

EULAR  
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## EU SHORTAGE OF ARTHRITIS DRUGS DUE TO USE AS TREATMENT FOR SEVERE CV-19 CASES

**EULAR President calls for equal access to medicines and for manufacturers to rapidly upscale production to tackle shortfall**

**The European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology, EULAR, wishes to highlight increasing shortages of vital anti-inflammatory drugs used in the treatment of arthritis, vasculitis and other inflammatory RMDs.**

EULAR President, Professor Annamaria Iagnocco, said:

*“EULAR is aware that more and more EU member states are experiencing shortages of essential anti-inflammatory drugs and that certain manufacturers have highlighted the prospect of global shortages in the upcoming months.*

*While recognising that many drugs traditionally used to treat rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) have become leading COVID (CV)-19 therapeutics, manufacturers and governments must take urgent steps to ensure that this increased demand does not impact the lives and livelihoods of Europeans with RMDs.*

*These are essential medications for many people with RMDs such as arthritis and vasculitis that not only help to mitigate against disability, and the social and employment impacts associated with RMDs, but the development of common co-morbidities like cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.*

*EULAR calls for equal in access to these medications from health care providers and the relevant manufacturers; and we join with our patient association membership pillar, People with Arthritis and Rheumatism in Europe, PARE, in calling on manufacturers to rapidly upscale output to meet the increasing clinical need.*

*A balanced approach is essential to ensure that we meet the ongoing pandemic imperatives and respect the needs of those already benefiting already from the use of this medicine, for some of whom it is an essential medication.”*

For many COVID-19 patients, an overly vigorous response creates a severe systemic inflammatory state – the so-called cytokine storm – characterized by the creation of lots of inflammatory products and that can result in serious lung damage and death. This is how CV-19 tends to kill.

When it became obvious that, in addition to the direct impact of the disease, CV-19 was causing deaths through hyper-inflammatory states very similar to RMDs, rheumatology health professionals came to the fore. During the pandemic, many anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressant RMD drugs have been repurposed to treat patients with severe CV-19 symptoms, particularly a class of drug called Glucocorticoids.

### **About EULAR**

EULAR is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to

improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

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