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Summary

THIOPURINES AND THE RISK OF CANCER IN PATIENTS WITH INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE – A DANISH NATIONWIDE COHORT STUDY (1996-2018)

Jakob Benedict Seidelin

UEG Week Vienna 2024 Poster

IBD

October 13, 2024

A Danish registry study of 43,419 IBD patients found that thiopurine therapy was associated with increased cancer risk that rose with cumulative exposure and returned to baseline after discontinuation.

KEY POINTS

- Thiopurine monotherapy was associated with a 36% increased cancer risk compared to unexposed IBD patients, while combination therapy showed a 148% increase.
- Among elderly patients over 65 years, the cancer risk was especially high with combination therapy.
- Patients exposed to thiopurines for more than five years had a 36% increased cancer risk.
- After discontinuation of thiopurines, cancer risk returned to the level of unexposed patients.
- The authors suggest avoiding combination therapy in the elderly and limiting thiopurine treatment duration to five years or less.

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