Prospective MRI score to predict negative EULAR response in patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) before therapy-escalation to a biological therapy

Dear Editor

We read with great interest the article by Baker et al who showed that early MRI measures independently predict erosive progression on X-ray and MRI after 1 and 2 years in therapy-naive patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) from the randomised-controlled GO-BEFORE trial. Due to these findings, we re-evaluated MRI data from the German REMISSION-PLUS Cohort at our centre to verify if a MRI score may predict negative response in patients with RA before therapy-escalation to a biological therapy. MRI was performed in 257 patients before therapy-escalation (T0) and after 12 months (T1) and analysed by using the Outcome Measures in Rheumatology (OMERACT) rheumatoid arthritis MRI score (RAMRIS). In addition, clinical and laboratory parameters (Disease Activity Score 28 (DAS-28) and C-reactive protein (CRP)) were collected for each visit. Logistic regression combining clinical and MRI parameters was performed resulting in a combination of the patients' age and the RAMRIS-T0 performing best for prediction of non-response. Bootstrapping with 5000 resamples was performed to estimate the accuracy of the model.

Of the patients included, 29 were escalated to a biological therapy (20 women, median age 57 years (IQR 46–65), 95% anti-tumour necrosis factor (TNF)-alpha therapy). Poor responders (n=5) and responders (n=24) had a mean RAMRIS-T0 score of 14.4 and 52.0, respectively (Wilcoxon test p<0.01). High RAMRIS score showed a trend towards a protective effect against non-response (OR 0.90 per RAMRIS point, 95% CI 0.79 to 1.03, p=0.12). The strength of the association was stable after adjusting for age, CRP, anti citrullinated peptide antibodies (ACPA)/rheumatoid factor and DAS-28 at baseline. The median area under the curve in the bootstrap analysis was 88.9% with 95% CI 84.0% to 92.8%.

Thus, while Baker et al clearly demonstrated that a high inflammatory activity on MRI (ie, RAMRIS) is associated with an unfavourable prognosis (ie, radiographic progression), our observations suggest that this may be overcome by administration of a highly effective therapy, for example, a biologic agent. Indeed, patients with a prognostic unfavourable high RAMRIS were even more likely to respond, making them ideal candidates for these costly drugs.

In summary, both studies emphasise the value of an MRI before therapy initiation or escalation. Hence, further studies are needed to improve our data in established patients with RA before escalating the therapy to biological disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug (bDMARD).

Philipp Sewerin, Stefan Vordenbaeumen, Ralph Brinks, Benedikt Ostendorf
Department of Polyclinic of Rheumatology and Hiller Research Unit Rheumatology University Hospital (UKD), Duesseldorf, Germany
Correspondence to Dr Philipp Sewerin, Department and Hiller Research Unit for Rheumatology, University Hospital Duesseldorf (UKD), Moorstreet 5, 40225 Duesseldorf, Germany; philipp.sewerin@med.uni-duesseldorf.de
Competing interests None declared.
Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

REFERENCES

Received 3 February 2017
Accepted 4 February 2017
Published Online First 10 March 2017

http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/annrheumdis-2017-211265


Indeed, patients with a prognostic unfavourable high RAMRIS were even more likely to respond, making them ideal candidates for these costly drugs.
Prospective MRI score to predict negative EULAR response in patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) before therapy-escalation to a biological therapy
Philipp Sewerin, Stefan Vordenbaeumen, Ralph Brinks and Benedikt Ostendorf

Ann Rheum Dis 2017 76: e44 originally published online March 10, 2017

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://ard.bmj.com/content/76/11/e44

These include:
References
This article cites 3 articles, 1 of which you can access for free at:
http://ard.bmj.com/content/76/11/e44#BIBL

Email alerting service
Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

Notes

To request permissions go to:
http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to:
http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to:
http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/