

Lay title: Long-term Persistence with Rituximab in Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Full title: Long-term persistence with rituximab in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

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What was already known?

Rituximab (RTX) is a type of drug called a biological therapy used to treat Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA). Although RTX has been used since 2007, little is known about how long people continue to use RTX and the reasons for discontinuation. Improved knowledge of this may help clinicians identify patients who are more likely to benefit from RTX.

What was discovered?

This large study of patients initiating RTX treatment for RA highlighted that almost two thirds of patients are still receiving RTX after four years, demonstrating that it is a useful treatment option. The most common reason for stopping RTX was ineffectiveness. This study also found that discontinuation partially depended on positivity for rheumatoid factor (a blood marker) and severity of RA. Biologic treatment subsequent to RTX discontinuation was also investigated, finding that tocilizumab, another biologic drug, was most commonly used.

Why is this important / what is the benefit to patients?

The results of this study will allow a clinician to possibly predict how long a patient may remain on RTX for and to identify patients that may tolerate RTX for longer.

Should you wish to read this scientific paper in full, the text can be found online here:

<https://academic.oup.com/rheumatology/article/57/6/1089/4939564>

