Pulmonary Involvement in Sjögren's Syndrome

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Dear Sir:

I read with interest the paper by Bariffi, et al. [1984].

This study reports a limited series of 15 female patients in which just the physiologic parameters of Sjögren's syndrome with regard to pulmonary function were evaluated. Pulmonary function testing, including dynamic flow parameters, flow volume loops and CO diffusing capacity, showed minor changes in approximately two-thirds of the patients. In many of these patients, the flow abnormalities were quite mild and insignificant. Mild restrictive impairments were noted in only 5 patients.

Based on this limited study, the conclusion that pulmonary involvement is present in virtually every patient with Sjögren's syndrome is misleading. The pulmonary function parameters noted in many of these patients were borderline normal or slightly below normal and not clinically significant. The presence or absence of symptoms in these patients is not discussed. It is difficult to relate these findings to the clinical significance which one may infer from reading the conclusions of this manuscript.

In a much larger series of patients, specifically 343 patients with classic Sjögren's syndrome, Strimlan et al. [1976] found that only 9% or 31 patients had clinically significant pulmonary disease associated with Sjögren's syndrome. At that time we concluded that pulmonary lesions occurred in Sjögren's syndrome more frequently than was previously reported. This is the incidence of clinically significant pulmonary disease in Sjögren's syndrome. The remainder of our patients had minimal or no pulmonary symptoms.

I thought this disparity regarding the clinical significance of pulmonary symptoms with Sjögren's syndrome should be discussed. I hope you find this information useful.

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References

Bariffi, F.; Pesci, A.; Bertorelli, G.; Manganelli, P.; Ambanelli, U.: Pulmonary involvement in Sjögren's syndrome. *Respiration* 46: 82-87 (1984).

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