

Online supplement:

Although the dose of RAPA has been shown to have a linear relationship to blood levels in the transplant literature, it has not been well documented in the rheumatologic literature (SLE, or now SSc). During this study we drew trough RAPA serum levels 2 weeks following any change in the RAPA dosing as well as every 8 weeks during the study. The initial serum levels to a standard 6 mg daily dose ranged widely from 7 ng/dl to 28 ng/ml. We then titrated the RAPA dose up or down as dictated by the serum level. Generally one change in dose was all that was required to produce a therapeutic blood level of RAPA. Further changes were made based on therapeutic RAPA serum levels.

Figure 1. The trough serum level of RAPA (Baseline) are shown at 2 weeks after starting the initial dose of 6 mg/day. The trough serum levels of RAPA shown at 3 and 6 months after starting RAPA demonstrate that target levels of 5-15 ng/ml can be reached easily.

