

Alcohol intake predisposed to by Maria Fatina Gomes de Sa Ribero et al

One accepted theory to explain the progression from a benign disease such as fatty liver to the more serious and irreversible liver damage as NASH/ASH is that of the “second hit”. In other terms, two noxae are more dangerous than one, particularly if they act in parallel rather than in series. The data reported by the group in São Paulo add additional evidence that this obvious but never fully experimentally proven concept is true. A quite large sample of patients with HCV-related liver damage was divided according to their alcohol intake, and the extent of histological damage assessed. Periportal inflammation was significantly more pronounced in heavy drinkers than in teetotalers. Also important, although expected, is the observation of a greater fibrosis in heavy drinkers. One of the major plus of this paper is the fact that histological samples were read by one of the world leading expert of hepatic histopathology thus making the morphological rock solid. One additional plus is how alcohol consumption was recorded with detailed information obtained not only from the patient but also from the family. Unfortunately no details were provided either on the HCV genotype(s) or on the viral load rendering difficult to understand the length and the severity of HCV infection. It will be highly informative and interesting to correlate the viral profile, the alcohol consumption and the histological picture making possible to understand the relationship, if any, and the relative role of these 3 players in HCV-related liver disorder.

TP53 abnormalities are frequent by Mauricio Moreno et al

p53, encoded by the *TP53* tumor suppressor gene, is acknowledged as one of the key mechanisms in maintaining the genome integrity and therefore in preventing the development of cancer in several tissues. In this study Moreno and colleagues investigated the inactivation of *TP53* in archival samples of gallbladder carcinoma originated in the presence of gallstones. To this end, DNA was extracted from the paraffin-embedded tissue and the loss of heterozygosity in *TP53* at exons 5 and 8 examined. In-

teresting was the comparison of what observed in tumor samples with non tumor adjacent and normal gallbladder tissue. Data suggest that mutations in *TP53* were frequent (more than 60%) in gallbladder carcinoma but the frequency was almost identical in non tumor samples (either normal or dysplastic). The vastly preponderant alteration was either allele loss or mutation. Although the same group previously reported allelic loss at the *TP53* locus in gallbladder cancer, the novelty of this series is the detection of such alteration in normal or dysplastic samples from gallbladder with the presence of cancer. This observation points to the role of *TP53* alterations in the development (or protection if one looks at the other side of the coin) in gallbladder carcinoma and adds another piece in the growing puzzle linking p53 and cancer in humans.

Abstracts of the First Cryobiology Meeting, Rosario, May 2005

Cryobiology is getting rapid momentum as it is becoming crucial in preserving longer organs to be transplanted better. Cryobiology is a multidisciplinary science where different, though strictly integrating expertise are necessary to provide the answer on how a given organ or cell may survive longer without damage of living functions. Dr. Guibert and Rodriguez and their group in Rosario are leader in this field since they recognized since quite a long time ago the need for this integrated and rapidly growing science. In May 2005 they succeeded in getting together in Rosario (where else?) top international speakers in the field and present their data on what has been achieved so far and, most important, what to do next. The decision of publishing the abstracts of the meeting is excellent as it allows for less “cryo-specialized” researchers and clinicians to appreciate what is behind a liver arriving in good shape on the transplanting table. What discussed will certainly pave the way for a better and more efficient storage and use of the organs but also to expand the basic science behind these concepts. Now that the ice has been broken (what could be more appropriate for a cryomeeting!), it is hoped that the meeting could be organized at staggered intervals and that the journal will maintain the good decision of publishing the abstracts.

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