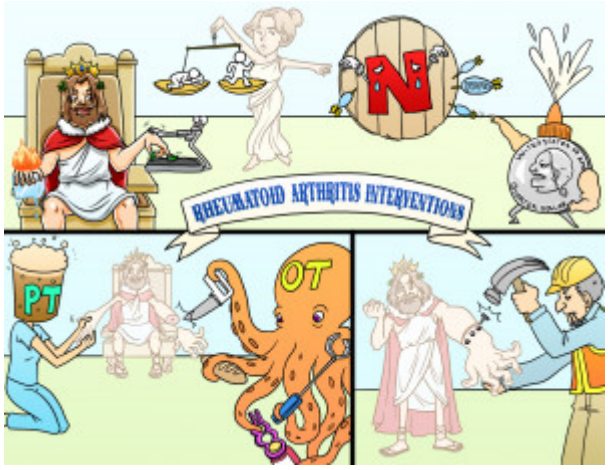
Rheumatoid Arthritis Interventions

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is a chronic, systemic autoimmune disease characterized by inflammation of connective tissue in the diarthrodial (synovial) joints with periods of remission and exacerbation. While there is no cure for RA, several pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic therapies can improve symptoms and slow disease progression. Goals of care include providing education on lifestyle modifications and drug therapy. Physical therapy helps maintain joint motion and muscle strength, while occupational therapy develops upper extremity function for performing activities of daily living.



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Lifestyle Modifications

Heat and Cold Applications
Flame and Ice Applied to hand
Heat and cold applications are part of the collaborative therapy for RA.

Therapeutic Exercise
Therapeutically-massaging Exercise-machine
Regular exercise is recommended to maintain muscle strength and improve overall physical function.

Balance Rest and Activity
Rest and Activity scale
Patients should balance rest and activity throughout the day to relieve fatigue and pain. During acute inflammation, patients will need rest, but should limit it to no longer than 1 week to prevent joint stiffness and immobility.

Drug Therapy

NSAIDs
N-sad
NSAIDs are given to provide physical comfort by relieving pain and stiffness in those with RA.

DMARDs
DMARDs Darts
DMARDs, or disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs, are a gold standard for RA treatment. These drugs can lessen the permanent effects of RA, like joint erosion and deformity.

Glucocorticoids
Glue-quarter-on-steroids
Glucocorticoids are sometimes used for symptom control during disease flare-ups, often through intraarticular injections into individual joints. Long-term use is not recommended as this can lead to the development of osteoporosis and avascular necrosis.

Considerations

PT/OT
Fizzy Therapist / Octopus Therapist
Physical therapy helps maintain joint motion and muscle strength, while occupational therapy develops upper extremity function for performing activities of daily living. The use of splints or other assistive devices (such as an electric can opener) can help with activities and provide joint protection.

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Reconstructive Joint Surgery

Construction-worker Reconstructing Joint

In some cases, surgical treatment is needed to provide pain relief and improve the function of deformed joints. Reconstructive joint surgery may involve the removal of the joint lining (synovectomy) or total joint replacement (arthroplasty).

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