Advances in safety management of targeted therapies for rheumatoid arthritis

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In the last two decades, a variety of targeted biologic and synthetic molecules have been developed to treat rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatologists and patients now have therapeutic options with varying mechanisms of action and targets. Remarkably, the safety profile of these agents are fairly similar, although differences do exist particularly with certain types of infections according to drug class. This lecture will explore the unique safety aspects of various targeted therapies and synthetic DMARDs. The emergence of JAK inhibitors provides unique challenges from a safety standpoint, particularly with regard to infection and potentially venous thromboembolism. Advances in the safety of both biologics and synthetic DMARDs include the ability of these agents to be steroid sparing. Advances in vaccination and screening for certain types of infections have also become more reliable, and these will be reviewed during this lecture.