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The efficacy of serum galactose-deficient IgA1 for the early detection of recurrent IgA nephropathy in kidney transplant recipients

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Objectives: Recurrent IgA nephropathy (IgAN) is the most frequent cause of renal graft loss among recurrent glomerulonephritis. It is known that the galactose-deficient IgA1 (Gd-IgA1) is the main role in the pathophysiology of IgAN, but the association between Gd-IgA1 and the occurrence of recurrent IgAN in kidney transplant recipients (KTRs) is uncertain.

Methods: We enrolled 27 KTRs with stored samples in the biobank among the patients who performed allograft biopsies between 2009 and 2016, and measured serum Gd-IgA1 level. The patients were divided into two groups: group 1; patients who did not show recurrence of IgAN in patients with IgAN prior KT (non-recurrent IgAN patients, n=14), group 2; patients who were diagnosed to recurrent IgAN in patients with IgAN prior KT (recurrent IgAN patients, n=13). We evaluated the clinical characteristics, graft and patient survivals.

Results: There were no significant differences in mean age at KT, the rate of female gender between the two groups. The 10-year graft survival rates were 69.6% in group 1 and 88.9 % in group 2, and patient survival rates were 92.9% in group 1 and 100% in group 2, respectively. Mean serum Gd-IgA1 levels were significantly higher in the group 2 compared to those in the group 1 ($6,418 \pm 3,675$ ng/mL vs. $3,381 \pm 2,844$ ng/mL, $P=0.024$). Cut off value of serum Gd-IgA1 in the ROC curve analysis was 4,338 ng/mL (AUC=0.76, 95% C.I. 0.57–0.95, $P=0.023$). Sensitivity was 76.9% and specificity was 78.6%. Mean time between kidney transplantation (KT) and allograft biopsies tended to be longer in the group 2 compared to that in the group 1 (109 ± 83 months vs. 62 ± 69 months). Serum Gd-IgA1 level was an independent factor for diagnosis of recurrent IgAN (OR 21.63, 95% C.I. 2.08-225.27, $P=0.046$).

Conclusions: Serum Gd-IgA1 might be effective for early detection of recurrent IgAN in KTRs.