Reviewer’s report

Title: Efficacy of subcutaneous tocilizumab in patients with rheumatoid arthritis and systemic sclerosis overlap syndrome: A report of two cases and review of the literature

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Reviewer: Patrick Verschueren

Reviewer's report:

In this article the authors present two interesting case reports and a review of the literature regarding the use of tocilizumab for RA and systemic sclerosis overlap syndrome.

Major remarks:

Both cases had already longstanding RA which seemed well controlled before they developed symptoms of systemic sclerosis. To what extent was the clinical presentation still related to RA?

Would it be possible to provide insight in the X-rays of the patients developing systemic sclerosis? Were there erosions which could be considered typical for RA (Larsen score 3+) ? Also some clinical pictures of the hands and the skin, before and after treatment would have been nice.

I would add in table 1 information on disease duration of RA and systemic sclerosis at the moment of tocilizumab treatment initiation.

Minor remarks:

The age of the patients at the different crucial moments in their history is somewhat unclear from the text. Can I assume that patient 1 was 74 in 2003 and thus 86 when she developed "scleredema"? Similarly, patient 2 underwent an arthroplasty at the age of 65, but it I'm not sure at what age she developed systemic sclerosis and was treated with tocilizumab. As a matter of fact the whole history of patient 2 is presented somewhat confusingly. This should be clarified, by presenting the history chronologically and step by step, mentioning timing.

On several occasions the authors use the word "sclerema". Can I assume they mean "scleredema"? Perhaps it would be a good idea to describe in more detail what is meant with this?

Page 8, Line 15: "TCZ is a recognized medication for arthritis." I suppose the authors are talking about RA here, but do not understand why they mention this at this particular place in the text.
Page 8, Line 15: "Since the stage of her skin thickening..." Are the authors talking about one of their cases here, or about a patient in another study?

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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