Do orthopaedic surgeons and rheumatologists use similar techniques for intra-articular knee steroid injections?

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**Background:** Intra-articular corticosteroid injections (IACI) are a common treatment used by orthopaedic surgeons and rheumatologists for the management of arthritic knee pain. Our study’s purpose was to observe if there were particular components of an IACI that were used more frequently than others since there is currently no standardization for an IACI.

**Methods:** The survey was administered electronically to 272 orthopaedic surgeons in the state of Louisiana. The survey was later administered to 75 rheumatologists in Louisiana in the same fashion. Data was received and analyzed using statistical methods. This study was granted IRB approval.

**Results:** There was a 22% (60 of 272 surveys) response rate amongst orthopaedic surgeons and a 33% (25 of 75 surveys) response rate amongst rheumatologists. Triamcinolone was the most commonly used steroid. 45% of orthopaedic surgeons and 68% of rheumatologists reported its use. Lidocaine was the most prevalent anesthetic with 57% of orthopaedic surgeons and 64% of rheumatologists using this. 27% of orthopaedic surgeons and 44% of rheumatologists reported using the combination of triamcinolone and 1% lidocaine. 93% of surgeons and 80% of rheumatologists use a 1.5 inch needle. 53% of responding orthopaedic surgeons use a 22 guage needle. 56% of rheumatologists reported a 25 guage needle and 28% reported using a 22 guage needle.

**Discussion/Conclusions:** Our evidence supports that triamcinolone and lidocaine are the most prevalent steroid and anesthetic components, respectively, amongst orthopaedic surgeons and rheumatologists in Louisiana. The combination of the two is the most commonly used combination amongst physicians in Louisiana. This study is unique because no previous studies examine physician behavior or trends on such a common procedure, and there is a need for standardization based on evidence-based medicine. Such standardization has the potential to improve quality of care and reduce cost.