

VOLUME 42, NUMBER 7
July 2025

ISSN 0189 - 160X

WAJM

WEST AFRICAN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE

ORIGINALITY AND EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE WEST AFRICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND
WEST AFRICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS



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RETROSPECTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

Spectrum of Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Diseases in a Rheumatology Clinic in Nigeria: A Report of the First 5000 Patients

Spectre des Maladies Rhumatismales et Musculosquelettiques dans une Clinique de Rhumatologie au Nigeria : Rapport sur les 5 000 Premiers Patients

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: Rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) are important causes of morbidity, disability, and mortality worldwide, including in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the spectrum of RMDs in this region has not been well documented due to a lack of data. This is particularly true since many of the diseases observed were previously considered rare among Africans. This study aims to identify the various RMDs seen in a private rheumatology facility in Lagos, Nigeria.

METHOD: The case records of the first 5,000 consecutive patients diagnosed with RMDs between January 2004 and May 2022 were reviewed. Diagnoses were made using standard rheumatology guidelines/consensus, societal guidelines, or clinical evaluation. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

RESULTS: The mean $\pm$ SD age of the 5,000 patients was 52.33 ± 16.15 years, with a female-to-male ratio of 1.7:1. The frequency of the common RMDs were degenerative joint diseases (54.16%), followed by inflammatory arthritis (14.52%), soft tissue rheumatism (13.28%) and connective tissue diseases (10.32%). Females were more commonly affected in all categories except crystal arthropathies and spondyloarthropathy. Septic arthritis, metabolic bone diseases, and orphan diseases were rarely seen, at 0.26%, 0.28%, and 0.82% of the total, respectively.

CONCLUSION: This study, which includes arguably the largest cohort of RMD patients in sub-Saharan Africa, revealed a wide spectrum of RMDs, contrary to previous assumptions that RMDs are rare among Africans. As this is a hospital-based study, large population-based studies are recommended to determine the burden of RMDs in the community to guide policy implementation and resource allocation.

WAJM 2025; 42 (7): 590-596

KEYWORDS: Spectrum, Rheumatic, Musculoskeletal, Nigeria

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE ET OBJECTIFS: Les maladies rhumatismales et musculosquelettiques (MRM) sont des causes importantes de morbidité, d'invalidité et de mortalité dans le monde, y compris en Afrique subsaharienne. Cependant, le spectre des MRM dans cette région n'a pas été bien documenté en raison du manque de données. Cela est particulièrement vrai puisque nombre de ces maladies étaient auparavant considérées comme rares chez les Africains. Cette étude vise à identifier les différentes MRM observées dans une clinique privée de rhumatologie à Lagos, Nigeria.

MÉTHODE: Les dossiers des 5 000 premiers patients consécutifs diagnostiqués avec des MRM entre janvier 2004 et mai 2022 ont été examinés. Les diagnostics ont été établis selon les directives/consensus standards en rhumatologie, les recommandations des sociétés savantes ou l'évaluation clinique. L'analyse des données a été réalisée à l'aide du logiciel Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

RÉSULTATS: L'âge moyen $\pm$ écart-type des 5 000 patients était de $52,33 \pm 16,15$ ans, avec un ratio femme/homme de 1,7:1. Les fréquences des MRM les plus courantes étaient les maladies articulaires dégénératives (54,16 %), suivies par les arthrites inflammatoires (14,52 %), les rhumatismes des tissus mous (13,28 %) et les maladies du tissu conjonctif (10,32 %). Les femmes étaient plus fréquemment touchées dans toutes les catégories, sauf pour les arthropathies microcristallines et les spondyloarthropathies. L'arthrite septique, les maladies osseuses métaboliques et les maladies orphelines étaient rarement observées, représentant respectivement 0,26 %, 0,28 % et 0,82 % du total.

CONCLUSION: Cette étude, qui inclut probablement la plus grande cohorte de patients atteints de MRM en Afrique subsaharienne, a révélé un large spectre de ces maladies, contrairement aux hypothèses antérieures selon lesquelles elles seraient rares chez les Africains. Étant donné qu'il s'agit d'une étude hospitalière, de vastes études populationnelles sont recommandées afin de déterminer la charge des MRM dans la communauté et d'orienter la mise en œuvre des politiques ainsi que l'allocation des ressources. WAJM 2025; 42 (7): 590-596

MOTS-CLÉS: Spectre, Rhumatismal, Musculosquelettique, Nigeria

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Abbreviations - ACR: American College of Rheumatology; AVN: avascular necrosis; COPCORD: community-oriented program on control of rheumatic diseases; CRFs: case record files; CTDs: connective tissue diseases; DALYs: disability-adjusted life years; DISH: diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis; EULAR: European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology; JIA: juvenile idiopathic arthritis; OA: osteoarthritis; RA: rheumatoid arthritis; RMD: rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases; SLE: systemic lupus erythematosus; SPSS: statistical package for the social sciences; STRs: soft tissue rheumatic diseases; WHO: World Health Organization