Mortality from systemic sclerosis in Portugal: results from the Rheumatic Diseases Portuguese Register (Reuma.pt)

Proponents: Gonçalo Boleto – Rheumatology Department, Unidade Local de Saúde de Santa Maria, Centro Académico de Medicina de Lisboa.

Research team: Gonçalo Boleto, Daniela Russell, Mariana Pereira Silva, Catarina Resende, João Eurico Fonseca (Rheumatology Department, Unidade Local de Saúde Santa Maria, Centro Académico de Medicina de Lisboa (CAML), Faculdade de Medicina, Universidade de Lisboa, CAML).

Abstract

Systemic sclerosis (SSc) is a severe autoimmune disease characterized by skin and organ fibrosis due to immune dysfunction and microvascular damage. Mortality is significantly higher than in the general population, mainly from complications such as interstitial lung disease, pulmonary hypertension, myocardial damage, and scleroderma renal crisis. Advances in immunosuppressive therapies, antifibrotic drugs, vasodilators, and stem cell transplants have improved survival. Several studies highlight variations in mortality and risk factors across populations, emphasizing the need for localized data to refine clinical practices and therapeutic guidelines, particularly considering genetic, environmental, and healthcare access differences in specific populations like Portugal.

Therefore, our main goal is to identify the causes of death and risk factors associated with SSc in Portugal.

This study will utilize the Rheumatic Diseases Portuguese Register (Reuma.pt). Patients meeting the 2013 SSc criteria will be analyzed. Individuals lost to follow-up over a 10-year period (2013-2023) will be cross-checked with death certificates to determine any deaths and their causes. We will then identify the risk factors associated with mortality in this population.