2023 International Vasculitis Symposium
July 14-16, 2023

Experienced Patients: What’s New for You?

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Outline

• What is remission?

• How do we know remission was achieved?

• How do we monitor disease during remission?

• How do we monitor long term possible adverse effects from medications?

• Do we ever consider stopping therapy? If yes, how does that change monitoring?
“Am I in remission?”

- Absence of active disease ≠ absence of symptoms

- Combination of: clinical symptoms + lab tests + imaging tests

- Impacts therapy decisions: change in medication and/or dose
Monitoring is critical to keep disease in remission

• Symptoms
  • Communication with your physician
  • Regular follow up visits

• Signs: physical exam

• Laboratory tests: at regular intervals

• Imaging tests: when needed
At the same time, we monitor the effects of long-term therapies

- Symptoms and signs
- Laboratory tests
- Bone density test
- Vaccines prior to onset of therapy if possible
Can therapy ever be stopped

• Yes and No → does the diagnosis matter?

• Timing: depends on
  • Severity of disease
  • Prior damage caused by the disease
  • Presence of factors that may increase risk of relapse

• If therapy is stopped, monitoring may need to be done more often