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### Pattern of Rheumatic Diseases in a New Rheumatology Clinic in Southwestern Nigeria. A Descriptive Study

*Profil des Maladies Rhumatismales dans une Nouvelle Clinique de Rhumatologie au Sud-Ouest du Nigéria : Une Étude Descriptive*

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#### ABSTRACT

**BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVE:** Rheumatic diseases (RMDs) are among the leading health burdens and causes of disability globally. Interestingly, they are on the rise due to the increasingly ageing population. Inflammatory RMDs are not left behind in the rise, especially in Africa, where they were thought to be rare as there has been increasing reportage of these diseases in recent years. Hence, this study aims to determine the pattern of RMDs presenting to a rheumatology clinic in southwestern Nigeria.

**METHODS:** In this retrospective study, the medical records of the patients who were diagnosed with RMDs who presented to the rheumatology clinic of the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex (OAUTHC) between February 2017 and April 2024 were reviewed and the data about their age, sex, and diagnoses were collated between May and June 2024. The diagnosis of RMDs was made based on various classification criteria and critical clinical evaluation by a rheumatologist. Non-rheumatic diseases were excluded from the study. The data were analysed using the IBM SPSS version 23.0 software to determine the characteristics of the various RMDs.

**RESULTS:** About 416 patients were seen during the study period. Three hundred and eighteen were females, while 98 were males with a F: M ratio of 3.2:1. The mean age of the patients was 48.62 years. Inflammatory RMDs were the most common (59.4%). Systemic lupus erythematosus was the most common RMD (21.2%) followed by osteoarthritis (19.7%). Rheumatoid arthritis was the most common inflammatory arthritis (11.8%). Trigger finger was the most common soft tissue RMD (4.8%) followed by rotator cuff tendinitis (3.6%).

**CONCLUSION:** This study showed an evolving trend toward inflammatory RMDs contrary to earlier African studies.

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**KEYWORDS:** Rheumatic diseases, Pattern, Rheumatology clinic, Southwestern Nigeria

#### RÉSUMÉ

**CONTEXTE/OBJECTIF:** Les maladies rhumatismales (RMD) représentent un des principaux fardeaux sanitaires et causes d'invalidité dans le monde. Elles sont en augmentation, en partie en raison du vieillissement de la population. Les maladies rhumatismales inflammatoires ne font pas exception, en particulier en Afrique, où elles étaient auparavant considérées rares, mais ont été de plus en plus rapportées ces dernières années. Cette étude vise à déterminer le profil des RMD dans une clinique de rhumatologie au sud-ouest du Nigéria.

**MÉTHODES :** Dans cette étude rétrospective, les dossiers médicaux des patients diagnostiqués avec des RMD qui ont consulté la clinique de rhumatologie du complexe hospitalier universitaire Obafemi Awolowo (OAUTHC) entre février 2017 et avril 2024 ont été examinés, et les données sur leur âge, sexe et diagnostic ont été collectées entre mai et juin 2024. Le diagnostic des RMD a été établi selon différents critères de classification et une évaluation clinique rigoureuse par un rhumatologue. Les maladies non rhumatismales ont été exclues de l'étude. Les données ont été analysées à l'aide du logiciel IBM SPSS version 23.0 pour déterminer les caractéristiques des différentes RMD.

**RÉSULTATS :** Environ 416 patients ont été suivis pendant la période de l'étude. Parmi eux, 318 étaient des femmes et 98 des hommes, avec un ratio F de 3,2:1. L'âge moyen des patients était de 48,62 ans. Les RMD inflammatoires étaient les plus fréquentes (59,4 %). Le lupus érythémateux systémique était la RMD la plus courante (21,2 %), suivi de l'arthrose (19,7 %). La polyarthrite rhumatoïde était l'arthrite inflammatoire la plus fréquente (11,8 %). Le doigt à ressort était le RMD des tissus mous le plus commun (4,8 %), suivi de la tendinite de la coiffe des rotateurs (3,6 %).

**CONCLUSION:** Cette étude a révélé une tendance croissante des RMD inflammatoires, en contraste avec les études africaines antérieures.

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**MOTS CLÉS:** Maladies rhumatismales, Profil, Clinique de rhumatologie, Sud-Ouest du Nigéria

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**Abbreviations - ACR:** American College of Rheumatology; **COPCORD:** Community-Oriented Program For The Control of Rheumatic Diseases; **EULAR:** European League Against Rheumatism; **GBD:** global burden of diseases; **MSKs:** musculoskeletal disorders; **OA:** osteoarthritis; **OAUTHC:** Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex; **RA:** rheumatoid arthritis; **RMD:** rheumatic disease; **SLE:** systemic lupus erythematosus; **SLICC:** Systemic Lupus International Collaborating Clinics; **WHO:** World Health Organisation