Director of the Research Center
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Members of the Center

Seniors
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Tina Trollmo
Anca Catrina
Christina Opava
Helena Erlandsson Harris
Jon Lampa
Lena Svelander
Vivianne Malmström
Staffan Lindblad
Ronald van Vollenhoven
Elisabet Svenungsson
Iva Gunnarsson
Ralph Nissell
Elisabet Welin Henriksson
Johan Askling

Post-Docs
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Eva Lindroos
Lotta Aveberger
Marianne Engström
Gull-Britt Almgren
Lena Klevenvall
Gunnel Bemerfeldt
Susanne Karlfeldt

Current Fields of Research
Our center is focused on translational research in inflammatory rheumatic diseases. This means that we have three major arms in our research and we focus on a few inflammatory rheumatic diseases, mainly arthritis (focus on rheumatoid arthritis, responsible Lars Klareskog), SLE (responsible Elisabet Svenungsson and Iva Gunnarsson), Sjögrens syndrome (responsible Marie Wahren Herlenius) and myositis (responsible Ingrid Lundberg), with some emerging activities in sclerodermia and vasculitis. We also conduct basic research related to inflammatory diseases within immunology, genetics and epidemiology.

Our research is conducted in three collaborating units; in the clinic where we conduct careful IT-based surveillance of longitudinal course of disease on a large group of patients with arthritis, SLE and myositis. In this work we also capture biological material for further large scale analyses of genetics, biomarkers etc that determine onset and course of the rheumatic diseases. We also have an advanced clinical trials unit, (headed by Ronald van Vollenhoven), where both investigator initiated and industry sponsored trials are conducted.

In the laboratory, which is situated at the Center for Molecular Medicine, adjacent to the rheumatology clinic, 10 different research groups lead by different senior investigators, conduct immunological and genetic research related to arthritis, myositis, Sjögrens disease and SLE. We also conduct basic research on inflammatory mechanisms that may contribute to inflammatory diseases in general. Also animal models are used (PI Helena Erlandsson Harris) and the animal work is also conducted in close collaboration with the other center of excellence in Stockholm, headed by Rickard Holmdahl.

Epidemiology research and genetic epidemiology is the third arm of our rheumatology research center. Epidemiology research is conducted both at the institute for environmental medicine (PI Lars Alfredsson) where the secretariat of the EIRA-study is located. EIRA is aimed at understanding how genes and environment determine the onset and course of arthritis as well as myositis. Epidemiology research is also conducted at the unit for Clinical Epidemiology which is the center where the surveillance of drug utilization, safety of drugs and health economics are performed under the leadership of Johan Asling. Here we are coordinating the ARTIS (Anti Rheumatic Therapy In Sweden) registry which is in charge of the surveillance of biologics in arthritis in Sweden.

Support and informatics structures are being developed in order to fuse the different parts of our research structure and the registers and management is being coordinated by Staffan Lindblad (also affiliated with the unit for Medical Management at Karolinska Institutet).

A major strategy in our work is to combine the different competences in the different research groups with the rheumatology unit and the rheumatology clinic, and enhance a number of different national and international collaborations within our focus areas. Major efforts in this respect are national collaborations funded by the national research foundations in Sweden (all together 8 million Euros over 5 years, beginning autumn 2008). In addition we are
coordinating the AutoCure project for rheumatology research in Europe and we are also members of the EU FP7 funded program Masterswitch. We also have extensive international collaborations, primarily with the Feinstein Institütet in New York (Peter Gregersen), the Harvard School of Medicine and Broad Institute (Robert Plenge), Boston and the Genome Institute of Singapore (Mark Seielstad).

Selected Publications


Current Funding
The Swedish Research Council
AFA Insurances
King Gustaf V:s 80-year foundation
The Swedish Rheumatism Association
EU FP 6, AutoCure
EU FP7, Masterswitch
Söderbergska foundations
Swedish Research Foundations (Vinnova, Stratfo, KK, Vardal, Invest in Sweden agency)
NIH – 2 grants (co-PI)

Training of Fellows in Research
As part of our international collaborations we are keen to develop exchange with students, post docs and senior scientists from all over the world.

WebPages
www.ki.se
www.autocure.org
www.combinesweden.se