

Recent Advancement in the Treatment of Immunoglobulin A Nephropathy - Mycophenolate Mofetil (MMF)

Immunoglobulin A nephropathy (IgAN) is the single most common form of kidney disease that causes end-stage renal disease (ESRD) in young adults aged 25-50. Mycophenolate mofetil (MMF) is increasingly used to treat various kidney diseases, but its effectiveness in IgAN remains unclear.

A study on the effectiveness of MMF in selected patients with IgAN was jointly conducted by the Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong and the United Christian Hospital during 2002-2004. It was found that MMF effectively lowers proteinuria which may improve kidney survival in the long term. The study was published in the leading international medical journal on kidney disease *Kidney International* in August 2005.

MMF reduced proteinuria by about 30% in selected IgAN patients, which may improve kidney survival in the long term, compared with conventional treatment alone. However, such benefits were only observed in selected patients with proteinuria more than 1 gram/day despite conventional treatment and with preserved renal function. Because MMF is an immunosuppressant, careful selection of the suitable patient is of fundamental importance. MMF is far from being an ideal medication which is yet to become available.

Early kidney disease is asymptomatic, people are advised to undergo regular body check-up including urine dipstick (urine protein, blood and glucose) and blood pressure measurement. Early diagnosis and treatment should be sought if any abnormality is found.