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Efficacy and Safety Profile of Teriflunomide in The Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis. Experience from A Tertiary MS Center in Dubai

Pournamy Sarathchandran¹, Yasmine Kamal Mohamed¹, Jihad Said Inshasi¹, Suhail Alrukn¹, Abubaker Al Madani¹

¹Rashid Hospital, Dubai, UAE

Background: Epidemiology of multiple sclerosis (MS) varies among regions and so is the drug responsiveness. There are relatively few studies addressing the real-world clinical experience with teriflunomide especially in the Middle East region.

Objective: To review the efficacy and the safety profile of teriflunomide in the treatment of multiple sclerosis.

Design & Method: We reviewed the medical records of 35 Relapsing Remitting Multiple Sclerosis (RRMS) patients, treated with teriflunomide from May 2014 to August 2015. Efficacy and safety outcomes were disability progression as measured by Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS), number of relapses, radiological activity and side effects.

Result: Thirty five RRMS patients, diagnosed as per 2010 McDonald's criteria, were initiated on teriflunomide 14mg once daily, from May 2014 to December 2015. Ten patients were treatment naïve; while 25 patients were switched over from other disease modifying therapies. Median EDSS at treatment initiation was 1.5. The median duration of follow up was 10 months. None of the patients had EDSS progression, clinical relapses or radiological relapses while on teriflunomide therapy (100%). Four patients (11.4%) developed asymptomatic elevation of hepatic transaminases which improved spontaneously. Three patients (8.5%) developed severe diarrhea while on therapy. These patients were switched over from fingolimod (patient-1), dimethylfumarate (patient-2) and interferon (patient-3). Patient -1 had serum sickness like illness due to fingolimod, while patient-2 had dimethylfumarate induced severe diarrhea. Patient -3 developed refractory diarrhea. Upper gastro-intestinal endoscopy, colonoscopy and biopsy were performed and the histology was suggestive of pan colitis. His symptoms subsided after rectal and systemic steroids. The causal relation of his colitis to teriflunomide was not clear.

Conclusion: Teriflunomide is very effective and safe in treating RRMS patients. Side effects appear to occur in patients who developed side effects with other disease modifying agents. Patients need to be monitored regularly for early detection and proper management of side effects.