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The Relationship Between Methotrexate and Arava Generates Larger Questions

Liver function is monitored for patients taking either Methotrexate or Arava. The NDB presented data from a long-term study (data provided by us) of 4,097 patients who have used these medications. The data indicated a rate of serious liver problems. The lecture presentation generated a lot of interest at the 2002 ACR meeting and was one of the highest attended events. Discussions from this presentation and other related topics lead to questions about the effect of newer medications and how they gain acceptance over time, and how medication failure is defined. Both of these areas are currently being researched.

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2. The effect of fatigue on working persons with arthritis.

3. Determine the rate and predictors of infection in RA;

4. The outcomes of rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia related to work.

5. Stress and arthritis.

6. Do you have any questions you would like to ask us?

7. How can I join the WebQuest?

8. How can I participate?

9. Do fat lowering drugs called “statins” help with the prevention of heart attacks?

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Glucosamine Intervention Trial for Osteoarthritis: The GAiT Study

Glucosamine and chondroitin are over-the-counter nutritional supplements, readily available to the public in supermarkets, department stores, and health food stores. Manufacturers claim that these substances may alleviate symptoms of arthritis and joint pain, yet, no clinical studies have been performed to prove or disprove these claims.

For several years dietary supplements such as glucosamine hydrochloride and chondroitin sulfate have been recommended for the treatment of osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis (OA) is a degenerative joint disease affecting approximately 27.6 million Americans. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), OA can be debilitating and lead to arthritic bones and for nearly 57 million physicians every year your body is spending $65 billion.

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Thanks again for your feedback and patience. We expect this version of the WebQuest to be very useful and easy, and we do not expect significant changes in the future. If you completed the WebQuest last time you will be automatically emailed a new link to the WebQuest. Please be patient if you are trying to access the on-line questionnaire for the first time, or if your email address has changed, please email info@arthritis-research.org or call us at 1-800-323-5871. We will send you everything you need to get started.
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In 2002 the NDB along with Vanderbilt University lead a fellowship training program in rheumatology aimed at providing broad exposure in arthritis research for new rheumatologists-in-training. Until now there have been no training programs in the US for rheumatologists-in-training that are designed to study the outcomes of rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia diseases.

The CHORD Program

In 2002, 15 CHORD fellows were selected. The CHORD program addresses these issues by providing specific training in research methods and data collection. A fellow is a physician who is undergoing special training in rheumatology research.

Under the direction of Dr. Fred Wolfe (NDB) and Dr. Ted Tol (Vanderbilt University), 15 CHORD fellows were selected. The fellows have designed research studies that range from determining rates of cancer, to developing databases of RA patients, to studying outcomes of arthritis. In 2003, 13 CHORD fellows are currently undergoing special training in rheumatology research.

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Glucosamine Intervention Trial for Osteoarthritis: The GAIT Study

For several years dietary supplements such as glucosamine hydrochloride and chondroitin sulfate have been recommended for the treatment of osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis (OA) is a degenerative joint disease affecting approximately 26.7 million Americans. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), OA can be debilitating in least severe and accounts for nearly 5 million physician visits every year. Many medical expenses for musculoskeletal diseases, which include OA, cost Americans $6 billion.

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If you would like to find out more about the GAIT study or where you can participate if you wish, please visit the GAIT study web site at www.nihgait.org and look under ‘Sites’.

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When you receive the email click on the link. If it does not bring up the first page of the WebQuest, it is possible that your email program does not use active links. In that case you will need to copy the link from the email to the browser. Paste it in the place you type URLs. Then address you use to go from site to site.

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Some Changes to Expect – We are trying harder than ever to make the questionnaire simple and straightforward without losing any critical information we need to continue research. Below are a few changes you can expect to see in 2003:

- The questionnaire has been simplified. You will notice that the joint surgery section and the disability payment section have been significantly reduced.

- The multi-dimensional “IQ” section and the sleep section have been removed from the questionnaire. We can get much of this information from other questions so we tried to reduce redundancy as much as possible.

2002 American College of Rheumatology Lecture Presentation Abstracts:

1) Low Rates of Serious Liver Toxicity to Leflunomide (LEF) and Methotrexate (MTX): A Longitudinal Surveillance Study of 14,997 LEF and MTX Exposures in (Treatment)

2) The Economic Consequences of Changes in Disease Activity, Functional Status, and Utility Measures in Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis. (Economics)

3) Lifetime Direct Medical Costs of Rheumatoid Arthritis. (Economics)