

PREVALENCE OF HTLV-ASSOCIATED UVEITIS IN PATIENTS OF SALVADOR. BRAZIL

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BACKGROUND: HTLV-associated uveitis (HAU) is an inflammatory reaction of the choroid, retina, optic nerve, and vitreous that can lead to visual deterioration. The prevalence of HAU varies from 1.61% to 14.5% worldwide and from 1.9% to 2.85% in Brazil. The objective of this study was to determine the prevalence of HAU in HTLV-1-infected patients and to describe the types of uveitis and associated symptoms.

METHODS: This was a cross-sectional analytical study to determine the prevalence of uveitis in HTLV-1-infected patients. Patients were recruited in Bahia, Brazil, a region considered endemic for HTLV-1 infection. Medical records of HTLV-1-infected (exposed) and uninfected (unexposed, comparison group) individuals who underwent ophthalmologic examination for the diagnosis of uveitis from June 2019 to June 2021 were analyzed. Patients were selected at the reference center for HTLV (exposed) and at the ophthalmology outpatient clinic (unexposed group). All patients were examined by the same ophthalmologist according to the same protocol. Prevalence rates (PRs) were calculated.

RESULTS: 171 HTLV-1-infected patients (consecutively examined) and 410 non-infected patients (randomly selected) were included. The proportion of women was 81.9% in the exposed group and 65.4% in the unexposed group ($p < 0.001$). The mean age of exposed and unexposed patients was 54.5% and 62.6%, respectively ($p < 0.001$). The prevalence of uveitis in HTLV-1-positive (exposed) patients was 7% and the prevalence in HTLV-1-negative (unexposed) subjects was 0.73% (PR=9.6; CI95%:2.7-33.6; $p < 0,001$). Bilateral intermediate uveitis associated with symptoms of visual disturbances and floaters was most common in exposed patients (66,6%), while unilateral pan-uveitis associated with symptoms of blurring and eye pain was more common in the unexposed group (66,6%).

CONCLUSION: The prevalence of uveitis in patients with HTLV-1 was higher than in previous national studies, and these results may be related to a more specific diagnostic method.

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST STATEMENT: NONE