

ABSTRACT

An unmatched case-control study was conducted in order to investigate some of the risk factors contributing to the development of Rheumatoid Arthritis in adult females. The study included 106 cases of Rheumatoid Arthritis, in conformity with the American Rheumatism Association Revised criteria of 1988, and 212 controls, comprising a wide spectrum of surgical and E.N.T. patients. The study was carried out between July and September, at the Colombo and Colombo South General Hospitals.

The cases were selected from the rheumatology clinics of the two hospitals. The controls were chosen from the surgical and E.N.T. clinics of these two hospitals, using a systematic sampling technique.

Data on demographic and socio-economic factors and specific information on stress, urinary tract infections and family history of Rheumatoid Arthritis were collected with the aid of an interviewer administered questionnaire. The information was collected by the principal investigator and three trained investigators.

A univariate analysis revealed that age, stress and a family history of the disease were significant risk factors of the disease. The past history of a urinary tract infection on the other hand, was not a significant risk factor of Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Multivariate analysis showed that age was not a confounder for the association between stress, family history and Rheumatoid Arthritis.