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Meijs J
Muhammad A
Nies JAB van
Rooy DPC van
Schaarenburg RA van
Shi J
Steenbergen HW van
Suurmond J
Current Fields of Research
Since the fifties of the twentieth century research was done at the Department of Rheumatology aiming to understand the biological basis of rheumatic diseases. Under supervision of Arnold Cats patient orientated research was set up. Ferry Breedveld started research into new immunomodulating therapies and into treatment strategies for rheumatic diseases.

Laboratory research now focuses on pathophysiology of rheumatic inflammation and on development of new diagnostic tools. Currently regulation of immune cell activation and the role of autoantibodies are the leading topics in research. Furthermore, the Department participates actively in genomic consortia to determine the genetic basis of rheumatic diseases.

Several patient cohorts are followed to enable patient orientated research. Over 3500 patients with early arthritis are followed in a standardized way (some patients since more than 15 years) to investigate determinants of the disease course and the effect of treatment. Furthermore cohorts of patients with osteoarthritis and spondyloarthritis are followed to investigate determinants of development and progression and to improve clinimetrics. The last decade research in new treatment modalities involved patients with reumatoïde artritis, osteoarthritis, SLE and sclerodermie.

Clinical studies
Clinical research focuses on identifying the best therapeutic strategy to treat arthritis, including the optimal timing of combinations of drugs and innovative therapies in a setting of intensive follow up with goal orientated treatment adjustments. These studies are LUMC coordinated multicenter studies, in cooperation with the majority of rheumatology clinics in the southwest of the Netherlands.
Recent analysis of our studies has shown that with intensive therapy, up to 20% of patients with rheumatoid arthritis in the earliest stages can be spared from developing a chronic and destructive disease. Some of the findings have already been translated from trial to daily practice and introduce a new paradigm in the treatment of RA.

Our research aims at using the ‘window of opportunity’ for early identification of patients at risk and individualized therapy with optimal use of available therapeutic interventions.

**Selected Publications**


**Current Funding**

Leiden University Medical Center  
Dutch Arthritis Association  
Industries  
Government  
European Union

**Training of Fellows in Research**

The training of fellows in rheumatology consist of 6 year, 3 years internal medicine and three years rheumatology. The training is done for 6 months at a county hospital in The Hague and 2.5 years in LUMC. During this rheumatology training the fellows are stimulated to do a clinical research project which should result in one scientific presentation and preferable one paper.

**WebPages**

www.lumc.nl