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NIVO PROSTACIKLINA I HORMONA KOD PACIJENTKINJA SA SIMPTOMIMA SPONTANOG POBAČAJA I INFEKCIJOM

PROSTACYCLIN AND HORMONE LEVELS IN PATIENTS WITH SYMPTOMS OF MISCARRIAGE AND INFECTION

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Sažetak - Ascendentno širenje infekcije u unutrašnjost uterusa, tokom graviditeta, praćeno je stimulacijom COX-2 enzima i lokalnim porastom prostaglandinske produkcije. Supklinička infekcija fetalnih membrana je dobro poznata kao uzrok prevremenog porođaja. Širenje infekcije iz vagine i cerviksa, u unutrašnjost uterusa može imati tragične posledice po plod. Cilj ovog istraživanja je da se utvrdi eventualna povezanost infekcije donjih partija genitalnog sistema žene sa simptomima spontanog pobačaja. Ispitivanje je obuhvatilo 140 pacijentkinja sa simptomima spontanog pobačaja i prisutnom vaginalnom infekcijom i 70 pacijentkinja sa urednim tokom trudnoće u prvom trimestru gestacije. Prisustvo infekcije dokazivano je nalazom brisa vaginalnog, cervikalnog sekreta i brisa na hlamidijalnu infekciju. U radu je praćeno kretanje nivoa prostaciklina, glavnog produkta prostaglandinskog metabolizma u trudnoći i hormonskog statusa trudnoće, određivanjem horionskog gonadotropina, estradiola, progesterona i prolaktina eliza metodom. Rezultati su pokazali da su serumske vrednosti prostaciklina povišene, dok je nivo estradiola, progesterona i prolaktina bio snižen kod pacijentkinja sa prisutnim infektom u vagini ili grliću. Povišene vrednosti prostaciklina, uslovljene povećanom aktivnošću COX-2 enzima, usled aktivacije brojnih citokina, verovatno predstavljaju kompenzatorni mehanizam, koji pokušava da prevaziđe probleme isprovocirane bakterijskim endotoksinima.

Ključne reči: Spontani pobačaj; Trudnoća; Genitalne bolesti žena; Infekcija; Fetalne membrane + patologija

Summary - During pregnancy, ascending infection into the uterus, is followed by local increase of cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) activity, and consequently elevated prostaglandin production. Subclinical infections of fetal amniotic membranes are well known to cause preterm delivery. Spreading of infection from vagina and cervix into uterine cavity, can be tragic for the fetus. The aim of this study was to reveal whether lower genital tract infections are associated with symptoms of threatened miscarriage. Our investigation included 140 patients with symptoms of threatened miscarriage and 70 patients with uncomplicated pregnancies. Infections were detected by vaginal or cervical smears as well as tests for Chlamydial infection. Levels of prostacyclin, main prostaglandin product during pregnancy, were evaluated via its stable metabolite, 6-keto-PGF1-alpha. Both prostaglandin levels and hormones were determined by ELISA method. We found that serum values of prostacyclin were elevated, while levels of estradiol, progesterone and prolactin were significantly lower in patients with lower genital tract infections. Increased prostacyclin levels in pregnancies complicated by lower genital tract infections are caused by stimulation of COX/2 enzyme, due to elevated production of various cytokines which are possibly a compensatory mechanism resolving problems caused by bacterial endotoxines.

Key words: Abortion, Spontaneous; Pregnancy; Genital Diseases, Female; Infection; Fetal Membranes + pathology

Uvod

Infekcija plodovih adneksa u ranoj trudnoći može biti razlog nastanka simptomatologije spontanog pobačaja [1,2]. U nastanku i razvoju inflamatorne reakcije značajnu ulogu imaju citokini, ciklo-oksigenazni i lipooksigenazni produkti metabolizma arahidonske kiseline, bradikinin.... Širenje infekcije sa ovojaka na placentu može imati tragične posledice po ishod trudnoće.

Nastanak intraovularne infekcije najčešće je vezan za širenje infekcije iz donjih partija genitalnog sistema majke, ali je moguće da se razvije i širenjem infekcije iz trbuha preko Fallopyjevih tuba ili jatrogenim unosom infekcije prilikom invazivnih dijagnostičkih procedura (CVS). Sposobnost fetusa da odgovori na infekciju izaziva pojavu različitih poremećaja na nivou limfoidnog sistema i zapaljenjske reakcije u afektiranim organima [1,3,4].

Introduction

Infection in the fetal adnexa in early pregnancy may cause symptoms of miscarriage [1,2]. Development of inflammatory reaction includes interaction of cytokines, cyclo- and lipo-oxygenase products of arachidonic acid metabolism, bradykinin... Spread of infection from adnexa to the placental tissue can result in tragic consequences regarding pregnancy.

Infections of fetal membranes are mostly caused by ascending invasion of bacteria, but spread via Fallopyian tubes, from abdomen, or artificially, during invasive diagnostic procedures during the first trimester, such as chorion villus sampling. The ability of the fetus to respond to infection causes various disturbances of the lymphoid system and inflammatory reaction in affected organs [1,3,4].

Skraćenice

PG	- prostaglandini
6-keto-PGF1-alfa	- 6-keto-prostaglandin F1-alfa (stabilni prostaciklinski metabolit)
CVS	- biopsija horionskih ćupica
5-HETE	- 5-hidroksieikosatetranoična kiselina
TNF-alfa	- faktor tumorske nekroze alfa
ICAM	- intercelularne adhezivne molekule
RANTES	- hemokine čija je ekspresija i sekrecija regulisana aktivacijom T-ćelija
COX-2	- enzim ciklo-oksigenaza-2
EP1	- prostaglandinski receptor podvrsta EP1
IFN	- interferon
IL-2,3,4,6,7,8,10	- interleukini: 2,3,4,6,7,8,10
M-CSF	- faktor stimulacije rasta kolonije makrofaga
TGF-beta-1	- transformišući faktor rasta beta-1
MIP-1 beta	- makrofagni inflamatorni protein 1-beta
Th-1	- Th1 "helper" limfociti ("pomoćni")
PGI2	- prostaciklin
PGE2	- prostaglandin E2
TXB2	- tromboksan B2
CRH	- kortikotropin "releasing" hormon
CBG	- kortizolvezujući protein
CRP	- C reaktivni protein
LH	- luteinizirajući hormon
HCG	- humani horionski gonadotropin
E2	- estradiol
PRG	- progesteron
PRL	- prolaktin

Porast koncentracija prostaglandina uslovljen je aktiviranjem citokina bakterijskim endotoksinima i vezan je za genezu uterušnih kontrakcija [5,6]. Pored PG-a, i povećana sinteza 5-hidroksieikosatetranoične kiseline (5-HETE), usled delovanja inflamatornih citokina, takođe je razlog nastanka uterušnih kontrakcija [7]. U toku intraovularne infekcije dolazi do naglog pada sekrecije prolaktina, nezavisno od skoka produkcije prostaglandina [8], kao i pada produkcije progesterona [9].

Ishod infekcije zavisi od stadijuma trudnoće u kojem se infekcija unese u uterus, kao i od prirode i virulentnosti infekta. U malim trudnoćama mikroorganizmi velike virulencije obično unište plod, te dolazi do spontanog pobačaja. Manje virulentni uzročnici mogu dovesti do nastanka hromozomskih anomalija ili poremećaja organogeneze. U drugom i trećem trimestru trudnoće infekcija može biti uzrok fetopatijama koje su praćene simptomima generalizovane infekcije [2,10].

Materijal i metode

Materijal za rad prikupljen je prospektivnom studijom tipa kliničkog istraživanja, u periodu od 1. maja 1999. godine do 30. novembra 2001. godine, kod pacijentkinja hospitalizovanih na Klinici za ginekologiju i akušerstvo Kliničkog centra u Novom Sadu. Ispitivanje je obuhvatilo 140 pacijentkinja primljenih pod dijagnozom pretećeg spontanog

Abbreviations

PG	- prostaglandins
6-keto-PGF1-alfa	- 6-keto-prostaglandin F1-alpha (stable metabolite of prostacyclin)
CVS	- chorion villus sampling
5-HETE	- 5-hydroxyeicosatetranoic acid
TNF-alfa	- tumor necrosis factor-alpha
ICAM	- intercellular adhesive molecules
RANTES	- chemokine regulated upon activation of normal T-cell-expressed and secreted,
COX-2	- cyclo-oxygenase-2
EP1	- prostaglandin receptor subtype EP1
IFN	- interferon
IL-2,3,4,6,7,8,10	- interleukins: 2,3,4,6,7,8,10
M-CSF	- macrophage-colony stimulating factor
TGF-beta-1	- transforming growth factor beta-1
MIP-1 beta	- macrophage inflammatory protein beta-1
Th-1	- Th1 helper lymphocytes
PGI2	- prostacyclin
PGE2	- prostaglandin E2
TXB2	- thromboxane B2
CRH	- corticotropin-releasing hormone
CBG	- corticotropin-binding globulin
CRP	- C-reactive protein
LH	- luteinizing hormone
HCG	- human chorionic gonadotropin
E2	- estradiol
PRG	- progesterone
PRL	- prolactin

Increase of prostaglandin (PG) concentration (most of all 5-hydroxyeicosatetranoic acid) during infection is due to cytokine induced activation by bacterial endotoxins [5,6]. These metabolites of arachidonic acid are responsible for uterine contractions [7], one of the symptoms of threatening miscarriage. Infections of fetal membranes are also associated with decrease of decidual prolactin (PRL) production [8], as well as compromised progesterone (PRG) production [9].

Manifestations of inflammatory response are different. In cases with very virulent microorganisms result of infection is very likely to be embryo death. Less virulent organisms are likely to cause disturbances in organogenesis or chromosomal anomalies. Spread of bacteria into uterus, in the second or third trimester of pregnancy, may cause fetopathies associated with symptoms of generalized infection [2,10].

Material and methods

This prospective clinical trial included 140 patients with symptoms of first-trimester threatening miscarriage (6-12 weeks gestation), admitted to the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics of the Clinical Centre of Novi Sad during the period from May 1st 1999 to November 30th 2001. The control group comprised 70 patients of the same gestational age, without pregnancy complications, but were ad-

pobačaja (između VI i XII nedelje gestacije). Kontrolnu grupu činilo je 70 pacijentkinja, koje su primljene sa urednim tokom trudnoće i drugim pratećim dijagnozama. Ispitivana grupa pacijentkinja podeljena je na osnovu nalaza vaginalnog sekreta, cervikalnog bakteriološkog brisa i brisa na *Chlamydia trachomatis* u podgrupe: podgrupu sa prisutnim vaginalnim, odnosno cervikalnim infektom i podgrupu sa urednim nalazima briseva.

Dobijeni rezultati komparirani su između podgrupa, kao i sa kontrolnom grupom.

Laboratorijske metode:

Pošto je prostaciklin nestabilni prostaglandin, njegove vrednosti određivane su putem utvrđivanja vrednosti njegovog stabilnog metabolita 6-keto-prostaglandina F1-alfa (6-keto-PGF1-alfa). Vrednosti su određivane ELISA (enzimski imunoesej) metodom, korišćenjem mikrometode na ploči (*plate method*). Analiza je rađena reagensima proizvođača "Kayman".

Hormoni: estradiol, progesteron, prolaktin i humani horionski gonadotropin određivani su takođe ELISA metodom korišćenjem visokoafinitetnih poliklonskih antitela i separacijom čvrste faze vezane magnetnim poljem. Za njihovo određivanje korišćeni su reagensi firme "SERONO": estradiol, progesteron, prolaktin i hCG SEROZYME.

Statistička analiza obuhvatila je deskriptivne statističke parametre, kao i testove statističke značajnosti.

Rezultati

Ispitivanje je obuhvatilo 140 pacijentkinja sa simptomima spontanog pobačaja, od kojih je 65 (46,62%) imalo pozitivne nalaze testova na prisustvo bakterijskog ili cervikalnog infekta, dok je 75 (53,08%) bilo negativno (tabele 1, 2). Kontrolnu grupu činilo je 70 pacijentkinja sa urednim tokom trudnoće (tabela 1).

Tabela 1. Grupa pacijentkinja

Table 1. Groups of patients

Grupa	Apsolutne vrednosti	Relativne vrednosti
Group	Absolute values	Relative values
Ispitivana grupa	140	75%
Number of patients in examined group		
Kontrolna grupa	70	25%
Number of patients in control group		
Ukupno/Total	210	100%

Kao što vidimo iz tabela 2 i 3, učestalost komplikacija bila je veća u ispitivanoj grupi pacijentkinja gde je iznosila 50,71% u odnosu na kontrolnu grupu pacijentkinja gde je učestalost komplikacija iznosila 34,28%. U obe grupe, kao najčešća komplikacija, pojavljivao se kolpitis. U ispitivanoj grupi pacijent-

mitted to our Department due to other problems. These patients were divided in two subgroups, depending on their results of vaginal and cervical smears: patients with positive findings (vaginal smear, cervical smear and smear for *Chlamydia trachomatis*) formed a group with infection, while others formed a group without infection.

Laboratory tests:

Hormones: estradiol (E2), human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG), progesterone (PRG) and prolactin (PRL) were detected by ELISA method (SERONO Estradiol, hCG, Progesteron and Prolactin Serozyme). Prostacyclin's stable metabolite 6-keto-PGF1-alpha (PG) was determined by ELISA "plate method" (Kayman).

Statistical evaluation included descriptive statistical tests and evaluation of statistical significance. Results between subgroups were compared, as well as with controls.

Results

The study included 210 patients, 140 patients with symptoms of threatening miscarriage, of which 65 (46.62%) with infection, while 75 (53.08%) were without infection (table 2). The rest of 70 patients were included as controls (table 1).

Tabela 2. Komplikacije u ispitivanoj grupi pacijentkinja

Table 2. Complications in the examined group

Vista komplikacije	Incidenca (%)
Type of complication	Incidence
Anomalije uterusu/Anomalies of uterus	10 7,14
Uterina miomata/Uterine fibroma	9 6,44
Ovarijalne ciste/Ovarian cyst	2 1,42
Colpitis/Vaginal discharge	65 46,62
Respiratorne infekcije majke u prvom trimestru	16 11,42
Respiratory infections of mother in the first trimester	
Urinarne infekcije majke u prvom trimestru	5 3,57
Urinary infections of mother in the first trimester	
Pozitivni TORCH/Positive TORCH	12 8,77
Willebrandtova bolest/M. von Willebrandt	1 0,72
Šećerna bolest/Diabetes mellitus	5 3,57
Autoimuni hepatitis sa trombocitopenijom	1 0,72
Autoimmune hepatitis with thrombocytopenia	
Hipertenzija/Preexisting hypertension	5 3,57
Alergična konstitucija/Susceptibility to allergies	6 4,28
Hiperfibrinogenemija/Hyperfibrinogenaemia	1 0,72
Urođena displazija kuka/Congenital hip dysplasia	1 0,72
Total (ukupan broj komplikacija)	139 100
Broj pacijentkinja bez komplikacija u ispitivanoj grupi/Number of patients in the examined group without other complications	69 49,29
Broj pacijentkinja sa komplikacijama u ispitivanoj grupi/No. of patients in the examined group with complications	71 50,71
Ukupno/Total	140 100

Notice: two or more complications appear in the same patient

Tabela 3. Komplikacije u kontrolnoj grupi pacijentkinja
Table 3. Complications in the control group

Vrsta komplikacije Type of complication	Incidenca (%) Incidence
Miomatozna materica/Uterine myoma	8 11,42
Ovarijalne ciste/Ovarian cyst	4 5,71
Respiratorne infekcije majke u prvom trimestru Respiratory infections of mother in the first trimester	6 8,57
Urinarne infekcije majke u prvom trimestru Urinary infections of mother in the first trimester	2 2,85
Sekret/Vaginal discharge	11 15,71
Hipertenzija pre trudnoće/Preexisting hypertension	2 2,85
Total (ukupan br komplikacija)	32 100
Broj pacijentkinja bez komplikacija u ispitivanoj grupi/Number of patients in control group without other complications	46 65,72
Broj pacijentkinja sa komplikacijama u ispitivanoj grupi/No of patients in control group with pregnancy complications	24 34,28
Ukupno/Total	70 100

U obe grupe 2 ili više komplikacija se javljaju kod istih pacijentkinja/In both analyzed groups two or more complications appear in the same patient

kinja visoka incidenca infekcije u donjim delovima genitalnog sistema od 46,62% ne treba se zanemariti kao momenat u nastanku simptomatologije spontanog pobačaja. U kontrolnoj grupi pacijentkinja incidenca kolpitisa iznosila je 15,71% (gotovo trostruko manja).

Vrednosti prostaglandina 6-keto-F2-alfa (6-keto-PGF2-alfa) u podgrupi pacijentkinja sa simptomatologijom spontanog pobačaja i prisutnim vaginalnim infektom bile su više ($X \pm SD = 25,66 \pm 9,99$ pg/ml) u odnosu na podgrupu bez prisutnog infekta ($X \pm SD = 13,65 \pm 5,13$ pg/ml), kao i u odnosu na kontrolnu grupu gde su se prosečne vrednosti kretale u intervalu $X \pm SD = 16,03 \pm 7,85$ pg/ml (tabela 4). Ove razlike između podgrupa, kao i razlike u odnosu na kontrolnu grupu, pokazale su se statistički značajnim (tabele 5 i 6).

Vrednosti horionskog gonadotropina u podgrupi sa prisutnim patološkim sekretom iznosile su $X \pm SD = 38,76 \pm 10,80$ mIU/l, što je nešto više nego u podgrupi pacijentkinja sa urednim nalazima bakterioloških briseva, gde su se prosečne vrednosti hCG-a kretale u obimu od $X \pm SD = 32,61 \pm 12,46$ mIU/l (tabela 4). Ove razlike nisu se pokazale statistički značajnim. Prosečne vrednosti estradiola u podgrupi pacijentkinja sa prisutnim patološkim sekretom bile su nešto niže i kretale su se u obimu $X \pm SD = 319,87 \pm 168,44$ pg/ml, dok su u grupi sa urednim nalazom briseva prosečne vrednosti iznosile $X \pm SD = 388,65 \pm 153,94$ pg/ml (tabela 4).

Prosečni nivo progesterona u podgrupi sa patološkim sekretom kretao se u granicama $X \pm SD = 102,33 \pm 44,96$ ng/ml, što je bilo niže nego u podgrupi bez patološkog sekreta ($X \pm SD = 123,79 \pm 46,66$ ng/ml), kao što se vidi iz tabele 4. Razlike u

The total incidence of complications during pregnancy in examined group was 50.71%, compared to control group where the rate of complications was lower (34.28%), (tables 2 and 3). The most frequent was lower genital tract infection, colpitis, and as a cause of miscarriage, it should not be neglected.

Levels of 6-keto PGF1-alpha in the group of patients with symptoms of threatening miscarriage and vaginal infection were higher ($X \pm SD = 25.66 \pm 9.99$ pg/ml) compared to the group without bacteria ($X \pm SD = 13.65 \pm 5.13$ pg/ml) and to the control group, where the mean range interval was $X \pm SD = 16.03 \pm 7.85$ pg/ml (table 4). These differences between subgroups and control group seem to be statistically significant (tables 5, 6).

Values of human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) in the group of patients with vaginal discharge were $X \pm SD = 38.76 \pm 10.80$ IU/l, i.e. a little bit higher than in the other group ($X \pm SD = 32.61 \pm 12.46$ mIU/l), but without statistical significance (tables 4,5). Mean serum levels of estradiol (table 4) in the group with infection were lower ($X \pm SD = 319.87 \pm 168.44$ pg/ml) than in the group without bacteria ($X \pm SD = 388.65 \pm 153.94$ pg/ml).

Tabela 4. Deskriptivna statistika

Table 4. Descriptive statistical parameters

Bez kolpitisa Without vaginal discharge	6-keto-PGF2- alfa (pg/ml)	HCG (mIU/l)	E2 (pg/ml)	PRG (ng/ml)	PRL (mIU/ml)
X (srednja vredn mean value)	13,65	32,61	388,65	123,79	35,99
SD(St. devijac/ stand. deviation)	5,13	12,46	153,94	46,66	7,52
N=	75	75	75	75	75
Kolpitis/Present vaginal discharge					
X (srednja vredn mean value)	25,66	38,76	319,87	102,33	29,78
SD(St. devijac/ stand. deviation)	9,99	10,08	168,44	44,96	6,22
N=	65	65	65	65	65
Total AB SPONTANEUS/Total with imminent miscarriage					
X (srednja vredn mean value)	19,65	35,68	354,26	113,06	32,88
SD(St. devijac/ stand. deviation)	9,42	11,15	158,22	43,79	6,89
N=	140	140	140	140	140
Kontrolna grupa/Control group					
X (srednja vredn mean value)	16,03	48,54	344,13	156,88	33,84
SD (St devijac/ stand. deviation)	7,85	7,76	181,64	44,28	0,69
N=	70	70	70	70	70
Ukupno/Total	210	210	210	210	210

Mean serum levels of progesterone in the first subgroup were $X \pm SD = 102.33 \pm 44.96$ ng/ml (table 4), that is significantly lower than in the subgroup without infection ($X \pm SD = 123.79 \pm 46.66$ ng/ml). Differences in levels of estradiol and progesterone, that were lower in subgroup with discharge, appeared to be statistically significant (in both cases level of

vrednostima estradiola i progesterona, koje su bile snižene u podgrupi pacijentkinja sa prisutnim patološkim sekretom, pokazale su se statistički značajnim (u oba slučaja $p < 0,05$), kako u odnosu na podgrupu sa urednim vaginalnim sekretom, tako i u odnosu na kontrolnu grupu (tabele 5 i 6).

Tabela 5. Analiza statističke značajnosti između podgrupa
Table 5. Statistic significance analysis of differences between analyzed subgroups

Vrsta testa type of test	6-keto-PG F2-alfa	HCG	E2	PRG	PRL
T test/T test	3,524	0,58	0,75	0,25	0,47
P vrednost/P value	$p < 0,05$				
F test /F test	2,468	0,88	1,12	1,843	1,967
P vrednost/ P value	$p < 0,05$			$p < 0,05$	$p < 0,05$
Z test/Z test	2,743	-0,12	2,638	2,564	1,36
P vrednost/P value	$p < 0,05$		$p < 0,05$	$p < 0,05$	
ANOVA/ANOVA			1,7689		
P vrednost/P value			0,004867		
F kritična vrednost F critical			1,367629		

Nivo prolaktina (tabela 4) u podgrupi pacijentkinja kod kojih su nalazi briseva bili pozitivni (jedan ili više) pokazao se nižim ($X \pm SD = 29,78 \pm 6,22$ mIU/ml), u odnosu na podgrupu pacijentkinja bez sekreta ($X \pm SD = 35,99 \pm 7,52$ mIU). Pad vrednosti prolaktina je udružen sa nižim vrednostima progesterona u ovoj podgrupi pacijentkinja, budući da prolaktin blokira receptore za luteinizirajući hormon u korpusu luteumu, preko kojih humani horionski gonadotropin stimuliše sintezu progesterona. U našem radu vrednosti prolaktina bile su za 17,25% niže u podgrupi pacijentkinja sa prisutnim patološkim brisevima; ove razlike, prema F testu, pokazale su se statistički značajnima ($p < 0,05$), kao što se vidi iz tabele 5 i 6.

Kada je analizirana ispitivana podgrupa sa prisutnim vaginalnim infektom u odnosu na kontrolnu grupu vrednosti prostaciklina, horionskog gonadotropina, estradiola i prolaktina bile su niže u ispitivanoj nego u kontrolnoj grupi, i ove razlike bile su statistički značajne ($p < 0,05$).

Diskusija

Prisustvo sekreta kod pacijentkinja sa simptomima spontanog pobačaja verifikovano je nalazom vaginalnog, cervikalnog bakteriloškog brisa i brisa na *Chlamydiju trachomatis*. Infekcija može isprovocirati simptome spontanog pobačaja. Uzrok tome je izmenjeni metabolizam prostanoida od strane bakterijskih endotoksina. Povišene koncentracije prostaglandina u slučaju infekcije modeliraju inflamatorni odgovor.

Najčešći mikroorganizmi koji su uzročnici infekcije plodovih ovojaka jesu oni iz vagine: *Esherichia coli*, *Proteus*, *Klebssiella pneumoniae*, *Trichomonas vaginalis*, streptokoke grupe B, *Lysteria monocytogenes*, *Chlamydia trachomatis*, *Ureaplasma urea-*

Tabela 6. Analiza statističke značajnosti između podgrupe sa prisutnom infekcijom i kontrolne grupe

Table 6. Statistic significance analysis between the subgroup with present infection and control group

Vrsta testa type of test	6-keto-PG F2-alfa	HCG	E2	PRG	PRL
T test/T test	4,687	-3,402	-0,9	-1,33	1,73
P vrednost/P value	$< 0,05$	$< 0,05$			
F test /F test	5,533	0,68	0,18	-0,56	2,645
P vrednost/ P value	$< 0,05$				$p < 0,05$
Z test/Z test	3,742	-0,468	3,86	-1,784	1,54
P vrednost/P value	$< 0,05$		$< 0,05$	$< 0,05$	
ANOVA/ANOVA			5,998259		
P vrednost/P value			0,00166		
F kritična vrednost F critical			2,17445		

significance is $p < 0,05$), compared to other subgroups and unaffected pregnancies (tables 5,6).

Prolactin serum levels (table 4) in the group of patients with positive findings (one or more) were apparently decreased ($X \pm SD = 29,78 \pm 6,22$ mIU/ml) compared to the group without discharge ($X \pm SD = 35,99 \pm 7,52$ mIU/ml). Lower serum prolactin levels are with decreased progesterone levels, in this subgroup of patients, assuming the fact that PRL inhibits expression of receptors for luteinizing hormone in corpus luteum, responsible for hCG stimulated PRG production. In our study PRL levels were by 17.25% lower in patients with positive smears, and differences were significant (tables 5 and 6).

In the subgroup with positive smears, compared to controls, a statistically significant elevation ($p < 0,05$) of main prostacyclin metabolite 6-keto-PGF1-alpha levels was established, and decreased levels of estradiol, progesterone and prolactin.

Discussion

Infection can provoke symptoms of miscarriage. The reason for this is altered prostanoid metabolism due to bacterial endotoxins. Elevated levels of prostanoids moderate an inflammatory response.

The most frequent organisms ascending from vagina are as follows: *E. coli*, *Proteus*, *Klebsiella*, *Trichomonas vaginalis*, *Streptococci*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Chlamydia trachomatis*, *Ureaplasma*, *Herpes* and *Parvo virus*, etc. The most significant are saprophytes, and potential pathogens, presenting as latent infections, but if they ascend they might result in chorioamnionitis. This non-specific vaginitis is transmitted by partners and should be evaluated as sexually transmitted disease. Bacteria with greatest inflammatory response and clinical manifestations, are *E. coli* and *B. fragilis* [11]. Their toxins can provoke inflammatory reaction even without presence of live bacteria [12].

lyticum, herpes virus, parvovirus i drugi. Posebno su značajni kao uzročnici infekcije uslovno patogeni saprofiti iz donjih partija genitalnog sistema, koji ne odaju utisak manifestne infekcije, a ukoliko ascediraju, mogu rezultirati horioamnionitisom. Među bakterijama koje daju najizraženije kliničke manifestacije posebno se ističu Gram-negativne bakterije *E. coli* i *B. fragilis* [11], a čak i sam endotoksin ovih uzročnika dovoljan je za izazivanje inflamatornog odgovora, i bez prisustva živih bakterija [6,12].

Prodor bakterija i virusa u ovojke ploda izaziva pozitivnu hemotaksu za neutrofilne granulocite, koji iz majčine cirkulacije migriraju u ovojke i izazivaju inflamatorni odgovor [5]. Raspadni produkti bakterija, lipopolisaharidi iz njihovog ćelijskog zida (endotoksini) deluju na ćelije koje učestvuju u inflamatornim reakcijama, te one počinju da proizvode citokine, koji podstiču hemotaksu i aktiviraju druge zapaljenjske ćelije [11,12]. Oslobađanje TNF-alfa dovodi do ekstravazacije tečnosti u ekstracelularni prostor, što rezultira pojavom edema i bolnosti. Ovaj efekat TNF-alfa ispoljava se preko stimulacije aktivnosti COX-2 enzima i pojačane produkcije prostaglandina (PGE2 i PGI2), kao i putem aktivacije prostaglandinskih EP1 receptora [13,14]. Osim TNF-alfa i drugi citokini, kao što su interferon (IFN), interleukin-8 (IL-8) i interleukin-6 (IL-6), kao i brojni neurotrofini (faktori rasta) učestvuju u regulaciji inflamatornog odgovora. Takvi su: faktor stimulacije kolonije makrofaga (M-CSF), intercelularne adhezivne molekule (ICAM) i hemokin RANTES, transformišući faktor beta-1 (TGF-beta-1), makrofagni inflamatorni protein (MIP-1 beta), inhibitor sekretorne proteinaze i polimerički imunoglobulinski receptor. Interleukin-7 stimulatívno deluje na rast T-ćelija, koje direktno uništavaju inficirane ćelije. Interleukini 6 i 8 deluju na produkciju vazodilatatornih prostaglandina, koji su odgovorni za pojavu reaktivnih simptoma zapaljenja [15]. Po principu povratne sprege, prostaglandin E2, pak, stimuliše T-ćelije na produkciju antiinflamatornih citokina: IL-4, IL-10 i IL-13, kao i manjih doza IL-2. Takođe on stimuliše produkciju TNF-alfa, TNF-beta i suprimira sintezu interferona (IFN)-gama. Prostaglandin E2 modulira ekspresiju Th-1 inflamatornog odgovora, putem inhibicije aktivnosti protein kinaze unutar ovih ćelija [16].

Koncentracije 6-keto-prostaglandina F1-alfa jesu merilo sinteze vazodilatatornog PGI2- prostaciklina, koji je dominantni produkt prostaglandinske sinteze u trudnoći. Ne postoje do sada utvrđeni standardi kretanja koncentracije ovog stabilnog metabolita prostaciklina u serumu majke, ali je poznato da su njegove vrednosti, kao i vrednosti drugog vazodilatatornog prostaglandina, PGE2 povišene ($p < 0,01$) u odnosu na negravidni status, što ukazuje na njihovu ulogu u inicijalnim stadijumima trudnoće [17]. Vrednosti 6-keto-PGF1-alfa u prvom trimestru graviditeta kreću se u rasponu 3,2-50 pg/ml (EIA metoda), odnosno 0,61-10 pg/ml (CLIA metodom), prema podacima iz *Cayman pharmaceuticalsa*. U

Spread of infection into fetal membranes has positive chemotaxis for neutrophils, that migrate from maternal circulation into fetal adnexa and are responsible for inflammatory reaction [5]. Bacterial endotoxins, lipopolysaccharides from their cellular wall stimulate the inflammatory cells to produce various cytokines: TNF-alpha, interferon (IFN), interleukins (IL) etc [12,13]. Releasing of TNF-alpha stimulates COX-2 enzyme and prostaglandin E2 and I2 production that are responsible for reactive symptoms of inflammation, edema and pain [13]. This effects of TNF-alpha manifests via stimulating COX-2 enzyme activity and increased production of prostaglandins (PGE2 and PGI2) as well as by activation of prostaglandin EP1 receptors [13,14]. Numerous other cytokines and neurotrophins (growth factors), such as macrophage colony stimulating factor (M-CSF), intercellular adhesive molecules (ICAM), chemokine RANTES, transforming growth factor beta-1 (TGF-beta1), macrophage inflammatory protein 1-beta (MIP-1 beta), secretory proteinase inhibitor and polymeric immunoglobuline receptor, participate in moderating inflammatory response. Interleukin-7 stimulates growth and differentiation of T-cells that directly destroy the infected cells, while IL-6 and 8 are, together with TNF-alpha, responsible for reactive symptoms of inflammation [15]. "Feed back" of prostaglandin E2 (PGE2) affects T cells production of anti-inflammatory cytokines, resulting in elevation of levels of IL-4, IL-10 and IL-13, as well as low doses of IL-2. Also, PGE2 stimulates production of TNF-alpha, TNF-beta, suppressing synthesis of IFN-gamma, and moderates activity of Th-1 inflammatory response by inhibition of protein-kinase inside these cells [16].

Levels of 6-keto-PGF1-alpha represent values of vasodilatory, prostacyclin (PGI2), which is the dominant prostaglandin metabolite during pregnancy. Standard levels of this stable prostacyclin metabolite in maternal serum are not defined, but it is well known that its concentrations, as well as values of PGE2 are elevated compared to unpregnant status, confirming their role in initial stages of gestation [17]. During the first trimester of pregnancy levels of 6-keto-PGF1-alpha are within the range of 3.2-50 pg/ml (EIA method), and the interval of 0.61-10 pg/ml (CLIA method), according to data from *Kayman pharmaceuticals*. During the first trimester of pregnancy values of 6-keto-PGF1-alpha are within the range of 8.7-25.5 pg/ml, while during the rest of pregnancy they increase to 255 pg/ml, and are a little bit lower than in nonpregnancy, when values are between 10.6 and 277.7 pg/ml [18, 19]. Research data confirm that concentrations of PGF2-alpha, 6-keto-PGF1-alpha and tromboxane B2 (TXB2) increase in pregnancy and correlate with gestational age [20]. According to *Khan-Dawood* [21], during pregnancy, levels of 6-keto-

toku trudnoće vrednosti 6-keto F1-alfa u prvom trimestru su, prema drugima, između 8,7 i 25,5 pg/ml, a tokom cele trudnoće kreću se u rasponu 8,7-255 pg/ml i nešto su niže nego van trudnoće, kada se vrednosti kreću u rasponu između 10,6 i 277,7 pg/ml [18,19]. Za vrednosti prostaglandina F2-alfa, 6-keto PGF1-alfa i TXB2 poznato je da rastu sa nastupanjem trudnoće i koreliraju sa napredovanjem gestacije [20]. Prema Khan-Dawoodu [20], tokom trudnoće koncentracije 6-keto-PGF1-alfa više su u odnosu na ostale PG-e, ali nema korelacije sa gestacijskom starošću. Serumske koncentracije PG-a u majčinoj i fetalnoj krvi iznose 1/50. deo vrednosti u uterušnim i fetalnim tkivima i pred kraj trudnoće pokazuju samo blagi porast [21].

S obzirom na veliki spektar PG-skih aktivnosti u praktično svim tkivima, veoma je verovatno da imaju veliki značaj u regulaciji neuroendokrinih upliva na lokalnom nivou. Porast koncentracije vazodilatatornog PGI₂, može se objasniti prema Jobinu i saradnicima stimulacijom aktivnosti COX-2 enzima [22], čija se aktivnost ispoljava samo u kritičnim situacijama (oštećenje ćelija uzrokovano infekcijom, zračenjem ili drugim noksama). Stimulacija COX-2 tipa enzima za produkciju vazodilatatornih prostaglandina, kakvi su prostaciklin i prostaglandin E₂, vezana je za pojačanu produkciju interleukina-1 (IL-1), od strane citokina TNF-alfa, koji se oslobađa iz ćelija koje učestvuju u inflamatornom odgovoru [23,24].

Porast IL-1 istovremeno dovodi do pojačanog stvaranja kortikotropin-rlizing hormona (CRH), usled čega raste produkcija kortizola, steroidnog hormona koji ima veliku ulogu u inflamatornim procesima. Kortizol i progesteron su u međusobnoj kompetitivnoj inhibiciji u odnosu na vezivanje za serumski transporter CBG (kortizol-vezujući globulin). Sa porastom vrednosti kortizola veći deo ovog transportera biva "okupiran", progesteron u krvi cirkuliše u većim koncentracijama kao slobodan, što u odnosu na receptorski sistem stvara lažnu predstavu o njegovim povišenim vrednostima, te se njegova produkcija po principu povratne sprege blokira [25]. Usled toga vrednosti progesterona u slučaju infekcije niže su nego kod pacijentkinja bez infekcije donjih delova genitalnog sistema. Snižene vrednosti progesterona u našem radu potvrđuju i radovi drugih autora. Prema rezultatima Fidela, transcervikalna inokulacija infekcije kod miševa u roku od 24 sata uzrokovala je pad produkcije progesterona za 60% [9]. Niske vrednosti progesterona stimulišu produkciju oksitocina u malim nesteroidnim ćelijama korpuse luteuma [21]. Povećana sinteza oksitocina stimuliše sintezu ovarijalnog estradiola, koji takođe stimuliše produkciju IL-1 a time i prostaglandina.

U našem ispitivanju bile su, pored progesterona snižene i vrednosti estradiola i prolaktina. Bethea i saradnici [26] ispitujući decidualnu produkciju prolaktina u uslovima infekcije, na eksperimentalnim životinjama, primetili su da posle 36 sati vrednosti

-PGF1-alpha are higher compared to other prostaglandins, but do not correlate with gestational age. Estimated serum concentrations of PG-s in maternal and fetal blood represent only 1/50 part of their concentrations in uterine and fetal tissues, and by the end of pregnancy, reveal only slight increase [20].

Assuming broad spectrum of prostaglandin activities in practically all tissues, they probably have great importance in regulation of neuroendocrine relations on local levels and during pregnancy. Elevation of vasodilatory PGI₂, during infection of fetal membranes in pregnancy, according to Jobin and al. [22], is a result of stimulation of cyclooxygenase 2 (COX-2), enzyme whose activation is expressed in critical situations (cellular damage due to inflammation, irradiation or other noxes). This explains elevated concentrations of 6-keto-PGF1-alpha, in cases of infection. Cells that mediate inflammatory response release TNF-alpha, neurotrophin that is responsible for elevated production of IL-1, and consequently for stimulation of COX-2 enzyme resulting in increased concentrations of vasodilatory prostaglandins, prostacyclin and PGE₂ [23,24].

Increased levels of IL-1, at the same time, stimulate production of corticotropin releasing hormone (CRH), and steroid hormone cortisol, that has a great importance in inflammatory response. Cortisol and progesterone exhibit competitive antagonism for binding serum transporter, cortisol binding protein (CBP), which binds both hormones with equivalent avidity. Increased levels of cortisol, "occupy" this CBP, and retain progesterone in vascular space circulating as a free molecule, that prevents its metabolic clearance. This, on the basis of receptor system, simulates false elevated levels of progesterone, and "feed back" mechanism blocks its production [25]. This is probably the mechanism that retains lower levels of progesterone during intraovarian infection.

Lower progesterone levels, found in our study have been reported by other authors as well. Research of Fidel et al. [9] revealed that transcervical inoculation of bacteria, inside 24 hours, resulted in 60% lower progesterone production, in mice. Low progesterone levels result in elevated production of oxytocin (OX) in nonsteroid luteal cells [21]. This stimulates synthesis of estradiol, that again elevates levels of IL-1, and prostanoids.

In our study levels of estradiol and prolactin were also lower in the subgroup with positive vaginal and cervical smears. Bethea and al. [26], estimating decidual production of prolactin in animal models, found that 36 hours after intracervical inoculation of infective agents, levels of prolactin decreased by 40%, and after 61-72 hours by 71%. In this study, IL-1 infusion resulted also in decrease of prolactin levels by 66%, inside 24-72 hours after

PRL padaju za 40%, dok 61-72 sata po inokulaciji infektivnog agensa vrednosti prolaktina padaju za 71%. Infuzija interleukina-1(IL-1), u ovom ispitivanju, dovela je takođe do pada vrednosti prolaktina za 66% 24-72 h po administraciji. Blokada produkcije prolaktina putem IL-1 beta, je logična, budući da prolaktin stimuliše njegovu produkciju, te njegove visoke vrednosti mogu delovati mehanizmom "povratne sprege" inhibitorno na produkciju prolaktina. Ukoliko je u infuziju dodat indometacin, koji blokira sintezu prostaglandina, promena nije bilo, što znači da pad vrednosti prolaktina nije vezan za promene nivoa prostaglandina. Pad vrednosti prolaktina delimično je takođe odgovoran za niske vrednosti progesterona, budući da prolaktin blokira receptore za luteinizirajući hormon u korpusu luteumu, preko kojih humani horionski gonadotropin stimuliše sintezu progesterona [27,28].

Pored poznatih inflamatornih medijatora, kao što su citokini i prostaglandini, u inflamatornim reakcijama učestvuju i histamin, bradikinin, zatim protoni, ATP i slobodni radikali (azotni oksid-NO) [29].

Kod pacijentkinja sa pozitivnim nalazima na prisustvo infekta u donjim partijama genitalnog sistema, bilo bi interesantno uključiti i analizu C-reaktivnog proteina (CRP), budući da su ispitivanja De Meeusa i saradnika pokazala da su vrednosti ovog markera infekcije povišene u slučaju prevremenog porođaja provociranog infektom [30].

Lokalizacija infekcije unutar trofoblastnog tkiva rezultira nastankom viloznog edema, koji izaziva hipoksiju embriona, odnosno fetusa, zbog kompresije krvnih sudova, usled prisustva intersticijalnog edema unutar resica, kao i zbog zadebljanja difuzione membrane između majčine i fetalne cirkulacije [31]. Kompromitovanje cirkulacije ka embrionu rezultira stagniranjem embrionalnog rasta, poremećajima u njegovoj homeostazi i odbacivanjem koncepta.

Zaključak

Prisutnost infekta u donjim partijama genitalnog sistema žene, ascendentnim širenjem i bez manifestne infekcije, može ugroziti plod. Prisustvo bakterija stimuliše lokalno oslobađanje proinflamatornih citokina i produkciju vazodilatatornih prostaglandina, kako bi se kompromitovana embrionalna cirkulacija poboljšala. Porast koncentracije prostaciklina u slučajevima patoloških nalaza cervikalnih i vaginalnih briseva istovremeno je udružen sa blokadom produkcije estradiola, progesterona i prolaktina.

administration, by "feed back" mechanism. Administration of indomethacin, prostaglandin metabolite, by infusion, did not alter levels of prolactin. Low prolactin levels are partly responsible for progesterone decrease, because prolactin blocks receptors of luteinizing hormone (LH) inside corpus luteum, through which human chorionic gonadotropin stimulates progesterone production [27,28].

Apart from the mentioned mediators of inflammatory reaction, such as cytokines and prostaglandins, other biologically active molecules, such as histamine, bradykinin, protons, ATP and free radicals (such as nitric oxide) also affect this response [29].

In patients with positive bacterial tests, analyses should include determination of C-reactive protein (CRP), because investigations of DeMeeus and al. [30] revealed elevated levels of this marker of infection in cases of preterm labor and asymptomatic infection.

Spread of infection into trophoblast tissue results in villous edema. This interstitial edema inside villi compromises fetal circulation and causes hypoxia of the embryo, and preventing fetomaternal exchange (31). Disorders in supply result in stagnation of embryonal development, disturbances of homeostasis and spontaneous abortion.

Conclusion

Ascending infections of the lower genital tract in women, although without manifestations, may jeopardize the embryo. Bacteria stimulate local release of proinflammatory cytokines and production of vasodilatory prostaglandins, in order to improve the compromised fetal circulation. Increase in prostacyclin levels during infection is followed by suppression of estradiol, progesterone and prolactin production.

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