Supplementary Table ST1. Baseline characteristics of RA-patients according to availability of data on referral delay

	Referral delay available (n = 962)	Referral delay not available (n = 562)	p
Female, n (%)	630 (65)	366 (65)	0.91
Age, mean ± SD	58 ± 15	58 ± 16	0.58
Symptom duration[#] (weeks), median (IQR)	16.6 (8.7–32.0)	18.5 (8.3–37.4)	0.52
TJC (0–53), median (IQR)	6 (4–9)	6 (4–9)	0.60
SJC (0–44), median (IQR)	7 (3–12)	8 (4–13)	0.20
ESR (mm/h), median (IQR)	30 (14–48)	32 (17–51)	0.11
DAS, mean ± SD	3.23 ± 0.97	3.23 ± 0.94	0.98
HAQ-DI, mean ± SD	1.1 ± 0.7	1.1 ± 0.7	0.47
RF-positive, n (%)	548 (57)	324 (58)	0.79
ACPA-positive, n (%)	485 (51)	287 (53)	0.45

Legend

[#] Symptom duration represent the duration between the first symptoms (patient-reported) to the first visit to the rheumatologist.

Abbreviations: RA = rheumatoid arthritis; SD = standard deviation; TJC = tender joint count; IQR = interquartile range; SJC = swollen joint count; ESR = erythrocyte sedimentation rate; mm/h = millimetres per hour; DAS = disease activity score; HAQ-DI = health assessment questionnaire disability index; RF = rheumatoid factor; ACPA = anti-citrullinated protein antibodies

Supplementary Table ST2. Baseline characteristics of all studied RA-patients and according to sex

	All RA-patients (n = 962)	Female (n = 630)	Male (n = 332)
Age, mean ± SD	58 ± 15	56 ± 16	61 ± 14
Symptom duration[#] (weeks), median (IQR)	16.6 (8.7–32.0)	18.4 (8.7–33.9)	13.4 (8.6–28.1)
TJC (0–53), median (IQR)	6 (4–9)	6 (4–9)	6 (4–10)
SJC (0–44), median (IQR)	7 (3–12)	7 (3–12)	8 (4–12)
ESR (mm/h), median (IQR)	30 (14–48)	31 (15–48)	29 (14–46)
DAS, mean ± SD	3.23 ± 0.97	3.25 ± 0.98	3.20 ± 0.97
HAQ-DI, mean ± SD	1.1 ± 0.7	1.1 ± 0.7	0.9 ± 0.7
RF-positive, n (%)	548 (57)	367 (59)	181 (55)
ACPA-positive, n (%)	485 (51)	332 (54)	153 (47)

Legend

[#] Symptom duration represents the duration between the first symptoms (patient-reported) to the first visit to the rheumatologist.

Abbreviations: RA = rheumatoid arthritis; SD = standard deviation; TJC = tender joint count; IQR = interquartile range; SJC = swollen joint count; ESR = erythrocyte sedimentation rate; mm/h = millimetres per hour; DAS = disease activity score; HAQ-DI = health assessment questionnaire disability index; RF = rheumatoid factor; ACPA = anti-citrullinated protein antibodies

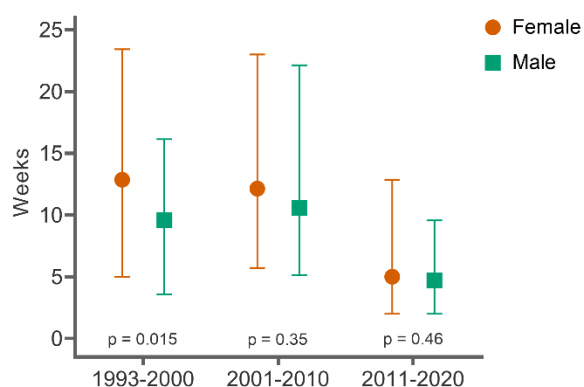## Supplementary Data SD1. Patient characteristics over time

As reported previously, age, gender, and ACPA-status were stable throughout the inclusion periods, indicating that similar RA patients were included over time.[1] Within both ACPA-positive and ACPA-negative RA, patients presented with shorter symptom duration, lower numbers of swollen and tender joints, and lower acute phase reactants in the more recent years, reflecting that earlier presentation was paralleled with less severe disease.[1]
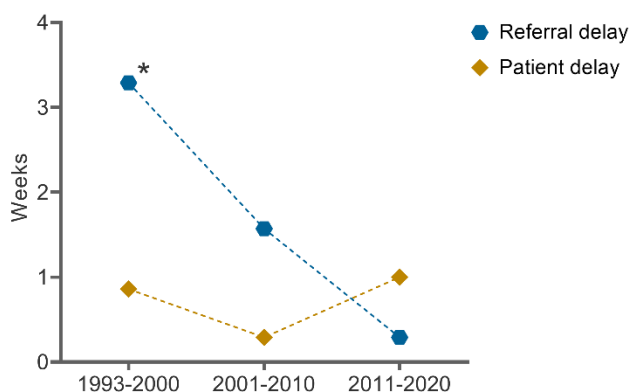
Reference:

1. Matthijssen XME, Niemantsverdriet E, Huizinga TWJ, van der Helm–van Mil AHM. Enhanced treatment strategies and distinct disease outcomes among autoantibody-positive and -negative rheumatoid arthritis patients over 25 years: A longitudinal cohort study in the Netherlands. PLoS Med 2020;17:e1003296.

Supplementary Figure SF1. Comparisons between female and male RA-patients over the years, with RA defined as clinical diagnosis plus fulfillment of the 1987- and/or 2010-criteria: Referral delay (A); patient delay (B); excess delay in female compared to male RA-patients (C); and the proportion of patients with total delay ≤12 weeks (D)
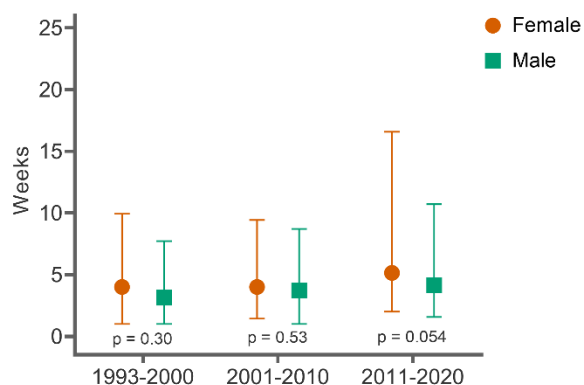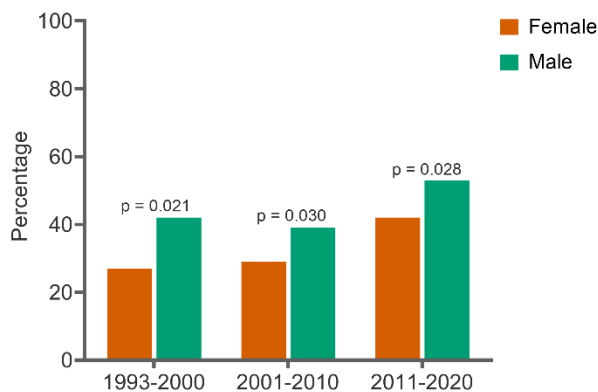

Legend

(AB)   Dots and squares represent the median. Error bars represent the interquartile range.

(C)   Excess delay was calculated per time-period by subtracting the median delay in male RA-patients from the median delay in female RA-patients.

Asterix (*): In 1993–2000, median referral delay in female RA-patients was significantly longer than in male RA-patients (p=0.015).