Iloprost, a Prostacyclin Analogue, in the Management of Rheumatic Disorders: an Overview and a Report on Local Experience

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Abstract: Prostacyclin (PGI₂) is produced by the endothelium. It has potent anti-platelet and vasodilatory effects and plays an important role in maintaining haemostasis. Therapeutically, it has been used in the treatment of a number of peripheral atherosclerotic and vasospastic disorders. Unfortunately, PGI₂ use is associated with many vasodilatory side-effects including headache and hypotension. Iloprost is an analogue of PGI₂ and is better tolerated with less side-effects. In Hong Kong, we have used it in patients with refractory Raynaud's phenomenon and pulmonary hypertension secondary to connective tissue diseases. This article will provide a review and report on our local experience in the use of iloprost in these disorders.

Keywords: Connective tissue disorder, peripheral vascular disease, pulmonary hypertension, Rayanud's phenomenon, systemic sclerosis, vasospasm