IMPLICATIONS OF OXIDATIVE STRESS IN END-STAGE KIDNEY DISEASE PATIENTS: A REVIEW OF CAUSATIVE MECHANISMS, CURRENT CONCEPTS

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Oxidative stress (OS), termed as the imbalance between antioxidants and pro-oxidants in favor of the latter, is highly prevalent in chronic kidney disease (CKD) even at early stages and is gradually increased, in parallel to deterioration of kidney function. In end-stage kidney disease (ESKD), OS is further aggravated and associated with various adverse outcomes, including atherosclerosis and cardiovascular disease. In this review, we aim to present the clinical implications of OS, the pathogenetic causative mechanisms and the potential therapeutic interventions in both hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis patients. *Acta Medica Medianae 2022;61(2):53-59.*

Key words: cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney disease, end-stage kidney disease, hemodialysis, oxidative stress, peritoneal dialysis, vitamin C, vitamin E

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Introduction

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a major health problem worldwide, affecting 11-13% of the global population, a percentage that is expected to rise dramatically in the next decade (1). Cardiovascular (CV) disease is highly prevalent and remains the major cause of mortality in these patients. Even at early CKD stages 1-2, patients are at risk for sudden CV death and as the disease progresses to end stage kidney disease (ESKD), this risk is further exacerbated (2). Thus, when compared to the general population and after adjustment for age, diabetes and hypertension, ESKD patients have a 2fold increased risk for CV death (3, 4). This is why the expected remaining lifespan of ESKD patients undergoing maintenance hemodialysis (HD) is 8 years for patients between 40 and 44 years old and under 4.5 years for 60-64 years old (4). Although the Framingham traditional CV risk factors such as age, gender, obesity, hypertension, smoking, diabetes, dyslipidemia, sedentary lifestyle and heart failure are over-represented, they cannot solely explain the heavy CV burden seen in these patients. During the past decades, novel-uremia-specific non-traditional risk factors have emerged, including anemia, inflammation, oxidative stress (OS), endothelial dvsfunction, hypoalbuminemia, malnutrition and abnormal calcium metabolism. These novel risk factors might explain the CV burden of ESKD patients and represent potential treatment targets. OS, a novel non-traditional risk factor, is a common pathogenetic mechanism underlying both the occurrence and progression of CV disease in ESKD patients.

Definition and markers of OS in CKD and ESKD

Every molecule that is missing an electron is defined as "pro-oxidant", whereas an agent that donates electrons to other molecules is termed "anti-oxidant". OS is the disturbance of balance between pro-oxidants and anti-oxidant agents, in favor of pro-oxidants. Pro-oxidant molecules, such as nitric oxide (NO) and reactive oxygen species (ROS) are highly reactive agents and in order to become stabilized, they "steal" an electron from adjacent biomolecules (including proteins, lipids, nucleic acids and carbohydrates) causing structural and functional modification and subsequent oxidative injury in the cells and tissues. In an attempt to counteract the injury caused by free radicals, endogenous antioxidants are generated to de-activate ROS. Since free radicals are chemically unstable molecules, their measurement in plasma or serum is very difficult to be performed. Therefore, the serum or plasma levels of oxidative molecules and endogenous antioxidants might serve as markers of OS status. Markers of protein oxidation include thiols, carbonyls, homocysteine, myeloperoxidase (MPO), oxidized albumin asymmetric dimethylarginine (ADMA) and advanced oxidation proteins products (AOPPs); markers of nucleic acid oxidation include 8-hydroxy deoxyguanosine and 8-Oxo-2-deoxyguanosine; markers of lipid peroxidation include malondialdehyde (MDA), oxidized low density lipoprotein (ox-LDL), F2-isoprostanes, thiobarbituric acid reactive substances (TBARS), lipoperoxides, advanced lipid oxidation products and advanced glycation end-products (AGEs) are the main marker of carbohydrate oxidation. On the other hand, enzymatic antioxidant markers include catalase (CAT), superoxide dismutase (SOD), glutathione transferase, glutathione peroxidase and total antioxidant capacity (TAC), whereas non-enzymatic antioxidant markers include glutathione, reduced glutathione, uric acid (5), albumin, transferrin and ferritin, zinc, copper and selenium, N-acetylcysteine (NAC), vitamins B, C, D, E, A-lipoic acid, flavonoids, polyphenols, L-carnitine, Qenzyme 10, green tea, curcumin, statins and omega-3 fatty acids (6).

In early CKD, OS is present and increases gradually with kidney function impairment to ESKD (7). This could be attributed to various reasons. First, due to the uremic environment, several molecular pathways - such as the mitochondrial respiratory chain reaction, the activity of dinucleotide phosphate oxidase (NADPH) and NO synthase- are severely de-arranged and lead to overproduction of pro-oxidants (8). Second, due to inadequate kidney clearance, these pro-oxidants accumulate in the circulation and third, the naturally occurring antioxidants present reduced activity and decreased concentrations in plasma and serum (9). Patients even at very early CKD stages have higher OS status compared to healthy subjects (10), whereas in a cohort of 87 patients at CKD stages 1-4, it was shown that F2-isoprostanes increased and TAC decreased progressively, across the stages of the disease (11).

Compared to pre-dialysis CKD, in ESKD, OS is further exacerbated and results in oxidative damage of the kidney (renal ischemia, glomerular damage and tubular apoptosis), upregulation and activation of systemic inflammatory cytokines, such as c-reactive protein (CRP), interleukin-6 and -10 (IL-6, IL-10), tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF- α) and subsequently endothelial dysfunction and atherosclerosis (12, 13). "Although dialysis per se triggers all the aforementioned molecular pathways, it was not clear whether the main culprit for the increased OS seen in ESKD patients is dialysis procedure or kidney damage." Data from studies where ESKD patients undergoing HD were subjected to kidney transplantation and kidney function was restored, showed

that within 2 months post-transplantation all markers of OS and inflammation were normalized (14).

OS in ESKD patients undergoing maintenance HD

Compared to pre-dialysis CKD patients and healthy subjects, ESKD patients undergoing maintenance HD present significantly increased OS status for various reasons. First, the dietary instructions in ESKD to avoid consumption of fruits and vegetables (that are rich in potassium) and the possible malnutrition that usually accompanies these patients might result in decreased intake of important antioxidants, such as vitamins B, C, D and E (15, 16). Second, various comorbidities that are common among ESKD patients, including hypertension, anemia, advanced age, dyslipidemia, diabetes mellitus, and atherosclerosis trigger generation of free radicals (17). Third, in ESKD, the endogenous antioxidant defense systems are significantly impaired (18) and four, the chronic micro-inflammation status that usually accompanies HD, might also contribute to generation of pro-oxidants. Finally, the HD procedure per se triggers OS through several pathogenetic mechanisms.

Due to the contact of blood with the bioincompatible, artificial membranes and dialysate, within 15 minutes after initiation of dialysis, ROS are abruptly generated and released to circulation by white blood cells (19, 20). It is estimated that after every 4 hour HD session ROS levels are fourteen times higher than before the session (21), whereas certain amounts of antioxidant vitamins and trace elements are lost (22, 23). Since the main mechanism underlying the oxidative burst of polymorphonuclear white blood cells is the bioincompatible dialyzer membranes, several investigators aimed to study whether the development of new, more biocompatible membranes might ameliorate OS and benefit HD patients. Several studies reported that compared to the older, cuprophane membranes, newer, more biocompatible polysulfone membranes were associated with decreased lipid peroxidation status (24, 25), reduced generation of ROS (26, 27) and increased levels of the antioxidants CAT (25) and vitamin E (28). Similarly, compared to cuprophane, regenerated cellulose membranes were related with reduced production of free radicals (29). Of note, no study has assessed the effect of these newer, more biocompatible membranes with clinical hard CV outcomes. Moreover, although the newer, synthetic, more biocompatible membranes are better compared to the old, cuprophane membranes, these membranes still trigger activation of prooxidants and therefore their designation as "biocompatible" is a debatable term.

Another HD-related factor implicated in the pathogenesis of OS is the use of anticoagulation; heparin is suggested to trigger oxidation of fatty acids (30), whereas citrate anticoagulation might be of benefit, regarding lipid peroxidation status (31). In a comparative study, Gritters et al. (32) examined the white blood cells' oxidative burst during HD session using citrate or classical heparin or low molecule weight dalteparin. The authors found that

in HD with classical or low molecular weight heparin, ROS were abruptly increased within the first ten times of HD session, whereas HD with citrate was associated with significantly decreased markers of lipid peroxidation, such as MPO and ox-LDL.

Ultrapure dialysate is fundamental in HD. Even the slightest concentration of bacterial toxins in the dialysate compromises the biocompatibility of HD session and triggers the activity of pro-oxidants (33, 34). On the other hand, HD treatment with ultrapure dialysate is suggested to ameliorate both inflammation and OS biomarkers and improve anemia status (35-37). A large meta-analysis of 31 studies including 1580 HD patients clearly showed that HD with ultrapure dialysate successfully suppressed plasma levels of ox-LDL, MPO, IL-6 and MPO (38).

Another factor related with increased OS in HD is problematic or failed HD vascular access, such as the use of misplaced central venous catheters and malfunctioning arteriovenous fistulae or grafts (39, 40). Weiss et al. (39), reported that in arteriovenous fistulae and grafts that were removed due to thrombotic episodes or aneurysm formation, markers of lipid, carbohydrate and protein oxidation were overexpressed. Of note, the majority of these tissues did not present inflammation.

Accumulating evidence suggests that anemia triggers OS in HD patients (41-43), whereas its correction significantly abrogates the oxidation process (42, 44, 45). Besides erythropoietin stimulating agents, the treatment of anemia in HD also includes intravenous iron infusion. Intravenous infusion of 100 mg iron sucrose triggered an abrupt formation of MDA 30 minutes after the initiation of the process in pre-dialysis anemic CKD patients (46. 47), and generation of MDA and OS-derived DNA damage in HD patients (48-50). To explore the degree of OS caused by intravenous iron administration, Tovbin et al. (51), infused 100 mg of iron saccharate for 3.5 hours in 19 HD patients and found a 37% increase in markers of protein oxidation after the end of HD session. The duration of iron infusion influenced the oxidative response triggered. Rapid or bolus intravenous administration caused an abrupt increase in free radicals, probably due to transient oversaturation of transferrin and iron overload (52, 53). Slow intravenous infusion of iron agents is suggested in HD patients, to give time to naturally occurring antioxidant defense mechanisms to counteract and neutralize the gradual generation of free radicals (54, 55).

OS in ESKD patients on peritoneal dialysis

Not all ESKD patients undergo HD treatment; it is estimated that nearly 196,000 ESKD patients worldwide, representing 12–15% of the dialysis population choose peritoneal dialysis (PD) as renal replacement therapy (RRT) (56). Although in HD, OS has been thoroughly investigated, in PD, the data remain limited. Compared to pre-dialysis CKD and ESKD patients, OS is higher in PD patients; however, the OS in PD is triggered without using bioincompatible membranes, dialysate, malfunctioning vascular access or heparin. The main culprit that is responsible for the OS in PD patients is the biocompatibility of PD solutions, including the high glucose concentration, the acidic pH, the lactate buffer and the increased osmolarity (57). Peritoneal mesothelial cells exposed to conventional PD solutions die from apoptosis within 40 minutes from their exposure (58). PD solutions include water, high glucose, lactate buffer and various electrolytes. When these solutions are heated, before entering the peritoneal cavity, AGEs and glucose degradation products (GDPs) are formatted (59). Exposure of peritoneal mesothelial and endothelial cells to the high glucose and the AGEs of the PD solution activate several molecular pathways similar to those underlying the pathogenesis of diabetic CKD, including the polyol pathway, glucose-oxidation and diacylglycerol pathway and activation of protein kinase C (60). Subsequently, growth factors (such as vascular endothelial growth factor), inflammatory (such as IL-6, IL-1, IL-10 and CRP) and OS markers are activated in the peritoneal cavity. Chronic exposure of the peritoneal cavity to these factors results in peritoneal fibrosis and thickening, angiogenesis, vasculopathy, progressive transformation of the peritoneal membrane and systemic OS and inflammation (60).

Therapeutic options to ameliorate OS in HD and PD

To counteract the deleterious effects of OS in HD, several lifestyle modifications have been proposed, including cessation of smoking, optimal management of blood pressure, lipids and glycemic control. Other interventions include use of a functional vascular access, correction of anemia status, slow intravenous infusion of iron and use of biocompatible dialyzers and ultrapure dialysate. Similarly, in PD, a multitargeted approach is needed, including limited salt and water intake, strict glycemic control and use of newer, more biocompatible PD solutions with low glucose, low GDPs, bicarbonate lactate and neutral pH.

Moreover, several investigators suggested that supplementation with exogenous antioxidants, including vitamin C, vitamin E and NAC could benefit EKSD patients. It has been shown that in every dialysis session about 66 mg of vitamin C are lost through the dialyzer, whereas vitamin C depletion is highly prevalent in HD patients (61). Several studies examined whether oral or intravenous supplementation of vitamin C might ameliorate OS in HD patients and produced contraindicatory results (62-66). Moreover, these studies have major limitations, including small sample size and wide diversity on follow-up time and doses used. A recent metaanalysis of 11 randomized controlled trials and 491 HD patients (67) reported that vitamin E supplementation improved endothelial dysfunction, and significantly decreased CRP and MDA levels, compared to the control group. Since vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant with anti-inflammatory properties and the main mechanism of OS in HD is the exposure of blood to the artificial dialyzer, coating the inner surface of HD membranes with vitamin E was an attractive approach to ameliorate OS. Data

from meta-analyses have coherently showed that HD with vitamin E coated membranes significantly decreased MDA and TBARS (68), improved anemia and decreased both inflammation (69) and OS status (70).

In PD, the most promising antioxidant that has been studied is NAC, a ROS scavenger that might decrease accumulation of AGEs and inflammatory cytokines in the peritoneal cavity (6, 18, 71). Two studies in PD cohorts independently reported that oral NAC supplementation decreased OS, suppressed inflammation, preserved residual renal function and protected the peritoneal membrane from OS-derived sclerosis and injury (72, 73).

Conclusion

OS is highly prevalent even at early stages of

CKD and gradually increases with deterioration of kidney function. In ESKD, OS is further aggravated and is associated with adverse events, including CV disease and mortality. In HD patients, the main pathogenetic mechanism underlying the generation of free radicals is the contact of blood with the artificial, synthetic, bioincompatible dialyzer membranes and dialysate. PD patients suffer from lesser degree of OS compared to HD patients, mainly due to the composition of PD fluids. To date, there are no specific guidelines regarding the supplementation of antioxidant agents to ameliorate the increased OS in HD or PD patients. Future, large, randomized, placebo-controlled trials are required to draw definite conclusions.

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IMPLIKACIJE OKSIDATIVNOG STRESA KOD BOLESNIKA U ZAVRŠNOJ FAZI HRONIČNE BOLESTI BUBREGA: PREGLED KAUZATIVNIH MEHANIZAMA I TRENUTNIH KONCEPATA

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Oksidativni stres (OS), označen kao disbalans između antioksidanasa i prooksidanasa, u korist potonjih, ima izraženu prevalenciju kod hronične bolesti bubrega (HBB), čak i u ranim fazama bolesti i postepeno se povećava, paralelno sa deterioracijom bubrega. U završnoj fazi hronične bolesti bubrega, OS se dalje pogoršava i povezuje se različitim nepovoljnim ishodima, uključujući aterosklerozu i kardiovaskularne bolesti. U ovom pregledu, cilj je da predstavimo kliničke implikacije OS, patogenetske kauzativne mehanizme i potencijalne terapeutske intervencije, kod bolesnika na hemodijalizi i peritonealnoj dijalizi.

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Ključne reči: kardiovaskularne bolesti, hronična bolest bubrega, završna faza hronične bolesti bubrega, hemodijaliza, oksidativni stres, peritonealna dijaliza, vitamin C, vitamin E

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