

Initial treatment strategies in rheumatoid arthritis

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Abstract:

Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic autoimmune disorder affecting peripheral joints, causing pain and functional impairment. In Portugal, RA has a prevalence of 0.7%, with a higher occurrence in women. Early diagnosis and treatment are crucial to prevent joint destruction and associated disabilities. Management goals include symptom relief, prevention of irreversible damage, and enhancing overall quality of life. Treatment strategies involve various drugs, including conventional synthetic and biologic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs

(csDMARDs and bDMARDs). Methotrexate is the preferred initial csDMARD, and biologics, often in combination with methotrexate, are effective for those who do not respond to traditional DMARDs. Real-world data from the Rheumatic Diseases Portuguese Registry (Reuma.pt) play a vital role in understanding RA impact, monitoring treatment effectiveness, and identifying predictors of response, bridging gaps left by randomized controlled trials. This project aims to compare the efficacy of different initial RA treatment strategies, utilizing real-world data to enhance therapeutic recommendations and improve patient care.