



The Medical **Bulletin**

In Rheumatology

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What a primary care physician must know about Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)?

- Autoimmune inflammatory poly arthritis
- Small joint symmetrical involvement of hands and foot, can involve large joint as well
- In hand distal interphalangeal joint sparing
- Rheumatoid factor sensitivity and specificity close to 70%
- Anti Cyclic Citrullinated Peptide (CCP) more specific 90%
- Early diagnosis is key to prevent deformity and complication
- The 2010 ACR/EULAR criteria, it picks up RA at an early stage
- Early identification and management prevents radiologic progression
- Rule out mimics Tuberculosis, malignancies
- Assess the extra articular manifestation Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD), Scleritis, Sjogrens syndrome, Vasculitis
- Look for comorbidity like diabetes mellitus, dyslipidemia, hypertension, cardio vascular and cerebro vascular disease
- Rule out complication like atlantoaxial dislocation, osteoporosis

Criteria for diagnosis of RA

Joint distribution	
1 Large joint	0
2-10 Large joints	1
1-3 Small joints (large joints not counted)	2
4-10 Small joints (large joints not counted)	3
>10 joints (at least one small joint)	5
Serology	
Negative RF and negative ACPA	0
Low positive RF or low positive ACPA	2
High Positive RF or high positive ACPA	3
Symptom duration	
<6 weeks	0
> 6 weeks	1
Acute phase reactants	
Normal CRP and normal ESR	0
Abnormal CRP or abnormal ESR	1

ACPA- Anti-Citrullinated Peptide Antibody, CRP- C-Reactive Protein, ESR- Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate, RF- Rheumatoid Factor

- A Score of six or more considered to have definite Rheumatoid arthritis
- Severity of this disease can be assessed by- Rheumatoid arthritis Disease Activity Score 28 (DAS 28)
- It is calculated based on several factors, including number of tender joints, no of swollen joints, ESR and patient global assessment
- Based on the results of DAS28 Calculator the severity of the disease is assessed

DAS 28 Value	Disease Activity
< 2.6	Remission
> 2.6 and <3.2	Low disease activity
>3.2 and <5.1	Moderate disease activity
>5.1	Severe disease activity

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