In double therapy but also monotherapy, MTX is always present since it’s a known drug, in mechanism and in side effects. MTX is known to have action and consequently side effects on proliferating cells (it interferes with purine synthesis). This drug affects cells that rapidly turn over like mucosal cells, immune cells, hair follicles.

Dosage of MTX: 7.5mg-25mg once a week; onset of action: 6-8 weeks (slow response due to low dosage)

An important drug to use in RA is Cecloxib (it blocks COX2) and it can’t be administered to cardiopathic patients.

MTX can’t be used during pregnancy (teratogenic); can’t be used together with sulfa antibiotics (sulfasalazine is ok); do not take together with alcohol.

Side effects:
- malaise, nausea
- ↑ liver enzymes

Dose sensitivity
- Alopecia
- Oral ulcers (vs mucus cells)
- Liver and bone marrow toxicity (vs proliferating cells)

Rare side effects:
- Pregnancy (zygote is seen as a foreign body and an inflammatory reaction against it is triggered; anticonceptional pill could not work properly)
- Pulmonary malignancy
- Infections

When we talk about aggressive therapy, it’s important to understand the concept of aggression, since RA must be treated as early as possible so the treatment must start against more than one step and against side effects, use of combination therapy with other drugs, not monotherapy in high dosage. Aim: long term benefits

HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE

It’s an antimalarial drug, found useful to treat RA. It ↑ intracellular ph (ph is strictly important in preserving proteins and cell’s structures, enzymatic reactions need their own ph for their work). The drug will interfere with cell’s ability to process and degrade proteins. It accumulates highly intracellularly.

Dosage: 200-400mg per day; onset of action: 6-12 weeks (very slow); avoid the sun (↑ sensitivity) → among rare side effects there’s ocular one (ophthalmologic screen needed for checking visual acuity and colour).

Common side effects:
- Rush, nausea, diarrhea
- Difficulty with reading;

Rare side effects: