Letters to the Editors

Effect of colchicine on serum lipid levels

Sirs,

We and others have previously shown that patients with Familial Mediterranean fever (FMF) had low cholesterol levels when compared to healthy controls (1-2). The causes of this abnormality are not understood. It could be due to an inherent effect of FMF or due to a lipid lowering effect of colchicine (3-5), as the patients in these studies were all regular users. There are also studies showing efficacy of colchicine in preventing some cardiac complications other than preventing pericarditis (6). We conducted a 12-week prospective study to determine whether colchicine would affect serum lipid levels in patients with FMF: Behçet’s syndrome (BS) patients were studied as diseased controls. We included in the study 24 patients with FMF (11 M, 13 F) and 16 (8 M, 8 F) patients with BS who used colchicine regularly for 12 weeks. Patients with FMF (mean age: 33.8±14.1 years) were significantly younger than BS patients (mean age: 36.5±9.5) (p=0.001). As seen in the Table I, colchicine did not change the levels of cholesterol or triglycerides in patients with FMF. This was also true for BS patients. Three patients suffered from mild diarrhoea (2 with FMF, 1 with BS) during colchicine treatment; besides that, colchicine use was uneventful. In conclusion, this study provided no evidence that colchicine use affects serum lipid levels among patients with FMF and BS. The small number of the study groups could be a limitation.

S. UGURLU1, MD, Assoc. Prof.
E. SEYAH1, MD, PhD
I. HANC1, Medical Student
S. PEHLLEVAN1, MD, Assoc. Prof.
H. OZDOGAN2, MD, PhD
H. YAZICI2, MD, PhD

1Division of Rheumatology, Department of Medicine, Cerrahpaşa Medical Faculty, University of Istanbul, Istanbul, Turkey;
2Sema Hospital, Istanbul, Turkey.

Table I. Serum lipid levels before and after colchicine levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Familial Mediterranean fever, n=19</th>
<th></th>
<th>Behçet’s syndrome, n=15</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before colchicine</td>
<td>After colchicine</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Before colchicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cholesterol, mg/dL</td>
<td>169.0 ± 77.1</td>
<td>181.3 ± 48.3</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>181.4 ± 50.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triglycerides, mg/dL</td>
<td>122.2 ± 82.3</td>
<td>128.2 ± 69.6</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>111.7 ± 62.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDL cholesterol, mg/dL</td>
<td>120.4 ± 44.3</td>
<td>112.2 ± 39.9</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>115.1 ± 38.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDL cholesterol, mg/dL</td>
<td>42.1 ± 13.4</td>
<td>47.1 ± 10.9</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>47.9 ± 9.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Address correspondence to: Emre Seyahi, MD, Cerrahpaşa Medical Faculty, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Rheumatology, 81310 Istanbul, Turkey.
E-mail: eseyahi@yahoo.com
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References

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