DISEASE CHARACTERISTICS, SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS AND COMORBIDITIES IN DIFFICULT-TO-TREAT RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS: A TERTIARY CENTER EXPERIENCE

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BACKGROUND

Recently, the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology (EULAR) defined difficult-to-treat (D2T) rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients as those that maintain disease activity and have already failed ≥ 2 biological or targeted-synthetic DMARDs with different mechanisms of action (MOA). In addition to disease characteristics, sociodemographic aspects and comorbidities can contribute to the persistence of disease activity. We aimed to assess those contributing factors in an observational study.

METHODS

Sixty RA patients were enrolled and categorized with 24 D2T and 36 non-D2T patients. Disease characteristics, sociodemographic aspects and comorbidities were assessed. Statistical analysis was performed on continuous and categorical variables. Comparisons were made with appropriate tests (p value < 0.05 was considered significant).

RESULTS

Results are shown in Table 1. No differences were found in age, gender, education, working situation and economic classification. In disease characteristics, D2T group had a higher mean CDAI, SDAI and pain VAS, also, a higher frequency of glucocorticoid and tsDMARD current therapy and difference in number of failed b/tsDMARD with or without different MOA. When comparing comorbidities, D2T group had a higher BMI mean and frequency of fibromyalgia, depression and anxiety.

CONCLUSION

In the D2T group, obesity, pain and mood disorders were identified as contributing factors. These factors impact in disease activity, show the clinical complexity of RA and must be assessed when tailoring the therapeutic strategies for a personalized medicine.

KEYWORDS

Rheumatoid arthritis, Difficult-to-treat, Comorbidities.

Table 1. Difficult-to-treat and non-D2T patient characteristics.

Variables	D2T (n = 24)	Non-D2T (n = 36)	p value
Sociodemographic			
Age (mean + SD)	56.90 ± 7.95	57.53 ± 6.41	0.76
Female (%)	95.8	91.7	0.64
Education			
First grade (%)	4.2	14.0	0.26
Second grade (%)	25.0	33.4	
Higher grade (%)	70.8	52.6	
Working situation			
Housewife (%)	20.8	27.8	0.80
Retired/disabled (%)	41.7	33.4	
Working (%)	37.5	38.9	
Economic class			
A–B (%)	8.3	16.7	0.36
C–E (%)	91.7	83.3	
Disease characteristics			
Disease duration (mean + SD)	15.13 ± 6.12	12.31 ± 8.03	0.15
RF/ACPA presence (%)	91.7	94.4	0.56
CDAI (mean + SD)	13.38 ± 11.80	6.92 ± 6.13	0.01
SDAI (mean + SD)	18.11 ± 13.94	7.92 ± 6.53	0.02
Pain VAS (mean + SD)	4.43 ± 2.21	3.14 ± 2.20	0.03
HAQ (mean + SD)	0.86 ± 0.71	0.93 ± 0.79	0.80
Current therapy			
Glucocorticoid (%)	75.0	44.4	0.019
csDMARD (%)	70.8	83.3	0.25
bDMARD (%)	58.3	61.1	0.83
tsDMARD (%)	37.5	2.8	0.01
Failed DMARD			
csDMARD	2 (0–3)	1 (0–4)	0.60
Total b/tsDMARD (median)	3 (2–6)	0 (0–3)	0.001
Different MOA b/tsDMARD (median)	3 (2–5)	0 (0–1)	0.001
Comorbidities			
Comorbidities presence (%)	100	72.2	0.004
Comorbidities (number)	3 (1–8)	3 (1–5)	0.09
BMI (mean + SD)	29.31 ± 5.17	26.61 ± 3.75	0.02
Fibromyalgia (%)	25.0	2.8	0.013
Depression (%)	45.8	5.6	0.001
Anxiety (%)	45.8	5.6	0.001