

Original Paper

Tuberculosis specificity characteristics among febrile patients with systemic lupus erythematosus on steroid therapy

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Abstract

Background and Objective: The incidence of infections is one of the most disturbing problems in the management of patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). The aim of this study was to describe the role of tuberculosis (TB) as a cause of fever in SLE patients.

Materials and Methods: In this descriptive study 103 SLE patients enrolled in Ahvaz, South-West of Iran during 2000 - 06. Patients were diagnosed according to American College of Rheumatology criteria (at least 4 of 11 criteria). Diagnosis of tuberculosis was based on Iranian National Program against TB criteria. The infection free patients were given corticosteroid therapy.

Results: In this study 20 patients did not follow the complete cycle and finally 83 patients were established as sample population of this study. Mean age of patients was 22.2±10 years, female to male ratio was 9.2:1, mean duration of treatment was 12±3.2 months and mean of daily dose of prednisolone was 28.2±13 mg. From total of patients, 8 (9.6%) had active tuberculosis. five patients had pulmonary and three with other type of TB, respectively. One of the above eight patients eventually died due to SLE/TB.

Conclusion: Tuberculosis is one of the important causes of fever among patients with SLE under treatment of corticosteroid. In approaching febrile SLE patient TB should always be considered as a treat.

Keywords: Systemic lupus erythematosus , Tuberculosis, Corticosteroid therapy, Iran

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