

EULAR
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Kilchberg,
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NEW: POINTS TO CONSIDER IN RESEARCH

Observational data are increasingly used to analyse the safety and effectiveness of new therapies in different subgroups. For effectiveness studies, authors typically report the proportion of patients reaching a defined clinical threshold after a set period of time. While comparing these outcomes is simple in randomised controlled trials, interpretation of comparative effectiveness is affected in observational studies by two key factors: confounding and selection bias.

EULAR, the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology has published new *points to consider* when analysing and reporting comparative effectiveness research using observational data in rheumatology. These complement previously published points to consider on how to use observational data to analyse and report safety data in biologic registers and report clinical trial extension studies. A EULAR task force was set up to draft the points. The group included healthcare professionals, rheumatologists, epidemiologists, statisticians, patients, and social science researchers.

The group developed three overarching principles and ten *points to consider*. The points do not carry the same weight of supporting clinical evidence as EULAR recommendations, but the agreement between task force members was very high. The principles focus on the definition of treatment effectiveness as how well a treatment performs in routine clinical settings. They also acknowledge that observational data traditionally have several limitations, including confounding and missing data, and note that robust and transparent epidemiological and statistical methods increase the trustworthiness of results gained from observational data.

The points to consider expand on current STROBE (Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology) guidelines regarding the importance of describing missing data patterns. Similar to STROBE guidelines, they are relevant not only to rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases, but can be used in most medical fields where cohort studies are used to assess effectiveness – especially of chronic disease treatments.

It is thought that EULAR is the first non-governmental organisation representing patients, healthcare professionals and scientific societies to date has developed recommendations for comparative effectiveness studies.

Source

[Courvoisier DS, Lauper K, Kedra J, et alEULAR points to consider when analysing and reporting comparative effectiveness research using observational data in rheumatologyAnnals of the Rheumatic Diseases Published Online First: 20 January 2022. doi: 10.1136/annrheumdis-2021-221307](#)

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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