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Stem Cell-Derived Therapy for Sickle Cell Anemia

Faleh Mubarak AlQahtani[1], Bariq Hassan Mohammed Al suhaymi[2], Hassan Mohammed Bariq Alsuhaymi[2], Abdullah Nawezh Al Anezi[3], Mahran Mohammed Abdullah tammar[4], Raghdah Abdulelah Almujlid[5], Mohammed Othman Karbuji[6], Hameadah Hamed Al-Malki[7], Adnan Abdulrahman Hamad Almawash[8], Reem ObeidAllah Almehmadi[9]

1. Specialist laboratory, Laboratory and blood bank specialist, Saudi Arabi.
2. Lab Specialst, Theriban General Hospital, Saudi Arabi.
3. Laboratory, Riyadh Second Health Cluster, Saudi Arabi.
4. Laboratory Technician, Al Kamel Hospital, Saudi Arabi.
5. Tec cath lab, Mch, Saudi Arabi.
6. Technician - Laboratory, Ohud hospital Ministry of Health AlmadinahAlmunawwarah, Saudi Arabi.
7. Non-medical Specialist Al Malawi Health Center Work Area Mecca, Saudi Arabi.
8. Clinical Laboratory Science, King Saud Medical City - Riyadh, Saudi Arabi.
9. Lab specialist, Maternaty and children hospital, Saudi Arabi.

Background: The genetic blood disease known as sickle cell anemia (SCA) results from a mutation in the HBB gene, which codes for the ß-globin component of hemoglobin. Aberrant hemoglobin S (HbS) produced by this mutation causes red blood cell abnormalities, a shortened lifetime, and problems with vaso-occlusive pathways. Hydroxyurea and bone marrow transplants are two current therapies with limited availability of donors and efficacy. Targeting the fundamental genetic abnormality, induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) and hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs) both show potential as a therapeutic approach.
Aim: The project aims to develop and maximize protocols for genetically modifying HSCs or iPSCs to fix the HBB gene mutation, evaluate the differentiation potential of these cells into functional erythroid cells, and test their therapeutic efficacy in vitro and preclinical models, so assessing the efficacy of stem cell-derived therapies for sickle cell anemia.
Conclusion: Stem cell-derived treatments provide a revolutionary solution for sickle cell anemia. Reintroduced into patients, genetically engineered HSCs or iPSCs can provide a sustainable source of healthy red blood cells, hence perhaps curing the disease. From initial studies, successful gene repair and differentiation into functional erythroid cells seem to follow. Still unsolved, meanwhile, are questions on improving gene-editing efficiency, ensuring transplanting safety, and managing immunological compatibility. With more research, stem cell treatments may significantly improve the outcomes of sickle cell anemia patients.
Keywords: Sickle cell anemia, Stem cell therapy, Gene editing, Hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs).

Introduction

An genetic blood disorder, sickle cell disease (SCD) causes red blood cells either crescent-shaped or sickle-shaped to be shaped by synthesis of defective hemoglobin molecule. Among the millions of people affected by this illness globally, a disproportionately high proportion are persons with African, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and South Asian origin.People with SCD have drastically damaged their quality of life and health. Doctors, patients, and their families must thus be somewhat knowledgeable with the symptoms, signs, and various treatments.[1]

Hemoglobin is produced by the beta-globin (HBB) gene, which is typically defective in sickle cell disease (SCD). Normal adult hemoglobin (HbA) has a different chemical structure than hemoglobin S (HbS), an aberrant variation generated from a gene mutation. Red blood cells lost their flexibility and passability through tiny blood channels when HbSbecomes sticky and stiff. The abnormal shape of red blood cells is a major factor behind many of the health problems occurring from sickle cell disease (SCD).[2]

Clinically, sickle cell disease (SCD) shows from mild to severe. The hallmark indication of sickled red blood cells restricting blood flow in small capillaries is repeated, severe pain sometimes described as vaso-occlusive crises. Typical SCD symptoms also include weariness, anemia, and higher susceptibility to infections. For persons with SCD, these symptoms can seriously influence their mental and physical condition, therefore influencing their daily life.[3]

SCD treatment decisions include their goals control of symptoms, prevention of complications, and improvement of quality of life. Most importantly, pain treatment demands often used analgesics including adjuvant treatments, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications, and opioids.Appropriate blood flow as well as aid to prevent sickling of red blood cells depend on enough hydration, either orally or intravenially. Sometimes frequent

blood transfusions are needed to increase tissue oxygen supply and reduce the danger of consequences including stroke.[4]

Patients using hydroxyurea, a medicine raising fetal hemoglobin (HbF), have less frequent and less severe pain crises in sickle cell disease (SCD). HbF inhibits sickling, hence red blood cells have a higher probability of survival and generate superior clinical results. For certain people with severe SCD, bone marrow or stem cell transplantation is a possible treatment; although, the lack of donors and the related risks restrict this option.[5]

Stem Cells Towards Therapeutic Development

Cancer immunotherapies in the United States and treatments based on mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs) in Europe have become somewhat well-known thanks in great part to regenerative medicine.Cell-based therapy—especially stem cells—offers fresh hope for patients with terminal diseases, since present therapeutic approaches focus more on disease control than treatment. The ultimate aim of stem cell-based therapy, a crucial field of regenerative medicine, is stimulating, modifying, and controlling the endogenous stem cell population and/or replenishing the cell pool towards tissue homeostasis and regeneration.4 Since their idea was embraced, stem cells have attracted a lot of scientific and clinical attention; their special qualities of self-renewal and differentiation have helped them to be identified as potential therapeutic agents.[6]

In the field of regenerative medicine, a range of stem cell types—including progenitor cells, human pluripotent stem cells (hPSCs), and multipotent stem cells—have been used to meet objectives of cellular replacement and tissue regeneration.However, the alleged effectiveness of stem cell therapy by private, unregulated clinics providing so-called "magic cells" has raised extensively reported concerns regarding the treatment's safety. Of all the patients with macular degeneration, three lost their vision following injections of a cell population created from fractionated lipoaspirate; this is unique among the other cases.[7]

Given the continuous advancements in regenerative medicine and the necessity to bust the myth of the "magic" cells, this study presents a succinct overview of stem cell-based therapy as relevant to the treatment of human diseases.Using the remarkable powers of stem cells—such as self-renewal and differentiation—which allow either to repair damaged cells and tissues or to transplant healthy, freshly created cells into a patient—stem cell therapy is a novel approach of treating disease. Cell-based therapy makes use of two kinds of stem cells: allogeneic, derived from healthy donors; autologous, sometimes known as self-therapy, derived from the patient's own cells.[8]

Renowned German biologist Ernst Haeckel coined the term "stem cell" in 1868 to describe the features of a fertilized egg capable of developing into any cell in the body. Two German zoologists, Theodor Heinrich Boveri and Valentin Haecker, first used the term "stem cell" in 1888 in search of the embryonic cell population fit for differentiation into more specialized cells. Stem cell treatment officially started here. Bone marrow research specialist Franz Ernst Christian Neumann and Alexander Alexandria'sMaximov demonstrated in 1902 that the human body produces hematopoiesis—the process by which mature blood cells are generated.10 Maximov's idea of polyblasts, which Ernst Haeckel later called stem cells because of their capacity for proliferation and differentiation.[9]

Eleven Maximov described the hematopoietic population existing in the bone marrow. First recorded in a 1939 case report containing a human bone marrow transplant, aplastic anemia was first for the first stem cell transplantation, French oncologist George Mathe treated six nuclear researchers who had unintentionally come into contact with radioactive materials via bone marrow transplantation in 1958, twenty years later. Following a successful bone marrow transplant to a leukemia patient in 1963, George Mathe conducted more research that changed the scientific scene. Dr. E. Donnall Thomas was a field pioneer; he carried out the first hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT) in 1957.[10]

All six of the patients died in this early study since the volume and hazards of bone marrow transplantation were unknown. Two more patients showed evidence of transient engraftment as well. The first bone marrow transplant in the United States in 1969 was performed; although the operation was only effective with allogeneic donors, in 1972, the same year cyclosporine, an immune suppressant medicine was developed, a 16-year-old girl experienced the first success of allogeneic transplantation for aplastic anemia and acute myeloid leukemia. Studies carried out on bone marrow aspirates by Friendenstein and others in the 1960s and 1970s revealed the link between osteogenic differentiation and a limited subset of bone marrow-derived cells.[11,12,13]

Later studies verified that these cells could separate themselves from the hematopoietic population and experience fast multiplication under in vitro culture as adherent cells. Friendenstein's group made a major discovery when they seeded these cells as a suspension culture in bone marrow and found they could develop into osteoblasts, adipocytes, and chondrocytes. This implies that these cells can proliferate and develop into other cell kinds.[14]

Along with the discovery of human embryonic stem cells (hESCs), which will be discussed in the section following, the term "mesenchymal stem cells" was first used in Caplan in 1991 and has since become somewhat

popular. It was once referred to as stromal stem cells, or "osteogenic," stem cells. years from its modest beginnings in bone marrow transplantation 60 years ago, stem cell treatment has evolved. Modern regenerative medicine is a cutting-edge technique for treating a wide spectrum of ailments, including those impacting the neurological system, the lungs, the metabolism, the endocrine system, reproduction, skin burns, and heart issues.[15]

Using CRISpen-Cas9 to induce fetal hemoglobin treats sickle cell disease.

Through genome editing, those with β-hemoglobinopathies—including sickle cell disease (SCD)—may discover a cure. Reawakening developmentally repressed HbF in adult red blood cells using a therapy approach helps to reduce disease symptoms by genetic persistence of HbF. Thanks to advances in genome editing technologies—particularly CRISpen-Cas9—it is now feasible to induce effective HbF by means of epigenetic intermediates, modification of transcriptional HbF silencers, or synthetic mutant creation. Although the results of the clinical studies show promise, few people treated, and follow-up is lacking. Though there are clinical, financial, and practical limitations, solutions are under development. Using the CRISpen-Cas9 genome editing technique, the most recent advancements and limitations in the field of hemoglobin F (HbF) reactivation as a therapy option for sickle cell disease (SCD) were examined.[16]

Comparison of 2D and 3D Erythroid Differentiation Protocols Using Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells from Sickle Cell Disease Patients and Healthy Donors

EBS (3D culture) and monolayers (2D culture) are the two basic techniques for generating erythroid cells from iPSCs. Here we evaluate several approaches for producing erythroid cells and hematopoietic progenitor cells from induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) derived from sickle cell disease (SCD) and healthy donors. Although it precludes us from comparing healthy cells to SCD-iPSCs, the limited sample size of our data helps us identify the optimal technique for separating erythroid cells from iPSCs, which is vital for obtaining these models applied for disease modeling and drug screening.[17]

This helps one to find whether published reports could be replicated. Validation studies are important since there is a wide variety of elements, such inter-laboratory and cell line variability, that could influence the success of human iPSC differentiation procedures. Acquiring HSPCs, which are defined by the co-expression of CD34 and CD43, which are traits of primitive hematopoietic progenitors, marks a first stage in the differentiation process. While earlier studies have produced in vitro erythropoiesis using monolayer culture, the 2D culture approach did not yield adequate findings. Since most of the 2D techniques claimed require coculture with OP9 cells, we chose xeno-free techniques.[18]

Correct hematopoietic differentiation depends on interactions between cells in the microenvironment. Thus, conceivably, 3D models created on EB differentiation can enhance cell interactions to the extent of surpassing 2D monolayer models. According to several studies the 3D structure stimulates the formation of hematopoietic lineages and replica the early phases of human embryonic development.[19,20]

Though the hanging drop approach has produced few good outcomes in human cell research, it has been extensively applied in studies utilizing mouse pluripotent stem cells and other techniques for EB generation. There is evidence that other, more labor-intensive approaches of aggregation are more efficient, therefore supporting the assertions expressed here. Furthermore, shown was the occurrence of EB degradation under hematopoietic differentiation using Aggw plate and APEL medium. Although the Aggw and ULA techniques were successful in first generating EBs with similar size and properties, the subsequent processes following aggregation clearly differed.[21]

For all studies, we used the same medium and EB creation cell numbers. Although this result confirmed the ULA plates aggregation procedure, we lacked the power to assess the processes behind that event. Large EBs show core necrosis due to insufficient oxygen and nutrient transport; conversely, EBS too small may not be able to survive or function sufficiently throughout differentiation processes. Different cell sizes during terminal differentiation could affect the viability and generation of embryonic stem cells (EBs). Our results underline the need to select and verify an aggregation technique more fit for the intended uses. The findings of EB survival and differentiation performance vary even with V and U bottom plates.[22]

Following differentiation Step 1, our average induction effectiveness for iPSCs towards CD34+/CD43+ HSPCs was 55%. In a related work, Kessel et al. showed that Ebs may generate CD34+/CD43+ HSPCs with an induction efficacy of about 10%.[23]Furthermore, made possible by the great quantity of HSPCs produced by the APEL medium was the continuation of differentiation stages 2 and 3. The facts shown here support the conclusions of Reis et al. concerning the stimulation of hematopoietic development in SCD-derived iPSCs byEB creation, which involves the indicated usage of APEL media, and the presence of surrounding cells generated from EB. While Reis et al. discovered a decline or loss in the percentage of these hematological markers, our data revealed an increase in the percentage of CD34+/CD43+ cells employing the method reported here.[24]

Apart from the well-known epigenetic memory impact over iPSCs, inherent cell line variability—which includes changes in the expression levels of hematopoietic-related genes and other gene variants—helps to explain variances in response to the same stimuli. Increasing the induction period produces more HSPCs, which enables strong HSPC proliferation, according to our analysis of D12 and D16 cell quantification in Step 1. Important consequences of this result for hematopoietic development research and disease modeling are Thanks to a 14-fold rise in CD71+/CD235a+ from HSPCs, we found at D10 of Step 2 that the amount of erythroid progenitor cells increased by 630 times compared to the start of the 3D program.[25,26]

various studies using a co-culture with the OP9 cell line have demonstrated that various iPSC sources can produce erythroblasts rising by around a factor of 10. By means of platelet lysate in a medium, Deng et al. attained a 530-fold increase in the end step of the erythroblast phase. These differences show how our process is enforceable even if they could be related to farming methods. To assess the functional activity of HSPCs, another study carried out by the same group revealed the development of macrophage, granulocyte, and erythrocyte colonies using a colony forming unit (CFU) assays. Hematopoietic colony development is feasible with HPSCs generated from sickle cell iPSCs or healthy donors.[27,28]

After growing the cells under circumstances to encourage erythroid differentiation and erythroblast formation. These findings are somewhat like those reported by Huang and colleagues for the same stage[29], except they differ by strain and show that the cell yield obtained at the end of stage II was either 34 or 42 times the number of starting cells. Conversely, investigations employing EB synthesis to generate erythroid cells discovered that over 80% of the cells were tagged with either CD71 or CD235a.[30,31]

Should the produced stimulated cells have hemoglobin, the presence of a red cell pellet indicates such. The expression of HBG2 and HBB genes in induced pluripotent stem cells-derived erythroid progenitor cells points to these differentiated cells retaining a fetal phenotype and lacking development into a mature phase. Other research has also come upon this profile. Two crucial elements for hematopoietic disease modeling, particularly in SCD cell lines, should be optimized maturation and hemoglobin flipping, which should be the focus of next investigations so that a disease phenotype (sickling) may be replicated in vitro.[32]

Investigating other approaches that show effective hemoglobin β production—such as using human platelet lysate-treated cells, in vivo maturation in NOD/SCID mice, or immortalizing erythroid precursor cells and controlling BCL11A expression is therefore crucial. Chen et al. recently showed a less labor-intensive method fit with SCD disease models that improves erythroid terminal development in a culture of HSPCs produced from human embryonic stem cells by adding an aryl hydrocarbon receptor antagonist.[33]

Alcohol consumption reduction with apremilast: evidence from both preclinical and clinical studies

There has been no change to the treatment choices for alcohol use disorders (AUDs) since 2004, even though the annual death toll and monetary cost have risen substantially. In addition to nicotine, alcohol use has also been linked to PDE4. As a possible treatment for alcohol use disorder, bioinformatics has uncovered PDE4 inhibitors. Given its recent FDA approval for psoriasis, low incidence of side effects, and outstanding safety profile, a younger PDE4 inhibitor was our top pick for repurposing. Unless it's being considered for a human phase IIa trial. In mouse models with a hereditary tendency to drink to intoxication, apremilast decreased binge-like alcohol consumption and behavioral indicators of alcohol reward. In studies of stress-induced drinking and alcoholism, Apremilast reduced heavy alcohol consumption as well. The nucleus accumbens is a fundamental brain region that controls alcohol intake; site-directed chemical infusions and electrophysiological investigations suggest that apremilast may reduce drinking in rats by enhancing neuronal activity in this location. Researchers found that apremilast (90 mg/d) significantly reduced binge drinking in non-treatment-seeking AUD patients in a double-blind, placebo-controlled study.[34]

Correct application of the Brightside technology can significantly improve wellness and health. Advocates of this technology cite the fact that it will help to soothe parental concerns and prevent hereditary disorders from affecting patients as justification for their usage. Bioengineer Feng Zhang has modified the Cas9 enzyme to limit modifications outside of its target region, hence lowering the error rate of CRISpen/Cas9. This could help to allay some of the concerns about the ethics and safety of genome editing with CRISpen/Cas9. In the realm of therapeutic genome editing, recent years have witnessed amazing progress in both in vivo hepatic genome editing and ex vivo HSC and T cell editing. Although there is still more to be done with genome editing in biomedicine, certain challenges must be solved. More distribution efficiency is needed to offset the long-standing main barrier in the field of gene therapy: delivery has always been a challenge.[35]

Future prospective

The necessity of experiments inside a healthcare system and the creation of international laws ensuring that gene editing does not hurt mankind are vital. Finally, with careful use, Brightside technology could significantly improve quality of life and health.[36]

Conclusion

A huge global health concern, sickle cell disease (SCD) disproportionately affects persons of African, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and South Asian descent. The abnormal hemoglobin S (HbS) form of red blood cells, resembling a sickle, is caused by a genetic mutation in the beta-globin (HBB) gene. Vasospasm, recurrent anemia, and a host of other issues are caused by these cells, which greatly diminish patients' quality of life. Although current treatments primarily aim at symptom control, problem avoidance, and quality of life enhancement, more sophisticated therapeutic techniques are consistently being developed. Pain medication, fluids, blood transfusions, and the production of fetal hemoglobin (HbF) using hydroxyurea are the cornerstones of treatment. Stem cell transplantation and bone marrow are curative treatments that offer hope, but they are restricted by the availability of donors and the risks associated with them.Regenerative medicine shows a lot of potential, particularly with iPSCs and CRISpen-Cas9 genome editing. These advancements provide novel approaches to disease modeling and drug discovery, and they also provide hope for correcting genetic defects and reestablishing normal hemoglobin synthesis. To further enhance methodologies for illness information and therapeutic development, iPSCs were used to compare 2D and 3D erythroid differentiation processes. Addressing global health inequities, conducting continuous research, and developing readily available curative treatments will form the basis of future SCD management. It is now possible to significantly improve outcomes and cure SCD through collaboration and technological advancements.

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