MERAC Collaborators

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Introduction

Warm Greeting from MERAC

MERAC is pleased to issue its newsletter for winter 2013-2014. This newsletter is designed to keep you informed on the most recent advances achieved by our MERAC team members, subject enrolment, preliminary data analysis, publication and the latest news about RA.

Latest News:

A Genome-Wide Association Study Reveals ARL15, a Novel Non-HLA Susceptibility Gene for Rheumatoid Arthritis in North Indians

ARL15 (ADP-ribosylation Factor –like 15) has been reported in a recent Arthritis and Rheumatism paper to be a novel risk factor for RA in North Indian population.

Negi et al. performed two independent case-control samples sets for the discovery and replication phases. 706 RA patients and 761 controls were studied in the discovery phase; 927 patients and 1148 controls in the replication phase. Patients enrolled were diagnosed with RA and were of North Indian ancestry by self-report. Controls were age, sex and ethnicity matched.

In addition to the HLA association with RA, this study identified ARL15 as a new gene. In fact, in individuals harboring the risk (C) allele of this gene, both the risk for RA and adiponectin levels were increased. Adiponectin is one of the important adipokines in the synovial fluid of RA patients. It affects multiple cells in the synovial tissue and is related to increasing pro-inflammatory cytokines and greater joint damage.

This study not only identifies a new risk allele for RA. It also demonstrates the importance of performing GWAS in populations of different ethnicities, which would help in opening the doors for more precise treatment of individuals with RA.

Season’s Greetings
With our best wishes for the New Year

MERAC Enrollment Update

To date, we have 954 subjects enrolled in our study: 528 cases and 426 controls. We aim to enroll 2000 cases & 2000 controls by March 2014.

Strategies to increase enrollments

Suggested strategies to expand the enrollment in the collaborating countries through the established centers:

- Extending to local colleagues & inviting them to join the team.
- Increasing visibility of our work by presenting at local conferences.

Announcement

MERAC is pleased to invite you to submit your news for our next newsletter. Please consider sending pictures and stories from your site.
Deadline is March 2014, for more information; please contact Mrs. Grace Aranki, gra2006@qatar-med.cornell.edu

QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Auditing:

As required by our quality management plan, a successful audit was done at AUB-MC and HMC with outstanding results.
Thanks for the AUB & HMC teams

We are looking forward to receive the audit reports from the other sites.

Reports, Publications & Presentations

1. April 2013: Presentations by Dr. Hammoudeh on behalf of MERAC at ELAR congress, Alexandria - Egypt.

2. August 2013: Completed a quality improvement project on the effect of shipping temperature on DNA quality by Amro Wafi (in fulfillment of a summer research project for WCMC-Q students).


4. October 2013: Completed a quality improvement project on each of the site’s compliance with ICF requirements.