

TNF α Inhibition in the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis

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The new anti-TNF- agents have been shown to act effectively and rapidly on the signs and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and they are now very widely prescribed. *TNF- α Inhibition in the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis* offers a timely and accurate guide to important issues regarding the use of these drugs, beginning with their application to RA. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 describe the three main anti-TNF- agents employed in the treatment of RA: infliximab, etanercept and adalimumab; their molecular features; how they are synthesized; their pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics; the results of clinical trials; their clinical uses; and eventual combination therapies with traditional DMARDs. Furthermore, problems of adverse events, safety and strategies to prevent the most serious side effects are discussed in scrupulous detail.

Among the broad spectrum of anti-TNF- agents, various p55 TNF- receptor-based constructs have been developed for clinical use: onercept, lenecept, and finally pegsunercept which has a longer half-life and is less immunogenic than most of the other molecules.

The use of TNF inhibition in the practical management of RA differs in the USA with respect to Europe, and the authors report the guidelines followed by various countries for treatment strategies in RA. The last chapter focuses on a very intriguing and little known aspect: the contrasting pro-inflammatory and immunosuppressive effects of TNF- . The literature on biological agents is quite ample, but *TNF α Inhibition in the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis* offers something new, for it not only summarizes the most important data relative to anti-TNF- therapies, but also focuses on important emerging issues that are not discussed in other works. It offers a useful tool for rheumatologists wishing to update their knowledge regarding these new drugs.

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