# BEHÇET'S DISEASE IN THE ELDERLY

M.BENZAKOUR; K.ENNEKHALI; M.MOUDATIR;K.ECHCHILALI;H.EL KABLI

IBN ROCHD UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, CASABLANCA

## INTRODUCTION

Behçet's disease (BD) is a vasculitis of unknown etiology and pathogenesis, characterized by relapses and primarily affecting the eyes, central nervous system, joints, and vessels. BD typically affects patients aged 20 to 40 years, with a male predominance. It is considered rare beyond the age of 65.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A retrospective descriptive study conducted in the internal medicine department of Casablanca University Hospital over 18 years (January 2006 - December 2023). All included patients were 65 years or older at the time of diagnosis. Diagnosis was established based on ISGBD and ACR 2007 criteria, after excluding differential diagnoses.

## AIM OF THE STUDY

- To highlight the rarity of BD in the elderly.
- To specify the main clinical manifestations of this disease in the elderly and therapeutic responses.
- To assess the impact of BD on the nutritional status of the elderly.

## RESULTS

Four elderly patients out of a total of 563 patients were identified, accounting for 0.71% of all cases.

Among them were 3 men and 1 woman.

The mean age at onset of clinical signs was 58.75 years (range 47 to 66 years).

Only one patient developed clinical symptoms after the age of 65; for others, the disease manifested at a younger age.

Common comorbidities included hypertension in 3 out of 4 patients and diabetes in 1 out of 4.

Oral aphthosis was the initial manifestation in all patients, followed by genital aphthosis in 50% of cases.

Ocular involvement was the most frequent presenting manifestation (75%), predominantly bilateral intermediate uveitis.

Necrotizing pseudo-folliculitis was found in 25% of cases, as well as asymmetric oligoarthritis of the lower limbs (negative ANA, negative rheumatoid factor).

None of the patients presented with erythema nodosum, vascular signs, neurological symptoms, or others.

Skin hypersensitivity testing was negative in all patients.

Laboratory findings showed normal CBC, platelets, absence of inflammatory syndrome, normal ESR, normal vitamin B9 and B12 levels, negative syphilitic, HIV, and herpetic serologies.

HLA-B51 antigen testing was performed only in one patient, yielding a positive result.

All patients were malnourished with an average albumin level of 30 g/L.

Therapeutically, all patients received colchicine treatment. Patients with ocular involvement were treated with corticosteroids/immunosuppressants in addition to local aphthous treatment.

Dietary enrichment, meal fractionation, and oral nutritional supplements were recommended for all patients.

All patients showed favorable outcomes under treatment.

## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

Behçet's disease is rare in the elderly; however, its occurrence in this age group remains possible and should be considered after excluding differential diagnoses.

Treatment of Behçet's disease leads to a good clinical outcome and helps prevent and/or correct malnutrition caused or exacerbated by oral aphthosis.

Malnutrition is one of the geriatric syndromes, correction of which helps avoid infectious risks, pressure ulcers, increased medication toxicity, etc.