

EULAR
20.10.2022
Kilchberg,
Switzerland

NEW: POINTS TO CONSIDER TO HELP PEOPLE WITH AN RMD STAY IN WORK

EULAR 'points to consider' published in the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*

Rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) are one of the leading causes of work disability, and account for up to 60% of prolonged sick leave and work disability in the European Union. EULAR – the European Alliance of Rheumatology Associations – has drafted a set of new *points to consider* to help people with RMDs engage in healthy and sustainable employment.

Across Europe, people with RMDs are less able to work than people in the general population. One of the most common reasons is that people with RMDs often have pain caused by their disease. This can prevent people from doing their jobs, and may also drive sick leave and long-term unemployment. Being able to stay in work generally translates into better health and well-being for people with chronic diseases. One of EULAR's strategic objectives is to help increase participation in work for people with RMDs, and to support them in getting the workplace adaptations they need.

The new EULAR points-to-consider were developed by a multidisciplinary task force. The group included 25 health professionals and patient representatives. The project was completed in line with EULAR standardized operating procedures. The RMDs considered were types of inflammatory arthritis, juvenile idiopathic arthritis, osteoarthritis, systemic diseases, crystal arthritis, and regional or generalised musculoskeletal pain.

The paper developed by EULAR and published in September 2022 issue of the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases* includes three overarching principles. These acknowledge that participation in work increases a person's self-worth and self-esteem, as well as giving them financial independence and social interactions. The aim of work-related support for people with RMDs is to optimise their work life and to support physical and mental health. EULAR believe it is important to support people with RMDs to take part in healthy and sustainable work, and ask all members of the society to take this on as a shared responsibility.

The points to consider include 11 statements on staying in work, risk factors for long-term sick leave, and the benefits of drug treatments and other interventions such as education and workplace adaptations. They also note that employers have a legal duty to ensure safety and equality at work. To improve career perspectives and sustainable work participation for people with RMDs, workplaces should be flexible in accommodating the needs of people with RMDs. These needs will naturally differ between individuals and across jobs, and may vary over time.

EULAR believe these points to consider can help prevent poor health and inequities for people with an RMD. At present, there is limited evidence on some of the aspects. A research agenda has been developed to help fill knowledge gaps in this area. Updates of the points may be considered if specific evidence becomes available in the future.

Source

[Boonen A, Webers C, Butink M, et al 2021 EULAR points to consider to support people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases to participate in healthy and sustainable paid work](#)
[Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases Published Online First: 15 September 2022. doi: 10.1136/ard-2022-222678](#)

About EULAR

EULAR is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

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