



Arthritis + Patient: An App

By Manisha Mulgund, MD, FRCPC



Hello Readers!

My name is Manisha Mulgund. I am a rheumatologist in Hamilton, Ontario, with a keen interest in early inflammatory arthritis. Amid the chaos of 2020, the app that I've worked on for a few years was released!

I am excited to share with you "Arthritis + Patient," an app for self-monitoring and education specifically tailored to patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), ankylosing spondylitis (AS/SpA), and psoriatic arthritis (PsA).

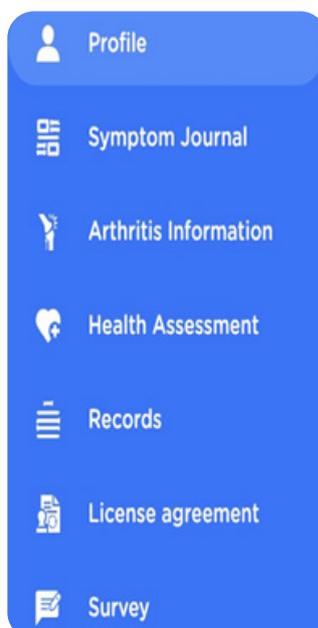
The diagnosis of inflammatory arthritis can be overwhelming and stressful for most patients. At the onset, our patients have to deal not only with the pain and the change in their quality of life (QoL), but also with complex medications and access to care. Once I recognized this pattern, I was motivated to find innovative ways to improve their experience.

Through patient surveys, I was able to understand the challenges they faced. With the inspiration and support of my patients, who gave me their valuable time and thoughts, the concept of the app was created. My goal was to provide a platform to further educate and support patients. This app is a start towards meeting that goal.

After years of work and multiple iterations, the free app for patients with inflammatory arthritis, "Arthritis + Patient," was released on both iOS and Android platforms.

Its key features are as follows:

- **Symptom Journal:** This journal serves as an up-to-date diary-like tool, with a camera, notes, and a dictation feature.
- **Health Assessment:** Depending on the disease, specific forms are available in this section. It includes a Functional Assessment (HAQ, BASDAI, or BASFI auto-calculated results with graphs); General Assessment, aka interim history, and a clickable Homunculus for marking tender joints.
- **Educational resources:** Patients can access audio files, written explanations of conditions, lifestyle recommendations, and additional websites for further information.
- **Record:** Patients can easily look back at their previous data such as assessment scores. This allows for increased convenience, as patients will simply have an all-in-one health wallet alternative to their charts and papers for their appointments.



Once downloaded, the app can be used anywhere at any time. Wi-fi connection is not required to complete the forms as the data is static and locally stored.

Here's how to use the app:

1. Download the free app.
2. Enter any number as your Demographic Number (could be a chart # or patient ID in the future).
3. Enter an e-mail address. Patients will have the option to share their records, at their own discretion.
4. Complete the rest of the profile by selecting one of the inflammatory arthritides.
5. At this point, the setup process is complete and patients are free to use any of the features. Once the profile is completed the health assessment feature becomes available to use.
6. Please fill out the survey form.

Using the information from the app at your patient's appointment is easy. Patients fill the health assessment section on the app prior to their scheduled appointments. During their visit, you ask them their scores and to highlight any specific notes they want to discuss within the app, allowing you to be focused and efficient. It saves time as the data is already available.

I hope that this app serves as an asset to both you and your patients in enhancing shared decision making. My mission statement is: Respect, Educate, Empower and Improve.

I am excited to be collaborating with my peers to bring a new section to the app called "Vaccines and Tests." Here, patients will be able to learn more about vaccines and create their own vaccine passport.

I am so grateful to everyone who has helped me during my journey towards creation of the app. I have interacted with some amazing people along the way.

I encourage you to download the app, explore it and share it with your patients. Together, we can do better and create an even greater impact on patient care. Connect with me at specialistshamilton@gmail.com for any questions or comments.

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