Dr. Matteson and Ms Crowson reply

To the Editor:

We thank Drs. Grzybowski and Sak for their interest in our article¹. They address an introductory background remark about the erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR)².

Our article was not an historical treatise on the ESR, but rather an examination of the utility of acute-phase reactants among patients with rheumatoid arthritis in the clinical trial setting. Therefore, as we made clear, we were concerned only with the ESR as proposed by Westergren, because this was the technique we used in our study. As far as we are aware, Westergren introduced it over 80 years ago, as we stated^{1,3,4,5}. Parenthetically, based on work done at the end of the 1920s, the C-reactive protein was described by Tillett and Francis in 1930⁶.

Although not the subject of our article, with respect to recognition of attribution, we certainly agree with the comment by Kucharz⁷, repeated by Grzybowski and Sak, that the fact that Biernacki published in Polish and in German was likely a reason that his work has failed to be recognized by many. The comment that we read only the English-language literature is misplaced, presumptuous, and inaccurate. That aside, Kucharz writes that the original contributions of Biernacki in describing a method for erythrocyte sedimentation determination were published in 1894 (rather than 1897, as stated by Grzybowski and Sak)^{7,8,9,10,11}.

ERIC L. MATTESON, MD, MPH; CYNTHIA S. CROWSON, MS, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, 200 First Street SW, Rochester, Minnesota 55905, USA. Address correspondence to Dr. Matteson; E-mail: matteson.eric@mayo.edu

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