was developed by a multidisciplinary team, with input from rheumatologists. Topics included the physicians’ approaches to evaluating back pain, their awareness about axSpA, their differential diagnosis of axSpA, the laboratory tests and imaging studies ordered when axSpA is suspected, their referral patterns for patients with presumed axSpA, their thoughts about factors contributing to diagnostic delay in axSpA, and their opinions about an Inflammatory Back Pain Assessment – ASAS criteria screening tool [5].

Results: Barriers to early diagnosis included patient factors (eg, multiple complaints, back pain not being the chief complaint), disease characteristics (eg, slow rate of disease progression), physician characteristics (eg, lack of rapport between patients and their primary care physicians), and structural/system issues (eg, lack of time). Most physicians reported that they would perform laboratory tests before referring a patient to a rheumatologist.

Conclusion: Primary care physicians were surprised to learn of the average delay to axSpA diagnosis, considered that this lengthy delay was problematic, and agreed that improvements are needed in screening for and early detection of axSpA. Physicians believed that there would be a role for using a screening tool in the primary care setting to improve diagnostic delay, but that evidence to support its implementation is needed.

References:

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THU0560 PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN PERSPECTIVES ON DELAYS IN DIAGNOSIS OF AXIAL SPONDYLOARTHRITIS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

S. H. Liu1, K. Lapane1, D. Shридharmurthy1, S. Khan1, K. Ferrucci1, C. Dubé1, E. Yi1, J. Kay1,2 1University of Massachusetts Medical School, Medical and Quantitative Health Sciences, Worcester, United States of America; 2Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, HEOR and Medical Access, US Clinical Development and Medical Affairs, East Hanover, United States of America; 3University of Massachusetts Medical School, Medicine, WORCESTER, United States of America

Background: The average delay in diagnosis for patients with any form of spondyloarthritis (SpA) ranges from 7 to 10 years [1–5]. In axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA), a subgroup of SpA, it is 5 to 14 years [4, 6, 7]. Factors that contribute to this delay include the lack of diagnostic criteria for axSpA and the difficulty in distinguishing inflammatory back pain (IBP), a key symptom of axSpA, from other highly prevalent forms of low back pain [8–10]. This impedes timely referral of these patients to rheumatologic care and initiation of appropriate treatment.

Objectives: Describe understanding of, attitudes towards, and practices regarding axSpA among primary care physicians.

Methods: We recruited 18 primary care physicians practicing in the United States as part of a larger qualitative study: the SpondyloArthritis Screening and Early Detection (SpA-SED) Study. We used purposive sampling with a goal of including an equal number of family medicine and internal medicine physicians who were balanced by gender. Physicians provided informed consent to participate in an in-depth interview (up to 60 minutes), conducted in person (n = 9) or over the phone (n = 15), between February and May 2019. The interview guide

THU0561 PREDICTING LIVER TOXICITY CAUSED BY CONVENTIONAL SYNDROME-DISEASE-MODIFYING ANTI-RHEUMATIC DRUGS

L. Kuusela1, M. Venäläinen2, S. Saranpalä3, H. Kirjava3, L. Eliö, L. Pirilä1 1University of Turku and Turku University Hospital, Center for Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology, Turku, Finland; 2University of Turku, Turku Bioscience Center, Turku, Finland; 3University of Turku, Turku, Finland

Background: Routine laboratory testing is recommended for early identification of toxicity during conventional synthetic disease modifying anti-rheumatic drug (csDMARD) treatment. Based on expert consensus, testing is recommended every 2–4 weeks for the first 3 months and quarterly thereafter (1).

Objectives: In addition to evaluating the incidence of alanine transaminase (ALT) elevations in rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients initiated on 1–2 csDMARDs, we aimed to distinguish patterns in ALT levels to develop a model for identifying patients at high risk for liver toxicity.

Methods: We identified RA patients who were initiated a new csDMARD course at a rheumatology clinic of Turku University Hospital in 2013–2019. Baseline and follow-up safety monitoring results were drawn from the electronic health record (EHR) data. Data on diagnoses and csDMARD initiation/cessation dates were manually confirmed from the EHR.

As the primary endpoint, we used ALT-elevations of more than twice the upper limit of reference range (women ≥70 U/L, men ≥100 U/L) within 6 months after treatment initiation. Intergroup differences were tested using Mann-Whitney test considering the chi-square test or Fisher’s exact test (n = 5) for categorical variables. Associations between different