

Rheumatology update*

As part of the annual scientific update for medical professionals, the ChanRe Rheumatology and Immunology Center and Research (CRICR), Bangalore, organized a seminar which was attended by 210 delegates. The main focus of the seminar was on newer trends in the management issues related to auto-immune diseases, especially rheumatic diseases.

Inaugurating the seminar, T. K. Nagabhushana (Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka) referred to the paradoxes of the immune system, its development and causation of autoimmune diseases. He appealed to medical scientists to work beyond medical science for the benefit of the common man, keeping in view the implication of these diseases on the society.

The inaugural lecture by Amita Aggarwal (Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute (SGPGI), Lucknow) focused attention on the less appreciated, but common Seronegative Spondyloarthropathy (SSA). She stressed on the fact that SSA, a group of distinct arthritis conditions, is more common than what is suspected and diagnosed. The newer development in the disease criteria and treatment modalities were discussed with stress on patient education and exercise.

V. Krishnamurthy (Apollo Hospital, Chennai) in his talk on 'Biological therapy of rheumatological diseases', referred to the opening up of new vistas in the treatment of rheumatological disorders from the marvels in biotechnology and recent understanding of the disease mechanism. The basic targets in biological therapy

were cellular subsets, adhesion molecules, histocompatibility complex molecules, T-cell receptors and cytokines. He brought to the notice of medical professionals the vast information available regarding the importance of anti-cytokine therapy and B-cell targeted therapies. He also noted that these therapies are potentially beneficial, but can increase the susceptibility for infections.

B. G. Dharmanand (Centre for Rheumatic Diseases, Bangalore) spoke on 'Crystal-induced arthropathy'. The management of gout, a common rheumatologic disease, has many shortfalls with the knowledge-practice gap being quite wide. Describing the disease process, diagnosis and treatment of gout, he also gave sufficient practice tips to the medical professionals gathered at the seminar.

S. Chandrashekara (CRICR) presented newer findings on thrombophilia, stressing the fact that it is a much needed diagnosis now-a-days. Discussing thrombophilia as a group of conditions responsible for increasing tendency for blood to clot in circulation, causing stroke and myocardial infarction, even in young patients, he stressed on the necessity to investigate the causes for the same, which will help in the management of these patients with early thrombosis, thereby reducing mortality and morbidity. Chandrashekara discussed in detail the approach to the diagnosis, timing of laboratory tests and detailed laboratory work-up profiles.

The seminar also included an update on HIV infection and lung involvement by Ramesh Revanna (Victoria Hospital, Bangalore). Ramesh spoke about the confusion prevailing in investigation and treatment modalities in lung involvement in HIV-infected patients. He explained how clinical characteristics and investigation differ in lung involvement. This was followed by discussion on compliance of therapy in allergic asthma and treatment

outcome by Sujeet K. Rajan (Bombay Hospital Institute of Medical Sciences, Mumbai). He discussed in depth the psychosocial factors influencing the compliance of drug therapy in chronic diseases. He illustrated how simple and effective counselling will improve compliance and can significantly reduce the cost burden in managing these diseases.

Sessions after lunch took up issues and developments in the field of diagnostics and physiotherapy. D. Sridaran (CRICR) spoke on the newer PCR-based diagnostics for infective, immunological and other diseases. He emphasized the importance of cautious interpretation of the results, since the techniques are too sensitive in detecting the infective organism, as in many infectious diseases presence of the organism does not indicate occurrence of the disease. He concluded by explaining about emerging microarray and nanotechnology into diagnostics.

A. Rajan Samuel (Vinayaka Mission College of Physiotherapy, Salem) spoke on advanced physiotherapy management in ankylosing spondylitis and I. Lourdu Raj (Goutham College of Physiotherapy, Bangalore) spoke on recent trends in physiotherapy for rehabilitation of rheumatoid arthritis. They spoke on newer modalities of hydrotherapy and electrotherapy, which have significantly contributed to improve rehabilitation.

The seminar concluded with a quiz on rheumatological case presentation and a competition on the assessment of effectiveness of the seminar for medical professionals.

S. Chandrashekara, 123, ChanRe Rheumatology and Immunology Center, 13th Cross, Margosa Road, Malleswaram, Bangalore 560 003, India.
e-mail: chandrashekara_s@yahoo.com

*A report on the seminar on new developments in the management of rheumatological diseases, organized by CRICR, Bangalore on 17 December 2006 at the Satish Dhawan Auditorium, Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore.