



Nov 22, 2020

# Trajectories of Glucocorticoid-Therapy After Initiation in Early (or Methotrexate-Naive) Rheumatoid Arthritis: Protocol for a Systematic Review, Meta-Analysis and Meta-Regression of Observational Cohort Studies

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## PROTOCOL CITATION

Andriko Palmowski, Frank Buttgereit 2020. Trajectories of Glucocorticoid-Therapy After Initiation in Early (or Methotrexate-Naive) Rheumatoid Arthritis: Protocol for a Systematic Review, Meta-Analysis and Meta-Regression of Observational Cohort Studies. **protocols.io**  
<https://protocols.io/view/trajectories-of-glucocorticoid-therapy-after-initi-bpyfmptn>

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## CREATED

Nov 22, 2020

## LAST MODIFIED

Nov 22, 2020

## PROTOCOL INTEGER ID

44775

### Objective

- 1 To assess real-world trajectories of glucocorticoid-therapy initiated as part of early rheumatoid arthritis (RA) treatment.

### Eligibility

- 2 Observational cohort studies (CS) published between Jan 01, 2005 and now. Studies must enroll early (or methotrexate-naive) RA patients and report on those starting/taking systemic glucocorticoids (GCs) at baseline and describe at least one of our outcomes at two time points minimum.

### Data Source

- 3 MEDLINE (via PubMed).

### Search Strings

- 4 Search strings were developed utilizing the PICOS mnemonic:

**P**opulation: early (or methotrexate-naive) RA - **I**ntervention: systemic GCs - **C**omparator: any - **O**utcome: any - **S**tudy design: observational cohort study

(Rheumatoid[Title] OR Arthritis, Rheumatoid[MeSh:NoExp])

AND (early[title/abstract] OR naïve[title/abstract])  
AND (Cortison\*[title/abstract] OR Predniso\*[title/abstract] OR Cortico\*[title/abstract] OR Glucocort\*[title/abstract] OR Steroid\*[title/abstract] OR Glucocorticoids[MeSh:NoExp])  
AND (Cohort[Title/Abstract] OR Longitudinal[Title/Abstract] OR Prospective[Title/Abstract] OR Registry[Title/Abstract] OR Longitudinal Studies[Mesh:NoExp] OR Cohort Studies[Mesh:NoExp] OR Registries[Mesh:NoExp])  
AND 2005/01/01:2021/01/01[dp]  
NOT (random\*[Title] OR randomized controlled trial[pt])  
NOT (review[Title] or review[pt])

#### Outcomes

- 5 Mean/median dose of prednisone equivalent, proportion of patients who could discontinue GCs, proportion of patients who could reduce GCs (all: at baseline, 3, 6, 9, 12, and 24 months).

#### Data Synthesis

- 6 Meta-analysis will be conducted to pool results, including meta-regression (mixed effects) to assess change over time for each outcome.