J O I N T V E N T U R E S
Osteoarthritis: A New Paradigm

KEY POINTS

Osteoarthritis is now considered to be a systemic inflammatory condition that affects all components of the joint, including subchondral bone.

- Chondrocytes and osteoblasts communicate with one another via molecular networks and growth factors to coordinate the degradation and repair of cartilage and bone.

- A complex relationship between OA and obesity exists, with circulating adipokines, secreted by adipose tissue, being involved in bone formation and cartilage homeostasis.

- Future approaches to treatment will include the targeting of specific pathological processes with the goal of interrupting the disease process itself.

Don’t Be Fooled by Normal Serum Urate in Acute Gout

BY BRUCE JANCIN

PARIS — Serum urate levels are often normal during acute gouty arthritis attacks, according to Dr. Naomo Schlesinger.

In the study of 339 patients with acute gouty arthritis whose serum urate levels were measured, 29% of individuals on chronic allopurinol had a true-normal serum urate level, defined as ≥6 mg/dL but <8 mg/dL. Among patients not on the uric acid-reducing drug, 11% had a true-normal serum urate level during their acute episode of gout.

“Many previous studies have shown a relationship between urate and gout, but for targeting pathologic targets and interrupting the disease process itself, we should expect novel therapeutic approaches not only for pain relief but for targeting pathologic targets and interrupting the disease process itself,” Dr. Schlesinger noted.

In response to audience questions, Dr. Schlesinger said patients with acute gouty arthritis with four or more gout attacks per year or with polyarticular attacks had higher serum urate during the episode studied than those without those characteristics.

In response to audience questions, Dr. Schlesinger said patients with acute gouty arthritis need to be identified by any significant change in serum urate, whether an increase or decrease. In some cases, serum urate falls secondary to the acute attack as a result of cytokines released during the episode.

Dr. Schlesinger disclosed that Merck & Co. provided her with access to the complete data from the two company-sponsored clinical trials as well as support in data analysis.