Table 2 Inheritance of HLA B5

HLA B5 from	Mother alone	Father alone	Both parents	
Turkey	2	5	1	8
Britain	1	1	1	3
Both	3	6	2	11

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Rheumatoid arthritis and type 1 diabetes mellitus

SIR, We read with interest the paper by Thomas and colleagues¹ describing an association between rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetes. In response to their original paper presented to the British Diabetic Association (BDA) in March 1981² we had investigated the prevalence of both type 1 and type 2 diabetes in the 1st and 2nd degree relatives of the population of patients with RA attending our clinics in Nottingham. Our findings were presented to the BDA in September 1981³ and have subsequently been published.⁴

In contrast to Thomas *et al.* we could find no increased prevalence of type 1 diabetes in the close relatives of 312 patients with RA compared with the relatives of 274 patients with degenerative joint disease. We suspect that the discrepancy between these 2 studies lies in the ascertainment of patients. Our group comprised at least 95% of the Caucasian patients with RA attending our clinics over a 3-month period and were drawn from a defined geographical area. Patients in the study by Thomas *et al.* were randomly ascertained from 2 separate London clinics by 2 different observers, both hospitals having a particular interest in the genetics of type 1 diabetes. Thus, although there may be sound theoretical reasons for an association between these 2 diseases, based on a common association with HLA-DR4, our data do not support such a hypothesis. It is perhaps unfortunate that the authors did not acknowledge this disagreement or quote the relevant reference in their paper.

As a side issue, this paper illustrates the potential confusion created by the current long publication delay in *Annals*. Our substantive report was published in *Journal of Rheumatology* in April 1982, within 4 months of submission. Thomas *et al.*'s paper, accepted for publication in the same month has unfortunately lain dormant in BMA House for 15 months.

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*The paper by Thomas *et al.* had not 'lain dormant in BMA House for 15 months' but owing to the great pressure on our space was at the printers awaiting publication.—ED, *Annals*.

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