

# 29TH BELGIAN CONGRESS OF RHEUMATOLOGY

24 – 26 SEPT 2025 • HILTON HOTEL • ANTWERP



Rheuma.be

KBVR-SRBR

## PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME



### Scientific Organiser

Nisha Limaye, Ph.D., UCL  
Scientific President

Patrick Durez, M.D., Ph.D., UCL  
Co-president

### Local Organising Committee

Nathalie Berghen, KLINA  
Els Gielis, ZAS  
Rik Joos, ZAS  
Margot Van Mechelen, UZA

### Scientific Committee

Nicolaas Aerts, ZAS  
Fleur Boelhouwers, Reumacentrum Genk  
Ellen De Langhe, KUL  
Patrick Durez, UCL  
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Antoine Enfrein, UCL  
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Olivier Malaise, CHU de Liège  
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Veerle Somers, UHasselt  
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Jean-Baptiste Vulsteke, KUL

### Congress Secretariat

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Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

The Royal Belgian Society for Rheumatology takes great pleasure in announcing the **29th Belgian Congress on Rheumatology**, taking place in **Antwerpen** on **24 – 26 September 2025**.

This 29th Congress will be hosted at Hilton Antwerp Old Town, situated in the heart of the city overlooking the Cathedral of Our Lady and the Old Town square.

We are proud to announce this year's scientific programme, featuring a well curated mix of state-of-the-art invited lectures by renowned national and international speakers, and Updates in Therapeutics organised with the support of industry.

Following last year's success, we are excited to once again offer interactive workshops on Friday morning, where clinically oriented, challenging cases will be discussed in small groups under the guidance of experts.

We have also provided ample space for participants to present their own work: The Scientific Committee will select a limited number of abstracts for oral presentation in the Young Investigators' Meeting, the abstract sessions and the Thieves Market (send us your most remarkable clinical cases!).

This year again, a **€ 500 prize** will be awarded to the young clinician who presents the best of the three selected clinical cases in the Thieves' Market. Please note that only trainees or rheumatologists within maximum 3 years of board certification are eligible to apply.

Furthermore, a **€ 500 prize** will be awarded to each of the four best abstracts.

Together with the Local Organising Committee and the KBVR-SRBR Board members, we hope to welcome you to BCR'25 in Antwerpen!

Yours sincerely,

Nisha Limaye, Ph.D.  
Scientific President

Patrick Durez, M.D., Ph.D.  
Co-president



- 10.00 **A1** **Young Investigators' Meeting**  
**IGF1 receptor does not mediate IGF1-induced joint damage in osteoarthritis**  
*Ana Escribano-Núñez (KUL)*
- 10.15 **A2** **Unravelling the microvasculature of human cortical bone: A concept for a comparative study between microcomputed tomography and histopathology**  
*Steven Van Offel (UZ Gent)*
- 10.30 **A3** **Role of Wnt-Integrin signaling in impaired chondrocyte mechanotransduction in the context of early osteoarthritis**  
*Nuria Viudes-Sarrión (KUL)*
- 10.45 **A4** **Immune deposit resorption in per-protocol repeat kidney biopsy performed in patients with proliferative lupus nephritis**  
*Antoine Enfrein (UCL)*
- 11.00 **A5** **DIO2 negatively regulates protective histone methyltransferase DOT1L in articular cartilage and osteoarthritis**  
*Léa Guilmot (KUL)*
- 11.15 **A6** **PRKD2: A candidate gene modulating T cell activation in familial systemic sclerosis**  
*Pierre Maus (UCL)*
- 11.30 **A7** **Characterization of CEMIP expression in skin biopsies from patients with systemic sclerosis**  
*Pauline Salpetier (CHU de Liège)*
- 11.45 **A8** **Short lymphocyte telomere length in systemic sclerosis is independent of silica exposure and unrelated to granulocytes**  
*Anne-Catherine Dens (UZ Leuven)*
- 12.00 Welcome Lunch



- 12.45 **Opening Ceremony**  
*Laurent Méric de Bellefon, President KBVR-SRBR*  
*Saskia Verwijs, Managing Director KBVR-SRBR*  
*Nisha Limaye, Scientific President*
- Session I. To the bone: The experts' guide to osteoarthritis & osteitis**
- 13.00 **I1** **Bone and Joint Lecture**  
**Osteoarthritis treatment innovation: Emerging strategies and future perspectives**  
*Jérémy Sellam, Sorbonne University, Paris, France*
- 13.35 **I2** **What you should know on chronic nonbacterial osteitis**  
*Liesbeth Winter, Leiden University Medical Center, Leiden, The Netherlands*
- Abstract presentations**
- 14.10 **O1** **Bone mineral density and bone micro-architecture modifications after kidney transplantation: Association with early changes in bone turnover biomarkers**  
*Olivier Malaise (CHU de Liège)*
- 14.20 **O2** **Low-dose CT reveals syndesmophyte progression in axSpA, particularly in the thoracic spine: Insights from the SPACE cohort covering early and established disease**  
*Manouk de Hooge (UZ Gent)*
- 14.30 **O3** **METHOFRAC, a methotrexate osteopathy multicentric cohort study**  
*François Robin (French Society of Rheumatology)*
- 14.40 Coffee Break
- Session II. Not child's play: Lessons from rare pediatric disorders**
- 15.10 **I3** **Novel/adaptive designs for rare diseases - Paediatric model**  
*Athimalaipet Ramanan, Bristol Royal Hospital for Children & University of Bristol, Bristol, UK*
- 15.40 **I4** **Fundamental immunology shapes the diagnosis and treatment of patients with rare immune disorders**  
*Selket Delafontaine (KUL)*





- 16.10 **04** **Abstract presentations**  
**Apolipoprotein A1 and B levels indicate specific lipid changes in early treatment naïve psoriatic arthritis and correlate with 1-year disease activity**  
*Alla Ishchenko (KUL)*
- 16.20 **05** **Ultrasound detection of monosodium urate crystal joint deposition and related comorbidities in patients with asymptomatic hyperuricemia**  
*Alina Stiuliuc (CHU Brugmann)*
- 16.30 **06** **The spectrum of renal tubular acidosis in primary Sjögren's disease: A BeSSTT cohort study**  
*Sophie Vanhoof (VIB-Ugent)*
- 16.40 **07** **Pneumocystis jirovecii pneumonia in patients with systemic inflammatory diseases: Risk profile and prophylaxis considerations**  
*Cédric Peters (CHU de Liège)*

16.50 Movement Break

## Session III. Ethics & Economy

- 17.20 **Update from BRV-AMRB**  
*Philip Remans, President BRV-AMRB*
- 17.40 **15** **Structured health data: The road to Mordor**  
*Mark Helbert (ZAS)*
- 18.40 **From insight to impact: What Rheuma.be membership can do for you!**  
*Laurent Méric de Bellefon, President KBVR-SRBR*  
*Saskia Verwijns, Managing Director KBVR-SRBR*
- 19.00 **2025 Review by BeHPR**  
*Thanny Bries*
- 19.05 **2025 Review by ReumaNet**  
*Veerle De Pourcq*
- 19.10 **2025 Review by Clair**  
*Veronique Frennet*
- 19.20 Welcome Reception
- 20.15 End of Day 1



## Session IV. Reality bytes: Pragmatic wisdom for the management of rheumatoid arthritis

- 09.00 Update in Therapeutics - Organised with an educational grant from Alfasigma  
**Unraveling RA pathogenesis: Translation into clinical practice and real-world impact**  
*Ernest Choy, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK*
- 09.30 Update in Therapeutics - Organised with an educational grant from AbbVie  
**Lessons from the RABBIT registry**  
*Anja Strangfeld, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany*
- 10.00 **16** **Art's debt to musculoskeletal knowledge**  
*Alain Saraux, Centre hospitalier universitaire de Brest, Brest, France*
- 10.20 **08** **Abstract presentations**  
**Does first-line biologic choice influence progression to difficult-to-treat rheumatoid arthritis? Insights from our longitudinal RA UCLouvain Brussels cohort**  
*Francesco Natalucci (UCL)*

- 10.30 **09** **Validation of novel autoantibody biomarkers for first-line therapy in rheumatoid arthritis in the Cap48 cohort**  
*Sukayna Fadlallah (UHasselt)*
- 10.40 **010** **Predicting pain outcomes in treatment-naïve early rheumatoid arthritis patients: Insights from a 5-year longitudinal RA UCLouvain Brussels cohort**  
*Claudia Ciancarella (UCL, Rome Sapienza)*

10.50 Coffee Break

## Session V. And in local news....

- 11.20 **FWRO awards and updates**  
*René Westhovens (KUL)*
- 11.45 **Year in review**  
*Olivier Malaise (CHU de Liège)*
- 12.10 **My PhD project in five minutes**



- 12.40 General Assembly
- 13.15 Lunch Break
- Parallel training sessions (13.30 - 14.15):**
- Hands-on training e-platform Clinical patient management system**  
Yves Piette (UGent, AZ Sint-Jan Brugge – Oostende)
- EULAR/SCTC consensus on standardised interpretation and description of nailfold videocapillaroscopy**  
Vanessa Smith (UGent)
- 14.00 Poster Viewing
- Session VI. Quench the spark? Damage-control in systemic autoimmunity**
- 14.30 **17** **Treatment of fibrotic manifestations of SSc**  
Jörg Distler, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Erlangen, Germany
- Vesalius Lecture
- 15.00 **18** **Lessons from targeting B lineage cells in systemic autoimmunity: SLE as a model**  
Thomas Dörner, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany
- Abstract presentations**
- 15.35 **011** **Early prediction of long-term renal outcomes in lupus nephritis using hazard index equations**  
Farah Tamirou (UCL)
- 15.45 **012** **Synergistic risk of systemic sclerosis from silica exposure and HLA-DQB1\*03:01/03:04 genotype: A Belgian case-control study**  
Anne-Catherine Dens (UZ Leuven)
- 15.55 **013** **Role of a rare variant in the NT5E gene in the pathogenesis of systemic sclerosis**  
Gaëlle Tilman (UCL)
- 16.05 Coffee Break



- Session VII. Both sides of the aisle: Fibromyalgia and polymyalgia rheumatica**
- 16.35 **19** **Optimal care of patients diagnosed with fibromyalgia**  
Fabiola Atzeni, University of Messina, Messina, Italy
- 17.05 Update in Therapeutics - Organised with an educational grant from Novartis  
**The patient journey in polymyalgia rheumatica**  
Alain Saraux, Centre hospitalier universitaire de Brest, Brest, France
- Thieves' Market Best Clinical Case Contest - Young (future) Rheumatologists**
- 17.35 **014** **The lymph node that solved the mystery: When Kikuchi-Fujimoto mimics encephalitis**  
Zoé Gendebien (CHU de Liège)
- 17.45 **015** **Sjogren's syndrome with serious manifestations or just a B-cell lymphoma?**  
Iro Ioanna Giannakopoulou (CHU Saint-Pierre)
- 17.55 **016** **From gout to disseminated bone and cutaneous M. chelonae infection in a heart transplant recipient**  
Pauline Salpetier (CHU de Liège)
- 18.15 **Voting & Thieves' Market Award Presentation**
- 18.30 Adjourn
- 19.30 Congress Dinner

**Workshops**

09.00 - 09.45 Workshops 1 - 4

09.45 - 10.00 Transfer time

10.00 - 10.45 Workshops 1 - 4

Workshop 1 – Organised with an educational grant from AbbVie  
**Prescribing targeted synthetic and biologic DMARDs**  
*Anja Strangfeld, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany*

Workshop 2 – Organised with an educational grant from Alfasigma  
**The treatment of chronic pain in RA**  
*Patrick Verschueren (KUL)*

Workshop 3 – Organised with an educational grant from Lilly  
**An approach to assessing enthesitis and nails - Is it or isn't it?**  
*Dennis McGonagle, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK*

Workshop 4 – Organised with an educational grant from Novartis  
**Connecting rheumatologists with their radiologists: Practical tips to get the best CT and MR imaging studies**  
*Lennart Jans (UGent)*

10.45 Coffee Break


**Session VIII. Know thy enemy: Pathogenic mechanisms in SpA and PsA**

11.15 Update in Therapeutics - Organised with an educational grant from UCB  
**Pathogenic mechanisms in spondyloarthritis: Emerging insights and therapeutic implications**  
*Frank Behrens, University Hospital Goethe-University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany*

11.45 Update in Therapeutics - Organised with an educational grant from Lilly  
**From fingertips to joints: Understanding the link between nails and joints in psoriatic arthritis**  
*Dennis McGonagle, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK*

12.15 Update in Therapeutics - Organised with an educational grant from Amgen  
**Comorbidities in psoriatic disease: what is next?**  
*Kurt de Vlam (KUL)*

12.45 Update in Therapeutics - Organised with an educational grant from Janssen-Cilag  
**Joining forces in conquering PsA and IBD side by side**  
*Marc Ferrante (KUL) & Gaëlle Varkas (UGent)*

13.15 **Closing Remarks**  
*Laurent Méric de Bellefon, President KBVR-SRBR*

13.30 **Farewell Lunch**


Meeting for Health Professionals in Rheumatology – Morning

08.45	Registration*
09.00	<b>Welcome</b> <i>Thanny Bries, Chair of BeHPR</i>
	<b>Session 1</b> <b>Chair: Tanja Debruyn</b>
09.15	<b>ReumaNet update</b> <i>Anouk Van der Heyden, ReumaNet</i>
09.30	<b>Myositis</b> <i>Yves Piette, UGent &amp; AZ Sint-Jan Brugge – Oostende</i>
10.00	<b>KBVR &amp; BeHPR</b> <i>Saskia Verwijns, Managing Director KBVR-SRBR</i>
10.15	<b>Understanding physical activity, barriers and beliefs in psoriatic arthritis</b> <i>Marlies Kaerts, KULeuven</i>
10.45	Coffee break
	<b>Session 2</b> <b>Chair: Deborah Defranck</b>
11.00	<b>Exercise training for (the prevention of) chronic diseases: Myths, facts and novelties anno 2025</b> <i>Dominique Hansen, UHasselt</i>
12.00	<b>BeHPR transparency and what do you want from BeHPR?</b> <i>Tanja Debruyn &amp; Thanny Bries, BeHPR</i>
12.15	Lunch & Networking Poster Viewing IMID nursing postgraduate

\*Registration (including coffee breaks and lunch) is free of charge, but obligatory

Meeting for Health Professionals in Rheumatology – Afternoon

	<b>Session 3</b> <b>Chair: Nele Ooms</b>
13.15	<b>RN Consultation</b> <i>Deborah Defranck, BeHPR</i>
13.45	<b>Addressing persistent disease burden in rheumatoid arthritis in remission: The patient's perspective</b> <i>Elias De Meyst, KULeuven</i>
14.15	<b>Paediatrics</b> <i>Speaker to be confirmed</i>
15.00	Coffee Break
	<b>Session 4</b> <b>Chair: Thanny Bries</b>
15.15	<b>Highlight from EULAR 2025: Stop eating tomatoes and move more!</b> <i>Diederik De Cock, VUB</i>
15.30	<b>Beyond the prescription: Adherence in clinical practice</b> <i>Marine Piessens, UZ Leuven</i>
15.45	<b>Mimics in arthritis</b> <i>Jean-Baptiste Vulsteke, UZ Leuven</i>
16.30	<b>Closing and a safe trip back home</b>

Organised with an educational grant from  **Biogen.**

## Registration



### Registration Fees

	EARLY Until 31 August	LATE As of 1 September
Member KBVR-SRBR	€ 345,00	€ 460,00
Non Member	€ 460,00	€ 575,00
Emeritus	€ 60,00	€ 85,00
Researcher non-MD*	€ 60,00	€ 85,00
Trainee in Rheumatology*	€ 60,00	€ 85,00
Other Trainee*	€ 85,00	€ 115,00
Congress Dinner	€ 90,00	€ 90,00
Health Professionals' Meeting on Thursday 19 September	Free	Free

\*Please bring a copy of your student card or a certificate of your director. Without proof the non-member fee will be charged.

#### The registration fee for participants includes

- Participation in all scientific sessions
- Participation in the 'Updates in Therapeutics' organised by the Industry
- Participation in the Workshops on Thursday lunchtime and Friday morning
- The Programme and abstracts (electronically)
- Access to the exhibition (MDs only)
- Lunches and coffee breaks
- Welcome Reception on Wednesday

#### Cancellations

Participants canceling their registration before 1 September 2025, will receive a full refund, less administration costs (€ 50,00 for members and non-members and € 25,00 for trainees, researchers and emeriti). There will be no refunds for cancellations received after this date. Cancellations must be confirmed in writing to the Organising Secretariat. All refunds will be processed after the Congress.

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