

NEW: Update of the joint EULAR/ERA-EDTA recommendations for the management of lupus nephritis

29 April, 2020, Kilchberg, Switzerland – The European League Against Rheumatism, EULAR, has published updated recommendations for the management of lupus nephritis. This update supersedes EULAR's 2012 recommendations and incorporates recent evidence on the use of certain drugs, disease monitoring and treatment targets.

Up to 40 percent of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) patients develop kidney disease, which represents a major cause of morbidity. In 2012, a EULAR task force developed joint recommendations for lupus nephritis (LN) with the European Renal Association-European Dialysis and Transplant Association (ERA-EDTA), involving a panel of rheumatologists, nephrologists, renal pathologists and paediatricians. Since then, new evidence has emerged, which includes the use of calcineurin inhibitors and “multitarget” therapy, disease monitoring and treatment targets. The task force therefore sought to update the recommendations for the management of LN; the recommendations have been published in the EULAR Journal, *The Annals of Rheumatic Diseases*.

The recommendations intend to inform rheumatologists, nephrologists, patients, national professional societies, hospital officials, social security agencies and regulators about the treatment of LN based on most recent evidence, in order to ensure optimal outcomes with existing therapies. Based on evidence from a systematic literature review and expert opinion, a EULAR multidisciplinary task force formulated four overarching principles and ten recommendations.

The four overarching principles are:

- Kidney involvement in SLE has high costs for healthcare systems and society and is best managed by interdisciplinary care with shared patient-physician decisions.
- Vigilance for symptoms and signs suggestive of kidney involvement, histological assessment by nephropathologists and input from specialised centres ensure optimal outcomes.
- Goals of treatment include patient survival, long-term preservation of kidney function, prevention of disease flares and organ damage, management of comorbidities and improving quality of life.
- Management of active phases of lupus nephritis includes an initial period of intense immunosuppressive therapy to control disease activity, followed by a longer period of usually less intensive therapy to consolidate response and prevent relapses.

The 10 recommendations give practical guidance for key points along the patient journey and cover the following aspects of lupus nephritis:

- Investigation of the patient with suspected lupus nephritis
- Pathological assessment of kidney biopsy
- Indications for immunosuppressive treatment
- Treatment of adult lupus nephritis
- Monitoring and prognosis of lupus nephritis

- Management of end-stage kidney disease in lupus nephritis
- Antiphospholipid syndrome and lupus nephritis
- Lupus nephritis and pregnancy
- Management of paediatric patients.

Despite improved prognosis over the last decades, LN poses therapeutic challenges and is linked to increased morbidity, mortality and healthcare costs. The nature of the disease (involvement of the kidneys in the context of a systemic autoimmune disease) mandates a multidisciplinary approach by rheumatologists and nephrologists, following histologic confirmation and assessment of LN by a nephropathologist. In this regard, management or periodic evaluation of these patients in centres with expertise is recommended. Decisions shared between patients and physicians are key to optimal outcomes; such decision-making requires that the patient is adequately informed about the nature and natural course of the disease and the therapeutic options.

Citation

Fanouriakis A, Kostopoulou M, Cheema K, *et al*

2019 Update of the Joint European League Against Rheumatism and European Renal Association–European Dialysis and Transplant Association (EULAR/ERA–EDTA) recommendations for the management of lupus nephritis, *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases* Published Online First: 27 March 2020. doi: 10.1136/annrhumdis-2020-216924

About EULAR

The European League against Rheumatism (EULAR) is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

About *The Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases* (ARD)

ARD is the EULAR Journal and the highest ranking rheumatology journal for original research, publishing research from clinical, translational and basic sciences related to rheumatological diseases as well as recommendations and points to consider for various diseases.

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