

Interstitial pulmonary involvement in rheumatoid arthritis. Analysis by
bronchoalveolar lavage Compromiso pulmonar intersticial en artritis reumatoide.
Análisis por lavado bronco-alveolar.

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We analyzed the results of bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) in 14 patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Ten patients had total cell counts above $10 \times 10^6/100$ ml and or more than 10% lymphocytes in differential counts. 40% of patients with normal clinical findings on pulmonary examination and normal A-a O₂ gradients had abnormal BAL findings. These findings support the theory that pulmonary fibrosis in patients with RA may start with alveolitis, probably a lymphocytic type in 60% of cases. BAL may help early diagnosis and treatment monitoring.