Relation between high serum hepcidin-25 level and subclinical atherosclerosis and cardiovascular mortality in hemodialysis patients

Özlem Yayar, Barış Eser, Harun Kılıç

Department of Nephrology, Çanakkale State Hospital; Çanakkale-Turkey

1Department of Nephrology, Hitit University, Erol Olcok Training and Research Hospital; Çorum-Turkey

2Department of Cardiology, Faculty of Medicine, Sakarya University; Sakarya-Turkey

ABSTRACT

Objective: In hemodialysis (HD) patients, cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the major cause of mortality and morbidity. In atherosclerotic diseases, iron gets accumulated in the arterial wall. Hepcidin is an important hormone in iron metabolism. Furthermore, hepcidin is associated with atherosclerotic disease. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relation of serum hepcidin-25 (SH-25) and sub-clinic atherosclerosis measured by carotid intima-media thickness (CIMT) and mortality in HD patients.

Methods: We enrolled 82 HD patients in a cross-control study. We measured SH-25 using ELISA kit and CIMT using high-resolution real-time ultrasonography. After 4 years of first assessment, we investigated the relation between all-cause and cardiovascular mortality and SH-25 and CIMT.

Results: Two patients were excluded because of renal transplantation. The survivors were younger (53.7±15.1 vs. 65.2±15.5; p<0.05) and CIMT was lower (0.83±0.2 vs. 0.95±0.2; p<0.05); however, there was no significant difference in SH-25 levels between the groups (29.1±13 vs. 32.4±22.4; p=0.767). The patients who died of CVD were significantly older (63.7±16.1 vs. 53.7±15.1; p<0.05) and had significantly higher CIMT (0.94±0.2 vs. 0.83±0.2; p=0.05). The SH-25 levels were statistically significantly higher in patients who died of CVD (40.3±25 vs. 29.1±13; p<0.05). Linear regression analysis showed a positive correlation between CIMT and SH-25 in the study population and in those who died from CVD (r=0.41; p<0.05 and r=0.606; p<0.05, respectively).

Conclusion: This study suggests that hepcidin is effective in cardiovascular mortality and pathophysiology of subclinical atherosclerosis in HD patients. (Anatol J Cardiol 2018; 19: 117-22)

Keywords: cardiovascular mortality, carotid intima-media thickness, hemodialysis, hepcidin

Introduction

Cardiovascular (CV) mortality is 20–40 times higher in patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) than in normal population (1). There are various mechanisms taking part in the pathogenesis of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in patients with CKD (2).

Iron accumulation in the vascular cells and macrophages causes endothelial dysfunction and atherosclerosis (3). This situation is significant in hemodialysis (HD) patients undergoing iron treatment. Carotid intima-media thickness (CIMT) was reported to be associated with ferritin levels and cumulative iron treatment dosage in HD patients (4).

In 2001, a peptide named as hepcidin was discovered (5, 6). Serum Hepcidin-25 (SH-25) is a bioactive isoform of hepcidin, which is important in iron homeostasis. Ferroportin is a cellular iron exporter that is present on enterocytes, macrophages, and hepatocytes. SH-25 causes internalization and degradation of ferroportin (6). Hepcidin expression is regulated by iron treatment, anemia, hypoxia, and inflammatory signals (7, 8). Hepcidin levels are elevated in CKD (9). There is an association between ferritin and hepcidin in HD patients (9-14).

The relationship between hepcidin and CVD in different patient groups has been previously investigated (15-17). These findings suggest the possible relation between hepcidin and atherosclerosis.

Atherosclerotic changes in the carotid arteries are associated with the extent of atherosclerosis in patients with CKD. CIMT is a reliable indicator of both systemic and coronary atherosclerosis and can be measured using ultrasonography (18). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relation between SH-25 and subclinical atherosclerosis measured by CIMT and mortality in HD patients.
Methods

Study design and population
This cross-control prospective study was approved by the Local Ethics Committee, and informed consents were obtained from study participants.

We included 82 patients who were on chronic HD treatment between 2011 and 2015. The inclusion criterion was HD treatment for at least 6 months. The exclusion criteria were the presence of malignancy, history of trauma, surgery in the past month, and the presence of acute infection or chronic liver disease. Data on demographic findings, history of CVD, diabetes mellitus, dialysis vintage, and treatment parameters were collected.

After 4 years of first assessment, the mortality of the patient group and its relation with SH-25 and CIMT was investigated. Two of the 82 patients were excluded because of renal transplantation. The patients who lived and died due to any cause and CVD were compared in terms of clinical parameters, echocardiographic parameters, CIMT, and SH-25 levels. Also, correlation analysis of CIMT was done in patients who died of CVD; parameters found to be statistically significant were analyzed by linear regression analysis.

Biochemical analysis
Predialysis blood samples were drawn, and routine laboratory assessments were performed using standard laboratory techniques. Serum total cholesterol and triglyceride levels were measured using commercial colorimetric assay methods (GPO-PAP and CHOD-PAP; Boehringer-Manheim, Mannheim, Germany). High-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C) levels were measured using the phosphotungstic acid precipitation method. Low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) levels were calculated using the Friedewald formula (LDL-C=CHO – TG/5 – HDL-C), where CHO is the serum total cholesterol level and TG is the serum triglyceride level. Serum C-reactive protein (CRP) levels were detected using rate nephelometry (IMAGE). Serum biochemical parameters (creatinine, blood urea nitrogen, glucose, electrolytes, albumin, and complete blood count) and intact parathyroid hormone levels were measured using a computerized auto analyzer (Hitachi 717; Boehringer-Mannheim). Predialysis blood samples were centrifuged at 1500 g for 10 min and stored at −80°C for measuring SH-25 levels. The DRG hepcidin enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) (Marburg, Germany) kit was used for measuring hepcidin-25. The range of SH-25 level was 0.78–50 ng/mL. ELISA kit was bought by the workers and the test was performed in private laboratory.

Carotid artery intima-media thickness and echocardiographic measurement
The CIMT measurements and echocardiographic evaluations for all participants were performed by the same cardiologist who was unaware of the clinical and laboratory data.

Ultrasonographic B-mode imaging of bilateral carotid arteries, carotid bulb, and internal carotid arteries were performed using high-resolution real-time ultrasonography using a 12 MHz linear-assay transducer (Mindray DC 7). Carotid arteries, carotid bulb, and internal carotid arteries were examined using two different longitudinal projections. At each longitudinal projection, CIMT was conducted from the site of greater thickness. CIMT was defined as the distance between the leading edges of the lumen interface at the far wall in plaque-free arterial segments. The value was expressed as an average of the maximal CIMT.

All echocardiographic measurements were made according to the recommendations of the American Society of Echocardiography (19). The left ventricle end-systolic diameter, left ventricle end-diastolic diameter (LVEDD), left ventricular posterior

| Parameters | Patients (n=82) |
|------------|----------------|
| Gender; male, %, n | 43.9 (36) |
| Age, years | 57.9±16.1 |
| Dialysis vintage, months | 124.8±16.8 |
| Diabetes mellitus, %, n | 26.8 (22) |
| History of CVD, %, n | 35.4 (29) |
| Current smoker, %, n | - |
| SBP, mm Hg | 125±17 |
| DBP, mm Hg | 77±10 |
| Kt/V | 1.49±0.28 |
| BMI, kg/m² | 25.6±14.4 |
| Treatment characteristics | |
| Prescription of ESA, %, n | 87.8 (72) |
| Use of iron replacement therapy, %, n | 67.1 (55) |
| Prescription of RAS inhibitors, %, n | 26.8 (22) |
| Prescription of calcium blocker, %, n | 24.4 (20) |
| Prescription of beta blocker, %, n | 29.3 (24) |
| Prescription of alpha blocker, %, n | 3.7 (3) |
| Prescription of statin, %, n | 3.7 (3) |

| Laboratory parameters | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Haemoglobin, g/dL | 10.7±1.4 |
| Ferritin, ng/mL | 75±377 |
| TSAT, % | 29.4±16.8 |
| LDL-C, mg/dL | 91.5±35.2 |
| HDL-C, mg/dL | 36.6±11.8 |
| Albumin, g/dL | 3.62±0.5 |
| CRP, mg/L | 2.22±2.72 |
| Hepcidin-25, ng/mL | 30.17±17.06 |
| CIMT, mm | 0.874±0.196 |

BMI - body mass index, CIMT - carotid intima-media thickness, CRP - C-reactive protein, CVD - cardiovascular disease, DBP - diastolic blood pressure, HDL-C - high density lipoprotein cholesterol, LDL-C - low density lipoprotein cholesterol, TSAT - transferrin saturation, SBP - systolic blood pressure.
wall thickness (LVPWT), interventricular wall thickness (IVWT), and left ventricular relaxation time were recorded. The body surface area (BSA) was calculated using DuBois and DuBois formula \[\text{BSA} = (\text{weight (kg)}^{0.425} \times \text{height (cm)}^{0.725}) \times 0.007184\] (20). The left ventricular mass index (LVMI) was calculated using Devereux formula \[\text{LVMI (g/m}^2\text{)} = \frac{(1.04 \times (\text{IVWT+LVEDD+LVPWT})^{3} - \text{LVEDD}^{3}) - 14 \text{ g/BSA}}{\text{BSA}}\] (21). LVH was evaluated using data from the Framingham Heart Study, and the presence of LVH was defined on the basis of LVMI greater than 131 g/m² and 100 g/m² for males and females, respectively (22).

### Statistical analysis

Data analysis was performed by using SPSS for Windows 20 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, USA). The results of the analysis of continuous variables were expressed as mean±SD and median (interquartile range: 25th–75th percentiles), whereas the results of analysis of discrete variables were expressed as frequency distributions and percentages. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used for testing normality of continuous variables. Normally distributed variables were analyzed using t-test, whereas others were analyzed using the Mann–Whitney U test. The chi-square test was used for comparing discrete variables. The linear regression analysis model was used to study the relationship between CIMT and SH-25. P<0.05 was considered statistically significant.

### Results

Table 1 shows the initial baseline characteristics of the patients enrolled in the first study. At the beginning, 82 patients
were involved in the study, and during follow-up, two patients were excluded because of renal transplantation. In the 4-year follow-up period, 31 of the 80 patients died. Of the 31 patients, 21 died because of CVD (14, acute coronary syndrome and seven, stroke), eight died because of infection, and two died because of gastrointestinal hemorrhage.

The patients were divided in two groups: patients who died and survivors. The survivors were significantly younger (53.7±15.1 vs. 65.2±15.5; p<0.05). CIMT was significantly lower in patients (0.83±0.2 vs. 0.95±0.2; p<0.05); however, there was no significant difference in the SH-25 levels between the groups (29.1±13 vs. 32.4±22.4; p=0.767). Table 2 shows the comparison between the two groups.

The patients who died of CVD were significantly older (63.7±16.1 vs. 53.7±15.5; p<0.05) and had significantly higher CIMT (0.94±0.2 vs. 0.83±0.2; p<0.05). The SH-25 levels were significantly lower in survivors than in patients who died of CVD (29.1±13 vs. 40.3±25.4; p<0.05).

A significantly positive correlation was found between CIMT and SH-25 levels in the whole study population (p<0.05, r=0.41).

SH-25 was not found to be correlated with CRP (p>0.05, r=0.181). A correlation analysis of CIMT of the patients who died of CVD was done, and CIMT was found to be positively correlated with age and SH-25 (Fig. 1) [r=0.505; p<0.05 and r=0.606; p<0.05, respectively, (Table 3)]. CIMT was analyzed as a dependent variable by linear regression analysis, and the correlation of CIMT with SH-25 persisted (Table 4).

### Discussion

There are two major findings of this study: (i) SH-25 was positively correlated with CIMT in the study population and (ii) SH-25 was not found to be elevated in patients who died due to all causes, but was found to be elevated in patients who died due to atherosclerotic diseases.

In many experimental animal studies, hepcidin was found to be associated with atherosclerotic disease. In mice, hepcidin

| Variables     | CIMT |  r  | P  |
|---------------|------|-----|----|
| Age           | 0.501| <0.05|
| BMI           | 0.091| 0.696|
| DV            | 0.196| 0.396|
| Kt/V          | 0.05 | 0.828|
| MAP           | 0.042| 0.856|
| Glucose       | 0.125| 0.620|
| Hemoglobin    | -0.22| 0.926|
| Albumin       | -0.76| 0.742|
| CRP           | 0.178| 0.441|
| Ca x P        | 0.338| 0.134|
| Ferritin      | 0.0167| 0.469|
| PTH           | 0.255| 0.264|
| Hepcidine     | 0.606| <0.05|

#### Table 3. The correlation between CIMT with demographic and biochemical parameters in deaths from cardiovascular disease

| Variables     | CIMT |  r  | P  |
|---------------|------|-----|----|
| Age           | 0.501| <0.05|
| BMI           | 0.091| 0.696|
| DV            | 0.196| 0.396|
| Kt/V          | 0.05 | 0.828|
| MAP           | 0.042| 0.856|
| Glucose       | 0.125| 0.620|
| Hemoglobin    | -0.22| 0.926|
| Albumin       | -0.76| 0.742|
| CRP           | 0.178| 0.441|
| Ca x P        | 0.338| 0.134|
| Ferritin      | 0.0167| 0.469|
| PTH           | 0.255| 0.264|
| Hepcidine     | 0.606| <0.05|

BMI - body mass index, Ca - calcium, CIMT - carotid intima-media thickness, CRP - C-reactive protein, DV - dialysis vintage, MAP - mean arterial pressure, P - phosphorus, PTH - parathyroid hormone

#### Table 4. Linear regression analysis

| Model | Unstandardized coefficients | Standardized coefficients | t  | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----|------|
|       | B                           | Standard error             | Beta|      |
| 1     | (Constant)                  | 0.666                     | 0.129| 0.476| 5.174| 0.000|
|       | Hepcidin-25                 | 0.003                     | 0.001| 0.282| 2.372| <0.05|
|       | Age                         | 0.003                     | 0.002| 1.405| 0.177|

Dependent variable: carotid intima-media thickness

---

**Figure 1.** The correlation analysis of serum hepcidin-25 (SH-25) and carotid intima-media thickness (CIMT) in patients who died of cardiovascular disease.
was suppressed and the intracellular iron content in macrophages was reduced. As a result, the efflux capacity of cholesterol into macrophages increased and foam cell formation decreased (23). In an atherosclerotic mice model, hepcidin caused inflammatory cytokine release, intracellular lipid accumulation, oxidative stress, and apoptosis of macrophages causing plaque destabilization (24).

In two studies in patients with nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, SH-25 levels were associated with the presence of atherosclerotic plaques (16, 17). In a study of postmenopausal women, hepcidin was associated with the presence of plaques in the carotid artery when adjusted for eGFR, inflammation, and traditional CV risk factors (25). In another study, the hepcidin–ferroportin axis has been shown to be effective in macrophage inflammatory response to human atherosclerotic plaques (26). Conflicting results were obtained in two studies investigating the relation between atherosclerosis and hepcidin. In the first study in general population, no relation was observed between hepcidin and atherosclerosis (27). In another study in hypertensive patients, higher aortic stiffness was found to be correlated with lower hepcidin levels (28).

Recently, the role of hepcidin as a CV marker gained attention in the CKD population (3). Two studies, one in chronic HD patients and another in patients on peritoneal dialysis, showed an association between arterial stiffness and hepcidin level (15, 19). Likewise, in our previous study in the same cohort, CIMT was correlated with high SH-25 (30). In this study, SH-25 was increased in patients who died of CVD. Furthermore, CIMT and SH-25 were independently correlated in this patient group. Finally, in a cohort of chronic HD patients with a median follow-up of 3 years, SH-25 levels were associated with the incidence of CV events, even after stepwise adjustments of clinical and anemia-related parameters, including inflammation (31). Similarly, in our study, in 4 years, CV mortality was correlated with SH-25 levels. In another study, an independent positive correlation was observed between hepcidin and CIMT in diabetic chronic HD patients (32). In our study, there was no difference between the percentage of diabetic patients who lived and died. Therefore, we did not separately analyze the correlation in diabetic patients.

Two studies investigated the relation between hepcidin and LVMI. One study in patients with CKD who were not on dialysis showed that lower hepcidin levels were associated with higher LVMI, possibly due to the concomitant iron deficiency resulting in an anemic state (33). In a study in chronic HD patients, no association between hepcidin and LVMI was observed (34). In our study, LVMI and anemia parameters were not different between patients who died of CVD and those who lived; however, the hepcidin levels between them differed.

Systemic hepcidin, mainly produced in the liver, can have an inhibitory effect on iron release from macrophages (8, 35). Elevated hepcidin levels may be associated with atherosclerotic disease by retaining iron in macrophages in the vascular wall. This intracellular iron sequestration may induce oxidative stress, inflammatory response, and apoptosis of macrophages causing a proatherogenic environment (22, 36, 37). In our study, serum ferritin, albumin, and CRP levels were not different between the patients who lived and died. This may be because of the usage of nonsensitive inflammatory markers.

Study limitations
There are some limitations to this retrospective study. Due to the study design, CIMT was measured and changes that have occurred over time are shown. As the hepcidin levels were measured once, the possibility of change in plasma hepcidin level during the time period could not be known. In addition, this was a single-centered study; therefore, the number of patients and racial diversity is limited. Due to the study design, we cannot talk a causal relationship; therefore, interpretations should be made carefully.

Conclusion
In conclusion, the data presented in this study and recent publications suggest a wider role of hepcidin as a marker in normal biological systems. Well-designed prospective randomized trials are needed to investigate its exact role in the pathogenesis of CVD in CKD.

Conflict of interest: None declared.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Authorship contributions: Concept – Ö.Y., B.E.; Design – Ö.Y.; Supervision – Ö.Y., B.E.; Materials – Ö.Y., B.E., H.K.; Data collection &/or processing – Ö.Y., B.E., H.K.; Analysis &/or interpretation – Ö.Y., H.K.; Literature search – Ö.Y.; Writing – B.E.; Critical review – Ö.Y., H.K.

References
1. Foley RN, Parfrey PS, Sarnak MJ. Clinical epidemiology of cardiovascular disease in chronic renal disease. Am J Kidney Dis 1998; 32(5 Suppl 3): S112-9.
2. Stenvinkel P, Carrero JJ, Axelsson J, Lindholm B, Heimbürger O, Massy Z. Emerging biomarkers for evaluating cardiovascular risk in the chronic kidney disease patient: how do new pieces fit into the uremic puzzle? Clin J Am Soc Nephrol 2008; 3: 505-21.
3. Nakanishi T, Hasuike Y, Otaki Y, Kida A, Nonoguchi H, Kuragano T. Hepcidin: another culprit for complications in patients with chronic kidney disease? Nephrol Dial Transplant 2011; 26: 3092-100.
4. Druke T, Witko-Sarsat V, Massy Z, Descamps-Latscha B, Guerin AP, Marchais SJ, et al. Iron therapy, advanced oxidation protein products, and carotid artery intima-media thickness in end-stage renal disease. Circulation 2002; 106: 2212-7.
5. Park CH, Valore EV, Waring AJ, Ganz T. Hepcidin, a urinary antimicrobial peptide synthesized in the liver. J Biol Chem 2001; 276: 7806-10.
6. Pigeon C, Ilyin G, Courcoulaud B, Leroyer P, Turlin B, Brissot P, et al.
A new mouse liver-specific gene encoding a protein homologous to human antimicrobial peptide hepcidin, is overexpressed during iron overload. J Biol Chem 2001; 276: 7811-9.

7. Swinkels DW, Girelli D, Laarakkers C, Kroot J, Campostini N, Kenna EH, et al. Advances in quantitative hepcidin measurements by time-of-flight mass spectrometry. PLoS One 2008; 3: e2706.

8. Babitt JL, Lin HY. Molecular mechanisms of hepcidin regulation: implications for the anemia of CKD. Am J Kidney Dis 2010; 55: 726-41.

9. Kroot JJ, Tjalsma H, Fleming RE, Swinkels DW. Hepcidin in human iron disorders: diagnostic implications. Clin Chem 2011; 57: 1650-69.

10. Peters HPE, Laarakkers CMM, Swinkels DW, Wetzes JF. Serum hepcidin-25 levels in patients with chronic kidney disease are independent of glomerular filtration rate. Nephrol Dial Transplant 2010; 25: 848-53.

11. Kato A, Tsugi T, Luo J, Sakao Y, Yasuda H, Hishida A. Association of prohepcidin and hepcidin-25 with erythropoietin response and ferritin in hemodialysis patients. Am J Nephrol 2008; 28: 115-21.

12. Kuragano T, Shimonaka Y, Kida A, Furuta M, Nanami M, Otaki Y, et al. Determinants of hepcidin in patients on maintenance hemodialysis: role of inflammation. Am J Nephrol 2010; 31: 534-40.

13. Van der Weerd NC, Grooteman MP, Bots ML, van den Dorpel MA, den Hoedt CH, Mazarai AH, et al. Hepcidin-25 in chronic hemodialysis patients is related to residual kidney function and not to treatment with erythropoiesis stimulating agents. PLoS One 2012; 7: e35783.

14. Weiss G, Theurl I, Eder S, Koppelstaetter C, Kurz K, Sonnweber T, et al. Serum hepcidin concentration in chronic haemodialysis patients: associations and effects of dialysis, iron and erythropoietin therapy. Eur J Clin Invest 2009; 39: 883-90.

15. Zaritsky J, Young B, Gales B, Wang HJ, Rastogi A, Westerman M, et al. Reduction of serum hepcidin by hemodialysis in pediatric and adult patients. Clin J Am Soc Nephrol 2010; 5: 1010-4.

16. Kuragano T, Itoh K, Shimonaka Y, Kida A, Furuta M, Kitamura R, et al. Hepcidin as well as TNFa are significant predictors of arterial stiffness in patients with metabolic syndrome alterations. Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol 2011; 31: 692-700.

17. Swinkels DW, Girelli D, Laarakkers C, Kroot J, Campostrini N, Kempen WP. Echocardiographic criteria for left ventricular hypertrophy: The Circulation 1981; 63: 1391-8.

18. Reichek N, Devereux RB. Left ventricular hypertrophy: Relationship of anatomic, echocardiographic and electrocardiographic findings. Circulation 1981; 63: 1391-8.

19. Van der Weerd NC, Grooteman MP, Bots ML, van den Dorpel MA, den Hoedt CH, Mazarai AH, et al. Hepcidin-25 is related to cardiovascular disease in an elderly general population. Clin Chem Lab Med 2016; 54: 151-61.

20. Peters HPE, Swinkels DW, Wetzes JF. Serum hepcidin and macrophage iron correlate with MCP-1 release and vascular damage in patients with metabolic syndrome. Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol 2011; 31: 683-90.

21. Kroot JJ, Tjalsma H, Fleming RE, Swinkels DW. Hepcidin in human iron disorders: diagnostic implications. Clin Chem 2011; 57: 1650-69.

22. Peters HPE, Laarakkers CMM, Swinkels DW, Wetzes JF. Serum hepcidin-25 levels in patients with chronic kidney disease are independent of glomerular filtration rate. Nephrol Dial Transplant 2010; 25: 848-53.

23. Saeed O, Otsuka F, Polavarapu R, Karmali V, Weiss D, Davis T, et al. Pharmacological suppression of hepcidin increases macrophage cholesterol efflux and reduces foam cell formation and atherosclerosis. Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol 2012; 32: 299-307.

24. Li JJ, Meng X, Si HP, Zhang C, Lv HX, Zhao YX, et al. Hepcidin destabilizes atherosclerotic plaque via over activating macrophages after erythropagocytosis. Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol 2012; 36: 1158-66.

25. Swinkels DW, Girelli D, Laarakkers C, Kroot J, Campostrini N, Kempen WP. Echocardiographic criteria for left ventricular hypertrophy: The Circulation 1981; 63: 1391-8.

26. Habib A, Polavarapu R, Karmali V, Guo L, Van Dam R, Cheng Q, et al. Hepcidin-ferroportin axis controls toll-like receptor 4 dependent macrophage inflammatory responses in human atherosclerotic plaques. Atherosclerosis 2015; 241: 692-700.

27. Peclaner R, Kiechi S, Mayr M, Santer P, Weger S, Haschka D, et al. Correlates of serum hepcidin levels and its association with cardiovascular disease in an elderly general population. Clin Chem Lab Med 2016; 54: 151-61.

28. Hsieh YP, Huang CH, Lee CY, Chen HL, Lin CY, Chang CC. Hepcidin-25 is related to cardiovascular disease in chronic hemodialysis patients. Nephrol Dial Transplant 2013; 28: 3062-71.

29. Li H, Feng SJ, Su LL, Wang W, Zhang XD, Wang SX. Serum hepcidin predicts uremic accelerated atherosclerosis in chronic hemodialysis patients. Hemodial Int 2016; 20: 191-7.

30. Li JJ, Meng X, Si HP, Zhang C, Lv HX, Zhao YX, et al. Hepcidin-25 is related to cardiovascular events in chronic haemodialysis patients. Nephrol Dial Transplant 2013; 28: 3062-71.

31. Hsieh YP, Huang CH, Chen HY, Chen HL, Lin CY, Chang CC. Hepcidin-25 negatively predicts left ventricular mass index in chronic kidney disease patients. World J Nephrol 2013; 2: 38-43.

32. Mostovaya IM, Bots ML, van den Dorpel MA, Goldschmeding R, den Hoedt CH, Kamp O, et al. Left ventricular mass in dialysis patients, determinants and relation with outcome. Results from the COnvectiveTransportSTudy (CONTRAST). PLoS One 2014; 9: e84587.

33. Eleftheriadis T, Liakopoulos V, Antoniadi G, Kartsios C, Stefanidis I. The role of hepcidin in iron homeostasis and anemia in hemodialysis patients. Semin Dial 2009; 22: 70-7.

34. Sullivan JL. Iron in arterial plaque: modifiable risk factor for atherosclerosis. Biochim Biophys Acta 2009; 1790: 718-23.