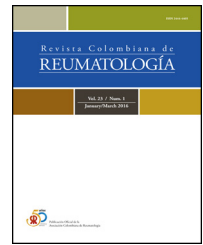




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## Original Investigation

# Evaluation of quality of life and depression in patients with rheumatoid arthritis in a General Hospital<sup>☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic, inflammatory, and multisystemic disease that has an impact on the quality of life and is associated with depressive symptoms. **Objectives:** To evaluate the quality of life, overall health status, and depression in patients with RA.

**Patients and methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in the outpatient Rheumatology Outpatient Department of a General Hospital in Mexico City. All patients met the criteria for rheumatoid arthritis according to the American Rheumatism Association, 1987. Clinical and sociodemographic characteristics were recorded. Four measurement tools were used: Arthritis Impact Measurement Scale (AIMS), Dunbar Questionnaire, a Visual Analog Scale, and the Beck Depression Inventory.

**Results:** A total of 43 patients aged  $\geq 18$  years were evaluated. The highest AIMS scores were in social activity ( $6.49 \pm 1.93$ ), pain ( $4.70 \pm 2.04$ ), depression ( $4.70 \pm 2.23$ ), and physical activity ( $4.03 \pm 2.10$ ). The mean score with the Dunbar questionnaire was  $6.48 \pm 1.87$ , the mean Visual Analog Scale score was  $69.41 \pm 24.67$ , and the mean of the Beck inventory was  $15.74 \pm 9.85$ .

**Conclusions:** The presence of anxiety and depression has an impact on the quality of life of patients with RA, but not on the presence of comorbidity or disease activity. Depressive symptoms are common in patients with RA, and should therefore be considered when evaluating this rheumatological disease.

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## Evaluación de la calidad de vida y depresión en pacientes con artritis reumatoide en un hospital general

### R E S U M E N

#### Palabras clave:

Artritis reumatoide

Calidad de vida

Depresión

**Introducción:** La artritis reumatoide (AR) es una enfermedad que afecta la calidad de vida de quienes la padecen y se asocia a sintomatología depresiva.

**Objetivos:** Evaluar la calidad de vida, el estado global de salud y depresión en pacientes con AR.

**Pacientes y métodos:** Se trata de un estudio transversal y comparativo. Se incluyeron 43 adultos mayores,  $\geq$  de 18 años, con diagnóstico de AR según los criterios de la American Rheumatism Association de 1987, que acudían al servicio de consulta externa de Reumatología de un hospital general en la ciudad de México. Se determinaron características clínicas y sociodemográficas. Se les aplicaron 4 índices: Escala de Medición del Impacto de la Artritis (AIMS), Cuestionario de Dunbar, Escala Análoga Visual y el Inventario de Depresión de Beck. **Resultados:** Se evaluaron 43 pacientes mayores de 18 años, en su mayoría del sexo femenino. Para la AIMS, las puntuaciones más altas fueron en actividad social ( $6, 49 \pm 1, 93$ ), dolor ( $4,70 \pm 2,04$ ), depresión ( $4,70 \pm 2,23$ ) y actividad física ( $4,03 \pm 2,10$ ). Para el cuestionario de Dunbar la puntuación promedio fue de  $6, 48 \pm 1, 87$ , en la escala análoga visual la puntuación media fue de  $69,41 \pm 24,67$ , finalmente, en el inventario de Beck el promedio fue de  $15,74 \pm 9,85$ .

**Conclusiones:** La presencia de ansiedad y depresión se relacionan con la calidad de vida de los pacientes con AR mas no con la presencia de comorbilidad o actividad de la enfermedad. Los síntomas depresivos son comunes en pacientes con AR por lo que deben considerarse al evaluar esta enfermedad reumatológica.

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## Introduction

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic, inflammatory, multi-systemic and autoimmune disease, which is characterized by a persistent inflammatory synovitis, causing different degrees of disability, loss of quality of life and increased comorbidities in those in whom a control of the pathology has not been achieved. The key sign of the disease is the potential of the synovial inflammation to cause cartilage destruction, with bone erosions and joint deformities. In 2010, it was estimated that the prevalence of RA in the world was 0.5–1% in developed countries, being 3 times more frequent in women than in men.<sup>1</sup> In 2011, a cross-sectional study was conducted in Mexico to estimate the prevalence of musculoskeletal diseases, including 5 different regions of the country. The prevalence of RA in Mexico City was 1.6%.<sup>2</sup> The presence of depressive symptoms could be conditioned by fear of disability, giving up ambitions with changes in social functionality, a feeling of poor control of the disease and an altered perception with a sensation of loss of functions.<sup>3</sup> The severe chronic pain accompanied by progressive joint destruction, disability and disfigurement, increases the risk of suffering emotional disorders.<sup>4</sup> Depression is a common comorbidity in patients with RA, being sometimes not diagnosed by the medical staff,<sup>5</sup> with a prevalence of 16.8% in the population with RA.<sup>6</sup> It is estimated that the prevalence of depression throughout the life, reported by rheumatologists, is 12.9%.<sup>5</sup> There is evidence that

depressive symptoms temporarily influence the evolution of the activity of RA, although the mechanism is unknown, however, slower rates of decrease in the activity of the disease have been reported. The depressive symptomatology apparently has no relationship with the affected joints and the acute phase reactants.<sup>7</sup> The great articular involvement leads patients to have varying degrees of disability, in addition to joint pain and stiffness, more accentuated during the active phase of the disease, which play an important role in the functional disability.<sup>8</sup> The health-related quality of life is a concept linked with the individual impact of the disease and its treatment, the functional capacity and the patient's perception in the social, physical and mental roles.<sup>9,10</sup> The need to assess the quality of life arises from the increase in life expectancy in our country, since much of the population will reach old age with the consequences of a physiological system in decline, increasing the vulnerability to chronic degenerative diseases and adverse health outcomes, for example, falls and their sequelae.<sup>11</sup> The instruments for measuring the quality of life may be generic and specific.<sup>10</sup> The generic include the SF-36 questionnaire, the Sickness Impact Profile, the Nottingham Health Profile and the Dunbar Questionnaire; and the specific include the Arthritis Impact Measurement Scale (AIMS), the Rheumatoid Arthritis Quality of Life, and the Rapid Assessment of Disease Activity.<sup>12</sup> The objective of the present study is to evaluate the presence of depression and the quality of life in patients suffering from RA by means of different instruments, since the latter is diminished in rheumatic diseases.

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