



# VERITY Newsletter

A newsletter brought to you by VERITY at Brigham & Women's Hospital

AUGUST 2020

## VERITY Updates

- **VERITY has awarded Vanessa Kronzer, MD**, the 2020 VERITY Pilot & Feasibility Research Award. Congratulations to Dr. Kronzer!

VERITY (NIH-P30-AR072577) is funded by NIH-NIAMS.

## Treat to Target in RA Virtual Learning Collaborative

VERITY is supporting an upcoming learning collaborative being led by Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School and is sponsored by the pharmaceutical company AbbVie. The TRACTION Learning Collaborative (LC) focuses on improving the use of Treat to Target (TTT) for rheumatoid arthritis (RA). TTT is part of the ACR and EULAR recommendations for RA, but it's difficult to implement in routine practice. This LC builds on our previous successful TRACTION trial which improved adherence with TTT from 11% to >50% in 11 rheumatology practices. The faculty includes Josef Smolen, Ted Pincus, Jeff Katz, Nancy Shadick and Daniel Solomon. This initiative involves a virtual kick-off meeting in October as well as 6 one-hour monthly webinars that will be led by experienced faculty. Due to COVID-19, the LC has gone virtual and will be hosted via Zoom. Another aspect of the virtual LC is free use of a smartphone app designed for patients with RA. The app was developed and tested at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and we will be offering it free to use for the first five practices signing up and wanting to offer this to patients. The app is designed to facilitate virtual care and improve adherence with TTT. Through this virtual LC, you will be taught proven methods for improving your use of TTT and how to engage your staff to make TTT the standard of care for rheumatoid arthritis in your practice. For your participation, a small honorarium will be offered to each site. If you are interested in joining the virtual TRACTION Learning Collaborative, please contact Jackie Stratton ([jstratton1@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:jstratton1@bwh.harvard.edu)) for additional information.

## VERITY Publications

Lalani R, Lyu H, Vanni K, **Solomon DH**. Low-Dose Methotrexate and Mucocutaneous Adverse Events: Results of a Systematic Literature Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Arthritis Care Res (Hoboken)*. 2020;72(8):1140-1146.

Lee YC, **Lu B**, Guan H, Greenberg JD, Kremer J, **Solomon DH**. Physician Prescribing Patterns and Risk of Future Long-Term Opioid Use Among Patients With Rheumatoid Arthritis: A Prospective Observational Cohort Study. *Arthritis Rheumatol*. 2020;72(7):1082-1090.

Zhao SS, Lyu H, **Solomon DH**, Yoshida K. Improving rheumatoid arthritis comparative effectiveness research through causal inference principles: systematic review using a target trial emulation framework. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2020;79(7):883-890.

## VERITY 2020 Pilot & Feasibility Research Award

VERITY has awarded the 2020 Pilot & Feasibility Research Award to Vanessa Kronzer, MD. Dr. Kronzer is a clinical investigator fellow in rheumatology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Dr. Kronzer and her team will be extending her previous research on respiratory diseases and RA. They will be researching an association between certain respiratory diseases and rheumatoid arthritis and evaluate whether respiratory disease interact with genetic risk factors of RA. Dr. Kronzer plans on partnering with the VERITY Methodology Core to assist with the biostatistical programming and genetics associated with this project. VERITY congratulates Dr. Kronzer and her team and looks forward to assisting them in this research.

## VERITY Member Spotlight: Amy Cunningham-Bussel



Amy Cunningham-Bussel, MD, PhD is a senior fellow in the Division of Rheumatology, Inflammation, and Immunity at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH). She received her MD and PhD from Cornell University as part of the Tri Institutional MSTP Program of Weill Cornell Medical College, Rockefeller University and Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She completed Internal Medicine Residency at BWH. She participated in the 2020 Virtual VERITY Course in Rheumatology Clinical Research and is currently enrolled in the Program for Clinical Effectiveness at the Harvard T.H. Chan School for Public Health.

Dr. Cunningham-Bussel's research bridges the fields of Rheumatology and Oncology, supported by her mentor Dr. Jeffrey Sparks, Associate Director of the VERITY Administrative Core and BWH Rheumatology Director of Immuno-Oncology and Autoimmunity. Dr. Cunningham-Bussel is committed to a career investigating the rheumatologic complications of immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy, which will connect her laboratory training in immunology and her current work in clinical epidemiology. She is currently identifying and phenotyping rheumatic immune-related adverse events in a large cohort of immune checkpoint inhibitor-treated cancer patients within the Mass General Brigham Healthcare System and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Her research will also define new biomarkers to predict the onset of rheumatic complications of immune checkpoint inhibitors and investigate the relationship between rheumatic complications of immune checkpoint inhibitors and overall survival. In support her work in this emerging field, Dr. Cunningham-Bussel is supported by an NIH T32 Immunologic Mechanisms and Rheumatic Diseases Program in the BWH Division of Rheumatology, Inflammation, and Immunity.

In the future, Dr. Cunningham-Bussel seeks to define the foundations of immune tolerance that are disrupted by immune checkpoint inhibitors to inform clinical practice and improve the care of cancer patients with immunotherapy toxicity, as well as those with primary rheumatic diseases.

\*\*\*For each issue, the newsletter will feature a VERITY member. For more information, please contact Jackie Stratton ([jstratton1@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:jstratton1@bwh.harvard.edu)) or visit [verityresearch.org](http://verityresearch.org) to become a VERITY member.

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