p<0.01). Liver fibrosis degree directly correlated with RDC (r=0.539), and inversely with IHBC (r=-0.543) in AGS and BA.
Conclusions: In conclusion, the reciprocal changes in AGS versus BA, with expansion of IHBC and paucity of RD in AGS, shows that Notch has an inductive effect on the liver cell fate, that is lost in AGS. In this condition, proliferating hepatocytes, unable to form ductular structures, generate an excess of cells adopting an intermediate phenotype, but unable to progress to RD. This hampered reparative reaction may explain the rare progression to cirrhosis in AGS, in contrast with BA where the pronounced ductular reaction is accompanied by a rapid establishment of liver fibrosis.

OC2.6.5

ESTROGEN RECEPTOR EXPRESSION IN LIVER DENDRITIC CELLS IN RESPECT TO THEIR DIFFERENT SUBPOPULATIONS AND THEIR MATURATION STATE

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Background and aim: Dendritic cells (DC), heterogeneous Antigen-Presenting Cells, migrate acquiring a mature phenotype, from peripheral tissues into lymphoid organ where they activate T lymphocytes. Maturation state and subpoulation (myeloid, "lymphoid related" and plasmacytoid) of DC appear to influence the character of T cell differentiation (Th1/Th2/Treg). DC expresses estrogens receptors (ER) and their function can be modulate by estrogens. Aims of this study were the analysis of liver (L)DC ER expression in three subpopulation and after in vitro maturation.
Material and methods: Ten week-old male C57BL/6J mice were treated with the endogenous hematopoietic growth factor, Flt3L (10μg; i.p.; 10d; Amgen, Seattle, WA; USA) that expand in vivo DCs without modifying their functional state. Bulk CD11c+ LDC were freshly immunobead-isolated with a purity consistently >96%. ER and lineage markers (CD11b: myeloid; CD8-alpha: "lymphoid related"; and B220: plasmacytoid) expression was studied in freshly-isolated LDC by immunofluorescence staining and confocal laser microscopy analysis. LDC maturation was induced by a 72 hr culture in FCS 10% phenol red-free complete media, GM-CSF and IL-4. Freshly and cultured bulk LDC were studied for co-stimulatory molecules (CM), MHC class II (IAb) and ER expression by flow cytometric analysis (PARTEC PAS; Germany).
Results: Confocal laser microscopy analysis demonstrate that all subpopulation of LDC (myeloid, "lymphoid related" and plasmacytoid) express ER. Moreover when freshly-isolated LDC were cultured for 72 hr they up regulate, as compared to basal value, CM (CD40: 7±3% vs 40±5%; CD80: 15±4% vs 56±4%; CD86: 8±2% vs 78±3%) and IAb (83±5% vs 94±3%) acquiring a mature phenotype with a concomitant and significant increase of ER expression (38±4% vs 78±5%).
Conclusions: These findings further demonstrate the importance of ER in regulating DC function since they are expressed in all DC subpopulations and their expression increase during the maturation process.
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OC2.6.6

KI 67, Bcl-2, p53, CD 44 IN HEPATOCELLULAR CARCINOMA (HCC): INTERACTION BETWEEN ETIOLOGY, GRADING, PROLIFERATION RATE AND PROGNOSTIC ROLE

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Background and aim: HCC is one of the most frequent malignancy worldwide, prognostic factors being not completely defined. The analysis of molecular markers of cytoproliferation and other predictors of aggressive behavior could be useful as prognostic predictors. Aim: To determine, in patients affected by HCC, the expression of a series of biological parameters, their link with clinical features and their prognostic role: Bcl-2 (apoptosis marker), KI-67 (cytoproliferation index), CD 44 (adhesion molecule), p53 protein overexpression. These biological factors were related to bio-humoral and morphological parameters.
Material and methods: 54 patients with histological diagnosis of HCC based on the result of fine needle aspiration biopsy was analyzed according to the following parameters: p53 protein overexpression (ICH method +/- [p53 Mo-Ab DO-1 IgG 2; Immunotech S.A. France]); Cytoproliferation (percentage of MIB1 KI-67 positive cells [KI-67 Mo-Ab clone MIB, IgG 1 mouse, Immunotech, France] considering negative section those with less than 1% positive cells per 10 hpf; Apoptosis (determining the percentage of Bcl-2 positive cells [Bcl-2 clone 124; Dako, Denmark]); CD44 by determining the cytoplasmatic positivity (CD44 std, Bender Medysistem).
Grading according to Edmonson and hystotype were evaluated and tumor size was assessed on US or CT scan (diameter of the largest lesion). Liver function and virological markers were assessed as routinely.
Results: Patients with longer survival showed hypo-expression of Ki67 while over-expression of Ki67 protein was related with higher grading of tumor (p=0.03).
Over-expression of p53 protein was statistically related to trabecular histotype (p=0.03) and HCV in the etiology (p=0.03). A significant inverse correlation between alphafetoprotein levels and Bcl-2 expression was noted. No correlation was found with disease activity, tumor size or focality.
Conclusions: The present study 1. shows a correlation between disease etiology (HCV) and p53 overexpression/mutation and between grading and cytoproliferation, 2. Identifies a subgroup of patients that can be defined as "long term survivers" who are characterized by low hepatocellular proliferation 3. suggest a negative interaction between AFP and apoptosis and, last but not least, supports the use of liver biopsy in the diagnostic algorithm of HCC for prognostic purposes.

OC3.1.1

EOSINOPHILIC OESOPHAGITIS AND CARBAMAZEPINE-INDUCED HYPERSENSITIVITY SYNDROME

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Background and aim: Anticonvulsant hypersensitivity syndrome (AHS) is a rare syndrome caused by a specific, severe idiosyncratic reaction to antiepileptic agents; it usually develops one week to three months after the introduction of the drug and most frequently consists of a multi-