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REVIEWS

- The role of emerging therapies in the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia. Is it any place?
- Is there any potential role for the elastography on the evaluation of clinical success of prostate artery embolization (PAE) on the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH)?

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

- Stem cell therapy for erectile dysfunction: Preliminary results from a single-center pilot study in Greece
- The effect of neoadjuvant chemotherapy on the perioperative morbidity of patients undergoing radical cystectomy for bladder cancer
- A retrospective examination of subjective symptoms and objective urodynamic findings in patients with multiple sclerosis and non-neurogenic LUTS

CASE REPORTS

- Plasmacytoma of the testis in a patient with previous multiple myeloma. A rare case report and review of the literature
- Elastosis perforans serpiginosa associated with pseudo-pseudoxanthoma elasticum after treatment with D-penicillamine in a patient with cystinuria



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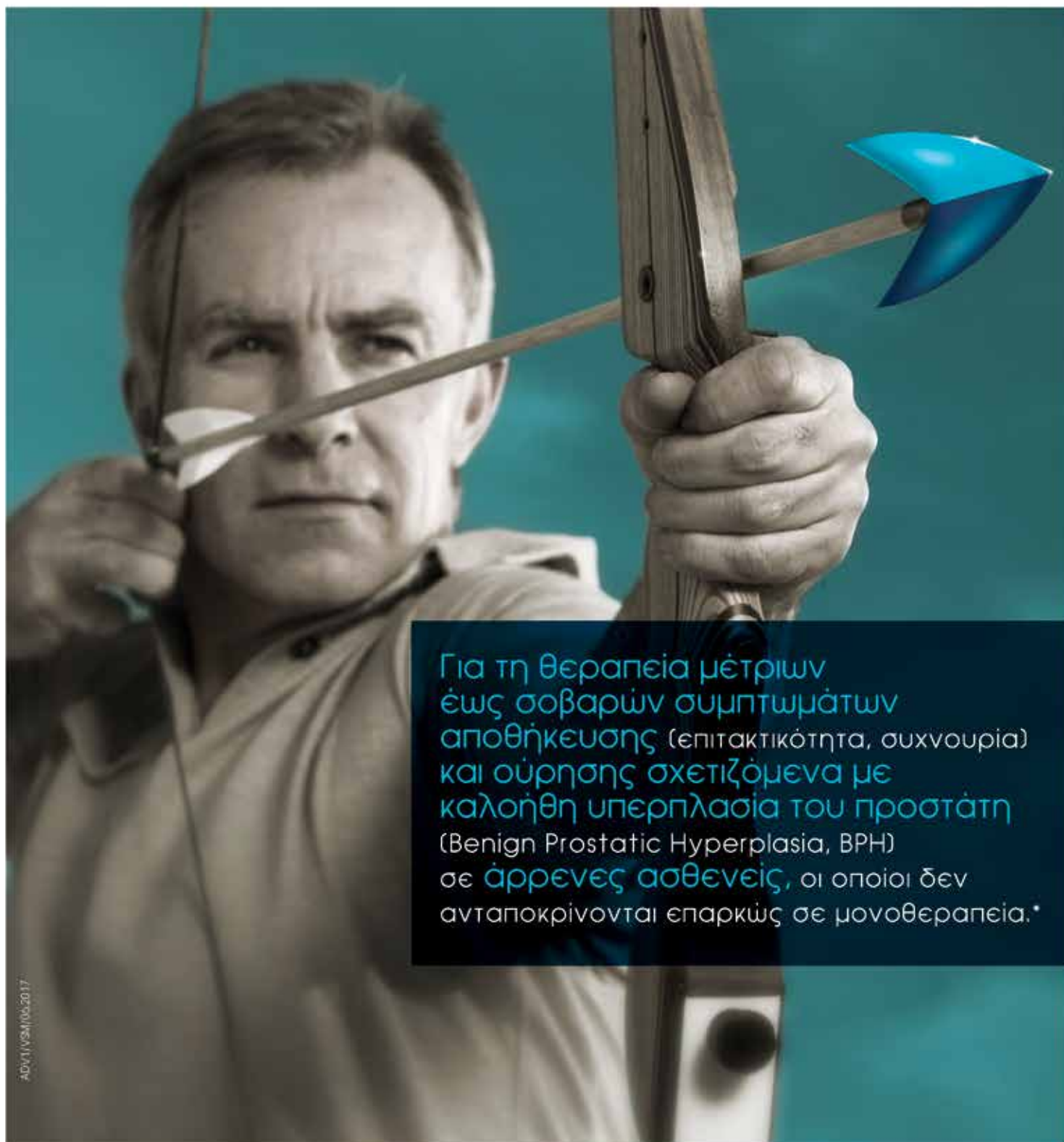
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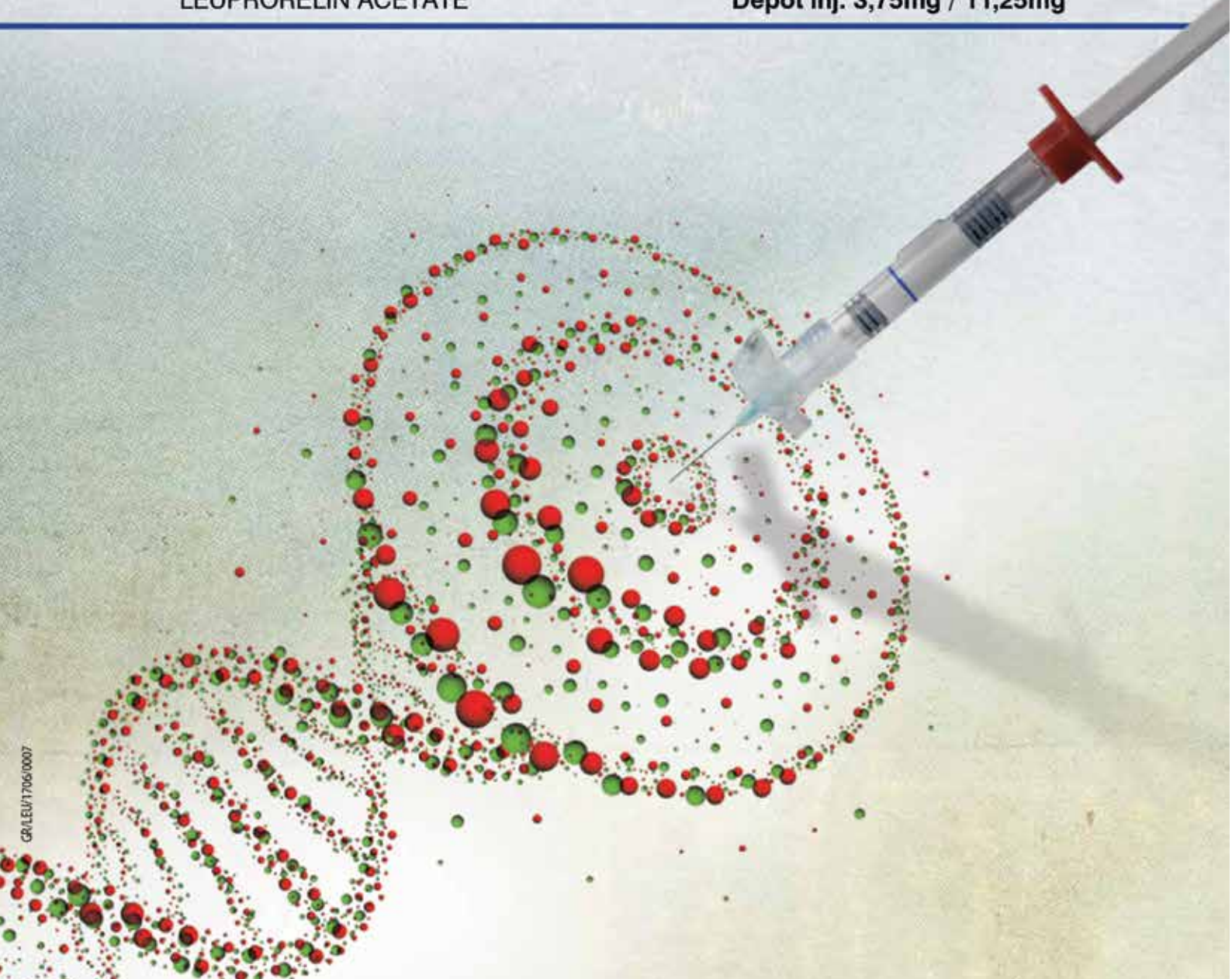
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3. Mettam GR, Adams LB. How to prepare an electronic version of your article. In: Jones BS, Smith RZ, editors. Introduction to the electronic age, New York: E - Publishing Inc; 1999, p. 281 - 304.

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Θεραπεία των συμπτωμάτων (συχνουρία ή/και έπειξη για ούρηση ή/και επιτακτικού τύπου ακράτεια) τα οποία μπορεί να παρουσιαστούν σε ενήλικες ασθενείς με σύνδρομο υπερδραστήριας ουροδόχου κύστης.¹

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 υπερδραστήριας ουροδόχου κύστης. **ΑΝΤΕΝΔΕΙΞΕΙΣ:** Υπερευαίσθησία στη δραστική ουσία ή στο φυσιολογικό ή στη σόγια ή σε οποιοδήποτε από τα έκδοχα, επίσχεση ούρων, γαστρική κατακράτηση, μη ελεγχόμενο γλαύκωμα κλειστής γωνίας, βαριά μυασθένεια, σοβαρή ηπατική δυσλειτουργία (Child- Pugh C), ταυτόχρονη χορήγηση ισχυρών αναστολέων του CYP3A4 σε άτομα με μέτρια έως σοβαρή ηπατική ή νεφρική δυσλειτουργία, σοβαρή ελκώδη 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 εξόδου με επειγουμένη 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 διφωσφονικά από το στόμα), τα οποία μπορεί να προκαλέσουν ή να παροξύνουν 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. **Αυξήσεις της δόσολογίας:** Σε ασθενείς με συνδυασμό αυτών των παραγόντων, αναμένονται επιπρόσθετες αυξήσεις της έκθεσης. Αντιμυοκαρδικές δοσοεξαρτούμενες 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 υπερδραστηριότητα του εξοστήρα 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 παρασχεθεί η κατάλληλη θεραπεία. **Ισχυροί επανανέτες του CYP3A4:** Η ταυτόχρονη χρήση της φεσοτεροδίνης με έναν ισχυρό επαγωγέα του CYP3A4 (όπλ. καρβαμαζεπίνη, ριφαμπικίνη, φαινοβαρβιτάλη, φαινυτοΐνη, 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 δυστορόρησης γλυκόζης-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 υπερδραστήρια

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 δυσκολιότητα. 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' ότι 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 συνθηκη συχνότητας: πολύ συχνές ($\geq 1/10$), συχνές ($\geq 1/100$ έως $< 1/10$), όχι συχνές ($\geq 1/1.000$ έως $< 1/100$), σπάνιες ($\geq 1/10.000$ σε $< 1/1.000$). Οι ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες παρατίθενται κατά φθίνουσα σειρά σοβαρότητας: Πολύ συχνές: Ξηροστομία, Συχνές: Αιτία, ζάλη, κεφαλαλγία, ξηροφθαλμία, ξηρότητα του φάρυγγα, κολιακό άλγος, διάρροια, δυσπεψία, δυσκολιότητα, ναυτία, δυσουρία, Όχι συχνές: Ουρολοίμωξη, δυσουρία, υπηλία, θαμπή όραση, ίλιγγος, ταχυκαρδία, αίσθημα παλμών, φαρυγολαρυγγικό άλγος, βήχας, ξηρότητα του ρινικού βλεννογόνου, κολιακή δυσφορία, μεταωριμώδης, γαστροοισοφαγική παλινδρόμηση, αυξημένη ALT, αυξημένη GGT, εξάνθημα, ξηροδερμία, κνησμός, επίσχεση ούρων (συμπεριλαμβανομένου του αισθήματος υπολειπόμενων ούρων και της διαταραχής της ούρησης), δυσκολία στην ούρηση, κόπωση, Σπινδίνες: Κατάσταση σύγχυσης, αγγειοοίδημα, κνίδωση. **Περιγραφή επιλεγμένων 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 καλοήγη υπερπλασία του προστάτη (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. **ΛΙΑΝΙΚΗ ΤΙΜΗ:** 4 mg δισκία παρατεταμένης αποδέσμευσης BT x 30, Α.Τ.: 32,65 € 8 mg δισκία παρατεταμένης αποδέσμευσης BT x 30, Α.Τ.: 33,76 € **ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΪΟΝ ΓΙΑ ΤΟ ΟΠΟΙΟ ΑΠΑΙΤΕΙΤΑΙ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΤΑΓΗ ΓΙΑ ΠΑΡΗΣΕΙΣ ΣΥΝΤΑΓΟΓΡΑΦΙΚΕΣ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΕΣ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΙΣΤΕ ΝΑ ΑΠΕΥΘΥΝΘΕΙΤΕ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΤΑΙΡΙΑ.**

1. Περίληψη Χαρακτηριστικών του Προϊόντος Toniaz 06/2015.

Βοηθήστε να γίνουν τα φάρμακα πιο ασφαλή και Αναφέρετε ΟΛΕΣ τις ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες για ΟΛΑ τα φάρμακα Συμπληρώνοντας το «ΚΙΤΡΙΝΗ ΚΑΡΤΑ»



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Λ. ΜΕΣΟΓΕΙΩΝ 243 - 11545 Ν. ΨΥΧΙΚΟ,
ΤΗΛ: 210 6785 800



Pierre Fabre
FARMΑΚΑ S.A.

Λ. Μεσογείων 350, 15341,
Αγία Παρασκευή
Τηλ. 210 7234 582

REVIEW

The role of emerging therapies in the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia. Is it any place?

Ioannis Glykas, Ioannis Gkialas

Department of Urology, General Hospital of Athens G.N.A. "G. Gennimatas"

Abstract

Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) may lead to bladder outflow obstruction and symptoms in older men. The latest developments as far as it concerns surgical treatment are focused on two principles: An office based procedure without the need for general anesthesia; and minimizing incontinence and sexual dysfunction related side effects while retaining satisfac-

tory clinical efficacy. The aim of this review is to evaluate evolving minimally invasive therapies for the treatment of lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) caused by BPH in which ongoing clinical trials show early promise, namely, intra-prostatic injections, alcohol ablation, aquablation, the Rezum device, prostatic artery embolization (PAE), and histotripsy.

Introduction

Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) may lead to bladder outflow obstruction and symptoms in older men [1]. Surgical interventions such as resection, enucleation and vaporization have led to reasonable long term outcomes with acceptable safety. Most of these techniques are operator dependent and success depends upon the extent of de-obstruction of the bladder outlet [2].

Although the development of new techniques has been reasonably successful, there is a continued desire to develop better techniques. The latest develop-

ments are focused on two principles: An office based procedure without the need for general anesthesia; and minimizing incontinence and sexual dysfunction related side effects while retaining satisfactory clinical efficacy. This has subsequently led to the investigation of even more minimally invasive therapies such as intra-prostatic injections, a variety of ablation techniques ranging from the use of high frequency ultrasound to water vapor, and mechanical interventions based on intra-urethral stenting [3,4].

The aim of this review is to evaluate evolving minimally invasive therapies

Key words

benign prostatic hyperplasia; alcohol ablation; aquablation, Rezum; histotripsy; embolization

Citation

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Corresponding author:

Corresponding Author: Ioannis Gkialas

E-mail: gjangkialas@yahoo.gr



for the treatment of lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in which ongoing clinical trials show early promise, namely, intra-prostatic injections, alcohol ablation, aquablation, the Rezum device, prostatic artery embolization (PAE), and histotripsy.

Intra-prostatic injections

Intra-prostatic injections have been used in the treatment of BPH for decades; however two drugs which have shown particular promise recently are NX-1207 and PRX-302. Administration of NX-1207 is guided by transrectal ultrasound, while PRX-302 is a transperineal or transrectal TRUS guided intra-prostatic injection, with a short course of pre and post procedure prophylactic antibiotics [5,6].

NX-1207 is a protein which reduces prostate volume at a cellular level by inducing apoptosis, the exact mechanism of which has not been published by its manufacturer, Nymox Pharmaceutical Corporation [5,7]. NX-1207 is currently undergoing phase III clinical trials but two phase II multicenter studies with 175 and 85 men (severe LUTS and prostate volume 30 mL-70 mL), have shown statistically significant improvements in American Urological Association Symptom Index (AUASI) scores and prostate volume [5,8]. Prostate volume reduction of 6.8 mL led to improvements in AUASI scores ranging from 9.4 to 11 points at 3 months to 6.5 years. In addition, more than 50% of participants in all phase I and II trials did not require any further surgical intervention for BPH at 5 year follow up. Minimal complications have been reported, limited to those underwent transrectal procedures – mild hematuria, dysuria or infection – and no significant difference has been shown when compared to placebo or equivalent transrectal procedures. No sexual dysfunction or urinary incontinence has been reported [5,7].

Similarly, PRX-302, also known as topsalysin, reduces prostate volume by inducing cell death. It is activated by enzymatically active prostate-specific antigen (PSA) within prostate tissue, and the subsequent formation of a transmembrane heptameric pore leads to apoptosis [6]. A small phase II study (18 patients) and a larger phase IIB study with 92 patients have been conducted [6,9]. In the phase IIB trial which was a placebo controlled study, men with severe IPSS and prostate volume 30 mL-100 mL were included. Although no significant difference in prostate volume was not-

ed, there was a significant decrease in IPSS by 9 points compared to 6 points in the vehicle group at 90 days. This difference however, was not statistically significant at 12 months. Complications were limited to both transient and at most, moderate severity such as dysuria, micturition urgency and/or frequency, perineal pain and mild hematuria [6]. Again, no sexual function-related side effects were reported and initial phase I and II studies showed no difference in erectile function scores at baseline and follow up at 12 months [6,9].

The main benefit of PRX-302 and NX-1207 lies in the relative ease of performing the procedure which can be performed by most urologists without a need for special training or special equipment, and the lack of side effects [5]. NX-1207 seems to be favorable as an office based catheter free procedure, and the results from the ongoing two large phase III studies should provide answers for durability of efficacy.

Alcohol ablation, also known as transurethral ethanol ablation of the prostate (TEAP), refers to the use of a flexible injection needle to inject dehydrated ethanol into the prostate under direct visualization using cystourethroscopy, for chemoablation of prostatic tissue [10,11]. This short procedure, up to 25 minutes long, can be done either with a peri-prostatic block with oral or intravenous sedation, or under spinal anesthesia [10-12]. The first clinical study proposing the safe and effective use of TEAP in the treatment of BPH was published in 1999 by Goya et al, with statistically significant improvements in mean AUASI (12.2 from 23.1), IPSS (3.2 from 5.1), Qmax (13.1 from 8) and PVR (49.3 from 129.1) at 3 months follow up but with a sample size of only 10 patients [13]. The phase I/II clinical trial in 2007 was a multi-center randomized trial ($n=79$) in the United States and used three different doses of anhydrous ethanol which all demonstrated statistically significant improvement across a range of clinical outcomes [12]. After 6 months of follow up, prostate volume dropped to 39.8 g from 46.1 g resulting in improvement in IPSS of 10.6 [8]. In a smaller study (35 men) with 4 year follow up, IPSS remained significantly lower than pre-injection values, with prostate volume decreasing from 52.67 ± 20.43 to 49.94 ± 21.28 grams. 10 Nine out of these patients had another intervention with four requiring a TURP. 10 Additionally, complications reported include hematuria, dysuria, urinary retention, infections such as UTIs and epidy-



mo-orchitis, urinary incontinence and urethral lacerations. There have also been documented cases of erectile dysfunction and ejaculatory problems despite the avoidance of bladder neck injections to minimize the risk of retrograde ejaculation [10,12]. Major complications such as wide-spread bladder necrosis leading to cystectomy however have largely led to abandonment of ethanol as a viable and safe intra-prostatic agent.

Aquablation

Aquablation involves a transrectal ultrasound guided, robot assisted high-velocity saline stream (inserted via a resectoscope) to ablate glandular prostatic tissue whilst eliminating the formation of heat energy [14]. The capsular issue is spared and ablation is monitored endoscopically and under transrectal ultrasound guidance.

In the initial canine survival study, superficial anticoagulation using a low power laser was also performed after ablation. This canine study ($n=8$) also confirmed aquablation's rapid procedure time with mean ablation only taking 60.5 seconds, as well as its relative safety due to both the radiological and histological sparing of collagenous tissue such as blood vessels and the surgical capsule. Although two of the dogs developed significant complications – bladder perforation – it was thought this was related specifically to canine anatomy [15]. Procedures in humans, done mostly under general anesthesia, have been found to take up to 12 minutes of ablation time and require catheterization for 24 hours [14].

Phase I and II clinical studies, the largest of which used 21 patients, had an improvement of IPSS by 13-19 from baseline whilst the prostate volume reduction was 57 grams to 35 grams [14]. These results were still significant at 6 months. In addition, there were no complications in any of these clinical trials, including bleeding, clot retention, retrograde ejaculation, urinary incontinence or erectile dysfunction. The efficacy and safety of the treatment is still to be validated in larger multi-center trials which are underway. The main advantage of this procedure is the non-dependence on the technical competency of the operator (though the operator is required to determine the limits of ablation through the Graphical User Interface), also the actual surgical time and efficiency is largely independent of prostate size.

The Rezum system

The Rezum system uses radiofrequency to create thermal energy in the form of water vapor to ablate prostatic tissue without the thermal gradient produced by other ablative procedures. The water vapor delivery device is inserted trans-urethrally under cystoscopic guidance and can be performed under local anesthetic with a mean procedure time of only 8 minutes [16,17]. First-in-man and phase I clinical trials ($n=30$) have shown significant improvements in IPSS (10.7 from 23 at baseline). This corresponded to a mean 26% reduction in total prostate volume at 3 months [16]. Similarly, a larger study including 44 men found reductions in prostate volume of 28.9% on Gadolinium-enhanced MRI at 6 months [17].

Adverse effects have been limited to transient urinary retention, mild dysuria and hematuria with no reported rectal injuries, urinary incontinence or sexual function-related side effects [17]. The main advantage of this procedure is its ability to be performed as an outpatient under local anesthesia. The reduction in volume has been moderate although ongoing multi-center trials are currently underway to confirm longer term efficacy.

Prostatic artery embolization

Percutaneous transluminal prostatic artery embolization (PAE) has been proposed as a non-surgical alternative to the TURP [18-20]. Reduction of prostate volume in PAE is achieved by the injection of an embolic agent – usually ethanol based – into the prostatic artery as the name suggests, and can be performed with unilateral or bilateral artery occlusion [18-21]. This requires CT angiography prior to the procedure, a trained interventional radiologist and a mean procedure time of 2 hours [19,21]. Like several other minimally invasive therapies for BPH, the benefits of PAE include the avoidance of a general anesthetic and lack of hemorrhage during treatment [19-21].

The first published cases by Carnevale et al in 2010, involved two patients who showed clinically significant improvements following the novel use of PAE for acute retention secondary to BPH. There were prostate volume reductions of 27.8% and 47.8% at 6 month follow up. A phase II trial ($n=11$), which confirmed the technical success rates of 75% and clinical success rate of 91%, was performed [22]. Subsequent trials were

even more favorable with technical success rates consistently greater than 90%, along with statistically significant improvements in clinical parameters at up to 30 months of follow up [19,20,23-26]. The largest prospective non-randomized study included 255 patients with a mean follow up of 10 months, and a success rate of 72% after 24 months. The IPSS improved from 24 to 9.1 at 36 months, but no significant difference in prostate volume was noted at a similar time interval [23].

As far as it concerns the prostate volume, it was not correlated to functional outcomes. Similarly, a systematic review of the clinical studies did not find differences in clinical outcome between unilateral and bilateral prostatic artery occlusion, or size of particles used [19-20, 23-26]. Documented complications were largely transient, and included dysuria, hematuria, hematospermia, rectal bleeding, hematoma at the site of access, acute urinary retention and minor infections such as urinary tract infections, prostatitis and balanitis [19-26]. Significant complications were largely theoretical and were related to the risks associated with inadvertent or untargeted ischemia affecting the bladder, rectum, anus and/or corpus cavernosum; however in the systematic review referred to previously, six cases of bladder ischemia were reported, with four cases requiring minor surgery [19]. There are no documented cases of urinary incontinence or sexual dysfunction.

Despite technical success rates of at least 90% across all individual studies to date, a high clinical failure rate ($n=131, 19\%$) has been reported in the review performed by Schreuder et al, with an unspecified proportion requiring subsequent TURP or re-embolization, which is of some concern [19]. A large multi-center study is currently underway in the United Kingdom to compare the efficacy of PAE to TURP [18,27]. Even if efficacy is proven, it seems unlikely this technique can be up taken by smaller centers due to the need for access to a sub-specialized interventional radiologist.

Histotripsy


Histotripsy is the use of extracorporeal ultrasound energy to induce extreme pressure changes within tissue to create localized and oscillatory clusters of microbubbles which cause mechanical fractionation. The violent collapse of these microbubble clusters then lead to cel-

lular destruction, specifically the conversion of tissue into acellular liquid, a process known as cavitation [28]. The reason for histotripsy's growing popularity aside from its non-invasive nature and relatively short procedural duration, is its high precision/localization due to significant differences in echogenicity between microbubbles and fractionated tissue making it ideal for the use of real time ultrasound monitoring [29].

Canine models have shown promising results in reducing prostate volumes by 12%-22%. Complications documented in order of incidence include mild to moderate hematuria without clot retention, perforated prostatic capsule and significantly less commonly; pelvic urinomata, superficial rectal erosions, recto-prostatic fistulae with associated abscess formation, peritonitis and urethral perforation [28-34].

Human clinical trials are underway with the Vortx Rx device however these are currently suspending participant recruitment for their pilot study due to poor enrolment [35]. Given the safety concerns seen in the animal models, it seems highly unlikely this technology will progress to use in a clinical setting in its current form.

Conclusion

Currently, there are several promising techniques for BPH on the horizon. Techniques such as PAE which have been in development since the 1980's have made significant progress with the availability of better imaging equipment. Some are progressing to phase III studies, such as NX-1207, aquablation and PAE, whereas the future of histotripsy technology is in doubt. Pilot studies have found significant differences in symptom scores compared to baseline with these devices however, as investigators of PRX-302 discovered, the placebo effect can also be significant. Treatments, in comparison to a placebo arm, may not have a statistically significant benefit. There may be several new techniques available to the urologist within a decade, and ultimately the technique's success will continue to depend on patient selection and skill of the operator. 

Conflicts of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Η καλοήθης υπερπλασία του προστάτη (ΚΥΠ) μπορεί να οδηγήσει σε απόφραξη της ουροδόχου κύστης και συμπτώματα από το κατώτερο ουροποιητικό σύστημα κυρίως σε ηλικιωμένους άνδρες. Η διουρηθρική προστατευτική αποτελεί τη θεραπεία εκλογής στην αντιμετώπιση της ΚΥΠ, ωστόσο τα τελευταία χρόνια αρχίζουν να εφαρμόζονται χειρουργικές τεχνικές ελάχιστα επεμβατικές, οι οποίες μπορεί να γίνουν χωρίς αναισθησία και οι οποίες προσφέρουν ικανοποιητικά αποτελέσματα με ελάχιστες παρενέργειες όσον αφορά στην ακράτεια

Λέξεις ερευρησιασμού

Καλοήθης υπερπλασία του προστάτη, ενδοπροστατικές ενέσεις, εμβολισμός προστατικής αρτηρίας, εκτομή με χρήση αλκοόλης ή νερού, χρήση συσκευής Rezum

των ούρων και στη σεξουαλική δυσλειτουργία. Σκοπός αυτής της ανασκόπησης είναι η αξιολόγηση των εξελισσόμενων ελάχιστα επεμβατικών θεραπειών για τη θεραπεία των συμπτωμάτων του κατώτερου ουροποιητικού (LUTS) που προκαλούνται από την ΚΥΠ στην οποία οι συνεχιζόμενες κλινικές δοκιμές δείχνουν ικανοποιητικά αποτελέσματα, και αφήνουν υποσχέσεις. Τέτοιες θεραπείες είναι οι ενδοπροστατικές ενέσεις, ο εμβολισμός της προστατικής αρτηρίας (PAE), η εκτομή με χρήση αλκοόλης ή νερού, η συσκευή Rezum και η ιστοτριψία.

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REVIEW

Is there any potential role for the elastography on the evaluation of clinical success of prostate artery embolization (PAE) on the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH)?

Konstantinos Stamatou

Urology Department, Tzaneio Hospital, Piraeus, Greece

Abstract

Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) is a very common condition in the male. It typically occurs in the sixth and seventh decades. Actually BPH is a histologic finding that becomes a clinical entity if and when it is associated with subjective symptoms. Not all men with histologic BPH will have significant lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) and other men who do not have histologic BPH will develop. In fact LUTS are also present in other diseases such as infection and cancer of the prostate, urethral stricture, etc. Tra-

ditionally, symptomatic benign prostatic hyperplasia is treated with either medical therapy or surgery. Among prostate-directed treatment modalities, prostate artery embolization (PAE) is the less invasive non pharmaceutical treatment. Initial studies showed that PAE led to reduction of the prostatic volume, symptom remission and improvements in quality of life. As a relatively new procedure, few data exist to clearly determine the exact mechanism(s) by which PAE achieve the above results.

Introduction: Pathophysiology of BPH

BPH is a histologic diagnosis characterized by proliferation of the cellular elements of the prostate. This involves both stromal and epithelial cells, resulting in the formation of large, fairly discrete nodules in the transition zone of the prostate [1]. The aetiology remains somehow unclear. Currently is considered as being a

normal part of the aging process in men caused by changes in intra-prostatic hormone balance (either by higher proportion of estrogen within the prostate or accumulation of high levels of dihydrotestosterone that both increases the activity of substances that promote prostate cell growth). Interactions between growth factors and steroid hormones may ulteriorly al-

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Corresponding author:

Dr. Stamatou Konstantinos
2 Salepoula str. 18536 Piraeus, Greece
E-mail: stamatiouk@gmail.com

ter the balance of cell proliferation versus cell death to produce BPH [2]. Alongside the age related hormonal alterations, evidence suggests that, failure in the spermatic venous drainage system in BPH patients results in increased hydrostatic pressure and local testosterone levels elevation (more than 100 fold above serum levels) [3]. Both the glandular epithelial cells and the stromal cells (including muscular fibers) undergo hyperplasia [4]. Given that BPH represent an increase in the number of cells rather than a growth in the size of individual cells, only 50% of individuals with histologic findings have clinical enlargement of prostate. Moreover, correlation among histology, clinical enlargement of prostate and symptoms is controversial since less than 50% of BPH patients with enlarged prostate have LUTS [5]. This is partially attributed to the nature of symptoms: Obstructive symptoms are thought to result either from mechanical obstruction due to glandular enlargement, or from dynamic obstruction secondary to contraction of the smooth muscles of the prostate, urethra and bladder neck. As stromal hyperplasia develops, the number of alpha-1 adrenoceptors increase. Subsequently, a sympathetic nervous system mediated overstimulation occurs, resulting in dynamic obstruction. Storage symptoms appear to be caused by detrusor instability related to detrusor muscle changes in response to obstruction, such as bladder wall hypertrophy and collagen deposition in the bladder [6]. Increased tonality of the muscular tissue of the prostate -as a result of fluid secretion obstruction due to BPH- lead to progressive fibrosis of muscular tissue and accumulation of fluid that causes for the expanding of the prostate in benign prostatic hyperplasia[7].

Of note, LUTS are also present in other diseases such as infection and cancer of the prostate, urethral stricture, etc. Although bladder irritation is bothersome, chronic bladder outlet obstruction may lead to serious complications such as renal insufficiency, recurrent urinary tract infections and gross hematuria and bladder calculi formation as well [8]. Symptoms burden varies. Mild symptoms usually do not require treatment however moderate and severe symptoms could be treated with either medical therapy or surgery. Currently pros-

tatic arterial embolization (PAE) was emerged as a feasible procedure to treat lower urinary tract symptoms associated with BPH. PAE is the less invasive non pharmaceutical treatment. Initial studies showed that PAE led to reduction of the prostatic volume, symptom remission and improvements in quality of life. However, as a relatively new procedure, few data exist to clearly explain the exact impact of PAE on the BPH pathophysiology. In the present article we aim to investigate the possible mechanism(s) by which PAE reduces BPH induced LUTS.

Key words

benign prostatic hyperplasia; lower urinary tract symptoms; symptom remission; prostatic volume; prostate artery embolization; prostate medical treatment; prostate surgery

Material and Methods

A search was performed in MEDLINE, NCBI, Pubmed, Cochrane Library and other electronic libraries using the following terms: "benign prostatic hyperplasia", "lower urinary tract symptoms", "prostate enlargement", "prostate", "steroid hormones", "symptom remission", "prostatic volume" in combination with the keywords: "prostate artery embolization", "prostate pharmaceutical treatment", "prostate surgery". The articles selected were checked for the relevancy of their content to the discussed subject. The bibliographic information in the selected articles was checked for relevant publications that had not been included in the original search.

Results

Current BPH treatment options

Medical treatment includes α 1-adrenoceptor antagonists (α 1-AR inhibitors), inhibitors of 5 α -reductase, combination of the above, phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors (PDE5 inhibitors) combination of α 1-blocker with PDE5 inhibitor and combination of α 1-blocker with anticholinergic agent. The mechanism of action of the abovementioned four factors varies: α 1-AR inhibitors cause urethral dilation and prostatic smooth muscle relaxation by blocking the binding of norepinephrine to the smooth muscle receptors [9]. On other hand, 5 α -reductase inhibitors (5ARIs) are compounds that block the conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone (DHT). DHT initiates transcription and translation promoting thus cellular growth and BPH development. Since 5 α -reductase inhibition



lead to 60%-95% decrease in circulating DHT, shift the imbalance between growth and apoptosis in favour of cellular death and subsequently induce prostatic volume decrease [10].

Anticholinergic medications inhibit the stimulation of the smooth muscle of the bladder by the action of acetylcholine on muscarinic receptors reducing thus the BPH related irritative urinary symptoms [11]. Finally, PDE5 inhibitors increase levels of nitric oxide (NO) repairing thus the associated with BPH decrease in NO-mediated relaxation of prostate smooth muscle [12].

Surgery (transurethral resection or open prostatectomy) is the appropriate treatment option for patients with moderate to severe LUTS, urinary retention, recurrent urinary tract infections and significant residual urine after voiding and pathophysiological changes of the kidneys, ureters, or bladder as well [13]. Both transurethral resection and open prostatectomy reduce prostatic volume nevertheless urethral reformation after prostate surgery also occurs.

Minimally Invasive Surgical Techniques include transurethral microwave therapy (TUMT), transurethral needle ablation (TUNA), laser resection/ablation (LRA), transurethral ethanol ablation (TEAP), and high intensity frequency ultrasound (HIFU) [14]. The abovementioned techniques reduce prostatic volume. LRA with Holmium provide comparable results to TURP (in IPSS's and flow rates), while having lowering complication rates. Randomized, comparative trials between TUMT and TUNA versus TURP show symptom scores to be comparable, though flow rates were clearly superior for TURP [14].

PAE in the treatment of BPH related LUTS: Criteria of clinical success

It is less than a decade that PAE was tested in the treatment of BPH induced LUTS. Initial experience showed promising results in terms of reduction of the prostatic volume, symptom remission and improvements in quality of life. However, no generally accepted definition for clinical success exists. In fact, principal outcome assessment varies among studies and could be either objective or subjective, laboratory, clinical or both. For example, regaining the ability to urinate after PAE is a measurable size whereas questionnaire-based self-reported improvement of both urination and sexual function and QoL as well is not. Furthermore, as long as the exact mechanism by which PAE affects BPH in-

duced LUTS remains unclear, reduction in prostate volume and serum PSA value may not be the most adequate outcome measures. In fact, clinical success -in terms of IPSS and Qmax- is not always analogous to prostate volume reduction. Moreover, the reduction on prostate volume occurs progressively and stabilized within six months of the procedure. Yet, up to 20% of patients undergoing PAE show no prostate volume reduction 3 months after the procedure [15].

A small MRI study showed that reduction of the prostate volume after embolization was significant only in patients with infarcts [16]. In this study infarcts were seen in only 70.6% of the subjects, exclusively in the central gland. However, a retrospective study showed that prostatic volume decrease occurs in both central and peripheral zones [17], a fact suggesting disproportion between infarcts and reduction of the prostate volume. Although, a small MRI study proposed infarcts to be a good predictor of clinical success after PAE in patients with AUR secondary to BPH [18], it seems that it is not the case.

A significantly high PSA elevation occurs in the 24 hours after PAE. During follow-up, mean PSA decreases to a level significantly lower than at baseline. This is suspected to result from prostate inflammation and ischemia due to embolization and suggests prostate cellular apoptosis after PAE [19]. However, no statistically significant correlation was detected between PSA level 24 hours after PAE and prostate volume reduction at 3 months of follow-up [20]. In contrast, a statistically significant negative correlation between PSA level elevation 24 hours after PAE and IPSS decrease at 3 months of follow-up was reported [31]. It should be mentioned that other conditions that can increase PSA levels such as pre-existing inflammation, pre-treatment prostate manipulations (e.g. catheterization) and prostate size may bias this association. Moreover IPSS has inadequate sensitivity and specificity to be used as a stand-alone tool in the evaluation of clinical success of a new method such as PAE. Although, a study proposed PSA elevation after PAE to be a prognostic factor for predicting patient response to PAE [31], more research is needed in order to confirm this suggestion.

In fact, uncertainty regarding the role of pre-treatment prostatic volume in the successfulness of PAE exists. Bagla et al., performed an analysis on 78 consecutive patients undergoing PAE, comparing pros-

tate volume groups (group 1 < 50cm³; group 2, 50-80cm³; group 3 >80 cm³) at baseline and follow-up to assess for differences in outcomes of American Urological Association (AUA) symptom index, quality of life (QOL)-related symptoms, and International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF). According to their result no statistically significant differences in the above parameters was found between groups [21]. Other authors suggest that patients with a smaller prostate (i.e., volume <30 cm³) should be excluded because PAE is believed to work based on prostate volume reduction, which will be more limited in patients with almost normal sized prostates [22]. Interestingly, Little et al., found a statistically significant reduction in prostate volume following embolization with a median reduction of 34% (30-55) in the group of patients with adenomatous-dominant BPH (AdBPH), compared to a mean volume reduction of 22% in the non-AdBPH group. IPSS and QOL score significantly improved in the AdBPH group while there was no deterioration in sexual function in either group post-PAE [23].

Discussion

The abovementioned findings may indicate a greater impact of PAE induced ischaemia in the adenomatous than in the stromal element of the prostate gland. However, as clinical effect occurs progressively and stabilized within six months it is possible that PAE resolves both mechanical and dynamic obstruction. This hypothesis along with the clear evidence on the superiority of PAE over medical monotherapy (either 5ARIs or α -blockers) provided the rationale of (PAE) in the treatment of symptomatic benign prostatic hyperplasia in a more systematic fashion. The exact mechanism(s) by which PAE resolves mechanical obstruction is the shrinkage of the enlarged prostate gland as a result of PAE induced ischemic infarction. Regarding the effects of PAE by which relaxes the increased prostatic smooth muscle tone, several potential mechanisms have been proposed. Among them are the reduction of the number and density of α 1-adrenergic receptor in the prostatic stroma following as ischemia-induced apoptosis, apoptosis enhanced by blockage of androgens circulation to the embolized prostate, secondary denervation following PAE, and potential effect of nitric oxide pathway immediately after embolization [24]. However, an alternative mechanism that resolves dynamic ob-

struction in a way quite similar to that of surgery is not to be excluded.

As shown in canine prostate model, at 2 weeks after surgery, the wound response gradually changes into a regenerative phase characterized by marked proliferation of the epithelial glandular elements with notable squamous metaplasia. At 3 weeks, inflammatory cell infiltration is gradually replaced by granulation tissue and re-epithelialization is essentially complete. At 4 weeks, gradual decrease in squamous metaplasia occurs and the granulation tissue is replaced by well-organized underlying connective tissue. Along with the reconstruction of the prostate urethra a subsequent stromal relaxation also occurs.


Current knowledge on the histology of prostate tissue following PAE for the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia is extremely limited. Camara-Lopes et al., described early prostate tissue histology changes after PAE. Along with embolic material (bright eosin-red spheroids filling the vessel lumens) they observed also areas of ischemic necrosis. The transition zone between necrotic and normal prostate tissue was characterized by inflammatory reactions containing macrophages. The two areas were furtherly delimited by ribbons of neutrophils, lymphocytes and proliferated fibroblasts. Nodular fibrosis with hyalinization as a consequence of the healing process was present in some areas associated with squamous metaplasia of the epithelium lining the surrounding glands. The remaining 95% of the prostate tissue exhibited, glandular and stromal hyperplasia, as well as mild, nonspecific chronic prostatitis [25]. Actually there are no studies examining long term prostate tissue histology changes after PAE. Given that PSA values decrease to a level significantly lower than at baseline but no ejaculation disorders occur it could be assumed that prostate gland return in fully functional state after PAE. As a matter of fact, metaplasia that occurs in response to necrosis and inflammation may represent an adaptive substitution of cells that are sensitive to stress by cell types better able to withstand the adverse environment and is reversible. On the other hand, the regained ability to urinate after PAE may be associated with changes in stromal elements. Because fibroblasts are typically activated following injury and are the main producers of extracellular matrix proteins, their role as reparative cells is widely recognized. Although the post-PAE heal-

ing process is not known, it is possibly similar/analogous to that of infarct healing which has been extensively studied: Fibroblasts sense microenvironmental alterations following myocardial injury and initiate the inflammatory response. Subsequently, infiltration of the infarct with fibroblasts and endothelial cells occurs. Fibroblasts differentiate then into myofibroblasts which express α -SMA and other contractile proteins [26], synthesize and deposit matrix proteins and are believed to be important for infarct contraction and structural integrity of the infarcted heart [27]. Fibroblasts may also play a critical role in remodeling of the prostate following PAE and thus, clinical success might be also related to the regained elasticity.

The stiffness of a tissue, or its ability to resist deformation when subjected to an applied force, is indicative of the regenerative state in most organs in the body. A softer tissue will deform (or undergo strain) more compared to a stiff tissue for the same applied force (or stress). Tissue stiffness is largely defined by chemistry and associated micro-macro structure of the extracellular matrix (ECM), and abnormal stiffening of ECM associates with fibrosis and cancer. Therefore, the

ability to estimate ECM stiffness may assist in monitoring healing after PAE and allow estimation of clinical success. Currently, elastic properties, of biomaterials including stiffness or shear modulus, can be investigated by Elastography. The last is the only specialized imaging-based method available to spatially map strain fields, it is cost-effective and safe [28].

Conclusion

PAE is a safe and efficient method for the treatment of both mechanical and dynamic component of bladder outlet obstruction in patients with BPH. Current imaging outcome measures are consistent with clinical ones in the group of patients with adenomatous-dominant BPH while are inconsistent in patients with small sized adenomas. Elastography may be useful for the evaluation of PAE outcome in these patients while may shed light on the pathophysiology of BPH and inspire new options and novel techniques for both treatment and follow up. 

Conflicts of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Η καλοήθης υπερπλασία του προστάτη είναι μια πολύ κοινή κατάσταση στους άνδρες κυρίως δε εμφανίζεται στην έκτη και την έβδομη δεκαετία της ζωής. Στην πραγματικότητα αποτελεί ένα ιστολογικό εύρημα που γίνεται κλινική οντότητα εάν και όταν συνδεθεί με υποκειμενικά συμπτώματα. Ωστόσο, περίπου το 50% των ανδρών με ιστολογική καλοήθη υπερπλασία του προστάτη εμφανίζει σημαντικά συμπτώματα ενώ και άτομα που δεν έχουν καλοήθη υπερπλασία θα αναπτύξουν παρόμοια συμπτωματολογία. Παραδοσιακά, τα συμπτώματα που συνδέονται με την καλοήθη υπερπλασία του προστάτη αντιμετωπίζονται με προστατοκεντρικές θεραπείες φαρμακευτικές ή χειρουργικές. Ο εμβολισμός των αρτηριών του προστάτη είναι η λιγότερο επεμβατική μη φαρμακευτική θεραπεία. Η μέθοδος αυτή έχει χρησιμοποιηθεί ήδη από την δεκαετία του 1970 στην αντιμετώπιση της μετεγχειρητι-

Λέξεις ευρητηριασμού

καλοήθης υπερπλασία του προστάτη, συμπτώματα κατώτερης ουροφόρου οδού, ύφεση συμπτωμάτων, όγκος του προστάτη, εμβολισμός της προστάτης αρτηρίας, ιατρική αγωγή του προστάτη, χειρουργική του προστάτη

κής και νεοπλασματικής αιμορραγίας. Αργότερα δοκιμάστηκε ως μέσο τοπικής χημειοθεραπείας στον τοπικό και προχωρημένο καρκίνο του προστάτη, ενώ έχει αναφερθεί καθετηριασμός των αρτηριών του προστάτη για εφαρμογή σκληροθεραπείας στην αντιμετώπιση των καλοήθων όγκων του οργάνου. Είναι λιγότερο από μια δεκαετία που η μέθοδος αυτή δοκιμάστηκε στην αντιμετώπιση των ενοχλημάτων ούρησης που σχετίζονται με την καλοήθη υπερπλα-

σία του προστάτη. Αρχικές μελέτες έδειξαν ότι επιτυγχάνεται μείωση του όγκου του προστάτη, ύφεση των συμπτωμάτων και βελτίωση της ποιότητας ζωής. Ως μια σχετικά νέα διαδικασία, υπάρχουν λίγα δεδομένα για να προσδιοριστεί σαφώς ο ακριβής μηχανισμός/μηχανισμοί με τον οποίο επιτυγχάνει τα παραπάνω αποτελέσματα ούτε έχει προσδιοριστεί η ιδανική μέθοδος ανάδειξης αυτών.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Stem cell therapy for erectile dysfunction: Preliminary results from a single-center pilot study in Greece

Vassilis Protogerou^{1,2}, Efstathios Michalopoulos³, Panagiotis Mallis³, Ioanna Gontika³, Christos Liakouras², Catherine Stavropoulos-Giokas³, Michael Chrisofos², Charalampos Deliveliotis⁴

¹Dpt of Anatomy and Surgical Anatomy, Medical School of Athens, National and Kapodistrian University

²2nd University Urological DPT, Attikon Hospital, Medical School of Athens, National and Kapodistrian University

³Hellenic Cord Blood Bank, BRFAA (Biomedical Research Foundation Academy of Athens)

⁴2nd university Urological Dpt, Sismanogleion Hospital, Medical School of Athens, National and Kapodistrian University

Abstract

Introduction: Stem cell therapy is a novel therapy that aims in regenerating tissues and organs and therefore, improves their condition or treats current diseases. The use of stem cell therapy in organic erectile dysfunction is a new alternative to the till now used treatments for erectile dysfunction.

Material-Methods: This is a pilot study to evaluate the safety and the efficacy of adipose derived stem cell therapy in erectile dysfunction (ED). Fifteen patients (aged 45-75) will be enrolled and divided in three groups: group A will be treated with adipose derived stem cells (ADSCs) plus Platelet Lysate Plasma (PLP), group B with ADSCs and group C with PLP. In each patient blood samples will be taken for hormonal and metabolic evaluation and CT scans of the abdomen, thorax and brain will be performed to rule out other pathologies. ED evaluation will be performed at the entry visit and then at 1st, 3rd, 6th and 12th month

visit through IIEF questionnaire and penile triplex. ADSCs will be collected from subcutaneous abdomen fat through punch biopsy or liposuction and after processing will be injected to the penis.

Key words

stem cells, erectile dysfunction; mesenchymal stem cells; adipose derived stem cells (ADSCs); Platelet Lysate Plasma (PLP)

Results: Five patients have been enrolled in group A and they have completed three months of follow up. In all patients there is a significant improvement in erectile function. Morning erections have reappeared or improved in all patients. Unassisted hard erections or erections with the use of oral PDE-5i are present in patients that needed Intracavernous injections (ICI) before treatment or were unable to have erections at all. No side effects or complications are noted so far.

Conclusion: Stem cell therapy with ADSCs for ED seems a promising therapy with encouraging results. Further studies and long follow up period is needed to fully evaluate this experimental treatment.

Citation

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Corresponding author:

Vassilis Protogerou, E-mail: vassilis_protogerou@hotmail.com

Introduction

Erectile dysfunction (ED) affects 150 million men worldwide and is considered that by 2,025,322 million will be suffering from erectile dysfunction [1]. Endothelial dysfunction is considered to be an early step in vascular ED. The currently available treatments although they improve endothelial function and enhance erections they cannot be considered as curative. Stem cell therapy is a novel treatment aiming at restoring endothelial dysfunction and thus, provides a possible cure for ED. After many years of animal research there is a growing number of studies in humans with encouraging results. This the first pilot study in Greece which uses adipose derived stem cell (ADSC) for treating patients with erectile dysfunction and we present the preliminary results.

Hypothesis - Aim

This is a pilot study in order to define and to quantify the improvement in ED and provide data to form sample size estimation in order to design a clinical trial as well as to test the feasibility and potential adverse effects.

Material and Methods

Design

Fifteen patients with ED will be enrolled (age 45 to 75 years). Patients will be divided in three groups. Group A (5 patients) will be treated with ADSCs and platelet lysate plasma (PLP); group B (5 patients) will be treated with ADSCs; group C (5 patients) will be treated with PLP. Exclusion criteria are psychogenic, neurologic or hormonal erectile dysfunction, injuries to penis others than Peyronie's disease and all cases of cancer.

All patients should undergo hormonal evaluation (Testosterone, Estradiol, LH, FSH, PRL, FT3, FT4, TSH, α -FP, CEA, CA 19-9), metabolic evaluation (Glucose, Cholesterol, Triglycerides) and PSA. CT scan of the abdomen, thorax and brain will be performed in all patients in order to exclude other pathologies. ED will be evaluated with penile triplex and through IIEF-5 questionnaire. All patients will sign informed consent and the protocol has been approved by the Scientific Committee of Attikon Hospital.

Adipose Derived Stem cells and PLP preparation

ADSCs and PLP preparation will be done at the Good

Manufacturing Practice rooms of the Hellenic Cord Blood Bank's laboratory of BRFAA. ADSCs culture was prepared according to the following protocol. Briefly, the subcutaneous adipose tissue or lipoaspirate was incubated in an orbital shaker at 37°C and 345 rpm for 4 hours along with collagenase. After incubation, the collagenase was inactivated with PBS and centrifuged at 500 gr for 6 min. The supernatant was discarded and the cell pellet was reconstituted with complete medium (15% FBS, 1% P-S and 1% L-glut). The cell pellet was transferred to tissue culture flask and incubated at 37°C and 5% CO₂ until confluency. Flow cytometric analysis was performed to ADSCs using a panel of antibodies. Specifically ADSC were positive for HLA-ABC CD29, CD-90, CD105, CD73 and negative for CD19, CD31, CD45, CD73, CD44, CD3, CD14, HLA-DR. Platelet Lysate Plasma (PLP) was prepared from peripheral whole blood after centrifugation at 1800 rpm for 15 min at 20°C. The supernatant was centrifuged at 3,500 rpm for 15 min at 20°C and 3/4 of the plasma volume was discarded, allowing only the platelet rich plasma. The PLP was stored at -20°C until further using.

Patient's treatment and follow up according to the protocol

First visit: Includes physical evaluation, history, penile triplex, completion of the IIEF-5 questionnaire, collection of blood samples and evaluation of CT scans. In eligible patients ADSCs harvesting is organized and performed either through punch biopsy or through liposuction. Blood for PLP is obtained through typical blood collection from a peripheral vein (arm). ADSC infusion is performed once all necessary laboratory tests have been performed (flow cytometry analysis, aerobic/anaerobic culture) from BRFAA laboratory and the sample has the required number of ADSCs.

ADSCs Infusion

ADSCs were reconstituted with 2 ml of PLP and transferred into 1.8 ml of sterile cryotube until infusion was performed. ADSCs plus/or PLP will be infused to the penis with the base of penis clumped for a period of 10 minutes.

Patients should be re-evaluated at 1st, 3rd, 6th and 12th month post infusion. Each follow up appointment includes physical and Andrological evaluation, IIEF- 5 questionnaire completion and penile triplex. At the last appointment CT scans will be repeated.

Patient	Age	Comorbidities
1	62	Hypertension, Hypercholesterolemia
2	52	Diabetes, Hypercholesterolemia
3	52	Hypertension, Diabetes
4	66	Peyronie's disease
5	52	Diabetes, Hypertension, Hypercholesterolemia

Patient	Number of stem cells (x10 ⁶)
1	9.5
2	43.2
3	37.2
4	53.2
5	51.4

Patient	Before therapy	1st month	3rd month	6th month
1	6	17	12	23
2	10	12	12	
3	6	5	6	
4	14	20	22	
5	16	16	20	

Patient	Before therapy	1st month	3rd month	6th month
1	35/11	30.5/7.8	39/12	42/10.5
2	40.3/8.6	25.4/ 6.0	40.8/11.0	
3	16.1/4.7	35/8.9	61.2/20.6	
4	57/15	78.2/16.6	97.9/22	
5	45.5/17.8	49.4/14.7	62.6/25.8	

Results

Five patients have been included in the protocol so far all of them in group A. Three months follow up is completed and patient 1 has completed 6 months follow up. In all patients CT scans and hormonal evaluation were normal. Patient's age and comorbidities are presented in **Table 1**.

Number of ADSCs used per patient are listed on **Table 2**.

IIEF score is presented in **Table 3**. In all patients there is an increase in IIEF score. A notable exception is patient 3 and the reason will be explained in the Discussion section.

Penile triplex results are shown on **Table 4**. In all patients there is an improving trend on Peak Systolic Ve-

locities (PSV) while there is a more variable pattern on the End Diastolic Velocities (EDV). Patient 1 and 2 had a decrease on the first month but PSV increased the following months. Morning erections results are shown on **Table 5**. In all patients either reappeared or become stronger compared to pre-stem cells period. In detail, patient 1, and 3 noticed that morning erection return on the 1st month follow up, patient 2 had morning erections on the 3rd month while patients 3 and 4 that had low quality erections before stem cell therapy noticed that morning erection became harder and appeared more often.

Before ADSC therapy, patients were unable to have erections on their own or with oral PDE-5i. Patient 1 could have erections hard enough for intercourse only

Patient	Morning erections Before therapy	1st month	3rd month
1	-	+	+
2	-	-	+
3	-	+	+
4	-/+	+	+
5	-/+	+	+

Patient	Erectile function before therapy	Erectile function 1st month	Erectile function 3rd month
1	Only with ICI, unable to climax	Hard erections with oral PDE5-I, normal ejaculation	Hard erections with oral PDE5-I, normal ejaculation
2	No erections	Some increase in hardness	Hard erections with oral PDE5-I
3	Moderate erections with ICI	Improvement only in morning erections	Hard erections with oral PDE5-I
4	Moderate erections with ICI	Hard erections with oral PDE5-I	Unassisted hard erections
5	Hard erections only with ICI	Unassisted hard erections short duration	Unassisted hard erections

with Intracavernosal Injections (ICI) but it was difficult for him to climax. Patient 2 had no erections, patient 3 had moderate erection with ICI but it was difficult for him to use them and therefore, he was negative in the idea of having sex. Patient 4 used to have good erections on ICI but progressively the quality of erections had decreased, while patient 5 had hard erections with ICI. Changes in erectile function as reported by the patients are presented in **Table 6**.

There were no significant complications from ADSC therapy. Patient felt a minor stinging pain during injection that resolved spontaneously a couple of minutes later.

Two of the diabetes patients noticed a significant decrease in their blood sugar levels. Patient 2 had a significant decrease and had to drastically decrease his insulin doses and patient 3 he also noticed significant decrease in his blood levels. Nevertheless, since the protocol did not include blood sugar measurement these data are provided by the patient's own measurements.

Discussion

In this paper we report the preliminary data from a single-center pilot study evaluating the effect of ADSC

therapy on ED. Due to the small follow up period and since the study is not yet completed we did not perform any statistical evaluation. Nevertheless both clinical and subjective results were quite remarkable and it was considered that it is worth reporting them.

Since current treatment of ED cannot be considered as curative the need for new treatment that can actually treat and reverse the damages in the penis that cause erectile dysfunction is necessary. ADSC therapy and its regenerative potential is a new treatment on this field.

Stem Cell Basics

Stem cells by definition are cell that can renew themselves indefinitely but also give birth to other type of cells. There are several ways to characterize and classify Stem Cells. According to their differentiation potential they are characterized as Totipotent that can give birth to all cell lines, Pluripotent that can differentiate to all germ layers but not to extra-embryonic cell lines, Multipotent that differentiate to all cell types within their germ layer and Unipotent that can differentiate to a specific cell line. Example of each type is the zygote for totipotent SC, embryonic cells taken from the inner cell mass of blastocysts for pluripotent SC, hematopoi-



etic and mesenchymal SC for multipotent SC and epithelial cells for Unipotent SC [2].

According to their origin, they can be either Embryonic stem cells (ESC) originating from embryonic tissue (inner cell mass of blastocyst) or Adult Stem Cell (ASC) arising from adult tissue. ESC are pluripotent while in general ASC are considered multipotent. Recently though, it has been shown that ASC can also be pluripotent [3]. Mesenchymal SC is a type of ASC with pluripotent potential [4]. They can be found in bone marrow, adipose tissue, skeletal muscle, dental pulp and cord blood [5-9]. Depending on their tissue origin or the tissue type they can differentiate into, ASCs can be further classified into hematopoietic, neural, epithelial, and mesenchymal. Mesenchymal SC are the most frequently used. They can differentiate into mesenchymal tissues, such as bone, cartilage, and fat. They were first identified in the bone marrow but have now been shown to exist in virtually all postnatal tissues, including skeletal muscle and adipose tissue [10,11]. Initially bone marrow stem cells (BMSC) were used but the discovery of adipose derived stem cells (ADSC) has replaced the BMSC due to the simplicity of collection and the similar characteristics [12].

Preclinical and clinical studies on Stem Cells for ED

A great number of preclinical (animal) studies have been performed using different models of erectile dysfunction (Aging, Diabetes, Hyperlipidemia, Cavernous nerve damage, Tunica Albuginea damage, post-radiation damage) as well as different type of stem cells, the majority being ADSC and BMSC [13]. These animal studies presented encouraging results regarding the efficacy and safety of stem cells treating ED.

The first clinical study was published at 2010 from Korea and included 7 diabetes patients that were proven unresponsive to previous medical therapies (oral phosphodiesterase 5 inhibitor, or PGE1 injection) for more than 6 months, and all were awaiting penile prostheses. They were treated with Human umbilical cord blood stem cells. The results were very encouraging: 3 patients experienced morning erections, 1 month after treatment, and all but 1 regained morning erections by the second month; this was maintained for at least 3 months. Six patients experienced an increase in penile hardness and 2 could achieve penetration with the use of PDE-5i [14].

A case report on 35 years old with erectile dysfunction unresponsive to oral PDE5 inhibitors was published on 2013. The patient was a smoker and had a history of hypercholesterolemia and was unresponsive for at least 6 month on Caverject injections. Bone marrow stem cells were administrated. Three weeks later the patient experienced erections hard enough for penetrations and three months later he was able to have intercourse [15].

Another study was published on 2015: 6 diabetic patients with erectile dysfunction unresponsive to oral PDE-5i or PGE1 injections were treated with Adipose Stem Cells. Four patients experienced morning erection 1 month post treatment and all but one had morning erections at the second month. None had morning erections prior to stem cells administration. All patients experienced an increase in the hardness of their erection but were still insufficient for penetration. With the addition of oral PDE-5i, 5 patients were able to have erection hard enough for penetrative sex till orgasm and 4 patients keep this ability up to 12 months [16].

The next year 3 new studies were published. For the first time cancer patients were treated with stem cells. The first study included 17 prostate cancer patients with post RP severe erectile dysfunction and Adipose Derived Regenerative Cells were used. In overall 8 out of 17 patients had an improvement on erectile function and were able to complete intercourse. Notably continent men had better results than incontinent men [17]. The other study [18] included 12 prostate cancer patients with localized cancer that have been treated with radical prostatectomy and had severe erectile dysfunction. Bone Marrow mononuclear cells have been used on 4 different doses. Six month post administration there was an increase on penile hardness during erection and overall 9 out of 12 patients reported successful intercourses with vaginal penetration on medication. Higher doses of stem cells were found more effective. The final study was not on cancer patients, on the contrary prostate cancer was an exclusion criterion. Eight patients with erectile dysfunction that had to use trimix to achieve erection were treated with placental matrix-derived mesenchymal stem cells. During the 6 months follow up, three patients were able to achieve and sustain erections without medication, 4 needed low-dose oral medication, and 1 patient continued to use the trimix solution to achieve erections [19].



In overall, in the above studies there is an obvious improvement in erectile dysfunction. There is a return on morning erections and some patients experienced erections hard enough to have sex without any additional treatment while others needed additional treatment which prior to stem cell therapy was ineffective.

In our pilot study there was an improvement in IIEF score in all patients. Patient 3 although he noticed an improvement in his morning erections and an increase in the hardness of his penis still reports low IIEF score. The reason is that many questions on the IIEF are regarding the quality of erections during intercourse. This patient for personal reasons did not have any intercourse and so he replied negatively in all these questions providing a low score. On the other hand this patient due to the significant improvement in his erectile function he is considering starting having sex soon, something that he was avoiding for quite a long time.

Penile triplex results show also an improvement. Patient 1 and 2 had a decrease in PSV the first month but over the next months there was continuous increase in arterial flow while patients 3, 4 and 5 had a steady increase in PSV. EDV pattern is not steady and there is a fluctuation. Patient 1, 2 and 5 experienced an initial decrease the first month and afterwards there was an increase (with a decrease for Pt 1 on the 6th month) while patient 3 and 4 had a continuous increase. Although, penile triplex is a very valuable tool in evaluating erectile dysfunction could be affected by an unrelated reason to ED such as, stress during the examination. Also, venous leak can be related to structural penile reasons other than endothelial dysfunction. Nevertheless, the available data till now showed an improvement in penile perfusion.

Morning erections reappeared in patients 1 and 3 first month post treatment while on patient 2 on the 3rd month. Patients 4 and 5 although they had morning erections prior to stem cell therapy there were not hard enough. They noticed a notable improvement regarding the frequency and the hardness of their erection from the first month post treatment.

Erectile function was generally improved. Patient 1 used Intracavernous injections with trimix but he could not climax, something that caused him frustration and anxiety. Following stem cell therapy, he noticed an increase in spontaneous erections and he could have sexual intercourse with oral treatment. He also no-

ticed that his sexual performance was generally improved as he could now ejaculate and that helped him in the psychological domain too. Patient 2 was unable to have erection before treatment even with PDE5-is. The first month he noticed that his penis presented episodes with some spontaneous hardness but he could not consider them as erections. On the 3rd month he had developed satisfactory erections with the use of PDE5-is. Patient 3 before treatment had only minor erection with ICI but due to the fact that he stopped using them he abandoned sex. He reported that had sexual intercourse with the use of PDE-5i three months post treatment, something that was impossible before ADSC therapy. Patient 4 did not respond satisfactory to ICI before treatment. On the first month he noticed a significant improvement in his erections and he could have intercourse with the use of oral PDE5-i. During the first month and due to other reasons he developed depression and he started treatment with sertraline (Zoloft). At the 3rd month appointment he reported that his erections improved and he could now have sex without any treatment at all. This is quite remarkable since both depression and anti-depressive treatment can have a negative result on erectile function. Patient 5 had also significant improvement. Prior to treatment he had to use ICI in order to have sex while on the 1st month appointment he reported spontaneous erections that were hard enough but they did not last. On the 3rd month appointment the erections were better and although he felt that there were adequate for sexual intercourse he preferred to use ICI because he felt insecure. He also reported that he was very hard working (he has a tavern) and the daily job activities were very exhausting and he felt that if he was more relaxed he could have even better erections.


In the first patient fat harvesting was performed through punch biopsy. We decided that the expansion of the cells obtained in this way was not adequate and so in the remaining patients we performed liposuction in order to obtain the amount of tissue needed. Therefore Pt 1 has been treated with significant less numbers of stem cells (**Table 2**).

Two diabetic patients noticed a significant decreased in their blood sugar levels and they had to change their treatment. Patient 2 experienced hypoglycemic episodes and drastically decreased his insulin doses. This patient reported that he had not changed any-

thing in his diet or in his daily activities that might had caused this effect. So, it is logical to attribute this effect on blood sugar levels, on ADSC treatment. Patient 3 also reported significant decrease in his blood sugar levels. In this case though, the patient reported that he had started some exercise (walking) and he was more careful with his diet in order to manage to decrease his sugar levels. Although he had started this effort several months before stem cell treatment, the results appeared just after stem cell injection. Thus, although we cannot attribute the results to stem cells alone, it seems that they have played a role in this. Our study did not measure blood levels at each visit and this is a finding reported by the patients. Although it can be questioned, it is in accordance with the findings in another study [14].

There were no significant complications from this treatment, only minor pain on the site of injection. Patient reported that the treatment was easy to toler-

ate but yet someone needs to have in mind that it is a two-step procedure with the one (liposuction) needing anesthesia. So, although it is a minor procedure with low rates of complication still may not be accepted from all patients.

Our study has the limitations of a pilot study. It is not a randomized study and has not a control group. Also, we do not know the long term results. In all previous studies the follow up was not more than a year and it is doubtful if the results will be permanent. Also, despite the fact that stem cell therapy has been used for several indications in many patients, the long term results regarding erectile dysfunction are yet unknown. Nevertheless the short results are quite impressive and look very promising in the battle against erectile dysfunction. 

Conflicts of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Σκοπός: Η θεραπεία με βλαστοκύτταρα είναι μια πολλά υποσχόμενη θεραπεία που αποσκοπεί στην αναγέννηση των ιστών και αποκατάσταση με τον τρόπο αυτό ιστικών βλαβών και των διαφόρων παθήσεων. Η εφαρμογή των βλαστικών κυττάρων για τη θεραπεία της Στυτικής Δυσλειτουργίας είναι μια νέα πολλά υποσχόμενη θεραπεία.

Μέθοδος: Πρόκειται για μια πιλοτική μελέτη με σκοπό τη διερεύνηση της ασφάλειας και της αποτελεσματικότητας της μεθόδου. Θα μελετηθούν 15 ασθενείς σε τρεις ομάδες. Η ομάδα Α θα αποτελείται από 5 ασθενείς στους οποίους θα χορηγηθούν βλαστοκύτταρα προερχόμενα από λιπώδη ιστό και PLP, η ομάδα Β από 5 ασθενείς στους οποίους θα χορηγηθούν μόνο βλαστοκύτταρα προερχόμενα από λιπώδη ιστό και η ομάδα Γ από 5 ασθενείς στους οποίους θα χορηγηθεί μόνο PLP. Εξετάσεις αίματος για ορμονολογικό και μεταβολικό έλεγχο θα πραγματοποιηθούν σε κάθε ασθενή καθώς και αξονική τομογραφία άνω/κάτω κοιλίας, θώρακος κι εγκεφάλου για τον αποκλεισμό άλλων παθήσεων. Η στυτική λειτουργία θα παρακολουθείται με τη χρήση του IIEEF ερωτηματολογίου

Λέξεις ευρητηριασμού

Βλαστοκύτταρα, στυτική δυσλειτουργία, μεσεγγυματικά βλαστικά κύτταρα, βλαστικά κύτταρα λιπώδη ιστού, πλάσμα πλούσιο σε αυξητικούς παράγοντες

και με τρίπλεξ πείκων αρτηριών και οι ασθενείς θα παρακολουθούνται σε διαστήματα 1,3,6 και 12 μηνών από τη χορήγηση. Τα βλαστοκύτταρα προερχόμενα από λιπώδη ιστό θα ληφθούν από το υποδόριο λίπος είτε με λήψη τεμαχιδίου ή με λιποαναρρόφηση και θα χορηγηθούν με ενδοπεϊκική ένεση.

Αποτελέσματα: Πέντε ασθενείς της ομάδας Α έχουν ολοκληρώσει μέχρι τώρα την τρίμηνη παρακολούθηση. Σε όλους τους ασθενείς πρωινές

στυσεις έχουν επανέρθει ή έχουν βελτιωθεί. Οι ασθενείς μπορούν πλέον να έχουν στυσεις μόνοι τους ή με τη βοήθεια από του στόματος PDE-5i ενώ πριν είτε χρειαζόντουσαν ενδοπεϊκές ενέσεις ή δεν μπορούσαν να έχουν στυσεις. Παρενέργειες ή επιπλοκές μέχρι τώρα δεν έχουν παρατηρηθεί.

Συμπέρασμα: Η εφαρμογή των βλαστοκυττάρων με βλαστοκύτταρα προερχόμενα από λιπώδη ιστό για τη θεραπεία της Στυτικής Δυσλειτουργίας είναι μια πολύ υποσχόμενη θεραπεία με ενθαρρυντικά αποτελέσματα. Ωστόσο περαιτέρω έρευνα χρειάζεται και μακρύτερη παρακολούθηση για να αξιολογηθεί επαρκώς αυτή πειραματική ακόμα θεραπεία.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The effect of neoadjuvant chemotherapy on the perioperative morbidity of patients undergoing radical cystectomy for bladder cancer

Charalampos Fragkoulis, Ioannis Glykas, Kimon Tsirkas, Konstantinos Stasinopoulos, Georgios Stathouros, Georgios Papadopoulos, Konstantinos Ntoumas
Department of Urology, General Hospital of Athens G.N.A. "G. Gennimatas", Athens, Greece

Abstract

Introduction: Radical cystectomy (RC) with concurrent lymph node dissection is the treatment choice in muscle invasive bladder cancer (MIBC). The use of neoadjuvant chemotherapy (NAC) in patients with MIBC who will undergo RC appears to improve 5-year survival by 5% without affecting the perioperative morbidity of patients. The aim of this study is to present the effect of NAC on perioperative morbidity in patients undergoing RC in our department.

Material and Methods: A retrospective study of the data of patients undergoing radical cystectomy for MIBC was performed in our department regarding the years 2016 and 2017. Patients were divided into two groups depending on whether they received NAC or not. Af-

terwards, a comparison of the perioperative morbidity between the 2 groups was performed as expressed by the duration of surgery, the time of hospitalization, the occurrence of complications and the need for immediate re-intervention.

Key words
neoadjuvant
chemotherapy;
bladder cancer;
radical cystectomy

Results: Patients who underwent NAC were younger in a statistical significant way. On the other hand, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding the duration of surgery, the time of hospitalization, the need for reoperation, the appearance of wound infection, the occurrence of urinary tract infection, the need for transfusion, the appearance of deep vein thrombosis or the occurrence of complications from the cardiovascular and respiratory system.

Citation

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Corresponding author:

Fragkoulis Charalampos

E-mail: harisfrag@yahoo.gr



Introduction

Bladder cancer (BC) is the second most common malignancy of the urinary system after prostate cancer. It is estimated that 78% of bladder cancer cases are diagnosed in patients of age 55 years and older and 30% of patients present with muscle invasive disease (muscle invasive bladder cancer - MIBC) [1]. Radical cystectomy (RC) with concurrent lymph node dissection (LND) is the standard of care for patients presenting with MIBC offering a 5 year survival rate of 50% [2]. RC can and also be performed in selected cases of high risk non muscle invasive bladder BC [2,3]. Even though the overall 5-year survival after RC with LND is 50% when the disease is organ confined it decreases to 30% when the disease extends extravesically or it involves the lymph nodes. Disease recurrence after RC is common and occurs with greater frequency at distant sites suggesting that systemic treatment modalities may improve outcomes of advanced bladder cancer [1].

Nowadays, platinum based neoadjuvant chemotherapy (NAC) before the RC provides a well established 5% overall 5-year survival benefit when compared to surgery alone in patients presenting with stage T2-T4a BC [4]. Moreover, taking into account that RC is an operation with high morbidity and mortality, data show that NAC does not increase morbidity or mortality rates of the operation [5]. As a result, it is highly recommended to use NAC in patients with BC fit to undergo RC prior to the operation as treatment for MIBC based on the strong evidence for survival benefit and the tolerable mortality and morbidity rates [3]. Despite these recommendations, NAC remains underused, even in high volume centers with multidisciplinary BC approach programs [6]. Exact reasons for this underuse remain unclear. However, a possible explanation of this fact is the concern for increased perioperative complications and high perioperative morbidity in the patients who receive NAC.

The aim of this study is to report our experience whether NAC is associated with higher perioperative complications and morbidity in patients undergoing RC for MIBC stage T2-T4a in our department.

Material and Methods

In a retrospective way, we reviewed the data from a total of 59 patients who underwent RC as treatment for MIBC in our department during the years 2016 and 2017. Patients were divided into two groups de-

pending on whether they received NAC or not. As a result, Group A is consisted of 21 patients (2 females, 19 males) who received NAC and group B of 38 patients (3 females, 35 males) who did not receive NAC. As far as it concerns clinical stage of the disease, in Group A 14 patients presented with cT2 stage and 7 with cT3. In Group B 10 patients presented with cT2 stage, 15 with cT3 and 12 with cT4. Patients in Group A and B were compared in terms of perioperative morbidity as expressed by the time of hospitalization, the occurrence of complications such as wound infection, urinary tract infection, cardiovascular and respiratory complications and also the need for immediate re-intervention. Duration of perioperative morbidity was up to 30 days postoperatively. A statistical analysis was performed between the two groups and $p < 0.05$ determined clinical significance of the results.

Results

Patients who underwent RC after receiving NAC (Group A) were younger compared to those who did not receive NAC (Group B) in a statistical significant way. Median age in Group A was 65.2 years compared to 70.4 years in Group B. As far as it concerns the parameters defining the perioperative morbidity after RC there was no statistical difference between the two groups in terms of hospitalization (10.2 days vs 10.5), need for re-operation, incidence of wound infection, urinary tract infections, cardiovascular complications and respiratory complications (**Table 1**).

Discussion

As NAC has proved its benefits in terms of overall survival in patients undergoing RC as treatment for BC, there was a wide interest of whether the chemotherapy sessions before surgery has an effect on perioperative morbidity by increasing the complication rate. This possible effect on perioperative morbidity or the complications of NAC that may delay surgery can be a possible explanation for its underuse by urologists despite the benefits in survival [6]. The idea of NAC is based on the fact that it is delivered as early as possible when the micrometastatic burden is low and the patients are most likely to tolerate the therapy rather than postoperatively [7].

Despite these concerns, the use of NAC does not seem to increase complications in patients undergo-

TABLE 1	Perioperative Morbidity	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
Median age	65.2	70.4 ($p<0.05$)
Time of hospitalization(days)	10.2	10.5
Need for reoperation	1	1
Wound Infection	1	2
Urinary Tract Infection	1	2
Cardiovascular complications	1	2
Respiratory complications	2	3


ing RC for bladder cancer. In a study by Johnson et al., 878 patients underwent RC with 8.9% receiving NAC. No difference was noted in terms of complications rate, reoperation, wound infection or wound dehiscence. Moreover NAC did not increase operative time and patients underwent NAC presented with a trend of shorter hospital stay [8]. In addition, patients receiving pre-operative chemotherapy seem to be better able to tolerate higher doses and a greater number of cycles than post-operatively [9]. We must also take into account that the morbidity and the mortality of the traditional MVAC combination (methotrexate, vinblastine, doxorubicin and cisplatin) is acceptable yet not unsubstantial and warrants proper patient selection [10]. Gemcitabine and cisplatin combination therapy has emerged as an alternative to MVAC with a better toxicity profile resulting in improved patient tolerability and compliance and decreased time to cystectomy [11]. Moreover, NAC is not indicated in patients with renal insufficiency, but exclusion of patients with renal insufficiency only partially accounts for the low utilization of NAC [12]. While overall survival does not appear to be affected by the timing of cystectomy after NAC when the surgery is performed between 4 and 12 weeks after termination of the therapy, there are evidence that supports the notion that complications are increased if the surgery is performed less than 4 weeks from the chemotherapy cessation [13].

On the other hand, one multi-institutional study demonstrated increased complication rates with NAC.

In a recently published report on complications of 939 robotic cystectomies from the International Robotic Cystectomy Consortium (IRCC) database, authors reported that receipt of NAC prior to robotic RC is an independent predictor of both any complication and high grade complications as well [14].

In a study by Gandaglia et al., the Effect of NAC on perioperative outcomes in patients who have bladder cancer treated with RC was assessed. No significant differences were observed in the rates of complications, prolonged length of stay, readmission, and mortality between the two groups. These results were confirmed in multivariate analyses, where the use of neoadjuvant chemotherapy was not associated with higher risk of 30 and 90 days complications, prolonged length of stay, readmission, and mortality [15]. To conclude, our study presents with similar results as reported above as NAC does not increase the morbidity of RC as expressed by length of hospitalization and complication rates

Conclusion

In conclusion, NAC does not burden the perioperative morbidity of patients with MIBC who undergo RC and should be suggested by the treating physician given the improvement it offers to the overall survival of the patients. 

Conflicts of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Εισαγωγή: Η ριζική κυστεκτομή (Radical Cystectomy - RC) με συνοδό λεμφαδενικό καθαρισμό αποτελεί την θεραπεία εκλογής στον μυοδιηθητικό καρκίνο ουροδόχου κύστης εκ μεταβατικού επιθηλίου (muscle invasive bladder cancer - MIBC). Η χρήση της εισαγωγικής χημειοθεραπείας (neoadjuvant chemotherapy - NAC) στους ασθενείς με MIBC που πρόκειται να υποβληθούν σε RC φαίνεται να βελτιώνει την πενταετή επιβίωση κατά 5% χωρίς να επιβαρύνει την περιεγχειρητική νοσηρότητα των ασθενών. Σκοπός της μελέτης, η παρουσίαση της επίδρασης της νεοεπικουρικής χημειοθεραπείας στην περιεγχειρητική νοσηρότητα στους ασθενείς της κλινικής μας.

Υλικό και Μέθοδος: Έγινε αναδρομική μελέτη των δεδομένων των ασθενών που υποβλήθηκαν σε ριζική κυστεκτομή για MIBC στην κλινική μας κατά τα έτη 2016 και 2017. Συνολικά σε RC για MIBC υποβλήθηκαν 59 ασθενείς. Οι ασθενείς χωρίστηκαν σε δύο ομάδες ανάλογα με το εάν έλαβαν NAC. Η ομάδα Α αποτελείται από 21 ασθενείς που έλαβαν NAC και η ομάδα Β από 38 ασθενείς που δεν έλαβαν. Ακολούθησε σύγκριση

Λέξεις ευρετηριασμού

εισαγωγική χημειοθεραπεία,
ριζική κυστεκτομή, καρκίνος
ουροδόχου κύστης

της περιεγχειρητικής νοσηρότητας όπως αυτή εκφράζεται από την διάρκεια της επέμβασης, τον χρόνο νοσηλείας, την εμφάνιση επιπλοκών και την ανάγκη για άμεση επανεπέμβαση. **Αποτελέσματα:** Οι ασθενείς της ομάδας Α είναι νεότερης ηλικίας σε στατιστικά σημαντικό βαθμό (65,2 vs. 70,4 έτη). Δεν παρατηρήθηκε στατιστικά σημαντική διαφορά μεταξύ των δύο ομάδων όσον αφορά στην διάρκεια της επέμβασης, τον χρόνο νοσηλείας, την ανάγκη για επανεπέμβαση, την εμφάνιση λοίμωξης του τραύματος ή διασπασης αυτού, την εμφάνιση λοίμωξης ουροποιητικού, την ανάγκη για μετάγγιση, την εμφάνιση εν των βάθει φλεβικής θρόμβωσης ή την εμφάνιση επιπλοκών από το καρδιαγγειακό και το αναπνευστικό.

Συμπερασματικά, η NAC δεν επιβαρύνει την περιεγχειρητική νοσηρότητα των ασθενών με MIBC που υποβάλλονται σε RC και πρέπει να προτείνεται από τον θεράποντα ιατρό δεδομένης της βελτίωσης που προσφέρει στην συνολική επιβίωση των ασθενών.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A retrospective examination of subjective symptoms and objective urodynamic findings in patients with multiple sclerosis and non-neurogenic LUTS: Focus on concomitant psychotropic drug treatment

Apostolos Apostolidis, Petros Georgopoulos, Eyaggelos Ioannidis, Elena Ioannidou, Marina Kalaitzi, Konstantinos Vaios Mytilekas
2nd Department of Urology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Abstract

Introduction-Aims: The aim of the study was to assess the potential contribution of lower urinary tract symptoms to psychotropic drug use, in neurological and non-neurological patients.

Material-Method: The study consisted of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) patients ($n=150$), and a control group of patients with lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS), refractory to initial medical treatment ($n=187$).

Results: Between men and women with MS, statistically significant differences were observed only in the symptom of stress urinary incontinence (women), and reported voiding symptoms (men). With regard to the objective urodynamic parameters, a statistically significant difference was only observed at the maximum detrusor pressure and the detrusor pressure at maximum flow rate.

Detrusor overactivity was the only statistically significantly different urodynamic parameter between women with MS, under, or without undergoing psychotropic drug treatment. In the comparative analysis between MS and non-neurological patients, both as a whole, or divided into sex-based subgroups, no aggravating urodynamic parameter was identified, so as to justify psychotropic drug treatment.

Conclusions: In both MS and refractory (r-LUTS) patients, female gender appears to constitute an independent predisposing factor for antidepressant drug treatment. No aggravating urodynamic observation was identified, so as to justify psychotropic drug treatment in neurological and other patients.

Key words

Neurogenic LUTS;
non-neurogenic LUTS; Urodynamic observations;
Psychotropic drugs

Citation

Apostolidis A, Georgopoulos P, Ioannidis E, Ioannidou E, Kalaitzi M, Mytilekas KV. A retrospective examination of subjective symptoms and objective urodynamic findings in patients with multiple sclerosis and non-neurogenic LUTS: Focus on concomitant psychotropic drug treatment. *Hellenic Urology* 2017, 29 (3): 47-57

Corresponding author:

Konstantinos Vaios Mytilekas

E-mail: vaiosmytilekas@gmail.com



Introduction

The association between clinically diagnosed depression and multiple sclerosis (MS) has been extensively addressed by the international scientific community. Nowadays it is accepted that the administration of antidepressants improves not only the quality of life, but also the subjective perception of symptoms in MS patients [1]. Approximately 50% of patients with MS will receive antidepressant treatment during their lifetime [2]. Neurogenic dysfunction of the lower urinary tract in patients with MS has also been considerably studied [3]. The mismatch between MS patients' symptoms and urodynamic diagnosis has already been highlighted [3,4]. However, international literature lacks data analysing the contribution of urinary disorders to depression. The primary objective of this retrospective study was to assess the gender-based correlation between the symptoms, and principally the objective urodynamic findings, and concurrent psychotropic treatment administration, or lack thereof, in both MS patients and patients with persistent LUTS, who sought urological treatment.

Material-Method

MS patients, who underwent complete urodynamic testing due to lower urinary tract symptoms, were retrospectively selected from the Functional Urology Clinic records of the 2nd University Urological Department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, to be included in the study. For the control group, we used a pre-existing database of non-neurological patients with initial treatment-resistant lower urinary tract symptoms, and a correlation between urodynamic testing and IPSS (refractory LUTS, 2010-2013 material). The study included 150 patients with MS, 42 men (mean age= 41.96 years) and 108 women (mean age= 42.59 years). The control group consisted of a database of 187 non-neurological patients, 99 men (mean age= 53.5 years) and 88 women (mean age= 55.9 years).

Psychotropic medication, as recorded in the individual drug history of all patients prior to urodynamic testing, was reviewed for all patients participating in the study ($n= 337$). Analysis of subjective symptoms, both during the urine storage and voiding phase, as well as free uroflowmetry parameters, with normal urinary urge, and urodynamic investigations (filling cystometry, pressure-flow study) were all included in the study. Initially we examined the presence, or lack thereof, of a

statistically significant difference in the aforementioned subjective and objective parameters between men and women with MS, as well as the separate rates of men and women who have been diagnosed with, and are undergoing treatment for, a psychiatric disorder. Subsequently, we assessed the presence of a statistically significant difference in subjective and objective parameters in women with MS, who have or have not been administered psychotropic drugs, as well as in women with r-LUTS, who have or have not been administered psychotropic drugs, in order to assess potential adverse urologic factors, that may contribute to psychotropic drug use, particularly in women. Finally, the percentage and mean age of subjects using psychotropic drugs was examined in both neurological patients with MS, and non-neurological patients with r-LUTS. Urodynamic testing was performed in all patients, in accordance with the recommended guidelines of the International Continence Society, using a 6 Ch intravesical and an 8 Ch rectal pressure recording catheter. The fill rate, using saline solution at room temperature, was moderate (30ml/min). Clear intermittent catheterisation (CIC) was performed in all patients at the end of the pressure-flow (P-F) study, so as to maximize objective measurement of post void residual (PVR) and maximum cystometric capacity (MCC). The presence of increased resistance, as recorded during the voiding pressure flow study, was assessed by the Blavas-Groutz nomogram for women[5], the Schafer nomogram for men [6], and the URA parameter [7] (≥ 20 for women[8] and ≥ 29 for men[9]) for both men and women. The assessed objective urodynamic parameters are cited, along with their abbreviations in **Table 1**.

Results

The records revealed that approximately one third of the study patients (34.42%, $n=116/337$) were taking psychotropic medication, with the majority (71.55%) receiving tricyclic antidepressants (SSRIs) ($n=83/116$), followed by 18.95% receiving central-nervous system sedative-hypnotics (benzodiazepines) ($n=22/116$), and 9.5% receiving antipsychotics ($n=11/116$). Psychotropic drug use was statistically significantly elevated in both women with MS compared to men with MS [44.44% (48/108) women *versus* 19.05 (8/42) men, Fisher's exact test two tailed, $p=0.0046$], and in women with r-LUTS compared to men with r-LUTS [40.9% (36/88) women *ver-*

TABLE 1	Abbreviations of terms	
f-Qmax	Maximum flow	Uroflow
f-VV	Voided Volume	Uroflow
f-PVR	Post Void Residual	Uroflow
Qmax	Maximum flow	Pressure -Flow study
VV	Voided Volume	Pressure -Flow study
PVR	Post Void Residual	Pressure -Flow study
Pdetmax	Maximum detrusor's pressure	Pressure -Flow study
PdetQmax	Detrusor's pressure during Qmax	Pressure -Flow study
DO	Detrusor Overactivity	Cystomanometry
DO-UUI	Detrusor Overactivity-Urge Urinary Incontinence	Cystomanometry
SUI	Stress Urinary Incontinence	Symptom/Cystomanometry
MCC	Maximum Cystomanometric Capacity	Cystomanometry
URA	Urethral Resistance Relation factor	Pressure -Flow study
B-G	Blaivas -Groutz nomogram	Pdetmax + f-Qmax
AUR	Acute Urinary Retention	Medical History
OABdry	Overactive Bladder without incontinence	Complex symptoms
OABwet	Overactive Bladder with incontinence	Complex symptoms
BOO	Bladder Outlet Obstruction	Pressure -Flow study
LPURR	Linear Passive Urethral Resistance Relation	Pressure -Flow study

TABLE 2	Subjective symptoms and rates of psychotropic drug use between men and women with MS, and urodynamic observations of LUTS			
MS patients	Total Patients (n=150)	Females (n=108)	Males (n=42)	Fisher's exact test
Storage Symptoms	92% (n=138)	93.5% (n=101)	88.1% (n=37)	0.3177
n-OABwet	74.66% (n=112)	78.7% (n=85)	64.3% (n=27)	0.0935
n-OABdry	17.33% (n=26)	14.81% (n=16)	23.81% (n=10)	0.2305
SUI	10.66% (n=16)	13.89% (n=15)	2,3% (n=1)	0.0421
Enuresis	19.33% (n=29)	20.37% (n=22)	16.67% (n=7)	0.8181
Voiding Symptoms	57.33% (n=86)	51.85% (n=56)	71.4% (n=30)	0.0425
AUR	18.66% (n=28)	15.74% (n=17)	26.2% (n=11)	0.1636
Psychotropic drug	37.33% (n=56)	44.44% (n=48)	19.04% (n=8)	0.0046

sus 24.24% (24/99) men, Fisher's exact test two tailed, $p=0.019$]. The mean time since the diagnosis of the disease was statistically significantly increased for women with MS under psychotropic drug treatment, compared to women with MS without psychotropic drug treatment (14.27 years *versus* 10.67 years, unpaired t test two tailed, $p=0.05$), while there was no statistically significant difference in the mean age between the aforementioned groups (43.94 years *versus* 41.82 years, unpaired t test two tailed, $p=0.30$), or between women with

r-LUTS, under, or without psychotropic drug treatment (59.22 years *versus* 53.67 years respectively, unpaired t test two tailed, $p=0.08$).

With regard to the gender-based analysis of reported subjective symptoms in MS, women presented with statistically significantly increased levels of reported stress urinary incontinence, as compared to men, and, on the contrary, men presented with statistically significantly increased rates of voiding symptoms, as compared to women (**Table 2**). However, neither difference was sta-

TABLE 3		<i>Objective urodynamic parameters and urodynamic observations between men and women with MS, and urodynamic examination of LUTS (*URA\geq20, **URA\geq29)</i>		
Uroflow	Females (n=108)	Males (n=42)	Unpaired t test	
Qmax (ml/sec)	16.18 (sd:7.73)	12.68 (sd:8.57)	0.0631	
VV (ml)	188.74 (sd:143.59)	226.28 (sd:167.96)	0.2841	
PVR (ml)	181,129 (sd:265,948)	183,044 (sd:201,144)	0.9729	
Invasive -UDS	Females (n=108)	Males (n=42)	Unpaired t test	
MCC (ml)	410.23	378.34	0.5399	
VV (ml)	190.24	178.1	0.7214	
PVR (ml)	228.25	200.88	0.5889	
Pdetmax (cm H ₂ O)	48.55 (sd:23.2)	69.71 (sd:28.79)	<0.0001	
PdetQmax (cm H ₂ O)	34.27 (sd:16.19)	46.88 (sd: 17.7)	0.0002	
Qmax (cm H ₂ O)	8.55 (sd: 7.45)	6.41 (sd: 4.87)	0.094	
	Females (n=108)	Males (n=42)	Fisher's exact test	
DO	76.85% (n=83)	80.95% (n=34)	0.6652	
DO-UUI	39.81% (n=43)	47.62% (n=20)	0.4618	
SUI	5.55% (n=6)	0% (n=0)	0.1859	
BOO	68.51% (n=74)*	61.9% (n=26)**	0.4471	

TABLE 4		<i>Objective urodynamic parameters and urodynamic observations between women with MS, under, or without concomitant psychotropic drug treatment, and urodynamic examination of LUTS (*free uroflowmetry parameters)</i>		
MS Females	f-Qmax*	f-VV*	f-PVR*	
Psychotropic (+)(N=48)	17.62	195.29	153,363	
Psychotropic (-)(N=60)	14,195	182.47	205,425	
Unpaired t test	0.0746	0.7086	0.4014	
Cystomanometry	DO	DO-UUI	SUI	
Psychotropic (+) (N=48)	60.42%	37.50%	0.06%	
Psychotropic (-)(N=60)	90%	41.67%	0.05%	
Fisher's exact test	0.0004	0.6963	1	
P-Fstudy	Qmax	Pdetmax	PdetQmax	
Psychotropic (+)	8.93 (sd:7.91)	49.93 (sd:27.66)	35.35 (sd:21.53)	
Psychotropic (-)	8.24 (sd:7.11)	47.35 (sd:18.73)	33.43 (sd:10.59)	
Unpaired t test	0.6547	0.5917	0.6066	
	MCC	VV	PVR	
Psychotropic (+)	450.64 (sd:344.42)	230.36 (sd:224.02)	226.09 (sd:316.64)	
Psychotropic (-)	377.43 (sd:241.62)	167.78 (sd:147.06)	230.21 (sd:244.41)	
Unpaired t test	0.2081	0.1163	0.9420	
	URA\geq 20	Severe+Moderate (B-G)	Mild (B-G)	
Psychotropic (+)	68.75%	31.03%	44.83%	
Psychotropic (-)	68.33%	21.21%	63.64%	
Fisher's exact test	1	0.4009	0.2012	

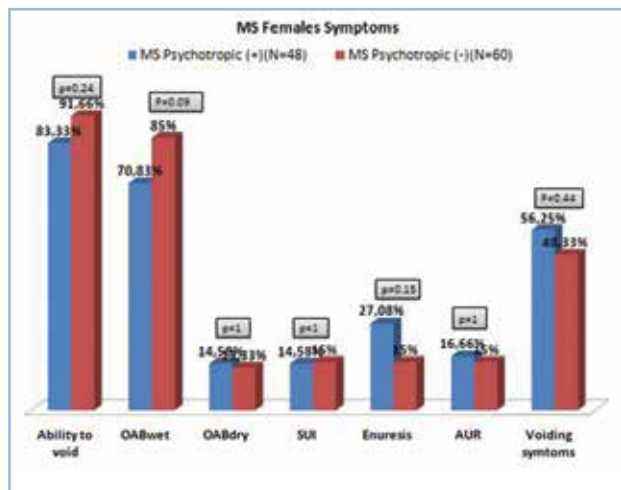


Figure 1A. Analysis of subjective symptoms between women with MS under, or without psychotropic drug treatment. No statistically significant difference. (Fishers exact test two tailed)

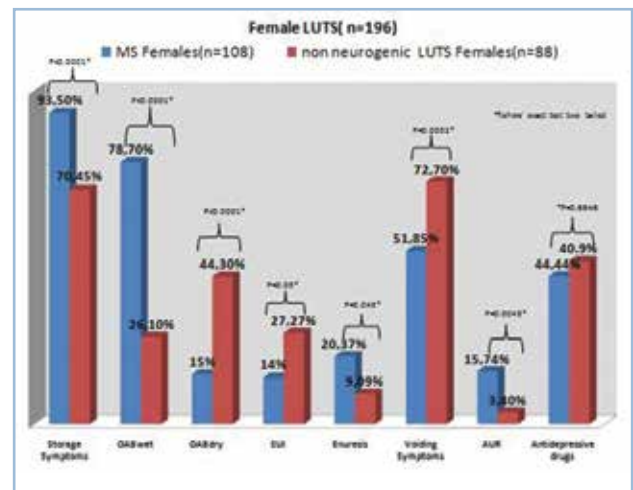


Figure 1B. Analysis of subjective symptoms between women with MS and women with r-LUTS

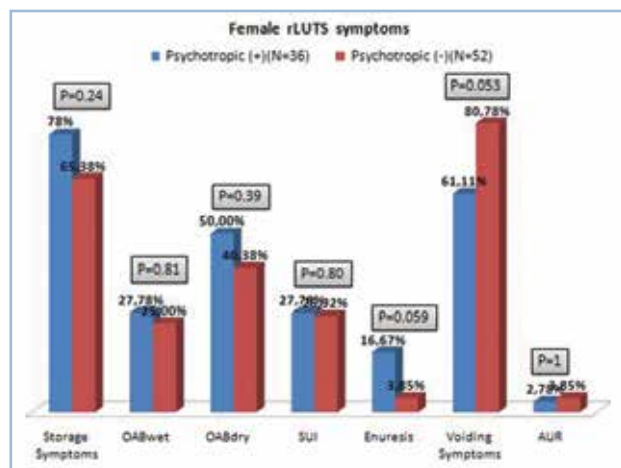


Figure 1C. Analysis of subjective symptoms between women with r-LUTS under, or without psychotropic drug treatment. No statistically significant difference between reported symptoms. (Fishers exact test two tailed)

tistically significant, when measured by objective urodynamic testing (**Table 3**). With regard to objective urodynamic parameters, only the maximum detrusor pressure (Pdetmax) in the voiding phase and the detrusor pressure at maximum flow rate (PdetQmax) were statistically significantly elevated in men with MS. No other urodynamic parameter was statistically significantly different between the two sexes in the MS group, so as to justify the increased incidence of psychotropic drug use in women, or to indirectly imply any potential contribution of an objective neurogenic dysfunction of the lower urinary tract to psychotropic drug use (**Table 3**). In addition,

when comparing objective urodynamic parameters and subjective symptoms between women with MS, under, or without psychotropic drug treatment, only urodynamic detrusor overactivity was found statistically significantly increased in women with MS who did not use psychotropic drugs (**Table 4 - Figure 1A**).

Despite the fact that women with MS presented with statistically significantly elevated rates of storage symptoms, urge incontinence, enuresis, and a history of urinary retention, while women with non-neurogenic LUTS displayed statistically significantly elevated rates of Overactive Bladder without incontinence (OABdry), stress urinary incontinence (SUI), and voiding symptoms (**Figure 1B**), the two groups of women, as it was mentioned above, had no statistically significant difference in the incidence of psychotropic drug use. Similarly to women with MS (**Figure 1A**), there was no statistically significant difference in reported urinary symptoms between women with non-neurological disorder (r-LUTS), under, or without psychotropic drug treatment (**Figure 1C**).

The rates of patients with a history of psychotropic drug use were not statistically significantly different, neither between men with MS and men with r-LUTS, nor between women with MS and women with r-LUTS. However, the mean age of patients with MS under psychotropic drug treatment was statistically significantly lower than that of patients with r-LUTS under psychotropic drug treatment, for each sex separately, as well as for all patients (**Table 5**).

Psychotropic drug	MS patients (n=150)	refractory-LUTS (n=187)	Fisher exact test
Males (psychotropic)	19.04% (n=8/42)	24.24% (n=24/99)	0.6607
Females (psychotropic)	44.44% (n=48/108)	40.9% (n=36/88)	0.6646
Total	37.33% (n=56/150)	32.09% (n=60/187)	0.3563
Mean Age	MS patients	Refractory- LUTS	Unpaired t test
Males (Psychotropic)	40.38 (+-8.70)	53.04 (+-16,27)	0.0453
Females (Psychotropic)	43.94 (+-9.54)	57.88 (+-13,79)	<0.0001
Total	43.43(+,-9,43)	56.15 (=+-14.79)	<0.0001

FEMALES	f-Qmax (MEAN)	f-VV (MEAN)	f-PVR (MEAN)
MS-Psychotropic(+) (N=48)	17.62	195.29	153.363
MS-Psychotropic (-)(N=60)	14.195	182.47	205.425
Unpaired t test	0.0746	0.7086	0.4014
rLUTS-Psychotropic(+) (N=36)	23.62	272.349	73.445
rLUTS-Psychotropic (-)(N=52)	22.898	236.829	66.086
Unpaired t test	0.8342	0.3561	0.7731
Total Psychotropic(+) (N=84)	21.065	238.325	109.771
Total Psychotropic(-) (N=112)	18.857	211.943	132.438
Unpaired t test	0.313	0.3199	0.4908
MALES	f-Qmax (MEAN)	f-VV (MEAN)	f-PVR (MEAN)
MS-Psychotropic(+) (N=8)	9.68	202.6	105.72
MS-Psychotropic (-) (N=24)	13.44	232.2	200.62
Unpaired t test	0.3922	0.7325	0.351
rLUTS-Psychotropic(+) (N=24)	11.13	215.317	87.13
rLUTS-Psychotropic (-) (N=75)	11.01	205.291	193.37
Unpaired t test	0.943	0.7898	0.1235
Total Psychotropic(+) (N=32)	10.88	213.124	90.34
Total Psychotropic (-) (N=109)	11.52	211.874	195.05
Unpaired t test	0.6759	0.9711	0.07

In the comparative analysis of the parameters of free uroflowmetry, no statistically significant difference emerged in either sex, in both MS and r-LUTS subgroups, between patients under, or without psychotropic drug treatment (**Table 6**). Although detrusor overactivity and urge urinary incontinence were found statistically significantly elevated in both sexes in MS patients (**Table 7**), in the comparative analysis of urodynamic observations

of filling cystometry, statistically significantly increased urodynamic overactivity rates were observed, as previously mentioned, only in women with MS without psychotropic drug treatment, as compared to women with MS under psychotropic drug treatment, and in all women in the study without a history of psychotropic drug treatment, as compared to women with a history of taking psychotropic medication (**Table 8**). With regard to

TABLE 7		<i>Filling cystometry and Pressure Flow study. Gender-based urodynamic observations between MS and r-LUTS patients</i>		
Females	MS Females(n=108)	r-LUTS Females(n=88)	Fisher's exact test	
DO	76.85% (n=83)	56.82% (n=50)	0.0035	
DO-UUI	39.81% (n=43)	25% (n=22)	0.0331	
SUI	5.55% (n=6)	12.5% (n=11)	0.1245	
BOO (URA \geq 20)	68.52% (n=74)	23.86% (n=21)	<0.0001	
Males	MS Males (n=42)	r-LUTS Males (n=99)		
DO	80.95% (n=34)	64.29% (n=63)	0.0483	
DO-UUI	47.62% (n=20)	6.06% (n=6)	<0.0001	
SUI	0%(n=0)	0%(n=0)	1	
BOO(URA \geq 29)	61.9%(n=26)	57.57%(n=57)	0.7098	

TABLE 8		<i>Filling cystometry. Urodynamic observations based on sex, presence of MS or r-LUTS, under, or without psychotropic drug treatment</i>		
Females MS	DO	DO-UUI	SUI	
Psychotropic (+) (N=48)	60.42% (N=29)	37.50% (N=18)	0.06% (N=3)	
Psychotropic (-) (N=60)	90% (N=54)	41.67% (N=25)	0.05% (N=3)	
Fisher's exact test	0.0004	0.6963	1	
Females r-LUTS				
Psychotropic (+) (N=36)	55.5% (N=20)	33.33% (N=12)	13.89% (N=5)	
Psychotropic (-) (N=52)	57.69% (N=30)	19.23% (N=10)	11.54% (N=6)	
Fisher's exact test	1	0.1435	0.7538	
Females Total				
Psychotropic (+) (N=84)	58.33% (N=49)	35.71% (N=30)	9.52% (N=8)	
Psychotropic (-) (N=112)	75% (N=84)	31.25% (N=35)	8.04% (N=9)	
Fisher's exact test	0.0201	0.5421	0.7997	
Psychotropic (+) (N=8)	87.5% (N=7)	62.5% (N=5)	0% (N=0)	
Psychotropic (-) (N=34)	79.41% (N=27)	44.12% (N=15)	0% (N=0)	
Fisher's exact test	1	0.4454	1	
Males r-LUTS				
Psychotropic (+) (N=24)	75% (N=18)	8.33% (N=2)	0% (N=0)	
Psychotropic (-) (N=75)	60.00% (N=45)	5.33% (N=4)	0% (N=0)	
Fisher's exact test	0.2275	0.6303	1	
Males Total				
Psychotropic (+) (N=32)	78.13% (N=25)	25% (N=8)	0% (N=0)	
Psychotropic (-) (N=109)	66.06% (N=72)	16.51% (N=18)	0% (N=0)	
Fisher's exact test	0.2778	0.3035	1	

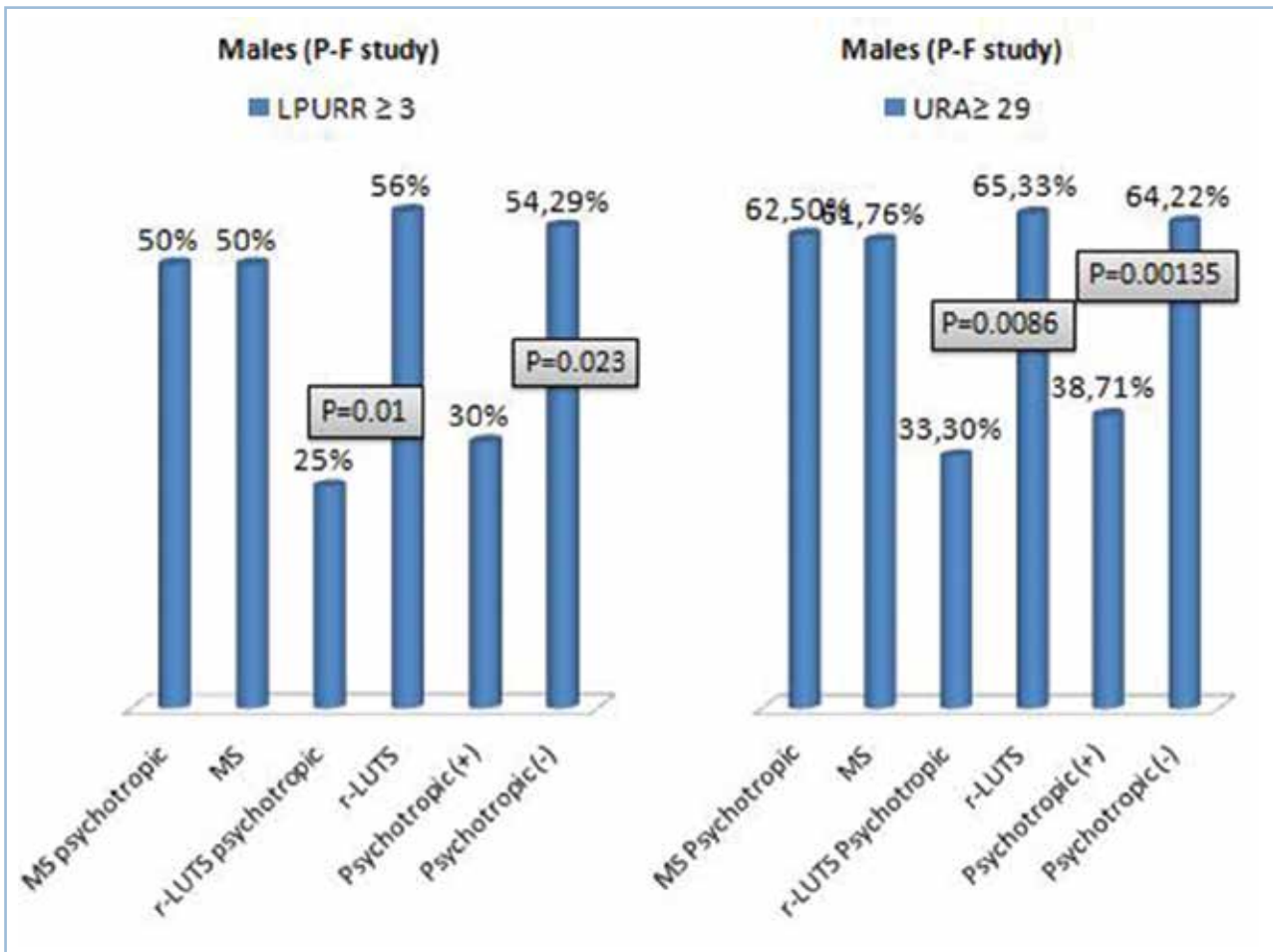


Figure 2. Pressure Flow study. Increased resistance between men under, or without psychotropic drug treatment, within the MS group, the r-LUTS group, and within both male groups combined

the presence of elevated obstruction during uroflow, as it was assessed in the pressure flow study, women with MS showed statistically significantly increased rates of bladder outlet obstruction, compared to women with rLUTS, as opposed to men with MS and men with rLUTS, who had similar rates (Table 7). However, in the comparison between patients under, or without psychotropic drug treatment, statistically significantly increased rates of subvesical obstruction were observed in men with r-LUTS, without psychotropic drug treatment, compared to men with r-LUTS, under psychotropic drug treatment (65.33% versus 33.30%, fisher's exact test two tailed $p=0.0086$), as well as in all men participating in the study who did not use psychotropic drugs, compared to those under psychotropic drug treatment (64.22% versus 38.71%, fisher's exact test two tailed $p=0.0135$) (Figure 2). No statistically significant difference was de-

tected between women under, or without psychotropic drug treatment, neither within the MS and r-LUTS subgroups, nor within the total female sample, with regard to the urethral resistance factor (Table 9).

Discussion

The increased incidence of depression in women, within the general population, has been widely documented [10,11]. MS patients are 3 to 10 times more likely to receive antidepressant treatment [2]. However, as demonstrated by this study, **even within MS patients, the female gender constitutes an independent factor in antidepressant treatment administration.** The increased incidence of depression in women with multiple sclerosis, always in comparison to healthy women, can theoretically be attributed to the increased incidence of health problems, to motor disability, as well

TABLE 9

Pressure Flow study and degree of obstruction, according to the URA parameter and the Blaivas-Groutz nomogram. Comparison between women under, or without psychotropic drug treatment, within the MS group, the r-LUTS group, and within both female groups combined

Females	URA \geq 20	Severe+Moderate (B-G)	Mild (B-G)
MS Psychotropic (+) (n=48)	68.75% (33)	31.25% (15)	45.83% (22)
MS Psychotropic (-) (n=60)	68.33% (41)	23.33% (14)	63.33% (38)
Fisher's exact test	1	0.3885	0.08
rLUTS Psychotropic(+) (n=36)	22.22%(8)	11.11% (4)	30.55% (11)
rLUTS Psychotropic (-) (n=52)	25%(13)	19.23% (10)	40.38% (21)
Fisher's exact test	0.8048	0.3828	0.3763
Total Psychotropic (+) (n=84)	48.81%(41)	22.62% (19)	39.29% (33)
Total Psychotropic (-) (n=112)	48.21%(54)	21.43% (24)	52.68% (59)
Fisher's exact test	1	0.8630	0.08

as to the social exclusion and discrimination suffered by women with MS [12]. In the present retrospective study, nevertheless, **the above-mentioned increased prevalence of psychotropic drug use in women with MS was not confirmed.** However, the MS group was not **compared** to a randomized sample of the female population, but **to a sample of women seeking treatment within the National Health System (NHS patients), for initial empirical treatment-resistant LUTS.** Therefore, it seems that, if we accept the recently shaped view by specialised neurologists, that depression, and mood disorders in general, particularly in women, constitute part of the clinical semiology of multiple sclerosis, then we should further examine whether mood and psychiatric disorders in general constitute part of the pathophysiology of several women with idiopathic, resistant LUTS. The conclusions of epiLUTS, a large epidemiological study, which found that 29.8% of men and 37.6% of women with LUTS met the self-reported diagnostic criteria for clinical depression (HADS Depression \geq 8) [13], seem to support this view. Moreover, based on the results of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), a survey of 2890 men \geq 40 years of age, which demonstrated a correlation between LUTS and moderate, as well as severe depression, the authors recommended that urologists perform a preventive screening for Depression on patients with reportedly severe LUTS [14]. Furthermore, according to the Boston Area Community Health (BACH) study of 5,506 adults, all urological and sexual symptoms were significantly correlated with depression [15].

There was no significant difference between men and women with MS in voided volume or post void residual, with a possible exception of maximum flow in free uroflowmetry, which showed a trend towards a higher mean value in women. Also, there was no statistically significant difference in the urodynamic parameters of filling cystometry, or in the percentage of men and women with increased urethral resistance (bladder outlet obstruction). Additionally, stress urinary incontinence, most frequently reported by women with MS, rather than men, did not appear to statistically significantly differ between women with MS, under, or without psychotropic drug treatment. In fact, this reported stress urinary incontinence was not confirmed by urodynamic testing in the majority of these women. Cough-triggered detrusor overactivity and urodynamic urge urinary incontinence were the most common urodynamic observations among these women.

The incidence of urodynamically confirmed neurogenic detrusor overactivity (NDO) was statistically significantly higher in women without psychotropic drug treatment. The rate of overactive bladder (OAB) syndrome, both with or without incontinence, without urodynamically confirmed NDO, was higher in women under psychotropic drug treatment. Besides, it has been documented that increased bladder sensitivity is observed both in sensory MS, and psychogenic voiding dysfunction [16]. **Therefore, neurogenic voiding dysfunction, in terms of subjective symptoms, but primarily in terms of objective urodynamic findings, does not appear to be a causal factor in receiving an-**


antidepressant or other psychotropic drug treatment.

In the relevant literature, there are indications that the chronic nature of MS disease mildly correlates with the probability of patients' mental health deterioration, and the probability of antidepressant treatment administration [17]. In this study as well, the mean time since MS diagnosis was higher in the group of women under antidepressant drug treatment, compared to the group of untreated women.

The limitations of the study consist of its retrospective nature, the lack of classification of psychotropic drugs by sub-category of active substance (SSRIs, benzodiazepines, antipsychotics), as well as the lack of an absolute, formal, psychiatric diagnosis by a specialist psychiatrist, or a formal, standardized questionnaire to assess patients' mental health. All the latter are important, in view of the fact that, in everyday medical practice, tricyclic antidepressants are extensively administered by neurologists in the case of MS patients, but also by other physicians, general practitioners, or even urologists in the general population.

Conclusion

It appears that female gender may be an independent prognostic factor for receiving antidepressant drug treatment, not only in the general population but also in patients with multiple sclerosis. Subjective symptoms, but, principally, objective findings of neurogenic voiding dysfunction did not appear to be correlated to psychotropic drug use. Compared to patients with resistant, non-neurogenic LUTS, the incidence of psychotropic drug use in patients with MS, in general, albeit with a lower mean age, was not statistically significantly higher.

The contribution of emotion and mental health to LUTS may need to be re-examined via larger-scale, prospective, multicentre studies, particularly at a time, when the role of upper cerebral function in lower urinary tract function and its symptoms constitutes a new, vast field of research. 

Conflicts of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Εισαγωγή-Στόχοι: Στόχος της μελέτης ήταν να εκτιμηθεί η πιθανή συμβολή των συμπτωμάτων της κατώτερης ουροφόρου οδού στην χρήση ψυχοτρόπων φαρμάκων, σε νευρολογικούς και μη νευρολογικούς ασθενείς.

Υλικό-Μέθοδος: Η μελέτη περιελάμβανε ασθενείς με σκλήρυνση κατά πλάκας (MS) (n=150) και ομάδα ελέγχου ασθενών με συμπτώματα κατώτερης ουροφόρου οδού (LUTS), ανθεκτικά στην αρχική θεραπεία (n=187).

Αποτελέσματα: Μεταξύ ανδρών και γυναικών με ΣΚΠ, παρατηρήθηκαν στατιστικά σημαντικές διαφορές μόνο στο σύμπτωμα της ακράτειας ούρων κατά την προσπάθεια (γυναίκες), και στα αναφερόμενα συμπτώματα ούρησης (άνδρες). Όσον αφορά τις αντικειμενικές ουροδυναμικές παραμέτρους, παρατηρήθηκε στατιστικά σημαντική διαφορά μόνο στη μέγιστη πίεση του εξωστήρα και στην πίεση του εξωστήρα στο μέγιστο ρυθμό ροής. Η υπερλειτουρ-

Λέξεις κλειδιά
ευρητηριασμού
νευρογενή LUTS, μη νευρογενή LUTS, ουροδυναμικές παρατηρήσεις, ψυχοτρόπα φάρμακα

γία του εξωστήρα ήταν η μόνη στατιστικά σημαντική διαφορετική ουροδυναμική παράμετρος μεταξύ των γυναικών με ΣΚΠ, υπό και δίχως ψυχοτρόπο αγωγή. Στη συγκριτική ανάλυση μεταξύ μη νευρολογικών ασθενών και ασθενών με ΣΚΠ, και οι δύο ομάδες στο σύνολό τους ή χωρισμένες σε υποομάδες με βάση

το φύλο, δεν προσδιορίστηκε καμία επιβαρυντική ουροδυναμική παράμετρος, ώστε να δικαιολογείται η θεραπεία με ψυχοτρόπα φάρμακα.

Συμπεράσματα: Στους ασθενείς με ΣΚΠ αλλά και στους ασθενείς με ανθεκτικά συμπτώματα κατώτερης ουροφόρου οδού (r-LUTS), το γυναικείο φύλο φαίνεται να αποτελεί έναν ανεξάρτητο παράγοντα προδιάθεσης για θεραπεία με αντικαταθλιπτικά φάρμακα. Δεν διαπιστώθηκε κάποια παρατήρηση επιβαρυντικής ουροδυναμικής, έτσι ώστε να δικαιολογείται η θεραπεία με ψυχοτρόπα φάρμακα σε νευρολογικούς και άλλους ασθενείς.

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CASE REPORT

Plasmacytoma of the testis in a patient with previous multiple myeloma.

A rare case report and review of the literature

Evangelos Boulinakis, Konstantinos Safioleas, Evangelos Koutsokostas, Ioannis Gerzelis
Konstantopoulio General Hospital Neas Ionias-Patision, Department of Urology

Abstract

Multiple myeloma is a plasma cell tumor that homes to and expands in the bone marrow and that, despite the new available drugs, remains incurable. We report the case of a 69-year-old male with multiple relapsed multiple myeloma (MM), who was found to have a testicular plasmacytoma. He presented with a gradually enlarging scrotal mass. Following orchidectomy, pathologic examination of the specimen demonstrated a plasmacytoma.

Key words

testis;
plasmacytoma;
multiple myeloma

Introduction

A plasmacytoma is a discrete, solitary mass of neoplastic monoclonal plasma cells in either bone or soft tissue. Extramedullary plasmacytoma (EMP) is a non-frequent manifestation during the natural history of multiple myeloma and is frequently associated with plasma cell bone marrow infiltration. The most common locations for an EMP include the gastrointestinal tract, pleura, skin, peritoneum, liver, endocrine glands, and lymph nodes. Testicular plasmacytoma is very rare, only a few cases have been reported and is associated with poor prognosis [1]. Regardless of the association with underlying MM, plasmacytoma of the testis is very uncommon [2,3]. Sev-

enty-one cases of testicular plasmacytoma have been published up to 2008 [4]. The majority of these present as extramedullary manifestations of MM (eMM). When dealing with testicular plasmacytoma, the distinction between primary testicular EP and eMM is important given the differences in prognosis and treatment pathways [5].

Case report

A 69-year-old male presented with a gradually increasing mass in his left hemiscrotum. He had a history of multiple relapsed MM manifesting as multiple plasmacytomas with minimal marrow infiltration, initially treated with bone marrow transplantation.

Citation

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Corresponding author:

Evangelos Boulinakis
E-mail: ev-81@hotmail.com



Figure 1: Computed tomography image demonstrates an avid region in the left testicle

Otherwise, his medical history was unremarkable and did not have any environmental or developmental risk factors. On admission, the vital signs were within normal range. Physical examination confirmed a mass in the left testis. Peripheral lymph nodes were not palpable. On abdominal palpation, liver, spleen or kidney were not palpable. Laboratory findings were as follows: Complete blood counts were haemoglobin 16,3 mg/dl, haematocrit 48,6%, leucocyte 13,89/mm³ and platelet 226.000/mm³. Blood chemistry tests showed LDH 194 IU/l, AFP 5,90ng/ml, β -HCG 3 mIU/ml, total protein 7,8g/dl, albumin 3,9g/dl and creatinine 1,6 mg/dl. The patient was initially treated with radical inguinal orchidectomy.

Discussion

Testicular plasmacytomas have been identified in multiple settings, mostly involving patients with concurrent multiple myeloma. Testicular EMPs have also been reported as a site of recurrence during multiple myeloma remission [6]. This is thought to be secondary to the blood-testes barrier creating a haven for tumour formation in the testicle. In rare cases, plasmacytoma of the testes can occur in the absence of documented hematologic malignancy [7,8,9]. Unfortunately, most of these patients will




Figure 2: Macroscopic specimen showing a grossly enlarged testicle

develop multiple myeloma, with only a few long-term progression-free survivors post-orchidectomy [10].

As with primary testicular masses, radical inguinal orchidectomy is the preferred surgical treatment. These tumours are markedly radiosensitive and therefore may respond well to adjuvant and/or salvage radiation therapy [11]. Despite advancements in treatment options, the prognosis for affected patients continues to be poor.

Conclusion

We present a case of testicular EMP presenting with multiple myeloma. EMPs are most frequently associated with the head and neck region, but in rare cases testicular involvement has been seen. These mimic other causes of testicular swelling and therefore require a full diagnostic workup and management similar to that of any scrotal pathology. Radical inguinal orchidectomy is the treatment of choice, but radiation therapy can be used as an adjunct or salvage. The prognosis with these lesions is poor and in cases of primary testicular plasmacytoma, progression to multiple myeloma is likely. 

Conflicts of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

Περίληψη

Το πολλαπλό μυέλωμα είναι ένας όγκος κυττάρων του πλάσματος που αναπτύσσεται και επεκτείνεται στο μυελό των οστών και, παρά τα νέα διαθέσιμα φάρμακα, παραμένει πολυπλοκή. Αναφέρουμε την περίπτωση ενός άντρα ηλικίας 69 ετών με πολλαπλό υποτροπιάζον πολλαπλό μυέλωμα (MM), ο οποίος βρέθηκε να έχει πλασματοκύττωμα όρχεων. Παρουσιάστηκε με μια σταδιακά διευρυνόμενη σαρκώδη μάζα. Μετά την ορχεκτομή, η παθολογική εξέταση του δείγματος έδειξε πλασματοκύττωμα.

**Λέξεις
ευρετηριασμού**
όρχις, πλασματοκύττωμα,
πολλαπλό μυέλωμα

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CASE REPORT

Elastosis perforans serpiginosa associated with pseudo-pseudoxanthoma elasticum after treatment with D-penicillamine in a patient with cystinuria

Spyridon Kampantais, Theodora Stasinou, Joseph Ingoe, Graham Young
Department of Urology, University Hospital of South Manchester, Wythenshawe, Manchester, UK

Abstract

D-Penicillamine has been used for the prevention of stone formation in patients suffering from cystinuria and its use has been associated with numerous side-effects. We present an unusual case of elastosis perforans serpiginosa

associated with pseudo-pseudoxanthoma elasticum after treatment with D - penicillamine. These cutaneous lesions persisted for years despite discontinuation of the treatment.

Introduction

Cystinuria is caused by an autosomally recessive inherited inborn error of metabolism that causes decreased proximal tubular reabsorption of the dibasic amino acids cystine, ornithine, lysine and arginine. Cystine is insoluble in acidic urine and homozygous state results in supersaturation and cystine crystal formation. D-Penicillamine (DPA) is a first-generation chelating agent that forms a disulfide complex with cystine which is up to 50 times more soluble thus preventing stone formation and possibly dissolving existing cystine stones [1]. Degenerative dermatoses such

as elastosis perforans serpiginosa (EPS) and cutaneous changes resembling pseudoxanthoma elasticum (PXE) are described as late-onset side effects of treatment with DPA due the effect on elastin and collagen [2].

Key words

**D-penicillamine;
Elastosis perforans
serpiginosa;
Pseudoxanthoma
elasticum;
cystinuria**

Case presentation

A 60-year-old lady with cystinuria was referred to our stone clinic. Her initial diagnosis with cystinuria was done about 15 years ago. Clinical examination revealed skin lesions in the nape, in the upper extremities and in her back just lateral to the right scapula. The dermatological diagnosis of the first two was consistent with pseudo - pseudox-

Citation

Kampantais S, Stasinou T, Ingoe J, Young G. Elastosis perforans serpiginosa associated with pseudo-pseudoxanthoma elasticum after treatment with D-penicillamine in a patient with cystinuria. *Hellenic Urology* 2017, 29 (3): 61-63

Corresponding author:

Kampantais Spyridon MD, FEBU, 130 Glendale Gardens, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, United Kingdom
E-mail: kabspir@hotmail.com



Figure 1. Yellowish papules with a plucked - chicken appearance on patient's neck



Figure 2. Skin folds in elbows

anthoma elasticum (pseudo - PXE) (**Figures 1, 2**) while the latter represented elastosis perforans serpiginosa (EPS) (**Figure 3**). Both of these skin disorders are associated with the use of D-penicillamine (DPA); DPA had indeed been prescribed in average daily doses of 1gr for the management of her cystinuria in the past. The above lesions became apparent at least 5 years after drug administration and despite discontinuation of treatment they remained virtually stable in the years that followed.

Discussion

EPS is a rare skin disorder affecting connective tissue. Clinically, serpiginous or annular patterned lesions up to several centimetres are the common lesions. These consist of keratinized papules, 2-5 mm in diameter and are typically located on the neck, face or arm, as was the case in our patient. Sometimes, these lesions resolve spontaneously, however usually persist for several years [3]. EPS can present in three clinical entities; idiopathic, reactive and drug-induced form. Idiopathic EPS accounts for 65% of the total cases. Reactive EPS, accounting for approximately 25-30% of the total, is often associated with systemic diseases or other fibrous degeneration diseases, such as Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, Marfan's syndrome, osteogenesis imperfecta and Down's syndrome [3]. The only drug that appears to be associated with this condition is DPA. It is likely that DPA impairs collagen deposition and interferes with the production of new elastic fibres. This could explain why the lesions usually occur after long term therapy [1]. EPS has been widely in patients suffering



Figure 3. EPS. Brownish-red papules arranged in arcuate to annular formations on the patient's back


from Wilson's disease and rheumatoid arthritis who received treatment with high dose of DPA (equal or higher of 1gr) [4]. However similar reports in cystinuric patients are rare [5].

PXE is a rare genetic disease characterised by calcification and fragmentation of elastic fibers that primarily affects the skin and the retina. However, many other skin disorders mimic pseudoxanthoma elasticum and are referred to as PXE - like disease or pseudo - PXE [2]. One of these elastopathies has been related to morphologic changes in elastic fibers secondary to prolonged therapy with DPA [6]. None of the various treatments that have been employed in the past managed to completely eliminate these skin lesions

[7]. These include cryotherapy, oral isotretinoin, cellophane tape stripping, topical tazarotene gel and imiquimod cream [8].

Our patient presented typical features of DPA - induced elastosis, manifesting as EPS and pseudo-PXE. Currently, she remains stone free on a regimen of high clear fluid intake, supplementary citrate and Tiopronin for the last 9-10 years, without any deterioration of the existing skin lesions.

D-penicillamin, apart from the above rare complications, has also been associated in about 20-30% of patients with bone marrow suppression, dysgeusia, anorexia, vomiting and diarrhoea [9]. Recently Parr et al. assessed the quality of life (QoL) in patients with cystinuria. Scoring on the SF-36 questionnaire,

cystinurics appeared to have lower QoL than the general public due to high interventional rates and side effects or lack of perceived efficacy after medical management [10]. The above, in combination with the multiple systemic and cutaneous manifestations of D-penicillamin treatment, present additional substantial arguments to discourage medical professionals from prescribing DPA for management of cystinuria and using newer agents such as tiopronin. 

Conflicts of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

Consent

Written consent has been obtained by the patient.

Περίληψη

Η D-πενικιλλαμίνη έχει χρησιμοποιηθεί για την πρόληψη της ουρολιθίασης σε ασθενείς που πάσχουν από κυστινουρία και η χρήση της έχει συσχετισθεί με πολλές παρενέργειες. Παρουσιάζουμε μια ασυνήθιστη περίπτωση έρπουσας και διατιτραίνουσας ελάστωσης σε συνδυασμό με ψευδο - ελαστικό ψευδοξάνθωμα μετά από θεραπεία με D-πενικιλλαμίνη. Οι παραπάνω δερματικές βλάβες παρέμειναν σταθερές για χρόνια, παρά τη διακοπή της θεραπείας.

Λέξεις ευρητηριασμού

D-πενικιλλαμίνη, έρπουσα και διατιτραίνουσα ελάστωση, ψευδο - ελαστικό ψευδοξάνθωμα, κυστινουρία

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1. ΟΝΟΜΑΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΙΚΟΥ ΠΡΟΪΟΝΤΟΣ: Betmiga 25 mg δισκία παρατεταμένης αποδέσμευσης, Betmiga 50 mg δισκία παρατεταμένης αποδέσμευσης. **2. ΠΟΙΟΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΣΟΤΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΘΕΣΗ:** Betmiga 25 mg δισκία παρατεταμένης αποδέσμευσης: Κάθε δισκίο περιέχει 25 mg mirabegron. Betmiga 50 mg δισκία παρατεταμένης αποδέσμευσης: Κάθε δισκίο περιέχει 50 mg mirabegron. Για τον πλήρη κατάλογο των εκδόχων, βλ. παράγραφο 6.1. **4. ΚΛΙΝΙΚΕΣ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΕΣ: 4.1 Θεραπευτικές ενδείξεις:** Συμπτωματική θεραπεία της υπερλειτουργικής ουροδόχου κύστης (Overactive Bladder Syndrome, OAB). **4.3 Αντενδείξεις:** Υπερευαίσθηση στη δραστική ουσία ή σε κάποιο από τα έκδοχα που αναφέρονται στην παράγραφο 6.1. **4.4 Αντενδείξεις:** Σοβαρή μη ελεγχόμενη υπέρταση που ορίζεται ως συστολική αρτηριακή πίεση ≥ 180 mmHg και/ή διαστολική αρτηριακή πίεση ≥ 110 mmHg. **4.4 Ειδικές προειδοποιήσεις και προφυλάξεις κατά τη χρήση:** **Νεφρική δυσλειτουργία:** Το Betmiga δεν έχει μελετηθεί σε ασθενείς με νεφροπάθεια τελικού σταδίου (GFR < 15 ml/min/1,73 m² ή ασθενείς που χρειάζονται αιμοδιύλιση) και συνεπώς δε συνιστάται για χρήση σε αυτόν τον πληθυσμό ασθενών. Υπάρχουν περιορισμένα δεδομένα για ασθενείς με σοβαρή νεφρική δυσλειτουργία (GFR 15 έως 29 ml/min/1,73 m²). Με βάση μια φαρμακοκινητική μελέτη (βλέπε παράγραφο 5.2), συνιστάται μείωση της δόσης στα 25 mg σε αυτόν τον πληθυσμό. Αυτό το φαρμακευτικό προϊόν δεν συνιστάται για χρήση σε ασθενείς με σοβαρή νεφρική δυσλειτουργία (GFR 15 έως 29 ml/min/1,73 m²) που λαμβάνουν συγχρόνως ισχυρούς αναστολείς του CYP3A (βλ. παράγραφο 4.5). **Ηπατική δυσλειτουργία:** Το Betmiga δεν έχει μελετηθεί σε ασθενείς με σοβαρή ηπατική δυσλειτουργία (Child-Pugh Κατηγορία Γ) και συνεπώς δε συνιστάται για χρήση σε αυτόν τον πληθυσμό ασθενών. Αυτό το φαρμακευτικό προϊόν δεν συνιστάται για χρήση σε ασθενείς με μέτρια ηπατική δυσλειτουργία (Child-Pugh Β) οι οποίοι λαμβάνουν ταυτόχρονα ισχυρούς αναστολείς του CYP3A (βλ. παράγραφο 4.5). **Υπέρταση:** Το mirabegron μπορεί να αυξήσει την αρτηριακή πίεση. Η μέτρηση της αρτηριακής πίεσης συνιστάται να γίνεται στην αρχή και περιοδικά κατά τη διάρκεια της θεραπείας με mirabegron, ιδιαίτερα σε υπερτασικούς ασθενείς. Τα δεδομένα είναι περιορισμένα σε ασθενείς με υπέρταση σταδίου 2 (αυστολική αρτηριακή πίεση ≥ 160 mm Hg ή διαστολική αρτηριακή πίεση ≥ 100 mm Hg). **Ασθενείς με συγγενή ή επίκτητη παράταση του διαστήματος QT:** Το Betmiga, στις θεραπευτικές δόσεις, δεν έχει αποδείξει κλινικά σημαντική παράταση του διαστήματος QT σε κλινικές μελέτες (βλ. παράγραφο 5.1). Ωστόσο, δεδομένου ότι ασθενείς με γνωστό ιστορικό παράτασης του διαστήματος QT ή ασθενείς οι οποίοι λαμβάνουν φαρμακευτικά προϊόντα που είναι γνωστό ότι παρατείνουν το διάστημα QT δεν συμπεριλήφθηκαν σε αυτές τις μελέτες, οι επιδράσεις του mirabegron σε αυτούς τους ασθενείς δεν είναι γνωστές. Προσοχή πρέπει να επιδεικνύεται κατά τη χορήγηση του mirabegron σε αυτούς τους ασθενείς. **Ασθενείς με υποκυστική απόφραξη και ασθενείς που λαμβάνουν αντισυσκευαστικά φαρμακευτικά προϊόντα για OAB:** Επίσχεση ούρων σε ασθενείς με υποκυστική απόφραξη (Bladder Outlet Obstruction-BOO) και σε ασθενείς που λαμβάνουν αντισυσκευαστικά φαρμακευτικά προϊόντα για την θεραπεία της OAB έχει αναφερθεί κατά την εμπειρία μετά την κυκλοφορία στην αγορά σε ασθενείς που λαμβάνουν mirabegron. Μια ελεγχόμενη μελέτη κλινικής ασφάλειας σε ασθενείς με BOO δεν κατέδειξε αυξημένη επίσχεση ούρων σε ασθενείς υπό θεραπεία με Betmiga. Ωστόσο, το Betmiga θα πρέπει να χορηγείται με προσοχή σε ασθενείς με κλινικά σημαντική BOO. Το Betmiga θα πρέπει επίσης να χορηγείται με προσοχή σε ασθενείς που λαμβάνουν αντισυσκευαστικά φαρμακευτικά προϊόντα για τη θεραπεία της OAB. **4.8 Ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες:** Περίληψη του προφίλ ασφαλείας. Η ασφάλεια του Betmiga αξιολογήθηκε σε 8.433 ασθενείς με OAB, εκ των οποίων οι 5.648 έλαβαν τουλάχιστον μία δόση του mirabegron στη φάση 2/3 του κλινικού προγράμματος, και 622 ασθενείς έλαβαν Betmiga για τουλάχιστον 1 χρόνο (365 ημέρες). Σε τρεις διάρκειες 12 εβδομάδων, φάσης 3, διπλά τυφλές ελεγχόμενες με εικονικό φάρμακο μελέτες, το 88% των ασθενών ολοκλήρωσαν τη θεραπεία με αυτό το φαρμακευτικό προϊόν, και το 4% των ασθενών δέχθηκαν τη θεραπεία λόγω ανεπιθύμητων ενεργειών. Οι περισσότερες ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες ήταν ήπιες έως μέτριες σοβαρότητας. Οι πιο συχνές ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες που αναφέρθηκαν σε ασθενείς υπό θεραπεία με Betmiga 50 mg κατά τη διάρκεια των τριών, διάρκειας 12 εβδομάδων, φάσης 3, διπλά τυφλών, ελεγχόμενων με εικονικό φάρμακο μελετών είναι ταχυκαρδία και ουρολοιμώξεις. Η συχνότητα της ταχυκαρδίας ήταν 1,2% σε ασθενείς που λάμβαναν Betmiga 50 mg. Η ταχυκαρδία οδήγησε σε διακοπή στο 0,1% των ασθενών που λάμβαναν Betmiga 50 mg. Η συχνότητα των ουρολοιμώξεων ήταν 2,9% σε ασθενείς που λάμβαναν Betmiga 50 mg. Οι ουρολοιμώξεις δεν οδήγησαν σε διακοπή κανέναν από τους ασθενείς που έλαβαν Betmiga 50 mg. Στις σοβαρές ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες περιλαμβάνεται κολπική μαρμαρυγή (0,2%). Οι ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες που παρατηρήθηκαν κατά τη διάρκεια της 1 έτους (μακροχρόνιας) ελεγχόμενης με δραστικό φάρμακο (μυοκαρδικός ανταγωνιστής) μελέτης ήταν παρόμοια σε τύπο και σοβαρότητα με εκείνες που παρατηρήθηκαν στις τρεις διάρκειες 12-εβδομάδων, φάσης 3, διπλά τυφλές, ελεγχόμενες με εικονικό φάρμακο μελέτες. **Συνοπτικός πίνακας ανεπιθύμητων ενεργειών:** Ο παρακάτω πίνακας απεικονίζει τις ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες που παρατηρήθηκαν με το mirabegron στις τρεις διάρκειες 12 εβδομάδων, φάσης 3, διπλά τυφλές, ελεγχόμενες με εικονικό φάρμακο μελέτες. Η συχνότητα των ανεπιθύμητων ενεργειών ορίζεται ως εξής: 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 $< 1/1.000$), πολύ σπάνιες ($< 1/10.000$) και μη γνωστές (δεν μπορούν να εκτιμηθούν με βάση τα διαθέσιμα δεδομένα). Εντός κάθε κατηγορίας συχνότητας εμφάνισης, οι ανεπιθύμητες ενέργειες παρατίθενται κατά φθίνουσα σειρά σοβαρότητας.

MedDRA Κατηγορία/οργανικό σύστημα	Συχνές	Όχι συχνές	Σπάνιες	Πολύ Σπάνιες	Μη γνωστές (δεν μπορούν να εκτιμηθούν με βάση τα διαθέσιμα δεδομένα)
Λοιμώξεις και παροσιτώσεις	Ουρολοιμώξη	Λοίμωξη του κόλπου Κυστίτιδα			
Ψυχιατρικές διαταραχές					Αϋθνία*
Διαταραχές του νευρικού συστήματος	Κεφαλαλγία*, Ζάλη*				
Οφθαλμικές διαταραχές			Οίδημα βλεφάρων		
Καρδιακές διαταραχές	Ταχυκαρδία	Αίσθημα παλμών, Κολπική μαρμαρυγή			
Αγγειακές διαταραχές				Υπέρταση-κρίση*	
Διαταραχές του γαστρεντερικού συστήματος	Ναυτία*, Δυσκοιλιότητα*, Διάρροια*	Δυσπεψία Γαστρίτιδα	Οίδημα χείλους		
Διαταραχές του δέρματος και του υποδόριου ιστού		Κνίδωση, Εξάνθημα, Εξάνθημα κηλοειδές, Εξάνθημα βλατιδώδες, Κνημμός	Λευκοκυτταρολαστική αγγειίτιδα, Πορφύρα, Αγγειοοίδημα*		
Διαταραχές του μυοσκελετικού συστήματος και του συνδετικού ιστού		Οίδημα άρθρωσης			
Διαταραχές των νεφρών και των ουροφόρων οδών			Επίσχεση ούρων*		
Διαταραχές του αναπαραγωγικού συστήματος και του μαστού		Αιδοιοκλιτικός κνημμός			
Παραολιμνικές εξετάσεις		Αυξημένη αρτηριακή πίεση αυξημένη GGT, αυξημένη AST, αυξημένη ALT			

*παρατηρήθηκαν από την εμπειρία μετά την κυκλοφορία του φαρμάκου
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