PURE OCULAR SYMPTOMS AT DISEASE ONSET IS ASSOCIATED WITH HLA-B44 IN PATIENTS WITH AUTOIMMUNE MYASTHENIA GRAVIS IN TURKISH POPULATION

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Objective: Acquired myasthenia gravis (MG) is an autoimmune disorder of the neuromuscular junction mainly occurring in genetically susceptible individuals. Associations between different major histocompatibility complex (MHC) class alleles and MG have been described in different ethnic populations. We aimed to investigate the probable genetic associations among patients with autoimmune MG in relation with the clinical symptoms at disease onset.
Methods: We examined MHC Class I-II allele distribution in 78 unrelated Caucasian Turkish patients with MG. Patients were separated into two groups according to the symptoms at disease onset as pure ocular(n=19) or generalized(n=59).
Results: The distribution of HLA-B44 was significantly increased in patients with pure ocular symptoms during disease onset (p=0.014).
Conclusion: The genotypic profile in patients with pure ocular symptoms at disease onset was different from the patients with generalized disease. This genetic association, to our knowledge, has not been previously reported.