ANTI-PHOSPHOLIPID AUTOANTIBODIES IN COVID-19 PATIENTS

M. Jordhanı1, D. Ruci1, V. Ruci1; 1UC Mother Teresa, Tirana, Albania, Internal Medicine, Tirana, Albania; 2University Trauma Hospital Tirana, Orthopaedics, Tirana, Albania

Background: Because of the inflammation boosting cytokines, Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has demonstrated thrombotic consequences that have increased its morbidity and mortality. There is evidence that mechanisms that contribute in thrombosis in COVID-19 patients are similar to those in anti-phospholipid syndrome (aPS). In fact, there is a possibility that anti-phospholipid autoantibodies (aPLs) might impulse thrombosis in patients with COVID-19, as literature suggests.

Objectives: The aim of our study was to evaluate the anti-phospholipid autoantibody titre in patients with COVID-19 during and after the infection.

Methods: This is an observational study which included 71 patients with a recent COVID-19 up to 4 weeks after. Every patient was completed with aPL titre about IgG and IgM anti-cardiolipine (ACA) and lupus anticoagulant (LAC) autoantibodies. According to titre results, the patients were divided into groups in order to better show the immunologic results.

Results: After gathering and analysing the data, it was estimated that 21 patients (29.6%) were positive for at least one type of aPL antibody: 12 patients were found positive for lupus anticoagulant autoantibodies (57.1%), 6 patients were double positive for LAC and ACA (28.6%), and 3 patients were positive for anti-cardiolipin antibodies (14.3%). Seven patients were IgM positive for any aPL (33.3%), 6 patients were found to have positive IgM and IgG (28.6%) and 8 patients had only IgG antibodies (38.1%).

Conclusion: From this study it was observed that a significant proportion of patients with recent COVID-19 infection had positive anti-phospholipid antibody, compared to the general population prevalence. This suggests that the impact of aPLs in COVID-19 might be of great importance. It should be carefully evaluated in order to better understand the mechanisms of thrombotic complications.

REFERENCES:

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CORONAVIRUS 19 DISEASE VACCINE: PERCEPTIONS AND INTENTIONS OF TUNISIAN PATIENTS WITH RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

K. Ben Abdelghani1, H. Boussaa1, S. Miladi1, M. Sellami1, L. Souabni1, K. Ouenich1, S. Kassab1, S. Chekili1, A. Fazaa1, A. Laatari1, Mongi Slim University Hospital, Rheumatology, La Marsa, Tunisia

Background: Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has now spread to millions of persons worldwide to become a global pandemic. Covid-19 is asymptomatic for some individuals and for others it can cause symptoms ranging from flu-like to acute respiratory distress syndrome, pneumonia and death. Several vaccine candidates are now available, and patients with chronic inflammatory disease such as rheumatoid arthritis (RA) are encouraged to get vaccinated.

Objectives: The aim of this study was to determine perceptions of RA patients about the covid-19 vaccine.

Methods: We conducted a cross-sectional study including Tunisian patients with RA (ACR/EULAR 2010). Demographic and disease parameters were collected: age, gender, educational status, disease duration, erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR), disease activity score (DAS28), and treatments being used. All patients responded to a questionnaire on their perceptions and concerns about the covid-19 vaccine, and whether they intended to get vaccinated or not. A p value inferior to 0.05 was considered significant.

Results: We included 54 patients (45 women and nine men) with a mean age of 55±11 years [23-69]. Thirty-one percent of patients were illiterate. The mean disease duration was 9.8±5.9 years [0-20]. The mean DAS28 ESR was 4.68±1.35 [1.50-7.16]. NSAIDs were used in 13% of patients, corticosteroids in 63% of patients at a mean daily dose of 8mg [2.5-20] of prednisone equivalent, methotrexate in 63% of patients, sulphasalazine in 13% of patients, leflunomide in 13%, and biologics in 22.2% of patients.

None of these patients had contracted the covid-19. Seventeen percent of patients had been in close contact with someone positive for the disease. All the patients reported that they respected the preventive measures. Fifteen percent of patients had stopped their treatment because they were afraid of the covid-19. Methotrexate (n=4), sulphasalazine (n=1), tocilizumab (n=2), and rituximab (n=1) were stopped after several doses. More than half of patients (67.7%) reported that they didn't want to get vaccinated against covid-19. The reasons given by these patients were: presumed adverse events (100%), religious beliefs (86.7%), presumed inefficiency (83.3%), no recommendation from their doctor (80%), fear that the vaccine would interact with their treatment (76.7%), lack of trust in the pharmaceutical laboratories (76.7%), fear from vaccines in general (53.3%), fear that the vaccine would make RA worse (50%), and presumed overprice of the vaccine (30%).