Psoriatic Erythroderma Treated with Etanercept

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To the Editor:
The recent introduction of biological therapy has revolutionized the therapeutic management of psoriasis. Various studies demonstrating the efficacy and safety of these treatments have been published.1-4 However, practically all of them studied patients with moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis and, therefore, there is little experience with “special” clinical forms of psoriasis, including psoriatic erythroderma.

We describe a 69-year-old woman with a history of depression, osteoporosis, and hypertension, with no known drug allergies, who was diagnosed with psoriasis in 1989. Since 1995, rotational therapy had been provided with systemic medication.

In December 2004, she developed erythroderma with severe erythema, skin edema, and fever. The score on the Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) was 55/72. At that time, she was receiving cyclosporin at a dose of 4 mg/kg/d. Treatment was initiated with support measures that included plenty of fluids, a high-calorie, high-protein diet, and antibiotic coverage after bacteremia was demonstrated. Treatment with alitretinoin at doses of 50 mg/d was attempted with barely any improvement. After 1 month of treatment with no results, a decision was made to discontinue and initiate etanercept therapy at 50 mg twice weekly for 3 months, followed by 25 mg twice weekly until completing 6 months of treatment. The chest x-ray was normal (the Mantoux test had already been done and was negative). After 3 weeks of etanercept therapy, the PASI score had decreased to 33/72. The psoriasis continued to improve with a PASI score of 17/72 at 6 weeks and 0/72 at 9 weeks. No adverse effects were observed during etanercept therapy.

Psoriatic erythroderma is one of the most uncommon and serious clinical forms of psoriasis, with frequent complications. This is a real challenge that requires a combination of systemic and supportive measures. The use of biological agents such as etanercept offers a promising therapeutic option for patients with severe psoriasis who do not respond to conventional therapies.

References
### Table. Patients With Psoriatic Erythroderma Who Received Biological Therapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case and Reference</th>
<th>Sex/Age, y</th>
<th>Severity of Psoriasis</th>
<th>Treatment and Dosage</th>
<th>Associated Treatments</th>
<th>Degree of Improvement</th>
<th>Adverse Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1ª</td>
<td>M/57</td>
<td>90% bs arthritis</td>
<td>Infliximab 5 mg/kg, 506-12</td>
<td>Methotrexate 7.5 mg/wk</td>
<td>PASI 75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ª</td>
<td>F/37</td>
<td>&gt; 90% bs</td>
<td>Infliximab 3 mg/kg, 506-12</td>
<td>Methotrexate 5 mg/wk</td>
<td>Almost complete</td>
<td>Clearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3ª</td>
<td>F/16</td>
<td>Erythroderma arthritis</td>
<td>Infliximab 4.4 mg/kg, 506-12</td>
<td>Methotrexate 7.5 mg/wk</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4ª</td>
<td>F/27</td>
<td>Erythroderma arthritis</td>
<td>Infliximab 3.3 mg/kg, 506-12</td>
<td>Methotrexate 5 mg/wk</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5ª</td>
<td>F/54</td>
<td>Erythroderma arthritis</td>
<td>Infliximab 3.4 mg/kg, 506-12</td>
<td>Methotrexate 5 mg/wk</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6ª</td>
<td>F/29</td>
<td>Erythroderma arthritis</td>
<td>Infliximab 2.7 mg/kg, 506-12</td>
<td>Methotrexate 5 mg/wk</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7ª</td>
<td>M/72</td>
<td>PASI: 34.4</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8ª</td>
<td>M/77</td>
<td>PASI: 48.2</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9ª</td>
<td>M/48</td>
<td>PASI: 31.6</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10ª</td>
<td>F/48</td>
<td>PASI: 32.4</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11ª</td>
<td>M/53</td>
<td>PASI: 32.4</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12ª</td>
<td>M/53</td>
<td>PASI: 52.0</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13ª</td>
<td>M/54</td>
<td>PASI: 18.4</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14ª</td>
<td>M/40</td>
<td>PASI: 54.9</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15ª</td>
<td>F/49</td>
<td>PASI: 18.8</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16ª</td>
<td>M/60</td>
<td>PASI: 68.3</td>
<td>Etanercept 25 mg twice weekly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 current case</td>
<td>F/69</td>
<td>PASI: 55</td>
<td>Etanercept 50 mg twice weekly for 3 months, followed by 25 mg twice weekly for 3 more months</td>
<td>PASI 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviations: M, male; F, female; bs, body surface; PASI, Psoriasis Area and Severity Index. In the Esposito et al study, PASI 75 was achieved in 50% of patients, PASI 50 in 30%, and a poor response in 20%, although the therapeutic response was not described on a patient-by-patient basis. Urinary infection and increased pruritus were reported as adverse effects in the patient group, but without identifying the specific case.
Letters to the Editor

In light of the interesting article published by Macaya-Pascual et al., we felt it appropriate to describe the results of a study conducted in our referral area.

In 2004 a service list for dermatology was prepared and distributed jointly by the Dermatology Department at the Hospital Universitario Germans Trias i Pujol and primary health care representatives in order to streamline the specialist care offering and reduce the waiting list. Among other points, this list expressly recommended that referrals be restricted when treatment was requested for clearly benign lesions—skin tags, seborrheic keratoses, dermal nevi, cherry angiomas, and liver spots—that present no diagnostic doubts or complications. Implementation was assessed by a cross-sectional study conducted in November and December 2005 of the first 200 consecutive visits referred to specialists from primary care. The endpoints assessed included whether the reason for consultation was considered “indicated” or “not indicated” in the opinion of the dermatologist consulted, using the previously agreed service list as a reference. As a whole, 72/200 (36%) of the initial visits assessed were considered “not indicated” by the dermatologist. In this group, 72% (52/72) of the visits included reasons for consultation agreed

References

Evaluation of Dermatological Services Implemented in the Primary Care Setting

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