



The impact of the COVID-19 pandemics on SLE patients

Garabajiu Maria, Mazur-Nicorici Lucia, Șalaru Virginia, Loghin-Oprea Natalia, Sadovici-Bobeica Victoria,

Panfile Elena, Cebanu Mariana, Rotaru Tatiana, Mazur Minodora

STATE UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY “NICOLAE TESTEMITANU”

INSTITUTE OF CARDIOLOGY



THE OBJECTIVE

The aim of the study was to determine the impact of COVID-19 limitations on patients with SLE in the Republic of Moldova.

METHODS

A group of 114 lupus patients (step 1) was examined during the period of 01.04.2019 – 31.03.2020, by investigating addressability, hospitalization, the activity of the disease, QoL by SF-8 and Lupus Impact Tracker (LIT) using questionnaire including the COVID-19 infection and vaccination. The same questionnaire was applied, patients (n=104, step 2) were interviewed by phone, during the period of 01.09.2020 – 01.09.2021.

RESULTS

Data from patients showed a reduction of addressability to rheumatologist and family physician from 3.2 to 0.8 visit per year. Although phone consultations of the same patients at the second step of our study were increased from 3.2 – 10.6 calls per year.

Table 1. Characteristic of the study groups

Parameters	Step 1, Nr 114	Step 2, Nr 104
Age \pm SD, years	43.9 \pm 13.28	44.6 \pm 9.16
Disease duration \pm SD, months	101.87 \pm 16.12	102.08 \pm 21.11
Addressability, nr. visits on site	3.2	0.8
Addressability, nr. telephone call	3.2	10.6
PGA \pm SD, points	46.97 \pm 19,39	50,78 \pm 22,41
SF-8 \pm SD, points		
PCS (physical component status)	40,73 \pm 10,60	35.11 \pm 10,33
MCS (mental component status)	42.80 \pm 10.83	34.93 \pm 10,47
Hospitalisation, %	21.91	5.84
Disability, %	46.94	61.05
COVID infection, %	0	15.42
Death due to COVID 19, %		0.96
Vaccination, %	0	
One dose		43.3
Two doses		34.6
LIT, points	58.44 \pm 11.01	69.08 \pm 10.15

Patient Global Assessment - PGA was increased - 46.9 and 50.7 mm, respectively. The SF-8 physical and mental component decreased from 40.7 to 35.1 and 42.8 to 34.9 points, respectively.

Hospitalizations decreased during COVID-19 pandemic from 21.9% to 5.8% cases. SARS-CoV-2 infection developed 15.4% of lupus patients, the death occurred in one case (0.96%). Vaccination against COVID-19 infection (one/two doses) was performed in 43.3%/34.6% cases, respectively.

The disease impact on lupus patients, assessed by LIT, at both steps attested the increasing from 58.4 to 69.1 points (<0.05), related to anxiety, depression and concentration deficit.

CONCLUSIONS

The burden of the disease on lupus patients during the COVID-19 pandemic was determined by the reduced addressability and hospitalizations, increased activity and psychological symptoms.