



Original Article

Effect of simvastatin on the transforming growth factor β 1, fibroscan scores, and aspartate transaminase to platelet index ratio patients with Liver Cirrhosis

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ABSTRACT

Background: Cirrhosis of the liver is the liver disorder marked fibrosis and abnormal liver architecture. Treatment of liver cirrhosis, among others, is to reduce fibrogenesis. Simvastatin as an anti-fibrotic among others, by a mechanism reduce the activity of hepatic stellate cell of the liver, reduce cell proliferation liver stelat, increases the production of nitric oxide and decrease vascular resistance in the liver cirrhosis.

Aim: This research to determine effect of simvastatin on the transforming growth factor β 1, fibroscan scores, and aspartate transaminase to platelet index ratio patients with liver cirrhosis.

Methods: This study is a randomized experiment, a sample of 30 people, divided into a control group given a placebo and the treatment given simvastatin 20 mg / day orally for 4 weeks. Before and after treatment measured levels of TGF β 1, FibroScan score, and a score of APRI. Statistical analysis using SPSS 22 for windows. Two different test mean using parametric tests (independent t test, paired t test) and if the data is normally distributed variable or non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney / Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test). P significant if $p < 0.05$.

Results: The results showed that the administration of simvastatin 20 mg for 4 weeks will reduce levels TGF β 1 (20,98+7,80 μ g/dl pretreatment, 16,20+5,50 μ g/dl post treatment; $p=0,013$), reduce fibroscan scores (22,29+14,65 kpa pretreatment, 13,61+4,02 kpa post treatment; $p=0,049$) and reduce APRI scores (40,13+41,28 pretreatment, 23,41+17,61 post treatment; $p=0,002$).

Conclusion: This study demonstrated that administration Simvastatin will be reduced levels of the transforming growth factor β 1, fibroscan scores, and aspartate transaminase to platelet index ratio patients with liver cirrhosis.

Key words: Simvastatin, Transforming Growth Factor β 1, Fibroscan score, Aspartate Transaminase To Platelet Index Ratio, Liver Cirrhosis

BACKGORUND

Liver Cirrhosis is a disease in which the micro-circulation, a large blood vessel anatomy and the entire system architecture of the liver changes become irregular and the addition of the connective tissue surrounding liver parenchyma (Guyton dan Hall, 2011). Cirrhosis of the liver was initially believed to be a reversible process, but the process is not absolutely irreversible (McCormick, 2011). After an injury to the hepatocyte cells, liver cells turn into stelat á-smooth muscle actin positive myofibroblasts which in turn will produce extracellular matrix such as collagen and non-collagen (Beyond dan Iredale, 2000). Fibrogenesis occurred with stellate cell activation by cytokines

TGF (transforming growth factor) β 1, PDGF (platelet derived growth factor), TNF (tumor necrozing factor) α , and IGF (insulin growth factor) 1, resulting in increased the number of cells after, there is increased synthesis of extracellular matrix composed of collagens, glycoproteins, proteoglycans and glucosaminoglycans, and a decline of matrix degradation (Kuntz, 2002).

Treatment of cirrhosis include eliminating the causes of cirrhosis, suppress hepatic inflammation, and reduces fibrogenesis. Several important pathways in fibrogenesis can be inhibited. The inhibition of the cell stelat, the use of anti-oxidants, inhibition of the cytokine receptor antagonists, and

inhibit collagen synthesis (McCormick, 2011). Curative treatment at an advanced stage of liver cirrhosis is liver transplantation. Although liver transplantation has been widely grown lately with a number of donors is quite adequate, but the clinical condition of the patient limit this therapy. The researchers began looking for ways to stop or even reduce fibrosis care to prevent complications that arise (Benyon dan Iredale, 2000).

Simvastatin will reduce hepatic venous pressure and increase hepatic perfusion in patients with cirrhosis (Albraldes, 2009). Anti-fibrotic mechanism of simvastatin as, among others, by lowering the activity of hepatic stellate cell of the liver (Shirin et al, 2013), reducing hepatic stellate cell proliferation and decreased collagen deposition (Rombouts et al, 2003), inhibit steatosis, fibrosis and carcinogenesis in NASH (Miyaki et al, 2011), and increase the production of nitric oxide (NO) and decrease vascular resistance in cirrhosis of the liver (Zafra et al, 2004). TGF- β is the most Fibrogenic factor in the activation of hepatic stellate cells in the mechanism of fibrogenesis (Gressnerr dan Weiskirchen, 2006). Vita et al reported that statins lower the Smad pathway activation by TGF- β . Smad pathway is the major signaling system for TGF- β . Inhibition of RhoA is intracellular mechanisms mediated by statin on the path of TGF- β . TGF - β through activation of the Smad pathway regulates many cellular responses including cell growth, cell survival, cell differentiation and extracellular matrix accumulation (Vita et al, 2008). Use of simvastatin in mice models of fibrosis showed decreased levels of TGF- β 1 and decrease the degree of fibrosis (Vita et al, 2008; Wei Wang et al, 2013).

Assessment of the degree of liver cirrhosis can be done in various ways. As the gold standard in measuring the degree of liver fibrosis is by using liver biopsy and further interpreted in the Metavir score. This action is invasive, the patient will suffer pain, bleeding can occur, and rarely can cause death. With a small sample results might occur sampling error (Mona et al, 2011). Non-invasive method widely used to measure the degree of liver fibrosis. Luo reported that the diagnostic accuracy of TGF β 1 in liver fibrosis patients with cirrhosis is quite good with an area under the curve of 82.5% (Luo et al, 2005). FibroScan is a non-invasive tool for measuring liver fibrosis by measuring liver stiffness. FibroScan method is painless and very good in diagnosing liver fibrosis with the area under the curve of > 90% (Mona et al, 2011). APRI is a tool for measuring liver fibrosis which is simple and easy to do. APRI sensitivity and specificity in diagnosing fibrosis was 76% and 71% (Shaheenn et al, 2007).

In previous studies in rats, simvastatin are known to have anti-fibrotic effects of hepatic better than fluvastatin (lukisvaya et al, 2007). Yang et al report simvastatin administration accompanied by protein kinase C inhibitor will reduce the activity of hepatic cells stelata, reduced collagen deposition, and decrease the degree of liver fibrosis in murine models of cirrhosis (Yang et al, 2011). But Shirin reported that atorvastatin and rosuvastatin have no anti-fibrotic effect on rat models of cirrhosis (Shirin et al, 2013). Additional experiments on rat models of cirrhosis show a benefit antifibrotik on simvastatin,

tetrandrien, and candesartan (Darwin dan Aziz, 2006). Research in humans in HALT-C trial with the subject in 1050 of hepatitis C patients with ishaq score > 3, the use of simvastatin for 3.5 years will reduce the degree of liver fibrosis (Simon et al, 2015).

This research to determine effect of simvastatin on the transforming growth factor β 1, fibroscan scores, and aspartat transaminase to platelet index ratio patients with liver cirrhosis.

METHODS

This study is a randomized experiment, a sample of 30 people, divided into a control group given a placebo and the treatment given simvastatin 20 mg / day orally for 4 weeks. Inclusion criteria: Age 18 s / d 60 years, liver cirrhosis is characterized by clinical, laboratory and ultrasound liver, patients willing to participate approved informed consent. Criteria for exclusion: Pregnant Patients, Infection, Patients Encephalopathy grade II-IV, Malignancy / cancer, diabetes mellitus, chronic renal failure, heart failure, Simvastatin therapy > 3 months, Obesity, ascites permagna. Before and after treatment measured levels of TGF β 1, FibroScan score, and a score of APRI. Statistical analysis using SPSS 22 for windows. Two different test mean using parametric tests (independent t test, paired t test) if the variable data is normally distributed and non-parametric tests (*Mann-Whitney / Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test*) if the data is not normally distributed. P significant if $p < 0,05$.

RESULT

The basic characteristics of research subjects and homogeneity can be seen in Table 1. Based on these data it appears that the basic characteristics of research subjects in the control group and the treatment group is homogeneous.

Table 1. Characteristics of research subjects

Variable	Controle		Treatment		P
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	
Hemoglobin (g/dL)	11,38	1,68	11,27	1,08	0,838
Trombochyte ($10^3/\mu$ l)	103,6	31,10	88,43	23,01	0,148
Albumin (g/dL)	3,08	0,51	3,04	0,65	0,865
PT (s)	16,67	4,37	15,87	1,82	0,530
SGOT (U/L)	77,20	94,62	80,36	134,59	0,880
SGPT (U/L)	38,40	51,52	36,93	79,97	0,652
Billirubin-I (mg/dL)	0,87	0,45	1,01	0,71	0,880
Billirubin-II (mg/dL)	0,75	0,49	0,67	0,40	0,621
Billirubin Total (mg/dL)	1,62	0,84	1,68	1,08	0,880
INR	1,42	0,50	1,35	0,28	0,780

Results of testing the mean difference two control and treatment groups for variable TGF β 1, FibroScan score, and a score of APRI to a prior administration of simvastatin treatment shows the test results were not significant at the 5 percent significance level ($p > 0.05$). Thus the variable TGF β 1, FibroScan score, and APRI score in the control group and the treatment of conditions

before administration of simvastatin did not differ conclusively (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison of TGFβ1, Scores FibroScan, and APRI Score on control and treatment groups in Condition Before Treatment

Variable	Control		Treatment		P value
	Mean	Std Deviasi	Mean	Std Deviasi	
TGF β1 (μg/dL)	21,74	9,71	20,98	7,80	0,817
Fibroscan score (kpa)	17,85	5,32	22,29	14,65	0,477
APRI score	24,74	19,99	40,13	41,28	0,591

Results of testing the mean difference two control and treatment groups for variable TGF β1 and score FibroScan on the condition after treatment administration of of simvastatin showed significant assay results for the variable TGF β1, and variable FibroScan score with 5 percent significance level ($p < 0.05$). But for the variable APRI score shows the test results were not significant at the 5 percent significance level ($p > 0.05$) (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of TGFβ1, Scores FibroScan, and APRI score between Control group and Treating Condition After Treatment

Variable	Control		Treatment		P
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	
TGFβ1 (μg/dL)	25,60	11,71	16,20	5,50	0,011*
Fibroscan score (kpa)	23,62	15,56	13,61	4,02	0,027*
APRI score	26,70	24,63	23,41	17,61	0,747

Results of testing the mean different 2 t test for paired samples to variable TGF β1 and FibroScan scores before and after treatment in the group treated samples show significant results of the testing on the degree of significance of 5 percent ($p < 0.05$) for both variables. It may mean that after getting treatment administration of simvastatin, variable TGF β1 and score FibroScan change convincingly. Variable TGF β1 and FibroScan score after treatment decreased to change convincingly, as well as variables change APRI score decreased significantly (Table 4).

Table 4. Comparison of TGF-β1, FibroScan Scores and APRI score before and after treatment in treatment group

Variable	Pre-test		Post test		P
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	
TGF β1 (μg/dL)	21,74	9,71	25,60	11,71	0,013*
Fibroscan score (kpa)	17,85	5,32	23,62	15,56	0,049*

APRI score	24,74	19,99	26,70	24,63	0,002**
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The result of the calculation different 2 mean by Mann Whitney test between variables delta-TGF β1, delta-FibroScan, and delta-APRI showed that the three variables that change (delta-TGF β1, delta_Fibroscan and delta_APRI) differs convincingly on the degree of significance of 5 percent ($p < 0.05$) (Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of TGF-β1, and APRI Score FibroScan Before and After Treatment

Variable	Control		Treatment		P
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	
Delta-TGF β1 (μg/dL)	-3,86	5,18	4,77	6,22	0,001**
Delta-Fibroscan (kpa)	-5,77	11,06	8,68	14,95	0,001**
Delta-APRI	-1,96	15,79	16,72	26,55	0,010*

Simvastatin therapy would reduce levels of TGF β1, FibroScan score, and APRI score in patients with liver cirrhosis. It can be seen from the administration of simvastatin 20 mg for 4 weeks will reduce levels of TGF β1, FibroScan score, and APRI score in patients with liver cirrhosis.

Pleiotrofik effect mechanism of statin associated with inhibition of the synthesis of mevalonate pathway of isoprenoid intermediates such as isopentenyl adenosine, farnesylpyrophosphate and geranyl-geranyl pyrophosphate. Intermediate serves as a hook protein to lipid in the cell membrane (lipid anchors) for post-translational modification of a number of proteins involved in intracellular signal transduction pathways, including heterotrimeric G-proteins and small guanosine triphosphate (GTP) -binding proteins, such as Ras, Rho and Rac1 (Tamargo et al., 2007). Small molecular weight G-proteins are involved in cell proliferation, differentiation, apoptosis, migration, contraction and regulation of gene transcription (McFarlane et al, 2002). Small molecular weight G-proteins are involved in cell proliferation, differentiation, apoptosis, migration, contraction and regulation of gene transcription (Sadowitz et al., 2010).

Rac, activating Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate (NADPH) oxidase in Smooth Muscle Cell (SMC) and endothelium, is a major source of ROS in the vascular wall. Increased ROS production will result in endothelial dysfunction and progression of atherosclerosis. Wassmann et al reported that atorvastatin lowers the production of ROS induced by angiotensin II and endothelial growth factor (EGF). Further explained that atorvastatin lowered Rac in the membrane and increase in cytoplasmic resulting in a decrease in NADPH oxidase activity (Paul 2003).

Activation of Angiotensin receptor 1 (AT1) angiotensin angiotensin II in the cells of the blood vessels is one of the most prominent mechanism of ROS production in vitro and in vivo. AT1 receptor expression levels following and influenced by up or down-regulation of the activity of the renin angiotensin system (RAAS). It has been shown that statins inhibit

posttranslational isoprenylation small GTP-binding protein in the vascular smooth muscle cells. Rac1 GTPase allegedly essential for the activation of NADPH oxidase and the release of free radicals. Rac1 is posttranslational geranylgeranylated. Giving statins lowers the membrane translocation of Rac1 under basal conditions and actually prevent angiotensin II-mediated increased expression of Rac1 in cell membranes (Wassmann S et al, 2001).

Nucleus Factor kappa Beta (NF κ b) had a seminal role in immunity, because it activates genes encoding proinflammatory. It is activated by phosphorylation, ubiquitination and subsequent proteolytic degradation of the inhibitor of kappa B kinase (IKK). NF κ b liberated translocate to the nucleus and bind as a transcription factor kappa B motif (kb) in the target gene promoter, leading to transcription. Antioxidants can inhibit the activation of nucleus factor κ β (NF κ b) (Guntur 2008).

Statins have antioxidant capabilities so that they can as antioxidants act as inhibitors against κ β kinase inhibitor (IKK) so that activation of nucleus factor κ β (NF κ β) inhibited resulting in a decrease in the number of pro-inflammatory cytokines including IL-6 and TNF- α . Excessive TNF- α would lead to oxidative stress (Guntur, 2008). So will decrease the degree of fibrosis in patients with liver cirrhosis.

Previous studies in rats, simvastatin are known to have anti-fibrotic effects of hepatic better than fluvastatin (lukisvaya et al, 2007). This study uses a rat model of liver fibrosis induced by administration of tioacetamid 200 mg / kg 2 times a week for 12 weeks. The study compared the effectiveness of simvastatin 5 mg / kg, simvastatin 10 mg / kg, and fluvastatin 10 mg / kg orally for 2 months after 12 weeks of administration of tioacetinamide. The degree of liver fibrosis was measured by histological examination of the liver with mallory azan staining hydroxiprolin, and measurement of mRNA levels of procollagen 1, MMP 13 and TIMP 1. The results showed that simvastatin had moderate anti-fibrotic, while fluvastatin does not have anti-fibrotic. This is evidenced by improvement of liver histology and increased mRNA levels of MMP 13 in rats given a dose of 10 mg simvastatin (lukisvaya et al, 2007).

Yang et al reported the administration of simvastatin with protein kinase C inhibitor will reduce the activity of hepatic cells stelat, reduced collagen deposition, and decrease the degree of liver fibrosis in murine models of cirrhosis (Yang et al, 2011). The study by Yang et al use a mouse model of liver fibrosis induced by intraperitoneal injection of carbon tetrachloride for 6 weeks, then given pravastatin and enzansaurin (inhibitor of protein kinase C) for 5 weeks. Assessment of liver fibrosis using liver histology using masson trichome staining and immunohistochemical examination of α -smooth muscle actin to show HSC activation. Results showed statins would improve liver histological and lower activation of HSC, this effect will be increased by administering a combination of statin and enzansaurin (inhibitor of protein kinase C) (Yang et al, 2011).

Shirin et al reported that atorvastatin and rosuvastatin have no anti-fibrotic effect on rat models of cirrhosis (Shirin et al, 2013). This study uses a rat model of liver fibrosis with induction

tioacetamide for 12 weeks and using drugs artovastatin dose of 1, 10, and 20 mg / kg, rosuvastatin doses of 1, 2.5, 5, 10, and 20 mg / kg. Assessment of the degree of fibrosis using histological examinations, measurement of hisroksiprolin, levels of malondialdehyde, measurement HSC. The results showed that rosuvastatin artovastatin and not have the effect of improvement in liver fibrosis. However, this study shows that both artovastatin and rosuvastatin safe, has no side effects, do not add to mortality, and well tolerated in mice models of fibrosis, it is shown by the levels of transaminase enzymes, levels of malondialdehyde, levels hydroxiprolin, and histology were not increased bad in rats receiving statins (Shirin et al, 2013). Additional experiments on rat models of cirrhosis show a benefit antifibrotik on simvatatin, tetrandrien, and candesartan (Darwin dan Aziz, 2006).

Research in humans, the HALT-C trial is a cohort study that examined effect simvastatin in subjects with chronic hepatitis C with the use of simvastatin for 3.5 years will reduce the degree of liver fibrosis (Simon et al, 2015). The study involved 1050 subjects in the Finnish study and were followed for 3.5 years. Assessment of the degree of liver fibrosis using the Ishak score. The results showed that the subjects who used statins hepatitis C will decrease the degree of liver fibrosis with an average of 0.34, whereas in subjects who did not use statins ishak an increase in the average score of 0.42 with a Hazard Ratio of 0.31 (95 % CI 0.1 to 0.97). The weakness of this study do not mention a dose of simvastatin (Simon et al, 2015).

Assessment of the degree of liver cirrhosis can be done in various ways. As the gold standard in measuring the degree of liver fibrosis is by using liver biopsy and further interpreted in Metavir score. This action is invasive, the patient will suffer pain, bleeding can occur, and rarely can cause death. With a small sample results might occur sampling error (Mona et al, 2011). Non-invasive method widely used to measure the degree of liver fibrosis. Luo reported that the diagnostic accuracy of TGF β 1 in liver fibrosis patients with cirrhosis is quite good with an area under the curve of 82.5% (Luo et al, 2005). FibroScan is a non-invasive tool for measuring liver fibrosis by measuring liver stiffness. Meniumbulkan FibroScan method is not painful and very good in diagnosing liver fibrosis with the area under the curve of > 90% (Mona et al, 2011). AST to platelet index ratio (APRI) is a tool for measuring liver fibrosis which is simple and easy to do. APRI sensitivity and specificity in diagnosing fibrosis was 76% and 71% (Shaheenn et al, 2007).

This study uses TGF β 1, FibroScan score, and APRI score as a marker of liver fibrosis. Previous research simvastatin as an anti-fibrotic liver has not been done using markers TGF β 1, FibroScan score, and APRI score as a marker of liver fibrosis. This study shows the alignment of with other studies that simvastatin has anti-fibrotic effect on liver cirrhosis in which the research is demonstrated by decreased levels of TGF β 1, FibroScan score, and APRI score in patients with liver cirrhosis in administration of simvastatin 20 mg for 4 weeks.

CONCLUSION

1. Simvastatin therapy lowered levels of TGF- β 1 in patients with liver cirrhosis

2. Simvastatin therapy lowered FibroScan scores in patients with liver cirrhosis
3. simvastatin therapy lowered the APRI score in patients with liver cirrhosis

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