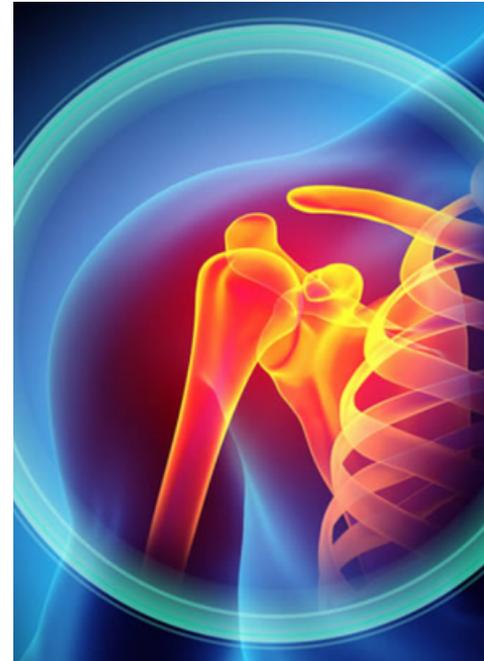
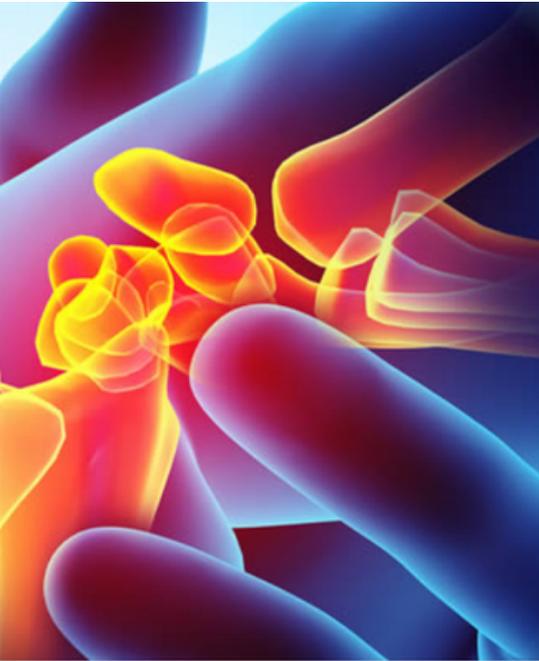




British Society for  
Rheumatology

Rheumatoid Arthritis Register

# Participant Newsletter



## *A word from...*

**PROFESSOR KIMME HYRICH**  
**BSRBR-RA CHIEF INVESTIGATOR**



Thank you for being involved with the British Society for Rheumatology Biologics Register for Rheumatoid Arthritis (BSRBR-RA)! This is an update for our participants, their families and anyone who is interested in our research into the long-term safety and effectiveness of new treatments for Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA).

The BSRBR-RA is coordinated by a small team at the University of Manchester. We receive funding and support from a charity called the British Society for Rheumatology and have been running for over twenty years!

Carry on reading to find out more about...

- **Latest research news** - are biosimilars truly similar?
- **Impact of the BSRBR-RA** over the last 20 years
- **Collaboration** with the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society

Over  
**30000**  
participants recruited from  
**250+**  
NHS Hospitals

# LATEST RESULTS FROM THE BSRBR-RA

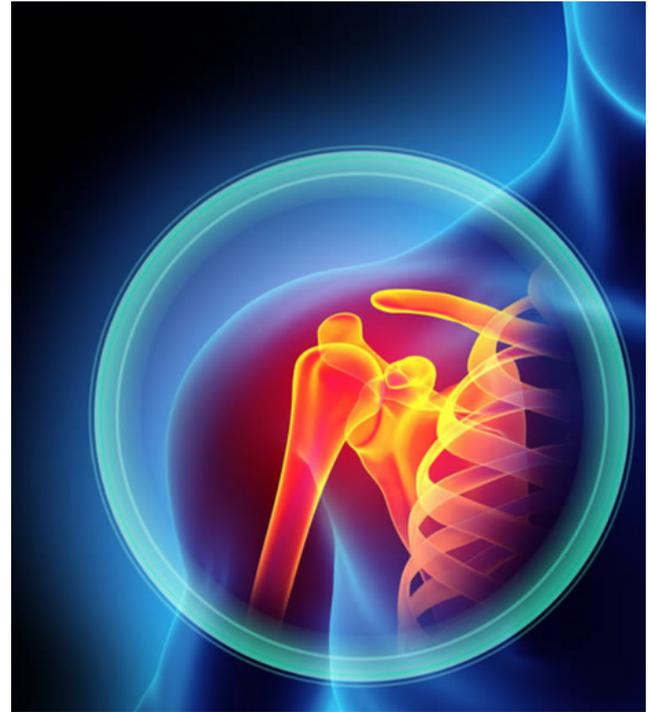
DR LIANNE KEARSLEY-FLEET ASKED...

*"Starting a biologic for the first time – are biosimilars truly 'similar'?"*



## What was already known?

Etanercept is one of the main treatment options for patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). In 2015, the patent for the original etanercept drug expired in Europe and consequently other pharmaceutical companies were able to make the drug; known as biosimilar. Biosimilar therapies must demonstrate the same clinical efficacy in clinical trials, and as a result, the NHS set guidelines for at least 90% of new patients to be prescribed the biosimilar product by 2019. This analysis was done to compare etanercept originator (the original) with the etanercept biosimilar in adults with RA starting a biologic therapy for the first time in routine clinical practice in the UK.



## What was discovered?

This analysis included 1806 adults with RA from the British Society for Rheumatology Biologics Register for RA (BSRBR-RA) study starting a biologic therapy for the first-time. In the 1009 starting etanercept originator and the 797 starting etanercept biosimilar, 30% achieved remission after six and 12 months of treatment, with no difference found between the two treatments. We found that one-in-five patients on the originator product were switched onto the biosimilar product, likely due to hospital policy (i.e. cost-saving). With most patients, three out of four, of either the originator or biosimilar still successfully on treatment after one year.

## Why is this important/what is the benefit to patients?

This is one of the largest analyses of adults with RA comparing those starting etanercept originator with those starting etanercept biosimilar. Using real-world data, we have shown that adults had similar improvements in their arthritis regardless of which product they are treated with. This is reassuring to patients and the clinical team when a patient with RA needs to start an etanercept therapy as their first biologic; either original or biosimilar.

Should you wish to read this scientific paper in full, the text can be found online here:  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/rheumatology/kead127>





# How do we collect data about study participants?

Once you consent to be involved in the study, your hospital will register you on the study database where you will be assigned a unique ID number.

The hospital periodically sends us information (taken from your hospital records) about any changes to your medication, your arthritis, and if you have experienced any new illnesses.

This is collected for the duration of the study; the current end date is September 2028, though this may be extended further if additional funding is obtained.

The data that we have already collected from our participants' hospitals can be enhanced by **linking** to other national databases such as NHS England (previously known as NHS Digital) – this means that we can be informed of some adverse events that we might have previously not known about for participants on our study.

For example, if one of the participants registered on our study develops a cancer, then we will be informed of that via a notification from the cancer register at NHS England. If a participant passes away, we will be informed via a notification from the deaths register at NHS England.

Please see our website for further information about data linkage: <https://bsrbr.org/for-participants/linking-data/>

# How has the BSRBR-RA made an impact in the real world?

We are so fortunate to have had such amazing support for the BSRBR-RA since we launched in 2001. The data that have been collected have resulted in over 90 publications in peer-reviewed academic journals, with some really important real-world impact, as detailed below. This couldn't have happened without your involvement in the study, thank you so much for your participation.



**Dr Kath Watson**  
BSRBR-RA Study  
Manager

## Publications

**97**  
Scientific publications using the rich BSRBR-RA data

Increasing number of plain language summaries explaining the findings of BSRBR-RA publications

[www.bsrbr.org/research/lay-summaries/](http://www.bsrbr.org/research/lay-summaries/)

**31**  
BSRBR-RA publications led by external academic researchers

## TWO DECADES OF BSRBR-RA IMPACT

- MAXIMISING PATIENT BENEFIT AND MINIMISING PATIENT RISK
- DATA CONTRIBUTED TO NATIONAL RHEUMATOLOGY GUIDANCE ON DRUG PRESCRIBING
- COLLABORATIONS WITH SIMILAR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES HAVE ALLOWED BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE RISK OF RARE OUTCOMES
- DATA CONTRIBUTING TO TRAINING OF NEW DOCTORS
- RESULTS HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED IN PATIENT DRUG INFORMATION LEAFLETS AND PRODUCT LABELLING
- INVALUABLE RESOURCE FOR SAFETY AND EFFICACY INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS, CLINICIANS, DRUG MANUFACTURERS AND DRUG REGULATORS (DATA CONTRIBUTED TO 20+ DRUG RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS)
- DATA CONTRIBUTED TO EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY APPROVAL OF NEW THERAPEUTICS

# *What do people with RA think is important for researchers to investigate?*

At the start of 2023 we designed and launched a short survey in collaboration with the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS).

**NRAS is a national registered charity which provides information and support for people who have Rheumatoid Arthritis.**

Our survey asked a series of questions about what people with RA (based in the UK) feel are the most important topics about their arthritis and its treatment. This will help guide future research in rheumatoid arthritis. We also included a few questions about COVID as we are keen to understand how the pandemic is still affecting people living with RA, including continued management of their treatments.

**WWW.NRAS.ORG.UK**

**WE WERE DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE OVER 1000 RESPONSES WITHIN THE FIRST HOUR OF LAUNCH!**

Our researcher Dr Simon Tsoi (pictured above) is currently looking at all the information from the survey and is analysing the results. These will be put in to a report for NRAS, keep an eye out for their website (link above) for details!



**RESULTS WILL BE PUBLISHED BY NRAS AND SHARED ON THEIR WEBSITE - PLEASE KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE REPORT!**

## **CONTACT THE TEAM**

WE WOULD **LOVE** TO HEAR FROM YOU IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ANSWERED, OR ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR OUR RESEARCH! WE CAN BE CONTACTED ON EMAIL AT

**BIOLOGICS.REGISTER@MANCHESTER.AC.UK**

Please visit our website for further information about the study, including more research results!

**[HTTPS://BSRBR.ORG/FOR-PARTICIPANTS/](https://BSRBR.ORG/FOR-PARTICIPANTS/)**

