SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION OF A PREDEFINED SET OF ANATOMIC SITES IN THE PELVIS OF PATIENTS WITH POLYMYALGIA RHEUMATICA SHOWING EXTRACAPSULAR INFLAMMATION AS VISUALIZED BY CONTRAST ENHANCED MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING:

Martin Fruth1, J Kozik1, P Martin-Seidel1, Annika Seggewiss2, Xenofon Baraliakos3, Juergen Braun3, Radiology, Herne, Germany; 1Rheumazentrum Ruhrgebiet, Herne, Germany; 2Ruhr-University, Bochum, Germany

Background: The diagnosis of polymyalgia rheumatica (PMR) is based on a thorough clinical evaluation of the patient - including exclusion of other diseases, since there is no decisive diagnostic test. A characteristic pattern of extracapsular inflammation in the pelvis of patients with PMR as assessed by contrast enhanced magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) has been recently described (1)

Objectives: To evaluate the performance of a predefined set of anatomic sites in the pelvis of patients with PMR vs. controls.

Methods: A total of 120 pelvic MRI scans of patients who had presented to our tertiary center with pelvic girdle pain in the last 3 years, including 40 patients with an expert rheumatologist diagnosis of PMR and 80 controls with other reasons of pelvic pain was evaluated by 3 radiologists blinded to clinical diagnosis and patient demographics. The experts scored the presence or absence of contrast enhancement at 19 predefined tendinous and capsular pelvic structures. Different patterns of involvement were compared and statistically evaluated by ROC analysis. Kappa statistics were applied to calculate inter- and intrareader agreement.

Results: Mostly bilateral peritendinitis and capsulitis including uncommon sites such as the proximal origins of the muscles rectus femoris and adductor longus were found almost exclusively and, thus, typically in PMR patients: the difference in the mean number of sites showing contrast enhancement was significantly different with 13.4±2.7 for PMR vs 4.0±2.3 for controls. A cut-off of ≥10 inflamed sites discriminated very well between the groups resulting in a sensitivity and specificity of 95.8% and 97.1%, respectively. Just concentrating on the most frequently involved anatomic sites bilateral inflammation of proximal M. rectus femoris or adductor longus tendons together with at least 3 other bilaterally inflamed sites performed even better with a specificity and sensitivity of 100% and 97.5%, respectively.

Conclusion: This study strongly confirms that the previously described pattern of extracapsular pelvic inflammation as assessed by contrast enhanced MRI is very typical for patients with PMR. In addition, the high sensitivity and specificity of the set of anatomic sites evaluated suggest their definite potential for use as a confirmatory diagnostic test.

REFERENCE:

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REUMANET – EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES – VIRTUAL CONFERENCE REUMANET

Mitchell Silva, Nele Caeyers. ReumaNet, zaventem, Belgium

Background: Every two years, ReumaNet organises a physical conference for patients addressing various topics of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMD). Traditionally, about 200 individuals attend this event. For the last edition however, ReumaNet swapped the physical event with a virtual one. This allowed us to reach far more people, who could attend the ‘conference’ online whenever they wanted, over a period of four weeks.

Objectives: The objective was to assess the impact, reach and patient experiences of such a virtual event.

Methods: In this virtual event, more than twenty presentations were pre-recorded and put into an online system. Virtual booths were offered to partner organisations to offer educational material in pdf’s or in video format. The board of ReumaNet set up an interesting program, covering the following aspects:

- Medical evolution in RMD’s: explanation about new treatments in various indications, information on new medication
- Living with an RMD: information about the psychological, vocational, social and physical aspects of having an RMD
- The future of healthcare: information on the changing technology in healthcare and sustainability of the healthcare system
- Testimonials: video testimonials of patient advocates

All information was pre-recorded and integrated into an online portal. The lectures showed both speaker and the slide set, moving along with the presentation. Registration was free and anonymous. Only email was required in order to validate the registration. Visitors also had the option to answer surveys on various topics and score every video presentation. All material could be downloaded (PowerPoint presentations, brochures, videos).

This virtual symposium was accessible from mid-September till mid-October, covering four weeks around World Arthritis Day. People could come and go, and log in at any other point in time from different devices, so it was not necessary to view all at once.

Results: The results were very promising, having over 1.300 registrations (compared to 200 registrations at a physical event). The social media reach was over 140.000 and the event also increased the visibility of the Facebook page of ReumaNet. On the platform itself there were over 5000 video views and over 3000 visits of the virtual booths of partner organisations. General satisfaction rates were high: 96% of the visitors indicated they were most likely to visit a similar event in the future. Over 80% gave the event a 4+ star rating out of 5.

Conclusion: This event was considered to be very successful. The results showed that this virtual event exceeded our expectations and had an impact on the visibility of our organisation via social media. This type of event has been expanded towards sister organisations in rheumatology, such as the Belgian organisation for healthcare professionals and can serve as an innovative way for other European patient organisations to attract new profiles and increase awareness of RMDs among the broad public.