

## PATTERNS OF RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS IN SRI LANKA

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Rheumatoid arthritis is a subacute or chronic symmetrical poly-arthritis causing destruction of articular cartilage and Juxta-articular bone with a predelection for small joints and often accompanied by systemic disturbance and circulating antiglobulins (Rheumatoid factors).

37 patients classifiable either as "Classical" or "Definite" Rheumatoid arthritis are described. The mean age was 42.4, the male to female ratio was 1 : 5, 70% were seropositive, 18.9% had subcutaneous nodules and 67% had positive radiological findings. However, in spite of attempts to standardise the diagnostic criteria for purposes of comparison, valid comparison between different populations cannot still be made with confidence.

Caucasian patients seem to show similar features as in our series. viz. mean age of 42-43 years, male to female ratio 1 : 3, 20 - 30% of them have subcutaneous nodules, and 85 - 90% are seropositive. Data from West Africa, however, indicate that majority of their patients are in the 20-40 age group, that the male to female ratio is more or less equal (29 : 31), and that very few of them have subcutaneous nodules and only 9 - 13% are seropositive.

More specific conclusions cannot be drawn from our present study until a more extended study including extensive field surveys are carried out in this country.