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Current Fields of Research
The research is organized in teams that have close interaction. Included in the Unit are the headquarters of PRINTO and the Laboratory of Immunology of Rheumatic Diseases.

Controlled clinical trials
The unit is the headquarter of the Paediatric Rheumatology International Trials Organisation (PRINTO) (www.printo.it). PRINTO, which was founded in 1996 by Alberto Martini and
Nicolino Ruperto, is composed by academic, clinical centres engaged in the care of children with paediatric rheumatic disease. It is composed of more than 200 centres from 51 countries and represents the largest paediatric rheumatology network in the world. PRINTO’s main goal is to coordinate, foster and facilitate multi-centres, international controlled clinical trials. PRINTO has received 5 grants from the European Union and has published so far more than 70 papers. It has also developed a website dedicated to families (www.pediatric-rheumatology.printo.it) available in more than 50 languages and visited daily by more than 10,000 people.

**Quantitative clinical assessment in paediatric rheumatic diseases**

This area of research is aimed to develop and validate new clinical measures for the assessment of disease activity, functional ability, clinical damage, pain, and health-related quality of life in children with paediatric rheumatic diseases. Some instruments put together different measures in a single multidimensional questionnaire that is aimed to assess all domains of disease impact simultaneously.

**Imaging**

The aim is to provide standardized methods to evaluate the role of conventional radiology, magnetic resonance and ultrasonography in the evaluation of articular damage in juvenile idiopathic arthritis. The research of the unit has provided most of the available imaging scores to evaluate articular damage in children.

**Immunology of rheumatic diseases**

The research is addressed at understanding the role of adaptive immunity in the pathogenesis of paediatric rheumatic diseases. Present research projects include the influence of innate immunity on the development of TH17 cells, the characterization of the immunological and functional phenotype of the different B cell populations and the role of TLRs and purinergic receptors during central and peripheral B cell development.

**Autoinflammatory diseases**

Starting from January 2002, a national referral center for the diagnosis and treatment of autoinflammatory diseases has been established. The Unit is the promoter of an European Union sponsored project (Eurofever) whose aim is to set up an international registry for autoinflammatory diseases. Laboratory activities are mainly focused on the pathogenesis of CIAS1-related diseases and of TNF-receptor-associated periodic syndrome (TRAPS).

**Selected Publications**

   IF: 28.638

IF: 52.589

IF: 8.111

IF: 8.111

IF: 9.432

IF: 8.111

IF: 7.332

IF: 7.332

IF: 8.111

IF: 7.332
Current Funding
European Union
Italian Agency of Drug Evaluation

Training of Fellows in Research
A dedicated fellowship training program for Italian and foreign physicians is in place. The program (from 3 months to 3 years) offers training in clinical management, clinical trials methodology, applied basic and intermediate biostatistics and epidemiology, and basic or clinical immunology. Since 2002 the unit has hosted 70 doctors from 23 countries. Fellows have been supported by public bodies (European Union and other) or self financed. A total of 11 EULAR training fellowships has been obtained since 2004.

WebPages
www.printo.it
www.pediatric-rheumatology.printo.it (for families)
www.gaslini.org