Author’s response to reviews

Title: Characterization of Pseudomonas aeruginosa isolates in severe Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: the role of bronchiectasis

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Dear Editor,

Please find attached our study “Characterization of Pseudomonas aeruginosa isolates in severe Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: the role of bronchiectasis” for consideration and possible publication in your Journal. The final version has been approved by all the co-authors. This study was conducted in our hospital in a cohort of 118 severe COPD patients during a three-year period, and the data were prospectively recorded during follow-up.

Characterization of P. aeruginosa isolates by pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) was carried out in the Microbiology Department of the Hospital Clínic after completion of the clinical study, and the microbiologist was blinded to clinical data. Our study demonstrates that the risk of P. aeruginosa isolation is closely related to the extent of bronchiectasis and the number of antibiotics courses administered, and that over 10% of patients become chronically colonized/infected. In this subset of patients, PFGE demonstrated a clonal persistence similar to that reported in cystic fibrosis. What is more, in these patients we found no relationship between chronic colonization/infection and the presence of bronchiectasis. This finding has not been reported previously.

We believe that these data have clinical implications for the management of severe COPD patients at risk of chronic colonization/infection by P. aeruginosa, a situation which requires an approach similar to that applied in cystic fibrosis.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you at your convenience.

Miguel Gallego, MD, on behalf of the authors
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