

Question 14 – Week of November 5

A 75 year old male with rheumatoid arthritis, history of hepatitis A, systolic heart failure requiring two hospitalization in the past year and his daily activities are limited due to shortness of breath is referred for newly diagnosed ulcerative colitis after having a history of chronic diarrhea for 9 months. He is on high dose mesalamine therapy and the referring physician would like to know if he is a candidate for infliximab. Which of the following is a contraindication to anti-TNF inhibitor in this patient?

- A. Age
- B. Hepatitis A
- C. Congestive heart failure
- D. Rheumatoid arthritis

Answer: C

Exacerbation of severe congestive heart failure (NYHA (New York Heart Association) class III–IV) appears to be a class effect of anti-TNF agents and advanced cardiac failure constitutes a contraindication to treatment. Data from a retrospective analysis of elderly (>65years) patients with rheumatoid arthritis suggested an increased risk of hospital admission for heart failure and risk of death in patients treated with anti-TNF agents, compared with methotrexate (hazard ratio: 4.2, 95 CI: 1.5–11.9)

Reference:

Setoguchi S, Schneeweiss S, Avorn J *et al.* Tumor necrosis factor-alpha antagonist use and heart failure in elderly patients with rheumatoid arthritis. *Am Heart J* 2008;**156**:336–341