

THE RATE OF RELAPSES IN PATIENTS, CURED FROM SARCOIDOSIS WITH ASYMPTOMATIC DEBUT OF THE DISEASE

O. V. Bychenko

Abstract

A literature data suggest that the patients, cured from sarcoidosis after long-term therapy with glucocorticosteroids (GCS), have higher rate of disease relapses.

Aim of study: to explore the rate of relapses in patients with asymptomatic debut of sarcoidosis.

Material and methods. We examined 46 patients with stage II sarcoidosis without clinical manifestation and lung function disturbances. 33 patients (men — 21, women — 12, age $(33,5 \pm 1,6)$ years) were allocated to group 1 and 13 patients (men — 5, women — 8; age — $(41,8 \pm 2,9)$ years) — to group 2. Patients in group 1 received no treatment. After 3 months of observation the patients with the CT-signs of spontaneous regression (sub-group A) remained under follow-up. Those patients either with no spontaneous improvement on CT or with deterioration (sub-group B) were treated using methylprednisolone (MP) in standard regimen. The duration of treatment was at least 1 year. The therapy consisted of two periods: 6 months from the start till resolution of CT lung abnormalities; second — 6 month maintenance treatment with MP 6 mg/day. In group 2 patients the therapy was initiated at visit 2.

Upon completion of therapy all patients were invited to visit clinic for examination at 6, 12 and 24 months.

Results. The CT-signs of relapse of pulmonary sarcoidosis were revealed in 10 (27 %) of patients. All relapses were registered in the first year after completion of treatment. In group 1 there were 4 cases with relapse ($12,1 \pm 5,6$) %: 3 (27,3 %) — in subgroup B and 1 in subgroup A. In patients from group 2 the relapses were much more often ($p < 0,05$): 6 cases ($46,1 \pm 13,8$) %.

Thus, long-term outcomes of treatment suggest that GCS-therapy is a risk factor for sarcoidosis relapse.

Conclusion. Despite high short-term efficacy of GCS therapy, a meaningful rate of relapses in asymptomatic debut sarcoidosis patients, justifies the use of GCS only in cases of progressive or resistant disease determined after 3 months of follow-up period.

Key words: pulmonary sarcoidosis with asymptomatic debut, glucocorticosteroid therapy, relapses.

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Olesya V. Bychenko

National institute of phthisiology and pulmonology

named after F. G. Yanovskyi NAMS of Ukraine

Department of Interstitial Lung Diseases

Resident physician, MD

10, M. Amosova str., Kyiv, 03038, Ukraine

Tel/fax: 38 044 270-35-60, olesia_bychenko@ukr.net