

Juvenile Arthritis Month

UEPA DEI Pearls July Newsletter

Quick Facts

- Juvenile arthritis, or pediatric rheumatic disease, does not refer to a specific disease. It is an umbrella term used to describe the inflammatory and rheumatic diseases that develop in children under the age of 16.
- An estimated 300,000 children in the United States have juvenile arthritis (JA), with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) as the most common form.
- The exact causes of JA are unknown, but researchers believe that certain genes may cause JA when activated by a virus, bacteria or other external factors. There is no evidence that foods, toxins, allergies or lack of vitamins cause the disease.



Sources:

<https://www.yalemedicine.org/conditions/juvenile-idiopathic-arthritis>
<https://www.arthritis.org/diseases/juvenile-arthritis> https://www.uptodate.com/contents/systemic-juvenile-idiopathic-arthritis-treatment?search=juvenile%20arthritis&source=search_result&selectedTitle=3%7E150&usage_type=default&display_rank=3#H15850614

Onset and Symptoms

- Typically occurs in children aged 2 to 4, with girls being more often affected than boys
- Symptoms include: persistent swelling, pain, tenderness, and stiffness in the joints are the most common in JIA
- Symptoms are usually worse in the morning or after taking a nap

Treatment

- Initial treatment guidelines recommend the use of NSAIDs for mild to moderate symptoms
- DMARDs and corticosteroids can be used for severe symptoms and for patients in whom NSAIDs are ineffective
- Regular exercise is key to managing joint stiffness and pain, preferably low impact activities

Other Considerations

- Younger children are more likely to be affected in their big joints such as the knees and ankles
- Older children are more likely to be affected in small joints such as fingers, hands, and wrists

What else is going on in July?

During the month of July, we also recognize and celebrate National Minority Health Awareness Month. As future healthcare providers we should be a source of help while recognizing that individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds may view mental health differently and may face different challenges seeking help.

