

Laurent Grange^{1,2}, Pascal Claudepierre³, René-Marc Flipo^{4,5, 6,7}, Marco Garrido-Cumbrera⁸, Emilie Desfleurs⁹, Françoise Alliot Launois¹⁰, Laure Gossec^{11,12}.

¹Grenoble Alpes University Hospital, Rheumatology, Echirolles, France;

²Association Française de Lutte Antirhumatisme A.F.L.A.R, President, Paris, France; ³Henri Mondor University Hospital, Rheumatology, Créteil, France; ⁴Lille University, Lille, France; ⁵Roger Salengro Hospital, Rheumatology, Lille, France;

⁶Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla, Spain; ⁷Health and Territory Research (HTR), Sevilla, Spain; ⁸Spanish Federation of Spondyloarthritis Associations (CEADE), Madrid, Spain; ⁹Novartis Pharma, Medical affairs, Rueil Malmaison, France;

¹⁰Association Française de Lutte Antirhumatisme A.F.L.A.R, Vice president, Paris, France; ¹¹Sorbonne University, Paris, France; ¹²La Pitié-Salpêtrière University Hospital, Rheumatology, Paris, France

Background: Axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA) can result in functional limitation and work disability. However, there are little data in the era of biologics.

Objectives: The aim of this analysis was to evaluate the impact of axSpA on professional life.

Methods: Between December 2017 and February 2018, patients followed for axSpA by their rheumatologists or affiliated to the French patients association AFLAR, and self-reporting axSpA, participated in the European Map of Axial Spondyloarthritis (EMAS) cross-sectional patient survey. Socio-demographics (age, gender, relationship status, educational level, job status), disease activity (BASDAI) and the impact of axSpA on professional life (job choice, working hours, sick leave, unemployment and relationship with colleagues) were collected. The participants who were employed and working at the time of the survey were regrouped as "employed" and the ones employed or on temporary sick leave or students at the time of the survey as "active". No imputation of missing data was performed and the analyses were descriptive.

Results: In France, 638 persons (mean age 41.5 ± 11.1 years, 77% females, mean disease duration 6.9±8.2 years, mean BASDAI 5.9±1.7) participated to the survey. About half of them (51%) had a university degree. At the time of the survey, 54% were employed, 26% in temporary or permanent sick leave, 7% unemployed, 6% retired, 5% homemaker and 2% students. Overall, 176 (28%) received social compensation for handicap or disability due to their axSpA. Regarding the employed ones (n=331), 50% were unskilled workers, 15% had an intermediate profession and 23% a white-collar job. The majority (73%) reported working issues related to axSpA in the last 12 months, such as sick leave (60%), reducing or difficulties to fulfill working hours (62%) or missing working hours for health appointments (33%). Among patients on temporary sick leave (n=72), 92% reported that it was the consequence of their axSpA and the mean duration of their temporary sick leave in the last 12 months was 5.4±4.0 months. Considering active people (n=418), 39% declared that their relationships with their work colleagues were worse since their axSpA. AxSpA had also influenced 55% of them in their job choice and drove 44% to adapt their workplace and 34% to move to another job. Finally, 62% expressed their fear to lose their job because of axSpA.

Conclusion: In this survey of 638 young axSpA patients, 66% of participants were active; the impact of the disease on professional life was described as important and often had consequences including permanent sick leave or unemployment. These aspects of axSpA should be better assessed.

REFERENCE

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