From symptom onset to consultation

Understanding the pathway to consultation in rheumatoid arthritis

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Background

**Delays** in the diagnosis and treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) might **reduce the effectiveness** of the treatment and **increase the likelihood of joint destruction**

![Graph showing rate of joint destruction over 6 years of follow-up after the first assessment by a rheumatologist in rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients with less than 12 weeks and more than 12 weeks of delay in the time to assessment.](image)

- A, SHS data for the entire group of 598 RA patients.
Background

Symptoms of RA → DELAY → GP consult → DELAY → Diagnosis + Treatment

Potential targets for INTERVENTION
Methods

- 31 interviews
- The general public
- What would they think and do if they experienced 4 different symptom combinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RA</th>
<th>RA</th>
<th>Bowel cancer</th>
<th>Angina</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint pain, stiffness NO swelling</td>
<td>Joint pain, stiffness AND swelling</td>
<td>Rectal bleeding, diarrhoea, weight loss</td>
<td>Chest Pain with strenuous activities</td>
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Results & targets for interventions

“Well, I'd then likely take some paracetamol … stretching and, manipulating … trying some kind of soaking in warm water perhaps or anti-inflammatory gels, rubs, that sort of thing” (p01/RA without swelling)

Possible interventions
- Educational interventions in symptom recognition directed at **allied healthcare professionals**
- Authoritative, easily identifiable and understandable information for the **general public**