staining (CD45/CD14/CD3, CD3/CD16⁺56/CD45, CD3/CD19/CD45, CD45RA/CD45RO/CD3, CD45RA/HLA-DR/CD3).

After two washing steps, the cells were analysed within a flow-cytometer (FACSCalibur, BD) using the CellQuest (BD) and Paint-a-Gate (BD) software.

Results From the SF we isolated a greater percent of CD14⁺, CD19⁺ and CD3⁺ cells compared with PB. We found in patients with RA a higher report CD4/CD8 in SF than in the PB; and many of the CD3⁺ CD8⁺ cells showed a cytotoxic phenotype. Among the patients with RA the median percent of cells expressing CD45RA+CD45RO+HLA-DR+ phenotype was 2% in PB respectively 25% in SF; for the CD45RA+CD45RO+HLA-DR- phenotype 25% in PB and 0 in SF; CD45RA-CD45RO+HLA-DR- 24% in PB and 26% in SF; CD45RA-CD45RO+HLA-DR+ 5% in PB and 30% in SF; CD45RA+CD45RO+HLA-DR- 25% in PB and 0 in SF. The HLA-DR expression was 6,1% of LT in PB in RA, predominantly associated with CD45RO expression.

Conclusion Our results confirmed the previous studies reports that described the presence of dual CD45RA+CD45RO+ LT population in PB and SF of patients with RA. The LT dual positive CD45RA and CD45RO population which did not express HLA-DR in PB made up 25% of LT from PB in RA. In SF all dual positive LT coexpress HLA-DR. These results sustained the hypothesis that LT are in a more activated state in SF than in PB.

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THU0099 THE LOCALISATION OF FLICE INHIBITORY PROTEIN (FLIP) IN RHEUMATOID SYNOVIUM

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Background FLICE inhibitory protein (FLIP, I-FLICE) is an inhibitor of caspase 8 (FLICE) and functions as an early mediator of apoptosis. Expression of FLIP is associated with resistance to apoptosis in differentiated macrophages and also in primary B-cells and B-cell lines. The role of FLIP in rheumatoid synovium has not been fully elucidated although it has been shown that FLIP is expressed at sites of bone and cartilage erosion in the rheumatoid joint.

Objectives The aim of this study is to examine the degree of expression of FLIP in rheumatoid synovium.

Methods Samples were obtained intraoperatively from patients with rheumatoid arthritis (n = 17) and osteoarthritis (n = 9). Colon sections from patients with ulcerative colitis were used as biological controls. Immunohistochemistry was carried out using a polyclonal antibody to both the long and short forms of FLIP. Sections of synovium with prominent mononuclear infiltrates were chosen for more detailed analysis of FLIP expression in inflammatory cells. Positive mononuclear cells were counted under a high-power field and the degree of positive staining was graded using the Lindblad and Hedfors scale (see Table 1).

Results FLIP was strongly expressed in the synovial lining of samples from patients with both rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. There was low expression of FLIP in the rheumatoid mononuclear cells relative to the inflammatory cells in the

osteoarthritis samples. Inflammatory cells in ulcerative colitis showed upregulation of FLIP.

Abstract THU0099 Table 1

	Rheumatoid arthritis (n = 13)	Osteoarthritis (n = 5)
I (	6	0
II (	5	0
III (	1	4
IV (>86% +)	1	1

Conclusion We conclude that the infrequency of lymphocyte apoptosis in RA synovium does not appear to be due to expression of FLIP. There is high expression of FLIP in the synovial lining in both RA and OA however. This may point to differing roles for FLIP in the regulation of apoptosis in synovium and suggests that other apoptotic regulators are involved in the persistence of inflammatory cells in rheumatoid arthritis.

THU0100 INTERLEUKIN-17 INCREASED THE PRODUCTION OF MATRIX METALLOPROTEINASE-3 IN CULTURED RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS SYNOVIOCYTES

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Background

Objectives To investigate the effect of interleukin-17 (IL-17) on production of matrix metalloproteinase-3 (MMP-3) in rheumatoid arthritis synoviocytes.

Methods Fibroblast-like synovial cell (FLS) were prepared from the synovial tissue of rheumatoid arthritis patients and cultured in the presence of various concentration of IL-17. MMP-3 levels were determined in the culture supernatants by sandwich ELISA according to culturing periods.

Results Stimulation of FLS by IL-17 with 5, 10, 20, 40 ng/ml concentrations increased the production of MMP-3 by 2.7, 2.7, 3, 3.4 fold after 24 h and 8.7, 8.7, 8.1, 10.2 fold after 48 h over the constitutive levels of unstimulated FLS.

Conclusion IL-17, a T cell-derived proinflammatory cytokine produced by rheumatoid synovium, may be involved in the cartilage degradation in rheumatoid arthritis by enhancing the production of MMP-3 from rheumatoid arthritis synoviocytes.

THU0101 HIGHLY ELEVATED LEVELS OF THE DISINTEGRIN METALLOPROTEINASE MDC15 IN RHEUMATOID SYNOVIAL MEMBRANES

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Background MDC15 (ADAM15) belongs to the family of membrane-bound disintegrin metalloproteinases (ADAM or MDC; a