

PRINTO, an international research network in pediatric rheumatology

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Pediatric rheumatic diseases (PRD) are rare conditions associated with important sequelae on quality of life and long-term outcome. Although many PRD are different from their adult counterparts and although children are not “small adults” until recently very few controlled trials had been performed in order to assess drug safety and efficacy in PRD.

This picture completely changed in the last years thanks to two important events. The first is the adoption (in 1999) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the so called “pediatric rule”. By this rule any pharmaceutical company that intends to register a new drug for use in adults has to provide information also on safety and efficacy in children if children can also benefit from this drug. The second is the presence of two international networks devoted to perform controlled trial in PRD, the

USA Pediatric Rheumatology Collaborative Study Group (PRCSG) and the Paediatric Rheumatology International Trials Organization (PRINTO), an international network based in Genova, Italy.

Initially founded by 14 European countries, PRINTO now includes pediatric rheumatology centers from more than 44 countries all over the world. Its activity has included the creation of standardized measures to monitor disease activity, the translation, adaptation and cross-cultural validation of instrument that measures functional activity and quality of life, the conduction of controlled trial with marketed drugs and with new drugs.

Children with PRD have now the same opportunities as adults to be treated with drugs whose safety and efficacy have been assessed through legitimate scientifically valid investigations.