Background and importance Despite the clinical benefits of therapy with control point inhibitors in several malignancies, this inhibition is closely linked to a series of immune related adverse events (irAEs). The early detection and management of these is of vital importance.

Aim and objectives To identify and describe irAEs with programmed cell death protein 1 (PD-1) inhibitors and programmed death ligand 1 (PD-L1) inhibitors in clinical practice.

Material and methods A retrospective, descriptive, observational study was conducted in a 400 bed hospital in patients treated with immunotherapy (IT) from 1 January 2016 to 30 October 2018. Variables were age, gender, type of tumour, stage, IT, irAEs and grade, cycles until irAE appearance, irAE treatment and IT suspension. The electronic medical history was reviewed in OrionClinic and IT treatment in Farmis-Oncofarm. The causality of irAEs was ascertained on the basis of the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) algorithms. Statistical analysis was performed with SPSS V.15.

Results A total of 127 patients were treated with an average age of 65 years (range 36–88) and 75% were women: 76% of patients had non-microcytic lung cancer, 7% head–neck, 6% bladder, 5% breast, 4% renal, 2% melanoma and colorectal cancer. In 67% of patients, stage IV tumours were found; in 27% stage III, in 4% stage II and in 2% stage I. Nivolumab was prescribed in 54% of patients, pembrolizumab in 26%, atezolizumab in 13% and durvalumab in 7%. Fifty-two irAEs were identified. The average number of cycles until irAE appearance was 3.25 (range 1–57). The main irAEs were cutaneous (37%), gastrointestinal (23%), pneumonitis (14%) and endocrinological (8%); 64% grade I, 25% grade II, 12% grade III and no grade IV. Treatment was given for 66% of irAEs: oral corticoids (52%), topical corticoids (17%), antihistamines (12%) and hormone replacement therapy (5%). IT was resumed in 83% of patients. By the end of the study period, 31% of patients remained on therapy. Non-continuity was due to progression (55%), irAEs (10%) and other reasons (4%).

Conclusion and relevance The most frequent irAEs in patients receiving IT were cutaneous and gastrointestinal, mostly transitory and grades I–II. They were mostly resolved with corticotherapy and antihistamines. Management of irAEs was presented on the basis of clinical experience; cooperation of patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals is required to watch over their safety to obtain the maximum efficacy with the lowest irAEs possible.

REFERENCES AND/OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No conflict of interest.
Conclusion and relevance Biosimilar rituximab showed an effectiveness and safety profile similar to brand rituximab. Nevertheless, the small sample limits the statistical power and suggests a larger study is required to confirm these results, which we are currently working on.

REFERENCES AND/OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No conflict of interest.

OFF-LABEL USE OF RITUXIMAB IN SYSTEMIC AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES
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Background and importance A large number of patients with systemic autoimmune diseases (SAD) do not respond or relapse to first-line therapies. Current guidelines recommend the off-label use of rituximab for many severe refractory SAD even though most of the available data rely on observational studies and case reports

Aim and objectives The aim of this study was to analyse the efficacy and safety of the off-label use of rituximab for patients with severe refractory SAD in a tertiary hospital

Material and methods Off-label use of rituximab between January 2016 and December 2018 was reviewed. Clinical data were collected retrospectively. Therapeutic response was evaluated after 12 months of rituximab initiation based on clinical judgement: complete response was defined as no disease activity, partial response as a significant improvement (>50% of initial disease activity) and no response if there was no improvement or worsening of symptoms

Results A total of 52 applications were analysed. There were 28 men (54%) and 24 women (46%) with a mean age of 54.41 years (SD 15.31). The indications for rituximab included systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) (17.3%), glomerulonephritis (15.4%), inflammatory myopathy (9.6%), cryoglobulinaemia (7.7%), polyneuropathy (7.7%) and other SAD. As for previous therapies, 42 patients (82.4%) received corticosteroids and 37 (71.2%) received at least one immunosuppressive drug.

From all patients with an assessable treatment (n=47), 70.2% achieved an improvement in disease after 12 months: 34% (n=16) a complete response and 36% (n=17) a partial response. The most favourable results were found in the treatment of SLE, glomerulonephritis, cryoglobulinaemia, multiple sclerosis and optic neuritis in which >80% of patients obtained a complete or partial response.

Adverse events were reported in 22 patients (42.3%): the most frequent were infections (n=7) followed by infusion related reactions (n=3). No serious or death related adverse events were reported

Conclusion and relevance Rituximab had acceptable tolerance and reduced disease activity in some severe refractory SAD. Future controlled trials are needed to confirm the potential use of rituximab in patients with SAD. In the meantime, it is necessary to closely follow-up these patients.

REFERENCES AND/OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


No conflict of interest.