

New Recommendations for DMARDs and Emerging Options for the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic, systemic, inflammatory, autoimmune disease that affects 1% of the U.S. population. The exact cause of RA is unknown, but female sex and genetics are thought to play a role. A variety of pharmacologic options are available to treat RA, and the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) recently released new recommendations for the use of nonbiologic and biologic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) in the treatment of RA. Because of their role in providing patient care and developing treatment algorithms and protocols, pharmacists in health systems need to be aware of these guidelines and the potential impact of new and emerging DMARDs on patient care, including safety issues associated with the agents.

This symposium will provide an overview of the patient presentation and diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis, as well as an update on the latest evidence related to the pathogenesis of the disease. The efficacy and safety of the various DMARDs currently available for the treatment of RA and the new ACR recommendations for nonbiologic and biologic DMARDs will be described in detail. Case studies will illustrate the therapeutic decision-making process in specific patient scenarios. In addition, the pharmacology and clinical experience associated with emerging drug therapies for RA will be discussed. An automated audience response system will be used to facilitate application of the concepts to clinical practice.