



ARAD Participant Newsletter

September 2022

ARAD Principal Investigators



Prof Marissa Lassere



Prof Lyn March



Prof Catherine Hill



Prof Rachelle Buchbinder

Firstly, a big thank you from the ARAD Principal investigators for your ongoing support of this wonderful study which was established in 2003.

In this issue of the Australian Rheumatology Association database (ARAD) newsletter, we provide some information about additional upcoming surveys and results of recent studies which your information has contributed to.

Surveys

As part of ongoing research, ARAD has contacted participants with surveys on:

- Your experience of rheumatology outpatient care and your COVID experience

Recent Findings

Information collected from ARAD participant surveys has been used by researchers and PhD candidates to investigate a number of areas. We have summarised the study results below.

Telehealth impact

Community restrictions and the introduction of telehealth during the pandemic period were assessed on Australian patients with inflammatory arthritis, including their overall mental and physical health. Results show higher confidence for telehealth to access GP and Rheumatologist compared with an in-person review. When asked if their healthcare was interrupted during the pandemic, 85% of respondents with inflammatory arthritis reported little or no interruption to their healthcare. Results also has shown that 91% have no difficulties with accessing to GP telehealth and 88.6% with rheumatologist telehealth. This is good news for Australians living with inflammatory arthritis showing that there was not too much disruption to health care during the pandemic. The lead author was Dr Adam Rischin, an early career rheumatologist working in Victoria.

Attitudes to Covid-19 vaccination

This study looked at attitudes to the COVID-19 vaccine in ARAD participants, particularly how hesitant people were to having the COVID-19 vaccine. The study found people were more hesitant about the vaccine if they were taking less advice from healthcare professionals and more advice from friends and family and online sources. Vaccine-related patient education might help to reduce this hesitancy. The lead authors were Dr Chris McMaster and Dr David Liew; early career rheumatologists working in Victoria.

Attitudes toward new biologic therapy in Australians with inflammatory arthritis

This study investigated the knowledge and beliefs of Australian patients with inflammatory arthritis regarding biologic/targeted synthetic disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (b/tsDMARDs) and biosimilars and where they got their information about these drugs from. Most people got their information from their rheumatologist. With regard to switching to a new biosimilar drug, 75% said they would consider switching to a biosimilar if this was recommended by their rheumatologist. Proven safety and efficacy in clinical trials were also an important consideration for many with cost and convenience less important. The lead author was Dr Alannah Quinlivan, an early career rheumatologist working in Victoria.

ARAD Ph.D. Candidates

Dr Tom Lynch, University of Sydney, Sydney.

Dr Oscar Russell, University of Adelaide, Adelaide.

Dr Maddie Bryant, University of Adelaide, Adelaide



Dr Oscar Russell



Dr Tom Lynch



Dr Maddie Bryant

Awards

Congratulations to Dr Oscar Russell (PhD Student) who won the new investigator award in the Australian Rheumatology Association Annual Scientific meeting 2022 for his paper "The Effect of Area-Level Socioeconomic Status on Functional Status in Australian Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients: Data from the Australian Rheumatology Association Database (ARAD)".

Participation in ARAD

We greatly value your participation in ARAD and this allows us to do important research in Australians with arthritis. Participation in ARAD is voluntary which means that you are free to discontinue the project at any time. If you wish to discontinue the questionnaires, ARAD would still like to continue to use your information to monitor for any changes in your health statistics through linking to government registers of prescription medications, hospitalisations, cancers, and deaths.

If you wish to discontinue completing the ARAD questionnaires and/or decline ARAD accessing your information, please write or email to notify us of this on ONE of the following:

Write to:

ARAD DMC
DEPM
Monash University
Reply Paid 83087
Melbourne 3004

Email:

arad@monash.edu

If you no longer wish to complete questionnaires for ARAD, ARAD thanks you for your participation so far. Should you wish to recommence, please contact arad@monash.edu so ARAD can update your details and get you active in ARAD again!