Supplementary file 3 EQPERA data quality assurance reporting tool

Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity	
Item	Guide questions/description
Researcher characteristics	
1. Interviewer / moderator/observer	Who conducted the interviews/ focus groups? (who observed the focus groups?) ►Maximum 2 interviewers at t_1 and t_2 /country and maximum 1 moderator at t_2/country ►Preferably the same observer(s) for each focus group
2. Credentials / background	What were the researcher's credentials? (e.g., PhD, RN)
3. Occupation	What were the researcher's occupation at the time of the study?
4. Gender	Was the researcher male or female?
5. Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?
Relationship with participants	
6. Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencements? (e.g., health professional)
7. Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participant know about the researcher? (e.g., personal goals, reasons for doing the research)
8. Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/moderator/observer? (e.g., bias, assumptions, reasons and interest in the research topic)
Domain 2: Study design (a longitudinal, qualitative, explorative study)	
Participant selection	
9. Sampling	How were participants selected (e.g., purposively) Mono or multicenter sampling? Type of recruitment center(s)? (i.e., academic hospital, general hospital or private practice)
10. Method of approach	Who invited the participants? How were participants approached? (e.g., face to face, telephone, mail, email)
11. Sample size	How many participants were in the study? ♦at t_1: number of individual interviews ♦at t_2: number of participants per focus group / number of individual interviews
12. Non-participation	How many eligible patients could potentially be recruited? How many people were approached and how many of them refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons? (if shared) ♦Not interested in participation (refusal) ♦Drop out (type 1): in case t_1 interview was scheduled and cancelled ♦Not interested in participation at t_2 (drop out, type 2) ♦Not interested in participation in a focus group, but willing to participate in an individual interview instead at t_2 ♦Drop out (type 3): in case t_2 interview was scheduled and cancelled

Setting	
13. Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected?
14. Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participant and researchers?
15. Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? (e.g., demographic data)
Data collection	
16. Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was the interview guide pilot tested? Is it being made available?
17. Focus group guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was the interview guide pilot tested? Is it being made available?
18. Audio / visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?
19. Data collection method	How were the data collected? (t_2: focus group or individual interview?) Were repeat interviews carried out at t_2?
20. Field notes	Were field notes made during and/ or after the interview or focus group? ►if yes, please record them in the descriptive or methodological interview report. Were short reports prepared after each interview?
21. Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus groups?
22. Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed? After how many interviews was data saturation reached? (Definition in EQPERA: “if the last 3 interviews do not provide new information, insights or additional understanding to accomplish the study aims”)
Domain 3: Analysis and findings	
Data analysis	
23. Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data? Who coded the data?
24. Independent coding	Was the analysis repeated by more than 1 researcher to ensure reliability?
25. Data analysis method	How were themes and concepts identified from the data? (e.g., Were themes identified in advance (framework-based) or derived from the data (data-driven)?)
26. Patient research partners	Did patient research partners provide feedback on the findings, and in which part(s) of the data analysis were they involved?
27. Software	What software was used to manage the data?
Reporting	
28. Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quote identified? (e.g., participant number, gender, age)
29. Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?
30. Clarity of themes	Were themes clearly presented in the findings?

Domain 4: Data management strategies

Data recording	
31. Recording changes and decisions	Were changes to the interview guide, the evolution in themes, deviations from the research protocol, and major local project decisions carefully documented along with the rationale for change? ►to recall decisions ►the use of a research log book is recommended
32. Recording interview data	Did you record the data with at least 2 audio recorders? ►to prevent missing data
Data storing	
33. Routinely storing of data	Was the data (e.g., audio files, transcripts, interview reports and field notes, patient-reported and clinical data, informed consents) or the project database routinely submitted to a central data repository or a secured cloud storage system? ►to avoid missing data and to easily manage large amounts of data like in qualitative research ►a uniform transcript header and file name could facilitate data storing (e.g., T1.number of interview.ddmmyyyy.initials of interviewer)
Data check	
34. Internal audit	Could the evidence (field notes, interview transcripts, recordings, reasons for interview guide adaptations,…) be inspected by others?
35. Preventing missing data	Did the principal investigator routinely check for missing data?
Data collection	
36. Recruitment flow	Was the recruitment flow carefully documented? ►the use a research log book (enrollment spread sheet) is suggested
37. Templates	Did you check the data collection templates and the Excel spread sheet?
38. Local interview guide	Translation/cultural adaptation interview guide: Did you use the proposed framework to translate the interview guide into the source language? Were cultural adaptations needed? ►please, record these in your research log book, together with the timing and the reason for adjustment
39. Avoiding and handling the presence of a third person	Focus of attention during interview scheduling: Was the purpose of a one to one interview mentioned to the participant? If someone else was present, did this affect the interview/data collection? ►please, reflect on this in the descriptive interview report
40. Introducing the interview	Did you prepare and practice the interview introduction? ►to maximize the interview return ►key words: welcoming the participant; introducing yourself; clarifying the purpose and importance of research, the importance of participant contribution, expectations regarding the participant (e.g., no good or wrong answers), role of the interviewer/moderator/observer, (t_2: “rules” regarding group discussion), ethical aspects; “Any questions?”; mobile phone on silent mode)

41. Interview burden	It is recommended to conduct 1 individual interview/day, with a maximum of 2 interviews/day ►to avoid interview burden and to have sufficient time to reflect on each interview
42. Interview reports	Did you write for each interview/focus group 3 short reports? (i.e., content report, descriptive report, methodological report)
43. Iterative process	Did you use an iterative process of data collection and analysis? ►to support data saturation
Data analysis	
44. Analysis guide	Did you use Qualitative Analysis Guide of Leuven (QUAGOL) to guide your data analysis? Did you use Saldaña's guiding questions for analyzing the longitudinal data?
45. Peer debriefings	Were regular peer debriefings held? ►time for reflection (in team): to discuss the interview return, the development of new themes, and to question and confirm saturation of themes ►early in de coding and interviewing process, more frequent meetings are suggested ►please make a short report of each debriefing to recall discussions
46. Team analysis	Was looked at the data in team (from different perspectives looking at the data)
Transcription	
47. Transcription guidelines	Who transcribed the data? ►>1 person: did you apply a uniform transcription method? (e.g., agreements about the level of details, to obtain confidentially, to reproduce the exact words spoken) ►external transcriber: was the interview transcript reviewed by the interviewer on data quality and accuracy of transcribing? How did you approach this quality check?
Team approach	
48. Patient research partners	What was the exact role of the patient research partners in the study
49. Interdisciplinary team	Who joined the interdisciplinary team, and what was their contribution?
Initiation session	
50. Project initiation	Did the local research team (at least the principal investigator) followed the initiation session lead by the project leader at t_1 and at t_2?

t_1: time point 1= 3-6 months after start of the initial treatment for early rheumatoid arthritis; t_2: time point 2= 12-18 months after start of the initial treatment for early rheumatoid arthritis.