BACKGROUND
There has been increasing focus on the importance of patients participating in the treatment decision-making process with their physicians. Previous research has demonstrated that effective physician-patient communication, a key component of shared decision-making, has a positive impact on patient satisfaction and adherence to therapy.

OBJECTIVE
To describe the shared decision-making process between patients and physicians when initiating biologic therapy for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) from the patient's perspective.

METHODS
Patients self-reporting a diagnosis of RA completed a self-administered, internet-based questionnaire, a modified version of the Patient Decision Aids Scale, at the time of initial consultation. A total of 2,138 respondents (76% female, mean age 56.4) completed the questionnaire. Demographics of respondents are provided in Table I.

RESULTS
Among patients currently treated with biologic therapy (n=434), discussions about biologic therapy were most often initiated by a rheumatologist (91%); only a small proportion of patients reported that a primary care physician (4%), the patient (3%), or another person (2%) initiated the discussion. Figure 2. Persons Initiating Discussions About Biologic Therapy (n=434)

CONCLUSIONS
Rheumatologists are best positioned to ensure patients have the necessary information to actively engage in the shared decision-making process for initiating biologic therapy. Rheumatologists most often initiate the discussion about biologic therapy, and patients' decisions are most influenced by the advice or recommendation of their physician.

REFERENCE

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