

How Big is the Risk of Infection, Malignancy and Other Complications?

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PURPOSE: Therapy with biologic modifier therapy has profoundly affected the treatment of systemic and ocular inflammation. In this presentation, literature on the safety of biologic response modifier therapy, including tumor-necrosis factor (TNF) blockers and more recently introduced biologic modifiers, with specific regards to risk of serious infections and malignancy, will be reviewed.

METHODS: Literature review based on MEDLINE search (www.pubmed.com)

RESULTS: The scientific literature indicates that therapy with biologic response modifiers, specifically including tumor necrosis factor blockers, may confer an increased risk of serious infections and some malignancies. In addition, side effects including demyelinating disease and worsening of heart failure are possible.

CONCLUSIONS: Biologic response modifiers are potent biomedicines which are effective in the treatment of many patients with refractory ocular inflammatory disease, but may have significant toxicity, which must be discussed with prospective patients prior to the use of these agents.