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A comparison between children and adolescents with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) and the German general population

F. Miličić1, M. Niewiadska2, J. Klotzsche3, J. Hörstmann4, S. Hansmann2, T. Kallinich2, C. Rietschel5, R. Trauzeddel6, J. Peitz7, M. Hartmann7, H. Girschick2, K. Minden5,6. 1German Rheumatism Research Centre, Epidemiology, and Healthcare Research, Berlin, Germany; 2University Children’s Hospital Tübingen, Center for Pediatric Rheumatology, Autonominisation Reference Centre Tübingen (arcT), Tübingen, Germany; 3Charité University Medicine Berlin, Department of Pediatric Rheumatology and Immunology, Berlin, Germany; 4Clementine Children’s Hospital, Rheumatology for Children and Adolescents, Frankfurt/Main, Germany; 5Helios Klinik Berlin-Buch, Department of Paediatrics, Berlin, Germany; 6Asklepios Clinic, Paediatric Rheumatology Centre, Sankt Augustin, Germany; 7German Center for Paediatric and Adolescent Rheumatology, Motion Analysis, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany; 8Vivantes Hospital im Friedrichshain, Children’s Hospital, Berlin, Germany; 9Charité University Medicine Berlin, Department of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology, Berlin, Germany

Background: Physical activity (PA), including sport participation, is essential for children throughout their growth and maturation. It improves physiological and psychosocial health and limits the risk of developing metabolic disorders. The beneficial effect of PA specifically in patients with JIA has also been linked to its potential regulatory effect on the balance between pro- and anti-inflammatory responses [1].

Objective: The study aimed i) to quantify the frequency of PA and participation in organised sports compared to the general population, ii) to determine self-reported reasons for not practising sports, and iii) to identify clinical parameters associated with non-participation in sports.

Methods: Data from children and adolescents with JIA recorded in the National Paediatric Rheumatological Database (NPRD) in the year 2019 were considered for the analyses. In accordance with the methodology used in the general population, the study sample was drawn. A logistic regression model was used to explore the association between non-participation in sports and patients’ clinical outcomes.

Results: Data of 5,333 matched-pairs (mean age 11.0 ± 4.3 years, female 67%, patients’ disease onset 4.8 ± 3.8 years, persistent oligoarthritis 43%) were available for evaluation. Almost 38% of patients aged 3 to 17 years met the recommended PA amount (76% aged 3 to 6; 48% aged 7 to 10; 30% aged 11 to 13; 15% aged 14 to 17). In matched controls, 21% fulfilled the WHO recommendations on PA (41% aged 3 to 6; 23% aged 7 to 10; 17% aged 11 to 13; 10% aged 14 to 17). Largest differences across JIA categories were found in persistent oligoarthritis (43%) and enthesis-related arthritis (22%). 84% of patients and 74% of controls reported participating in sports, of which 72% of patients and 58% of controls stating to participate in a formally organised way. In both groups, boys indicated organised sports participation more often than girls. Among those who declared not participating in sports, “no interest” (patients 27% vs. controls 29%), “no suitable offer nearby” (patients 25% vs. controls 31%), “health restrictions” (patients 22% vs. controls 4%) and “no time” (patients 15% vs. controls 23%) were the most frequently mentioned reasons (multiple responses possible).

Conclusion: Based on self-reported data, children and adolescents with JIA meet the WHO recommendation on PA more often than general population controls. Patients are less frequently engaged in sports, but more often involved in formally organised forms. In order to bring joyful, interesting PA opportunities in line with WHO recommendations, further components (e.g. intensity), facilitators and barriers to PA and sports need to be addressed in the future while controlling for JADAS and CHAQ.

REFERENCES:

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CROSS-SECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF INTERFERON SIGNATURE IN PEDIATRIC SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS

R. Raupov1, E. Susipti1,2, E. Kalashnikova3, N. Lybimova4, E. Kuchinskaya4, R. Mukhotdina5, A. Kosmin6, M. Kostis1,2, St-Petersburg State Pediatric Medical University, Department of Pediatric Hematology, Russian Federation; 2N.N.Petrov Institute of Oncology, Molecular diagnostics, St-Petersburg, Russian Federation; 3St-Petersburg State Pediatric Medical University, Department of Medical Genetics, St-Petersburg, Russian Federation; 4AlmaZov National Medical Research Centre, Pediatrics, St-Petersburg, Russian Federation

Background: The role of interferon pathways in the pathogenesis of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) has been proven over the past years. Existing data suggest that interferon score (IFN score) may serve as a useful marker of disease activity and patient clinical characteristics.

Objective: To compare characteristics of pediatric SLE patients with high and normal IFN I score.

Methods: 40 SLE patients (33 girls, 7 boys) under 18 years old were included in the cross-sectional study. In all cases the diagnosis was made using Systemic Lupus Erythematosus International Collaborating Clinics (SLICC) classification criteria. The data on clinical manifestations, disease activity by SLEDAI and ECLAM, laboratory findings in the onset of the disease and at the moment of interferon signature assessment were evaluated. Interferon signature was assessed by real-time PCR quantitation of 5 IFN I-regulated transcripts; median expression of ≥2 was considered as a threshold. The patients were divided into 2 groups depending on the level of interferon score: high (group 1, n=31) and normal (group 2, n=9).

Results: The mean age of the disease onset was 12 (9.5, 14.0) years. The most common symptoms were skin lesions (85%), arthritis (67.5%), fever (55%), mucosa (45%), CNS (37.5%) and kidney (30%) involvement. Anemia, leukopenia and thrombocytopenia were observed in 62.5%, 27.5% and 50% of cases, respectively. In group 1, 62.5% of patients had nephritis, 43.8% had arthritis, 54.8% had fever, and 58% had skin lesions. In group 2, 22.2% had nephritis, 55.6% had arthritis, 77.8% had fever, and 77.8% had skin lesions. The common symptoms were skin lesions (85%), arthritis (67.5%), fever (55%), mucosa (45%), CNS (37.5%) and kidney (30%) involvement. Anemia, leukopenia and thrombocytopenia were observed in 62.5%, 27.5% and 50% of cases, respectively. In group 1, 62.5% of patients had nephritis, 43.8% had arthritis, 54.8% had fever, and 58% had skin lesions. In group 2, 22.2% had nephritis, 55.6% had arthritis, 77.8% had fever, and 77.8% had skin lesions.

Conclusion: The study allowed to reveal that higher levels of interferon score in children with SLE are associated with worse disease manifestations.