

Pursuing Remission in the Asia-Pacific Region

Inflammatory rheumatic conditions place a heavy burden on patients. But remission – the disappearance of a disease’s signs and symptoms – can transform daily life by reducing pain and fatigue, restoring normal routines and improving overall well-being. Yet in the Asia-Pacific region, many barriers stand in the way of remission.

Patient advocates and other stakeholders across the Asia-Pacific region gathered to discuss barriers and solutions to achieving remission. The Global Remission Coalition is committed to shedding light on these challenges and advocacy priorities so patients across the region can access the full benefits of remission.



Barriers to Achieving Remission

While early diagnosis and timely treatment are proven to improve outcomes, patients in the Asia-Pacific region often face systemic obstacles:



Community provider limitations:

General practitioners are often excluded from remission strategies.



Shortage of specialists:

Workforce shortages in rheumatology lead to long waits for appointments, poor consultation quality and delayed diagnoses.



Knowledge gaps:

Patients and providers often aren’t up to date with symptom recognition and treatment techniques. Online misinformation can exacerbate these misunderstandings. In Taiwan, confusion around whether to trust traditional medicine or modern therapies can harm adherence and outcomes.



“Invisible” burdens:

Comorbidities such as depression, anxiety, fatigue and sleep disruption are often overlooked.



Access barriers:

“Generic-first” policies leave patients without access to innovative treatments. In Malaysia, patients have expressed frustration around a system that discourages the use of innovative therapies.



Financial strain:

High costs can leave treatments out of reach. Patients in Singapore recognize that middle-income groups often fall through the cracks: they are not wealthy enough to absorb treatment costs easily, yet are not eligible for subsidies.



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Advocacy Priorities

To overcome these barriers and help patients pursue remission, advocates are calling for:



Coordinated systems of care:

The first step in strengthening remission is defining it consistently across specialties. Expanding prevention tools to community providers and ensuring a multidisciplinary approach across the care spectrum will support a holistic approach toward remission.



Shared decision-making:

Involving patients in conversations about therapy selection, side-effect management and relapse prevention improves adherence and strengthens trust. In Australia, advocacy organization Dragon Claw's MyNumbers platform allows patients to track results and discuss them with providers.



Greater health system capacity:

To close the knowledge gap, health professionals should receive refresher training in remission surveillance, side-effect monitoring and lifestyle coaching. In Korea, online training programs are underway to close these gaps.



Patient empowerment:

When patients have high-quality information, they are better equipped to advocate for themselves. In Taiwan, local groups are focusing on patient education.



Stronger patient communities:

Patients shouldn't have to navigate their remission journey alone. Hong Kong uses awareness activities and patient meetups to build community and improve mental health outcomes.



Documented comorbidities:

Systemic documentation of fatigue, anxiety and depression could provide the evidence base needed to persuade policymakers to invest in remission.

GRC Asia-Pacific Members



The Path Forward

The sooner remission is achieved, the sooner patients and health systems can reap the benefits. But every region is different. By focusing on region-specific barriers and priorities, policymakers in the Asia-Pacific region can better meet patient needs and advance the pursuit of remission.



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