Abstract P56:126 AUTOIMMUNE CYTOPENIA IN SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS: EXPERIENCE OF AN INTERNAL MEDIC

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Objective Our objective was to review the rate of autoimmune cytopenia observed in lupus patients either at the inaugural diagnosis of lupus or during an already known lupus disease; try to correlate it with the precipitating factors and evaluate their outcome.

Design and Method This is a retrospective study of 9 years in an adult unit of internal medicine including 108 lupus adult patients. Anti-nuclear antibodies (ANA) were present in all patients, with antibodies to double stranded DNA (anti dsDNA): anti nucleosome antibodies.

It concerns 94 women and 14 men. 35 cases diagnosed after the age of 50.

Results The autoimmune cytopenia was observed in 21 patients (16 women and 5 men).

The revelation modes varied between: exclusive neutropenia (6 cases), exclusive thrombocytopenia (6 patients) and pancytopenia (9 patients).

The association with antiphospholipid antibodies was noted in 6 patients, 2 cases had in addition insignificant titre of cold agglutinin, 1 case with a Sjögren syndrom, 2 cases associated with rheumatoid arthritis, 1 case with sclerosing cholangitis, 1 patient with cryofibrinogenemia and 2 cases with multiple autoimmunity disease. Only 1 woman had vitamin B12 deficiency.

The entry into the disease was revealed by a thrombotic microangiopathy (TMA) in one case and another woman by HELLP syndrome. A bone marrow aspirate was performed in a number of patients and eliminated a central cause.

Treatment with HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE and corticosteroids was given to all patients.

Immunosuppressive therapy, intravenous Immunoglobulin, thrombopoietin agonists and anti-CD20 were used in some cases. Cyclic antibiotics and Granocyte-colony stimulating factor were given to a patient with profound neutropenia and repeated severe infections. Plasma exchanges were performed in the TMA patient. The outcome was generally favourable for most patients and did not present a risk for survival. The death occurred in 2 patients due to other causes (mesenteric ischemia in one and bladder cancer in another).

Conclusions The autoimmune cytopenia in lupus is a source of diagnostic wandering, especially when it inaugurates the clinical presentation. The best knowledge of the mechanisms makes it possible to adapt the appropriate treatment. These cytopenias in our series did not constitute a pejorative element and were always of good prognosis due to the early management.

Abstract P56:127 GENDER INFLUENCE IN SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS

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Introduction Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is more frequent in men than women with sex ratio F/M=8/1, but whether it’s more severe or not, is not clear.

Objectives We aimed to study clinical, biological and immunological features of SLE in men.

Methods It’s a retrospective study conducted in an internal medicine department. Patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (ACR revised criteria) were included. Data were recorded...
and compared using SPSS. Variables with a p inferior or equal to 0.05 were considered to be statistically significant.

**Results** A total of consecutive 89 SLE patients were included: 80 female (89.9%) and 9 male (10.1%) (sex ratio F/M was 8.9). Mean ages at SLE diagnosis were comparable for men and women respectively 36.9±15.8 and 35±12.8 years. History of familiar SLE was more frequent in males than females (22.2% vs 3.8%; p=0.078 (Fisher test)). Photosensitivity, cutaneous and renal involvement were significantly more frequent in females (70% vs 33.3%; p=0.027% and 26.3% vs 15.6%; p=0.078 respectively). Whereas hemolytic auto immune anemia and respiratory complications were more frequent in males (22.2% vs 1.3%; p=0.027% and 55.6% vs 25%; p=0.066 respectively). There were no differences in articular, cardiac or neurological manifestations. Biological and immunological findings were similar too.

**Conclusion** It seems that males are more prone to develop SLE when they have familiar history of this disease. They develop more frequently pulmonary manifestations and hemolytic autoimmune anemia. These results should be confirmed by other prospective studies.

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**PS6:128 INFLUENCE OF ASSOCIATED AUTO IMMUNE DISEASES IN SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS**

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**Introduction** Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) is a systemic connective disease which can have threatening complications. It can be associated to various other auto immune diseases. Our objective is to know whether the prognosis of SLE is more severe in isolated or in associated SLE.

**Patients and methods** It’s a retrospective study conducted in an internal medicine department. Patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (ACR revised criteria) were included. We compared 2 groups: patients with isolated SLE (ISLE) and patients with associated SLE to another autoimmune disease (ASLE). Variables with a p inferior or equal to 0.05 were considered to be statistically significant.

**Results** A total of 89 SLE patients were included: 80 females (89.9%) and 9 males (10.1%) (sex ratio F/M was 8.9). Mean age was 35.3 years (14 to 72 years). SLE was isolated in 50 patients (56.1%) and associated to another autoimmune disease (ASLE). Variables with a p inferior or equal to 0.05 were considered to be statistically significant.

**Conclusion** A total of 89 SLE patients were included: 80 females (89.9%) and 9 males (10.1%) (sex ratio F/M was 8.9). Mean age was 35.3 years (14 to 72 years). SLE was isolated in 50 patients (56.1%) and associated to another autoimmune disease in 39 cases (43.9%) as following: sjogren syndrome in 13 patients (14.6%), rheumatoid arthritis in 6 patients (6.7%), Hashimoto in 5 patients (5.6%), Bapsedow in 2 cases (2.2%) and SLE was associated to more than an autoimmune disease in 13 cases (11.6%). Comparative study between ISLE and ASLE showed no significant difference between age onset or sex ratio. Comparing clinical manifestations, patients with ISLE seem to have more cutaneous manifestations and more photosensitivity but without significant difference (p=0.076, p=0.082 respectively). Immunological findings showed that anti SSA and anti SSB antibodies were significantly associated to ISLE (p=0.007 and p=0.013 respectively). We found no difference in biological findings or SLEDAI score.

**Conclusion** ASLE seems to develop less specific cutaneous manifestations and to show more frequently positive anti SSA and anti SSB antibodies. When associated to other autoimmune diseases SLE doesn’t seem to be more severe.

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**PS7:129 SYNERGIC B-CELL IMMUNOMODULATION WITH RITUXIMAB AND BELIMUMAB COMBINATION TREATMENT IN SEVERE, REFRACTORY SLE**

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**Background** Neutrophil extracellular traps (NETs) are autoantigenic DNA strands and potentially give rise to SLE-specific autoantibodies that can deposit in glomeruli. It has been shown that autoantibodies can induce NETs, contributing to the vicious circle of immune activation in SLE. We hypothesised that eliminating autoantibodies can lead to decreased NET induction and thereby ameliorating disease in SLE. Therefore, we designed a proof-of-concept study to eliminate autoantibodies and NET formation through synergetic B-cell immunomodulation with rituximab and belimumab (RTX +BLM) in severe refractory SLE.

**Methods** We treated patients with severe, refractory SLE in a phase 2 study with RTX+B. The primary endpoint assessed reduction of pathogenic autoantibodies and NET induction at 24 weeks. Anti-dsDNA autoantibodies were measured and high sensitivity FACS was performed to assess B-cell subsets. NET induction was measured with 3D confocal immunofluorescence microscopy.

**Results** We included 16 patients with severe, refractory SLE of whom 13 had a renal flare. At 24 weeks we observed significant reductions in anti-dsDNA autoantibodies (p=0.0004). CD19 +B cells were depleted throughout the study (p=0.0002) while plasma cells (PCs) temporarily decreased but returned at week 24 despite persistent depletion of transitional B-cells. Taken together with the observed reductions of autoantibodies and stable total IgG and protective antibodies, there is no reconstitution of autoreactive PCs. Further, we observed excessive NET induction in all patients at baseline which was reduced after 24 weeks (p=0.0006). In vitro studies elucidated this reduction in NET induction complexes by RTX +BLM. Importantly, the beneficial immunological effects translated to amelioration of clinical disease activity: SLEDAI decreased from a median of 18 to 2 (p<0.0001). Eleven out of 13 LN patients showed a response (5 complete renal remissions at 24 weeks). The SynBiose study is the first to demonstrate that RTX+B ameliorated disease in patients with severe SLE in association with the reduction of pathogenic autoantibodies and immune complex-mediated NET induction. Therefore, RTX+B represents a novel treatment concept in SLE.