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

Observational cohort studies (CS) published between Jan 01, 2005 and now. Studies must enroll early (or methotrexate-naïve) 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.

MEDLINE (via PubMed).

Search strings were developed utilizing the PICOS mnemonic:

- **Population**: early (or methotrexate-naïve) RA
- **Intervention**: systemic GCs
- **Comparator**: any
- **Outcome**: any
- **Study design**: observational cohort study

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.