Improvement in Diagnostic Delay in Spondyloarthritis Patients Over Time but Disease Control is Still Inadequate

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Abstract: **Objectives:** To investigate factors associated with diagnostic delay in a group of spondyloarthritis (SpA) patients. **Methods:** One hundred and twenty seven SpA patients of Chinese ethnicity were recruited from the rheumatology clinic of Queen Mary Hospital. All of them were diagnosed to have SpA according to expert opinion. Recruited patients were interviewed for the delay in SpA diagnosis. Clinical and radiological features were compared among the significant delayed group (delay in diagnosis of more than 5 years) and the less delayed group (delay of less than 5 years). Variables found to be different were used as independent variables in the multivariate regression using delay in diagnosis as the dependent variable. **Results:** The delay in SpA diagnosis was found to be associated with age (Beta=0.17; p=0.04) and disease duration (Beta=0.51; p<0.01). The significantly delayed group and the less delayed group were not different in terms of disease activity (4.0±1.9 in the delayed group and 4.1±1.8 in the less delayed group; p=0.72). The recruited patients had high disease activity (mean BASDAI=4.0). **Conclusion:** Less diagnostic delay was observed in the recent years. Despite the finding, most of the SpA remains inadequately treated.

**Keywords:** Delay in diagnosis, Disease activity, Disease duration, Spondyloarthritis