A comment on "The Knowledge Level of Turkish Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients about Their Diseases"

"Türk Romatoid Artrit Hastalarının Hastalıkları Hakkındaki Farkındalık Düzeyi" Hakkında Bir Yorum

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest the article entitled "The Knowledge Level of Turkish Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients about Their Diseases" by Bozbas and Gurer, published in January 2018 in *Anatolian Clinic the Journal of Medical Sciences* (1). The article contains points that contribute to the assessment of the level of disease-specific knowledge of patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Authors try to attract the reader's attention to the importance of patient education in coping with a chronic disease. The study aims to assess the level of disease-specific knowledge of patients with RA through a sample large enough (N=255) for generalizable results. The patients' knowledge was examined by using the "Patient Knowledge Questionnaire in Rheumatoid Arthritis (PKQ-RA)." In the high-quality study, the internal consistency of the Turkish version of the PKQ-RA was high (Cronbach's alpha 0.71) and, according to the results, most of the patients (86.7%) reported that they had gained their knowledge on RA from their physicians. The mean of the PKQ-RA scores was reported to be 15.1±12.6 (range 0–27). Age, education, socioeconomic status, and family history of the disease were associated with the patients' knowledge levels. But in conclusion authors failed to notice a previously conducted study entitled "The assessment of knowledge level about their disease in patients with rheumatoid arthritis" by Karahan et al. (2), published in September 2014 in *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Investigations* (2). The Turkish version of the PKQ-RA was first used by the authors of this previous study with the permission of Jackie Hill (the developer of the original PKQ-RA). Karahan et al. (2), too, evaluated the knowledge level of patients with RA about their disease, but in a smaller sample of 50. In their study the mean PKQ-RA score was found 10.9±7.3. However, there was no correlation between the PKQ scores and the Health Assessment Questionnaire (HAQ) and Daily Activity Score (DAS-28) results. The higher scores of PKQ-RA in the current study by Bozbas and Gurer are remarkable and can be interpreted as increased patient awareness over time. The two studies use samples with similar characteristics from different geographical regions of Turkey.

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In conclusion, the level of awareness of patients with RA was found to be suboptimal in both studies. But the two papers are important for highlighting the need for patient education, an essential step in the treatment of chronic diseases that should be more focused on with effective strategies. More clinical studies are needed, especially from developed countries such as Turkey.

REFERENCES

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