

CHRONIC CRUSTATION, NASAL CARRIAGE OF *STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS*, AND THE RELAPSE RATE IN PULMONARY WEGENER'S GRANULOMATOSIS

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Wegener's granulomatosis (WG) is a systemic disease characterized by necrotizing granulomatous inflammation of the upper and lower respiratory tract and necrotizing crescentic glomerulonephritis. Nasal carriage of *S. aureus* is considered a risk factor for *S. aureus* infections. The aim was to examine possible risk factors for relapse including refractory nasal carriage of *S. aureus* in patients with WG. Swab cultures of anterior nares for *S. aureus* were taken in consecutive patients (n=88) with limited form (n=45) and systemic one (n=33) and biopsy-proven WG. The occurrence of infection and relapses were identified according to the defined criteria. Of the 88 patients, 55 (59%; 95% CI, 41-76%) were found to be chronic nasal carriers of *S. aureus* ($\geq 82\%$ of nasal cultures positive for *S. aureus*). Hazard regression analysis identified chronic nasal carriage of *S. aureus* as independent risk factor for relapse (HR-9,26; CI 2.23-36,5) in patients with limited WG. Chronic nasal carriage of *S. aureus* characterized patients with WG who are more prone to relapses.