

# Chloroquine May Alter CVD Risk in RA Patients

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BUDAPEST, HUNGARY — Chloroquine therapy for patients with rheumatoid arthritis may lower levels of antibodies to oxidized low-density lipoprotein, and thus reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, C.L.P. Manguiera, M.D., reported at the 4th International Congress on Autoimmunity.

Oxidized low-density lipoprotein (oxLDL)

induces antibody production and the inflammatory process. These antibodies (anti-oxLDL) are also considered risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

In a study of 66 rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients and 66 age-matched healthy controls, "we found an apparent association between the use of chloroquine and low levels of the antibodies to oxidized LDL," said Dr. Manguiera of Hospital das Clinicas da Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil.

The researchers evaluated the levels of anti-oxLDL in RA patients by two different assays developed by Dr. Manguiera's group and compared them with those of the control group.

RA patients were using methotrexate, prednisone, sulfasalazine, chloroquine, and leflunomide.









"We found higher levels of anti-oxLDL in rheumatoid patients compared with the control group," using both methods, Dr. Manguiera said. There was no statistical

correlation between anti-oxLDL levels and disease severity, which was assessed using the Modified Disease Activity Score system, the erythrocyte sedimentation rate, and C-reactive protein.

The 22 RA patients on chloroquine therapy had lower levels of anti-ox-LDL than did RA patients with no chloroquine use. In addition, the RA patients taking chloroquine had lower levels of anti-apolipoprotein B peptides than did those not taking the drug. ■

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Reference: 1. Guidelines for the management of rheumatoid arthritis: 2002 update. *Arthritis Rheum.* 2002;46:328-346.

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