

Seven-years Outcome of Rheumatoid Factor Positive Rheumatoid Arthritis after Treatment with the Step-down Bridge Protocol of Intravenous and Oral Combination of 5 Immunosuppressants.

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Abstract

Objective. To assess 7-years outcome of patients with Rheumatoid Factor Positive Rheumatoid Arthritis (RF+ RA)

Materials and Methods. The 271 consecutive patients with RF+ RA were enrolled in a 7-years prospective observational study. The Step-down Bridge Protocol of Intravenous and Oral Combination of 5 Immunosuppressants (SBP-5-IMNs) comprising intravenous Methylprednisolone+ Cyclophosphamide + Methotrexate plus oral Cyclosporin+Methotrexate+Mycophenolate Mofetil was empirically applied when the ESR was > 40 mm per 1-hour (men > 30 mm) and CRP > 3 mg%.

Results. Remission was induced by the intravenous therapy in 2-4 months. Remission with oral Drugs was achieved in 5.5-7.5 months after tapering off intravenous therapy. Remission was consolidated for at least 2 years, before tapering off oral drugs over 1 year. Remission without Drug was ultimately obtained after 3.5 – 4.5 years in Immunosuppressant-naïve RF+ RA with Larsen grade < 2 erosion(s) in 40.2%. Not Immunosuppressant-naïve RF+ RA with grade \geq 2 erosions acquired and remained in Remission with oral Drugs in 51.3%, except 4 cases who achieved improvements of ACR70. The p value of the difference of the Rau modified Larsen Index and EJC between the baseline and outcome in the cases were 94.62% and 99.99% with 95% CI of 92.1 to 93.9%.

Conclusion. Induction of Remission by intravenous and oral combination of 5 Immunosuppressants is feasible in RF+ RA. In immunosuppressant-naïve RF+ RA with < Grade 2 erosions Remission without Drug is achieved.

Key Words

Rheumatoid Factor Positive Rheumatoid Arthritis

Immunosuppressant-naivety

Radiological outcome

Clinical outcome

Remission with oral Drugs

Remission without Drug