

LORA or Late-Onset Rheumatoid Arthritis: Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Elderly

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Please cite this article as: Ben Hamad M et al. LORA or Late-Onset Rheumatoid Arthritis: Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Elderly. Middle East Journal of Age and Ageing. 15(3):74. DOI: 10.5742MEJAA.2018.93558

ABSTRACT

Introduction: LORA or late-onset rheumatoid arthritis is a particular form of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) defined as a RA that started after the age of 65 years. It is a condition that is far from rare but often overlooked face to inflammatory joint complaints beginning after the age of 60. This form is characterized by a clinic often misleading explaining the diagnosis delay.

Case report: A 62-year-old patient with diabetes had a bilateral symmetrical distal polyarthritis predominant on MCP and PIP articulations with a notion of morning stiffness lasting more than 30 minutes. We noted several episodes of synovitis of both wrists, PIPs and PCMs on both sides during the previous year. Examination found ankylosis with limitation of lateral inclinations and pronosupination of both wrists. The small joints of the hands (PIP and MCP) are painful but not swollen nor inflammatory (no synovitis or evolutionary arthritis). No clinical signs have been noted for extra-articular manifestations of chronic rheumatism.

The biological assessment revealed a net inflammatory syndrome with ESR at 66mm/H1, CRP at 46.7mg/l, and microcytic anemia at 10.9g/dl testifying to the chronicity of the inflammatory process. X-ray of both hands showed specific signs of RA. Rheumatoid factor and anti-CCP antibodies were positive. Thus, the diagnosis of RA was retained according to the new criteria for RA (ACR/EULAR 2010). With prednisone (10mg/d) and methotrexate (15mg/week), the clinical and biological response was satisfactory.

Conclusion: the overall prevalence of RA in the elderly is estimated at 2%; it is twice that of RA, which begins before the age of 60. Late-onset forms of RA are characterized by a lower female predominance, an acute onset in 40%, frequent involvement of large joints, general signs, and a more marked biological inflammatory syndrome. The diagnosis must be evoked in principle before any inflammatory arthritis of the elderly.