**Online supplementary text**

In the randomised clinical trials from which patient data were derived, patients were excluded if they had (among others) the following:

* Systemic autoimmune disorders or conditions other than rheumatoid arthritis (patients with Sjögren’s syndrome were not excluded).
* Major surgery within 8 weeks prior to study entry.
* Serious cardiovascular condition within 12 weeks prior to study entry.
* Chronic renal disease or severe hepatic impairment (estimated glomerular filtration rate [eGFR] <40 mL/min/1.73 m2; aspartate transaminase [AST]/alanine transaminase [ALT]/total bilirubin >1.5 x upper limit of normal [ULN]).
* History or presence of cardiovascular, respiratory, hepatic, gastrointestinal, endocrine, haematological, neurological, or neuropsychiatric disorders, or unstable illness which could constitute a risk when taking the investigational drug.
* Current or recent (<30 days prior to study entry) clinically serious viral, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic infection. Patients with latent tuberculosis or active hepatitis B or C virus were accepted if prophylaxis had been given and a lack of viral replication confirmed.
* Lymphoproliferative disorders and active malignancies for <5 years.
* Alcohol or drug abuse within 2 years prior to study entry.