

Immune-related neuromuscular and cardiac adverse events: a retrospective, multicentre analysis and systematic review of case reports and series

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BACKGROUND

- Immune-checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs) have revolutionized clinical practice in oncology, with significant benefits in terms of efficacy, quality of life and safety in several tumor types¹.
- In most cases, the immune-related adverse events (irAEs) are clinically easy to manage and paucisymptomatic. However, in rare cases irAEs may be life-threatening, especially those affecting the neuromuscular and cardiac system².
- The management of these irAEs is not clear due to the lack of consistent data. Therefore, we collected cases from selected Italian centers and carried out a systematic literature search to collect case reports and case series on this topic to improve our understanding of these irAEs.

METHODS

- We collected retrospective data from patients treated in 6 Italian centers with ICIs (PD-1 or PD-L1 and/or CTLA-4 inhibitor) for any solid tumor who experienced neuromuscular and/or cardiovascular toxicity.
- Then, to increase the caseload, we performed a search of case reports and series of neuromuscular/cardiac irAEs from ICIs with any solid tumor.

References: ¹Ribas A, Wolchok JD. Cancer immunotherapy using checkpoint blockade. *Science* 2018; 359(6382):1350–1355. ²Haanen JB, et al. Management of toxicities from immunotherapy: ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up. *Ann Oncol.* 2017 Jul 1;28(suppl_4):iv119–42.

Abbreviations CK: creatin kinase; ECG: electrocardiogram; ICI: immune checkpoint inhibitor; irAE: immune-related adverse event; LVEF: left ventricular ejection fraction; NSCLC: non-small cell lung cancer.

RESULTS

The muscular/cardiac irAEs outcome analysis has been conducted including both cases from our institutions (n=18) and the case reports identified in our systematic literature search (n=112), for a total of 130 patients.

- Among these patients, 44 had complete resolution of their neuromuscular/cardiac irAEs, in 21 there was a clinical improvement with mild sequelae, and 52 patients died as a result of the irAEs.
- Factors statistically significantly associated with worse outcomes were the earlier irAE onset, within the first 2 cycles of ICI (Fisher P < 0.0001), clinical manifestation of both myositis and myocarditis if compared to patients who developed only myositis or myocarditis (Chi-square P = 0.0051), and the development of arrhythmia (Fisher P = 0.0051).

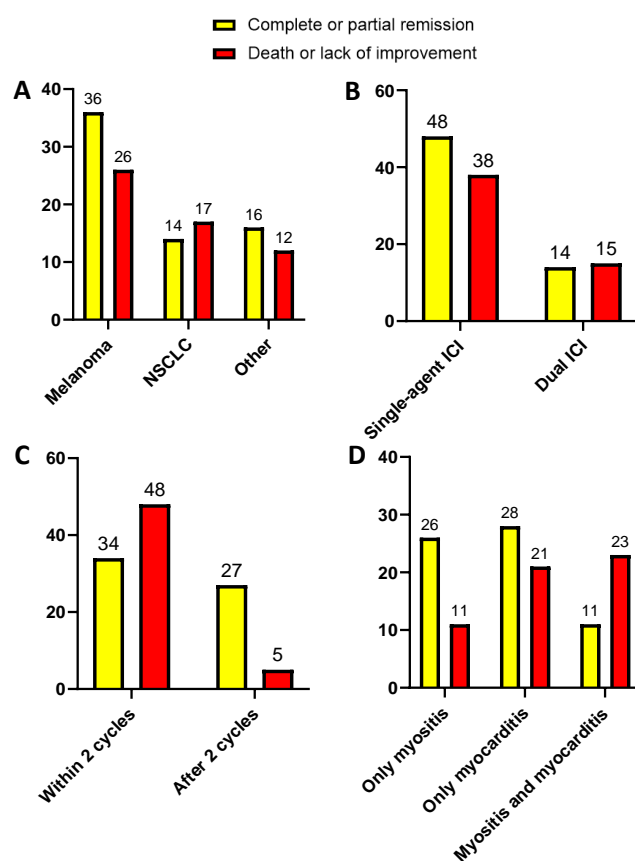


Figure 1. Outcomes of cardiac/muscular irAEs based on: A) primary tumor (Chi-square P = 0.4755), B) use of single-agent ICI (anti PD-1 or PD-L1) or dual ICIs (anti PD-1/PD-L1 plus anti-CTLA4) (Fisher P = 0.5233), C) time of onset of the muscular/cardiac irAE (Fisher P < 0.0001), and D) clinical manifestations of the muscular/cardiac irAE (Chi-Square P = 0.0051).

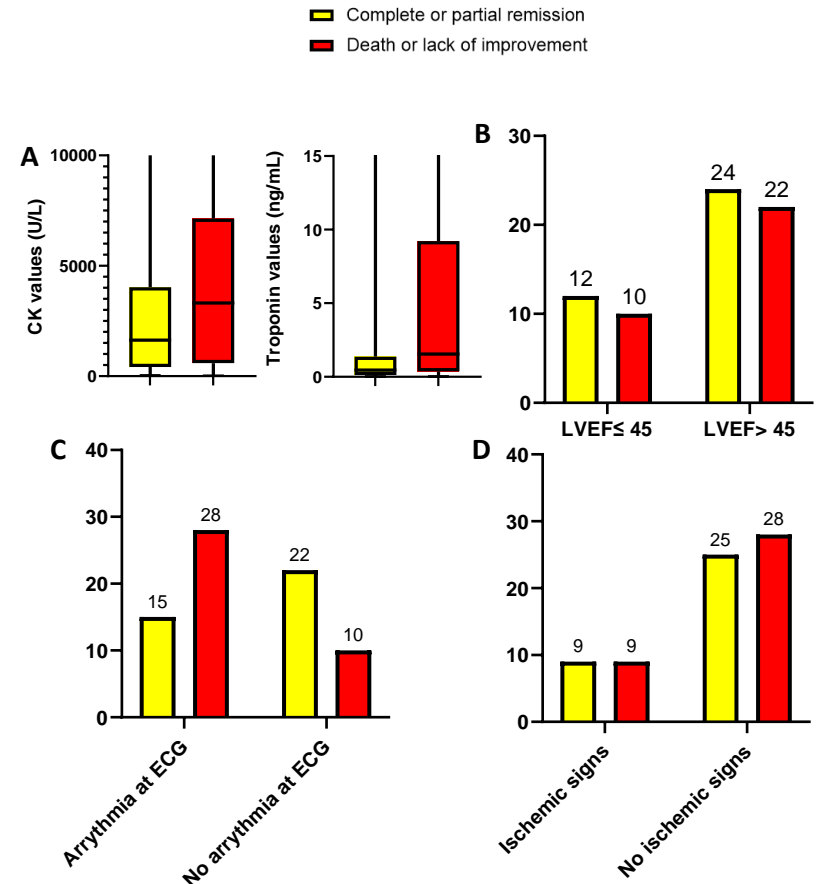


Figure 2. Outcomes of cardiac/muscular irAEs based on: A) CK values (Mann-Whitney P = 0.2467) and troponin values (Mann-Whitney P = 0.0346), B) left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) (Chi-Square P = 0.9999), C) finding of arrhythmia at ECG (Chi-Square P = 0.0051), and D) ischemic signs at ECG (Chi-Square P = 0.9999).

CONCLUSIONS

To our knowledge, this is the widest collection of individual cases of immune-related myocarditis/myositis. Early irAE onset, concurrent development of both myositis and myocarditis and occurrence of arrhythmias are associated with worse outcomes and should encourage an aggressive immunomodulatory treatment.