



IRA e-bulletin

Newsletter For Health Professionals in Rheumatology

From the
Editor's
Desk



Latest
Research



Expert
Opinion



Conference
Calendar



IRA
Matters



News from
EULAR 2013



Do You
Know?



Best reply for the question of the month June issue

The cause of all autoimmune disease is an upset delicate balance between the genetic infrastructure of the individual, a fixed, presently, unmodifiable edifice and the ebb and flow of activity in the immune system. This is strongly influenced by the environment. What does that contain. The air we breathe and the germs that come with it, the food and drink we consume and the bugs that go with it and the body fluids we exchange and the bugs that are in it. Add to that the consummate skill we have in disrupting the natural barriers against infection piercing, tattoos, injuries from sport and adventure, exposure to insects and the germs they carry compromise the skin: amorous human behavior breaches the mucosal barrier; acid suppressants and PPIs disrupt the acid barrier that protects the immune system in the GIT (the microbiome everyone is talking about) and we who suppress the immune system for some very good reasons.

THERE IS NO OTHER PARTICIPANT IN THIS GREEK TRAGEDY. OUR GENES OF WHICH WE KNOW A LITTLE BUT UNDERSTAND EVEN LESS, OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM OF WHICH WE HAVE A LITTLE UNDERSTANDING AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

Citrullination of proteins by smoke is a new 'smoking gun'. Many women in rural India smoke but do not admit it so chasing the question is important. Rich women in urban India think it's a fashion statement. Either way they will often have heavy second hand smoke exposure and have we thought about cooking fire smoke and fumes?

We have not yet scratched the surface of environmental triggers. The greatest diversity of triggers resides in this group. These triggers and the natural history of the resultant syndrome they induce is important to understand before we have a similar study cohort in treatment studies. Patients will need to be classified by genes, immune function drivers and triggers. A long way to go for that.

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