

ELEVATED INFLAMMATORY MARKERS IN SCHIZOPHRENIA PATIENTS

S.K. Agarwal

Agarwal Health Center, East Orange, NJ, USA

Introduction: Infection and the resultant immune response may play a role in the pathogenesis of schizophrenia. Higher levels of inflammation appear to be associated with worse psychotic symptoms in these patients. Further anti-inflammatory agents such as cyclooxygenase-2 inhibitors have been shown to improve symptoms in this population. CRP and ESR are two simple, cheap and readily available measurements that reliably reflect inflammation.

Objectives: To evaluate if inflammation is common in schizophrenia patients.

Aims: To establish that acute phase inflammatory marker CRP and chronic phase inflammatory marker ESR are elevated in the schizophrenia patients.

Methods: We retrospectively reviewed the laboratory results of all schizophrenia patients seen in our office during a period of one year. These visits were for routine yearly physical. All patients were diagnosed and being treated for schizophrenia by psychiatrists. CRP was considered indicative of inflammation if it measured between 1 and 10 while ESR was considered abnormal if it was more than 20.

Results: Of a total of 60 patients (47 men; 13 women; ages 22-54): CRP elevated in 30 of 60 (50%): men 22 (47%) out of 47; females 8 out of 13 (61%). ESR elevated in 21(40%) out of 52: men 15 (37%) out of 41: females 6 (55%) out of 11.

Conclusion: Patients with schizophrenia appear to have high rates of inflammation. This may partly explain the increased premature morbidity and mortality seen in these patients. The therapeutic use of aspirin or other anti-inflammatory drugs in this population needs to be explored.