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Response to the letter to the editor by Shadmani et al – EJCI-2017-0437

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Dear Editor-in-Chief,

We read with great interest the letter by Shadmani et al. regarding our recently published article investigating the correlation between complement C3 and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) in rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients [1].

The authors raised some technical issues about the statistical methodology of our work. We truly appreciated the precious and highly qualified contribution - given the leading expertise of the authors in the field of biostatistics and epidemiology - and largely agree with them that the cross-sectional design of our study may significantly limit the ability of our results to support definitive conclusions regarding the direction of the relationship between C3 and NAFLD.

However, we feel the need to clarify that the main aim of our manuscript was not that of confirming a direct, unimpeachable, unidirectional causal correlation between complement C3 and the future development of NAFLD, but rather to provide a hypothesis-generating basis for

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further, adequately-powered longitudinal studies aiming at investigating in details the processes linking complement system to metabolic disturbances in RA patients, as already suggested by other studies published by our group [2-4].

References

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