

# Diagnostic delay in axSpA and its impact



Axial Spondyloarthritis - also referred to as ankylosing spondylitis or Morbus Bechterew - is a **painful, chronic inflammatory disease** that causes pain and stiffness in the spine and sacroiliac joints.<sup>1</sup>

As many as **1 in every 150 people worldwide** have axial Spondyloarthritis - or axSpA - and it affects men and women equally.<sup>2</sup>

The disease can first occur at any age but typically **begins between the ages of 20-40**. There is currently no cure, so the disease is lifelong.<sup>3</sup>

## Recognising the global delay in axSpA diagnosis

Globally, there is an unacceptable average delay of around **7 years** in diagnosing axSpA<sup>4</sup>



Long delays in axSpA leave individuals at risk of **irreversible spinal damage** and poorer quality of life<sup>1</sup>

Latest findings from an international survey suggest there are regional differences in the average axSpA diagnosis times:<sup>5</sup>



Data suggests there are **significant inequalities** in the diagnosis of axSpA **between different groups**.

It can take over **2 years longer** to diagnose axSpA in women than in men.<sup>6,7</sup>



## The impact of axSpA diagnostic delay

### Socioeconomic impacts

- More than **4 in 10** report job choice influenced by condition<sup>8</sup>
- **71%** report difficulties **finding a job**<sup>9</sup>
- **3 times more likely** to withdraw from work<sup>10</sup>
- **Significant loss in income**
- Additional **'out of pocket' costs** to manage symptoms
- More likely to be **unmarried and without children**<sup>11</sup>
- Significant **healthcare system costs**
- **Wider societal costs** due to lost productivity

### Physical impacts

- More likely to lead to **life-altering damage**<sup>12</sup>
- Reduced ability to **manage symptoms**
- More likely to require **help in carrying out routine activities**, such as housework, shopping and getting out of bed

### Psychological impacts

- **6 out of 10** report symptoms of anxiety and depression<sup>13</sup>
- **43%** suffer from sleep disorders<sup>14</sup>
- **Women are more likely** to experience greater levels of psychological distress<sup>14</sup>

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## Think axSpA

AxSpA is under-recognised and under-diagnosed. If you encounter gradual onset of pain and stiffness in the **lower back, buttocks and hips**, think axSpA.

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