WHAT IS IMMUNOGLOBULIN A (IgA) NEPHROPATHY?

IgA nephropathy, also known as Berger disease, is a chronic kidney disease that affects the small blood vessels in the glomeruli. It is associated with immune complexes that build up in the blood vessels, leading to damage.

The buildup of these complexes activates the complement system, causing damage. Immune complexes that build up in the kidneys play a key role in IgA nephropathy, which is characterized by proteinuria (protein in the urine), hematuria (blood in the urine), and, in some cases, hypertension.

Large immune complexes, including those that are related to IgA, can deposit in the kidneys and cause damage. Immune complexes that build up in the kidneys are essential to the diagnosis of IgA nephropathy.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF IG A NEPHROPATHY?

The exact cause of IgA nephropathy is unknown, but it is thought to be due to a variety of factors, including genetics, environmental factors, and immune system abnormalities. It is estimated that approximately 100-1,000 people per million worldwide are affected by IgA nephropathy.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF IG A NEPHROPATHY?

The symptoms of IgA nephropathy can vary, and some people may experience no symptoms at all. Common symptoms include:

- Red or cola-colored urine
- Foamy urine
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Swelling in hands and feet (edema)

HOW IS IG A NEPHROPATHY DIAGNOSED AND MANAGED?

IgA nephropathy is diagnosed through a combination of blood and urine tests, as well as imaging studies. Once IgA nephropathy is suspected, preliminary blood and urine tests are done to determine if a kidney biopsy is needed.

Once IgA nephropathy is confirmed, preliminary blood and urine tests are done to determine if a kidney biopsy is needed. A kidney biopsy is a procedure in which a small piece of kidney tissue is removed and examined under a microscope to determine the cause of the disease.

Most current treatments, including those that are developed by Alexion, focus on providing supportive care to treat high blood pressure and, in some cases, inflammation. However, a transplant that removes waste from the blood when the kidneys are unable to do so — or a kidney transplant — is the most effective treatment for IgA nephropathy.

WHAT ROLE MAY COMPLEMENT INHIBITION PLAY IN TREATING IG A NEPHROPATHY?

There is strong evidence suggesting that the complement system plays a key role in IgA nephropathy. The complement system is a group of proteins in the blood that are activated in response to foreign substances and can cause dangerous, uncontrolled cascade of reactions when activated.

The complement system is a part of the immune system that is essential to the body's defense against infection. When the system is activated, it can cause inflammation and destruction of healthy cells.

The continued study and development of innovative treatments for people living with rare diseases is essential to unlocking potential treatment options for IgA nephropathy.

WHAT TREATMENT APPROACH IS BEING STUDIED BY ALEXION?

Alexion is conducting multiple clinical trials investigating the safety and efficacy of inhibiting various parts of the complement system in IgA nephropathy. These clinical trials are exploring the potential of the complement system and continue to pioneer innovations for people living with rare diseases.