

Reply to comment on: Palindromic rheumatism following COVID-19 infection evolved to rheumatoid arthritis after COVID-19 reinfection

Sirs,

We would like to thank Dr Drosos *et al.* for their letter regarding our case report describing a possible association between COVID-19 infection and the development of palindromic rheumatism (PLR) progressing to full blown rheumatoid arthritis (RA) (1).

Though we believe that the association between the infection and the joint disease is coincidental, we chose to conclude our discussion with the following sentences: "Therefore, it is difficult to totally ignore the temporal relationship between the appearance of PLR after the first COVID-19 infection in our patient and the transition to full blown RA following her COVID-19 reinfection. This course of events merits further investigation and clarification".

Yet, all the studies supporting the notion that COVID-19 causes Rheumatoid arthritis are theoretical and use the terms **potential** trigger or **may** contribute to the development

of the rheumatic disease (2). This means that we cannot be determinant in this causal and effect relationship. Moreover, during the pandemic of COVID-19, millions of patients were infected with the virus and yet the number of patients who developed RA is relatively small and they were described in case reports only or in a very small series. If there was a clear association between the infection and this rheumatic disease, we would expect a parallel "pandemic" of rheumatoid arthritis.

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