Fact sheet

Quick facts about rheumatoid arthritis (RA)

It is estimated that five million people suffer from RA in the seven major markets. Although RA can affect people of all ages, the onset of the disease usually occurs between 30 and 50 years of age. People living with RA are at a higher risk of developing other conditions, including heart disease, stroke and depression.

- Prevalence is not split evenly between genders, since women are three times more likely to be affected than men.
- RA is more prevalent among women and in developed countries.

Social and emotional impact

- People with RA are twice as likely to suffer from depression as members of the general population.
- The prevalence of depression in RA patients is estimated to range between 14% to 46% of the population of people living with the disease.
- More than half of people with RA found that their condition placed limitations on intimate relations due largely to fatigue and pain associated with their condition.

Productivity

- RA can lead to disability, and for some patients this happens at a young age. In early studies, 10% of RA patients were confined to a wheelchair or bedridden 10-15 years after the onset of the disease.
- RA patients who are working can often become disabled in the years following their disease diagnosis. Twenty years following diagnosis, 80% of working people with RA had become disabled.
- RA patients often need assistance around the house. A study found that half of people with RA needed household help from relatives, friends, formal home assistance, or private household assistance.

Financial implications

- Indirect costs make up a major portion of RA costs and spending. Analyses of RA-related costs have shown that indirect costs (due to loss of productivity) account for 50%-85% of the overall cost of the disease, the main indirect costs being work disability and sick leave.
- Based on the annual cost per patient, the total national cost of RA is estimated at €45.3 billion in Europe.

Disease and Outcomes

Due to the chronic nature of RA, the long term implications of the disease touch nearly every aspect of life.

- One in five General Practitioner visits involves the symptoms of arthritis, such as joint pain, stiffness, fatigue and impaired mobility.
- Recent studies have demonstrated an increased mortality in rheumatoid patients.
- Median life expectancy was shortened an average of seven years for men and three years for women compared to control populations.
- People with RA, particularly those whose disease is not well controlled, may have a higher risk for heart disease and stroke.
- Disability is higher among patients with rheumatoid arthritis with 60% being unable to work 10 years after the onset of their disease.

For more information visit www.ucb.com
Fact sheet

References

1. Rheumatoid Arthritis, Biologics battle up the treatment algorithm. Data Monitor, 7 September 2006
15. Arthritis Care: General Information about RA – Online March 2010