

Call for Research Proposals on Stratified Medicine in Rheumatology

Introduction

Stratified medicine approaches are based on the concept that different subgroups (often referred to as “endotypes” or “pathotypes”) exist within a single disease entity. These subgroups may vary in the natural course of disease, in their responsiveness to therapy and in the overall outcome of the patients. There is a substantial level of heterogeneity within individual Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Diseases (RMDs) suggesting that stratified medicine approaches are not only feasible but will become an essential part of a more specific and better management of these diseases. Biomarkers may facilitate characterisation of these endotypes / pathotypes and thereby allow better stratification of patients with RMDs. FOREUM Foundation for Research in Rheumatology views a tailored diagnostic and treatment approach to be of utmost importance for patients with RMDs. FOREUM therefore supports research which improves the knowledge on the nature of these endotypes / pathotypes and projects in the field of stratified medicine in rheumatology. This effort aims to improve the (still limited) possibilities for an individualized diagnostic, prognostic and treatment approach in patients with RMDs.

Scope

FOREUM seeks to support projects in the following areas:

- Studies that support the definition of distinct molecular endotypes of RMDs differing in clinical presentation, disease course or outcome
- Development and validation of predictors of disease outcome (prognostic biomarkers)
- Development and validation of biomarkers that allow better prediction of response to anti-rheumatic drugs
- Innovative methodological approaches to the study of stratified medicine
- Applications demonstrating the value of genetic, biochemical and imaging biomarkers in a stratified medicine approach.

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 Stratified Medicine in Rheumatology 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). Necessary application forms can be downloaded at www.foreum.org.

Letter of intent

All applicants considering submission of a proposal are invited to send a short 'scientific letter of intent' by 1st June 2017 to FOREUM (email to info@foreum.org) accompanied by a 'lay summary letter of Intent', for review by patients. For applying, please use the templates that are available at www.foreum.org. 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 1th July 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 31st October 2017 to the FOREUM Secretariat.

Participation of patient research partners

Participation of patient 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 proposals will then 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 January 2018. Final decisions will be taken by the FOREUM Board of Trustees and communicated by the FOREUM Secretariat by 31 January 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.

Declaration of Interest forms will be completed by all successful applicants.

Management of the Call

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

Timeline

Call issued:	26 th April 2017
Closing date for Letter of intent:	1 st June 2017
Decisions on Lol announced:	1 st July 2017
Closing date for full proposals:	31 st October 2017
Decisions on full proposals announced:	31 st January 2018

Enquiries

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