Biennial report

Study Groups

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

   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.