

INTRODUCTION

Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic inflammatory arthritis of unknown origin, involving multiple joints and characterized by a tendency for spontaneous remissions and subsequent relapses (Silberberg, 1985).

Articular synovial tissue is the target, but the synovial membranes of tendon sheaths, joint recesses and bursae are also disturbed (Gardner, 1986).

It is a well established fact that common diseases are subject to considerable variation in incidence and expression due to incidence of certain geographical factors (Lawrence et al., 1966).

Rheumatoid arthritis can be found almost everywhere in the world if it is looked for, although the prevalence and manifestations of the disease vary widely between different populations and countries due to genetic and environmental factors (Hadidi et al., 1987).

Now, rheumatoid arthritis, a one time rarity, is increasingly recognized in Africans. The Ugandan experience is typical. An early report was followed by progressively larger series, culminating in a review of no less than 404

patients with classical rheumatoid arthritis, the largest series by far to come out of Africa. Reports from other African countries have mirrored the Ugandan experience (McGill, 1991).

AIM OF THE WORK

The aim of this work is to find out the pattern of rheumatoid arthritis in the Egyptian patients, pattern of rheumatoid arthritis in male and female patients, pattern of rheumatoid arthritis in different ages, and pattern of seropositive and seronegative rheumatoid arthritis.