

The New York Arthritis Reporter

Arthritis Foundation, Inc., New York Chapter • 122 East 42nd Street • New York, New York 10168-1898 • (212) 984-8700

Research Update

Exploring Pathways to Autoimmunity

"A patient may think of arthritis as one disease, but arthritis is the umbrella name for more than 100 different disorders. Moreover, physicians envision multiple possible pathways within the body that could potentially lead to each condition," says Chaim Putterman, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine and Chief, Division of Rheumatology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx.

"One of the most exciting areas of arthritis research today is the investigation of biologic therapies for rheumatoid arthritis (RA), lupus, psoriatic arthritis, and other related autoimmune disorders. Autoimmune disorders occur when the body's natural defense mechanisms malfunction and, instead of offering protection, actually contribute to disease. Biologic therapies for RA target specific pathways/interactions in the body's immune system in an effort to modulate or block, with precision, the inflammation process so devastating to joints and other organs," Dr. Putterman explains.

"Precision" is the key word in explaining why the biologics are so promising. Some of the standard treatments for immune disorders can influence many more cell types than some of the new biologics, thus creating the potential for more adverse reactions and side effects. By concentrating on a specific target, the **precision** of the biologics can limit the damage to other



interact with B cells and other cells of the immune system to produce inflammation.

Many patients have experienced dramatic improvement while taking a form of biologic therapy. However, each individual may

respond differently to each drug because not every person arrives at a disease through the same pathway. Dr. Putterman, who is also the Chairman of the Chapter's Medical & Scientific Committee, says that an important focus of arthritis research today is to increase the choices available to patients, i.e.,

cells while producing the desired results.

Currently, there are three major classes of biologics:

- **Cytokine inhibitors**, like etanercept and infliximab, which block a substance known as tumor necrosis factor (TNF- α); and anakinra which blocks another substance called interleukin-1 (IL-1).
- **B-cell inhibitors**, like rituxan, a treatment for lymphoma, which has recently been approved to use for RA. This medication targets a molecule known as BLYS (B Lymphocyte Stimulator; also known as BAFF) which stimulates B cells to proliferate.
- **Co-stimulation inhibitors**, like the newly approved abatacept, which interferes with the process by which T cells stimulate and

create a wider variety of modulators/inhibitors from which to choose so that more patients can benefit from biologic therapy.

Exploring genetic clues to autoimmunity is another exciting area of arthritis research today. Scientists are studying specific genes to determine their role in the inflammation process. Some genes are suspected of having a negative impact, ultimately aiding joint damage, while others may have a protective influence. Studies are underway to determine how best to use this information.

For example, the North American Rheumatoid Arthritis Consortium (NARAC), jointly funded by the Arthritis Foundation

(Continued on page 2)

GHI and HIP – Taking Care of Subscribers

Knowing that informed and motivated consumers can enjoy better health and reduce their healthcare costs, both **Group Health Incorporated (GHI)** and **HIP Health Plan of New York (HIP)** have renewed their partnerships with the Chapter to offer members a selection of Chapter disease management, education, and healthy living programs, free of charge.

"With empowerment resources like the *Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program* (also available in Spanish), the *Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program*, *Tai Chi by the Arthritis Foundation*, and *Osteoporosis and You*, **GHI** and **HIP** are anticipating the needs of a wider range of subscribers," says Dr. Linda Russell, chair of the Chapter's Patient Services Committee. Subscribers are encouraged to check their plan to see which Chapter programs are available to them.

This issue is underwritten by an educational grant from Wyeth.

NEW YORK CHAPTER



Research Update

(continued from page 1)



and the National Institutes of Health, has recently discovered a gene variation linked to an increased risk for RA, lupus and other autoimmune disorders. When this gene variation is present, the immune system isn't able to shut down appropriately, resulting in chronic inflammation and tissue damage.

Within the next five years, NARAC researchers expect to identify other important genes involved in autoimmune conditions. This can lead to better diagnostic methods, including the ability to predict disease severity. It may enable treatments to be tailored to the individual. This task might be difficult, as human autoimmune and rheumatic diseases are thought to be complex and multi-genic. In this process, researchers will also be looking to identify protective genes that suppress inflammation.

To learn more about arthritis research, visit our Web site, www.arthritis.org, and click on "Research" at the top right corner of the page. You will gain access to a wide variety of research topics. For more information about biologic therapies, you can request a copy of our free brochure, *Biologic Response Modifiers*, by calling the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** telephone helpline, sponsored by Pfizer Inc, at (212) 984-8730, or, from the 914 or 845 area codes only, (800) 246-2884.

Partners in Multilingual Programming

With educational grants from **Eli Lilly & Company** and **Wyeth Pharmaceuticals**, the Chapter will be offering free public forums on rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis during the month of June in Chinese, Spanish, Russian and English. "The Chapter is thrilled about these grants and the opportunity they provide for us to serve our constituents from diverse ethnic backgrounds," said Dr. Linda A. Russell, Chair of the Chapter's Patient Services Committee.

Forums are scheduled in the following locations. Please call Teresa Davis at the New York Chapter, (212) 984-8711 or tdavis@arthritis.org, for additional information.

Current Treatment Options for Rheumatoid Arthritis

Sponsored by Wyeth Pharmaceuticals

Chinese

Thursday, August 3, 2006 — 1:30 PM

Charles B. Wang Community Health Center
268 Canal Street, New York
Speaker: Sicy Lee, MD

Spanish

Wednesday, June 7, 2006 — 10:00 AM

Trinity Adult Health Day Care Program
172-61 Baisley Blvd., Jamaica
Speaker: Laureano Lopez-Garrido, MD

English

Wednesday, June 7, 2006 — 6:00 PM

White Plains Hospital Center
Davis Ave. at East Post Rd., White Plains
Speaker: Jack Berger, MD

English

Wednesday, June 21, 2006 — 1:00 PM

Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Heights
280 Cadman Plaza West at Tillary Street
Speaker: Brian Golden, MD

Osteoporosis: The Silent Epidemic

Funded by an educational grant from Eli Lilly & Company

Chinese

Tuesday, June 6, 2006 — 1:00 PM

Taiwan Center
137-44 Northern Blvd., Flushing
Speaker: Chien-Jung Chu, MD

Spanish

Thursday, June 29, 2006 — 11:00 AM

Marble Hill Senior Center
5365 Broadway, Bronx
Speaker: TBD

Russian

Wednesday, June 21, 2006 — 10:30 AM

Brighton Beach Branch Library
Brighton First Rd. & Brighton Beach Ave.
Brooklyn
Speaker: Yelena Sokolova, MD

English

Wednesday, June 28, 2006 — 6:00 PM

Staten Island Medical Group
1050 Clove Road, Staten Island
Speaker: Shari Schloss, MD

FREE Arthritis Foundation Exercise Programs and Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Programs for HIP Subscribers

Pre-registration required, contact Sarah Goodstein at (212) 984-8714 for locations in our Chapter region.

NEW YORK CHAPTER



The New York Arthritis Reporter

Take Control. We Can Help.™

Published by

Arthritis Foundation, Inc., New York Chapter
122 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10168-1898

New York Arthritis Exchange™ (212) 984-8730

Administrative Offices (212) 984-8700 • Fax (212) 878-5960

www.arthritis.org

All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

David C. Clapp
Chair

Ross Alfieri
President

Helen Levine
Vice President,
Medical Affairs

Steven B. Abramson, MD
Chair, Executive Committee

Phyllis Geraghty
Editor

Copies of our financial and operating report have been filed with the state and are available upon request. To obtain one, write: Office of the Attorney General, Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271, or contact us at the address above.

SAVE THE DATE Joint Replacement Symposium Monday, October 9th, 1-5 PM

Today's candidates for joint replacement surgery are faced with a wide array of choices, not only in the type of implant used, but in the surgical technique. Learn your options and outcomes. Join other patients and joint replacement professionals at the public segment of the **19th Annual Symposium of the International Society for Technology in Arthroplasty** scheduled for **Monday, October 9th, 1-5 PM, at the Roosevelt Hotel, East 45th Street at Madison Avenue in Manhattan.**

To register and reserve a seat, please send your name, number attending, and email address to ista@pacbell.net. There will be a \$25/person fee payable at the conference registration area.

Beatrice Slutsky remembered the Chapter in her will with a bequest of \$1,000.

A distribution of \$11,979 from estate of Lillian Epps will support programs for people with arthritis.

A bequest to the Chapter of \$1,000 was thoughtfully made by Thelma Berger.

The estate of Kay Bernstein provided the Chapter with a distribution of \$25,000.

Questions and Answers

Panagiotis Koulouvaris, M.D. and Kleio Mavragani, M.D., Ph.D. are the first Stavros S. Niarchos International Fellows

The Stavros S. Niarchos International Fellowship Exchange Program, a collaborative effort between the New York Chapter and The Stavros S. Niarchos Foundation, is a two-year international rheumatology and orthopaedic fellowship designed to provide Greek nationals the opportunity to participate in an adult/pediatric rheumatology or orthopaedic surgery program in a New York-based institution. Initiated in 2004, the program partnership has been renewed and two more fellows will be selected this year. The goal of the program is to encourage qualified Greek physicians and scientists to embark on careers in research related to arthritis and rheumatic diseases.

The first two Niarchos fellows are currently conducting research at the Hospital for Special Surgery. **Kleio Mavragani, M.D., Ph.D.**, from Laikon General Hospital, Medical School, University of Athens, is examining the role of interferon- α in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). **Panagiotis Koulouvaris, M.D.**, from the University of Ionnina Medical School, is focusing on joint replacement and the mechanisms of cell particle interaction involved in periprosthetic osteolysis. Here is what they had to say about their research in New York.

Q: What do you believe are the greatest benefits of global collaborative medical research programs?

A: Scientific knowledge is expanding at an unprecedented pace and it is an invaluable experience to be part of an established research team in another country.

Understanding the underlying mechanisms of disease is not an isolated effort, but requires a multi-disciplinary approach. The global academic environment offered through the fellowship program provides a unique opportunity to contribute to the exchange of medical knowledge and ideas, and to integrate the different areas of expertise among different parts of the world.

This combination of forces is key to the advancement of science, the maturation of young researchers, the establishment of new collaborations between their mentors, and finally, benefit for the patients....the ultimate goal.



Q: What impact has this Fellowship had on your career to date?

A: The two fellowship years are having an enormous impact...they include the most creative moments in our careers to date. The experience has broadened our intellectual horizons, helping us to better understand the principles of basic molecular mechanisms and to integrate that with a clinical knowledge

of autoimmune diseases. We have established collaborations and friendships with young researchers from different institutions around the world.

We both believe this experience is the starting point for other fruitful interactions in the years to come. With the continuation of this successful fellowship program, all the Niarchos fellows will form an elite group of researchers to promote a global interest in rheumatology and orthopedics. Dr. Koulouvaris is already working on plans to establish the first Basic and Clinical Department to study joint replacement in arthritis patients at the University of Ionnina Medical School when he returns to Greece.

New DVDs Now Available!

Take Control With Exercise, a DVD introduced at the Arthritis Walk, is now available for \$19.95. Created especially for people with arthritis, this upbeat 60-minute fitness DVD features two optional endurance routines and a relaxing guided imagery segment to help manage stress. Based on the *Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program* and offered at \$29.95, **Arthritis Water Exercise** is another fitness DVD featuring a 40-minute aquatic program.

Both DVDs can be ordered by calling the Chapter at (212) 984-8730.

Visit Our Thrift Shop

Arthritis Foundation Thrift Shop
1383 Third Avenue • New York, NY 10021
(212) 772-8816

Donations always welcome.

FREE Arthritis Foundation Self-Help, Osteoporosis and You, and Arthritis Foundation Exercise Programs for GHI Subscribers

Pre-registration required, contact Wendy Isaacs at (212) 984-8713 for locations in our Chapter region.

Centocor and the Chapter Educating the Public Together

Mutually committed to educating the public about arthritis, **Centocor, Inc.** and the Chapter have joined forces to offer a broad spectrum of consumer education programs at several locations in the Chapter region.

New Locales

Forums on ankylosing spondylitis are coming to Veterans Administration Hospitals in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, and Westchester. Featuring the latest information on this form of arthritis of the spine common among former servicemen, these forums are the first Chapter educational programs offered to veterans and their families.

More about RA

Two symposia will take place in June—one in Poughkeepsie and the other in Manhattan. Both will offer current information on rheumatoid arthritis, including the latest treatment options. The symposium in Manhattan will also feature a session on Medicare's Part D new prescription drug coverage:

- **Today's Options for Rheumatoid Arthritis Management Symposium**
Saturday, June 3, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm,
St. Francis Hospital, Poughkeepsie
- **Living with Rheumatoid Arthritis: Treatment Options, Surgical Advances & Health Advocacy**
Tuesday, June 27, 5:00 pm – 8:30 pm,
Lighthouse International Conference Center, New York City.

ABC Expansion

With Centocor's help, the Chapter is expanding its *Arthritis Basics for Change (ABC)* program into more locations throughout Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx. The *ABC* program is designed to teach seniors fundamental disease management techniques and offer tips on improving the doctor/patient relationship.

To learn more about all of these programs, please call Teresa Davis at the Chapter at (212) 984-8711 or tdavis@arthritis.org.

The estate of Bertha J. Prerau provided the Chapter with a distribution of \$19,152 which will support patient services for people with arthritis.

Chapter a Leader in Funding Arthritis Research

The New York Chapter is currently funding 14 strategic arthritis-related research projects in New York City's most prominent medical institutions. Designed to encourage bright young scientists to pursue careers in rheumatology and orthopedics, the Chapter research program includes fellowships, research grants, and our coveted Young Scholar Awards, totaling **\$800,000 in 2005**. Chapter research funding is awarded only to those arthritis-related projects that have met the rigorous standards of excellence of the Arthritis Foundation's National Peer Review Process. Many of our Chapter grant recipients have gone on to receive prestigious National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding.

Arthritis Foundation, New York Chapter 2005 Research Award Recipients

Anca Askanase, M.D.

Hospital for Joint Diseases

Young Scholar: Outcomes of Children with Neonatal Lupus and Their Unaffected Siblings

R. Krishna Chaganti, M.D.

Hospital for Special Surgery

Fellowship: Clinical systemic markers for periprosthetic osteolysis

Matthew E. Cunningham, M.D., Ph.D.

Hospital for Special Surgery

Orthopedic Fellowship Award: Gene-mediated Minimally Invasive Anterior Spinal Fusion

Sally Frenkel, Ph.D.

Hospital for Joint Diseases

Research: Human Stem Cells in a Novel Scaffold for Cartilage Repair

Panagiotis Koulouvaris, M.D.

Hospital for Special Surgery

Niarchos Fellowship Award:

Mechanisms of Cell Particle Interaction Involved in Periprosthetic Osteolysis: An In Vitro and In Vivo Study

Chuanju Liu, Ph.D.

Hospital for Joint Diseases

Young Scholar: ADAMTS7B: A novel Cartilage Degrading Enzyme

Meggan Mackay, M.D.

Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center

Clinical Research: Novel Mechanism for Cognitive Dysfunction in SLE

Lisa Ann Mandl, M.D., M.P.H.

Hospital for Special Surgery

Clinical Research: A Randomized Controlled Trial for Treating Carpometacarpal Osteoarthritis

Kleio Mavragani, M.D., Ph.D.

Hospital for Special Surgery

Niarchos Fellowship Award: Role of interferon- α in lupus pathogenesis



Drs. Lisa A. Mandl, Anca Askanase and Adrian T. Ting gave presentations on their research projects at the Chapter's Annual Meeting in April.

Adam Mor, M.D.

NYU-Hospital for Joint Diseases

Fellowship: Ras Signaling in Autoimmune T Cells

Linda A. Spatz, Ph.D.

City College of New York, CUNY Medical School

Research: The role of BAFF in the regulation of anti-dsDNA B cells

Clement Erasmus Tagoe, M.D., Ph.D.

Hospital for Joint Diseases

Research: Annexins in Rheumatoid Arthritis Synovial Fibroblasts

Adrian T. Ting, Ph.D.

Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Research: Genetic analysis of proximal TNFR1 signal transduction

Sergey V. Yurasov, M.D.

Rockefeller University

Young Scholar: B Cell Tolerance Alterations in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

Future issues of the *Reporter* will feature Chapter-funded researchers and how Chapter support has impacted their careers as investigators.

Dates to Remember

Hospital for Special Surgery

535 East 70th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY

June 7 Bone & Joint Health

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Physical Therapy at Briarcliff

584 North State Road, Briarcliff Manor, NY

June 7, July 5, August 2, September 6

Chronic Pain/Fibromyalgia Support Group

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Physical Therapy at Jefferson Valley

1 Lee Boulevard, Jefferson Valley, NY

June 15, July 20, August 17

Chronic Pain/Fibromyalgia Support Group

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Poughkeepsie Galleria

790 South Road, Poughkeepsie, NY

June 8, July 13, August 10

Arthritis Support Group

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

June 9, July 14, August 11

Fibromyalgia Support Group

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Programs require pre-registration. For further information, call the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** at (212) 984-8730 or, from the 914 and 845 area codes only, 800-246-2884.

Today's Options for Rheumatoid Arthritis Management Symposium Saturday, June 24, 2006

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Long Island College Hospital
339 Hicks Street, Brooklyn

Good Living Series Updated

The Arthritis Foundation's *Good Living* publications are being revamped and the first book to be updated is now available. *Good Living With Fibromyalgia* retails for \$16.95 and can be ordered by calling the Chapter at (212) 984-8730.

New, revised editions of *Good Living With Rheumatoid Arthritis* and *Good Living With Osteoarthritis* are to be released this summer.

A distribution of \$39,993 from the estate of Mikey Pierre will support arthritis research.

Visit the Features on our Web site

- Arthritis Advocates in Action
- Advocacy News
- Your Direct Access
- Kids Get Arthritis, Too
- NAAP Statistical Data
- The New York Arthritis Reporter
- Información en español



Log on to **www.arthritis.org**. Enter your zip code to find the New York Chapter.

In the Next Issue: Complementary Therapies