Letter to Editor
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The Role of Platelet Levels in Emergency Department Assessment

Bahaeddin Onur[1], Hakan Barış Demirbaş[1], Arif Gülmez[1]
[1]Primary Healt Care Corporation, Doha, Qatar

To the Editor,

I read the article titled "The Effect of White Blood Cell and Platelet Values on Mortality in Patients with Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm" published in the fifth volume and second issue of your journal with great interest (1). Platelet level is a parameter that is often overlooked in the emergency department (ED). I congratulate the authors for the article investigating the usability of platelet level, an important hematological parameter, in abdominal aortic aneurysm cases who underwent open or endovascular repair. To emphasize the importance of platelet level in the emergency department, I would like to talk about its use in critically ill patients. Platelet levels serve as crucial indicators in the management of patients presenting to the ED. As frontline healthcare providers assess and triage patients in the ED, rapid evaluation of platelet counts aids in the timely identification of individuals at risk of bleeding or coagulation disorders. Thrombocytopenia, defined as a platelet count below the normal range of 150 × 109/L, can signal underlying pathologies such as sepsis, trauma, or medication-related adverse effects, all of which may necessitate urgent medical intervention. Additionally, monitoring platelet levels during the patient's ED stay enables clinicians to gauge the severity of thrombocytopenia and tailor treatment strategies accordingly (2,3). In cases of severe thrombocytopenia or active bleeding, platelet transfusions may be considered to mitigate the risk of hemorrhage and restore hemostasis. However, the decision to transfuse platelets should be based on clinical judgment, considering the patient's overall condition, bleeding risk, and underlying etiology of thrombocytopenia (4,5). Serial monitoring of platelet counts throughout the patient's ED course is essential for assessing treatment response and guiding further management decisions. By integrating platelet levels into the diagnostic and therapeutic algorithms of the ED, healthcare providers can optimize patient care and improve outcomes in a timely and effective manner (6,7). Platelet levels are of paramount importance in the assessment and management of trauma patients, given their pivotal role in hemostasis and coagulation. When a patient sustains traumatic injuries, the body initiates a complex cascade of physiological responses to staunch bleeding and restore hemostasis. Platelets are the primary cellular component responsible for forming blood clots and sealing off damaged blood vessels, thus preventing excessive blood loss. Consequently, upon admission to the emergency department, evaluating the patient's platelet count is crucial in identifying individuals at risk of hemorrhage or coagulopathy. Thrombocytopenia, characterized by a platelet count below the normal range of 150 × 10^9/L, may signify underlying coagulopathies or ongoing bleeding, necessitating prompt intervention to mitigate potential complications (8,9). Moreover, serial monitoring of platelet counts throughout the patient's hospitalization is indispensable for assessing the efficacy of hemostatic interventions and predicting clinical outcomes. Changes in platelet levels over time can provide valuable insights into the patient's response to treatment and help clinicians make informed decisions regarding transfusion therapy, surgical interventions, or adjustments to pharmacological management (9,10). Elevated or declining platelet levels may serve as early indicators of evolving clinical conditions, such as persistent hemorrhage, sepsis-related coagulopathies, or disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC), prompting timely intervention to optimize patient care and improve outcomes. In summary, platelet levels serve as a critical biomarker in the comprehensive evaluation and ongoing management of trauma patients, underscoring the importance of vigilant monitoring and timely intervention in ensuring favorable clinical outcomes (11). Sepsis is a life-threatening condition characterized by a dysregulated host response to infection, leading to organ

Corresponding Author: Bahaeddin Onur **e-mail:** bahaeddin.onur@istun.edu.tr
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dysfunction. Thrombocytopenia is a common hematological abnormality observed in patients with sepsis and plays a significant role in the pathophysiology and clinical course of the disease. Thrombocytopenia in sepsis can result from multiple mechanisms, including increased platelet consumption, impaired platelet production, and enhanced platelet destruction (12). The pathogenesis of thrombocytopenia in sepsis is multifactorial and complex. Endothelial activation and damage, systemic inflammation, and dysregulation of the coagulation cascade contribute to the development of thrombocytopenia by promoting platelet aggregation, sequestration, and clearance. Additionally, the release of pro-inflammatory cytokines, such as tumor necrosis factor-alpha and interleukin-6, can directly suppress megakaryocyte function and impair platelet production in the bone marrow (13,14). Thrombocytopenia in sepsis is associated with adverse clinical outcomes, including increased mortality, longer hospital stays, and higher rates of organ dysfunction. The severity of thrombocytopenia often correlates with the severity of sepsis and serves as a prognostic marker for disease progression and outcome (15-17). Patients with severe thrombocytopenia are at greater risk of developing complications such as bleeding diathesis, DIC, and multi-organ failure (18). Management of thrombocytopenia in sepsis focuses on addressing the underlying infection, controlling systemic inflammation, and supporting hemostasis. Platelet transfusion may be considered in patients with severe thrombocytopenia and active bleeding or in those undergoing invasive procedures with a high risk of bleeding. However, the decision to transfuse platelets should be individualized based on the patient's clinical status, bleeding risk, and platelet count trend (19,20). Lastly, thrombocytopenia is a common hematological manifestation of sepsis, reflecting the complex interplay between inflammation, coagulation, and endothelial dysfunction. Understanding the underlying mechanisms of thrombocytopenia in sepsis is crucial for guiding clinical management and improving patient outcomes in this high-risk population. Thrombotic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (TTP) is characterized by thrombocytopenia, microangiopathic hemolytic anemia, and microvascular thrombosis, which can lead to organ damage and systemic complications. Platelet levels play a critical role in the diagnosis and monitoring of TTP. Measurement of platelet counts is essential in the initial evaluation of suspected TTP, as thrombocytopenia is a hallmark feature of the disease. A rapid decline in platelet counts, often accompanied by schistocytes on peripheral blood smear, raises suspicion for TTP and warrants further investigation (21-23). Additionally, monitoring platelet levels during treatment is crucial for assessing disease response and guiding therapeutic interventions. Platelet counts serve as an important marker of disease activity, with an increase indicating treatment efficacy and a decrease suggesting disease exacerbation or relapse (24). Therefore, serial monitoring of platelet levels is integral in the management of TTP, allowing clinicians to optimize treatment strategies and monitor patient outcomes effectively. Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS) is characterized by microangiopathic hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia, and acute renal failure, often triggered by infection with Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli or other pathogens. Platelet levels play a crucial role in the diagnosis and management of HUS (25,26). Thrombocytopenia is a hallmark feature of HUS, reflecting the widespread microvascular thrombosis and platelet consumption observed in the disease. Measurement of platelet counts is essential in the initial evaluation of suspected HUS, as a rapid decline in platelet levels, along with other clinical and laboratory findings such as hemolytic anemia and renal impairment, raises suspicion for the diagnosis. Monitoring platelet levels during the disease is critical for assessing response to treatment and predicting clinical outcomes. Serial monitoring of platelet counts allows clinicians to adjust therapeutic interventions as needed and monitor for complications such as hemorrhage or thrombosis (27). Therefore, platelet levels serve as a valuable marker in the diagnosis, monitoring, and management of HUS, guiding clinical decision-making and optimizing patient care. In conclusion, the assessment and management of platelet levels play a vital role in emergency medicine, particularly in the diagnosis and monitoring of various critical conditions such as trauma, sepsis, TTP, and HUS. Thrombocytopenia serves as a crucial indicator for identifying patients at risk of bleeding or coagulation disorders, guiding treatment decisions, and predicting clinical outcomes. By integrating platelet monitoring into the diagnostic and therapeutic algorithms of emergency care, healthcare providers can optimize patient management, improve outcomes, and enhance the overall quality of emergency medical services.

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