

Analysis of DNA Repair Genes Polymorphisms in Breast Cancer

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Abstract Genetic polymorphisms in the DNA repair genes may be associated with increased cancer risk. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the association of the DNA repair genes polymorphisms with the risk of breast cancer development. The study included 200 breast cancer patients and 200 healthy controls. The following polymorphisms were studied: C/G (Ser326Cys, rs1052133) of the *hOGG1*, A/C (IVS5 + 33, rs3212961) of the *ERCC1*, A/C (Lys939Gln, rs2228001) of the *XPC*, C/T (Thr241Met, rs861539) of the *XRCC3*, G/T (Leu787Leu, rs1800392) of the *WRN* and G/T (Ser307Ser, rs1056503) of the *XRCC4* gene. Presented study showed statistically significant increase in the breast cancer development risk of the G/G *hOGG1* genotype (OR 8.13; 95 % CI, 4.37–15.14; $p < 0.001$) and for the G *hOGG1* allele (OR 5.11; 95 % CI, 3.69–7.06; $p < 0.001$), as well as for the C/C *ERCC1* genotype (OR 10.61; 95 % CI, 5.72–19.69; $p < 0.001$) and the C *ERCC1* allele (OR 4.66; 95 % CI, 3.43–6.34; $p < 0.001$) in patients with breast cancer in comparison with healthy control group. We also observed positive association of the C/C *XPC* genotype (OR 3.80; 95 % CI, 2.27–6.38; $p < 0.001$) as well as the C *XPC* allele occurrence with an increased breast cancer development risk (OR 2.65; 95 % CI, 1.98–3.55; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, we found an association of the G/T *WRN* gene polymorphism with increased risk of carcinoma.

The *hOGG1*, *ERCC1*, *XPC* and *WRN* genes polymorphisms may be related to development of breast cancer.

Keywords Breast cancer · DNA repair · Genes · Polymorphism

Introduction

Breast cancer is still the most frequent entity among malignant neoplasms encountered in women with worryingly increasing number of new cases [1]. In spite of a noticeable improvement in diagnostic approach and treatment which reduced cancer-related mortality, more efficient methods of diagnosis and therapy are undoubtedly needed. Presumably, the current progress in molecular biology will have a significant impact on that field. One of the promising research areas is the variability of genetic background of DNA repair mechanisms in population [2, 3] and its assumable relation to breast cancer development. The repair process strictly depends on the nature of DNA impairment. A single-strand damage, which allows to use the intact DNA strand as a template for reconstruction of the damaged one, may be corrected by one of three amendment systems: base excision repair (BER), nucleotide excision repair (NER) or mismatch repair (MMR) [4, 5]. More complicated process of repairing, which is connected with a double-strand damage, includes two pathways: non-homologous end joining (NHEJ) and homologous recombination (HRR) [6, 7].

A group of specific proteins is involved in the mechanisms of DNA repair and the variability of the genes encoding such proteins is responsible for possible modulations of this process.

It is suggested in the literature that the differences in response to DNA damage based on genetic polymorphism may

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be significantly related to the risk of carcinogenesis [8, 9] thus it is reasonable to investigate that subject in the context of determining potential risk group among patients. BER is the most important reaction to the oxidative damage of the DNA [10]. The protein which plays the essential role in that pathway is the human 8-oxoguanine DNA N-glycosylase 1 (hOGG1) [11]. The group of proteins valid for NER, a mechanism connected mainly with repairing damage of the DNA induced by ultraviolet light, include ERCC1 (excision repair cross-complementing 1) and XP (xeroderma pigmentosum groups A, C, F, G) [12, 13]. Another important protein group, which is involved in HRR process, referring to precise repair of severe DNA impairment with the sister chromatid or homologous chromosome used as a template, encompasses XRCC3 [14] and WNR [15]. Finally, the significant component of NHEJ pathway is XRCC4 [16], a cofactor in DNA ligase complex which participates in joining two DNA ends. The essential source of genetic variability in DNA-repair systems are single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs).

In the present study we analyzed an association between breast cancer occurrence and the SNPs encountered in one BER-related, two NER-related, two HRR-related and one NHEJ-related gene: *hOGG1-C/G* (Ser326Cys, rs1052133), *ERCC1-A/C* (IVS5 + 33, rs3212961), *XPC-C/T* (Lys939Gln, rs2228001), *XRCC3-G/T* (Thr241Met, rs861539), *WRN-G/T* (Leu787Leu, rs1800392) and *XRCC4-G/T* (Ser307Ser, rs1056503), respectively.

Materials and Methods

Patients

The study included 400 patients: 200 with breast cancer (aged 42–82 years) and 200 gender- and age-matched healthy controls. All patients and healthy subjects were Caucasian. We enrolled only women born and living in central Poland (Lodz region). Analysed patients were hospitalized in Department of Oncology, Institute of Polish Mother's Memorial Hospital, Lodz, Poland between 2005 and 2010. The study protocol was approved by the ethical committee of the Institute of Polish Mother's Memorial Hospital, Lodz, Poland. The samples, previously collected for diagnostic purposes and anonymized, were used for molecular analysis. Only patients with confirmed pathology diagnosis of ductal breast carcinoma were included into the study. All the tumors were graded by a method, based on the criteria of Scarf-Bloom-Richardson. Tumour grade was classified into Grade 1 (well differentiated), Grade 2 (moderately differentiated) and Grade 3 (poorly differentiated). The distributions of clinical characteristics of the patients are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 The characteristic of breast cancer patients and controls

Characteristics	Patients (n = 200)	Controls (n = 200)
Age (years)		
< 45	57 (28.5 %)	59 (29.5 %)
45–54	50 (25 %)	48 (24 %)
55–64	53 (26.5 %)	46 (23 %)
> 64	40 (20 %)	47 (23.5 %)
Family history of breast cancer ^a		
Yes	90 (45 %)	82 (41 %)
No	110 (55 %)	118 (59 %)
Menarche (years)		
10	30 (15 %)	23 (11.5 %)
11	38 (19 %)	46 (23 %)
12	39 (19.5 %)	41 (20.5 %)
13	38 (19 %)	35 (17.5 %)
14	30 (15 %)	32 (16 %)
≥ 15	25 (12.5 %)	23 (11.5 %)
Parity		
Nulliparous	51 (25.5 %)	46 (23 %)
1	41 (20.5 %)	46 (23 %)
2	42 (21 %)	38 (19 %)
3	35 (17.5 %)	39 (19.5 %)
≥ 4	31 (15.5 %)	31 (15.5 %)
Menopause status		
Premenopausal	95 (47.5 %)	89 (44.5 %)
Postmenopausal	105 (52.5 %)	111 (55.5 %)
Use of menopausal hormones		
Never	102 (51 %)	95 (47.5 %)
Estrogen	98 (49 %)	105 (52.5 %)
Bloom-Richardson grading		
1	65 (32.5 %)	
2	95 (47.5 %)	
3	40 (20 %)	
Tumor size grade		
T1	57 (28.5 %)	
T2	85 (42.5 %)	
T3	58 (29 %)	
Lymph node status		
N0	64 (32 %)	
N1	48 (24 %)	
N2	46 (23 %)	
N3	42 (21 %)	

^a Family history defined as self-reporting of at least one first-degree relative with known breast cancer

High Resolution Melting Analyses

Peripheral venous blood samples were obtained from all analysed patients at the time of hospital admission. Genomic DNA was prepared using DNeasy Blood & Tissue Kit

(Qiagen GmbH, Hilden, Germany) according to the manufacturer instruction. PCR products for the analysed variants were analysed by High-Resolution Melter (HRM) analysis. Primers for HRM analysis of all examined SNPs are summarized in Table 2. Analysis of the SNPs was performed by help of LightCycler® 480 High Resolution Melting Master Kit (Roche, Mannheim, Germany) according to recommendations of producer. The non-template control contained water instead of genomic DNA as a negative control. Additionally, positive controls (DNA samples with known genotype) were employed in each HRM analysis run. PCR amplification was performed in LightCycler® 96 (Roche, Mannheim, Germany) Thermocycler. Collected data were analyzed using LightCycler® 96 software version SW 1.1 (Roche, Mannheim, Germany).

Statistics

To determine differences between groups, standard χ^2 test or Fisher's exact test were used. Clinical significance of analyzed polymorphisms was determined using logistic regression analysis and presented in tables as odds ratios (OR) with their 95 % confidence intervals. The deviations from Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium were analyzed using the χ^2 test. All the results were determined to be statistically significant when they reached the significance level of $p \leq 0.050$.

Results

The genotype distributions of analyzed the *hOGG1*-C/G (Ser326Cys, rs1052133), *ERCC1*-A/C (IVS5 + 33, rs3212961), *XPC*-A/C (Lys939Gln, rs2228001), *XRCC3*-C/T (Thr241Met, rs861539), *WRN*-G/T (Leu787Leu, rs1800392) and *XRCC4*-G/T (Ser307Ser, rs1056503). Genes polymorphisms are summarized in Table 3.

In the studies on a series of 200 DNA samples from patients with breast cancer, originating from an ethnically

homogenous population, we found a relationship of the studied polymorphisms *hOGG1*-C/G, *ERCC1*-A/C, *XPC*-A/C and *WRN*-G/T with breast cancer occurrence.

In the present work we succeeded to demonstrate that G/G genotype of C/G polymorphism of *hOGG1* gene was associated with an increased risk of breast cancer in studied population, almost eight (OR 8.13; 95 % CI 4.37–15.14) times higher than in case of the other genotypes. We observed that G allele of C/G polymorphism of *hOGG1* gene was strongly associated with breast cancer (OR 5.11; 95 % CI 3.69–7.06, $p < .0001$).

Table 3 shows genotype distribution values of A/C, IVS5 + 33 polymorphisms of *ERCC1* in breast cancer patients and controls. We found a relationship of the studied A/C, IVS5 + 33 polymorphism with breast cancer occurrence. We have demonstrated in the presented report that the C/C variant may increase the risk of studied tumour development (OR 10.61; 95 % CI 5.72–19.69, $p < .0001$). Variant C allele of *ERCC1* increased cancer risk (OR 4.66; 95 % CI 3.43–6.34, $p < .0001$).

We presented that C/C genotype of A/C polymorphism of *XPC* gene (OR 3.80; 95 % CI 2.27–6.38, $p < .0001$) and for the C *XPC* allele (OR 2.65; 95 % CI 1.98–3.55, $p < .0001$), as well as for T/T genotype of G/T polymorphism of *WRN* gene (OR 1.94; 95 % CI 1.12–3.37, $p = 0.024$) and the T *WRN* allele (OR 1.45; 95 % CI 1.09–1.92, $p = 0.011$) were strongly associated with the incidence of the tumour.

We also simultaneously showed that neither C/T polymorphism of *XRCC3* gene nor G/T polymorphism of *XRCC4* gene was in any way related to an increased risk of breast cancer ($p > 0.05$).

The potential relationship between *hOGG1*, *ERCC1*, *XPC*, *WRN*, *XRCC3* and *XRCC4* genotype distribution and clinical data of breast cancer patients was investigated. However the current study failed to show the correlation between analysed genes polymorphisms and tumor size, grade or lymph node status. DNA repair genes polymorphisms were also unrelated to the patients age, menarche, parity, menopause status and family history of cancer ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2 Primer sequences for real-time PCR and the following HRM analysis of the examined DNA repair genes SNPs

	Polymorphism	Primers
<i>hOGG1</i>	Ser326Cys (rs1052133)	5'-CCCTCCTACAGGTGCTGTTC-3' 5'-TGGGGAATTTCTTTGTCCAG-3'
<i>ERCC1</i>	IVS5 + 33 (rs3212961)	5'-TTGTCCAGGTGGATGTGGTA-3' 5'-CCTCGCTGAGGTTTTAGCTG-3'
<i>XPC</i>	Lys939Gln (rs2228001)	5'-CCTCAAAACCGAGAAGATGAAG-3' 5'-CAGGTGTGGGGCCTGTAGT-3'
<i>XRCC3</i>	Thr241Met (rs861539)	5'-CCATTCCGCTGTGAATTTG-3' 5'-GAAGGCACTGCTCAGCTCAC-3'
<i>WRN</i>	Leu787Leu (rs1800392)	5'-TGGAATTTGAAGGTCCAAC-3' 5'-GCATGGTATGTCCACAGGA-3'
<i>XRCC4</i>	Ser307Ser (rs1056503)	5'-AGGCCTGATTCTTCACTACCTG-3' 5'-GGCTGCTGTTTCTCAGATTTTC-3'

Table 3 Distribution of *hOGG1*, *ERCC1*, *XPC*, *XRCC3*, *WRN* and *XRCC4* genotypes estimated by HRM analysis in DNA samples of breast carcinoma patients

	Patients (n = 200)		Controls (n = 200)		OR (95 % CI) ^a	<i>p</i> ^b
<i>hOGG1</i>	Number	(%)	Number	(%)		
C/C	23	11.5	44	22	1.00 Ref	
C/G	24	12	120	60	0.38 (0.20–0.75)	0.007
G/G	153	76.5	36	18	8.13 (4.37–15.14)	<.0001
C	70	18	208	52	1.00 Ref	
G	330	82	192	48	5.11 (3.69–7.06)	<.0001
<i>ERCC1</i>	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	OR (95 % CI)	<i>p</i>
A/A	28	14	56	28	1.00 Ref	
A/C	34	17	118	59	0.58 (0.325–1.04)	0.093
C/C	138	69	26	13	10.61 (5.72–19.69)	<.0001
A	90	22.5	230	57.5	1.00 Ref	
C	310	77.5	170	42.5	4.66 (3.43–6.34)	<.0001
<i>XPC</i>	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	OR (95 % CI) ^a	<i>p</i>
A/A	36	18	64	32	1.00 Ref	
A/C	44	22	80	40	0.98 (0.56–1.69)	1.000
C/C	120	60	56	28	3.80 (2.27–6.38)	<.0001
A	116	29	208	52	1.00 Ref	
C	284	71	192	48	2.65 (1.98–3.55)	<.0001
<i>XRCC3</i>	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	OR (95 % CI) ^a	<i>p</i>
C/C	48	24	52	26	1.00 Ref	
C/T	72	36	72	36	1.08 (0.67–1.81)	0.862
T/T	80	40	76	38	1.14 (0.69–1.88)	0.698
C	168	42	176	44	1.00 Ref	
T	232	58	224	56	1.08 (0.82–1.43)	0.617
<i>WRN</i>	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	OR (95 % CI) ^a	<i>p</i>
G/G	39	19.5	50	25	1.00 Ref	
G/T	85	42.5	100	50	1.09 (0.65–1.81)	0.841
T/T	76	38	50	25	1.94 (1.12–3.37)	0.024
G	163	40.8	200	50	1.00 Ref	
T	237	59.2	200	40	1.45 (1.09–1.92)	0.011
<i>XRCC4</i>	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	OR (95 % CI) ^a	<i>p</i>
G/G	52	26	57	28.5	1.00 Ref	
G/T	92	46	82	41	1.23 (0.76–1.98)	0.471
T/T	56	28	61	30.5	1.01 (0.59–1.69)	0.920
G	196	49	196	49	1.00 Ref	
T	204	51	204	51	1.00 (0.75–1.31)	0.920

^a Crude odds ratio (OR), 95 % CI = confidence interval at 95 %^b Chi square

Discussion

The results of our study showed statistically significant correlation between the investigated SNPs of *hOGG1*, *ERCC1*, *XPC* and *WRN* genes and the breast cancer development in women. However, this correlation was not observed in the case of the examined SNPs of *XRCC3* and *XRCC4* genes.

The relation between *hOGG1* gene and the development of different malignant neoplasms, including breast cancer, has been intensively studied recently [17–52]. A significant

correlation between the *hOGG1* Ser326Cys polymorphism and general cancer risk is suggested in the literature, however, according to further meta-analysis, limited to Asian population with no explicit evidence of such strong association in Caucasians [53]. Moreover, the studies of the *hOGG1* Ser326Cys polymorphism in relation to breast cancer risk lead to contradictory conclusions [54]. Our present study revealed an 8-fold increased risk of breast malignancy within the population of Polish women with G/G genotype of *hOGG1* Ser326Cys polymorphism in comparison to the group with

other genotype variants. Furthermore, among the patients with the C/C genotype of the *ERCC1* polymorphism the risk of the breast carcinoma morbidity is 10.61-fold increased compared to the control group. The results confirm the positive correlation between SNP of *ERCC1* and significantly higher risk of breast malignant entities in Caucasian population, which is indicated in the literature [55].

Another conclusion drawn from our research is the significant association between the homozygous C/C variant of *XPC* Lys939Gln polymorphism and the breast carcinoma occurrence which is contrary to the studies reporting the lack of association between polymorphic xeroderma pigmentosum genes and the breast cancer in the Caucasians [56]. In addition, the T/T genotype of *WRN* Leu787Leu polymorphism revealed a strong association with the development of breast malignant tumors in Polish women. This finding generally confirms the connection between the polymorphic *WRN* genes and the increase of breast cancer risk, although the reports indicate this association in Asian population [57].

Although researchers report the significant correlation between the *XRCC3* Thr241Met and polymorphism [58], our study performed on population of Polish women provided opposite results.

Similarly, our analysis of the *XRCC4* Ser307Ser polymorphism did not reveal a considerable association between this SNPs and the breast malignancy in the population of Polish women. However, the results of our research may contribute the current perception of the complex role of *XRCC4* polymorphisms in breast cancer development which are poorly recognized yet [59].

Our research are affected certain limitations. The sample for the present study comprised of 200 patients with cancer. This sample is only a very small proportion of the entire population of breast cancer women in the country. Therefore the obtained results can not be considered as definitive and require further, more extensive evaluations, performed on bigger groups of patients.

To conclude, the SNPs within the analysed genes of DNA repair systems comprise the new potentially important group of risk factors of breast cancer development in the Polish women. The SNPs analysis may be used in the near future as a convenient method of selecting patients with high risk of morbidity. However, considering the equivocal results of the studies presented in the literature, further research in this field on larger groups of patients is recommended.

Conclusions

1. A significant correlation was found between single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) of the *hOGG1* gene of DNA repair by base excision repair (BER) and the formation of breast cancer in women.

2. A significant relationship was demonstrated between SNPs of *ERCC1* and *XPC* genes, participating in DNA repair by excision of nucleotides (NER – nucleotide excision repair) and the occurrence of breast cancer.
3. A significant correlation was found between single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) of the *WRN* gene of DNA double fracture repair by homologous recombination (HRR) and the formation of breast cancer in women.
4. No correlations were found between SNPs of *XRCC3* and *XRCC4* genes, participating in DNA repair by HRR and non-homologous end joining (NHEJ) and the occurrence of breast cancer.
5. The polymorphisms of single nucleotides within the studied genes of the DNA repair system constitute a group of new risk factors of breast cancer for women.
6. The analysis of the polymorphisms of the studied DNA repair genes may be used in the qualification of patients to high-risk groups.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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