

Meta-analysis shows no association of CYP3A5*3 variant with acute renal rejection in kidney-transplant patients receiving tacrolimus-based immunotherapy

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Received: 11 November 2019

Accepted: 20 December 2019

ePublished: 27 December 2019

Keywords: Tacrolimus, CYP3A5, rs776746, acute renal rejection, meta-analysis

Abstract

Life expectancy of kidney-transplanted patients is very low due to many causes, but allograft rejection is the central issue in organ transplantation. Immunosuppressive agents such as tacrolimus can solve this problem by inhibiting calcineurin. Tacrolimus has a very low therapeutic index and showed extensive intra-patient and inter-patient variability. The current meta-analysis is investigating the association between CYP3A5*3 (rs776746) variant and acute renal rejection (ARR) in tacrolimus treated population. To retrieve data, papers published on this subject were collected from PubMed, Google Scholar and Embase databases. Odds ratios (ORs) at 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were estimated to evaluate the association between CYP3A5*3 variant and risk of ARR. The pooled OR and CIs were calculated using random effect model. Heterogeneity was determined through Cochrane Q test and I-square statistic. Between-study heterogeneity was assessed through sensitivity analysis. Funnel plots and Egger's test were performed to check publication bias. This meta-analysis included 27 papers comprising 790 ARR and 2981 no rejection subjects. No association between CYP3A5*3 and ARR risk was found in overall (Dominant model OR=1.25; 95% CI 0.96-1.64; $P=0.097$; I-square: 42%) or in subgroup ethnicities such as Asian (Dominant model OR=1.20; 95% CI 0.79-1.85; $P=0.302$; I-square: 53.4%) and Caucasian (Dominant model OR=1.15; 95% CI 0.89-1.47; $P=0.282$; I-square: 33.7%) populations. There was no significant publication bias found in this meta-analysis. Based on current meta-analysis it can be concluded that there is no association between CYP3A5*3 variant and ARR in kidney-transplanted patients receiving tacrolimus-based immunotherapy.

Citation: Rakshit S, Khare RL, Lakkakula BVKS. Meta-analysis shows no association of CYP3A5*3 variant with acute renal rejection in kidney-transplant patients receiving tacrolimus-based immunotherapy. J Prev Epidemiol. 2019;4(2):e18.

Introduction

Kidney is one of the most vital organs of the body. It works as a blood purifier by eliminating toxic molecule through urine by glomerular filtration. Any alteration in the filtration by drug or disease may cause kidney injury. Acute renal failure or acute kidney injury (AKI) is a clinical syndrome characterized by the rapid loss of the kidney's excretory function (1). Incidence of AKI greatly varies between populations due to variety in geographical settings. In developing countries hypovolemia and diarrhea and in developed countries open-heart surgery is the common cause for the development of AKI (2). Over time, incidence of AKI has increase (3). AKI is very common in hospitalized patients; approximately half of the elderly ICU patients develop AKI (4). Kidney failure or end-stage renal disease (ESRD) is traditionally regarded as the most serious outcome of chronic kidney disease (CKD). In developed countries, CKD is often associated with old age, diabetes,

hypertension, obesity, and cardiovascular disease, with diabetic glomerulosclerosis and hypertensive nephrosclerosis and presumed pathological entities (5, 6). In Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, glomerulonephritis, herbal medication by rural people and antiretroviral therapies have contributed in the formation of CKD (7).

Kidney transplantation is a surgical procedure to place a healthy kidney into a patient with end-stage kidney disease. Compared to general population, life expectancy in patients undergoing kidney transplantation is lower. As allograft rejection becomes the central issue in organ transplantation, successful allograft function is needed (8). Immunosuppressive agents are best for induction, maintenance, and reversal of established rejection by inhibiting calcineurin. Tacrolimus is one of calcineurin inhibitors that improved short-term patient and graft outcomes by decreasing the incidence of rejection (9). Tacrolimus has a very low therapeutic index and showed



Core tip

Kidney transplantation is a surgical procedure to place a healthy kidney into a patient with end-stage kidney disease. Acute renal allograft rejection is the major issue in kidney transplantation. Tacrolimus is the primary immunosuppressant used in kidney transplant patients. Several studies have investigated the influence of CYP3A5 genetic polymorphism on tacrolimus daily dose requirements and acute rejection in kidney transplant patients. Our meta-analysis of CYP3A5*3 studies indicated that this polymorphism is not associated with the allograft rejection.

extensive intra-patient and inter-patient variability (10). Tacrolimus is metabolized by CYP3A, expected to express in all individuals. Genetic polymorphisms in CYP3A5 gene (CYP3A5*3) influence the tacrolimus trough blood levels. CYP3A5*3 is a common transition in intron 3 of the CYP3A5 gene, which introduces a frame shift during translation and results in truncated nonfunctional protein (11). The studies related to the association of CYP3A5*3 with ARR in kidney-transplanted patients receiving tacrolimus-based immunotherapy are inconclusive. Hence, we performed a meta-analysis to investigate the role of CYP3A5*3 and allograft rejection in renal transplant recipients.

Methods**Search strategy**

To identify studies addressing the association between CYP3A5*3 polymorphism and risk of acute rejection in population treated with tacrolimus after renal transplantation, a comprehensive literature search was performed in PubMed, Google scholar and Embase. The following keywords were used to search literature: kidney transplantation, renal transplant, acute renal rejection, tacrolimus, CYP3A5*3, and rs776746. Further, references were manually reviewed to identify potentially relevant articles.

Study selection

Relevant studies were included in our meta-analysis only when they met the following criteria. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) studies included the effect of CYP3A5*3 genetic polymorphism on adult renal transplant recipients treated with tacrolimus; (2) studies having CYP3A5*3 genotypes information for both acute rejection and no rejection patients. Studies were excluded from meta-analysis if (1) article published in language other than English; (2) article without acute rejection and no rejection patients data as well as genotypes. Patients received tacrolimus for at least six months were considered for the study.

Data extraction and quality assessment

Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria stated above, two authors independently evaluated every study for inclusion. The following information such as first author, year of publication, ethnicity; CYP3A5*3 genotypes

of patients with acute rejection and no rejection were extracted from the selected papers (12-38).

Statistical analysis

To evaluate the strength of the relationship between genotypes and allograft rejection events after tacrolimus treatment, individual as well as pooled OR with 95% confidence intervals (95% CIs) were calculated. $P < 0.05$ was considered significant. Statistical heterogeneity among all included studies was calculated by Q-statistic and I-square value. In case of significant heterogeneity, individual study effects were pooled using a random effects model otherwise fixed effects model was employed. To know the source of heterogeneity sensitivity analysis and subgroup analysis by ethnicity (Asians and Caucasians) was performed. As most of the studies have not given all genotypes were separately in allograft rejection groups and no rejection groups, we could not analyse the Hardy-Weinberg proportions and genetic association was tested only under dominant model (*1/*1+*1/*3 vs. *3/*3). Meta-analysis for the study was performed using MetaGenyo web tool (39).

Results**Study characteristics**

Figure 1 represent search strategy, eligibility and included studies for current meta-analyses. As of May 2020, total 93 records were identified in different database after rigorous searching by both the author. Duplicate records (n=37) were immediately removed after confirmation. After thorough screening of all the records, we found 14 such records that involved either other SNPs or a different drug were excluded. Upon full paper screening, some records that have incomplete information about genotype frequencies of patients were excluded (n=10). After exclusion, we considered total 32 records suitable

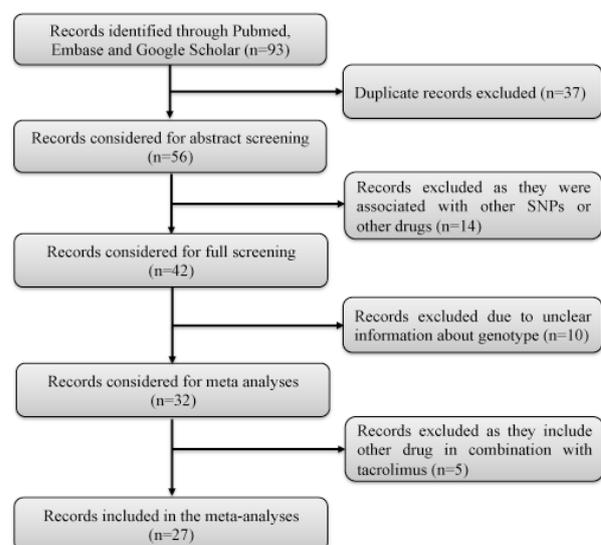


Figure 1. Flow Chart of Study Selection.

for meta-analyses. Out of 32 records, 5 records that used other drug combination with tacrolimus were eliminated from the meta-analysis. Finally, 27 records comprising 790 cases (allograft rejection) and 2981 controls (no rejection) were considered for the meta-analyses. The CYP3A5 gene expressor (*1/*1+*1/*3) and non-expressor (*3/*3) genotypes were presented in [Table 1](#).

Association study

Forest plot of each individual studies as well as pooled studies (n=27) involving association of CYP3A5*3 and ARR after tacrolimus treatment were presented in [Figure 2](#). No association between CYP3A5*3 and ARR risk was found in overall (Dominant model OR=1.25; 95% CI 0.96-1.64; $P=0.097$; I^2 : 42%) or in subgroup ethnicities such as Asian (Dominant model OR=1.20; 95% CI 0.79-1.85; $P=0.302$; I^2 : 53.4%) and Caucasian (Dominant model OR=1.15; 95% CI 0.89-1.47; $P=0.282$; I^2 : 33.7%) populations ([Table 2](#)).

Sensitivity analysis and publication bias

According to the I^2 value (41.8%), there is substantial heterogeneity between studies. We employed sensitivity

analysis to confirm robustness of our study. Each time by omitting an independent study we did pooled analysis. We did not find any substantial difference in the pooled ORs ([Figure 3](#)). Begg's funnel plot showed symmetry in the shape indicating no publication bias ([Figure 4](#)), which was further confirmed by Egger's test (Dominant model, $P=0.221$).

Discussion

The results of the present meta-analysis did not support the hypothesis that specific genotypes at the CYP3A5*3 loci modestly increase the risk of allograft rejection in kidney-transplant patients receiving tacrolimus-based immunotherapy. The current meta-analysis was free from any publication bias with significant between-study heterogeneity.

The CYP3A activity of an individual is the sum activity of the family of CYP3A genes, including CYP3A5 that represents at least 50% of the total hepatic CYP3A content. Higher CYP3A5 expression (between 21 and 204 pmol/mg protein) is determined by the presence of at least one CYP3A5*1 allele. Individuals homozygous for CYP3A5*3 shows reduced levels of intestinal or hepatic CYP3A5 (<21

Table 1. The distribution of CYP3A5 gene expressor and non-expressor genotypes in renal allograft recipients undergoing tacrolimus-based immunosuppression

Reference	Country	Ethnicity	Genotyping	Rejected allografts		Non-rejecting allografts	
				CYP3A5 Expressor	CYP3A5 Non-expressor	CYP3A5 Expressor	CYP3A5 Non-expressor
Hesselink et al (12)	Netherlands	Caucasian	PCR-RFLP	4	9	13	36
MacPhee et al (13)	UK	Caucasian	PCR-RFLP	7	43	8	60
Roy et al (14)	Canada	Caucasian	PCR-RFLP	3	8	6	27
Tirelli et al (15)	Italy	Caucasian	DNA Sequencing	4	3	3	16
Ferraresso et al (16)	Italy	Caucasian	DNA Sequencing	5	5	3	16
Hesselink et al (17)	Switzerland	Caucasian	PCR-RFLP	2	18	24	93
Quteineh et al (18)	France	Caucasian	TaqMan Genotyping	7	9	27	93
Singh et al (19)	India	Asian	PCR-RFLP	17	10	19	27
Satoh et al (20)	Japan	Asian	PCR-RFLP	3	8	16	14
Chen et al (21)	China	Asian	PCR-RFLP	9	2	29	27
Kuypers et al (22)	Belgium	Caucasian	PCR-RFLP	11	23	41	229
Min et al (23)	Korea	Asian	TaqMan Genotyping	21	17	8	16
Wang et al (24)	America	Caucasian	DNA Sequencing	3	11	36	58
Glowacki et al (25)	France	Caucasian	TaqMan Genotyping	5	17	32	149
Santoro et al (26)	Brazil	Caucasian	PCR-RFLP	7	8	55	83
Cho et al (27)	Korea	Asian	TaqMan Genotyping	4	4	22	40
Gervasini et al (28)	Spain	Caucasian	PCR-RFLP	1	15	9	78
Ro et al (29)	Korea	Asian	TaqMan Genotyping	21	30	90	108
Li et al (30)	China	Asian	SNaPshot assay	33	37	91	79
Cheng et al (31)	China	Asian	TaqMan Genotyping	3	2	21	9
Yaowakulpatana et al (32)	Thailand	Asian	TaqMan Genotyping	5	6	78	75
Flahault et al (33)	France	Caucasian	TaqMan Genotyping	55	95	177	250
Niioka et al (34)	Japan	Asian	PCR-RFLP	43	42	54	81
Lloberas et al (35)	Spain	Caucasian	TaqMan Genotyping	5	32	37	191
Gervasini et al (36)	Spain	Caucasian	TaqMan Genotyping	3	16	13	105
Udomkamjananun et al (37)	Thailand	Asian	TaqMan Genotyping	8	9	23	7
Fernando et al (38)	India	Asian	HRM genotyping	18	4	42	37

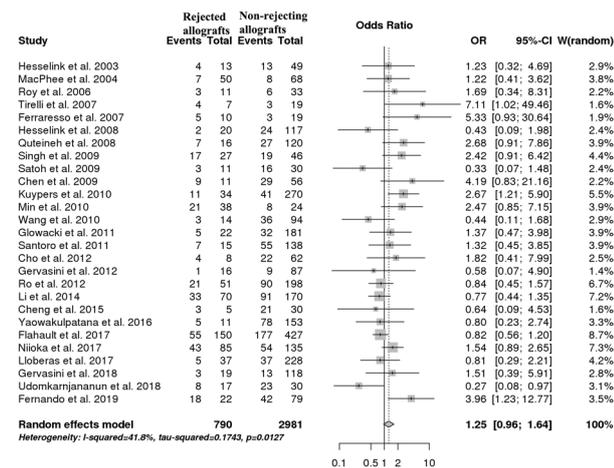


Figure 2. Forest plot depicting the association between CYP3A5*3 polymorphism and allograft outcome.

pmol/mg protein) (11). Hence polymorphisms in CYP3A5 may be the most important genetic contributor to inter-individual variations in CYP3A-dependent drug clearance. Kidney transplant patients with CYP3A5 polymorphism showed a modulated tacrolimus concentration/dose ratio, which severely affects nephrotoxicity. It was reported that CYP3A5 nonexpressor genotype (CYP3A5 *3/*3) exhibited significant lower dose requirement than CYP3A5 expressors (CYP3A5 *1/*1 or *1/*3) after transplantation as those patients require higher doses to achieve target blood concentrations (40). This clearly suggests that the recipient's genotypes are responsible for tacrolimus metabolism after transplantation. Further, the CYP3A5 expresser genotypes in transplant recipient patients treated with tacrolimus have a higher risk of acute rejection (15, 22, 38). However, majority of studies did not demonstrate this increased risk of acute rejection in individuals carrying CYP3A5 expressor genotypes (12,28-36).

Results of our meta-analysis are consistent with one of the previous meta-analyses in which the CYP3A5 polymorphisms had no effect on the acute rejection rates in renal transplant patients undergoing tacrolimus therapy (41). In contrast to this, a subsequent meta-analysis demonstrated that the expresser genotypes increase risk of

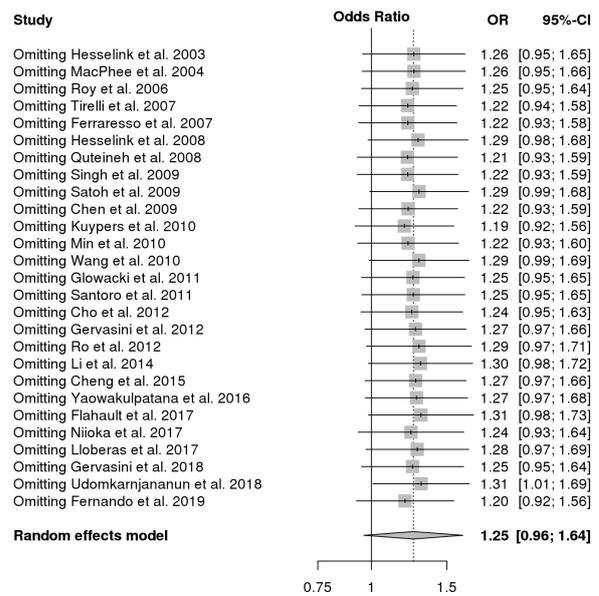


Figure 3. Forest plot for the sensitivity analysis in the meta-analysis

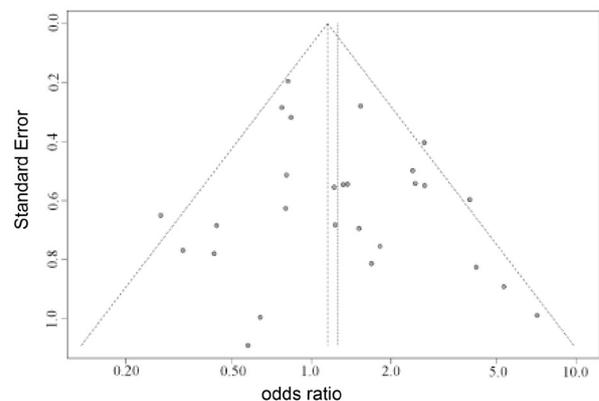


Figure 4. Begg's funnel plot depicting publication bias.

acute rejection and tacrolimus-related nephrotoxicity (42). The dissimilarity in the results could be due to variation in the CYP3A5 expressor allele frequency ranging from 0.14 among sub-Saharan Africans to >0.95 in European populations (43-45). This meta-analysis showed significant level of unexplained heterogeneity that might

Table 2. Meta-analysis of the association of CYP3A5*3 polymorphism on allograft outcome

Dominant Model (*1/*1+*1/*3 vs. *3/*3)	Overall	Ethnicity	
		Caucasian	Asian
Number of studies	27	12	15
Test of heterogeneity	I ² %	33.7	53.4
	P value	0.099	0.015
Test of association	Model	Fixed effect	Random effect
	OR (95% CI)	1.15 (0.89-1.47)	1.20 (0.79-1.85)
	P value	0.282	0.302
Publication bias	Egger's test P value	0.170	0.784

have aroused due to variations in the criteria adopted for determination of the incidence of acute rejection in the independent studies.

In summary, this meta-analysis revealed that the CYP3A5 expressers (CYP3A5*1/*1 or *1/*3) genotypes are not associated with a higher risk of tacrolimus-related acute renal rejection. Further research considering the donor-recipient genotypes is still needed to investigate the clinical and biological implications of this association.

Authors' contribution

Study conceived; BVKSL. Data collected; BVKSL, RLK and SR. Data analyzed; BVKSL, RLK and SR. Wrote the paper; BVKSL, RLK and SR. All authors have seen and approved the manuscript.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues (including plagiarism, data fabrication, double publication) have been completely observed by the author.

Funding/Support

None.

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