Familial Mediterranean Fever and Service in the Israel Defense Forces

ABSTRACT

Background: Familial Mediterranean Fever (FMF) is one of the most common genetic diseases in Israel. FMF is characterized by acute fever attacks accompanied by peritonitis, pleurisy and erysipelas-like erythema. These attacks tend to occur in stressful situations, such as military service. Patients homozygous for the M694V mutation experience a more severe form of the disease. This study's objective was to observe the disease's course throughout the patients' service in the IDF, with an emphasis on patients homozygous for the M694V mutation.

Methods: The study was conducted on 100 FMF patients who had completed military service. The patients filled out a questionnaire regarding their military service and disease.

Results: The average number of attacks increased from 7.1 per month prior to recruitment to 16.9 during service, and decreased to 7.5 following discharge. The increase was similar in the homozygous for M694V mutation group and in the patients with other mutations.

The average dose of colchicine increased from 1.2 mg/day to 1.7 and did not decrease following discharge; no significant difference between the two groups was observed in this respect. The participants rated their satisfaction with their military service 6.8 on average on a scale of 1 to 10, and the military doctors' knowledge on the subject of FMF – 3.6 on the same.

Conclusions: FMF tends to worsen significantly during military service, with an increase in the number of attacks and in the dose of colchicine needed for treatment. The patients gave the military doctors' knowledge regarding their disease a low rating.

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest and have submitted the ICMJE disclosure form.

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