

This lay summary was provided by Theresa Burkard

Interruptions of biological and targeted synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs in rheumatoid arthritis: a descriptive cohort study assessing trends in patient characteristics in Switzerland

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BMJ Open 2022;12:e056352. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-056352

There are many reasons why rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients stop an advanced therapy. This research shed light on how often patients stopped these treatments in Switzerland: 38% of patients stop due to non-response, 19% due to an adverse event (majority: allergic reaction and infection), 8% due to remission and 18% due to other reasons (majority: patient preference), and 18% due to unknown reasons. We further observed differing patient characteristics between patients who stopped for different reasons, e.g. those who stopped to an adverse event were most likely to have depression or anxiety. Nearly all patients (94%) who stopped due to non-response re-started treatment, and did so rapidly (after a median of around 30 days). However, only 48% of patients who stopped due to remission needed to re-start an advanced therapy, and did so only after a long time (after a median of around 4 years). To conclude, use of advanced therapy in RA is on a good trajectory in Switzerland resulting in a substantial amount of patients who can stop the advanced treatment without relapsing, however, advanced therapy use can still be improved, especially with regards to the large proportion needing to stop advanced treatment due to non-response.