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Therapeutic exercises in axial spondyloarthritis: The Asia-Pacific perspective

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The burden of axial Spondyloarthritis (axSpA) in the Asia Pacific region is overwhelming. The management of axSpA has been revolutionized with the advent of biological therapy where the disease activity, functional limitations and negative psychological impact can be mitigated to a great extent. Exercise remains an essential component of the management of axSpA which is often underutilized or discounted. It is well acknowledged that therapeutic exercise has a multifold beneficial role on the cardiovascular, musculoskeletal and psychological health in general population and people with rheumatic diseases. There are paucity available evidences to advocate the optimum exercise prescription, including the frequency, type and dosage of axSpA specific exercises and they warrant further research. There is dyssynchrony between huge burden of patients with axSpA and paucity of trained rheumatologists and rehabilitation personnel in the Asia Pacific region. It is also perceived that the acceptability and uptake of therapeutic exercise is remarkably poor in this region because of multiple factors such as lack of awareness among the health professionals and general population, poor healthcare infrastructure, lack of resource and limited accessibility to rehabilitation services. Health authorities and professional bodies in these countries need to work in tandem to expand healthcare facilities, encourage training opportunities and promote safe and effective exercise interventions which is accessible to general population and individuals with axSpA. Adequate patient education, control of disease activity, supervised exercise programs and strict adherence to therapeutic exercise is essential to predict the best clinical outcome. In this presentation we will discuss the impact of therapeutic exercise in this era of biological therapies in axSpA and explore the challenges of rehabilitation services in the Asia Pacific countries.

Recent Publications

1. Das P, Samanta A, Dasgupta B. Balancing on the edge: implications of a UK national audit of the use of BSR-BHPR guidelines for the diagnosis and management of polymyalgia rheumatica. RMD Open. 2015 Jul 28;1(1):e000095.
2. Das P, Moorthy A, Samanta A
3. THU0222 Anti TNF Therapy in Ankylosing Spondylitis – an Observational Study Assessing the Impact of Smoking in White British and Indian Population Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases 2015;74:276-277.

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