

## Physician - Coronary Artery Diseases and Surgery

[MSB-10]

### The Biomarker Potential of Serum-Derived Exosomes Carrying Autophagic Regulators in Carotid Artery Stenosis Patients

Ceyda Colakoglu Bergel<sup>1</sup>, Isil Ezgi Eryilmaz<sup>2</sup>, Bilge Arioiz<sup>1</sup>, Atif Yolgosteren<sup>3</sup>, Unal Egeli<sup>1</sup>, Basak Erdemli Gursel<sup>4</sup>, Murat Bicer<sup>3</sup>, Gulsah Cecener<sup>2</sup>, Mustafa Tok<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Medical Biology, Bursa Uludağ University, Graduate School of Health Sciences, Bursa, Türkiye

<sup>2</sup>Department of Medical Biology, Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Medicine, Bursa, Türkiye

<sup>3</sup>Department of Cardiovascular Surgery, Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Medicine, Bursa, Türkiye

<sup>4</sup>Department of Radiology, Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Medicine, Bursa, Türkiye

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E-mail: ceydacolakoglu44@gmail.com

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**Objective:** This study aimed to investigate the biomarker potential of exosomes as autophagic regulators for discriminating ulcerated from smooth ones by serum-derived exosome isolation and real-time quantitative polymerase chain reaction (RT-qPCR) analysis.

**Methods:** Eight carotid artery stenosis (CAS) patients (6 males, 2 females; mean age: 65.7±11 years) were included in the study conducted. Plaque ulceration was determined by Doppler ultrasonography. Afterward, the serum was separated and exosome/exosomal RNA isolation was performed using an exoRNeasy Midi Kit. Transmission electron microscopy and nanoparticle tracking analysis were performed for exosome characterization. Finally, the expression of autophagy-related genes (Atg5, Atg12, Beclin, and LC3) was analyzed by RT-qPCR.

**Results:** Five (62.5%) patients had ulcerated carotid plaques. The patients' stenosis degree was 70% or greater. Based on the RT-qPCR (120 nm), Atg12, Beclin, LC3, and Atg5 levels were downregulated by 3.79-, 5.28-, 2.40- (p>0.05), and 4.83-fold (p=0.02) in ulcerated plaques, respectively.

**Conclusion:** Although further validation is needed, data suggests that autophagy-related mRNA cargoes of serum-derived exosomes may be potential biomarkers for risk stratification based on plaque surface morphology in CAS patients.

**Keywords:** Autophagy, carotid artery stenosis, exosome, ulcerated plaques.