



AUTOIMMUNE BULLOUS DISEASES

EFFICACY OF RITUXIMAB IN THE TREATMENT OF PEMPHIGUS: EXPERIENCE OF MOROCCAN POPULATION

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Introduction: Rituximab is an antiCD20 monoclonal antibody inducing B lymphocytes depletion. It's an emerging therapy for many autoimmune diseases including pemphigus.

Objective: Our aim was to analyse the efficacy and tolerance of Rituximab in the treatment of severe and refractory forms of our pemphigus population.

Materials and method: We did a prospective study in the dermatology department of the university hospital of Fez, over 30 months from 2016 to 2018. Data were entered on Excel and analyzed by using the statistical software package SPSS 17.0.

Results: We collect 13 cases. The average age was 55 years with a clear female predominance. There were 11 pemphigus vulgaris and 2 superficial pemphigus. Nikolsky's sign was positive in 8 patients. Cutaneous involvement was found in 11 patients, whereas mucous involvement was present in 8 cases. Most patients had severe disease with very high indirect Immunofluorescent. 3 patients were treated with Rituximab as first-line therapy while 10 others received it after failure of other treatments. The average duration of follow-up was 18 months. The use of Rituximab was associated with significant reduction in corticosteroid dosing during follow-up. After 3 months, 6 patients achieved complete remission, while 4 had partial remission with persistent buccal erosions. Side effects were found in 53% of cases, mainly infectious complications. No case of death was encountered.

Conclusion: Rituximab is a safe and effective treatment of severe and refractory forms of our pemphigus population. It allows rapid control which prevent side effects of long-term corticotherapy.

