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Review Article

Understanding Platelet-Rich Plasma as Potential Therapy to Improve Cardiac Function after Myocardial Infarction: Based on the in-vitro and animal model evidence

Linda Chiuman¹, Dearn Anggita Krismayani Purba², Hendy Million Samin^{3*}

¹Department of Biomedical Science, Faculty of Medicine, Prima Indonesia University, Indonesia

²Faculty of Medicine, University of North Sumatra, Indonesia

³ Faculty of Medicine, Prima Indonesia University, Indonesia

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Abstract

Myocardial infarction is the leading cause of death in the world's population. The cardiac remodeling and disproportion of the loss and the new formation of contractile cells will ultimately reduce the function of the heart muscles after infarction. Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) in the last decade has been attracted attention regarding its role in cell regeneration. The content of cytokines and growth factors contained in PRP such as platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF), transforming growth factor-beta 1 (TGF-B1), epidermal growth factor (EGF), vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), basic fibroblast growth factor (bFGF) and others are known to be involved in the migration, proliferation, and differentiation of various cell types and to induce post-ischemic angiogenesis. This review aims to analyze and investigate the benefits of PRP therapy in myocardial infarction. Recent literatures regarding the use of PRP in myocardial infarction was collected by searching PubMed and Google Scholar databases with the keywords of "platelet-rich plasma", "myocardial infarction", "reperfusion", and "angiogenesis". The researchers used was published between January 2011 and December 2022. Based on the in-vitro and animal model evidence, platelet-rich plasma (PRP) is considered capable of accelerating angiogenesis and mitogenesis, protecting cells from free radicals, reducing infarct area and scar tissue in myocardial infarction, and also increasing ejection fraction.

Keywords:

Platelet-rich plasma; Myocardial infarction; Angiogenesis; Cardiac function

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INTRODUCTION

Myocardial infarction is the leading cause of death and premature mortality in the world's population.¹ Myocardial infarction can destroy approximately 25% or one million cardiomyocytes in the left ventricle. The cardiac remodeling that happens after infarction and the disproportion of the loss and the new formation of contractile cells will ultimately reduce the function of the heart muscles.² Cardiac remodeling is defined as the volume increase of the left ventricular cavity with a reduced LV ejection fraction following myocardial infarction. The hemodynamic overload activates maladaptive remodeling cascade, resulting in compensatory left ventricle hypertrophy. On the other hand, cytokine release and inflammation lead to

fibroblast proliferation and metalloproteinase activation cause fibrosis.³ Cardiomyocyte cell regeneration can be achieved by implantation or by stimulation the capacity of endogenous cells to proliferate.^{2,3}

Platelets are one source of growth factors involved in essential processes, such as blood clots, immune response, angiogenesis, and cell proliferation in the body.⁴

* Corresponding author:

E-mail: hendy.samin1988@gmail.com

(Hendy Million Samin)

Table 1. Summary of MeSH terms, inclusion and exclusion criteria to filter the literature for this study

MeSH terms	Inclusion	Exclusion
“Platelet-rich plasma” “Myocardial infarction” “Reperfusion” “Angiogenesis”	(1) Prospective clinical trials	Review
	(2) Animal studies	Case report and case series
	(3) Studies assessing PRP in patients with myocardial infarction	Commentaries
	(4) Effects of PRP on cardiac function after myocardial infarction	Letters to the Editor
	(5) Research in English	Short communications

After myocardial infarction occurs, platelets will release granules and microparticles that regulate: 1) the extravasation and accumulation of inflammatory cells in the myocardium after infarction; 2) the immunoinactive response of leukocytes, especially neutrophils and monocytes/macrophages (M1) and activated M2 to regenerate tissue; 3) the activation and transformation of fibroblasts into myofibroblasts to synthesize extracellular matrix (ECM); 4) the proliferation, migration and differentiation of cardiac progenitor cells; 5) the differentiation of progenitor cells into cardiomyocytes; 6) the increased inotropic activity of cardiomyocytes and the release of antiapoptotic signals.⁵

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) is an autologous plasma taken from a blood sample and centrifuged to obtain a platelet-rich supernatant. PRP contains concentrates and platelets which can be activated by additional products such as calcium chloride, thrombin, or fibrinogen.^{6,7} Several studies regarding the role of PRP in cell regeneration in myocardial infarction have been conducted in the last decade. In addition, the use of PRP also attracts attention because of its economic reason, does not require complex tools and materials, and does not require trained experts. PRP is also a relatively non-invasive technique with low risk of infection and immunological reactions.^{8,9}

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Focused question

This study aims to review the beneficial effect of PRP in myocardial infarction systematically. The research question developed through the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) protocol: “What is the benefit of PRP in myocardial infarction?” and “What is the benefit of PRP to improve cardiac function after myocardial infarction?”

Selection criteria

The studies included in this systematic review are: (1) prospective clinical trials; (2) animal studies; (3) studies assessing PRP in patients with myocardial infarction; (4) the effect of PRP on cardiac function after myocardial infarction; (5) research in English. Articles in the form of reviews, case reports and case series, commentaries, letters to the editor, short communications were excluded.

Search methodology

In this article, we summarize the latest literatures regarding the use of PRP in myocardial infarction searched through PubMed and Google Scholar databases

with the “platelet-rich plasma”, “myocardial infarction”, “reperfusion”, and “angiogenesis” keywords. The research used is research published between January 2011 to December 2022. A summary of the search criteria and the use of MeSH *terms* is shown in Table 1.

RESULTS

The benefits of PRP have been reported in various organs, but its specific efficacy in cases of myocardial infarction is still limited. After eliminating the same research, in our primary search we found 41 articles. Based on the abstract, title and exclusion criteria, 7 relevant articles were obtained which are described in Table 2.

DISCUSSION

PRP is a platelet-rich product resulting from blood centrifugation which can be activated if combined with calcium chloride, thrombin, or fibrinogen.¹⁷ The number of platelets that occurred in PRP was $4,410 \pm 34 \times 10^3$, higher than platelet-poor plasma (PPP) ($p < 0.005$) and found to be 250% more in numbers than platelets in whole blood preparations.^{18,19} PRP containing 15 ml/kg (equivalent to 2.0×10^{10} platelets/kg) can increase circulating platelets by about 40% ($p = 0.03$).²⁰

Although the molecular mechanism is unclear, PRP is known to be involved in the migration, proliferation, and differentiation of various cell types.^{21,22} PRP can accelerate the differentiation of Human-Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs) into cardiomyocytes.¹⁶ Suryawan, 2020 reported that GATA-4 expression in PRP-administered AMSCs was found to be higher compared to negative and positive controls (67.04 ± 4.49 vs 58.15 ± 1.23 $p < 0.05$; 67.04 ± 4.49 vs 52.96 ± 2.02 $p < 0.05$). GATA-4 is a specific transcription factor indicating cardiomyocyte development in the cardiac progenitor formation phase. The finding was supported by immunocytochemical results on troponin expression, which showed a marked increase in the PRP group compared to negative and positive controls (38.13 ± 5.2 vs 10.73 ± 2.39 $p < 0.05$; 38.13 ± 5.2 vs 26.00 ± 0.4 $p < 0.05$).¹⁵ This study supports previous flow cytometry analysis confirming that cardiac progenitor cells (CPC) and AMSCs express the same markers CD90 and CD105.²³ Several previous attempts have been made to facilitate AMSCs, such as the administration of 5-azacytidine, and the result was that 5-azacytidine was insufficient in supporting AMSCs to differentiate into cardiomyocytes fully.²⁴ However, since this is the first study of PRP on AMSCs, it still needs further investigation.

Table 2. Summary of the effect of Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) on myocardial infarction

No	Author, year	Sample	Study Group	Duration	PRP Concentration	Route of Administration	Effect	Ref
1.	Mishra <i>et al</i> , 2011	Twenty-eight mice	Four groups consisting of two treatments: 1. Permanent Ligation: Revaten PRP (n=5) and control group with 50 µl phosphate buffered saline (n=4) 2. Ischemia and Reperfusion: PRP (n=10) and control group with 50 µl of phosphate buffered saline (n = 9)	Seven days for group with Permanent Ligation and twenty-one days for group with ischemia and reperfusion	50 µl PRP	Intramyocardial injection	Improved cardiac function (ejection fraction) after myocardial infarction.	10
2.	Cheng <i>et al</i> , 2012	Seventy-eight wistar-kyoto female rats	Two groups: Control (n=39) and PRP group (n=39)	Six weeks (observations were made on day 0, week 3 and week 6)	150µl platelet gel: 75µl host plasma were mixed with 75µl pre-warmed DMEM	Intramyocardial injection	PRP caused de novo angiogenesis, producing more cardiomyocytes and endothelial cells and improve heart function.	11
3.	Hargrave <i>et al</i> , 2012	Eight white rabbits	Two groups: Control (n=3) and PRP group (n=5)	Two weeks	200µl (0,21 mg) PRP per heart	Intramyocardial injection	PRP significantly reduced the size of the myocardial infarction area, improved post-infarction ventricular function, decreased production Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS), and decreased mitochondrial depolarization	12
4.	Vu <i>et al</i> , 2015	Thirty Yorkshire female pigs (65-70 kg)	Five groups: 1) Hyaluronic acid-based hydrogel (n=6); 2) autologous platelet-rich plasma (PRP) (n=6); 3) ascorbic acid-enriched hydrogel (50 mg/L), combined with IV ibuprofen (25 mg/kg) and allopurinol (25 mg/kg) (cocktail group) (n=6); 4) PRP and cocktail (full-compound) (n=6); or 5) saline (control) (n=6).	Eight weeks	8 ml PRP	Intramyocardial injection	PRP can reduce scar tissue in the left ventricle after infarction, inhibit the expansion of infarct size and promote the formation of new blood vessels.	13
5.	Hehanusa <i>et al</i> , 2019	Mononuclear cell	Three groups: 1) PRP group; 2) PPP group (0.5 mL); 3) Control.	Two weeks	0,5 mL PRP	In vitro	Significantly increased myocardial endothelial progenitor cell growth	14

Several PRP cytokines and growth factors that have been proposed as the underlying mechanism, such as platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF) which stimulates the formation of type I collagen and triggers the process of angiogenesis; transforming growth factor-beta 1 (TGF-B1) which stimulates the proliferation and differentiation of stem mesenchymal cells, synthesis the type I collagen, and triggers the angiogenesis; epidermal

growth factor (EGF) which stimulates tissue granulation; vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) which induces endothelial cell chemotaxis and proliferation, triggers angiogenesis, prompts vascular hyperpermeability, and precipitate renal stem cell differentiation; basic fibroblast growth factor (b-FGF) that induces post-ischemic angiogenesis; insulin-like growth factor (IGF) which promotes angiogenesis and

Table 2. Continuous..

No	Author, year	Sample	Study Group	Duration	PRP Concentration	Route of Administration	Effect	Ref
6.	Suryawan <i>et al</i> , 2020	Adipose derived Mesenchymal Stem Cell	Three groups: 1) negative control group (α -mem medium-no fluorescence); 2) Positive control group (Cardiomyogenic kit medium-with fluorescence); 3) The PRP group	Two weeks	5×10^9 /L PRP	In vitro	PRP-administered group had a higher adipose derived mesenchymal stem cells (AMSCs) differentiation rate into cardiomyocytes than the positive and negative control groups.	15
7.	Torabi <i>et al</i> , 2020	Human-Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs)	Two groups: the control group with 5mL phosphate buffered saline and the PRP group.	Four weeks	5 ml PRP	In vitro	PRP can accelerate the differentiation of Human-Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs) into cardiomyocytes.	16

myogenesis; platelet factor 4 (PF4); adenosine triphosphate (ATP); adenosine diphosphate (ADP); angioprotein-2; fibronectin; osteocalcin; serotonin; and thrombospondin-1 (TSP-1), and others.^{17,25} Furthermore, the presence of leukocytes and interleukins in PRP play essential role in its antimicrobial effect.²⁶

The most common growth factor in PRP due to its concentrations was TGF- β 1 (30,500 \pm 20,500 pg/ml), followed by PDGF-BB (9440 \pm 1620 pg/ml), VEGF (2040 \pm 971 pg/ml), EGF (906 \pm 206 pg/ml) and bFGF (32.6 \pm 8.7 pg/ml).²⁷ The mean value of VEGF in PRP was higher than expected plasma/serum; compared to the control group receiving saline solution, the value was 1.42 times higher ($p = 0.017$).^{28,29} The study of protocol preparation of PRP reported that the release of VEGF, EGF, bFGF, IL-17, and IL-8 were significantly higher when PRP was incubated at 4°C before coagulated. This cold temperature also increases the activation of p38, which is involved in the process of angiogenesis.³⁰

Research on PRP in organs has been widely carried out. PRP with saline solution can increase 25-50% angiogenesis and regeneration in wound healing process.³¹ In 56 patients with chronic diabetic ulcers, a significant healing process occurred in PRP-treated group compared to the control group (86% vs 68%).³² Based on color, surface appearance, hair growth and wound drying, better healing was found in the combination of PRP and stromal vascular fraction (SVF).³³ Patients with thromboangiitis obliterans also experienced a decrease in their VAS Score around 50% within 24 hours after PRP was given (mean VAS score 4.35).³⁴

Post-infarction platelets injection increases the number of cardiomyocytes and endothelial cells, thereby promoting mitogenesis and angiogenesis. Within seven days of observation, mature blood vessels were found in the PRP group.¹¹ This new blood vessel formation was

found not only in the infarcted area but also significantly in the peri-infarction area.¹³

The infarction area in the PRP-treated rabbit model was found to be smaller than in the control group ($p < 0.05$).¹² Confirmed by histopathological analysis, scar tissue was also found to be more abundant in the control group with phosphate-buffered saline than in the PRP group.¹⁰ Through the examination of flow cytometry, PRP was able to significantly reduce ROS production in H9c2 cells at concentrations of 44 mM ($p < 0.05$) and 8.8 mM ($p < 0.05$). Decreased ROS production causes a decrease in mitochondrial depolarization, which is often used as a marker of apoptosis in nucleated and non-nucleated cells. Thus, PRP was said to protect the heart muscle from expanding ischemic areas.^{12,35} The combination of PRP with antioxidants and anti-inflammatories also resulted in a lighter left ventricular mass post-infarction than the control group (196 \pm 15 g vs 269 \pm 20 g; $p < 0.05$).¹³

Cardiomyocyte cells will die and undergo necrosis after myocardial infarction. Then, these necrotic cardiomyocytes will be gradually replaced by noncontractile fibroblasts, thus interfering with cardiac function.^{36, 37} PRP was found to increase the left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) and to decrease the exacerbation of inflammation after myocardial infarction.¹¹ Administration of PRP for 7 days in rats whose anterior descending artery was ligated could increase LVEF by 38% ($p = 0.27$). In contrast, the administration of PRP for 21 days in groups of rats undergoing post-ischemic reperfusion therapy could increase LVEF by 28% ($p = 0.038$).¹⁰ Administration of PRP therapy in mice with myocardial infarction also showed tissue protection, endogenous regeneration, greater capillary density, and lower myocyte hypertrophy than the control group.¹¹

The risk of bleeding can occur in patients after myocardial infarction due to anti-platelet consumption.³⁸

Studies in animals receiving the anti-platelet vorapaxar, aspirin, and clopidogrel have shown that PRP reduces bleeding risk by reducing bleeding times by 150 seconds after treatment.³⁹ Another advantage of PRP can be judged by its safety. A retrospective study involving 611 patients post cardiac stenting (post myocardial infarction), diabetes mellitus, stroke, osteoarthritis, anti-aging, hypertension, etc., found no side effects such as allergies, infections, and coagulation problems in patients receiving PRP therapy.^{40,41}

PRP also shows its existence as a protective factor against free radicals. The levels of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and pro-inflammatory cytokines in cases of skin trauma can be reduced by PRP by decreasing the expression of pASK-1 and pNF-KB.⁴² Decreased total oxidant status, oxidative stress index, and ischemic score on histopathological results of ovarian torsion in rats were found after PRP administration.⁴³ In addition, this cytoprotective effect was also reported in cases of testicular torsion in rats in which there is a decrease of nitric oxide (NO), IL1B, TNF- α , caspase 3; and increased CAT, GST, GSH, and BCL2 as evidenced by histological improvement.²⁶

The use of PRP has so far been limited due to its short half-life. After PRP was purified and injected, its effect disappeared within 5-7 days because PRP is easily broken down in the blood vessels and excreted. Therefore, several studies have found that the single use of PRP is less effective in promoting angiogenesis and recommends its combination with other preparations such as gelatin hydrogel to prolong the duration of action. This combination is reported to be much more potent and effective for restoring blood perfusion in ischemic conditions.^{18,44}

Although many studies support the benefits of using PRP, one study reported that administration of PRP could increase the ischemic area of renal tissue. Histopathological examination, ultrasound renal flow parameters, serum creatinine levels, urea levels, renal mass and volume confirmed this condition. Several hypotheses have been proposed to support this situation, namely: (1) the possibility of thrombus in intrarenal vessels; (2) the damage occurred due to the higher osmolarity of PRP compared to saline solution in the control group; (3) the injected PRP also releases cytokines and leukocytes (Mean 5300 \pm 3600/ μ L) along with growth factors, thereby worsening the work of the kidneys; (4) the PRP used induces an immune reaction because it is taken from another mouse sample; (5) PRP injection when the kidney is still ischemic has the potential to cause compartment syndrome; (6) this study is the first study on the kidney, so it is suspected that PRP is not effectively applied to solid organs.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) is considered capable of accelerating angiogenesis and mitogenesis, protecting cells from free radicals, reducing infarct area and scar tissue in myocardial infarction, and also increasing ejection fraction. However, this review is based on in-vitro and animal model evidence; it remains unknown in humans. The potential use of PRP as a modality to improve cardiac function after myocardial infarction should be further investigated.

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