

Omalizumab Therapy Experience for Asthma, at Zayed Military Hospital (ZMH) in United Arab Emirates

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Abstract : Introduction: 300 million people worldwide are affected by asthma .In UAE, prevalence is around 10% (900,000 people).Patients with persistent symptoms despite using high dose ICS plus a second controller +/- OCS are considered to have severe asthma. Omalizumab (Xolair) an IgE monoclonal antibody is approved as add on therapy for severe allergic asthma. Objective: To determine the efficacy of omalizumab based on clinical outcomes in our cohort of patient pre and post 52 weeks of treatment to assess safety and tolerability of treatment. Methods: Medical records of patients receiving omalizumab therapy for asthma at ZMH ,Abu Dhabi were retrospectively analyzed. Patients fulfilling the criteria of severe allergic asthma as per GINA guidelines were included. Asthma control over 12 months prior to and 12 months after commencement of omalizumab therapy was analysed by taking into account the number of exacerbations and hospitalizations in addition to maintenance of medication dosages, need for rescue reliever therapy and pulmonary function testing. Results: Total cohort of 21 patient (5 females), average age 41 years and av length of therapy 22 months were included. Seven patients (total 11/52%) managed to stop steroids on treatment while four were able to decrease the dosage. Mean exacerbation rate decreased from five/ year pre treatment to 1.36 while on treatment. Number of hospitalizations decreased from mean of two per year to 0.9 per year. Rescue reliever inhaler usage decreased from mean of 40 puffs to 15 puffs per week. 2 patients discontinued therapy, 1 due to lack of benefit (2 doses) and 2nd due to severe persistent side effects including local irritation, severe limb and joint pains after 6 months. Conclusion: Treatment with omalizumab showed effect in terms of reduced number of exacerbations, maintenance therapy and reliever medications. However, no improvement was seen in PFTs. There is room for improved documentation in terms of symptom recording and use of rescue medication as well as for better patient education and counselling in order to improve compliance.

Keywords : asthma, omalizumab, severe allergic asthma, UAE

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020