

Peripheral arterial disease in rheumatoid arthritis patients at the Kenyatta National Hospital, Kenya

Abstract:

Objective: To determine the magnitude of the atherosclerotic arterial disease in Rheumatoid Arthritis(RA) patients at Kenyatta National Hospital. Design: hospital based cross-sectional study. Setting: Kenyatta National Hospital Rheumatology outpatient clinic. Subjects: Rheumatoid Arthritis patients. Results: We obtained ABI measurements in 90 RA patients, among them 23(25.5% 95% CI 17.2-36.1) had obstructed lower limb arteries. Among the 23, 21(91.3%) had mild PAD, two (8.7%) had moderate PAD; none had severe PAD nor incompressible vessels. The obstruction of vessels was independent of diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia and cigarette smoking though these factors increased the likelihood of having PAD. Risk age(≥ 45 males, ≥ 55 females), Established RA(> 5 year duration) and severe RA were found to be significantly associated with the likelihood of having PAD. These trends remained significant after multivariable adjustment for potential confounders. twenty five (27.7%) of the study subjects exhibited symptoms of intermittent claudication, 13(52%) of them had PAD on ABI measurements, The Edinburgh claudication questionnaire was found to have 56.5% sensitivity and 82% specificity in detection of PAD in RA patients. Conclusion: There seems to be an association between PAD in RA with chronicity and severity of the RA. This association may support the pathogenic role of accumulated systemic inflammation in atherosclerosis. Clinicians should be alert to the possibility of impaired arterial function and thus subsequent cardiovascular morbidity and mortality in this group of patients.