Prevalence and Incidence
- Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) affects between 0.5 to 1 per cent of the adult population worldwide.
- In China, Japan and Taiwan RA affects 0.3 per cent of the population in each country—or 4 million, 380,000 and 69,000 people respectively.\(^1\,\,^2\,\,^3\)
- In Malaysia, RA affects about 0.5 per cent of adults between the ages of 25 and 50.\(^4\)
- Two to three times as many women as men suffer from the disease.
- RA can start at any age, but the peak age of onset is between 30 and 55 years.

Burden of Disease on Patients
- Treating only the symptoms of RA can reduce a person’s lifespan by about 10 years.\(^5\)
- Work disability among people with RA is significantly higher than in the general population.
- Research has shown that two-thirds of people with RA lose an average of 39 working days each year.\(^6\)
- Another study demonstrated that nearly a quarter of patients with RA experience a reduction in income.\(^7\)

Economic Burden of RA
- In the United States, a systematic review revealed that the average annual medical cost associated with RA is US$5,720 per patient of which in-patient cost is the largest component.\(^8\)
- In Korea, the economic burden of RA is estimated to be US$624.9 million, equivalent to 0.11 per cent of the GNP.\(^9\)
- In Australia, arthritis costs A$24 billion each year in healthcare, lost time at work, shortened lives and years spent with disability.\(^10\)
- In Thailand, the average societal cost of RA is estimated to be US$2,682, 41.4 per cent of a patient’s average annual income. Average direct and indirect costs were estimated to be US$2,135 and US$547 per patient per year, respectively.\(^11\)
REFERENCES: