Conclusion: In our cohort of SLE patients, baseline serum level of APRIL together with percentage of CD3+CD8+ effector memory cells, or BAFF serum level alone resulted as best predictors of response to Belimumab. Considering that immunophenotyping is often not done in clinical practice, BAFF baseline serum levels alone could be used routinely as a good predictor of response to therapy, as suggested by post-hoc analyses of the BLISS study and showed by a recent "real-life" observational study [3].

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Disclosure of Interests: Francesca Regola: None declared, Silvia Piantoni: None declared, Laura Andreoli: None declared, Torsten Lowin: None declared, Rajesh Kumar : None declared, Paolo Airò: None declared, Franco Franceschini: None declared, Angela Tincani Consultant for: UCB, Pfizer, Abbvie, BMS, Sanofi, Roche, GSK, AlphaSigma, Lilly, Janssen, Cellgene, Novartis, Georg Pongratz : None declared

DOI: 10.1136/annrheumdis-2019-eular.4369

FRI0208

IDENTIFYING LUPUS PATIENT SUBSETS AND SPECIFIC PHARMACODYNAMIC CHANGES THROUGH IMMUNE CELL DECONVOLUTION OF GENE EXPRESSION DATA IN ATACICEPT-TREATED PATIENTS IN THE APRIL-SLE STUDY

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Background: The Phase 2/3 APRIL-SLE study evaluated the safety and efficacy of atacicept, a dual inhibitor of the B lymphocyte stimulator (BLyS) and a proliferation-inducing ligand (APRIL), in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

Objectives: The goal of this post-hoc analysis was to use cell-based gene signatures on gene expression data from the APRIL-SLE study to identify clusters of patients with potential to flare and to assess clusters for differences in treatment effects of atacicept vs placebo.

Methods: A published immune cell deconvolution algorithm (Abbas *et al*, 2009) was applied to whole-blood gene expression data from APRIL-SLE patients to identify relative proportions of 17 immune cell types. Patients were then grouped into clusters based on these immune cell profiles using a k-medoid clustering algorithm and were compared to each other based on patient characteristics, biomarkers and clinical efficacy. In addition, baseline expression and change in expression of putative APRIL-responder genes were compared among clusters. APRIL-responder genes were identified by combining differential expression results from the APRIL-SLE study (Week 52 vs Day 1 randomization) and tabalumab (targets BLyS only) Phase 3 studies (Week 52 vs baseline; GSE88887).

Results: Patient gene expression data (N=105; placebo, n=30; atacicept 75 mg, n=40; atacicept 150 mg, n=35) were used to group patients into five main clusters (P1-P5) by predominant characteristic cells: P1, T helper cells; P2, plasma cells; P3, neutrophils and B cells; P4, B cells; P5, activated dendritic cells. Patients in P2 and P5 were more likely to have positive anti-dsDNA antibodies (≥ 30 IU/ml), elevated BLyS; ≥ 1.6 ng/ml, and high interferon gene signature in the blood than other those in other clusters. Patients in P2 were most likely to have low complement C3 and C4 levels. Placebo-group flare rates in P2 (100%), P4 (100%) and P5 (83%) were markedly higher than in P1 (33%) and P3 (29%). In P2, P4, and P5 the median time-to-flare was much lower with placebo (85, 98.5, and 115.5 days, respectively) than with atacicept 150 mg (over 364 days for all three clusters). A comparison of differentially-expressed genes from clinical studies of SLE patients treated with

atacicept and tabalumab revealed possible APRIL-responder genes: SDC1, PARM1 and MZB1. These genes had a higher baseline expression in P2 and P4 compared with other clusters. SDC1 was reduced from baseline more in P2, P4, and P5 after atacicept treatment, while PARM1 and MZB1 decreased after atacicept treatment in P2 and P4.

Conclusion: These post-hoc analyses revealed different subsets of SLE patients based on their molecular profiles. Atacicept may have different treatment effects in the identified patient subsets vs placebo, providing insights into potential mechanisms of flare in SLE.

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Disclosure of Interests: Eileen Samy Employee of: Current employees of EMD Serono, Matthew Studham Employee of: Current employees of EMD Serono, Amy Kao Employee of: Current employees of EMD Serono, Philipp Haselmayer Employee of: Current employee of Merck KGaA, Peter Chang Employee of: Current employees of EMD Serono, P. Alexander Rolfe Employee of: Current employees of EMD Serono, David Wofsy Consultant for: GlaxoSmithKline – Member, data safety monitoring board Novartis – Member, data safety monitoring board Celgene – member, scientific advisory board, Julie DeMartino Shareholder of: Shares in Merck & Co, Employee of: Current employees of EMD Serono; Past employee of Merck & Co. & Roche, Robert Townsend Employee of: Current employees of EMD Serono

DOI: 10.1136/annrheumdis-2019-eular.702

FRI0209

LOW-DOSE GLUCOCORTICOID COULD AFFECT ADVERSE PREGNANCY OUTCOMES, ESPECIALLY IN PRETERM BIRTH, LIGHT-FOR-DATE NEWBORNS, PRETERM PREMATURE RUPTURE OF MEMBRANE IN CONNECTIVE TISSUE DISEASE PATIENTS

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Background: Connective tissue disease (CTD) often occurs in women of child-bearing age, and flare-ups during pregnancy. Therefore, it is important to manage their disease activities with the treatment which have no influence on fetal growth and development. Among the treatment during pregnancy glucocorticoid is most often used for maintain or control to flare-ups of CTD disease activities. However, prolonged use of glucocorticoid during pregnancy is considered to increase the risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes (APOs) including preterm birth, intrauterine growth restriction, and premature rupture of membrane (PROM) (1, 2).

Objectives: The aim of this study is to reveal the dose of glucocorticoid which influences on APOs.

Methods: We investigated 164 pregnant patients complicated with CTD from March 2006 to January 2019. All these patients were managed their disease activities throughout pregnancy in our institute. APOs including preterm births, light-for-date (LFD) newborns, PROMs in these pregnant patients were examined retrospectively. We analyzed the association between APOs and the incidence or mean dose of glucocorticoid use during pregnancy.

Results: Underlying CTD is Systemic lupus erythematosus (25.3%), Sjogren's syndrome (24.9%), rheumatoid arthritis (18.1%), Antiphospholipid syndrome (8.8%), mixed connective tissue disease (6.7%), and others. Glucocorticoid was administered in 96 cases, which tended to be earlier gestational week at delivery (37.5 $\pm$ 3.0 vs. 38.9 $\pm$ 1.5, $P<0.01$) and lower birth weight of newborns (2601.9 $\pm$ 603.0 vs. 3019.0 $\pm$ 480.8, $P<0.01$) significantly. Compared with full-term birth, the cases of preterm birth had higher dose of glucocorticoid during pregnancy significantly ($P<0.01$). Logistic regression analysis for preterm birth revealed the cut-off value of mean prednisolone dose as 7.5 mg per day (Figure 1). Similarly, the