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Online home monitoring of symptoms in patients with sarcoidosis using visual analogue scales: an analysis of the PREDMETH trial

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Introduction

In the recent PREDMETH trial in patients with pulmonary sarcoidosis, we found that methotrexate (MTX) was non-inferior to prednisone for lung function and health status, with fewer ongoing side effects for MTX after 24 weeks. To gain more granular insights in symptom trajectories, patients completed weekly visual analogue scales (VAS).

Aims

To assess change in symptoms and determine time to maximum improvement after start of prednisone and MTX

Methods

Patients completed weekly VAS on cough (VASC), dyspnea (VASD), fatigue (VASF) and general wellbeing (VASG) using an online app. Adherence was monitored. We analyzed changes over time and time to maximum improvement using non-linear mixed models (SAEmix).

Results

69 participants in the prednisone group and 67 in the MTX group completed VAS. Mean age was 47 years (SD12); 73.5% was male. Mean adherence for weekly VAS over 24 weeks was 77.8% (SD25.6). All VAS scores significantly improved in patients on MTX, with maximum improvement in VAS scores estimated to be reached between day 135-213 (range 90-275) for different symptoms. VASD, VASC, and VASG did not change over time in the prednisone group, whereas VASF significantly improved with a plateau already after 5 days (figure 1).

Conclusions

Symptoms significantly improved over time after start of methotrexate, whereas only fatigue improved in patients on prednisone. Weekly completion of online VAS is feasible and yields detailed insights in symptom trajectories and time to improvement after start of treatment.

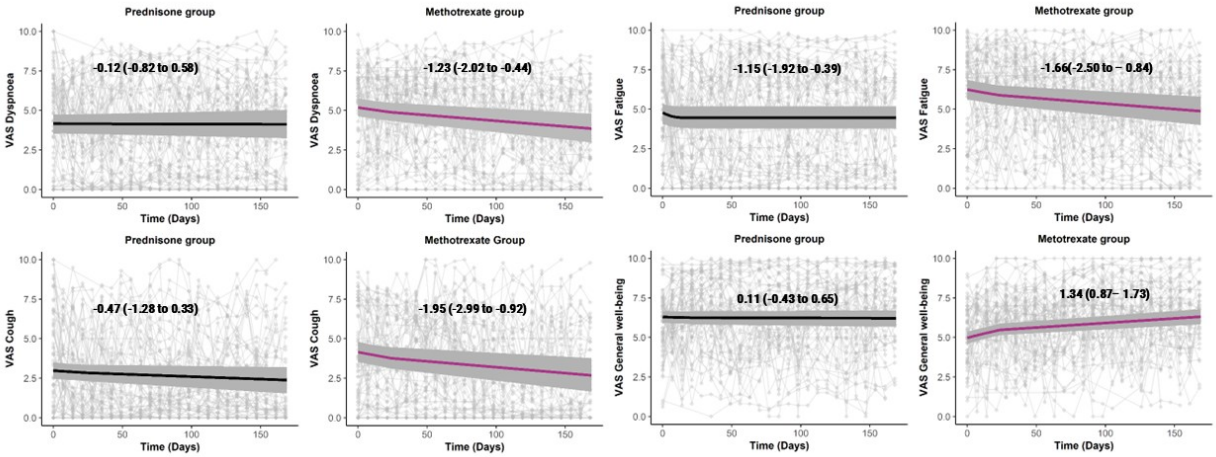

Figure 1. *Weekly visual analogue scale measurements over 24 weeks. The grey diamond shapes and lines in the background represent the actual VAS values and trajectories of the individual subjects For VASD, VASF and VASC higher scores indicates worse symptoms; for VASG a higher score indicates a better general wellbeing*