

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Dr. Joachim Sieper, my “doctor father”, for his firmly support, timely help, energetically encouragement, invaluable comments and discussion.

I thank Dr. Jürgen Braun, Dr. Martin Rudwaleit and Dr. Andres Thiel for patient samples and helpful discussion during the study.

I would like to thank Wolfgang Kuon, Peihua Wu, Matina Grolms, Department of Medicine, Division of Gastroenterology, Infectiology and Rheumatology, Klinikum Benjamin Franklin, Free University, Berlin, for their excellent technical help and discussion.

I greatly appreciate the love and support from my wife, Xueli Li, and my son, Yifei Zou.

I really appreciated fruitful teamwork of the working group Joachim Sieper.