



Rheumatic disorders- Rural Experience

Vishal .R. Tandon, Annil Mahajan

Prevalence of rheumatic disorders is increasing drastically world wide, both in urban and rural areas.(1-5) This has led to alarming increase in physical, social and economic burden (2, 3), which is preventable to a greater extent with early identification of disease & aggressive treatment. However, the primary rheumatology services are inadequate. We would like to share with our readers rural experience of rheumatic disorders collected from three studies (4) over a period of time. Prevalence of rheumatic disorders- in one of our Rural Hospital Based Prospective Study was recorded $172/1360 \times 100 = 12.64\%$

Prevalence of rheumatic disorders is increasing even in rural areas as evident from this study (4).

Females were commonly affected with Rheumatic Disorders in comparison to males. OA was commonest disorder followed by Symptom related (SR)/ILL-Defined Rheumatic Symptom, Vague Symptoms & RA. OA commonly affected 46-65 year age group, whereas (SR)/ILL-Defined Rheumatic Symptom and vague symptoms affected commonly 15- 45 years age group. Knee OA, Low back ache, Myalgia, Frozen Shoulder & sero-positive RA were also common. Light and moderate type of work doing people were more affected. HT, DM,

Dyslipidemia, anxiety, APD and anemia were most common co-morbid conditions. Unawareness about disease was prevalent both among urban and rural patients. Practitioners lack acquisition of knowledge of various aspects of basic and applied medical sciences relevant to common rheumatological disorders. They lack competence in diagnosis, knowledge in interpretation of investigations and commit many common mistakes in treatment of patients with common rheumatological disorders. They also lack awareness of the value of supportive & complementary therapies like physiotherapy, occupational therapy, assessment and follow up.

Hence, basic training & continued education of practitioners, nation wide short regular rheumatology courses and inclusion of rheumatology clinics and special classes for graduates in the field of rheumatology particularly in rural area is need of hour

References

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Secretary and President Indian Rheumatology Association, J&K Chapter

Correspondence to : Dr Annil Mahajan, Associate Professor, Incharge Rheumatology Clinic, Post Graduate Department of General Medicine, Govt. Medical College, Jammu.