OPTIMISATION OF RHEUMATIC DISEASE ASSESSMENTS IN CLINICAL TRIALS, CLINICAL CARE AND LONG-TERM DATABASES

Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology

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Rheumatologists

Course Description
This supplement for the journal Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology is the 15th in an annual series entitled ‘Contemporary Topics in Rheumatic Diseases’.

Statement of Need
Assessment of rheumatic diseases is more complicated than many common chronic diseases such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes and osteoporosis. The absence of a single gold standard measure has been addressed in rheumatic diseases by development of composite indices to assess and estimate changes in patient status. Formal indices have been developed for rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, vasculitis, and other rheumatic diseases, which generally include 3 types of measures: from a patient history in the format of a patient self-report questionnaire; physical examination; and laboratory tests. The RA indices reflect patient history and physical examination in contrast to gold standard biomarkers, which are most prominent in clinical decisions in most of the other chronic diseases. Most rheumatology care is conducted without quantitative measures, although use of quantitative measures has been shown to improve care and outcomes.

Educational Objectives
At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be able to:
○ recognise the indices that are available for different rheumatic diseases, which might be applicable in usual care
○ recognise how measures and indices might be improved for clinical trials in rheumatic diseases
○ recognise how measures and indices might be improved for routine clinical care of rheumatic diseases
○ characterise features of long-term databases that might be emulated by different databases in different clinical settings to improve the long-term databases

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