<https://doi.org/10.47660/CBR.2020.174645>

REAL-WORLD USE OF RITUXIMAB IN RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS: A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY OF A SINGLE-CENTER IN RIO DE JANEIRO

Elisa Benicio Henriques^{1,*}, Manuella Lima Gomes Ochdrop¹, Leticia Rocha Pereira¹, Guilherme Brezenski Rodrigues¹, Camila Souza das Chagas Nogueira¹, Talita Gonçalves Pereira de Souza¹, Juliana Murad Faria¹

1.Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil.

*Corresponding author: elisa.bhenriques@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

Rituximab (RTX) is a well-established biological disease modifying antirheumatic drugs (bDMARDs) in patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) not responding adequately to synthetic DMARDs. The aim of this study was to describe clinical and laboratory characteristics of RTX in Brazilian patients with RA.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data from 29 patients were collected from medical charts made between January 2011 and September 2020. Included patients were followed at the biologic outpatient clinic of a tertiary university hospital. Patients characteristics were described using mean, standard deviation (SD), median, range, frequency and percentage.

RESULTS

Patient characteristics are shown on Table 1. Most patients received a 1 g infusion of RTX on days 0 and 14, every 6 months. The median cumulative RTX dose was 7.74 g (SD 5.12, 2–26 g). Median follow-up time after RTX initiation was 46 months (SD 35.13, 6–84 months). Four patients (13,7%) were refractory to RTX. Mean CDAI evolution is shown on Table 2 and CDAI was classified as high (> 26), moderate (> 11 and ≤ 26) and low (≤ 11). Eight (27,5%) patients had infection events - herpes zoster (1), arbovirus (2), pyodermitis (1), sinusitis, COVID-19 (2), superficial mycosis (1). One patient had a serious infection (hospitalization due to pyelonephritis, requiring venous antibiotic therapy). No patient developed malignancies or tuberculosis.

Table 1. Patients' characteristics.

Characteristics	RA patients (n = 29)
Mean age (SD), years	53 (11.58)
Erosive disease (%)	25 (86.2%)
Rheumatoid Factor and/or Anti-Citrullinated Protein Antibody positive, n (%)	28 (96%)
Rheumatoid vasculitis (%)	5 (17.2%)
Average duration of disease, years	15.46 (SD 8.26; 1.5–39.3)
Number of previous bDMARDs, n (%)	RA patients (n = 29)
None	4 (13%)
One	9 (31%)
Two or more	16 (55%)

Table 2. Mean CDAI evolution.

Moment after RTX first dose	Before RTX	6 months	12 months	24 months
Patients using RTX (n)	29	26	23	20
CDAI, mean (SD)	31.08 (15.892)	18.33 (10.25)	17.93 (15.74)	14.85 (13.32)
Patients with high CDAI n (%)	18 (62%)	5 (19%)	5 (21%)	3 (15%)
Patients with moderate CDAI n (%)	6 (20%)	15 (57%)	10 (43%)	6 (30%)
Patients with low CDAI n (%)	5 (17%)	6 (23%)	8 (34%)	11 (55%)

CONCLUSION

We observed in our cohort that most patients achieved moderate or low activity after 6 months. Few adverse events have been observed resulting in hospitalization or death even in the presence of high cumulative dose of RTX in some cases.