RITUXIMAB IN SYSTEMIC SCLEROSIS: SAFETY AND EFFICACY DATA FROM THE EUSTAR NETWORK


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Background: Few small-sized observational studies have suggested that rituximab might be a promising treatment in systemic sclerosis (SSc)

Objectives: To evaluate the outcomes of SSc-patients receiving in routine care rituximab

Methods: Retrospective longitudinal multicenter observational study which included SSc-patients treated with rituximab upon the decision of their physician within the framework of EUSTAR. We interrogated the participating centres and EUSTAR database to determine epidemiological and clinical characteristics, the indication for initiating the treatment, and the following parameters at baseline and at the last visit under treatment: modified Rodnan Skin Score (mRSS), joint, lung and gastrointestinal involvements, treatment, laboratory tests and safety events.

Results: 248 patients were included: 70 (28%) men, mean age: 51±13 years, mean disease duration: 7±7 years; 150 (65%) had diffuse cutaneous SSC, 54% were positive for anti-topoisomerase and 71% had lung fibrosis. Overlap disease was noticed in 62 (25%) patients (49%) including Sjögren’s syndrome, lupus. Indications for the treatment was lung involvement (56%) followed by articular (42%) and skin involvements (30%). At baseline, 175 patients were treated with steroids and 132 with DMARDs. Mean follow-up was 2.4 (±1.9) years.

Conclusions: In this study, joint and lung involvement appeared to improve under rituximab. Infections and other severe adverse events were frequently reported. A comparative study including control patients from EUSTAR centres is ongoing.

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