

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PREDICTING DEPRESSION IN PEOPLE WITH RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS**

**SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 25, 2008** – Disability and a recent diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) are associated with a greater risk for depression according to research funded by the Arthritis Foundation and presented this week at the American College of Rheumatology Annual Scientific Meeting in San Francisco.

Studies show that people with RA who are depressed have worse outcomes – including death – as compared to people with RA who are not depressed. Previous studies regarding RA and depression included a primarily Caucasian population. To remedy this bias, scientists from University of California, San Francisco, designed a study to evaluate predictors of depression in patients from a multiethnic group of people with RA at an urban hospital.

Of the 210 people with RA enrolled in the study, 39 percent had scores on the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 that indicated at least moderate depression. Patient-, disease-, and treatment-related information was gathered to see if any of these factors are associated with depression. The study found that race/ethnicity, disease activity and medications are not associated with depression. The variables associated with depression are shorter disease duration and increased disability as scored on the Health Assessment Questionnaire.

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Lead scientist Mary Margaretten, MD, says, “RA affects people both physically and psychologically. Given that comorbid depressive symptoms are known to worsen health outcomes, it is useful to parse out the determinants of depression in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.”

**About the Arthritis Foundation**

The Arthritis Foundation is the leading health organization addressing the needs of some 46 million Americans living with arthritis, the nation’s most common cause of disability. Founded in 1948, with headquarters in Atlanta, the Arthritis Foundation has multiple service points located throughout the country.

The Arthritis Foundation is the largest private, not-for-profit contributor to arthritis research in the world, funding more than \$400 million in research grants since 1948. Celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the foundation helps individuals take control of arthritis by providing public health education; pursuing public policy and legislation; and conducting evidence-based programs to improve the quality of life for those living with arthritis.

Information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-283-7800 or

[www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org).

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