



PI3K pathway gene polymorphism in breast cancer tissues proliferation with synergistic effect of EBV- LMP1 oncogene activity among breast cancer patients in Basrah, southern of Iraq

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ABSTRACT

PI3K is an intracellular heterodimer of two subunits regulator and catalytic one, induces many signalling pathways after activation. Specific primers used to detect PI3K in breast tissues of 186 patients with 84 benign of fibroadenoma and 72 invasive ductal carcinoma. conventional PCR detects that 97% of PI3K genome identity with standard strain and from 42 samples sent to sequencing, there were (38.1%) of PI3KCA samples were mutated, when 15 (93.75%) of them in malignant and just one (6.25%) was benign. PI3KCA mutation increased with the advancing grades of malignant tissue especially in grade III, and the variation increased directly with the age. It has been noticed that PI3K pathways mutation and EBV-LMP1 have a directly effect on tumor progression. PIK3CA mutations were positively correlated with EBV-positive invasive ductal carcinoma and also associated with the mutation loci where those in exon 9 ($\Delta E542K$), and exon 20 ($\Delta H1047R$) are frequently detected and associated with greater PIK3CA mutations.

Keywords: *PI3K, Invasive ductal carcinoma, Breast cancer*

INTRODUCTION

phosphatidylinositol 3-phosphate (PI3K) is one of the intracellular heterodimer proteins consisting of regulatory sub-unit protein p85 by which can link to the transmembrane receptor and another catalytic protein SU p110.1, 25 Its intracellular signaling pathway plays an essential role in the regulation of cell growth, apoptosis, and the cell cycle. Many factors, can increase the activity of the PI3K/Akt pathway as cancer-related viruses specially EBV oncoproteins². Mutations of genes in these pathways produced mutated proteins, overexpressed or deleted base pair, depending on the case, resulting in biological effects which increased proliferation, genomic instability, changed cytoskeleton and demised apoptosis and many cancerous process.³

The PI3K pathway is one of the major signaling pathways with oncogenic properties in a variety of malignancies specifically, breast cancer tumorigenesis is believed to be related on the PI3K pathway, most are depend on the fact that at least one molecular mechanism that potentially activate the pathway. The mutations of the PI3K gene is the main PI3K-promoting mechanisms, specially PIK3CA gene mutations.

The frequency reported to be 20 -30% suggests an important role of this gene in tumorigenesis⁴. The modifications of genes in many signaling pathways such as PI3K/AKT/mTOR promote the cancer dangerous by provoking critical cellular functions⁵. Depending to different studies, PIK3CA gene mutations in breast cancer are studied worldwide.^{6,7,8,9} Although Epstein Bar Virus EBV oncogenes can affect many signal pathways, such as NF-κB, MAPK, and JNK, but it seems that the PI3K/Akt pathway is the most essential one. This article focus on the role of PI3K mutations in breast tissues and examines

PI3K mutations and its association with EBV-LMP1 gene polymorphism.

METHODS

Breast cancer specimens in formalin fixed blocks were collected during the period between January 2019 to December 2021 from Al -Sadder teaching hospital. Total of 186 patients with different age range from teens to elderly of 79 years old: on pathologic diagnosis basis, 84 with fibroadenoma, 72 with invasive ductal carcinoma and 5 benign cases, negative for EBV-LMP1. The tissue sample blocks were brought to Microbiology Departments\ Virology labs, Central laboratories of Basrah Medical College for DNA extraction by grinding the tissue and dewaxing for preparing PI3K genome by using G-DEX™ IIC Genomic DNA Extraction Kit of Intron company. All samples submitted to conventional PCR technique using of four specific primers PI3K to cover all part of gene (1-770); (760-1550); (1538-2378) and (2364-3201). (Table 1), PI3KCA was splitted in to four pieces to be sequenced, then the DNA sequencing company removed overlap areas and compined the parts to get the whole gene sequencing by assembly PCR. The PCR products was passing in gel electrophoresis to detect accurate band size which explained in detail procedure by 10 then sending it for DNA sequencing company. DNA sequencing: Cloned DNAs were purified and identified by DNA sequencing (GATC-Biotech Ltd (Germany)). Using online tools for Sequence analyzing which performed with (https://www.gatc-biotech.com/en/mygatc4/single-readsequencing/mywatchbox/mysinglerun.html#watchboxlist_watchbox_div), (<http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>), (http://www.ebi.ac.uk/Tools/psa/emboss_needle/nucleotide.html).

TABLE 1: Oligonucleotides primers and their sequences

Gene Target	Sequence (5'→3')	Company
PI3KC (1-770)	F- 5' TACGGAGGTGCTGGTAGTAGTCC '3 R- 5' GTAGGTGTGTGAAAATTTTATATGAACGGG '3	Invitrogen
PI3KC (760-1550)	F- 5' TGTGTGGATGTGATGAATAC '3 R- 5' TCAGTCCTGCGTGGGAATAGC '3	Invitrogen
PI3KC (1538-2378)	F- 5' CTCATTGTCTGATCGATCTCTG '3 R- 5' AGTAACTCTGACATGATGTCTGGG '3	Invitrogen
PI3KC (2364-3201)	F-5' TACAGTCTCAATGACAAAGTCTTG '3 R-5' CAATGCATGCTGTTAATTGTGTGG '3	Invitrogen

RESULTS

Breast cancer samples were amplified by PCR by using 42 samples that showed typical bands for the four primers (Figure 1) and adequate quantity were selected to DNA sequencing of PI3KCA and EBV-LMP1. PI3KCA mutations were detected in 16 samples (38.1%) among them

15 (93.75%) in malignant and just 1 (6.25%) in benign and none of the control group. The difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.01$) (Table 2). Wild PI3KCA was the dominant (61.9%) among them 53.8% in malignant cases compared to 26.6% among the benign samples and 19.2% in the control.

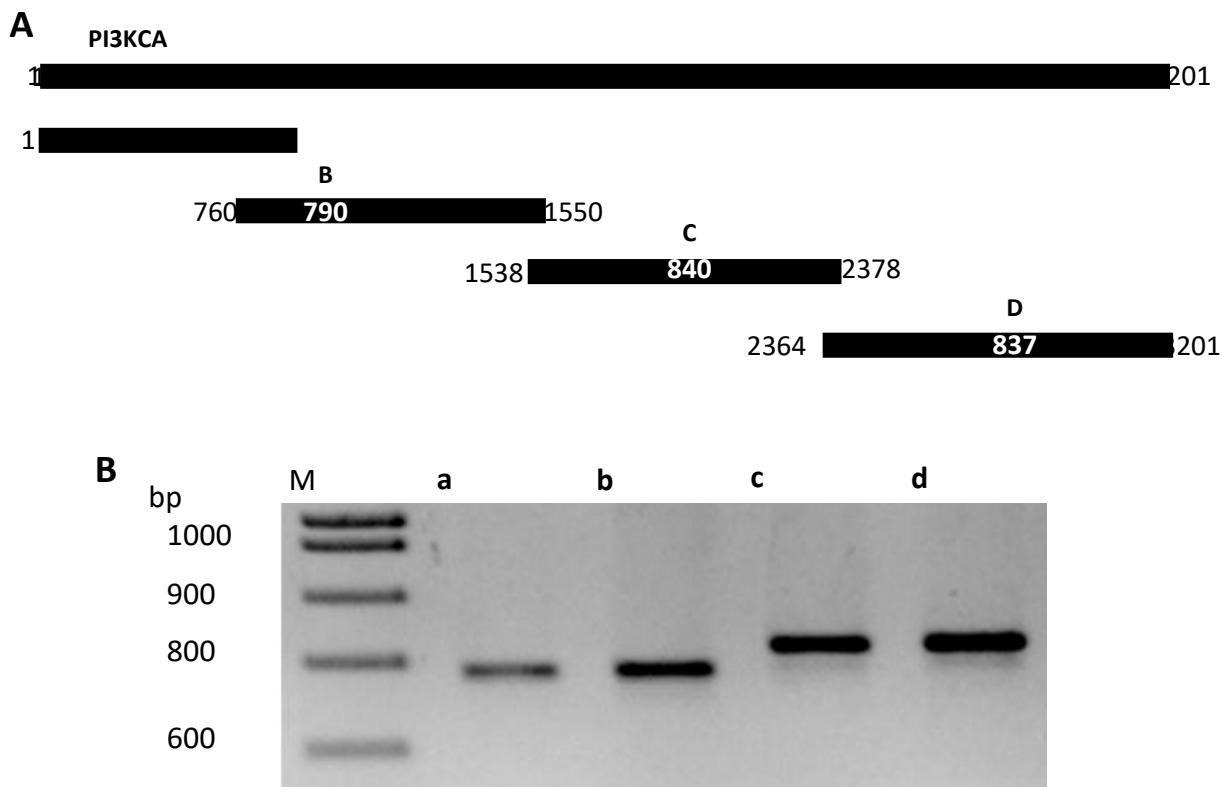


FIGURE 1: PI3KCA parts to cover the gene. A) diagram showed the parts that used to sequence PI3KCA. B) bands of PI3KCA products showed by gel electrophoresis. M= Marker 1000bp; a= (1-770); b (760-1550); c= (1538-2378); d (2364-3201)

TABLE 2: Frequency of PI3KCA mutation among malignant, benign and control group.

PI3K AC	B		M		Control		Total		X2	P value
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Mutants	1	6.25	15	93.75	0	0	16	38.1	68.0028	0.01
Wild	7	26.9	14	53.8	5	19.2	26	61.9	18.5148	0.01
Total	8	19	29	69	5	19.2	42	100		

The study showed that PI3KCA mutation increased significantly ($P < 0.01$) by age of patients (Table 3) with 8 out of 15 (53.3%) of all mutation samples were found in patients above fifties, while 6 samples (40% of malignant) were detected at age group 30 to 49 years old and

just one sample (7.6%) showed mutated PI3KCA at age group 10-29 years old (Table 2). The majority of wild type were detected at age group of 30-49 years (50%) which showed no significant differences ($P > 0.05$).

TABLE 3: Distribution of PI3KCA mutations according to patient age and PI3K type:

Age groups	No.	%	PI3K				Control		X2	P value
			Wild		Mutants		N	%		
			n	%	N	%				
10-29	8	19.04	6	27.3	1	7.6	1	2	28.7138	0.01
30-49	19	45.24	11	50	6	40	2	40	1.36594	NS
> 50	15	35.72	5	22.7	8	53.3	2	40	12.3556	0.01
Total	42	100	22	100	15	100	5	100		

According to pathologic diagnosis 28 pools of DNA from malignant samples within invasive ductal carcinoma were sequenced for PI3KCA and found that a significant ($P < 0.01$) number of PI3KCA mutation appeared among patients with

grade III in 8 out of 13 (61.5%), while grade 2 in 4/13 (30.7%) and just one sample in grade 1 (7.7%). On the other hand, the non-mutated showed rise among the grades I and II (Table 4).

TABLE 4: Occurrence of PI3K mutation in relation to BC grading.

PI3KCA	Total		BC grade						X2	P value
	No	%	G1		G2		G3			
			n	%	n	%	n	%		
Mutants	13	46.4	1	7.7	4	30.7	8	61.5	43.7646	0.01
Non-mutated	15	53.6	1	6.7	7	46.7	7	46.7	38.9094	0.01
TOTAL	28	100	2	100	11	100	15	100		

Table 5 showed that mutation of PI3KCA genome significantly associated ($P < 0.01$) with occurrence of deletion in EBV-LMP1 as there were 13 mutated PI3K out of 15 (86.7%) with EBV-LMP1 deletion mutation indicating the impact of LMP1

deletion in enhancing PI3KCA mutation, while 25 samples out of 27 (92.6%) of the wild type of PI3KCA associated with non-deletion mutation in EBV-LMP1.

TABLE 5: Relation of PI3KCA mutation to EBV-LMP1 deletions.

PI3K	EBV-LMP1				Total	X2	P value
	deletion		Non-delet.				
	n	%	n	%			
Mutants	13	86.7	2	13.3	15 (35.7)	53.8756	0.01
Non-Mutated	2	7.4	25	92.6	27 (64.3)	72.5904	0.01
Total	15	35.71	27	64.28	42 (100%)	8.16327	0.05

Different kinds of PI3KCA mutation were observed in the results of DNA sequencing. Five mutants showed Δ H1047R variants from them 4 were positive EBV-LMP1 (80%) and one was negative EBV-LMP1, their frequency was 33.3% (Table 6) and four mutants Δ E542K was detected in 4 of EBV-LMP1 positive samples (100%), their frequency 26.6% which represent a significant relation between the occurrence of specific locus hotspot mutations

and EBV-LMP1 infection specially those with deletions. Another 4 substitution mutations Δ R88Q; Δ R93Q; Δ C420R and Δ E545K were appeared once in malignant samples. For second type of mutation there were deletion mutations identified in 2 samples, one including 20 base pair in area of 593 to 602 EBV-LMP1 positive sample and the other 9 base pair between 330-350 in EBV-LMP1 negative sample (Table 6).

PI3KCA hotspot mutations at positions of Δ H1047R and Δ E542K are associated with EBV-LMP1 positive cases which presented with 26.6% for each indicating their relation to EBV-LMP1 variants.

TABLE 6: local positions of PI3K mutation of BC in Basrah

Type of mutation	No	%	EBV-LMP1			
			+ve		-ve	
			n.	%	n.	%
330-350	1	6.7	0	0	1	6.7
593-602	1	6.7	1	6.7	0	0.0
Δ H1047R	5	33.3	4	26.6	1	6.7
Δ E542K	4	26.6	4	26.6	0	0.0
Δ R88Q	1	6.7	1	6.7	0	0.0
Δ R93Q	1	6.7	1	6.7	0	0.0
Δ C420R	1	6.7	1	6.7	0	0.0
Δ E545K	1	6.7	1	6.7	0	0.0

DISCUSSION

In this study, we analyse the correlation between presence of EBV-LMP1 and PI3KCA mutation in breast cancer cells¹¹. EBV-LMP1 was used to detect presence of EBV in tissue^{12,13}. The study analyse DNA sequencing of 42 samples, 37 of them were positive to EBV-LMP1 and the other 5 were benign and negative to LMP1 and used as a negative control for sequencing of PI3KCA. The result showed that mutation of PI3KCA increased in malignant which was observed in 93.75% which is greater than the reported figure in other studies where the mutations of PI3K were noticed in 20–30% of all patients with breast cancers^{14,15}. The PI3KCA that showed mutation in breast cancer, was proved in several studies^{16,17}. PI3K involved in several signaling pathways to induce proliferation or regulation of cell apoptosis, survival and differentiation¹⁶. Compatible with this study result, PI3KCA was shown to be mutated in about 93.7% of malignant breast cancer samples and most of them recorded in samples of elderly¹⁸. Advanced grades of tumor as grade III that shown in this study has contributed to more mutation rate in PI3KCA in the presence of EBV-LMP1. Some other studies explained this phenomenon due to the patient taking of different kinds of drugs and chemotherapies that may affect the PI3KCA mutation rates¹⁹. However, different ways that the oncoprotein LMP1 and LMP2 were

found to perform in order to disrupt cell signalling pathways one of these is AKT pathway²⁰ which is in agreement with the finding of this study.

Presence of EBV-LMP1 was confirmed to be an activation factor for PI3K and cause mutation in it. It showed that EBV-LMP1 and 2 play a critical role in malignant metastasis^{20,21,22}. These findings clearly distinguish the presence of LMP1 might triggered the PI3K mutation and that was clearly appeared in results of this study which showed that about 31% of samples were mutated in PI3K and LMP1 together in same samples (Table 5). 93.7% of malignant samples with PI3K mutation, when others^{14,15} found these mutation in 20-30%. The exon 9 and 20 were the important hot spots of oncogenic mutations, which code for activation kinase and helical domains of the enzyme and result in over-enhancing of this protein⁴. In the helical domain of p110, there are exon 9 mutations which enable p110 escape from the inhibitory effect of p85 via the Src-homology 2 (SH2) domain. mutations of exon 20 are located near the activation loop of the kinase domain. this study reported 10% frequency of PI3K somatic mutations in breast cancer, but later studies reported 30% when found PI3KCA was the most frequent mutation, associated with an increased kinase activity of the PI3K pathway. Mutant PI3KCA promotes cell growth and invasion of human cancer cells.

23 that almost consistent with the frequencies of 33.3% (H1047R) and 26.6% (E542 K) found in this study for exon 20 and exon 9 mutations respectively, although some studies reported lower frequency (16% for H10487R location)²⁴. Which agree with Karacas et. Al who mentioned that PI3K p110 subunit were mutated in breast cancer²⁵. These mutations performed by single nucleotide substitutions that determine amino acid substitutions, E542 K, E545 K and H1047R that prompt transformation and tumorigenicity²⁶. However, many tumor sequencing studies reported somatic mutations of PI3K, represented in certain hotspots, which lead to cancer progression by gaining a function for PIK3CA²⁷. Since, PI3K mutations in breast cancers, at E542K in exon 9 and H1047R in exon 20, have been noticed in studies utilizing MCF10A cell lines as immortalized breast epithelial cells. This mutation in PI3K was found to be synergistically associated with mutation in LMP1 gene of EBV in same samples. Barbareschi et al.²⁸ observed different effects based on mutation loci. They mentioned that mutations in exon 9 (Δ E542K), were associated with poor prognosis, while those occurring in exon 20 (Δ H1047R) were achieved better prognosis. Four other PI3K variants were detected in this study; Δ R93Q was recorded once and it was mentioned in a study and show no effect in PI3K activation³⁰. Furthermore, additional variants of Δ R88Q, C420R and E545K were detected in this study once and it was recorded before and showed to be contracted with phosphorylation of AKT, MEK1, MEK2 and protein S6 and these will increase proliferation and cell metastasis^{30,31,32,33}.

CONCLUSIONS

PIK3CA mutation were very important to study after the results emphasize their roles in malignant breast tissues, and its functional correlate, PI3K signaling strength, EBV-LMP1 deletion in determining the cellular mutational activation of this pathway. These mutations lead to enhance the kinase activity of the PI3K pathway, resulting in abnormal deregulated cell proliferation. In our study, we provided evidence that PIK3CA mutation in E542K or H1047R, gave a more aggressive phenotype in breast cancer cells. Importantly, proved that PIK3CA mutation could lead to the constitutive activation

of the PI3K/AKT/mTOR pathway which suppression of apoptosis, especially when coupled to EBV-LMP1 oncogene which may contributed in the overlapping with the treatment and development of cancer to chemotherapy resistance in BC.

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