

**Procollagen III Amino Terminal Propeptide (PIIINP):
A Non Invasive Marker of Methotrexate Induced
Liver Fibrosis in Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients**

Thesis

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قَالَ

لَسْبَدَانِكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا
إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الْعَلِيمُ الْعَظِيمُ

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List of Contents

Title	Page No.
List of Tables	i
List of Figures	iv
List of Abbreviations	vi
Introduction	1
Aim of the Work.....	11
Review of Literature	
📖 Rheumatoid Arthritis	12
📖 Pro Collagen III N-Terminal Peptide	40
Patients and Methods	52
Results	64
Discussion	92
Summary	98
Conclusion.....	101
References	102
Arabic Summary	

List of Tables

Table No.	Title	Page No.
Table (1):	Actions of cytokines that play major roles in RA pathobiology.....	21
Table (2):	The 2010 American College of Rheumatology/ European League against Rheumatism classification criteria for rheumatoid arthritis ...	24
Table (3):	This table lists diagnostic properties of rheumatoid factors, anti-CCP2 and anti-MCV. This demonstrates that anti-CCP and anti-MCV are tests of equal value for diagnostic testing for RA	29
Table (4):	Reagents provided by the kit.....	59
Table (5):	Standards.....	60
Table (6):	Descriptive laboratory data of the studied groups	65
Table (7):	Demographic data and disease history for all the studied patients.....	66
Table (8):	MTX history within MTX intake group	69
Table (9):	Comparison between studied groups as regard CRP	70
Table (10):	Comparison between studied groups as regard DAS28 by CRP.....	71
Table (11):	Comparison between studied groups as regard ESR	72
Table (12):	Comparison between studied groups as regard DAS28 by ESR.....	73
Table (13):	Comparison between studied groups as regard RF	74

List of Tables (Cont...)

Table No.	Title	Page No.
Table (14):	Comparison between studied groups as regard AST.....	75
Table (15):	Comparison between studied groups as regard ALT	75
Table (16):	Comparison between studied groups as regard AST/ALT Ratio	76
Table (17):	Comparison between studied groups as regard FIB-4 Score.....	77
Table (18):	Comparison between studied groups as regard PIIINP	78
Table (19):	Correlation study between PIIINP and disease duration in group I.....	81
Table (20):	Correlation study between PIIINP and MCV in group I.....	81
Table (21):	Correlation study between PIIINP and platelets in group I.....	82
Table (22):	Correlation study between PIIINP and AST in group I.....	83
Table (23):	Correlation study between PIIINP and ALT in group I.....	84
Table (24):	Correlation study between PIIINP and AST/ALT ratio in group I	85
Table (25):	Correlation study between PIIINP and FIB-4 score in group I	86
Table (26):	Correlation study between PIIINP and Folic acid intake in group I	87

List of Tables (Cont...)

Table No.	Title	Page No.
Table (27):	Correlation study between PIIINP and MTX therapy duration and dose in group I.....	88
Table (28):	Correlation study between MTX cumulative dose and PIIINP and FIB-4 score in group I	90

List of Figures

Fig. No.	Title	Page No.
Figure (1):	Schematic view of a normal joint and a joint affected by RA.....	15
Figure (2):	Algorithm based on the 2016 European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) recommendations on rheumatoid arthritis (RA) management.....	32
Figure (3):	Structures of MTX and folic acid. MTX is a folate derivative	33
Figure (4):	DAS28-ESR.....	54
Figure (5):	Standards.	60
Figure (6):	Comparison between studied groups as regards Age.	68
Figure (7):	Comparison between studied groups as regards Sex.	69
Figure (8):	Comparison between studied groups as regards CRP.....	70
Figure (9):	Comparison between studied groups as regards DAS28 by CRP.	71
Figure (10):	Comparison between studied groups as regards ESR.....	72
Figure (11):	Comparison between studied groups as regards DAS28 by ESR.	73
Figure (12):	Comparison between studied groups as regards RF.....	74
Figure (13):	Comparison between studied groups as regards AST/ALT.....	76

List of Figures (Cont...)

Fig. No.	Title	Page No.
Figure (14):	Comparison between studied groups as regards FIB-4 score.....	77
Figure (15):	Comparison between studied groups as regards PIIINP.....	78
Figure (16):	Roc curve of both groups.....	79
Figure (17):	Roc curve of group I.....	80
Figure (18):	Correlation graph between PIIINP and Platelets in group I.....	82
Figure (19):	Correlation graph between PIIINP and AST in group I.....	83
Figure (20):	Correlation graph between PIIINP and ALT in group I.....	84
Figure (21):	Correlation graph between PIIINP and AST/ALT in group I.....	85
Figure (22):	Correlation graph between PIIINP and FIB-4 score in group I.....	86
Figure (23):	Correlation graph between PIIINP and Folic Acid in group I.....	87
Figure (24):	Correlation graph between PIIINP and MTX duration in group I.....	88
Figure (25):	Correlation graph between PIIINP and MTX dose in group I.....	89
Figure (26):	Correlation graph between PIIINP and MTX cumulative dose in group I.....	90
Figure (27):	Correlation graph between FIB-4 score and MTX cumulative dose in group I.....	91

List of Abbreviations

Abb.	Full term
<i>ALT</i>	<i>Alanine Aminotransferase</i>
<i>ANA</i>	<i>Antinuclear Antibodies</i>
<i>Anti-CCP</i>	<i>Anti Cyclic Citrullinated Peptide</i>
<i>Anti-ds</i>	<i>Anti-Double-Stranded</i>
<i>AST</i>	<i>Aspartate Aminotransferase</i>
<i>CBC</i>	<i>Complete Blood Count</i>
<i>CRP</i>	<i>C-Reactive Protein</i>
<i>DMARDs</i>	<i>Disease-Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs</i>
<i>ELF</i>	<i>Enhanced Liver Fibrosis</i>
<i>ELFTM</i>	<i>Enhanced Liver Fibrosis Test</i>
<i>ELISA</i>	<i>Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay</i>
<i>ESR</i>	<i>Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate</i>
<i>GCs</i>	<i>Glucocorticoids</i>
<i>HA</i>	<i>Hyaluronic Acid</i>
<i>HSCs</i>	<i>Hepatic Stellate Cells</i>
<i>ICAM-1</i>	<i>Intracellular Adhesion Molecule1</i>
<i>IL6</i>	<i>Interleukin</i>
<i>IVC</i>	<i>IV Collage</i>
<i>LN</i>	<i>Laminin</i>
<i>MI</i>	<i>Myocardial Infarction</i>
<i>MIF</i>	<i>Migration Inhibitory Factor</i>
<i>MMP</i>	<i>Matrix Metalloproteinases</i>
<i>MTX</i>	<i>Methotrexate</i>
<i>NAFLD</i>	<i>Non Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease</i>
<i>NPV</i>	<i>Negative Predictive Value</i>
<i>NSAIDs</i>	<i>Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs</i>
<i>PADs</i>	<i>Peptidylarginine Deaminase Enzymes</i>
<i>PAF</i>	<i>Platelet Activating Factor</i>
<i>PGs</i>	<i>Prostaglandins</i>

List of Abbreviations (Cont...)

Abb.	Full term
<i>PIIIP</i>	<i>Procollagen III Aminoterminal Peptide</i>
<i>PPV</i>	<i>Positive Predictive Value</i>
<i>RA</i>	<i>Rheumatoid Arthritis</i>
<i>RF</i>	<i>Rheumatoid Factor</i>
<i>rhGH</i>	<i>Recombinant Human Growth Hormone</i>
<i>SD</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<i>SJC</i>	<i>Swollen Joint Count</i>
<i>SPSS</i>	<i>Statistical Program for Social Science</i>
<i>TGF-β</i>	<i>Tumor Growth Factor-Beta</i>
<i>TIMP</i>	<i>Tissue Inhibitor Metalloproteinases</i>
<i>TJC</i>	<i>Tender Joint Count</i>
<i>VCAM-1</i>	<i>Vascular Cell Adhesion Molecule1</i>
<i>VEGF</i>	<i>Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor</i>

Abstract

In the present study, the serum level of PIIINP was significantly higher in patients on MTX therapy (group I) compared to patients on other medications (group II).

Data from the present study confirmed the presence of positive correlation between Fib-4 score, AST/ALT ratio and PIIINP in patients on MTX therapy (group I).

Data from the present study also found that there was a statistically significant difference among the groups as regard MTX dose and duration and PIIINP levels.

Data from the present study confirmed the presence of statistical significant difference and negative correlation between PIIINP and Folic acid intake in group I where PIIINP levels were lower in patients on folic acid.

Keywords: *Recombinant Human Growth Hormone - Tender Joint Count - Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor*

INTRODUCTION

Rheumatoid arthritis is a systemic autoimmune disease characterized by inflammatory synovitis and progressive joint destruction, which are associated with severe disability and increased mortality (*Taylor et al., 2017*).

In the new criteria set, classification as “definite RA” is based on the confirmed presence of synovitis in at least 1 joint, absence of an alternative diagnosis that better explains the synovitis, and achievement of a total score of 6 or greater (of a possible 10) from the individual scores in 4 domains: number and site of involved joints (score range 0–5), serologic abnormality (score range 0–3), elevated acute-phase response (score range 0–1), and symptom duration (2 levels; range 0–1) (*Aletaha et al., 2010*).

The management of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) rests on several principles. Drug treatment, which comprises disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs), also non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and glucocorticoids (GCs), as well as non-pharmacological measures, such as physical, occupational and psychological therapeutic approaches, together may lead to therapeutic success. However, the mainstay of RA treatment is the application of DMARDs (*Smolen et al., 2011*).

Methotrexate is an antifolate and antimetabolite; thereby inhibiting synthesis of purines and pyrimidines and decreasing DNA and RNA synthesis that is used extensively in the therapy

of leukemia, lymphoma and several solid organ tumors. It also has potent activity against psoriasis and has immunomodulatory activity against inflammatory bowel disease and the inflammatory arthritis (*Singh et al., 2012*).

Long term therapy with methotrexate has been associated with development of fatty liver and hepatic fibrosis and, in rare instances, portal hypertension and symptomatic cirrhosis. Symptoms are usually absent until cirrhosis is present, and liver tests are typically normal or minimally and transiently elevated. Routine monitoring of patients with regular liver biopsies done at 1 to 2 year intervals or with cumulative methotrexate doses of 1 to 10 grams demonstrates that approximately 30% of patients develop mild-to-moderate histological abnormalities and 2 to 20% of patients develop some degree of hepatic fibrosis (*Wong et al., 2013*).

Liver biopsy is the standard for diagnosing liver fibrosis, but it may be associated with significant morbidity and mortality of up to 0.33%, thereby limiting its use. So the noninvasive markers of hepatic fibrosis such as serial platelet counts, serum procollagen III aminoterminal peptide (PIIIP), serum bile acids, hepatic ultrasound and advanced imaging techniques may be more efficient in screening for fibrosis in patients on long term methotrexate (*Singh et al., 2012*).

AIM OF THE WORK

The aim of the present work is to evaluate the reliability of Procollagen III amino terminal propeptide (PIIINP) in screening for hepatic fibrosis induced by long term methotrexate therapy in rheumatoid arthritis patients compared with FIB 4 score and ALT/AST ratio.