

Methotrexate use linked to reduced mortality in RA

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Image courtesy of Blausen Medical

Use of methotrexate for one year or more is associated with a reduction in the risk of mortality for patients with rheumatoid arthritis, according to a study published online Oct. 8 in *Arthritis & Rheumatism*.

(HealthDay)—Use of methotrexate for one year or more is associated with a reduction in the risk of mortality for patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), according to a study published online Oct. 8 in *Arthritis & Rheumatism*.

Mary Chester M. Wasko, M.D., from the West Penn Allegheny Health System in Pittsburgh, and colleagues assessed the association between [methotrexate](#) use and mortality in a cohort of 5,626 patients with RA, studied prospectively for 25 years, after controlling for individual propensity scores for methotrexate use.

The researchers found that 666 patients (12 percent) died during follow-up. There was a reduced risk of death with methotrexate use (adjusted hazard ratio, 0.30; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.09 to 1.03). The protective association between methotrexate use and mortality was not accounted for by selective methotrexate cessation immediately before death. The lower [mortality](#) risk was only associated with methotrexate use longer than one year, with no stronger associations linked to longer durations of use.

"These findings have implications for the use of

MTX in the treatment of RA," the authors write. "For patients in whom MTX monotherapy does not achieve complete control, add-on therapy may be more appropriate than switching to other medications, as MTX may still carry a survival benefit."

One author disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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