



Research corner

The management of Behçet's disease-related uveitis

Source: Presentation by Luca Cantarini at ISSAID 2019

Among other disorders related to Behçet's disease, eye issues have a strong impact in quality of life impairment. But recent recommendations tends to recognize the positive contribution of biological agents to improve patient care.

Ocular involvement has a major impact in quality of life for Behçet's disease patients

Behçet's disease (BD) is a rare disorder that causes blood vessel inflammation throughout the body. Main symptoms can include mouth sores, eye inflammation, skin rashes and lesions, and genital sores. According to Pr. Cantarini, 50-70% of BD patients have eye issues (ocular involvement), and blindness is even reported in ca. 25% of cases. Impairment of quality of life is more evident in patients with panuveitis (inflammation of the eye), when compared to other eye problems.

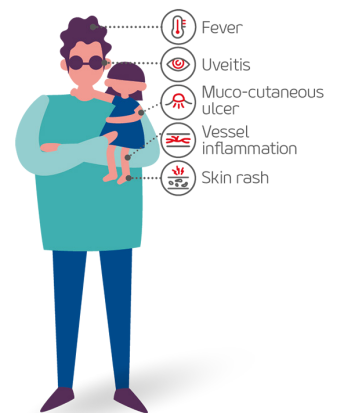
Biological agents to improve BD-related uveitis

The aims of the treatment in BD-related uveitis (inflammation of the middle layer of the eye) is to prevent irreversible organ damage and functional impairment. The 2018 update of EULAR recommendations for the management of BD highlighted the increased evidence on the use of biological agents.

Monoclonal TNF-alpha inhibitors (a type of drug that suppresses inflammation) can now be used as first-line therapy in case of eye inflammation. In particular, as per various publications, adalimumab and infliximab have proven to provide a sustained positive clinical response in patients with BD-related uveitis. There is less evidence on the efficacy (the ability to produce the intended result) of either golimumab and certolizumab, since these are newer medications.

On the other hand, IL-1 inhibitors, such as anakinra or canakinumab, may induce a rapid and sustained clinical efficacy in patients with non-responsive uveitis, as well as help preserve the visual function.

In any case, a close collaboration between rheumatologists and ophthalmologists is highly recommended for managing BD-related uveitis.



Main clinical features of Behçet's disease