

Clinical Characteristics of Uremic Pruritus in Hemodialysis Patients

Eun Hui Bae · Woo-Heon Kang* · Joung Woo Park · Woo Kyoum Bae
Seong Kwon Ma · Nam Ho Kim · Ki Chul Choi · Soo Wan Kim

*Department of Internal Medicine, Chonnam National University Medical School,
Department of Medicine*, College of Medicine, Jeju National University, Korea*

Background : Although pruritus is a common, unpleasant symptom in patients on maintenance hemodialysis (HD), its pathogenesis remains unclear. The aim of this study was to evaluate the frequency of pruritus in HD patients and to correlate its presence and intensity with several clinical and laboratory parameters.

Methods : One hundred seventy patients (M:F=80:90) on maintenance HD enrolled the study. Several clinical and laboratory parameters (age, sex, duration of dialysis, type of membrane, underlying renal disease, medications, dose of erythropoietin [EPO] and laboratory findings including hematocrit, BUN, creatinine, calcium, phosphorus, parathyroid hormone [PTH], erythrocyte sediment rate [ESR], albumin, $\beta 2$ -microglobulin ($\beta 2$ MG) and lipid profile) were evaluated to find a correlation with the pruritus.

Results : Sixty patients complained of pruritus (Group I, M:F=29:31), while remaining 110 did not (Group II, M:F=51:59). Mean age was significantly higher in Group I (59.6 ± 14.8 vs. 54.3 ± 13.6 years old, $p < 0.05$). There was no differences in sex, types of membrane, primary renal diseases, serum $\beta 2$ MG, ESR, EPO dose, duration of dialysis and serum albumin levels between the groups. The mean value of Kt/V was higher in Group II (1.39 ± 0.36 vs. 1.51 ± 0.27 , $p < 0.05$).

Conclusion : Pruritus was more common in older patients and in those with lower KT/V, but other clinical characteristics and laboratory findings did not correlate with uremic pruritus.