

Workers more at risk of RA in certain occupations

New research now indicates that there could be a raised risk of environmental factors thought to be involved in triggering auto-immune reactions for people working in certain occupations.

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Environmental factors are thought to be involved in triggering auto-immune reactions in people leading to the development of conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis. New research now indicates that there could be a raised risk of this for people working in certain occupations.

A study carried out at the Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, by Anna Llar and colleagues, looked at information on environmental, genetic and immunological factors collected between 1996 and 2014. The data was gathered from 3,522 people with RA and 5,580 controls.



Male workers in the manufacturing sector had a higher risk of developing RA than people working in a professional, administrative, or technical setting (reference group). A twofold increase in risk of developing RA was seen in male electrical and electronics workers along with material handling operators compared to the reference group. The risk was 3 times as much in bricklayers and concrete workers.

However, for women in the manufacturing sector, there was no increased risk (although this may be

accounted for by the very low number of women in this area). Women working as assistant nurses and attendants did have a slightly increased risk.

The participants' smoking habits, alcohol consumption, level of education and body mass index were all taken into account when analysing the results as these all play a factor in the risk of developing RA.

The results of this study indicate that work-related factors may potentially contribute to the development of RA, in particular, exposure to harmful airborne substances such as silica, asbestos, organic solvents and motor exhaust. However, more research needs to be done to identify specifically which of these is involved.

Once this is done, then employees and employers can make decisions to reduce the risk of developing RA by limiting the exposure to these factors.

I want to work

In this booklet you will find up-to-date and accurate advice and information, to make sure you know what help you can expect to receive and have the support to help you to keep working and to minimise the impact that work might have on your RA and vice versa.

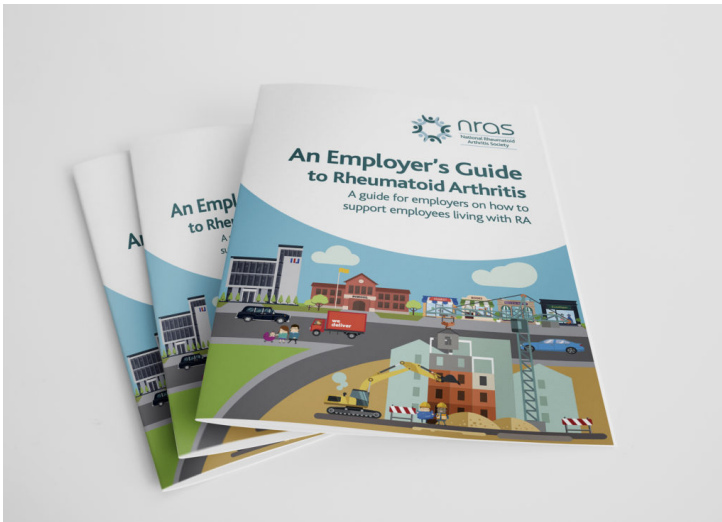
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An employers' guide to rheumatoid arthritis

This booklet has information about rheumatoid arthritis (RA), how it can affect people at work, the kind of difficulties it can cause and how these may be overcome. It also includes up to date information on where employers can go for help and advice on the law relating to disability, on best practice and on making reasonable adjustments for employees at work.

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RA can affect all aspects of life, including work, and of course, the added stress of needing an income from work makes managing RA in a workplace setting all the more important. Thankfully, there is much that can be done, with reasonable adjustments and a good understanding of your rights and how your employer can support you at work.

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