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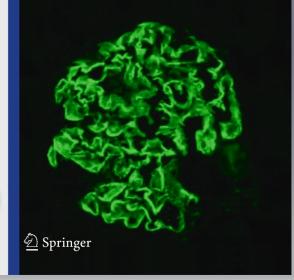
Journal of the International Pediatric Nephrology Association

ISSN 0931-041X Volume 33 Number 9

Pediatr Nephrol (2018) 33:1523-1529 DOI 10.1007/s00467-018-3965-8



Pediatric Nephrology







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Pediatric Nephrology (2018) 33:1523–1529 https://doi.org/10.1007/s00467-018-3965-8

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Distal renal tubular acidosis. Clinical manifestations in patients with different underlying gene mutations

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Received: 24 January 2018 / Revised: 28 March 2018 / Accepted: 6 April 2018 / Published online: 3 May 2018 © IPNA 2018

Abstract

Background To evaluate whether there are differences in the phenotype of primary distal renal tubular acidosis (dRTA) patients according to the causal defective gene.

Methods Twenty-seven non-oriental patients with genetically confirmed dRTA were grouped according to the identified underlying mutations in either ATP6V1B1 (n = 10), ATP6V0A4 (n = 12), or SLC4A1 (n = 5) gene. Demographic features, growth impairment, biochemical variables and presence of deafness, nephrocalcinosis, and urolithiasis at diagnosis were compared among the three groups.

Results Patients with SLC4A1 mutations presented later than those with ATP6V1B1 or ATP6V0A4 defects (120 vs. 7 and 3 months, respectively). Hearing loss at diagnosis was present in the majority of patients with ATP6V1B1 mutations, in two patients with ATP6V0A4 mutations, and in none of cases harboring SLC4A1 mutations. Serum potassium concentration (X ± SD) was higher in SLC4A1 group (3.66 ± 0.44 mEq/L) than in ATP6V0A4 group (2.96 ± 0.63 mEq/L) (p = 0.046). There were no differences in the other clinical or biochemical variables analyzed in the three groups.

Conclusions This study indicates that non-oriental patients with dRTA caused by mutations in the *SLC4A1* gene present later and have normokalemia or milder hypokalemia. Hypoacusia at diagnosis is characteristically associated with *ATP6V1B1* gene mutations although it may also be present in infants with *ATP6V0A4* defects. Other phenotypical manifestations do not allow predicting the involved gene.

Keywords Distal renal tubular acidosis · Genetic analysis · ATP6V1B1 · ATP6V0A4 · SLC4A1

Abbreviations and acronyms

dRTA distal renal tubular acidosis
ATP6V0A4 ATPase H+ transporting V0 subunit A4
ATP6V1B1 ATPase H+ transporting V1 dubunit B1
SLC4A1 Solute carrier family 4 member 1

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Introduction

Type 1, distal renal tubular acidosis (dRTA) is a rare disorder characterized by persistent hyperchloremic, normal plasma anion gap, and metabolic acidosis in the presence of inappropriately high urinary pH and low urinary excretion of ammonium [1]. dRTA is caused by inability of the α -intercalated cells of the collecting tube to acidify the urine. Proximal leak of bicarbonate does not occur, and glomerular filtration rate is characteristically normal [2].

In children, dRTA is usually primary, common presenting manifestations being growth retardation, vomiting and dehydration, loss of appetite, diarrhea or constipation, and polyuria [3]. Hypokalemia is often found and may lead to weakness and paralysis [4]. The association of hypocitraturia and elevated urine calcium excretion leads to nephrocalcinosis and increased risk of urolithiasis [5].



Primary dRTA results from genetic defects, the most frequently implicated genes being ATP6V1B1, located at chromosome 2 (2p13.3), and ATP6V0A4, at chromosome 7 (7q33-34), which, respectively, encode the B1 and A4 subunits of the H⁺-ATPase of the α -intercalated cells [6]. The B1 isoform of the H⁺-ATPase V1 domain is also expressed in the inner ear cells [7]. Loss of function mutations in ATP6V1B1 and ATP6V0A4 genes causes early onset and severe forms of autosomal recessive dRTA [8]. The SLC4A1 gene, located at chromosome 17 (17q31.21), codifies the exchanger Cl /HCO3⁻ (AE1) placed on the basolateral surface of α - intercalated cells and in erythrocyte membrane. Mutations in SLC4A1 gene cause a milder form of dRTA that follows an autosomal dominant inheritance and often presents in adulthood [9–11], thereby few pediatric cases have been reported. Autosomal recessive dRTA caused by mutations in SLC4A1 gene have particularly been described in Asian people in association with ovalocytosis and spherocytosis [12–14]. Recently, recessive missense mutations in FOXI1 gene, encoding the transcription factor FOXI1 that regulates a group of membrane transport proteins in the collecting duct, have been found in two unrelated consanguineous families as responsible of sensorineural deafness and dRTA [15].

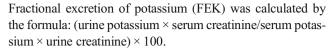
We used the RenalTube database [16] to better characterize the phenotypical spectrum of primary dRTA caused by *ATP6V1B1*, *ATP6VOA4*, or *SLC4A1* gene defects and find out whether clinical and/or biochemical manifestations might help differentiate these three types of dRTA.

Material and methods

Patients

Twenty-seven pediatric patients with primary dRTA aged from 1 month to 15 years (18 males) and corresponding to 25 families were selected from the RenalTube database and grouped according to the underlying genetic defect as follows: *ATP6V1B1*, *ATP6V0A4*, and *SLC4A1* groups. Sex, age, presenting manifestations, family history, biochemical data, and image studies at diagnosis were analyzed and compared.

Metabolic acidosis was diagnosed by a blood pH < 7.35 and/or serum bicarbonate concentration < 22 mEq/L. Hyperchloremia was defined by serum chloride values > 105 mEq/L, and hypokalemia was defined by serum potassium < 3.5 mEq/L. A urinary acidification defect was diagnosed by urinary pH > 5.5 in the presence of metabolic acidosis. Hypercalciuria was defined by calcium/creatinine ratio > 0.8 mg/mg in infants aged between 1 and 6 months, > 0.6 mg/mg in those aged 6–12 months, > 0.47 mg/mg in children of 1 year of age and > 0.22 mg/mg in those aged > 2 years [17]. The diagnosis of hypocitraturia was made when first morning urine citrate/creatinine ratio was < 400 mg/g.



Mutations of *ATP6V1B1*, *ATP6V0A4*, and *SLC4A1* genes were identified by next-generation sequencing (NGS) and validated by Sanger sequencing, as described [18].

Statistical analysis

Comparisons among the three groups were performed using SPSS software (SPSS V15.0 Windows). Age at diagnosis and Ca/Cr ratio were expressed as median and interquartile range for being not normal quantitative variables and were compared by non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test. The normal quantitative variables, expressed as mean and standard deviation ($X \pm \text{SD}$), were compared using one-way Anova. χ^2 Pearson or the Fisher exact test was used to relate categorical variables. P values lower than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. Height and weight were represented graphically as boxplots (median and interquartile).

Results

Table 1 shows the demographic, clinical, and genetic data of the three groups of patients: 10, 12, and 5 cases harboring mutations in ATP6V1B1, ATP6V0A4, SLC4A1 genes, respectively. Patients with ATP6V1B1 or ATP6V0A4 gene mutations (I.1-XX.1) were diagnosed earlier (p < 0.002) than patients with SLC4A1 mutations (XXI.1-XXV.1), median ages being 7 (30) months for ATP6V1B1, 3 (9) months for ATP6V0A4, and 120 (60) months for SLC4A1 patients. No differences were found in height and weight among groups (Figs. 1 and 2).

Hearing loss was recognized in eight children with *ATP6V1B1* mutations and two children with *ATP6V0A4* mutations. None of the *SLC4A1* patients had sensorineural hearing impairment.

Diagnostic laboratory tests are shown in Table 2. Differences were only found for serum potassium, higher in SLC4A1 than ATP6V0A4 patients (p = 0.046).

Discussion

This study provides interesting findings useful for the diagnosis and phenotypical characterization of primary dRTA. Few publications [18–21], such as those of Palazzo et al. [20] and Besouw et al. [22] recently reported, have compared the clinical manifestations of pediatric patients with dRTA classified according to the underlying genetic defect. Among the patients here presented, ten had mutations in the ATP6V1B1 gene. Five of these children



Table 1 Demographic and clinical features of the three groups of patients at diagnosis

	Age (Months)	Sex	Ethnic Background	Weight (SDS)	Height (SDS)	NC	NL	Hearing loss	Inheritance	Mutations
Group ATP6V1B1	81	,								
1.1	7 -	Ξı	Κ ◆	I	I	- 2	1 2	- 2	Homozygous	c. 1228 in. C; p.1386His.
II. I	10	<u>.</u> ,	۷,	,	ı	res	No.	res	Homozygous	C.1228 In. C; p.1380HIS.
11.1	00	W I	A	- 5.10	- 0.00	res	NO.	res	Homozygous	c.1228 in. C; p.1386HIS.
III.2	-	П	A	+ 0.73	+0.04	No No	No	Yes	Homozygous	c.1228 in. C; p.1386Hfs.
IV:1	13	H	А	-3.43	-1.73	Yes	No	No	Homozygous	c.1228 in. C; p.1386Hfs.
V.1	22	\mathbb{Z}	C	-3.05	-3.87	1	1	Yes	Homozygous	g.70960079; Intron $6 + 1 \text{ G} > A$, Splicing
VI.1	2	\mathbb{Z}	C	ı	1	No	No	Yes	Homozygous	g.70960079; Intron $6 + 1 \text{ G} > A$, Splicing
VII.1	5	\mathbb{Z}	C	-4.03	-4.41	Yes	No	Yes	Compound	g.70960079; Intron 6+1 G>A,Splicing/
									heterozygous	c.1061 G>A; p.E330K
VIII.1	09	ш	C	-1.39	-2.21	Yes	Yes	Yes	Homozygous	g.70960079; Intron $6 + 1 \text{ G} > A$, Splicing
VIII.2 Group ATP KV0A A	1 1	\mathbb{Z}	C	-0.49	+1.09	Yes	No	Yes	Homozygous	g.70960079; Intron $6 + 1 \text{ G} > A$, Splicing
IX 1	36	Σ	ر	080-	-0.83	No.	No	No.	Нотомито	2 1620 C > T: n B440H
Z 1	17	W N) ز	-1.45	2.5	No	No	No	Homogramme	5.1027 C/ 1; p.1x++7.11
XI.1	, ₍ ,	Į į	Ή	-2.43	-2.12 -2.87	Yes	S Z	No.	Compound	c. 2648 T > G· n T789P / c. 837 A > G· n F185S
)	•	:	i	i				heterozvoons	
XII.1	_	Σ	C	-0.74	+4.38	Yes	No	No	Compound	c. 592 in. T. p.L103Lfs. / g. 138.418.879; Intron
	ı	!	ı					!	heterozygous	16+2 in. A, Splicing
ХШТ	_	ĹΤ	A	ı	ı	Yes	No	No	Homozygous	c. 1111 del TGTT: n O276Ofs
XIVI	٠ 4	, ≥	: כ	+173	-5 92	Yes	Yes	No.	Compound	c. 1789 A > T. n V502X / o. 138 418 879. Intron
:	-)		1			2	heterozygous	16+2 in. A. Splicing
XV.1	_	Ī	ر	+151	+1 57	Vec	No	No	Compaind	c 1789 A > T: n V 502 X / \alpha 138 418 879: Intron
1.4.7	1	-)	1+	77:1-	103	041	0	heterozygone	
1 11 12 1	,	7	ζ			17.	, i		necrozygous	10 + 2 III. A. Spircing
XVI.1	3	M	<u>ن</u>	I	I	Yes	No	No	Compound	c 1468 del G; p.P393PIS. / c. 2340 G > A;
VX/II 1	,	N	ζ	1 05	9	Vec	N	VI.	neterozygous	p.Q/55A 2.1468451 C. = p20£p£
AVIII.1 VVVIII.1	n c	ΞZ	ם כ	- 2.66 - 2.66	- 2.62	res Ves	No No	No No	Homozygous	c 1400uci U; p.r.39.2ris.
AVIII.1 VIV 1	⁷ C	E >		3.00	3.02	Ics Ves		INO	Homozygous	c. 2223 del O, p.A047 v Is.
AIA.1	17	Z Z		ı	ı	res	ICS VS:	158 V26	nomozygous	c. 500 C > 1; KoQis.
VV.1	-	<u>V</u>	ر	I	I	ıcs	ICS	8	Compound	g. 136,444,022, muon 7–2 1 > C. Spireing / g.138418879;Intron 16 + 2 in. A, Splicing
GroupSLC4A1	(ţ	(ţ		,	,		E Cook
XXI.1	96	т >	၁ (-1.13	+0.17	Yes	No No	9 Z	Heterozygous	c.1981C>T; p.G609R
AAII.1	120	Ξ;	، ر	65.0-	10.44	res	NO	No.	Heterozygous	c.1922 C > 1; p.K589H
XXIII.1	156	Σı	ن د	-1.88	78.7	Yes	Yes	No.	Heterozygous	c. 1922 C > 1; p.K589C
XXIV.1	180	т, [†]	ر د	-0.11	- 1.04	Yes	No	No.	Heterozygous	c.1922 C > 1; p.R589C
XXV.1	120	Z;	C	-1.11	-1.66	Yes	No	No	Heterozygous	c.1981 $C > T$; p.G609R
Total ATDKVIRI	(30)	M/F: 6/4	A/C/H: 5/5/0	-2.11 ± 1.76	-2.53 ± 2.67	Y/N/U: 6/2/2	Y/N/U: 1/1/2	Y/N/U: 8/1/1		
Total	3 (9)	M/F: 9/3	A/C/H: 1/8/3	-0.93 ± 1.73	-1.08 ± 3.04	Y/N/U:	Y/N/U: 3/9/0	Y/N/U: 2/10/0		
ATP6V0A4						10/2/0				
Total SLC4A1 TOTAL	120 (60) ^a 5 (58)	M/F: 3/2 M/F:	A/C/H: 0/5/0 A/C/H:	-0.96 ± 0.66 -1.33 ± 1.60	-1.16 ± 1.15 -1.58 ± 2.57	Y/N/U: 5/0/0 Y/N/U: 21/4/3	Y/N/U: 1/4/0 Y/N/U:	Y/N/U: 0/5/0 Y/N/U:		
		10/2	0/10/3			7/4/7	2/20/2	10/10/1		

Roman numerals denote different families. Mean ± SD of quantitative variables are given for each group and for all patients except groups' age which is expressed as median (interquartile range). NC nephrocalcinosis, NL nephrolithiasis, M male, F female, A African, C Caucasian, H Hispanic-American, U unknown, Yyes, N no. ¹ Different from ATP6VIB1 and ATP6V0A4 groups



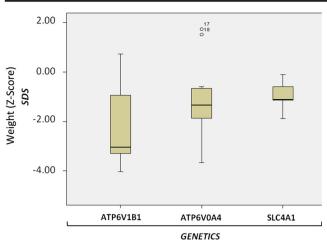


Fig. 1 Boxplot showing the weight SDS at diagnosis. ATP6V1B1 means patients with mutation in *ATP6V1B1* gene. ATP6V0A4 means patients with mutation in *ATP6V0A4* gene. SLC4A1 means patients with mutation in *SLC4A1* gene

were Africans and harbored the same mutation (c.1228 in. C; p.I386Hfs.) in homozygosis, according to the founder effect of this variant proposed by Nagara et al. for dRTA patients from North-African geographical origin [22]. In this group, the five remaining patients were Caucasian and three (V.1, VI.1, and VII.1) carried the same mutation (g.70960079; Intron 6 + 1 G > A, Splicing), in spite of no known familiar relationship between them.

As for the SLC4A1 group, it is of note that almost no data are available in the literature on children of Occidental origin with this variant form of autosomal dominant dRTA not associated with hemolytic anemia [23-27]. SLC4A1 variants found in our patients have already been related with a late clinical onset of dRTA [18, 28, 29]. The median age at diagnosis of our patients with SLC4A1 mutations was 10 years. Therefore, patients with this type of dRTA may present before adulthood, in the late childhood. There was no overlap in the age of diagnosis between dRTA caused by SLC4A1 gene mutations and the other two types of dRTA. Patients with ATP6V1B1 and ATP6V0A4 gene defects in our series debut in infancy at a mean age of 7 and 3 months, respectively. However, it should be noted that two children having ATP6V1B1mutations and one child with ATP6V0A4 mutations were diagnosed after the second year of life indicating that these forms of dRTA may not be detected during early infancy. Patients with SLC4A1 gene mutations had less severe forms of dRTA and tended to have less marked growth retardation, less severe metabolic acidosis, and significantly milder hypokalemia which might someway justify the later diagnosis. Besouw et al. [21] found that children with H⁺-ATPase pump defects needed higher alkali doses to correct acidosis than children with SCL4A1 mutations. It has also been reported that the degree of acidosis or hypokalemia varies

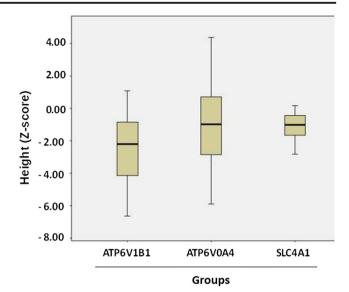


Fig. 2 Boxplot showing the height SDS at diagnosis. ATP6V1B1 means patients with mutation in *ATP6V1B1* gene. ATP6V0A4 means patients with mutation in *ATP6V0A4* gene. SLC4A1 means patients with mutation in *SLC4A1* gene

depending on whether the dRTA is autosomal recessive (*ATP6V0A4* and *ATP6V1B1* genes) or dominant (*SLC4A1* gene). Battle et al. [29] showed that individuals with autosomal-recessive pattern had serum potassium levels lower than those with an autosomal-dominant inheritance.

Neither the frequency of nephrocalcinosis or urolithiasis nor the urinary calcium excretion was different among the three groups.

The patient XXIII.1 of the SLC4A1 group had a height Z score equal to -2.82 DS, much greater growth retardation than the other group's cases. It is worth commenting that this patient, additionally to the de novo p.R589C mutation, had a polymorphism (rs148170067 SNP; c.889 C > T, p.V245 M) inherited from the father, who never manifested any symptom related to dRTA. Thus, this polymorphism could induce a synergistic negative effect, enhancing the harmful impact of the mutation and explaining why this patient had more severe metabolic acidosis and greater growth retardation.

Another noticeable finding of our study was that eight patients with mutations in the *ATP6V1B1* gene were deaf, out of ten in whom the symptom was sought, by contrast with only 2 out of 14 children with *ATPV0A4* gene mutations. As expected, none of patients harboring *SLC4A1* gene defects had deafness because the Cl⁻/HCO3⁻ anion exchanger does not express in the ears. It was classically assumed that dRTA caused by defective *ATP6V1B1* gene was associated with early nerve hearing loss [7, 28, 30–33], while *ATP6V0A4* mutations were related with either late-onset deafness or normal hearing, [34–40]. Vargas-Poussou et al. [41] challenged this assumption demonstrating genetic heterogeneity in dRTA associated with deafness and emphasizing the importance of mutational gene analysis for recessive forms of dRTA independent of



 Table 2
 Biochemical features of the three groups of patients at diagnosis

				Serum					Urine			
	Anion Gap	Anion Gap Creatinine (mg/dL) pH	Hd	Bicarbonate (mEq/L) K (mEq/L) Cl (mEq/L) Na (mEq/L) pH	K (mEq/L) (Cl (mEq/L)	Na (mEq/L) 1	Hc	Anion Gap	FEK (%)	Ca/Cr (mg/mg)	Citraturia
Group ATP6V1B1												
1.1	1	1		I	1				NA	1	ı	NA
II. 1	19	0.32	7.43	24.00	3.40	001	140		+	17.4	0.13	NA
Ш.1	13	0.31	7.27	19.30	3.38	601	138	7.00	+	33.6	0.40	L
Ш.2	16	0.32	7.13	15.00	3.70	108	136	1	NA	14.00	08.0	NA
IV.1	16	0.80	7.07	06.6	2.40		148	7.00	+	24.25	0.23	Z
V.1	22	1.03	7.26	16.00			153	7.50	+	68.3	1	NA
VI.1	ı	ı	7.37	16.00		122	140 8	3.00	+	24.4	0.37	NA
VII.1	17	0.46	7.33	14.70			135	7.00	+	18.00	0.70	L
VIII.1	19	0.62	7.29	10.80	3.02	111	138	7.17	+	35.5	60.0	L
VIII.2	21	0.71	7.29	11.00	4.29	901	134	7.00	+	19.00	0.05	L
Group ATP6V0A4	4											
IX.1	25	0.40	I	15.00	1.60	102	141		NA	ı	1	NA
X.1	23	0.41	7.30	19.50		66	138		+	16.6	5.30	NA
XI.1	14	0.94	7.33	21.10	3.10	104	136	7.00	+	12.84	0.12	NA
XII.1	I	I		ı	1		1	1	NA	ı	ı	NA
XIII.1	15	0.40	7.24	14.30			138		+	21.70	0.61	L
XIV.1	29	09.0	7.32	16.00	2.70		148	7.50	NA	32.6	0.43	NA
XV.1	13	0.74	6.72	4.00	3.30	122	136	5.00	Ng	28.54	0.37	Z
XVI.1	8	0.30	7.17	11.00	3.70	116	131	7.00	NA	1	ı	NA
XVII.1	14	09.0	7.20	13.00	2.40		143	7.00	+	15.29	0.33	NA
XVIII.1	21	0.30	7.18	10.00	3.00		147	8.00	+	11.9	06.0	Z
XIX.1	6	0.70	7.26	17.00	2.90	611	142	8.00	+	18.00	0.20	NA
XX.1	ı	1	7.21	13.00	I I			7.14	+	1	1	NA
Group SLC4A1												
XXI.1	16	0.56	7.24	19.70	3.18		140	7.00	+	16.73	0.20	NA
XXII.1	13	0.80	7.24	17.40	3.40		140	7.00	+	21.67	0.23	Г
XXIII.1	11	0.90	7.18	16.40	3.50	611	143 (6.50	+	18.00	0.35	NA
XXIV.1	21	69.0	7.33	20.70	4.30	901	143	1	NA	I	80.0	NA
XXV.1	17	0.71	7.20	17.50		111	142	7.50	+	12.63	0.23	L
Total ATP6V1B1	18 ± 3	0.57 ± 0.26	7.27 ± 0.11	15.19 ± 4.48		112 ± 8	140 ± 6	7.33 ± 0.45	+/Ng/NA: 8/0/2	30.06 ± 16.89	0.23 (0.31)	L/N/NA: 4/1/5
Total ATP6V0A4	17 ± 7	0.54 ± 0.21	7.19 ± 0.18	13.99 ± 4.71					+/Ng/NA: 7/1/4	19.68 ± 7.45	0.40(0.60)	Y/N/NA: 1/2/9
Total SLC4A1	15 ± 4	0.73 ± 0.13	7.24 ± 0.06	18.34 ± 1.79	а				+/Ng/NA: 4/0/1	17.26 ± 3.73	0.23 (0.11)	Y/N/NA: 2/0/3
TOTAL	17 ± 6	0.59 ± 0.22	7.23 ± 0.14	15.29 ± 4.38	3.24 ± 0.61 1	112±7	140±5	7.20 ± 0.66	+/Ng/NA: 19/1/7	22.90 ± 12.50	0.57 (0.36)	Y/N/NA:7/3/17

K potassium, CI chlorine, Na, sodium, FEK, fractional excretion of potassium, Ca/Cr calcium creatinine ratio, +, positive, Ng negative, NA not available, L low, N normal, Y yes, N no Mean ± SD of quantitative variables are given for each group and for all patients except groups' Ca/Cr which is expressed as median (interquartile range) ^a Different from ATP6V0A4 group



hearing loss. However, although the early presence of neurosensorial deafness does not fully discriminate between the two types of dRTA caused by a loss of function of the H+ ATPase pump, our results indicate that, at early age, the detection of deafness in patients with dRTA is highly suggestive of an underlying mutation in the *ATP6V1B1* gene. It should be mentioned that the occurrence of deafness in dRTA has been related with the expansion of the vestibular aqueduct [42, 43], a finding unfortunately not explored in our series of patients.

In summary, we here presented clinical and biochemical data at diagnosis of non-oriental patients with different genetic forms of primary dRTA. At diagnosis, the patient's age, the severity of hypokalemia, and the presence of hypoacusia might be useful to differentiate the underlying molecular defect which needs to be confirmed by gene analysis.

Funding information This work was supported partially by GRUPIN 14-020 grant from "Principado de Asturias" Funds, ISCIII FIS PI14/00702, Plan Estatal I+D+I 2013-2016, FEDER Funds, and FundaciónNutrición y Crecimiento.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

There are no prior publications or submissions with any overlapping information.

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