



Effective Health Care

Treatment for Rheumatoid Arthritis in Women Considering Pregnancy

Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- The topic, *Treatment for Rheumatoid Arthritis in Women Considering Pregnancy*, is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.
- The topic could potentially be considered for new research in comparative effectiveness.

Topic Description

Nominator(s): Individual

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in knowing about the comparative safety and effectiveness of available treatment strategies for women with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) who are considering pregnancy. The nominator also wants to understand how the evidence supporting available treatment options compares for women from specific subgroups (e.g., women with previous children, different disease states of RA, age, other factors).

Staff-Generated PICO

Population(s): Women of reproductive age considering pregnancy, pregnant women and nursing mothers diagnosed with RA

Intervention(s): Pharmacological treatments for RA

Comparator(s): Other pharmacological treatment options for RA

Outcome(s): 1. RA-related disease status; morbidity and mortality
2. Fertility and conception
3. Health of mother and child

Key Questions from Nominator: What is the comparative safety and effectiveness of available treatment strategies for women with RA who are considering pregnancy? How does the evidence supporting available treatment options compare for women from specific subgroups (e.g., women with previous children, different disease states within RA, age, other factors)?

Considerations

- There are significant concerns associated with the use of medications to treat rheumatoid arthritis (RA) by women of reproductive age who are considering pregnancy, are already pregnant or are nursing. Potential adverse effects of using these medications during pregnancy include worsening maternal health (e.g., development or worsening of gestational diabetes, diabetes mellitus and osteoporosis),

potential abnormalities in the newborns (e.g., abnormalities of body structure, mental retardation), miscarriage, and early neonatal deaths.

- A search of the literature did not identify a high quality systematic review, meta-analyses, or evidence-based guideline on this topic. We identified few studies, and an AHRQ systematic review is not feasible at this time.
- Research on this topic could have a potential impact in terms of helping to address concerns about the best medications to use and guide the treatment of this population. More traditional approaches to research on this topic may be difficult. Approaches to research on this topic may include different methods such as patient registries.