

Psoriatic Arthritis

Consumer media backgrounder

DISEASE AWARENESS:

What is psoriatic arthritis?

Psoriatic arthritis is linked to psoriasis, an itchy and painful skin condition.¹ There may be inflammation of one or several joints either in the hands, feet or larger joints such as the hips and knees. It can also affect the spine.

- ▶ Affected joints become tender, swollen and stiff, and onset can be sudden or slow.
- ▶ Usually, patients develop inflammation in their joints after the onset of psoriasis, although approximately 1 in 10 people develop arthritis first, then psoriasis.¹

What causes psoriatic arthritis?

The cause of psoriatic arthritis is not known. It may be due to a combination of:

- genetic (family)
- environmental
- immune factors
- some cases of psoriasis may be linked to infections.

FAST FACT!

About 40% of people with psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis have a close relative with the condition.²

How is psoriatic arthritis diagnosed?

Unfortunately there is no specific test for psoriatic arthritis.

Doctors look for a family history of psoriasis together with arthritis and inflammation in at least one joint.

It can be a challenge to diagnose because it can resemble rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, although blood tests for rheumatoid arthritis will provide negative results.¹

PATIENT IMPACT:

I've had psoriasis since my early twenties. As I approached 30, my toes started to become swollen and tender, making it difficult to wear leather shoes and painful to walk. I only see a skin specialist for my psoriasis so the arthritis wasn't diagnosed straight away. I didn't know the two conditions were linked before I was diagnosed.

Andrew, 31 year old man with psoriatic arthritis

Who's affected?

Psoriatic arthritis affects around one per cent of the overall population and can develop at any age from early childhood onwards.

- ▶ Men and women are almost equally affected.¹ It appears that men are more prone to developing arthritis of the spine and women are more susceptible to severe disease of other joints.
- ▶ The majority of people with psoriatic arthritis also suffer from 'psoriatic nail disease', where the nail plate becomes deeply pitted and crumbles in yellowish patches.¹ Nail psoriasis is treated by the dermatologist as part of the overall treatment of the disease.



Psoriatic nail disease

What is the impact of psoriatic arthritis on a patient's life?

Over the last two decades, it has become clear that psoriatic arthritis is much more aggressive than previously thought.

- ▶ Approximately 20% of patients develop a very destructive form of arthritis and after 10 years more than half of patients have five or more deformed joints.¹
- ▶ Like rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis can lead to chronic levels of joint damage, spinal pain, increased disability and increased mortality.¹

FAST FACTS!

In a survey of over 100 psoriatic arthritis patients³:

- 48% said their condition seriously limited their ability to participate in moderate to vigorous activities
- 40% said their disease limited the kind of work they could do

TREATMENT OPTIONS:

What treatments are available?

The goal of treatment for psoriatic arthritis is to control inflammation. Skin and joint symptoms are usually treated at the same time.

- ▶ Anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen, can help reduce inflammation and pain; however they do not alter disease progression.⁴
- ▶ In more severe cases, patients are treated with disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs).
- ▶ These drugs suppress the body's overactive immune and/or inflammatory systems, thereby controlling (or 'modifying') an aspect of the disease process.
- ▶ One commonly used DMARD is methotrexate, which suppresses the body's immune system. As it acts on the body's whole system, methotrexate is also known as a 'systemic' treatment. The most serious complication with methotrexate treatment is liver damage, but this can be avoided with regular blood screening tests.⁵

BIOLOGICS!

Recently a new class of medicines called 'biologics' have been developed to treat psoriatic arthritis.

Unlike other medicines which are made by combining chemicals, biologics are created from living human or animal proteins. Whereas systemics have a broad impact on the immune system, biologics are more targeted and should spare the body these far-reaching side-effects. Biologics therefore have the potential to be a safer option.⁶

- ▶ Biologics that are approved for the treatment of psoriatic arthritis in Europe include: Enbrel[®] (etanercept) and Humira[®] (adalimumab) which are injected under the skin, and Remicade[®] (infliximab) which is given by intravenous injection in hospital.

These drugs work by blocking the action of a naturally occurring protein in the body called 'tumour necrosis factor' that is involved in causing inflammation.⁵

Note to media

Please contact your local Wyeth office for information regarding country regulations. Further details are available at <http://www.wyeth.com/worldwide>.

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