## Contents

### MINIREVIEWS

**6213**  
Role of gut microbiome in regulating the effectiveness of metformin in reducing colorectal cancer in type 2 diabetes  

### ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Retrospective Cohort Study**

**6229**  
Impact factors of lymph node retrieval on survival in locally advanced rectal cancer with neoadjuvant therapy  

**Retrospective Study**

**6243**  
Three-year follow-up of Coats disease treated with conbercept and 532-nm laser photocoagulation  
_Jiang L, Qin B, Luo XL, Cao H, Deng TM, Yang MM, Meng T, Yang HQ_

**6252**  
Virus load and virus shedding of SARS-CoV-2 and their impact on patient outcomes  

**6264**  
Risk factors for de novo hepatitis B during solid cancer treatment  

**6274**  
Cause analysis and reoperation effect of failure and recurrence after epiblepharon correction in children  
_Wang Y, Zhang Y, Tian N_

### Clinical Trials Study

**6282**  
Effects of different acupuncture methods combined with routine rehabilitation on gait of stroke patients  
_Lou YT, Yang JJ, Ma YF, Zhen XC_

### Observational Study

**6296**  
Application of endoscopic submucosal dissection in duodenal space-occupying lesions  
_Li XY, Ji KY, Qu YH, Zheng JJ, Guo YJ, Zhang CP, Zhang KP_

**6306**  
Early renal injury indicators can help evaluate renal injury in patients with chronic hepatitis B with long-term nucleos(t)ide therapy  
_Ji TT, Tan N, Lu HY, Xu XY, Yu YY_
Prospective Study

Neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy plus surgery in the treatment of potentially resectable thoracic esophageal squamous cell carcinoma

Yan MH, Hou XB, Cai BN, Qu BL, Dai XK, Liu F

CASE REPORT

Uterine rupture in patients with a history of multiple curettages: Two case reports

Deng MF, Zhang XD, Zhang QF, Liu J

Pleural effusion and ascites in extrarenal lymphangiectasia caused by post-biopsy hematoma: A case report

Lin QZ, Wang HE, Wei D, Bao YF, Li H, Wang T

Eighty-year-old man with rare chronic neutrophilic leukemia caused by CSF3R T618I mutation: A case report and review of literature

Li YP, Chen N, Ye XM, Xia YS

Sigmoid colon duplication with ectopic immature renal tissue in an adult: A case report

Namgung H

Paraplegia from spinal intramedullary tuberculosis: A case report

Qu LM, Wu D, Guo L, Yu JL

Confocal laser endomicroscopy distinguishing benign and malignant gallbladder polyps during choledochoscopic gallbladder-preserving polypectomy: A case report

Tang BF, Dang T, Wang QH, Chang ZH, Han WJ

Sclerosing stromal tumor of the ovary with masculinization, Meig’s syndrome and CA125 elevation in an adolescent girl: A case report

Chen Q, Chen YH, Tang HY, Shen YM, Tan X

Primary pulmonary malignant melanoma diagnosed with percutaneous biopsy tissue: A case report

Xi JM, Wen H, Yan XB, Huang J

SRY-negative 45,X/46,XY adult male with complete masculinization and infertility: A case report and review of literature

Wu YH, Sun KN, Bao H, Chen YJ

Refractory case of ulcerative colitis with idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura successfully treated by Janus kinase inhibitor tofacitinib: A case report


Immunotherapies application in active stage of systemic lupus erythematosus in pregnancy: A case report and review of literature

Xiong ZH, Cao XS, Guan HL, Zheng HL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6418</td>
<td>Congenital nephrogenic diabetes insipidus due to the mutation in AVPR2 (c.541C&gt;T) in a neonate: A case report</td>
<td>Lin FT, Li J, Xu BL, Yang XX, Wang F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6425</td>
<td>Primary gastric melanoma in a young woman: A case report</td>
<td>Long GJ, Ou WT, Lin L, Zhou CJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6432</td>
<td>Extreme venous letting and cupping resulting in life-threatening anemia and acute myocardial infarction: A case report</td>
<td>Jang AY, Suh SY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6437</td>
<td>Novel conservative treatment for peritoneal dialysis-related hydrothorax: Two case reports</td>
<td>Dai BB, Lin BD, Yang LY, Wan JX, Pan YB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6444</td>
<td>Clinical characteristics of pulmonary cryptococcosis coexisting with lung adenocarcinoma: Three case reports</td>
<td>Zheng GX, Tang HJ, Huang ZP, Pan HL, Wei HY, Bai J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6450</td>
<td>Fracture of the scapular neck combined with rotator cuff tear: A case report</td>
<td>Chen L, Liu CL, Wu P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6456</td>
<td>Synchronous colonic mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue lymphoma found after surgery for adenocarcinoma: A case report and review of literature</td>
<td>Li JJ, Chen BC, Dong J, Chen Y, Chen YW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6465</td>
<td>Novel mutation in the ASXL3 gene in a Chinese boy with microcephaly and speech impairment: A case report</td>
<td>Li JR, Huang Z, Lu Y, Ji QY, Jiang MY, Yang F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6480</td>
<td>Status epilepticus as an initial manifestation of hepatic encephalopathy: A case report</td>
<td>Cui B, Wei L, Sun LY, Qu W, Zeng ZG, Liu Y, Zhu ZJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6487</td>
<td>Delayed diagnosis of prosopagnosia following a hemorrhagic stroke in an elderly man: A case report</td>
<td>Yuan Y, Huang F, Gao ZH, Cai WC, Xiao JX, Yang YE, Zhu PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6511</td>
<td>Extracorporeal shock wave therapy treatment of painful hematoma in the calf: A case report</td>
<td>Jung JW, Kim HS, Yang JH, Lee KH, Park SB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6517</td>
<td>Takotsubo cardiomyopathy associated with bronchoscopic operation: A case report</td>
<td>Wu BF, Shi JR, Zheng LR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABOUT COVER

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AIMS AND SCOPE

The primary aim of World Journal of Clinical Cases (WJCC, World J Clin Cases) is to provide scholars and readers from various fields of clinical medicine with a platform to publish high-quality clinical research articles and communicate their research findings online.

WJCC mainly publishes articles reporting research results and findings obtained in the field of clinical medicine and covering a wide range of topics, including case control studies, retrospective cohort studies, retrospective studies, clinical trials studies, observational studies, prospective studies, randomized controlled trials, randomized clinical trials, systematic reviews, meta-analysis, and case reports.

INDEXING/ABSTRACTING

The WJCC is now indexed in Science Citation Index Expanded (also known as SciSearch®), Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition, PubMed, and PubMed Central. The 2020 Edition of Journal Citation Reports® cites the 2019 impact factor (IF) for WJCC as 1.013; IF without journal self cites: 0.991; Ranking: 120 among 165 journals in medicine, general and internal; and Quartile category: Q3.

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Refractory case of ulcerative colitis with idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura successfully treated by Janus kinase inhibitor tofacitinib: A case report

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Author contributions: Komeda K and Sakurai T wrote the manuscript. Komeda K, Sakurai T, Morita Y and Hashimoto A was the patient's doctor in charge and was responsible for collecting medical history. Komeda Y, Sakurai T, Sakai K, Nagai T, Hagiwara S, Matsumura I, Nishio K and Kudo M contributed data analysis and interpretation of data.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND
Concomitant ulcerative colitis (UC) and idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) is a rare phenomenon. The management of UC with ITP can be challenging, since a decreased platelet count augments UC.

CASE SUMMARY
A 24-year-old man with UC and steroid-resistant ITP experienced UC flare. Although continuous infusion of cyclosporine was initiated, UC did not improve. The administration of tofacitinib subsequently led to the induction of remission. The patient has maintained remission of UC and ITP for over one year on tofacitinib treatment. Whole transcriptomic sequencing was performed for inflamed rectal mucosae obtained before and after the initiation of Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitor, suggesting that distinct molecular signatures seemed to be regulated by JAK inhibitors and other conventional therapies including tumor necrosis factor lockers.

CONCLUSION
Tofacitinib should be considered in refractory cases of UC with ITP.

Key Words: Ulcerative colitis; Idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura; Tofacitinib; Whole
Introduction

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), including ulcerative colitis (UC) and Crohn’s disease, is characterized by chronic relapsing inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract. The precise etiology of UC remains unknown. It has been associated with extraintestinal manifestations, including musculoskeletal diseases, mucocutaneous diseases, and hepatobiliary diseases[1-3]. The association between UC and idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) has also been described. The proposed pathogenesis of the concurrence of UC and ITP is antigenic mimicry between luminal antigens and platelet surface antigens[4]. The concurrence of UC with ITP adds complexity to the clinical course, since the number of bloody bowel movements is an important criterion for assessing the disease severity of UC. In addition, treatment of underlying UC flare can be challenging, since a decreased platelet count worsens the UC symptom, hematochezia. While treatment with anti-tumor necrosis factor (TNF) agents and cyclosporin as well as colectomy are acceptable options in refractory cases of UC associated with ITP[4,5], there are currently no recommended therapeutic strategies. The Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitor tofacitinib was recently introduced for the treatment of refractory UC, but its effectiveness has not been determined for UC with ITP. We herein report a refractory case of UC associated with ITP successfully treated with tofacitinib.

Case Presentation

Chief complaints

A 24-year-old Japanese male presented to the Gastroenterology Department of our hospital with diarrhea and hematochezia.

History of present illness

The patient was diagnosed with UC in 2015. At the onset, the disease was localized to the entire colon, and the patient was initially treated with mesalazine (3600 mg/d) for one year. In 2016, following a relapse, he was hospitalized. He then presented with anemia (hemoglobin 4 g/L) and thrombocytopenia (platelet count 5 × 10^10/μL). Further examinations, including bone marrow puncture, led to a diagnosis of concurrence of UC and ITP. The patient then started on prednisolone (30 mg/d) and achieved clinical and endoscopic remission for UC. However, since ITP was resistant to steroid and...
immunoglobulin treatments, he started oral cyclosporine and achieved remission for ITP. Thereafter, the patient maintained overall good health on oral mesalazine, prednisolone (5 mg/d), and cyclosporin (150 mg/d). His history was unremarkable. His family history was negative for hematological disease or inflammatory bowel disease.

In April 2019, the patient experienced a flare of UC characterized by six bowel movements/day of liquid and bloody stool and abdominal pain. The partial Mayo index score was 7, indicating severe disease. Laboratory exams revealed anemia but not thrombocytopenia (Table 1). After the exclusion of intestinal infections, oral cyclosporine initially changed to a continuous infusion of cyclosporine to control the blood concentration strictly. The patient reported little clinical benefit. He then started tofacitinib and achieved clinical remission (Figure 1A). The patient underwent colonoscopy in September 2019, which showed endoscopic remission (Figure 1B). Prednisolone was stopped, and the patient has maintained remission in UC and ITP for over one year on mesalazine and tofacitinib.

**History of past illness**

Past history is unremarkable except for UC and ITP.

**Personal and family history**

Personal and family history is unremarkable.

**Physical examination**

The patient did not have a fever. Physical examination showed slight tenderness in the left lower abdomen.

**Laboratory examinations**

Laboratory exams revealed anemia but not thrombocytopenia (Table 1).

**Imaging examinations**

To further analyze the molecular mechanism underlying tofacitinib therapy, whole transcriptomic sequencing was performed for inflamed rectal mucosae obtained before and after the initiation of JAK inhibitor (Supplementary Material). Compared with the gene expression before tofacitinib treatment, the top 10 downregulated genes during tofacitinib treatment were REG1A, REG1B, REG3A, SPINK4, DUOX2, TNIP3, DEFB4A, SAA2, CXCL5, and CXCL1. In contrast, the top 10 upregulated genes after the initiation of tofacitinib treatment were HMGCS2, AQP8, SLC6A19, MT1H, UGT2A3, CLDN8, MT1M, SLC5A1, PRKG2, and MT1G.

**FINAL DIAGNOSIS**

A refractory case of ulcerative colitis with idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura.

**TREATMENT**

The patient was successfully treated with tofacitinib.

**OUTCOME AND FOLLOW-UP**

The patient has maintained remission in UC and ITP for over one year on mesalazine and tofacitinib.

**DISCUSSION**

Major concerns of tofacitinib include the risk of hematologic toxicity, such as pancytopenia, agranulocytosis, and thrombocytopenia. The patient has maintained corticosteroid-free remission for UC and ITP for one year on tofacitinib treatment. The platelet count remained within the normal range despite stopping specific treatment for ITP. The relationship between these two entities underscore treatment implications,
Table 1 Serum laboratory values on before and after administration of tofacitinib

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laboratory test</th>
<th>Before tofacitinib</th>
<th>After tofacitinib</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albumin</td>
<td>3.6 g/dL</td>
<td>4.8 g/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-reactive protein</td>
<td>3.9 mg/dL</td>
<td>0.0 mg/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White blood cell count</td>
<td>11200/μL</td>
<td>4500/μL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erythrocyte sedimentation rate</td>
<td>20 mm</td>
<td>10 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red blood cell count</td>
<td>413 × 10^4/μL</td>
<td>448 × 10^4/μL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemoglobin</td>
<td>12.4 g/dL</td>
<td>14.3 g/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hematocrit</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platelet count</td>
<td>14.5 × 10^4/μL</td>
<td>25.2 × 10^4/μL</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

After Tofacitinib: 6 mo after the initiation of tofacitinib.

given their potentially shared immunological pathway and responses to similar medications. To our knowledge, this study is the first to report a UC patient with ITP who was successfully treated with tofacitinib.

REG1A and REG1B are upregulated in human colonic mucosa with UC\(^7\). IL-22 stimulation of REG1A is based on the presence of IL-activatable elements of the REG1A promoter and may be mediated through STAT3 tyrosine phosphorylation, located downstream of the JAK signaling pathway\(^8\). Consistently, the expression of these genes was substantially reduced through JAK inhibition in our case. Hyams et al\(^9\) reported that 33 genes were differentially expressed in the rectum of patients with moderate-to-severe UC who did and did not achieve corticosteroid-free remission after conventional treatments including anti-TNF therapy. The mucosal expression of DEFB4A, KRT6B, SPRR1B, TCN1, and SAA4 was high in our case, a responder to tofacitinib, while the expression was reduced in responders to conventional UC treatments, including anti-TNF therapy, compared with non-responders\(^9\). The expression of CHP2, GUCA2A, CA1, SLC26A2, PCK1, GLRA2, HAVCR1, and ABCG2 was low in our case that was successfully treated with tofacitinib and high in responders to conventional UC treatments\(^9\). In responders to tofacitinib, the expression of genes associated with resistance to conventional UC therapies was shown to be upregulated. The opposite trend in the signatures of genes related to the therapeutic response might be due to different mechanisms of action between JAK inhibitors and other therapies. Based on the findings of the present patient and another patient treated with anti-TNF antibodies who had RNA sequencing data, unsupervised hierarchical clustering of the gene panel and t-distributed Stochastic Neighbor Embedding visualization were defined (Figure 2). Consistently, distinct molecular signatures seemed to be regulated by JAK inhibition and TNF blockade, suggesting that the identification of gene sets may be able to predict therapeutic responses to medications. We have no data regarding biomarkers predicting the response to JAK inhibitors at present. Further investigations will be required to establish predictive biomarkers and personalized therapeutic strategies in IBD patients.

CONCLUSION

Tofacitinib should be considered in refractory cases of UC with ITP.
Figure 1 The administration of tofacitinib subsequently led to the induction of remission. A: The clinical course before and after tofacitinib therapy; B: Endoscopic aspects of the colon before and after tofacitinib treatment. There are spontaneous bleeding and ulcerations before tofacitinib treatment, and they improved after tofacitinib treatment.
Figure 2  Distinct molecular signatures seemed to be regulated by Janus kinase

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