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## NEW POPULATION-BASED STUDIES SHOW INCREASED RISK OF DEMENTIA AND DEPRESSION IN RA

**New data presented at the 2022 EULAR Congress**

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**Growing evidence from observational studies indicates that patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) have a higher risk of developing dementia. The occurrence of depression is also increased. New research shows depression is linked to increased mortality in this population. Clinically active RA was also associated with an elevated risk of dementia. Further studies are warranted to identify mechanisms of increased risk of dementia in RA patients.**

In work presented at the 2022 EULAR Congress, Dr Jens Kristian Pedersen and colleagues used data from the DANBIO registry to describe the all-cause mortality risk associated with depression in patients with incident RA.

The group used the first filling of a prescription for antidepressants as a proxy for depression. Among 11,071 RA patients 10% had filled prescriptions for antidepressants. Analysis showed depression was associated with more than 6-fold increased mortality risk in patients with incident RA.

Growing evidence suggests people with RA have a higher risk of developing dementia. However, the incidence of dementia among RA patients has declined in recent years. It is unknown if this reflects broader trends of dementia incidence over time, treatment advances yielding better control of RA, or other factors. Dr Elena Myasoedova shared new findings on risk factors for incident dementia in a large inception cohort of patients with RA.

The key finding was that clinically active RA, among other risk factors, is associated with an elevated risk of dementia. The cumulative incidence of dementia increased by 2–3% every 5 years after the diagnosis of RA, and older age at RA incidence was consistently associated with risk of dementia. Presence of rheumatoid nodules, large joint swelling, hypertension, heart failure, and depression at baseline or during the first year after RA incidence were significantly associated with risk of dementia. Large joint swelling, any cardiovascular or cerebrovascular disease (particularly heart failure and ischemic stroke), anxiety, and depression at any time increased the risk of dementia. Studies are ongoing to evaluate the role of systemic inflammation and its interactions with other risk factors on the risk of cognitive decline in patients with RA.

Dr Yeonghee Eun also shared data on the association between dementia and RA, based on a study in a large population-based cohort.

Results showed that RA patients had a 1.2-times higher risk of dementia than controls. This included both Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. In a stratified analysis according to age, gender, lifestyle factors, and comorbidities, the association between RA and dementia was

consistently found. The authors note that appropriate evaluation of dementia is required when cognitive impairment occurs in RA patients.

### **Source**

Pedersen K, et al. More than six-fold increased mortality risk in patients with incident rheumatoid arthritis and depression in a large cohort with 10-year follow-up. Presented at EULAR 2022; abstract OP0067.

Myasoedova E, et al. Active rheumatoid arthritis and associated comorbidities increase risk of dementia: A population-based cohort study. Presented at EULAR 2022; abstract OP0134.

Eu Y, et al. Increased risk of dementia in patients with rheumatoid arthritis: a nationwide population-based cohort study. Presented at EULAR 2022; abstract OP0271.

### **About EULAR**

EULAR – the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology – 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.

### **About the EULAR European Congress of Rheumatology**

Since its introduction in 2000, the annual EULAR European Congress of Rheumatology has become the primary platform for exchange of scientific and clinical information in Europe. It is also a renowned forum for interaction between medical doctors, scientists, people with arthritis/rheumatism, health professionals and representatives of the pharmaceutical industry worldwide. The EULAR congress is usually held in June in one of the major cities in Europe.

The scientific programme covers a wide range of topics on clinical innovations, clinical, translational and basic science. Meetings set up by associations of people with arthritis/rheumatism, health professionals and the health care industry complement the programme. The poster sessions, offering lively interaction between presenters and participants, are regarded by many as the heart of the congress.

Over the years, the EULAR Congress has gained a reputation of being a most innovative platform for the practicing physician particularly with respect to the acquisition of information on novel clinical research. The congress attracts more than 18,000 delegates from more than 130 countries.

The aim of the EULAR European Congress of Rheumatology is to provide a forum of the highest standard for scientific, both clinical and basic, educational, and social exchange between professionals involved in rheumatology, liaising with patient organisations, in order to achieve progress in the clinical care of people with rheumatic diseases.

**Contact**

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