**Director of the Research Center**
J.M. van Laar (Prof. MD, PhD, Medical Director)

**Institution**
Rheumatology & Clinical Immunology
University Medical Centre Utrecht

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**Members of the Center**

**Full professors**
Lafeber FPJG (PhD) Experimental rheumatology; Manager of research
Radstake TR (MD PhD) Innate immunology of chronic immune disease
Hack EC (MD, PhD) (10%) Innate immunology
Geenen R (UU, Clin.& Health Psychol.) Psychology of rheumatic diseases

**Associate professors**
Jacobs JWG (MD, PhD) epidemiology, RA
Laan van der WH (MD, PhD) (10%) osteoarthritis; OA

**Assistant professors (PIs)**
Roon van JAG (PhD, immunologist) (80%) immunology
Mastbergen SC (PhD, med. biologist) (cartilage) tissue regeneration
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Current Fields of Research

Our final goal is to improve clinical practice by development and improvement of diagnosis and treatment of rheumatic diseases.

For this purpose we perform translational rheumatology research: questions from basic research are translated, when necessary and possible via in vivo animal research, to clinical studies. The other way around, questions raised from clinical practice are translated into basic research and results will be confirmed (when necessary and possible via in vivo animal studies) by clinical studies.

There is a focus on translational biomedical research on three specific patient populations: patient with rheumatoid arthritis, with osteoarthritis, and with systemic auto immune diseases. In each of these themes, various research lines are subject of study. This research fits within the central themes ‘chronic inflammation’ and ‘musculoskeletal tissues’ each within two of the six focus areas of the UMC Utrecht: ‘immunity’ and ‘regenerative medicine - stem cells’.

In all cases cohorts of patients are the basis, enabling clinical (epidemiologic) studies, as well as ex vivo research. These cohorts are also a source of biomaterials for more fundamental in vitro approaches. Questions arising from clinical practice will be studied using these in vitro and ex vivo approaches. When findings appear of relevance they are tested in animal models and subsequently may enter clinical trials.

More details about our mission, setting, research group and collaborations can be found on this website: www.umcutrecht.nl/rheumatology-research.

Selected Publications
(for an overview of all publications, see www.umcutrecht.nl/rheumatology-research.)

- Glucosamine sulphate in osteoarthritis; the jury is still out. Bijlsma JWJ and Lafeber FPJG. Annals of Internal Medicine 2008; 148:315-316. IF:16
Current Funding
University Medical Centre Utrecht
Dutch Arthritis Association
Industries
Government

Training of Fellows in Research
The department of Rheumatology & Clinical Immunology has for its research the disposal (alone or in collaboration) of large patients cohorts, relevant animal models (central animal facility) and well equipped research laboratories specialized in cell and tissue culture and protein-chemistry.

Research within the department is directed by a rheumatologist (head of the department) and a biologist (manager of research of the department). There is an integrated collaboration with the UU on ‘psychology of rheumatic diseases’ and the UMCU, department ‘laboratory and pharmacy’ on more basic immunology and protein chemistry, and there is close collaboration with the department of orthopedics on ‘cartilage tissue regeneration’. The research program is structured by three principle investigators (PIs) with each a clinical counterpart (co-PI). One team for the immunology (a physician in rheumatology / internal medicine with a (medical) biologists / immunologists), one for tissue regeneration (a physician in rheumatology with a (medical) biologist), and one for the epidemiology regarding inflammation and tissue regeneration (a physician in rheumatology with an epidemiologist). Clinical work is supported/coordinated by a PhD and an MD, specialized in this field. The research is executed in addition by (PhD) students/trainees in medicine, (medical)biology, movement scientists or related training, technicians, research nurses, and datamanagers.

This organisation and infrastructure provides the necessary ingredients to perform state-of-the-art translational research.

WebPages
www.umcutrecht.nl
www.umcutrecht.nl/rheumatology-research