

Introduction

Without excluding others, our Symptomatrix may be of significance for women and men aged approximately 50 years and over who suffer from odd complaints.

Explanation

Arteriitis Temporalis (English: Giant Cell Arteriitis, abbr. GCA, AT) is a rheumatic inflammation of medium and large size arteries, in particular those of the temples: a vasculitis. A number of scientifically known complaints are listed in our Symptomatrix - an instrument to arrive at an Early Diagnosis. Early Diagnosis is even more essential as occasionally the disease may turn into a multiple condition which by exception progresses fatally.

As a rule, patients that suffer from Giant Cell Arteriitis suffer from Polymyalgia Rheumatica (abbr. PMR) simultaneously. Polymyalgia Rheumatica is an ailment with inflammation of the muscles, in particular those in neck, shoulders, upper arms, pelvis and upper legs. Significantly, pain is in both sides of the body.

Giant Cell Arteriitis and Polymyalgia Rheumatica can be cured with success. However, early recognition of the symptoms and subsequently early diagnosis are essential.

Both diseases are usually considered as auto-immune illnesses and belong to a group of six to eight thousand of Rare Diseases, also referred to as Orphan Diseases.

(sources: Marijke Foundation, Rheumatism Foundation [Dutch]), various international scientific publications.

Additional information

By browsing the internet with the keywords 'Arteriitis Temporalis', 'Giant Cell Arteriitis' and/or 'Polymyalgia Rheumatica' you will certainly find quite a number of commercial and non-commercial websites with extensive information about these diseases. However, we strongly recommend to visit in the first place the websites of those societies, foundations and institutions in your country that are officially acknowledged for their professional involvement in these diseases.

More general information can be obtained from the website of the Marijke Foundation: www.marijke-foundation.eu.

The Symptomatrix®: Why?

It is not always possible to determine the mutual connection in the diversity of known complaints, which makes it sometimes difficult to diagnose Giant Cell Arteriitis and Polymyalgia Rheumatica timely. Complaints are quite often diagnosed and treated as isolated complaints, for instance as side effects of cold or as simple aches and pains that may disappear by (for instance) physiotherapeutical treatment.

As a result frequently too much time elapses before the diseases are properly diagnosed and adequate treatment is started.

Consequently patients quite often have to suffer from unnecessary progression of Giant Cell Arteriitis and/or Polymyalgia Rheumatica. The Symptomatrix is meant to overcome this problem.

(It is important to follow all 4 Steps below).

General Practitioner

Of course your family doctor is the right person for a diagnosis or referral to a specialist for the purpose.

Thus, our Symptomatrix is not meant to be a tool for uncontrolled self-diagnosis. It is just an expedient for rapid diagnosis: a combination of complaints, listed in the Symptomatrix, should be a reason to visit your family doctor - for the first time or again.

Step 1.: Filling out the Symptomatrix - suspicion: Giant Cell Arteriitis and/or Polymyalgia Rheumatica

female male

Your age :

Country :

State (if appl.) :

A. Frequently observed complaints

- 01. Feeling unhealthy, physical malaise and/or weakness, whether or not resembling flu
- 02. Fatigue and apathy; no improvement by more sleep, vitamins et cetera
- 03. Bleakness, depression
- 04. Poor or lack of appetite
- 05. Unusual loss of weight (not because of a diet)

- 06. A temperature without demonstrable reason
- 07. Headaches, whether or not on both sides of the head, whether or not pulsing; common pain relievers do not help
- 08. Headaches (07.) resemble migraine
- 09. Stiffness of the jaws, whether or not painful when chewing
- 10. Weakness of the tongue and/or painful tongue
- 11. Persisting or frequently returning stiffness in the neck and/or back and/or joints and/or muscles, whether or not painful
- 12. Resulting from 11.: limitations in body motion, for instance when getting up in the morning, dressing, washing yourself, combing your hair and other common daily activities
- 13. Rapidly changed eyesight, reduced eyesight
- 14. Notable sensitivity of the scalp
- 15. Bloated arteries of the temples, whether or not sensitive and/or painful
- 16. Unusual perspiration, night sweats
- 17. If you are doing sports like gymnastics, aerobics, swimming, cycling, work-outs and so on in order to overcome your complaints, do you experience that they remain the same or even get worse ?
- 18. Do you experience that your complaints do not decrease in spite of consultation of your family doctor, a specialist, physiotherapeutical treatment and/or medication ?

If you have tick marked at least 5 of the above complaints, please proceed with item 19. in section B.

If you tick marked less than 5 complaints, Giant Cell Arteritis and/or Polymyalgia Rheumatica are less likely. However, in such a case it is advised as well to proceed with the items in the sections B. and C. and to consult your family doctor or specialist with this Symptomatrix on hand.

B. Less frequently observed complaints (a-typical complaints)

- 19. Severe ache deeply in the ear, that is diagnosed and treated by you or your family doctor or medical specialist as the effect of cold but nonetheless does not disappear
- 20. Notable increased need for sugar, sweets, cakes, sweet drinks and so on
- 21. Necrosis of the skin, also under the hair of the head (necrosis is a condition of pathologic death of living tissue)
- 22. Sleeping problems, disrupted sleep pattern.

C. Additional information

The information in this section is also important for the Marijke Foundation. The information provided (please refer to Step 3.) is used for the continuing process of improvement, fine tuning and maintenance of this Symptomatrix.

- 23. Do you live in a period of notable tension and strain, in work and/or private, and do you experience this stress as a heavy burden for your physical and mental condition ?
- 24. Did you suffer from a severe flu, a bronchial infection/inflammation or a similar infection over the past two or three years ?
- 25. If so, does it seem that the symptoms have not disappeared completely and/or sometimes return ?
- 26. Do you experience the after-effects / symptoms as a cold that does not wear out ?

27. Did or do you suffer from constitutional eczema = dermatitis (rheumatic inflammation of the skin, usually treated with creams that contain corticosteroids) ?
28. Did your complaints develop after having been on a diet ?
29. Other complaint 1.:
30. Other complaint 2.:
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Step 2.: Present and discuss

When you are convinced you have tick marked an adequate number of boxes, then you are ready to present this Symptomatrix to your family doctor for further discussion.

But please do not forget to follow Step 3. as well, now or after having visited your family doctor or specialist.

Step 3.: Feed back is of major importance

Of course we hope that Giant Cell Arteriitis and/or Polymyalgia Rheumatica is not diagnosed. But whatever the case, feed back is very important to us.

The Marijke Foundation would be obliged to receive an either personalized or anonymous copy of your tick marked and filled-out Symptomatrix after you have visited your family doctor and/or medical specialist, no matter if the diagnosis Giant Cell Arteriitis and/or Polymyalgia Rheumatica has been positive or negative. Your information supports the evaluation, further development and fine-tuning of this Symptomatrix. Additional information is of course welcome as well.

- a. Giant Cell Arteriitis was diagnosed
- b. Polymyalgia Rheumatica was diagnosed
- c. Giant Cell Arteriitis and Polymyalgia Rheumatica were not diagnosed
- d. This Symptomatrix was helpful to arrive at a diagnosis (positive or negative)
- e. The diagnosis has been made by the (only one choice):
- family doctor rheumatologist neurologist ophthalmologist internist
- f. Who did you visit with your complaints (in sequence, by giving a number: 1, 2, 3 and so on):
- family doctor rheumatologist neurologist ophthalmologist
- internist otorhinolaryngologist physiotherapist
- g. How many weeks elapsed between your first visit to a doctor and the diagnosis: ?
- h. Yes, in order to be able to verify my information, you may contact me by mail or e-mail.

My name and address :

My e-mail address :

Thanking you for your cooperation, the Board of The Marijke Foundation guarantees that your information will only be used for statistical research in order to further develop the Symptomatrix.

Our postal address:

Marijke Foundation
Karel Doormanweg 3
1181 WD Amstelveen - The Netherlands

Step 4.: Call up for former patients and non-patients

You can mean a lot for (potential) patients.

For further development and fine tuning of the Symptomatrix, the Marijke Foundation is doing continuing research.

Former patients Giant Cell Arteriitis and/or Polymyalgia Rheumatica, but also non-patients, are invited to fill out the Symptomatrix as well and to send it to the Marijke Foundation. Their information is also useful for our research.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Reservation

The Marijke Foundation, Amstelveen - The Netherlands, offers the Symptomatrix as a service and support only. She accepts no responsibility, of any kind, for the use of the information, indications or suggestions offered on the website or otherwise published.

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