Incidence Rate of Biologic/Targeted Synthetic (b/ts) Disease Modifying Antirheumatic Drugs (DMARDs) for Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), Preceding Therapy and Time to Discontinuation in a Commercially Insured Population

**Background**

- In 2014, the incidence rate of b/tsDMARDs for RA was 4.0 per 100,000 members.
- Of the 26,098 members with RA, 10,143 (37.4%) had three or more b/tsDMARD switches.
- The validated cost effective triple csDMARD therapy, defined as MTX+HCQ+SSZ, was found to be rarely attempted, at only 5%.
- One in eight members newly initiating a b/tsDMARD had no csDMARD claim in the preceding 12 months even though a csDMARD is needed if b/tsDMARD therapy was not initiated.

**Methods**

- A retrospective claims study was performed on members newly starting b/tsDMARD therapy in 2014 and followed for 36 months.
- The study included all members continuously enrolled from 2013 through 2016 with RA medical claims in 2014.
- The study excluded members who had any days covered by a csDMARD within 30 days of their first b/tsDMARD supply.
- The study also excluded members who had a csDMARD prior to their first b/tsDMARD supply.
- The study analyzed the incidence of b/tsDMARD therapy in 2014 and followed members for 36 months.

**Results**

- The incidence of b/tsDMARD therapy in 2014 was 4.0 per 100,000 members.
- Of the 26,098 members with RA, 10,143 (37.4%) had three or more b/tsDMARD switches.
- The validated cost effective triple csDMARD therapy, defined as MTX+HCQ+SSZ, was found to be rarely attempted, at only 5%.
- One in eight members newly initiating a b/tsDMARD had no csDMARD claim in the preceding 12 months even though a csDMARD is needed if b/tsDMARD therapy was not initiated.

**Conclusions**

- The validated cost effective triple csDMARD therapy, defined as MTX+HCQ+SSZ, was found to be rarely attempted, at only 5%.
- One in eight members newly initiating a b/tsDMARD had no csDMARD claim in the preceding 12 months even though a csDMARD is needed if b/tsDMARD therapy was not initiated.

**References**