

Blood test helps predict relapse in patients with autoimmune disease affecting the kidneys

October 16 2014

In patients with an autoimmune disease that often involves the kidneys, monitoring the blood for autoantibodies may help doctors predict the chance of relapse. The findings are from a study appearing in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* (*JASN*). Such measures may help protect patients' kidney health.

Patients with an autoimmune disorder called anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody (ANCA)-associated vasculitis produce antibodies that damage [blood](#) vessels in the body. Relapses of the disorder can cause severe and permanent damage to organs and other parts of the body. Jan Willem Cohen Tervaert, MD, PhD, Michael Kemna (Maastricht University, The Netherlands), and their colleagues wondered whether blood levels of ANCA autoantibodies could be used to predict a patient's risk of relapse.

The researchers followed 166 patients with ANCA-associated vasculitis, 104 of whom had kidney problems associated with their disease and 62 of whom did not. During an average follow-up of 49 months and 18 ANCA measurements, 89 ANCA increases and 74 relapses were recorded. Among patients with kidney involvement, ANCA increases were linked with an 11-fold increased risk of relapse. Among patients without kidney involvement, ANCA increases were associated only weakly with relapses.

"By measuring ANCA levels in patients with kidney involvement,

doctors can predict which patients are going to relapse. It is expected that by using ANCAs as a guideline, severe [relapses](#) necessitating dialysis can be prevented," said Dr. Tervaert.

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

Citation: Blood test helps predict relapse in patients with autoimmune disease affecting the kidneys (2014, October 16) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-blood-relapse-patients-autoimmune-disease.html>

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