

First-degree relatives have high perceived risk for rheumatoid arthritis

January 23 2023, by Elana Gotkine



First-degree relatives (FDRs) of patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA)

have a high perceived risk for developing RA, according to a study published online Dec. 5 in *RMD Open*.

Sarah Bunnewell, from Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust in the United Kingdom, and colleagues defined variables associated with perceived risk for developing RA in FDRs of [patients](#) with RA. Patients with RA and their FDRs were asked to complete cross-sectional surveys; 395 FDRs were included in the analysis. Paired data from 213 RA patients were available for 291 of these FDRs.

The researchers observed an intercorrelation for all measures of perceived risk. Overall, 65.2 percent of FDRs perceived themselves as being likely or very likely to develop RA. Associations with an increase in FDRs' perceived risk were seen for relationship with index patient, high health anxiety, female gender, long perceived RA duration, high perceived concern about RA, negative perceived emotional impact of RA, and low perceptions of how well treatment would control RA. There were no associations seen for patient characteristics with FDR risk perception.

"Three main predictors of perceived risk were identified which were being a child of a patient with RA, higher health anxiety, and lower perceptions of treatment control," the authors write. "Understanding of these predictors will inform the development of effective risk communication strategies and aid RA prevention and early intervention efforts."

More information: Sarah Bunnewell et al, Predictors of perceived risk in first-degree relatives of patients with rheumatoid arthritis, *RMD Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1136/rmdopen-2022-002606](https://doi.org/10.1136/rmdopen-2022-002606)

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Citation: First-degree relatives have high perceived risk for rheumatoid arthritis (2023, January 23) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-01-first-degree-high-rheumatoid-arthritis.html>

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