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Evidence of a casual relationship between vitamin D deficiency and hypertension: a family-based study

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Abstract

An association between vitamin D deficiency and hypertension has been observed in numerous studies. However, blood pressure improvements resulting from supplementation with vitamin D have been inconsistent. The causal relationship between vitamin D deficiency and hypertension is still unclear and was investigated in this family-based study. A total of 1370 individuals from both vitamin D deficiency and hypertension families were included. First, the heritability of vitamin D deficiency was estimated by the Falconer method. Second, SNPs (single nucleotide polymorphisms) of vitamin D metabolic and functional pathway genes associated with vitamin D deficiency were screened by a family-based association test, and the findings were further verified in nuclear families with vitamin D deficiency. Finally, a family-based association test was applied to investigate the association between selected SNPs associated with vitamin D deficiency and hypertension. The heritability of vitamin D deficiency was 50.4% in this family-based study. Allele C of rs3847987 was a risk factor for vitamin D deficiency (OR: 1.639, 95% CI: 1.170-2.297, $P = 0.004$). Furthermore, a family-based association of rs3847987 with hypertension was found in both additive and recessive models ($P < 0.05$). In addition, vitamin D deficiency was associated with hypertension (OR: 1.317, 95% CI: 1.022-1.698, $P = 0.033$). In conclusion, rs3847987 in the VDR gene was associated with both vitamin D deficiency and hypertension. Therefore, vitamin D deficiency may be a causal factor for hypertension.

Keywords: Family-based association; Heritability; Hypertension; Vitamin D deficiency.

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