Joint Efforts:

Patients at the Core of Rheumatology

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The University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine & Surgery, in partnership with the University of Santo Tomas Hospital (USTH) Section of Rheumatology, hosted a transformative educational workshop entitled **"The Patient is the Best Teacher"** last September 19, 2025. The event was powered by the unique Patient Partners in Rheumatology Program, an initiative that highlights the invaluable role of patients in medical education.

Medical students and trainees from Internal Medicine and Rheumatology had the rare opportunity to engage directly with patients living with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) and Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA). Unlike traditional lectures, this workshop allowed students to go "up close and personal" with patients who became their teachers for the day.

Participants were guided in performing musculoskeletal physical examinations, where patients demonstrated their joint deformities and physical limitations firsthand. This interactive, bedside-style learning brought textbook descriptions to life, deepening students' understanding of the impact of chronic rheumatologic disease.

Beyond physical examination skills, patients courageously shared their life stories—narratives of pain, disability, resilience, and triumph. Their testimonies revealed not only the challenges of living with a lifelong disease but also the hope and strength that come from perseverance, treatment, and community support.

Faculty mentors emphasized that the essence of the workshop was not just technical skill but also empathy: to treat not only the disease but the whole person.

"This experience reminds us that medicine is more than science—it is humanity," one student reflected.

The success of this workshop reaffirmed the UST Faculty of Medicine & Surgery and USTH Section of Rheumatology's commitment to holistic and patient-centered medical education, where patients are not just recipients of care, but also partners in teaching future doctors.