

The Correlation between Migraine and some Biochemical Parameters in Saudi Females

Shouq A. Alshehri, Foziah A. Alshubaily*, Anbrah A. Alzubidi, Hala S. Sonbol, Sawsan A. Rahimuddin, Ebtihaj J. Jambi

Received: 14 November 2018 / Received in revised form: 05 March 2019, Accepted: 10 March 2019, Published online: 23 March 2019
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Abstract

Migraine is a common disabling primary headache disorder. It affects 6% of men and 18% of women worldwide and 12.1% in Saudi Arabia. The lack of many nutrients like vitamin B₁₂ and magnesium is associated with migraine. Migraine may be associated with cardiovascular risk factors such as a high level of cholesterol. Ninety-one Saudi female patients with a mean age of 32.91±1.187 and fifty-four healthy Saudi females (control) with a mean age of 30.00±1.32 years participated in this study. Serum lipid profile, vitamin B₁₂, and magnesium levels were measured in both patients and controls. The results showed a significant increase in serum cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL), and lower levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) for migraine patients. However, no significant difference has been observed in triglyceride serum levels. No significant differences were found in vitamin B₁₂ and magnesium (Mg) serum levels between the two groups (migraine patients and control). In conclusion, lipid profile was shown to be associated with Saudi female patients with migraine. Vitamin B₁₂ serum levels and mg serum levels were not significantly correlated in migraine patients and controls.

Keywords: Headache, migraine, vitamin B₁₂, magnesium, lipid profile.

Introduction

Migraine is a common multifactorial brain disorder described by recurrent, disabling attacks of moderate to a severe headache lasting for 4–72 hours (Chua, Del Rio, and Silberstein, 2017) and is accompanied by nausea and hypersensitivity to light (photophobia) or sound (phonophobia) or odors (osmophobia) (Green, 2013; Dodick, 2018). The main types of migraine are: migraine with aura, migraine without aura and chronic migraine (Society, H.C.C.o.t.I.H, 2013). Migraine affects 12.1% in Saudi population (Rajeh et al., 1997; Benamer, Deleu and Grosset, 2010) and 11-12% of adults in the world population (Younger, 2016; Lipton et al., 2007). Females are about twice as likely to suffer from migraine as males because of hormonal effects (Lipton et al.,

Shouq A. Alshehri, Foziah A. Alshubaily*, Anbrah A. Alzubidi, Hala S. Sonbol, Sawsan A. Rahimuddin, Ebtihaj J. Jambi

Biochemistry Department, Faculty of science, King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia.

*Email: falshibli @ kau.edu.sa

2001; Morillo, 2004). The prevalence of migraine is highest in ages

from 25 - 55 years old (the most productive years) (Winter et al., 2012). Dietary and lifestyle habits, along with some biochemical parameters can affect the intensity of migraine such as: vitamin B₁₂, lipid profile and magnesium (Monastero et al., 2008; Reynolds, 2006; Bianchi et al., 2004; Nattagh-Eshtivani et al., 2018). Vitamin B₁₂ is an important vitamin for many body functions including brain health and prevention of disorders of central nervous system (CNS) development (Reynolds, 2006). Vitamin B₁₂ works as a coenzyme for a critical methyl transfer reaction that transforms homocysteine to methionine (Intakes, I.o.M.S.C.o.t.S.E.o.D.R, 1998). Vitamin B₁₂ pathway dysfunction is related to migraine pathogenesis (Gabriel et al., 1992).

Increased cholesterol and free fatty acids blood levels are among the remarkable factors implicated in triggering migraine headache (Bic et al., 1999; Ferrara et al., 2015). Migraine is linked with high risk of cardiovascular disorders which are associated with cholesterol levels (Kurth et al., 2006; Linstra et al., 2017). High total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein and triglyceride correlate with migraine with aura (Rist, Tzourio and Kurth, 2011).

Magnesium (Mg, the most abundant mineral in the body) works as a cofactor for many enzymatic reactions (Swaminathan, 2003). Lack of magnesium is more prevalent in migraine patients than in non-migraine patients (Mauskop and Varughese, 2012). Magnesium insufficiency may affect calcium channel and neuroinflammation, leading to an increased susceptibility to migraine (Taylor, 2011). There were many studies that showed the prevention of migraine by magnesium intake (Mauskop and Varughese, 2012; Grazi et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2003).

Migraine is the most significant primary headache disorder because of its high occurrence and the inability that it causes (Chua, Del Rio, and Silberstein, 2017). Understanding the relationship among nutrients and migraine, lead to accurate diagnosis and decrease in the cost-effectiveness of migraine treatment (MacGregor, 2016). This study aims to investigate the correlation between migraine and some biochemical parameters in Saudi females, which could be an important factor that affect migraine as the previous studies on migraine were limited in Saudi Arabia population (Benamer, Deleu, and Grosset, 2010).

Materials and Methods

A. Study participants

Ninety-one adult Saudi females (19 - 65 years) suffering from migraine were enrolled in this study. This study was performed in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, between January and May 2018. The participants were from the neurology clinic at King Abdulaziz University Hospital (KAUH) who have been diagnosed with migraine. The aim of the study was described to the participants and they joined the study conscious and with voluntary participation through signing of an informed consent. An interview with the patients was performed to evaluate the demographic factors including age, marital status, the common symptoms of headache and duration. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated as weight (in kilograms) divided by the square of height (in meters). For obesity, we considered BMI 30.0 kg/m² or above and below 25.0-29.9 kg/m² considered overweight according to World Health Organization (WHO). Control subjects consisted of 54 females with an average age ranging between 19-55 years. Most of the subjects were not taking any medication and did not suffer from any chronic diseases. This work was performed under the approval of the ethical committee of King Abdulaziz University Hospital in Jeddah (Reference number 453-16).

B. Blood collection

Blood samples were obtained after a 10-12 hour overnight fasting period. They were processed and centrifuged at 4500 rpm. Serum was stored at -80°C until analysis. Measurements of samples were done in the biochemical laboratory at King Abdulaziz University Hospital. Vitamin B₁₂ was measured using Cobas machine (Roche Diagnostics GmbH; Mannheim, USA) while lipid profile and magnesium were assessed automatically in the chemistry lab of the hospital by using SIMENS (Dimension Vista 1500 System USA).

C. Statistical analysis

The analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) version 21. We used independent-sample t-test to compare between the two groups; patients and control. A p-value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results

The study group consisted of 91 migraine patients and 54 subjects as control. The mean age of patients was (32.91 ± 1.187), the youngest being 19 years and the eldest 58 years; 46.7% were single, 46.7% were married and 6% were divorced. The clinical characteristics of the study population are presented in table 1. There is a significant difference in the body mass index (BMI) between the two groups (P < 0.05). The most common symptoms accompanying migraine headache were photophobia (71 people; 78.9%) and nausea (66 people; 73.3%) as shown in table 2. Each patient may have more than one accompanying symptom. The frequency of symptoms of migraine patients is presented in table 2.

The results of vitamin B₁₂ serum measurements of migraine patients compared to control have no significant differences. Magnesium serum mean values show no significant difference between migraine patients and control. The patient group had significantly higher serum levels of cholesterol (4.91 ± 0.098 vs. 4.45 ± 0.092 mmol/L, p < 0.05) and LDL (2.88 ± 0.083 vs. 2.58 ± 0.077 mmol/L, p < 0.05). However, lower high-density lipoprotein (HDL) serum levels (1.43 ± 0.352 vs. 1.66 ± 0.055 mmol/L, p < 0.05) were observed in migraine patients. There was no significant difference in triglyceride (TG) levels in both groups. All parameter results are presented in table 3. The comparison of obese and normal weight migraine patients with obese and normal weight controls showed a significant difference in cholesterol, LDL and HDL. A significantly increase in cholesterol in normal weight group (BMI 18.6-24.9) was found as shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Clinical characteristics of the study population

Parameters	Groups	Mean ± SEM	P value
Age (years)	Patients n=91	32.91 ± 1.187	0.117
	Control(n=54)	30.00 ± 1.320	
Height (cm)	Patients (n=91)	156.57 ± 0.669	0.035
	Control (n=54)	158.94 ± 0.729	
Weight (kg)	Patients (n=91)	65.34 ± 2.098	0.113
	Control (n=54)	60.04 ± 1.417	
BMI	Patients (n=91)	25.62 ± 0.541	0.019
	Control (n=54)	23.67 ± 0.527	

Table 2. Frequency of symptoms of migraine patients

Symptoms	Number	Percentage
Photophobia	71	78.9%
Phonophobia	61	67.8%
Osmophobia	31	34.4%
Nausea	66	73.3%
Vomiting	27	30.0%

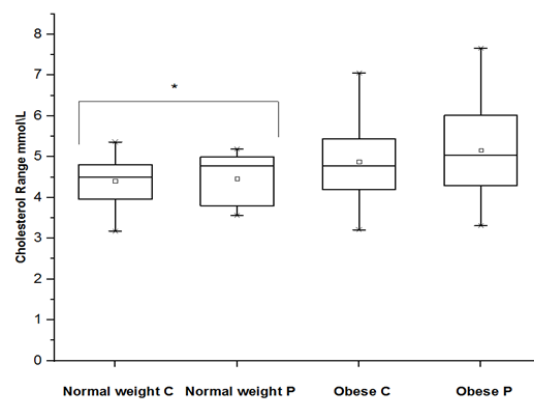


Figure 1. Comparison of cholesterol values between normal weight controls and patients, and between obese controls and patients. * P<0.05, C=control, P= patients.

Table 3. Mean levels of lipid profile, vitamin B₁₂ and Mg in patients and control

Parameters	Patients	Control	P value
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Vitamin B₁₂ (156 – 672pmol/L) Mean± SEM	254.90 ± 13.140	258.46 ± 15.491	0.663
Mg (0.74 – 0.99mmol/L) Mean± SEM	0.834 ± 0.009	0.823 ± 0.010	0.736
Cholesterol (0.0 – 5.18mmol/L) Mean± SEM	4.91 ± 0.098	4.45 ± 0.092	0.003
TG (0.3 – 2.3mmol/L) Mean± SEM	0.94 ± 0.054	0.82± 0.048	0.165
LDL (0.0 – 3.57mmol/L) Mean± SEM	2.88 ± 0.083	2.58 ± 0.077	0.018
HDL (0.9 – 1.55mmol/L) Mean± SEM	1.43 ± 0.352	1.66 ± 0.055	0.000

*Mg: magnesium, TG: triglycerides, LDL: low-density lipoprotein, HDL: high-density lipoprotein.

*values betweenbrackets indicates the normal range of the parameter.

Discussion

Migraine is a long-lasting and disabling disorder that has an effect on migraineurs and society (Leonardi et al., 2005). However, migraine pathophysiology is not completely clear (Faraji, Paknahad and Chitsaz 2018). Since migraine is a multifactorial disease (Kowalska et al., 2017), many modifying factors are involved in its progression. These factors include genes, lifestyle and biochemical markers (Dodick, 2018). Migraine is associated with high body mass index (BMI) (Bigal et al., 2006). In this study, the mean of BMI of the patients is higher than control, and was considered overweight (25 to 29.9). Bigal and Lipton (Bigal et al., 2006) found that increased BMI was linked to an increased prevalence of migraine about 1.2% in overweight subjects. This could be due to some preventive treatments of migraine, that are often linked with weight gain (Diener et al., 2003). In addition, there are many mechanisms that explain the connection between obesity and migraine (Hamed, 2009). The overweight subjects that consumed a higher fat diet, had a high secretion of Calcitonin Gene-Related Peptide (CGRP) (Zelissen et al., 1991). CGRP is a neuropeptide in the brain released from activated trigeminal sensory nerves. It is a postsynaptic mediator of trigeminovascular inflammation which increase headache susceptibility (Lassen et al., 2002).

In our study the migraine patients in the normal weight range showed significantly increased cholesterol, increased LDL and decreased HDL levels compared to controls with similar weight. Gruber et al. found similar results of normal weight patients and suggests that migraine is linked with an increased risk for cardiovascular disease (Gruber et al., 2010). There is a study which found a significant increased cholesterol and LDL levels of migraine patients compared with non-migraineurs controls (Gruber et al., 2010). Monastero et al, (2008) found a relationship between lipid levels in blood and migraine patients, specifically increased total cholesterol in subjects aged ≥ 50 years. Winsvold et al, (2011) found an association between migraine and low levels of

total HDL. Studies show that HDL has anti-inflammatory properties that may probably alter the perception of pain (Bigal et al., 2009; Navab et al., 2007). Triglycerides levels were increased in obese migraineurs (Gruber et al., 2010). This study results were on line with above-mentioned studies. In our study a significant increase in cholesterol, LDL and a significant decrease in HDL were observed in migraine group comparing with control group.

Vitamin B₁₂ has essential roles in CNS function, particularly the methionine-synthase mediated conversion of homocysteine to methionine (Reynolds, 2006). Many studies have shown an association between homocysteine level and migraine (Moschiano et al., 2008; Isobe and Terayama, 2010; Lippi et al., 2014). Decreased serum levels of vitamin B₁₂, folate and B₆ are associated with elevation of the homocysteine level in blood (Lippi et al., 2014). As a result, plasma homocysteine level may be decreased by folic acid supplementation (Pizza et al., 2013). Raised homocysteine level in the brain may increase negative electrophysiological hyperactivity, which may lead to migraine (Lippi et al., 2014). Also, homocysteine may increase oxidative stress by preventing the action of key antioxidant enzymes, like extracellular superoxide dismutase, which in turn is associated with migraine (Yamamoto, Hara, and Adachi, 2000). Lea et al, (Maizels, Blumenfeld, and Burchette, 2004) found that vitamin supplementations (2 mg of folic acid, 25 mg of vitamin B₆, and 400 μ g of vitamin B₁₂) significantly reduce the prevalence of migraine disability. Another study conducted on Australian females suffering from migraine with aura showed that vitamins B₆, B₉, and B₁₂ supplementation increase homocysteine levels and reduce the severity of migraine headache and disability among migraine patients and controls (Menon et al., 2012). In this study, there is a slight increase in vitamin B₁₂ of control group (not significant) but is not compatible with the results of the previous studies. This may be due to that 10.9% of patients take B₁₂ supplements and 16.7% of patients take multivitamins which may affect this study results, while in the above studies used to reduce the migraine attacks.

Magnesium has numerous functions in the human body. These functions are involved in intracellular energy storage, working as a cofactor in many enzymes, regulating ion channels and receptors as well as working in the transport system (Nattagh-Eshtivani et al., 2018). The importance of magnesium in the pathogenesis of migraine has been significant in several studies. Low levels of magnesium has been linked with cortical spreading depression (CSD) (Strong et al., 2002), neurotransmitter release (Coan and Collingridge, 1985), platelet cohesion (Baudouin-Legros, Dard and Guicheney, 1986), and vasoconstriction (Altura and Altura, 1980). Tarighat et al, (Esfanjani et al., 2012) found that magnesium supplementation minimize the severity and frequency of migraine attacks after consuming 500 mg/day of magnesium. Bigal et al, (2002) found that magnesium in 1g/day intravenous (IV) intake relieved pain and improved symptoms in 180 patients. In this study we did not find any statistically significant difference between patient and control groups regarding magnesium. We have measured the magnesium serum for patients while they were not having an active headache attack. A study showed decreased magnesium level during migraine attack in 50% of migraine patients (Mauskop and Altura, 1998). Masoud (2003) found a

significant difference between serum Mg levels during attacks, but after the migraine attack, the magnesium serum level was increased. Also, 16.7% of the patients were using multivitamins and 4.4% were taking magnesium supplementation which may affect this study results.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrated elevated levels of serum cholesterol and LDL with low levels of HDL in Saudi females migraineurs. The monitoring of fat in diet and lipid profile may reduce the migraine attacks. Vitamin B₁₂ serum levels and magnesium serum levels were not significantly different in migraineurs from those without migraine. Further investigations for a larger population sample may be required.

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