

DISEASE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS PATIENTS FROM CROATIA – BASED ON THE SYSTEMIC LUPUS ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE (SLAKE)

ZNANJE HRVATSKIH BOLESNIKA SA SISTEMSKIM ERITEMSKIM LUPUSOM O NJIHOVOJ BOLESTI TEMELJEM UPITNIKA SLAKE (SYSTEMIC LUPUS ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE)

Ivan Padjen ¹, Mislav Čaić ¹, Robert Marčec ¹, Laurent Arnaud ²

¹*Division of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, Referral Centre for SLE and Related Diseases, Department of Internal Medicine, University Hospital Centre Zagreb, University of Zagreb, School of Medicine*

²*Department of Rheumatology, National Reference Centre for Autoimmune Diseases (RESO), Strasbourg Academic Hospitals, Strasbourg, France*

Introduction: The SLAKE is a novel tool developed by an international team of healthcare professionals and patient research partners. It is an online tool assessing knowledge on SLE in 11 domains. SLAKE has been adapted to 19 languages, including Croatian.

Patients and Methods: The SLAKE tool tests knowledge based on a bank of questions pertaining to 11 domains: disease understanding (D1), symptoms recognition (D2), pregnancy and family planning (D3), treatment options and medications management (D4), therapeutic adherence (D5), non-pharmacological management (D6), disease monitoring (D7), flare management (D8), complications and comorbidities (D9), support and resources (D10), communication with healthcare providers (D11). Each domain is scored from 0 to 4, based on responses to four questions. The maximum total SLAKE score is 44. We analysed responses from a sample of Croatian patients collected via an online questionnaire between April and July, 2025.

Results: A total of 88 SLE patients participated in the SLAKE assessment. The mean age was 43.18 years (SD 9.99), median disease duration 12.00 years (5.50-21.00 years). The mean SLAKE score was 37.26 (SD 3.36). The score for each domain ranged between 3 and 4 (IQR 3-4, except for D3, IQR 2-4). A weak negative correlation was identified between the total SLAKE score and age ($r=-0,21$; $p=0,049$), whereas no correlation was found between the total SLAKE score and disease duration. Although there was a positive numerical association between the education level and lupus-related knowledge (median SLAKE score 32 – middle school vs. median score of 39 – doctoral or equivalent level), it was not statistically significant.

Conclusion: The SLAKE tool may help address the knowledge gap in patients living with SLE.

Keywords: patient education, knowledge, systemic lupus erythematosus

E-mail of the main author: ivan_padjen@yahoo.ca

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