Diagnosing axial spondyloarthropathy. The new Assessment in SpondyloArthritis international Society criteria: MRI entering centre stage

A N Bennett,² H Marzo-Ortega,¹ P Emery,¹
D McGonagle,¹ on behalf of the Leeds
Spondyloarthropathy Group

In this issue of the *Annals of Rheumatic Disease* the Assessment in SpondyloArthritis international Society (ASAS) have published three interrelated papers (see pages 770, 777 and 784)¹⁻³ that could contribute to a new era in the diagnosis and classification of axial spondyloarthritis (SpA). The first paper focuses on a new definition of inflammatory back pain (IBP), the “expert” criteria, followed by two reports on the development of new classification criteria for axial SpA and their validation in a large multicentre study. These criteria for axial SpA will be welcomed by the spondyloarthropathy community, since the currently available criteria⁴⁻⁶ do not allow for the diagnosis of preradiographic axial SpA. The proposed new set of criteria includes early (pre-radiographic) and established ankylosing spondylitis (AS), recognising them as a continuum of disease. This is of major importance as it is now clear that the burden of early AS is comparable to that of the later stages.⁷ The benefit of MRI in the diagnosis of early axial SpA is recognised by the authors and included in the new classification criteria. Indeed, the inclusion of MRI is the most significant change compared to previous criteria⁴⁻⁶ and is in line with clinical experience

where MRI is of recognised value as a diagnostic and outcome tool.^{8-9, 14} Furthermore, with the emerging data on the efficacy of tumour necrosis factor (TNF) α blocking therapies in early disease^{10, 11} a new horizon has opened whereby AS sufferers can be identified and treated in the early stages of their disease process before structural damage has occurred.

In the first report Sieper *et al*¹ propose new clinical criteria for IBP. The study adopted a novel approach in which the “experts” were blinded to patient diagnosis, and the criteria judged for an ability to discriminate for a “diagnosis” of IBP (rather than for a diagnosis of SpA, as previously performed).^{12, 13} This, along with the robust statistical analysis, performed using logistic regression to identify which criteria/parameters independently contributed specifically to IBP, are the strong points of the study.

However, the need for new criteria to define IBP might be questioned since it is only 3 years after the last set of IBP criteria were published by the same core group.¹² Indeed, the authors point out that the existing criteria performed reasonably well and that there are only small differences between the new criteria and the previous 2006 Berlin criteria.¹² In addition the new IBP criteria surprisingly omit the assessment of early morning stiffness (EMS) of greater than 30 min as well as pain in the second half of the night, which were present in the previous criteria. These were dropped because the duration of EMS and timing of nocturnal pain were not specifically analysed. Given the central role of EMS duration in inflammatory rheumatic diseases this approach seems to lack face validity.

Therefore, while the improved methodology of this study to define new criteria for IBP are most welcome, whether the new criteria represent a significant advance will, as the authors highlight, depend on further assessment, particularly validation in the primary care setting.

The subsequent two papers focus on the development² and validation³ of candidate classification criteria for axial SpA, including patients with and without radiographic sacroiliitis. These patients without radiographic sacroiliitis have up to now been mostly labelled as undifferentiated SpA (uSpA) following The European Spondyloarthropathy Study Group criteria (ESSG).⁵ However, uSpA does not differentiate between patients with isolated axial or isolated peripheral disease. The data reported in this issue of the journal show that it is possible to robustly classify cases of axial SpA hence facilitating the conduct of future clinical trials and observational studies. This is particularly critical in the context of therapeutics as the newly proposed criteria might serve as a basis for a judicious use of TNF blockers in the non-radiographic stage of axial SpA. This is all the more likely given the increasing evidence that MRI can predict the future development of AS,^{14, 15} that early preradiographic axial patients with SpA have just as much disease activity and pain as established AS⁷ and that early preradiographic axial SpA responds well to anti-TNF therapies.^{10, 11}

A strength of the ASAS papers lies within the inclusion of international experts’ opinions on 71 real-life paper patients. Their opinion regarding diagnosis, as well as the strength of certainty of their opinion were sought with both being subsequently reviewed and accepted or rejected by a five-strong expert panel. The subsequent validation study³ is a unique and unprecedented clinical study in terms of international collaboration and the recruitment of nearly 650 cases. Although the mean duration of symptoms of the studied cohort was 6.1 years, the patient population was representative of the clinical spectrum of disease from early preradiographic axial involvement to radiographically confirmed sacroiliitis. Given the emerging power of MRI for predicting the development of AS,^{14, 15} this imaging modality was importantly included in the assessment of these patients.

Of note, in the first classification paper,² raised C-reactive protein (CRP)

¹ Section of Musculoskeletal Disease, Leeds Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Leeds, Chapel Allerton Hospital, Chapeltown Road, Leeds LS7 4SA, UK;

² Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, Headley Court, Epsom, Surrey KT18 6JN, UK

Correspondence to: Professor P Emery, Musculoskeletal Disease, Leeds Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Leeds, Clinical Director (Rheumatology), Director-Leeds MSK Biomedical Research Unit, Chapel Allerton Hospital, Chapel Town Road, Leeds LS7 4SA, UK; p.emery@leeds.ac.uk

levels were more frequent in the non-SpA (42.1%) than the SpA population (27.8%), yet elevated CRP was included in set 1 and set 2 candidate classification criteria. However, in the validation paper³ this observation is reversed with raised CRP being more common in SpA. Likewise in the initial classification² of the three studied IBP criteria, the new "expert" criteria¹ performed worse, with only 57.1% compared to 84.4% for the Calin criteria¹³ and 85.3% for the Rudwaleit/Berlin criteria.¹² Again however this changed considerably in the follow-up validation study. The proposed new classification criteria for axial SpA has an 82.9% sensitivity and 84.4% specificity out of a large data set of 649 patients with a positive likelihood ratio of 5.3 for axial SpA, which increases the post-test probability of a diagnosis of axial SpA from 60.2% to 89.0%. Furthermore when benchmarked against existing long-standing criteria such as the Amor and ESSG criteria,^{4,5} they were shown to be superior.

One important observation is the fact that the reported studies further support the diagnostic utility of MRI in axial SpA. Indeed MRI of the sacroiliac joints (SIJs) changed the diagnosis to axial SpA in a fifth of cases.² These findings justify the well established use by rheumatologists of MRI for the assessment of suspected AS in the real world clinical setting. However, it also recognises the limitations of MRI given that spinal/SIJ inflammation is variable in the natural history of the disease, and that current MRI technology has some limitations in detecting active inflammation.¹⁶ This is shown by the fact that only 38% and 65% of sample patients in the classification and validation paper, respectively, had a positive MRI. Hence criteria have been established that permit a diagnosis of axial SpA on clinical grounds only without the need for a positive MRI. This is essential, partly for the diagnosis of the subgroup of axial SpA who present with normal MRI scans but more importantly for clinicians who have poor or no access to MRI scanning facilities.

It should be noted that only the SIJs were imaged with MRI in the initial classification paper, and in the validation paper only a proportion of the 650 patients had spinal as well as SIJ MRI. Spinal inflammation is well recognised in SpA and it has been reported that as many as 23% of patients with clinically active AS have normal MRI of the SIJ¹⁷ and that thoracic spinal lesions are as common as SIJ lesions.¹⁸ Therefore classification criteria that include spinal as well as SIJ MRI could

have improved the overall sensitivity and specificity of these criteria.

Importantly the definition of active MRI sacroiliitis is needed for research as well as clinical practice. Variable "degrees" of active MRI sacroiliitis are recognised depending on the intensity and/or extent of the MRI signal when using fat suppression techniques^{8,19} which may lead to different clinical and radiographic outcomes.¹⁴ Indeed, low grade bone marrow oedema lesions as identified by MRI are not specific for SpA and are also evident in degenerative joint disease and occasionally in healthy people,^{8,18} and hence a clarifying definition of active MRI sacroiliitis is essential.

In summary, these are exciting times in the field of research in SpA. Only a decade ago there was little recognition of early disease and treatment in early and established AS was woefully inadequate. Now, we have widespread access to the non-ionising radiation of fat suppression MRI that can predict progression to AS as well as showing efficacy of TNF blocking agents in the suppression of inflammation leading to major improvements in early and late disease. Furthermore MRI has a major role in the diagnosis of the early disease stages.

The present studies have utilised a breadth of expert knowledge on SpA and MRI to take us further along the clinical translational road to a better understanding of axial SpA. The formulation of new international classification criteria for axial SpA, which embraces early axial SpA and AS, as described in this journal, is essential for future research and the management of axial SpA. Given the falling costs of MRI and its great potential in SpA the case for using MRI in inception cohorts of patients with IBP, and other non-IBP diagnosis for comparison, is growing. The present studies produce compelling evidence for the use of MRI for the diagnostic evaluation of SpA in routine practice. However, it is vital to remember that a negative MRI scan does not exclude a diagnosis of SpA and that it can still be difficult to discern the basis of some types of back pain even with IBP and MRI criteria.

Competing interests: PE and HM-O are members of Assessment in SpondyloArthritis international Society (ASAS).

Accepted 10 March 2009

Ann Rheum Dis 2009;**68**:765–767.
doi:10.1136/ard.2009.111435

REFERENCES

1. Sieper J, van der Heijde DM, Landewé RBM, Brandt J, Burgos-Vargas R, Collantes Estévez E, et al.

New criteria for inflammatory back pain in patients with chronic back pain: a real patient exercise of the Assessment in SpondyloArthritis International Society (ASAS). *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:784–8.

2. Rudwaleit M, Landewé R, van der Heijde D, Listing J, Brandt J, Braun J, et al. The development of Assessment of SpondyloArthritis international Society (ASAS) classification criteria for axial spondyloarthritis (part I): classification of paper patients by expert opinion including uncertainty appraisal. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:770–6.
3. Rudwaleit M, van der Heijde D, Landewé R, Listing J, Akkoc N, Brandt J, et al. The development of Assessment of SpondyloArthritis international Society (ASAS) classification criteria for axial spondyloarthritis (part II): validation and final selection. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:777–83.
4. Amor B, Dougados M, Mijiyawa M. Criteria of the classification of spondylarthropathies. *Rev Rhum Mal Osteoartic* 1990;**57**:85–9.
5. Dougados M, van der Linden S, Juhlin R, Huitfeldt B, Amor B, Calin A, et al. The European Spondylarthropathy Study Group preliminary criteria for the classification of spondylarthropathy. *Arthritis Rheum* 1991;**34**:1218–27.
6. van der Linden S, Valkenburg HA, Cats A. Evaluation of diagnostic criteria for ankylosing spondylitis. A proposal for modification of the New York criteria. *Arthritis Rheum* 1984;**27**:361–8.
7. Rudwaleit M, Haibel H, Baraliakos X, Listing J, Marker-Hermann E, Zeidler H, et al. The early disease stage in axial spondylarthritis: results from the German spondylarthritis inception cohort. *Arthritis Rheum* 2009;**60**:717–27.
8. Marzo-Ortega H, McGonagle D, O'Connor P, Hensor EMA, Bennett AN, Green M, et al. Baseline and one year magnetic resonance imaging of the sacroiliac joints and lumbar spine in early inflammatory back pain. The relationship between HLA-B27, symptoms and disease extent and persistence. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2008;**67**(Suppl II):377–8.
9. Marzo-Ortega H, McGonagle D, O'Connor P, Emery P. Efficacy of etanercept in the treatment of the enthesal pathology in resistant spondylarthropathy: a clinical and magnetic resonance imaging study. *Arthritis Rheum* 2001;**44**:2112–17.
10. Barkham N, Keen H, Coates LC, O'Connor P, Hensor EMA, Fraser A, et al. A randomised controlled trial of infliximab shows clinical and MRI efficacy in patients with HLA-B27 positive very early ankylosing spondylitis. *Arthritis Rheum* 2007;**56**(Suppl):L11.
11. Haibel H, Rudwaleit M, Listing J, Heldmann F, Wong RL, Kupper H, et al. Efficacy of adalimumab in the treatment of axial spondylarthritis without radiographically defined sacroiliitis: results of a twelve-week randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial followed by an open-label extension up to week fifty-two. *Arthritis Rheum* 2008;**58**:1981–91.
12. Rudwaleit M, Metter A, Listing J, Sieper J, Braun J. Inflammatory back pain in ankylosing spondylitis: a reassessment of the clinical history for application as classification and diagnostic criteria. *Arthritis Rheum* 2006;**54**:569–78.
13. Calin A, Porta J, Fries JF, Schurman DJ. Clinical history as a screening test for ankylosing spondylitis. *JAMA* 1977;**237**:2613–4.
14. Bennett AN, McGonagle D, O'Connor P, Hensor EM, Sivera F, Coates LC, et al. Severity of baseline magnetic resonance imaging-evident sacroiliitis and HLA-B27 status in early inflammatory back pain predict radiographically evident ankylosing spondylitis at eight years. *Arthritis Rheum* 2008;**58**:3413–8.
15. Oostveen J, Prevo R, den Boer J, van de Laar M. Early detection of sacroiliitis on magnetic resonance imaging and subsequent development of sacroiliitis on plain radiography. A prospective, longitudinal study. *J Rheumatol* 1999;**26**:1953–8.
16. Appel H, Kuhne M, Spiekermann S, Ebhardt H, Grozdanovic Z, Kohler D, et al. Immunohistologic

- analysis of zygapophyseal joints in patients with ankylosing spondylitis. *Arthritis Rheum* 2006;**54**:2845–51.
17. **Rudwaleit M**, Schwarzlose S, Hilgert ES, Listing J, Braun J, Sieper J. MRI in predicting a major clinical response to anti-tumour necrosis factor treatment in ankylosing spondylitis. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2008;**67**:1276–81.
 18. **Bennett AN**, Rehman A, Hensor EMA, Marzo-Ortega H, Emery P, McGonagle D. Evaluation of the diagnostic utility of spinal MRI in axial spondyloarthritis. *Arthritis Rheum* 2009. In press.
 19. **Puhakka KB**, Jurik AG, Schiottz-Christensen B, Hansen GV, Egdal N, Christiansen JV, et al. MRI abnormalities of sacroiliac joints in early spondyloarthritis: a 1-year follow-up study. *Scand J Rheumatol* 2004;**33**:332–8.

New tumour necrosis factor inhibitors for rheumatoid arthritis: are there benefits from extending choice?

David L Scott,¹ Andrew Cope²

Certolizumab pegol (UCB, Brussels, Belgium) and golimumab (Centocor, Horsham, Pennsylvania, USA) are the latest tumour necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors evaluated in double-blind, multicentre randomised controlled trials (RCT). Certolizumab is the pegylated (polyethylene glycolated) Fab' fragment derived from a high affinity humanised anti-TNF α monoclonal antibody (mAb). Fab' fragments lack the Fc portion of immunoglobulin, and so the repertoire of Fc-mediated effector responses, such as complement or antibody-dependent cell-mediated cytotoxicity, is distinct from those of other anti-TNF mAb. Nonetheless, it still neutralises membrane TNF α . Derivatisation of the Fab' fragment prolongs the plasma half-life to 2 weeks. Certolizumab pegol is administered by subcutaneous injection (200 or 400 mg) every 2 weeks. Golimumab is a human anti-TNF mAb administered by subcutaneous injections (50 or 100 mg) every 4 weeks. Three RCT in this issue of *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*,^{1–3} (see pages 789, 797 and 805) which report their use in active rheumatoid arthritis (RA), raise two questions. First, do we need more TNF inhibitors? Second, how effective and safe are these new TNF inhibitors?

Successful drugs are invariably replicated. "Breakthrough" treatments sound more impressive than subsequent "me

too" replications, although the latter products might perform better. Lee⁴ has elegantly summarised the arguments for "me too" products, indicating that their presence "does not mean that imitation has replaced innovation". Successful "me too" treatments improve efficacy, reduce toxicity and increase "cost effectiveness". With biological agents such as TNF inhibitors their added benefits may include more favourable routes or frequencies of administration.

There are cogent reasons to anticipate that "me too" biological agents will be commonplace as experience with these agents solidifies and their use increases. There may be special factors with biologicals, particularly around their mechanism of action, which may complicate the comparison of different "me too" products. Nevertheless, it is generally appropriate to assume that what holds for conventional drugs also holds for large molecules with regard to the benefits of "me too" products. Indeed, regulatory developments have paved the way for future biosimilars or follow-on biologicals to be developed as the patent life of established molecules draws to a close.⁵

There are many critics of "me too" conventional drugs.⁶ Clinicians often use only one or two drugs in each class and may not need wide choices. Furthermore, much expenditure on drugs is attributable to high-cost "me too" products. However, this issue is complex because it could represent either high expenditure on unneeded replication or a realistic preference for refined "me too" products over less effective or more toxic "breakthrough" products. Overall, the proliferation of agents in a successful treatment class reflects the competitive nature of

drug development, the length of the regulatory process and the risks of first agents in a class not achieving registration. It seems unlikely that "me too" products stifle the development of novel agents; recent history suggests "me too" agents are an inevitable part of the process of finding new products.⁷

Two RCT reported in this issue evaluated the new TNF inhibitors combined with methotrexate in disease-modifying antirheumatic drug (DMARD) non-responders. American College of Rheumatology 50% improvement (ACR50) responder rates at 6 months can be used to place the results in context. With golimumab-methotrexate ACR50 responder rates were 35% compared with 14% with controls;² in a previous dose-ranging trial ACR50 responder rates were 31% with active treatment and 6% in controls.⁸ Certolizumab pegol/methotrexate gave ACR50 responder rates of 33% compared with 3% with controls;¹ in a previous phase III trial ACR50 responder rates were 37–40% compared with 8% with controls.⁹ We extended this analysis of ACR50 responder rates at 6 months across TNF inhibitor-methotrexate combinations, using key RCT in established RA identified in a previous systematic review.^{10–13} Although this analytical approach has its limitations as the trials were undertaken at different times and in different populations, it is possible to gain some understanding of the overall efficacy of different TNF inhibitors from this type of comparative analysis. The number needed to treat (NNT) to achieve an ACR50 response compared with methotrexate monotherapy ranges from 3 to 5 (table 1). These results show that both established and new TNF inhibitors have similar efficacy when combined with methotrexate.

Established TNF inhibitors prevent erosive progression over 12 months and beyond. Comparative 6-month data for certolizumab pegol suggest it reduces erosive damage and its efficacy is similar to etanercept and adalimumab^{12 13} (fig 1). Whereas conventional assessments of erosive damage use 12-month changes, 6-month changes are equally impressive with all these agents. Although comparable 6-month data on erosive progression are not available for infliximab and golimumab, their absence is most likely

¹ Academic Department of Rheumatology, King's College London School of Medicine, Weston Education Centre, King's College London, London, UK; ² Academic Department of Rheumatology, King's College London School of Medicine, Guy's Hospital, London, UK

Correspondence to: Professor D L Scott, Academic Department of Rheumatology, King's College London School of Medicine, Weston Education Centre, King's College London, 10 Cutcombe Road, London SE5 9RS, UK; david.l.scott@kcl.ac.uk

Corrections

The department of one of the authors who co-authored all of the below papers has found that the affiliations were not correct. The correct affiliations for Professor P Emery, for all of the below articles, are: ¹Section of Musculoskeletal Disease, Leeds Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Leeds; ²NIHR Leeds Musculoskeletal Biomedical Research Unit, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Leeds, UK.

1. **Keystone E**, Emery P, Peterfy CG, *et al*. Rituximab inhibits structural joint damage in patients with rheumatoid arthritis with an inadequate response to tumour necrosis factor inhibitor therapies. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:216–21.
2. **Doward LC**, McKenna SP, Whalley D, *et al*. The development of the L-QoL: a quality-of-life instrument specific to systemic lupus erythematosus. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:196–200.
3. **Potter C**, Hyrich KL, Tracey A, *et al*. Association of rheumatoid factor and anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide positivity, but not carriage of shared epitope or PTPN22 susceptibility variants, with anti-TNF response in RA. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:69–74.
4. **Smolen JS**, Han C, van der Heijde DM, *et al*. Active-Controlled Study of Patients Receiving Infliximab for the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis of Early Onset (ASPIRE) Study Group. Radiographic changes in rheumatoid arthritis patients attaining different disease activity states with methotrexate monotherapy and infliximab plus methotrexate: the impacts of remission and tumour necrosis factor blockade. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:823–7.
5. **Buch MH**, Boyle DL, Rosengren S, *et al*. Mode of action of abatacept in rheumatoid arthritis patients having failed tumour necrosis factor blockade: a histological, gene expression and dynamic magnetic resonance imaging pilot study. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:1220–7.
6. **Emery P**, Van Vollenhoven R, Ostergaard M, *et al*. Guidelines for initiation of anti-tumour necrosis factor therapy in rheumatoid arthritis: similarities and differences across Europe. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:456–9.
7. **Bejarano V**, Conaghan PG, Proudman SM, *et al*. Long-term efficacy and toxicity of ciclosporin A in combination with methotrexate in poor prognosis rheumatoid arthritis. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:761–3.
8. **Rudwaleit M**, Landewé R, van der Heijde D, *et al*. The development of Assessment of SpondyloArthritis international Society classification criteria for axial spondyloarthritis (part I): classification of paper patients by expert opinion including uncertainty appraisal. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:770–6.
9. **Bennett AN**, Marzo-Ortega H, Emery P, *et al*. Leeds Spondyloarthritis Group. Diagnosing axial spondyloarthritis. The new Assessment in SpondyloArthritis international Society criteria: MRI entering centre stage. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:765–7.
10. **Marzo-Ortega H**, McGonagle D, O'Connor P, *et al*. Baseline and 1-year magnetic resonance imaging of the sacroiliac joint and lumbar spine in very early inflammatory back pain. Relationship between symptoms, HLA-B27 and disease extent and persistence. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:1721–7.
11. **Gilworth G**, Emery P, Gossec L, *et al*. Adaptation and cross-cultural validation of the rheumatoid arthritis work instability scale (RA-WIS). *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:1686–90.
12. **Gilworth G**, Emery P, Gossec L, *et al*. Adaptation and cross-cultural validation of the RA-WIS (Work Instability Scale). *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:1686–90.
13. **Jarrett SJ**, Sivera F, Cawthell LS, *et al*. MRI and clinical findings in patients with ankylosing spondylitis eligible for anti-tumour necrosis factor therapy after a short course of etoricoxib. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:1466–9.
14. **Haugeberg G**, Conaghan PG, Quinn M, *et al*. Bone loss in patients with active early rheumatoid arthritis: infliximab and methotrexate compared with methotrexate treatment alone. Explorative analysis from a 12-month randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled study. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:1898–901.
15. **Genovese MC**, Breedveld FC, Emery P, *et al*. Safety of biological therapies following rituximab treatment in rheumatoid arthritis patients. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2009;**68**:1894–7.
16. **Kekow J**, Moots RJ, Emery P, *et al*. Patient-reported outcomes improve with etanercept plus methotrexate in active early rheumatoid arthritis and the improvement is strongly associated with remission: the COMET trial. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:222–5.
17. **Furst DE**, Keystone EC, Fleischmann R, *et al*. Updated consensus statement on biological agents for the treatment of rheumatic diseases, 2009. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**(Suppl 1):i2–29.
18. **Freeston JE**, Wakefield RJ, Conaghan PG, *et al*. A diagnostic algorithm for persistence of very early inflammatory arthritis: the utility of power Doppler ultrasound when added to conventional assessment tools. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:417–9.
19. **Jones E**, Churchman SM, English A, *et al*. Mesenchymal stem cells in rheumatoid synovium: enumeration and functional assessment in relation to synovial inflammation level. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:450–7.
20. **Alten RE**, Zerbini C, Jeka S, *et al*. Efficacy and safety of pamapimod in patients with active rheumatoid arthritis receiving stable methotrexate therapy. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:364–7.
21. **Machold KP**, Landewé R, Smolen JS, *et al*. The Stop Arthritis Very Early (SAVE) trial, an international multicentre, randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial on glucocorticoids in very early arthritis. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:495–502.
22. **Schoels M**, Knevel R, Aletaha D, *et al*. Evidence for treating rheumatoid arthritis to target: results of a systematic literature search. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:638–43.
23. **Smolen JS**, Aletaha D, Bijlsma JW, *et al*. T2T Expert Committee. Treating rheumatoid arthritis to target: recommendations of an international task force. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:631–7.
24. **Burr ML**, Naseem H, Hinks A, *et al*. BIRAC Consortium; YEAR Consortium. PADI4 genotype is not associated with rheumatoid arthritis in a large UK Caucasian population. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:666–70.
25. **Emery P**, Durez P, Dougados M, *et al*. Impact of T-cell costimulation modulation in patients with undifferentiated inflammatory arthritis or very early rheumatoid arthritis: a clinical and imaging study of abatacept (the ADJUST trial). *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:510–16.
26. **Bennett AN**, Rehman A, Hensor EM, *et al*. The fatty Romanus lesion: a non-inflammatory spinal MRI lesion specific for axial spondyloarthritis. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:891–4.
27. **Nam JL**, Winthrop KL, van Vollenhoven RF, *et al*. Current evidence for the management of rheumatoid arthritis with biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs: a systematic literature review informing the EULAR recommendations for the management of RA. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:976–86.
28. **Smolen JS**, Landewé R, Breedveld FC, *et al*. EULAR recommendations for the management of rheumatoid arthritis with synthetic and biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:964–75.
29. **Tan RJ**, Gibbons LJ, Potter C, *et al*. BRAGGSS. Investigation of rheumatoid arthritis susceptibility genes identifies association of AFF3 and CD226 variants with response to anti-tumour necrosis factor treatment. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1029–35.
30. **Robinson JL**, Barrett JH, Taylor JC, *et al*. YEAR Consortium; BRAGGSS. Dissection of the FCGR3A association with RA: increased association in men and with autoantibody positive disease. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1054–7.
31. **Cohen SB**, Keystone E, Genovese MC, *et al*. Continued inhibition of structural damage over 2 years in patients with rheumatoid arthritis treated with rituximab in combination with methotrexate. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1158–61.
32. **Haugeberg G**, Bennett AN, McGonagle D, *et al*. Bone loss in very early inflammatory back pain in undifferentiated spondyloarthritis: a 1-year observational study. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1364–6.
33. **Schoels M**, Aletaha D, Smolen JS, *et al*. Follow-up standards and treatment targets in rheumatoid arthritis: results of a questionnaire at the EULAR 2008. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:575–8.
34. **Eyre S**, Flynn E, Martin P, *et al*. No evidence for association of the KLF12 gene with rheumatoid arthritis in a large UK cohort. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1407–8.
35. **Eyre S**, Hinks A, Flynn E, *et al*. Confirmation of association of the REL locus with rheumatoid arthritis susceptibility in the UK population. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1572–3.
36. **Orozco G**, Eyre S, Hinks A, *et al*. Wellcome Trust Case Control consortium YEAR Consortium. Association of CD40 with rheumatoid arthritis confirmed in a large UK case-control study. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:813–16.
37. **Emery P**, Durez P, Dougados M, *et al*. Impact of T-cell costimulation modulation in patients with undifferentiated inflammatory arthritis or very early rheumatoid arthritis: a clinical and imaging study of abatacept (the ADJUST trial). *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:510–16.
38. **Saleem B**, Keen H, Goeb V, *et al*. Patients with RA in remission on TNF blockers: when and in whom can TNF blocker therapy be stopped? *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1636–42.
39. **Barkham N**, Coates LC, Keen H, *et al*. Double-blind placebo-controlled trial of etanercept in the prevention of work disability in ankylosing spondylitis. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1926–8.
40. **Emery P**, Deodhar A, Rigby WF, *et al*. Efficacy and safety of different doses and retreatment of rituximab: a randomised, placebo-controlled trial in patients who are biological naive with active rheumatoid arthritis and an inadequate response to methotrexate (Study Evaluating Rituximab's Efficacy in MTX iNadequate rEsponders (SERENE)). *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1629–35.
41. **Dixon WG**, Hyrich KL, Watson KD, *et al*. BSRBR Control Centre Consortium; British Society for Rheumatology Biologics Register. Influence of anti-TNF therapy on mortality in patients with rheumatoid arthritis-associated interstitial lung disease: results from the British Society for Rheumatology Biologics Register. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2010;**69**:1086–91.

Ann Rheum Dis 2011;**70**:1519. doi:10.1136/annrheumdis-2011-70-08