Gout is one of the most common forms of inflammatory arthritis in Europe, but awareness of it is relatively low. There is limited information available about the impact of gout on patients, and more generally on society. The results of this survey demonstrate that gout has a significant impact not only on patients, but also on their families and society. The survey found that people with RA and JIA were less satisfied with their life, believed the things in their life were less worthwhile, and were less happy. The proportion of people who scored poorly on life satisfaction and life worth was over 7 times greater in those with RA and adult JIA than the national average. Despite this, the survey found that 2 in 5 people had never been asked by a health professional about their emotional and psychological well-being, and 1 in 3 people who had requested or been offered support had never received it. Positive experiences that respondents shared of psychological support, such as GPs and rheumatologists being very supportive, the importance of family, and services offered by NRAS, demonstrate the benefits of good and appropriate support being available. Negative experiences, such as lack of health professional understanding about mental health, lack of understanding of RA by counsellors, and lack of personalised care demonstrate the future work that must be done to help adequately support people with RA and adult JIA.

Conclusion: The survey has demonstrated the need to provide more effective self-management techniques of emotional as well as physical well-being, ultimately leading to overall improved health outcomes. In line with NICE guidelines, other additional support is needed, such as the availability of cognitive behavioural therapy and the implementation of mental health and well-being assessments at annual review. Further research is needed into specific areas, such as health inequalities and why people with severe mental health issues experience poorer disease activity, understanding why adults with JIA have poorer life quality than those with RA and adult JIA.

References

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