

# 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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Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to introduce the third edition of the ARCH Newsletter, and to share exciting developments as we continue to advance rheumatology research throughout the Arab countries.

Since its establishment in June 2021 under ArLAR as a Special Interest Group, the ARCH has remained committed to driving large-scale, collaborative research that addresses the needs of patients and physicians in our region.

In this edition, we are proud to highlight a major milestone for our community: the successful launch of our landmark **PROSPA** axial spondyloarthritis study, conducted across 15 Arab countries with the participation of more than 1,000 patients. This unprecedented effort reflects our shared vision to generate meaningful regional data and improve the care landscape for axSpA patients.

We also bring you updates on our ongoing and upcoming studies, scientific activities, educational webinars, and new opportunities for collaboration within the network.

We thank all our members, investigators, and coordinators for their commitment, enthusiasm, and continuous engagement. Your efforts are shaping the future of rheumatology research and transforming patient outcomes across the Arab countries.

With warm regards,

**The ARCH Steering Committee**

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**Advancing  
Rheumatology  
Research Across the  
Arab Countries**

# MISSIONS OF THE ARCH

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Promote  
collaboration  
between  
researchers and  
clinical  
rheumatologists in  
the Arab countries

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.



## 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 2023-2025

## TACTIC PROJECT

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

The TACTIC project included patients from 554 patients with psoriatic arthritis from 13 Arab countries.

In addition to the main study published in 2024, **Ancillary studies were published this year!**

Abbas N, Hmamouchi I, Kibbi LE, Maroof A, Elzorkany B, Abdulateef N, Adnan A, Ihsan N, Gorial FI, Al Chama N, Haouichat C, Alnaimat F, Hannawi S, Atawnah S, Halabi H, Al Mashaleh M, Aljazwi L, Abogamal A, Ayoub L, Bouajina E, Bahiri R, Saad S, Sabkar M, Aouad K, Ziadé N, Gossec L. Discordance between patient and physician global assessments of psoriatic arthritis activity: an observational study in 13 Arab countries. *Rheumatol Int.* 2025 Mar 12;45(4):70. doi: 10.1007/s00296-025-05819-1.

Maroof A, Ziadé N, Abbas N, Gossec L, Kibbi LE, Elzorkany B, Jassim NA, Gorial FI, Adnan A, Al Shamaa N, Haouichat C, Alnaimat F, Hannawi S, Atawnah S, Saad SA, Halabi H, Aljazwi L, Masri BK, Abogamal A, Ayoub L, Rachid B, Aouad K, Hmamouchi I, Al Mashaleh M. Impact of concomitant fibromyalgia on patient-reported outcomes and inflammatory markers in psoriatic arthritis: a multinational cross-sectional study. *Rheumatol Int.* 2025 Dec 8;46(1):6. doi: 10.1007/s00296-025-06054-4.

Other ancillaries are also submitted:

- Different Phenotypes and Unmet Treatment Needs in Women with Psoriatic Arthritis (Dr Ihsane Hmamouchi & team)
- Does the Psoriatic Arthritis Impact of Disease's cut-off depend on the ethnic background? (Dr Wafa Hamdi & team)

“

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

## COLLABORATION WITH THE AAAA GROUP

### Engaging Arabic-Speaking Patients With Rheumatic Diseases Through Social Media: A Multinational Infodemiology Analysis

Published in the **Journal of Rheumatology**

Hmamouchi I, Liew JW, Ziade N, Abdullateef N, Abutibain F, Elrakawi M, Ghogho M, Graef ER, Hajjaj-Hassouni N, Masri B, Subki AH, Rolle NA, Halabi H, El Kibbi L. Engaging Arabic-Speaking Patients With Rheumatic Diseases Through Social Media: A Multinational Infodemiology Analysis. *J Rheumatol.* 2025 Nov 1;52(11):1171-1174. doi: 10.3899/jrheum.2025-0455.

## ARCH ABSTRACTS 2025

**EULAR 2025 Barcelona**

**ACR 2025 Chicago**

**Levant 2025 Amman**

**SFR 2025 Paris**

# 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.

Two manuscripts were published from this project in 2025, and a third one is expected in 2026.

The first manuscript 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, and was published in **Clinical Rheumatology**:

Ziade N, Mechleb K, Haouichat C, Baron F, Abdulateef Al-Ani N, Adnan AR, El Kibbi L, Mashaleh M, Elzorkany B, Gamal SM, Maroof A, El Rakaawi M, Alnaimat F, Erraoui M, Aouad K, Masri B, Hmamouchi I; ArLAR research group - ARCH. Design and validation of a referral algorithm for inflammatory arthritis and low back pain: identifying gaps in primary care practices. *Clin Rheumatol*. 2025 Nov 19. doi: 10.1007/s10067-025-07805-1.

The second manuscript evaluated the baseline referral delay in rheumatology clinics in November 2023. For the first time, diagnostic delays were estimated in 8 Arab countries. The study was published in the third volume of the new **Arab Journal of Rheumatology**:

Mechleb, Karen; Hmamouchi, Ihsane; Abdulateef, Nizar; Maroof, Avin; Adnan, Asal; Rakaawi, Manal El; Haouichat, Chafika; Elzorkany, Bassel; Gamal, Sherif; Erraoui, Mariam; Mashaleh, Manal; Naimat, Fatima Al; Masri, Basel; Baron, Fatemah; Kibbi, Lina El; Aouad, Krystel; Ziade, Nelly; On Behalf of ArLAR Research Group - ARCH. Exploring diagnostic timelines: A cross-sectional study of referral and diagnostic delays of patients with chronic inflammatory rheumatic diseases. *Arab Journal of Rheumatology* 3(1):p 5-13, Jan-Jun 2025. | DOI: 10.4103/ajr.ajr\_17\_24

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. We have shown a positive impact on referrals following this campaign and published the results as abstracts in different international (ACR, EULAR, SFR) and regional (Levant) congresses. The manuscript is expected to be published in 2026.

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**The !MPACT study showed a positive 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.

- 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 database “**PRO**file of patients with axial **SP**ondyloarthritis in the **A**rab countries” was locked in November 2025.

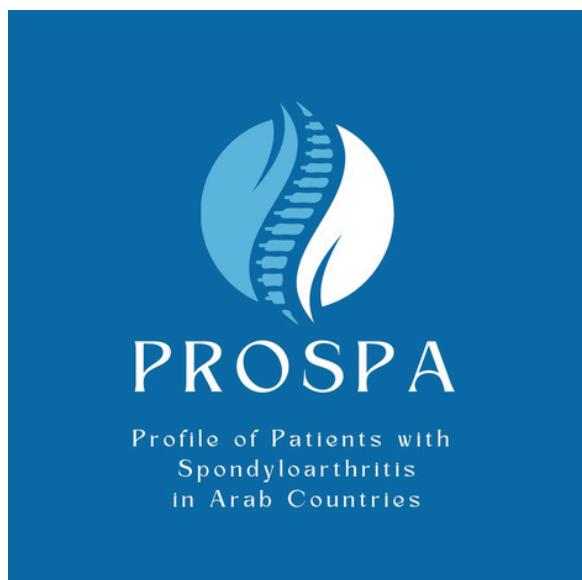
This ambitious project included **1,114 patients with axSpA**, thanks to the efforts of **42 investigators from 15 Arab countries**.

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
- The association of physical activity and disease activity
- The patient-physician discordance in the assessment of disease activity
- The association between adherence to a Mediterranean diet and disease activity
- The role of coxitis
- The role of HLA-B27
- The differences between men and women
- Other research questions suggested by the co-investigators

“

**The PROSPA study collected data from over 1,000 patients with axial spondyloarthritis in 16 Arab countries and will address research questions regarding these patients, encompassing cultural specificities and the impact of environmental factors**



# EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS 2025

**TOP REASONS FOR ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION OF A SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE: THE EDITOR'S POINT OF VIEW**

Tuesday, 24 June 2025 7:00 pm (GMT+3)

ArLAR Research Group | 1 hour

**Nizar Abdulateef, MD**  
ArLAR President

**Imad Uthman, MD**  
President of ArLAR Scientific Committee and ArLAR College

**Nelly Zlade, MD**  
ARCH President

**MODERATOR**  
**Dr. Layla Kazkaz**  
Honorary president of the Syrian Association for Rheumatology, past president, Member of ArLAR and member of APR, Editor-in-chief of the Arab Journal of Rheumatology, Member of the British Society for Rheumatology, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London

**MODERATOR**  
**Dr. Ihsane Hmamouchi**  
Dr. Ihsane Hmamouchi, MD, PhD, is a rheumatologist and clinical epidemiologist. She currently serves as Vice Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the International University of Rabat (UIR), Morocco, and is the Founder of EpilRheum.com, a free platform dedicated to advancing scientific education in research methodology and biostatistics. She is also an Administrator of the French Society of Rheumatology (SFR) and actively engages in international initiatives promoting clinical research, health literacy, equity and digital inclusion.

**SPEAKER**  
**Dr. Victoria Navarro Compán**  
Victoria Navarro Compán, MD, PhD, MSc, is a rheumatologist working at the University Hospital La Paz and IdiPaz in Madrid, Spain since 2015. She did her training in rheumatology at University Hospital Virgen Macarena in Seville, Spain, and obtained her doctoral degree at the Leiden University Medical Center, the Netherlands. Currently, she combines clinical practice and research at La Paz University Hospital. Her main focus is in clinical research in the field of spondyloarthritis. She has participated in and led national and international research projects in the area of spondyloarthritis. She is currently a member of the Assessment of SpondyloArthritis International Society (ASAS) Executive Committee, also acting as President. She is qualified as European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology (EULAR) Methodologist. She is associate editor of Seminars in Arthritis (since 2021) and member of the international advisory board of the Lancet Rheumatology. She also collaborates as a member of high impact journal including Annals of Rheumatic Diseases, Rheumatology (Oxford), Arthritis Research and Therapy and The Journal of Rheumatology.

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For more information Please contact: info.arlar@arabrheumatology.org +961 1510 880

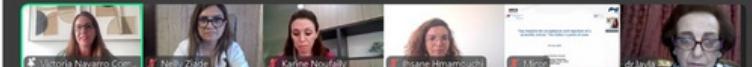
**INFOMED**

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**The 2025 webinar evolved around the Editor's point of view about top reasons for acceptance and rejection of a scientific article**

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**Prof Victoria Navarro-Compan shared tips & tricks with young researchers to help them get their manuscript accepted, with an amazing moderation by Dr Layla Kazkaz and Dr Ihsane Hmamouchi from the ARCH**



**Top reasons for acceptance and rejection of a scientific article: The Editor's point of view**

24 June 2025

Victoria Navarro Compán  
Rheumatology Department  
University Hospital La Paz, IdiPaz  
Madrid, Spain

To register for upcoming webinars:

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

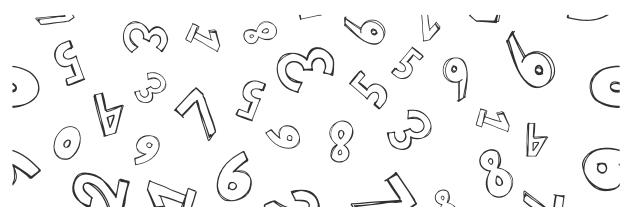


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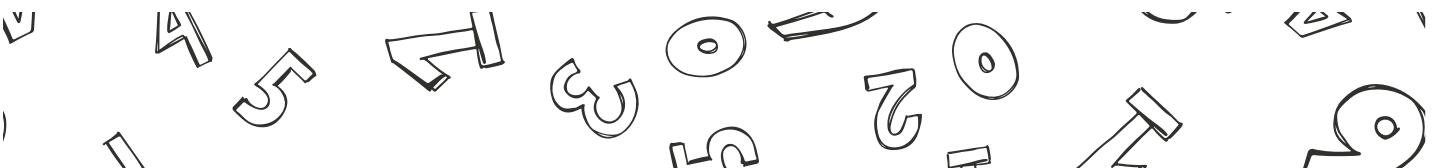
[www.arabrheumatology.org/educational-library](http://www.arabrheumatology.org/educational-library)



# THE ARCH PUBLICATIONS: IN NUMBERS!



	2023	2024	2025
Project	MACRO	TACTIC ALFA	PROSPA
Theme	Rheumatology workforce in the Arab countries	Psoriatic Arthritis Referral campaigns	Axial Spondyloarthritis
Manuscripts	First publication on Rheumatology Wrkforce	Three published manuscripts	Five published manuscripts Six manuscripts in writing
Posters	10	8	7

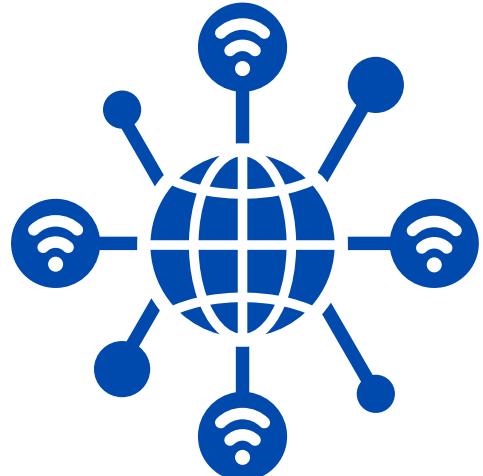


# HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE ARCH ACTIVITIES?

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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 join the ARCH network.

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## 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 that they co-author according to the ICMJE criteria



## 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, Hanan El Rayess, Soad Hashad, Suad Hennawi, Saed Atawnah, Faiq Ishaq Gorial, Manal Al Mashaleh, Batool Al Lawati, Suad Abdellateif Eltaybe Mohammed, Walaa Abdel Rahman  
Ex-Officio members: Manal El Rakawi, Basel Masri, Fatemah Abutibana, Nizar Abdullateef, Lina El Kibbi  
ARCH network members

To contact the ARCH:  
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