Appendix S1

All procedures regarding the appropriate serum storage and the use of the ELISA kits were followed according to the manufacturers' manuals. Quantitative analysis of YKL-40 and sIL-2R concentrations was carried out by means of the Epoch spectrophotometer (BioTek Instruments, Winooski, USA). Serum CRP levels were determined by using the turbidimetric assay on ARCHITECT® ci4100™ analyser (Abbott Diagnostics, Lake Forest, USA). WBC counts were measured using fluorescent flow cytometry Sysmex XN-2000™ analyzer (Sysmex, Kobe, Japan).

Data were excluded when >4 SD above the mean, exclusions were noted. Differences between groups were determined by means of the Mann-Whitney *U*-test and Kruskal-Wallis test or Student's *t*-test with reference to the distribution of evaluated variables. Multivariate analysis of variance was applied for 2 or more dependent variables. Correlations were determined by Spearman correlation analysis. Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves were used to establish the cut-off value of patients-controls differentiation. Cut-off points were set as the highest positive (PPV) and negative predictive values (NPV). A p-value <0.05 was considered statistically significant. Statistical analyses were performed using Statistica 10 software (StatSoft, Tulsa, USA).