Supplementary data

Supplementary Table I. Immunosuppressive medications used in the exclusion criteria.

Methotrexate	Etanercept
Hydroxychloroquine	Infliximab
Sulfasalazine	Prednisone
Adalimumab	Dexamethasone

Variable definitions

<u>**Hypertension**</u> was defined as an average systolic blood pressure ≥140 mm Hg, diastolic blood pressure ≥90 mm Hg, or the use of antihypertensive medication. Blood pressure was recorded as the average of five sequential measurements during the first study visit.

<u>**Hypercholesterolaemia**</u> was defined as a low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol ≥160 mg/dL (4.1 mmol/L) on a fasting sample, direct LDL >160 mg/dL on a non-fasting sample, or use of statin medication.

<u>**Diabetes**</u> was defined by a fasting glucose level ≥126 mg/dL, non-fasting glucose ≥200 mg/dL, or use of hypoglycaemic medication.

<u>**Metabolic syndrome**</u> was defined according to the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) Adult Treatment Panel (ATP III) criteria that require the presence of >3 of the following: 1) increased waist circumference (>40 in [>102 cm] for men; >35 in [>88 cm] for women); 2) elevated triglycerides (>150 mg/dL [1.69 mmol/L]); 3) low high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol (<40 mg/dL [1.04 mmol/L] in men, <50 mg/dL [1.29 mmol/L] in women); 4) elevated blood pressure (>130/>85 mmHg) or medically-treated hypertension; and 5) impaired fasting glucose (>100 mg/dL [5.6 mmol/L]) or medically treated diabetes.

<u>**Smoking**</u> was defined as current smoker, former smoker or never smoker.

Imaging methods for measurement of aortic wall thickness and compliance
Aortic magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) was performed using a 1.5 Tesla whole-body MRI system (Intera, Philips Medical Systems, Best, The Netherlands), and 6 transverse slices of the infrarenal abdominal aorta were obtained using a T2-weighted turbo spin-echo (black-blood) sequence. Aortic wall thickness (AWT) was calculated by dividing the total vessel wall area by the aortic circumference in each slice, and averaging over the 6 slices.