TREAT AIE

First European networking conference to provide guidelines and improve treatment of Autoimmune Encephalitis

Florence, Italy, 29-30 April 2022 (hybrid: attending online possible as well)

TREAT AIE is supported by the European Academy of Neurology (EAN), the European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases (EJP RD, network support scheme) and the Careggi University Hospital, Florence.

At this conference, fifty experts from fourteen European countries will convene to foster collaboration and improve the future of Autoimmune Encephalitis (AIE).

AIE are a group of severe, but treatable immune mediated diseases of the brain. Although the frequency of each specific AIE is low, as a group these diseases are less rare. As many AIE types have only been discovered over the last decade, it is increasingly recognized, but underdiagnosis is still likely. AIEs occur at all ages, consequences can be severe and persistent. As hospital admission is often long, these diseases poses a high burden on the health care systems.

Diagnostic criteria for AIE have recently been proposed in 2016 by an international, European-led team. This advancement has improved the clinical characterization and frequency of diagnoses. In addition it allowed earlier diagnosis and treatment. This is essential to minimize brain damage, improve neurological outcomes, and prevent relapses. This also improved treatment efficacy to an extent to frequently allow curative interventions. However, the rarity of each AIE entity, has thus far prevented development of evidence on treatment efficacy based on high quality studies as for instances randomized clinical trials. Therefore most treatments are based only on expert opinion or on low quality studies, like retrospective case series.

A task force of experts has been established, endorsed by the European Academy of Neurology, to create a guideline on management of AIE. While providing the research to make this treatment guideline, the Task Force has identified several knowledge gaps. In this networking conference, next to discussing the progress of the treatment guideline, the Task Force will also discuss the state of the art of AIE, including history, the use of brain imaging, blood and brain fluid biomarkers. Importantly, the networking conference has the additional goal

supported also by the European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases (EJP RD),to create further European collaboration: TREAT AIE.

The aims of this collaboration - beyond treatment guideline development -, are standardization of data, sharing of databases, creating an European framework database, leading to fruitful research collaborations. The pitfalls and challenges will be discussed, but by working towards harmonization, this will lead to uniformity of cohort descriptions, enabling comparative research. Prospectively, this will improve the quality of the studies and enable randomized controlled trials on treatment efficacy. Altogether, this endeavor will improve diagnosis and treatment of patients with AIE in the whole of Europe and beyond. It will also reinforce European research at the front line in the field of rare neuroimmunological diseases.

The conference is **open to attend online** by people from outside the expert group. The presentations include (among others) presentations by Ava Easton, director of the Encephalitis Society, a patient society working with patients and professionals all around the world, and Josep Dalmau, the neurologist who discovered many of the AIE currently known. The breakout sessions, discussing the progress of the guidelines, and the reports of the breakout sessions to the plenary expert group will not be open to the public as these are restricted to the expert group only.

The **program** and **registration form** of the TREAT AIE networking conference can be found here**:** https://www.morecomunicazione.it/archivio-eventi/treat-aie-networking-conference/.

Registration for those interested is free, but mandatory. The capacity is limited to 400 persons. Interested persons should fill a registration form available at the link above.

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