



AUTOIMMUNE CONNECTIVE TISSUE DISEASES

## EFFICACY OF RITUXIMAB IN THE TREATMENT OF SYSTEMIC SCLEROSIS

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**Introduction & Objectives:** To assess the efficacy of Rituximab (RTX) in Systemic sclerosis.

**Materials & Methods:** A 37 year old female with systemic sclerosis for 2 years was treated with two doses of Rituximab ( 500mg 15 days apart). The main indication for RTX was interstitial lung fibrosis, cutaneous, and articular manifestations unresponsive to previous therapies. Lung involvement was assessed by pulmonary function tests (PFTs) and chest high-resolution CT (HRCT). Skin involvement was assessed both clinically and histologically. The effects of RTX were evaluated after 6months of the first cycle.

**Results:** RTX significantly improved the extent of skin sclerosis in the patient at 6month evaluation (modified Rodnan skin score from 27 to 19). A clinical improvement of other cutaneous manifestations, namely hypermelanosis and pruritus was observed. There was a significant increase of forced vital capacity [FVC] ( from 63.6 at baseline to 72 at 6 months). Moreover, significant improvement was noted in lung fibrosis on HRCT at 6 months when compared with the baseline.

**Conclusions:** This case indicates that Rituximab has beneficial effects on lung function and cutaneous manifestations in patients with systemic sclerosis.

**Conflict of interest:** No conflicts of interest.

