

untreated with SLIT [9]. Moreover, we very recently published that there was an inverse significant relationship between serum TGF- β levels and nasal eosinophils in patients with seasonal AR evaluated during the pollen season [10]. In addition, we observed a strong inverse relationship ($r=-0.64$) between serum TGF- β levels and nasal obstruction perception assessed by VAS in those patients (unpublished data; Fig. 1). This last finding further confirms the close association between increased TGF- β production and nasal obstruction, symptom, which is a consequence of allergic inflammation. Unfortunately, the authors did not discuss this dichotomic function exerted by TGF- β and the possible interaction with remodelling phenomena. In fact, the fibrogenic role exerted by TGF- β is consistent with remodelling, nevertheless TGF- β may also have pro-

TECTIVE activities as just evidenced. Therefore, this issue deserves adequate consideration.

- (4) Finally, the authors did not evaluate inflammatory cells in their study. We are surprised by this fact as they had nasal biopsies. A possible relationship between inflammation severity (e.g. assessed by eosinophil count) and remodelling could be interesting as well as the evaluation of activation state of inflammatory cells.

In conclusion, numerous studies have analysed the existence of remodelling at nasal level. However, only this study unquestionably demonstrated for the first time that remodelling occurs in the nasal mucosa of patients with persistent AR. We hope that further studies may resolve the still unanswered questions.

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Response by S. H. Lee, on behalf of the authors

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We thank Dr Ciprandi for his pertinent comments on our paper and agree with the points he has made. We do need to know whether the features of remodelling are related to functional changes and duration of disease. It is also important to dissect out the mechanisms involved in

causing the pathological changes. We will certainly try and address some of the questions raised by Dr Ciprandi and we hope that our work will also stimulate other groups to explore this area in more detail.