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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Justification: Oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma (OPSCC) is a subtype of head and neck cancer with high mortality rates and aggressive behavior. Smoking, alcohol consumption, and HPV infection are well-established risk factors in carcinogenesis of the tumor. Genetic inherited variations can influence OPSCC susceptibility and tumor characteristics by altering gene expression. The KIF13B gene encodes a kinesin motor protein involved in intracellular transport, and sequence variations in its regulatory regions may affect gene expression. However, the impact of the KIF13B c.*3163G>A single nucleotide variant (SNV) on OPSCC risk and tumor features remains unclear. **Objectives:** To evaluate whether distinct genotypes of the SNV KIF13B c.*3163G>A influence the risk and tumor characteristics of OPSCC, as well as the expression of the KIF13B gene and the microRNA (miRNA) let-7e-3p in controls, and to functionally assess the interaction between let-7e-3p and the SNV region in the 3'-UTR of KIF13B. **Materials and Methods:** We evaluated 250 OPSCC patients and 250 controls seen at the Clinical Oncology Services of the General Hospital of University of Campinas. The genomic DNA was obtained from peripheral blood leukocyte samples from patients and controls entered the study. The KIF13B c.*3163G>A SNV genotypes were identified by polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The RNA was obtained from peripheral blood leukocyte samples from controls. The gene and let-7e-3p expression were evaluated by quantitative PCR. Interaction between let-7e-3p and the 3'-UTR of KIF13B was evaluated by luciferase reporter assay in FaDu and Detroit 562 pharyngeal cell lines. **Results:** KIF13B c.*3163GG genotype was more common in OPSCC patients than in controls (42% versus 32%; $P = 0.03$); individuals with KIF13B c.*3163GG genotype were under 1.73-fold increased risk of OPSCC than others. KIF13B c.*3163GG genotype was more common in patients with greater tumor extension (46% versus 28%, $P = 0.01$) than others and in patients with greater tumor extension than in controls (46% versus 32%; $P = 0.004$); individuals with KIF13B c.*3163GG genotype were under 2.47-fold increased risk of aggressive OPSCC than others. Individuals with KIF13B c.*3163GG genotype showed lower levels of KIF13B mRNA (1.02 arbitrary units (AUs) ± 0.35 standard deviation (SD) versus 1.28 AUs ± 0.53 SD, $P = 0.05$). The expression level of miRNA let-7e-3p was similar in individuals with distinct genotypes KIF13B c.*3163G>A SNV (0.52 AUs ± 0.31 DP versus 0.48 AUs ± 0.26 DP versus 0.55 AUs ± 0.39 DP, respectively; $P = 0.85$). The let-7e-3p miRNA exhibited more efficient binding to the 3'-UTR of the ancestral G allele compared to the variant A allele in the FaDu ($p = 0.004$) and Detroit 562 ($p = 0.04$) cell lines. **Conclusion:** Our data present, for the first time, evidence that KIF13B c.*3163G>A SNV is associated with

increased risk of OPSCC possibly due to the variation of KIF13B gene expression, modulated by the miRNA let-7e-3p.

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Keywords: KIF13B, Oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma, Risk, Single nucleotide variants.

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ASSOCIAÇÃO ENTRE SINTOMAS DE DEPRESSÃO E UMA VARIANTE NO GENE DA CHAPERONA ERP29 ASSOCIADA A PROCESSOS INFLAMATÓRIOS EM PACIENTES COM CÂNCER DE CABEÇA E PESCOÇO

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RESUMO

Introdução/Justificativa: O câncer de cabeça e pescoço (CCP) é um problema de saúde global, frequentemente acompanhado de reações emocionais, incluindo a depressão. Genes que regulam as vias de resposta inflamatória ao estresse desempenham um papel importante nos processos depressivos. O gene ERP29 codifica uma proteína chaperona envolvida no enovelamento e secreção de proteínas no retículo endoplasmático. Estudos conduzidos pelo nosso grupo demonstraram que a supressão do ERP29 em linhagens de células de tumores de cabeça e pescoço está associada ao aumento da expressão de genes das vias MAPK e Akt, conhecidas por seu envolvimento em processos inflamatórios. Além disso, uma variante genética de base única (SNV) no ERP29 (rs7114, A>G) foi associada a um maior risco de desenvolvimento de CCP e à redução da expressão do gene. No entanto, a relação dessa SNV com os sintomas depressivos ainda não foi estabelecida. **Objetivos:** O presente estudo teve como objetivos: 1) investigar se os sintomas depressivos em pacientes com CCP estão associados a

características clínicas e do tumor, e 2) avaliar a relação entre os genótipos da SNV ERP29 rs7114 e os sintomas depressivos. **Materiais e Métodos:** Foram avaliados 70 pacientes com CCP (57 homens, 13 mulheres, idade média de 60 anos, 59 tabagistas e 54 etilistas) atendidos até dois anos após o diagnóstico no Hospital de Clínicas da UNICAMP. Os sintomas depressivos foram avaliados por meio do Inventário de Depressão de Beck (BDI-II) que contém 21 questões abordando aspectos como humor depressivo, culpa, ideação suicida, isolamento social, alteração na imagem corporal, distúrbios do sono, fadiga e perda de libido. Cada item é pontuado de zero (ausência de sintoma) a três (sintoma grave) e a soma total reflete a gravidade dos sintomas depressivos. Os genótipos da SNV ERP29 rs7114 (AA, AG ou GG) foram identificados por meio da reação em cadeia da polimerase em tempo real com sondas TaqMan (Life Technologies) e os reagentes do kit TaqMan Universal PCR Master Mix (Applied Biosystems), seguindo as recomendações do fabricante. O significado estatístico das diferenças entre os grupos foi calculado por meio do teste de Mann-Whitney com os resultados apresentados em mediana e intervalo interquartil (IQR). **Resultados:** As características clínicas dos pacientes (sexo, estado civil, tabagismo e etilismo) e os aspectos do tumor (localização e estágio TNM) não influenciaram os sintomas depressivos desses pacientes com CCP. No entanto, observamos que os pacientes mais jovens (< 60 anos) apresentaram sintomas depressivos mais intensos (22 (IQR: 18,0) vs. 16 (IQR: 14), $p=0,02$). Além disso, pacientes com os genótipos AG ou GG da SNV rs7114 (A>G) no ERP29 tiveram pontuações mais altas de sintomas depressivos em comparação com aqueles com o genótipo AA (28 (IQR: 14,5) vs. 18 (IQR: 13), $p=0,02$). **Conclusão:** Nossos resultados sugerem que a variante genética rs7114 no ERP29 pode estar associada a sintomas depressivos de pacientes com CCP. Esses resultados demonstram a importância de investigar fatores genéticos na manifestação de sintomas emocionais em pacientes oncológicos. Estudos futuros, com ampliação da casuística e análise de marcadores inflamatórios, são necessários para confirmar essa associação. Agência financiadora: CNPq.

Palavras-chave: Câncer de cabeça e pescoço, Depressão, ERP29, Variante genética.

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COMPARISON BETWEEN MANUAL AND AUTOMATIC SEGMENTATION OF THE WHOLE-BRAIN AND CEREBELLUM

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A B S T R A C T

Introduction/Justification: 18F-FDG PET/CT is widely used to quantify brain metabolic activity and plays a key role in studying various diseases. Segmentation method choice can significantly influence standardized uptake value (SUV) measurements, thereby affecting the accuracy of the analysis. The Beth Israel Plugin in ImageJ allows both manual and automatic segmentation, making it relevant for evaluating differences in brain and cerebellum analysis. **Objectives:** This study aims to compare the mean, maximum, and peak SUVs obtained through manual and automatic (Grow Mask) segmentation of the brain and cerebellum, assessing the relative percentage differences and variations between the methods. **Materials and Methods:** Seventy-three multiple myeloma (MM) patients who underwent 18F-FDG PET/CT were included in the study, comprising 43 men (58.9%) with a mean age of 64.2 ± 11.4 years. Brain segmentation was performed in FIJI using two methods: (1) manual segmentation (MS) consisting of a spherical volume of interest (VOI) of 6.7 mL for the cerebellum and 377 mL for the brain and (2) auto-segmentation (AS) using a Grown Mask algorithm. Manual cropping of PET images was performed before AS to exclude non-cerebellar regions. The relative percentage difference between the two methods was calculated as $(1 - MS/AS)$. Mean, maximum and peak SUVs (SUVmean, SUVmax and SUVpeak, respectively), as well as maximum and minimum variation ranges of SUVs between MS and AS, were recorded. **Results:** For the brain, SUVs were higher for AS compared to MS: SUVmean = 4.19 ± 0.02 (MS) vs. 5.99 ± 0.03 (AS), corresponding to 30.05% difference (range: 10.21% to 41.39%); SUVpeak = 8.07 ± 0.05 (MS) vs. 9.05 ± 0.06 (AS), 10.83% difference (range: 0% to 40.59%); and SUVmax = 10.76 ± 0.06 (MS) vs. 11.75 ± 0.07 (AS), 8.43% difference (range: 0% to 55.46%). For the cerebellum, a greater variability between MS and AS SUVs were found: SUVmean = 6.00 ± 0.03 (MS) vs. 5.47 ± 0.02 (AS), corresponding to -9.69% difference (range: 0% to 53.51%); SUVpeak = 7.06 ± 0.03 (MS) vs. 7.29 ± 0.03 (AS), 3.15% difference (range: 0% to 32.96%); SUVmax = 8.23 ± 0.04 (MS) vs. 9.20 ± 0.04 (AS), 10.54% difference (range: 0% to 42.57%). **Conclusion:** The choice of segmentation method significantly impacts SUV values. AS yielded higher brain SUVs, while cerebellum MS showed greater variability due to manual adjustments and VOI selection. The differences between methods stem from segmentation techniques: MS used a spherical VOI, sometimes excluding the highest SUV point, whereas AS encompassed the full structure, capturing the true SUVmax. Thus, spherical VOI is less precise for whole-organ analysis but useful for quick regional calculations. Standardizing segmentation methods is crucial for reliable comparisons in clinical and research settings.