

**Associations between Coagulation Factors, Clinical  
Phenotypes, Cytokine Profiles and Polymorphisms in  
Immune Response Genes of Haemophilia A and B  
Patients With and Without Inhibitors.**

**Nontobeko Thenjiwe Lorraine Ndlovu**

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the  
Witwatersrand, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science in Medicine.

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**DECLARATION**

I, Nontobeko Thenjiwe Lorraine Ndlovu declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Science in Medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at this or any other University.

.....

Candidate signature

.....day of .....2009.

**DEDICATION**

**In loving memory of my father**

**Jabulani Chris `Over` Ndlovu**

**1956-2003**

## **PRESENTATIONS ARISING FROM THIS STUDY**

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Associations between coagulation factors, clinical phenotypes, cytokine profiles, inhibitor development and IL-10 gene promoter polymorphisms in haemophilia.

## **ABSTRACT**

The underlying mechanism and determinants of inhibitor formation in approximately 30% haemophilia A and 5% haemophilia B patients are not fully understood. A large amount of the data on immune responses against FVIII and FIX is from animal models. Studies investigating cytokines in haemophilia are very limited and fragmentary, and the classification of hemophilia patients according to their factor activity levels has been observed to be inconsistent. The current study aims to find the associations between factor levels, clinical phenotype, cytokine profiles and polymorphisms in the IL-10 gene promoter of haemophilia A and B patients with and without inhibitors. This may give more insight into the pathophysiology of haemophilia, help improve the understanding of the pathogenic mechanisms that underlie inhibitor development, and facilitate new diagnostic and therapeutic strategies for haemophilia.

Haemophilia A and B patients with and without inhibitors were enrolled in the current study. Forty (40) patients from the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital Haemophilia Comprehensive Care Centre (CMJAH-HCCC) were randomly selected. An equal number of frequent bleeders and infrequent bleeders were recruited. Frequent bleeders were defined as those patients with 2 or more bleeding episodes per month on three consecutive months. Bleeding frequency was evaluated on the patient's bleeding charts.

FVIII and FIX activity levels of all patients were measured using the Dade Behring Sysmex CA-7000 coagulation analyzer, and information on each patient's bleeding episodes was obtained from the haemophilia bleeding charts. The inhibitor status of all patients was evaluated using the Bethesda inhibitor assay. IL-1 $\beta$ , IL-6 and TNF- $\alpha$  were analyzed using an ELISA kit method. IL-2, IL-4, IL-10 and IFN- $\gamma$  were analyzed using the CBA Human TH1/TH2 Cytokine Kit. DNA was extracted using the Nucleon BACC3 from Amersham Biosciences. Polymorphisms in the IL-10 gene promoter region were analyzed using PCR. The Statistica Release 8 statistics package was used for statistical analysis.

The present study population showed significant discrepancies in the theoretic classification of haemophilia patients. Severe haemophilia patients had significantly higher levels of IL-6 than the mild/moderate group and biochemical classification correlated positively with IL-6. IL-6 was also the only significant predictor of biochemical classification. IL-1 $\beta$  and IL-4 was found to be significantly higher in the mild/moderate group than in the severe group. There were no significant differences in the levels of IL-2, IL-10, and IFN $\gamma$  between the mild/moderate and severe groups and between patients with inhibitors and without inhibitors. There were also no differences in the cytokine profiles of low and high responders.

No significant differences were found between cytokine profiles of frequent and infrequent bleeders. IL-6 and TNF- $\alpha$  were found to be significantly higher in patients with inhibitors than in haemophilia patients without inhibitors. IL-6 and IL-1 $\beta$  were

the only significant predictors of the inhibitor status of haemophilia patients. Haemophilia severity and race were found to be significant risk factors for inhibitor development. A 150 bp allele of the IL-10 promoter region with the microsatellite marker was observed in patients with and without inhibitors as well as the healthy controls. The 150 bp allele was also observed in both black and white subjects.

Large phenotypic heterogeneity exists in haemophilia patients. The pro-inflammatory cytokines IL-6 and IL-1 $\beta$  together with IL-4 may be involved in determining the biochemical severity of haemophilia. IL-6 was the only cytokine in this study found to be a significant predictor of bleeding frequency. The study results also suggest that IL-6 and IL-1 $\beta$  may be involved in the production of antibodies against infused factor in patients with inhibitors.

The presence of a 150 bp allele of the highly polymorphic IL-10 promoter region in patients with and without inhibitors as well as the healthy controls suggests that, polymorphisms in this gene do not influence inhibitor development in this population.

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|   | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| Declaration.....  | ii          |
| Dedication.....   | iii         |
| Presentation Arising from this Study.....                 | iv          |
| Paper in Preparation for Publication.....                 | iv          |
| Abstract.....   | v           |
| Acknowledgements.....                                     | viii        |
| Table of Contents.....                                    | ix          |
| List of Figures.....                                      | xiv         |
| List of Tables.....                                       | xvii        |
| List of Abbreviations.....                                | xx          |
| <b>CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Literature Review.....</b> | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.0 Introduction.....                                     | 1           |
| 1.1 Haemostasis.....                                      | 3           |
| 1.2 Haemophilia A and B.....                              | 6           |
| 1.3 Epidemiology of haemophilia.....                      | 7           |
| 1.3.1 United States.....                                  | 7           |
| 1.3.2 International.....                                  | 8           |
| 1.3.3 Mortality/Morbidity.....                            | 8           |
| 1.3.4 Race.....   | 9           |
| 1.3.5 Sex.....  | 10          |

|         |  |    |
|---------|--|----|
| 1.3.6   | Age.....   | 10 |
| 1.4     | Brief history of haemophilia.....                            | 11 |
| 1.5     | Classification and clinical phenotype.....                   | 14 |
| 1.6     | Therapy and its complications.....                           | 18 |
| 1.7     | Immune response and inhibitor development.....               | 20 |
| 1.8     | Risk factors for inhibitor development.....                  | 23 |
| 1.8.1   | Genetic risk factors.....                                    | 23 |
| 1.8.1.1 | Severity of haemophilia.....                                 | 23 |
| 1.8.1.2 | Race and ethnicity.....                                      | 24 |
| 1.8.1.3 | Family history of inhibitors.....                            | 24 |
| 1.8.1.4 | Type of factor mutation.....                                 | 25 |
| 1.8.2   | Environmental risk factors.....                              | 26 |
| 1.9     | FVIII and FIX genes and proteins.....                        | 27 |
| 1.9.1   | The FVIII gene.....  | 27 |
| 1.9.2   | The FIX gene.....  | 28 |
| 1.9.3   | FVIII protein structure and activation.....                  | 29 |
| 1.9.4   | FIX protein structure and activation.....                    | 30 |
| 1.10    | Characteristics and actions of FVIII and FIX inhibitors..... | 32 |
| 1.10.1  | Characteristics of FVIII and FIX inhibitors.....             | 32 |
| 1.10.2  | Actions of FVIII inhibitors.....                             | 33 |
| 1.10.3  | Actions of FIX inhibitors.....                               | 34 |
| 1.11    | Cytokines.....   | 35 |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1.11.1 Cytokine effects.....                                     | 35        |
| 1.12 Polymorphisms in immune response genes.....                 | 40        |
| 1.13 Aim of the present study.....                               | 42        |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>CHAPTER 2: MATERIALS AND METHODS.....</b>                     | <b>43</b> |
| 2.1 Study population.....  | 43        |
| 2.1.1 Inclusion criteria.....                                    | 43        |
| 2.1.2 Exclusion criteria.....                                    | 43        |
| 2.2 Study design.....  | 44        |
| 2.3 Methodology outline.....                                     | 44        |
| 2.4 Blood collection and storage.....                            | 45        |
| 2.5 Quantitative measure of inhibitors.....                      | 46        |
| 2.6 Clotting factor activity determination.....                  | 47        |
| 2.7 Cytokine quantification.....                                 | 48        |
| 2.7.1 IL-1 $\beta$ , IL-6 and TNF- $\alpha$ Quantification ..... | 48        |
| 2.7.2 IL-2, IL-4, IL-10 and IFN- $\gamma$ Quantification .....   | 49        |
| 2.8 DNA extraction.....  | 50        |
| 2.8.1 DNA quantification and purity check.....                   | 51        |
| 2.9 PCR master mixture preparation.....                          | 52        |
| 2.10 DNA agarose gel fractionation.....                          | 54        |
| 2.10 Statistical analysis.....                                   | 54        |
| 2.10.1 Categorising codes used for statistical analysis.....     | 55        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>CHAPTER 3: RESULTS.....</b>   | <b>56</b> |
| 3.1 Demographics of the study population.....                                  | 59        |
| 3.2 Quantitative Measure of Inhibitors.....                                    | 60        |
| 3.3 Factor Activity, Biochemical Classification and Bleeding Frequency.....    | 62        |
| 3.4 IL-1 $\beta$ , IL-6 and TNF- $\alpha$ Quantification.....                  | 64        |
| 3.5 IL-2, IL-4, IL-10 and IFN- $\gamma$ Quantification.....                    | 68        |
| 3.6 Pearson Correlation Coefficients of all Variables in the Study.....        | 73        |
| 3.7 Linear Regression Analysis.....  | 74        |
| 3.8 DNA quantification and purity check.....                                   | 76        |
| 3.9 DNA agarose gel electrophoresis.....                                       | 77        |
| <b>CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION &amp; CONCLUSION.....</b>                              | <b>78</b> |
| 4.1 Discrepancies in the theoretic classification of haemophilia patients..... | 78        |
| 4.2 Cytokine analysis in haemophilia.....                                      | 79        |
| 4.2.1 Cytokines and disease severity .....                                     | 81        |
| 4.2.2 Cytokines and bleeding frequency.....                                    | 82        |
| 4.2.3 Cytokines and inhibitor development.....                                 | 82        |
| 4.3 Haemophilia severity and the risk of inhibitor development.....            | 83        |
| 4.4 Race as a risk factor for inhibitor development.....                       | 84        |
| 4.5 Polymorphisms in the IL-10 gene promoter.....                              | 84        |
| <b>4.6 CONCLUSION.....</b>   | <b>86</b> |
| <b>4.7 RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>  | <b>87</b> |

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>APPENDIX.....</b>              | <b>88</b> |
| Ethics Clearance Certificate..... | 88        |
| <b>REFERENCES.....</b>            | <b>89</b> |

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

1. Figure 1. The normal haemostatic mechanisms with clotting factors of the intrinsic and extrinsic pathways of the coagulation cascade.....4
2. Figure 2. A family tree of a haemophilic family showing x-linked pattern of inheritance of the disease.....7
3. Figure 3. The British Royal family haemophilia Pedigree.....13
4. Figure 4. Schematic model of the immune response to exogenous FVIII/FIX protein.....20
5. Figure 5. Location of the FVIII gene on the long (q) arm of the X chromosome at position 28.....28
6. Figure 6. Location of the FIX gene on the long (q) arm of the X chromosome between positions 27.1 and 27.2.....29
7. Figure 7. The Factor VIII protein molecular structure.....29
8. Figure 8. Structure of the FIX precursor protein.....31

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 9. Figure 9. Schematic model showing the domain structure of factor VIII (FVIII) and the localization of the main binding epitopes of FVIII antibodies..... | 34 |
| 10. Figure 10. Schematic model showing the domain structure of factor IX (FIX) and the main binding areas of inhibitory FIX antibodies highlighted.....     | 34 |
| 11. Figure 11. Cytokines control the immune response by influencing and changing the balance of T helper 1 (TH1) and T helper 2 (TH2) cells.....            | 37 |
| 12. Figure 12. A portion of the IL-10 gene showing the CA repeat microsattelites.....   | 41 |
| 13. Figure 3.1.1 Histogram showing the abnormal distribution of IL-1 $\beta$ quantification.....  | 56 |
| 14. Figure 3.1.2 Histogram showing a log transformed distribution of IL-1 $\beta$ .....   | 57 |
| 15. Figure 3.2 Study population selection.....  | 58 |
| 16. Figure 3.3 Stratification of participants according to severity of bleeding ....  | 63 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 17. Figure 3.5.1 CBA Data Acquisition from the FACS Array instrument from<br>BD Biosciences..... | 68 |
| 18. Figure 3.5.2 Cytometric Bead Array standards.....  | 70 |
| 19. Figure 3.5.3. Subject MFB-8 sample showing very low cytokine levels. ....                    | 70 |
| 20. Figure 3.7 Agarose gel electrophoresis of PCR (IL-10 promoter region).....                   | 77 |

## **LIST OF TABLES**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Table 1. Relationship between clotting factor level and clinical phenotype in haemophilia..... | 14 |
| 2. Table 2 Sites of bleeding in haemophilia.....  | 17 |
| 3. Table 2.1 Master mixture components.....   | 52 |
| 4. Table 2.2 IL-10 G primer properties.....   | 53 |
| 5. Table 2.3 DNA Amplification.....   | 53 |
| 6. Table 2.4 Variable codes .....   | 55 |
| 7. Table 2.5 Grouping of participants.....  | 55 |
| 8. Table 3.1 Demographics of the study population.....  | 59 |
| 9. Table 3.2 Participants with inhibitors.....  | 60 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 10. Table 3.3 Factor Activity, Biochemical Classification and Bleeding<br>Frequency.....                  | 62 |
| 11. Table 3.4 IL-1 $\beta$ , IL-6 and TNF- $\alpha$ Quantification (ELISA).....                           | 64 |
| 12. Table 3.4.1. Cytokine levels of Mild/Moderate (M) compared to Severe (S)<br>haemophiliacs.....        | 65 |
| 13. Table 3.4.2. Cytokine levels of Frequent (FB) compared to Infrequent<br>Bleeders (IFB).....           | 65 |
| 14. Table 3.4.3 Inhibitor (I) vs. Non-Inhibitor (NI) patients.....  | 66 |
| 15. Table 3.4.4 Low Responder vs. High Responder patients.....  | 67 |
| 16. Table 3.5 IL-2, IL-4, IL-10 and IFN- $\gamma$ Quantification (CBA).....                               | 69 |
| 17. Table 3.5.1. Cytokine levels of Mild/Moderate (M) compared to Severe (S)<br>haemophilia patients..... | 71 |
| 18. Table 3.5.2. Cytokine levels of Frequent (FB) compared to Infrequent<br>Bleeders (IFB).....           | 71 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 19. Table 3.5.3. Inhibitor (I) vs. Non-Inhibitor (NI) haemophiliacs.....                        | 72 |
| 20. Table 3.6 Pearson Correlation Coefficients Of All Variables In The Study<br>Population..... | 73 |
| 21. Table 3.7.1 Dependent Variable: Bleeding Frequency.....                                     | 74 |
| 22. Table 3.7.2 Dependent Variable: Biochemical Classification.....                             | 74 |
| 23. Table 3.7.3 Dependent Variable: Inhibitors.....   | 75 |
| 24. Table 3.6 DNA quantification and purity check.....  | 76 |

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ATIII - anti-thrombin 3

bp – base pairs

CBA – cytometric bead array

CMJAH – Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital

DNA – deoxyribonucleic acid

EDTA – ethylenediaminetetra-acetic acid

EGF – epidermal growth factor

ELISA – Enzyme linked immuno-sorbent assay

FIX – factor nine

FV – factor five

FVII – factor seven

FVIII – factor eight

FX - factor ten

FXa – active factor ten

FXIII – factor thirteen

Gla – glutamic acid

HCCC – Haemophilia Comprehensive Care Centre

HIV – human immunodeficiency virus

HRP - horseradish peroxidase

IFN- $\gamma$  – interferon gamma

IgG – immunoglobulin G

IL-10 – interleukin ten

IL-1 $\beta$  - interleukin one beta

IL-2 – interleukin two

IL-4 – interleukin four

IL-6 – interleukin six

IU – international unit

MAbs - monoclonal antibodies

MgCl<sub>2</sub> – magnesium chloride

MHC – major histocompatibility complex

MIBS - Malmo International Brother Study

ml – milli litre

nm – nano metre

PBMCs - peripheral blood mononuclear cells

PCR – polymerase chain reaction

PE - phycoerythrin

SA – South Africa

SLE - systemic lupus erythematosus

SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TF – tissue factor

TFPI - tissue factor pathway inhibitor

TH1 and TH2 – T cell helper 1 and T cell helper 2

TNF- $\alpha$ - tumour necrosis factor alpha

$\mu$ l –micro litre

VWD - von Willebrand disease