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Genetic Study and Prediction of COVID-19 Severity in Hospital Patients

Anna Maria*

Department of Biology, İstanbul University, İstanbul, Turkey

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted global healthcare systems, with patient outcomes ranging from mild symptoms to severe complications and mortality. Understanding the genetic factors influencing disease severity is crucial for improving patient care and developing targeted interventions. This study examines the genetic variations associated with COVID-19 severity in a hospital-based cohort and utilizes predictive modeling to enhance clinical decision-making. The severity of COVID-19 varies widely among individuals, suggesting that host genetic factors play a critical role in disease progression. Several Genome-Wide Association Studies (GWAS) have identified specific genetic variants linked to susceptibility and severity, particularly in genes involved in immune response, inflammation, and lung function. The ACE2 gene, which encodes the receptor for SARS-CoV-2, has been extensively studied, as its polymorphisms may influence viral entry efficiency. Additionally, variants in genes such as TMPRSS2, IFNAR2, and OAS1 have been associated with differential immune responses, potentially affecting viral clearance and cytokine release patterns.

Description

In this study, a cohort of hospitalized COVID-19 patients was analyzed for genetic markers correlated with disease severity. Patients were categorized based on clinical outcomes, including mild, moderate, severe, and critical cases. Whole-genome sequencing and targeted genotyping were performed to identify relevant genetic variants. Statistical analyses, including logistic regression and machine learning algorithms, were employed to determine the predictive power of these genetic markers in forecasting disease progression. Our findings revealed significant associations between certain genetic variants and COVID-19 severity. Notably, polymorphisms in the IFITM3 gene, known for its role in antiviral defense, were linked to increased risk of severe outcomes. Similarly, variations in the HLA region, which influence immune recognition, were found to correlate with differential disease susceptibility. Patients carrying specific alleles in the TYK2 and DPP9 genes exhibited higher risks of severe inflammation and respiratory distress, aligning with previous studies highlighting their roles in immune regulation [1-3].

Beyond individual genetic markers, Polygenic Risk Scores (PRS) were computed to integrate multiple genetic variants into a composite risk assessment. PRS models demonstrated robust predictive capabilities, distinguishing between mild and severe cases with high accuracy. Machine learning techniques, including random forests and neural networks, further enhanced the predictive performance by incorporating demographic and clinical variables alongside genetic data. While genetic predisposition plays a crucial role, environmental and lifestyle factors also contribute to COVID-19 severity. Comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity interact with genetic risk factors, exacerbating disease outcomes. Our study incorporated these variables into the predictive modeling framework, yielding a more comprehensive risk stratification tool for clinical application. The implications of these findings extend to personalized medicine and public health strategies. Genetic screening for high-risk individuals could facilitate early interventions, such as prioritizing vaccination and monoclonal antibody treatments. Additionally, insights from this study may inform drug development by identifying potential therapeutic targets within immune-related pathways [4,5].

Conclusion

Despite its strengths, this study has limitations, including sample size constraints and population-specific genetic variations. Future research should aim for larger, multi-ethnic cohorts to validate and refine predictive models. Moreover, integrating transcriptomic and proteomic data could enhance the understanding of gene expression dynamics in COVID-19 pathophysiology. In conclusion, this genetic study provides valuable insights into the determinants of COVID-19 severity and underscores the potential of predictive modeling in clinical practice. By identifying key genetic factors and leveraging advanced computational approaches, this research contributes to the ongoing efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and improve patient outcomes.

Acknowledgement

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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***Address for Correspondence:** Anna Maria, Department of Biology, İstanbul University, İstanbul, Turkey, E-mail: marianna@gmail.com*

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