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Project Abstract

Title of Project: Foundation of a working group on ocular graft versus host disease

Purpose: Ocular chronic graft versus host disease after allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplantation is a severe disease mostly of the ocular surface, which can reduce quality of life and lead to blindness in severe cases. Patients are often resistant to standard therapies and evidence levels for diagnosis and therapy are low. The pathophysiology of ocular chronic GVHD has not been fully understood until now. Main purpose of the project was to create a network of interested and experienced colleagues and to exchange experiences with different therapies

Methods: Foundation of a working group respectively special interest group on ocular chronic graft versus host disease under the auspices of the Cornea Section of the German Ophthalmological Society (DOG). A meeting of a peer group of ophthalmologists specialized on GVHD was organized in Spring 2013 in Cologne to exchange therapeutic standards and to develop research projects on the pathophysiology of ocular GVHD.

Results: Together with a colleague from the University of Cologne the working group was founded in September 2013 during the German Ophthalmological Society Congress. Email addresses of interested members were registered. In 2014 a first survey among the members of the working group was performed.

Conclusion: Main purpose of the project was to create a network of ophthalmologists who are knowledgeable and/or interested in treating patients with ocular chronic GVHD and in developing research ideas on ocular GVHD.