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Short Communication

Dermatomyositis: An In-Depth Investigation

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ABSTRACT

Dermatomyositis is an idiopathic inflammatory disease affecting the skin and muscles, clinically presenting with muscle weakness and characteristic skin manifestations. This article reviews the etiology, pathophysiology, diagnosis, and treatment of dermatomyositis, with special emphasis on physical rehabilitation and symptom management. Recent advances in biomarkers and immunomodulatory therapies are included.

Keywords: Dermatomyositis; Idiopathic inflammatory disease; Muscle weakness; Rehabilitation; Biomarkers

INTRODUCTION

Dermatomyositis is a rare inflammatory myopathy characterized by proximal muscle weakness and specific skin lesions. Its incidence varies according to the population and occurs in two age peaks: In childhood and in adults, especially middle-aged women. Manifestations vary from mild to severe, with pulmonary or cardiac involvement in advanced cases, which requires a multidisciplinary approach for treatment and management [1].

DESCRIPTION

Dermatomyositis is an autoimmune disease that primarily affects the muscles and skin, leading to progressive muscle weakness and distinct skin rashes. The condition often presents with symptoms such as difficulty performing daily tasks, fatigue and characteristic skin changes like a heliotrope rash or Gottron's papules. Its underlying cause remains unclear, but it is believed to involve an immune-mediated attack on muscle fibers and skin tissues [2]. Diagnosis typically involves a combination of clinical evaluation, blood tests, imaging and sometimes muscle biopsy. Treatment focuses on immunosuppressive therapies, physical rehabilitation and symptom management to improve muscle strength and enhance quality of life [3].

Etiology and pathophysiology

Although the etiology of dermatomyositis is not fully understood, it is considered to have an autoimmune basis, with contributing genetic and environmental factors. The activation of the immune system and the production of specific autoantibodies, such as anti-Mi-2 and anti-TIF1γ, play a key role in its development and in the severity of symptoms [4].

Clinical manifestations

Dermatomyositis is clinically characterized by muscle weakness and skin lesions such as heliotrope erythema and Gottron's papules. In addition, other symptoms such as arthralgia, dysphonia and difficulty swallowing may occur, which together significantly affect the quality of life of patients [5].

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of dermatomyositis is based on clinical criteria, laboratory criteria, imaging studies, and muscle biopsy findings. Serum levels of muscle enzymes such as Creatine Kinase (CK) are often elevated in these patients. Additionally, electromyography and magnetic resonance imaging help in identifying areas of active muscle inflammation [6].

Treatment

Initial treatment focuses on the use of corticosteroids, with immunosuppressants such as azathioprine and methotrexate as alternatives for resistant cases. New biological treatments and immunomodulatory agents, such as rituximab, are being investigated and show promising results in patients who do not respond to traditional therapies [7].

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Physical rehabilitation in dermatomyositis

Rehabilitation is essential to prevent muscle atrophy and improve mobility in patients with dermatomyositis. The rehabilitation program should include stretching exercises, progressive strengthening and techniques to improve functional capacity and quality of life. Physical therapy is especially useful in maintaining function in the remission stages of the disease [8].

CONCLUSION

Dermatomyositis is a complex disease with a significant impact on patients' lives. Physical rehabilitation plays an important role in the management of this pathology, allowing patients to maintain their functionality and a good quality of life. New immunomodulatory therapies represent hope for those patients who do not respond to conventional treatments, but more studies are required to evaluate their long-term effectiveness.

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