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Poster presentation

# Illness representation in adolescents with juvenile idiopathic arthritis

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## Background

The Common Sense Model (CSM) conceptualizes a patient as a problem solver creating representations of their disease which may affect coping style and disease outcome [1]. The aim of the study was to explore illness representations in adolescents with JIA.

## Materials and methods

Adolescents from a JIA transition clinic were asked to complete the revised Illness Perception Questionnaire (IPQ-R) [2]. Representations were rated by answering 4 to 6 questions per component on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree).

## Results

Thirty-five patients with JIA participated, 14 boys and 21 girls (mean age in years (SD): 17.1 (± 0.7); mean disease duration in years (SD): 8.4 (± 5.0). Nine patients had active disease, 11 were under disease control with medication, 9 patients were in clinical remission on medication and 6 patients were in remission. Representations (Min-max score) and Mean (± sd) 1. Timeline acute/chronic (6–30): 21.9 (3.9). 2. Timeline cyclical (4–20), 13.1 (3.2). 3. Consequences (6–30), 14.2 (3.3). 4. Personal control (6–30), 20.2 (2.7). 5. Treatment control (5–25), 18.8 (1.7). 6. Illness coherence (5–25), 20.1 (2.7). 7. Emotional representation (6–30), 12.9 (3.4).

## Conclusion

Adolescents with JIA have a coherent understanding of their disease. Patients perceive JIA as a chronic disease which can be influenced by their own action and by medical treatment. Patients perceive JIA as a disease which gives hardly any feelings of stress and anxiety and as having little impact on their life. Further research is needed how illness representations affect coping strategies and outcome.

## References

1. Hale ED: **The common-sense model of self-regulation of health and illness: how can we use it to understand and respond to our patients' needs?** *Rheumatology* 2007, **46:**904-906.
2. Morris R: **The revised illness perception questionnaire (IPQ-R).** *Psychology & health* 2002, **17:**1.