Ofatumumab-associated acute pneumonitis: Not new but still the first case

Alice Bonanni\textsuperscript{1}, Enrica Bertelli\textsuperscript{1}, Chiara Panicucci\textsuperscript{1}, Matteo D’Alessandro\textsuperscript{1}, Andrea Moscatelli\textsuperscript{2}, Elisabetta Lampugnani\textsuperscript{2}, Oliviero Sacco\textsuperscript{3}, Gian Michele Magnano\textsuperscript{4}, Pietro Ravani\textsuperscript{5} & Gian Marco Ghiggeri\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1}Division of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation, Giannina Gaslini Children’s Hospital, Via GerolamoGaslini 5, Genoa 16148, Italy
\textsuperscript{2}Neonatal and Pediatric ICU, Department of Critical Care and Perinatal Medicine, Giannina Gaslini Children’s Hospital, Via GerolamoGaslini 5, Genoa, 16148, Italy
\textsuperscript{3}Division of Pneumology, Giannina Gaslini Children’s Hospital, Via GerolamoGaslini 5, Genoa 16148, Italy
\textsuperscript{4}Division of Radiology, Giannina Gaslini Children’s Hospital, Via GerolamoGaslini 5, Genoa 16148, Italy
\textsuperscript{5}Division of Nephrology, University of Calgary, 1403-29th Street NW, Calgary, Alberta T2N 2T9, Canada

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Correspondence
Gian Marco Ghiggeri, Division of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation, Giannina Gaslini Children’s Hospital, Via Gerolamo Gaslini 5, Genoa 16148, Italy. Tel: +39 010 5636-2419; Fax: +39 010 395214; E-mail: GMarcoGhiggeri@ospedale-gaslini.ge.it

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Case Report
A 14-year-old boy affected by steroid-resistant nephrotic syndrome, dependent on prednisone (>1 mg/kg) plus cyclosporine A (4 mg/kg), was previously treated with cyclophosphamide and rituximab, without achieving long-lasting remission. Hence, the patient was enrolled in ClinTrials.gov NCT02394119 and treated with ofatumumab 1500 mg/1.73 m\textsuperscript{2} as stated by the protocol. The drug (final dose 1400 mg) was diluted in 1 L saline and infused at constant rates from 12 to 96 mL/h in 24 h (12 mL/h for the first 60 min followed by 24 mL/h 61–120 min, 48 mL/h 121–180 min, and 96 mL/h up to the end). For premedication, we utilized a modification (Bonanni et al. 2016) of the classical schedule utilized for rituximab consisting i.v. methyl prednisolone (2 mg/kg),
oral cetirizine (0.2 mg/kg), paracetamol (15 mg/kg), and salbutamol (0.15 mg/kg). The study was approved by the Ethical Committee Regione Liguria and was published in ClinTrials.Gov NCT02394119. The patient was well-being for 2 months after the infusion, when he finished the steroid tapering; thereafter, he developed severe exertional dyspnea, mild fever, and cyanosis. He was admitted to a local hospital where a high-resolution chest CT scan was performed which showed diffuse ground glass areas in both lungs (Fig. 1). Thus, he was admitted to our institute; the clinical examination as well as the blood pressure, peripheral oxygen saturation, complete blood count, and C-reactive protein were normal. Proteinuria was absent. We performed a CO diffusion study; remarkable interstitial damage and severe carbon monoxide (CO) diffusion reduction were evident. We performed bronchoscopy with bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) to rule out infectious disease: both culture and polymerase chain reaction analyses were negative for common viral and bacterial causes of pneumonia. Furthermore, we defined the lymphocyte phenotype on BAL and the BAL:blood ratio, highlighting that T-CD8⁺ lymphocytes were the main subpopulation in BAL, with high relevance of HLA-DR⁺ phenotype (90%). Low-dose steroid therapy was started with prompt resolution in symptoms. Predominance of T-CD8⁺ implies activation of an inflammatory process through MHC-I. We hypothesize that apoptotic CD20 may act as trigger the process, a possibility that must clearly be confirmed and better characterized.

Clinical outcome was good with rapid improvement and normalization of all parameters without any specific therapy. After 60 days, chest CT and CO diffusion tests were normal.

In conclusion, we describe here the first case of lung injury associated with ofatumumab that present the same clinical, laboratory, and radiology features of the same lung injury reported for rituximab. Like RALI occurring in patients treated for nephritic syndrome (Wagner et al. 2007, Spatafora et al. 2015), OALI had a mild clinical expression and recovered in a few months. Activation of T8 cells was the main cellular finding.

Disclosures

All the authors declare that they have not received support from any company for the submitted work, have no relationships with any company that might have an interest in the submitted work, and not have financial or non-financial interests that may be relevant to the submitted work. They also declare that their spouses, partners, or children have not had financial relationship that may be relevant to the submitted work.

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