

EXCELLENCE in Rheumatology

Cutting edge findings into clinical practice

25-28 JANUARY 2012 MADRID, SPAIN

Save the date!
Lisbon Jan 24-27, 2013



Professor George Kitas, Chair of the Scientific Organising Committee, introducing EiR before the opening keynote lecture.

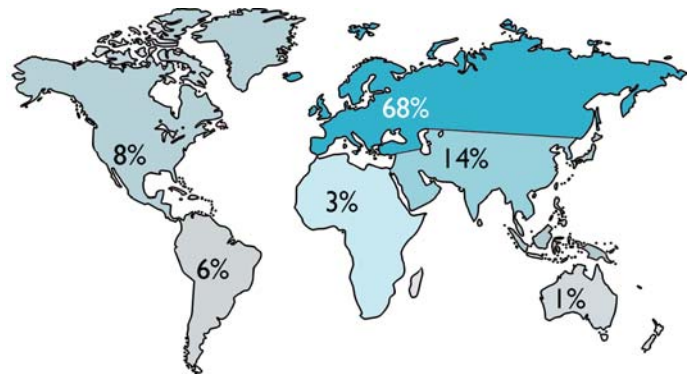
Conference report from Excellence in Rheumatology 2012

By The Excellence in Rheumatology Institute

Dates: January 25-28, 2012
Location: Madrid, Spain

The Excellence in Rheumatology (EiR) Institute is a foundation for the advancement of clinical rheumatology. Established in 2011, the EiR Institute works together with multiple rheumatology care stakeholders such as specialist physicians, patient organisations, and the pharmaceutical industry, to identify and develop new approaches that could help improve the outcomes in clinical rheumatology. As an organisation, the EiR Institute hosts a number of expert teams that together produce a continuous flow of research, development, and educational activities throughout the year. One of the main events by the EiR Institute, and perhaps also the single most important event, is the annual conference Excellence in Rheumatology.

The Excellence in Rheumatology conference aims to represent a contemporary approach to rheumatology conferencing, with an exclusive focus on clinical practice and an innovative engagement of multiple healthcare stakeholders. An international faculty from rheumatology centers around the World are invited by the EiR Institute to lecture about medical research findings and to discuss in a peer to peer environment how these results could affect clinical practice. For the clinical practitioner, the EiR conference could thus have a continuous medical education function that may help translate highly specialised research into understandable and ideally also actionable clinical practice for rheumatologists. Many rheumatologists already work in specialist medical departments in a secondary care setting, and thus will enjoy continuous access to new research updates in their daily work. The EiR conference may however still provide a useful platform for wider and relevant research discussions beyond the immediate area of expertise of these departments. The scientific programme of EiR 2012 was developed by a team of rheumatologists in the EiR Scientific



EiR 2012 had a global attendance. Although most delegates came from Europe including Turkey and Russia, the discussions on clinical practice in various healthcare systems provided new insights into solutions that may not otherwise have been considered. This was valuable at a time when global austerity measures require creative solutions to cope with increasing demands.

The committee was chaired by Professor George Kitas from the Dudley Group of Hospitals, UK and co-chaired by Professor George C. Tsokos, from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School, USA and Professor Piet van Riel, from University Medical Centre Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

EiR 2012 was delivered by 134 rheumatology faculty from 24 countries. The registered delegates approached 700 hundred from all over the world, see map above. The scientific programme featured 47 sessions over four days. These sessions included plenary lectures, state of the art lectures, clinical practice workshops, hot therapeutics sessions, and how-to sessions. Main topics covered during the 2012 event included spondylarthropathies, paediatric rheumatology, systemic connective tissue diseases, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, hot therapeutics, comorbidities, patient focus.

Excellence in Rheumatology is kindly supported by:



Several sessions at the EIR 2012 conference were video-recorded and these videos will soon be published together with complementary session reports on the EIR website: www.excellence-in-rheumatology.org, and announced to the EIR community with a potential outreach of more than 15.000 rheumatologists worldwide

New initiatives by the EIR Institute, in parallel to the conference

A new initiative was the introduction of **clinical schools** for young rheumatologists and fellows in the EIR School programme. The EIR Schools were developed for clinical fellows and junior faculty who wanted to gain expertise and training on relevant systemic autoimmunity and arthritis topics by presenting their own case studies or research projects to a panel of EIR Schools faculty members. The fellows also gained valuable advice from their assigned mentors at the EIR Institute, who shared insights and guidance on possible academic careers and the resulting future prospects. The EIR Institute awarded 25 full fellowships to EIR school participants from 13 countries. After the schools and the annual EIR conference, the feedback from awarded fellows was encouraging: 89% indicated that the programme content and structure was either excellent or very good. Similarly, 89% indicated that the faculty guidance and career counseling was either excellent or very good. Overall, 100% of the 18 responders to the post-

event survey indicated that their overall satisfaction with the schools was either excellent or very good.

Another new initiative was the **multi-functional rheumatology Think Tank**, a group meeting which gathered different healthcare stakeholders. The purpose of the meeting was to better understand and improve pain management in rheumatoid arthritis through a joint effort. Participants included doctors, patient organisations, and senior clinical representatives from the pharmaceutical industry. Professor Peter Taylor from Oxford University chaired the meeting, which developed new suggestions for future pain management. Following a scene-setting presentation by Professor Taylor, smaller and cross-functional break out group discussions covered topics such as identifying the current research gaps, what can be done differently to leverage improvements in pain management with current treatments, what is the evidence that new treatment approaches are needed where pain remains an issue despite optimal control of inflammation, and how to improve the pharmacologic management of rheumatic pain. The results of these discussions were documented in a short meeting report. The purpose of the Think Tank was to agree priority areas for future policy making and concrete action plans.

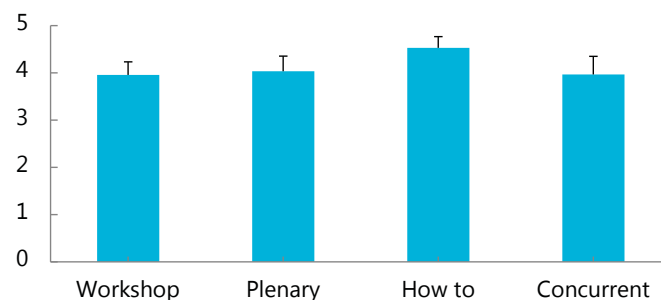
The third new initiative by EIR Institute was a co-localised best practice event focusing on administrative management. Hosted by EIR Institute, at the EIR conference 2012, was a new meeting with the earlier established trans-atlantic **Biobadamerica registry group**. This meeting was organised to update and share valuable country experiences of introducing national rheumatology patient registries in various countries. Professor Juan Jesus Gómez-Reino chaired this meeting between Latin and South American countries, as well as Spain and Portugal. The meeting explored opportunities and practical challenges associated with the establishment of national rheumatology patient registries in each participating country. The results of these discussions were documented in a short meeting report.

A fourth new initiative by EIR Institute, and a parallel event to the EIR 2012 conference, was the unique rheumatology **patients meeting**. This meeting aimed to mobilise and educate those active patient volunteers, who are already working at the local and/or regional level. The underlying idea for the patients meeting was to support the established patient organisations in providing qualified local patient-to-patient support for their members. Such local support could include self management courses, presentations, advocacy work (local committee work) or chairing a local or regional patient group. Fifty patient delegates were able to attend the meeting thanks to a full bursary by the Institute, covering registration, round trip travel and hotel accommodation in Madrid.

The EIR conference is a global event. The 2012 attendees were mostly from European countries including Russia and Turkey. An increasing participation, however, is now also seen from regions surrounding Europe. Participation from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia is already frequent. In addition to this, the EIR conference 2012 also had a number of visitors from the North and South Americas.

Publication and continued medical education (CME) accreditation are two important quality measures for the EIR Institute. For the second consecutive year, the book of abstracts for the EIR conference was published in the highly regarded journal *Rheumatology* by Oxford University Press. Most readers will of course recognise that **Rheumatology** is also the official journal for the British Society for Rheumatology (BSR). The EIR 2012 conference delegates had the opportunity this year to earn a maximum of 21 CME credits through their attendance by EACCME.

Some highly attended sessions	Speaker
Ankylosing Spondylitis	D. Baeten, J. Sieper, J. Braun, Ir. Van der Horst-Bruinsma
Psoriatic Arthritis	D. Veale, F. Nestle, J. Fransen, Ph. Mease, V. Chandran
Autoinflammatory diseases	Georg Schett
Fatal attraction - chemokine receptor blockade revisited	Paul Peter Tak
Complement and Autoimmunity / Mechanisms of Tissue Injury	J. Atkinson, G. Tsokos
HOT THERAPEUTICS RA Therapy	P. C. Taylor
HOT THERAPEUTICS Osteoporosis therapies	P. Geusens
HOT THERAPEUTICS Spondyloarthropathy management	X. Baraliakos
HOT THERAPEUTICS Novel Approaches to the therapy of OA	F. Lafeber
HOT THERAPEUTICS Recent developments in the management of Gout	M. Becker
Some popular concurrent sessions	Speaker
Vasculitis	R. Luqmani, L. Guillevin, G. Hoffman
Atherosclerosis in SLE	I. Bruce, K. H. Costenbader, M. Kaplan, S. Manzi
Biologics in SLE	J. Merrill, B. Diamond, M. Petri
APLS	M. Khamashta, St. krillis, R. Cervera, Y. Shoenfeld
Paediatric Rheumatology - Part A	R. Petty, P. Woo, A.V. Ramanan
Some sessions reported as 'immediately useful for my practice'	Speaker
HOW TO evaluate lab results	R. Shmerling
HOW TO diagnose & treat behcet's	P. Sfikakis, H. Yazici
How to Provide Pregnancy Counseling in People with Rheumatic Diseases	M. Ostensen
HOW TO evaluate and treat myositis	L. Rider
Vasculitis	R. Luqmani, L. Guillevin, G. Hoffman



Average overall rating by delegates of the four main session types at EIR 2012.

What did people say about the EIR 2012 conference in Madrid?

Delegate feedback is one important quality measure of the EIR conference. This can of course, due to its highly subjective nature, carry different types of information depending on how it is collected. The EIR Institute has chosen a highly transparent approach by collecting three types of feedback to monitor delegate interest and satisfaction with our conference. Together they provide a good understanding of our strengths as well as improvement areas, thus enabling continuous development of the conference from one year to the next.

Average ratings of various session types. First, average overall ratings by delegates were collected for the four main session types at EIR 2012. As shown in the barplot above, average scores of 4 or more out of 5 indicate a consistently high appreciation of the conference. Although delegate surveys are inherently limited by partial responder rates and a potential bias among some responding individuals, they – just like patient registries vs. clinical trials – provide useful insights into what actually happened regardless of what were the plans. 82% of responders declared that the session learning objectives had been met while 72% said that they could immediately **apply the new knowledge acquired at the conference** in their clinical practice.

The most attended and most useful sessions. A second measure of quality, and a valuable feedback of what really interested our conference delegates, is the complementary listing of **some highly attended sessions, some popular concurrent sessions, and some sessions reported as immediately useful for my practice.** These three ranking lists, shown in the table above, indicate which of the covered topics were the most important for the conference delegates. Popular concurrent sessions included topics such as vasculitis, atherosclerosis, biologics in SLE, paediatric rheumatology, and APLS. These sessions were most probably very valuable for some delegates, but not necessarily for the entire conference population. Hence they were best scheduled as parallel sessions in slightly smaller rooms. The perceived immediate clinical usefulness of a topic or lecture is a complementary quality measure to high attendance numbers. As the table shows, this category was totally dominated by the *How to* sessions. Evaluation of lab results, the diagnosis and treatment of Behcets disease, and pregnancy counselling were found among those *How to* sessions that were perceived as most immediately useful.

Personal quotes from those who attended the EIR 2012 conference.

Last but not least, average numbers and session tables need to be complemented by personal statements from delegates who attended the 2012 event in Madrid. Reading these can provide a good indication of the general atmosphere. For practical reasons it is impossible to share all submitted personal quotes here, so we have chosen to include a few which we believe are representative of most delegates.

Comments from the Schools:

This conference provides a platform for the budding scientist to interact and learn from those who already excel in the current scenario of science with their experience and hard work. This was a great experience for me to share my views during the school and learn how to do things better than before this meeting.

Everything was perfectly fine, the best I can think...Thank you very much for the support and my congratulations for organizing such a grand successful event.

Thank you very...very much for providing me with a unique opportunity to rub shoulders with the most eminent of personalities in Rheumatology. [...] This unique opportunity shall certainly serve as an anchor to me as I search for opportunities to undertake a formal training in paediatric rheumatology [...] May EIR schools continue to grow and to offer people like me from the developing countries the chance to make a break into the world of rheumatology. The networking opportunity was also a gem whose real value is unquantifiable.

Comments from patients:

Glad that I was welcomed to join – lots to take back home!

A marvelous event. I especially enjoyed meeting patients from all over Europe...All presentations were of high quality and stimulated me to make more changes in my behavior.

Excellent opportunity to learn and exchange ideas. So useful to have the chance to talk to healthcare professionals as well as patients.

Future outlook. Next year the EIR conference will take place in Lisbon, Portugal, on January 24-27, 2013. News on the EIR 2013 conference will automatically reach those individuals who log on to www.excellence-in-rheumatology.org. The website also provides convenient access to a wide range of freshly posted videos and presentations from the EIR 2012 conference along with learnings from the 2011 edition.



The multi-stakeholder EIR Think Tank chaired by Professor Peter Taylor.



Professor Frank Wollheim (right) was awarded with the first EIR award, by Co-Chair Professor Piet van Riel (left) on behalf of the EIR Institute.



One of the EIR Schools, with Professor George C. Tsokos (EIR co-Chair: left) and Professor Gabriel S. Panayi (right), both chairing the session.