

# Understanding the Patient Perspective in Living With and Treating Spondyloarthritis

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## CONCLUSIONS

Understanding the needs of spondyloarthritis patients provides significant opportunities for rheumatologists and primary care physicians to better support and educate their patients. Areas to consider include discussing potential treatment options, listening to specific patient concerns, and acknowledging the mental health challenges. Results suggest that wide-ranging, empathetic, and personal conversations at appointments play a role in patient satisfaction, potentially contributing to better outcomes for patients.

## BACKGROUND

Spondyloarthritis (SpA), the group of conditions that includes ankylosing spondylitis, psoriatic arthritis, and non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis, among others, can lead to symptoms of pain, stiffness, and swelling. The burden of disease can affect patients' quality of life.

## OBJECTIVES

Patient research was undertaken to explore the impact of spondyloarthritis on quality of life, patients' ability to manage the disease, as well as experiences with health-care providers (HCP). Better understanding is crucial to improving HCP-patient interactions, helping patients to the right treatment path, and improving health outcomes.

## METHOD

In July 2022, an email invitation to an online survey was sent to members of MySpondylitisTeam, a social network of over 88,000 people. In total, 361 members completed the 25-question survey. All respondents were 21 or older and self-reported as having a diagnosis from a doctor for spondyloarthritis.



## RESULTS

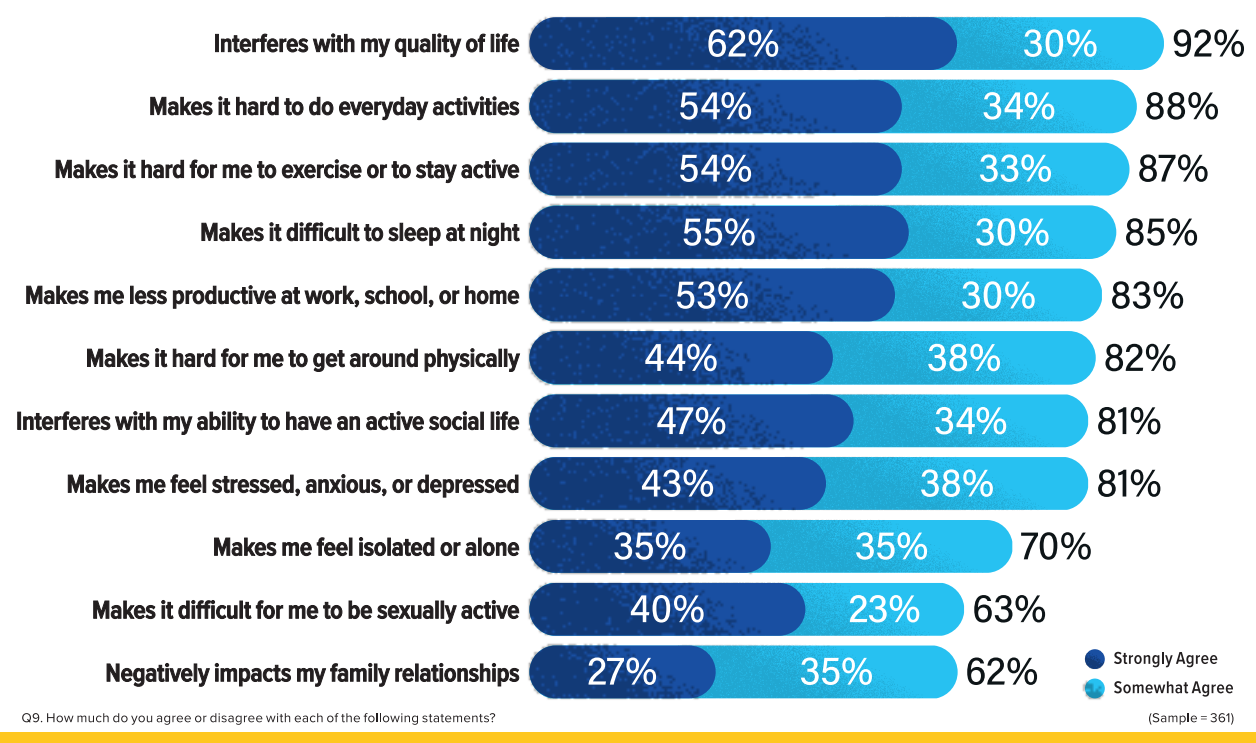
92% of members report that spondyloarthritis interrupts their quality of life (62% strongly agree and 30% somewhat agree). SpA takes both a physical and emotional toll. 88% report it makes it hard to do everyday activities (54% strongly agree and 34% somewhat agree). **(Figure 1)**

Symptoms extend well beyond lower back, joint and hip pain (92%, 84%, and 83% experienced in the past year respectively). Virtually all experience fatigue (91%). **(Figure 2)** Additionally many have experienced symptoms of depression (63%) or anxiety (61%) in the past year.

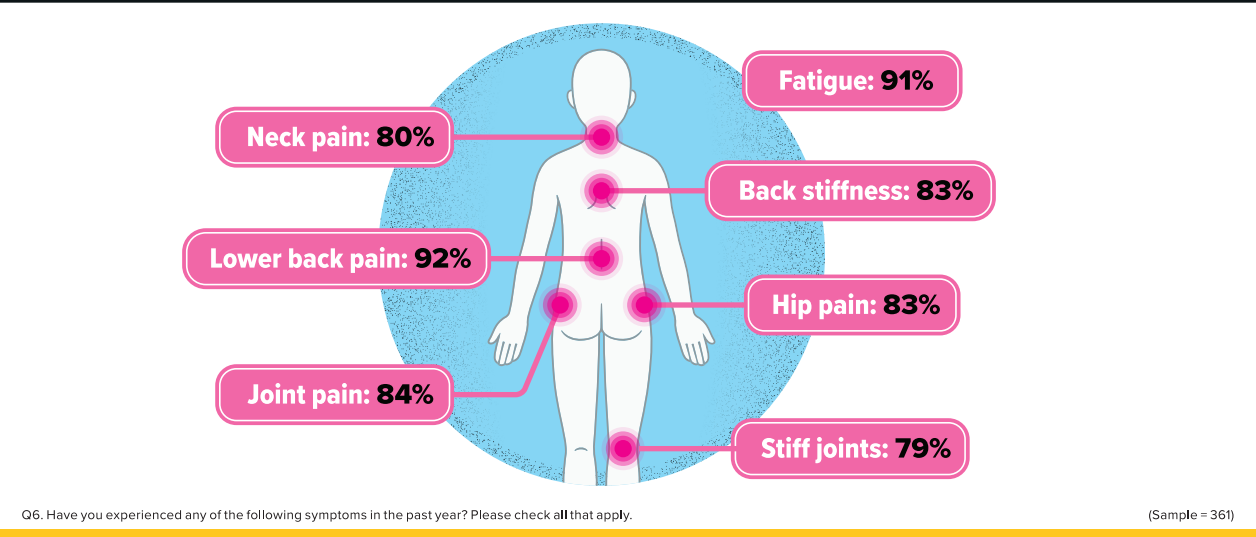
At the same time, just 52% believe they can ask doctors and have meaningful discussions about SpA and how best to manage it (27% strongly agree and 25% somewhat agree). **(Figure 3)** Only 35% are extremely or very satisfied with the care they receive from the doctor who primarily treats their SpA, while 34% are somewhat satisfied and 31% are not very or not at all satisfied. **(Figure 4)**

Overall, 38% indicate that the doctor recommends treatment based on their personal needs, and 36% indicate that the doctor addresses their SpA symptoms. However, results show large differences based on satisfaction with their HCPs. Respondents who are most satisfied with their doctors feel that they have had more detailed and personal discussions covering more facets of care than those who are only somewhat satisfied or not satisfied. For example, among those extremely or very satisfied with their HCP, 72% say the doctor listens to them and understands their specific needs, compared with 27% of those somewhat satisfied, and just 1% of those not very or not at all satisfied. **(Figure 5).**

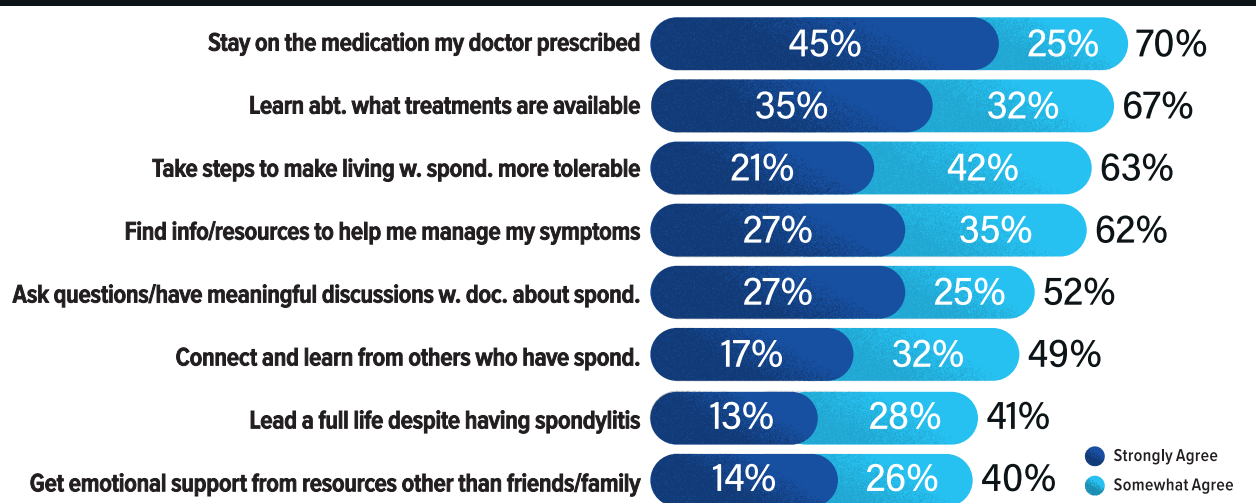
**FIGURE 1.** Impact of Spondylitis on Quality of Life (% Strongly/Somewhat Agree)



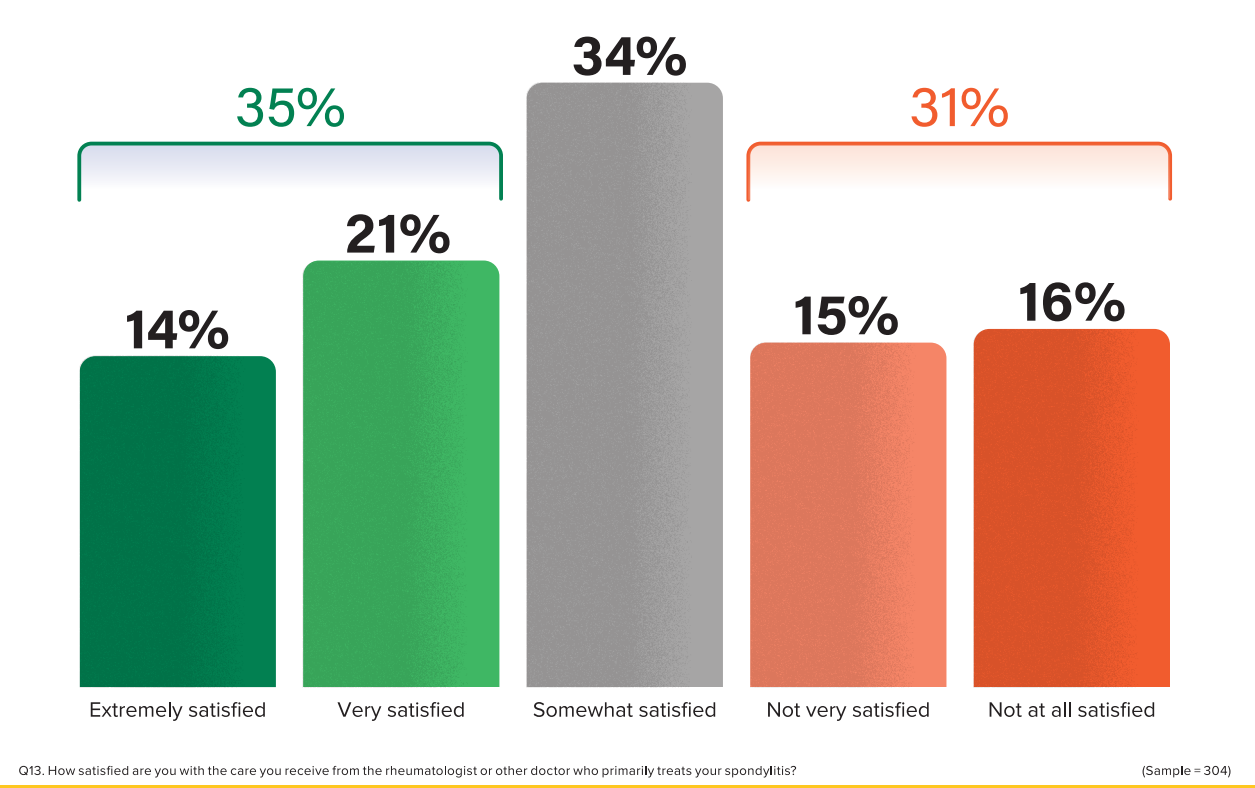
**FIGURE 2.** Most Common Symptoms Experienced in the Past Year



**FIGURE 3.** Managing Spondylitis (% Strongly/Somewhat Agree)



**FIGURE 4.** Satisfaction Among Those Seeing a Doctor



**FIGURE 5.** Doctor Discussions Based on Satisfaction Levels

