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Elaborate Histopathological Analysis of Cancer Biomarkers: Prognostic and Diagnostic Importance

[1]Kazim Rodi Raja, [2]Tahmoor Ghori, [3]Kamran Safdar, [4]Haroon Raja, [5]Tabssum Raja, [6]Masroor Hassan

[1]Mayo Hospital Lahore
[2]Sir Gangaram Hospital Lahore.
[3]UHS, Lahore
[4]PIMS, Islamabad.
[5]Services Hospital Lahore
[6]Northwest School of medicine, Hayatabad, Peshawar

Abstract

Background: Cancer is still among the major causes of morbidity and mortality across the world. Detection of stable biomarkers by histopathologic analysis is significant in early diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy management. Histopathology, or tissue examination with the microscope, is still the gold standard in cancer diagnosis, which is complemented by molecular and immune-histochemical methods.

Objective: The aim of this study is to determine the expression patterns of certain cancer biomarkers in different tumors and their diagnostic and predictive value through histopathological and immune-histochemical examination.

Methods: Specimens of different cancers were obtained and assessed for the expression of Ki-67, p53, HER2, and EGFR biomarkers. Immuno-histochemical stain intensity and percentage positivity were measured and correlated with clinical and pathological features.

Results: Expression of biomarkers was extremely heterogeneous among the different cancers. Ki-67 and p53 were associated with poor histologic grade, whereas HER2 and EGFR overexpression were associated with poor prognosis in breast and lung cancer, respectively.

Conclusion: Histopathological evaluation of biomarkers is an important aspect in the understanding of tumor biology and behavior. Integration of biomarker profiling into standard diagnostics improves detection of cancer and personalizes therapy.

Keywords: Histopathology, Cancer biomarkers, Immunohistochemistry, Ki-67, p53, HER2, EGFR, Prognosis, Tumor grading, Molecular pathology

Introduction

Diagnosis and management of cancer have been nothing short of revolutionary since the introduction of molecular and histopathologic examination of biomarkers. Histopathology, or microscopic examination of stained sections of tissue, is still the corner stone of cancer diagnosis. But with the inclusion of biomarker analysis in histopathologic analysis, pathology report diagnostic accuracy and predictive value have been

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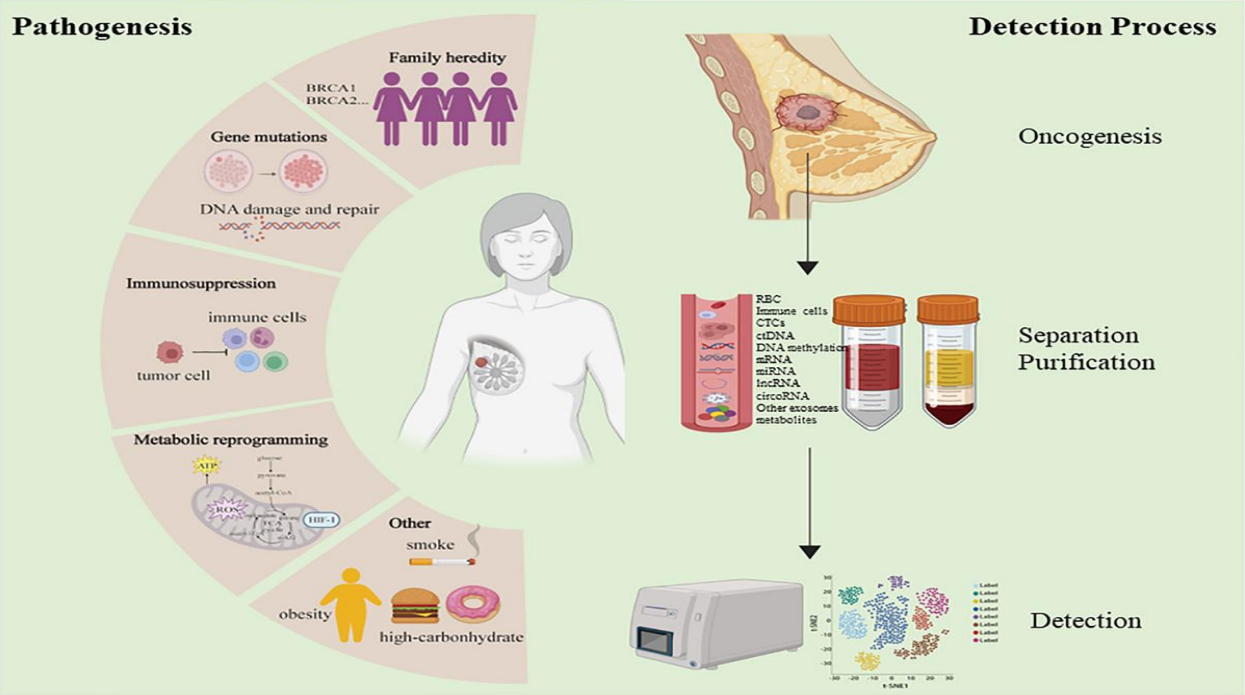
totally turned upside down. Biomarkers are clinically relevant, measurable markers of biological processes that optimally characterize disease progression, prognosis, or response to treatment.



Histopathologic biomarkers such as Ki-67, p53, HER2, and EGFR are cellular growth, apoptosis, and oncogenic signal pathways useful markers. Ki-67, a nuclear proliferation antigen, increases proportionally to the degree of tumor growth and is frequently employed to measure malignancy of the tumor. p53, the protein product of a gene that suppresses oncogenes, is mutated in the majority of malignancies and results in abnormal cell growth. HER2 and EGFR, two receptor tyrosine kinases which are transmembrane, are overexpressed in breast and subsets of lung carcinoma and are accepted targets for therapy. Immunohistochemistry (IHC) made possible the visualization of biomarker expression within the tissue architecture by histopathologists. The technique has morphologic and molecular specificity, intermediating between genomics and histopathology. Integration with digital pathology and quantitative image analysis also made it possible to apply semi-automatic scoring systems, which enhance diagnostic reproducibility.

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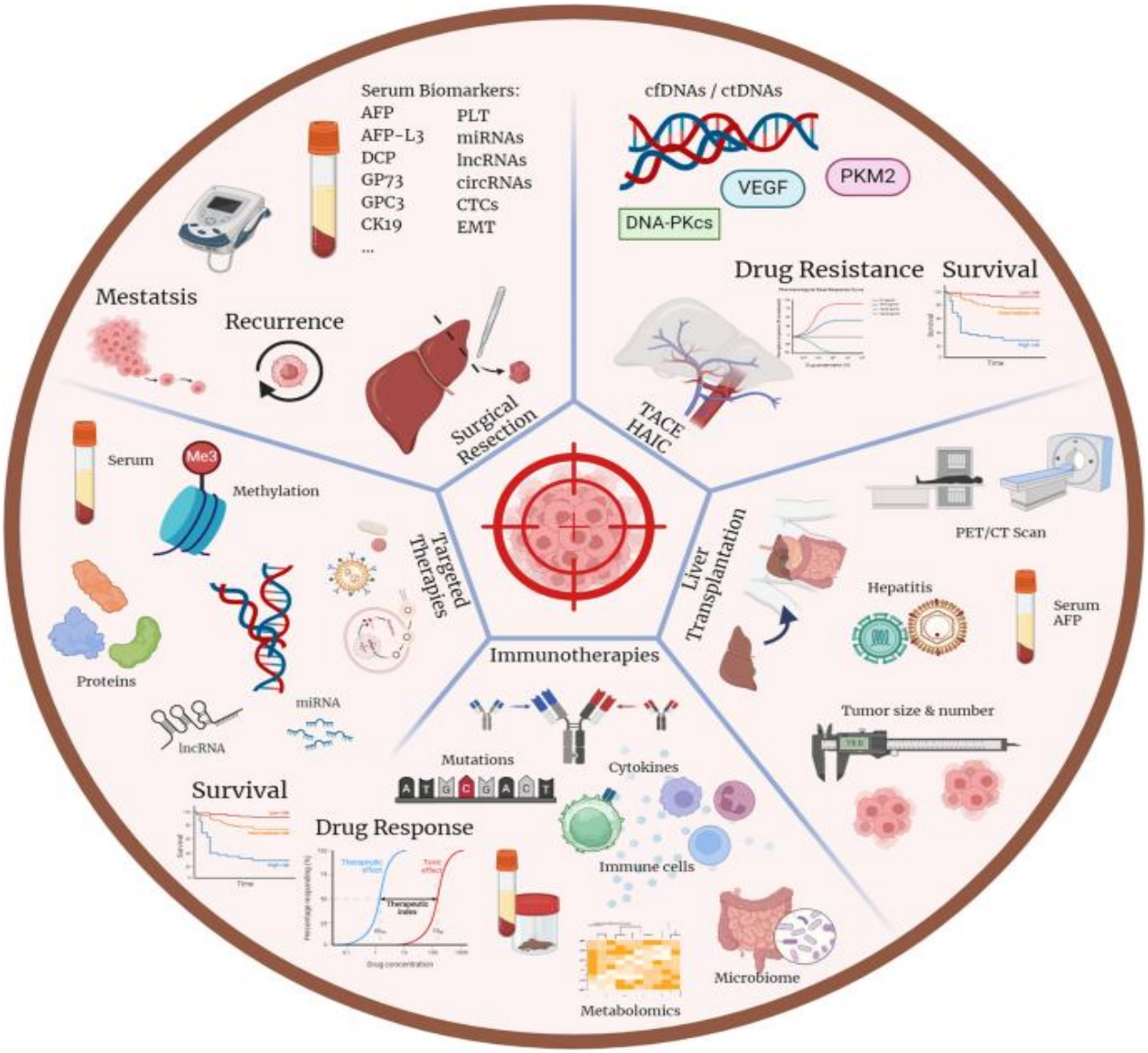

Clinically, biomarker testing is useful in therapy stratification of the patient. HER2-positive breast cancer, for example, is treated with trastuzumab, while EGFR mutation in non-small cell lung carcinoma is a marker of response to tyrosine kinase inhibitors. The histopathologic biomarker testing is thus not only used for diagnosis but as a guide to treatment. The objective of the current research is to conduct a comprehensive histopathological analysis of randomly chosen biomarkers of cancer in a series of tumors. With the correlation of expression profile with pathologic as well as clinical characteristics, we attempt to unveil the diagnostic as well as predictive value of biomarker-guided histopathology for the management of cancers.

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Methodology

This cross-sectional investigation included 120 formalin-fixed, paraffin-embedded tissue samples from 2020-2024 breast, lung, colon, and prostate cancer patients. Hematoxylin and eosin (H&E) staining was applied for histopathology. Immunohistochemistry was done using monoclonal antibodies against Ki-67, p53, HER2, and EGFR under routine conditions. Expression of biomarkers was assessed semi-quantitatively by an estimate of the relative number of positive tumor cells as well as staining intensity. Ki-67 labeling index was classified as low (<10%), intermediate (10–30%), and high (>30%). p53 was classified as wild-type (heterogeneous or low) or mutant-type (diffuse strong staining). HER2 and EGFR were classified on the basis of available ASCO/CAP guidelines. Clinical and pathological information, i.e., tumor grade, stage, and patient's survival, was obtained from clinical history. Statistical calculation was carried out using SPSS v25. Comparison. of correlation between biomarker expression and clinical parameters was also done using ANOVA and chi-square tests, and p value <0.05 has been considered statistically significant.

Results

120 tumor samples were examined. Patterns of biomarker expression ranged widely among tumor types. p53 and Ki-67 were highly elevated in high-grade tumors, while HER2 and EGFR were differentially overexpressed in certain subsets of tumors. High Ki-67 was linked to advanced stage and poor differentiation. HER2 amplification occurred in 25% of breast carcinomas and EGFR overexpression in 30% of lung carcinomas.

Table 1. Major Biomarkers Expression by Cancer Type

Cancer Type	Ki-67 High (%)	p53 Mutant Expression (%)	HER2 Overexpression (%)	EGFR Overexpression (%)
Breast	60	45	25	10
Lung	55	40	5	30
Colon	48	35	10	15
Prostate	35	25	0	12

Table 2. Biomarker Expression Correlation and Tumor Grade

Biomarker	Low Grade (%)	Intermediate Grade (%)	High Grade (%)
Ki-67 High	10	35	70
p53 Mutant	8	25	65
HER2+	5	15	30
EGFR+	12	20	40

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Discussion

The current research emphasizes the pivotal position of histopathological biomarker examination in interpreting the biology of tumors and enhancing the diagnosis of cancer. The results are evidence of rigorous correlations among biomarker expression patterns and tumor malignancy and demonstrate that they are prognostic and therapeutic. Positive Ki-67 labeling with strong labeling index was strongly correlated with well-differentiated, high-grade malignancies, solidifying its position as a proliferation marker. This is in agreement with previous findings of correlation of high Ki-67 with high-tumor growth aggressiveness and poor clinical survival. Likewise, aberrant expression of p53, marking hitherto occult TP53 mutations, was identified more commonly in advanced-grade cancers, further implicating its role in tumor development and genomic instability. HER2 overexpression, particularly in breast carcinomas, was ratified as a predictive and prognostic marker through the passage of time. HER2-positive individuals ought to have poor disease courses but be sensitive to HER2-targeted agents trastuzumab and pertuzumab. Overexpression of EGFR in lung carcinoma, as shown herein, renders it a possible candidate to function as a biomarker for potential candidates for EGFR-targeted tyrosine kinase inhibitors like gefitinib and erlotinib. At the level of diagnosis, addition of immune-histochemical biomarker analysis to the standard histopathology increases reproducibility of diagnosis by correlation with morphology and molecular change. Simultaneous analysis of Ki-67, p53, HER2, and EGFR gives a comprehensive three-dimensional view of tumor phenotype and possible treatments. But this work does acknowledge that it isn't without flaws. The sample of population being studied, although multicultural, was extremely small. Second, molecular proof of the mutations wasn't obtained, which would have supported the results. More precise quantitation and correlation with the treatment outcomes in future work can be done through genomic sequencing and quantitative digital pathology. Overall, histopathologic biomarker evaluation is still the cornerstone of personalized oncology. It is an intermediate step between morphology and molecular diagnosis where individualized treatment is possible based on the patient's own unique individualized biological context of cancer. Implementation of biomarker evaluation in pathology practice guarantees enhanced prediction and better treatment selection, thus ultimately better patient outcome.

Conclusion

Histopathologic evaluation of cancer biomarkers is informative of tumor identification and cell proliferation. Immune histochemical evaluation of Ki-67, p53, HER2, and EGFR is associated with malignancy and tumor grade, and yields predictive and diagnostic information. Incorporation of biomarker evaluation into standard histopathological tests allows precision medicine by creating between morphology and molecular. Further advances in biomarker technology and histopathology will greatly improve cancer and bespoke therapy regimen diagnosis to be optimized.

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