

ATACC-RA CALCULATOR

Improving Cardiovascular Risk Screening in Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis

Overall, patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) are twice as likely as the average person to develop heart problems. However, RA patients have lower rates of preventive screenings, such as lipid testing, compared to general medical patients. Although inflammation associated with RA exposes patients to higher cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk, other factors can be contributory, such as:

- Clinicians not routinely checking for traditional CVD risk factors in RA patients and providing appropriate treatment.^{1,2}
- Differences in opinion between rheumatologists and primary care physicians regarding to CVD risk screening and treatment.²⁻⁵
- Many primary care physicians are not aware of the association between RA and CVD.^{1,6}
- Some primary care physicians do not correctly calculate CVD risk in RA patients.^{6,7}
- Heart disease risk assessment tools commonly used by physicians often underestimate the cardiovascular disease danger faced by rheumatoid arthritis patients, especially women.⁸

New methods for CVD assessment in RA patients are being developed by an international team from the United States, Canada, Mexico, South Africa, and Europe, known as the Transatlantic Cardiovascular Risk Calculator for Rheumatoid Arthritis, or ATACC-RA.

Initial findings show the new calculator is more effective for rheumatoid arthritis patients than standard heart disease risk calculators such as the Framingham and SCORE risk assessment tools, because it incorporates rheumatoid arthritis disease characteristics into the assessment of cardiovascular risk.

The ATACC-RA calculator is designed to accurately predict a rheumatoid arthritis patient's risk of developing heart disease within 10 years. The calculator is being refined so that it can be personalized for patients.

More information about ATACC-RA is available here: <http://atacc-ra.com/about-atacc-ra/>

References

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