

## **Galectin-3 as a Potential Biomarker for Liver Regeneration and Transplant Outcomes**

Ivana Vasic<sup>1</sup> (M.D. Program, SOM), Nathaly Limon-de la Rosa<sup>2</sup>, Eduardo Cervantes<sup>2</sup>, Nalu Navarro-Alvarez<sup>1,2</sup>,  
Christene A. Huang<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Department of Surgery, Division of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery and Division of Transplant Surgery, Aurora, Colorado

<sup>2</sup> Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Médicas y Nutrición Salvador Zubirán, Mexico City, Mexico.

Purpose of this study was to compare plasma Galectin-3 levels between deceased liver donors and healthy subjects, and investigate the co-expression of Galectin-3 and cell cycle markers in liver tissues from patients with liver cirrhosis.

Methods: Invitrogen Human Galectin-3 ELISA kit was used to analyze circulating levels of Galectin-3 in sera of healthy donors (n = 10) and deceased liver donors (n = 64) collected immediately prior to graft procurement. Unpaired t-test was performed and a p-value <0.05 was considered to be of statistical significance.

Liver tissue samples from patients with liver cirrhosis were stained for DAPI, Galectin3, Ki67, CyclinD1, EPCAM, p21, and p53 and analyzed using inForm<sup>®</sup> software.

Results: Deceased donors had significantly higher levels of serum Galectin-3 (mean 17.1659 ng/ml, standard deviation 7.525991) in comparison to healthy controls (mean 11.4919 ng/ml, standard deviation 4.480911). Preliminary data shows that in a cirrhotic liver galectin 3 co-localizes with known cell cycle suppressors including p53 and p21. At the same time, regenerative nodules that express EPCAM, a marker of pluripotency, show low levels of Galectin-3.

Conclusion: Galectin-3 is a known inflammatory marker. Here, we are showing that it could also be involved in the regulation of cell cycle in the regenerative liver nodules. This, along with its pro-inflammatory effects could significantly contribute to the outcomes in liver transplant recipients and liver regeneration in patients with chronic diseases.