

Biologics improve productivity and reduce missed workdays in rheumatic disease

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The results of a systematic review of published studies presented today at the European League Against Rheumatism Annual Congress (EULAR 2015) Press Conference showed that biologics improve both absenteeism (not showing up for work) and presenteeism (being at work but not functioning fully) in patients with chronic inflammatory arthritides. Rheumatic conditions are the most frequently cited reason for absence from work, and these findings suggest that biologics could significantly reduce the economic burden of these diseases.

Chronic inflammatory arthritides - such as [rheumatoid arthritis](#) (RA), ankylosing spondylitis (AS), and [psoriatic arthritis](#) (PsA) - confer significant patient and economic burdens. As a result of their condition, one fifth of people with rheumatic conditions has been forced to change career, one third will have stopped working within two years of onset, and half will be unable to work within ten years.

"Within a few years of diagnosis, a significant proportion of those suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, [ankylosing spondylitis](#) and psoriatic arthritis are no longer able to work. This has major financial consequences for individuals and society, and is one of the reasons the indirect costs are higher for [rheumatic disease](#) than other diseases, " said study investigator Dr Cécile Gaujoux Viala, head of the Rheumatology Department of Nîmes University Hospital, France. "Our systematic review demonstrates the beneficial effects of biologics on absenteeism and presenteeism, leading us to suggest that the high costs of these treatments could in fact be at least partly offset by the savings they

deliver in indirect costs."

Fifteen randomised controlled trials and seven controlled cohorts reporting the effect of biological agents on work among 15,881 patients with RA, AS and PsA were identified and analysed. The outcomes were accumulated missed workdays, number of patients losing work time due to these conditions, impact on productivity, and employment loss, as compared with 9,713 patients receiving non-biologics.

Despite the heterogeneity of the data, the meta-analysis revealed that biologics significantly reduce accumulated missed workdays, the number of patients losing hours and improve work productivity.

Provided by European League Against Rheumatism

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