Author's response to reviews

Title: Long-term Persistence and Effects of Fetal Microchimerisms on Disease Onset and Status in a Cohort of Women with Rheumatoid Arthritis and Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

Authors:

Marianne Kekow (m_kekow@hotmail.com)
Maria Barleben (mariabarleben@gmx.de)
Susanne Drynda (susanne.drynda@med.ovgu.de)
Sibylle Jakubiczka (sibylle.jakubiczka@med.ovgu.de)
Jörn Kekow (joern.kekow@med.ovgu.de)
Thomas Brune (thomas.brun@klinikum-lippe.de)

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editors,

This is to submit the enclosed manuscript entitled “Long-term Persistence and Effects of Fetal Microchimerisms on Disease Onset and Status in a Cohort of Women with Rheumatoid Arthritis and Systemic Lupus Erythematosus” as research article.

The paper describes the detection of fetal microchimerisms in patients with RA and SLE in comparison to healthy controls decades after the birth of a son applying a sensitive method for the detection of male specific DNA. Findings were correlated with clinical features of patients to explore a possible significance of microchimerisms for disease progression and severity.

Some data have been presented in 2012 at the ACR annual scientific meeting in Washington, the abstract has been published in Arthritis & Rheumatism vol. 64, no. 10 (suppl.) S190-191.

According to the suggestion from the editors from Arthritis Research and Therapy the manuscript has been transferred for submission to BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders. The comments of the reviewers were considered in revision of the manuscript (see below). We hope, that with these modifications our manuscript meets the requirements of the journal.

We look forward to your kind consideration of the manuscript.

Sincerely,

Marianne Kekow, M.D.