



Patient Partners in Rheumatology

OCTOBER 4, 2024 University of Santo Tomas Hospital
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On the morning of Friday, October 4, 2024, Prof Sandra Navarra led an enthusiastic gathering of volunteer medical students, Internal Medicine residents and Rheumatology fellows - with patients at centerstage stepping into the role of teachers, sharing their personal journeys. The day was all about learning, empathy, and supporting those facing the challenges of autoimmune diseases—an experience that left an inspiring impact on everyone involved!



The Battle with Chronic Inflammation

Patients shared their struggles with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and the toll it takes over time. The students listened to real-life stories of how RA can silently impact the cardiovascular system, raising risks for heart attacks and strokes due to hardened arteries. Bone health, too, takes a hit—constant inflammation and steroid use make bones more fragile, increasing the risk of osteoporosis. Together, they explored how lifestyle changes, regular exercise, medication, and regular monitoring can keep these complications at bay.

Mastering Musculoskeletal Examination

The students got a hands-on lesson straight from those who know it best—the patients themselves! They practiced the art of the musculoskeletal physical exam, learning how to detect joint swelling, tenderness, and limited movement. They delved into patterns of joint involvement, discovering the nuances that separate RA from psoriatic arthritis (PsA) and juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA). It was more than a demonstration—it was a practical toolkit for diagnosing and understanding these conditions in their future clinical practice.





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SLE Nephritis: Distinguishing features of Acute Inflammation and Chronic Damage (end-stage renal disease)

An in-depth discussion on lupus nephritis brought students up close with the complexity of kidney health. The patients shared what it's like to live with lupus, especially when it affects the kidneys. Students learned about the delicate distinction between active inflammation and long-term damage, seeing firsthand how important early intervention and close monitoring are for aggressively managing LN flare and protecting kidney function.

Patient Partnership

This event wasn't just a class—it was a partnership, blending heartfelt stories with essential medical knowledge. Through this interactive exchange, future doctors gained insights that will shape their compassionate care for patients. This activity exemplified the power of patient-centered learning, showing how collaboration can bring out the best in healthcare education.

