

A-TAP: finding more uses for new drugs

Conditions like arthritis and inflammatory gut and skin disorders can often be treated with similar drugs. Steroids, for example, can treat lots of different things. When a new arthritis drug first becomes available, doctors can usually only prescribe it to treat arthritis, but it might actually be helpful for other conditions like inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

At the same time, conditions like arthritis can also have lots of different underlying causes. This means that a new treatment prescribed for arthritis might work for some people but not others.

Together, this means that a new drug might be helpful for people who aren't receiving it and might not help other people who are receiving it.

The Arthritis Therapy Acceleration Programme (A-TAP) aims to match new and existing drugs to the people who will benefit from them based on the underlying cause of their condition rather than their symptoms. A-TAP does this by looking at a map of how drugs work on different cell types in the body, such as gut and skin cells. This will let us see whether there are features of inflammation that are shared between diseases and that might be treated in a common way.

So far we have done four clinical studies, using A-TAP, to look at how existing drugs could be better matched or repurposed to different inflammatory conditions. We hope that this will enable people to get earlier access to treatments that will work for them, while avoiding treatments that would never have worked for them.

