the pretrial response measure. Whether this response is adequate in terms of long-term disease control is a separate issue this study was not designed to address. Clearly, current thinking is towards complete eradication of any and all signs and symptoms of disease; we agree this is a legitimate goal, which, however, can be achieved with varying means in different patients, not all of whom require ‘aggressive treatment’ [3].

We agree with Kaarela and Pincus et al. that long-term follow up of this and every cohort of patients with RA will provide the true test of adequacy of our current treatment approaches. We hope that a more differentiated approach will identify those patients requiring aggressive treatment, sparing patients with milder disease the unwanted consequences of more aggressive management.

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