

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## ΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΕΚΔΟΤΗ

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ΑΡΧΕΙΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗΣ 2026, 43(2):275–276

### The effect of long-term doctor-patient relationship on treatment outcomes in rheumatology

The study titled “*Long-term doctor-patient relationship in rheumatology: A qualitative study*” published in the *Archives of Hellenic Medicine*<sup>1</sup> provides a valuable contribution in terms of emphasizing the effect of long-term doctor-patient relationship on treatment in the field of rheumatology. In this study, it was stated that 15 patients with chronic rheumatic diseases were categorized and examined according to the duration of doctor-patient relationships.<sup>1</sup> The findings suggest that patients who had been in a relationship with the same physician for more than a decade had significantly better health status, medication adherence, and psychological state.<sup>1</sup>

Previous studies have also shown that long-term relationships strengthen treatment adherence in patients by increasing their trust in their doctors.<sup>2,3</sup> This adherence is not only limited to the effect on treatment outcomes, but it also positively affects the psychosocial status of patients by reducing their stress and anxiety levels.<sup>3,4</sup> However, as

mentioned in the publication in question,<sup>1</sup> the generalizability of the findings is limited due to the small patient population. Therefore, it is important to conduct additional studies in different rheumatological diseases and larger samples.

In clinical applications, it is recommended to adopt strategies to strengthen the patient-doctor relationship.<sup>5</sup> For example, training rheumatologists on effective communication skills, ensuring the active participation of patients in the treatment process, and disseminating patient-oriented thinking approaches can ensure compliance with treatment and achieve remission.<sup>2,5</sup>

In conclusion, this study, published in the *Archives of Hellenic Medicine*<sup>1</sup> presents a valuable finding that emphasizes the importance of long-term doctor-patient relationship in rheumatological practice. Future research should examine in more detail the impact of patient-oriented communication strategies and practices that strengthen the patient-physician relationship on health outcomes. In addition, studies focusing on larger samples and different rheumatological diseases will more comprehensively reveal the contribution of this relationship to the treatment process.

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#### Key words

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**ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ****Η επίδραση της μακροχρόνιας σχέσης ιατρού-ασθενούς στα αποτελέσματα της θεραπείας στη Ρευματολογία**

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*Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Faculty of Medicine, Bezmialem Vakif University, Istanbul, Turukia**Αρχεία Ελληνικής Ιατρικής 2026, 43(2):275–276***Λέξεις ευρετηρίου:** Μακροχρόνια θεραπεία, Σχέση ιατρού-ασθενούς, Ρευματολογία**References**

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