Introduction

Why a Study group on Microcirculation in Rheumatic Diseases?

The EULAR study group on Microcirculation in RD aims to build an international network of expert centres to facilitate collaboration and exchange knowledge within Europe and provide a platform on which the investigators can:
1. Study (micro)vascular mechanisms involved in the progression of RD with (micro)vascular involvement.
2. Develop natural history investigations operating across existing cohorts of European centres interested in the cooperation and implementation of diagnostic tools on microcirculation.
3. Identify through statistical analysis (based on large samples), models based on (micro)vascular assessment tools to predict disease progression and outcome.
4. Evaluate the microvascular effects of novel target strategies within specific RD populations.

Who we are

The EULAR study group on microcirculation in Rheumatic Diseases was accepted by the EULAR Executive committee in March 2014 and is being supervised by EULAR Committee on Investigative Rheumatology, currently chaired by prof R Lories. The study group first convened at EULAR 2014 consisting of 12 founding members (Chair: Prof. V. Smith; Co-Chairs: Prof. A. Herrick, Prof. M. Cutolo, Prof. A. Sulli and other founding members: Prof. Y. Allanore, Prof. O. Distler, Prof. N. Damjanov, Prof. U. Müller-Ladner, Dr. W. Hermann, Prof. I. Murat, Dr. V. Ricciere and Prof. AE. Voskuyl) and 28 in members (from which 11 of 5 non-european countries: USA, Brasil, South Africa, Turkey and Japan). Anno 2015 the number of members has risen to 35 (out of which 13 from 6 non-european countries [including the United Arab Emirates]).

Summary of last year's activities

- As standardisation of techniques to evaluate the microcirculation is one of the aims of the study group, a first activity was a multicentre study to assess the reliability of simple capillaroscopic definitions to evaluate morphologies of single capillaries. This study consisted of three parts (namely evaluation of study images by experts, evaluation of study images by novices at the 6th EULAR course on capillaroscopy in Genova, September 2014 and thirdly by participants at a training course at the Ghent University, Belgium, November 2014) resulted in an EULAR abstract (EULAR15-1484) and a manuscript (in preparation).
- Secondly, the evaluation of interrater reliability of microcirculatory flow evaluation (Laser Speckle Contrast Analysis) was piloted by two of the founding members and will be submitted as abstract to American College of Rheumatology 2015.
- Thirdly, to step forward to the aim to identify through statistical analysis (based on large samples), models based on (micro)vascular assessment tools to predict disease progression and outcome a large multicentre study to evaluate of the role of capillaroscopy in the prediction of severe organ involvement was set up also in close liaison with EUSTAR. Evaluation will start in winter 2015.
• Annual European Congress of Rheumatology “EULAR 2014”, June 2014 Workshop on Capillaroscopy, Paris (France)
• The 6th EULAR course on Capillaroscopy, September 2014, Genova (Italy)
• Annual scientific meeting American College of Rheumatology “ACR 2014”. Study group on Capillaroscopy, Boston (USA)
• EULAR 2015: Annual EULAR SG/MC in RD meeting Saturday June 13th (Invited lectures):
  Ariane Herrick: Presentation of book “Raynaud’s phenomenon, A guide to pathogenesis and Treatment”
  Sam Beeckman: Results of the first EULAR SG/MC study: “An EULAR study group pilot study on reliability of ‘simple’ capillaroscopic definitions to describe capillary morphology in rheumatic diseases”

Publications

1. Third EULAR On-line Course on Systemic Sclerosis September 2013 - June 2014. On the invitation of Prof. E. Hachulla, Lille Cedex (France).
   Module 3: Cutolo M, Smith V. Nailfold capillaroscopy and other methods to assess the microvasculopathy in systemic sclerosis.