



UNC
KIDNEY CENTER

Podcast Transcript:

Dr. Ron Falk

ANCA Vasculitis Treatments

“ANCA Treatments: Remission”

Patient: How will I know, and how will my physician know, when these drugs are working? You said there’s an 85% remission rate. How do you know that someone’s in remission?

Dr. Falk: The whole question of remission and what constitutes remission is, actually a really interesting and difficult question. It would be wonderful if there was a marker, a blood test, that you could use and know for sure that the person was in remission or not. And those blood tests, even ANCA tests, don’t really help us fully. So, I think of somebody in remission who has no active disease in the organ system or the part of the body where their disease was mostly manifested. So, if your disease was in your lungs, then I would want to make sure that your lungs were clear on a chest x-ray. Or even yet, on a computerized, or CAT scan of your lungs. I would want to make sure in your kidney that the kidney function was improving, was stabilized, that the amount of blood in your urine was gone, or almost gone. Protein in the urine is not a good marker for remission.

You know when your nose is healing, you know when your nose is active, better than we do. So some of these are symptoms. How well does the person feel? The problem is nobody feels hugely well on cyclophosphamide, ever. And so, how much of how people are actually able to do is a combination of how active their disease is, side effects of the drug, and just healing from the autoimmune process itself. So your question is complicated.

How do we do it in practice? I like to make sure that the organ system involved doesn’t have active disease, that there are no new symptoms, and there are formal ways of doing this with a vasculitis scoring system. I try to make sure that there really are no things to score, there’s no evidence of any active disease. That’s really remission.