In patients with axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA) an early diagnosis is becoming progressively more relevant. Nowadays, several therapies have shown to be efficacious to control disease symptoms and signs and they are even more useful if administered in early stages of the disease. However, the aim of an early diagnosis is not easy to achieve. Similar to the majority of rheumatic diseases, axSpA is heterogeneous in its presentation, course, and outcome, and does not have a single clinical, laboratory, pathological, or radiological feature to serve as a gold standard in support of diagnosis. With the new therapies available, many research studies are focusing on how to make an early diagnosis of axSpA. Additionally, some confusion remains about differences between classification and diagnosis of axSpA. In clinical practice, in the absence of diagnostic criteria, the classification criteria are often used to assist in the diagnostic process of a disease. Based on this, there is an ongoing debate about whether or not the current classification criteria should be revised. During this session, the new insights on diagnosis and classification in axSpA will be highlighted.

Disclosure of Interest: None declared


We present the case of a male patient, who developed in 2002 (at the age of 37) rheumatoid arthritis, at that time positive for RF and ACPA without erosions on X-rays. He was first treated with salazopyrine, stopped in 2003 because of residual disease activity and structural damage progression on X-rays (MTP 5 erosion, JSN on both carpal joints), then methotrexate, which was efficient but was finally stopped in 2004 for suspicion of MTX pulmonary toxicity (cough, short breath, with CT-scan abnormality). Leflunomide 20 mg/day was started with adequate response up to 2009, when loss of efficacy was recorded. Addition of adalimumab 40 mg every other week was decided, leading to sustained remission.

In 2011, he was on remission with this combination of treatments, and he stopped adalimumab abruptly on his own, resulting in a flare after 4 months (7 tender joints and 5 swollen joints). Adalimumab every other week was restarted, and remission was obtained a few weeks later. In 2013, he remained on sustained remission, which led to his inclusion in a trial testing the progressive spacing of adalimumab. Every 6 months, the disease activity was assessed in consultation, and hands and feet X-rays were repeated every year: the patient remained on sustained remission according to DAS28, and there was no additional structural damage. Finally, in May 2017, DAS28 was at 1.71 with leflunomide 20 mg/day and adalimumab 40 mg every 2 months, so we proposed to stop adalimumab. When last seen, in November 2017, the patient was still on remission with leflunomide monotherapy.

Disclosure of Interest: None declared


Remission is more and more achievable in the course of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) or spondyloarthritis (SpA). Tapering strategies have been proposed to reduce the risk of overtreatment of patients with inactive disease. They have been tested in several observational or randomised controlled trials. On this basis, EULAR guidelines recommend to consider careful DMARD tapering in people with sustained remission. The lecture will develop the potential benefits and risks of a tapering strategy for people affected by RA or SpA, in remission thanks to biologic agents. It will also highlight the residual unmet needs for the care of RA or SpA patients in remission.

Disclosure of Interest: None declared


Can we improve the care of gout?

Hyperuricaemia is a diagnostic hallmark of gout and elevated serum urate (SU) levels are used to define gout. However, urate deposition in joints and soft tissues is not necessary for the diagnosis of gout, and SU values do not always predict urate deposition. The presence of gouty tophus is a strong marker of SU metabolism defects and permanent excess of urate deposition. The current clinical classification criteria for gout do not consider SU levels, only the presence of tophus is relevant. However, recent studies suggest that SU levels might be informative in gout diagnosis.

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