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THU0240 EPIDEMIOLOGY OF OSTEOARTHRITIS IN NORTHERN ETHNIC GROUPS OF RUSSIA

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10.1136/annrheumdis-2001.784

Background Till present there are practically no information on the prevalence and risk factors of osteoarthritis in populations residing in severe climatic zones of Russia and subject to the influence of a number of unfavourable environmental factors.

Objectives To study the epidemiology of osteoarthritis among native population of rural areas of Siberian North – in Yakutia.

Methods Cross-sectional study of residents of four Yakutian settlements (North/North-Eastern part of Siberia) was performed. At the moment of the study 1282 persons aged 18 and more resided lived there. Among them 1216 persons (94.8%) were examined. 1002 persons were Yakutians (Saha) and 214 – Evenks.

Results Osteoarthritis was diagnosed in 218 settlement residents. Correspondingly the prevalence of OA in the population under study was 18.00.8%. Among women the OA prevalence was 22.51.4% and among men 12.61.4% ($p < 0.05$). There was no reliable difference in prevalence between Yakuts and Evenks (correspondingly 17.3% and 21.0%, $p < 0.05$). We found linear correlation ($r = 0.96$) between frequency of OA and age.

Conclusion Thus, epidemiological study of osteoarthritis among rural population of Russian North demonstrated that the prevalence of the disease is 18.0% and women prevail and there is direct age relation between age and frequency of the disease.

THU0241 BEHCET'S DISEASE: DOES LACK OF KNOWLEDGE RESULT IN UNDERDIAGNOSIS?

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10.1136/annrheumdis-2001.785

Background Prevalence of Behcet's disease has been estimated at 8–38/10,000 in Turkey and 1–2/30,000 in the USA. Pathergy test positivity is a major criterion for making the diagnosis of Behcet's disease.

Objectives To determine the knowledge among internal medicine (IM) residents from 2 different Mediterranean regions and 2 different regions in the USA regarding general rheumatology (GR), Behcet's disease, pathergy test and PPD test for tuberculosis.

Methods A 26-item questionnaire was developed including both closed and open-ended items, testing knowledge of GR, Behcet's disease, pathergy test, and PPD test. It was given to IM residents from 4 university centres (St. Louis University Health Sciences Centre (A) and Weill Medical College of Cornell University (B) in the USA, Shaare-Zedek Medical Centre (C) in Israel, and

Cerrahpasa Medical Faculty (D) in Turkey). In a single session, residents were asked 10 questions each about GR and Behcet's disease and 3 questions each about pathergy test and PPD. Rates of correct responses between IM residents from the USA and IM residents from Israel/Turkey were compared using Fischer's Exact test.

Results 69 residents participated in this study (A: 26, B: 13, C: 10, D: 20). The Table 1 shows the proportion of correct answers given for each category of questions. There was a statistically significant difference between the rate of correct responses among IM residents in the USA compared to those in Israel/Turkey with respect to the categories of GR, Behcet's disease, and pathergy test. This difference was more pronounced in the questions regarding Behcet's disease and pathergy test.

Abstract THU0241 Table 1

	General rheumatology	PPD	Behcet's disease	Pathergy test
United States	33%	61%	35%	21%
Israel/Turkey	48%	70%	65%	66%
p value	<0.0002	0.05	<0.0001	<0.0001

Conclusion Knowledge of Behcet's disease, and especially pathergy test among IM residents tested is significantly lower in the USA than among those in Israel/Turkey. The difference in the prevalence of Behcet's disease in these two regions of the world may partly explain this disparity. Contrarily, lack of GR and Behcet's disease knowledge may contribute to decreased recognition and thus underdiagnosis of Behcet's disease resulting in the reported low prevalence in the US. Only by improving the education of internists with respect to Behcet's disease will the true prevalence of this condition be realised.

THU0242 CAN SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SOCIAL NETWORK PREDICT THE EVOLUTION OF QUALITY OF LIFE OVER TIME IN EARLY RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS? THE EURIDISS COHORT STUDY

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10.1136/annrheumdis-2001.786

Background There is clear epidemiological evidence for a relationship between social support and health. Though, the mechanism remains unclear whether a poor social support precedes or follows a poor health status. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic inflammatory disease affecting particularly quality of life.

Objectives First, to investigate cross-sectional relationships between quality of life and social support (SS) and support network (SN) in patients with early RA. Then to look at how baseline SS or SN influence quality of life over time; and last, to explore how variations over time in SS or SN affect quality of life over time.

Methods Subjects were members of the EURIDISS population-based cohort from France, the Netherlands and Norway, and had suffered from RA for less than 5 years. Yearly assessments