Millions of us have fought the crippling pain and damage of Rheumatoid Disease with remarkable resilience. We face multiple procedures and harsh treatment side effects with optimism, humor, and compassion.

RD is a serious disease, but symptoms can be visibly subtle, making it difficult to understand. Lack of awareness of RD makes it even more isolating. Too often, even doctors doubt how much RD patients endure.

We understand because we are patients and caregivers who live with RD. Together we will transform the future for everyone diagnosed with the disease.

RPF uses photographs donated by RD patients in all of its literature. Thanks to those who donated photos for use in this brochure.

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Our Vision is a world where no one suffers from Rheumatoid Disease

WHAT IS RHEUMATOID DISEASE?

Rheumatoid Arthritis, or Rheumatoid Disease (RD), is a progressive inflammatory disease that causes damage to organ and joint tissues, producing pain, disability, and deformity. Mortality is significantly increased especially due to its effects upon the heart and lungs.

Researchers believe it is caused by a malfunction of the immune system, which is an extremely complex system of pathways and triggers. The immune system is triggered to attack the patient’s own body as it would an intruding virus.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO LIVE WITH RHEUMATOID DISEASE?

There is variety to the pattern of symptoms that people with RD experience. Sometimes RD attacks only a few joints at a time, allowing a person to adapt to a slight disability. In other people, RD attacks every single joint, requiring drastic lifestyle changes. RD often simultaneously attacks the heart or other organs.

Rheumatoid Disease activity can be classified as mild, moderate, or severe. Patients may experience periodic or constant flare. Common symptoms include: fatigue, joint pain, stiffness, fever, and swelling.

Treatment for RD continues for a lifetime, so medications, tests, and doctor visits become an ordinary part of life. A small percentage of people achieve remission with treatment, but most live with pain and fatigue every day. At least one third of patients have no response to medications available today.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY RHEUMATOID DISEASE?

Prevalence of RD is usually estimated at one to two percent of the total population worldwide. In 2011, Mayo Clinic estimated that the lifetime risk of RA is 3.6 percent or 1 in 28 for women and 1.7 percent or 1 in 59 for men. Mayo Clinic reports at least 1.5 million Americans live with the disease in the U.S. Incidence is increasing, especially in women.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Join the Rheumatoid Patient Foundation now at this address: http://rheum4us.org/about/become-a-member/

WHY DO WE NEED THE RPF?

The RPF is the only organization with the sole purpose of benefiting people with Rheumatoid Disease. Although patient organizations have existed for various other rheumatological conditions or autoimmune diseases, the RPF is the first non-profit organization just for the millions of people living with RD. We endeavor to explicitly represent the needs of RD patients and to advance research to improve and extend their lives.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT RHEUMATOID DISEASE, VISIT rawarrior.com.