

**CORRELATION RISK ANALYSIS OF SERUM AMYLOID A, PROCALCITONIN AND IFN- $\beta$ 2 IN ADVERSE OUTCOMES OF ACUTE PANCREATITIS**ANALIZA KORELACIJE RIZIKA SERUMSKOG AMILOIDA A, PROKALCITONINA I IFN- $\beta$ 2 U NEPOVOLJNIM ISHODIMA KOD AKUTNOG PANKREATITISANaibo Yu<sup>1</sup>, Ruxia Han<sup>2</sup>, Chen Menghui<sup>3</sup>, Li Xuke<sup>3</sup>, Kangjian Wang<sup>4\*</sup><sup>1</sup>Department of Emergency, Shanghai Fengxian District Central Hospital, No. 6600, Nanfeng Road, Fengxian District, Shanghai City 201499, China<sup>2</sup>Intensive Care Unit, Department of Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery, the First Medical Centre of PLA General Hospital, No. 28, Fuxing Road, Haidian District, Beijing City 100853, China<sup>3</sup>Gastroenterology Department, the First Affiliated Hospital of Zhengzhou University, No. 1, Jianshe East Road, Erqi District, Zhengzhou City 451191, China<sup>4</sup>Department of Critical Care Medicine, Shulan (Hang Zhou) Hospital, No. 848, Dongxin Road, Gongshu District, Hangzhou City 310000, China**Summary**

**Background:** To investigate the relationships between the severity and prognosis of individuals with acute pancreatitis (AP) and the levels of serum amyloid A, procalcitonin, and interferon- $\beta$ 2 (IFN- $\beta$ 2).

**Methods:** 224 AP patients admitted to our hospital between February 2022 and February 2024 were selected as research participants. According to the Acute Physiology and Chronic Health Evaluation II (APACHE II) score, the patients were divided into a mild AP group (140 patients) and a severe AP group (84 patients). The levels of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 in the two groups were compared, and the relationships between these levels and the severity of the disease were analysed using Spearman correlation. The factors affecting the prognosis of AP patients were examined using binary logistic regression. Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves were used to evaluate the prognostic significance of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2.

**Results:** The levels of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin and IFN- $\beta$ 2 in the mild AP group were significantly lower than those in the severe AP group ( $P < 0.05$ ). The severity of AP was favourably connected with serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 levels ( $r = 0.774, 0.678, 0.830, 0.584, P < 0.05$ ). After 28 days of follow-up,

**Kratak sadržaj**

**Uvod:** Cilj je bio da se ispita povezanost između težine bolesti i prognoze kod pacijenata sa akutnim pankreatitisom (AP) i nivoa serumskog amiloida A, procalcitonina i interferona- $\beta$ 2 (IFN- $\beta$ 2).

**Metode:** U istraživanje je uključeno 224 pacijenta sa AP primljenih u našu bolnicu između februara 2022. i februara 2024. godine. Na osnovu APACHE II skora, pacijenti su podeljeni u grupu sa blagim AP ( $n = 140$ ) i grupu sa teškim AP ( $n = 84$ ). Mereni su nivoi serumskog amiloida A, C-reaktivnog proteina (CRP), procalcitonina i IFN- $\beta$ 2, koji su zatim upoređeni između grupa. Korelacija ovih biomarkera sa težinom AP analizirana je Spirmanovom metodom. Binarnom logističkom regresijom utvrđeni su faktori koji utiču na prognozu. Za procenu prediktivne vrednosti svakog biomarkera korišćene su ROC krive.

**Rezultati:** Nivoi serumskog amiloida A, CRP-a, procalcitonina i IFN- $\beta$ 2 su bili značajno viši u grupi sa teškim AP u odnosu na grupu sa blagim AP ( $P < 0,05$ ). Sva četiri biomarkera bila su pozitivno povezana sa težinom AP ( $r = 0,774; 0,678; 0,830; 0,584; P < 0,05$ ). Nakon 28 dana praćenja, 64 pacijenta (28,57%) je imalo nepovoljne ishode, uključujući respiratornu insuficijenciju ( $n = 20, 8,93\%$ ), hipokalcemiju ( $n = 24, 10,71\%$ ) i smrt ( $n = 20, 8,93\%$ ). Incidencija nepovoljnih ishoda je bila značajno

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among 224 AP patients, 64 patients (28.57%) had poor prognoses, including 20 patients (8.93%) with respiratory insufficiency, 24 patients (10.71%) with hypocalcemia, and 20 patients (8.93%) who died. The severe AP group also had a higher overall incidence of poor prognosis than the moderate AP group ( $P < 0.05$ ). AP patients' poor prognosis was influenced by the APACHE II score and blood levels of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 ( $P < 0.05$ ). According to the ROC curve analysis, the areas under the curve for predicting a poor AP prognosis were 0.859, 0.851, 0.811, and 0.802 for blood serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2, respectively, all of which had some predictive value.

**Conclusions:** Serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 levels show a strong prognostic value for AP patients' prognosis and are positively connected with the severity of AP.

**Keywords:** acute pancreatitis, serum amyloid protein A, C-reactive protein procalcitonin, interferon- $\beta$ 2, severity of the illness

## Introduction

Acute pancreatitis (AP) is an autoimmune inflammatory response of pancreatic tissue triggered by various factors, characterised by inflammatory cell infiltration, pancreatic oedema, haemorrhage, and necrosis (1–3). Clinical data show that AP can be classified into mild and severe cases based on disease severity. Among them, mild AP has relatively mild clinical symptoms and a good prognosis, and the body can recover after treatment. Severe AP often manifests as secondary inflammation, infection, and organ failure, which can seriously threaten patients' safety (4). Therefore, improving the early diagnosis rate of AP is important for determining patient prognosis. The persistent systemic inflammatory response during the acute reaction period can cause target organ damage and worsen AP. Studies (5–7) have shown that interferon- $\beta$ 2 (IFN- $\beta$ 2), procalcitonin, serum amyloid A, and C-reactive protein (CRP) are important components of the body's immune system and inflammatory response, and they may also contribute to the onset and progression of AP. At present, clinical studies on serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, IFN- $\beta$ 2 and AP have focused mostly on their relationships with disease severity, whereas relatively few reports exist on the prognostic assessment of AP using these biomarkers.

One prevalent acute abdominal ailment in clinical practice is acute pancreatitis (AP) (8). Its course progresses rapidly, and the prognosis varies significantly. Patients with mild symptoms usually recover on their own, whereas severe acute pancreatitis (SAP) is prone to serious complications such as multiple organ dysfunction and pancreatic necrosis and infection, with a mortality rate as high as 20–30% (9). Early and accurate assessment of disease severity and prediction of patient prognosis are highly important for optimising clinical intervention strategies and improving

veća u grupi sa teškim AP ( $P < 0,05$ ). Logistička regresija pokazala je da su APACHE II skor i serumski nivoi amiloida A, CRP-a, procalcitonina i IFN- $\beta$ 2 nezavisni prediktori nepovoljne prognoze ( $P < 0,05$ ). ROC analiza je pokazala da serumski amiloid A, CRP, procalcitonin i IFN- $\beta$ 2 imaju prognostičku vrednost, sa površinama ispod krive (AUC) od 0,859; 0,851; 0,811 i 0,802, respektivno.

**Zaključak:** Viši nivoi serumske amiloidne A, CRP-a, procalcitonina i IFN- $\beta$ 2 snažno su povezani sa težinom AP i imaju značajnu prediktivnu vrednost za nepovoljne ishode kod pacijenata sa akutnim pankreatitisom.

**Ključne reči:** akutni pankreatitis, serumski amiloid A, C-reaktivni protein, procalcitonin, interferon- $\beta$ 2, prognoza, težina bolesti

patient survival outcomes. At present, clinical practice relies on composite evaluation systems, such as the Ranson and APACHE-II scores. However, these systems are complex to operate and have delays (10–12). There is an urgent need to identify biological markers with high sensitivity and strong timeliness to support dynamic monitoring. An important part of the pathophysiology of AP involves serum inflammatory factors. A common inflammatory marker used to assess AP severity is C-reactive protein (CRP) (13). Procalcitonin has a high predictive value for pancreatic necrosis secondary to bacterial infection. Serum amyloid A may more accurately signal the onset of tissue damage due to its increased pace and amplitude (14). However, the synergistic value of the aforementioned markers for prognostic prediction has not been systematically elucidated.

In this investigation, the dynamic changes in serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 levels in AP patients were prospectively analysed, and their relationships with prognostic outcomes, including organ failure, local complications, and mortality, were examined to provide an evidence-based basis for establishing a more efficient disease early warning model.

## Materials and Methods

### General information

Two hundred twenty-four AP patients admitted to our hospital between February 2022 and February 2024 were selected as research participants.

Inclusion criteria: (1) Those who meet the diagnostic criteria of the »Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Acute Pancreatitis (2020)«; (2) Those accompanied by symptoms of varying degrees, such as abdominal pain, abdominal distension, and indi-

gestion; (3) Those with complete clinical data. Exclusion criteria: (1) Those with impaired function of vital organs; (2) Those with concurrent malignant tumours; (3) Those whose time from onset to admission is  $\geq 48$  hours.

All the selected patients were divided into a mild AP group (APACHE II score  $< 8$ , 140 cases) and a severe AP group (APACHE II score  $\geq 8$ , 84 cases) according to the Acute Physiology and Chronic Health Evaluation II (APACHE II) score. In the mild AP group, 82 males and 38 females were included. The ages ranged from 23 to 80 years, with an average of  $52.50 \pm 7.86$  years. The body mass index (BMI) ranged from 19 to  $28 \text{ kg/m}^2$ , with an average of  $23.66 \pm 3.22 \text{ kg/m}^2$ . There were 32 females and 52 males in the severe AP group. The age ranged from 24 to 78 years, with an average of  $53.46 \pm 7.22$  years. The average BMI was  $23.46 \pm 3.03 \text{ kg/m}^2$ , with a range of 19– $28 \text{ kg/m}^2$ . The two groups' general data showed no statistically significant difference ( $P > 0.05$ ).

#### Laboratory testing methods

Five millilitres of venous blood were drawn from patients with AP after they had fasted for more than 6 hours. The mixture was subsequently centrifuged at 3,000 r/min for 10 minutes with a 10 cm radius. The upper layer of serum was removed and stored at  $-80^\circ\text{C}$  until analysis. The levels of procalcitonin, IFN- $\beta 2$ , and serum amyloid A in patients with AP were determined using a quantum dot fluorescence immunoassay. CRP was determined by immunoscattering turbidimetry (the serum amyloid A kit was produced by Nanjing Novozyme Medical Technology Co., Ltd.; Jinwei Biomedical Engineering Co., Ltd., produced the procalcitonin and IFN- $\beta 2$  kits; and Guangdong Pumen Biomedical Technology Co., Ltd. produced the CRP kit). Every operation listed above was carried out strictly in accordance with the reagent instructions.

#### Follow-up investigation and analysis

Every patient was monitored for 28 days to assess their prognosis and identify those with a poor prognosis. Poor prognosis was defined as respiratory insufficiency, hypocalcemia and death.

#### Statistical processing methods

The statistical program SPSS 22.0 was used to analyse the data. The  $\chi^2$  test was used to compare groups, and count data are presented as percentages or counts. For group comparisons, an independent-samples t-test was employed, and the measurement data are presented as  $\bar{x} \pm s$  values. Using Spearman correlation, the relationships between the severity of AP and the levels of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta 2$  were examined. Binary logistic regression was used to analyse multivariate data, and receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves were used to assess predictive value. AUC values indicated superior predictive accuracy between 0.7 and 0.9, while good predictive accuracy was indicated by AUC values above 0.9.

## Results

#### Comparison of the serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin and IFN- $\beta 2$ levels between the two groups

The levels of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin and IFN- $\beta 2$  in the mild AP group were significantly lower than those in the severe AP group ( $P < 0.05$ ), as shown in *Table 1*.

Patients with acute pancreatitis were divided into mild and severe groups based on the APACHE II score. Serum levels of inflammatory markers, including procalcitonin, C-reactive protein (CRP), serum amyloid A, and interferon- $\beta 2$  (IFN- $\beta 2$ ), were compared between the two patient groups. The findings showed that the moderate AP group's serum levels of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta 2$  were much lower than those of the severe AP group, and that each index difference between the two

**Table 1** Comparison of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and L-6 levels between two groups ( $\bar{x} \pm s$ ).

Group	n	Serum amyloid A (mg/L)	Serum CRP (mg/L)	Serum procalcitonin (ng/mL)	Serum IFN- $\beta 2$ (ng/L)
Mild AP group	140	$342.50 \pm 80.29$	$45.20 \pm 13.30$	$1.85 \pm 0.32$	$12.49 \pm 3.16$
Severe AP group	84	$602.49 \pm 121.58$	$78.46 \pm 20.50$	$3.43 \pm 0.46$	$18.92 \pm 4.56$
t		13.623	10.343	21.774	9.036
P		$< 0.001$	$< 0.001$	$< 0.001$	$< 0.001$

groups was statistically significant. Among AP patients with varying degrees of disease severity, there are significant differences in the expression levels of these key inflammatory markers. Patients with severe AP generally have higher levels of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin and IFN- $\beta$ 2, reflecting a more intense systemic inflammatory response.

#### Spearman correlation analysis

There was a favourable correlation between the severity of AP and the serum levels of amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2, as well as the severity of the disease ( $r=0.774, 0.678, 0.830, 0.584; P<0.05$ ).

To thoroughly assess the relationships between the severity of acute pancreatitis (AP) and the levels of serum amyloid A, C-reactive protein (CRP), procalcitonin, and interferon- $\beta$ 2 (IFN- $\beta$ 2), Spearman correlation analysis was employed. The analysis revealed that serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 were significantly positively correlated with the clinical severity of AP. These findings indicate that as levels of these inflammatory markers increase, the severity of the patient's disease intensifies, reflecting their crucial role

in the pathological process of AP. This positive correlation further confirms that serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 can be used as reliable indicators of the intensity of the AP inflammatory response, and that changes in their levels can effectively reflect the progression of disease from mild to severe.

#### Comparison of prognosis between the two groups of patients

After a 28-day follow-up, among 224 AP patients, 64 (28.57%) had a poor prognosis, including 20 (8.93%) with respiratory insufficiency, 24 (10.71%) with hypocalcemia, and 20 (8.93%) who died. The severe AP group had a higher overall incidence of poor prognosis than the moderate AP group ( $\chi^2=15.124, P<0.05$ ), as shown in *Table II*.

The risk of adverse prognosis in patients with severe acute pancreatitis was much greater than that in patients with mild acute pancreatitis, and the cumulative incidence of adverse prognosis was significantly greater. The specific manifestations of poor prognosis include multiple serious complications, such as respiratory insufficiency, hypocalcemia and death.

**Table II** Comparison of prognosis between two groups of patients [n (%)].

Group	n	Respiratory insufficiency	Hypocalcemia	Death	Total
Mild AP group	140	4 (2.86)	6 (4.28)	12 (8.57)	22 (15.71)
Severe AP group	84	16 (19.05)	18 (21.43)	8 (9.52)	42 (50.00)

**Table III** Univariate analysis of prognostic factors in AP patients [n (%) or  $\bar{x}\pm s$ ].

Item	Poor prognosis group	Good prognosis group	$\chi^2/t$	P
Gender			1.480	0.227
Male	44 (68.75)	90 (56.25)		
Female	20 (31.25)	70 (43.75)		
Age (years)	52.16 $\pm$ 7.49	52.89 $\pm$ 7.62	0.452	0.642
BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	23.16 $\pm$ 3.50	23.50 $\pm$ 3.24	0.630	0.520
APACHEI score (points)	10.40 $\pm$ 3.16	6.16 $\pm$ 1.79	8.717	<0.001
Serum amyloid A (mg/L)	564.46 $\pm$ 112.19	405.28 $\pm$ 82.89	6.112	<0.001
CRP (mg/L)	92.19 $\pm$ 13.20	74.56 $\pm$ 11.23	6.930	<0.001
Procalcitonin (ng/mL)	3.46 $\pm$ 0.82	2.19 $\pm$ 0.69	6.590	<0.001
Il-6 (ng/L)	17.89 $\pm$ 4.16	12.28 $\pm$ 3.17	4.748	<0.001
Fatty liver	12 (18.75)	20 (12.50)	0.723	0.397
Hypertension	10 (15.63)	22 (13.75)	0.060	0.792
Ddiabetes	16 (25.00)	28 (17.50)	0.819	0.361

**Table IV** Logistic regression analysis of prognostic factors in AP patients.

Factor	$\beta$	SE	Wald	Degree of freedom	P	OR	95% CI	
							lower limit	upper limit
APACHE II rating	-0.806	0.199	17.146	1	<0.001	0.442	-0.806	0.198
Serum amyloid A	-0.015	0.008	8.920	1	0.007	0.983	-0.015	0.008
Serum CRP	-0.079	0.035	5.782	1	0.010	0.922	-0.079	0.035
Serum procalcitonin	-1.895	0.558	11.688	1	0.001	0.155	-1.895	0.557
Serum IFN- $\beta$ 2	-0.279	0.090	8.235	1	0.008	0.753	-0.279	0.090

**Table V** The predictive value of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 levels for poor prognosis of acute pancreatitis.

Indicator	AUC	SE	P	95% CI		Truncation value	Sensitivity (%)	Specificity (%)	Yoden Index
				Lower limit	Upper limit				
Serum amyloid A	0.859	0.044	<0.001	0.772	0.937	502.119 mg/L	71.3	90.4	0.613
Serum CRP	0.851	0.045	<0.001	0.772	0.931	82.159 mg/L	84.8	77.9	0.613
Serum procalcitonin	0.811	0.048	<0.001	0.735	0.906	2.549 ng/mL	90.0	83.1	0.447
Serum IFN- $\beta$ 2	0.802	0.049	<0.001	0.724	0.891	13.834 ng/L	81.7	52.9	0.332

*Prognostic factor univariate study in AP patients*

According to univariate analysis, the poor-prognosis and favourable-prognosis groups did not differ significantly in sex, age, BMI, underlying disorders, etc. ( $P > 0.05$ ). Nonetheless, the bad-prognosis group had higher serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 levels, as well as a higher APACHE II score, than the good-prognosis group.  $P < 0.05$  indicated that the differences were statistically significant, as shown in *Table III*.

*Logistic regression analysis of prognostic factors in AP patients*

Using the APACHE II score and the prognosis of AP patients as the dependent variables (assignment: 0 = poor, 1 = good). Additionally, a binary logistic regression analysis was performed with serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 as independent variables. The findings showed that the poor prognosis of AP patients was influenced by the APACHE II score and serum levels of amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 ( $P < 0.05$ ), as shown in *Table IV*.

*Predictive value of serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin and IFN- $\beta$ 2 for poor prognosis in AP patients*

The AUCs of the serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin and IFN- $\beta$ 2 levels for the prediction of poor AP prognosis were 0.859, 0.851, 0.811 and 0.802, respectively, all of which had certain accuracy. The maximum cutoff point of the Youden index in the upper left corner of the ROC curve was used as the cutoff value (serum amyloid A was 502.119 mg/L, CRP was 82.159 mg/L, procalcitonin was 2.549 ng/mL, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 was 13.87 ng/L). The predictive sensitivity and specificity at this point were as follows: the predictive values of serum amyloid A were 71.3% and 90.4%, those of CRP were 84.8% and 77.9%, those of procalcitonin were 90.0% and 83.1%, and those of IFN- $\beta$ 2 were 81.7% and 52.9%. All of these values were good, as shown in *Table V*.

**Discussion**

Pancreatitis can present clinically as acute or chronic, but acute pancreatitis is more common (15). After its occurrence, it can be complicated by organ dysfunction and failure, seriously threatening the

patient's safety. AP is a common digestive system disease (16). Clinically, it can be classified into mild and severe cases based on the severity of the condition. Mild AP has mild clinical symptoms, mostly manifesting as intermittent or continuous upper abdominal pain, which can radiate to the waist and back (17). After treatment with water deprivation, acid and enzyme inhibition, etc., the patient's clinical symptoms gradually improve, and the prognosis is good. Severe AP involves extensive pancreatic necrosis and may lead to secondary infection. This further leads to multiple organ failure, shock and even death. The fatality rate of AP is approximately 10%, while the fatality rate of severe AP can reach over 50%, and it can be reduced to approximately 20% after early treatment (18–20). Therefore, after the diagnosis of AP, accurately assessing its severity and choosing effective treatment measures are key to improving its prognosis.

Macrophages, monocytes, etc, mainly secrete IFN- $\beta$ 2. An increase in its level can, on the one hand, promote differentiation and downregulate related inflammatory factors, thereby promoting neutrophil apoptosis and reducing inflammation in the body (21). On the other hand, it can cause immune dysfunction, leading to immunosuppression and damage to internal organs. Procalcitonin is mainly a glycoprotein secreted by cells (22). It has good stability and a very low content in normal organisms. However, under pathological or inflammatory conditions, it can be induced to be secreted by toxins, tumour necrosis factors, interleukins, etc., and its levels in body tissues increase significantly. Research reports (23–25) indicate that procalcitonin can serve as a sensitive marker of infection. Especially when hyperlipidemia is present, an increase in procalcitonin levels can compromise the body's defence mechanisms, allowing the infection to spread and affecting prognosis. Therefore, in this study, the differences in the expression of the above four indicators in the blood of patients with AP of different severities were selected for research, and their prognostic value was analysed (26). Analysis of the cause revealed that, after pancreatitis, bacterial infection often occurs (27). The

levels of procalcitonin and serum amyloid A in AP patients increase, and the more severe the condition, the greater the increase (28–30). The pathological manifestation of AP is the activation of the mononuclear macrophage system in pancreatic tissue, thus leading to rapid increases in CRP and IFN- $\beta$ 2 levels in the blood. Previous studies (31–34) have shown that CRP levels in patients with pancreatitis are significantly positively correlated with their condition. CRP >150 mg/L 72 hours after disease onset suggests pancreatic tissue necrosis. If IFN- $\beta$ 2 also shows a dynamic and continuous increase, it indicates a poor prognosis. Studies (35–37) have shown that IFN- $\beta$ 2-induced activation and secretion of the peripheral blood mononuclear cell system are important drivers of the progression of AP and infectious multiple organ failure.

## Conclusion

Serum amyloid A, CRP, procalcitonin, and IFN- $\beta$ 2 levels have substantial prognostic value for AP patients and are positively associated with the severity of AP. The study's limitations include a limited sample size and the failure to monitor and track the long-term prognosis of AP patients. Moreover, CRP levels may be associated with a patient's BMI and age. However, interfering factors were not excluded in this study, which may have introduced a degree of bias into the research results. Therefore, large-sample, long-term follow-up, and strict quality-control studies are needed for verification.

## Authors' contribution

Naibo Yu and Ruxia Han contributed equally to this research

## Conflict of interest statement

All the authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in this work.

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