Vitamin D receptor alleles and C-reactive protein in hemodialysis patients

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Cardiovascular disease due to atherosclerosis is the major determinant of morbidity and mortality in uremic patients. Inflammation is essential in the development of atherosclerosis and markers of inflammation, in particular C-reactive protein, predict the cardiovascular risk. Vitamin D exerts its effects through the Vitamin D Receptor, coded for by a gene showing several polymorphisms associated with a variety of diseases and differential responses to Vitamin D. We evaluated the association between four Vitamin D Receptor polymorphisms (i.e. those identified by the restriction enzymes BsmI, ApaI, TagI and FokI) and serum level of C-reactive protein in 88 hemodialysis patients routinely treated with active Vitamin D (calcitriol). Absence or presence of the BsmI, ApaI, TagI, and FokI restriction sites were denominated B and b, A and a, T and t, F and f respectively. Our results show that the b, a, T, alleles were more frequent in patients with elevated serum level of C-reactive protein compared with patients with normal C-reactive protein level. The differences were statistically significant (p < 0.05). These results suggest that the Vitamin D Receptor alleles b, a, T could be considered novel risk factors in the pathogenesis of inflammation-related, atherosclerosis-dependent cardiovascular disease risk in uremic patients.

INTRODUCTION

Chronic inflammation plays an important role in the pathogenesis of cardiovascular disease in uremic patients (Panichi et al., 2000). Several studies demonstrated a strong association between elevated serum level of C-reactive protein (CRP), the prototypical acute phase response protein, and cardiovascular disease in general