ABO BLOOD GROUPS AND RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE

BY

A. L. MACAFEE

Department of Pathology, The Queen's University of Belfast

Buckwalter, Naifeh, and Auer (1962) reviewed the literature on the relationship of the blood groups to rheumatic fever. There is a significant increase in the frequency of ABO (H) non-secretors in rheumatic fever patients as compared with controls, and there is a significant deficiency of patients of blood group O. This paper reports the ABO distribution in 431 additional cases.

Material

Patients.—The data were derived from the case records of 431 in-patients treated in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, during an 8-year period, 1953 to 1960 inclusive. There were 89 males and 342 females, all of whom had mitral valvotomy for the treatment of mitral stenosis caused presumably by a previous attack of rheumatic fever.

Controls.—The controls were drawn from the same population as the patients. The ABO blood group distribution was known for a large series (28,566) of "current" and "resigned" blood donors normally resident in the County Borough of Belfast and these were used as controls. The blood donors' distribution has been used to compute the expected distributions of the patients on the hypothesis that patients and controls have similar ABO distributions.

Results

Table I shows the ABO distribution of the 431 patients compared with that expected from the 28,566 controls. There was a significant (P <0.05) difference between the observed and expected distributions. \( \chi^2 = 14.70; 0.01 > P > 0.001. \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blood Group</th>
<th>Patients</th>
<th>Controls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total No.</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>36.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>47.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2 = 14.70; \) d.f. = 3; \( 0.01 > P > 0.001 \)

Discussion

The method of Woolf (1955) comparing blood groups A and O has been used to compare and combine these data with some of those from the literature (Table II).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors, Date, Centre</th>
<th>Total No. of Patients</th>
<th>Relative Incidence A:O</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarke, McConnell, and Sheppard (1960) Liverpool</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>0.05 &gt; P &gt; 0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glynn, cited by Clarke and Others (1960), Glynn, Glynn, and Holborow (1956) Taplow</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.70 &gt; P &gt; 0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Study (1965) Belfast</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>0.05 &gt; P &gt; 0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Weighted Relative Incidence</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>0.01 &gt; P &gt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference from unity d.f. = 1</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.20 &gt; P &gt; 0.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterogeneity d.f. = 2</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>0.01 &gt; P &gt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

392
In Liverpool and Belfast the estimated incidence of rheumatic heart disease in persons of blood group A is significantly greater than in those of blood group O. The average relative incidence of 1·18 is significantly different from unity. There is no evidence of significant heterogeneity between areas. The Taplow series was based on the examination of children with rheumatic fever, while the Liverpool data, like the present series, were based on the examination of patients with established mitral stenosis. Buckwalter and others (1962) drew attention to the fact that the ABO blood group association is strongest in the patients who were not operated upon. It is possible that the diagnostic criteria used in ABO blood group investigations of rheumatic heart disease may have an effect upon the ABO blood group distributions.

Summary

A series of 431 patients operated upon for the treatment of rheumatic heart disease showed a significant difference in the ABO blood group frequency as compared with controls from the same population. There was also a significant increase in the incidence of blood group A over blood group O in the combined data from three centres.

Dr. A. C. Kopéé of the Nuffield Blood Group Centre very kindly provided the control data.

I am grateful to Dr. J. D. Merrett for advice on the statistics.

REFERENCES

Glynn, L. E., cited by Clarke and others (1960).

Les groupes sanguins ABO et la maladie de Bouillaud

Résumé

Une série de 431 patients opérés pour la maladie de Bouillaud accusa une différence significative dans la fréquence des groupes sanguins ABO comparée à celle trouvée chez les témoins de la même population. Il y eut aussi une augmentation appréciable de la fréquence du groupe sanguin A par rapport au groupe O dans le matériel combiné obtenu de trois centres.

Los grupos sanguíneos ABO y la enfermedad de Bouillaud

Sumario

Una serie de 431 pacientes con la enfermedad de Bouillaud tratados quirúrgicamente acusó una diferencia significativa en la frecuencia de los grupos sanguíneos ABO en comparación con la encontrada en testigos de la misma población. Se observó también un aumento apreciable de la incidencia del grupo sanguíneo A en comparación con el grupo O en el material recogido en tres centros.
ABO blood groups and rheumatic heart disease.

A L Macafee

*Ann Rheum Dis* 1965 24: 392-393
doi: 10.1136/ard.24.4.392

Updated information and services can be found at:

[http://ard.bmj.com/content/24/4/392.citation](http://ard.bmj.com/content/24/4/392.citation)

**Email alerting service**

Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

**Notes**

To request permissions go to:

[http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions](http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions)

To order reprints go to:

[http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform](http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform)

To subscribe to BMJ go to:

[http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/](http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/)