

Press release

21.09.2017

Page 1 / 4

Medac Finland – 10-years anniversary symposium

Enhancing the potential of methotrexate

Optimise rheumatism treatment in Finland with Metoject[®] PEN¹ and ensure long-term success of therapy

Helsinki / Wedel (September 21, 2017). There is room for improvement in drug treatment of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) with the gold standard methotrexate (MTX). Current analyses of the FIN-ERA cohort suggest that Finnish rheumatology exploits the potential of methotrexate as initial treatment² and follows the European treatment guidelines in a slightly adopted way focusing on combination therapy^{3,4}: “At baseline, 68 % used methotrexate-based combination therapy, and 31 % used triple therapy with methotrexate, hydroxychloroquine, and sulphasalazine (the Fin-RACo regimen)”⁵.

Current real life data from a German health insurance, however, paint a dramatically different picture nationwide. Given that csDMARDS account for 35 % of drug treatment, Germany for

¹ Equivalent to Metex[®] PEN, Metex.

² Rannio T et al. Three out of four disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug-naïve rheumatoid arthritis patients meet 28-joint Disease Activity Score remission at 12 months: results from the FIN-ERA cohort. *Scand J Rheumatol.* 2017 Apr 3:1-7. [Epub ahead of print].

³ Smolen JS et al. EULAR recommendations for the management of rheumatoid arthritis with synthetic and biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs: 2016 update. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2017;76:960-77.

⁴ Piriälä L et al. Alternative interpretation of data for recommendations on how to manage rheumatoid arthritis. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2017 Apr 27. [Epub ahead of print].

⁵ Rannio T et al. Three out of four disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug-naïve rheumatoid arthritis patients meet 28-joint Disease Activity Score remission at 12 months: results from the FIN-ERA cohort. *Scand J Rheumatol.* 2017 Apr 3:1-7. [Epub ahead of print].

Press release

21.09.2017

Page 2 / 4

example is some way from appropriate therapeutic treatment of patients with rheumatoid arthritis.⁶

Optimised initial treatment – is the potential of methotrexate exploited to the full?⁷

Data show that higher-dose and subcutaneous administration of MTX in the initial treatment of early RA are associated with improved therapy response and fewer therapy failures.^{8,9} Particularly at dosages ≥ 15 mg/week, pre-filled syringes or pre-filled auto-injectors improve bioavailability.^{10,11} Lifestyle factors such as smoking, obesity and poor dental health not only worsen the course of RA but also influence the therapy response and should therefore be discussed with patients.

Subcutaneous administration of methotrexate with the pre-filled pen

Moreover, use and treatment adherence are encouraged by easier self-administration provided by the auto-injector Metoject[®] PEN.^{12,13,14} Documentation of current practice by Medac

⁶ Albrecht K et al. Ambulante Versorgung und Krankheitslast der rheumatoiden Arthritis. Eine Analyse von Abrechnungsdaten und einer Versichertenbefragung. Z Rheumatol. 2017 Mar 21. [Epub ahead of print].

⁷ Medac 10-years anniversary symposium “Optimal methotrexate treatment – perspectives from Denmark and United Kingdom“, Helsinki, September 13 2017.

⁸ Hazlewood GS et al. The comparative effectiveness of oral versus subcutaneous methotrexate for the treatment of early rheumatoid arthritis. Ann Rheum Dis 2016;75:1003-8.

⁹ O'Connor A et al. The rapid kinetics of optimal treatment with subcutaneous methotrexate in early inflammatory arthritis: an observational study. BMC Musculoskelet Disord. 2016;17:364.

¹⁰ Schiff MH et al. Head-to-head, randomised, crossover study of oral versus subcutaneous methotrexate in patients with rheumatoid arthritis: drug-exposure limitations of oral methotrexate at doses ≥ 15 mg may be overcome with subcutaneous administration. Ann Rheum Dis. 2014;73:1549-51.

¹¹ Pichlmeier U, Heuer KU. Subcutaneous administration of methotrexate with a prefilled autoinjector pen results in a higher relative bioavailability compared with oral administration of methotrexate. Clin Exp Rheumatol. 2014;32:563-71.

¹² Demary W et al. Subcutaneously administered methotrexate for rheumatoid arthritis, by prefilled syringes versus prefilled pens: patient preference and comparison of the self-injection experience. Patient Prefer Adherence. 2014;8:1061-71.

Press release

21.09.2017

Page 3 / 4

among German rheumatologists and rheumatoid arthritis patients confirms the high estimation that is known from studies to date. “97 % percent of all doctors and 89 % of patients with previous experience with pre-filled syringes rate the [...] PEN as “very beneficial” or “beneficial” compared to a pre-filled syringe.”¹⁵ The methotrexate auto-injector Metoject® PEN “is currently the only commercially available preparation to fully comply with the EU directive” 2010/32/EU - prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector.¹⁶

Thereby right from the start, the methotrexate auto-injectors from Medac make easy and comfortable subcutaneous self-administration of MTX possible in daily clinical practice and are rated by both doctor and patient as beneficial compared to the pre-filled syringe.

2,663 characters (including spaces)

¹³ Pachon JA et al. Assessing usability, label comprehension, pen robustness and pharmacokinetics of a self-administered prefilled autoinjector pen of methotrexate in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. SAGE Open Med. 2014;2:2050312114564241.

¹⁴ Freundlich B et al. Nearly pain-free self-administration of subcutaneous methotrexate with an autoinjector: results of a phase 2 clinical trial in patients with rheumatoid arthritis who have functional limitations. J Clin Rheumatol. 2014;20:256-60.

¹⁵ Hattesoehl M. et al. Handhabung eines Fertigpen zur subkutanen Selbstoppliation von Methotrexat. DGRh Abstract 2017. URL: <http://www.egms.de/static/de/meetings/dgrh2017/17dgrh244.shtml> (as at: 06.09.2017).

¹⁶ Royal College of Nursing, Administering subcutaneous methotrexate for inflammatory arthritis, London 2016.

Press release

21.09.2017

Page 4 / 4

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medac is a privately held German pharmaceutical company located near Hamburg in Wedel and Tornesch. Medicinal products from medac support doctors and patients throughout the world in overcoming their acute and persistent diseases in the indication areas of oncology & haematology, urology and autoimmune disorders. In addition, medac develops and markets special diagnostic test systems. Since 1970, medac has been committed to unifying therapeutic and diagnostic agents under one roof.

You can find further information on the company and its products on the internet under www.medac.de.