

CORRESPONDENCE

FMF revisited

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Reply to the Letter from K Konstantopoulos and A Kanta

We thank Konstantopoulos and Kanta¹ for their useful distinction about Greeks and Greek Orthodoxes, and about Roman-Jews of Greece and Roman-Jews of Rome. Obviously, when we speak about Greeks, we refer to the ancestry and not to the religion.²

As regards genetic similarities between Italians and Greeks, we also recall the high prevalence of thalassemia³ (many of our FMF patients are microcytemic, too) and the investigation of erythrocyte genetic markers and blood groups between Italians and other European and Near/Middle Eastern populations. These studies showed that southern and central Italian, Greek and Aegean populations are very homogeneous and quite differentiated from the rest of Europe – including northern Italy – stressing the major impact of the heavy Greek colonization on the genetic pools of the circum-Mediterranean people.^{4,5}

Familial Mediterranean fever (FMF) is more and more frequent in Italy: the number of our patients increases exponentially, year after year. At the moment, it has grown by almost 100% in only 1 year and it is still increasing. After our paper had been accepted for publication by the *European Journal of Human Genetics*, we also observed one case of phenotype 2 in a family with 3 other members affected by phenotype 1.

So, the need to look for such patients among those affected by amyloidosis and/or otherwise unexplained renal failure, becomes more urgent.

Since our experience on FMF has emerged from the study of fevers of unknown origin (FUO), we receive patients with these problems from all over Italy. A Research Centre on Periodic Fevers has thus been established in our University.

Finally, to meet the need of a better understanding of FMF population epidemiology and support global projects on genetic diversity, just a few weeks ago we have submitted a proposal to the European Commission for a systematic and considerable integration in FMF research along with the following Euro-Mediterranean institutions (INFLA-NET):

1. Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, London, UK
2. Institut de Génétique Humaine, CNRS UPR1142, Montpellier, France
3. Centre Hospitalier Régional et Universitaire de Marseille, Marseille, France
4. Helsinki University Central Hospital, Helsinki, Finland

5. Universitair Medisch Centrum, Utrecht, Netherlands
6. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
7. Rabin Medical Center, Beilinson Campus, Petah Tikva, IL, USA
8. Hadassah University Hospital, Jerusalem, IL, USA
9. The Heller Institute, Sheba Medical Centre, Tel Hashomer, IL, USA
10. Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, London, UK
11. Hôtel Dieu, Paris, France
12. Hôpital Cochin, Paris, France
13. Hôpital Henri Mondor, Creteil, France
14. Charité Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany
15. University Medical Centre St Raboud, Nijmegen, Netherlands
16. University of Cyprus, Cyprus
17. Facoltà di Farmacia, Università La Sapienza, Roma, Italy
18. National Amyloidosis Centre, Department of Medicine, Royal Free and University College Medical School Royal Free Hospital London, UK

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