

## Biennial report

### Study Groups

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#### Title of the study group: **Synovitis Study Group**

Study Group Leader's name: Bernard Lauwerys and João Fonseca

Date of annual report submission: February 2018

#### Summary of last year's activities

##### 1- Collaborative Research Projects

- a) Clinical Trial R4RA. PI: Costantino Pitzalis. Recruitment closed. The main aim of this project is to test the hypothesis that the presence or absence of specific synovial cellular and molecular signatures (B cells and B cell-associated signatures), assessed following a synovial tissue biopsy, will enrich for response/non-response to the B cell depleting anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody (mAb) Rituximab. See more <http://www.r4ra-nihr.whri.qmul.ac.uk>
- b) Prediction of response to TNF inhibitors in rheumatoid arthritis based on gene expression profiling in the synovium. PI: Patrick Durez. Recruitment open. The main research question is if high expression of TNF-dependent transcripts in the synovium is associated with poorer response to TNF blocking agents at 3 months?
- c) Standardization of synovial tissue biopsy procedures. PIs: Aurélie Najm, Douglas Veale. On going. The aim of this project is to deliver a consensus statement by participating ESSG members on biopsy sampling, biopsy processing and histological scoring procedures, using a Delphi method. The results of this Delphi survey will be included in an **OMERACT** proposal aiming at the identification of the relationship between immunopathology, specific therapeutic responses and disease outcome.
- d) Standardization of synovial tissue handling procedure. PIs: Rogier Thurlings, Stefano Alivernini. The aim of this project is the standardization of synovial tissue handling procedures. Our focus is the possibility to cryopreserve synovial tissue to retain cell viability.

##### 2- Dissemination

- a) Synovial tissue research: a state of the art review. Orr C et al. Nat Rev Rheumatol 2017; 13: 463-75.
- b) Development of a web-based platform for data exchange in the context of the Synovitis Study Group.
- c) Preparation of the First EULAR course on US-guided biopsies to be held in October 2018, Brussels, Belgium.
- d) Creation of the Collaborative ACR-EULAR synovitis study group at the ACR. First preparatory meeting at ACR 2017 and first formal meeting at ACR 2018.