LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Extreme Phenotypic Variation in Siblings with Identical Homozygous Mutations Causing ADA2 Deficiency: A Case Series

ADA2 Eksikliğine Neden Olan Aynı Homozigot Mutasyonlara Sahip Kardeşlerde Aşırı Fenotipik Varyasyon: Olgu Serisi

Muhammed D. Aksu[1,2], Seza Özen[3], Tekin Aksu[4], Ayşe Gürel[5], Arda Çetinkaya[5,6,7], Şule Ünal[4,7]

[1]*Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine, Ankara, Türkiye*
[2]*Hacettepe University Cancer Institute, Department of Basic Oncology, Ankara, Türkiye*
[3]*Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatric Rheumatology, Ankara, Türkiye*
[4]*Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatric Hematology, Ankara, Türkiye*
[5]*Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Medical Genetics, Ankara, Türkiye*
[6]*Hacettepe University Center for Genomics and Rare Diseases, Ankara, Türkiye*
[7]*Hacettepe University Research Center for Fanconi Anemia and Other Inherited BMF Syndromes, Ankara, Türkiye*

To the Editor,

Deficiency of adenosine deaminase-2 (DADA2; MIM # 615688) is a rare autoinflammatory disorder caused by homozygous mutations in the *ADA2* gene (MIM # 607575). Since the initial description of DADA2 [1,2], a wide range of clinical manifestations have been reported [3], which led the disease to be broadly classified into three phenotypes: polyarteritis nodosa (PAN)-like, Diamond-Blackfan anemia (DBA)-like, and immune deficiency phenotype [4,5]. To date, the *ADA2* gene has been found to harbor over 100 mutations distributed across all exons that cause the disease [3,6]. Previous research has attempted to explain the basis for the broad spectrum of DADA2 phenotypes by focusing on the location of pathogenic variants within *ADA2* [5]. However, affected individuals with identical *ADA2* mutations have been reported to develop different disease courses with differing ages of onset [6]; therefore, the genotype-phenotype association in DADA2 is still not fully understood. In this letter, we describe four children with DADA2 from two different families (family A and family B), illustrating how the same mutation can result in significant variations in disease manifestations even in siblings.

Patient A1 was a 9-year-old girl with recurrent fever, myalgia, and arthralgia, which had developed over the last 6 months. Her parents were consanguineous, and she had a healthy older brother and a younger sister (patient A2). Her clinicodemographic characteristics are summarized in Table 1. During follow-up, she developed severe proteinuria and hypoalbuminemia along with elevated creatinine levels. Subsequently, a kidney biopsy demonstrated amyloidosis, which also involved the intestinal system. A bone marrow investigation was non-diagnostic. Although familial Mediterranean fever was initially suspected, analysis of the *MEFV* gene did not reveal any mutations. Moreover, autoimmune lymphoproliferative syndrome was excluded. Additionally, common congenital neutropenia genes had no pathogenic mutations. Patient A1 did not improve despite all treatment and unfortunately died before her diagnosis was established. Patient A2 subsequently presented with fatigue, fever, abdominal pain, and frequent upper respiratory tract infections (Table 1). A bone marrow study revealed hypoactivity of erythroid precursors. Considering the patient's severe neutropenia, reduced immunoglobulin (Ig) A and IgM levels, and the family history involving an older sister with intestinal and renal amyloidosis, as well as the consanguinity of the parents, inherited immune dysregulation was suspected. Whole-exome sequencing (WES) during a routine examination revealed a homozygous *ADA2* deletion. The patient ultimately underwent hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT). Currently, patient A2 remains free of any further medical issues.

A 2-year-old girl (patient B1) was referred due to monthly erythrocyte transfusion dependency since she was 4 months old. Her clinicodemographic characteristics are given in Table 1. Hemoglobin electrophoresis, osmotic fragility tests, and serum lactate dehydrogenase levels were all normal and the direct antiglobulin test was negative. Additionally, glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase and pyrimidine 5-nucleotidase deficiencies were excluded. Bone marrow aspiration revealed a notable decrease in erythroid precursors. The findings pointed toward DBA; however, corticosteroid treatment was unsuccessful and Sanger sequencing of the *RPS19* gene was normal. Finally, WES

Table 1. Demographic and clinical features of patients with deficiency of adenosine deaminase-2.

	Patient A1	Patient A2	Patient B1	Patient B2
Age (years)				
At symptom onset	9	6	<1	N/A
At admission	9	7	2	<1
At genetic diagnosis	N/A	9	6	<1
Current	N/A	11	11	4
***ADA2* mutation**	hom. ΔExon7	hom. ΔExon7	hom. c.1072G>A: p.Gly358Arg	hom. c.1072G>A: p.Gly358Arg
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Female
Ethnicity	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish
Consanguinity	+	+	-	-
Recurrent fever	+	-	-	-
Recurrent infections	+	+	-	-
Myalgia/arthralgia	Myalgia	Myalgia	-	-
Neurologic involvement	-	-	-	-
Hematological involvement	Anemia, leukopenia	Anemia, leukopenia	Anemia	-
Immunological involvement	Hypogammaglobulinemia	Low IgA and IgM	-	-
Gastrointestinal involvement	Abdominal pain, hepatosplenomegaly, intestinal amyloidosis, melena	Abdominal pain, hepatosplenomegaly	Secondary hemochromatosis	-
Renal involvement	Nephrotic syndrome	-	-	-
Dermatological findings	Aphthous tongue lesions, bullous lesion on the left elbow, gingival erythema, oral mucositis	Multiple warts on the fifth finger of the right hand	-	-
Other findings	Cervical lymphadenopathy, pretibial edema, eyelash trichomegaly	Pallor (skin and conjunctival)	Tired, sleepy appearance	-
Laboratory results*				
Hb (g/dL)	9.7	6.2	8.1	Normal range
WBC (cells/mm^3)	1000	3900	10,700	Normal range
ANC (cells/mm^3)	170	1700	3500	Normal range
ALC (cells/mm^3)	800	1500	6300	Normal range
Autoantibody panel**	-	-	-	N/A
Direct/indirect Coombs tests	+/-	-/-	-/-	N/A
Bone marrow findings	Hypocellular bone marrow, increased presence of T-lymphoid precursors, dysmorphic erythroid and myeloid precursors, reduction in granulocyte precursors	Slightly hypocellular bone marrow, hypoactive erythroid precursors, reduction in megakaryocytes, dysplastic changes in myeloid precursors	Normocellular bone marrow, reduction in erythroid precursors	N/A
Previous treatment	CAS, CIP, COL, ES, G-CSF, intravenous albumin, IVIG, Mpm, MP, TEC, TOZ, TPN	ES, PT	Deferasirox, ES, MP, UDCA, vitamin E	-
Current treatment	N/A	BM transplantation	Deferasirox, ES, UDCA, vitamin E	-
Outcome	Deceased	Cured	Awaiting BM donor match	Asymptomatic

Patients A1 and A2 and patients B1 and B2 are siblings. *Laboratory results at admission; **Autoantibody panel included ANA (antinuclear antibody), anti-dsDNA, ANCA (antineutrophil cytoplasmic antibody), aPL (antiphospholipid antibody), aCL (anticardiolipin antibody), lupus anticoagulants, ASMA (anti-smooth muscle antibodies), and LKM-1 (liver kidney microsomal autoantibodies).

ALC: Absolute lymphocyte count; ANC: absolute neutrophil count; BM: bone marrow; CAS: caspofungin; CIP: ciprofloxacin; COL: colchicine; ES: erythrocyte suspension; G-CSF: granulocyte-colony stimulating factor; Hb: hemoglobin; hom.: homozygous; IVIG: intravenous immune globulin; Mpm: meropenem; MP: methylprednisolone; N/A: not applicable; PT: platelet transfusion, TEC: teicoplanin; TOZ: tocilizumab; TPN: total parenteral nutrition; UDCA: ursodeoxycholic acid; WBC: white blood cell count; ΔExon7: deletion of exon 7.

detected the homozygous c.1072G>A (p.Gly358Arg) mutation in the *ADA2* gene. The patient is now being considered for HSCT. Patient B1 has a younger sister who was found to be homozygous for the same *ADA2* mutation (patient B2). She has been routinely scheduled for follow-up and, to date, she remains asymptomatic.

Patient A1 was considered to predominantly demonstrate the vasculitis-like phenotype. However, the severe neutropenia and the history of frequent infections suggest immune dysfunction as well. On the other hand, patient A2 offers a classic example of the hematological DADA2 phenotype. Patient A2 also had recurrent upper respiratory tract infections and low IgA and IgM, suggesting minor disruption of immune functions. Patient B1 exhibited the hematological phenotype of the disease; intriguingly, despite sharing identical mutated alleles with her older sister, patient B2 still remains asymptomatic at the age of 4 years.

A recent study suggested that catalytic domain mutations in exon 7 were responsible for pure red cell aplasia [5]. Based on this, our expectation would be to see DBA-like phenotypes in all cases presented here. However, patient A1 exhibited a PAN-like phenotype and patient B2 has been completely symptom-free. The discrepancy in disease severity and presentation of the disease at different ages, although the presented siblings were affected by the same homozygous mutation, may help confirm the impact of epigenetic and environmental influences on the *ADA2* gene. Furthermore, a Finnish follow-up study of DADA2 patients revealed bacterial dental or respiratory infections as a trigger of vascular flares of the disease [7].

With the limited insights to date regarding the pathology of DADA2, tumor necrosis factor inhibitors are a prominent choice of treatment, especially for the vasculitis phenotype [8]. However, trying to suppress the inflammation experienced by patient A1 with steroids, colchicine, and tocilizumab was unsuccessful in our management. For the hematologic phenotype, HSCT has been reported to be an effective treatment strategy [3], as proven with patient A2. A human leukocyte antigen-matched donor is still being sought for patient B1.

In conclusion, this report presents siblings from two different families of Turkish origin who were affected by the same mutations in the *ADA2* gene yet displayed different phenotypes of the DADA2 spectrum. More research in this field is warranted to better understand the pathology of the disease with different manifestations and to ensure optimal personalized management strategies.

Keywords: Deficiency of adenosine deaminase 2, DADA2, Vasculitis, Diamond-Blackfan anemia, Child, Polyarteritis nodosa

Anahtar Sözcükler: Adenozin deaminaz 2 eksikliği, DADA2, vaskülit, Diamond-Blackfan anemisi, Çocuk, Poliartiritis nodoza

Ethics

Informed Consent: Informed consent for the publication of the results was obtained from the parents of the patients.

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Footnotes

Authorship Contributions

Surgical and Medical Practices: S.Ö., T.A., Ş.Ü.; Data Collection or Processing: M.D.A., T.A., Ş.Ü.; Genetic Work-up: A.G., A.Ç.; Literature Search: M.D.A., A.Ç., Ş.Ü.; Writing: M.D.A., S.Ö., A.Ç., Ş.Ü.

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Address for Correspondence/Yazışma Adresi: Şule Ünal, M.D., Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatric Hematology, Ankara, Türkiye
E-mail: suleunal@hacettepe.edu.tr **ORCID:** orcid.org/0000-0002-3842-8788

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