

Description of Hematological Parameters and Severity Levels of COVID-19 Patients and Disease Progression at Royal Prima Hospital, Medan, North Sumatera, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: The severity of COVID-19 can be evaluated by checking several routine hematological parameters. Routine hematology examinations have an important role in early detection, diagnosis, disease management and disease progression. This study aims to determine the relationship between hematological parameters and disease progression and severity in COVID-19 patients.

Subjects and Method: This was a cross sectional study conducted at Royal Prima Hospital, Medan, North Sumatera, Indonesia, from January to February 2022. A total of 93 patients who had confirmed COVID-19 were selected using a simple random sampling technique according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The dependent variables of this research were disease progression and severity of COVID-19 patients. The independent variables are hematological parameters based on hospital medical record data. Data analysis used the Chi-Square test and logistic regression.

Results: 75 people (80.6%) COVID-19 sufferers had severe disease. NLR and D-dimer levels were significantly related to disease progression in COVID-19 sufferers ($p < 0.05$). Leukocyte, lymphocyte, NLR, CRP, D-dimer levels are related to the severity of COVID-19 sufferers ($p < 0.05$). Leukocyte levels have the strongest relationship with the severity of COVID-19 with an OR value of 1.798.

Conclusion: NLR and D-dimer levels are significantly related to disease progression and leukocyte. Lymphocyte, NLR, CRP, D-dimer levels are related to the severity of COVID-19 sufferers.

Keywords: hematological parameters, severity level, disease progression

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BACKGROUND

Corona Virus Diseases 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new type of Corona Virus. This disease began with the

emergence of cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology in Wuhan, China. Based on epidemiological results, the case is suspected to be related to the Seafood Market in

Wuhan. On January 7 2020, the Chinese Government then announced that the cause of the case was a new type of Coronavirus which was later named SARS CoV2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2) and the name of the disease as Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). In recent years, coronaviruses have appeared periodically in various regions around the world and caused an increase in deaths. (Li et al, 2020).

Coronaviruses are enveloped, non-segmented, positive-stranded single-stranded RNA viral genomes ranging in size from 26 to 32 kilobases. There are 4 main protein structures in Coronavirus, namely protein N (nucleocapsid), glycoprotein M (membrane), glycoprotein S (Spike), and protein E (Envelope). (Li et al, 2020)

COVID-19 was diagnosed based on WHO guidelines. Confirmed COVID-19 cases were obtained from Real Time Reverse Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) from nasal and pharyngeal swab specimens.

Routine hematological examination and leukocyte count have an important role in early detection, diagnosis and treatment of disease. This examination is important because it can be used as supporting data for the gold standard examination, namely RT-PCR. Laboratory diagnostics are used to assess the severity of the disease, to determine the prognosis, for patient follow-up, treatment and monitoring therapy. Apart from early detection, laboratory examinations can be a tool for monitoring the course of COVID-19 (Wang et al, 2020).

Several blood test components that are widely used as monitoring tools and predictors of COVID-19 are leukocytes, lymphocyte levels, neutrophil levels, platelet levels, neutrophil lymphocyte ratio, C-Reactive Protein, and D-dimer. One of them is leukocytes, which are cells that have the

main function of the body's immune system. Leukocytes consist of 5 types, namely eosinophils, basophils, neutrophils, lymphocytes and monocytes. The neutrophil value also plays a very important role in determining the severity of COVID-19. Likewise with lymphocytes, namely T cells, B cells and NK cells which play a role in maintaining the body's immune system, including viral infections. For this reason, many studies use this parameter for screening and monitoring the severity of COVID-19 disease (Ding et al., 2020).

Several previous studies concluded that Leukocytosis, Neutrophilia, increased Neutrophil to Lymphocyte ratio, APTT, D-dimer, LDH, serum Ferritin and CRP were associated with the severity of COVID-19 disease (Taj et al, 2021). Dynamic changes in vital hematological parameters of severe and non-severe patients have been characterized during hospitalization. During hospitalization, NLR was found to have particular relevance to days of hospitalization and played a role in predicting disease prognosis for patients with COVID-19 (Ding et al, 2020). Increased NLR correlates with severity of COVID-19. NLR assessment can be proposed to identify high-risk individuals with COVID-19 (Matin et al, 2022). This study aims to determine the relationship between hematological parameters and disease progression and severity in COVID-19 patients.

SUBJECTS AND METHOD

1. Study Design

This was a cross-sectional study conducted at the Medical Records Installation at Royal Prima General Hospital, Medan, Indonesia, from January to February 2022.

2. Population and sample

The population in this study were patients who had a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 at RSU Royal Prima Medan. Sampling was carried out using a simple random sampling

technique. The subjects in this study were 93 COVID-19 patients with a history of being treated from January to May 2021 who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria, namely patients who were diagnosed with COVID-19 from RT-PCR results and had complete hematology examination data.

Exclusion criteria include patients suffering from immunodeficiency, patients who are pregnant, have comorbidities, patients with blood disorders before suffering from COVID-19.

3. Study Variables

The dependent variables are disease progression and severity. The independent variables are hematological parameters.

4. Operational Definition of Variables

The severity of COVID-19 patients is the symptoms that appear after exposure to COVID-19.

Disease progression is the process of disease progressing, getting better or worse.

Hematology parameters are an examination of the types of cells in the blood through the results of hospital laboratory examinations.

5. Instrument

Data were obtained from patient's medical record data.

6. Data Analysis

Data from medical records were collected and analyzed using SPSS.

7. Research Ethics

This research has received approval from the Health Research Ethics Commission (KEPK) Faculty of Medicine, Prima Indonesia University, Medan with No: 003/-KEPK/UNPRI/III/2021 and research permission from the Head of Medical Records RSU Royal Prima Medan with No: 454.A/EXT/PP/RSURP/IV/2021.

RESULT

a. Characteristics of the patients

The subjects who participated in this study were 93 people suffering from COVID-19 with an average age of 47 years. The largest age group is 26-45 Years (Adults). More COVID-19 sufferers were female, namely 50 people (53.8%) with a length of stay \geq 8 days, namely 65 people (69.9%). Sample characteristics can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Category	n	(%)
Age	12-25 years (adolscent)	9	9.6
	26-45 years (adult)	40	43.0
	46-65 years (elderly)	34	36.6
	> 65 years (elderly)	10	10.8
Gender	Female	50	53.8
	Male	43	46.2
Duration of treatment	\leq 8 days	28	30.1
	> 8 days	65	69.9

b. Hematology

Table 2. Distribution of Patients Based on Hematological Parameters

Hematological Parameters	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Leukosit	7.0	2.9	8.5	3.7
Trombosit	219.1	79.7	280.3	101.3
Limfosit	23.1	9.2	21.1	10.7
NLR	4.4	4.7	7.5	9.0
CRP	31.8	25.0	25.8	26.9
D-dimer	1127.5	1212.4	861.4	1050.7

Table 3. Distribution of Patients Based on Hematological Parameter Categories

Hematological Parameters	Examination 1 (days 1-7)		Examination 2 (days 8-15)	
	Total	(%)	Total	(%)
Leukosit ($10^3/\mu\text{l}$)				
Dropped	21	22.6	12	12.9
Normal	59	63.4	54	58.1
Raised	13	14.0	27	29.0
Trombosit ($10^3/\mu\text{l}$)				
Dropped	17	18.3	7	7.5
Normal	72	77.4	76	81.7
Raised	4	4.3	10	10.8
Limfosit (%)				
Dropped	35	37.6	45	48.4
Normal	54	58.1	43	46.2
Raised	4	4.3	5	5.4
Neutrofil Limfosit Ratio (NLR) (%)				
Dropped	54	58.1	44	47.3
Raised	39	41.9	49	52.7
C-Reactive Protein (CRP) (ug /ml)				
Dropped	8	8.6	30	32.3
Raised	85	91.4	63	67.7
D-dimer (ng /mL)				
Dropped	21	22.6	41	44.1
Raised	72	77.4	52	55.9

Disease progression in this study was seen through hematological parameters while the patient was undergoing treatment (Table 2). Then each hematological parameter seen based on laboratory tests was categorized (Table 3). The results of the study showed that COVID-19 sufferers had leukocyte levels for the first examination, namely a minimum of $2.11 \times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ and a maximum of $16.7 \times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ with an average value of 7.0 (SD= 2.9) $\times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ and for the second examination, a minimum of $3.4 \times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ and a maximum of $24.5 \times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ with an average value of 8.5 (SD= 3.7) $\times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ and more with normal leukocyte levels.

COVID-19 sufferers had platelet levels for the first examination, namely a minimum of $98 \times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ and a maximum of $535 \times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ with an average value of 219.1 (SD= 79.7) $\times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ and for the second examination, a minimum of $108.0 \times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ and a maximum of $586.0 \times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ with an average value of 280.3 (SD= 101.3) $\times 10^3/\mu\text{l}$ and more with normal platelet levels.

COVID-19 sufferers had lymphocyte levels for the first examination, namely a minimum of 4.8% and a maximum of 45.8% with an average value of 23.1% (SD= 9.2) and for the second examination, a minimum of 2.5% and a maximum of 48.7% with an average value of 21.1% (SD= 10.7) and more with normal lymphocyte levels for the first examination, namely 51 people (54.8%) while for the second examination it decreased more, namely 45 people (48.4%).

COVID-19 sufferers had NLR levels for the first examination, namely a minimum of 0.8% and a maximum of 23.8% with an average value of 4.4% (SD= 4.7) and at the second examination, a minimum of 0.7% and a maximum of 40.3% with an average value of 7.5% (SD= 9.0) and more with NLR levels decreasing for the first examination, namely 54 people (58.1%) while for the second examination it increased more, namely 49 people (52.7%).

COVID-19 sufferers have CRP levels for the first examination, namely a minimum of 2.5 ug/ml and a maximum of 119.0 ug/ml with an average value of 31.8 ug/ml (SD= 25.0) and for the second examination, a minimum of 2.5 ug/ml and a maximum of 96.0 ug /ml with an average value of 25.8 ug /ml (SD= 26.9) and more with increasing CRP levels for both the first and second examinations.

COVID-19 sufferers had D-dimer levels for the first examination, namely a minimum of 118.4 ng / mL and a maximum of 5041.3 ng/ mL with an average value of 1127.5 ng/ mL (SD= 1212.4) and for the second examination, a minimum of 112.0 ng / mL and maximum 5000.0 ng / mL with an average value of 861.4 ng/mL (SD= 1050.7) and more with increasing D-dimer levels for both the first and second examination.

c. Severity Level of COVID-19 Sufferers

Table 4. Distribution of Sufferers Based on Severity Level

Level of Severity	Total	(%)
Medium	75	80.6
Severe	18	19.4

The research results showed that more COVID-19 sufferers were observed through

medical records with moderate severity, namely 75 people (80.6%) (Table 4).

d. Correlation of Hematological Parameters with Disease Progression

Based on the levels of leukocytes, platelets and lymphocytes seen through the length of treatment, it is known that of the 93 COVID-19 sufferers for the first examination, most were in the normal category. Meanwhile, the levels of NLR, CRP and D-dimer varied, namely that NLR decreased more, CRP and D-dimer increased more. The results of the

Pearson correlation test for the first examination of all hematological parameters obtained a p value of >0.05, indicating there was no relationship with disease progression.

On the second examination, the leukocyte levels, the platelets were more normal, but the lymphocytes were lower. Meanwhile, NLR, CRP and D-dimer levels increased more. The relationship between hematological parameters and disease progression can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlation of Hematological Parameters with Disease Progression

Hematologi	Examination							
	I (day 1-7)				II (day 8-15)			
	N	%	r	p	n	%	r	p
Leukocytes								
Dropped	21	22.6	0.09	0.400	12	12.9	0.22	0.032
Normal	59	63.4			54	58.1		
Raised	13	14.0			27	29.0		
Platelets								
Dropped	17	18.3	-0.05	0.664	7	7.5	0.26	0.013
Normal	72	77.4			76	81.7		
Raised	4	4.3			10	10.8		
Lymphocytes								
Dropped	35	37.6	-0.19	0.059	45	48.4	-0.21	0.047
Normal	54	58.1			43	46.2		
Raised	4	4.3			5	5.4		
NLR								

Hematologi	Examination							
	I (day 1-7)				II (day 8-15)			
	N	%	r	p	n	%	r	p
Dropped	54	58.1	0.39	<0.00	44	47.3	0.46	<0.001
Raised	39	41.9			49	52.7		
CRP								
Dropped	8	8.6	0.14	0.184	30	32.3	0.22	0.038
Raised	85	91.4			63	67.7		
D-Dimer								
Dropped	21	22.6	0.19	0.066	41	44.1	0.21	0.048
Raised	72	77.4			52	55.9		

e. Correlation of Hematological Parameters with Severity Level

Based on the severity, leukocyte and platelet levels were more in the normal category, while

lymphocyte levels were more decreased, while NLR, CRP and D-dimer levels were more increased. Th is a significant relationship of hematological parameters and severity.

Table 6. Correlation of Hematological Parameters with Severity Level

Hematology	Level of severity				p
	Moderate		Severe		
	n	%	N	%	
Leukocytes					
Dropped	12	100.0	0	0.0	<0.001
Normal	48	88.9	6	11.1	
Raised	15	55.6	12	44.4	
Platelets					
Dropped	7	100.0	0	0.0	0.108
Normal	62	81.6	14	14.4	
Raised	6	60.0	4	40.0	
Lymphocytes					
Dropped	30	66.7	15	33.3	0.004
Normal	40	93.0	3	7.0	
Raised	5	100.0	0	0.0	
NLR					
Dropped	43	97.7	1	2.3	<0.001
Raised	32	65.3	17	34.7	
CRP					
Dropped	22	73.3	8	26.7	0.218
Raised	53	84.1	10	15.9	
D-Dimer					
Dropped	38	92.7	3	7.3	0.009
Raised	37	71.2	15	28.8	

f. Multiple Logistic Regression

Based on the results of the logistic regression test, the relationship between hematology and progression showed that NLR and D-dimer levels were related to disease progression,

while leukocyte, platelet, lymphocyte and CRP levels were not related ($p>0.05$). The relationship between hematology and disease progression can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7. Analysis of Logistic Regression Test Results for the Relationship between Hematology and Disease Progression

Independent Variables	OR	95% CI		p
		Lower limit	Upper limit	
Leukocytes	1.00	0.84	1.19	0.988
Platelets	1.00	0.99	1.01	0.358
Lymphocytes	1.05	0.99	1.12	0.096
NLR	1.09	1.01	1.19	0.030
CRP	0.99	0.97	1.01	0.339
D-dimer	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.019
Constant	0.04			0.033

Meanwhile, the results of the logistic regression test of the relationship between hematology and severity showed that leukocyte, lymphocyte, NLR, CRP and D-dimer levels were related to severity ($p < 0.05$) while platelet levels were not related ($p > 0.05$).

Leukocyte levels were a variable that dominantly related to the severity of COVID-19 with the largest OR (OR= 1.80). The relationship between hematology and severity can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. Analysis of Logistic Regression Test Results of the Relationship between Hematology and Severity Level

Independent Variables	OR	95% CI		p
		Lower limit	Upper limit	
Leukocytes	1.79	1.174	2.755	0.007
Platelets	1.00	0.995	1.012	0.429
Lymphocytes	1.16	1.008	1.335	0.038
NLR	1.34	1.109	1.615	0.002
CRP	0.89	0.833	0.971	0.007
D-dimer	1.00	1.000	1.002	0.009
Constant	0.01			0.002

DISCUSSION

In this study, the largest age group was 26-45 years (Adults) compared to other age groups. Patients aged 26-45 years are included in the productive age group. The results of this research are not much different from research (Tyastuti, 2022) at Sultan Agung Hospital, Semarang, which concluded that patients in the productive age group dominate the frequency of COVID-19 incidents due to the high level of mobility in this age group. The proportion of COVID-19 sufferers is more female, namely 50 people (53.8%). The results of this study are not much different from the results of research (Ding et al, 2020) at Beijing YouAn

Hospital, concluding that more COVID-19 sufferers were women, namely 54.2%.

Referring to the results of research tests, bivariately, all hematological parameters obtained a value of $p < 0.05$, indicating that there was a significant relationship with disease progression and in multivariate terms, only NLR and D-dimer levels were related to disease progression ($p < 0.05$), while for leukocyte, platelet, lymphocytes and CRP were related but not significant.

NLR levels were significantly related to disease progression (OR= 1.09; 95% CI; 1.00 to 1.18; $p = 0.030$). This means that COVID-19 sufferers who have increased NLR levels are estimated to increase disease

progression against COVID-19 by 1.1 times. The results of this study are not much different from research (Ding et al, 2020) at Hunan Provincial People's Hospital, which concluded that patients with confirmed COVID-19 had NLR levels that correlated with hospitalization time gradually and increased significantly from day 5 after enter.

D-Dimer levels were significantly associated with disease progression ($p = 0.019$; OR = 1.001; 95% CI; 1.000-1.001). This means that COVID-19 sufferers who have increased D-Dimer levels are estimated to increase disease progression against COVID-19 by 1.0 times. The results of this study are not much different from research (Shi et al, 2021) in China, which concluded that the majority of COVID-19 patients experienced a decrease in D-dimer levels when they were discharged from the hospital.

This study concluded that NLR and D-dimer levels were significantly related to disease progression in COVID-19 sufferers. Referring to the research results, leukocyte, lymphocyte, NLR, CRP and D-dimer levels were related to severity ($p < 0.05$) while platelet levels were not related ($p > 0.05$).

Leukocyte levels were significantly related to severity ($p = 0.007$; OR = 1.798; 95% CI; 1.174-2.755). This means that sufferers who have increased leukocyte levels are estimated to have an increased risk of severity of COVID-19 by 1.8 times. The results of this study are in line with research (Shi et al, 2021); (Zhao et al, 2020); (Taj et al.); (Waris et al, 2021) concluded that higher leukocyte levels (OR, 1.34; 95% CI, 1.05–1.71) were associated with severity.

Platelet levels were related but not significant to severity ($p = 0.429$; OR = 1.003; 95% CI; 0.995-1.012). The results of this study are in line with research (Taj et al, 2021) concluding that platelet levels do not

show a significant relationship with the severity of COVID-19 disease.

Lymphocyte levels were significantly related to severity ($p = 0.038$; OR = 1.160; 95% CI; 1.008-1.135). This means that sufferers who have increased lymphocyte levels are estimated to have an increased risk of severity of COVID-19 by 1.2 times. The results of this study are in line with research (Gong et al, 2020); (Waris et al, 2021) concluded that lymphocyte levels show a significant relationship with the severity of the disease.

NLR levels were significantly related to severity ($p = 0.002$; OR = 1.338; 95% CI; 1.109-1.615). This means that sufferers who have increased NLR levels are estimated to have an increased risk of severity of COVID-19 by 1.3 times. The results of this study are in line with research (Taj et al, 2021); (Waris et al, 2021); (Ding et al, 2020) and (Fristiani et al, 2022) concluded that NLR levels show a significant relationship with disease severity.

CRP levels were significantly related to severity ($p = 0.007$; OR = 0.899; 95% CI; 0.833-0.971). This means that sufferers who have increased CRP levels are estimated to have an increased risk of severity of COVID-19 by 0.9 times. The results of this research are in line with research (Taj et al, 2021); (Sun et al, 2020); (Gong et al, 2020) which concluded that CRP levels show a significant relationship with disease severity.

D-dimer levels were significantly related to severity ($p = 0.009$; OR = 1.001; 95% CI; 1.000-1.002). This means that sufferers who have increased D-dimer levels are estimated to have an increased risk of severity of COVID-19 by 1.0 times. The results of this research are in line with research (Taj et al, 2021); (Sun et al, 2020); (Li et al, 2020) and (Yu et al, 2020) which concluded that D-dimer levels showed a

significant relationship with disease severity.

This study concludes that the levels of leukocytes, lymphocytes, NLR, CRP, D-dimer are related to the severity of COVID-19 sufferers.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION:

Chrismis Novalinda, Linda Chiuman, Sahna Ferdinand as supervisors and providers of input regarding literature reviews, research methods, as well as providers of input in discussing the results. Yunita Wannur Azah as a writer and thinker analyzing data and discussing results.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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