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Editorial

Pulmonary involvement in systemic disease: challenges and insights

The lungs, as the primary organs of gas exchange, are indispensable to life. Beyond their respiratory role, they contribute significantly to various non-respiratory functions as well - including immunity, surfactant production, and acid-base homeostasis. Pulmonary pathology is broad, ranging from infections and malignancies to autoimmune disorders and mechanical restrictions that impair respiratory function. Optimal lung function is fundamental to survival and quality of life. In this issue of the *Galle Medical Journal*, we feature two contributions that underscore the complexity of pulmonary involvement in systemic disease.

Egodage *et al*. examine the effects of rheumatoid arthritis on lung function. Rheumatoid arthritis is known to cause pulmonary manifestations such as interstitial lung disease, pleuritis, and airway involvement. Compounding this, disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs like methotrexate can induce adverse pulmonary effects through mechanisms including hypersensitivity, direct injury, and fibrosis. This dual impact - disease-related and treatment-related - highlights the need for careful evaluation and personalised management in rheumatoid arthritis patients.

Gunathilaka and Abeywickrama present a case report of membranoproliferative glomerulonephritis as a paraneoplastic syndrome secondary to lung cancer. Paraneoplastic syndromes represent remote effects of malignancy, typically mediated by immune or hormonal factors rather than direct tumour invasion. These syndromes can involve virtually any organ system and are often diagnostically challenging.

Their case illustrates the systemic ramifications of pulmonary neoplasia and the necessity for comprehensive assessment in cancer care.

These cases emphasize the critical role of multi-disciplinary collaboration. The management of such complex, multi-system conditions often requires inputs from pulmonologists, rheumatologists, oncologists, nephrologists, and other specialists. As our understanding of disease mechanisms continues to evolve with molecular and immunological insights - a coordinated and individualised approach becomes even more important.

The recognition of the direction of disease, along with both expected and unanticipated complications, is essential. Equally important is the ability to weigh treatment benefits against potential harms. Personalised, multidisciplinary care has become the mainstay of modern medical practice.

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