To the Editor:

Certain HLA haplotypes were found guilty for certain diseases, and aplastic anemia (AA) is reported to be one of them, especially for HLA-DR2. However, HLA-DR2 frequency in AA reached significance in only one study that contained a racially heterogeneous group. We retrospectively analyzed the results of HLA-DR typing in 26 Turkish AA patients who received either immunosuppressive therapy (IST) or HLA-matched sibling bone marrow transplantation (BMT). Nineteen were male and seven were female. Median age was 22 (range, 12 to 33). In the AA group, HLA-DR2 and -DR3 frequencies were 42.3% and 11.5%, respectively. Other HLA-DR frequencies are given in Table 1. HLA-DR2 positivity was found significantly higher in patients with AA when compared with an unrelated healthy control group \( (P = .02) \). All the patients and the control group \( (n = 230) \) were white. The relative risk of AA in DR2+ versus DR2- patients is 1.99 (with a 95% confidence interval of 1.19 to 3.32). Eighteen patients received IST and 8 received BMT. Of the 18 patients given IST, 44% (8 patients) had either a complete remission (CR) (6 patients) or partial remission (PR) (2 patients). In DR2+ and DR2- patients, overall response rates were 66% (4 CR and 2 PR) and 22% (2 CR), respectively \( (P = .029) \). On the contrary, in Nimer et al’s study, there was no significant difference between HLA-DR2+ and -DR2- patients in response to ATG therapy in a racially heterogeneous group. As a result, the incidence of HLA-DR2 was clearly increased in Turkish patients with AA. Response rate to IST was significantly higher in the DR2+ patients when compared with the DR2- patients.

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REFERENCES

1. Nimer SD, Ireland P, Meshkinpour A, Frane M: An increased HLA-DR2 frequency is seen in aplastic anemia patients. Blood 84:923, 1994


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antigen</th>
<th>Patients ( (n = 26) )</th>
<th>Control ( (n = 230) )</th>
<th>Relative Risk</th>
<th>( P ) Value</th>
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HLA-DR frequency in Turkish aplastic anemia patients and the impact of HLA-DR2 positivity in response rate in patients receiving immunosuppressive therapy [letter]

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