

APLAR Special Interest Group (SIG)

Terms of Reference

A. Introduction

Rheumatology of APLAR region is now growing and the scientific meeting of APLAR has been held every year. However, each annual scientific meeting is independently organized by each organizing committee. Therefore, it is not easy to create our sustainable scientific interactions among rheumatologists from various APLAR countries in each field of rheumatology. Therefore, APLAR decided to establish Special Interest Groups in the following fields:

1. Crystal-Induced Arthritis
2. Epidemiology (to work in close collaboration with COPCORD group)
3. Genetics
4. Imaging
5. Osteoporosis
6. OsteoArthritis (OA)
7. Paediatric Rheumatology
8. Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
9. Scleroderma / Myositis
10. Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)
11. SpondyloArthritis (SpA)
12. Vasculitis

Other fields could be identified and established in future as the needs arise, in consultation with the Scientific Committee and final approval obtained from APLAR Board of Directors.

B. Missions

The purpose and objects of the SIGs shall be:

- i. Patient empowerment;
- ii. Education of physicians, including continued professional development (CPD) of rheumatologists in the APLAR region;
- iii. Formulation of APLAR management guideline of each disease;
- iv. Development of a registry in APLAR; and
- v. Development of research collaboration
- vi. SIG publications

C. Convenor & Co-convenor of SIGs

Currently, each SIG is led by a convenor, selected from senior rheumatologists in the field, nominated by the Scientific Committee and approved by APLAR Board of Directors. In future, members of each SIG could discuss and recommend convenor candidates, in consultation with the Scientific Committee, with approval from APLAR Board of Directors.

1. Appointment of Convenor and Co-Convenor

Convenor and Co-convenor shall be recommended by the Permanent Members of the SIG, in consultation with the Scientific Committee, with approval from the APLAR Board of Directors

2. Tenure of convenor

Each Convenor shall have a 4-year term. After completion of his/her term, if the SIG members, Scientific Committee and/or APLAR Board wish him/her to continue for the best interest of science of APLAR, he may continue as **Co-convenor** along with the new Convenor for the entire tenure of the new Convenor. This will also ensure the continuity of ongoing projects and knowledge retention of the SIG through the sharing of his/her experience and expertise.

3. Tenure of Co-Convenor

Each SIG may have up to 2 Co-convenors. One of the Co-convenors shall be the immediate past convenor, as illustrated above, while the other Co-convenor shall be a younger member of the SIG. They shall serve a 4-year term, over the same period as the Convenor.

After completion of their terms, the convenor and co-convenors shall continue to contribute as a Permanent Member of the SIG.

D. Membership of SIG

1. Eligibility for SIG Members

Members should be genuinely interested clinicians or researchers in the area of the SIG.

2. Category of Members

There can be 2 types of members:

- i) **Permanent members:** must have at least 1 publication as the principal author or 3 publications as a non-principal author, in the subspeciality of the SIG and interested to continue academic career or research in the area. For the purpose of this Terms of reference, the principal author shall be defined as either the first or corresponding author of his/her publication.
- ii) **Observer members:** These are members who do not meet the criteria of a permanent member

but are genuinely interested in the academic career or research in the field of the SIG, and willing to assist in SIG activities. They may be upgraded to permanent members if they fulfill the requirements in due course.

3. Selection of Members

At the start of each new 4-year term, the new Convenor and the MNOs will have the discretion to nominate new members or to retain the existing members. Members of the SIGs are to be selected by the following manner.

- i) **MNO nomination:** One (1) member nominated by each MNO as Permanent or Observer member once every 4 years. The new convenor may write to the MNO, requesting the MNO to nominate an existing SIG member. However, the MNO's nomination shall be final.
- ii) **Convenor's nomination:** One (1) member nominated by the SIG Convenor from each MNO once in 4 years.
- iii) **Nomination of Eminent persons:** Up to three (3) eminent persons, who have great scientific background and have contributed significant science in the field of the SIG may be nominated by convenor, in consultation with the Scientific Committee, with the approval from APLAR Board of Directors. Nominations under this category will be over and above the 2 types of nominations mentioned above.

4. Membership in Multiple SIGs

Member can only be a Permanent member of one (1) SIG, but he/she can be an Observer Member of more than one (1) SIGs. However, if a Convenor decided to nominate a Permanent member of another SIG, to be his/her Permanent member due to this member's wide publication or research involvement in the SIG's area of interest, the convenor may consult the Scientific Committee and seek approval from the APLAR Board of Directors.

5. Replacement of Inactive SIG Member

Members who are inactive or non-responsive, Convenors may write to them to confirm their interest in continuing their membership with the SIG. If members did not reply after a period of at least 14 days, the member shall be deemed as not interested and the Convenor may nominate a new member in discussion with the MNO.

E. SIG ACTIVITIES

In principle, the members of each SIG should discuss and determine their activities together with their convenors. However, every activity should be reviewed and approved by APLAR Board of Directors, because their activities are under the name of APLAR.

Annual SIG meetings are encouraged during annual APLAR scientific meetings. APLAR will offer a room for each SIG during these occasions. In addition, convenor shall organise regular SIG meetings among members between Congresses using virtual platform.

1) SIG Webinars and short courses

SIGs are encouraged to organise webinar and short courses regularly. Webinars are short lectures of about 90 to 100 minutes while short courses could be workshops run over several webinars. Such Webinar and Courses shall be under the purview of the Education Committee. All proposals are to be submitted to the Education committee for approval and be included in APLAR Calendar. For late submission, SIG may need to look for own support and platform to run the webinar.

2) SIG Symposium at APLAR Congress

SIGs shall work closely with the Scientific Committee to organise one (1) SIG Symposium at the Annual APLAR Congress. Presentations at the SIG Symposium should be on the research work done by the SIG or members of the SIG.

Other expected Activities of SIGs include:

1. Recommendation of members of APLAR Scientific Committee
2. Recommendation of speakers of APLAR Review Course of annual scientific meetings of APLAR.
3. Organization of symposia of annual scientific meetings of APLAR together with the local organization committee and APLAR Scientific Committee.
4. Conduction of international collaborative studies in the related field.
5. Planning and publishing of APLAR recommendation of rheumatic diseases.
6. Development of disease specific registry in APLAR
7. Should conduct SIG business meeting during congress
8. Should conduct periodic webinars/short courses/workshops
9. APLAR MNO based Collaborative research and publications
10. Any generation of funding must be routed through central APLAR account only.