



An ISO 9001:2015 Certified Hospital



UNDERSTANDING RHEUMATIC AND MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES

MTRH is committed to promotion of musculoskeletal health as well as prevention and timely management of Rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases.

In line with the hospital vision to provide multispecialty services, MTRH promotes musculoskeletal health by offering specialized Rheumatology services.

This year we join the world in commemorating the
World Arthritis day.

2022 THEME: IT IS IN YOUR HANDS, TAKE ACTION



FACTS ABOUT RHEUMATIC AND MUSKULOSKELETAL DISEASES

1. Terminologies, application of terms

Arthritis: a general term used to refer to rheumatic diseases. Arthritis, which literally means joint inflammation, is just part of the rheumatic diseases. Arthritis in the restricted sense primarily involves: joint pain, joint stiffness, joint inflammation, and joint damage.

Rheumatism refers to various painful medical conditions which affect joints, bones, cartilage, tendons, ligaments and muscles;

Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Diseases (RMDs)

They are a diverse group of diseases that commonly affect the joints, but can also affect the muscles, other tissues and internal organs. There are more than 200 different RMDs, affecting both children and adults, which span from various types **of arthritis** on to systemic connective tissue diseases. Examples of these diseases are Rheumatoid arthritis, Gout, Systemic lupus erythematosus, Scleroderma, Osteoporosis, and Osteoarthritis.

Many of these diseases are long term and worsen over time. In severe cases, RMDs can result in significant disability, having a major impact on both quality of life and life expectancy

2. Myths and misconceptions about arthritis

These are perpetuated by the spread of inaccurate information and can keep a person away from managing the disease properly. Here are some examples:



- Arthritis is an old person's disease. Fact: Arthritis can occur at any age.
- Arthritis is induced by a cold climate. Fact: Climate itself is neither a proven cause, nor the cure but can aggravate or relieve symptoms.
- Arthritis is caused by a specific diet. Fact: There is little scientific evidence that specific food prevents or causes arthritis, there are few diseases, such as gout, where intake of certain types of food or drinks (alcohol) can precipitate an attack.

3. How common are these diseases

According to a report by World Health Organization, rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases were labeled as the second most reported cause of disability around the globe. Rheumatic diseases are among the most prevalent in the industrialized world, they affect more individuals than any other disease group. In fact a third of people of all ages are affected at some point during their lifetime. In Europe almost every family is affected in some way by a rheumatic disease. There is paucity of Data in Africa/Kenya mainly due to undiagnosed disease but not lack of.

4. Who can be affected by rheumatic/arthritis diseases?

Rheumatic diseases affect all ages (from children to adults) and both genders.

5. Some factors can increase the risk of developing rheumatic disease

- Smoking
- Excessive weight
- Genetic factors, immune system changes
- Certain occupations which lead to poor posture or injury and overuse of joints
- Increasing age

6. There are different symptoms to rheumatic diseases



You might suspect that you have a rheumatic disease if you have signs and symptoms which include but not limited to the following:

- Persistent joint pain
- Tenderness
- Inflammation indicated by joint swelling, stiffness, redness, and/or warmth
- Joint deformity
- Loss of range of motion or flexibility in a joint
- Extreme fatigue, lack of energy, weakness, or a feeling of malaise.

7. Diagnosis and treatment

A definitive diagnosis of rheumatic diseases can be made by assessing the medical history, by performing a physical examination or ordering specific laboratory tests, and undertaking imaging investigations.

There is no single medication or treatment which is optimal for everyone. There are treatment options which help manage pain and control arthritis symptoms, many inflammatory rheumatic diseases are treated with so-called disease modifying drugs which have a more profound impact than drugs which reduce disease symptoms only; new biologic therapies are among these more effective agents.

Medications are the traditional treatment for arthritis. But there are also: injections into a joint or the soft tissues, natural treatment (acupuncture, chiropractic ...) and surgical options. Patients vary in their response to treatments for arthritis.

9. Financial impact

The economic burden of rheumatic diseases is heavy: In Europe according to recent studies, they are the most expensive of all diseases for European health care systems due to their chronicity and prevalence.



10. Burden of disease

Rheumatic diseases have significant impact on people 's quality of life if they are not treated early or appropriately. Daily activities such as walking, climbing stairs, cooking, and personal hygiene are affected. Rheumatic diseases can also have a profound effect on work capacity. They are the single biggest cause of both sick leave and premature retirement, causing physical disability, even amongst people of working age.

Among the actions one can take is lifestyle improvements.

Lifestyle improvements are an essential part of RMD management that complement medical treatment, they reduce and prevent progression of the disease. Recommendations for individuals with RMD depend on age, severity of disease and comorbidities. Some general lifestyle behaviors include;

1. Diet- improved nutritional habits, balanced diet rich in fiber and vegetables.
2. Eliminate bad habits such as smoking and alcohol intake.
3. Regular physical exercises according to ability.
4. Adherence to medication and medical advice.
5. Seek physical and occupational therapy where required.
6. Reduce stress levels – psychological support, reach out for help, join support groups.
7. Foot wear- wear flat comfortable shoes.
8. Weight- Keep a healthy body weight.
9. Avoid delay in seeking medical consultation.



Help is Available – visit a healthcare provider if you have symptoms of a rheumatic musculoskeletal disease

Services available at MTRH

1. Daily consultation and management at MTRH Emergency Department
2. Specialized services, Rheumatology, Orthopedics, Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy
3. Emergency services available at the hospital 24 hours
4. Psychological counselling services available 24 hours.