

Referral for retinal screening amongst rheumatology patients on hydroxychloroquine

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BACKGROUND

Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) is the cornerstone of the management of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) but therapy can be limited by retinopathy which occurs in around 7.5% and can occur in up to 20-50% depending on exposure dose and time¹.

It is recommended that all patients who are on long term HCQ should have a baseline ocular examination in their first year with OCT² and that HCQ dosing should be 5mg/kg/day (max 400 mg per day) to reduce the risk of retinal toxicity¹. At present, a paper referral form to ophthalmology department is completed for patients commenced on HCQ in the rheumatology department of Beaumont Hospital.

OBJECTIVE

To determine the frequency of referrals for hydroxychloroquine retinopathy screening amongst patients attending the Rheumatology Department in Beaumont Hospital.

METHODS

Healthcare records of patients attending the rheumatology outpatients prescribed HCQ were reviewed for December 2020. Patient's demographics, dose of HCQ, weight, retinal screening referral, tamoxifen use and history of renal impairment were recorded. The audit is based on the guidelines recommended by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, United Kingdom.

RESULTS I

- 45 charts were reviewed.
- 32 (71.1%) were female with median age of 58 years.
- A majority of patients were on 400mg daily (73.3%), followed by 22.2% on 200mg daily and 4.5% on 300mg daily.
- Only 30 (66.7%) had weight recorded within the past year.
- 24 (53.3%) were on HCQ for rheumatoid arthritis, 10 (22.2%) for systemic lupus erythematosus, 8 (17.8%) for other connective tissue diseases and 3 (6.7%) for inflammatory osteoarthritis.
- None of the patients were on tamoxifen and only 4.4% were known to have chronic kidney disease.
- 64.4% of patients on HCQ were known to the ophthalmology service and 4(25%) who were not has since been referred to them.

RESULTS II

Figure 1: Percentage of patients on hydroxychloroquine who are known to the ophthalmology service

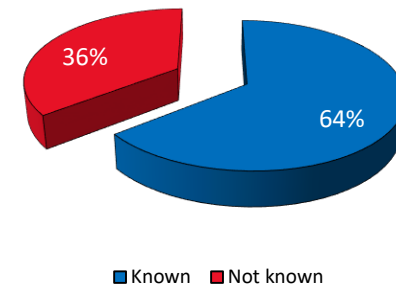
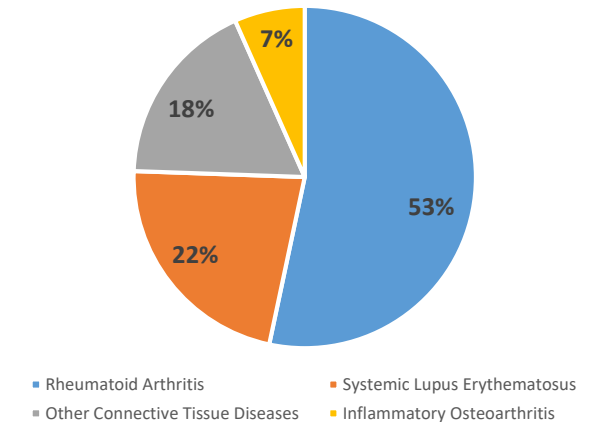


Figure 2: Hydroxychloroquine use in Various rheumatic diseases



CONCLUSION

Less than three quarters of patients on hydroxychloroquine have been referred to ophthalmology for retinal screening. An electronic referral for retinal screening has been developed to ensure this occurs and patients attending review visits will have their weights checked.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Melles RB, Marmor MF. The risk of toxic retinopathy in patients on long-term hydroxychloroquine therapy. *JAMA Ophthalmol.* 2014;132:1453–60.
- ² Yusuf IH, Foot B, Galloway J et al. Royal College of Ophthalmologists Guideline Development Group – Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine retinopathy: Recommendations on Screening. <https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/standards-publications-research/clinical-guidelines/>. Accessed 31 January 2021.