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Development and validation of a new ultrasound score (SONAR-7) for synovitis in psoriatic arthritis and axial spondyloarthritis

Researchers developed a novel ultrasound score (called “SONAR-7”) to assess joint inflammation in 80 patients with psoriatic arthritis and axial spondyloarthritis, compared to 41 healthy participants. The score examines 7 joints on both sides (wrists, selected finger and toe joints, and knees)—and took a median of 10 minutes to perform.

As expected, ultrasound abnormalities were significantly more common in patients compared to healthy controls and the score was able to distinguish between patients and controls as well as the longer and more time-consuming 28-joint assessments.

The scores specificity was high (95%), meaning few healthy people were incorrectly classified, but sensitivity was modest (44%); therefore, a normal score cannot exclude disease. Higher scores were also associated with more swollen joints, higher disease activity, inflammation around tendons and their attachment sites, and poorer quality of life.

For rheumatologists, SONAR-7 could provide objective information during routine visits without requiring a lengthy scan. For patients, this may support quicker assessments and better-informed monitoring and treatment decisions. However, larger, long-term studies are needed before the score can be widely adopted.

Link to the publication: Development and validation of a new ultrasound score (SONAR-7) for synovitis in psoriatic arthritis and axial spondyloarthritis at <https://doi.org/10.1136/rmdopen-2026-006802>