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Evaluation of Albumin messenger Ribo Nuclear Acid (mRNA) by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) in Comparison to Alpha Feto Protein (AFP) by Chemiluminescence in Liver Disease

A Thesis

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Plasma albumin mRNA as a non-invasive Marker to predict liver injury in chronic Hepatitis C and Hepatocellular carcinoma patients

ABSTRACT

Background: Analysis of circulating nucleic acids in plasma, such as cell free RNA offers an avenue for non-invasive monitoring of a variety of physiological and pathological conditions. **Aims:** Because albumin is the most abundant protein in the body and is synthesized by the liver, the current study was designed to assess plasma albumin mRNA (ALB mRNA), as a non-invasive diagnostic marker of liver injury in chronic HCV (CHC) and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC).

Patients and Methods: The study included 50 patients, 20 patients had CHC and 20 were of HCC as well as 10 healthy control subjects. Patients were subjected to clinical examination, abdominal ultrasonography, CT for HCC cases and laboratory investigations including liver function tests, AFP and plasma albumin mRNA by Real Time-PCR.

Results: Patients with CHC and HCC have a significant increase in their plasma ALB mRNA than controls; the higher level was in HCC cases. At a cut-off >935 copies/ml, plasma ALB mRNA can discriminate liver diseased from healthy subjects, with a sensitivity of 81.5%, and specificity of 96%, while, elevated serum levels of ALT had a sensitivity of 32.3%, and specificity of 92%. However, at a cut-off >20 ng/ml alpha-feto protein (AFP) had a sensitivity of 55.9% and specificity of 91.2% in diagnosis of HCC.

Conclusion: ALB mRNA in plasma is liver specific; it is increased in liver disease suggesting liver pathology and may be more diagnostically sensitive than alpha-fetoprotein and Alanine aminotransaminase (ALT) serum levels. Thus, future studies should assess if the plasma concentration of ALB mRNA may be used as therapy monitoring.

Keywords: Albumin, HCC, CHC.



وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ
تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

صدق الله العظيم

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Candidate

 **Walaa Abdel Hamid**



CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	I
LIST OF TABLES	III
LIST OF FIGURES	V
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1 Liver Diseases	5
2.1.1 Chronic Liver Diseases	5
2.1.1.1 Definition.....	5
2.1.1.2 Causes of Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis.....	5
2.1.1.3 Diagnosis of Chronic Liver Disease CLD..	8
2.1.2 Hepatocellular Carcinoma	11
2.1.2.1 Risk Factors	11
2.1.2.2 Diagnosis of HCC.....	14
2.2 Messenger Ribonucleic Acid (mRNA).....	25
2.2.1 DNA Structure	25
2.2.2 RNA Structure	26
2.2.3 Types of RNA	27
2.2.4 Transcription of mRNA	28
2.2.4.1 Transcription Factors	29
2.2.4.2 Initiation of Transcription.....	31
2.2.4.3 Elongation.....	31
2.2.4.4 Termination.....	32
2.2.4.5 Promoters	33
2.2.4.6 Enhancers.....	33
2.2.4.7 Introns and Splice Junctions	34



2.2.4.8 5' and 3' Untranslated Sequences.....	34
2.2.5 Translation of mRNA	36
2.3 PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction).....	40
2.3.1 Reverse Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR).....	40
2.3.1.1 Type of Specimen	40
2.3.1.2 Principle of RT-PCR	40
2.3.2 Conventional PCR	44
2.3.3 Real-time PCR	44

CHAPTER III EXPERIMENTAL 48

3.1 Subjects	48
3.1.1 Patients' Groups (n = 40)	48
3.1.1.1 Group A (n = 20)	48
3.1.1.2 Group B (n = 20)	49
3.1.2 Control Group (n = 10)	49
3.2 Methods.....	50
3.2.1 Sample Collection.....	50
3.2.2 RNA Extraction	50
3.2.3 Reverse Transcription	53
3.2.3.1 Preparing the cDNA Reverse Transcription Reactions.....	53
3.2.3.2 Performing Reverse Transcription.....	53
3.2.4 Analytical Methods.....	55
3.2.4.1 Aspartate Aminotransferase (AST)	55
3.2.4.2 Alanine Aminotransferase (ALT).....	56
3.2.4.3 Albumin (ALB)	56
3.2.4.4 Total Bilirubin	57
3.2.4.5 HBsAG.....	57
3.2.4.6 HCVAb	58
3.2.4.7 AFP	59
3.3 Data Analysis	64



3.3.1 Statistical Analysis.....	64
CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	66
4.1 Results	66
4.2 Discussion	79
CHAPTER V SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	87
CHAPTER VI REFERENCES.....	91



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

No.	Abbreviations	Meaning
1	AFB1	Aflatoxin B1
2	AFP	α -Fetoprotein
3	ALP	Alkaline phosphatase
4	ALT	Alanine aminotransferase
5	AST	Aspartate aminotransferase
6	cDNA	Complementary deoxyribonucleic acid
7	CHC	Chronic Hepatitis C
8	CL	Chemiluminescence
9	CLDs	Chronic liver diseases
10	CLIA	Chemiluminescent immunoassay
11	DM	Diabetes mellitus
12	DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
13	FNAB	Fine needle aspirative biopsy
14	GGT	γ -Glutamyl transpeptidase
15	HA	Hepatic arteriography
16	HAART	Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy
17	HBV	Hepatitis B virus
18	HCC	Hepatocellular carcinoma
19	HCV	Hepatitis C virus
20	hnRNA	Heterogeneous nuclear



		ribonucleic acid
21	IA	Immunoassay
22	IARC	International Agency of Research of Cancer
23	IL	Interleukin
24	LDH	Lactate dehydrogenase
25	LOC	Lab-on-a-chip
26	MRI	Magnetic resonance imaging
27	mRNA	Messenger Ribonucleic acid
28	NASH	Non alcoholic Steatohepatitis
29	PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
30	PIHI	Pulse inversion harmonic imaging
31	RNA	Ribonucleic acid
32	RNAP	RNA polymerase
33	rRNA	Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
34	RT-PCR	Reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction
35	SD	Standard deviation
36	snRNps	Small nuclear ribonucleo- proteins
37	SPSS	Statistical package for social science
38	THI	Tissue harmonic imaging
39	tRNA	Transfer ribonucleic acid
40	U/S	Ultrasound
41	μTAS	Micro total analysis systems



LIST OF TABLES

Table (1) Genetic Code	38
Table (2) Comparison between groups according to ALB mRNA.	68
Table (3) Comparison between groups according to AFP...	69
Table (4) Comparison between groups according to ALT. .	70
Table (5) Comparison between groups according to ALP...	71
Table (6) Comparison between groups according to T. Bil.	72
Table (7) Comparison between groups according to Target Gene.	73
Table (8) Comparison between groups according to Ref. Gene	74
Table (9) Comparison between groups according to Δ CT...	75
Table (10) Comparison between groups according to $\Delta\Delta$ CT.	76
Table (11) Comparison between groups according to 2- $\Delta\Delta$ CT.....	77
Table (12) Diagnostic Performance of Albumin mRNA and AFP in Diagnosis of Hepatocellular Carcinoma:	78
Table (13) Multi ROC using AFP and Albumin mRNA in Diagnosis of Hepatocellular Carcinoma:	78



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure (1) Structure of Hepatitis C virus (Grigorescu et al., 2008)	6
Figure (2) The immunoassay analyzer cobas e 411 2nd generation platform of ECL technology	21
Figure (3) DNA Molecule and Nucleotide Bases (Friedman et al., 2001)	26
Figure (4) RNA Structure (Allain et al., 1997)	27
Figure (5) mRNA Carrying The Genetic Information of a special Aminoacid (Gesteland et al., 1992; Taliaferro and Farabaugh, 2007)	28
Figure (6) Transcription of mRNA (Gregory et al., 1997) ..	29
Figure (7) Role of Transcription Factors (Ringquist et al., 2002)	30
Figure (8) Termination of Eukaryotic Transcription (Arimbasseri et al., 2013)	32
Figure (9) Translation of messenger RNA into protein (Alberts et al., 2002)	37
Figure (10) Steps of PCR (Page and Stomberg, 2011)	43
Figure (11) Comparison of two-step and one-step RT-PCR. A: one step real-time PCR, B: two step real-time PCR (Page and Stomberg, 2011)	47



Figure (12) Cobas 4000.....	59
Figure (13) Comparison between groups according to ALB mRNA.	68
Figure (14) Comparison between groups according to AFP.	69
Figure (15) Comparison between groups according to ALT70	
Figure (16) Comparison between groups according to ALP.	71
Figure (17) Comparison between groups according to T. Bil	72
Figure (18) Comparison between groups according to Target Gene.	73
Figure (19) Comparison between groups according to Ref. Gene.	74
Figure (20) Comparison between groups according to Δ CT.	75
Figure (21) Comparison between groups according to $\Delta\Delta$ CT.	76
Figure (22) Comparison between groups according to 2- $\Delta\Delta$ CT.....	77
Figure (23) ROC curve analysis showing the diagnostic performance of ALB mRNA, AFP and their	



combination for discriminating patients with HCC from non-HCC (CHC+Control)	79
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The clinical course of untreated hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is highly variable with the majority of patients experiencing a slow fluctuating disease that may take 20 years or more for full expression. Approximately half of HCV patients develop chronic active hepatitis and this may progress to liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) (*Banker, 2003*).

Hepatic fibrosis is the accumulation of extracellular matrix, or scar, in response to acute or chronic liver injury. Fibrogenesis represents a wound healing response to injury, and ultimately leads to cirrhosis. Both fibrosis and cirrhosis are the consequences of a sustained wound-healing response to chronic liver injury from a range of causes, including viral, autoimmune, drug induced, cholestatic and metabolic diseases (*Rockey and Friedman, 2007*).

The development of severe fibrosis and necroinflammatory changes in liver leads to cirrhosis and worsens prognosis by enhancing the risk of HCC. Chronic HCV varies greatly in its course and outcome. The presence

of HCV RNA indicates that the patient has ongoing viral infection despite normal ALT levels (**Berry et al., 2005**). Serologic assays detect HCV antibodies that indicate present or previous infection, but they cannot discriminate acute from chronic or resolved infection. Occasionally immunocompromised patients, hemodialysis patients and patients with mixed cryoglobulinemia have false negative serology results and may require HCV-RNA listing for diagnosis (**Thio et al., 2000**). While needle biopsy is still the mainstay in diagnosing hepatic fibrosis, its days of dominance seem limited as laboratory technology and imaging studies improve (**Thabet et al., 2011**).

The existence of extracellular mRNA in the circulation, i.e., plasma and other body fluids has been long known (**Swaminathan and Butt, 2006**). The extracellular mRNA is thought to be released into the circulation from intact and viable cells as well as necrotic cells. The biological roles of circulating mRNA are still unclear, although its physiological significance has been investigated during the last several years (**Fleischacker, 2006**).

The detection of circulating RNA offers certain advantages over the detection of circulating DNA (**Zhau et al., 2010**). First, if both plasma RNA and DNA were derived