

[IMAGE]

## **Rheumatoid Arthritis Affects Men and Women Alike**

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is one of the most common forms of arthritis in the United States, affecting approximately two million Americans. According to the American College of Rheumatology, women are almost three times as likely to contract RA as men. While it is well-known that women are at a much higher risk of developing RA, it is unclear as to whether a person's sex determines the severity of the disease.

In this study, a team of scientists compared the records of 133 male rheumatoid arthritis patients with an identical number of female rheumatoid arthritis patients, all of whom had been suffering with the disease for approximately the same length of time (7.4 years). Among the data they collected were the number and type of joints affected, episodes of surgery to treat RA, and scores on a health assessment questionnaire.

Women experienced a condition called sicca syndrome (an inflammation of the glands and other tissues of the body) more than twice as often as men. In addition, tests revealed that 21 percent of the women carried two RA-associated genes, compared to only 11 percent of the men. Aside from these findings, there were no significant differences in the severity of the disease.

While there is no cure for rheumatoid arthritis, your doctor of chiropractic can help manage the pain and stiffness associated with the disease. Your chiropractor can also help create an exercise program that will increase flexibility and improve overall fitness levels. For more information, visit [www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/musculoskeletal/other/index.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/musculoskeletal/other/index.html).

Gossec L, Baro-Riba J, Bozonnat MC, et al. Influence of sex on disease severity in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. *Journal of Rheumatology*, August 2005;32:1448-51.

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