Lupus nephritis (LN) is about 40% (1). The rate of progression to end stage renal disease (ESRD) is 4.3-10.1% (2) and renal involvement is a strong predictor of morbidity and mortality.

Objectives: To describe clinical, histological features and renal outcomes of LN patients included in our single-center registry reporting data from more than 30 years. Moreover, we examined the correlation between clinical features at LN diagnosis and therapeutic lines used during the course of a 24-years follow-up.

Methods: A total of 71 patients were diagnosed with LN from 1989 to 2020. Demographic features and laboratory abnormalities (serum creatinine, 24 hours urine protein, urinary sediment, ds-DNA) at the time of LN diagnosis and at last available follow-up were evaluated. We also examined renal biopsy performed and the histological classes (proliferative vs non-proliferative). We considered the increase number of therapeutic lines adopted as a negative prognostic factor in response to therapy. Mean (SD) or median (IQR) were used according the variable distribution. T-test and Chi square and Mann-Whitney were used and p-value <0.05 were considered significant.

Results: Among 71 patients with LN, 63 (88.7%) were females and 8 (11.3%) males, with a F/M ratio of 6. Median SLE duration was 180 (162) months. The median age at the onset of nephritis was 28 (19.5) years and occurred in median after 12 (60) months from SLE diagnosis. Sixty patients underwent a biopsy: the histology showed class III or IV proliferative glomerulonephritis in 19 patients (31.6%) and a non-proliferative class in 11 (18.3%) (p< 0.0001). Median serum creatinine value, 24 hours urine protein, urinary sediment, anti-ds-DNA at LN onset are reported in Table 1. Induction therapy was performed with cyclofosfamide in 14.5% of cases, mycophenolate in 21.1%, rituximab in 1.9% and azathioprine in 4.6%. The therapy was performed with cyclofosfamide in 14.5% of cases, mycophenolate in 21.1%, rituximab in 1.9% and azathioprine in 4.6%. The lines of therapies adopted during the follow-up ranged between a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 6 lines with a median value of 1. Overall, the median follow-up was 180 (111) months and 30 (21.3%) patients had at least 120 months of follow-up. Median serum creatinine value, 24 hours urine protein, urinary sediment and eGFR last available follow-up are reported in Table 1. Three patients underwent dialysis and 3 kidney transplantation. Eight patients underwent a re-biopsy: 7 (87.5%) had a proliferative class and 1 (12.5%) had a membranous class (p=0.01). Median serum creatinine value, 24 hours urine protein, urinary sediment re-biopsy are reported in Table 1. In re-bi-optized subgroup patients, induction therapies were cyclofosfamide in 50% of cases, mycophenolate in 12.5%, cyclophosphamide A in 25% and azathioprine in 12.5%. There were not statistically significant differences among the age on LN onset, the time from renal onset to the onset of the disease and the number of therape-utic lines adopted (Figure 1).

Conclusion: Among patients with LN the proliferative classes are the most common. At the 15-year follow-up 2.1% had renal transplantation and 2.1% dialysis. We did not detect any association between age at diagnosis, time from renal impairment and the number of therapeutic lines.

REFERENCES:

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Table 1. Laboratory features in SLE patients at LN onset, at last available follow-up and in re-biopsied patients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LN onset (n=71)</th>
<th>After 10 years long FOLLOW-UP (n=30)</th>
<th>P value</th>
<th>Re-biopsied patients (n=8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serum creatinine (mg/dl)</td>
<td>0.81±0.41</td>
<td>3000 (3.7079)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>125 (3.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 hours urine protein (mg/24h)</td>
<td>300 (0.66)</td>
<td>330 (0.793)</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>5068 (2392)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active urinary sediment</td>
<td>64 (45.4%)</td>
<td>2 patients</td>
<td>&lt;0.00001</td>
<td>8 patients (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-ds-DNA + eGFR &lt;50ml/h</td>
<td>30 patients</td>
<td>12 patients (3.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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AUDIOMETRIC EVALUATION IN SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS PATIENTS AND IMPACT OF HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE THERAPY

S. Thanawal1, W. Elshawa1, M. K. Nsassy1, Mansoura University, Internal Medicine, Rheumatology & Immunology, Mansoura, Egypt; 2Mansoura University, Audiology Unit, ORL Department, Mansoura, Egypt; 3Mansoura University, Nephrology and Dialysis Unit, Internal Medicine Department, Mansoura, Egypt

Background: Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) is a commonly used agent in the treat-ment of rheumatic diseases including systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). [1]

Objectives: The aim of this study was to evaluate the hearing function in SLE patients and assess the impact of chronic HCQ.

Methods: This study was carried out on 60 individuals (48 SLE and 12 healthy controls). The SLE patients were divided into HCQ group (n=36) and non-HCQ group (n=12) according to the chronic administration of HCQ. All participants were assessed by full audiological history and extended high frequency audiometry at frequencies 9, 10, 11, 2, 12.5, 14, 16,18 and 20 KHz.

Results: When comparing the study SLE patients with healthy controls, there was a statistically significant difference regarding patient reported otological manifestations such as tinnitus (p=0.021), vertigo (p=0.002) and hearing impairment (p=0.042) while there was no significant difference regarding deafness or ear buzzing in one or both ears. HCQ group showed more hearing impairment at frequency 9000 and 20000 Hz than non-HCQ group (p=0.004, <0.001 respectively).

Conclusion: Otological symptoms and sensorineural hearing loss are prevalent among SLE patients. Chronic administration of HCQ may have an ototoxic effect.

REFERENCES:

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CHANGING EXPRESSION PROFILES OF LONG NONCODING RNAs, MiRNAS, MiRNAs AND CIRCULAR RNAs IN LABIAL SALIVARY GLANDS OF PRIMARY SJÖGREN’S SYNDROME (PSS)

G. Feng1, L. Huang2, J. Ji3, C. Dong3, Y. Xia3, C. Cheng4, Z. Gu3. 1Affiliated Hospital of Nantong University, Department of Stomatology, Nantong, China; 2Affiliated Hospital of Nantong University, Department of Critical Care Medicine, Nantong, China; 3Affiliated Hospital of Nantong University, Department of Rheumatology, Nantong, China; 4Nantong University, Jiangsu Province Key Laboratory for Inflammation and Molecular Drug Target, Nantong, China

Background: Primary Sjögren’s syndrome (pSS) is a relatively common autoim-mune disease characterized by oral and ocular dryness. An increasing number of studies have revealed that long non-coding RNA (IncRNA), miRNA, mRNA and circular RNA (circRNA) contributes to the pathogenesis of autoimmune diseases.

Objectives: To explore IncRNA, miRNA, mRNA and circRNA expression profiles in labial salivary glands (LSGs) in pSS patients and their biological functions in the regulation of pSS.

Methods: The expression of 75,550 IncRNAs, 2,318 miRNA, 20,292 mRNA and 6,877 circRNAs were determined in the LSG of six pSS patients and six healthy controls using microarray experiments. Validation was performed in pSS patients and controls using real-time PCR. LncRNA-miRNA co-expression and gene-pathway networks were constructed using bioinformatics software.

Results: A total of 599 IncRNAs (upregulated: 279, downregulated: 320), 78 miR-NAs (upregulated: 26, downregulated: 52), 615 miRNAs (upregulated: 590, downregu-lated: 25) and 160 mRNAs (upregulated: 110, downregulated: 50) were differentially expressed in the LSGs of pSS patients. Five of these IncRNAs were validated using real-time PCR. IncRNA HCPS, IncRNA SNHGS, IncRNA IF4AIL, IncRNA CMPK2 were significantly upregulated and IncRNA TTYH1 were downregulated in pSS. GO
and KEGG biological pathway analysis were performed to predict the functions of differentially expressed IncRNAs and co-expressed potential targeting genes. Subsequently, a ceRNA (IncRNA-miRNA-mRNA) network including 2320 ceRNA pairs was constructed based on predicted miRNAs shared by IncRNAs and mRNAs.

**Conclusion:** The expression profile provided a systematic perspective on the potential functions of IncRNAs and mRNAs in the pathogenesis of psS. Therefore, this study will aid in the development of new diagnostic biomarkers and drug therapies.

**REFERENCES:**


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**Figure 1.**

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**POS0786**

**UNMET TREATMENT NEEDS IN SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS (SLE): A CROSS-SECTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF DISEASE ACTIVITY IN SLE PATIENTS DURING THEIR LAST VISIT**

O. Gioti1, K. Chavatza2, G. Belevonis1, S. Koutsoviti1, C. Katsimpari1, I. Sfianosis1, A. Tatsi1, P. Tzannis1, A. Lazarini1, K. Klavdanou1, I. Giannakopoulou1, E. Kalavri1, E. Theotikos1, A. Elezoglou1, D. Boumpas2, O. Fanouraki1,2.

**Department of Rheumatology, Nantong, China**

**Affiliated Hospital of Nantong University, Department of Rheumatology, Nantong, China**

**Background:** The current goal of treatment in SLE is remission or low disease activity (LDA) and prevention of flares, achieved with the lowest possible dose of glucocorticoids. Nevertheless, in current clinical practice a significant number of patients still has active disease.1,2

**Objectives:** To assess the current disease activity state of SLE patients during their most recent visit in two centers (Department of Rheumatology in “Asklepieio” Hospital and Rheumatology Unit in “Attikon” Hospital, both in Athens, Greece).

**Methods:** Cross-sectional study of patients with a diagnosis of SLE for at least one year. Patients were divided into four groups: 1) Remission off-therapy: SLE Disease Activity Index (SLEDAI)=0 without prednisone or immunosuppressive treatments (IS); 2) Remission on-therapy: SLEDAI=0, prednisone dose ≤5mg/day and/or IS (convventional and biologic, maintenance phase), 3) LDA: SLEDAI ≤4, prednisone dose ≤7.5mg/day and/or IS (maintenance phase), 4) Active disease: SLEDAI >4 and/or prednisone dose >75mg/day and/or IS (induction phase).

**Results:** 205 patients were included (95.1% female, mean (SD) age 48.4 (14.9) years and median disease duration (IQR) 6.2 (12.6) years). A history of lupus nephritis and neuropsychiatric SLE was present in 24.4% and 17.1% of our patients, respectively. Seventy-five patients (36.6%) had LDA, respectively, but only 3.9% had a SLEDAI > 8, indicative of high disease activity. At last visit, remission off-therapy and remission on-therapy was present in 8.3% (n=17) and 15.1% (n=31) of our patients, respectively. Seventy-five patients (36.6%) had LDA, whereas 82 patients (40%) had active disease. More than 85% (86.3%) of patients were in treatment with hydroxychloroquine and 64.4% were receiving immunosuppressive drugs. Regarding glucocorticoids, 50.2% (n=103) were treated with prednisone dose ≤75mg/day and over 40% (42.4%, n=87) did not receive prednisone at all. A SLEDAI score 0 and 1-4 was achieved in 24.4% and 42.9% of patients, respectively, and 39% of patients had SLICC/ACR damage index (SDI) > 0. At last visit, remission off-therapy and remission on-therapy was present in 8.3% (n=17) and 15.1% (n=31) of our patients, respectively. Seventy-five patients (36.6%) had LDA.

**Conclusion:** The ultimate goal of the treatment of SLE is to achieve LDA, which is associated with a lower risk of damage development. However, our study shows that the majority of patients still has active disease. Further studies are needed to investigate the role of gut microbiota in the treatment of SLE. The application of berberine is a relatively safe and convenient way. In the coming investigations, we plan to focus on the study of berberine and its metabolites on intestinal function and systemic immunity.

**REFERENCES:**


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**POS0787**

**BERBERINE MODULATES LUPUS SYNDROME VIA THE REGULATION OF GUT MICROBIOTA IN MRL/LPR MICE**

Y. Bao1, J. Ji1, Z. Xu1, Z. Gu1.

1Affiliated Hospital of Nantong University, Department of Rheumatology; Nantong, China; 2Affiliated Hospital of Nantong University, Research Center of Clinical Medicine, Nantong, China

**Background:** Intestinal flora disorder and immune abnormalities have been reported in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) patients1,2. Berberine (BBR) showed significant effects in regulating the intestinal flora, repairing gut barriers and regulating immune cells3,4. While few reports mentioned the abnormal gut microbiota and metabolites in Chinese SLE patients.

**Objectives:** Our investigation tried to illustrate the relationship between gut microbiota, intestinal metabolites and disease activity in Chinese SLE patients. And the effect of BBR to intestinal dysbiosis, multiple organ damages and over-activated immune system in MRL/Lpr mice.

**Methods:** 16S high-throughput (16S RNA) sequence, qRT-PCR and gas chromatography technology were used to determine the gut microbiota and metabolites in 104 SLE patients from Affiliated Hospital of Nantong University, China. BBR was orally treated to the MRL/Lpr mice in low, medium and high doses. After 6 weeks treatment, mice were sacrificed. Serum, faeces and organs were collected for further studies.

**Results:** Chinese SLE patients showed higher abundance of Bacteroidetes and lower abundance of Firmicutes. The results of qRT-PCR showed high Firmicutes/Bacteroidetes (F/B) ratio of SLE patients. The F/B ratio was negative correlated with SLE disease activity index (SLEDA) score. Almost all the tested short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) found statistically significant results in SLE and LN (lupus nephritis) patients, especially the propanoic acid and butyric. BBR altered the relative abundance of Bacteroides and Verrucomicrobia and the butyric acid content in colon of MRL/Lpr mice. The increase of tight junction protein also indicated the gut barrier was repaired by BBR. Treg and Th17 cells in spleen and mesenteric lymph node (MLN) were increased. These results revealed a positive therapeutic effect of berberine on SLE from gut microbiota to immune status.

**Conclusion:** Our study highlights current status of intestinal dysbacteriosis in Chinese patients with SLE and differences in intestinal metabolites among patients with different disease states. The regulation of intestinal flora and the repairment of gut barrier by intestinal metabolites in BBR treated mice seemed to be the factor that directed the immune responses and disease outcomes. The ultimate goal of our study was to determine the beneficial effects of regulating the gut microbiota on the treatment of SLE. The application of berberine is a relatively safe and convenient way. In the coming investigations, we plan to focus on the study of berberine and its metabolites on intestinal function and systemic immunity.

**REFERENCES:**


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