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EXPRESSION OF SV40 LARGE T ANTIGEN (Tag) IN 18 MALIGNANT MESOTHELIOMAS (MM) FROM TURKISH VILLAGES: COMPARISON WITH UNITED STATES CASES

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Background: High rates of malignant mesotheliomas (MM) in certain villages in Turkey are associated with asbestos and zeolite in native rock. In North America MM is usually associated with occupational asbestos exposure. The SV40 virus is a polyomavirus which induces MM in hamsters and identification of SV40 virus DNA by PCR and by immunohistochemistry has been reported in several countries. We investigated the frequency of SV40 Tag expression in a group of MM from Turkish villages compared to MM from the US.

Design: After antigen retrieval, paraffin-embedded sections of 18 MM from Turkish MM villages were immunostained with monoclonal anti-SV40 Large T-antigen antibody (1:25, Pab 101, Cat.#SC-147, Santa Cruz Biotechnology) and the avidin-biotin technique. MM with more than 5% of cells positive were considered immunopositive. The results were compared to those of 141 MM previously reported from the United States.

Results: Of the 18 Turkish cases, 11 (61%) were immunopositive and 7 (38%) were immunonegative. Of 141 US cases, 98 (69%) were immunopositive and 43 (31%) were immunonegative.

Conclusion: The frequency of SV40 Tag expression is similar in MM from Turkish villages and MM from US. Tag expression may represent: (1) coincidental universal SV40 subclinical infection, (2) SV40 as an etiologic factor in some MM (3) consistent false positives (i.e. other viruses, artifacts, etc).

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