

Call for Research Proposals on Comorbidities in RMDs

Introduction

Rheumatic Musculoskeletal Diseases (RMDs) usually occur in conjunction with other diseases (comorbidities). Comorbidities may affect the natural course of the RMD, determine the overall state of the patient and influence treatment decisions. Traditionally, RMDs are seen as isolated diseases and one does not account for comorbidities. However, in real life, not least due to the ageing population, comorbidities become increasingly important. Comorbidities develop independently from the respective RMD, although sometimes the underlying RMD may increase the risk for certain comorbidities. FOREUM Foundation for Research in Rheumatology considers studies on comorbidities of key importance for patients with RMDs as they help to better interpret the overall patients' condition and prognosis. FOREUM therefore wishes to instigate research which improves the knowledge on comorbidities in RMDs. This effort aims to improve the overall management of patients with RMD and may feed into individualized treatment and management strategies.

Scope

FOREUM seeks to support projects in the following areas:

- Structured approaches to determine the incidence and prevalence of comorbidities in RMDs
- Development of instruments that take into account the impact of comorbidities on patients disease state
- Studies that aim to unravel new functional relationships between RMDs and comorbidities
- Concepts that take into account comorbidities in the treatment of RMDs
- Strategies that help to improve the management of comorbidities in patients with 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

This 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 September 10, 2018 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 October 1, 2018 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 December 1, 2018 to the FOREUM Secretariat.

Patient organisations and 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.

EULAR developed guiding reference cards and an explanatory brochure available for project leaders, patient research partners and other interested parties. These materials have been realised with the support and input of a stakeholder group, active in the field of rheumatology research.

[Reference cards](#)

[Explanatory brochure](#)

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 / February 2018. Final decisions will be communicated by the FOREUM Secretariat by 12 February 2019.

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.

Schedule

Call issued:	27 June 2018
Closing date for Letter of intent:	10 September 2018
Decisions on LoI announced:	1 October 2018
Closing date for full proposals:	1 December 2018
Decisions on full proposals announced:	12 February 2019

Inquiries

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