

## Gene link to arthritis

Researchers in the U.S. have found a gene associated with disease severity in models of rheumatoid arthritis. The discovery could not only provide a new pathway for treatment but also a way to measure the prognosis of patients diagnosed with the autoimmune condition. The gene was discovered during experiments on synovial cells from the inner lining of joints in humans and animals, and also in animal models of arthritis severity. This is the first time that the gene, HIP1, has been implicated in arthritis severity and in cell invasiveness. Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic disease that can cause disability and deformation of joints and affects roughly 1% of the world's population. Drugs currently available to treat rheumatoid arthritis target the body's immune response but raise the risk of immunosuppression and susceptibility to infections such as herpes zoster and pneumonia. The findings have been published online in the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*.

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