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Multiple factors determine the increased prevalence of atherosclerosis in rheumatoid arthritis

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Relation of the mechanisms that take part in the pathogenesis of atherosclerosis in RA patients is needed. Thus, the authors review the role of several factors involved in RA atherosclerosis, including disease activity, new cardiovascular risk factors, dyslipidemia and the association of atherosclerosis with the use of anti-rheumatic drugs, glucocorticoids and anti-tumor necrosis factor (TNF) agents. The role of humoral autoimmunity, namely autoantibodies against heat shock proteins, cardiolipin and beta 2--glycoprotein I, and its link with atherosclerosis is also discussed. It is likely that the elucidation of the key mechanisms of atherosclerosis in RA may determine a positive impact by reducing cardiovascular morbidity and mortality of these patients.

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