

Almost three quarters of women with rheumatoid arthritis worldwide suffer pain daily

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Almost three quarters (72%) of women with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) suffer pain daily, despite the fact that three quarters (75%) receive pain relief medication, according to a new study presented today at EULAR 2010, the Annual Congress of the European League Against Rheumatism in Rome, Italy. Furthermore the physical pain appears to affect women to such an extent that it impacts negatively on emotional and social aspects of their lives.

Key results from data collected across seven countries (UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, USA and Canada) highlighted the health-related emotional, social and physical impact of RA on women's lives. [Women](#) with RA reported suffering feelings of detachment and isolation and said that their condition had negatively affected intimate relationships; with 40% of single women stating that it was more challenging to find a partner and 22% of divorced or separated respondents indicating that RA played a role in their decision to separate from their partner. Sixty eight percent of women with RA reported concealing their [pain](#) from those closest to them, and 67% said they constantly look for new ideas to address the pain they suffer.

"These data confirm that pain is a paramount issue for women with RA, fundamentally striking at the heart of their physical, social and emotional wellbeing. The research highlights the complexity of the management of RA, and the pain associated with RA, over and above basic symptom

control," said Professor Paul Emery, President of EULAR and arc Professor of Rheumatology, Leeds Institute of [Molecular Medicine](#), University of Leeds, UK. "The adoption of treatment pathways and strategies to reduce pain, reinstate productivity at work and manage the social impact of RA is of huge importance in the clinical management of this patient population."

The survey further explored the negative impact of the disease and pain on respondents' productivity at work with 71% of those who were employed at the time of the survey (n=1,108), reporting they were less productive at work because of their RA. Many respondents reported that RA had a long term effect on their work life, with 23% of respondents stopping work altogether and 17% of respondents reporting a switch to part-time employment as a result of their RA.

"PARE (People with Arthritis and [Rheumatism](#) in Europe) believes firmly that putting the patient at the centre of all discussions on the management of rheumatic conditions is imperative. The results of this study highlight that a continuing dialogue between Healthcare practitioners and patients is essential for long term conditions such as RA," said Neil Betteridge, Vice President, PARE and Chief Executive Officer of Arthritis Care in the UK. "PARE has developed a set of eight practical recommendations* organising patient involvement in clinical research which we hope will enable the successful inclusion of a patient perspective in future research projects, in particular in the context of EULAR studies. These recommendations follow a progressive model from which we believe the whole world can learn."

27,459 women aged 25-65 (mean age 46) were recruited for the study via an online research panel, 1,958 of these participants completed the questionnaire between 30th July and 31st August 2009. Seventy five percent had been formally diagnosed with RA for longer than one year, and 69% self reported moderate to severe RA disease activity.

Provided by European League Against Rheumatism

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