

# NEWS FROM THE ARCH

The newsletter of the ArLAR Research Group



Get the latest news about the ARCH research activities, and be part of the ArLAR research community!

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**Advancing  
Rheumatology  
Research Across the  
Arab Countries**

We are delighted to present the second edition of the ARCH Newsletter and share some news about advancing rheumatology research across the Arab countries.

Since its inception in June 2021 as a Special Interest Group of the ArLAR, the ARCH has been dedicated to its mission to lead collaborative rheumatology research in the region.

In this edition, we spotlight our recent research projects, which are committed to fulfilling unmet needs in our region. Additionally, we share updates on ongoing projects, webinars, and opportunities for collaboration.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all members for their unwavering support and contributions. Your dedication is instrumental in propelling rheumatology research and improving patient care across our region.

Warmest regards,  
The ARCH Steering Committee

# MISSIONS OF THE ARCH

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The missions of the ARCH are focused on four major pillars:

- **RESEARCH PROJECTS:** Plan and conduct research projects on behalf of the ArLAR to serve the interests of the patients with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases living in the Arab countries.
- **QUALITY & INFRASTRUCTURE:** Support and promote high-quality collaborative research among the Arab countries and improve the research environment by ensuring compliance to international standards in both infrastructure & standard operating procedures.
- **MOTIVATION & SUPPORT:** Motivate and assist young researchers in the Arab countries to conduct successful and high-standard research projects.
- **RESEARCH NETWORKING:** Connect with the international rheumatology research teams, institutions, and companies to take part in their global clinical trials.



**Pursue excellence in research from design to outcome, while ensuring a high-standard research infrastructure.**

## The ARCH values

- **EXCELLENCE:** Pursue excellence in research from design to outcome, while ensuring a high-standard research infrastructure.
- **ETHICS & INTEGRITY:** Prioritize ethical conduct and integrity in research.
- **EDUCATION:** Invest in young Arab researchers enhancing their capabilities and capacities.
- **MOTIVATION:** Inspire and motivate for research in the Arab region.
- **TEAMWORK:** Promote collaboration between researchers and clinical rheumatologists in the Arab countries.

To know more about the ARCH

<https://www.arabrheumatology.org/arlar-research-group>



# RESEARCH PROJECTS 2023-2024

## TACTIC PROJECT

### TACTIC: Translation and cross-cultural validation of the Psoriatic Arthritis Impact of Disease questionnaire (PsAID-12) in Arabic

In addition to the main study where the PsAID was translated and validated in Arabic (published manuscript), several ancillary studies were derived from the TACTIC study, using the data on 554 patients with psoriatic arthritis:

- Concordance between physicians and patients' assessment of disease activity (Dr Noura Abbas & Team)
- Different Phenotypes and Unmet Treatment Needs in Women with Psoriatic Arthritis (Dr Ihsane Hmamouchi & team)
- Frequency of Fibromyalgia Using Validated Measures in a Sample of Patients with Psoriatic Arthritis and Impact on Disease (Dr Avin Maroof & team)
- Does the Psoriatic Arthritis Impact of Disease's cut-off depend on the ethnic background? (Dr Wafa Hamdi & team)

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**Creating large databases across the Arab countries, that can generate several collaborative research studies and publications**

## COLLABORATION WITH THE AAAA GROUP

- **Shaping awareness** about rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases in the Arab region: The Arab Adult Arthritis Awareness Group initiative: Manuscript published in the new **Arab Journal of Rheumatology** (Dr Lina el Kibbi & team)
- **Social Media Strategies** to Engage Patients with Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Diseases: a cross-sectional infodemiology study (Dr Ihsane Hmamouchi & team)

## ARCH ABSTRACTS 2024

### EULAR 2024 Vienna

3 abstracts presented

### ACR 2024 Washington

3 abstracts presented

### SFR 2024 Paris

3 abstracts presented

# RESEARCH PROJECTS 2024-2025

## ALFA PROJECT

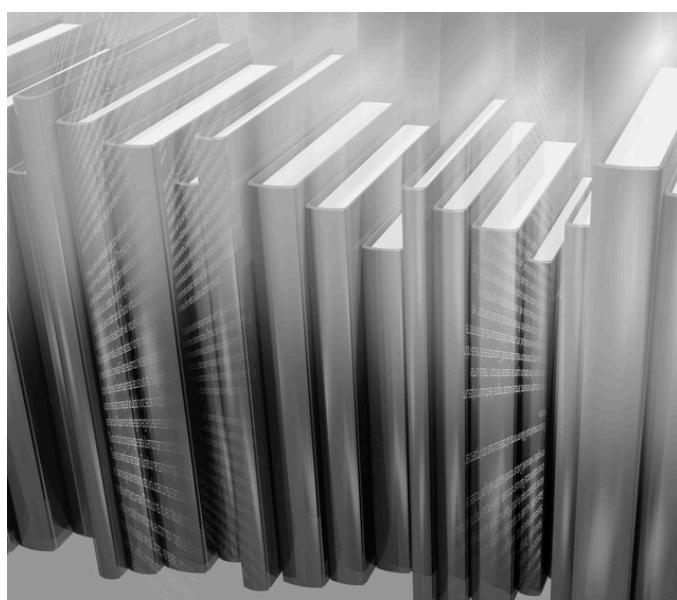
The ALFA program “**ARCH-ArLAR REFERRAL PROGRAM**” was conducted by the ARCH with the support of an unrestricted research grant from Pfizer.

Several publications were derived from this program.

The first study validated a referral algorithm for primary care physicians to guide them about the optimal referral of patients with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases to rheumatology. It was conducted in 8 Arab countries and included around 900 physicians.

The second study evaluated the baseline referral delay in rheumatology clinics in November 2023. For the first time, diagnostic delays were estimated in 8 Arab countries.

The third study evaluated the change in referrals to rheumatology in November 2024 after launching an awareness campaign simultaneously in 8 Arab countries, including online live webinars, face-to-face workshops, and social media posts. Over 1500 non-rheumatology physicians are estimated to be reached by this campaign.



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**The !MPACT study evaluated the effect of a referral campaign on the real-life improvement of referrals to rheumatology in 8 Arab countries**

## RESEARCH PROJECTS ENDORSED BY THE ARCH

As part of its research networking mission, the ARCH has endorsed several regional and international research projects using internal standardised operating procedures.

- IMAGE study: Leveraging Social Media for Effective Engagement with the Patients: conducted by the AAAA group
- Tuberculosis and rheumatic diseases: conducted by the ArLAR francophone group
- KAP about biosimilars: conducted by the Iraqi League for Bone and Joint Health
- Perspectives of Rheumatology Trainees About Specialist Training in ArLAR Region in collaboration with Young ArLAR
- ALFA in Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis: in collaboration with the PRAG

# RESEARCH PROJECTS 2025-2026

## PROSPA PROJECT

The PROSPA project "PROfile of patients with axial SPondyloarthritis in the Arab countries" was launched by the ARCH in December 2024.

This ambitious project including 47 investigators from 17 Arab countries aims to recruit over 500 patients with axial spondyloarthritis.

In addition to establishing the phenotype of disease in the Arab countries, ancillary studies will include the evaluation of:

- The fertility status of patients with axSpA in the Arab Countries
- The association of physical activity and axSpA disease activity
- The patient-physician discordance in the assessment of disease activity
- The association between adherence to a Mediterranean diet and disease activity
- Other research questions suggested by the co-investigators

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**The PROSPA study will evaluate the profile of patients with axial spondyloarthritis in the Arab countries and will address research questions regarding these patients, encompassing cultural specificities and the impact of environmental factors**



# EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS 2024

Challenges in Early Referral of Psoriatic Arthritis Patients to Rheumatology

Laura Coates, UK

16 Jan 2024



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**The 2024 webinars evolved around the theme of timely referral to rheumatology**



Challenges in Early Referral of Patients with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

Sulaiman Al Mayouf, KSA

Wafa Hamdi, Tunisia

21 Feb 2024



Advancing Rheumatology Research through Artificial Intelligence

Diego Benavent, Spain

14 May 2024

Strengths and Weaknesses of an International Scientific Study in the Field of Rheumatology

Maxime Dougados, France

29 April 2024



When to Refer a Patient with Early Arthritis or Inflammatory Low Back Pain to Rheumatology?

Nizar Abdulateef, Iraq

Zahraa Taher, Iraq: invited family physician

23 October 2024



To register for upcoming webinars:

[www.arabrheumatology.org/blog](http://www.arabrheumatology.org/blog)



To watch replays:

[www.arabrheumatology.org/educational-library](http://www.arabrheumatology.org/educational-library)



# EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS 2024

## COLLABORATION WITH THE ARLAR FRANCOPHONE GROUP

Quand Référer les Patients Ayant une Arthrite Précoce ou une Lombalgie Inflammatoire en Rhumatologie?

Chafica Haouichat, Algeria

Khadidja Misraoui, Algeria: Invited General Practitioner  
24 Oct 2024



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**The 2024 webinars were attended by over 1,000 international attendees**

Quand Référer les Patients Ayant une Arthrite Précoce ou une Lombalgie Inflammatoire en Rhumatologie? Etude ALFA

Nelly Ziadé, Liban  
12 Sep 2024



To register for upcoming webinars:

[www.arabrheumatology.org/blog](http://www.arabrheumatology.org/blog)



To watch replays:

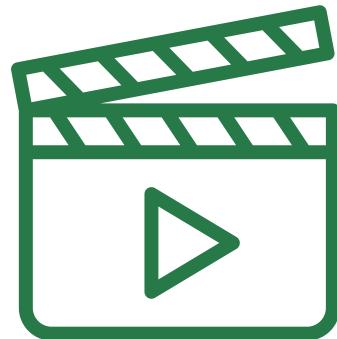
[www.arabrheumatology.org/educational-library](http://www.arabrheumatology.org/educational-library)



## NEW ARCH VIDEO ONLINE

The ARCH published a new video to share the latest about the group's activities online

Thank you Dr Bassel Elzorkany and Dr Fatemah Baron for adding their voice over the video!



## HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE ARCH ACTIVITIES?

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In addition to the ARCH country representatives who are nominated by their respective national Societies, rheumatologists who have an interest in medical research can now join the ARCH network.

### What can an ARCH network member do?

Participate in the ARCH study by disseminating surveys, including patients, sharing study results

Advise for research projects methodology

Propose new research projects or ancillary studies



**Thank you to all the ARCH collaborators!**

Steering committee: Nelly Ziadé, Ihsane Hmamouchi, Chafica Haouiuchat, Fatemah Baron

ARCH members: Salwa Al Cheikh, Samar Alemadi, Elyes Bouajina, Soad Hashad, Saeed Hennawi, Saeed Atawnah, Faiq Isho Gorial, Manal Al Mashaleh, Batoool Al Lawati, Suad Abdellateif Eltaybe Mohammed, Walaa Abdel Rahman

Ex-Officio members: Manal El Rakawi, Basel Masri, Fatemah Abutibana, Nizar Abdullateef, Lina El Kibbi

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