Reviewer’s report

Title: Low level of physical activity in women with rheumatoid arthritis is associated with cardiovascular risk factors but not with body fat mass - a cross sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 30 November 2010

Reviewer: Alexandros Drosos

Reviewer’s report:

Dear editors,

Thank you for requesting us to review the manuscript with the title “Low level of physical activity in women with rheumatoid arthritis is associated with cardiovascular risk factors but not with body fat mass – a cross sectional study”.

Overall, the manuscript is interesting since it points out the importance of physical activity and lifestyle in general for atherosclerosis prevention in patients with RA. It gives clues regarding the potential mechanisms whereby reduced physical activity negatively affects the atherosclerosis process, namely by impairing metabolic parameters (ApoA1, HDL, insulin, anti-PC), while it is related to a less healthy diet containing more SFA that in turn have been related to higher levels of oxLDL.

However, the patients had low to medium disease activity, they were overweight and had high %FM in a substantial proportion. On the contrary, these same obese patients were overall comparable to the general Swedish population as far as physical activity is concerned and their energy uptake was found within the recommended for low energy expenditure. Then what is the authors’ explanation regarding this high prevalence of obesity? Were the RA patients studied as overweight as the general Swedish population to whom they were compared in terms of physical activity? Or might there be some association between even low-medium disease activity state to obesity despite seemingly adequate calorie expenditure and reasonable calorie uptake?


Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests