

Scientific Editor

The study describes the use of rituximab in juvenile systemic lupus erythematosus in ERA and LRA protocols, comparing their efficacy and clinical benefits for patients.

Dear Authors, Thank you very much for the opportunity to read such an interesting article. I think it represents a really good level.

Dear Editor!

Thank you very much for your kind evaluation of our manuscript.

Our answers (A) on your queries (Q) are below. All changes in the text have been highlighted with color.

The following are my suggestions for its improvement:

Q1. Title: In the title of the paper, I would add what type of scientific research it is, to provide greater clarification for potential readers.

A1. Dear Editor! The changes were done. The type of the research added to the title. The new one: Outcomes of a 12-month course of early and late rituximab BCD020 biosimilar administration in juvenile systemic lupus erythematosus: a retrospective study

Q2. Please use one abbreviation for juvenile systemic lupus erythematosus. Once time you use SLE and once other time you use jSLE.

A2. Dear Editor! Done. We remained SLE.

Q3. I recommend linguistic review of the article, especially for style in some sentences.

A3. Dear Editor! The language editing was done.

Q4. Please indicate in the "Methods" section at what time interval subjects were recruited. If possible, I would ask to know what percentage of the total number of patients of the Center were the subjects of the study. This would be very useful information, outlining the scale of the whole problem.

A4. Dear Editor! The time interval is 2012-2022. The whole database is 165 patients, the studied group is 21.2%. The information added in the manuscript.

Q5. I would recommend marking in tables the statistically significant results, for example, by adding the \* symbol next to a statistically significant p-value or highlighting in a different color/bold. In addition, after applying the above changes, please place an appropriate annotation in the legend below the tables.

A5. Dear Editor! The significant p-value marked by the bold.

Q6. In the Results section, please explain the exact meaning of the numbers in parentheses, whether it is IQR, median, or SD, for example (IQR: 0;9).

A6. Dear Editor! All numerical data are presented with medians (Me) and percentiles in parenthesis. We did not use means and standard deviations due to lack of normal distribution. The categorical data are presented with absolute number and parts/percentiles in the parenthesis. The information updated in the Methods and in the text and highlighted.

Q7. In the "Patients' characteristics on the onset" section, please put the data with percentages in the overhangs together with the p-value. This will make the text more readable and obvious to readers.

A7. Dear Editor! The required information added in this section

Q8. Please re-evaluate your manuscript for abbreviations. If you introduce an abbreviation with an explanation then please provide it consistently throughout the rest of the manuscript. If you are using it for the first time, please explain it thoroughly the first time you use it.

A8. Dear Editor! All abbreviations checked during the manuscript and whole list of the abbreviations in the alphabetical order added at the bottom of the text. All changes are highlighted.

Q9. Please add more recent papers in the references if possible. Less than half of them are from the last 5 years, I recommend searching for more recent literature. If this is not possible, due to the nature of the topic, please provide this information in your response to the Editor.

A9. Dear Editor! We have added several recent manuscript in the list and cited them in the discussion, but the data about rituximab in juvenile SLE is scarce, especially there were no data about comparison of early and late rituximab administration.

Q10. Please improve the description of Figure 3 to make it more readable. For example: ....(left part), .... (right part) or left part:..., right part:.... .

A10. Dear Editor! Done.

Q11. I think that adding a short section comparing the treatment of jSLE and SLE to the introduction section or discussion section would be really valuable, especially for clinicians who are not rheumatologists but are interested in the topic of the article. The above tips are only suggestions that will help improve the manuscript to make it more readable and accessible. I have no comments on the methodology, study design, or its implementation. I greatly appreciate the addition of the study limits, in this section I have nothing to add. The authors also noted how the described limits can be resolved, as a guide for future studies. Ethics and financing have been properly described. My recommendation is to accept the article after major corrections.

A11. Dear Editor! The comparison between pediatric and adult SLE added to the discussion section. The limitations section has expanded and added the recommendation how to decrease the bias in the future similar studies.

Dear Editor! Thank you so much for your time and efforts. The manuscript has become better and readable after your valuable suggestion.

On behalf of the Authors

Mikhail Kostik, MD, Ph.D., Professor