

# SMILE-RA

## Self-management Individualised Learning Environment in Rheumatoid Arthritis

### Results of first survey of participants

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**nrAS**  
National Rheumatoid  
Arthritis Society

# Innovative e-learning in rheumatoid arthritis

Co-produced with health professionals in rheumatology and people with lived experience at every step

## OBJECTIVE



Provision of excellent supported self-management services and resources is at the heart of what NRAS does and SMILE-RA, provides innovative, evidence-based, high quality educational content which is accessible to individuals and their families & carers and is available **free**, 24/7. We surveyed participants in Jul/Aug 2022 to find out if our broad goals for the programme were being met regarding issues including:

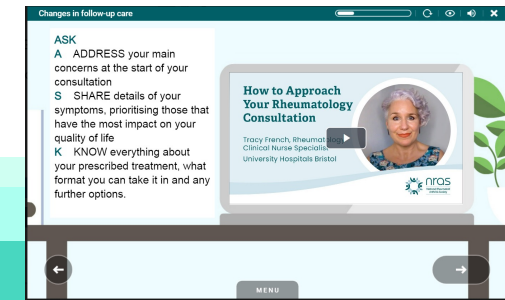
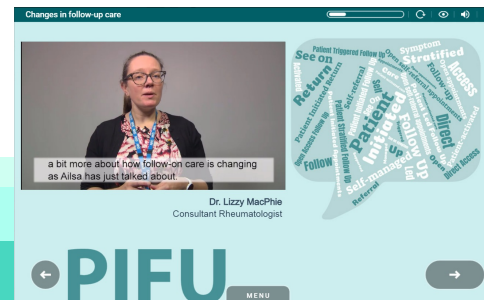
- Ease of use
- Understanding of aspects of disease management
- How they had found out about SMILE
- Whether they would recommend it to others

## BACKGROUND



An important but insufficient aspect of care in people with inflammatory arthritis (IA) is empowering them to acquire a good understanding of their disease and build their ability to deal effectively with the practical, physical and psychological impacts of it. This extends beyond drug therapy and emphasises the ability to self-manage, with the right support, as an essential component of care. Good self-efficacy and coping skills benefit all by reducing the health and financial burden to the individual as well as the health service, benefitting society overall.

In a post pandemic NHS recovery landscape, outpatient care is being transformed and patients are seeing their HCPs less, experiencing remote appointments and monitoring, with many being moved to patient initiated follow up pathways. **This means that being knowledgeable about your disease and being able to self-manage well is more critical than ever.**



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## RESULTS

Participants were surveyed between 11/7 and 15/8/2022. Majority had RA, few IA and 2 HCPs. 132 responded to the survey which was good

Majority heard about SMILE through NRAS channels, **only 9%** were sign-posted by rheumatology professionals.

Nearly 70% completed Foundation module/RAID questionnaire and 72% of those said that it had improved their understanding of importance of supported self-management and how their team and NRAS can support this.

88% think that the navigation is extremely (majority) or quite easy to use

Nearly 80% think that the length of the modules (between 20 – 30 minutes dependent on topic) is just right

91% think that learning objectives at the start of each module are extremely (majority) or quite clear and helpful

85% think that the quiz questions embedded in the modules are extremely (majority) or quite clear and helpful

86% think that the links to other resources, whether NRAS or external, are extremely (majority) or quite clear and helpful

56% of people said that SMILE had increased their understanding of the make-up of the rheumatology team

72% of people said that SMILE had increased their understanding of the importance of self-management

68% of people said that SMILE had increased their knowledge of their disease

62% said that SMILE had increased their knowledge of medicines used in the treatment of RA

62% said that SMILE had increased their confidence to effectively self-manage with the right support



## RESULTS

**84% said that they would recommend SMILE to another person**

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## CONCLUSION

In the context of NHS outpatient transformation, with continuing remote consultations, remote monitoring, patient initiated follow up pathways, optimising referrals and workforce shortages in the post pandemic NHS recovery; increasing patients' understanding and education about their disease along with access to supported self-management resources and services is **critical** if we want to see improved patient outcomes. The ability to self-manage, with the right support, is not a 'nice if you can get it', it's an **essential** component of care. This survey of SMILE-RA participants evidences that the programme improves many of the components of patient empowerment.

I very much welcome having you guys to ready to support and help. I'm still fairly new to the whole palaver so information is vital

I have also completed the foundation level of the NRAS Self-Management course SMILE-RA which was helpful, I learnt something from this and would recommend the course to anyone with RA.

*This is a truly amazing resource. It will change lives including mine by enhancing knowledge, pro-activeness, along with wellbeing, particularly mentally and emotionally. Well done and a huge thank you for this ground-breaking effort.*

**"As a rheumatology nursing community, we value any reliable evidence-based resources that we can signpost our patients to in order to provide additional support on understanding their rheumatoid arthritis diagnosis, and welcome the launch of SMILE-RA"**

**Julie Begum – Lead Rheumatology Nurse Specialist at Luton & Dunstable University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Past Chair, Rheumatology Nurse Forum at the Royal College of Nursing**

