COVID-19 incidence not increased with corticosteroid injections

14 July 2022

Adults who received image-guided corticosteroid injections for musculoskeletal pain between April 2020 and February 2021 had a lower incidence of symptomatic COVID-19 than the general population in Massachusetts, according to a study published online July 5 in *Radiology*.

Joao R.T. Vicentini, M.D., from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and colleagues examined the incidence of symptomatic COVID-19 in individuals receiving image-guided corticosteroid injections for musculoskeletal pain between April 2020 and February 2021 in a prospective cohort multicenter study. A total of 2,190 adult participants underwent 2,714 corticosteroid injections; follow-up data were available for 1,960 adults who received 2,484 injections. The Massachusetts COVID-19 Response Reporting website was used to obtain the incidence of COVID-19 in the state during the same period.

The researchers found that 0.5 and 2.2 percent of participants had COVID-19 within 28 days of the corticosteroid injection and up to four months after the injection, respectively. This was lower than the general population incidence rate of COVID-19, which was 7.5 percent in the population of Massachusetts during the same period. Compared with the entire cohort that received corticosteroid injections, participants with COVID-19 at 28 days had elevated body mass index.

"These findings provide reassurance to providers and individuals who rely on corticosteroid injections for the management of musculoskeletal pain during potential new COVID-19 surges, even in places with low vaccination rates," the authors write.

More information: Joao R. T. Vicentini et al, The Relationship of Imaging-guided Corticosteroid Injections to COVID-19 Incidence in the Pandemic Recovery Period, *Radiology* (2022). DOI: 10.1148/radiol.220271