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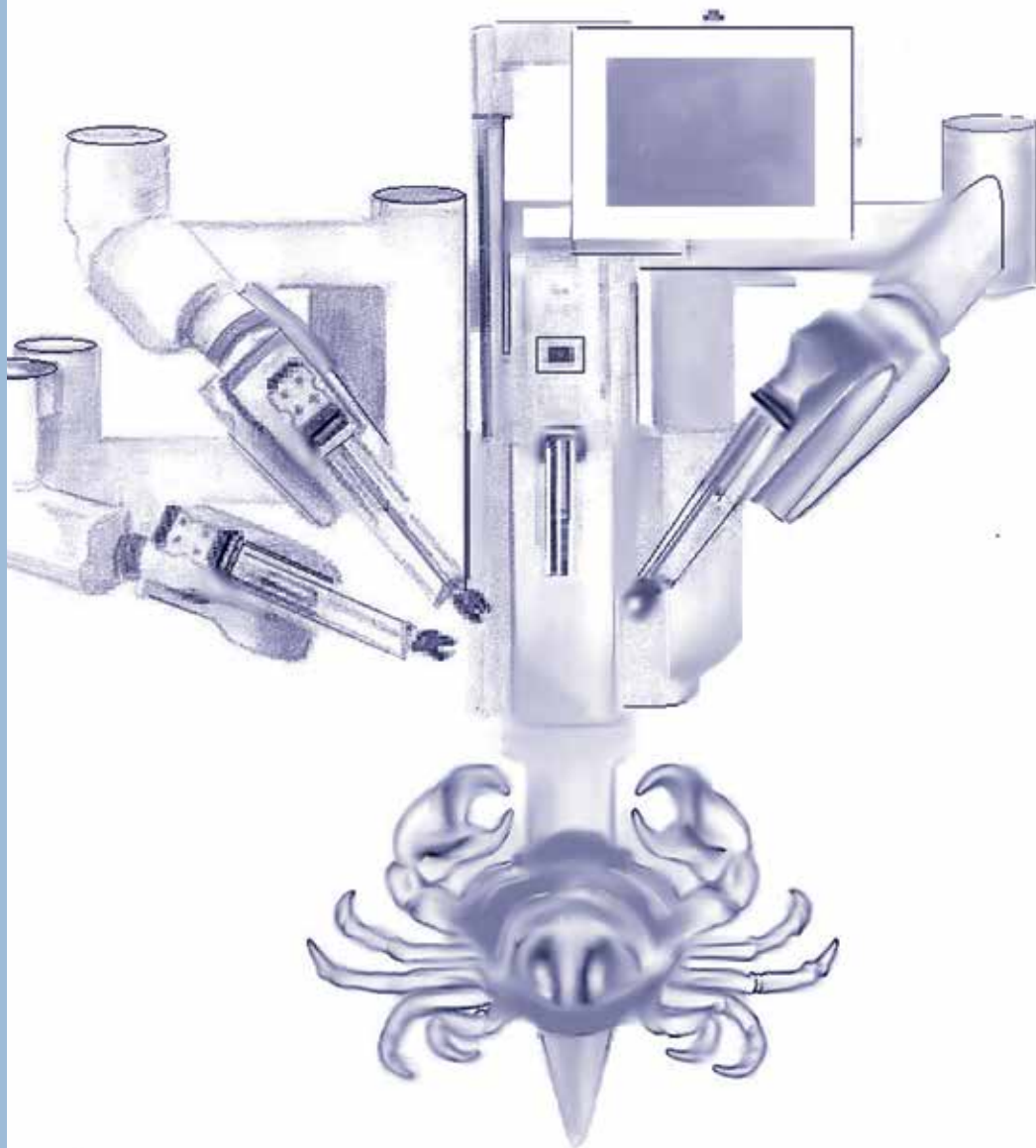
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- Diffuse intestinal metaplasia of the urinary bladder causing bilateral hydronephrosis in a 48-year old man



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ΤΟΝΙΑΖ (φουμαρική φεσοτεροδίνη) **ΔΙΣΚΙΑ ΠΑΡΑΤΕΤΑΜΕΝΗΣ ΑΠΟΔΕΣΜΕΥΣΗΣ 4 & 8 mg/Tab ΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΤΙΚΕΣ ΕΝΔΕΙΞΕΙΣ:** Θεραπεία των συμπτωμάτων (συχνουρία ή/και έπειξη για ούρηση ή/και επιτακτικού τύπου ακράτεια) τα οποία μπορεί να παρουσιαστούν σε ενήλικες ασθενείς με σύνδρομο υπερδραστικής ουροδόχου κύστης. **ΑΝΤΕΝΔΕΙΞΕΙΣ:** Υπερευαίσθησία στη δραστική ουσία ή στο φυσικό ή στη σόγια ή σε οποιοδήποτε από τα έκδοχα, επίσχεση ούρων, γαστρική κατακράτηση, μη ελεγχόμενο γλαύκωμα κλειστής γωνίας, βαριά μασθενία, σοβαρή ηπατική δυσλειτουργία (Child-Pugh C), ταυτόχρονη χορήγηση ισχυρών αναστολέων του CYP3A4 σε άτομα με μέτρια έως σοβαρή ηπατική ή νεφρική δυσλειτουργία, σοβαρή ελκώδης κολίτιδα, τοξικό megacolon. **ΕΙΔΙΚΕΣ ΠΡΟΕΙΔΟΠΟΙΗΣΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΙΔΙΑΙΤΕΡΕΣ ΠΡΟΦΥΛΑΞΕΙΣ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΗ ΧΡΗΣΗ:** Το ΤΟΝΙΑΖ πρέπει να χρησιμοποιείται με προσοχή σε ασθενείς με: Κλινικά σημαντική απόφραξη της κυστικής εξέδου με επαλειπούμενη επίσχεση ούρων, (π.χ. κλινικά σημαντική διόγκωση του προστάτη λόγω καλοήθους υπερπλασίας του προστάτη), αποφρακτικές βλάβες του γαστρεντερικού σωλήνα, π.χ. στένωση του πυλωρού, γαστροοισοφαγική παλινδρόμηση ή/και ασθενείς που παίρνουν ταυτόχρονα φαρμακευτικά προϊόντα (όπως διφωσφορικά από το στόμα), τα οποία μπορεί να προκαλέσουν ή να παρεξυμούν υπάρχουσα οισοφαγίτιδα, μειωμένη γαστρεντερική κινητικότητα, αυτόνομη νευροπάθεια, ελεγχόμενο γλαύκωμα κλειστής γωνίας. Συνιστάται προσοχή κατά τη συνταγογράφηση ή την αύξηση της δόσης της φεσοτεροδίνης σε ασθενείς στους οποίους αναμένεται αυξημένη έκθεση στον ενεργό μεταβολίτη: Ηπατική δυσλειτουργία, νεφρική δυσλειτουργία, ταυτόχρονη χορήγηση ισχυρών ή μέτριας ισχύος αναστολέων του CYP3A4, ταυτόχρονη χορήγηση ισχυρού αναστολέα του CYP2D6. **Αυξησής της δόσολογίας:** Σε ασθενείς με συνδυασμό αυτών των παραγόντων, αναμένονται επιπρόσθετες αυξήσεις της έκθεσης. Αντιμυοκαρδικές δοσοεξαρτώμενες ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες είναι πιθανόν να εμφανισθούν. Σε πληθυσμούς όπου η δόση μπορεί να αυξηθεί στα 8 mg μία φορά την ημέρα, η εκτίμηση της ανταπόκρισης και ανοχής του κάθε ασθενή ξεχωριστά θα πρέπει να προηγηθεί της αύξησης της δόσης. Πρέπει να αποκλειστούν όλα τα οργανικά αίτια προτού εξεταστεί οποιαδήποτε θεραπεία με αντιμυοκαρδικά. Η ασφάλεια και η αποτελεσματικότητα δεν έχουν ακόμα τεκμηριωθεί σε ασθενείς με νευρογενή αίτια για την υπερδραστικότητα του εξωστήρα μύος. Άλλα αίτια της συχνουρίας (θεραπεία της καρδιακής ανεπάρκειας ή νεφροπάθεια) πρέπει να αξιολογούνται πριν τη θεραπεία με φεσοτεροδίνη. Εάν είναι παρούσα λοίμωξη των ουροφόρων οδών, πρέπει να ληφθεί μια κατάλληλη ιατρική προσέγγιση/ να ξεκινήσει αντιμικροβιακή θεραπεία. **Αγγειοοίδημα:** Έχει αναφερθεί αγγειοοίδημα με φεσοτεροδίνη και έχει εκδηλωθεί μετά την πρώτη δόση σε κάποιες περιπτώσεις. Εάν εκδηλωθεί αγγειοοίδημα, η φεσοτεροδίνη θα πρέπει να διακοπεί και θα πρέπει να παρσχεθεί η κατάλληλη θεραπεία. **Ισχυροί επαναγωγείς του CYP3A4:** Η ταυτόχρονη χρήση της φεσοτεροδίνης με έναν ισχυρό επαγωγέα του CYP3A4 (δηλ. καρβαμαζεπίνη, ριφαμικίνη, φαινοβαρβιτάλη, φαινοϊνίνη, υπερίκο) δεν συνιστάται. **Παράταση του διαστήματος QT:** Το ΤΟΝΙΑΖ πρέπει να χρησιμοποιείται με προσοχή σε ασθενείς με κίνδυνο παράτασης του διαστήματος QT (π.χ. υποκαλιαιμία, βραδυκαρδία και ταυτόχρονη χορήγηση φαρμάκων για τα οποία είναι γνωστό ότι παρατείνουν το διάστημα QT) και σχετικές προϋπάρχουσες καρδιακές ασθένειες (π.χ. ισχαιμία του μυοκαρδίου, αρρυθμία, συμφορητική καρδιακή ανεπάρκεια). Αυτό ισχύει ιδιαίτερα κατά τη λήψη ισχυρών αναστολέων του CYP3A4. **Λακτόζη:** Τα ΤΟΝΙΑΖ δισκία παρατεταμένης αποδέσμευσης περιέχουν λακτόζη. Οι ασθενείς με σπάνια κληρονομικά προβλήματα δυσανεξίας στη γαλακτόζη, ανεπάρκειας λακτάσης του Lapp ή δυσασπορίσθησης γαλακτικής-γαλακτόζης δεν πρέπει να λαμβάνουν αυτό το φαρμακευτικό προϊόν. **ΑΝΕΠΙΘΥΜΗΤΕΣ ΕΝΕΡΓΕΙΕΣ: Περίληψη του προφίλ ασφαλείας:** Η ασφάλεια της φεσοτεροδίνης, αξιολογήθηκε σε ελεγχόμενες με εικονικό φάρμακο κλινικές μελέτες σε ένα σύνολο 2.859 ασθενών με υπερδραστική

ουροδόχο κύστη, από τους οποίους 780 έλαβαν εικονικό φάρμακο. Λόγω των φαρμακολογικών ιδιοτήτων της φεσοτεροδίνης, η θεραπεία ενδέχεται να προκαλέσει ήπιες έως μέτριες αντιμυοκαρδικές δράσεις, όπως ξηροστομία, ξηροφθαλμία, δυσπεψία και δυσκοιλιότητα. Επίσχεση ούρων μπορεί να εκδηλωθεί σπάνια. Η ξηροστομία, η μόνη πολύ συχνή ανεπιθύμητη ενέργεια, εμφανίστηκε με συχνότητα 28,8% στην ομάδα φεσοτεροδίνης σε σύγκριση με 8,5% στην ομάδα του εικονικού φαρμάκου. Η πλειονότητα των ανεπιθύμητων ενεργειών παρατηρήθηκαν κατά τη διάρκεια του πρώτου μήνα θεραπείας με εξαίρεση περιστατικά που κατηγοριοποιήθηκαν ως επίσχεση ούρων ή υπόλειμμα ούρων μετά την ούρηση μεγαλύτερο από 200ml, το οποίο μπορεί να συμβεί μετά από μακροχρόνια θεραπεία και ήταν πιο συχνό στους άντρες απ' ό,τι στις γυναίκες. Παρακάτω παρουσιάζεται η συχνότητα των ανεπιθύμητων ενεργειών που παρουσιάστηκαν κατά τη θεραπεία, από τις ελεγχόμενες με εικονικό φάρμακο κλινικές δοκιμές και από την εμπειρία μετά την κυκλοφορία του φαρμάκου στην αγορά. Οι ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες αναφέρονται με την ακόλουθη συνθηκική συχνότητας: πολύ συχνές ($\geq 1/10$), συχνές ($\geq 1/100$ έως $< 1/10$), όχι συχνές ($\geq 1/1.000$ έως $< 1/100$), σπάνιες ($\geq 1/10.000$ έως $< 1/1.000$). Οι ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες παρατίθενται κατά φθίνουσα σειρά σοβαρότητας: Πολύ συχνές: Ξηροστομία, Συχνές: Αιτινία, ζάλη, κεφαλαλγία, ξηροφθαλμία, ξηρότητα του φάρυγγα, κοιλιακό άλγος, διάρροια, δυσπεψία, δυσκοιλιότητα, ναυτία, δυσουρία. Όχι συχνές: Ουρολοιμώξη, δυσγευστία, υπνηλία, θαμνή όραση, ίλιγγος, ταχυκαρδία, αίσθημα παλμών, φαρυγγολαρυγγικό άλγος, βήχας, ξηρότητα του ρινικού βλεννογόνου, κοιλιακή δυσφορία, μετεωρισμός, γαστροοισοφαγική παλινδρόμηση, αυξημένη ALT, αυξημένη GGT, εξάνθημα, ξηροδερμία, κνησμός, επίσχεση ούρων (συμπεριλαμβανομένου του ασθμάτος υπολειπόμενων ούρων και της διαταραχής της ούρησης), δυσκολία στην ούρηση, κόπωση, Σπίνιες: Κατάσταση σύγχυσης, αγγειοοίδημα, κνίδωση. **Περιοσάφι επελεγμένων ανεπιθύμητων ενεργειών:** Στις κλινικές δοκιμές της φεσοτεροδίνης, αναφέρθηκαν περιπτώσεις σημαντικά αυξημένων ηπατικών ενζύμων με συχνότητα εμφάνισης όμοια με εκείνη της ομάδας του εικονικού φαρμάκου. Η συσχέτιση με τη θεραπεία φεσοτεροδίνης δεν έχει διευκρινιστεί. Ελήφθησαν ηλεκτροκαρδιογραφήματα 782 ασθενών υπό θεραπεία με 4 mg, 785 ασθενών υπό θεραπεία με 8 mg, 222 ασθενών υπό θεραπεία με 12 mg φεσοτεροδίνης και 780 ασθενών που λάμβαναν εικονικό φάρμακο. Το διορθωμένο για τον καρδιακό ρυθμό διάστημα QT στους ασθενείς υπό θεραπεία με φεσοτεροδίνη δεν διέφερε από εκείνο των ασθενών που λάμβαναν εικονικό φάρμακο. Τα ποσοστά εμφάνισης QTc ≥ 500 ms μετά την αρχική αξιολόγηση ή εμφάνισης αύξησης QTc ≥ 60 ms είναι 1,9%, 1,3%, 1,4% και 1,5%, για φεσοτεροδίνη 4 mg, 8 mg, 12 mg και εικονικό φάρμακο, αντίστοιχα. Η κλινική σημασία αυτών των ευρημάτων θα εξαρτηθεί από τους παράγοντες κινδύνου και τους προδιαθεσιακούς παράγοντες του κάθε ασθενούς ξεχωριστά (βλ. παράγραφο Ειδικές προειδοποιήσεις και Ιδιαίτερες προφυλάξεις κατά τη χρήση). Περιστατικά επίσχεσης ούρων μετά την κυκλοφορία του φαρμάκου στην αγορά, τα οποία απαιτούν καθημερινό, έχουν περιγραφεί γενικά μέσα στην πρώτη εβδομάδα θεραπείας με φεσοτεροδίνη. Σε αυτά συμπεριλαμβάνονταν κυρίως ηλικιωμένοι άντρες ασθενείς (≥ 65 ετών) με ιστορικό σχετιζόμενο με καλή επίσχεση ούρων (βλ. παράγραφο Ειδικές προειδοποιήσεις και Ιδιαίτερες προφυλάξεις κατά τη χρήση). **ΚΑΤΟΧΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΥΚΛΟΦΟΡΙΑΣ:** Pfizer Limited, Ramsgate Road, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9NJ, Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο. **ΑΡΙΘΜΟΣ(ΟΙ) ΑΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΥΚΛΟΦΟΡΙΑΣ:** EU/1/07/386/001-020 **ΗΜΕΡΟΜΗΝΙΑ ΑΝΑΘΕΩΡΗΣΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΥ:** 06/2015. **ΛΙΑΝΗΚΗ ΤΙΜΗ:** 4 mg δισκία παρατεταμένης αποδέσμευσης ΒΤ x 30, Λ.Τ.: 32,65 €, 8 mg δισκία παρατεταμένης αποδέσμευσης ΒΤ x 30, Λ.Τ.: 33,76 € **ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΪΟΝ ΓΙΑ ΤΟ ΟΠΟΙΟ ΑΠΑΙΤΕΙΤΑΙ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗ ΥΠΝΗΓΗ ΓΙΑ ΠΛΗΡΗΣ ΣΥΝΤΑΓΟΓΡΑΦΙΚΕΣ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΕΣ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΗΣΤΕ ΝΑ ΑΠΕΥΘΥΝΘΕΙΤΕ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΤΑΙΡΙΑ.**

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1. SmPC Spedra[®], September 2015
2. Goldstein I et al. J Sex Med 2012; 9 (4): 1122-1133.
3. Belkoff LH et al. Int J Clin Pract 2013; 67 (4): 333-341.

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Βιβλιογραφία: 1. Miller K, et al. Poster presentation at the 31st Annual European Association of Urology (EAU) Annual Congress, 11-15 March 2016, Munich, Germany. Poster no. 775.

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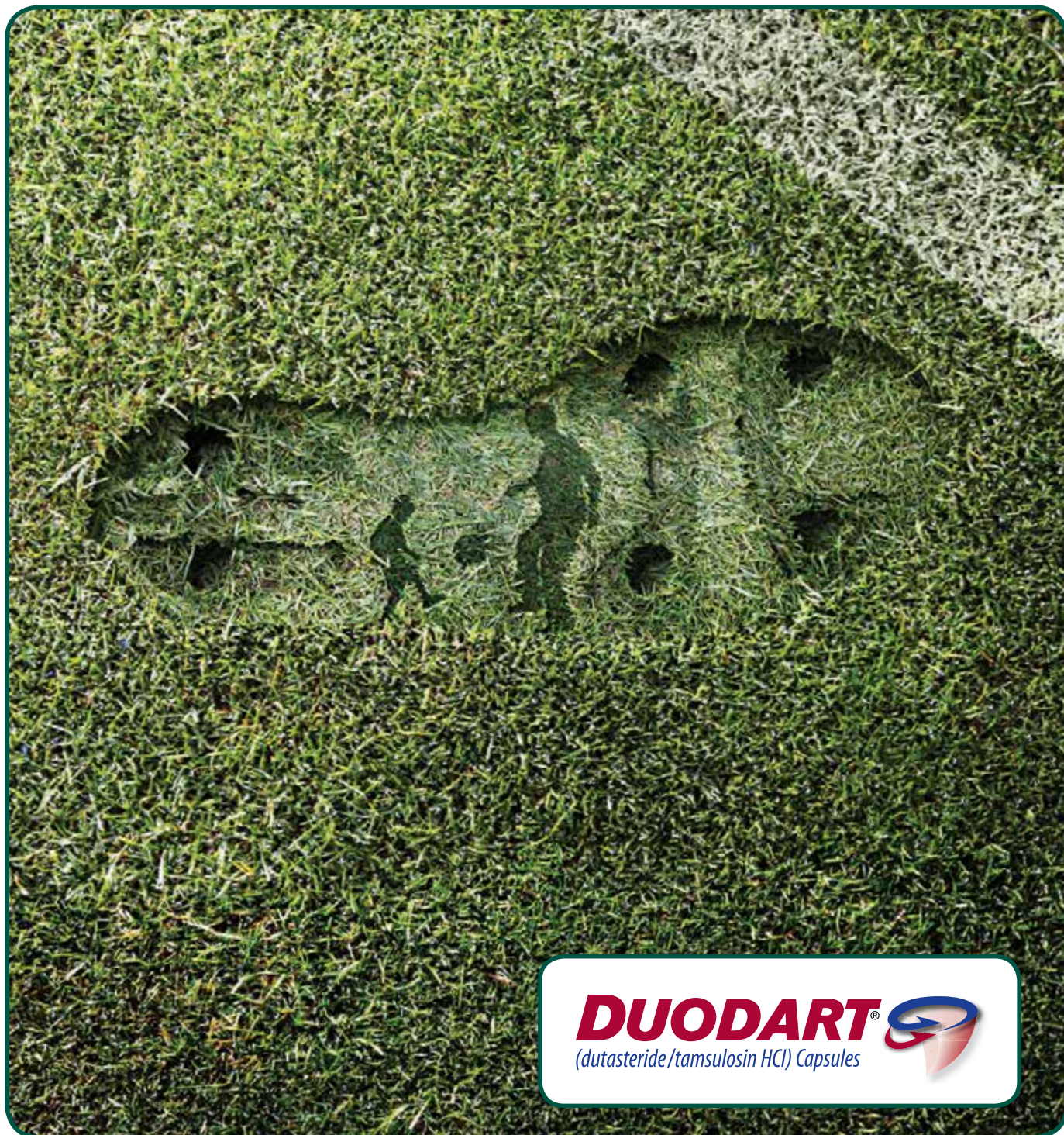
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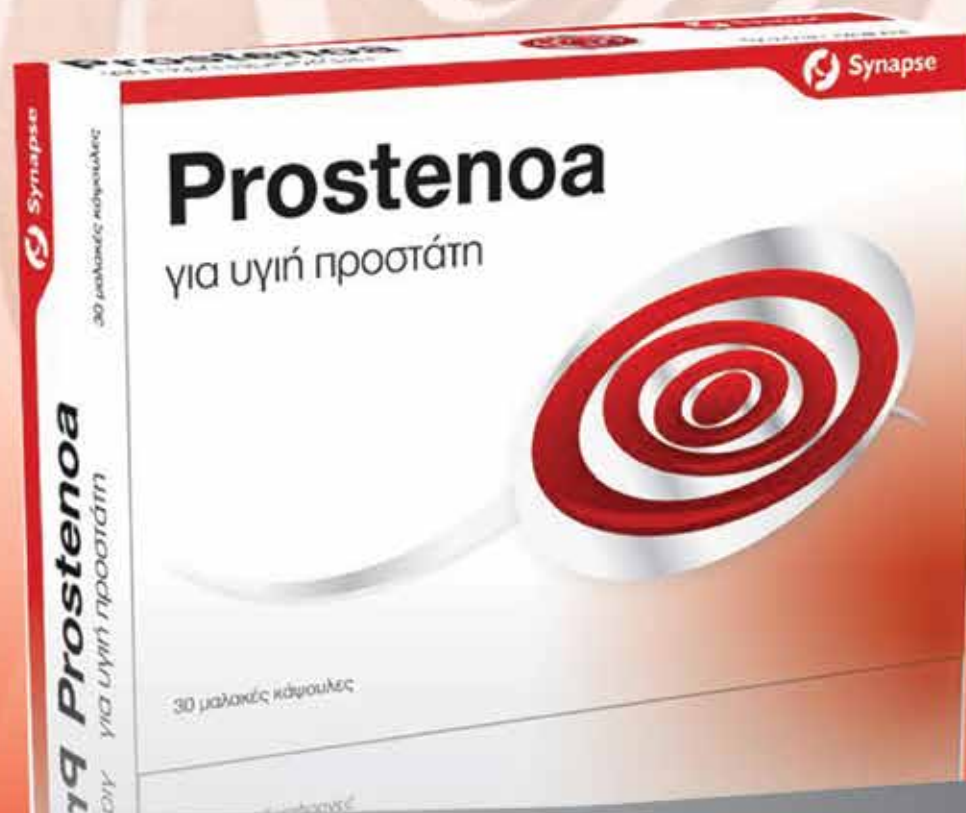
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Σηλα στον άνθρωπο

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΙΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΪΟΝΤΟΣ

1. ΟΝΟΜΑΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΙΚΟΥ ΠΡΟΪΟΝΤΟΣ: Arvekar 11,25 mg/vial (3 μινών). **2. ΠΟΙΟΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΣΟΤΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΘΕΣΗ:** Ένα φιαλίδιο περιέχει 15mg triptorelin pamoate, που αντιστοιχεί σε 11,25mg triptorelin. Για τον πλήρη κατάλογο των εκδόχων βλ. επόμενη παράγραφο 6.1. **3. ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΤΕΧΝΙΚΗ ΜΟΡΦΗ:** Κόνις και διαλύτης για ενέσιμο ελαιώδη. **4. ΚΛΙΝΙΚΕΣ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΕΣ: 4.1. Θεραπευτικές Ενδείξεις:** - **Καρκίνος του προστάτη:** Θεραπεία του τοπικά προχωρημένου ή μεταστατικού καρκίνου του προστάτη (ευνοϊκή επίδραση της θεραπείας είναι εμφανέστερη και συχνότερη σε ασθενείς που δεν είχαν λάβει προηγούμενες άλλη ορμονική θεραπεία). - **Ενδομητρίωση:** Γεννητική και εξωγεννητική ενδομητρίωση (στάδιο ΙV). - **Ινομυώματα μήτρας:** Θεραπεία των ινομυωμάτων μήτρας. **4.2. Δοσολογία και τρόπος χορήγησης:** - **Καρκίνος του προστάτη:** Μία ενδομυϊκή ένεση του Arvekar 11,25mg κάθε τρεις μήνες. - **Ενδομητρίωση:** Μία ενδομυϊκή ένεση του Arvekar 11,25mg κάθε τρεις μήνες. Η θεραπεία πρέπει να αρχίζει τις πρώτες πέντε ημέρες του καταμήνιου κύκλου. Διάρκεια της θεραπείας ενδομητρίωσης: αυτή εξαρτάται από την αρχική βαρύτητα της ενδομητρίωσης και τις αλλαγές που παρατηρούνται στον κλινική εικόνα (λείπτουσες και ανατομικές) κατά τη διάρκεια της θεραπείας. Γενικά, αντιστάται η ενδομητρίωση να θεραπευθεί για διάστημα 3 μινών και μόνον αν αποδειχθεί στους 3 μήνες ότι η θεραπεία απέδωσε μπορεί να συνεχισθεί το ανώτερο μέχρι 6 μήνες. Δεν πρέπει να χορηγείται δεύτερη σειρά θεραπείας με αυτό το φαρμακευτικό προϊόν ή άλλο ανάλογο γοναδορелиνών. - **Ινομυώματα:** Μία ενδομυϊκή ένεση του Arvekar 11,25mg κάθε τρεις μήνες. Η θεραπεία πρέπει να αρχίζει τις πρώτες πέντε ημέρες του καταμήνιου κύκλου. Γενικά, αντιστάται η ενδομητρίωση να θεραπευθεί για διάστημα 3 μινών και μόνον αν αποδειχθεί στους 3 μήνες ότι η θεραπεία απέδωσε μπορεί να συνεχισθεί το ανώτερο μέχρι 6 μήνες. **4.3. Αντενδείξεις:** - Υπερευαίσθησία στη γοναδορелиνική, τα ανάλογα της ή σε οποιοδήποτε άλλο συστατικό του φαρμάκου (βλ. επόμενη παράγραφο 4.8 "Ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες"). - Σε ασθενείς με καρκίνο του προστάτη που παρουσιάζουν συμπίεση του νωτιαίου μυελού ή ενδείξεις μεταστάσεων. - Κύηση. Πριν την έναρξη της αγωγής πρέπει να επιβεβαιώνεται ότι η ασθενής δεν είναι έγκυος. **4.4. Ειδικές προειδοποιήσεις και προφυλάξεις κατά τη χρήση:** Σε ενήλικες, η παρατεταμένη χρήση αναλόγων GnRH μπορεί να οδηγήσει στην απώλεια οστικής μάζας γεγονός που αυξάνει τον κίνδυνο οστεοπόρωσης. Ρύθμιση της αντιπεραστικής θερμοκρασίας μπορεί να απαιτείται σε ασθενείς οι οποίοι λαμβάνουν τέτοια αγωγή. - **Καρκίνος του προστάτη:** Η τριπτορελίνη, όπως και τα άλλα ανάλογα GnRH, προκαλεί αρχικά μία παροδική αύξηση στα επίπεδα ορού της τεστοστερόνης, και πιθανά επακόλουθη επιδείνωση των συμπτωμάτων που σχετίζονται γενικά με τον καρκίνο του προστάτη. Για να αντισταθμιστεί αυτή η αρχική αύξηση των επιπέδων τεστοστερόνης, μπορεί να εξεταστεί η χορήγηση αντιανδρογόνων κατά την έναρξη της θεραπείας. Ασθενείς που παρουσιάζουν ή έχουν αυξημένο κίνδυνο για ανάπτυξη απόφραξης των ουροφόρων οδών ή συμπίεσης του νωτιαίου μυελού πρέπει να παρακολουθούνται στενά. Είναι χρήσιμος ο περιοδικός έλεγχος των επιπέδων τεστοστερόνης αίματος, καθώς αυτά δεν πρέπει να ξεπερνούν το 1 ng/ml. - **Ενδομητρίωση - Ινομυώματα:** Η χορήγηση triptorelin στη συνιστώμενη δοσολογία προκαλεί συχνά υπογοναδοτροφική αμηνόρροια. Εάν συμβεί μπροσπαγία μετά από τον πρώτο μήνα, πρέπει να μετρηθούν τα επίπεδα της οιστραδιόλης στο πλάσμα και εάν αυτά τα επίπεδα είναι κάτω από 50 pg/ml, πρέπει να ανασταθθούν πιθανές οργανικές βλάβες. Η ωοθηκική λειτουργία επανέρχεται μετά από τη διακοπή της θεραπείας και η ωορρηγία συμβαίνει περίπου 5 μήνες μετά την τελευταία ένεση. Μία μη ορμονική μέθοδος αντισύλληψης θα πρέπει να χρησιμοποιείται σε όλη τη διάρκεια της αγωγής περιλαμβανομένων και 3 μινών μετά την τελευταία ένεση. - **Πρώιμη ήβη:** Η αρχική διέγερση των ωοθηκών στα κορίτσια, μπορεί να προκαλέσει αιμορραγία από τη μήτρα. Επιβάλλεται η τακτική παρακολούθηση των ασθενών μέχρι τη διακοπή της θεραπείας. **4.5. Αλληλεπιδράσεις με άλλα φάρμακα και άλλες μορφές αλληλεπίδρασης:** Να μη χορηγείται ταυτόχρονα με φάρμακα που προκαλούν υπερρολακτιναιμία (μειώνουν τον αριθμό των υποδοχέων της GnRH στην υπόφυση). Δεν έχει παρατηρηθεί άλλη κλινικά σημαντική αλληλεπίδραση με άλλα φαρμακευτικά προϊόντα. **4.6. Κύηση και Γαλουχία:** - **Κύηση:** Μελέτες σε πειραματόζωα δεν έδειξαν τερατογόνο επίδραση. Κατά τη διάρκεια της επιτήρησης μετά την κυκλοφορία στην αγορά και σε περιορισμένο αριθμό εγκύων γυναικών με έκθεση στην τριπτορελίνη, δεν υπήρξαν αναφορές γενετικών ανωμαλιών ή εμβρυοτοξικότητας οι οποίες να αποδίδονται στο προϊόν. Εντούτοις, επειδή ο αριθμός των ασθενών είναι πολύ μικρός για την εξαγωγή συμπερασμάτων όσον αφορά στον κίνδυνο συγγενών ανωμαλιών ή εμβρυοτοξικότητας, εάν η ασθενής καταστεί έγκυος ενώ λαμβάνει τριπτορελίνη, η θεραπεία πρέπει να διακοπεί. Μία μη ορμονική μέθοδος αντισύλληψης θα πρέπει να χρησιμοποιείται σε όλη τη διάρκεια της αγωγής περιλαμβανομένων και 1 μινών μετά την τελευταία ένεση. - **Γαλουχία:** Η τριπτορελίνη δεν αντιστάται να χρησιμοποιείται κατά την περίοδο του θηλασμού. **4.7. Επίδραση στην ικανότητα οδήγησης και χειρισμού μηχανών:** Δεν έχουν παρατηρηθεί επιδράσεις στην ικανότητα οδήγησης και χειρισμού μηχανών. **4.8. Ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες: Εμπειρία από τις κλινικές μελέτες:** Τα στοιχεία που αναφέρονται κατωτέρω βασίζονται στην ανάλυση των αθροιστικών δεδομένων που αναφέρθηκαν κατά τη διάρκεια των κλινικών μελετών με τη μινιαία και την τριμηνια μορφή του φαρμάκου (συνολικός πληθυσμός περίπου 2400). Η πλειοψηφία των ανεπιθύμητων ενεργειών που αναφέρθηκαν κατά τη διάρκεια των κλινικών μελετών σχετιζόταν με τις φαρμακολογικές δράσεις, όπως ο υπογοναδοτροφικός υπογοναδισμός, ή η αρχική διέγερση της υπόφυσης και των γονάδων. Η συχνότητα των ανεπιθύμητων ενεργειών που αναφέρονται παρακάτω, ορίζεται με βάση την ακόλουθη αρχή: Πολύ συχνές ($\geq 10\%$) – Συχνές ($\geq 1\%$ – $< 10\%$) – Μη συχνές ($\geq 0,1\%$ – $< 1\%$) – Σπάνιες ($\geq 0,01\%$ – $< 0,1\%$) – Πολύ σπάνιες ($< 0,01\%$). **Γενική ανοχή σε ενήλικες:** Πολύ συχνές: Ήπιες μέχρι έντονες εξεψεις και επιδράσεις οι οποίες συνήθως δεν απαιτούν διακοπή της θεραπείας. **Γενική ανοχή σε άνδρες:** Πολύ συχνές κατά την έναρξη της θεραπείας (βλ. παράγραφο 4.4 "Ειδικές προειδοποιήσεις και προφυλάξεις κατά τη χρήση"): Επιδείνωση συμπτωμάτων εκ του ουροποιητικού, οστικός πόνος μεταστατικής αιτιολογίας και συμπτώματα που σχετίζονται με συμπίεση του νωτιαίου μυελού από σπονδυλικές μεταστάσεις (πόνος σφύσης, αδυναμία, παραισθησία των κάτω άκρων), όταν τα επίπεδα τεστοστερόνης πλάσματος αυξάνονται αρχικά και παροδικά κατά την έναρξη της αγωγής. Αυτά τα συμπτώματα είναι παροδικά και συνήθως εξαφανίζονται σε μία έως δύο εβδομάδες. Συχνές κατά τη διάρκεια της θεραπείας: Ελαττωμένη σεξουαλική επιθυμία και ανακινώσιμη σύσταση που σχετίζονται με τη μείωση των επιπέδων πλάσματος τεστοστερόνης λόγω της φαρμακολογικής δράσης της τριπτορελίνης. **Γενική ανοχή σε γυναίκες:** Πολύ συχνές κατά την έναρξη της θεραπείας: - Επιδείνωση συμπτωμάτων ενδομητρίωσης (μυϊκός πόνος, αιμορραγία) κατά τη διάρκεια της αρχικής και παροδικής αύξησης των επιπέδων οιστραδιόλης πλάσματος. Αυτά τα συμπτώματα είναι παροδικά και συνήθως εξαφανίζονται σε μία έως δύο εβδομάδες. - Αιμορραγία εκ του γεννητικού συστήματος περιλαμβανόμενης μηνόρραγια, μπροσπαγία, μπορεί να συμβεί κατά τον μήνα που ακολουθεί στην πρώτη ένεση. Πολύ συχνές κατά τη διάρκεια της αγωγής: Κατά τη διάρκεια των κλινικών μελετών στην ενδομητρίωση οι ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες έδειξαν μια γενική μορφή υποιστρογονικών συμπτωμάτων που σχετίζονται με την καταστολή της υπόφυσης και των ωοθηκών, όπως διαταραχές ύπνου, κεφαλαλγία, διαταραχές θυμικού, κόπωση, ζήτηση, δυσπαρέυνια και μειωμένη σεξουαλική επιθυμία. Πολύ συχνές κατά τη διάρκεια της αγωγής ή την μινιαία μορφή του φαρμάκου: πόνος στήθους, μυϊκές κρήμες, αρθραλγία, αύξηση βάρους, ναυτία, κοιλιακός πόνος / δυσφορία, εξασθένιση. **Γενική ανοχή σε παιδιά:** Αντιδράσεις υπερευαίσθη-

σίας, κεφαλαλγία, εξάψεις, και αιμορραγία εκ του γεννητικού συστήματος στα κορίτσια (βλ. παράγραφο 4.4 "Ειδικές προειδοποιήσεις και προφυλάξεις κατά τη χρήση"). **Τοπική ανοχή:** Συχνές: πόνος, ερυθρότητα και φλεγμονή στο σημείο της ένεσης. **Εμπειρία μετά την κυκλοφορία του προϊόντος: Σε ενήλικες:** Κατά τη διάρκεια της επιτήρησης μετά την κυκλοφορία του προϊόντος έχουν αναφερθεί επιπλέον πολύ σπάνιες ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες. Αυτές ταξινομούνται κατά κατηγορία οργάνων σώματος και κατά μειούμενη συχνότητα εμφάνισης. - Ενδοκρινικές διαταραχές: γυναικομαστία. - Ψυχιατρικές διαταραχές: κατάθλιψη, απληξία της προσωπικότητας. - Διαταραχές νευρικού συστήματος: ζάλη, παραισθησία σε άκρες. - Οφθαλμικές διαταραχές: θολή όραση ή διαταραχές της όρασης. - Διαταραχές ώτων και λαβυρίνθου: ίλιγγος που μερικές φορές σχετίζεται με γαστρεντερικά συμπτώματα. - Διαταραχές αναπνευστικές, θώρακος και μεσοθωρακίου: δύσπνοια. - Γαστρεντερικές διαταραχές: διάρροια, έμετος. - Διαταραχές δέρματος και υποδόριου ιστού: αντιδράσεις υπερευαίσθησης που περιλαμβάνουν κνησμό, κνίδωση, εξάνθημα, αγγειοοίδημα (βλ. παράγραφο 4.3 "Αντενδείξεις"). - Διαταραχές μυοσκελετικές, οστικές και συνδετικού ιστού: αρθραλγία, μυαλγία και μυϊκή αδυναμία σε άνδρες και γυναίκες, επεισοδιακή οστική πόνου σε άνδρες κατά τη διάρκεια της αγωγής (βλ. επίσης παράγραφο 4.4 "Ειδικές προειδοποιήσεις και προφυλάξεις κατά τη χρήση", σχετικά με τον κίνδυνο οστεοπόρωσης). - Διαταραχές του αναπαραγωγικού συστήματος και μαστού: σε γυναίκες, παρατεταμένες διαταραχές περιόδου όπως αμηνόρροια, μηνόρραγια και μπροσπαγία μετά την αγωγή. Βλ. σχετικά με την ενδομητρίωση σε παιδιά δια ινομυώματα μήτρας στην παράγραφο 4.4 "Ειδικές προειδοποιήσεις και προφυλάξεις κατά τη χρήση". - Γενικές διαταραχές και καταστάσεις σημείων χορήγησης: πυρεξία, κακουχία. - Εξετάσεις: αυξημένη αρτηριακή πίεση. **Σε παιδιά:** Σύμφωνα με την συσχετισμένη εμπειρία ασφαλείας στις τριπτορελίνες σε παιδιά που έλαβαν αγωγή για τον πρώιμη ήβη, οι ακόλουθες σπάνιες ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες έχουν αναφερθεί επιπλέον κατά την επιτήρηση μετά την κυκλοφορία του προϊόντος: αντιδράσεις υπερευαίσθησης, κεφαλαλγία, αύξηση βάρους, αυξημένη αρτηριακή πίεση, επεισοδιακή θολή ή διαταραχές όρασης, δυσφορία εκ του γαστρεντερικού με κοιλιακό πόνο και έμετο, επίσταξη, κακουχία, μυαλγία, συναισθηματική αστάθεια, νευρική κόπωση. **4.9. Υπερδοσολογία:** Δεν έχουν αναφερθεί ανεπιθύμητες αντιδράσεις οφειλόμενες σε υπερδοσολογία. Σε περίπτωση υπερδοσολογίας, ενδείκνυται συμπτωματική αντιμετώπιση. **5. ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΛΟΓΙΚΕΣ ΙΔΙΟΤΗΤΕΣ: 5.1. Φαρμακοδυναμικές ιδιότητες: ΑΝΑΛΟΓΟ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΛΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΟΡΜΟΝΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΓΟΝΑΔΟΤΡΟΦΙΝΩΝ. Κωδικός ATC: L02AE04 (αντιεπιδείξιμο και αναστροπιογονικό).** Η τριπτορελίνη είναι συνθετικό δεκαπενταϊκό που είναι ανάλογο της φυσικής εκλυτικής ορμόνης των γοναδοτροφινών (γοναδορелиνική, GnRH, LH-RH). Μελέτες σε ζώα και στον άνθρωπο έχουν δείξει ότι η συνεχής χορήγηση τριπτορελίνης, μετά από μία αρχική διέγερση, αναστέλλει την έκκριση των γοναδοτροφινών με επακόλουθη καταστολή της λειτουργίας των όρχων και της ωοθήκης. Η πρώτη ένεση του Arvekar 11,25 mg διεισφέρει την απελευθέρωση των υποφυσιακών γοναδοτροφών LH και FSH προκαλώντας μία παροδική αύξηση των επιπέδων τεστοστερόνης στους άνδρες και οιστραδιόλης στις γυναίκες (flare-up). Η παρατεταμένη χορήγηση οδηγεί, περίπου 20 ημέρες μετά και καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια απελευθέρωσης της δραστικής ουσίας, σε μείωση των επιπέδων LH και FSH και κατά συνέπεια σε πτώση της τεστοστερόνης ή οιστραδιόλης πλάσματος σε επίπεδα ενουσιασμού. Μία παροδική αύξηση των ορίων φωσφορικών μπορεί να παρατηρηθεί σε άνδρες κατά την έναρξη της θεραπείας. Στην πρώιμη ήβη η αναστολή της υποφυσιακής γοναδοτροφικής υπερδραστικότητας και στα δύο φύλα, οδηγεί στην καταστολή της αιχμής της LH μετά από διεγερτική δοκιμασία LHRH και συνεπώς καταστολή της έκκρισης οιστραδιόλης ή τεστοστερόνης και σε βελτίωση του λόγου ηλικίας ως προς το ύψος / οστική ηλικία και του τελικού ύψους. **5.2. Φαρμακοκινητικές ιδιότητες:** Μετά την ενδομυϊκή ένεση του Arvekar 11,25mg στους ασθενείς με καρκίνο του προστάτη, παρατηρείται μία μέγιστη τιμή της τριπτορελίνης πλάσματος περίπου 3 ώρες μετά την ένεση. Μετά από μία φάση ελάττωσης που συνεχίζεται κατά τη διάρκεια του πρώτου μήνα, τα επίπεδα τριπτορελίνης στην κυκλοφορία παραμένουν σταθερά μέχρι την ημέρα 90. Το επίπεδο τεστοστερόνης στο αίμα φθάνει στο όριο ενουσιασμού περίπου 20 ημέρες μετά την ένεση και παραμένει σημαντικό κάτω από αυτό το όριο καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια απελευθέρωσης της δραστικής ουσίας αντιστοιχώντας με τη φάση σταθεροποιημένης συγκέντρωσης στο πλάσμα. **5.3. Προκλινικά στοιχεία για την ασφαλεία:** Τα μόνα προκλινικά ευρήματα ήταν αυτά που σχετίζονται με την αναμενόμενη φαρμακολογική δράση της τριπτορελίνης, δηλαδή την καταστολή του υποθαλάμου-υποφυσιακού-γοναδικού άξονα, με το επακόλουθο αποτέλεσμα στα επίπεδα των ορμονών του φύλου και στον αναπαραγωγικό άξονα. Αυτά τα ευρήματα ήταν σε μεγάλο βαθμό αναστρέψιμα κατά την περίοδο ανάκαμψης. Η τριπτορελίνη δεν έχει δεχθεί να είναι τοξική στο γενετικό υλικό στην κλασσική σειρά δοκιμασιών μεταλλάξεων. 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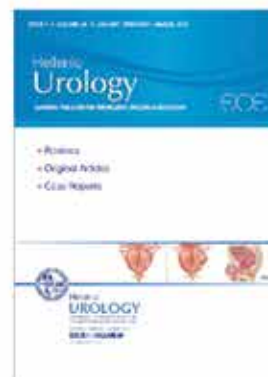
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REVIEW

Green therapies for a grey disease

Konstantinos Stamatou

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Abstract

Phytotherapeutic agents are used for many years as an adjunctive therapy of benign prostatic hypertrophy. The similarity of the symptoms of the lower urinary tract associated with chronic prostatitis with those caused by benign prostatic hypertrophy and the anecdotally observed efficacy of the phytotherapeutic agents in the improvement of pelvic pain justifies their use in the treatment of chronic nonbacterial prostatitis. Many clinicians and researchers have investigated the role of herbal medicinal products against the symp-

toms of the lower urinary tract however a careful review of the reported studies showed that specific studies for nonbacterial prostatitis are limited. Even if in these studies the target, the material and the methods varies, most support their usefulness. Despite the general belief that phytotherapeutic agents' have a dual mechanism of action (both hormonal and anti-inflammatory) it seems that they actually exhibit a moderate anti-inflammatory effect the exact mechanism of which is not fully investigated.

Citation

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Introduction

Chronic nonbacterial prostatitis or chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome (CP/CPPS) is considered the most common form of prostatitis, accounting for almost 90% of all the prostatitis cases. It can affect men of all ages. It manifests as a combination of mild prostatism (irritant or obstructive symptoms) and pain in the prostate and in various other locations such as the perineum, the scrotum, testicles, penis or even the bladder. The intensity of discomfort may be initially mild and it

worsening gradually over a period of time (usually longer than three months). Up to 50% of the patients experience sexual dysfunction. The symptoms sometimes persist and sometimes disappear. Although signs of inflammation are present, patients have no bacteria in their urine and prostatic secretion¹. Actually no causative agent has been implicated with certainty therefore, treatment is basically symptomatic. For the above reasons CP/CPPS remains a grey disease.

Current pharmacotherapy of CP/CPPS is multid-

Key words

chronic nonbacterial prostatitis; chronic pelvic pain syndrome; lower urinary tract symptoms; pharmacotherapy; phytotherapeutic drugs

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mensional and includes alpha - adrenergic blockers, muscle relaxants, nonsteroidal anti - inflammatory drugs, 5 - alpha - reductase inhibitors, antibiotics and herbal medicines. However, the use of - most of - the above medications is not fully justified and documented².

With regard to phytotherapeutic drugs, some have been proven effective in improving symptoms of the lower urinary tract associated with benign prostatic hypertrophy. Given that several symptoms are common in CP/CPPS and prostatic hypertrophy and since these conditions overlap in pathological substrate, many clinicians and researchers investigated the role of phytotherapy in the treatment of CP/CPPS³. This article presents the existing published data on the efficacy of the most usually used phytotherapeutic agents in the treatment of prostate diseases and discusses the pathophysiological basis of phytotherapy in CP/CPPS.

Material and methods

A database and a manual search were conducted in the MEDLINE database of the National Library of Medicine, Pubmed, Cochrane Library and other libraries using the terms: "prostate", "prostatitis", "chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome", "non - bacterial prostatitis" "phytotherapy", combined with the key words: "Saw palmetto", "Pygeum Africanum", "Equisetum arvense", "Chimaphila umbellata", "Populus tremula", "Pulsatilla pratensis", "Quercetin", "Cernilton" in various combinations. Bibliographic information in the selected publications was checked for relevant publications not included in the initial search. Because of the close relationship between inflammation and prostatic hypertrophy and the fact that these two conditions share similar symptoms, we also took in consideration studies examining the efficacy of phytotherapy in the treatment of symptoms secondary to benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) that are common to CP/CPPS.

Results

A variety of phytotherapeutic agents are used worldwide for the management of lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) and some of them have been also tested in CP/CPPS treatment. The most commonly

used preparations originate from the species *Serenoa repens*, rye - grass and *Pygeum africanum*.

Serenoa repens (Saw palmetto, *Serenoa serrulata*) is the best known phytotherapeutic as it has been used in traditional and alternative medicine to treat a variety of conditions. Not only the fruits but also the husk and leaves of this palm - like plant are highly enriched in fatty acids and phytosterols. Their extract has been the subject of intensive research for the treatment of symptoms of BPH and recently, prostatitis. In both cases its efficacy has been investigated either in combination or in comparison with other phytotherapeutic, antibiotics, alpha - blockers, anti - inflammatories and inhibitors of 5 - alpha reductase. There are more studies examining the role of saw palmetto as add - on therapy to other agents and less as monotherapy.

With regard to studies using *S. repens* extract as monotherapy for men with confirmed CP/CPPS, these of Lopatkin et al., and Giulianelli et al., showed significant improvement in symptoms (as measured in IPSS and NIH - CPSI questionnaires) over the six month treatment and follow up period. Moreover, an improvement in both erectile and voiding function (as demonstrated by the increase in the scores for the IIEF - 5 questionnaire and uroflowmetry results respectively) was also achieved^{4,5}. This efficacy appears to increase by the addition of supplements such as lycopene and selenium: Morgia and colleagues evaluated the effectiveness of this combination (*S. repens*, lycopene and selenium) versus *S. repens* alone and found a significant decrease in PSA and white blood cell count after eight weeks of treatment only in the group of patients who received combined therapy⁶. Of note, IPSS improvement was slightly higher in the group of combined therapy and the mean NIH CPSI score reduction in the group of combined therapy was twice as much as that of monotherapy arm⁶. Similarly, a placebo controlled randomized trial of combinational treatment (*S. repens*, selenium and lycopene) from the same authors showed greater changes in IPSS scores, serum PSA levels and peak urine flow rates in the treatment than in control group⁷. The mean NIH CPSI score reduction in the treatment arm was twice as much as that of placebo. Interestingly, while combination of *S. repens* with selenium and lycopene achieved high



success rates in both studies that of *S. repens* alone in the previously mentioned trial was comparable to that of placebo in the last mentioned study.

Magri et al., who tested the combination of *S. repens* with α - blockers with or without supplements (lycopene and selenium), found a similarly significant improvement in urinary flow (Qmax), pain and quality of life (questionnaires NIH - CPSI, QoL) over the 18 month follow - up period⁸. Kaplan and colleagues in a prospective, 1 - year trial compared the effects of *S. repens* treatment with that of finasteride. According to their results, patients treated with *S. repens* showed no significant long - term improvement (as measured in NIH/CPSI, AUA Symptom Score, QoL and MPS), while those treated with finasteride had significant and long - term improvement in all studied parameters except that of urinary flow rate⁹. Finally, a multicentre study of the Italian Society of Oncological Urology compared the efficacy of the combination *S. repens* plus alpha - blocker versus that of *S. repens* alone, and found similar changes in the uroflowmetry after 6 months of follow - up. The mean urine flow rate was slightly increased while there were no changes in sexual function during the observation time. Notably, there was a substantial decrease in the amount of patients presenting severe prostatic symptoms and an improvement of inflammatory findings on ultrasound examination, clinical examination and biopsy material¹⁰. In none of the studies mentioned above were observed significant side effects.

Regarding studies focusing on LUTS of various aetiologies accompanied or not by chronic pelvic pain, two synchronous comparative placebo controlled trials found no difference in the effectiveness of *S. repens* versus placebo^{11, 12}. In accordance to these findings, a large multicentre randomized trial by Barry et al., showed that - even - higher doses of *S. repens* cannot influence neither the impact of LUTS nor the quality of sexual performance over the placebo¹³. On the other hand, Sinescu et al., demonstrated a statistically significant improvement of mild or moderate LUTS (as measured in IPSS questionnaire) induced by BPH in a cohort of patients treated with *S. repens*. Further improvements were observed in QoL, urinary flow (Qmax), residual urinary volume and erectile

function (as measured in IIEF questionnaire) during the long term study period¹⁴. In accordance to the above, Reissigl et al., in a randomized placebo controlled study found an overall 30% reduction of pain (as measured in NIH - CPSI questionnaire) and an 18% decrease of PSA levels in the *S. repens* group which were significantly different of that of the control group¹⁵. A prospective multicenter double - blind randomized study comparing tamsulosin (0.4mg/24h) with *S. repens* (320mg/24h) in a sufficient number of patients (542) with symptomatic prostatic hypertrophy (IPSS \geq 10) found no differences in IPSS (with a corresponding improvement in both of irritative and obstructive complaints), after 12 months of follow up. Notably, Qmax and PSA improvement was similar in both groups. Both treatments were equally well tolerated¹⁶. Pavone et al., administered a combination of *S. repens*, *Urtica dioica* and *Pinus pinaster* (IPBTRE) either alone or in association with antibiotics or α - blockers for a minimal duration of 30 days to a maximum of a year. They found a remarkable reduction of pain and LUTS induced discomfort in 85% of the evaluated cases (especially in relation to irritative symptoms)¹⁷. Of note, meta - analyses found the effectiveness of saw palmetto inferior of that of finasteride and tamsulosin but clearly higher than that of placebo in the treatment of mild and moderate LUTS, nocturia and discomfort, while there was no comparable efficacy for pain management^{18, 19}.

Controversy exists with regard to the ability of *S. repens* to reduce prostatic size. While Debruyne et al. observed a slight reduction in prostate size after 12 months of follow up of patients treated with *S. repens*, most clinical trials found *S. repens* extract no more effective than placebo in blocking benign prostate growth²⁰. Experimental evidence suggests that it is rather the association of *S. repens* with some natural compounds (such as lycopene, other carotenoids and selenium) that reduce prostate size than *S. repens* alone²¹.

The bark of the plant *Pygeum Africanum* contains phytosterols (e.g. beta - sitosterol) pentacyclic triterpenes (ursolic and oleanic acids) and ferulic acid nesters (n - docosanol and tetracosanol). It has been used for ages in Africa and since the mid - 1960s in Europe to treat BPH. Despite the long experience with

pygeum, it actually has been the subject of very few studies. Some of them shows efficacy in symptoms regression (either as experienced by patients or as measured by IPSS) and micturition parameters (maximum urine flow and volume of urination)^{22, 23}. This efficacy appears to persist over time^{24, 25}. Frequency of nocturia and quality of life were found to improve further with long - term pygeum administration²⁵. However residual urine, prostate size and quality of sexual performance were not improved²⁴. In contrast to BPH patients, patients with CP/CPPS treated with pygeum - alone or in association with antibiotics - significantly improved in sexual function²⁶. In none of these studies undesirable effects were observed.

Quercetin is a natural bioflavonoid found in many fruits, vegetables, grains and leaves. Although it has been widely used for years, there are quite few studies examining its efficacy in the treatment of LUTS and prostatitis²⁷. In a large cohort of patients with CP/CPPS, Shoskes et al., administered phenotypical treatment (UPOINT) and found greater improvement (as measured in NIH - CPS questionnaire) with quercetin compared with other treatments after at least 6 months of therapy²⁸. In a smaller study from the same centre, quercetin administered alone, achieved high improvement rates (from at least 25 to 100%) in the 67% of the patients. Of note, when administered in combination with papain (which enhances the absorption of bioflavonoids); it achieved even higher improvement rates in 82% of the patients. In contrast, the placebo controlled group showed lower improvement rates in only 25% of the patients²⁹.

The rye - grass pollen extract (Cernilton) contains carbohydrates, aminoacids, vitamins, minerals and vegetable fats. The last are believed that increase plasma antioxidants, reduce insulin and confine local inflammation, limiting thus the development of both prostatitis and BPH. Since the early 90s, when Cernilton was first introduced in clinical practice, few studies examined its clinical effects and safety. More precisely, before 2000 only two placebo - controlled, two comparative trials and two trials with no control groups were published. All these studies lasted 3 - 14 months^{30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35}. In all, Cernilton improved self - rated urinary symptoms but did not improved urinary flow rates, residual volume or prostate size compared

with placebo or the comparative study agents³⁶. When studied in cohorts of patients with CP/CPPS improved self - rated urinary symptoms^{37, 38} and showed a clear therapeutic advantage over placebo³⁹. However, in an interesting study of patients with BPH who underwent surgery and were diagnosed with chronic nonspecific prostatitis upon biopsy, administration of Cernilton improved the persistent symptoms from the lower urinary tract and sexual dysfunction, according to the degree prostatitis⁴⁰. Other researchers found an overall 74.2% improvement in subjective symptoms and 65.6% in the objective findings³⁹ while other reported complete cure of only 36% of the treated population⁴¹. Notably, according to these authors, in the presence of aggravating or alleviating factors, the response to Cernilton treatment was practically null⁴². Reasons explaining the abovementioned disparities are unknown. One possible explanation is that the therapeutic effect of Cernilton may be time and dose dependent: Long - term administration of cernilton (6 months of treatment) resulted in a significant improvement rate of 76 - 78%^{37, 42}. Correspondingly, a daily dose of 750 mg promoted a faster and more noticeable improvement in subjective (NIH - CPSI, Sex - 4, IPSS, QoL) and objective criteria (leukocyte count in prostatic exudation) compared with that induced by the dose of 375 mg^{43, 44}. Both doses were equally well tolerated.

Equisetum arvense (field horsetail or common horsetail) is an herbaceous perennial plant. It was long used in the treatment of various diseases and it has specific use for BPH, prostatitis and prostate oedema⁴⁵. It is rich in silicic acid and silicates, which provide approximately 2 - 3% elemental silicon. Silicon stimulates leucocyte activity, helps preserve elasticity of connective tissue and promotes the repair of tissue. The abovementioned properties are of outmost importance for the treatment CP/CPPS. In the few existing reports, *Equisetum arvense*'s extract is being using in the treatment of LUTS and chronic prostatitis in combination with other phytotherapeutic agents (extracts from the plants *Chimaphila umbellata*, *Populus tremula*, *Pulsatilla pratensis*, Willow bark) and wheat germ oil as well, under the brand name Eviprostat. Tamaki et al., reported gradual improvement in symptoms of prostatism and dysuria



(IPSS), improvement in quality of life scores (QoL) and significant nocturia reduction during treatment. The drug was well tolerated⁴⁶. Iwamura et al., compared the efficacy of *Equisetum arvense* with that of rye pollen extract in the treatment of patients with CP/CPPS and found no significant differences⁴⁷.

The root extract of African potato (*Hypoxis hemerocallidea*) was used for centuries in Africa for relieving diseases of the urinary tract. *Epilobium parviflorum* is an herbaceous perennial plant belonging to the Onagraceae family. Its flower - petal - extract was traditionally used in Central Europe for the treatment of prostate disorders. Despite their popularity there are no clinical studies demonstrating any efficacy in the treatment of CP/CPPS for both herbals^{48, 49}.

Paeoniflorin is one of the main components of the root of herbaceous plant *Paeonia lactiflora* (white peony) which is used by the traditional medicine of Korea, China and Japan for its soothing properties. It is believed that it is effective in the treatment of prostate complaints. A clinical study evaluated its efficacy in the treatment of CP/CPPS based on the improvement in NIH - CPSI score and the number of lecithin particles (SPL) in the prostatic fluid. Moreover it was examined whether and if α - blockers enhance its efficacy. According to the authors, treatment with Paeoniflorin (Qianlieping Capsule) alone increased the number of lecithin particles by 46.9% and improved the NIH - CPSI score by 24.4%. However, the combination of paeoniflorin and tamsulosin increased the number of lecithin particles by 61.4% and improved the NIH - CPSI score by 42.3%. Of note, combinational treatment achieved higher rates in NIH - CPSI score than those of tamsulosin alone (33.7% and 28.6% respectively)⁵⁰.

Traditional Chinese medicine uses mixtures of herbs and plant extracts products of the Far East to relieve discomforts from urinary tract. A focused study evaluated the therapeutic effect of the Longjintonglin herbal mixture (*Genciana*, *Bambú*, *Poria cocos*, *astrágalo*, *Salvia púrpura*, *Gardenia* and *Houttuynia*) in patients with CP/CPPS. A statistically significant improvement in NIH - CPSI score, TCMSS (Traditional Chinese Medicine Syndrome Score) and a similarly significant reduction in the number of leukocytes in prostatic secretion was found⁵¹.

Discussion

For most of the abovementioned phytotherapeutic drugs no comparative or placebo - controlled studies further evaluating their efficacy exist and the few existing clinical trials have methodological problems and omissions in the reported results. Regarding the most known of them - saw palmetto and cernilton - published studies weren't based on a single clinical trial formulation. In addition the clinical trials are limited by their short duration, the limited number of participants and the unknown quality of the preparations used. However the main reason for the low adoption of phytotherapeutic drugs in the everyday clinical practice is the fact that their mechanism of action remains unclarified. They generally believed to have anti - androgenic and anti - inflammatory properties. Although the latter explain the pain recession, the exact mechanism that improves complaints of urination and sexual function remains unknown.

Three different mechanisms of action have been proposed for Saw palmetto: inhibition of the androgenic receptor (antiandrogenic), inhibition or blocking the action of growth factors (antiproliferative) and reduction of the production of 5 - lipoxygenase metabolites (anti - inflammatory)⁵². The latter has been proved both clinically and pathologically: the percentage of inflammatory pattern in biopsy material and prostatectomy specimens from patients receiving *serenoa repens* and quercetin was significantly lower than that of the control group²⁰. In contrast, the existing evidence on an antiandrogenic action by inhibiting 5 α - reductase activity is rather contradictory^{53,54}. In support of this, a relatively new study on androgen - independent prostate epithelial PC - 3 cells demonstrated that the anti - proliferative, anti - inflammatory and anti - oedematous effects of *serenoa repens* are taking place in absence of androgens⁵⁵. Infact, *serenoa repens* at effective concentrations of 50 μ g/mL prevented inflammatory activity on human epithelial prostate cells by suppressing signaling growth factors such as IGF - I (Insulin - Like Growth Factor)⁵⁶. Furthermore, it exerts an inhibitory effect on the expression of the inflammation factors COX - 2, 5 - LOX, iNOS, on the binding activity of NF - κ B and on the replication of TNF - α . Notably, the combination of *serenoa repens*, selenium and lyco-

pene exhibits greater inhibitory activity than that of the serenoa repens alone⁵⁷. Notably, the combination serenoa repens, selenium and lycopene increases the pro - apoptotic molecules Bax and caspase - 9, blocks the mRNA of the anti - apoptotic Bcl - 2, and limits the expression of the epidermal and vascular - endothelial growth factors⁵⁸. Therefore it could be hypothesized that the significant decrease in mast cell concentration and the rapid fall of histamine levels as well as the reduction in the inflammatory oedema (resulting from the above sequelae) allow relaxation of muscle layer and gradually lead to the relief of chronic prostatitis symptoms. Of note, although antiandrogenic activity of serenoa repens has not been experimentally demonstrated, it has been suggested that long term administration causes atrophy of the epithelium of the central region of the prostate gland. This finding provides evidence of an antiandrogenic action and also explains the limited efficacy of serenoa repens in sexual dysfunction complaints⁵⁹.

Quercetin is considered an anti - allergenic and natural anti - inflammatory that inhibits the formation of bruises and the development of oedema²⁵. These properties have been histologically demonstrated in the prostate gland⁶⁰. There are no sufficient laboratory studies investigating the exact mechanism but it appears to exhibit a strong antioxidant activity. It is able to down - regulate the inflammatory response of bone marrow - derived macrophages in vitro. Moreover, it inhibits cytokine and inducible nitric oxide synthase expression through inhibition of the NF - kappaB pathway⁶¹. This property indicates that quercetin reduce or even help prevent some of the damage free radicals cause. Importantly, it is also considered a non - specific inhibitor of protein kinase through which inhibits activation of inflammatory mediators and enzymes such as lipoxygenase^{62, 63, 64}. Through this effect quercetin decreases levels of inflammatory prostaglandins and increases levels of prostatic endorphins which are natural pain - relieving molecules⁶⁵. Moreover, it also prevents the release of histamine which causes concentration of basophils and mast cells. The abovementioned effects can cause oedema reduction and relaxation of muscle stroma⁵⁴. These properties explain both the pain recession and complaints of urination improvement following long term (eight

- week) quercetin administration⁶⁶. A poorly investigated hormonal action with presumably anti - testosterone effects is also reported. According to Prossnitz and Barton quercetin activates the alpha and beta estrogen receptors (Era & ERb) and acts as an agonist of the G - coupled estrogen receptor protein (GPER). However, it is about two to three times less potent than the endogenous 17β - estradiol⁶⁷.

Rich in phytosterols, cernilton (pollen extract) is thought to have anti - inflammatory properties. It is believed that exhibits a strong antioxidant activity and blocks the formation of inflammatory prostaglandin and leukotriene molecules. Chen et al studied the levels of oxygen free radicals in the prostate during occurrence, development, and recovery of CP/CPPS. A significant reduction of free radicals levels in the after treatment period was found in the biological material from patients received pollen extract (EA - 10, P5), while no changes observed in the control group⁶⁸.

In an experimental investigation of the anti - inflammatory activity of pollen extract cernilton in mice Kamijo et al., found that it clearly inhibits the proliferation of the stromal cells, and, in combination with increased apoptosis protects epithelial cells from inflammation spread⁶⁹.

Similarly, another experimental study of hormonally induced chronic nonbacterial prostatitis in rats by Asakawa et al., found that pollen extract significantly reduced the elevated levels of cytokines in a dose - dependent manner. Moreover, the histopathological changes associated with inflammation were all resolved with treatment⁷⁰. According to these researchers the above offer a strong evidence of a hormonally mediated anti - inflammatory action. Interestingly, patients with chronic non - bacterial prostatitis whose treatment failed were found to bear genotype which predisposes to the production of low levels of interleukin 10⁷¹. This fact suggests autoimmunity as a probable aetiology of this disease and provides evidence that pollen extract has an anti - inflammatory activity rather due to the inhibitory effect on inflammatory cytokines of prostatic tissue than hormonally mediated⁷¹.

The stems of equisetum arvense (horsetail) contain 5% to 8% of silica and silicic acids. The size of silicified structures varies accordingly to the location within



the plant: thicknesses of 3 - 7 μm and 0.2 - 1.0 μm are observed in the stem and leaf, respectively. The plant contains about 5% of a saponin called equisetin, in addition to the flavone glycosides isoquercitrin, equisetin, and galuteolin. It also contains phenolic acids, tannin, alkaloids. Of note, the alkaloid nicotine is present in minute amounts (less than 1 ppm) but may account for a portion of the pharmacologic activity of the plant. The sterol fraction of *Equisetum arvense* contains beta - sitosterol, campesterol, isofucosterol, and trace amounts of cholesterol⁷². The plant also contains more than 15 types of bioflavonoids, as well as manganese, potassium, sulfur, and magnesium while the cytokinin isopentenyladenosine has been identified in fertile fronds⁷³. *Populus tremula* contains popoulins, salicin and gallic acid. *Chimaphila umbellata* contains large quantities of erikolinis, arbutin and methyl - arbutin, tannin and gallic acid. Most of the above exhibit some anti - inflammatory activity. The most intriguing of *Equisetum arvense*'s components is silica. It is well known that silica is a fibrogenic factor which has been associated with chronic inflammation of the lungs and thus it could aggravate prostatic inflammation when administered in CP/CPPS patients. However it was shown that silica - activated macrophages promote high expression of the anti - inflammatory and fibrotic cytokine IL - 10. Therefore the fibrotic formation can either be accompanied by a pronounced anti - inflammatory reaction or a progressive inflammation⁷⁴. Studies showed that silica particle size impacts immune responses, with submicron amorphous silica particles inducing higher inflammatory responses than silica particles over 1000 nm in size, which is ascribed not only to their ability to induce caspase - 1 (IL - 1) activation but also to their cytotoxicity⁷⁵.

Salicin is the precursor of aspirin and it is considered responsible for the anti - inflammatory properties of the plants *Populus tremula* and Willow bark. The extract from the bark of the above - mentioned trees was found to be at least as effective as aspirin in reducing inflammatory exudates and in inhibiting leukocytic infiltration as well as in preventing the rise in cytokines, and was more effective than aspirin in suppressing leukotrienes, but equally effective in suppressing prostaglandins. The fact that

the extracts of the plants *Populus tremula* and Willow bark have lower "salicin" content than that of an equivalent dose of aspirin may lead one to speculate that other constituents of the extract contribute to its overall activity⁷⁶. According to Khayyal et al., the presence of polyphenols in the extract of Willow bark probably plays a significant role in enhancing its free radical scavenging properties⁷⁶. Independently to the controversy regarding long term salicin induced anti - inflammatory properties, its role in the reduction of pain is not to be doubted.

The ester of epigallocatechin and gallic acid (epigallocatechin gallate - 3) is a polyphenol with strong antioxidant activity that can neutralize free radicals and reduce cell damage. Moreover it has immunostimulatory properties⁷⁷. Arbutin and methyl arbutin are transformed in hydroquinone into the intestine. The last inhibits tyrosinase, thereby helping to reduce the amount of free radicals. Furthermore, arbutin exerts an antiseptic effect on the mucous membrane of the urinary tract⁷⁸. Tannin is a phenol with astringent and antiseptic properties. It is believed to form a protective layer around cells which reduces the increased secretion of inflamed gland⁶⁴. The flower extract of *Pulsatilla pratensis* contains a lactonic glycoside called ranunculin, triterpenoid saponins, tannin and volatile oil. Ranunculins' product protoanemonin is a toxin with antibacterial, antiviral and cytopathogenic properties. When comes into contact with air and dimerizes to anemonin, which is further hydrolyzed to a non - toxic carboxylic acid that exhibits anti - inflammatory and anti - neuralgic properties⁷⁹.

An experimental study in rats with induced non-bacterial prostatitis has shown that this combination of the abovementioned components (Evi prostat) significantly reduced levels of cytokines and malondialdehyde (oxidative stress marker)⁸⁰.

Pygeum contains numerous constituents, including phytosterols such as beta - sitosterols, which were thought to inhibit of the androgenic receptor (antiandrogenic) in a fashion similar with that of finasteride (by interfering with the binding sites for dihydrotestosterone). However, the fact that hormone mediated effects (such as sexual dysfunction and prostate gland size reduction) are rare in patients

receiving pygeum suggests a different mechanism of action^{81, 82}. In fact, sitosterols exhibit a clear anti-inflammatory action by inhibiting the production of prostaglandins in the prostate. Pygeum contains also ferulic esters, which reduce levels of prolactin (a hormone that promotes testosterone uptake in the prostate gland) and cholesterol (which increase the binding sites for dihydrotestosterone). The extent of their impact is unknown. Actually the esters of ferulic acid act on the endocrine system: experimental studies showed docosanol to reduce levels of LH and testosterone while raised adrenal steroid secretion of both androgens and corticosteroids⁸³. Stimulation of adrenal androgen secretion enhances anti-inflammatory effects and contribute to the restoring of the secretory activity of prostate epithelium^{84,85}. Other pygeum components include pentacyclic triterpenes, which inhibit an enzyme involved in inflammation and help reduce edema and oleanic acid that also has anti-edematous effects⁸⁶. In a laboratory study, pygeum extract demonstrated also a poorly investigated anti-proliferative effect on prostate cells derived from rats, which was in part mediated by inhibition of basic fibroblast growth factor⁸⁷. Experimentally it has been shown that pygeum reduce the production of the metabolites of 5-lipoxygenase (especially leukotrienes) and inhibits the production of fibroblasts (through repression of bFGF - basic fibroblast growth factor)⁸⁸. An additional neurotropic effect is not to be excluded since pygeum administration in experimental animal models modified bladders' contractility by reducing the sensitivity to electrical stimuli, to phenylephrine, to adenosine triphosphate and carbachol as well^{89, 90}.


Most of the components of Paeoniflorin are monoterpene glycosides. Of these, paioniflorin is the major (>90%) component and it is responsible for the pharmacological effects both in vitro, and in vivo. It has anti-inflammatory effects involving the inhibition of acute and sub-acute inflammation by suppressing the increase of intracellular calcium ions concentrations and by inhibiting the production of PGE₂, LTB₄ and NO (mediators of inflammation). Moreover it acts

on lymphocyte proliferation, differentiation of Th / Ts lymphocytes and the production of proinflammatory cytokines and IgM antibodies⁹¹.

The ethanol extract of dried leaves of Gardenia contains a sufficient amount of genipin which has anti-inflammatory effects. This effect was found to be proportional to the concentration of genipin. However, the nature and the exact mechanisms of action are not well understood⁹².

Leaves of Salvia contain saponins, resins, terpenes, tannins and flavonoids for which exhibits anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties. Bamboo leaves have also anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties which are probably associated to the presence of abundant silica. Houltuynia has antibacterial properties and fungus Poria Cocos has a diuretic effect therefore its role is probably auxiliary. No studies investigating the underlying mechanisms and their effects on prostate exist for these herbs.

Conclusions

Several clinicians and researchers have investigated the effectiveness of phytotherapeutics in the treatment of benign prostatic hypertrophy related lower urinary tract symptoms, however specific studies clearly focusing on nonbacterial prostatitis are very rare. Most of the published studies demonstrate a significant improvement in LUTS and CP/CPPS symptoms associated with a satisfactory safety profile. The exact mechanism of action remains unknown however they generally exhibit anti-inflammatory properties. Due to the heterogeneity of the products of this class of medicines and the methodological problems associated with the existing studies it is not easy to draw definitive conclusions about their role in CP/CPPS treatment. 

Abbreviations

Chronic nonbacterial prostatitis or chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome (CP/CPPS), lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS), benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

Περίληψη

Τα φυτοθεραπευτικά χρησιμοποιούνται εδώ και πολλά χρόνια ως συμπληρωματική θεραπεία στην καλοήγη υπερτροφία του προστάτη. Η ομοιότητα των συμπτωμάτων του κατώτερου ουροποιητικού στη χρόνια προστατίτιδα με αυτά που προκαλούνται από την καλοήγη υπερτροφία του προστάτη και η παρατηρούμενη αποτελεσματικότητα των φυτοθεραπευτικών στη βελτίωση του πυελικού πόνου δικαιολογεί τη χρήση τους στη θεραπεία της χρόνιας μη βακτηριακής προστατίτιδας. Πολλοί κλινικοί γιατροί και ερευνητές έχουν διερευνήσει το ρόλο των φυτικών φαρμακευτικών προϊόντων κατά των συμπτωμάτων του κατώτερου ουροποιητικού συστήματος, ωστόσο μια προσεκτική εξέταση των υφιστάμενων μελετών έδειξαν ότι οι εξειδικευμένες για τη μη βακτηριακή προστατίτιδα είναι περιορισμένες. Ακόμα και αν σε αυτές τις μελέτες ο στόχος, το υλικό και οι μέθοδοι ποικίλλουν οι περισσότερες υποστηρίζουν τη χρησιμότητά τους. Παρά τη γενική πεποίθηση ότι τα φυτοθεραπευτικά, έχουν διπλό μηχανισμό δράσης (ορμονικό και αντί-φλεγμονώδη) φαίνεται ότι εμφανίζουν μία μέτρια αντιφλεγμονώδη δράση της οποίας ο ακριβής μηχανισμός δεν έχει πλήρως διερευνηθεί.



Λέξεις ευρητηριασμού

**χρόνια μη βακτηριακή
προστατίτιδα, σύνδρομο
χρόνιου πυελικού
άλγους, συμπτώματα
από το κατώτερο
ουροποιητικό σύστημα,
φαρμακοθεραπεία,
φυτοθεραπευτικά**

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REVIEW

Current controversies about PSA screening: Similarities and differences between the European Association of Urology (EAU) and the American Urological Association (AUA) Guidelines

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Abstract

During the last 2 decades screening with PSA has allowed detection of PCa at earlier stages, improving patient survival and the chances of cure with definitive local therapy. Thus, PSA screening has been widely used with the intention to decrease mortality and increase health-related quality of life. However, the true benefit of screening for PCa remains uncertain, as there is a substantial risk of overdiagnosis and overtreatment, when it is used with inappropriate frequency. Therefore, screening for PCa has generated considerable debate within the medical and broader community, as demonstrated by

the varying recommendations made by medical organizations, such as the EAU and the AUA. In this paper, similarities and differences between the EAU and AUA guidelines are presented, and their scientific background is discussed. Despite the debate, both societies agree, that the PSA test does not have the required characteristics to be used as a widespread screening tool for PCa. Indication for PSA screening, therefore, should be individualized and screening should be offered to well-informed men, who should be aware of the benefits and harms of PSA screening.

Key words
prostate cancer; PSA;
PSA screening; AUA
and EAU Guidelines



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Introduction

Prostate cancer (PCa) is considered one of the most important medical issues regarding the male population. The global incidence of PCa has been estimated

at 500.000 new cases each year. Between 230.000 to 240.000 men are diagnosed annually with PCa in both Europe and the US¹. In Europe, it is the most common solid neoplasm, with an incidence rate of 214 cases per

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1000 men, outnumbering lung and colorectal cancer and currently it is the second most common cause of cancer death in men². For most men PCa is slow growing and does not result in clinical signs or symptoms during their lifetime. However, in some men PCa progresses and is a leading cause of cancer morbidity and mortality.

During the last 2 decades screening with PSA has allowed detection of PCa at earlier stages, improving patient survival and the chances of cure with definitive local therapy. In the National Prostate Cancer Detection Project Study³ involving serial screening with PSA, digital rectal examination and transrectal ultrasonography the rate of clinically advanced disease was reduced to less than <9% of all newly diagnosed cancers over a 10 - year period, compared with 41% in a survey of 1982⁴. Thus, PSA screening has been widely used with the intention to decrease mortality and increase health - related quality of life, however the true benefit of screening for PCa remains uncertain⁵.

It is well known that initial diagnosis of PCa is based on PSA values, digital rectal examination (DRE) and transrectal ultrasound. Use of the DRE as a screening tool is limited due to poor reliability, sensitivity, and the inability to palpate the entire prostate gland, especially for small tumors that have not reached the prostatic capsule. On the other hand, PSA test produces high false - negative and false - positive results depending on thresholds used to define abnormality, and may detect prostate cancers that are unlikely to cause health problems in the future, even if left untreated, a phenomenon known in the literature as overdiagnosis⁶. Moreover, recent data suggested that the PSA test does not attain the likelihood ratios for a screening test, regardless of what threshold value for the PSA is assigned⁷.

Currently there is no consensus regarding the value and importance of PSA screening in daily practice, and this might explain the fact, that two of the biggest urological associations, namely the European Association of Urology (EAU) and the American Urological Association (AUA) in their guidelines have different approaches, and therefore different recommendations for the early detection of PCa.

The AUA Guidelines

The AUA guidelines do not make a distinction be-

tween early detection and screening for PCa; both imply detection of disease at an early, presymptomatic stage when an individual would have no reason to seek medical care⁸. In the US, early detection is driven by PSA - based screening followed by prostate biopsy for diagnostic confirmation. Therefore the AUA guidelines focus only on the efficacy of PSA screening with the specific intent to reduce prostate cancer mortality and not secondary tests often used after screening to determine the need for a prostate biopsy or a repeat prostate biopsy. In brief the AUA guideline⁹:

1. Does not recommend PSA screening in men under 40 years of age (Grade of recommendation C)
2. Does not recommend PSA screening in men between ages 40 to 54 years at average risk (Grade of recommendation C)
3. Does recommend a shared decision - making for men ages 55 to 69 years (Grade of recommendation B)
4. Does recommend a screening interval of ≥ 2 years, which may be preferred over annual screening in those men who have participated in shared decision - making and decided on screening. Additionally, intervals for rescreening can be individualized by a baseline PSA level. (Grade of recommendation C).
5. Does not recommend PSA screening in men age ≥ 70 years or in men with a life expectancy of < 10 to 15 years (Grade of recommendation C).

The EAU Guidelines

Based on the current evidence in the literature the EAU has a different recommendation for the early detection of PCa. The updated EAU guidelines do not recommend widespread mass screening for PCa and early detection in well - informed men is strongly recommended. A baseline PSA determination at age 40 to 45 years has been suggested upon which the subsequent screening interval may then be based. Furthermore, the EAU guidelines do not use a specific chronological age as a threshold for screening, but screening in men with a life expectancy > 10 years is recommended independent on chronological age. More specifically, the EAU has come to following statements¹⁰:

1. Early detection of PCa reduces prostate cancer - related mortality.

2. Early detection of PCa reduces the risk of being diagnosed and developing advanced and metastatic prostate cancer.
3. A baseline serum PSA level should be obtained at 40 - 45 years of age.
4. Intervals for early detection of PCa should be adapted to the baseline PSA serum concentration.
5. PSA screening should be offered to men with a life expectancy of > 10 years.
6. In the future, multivariable clinical risk - prediction tools need to be integrated into the decision making process.

Scientific background

Population based recommendations for cancer screening should ideally be based on high quality evidence derived from systematic reviews of randomized controlled trials (RCT) that document a positive impact of screening on outcomes that are the most important to patients¹¹. Currently five prospective RCT's on PCa screening are available, and these include a total of 341.342 participants. All involved PSA testing, with or without DRE, though the interval and threshold for further evaluation varied across trials. The age of participants ranged from 45 to 80 years and duration of follow - up from 7 to 20 years¹². These five RCT's are:

- European Randomized Study of Screening for Prostate Cancer (ERSPC)
- Norrköping
- Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian Cancer Screening Trial (PLCO)
- Quebec and
- Göteborg

The most important data provided from these RCT's was related to prostate cancer specific mortality. Additional reported outcomes included PCa diagnosis, all - cause mortality, stage at diagnosis, and treatment follow - up. The ERSPC and PLCO studies provided data on number of biopsies performed and harms associated with screening (e.g. biopsy - associated complications such as infection or bleeding). Besides these five RCT's there is a significant number of systematic reviews and meta - analyses in the literature, which are providing evaluation and interpretation of the data^{12 - 14}. More specifically the most important conclusions that have been made until nowadays are:

■ Prostate cancer specific mortality

Most of the RCT's showed that PCa screening did not result in a statistically significant reduction in PCa specific mortality between men randomized to screening or control. Meta - analysis of these 5 RCT's showed that the Relative Risk (RR) was 0.95 (95% CI 0.85 - 1.07). However, the ERSPC study reported a 21% significant benefit for screening in PCa specific mortality in a pre - specified group of men aged 55 to 69 years (RR 0.80, 95% CI 0.65 - 0.98)¹⁵. Moreover, the ERSPC study concluded, that the benefit of screening becomes more evident as follow - up increases, with a RR reduction of 38% in men with a follow - up of 10 - 11 years. This conclusion was also confirmed by the Göteborg study¹⁶, according to which most of the benefit from screening occurs after 10 years of follow - up.

■ All cause mortality

PCa screening did not result in a statistically significant reduction in all cause mortality. Meta - analysis of four studies investigating all cause mortality did not determine any significant differences between men randomized to screen or control (RR 1.00, 95% CI, 0.96 - 1.03)¹².

■ Prostate cancer diagnosis

PCa screening increased the number of men diagnosed with PCa. A meta - analysis of four of the five RCT's (ERSPC, PLCO, Norrköping, Göteborg), which investigated PCa diagnosis across both screening and control groups, indicates that screening is associated with a 35% increase in the number of men diagnosed with prostate cancer. (RR 1.30, 95% CI, 1.02 - 1.65)¹⁷. Localized PCa was more commonly diagnosed in men randomized to screening, whilst the proportion of men diagnosed with advanced PCa was significantly lower in the screening group compared to the men serving as controls (RR 0.80, 95% CI, 0.73 - 0.87).

■ Harms of screening

Generally, PCa screening resulted in a range of harms that can be considered minor to major in severity and transient in duration. Common minor harms from screening include bleeding, bruising and short - term anxiety. Common major harms include overtreatment and overdiagnosis, false - positive results for the PSA test, as well as medical complications, such as infection,

blood loss requiring transfusion, pneumonia, erectile dysfunction, and incontinence. The RCT's failed to report complications rates in the screening and control group, so data could not be quantitatively pooled. The ERSPC trial did not include updates on the adverse events it reported in 2002¹⁸. The PLCO trial reported that DRE led to bleeding or pain at a rate of 0.3 per 10.000 screenings and the PSA test included 3 episodes of fainting per 10.000 screenings¹⁹. Complications, such as infections, bleeding and urinary difficulties, occurred in 68 per 10.000 diagnostic evaluations. No other studies reported data in either a qualitative or quantitative format.

Nevertheless, the main harm of screening is overdiagnosis, that results in unnecessary treatment and harms, which are frequent, often persist and are at least moderate in severity. The ERSPC trial reported that the overdiagnosis rate was estimated to be up to 50%¹⁵. In the same trial the false - positive rate for men who had an elevated PSA value (different PSA thresholds were used to define elevated, but typically was defined as > 3.0 ng/mL) and subsequently underwent a biopsy was 75.9%. Therefore, the known harms associated with screening suggest that any small mortality benefit of screening at 10 years would be challenged by the occurrence of these harms that occur early and may persist¹³.

Nevertheless, these five RCT's differed considerably in their design, screening methodologies, frequencies, thresholds and analysis thus limiting the value of strict reliance on pool estimates¹⁷. For example, all but one study included measurement of PSA as a screening test in all participants; the Norrköping study initially used only DRE but then used a combination of PSA and DRE. Three of the five studies did not consistently used DRE in all participants; in the ERSPC trial the screening method differed by participating country and was mostly based on PSA. In the Göteborg study screening was based on PSA testing alone, and participants underwent a DRE only if the test result was abnormal. Four of the five studies provided information on all cause mortality, all studies on deaths from PCa and on diagnosis of PCa. Length of follow - up ranged from about 4 to 15 years. All but the Quebec and the Göteborg study provided information on cancer stage at diagnosis. The ERSPC trial and, to a limited extend, the

Göteborg trial allowed subgroup analyses for death from PCa based on age groups, but only the Göteborg study provided age specific information for all cause mortality. Furthermore, all of these RCT's have been criticized for being too small, methodologic problems, or for being inconclusive because of a high rate of contamination²⁰⁻²¹.

On the other hand the evidence that the guideline panels of both the EAU and AUA were based on may be the same, the weighting of the evidence and the perspectives of each panel can be very different (eg public health vs individual perspectives) leading to different interpretations of evidence and policy implications. Thus the AUA guideline panel interpreted the evidence from the perspective of the individual with emphasis on the information, both benefits and harms, which an asymptomatic man would need to make an informed decision about PCa screening⁹.

The EAU guideline panel relied on different strategy, which was based on the most important results of the two positive RCT's: namely the ERSPC and the Göteborg. Thus, besides the significant reduction in PCa mortality in men aged 55 - 69 years, which was demonstrated only in the ERSPC study, it was also demonstrated (1) that a diagnosis of PCa was significantly greater in the screening group, (2) that localized PCa was more commonly diagnosed in the screening group, (3) that the proportion of men with locally advanced PCa, or aggressive Gleason score 8 - 10 PCa was significantly lower in the screening group, (4) that the benefit of screening becomes more evident as follow - up increases¹⁰.

Similarities and differences between EAU and AUA Guidelines

The most basic principle on which both the EAU and the AUA guidelines rely is that any benefits from PCa screening must be balanced against any harms. Both urologic societies agree that at present, widespread mass screening for PCa is not appropriate, as the PSA test does not have the required characteristics to be used as a widespread screening tool, since there is not sufficient evidence that is needed to establish recognized threshold values for a "negative" and "positive" test results⁶.

However there are also important differences be-



tween both guidelines regarding the PSA screening. Thus, the AUA guideline panel does not recommend routine screening in men between 40 to 54 years of age, and for men ages 55 to 69 years the panel recommends shared decision - making after weighting the benefits and harms from screening. On the other hand the EAU guideline panel concludes that a baseline PSA level should be obtained at 40 - 45 years of age, according to which, PSA screening should then be individualized. This EAU recommendation is based on the results of several studies, which have indicated that a baseline PSA level above the median PSA for age group might be a better indicator of PCa development than other clinical risk factors, such as race, family history, or suspicious DRE^{22,23}.

Regarding the screening interval, the AUA guideline panel recommends a routine screening interval of two years or more, and this interval may be preferred over annual screening, in those men who have participated in shared decision making and decided on screening, so that the majority of the benefits can be preserved and harms, overdiagnosis, and false positive results reduced. For the EAU guideline panel, screening intervals should be adapted to the baseline PSA level. More specifically, screening intervals should be 2 - 4 years for men with PSA level > 1.0 mg/dL at 45 - 59 years of age, whereas it could be up to 8 years in men with PSA level below this threshold value, indicating that shorter intervals are preferable to avoid the risk of missing significant cancers, but, on the other hand, longer intervals might be preferable to reduce the substantial risk of overdiagnosis and reduce costs associated with frequent screening²⁴.

Another significant difference between the EAU and AUA guidelines on PCa screening regards the age limit, beyond which routine PSA screening should be discontinued. The AUA panel does not recommend routine PSA screening in men age 70 years or more, or any man with less than a 10 - 15 year life expectancy. The panel believes, that although a group of men over 70 years of age can have a life expectancy >10 - 15 years, or may be in excellent health condition, and may benefit from PSA screening, however the evidence to support the magnitude of benefit in this age group is very limited. Moreover, there is strong evidence, that the ratio of harm to benefit increases with age, and that the


likelihood of overdiagnosis is extremely high, particularly among men with low - risk disease⁹.

Unlike the AUA approach, the EAU guideline panel suggests, that PSA screening should be offered to men with a life expectancy > 10 years, independent on chronological age. This recommendation is based on the results of several studies, which demonstrate, that local progression and death from PCa can develop even in elderly men with organ - confined disease at the time of diagnosis, so early detection and active treatment seems to be justified in men with a long life expectancy independent on chronological age^{25 - 26}. Moreover, the independent impact on age on PCa - specific survival has not been well established. Recent studies have shown that with careful patient selection, older men up to age of 75 years with Gleason score 5 - 7 PCa and up to age 80 years with Gleason score 8 - 10 PCa who undergo radical prostatectomy or radiotherapy have gains in life expectancy comparable with those of younger men^{27,28}. Furthermore, there is data indicating, that not age by itself but rather comorbidities are the major factor that should be considered when discussing screening or treatment of PCa²⁹. Thus, depending on age and comorbidity, men without comorbidities and with organ - confined Gleason score 5 - 7 PCa have 2 - 4% probability of dying from the disease within 5 years after diagnosis, whereas the risk increases to 12 - 48% in men with significant comorbidities but the same age. Therefore, for the EAU guideline panel, it seems necessary to consider patient age and comorbidities with the use of validated tools such as the Charlson Comorbidity Index (CCI), which has been validated in men with PCa, to assess life expectancy³⁰.

Conclusion

PSA screening results in a significant reduction in PCa related mortality, diagnosis, and development of advanced and metastatic PCa, but there is a substantial risk of overdiagnosis and overtreatment, when it is used with inappropriate frequency. Therefore, screening for PCa has generated considerable debate within the medical and broader community, as demonstrated by the varying recommendations made by medical organizations, such as the EAU and the AUA, and governed by national policies. Despite the debate, most of experts agree, that the PSA test does not have the required

characteristics to be used as a widespread screening tool for PCa. Indication for PSA screening, therefore, should be individualized and screening should be offered to well - informed men, who should be aware of

the benefits and harms of PSA screening. Furthermore, as PSA may be prostate specific, it is however not specific to PCa; therefore, continued research into alternative prostate - specific markers is required. 

Περίληψη

Κατά τη διάρκεια των δύο τελευταίων δεκαετιών ο μαζικός έλεγχος του PSA έχει συμβάλει στην πρώιμη διάγνωση του προστατικού καρκίνου και ακολούθως στην αύξηση των πιθανοτήτων ίασης μετά από τοπική θεραπεία. Έτσι ο προσυμπτωματικός έλεγχος του PSA έχει χρησιμοποιηθεί ευρέως τα τελευταία χρόνια, με σκοπό την ανίχνευση του προστατικού καρκίνου σε πρώιμο στάδιο, έτσι ώστε η αντιμετώπισή του να είναι εφικτή με στόχο την ίαση και συνεπώς τη μείωση θνητότητας και βελτίωση της ποιότητας ζωής. Ωστόσο τα πραγματικά οφέλη του προσυμπτωματικού αυτού ελέγχου παραμένουν αδιευκρίνιστα, καθώς υπάρχει σημαντικός κίνδυνος υπερδιάγνωσης και υπερθεραπείας, όταν ένας τέτοιος έλεγχος διενεργείται σε μη ενδεδειγμένες συχνότητες. Ως εκ τούτου, γύρω από το θέμα του προσυμπτωματικού ελέγχου του PSA, έχουν δημιουργηθεί σημαντικές αντιπαράθεσεις, όχι μόνο σε ιατρικό, αλλά και σε κοινωνικό επίπεδο, γεγονός που αντικατοπτρίζεται από τις διαφορετικές

συστάσεις που εκδίδονται από μεγάλες ιατρικές εταιρίες, όπως είναι η Ευρωπαϊκή Ουρολογική Εταιρία (EAU) και η Αμερικανική Ουρολογική Εταιρία (AUA). Στην παρούσα εργασία παρατίθενται οι ομοιότητες και οι διαφορές που υπάρχουν στις κατευθυντήριες οδηγίες που έχουν εκδώσει οι δύο αυτές εταιρίες σχετικά με το προσυμπτωματικό έλεγχο για τον προστατικό καρκίνο, καθώς γίνεται συζήτηση σχετικά με το επιστημονικό υπόβαθρο, πάνω στο οποίο βασίζονται. Παρά τις

οποίες αντιπαράθεσεις και οι δύο εταιρίες συμφωνούν στο ότι, η εξέταση του PSA δεν διαθέτει τα απαιτούμενα χαρακτηριστικά, ώστε να μπορεί να χρησιμοποιείται ως διαγνωστικό εργαλείο για μαζικούς προσυμπτωματικούς ελέγχους. Ως εκ τούτου η ένδειξη για τη διενέργεια ελέγχου του PSA, θα πρέπει να εξατομικεύεται, ο έλεγχος δε θα πρέπει να γίνεται σε καλά πληροφορημένους άνδρες, οι οποίοι θα είναι ενήμεροι για τα οφέλη και τους πιθανούς κινδύνους που μπορεί να προκύψουν.



**Λέξεις
ευρετηριασμού**
**καρκίνος προστάτου,
PSA, προσυμπτωματικός
έλεγχος, κατευθυντήριες
οδηγίες AUA και EAU**

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Genetic aspects of azoospermia and severe oligozoospermia in Greek infertile men

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Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate the genetic aspects of severely infertile Greek men, presenting azoospermia and severe oligozoospermia, before the application of assisted reproductive methods. The patients were submitted to a comprehensive work - up with emphasis on the examination for Yq chromosome microdeletions, karyotypic anomalies and mutations of the CFTR (Cystic Fibrosis Transmembrane Regulator conductance) gene. The overall inci-

dence of genetic abnormalities reached 25%, with a prevalence of karyotypic anomalies (16%). The incidence of Yq microdeletions (AZFb and AZFc) (3%) and CFTR (6%) was found relatively low. The severely infertile Greek men examined exhibited a high prevalence of genetic anomalies, indicating the importance of comprehensive genetic testing and appropriate counselling prior to their therapeutic management.

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Introduction

It is estimated that about 25% of men referred to infertility clinics are diagnosed with severe spermatogenic aberrations, exhibited as very low numbers or total lack of seminal spermatozoa^{1,2}. Once the repeated semen analysis has established the azoospermic or severely oligozoospermic profile, a series of biochemical, endocrinological, physical and genetic examinations is recommended in order to clarify the aetiology of the dysfunction³.

Genetic aberrations have been shown to underlie severe cases of male infertility. In most countries, laboratories offering molecular genetic diagnostic testing employ protocols of variable heterogeneity that may cause difficulties in the interpretation of

the results and their application in the therapeutic management of the infertile couples^{4,5}.

Our study aimed to investigate the genetic aspects of a group of Greek azoospermic and severely oligozoospermic men consulting for

Key words

**azoospermia; oligozoospermia;
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HORMONE EXAMINED	MEAN VALUE	UNIT	% SUBJECTS BELOW OR ABOVE THE REFERENCE RANGES	DIVERGENCE
FSH	15.89	mIU/ml	70	HIGHER THAN NORMAL
LH	7.87	mIU/ml	14	HIGHER THAN NORMAL
FTESTO	22.35	pg/ml	11	LOWER THAN NORMAL
TESTO	5.66	ng/ml	12	LOWER THAN NORMAL
PRL	16.13	ng/ml	9	HIGHER THAN NORMAL

infertility, in comparison to other ethnic populations. The importance of this evaluation is discussed as a means of efficient diagnosis in routine clinical practice.

Material and methods

Patients and study design

We retrospectively evaluated the results of the andrological work - up performed in 114 Greek patients of a mean age of 36 (15 - 53), diagnosed with azoospermia (n=84) and severe oligozoospermia (sperm concentration $\leq 100.000/\text{ml}$, n=30). The patients were collectively evaluated due to the severely low semen quality and the relatively limited number of oligozoospermic patients. Informed consent was obtained by each subject.

All subjects were examined for the size, volume and consistency of the testis, the presence of varicocele and a hormonal profile was recorded, including serum follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), luteinizing hormone (LH) and testosterone (TESTO - FREE TESTO) and prolactin (PRL). Data on medical history regarding medication, anti - cancer chemotherapy, systemic disease and obesity, as well as testicular biopsy results, where available, were also evaluated. **Table 1** presents the collective data on the hormonal evaluation of the examined subjects.

Parameters investigated

All semen analyses were performed in the largest specialized andrology unit in Athens, which participates in ESHRE SIG Andrology External Quality Control Scheme (Karolinska University Hospital, Sweden) and complies with the ISO9001:2008 standards for quality management.

The diagnosis of azoospermia or severe oligozoospermia was obtained by at least two semen analyses, performed post centrifugation, according to the recommendations of the WHO (1999)⁶. The samples were obtained after 2 - 4 days of sexual abstinence and were allowed to liquefy at 37°C. The total collected semen volume was centrifuged at 1000g for 15 min and the pellet was examined thoroughly at a 400X magnification using phase contrast microscopy. The complete absence of spermatozoa in the examined pellet was considered as azoospermia, whereas the presence of even a few spermatozoa per high power field was evaluated accordingly to provide an estimated sperm concentration, falling below 100,000/ml for the subjects included in the study.

The genetic screening included Yq chromosome microdeletions, karyotypic anomalies and mutations of the cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator (CFTR) gene. All the information was recorded in the files of the andrological center that consulted the patients. A total of 16 laboratories provided the genetic tests' results, 26% and 74% of which operated in the public and private sector, respectively. Among all the laboratories, only two gave more detailed reports regarding methodology and the presence of polymorphisms. The various coding regions examined and molecular techniques applied are summarized in **Table 2**.

Results

Genetic abnormalities were shown to account for 25% of azoospermia and severe oligozoospermia in the group of men examined in our study.

TABLE 2		<i>Technical details of the methods employed by various laboratories performing the genetic tests</i>		
GENETIC ASPECT	TECHNIQUE	GENETIC LOCI INVESTIGATED	INCIDENCE	SENSITIVITY
CF	PCR	33: ΔF508, G542X, N1303K, 621+1G>T, R334W, 1717-1G>A, R117H, W1282X, R553X, G85E, 394delTT, G551D, R560T, 1078delT, 2789+5G>A, R347P, R347H, R1162X, 3905insT, A455E, 3849+10kC>T, 2183AA>G, 2184delA, I507del, 711+1G>T, 1898+1G>A, I148T, 3120+1G>A, S549N, S549R, V520F, 3876delA	76%	995-998‰
CF	Luminex xTAG	39: ΔI507, 3659delC, R560T, 1898+5G>T, 2307insA, Y1029X, M1101K, S1255X Polymorphisms: 5T, 7T, 9T, F508C, I507V, I506V	74%	980‰
CF		36: ΔI507, Q552X, S1251N, E60X, R344W, 2143delT, 711+5, 3120+1, M.1507del, W.CFTRdele2.3(21kb), W.3272-26a>G, W.S1251N, W.3199del6 Polymorphism: intron 8	75%	995‰
CF	CF OLA v3.0, 'reverse SBE' and MLPA	43: E822X, R1158X, 574delA, W1282X, 1677delTA, W496X, 3272-26A>G, 711+3A>G, 621+3A>G, R1070Q, 2184insA, D110H, R553X, R117H, 1717-1G>A, 3659delC Deletions in exons 1-24	85%	995‰
CF (Public lab)	DGGE (denaturing gradient gel electrophoresis)	Not detailed report of mutations tested '16 coding regions of the gene' – only specific alterations found were reported	86%	
KARYOTYPE	Lymphocyte culture (10-20 metaphases) GTG	Karyotypic anomalies NOR-Banding reciprocal translocations / FISH in cases of inversions		994-998‰
KARYOTYPE	Lymphocyte culture (20 metaphases) RTBG			995-998‰
KARYOTYPE (Public lab)	Lymphocyte culture (4-5 metaphases) GTG	Not detailed		994-998‰
Yq MICRO-DELETIONS	Multiplex PCR	Absence of STSs: ZFY, SRY, AFZa (sY84, sY86), AZFb (SY127, SY134), AZFc (sY254, SY255)		EMQN (quality control)

Karyotypic anomalies were the most prevalent aspects of the genetic profile (16%). Abnormal findings included: Klinefelter's syndrome (47, XXY) in 2 out of 70 (2%) cases examined, balanced translocations between the chromosomes 11/13 [46,XY, t(11;13)(q12.1;p13)] and 19/20 [46, XY, t(19;20)(q13.2;q13.3)] (3/70, 4%), one inversion [46, XY inv(3)(p25;q12)] (1/70, 1%) and various polymorphisms (5/70, 7%).

CFTR gene mutations were recorded in 6% of the cases, all of which regarded the mutation ΔF508. More detailed reports remarked the presence of heterozygosity in the alleles of intron 8, mainly 5T/9T (1/54, 2%), 5T/7T (2/54, 4%) and 7T/9T (5/54, 9%). Non

pathological mutations were recorded in 4% of the cases (2/54). A comprehensive presentation of our results, in comparison to relative data obtained from other populations is summarized in **Table 3**.

Discussion

The total number of genetic aberrations established in the group of Greek infertile men examined in this study is in line with the current literature regarding severe male factor infertility in total⁷, although the incidence of the individual types of aberrations varies widely among different populations.

With regard to the most prevalent type, i.e. karyotypic anomalies, our results conform to the published

TABLE 3		Comparative data on the incidence of genetic aberrations in groups of infertile men of variable ethnic origin. (aICSI: intracytoplasmic sperm injection; bOAT: oligoasthenoteratozoospermic; cIVF: in vitro fertilization)			
KARYOTYPIC ANOMALIES					
Population cohort	Incidence (%)				Reference
Infertile	3				16
Azoospermic	3.5-14				
ICSI ^a	1				
		Klinefelter	Translocations		9
			Robertsonian	Reciprocal	
Azoospermic	13.1	8.7	0.2	0.5	
OAT ^b	4.3	0.5	1.5	0.7	
Infertile	4.6	2.0	0.7	0.5	
IVF ^c	0.9		0.2	0.5	
ICSI	4.6	1.0	0.9	0.7	
Present study	16%				
CF MUTATIONS					
Population cohort	Incidence (%) of $\Delta F508$				Reference
Northern European	70				11
Southern European	44.7		French		12
Our study	100%				
Population cohort	Incidence (%) of Polymorphisms				Reference
French	5T		36.2		5,12
Croatian	7T/7T		34.2		
Croatian	5T		27		
Italy (1,195 IVF husbands)	5T		11		13
European	5T		14.3 (Azoospermic)		14
			17.5 (Infertile)		
Present study	5T		6%		
	6%				
Yq MICRODELETIONS					
Population cohort	Incidence (%)				Reference
Infertile			0.7-34.5 (average 8.2)		10,15,22
Oligozoospermic			4.0 (30/744)		
Azoospermic			11.0 (137/1,243), 12.8		
ICSI			3.8 (38/850)		
Severely infertile	Saudi Arabia		3.2		8
	Turkey		3.3		
	Kuwait		2.6		
	Morocco		3.15		17
	Sweden		3		5
	Croatia		4.5		
	India		6.01		19
	China		11.5		1,21
New Zealand		20		5	
Present study	35%				

data, reporting frequencies varying from 1 - 14% in infertile men and most commonly including numerical sex chromosome aberrations and translocations, with a prevalence of Klinefelter's syndrome⁸⁻¹⁰.

The most common mutation of the CFTR gene, $\Delta F508$, reaches frequencies of about 70% in Northern European populations, with lower incidence in Southern Europe (44.7%). In our study, the fact that all positive subjects carried this mutation is justified by the low number of cases examined^{11,12}.

The presence of the 5T allelic variant warrants further investigation of the CF gene for other possible rare mutations. Our subjects exhibited a relatively low incidence of 6% for the 5T allele compared to other studies, mainly due to the fact that only two laboratories employed extensive polymorphism analysis^{5, 12-14}.


Generally, reports on the presence of Y chromosome microdeletions range from 0.7% to 34.5%, with an average frequency of 8.2% as an overall prevalence in infertile men, regardless of the number of sequence - tagged sites (STSs) used¹⁵. Our results indicate a low presence of microdeletions (3%) located on AZFb and AZFc parts of the Yq chromosome. One subject exhibited deletion in both these AZF loci. These figures are in agreement with population studies regarding severely infertile men in Saudi Arabia (3.2%), Turkey (3.3%), Kuwait (2.6%)¹⁶, Morocco (3.15%)¹⁷, Sweden (3%) and Croatia (4.5%)⁵. A nation - based screening study performed in Cyprus evaluated an overall 5% of Y chromosome microdeletions in a cohort of Greek patients exhibiting severe spermatogenic failure¹⁸. However, differences are observed in comparison to other ethnic groups in India (6.01%)¹⁹, China (11.5%)^{20,21}, America (10%)²² and New Zealand (20%)⁵. These discrepancies may be attributed to selection criteria of the patients, methodological aspects, geographical, population/ethnic variances, particular Y chromosome haplotypes, genetic background and environmental influences^{21,23-24}.

The diagnostic value of the genetic screening in cases of severely infertile men is heavily dependent upon the accuracy and reliability of laboratory methodology. Our study demonstrated distinct differences among laboratories with regard to the number and type of genetic mutations and STSs examined for CFTR and Yq

microdeletions respectively, as well as issues regarding external quality control. The application of generalized criteria on a strict quality controlled basis could promote the validity of test results and the creation of an international database that would facilitate the comparisons between different populations^{5,19,23,25}.

Recent scientific data suggest that genetic anomalies may have a combined presence, e.g. patients with karyotypic disorders such as Klinefelter's syndrome may also harbour partial Y microdeletions²⁶. This finding is particularly important where ICSI is selected as a therapeutic strategy with spermatozoa retrieved from patients exhibiting genetic aberrations, as they may be transmitted to the male offspring²⁷. In addition, the evaluation of the genetic aspects of the azoospermic or severely oligozoospermic profile in patients opting for microdissection testicular sperm extraction (microTESE) - intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) could serve as a predictive factor in assessing the probability of sperm retrieval²⁸. Extensive genetic screening and counselling should therefore be strongly advised in patients exhibiting severe spermatogenic failure, as these genetic traits could possibly affect the overall success rate of the assisted reproduction techniques (ART)^{20,29,30}.

Conclusion

In the era of ICSI, when highly invasive methods are increasingly used in the treatment of severe male factor infertility, caution should be focused on the thorough diagnostic evaluation of the father-to-be. Given that scientific evidence demonstrates that genetic aberrations underlie the severity of sperm dysfunction, a comprehensive genetic screening should be conducted in infertile men with oligozoospermia and azoospermia before ICSI. Chromosomal abnormalities and especially Y chromosome microdeletions have been implicated in time - related deterioration of semen quality, early miscarriage and adverse effects on the offspring. An early identification of these genetic defects could, therefore, not only permit the definition of the aetiology of spermatogenic failure and the possible cryopreservation of seminal spermatozoa in oligozoospermic patients, but also allow the infertile couple to make informed therapeutic decisions. 

Περίληψη

Σκοπός της παρούσας μελέτης ήταν η διερεύνηση γενετικών ανωμαλιών σε έναν Ελληνικό πληθυσμό υπογόνιμων ανδρών με αζωοσπερμία και σοβαρή oligozoospermia, πριν από την εφαρμογή μεθόδων ιατρικώς υποβοηθούμενης αναπαραγωγής (ΙΥΑ). Οι εξεταζόμενοι υπεβλήθησαν σε εξονυχιστικό διαγνωστικό έλεγχο, με έμφαση στη διερεύνηση μικροελλείψεων του χρωμοσώματος Υ, καρυστυπικών ανωμαλιών και μεταλλαγών του γονιδίου CFTR (Cystic Fibrosis Transmembrane Regulator) της ινοκυστικής νόσου. Η συνολική παρουσία των γενετικών ανωμαλιών ανήλθε στο 25%, με μεγαλύτερη συχνότητα για τις καρυστυπικές ανωμαλίες (16%). Η εμφάνιση των μικροελλείψεων του χρωμοσώματος Υ (AZFb και AZFc) (3%), καθώς επίσης και του γονιδίου CFTR (6%), ευρέθησαν σε σχετικά χαμηλά επίπεδα.



Λέξεις ευρετηριασμού

**αζωοσπερμία,
ολιγοζωοσπερμία,
γενετικός έλεγχος,
θεραπευτική προσέγγιση**

Οι υπό εξέταση υπογόνιμοι άνδρες του Ελληνικού πληθυσμού επέδειξαν υψηλά επίπεδα γενετικών ανωμαλιών, πράγμα που ενισχύει τη σημασία του ενδεδειγμένου γενετικού ελέγχου και της ανάλογης παροχής γενετικής συμβουλής πριν από την εφαρμογή θεραπευτικών μεθόδων ΙΥΑ.

γενετικού ελέγχου και της ανάλογης παροχής γενετικής συμβουλής πριν από την εφαρμογή θεραπευτικών μεθόδων ΙΥΑ.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Urodynamic assessment of orthotopic neobladder reconstruction following radical cystectomy in bladder cancer

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Abstract

Objectives: The aim of this study is to compare urodynamic and continence parameters among patients undergoing orthotopic neo-bladder substitution with ileal segment.

Material and Methods: 95 patients with localized muscle invasive bladder cancer (T2NoMo) without any neo-or adjuvant treatment, underwent radical cystectomy and neobladder formation using the Padovana technique. Urodynamic evaluation was performed at the 6th, 12th, and 36th postoperative month. Subjective functional evaluation of the neobladder was performed with the use of a special questionnaire at the same time points.

Results: Urodynamic evaluations showed that with time neobladder capacity increased. Maximum neobladder capacity at 6th, 12th and 36th month was 445 ± 33 , 539 ± 55 and 590 ± 20 ml respectively.

In all the measurements the difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Residual urine was stable (59 ± 4 ,

60 ± 6 and 69 ± 9 ml, $p > 0.05$ for all measurements. Accordingly a statistically significant decrease was noted at Qmax (19 ± 5 , 16 ± 1 and 13 ± 4 ml/sec, $p < 0.05$) while on the contrary the number of intrinsic contractions remained stable (4 ± 1.2 , 4 ± 1.5 , 5 ± 1 , 4 , $p > 0.05$).

Eighty-four patients (88,42%) were continent during daytime at the 6th month compared to 85 (89.7%) at 12th and 83 (87.3%) at 36th month visit ($p = n.s$). Similarly, continence rates during the night were stable with 74 patients (77.89%) being con-

continent at 6 months and 72 (75,78%) and 72 (75,78%) at 12 and 36 months respectively ($p = n.s$).

Conclusion: A neobladder constructed from detubularized ileum achieves urodynamic proven adequate capacity and compliance with 87,3% daytime and 78,78% night time continence at the 36th month visit. Urodynamic evaluations showed also that with time the neobladder capacity increased.

Key words

bladder cancer; orthotopic neobladder; urodynamic parameters; continence

Citation

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	3months	12months	36months	P (3 vs 12 months)	P (12 vs 36 months)
Capacity (ml)	445±33	539±55	590±20	0.002	0.012
Residual(ml)	52±4	60±6	69±9	0.08	0.07
End-filling pressure(cm H ₂ O)	23±4	20±1	15±1	0.012	0.003
Qmax(ml/sec)	19±5	16±1	13±4	0.018	0.035
Intrinsic contractions(n)	4±1.2	4±5	5±1.4	0.09	0.07

Introduction

Since 1990 when Artibani et al.¹ reported the technique for neobladder formation VIP has been used for bladder substitution after radical cystectomy with good results²⁻⁶. Here, we present the functional urodynamic results during a 36 month postoperative follow - up period for an important number of consecutive patients.

Material and methods

95 patients with muscle invasive bladder TCC(cT2No-Mo) without any neo - or adjuvant treatment and with preoperative negative prostatic urethral biopsies, underwent radical cystectomy and neobladder formation using Padovana technique. The surgical technique and the complications are discussed in another of our papers. In no patients was any other treatment used. Urodynamic evaluation was performed at the 6th 12th and 36th postoperative month. Subjective functional evaluation of the neobladder was performed with the use of a questionnaire (**Appendix 1**) at the same time points.

For the urodynamic study a 6Fr urethral catheter and a 14Fr rectal balloon catheter were used. Normal saline was used to fill the bladder at a rate of 20ml/min at maximum filling volume no more than 1000ml and cystometry and uroflowmetry were performed. Parameters measured were maximum neobladder capacity (the filling volume at which leakage or pain occurred), end filling pressure, intrinsic contractions, Qmax and the residual volume.

Appendix

Questionnaire of Subjective Functional Evaluation of Neobladder

1. Do you use catheter to empty your bladder?

- Never
- Once daily
- more than daily

2. Do you leak urine during the daytime?

- Yes
- No

3. If you leak, how many pads do you use per day?

- One
- Two
- More than two

4. Do you leak urine during night?

- No
- Yes
- No, I wake up and go to toilet

Changes between the follow up visits were evaluated as following: changes in continuous variables were assessed by chi - square test.

Results

Urodynamic evaluations showed that with time neobladder capacity increased. Maximum neobladder capacity at 6th ,12th and 36th month was 445 ± 33, 539 ± 55 and 590 ± 20ml respectively. In all three measurements the difference was statistically significant (p<0.05). Residual urine was stable (52 ± 4, 60 ± 6 and 69 ± 9ml, p> 0.05 for all measurements). End - filling pressure decreased over time in a statistically significant manner (23 ± 4, 20 ± 1 and 15 ± 1 cm H₂O, p<0.05), while on the contrary the number of intrinsic contractions re-



mained stable ($4 \pm 1.2, 4 \pm 1.5, 5 \pm 1.4, > 0.05$) (**Table 1**).

Eighty - four patients (88,42%) were continent during daytime at the 6th month compared to 85 (89,47%) at the 12th and 83 (87,36%) at 36th month visit ($p = n.s.$). Similarly, continence rates during the night were stable with 74 patients (77,78%) at 12 and 36 months respectively ($p = n.s.$).

Discussion


Orthotopic neobladder substitution has to fulfill several goals in order to be successful. Currently there is no consensus about the urodynamic assessment of the intestine neobladder. The same parameters applied to an intact bladder are used without considering that the intestine was not originally conceived to store or void urine. Good function refers to adequate voiding and storage characteristics without compromising upper urinary tract safety either by high pressure urination, obstruction, back flow of urine, stone formation or other causes. In all series urodynamic evaluation showed that neobladder capacity increased over time but remained well below 700cc which is considered by others⁷ a threshold with prognostic significance of clinically important residual ($> 100cc$). Also end - filling pressure decreased overtime (23 ± 4 vs 20 ± 1 vs 15 ± 1 cm H₂O), together with Qmax (19 ± 5 vs 16 ± 1 vs 13 ± 4 ml/sec). These findings might differ from others^{1, 4, 6, 8, 9} and might imply a "relaxation" of the neobladder. Yet, Qmax of 13 ± 4 ml/sec is a good flow and the fact that residual remained stable and well below 100cc (69 ± 9 ml at the end of the follow up) proves that VIP is a highly functional neo-

bladder. The intrinsic contractions during the follow up period remained stable, while others¹ report an increase of the intrinsic contractions. They attributed these contractions to a population of Cazal cells based on the myenteric plexus of the ileum with significant contribution to gastrointestinal mobility.

They are divided in two populations (ICC - MP and ICC - DMP) and their number although decreased or even disappeared (ICC - DMP) post detubularization, might remain scarce but active (ICC - Mp) or even increase¹¹⁻¹³. Intrinsic contraction if they are big in magnitude might lead to inadequate voiding or incontinence.

In our series continence rates were high during daytime and stable with more than 87% of the patients remaining continent during the 3 years of follow up. Similarly very good outcome regarding nighttime continence was noted with more than 75% continence rates for the whole 3 years. Although direct comparison between studies regarding "continence" might not be accurate with the most obvious reason being the definition of continence itself used in each study, our results are similar to the ones reported by others^{1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 14} and offer a very good pattern of urination.

Conclusion

A neobladder constructed from detubularized ileum achieves urodynamically proven adequate capacity and compliance with 87,3% daytime and 75,78% night time continence at the 36th month visit. Urodynamic evaluation showed also that with time the neobladder capacity increased. 

Περίληψη

Σκοπός: Ο σκοπός αυτής της εργασίας είναι να συγκριθούν οι ουροδυναμικές παράμετροι και οι παράμετροι εγκράτειας σε ασθενείς που υποβλήθηκαν σε ορθότοπη νεοκύστη με ειλεϊκό αγωγό.

Υλικό και μέθοδοι: 95 ασθενείς με εντοπισμένο μυοδιηθητικό καρκίνο (T2NoMo) υποβλήθηκαν σε ριζική κυστεκτομή και νεοκύστη σύμφωνα με την τεχνική Padovana. Έγινε ουροδυναμική εκτίμηση το 6ο, το 12ο και τον 36ο μετεγχειρητικό μήνα. Συγχρόνως έγινε υποκειμενική λειτουργική εκτίμηση της νεοκύστης με την εφαρμογή ειδικού ερωτηματολογίου.

Αποτελέσματα: Η ουροδυναμική εκτίμηση έδειξε ότι με την πάροδο του χρόνου η χωρητικότητα της νεοκύστης αυξανόταν. Η μέγιστη χωρητικότητα της νεοκύστης τον 6ο, το 12ο και τον 36ο μήνα ήταν 445 ± 33 , 539 ± 55 και 590 ± 20 ml αντίστοιχα. Σ' όλες τις μετρήσεις η διαφορά ήταν στατιστικώς σημαντική ($p < 0.05$). Το υπόλειμμα ούρων ήταν σταθερό (52 ± 4 , 60 ± 6 και 69 ± 9 ml.

$P > 0.05$ σ' όλες τις μετρήσεις). Σημειώθηκε στατιστικώς σημαντική μείωση του Q_{max} (19 ± 5 , 16 ± 1 , 13 ± 4 ml/sec, $p < 0.05$), ενώ αντιθέτως ο αριθμός των ενδοαυλικών συσπάσεων παρέμεινε σταθερός (4 ± 1.2 , 4 ± 1.5 , 5 ± 1.4 $p > 0.05$). 84 ασθενείς (88,42%) ήταν εγκρατείς κατά τη διάρκεια της ημέρας τον 6ο μήνα, 85 (89,7%) το 12ο μήνα και 83 (87,3%) τον 36ο μήνα ($p = n.s$). Παρομοίως η εγκράτεια κατά τη διάρκεια της νύκτας ήταν σταθερή με 74 ασθενείς (77,84%) να είναι εγκρατείς τον 6ο μήνα και 72 (7,78%) και 72 (75,78%) το 12ο και 36ο μήνα αντίστοιχως ($p = n.s$).

Συμπέρασμα: Η νεοκύστη που δημιουργείται από αποσωληνοποιημένο εντερικό τμήμα ειλεού αποδεικνύεται ουροδυναμικά ότι εμφανίζει επαρκή χωρητικότητα και επάρκεια με 87,3% ημερήσια και 75,78% νυκτερινή εγκράτεια 36 μήνες μετεγχειρητικά. Η ουροδυναμική εκτίμηση έδειξε επίσης πώς με την πάροδο του χρόνου η χωρητικότητα της κύστεως αυξάνεται.

**Λέξεις
ευρητηριασμού**
καρκίνος κύστης,
ορθότοπη νεοκύστη,
ουροδυναμικές
παράμετροι, εγκράτεια

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Experience with resonance stent

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Abstract

The full metallic double-J ureteral stent (MS) represents a method for providing long-term drainage in malignant ureteral obstruction. The design and mechanical properties of the MS allowed higher efficacy in providing drainage in difficult cases in comparison to the standard polymeric double-J stents (experimental data). The clinical data showed controversial results. MS insertion was associated with variable patency rates. Careful patient selection resulted in efficient long-term management of malignant ureteral obstruction as well

as in selected benign cases. The majority of the complications were reported to be minor while the major complications were scarce. The use of MS in pediatric patients is still very limited to draw conclusions. The cost-effectiveness of the MS was reported to be appropriate for the treatment of long-term cases. Further investigation with comparative clinical trials would document the outcome more extensively and establish the indications as well as the selection criteria for the MS.



Key words

metal stent; ureteral stent; Resonance stent; full metal ureteral stent; double-J metal stent



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Introduction

Ureteral obstruction, either benign or malignant in etiology, is a common problem for the practicing urologists. The percutaneous nephrostomies (PN), the retrograde polymeric double - J ureteral stents (PS) and the metal mesh stents (MMS) are the three minimal invasive tools commonly used with variable success rates for the long term relief of ureteral obstruction. MMSs have been introduced in the

urological clinical practice due to significant failure rates of PSs in the face of extrinsic malignant ureteral compression requiring long - term drainage^{1,2}. Ureteral MMSs were associated with improvement of the patients' quality of life. Nevertheless, they were also associated with high rate of migration, stone encrustation and obstruction due to the urothelial hyperplasia. These complications resulted in limited efficacy for long - term ureteral drainage³⁻⁵ and

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Figure 1A: An Resonance stent after 12 months of indwelling. Notice that encrustation is not evident on the stent

Figure 1B: The same Resonance stent examined by the Electron Microscopy. The presence of encrustations on its surface is clear. Similar results were observed in all stents without macroscopically evident encrustation that were examined by the authors in Electron Microscopy (see Ref. 14)

eventually limited the widespread application of the MMSs in the ureter.

An alternative treatment for extrinsic ureteral obstruction was introduced with the Resonance™ stent (Cook Medical, Ireland) (MS). The latter is an all metal, double pigtail stent. Cases of extrinsic tension sufficient enough to occlude the PSs are efficiently managed by the MS due to its incompressible metal structure. MS is shaped as a double - pigtail stent, but molded from a corrosion resistant alloy, which forms a tightly coiled spiral with no end - holes. The diameter of MS is 6Fr. Its alloy is based on nickel, chromium, titanium and molybdenum. The design and material of the stent aim to overcome problems related to the use of MMSs such as encrustation, migration, tissue ingrowth and those related to PSs such as occlusion by the external compression by tumor, the need for frequent stent changes and encrustation^{6,7}.

Experimental Data

Experimental settings have documented that the MS could provide efficient upper urinary tract drainage in cases that the PSs have failed. The MS provided less overall flow than a PS, continued to provide satisfactory drainage in cases of significant extrinsic ureteral compression resulting in occlusion of a PS⁸. When the mechanical properties of the MS were compared with the Silhouette coil - reinforced double - pigtail stent (Applied Medical, Rancho San Mi-

rage, Calif) and PSs, the MS proved to have a higher tensile strength than the Silhouette stent while the latter stent was more resistant to extrinsic tension than the MS. Moreover, the PSs were less resistant than the above stent types⁹. The MS was also reported to be more resistant to extrinsic tension than the Silhouette and the PSs. No permanent deformation of the MS was observed after the experimental evaluation while the Silhouette and PSs showed indentation¹⁰. The compatibility of the MS with radiotherapy has been evaluated in the porcine model. No significant histological differences were observed between the ureters containing the MSs and their controls after the performance of radiotherapy¹¹. Another experimental study in a porcine model proved that Extracorporeal Shock Wave Lithotripsy (SWL) could be performed with safety in ureters having MSs. Thus, SWL could be used for managing encrustations formed on a MS in an attempt to postpone stent replacement¹². The formation of encrustations on the MS was evaluated by Electron microscopy which showed the presence of biofilm lining and inorganic material on MSs after several months of indwelling^{13,14}. In the study by Liatsikos et al., all stents without the macroscopic appearance of deposits had encrustations on their surface (**Figure 1A+B**). Nevertheless, the presence of encrustations didn't result in occlusion of the MSs in the majority of the cases¹⁴.

TABLE 1		<i>Urodynamic results</i>			
Study	Number of stents/ Benign/ Malignant	Follow-up Benign/ Malignant	Patency rate	Complications x number of patients	Management of complications
Borin et al. ¹⁵	2/-/2	-/4 months	100%	Urgency and frequency	Not reported
Nagele et al. ¹⁶	18/5/13	11.6/7.3 months (mean)	Benign 75% Malignant 46%	Urinary tract infection x 6 Recurrent infections x 1 Persistent hematuria x 1 Encrustation x 2 Severe dysuria and pain x 2 Insufficient drainage x 4	Antibiotics Stent removal Stent removal Not reported Stent removal Stent removal
Wah et al. ¹⁷	17/-/17	Up to 12 months	82.3%	Stent obstruction x 3	Nephrostomy placement
Liatsikos et al. ¹⁴	54/18/25/7*	11 (4-14) /6.8 months /7 days* (mean), up to 16 months	Benign 44% Malignant 100% Benign* 0%	Dysuria and pain x 10 Hematuria x 6 Encrustation x 1 Tissue ingrowth x 7* Insufficient drainage x 7 Bladder erythema x 2	Antibiotics Spontaneous resolution Stent removal Stent removal-Polymer- ic stent Stent removal Conservative
Li et al. ¹⁸	23/10/13	5.1 (0.5-18.2) months (Mean)	82.6% (radiotherapy patients only 50%)	Acute pyelonephritis x 2 Stent obstruction x 4 Abdominal pain x 5 Flank pain x 3 Bladder pain x 3 Dysuria x 15	Stent removal Stent removal or observation Conservative Conservative Conservative Conservative
Wang et al. ¹⁹	22/4/18	5 (1 day- 10.5) months (Mean)	Overall 77.3%, 6 months 81%, 9 months 27% (radiotherapy pa- tients only 50%)	Migration x 1 Hematuria x 4 Urgency and bladder irri- tation x 2 Insufficient drainage x 5	Stent removal Spontaneous resolution Conservative Stent removal
Modi et al. ²⁰	69/19/50 (76 stents when includ- ing stent exchanges)	5 (0-18) months (Mean)	Overall 57%, >12 months in- dwelling 36%, MSs for PSs replace- ment 37%	Encrustation x 3 Tissue ingrowth x 1 Obstructed stents x15 Migration x 1 Urinary tract infection x 8	Cystolithoapaxy or percuta- neous nephrolithotomy Percutaneous stent removal Stent removal Stent removal Stent removal Stent removal when stent failure
Goldsmith et al. ²¹	37/-/37	Up to 12 months	65%	Migration x 3 Progressive hydronephro- sis x 9 Subcapsular renal hemat- oma x 3	Observation or stent exchange Stent removal or exchange Conservative
Potrezke et al. ²⁶	2/-/2 Pediatric case	3 years	100%	Not reported	N/A
Garg et al. ²²	10/8/2 Ureteroenteric	Up to 12 months	12.5%	Migration x 9	Stent removal and polymeric stent insertion

TABLE 1		Urodynamic results			
Study	Number of stents/ Benign/ Malignant	Follow-up Benign/ Malignant	Patency rate	Complications x number of patients	Management of complications
Brown et al. ²⁹	8/-/8	Up to 7 months	20% within the first 4 months	Flank pain x 5 Hematuria x 2 Renal failure x 3 Renal obstruction x 4 Urinary tract infection x 4 Migration or malposition x 3	Not reported Not reported Stent removal and alternative drainage Stent removal and alternative drainage Not reported Repositioning or endoscopic intervention
Gayed et al. ²⁵	2/-/2 Pediatric population	3 weeks and 3 months	0%	Acute renal failure x 1 Flank, worsening hydro-nephrosis and pyelonephritis x 1	Dialysis, nephrostomy placement Stent removal, nephrostomy placement
Huertas et al. ²⁷	14/14/-	Up to 12 months	92%	Irritative bladder symptoms x2 Recurrent gross hematuria x 1 Recurrent urinary tract infection x 1	Alternative drainage Not reported Antibiotics and stent exchange
Taylor et al. ²⁸	26/17/9	Total 12 months, Benign 14 months, Malignant 10 months (Mean)	92%	Stent obstruction x 1	Stent removal and nephrostomy placement
Abbasi et al. ²³	27/0/27	Mean 7.4 months Subgroup of patients still living mean 11.4 months		Persistent azotemia x 2 obstructive symptoms x6	Conversion to percutaneous drainage Change to traditional stents x2 Removal of metallic stents x4

N/A: non available *; Represents a special group of the study which includes patients with previous placement of permanent metal ureteral mesh stents. These stents had been occluded and were managed by MS insertion.

Current Clinical Data

The clinical experience with the management chronic extrinsic ureteral obstruction by MS insertion is limited but continuously expanding. The first successful clinical case was reported by Borin et al. The MS insertion successfully drained for 4 months a ureteral obstruction due to retroperitoneal fibrosis associated with metastatic breast cancer¹⁵. Nagele et al. studied 14 patients with ureteral obstruction of both benign (5 ureters) and malignant etiologies (13 ureters). In

this study, the MS managed to alleviate the obstruction for a mean follow - up time of 8.6 months. Complications were reported in half of the cases. Proper stent length selection was considered important by the authors for patient comfort¹⁶. Wah et al. inserted 17 MSs in 15 patients with malignant ureteral obstruction. Insufficient drainage was reported in 3 cases associated with bulky pelvic malignancy²¹. Brown et al. in a sample of 5 patients with malignant obstruction reported a failure rate up to 80% and a high fre-



quency (60%) of additional interventions for stent migration and malposition. In all MS failures, urinary tract infection was present and may have been responsible for the failures of the MSs¹⁷.

A large series including 50 patients with both malignant (n= 25) and benign ureteral obstruction (n=25) was studied by Liatsikos et al. Malignant cases had a 100% patency rate during the mean follow - up period of 11 months (range 4 - 14 months), whereas the patency rate of the benign cases was only 44%. Only minor complications were reported such as transient hematuria, slight bladder irritation and positive urine cultures without symptomatic infection. MS failures were associated with benign cases. A higher efficiency of the MS was noted in malignant extrinsic obstructions in comparison to benign cases¹⁴.

Li et al. inserted 23 MSs in 20 patients for both malignant and benign disease. They reported significantly lower patency rates for the patients who had undergone radiotherapy in comparison to the non - radiotherapy patients. The patency rate was 50% for the irradiated patients while the overall patency rate was 82.6%. Symptoms such as flank pain, abdominal pain, dysuria, pyelonephritis were associated with 65.2% of the cases. One case of pyelonephritis and another of persistent ureteral obstruction led to the removal of the stent¹⁸. Wang et al., in a series of 19 patients (26 MSs), reported similar results regarding the patency of patients who had previously undergone radiotherapy. A significantly higher patency rate was reported for the previously irradiated patients in comparison to those not treated by radiation therapy (50% vs 92.3%, respectively). For the total population, 5 stents failed over a mean follow - up period of 5 months and the patency rate was 77.3%. Complications, such as hematuria (n= 4) and urgency (n= 2) were observed in 6 patients¹⁹. The above evidence showed that patients who had undergone radiotherapy before MS insertion have a higher likelihood for MS failure and should be carefully selected for MS.

Modi AP et al. reported multi - institutional experience including 59 obstructed renal units which were managed with 76 MSs. Both benign (n= 15) and malignant (n= 44) cases were treated. The median follow - up was 5 months (range 0 - 18). Hydronephrosis was stabilized in 47%, improved in 40% and worsened in 18% of

the cases. Creatinine levels were improved in 28%, stable in 37% and worsened in 35% of the cases. MSs were placed in 41 malignant cases resistant to PS insertion. In 15 of these cases, the MSs failed to alleviate the obstructions. The obstruction of the MSs was noted within the first weeks after the placement with a median time of 1.5 months. Moreover, 43% of the stents were obstructed within the first 12 months²⁰. Early stent failure within the first days to weeks has been also described by Liatsikos et al. ¹⁴. Thus, a close follow - up of the patients with MS is necessary due to the risk of insufficient drainage.

Controversial results concerning the MS insertion were reported by Goldsmith et al. in a series of 25 patients (37 MSs) with malignant ureteral obstruction. Persistent obstruction after the insertion, progressive hydroureteronephrosis and increase in the creatinine values was observed in 12 patients (35%). Five failed stents had to be replaced by another MS resulting in successful treatment of the obstruction. 3 cases of migration were reported. The risk of failure increased significantly when the prostate cancer invasion to the bladder was evident while placing the MS. In an attempt to define the possible risk factors of MS failure, the authors concluded that patients, who had undergone radiotherapy, had an ileal conduit and had a prior ureteral stent failure, presented a higher risk of MS failure. Subcapsular hematomas as a complication after MS insertion was described in 3 patients and these cases were treated conservatively. The failure rate was similar to PSs according to the conclusion of the authors²¹.

Ten cases of ureteroenteric anastomotic strictures have been managed by MS insertion in the literature. Eight strictures were benign and two were related to tumor involvement. One stent remained in place for 10 months whereas nine of them migrated distally. When considering the above experience, ureteroenteric strictures should possibly be treated with other drainage approaches²².

Abbasi et al. managed 20 patients (6 men and 14 women) with malignant ureteral obstruction in 27 renal units. 8 patients required further intervention (40%) of which 2 were managed by a percutaneous drainage and 6 patients by changing to traditional stents or removal of the MS. The failed cases had a mean follow

- up of 7.5 months (range 0 - 18). At the last follow-up, sixteen patients had died. 14 of these patients died with functioning MSs in place. One patient, who initially was managed by bilateral metallic stent placements, had a left stent removed due to migration. The authors concluded that though the failure rate for the MS is similar to that of traditional stents, the mean time to failure is longer. Thus, MSs could be considered for patients with malignant obstruction instead of PSs²³.

Benson et al. managed 23 patients by placing in total of 42 MSs with a median follow-up period of 13 months (range 2 - 32). 3 out of 42 MSs failed to provide drainage in patients with malignant obstruction. Failures were not reported for the benign cases. The failure cases were complicated by acute renal failure and hydronephrosis and were treated with PN placement. The authors concluded to the good tolerability, low complications rate and minimum failure rate of the Resonance MS²⁴.

The largest pediatric population treated by MSs includes 3 cases. In two of them, MSs did not succeed in managing the obstruction in both patients. The respective MS failure time periods were 3 weeks and 3 months²⁵. One more pediatric case of malignant ureteral obstruction was successfully treated by the MS for 3 years. The stent was routinely exchanged every 12 months in order to avoid encrustation²⁶.

The **Table** summarizes current experience with the MS.

The Full Metallic Double - pigtail Ureteral Stent compared to standard Polymeric Double - pigtail Ureteral Stent and Metal Mesh stents

There are no comparative studies between the MSs and the PSs or MMSs in the current literature. MS insertion has been performed in cases of previous PSs and MMSs failure.


In the studies of previous PSs failure, the MS provided patency rates ranging between 37% and 100%^{15, 16, 20, 26}. Case studies report similar patency rates (15, 26) while the respective rates of population studies range between 37 and 46%^{16, 20}. Modi et al. revealed detailed

data on the renal function and their population had a patency rate of 37%²⁰. After MMS failure, the use of MSs showed disappointing results with failure of the MSs within a period of days¹⁴.

The evaluation of cost for the Full Metallic Double - pigtail Ureteral Stent

Two studies are available in literature providing a cost comparison between the MSs and PSs. The cost - effectiveness of MS was higher than the PSs as the longer replacement periods of the MS replacement balanced the higher cost of the MS^{27, 28}.

Conclusion

Patient selection for MS insertion remains unclear since the experience with the stent is still controversial. Malignant ureteral obstruction cases could be managed efficiently in long-term^{14-19, 23}. Previously irradiated patients seem not be good candidates for the MS^{18, 19, 23}. It is not clear yet if patients with prostate cancer and bladder involvement as well as those with bulky pelvic disease should be treated with MS^{16, 21, 23}. All patients with MS should be under close follow-up especially during the first 8 weeks^{14, 20}. Benign cases and pediatric patients require further investigation to establish criteria for the selection of these patients^{14, 16, 18, 20}. MS is probably not appropriate for ureteroileal anastomotic strictures due to the high migration rates^{21, 22}. Complications are usually minor and are limited with carefully selected^{14, 16, 18}. Perioperative use of antibiotics is advised due to the high MS failures related to infection^{20, 29}. Further investigation, especially comparative clinical trials, would document the outcome more extensively and would provide the proper indications for the MS. 

Abbreviations

Polymeric ureteral stent (PS)
Percutaneous nephrostomy (PN)
Mesh stent (MMS)

Περίληψη

Η πλήρως μεταλλική αυτοσυγκρατούμενη ουρητηρική ενδοπρόθεση (ΜΕ) αρχικά παρουσιάστηκε σαν μια μέθοδος για τη μακροπρόθεσμη παροχέτευση σε κακοήθη απόφραξη του ουρητήρα. Η πειραματική αξιολόγηση της ΜΕ αποκάλυψε ότι οι μηχανικές ιδιότητες της επιτρέπουν την αποδοτική παροχέτευση σε δύσκολες περιπτώσεις που δεν μπορούν να αντιμετωπιστούν με την εισαγωγή μιας πολυμερικής ουρητηρικής ενδοπρόθεσης. Η κλινική εμπειρία με την ΜΕ έδειξε αμφιλεγόμενα αποτελέσματα. Οι κακοήθους αιτιολογίας αποφράξεις του ουρητήρα αντιμετωπίζονται με τοποθέτηση ΜΕ για μεγάλο χρονικό διάστημα. Ασθενείς που έχουν υποβληθεί σε ακτινοθεραπεία φαίνεται ότι δεν είναι καλοί υποψήφιοι για τοποθέτηση ΜΕ λόγω αυξημένης πιθανότητας για απόφραξη της και παρουσίαση επιπλοκών. Ασθενείς με ευμεγέθεις όγκους πύελου και καρκίνου του προστάτη που διηθεί

την ουροδόχο κύστη δεν είναι κατάλληλοι λόγω ελαττωμένων ποσοστών για επιτυχή παροχέτευση. Καλοήθεις περιπτώσεις και παιδιατρικοί ασθενείς απαιτούν περαιτέρω κλινική αξιολόγηση, ώστε να παρέχουν τις κατάλληλες ενδείξεις για τοποθέτηση ΜΕ. Τα στενώματα των ουρητηροεντερικών αναστομώσεων που αντιμετωπίζονται με ΜΕ έχουν αυξημένα ποσοστά αποτυχίας λόγω μετανάστευσης της ΜΕ περιφερικά με αποτέλεσμα την προεξοχή της μέσω του στομίου. Τα περιστατικά λιθίασης σχετίζονται με αυξημένο ποσοστό αποτυχίας λόγω ασβέστωσης της ΜΕ. Γενικά, το ποσοστό επιπλοκών παραμένει χαμηλό και οι σοβαρές επιπλοκές είναι σπάνιες και σχετίζονται με αιματοουρία, δυσουρία, άλγος, ανεπαρκή παροχέτευση και ουρολοιμώξεις. Μονό μακροχρόνια περιστατικά φαίνεται ότι μπορούν να επιτύχουν μια αποδεκτή σχέση κόστους - αποτελέσματος όταν αντιμετωπιστούν με ΜΕ.



Λέξεις ευρητηριασμού

**μεταλλική ενδοπρόθεση,
ουρητηρική ενδοπρόθεση,
μεταλλική ουρητηρική
ενδοπρόθεση,
αυτοσυγκρατούμενη ουρητηρική
μεταλλική ενδοπρόθεση**

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CASE REPORT

Acute renal infarction of unknown origin in a young male. A case report

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Abstract

Within the variety of urologic emergencies, very few entities seem to be so deceiving like acute renal infarction. This rare disease mimics other common conditions as urolithiasis, lumbago or other abdominal lesions, detected therefore rarely early in clinical practice. In this paper, we present a case of an

acute renal infarction in a healthy 42-year old man, who was initially misdiagnosed with renal colic, before the diagnosis of the disease was finally established. Riffing the relative literature, trigger points are searched, which can make the early diagnosis of a RI possible.

Citation

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Introduction

Renal infarction (RI) is a deceiving entity of unknown incidence in the emergency departments (EDs). Patients suffering from RI usually present with abdominal or flank pain, elevated levels of lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) and/or hematuria¹. The diagnosis is often delayed since the clinical spectrum of the disorder guides the suspicion in other common conditions like renal colic, pyelonephritis or abdominal pathology². Although most

patients with RI are old and have a high risk of thromboembolism, younger patients not carrying any obvious risks should not be excluded³. Contrast-enhanced CT is thought to be a 'sine qua non' in terms of RI diagnosis,

therefore should be performed if suspicion is raised⁴. Herein, we present a case of a RI in a young man, who was initially misdiagnosed with renal colic.

Case presentation

A 42-year old male smoker present-

Key words

renal infarction;
thromboembolism; LDH;
young male

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Figure 1. (a) CT imaging without IV contrast; no evidence of cortical lesion. Indirect sign is a mild thickening of the perirenal fascia (white arrow). (b) CT with IV contrast; wedge shaped defect of enhancement of anterior region of left kidney, suggestive of segmental renal infarct. Additional features include a rim of capsular enhancement surrounding the hypodense area (cortical rim sign- white arrow) as well as perirenal stranding with thickening of Gerota's fascia (yellow arrow)

ed to the ED with acute onset of left flank pain and nausea for a few hours. No history of illnesses or trauma was reported. Vital signs were temperature of 36.6°C, pulse rate of 80 beats/minutes, normal respiratory rate and blood pressure. Physical examination revealed left flank tenderness. Urine analysis demonstrated hematuria, while urine pH was 5. Blood examination showed no leucocytosis and normal hematocrite. Markers of blood coagulation (PT, PTT, INR) and biochemical tests, including LDH, were normal. KUB x-ray was negative for radiopaque lithiasis. Thus, a radiolucent lithiasis renal colic was hypothesized and the patient was treated with analgesics. After the remission of pain, the patient received relational instructions and was counseled for reexamination.

After 24 hours the patient presented again reporting worsening of the flank pain. Vital signs were normal. Blood tests showed mild leukocytosis. Creatinine was elevated in 1.8 mg/dl. Liver enzymes were also mildly elevated but LDH was markedly increased in 780 IU/L. Urine analysis showed hematuria and mild proteinuria. Ultrasonography was not contributive, showing neither lithiasis nor obstruction. In front of a differentiation concern, further investigation was decided.



Figure 2. (a) MPR reformatted images in sagittal plane shows anterior upper distribution of renal infarct. (b) Left renal artery variation with double renal artery at its origin. White arrow depicts intraluminal thrombus of anterior renal artery



Figure 3. (a) MPR reformatted images in coronal plane shows intramural thrombus of anterior renal artery (white arrow). (b) Flip flop enhancement was seen, where a region of hypoenhancement on early phases becomes hyperattenuating on delayed imaging (white arrow)

The patient was referred to Radiology department and CT without and after IV contrast was performed. In non-enhanced images a mild thickening of the perirenal fascia was found (**figure 1a**). After contrast-material administration, CT demonstrated a focal, triangular-shaped defect of renal parenchyma situated at anterior upper segment that involved

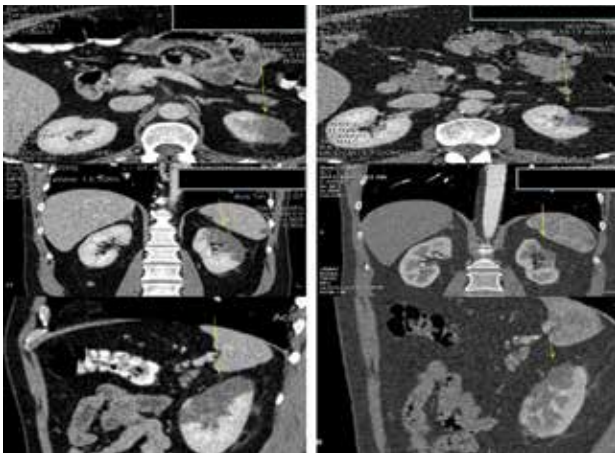


Figure 4. 4-months CT follow-up: Axial, coronal and sagittal MPR reconstruction of CT imaging. Comparative images demonstrate the evolution of cortical defect (right column - yellow arrows) in place of renal infarct

both the cortex and medulla; a featuring cortical-rim sign, due to collateral capsular perfusion, was also observed (**figure 1b, 2a**). Closer observation depicted an anatomic variation of left double renal artery (**figure 2b**) and an intraluminal thrombus of the anterior artery irrigating the anterior segment of left kidney (**figure 2b, 3a**). Flip-flop-enhancement sign was also seen (**figure 3b**). Subsequently, the diagnosis of acute segmental RI of left kidney was established.

Just following, an echocardiogram was performed demonstrating a normal left atrium and normal left ventricular size with normal ejection fraction. During hospitalization, the patient was evaluated for deep vein thrombosis, thrombophilia and rheumatologic disorders; the examination panel consisted of Doppler examination of carotids arteries and veins of upper and lower limbs, measurement of blood levels of homocysteine, antithrombin, protein C and S, lupus anticoagulant and anticardiolipin antibodies. All examinations failed to designate an obvious cause of embolus.

The patient was treated with intravenous heparine and oral acenocumarole until INR in 2.5 was stabilized. The pain was totally resolved after 2 days. He was discharged from hospital after 7 days, with a creatinine level of 1.1 mg/dl. Additionally, the patient was counseled by the cardiologist to continue oral acenocumarole.

Follow-up CT at 4 months depicted an area of cortical defect in the site of the RI (**figure 4**), while creatinine was measured in 1.1 mg/dl which was considered as baseline. The cardiologist counseled the alteration of oral acenocumarole to prophylactic low-dose aspirin for at least further 6 months. For further monitoring of the potential sequelae regarding blood pressure and renal function the patient was referred to a nephrologist. Till now his medical course is reported uneventful.

Discussion

The actual occurrence of RI cannot be easily determined since the condition is limited reported in the literature⁴. However, its incidence up to 1.4% in autopsy studies² indicates that the disease is underestimated, demanding huge suspicion to be diagnosed ante mortem.

Advanced age and high risk of thromboembolism is almost the rule in patients with RI as it is noted in most reports⁴. Atrial fibrillation, history of previous embolism, infectious endocarditis, valvular and ischemic heart disease, coagulation dysfunction or hematologic disease, atherosclerosis of abdominal aorta and spontaneous renal artery dissection are usually reported; atrial fibrillation is the most common cause and the most common site of embolus is considered of cardiac origin⁴. However, Bolderman et al observed a group of patients who did not carry any obvious risk but they suffered from an RI; these patients were middle-aged, smokers, being treated for hypertension or hyperlipidemia and their emboli may have been originated from the suprarenal aortic wall rather than the cardiac chambers³. After evaluation, half of them were found to have underlying diseases like hyperhomocystinemia or congenital coagulation diseases, but the rest were found negative for a risk factor³.


The clinical spectrum of RI consists of flank, abdominal or lower back pain, nausea/vomiting, fever/chills, even diarrhea, dyspnea or chest pain⁴; laboratory examinations which could alert the diagnosis are LDH and the simultaneous presence of hematuria or proteinuria⁴. Almost all patients have elevated LDH, up to 6.86-fold higher than normal, which is considered the most sensitive mark indicat-

ing further investigation¹. Microscopic hematuria is frequently present, although its absence may suggest a serious loss of renal function². Creatinine is not found significantly elevated and thus, not helpful but higher values may signify more severe renal damage and prolonged hospitalization^{1,2}. C-reactive protein, liver enzymes, blood urea or white-blood-cells may be elevated as well⁴.

Diagnosis of acute RI via CT is established in up to 80% of the cases⁵. It also helps ruling out other abdominal pain entities such as renal colic, appendicitis, aortic aneurysm or hepatic diseases⁴. Furthermore, CT is noninvasive, reachable in most tertiary hospitals and is considered the standard of reference⁴. After IV contrast administration renal infarct appears as a non-enhanced triangular-shaped zone of diminished density². Other signs are cortical-rim sign, a distal area of cortical enhancement surrounding the ischemic parenchyma and flip-flop-enhancement sign where a region of hypoenhancement on early phases becomes hyperattenuating on delay images². In cases where non-contrast CT is performed, like in cases searching for lithiasis, imaging of perinephric stranding without hydronephrosis may be the only sign raising the suspicion of a renal infarction⁵; if clinical and laboratory findings - like thromboembolic risk, persistence of pain and raised LDH - indicate further investigation, contrast-enhanced CT is then necessary⁵. Doppler ultrasound may be helpful in the recognition of global rather than segmental RI, but still can be the study of choice for obstructive lithiasis or aortic aneurysm¹. Finally, renal angiography looks like the optimal imaging modality for final diagnosis, albeit carrying the disadvantage of invasiveness².

The management of the acute phase of RI remains unclear and lacks of standardized approach; oral or intravenous anticoagulants agents (heparine plus warfarin) or anticoagulants agents along with thrombolytics (as streptokinase) may be used^{2,5}. No comparative studies are available, but some authors argue in favor of conservative treatment, as far as acceptable outcome in terms of renal function is achieved in most patients, while thrombolysis carries risk of complications and gives non-superior results². Thrombolysis might be beneficial if attempted within 90 minutes

from onset of pain, but even then successful revascularization may be expected in less than 50% of patients¹. Besides, definitive diagnosis might delay several days¹. In general terms, early enough diagnosis is more significant for the final outcome than treatment modality¹ and is considered mandatory since the condition may result in unwanted sequelae like renal insufficiency or even death². Regarding the long term management of RI, there are no certain recommendations in the literature. In our case, we referred our patient to regular cardiologic follow-up, since the patient was initially treated with acenocumarole which demands regular measurement of INR and dose titration. Whereas long-term anticoagulant therapy for cardiac patients is unquestionable, the type or the duration of therapy in idiopathic RI is still unknown³. Even if subsequent risk was small, it was decided our patient to be treated with a further antithrombotic prophylaxis with low-dose aspirin, as reported in the literature³. Additionally, a contrast-enhanced CT was performed 4 months after the event to evaluate the condition of renal parenchyma; a DMSA scan could also be helpful. Finally, the patient was also referred to a nephrologist for the assessment of renal function and the monitoring of the possible sequel of nephrogenic hypertension⁵.

In conclusion, RI is a rare entity which demands high level of suspicion. The typical patient is old and carries a high risk of thromboembolism, presenting with pain in the abdomen or in the flank and demonstrating microscopic hematuria, proteinuria and elevated LDH. However, young patients without obvious risk factors should not be excluded. Although renal function is likely to be preserved even in delayed diagnosis, early and definitive diagnosis and treatment is mandatory. 

Abbreviations

EDs=Emergency Departments

RI=Renal Infarction,

LDH=lactic acid dehydrogenase

CT=computer tomography

PT=Prothombine Time

aPTT=partial thromboplastin time

INR= international normalized ratio

Περίληψη

Ανάμεσα στην ποικιλία των ουρολογικών επειγόντων, ελάχιστες οντότητες δείχνουν να παραπλανούν τόσο όσο ένα οξύ νεφρικό έμφρακτο. Αυτή η σπάνια πάθηση μιμείται άλλες συχνές καταστάσεις, όπως η ουρολιθίαση, η οσφυαλγία ή άλλες κοιλιακές διαταραχές, και ως εκ τούτου σπάνια ανιχνεύεται νωρίς στην κλινική πράξη. Σε αυτή την εργασία, παρουσιάζουμε την περίπτωση ενός οξέος νεφρικού εμφράκτου σε έναν υγιή άντρα 42 ετών, ο οποίος αρχικά διεγνώσθη εσφαλμένα με κωλικό νεφρού, έως η διάγνωση της νόσου τελικά να επιβεβαιωθεί. Ξεφυλλίζοντας την σχετική βιβλιογραφία, αναζητούνται εναύσματα, που θα μπορούν να κάνουν την πρώιμη διάγνωση ενός νεφρικού εμφράγματος εφικτή.

**Λέξεις
ευρετηριασμού**
νεφρικό έμφρακτο,
θρομβοεμβολισμός, LDH,
νέος άνδρας

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CASE REPORT

Diffuse intestinal metaplasia of the urinary bladder causing bilateral hydronephrosis in a 48-year old man. A case report

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Abstract

Glandular cystitis is a benign disease of the urinary bladder, possibly caused by permanent irritation of urothelium by various causes. The atypical or intestinal morphological type of the disease intrigues as it has been hypothesized as a premalignant

condition associated with bladder adenocarcinoma. Whereas such a relation remains controversial, severe sequelae can occur from the benign version of the disease, provoking dilemmas and making difficult its management by the urologist.

Citation

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Introduction

Cystitis glandularis (CG) is a glandular metaplastic lesion of the bladder, commonly identified in normal organ specimens or at times in conjunction with urothelial or other carcinomas¹. The condition is the outcome of benign glandular differentiation in the von Brunn nests, while the cystic dilatation of these structures form the condition called cystitis cystica². Further metaplasia of the lining epithelium in mucin - filled goblet cells constitutes

intestinal metaplasia (IM), a condition speculated as a precursor lesion for bladder adenocarcinoma (AD) by observation studies and case reports³, although other studies did not demonstrate such a connection^{1,4,5}. The irritation of the bladder mucosa in a persistent manner

is the causative event, while the clinical spectrum of the condition is quite unspecific including hematuria, voiding symptoms or obstructive uropathy⁶. Since the condition can mimic radiographically and cystoscopically other malignancies

Key words

glandular cystitis; intestinal metaplasia; adenocarcinoma; cystectomy

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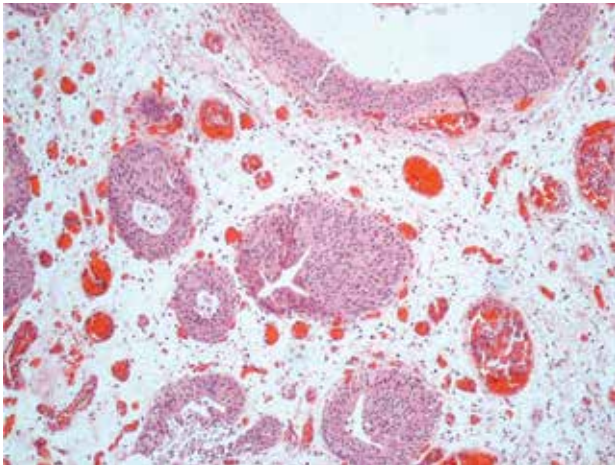


Figure 1: Area of cystitis glandularis. (H.E Stain 10x)

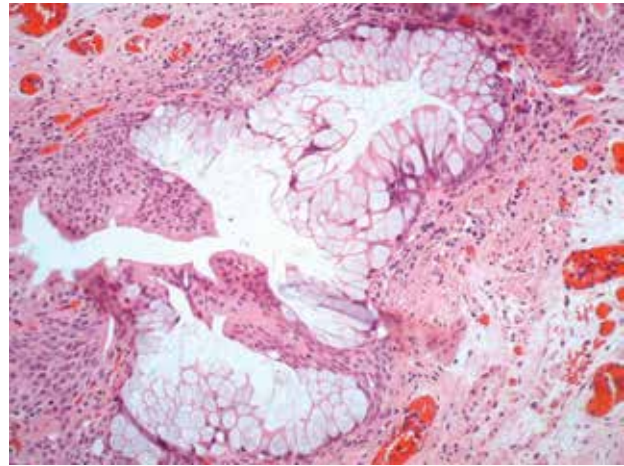


Figure 2: Intestinal type metaplasia (H.E Stain 20x)

nant lesions of the bladder, the usual management consists of transurethral resection of the mass and the disease is usually beatable, not needing further measures⁷. However, persistent or complicated cases may demand more aggressive management⁷. In this paper, we present a case of diffuse intestinal metaplasia of the bladder in a 48-year old man. Moreover, the clinical significance of the finding, particularly in association with bladder AD, is discussed.

Case presentation

A 48-year old man, of Slavian ancestry, was referred to our department by a nephrologist due to deterioration of serum urea and creatinine and imaging findings of bilateral upper tract obstructive uropathy. The patient referred no illnesses or drug intake and the general medical and urological history was unremarkable. No voiding symptoms or hematuria, during at least the last year, were reported. Ultrasonography showed bilateral upper tract obstruction with gross dilatation of both renal pelvises and ureters; moreover, the bladder wall showed manifold thickening and abnormal fattening of bladder trigone. Urine examination demonstrated mild pyuria, hematuria and the presence of mucus, while urine cytology was negative for malignancy. A non-contrast enhancement computer tomography was performed which sustained upper tract and ureters obstruction up to the ureteral orifices without obvious obstacle like lithiasis or tumor.

Due to the unknown nature of the mass in the bladder, the urologic team yield priority to the relief of the

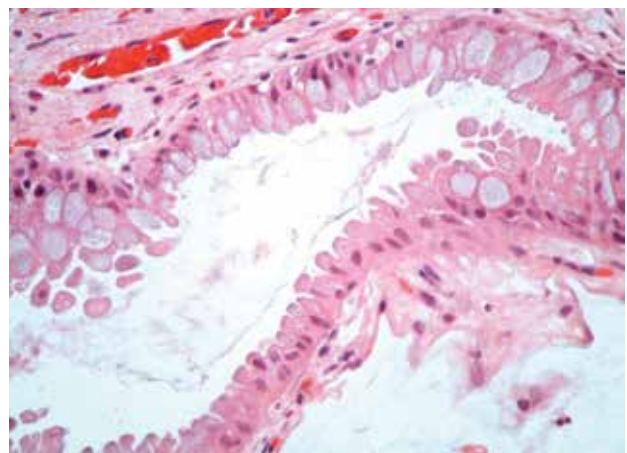


Figure 3: Progressive metaplastic lesions of the glandular epithelium (H.E Stain 40x)

obstruction and the recovery of renal function. Bilateral percutaneous nephrostomy were placed and a diagnostic transurethral resection (TUR) of the lesion was then performed: cystoscopy revealed nodules-like structures lying underneath the submucosa, while ureteral orifices were undoable to be found. Biopsy specimens were taken from both the mass and from the healthy looking urothelium. The pathologic diagnosis was "cystitis glandularis with multifocal intestinal type metaplastic changes and focal mucosal ulceration" (**Figures 1, 2**). A second, more aggressive, TUR was performed 3 weeks later for the establishment of the diagnosis, the total removal of the mass and for the deliverance of the orifices from the lesion. The pathologic report was identical (**Figure 3**).

One month later and since renal function had been recovered, a urogram via nephrostomies was performed. However, ureteral orifices were found still obstructed; moreover, repeat cystoscopy showed recurrence of the mass both in the trigone and in various sites. Because of the deterioration in patient's life, the helplessness of the repeated TURs and the possible connection of IM with bladder adenocarcinoma, the patient was counseled undergoing ileal neobladder reconstruction in an expertise center. Indeed, the patient underwent the procedure, whom, to our dispatch, the pathologic report showed intestinal metaplasia in the ground of glandular cystitis of the bladder, without sign of malignancy.

Discussion

Cystitis glandularis is a metaplastic alteration of the urothelium, which can occur in both bladder and ureter⁶. The condition consists of two types of distinct morphology; the typical type is characterized by luminal structures within the lamina propria having an innermost lining of columnar or cuboidal cells and bounded peripherally by transitional cells, while the intestinal or atypical type, or intestinal metaplasia, has a similar architecture but contains mucin-secreting goblet cells in the lining epithelium⁸. Both types, especially IM, have been incriminated as premalignant conditions of bladder AD². The histological differentiation of widespread IM from AD can be problematic, since both entities may secrete abundant extravasated stromal mucin; however, IM does not develop nuclear atypia or mitotic figures and rarely surpasses lamina propria, while classic signet ring cells and epithelial necrosis are not seen⁶.

Chronic injurious stimulation is considered the predisposing factor in the formation of CG¹; bladder exstrophy and pelvic lipomatosis⁴, chronic urinary tract infections, urolithiasis, intravesical drugs' instillation, bladder outlet obstruction, neurogenic bladder and abdominal or pelvic radiotherapy¹ have been reported as risk factors. Bladder trigone is the most common site of development and clinical spectrum is remarkable unspecific involving various lower urinary tract symptoms, hematuria or obstructive uropathy⁷. Cystoscopy or imaging studies cannot distinct the condition from other malignant lesions and eventually the diagnosis cannot be made without microscopic examination⁶. Transurethral resection of the mass usually breaks the problem, but cases of persistent


disease may require adjuvant intravesical BCG (bacillus Calmette - Guerin) or steroids instillations, while implication of the ureters may demand temporary percutaneous nephrostomy or further surgical intervention; ureteral reimplantation into the dome of the bladder or cystoprostatectomy with ileal neobladder reconstruction may be necessary⁷.

The most stimulating issue about IM is the possible premalignant role of the condition, as it has been implicated at a considerable number of case reports; the synchronous presence of bladder adenocarcinoma and diffuse CG or intestinal metaplasia in the specimens of most of these cases, provoked authors to classify the condition as precancerous¹. More recent data from laboratories studies have attach importance to this hypothesis. Telomere shortening, already recognized in cancer development, has been found significantly present in urothelial intestinal metaplasia, while nuclear beta-catenin expression, a common signaling pathway with Barrett's metaplasia of oesophagus has been shown in intestinal metaplasia of the bladder and not it typical CG⁶. Cyclooxygenase - 2, an important enzyme regulating expression of the proto-oncogene bcl - 2 (b-cell lymphoma - 2), which inhibit apoptosis, has been found highly expressed in intestinal metaplasia and bladder adenocarcinoma tissues; the authors conclude that such overexpression likely contributes to sensitizing premalignant lesions to genotoxic carcinogens³. A transcription factor, called CDX - 2, nodal in the differentiation of intestinal epithelial cells, has been reported in a variety of adenocarcinomas and has been also observed in intestinal metaplasia but once again not in typical CG⁸. Another evidence of premalignancy that has been reported in both types of CG is considered the imbalance of the "guardian of the genome" TP53, a known antitumor - gene implicated in many kinds of cancer⁶. Finally, in their study, Gordetsky et al observed concurrent intestinal metaplasia with dysplasia and bladder adenocarcinoma in 40% of the cases, recommending close follow-up when dysplasia is apparent⁹.

In contradiction to these findings, cystitis glandularis is a relatively common finding in apparently healthy bladders in autopsy specimens⁵. Moreover, some studies have demonstrated negative association between CG, neither typical nor intestinal, and bladder adenocarcinoma. In the most extended study, Corica et al followed 53 patients

with intestinal metaplasia for a median time of more than 12 years and none of them developed cancer, and thus, authors concluded that IM is not a strong risk factor for the development of malignancy⁴. Two additional studies drew same conclusions after long - term tracking of 302 patients with typical or intestinal type of CG^{1,5}. Given that conflicting data, the possibility of the premalignancy in bladder adenocarcinoma remains cloudy.

In conclusion, cystitis glandularis is a benign lesion of the bladder, which should always be concerned. Severe sequelae due to diffuse disease, especially of the intestinal type, like obstructive uropathy, may be remarka-

ble and demand aggressive intervention. Of course, like in our case, we believe that such approaches should be considered the last hope. Finally, since recent researching data alert the possible precancerous role of the condition, we strongly believe that the presence of IM, regardless dysplastic or not, should always alert urologists to keep these patients in close follow - up. 

Abbreviations

CG = Cystitis Glandularis

IM = Intestinal metaplasia

AD = Adenocarcinoma

Περίληψη

Η αδενική κυστίτιδα είναι μια καλοήθης πάθηση της ουροδόχου κύστης, με πιθανότερη αιτία τον επίμονο ερεθισμό του ουροθηλίου από ποικίλες αιτίες. Ο άτυπος ή εντερικός μορφολογικός τύπος της πάθησης συγκεντρώνει ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον καθώς έχει υποτεθεί ως μια προκαρκινωματώδη κατάσταση σχετιζόμενη με το αδενοκαρκίνωμα της κύστης. Ενώ η σχέση αυτή παραμένει αμφιλεγόμενη, σοβαρές συνέπειες μπορεί να προέλθουν και από την καλοήθη εκδοχή της νόσου, εγείροντας διλήμματα και κάνοντας δύσκολη την αντιμετώπισή της από τον ουρολόγο.

Λέξεις ευρετηριασμού

αδενική κυστίτιδα,
εντερική μεταπλασία,
αδενοκαρκίνωμα,
κυστεκτομή

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