

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.

Tocilizumab Plus Corticosteroid in Elderly Patients Hospitalized with COVID-19 Pneumonia: A Retrospective Cohort Study

The objective of the study was to evaluate the utility of tocilizumab 400 mg with steroids compared to steroids alone for the treatment of severe COVID-19 pneumonia in the elderly.

It addresses the controversy of the usefulness of IL-6 receptor blockade for the treatment of severe COVID-19 pneumonia in the elderly. It is also relevant that the historical moment before COVID-19 vaccines and with aggressive SARS-CoV-2 strains was considered.

Being a retrospective cohort study, the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the sample size of both groups, and the statistical analysis are adequate.

The results are clear and easy to understand, and the tables are well interpreted.

The distribution of the different variables between the groups was homogeneous; however, as stated in the limitations, it is likely that the control group could have benefited from the higher frequency of use of remdesivir.

Regarding the discussion, its content and development is adequate, compares its relevant results with other studies, and establishes the limitations and strengths in a conservative manner.

As the only observation in the discussion: it could probably contribute to improve the analysis of the results to consider the immune response of the elderly; that is, "inflammaging" as a possible explanation for the increase in mortality due to the use of this biologic. In any case, the information used may be sufficient.

In conclusion, mortality occurred more frequently in patients who received tocilizumab plus corticosteroids and there was no difference in the need for mechanical assistance between the two groups.

I consider that the article is well balanced in all its contents.

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