

ROZPRAWA DOKTORSKA

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Ocena przydatności oznaczeń markerów amyloidowych, białka tau i YKL-40 we krwi w różnicowaniu i monitorowaniu przebiegu otępień.

Promotor pracy

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16. Piśmiennictwo

1. Wykaz publikacji stanowiących podstawę rozprawy doktorskiej

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Serum amyloid biomarkers, tau protein and YKL-40 utility in detection, differential diagnosing, and monitoring of dementia.

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2. Zestawienie publikacji doktorantki

| Rodzaj publikacji | Liczba | Impact Factor | Punktacja MNiSW |
|---|-----------|---------------|-----------------|
| Prace włączone do rozprawy doktorskiej | 2 | 8,399 | 240,00 |
| Prace, które nie zostały włączone do rozprawy doktorskiej | 35 | 14,918 | 609,00 |
| Streszczenia zjazdowe | 15 | - | - |
| Razem | 52 | 23,317 | 849,00 |

3. Wstęp

3.1 Charakterystyka kliniczna otępień

Otępienie jest heterogennym zespołem zaburzeń funkcji poznawczych powodujących postępujące upośledzenie funkcjonowania. Obok dysfunkcji poznawczych obserwuje się także objawy psychopatologiczne, behawioralne i neurologiczne. Otępienie występuje u co piątej kobiety i co dziesiątego mężczyzny i stanowi siódmą najczęstszą przyczynę zgonów.

Czynniki ryzyka to niski poziom wykształcenia, dysfunkcja narządu słuchu, nadciśnienie, cukrzyca, palenie tytoniu, nadużywanie alkoholu, urazy mózgu, otyłość, niewłaściwa dieta, ograniczona aktywność poznawcza, fizyczna i społeczna, czynniki toksyczne (ołów, pestycydy, zanieczyszczenia powietrza) oraz czynniki genetyczne takie jak polimorfizm apolipoproteiny E (ApoE) [1-5].

Najczęstszą przyczyną otępienia jest choroba Alzheimera (AD) stanowiąca 60-80% przypadków. W AD stwierdzone są mikroskopowo złogi amyloidu na zewnątrz oraz splątki białka tau wewnątrz neuronów, a makroskopowo - zanik mózgu, szczególnie płatów skroniowych. Choroba charakteryzuje się stopniową, powolną utratą pamięci autobiograficznej i epizodycznej, anomią, zaburzeniami funkcji wzrokowo-przestrzennych, utratą zdolności uczenia się oraz apatią.

Od rozpoznania do zgonu mija 4-8 lat, natomiast proces chorobowy rozpoczyna się nawet 20 lat wcześniej. U połowy chorych stwierdza się współwystępowanie innych otępień, najczęściej otępienia naczyniowego (VaD) [2, 5].

W VaD występują ogniska niedokrwienia i atrofii mózgu, zmiany miażdżycowe naczyń oraz cechy gliozy w istocie białej. „Czyste” VaD występuje u około 5-10% chorych z demencją. Zmiany naczyniowe częściej występują jako element otępienia mieszanego i są obecne u około 40% chorych z otępieniem. Częstość występowania VaD rośnie z wiekiem i jest najwyższa wśród osób obciążonych czynnikami ryzyka naczyniowego, a początek zaburzeń jest często związany z incydem naczyniowo-mózgowym. Przebieg choroby jest skokowy. Objawy są zależne od lokalizacji uszkodzeń i obejmują najczęściej zaburzenia uwagi, przetwarzania informacji, funkcji wykonawczych oraz objawy neurologiczne [2, 5, 6, 7].

Otępienie mieszane (MxD) występuje u około połowy chorych z demencją, szczególnie po 85. roku życia [5]. Etiologię stanowi najczęściej AD i VaD. W pierwotnym VaD niedokrwienie prowadzi do przeciekania bariery krew-mózg (BBB), dysfunkcji śródbłonna, niedotlenienia i nasilenia stresu oksydacyjnego, co pobudza produkcję amyloidu beta (A β) i białka tau. Z kolei w pierwotnym AD odkładający się w ścianach naczyń A β powoduje angiopatię amyloidową (CAA) – zwężenie światła naczynia i dysfunkcję śródbłonna [8].

Do rzadziej występujących otępień należą:

- **otępienie z ciałami Lewy’ego (LBD)** wywołane obecnością złożeń α -synukleiny w korze mózgu. Charakterystyczne są omamy wzrokowe, zaburzenia funkcji wzrokowo-przestrzennych oraz parkinsonizm przy początkowo względnie sprawnej pamięci. Przebieg jest powolny, falujący.

- **otępienia czołowo-skroniowe (FTD)**, najczęstsze przed 60. rokiem życia, wywołane przez wtręty fosforylowanego białka tau, TDP-43 i białka FUS, powodujące zanik kory czołowej i/lub skroniowej. Objawy to zmiany zachowania oraz afazja z późniejszą utratą pamięci. Przebieg zazwyczaj jest stopniowy, powolny. [2, 5].

- **otępienie w chorobie Parkinsona (PDD)** związane z odkładaniem się złożeń α -synukleiny w istocie czarnej, a następnie także w korze, z objawami jak w LBD.

Otępienie bywa wywołane również przez odwracalne przyczyny takie jak depresja, niedoczynność tarczycy, niedobory witamin i nadużywanie alkoholu [5].

Przebieg otępień ma zwykle charakter przewlekły i postępujący, a rodzaj i nasilenie objawów różni się w zależności od zaawansowania procesu chorobowego. W przebiegu AD wyróżnia się następujące stadia:

- **faza przedkliniczna**, w której można stwierdzić obecność biomarkerów otępienia bez objawów klinicznych choroby.

- **łagodne zaburzenia poznawcze (MCI)** zauważalne dla chorego i rodziny, ale nie dla dalszego otoczenia, nie zaburzające aktywności dnia codziennego.

- **otępienie łagodne**, w którym zachowana jest możliwość względnie niezależnego funkcjonowania przy zapewnieniu pomocy innych osób.

- **otępienie umiarkowane**, stanowiące często najdłuższą fazę choroby, charakteryzujące się zaburzeniami komunikacji i wykonywania rutynowych czynności, zmianami zachowania, podejrzliwością i pobudzeniem.

- chorzy z **otępieniem ciężkim** wymagają stałej całodobowej opieki, tracą zdolność poruszania się, pobierania płynów i pokarmów [5].

Rozpoznanie prawdopodobnego otępienia ustala się na podstawie wywiadu, badania neuropsychologicznego, badań laboratoryjnych i neuroobrazowych. W przypadkach wątpliwych może być wskazane wykonanie badania pozytonowej tomografii emisyjnej (PET) lub badania płynu mózgowo-rdzeniowego [2].

3.2 Rola amyloidu beta w otępieniach

Amyloid to włóknkowe złogi białka barwiące się czerwienią Kongo i dające żółto-zieloną dwójłomność. Znanych jest 36 białek amyloidowych powodujących choroby różnych układów i narządów nazywane amyloidozami [9, 10].

A β powstaje w wyniku modyfikacji białka prekursorowego amyloidu (APP) przez sekretazy. C-koniec jest odcinany zawsze przez γ -sekretazę. Przecięcie N-końca przy udziale α -sekretazy powoduje powstawanie rozpuszczalnego białka prekursorowego (sAPP α), natomiast pod wpływem β -sekretazy powstaje nierozpuszczalny A β . γ -sekretaza składa się z czterech białek: preseniliny przecinającej łańcuch APP oraz trzech innych białek regulujących jej aktywność.

Oligomery A β zawierają 37-49 reszt aminokwasowych. Najważniejsze z nich to hydrofilny A β 1-40 oraz mniej rozpuszczalny A β 1-42 [11, 12]. Iloczyn A β 1-42/A β 1-40 może służyć jako wskaźnik nasilenia amyloidopatii [13].

A β jest wydzielany do przestrzeni zewnątrzkomórkowej lub pozostaje związany z błoną komórkową. Po związaniu A β z ApoE może dochodzić do jego endocytozy, co powoduje uszkodzenie i śmierć komórki. Rozpuszczalne formy A β mogą też indukować zaburzenia metabolizmu glukozy, funkcji mitochondriów i nasilać stres oksydacyjny [11, 12]. Oligopeptydy A β mogą osadzać się w postaci nierozpuszczalnych agregatów, być aktywnie transportowane poza BBB lub ulegać degradacji proteolitycznej. Agregacja A β zaburza funkcjonowanie synaps i mitochondriów, uruchamia odpowiedź zapalną, nasila fosforylację białka tau oraz generuje reaktywne formy tlenu, wskutek czego dochodzi do utleniania lipidów i powstawania związków toksycznych takich jak 4-hydroksynonenal (HNE) [11]. HNE promuje syntezę A β zmniejszając aktywność katalityczną neprylizyny oraz zwiększając aktywność γ -sekretazy [14].

W AD o wczesnym początku występują mutacje genów APP i preseniliny powodujące zwiększenie proporcji A β 1-42 do A β 1-40, zaś w późnych postaciach główną rolę odgrywają czynniki prozapalne oraz czynniki wpływające na wzrost produkcji i agregacji oraz hamowanie eliminacji i rozkładu A β [11, 15].

Amyloidopatię stwierdzano badaniem PET również w LBD, FTD i VaD [16-20]. W VaD odkładanie się A β w naczyniach powoduje krwawienie i stan zapalny. W CAA przeważają zmiany w ścianach naczyń krwionośnych, w przeciwieństwie do AD, gdzie złogi A β lokują się głównie międzykomórkowo [21, 22].

Nadprodukcja lub upośledzona eliminacja A β może występować także w nowotworach, szczególnie wątroby, niewydolności nerek i wątroby, chorobie Parkinsona, otyłości i insulinooporności, zespole Downa, hipoksji i zaburzeniach psychicznych (schizofrenii, depresji i chorobie afektywnej dwubiegunowej) [23-30]. Stanowi to poważne ograniczenie przydatności A β jako biomarkera szczególnie u osób starszych i schorowanych [31].

3.3 Białko tau w otępieniach

Białko tau, nazywane też białkiem związanym z mikrotubulami (MAPT) ulega alternatywnemu składaniu tworząc 6 izoform: 3R0N, 3R1N, 3R2N, 4R0N, 4R1N, 4R2N. Stosunek izoform 3R do 4R u osób zdrowych wynosi 1:1, a jego zaburzenie występuje w stanach chorobowych – tauopatiach [32].

Mikrotubule tworzą szkielet komórek nerwowych oraz transportują organelle i cząsteczki sygnałowe wzdłuż aksonu. Białko tau bierze udział m. in. w stabilizacji mikrotubul, plastyczności synaptycznej, regulacji cyklu komórkowego oraz wpływa na przekaźnictwo glutaminergiczne [33-35].

Funkcje białka tau są regulowane przez modyfikacje potranslacyjne, z których najistotniejszą jest fosforylacja, zachodząca w odpowiedzi na stresory takie jak zaburzenia gospodarki insulinowej, głód, hipotermia, glikokortykoidy, czy alkohol [32, 33]. Nadmierna fosforylacja (hiperfosforylacja) powoduje zmianę konformacji i ładunku białka, co umożliwia jego agregację i oligomeryzację [32].

Zmiany wywoływane przez hiperfosforylowane białko tau (p-tau) wynikają z:

- 1. utraty jego właściwości fizjologicznych:** zaburzenie funkcji cytoszkieletu, podatność na stres oksydacyjny, zaburzenia struktury i funkcji mitochondriów;
- 2. działania toksycznego nieprawidłowego białka:** aktywacja procesów zapalnych, zaburzenie przekaźnictwa poprzez gromadzenie się p-tau w kolcach postsynaptycznych, zaburzenia degradacji białek i autofagii [33, 36].

Agregacja białka tau powoduje choroby neurozwyrodnieniowe zwane tauopatiami, może też występować w starzeniu bez otępienia [34, 35]. Do tauopatii pierwotnych należą między innymi podtypy FTD oraz atypowe zespoły parkinsonowskie. Ze względu na złożoną, zależną również od A β etiopatogenezę AD zalicza się do tauopatii wtórnych. W AD A β aktywuje kinazy oraz pośredniczy w wywołaniu stresu oksydacyjnego promując w ten sposób hiperfosforylację i agregację tau. Inne tauopatie wtórne to m. in. zespół Downa, choroby prionowe, encefalopatia pourazowa i stwardnienie zanikowe boczne [20, 33, 37].

Uważa się, że stężenie białka tau w CSF odzwierciedla stopień uszkodzenia neuronów [38]. Białko tau przenika przez BBB i ziarnistości opony pajęczej, dzięki czemu może być też wykrywane we krwi obwodowej [39]. Stężenia całkowitego białka tau (t-tau) w osoczu korelują z jego zawartością w tkance mózgowej ocenianą badaniem PET [40, 41].

3.4 YKL-40 jako marker zapalny otępienia

Neurozapalenie stanowi trzeci kluczowy element patofizjologii AD. Rozwój stanu zapalnego przypisuje się aktywności mikrogleju i uwalnianiu cytokin w odpowiedzi na utratę neuronów w przebiegu choroby. Odpowiedź zapalna promuje dalszą syntezę APP i fosforylację białka tau [42].

YKL-40 należy do rodziny hydrolaz glikozydowych. Jest nazywane również białkiem 1 podobnym do chitynazy 3 (CHI3L1), ludzką glikoproteiną chrząstkową 39 (HC-gp39) lub białkiem regresji gruczołu sutkowego (BRP-39).

Białko to jest wytwarzane przez różne komórki tkanki łącznej, komórki nowotworowe, śródbłonek i mięśnie gładkich ścian naczyń, a jego produkcję regulują cytokiny, czynniki wzrostu i stres. YKL-40 bierze udział w odpowiedzi immunologicznej oraz procesach zapalnych. Stymuluje wzrost i proliferację komórek, bierze udział w procesach naprawy tkanek, hamuje apoptozę, aktywuje układ odpornościowy, reguluje syntezę i degradację składników macierzy zewnątrzkomórkowej [43].

Do dowodów na związek YKL-40 z AD należy występowanie obszarów zwiększonej jego ekspresji wokół blaszek amyloidowych oraz w naczyniach krwionośnych z cechami CAA [44], zależność między genotypem APOE4 a stężeniem YKL-40 w CSF [45] oraz zmniejszenie ekspresji APP i poprawę funkcji poznawczych gryzoni po podaniu substancji hamującej aktywność YKL-40 [46].

Nadekspresja YKL-40 występuje w chorobach zapalnych, nowotworach, [43], po udarach niedokrwiennych mózgu [47], w tauopatiach [48, 49], chorobach neurozwyrodnieniowych [50] i niektórych zaburzeniach psychicznych [51, 52]. Obniżone stężenie YKL-40 w CSF obserwowano w zaburzeniu afektywnym dwubiegunowym przed wystąpieniem epizodu manii lub hipomanii [53].

3.5 Biomarkery otępienia

Biomarker to zdefiniowana cecha (molekularna, histologiczna, radiologiczna, fizjologiczna) mierzona jako wskaźnik normalnych procesów biologicznych, procesów patologicznych lub odpowiedzi na ekspozycję bądź interwencję. Biomarkery mogą być stosowane do oceny ryzyka zachorowania, diagnostyki, monitorowania, prognozowania przebiegu choroby oraz oceny bezpieczeństwa i skuteczności terapii [54]. Umożliwiają optymalizację diagnostyki i leczenia, ułatwiają prowadzenie badań klinicznych i poznawczych [49].

Marker diagnostyczny powinien charakteryzować się przynajmniej umiarkowaną czułością i wysoką specyficznoscią (>85%), łatwością pozyskania materiału, prostym sposobem oznaczenia, powtarzalnością oraz niską ceną. Powinien również posiadać zdolność wczesnego wykrywania i różnicowania choroby, być powiązany z podstawową patofizjologią schorzenia i odpowiednio zwalidowany. Jego stężenie nie powinno ulegać zmianom pod wpływem objawowo stosowanego leczenia [17, 55].

Aktualnie uznane za diagnostyczne biomarkery AD przedstawiono w Tabeli 1 [56]. Do markerów kandydujących należą m. in. neurogranina i YKL-40 w CSF oraz peptydy A β i p-tau w surowicy [57].

Do biomarkerów VaD zalicza się p-tau, A β , metaloproteazy macierzy, sulfatydy, albuminę i białko C-reaktywne (CRP) w CSF i surowicy. Są to markery czułe, jednak mało specyficzne [58].

| | Markery amyloidowe | Markery tau | Markery zapalenia |
|------------------|--|--|---|
| CSF | ↓A β 1-42 | ↑t-tau | ↑NFL |
| | ↓A β 1-42/A β 1-40 | ↑p-tau | |
| surowica | kontrowersyjne | ↑t-tau | ↑NFL |
| neuroobrazowanie | Amyloid PET (Pittsburgh Compound B, 18F-florbetapir) | Tau PET (18F-flortaucipir, 18F-RO-948) | FDG-PET (hipometabolizm) MRI (atrofia) |

Tabela 1. Biomarkery AD. NFL – łańcuchy lekkie neurofilamentów; MRI – rezonans magnetyczny; FDG-PET – badanie PET ze znakowaniem fluorodeoksyglukozą [56].

4. Cele pracy

Otępienie stanowi aktualnie jeden z najważniejszych problemów zdrowia publicznego na świecie. W większości przypadków otępienie jest chorobą przewlekłą, postępującą i nieuleczalną, a konieczność opieki nad chorymi generuje olbrzymie koszty społeczne i ekonomiczne. Ze względu na ograniczoną dostępność opieki specjalistycznej oraz niedostateczne możliwości diagnostyczne w warunkach podstawowej opieki zdrowotnej wielu chorych pozostaje nie zdiagnozowanych i nie leczonych aż do późnych stadiów choroby.

Celem przeprowadzonych badań była ocena przydatności oznaczeń w surowicy stężeń wybranych białek związanych z patogenezą otępień jako prostych, niedrogich badań przesiewowych, które mogłyby być zlecane przez lekarzy podstawowej opieki zdrowotnej pacjentom z grup ryzyka, w celu identyfikowania osób wymagających dalszej specjalistycznej diagnostyki.

W przeprowadzonym badaniu oznaczono stężenia potencjalnych biomarkerów w surowicy chorych z najczęściej występującymi otępieniami – AD, VaD i MxD oraz zdrowych osób po 60. roku życia.

Cele szczegółowe pracy obejmowały:

1. Ocenę przydatności A β 1-40, A β 1-42, t-tau i YKL-40 w diagnostyce występowania otępienia.
2. Ocenę przydatności A β 1-40, A β 1-42, t-tau i YKL-40 w różnicowaniu otępienia alzheimerowskiego, naczyniopochodnego i mieszanego.
3. Ocenę korelacji stężeń A β 1-40, A β 1-42, t-tau i YKL-40 ze stopniem zaawansowania otępienia.
4. Ocenę zmian stężeń A β 1-40, A β 1-42, t-tau i YKL-40 po czterech tygodniach hospitalizacji.

5. Materiał i metody

5.1 Uczestnicy

Badaniem objęto 60 spośród wstępnie zakwalifikowanych 100 pacjentów z otępieniem (20 z AD, 20 z VaD, 20 z MxD) oraz 20 zdrowych ochotników powyżej 60 roku życia. Uczestnicy lub opiekunowie wyrazili pisemną zgodę na udział w badaniu. Badanie przeprowadzono zgodnie z zasadami Deklaracji Helsińskiej. Protokół badania został zaakceptowany przez Komisję Bioetyczną przy Uniwersytecie Medycznym w Białymstoku (R-I-002/62/2016).

Grupy badane

Do badania wstępnie zakwalifikowano 100 pacjentów Oddziału Psychogeriatric Samodzielnego Publicznego Psychiatrycznego Zakładu Opieki Zdrowotnej w Choroszczu. Badani byli hospitalizowani z przyczyn psychiatrycznych. Przyczyną hospitalizacji pacjentów z umiarkowanym i ciężkim otępieniem były zwykle zaburzenia zachowania w przebiegu choroby podstawowej, natomiast pacjenci z otępieniem lekkim byli hospitalizowani w celu przeprowadzenia diagnostyki różnicowej lub z powodu łagodnych, innych niż otępienie zaburzeń psychicznych, na przykład zaburzeń lękowych.

Pacjenci byli przy przyjęciu badani Krótką Skalą Oceny Stanu Psychicznego (MMSE), według podręcznika PAR MMSE Clinical Guide Reorder #RO-4922. Wstępnie zakwalifikowano 100 badanych z wynikiem poniżej 23 punktów w skali MMSE i bez towarzyszących chorób zapalnych, nowotworowych i autoimmunologicznych w wywiadzie.

W kolejnym etapie u wszystkich pacjentów wykonano panel badań dodatkowych służący do wykluczenia innych przyczyn otępienia oraz współwystępowania chorób przyjętych za kryteria wyłączenia z badania, tj. przewlekłych chorób zapalnych, autoimmunologicznych i nowotworowych. Panel badań obejmował tomografię komputerową głowy, morfologię krwi obwodowej, stężenie elektrolitów – sodu, potasu i chlorków, poziom wapnia całkowitego w surowicy, stężenie mocznika i kreatyniny, aktywność transaminaz wątrobowych, stężenie białka C-reaktywnego (CRP), stężenie hormonu

tyreotropowego, stężenie kwasu foliowego i witaminy B12 oraz ocenę Geriatryczną Skalą Depresji (GDS).

W trakcie diagnostyki różnicowej wykonano również badania neuropsychologiczne przy zastosowaniu zestawu testów dobieranego przez psychologa indywidualnie, w zależności od możliwości poznawczych badanego. Stosowano między innymi: ACE-R, badanie fluencji słownej, test do badania funkcji czołowych Frontal Assessment Battery, test Stroopa, test figury złożonej Rey'a, test 15 słów Rey'a, test łączenia punktów, montrealski test funkcji poznawczych (MoCA), zeszyty Łuckiego. Rozpoznanie ustalono zgodnie z kryteriami ICD-10 przedstawionymi w Tabeli 2.

Do badania zakwalifikowano 20 osób z AD, 20 z VaD i 20 z MxD. Spośród przebadanych wstępnie 100 pacjentów wybrano chorych bez współistniejących chorób autoimmunologicznych, zapalnych i nowotworowych, z prawidłowymi wynikami badań laboratoryjnych i jak najmniej obciążonych somatycznie. Do grupy z AD zakwalifikowano wyłącznie pacjentów bez zmian patologicznych w badaniu TK głowy, za wyjątkiem zmian zanikowych kory mózgu.

Po czterech tygodniach hospitalizacji ponownie pobrano krew do oznaczeń biomarkerów oraz oceniono funkcjonowanie poznawcze przy zastosowaniu skali MMSE. W celu wykluczenia wpływu wieku i wykształcenia wyliczono skorygowaną wartość MMSE według wzoru: **skorygowany MMSE = surowy MMSE – (0.471 × [lata nauki-12]) + (0.131 × [wiek-70])** [59].

W celu oceny związku nasilenia otępienia ze stężeniami biomarkerów dokonano podziału badanych na dwie grupy: chorych z otępieniem łagodnym (MD) i umiarkowanym do ciężkiego (MSD). Za punkt odcięcia przyjęto skorygowany wynik badania skalą MMSE równy 20 punktów. W grupie z otępieniem łagodnym znalazło się 17 pacjentów (4 z AD, 7 VaD, 6 z MxD), zaś w grupie cięższej chorych – 43 osoby, w tym 16 z AD, 13 z VaD i 14 z MxD.

Grupa kontrolna

Do grupy kontrolnej zakwalifikowano 20 słuchaczy Uniwersytetu Zdrowego Seniora bez otępienia (wynik MMSE powyżej 27 pkt.) i bez towarzyszących chorób zapalnych, nowotworowych i autoimmunologicznych w wywiadzie. U osób z grupy kontrolnej pobrano krew do oznaczeń, wykonano identyczny

jak w grupie badanej panel badań laboratoryjnych oraz wykluczono obecność depresji skalą GDS.

| Otępienie | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>G1. Stwierdzenie wszystkich następujących: (1) Osłabienie pamięci najwyraźniejsze w zakresie uczenia się nowych informacji, chociaż w cięższych przypadkach odtwarzanie wcześniej nabytych wiadomości może być również zaburzone. Uszkodzenie przejawia się w odniesieniu do materiału zarówno słownego, jak i bezsłownego. Spadek należy potwierdzić obiektywnie, uzyskując rzetelny wywiad od otoczenia i uzupełniając go, jeśli można, testami neuropsychologicznymi i ilościowymi metodami oceny procesów poznawczych. (2) Spadek innych zdolności poznawczych cechujący się pogorszeniem sądzenia i myślenia, w zakresie planowania i organizowania oraz ogólnego przetwarzania informacji. Najlepiej byłoby uzyskać potwierdzenie tego stanu rzeczy od osób z otoczenia i uzupełnić, jeśli to możliwe, za pomocą testów neuropsychologicznych lub obiektywnych metod ilościowych. Należy stwierdzić pogorszenie w stosunku do wcześniejszego wyższego poziomu funkcjonowania. G2. Zachowana świadomość otoczenia (tj. brak przymglenia świadomości) przez czas wystarczająco długi dla jednoczesnego ujawnienia objawów kryterium G1. W przypadku nawarstwienia się epizodów zaburzeń świadomości (delirium) rozpoznanie należy odroczyć. G3. Spadek emocjonalnej kontroli nad motywacją albo zmiana zachowań społecznych przejawiająca się co najmniej jednym z następujących: (1) chwiejność emocjonalna, (2) drażliwość, (3) apatia, (4) prymitywizacja zachowań społecznych. G4. Wiarygodne rozpoznanie kliniczne wymaga występowania objawów kryterium G1 przez co najmniej 6 miesięcy. Jeżeli okres od ich ujawnienia się jest krótszy, rozpoznanie może być tylko przypuszczalne.</p> | | |
| AD (F00) | VaD (F01) | MxD (F00.2) |
| <p>A. Spełnione kryteria otępienia (G1-G4) B. W wywiadzie, badaniu stanu somatycznego i badaniach dodatkowych brak potwierdzenia wszelkich innych przyczyn otępienia (np. choroby naczyniowej mózgu, nabytego upośledzenia odporności, choroby Parkinsona, choroby Huntingtona, wodogłowa normotensyjnego), choroby ogólnoustrojowej (np. niedoczynności tarczycy, niedoboru witaminy B12 lub kwasu foliowego, hiperkalcemii), albo nadużywania alkoholu czy substancji psychoaktywnych.</p> | <p>G1. Spełnione ogólne kryteria otępienia (G1-G4). G2. Nierównomierne deficyty wyższych czynności korowych, z wyraźnym zajęciem pewnych funkcji i względnym zaoszczędzeniem innych. Przykładowo, pamięć może być zaburzona całkiem wyraźnie, podczas gdy myślenie, rozumowanie czy przetwarzanie informacji może wykazywać jedynie łagodny spadek. G3. Przesłanki kliniczne organicznego uszkodzenia mózgu, przejawiające się co najmniej jednym z następujących: (1) jednostronny niedowład spastyczny kończyn, (2) jednostronne wzmożenie odruchów ścięgniastych, (3) dodatni odruch podeszwowy, (4) porażenie rzekomoopuszkowe. G4. Wywiad, badanie lub testy potwierdzają wyraźnie chorobę naczyniową mózgu, którą można zasadnie uważać za powiązaną z otępieniem (np. udar w wywiadzie, stwierdzenie zawału mózgu).</p> | <p>1. Spełnione kryteria otępienia w chorobie Alzheimerera (F00), wiek wystąpienia – 65 rok życia lub później. 2. Dodatkowo, spełniony co najmniej jeden z wymogów: (a) potwierdzenie bardzo powolnego, stopniowego początku i progresji (szybkość tej ostatniej można ocenić tylko retrospektywnie, po przebiegu obejmującym okres 3 lat lub dłuższy), (b) zaburzenia pamięci G1(1) dominują nad ogólnym uszkodzeniem intelektu G2(2) – patrz ogólne kryteria dla otępienia.</p> |

Tabela 2. Kryteria ICD-10 rozpoznawania otępienia [60].

5.2 Oznaczenia laboratoryjne

Stężenia badanych biomarkerów oznaczano we krwi żyłnej pobranej z żyły łokciowej, odwirowanej i zamrożonej w temperaturze -80 stopni Celsjusza. W grupach badanych stężenia biomarkerów oznaczano w dwóch próbkach pobieranych w odstępie 4 tygodni, a w grupie kontrolnej w pojedynczych próbkach.

Stężenie YKL-40, t-tau, A β 1-42 i A β 1-40 oznaczono metodą immunoenzymatyczną ELISA z zastosowaniem gotowych zestawów laboratoryjnych USCN Life Science (Wuhan, Chiny), użytych zgodnie z zaleceniami producenta. Absorbancję mierzono czytnikiem mikroplątek Infinite M200 PRO Multimode Microplate Reader (Tecan). Wszystkie oznaczenia przeprowadzono w podwójnych próbach.

5.3 Analiza statystyczna

Analizy statystycznej dokonano przy użyciu programu GraphPad Prism 7.0 for MacOS (GraphPad Software, La Jolla, USA).

Normalność rozkładu oceniano testem D`Agostino-Pearsona i Shapiro-Wilka. Jednorodność wariancji badano testem Levene'a. Do porównań między grupami użyto ANOVA i testu Tukey'a, a w przypadku braku rozkładu normalnego - testu Kruskala-Wallisa i testu ANOVA Dunna. Korelacje między stężeniami biomarkerów oceniano przy zastosowaniu współczynnika korelacji Pearsona.

Użyteczność diagnostyczną badanych markerów oceniono z zastosowaniem krzywej ROC. Przedziały ufności dla czułości i specyficzności obliczono metodą Wilsona/Browna.

Analizę wpływu wielu zmiennych niezależnych (wieku, płci, punktacji w skali MMSE) na zmienną zależną przeprowadzono za pomocą regresji liniowej. Płeć, wiek i punktację w skali MMSE potraktowano jako zmienne niezależne.

Za poziom istotności statystycznej przyjęto $p \leq 0,05$.

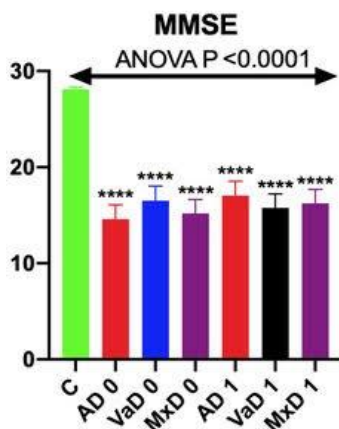
6. Wyniki

6.1 Analiza demograficzna

Analiza wariancji nie wykazała istotnych statystycznie różnic wieku i poziomu wykształcenia pomiędzy grupami. Badaniem objęto 60 kobiet i 20 mężczyzn (w tym 6 mężczyzn z AD, 4 z VaD, 5 z MxD i 5 z grupy kontrolnej).

Wyniki badań dodatkowych u wszystkich osób z grup badanych i grupy kontrolnej mieściły się w granicach normy lub wykazywały minimalne, nieistotne klinicznie odchylenia. Wszyscy pacjenci z grup badanych mieli wykonaną tomografię komputerową głowy. U żadnego z badanych nie uwidoczniono zmian mogących sugerować wtórną etiologię otępienia, takich jak ostre zmiany niedokrwienne lub krwotoczne czy guzy. Do grupy AD kwalifikowano wyłącznie chorych bez uwidoczniionych badaniem obrazowym zmian naczyniopochodnych mózgu. W skali GDS badani uzyskali wyniki poniżej 6 punktów, co pozwoliło wykluczyć występowanie depresji.

Wyniki badania skalą MMSE były porównywalne we wszystkich grupach z otępieniem i statystycznie istotnie różniły się od wyników w grupie kontrolnej, co ilustruje Rycina 1. W grupach badanych ocenę skalą MMSE przeprowadzano dwukrotnie. Wyniki na początku hospitalizacji i po 4 tygodniach jej trwania nie różniły się istotnie statystycznie.



Ryc. 1. Punktacja w skali MMSE przy przyjęciu (0) i po 4 tygodniach hospitalizacji (1). **** p vs. C <0,0001.

6.2 Analiza korelacji stężeń biomarkerów z parametrami laboratoryjnymi i punktacją w skali MMSE

Stężenie YKL-40 korelowało ze stężeniami t-tau, A β 1-42/A β 1-40, nasileniem otępienia mierzonym skalą MMSE oraz stężeniem CRP.

Stężenie t-tau korelowało ze stężeniem YKL-40 i punktacją w MMSE.

Zaobserwowano również odwrotną korelację pomiędzy stężeniem CRP a punktacją w skali MMSE. Najważniejsze korelacje przedstawiono w Tabeli 3.

| Badane parametry | R | 95% CI | P value |
|--|--------|---------------------|---------|
| YKL-40 1 & t-tau 1 | 0.36 | 0.1163 do 0.5622 | 0.005 |
| YKL-40 0 & A β 1-42/A β 1-40 0 | 0.288 | 0.03707 do 0.5052 | 0.026 |
| YKL-40 0 & MMSE 0 | -0.614 | -0.7507 do -0.4263 | <0.0001 |
| YKL-40 1 & MMSE 1 | -0.563 | -0.7145 do -0.3601 | <0.0001 |
| YKL-40 1 & CRP | 0.29 | -0.2512 do 0.2566 | 0.025 |
| t-tau 0 & MMSE 0 | -0.287 | -0.5041 do -0.03550 | 0.026 |
| t-tau 1 & MMSE 1 | -0.287 | -0.5041 do -0.03551 | 0.026 |
| MMSE 0 & CRP | -0.407 | -0.5992 do -0.1710 | 0.001 |

Tabela 3. Istotne statystycznie korelacje między biomarkerami, MMSE i parametrami zapalnymi. R – współczynnik korelacji; CI – przedział ufności; Neu - neutrofile; YKL-40 0 - YKL-40 przy przyjęciu; YKL-40 1 - stężenie YKL-40 po 4 tygodniach itd.

6.3 Stężenia biomarkerów w poszczególnych rodzajach otępienia

Stężenia biomarkerów w poszczególnych grupach przedstawia zamieszczona na kolejnej stronie Rycina 2. Stężenia YKL-40 u pacjentów ze wszystkimi podtypami otępienia, były istotnie statystycznie wyższe niż w grupie kontrolnej. Stężenia t-tau były wyższe w AD i MxD, a A β 1-40 i A β 1-42 - w AD i VaD. Wartość ilorazu A β 1-42/A β 1-40 nie różniła się istotnie pomiędzy grupami.

Analiza ROC wskazuje na wysoką czułość i swoistość YKL-40 w różnicowaniu między otępieniem a kontrolą. Najważniejsze spośród uzyskanych parametrów ROC przedstawiono w Tabeli 4. YKL-40 jest najbardziej diagnostyczny dla AD i VaD, nieco mniej dla MxD.

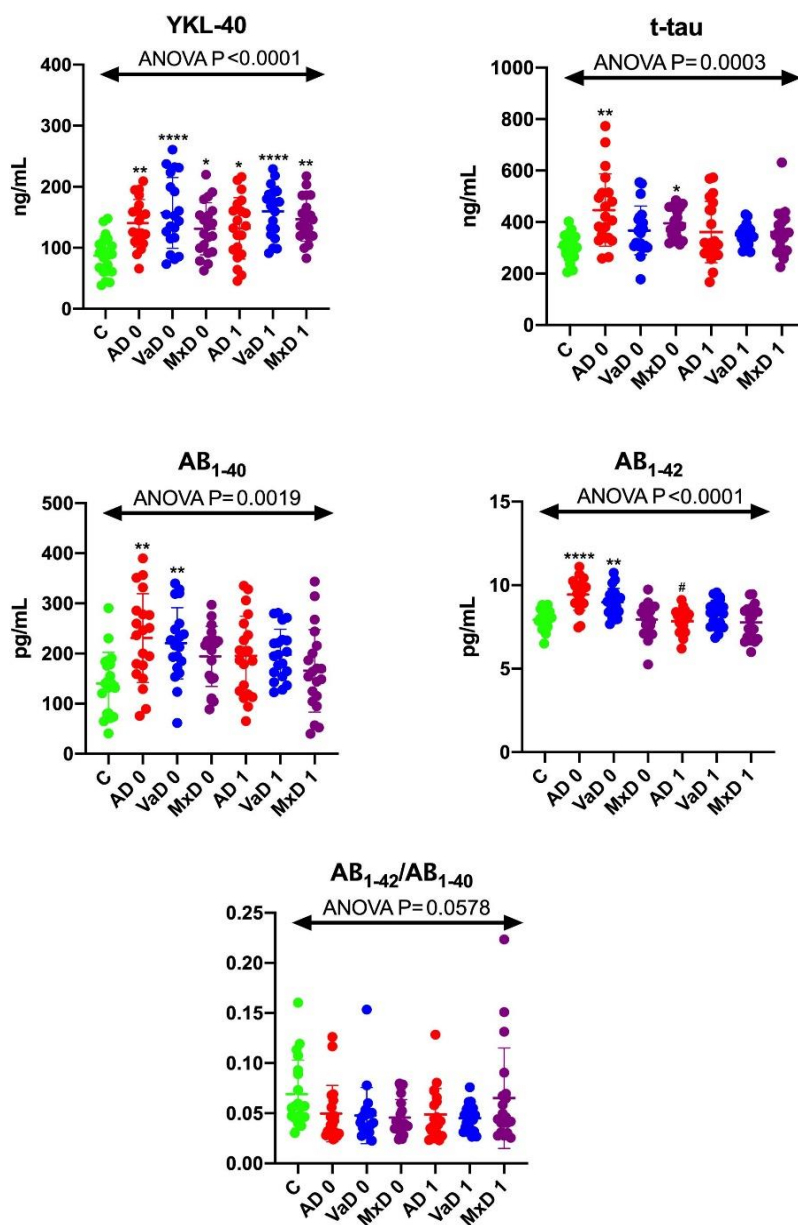
Białko tau wykrywało występowanie AD i MxD z czułością 75% i specyficznością 70%. T-tau okazało się nieprzydatne w diagnostyce VaD.

Analiza ROC nie potwierdziła przydatności diagnostycznej A β 1-40 i A β 1-42.

Uzyskane wyniki nie wskazują, by którykolwiek z biomarkerów mógł być przydatny w różnicowaniu między AD, VaD i MxD. W analizie ROC dla porównań między grupami z otępieniem uzyskiwano czułość i specyficzność rzędu 50-65%.

| | AUC | P value | Punkt odcięcia | Czułość | Specyficzność |
|---------------|--------|---------|----------------|---------|---------------|
| t-tau | | | | | |
| C vs AD 0 | 0.845 | 0.0002 | >338.4 | 75 | 70 |
| C vs VaD 0 | 0.7175 | 0.0186 | >318.3 | 60 | 55 |
| C vs MxD 0 | 0.8825 | <0.0001 | >341.4 | 75 | 70 |
| YKL-40 | | | | | |
| C vs AD 0 | 0.8625 | <0.0001 | >106.3 | 85 | 75 |
| C vs VaD 0 | 0.8525 | 0.0001 | >113.0 | 80 | 80 |
| C vs MxD 0 | 0.7975 | 0.0013 | >103.9 | 70 | 70 |

Tabela 4. Analiza ROC przydatności diagnostycznej biomarkerów w poszczególnych rodzajach otępienia.



Ryc. 2. Stężenia biomarkerów u pacjentów z otępieniem i w grupie kontrolnej przy przyjęciu i po 4 tygodniach hospitalizacji. Wyniki przedstawiono jako średnią, odchylenie standardowe (SD) oraz wartości w poszczególnych próbach. C – grupa kontrolna (n = 20); AD 0 – pacjenci z chorobą Alzheimera, próbki pobrane przy przyjęciu (n = 20); VaD 0- pacjenci z otępieniem naczyniowym, próbki pobrane przy przyjęciu (n = 20); MxD - pacjenci z otępieniem mieszanym, próbki pobrane przy przyjęciu (n = 20); AD 1 - pacjenci z chorobą Alzheimera, próbki pobrane po 4 tygodniach (n = 20); VaD 1 - pacjenci z otępieniem naczyniowym, próbki pobrane po 4 tygodniach (n = 20); MxD 1 - pacjenci z otępieniem mieszanym, próbki pobrane po 4 tygodniach (n = 20). *p < 0.05 vs. C, **p < 0.005 vs. C, ****p < 0.0001 vs. C, #p < 0.05 vs. AD 0.

6.4 Ocena zmian stężeń biomarkerów w czasie

Stężenia biomarkerów na początku hospitalizacji i po 4 tygodniach jej trwania przedstawiono na Ryc. 2. Jedynie stężenia A β 1-42 u chorych z AD istotnie statystycznie zmniejszyły się po 4 tygodniach hospitalizacji.

6.5 Analiza przydatności biomarkerów w ocenie progresji otępienia

YKL-40 okazał się czułym i specyficznym markerem rozróżniającym zdrową grupę kontrolną z otępieniem wczesnym (MD). Umiarkowaną przydatność w wykrywaniu wczesnych otępień wykazuje również t-tau (Tabela 5).

W porównaniu pomiędzy grupami z MD i MSD diagnostyczny okazał się jedynie YKL-40 wykazując czułość i specyficzność powyżej 76%.

Analiza ROC nie potwierdziła przydatności markerów amyloidowych w monitorowaniu nasilenia otępienia.

| | AUC | P value | Punkt odcięcia | Czułość | Specyficzność |
|-----------|--------|---------|----------------|---------|---------------|
| | | | <i>t-tau</i> | | |
| C vs MD | 0.8488 | <0.0001 | >341.1 | 72.09 | 70 |
| MD vs MSD | 0.6607 | 0.0539 | <377.9 | 58.82 | 58.14 |
| | | | <i>YKL-40</i> | | |
| C vs MD | 0.9128 | <0.0001 | >115.8 | 86.05 | 85 |
| MD vs MSD | 0.8263 | <0.0001 | <123.3 | 76.47 | 76.74 |

Tabela 5. Analiza ROC przydatności diagnostycznej biomarkerów w ocenie zaawansowania otępienia.

6.6 Analiza regresji wieloczynnikowej

W celu oceny wpływu wieku, płci i głębokości otępienia mierzonej skalą MMSE na uzyskane stężenia t-tau i YKL-40 przeprowadzono analizę regresji wieloczynnikowej. Uzyskane wartości p value przedstawiono w Tabeli 6.

Wiek i płeć badanych nie miały wpływu na stężenia biomarkerów. Stężenia YKL-40 i t-tau były zależne od nasilenia otępienia ocenianego na podstawie wyniku MMSE.

| Zmienna zależna | Wartości p wpływu zmiennych niezależnych | | |
|-----------------|--|--------|---------|
| | wiek | płeć | MMSE |
| t-tau | 0.6261 | 0.1003 | 0.0252 |
| YKL-40 | 0.7948 | 0.3831 | <0.0001 |

Tabela 6. Wartości p dla wpływu zmiennych niezależnych na stężenia biomarkerów uzyskane metodą regresji liniowej.

7. Dyskusja

7.1 YKL-40 jako czuły i specyficzny marker otępienia

Białko YKL-40 jest dość niespecyficznym markerem stanu zapalnego, stanowiącego trzecią obok amyloidopatii i tauopatii składową patofizjologii otępienia. Główną przyczyną aktywacji procesów zapalnych w AD jest neurozwyrodnienie, a w VaD – niedokrwienie. Dotychczas przeprowadzono niewiele badań dotyczących możliwej przydatności oznaczania YKL-40 w surowicy chorych z otępieniem.

Stężenia YKL-40 we wszystkich badanych grupach było istotnie statystycznie wyższe, niż w grupie kontrolnej, a analiza ROC potwierdziła jego użyteczność diagnostyczną w różnicowaniu między osobami zdrowymi a chorymi ze wszystkimi rodzajami otępienia – uzyskane wartości AUC wynosiły od 0,8 dla MxD do 0,86 dla AD. YKL-40 nie jest markerem zdolnym do różnicowania etiologii otępienia.

Analiza ROC pomiędzy stężeniami YKL-40 w grupie z otępieniem łagodnym, umiarkowanym do ciężkiego i grupą kontrolną wskazuje na przydatność tego białka w wykrywaniu wczesnego otępienia z czułością 86,05% i specyficznością 85%. YKL-40 może być również przydatne w monitorowaniu progresji otępienia.

Stężenie YKL-40 nie zmieniało się istotnie po 4 tygodniach hospitalizacji, co potwierdziło stabilność jego stężeń wobec stosowanych czynników leczniczych takich jak leki prokognitywne, leczenie współwystępujących chorób somatycznych i zaburzeń psychicznych oraz oddziaływania terapeutyczne.

Najpoważniejszym ograniczeniem przydatności diagnostycznej YKL-40 jest wzrost jego stężenia w chorobach zapalnych oraz nowotworowych, które stanowią częstą współchorobowość u osób starszych. Zastosowanie tego biomarkera wymagałoby zatem wykluczenia innych schorzeń mogących powodować wzrost stężenia YKL-40. Pomocnym mogłoby być dokładne zebranie wywiadu i/lub jednoczesne oznaczenie nieswoistego markera zapalnego takiego jak CRP. Zasadnym mogłoby też być zastosowanie kombinacji YKL-40 z mniej wrażliwym na występowanie współchorobowości markerem, takim jak t-tau.

Uzyskane wyniki wskazują na korelacje stężeń YKL-40 ze stężeniami białka tau, nasileniem stanu zapalnego odzwierciedlonym przez stężenie CRP oraz nasileniem otępienia mierzonym punktacją w skali MMSE, co potwierdza spójność uzyskanych wyników. Na podstawie wyników analizy regresji wykluczono wpływ płci i wieku na stężenia tego biomarkera.

Idealny biomarker powinien być powiązany z neuropatologią choroby, nie ulegać zmianom pod wpływem leczenia objawowego oraz wykazywać przynajmniej umiarkowaną czułość i wysoką (>85%) specyficzność [17]. Istotna jest również łatwość pozyskania materiału do oznaczeń, prosta metoda i niski koszt oznaczenia, oraz powtarzalność uzyskiwanych wyników [55]. Wyniki badania wskazują, że YKL-40 w surowicy jako biomarker do wykrywania otępienia we wczesnym stadium spełnia wszystkie powyższe warunki.

7.2 Białko tau jako marker wczesnych otępień alzheimerowskich

Kolejnym istotnym elementem patofizjologii AD jest gromadzenie się splątków białka tau. Podwyższone stężenia t-tau obserwuje się w tauopatiach, z których większość stanowią choroby rzadkie. Niektóre tauopatie, między innymi FTD również przebiegają z otępieniem. Powoduje to, że t-tau jest dość swoistym markerem chorób neurozwyrodnieniowych. Stężenia t-tau w surowicy korelują z jego zawartością w mózgu ocenianą badaniem PET [35].

W przeprowadzonym badaniu stężenia t-tau korelowały ze stężeniami YKL-40 oraz nasileniem otępienia w skali MMSE. Nie zaobserwowano związku stężenia t-tau ze stężeniem biomarkerów amyloidowych ani CRP.

Stężenia t-tau były istotnie statystycznie wyższe w grupach z AD i MxD niż w VaD, co wynika z patogenezy poszczególnych typów otępień. Analiza ROC nie potwierdziła przydatności t-tau w różnicowaniu etiologii otępienia, jest ono jednak czułym i specyficznym markerem do różnicowania między otępieniem w AD i MxD a osobami zdrowymi. Wartości AUC wyniosły 0,85 dla AD vs grupa kontrolna i 0,88 dla MxD vs kontrola.

T-tau wydaje się być wartościowym markerem pomimo nieprzydatności w wykrywaniu VaD. Otępienie alzheimerowskie występuje pojedynczo lub jako składnik złożonej patofizjologii u 60-80% ogółu chorych z otępieniem [5]. Tauopatia występuje również w otępieniu z ciałami Lewy'ego [38], stanowiącym kolejne 5% chorych [5], a także otępieniach czołowo-skroniowych [35] występujących u 10% chorych z otępieniem przed 65. rokiem życia i u 3% po 65 roku życia [5]. Wynika stąd, że t-tau może być markerem zdolnym do wykrywania przeważającej większości chorych z otępieniem.

Białko tau może być też przydatne w diagnostyce wczesnego otępienia niezależnie od etiologii, jednak z czułością i swoistością mniejszą niż YKL-40. Ze względu na opisane wyżej ograniczenia zastosowania YKL-40, t-tau może pełnić rolę markera dodatkowego lub zastępczego. Nie potwierdzono przydatności diagnostycznej białka tau w ocenie progresji otępienia do stadiów cięższych.

Stężenia t-tau nie zmieniły się istotnie po 4 tygodniach stosowania oddziaływań leczniczych i terapeutycznych, co potwierdza stabilność i niepodatność biomarkera na wpływ nieswoistego leczenia.

Wyniki analizy regresji wskazują, że stężenia t-tau były niezależne od płci i wieku badanych.

7.3 Markery amyloidowe

W przeprowadzonym badaniu stężenia A β 1-40 i A β 1-42 były istotnie statystycznie wyższe w grupie z AD i VaD niż w grupie kontrolnej, jednak analiza ROC nie potwierdziła ich przydatności w diagnostyce ani różnicowaniu otępień.

A β 1-42 był jedynym parametrem, którego istotny statystycznie spadek odnotowano po 4 tygodniach hospitalizacji. Spadek ten nie wiązał się jednak z poprawą funkcji poznawczych w skali MMSE. Stężenia A β 1-42 nie korelowały ze stężeniem innych biomarkerów, a analiza ROC nie potwierdziła jego przydatności w diagnostyce, różnicowaniu i ocenie progresji otępienia. Spadek stężenia A β 1-42 miał najpewniej charakter nieswoisty i mógł wynikać z ogólnej poprawy zdrowia psychicznego i/lub somatycznego w trakcie hospitalizacji.

W niniejszym badaniu nie uzyskano wyników wskazujących na przydatność diagnostyczną markerów amyloidowych, co nie dziwi w kontekście danych z pracy przeglądowej, w której wyniki kilkudziesięciu analizowanych badań markerów amyloidowych w surowicy były w znacznym stopniu niespójne. Brak przydatności diagnostycznej A β w surowicy przy jego potwierdzonej użyteczności diagnostycznej w CSF może wynikać ze zmiennej osobniczo przenikalności A β przez BBB, zmiennej szybkości eliminacji z krwi i/lub obecności we krwi A β powstałego w tkankach i narządach innych niż mózg.

7.4 Ograniczenia badania

Do najważniejszych ograniczeń badania należą: mała liczebność próby oraz kwalifikacja do badania pacjentów z prawdopodobną, a nie potwierdzoną etiologią otępienia.

Najdokładniejszymi możliwymi do wykonania przyżyciowo badaniami potwierdzającymi alzheimerowską etiologię otępienia są oznaczenia biomarkerów choroby w płynie mózgowo rdzeniowym lub badanie PET. Wykonanie nakłucia lędźwiowego wymagałoby zaangażowania osoby przeszkolonej w pobieraniu płynu mózgowo-rdzeniowego, wiązałoby się też ze zbyt dużym ryzykiem dla badanych. Z kolei PET jest badaniem kosztownym i niedostępnym w placówce, w której leczeni byli badani pacjenci. Z powyższych względów za kryteria włączenia do badania przyjęto badawcze kryteria diagnostyczne według ICD-10, przedstawione we wstępie.

Kolejnym ograniczeniem badania jest oparcie go na teście MMSE. Jest to prosty test przesiewowy, badający głównie pamięć, w mniejszym stopniu inne funkcje poznawcze. Do zalet MMSE należy szybkość wykonania, powtarzalność i dostępność wielu zwalidowanych wersji językowych, co umożliwia porównywanie badań prowadzonych w różnych ośrodkach. W procedurach diagnostycznych niniejszego badania test MMSE służył głównie za narzędzie przesiewowe. W grupach badanych wykonano wiele innych testów neuropsychologicznych, które nie mogły być jednak użyte jako narzędzie porównawcze ze względu na różny zestaw użytych testów w zależności od głębokości otępienia. MMSE był testem możliwym do wykonania u wszystkich badanych, zatem jego skorygowaną wartość przyjęto jako miarę nasilenia otępienia.

Niewielka liczebność próby stanowi niewątpliwie istotne ograniczenie wartości badania. Wydaje się jednak, że mała liczba badanych umożliwiła niejako ich bardziej rygorystyczną selekcję, gdyż pacjenci byli kwalifikowani do badania przez lekarza prowadzącego ich diagnostykę i leczenie. Posiadana wiedza na temat stanu zdrowia badanych najprawdopodobniej zmniejszyła ryzyko

pomyłek diagnostycznych oraz kwalifikacji osób z występującymi, lecz nie ujawnionymi kryteriami wyłączenia.

7.5 Znaczenie uzyskanych wyników

Skalę niedoszacowania przypadków otępienia dobrze obrazuje fakt, że u 52 spośród 60 uczestników badania rozpoznanie zostało postawione po raz pierwszy w życiu. Wiele spośród nich stanowiły osoby z otępieniem w stopniu umiarkowanym i głębokim. Do tego stanu rzeczy przyczynia się niska świadomość faktu, że zaburzenia pamięci w wieku starszym stanowią chorobę, a nie nieodzowny element starzenia się, w związku z czym obserwowane zaburzenia poznawcze rzadko są zgłaszane lekarzowi pierwszego kontaktu lub skłaniają do wizyty u specjalisty psychiatry czy neurologa. W warunkach podstawowej opieki zdrowotnej główny problem stanowi ograniczony czas wizyty oraz niewystarczające przeszkolenie i doświadczenie personelu w zakresie przesiewowej diagnostyki funkcji poznawczych. Dostępność diagnostyki specjalistycznej jest z kolei ograniczona czasem oczekiwania na wizytę, a często także odległym od miejsca zamieszkania położeniem placówki specjalistycznej, co w połączeniu z ograniczoną mobilnością chorego stanowi istotną barierę. W praktyce specjalistycznej bardzo często spotyka się z prośbami opiekunów o przyjazd na wizytę domową bądź udzielenie porady za pośrednictwem środków komunikacji zdalnej.

Rozwiązaniem wyżej opisanych problemów mogłoby być zastosowanie w podstawowej opiece zdrowotnej prostego testu przesiewowego pod postacią oznaczenia biomarkera lub biomarkerów otępienia we krwi i kierowanie do diagnostyki specjalistycznej pacjentów z dodatnim wynikiem testu [61].

Uzyskane w niniejszym badaniu wyniki, jak również potrzeba stworzenia prostego testu przesiewowego do diagnostyki otępienia w warunkach podstawowej opieki zdrowotnej uzasadniają prowadzenie dalszych badań nad zastosowaniem oznaczeń YKL-40 i t-tau we krwi jako biomarkerów otępienia.


8. Wnioski

1. Stężenia YKL-40 korelowały ze stężeniami innych markerów, CRP i punktacją w skali MMSE. Stężenia YKL-40 i t-tau były niezależne od płci i wieku.
2. YKL-40 może być przydatny w diagnostyce wszystkich rodzajów otępień, natomiast t-tau - w diagnostyce otępień z komponentą alzheimerowską.
3. Nie wykazano przydatności żadnego z biomarkerów w różnicowaniu otępień.
4. YKL-40 może być przydatne w wykrywaniu otępień wczesnych i monitorowaniu progresji otępienia.
5. T-tau może być przydatne w diagnostyce wczesnego otępienia, szczególnie gdy zastosowanie YKL-40 będzie ograniczone przez współchorobowość.
6. Po czterech tygodniach hospitalizacji zaobserwowano istotny statystycznie spadek stężeń A β 1-42 w grupie z AD, mający najprawdopodobniej charakter nieswoisty, wtórny do poprawy ogólnego stanu zdrowia.

9. Kopia pracy przeglądowej

Review

Diagnostic Utility of Selected Serum Dementia Biomarkers: Amyloid β -40, Amyloid β -42, Tau Protein, and YKL-40: A Review

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Abstract: Introduction: Dementia is a group of disorders that causes dysfunctions in human cognitive and operating functions. Currently, it is not possible to conduct a fast, low-invasive dementia diagnostic process with the use of peripheral blood biomarkers, however, there is a great deal of research in progress covering this subject. Research on dementia biomarkers in serum validates anticipated health and economic benefits from early screening tests. Biomarkers are also essential for improving the process of developing new drugs. Methods: The result analysis, of current studies on selected biomarker concentrations ($A\beta$ 40, $A\beta$ 42, t-tau, and YKL-40) and their combination in the serum of patients with dementia and mild cognitive disorders, involved a search for papers available in Medline, PubMed, and Web of Science databases published from 2000 to 2020. Results: The results of conducted cross-sectional studies comparing $A\beta$ 40, $A\beta$ 42, and $A\beta$ 42/ $A\beta$ 40 among people with cognitive disorders and a control group are incoherent. Most of the analyzed papers showed an increase in t-tau concentration in diagnosed Alzheimer's disease (AD) patients' serum, whereas results of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) groups did not differ from the control groups. In several papers on the concentration of YKL-40 and t-tau/ $A\beta$ 42 ratio, the results were promising. To date, several studies have only covered the field of biomarker concentrations in dementia disorders other than AD. Conclusions: Insufficient amyloid marker test repeatability may result either from imperfection of the used laboratorial techniques or inadequate selection of control groups with their comorbidities. On the basis of current knowledge, t-tau, t-tau/ $A\beta$ 42, and YKL-40 seem to be promising candidates as biomarkers of cognitive disorders in serum. YKL-40 seems to be a more useful biomarker in early MCI diagnostics, whereas t-tau can be used as a marker of progress of prodromal states in mild AD. Due to the insignificant number of studies conducted to date among patients with dementia disorders other than AD, it is not possible to make a sound assessment of their usefulness in dementia differential diagnostics.

Keywords: Alzheimer's disease; vascular dementia; mixed dementia; serum; biomarkers; amyloid beta; tau protein; YKL-40

1. Introduction

1.1. Dementia

Dementia is a group of multiple etiology cognitive disorders that result in daily life impediments. The most common cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease (AD) which is chronic, progressive, and leads to death of the neurodegenerative process [1].

There are two main groups of pathologies that cause dementia, i.e., neurodegenerative diseases and secondary dementias [1]. The cause of neurodegenerative diseases (proteinopathies) is accumulation

and aggregation of proteins with abnormal conformation [2], which results in death of neurons and supporting cells, leading to cognitive and motor dysfunctions [3]. Death of cells results in activation of glial cells and secretion of cytokine and chemokine by them, which leads to the chronic inflammatory process interfering with brain tissue homeostasis. Moreover, neurotoxicity of some inflammatory response products intensifies the neurodegenerative process [4]. Neurodegenerative dementia includes the following: dementia in Alzheimer's disease, dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB), frontotemporal dementia (FTD), dementia in Parkinson's disease (PDD), Huntington's disease (HD), and dementia in prion diseases.

The most common secondary dementia is vascular dementia. Approximately 10–15% of patients are only diagnosed with vascular-only dementia (VD). VD consists of subtypes of different etiology and clinical features, such as multi-infarct dementia, small vessel disease, strategic infarct dementia, hypoperfusion dementia, haemorrhagic dementia, hereditary cerebral autosomal dominant arteriopathy with subcortical infarction, and leukoencephalopathy (CADASIL) [1,5].

The observed symptoms of dementia such as depression, delirium, thyroid hormone abnormalities, vitamin deficiencies, or normotensive hydrocephalus are in potentially reversible states [1]. Chronic alcohol use is also a very common cause of dementia. In contrast to Wernicke–Korsakoff syndrome associated primarily with memory impairment, in alcoholic dementia, there are disorders in many other cognitive functions. Alcoholic dementia constitutes approximately 10% of early-onset cases and slightly more than 1% of late-onset dementia cases [6].

Dementia can be of mixed etiology, in up to half of patients, especially in senior age groups [1]. Vascular lesions occur in 40% of demented patients and usually coexist with other dementia causes. Changes caused by microinfarcts were found in around half of the patients with AD [7]. Contrary to previous diagnostic recommendations considering cerebral vascular lesions as an exclusion criterion of AD, the American Alzheimer's Association currently takes the view that dementia often results from both neurodegenerative and vascular pathologies and suggests classifying such conditions as mixed dementias [1]. An autopsy study by Schneider et al. revealed that subjects with multifactorial etiology of dementia found in the autopsy were more frequently diagnosed with dementia during life as compared to those with only one type of neuropathological change [8]. It suggests that mixed dementia (despite its heterogeneous etiology) may be a category for underdiagnosed cases, and it also has an important clinical and prognostic value. Other relatively common forms of mixed dementia include the coexistence of AD and DLB or PDD [8].

1.2. Amyloid Beta and Its Role in Dementia Process

Amyloid is a group of insoluble beta-sheet proteins that form filamentous structures. They may play a role in the pathogenesis of various diseases when accumulating as deposits in the extracellular space. Each amyloid type is formed from its specific precursor protein-like amylin, derived from the precursor islet amyloid polypeptide (IAPP), involved in the pathogenesis of insulin-dependent diabetes, or AL and AH proteins composed of light and heavy chains of immunoglobulin, resulting in primary systemic amyloidosis [9]. Except for brain tissue, the amyloid precursor protein (APP) has been identified in the thymus, heart, lungs, kidneys, muscles, adipose tissue, liver, spleen, skin, and the intestine [10].

Amyloid beta ($A\beta$) refers to oligopeptides composed of 40–42 amino acid residues, originating from the amyloid precursor protein (APP). The APP protein family includes two similar peptides, i.e., amyloid precursor-like proteins 1 and 2 (APLP1 and APLP2) [11]. The APP protein encoding gene is located on chromosome 21q21. Most of the many APP mutations exist around sequences encoding secretase splitting sites and they are responsible for early-onset, familial forms of the disease [12]. The amyloid precursor protein is transformed to oligopeptides by three enzymes, i.e., α -, β - and γ -secretase. The C-terminal fragment of APP is always cut off by γ -secretase, but the forming of $A\beta$ is determined by enzyme activity cutting off the N-terminus of either α - or β -secretase precursor peptides. Formation of $A\beta$ happens when an N-terminus fragment is cleaved by β -secretase, while the

activity of secretase α results in making a so-called secreted form of APP (s-AAP α) [13], a signal protein which is a neuron growth factor that promotes synaptogenesis and has a positive role in memory and learning processes [10]. Another factor contributing to A β formation are mutations of the γ -secretase subunits, i.e., presenilins. On the one hand, presenilins of correct structure regulate intracellular calcium balance, lysosome, and proteasome activity and counteract the effects of oxidative stress. On the other hand, presenilin mutations contribute to the formation of longer A β chains, which are more prone to aggregate into insoluble A β forms [14].

A β oligopeptides vary in the number of amino acids in the molecule. Most scientific research has focused on the fragment with 42 amino acid residues, i.e., A β 42. It is the main component of amyloid plaques found in the brain of patients with AD. A second dominant isoform of A β is peptide with a length of 40 amino acid residues. A β 40 is a less amyloidogenic form. Researchers have also suggested their role in preventing formation of A β deposits. Calculation of the A β 42/A β 40 ratio can be found in many scientific papers. A high value of this ratio is used as a predictor of cerebral amyloidopathy. Other forms of A β were also considered to be potential biomarkers, mainly A β 38 [15].

In addition to previously described overproduction, accumulation, and aggregation of A β in the brain tissue, the impaired pathological protein degradation also contributes to dementia pathogenesis. Peroxidation of the cell membrane lipids under oxidative stress results in 4-hydroxynonenal (HNE) secretion, which has an ability to modify protein structure and function. HNE lowers the catalytic activity of neprilysin, a metallopeptidase preventing the deposition of A β through degradation of mono- and oligomeric A β forms [16]. Apolipoproteins E2 and E3 (but not E4 which is one of the main AD risk factors) are capable of binding HNE through cysteine, lysine, and histidine residue, preventing the damage of other proteins [17]. HNE also increases the synthesis of A β by its binding with nicastrin, part of the gamma-secretase complex, increasing activity of this enzyme [18].

The role of A β in AD pathogenesis is described in the so-called amyloid cascade hypothesis. This theory suggests that the disease process begins with overproduction and accumulation of A β as amyloid plaques. Their presence leads to mitochondrial and synaptic damage, disrupting the homeostasis of brain tissue. This process is accompanied by microglia and astrocytes activation, which results in inflammation and oxidative stress, eventually causing the death of neurons. Furthermore, A β is considered to be a factor that activates hyperphosphorylation of tau proteins. In addition to the amyloid cascade hypothesis, there are other possible explanations of the AD pathogenesis, such as the "prion-like" action of the A β hypothesis [19]. More and more reports have shown that the amyloid cascade hypothesis has not fully explained the pathogenesis of AD. It has recently been demonstrated that amyloid-dependent memory and synaptic plasticity impairments could occur without tau [20].

On the basis of current knowledge, pathologies tied with A β are not specific for AD dementia. The existence of amyloid deposits have also been identified by PET scan in dementias other than AD, especially among seniors who have been carriers of the APOE4 allele. Ossenkoppele et al. obtained positive amyloid-PET results in as many as 83% of 80-year-old APOE4 gene carriers with DLB, 43% with FTD and 64% with VD. Among a younger group of people (around 60 years old), who were not carriers of APOE4, those percentages were respectively 29%, 5%, and 7% [21]. It is not easy to state whether those observations might result from incorrectly established clinical diagnosis or rather amyloid deposition is secondary to neuropathology of other dementia types [22]. Among non-AD dementias, the clearest relationship occurs between A β and VD. It is known that apart from the predominant atherosclerotic etiology, other angiopathies such as congophilic amyloid angiopathy (CAA) can initiate the disease process [5]. Contrary to AD, where amyloid deposits locate mainly (but not exclusively) into intercellular space, in CAA subjects, the lesions are predominately in the blood vessel walls [3]. It has been proven that the density of congophilic vascular lesions increased with the severity of cognitive impairment [7]. On the one hand, overproduction or impaired elimination of A β can also occur in other diseases. Increased amyloid peptide concentrations were found in patients diagnosed with liver tumors [23], kidney [24] and liver [25] failure, Parkinson's disease [26], obesity

and insulin resistance [27], or Down Syndrome [28]. On the other hand, a decrease in A β 42 levels in the serum has been observed in depression [29]. An increased level of A β in many conditions results in serious limitations of its use as a biomarker, especially in a multimorbid old age group. Meta-analysis published by Zhang et al. indicated that the lack of proper screening for comorbidities among the control group resulted in minor differences in the amyloid marker concentrations among groups in studies [30].

1.3. Tau Protein and Its Role in Dementia

Tau protein is a product of the MAPT gene, located on chromosome 17. It is expressed predominantly in the central nervous system [31]. This protein is found mainly inside neurons (especially in microtubule-rich axons), but also, to a lesser extent, in glial cells (astrocytes and oligodendrocytes) [32], as well as in extracellular space [33]. It locates primarily in the cytoskeletal structures of the cell, but it has also been identified in the nuclei and centrosomes [32]. The MAPT gene product undergoes alternative splicing into six different, tissue-specific tau proteins. Depending on the number of 29-amino acid inserts (0, 1 or 2), there are three isoforms, i.e., 0 N, 1 N, and 2 N. Each isoform contains three or four microglobulin binding domain repeats (3R or 4R) [32,33]. In normal conditions, the tau protein is soluble and unfolded [33].

The physiological functions of the tau protein include stabilization and polymerization of microtubules, regulation of axonal transport, neuron polarization, axon growth and elongation, protection of DNA and RNA integrity, formation of cytoskeleton actin filaments, regulation of synaptic plasticity (dendritic tau protein), as well as cell cycle regulation via tyrosine kinase, membrane interactions, synaptic transmission, and regulation of NMDA transmission through interactions with the Fyn protein [32–34]. The tau protein undergoes post-translational modifications such as phosphorylation, O-glycosylation, advanced glycation, Maillard reaction, ubiquitination, nitration, sumoylation, proline isomerization, acetylation, and truncation. The most important one of the above is the kinase-induced phosphorylation process regulating tau distribution within the cell, the transport of organelles to the somatodendritic compartment, and enabling interactions with neurotransmitters and enzymes. Under physiological conditions, tau phosphorylation occurs in response to stressors such as insulin imbalance, hunger, hypothermia, anesthesia, glucocorticoids, opiates, or alcohol [32].

Phosphorylation also enables the tau protein to aggregate [31]. Excessive aggregation of the tau protein leads to formation of neurofibrillary tangles and it occurs in medical conditions called tauopathies and in the physiological aging process [32]. The presence of tau protein inclusions in neurons or glia causes tauopathies-progressive diseases associated with cognitive, behavioral, and motor impairment. Hyperphosphorylated tau protein and its isoforms, such as p-tau-217, measured in the peripheral blood are also promising AD biomarker candidates [35].

The pathological changes caused by the hyperphosphorylated tau protein (p-tau) can be divided into the following:

1. Resulting from the loss of its physiological properties:
 - a. Axonal transport disturbance;
 - b. Actin cytoskeleton abnormalities leading to increased susceptibility of the cell to oxidative stress;
 - c. Disturbed structure and function of mitochondria, disrupting their metabolism and increasing susceptibility to oxidative stress, which leads to the death of the cell.
2. Resulting from the toxic effect of the abnormal isoform:
 - a. Activation of astrocytes and microglia to secrete proinflammatory mediators;
 - b. Disruption of synaptic transmission through the accumulation of pathological tau in postsynaptic spines;
 - c. Disturbances in proteasome degradation and autophagy [30,32].

Formation of tau protein deposits is the key pathophysiological process in primary tauopathies, while in secondary tauopathies, its origin is from other pathologies. Primary tauopathies include the subtypes of frontotemporal dementia, atypical parkinsonian syndromes, argyrophilic grain disease, and globular glial tauopathy. Considering complex (dependent also from amyloid beta) aetiopathogenesis, AD is qualified as a secondary tauopathy [36]. Other conditions, secondary to the tau protein pathology are the aging process (primary tauopathy related to age, astriogliopathy related to age), Down syndrome, prion diseases, post-traumatic encephalopathy (dementia pugilistica), amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, parkinsonism-dementia complex, postencephalitic parkinsonism, and some rare diseases such as progressive subcortical gliosis, diffuse neurofibrillary tangles with calcification, “tangle-only dementia”, Hallervorden–Spatz disease, Niemann–Pick type C disease, subacute sclerosing panencephalitis, myotonic dystrophy, non-guanamian motor neuron disease with neurofibrillary tangles, meningioangiomas, and tuberous sclerosis [32]. Neurofibrillary changes have also been identified post mortem in subjects without any dementia characteristics. There is an assumption that in such cases the disease was present in an asymptomatic state [7].

It is believed that the concentration of tau protein in CSF relates to the degree of brain cells damage [37]. Tau protein is secreted from neurons to the cerebrospinal fluid, where it penetrates through the blood-brain barrier and the arachnoid granules to the bloodstream, which is why it can be identified in peripheral blood [38]. Results of studies show the correlation between total tau protein (t-tau) concentration in serum and its brain tissue levels assessed by PET scan [39,40].

1.4. YKL-40: An Inflammatory Marker in Dementia

More and more data show the key role of the inflammatory process (neuroinflammation) in AD pathogenesis. Most of all, microglia cells and astrocytes are present in the CNS inflammatory response. These cells are activated by proinflammatory cytokines, as well as A β and APP, causing the release of neurotoxic proinflammatory cytokines and reactive oxygen forms, and resulting in intensification of the inflammatory process and oxidative stress [41]. This knowledge resulted in taking the interest of inflammatory mediators as potential AD biomarkers.

Chitinase 3-like protein 1 (CHI3L1), also named YKL-40, human cartilage glycoprotein-39 (hcgp-39), or breast regression protein (BRP-39), is ranked among the chitinase family (glycosidic hydrolases). It is an acute-phase protein secreted into extracellular matrix through connective tissue cells (neutrophils, monocytes, macrophages, coming from monocytes, dendritic cells, osteoclasts, chondrocytes, synovial cells), vascular smooth muscle cells, glandular epithelium, and also thru other cells within an inflammatory state in response to inflammatory cytokines such as TNF-alpha, INF-gamma, IL-1beta, and IL-6 [42,43]. Some cancerous cells also have the ability of YKL-40 secretion [44].

In the inflammatory process, YKL-40 acts as an acute-phase protein that regulate proliferation, adhesion, migration, and cells differentiation. To date, the known functions of YKL-40 are the following:

- connective tissue repair process, i.e., connective tissue growth stimulation, bonding and fibrillogenesis of collagen, modulating of inflammatory cytokines impact on fibroblasts;
- stimulation of epithelial cells migration;
- modulation, adhesion, and migration of vascular smooth muscle cells;
- stimulation of alveoli macrophages to metalloproteinases and chemokines secretion;
- increase in auxiliary lymphocytes Th2 response caused by antigens;
- regulation of oxidative stress response;
- regulation of apoptosis process (i.e., prevention of epithelial cells apoptosis);
- stimulation of M2 macrophages differentiation;
- suppression of mammary gland epithelial cells differentiation [42,43,45].

Studies have described the relationship between YKL-40 and AD (occurrence of increased YKL-40 expression areas, concentrating mainly on astrocytes surface, around amyloid plaques and blood vessels, with amyloid angiopathy in patients with AD brain [46]), and the relationship between APOE4

genotype and YKL-40 concentration in cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) [47]. This was also supported by an experiment conducted by Choi et al., who found, in mice disease model, decreased APP expression and an improvement of rodents' cognitive functions after administration of substance suppressing CHI3L1 activity [48]. The relationship between neuroinflammation and described biomarkers in AD are shown on Figure 1.

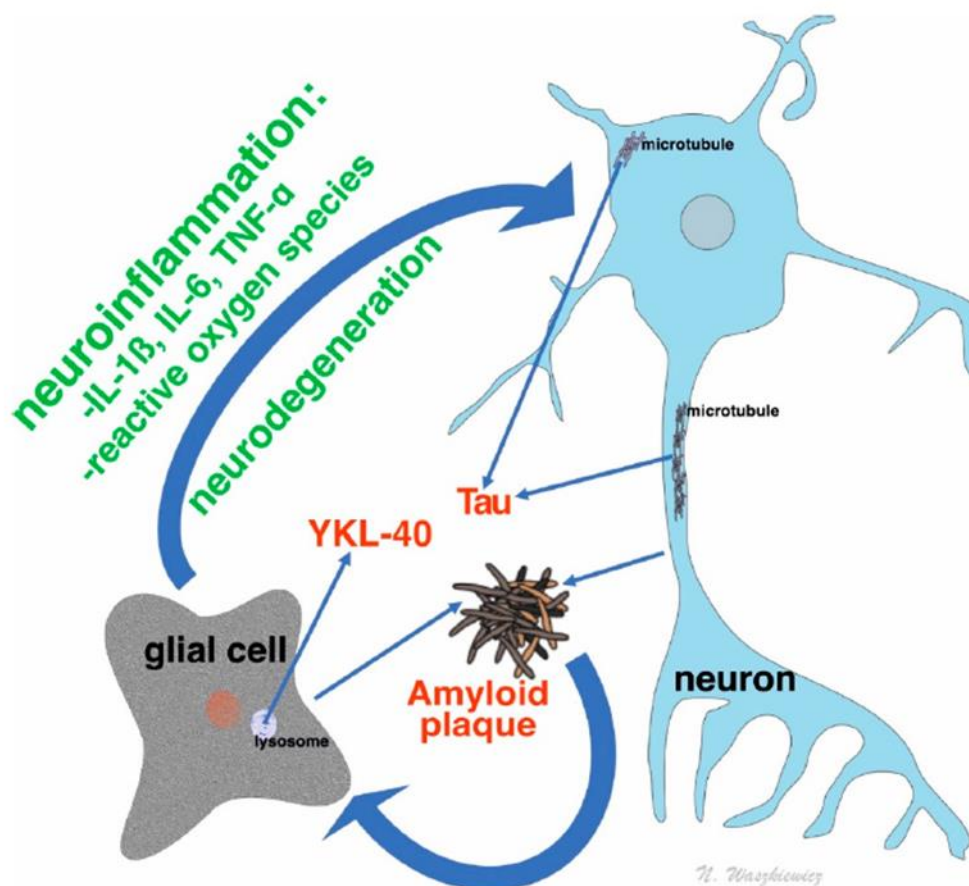


Figure 1. The role of neuroinflammation and neurodegeneration processes in the formation of dementia protein biomarkers, i.e., amyloid, tau, and YKL-40. IL-1b, interleukin 1 beta; IL-6, interleukin 6; TNF-a, tumor necrosis factor alpha.

YKL-40 diagnostic utility is limited by its non-specificity. An increased concentration of this protein was found in various types of cancer, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases [43], bacterial, viral, and parasitic infections [44]. An increase in serum YKL-40 concentration was also documented in VD and mixed dementia with vascular risk factors, such as metabolic syndrome [49], coronary heart disease [50], atrial fibrillation [51], and obstructive sleep apnea [52]. Xu et al. concluded, in a group of patients with prehypertensive state, that the disease could be preceded by an increase in YKL-40 concentration [53]. In the first days after an ischaemic stroke, an increase in this marker was proportional to the volume of the stroke site and the severity of symptoms [54].

An increase in YKL-40 expression was observed in tissues and bodily fluids other than serum, for example, in motor cortex and spinal cord of patients with atrophic lateral sclerosis [55], in hippocampus of schizophrenia patients [56], or in CSF of elderly woman with suicidal thoughts [57]. On the one hand, increased YKL-40 immunoreactivity in brain, correlating with tau protein, was observed in tauopathies other than AD [58]. On the other hand, studies conducted by Isgren et al. have shown that decreased concentration of YKL-40 in CSF of patients with bipolar disorders was preceded by episodes of mania or hypomania [59].

1.5. Practical Aspects of Using Dementia Biomarkers

Many studies conducted, to date, have proven that brain lesions precede the occurrence of clinical symptoms of disease even by 20 years [1], which gives hope to use these observations for development of early detection and prevention methods. Efforts that have been undertaken to use proteins involved in disease pathogenesis as biomarkers have proven that they can inform about disease existence even in the asymptomatic stage and they also correlate with disease intensification when neuropathological changes buildup [60].

Considering potential application, the following can be singled out:

- predictive biomarkers for estimating disease in the preclinical stage, and for estimating clinical prognosis;
- diagnostic biomarkers in precise differential diagnosis;
- biomarkers for healing response and assessing the effectiveness of therapy;
- surrogate markers for estimating the influence of therapeutic intervention on selected pathophysiological processes;
- trait markers, strictly tied to disease characteristics (e.g., mutations);
- condition markers (e.g., enzymes) for monitoring progression of disease [22].

Diagnosis and monitoring of dementia are carried out mainly by clinical assessment and neuropsychological tests. It is only possible to diagnose the disease in the symptomatic stage, and the given diagnosis is considered to be probable [22]. Regular neuropsychological assessment, which is recommended as an early dementia diagnosis tool, is not fulfilling its role. The main causes of this situation are (among others) the long waiting time for an appointment and very short duration of visits. In standard healthcare, a common problem is also inaccurate screening performance and interpretation of cognitive functioning of patients. This results from insufficient training and experience of primary care staff. The key step is the referral of a patient to a specialist by a general medical practitioner. Adequate biochemical markers could be an inestimable tool in the hands of family physicians, facilitating selection of patients in need of specialist treatment [61]. Regardless of health benefits, early AD diagnosis could significantly reduce treatment and care costs generated by patients [1].

Usage of biomarkers in dementia diagnostics could aid early diagnosis, monitoring of disease severity, and recovery prognosis. It could also help in the development of more personalized pharmacotherapy by adequate recruiting and grouping of subjects, as well as assessment, in clinical trials, of test drug effectiveness and dosage [15]. The role of biomarkers in the development process of new drugs is crucial because of verification of patients included in clinical trials, for example, the PET amyloid test showed that many of the patients were falsely classified as AD patients [62]. In the future, proper selection and use of biomarkers may enable the development of personalized therapy for every individual patient, such as in modern oncological treatment standards [15,61]. However, the current goal, in studies on AD biomarkers, is to achieve a cost-efficient screening test with high negative (not necessarily high positive) predictive value, which should have the ability to identify AD cases on a large scale [61].

An ideal diagnostic marker should be characterized by at least moderate sensitivity and high specificity (>85% [22]), ease of obtaining research material, easy determination method, repeatability, and low cost [60]. It should also have the ability to identify disease in the early stage and differentiate it from other dementias, reflecting the neuropathology of the examined disease. Another important characteristic of a valuable biomarker is the absence of concentration changes due to the influence of the used symptomatic treatment [22]. Currently, on the one hand, biomarker identification in cerebrospinal fluid (A β 42, t-tau, p-tau) requires qualified personnel that can use a more invasive, expensive, and often non-refundable procedure for material extraction [60,63]. Use of the CSF extraction procedure is limited to a wide-range population and its repeatability, which calls in to question its usability in standard healthcare or in clinical trials [15]. Survival assessment of the occurrence of A β deposits

with the PET method is very costly and often non-refundable, moreover it is associated with exposure to a radioactive substance [63]. On the other hand, collecting a blood sample and its analysis is a routine procedure that does not require additional personnel training and it is repeatable and possible to perform in various conditions [61].

Imprecise measurement of the concentration of marker in peripheral blood due to its low blood-brain barrier (BBB) permeability [60], possible proteolysis of tested protein in peripheral blood, and its fast elimination by liver or kidneys are the main elements that limit the capability of using biomarkers from peripheral blood. Moreover, blood is a fluid with a high concentration of various proteins, posing a risk of obtaining false-positive results with insufficient specificity of applied tests [61,64]. Therefore, imperfections of available markers may be minimized by application of several different test panels [60].

The aim of this review is to gather and summarize studies conducted to date, on using selected proteins that can act as dementia biomarkers in blood material, for example, A β 40 and A β 42 amyloids, tau protein, as well as its phosphorylation products (p-tau) and YKL-40 protein.

2. Experimental Section

For the analysis of acquired studies and their results on concentrations of selected biomarkers in the blood of dementia patients, the search for works about human research published in English scientific journals in Medline, Pubmed, and Web of Science databases was conducted with the use of keywords such as "amyloid beta", "tau protein", "YKL-40 OR CHI3L1" AND "dementia OR alzheimer*" AND "plasma OR serum or blood". Considering the possibility of outdated laboratory techniques influencing results, the search was limited only to studies from 2000 to 2020. Among the acquired search results, only cross-sectional studies with a control group and a test group with dementia and mild cognitive impairments (MCI) were qualified for comparison. Review articles and prospective studies were excluded. Studies on biomarkers in other than plasma or serum biological material, as well as studies on specific isoforms of the markers, were excluded. We also did not qualify research made on specific groups, i.e., corpses, children, patients with concomitant diseases (e.g., Down syndrome), or patients with undefined dementia etiology. Some groups of patients were investigated in more than one article, in such cases, only one methodologically best study was taken into account. Papers with no significance level "p" value for comparison among groups and in which test or control groups consisted of less than 10 people were also excluded. The results obtained in groups other than dementia and MCI were not included in the tables. The number of search results in each database is listed in the Table 1.

Table 1. Search results in each database.

| Biomarker | Database | Found | Qualified | Qualified Total |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-------|-----------|-----------------|
| Amyloid beta | Medline | 1698 | 41 | 50 |
| | PubMed | 1709 | 40 | |
| | Web of Science | 7133 | 48 | |
| T-tau | Medline | 405 | 15 | 20 |
| | PubMed | 397 | 16 | |
| | Web of Science | 1547 | 14 | |
| YKL-40 | Medline | 14 | 4 | 5 |
| | PubMed | 11 | 3 | |
| | Web of Science | 38 | 5 | |
| Amyloid beta and t-tau combination | Medline | 281 | 5 | 4 |
| | PubMed | 255 | 5 | |
| | Web of Science | 960 | 5 | |

3. Results

3.1. Amyloid Markers A β 40, A β 42, and A β 40/42 Ratio

According to the adopted criteria, 50 studies comparing concentrations of A β 40, A β 42, and their ratio were selected from the search results. A total number of 7303 patients with dementia or MCI and people from control groups without any cognitive disorders were examined in these studies. In 31 studies, the ELISA method was used for identification; in eight studies, the immunomagnetic reduction method (IMR) was used; in six studies, the fluorescence in multiplex immunology test method (xMAP) was used; and in two studies, the single molecular array method (Simoa) was used. In one study, identification was made using the immunoblot method [65]. The most recent from the covered studies [66] was conducted by carbon nanotubes array (CNT).

The A β 40 concentration was tested in 43 trials, listed in Table 2. The obtained results are highly incoherent. Statistically significant differences among groups were found in only 24 trials, whereas, in 10 of the trials, the concentrations of A β 40 were (contrary to general trend) higher in the control group. In 39 trials, AD patients were investigated. Twenty trials compared MCI subjects to cognitively normal controls. The inconsistency of results did not depend on the method used. A large part of research gave statistically not significant results (12 out of 20 for ELISA, three out of eight for IMR, two out of five for xMAP).

In 48 of the selected studies, there was a comparison of A β 42 among groups. In 32 of them, the results were statistically significant. In most of the comparisons, the A β 42 concentrations were higher in control groups, but in as many as 13 cases higher concentrations of A β 42 were identified in patients with dementia or MCI rather than in the control group. Among the methods repeated in several studies, it was noteworthy that, in all seven studies conducted using the IMR method, the A β 42 levels were significantly higher in the AD or MCI groups than in the controls. In addition, studies based on ELISA or xMAP method gave very inconsistent results.

Table 2. Studies on Aβ40, Aβ42, and Aβ40/Aβ42 in serum.

| Study | N | Groups (n) | Aβ40 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42/Aβ40 (SD or CI) | p | Method |
|----------------------------------|------|--|--|----------------|---|---|--|--------------------------|--------|
| Mehta et al., 2000 [67] | 65 | AD (36), HC (29) | AD 272 (100–770) HC 219 (35–490) | 0.005 | AD 73 (25–880) HC 81 (25–905) | >0.05 | - | - | ELISA |
| Sobów et al., 2005 [68] | 158 | AD (54), MCI (39), HC (35) | AD 168.7 (32.2) MCI 160.1 (20.2) HC 160.1 (15.2) | >0.05 | AD 37.8 (10.3) MCI 56.8 (9.3) HC 36.3 (6.3) | <0.001 (MCI vs. AD + HC) | AD 4.6 (0.9) MCI 2.9 (0.6) HC 4.5 (0.6) | <0.001 (MCI vs. AD + HC) | ELISA |
| Pesaresi et al., 2006 [69] | 324 | AD (146), MCI (89), HC (89) | - | - | AD 38 MCI 52 HC 54 | <0.01 (AD vs. MCI + HC) | - | - | ELISA |
| Fagan et al., 2007 [70] | 114 | AD CDR1 (16), AD CDR0.5 (33), HC-CDR0 (65) | AD CDR 1 AD CDR 0.5 CDR 0 191 (61.3) | 0.51 | AD CDR1 36 (37.2) AD CDR0.5 41 (38.9) CDR0 36 (29.4) | 0.76 | Aβ40/42 AD CDR1 9.25 (7.0) AD CDR0.5 7.78 (6.5) CDR0 8.64 (8.9) | 0.82 | ELISA |
| Abdullah et al., 2007 [71] | 213 | AD (67), HC (146) | Serum AD 183.01 (6.23) HC 134.33 (2.79) Plasma AD 103.38 (4.27) HC 80.66 ± 1.86 | <0.05 <0.01 | Serum AD 9.87 (0.82) HC 9.02 (0.40) Plasma AD 4.53 (0.52) HC 5.66 (0.31) | >0.05 >0.05 | AD 0.064 (0.011) HC 0.076 (0.005) AD 0.053 (0.008) HC 0.061 (0.006) | <0.05 >0.05 | ELISA |
| Baranowska-Bik et al., 2008 [72] | 124 | mildAD (29), m-sAD (28), HC (67) | - | - | HC > mildAD > mod-sevAD | <0.05 (mild vs. m-sAD) <0.01 (HC vs. mildAD) | - | - | ELISA |
| Xu et al., 2008 [73] | 268 | AD (113), HC (155) | AD 112 (39.51) pmol/L HC 95.38 (32.30) | <0.0002 | AD 10.29 (13.80) pmol/L HC 12.13 (12.29) | <0.0001 | Aβ40/42 AD 14.42 (10.00) HC 8.34 (3.83) | <0.0001 | ELISA |
| Ait-ghezala et al., 2008 [74] | 175 | AD (73), HC (102) | AD 91.99 (5.02) HC 81.04 (2.94) | <0.05 | AD 1.91 (0.14, 6.84) HC 2.82 (0.59, 5.38) | >0.05 | AD 0.015 (0.002, 0.097) HC 0.032 (0.008, 0.065) | >0.05 | ELISA |
| Roher et al., 2009 [75] | 38 | AD (17), HC (21) | AD 424.06 (147.73) HC 344.41 (132.43) | 0.088 | AD 139.91 (77.82) HC 124.71 (42.34) | 0.448 | AD 0.35 (0.16) HC 0.44 (0.30) | 0.292 | ELISA |
| Sedaghat et al., 2009 [76] | 35 | AD (29), HC (16) | - | - | AD 16.2 (2.6) HC 13.4 (1.4) | >0.05 | - | - | ELISA |
| Luis et al., 2009 [77] | 78 | AD (25), MCI (13), HC (40) | AD 181 (13.78) MCI 158 (17.55) HC 158 (7.65) | >0.05 | AD 13.89 (2.00) MCI 23 (5.93) pg/mL HC 10 (1.84) | 0.015 0.02 (MCI vs. HC) | AD 0.086 (0.013) MCI 0.161 (0.045) HC 0.071 (0.014) | 0.021 | ELISA |
| Cammarata et al., 2009 [78] | 293 | MCI (191), HC (102) | MCI 294.7 (20.86) HC 315.6 (23.64) | >0.05 | MCI 26.62 (2.68) HC 16.46 (1.46) | <0.01 | MCI 0.12 (0.02) HC 0.09 (0.01) | <0.01 | ELISA |
| Lui et al., 2010 [79] | 1032 | AD (186), MCI (122), HC (724) | AD 155.1 (44.2) MCI 152.9 (51.5) HC 153.4 (40.2) | 0.877 | AD 30.0 (10.2) MCI 30.2 (11.9) HC 32.4 (9.7) | <0.001 | AD 0.199 (0.056) MCI 0.216 (0.120) HC 0.221 (0.097) | 0.001 | ELISA |

Table 2. Cont.

| Study | N | Groups (n) | Aβ40 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42/Aβ40 (SD or CI) | p | Method |
|--------------------------------|-----|--|---|--|--|---|--|---|--------|
| Konno et al., 2011 [80] | 49 | AD (39), HC (21) | AD 378 (113) HC 254 (63) | <0.0001 | - | - | - | - | ELISA |
| Han et al., 2012 [81] | 343 | AD (112), VD (85), other dementias—OD (30), HC (116) | AD 90.7 (8.7) VD 93.6 (12.3) OD 93.1 (11.0) HC 92.4 (13.0) | >0.05 | AD 32.1 (3.0) VD 37.3 (7.5) OD 37.2 (5.5) HC 37.7 (7.6) | <0.001 | AD 0.29 (0.07) VD 0.4 (0.09) OD 0.4 (0.08) HC 0.41 (0.09) | <0.001 | ELISA |
| Zhang et al., 2013 [82] | 326 | AD (153), VD (53), HC (120) | AD 97.7 (30.6) VD 98.2 (20.5) HC 92.6 (26.7) | >0.05 | AD 11.5 (2.9) VD 13.2 (3.1) HC 13.3 (3.7) | <0.001 (AD vs. HC) <0.01 (AD vs. VD) | AD 0.12 (0.03) VD 0.14 (0.02) HC 0.14 (0.01) | <0.001 (AD vs. HC, AD vs. VD) | ELISA |
| Huang et al., 2013 [83] | 34 | AD (18), MCI + HC (16) | - | - | AD 17.19 (21.9) MCI + HC 7.31 (5.3) | 0.079 | - | - | ELISA |
| Ruiz et al., 2013 [84] | 140 | AD (51), MCI (36), HC (53) | AD 51 (16) MCI 58.9 (16) HC 44.4 (14) | <0.002 | AD 10.8 (7.5) MCI 14 (18) HC 13 (12) | <0.002 (n/s) | - | - | ELISA |
| Wang et al., 2014 [85] | 273 | AD 97 MCI 54 HC 122 | AD 59.10 (20.30) MCI 51.66 (26.03) HC 43.14 (22.57) | MCI vs. HC 0.027 MCI vs. AD 0.063 AD vs. HC <0.001 | AD 47.10 (2.29) MCI 47.49 (0.93) HC 47.53 (1.97) | 0.944 MCI vs. HC 0.474 MCI vs. AD 0.468 AD vs. HC | - | - | ELISA |
| Tzikas et al., 2014 [86] | 55 | AD (28), HC (27) | AD 39.65 (8.08) HC 36.30 (6.68) | 0.171 | AD 3.38 (2.34) HC 3.39 (2.64) | 0.849 | - | - | ELISA |
| Krishnan et al., 2014 [87] | 105 | AD (30), VD (35), HC (40) | - | - | AD 164.66 (66.76) VD 148.17 (60.24) HC 86.10 (43.75) | <0.001 (AD vs. HC, VD vs. HC) >0.05 (AD vs. VD) | - | - | ELISA |
| Kleinschmidt et al., 2015 [88] | 94 | AD (15), MCI (14), HC 18–30 years (13), HC 40–65 (13), HC 66–85 (19) | HC 66–85 > AD > HC 40–65 > MCI > HC 18–30 | <0.05 for AD vs. MCI <0.01 for MCI vs. HC 66–85 | HC 66–85 > HC 18–30 > HC 40–65 > AD > MCI | <0.05 for AD vs. HC 66–85 and MCI vs. HC 66–85 | HC 18–30 > HC 40–65 > HC 66–85 > MCI > AD | <0.01 (AD vs. HC 66–85) <0.05 (MCI vs. HC 66–85) | ELISA |
| Jiao et al., 2015 [89] | 285 | AD (156), HC (129) | AD 86.2 (55.5) HC 60.2 (34.7) | <0.001 | AD 68.4 (61.9) HC 49.3 (27.7) | 0.001 | - | - | ELISA |

Table 2. Cont.

| Study | N | Groups (n) | Aβ40 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42/Aβ40 (SD or CI) | p | Method |
|-----------------------------|-----|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|------------|
| Igarashi et al., 2015 [90] | 153 | AD (70), MCI (50), HC (33) | Median AD 51.0 pmol/L MCI 50.0 HC 51.4 | >0.05 | Median AD 6.4 pmol/L MCI 6.2 HC 6.9 | >0.05 | Median Aβ40/42 AD 8.2 MCI 7.8 HC 6.9 | 0.01 (AD vs. HC) <0.05 (MCI vs. HC) | ELISA |
| Kim et al., 2015 [91] | 146 | AD (100), HC (46) | AD 58.7 (20.2) HC 54.2(25.0) | 0.371 | AD 9.0 (4.0) HC 10.4 (3.5) | 0.003 | Aβ40/42 AD 6.8 (2.1) HC 5.0 (1.7) | 0.000 | ELISA |
| Poljak et al., 2016 [92] | 251 | AD (39), MCI (93), HC (129) | AD 155.82 (75.11) MCI 233.64 (100.56) HC 254.85 (145.72) | AD vs. HC p < 0.001 MCI vs. HC p = 0.14 | AD 18.34 (32.10) MCI 37.58 (74.38) HC 65.63 (217.04) | <0.001 (AD vs. HC) 0.005 (MCI vs. HC) | AD 0.20 (0.64) MCI 0.23 (0.49) HC 0.26 (0.59) | <0.001 (AD vs. HC) 0.019 (MCI vs. HC) | ELISA |
| Grewal et al., 2016 [93] | 75 | 3 groups of 15 (aMCI) and 10 (HC) women of different races | LA aMCI 127.63 (23.76) CA aMCI 160.51 (25.91) AA aMCI 106.28 (9.57) LA HC 104.81 (18.66) CA HC 96.02 (20.24) AA HC 103.33 (14.77) | LA p < 0.05 CA p = 0.0001 all groups p = 0.0001 | LA aMCI 40.38 (4.76) CA aMCI 33.21 (2.81) AA aMCI 26.48 (2.61) LA HC 23.69 (2.34) C HC 34.82 (4.00) AA HC 26.95 (4.05) | <0.005 (LA) >0.05 (CA, AA) | LA aMCI 0.3 (0.05) CA aMCI 0.16 (0.01) AA aMCI 0.41 (0.19) LA HC 0.4 (0.31) C HC 0.46 (0.09) AA HC 0.3 (0.05) | >0.05 | ELISA |
| Yamashita et al., 2016 [94] | 36 | AD (18), HC (18) | AD 103.6 (11.8) fmol/mL HC 81.2 (9.8) | >0.05 | AD 25.0 (5.3) HC 18.5 (2.8) | >0.05 | AD 0.3 (0.1) HC 0.3 (0.0) | >0.05 | ELISA |
| Rani et al., 2017 [95] | 90 | AD (45), HC (45) | - | - | AD 174.87 (62.15) HC 90.62 (42.35) | <0.001 | - | - | ELISA |
| Sun et al., 2018 [96] | 137 | AD (76), HC (61) | AD 215.25 (54.26) HC 144.62 (47.20) | <0.001 | AD 123.48 (45.89) HC 91.35 (36.39) | <0.001 | - | - | ELISA |
| Chen et al., 2018 [97] | 126 | AD (96), HC (30) | AD 649.68 (132.21) HC 423.52 (100.99) | <0.001 | AD 322.25 (76.04) HC 219.21 (62.51) | <0.001 | Aβ40/42 AD 2.13 (0.66) HC 2.15 (0.95) | >0.05 | ELISA |
| Bibi et al., 2007 [65] | 85 | AD (15), AD-CVD (20), VD (15), PD/PDD (20), HC (15) | AD 0.199 (0.099) AD-CVD 0.197 (0.083) VD 0.270 (0.103) PD/PDD 0.185 (0.069) HC 0.209 (0.087) | <0.05 (VD vs. HC) remaining p > 0.05 | AD 0.022 (0.007) AD-CVD 0.023 (0.013) VD 0.022 (0.008) PD/PDD 0.023 (0.007) HC 0.025 (0.007) | >0.05 | - | - | immunoblot |

Table 2. Cont.

| Study | N | Groups (n) | Aβ40 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42/Aβ40 (SD or CI) | p | Method |
|------------------------------|------|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|--------|
| Le Bastard et al., 2009 [98] | 162 | AD (48), non-AD (46), MCI (39), HC (29) | - | - | AD 40.5 (32.8–50.9) non-AD 42.1 (33.1–48.6) MCI 44.3 (38.3–55.8) HC 38.9 (31.0–46.1) | 0.174 | - | - | xMAP |
| Le Bastard et al., 2010 [99] | 147 | AD (50), non-AD (50), HC (47) | AD 306.8 (268.7–336.8) non-AD 292.7 (238.9–334.9) HC 284.8 (240.6–333.6) | 0.347 | AD 40.4 (32.1–50.8) non-AD 41.7 (33.4–48.0) HC 39.4 (29.4–46.7) | 0.506 | AD 0.135 (0.110–0.160) non-AD 0.152 (0.122–0.185) HC 0.137 (0.111–0.153) | 0.056 | xMAP |
| Sundelöf et al., 2010 [100] | 213 | AD (101), MCI (84), HC (28) | AD 145.9 (64.3) MCI 166.8 (57.1) HC 91.9 (28.5) | <0.05 (AD vs. HC and MCI vs. HC) | AD 28.5 (10.7) MCI 36.9 (11.7) HC 22.0 (9.2) | <0.05 (AD vs. HC and MCI vs. HC) | - | - | xMAP |
| Chou et al., 2016 [101] | 781 | AD (592), MCI (119), HC (170) | AD 173.1 (79.3) MCI 178.7 (54.6) HC 171.6 (64.3) | 0.807 (AD vs. MCI) 0.318 (AD vs. HC) | AD 23.8 (15.1) MCI 23.6 (12.5) HC 23.7 (12.6) | 0.899 (AD vs. MCI) 0.969 (MCI vs. HC) | AD 0.15 (0.25) MCI 0.14 (0.07) HC 0.15 (0.08) | 0.904 (AD vs. HC) 0.189 (MCI vs. HC) | xMAP |
| Hsu et al., 2017 [102] | 335 | AD (177), MCI (60), HC (108) | AD 170.3 (63.9) MCI 171.1 (54.5) HC 143.7 (34.9) | 0.0001 (AD vs. HC) 0.0013 (MCI vs. HC) | AD 37.2 (14.1) MCI 34.9 (9.5) HC 33.6 (10.2) | 0.025 (AD vs. HC) 0.38 (MCI vs. HC) | AD 0.232 (0.095) MCI 0.210 (0.06) HC 0.239 (0.064) | 0.14 (AD vs. HC) 0.0032 (MCI vs. HC) | xMAP |
| Hanon et al., 2018 [103] | 1040 | AD (501), aMCI (417), naMCI (122) | AD 263 (80) aMCI 269 (68) naMCI 272 (52) | 0.04 | AD 36.9 (11.7) aMCI 38.2 (11.9) naMCI 39.7 (10.5) | 0.01 | - | - | xMAP |
| Uslu et al., 2012 [104] | 60 | AD (18), MCI (16), HC (26) | AD 53.21 (34.69) MCI 47.98 (16.20) HC 65.84 (13.47) | >0.05 | AD 34.22 (31.62) MCI 22.66 (20.83) HC 15.79 (0.56) | 0.001 (AD vs. HC) | AD 0.6906 (0.3363) MCI 0.4502 (0.1864) HC 0.2464 (0.0370) | <0.001 (AD vs. HC and MCI vs. HC) | IMR |
| Chiu et al., 2012 [105] | 60 | AD (18), MCI (16), HC (26) | AD 53.21 (34.69) MCI 47.98 ± 16.20 HC 65.84 (13.47) | >0.05 | AD 34.22 (31.62) MCI 22.66 (20.83) HC 15.79 (0.56) | 0.001 (AD vs. HC) | AD 0.6906 (0.3363) MCI 0.4502 (0.1864) HC 0.2464 (0.0370) | AD vs. MCI p < 0.001 MCI vs. HC p < 0.0001 | IMR |
| Tzen et al., 2014 [106] | 45 | AD (14), MCI (11), HC (20) | AD 36.9 (1.6) MCI 41.4 (1.8) HC 60.9 (6.4) | <0.001 | AD 18.9 (0.3) MCI 17.2 (0.3) HC 15.9 (0.3) | <0.001 | AD 0.52 (0.07) MCI 0.42 (0.07) HC 0.26 (0.03) | <0.001 | IMR |
| Lee et al., 2017 [107] | 140 | AD (62), HC (78) | AD 43.9 (22.1) HC 61.1 (6.3) and 60.7 (6.9) | <0.001 | AD 23.2 (18.4) HC 15.8 (0.3) and 16.0 (0.5) | <0.001 | AD 0.55 (0.23) HC 0.26 (0.03) and 0.27 (0.04) | <0.001 | IMR |

Table 2. Cont.

| Study | N | Groups (n) | Aβ40 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42 Concentration [pg/mL] (SD or CI) | p | Aβ42/Aβ40 (SD or CI) | p | Method |
|------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|---|--------|
| Teunissen et al., 2018 [108] | 106 | AD 63 HC 43 | AD 17.9 (4.3) HC 15.5 (2.1) | <0.001 | - | - | - | - | IMR |
| Tang et al., 2018 [109] | 79 | AD (21), VD (34), HC (24) | HC > VD > AD | 0.01 (AD vs. HC) <0.01 (VD vs. HC) | AD > VD > HC | <0.05 (AD vs. HC) <0.01 (AD vs. VD) <0.05 (VD vs. HC) | - | - | IMR |
| Fan et al., 2018 [110] | 80 | AD (16), MCI (25), HC (39) | AD 39.5 (5.8) MCI 41.5 (3.9) HC 59.2 (11.1) | <0.001 (AD vs. HC, MCI vs. HC) | AD 19.0 (2.7) MCI 17.0 (2.0) HC 16.1 (1.8) | <0.001 (AD vs. MCI, MCI vs. HC) | - | - | IMR |
| Tsai et al., 2019 [111] | 90 | AD (37), MCI (40), HC (13) | AD 51.7 (3.7) MCI 51.9 (4.9) HC 51.8 (5.1) | >0.05 | AD 17.4 (1.0) MCI 17.0 (0.7) HC 16.7 (0.7) | <0.05 (AD + MCI vs. HC) | AD 0.338 (0.032) MCI 0.330 (0.035) HC 0.326 (0.035) | >0.05 | IMR |
| Startin et al., 2019 [28] | 54 | AD (27), HC (27) | AD 160.80 (43.60–420.00) HC 144.40 (26.88–355.60) | 0.506 | AD 13.32 (4.28–18.84) HC 14.76 (2.00–45.62) | 0.710 | AD 0.08 (0.04–0.11) HC 0.10 (0.07–0.17) | <0.001 | Simoa |
| Janelidze et al., 2016 [112] | | AD (57), MCI (214), HC (274) | AD 244.3 (105.8) MCI 287.6 (77.0) HC 276.7 (66.1) | <0.001 (AD vs. HC) <0.0001 (AD vs. MCI) | AD 13.2 (7.3) MCI 18.8 (6.1) HC 19.6 (5.2) | <0.0001 (AD vs. HC) <0.0001 (AD vs. MCI) | AD 0.057 (0.022) MCI 0.066 (0.015) HC 0.073 (0.023) | 0.0001 (AD vs. HC) 0.002 (MCI vs. HC) 0.003 (AD vs. MCI) | Simoa |
| Shi et al., 2009 [113] | 155 | MCI (68), HC (87) | MCI 157.65 (64.50) HC 183.76 (61.87) | 0.011 | MCI 5.95 (2.60) HC 8.14 (3.12) | 0.000 | - | - | Simoa |
| Kim et al., 2020 [66] | 40 | AD (20), HC (20) | AD 184 (67.8) HC 159 (78.0) | 0.26 | AD 6.49 (5.02) HC 19.3 (15.5) | <0.001 | AD median approx. 0.1 HC median approx. 0.05 (from the graph) | <0.000001 | CNT |

SD, standard deviation; CI, confidence interval; AD, Alzheimer’s disease; MCI, mild cognitive impairments; HC, control group; CDR, clinical dementia rating; VD, vascular dementia; PD, Parkinson’s disease; mildAD, AD in mild level; m-sAD, moderate and severe AD; non-AD, dementia of etiology other than AD; aMCI, amnesic MCI subtype; naMCI, non-amnesic MCI subtype; ELISA, immunoenzymatic method; IMR, immunomagnetic reduction method; CNT, carbon nanotube array.

The amyloid peptide concentration ratio was assessed in 29 studies. In nine cases, the results were not statistically significant. Among the comparisons that were statistically significant, in 11 cases, the Aβ42/Aβ40 concentration ratio was higher in the control groups and, in seven cases, it was higher in the study groups. In two of the studies, the Aβ42/Aβ40 ratio was similar in the AD and control groups and significantly higher than in the MCI groups [68,102]. The results varied depending on laboratory methods use. None of the three studies using xMAP gave statistically significant results, while, in four out of five IMR studies, the Aβ42/Aβ40 ratio was significantly higher in the AD or MCI groups than in the controls. The results obtained in ELISA studies were highly inconsistent.

3.2. Tau Protein

Twenty cross-sectional tests, conducted to date, on t-tau concentration in patients with dementias and MCI serum, and which meet the search criteria, are listed in Table 3. One work included two separately examined cohorts [114]; 16 patients with AD and 12 patients with MCI were examined. Single tests referred to FTD (t-tau significantly higher than in control group [115]) and VD (t-tau significantly lower than in AD and higher than control group [87,109]). The identification of tau protein was conducted in seven studies by the Simoa method, in six studies by the ELISA method, in six studies by the IMR method, and in one study by CNT. The absolute values of t-tau concentration identified by the single molecule array (Simoa) method were lower by one to two orders of magnitude than values acquired by other methods.

Table 3. Studies on t-tau concentration in serum.

| Study | N | Groups (n) | Tau Concentration in Serum (SD or CI) [pg/mL] | p | Method |
|----------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|---|---|--------|
| Chiu et al., 2014 [116] | 60 | AD (10), MCI (20), HC (30) | AD 53.9 (11.7) MCI 32.7 (5.8) HC 15.6 (6.9) | <0.01 (MCI vs. AD) >0.05 (MCI vs. HC) | IMR |
| Tzen et al., 2014 [106] | 45 | AD (14), MCI (11), HC (20) | AD 46.7 (2.0) MCI 33.5 (2.2) HC 13.5 (5.5) | <0.001 | IMR |
| Lee et al., 2017 [107] | 140 | AD (62), HC (78) | AD 47.5 (18.9) HC 15.0 (7.3) and 14.9 (5.5) | <0.001 | IMR |
| Tang et al., 2018 [109] | 79 | AD (21), VD (34), HC (24) | AD > VD > HC | <0.001 (AD vs. HC) <0.01 (AD vs. VD) <0.05 (VD vs. HC) | IMR |
| Yang et al., 2018 [117] | 73 | AD (21), MCI (29), HC (23) | AD 37.54 (12.29) MCI 32.98 (10.18) HC 18.85 (10.16) | < 0.001 (AD vs. HC + MCI) >0.05 (MCI vs. HC) | IMR |
| Tsai et al., 2019 [111] | 90 | AD (37), MCI (40), HC (13) | AD 27.1 (4.8) MCI 24.5 (4.0) HC 22.5 (3.4) | <0.05 | IMR |
| Wang et al., 2014 [85] | 273 | AD (97), MCI (54), HC (122) | AD 213.95 (44.57) MCI 209.61 (39.65) HC 214.94 (43.23) | 0.457 (MCI vs. HC) remaining comparisons p > 0.05 | ELISA |
| Krishnan et al., 2014 [87] | 105 | AD (30), VD (35), HC (40) | AD 458.62 (253.82) VD 718.3 (326.24) HC 879.19 (389.53) | <0.05 (AD vs. VD) <0.001 (AD vs. HC) | ELISA |
| Jiao et al., 2015 [89] | 285 | AD (156), HC (129) | AD 227.1 (102.2) HC 181.0 (103.2) | <0.001 | ELISA |
| Shekhar et al., 2016 [118] | 113 | AD (39), MCI (37), HC (37) | AD 47.49 (9.00) MCI 39.26 (7.78) HC 34.92 (6.58) | <0.001 (AD vs. HC) <0.001 (AD vs. MCI) 0.059 (MCI vs. HC) | ELISA |
| Rani et al., 2017 [95] | 90 | AD (45), HC (45) | AD 451.76 (240.82) HC 836.93 (369.31) | <0.001 | ELISA |

Table 3. Cont.

| Study | N | Groups (n) | Tau Concentration in Serum (SD or CI) [pg/mL] | p | Method |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|--------|
| Jiang et al., 2019 [119] | 238 | AD (110), HC (128) | AD 26.14 (11.52) HC 15.02 (9.04) | <0.001 | ELISA |
| Dage et al., 2016 [120] | 439 | MCI (161), HC (378) | MCI 4.34 HC 4.14 | 0.078 | Simoa |
| Mattson et al., 2016 [114] | 563 + 547 (two cohorts) | I: AD (179), MCI (195), HC (189), II: AD (61), MCI (212), HC (274) | AD 3.12 (1.50) and 5.37 (2.56) MCI 2.71 (1.32) and 5.46 (2.71) HC 2.58 (1.19) and 5.58 (2.51) | 0.0017 and 0.58 (AD vs. MCI + HC) | Simoa |
| Mielke et al., 2017 [121] | 458 | MCI (123) HC (335) | MCI 4.5 (1.8) HC 4.2 (1.5) | 0.28 | Simoa |
| Deters et al., 2017 [122] | 508 | AD (168), MCI (174), HC (166) | AD 3.13 (1.3) MCI 2.81 (1.2) HC 2.71 (1) | 0.002 (AD vs. MCI + HC) | Simoa |
| Mielke et al., 2018 [39] | 267 | AD (40), MCI (57), HC (172) | AD 7.2 (2.8) MCI 5.9 (2.8) HC 5.9 (1.9) | 0.029 (AD vs. MCI) 0.001 (AD vs. HC) >0.05 (MCI vs. HC) | Simoa |
| Foiani et al., 2018 [115] | 176 | BvFTD (71), PPA (83), HC (22) | BvFTD 1.96 (1.07) PPA 2.65 (2.15) HC 1.67 (0.50) | <0.05 (FTD vs. HC) | Simoa |
| Shi et al., 2019 [113] | 155 | MCI (68), HC (87) | MCI 3.71 (2.3) HC 3.56 (1.84) | 0.865 | Simoa |
| Kim et al., 2020 [66] | 40 | AD (20), HC (20) | AD 32.2 (16.4) HC 13.4 (13.2) | <0.001 | CNT |

SD, standard deviation; CI, confidence interval; AD, Alzheimer's disease; MCI, mild cognitive impairments; HC, control group.

In 14 studies, t-tau concentration was higher as compared with a control group; in five studies, there was no significant difference; and in two studies [87,95], t-tau concentration was higher in the control group. A significantly higher concentration of t-tau protein in AD as compared with a control group was identified in 13 out of 16 studies, and AD as comparing with MCI in eight of nine studies. In addition, in studies comparing t-tau concentration between MCI and the control group, results indicating diagnostic usability of this marker were achieved in only two out of 12 comparisons.

In all six studies using the IMR method and in five out of six studies performed with ELISA determination, tau levels were significantly higher in AD/MCI patients. Simoa gave less consistent results, i.e., in three out of eight cohorts the differences among groups did not reach the statistical significance.

3.3. Amyloid Markers and Total Tau Protein Combinations

In database searches, there were four studies on t-tau/A β 42 ratio as a dementia biomarker in serum. The results are listed in Table 4. In three studies, the t-tau/A β 42 concentration ratio was higher in the control group than in the AD group, but, in one of them, this difference was not statistically relevant. The age gap between the AD groups and control groups could have influenced the obtained results from this study [28]. In the Krishnan et al. study, the combination of both markers was characterized by significantly higher diagnostic sensitivity in differentiation of AD from healthy subjects (90.3%, AUC 0.991), than each separate marker (80.6%), but specificity for t-tau, A β 42, and markers ratio hovered around 67% [87]. Kim et al. acquired a higher t-tau to A β 42 concentration ratio level in the test group, using a new identification technique [66]. Assessment of t-tau/A β 42 in serum was also conducted by Park et al. Authors of this study did not provide a comparison among groups (AD, MCI, HC), but they were searching for a correlation of acquired biomarkers ratio to existence or non-existence of tau protein deposits by the use of PET. The researchers managed to show a relation between biomarkers concentration ratio and occurrence of tauopathy within cingulate gyrus, temporal, prefrontal, and orbitofrontal cortex [40].

Table 4. T-tau/Aβ42 diagnostic usability studies.

| Study | N | Groups (n) | T-tau/Aβ42 (SD/CI) | p | Method |
|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|---|---|--------|
| Krishnan et al., 2014 [87] | 105 | AD (30), VD (35), HC (40) | AD 3.42 (2.66) VD 5.76 (3.84) HC 15.06 (10.64) | <0.05 (AD vs. VD) <0.001 (AD vs. HC and VD vs. HC) | ELISA |
| Rani et al., 2017 [95] | 90 | AD (45), HC (45) | AD 3.08 (2.35) HC 13.36 (4.42) | <0.001 | ELISA |
| Startin et al., 2019 [28] | 54 | AD (27), HC (27) | AD 10.23 (0.77-52) HC 10.59 (1.14-82.25) | >0.05 | Simoa |
| Kim et al., 2020 [66] | 40 | AD (20), HC (20) | AD median about 5.5 HC median 2 (read from the figure) | <0.000001 | CNT |

SD, standard deviation; CI, confidence interval; AD, Alzheimer’s disease; MCI, mild cognitive impairments; HC, control group.

Moreover, diagnostic usability of the t-tau/Aβ42 ratio identified by IMR method was assessed in two other studies. The results obtained by Chiu et al. pointed to 80% sensitivity and 82% specificity of the biomarker ratio in AD as compared with MCI, as well as 96% sensitivity and 97% specificity for the cognitive impairments group (AD and MCI) as compared with healthy subjects. The authors did not provide the p value for comparisons among groups [123]. In the Tsai et al. study, the difference between a cognitively impaired group and a control group was statistically relevant (p < 0.05), but in the AD and MCI groups the acquired values of the biomarker ratio overlapped (respectively 473.2 ± 107.4 and 418.3 ± 80.3) [111].

3.4. YKL-40

The adopted search criteria were met by five studies that focused on diagnostic and prognostic usability assessment of YKL-40 in MCI and dementia in serum of patients. Their results are listed in Table 5.

Table 5. YKL-40 concentration in serum studies.

| Study | N | Groups (n) | YKL-40 Concentration in Serum (SD or CI) [ng/mL] | p | Method |
|----------------------------------|-----|--|---|--|--------|
| Craig-Schapiro et al., 2010 [45] | 237 | AD (CDR1 and CDR0.5), HC | AD (CDR1): 91.9 (15) AD (CDR 0.5): 81.1 (8) HC (CDR 0): 62.5 (3.4) | 0.031 (AD CDR1 vs. HC) 0.046 (AD CDR0.5 vs. AD) | ELISA |
| Choi et al., 2011 [124] | 141 | AD (61), MCI (41), HC (35) | AD: 376.86 (54.1) MCI:176.49 (25.69) HC: 96.91 (11.02) | 0.014 (AD vs. HC) 0.008 (AD vs. MCI) | ELISA |
| Grewal et al., 2016 [93] | 75 | 15 (aMCI) and 10 (HC) women of white race (CA), Afro-Americans (AA) and people of Latino origin (LA) | LA aMCI 114.08 (30.02) CA aMCI 93.39 (12.70) AA aMCI 54.26 (10.12) LA HC 54.2 (8.37) CA HC 70.92 (15.96) AA HC 54.66 (14.42) | 0.033 (LA) 0.418 (CA) 0.988 (AA) | ELISA |
| Surendranatan et al., 2018 [125] | 35 | DLB (19), HC (16) | DLB 64.150 (46.616) HC 43.034 (28.357) | 0.115 | ELISA |
| Villar-Pique et al., 2019 [126] | 315 | CJD (78), AD (50), DLB (34), FTD (17), VD (22), ND (44), HC (70) | DLB: 167 (157) CJD: 189 (167) FTD: 125 (108) VD: 140 (150) AD: 133 (110) ND: 95 (61) HC: 84 (84) | <0.001 (CJD vs. HC) remaining p > 0.05 | ELISA |

SD, standard deviation; CI, confidence interval; AD, Alzheimer’s disease; MCI, mild cognitive impairments; HC, control group; CDR, clinical dementia rating; CA, Caucasian race; AA, African American race; LA, Latino-American race; aMCI, amnesic MCI subtype; VD, vascular dementia; CJD, Creutzfeld–Jakob disease; DLB, dementia with Lewy bodies; FTD, frontotemporal dementia; ND, neurological diseases other than dementia.

Briefly, the findings of these five studies were the following:

1. Craig-Schapiro et al. found a statistically relevant increase in YKL-40 concentration in serum with disease progress which corresponded with results from CSF [45].
2. Choi et al. suggested that YKL-40 could be highly useful in the diagnostic of MCI progression to mild AD. This was supported by the highest marker increase among these groups and the correlation of acquired results with patient functioning, measured by the CDR scale at this stage of disease progression diagnosis [127]. The results of this study do not clearly reinforce the prognostic value of YKL-40 in serum, but they suggest its diagnostic usability in combination with other markers (A β 42, tau, and p-tau) [124].
3. Grewal et al. examined women with amnesic MCI subtype from various ethnicity groups. Statistically significant concentration differences of YKL-40 among subgroups were identified only in the Latin American group. In addition, other measured biomarkers showed the differences of sensitivity among ethnic groups [93]. Amnesic type MCI is a state highly predisposing to AD, contrary to non-amnesic types which are the bases for developing other dementias. The results of prospective studies show that, every year, dementia is developed in 10–15% of patients with MCI [128].
4. Surendranathan et al. did not shown any statistically significant YKL-40 concentration differences between patients with DLB and a control group [125].
5. Villar-Pique et al. did not obtain any statistically relevant differences between AD patients and a control group. The acquired results were significantly divergent across groups. Among the tested groups, highly increased YKL-40 concentrations were observed in patients with CJD ($p < 0.001$) and to a lesser degree in patients with LBD ($p < 0.05$). The authors hypothesized that the crucial factor influencing the concentration of the marker in peripheral blood may be the damage level of the blood-brain barrier in the course of primary disease [126].

4. Discussion

In dozens of studies, conducted to date, comparing the concentrations of A β 40, A β 42, and A β 42/A β 40 in blood of dementia and MCI patients, the results have been incoherent. This constitutes a fairly surprising observation regarding the crucial role of A β in AD pathogenesis and proven diagnostic value of amyloid markers in CSF. The incoherence of the observed results suggest that A β concentration in serum does not reflect its level in brain tissue and CSF. It is equally probable that not enough restrictive selection of a control group regarding comorbidities or imprecision of used laboratorial methods could have had an influence on these results.

Tau protein is characterized by higher specificity than other markers. In common, typically for the elderly somatic disorders, there was no increase in its concentration. The concentration of tau protein increases mainly in tauopathies, from which many of them are rare diseases. Therefore, t-tau may be the preferred marker in patients with somatic ailments. The most common tauopathy, other than AD, is FTD. The t-tau concentration in serum is increased in both of these diseases, however it seems that regarding specific FTD symptoms (behavioral problems preceding dementia and distinctive aphasia) differentiation of these diseases may not be a major diagnostic problem. According to many experts, tau protein hyperphosphorylation and its accumulation in the form of neurofibr tangles is secondary to amyloidopathy. The results of studies have highlighted that the lack of an increase in t-tau, in patients with MCI, could possibly be confirmation of this theory. T-tau may, thus, serve as a marker of progression from MCI to AD. However, it seems useless in asymptomatic stages and MCI diagnostics.

The past failure to identify a single, sensitive, and specific dementia serum marker implies attempts using combinations of more than one biomarker. In several studies, conducted to date, comparing values of t-tau and A β indicator, the acquired results were promising, and therefore this seems to be a good reason for further studies.

There are not many works on using YKL-40 in dementia diagnostics. Studies by Craig-Schapiro et al. [45], Choi et al. [124], and Grewal et al. [93] have given hope for its use in diagnostics of early stage dementias (MCI and mild stage AD). Less promising results were acquired by Villar-Pique et al. [126]. Due to the increase in this marker in many other diseases, there is an assumption that its usage may be limited only to the patients without any somatic comorbidity.

Considering the results of amyloid markers separately for individual laboratory methods, we noticed some differences. In the case of amyloid markers, on the one hand, almost all tests performed with the IMR method gave consistent, statistically significant results, in contrast to the determinations by ELISA or xMAP. On the other hand, the Simoa method, often used for the determination of tau protein concentrations, in the analyzed works, gave much less consistent results as compared with ELISA and IMR. Therefore, it seems that the laboratory method used may influence the obtained results.

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Serum Amyloid Biomarkers, Tau Protein and YKL-40 Utility in Detection, Differential Diagnosing, and Monitoring of Dementia

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Introduction: The diagnosis and treatment of dementia is one of the greatest challenges in contemporary health care. The widespread use of dementia biomarkers would improve the quality of life of patients and reduce the economic costs of the disease. The aim of the study was to evaluate the usefulness of proteins related to the Alzheimer's disease pathogenesis—amyloid beta isoform (A β) and total tau protein (t-tau), as well as the quite recently discovered marker YKL-40 in the most common types of dementia.

Methods: 60 dementia (AD—Alzheimer's disease, VaD—vascular dementia, MxD—mixed dementia) and 20 cognitively normal subjects over 60 years old were examined. Subjects with dementia of etiology different than AD or VaD and with neoplastic or chronic inflammatory diseases were excluded. Concentrations of A β 40, A β 42, t-tau, and YKL-40 were measured in serum using ELISA kits on admission and after 4 weeks of inpatient treatment. ANOVA and Tukey's test or Dunn's test were used to perform comparison tests between groups. Correlations were measured using Pearson's coefficient. Biomarker diagnostic utility was assessed with ROC analysis.

Results: YKL-40 differentiates between cognitively normal and mild dementia patients with 85% sensitivity and specificity and t-tau with 72% sensitivity and 70% specificity. YKL-40 and t-tau concentrations correlate with each other and with the severity of clinically observed cognitive decline.

Conclusions: YKL-40 is a sensitive and specific biomarker of early dementia and, to a lesser extent, of dementia progression, however, many comorbidities may influence its levels. In such conditions, less specific but still reliable t-tau may serve as an alternative marker. Obtained results did not confirm the diagnostic utility of amyloid biomarkers.

Keywords: Alzheimer's dementia (AD), vascular dementia (VaD), mixed dementia, amyloid beta, tau protein, YKL-40 (chitinase 3-like 1), serum

INTRODUCTION

Dementia is a group of diseases causing cognitive dysfunction and disturbing functioning in everyday life (1). According to World Health Organization, around 50 million people in the world have dementia and every year there are nearly 10 million new cases (2).

The most common cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease (AD), found in 60–80% of dementia cases. AD is a primary degenerative disease resulting from the accumulation of amyloid beta (A β) plaques in the perineural spaces and fibrillary tangles composed of tau protein inside neurons, leading to nerve cell damage and death. In about half of AD patients, another predominantly vascular cause of dementia coexists, which is classified as mixed dementia (MxD). Vascular dementia (VaD) is the second most common cause of dementia and it accounts for 10% of total dementia cases, while in another 30% it is a component of MxD (1).

The diagnosis of dementia is often made too late due to the insufficient availability of specialistic healthcare and lack of training of personnel (3). To date, the use of AD biomarkers is limited by their high cost, low availability, and invasiveness of the CSF collection procedure (3). A diagnostic test based on a serum biomarker could be widely used, as blood collection is cheaper, faster, less invasive, and more acceptable for the patient (4). An ideal biomarker should give reliable and reproducible results, be inexpensive and easy to use (5), and be related to the neuropathology of the disease, and validated in neuropathologically confirmed cases. It should also be detectable in the early stages of dementia and not be affected by applied treatment. It has been considered that an acceptable level of sensitivity and specificity of the AD biomarker is >85% (4). Biomarkers may also be used to assess the likelihood of preclinical disease occurrence and further prognosis, differential diagnosis, therapeutic response, or disease progression (4). In the process of drug development, biomarkers could help in subject selection and group assignment, as well as in the study drug evaluation (5).

Due to their key role in the pathogenesis of AD, amyloid markers and tau protein are considered as potential biomarkers of dementia in serum. A β 1-42 is the major component of amyloid plaques, negatively correlating with the burden of amyloid deposits in the brain tissue, while A β 1-40 is a more soluble, less amyloidogenic form which may even protect against A β deposition (5). Amyloidopathy also occurs in VaD as cerebral amyloid angiopathy (6). Some studies have yet confirmed the correlation between blood A β 1-42 and A β 1-40 concentrations and the presence of AD (7–9), while the results of other studies contradicted this thesis (10–12). The concentrations of amyloid markers in vascular dementia have been also investigated (13).

The second key element of AD pathogenesis is tauopathy (5). Some studies have confirmed the increase of total tau protein (t-tau) in the serum of AD (14–16) and FTD subjects (17). In a study including a VaD group, the highest t-tau concentrations were obtained in AD, an intermediate in VaD, and the lowest in controls (13).

An inflammatory marker YKL-40 is also considered as a potential biomarker of dementia (18), neoplastic

diseases, and chronic inflammation (19). The increase in YKL-40 concentration in AD results from the activation of proinflammatory cells due to cell death caused by the accumulation of beta amyloid (20). Therefore far, the increase in the concentration of this marker in AD has been confirmed in two cross-sectional studies (21, 22).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Subjects with dementia were recruited among patients of the psychiatric hospital in Choroszcz, Poland. All subjects gave their informed consent before participation in the study. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of Medical University of Białystok (R-I-002/62/2016).

Examined subjects were hospitalized for psychiatric reasons. Patients with more severe cognitive decline were hospitalized for disorders associated with dementia (e.g., behavioral symptoms), while those with mild dementia—for in-depth neurocognitive diagnosis or for other mental disorders (e.g., anxiety disorders). First, they were prescreened with Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE) according to the PAR MMSE Clinical Guide Reorder #RO-4922. The cut-off MMSE score was set on 23 points. After prescreening, 100 demented patients without inflammatory and neoplastic comorbidities were included.

Subsequently, to exclude secondary dementia, all of them underwent: brain computed tomography and blood tests: morphology, sodium, potassium, chloride, total calcium, urea, creatinine, aspartate aminotransferase (AST), alanine aminotransferase (ALT), C-reactive protein, thyroid stimulating hormone, folic acid, and vitamin B12. In all subjects, laboratory test results were either within the normal range or showed slight, clinically insignificant deviations from the reference values (Supplementary Table 1). Due to the possibility of a decrease in cognitive functioning secondary to depression, the presence of depression was excluded using the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS).

The diagnosis of dementia subtypes was established clinically by experienced clinical psychologists and psychiatrists based on the case history, observation, computed tomography (presence or absence of vascular lesions in the central nervous system) and a battery of neuropsychological tests selected individually for each patient. The tests were matched to the individual level of cognitive functioning and included tools such as ACE-R, Verbal Fluency Test, Frontal Assessment Battery, Stroop test, Rey Complex Figure Test, Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test, Trail Marking Test. Patients with clinical features of primary dementia other than AD, such as Lewy body dementia or FTD, were not eligible for the study. The final diagnosis was made based on ICD-10 research criteria [Table 1; (23)].

Of the 100 prescreened subjects, 60 patients with dementia were finally qualified for biomarker determinations, including 20 with AD, 20 with VaD, and 20 with MxD with Alzheimer's and vascular features. The subjects chosen from prescreened group had the lowest burden of comorbidities in order to minimize

TABLE 1 | ICD-10 dementia research diagnostic criteria used in the study (2,3).

| DEMENTIA | | |
|---|--|--|
| G1. Evidence of each of the following: | | |
| (1) A decline in memory, which is most evident in the learning of new information, although in more severe cases, the recall of previously learned information may be also affected. The impairment applies to both verbal and non-verbal material. The decline should be objectively verified by obtaining a reliable history from an informant, supplemented, if possible, by neuropsychological tests or quantified cognitive assessments. For example, the individual has difficulty in registering, storing and recalling elements in daily living, such as where belongings have been put, social arrangements, or information recently imparted by family members. | | |
| (2) A decline in other cognitive abilities characterized by deterioration in judgement and thinking, such as planning and organizing, and in the general processing of information. Evidence for this should be obtained when possible from interviewing an informant, supplemented, if possible, by neuropsychological tests or quantified objective assessments. Deterioration from a previously higher level of performance should be established. Activities are increasingly restricted and poorly sustained. | | |
| G2. Preserved awareness of the environment [i.e., absence of clouding of consciousness (as defined in F05, criterion A)] during a period of time long enough to enable the unequivocal demonstration of G1. | | |
| G3 A decline in emotional control or motivation, or a change in social behavior, manifest as at least one of the following: (1) emotional lability; (2) irritability; (3) apathy; (4) coarsening of social behavior. | | |
| G4. For a confident clinical diagnosis, G1 should have been present for at least 6 months; if the period since the manifest onset is shorter, the diagnosis can only be tentative. | | |
| AD (F00) | VaD (F01) | MxD (F00.2) |
| A. The general criteria for dementia (G1 to G4) must be met. | G1. The general criteria for dementia (G1 to G4) must be met. | A. All of the AD criteria, except from the absence of cerebrovascular disease met. |
| B. There is no evidence from the history, physical examination, or special investigations for any other possible cause of dementia (e.g., cerebrovascular disease, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, normal pressure hydrocephalus), a systemic disorder (e.g., hypothyroidism, vit. B12 or folic acid deficiency, hypercalcaemia), or alcohol- or drug-abuse. | G2. Unequal distribution of deficits in higher cognitive functions, with some affected and others relatively spared. Thus memory may be quite markedly affected while thinking, reasoning and information processing may show only mild decline. | B. VaD criteria met. |
| | G3. There is clinical evidence of focal brain damage, manifest as at least one of the following: (1) unilateral spastic weakness of the limbs; (2) unilaterally increased tendon reflexes; (3) an extensor plantar response; (4) pseudobulbar palsy. | |
| | G4. There is evidence from the history, examination, or tests, of a significant cerebrovascular disease, which may reasonably be judged to be etiologically related to the dementia (e.g., a history of stroke; evidence of cerebral infarction). | |

the possible impact of these diseases and their treatment on the study results. Assessment of the MMSE scale was performed by the same investigator twice (at the beginning and after 4 weeks of treatment) in the study group. Raw MMSE results were adjusted for age and education level of examined subjects using the formula: $\text{adjusted MMSE} = \text{raw MMSE} - (0.471 \times [\text{Education} - 12]) + (0.131 \times [\text{Age} - 70])$ (24). The blood for biomarker determination was collected twice—on admission and after 4 weeks of inpatient treatment.

To assess the impact of dementia severity on biomarker concentrations, we also divided the subjects with dementia into two groups. Patients with an adjusted MMSE score ≥ 20 points were qualified for the mild dementia group (MD) and those with lower MMSE scores for the moderate to severe dementia group (MSD). The MD group contained 17 subjects (4 AD, 7 VaD, and 6 MxD) and the MSD group—43 subjects (16 AD, 13 VaD, 14 MxD). The demographic characteristics of the groups are shown in Supplementary Table 2.

The control group was consisted of 20 cognitively normal attenders of the Healthy Senior University at the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Medical University of Białystok. The healthy volunteers had adjusted Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE) test results within the normal range (27 points or more). In the control group, the occurrence of chronic inflammatory and neoplastic diseases was excluded using the medical history and a

panel of laboratory tests. As in the study groups, depression was excluded using the GDS scale.

All participants were over 60 years of age.

Biomarker Determination

Blood was collected from the ulnar vein, centrifuged, and then frozen at -80°C until the biomarker determination was performed. In the study groups, blood was taken twice—on admission and after 4 weeks of hospitalization, to assess the possible impact of the treatment on the concentration of biomarkers. The concentration of YKL-40, t-tau, A β 1-40, and A β 1-42 in serum was determined by enzyme immunoassay ELISA using ready-made diagnostic kits from USCN Life Science, Wuhan, China. The manufacturer's instructions were followed. The absorbance of the samples was measured using an Infinite M200 PRO Multimode Microplate Reader (Tecan). All determinations were made in duplicate tests.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis of the results was performed with GraphPad Prism 7.0 for MacOS (GraphPad Software, La Jolla, USA). The D'Agostino-Pearson test and the Shapiro-Wilk test were used to assess the normality of the distribution, and the Leven test to assess the homogeneity of variance. All data are presented in graphs or tables as mean and standard deviation (SD).

For comparisons between groups, ANOVA and Tukey's test were used, and in the absence of normal distribution—the Kruskal-Wallis and Dunn's test ANOVA. Multiplicity adjusted *p*-value was also calculated. Correlations between biomarkers were assessed using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Multivariate analysis of the simultaneous impacts of many independent variables on one quantitative dependent variable was made by means of linear regression. Gender, age, and MMSE were included as independent variables; 95% confidence intervals (CI) were reported along with regression parameters. The diagnostic usefulness analysis of biomarkers was assessed using Receiver Operating Curve (ROC) analysis. The confidence intervals of sensitivity and specificity were calculated using Wilson/Brown method. The level of statistical significance was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

RESULTS

Demographics and Diagnostic Tests

The analysis of variance showed no statistically significant differences in the age and education of the respondents between the groups (Supplementary Table 1). The groups were consisted of 60 women and 20 men (AD - 6; VaD - 4; MxD - 5; C - 5 men).

The results of basic examinations and studies aimed at excluding secondary causes of dementia were within the normal range. The only statistically significant differences between the groups were observed in the concentrations of sodium, chloride, MCV, plateletcrit, aspartate aminotransferase, and blood glucose (Supplementary Table 1). All subjects of the study group had brain CT scan. Only those without CNS vascular changes were qualified to the AD group. None of the subjects had acute brain hemorrhage or ischemia, tumors, or other lesions that might indicate a cause of dementia other than AD or VaD. The GDS test ruled out depression in all participants. The obtained GDS results ranged 0–6 points. Assessment of the MMSE scale was performed once in the control group and twice (at the beginning and after 4 weeks of treatment) in the study group. The obtained results were comparable in all groups with dementia and statistically significantly lower than in the control group. There were no significant differences in the adjusted MMSE score before and after 4 weeks of inpatient treatment (Figure 1).

Correlation of Biomarker Concentrations With the Assessed Parameters

YKL-40 correlated with the concentrations of other markers (t-tau and Aβ1-42/Aβ1-40), the severity of dementia as reflected by the MMSE score, and the parameters of inflammation (C-reactive protein and percentage of neutrophils). A negative correlation with ALT activity was also observed.

T-tau correlated positively with YKL-40 and dementia severity (negative correlation with the MMSE score). Among the laboratory parameters, the correlation with the percentage of neutrophils and the concentrations of sodium, calcium, and creatinine achieved the level of statistical significance.

Correlations between the values of the Aβ1-42/Aβ1-40 index and the concentrations of YKL-40 and Aβ1-40 were also observed. There was no relationship between amyloid markers and t-tau concentrations. The concentrations of

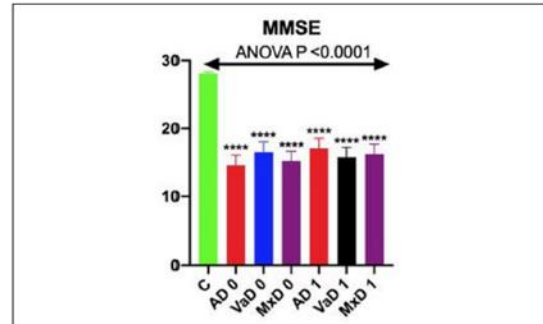


FIGURE 1 | MMSE scores on admission and after 4 weeks of hospital treatment. *****p* vs. C < 0.0001.

TABLE 2 | Statistically significant correlations found between MMSE, inflammatory parameters and analyzed biomarkers.

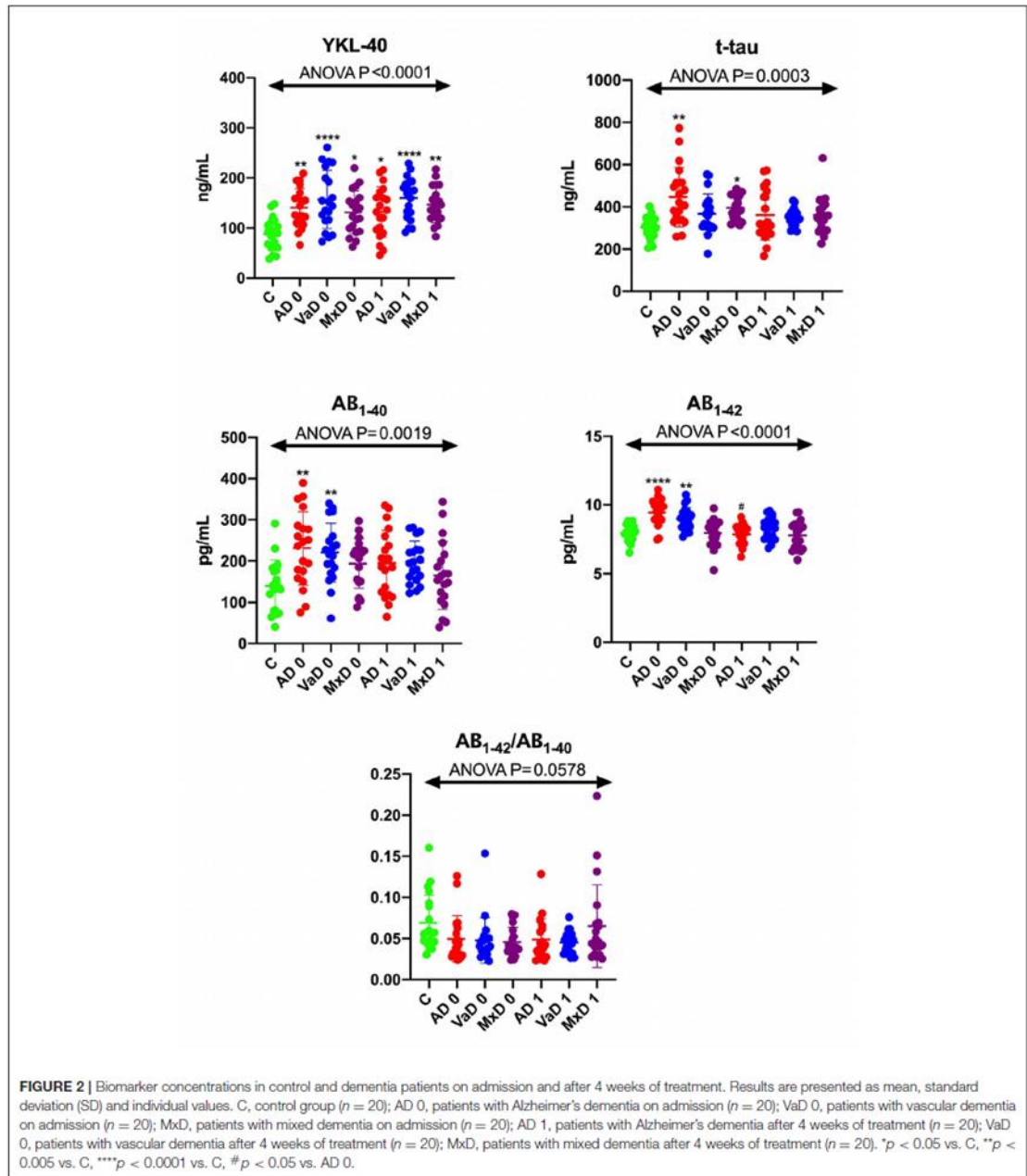
| Parameters | R | 95% CI | p |
|------------------------------|--------|---------------------|----------|
| YKL-40 0 and YKL-40 1 | 0.461 | 0.2342 to 0.6398 | < 0.0001 |
| YKL-40 0 and Aβ1-42/Aβ1-40 0 | 0.288 | 0.03707 to 0.5052 | 0.026 |
| YKL-40 0 and MMSE 0 | -0.614 | -0.7507 to -0.4263 | < 0.0001 |
| YKL-40 1 and t-tau 1 | 0.36 | 0.1163 to 0.5622 | 0.005 |
| YKL-40 1 and MMSE 1 | -0.563 | -0.7145 to -0.3601 | < 0.0001 |
| YKL-40 1 and CRP | 0.29 | -0.2512 to 0.2566 | 0.025 |
| YKL-40 1 and Neu | 0.507 | 0.2861 to 0.6767 | < 0.0001 |
| t-tau 0 and MMSE 0 | -0.287 | -0.5041 to -0.03550 | 0.026 |
| t-tau 1 and MMSE 1 | -0.287 | -0.5041 to -0.03551 | 0.026 |
| t-tau 1 and Neu | 0.269 | 0.01127 to 0.4929 | 0.041 |
| Aβ1-40 0 and Aβ1-40 1 | 0.323 | 0.07473 to 0.5328 | 0.012 |
| Aβ1-40 0 and Aβ1-40/Aβ1-42 0 | -0.819 | -0.8881 to -0.7131 | < 0.0001 |
| Aβ1-40/Aβ1-42 1 and Aβ1-40 1 | -0.778 | -0.2503 to 0.2575 | < 0.0001 |
| MMSE 0 and CRP | -0.407 | -0.5992 to -0.1710 | 0.001 |
| MMSE 0 and Neu | -0.674 | -0.7937 to -0.5027 | < 0.0001 |

MMSE, Mini Mental State Examination; CRP, C-reactive protein; Neu, neutrophils; Leu, leucocytes; YKL-40 0, YKL-40 concentration on admission; YKL-40 1, YKL-40 concentration after 4 weeks of treatment; MMSE 0, MMSE on admission etc.

Aβ1-40 and Aβ1-42 also correlated with the concentration of chloride and the values of some blood count parameters. Statistically significant correlations between biomarkers, MMSE, inflammatory parameters and obtained in statistical analysis are summarized in Table 2. All other statistically significant correlations were put in Supplementary Table 3.

Differences in Biomarker Concentrations in Various Types of Dementia

Figure 2 shows the biomarker concentrations in controls and in demented subjects on admission and after 4 weeks of treatment. YKL-40 concentrations in all dementia types, both on admission and after 4 weeks, were statistically significantly higher than in the control group. The concentrations of other biomarkers were higher only on admission. Significantly higher concentrations of t-tau were observed in AD and MxD.



Aβ₁₋₄₀ and Aβ₁₋₄₂ were increased in AD and VaD, which is not surprising considering that amyloidopathy occurs in both dementia types. The Aβ₁₋₄₂/Aβ₁₋₄₀ ratio did not differ significantly between the groups.

The ROC analysis (Table 3) indicates a high sensitivity and specificity (70–85%) of YKL-40 in the differentiation between dementia and the control group, however, it does not confirm the utility of YKL-40 in differentiating dementias of various

TABLE 3 | ROC analysis of serum YKL-40 in different types of dementia.

| | AUC | 95% CI | P | Cut-off | Sensitivity% | 95% CI | Specificity% | 95% CI |
|-----------------|--------|---------------|---------|---------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| t-tau | | | | | | | | |
| C vs. AD 0 | 0.845 | 0.7188–0.9712 | 0.0002 | >338.4 | 75 | 53.13–88.81% | 70 | 48.10–85.45% |
| C vs. VaD 0 | 0.7175 | 0.5561–0.8789 | 0.0186 | >318.3 | 60 | 38.66–78.12% | 55 | 34.21–74.18% |
| C vs. MxD 0 | 0.8825 | 0.7825–0.9825 | <0.0001 | >341.4 | 75 | 53.13–88.81% | 70 | 48.10–85.45% |
| AD 0 vs. VaD 0 | 0.675 | 0.5060–0.8440 | 0.0583 | <380.4 | 65 | 43.29–81.88% | 65 | 43.29–81.88% |
| AD 0 vs. MxD 0 | 0.5975 | 0.4131–0.7819 | 0.2914 | <394.4 | 55 | 34.21–74.18% | 55 | 34.21–74.18% |
| VaD 0 vs. MxD 0 | 0.645 | 0.4675–0.8225 | 0.1167 | >375.1 | 60 | 38.66–78.12% | 60 | 38.66–78.12% |
| YKL-40 | | | | | | | | |
| C vs. AD 0 | 0.8625 | 0.7510–0.9740 | <0.0001 | >106.3 | 85 | 63.96–94.76% | 75 | 53.13–88.81% |
| C vs. VaD 0 | 0.8525 | 0.7352–0.9698 | 0.0001 | >113.0 | 80 | 58.40–91.93% | 80 | 58.40–91.93% |
| C vs. MxD 0 | 0.7975 | 0.6621–0.9329 | 0.0013 | >103.9 | 70 | 48.10–85.45% | 70 | 48.10–85.45% |
| AD 0 vs. VaD 0 | 0.5750 | 0.3926–0.7574 | 0.4171 | >139.8 | 55 | 34.21–74.18% | 50 | 29.93–70.07% |
| AD 0 vs. MxD 0 | 0.5775 | 0.3984–0.7566 | 0.4017 | <130.7 | 50 | 29.93–70.07% | 50 | 29.93–70.07% |
| VaD 0 vs. MxD 0 | 0.6200 | 0.4436–0.7964 | 0.1941 | <137.9 | 55 | 34.21–74.18% | 55 | 34.21–74.18% |

TABLE 4 | ROC analysis of serum t-tau and YKL-40 compared between mild dementia (MD), moderate to severe dementia (MSD), and control group.

| Comparison | AUC | 95% CI | P | Cut-off | Sensitivity% | 95% CI | Specificity% | 95% CI |
|---------------|--------|---------------|---------|---------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| t-tau | | | | | | | | |
| C vs. MD | 0.8488 | 0.7553–0.9423 | <0.0001 | >341.4 | 72.09 | 57.31–83.25% | 70 | 48.10–85.45% |
| C vs. MSD | 0.7294 | 0.5613–0.8975 | 0.0174 | >324.8 | 64.71 | 41.30–82.69% | 65 | 43.29–81.88% |
| MD vs. MSD | 0.6607 | 0.5114–0.8101 | 0.0539 | <377.9 | 58.82 | 36.01–78.39% | 58.14 | 43.33–71.62% |
| YKL-40 | | | | | | | | |
| C vs. MD | 0.9128 | 0.8412–0.9843 | <0.0001 | >115.8 | 86.05 | 72.74–93.44% | 85 | 63.96–94.76% |
| C vs. MSD | 0.6471 | 0.4692–0.8249 | 0.1276 | >90.60 | 52.94 | 30.96–73.83% | 55 | 34.21–74.18% |
| MD vs. MSD | 0.8263 | 0.7067–0.9458 | <0.0001 | <123.3 | 76.47 | 52.74–90.44% | 76.74 | 62.26–86.85% |

etiologies. YKL-40 is the most diagnostic for AD (sensitivity 85%, specificity 75%, AUC 0.8625) and VaD (sensitivity and specificity more than 80%, AUC 0.8525), for MxD (sensitivity and specificity ~70% each, AUC 0.7975).

T-tau was diagnostic for AD and MxD with 75% sensitivity and 70% specificity (AUC 0.845 and 0.8825, respectively), while its diagnostic value in VaD turned out to be poor.

Changes in Biomarker Concentration Over Time

The distribution of concentrations of individual biomarkers determined at the beginning of hospitalization and after 4 weeks of its duration is presented in Figure 2. Aβ1-42 concentrations in patients with AD declined after 4 weeks of treatment. In the remaining cases, the concentrations of biomarkers did not change significantly over time.

Biomarkers in the Assessment of Dementia Progression

All subjects, regardless of the etiology of dementia, were divided into mild dementia (MD) and moderate to severe dementia (MSD) groups, taking the MMSE score of 20 as the cut-off point. The results of ROC analysis for individual markers are summarized in Table 4 (t-tau and YKL-40) and Supplementary Table 4 (amyloid markers). The highest

sensitivity and specificity in differentiating between healthy subjects and patients with mild dementia was obtained for YKL-40 (sensitivity 86.05%, specificity 85%, AUC 0.9128) and slightly lower for t-tau (72.09%, 70% and 0.8488, respectively). The differences between the concentrations of amyloid markers were also statistically significant, while their sensitivity and specificity were lower than for YKL-40 and t-tau, and the AUC values were below 0.8.

In the comparison between MD and MSD, only YKL-40 proved to be diagnostic for dementia progression. At the cut-off point of 123.3 ng/ml, the sensitivity was 76.47%, specificity—76.74%, and the AUC was 0.8263. The sensitivity and specificity in differentiating the stages of dementia for the remaining biomarkers ranged from 50 to 60%, and the areas under the curve were below 0.7.

Aβ1-40 has shown the ability to differentiate between controls and subjects with more severe dementia, however, its ROC parameters do not show its utility in discrimination between cognitively normal and subjects with mild dementia, as well as between dementia stages (Table 4).

Multifactorial Regression on the Assessed Biomarkers

The results of regression analysis are presented in Table 5 for t-tau and YKL-40 and in Supplementary Table 5 for amyloid

TABLE 5 | Multifactorial regression of YKL-40 and t-tau.

| Dependent variable | | Independent variable | | |
|--------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| | | Age | Sex | MMSE |
| YKL-40 | EE | 0.2469 | 9.532 | -4.376 |
| | 95%CI | -1.645 to 2.139 | -12.19 to 31.25 | -5.895 to -2.857 |
| | P-value | 0.7948 | 0.3831 | <0.0001 |
| t-tau | EE | 1.229 | -48.13 | -4.631 |
| | 95%CI | -3.797 to 6.256 | -105.8 to 9.569 | -8.666 to -0.5963 |
| | P-value | 0.6261 | 0.1003 | 0.0252 |

markers. We did not show the influence of age and gender on the evaluated biomarkers.

Ykl-40 and t-tau, but not amyloid levels, were dependent on dementia severity assessed with MMSE score.

DISCUSSION

Clinicians' Expectations Regarding Dementia Biomarkers

Undoubtedly, the significant value of our study is the fact that the qualification of patients and diagnostic procedures were conducted by a clinician treating patients during hospitalization for several weeks, having extensive knowledge about the patient's medical history and staying in touch with their caregivers. In everyday medical practice, the benefits of developing and disseminating easy-to-use diagnostic tests have been recognized many times.

Fifty two out of the 60 patients we studied were diagnosed with dementia for the first time in their lives. Patients with mild dementia were often hospitalized because of other psychopathological symptoms (e.g., anxiety) and subjectively regarded their cognitive functioning as normal. Memory disorders were also sometimes unnoticed by caregivers or considered as a physiological element of the aging process. Dementia was also often not diagnosed and not treated by other specialists taking care of the patient, for example, by primary care doctors. As previously mentioned, this may result from both limited access to health services (count and duration of visits) and insufficient training in diagnosing dementia of the medical staff (3). It also seems that, in the opinion of many physicians, the diagnosis and treatment of dementia makes little sense due to the low effectiveness of the applied therapies and the predicted short survival time. A cheap and readily available screening test would allow the early identification of patients with a high probability of dementia requiring further specialistic diagnosis (3).

In addition to the direct benefits for patients of early detection of dementia and accurate diagnosis of dementia, new biomarkers could also facilitate clinical trials of novel medications. The diagnostic difficulties described above may contribute to the incorrect qualification of some patients for examination and consequently obtaining unreliable results. It is also difficult to properly quantify the severity of dementia in the investigated subjects (5).

The biomarkers currently used in the diagnosis of dementia are amyloid peptides and tau protein in the cerebrospinal fluid or amyloid beta identified in the brain *in vivo* by PET. These tests are expensive, available only in highly specialized centers. Performing a lumbar puncture to collect CSF is associated with the risk of complications (4). The development of diagnostic tests with the use of biomarkers measurable in biological material that can be collected in a simple and minimally invasive way (such as blood) would significantly improve the effectiveness of diagnosis and treatment of dementia.

YKL-40 as a Marker Identifying Dementia and Determining Its Severity

Thus far, only a few studies of YKL-40 as a dementia biomarker have been conducted (21, 22). The obtained results indicate its potential diagnostic usefulness and encourage further research. The activation of the inflammatory process due to damage to nerve cells by neurodegeneration (AD) or ischemia (VaD) seems to be responsible for the increase in YKL-40 concentrations in dementia (20).

The obtained YKL-40 concentrations were statistically significantly higher in all study groups compared to the control group, and the high diagnostic value was confirmed by the ROC analysis (AUC from 0.8 for MxD to 0.86 for AD). This indicates the potential usefulness of this marker in screening for dementia. We also observed a correlation of YKL-40 concentrations with the level of cognitive functioning measured with the MMSE scale and with t-tau concentrations, which confirms the cohesion of the obtained results.

Sensitivity and specificity at the level of at least 85% suggests that the diagnostic test can be used as a dementia biomarker (4). These criteria were met for the differentiation of the control group from mild dementia. Slightly lower (>76%), but still satisfactory values of those parameters were also obtained when trying to differentiate between mild and moderate to severe dementia with the use of YKL-40 protein. Those results indicate its higher sensitivity and specificity both in the early detection and in monitoring the progression of dementia than amyloid and t-tau.

The most serious limitation of the use of YKL-40 as a biomarker seems to be its non-specificity. Its concentration increases during many diseases, especially inflammatory diseases (including neuroinflammatory processes) and neoplastic

diseases, which are quite common comorbidities in the elderly population (19, 20). Therefore, when using YKL-40 as a diagnostic test, it would be necessary to obtain at least an in-depth medical history regarding comorbidities to avoid misinterpretation of the biomarker levels. It might also be useful to determine the concentration of another non-specific marker of the inflammatory response simultaneously. Such a marker could be, for example, the C-reactive protein or the percentage of neutrophils, which showed a positive correlation with the concentration of YKL-40 in our study.

Due to the low serum concentrations (nanograms/milliliter), the accuracy of the quantification of YKL-40 protein may be highly dependent on the laboratory methods used. We decided to determine the concentrations of YKL-40 using the ELISA method due to its relatively low cost and the large number of experienced laboratory diagnosticians.

T-Tau as an Alternative Dementia Diagnostic Marker

The tau protein, despite its lower sensitivity and specificity, may be an alternative marker to YKL-40 in the diagnosis of early stages of dementia, especially for patients in whom the concentration of YKL-40 is elevated for other reasons, such as chronic inflammatory diseases. The tau protein is a marker that is a characteristic of a group of diseases called tauopathies, most of which are rare diseases or may be easily recognized by their specific symptoms [e.g., Down syndrome; (25)]. It follows that the risk of a falsely positive result due to a coexisting disease is low for t-tau.

The t-tau protein concentrations were the highest in the AD group, a slightly smaller increase was observed in Mx, and the marker concentration in the VaD group did not differ from that observed in the control group, which reflects the role of t-tau in the etiology of individual types of dementia. The sensitivity of 72.09% and the specificity of 70% in the diagnosis of early dementia is lower than YKL-40, but still higher than that of amyloid markers, and may be sufficient for t-tau use in brief screening. The reliability of t-tau as a marker of dementia is also supported by the correlation of its concentrations with the results of the MMSE test and YKL-40. It might be surprising that the diagnostic accuracy of t-tau, as well as YKL-40 was better in differentiating between control and mild dementia than between controls and MSD. This may be explained by the results of a study by Llibre-Guerra et al. analyzing the longitudinal changes in AD CSF biomarkers. In this study, the t-tau CSF levels in AD subjects did not increase and p-tau-181 even decreased after the disease onset. The observed biomarker trajectories were consistent with the degree of brain atrophy observed in MRI. No further increase of biomarkers in the later disease stages may be explained by a lesser extent of cellular stress and inflammation and the less number of neuronal tissue and neuronal substrates to produce tau (26).

Due to the common morbidity in geriatric patients, it is important to have a diagnostic test not significantly affected by concomitant diseases. This suggests a possible diagnostic usefulness of t-tau in patients with diagnosed or suspected

conditions that may cause an increase of YKL-40 concentration in serum. However, the obtained results indicate the risk of a fairly high percentage of false-positive and false-negative results when using this biomarker. A solution might be to use a combination of two or more biomarkers playing different roles in the pathophysiology of dementia. The results of our study show that t-tau may be a quite reliable marker of AD and Mx with Alzheimer's features, but not necessarily for VaD.

Serum Amyloid Markers Cannot Be Used as Dementia Markers

Serum amyloid biomarkers, especially A β 1-42 and A β 1-40 in serum, were initially considered as potential markers of dementia at the end of the last century (20). This resulted mostly from a previously confirmed increase in the "amyloidogenic" A β 1-42 isoform at the expense of a decrease in the amount of more soluble A β 1-40 in the CSF (5). It was expected that similar amyloid isoform concentration changes might be observed in peripheral blood.

In serum, amyloid markers do not correlate with the presence or severity of dementia as measured by the MMSE scale. It may result from the limited and individually variable permeability of amyloid peptides across the blood-brain barrier, as well as from originating some portion of serum A β from tissues other than the brain.

We also found no significant differences between the levels of amyloid markers in different types of dementia. This seems understandable due to the presence of amyloidopathy not only in AD, but also in VaD (amyloid angiopathy) (6).

Biomarkers in the Differential Diagnosis of Dementia

Dementia is a group of diseases of various etiologies, pathophysiology, and prognosis. The effectiveness of the used pharmacological treatment methods is also different depending on the dementia subtype. On the other hand, the pivotal clinical signs are largely common to all types of dementia. Some additional symptoms are specific to particular types of dementia, for example, impaired motor function may indicate vascular dementia, hallucinations, and parkinsonism speak for dementia with Lewy bodies, and aphasia as well as personality changes make frontotemporal dementia plausible (1). However, it is not possible to reliably establish the etiology of dementia on the basis of clinical symptomatology alone (3, 4). The changes observed in brain neuroimaging also do not allow for a clear determination of the type of dementia. For example, in a patient with numerous cerebral vascular lesions, Alzheimer's etiology of dementia cannot be ruled out, firstly because of the possibility of coexistence of both pathophysiological processes, and secondly because of the possibility of vascular pathology secondary to amyloid deposition in the blood vessels. Such a patient could be unjustly disqualified from treatment with a preparation used exclusively in Alzheimer's dementia, losing the potential benefits of pharmacotherapy.

Our results do not indicate the usefulness of any of the studied biomarkers in the differential diagnosis between different types of dementia. The greatest differences were observed in the case of t-tau, the concentration was statistically significantly higher in the AD group, a slightly smaller increase was observed in MxD, and the marker concentration in the VD group did not differ from that observed in the control group, which in a way reflects the role of t-tau in the etiology of those types of dementia. Amyloid beta and YKL-40 are not dementia specific markers, and the increase in their concentrations occurs in many neuroinflammatory processes of various etiologies. These observations are consistent with the results of previous studies, which found a quantitatively non-specific increase in the concentration of amyloid and t-tau markers for the type of dementia (18).

Biomarkers in Monitoring of Treatment Response

The possibility of quantifying the severity of the disease using a biomarker could facilitate the effectiveness assessment of the applied pharmacotherapy, which is particularly important in clinical trials (4). The clinical scales currently used for this purpose may give unreliable results for reasons such as learning questions and tasks repeated at each visit or mental and somatic complaints (e.g., anxiety or concentration on pain). The results may also be inconclusive due to sensory dysfunctions common in old age, such as uncorrected or uncorrectable seeing and hearing defects. The possibility of repeatable, minimally invasive determination of the disease biomarker would also allow for a more precise assessment of the effects of the therapy.

We found a statistically significant decline in the concentration of A β 1-42 in AD after 4 weeks of treatment. These results are understandable considering the role of amyloid in dementia/aging/inflammation (5), but were difficult to interpret in the context of the lack of changes in other marker's concentrations. We suspect that A β 1-42 decline might have occurred due to a general improvement of mental and/or general health after treatment. The lack of improvement in cognitive functioning as measured by the MMSE scale after 4 weeks seems to support this thesis.

Study Limitations

Clinical diagnoses of dementia subtypes established on the basis of an interview, observation, neuropsychological diagnosis, and exclusion of the most common secondary causes of dementia are uncertain to some extent. Diagnostics based on the examination of amyloid markers and/or tau protein in the cerebrospinal fluid or the use of PET examination would be much more reliable, but at the same time a costly method of qualifying patients with AD. Moreover, for economic reasons, the subjects underwent brain imaging using computed tomography, instead of the more accurate and more recommended magnetic resonance imaging.

The method of assessing the severity of dementia that we have adopted may also have some limitations. We based it on the MMSE test results adjusted for the age and education level of the respondents. MMSE is a quick and easy test, and the availability

of its validated language version makes it possible to compare the results of studies conducted on different populations in various languages. On the other hand, its serious disadvantage is the fact that it primarily assesses the efficiency of memory, and to a lesser extent other cognitive functions, but does not take into account other symptoms accompanying cognitive deficits. In practice, it is often observed that patients with similar results of cognitive tests may present diametrically different levels of functioning, which makes it difficult to quantify the severity of dementia. The refinement of methods to quantify dementia progression could improve the quality of future research on this clinical syndrome.

As mentioned above, in our study there is a lack of validated biomarkers (e.g., amyloid PET, CSE, and/or FDG-PET) to support the diagnosis of different types of dementia and the lack of a comparable neuropsychological evaluation to assess cognitive impairment. However, the selection of neuropsychological tests and the diagnosis of individual patients were based on the profound clinical experience of a neuropsychologist who evaluated all patients.

Another important limitation of our study is the sample size. Due to the promising results we obtained, we believe that the study is worth to be repeated on a larger group of respondents.

Future Directions

More research is needed to enable long-term follow-up in dementia patients. We are convinced that long-term prospective study on serum dementia biomarkers would bring valuable data that might contribute to the development of dementia screening and follow-up markers.

Finally, there is also a need to look for new biomarkers, especially those that would contribute to a non-invasive diagnosis of dementia. Especially promising are salivary redox parameters, which with high sensitivity and specificity differentiate patients with mild dementia from severe dementia as well as AD from VaD and MxD (27, 28). Saliva can be a promising, easily accessible, and non-expensive diagnostic material used in patients with neuropsychiatric disorders (29, 30). There are also some promising blood biomarkers some tau isoforms, such as p-tau-217 (18). Nevertheless, further studies are required on a large population of patients.

CONCLUSIONS

YKL-40 is a highly sensitive and specific marker that differentiates healthy individuals from patients with Alzheimer's, vascular or mixed dementia. It is particularly sensitive and specific in the diagnosis of dementia onset, and slightly less in the assessment of progression to more advanced stages of the disease. The possibilities of using YKL-40 as a biomarker are limited by its non-specificity. T-tau shows a slightly lower but still satisfactory sensitivity and specificity in differentiating between mild AD, MxD, and the control group. T-tau may be a marker particularly useful for the diagnosis of patients with coexisting diseases associated with an increase of YKL-40 concentrations in serum.

Our study results do not indicate the diagnostic usefulness of amyloid markers (A β 1-40, A β 1-42, and A β 1-42/A β 1-40). The results do not indicate the usefulness of any of the examined biomarkers in the differential diagnosis between dementias of different etiologies. Decreased concentrations of A β 1-42 in AD after 4 weeks of inpatient treatment might be due to the improved general and/or mental health while treatment/hospitalization.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by Ethics Committee of Medical University of Białystok. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

NW and KW: conceptualization, resources, writing—review and editing, project administration, and funding acquisition. NW, AZ, MM, and KW: methodology. MM: software. MM and AZ: validation. KW, MM, and NW: formal Analysis. KW and MM: investigation, data curation, and visualization. KW: writing—original draft preparation. NW and AZ: supervision. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2021.725511/full#supplementary-material>

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11. Streszczenie w języku polskim

Otępienia to grupa przewlekłych, postępujących schorzeń upośledzających funkcjonowanie człowieka i generujących wysokie koszty ekonomiczne. Na otępienie cierpi obecnie około 50 mln osób na świecie, a w związku ze starzeniem się populacji prognozuje się dalszy wzrost liczby chorych. Wielu chorych pozostaje nie zdiagnozowanych i nie leczonych, a konieczne do postawienia rozpoznania badania są czasochłonne, kosztowne i/lub nie zawsze dostępne. Zastosowanie biomarkerów pozwoliłoby na wcześniejszą interwencję w stosunku do osób z rozpoczynającym się procesem otępiennym.

Celem pracy było oznaczenie stężeń biomarkerów: amyloidu beta 1-40 (A β 1-40), amyloidu beta 1-42 (A β 1-42), ilorazu A β 1-42/ A β 1-40, białka tau (t-tau) i YKL-40 w surowicy chorych z otępieniem alzheimerowskim (AD), naczyniopochodnym (VaD) i mieszanym (MxD) celem oceny:

- przydatności diagnostycznej badanych markerów w diagnostyce otępienia,
- przydatności biomarkerów w różnicowaniu otępień,
- korelacji stężeń biomarkerów ze stopniem zaawansowania otępienia,
- zmian stężeń markerów po 4 tygodniach hospitalizacji.

Do badania wstępnie zakwalifikowano 100 pacjentów Oddziału Psychogeriatrici bez chorób zapalnych, nowotworowych i autoimmunologicznych, które przyjęto za kryteria wyłączenia. Wykonano u nich badanie neuroobrazowe, panel badań laboratoryjnych, badanie neuropsychologiczne oraz badanie Geriatryczną Skalą Depresji (GDS). Rozpoznanie i prawdopodobną etiologię otępienia ustalono na podstawie kryteriów ICD10. Ostatecznie do badania zakwalifikowano 20 osób z AD, 20 z VaD i 20 z MxD. Przy przyjęciu oraz po czterech tygodniach hospitalizacji pobrano krew do oznaczenia biomarkerów oraz wykonano badanie skalą Krótką Skalą Oceny Stanu Psychicznego (MMSE). W celu wykluczenia wpływu wieku i wykształcenia wyliczono skorygowaną wartość MMSE. Pacjentów ze wszystkimi rodzajami otępienia podzielono również na grupy z otępieniem łagodnym (MD) oraz umiarkowanym do ciężkiego (MSD). Grupę kontrolną stanowiło 20 osób po 60. roku życia bez otępienia.

Stężenia biomarkerów w surowicy krwi oceniano metodą ELISA w podwójnych próbkach. Korelacje pomiędzy uzyskanymi danymi oceniano przy zastosowaniu współczynnika korelacji Pearsona. Do porównań między grupami użyto ANOVA i testu Tukey'a, a w przypadku braku rozkładu normalnego – testu Kruskala-

Wallisa i ANOVA Dunna. Analizę wpływu zmiennych niezależnych na zmienną zależną przeprowadzono metodą regresji liniowej. Użyteczność diagnostyczną biomarkerów oceniano przy użyciu krzywej ROC. Za poziom istotności statystycznej przyjęto $p \leq 0,05$.

Stężenie YKL-40 korelowało ze stężeniami t-tau, $A\beta 1-42/A\beta 1-40$, nasileniem otępienia mierzonym przy pomocy skali MMSE oraz białka C-reaktywnego (CRP), z kolei stężenie t-tau korelowało ze stężeniem YKL-40 i punktacją w MMSE.

Analiza ROC wykazała przydatność YKL-40 w diagnostyce AD, VaD i MxD oraz przydatność t-tau w diagnostyce AD i MxD, lecz nie VaD.

Po 4 tygodniach hospitalizacji jedynie stężenie $A\beta 1-42$ u chorych z AD istotnie zmniejszyło się w stosunku do wartości wyjściowych po 4 tygodniach hospitalizacji.

Analiza ROC z podziałem na stopnie zaawansowania otępienia (MD oraz MSD) wykazała wysoką przydatność YKL-40 i umiarkowaną t-tau w różnicowaniu między osobami zdrowymi a pacjentami z MD. YKL-40 okazało się też przydatne w różnicowaniu między MD a MSD.

Analiza regresji wykluczyła wpływ płci i wieku na stężenia biomarkerów, potwierdziła natomiast wpływ ciężkości otępienia (punktacji MMSE) na stężenia YKL-40 i t-tau.

Na podstawie wyników badania wyciągnięto następujące wnioski:

1. Stężenia YKL-40 korelowały ze stężeniem innych markerów, CRP i punktacją w skali MMSE. T-tau korelowało z YKL-40 i MMSE. Stężenia YKL-40 i t-tau były niezależne od płci i wieku.
2. YKL-40 może być przydatny w diagnostyce wszystkich rodzajów otępień, natomiast t-tau - w diagnostyce otępień z komponentą alzheimerowską.
3. Nie wykazano przydatności żadnego z biomarkerów w różnicowaniu otępień.
4. YKL-40 może być przydatny w wykrywaniu otępień wczesnych i monitorowaniu progresji otępienia.
5. T-tau może być przydatne w diagnostyce wczesnego otępienia, szczególnie gdy zastosowanie YKL-40 będzie ograniczone przez współchorobowość.
6. Po czterech tygodniach hospitalizacji zaobserwowano istotny statystycznie spadek stężeń $A\beta 1-42$, mający najprawdopodobniej charakter nieswoisty, wtórny do poprawy ogólnego stanu zdrowia.

12. Streszczenie w języku angielskim

Dementia is a group of chronic, progressive diseases that significantly impair human functioning and generate high economic costs. Approximately 50 million people worldwide currently suffer from dementia, and a further increase in the number of patients due to the aging of the population is forecasted. Many patients remain undiagnosed and untreated while the diagnostic tests are time-consuming, costly, and / or not always available. The use of biomarkers would enable earlier intervention for patients with the onset of dementia.

The aim of the study was to determine the concentration of biomarkers: amyloid beta 1-40 ($A\beta$ 1-40), amyloid beta 1-42 ($A\beta$ 1-42), $A\beta$ 1-42/ $A\beta$ 1-40 ratio, tau protein (t-tau) and YKL-40 in the serum of patients with Alzheimer's (AD), vascular (VaD) and mixed dementia (MxD) to evaluate:

- the usefulness of the examined markers in the diagnosis of dementia,
- the usefulness of biomarkers in the differential diagnosis of dementia,
- the correlation of biomarker concentrations with the severity of dementia,
- the changes in marker levels after 4 weeks of hospitalization.

100 patients of the Department of Psychogeriatrics without comorbid inflammatory, neoplastic and autoimmune diseases, which were considered as exclusion criteria, were initially qualified for the study. They underwent a neuroimaging examination, a panel of laboratory tests, a neuropsychological examination and a Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) examination. The diagnosis and probable etiology of dementia was established based on the ICD-10 criteria. Ultimately, 20 patients with AD, 20 with VaD and 20 with MxD were qualified for the study. The blood collection for biomarker testing and the Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE) were performed on admission and after four weeks of hospitalization. In order to exclude the influence of age and education, the adjusted MMSE was calculated. Patients with all types of dementia were further divided into two groups: mild (MD) and moderate to severe (MSD) dementia. 20 people aged over 60 without dementia were qualified for the control group.

Serum biomarker concentrations were determined by ELISA method in duplicate tests. The correlations were assessed using the Pearson's correlation coefficient. ANOVA and Tukey's test, and in the absence of normal distribution - Kruskal-Wallis and Dunn's ANOVA were used for comparisons between groups. The analysis of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable

was performed using the linear regression. The diagnostic utility of the biomarkers was assessed using the ROC curve. The level of statistical significance was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

The concentration of YKL-40 correlated with t-tau, $A\beta 1-42/A\beta 1-40$ and C-reactive protein (CRP) concentrations, as well as with the severity of dementia reflected by MMSE score, while t-tau correlated with YKL-40 and MMSE score.

The ROC analysis showed the usefulness of YKL-40 in the diagnosis of AD, VaD and MxD, and the usefulness of t-tau in the diagnosis of AD and MxD, but not VaD.

Only the concentration of $A\beta 1-42$ in patients with AD significantly decreased compared to the baseline values after 4 weeks of hospitalization.

The ROC analysis for groups divided by dementia stage (MD and MSD) showed a high usefulness of YKL-40 and moderate usefulness of t-tau in differentiating between healthy control and patients with MD. YKL-40 was also proven useful in differentiating between MD and MSD.

The regression analysis excluded the influence of sex and age on the biomarker levels, while confirmed the influence of the severity of dementia measured as MMSE score on the levels of YKL-40 and t-tau.

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The concentration of YKL-40 correlated with other markers, CRP and the MMSE score. T-tau correlated with YKL-40 and MMSE. YKL-40 and t-tau concentrations were independent of sex and age.
2. YKL-40 may be useful in the diagnosis of all types of dementia, while t-tau - in the diagnosis of dementias with Alzheimer's component.
3. None of the biomarkers have shown to be useful in differential diagnosis of dementia.
4. YKL-40 may be useful in early detection and monitoring of dementia progression.
5. T-tau may be useful in the diagnosis of early dementia, especially when the use of YKL-40 is limited by comorbidities.
6. After four weeks of hospitalization, a statistically significant decrease in $A\beta 1-42$ concentrations in AD patients was observed, which was most likely non-specific, secondary to general health improvement.

13. Uchwała komisji bioetycznej

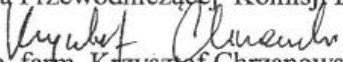
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Białystok, 25-02-2016

Uchwała nr: R-I-002/62/2016

Komisja Bioetyczna Uniwersytetu Medycznego w Białymstoku, po zapoznaniu się z projektem badania zgodnie z zasadami GCP/ Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice /- **w y r a ż a z g o d ę** na prowadzenie tematu badawczego: „Badanie aktywności stresu oksydacyjnego, czynników zapalnych, enzymów lizosomalnych oraz procesów de/glikozylacji u pacjentów z objawami otępienia o typie alzheimerowskim i naczyniowym” przez dr hab. Napoleona Waszkiewicza wraz z zespołem badawczym z UMB.

Z-ca Przewodniczącej Komisji Bioetycznej UMB


dr n. farm. Krzysztof Chrzanowski

Pani lek. Katarzyna Witkowska jest członkiem zespołu badawczego w powyższym temacie (badawczym)

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D. Janowski

14. Informacje o charakterze udziału współautorów w publikacjach wraz z szacunkowym określeniem procentowego wkładu każdego z nich

Praca przeglądowa

| Wilczyńska K, Waszkiewicz N. Diagnostic utility of selected serum dementia biomarkers: amyloid β -40, amyloid β -42, tau protein, and YKL-40: a review. Journal of Clinical Medicine: 2020: 9, 26 | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| Autor | Udział w przygotowaniu pracy | Udział procentowy |
| Karolina Wilczyńska | Koncepcja pracy, analiza piśmiennictwa, przeszukanie baz danych i selekcji prac do przeprowadzenia przeglądu systematycznego, analiza wyników, przygotowanie manuskryptu do publikacji | 90% |
| Napoleon Waszkiewicz | Koncepcja i metodyka pracy, nadzór nad ostatecznym kształtem manuskryptu | 10% |

Praca oryginalna

| Wilczyńska K, Maciejczyk M, Zalewska A, Waszkiewicz N. Serum amyloid biomarkers, tau protein and YKL-40 utility in detection, differential diagnosing, and monitoring of dementia. Frontiers in Psychiatry: 2021: 12, 11 | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Autor | Udział w przygotowaniu pracy | Udział procentowy |
| Karolina Wilczyńska | Wstępu teoretyczny, koncepcja i metodyki pracy, rekrutacja i selekcja osób badanych, przygotowanie bazy danych, badanie testami psychometrycznymi, przygotowaniu materiału do oznaczeń, oznaczenia laboratoryjne, analiza wyników, przygotowanie manuskryptu do publikacji | 70% |
| Mateusz Maciejczyk | Koncepcja i metodyka pracy, pomoc przy wykonaniu oznaczeń laboratoryjnych, opracowanie statystyczne danych, interpretacja wyników, pomoc w przygotowaniu manuskryptu do publikacji | 15% |
| Anna Zalewska | Metodyka, nadzór nad ostatecznym kształtem manuskryptu | 5% |
| Napoleon Waszkiewicz | Koncepcja i metodyka pracy, interpretacja wyników oraz nadzór nad ostatecznym kształtem manuskryptu | 10% |

15. Oświadczenia o zgodzie na wykorzystanie publikacji w rozprawie doktorskiej

Białystok, 09.02.2022

Karolina Wilczyńska
doktorant w Klinice Psychiatrii
Uniwersytetu Medycznego w Białymstoku

Oświadczenie autora

Oświadczam, iż mój udział w przygotowaniu publikacji:

1. *Wilczyńska Karolina, Waszkiewicz Napoleon.*
Diagnostic utility of selected serum dementia biomarkers: amyloid β -40, amyloid β -42, tau protein, and YKL-40: a review.
Journal of Clinical Medicine: 2020: 9, 26 pp, Article ID 3452

wchodzącej w skład mojej rozprawy doktorskiej polegał na ustaleniu koncepcji pracy, wyszukaniu i analizie piśmiennictwa dotyczącego badanych biomarkerów, przeszukaniu baz danych i selekcji prac naukowych do przeprowadzenia przeglądu systematycznego, analizie uzyskanych wyników oraz przygotowaniu manuskryptu do publikacji, co określam jako 90% udziału w przygotowaniu wyżej wymienionej publikacji.

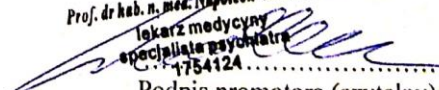
2. *Wilczyńska Karolina, Maciejczyk Mateusz, Zalewska Anna, Waszkiewicz Napoleon.*
Serum amyloid biomarkers, tau protein and YKL-40 utility in detection, differential diagnosing, and monitoring of dementia.
Frontiers in Psychiatry: 2021: 12, 11 pp., Article ID: 725511

wchodzącej w skład mojej rozprawy doktorskiej polegał na opracowaniu wstępu teoretycznego, współudziale w opracowaniu koncepcji i metodyki pracy, rekrutacji i wstępnej selekcji osób badanych, przygotowaniu bazy danych demograficznych i medycznych, badaniu testami psychometrycznymi, przygotowaniu materiału do oznaczeń laboratoryjnych, współuczestnictwie w wykonaniu oznaczeń laboratoryjnych i analizie uzyskanych wyników oraz przygotowaniu manuskryptu do publikacji, co określam jako 70% udziału w przygotowaniu wyżej wymienionej publikacji.



Podpis autora rozprawy doktorskiej (czytelny)

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Podpis promotora (czytelny)

Prof. dr hab. n. med. Napoleon Waszkiewicz
Klinika Psychiatrii
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Białystok, 09.02.2022

Oświadczenie współautora

Oświadczam, iż mój udział w przygotowaniu publikacji:

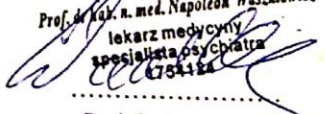
1. *Wilczyńska Karolina, Waszkiewicz Napoleon.*
Diagnostic utility of selected serum dementia biomarkers: amyloid β -40, amyloid β -42, tau protein, and YKL-40: a review.
Journal of Clinical Medicine: 2020: 9, 26 pp, Article ID 3452

wchodzącej w skład rozprawy doktorskiej lek. Karoliny Wilczyńskiej polegał na pomocy w przygotowaniu koncepcji pracy, metodyki, oraz nadzorze nad ostatecznym kształtem manuskryptu, co określam jako 10% udziału w przygotowaniu wyżej wymienionej publikacji.

2. *Wilczyńska Karolina, Maciejczyk Mateusz, Zalewska Anna, Waszkiewicz Napoleon.*
Serum amyloid biomarkers, tau protein and YKL-40 utility in detection, differential diagnosing, and monitoring of dementia.
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wchodzącej w skład rozprawy doktorskiej lek. Karoliny Wilczyńskiej polegał na pomocy w ustaleniu koncepcji i metodyki pracy, analizie uzyskanych wyników oraz nadzorze nad ostatecznym kształtem manuskryptu, co określam jako 10 % udziału w przygotowaniu wyżej wymienionej publikacji.

Jednocześnie wyrażam zgodę na przedłożenie wyżej wymienionych prac przez lek. Karolinę Wilczyńską jako część rozprawy doktorskiej w formie spójnego tematycznie cyklu prac opublikowanych w czasopiśmie naukowych.

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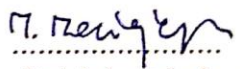
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1. *Wilczyńska Karolina, Maciejczyk Mateusz, Zalewska Anna, Waszkiewicz Napoleon. Serum amyloid biomarkers, tau protein and YKL-40 utility in detection, differential diagnosing, and monitoring of dementia. Frontiers in Psychiatry: 2021: 12, 11 pp., Article ID: 725511*

wchodzącej w skład rozprawy doktorskiej lek. Karoliny Wilczyńskiej polegał na pomocy w ustaleniu koncepcji i metodyki pracy, pomocy przy wykonaniu oznaczeń laboratoryjnych, opracowaniu statystycznym uzyskanych danych, pomocy w analizie wyników oraz uczestnictwie w przygotowaniu manuskryptu do publikacji, co określam jako 15 % udziału w przygotowaniu wyżej wymienionej publikacji.

Jednocześnie wyrażam zgodę na przedłożenie wyżej wymienionej pracy/prac przez lek. Karolinę Wilczyńską jako część rozprawy doktorskiej w formie spójnego tematycznie cyklu prac opublikowanych w czasopismach naukowych.


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Podpis (czytelny)

Białystok, dn. 01.02.2022.....

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Oświadczenie współautora

Oświadczam, iż mój udział w przygotowaniu publikacji:

1. *Wilczyńska Karolina, Maciejczyk Mateusz, Zalewska Anna, Waszkiewicz Napoleon. Serum amyloid biomarkers, tau protein and YKL-40 utility in detection, differential diagnosing, and monitoring of dementia. Frontiers in Psychiatry: 2021: 12, 11 pp., Article ID: 725511*

wchodzącej w skład rozprawy doktorskiej lek. Karoliny Wilczyńskiej polegał na pomocy w przygotowaniu metodyki oraz nadzorze nad ostatecznym kształtem publikacji co określam jako 5 % udziału w przygotowaniu wyżej wymienionej publikacji.

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16. Piśmiennictwo

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