Reviewer's report

Title: Risk of infections in bronchiectasis during disease-modifying treatment and biologics for rheumatic diseases

Version: 2 Date: 13 April 2011

Reviewer: Hideo Kobayashi

Reviewer's report:

At first, the reviewer is a pulmonologist, not rheumatologist. Therefore the interest of concern was almost focused to the respiratory investigation.

Major comments

1. Explanations about types of bronchiectasis are insufficient. The concept of bronchiectasis is not the homogeneous disease that image finding, respiratory symptom and prognosis are uniform.

HRCT findings of 47 cases of BE were inadequately described. The authors solely described that 13 cases were diffuse bronchiectasis. How about 34 cases? The risk of superimposed infection would be influenced by the degree anatomical destruction.

2. The quality of bacteriological study for sputum is questionable. Some pathogens frequently colonized in sputum, i.e. M. cattharalis, H. parainfluenzae, E. coli, haemolytic streptococcus, were not present in this study.

How was Gram staining examination, cellular composition classification by Geckler? It is too small that just five samples of sputum have bacterial colonization in first period.

3. Were there any pre-treatment for bronchiectasis? Was the pre-treatment to bronchiectasis unnecessary?

4. How the drugs for rheumatic disease were selected? Were there any intentional selections for the administration of biologic agents?

5. 90% of subjects are RA. If the subjects were restricted in pure RA cases, the reliability of conclusion would be more purified. The reviewer recommends to purify the subject.

6. The severity of respiratory infection during treatment is not documented. Were there any cases to be needed hospitalization for infection control? How was the treatment content to respiratory infection?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.