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CORRESPONDENCE

Instructional videos on labial salivary gland biopsy available

To the Editor,

Sjögren disease is common and still grossly underdiagnosed. Diagnosis—once made—is delayed by several years on average.[1] Efforts like the development by Yu et al of a screening questionnaire to identify patients likely to have Sjögren syndrome represent an attempt to find more undiagnosed patients.[2] Each set of classification criteria developed for Sjögren syndrome, including the current 2016 ACR/EULAR criteria that serve as a standard,[3] includes a weighted item for certain salivary gland pathology. A search for such pathology in unselected asymptomatic patients hints at the wider prevalence of Sjögren syndrome, with 15% of 54 healthy adults showing minor salivary gland features that would be sufficient to support a Sjögren syndrome diagnosis in any of the existing criteria sets.[4] Although confirming a suspected Sjögren disease diagnosis does not always require tissue, obtaining tissue when desired can be a difficult process, often relying on referral to practitioners who seldom perform the procedure, which is considered outside the scope of their usual practice. But the procedure of labial salivary gland biopsy is very simple to perform by any physician capable of closing a simple laceration and who has access to the appropriate instruments and reagents.[5] One of us (RWI) did it for most of the 33 years of his academic practice, with the other (SSM) learning it during fellowship and applying it for the 7 years and counting of her time in academia.

We write to inform the members of the Asia Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology (APLAR) and other readers of the *International Journal of Rheumatic Diseases* of two free instructional videos that we have published on YouTube and more recently on VuMedi. These grew out of a workshop on labial salivary gland biopsy that we conducted at the last in-person American College of Rheumatology meeting, November 2019 in Atlanta. In addition to a didactic presentation, which included a video of the procedure being performed, we provided instruments and fresh sheep lips on which the participants could practice.[6] Facing suspension of in-person meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, we decided to make videos that could provide guidance to those wishing to learn how to perform labial salivary gland biopsy themselves to obtain tissue that might help confirm a Sjögren Disease diagnosis or any of the other diagnoses that salivary gland pathology might support.[7] One of the videos is a simple six and a half minute recording of a labial salivary gland biopsy being performed while we provide narration,[8] while the other is a recording of the full Powerpoint and video presentation one of us (SSM) delivered at the workshop to which we both added additional narration.[9] We hope that these videos will help the interested physician to get past the "see one" phase of learning this simple procedure while acquiring knowledge about the indications, role in diagnosis, instruments and setup, documentation, and billing.

Learning procedures by watching online videos is common among today's generation of rheumatology trainees, turning to the internet for everything from the physical examination[10] to arthrocentesis.[11] Lip biopsy should be added to the list of procedures that a rheumatologist can learn on-line, and good resources are available.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The bulk of the effort involved in developing the workshop portrayed in the videos came from Dr. McCoy. Drs. Ike and McCoy contributed equally to making of the videos, while Dr. Ike did most of the writing of this paper.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose regarding this work.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The only "data" tapped in the writing of this paper are the videos themselves, and links to theses are in the reference list.

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