

PEDIATRICS RHEUMATOLOGY

Clinical activity and areas of excellence

The Pediatrics and Rheumatology Division has been accredited as Centre of Excellence in Rheumatology (years 2008-2013) by the EULAR (European League Against Rheumatism). The unit is the sole centre of excellence in rheumatology recognized by EULAR in Italy.

Clinical activity is focused on the diagnosis and treatment of rheumatic diseases (juvenile idiopathic arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, dermatomyositis, scleroderma, vasculitis, etc.), recurrent fever of genetic origin and other autoinflammatory diseases (familial Mediterranean fever, HyperIgD syndrome, TRAPS, CINCA, etc., in collaboration with the Molecular Genetics unit). Intense research activity is carried out in association with clinical activity which positions the Rheumatology unit among the major pediatric rheumatology centres worldwide.

The unit hosts the Direction of PRINTO (Pediatric Rheumatology International Trial Organization), the largest international network for the experimentation of new therapies in pediatric rheumatic diseases.

The network links all European pediatric rheumatology centers as well as many centers from other nations (overall 91 countries). PRINTO has also developed an informative website for families of children with rheumatic diseases (www.printo.it/pediatric-rheumatology).

The Laboratory of Immunology of Rheumatic Diseases of the unit studies the causes of rheumatic and autoinflammatory diseases in the child. The unit hosts the Association for Child Rheumatic Diseases (www.amri.it), a volunteering association helping affected children and their families.

To the Rare Diseases section are admitted patients with metabolic diseases, in particular lysosomal diseases and defects of carbohydrate metabolism (glycogenosis, defects of fructose and galactose metabolism). These diseases are diagnosed and treated (enzyme substitution therapy, therapy with substrate inhibitors).

The section is also involved in national and international experimental therapeutic trials concerning new therapies for lysosomal diseases and in research projects on metabolic diseases.

Other rare genetic diseases are followed (mental retardation of genetic origin, other neurogenetic diseases, skeletal dysplasias). The section collaborates with the Medical Direction in the coordination of the rare diseases multidisciplinary group of the Gaslini Institute for a coordinated approach to patients with rare diseases and multiple organ damage, and with the Regional Public Health Agency in the Ligurian rare diseases network.

MAJOR COLLABORATIONS

- ■ ■ Children's Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA
- ■ ■ Children's Hospital, Utrecht, The Netherlands
- ■ ■ National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Disease, NIH, Bethesda, USA
- ■ ■ Over 661 centres in 91 countries belonging to PRINTO



PROJECTS

- The PRINTO Evidence-based Revision of the International League Against Rheumatism (ILAR) Classification criteria for juvenile idiopathic Arthritis.
- Comparison of STep-up and step-down therapeutic strategies in childhood ARthritis (The STARS Trial).
- Applicability of standardized ultrasound examination to estimate disease activity in combination with JADAS and inflammation markers in JIA patients (The DAISY study).

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