

EULAR
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EULAR: SUPPORTING RESEARCH AT THE NEXUS OF SCIENCE AND THE CLINIC

EULAR launches new service to provide expert research advice for translational science investigators across Europe who want to develop solutions to the unmet needs of people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs).

Chronic and often painful rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) disable millions of people in the EU and worldwide^[1]. More than 200 of these conditions are still poorly understood without a cure in sight. Translational researchers are trying to both understand the causes and characteristics of this disease group at a cellular level and develop prevention strategies and treatments. Yet, this type of research is challenging, and research conditions vary across Europe. The European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology (EULAR) launched a free service that will match interested investigators with translational research experts to help them develop high-quality research projects that address unmet needs in this field.

Translational research is thought of broadly as the progression of a new scientific insight or discovery into a useful product, medicine, or other societal interventions^[2,3]. Translational researchers will be key to finding new solutions that will improve the lives of people with RMDs. “People with RMDs will benefit most from the exciting revolution in molecular medicine that is currently taking place if new ideas can be rapidly and effectively translated into the clinic – this exciting new initiative from EULAR will hasten this process” says EULAR President Prof. Iain McInnes. There are many questions, such as: What causes treatment resistant rheumatoid arthritis, and how can we better treat it? Can we find new therapeutics that help patients with psoriatic arthritis who have ‘tried everything’? Which biomarkers can lead to a more precise prognosis and disease-modifying therapy in patients with ankylosing spondyloarthritis?^[4]

About EULAR’s Translational Research Support

In addition to the already established Clinical Research Support, the EULAR Translational Research Support will be offered through the newly created [EULAR Virtual Research Centre \(VRC\)](#) and is designed to help investigators develop and execute high-quality translational research focused on rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). The focus is on translational research that involves the use of patient/human materials (e.g., cells, serum, tissue) or dedicated models of RMDs to address bedside-to-bench research questions.

Investigators can get expert advice on a range of questions related to study design and protocol development, accessing patient/human materials, and using methods and technologies to perform translational science-related analyses such as biomarker testing. Applicants will be matched with consultants who are successful and highly experienced investigators with experience in the area of need.

The service will be available to investigators who are currently resident and working in EULAR-affiliated countries. “We hope to reach investigators with diverse backgrounds that may currently be underrepresented in RMD research to help them realize their research ideas,” remarked Prof. Rik Lories, KU Leuven, Belgium, who is currently developing this service for EULAR in close collaboration with the EULAR VRC team.

How to request the service and cost

Investigators can [view the service areas online and request a consultation](#) by filling out a brief request form.

For the first two years after the launch, these services will be provided without charge. Some limitations of use and number of projects per individual applicant principal investigator will be applied in this period to ensure a fair use policy.

Sources

^[1][van der Heijde D, et al. Common language description of the term rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases \(RMDs\) for use in communication with the lay public, healthcare providers and other stakeholders endorsed by the European League Against Rheumatism \(EULAR\) and the American College of Rheumatology \(ACR\) Published: 13 March 2018. Ann Rheum Dis 2018;77:829–832](#)

^[2][Emmert-Buck M. Translational Research: From Biological Discovery to Public Benefit \(or Not\). Advances in Biology, vol. 2014, Article ID 278789 Published: 30 June 2014](#)

^[3][van der Laan AL, et al. Beyond bench and bedside: disentangling the concept of translational research Published: 18 December 2012. Health Care Anal. 2015;23\(1\):32-49 doi:10.1007/s10728-012-0236-x](#)

^[4][Winthrop KL, et al. Unmet need in rheumatology: reports from the Targeted Therapies meeting 2019 Published: 29 October 2019. Ann Rheum Dis. 2020;79\(1\):88-93. doi:10.1136/annrheumdis-2019-216151](#)

About EULAR

EULAR is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

About the EULAR VRC

Founded in 2020, the EULAR Virtual Research Centre facilitates collaborative basic, clinical, and translational research to improve the lives of people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases.

The centre does this by providing a research roadmap as well as research resources, infrastructure, services, and training enabling high-quality, interdisciplinary rheumatic and musculoskeletal disease research.

To advance its mission, the centre also develops broad coalitions and partnerships at the local, national, and international level to integrate existing resources, support research that addresses the needs of people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases, and foster innovation in the field.

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