

2018 update of the EULAR recommendations for the role of the nurse in the management of chronic inflammatory arthritis

1. April 2020, Kilchberg, Switzerland – The European League Against Rheumatism, EULAR, has published the 2018 update of the EULAR recommendations for the role of the nurse in the management of chronic inflammatory arthritis. These recommendations, based upon the most up to date evidence, replace EULAR's 2012 recommendations.

A EULAR task force of rheumatologists, health professionals and patients formulated three overarching principles and eight recommendations for the role of nurses in chronic inflammatory arthritis (CIA) care. The overarching principles emphasise the nurse's role as part of a healthcare team, describe the importance of providing evidence-based care and endorse shared decision-making in the nursing consultation with the patient. The recommendations cover the contribution of rheumatology nursing in needs-based patient education, satisfaction with care, timely access to care, disease management, efficiency of care, psychosocial support and the promotion of self-management.

The three overarching principles are:

- A. Rheumatology nurses are part of a healthcare team. Rheumatology nurses do not work in isolation, but in close collaboration with the patient (and family/significant others, as appropriate), the rheumatologist and, if applicable, a wider healthcare team, with a common focus on care and outcome.
- B. Rheumatology nurses provide evidence-based care. Rheumatology nursing is based on the principles of evidence-based practice. Evidence-based care integrates different sources of knowledge in practice: (i) research evidence, (ii) clinical nursing experience, (iii) patients' experiences, preferences and values and (iv) the local context. Providing evidence-based care is broader than care based on protocols and guidelines.
- C. Rheumatology nursing is based on shared decision-making with the patient. Patients' values and preferences are part of the comprehensive process of proper knowledge exchange and consensus on treatment decision.

The eight recommendations are:

1. Patients should have access to a nurse for needs-based education to improve knowledge of CIA and its management throughout the course of their disease.
2. Patients should have access to nurse consultations in order to enhance satisfaction with care.
3. Patients should have the opportunity of timely access to a nurse for needs-based support; this includes tele-health.
4. Nurses should participate in comprehensive disease management to control disease activity, reduce symptoms and improve patient-preferred outcomes; this leads to cost-effective care.
5. Nurses should address psychosocial issues to reduce patients' symptoms of anxiety and depression.
6. Nurses should support self-management skills to increase patients' self-efficacy.
7. Nurses should have access to and undertake continuous education in the specialty of rheumatology to improve and maintain knowledge and skills.
8. Nurses should be encouraged to undertake extended roles after specialised training and according to national regulations.

In several European countries, rheumatology nursing has developed into a recognised specialty with nurses undertaking both advanced and extended roles. Rheumatology nurses operate telephone advice lines, provide self-management support, patient education and counselling. Moreover, they participate in disease management, monitor disease-modifying treatments, give intra-articular injections, refer to other health professionals, prescribe drug treatments and help to manage comorbidities. In some European countries, such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom, nurse-led clinics are well established. These add value to patient outcomes and equal the cost of traditional physician-led follow-up.

About EULAR

The European League against Rheumatism (EULAR) is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with 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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Notes to Editors

EULAR Strategy: https://www.eular.org/eular_strategy_2018.cfm

EULAR School: <https://esor.eular.org/>

EULAR Campaign: https://www.eular.org/eular_campaign.cfm

EULAR Recommendations: https://www.eular.org/recommendations_home.cfm

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