

RHEUMATOLOGY RESEARCH FOUNDATION



SUMMER  
RESEARCH  
SERIES

HEALTH SERVICES  
RESEARCH

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27TH  
2:00 - 3:30 PM EDT

**Maria Angeles Lopez-Olivo, MD, PhD**

University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center

***Improving decision-making in patients with RA  
and concomitant cancer considering immune  
checkpoint inhibition***

Innovative Research Award



National estimates suggest that about 40% of individuals will be diagnosed with cancer at any site at some point in their lifetime. Therefore, many patients with rheumatoid arthritis will develop a malignancy and will be treated with immune checkpoint inhibitors.

Our study acknowledges the expanding impact of rheumatologists in the field of immune-related adverse events clinical care. The overall goal of this proposed study is to develop and test a decision support tool aimed at improving the decision-making process for healthcare providers and their patients with rheumatoid arthritis and melanoma who may benefit from immune checkpoint inhibition.

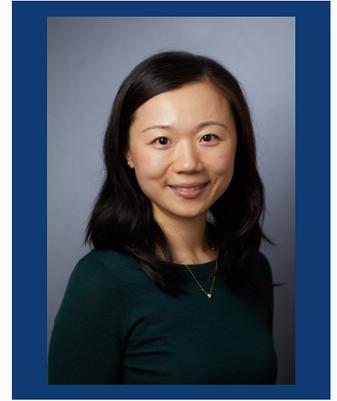
The tool will help patients facing complicated barriers (uncertainty and decisional conflict) make decisions, and will help providers deliver information, and support and honor their patient's decision.

## **Betty Hsiao, MD**

Yale University

### ***Improving Treat-to-Target by Incorporating the Patient Perspective***

Innovative Research Award



Despite proven benefits and widespread endorsement, implementation of treat-to-target (T2T) strategies in rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is low, with most studies demonstrating appropriate escalation of treatment in less than 50% of patients with moderate to high disease activity. Documented reasons underlying poor adherence to T2T strategies include discordance between disease activity scores and rheumatologists' global impact scores, co-morbidities, medication lag, and patient reluctance. Of these, only the latter represents a missed opportunity to escalate treatment. Therefore, increasing T2T rates will require changing patients' decision-making.

We propose to gain in-depth understanding of patients' decision making using the mental models approach to risk communication (MMARC) derived from decision science. The objective of the MMARC is to develop interventions which address the critical discrepancies between experts' and end-users' mental models. In this context, mental models refer to rheumatologists' and patients' thought processes and beliefs about how T2T strategies work. This effort will identify critical gaps between the rheumatologist and patient mental models and will identify the content to be targeted in interventions. Lastly, we will create a framework matching communication strategies to distinct RA patient positions towards T2T.

The results from this study will inform interventions to improve T2T strategies both at the individual RA patient and population level.

## Swamy Venuturupalli, MD

Attune Health



### ***Telehealth-delivered HealthcaRe to Improve Care (THRIVE) in Community-Practice Rheumatology*** Innovative Research Award

In 2020, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a massive increase in the use of home-based telehealth to provide clinical care in community rheumatology. This project will convene a set of stakeholders including community-practice clinicians, clinical researchers, telehealth experts, patients, and patient advocates to redesign community-based rheumatology telehealth care. Informed by a systematic literature review, we will codify the best practices in telehealth rheumatology, adapt those to the practice of rheumatology, and then implement those best practices to condition-specific care pathways in use by a large, 250+ provider community rheumatology network. We will measure rheumatology patient satisfaction with telehealth to inform these best practices with quantitative data, especially identifying the patient-, provider-, and practice-level factors associated with patients being satisfied (or not) with telehealth services. We will also create video-guided patient education to standardize elements of patient self-examination with a focus on RA and develop companion provider-facing training on how to conduct a standardized, structured exam over a telehealth video interface. We will incorporate and disseminate these tools not only to the large rheumatology community provider network participating in this project but also to community rheumatologists everywhere through a variety of distribution channels.

This project is a collaboration with University of Alabama at Birmingham, Global Healthy Living Foundation, and Bendcare, LLC.



We hope you will join us. Registration is required.

**[CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)**



**Rheumatology Research Foundation**  
Advancing Treatment | Finding Cures