PITUITARY FUNCTION

Mitotane—safe and effective for Cushing disease?

Mitotane, an anticortisolic drug, is safe and effective in patients with Cushing disease, new data reveal.

Pituitary surgery has a high success rate for remission (60–85%) in patients with the disease; however, recurrence still occurs in 5–20% of patients. For patients who have recurrence after surgery and for those who do not respond to surgery, new, effective medical treatments are needed. “Anticortisolic drugs, such as ketoconazole, metyrapone and mitotane, are often used, but their safety and efficacy needs to be investigated,” says Jérôme Bertherat, the lead investigator.

The researchers conducted a single-centre, retrospective analysis of 76 patients treated with mitotane, from 219 patients diagnosed with Cushing disease between the years 1993–2009. They show that disease remission (defined as normalization of 24 h urinary free cortisol [UFC] levels) was achieved in

48 (72%) of 67 patients who were treated with mitotane for a median of 6 months. They note a negative linear relationship between plasma mitotane concentration and UFC levels and report that all patients with plasma mitotane levels ≥ 8.5 mg/l had normal 24 h-UFC levels during follow-up. Moreover, 29% of patients did not have recurrence after treatment was stopped.

“Mitotane could be well tolerated in most patients after dose adjustment,” comments Bertherat. “We now plan to analyze the correlation between plasma mitotane levels and treatment efficacy in a prospective study to provide a proper guideline for dose adjustment.”

Iley Ozerlat

Original article Baudry, C. *et al.* Efficiency and tolerance of mitotane in Cushing's disease in 76 patients from a single center. *Eur. J. Endocrinol.* doi:10.1530/EJE-12-0358