



AUTOIMMUNE BULLOUS DISEASES

## RISK OF MALIGNANCY AFTER LONG-TERM TREATMENT WITH IMMUNOSUPPRESSANT DRUGS IN PATIENTS WITH AUTO-IMMUNE BULLOUS SKIN DISEASES

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**BACKGROUND:** Auto-immune bullous diseases (AIBD) are often successfully treated with systemic steroids and immunosuppressant drugs. Treatment with immunosuppressant drugs has been proven to increase the risk of cancers in transplant patients and possibly in patients with inflammatory and autoimmune diseases well. Despite reported associations of malignancies with AIBD, little is known about the risk of cancer development in AIBD patients treated with immunosuppressants.

**OBJECTIVES:** The aim of this study is to determine the incidence of cancer in patients with AIBD treated with immunosuppressants for at least one year, as compared with the general Turkish population.

**METHODS:** Data were extracted from the files of patients with AIBD treated in a dermatology out-patient clinic in a university hospital between January 2014 and September 2017. We compared the incidence to age and gender matched Turkish population.

**RESULTS:** Eighty-seven patients were analysed. Seventy-four (43 women and 31 men) were treated with systemic steroid and immunosuppressant drugs at least for one year. Twenty-one of 43 women were treated with azathioprine at least for one year. No male patients developed skin or other cancers after diagnosis or treatment of AIBD. Two female patients with pemphigus vulgaris and one female patient with mucous membrane pemphigoid were diagnosed with breast cancer after systemic steroid and azathioprine treatment..

**CONCLUSIONS:** In this cohort; 3 of 21 (14.28%) female patients with AIBD; treated with at least one year azathioprine; developed breast cancer and the risk of breast cancer was increased in this group, as compared with the general Turkish women with 0.3% prevalence of breast cancer in 2012 statistics.

