Background/Purpose: Ethnic differences are well documented in patients with arthritis; however, there are no such studies in patients with gout. We sought to compare gout characteristics, health-related quality of life (HRQOL), and health care utilization (HCU) between Caucasian (Cau) and Non-Caucasian (Non-Cau) patients with gout in a cross-sectional US observational study.

Methods: Data were obtained from patients who participated in a cross-sectional validation study of a gout-specific HRQOL instrument. Patients completed the SF-36 v2 and the Gout Impact Scale (GIS), which assesses impact of gout during an attack and overall (each scale 0 to 100 [greater gout impact]), and reported gout characteristics, comorbidities, demographics, and gout-related HCU over past year. Differences were evaluated using Student t-test and chi-square analyses.

Results: Of the 308 patients, 220 (71%) were Caucasian, 37 (12%) were African American, 16 (5%) were Asian, 17 (6%) indicated Other, and 18 (6%) did not specify. The Cau vs. Non-Cau sample was older (63 vs. 58, p=0.01), and had a greater proportion of males (92% vs. 83%, p=0.02) and longer duration of gout (15 vs. 11 years, p=0.05). Non-Cau appeared to have poorer gout control—higher sUA level, greater percentage of subjects experiencing attack in past 3 months, and higher pain rating for worst attack (all p<0.05). No significant difference in SF-36 or HCU was observed. However, non-Cau had significantly higher (worse, p<0.05) scores for 3 of the 5 GIS scales.

Conclusion: In this cohort, Non-Cau appeared to have poorer gout control and experienced greater impact of gout on their HRQOL. Future studies should explore possible ethnic differences and explanatory factors.

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