Inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency

Inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency is a genetic condition that typically does not cause any health problems.

Thyroxine-binding globulin is a protein that carries hormones made or used by the thyroid gland, which is a butterfly-shaped tissue in the lower neck. Thyroid hormones play an important role in regulating growth, brain development, and the rate of chemical reactions in the body (metabolism). Most of the time, these hormones circulate in the bloodstream attached to thyroxine-binding globulin and similar proteins. If there is a shortage (deficiency) of thyroxine-binding globulin, the amount of circulating thyroid hormones is reduced.

Researchers have identified two forms of inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency: the complete form (TBG-CD), which results in a total loss of thyroxine-binding globulin, and the partial form (TBG-PD), which reduces the amount of this protein or alters its structure. Neither of these conditions causes any problems with thyroid function. They are usually identified during routine blood tests that measure thyroid hormones.

Although inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency does not cause any health problems, it can be mistaken for more serious thyroid disorders (such as hypothyroidism). Therefore, it is important to diagnose inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency to avoid unnecessary treatments.

Frequency

The complete form of inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency, TBG-CD, affects about 1 in 15,000 newborns worldwide. The partial form, TBG-PD, affects about 1 in 4,000 newborns. These conditions appear to be more common in the Australian Aborigine population and in the Bedouin population of southern Israel.

Causes

Inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency results from mutations in the SERPINA7 gene. This gene provides instructions for making thyroxine-binding globulin. Some mutations in the SERPINA7 gene prevent the production of a functional protein, causing TBG-CD. Other mutations reduce the amount of this protein or alter its structure, resulting in TBG-PD.

Researchers have also described non-inherited forms of thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency, which are more common than the inherited form. Non-inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency can occur with a variety of illnesses and is a side effect of some medications.
Inheritance Pattern

Inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency has an X-linked pattern of inheritance. The SERPINA7 gene is located on the X chromosome, which is one of the two sex chromosomes.

In males (who have only one X chromosome), a mutation in the only copy of the gene in each cell causes partial or complete inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency. In females (who have two X chromosomes), a mutation in one of the two copies of the gene in each cell reduces the amount of thyroxine-binding globulin. However, their levels of this protein are usually within the normal range.

A characteristic of X-linked inheritance is that fathers cannot pass X-linked traits to their sons.

Other Names for This Condition

- TBG deficiency

Diagnosis & Management

Genetic Testing Information

- What is genetic testing?
  /primer/testing/genetictesting

- Genetic Testing Registry: Thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency

Other Diagnosis and Management Resources

- American Thyroid Association: Thyroid Function Tests
  http://www.thyroid.org/thyroid-function-tests/

- MedlinePlus Encyclopedia: Serum TBG Level
  https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003374.htm

Additional Information & Resources

Health Information from MedlinePlus

- Encyclopedia: Serum TBG Level
  https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003374.htm

- Health Topic: Newborn Screening
  https://medlineplus.gov/newbornscreening.html

- Health Topic: Thyroid Diseases
  https://medlineplus.gov/thyroiddiseases.html
Educational Resources

- MalaCards: inherited thyroxine-binding globulin deficiency
  https://www.malacards.org/card/inherited_thyroxine_binding_globulin_deficiency

Patient Support and Advocacy Resources

- American Thyroid Association
  https://www.thyroid.org/

- Hormone Health Network: Thyroid
  https://www.hormone.org/your-health-and-hormones/glands-and-hormones-a-to-z/glands/thyroid

Scientific Articles on PubMed

- PubMed
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%28%28thyroxine-binding+globulin+deficiency%5BTIAB%5D%29+OR+%28tbg+deficiency%5BTIAB%5D%29%29+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+human%5Bmh%5D+AND+%22last+3600+days%22%5Bdp%5D

Catalog of Genes and Diseases from OMIM

- THYROXINE-BINDING GLOBULIN OF SERUM
  http://omim.org/entry/314200

Sources for This Summary


Reprinted from Genetics Home Reference:

Reviewed: September 2009
Published: March 31, 2020