



TOP-FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS on low-value practices

Better care. **Better** decision-making. **Better** use of resources.

The Australian Rheumatology

Association (ARA) is an association of rheumatologists in Australia that is a specialty society of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP). Rheumatologists are specialist physicians with particular expertise in the diagnosis and holistic management of diseases that affect joints, muscles, tendons and bones. They treat all forms of arthritis, autoimmune connective tissue disease, spinal and soft tissue disorders and certain metabolic bone disorders, such as osteoporosis and chronic musculoskeletal pain syndromes.

1

Do not perform arthroscopy with lavage and/or debridement or partial meniscectomy for patients with symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee and/or degenerate meniscal tear

2

Do not order anti-nuclear antibody (ANA) testing without symptoms and/or signs suggestive of a systemic rheumatic disease

3

Do not undertake imaging for low back pain in patients without indications of a serious underlying condition

4

Do not use ultrasound guidance to perform injections into the subacromial space as it provides no additional benefit in comparison to non-image guided injection

5

Do not order anti-double stranded (ds) DNA antibodies in ANA negative patients unless clinical suspicion of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) remains high





1

Do not perform arthroscopy with lavage and/or debridement or partial meniscectomy for patients with symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee and/or degenerate meniscal tear

There is consistent evidence to indicate that arthroscopic lavage and/or debridement to treat people for symptomatic knee osteoarthritis, and/or partial meniscectomy for patients with a degenerate meniscal tear (with or without underlying osteoarthritis), is no more effective than placebo surgery or non-operative alternatives.

There appears to be a high rate of conversion from knee arthroscopy to total knee arthroplasty, which rises with increased age, further suggesting arthroscopic surgery should be avoided in people over the age of 50 years. Additionally, arthroscopy is associated with peri and post-operative risks and considerable cost.

2

Do not order anti-nuclear antibody (ANA) testing without symptoms and/or signs suggestive of a systemic rheumatic disease

Antinuclear antibodies (ANAs) are present in healthy individuals and ANA testing is only useful in patients with symptoms and/ or signs of a rheumatic disease where it can aid in the confirmation or exclusion of systemic connective tissues diseases. ANA testing has a very high negative predictive value for excluding connective tissue diseases as a cause for patients' symptoms. However, a positive ANA result does not have a high positive predictive value for diagnosing these conditions in isolation, and further sub-serology testing is needed to accurately diagnose and classify these conditions.

3

Do not undertake imaging for low back pain in patients without indications of a serious underlying condition

Most episodes of low back pain (~90%) do not require imaging. Imaging may identify irrelevant incidental findings and increase the risk of exposure to unnecessary, and sometimes invasive treatment, in addition to increasing costs. For patients with low back pain and no suggestion of serious underlying conditions there are no significant differences in pain or disability outcomes between immediate imaging as compared with usual care without imaging.

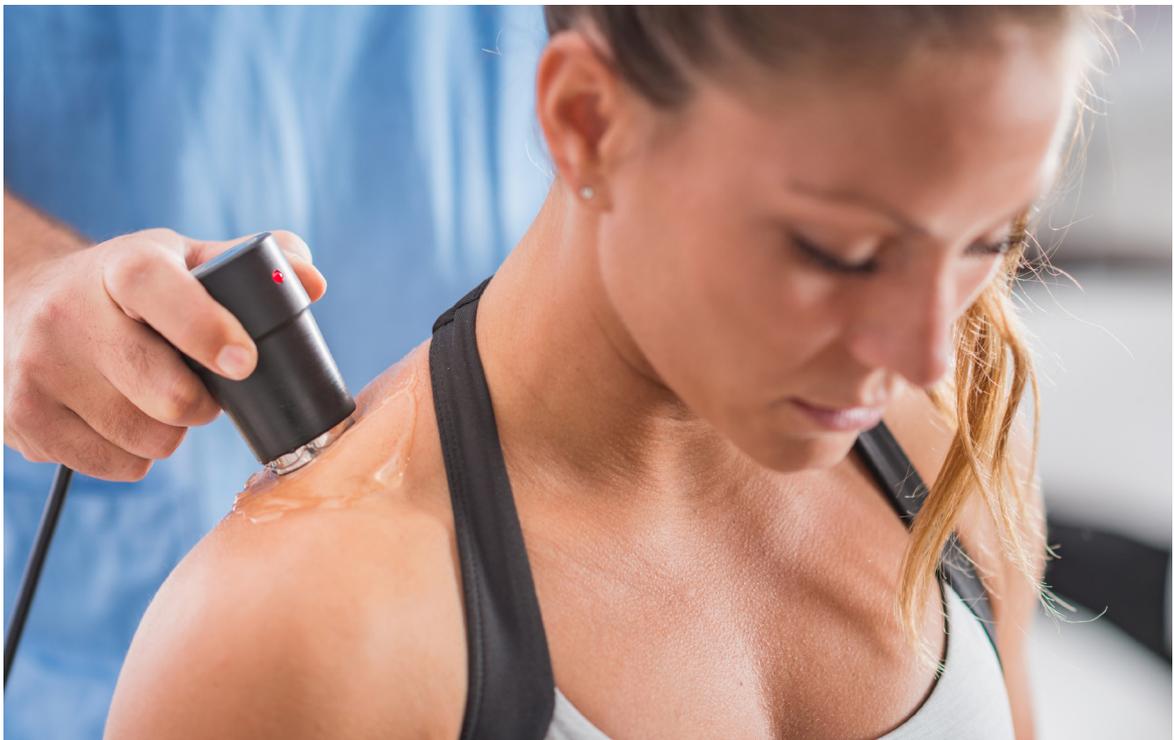




4

Do not use ultrasound guidance to perform injections into the subacromial space as it provides no additional benefit in comparison to landmark-guided injection

Currently there is no high-quality evidence to support the superiority of ultrasound-guided subacromial injections compared with injections guided by landmarks alone. Based upon moderate quality evidence from five trials, a Cochrane review was unable to find any advantage (in terms of pain, function, range of motion or adverse events) of ultrasound-guided injection over either landmark-guided or intramuscular injection. These results are consistent with a more recent trial. In view of the currently available data and the significant added cost, there is little clinical justification in using ultrasound to guide injections for shoulder pain.





5

Do not order anti-double stranded (ds) DNA antibodies in ANA negative patients unless clinical suspicion of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) remains high

International recommendations advise testing for anti-dsDNA antibodies only after detecting a positive ANA in patients with symptoms consistent with systemic lupus erythematosus. In patients who are ANA negative, anti-dsDNA should only be ordered in clinical situations where the pre-test probability of SLE is very high. Where positive, repeating anti-dsDNA antibodies titres is a useful test for monitoring disease activity, especially in lupus nephritis.

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For the list of references supporting these recommendations and further information on the development process, see <https://evolve.edu.au/published-lists/australian-rheumatology-association>

WHAT IS EVOLVE?

Part of a global movement, Evolve is an initiative led by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) to drive high-value, high-quality care in Australia and New Zealand.

As medical practice and medical research continues to grow in volume and complexity, physicians can be inundated with new guidelines, new research and new information. Evolve helps physicians to stay abreast of the current evidence and recommended best practice to support the provision of high-value, high-quality care to patients.

How does Evolve work?

Evolve identifies a specialty's Top 5 clinical practices that, in particular circumstances, may be overused, provide little or no benefit, or cause unnecessary harm.

Evolve recommendations are developed through a rigorous, peer-reviewed process; led by clinical experts, informed by in-depth evidence reviews, and guided by widespread consultation.

Evolve contribution to the Choosing Wisely campaigns

RACP is a founding member of Choosing Wisely in Australia and New Zealand, and all Evolve recommendations are also available via these campaigns.

By bringing together recommendations from multiple medical colleges and healthcare organisations, together with expertise in consumer and patient care, Choosing Wisely helps healthcare providers and consumers start important conversations about improving the quality of healthcare.

