EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS AND SAFETY OF SWITCHING FROM INTRAVENOUS TO SUBCUTANEOUS TOCILIZUMAB

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BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE
During the COVID-19 pandemic, a strategies implemented to minimize patient visits to health centres was switching the administration of tocilizumab (TCZ) from intravenous (IV) to subcutaneous (SC).

AIM AND OBJECTIVES
To evaluate the effectiveness and safety of switching from IV to SC TCZ.

MATERIAL AND METHODS
Retrospective observational study conducted in a tertiary hospital including patients receiving active treatment of IV TCZ during March-April 2020. The follow-up period was one year. Data was collected on the following variables:
- Age
- Sex
- Pathology
- Switching to SC TCZ
- Switching back to IV administration
- Physician assessment or patient self-assessment

RESULTS
45 patients were included
Median age of 54 years
Women represented 85%

Prescribing physicians
- 63% rheumatologists
- 24% internists
- 13% paediatricians

Diagnostics
- 49% rheumatoid arthritis
- 18% juvenile idiopathic arthritis
- 16% Graves disease
- 13% lupus
- 2% spondylarthritis
- 2% other diagnoses

71% 32 patients switched to TCZ SC
34.4% 11 patients switched again to TCZ IV

- 86% of rheumatology
- 83% of paediatrics
- 27% of internal medicine
- 7 cases reported aggravations after switching
- 4 cases for undetermined reasons

4 patients reported improvement

CONCLUSION AND RELEVANCE
One fifth of the patients reported loss of effectiveness when changing from IV to SC form, and one third switched back to IV administration. Regarding safety, the toxicity profile of both forms was similar to other studies.