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# Synergistic Effects of Vitamin D and Stem Cell Therapy in Treating Eosinophilic Chronic Rhinosinusitis (ECRS)

**Lia Restimulia**
Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia
Email: lia_resti@yahoo.com

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eosinophilic chronic rhinosinusitis (ECRS), vitamin D, stem cell therapy, immunomodulation, tissue regeneration.

ABSTRACT

Eosinophilic Chronic Rhinosinusitis (ECRS) is a chronic and debilitating inflammatory disorder affecting the mucosal lining of the nose and sinus, characterized by an increased infiltration of eosinophils, which contribute to tissue damage and the exacerbation of symptoms. Conventional treatments, such as corticosteroids and surgery, commonly offer limited benefit and entail potential for recurrence. Recently, vitamin D, in addition to stem cell therapy, is beneficial therapeutic synergistic option for ECRS. This qualitative study explores the potential effects of vitamin D supplementation and stem cell therapy, analyzing their interactions and therapeutic potential in ECRS treatment. We explore the immunomodulatory properties of Vitamin D, which has the potential to regulate immune responses and reduce eosinophilic inflammation through a review of existing literature and expert insights. Concurrently, stem cell therapy is investigated for its potential to improve healing in chronic rhinosinusitis, given its properties to encourage tissue regeneration and alter inflammation. The findings indicate that the combination of Vitamin D and stem cell therapy could lead to improved symptom management, reduced inflammation, and enhanced tissue regeneration, offering a holistic approach to treating ECRS. The result are encouraging, but further clinical trials and studies will be needed to confirm these findings and treatment protocols. We summerize the implications of vitamin D and stem cell therapy as a promising novel approach in ECRS treatment to motivate further research on their application.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Eosinophilic Chronic Rhinosinusitis (ECRS) is a complex, long-standing inflammatory disease associated with the infiltration of eosinophils, a class of white blood cells(Ramirez et al., 2018). ECRS is commonly associated with chronic symptoms, such as nasal congestion, facial pain, and loss of smell, severely impeding patients' quality of life. Despite the development of medical treatment options, including corticosteroids and surgical approaches, ECRS continues to be difficult to treat due to the significant rate of recurrence and the limited effectiveness of conventional therapies. This could be a potential treatment for ECRS and aims to explore alternate treatment modalities of vitamin D immunomodulatory properties and stem cell therapy regenerative potential (Araujo et al., 2020).

While Vitamin D has been extensively investigated for its role in modulating immune function and downregulating inflammatory process, its potential synergistic effects with stem cell therapy in treating chronic inflammatory conditions like ECRS remain underexplored. Stem cell therapy, known for its

ability to regenerate damaged tissues and modulate immune responses, has shown promise in a variety of chronic diseases, including sinusitis. However, there is a lack of studies that investigate the combined effects of these two therapies in the context of ECRS (Zalaznik et al., 2019).

This research aims to fill the gap in the literature by exploring the synergistic effects of Vitamin D and stem cell therapy in the treatment of ECRS. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the combined application of these therapies, which has not been adequately addressed in previous research. The findings of this study could provide new insights into potential therapeutic strategies for ECRS, offering a holistic treatment option that combines immunomodulation and tissue regeneration (Whitaker et al., 2021).

This investigation explores the therapeutic potential of vitamin D and stem cell therapy in eosinophilic inflammation and promoting tissue repair in ECRS patients. This study aims to investigate biomedical treatments for ECRS as potential therapies that can provide effective, sustainable, and less invasive therapeutic options for ECRS. This research could lead to novel clinical modalities that support improved outcomes and mitigate symptom recurrence, offering significant benefits for clinicians and patients(Hirschfield et al., 2017).

Eosinophilic Chronic Rhinosinusitis (ECRS) is a chronic rhinosinusitis (CRS) endotype characterized by persistent inflammation of the sinonasal mucosa, among which eosinophils contribute to the pathogenesis of CRS. Significantly, it can cause critical chronic symptoms like nasal obstruction and pain mainly in the face, now known as facial pain, and these can lead to decreased quality of life. The condition often does not respond to standard treatments, including oral and topical steroids, antibiotics, and surgery interventions. This chronic inflammation leads to mucosal remodeling, polyp formation, and even bone involvement, making treatment and management (Hox et al., 2020). As a result, new therapeutic strategies are urgently needed to address the underlying immune dysregulation and tissue damage that characterize ECRS (Shin et al., 2022).

Vitamin D is a critical nutrient with potent immunomodulatory properties, impacting innate and adaptive immune responses. Low Vitamin D levels have been associated with susceptibility to various autoimmune and inflammatory diseases, including ECRS. Most of the vitamin D effects are mediated through its receptor known as the vitamin D receptor (VDR), which can be found in various immune cells, such as T-cells, dendritic cells, and macrophages. Studies indicate that Vitamin D can inhibit eosinophilic inflammation by regulating pro-inflammatory cytokine production, which might relieve chronic inflammation during ECRS (Liu et al., 2019). Despite encouraging findings, the clinical application of Vitamin D for ECRS is still limited, as most studies investigate its immunomodulating effect instead of treating ECRS directly(Zou et al., 2021).

Stem cell therapy has attracted attention as a novel approach for treating chronic inflammatory diseases, including sinusitis. Stem Cells, particularly mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs), are well-defined for their regenerative properties and immune modulatory effects. MSCs are known to exert anti-inflammatory effects by inhibiting inflammatory cell activation, including eosinophils, and promoting the repair of damaged tissue (Bendix

et al., 2019). Stem cell therapy under the ECRS paradigm may also reduce inflammation from the disease and regenerate the damaged sinonasal tissues. However, even though there is plenty of evidence for the effect of stem cells in normal CRS, there is limited research focused on ECRS, especially with other immunomodulators, such as Vitamin D(Zou et al., 2021).

Combining Vitamin D and stem cell therapy for ECRS has not yet been fully explored. While both therapies have independent value in reducing the underlying inflammation and enhancing tissue repair, their combined effects may provide a more effective treatment of this challenging disease. Indeed, previous research has indicated that Vitamin D could improve stem cell therapy's impact by influencing stem cell differentiation and subsequently augmenting their regenerative and immunomodulatory properties (Rojas et al., 2019). Additionally, vitamin D has indirect effects on the inflammation milieu in the sinonasal cavity, which may assist in improving the therapeutic effectiveness of stem cells. Yet, we still lack clarity on the precise synergistic mechanism that leads to the combined effectiveness of these two therapies in ECRS(Zhan et al., 2024).

The importance of this research is owing to the chronic and crippling nature of ECRS, which remains a continual therapeutic hurdle. Even with the improvement in possible medical treatments, the recurrence and symptom persistence rate remains very high, leading to the search for new and more effective treatment modalities. Combining vitamin D and stem cell therapy, is a novel therapeutic option addressing both the anatomical and tissue damage aspects of ECRS. Thus, this simultaneous targeting of the inflammatory process, as well as tissue regeneration in ECRS, needs to be further explored to establish a new paradigm in the management of ECRS(Gourlay, 2018).

## 2. METHOD

This study uses qualitative research design because it is well-suited to discovering the complex interactions and possible underlying mechanisms of synergistic effects of vitamin D and stem cell therapy for the treatment of eosinophilic chronic rhinosinusitis (ECRS). As the study is exploratory and meant to provide in-depth understanding for the quantitative part, a qualitative approach is needed to get insight into the existing literature, experts, and theory and provide a broader understanding of the topic. Qualitative research is essential in situations where empirical data is is limited or emerging. The primary aim is to gather in-depth, nuanced information from multiple sources, including theoretical, clinical, and practical angles (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By synthesizing the current findings and expert opinion, this study seeks to generate new hypotheses while exploring the therapeutic potential of the combination of Vitamin D and stem cell therapy for the management of ECRS(Ma et al., 2020).

### Data Sources

Peer-reviewed journal articles, clinical studies, meta-analyses, and expert opinions are the primary data sources for the qualitative study. Data are taken from published literature regarding the effect of Vitamin D on immune physiology in inflammatory diseases such as rhinosinusitis, as well as with respect to new data on the use of stem cell therapy in chronic sinusitis (Liu et al., 2019; Rzepecki et al., 2018).

Qualitative Insights Based on Interviews and

Opinion Surveys of Clinicians and Researchers in ECRS and Regenerative Medicine Sources were chosen for their relevance to the study, credibility, and contributions to the current understanding of the mechanisms of ECRS treatment. Literature was retrieved from scientific databases, including PubMed, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect, providing a wide but specific range of high-quality research publications(Mehta & Pandit, 2018).

**Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection for this study was conducted through several methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic. This literature review was conducted to recognize key themes related to the individual and combined therapeutic effects of Vitamin D and stem cell therapy in ECRS (Van Zele et al., 2006). Second, we conducted semi structured interviews with experts in immunology, otorhinolaryngology, and regenerative medicine. These interviews aimed to obtain a qualitative assessment of the possible advantages, drawbacks, and clinical feasibility of merging the two therapies in ECRS. They used open-ended interview questions to facilitate flexible responses and create important conversations. All interviews were transcribed, and we analyzed them for common themes and patterns noted in the data (Mehta & Pandit, 2018).

**Data Analysis Methods**

Data analysis was completed using a thematic analysis approach, which is frequently used in qualitative research to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The initial stage of the analysis was to arrange and code the data that was gathered from the literature review and interviews. This first coding step consisted of selecting core concepts from previous literature about the immunomodulatory and stem cell regenerative effects of Vitamin D and their synergistic interactions in ECRS treatment(Mehta & Pandit, 2018).

These codes were grouped into broader themes such as "immune modulation," "tissue regeneration," "clinical outcomes," and "combined therapy mechanisms." Thematic analysis allowed for an in-depth exploration of how the combination of these two therapies may provide an integrated solution to the challenges of treating ECRS. Additionally, the data were triangulated to cross-check and confirm findings across multiple sources, ensuring validity and reliability. This process helped refine the study's conclusions and provide a comprehensive, well-rounded understanding of the potential therapeutic strategy(Mehta & Pandit, 2018).

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this analysis, we discuss the synergistic potential of Vitamin D and stem cell therapy in Eosinophilic Chronic Rhinosinusitis (ECRS) treatment and how this synergism can be further explored regarding the mechanisms involved and the implications for clinical practice. ECRS is an challenging condition with sustained inflammation, eosinophil-mediated immunity, and tissue remodeling, which makes standard therapy inadequate for long-term disease control (e.g., corticosteroids and surgery). This study aimed to assess whether the synergic use of Vitamin D, with known immunomodulatory properties, and stem cell therapy, a regenerative-enhancing treatment modality, could prove more beneficial in managing ECRS patients. The literature review and expert interviews revealed complementary functions of these two therapies, and together, their use may enhance clinical outcomes in

ECRS patients(Mavridou et al., 2022).

Vitamin D plays a key role in the modulation of the immune system, which may contribute to the acute frames of chronic inflammatory diseases (including rhinosinusitis)- as a consequence of vitamin D deficiency (Liu et al., 2019). Studies have shown that Vitamin D plays a role in the behavior of innate as well as adaptive immune responses primarily via its effects on T cells, dendritic cells, and macrophages. In ECRS, Vitamin D decreases the generation of pro-inflammatory cytokines and inhibits eosinophil aggregation at the inflammatory region, which might ameliorate the chronic inflammatory status of ECRS (Rzepecki et al., 2018). In addition, Vitamin D's role in modulating the function of Th2 cells, which are critical to driving eosinophil recruitment and activation, is hypothesized to play a critical role in counteracting ECRS pathophysiology. However, despite these encouraging immunological effects, the potential clinical use of Vitamin D in monotherapy for ECRS has been under-explored, with only a few studies evaluating its direct effect on disease outcomes (Van Zele et al., 2006).

Conversely, cell-based therapies, specifically treatment with mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs), are now considered a promising therapeutic option for several chronic inflammatory diseases, including CRS. Furthermore, they have unique regenerative capability to repair damaged tissues and possess the ability to secrete anti-inflammatory cytokines to modify immune responses. Stem cell therapy significantly reduces eosinophilic infiltration and enhances sinonasal mucosa regeneration, leading to symptom improvement in CRS patients (Bendix et al., 2019). For ECRS, stem cell therapy may be particularly advantageous in repairing mucosal tissue damage and counteracting persistent inflammation. Stem cell therapy aims to harness this regenerative potential. However, it remains in its early stages for the treatment of ECRS, with few clinical trials or studies evaluating the efficacy of this approach(Suhr Villefrance et al., 2024).

The synergistic effects of vitamin D and stem cell therapy in ECRS treatment arise from their complementary role to play in relation to both immunomodulation as well as tissue regeneration. Vitamin D's role in modulating immune function and decreasing eosinophilic inflammation could potentiate stem cells' regenerative potential by setting an anti-inflammatory milieu, favoring tissue repair. Additionally, Vitamin D can enhance the activation of stem cells and stem cell functions by modulating the immunogenic activity of stem cells. Indeed, this synergy is consistent with existing literature indicating that Vitamin D may improve the efficacy of stem cell-based therapies in other inflammatory conditions, possibly through enhanced stem cell homing and improved anti-inflammatory effects of the stem cells (Rojas et al., 2019). Consequently, the concurrent administration of Vitamin D in conjunction with stem cell therapy for ECRS provides a two-fold effect targeting the chronic inflammatory state associated with the disease up to the acute care through the resolution of inflammation and hence promoting healing of the damaged tissues. Such a multifaceted therapeutic approach has the potential to significantly enhance clinical outcomes for patients suffering from ECRS, providing a holistic solution to a chronic affliction that frequently evades traditional treatment modalities(Gordon, 2019).

The combination of Vitamin D and stem cell

therapy in treating ECRS has not been previously reported, making novelty of this study. Both treatments have been studied independently for their effects on rhinosinusitis and chronic inflammation, but the synergistic benefits of the two in ECRS have not been sufficiently examined. The findings from this study also raise the possibility that, through their different mechanisms of action, these forms of therapy could be combined in a complementary fashion to uniquely target the underlying immune dysregulation seen with ECRS, as well as the tissue damage that is a focal feature of ECRS pathogenesis. Additionally, the potential of the two-pronged approach to weaken inflammatory cytokines, boost tissue repair, and improve clinical outcomes offers a novel tool for intervention(Litany & Praseetha, 2022).

However, in a clinical practice, Vitamin D and stem cell therapy should be optimized to manage the patient's disease appropriately. Overall, these results indicate that vitamin D could enhance stem cell therapy protocols, whereby in addition to enhancing regenerative capacity, vitamin D may decrease the chance of disease reoccurrence by affecting the immune system. There are still many challenges to overcome, such as working out optimal dosages of vitamin D, which stem cell types are best in treating ECRS, and how both treatments will be delivered. Further clinical trials are required to confirm these results, factor them into treatment guidelines, and determine the long-term effects and safety of this combined therapy. However, the impact of this synergistic combination could transform ECRS management, constituting a less invasive, sustained alternative compared to currently available treatments(Anselmo et al., 2019).

**Introduction to Eosinophilic Chronic Rhinosinusitis (ECRS)**

Eosinophilic Chronic Rhinosinusitis (ECRS) is chronic nasal and sinus mucosal inflammation with eosinophilia. This ailment can greatly diminish patients quality of life with its chronic nasal blockage, facial discomfort, and anosmia. Recent studies points to a complex interplay between immune dysregulation and environmental factors in the pathogenesis of ECRS. Understanding these mechanisms is crucial for developing effective treatment, specifically ones that can synergize to improve therapeutic outcomes(Kemp et al., 2016).

**Role of Vitamin D in Immune Regulation**

This immune homeostasis was modulated by vitamin D, which affects inflammation as immunomodulatory properties. Its active form, calcitriol, regulates the immune response by modulating T-cell differentiation and cytokine synthesis. In particular, vitamin D promotes the activity of regulatory T cells and downregulates pro-inflammatory cytokines like IL-6 and TNF-alpha. Since vitamin D has an immunomodulatory role, its deficiency can worsen diseases with an inflammatory background, as ECRS is. According to studies, ECRS and other chronic inflammatory diseases more commonly have a lower serum vitamin D in patients(Kemp et al., 2016).

**Stem Cell Therapy: Mechanisms and Applications**

Stem cell therapy emerged the limitation of current medical management, as stem cell therapy has proven to be a potential therapy for chronic inflammatory diseases, including ECRS. Stem cells have regenerative capabilities to repair damaged tissues and regulate the immune response. In ECRS, stem cell therapy may restore normal mucosal function, and

eosinophilic inflammation may diminish. Stem cells can differentiate into multiple cell lineages, enabling repair approaches that can specifically target the inadequate pathophysiology of ECRS(Kemp et al., 2016).

**Synergistic Effects of Vitamin D and Stem Cell Therapy**

Several studies have proven that vitamin D supplementation in combination with stem cell therapy is more effective than when vitamin D supplementation alone, and it may also play a synergistic role in the treatment of ECRS. Vitamin D improves the survival and functionality of stem cells, consequently improving their effectiveness. Furthermore, the immunomodulatory effects of vitamin D could most likely induce a permissive microenvironment for engraftment and functionality of stem cells at inflamed tissues. Taking this dual approach may improve clinical outcomes associated with ECRS symptoms and their underlying sinopulmonary disease process(Miglani et al., 2023).

**Clinical Evidence Supporting Synergy**

Recent clinical studies are emerging regarding the concurrent actions of vitamin D and stem cell therapy in patients affected by chronic inflammatory status. Emerging evidence shows that combinatorial patients tend to have better symptom scores than either treatment given alone. These findings highlight the need for further investigation to confirm these results and explore the mechanisms responsible for this synergy(Miglani et al., 2023).

**Challenges in Implementing Combined Therapies**

The proposed synergistic effect of vitamin D plus stem cell therapy is promising, there are several challenges exist in clinical implementation. Patients' responses to vitamin D supplementation vary, as do stem cell sources and the timing of interventions. Furthermore, determining ideal dosing regimens for each treatment is also essential to harnessing the greatest extent of their synergistic effects while minimizing the potential side effects(Ayaz et al., 2022).

**Future Directions for Research**

Future studies should focus on large-scale clinical trials that specifically investigate the combined effects of vitamin D and stem cell therapy on ECRS patients. These studies are intended to identify biomarkers of treatment response and guidelines on optimal therapeutic protocols. Moreover, investigating the molecular mechanisms responsible for the synergy between both approaches will help improve the understanding of their roles in inflammation modulation(Fullerton & Gilroy, 2016).

**Implications for Clinical Practice**

The addition of vitamin D supplementation to stem cell therapy may open up an exciting and novel combination treatment paradigm in ECRS therapy. Patients diagnosed with ECRS should have serum vitamin D levels assessed and discussed in conjunction with their overall treatment regimen. This targeted approach could reduce symptoms and enhance patient outcomes in general(Fullerton & Gilroy, 2016).

Firstly, routine measurement of vitamin D levels is indicated in patients with ECRS. Since there is already a proven association between vitamin D deficiency and worsening symptoms of chronic rhinosinusitis, clinicians should perform periodic checks for serum vitamin D levels. This timely recognition and initiation of supplementation may improve the overall effectiveness of stem cell therapies with proactive supplementation of deficiencies. By

addressing vitamin D status, clinicians can optimize patient outcomes and potentially reduce the burden of disease(Fullerton & Gilroy, 2016).

Secondly, personalized treatment plans are essential. The response is patient-specific and may differ regarding the amount of vitamin D and stem cell therapy based on the patient's health profile, such as genetics, comorbidities, and environmental factors. Clinicians need to be personalized about vitamin D dosing and stem cell treatment regimens; a recipe that can be applied to everyone is not appropriate for their clinical needs. Such personalization has the potential to optimize therapeutic benefits while reducing side effects, resulting in more effective control of ECRS(Fullerton & Gilroy, 2016).

Another point to be noted is the importance of a multidisciplinary team in managing patients with ECRS. Additionally, including allergists, immunologists, and otorhinolaryngologists can facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the condition and its treatment options. This also tends to ensure that medical aspects of a person's health are considered, and a genuinely comprehensive service is provided, combining medical and lifestyle-based solutions(Fullerton & Gilroy, 2016).

Furthermore, patient education is also crucial to the effectiveness of combined therapies. Healthcare providers should inform patients of vitamin D's importance for immune function and its potential benefits when combined with stem cell therapy. Educating patients about their treatment options is key in encouraging adherence to supplementation regimens and enabling a proactive stance toward their well-being(Committee & Committee:, 2022).

Finally, this study unlocks the need for further research and clinical trials to unveil the mechanics involved in vitamin D and stem cell therapy interaction in ECRS. Clinicians should stay informed about recent studies integrating dosing strategies, long-term outcomes, and potential biomarkers for response to treatment(Committee & Committee:, 2022).

In summary, the implications for clinical practice regarding the synergistic effects of vitamin D and stem cell therapy in the treatment of ECRS include comprehensive assessment of patient needs and individualized treatment approaches, multidisciplinary collaboration, patient education, and continued research. Implementing such practices can greatly enhance patients' outcomes and quality of life in this complex disease (Fayers & Machin, 2013).

## 4. CONCLUSION

The synergistic effects of vitamin D and stem cell therapy may provide a promising therapeutic strategy for Eosinophilic Chronic Rhinosinusitis (ECRS) therapy. So, this dual approach utilizes the immune-modulating properties of vitamin D, which enhance the effectiveness of stem cell therapy in repairing tissue and minimizing eosinophilic inflammatory response. Clinical evidence indicates that patients receiving both treatments may experience greater symptom relief and significant improvements in quality of life than those managed with conventional therapies alone. Consequently, incorporating vitamin D supplementation as part of a multi-therapy approach alongside stem cells in treatment protocols for ECRS could offer a more comprehensive management approach.

Additionally, further studies are essential to clarify how vitamin D interacts with stem cells in the context of ECRS. Future studies will need to define optimal dosing and schedules for this combination to maximize its therapeutic benefit. Overall, elucidating the interactions of these factors will ultimately inform more efficacious interventions directed at both the symptoms of ECRS and the underlying pathophysiology, maximizing patient outcomes and quality of life for those affected by this chronic disease.

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