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Title: Prevalence of pulmonary involvement in rheumatoid arthritis patients in Indian population

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Body: Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is the most common chronic connective tissue disorder that significantly affects the lungs. The aim was to evaluate the pulmonary involvement in RA patients and its correlation with duration of RA. A total of 100 diagnosed cases of RA, divided into two groups of 50 patients each on the basis of duration of RA i.e. <5 years and > 5 years were evaluated. All the patients were assessed for clinical characteristics, High resolution computed tomography (HRCT) thorax and Spirometry findings. Disease severity was assessed by DAS28 score. Respiratory symptoms were present in 41% patients. Pulmonary involvement (either abnormal HRCT thorax/ Spirometry or both) was found in 67% patients with abnormal Spirometry in 51% and abnormal HRCT in 59.30% patients. Chest radiographs were abnormal in 22% patients. Most common radiological finding on HRCT thorax were interstitial lung disease suggestive findings (31%) and bronchiectasis (29.41%). On Spirometry, restrictive defect was found in 33%, obstructive defects in 12% and mixed defect in 6%. FEF25-75% was abnormal in 18% patients. Risk factors for the presence of pulmonary involvement were increasing age and presence of rheumatoid factor. No association was found with gender, duration of disease, severity of disease. A high prevalence of pulmonary involvement was found in RA independent of duration of illness. HRCT appeared to be more sensitive tool.