

Certain Arthritis Drugs May Protect the Heart

The study, by the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, demonstrated that the time of exposure both to disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs and biological agents is associated with a reduction of the risk of cardiovascular events after researchers studied more than 4300 rheumatoid arthritis patients from 15 countries.

The study showed that most traditional risk factors, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes were associated with the risk of cardiovascular disease, but obesity and being physically inactive were not.

The team also found a link between the presence of manifestations of rheumatoid arthritis outside the joints, such as inflammation of blood vessels, and heart attack. Being male also carried a higher risk for any cardiovascular event.

However, after adjustment, the researchers found that prolonged exposure to certain anti-arthritis agents -- namely, methotrexate, leflunomide, sulfasalazine, glucocorticoids and biologic agents -- substantially reduced the risk of cardiovascular death.

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