Rheumatic diseases affecting joints, tendons, ligaments, bones, and muscles fall into the category of chronic rheumatic conditions. This includes many types of arthritis. Sometimes these conditions are called musculoskeletal diseases. Rheumatic or musculoskeletal conditions consist of over 150 diseases and syndromes. They are usually progressive and associated with pain. They can broadly be categorized as joint diseases, physical disability, spinal disorders, and conditions resulting from trauma. Musculoskeletal conditions are the leading causes of morbidity and disability. This gives rise to enormous healthcare expenditures and loss of work.

Common symptoms include:
- Joint pain
- Loss of motion in a joint or joints
- Inflammation – swelling, redness, and warmth in a joint or affected area

A Rheumatologist will examine to diagnose the condition. The treatment plan will likely include medications, regular exercise, a healthy diet, stress management, and rest.

**Cause of Rheumatic disease**
Most of these rheumatic disease conditions occur when the immune system goes off course and attacks their tissues. The exact cause of it is still under investigation. Genes play a major role in this condition. Also cigarette smoke, pollution, infections and gender are other causes that are seen to cause it. Rheumatic diseases are seen among women more than men.

Conditions with the greatest impact on society include -
**Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)**

Rheumatoid Arthritis is a chronic systemic disease that affects the joints, connective tissues, muscle, tendons, and fibrous tissue when the immune system attacks the own tissues. It tends to strike during the most productive years of adulthood. This is a chronic disabling condition often causing pain and deformity between the ages of 20 and 40. This is not a part of normal ageing.

The prevalence varies between 0.3% and 1%. It is more common in women and developed countries. Within 10 years of onset, at least 50% of patients in developed countries are unable to hold down a full-time job.

**Symptoms**
- Pain and swelling in multiple joints (usually the same joints on both sides of your body)
- Problems in other organs such as the eyes and lungs
- Joint stiffness, especially in the morning
- Fatigue
- Lumps called rheumatoid nodules

**Diagnosis**
Physical examination and history help the diagnosis. X-rays and samples of your joint fluid will help the diagnosis. Blood tests that look for different signs of inflammation are:
- Antinuclear antibody (ANA)
- Anti-cyclic citrullinated peptides (anti-CCP)
- Complete blood count
- C-reactive protein (CRP)
- Erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR)
- Rheumatoid factor (RF)

**Osteoarthritis**
Osteoarthritis is a degenerative joint disease, which mainly affects the articular cartilage. It is not linked to the immune system. It is associated with ageing. Most likely it will affect the joints that have been continually stressed throughout the years including the knees, hips, fingers, and lower spine region. As the
disease progresses the joint hurts which makes it harder to move. Osteoarthritis is one of the ten most disabling diseases in developed countries. Farming 1-9 years increases the risk of osteoarthritis 4.5 times; farming 10 or more years increases the risk 9.3 times. Worldwide estimates are that 9.6% of men and 18.0% of women aged over 60 years have symptomatic osteoarthritis. 80% of those with osteoarthritis will have limitations in movement, and 25% cannot perform their major daily activities of life.

Symptoms
- Pain
- Swelling
-Warmth
-Stiffness

Muscle weakness will make the joints unstable. Depending on the body part it affects, OA can make it hard to walk, grip objects, dress, comb hair, or sit.

Diagnosis
Medical history and symptoms play an important role. A physical examination too will help to confirm the diagnosis. Blood tests and a sample of fluid from the affected joint will help the diagnosis. At the time of treatment usually, changes are visible on X-Ray of the affected joint. The X-ray may show a narrowing of the joint space or the presence of bone spurs. In some cases, MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) to provide a picture of the inside of the joint will be helpful for confirmation.

Spinal Disorders
Many conditions and injuries can affect the spine, which can damage the vertebrae, cause pain, and limit mobility. Spinal Disorders include trauma, mechanical injury, spinal cord injury, inflammation, infection, and tumour. About 80–85% of back pain episodes have no known cause. The spinal disorders are divided as:
- Degenerative spine and disc conditions as Arthritis, Degenerative disc disease, Herniated disc, Spinal stenosis and Spondylosis
- Other spine conditions and disorders as Ankylosing spondylitis. Back pain, Chronic spine and back pain, Kyphosis. Neck pain, Scheuermann’s kyphosis, Scoliosis, Spinal cord cancer, Spinal deformities, Spinal fracture, Spinal tumors and Spondylolisthesis

Low back pain, the most common spinal disorder, affects over 80% of persons at some point in their life, and from 4–33% of a population at any one time. Back pain is the most common cause of disability among young adults. Many factors, physical, psychological and occupational, contribute to the occurrence of back pain.

Diagnosis
Physical examination, family and medical history, sign symptoms and risk factors and neurological examination will help to diagnosis. Also Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan to detect injuries and disorders in soft tissue such as muscles, ligaments, tendons, spinal cord, and nerves, Computed tomography (CT) scan for evaluating bone injuries or disorders, X-ray for bone problems such as fractures, other injuries, and chronic disorders, Biopsy in case of suspected cancer, and Electromyography (EMG) to assess the electric activity will confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment
- Back bracing
- Cancer treatment such as surgery to remove tumours, radiation therapy, radiosurgery, and chemotherapy
- Ice or heat therapy for injuries
- Injections, such as corticosteroids or nerve blocks, for pain
- Medications such as anti-inflammatories, pain relievers, or muscle relaxers
- Rehabilitation using physical therapy to strengthen and stretch the back and abdominal muscles
- Surgery to replace discs, fuse (connect) vertebrae, open up the spinal canal, or repair nerves

Severe limb trauma
Severe limb trauma that can result in permanent disability. This includes amputations, fractures, crushing injuries, dislocations, open wounds, blood vessel and nerve injuries. In developed countries, serious limb trauma requiring hospitalization arises 50% of the time from falls, 15–20% from road traffic accidents, and about 20% from machinery and tool usage. The highest rates for limb trauma occur in two distinct age groups those 5–34 years of age and those over 75 years of age. In the elderly, falls represent the greatest threat for incurring limb injury, while road traffic accidents present the highest risk factor for adolescents and young adults.

Social consequences of these diseases constitute limitations in performing roles relating to working life as well as family and social life caused by the disease, mainly chronic. The type of limitations may be temporary or permanent. Disability as a result of the chronic process of the disease or injury is a particular type of social effects. Social implications of the disease can be analyzed in the following terms:
- physical and biological – as limitations in performing regular life functions,
- professional – meaning limitations in the ability to work or complete incapacity for work,
- Legal – acquisition of entitlement to benefits defined in relevant legal acts, e.g. disability pensions, sickness benefits.

Compiled by
Dr. T. D. Haputhanthri, Medical Officer, Epidemiology Unit

Source
World Health Organization. Chronic diseases and health promotion
https://www.who.int/chp/topics/rheumatic/en/
WebMD Rheumatology and Rheumatic Diseases: https://www.webmd.com/rheumatoid-arthritis/an-overview-of-rheumatic-diseases#6
Table 1: Selected notifiable diseases reported by Medical Officers of Health 31st - 06th Sep 2019 (36th Week)

| Division   | A  | B   | C   | D  | E  | F  | G  | H  | I  | J  | K  | L  | M  | N  | O  | P  | Q  | R  | S  |
|------------|----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Colombo    | 297| 9460| 3  | 42  | 0  | 9  | 0  | 18 | 0  | 50 | 1  | 153| 0  | 8  | 0  | 8  | 0  | 7  | 351| 1  |
| Gampaha    | 280| 7540| 0  | 30  | 1  | 7  | 0  | 15 | 0  | 25 | 2  | 73 | 0  | 3  | 0  | 7  | 1  | 3  | 328| 0  | 19  |
| Kandy      | 179| 4685| 1  | 60  | 0  | 16 | 0  | 58 | 21 | 415| 1  | 6  | 0  | 10 | 1  | 10 | 0  | 1  | 511| 0  | 198 |
| Matara     | 139| 2856| 0  | 82  | 0  | 10 | 0  | 15 | 0  | 32 | 0  | 19 | 0  | 6  | 0  | 4  | 0  | 27 | 0  | 104 |
| Kandy      | 139| 2856| 0  | 82  | 0  | 10 | 0  | 15 | 0  | 32 | 0  | 19 | 0  | 6  | 0  | 4  | 0  | 27 | 0  | 104 |
| Matale     | 12  | 420 | 0  | 24  | 0  | 3  | 1  | 0  | 6  | 0  | 41 | 1  | 6  | 0  | 7  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 72 | 0  |
| Nuwara Eliya | 8  | 175 | 1  | 92  | 0  | 2  | 0  | 8  | 0  | 3  | 1  | 38 | 0  | 5  | 8  | 0  | 7  | 1  | 105 | 3  | 36  |
| Galle      | 120| 4659| 2  | 39  | 0  | 7  | 0  | 3  | 0  | 5  | 14 | 317| 4  | 43 | 2  | 40  | 0  | 9  | 340| 0  | 29  |
| Habarana   | 43  | 1211| 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 3  | 0  | 2  | 7  | 0  | 3  | 20 | 0  |
| Matale     | 81  | 2361| 0  | 18  | 0  | 4  | 0  | 2  | 0  | 16 | 12 | 295| 1  | 32  | 0  | 16  | 0  | 1  | 6  | 237| 0  |
| Jaffna     | 19  | 2184| 9  | 190 | 0  | 13 | 0  | 23 | 0  | 19 | 76 | 1  | 28  | 4  | 272 | 0  | 4  | 0  | 1  | 150 | 0  |
| Kegalle    | 3  | 124 | 0  | 17  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 11 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 19  | 0  | 25 | 0  | 1  | 3  | 217| 0  |
| Galle      | 1  | 79  | 1  | 8  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Mullaitivu | 0  | 218 | 3  | 22  | 0  | 10 | 0  | 24 | 0  | 13  | 0 | 53 | 0  | 5  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  | 217| 0  |
| Batticaloa | 21  | 1108| 5  | 11 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Mullaitivu | 9  | 195 | 4  | 57 | 0  | 2  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Matara     | 27  | 659 | 2  | 62  | 0  | 16 | 0  | 6  | 0  | 30 | 0  | 8  | 0  | 13 | 0  | 33 | 0  | 3  | 11 | 22  |
| Polonnaruwa | 9  | 498 | 3  | 41  | 0  | 8  | 0  | 4  | 0  | 11 | 1  | 100| 0  | 33 | 22 | 0  | 2  | 4  | 43 | 0  |
| Tissamaharama | 27  | 659 | 2  | 62  | 0  | 16 | 0  | 6  | 0  | 30 | 0  | 8  | 0  | 13 | 0  | 33 | 0  | 3  | 11 | 22  |
| Polonnaruwa | 85  | 2183| 0  | 32  | 0  | 10 | 0  | 27 | 0  | 8  | 0  | 13 | 0  | 28 | 0  | 2  | 0  | 28 | 0  | 23  |
| Ratnapura  | 17  | 1262| 0  | 32  | 0  | 10 | 0  | 27 | 0  | 8  | 0  | 13 | 0  | 28 | 0  | 2  | 0  | 28 | 0  | 23  |
| Kegalle    | 57  | 1262| 0  | 32  | 0  | 10 | 0  | 27 | 0  | 8  | 0  | 13 | 0  | 28 | 0  | 2  | 0  | 28 | 0  | 23  |
| Kandy      | 8  | 593 | 0  | 62  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 55 | 0  | 27 | 0  | 3  | 0  | 3  | 0  | 0  | 10 | 191|

Source: Weekly Returns of Communicable Diseases (WRCD). A: No. of cases reported during the current week. B: Cumulative cases for the year.
### Table 2: Vaccine-Preventable Diseases & AFP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>No. of Cases by Province</th>
<th>Number of cases during current week in 2019</th>
<th>Number of cases during same week in 2018</th>
<th>Total number of cases to date in 2019</th>
<th>Total number of cases to date in 2018</th>
<th>Difference between the number of cases to date in 2019 &amp; 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFP*</td>
<td>W C S N E NW NC U Sab</td>
<td>01 00 01 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 02 00 56 43 23.2 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diphtheria</td>
<td>00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 02 241 89 170.7 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumps</td>
<td>00 00 01 01 01 01 00 02 00 06 04 246 247 - 0.4 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles</td>
<td>03 01 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 02 241 89 170.7 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubella</td>
<td>00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 02 241 89 170.7 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS**</td>
<td>00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 02 241 89 170.7 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetanus</td>
<td>01 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 02 241 89 170.7 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonatal Tetanus</td>
<td>00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 02 241 89 170.7 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Encephalitis</td>
<td>00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 02 241 89 170.7 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whooping Cough</td>
<td>00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 02 241 89 170.7 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>94 21 00 00 07 11 20 10 02 10 175 159 5674 5927 - 4.2 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key to Table 1 & 2

**Provinces:**  

**RDHS Divisions:**  

**Data Sources:**  

CRS** = Congenital Rubella Syndrome

NA = Not Available

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### Dengue Prevention and Control Health Messages

**Look for plants such as bamboo, bohemia, rampe and banana in your surroundings and maintain them free of water collection.**

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**ON STATE SERVICE**

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