

## Doctors should evaluate hand function in RA, systemic sclerosis

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(HealthDay)—Assessment of hand function is an important component

in the clinical evaluation of patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and systemic sclerosis (SSc), according to a study published online March 21 in the *International Journal of Rheumatic Diseases*.

Kemal Erol, M.D., from Erciyes University in Kayseri, Turkey, and colleagues compared [hand function](#) and potential influence of functional loss on patients' overall physical functions, health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and psychological status in age- and gender-matched adult patients with RA (51 patients) and SSc (50 patients).

The researchers found that functioning and HRQoL were similar between the groups. However, patients with RA had higher visual analog scale-pain and [body mass index](#). The Duruöz Hand Index showed similar functional loss in both groups. Hand function was strongly influenced by hand span, grip strength, and modified Rodnan skin score in SSc.

"Loss of hand functions is an important feature contributing negatively to the overall physical status and HRQoL in patients with SSc and may be more frequent and important than expected," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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