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BeTheCure Newsletter - for collaborators and interested external parties - 1/2014

BTCure at EULAR Paris

As all previous years, BTCure was represented at this year's EULAR congress in Paris, June 11-14. The exhibition stand in the EULAR village was very well visited by several of our internal BTCure colleagues, as well as by external collaboration partners. A lot of formal and informal meetings were held in the stand and fruitful and interesting discussion took place.



Thank you Pia-Maria!

Pia-Maria Blaas, who has worked as the Scientific Coordinator for WPs 1-5, have been given the opportunity to take on a new position outside Karolinska Institutet. On June 16th 2014, Pia-Maria started working as Associate Director, Scientific Affairs, in the area of Hemophilia at a leading integrated biopharmaceutical company based in Stockholm.

We are very happy for Pia-Maria and want to wish her the very best of luck in her new

career, and we would also like to thank her for the fantastic job that she has carried out in BTCure.

Good Bye all BTCure members!

I have enjoyed my time at BTCure very much and want to thank all of you for our nice collaboration. I wish you all the best for your future and your projects!

Let's stay in touch and see you soon at some point in the fascinating world of science.



Introducing our new Scientific Coordinator: Welcome Martina!

Martina Johannesson will be joining us as our new scientific coordinator from the 1st of August. Martina has a background in academic research with a PhD in genetics of autoimmunity in 2005 (from the group of Rikard Holmdahl). Since then she has been combining project coordination with research into the genetics of RA using animal models for the disease. Martina will be responsible for the coordinating activities in WPs 1-5.

You will all have a chance to meet Martina at our annual meeting in Prague and to discuss how she best can support your work within BTCure. If you wish to contact her before that, her email is martina.johannesson@ki.se.



" I'm very much looking forward to start working within BTCure and to be part of such a large collaborative effort to create a better future for RA patients."

/Martina

Tolerance workshop



Between May 22-25 we organised the first workshop on Tolerance/Tolerizing therapies. The meeting venue was hotel Sigtunahöjden outside Stockholm. During these three days, 120 participants from all over Europe, as well as from different sites in USA and Australia, contributed to very interesting discussions, presentations and a lot of fruitful interactions.

The main objectives of the workshop were:

- * to systematically investigate opportunities -) for intervention at various steps of autoimmune disease development and progression and -) re-establishing self tolerance by making use of our most current understanding of self-tolerance mechanisms, immune regulation/deregulation and of factors contributing to the break of tolerance
- * to up-date on recent research results and clinical outcomes of immune therapies targeting autoimmunity and the break of tolerance
- * to learn from development and advances in this area from other related inflammatory disorders and from basic research and to discuss to which extent can we compare, make use of insights from other diseases for RA
- *to discuss how to transfer emerging knowledge on precise B and T cells specificity, in particular but not exclusively to citrullinated antigens, into more specific therapies
- *to learn from industry experience and leverage industry expertise
- *to establish new collaborations and alliances in this context, as with similar US initiatives (NIH, ITN)
- *to foster debates and discussions on future research focus, define potentials and opportunities for new innovative approaches of interest, in particular to initiate strategic discussion with industry partners on potential strategies for drug developments aimed at tolerance induction.



Patient research partner in BTCure

In BTCure we have several patient research partners involved. This is in many ways very fruitful for both the project per se, the individual researchers as well as for the patient research partners. Follow the discussion between Heidi Wähämaa, researcher at Karolinska and Eva Johansson, patient research partner, in this nice story ([click here for the full report](#)).



Report from miRNA workshop

For researchers interested in micro RNA research in Autoimmune Disease, a workshop took place in Zurich from April 8-10, 2014. The workshop was organized by Prof. Steffen and Renate Gay from the University of Zurich, who are BTCure`s leading experts in epigenetic control mechanisms. The workshop was a co-initiative of SIICA, the Società Italiana Immunologia, and DGfI, the German society for immunology and BTCure and was supported by industrial partners Pfizer, Novartis, and Roche. The workshop received a lot of interest with approximately 120 participants attending the meeting. The meeting was also attended by many BTCure members, among them in particular microRNA experts and speakers as Christian Jorgensen (WP1C leader), Florence Apparailly (Montpellier), George Kollias (WP1B leader, Athens), Stephan Bluemel (Vienna), Dimitrios Boumpas (Crete), Caroline Ospelt (Zurich), Andreas Radbruch, Mir-Farzin Mashrehi (DRFZ), and Panagiotis Verginis (Greece), Mariola Kurowska-Stolarska, Glasgow. For a full report, please follow [this link](#).

Report from animal models workshop

May 14-16, the third BTCure workshop on animal models was held. Besides wrapping up BTCure`s SOP work, making decisions on their publication and discussing new animal models, that have not yet been presented, the main focus of the workshop was the presentation and discussion of -omics work performed in selected mouse models.

In addition, there has been an own short session on neutrophils and NETs, which are currently actively discussed. Moreover, imaging and in vivo monitoring techniques were presented to follow up on functional impairment over time. For the full report and final program, please follow [this link](#).

Report from EWRR

BTCure was also present at the European Workshop for Rheumatology Research in Lisbon in February.

The major topics of the workshops were:

- New Perspectives on Immunomodulation
- Brain, Psychology and the Immune System
- Looking at the Future (Funding Opportunities)
- Understanding the Sexist Distribution of Auto-Immune Diseases
- Scleroderma
- Regenerative Medicine
- Innate Immunology
- Rising Stars in the Biology of Inflammatory Rheumatic Disorders

For a full report from the workshop, please follow [this link](#).

Patient report

This is a very nice summary of activities, objectives, goals etc within BTCure, addressing patients and the public. This should be shared and distributed as widely as possible to raise the awareness on what we are doing within BTCure and what our goals are for the future. [Please open this link](#), read, download and distribute as you wish.

Annual report summary

February 28 we submitted the 3rd annual report. In this report we focused on major

achievements during 2013 and plans for the remaining part of the project. **The report, as well as all supporting documents to the report, can be found in the internal platform** under workplace WP10 - management/document management/documents/annual reports/reporting period 3. A couple of extracts from the report is shown below.

Extract from Summary of progress:

..... In our third year of existence the established BTCure platforms and key results of previous years already bear fruits. SOPs, tools, technologies and assays are used to a larger extend in collaborative efforts, as in multi-centre validations and harmonized sample and data sharing projects to commonly answer scientific questions.

Moreover, through our recent insight in adaptive auto-immunity, immune cell regulation and interaction, and the identification of new potential RA targets, we could gain further industry interest, which is shown by the intensified, individual academia industry-collaboration and first commonly published results. During our Prague meeting we could more actively engage industry partners and industry outlined strategic areas of interest, which will lead to commonly organized workshops in 2014.

In 2013 BTCure could also gain new partners, most prominently GSK and approved for IMI`s ENSO funding. We could initiate ENSO supported projects which also enable us to focus on promising collaborative approaches, in particular to commonly develop better diagnostics for early diagnosis and prognosis and the longitudinal observation of tissue, immune cell, antibody and -omics profiles throughout disease development and progression.....

Extract from Major achievements:

- * Alignment of animal models of arthritis and human disease, and standardization of models
- * Development and coordination of European longitudinal databases and biobanks for patients with RA and use of these assets for development of new diagnostic assays
- * New Technologies and target evaluations
- * Collaboration between patients/patient organizations, academic and industry partners has been strengthened within the area of bioethics and research communication
- * Generation and use of new understanding of adaptive immunity for diagnosis and treatment of RA in collaboration with industry
- * With regard to investigated, related rheumatologic disease, involved groups have made progress in their investigations of new pathways and gene expression profiling associated with IBD and Crohn`s disease.

Upcoming events and workshops

- * **BTCure 3rd annual meeting**, Prague Sept 14-16, Andel's hotel. Organizer: BTCure management team. For details contact susanne.karlfeldt@karolinska.se



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