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Human Herpesvirus 8 (HHV-8) in Non-HIV Associated Forms of Kaposi's Sarcoma from Turkey

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**Abstract:** Objective: Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), first described in 1872 by Moritz Kaposi, is a spindle cell, multifocal vascular tumor. Despite the intense work on the pathogenesis of KS, its etiology remains in doubt. The aim of this study was to determine the presence of HHV-8 sequences in non-HIV associated Kaposi's sarcoma patients, namely classical and immunosuppression-associated, and compare the results with normal healthy subjects. Materials and Methods: Nineteen patients with classical Kaposi's sarcoma (CKS), and nine patients with immunosuppression-associated Kaposi's sarcoma (ISKS) (6 renal transplantation, 1 Behçet's disease, 1 high grade lymphoma, 1 ataxia telangiectasia) were included in this study. Skin samples of 29 healthy subjects who had elective plastic surgery were used as a control group. All samples were retrieved from the archives of the pathology department and studied in the microbiology department of a university hospital. Formalin fixed, paraffin embedded tissue samples of classical and immunosuppression-associated Kaposi's sarcoma patients were investigated by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and restriction enzyme analysis (REA) for the presence of HHV-8 DNA sequences. Results: HHV-8 sequences were detected in 16 of 19 (84%) CKS patients, and 5 of 9 (55%) ISKS patients by PCR and REA. The prevalence of HHV-8 detection was lower in the ISKS group. In this group, five positive results belonged to renal transplant patients who received cyclosporine in addition to prednisolone. We did not detect HHV-8 sequences in the 29 healthy skin samples. Conclusions: Our data suggest that HHV-8 probably plays an important role in the pathogenesis of non-HIV infection related forms of KS. Unlike other herpesviruses, HHV-8 is not widespread in the normal population. In immunosuppressed patients, HHV-8 expression may be due to cyclosporine treatment.

**Key Words:** Kaposi's sarcoma, Human herpesvirus-8

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