

## EDITORIAL

# The relevance of observational studies in rheumatology and clinical immunology

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Most of the developments happened in the field of science, especially in medicine, are based on meticulous observations and interpretations. In the recent years, it is necessary to support such observations or findings by evidence based on experiments done at controlled conditions. However, experiments involving humans have many limitations and drawbacks. In most cases, it is difficult to fully imply the findings observed in animal experiments in human trials. Even in the era ruled by evidence-based medicine, especially with reference to treatment strategies, observational studies are significant to circumvent such inadequacies. Realizing this fact, FDA (USA) in 2007 launched a well-known sentinel program named Observational Medical Outcomes Partnership (OMOP) to create a nationwide data network.<sup>1</sup> The program assisted in developing many useful methods and designs to utilize the available large observation data. Such programs highlight the relevance of having observational studies with significant findings.

It is essential to revise epidemiological data of even the diseases that are well-described, especially with reference to autoimmune and rheumatological diseases. The newer and well-defined criteria for diagnosis and improved understanding of these diseases substantiate the necessity to revise the epidemiology and clinical characteristics of such diseases. Additionally, further evaluation of the emerging disease patterns and approaches to diagnosis and treatment is vital.

The data available from developing and underdeveloped

countries on epidemiology of autoimmune diseases is inadequate. Further updation of the perceptions of policy makers as well as the primary care physicians about these diseases is also crucial, as they influence the efforts of various organization and funding agencies.<sup>2</sup> The efforts of many participating groups including the Community Oriented Program for Control of Rheumatic Diseases (COPCORD) launched by WHO-ILAR (International League of Associations for Rheumatology) are commendable. In order to highlight the significance of observational studies, *IJRCI* has launched a supplementary issue focusing on observational studies in rheumatology and immunology. The issue will be open for submission throughout the year and will be updated regularly. This may help to fill in the gap of publishing papers that are valuable for clinical governance and improving patient care in the field of autoimmune diseases.

## Competing interests

The author declare that he has no competing interests.

## Citation

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