

## EULAR PRESS RELEASE



Israel

### EULAR 2011

### Annual Congress of the European League Against Rheumatism

London, UK, 25-28 May 2011



### STUDY CONFIRMS LINK BETWEEN RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS (RA) AND COPD COPD prevalence twice as high in patients with RA

**London, UK, Thursday 26 May 2011:** Patients with rheumatoid arthritis are two times more likely to have concurrent chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) than healthy controls – an association which was sustained even when variables such as age, gender, smoking and obesity were controlled for, according to a study presented today at the EULAR 2011 Annual Congress.

The study of 15,766 patients with RA and 15,340 controls found that the prevalence of COPD was significantly higher in RA patients than healthy controls (8.9% vs 4.4%,  $p < 0.001$ ). Interestingly, the link was still significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) after risk factors common in both RA and COPD patients, such as smoking, obesity and socioeconomic status, were controlled for.

“We know that similar changes in core physiological processes cause symptoms in RA and COPD and we hope that the results of our study prompts new research into potential links between altered genetic and autoimmune processes in the two conditions” said Dr. Amital of the Sheba Medical Centre, Israel.

The large, population-based case-control study was performed using the patient database of Israel’s largest healthcare provider, Clalit Health Services. The prevalence of COPD was compared between RA patients over 20 years of age and a sample of age- and gender-matched patients without RA (the control group). Group matching was performed and data on health-related lifestyles and other comorbidities was collected. Multivariate logistic regression models were used to compare study groups and to control for the confounders of age, gender, socioeconomic status, smoking and obesity.

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### NOTES TO EDITORS:

For further information on this study, or to request an interview with the study lead, please do not hesitate to contact the EULAR congress Press Office in Room N12 (opposite the exhibition hall) of the Congress Centre during EULAR 2011 or on:

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### About EULAR

- The European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) is the organisation which represents the patient, health professional and scientific societies of rheumatology of all the European nations.
- In line with The European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), EULAR defines rheumatology as including rheumatic diseases of the connective tissue, locomotor and musculoskeletal systems.
- The aims of EULAR are to stimulate, promote, and support the research, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of rheumatic diseases. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with rheumatic diseases.
- Diseases of the bone and joints such as rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis cause disability in 4-5% of the adult population and are predicted to rise as people live longer.
- EULAR 2011 is set to be the biggest rheumatology event in Europe with over 15,000 scientists, physicians, allied health professionals, and related audiences in attendance from over 100 countries. Over the course of the congress, almost 300 oral and more than 1600 poster abstract presentations will be featured, with 300 invited speaker lectures taking place in more than 140 sessions.
- To find out more about the activities of EULAR, visit: [www.eular.org](http://www.eular.org)