Annual report

Study Groups

Title of the study group: EULAR Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) Study Group

Study Group Leader’s name: Dimitrios T. Boumpas. Facilitator: G Bertsias
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Summary of last year’s activities (2013)

The study group met during the EULAR Annual European Congress of Rheumatology 2013 in Madrid, Spain. The objectives of the meeting were to: a) network clinicians and researchers interested in SLE, b) inform and coordinate educational activities for fellows, nurses and patients, c) develop and disseminate management recommendations for lupus by encouraging the participation of new people both willing and able to support such activities, d) update on research initiatives at the translational and clinical level, and e) discuss topics that we wish to propose for the annual EULAR meeting scientific meeting.

New initiatives and proposals discussed during the meeting included: a) the role of lupus groups in enhancing the clinical setting and supporting the scientific advancements in the disease (presented by K. Lerstrøm, LUPUS EUROPE), b) the use and interpretation of laboratory diagnostic tests for the management of SLE (presented by P-L Meroni), c) Pregnancy/Contraception/Fertilization in women with SLE (presented by L. Andreoli and A. Tincani), d) the establishment of a common European SLE database (presented by C. Pamfil), e) a biomarker study of the failure of SLE sera to support the clearance of apoptotic cells and of necrotic cell material (presented by M. Manoussakis). Other topics that were discussed included: a) Controlled trial of rituximab in refractory lupus nephritis (presented by F. Houssiau), b) education in SLE: an initiative to create a database of educational slides on the pathogenesis, diagnosis, treatment, monitoring, and prognosis of SLE patients (presented by D. Boumpas), and c) announcement for the upcoming 9th European Lupus Meeting in 2014 (by D. Boumpas).

Main achievements

9th Eurolupus congress in Athens. Over 500 attendees.
- Top clinical and basic researchers in the field. Networking of basic researchers with clinical investigators.
- Special forum for young investigators and EULAR study group meeting.
- Networking with patients and allied health professionals thru combined sessions.
- Regional web-based research initiatives in epidemiology, quality care and outcomes; nephritis; neuropsychiatric lupus; co-morbidities.

Active participation in the EULAR endorsed SLE course in Pisa (Organizers: Bombardieri and Mosca): the best lupus course in the world. A slide collection based on this meeting is in progress.
Regional South-Eastern European lupus course in Boucharest (organized by prof R Ionescu) in September 2013 and September 2014;
Southeasten European Family Planning, Fertility and Pregnancy in Immune Mediated Diseases expert meeting Athens 2014.
EULAR recommendations for the management of lupus pregnancy (Chair: A Tincani) Project approved by EULAR executive committee and is in progress.

The enthusiastic attendance and active participation during the meeting (over 50 individuals from several countries) confirms that there is a need for an SLE Study group within EULAR. Importantly, this is turning to be an important opportunity for younger investigators to network with the lupus community.