

This lay summary was created using ChatGPT (version GPT-4o), approved by the project leader, and translated using DeepL.com.

Early axial spondyloarthritis according to the ASAS consensus definition: characterisation of patients and effectiveness of a first TNF inhibitor in a large observational registry

The study investigates the early disease stage in patients with axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA) and back pain duration of less than 2 years according to consensus definition recently published by the Assessment of SpondyloArthritis International Society (ASAS). In the Swiss Clinical Quality Management (SCQM) cohort, 20% of patients were recruited in this early disease stage.

While disease activity, functional impairment and quality life were comparable in early versus established disease, impaired spinal mobility and radiographic damage was more frequent in patients with longer disease duration. To investigate whether a window of opportunity might exist if patients are treated earlier with biologics, response to a first tumor necrosis factor inhibitor (TNFi) was compared in patients with early versus established axSpA. No significant differences in drug retention and response rates could be detected between the two groups after accounting for potential confounders. It remains to be established whether a better treatment response can be achieved if patients are diagnosed and treated at even an earlier stage (within one year after start of back pain).

Link to the publication: Early axial spondyloarthritis according to the ASAS consensus definition: characterisation of patients and effectiveness of a first TNF inhibitor in a large observational registry at <https://rmdopen.bmj.com/content/9/4/e003455>