



**TITLE:** A clinical audit of Multidisciplinary Care for Foot Health Issues in Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis

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### ABSTRACT

**Objectives-** The audit aimed to evaluate the quality of foot screening and care provided to patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) against international standards for RA-related foot care.

**Methods** – Data were randomly collected from the initial 91 patients who attended the rheumatology clinic at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka and met the American College of Rheumatology criteria for RA, between June and August 2023. The audit included a retrospective assessment of formal foot evaluation and the multidisciplinary management of foot deformities. This encompassed wound care, the provision of foot orthoses, referrals to podiatry and orthopaedic services. Above practices were assessed against the international standards(1)

**Results** – eighty four point six percent (n=77) of the patients experienced foot or ankle involvement due to RA at some point during their disease course. Among the 91 patients, only 28 had received a foot assessment within the last three months of their clinic visit. Twenty nine patients (31%) had never undergone a formal foot assessment since being diagnosed with RA. Thirty seven patients had experienced bunions, corns, calluses or ulcers during the course of their disease yet none had been seen by a podiatrist.

Three patients were referred for orthopaedic opinion with two undergoing foot surgery. Of the 77 patients with foot problems only 15.6% (n=12) patients had been prescribed foot orthoses, all of which were non casted orthoses. 75% (n=9) patients did not wear orthoses, primarily due to discomfort and pain.

**Conclusion** – Our audit reveals a concerning lack of compliance with international standards for RA foot care. There is a clear need for health education and training of medical staff in formal foot assessment. The establishment of multidisciplinary rheumatology services, the introduction of podiatry services, and the implementation of a timely referral system are essential steps towards improving RA foot care.

#### References

1. Kennedy T. BSR guidelines on standards of care for persons with rheumatoid arthritis. *Rheumatology*. 2005 Feb 3;44(4):553–6.



3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference on  
**ORTHOPEDICS, RHEUMATOLOGY AND MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS**  
November 27-28, 2023 | Dubai, UAE

**BIOGRAPHY** Melina Dissanayake has completed her MD at the age of 33 years from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Currently she holds the position of Senior Registrar in Rheumatology at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka. Her dedication to advancing the field of rheumatology is evident through her substantial body of work. She has authored numerous case reports and research articles, showcasing her expertise and commitment to the field.

Notably, her research findings have been selected for presentation at upcoming international congresses, including the Asia Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology (APLAR) Congress in December 2023 and the Indian Rheumatology Association congress (IRACON) November 2023



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