LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
EDİTÖRE MEKTUP
The prevalence of inflammatory bowel disease in patients with primary sclerosing cholangitis

Primer sklerozan kolanjitli hastalarda inflamatuvar barsak hastalığı prevalansı

To the Editor

The prevalence of primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC) in patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) was reported to be between 2.5-7.5% in the world (1, 2). In our country, several reports have documented the prevalence of PSC in patients with IBD (3, 4). They revealed that results were similar to those of western origin studies. However, insufficient data exists about the prevalence of IBD in patients with PSC in Turkey. Thus, we aimed to determine the prevalence of IBD in our patients with PSC, and to compare the clinical features of patients with PSC coexisting with IBD (Group A) or not (Group B). Towards this purpose, we reviewed the patients diagnosed as sclerosing cholangitis by endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography and/or liver biopsy in our department between 2000 and 2004. Patients with secondary sclerosing cholangitis (SSC) were excluded. Patients with PSC were divided into two groups according to the presence (Group A) or absence (Group B) of IBD. Clinical features were compared between the two groups.

There were 44 patients with sclerosing cholangitis (30 patients with PSC and 14 patients with SSC). The mean age at diagnosis of the 30 patients with PSC was 38.2 years (range: 16-57 years) with a male-to-female ratio of 17:13. Group A consisted of 13 patients (ulcerative colitis: 13, Crohn's disease: 0). Prevalence of IBD in patients with PSC was found to be 43.3% (13/30). Among them, 11 (84.6%) patients were found to have pancolitis, and 2 (15.4%) patients were found to have distal colitis. Liver transplantation was performed in 8 (26.6%) patients (Group A: 4, Group B: 4). Seven (23.3%) patients were diagnosed to have cholangiocarcinoma. No characteristic difference was found between Group A and Group B (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of features between Group A (PSC with ulcerative colitis) and Group B (PSC without ulcerative colitis

Features	Group A	Group B
No. of patients	13 (43.3%)	17 (56.7%)
Male/Female	7/6	10/7
Mean age at diagnosis (years-range)	37.9 (16-56)	38.4 (23-57)
Liver transplantation	4/13 (30.7%)	4/17 (23.5%)
Death after transplantation*	1/4 (25%)	0/4 (0%)
Cholangiocarcinoma	3/13 (23%)	4/17 (23.5%)
Overall death**	3/13 (23%)	4/17 (23.5%)

*Pre-operative investigations failed to show the presence of malignancy. Histopathological examination of explant liver revealed the presence of cholangiocarcinoma in this patient. **Reason for death was the presence of cholangiocarcinoma for all of the patients.

The overall prevalence of IBD in patients with PSC was reported to be between 50-75% (1, 2). A survey of 23 hospitals in Spain examined the reported cases of PSC from 1984 to 1988; IBD was present in 44.2% of 43 patients (5). In another report of Bambha et al., 22 patients met diagnostic criteria for PSC from 1976-2000, and 73% of cases had IBD, with the majority having ulcerative colitis (6). Parlak et al. from Turkey reported 16 PSC patients on whom they performed endoscopic treatment, and 10 (62.5%) patients among them had IBD (7).

In conclusion, prevalence of IBD in our patients with PSC was found to be similar to results of western origin studies. In addition, presence of IBD did not affect the clinical features of our patients with PSC.

Address for correspondence: Fatih TEKİN
Department of Gastroenterology, Ege University Medical Faculty, Bornova 35100, İzmir, Turkey
Phone: +90 232 388 34 76 • Fax: +90 232 342 77 64
E-mail: drtekinfatih@yahoo.com

Manuscript received: 15.08.2005 **Accepted:** 22.09.2005

REFERENCES

1. Lee YM, Kaplan MM. Primary sclerosing cholangitis. N Engl J Med 1995; 332: 924-33.
2. Fausa O, Schrumpf E, Elgjo K. Relationship of inflammatory bowel disease and primary sclerosing cholangitis. Semin Liver Dis 1991; 11: 31-9.
3. Parlak E, Kosar Y, Ulker A, et al. Primary sclerosing cholangitis in patients with inflammatory bowel disease in Turkey. J Clin Gastroenterol 2001; 33: 299-301.
4. Ozdil S, Akyuz F, Pinarbasi B, et al. Ulcerative colitis: analyses of 116 cases (do extraintestinal manifestations effect the time to catch remission?). Hepatogastroenterology 2004; 51: 768-70.
5. Escorsell A, Pares A, Solis-Herruzo JA, et al. Epidemiology of primary sclerosing cholangitis in Spain. Spanish Association for the Study of the Liver. J Hepatol 1994; 21: 787-91.
6. Bambha K, Kim WR, Talwalkar J, et al. Incidence, clinical spectrum, and outcomes of primary sclerosing cholangitis in a United States community. Gastroenterology 2003; 125: 1364-9.
7. Parlak E, Kuran SO, Disibeyaz S, et al. Endoscopic treatment of primary sclerosing cholangitis. Turk J Gastroenterol 2004; 15: 144-8.

Necla OSMANOĞLU, Fatih TEKİN, Ömer ÖZÜTEMİZ, Galip ERSÖZ, Oktay TEKEŞİN

Department of Gastroenterology, Ege University, School of Medicine, İzmir