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Osteopontin as a marker for response to pegylated interferon alpha-2b treatment in chronic HCV Saudi patients

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Background: Many recent studies support the idea that osteopontin (OPN) can be used to predict the success of pegylated interferon (PEG IFN) alpha-2b/ribavirin therapy in chronic HCV patients. Our aim was to investigate the role of plasma OPN and its gene polymorphism at nt – 443 in response to PEG IFN in Saudi patients with chronic HCV.

Methods: Blood was collected from 87 patients with chronic hepatitis C before treatment, then patients received PEG IFN α2b plus ribavirin combination therapy. Another 25 healthy subjects, matched for age and sex to patients, were enrolled as controls. Single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) in OPN at nt–443 and its blood level were analyzed.

Results: The frequency of patients who reached sustained virological response (SVR) was increased in patients with T/T at nt–443 than in those with C/C or C/T. Also the frequency of T allele was increased in responders than in non-responders. However, this increase was not statistically significant. The blood level of OPN was significantly increased in non-responders (Mean±SD=37.21±3.9) in comparison to responders (Mean±SD=33.22±4.1).

Conclusion: Osteopontin blood level can be considered as reliable predictor to PEG IFN α2b plus ribavirin therapy in Chronic HCV Saudi patients.

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