

Outpatient Case

Ms. Medrano works as a hairdresser in Albuquerque. Seven months ago she began noticing stiffness in both hands in the morning that lasted longer and longer. Stiffness now lasts more than 1 hour every morning and includes her hands, wrists, and ankles. She also has increasing difficulty standing for long periods of time at work or at home due to foot and ankle pain. She began taking ibuprofen 800mg 3 times a day and it had helped her to get through the day with less pain and stiffness.

Three months ago, Ms. Medrano noticed pain in her right and left shoulders when she would cut or blow dry her client's hair. She also began feeling extremely tired and short tempered. She had no energy to do her usual activities. Ibuprofen was no longer effective for her pain and stiffness.

One morning, Ms. Medrano could not lift her arms at all without extreme shoulder pain. She decided to make this appointment with you.

What symptoms stand out or are concerning to you?

What follow up questions would you like to ask now that you have more history?

What would you focus on during the exam and what might you expect to find?

What is your differential diagnosis at this point?

What are your top diagnoses? What makes them most likely?

How does fibromyalgia differ?

What history and exam findings would be more consistent with osteoarthritis?

What presentation would be more consistent with gout?

What lab work would you order?

WBC was 11.4, Hgb and Hct were 12.9 and 44, platelets were 422. Chemistry and LFTs were normal.

TSH was normal.

ANA was also positive with a 1:40 titer and speckled pattern.

The blood tests showed a positive rheumatoid factor (1,060), CCP antibodies (131.4), elevated ESR (96) and CRP (4.7).

Hep B surface antigen was NR and Hep B surface antibody titer was < 3. Hep C antibody was nonreactive, quantiferon GOLD was nonreactive.

How do you interpret these results?

What imaging studies would you order?

What about this patient's presentation is typical of the epidemiology and presentation of rheumatoid arthritis?

What is the diagnostic criteria for rheumatoid arthritis?

What are the extra-articular manifestations of rheumatoid arthritis?

Ms. Medrano was referred to a rheumatologist, however, in the interim, you discussed with her that her diagnosis was rheumatoid arthritis and decided to begin treatment.

What treatment might you start?

When is methotrexate contraindicated?

What are other DMARDs?