ASSESSMENT OF SELF-CARE AGENCY AND ITS MAJOR BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH, SETTING AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Background: Physical activity (PA), including engagement in structured exercise, is a key element in the management of chronic inflammatory rheumatic diseases, in particular rheumatoid arthritis (RA) (ref). However, maintaining a physically active lifestyle is a challenge for people with RA. PA determinants in this population need to be understood better to be optimised through public health or healthcare interventions and social policy changes.

Objectives: To collect qualitative evidence on barriers and facilitators of PA for patients with RA through a systematic literature review (SLR).

Methods: A SLR of Medline, Web of Science and grey literature was performed from inception to January 2019; key search terms were exercise [MeSH], barriers [TitleAbstract], facilitators [TitleAbstract] and Arthritis, Rheumatoid [MeSH]. All qualitative reports of barriers and facilitators in RA, published in English were collected. A thematic synthesis was applied.

Results: Of 89 references, 10 (11.2%) studies were qualitative reports in RA and were analyzed: 3 (49 patients) were focus group and 7 (99 participants) were interviews. In all, 148 patients participated: mean age 57.4 years (standard deviation, SD 3.9), range of means 50.0-63.5), mean disease duration 14.3 years (SD 5.2, range 6.9-21.9). Barriers and facilitators were reported for general physical activity in 6 studies and for supervised exercises (e.g. exercise program leads by physiotherapist) in 4 studies. Overall, 7 categories of barriers (mean 3.4 (SD 1.9) per study) and 8 categories of facilitators (mean 3.7 (SD 2.1) per study) were reported. These could be grouped in 4 major themes (physical health, psychological aspects, setting and social environment) (Table). The 3 most reported categories of barriers were symptoms of RA (8/10 studies), beliefs, fears and loss of motivation (7/10) and lack of support, exercise knowledge, confidence and conflict in advice from healthcare (4/10). The 3 most reported categories of facilitators were group socialization, influence of others, social support (8/10), positive beliefs, knowledge about benefits of PA (5/10) and positive emotions and experiences of PA (5/10).

Conclusion: Our findings emphasize the complex interplay of physical and psychological health, setting and social environmental factors, corresponding to the facilitation and hindrance of PA engagement.