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Safety and efficacy of VIT to the wasp in ultra-rush protocols in patients over 60

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Introduction

Allergen immunotherapy remains a widely recognized and widely used method of treatment of selected allergic diseases. Presently, according to the guidelines of EAACI (European Academy Of Allergy and Clinical Immunology), venom immunotherapy (VIT) may be considered in older patients. Still, no separate studies confirm this therapy's efficacy and safety. The study aimed to evaluate the short-term effectiveness of VIT against wasp allergen in the ultra-rush protocol for older patients compared to young.

Material and methods

Among 113 patients included in the study, 51 were over 60 (group A), and 62 formed the control "young group" (age range:18-35). All patients were desensitized to wasp venom using the ultra-rush protocol according to Muller and aqueous solutions of vaccines containing wasp venom. Basophil activation test (Basotest, Orpegen Pharma, Germany) and intracutaneous tests with dilutions of wasp allergen and specific IgE to extract wasp venom were performed at the start and after six months of VIT. The safety of VIT was assessed on the basis of the international Mueller scale.

Results

One hundred eleven patients with confirmed wasp allergy finally finished six months of VIT: 51 participants over 60 (group A) and 60 young people (group B). No systemic adverse reactions were observed during the VIT induction phase. However, large local reactions were noted in 17% of older and 20% of young patients on a similar level ($p>0.05$). During maintenance VIT, two mild grade I systemic reactions were confirmed in young patients. These

symptoms resolved spontaneously. There were no such reactions in older patients. The effectiveness of VIT was tested using BAT. There was a statistically significant reduction in CD63 reactivity in 86% of patients in group A and a comparable and substantial decrease in 84% of young patients in group B. In the BAT test, the mean reductions in the area under the curve (AUC) after six months of VIT were significant and comparable between groups A and B: - 6.52 vs 7.21 for $p<0.05$.

Conclusions

VIT to wasp venom is safe and effective in short-term observation and is comparable to young patients.