



# **ROLE OF CYCLOSPORINE A (CsA) IN MANAGEMENT OF INTERSTITIAL LUNG DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS (RA-ILD)**

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** Interstitial lung disease associated with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA-ILD) is due to pathology and complication of disease or due to prolonged use DMARDS or conventional drugs used for management of RA.

**Principle of results:** Cyclosporine A is an immunosuppressive drug which inhibits the t-cell activation and decrease the ILD related reaction with high efficacy and minimal adverse effects. So cyclosporine is considered for prophylactic and therapeutic management of RA-ILD treatment.

**Conclusion:** cyclosporine A is effective drug for treatment of intestinal lung disease and its complications. It is more effective with combination with methotrexate and corticosteroids than monotherapy which has been proven in various previous literatures. So the cyclosporine is choice of drug for effective treatment of intestinal lung disease associated with rheumatoid arthritis to prevent further complications like airway and pleural diseases, respiratory infections etc.

**New aspects in review ;** Compare to conventional drugs used in management of rheumatoid arthritis cyclosporine A is better choice for prevention of complications like ILD, other lung infections and other systemic illness. It has major role in suppression of inflammatory reaction in Interstitial lung disease associated with Rheumatoid Arthritis. Upon combination its has higher efficacy rate than monotherapy .it has better therapeutic range and low risk profile but on over usage it lead to nephrotoxicity

## **KEYWORDS:**

“Rheumatoid arthritis” , “interstitial lung disease” , “cyclosporine A”, “methotrexate”, “corticosteroids”, conventional DMARDS” ‘

## **Introduction:**

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic autoimmune inflammatory illness characterized by polyarthritis of small and large joints which in the course of time may progress to disability <sup>[1, 2]</sup>. Due to its pathogenesis, this condition affects internal organs, particularly heart, lungs, kidneys, blood vessels, brain, and therefore is regarded as a systemic illness <sup>[3]</sup>. It is characterized by symmetrical erosive synovitis and progressive disability, often complicated by extra-articular manifestations. Among them, lung involvement is common, and it can include a wide spectrum of disorders, ranging from airways and pleural disease, bronchiectasis, and nodules, to infection and drug toxicity <sup>[4, 5, 6]</sup>. The cause of RA is not fully understood but it is multi factorial. It is considered as autoimmune disease. It can occur due to environmental influence like bacteria , virus or genetic markers such as DR4 ( HLA-DR4 ) associated with triggering the inflammatory process or TNF -ALPHA ,IL-1, IL-6 and growth factors propagate inflammatory process or inflamed synovium <sup>[7]</sup>. RA is characterised by morning stiffness, malaise, anorexia, accompanied by symmetrical tender and swollen joints. Pain in joints is common and aggravated by movement.

Current rheumatoid arthritis management emphasizes the benefits of early disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs). These agents are characterized by the ability to reduce or reverse the signs and symptoms, disability and improve quality. The medication like NSAIDs, corticosteroids, hydroxychloroquine is used in the management of RA. In long-term corticosteroid-treated patients, there is a tendency for severe extra pulmonary and miliary tuberculosis <sup>[8]</sup>.

Interstitial lung diseases (ILDs) are a group of diseases that affect the lung parenchyma tissue causing irreversible damage through fibrosis and chronic inflammation, depriving gas exchange in affected individuals <sup>[9]</sup>. The effects in ILDs are observed largely in the lung interstitium and differentiating them from one another is challenging as they often share comparable physiological, clinical and radiological features <sup>[10]</sup>. Their known aetiology of ILDs includes those that may have genetic predisposition which includes pulmonary manifestation of existent rheumatoid arthritis (RA) <sup>[11]</sup>. About 10% of the RA patients develop a clinically significant ILD that is responsible for 10–20% of mortality, with a mean survival of 5–8 years <sup>[12, 13, 14, 15, 16]</sup>. The role of immunosuppressants in usual interstitial pneumonia (UIP) in RA, shows a better response in ILD patterns different to UIP has been suggested by some retrospective studies <sup>[17, 18, 19, 20]</sup>. Cyclosporine plays an important role in management of interstitial lung diseases associated with rheumatoid arthritis shown in some research studies .

## **Actions of cyclosporine A:**

CsA inhibits T cell activation by interfering with calcium-dependent signalling events involved in lymphokine Gene transcription. Once it enters a cell, CsA binds to cyclophilin and this complex competitively inhibits the enzymatic activity of calcineurin, a serine/Threonine phosphatase required for the Dephosphorylation of nuclear factor for

Activated T cells (NF-AT) and activated Protein-1 (AP-1)<sup>[21]</sup>. This blockade Prevents NF-AT and AP-1 translocation into the nucleus and results in the failure to initiate the transcription of several T-cell cytokine genes, such as IL-2<sup>[22]</sup>, IL-3, IL-4, tumour necrosis Factor- $\alpha$  (TNF- $\alpha$ ), granulocyte-macrophage colony stimulating factor (GM-CSF), and interferon- $\gamma$  (IFN- $\gamma$ )<sup>[23,24]</sup>. The result is inhibition of T-cell activation and suppression of T-cell dependent immune responses. CsA also appears to have additional actions. More recently the role of CsA in attenuating fibrosis has been explored in animal models of IPF and they have been shown to exhibit their anti-fibrotic effect by degrading hypoxia inducible factor-1 $\alpha$ <sup>[25]</sup>. The dual action of CsA may thus be of an advantage to achieving considerable attenuation in the overall progression of the disease.

## **RESULTS:**

fig-1

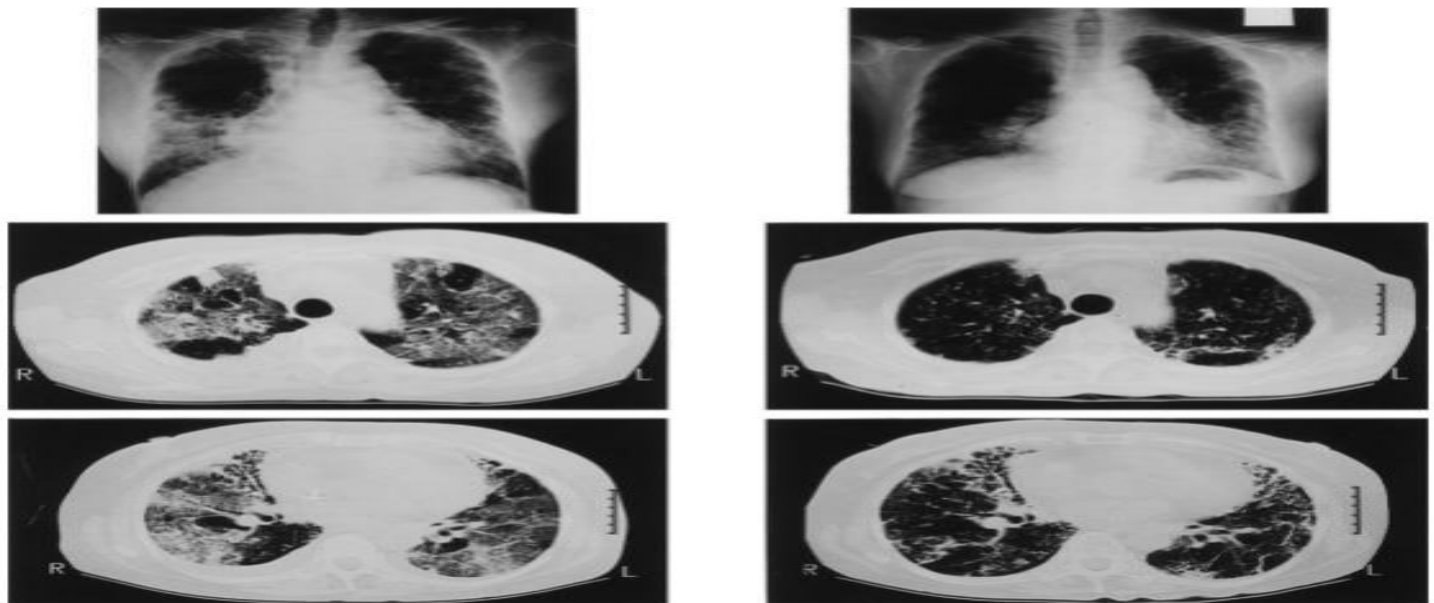


FIG. 1. Chest X-ray and CT before (left) and after (right) the initiation of combined CyA + prednisolone therapy. (Top left) Chest X-ray showing diffuse reticular infiltrates in both lung fields. (Lower two panels, left) Chest CT demonstrating bilateral patchy areas of ground-glass appearance in the outer and inner zones. Note the lack of honeycombing. (Top right) Chest X-ray showing remarkable improvement (compare with left side). (Lower two panels, right) The ground-glass appearance disappeared on chest CT 3 months after initiating the combination treatment. Note the presence of slight irregular pleural thickening but no obvious honeycombing.

## **Discussion:**

The intestinal lung disease associated with rheumatoid arthritis is characterised by slow and insipidus in progression up to 10 years. This form of acute lung intestinal disease is treated early with oral corticosteroids with high doses which leading to serious adverse effects in patients. But now this now is replaced by cyclosporine which shows better therapeutic effects than steroids which was used as conventional therapy<sup>[26, 27, 28]</sup>. The study further examines the role of immunosuppressive drugs such as cyclosporine in these specific patient population. Cyclosporine (CsA) was shown to be effective in these patients illustrated clearly by the significant decrease in physiological parameters such as %FVC, %DLCO and composite physiologic index, since the years of CsA initiation with the best outcomes observed in 2 years after dosage. The affectivity was especially enhanced in these patients who were also on low doses of prednisolone (PSL), demonstrating an anti-inflammatory additive effect of these drugs shows completely differential mechanisms, can attenuate the disease progression.



## **The benefits of cyclosporine**

CsA used for the treatment of RA in 1980, used after the observational study of a therapeutic effect in psoriatic patients. In RA patients, CsA was used as a “rescue therapy” in patients earlier who were non-responders to other common DMARDs and in monotherapy. The patients how had long-standing disease at entry with poor prognostic factors and several previous failed drugs, and CsA was administered at high doses (ranging between 5 & 10mg/Kg/day) [29, 30, 31] shows good therapeutic efficacy. In patients with early RA using lower doses of CsA demonstrated good control over clinical and radiologic progression [32, 33, 34, 35, 36]. When treating patients with cyclosporine (mean dose 3 mg/Kg/day) or other common DMARDs, CsA group showed a significant delay in erosion progression, with acceptable tolerability [37]. When analysis was performed on daily treatment basis shows slowing radiologic progression of joint damage with CsA and parenteral gold [38]. According to these clinical trial data, CsA monotherapy shows at least similar efficacy to the other conventional DMARDs. These findings led to the use of combination therapy in several clinical trials, with additive efficacy when cyclosporine [39] was combined with methotrexate (MTX), antimalarial agents or gold salts [40,41,42,43,44,45,46]. The efficacy of cyclosporine for the treatment of RA has been proven. Few reports suggest successful cyclosporine use in progressive ILD or acute interstitial pneumonitis in association with RA.

Spontaneous remission is extremely rare in progressive ILD associated with RA, the improvement of the lung disease was mostly considered to be the effect of cyclosporine. Cyclosporine has highly selective immunosuppressive properties. This agent appears to reduce interleukin-2 synthesis by activated T-cells and to disrupt cytokine dependent T lymphocyte-macrophage interaction, and thus prevents fibroblast mediated fibrosis that is thought to be important in the pathogenesis of ILD. It has been successfully used in patients with ILD related to inflammatory myositis [47], also when presenting as acute respiratory distress syndrome [48]. However, the use of calcineurin inhibitor is often limited by their side effects and their efficacy in RA-ILD remains undefined and needs more dedicated studies.

## **Conclusion**

The respiratory safety of RA therapy is an important element while choosing the best treatment for patients with RA with active joint disease and coexisting ILD. Cyclosporine is very useful in treatment of ILD-RA shows good efficacy and minimal side-effects and prevents further complications of RA. Compare to monotherapy with cyclosporine to combination therapy with methotrexate and other corticosteroids have greater efficacy and low risk profile. So the cyclosporine is choice of drug for effective treatment of intestinal lung disease associated with rheumatoid arthritis to prevent further complications like airway and pleural diseases, respiratory infections etc. Compare to conventional drugs used in management of rheumatoid arthritis cyclosporine A is better choice for prevention of complications like ILD, other lung infections and other systemic illness. It has major role in suppression of inflammatory reaction in interstitial lung disease associated with Rheumatoid Arthritis. Upon combination its has higher efficacy rate than monotherapy. It has better therapeutic range and low risk profile but on over usage it lead to nephrotoxicity and other serious adverse drug events.

## Annexure-1

### Abbreviations

RA- rheumatoid arthritis

ILD – Interstitial lung disease

RA-ILD- Interstitial lung disease associated with Rheumatoid Arthritis

CsA- cyclosporine A

MTX- methotrexate

Mg-milligram

Kg-kilogram

### Figure-1

[https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1JJTC\\_enIN938IN939&q=interstitial+lung+disease+associated+with+rheumatoid+arthritis&tbm=isch&source=lnms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj1lMnJqaqAAxUGGYgKHb5rDQsQ0pQJegQIDBAB&biw=1280&bih=772&dpr=1](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1JJTC_enIN938IN939&q=interstitial+lung+disease+associated+with+rheumatoid+arthritis&tbm=isch&source=lnms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj1lMnJqaqAAxUGGYgKHb5rDQsQ0pQJegQIDBAB&biw=1280&bih=772&dpr=1)

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