Abstract

Background
Osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis are the most common types of arthritis seen at the tertiary level of health care. There have been few reports of arthritis in Nigeria and Africa.

Objective
This study aims at determining the clinical, laboratory and radiological characteristics of the common types of arthritis.

Materials and Methods
This is a prospective study of patients attending the rheumatology clinic over a nine month period at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital, a tertiary hospital in Benin City, Edo State. Patients included were those who were 18 or more years of age with joint or back pain, joint swelling and stiffness as well as patients with previously diagnosed arthritis or soft tissue rheumatism. Patients with fractured induced joint pains were excluded. Informed consent was obtained from the patients. Approval for the study was obtained from the Hospital Ethics Committee.

Detailed history and physical and relevant laboratory examinations were carried out on each patient.

Results
Sixty five cases of arthritis were seen with a female predominance (76.9%). Osteoarthritis was the most common type (64.6%). This was followed by rheumatoid arthritis (18.5%), gout (9.2%), septic arthritis (6.2%) and systemic lupus erythematosus (1.5%).

The mean age of patients with the various types of arthritis were as follows: OA (61.0±11.0 years), RA (48.7±9.7 years), gout (58.2±10.7 years), SA (60.3±6.9 years).
Patients with gout had the highest body mass index of 31.5±2.2 kg/m², while those of SA, OA, and RA were 30.4±3.9 kg/m², 29.7±5.8 kg/m², and 25.9±3.9 kg/m² respectively. The joints most commonly involved in OA were the knees (88.1%), lumbosacral spine (34.1%) and the cervical spine (13.6%). In RA the proximal interphalangeal, metacarpophalangeal and knee joints were involved in all patients (100.0%). Patients with gout had knee joint (100.0%), elbow, and PIP and wrists joint affectation (83.3%). Rheumatoid factor was positive in 31.7% of patients with OA, 55.0% with RA, 16.7% with gout and 50.0% with SA.

All patients with OA had joint space narrowing and osteophytes. Peri-articular osteopenia was present in 58.3% of RA patients, while 16.7% had joint erosions.

**Conclusion**

This study shows that osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis are the most common types of arthritis in the study population.