

Rheumatoid arthritis affects 1 in 100 Australians. It is a major cause of disability and psychological distress due to its chronic, painful and disabling character. Rheumatoid arthritis, an inflammatory autoimmune disease, is the second most common type of arthritis after osteoarthritis. The disease is more common amongst women and in the older age groups. Untreated rheumatoid arthritis can result in joint damage and deformities. The disease impacts on activities of daily living, capacity to work, and family life. Early diagnosis and medical intervention are critical to limiting structural damage and improving health outcomes.

The Clinical Guideline for Diagnosis and Management of Early Rheumatoid Arthritis presents recommendations to assist and support clinical judgement of GPs in managing patients with rheumatoid arthritis. This program, in line with the Guideline, focuses on diagnosis, early management, and coordination of multidisciplinary care needs for people with rheumatoid arthritis. Pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions are reviewed. The Clinical Guideline recognises the need for every patient with rheumatoid arthritis to have a thorough assessment of their individual needs; access to a range of health professionals; and a comprehensive care plan.

This program is one of four in a new Musculoskeletal Guideline Series. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has developed national musculoskeletal clinical guidelines for general practitioners and other primary care health professionals for osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile idiopathic arthritis and osteoporosis.

Learning Outcomes for this program:

At the end of this program viewers will be able to:

- Utilise the Clinical Guideline for Diagnosis and Management easily and effectively
- Identify the criteria for early and accurate diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis
- Develop multidisciplinary care plans for early rheumatoid arthritis
- Demonstrate awareness of the recommended interventions for early rheumatoid arthritis

Panel of Speakers

Chair: **Dr Norman Swan** - Presenter of *The Health Report* on ABC Radio National

Dr John Bennett - General Practitioner, University Health Service, University of Queensland, (RACGP Rheumatoid Arthritis Working Group)

Professor Lyn March - Rheumatologist, Royal North Shore Hospital, Sydney (RACGP Rheumatoid Arthritis Working Group)

Ms Christine Retallack - Rheumatology Community Health Nurse, Great Southern Aboriginal and Community Health, Albany, WA

Associate Professor Louise Sharpe - Director of Clinical Research, School of Psychology, University of Sydney NSW

Each program in this series is accredited or endorsed for professional development by RACGP, ACRRM, RCNA and APA.

Broadcast and Webcast details

Tuesday 9th March 2010

LIVE satellite broadcast (on Channel 4) and webcast at:

- 8.00pm in ACT, NSW, TAS & VIC
- 7.30pm in SA
- 7.00pm in QLD
- 6.30pm in NT
- 5.00pm in WA

(broadcast repeated in WA on Channel 23 at 8.00pm)

Friday 12th March 2010

Repeat satellite broadcast on Channel 23 at:

- 12.30pm in ACT, NSW, TAS & VIC
- 12 noon in SA & NT
- 11.30am in QLD
- 11.00 in NT
- 9.30am in WA

For more details visit the program page on the Foundation's
http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/program-1/?program_id=391