

Table 1

Differential diagnosis of acute and chronic arthritis

Causes of acute joint pain

- Septic arthritis: *S. aureus*, Group B streptococci, *S. pneumoniae*, Gram-negative organisms (especially in immunocompromised patients)
- Crystal induced arthritis - gout, pseudogout
- Flare of osteoarthritis
- Reactive arthritis (following infection)
- Haemarthrosis
- Intra-articular injury (fracture, meniscal tear, osteonecrosis)
- Systemic disease
 - Inflammatory e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, SLE, polymyalgia rheumatica
 - Malignancy (paraneoplastic)

Causes of chronic joint pain

- Osteoarthritis
- Crystal associated arthritis e.g. gout, pseudogout, Milwaukee shoulder
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Seronegative spondyloarthropathy e.g. psoriatic arthritis
- Remitting seronegative symmetrical synovitis with pitting oedema (RS3PE)
- Joint related conditions such as tendinitis/tendinosis, tendon rupture, ligamentous sprain/strain, bursitis