ROLE OF NURSE-LED TELEPHONE FOLLOW UP TO ENHANCE AND SUBSEQUENTLY MAINTAIN HIGH LEVEL OF ADHERENCE TO OSTEOPOROSIS PROPHYLAXIS MEDICATIONS: A PROSPECTIVE COHORT STUDY OF PATIENTS WITH POLYMYALGIA RHEUMATICA AND GIANT CELL ARTERITIS

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Background: Poor adherence to the osteoporosis prophylaxis medications has been reported before, which may result in treatment failure. However findings of previous studies are controversial. 1,2

Objectives: To investigate the role of nurse-led telephone follow-up to increase the level of adherence to osteoporosis prophylaxis medications in patients with newly diagnosed Polymyalgia Rheumatica/Giant Cell Arteritis (PMR/GCA).

Methods: This is an ongoing 1-year prospective cohort study. 37 consecutive steroid treated patients with newly diagnosed PMR/GCA were included. Patients were seen by the physicians at baseline, 1st and 4th month, where they were interviewed about their compliance towards osteoporosis prophylaxis medications, i.e. Calcium/Vitamin D supplements and Bisphosphonates (if Tscore <-1), using a standardized questionnaire. Patients were therefore categorized as 100%, 50-100%, <50% adherent or non-adherent to the prescribed drugs. Every individual patient were contacted by our nurses one week after treatment initiation, and subsequently one month after physician visit to evaluate the effect of treatment, compliance to the medications and possible drugs side effects.

Results: 85.3% and 75.8% of the patients were completely adherent to their osteoporosis medications at 1st and 4th months of treatment initiation, respectively. (figure 1) The difference between level of adherence to the osteoporosis medications at 1st (-week 4) and 4th month (-week 16) was not statistically significant. (P value:0.369). Decreased adherence in the patients was mainly due to forgetfulness.

Conclusion: Compared to the earlier findings we found a higher level of adherence in this group of patients. Nurse-led telephone follow up as well as educating the patients respecting the importance of the osteoporosis medications for preventing steroid related side effects, may enhance and subsequently maintain high level of adherence to the osteoporosis medications. Our findings are in line with our earlier study indicating a high level of adherence to the osteoporosis medications in PMR/GCA patients. 2

REFERENCES

Disclosure of Interests: None declared