

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.

The author determined whether adding tocilizumab to corticosteroids decreases the incidence of mechanical ventilation in older patients compared to corticosteroids alone. The secondary objectives were to assess the mortality and improvements in respiratory status. Of 1,651 patients screened, 355 met the inclusion criteria (176 treated patients and 179 patients in the comparison group). However, the incidence of being placed on a ventilator within 28 days was 20% and 11% (OR=2.0; $p=0.016$) for the treatment and the comparison groups, respectively. Patients in the treatment group had 2.4 times the odds of dying ($p<0.001$). Patients in the treatment group had 0.9 times the odds of improvement in respiratory status ($p=.628$). The results of this paper contradict the results of many RCTs. Tocilizumab therapy requires testing of patients' serum IL-6 levels to guide medication. This study excluded confounding factors when screening patients for inclusion in the treatment and control groups using a propensity score. Therefore, the results of this paper need to be treated with caution.