

# Rheumatology – Goals & Objectives

- **Participating Site(s):** Rheumatology outpatient clinics
- **Duration:** 4 weeks
- **Required or Elective:** Required

## Rotation Overview

This rotation provides residents with structured exposure to the evaluation and management of common and complex rheumatologic conditions, primarily in the outpatient setting with additional inpatient consult experience as available. Emphasis is placed on diagnostic reasoning, longitudinal disease management, interpretation of rheumatologic testing, procedural skills, and patient-centered care for chronic multisystem diseases.

## Overall Rotation Goal

The goal of this rotation is for residents to progressively develop the knowledge, clinical skills, and clinical judgment required to evaluate patients with rheumatologic complaints, diagnose inflammatory and non-inflammatory rheumatic diseases, initiate evidence-based treatment plans, and recognize indications for specialty referral and procedural intervention.

## Educational Objectives (Aligned with ACGME Competencies)

### Patient Care

Residents will be able to:

- Evaluate patients presenting with rheumatologic complaints, including monoarticular and polyarticular pain, myalgias, back pain, soft tissue rheumatism, and systemic symptoms
- Formulate prioritized differential diagnoses for inflammatory and non-inflammatory rheumatic diseases
- Initiate diagnostic and management plans for common rheumatologic conditions, including:
  - Rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, and spondyloarthropathies
  - Crystal-induced arthropathies
  - Systemic lupus erythematosus and other connective tissue diseases
  - Vasculitides, polymyalgia rheumatica, and giant cell arteritis
  - Fibromyalgia and chronic pain syndromes
- Perform joint aspiration of large synovial joints under supervision and interpret synovial fluid analysis
- Demonstrate appropriate use of joint and soft tissue injections when indicated

### Medical Knowledge

Residents will be able to:

- Explain the pathophysiology and clinical manifestations of common rheumatologic diseases
- Interpret laboratory studies commonly used in rheumatology, including inflammatory markers, autoantibodies, and metabolic testing
- Interpret rheumatologic imaging studies, including plain radiographs, CT, MRI, and radionuclide imaging
- Describe the indications, mechanisms of action, monitoring requirements, and adverse effects of medications used in rheumatologic care, including:
  - NSAIDs and corticosteroids
  - Conventional DMARDs
  - Biologic and targeted therapies
  - Gout-directed pharmacotherapy

## **Practice-Based Learning and Improvement**

Residents will be able to:

- Identify individual learning needs related to rheumatologic disease management
- Incorporate evidence-based resources, including American College of Rheumatology guidelines and MKSAP content, into clinical decision-making
- Reflect on clinical encounters and patient outcomes to improve diagnostic accuracy and management strategies

## **Interpersonal and Communication Skills**

Residents will be able to:

- Communicate diagnoses, treatment plans, and disease prognosis clearly to patients and families
- Counsel patients on chronic disease management, medication adherence, and treatment risks and benefits
- Present rheumatology cases concisely and effectively to faculty and interdisciplinary teams

## **Professionalism**

Residents will be able to:

- Demonstrate professionalism, accountability, and reliability in clinical and educational responsibilities
- Respect patient autonomy, cultural values, and confidentiality
- Recognize personal limitations and seek appropriate supervision when needed

## **Systems-Based Practice**

Residents will be able to:

- Utilize laboratory testing, imaging, and specialty consultation appropriately to provide high-value care
- Recognize indications for referral to orthopedic surgery, hand surgery, or other subspecialists for advanced management
- Coordinate care for patients with chronic rheumatologic diseases requiring multidisciplinary involvement

## **PGY-Level Expectations**

### **PGY-1:**

- Identify common rheumatologic conditions and report clinical findings under direct supervision
- Initiate basic diagnostic evaluations and symptom-directed management plans

### **PGY-2:**

- Develop prioritized differential diagnoses and propose treatment plans with indirect supervision
- Interpret rheumatologic laboratory studies and imaging findings

### **PGY-3:**

- Independently manage routine rheumatologic conditions with attending oversight
- Advise on diagnostic strategies, medication selection, and referral decisions for complex patients

## **Teaching and Learning Activities**

- Supervised outpatient rheumatology clinic experiences
- Inpatient rheumatology consult exposure as available

- Case-based discussions and guideline review
- Independent study using ACR resources and MKSAP

## **Evaluation and Feedback**

Resident performance is evaluated through:

- Direct faculty observation
- End-of-rotation faculty evaluation mapped to applicable ACGME milestones
- Assessment of clinical reasoning, procedural skills, and communication

Residents receive ongoing formative feedback and summative feedback at the conclusion of the rotation.

## **Supervision**

Faculty supervision is provided in accordance with ACGME supervision guidelines and is based on resident demonstrated competence, PGY level, and patient acuity.