A 40-bp Insertion/Deletion Polymorphism of Murine Double Minute2 (MDM2) Increased the Risk of Breast Cancer in Zahedan, Southeast Iran

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ABSTRACT

Background: MDM2 (Murine Double Minute2) is an oncoprotein that inhibits the P53 activity. Overexpression of MDM2 gene has been reported in several human tumors. In the present study, we aimed to evaluate the impact of 40-bp insertion/deletion (ins/del) polymorphism on the promoter of MDM2 and susceptibility to breast cancer in a sample of Iranian population. Methods: This case-control study was carried out on 236 patients with breast cancer and 203 healthy individuals. Genomic DNA was extracted from the whole blood by the salting-out method. The 40-bp ins/del polymorphism was determined by using polymerase chain reaction. Results: The findings indicated that MDM2 ins/del variant increased the risk of breast cancer in co-dominant- (odds ratio [OR] = 2.09, 95% CI = 1.14-3.85, P = 0.018, del/del vs. ins/ins), dominant- (OR = 1.49, 95% CI = 1.02-2.18, P = 0.038, ins/del + del/del vs. ins/ins), and recessive- (OR = 1.86, 95% CI = 1.03-3.34, P = 0.038, del/del vs. ins/ins + ins/del) tested inheritance models. The del allele increased the risk of breast cancer (OR = 1.48, 95% CI = 1.11-1.98, P = 0.008) compared with ins allele. Conclusions: Our result revealed that 40-bp ins/del polymorphism in the promoter of MDM2 increased the risk of breast cancer in an Iranian population. Further investigations with larger sample sizes and diverse ethnicities are needed to verify our findings. Iran. Biomed. J. 18 (4): 245-249, 2014

Keywords: Breast cancer, Murine Double Minute2 (MDM2), Polymorphism

INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is one of the most common forms of cancers among Iranian women [1]. The exact cause of breast cancer is still unknown, but genetic factors are shown to play essential roles in the pathogenesis and progress of breast cancer [2]. The p53 tumor suppressor protein, encoded by the p53 tumor suppressor gene, is an essential regulator of the cellular stress responses [3]. Among the genetic alterations, the tumor suppressor protein, P53, is a principal mediator of multiple cellular functions, including growth arrest, senescence, and apoptosis in response to cellular damage [4, 5]. The activity of P53 may either be inactivated or be attenuated in a vast majority of human cancers through mutations in the P53 gene or aberrant expression of proteins acting in the P53 pathway, such as Murine Double Minute2 (MDM2) [6].

MDM2, coded by the MDM2 gene, is a key negative regulator of P53. Besides its directly inhibiting the transcriptional activity of P53, MDM2 also functions as an E3 ubiquitin ligase responsible for the ubiquitination and proteolytic degradation of p53 [7]. Gene expression changes induced by p53 lead either to cell cycle arrest, which enables cells to repair DNA damage, or to apoptosis [8]. Overexpression of MDM2 is observed both in epithelial cells of transgenic mice with induced mammary carcinomas [9] and in various human tumors, including breast cancer [10, 11]. Consequently, increased levels of p53 inhibitors in tumor cells resulted in the loss of p53 function. In response to many forms of stresses, the association between p53 and MDM2 is disrupted, leading to p53 stabilization and activation [12].

The human MDM2 is located on chromosome 13q12.

promoter P1 functions principally in a non-stressed
to regulate MDM2 levels in stressed cells, while th e
(P2) starting in the intron 1 [13]. The promoter P2
contains a p53-responsive element and has been shown
has a basal promoter (P1) and an alternative promot er
(P2) of the

12q14.3-15 and contains 11 exons. The MDM2 gene
has a basal promoter (P1) and an alternative promoter
(P2) starting in the intron 1 [13]. The promoter P2
contains a p53-responsive element and has been shown
to regulate MDM2 levels in stressed cells, while th e
promoter P1 functions principally in a non-stressed
environment [13, 14]. Genetic variant rs2279744
(SNP309 T/G) within the intronic p53-responsive
promoter of the MDM2 has been shown to be
associated with the increased affinity of the transcrip
tional activator Sp1, resulting in higher levels of
MDM2 mRNA and protein. This SNP has been shown
to attenuate apoptotic activity and accelerate tumor
formation [15, 16]. Several studies have reported the
associations between rs2279744 variant and the risk
of different types of cancer [17-19].

There is little and controversial data regarding the
impact of 40-bp insertion/deletion (ins/del) poly-
morphism on the constitutive promoter of MDM2 gene
and cancer risk [20-22]. Therefore, the present study
was aimed to find out the possible association between
40-bp ins/del polymorphism in the promoter region of
MDM2 and breast cancer in a sample of Iranian
population.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Patients. This case-control study was performed on
236 histopathologically confirmed breast cancer
patients and 203 age-matched women with no history
of cancer of any type (as the control group) in a
Southeast Iranian population. The clinicopathologic
characteristics of the patients have been described in
detail previously [23]. Ethical approvals for
recruitment were obtained from local Ethics
Committee of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences
(Iran), and an informed consent was obtained from all
patients and healthy individuals. Blood samples from
patients and healthy controls were collected in EDTA
tubes, and DNA were extracted using salting-out
method as described previously [24].

Genotyping. Genotyping of 40-bp ins/del polymorphism of MDM2 was performed using forward
5′-GACCACATGTTAAGGAAG-3′ and reverse
5′-TGACTCCACTTCTTCCAC-3′ primers. PCR
was performed using commercially available PCR
premix (AccuPower PCR PreMix; Bioneer, Daejeon,
South Korea) according to the manufacturer’s
recommended protocol. The PCR cycling conditions
were initial denaturation at 95°C for 5 min, followed
by 30 cycles of 30 s at 95°C, 25 s at 59°C, 30 s at
72°C, with a final extension of 72°C for 10 min. The
product sizes for the heterozygous ins/del production
were 287 and 247 bp, respectively. The PCR products
were verified onto 2% agarose gels containing 0.5
μg/ml ethidium bromide, and observed under a UV
light (Fig. 1). To ensure genotyping quality, we
regenotyped random samples (approximately 20% of
total samples) and found no genotyping mistake.

Statistical analysis. Statistical analysis was
calculated using statistical package SPSS 18 software.
Data were analyzed by independent sample t-test and
χ2 test. The association between MDM2 ins/del variant
and breast cancer was assessed by computing the odds
ratio (OR) and 95% CI from logistic regression
analyses. A P value less than 0.05 were considered
statistically significant.

RESULTS

The study group consists of 236 breast cancer
patients with an average age of 47.1 ± 12.3 years and
203 healthy women with a mean age of 45.3 ± 12.8
years. No significant difference was found between the
groups concerning age (P = 0.136).

The genotype and allele frequencies of MDM2
ins/del polymorphism in breast cancer patients and
healthy subjects are shown in Table 1. The finding
indicated that ins/del variant increased the risk of
breast cancer in co-dominant- (OR = 2.09, 95% CI =
1.14-3.85, P = 0.018, del(del vs. ins/ins), dominant-
(OR = 1.49, 95% CI = 1.02-2.18, P = 0.038, ins/del +
del(del vs. ins/ins) and recessive- (OR = 1.86, 95% CI
= 1.03-3.34, P = 0.038, del(del vs. ins/ins + ins/del)
tested inheritance models.

The deletion allele increased the risk of breast cancer
(OR = 1.48, 95% CI = 1.11-1.98, P = 0.008) in
comparison with insertion allele. The genotype
frequency of the MDM2 ins/del polymorphism was
tested for Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium separately in
cases and controls. The genotype in controls ($\chi^2 = 2.77, P = 0.100$) but not in cases ($\chi^2 = 6.88, P = 0.008$) was in Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium.

In breast cancer patients, the ins/del polymorphism was not associated with age, tumor grade, disease stage, estrogen/progesterone receptor, and HER2/neu status (data not shown).

**DISCUSSION**

In the present study, we investigated the impact of 40-bp ins/del polymorphism of $MDM2$ on risk of breast cancer in a sample of Iranian population. The results showed that the del allele increased the risk of breast cancer in our population, and carriers of del allele were at 1.5-fold higher risk of breast cancer than those subjects with the Ins allele. Additionally, the del/del genotypes in the co-dominant and recessive models as well as the ins/del + del/del genotype in the dominant model were risk factors for developing breast cancer in our population. In contrast to our findings, Ma et al. [22] have found no association between $MDM2$ 40-bp ins/del polymorphism and breast cancer. Hu et al. [21] have found that 40-bp ins/del polymorphism in the $MDM2$ gene is associated with risk of lung cancer in Chinese population. Dong et al. [20] reported that $MDM2$ ins/del polymorphism increases the risk of hepatocellular carcinoma in a Chinese population. With respect to the critical role of $MDM2$ in tumorigenesis, it is expectable that individuals who carry the 40-bp deletion allele may change transcription factor binding site. Higher expression of $MDM2$ increases the lifetime risk of developing breast cancer.

The $p53$ tumor suppressor has a key role in orchestrating cellular responses to numerous types of stresses, including DNA damage and oncogene activation with apoptosis, cell-cycle arrest, DNA repair, and cell metabolism [21, 25]. Dysfunction and mutations of $p53$ have been established in most human cancers, leading to a deregulated $p53$ activity that allows cells to proliferate and survive [26]. Many proteins regulate the activity of $p53$, and one of the most extensively studied regulators of $p53$ is $MDM2$ oncoprotein. The $p53$ activity can be regulated by $MDM2$ in different means, and even modest alterations of $MDM2$ levels can affect the $p53$ pathway [27]. Firstly, $MDM2$ directly binds to the $p53$ transactivation domain, consequently inhibiting its transcriptional activity. Secondly, $MDM2$ promotes ubiquitination and degradation of $p53$ by functioning as an E3 ubiquitin ligase [7, 28]. Finally, $MDM2$ binds $p53$ in the nucleus and shuttle it into the cytoplasm, promoting $p53$ degradation. Notably, a negative feedback loop exists between $p53$ and $MDM2$; $p53$ stimulates the transcription of $MDM2$, and in turn the $MDM2$ protein inhibits $p53$ activity [29].

$MDM2$ overexpression is detected in a number of human cancers [30-32]. Since $MDM2$ is a key component of the $p53$-mediated DNA-damage response, promoter polymorphism in this gene might influence this highly regulated pathway by modifying cellular $MDM2$ protein levels [33]. It has been proposed that functional variants in promoter regions can lead to variable gene expression levels [34]. Polymorphisms in gene promoters, involved in DNA-damage responses and apoptosis, could have an impact on individual’s vulnerability to cancer development [2, 23, 35].

In summary, we have provided the evidence that the 40-bp ins/del polymorphism in the promoter of $MDM2$
gene increases the risk of breast cancer in a sample of Iranian population. However, larger sample sizes with different ethnicities are desired to validate our findings.

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