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Opinion Article

Advancing Pharmacovigilance through Pharmacogenomics: Harnessing Genetic Insights to Mitigate Drug-Induced Toxicities

Enci Mei*

Department of Pharmacy, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

ABOUT THE STUDY

Pharmacovigilance is a critical component of drug safety assessment that aims to monitor, identify, and mitigate Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) in the post-marketing phase. Despite rigorous preclinical and clinical testing, some adverse reactions can go undetected until a drug reaches a larger population. Pharmacogenomics, the study of how genetic variations influence drug responses, has emerged as a powerful tool to enhance pharmacovigilance efforts. This article discusses the potential of pharmacogenomics in advancing pharmacovigilance, particularly in mitigating drug-induced toxicities by identifying individuals at higher risk and customizing drug therapies based on genetic insights.

Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) pose significant challenges to patient safety and public health. Traditional pharmacovigilance relies on the reporting of ADRs by healthcare professionals and patients. However, this passive system has limitations, as not all ADRs are reported, and causality assessment can be challenging. Pharmacogenomics offers a proactive approach to identify individuals who may be predisposed to certain ADRs based on their genetic makeup.

Pharmacogenomic studies have revealed a multitude of genetic variations that influence drug metabolism, efficacy, and toxicity. By identifying specific genetic markers associated with increased susceptibility to drug-induced toxicities, pharmacovigilance efforts can be enhanced. For instance, the HLA-B*57:01 allele has been linked to severe hypersensitivity reactions to abacavir, an antiretroviral drug. Incorporating genetic testing for this allele before prescribing abacavir has significantly reduced the incidence of these reactions.

Pharmacovigilance heavily relies on signal detection to identify potential safety concerns associated with drugs. The incorporation of pharmacogenomic data can refine this process by providing biological plausibility for observed ADRs. Genetic variations in drug-metabolizing enzymes, such as *CYP2D6* and *CYP2C19*, can lead to altered drug concentrations and responses. Integrating pharmacogenomic information into signal detection algorithms can help differentiate ADRs caused by genetic factors from those due to other causes.

The era of personalized medicine aims to tailor drug therapies based on individual characteristics, including genetics. Pharmacogenomics plays a pivotal role in this paradigm by guiding treatment decisions to minimize the risk of ADRs. Genetic testing before drug initiation allows healthcare providers to select the most appropriate drug and dosage for each patient, optimizing therapeutic outcomes while minimizing the potential for toxicities.

Despite the potential of pharmacogenomics in pharmacovigilance, challenges remain. The availability of comprehensive pharmacogenomic databases, standardization of testing methods, and interpretation of complex genetic interactions are areas that require attention. Additionally, ethical considerations surrounding genetic testing, patient privacy, and data sharing need to be addressed to ensure responsible implementation.

The future of pharmacovigilance lies in the integration of pharmacogenomics with other cutting-edge technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. These approaches can identify subtle patterns and associations within vast genetic datasets, enabling the prediction of ADRs with higher accuracy.

Pharmacovigilance is evolving to embrace the era of precision medicine, and pharmacogenomics is at the forefront of this transformation. By harnessing genetic insights, healthcare providers can proactively identify individuals at risk of drug-induced toxicities and make informed treatment decisions. The synergy between pharmacovigilance and pharmacogenomics of safer and more effective drug therapies, ultimately benefiting patients, healthcare professionals, and public health as a whole. As we continue to unravel the intricate interplay between genetics and drug responses, the potential for mitigating drug-induced toxicities becomes increasingly attainable.

Correspondence to: Enci Mei, Department of Pharmacy, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, E-mail: encimei@ksu.edu.sa

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