

Call for Research Proposals on Ageing in RMDs

Introduction

Rheumatic Musculoskeletal Diseases (RMDs) are among the most important conditions affecting health at different stages of life. Whether young, middle-aged or senior, changes in the function of the musculoskeletal system but also the responsiveness of the immune system occur thereby impacting the clinical manifestations of RMDs. Since life expectancy continuously increases in Europe, the understanding of ageing, as a physiological process as well as a factor influencing RMDs, becomes increasingly important. Since ageing impacts the steady-state condition of cells and tissues as well as the functional state of an individual, the manifestation, outcome and treatment responses of RMDs may likely vary with age. FOREUM Foundation for Research in Rheumatology wishes to instigate research, which will increase the knowledge on the impact of life course progression on the musculoskeletal and the immune system. The call is not necessarily restricted to study senior individuals only. FOREUM therefore wants to support high quality collaborative research projects in this field to improve our knowledge in ageing in RMDs and extend the individualized diagnostic, prognostic and treatment possibilities for patients affected by these diseases.

Scope

FOREUM seeks to support projects in the following areas:

- Impact of age on the clinical manifestation, disease course and treatment of RMDs
- Age-related functional decline of musculoskeletal function and frailty and their prevention and treatment
- Physiological age-related changes of musculoskeletal cells and/or tissues involved in RMDs
- Immune and inflammation changes related to ageing
- Preclinical models to understand the role of ageing in RMD
- Development of age-related standards in instruments used in the assessment of RMDs

Eligibility

FOREUM primarily encourages collaboration across Europe and therefore requires multi-center project applications involving partners from at least three different countries. Any given institution shall be allowed to lead on only one application. However, that institution, or its staff may participate in other projects as collaborators.

The call shall be open to participants from the global scientific community; however, we stipulate that the Principal Investigator should come from a [EULAR membership country](#). Similarly, whereas participating centers may be from outside Europe to provide necessary expertise, the majority of contribution should be from EULAR member countries.

Members of the FOREUM committees and EULAR Executive Committee are not allowed to submit or to participate in applications.

Budget

The Ageing in RMDs call is designed to fund a range of research projects. An individual proposal may be funded with up to a maximal amount of **600.000 Euro for a 3 year funding period**, provided the expenditure is appropriately justified. Collaborating partners should have a substantial part of the budget to appropriately conduct research. Projects will be subjected to an interim evaluation of progress and will have to offer a written final report. Submitted publications can be used as part of the report.

How to apply

Applications should be made electronically (email to info@foreum.org). For applying, using the templates that are available at www.foreum.org is mandatory.

Letter of intent

All applicants considering submission of a proposal are invited to send a short 'scientific letter of intent' by 7th January 2017 to FOREUM (email to info@foreum.org) accompanied by a 'lay summary letter of intent', for review by patients. Letters of intent should not only include information on the study question and its novelty, but also the agreement of the participating centers to collaborate in data analyses or to provide aggregated or raw data in line with national regulations and their governing boards. Letters of intent will be assessed by members of the FOREUM Scientific Committee. Applications deemed meritorious of full application will be selected on a competitive basis. Please note that the lay summary is a critical part of our evaluation as the views of people with RMDs are central in our decision making process. The secretariat will respond by 28th February 2017 as to whether the proposal meets the scope, priority and requirements of the call such that a full application will be invited.

Full project proposal

Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal; they will be sent the Full Project Proforma template. To facilitate review by patients, additionally a Lay Summary Proposal must also be completed at this stage. Both forms will be provided to applicants invited to submit a full proposal. Full research proposals must be submitted electronically by 30th April 2017 to the FOREUM Secretariat. If selected for funding, the lay summary will be used for describing the project on our website.

Participation of patient research partners

Participation of patient organisations and patients as research partners is strongly recommended for clinical research projects and should be considered for all other research projects to provide experiential knowledge, with the aim of improving the relevance, quality and validity of the research process. For more information, please read the material on http://www.eular.org/pare_patient_research_partners.cfm

Evaluation and decision

The full project proposals will be externally, independently peer-reviewed to evaluate their feasibility, novelty, design, relevance and potential impact relative to the subject matter of the call. Based on this peer review, the FOREUM Scientific Committee will make a funding recommendation to the FOREUM Executive Committee, which will make funding decisions in June 2017. These are ratified by the FOREUM Board of Trustees.

Decisions will be communicated to the applicants by the FOREUM Secretariat by 15th July 2017.

Ethical aspects

FOREUM expects a high standard in the conduct of research it funds. For researchers this includes scientific integrity and adherence to the principles of good research practice. Patients subjected to investigation shall be included with due adherence to the declaration of Helsinki.

Call management

The FOREUM call and approval process will be administered by the FOREUM Secretariat, together with the FOREUM Scientific Committee.

Call issued:	2 nd November 2016
Closing date for Letter of intent:	7 th January 2017
Decisions on Lol announced:	28 th February 2017
Closing date for full proposals:	30 th April 2017
Decisions on full proposals announced:	15 th July 2017

Inquiries

For general inquiries please contact the FOREUM Secretariat at info@foreum.org.