Association of Musculoskeletal and Radiological Features with Clinical and Serological Findings in Systemic Sclerosis: A Single-Centre Registry Study

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Abstract : Aim: Systemic sclerosis (SSc) is a chronic connective tissue disease with the clinical hallmark of skin thickening and tethering. The correlation of musculoskeletal features with other parameters should be considered in SSc patients. Methods: We reviewed the records of all patients who had more than one visit and standard anteroposterior radiography of hand. We used univariate analysis, and factors with p<0.05 were included in logistic regression to find out dependent factors. Results: Overall, 180 SSc patients were enrolled in our study, 161 (89.4%) of whom were women. The median age (IQR) was 47.0 years (16), and 52% had a diffuse subtype of the disease. In multivariate analysis, tendon friction rubs (TFRs) were associated with the presence of calcinosis, muscle tenderness, and flexion contracture (FC) on physical examination (p<0.05). Arthritis showed no differences in the two subtypes of the disease (p=0.98), and in multivariate analysis, there were no correlations between radiographic arthritis and serological and clinical features. The radiographic results indicated that disease duration correlated with joint erosion, acro-osteolysis, resorption of the distal ulna, calcinosis and radiologic FC (p< 0.05). Acro-osteolysis was more frequent in the dcSSc subtype, TFRs, and anti-TOPO I antibody. Radiologic FC showed an association with skin score, calcinosis and haematocrit <30% (p<0.05). Joint flexion on radiography was associated with disease duration, modified Rodnan skin score, calcinosis, and low hematocrit (P<0.01). Conclusion: Disease duration was a main dependent factor for developing joint erosion, acro-osteolysis, bone resorption, calcinosis, and flexion contracture on hand radiography. Acro-osteolysis presented in the severe form of the disease. Acro-osteolysis was the only dependent variable associated with bone demineralization.

Keywords : disease subsets, hand radiography, joint erosion, sclerosis

Conference Title : ICRR 2023 : International Conference on Radiography and Radiotherapy

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : September 25-26, 2023

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