

Clinical Note

New EULAR guidelines on lifestyle changes in patients with rheumatic and musculoskeletal disorders

Running title: Lifestyle and rheumatic diseases

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Abstract

This clinical note underscores the major points of the recent guidelines issued by EULAR regarding lifestyle changes in patients with rheumatic diseases. Amongst other, these guidelines provide practical hints regarding the effect of lifestyle modification, exercise, diet, body mass index, alcohol consumption, smoking, and participation to work in the progression of rheumatic diseases.

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Keywords- Alcohol; Diet; Exercise; EULAR; Guidelines; Lifestyle; Smoking; Vitamin D

I. INTRODUCTION

As a result of thorough review of the existing literature, EULAR recently published recommendations on lifestyle changes (lifestyle behaviors and work participation) that could help prevent the progression of rheumatic and musculoskeletal disorders (1).

Amongst many recommendations, I wish to outline the following:

- Lifestyle modifications, although important for the health of these patients, complement but do NOT replace medication
- Exercise (aerobics and strength training, at least moderate intensity, preferably in a group) is

recommended due to its beneficial effects on pain, function and quality of life, especially in patients with osteoarthritis or ankylosing spondylitis.

- A healthy, balanced diet is important; special dieting practices (eg vitamin D, cod liver oil, omega-3 fatty acids, etc.) is unlikely to be associated with better outcomes
- Overweight patients should attempt to lose weight with the assistance of weight loss experts, through diet and exercise.
- Consumption of small amounts of alcohol is unlikely to have negative effects on the outcome of rheumatic diseases. In patients with rheumatoid Arthritis, moderate alcohol consumption is associated with an increased risk of disease or comorbidities. The same applies goes for gout.
- Recommendation for smoking cessation. Smoking has detrimental effects on symptoms, function, disease activity, disease progression and comorbidities in all rheumatic diseases.
- Participation in work is associated with beneficial effects on the health outcome of these patients

II. CONCLUSION

The new EULAR guidelines (1) are providing practical hints for the practicing physician and can assist efforts for counseling of the affected individuals, based on the review of the existing literature.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

SNN scripted the draft. The original idea has been initiated from a post on the author's blog in his native language.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Reference

1. 2021 EULAR recommendations regarding lifestyle behaviours and work participation to prevent progression of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2022 Mar 8 ;annrheumdis-2021-222020. doi: 10.1136/annrheumdis-2021-222020. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 35260387.