



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***CYTOTOXIC T-LYMPHOCYTES ANTIGEN 4 GENE POLYMORPHISM  
AND CYTOKINE LEVELS AMONG SEVERE HAEMOPHILIA A PATIENTS  
WITH AND WITHOUT INHIBITORS***

**ANANTHA KUMMAR A/L NADARAJAN**

**FPSK(m) 2021 43**



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By

**ANANTHA KUMMAR A/L NADARAJAN**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,  
Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Science**

**June 2020**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

**CYTOTOXIC T-LYMPHOCYTES ANTIGEN 4 GENE POLYMORPHISM AND CYTOKINE LEVELS AMONG SEVERE HAEMOPHILIA A PATIENTS WITH AND WITHOUT INHIBITORS**

By

**ANANTHA KUMMAR S/O NADARAJAN**

June 2020

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**Faculty : Medicine and Health Sciences**

Introduction: Haemophilia A (HA) is an inherited X-chromosome recessive disorder characterized by factor VIII (FVIII) deficiency. High risk of spontaneous bleeding is present among patients with severe HA (FVIII < 1%). FVIII concentrate infusion is the preferred treatment for patients with severe HA however, the formation of neutralizing antibodies known as inhibitor is one of the most significant complications. The neutralizing antibodies inhibits the coagulation activity against the infused concentrated FVIII. The aim of this study is to characterize the gene polymorphism encoding for -49 (A/G) and -318 (C/T) alleles of Cytotoxic T-Lymphocytes Antigen 4 (CTLA-4) which relate to the inhibitors development. Cytokines level of interleukin 4 (IL4), interleukin 10 (IL10) and tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF $\alpha$ ) were measured to link with inhibitors development. Materials/Methodology: Whole blood and DNA of 64 severe HA respondents with and without inhibitor collected from PDN were analysed for gene polymorphisms using the Polymerase Chain Reaction Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism (PCR-RFLP) and cytokines level were measured using the Enzyme-linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA). Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Results: There were 32 respondents with inhibitors and 32 respondents without inhibitors. Among the respondents, almost half (46.9%) of which had high titre inhibitors ( $\geq 5$  BU) and another half of the respondents (53.1 %) had low titre inhibitors. Cytokines measurement expressed mixed pattern among respondents. Higher expression of IL4 was noted in respondents with inhibitors especially those with inhibitors of  $\geq 5$  BU/ml but this was statistically not significant. Statistical comparison of CTLA-4 -49 (A/G) polymorphisms with IL4 showed homozygous G/G genotypes patients with inhibitors had higher level of IL4 concentration but statistically not significant. Patients with inhibitors titre of  $\geq 5$  BU/ml expressed higher level of IL10 concentration but TNF $\alpha$  concentration was expressed at a lower level. These findings were statistically significant

( $p < 0.05$ ). Discussion/Conclusion: This study found gene polymorphisms of CTLA-4 -49 (A/G) and CTLA-4 -318 (C/T) were not significantly different among severe HA with inhibitors and without inhibitors. However, the findings of the mixed pattern of cytokine profiles of IL4, TNF $\alpha$  and IL10 in severe haemophilia A patients seemed to be associated with the presence of FVIII inhibitors which requires further verification with a study using a larger sample size.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

## GEN POLIMORFISME PADA ANTIGEN 4 SITOTOKSIK T LIMFOSIT DAN TAHAP SITOKIN DIKALANGAN PESAKIT HEMOPHILIA A PARAH

Oleh

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Pengenalan: Hemofilia A merupakan sejenis penyakit keturunan herisian X-kromosomal yang dicirikan oleh kekurangan faktor VIII (FVIII). Pesakit hemofilia parah (FVIII < 1%) berisiko tinggi untuk mengalami pendarahan spontan. Infusi 'FVIII concentrate' merupakan rawatan pilihan bagi pesakit hemofilia parah namun penghasilan antibodi peneutralan ataupun lebih dikenali sebagai perencat menjadi satu komplikasi berat yang bererti. Antibodi peneutralan merencatkan aktiviti kogulasi dari infusi 'FVIII concentrate'. Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mencirikan gen polimorfisme yang mengekodkan alel -49 (A/G) dan -318 (C/T) pada 'antigen 4 sitotoksik T limfosit (CTLA-4)' dalam penghasilan antibodi perencat. Tahap sitokin termasuk IL4, IL 10 dan TNFA diukur untuk menilai kemungkinan ada hubungkait dengan penghasilan perencat. Bahan/Metodologi: Darah keseluruhan dan sampel DNA dari 64 responden hemophilia A parah dengan perencat dan tanpa perencat telah di ambil dari PDN dan dianalisa untuk gen polimorfisme menggunakan teknik 'Polymerase Chain Reaction Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism (PCR RFLP)'. Tahap sitokin pula telah diukur menggunakan teknik 'Enzyme-linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA)'. Data terkumpul telah dianalisa menggunakan 'Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)' versi 23.0. Penemuan: Seramai 32 responden adalah hemophilia A parah dengan perencat dan 32 darinya tanpa perencat. Daripada jumlah responden dengan perencat, hampir separuh (46.9%) mempunyai titer antibodi yang tinggi dan separuh lagi (53.1%) mempunyai titer antibodi yang rendah. Pengukuran tahap sitokin dikalangan responden menunjukkan corak yang bercampur. Paras IL4 yang lebih tinggi dikalangan responden dengan perencat terutamanya mereka yang mempunyai perencat titre  $\geq 5$  BU/ml dinamakan ianya tidak bererti secara statistic. Perbandingan statistik diantara polimorfisme CTLA-4 -49 (A/G) and IL4 menunjukkan pesakit genotip G/G 'homozygous' yang menghasilkan perencat mempunyai tahap IL4 lebih tinggi namun tidak bererti secara statistic. Pesakit dengan titre perencat melebihi 5 BU/ml menunjukkan paras IL10 yang tinggi dan tahap TNFalpha yang

rendah. Analisa menunjukkan penemuan ini tidak bererti secara statistik. Diskusi/Kesimpulan: Hasil kajian menunjukkan polimorfisme gen CTLA-4 -49 (A/G) dan CTLA-4 - 318 (C/T) tidak mempunyai perbezaan yang ketara dikalangan responden HA parah dengan perencat dan tanpa perencat. Walau bagaimanapun, corak bercampur profil sitokin IL4, TNF $\alpha$  dan IL10 dikalangan responden HA parah menunjukkan perhubungan dengan kehadiran perencat FVIII yang memerlukan pengenalpastian melalui penyelidikan yang menggunakan saiz sampel yang lebih besar.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my project supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Sabariah Md Noor from the Faculty of Medicine, UPM for her continuous knowledge sharing, guidance and support given during my entire term of study. Among her key contribution in this study include provision of facts and ideas, review of findings, review of write-ups, workflow guidance, motivation and many more whom without which would not have made this project possible.

I would also like to thank my internal project co-supervisor, Dr. Suhaili Abu Bakar @ Jamaludin from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, UPM for her assistance rendered during my laboratory work especially in the molecular areas of this project. A word of thanks also to my external co-supervisor, Dato' Dr. Faraizah Binti Abd Karim from the National Blood Centre Malaysia for her assistance rendered especially in facilitating the specimen collection and sample procurement for this project.

My sincere gratitude to my family members, friends, colleagues and acquaintances whom has continuously supported and assisted me in all ways possible making this research project a success. Last but not the least, I would like to thank the entire Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, UPM for giving me the opportunity to pursue my post-graduate studies here in this renowned institution. The knowledge and experience garnered here during my post-graduate studies will always be valuable to me.



This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A/A	Adenine / Adenine
A/G	Adenine / Guanine
APC	Antigen Presenting Cell
APTT	Activated Partial Thromboplastin Time
BT	Bleeding Time
BU	Bethesda Unit
C/C	Cytosine / Cytosine
C/T	cytosine / Thymine
CI	Confidence Interval
CTLA-4	Cytotoxic T Lymphocyte Antigen
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DNPs	Double nucleotide polymorphisms
ELISA	Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay
FFP	Fresh Frozen Plasma
FI	Factor 1 @ Fibrinogen
FII	Factor 2 @ Prothrombin
FIIa	Factor 2a @ Thrombin
FIX	Factor 9
FIXa	Factor 9a
FV	Factor 5
FVIII	Factor 8
FVIIIa	Factor 8a
FX	Factor 10
FXa	Factor 10a
FXI	Factor 11
FXII	Factor 12
FXIII	Factor 13
G/G	Guanine / Guanine
HA	Haemophilia A
HLA	Human Leucocyte Antigen
IL10	Interleukin 10
IL4	Interleukin 4
IQR	Inter Quatile Range
ITI	Immune Tolerance Induction
MHC	Major Histocompatibilty Complex
MNPs	Multiple nucleotide polymorphisms
OR	Odd Ratio
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PCR-RFLP	Polymerase Chain Reaction - Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism
pdFVIII	Plasma Derived Factor 8
PT	Prothrombin Time
RFLP	Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism
rFVIII	Recombinant Factor 8
SD	Standard Deviation
SNPs	Single nucleotide polymorphisms
T/T	Thymine / Thymine
TF	Tissue Factor

TF-FVIIa	Tissue Factor - Activated Factor 7a
TNF $\alpha$	Tumor Necrosis Factor Alpha
TNPs	Triple nucleotide polymorphisms
TT	Thrombin Time
vWF	von Willebrand Factor



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

Haemophilia A (HA) is a type of inherited bleeding disorder in which a person has low levels of clotting factors activities which results in coagulation disorder. Haemophilia A patient suffers from deficient levels of factor VIII (FVIII) in their blood which results in poor coagulation process. This X-linked disorder represents a high majority of hereditary deficiencies pertaining to blood clotting protein that occurs nearly one per five thousand male birth (Rohan *et al.*, 2019).

An individuals with an FVIII amount of  $< 1$  IU / dL in their blood are generally classified as severe haemophilia and comprise roughly half of the cases diagnosed. Moderate and mild haemophilia is diagnosed if a patient's FVIII levels between 1-5 IU/dL and  $> 5$  IU/dL respectively. The World Federation of Haemophilia (2006) reported that the prevalence of haemophilia A and haemophilia B noticeably differs among nations or countries. Statistical data reported by Management of Haemophilia, HTA Report, (2012) stated that "the prevalence of haemophilia A cases in Malaysia has increased from 5.6 per 100,000 males in 1998 to 6.6 per 100,000 males in 2006; where the mean was  $5.9 \pm 0.4$  per 100,000 males". The recent HA epidemiology in Malaysia still under reported.

Plasma fraction containing FVIII product was first introduced in 1970's as a treatment for haemophilia A. Although plasma fractions have been a choice of treatment, patients begin to develop complications resulting from the infusion of plasma fractions. These patients have a risk of developing inhibitors towards FVIII. These inhibitors are generally alloantibodies that binds to an epitope of FVIII to form a complex which is then recognized by the immune system as a foreign peptide. This was known as the most serious complication in haemophilia A patient with respect to the replacement therapy where the treatment becomes more challenging for the patients that develops inhibitors (De Alencar *et al.*, 2013).

Several studies revealed that immune genes and Human Leukocytes Antigen (HLA) genes are highly link to the production of haemophilia A inhibitors. TNF $\alpha$  gene polymorphisms is associated with inhibitors development among haemophilia A patients (Jan Astermark *et al.*, 2008). Recent studies showed that the polymorphisms of TNF $\alpha$ , CTLA-4 and IL10 have been involved in inhibitor risk among haemophilia patients (Pavlova *et al.*, 2009). In addition, TNF $\alpha$  gene could be useful marker which also has the potential as a modulator of the

immune response in replacement therapy for haemophilia A patient (Zhang *et al.*, 2011).

CTLA-4 protein is a receptor which is found on activated T cells. Its function is down regulation of T-cell activity by binding with B7 molecules in competing with CD28 molecules (Astermark, 2010). Polymorphism of this particular gene is suspected to increase the inhibitors production but a study conducted in India could not provide significant evidence (Pinto *et al.*, 2012). A study conducted in Sweden also did not show any significant statistical difference between the polymorphisms of CTLA-4 and inhibitor development (Pavlova *et al.*, 2009). Finding among the Chinese population found a lower frequency pattern for the -318 C/T polymorphism T allele in all haemophilia A patients (Lu *et al.*, 2012).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Inhibitors development in severe HA patients is the most challenging issue in the treatment of the disorder using factor replacement therapy. The inhibitors development leads to ineffective treatment outcomes which causes serious morbidity and mortality in HA patients. There were studies which suggested that the polymorphism of CTLA-4 gene and immune cytokines level are associated with inhibitors development in severe HA patients that were being treated with factor replacement but this finding is not clearly understood and requires further investigation. The findings from this research hope to facilitate a better understanding of the influence of immune genes particularly the CTLA-4 genes on the pathophysiology of inhibitors development. The findings hope to provide some additional alternative treatment strategies for severe HA patients particularly patients with inhibitors.

## **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The polymorphism of CTLA-4 genes have not been investigated among severe haemophilia A patients in Malaysia. This will be a case and control study looking into the association of these immune genes in different ethnic groups along with the risk and severity of inhibitor among severe haemophilia A in Malaysia. The findings of this study will be a foundation for future studies looking into the same aspect as well as investigating the choice of treatment approach in this group of patients.

## **1.4 Study objective**

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

To characterise the Cytotoxic T Lymphocyte Antigen 4 (CTLA-4) genes polymorphism and selected cytokines levels on inhibitor development in severe haemophilia A patients.

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

- 1) To determine the demographic factors (age, race) and clinical factors (inhibitor status, inhibitors level) distribution and frequency of severe haemophilia A patients in Malaysia.
- 2) To determine the prevalence of CTLA-4 gene polymorphism among severe haemophilia A patients with and without inhibitors development.
- 3) To determine the distribution and frequency of interleukin 4 (IL4), interleukin 10 (IL10) and TNF $\alpha$  cytokines levels according to patients' demographic and clinical factors (age, race, inhibitors status and inhibitor level)
- 4) To determine the association of patients' demographic and clinical factors (age, race, inhibitor status, inhibitors level) with CTLA-4 genes polymorphism among Malaysian severe haemophilia A patients with and without inhibitors.
- 5) To determine the association of cytokines levels according to patients' demographic and clinical factors (age, race, inhibitor level, inhibitors status) with CTLA-4 genes polymorphism of severe haemophilia A patients in Malaysia.

## **1.5 Hypothesis**

CTLA-4 gene polymorphisms and the increase in cytokines level is associated with the development of inhibitors among Malaysian patients with severe Haemophilia A.

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