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**Comparative Analysis of Patient-reported Outcomes among Employed and Unemployed Patients with Axial Spondyloarthritis. Results of the Spanish Atlas 2017**

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on behalf of Atlas working group

**Background:**

Unemployment is associated with poorer disease outcomes in chronic conditions. Current high rates of unemployment in Spain may lead to a higher burden of disease in axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA) patients.

**Objectives:**

To evaluate the differences in sociodemographic factors and patient-reported outcomes (PROs) between employed and unemployed axSpA patients in the same sample.

**Methods:**

Data from 680 unselected patients of the Spanish Atlas of Axial Spondyloarthritis from an online survey were collected in 2016 were analysed. Active workforce participants were divided into employed and unemployed according to International Labour Organization (ILO) standards. Socio-demographic characteristics, and Patient-reported Outcomes (PROs) [BASDAI (0-10), spinal stiffness (3-12), functional limitation (0-54) and psychological distress (0-12, General Health Questionnaire GHQ-12)] were compared between employed and unemployed participants. The X<sup>2</sup> test was used for qualitative variables and the Mann-Whitney test for quantitative variables.

**Results:**

In total, 415 (63.6%) patients were categorised in the active population, of which 325 (78.3%) were employed and 90 (21.6%) unemployed (Table 1). 62.8% (N = 86) of unemployed patients declared that axSpA was the cause of their joblessness. Compared to the unemployed, the employed patients had a higher percentage of university studies (47.1% vs 23.3%; p=0.001) and higher income level per family member (€890.4 vs €358.5; p<0.001). In relation to PROs, the unemployed presented greater disease activity (6.3±1.9 vs 5.2±1.9; p<0.001) and spinal stiffness (7.8±2.3 vs 6.5±2.6), worst functional limitation (45.0±8.4 vs 40.6±10.1; p<0.001) and more psychological distress (7.6±4.2 vs 4.9±4.3; p<0.001). In addition, a higher proportion of unemployed participants self-reported anxiety (27.8% vs 16.0%; p=0.011) and depression (23.3% vs 10.2%; p=0.001) (Table 2).

## Conclusion:

The Spanish Atlas results show significant differences between employed and unemployed patients with axSpA, with greater disease activity, spinal stiffness, functional limitation, and poorer mental health in those who are unemployed.

## References:

**Table 1.** Employment status of Spanish Atlas survey respondents

Population	N	%	Employment status	N	%
Active population*	415	63.6	Employed	325	78.3
			Unemployed	90	21.6
			Total	415	100.0
Inactive population	238	36.4	Temporary sick leave	63	26.5
			Permanent sick leave	64	26.9
			Retired	63	26.5
			Homemakers	29	12.2
			Students	9	3.8
			Early retirement	10	4.2
			Total	238	100.0
Total	653	100.0			

\*According to the ILO

**Table 2.** Association between sociodemographic characteristics and PROs comparing employed and unemployed axSpA patients

	Employed (N = 325) Mean ± SD or n (%)	Unemployed (N = 90) Mean ± SD or n (%)	p-value
<b>Sociodemographic</b>			
Age (years)	42.9 ± 8.6	42.0 ± 9.1	0.513
Gender (Male)	159 (48.9)	36 (40.0)	0.133
Education level (University)	153 (47.1)	21 (23.3)	<b>0.001*</b>
Marital status (Married)	231 (71.1)	54 (60.0)	0.051
Monthly Income (€)	890.4 ± 592.3	358.5 ± 377.7	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
<b>PROs</b>			
Diagnostic Delay (years)	7.7 ± 7.6	8.0 ± 6.5	0.319
BASDAI (0-10)	5.2 ± 1.9	6.3 ± 1.9	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
Spinal Stiffness (3-12)	6.5 ± 2.6	7.8 ± 2.3	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
Global Limitation Index (0-54)	40.6 ± 10.1	45.0 ± 8.4	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
GHQ-12 (0-12)	4.9 ± 4.3	7.6 ± 4.2	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
Anxiety	52 (16.0)	25 (27.8)	<b>0.011*</b>
Depression	33 (10.2)	21 (23.3)	<b>0.001*</b>
Sleep disorder	50 (15.4)	18 (20.0)	0.295

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