Impediments to Accurate Diagnosis of Non-radiographic Axial Spondyloarthritis (nr-axSpA): "Rheum to Diagnosis" Study: Interim Results

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Study Background, Objective, and Methods

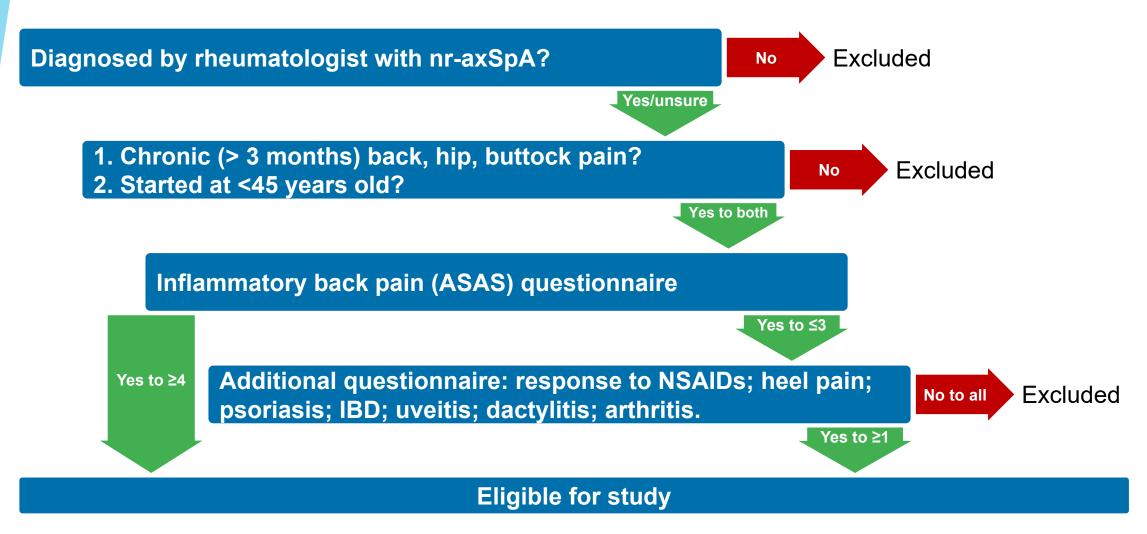
- In the US, there is up to 14-year delay in axSpA diagnosis¹, which is likely greater for nr-axSpA.
- Impediments to timely diagnosis of nr-axSpA are unknown.
- Objective: To understand the patient experience & contributors to delayed nr-axSpA diagnosis among both patients and rheumatologists.

- Methods:
 - Convenient sampling method
 - Qualitative surveys
 - Recruitment: Feb 5 to Feb 21, 2020
 - Semi-structured phone interviews
 - Analysis: Grounded theory approach to identify key themes

	Patients (SAA sample)	Patients (General sample)	Rheumatologists
Recruitment	SAA monthly newsletter	Back pain panel	SAA list
Screened	165	1425	26
Qualified	50	15	
Interviewed	24	1	15

¹Deodhar A et al. Arthritis Rheumatol 2016; 68(7):1669–1676.

Methods: Patient Screening



Survey Results: Barriers to Diagnosis

Unaware of nr-

Gender bias

axSpA

Patients' Perceptions

Lack of awareness among patients (back pain considered part of daily life)

Delayed diagnosis after referral to rheumatology (Long wait time to see rheum; cycle through 3-5 rheumatologists before finding one who they can trust; misdiagnosed as RA or fibromyalgia)

> Delayed referral to rheumatology (Lack of X ray findings, negative HLA B27, young age onset)

Rheumatologists' Perceptions

Lack of understanding of IBP among referring providers

Varied & latent symptomatology

Lack of specific biomarkers

Imaging issues (lack of formal training for MRI interpretation)

Insurance issues (MRI/HLA B27 testing)

Other Suggestions:

Patients: Need reliable support/patient advocacy groups, "branding" spondylitis, holistic approach in management of nr-axSpA.

Rheumatologists: Freedom from insurers (HLA B27, MRI, Biologics)

IBP, inflammatory back pain; RA, rheumatoid arthritis.

Conclusions & Limitations





Conclusions:

- Patients: Delayed diagnosis even after referral to rheumatology
- Rheumatologists: Lack of formal MRI training, and insurance barriers
- Both patients and rheumatologists agreed to a more widespread awareness and education on nr-axSpA amongst patients, referring providers, and rheumatologists

Limitations:

- Rheumatologists' and patients' associations with SAA, not representative of general public
- Future Directions:
 - Results form the basis for the quantitative study currently enrolling (N=163)

Disclosures:

Kiwalkar: Nothing to disclose

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