

Review of: "Tocilizumab Plus Corticosteroid in Elderly Patients Hospitalized With COVID-19 Pneumonia: A Retrospective Cohort Study"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This Article Supports the Importance of Randomized Control Studies

Although efforts can be made to compare supposedly equivalent groups in small studies, all things may not always be equal. Clinical decision making based on individual case features always enters as a critical bias. Clearly the tocilizumab and steroid groups may have had different features influencing the decisions made on whether to use both agents or corticosteroids alone. For example, it is clear that the steroid only group tended to receive remdesivir while the tocilizumab group was receiving HCQ and azithromycin, although the comparison numbers are not provided. Certainly one question which must be asked is whether the patients were treated during the same period of time and which SARS-Cov-2 variants predominated. Propensity scoring and emulated randomization may be useful to reduce bias in very large studies of digitally acquired data, but, in a small study such as this, clinical acumen matters.