Follow-up of Lupus Nephritis Patients Cohort in Northeastern Brazil

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INTRODUCTION AND AIMS: Lupus nephritis (LN) affects almost 70% of Lupus patients, it is a very prevalent secondary glomerulonephritis (GN) and may lead to chronic kidney disease (CKD). The aim of this study is to show the clinical picture of a LN cohort in two GN clinics from Recife, Northeastern Brazil.

METHODS: Adults with Lupus according to SLICC criteria, kidney biopsy of LN class III, IV or V and follow-up of more than 6 months were included in the study. Data from charts was retrospectively analyzed using RStudio software.

RESULTS: Between January and December of 2017, 202 patients were included in the study. The mean age was 36y (±10), 92% were female, 75% non-white and 70% has completed high school. They had median of Lupus diagnosis and LN follow-up of 81 months (48-131) and 60 months (31-114), respectively. At LN diagnosis they presented with mean SCr 1.5mg/dL (±1.2), S Alb 2.8mg/dL (±0.8) and median proteinuria 3.7g/24h (2-6.8). The initial kidney biopsy revealed proliferative III or IV class (±V) in 81.3% of cases. Dialysis was needed in 17.4% of cases during flares. As induction therapy, besides steroids, Cyclophosphamide and Mycophenolate Mofetil were the drugs of choice in 72% and 21% of cases, respectively. Partial or complete remission at 6, 12, 24, 36, 60 months and at end of follow-up were achieved in 64%, 69%, 77%, 76%, 73% and 70% of cases, respectively. Relapse was found in 48% and refractory disease in 17%, despite two different treatments. Chronic kidney disease, with GFR less than 60ml/min, and end stage renal disease were the final outcome for 24% and 7%, respectively. Two patients (1%) died during follow-up due to infection.

CONCLUSIONS: In this cohort predominantly of young females from the Northeastern Brazil progressive CKD occurred in a quarter of the patients and ESRD in 7%. At presentation, NL Class III and IV were the most biopsy findings, as well as reduced glomerular filtration, elevated proteinuria and hypoalbuminemia. Despite treatment, remission was not achieved by a significant number of patients and almost half of them relapsed during follow-up.