Biologics in autoimmune diseases

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Aims & Scope:
Autoimmune diseases are a large group of diseases occur due to uncontrolled abnormal immune responses. The common autoimmune diseases seen in clinical practice are rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, ankylosing spondylitis, psoriatic arthritis, sjogren's syndrome, vasculitis, idiopathic inflammatory myopathies and systemic sclerosis. Biologic therapy as a new weapon in the war against autoimmune diseases is rapidly expanding owning to their specificity, efficacy and safety profiles compared with the traditional non-biologic disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs). The major targets of these biologic therapies include cytokines, immune cells and some co-stimulation molecules. Cytokines as the targets of biologic therapies include the three classic inflammatory cytokines tumor necrosis factor (TNF)-α, interleukin (IL)-6 and IL-1. Immune cells targets include use of anti-CD20 antibodies to deplete B cells and B-cell activating factor (BAFF) modulation. Though these agents are useful in most patients, the adverse effects accompanied with biologic therapy such as infection and tumor incidence make it quite important to decide appropriately when and how to use these agents. Research in order to fine more candidate targets of biologic therapy in autoimmune disease is ongoing.

In order to facilitate the right use of biologic therapy as a useful and safe tool in treatment of autoimmune disease, this special issue aims to review the recent advances of biologic therapy in autoimmune disease, covering different strategies available in clinical use and potential targets for treatment of different diseases.

Keywords:
autoimmune diseases, biologics, biologic therapy

Subtopics:

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