

## **Layman's Summary**

Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) is an autoimmune condition causing inflammation of medium and large blood vessels, known as vasculitis. GCA is the most common vasculitis affecting people over the age of 50. It is a complex and sometimes difficult to diagnose condition. If not treated quickly, it can cause serious problems like blindness or stroke. Doctors usually treat it with prednisolone, a type of steroid, which are very effective but can also have serious side effects, especially when taken for a long time.

In this study, we looked at how GCA affects people's health in the long run. We used health records from thousands of people to compare those with GCA to people without the disease. We looked at how often people went to hospital and what conditions they were treated for.

We found that people with GCA were more likely to be hospitalised, not just for the GCA itself, but for a wide range of other health problems, including stroke, infections, diabetes and osteoporosis.

These health problems may be due to the disease itself or to the side effects of long-term steroid use. This tells us that GCA can have lasting effects on many areas of health. It also shows the importance of regular check-ups and good long-term care for people living with GCA, not just to manage their symptoms but to help prevent other serious health issues down the track.

Thanks to funding from Arthritis Australia and the Australian Rheumatology Association Research Fund, this research helps shine a light on how complex GCA can be and the importance of good long-term care.