

EVIDENCE FOR EQUITY

SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS FOR RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Self-management education programs are designed to help patients take an active role in managing their symptoms. They teach skills like problem solving, making decisions, finding support and taking practical steps to manage and cope with symptoms. The programs work together with medical care.

IMPORTANCE FOR EQUITY

Health literacy affects the ability to understand and apply self-management guidance. Low income individuals may face barriers to participation due to cost and digital access. Cultural beliefs may influence perceptions of pain and understanding of therapies.



CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIES



Studies were conducted in high-income countries
Majority of participants were older, Caucasian women

FINDINGS & INTERPRETATION

Low to moderate quality evidence indicates that self-management education programs result in small or no benefits in:

- self-management skills
- pain and function
- osteoarthritis symptoms
- quality of life

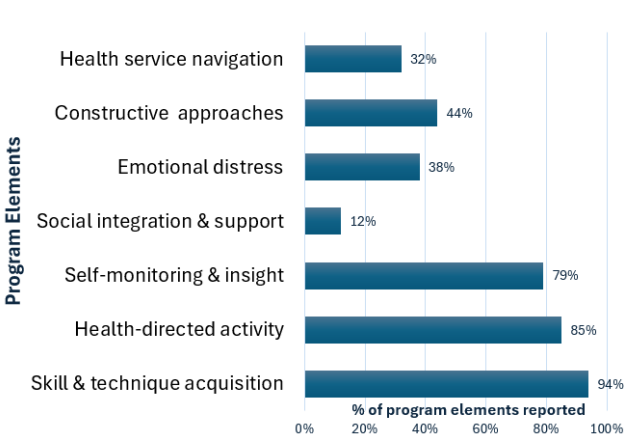
But they are unlikely to cause harm.

Active and positive engagement in life, knowledge, and self efficacy outcomes were not reported in many studies.

QUALITY RATING

Low to moderate quality evidence
Downgraded for concerns about study quality, relevance and certainty

ELEMENTS OF PROGRAMS



EQUITY FINDINGS

- Provide information in clear, simple language
- Make programs easier to access with supports for program costs, transportation
- Offer flexible, person-centered delivery options, including both digital and in-person formats
- Tailor services to meet the cultural needs of equity-relevant populations, including specific needs assessments, community support and involvement, training local lay leaders to deliver the program, translating and co-producing materials

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Self-management programs have small overall effects but few harms
- Make content easy to understand for people with low health literacy
- Consider tailoring self-management programs to improve equitable access and benefit

FUTURE RESEARCH

Investigate impact of structural disadvantages due to SES, cultural, educational barriers

Future trials should investigate programs with both exercise and psychological components

Investigate models tailored to the individual