CONCORDANCE BETWEEN THE PHYSICIAN’S AND THE PATIENT’S ASSESSMENT OF DISEASE ACTIVITY IN RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS: RESULTS OF THE AUTODAS-MEAC STUDY AT ONE YEAR

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The study included 428 patients over a period of three years (2018 to 2020). The mean age of participants was 49.8 years, 82.5% were females, and 44.3% had a university degree and the mean disease duration was 11.4 years.

At baseline, the average patient-DAS was higher (4.06 ±1.52) than the physician-DAS (3.97 ±1.52). The mean difference was -0.09 [95% CI -0.14 ; -0.04] and most of the patients were within the limit of agreement in the Bland-Altman graph, indicating a good concordance, particularly in cases of remission.

During the study follow-up, 299 patients consulted for visit 2 (69.9% of the total population), 232 for visit 3 (54.2%) and 199 for visit 4 (46.5%). The weighted kappa was 0.80 [95% CI 0.76;0.85] at visit 1 and 0.79 [95% CI 0.72;0.88] at visit 4 (Figure 1 showing kappa for DAS-28, CDAI and SDAI as well). A minor numerical decrease in kappa was observed over time; however, the CIs were overlapping over the four visits and the agreement was considered stable, remaining in the excellent range. At visit 4, a positive concordance between the physician and the patient-DAS was associated with the profession (lower in blue collar, p=0.001), the educational level (higher in high school and university, p=0.034) and the baseline physician’s DAS (higher in high disease activity, p=0.46).

Conclusion: The agreement between the DAS-28 performed by the physician and by the patient was excellent at baseline and remained stable over one year. A positive concordance was associated with the profession, the educational level and the level of disease activity. The present study can help the rheumatologist make informed decisions about the patients who may be suitable for a remote evaluation of their disease activity, that can be of particular interest in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Figure 1. Agreement between physicians and patients in disease activity scoring over time

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