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IN BRIEF

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

No advantage of leflunomide loading dose

Patients ($n = 120$), naive to DMARDs and diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis within the past 6 months, were randomized to receive either a 100 mg loading dose or a 20 mg dose of leflunomide for 3 days, followed by a 3-month daily treatment with 20 mg leflunomide. Although leflunomide treatment was effective in terms of 3-month response rates, administration of the loading dose conferred no advantage. Moreover, adverse events were more frequently reported, and occurred earlier in treatment, in patients who received the loading dose compared with patients in the fixed-dose group.

Original article Cutolo, M. *et al.* Efficacy and safety of leflunomide in DMARD-naïve patients with early rheumatoid arthritis: comparison of a loading and a fixed-dose regimen. *Rheumatology (Oxford)* doi:10.1093/rheumatology/kes321

BIOMARKERS

Biomarkers for RA-associated interstitial lung disease?

Some patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) develop interstitial lung disease (ILD), but algorithms to identify those at risk of pulmonary pathology are lacking. Citrullinated and uncitrullinated proteins were immunoprecipitated from cell extracts using the sera of patients with RA with and without ILD, and analysed to identify potential autoantigen markers of RA-associated ILD. Citrullinated versions of HSP90 α and HSP90 β distinguished samples from patients with RA-ILD from those with RA alone; these proteins might be effective biomarkers to identify patients at risk of developing ILD.

Original article Harlow, L. *et al.* Identification of citrullinated heat shock protein 90 isoforms as novel autoantigens in rheumatoid arthritis-associated interstitial lung disease. *Arthritis Rheum.* doi:10.1002/art.37881

SPONDYLOARTHROPATHIES

No advantage of gadolinium in spondyloarthritis detection

Sacroiliac joints of 127 patients in an early axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA) cohort were assessed by T1, short tau inversion recovery (STIR) and T1/Gd (gadolinium) MRI sequences for signs of active lesions. No additional value of Gd administration was found; although T1/Gd enabled visualization of additional synovitis and enthesitis, these features occur in the presence of bone marrow oedema, detection of which was not increased. Thus, T1 and STIR sequences are sufficient in MRI assessment of early axSpA.

Original article de Hooge, M. *et al.* Magnetic resonance imaging of the sacroiliac joints in the early detection of spondyloarthritis: no added value of gadolinium compared with short tau inversion recovery sequence. *Rheumatology (Oxford)* doi:10.1093/rheumatology/ket012

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Air pollution not a risk factor for RA

Air pollution exposure and other lifestyle data from 111,425 participants in the US Nurses' Health Study—volunteers prospectively followed every 2 years since 1976—were analysed alongside incidence rates of seropositive and seronegative rheumatoid arthritis (RA). No association between adult exposure to air pollution and risk of developing RA was found, with scant evidence of influence on RA risk from socioeconomic status, smoking, or geographic region.

Original article Hart, J. E. *et al.* Ambient air pollution exposures and risk of rheumatoid arthritis in the Nurses' Health Study. *Arthritis Care Res.* doi:10.1002/acr.21975