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Single nucleotide polymorphisms near IL28B and IL28A genes are associated with spontaneous seroclearance of HCV RNA in untreated patients with HCV infection



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Topic: **Viral Hepatitis: Epidemiology and Co-Morbidities**

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Background and aims: Previous genome-wide association studies found significant association between the single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNP) near IL28B (rs8099917 and rs12979860) and response in chronic hepatitis C patients. The aims of this study were to examine the association between two candidate SNPs and other SNPs near IL28A and IL28B genes with the spontaneous HCV RNA.

Methods: There were 889 anti-HCV-seropositive and HBsAg-seronegative participants in a community-based study. They were 30-65 years old and without antiviral treatment. There were near IL28A and IL28B genes genotyped using Illumina VeraCode GoldenGate genotyping. Deviations from Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium for each marker were examined by Chi-square test. Adjusted odds ratio (ORadj) and 95% confidence interval (CI) were estimated using multivariate regression models. Models were adjusted for the following covariates: age, sex, cigarette smoking, and serum levels of alanine aminotransferase.

Results: There were 294 participants who experienced spontaneous seroclearance of HCV RNA. The frequency of the minor allele of rs8099917 and rs12979860 was 0.04 and 0.05, respectively. However, these two candidate SNPs were significantly associated with spontaneous HCV RNA seroclearance showing the ORadj (95% CI) of 2.23 (1.22-4.09) and 2.25 (1.28-3.97), respectively, for participants carrying T or C allele on rs8099917 and rs12979860. There was a strong association between the two SNPs with r^2 of 0.98. For other tested SNPs near IL28A and IL28B, there were six SNPs that showed significant differences in their allele frequencies between those who experienced spontaneous HCV RNA seroclearance and those who did not. The ORadj (95% CI) of experiencing HCV RNA seroclearance for the six SNPs were 2.25 (1.28-3.97), 3.24 (1.46-7.16), 2.45 (1.37-4.40), 2.25 (1.28-3.97), 1.94 (1.14-3.30), and 1.94 (1.22-3.00), respectively.

Conclusion: The SNPs near IL28A and IL28B are associated with spontaneous seroclearance of HCV RNA in untreated patients with HCV infection.

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