Original Research Article

A study of platelet parameters on chronic cigarette smokers

Naveen Kumar Tirkey[1],Pradeep Beck[2*]

[1] Associate Professor,Department of General Medicine,Bharat Ratna Late Shree Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Medical College,Rajnandgaon,C.G,India

[2] Professor,Department of General Medicine,Bharat Ratna Late Shree Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Medical College , Rajnandgaon,C.G,India

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Abstract

Introduction : During the last decade, it was suggested that cigarette smoking affects the blood characteristics and leads to death. There are a very few studies relating the effect of smoking on platelets. In addition, many of the studies have not compared the data with those of the non smoking control groups. **Methods:** After taking inform consent from patients, this Observational & analytical study was conducted in 100 patients in each group (100 smokers as study group and 100 age-matched nonsmokers as control group) having age group of 18–60 years using Predesigned questionnaire &complete blood count and platelet parameters such as platelet count (PLT), platelet crit (PCT), MPV, PDW, and platelet-large cell ratio (P-LCR) were estimated using Sysmex II Autoanalyser. **Results** : Anthroprometric & platlet para-meters were compared . The platelet parameters between smokers and nonsmokers and shows a statistically significant increase in MPV and PDW in the smokers. **Conclusion**: cigarette smoking in healthy men was accompanied by significant effects on platelet indices,such as increase in the mean MPV and PDW values in comparison with nonsmokers, which were also pronounced in heavy smokers along with increase in P-LCR.

Keyword : Smoking , MPV , PDW , PCT

Introduction

Smoking is considered a major risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, inflammation,coagulopathy and respiratory diseases.

Recently, the role of cigarette smoking in abnormalities in platelet activation and aggregation, along with other coagulation processing disruptions resulting in thrombotic formations, has been suggested. [1,2].The only legal drug that kills many of its consumers when used accurately as proposed by the manufacturers is tobacco, and an estimation by WHO shows that about six million deaths worldwide each year, with most of them as premature deaths, occur owing to tobacco use (smoking and smokeless). [1] Despite of the fact that tobacco smoking is positively associated with many diseases, increasing prevalence of smoking among young people is still a problem of severe concern for health professionals. A cigarette smoke contains over 4000 chemicals,[2] and a cigarette smoker is exposed to a number of harmful substances including nicotine, free radicals, carbon monoxide, and other gaseous products.[3] It is widely known that smokers have higher risk for cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, inflammation, stroke, clotting disorder, and respiratory disease.[4–8] In addition, cigarette smoking enhances the pathogenesis in various types of cancers such as lung, pancreas, breast, liver, and kidney.[5,9] Similarly, it also enhances pH in stomach that result in peptic ulcers and gastric diseases.[6,10] During the last decade, it was suggested that cigarette smoking affects the blood characteristics and leads to death.[4] Platelets are formed from bone marrow megakaryocytes. They are nonnucleated and possess little viable mitochondria, glycogen, many types of morphologically variant granules(dense core granules and lyso-somes), and a complex membranous system.

The granules contain adhesion molecules, which help in platelet–platelet interactions and platelet interactions with other blood cells, mitogenic factors, plasma proteins, some coagulation factors, and fibronectin. Platelets are important for hemostasis, wound healing, and inflammation.[11] The increased platelet activity and thrombus formation and thromboembolic diseases are among the major cause of mortality in developed countries. Successful management of these diseases relies on early detection of progressive activation of coagulation.

Recently, many reliable markers which play a role in the activation of coagulation, such as prothrombin fragment 1+2 and thrombin–antithrombin complex, and involved in the platelet activation, such as b-thromboglobulin or soluble platelet P-selectin have been investi-gated.[12] The laboratory assessment of these indices is strenuous and costly. Moreover, routine laboratory tests cannot contain the afore mentioned indices.[13,14] Mean platelet volume (MPV) and the platelet distribution width (PDW) are the indicators of platelet activation. The size of the platelet is correlated with the activity and the function of the platelet. Larger platelets are more active than the smaller ones. PDW is a marker of differences in the platelet size, which can be an indicator of active platelet release. These platelet parameters are estimated routinely by automated blood counters. As the point that platelet activation results in morphologic variations of platelets is known, a sequence of platelet parameters measured by hematology analyzers have been applied by several researchers. The MPV is perhaps the most widely studied platelet activation parameter.[15–17] Mean platelet component and platelet component distribution width are the new indices that are assessed recently as potential platelet activation markers.[18] These indices are not assessed by all the hematology analyzers. There are a very few

*Correspondence
Dr. Pradeep Beck
Professor,Department of General Medicine,
Bharat Ratna Late Shree Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Medical College, Rajnandgaon, C.G,India.
E-mail: dr_pradeepbeck@yahoo.co.in

studies relating the effect of smoking on platelets. In addition, many of the studies have not compared the data with those of the nonsmoking control groups.[19,20] Kario et al.[21] found elevated MPV in smoking patients, which reduced after the patients stopped smoking. However, Butkiewicz et al.[22] studied the impact of smoking on platelet activation and few other morphological indices including MPV and found no effect on MPV by smoking. Thus, studies on this have reported conflicting results. Hence, this work was undertaken to study the effect of cigarette smoking on platelet parameters.

Methodology

After taking inform consent from patients, this Observational & analytical study was conducted in 100 patients in each group in local community areas in randomly selected OPD Units of local secondary & tertiary hospitals having haematology lab. (100 smokers as study group and 100 age-matched nonsmokers as control group) of cases and control having age group of 18–60 years.Informed consent was obtained via from all the subjects. The socioeconomic status, age, height, weight, and daily activity were comparable between the study and the control groups. Subjects with history of coagulation disorders, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, hypertension, peripheral vascular disease, chronic renal disease, hypertension, and any infectious or debilitating illness and those who are on any medication such as aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)were excluded from this study. All subjects were free from other habits such as tobacco chewing and alcohol intake. The subjects who were passive smokers and ex-smokers and those who underwent radio-therapy were also excluded. Since smoking is extremely rare among women in this area owing to cultural reasons, women were not included.A detailed history regarding current smoking status, number of cigarettes smoked per day, years of smoking, and years since quitting was obtained by using a predesigned questionnaire. Nonsmokers were the respondents who affirmed that they have not smoked yet.The pack-year is a unit for measuring the amount a person has smoked over a long period of time and was calculated by using the following formula: pack-years = (number of cigarettes smoked per day number of years smoked)/20. In our study, the smokers were classified into mild, moderate, and heavy based on the number of pack-years as 10–14, 15–19, and 20 years and above, respectively.[23]

The subjects underwent the following tests: blood pressure examination to rule out hypertension, complete blood count and platelet parameters such as platelet count (PLT), platelet crit (PCT), MPV,PDW,and platelet-large cell ratio(P-LCR) were estimated using Sysmex II Autoanalyser.

MPV was calculated by the following formula:

MPV (fL) =[(plateletcrit (%)/platelet count (109 /l)] 105 .

PCT was the ratio of the platelet volume to the whole blood volume. PDW and P-LCR were analyzed from a histogram of platelet size distribution. The distribution width at the level of 20% (the peak of the histogram is 100%) was defined as PDW, and the percentage of platelets with a size of more than 12 fL was defined as P-LCR. [24] All the results of laboratory investigations were loaded in computer-ized SPSS 12.0 programer, and statistical significance were analyzed by unpaired Student's ''t'' test and ANOVA. Results were expressed as mean ± standard deviation (SD). The P value of 0.05 has been considered as significant.

Results

Comparison of anthropometric data between smokers and non-smokers is given in table 1 .

Table 1: Showing Comparison of anthropometric data between smokers and non-smokers.

Parameters	Group A (n= 100)	Group B (n=100)	P value
Age	39.8 ± 5.9 Years	41.4 ± 11.7	0.1
Height	156 ± 10.7 cms	160 ± 8.8	0.32
Weight	59 ± 8.9 Kgs	62.7 ± 11.6	0.14
BMI	24.06 ± 3.17 kg/m^2	25.81 ± 4.24	0.267

Table 1 compares the anthropometric parameters between smokers and nonsmokers, which shows that there is no significant difference between the two groups.

Table 2 Compares the platelet parameters between smokers and nonsmokers and shows a statistically significant increase in MPV and PDW in the smokers.

Table 2: Platelet parameters between smokers and nonsmokers

Platelet parameters	Group I, smokers (*n*=100) (mean±SD)	Group II, control subjects(*n*=50) (mean±SD)	*P*	*t*
PLT	304.28±65.12	283.72±71.31	0.32	1.312
PDW	11.61±1.53	11.49±1.48	0.03*	2.370
MPV	10.73±0.78	9.85±0.61	0.024*	2.186
P-LCR	25.37±5.49	24.34±4.85	0.510	0.70
PCT	0.310±0.08	0.300±0.06	0.102	1.288

*$P \leq 0.05$,statisticallysignificant.

The abnormalities of platelet parameters were more significant when the smoking intensity increases.

Discussion

Tobacco smoking has been associated to be a reason for various major morphological and biochemical complications in individuals. In this study,we compared the platelet parameters between smokers and nonsmokers.

Table 1 shows that both the groups were comparable.The experi-mental results showed differences in platelet parameters such as MPV and PDW, which were significantly high ($P \leq 0.05$)in smokers when compared with non-smokers[Table 2]. MPV and PDW increased during platelet activation. To achieve a larger surface area, platelets modify their shapes during activation. Their shape changes from discoid to spherical[25-28].Pseudopodia are formed as well. On the basis of impedance technology, the hematology analyzers estimate the platelet volume by the distortion of electrical field, which depends on the platelet vertical diameter. In acute thrombotic events, platelet activation can be assessed by an increase in MPV, a well-known marker. It is alleged that carbon monoxide(CO)establishes a vital role in the cigarette smoke-induced cardiovascular diseases. The researchers found significant correlations between MPV and COHb levels (r=0.55, P=0.0001) and between MPV and lactate levels (r = 0.65, P = 0.0001) after smoking and have shown that 1-hexposure to passive smoking

enhances the platelet activation, which may be the mechanism that leads to an enhanced risk of thrombotic events in healthy people. It is probable that continued exposure to passive smoking might pose even higher impacts.Passive smoking exposure should be avoided by healthy people in order to prevent from increasing risk of thrombotic events.[25] Varol et al.[26]have shown that chronic smoking causes platelet activation and smoking cessation improves platelet function. However, Arslan et al.[27] investigated the effects of smoking on MPV in young healthy male population (smokers,56;nonsmokers,46),and they found no signific-ant difference in MPV between the smoking and non smoking healthy male participants.The increase of MPV among the smokers in this study may be attributed to platelet activation and the increase of PDW to platelet anisocytosis, which results from pseudopodia formation. Ihara et al.[28] and Khandekar et al.[29] found the same observation in patients with ischemic heart disease. We observed that the MPV, PDW, and P-LCR were significantly increased as the intensity of smoking increases. This increase of MPV and PDW and P-LCR comparatively suggests that young platelets are released into circulation, which are comparatively more reactive. [30] For decades, epidemiological data have demonstrated the association of s smoking with the incidence of coronary heart disease, myocardial infarction, and stroke. In majority of the acute clinical scenarios, there is incidence of thrombotic occlusion of the vessel, a process that is habitually related to platelets. Therefore, the definition of the relation between platelets and smoking seems important.[31]Hung et al.[32] demonstrated smoking-stimulated platelet aggregate formation in habitual smokers. Another effect of smoking found by different groups is an increase in the serum fibrinogen levels. In addition, platelets shape and volume might differ, even in healthy persons. Thus, sequential assessment of MPV and PDW might be beneficial but unrealistic for the identification of progressive platelet activation.

Instead, concurrent enhancement of MPV and PDW might suggest platelet activation, as shown by Vagdatli et al.[33] Platelet activation by cigarette smoking is related to thrombosis formation, which may lead to initiation of myocardial infarction. Apaucity of studies that estimate all of the platelet parameters, including MPV, PDW, and PCT, exists in the literature. Some limitations of our study include the relatively small sample size and lack of investigation of women owing to their denial of smoking.

Conclusion

In our study,cigarette smoking in healthy men was accompanied by significant effects on platelet indices,such as increase in the mean MPV and PDW values in comparison with nonsmokers, which were also pronounced in heavy smokers along with increase in P-LCR. We propose that these platelet parameters should be routinely reported with other hematological parameters incomplete blood countre ports. In light of the adverse effects on platelet function, cessation of smoking should be encouraged.Future research should be carried out with larger sample sizes including female subjects to explain these morphological changes in platelets following smoking.

Study Limitations

Short duration of follow up and relatively small sample size is the limitation of this study. A further study with larger sample size and longer follow up will be required to provide proper guidelines.

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