

Severe Sight-Threatening Orbitopathy Is a Very Rare Event in the Natural History of Graves' Disease

the overwhelming majority of these patients (i.e., 81%) will never have GO; in only one patient did the orbitopathy evolve into severe sight-threatening disease. In addition, in 58 patients with mild initial GO, all signs of eye disease disappeared during the 18

months of observation. Therefore, in Graves' disease with minimal or no GO, the risk of evolution toward moderate to severe GO during methimazole therapy is minimal.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY ● ● ● ● ●

These results are reassuring and corroborate the personal experience of most endocrinologists. The cohort of patients studied here initially included 70 individuals with mild GO. These patients need special follow-up since the eyes signs became worse during the treatment in 5 of them. These 5 patients represent, however, 25% of the 20 patients in whom mild GO was still present at the end of treatment.

Since we lack reliable prognostic parameters for identifying cases of GO that may progress independently of hyperthyroidism, careful monitoring is indicated (2). Unfortunately, GO can appear many years after Graves' hyperthyroidism has been cured. Also, there is ongoing debate concerning whether ¹³¹I treatment (with or without glucocorticoids) is associated with a worsening prognosis of GO. This problem is not discussed in the article.

References

1. Bartalena L, Baldeschi L, Dickinson A, Eckstein A, Kendall-Taylor P, Marcocci C, Mourits M, Perros P, Boboridis K, Boschi A, et al. Consensus statement of the European Group on Graves' Orbitopathy (EUGOGO) on management of GO. *Eur J Endocrinol* 2008;158:273-85.
2. Bartalena L, Tanda ML. Graves' ophthalmopathy. *N Engl J Med* 2009;360:994-1001.



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