

MUTATION SCREENING OF FAMILIAL MEDITERRANEAN FEVER IN THE AZERI TURKISH POPULATION: GENOTYPE-PHENOTYPE CORRELATION AND THE CLINICAL PROFILE VARIABILITY

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Familial Mediterranean fever is known as a most frequent hereditary autoin-Xammatory among the autoinflammatory syndromes characterised by fever, arthritis and serosal inflammation. Clinically, the foremost severe symptom of the disease is amyloidosis, which may cause to renal failure. MEFV renal failure consists of ten exons and conservative mutations clustered in exon ten (M694V, V726A, M680I, M694I) and exon two (E148Q) are considered more common mutations within this coding region and that they are detected with a distinct frequency changes in line with ethnicity. The aim of this study was to research the spectrum of mutations in Azeri Turkish population.

We evaluated the molecular test results of 82 patients and their parents from eighty families identified as having FMF clinical symptoms referred to Molecular Genetics Laboratory of the Department of Medical Genetics. Patients were referred by their physicians for MEFV mutation detection. The most frequent mutations were M694V respectively followed by M680I (G/C), V726A, M694I and E148Q mutations. A phenotypic variability was also ascertained between patients with different mutations and it must be considered within the daily management of FMF patients.

Key words: Familial Mediterranean fever, 16p13.3, Azeri Turkish

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INTRODUCTION

Familial Mediterranean fever (FMF, MIM249100) is one among the autosomal recessive disorders that characterised by continual attacks of fever and inflammation within the peritoneum, synovium and pleura, accompanied by pain. The clinical symptoms can be developed variously in different patients, sometimes even within the same family by recurring serositis leading to pain in the abdomen, chest, joints and muscles. Amyloidosis just like that seen in other chronic inflammatory diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, is that the most severe complication of FMF and leads to renal failure. Also, concerning these destructive arthritis and potentially life threatening secondary amyloidosis are assumed because the major long-term complications associated with the disease (PRAS *et al.* 1998; CAZENEUVE *et al.* 1999; LIVNEH *et al.* 1999; SHOHAT *et al.* 1999; TAMIR *et al.* 1999; BRIK *et al.* 2001; NOTARNICOLA *et al.* 2002; GERSHONI-BARUCH *et al.* 2003).

FMF is reported more frequently in the people with the origin from the Mediterranean region (non-Ashkenazi Jews, Armenians, Sephardic Jews, Turks, Greeks, Druze and Arabs), which are considered as classically at risk ethnic groups. This phenotype is less common in other populations of Mediterranean ancestry, with the carrier individuals and the severity of the clinical symptoms of the disease varying considerably both among and within different races.

The discovery of FMF causing gene (GenBank af018080) has prepared possibilities to study the distribution of various mutations in geographically and ethnically different groups (HOLMES *et al.* 1998; PRAS *et al.* 1998; AKSENTIJEVICH *et al.* 1999; CAZENEUVE *et al.* 1999; TAMIR *et al.* 1999; BOOTH *et al.* 2001; BRIK *et al.* 2001; MANSOUR *et al.* 2001; YILMAZ *et al.* 2001; NOTARNICOLA *et al.* 2002; AL-ALAMI *et al.* 2003; GERSHONI-BARUCH *et al.* 2003; ALDEA 2004; ATAGUNDUZ *et al.* 2004; AYESH *et al.* 2005; SARKISIAN *et al.* 2005; BELMAHI *et al.* 2006; MATTIT *et al.* 2006). The candidate gene is located on chromosome 16p13.3 and it has been recognized by positional cloning in the summer of 1997. The locus composes of 10 exons and encodes 781 amino acid protein that named pyrin/marenostrin that is predominantly expressed in polymorph nuclear cells as well as in cytokine activated monocytes. It seems that assist normally in keeping inflammation under control by inhibiting interleukin-1 (IL-1) processing and permitting macrophageapoptosis, without this control, an in appropriate full-blown inflammatory reaction occurs. To date, 218 MEFV gene alterations (polymorphisms/mutations) have been reported as responsible for the phenotypic variance seen in the disease that most of them are substitutions; 78 of them are missense, one nonsense, 39 silent mutations, 17 are located in introns, two in UTS, one is duplication, two are insertions and two are deletions (Holmes *et al.* 1998; Hull *et al.* 2003).

Between the investigated mutation frequencies in classically affected populations, five responsible for more than 70% of affected patient (V726A, M694V, M694I, M680I and E148Q7) (SHINAWI *et al.* 2000; GERSHONI-BARUCH *et al.* 2001). The tenth exon has the first four mutations reported in FMF and has the forty-eight of the MEFV mutations. Numerous reports have revealed that FMF may be provoked in carriers of a single mutation by factors unrelated to the other MEFV allele (LIVNEH *et al.* 2001). These secondary factors such as modifier genes, sex and ethnicity can alter the pattern and appearances of the disorder beside the detected mutations that can cause the different rate of clinical manifestation (DEWALLE *et al.* 1998; PRAS *et al.* 1998; AKSENTIJEVICH *et al.* 1999; TAMIR *et al.* 1999; YALÇINKAYA *et al.* 2000; LIVNEH *et al.* 2001; TOUITOU 2001; TOUITOU *et al.* 2001; NOTARNICOLA *et al.* 2002; CAZENEUVE *et al.* 2003; PADEH *et al.* 2003).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Subjects

This study was conducted in the Department of Medical Genetics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Medical Sciences, and Tabriz, Iran. Our patients were screened by their physicians for MEFV mutation detection.

Criteria for Diagnosis of FMF Patients

Our patients were selected from north-west of Iran with Azeri Turkish origin and clinical diagnosis of FMF has until recently been based upon the published clinical criteria (Livneh *et al.* 1997) and all FMF subjects were diagnosed by expert clinicians regarding to: 1- probands and/or sibs with two FMF causing mutations in the MEFV gene (homozygotes or compound heterozygotes); and 2- probands found to carry only one known mutation but who demonstrated characteristic FMF symptoms that met the diagnostic criteria and who had no family history of FMF that could suggest a carrier state by descent. The diagnosis of phenotype in siblings when the proband was found to have two FMF mutations has been evaluated for presence of these same mutations in the sibling and when the proband had only one known mutation, it was based on the detection of the sharing of two alleles with the proband. Asymptomatic individuals with carrying mutations in both alleles were considered affected. Written consent was obtained from the parents of the children.

Genomic DNA extraction

Genomic DNA was isolated from EDTA anticoagulated blood using the total DNA extraction kit (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany), according to manufacturer's instructions.

Mutation Analysis

To screen for these mutations, we have selected direct PCR cleavage methods based on the in compliance of constitutive restriction sites or the implementation of a restriction site in either the wild type or the mutant allele. Identification of mutations M694V and V726A were executed by PCR with primers (FMF-A: 5'-GAATGGCTACTGGGTGGAGAT-3') and (FMF-B: 5'-GGCTGTCACATTGTAAAAGGAG-3'). Amplification conditions were 94°C for 4 min followed by 30 cycles of: 40s at 94°C, 30s at 56.2°C, and 1 min at 72°C and 10 min incubation at 72°C. Normal allele does not have any *Hph*-I restriction site for M694V proximal to the mutation, on the contrary, creates a site in the PCR product of the mutant allele. Digestion with *Hph*-I the mutant allele yields one 118-bp and one 36-bp fragments and the normal allele gives a 154-bp uncut fragment. Mutant allele have an *Alu*-I restriction site in the PCR product for the V726A. Subsequent digestion by *Alu*-I, the normal allele yields a 154-bp uncut fragment whilst the mutant allele gives one 122-bp and one 32-bp fragment. Mutation detection for M694I was done by substituting a base in the sequence of primer FMF-C turn this way locates adjacent to the mutation locus and a *Bsp*H-I restriction site was produced in the normal allele. Designated conditions above were used to fragment amplification with FMF-C (5'-GCTACTGGGTGGTGATAATCAT-3') and FMF-B primers. After cleavage with *Bsp*H-I, the mutant allele gives a 149-bp uninterrupted fragment whilst yields a 130-bp and a 19-bp fragments for the normal allele. Mutation M680I was investigated by primers FMF-D (5'-TATCATTGTTCTGGGCTC-3') and FMF-E (5'-CTGGTACTCATTTTCCTTC-3'). The normal allele, following digestion with *Hinf*-I, shows one 124-bp and one 60-bp fragments whilst

the mutant allele yields a 184-bp uncut fragment. The amplification conditions for these primers were 94°C for 4 min that followed by 30 cycles of: 40s at 94°C, 45s at 55°C, and 1 min at 72°C and 10 min final incubation at 72°C. The PCR products were separated on 8% non-denaturing polyacrylamide gel. The comprising region of E148Q mutation was analyzed using primers F: 5'-GCCTGAAGACTCCAGACCACCCCG-3' and R: 5'-GGCCCTCCGAGGCCTTCTCTCTG-3' with an annealing temperature of 69°C. 157bp PCR product was restricted with BstNI, which recognizes the mutation.

We analyzed exon 2, 3, 4 and exon 10 of the MEFV gene for all patients by bidirectional sequencing method that did not appear above mentioned mutations. We tested 5' end of exon 2 by PCR amplification using the forward primer F: 5'-ATCATTTTGCATCTGGTTGTCCTTCC-3' and the reverse primer R: 5'-TCCCCTGTAGAAATGGTGACCTCAAG-3'. The PCR reaction was performed under the following conditions: 95°C for 2 minutes followed by 30 cycles of 95°C for 30s, 59.6°C for 30s and 72°C for 30s, and final extension at 72°C for 10 minutes. Also 3' end of exon 2 was amplified by forward primer F: 5'-GGCCGGGAGGGGCTGTCGAGGAAGC-3' and the reverse primer R: 5'-TCGTGCCCCGCCAGCCATTCTTCTC-3'. Exon 10 primers were forward primer F: 5'-CCAGAAGAACTACCCTGTCCC-3' and the reverse primer R: 5'-CAGAGCAGCTGGCGAATGTAT-3'. PCR products were purified with the High Pure PCR Product Purification kit (Roche, Germany) and sequenced directly; using specific primers. Twenty one individuals without any symptoms of FMF were also investigated in the study as controls. Also, exons 3 and 4 were amplified by forward primer F: 5'-CACAGCAGAATCTCGGGG-3' and the reverse primer R: 5'-GCACATCTCAGGCAAGGG-3'.

RESULTS

The MEFV gene has recently been identified and major missense mutations causing FMF were described (FRENCH FMF CONSORTIUM, 1997; INTERNATIONAL FMF CONSORTIUM, 1997). Using this panel of direct PCR based tests we characterized mutation bearing chromosomes from our patient group comprised 82 unrelated Azeri Turkish FMF patients, of whom 27 were homozygous M694V and 24 were heterozygous for one MEFV mutation (M694V=22; M694I =4; V726A=6; M680I=4; E148Q=2). Sixteen different mutations were identified in these cases; five of them were frequently observed (Table1), while others were only detected at the heterozygous state (Table1) in affected individuals.

Table 1: Frequencies of the studied founder mutations in analyzed alleles in the target population.

Mutation type	Number of alleles	Genotype Status		Total Allele frequency (%)
		Homozygous	Heterozygous	
M694V	76	27	22	46.34
M694I	14	5	4	8.54
V726A	18	6	6	10.97
M680I	22	9	4	13.41
E148Q	8	3	2	4.89
Other*	12	1	-	7.31
Unknown	14	-	-	8.54
Total	164			100

* R202Q, R653H, R408Q, S675N, G678E, M680L, I720M, I692del, M694L, T681I and A744SM mutations.

On the other hand, E148Q and R202Q mutations in exon 2 were detected in each homozygous and heterozygous states and R408Q in exon 3 were detected only in heterozygous state. The observed MEFV genotypes are summarized in Table 1. Since the majority of FMF patients can be carrier of one or two of five mutations, obtained clinical information from them showed phenotypic variability in compare with the genotypic data (Table2).

Table 2. Analysis of presenting clinical manifestations of FMF cases

Clinical manifestations	Score		
	1	2	3
Family history	Negative (67.8%)	Positive (32.2%)	-
Consanguinity	Negative (42.7%)	Positive (57.3%)	>5 days
Duration of each attack	3> days (27.6%)	3-5 days (69.1%)	>30 year (3.3%)
Frequency of attacks	10> year (12.2%)	10-30 year (71.4%)	(16.4%)
Fever	Negative (10.6%)	Up to 39 ^o C (12.3%)	<39 ^o C (77.1%)
Abdominal pain*	Negative (9.3%)	Moderate (19.1%)	Severe (71.6%)
Joint affection	Negative (52.7%)	Arthralgia (44.8%)	Arthritis (2.5%)
Chest pain*	Negative (41.2%)	Moderate (56.9%)	Severe (1.9%)
Myalgia*	Negative (54.1%)	Moderate (45.3%)	Severe (1.6%)
Operations	Negative (82.5%)	Positive (17.5%)	-

DISCUSSION

Polymorphism in the exon 2 region of the *DRB1* gene in Iranian Makuie sheep breed (fat-tailed sheep breed) was studied by PCR-RFLP. Compared to cattle and other animals, *Ovar-DRB1* locus is poorly studied in Iranian sheep breeds. Different methods have been used to study genetic variation in the *Ovar-DRB1* gene in various sheep breeds. Among different methods, PCR-RFLP analysis has been found a valuable technique in identifying genetic variation of the *DRB1* gene in farm animals (KONNAI *et al.*, 2003a, b; GRUSZCZYNSKA *et al.*, 2005).

Ten alleles and eighteen genotypes were identified in the exon 2 region of the *MHC-DRB1* gene in Makuie sheep breed population. The most frequent allele and genotype were A allele and AA genotype in the frequencies of 0.4756 and 0.317, respectively. Our results partly were in agreement with the results of KONNAI *et al.* (2003b) and GRUSZCZYNSKA *et al.* (2005). KONNAI *et al.* (2003a) reported alleles Q and P in Polish Heath and Polish Lowland sheep breeds with 6 and 13 different patterns respectively. GRUSZCZYNSKA *et al.* (2005) reported alleles B, E, D and F in Suffolk sheep breed. Other alleles (A, I, M, O and V) were not reported in sheep breeds until now. CHARON *et al.* (2000) have shown positive association between *MHC-DRB1* alleles with reduced faecal egg counts in parasitic infestations. Ovine *MHC* class II *DRB1* alleles reported to be associated with susceptibility to development of bovine leukemia virus-induced ovine lymphoma (NAGAOKA *et al.*, 1999). In recent researches we couldn't find any creature without *MHC* molecules. This truth can indicate that creatures without *MHC* couldn't survive longtime after their birth because any slight defect or mutation in *MHC* molecules would cause intense immunological disorder (DUKKIPATI *et al.*, 2006b).

Shannon's information index revealed high genetic diversity within studied population. The chi-square test showed significant ($P \geq 0.05$) deviation from Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium at the *MHC-DRB1* gene in the studied population. This was the first report on studying the polymorphism in the *MHC-DRB1* locus in Makuie sheep breed. The previous breeding programs in the most research centers of Iran were based on only phenotypic characters. This study may be considered as an introductory to understanding the genetic variability on native sheep breeds in the Azerbaijan regions by using molecular techniques that do not affect by environmental effects.

Table 3: A comparison of results obtained from various studies in population with different origins

Origin	Main gene mutation respectively by percent
Algeria	M694I, M694V, E148Q, A744S, M680I
Azeri Turks	M694V, M680I, V726A, M694I, E148Q
Armenia	M694V, V726A, M680I, E148Q, M694I, R761H
Egypt	V726A, M694V, M680I, E148Q, M694I
France	E148Q, M694V, M694I,
Greece	M694V, V726A, E148Q, M694I
Jews	M694V, V726A, M680I, M694I, E148Q
Jordan	M694V, V726A, M680I, E148Q, M694I
Italy	M694V, E148Q, M680I, M694I, V726A
Iraq	M694V, V726A, E148Q
Kuwait	V726A, M694I, M694V, A744S
Lebanon	M694V, V726A, M694I, M680I, E148Q
Morocco	M694V, M694I, A744S, M680L, E148Q
Palestine	M694V, V726A, M694I, M680I, E148Q
Syria	M694V, M694I, M680I, V726A, E148Q
Spain	M694V, E148Q
Tunisia	M694V, M694I, A744S, E148Q
Turks	M694V, E148Q, M680I, V726A, P369S

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**SKRINING MUTACIJA PORODIČNE MEDITERANSKE GROZNICE U AZERI
TURSKOJ POPULACIJI: KORELACIJA GENOTIPA I FENOTIPA I
VARIJABILNOST KLINIČKOG PROFILA**

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Izvod

Porodična Mediteranska groznica (FMF) je poznata kao najučestalija nasledna recesivna bolest unutar autoinflamatornog sindroma čije karakteristike su groznica, arthritis i ozbiljne upale. Klinički, simptom najistaknutiji symptom ove bolesti je amiloidoza, koja može da izazove otkazivanje funkcije bubrega. Gen kandidat koji kontroliše ovu bolest je lociran na hromozomu 16p13.3 koji je identifikovan pozicionim kloniranjem 1997. godine i kodira protein pyrin/marenostrin. Lokus čine 10 egzona i konzervativne mutacije grupisane u egzonu 10 ((M694V, V726A, M680I, M694I) i egzonu 2 ((E148Q). Cilj ovog rada je bio ispitivanje spektra mutacija u Azeri Turskoj populaciji. Vršena je ocena rezultata molekularnog testa kod 82 pacijenta i njihovih roditelja iz 8 porodica koje su imale ovu bolest (FMF) sa kliničkim simptomima uvrđenim u laboratoriji za molekularnu genetiku odeljenja medicinske genetike. Najučestalije utvrđene mutacije su M694V a zatim M680I (G/C), V726A, M694I and E148Q. Utvrđena je i fenotipska varijabilnost među pacijentima sa različitim mutacijama.

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