

infusion and has a terminal half-life of 8 to 10 days. Hence it is administered every 4 to 8 weeks and the dosage lies between 3 to 5 (to 10) mg/kg.

The efficacy of infliximab with MTX has been demonstrated in several trials (Table 1). Patients receiving combination therapy achieved overall higher median improvements in ACR-N than those in the MTX plus placebo group [16-18]. In addition, the clinical efficacy is similar in different dosage of infliximab group [16-18]. In terms of radiographic image, the combination of infliximab and MTX prevented the radiographic progression and led to lasting clinical amelioration [16]. In infliximab treatment inhibited progression of joint damage even in patients take low of MTX in the RISING study [18]. Compared with the MTX-only-treated patients, both erosions and joint space narrowing overall reduced from baseline in the infliximab plus MTX-treated patients except in infliximab 3 mg/kg every 8 weeks. There were fewer newly eroded joints per patient in the infliximab plus MTX treatment groups than in the MTX-only group [17]. The studies by St Clair EW illustrated that HAQ scores accelerated more in the group conducted in infliximab than in the group receiving MTX alone [16].

The most common adverse events found in clinical trials of infliximab included infection reactions, infection. The therapy of infliximab might increase the risk of malignancies, tumors and cardiovascular [19]. The incidence of serious infections, acute infection reactions, and death as similar between patients treated with infliximab plus MTX and those adopted MTX only [17]. Among the serious infections, pneumonia, tuberculosis occurred more frequently in the infliximab-treated patients than in those treated with MTX alone [16,19].

Etanercept is a genetically engineered protein consisting of two molecules of the extracellular domain of TNF receptor II (p75) and the Fc portion of IgG1 [20]. Owing to its half-life of approximately 3-5.5 days, etanercept is administered subcutaneous (s.c) either weekly (50mg) or twice a week (25mg) [21].

The superiority of the combination therapy of etanercept plus MTX over etanercept or MTX monotherapy in patients with RA has been demonstrated (Table 2) [22-24]. The 2-year data from the TEMPO study confirmed that apparently larger proportion of patients treated with combination therapy achieved the clinical response than that receiving either monotherapy [22]. Moreover, the combination-treated patients had predominant lower erosion change scores (-0.67) than patients treated with etanercept alone (0.39) or MTX alone (3.25) [25]. Therefore, treatment with a combination of etanercept and MTX halted joint damage and patients achieved disease remission [25]. Sustained efficacy and decreased rate of radiographic progression gained in patients with early aggressive RA whose long-term treatment with etanercept [26]. Patients adopted combination therapy enhanced greatly in function status than in group of monotherapy [27]. Additionally, etanercept 50 mg once weekly is an optimal in most patients with RA. Increasing the dosage of etanercept from 50mg once a week to 50 mg twice a week in suboptimal responders did not dramatically improve response rates [28]. There was no obvious improvement between etanercept as monotherapy at 50 mg twice weekly and 25 mg twice weekly with regard to the safety and efficacy [29].

Injection-site reactions and hypertension were more common with etanercept than with MTX or with combination therapy [22]. These

events were mostly mild or moderate. Nonetheless and omitting these more often concerned with MTX than with etanercept or combination therapy. No significant differences were seen among the groups in the incidence of serious adverse events (infectious and noninfectious) [22].

In summary, etanercept was beneficial for patients with RA. But the combination of etanercept with MTX is superior to a monotherapy with each drug. The combination regimen can reduce disease activity, slow radiographic progression and improve function. Furthermore, the treatment with etanercept plus MTX was well-tolerated and did not increase serious adverse events.

Adalimumab is a monoclonal antibody of recombinant immunoglobulin (IgG1) containing only human sequences of peptides. It is an antagonist of TNF, which prevents the binding of TNF to its receptors [6]. It has a half-life of 10-20 days and can be used as monotherapy or in combination with several other DMARDs, preferably MTX [30,31]. The recommended dose of adalimumab is 25 mg subcutaneous a week.

Treatment with adalimumab plus MTX was found to be statistically superior to placebo plus MTX according to the ACR20/50/70 response rates at week 26 (Table 3) [32]. If patients received

First author	Disease	ACR20	ACR50	ACR70	
St.Clair EW et al. [16]		62.4	45.6	32.5	0.4 ± 5.8
		66.2	50.4	37.2	0.5 ± 5.6
		53.6	32.1	21.2	3.7 ± 9.6
al. [17]		42	21	10	1.02 ± 7.13
		40	30	21	1.03 ± 11.65
		48	36	20	1.14 ± 4.92
		40	20	10	-0.42 ± 6.10
		16	6	1	12.59 ± 20.05
et al. [18]		75.8	60.6	37.4	
		78.8	58.7	42.3	
		82.7	66.3	43.3	

Table1:

First author	Disease Duration	ACR20	ACR50	ACR70	DAS28 <2.6(%)	TTS (mean)
et al. [22]	ETN	86	71	49	42.4	-0.56
		75	54	27	22.4	1.10
		71	42	21	18.9	3.34
et al. [23]	ETN	81.0	83.8	82.6		-1.35
		70.8	88.5	66.7		-0.19
		62.2	50.0	63.2		2.82
et al. [24]	ETN	90.4	64.4	38.4	27.4	
		63.8	47.8	26.1	10.1	

Table 2:

adalim mab+MTX in early RA, the overall achieved rapid clinical and functional improvements [32]. Adalim mab regimens decreased risk of radiographic disease progression [33]. In an open-label extension study of 5 years, the addition of adalim mab led to greater inhibition of structural damage compared with patients who continued with MTX monotherapy (Table 3) [34]. The PREMIER study confirmed that treatment with adalim mab plus MTX is initiated early, it contribute to higher improvements in clinical, functional, and radiographic responses as compared with the treatment with MTX alone or adalim mab alone [35].

In addition, adalim mab plus MTX ameliorated physical function for patients with RA [33,36].

Adalim mab had good tolerance generally. The research demonstrated that the rate of adverse events (both serious and nonserious) was similar in the adalim mab and placebo groups, although the proportion of patients reporting serious infections was higher in patients receiving adalim mab (3.8%) than that in placebo (0.5%) ($P < 0.02$), and was the highest in the patients adopted 40mg every other week [33]. The common adverse events were injection site reactions, serious infections such as mycobacterial infections, cellulitis [35]. However, adalim mab were safe and well tolerated. These adverse events were not serious and severe side effects were relatively seldom.

Golimumab is a human anti-TNF- α monoclonal antibody that was generated and administered in an intravenous form [37]. Golimumab has a high affinity and specificity for human TNF- α and effectively neutralizes TNF- α bioactivity in vitro [38].

The efficacy of golimumab had been tested in several different groups (Table 4) [37,39,40]. The combination of golimumab and MTX was significantly better at improving the signs and symptoms of RA and physical function [37]. The difference weren't observed in the efficacy of the two golimumab dose groups (50 mg and 100 mg) [37].

Although compared individually with the placebo group, the golimumab in combination with MTX in patients with RA showed greater clinical response, the response rates did not displayed a clear dose-response pattern among the groups of golimumab plus MTX (Table 4) [39].

In the multicenter, randomized, placebo-controlled GO-FORWARD study, mean improvement from baseline in HAQ-DI was significantly greater for golimumab 50mg+MTX and 100mg+MTX versus placebo+MTX [41]. On the other hand, golimumab+MTX also elicited a significant better response than placebo+MTX in other efficacy parameters, including disease activity score (DAS28) response. And the combination of golimumab and MTX limit radiographic progression [42].

The safety of golimumab has been demonstrated in different trials. However, adverse events were reported in the process of treatment. The most frequent adverse events in the combined golimumab groups were nausea, headache, and injection site reaction. Most events were mild or moderate in severity [43].

In general, golimumab, in combination with MTX, can alleviate the signs and symptoms of RA and improve physical function.

Certolizumab pegol is a humanized anti-TNF- α antibody with high affinity to TNF [44]. In managing patients with RA, the recommended dose of certolizumab pegol is 400 mg (given as two subcutaneous

injections of 200 mg) initially and at week 2 and 4, followed by 200 mg every other week.

An international, multicenter, phase 3, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study has assessed the efficacy of certolizumab pegol in MTX non-responders [45]. Compared to placebo treatment, certolizumab pegol plus MTX effectively reduced the signs and symptoms of RA, and inhibited progression of joint damage (Table 5) [45-46]. There were no obvious differences in clinical efficacy

idea of the therapy on RA. Biological agents can quickly relieve clinical symptoms and delay the bone destruction. When the TNF-inhibitors applied to clinical practice, the combinations with DMARDs are conducive to ease the symptoms and prevent the bone structural damage and elevate physical function. Besides, the conversion between different agents between biological agents and DMARDs is

65: 328-334.

28.

Arthritis Rheum 58: 1921-1930.

29.

30.

Ann Rheum Dis 63: 508-516.

31.

32.

976-986.

60.

61.

62.

arthritis. *J Rheumatol* 31: 1098-1102.

63.