



Variants in *ARID5B* gene are associated with the development of acute lymphoblastic leukemia in Mexican children

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Abstract

A high impact of *ARID5B* SNPs on acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) susceptibility has been described in Hispanic children; therefore, it is relevant to know if they influence the high incidence of childhood-ALL in Mexicans. Seven SNPs (rs10821936, rs10994982, rs7089424, rs2393732, rs2393782, rs2893881, rs4948488) of *ARID5B* were analyzed in 384 controls and 298 ALL children using genomic DNA and TaqMan probes. The SNPs were analyzed for deviation of Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium; Fisher's exact test was used to compare the genotypic and allelic frequencies between controls and patients. The association between SNPs and ALL susceptibility was calculated, and haplotype and ancestry analyses were conducted. All SNPs were associated with ALL, pre-B ALL, and hyperdiploid-ALL susceptibility ($p < 0.05$). No association with T-ALL and gene fusions was found ($p > 0.05$). The seven SNPs were associated with risk of pre-B ALL in younger children; however, rs2393732, rs2393782, rs2893881, and rs4948488 were not associated with susceptibility in older children and adolescents. The CAG haplotype (rs10821936, rs10994982, rs7089424) was strongly associated with ALL risk in our population ($p < 0.00001$). The frequency of all risk alleles in our ALL, pre-B, and hyperdiploid-ALL patients was higher than that in Hispanic children reported. This is the first report showing the association between rs2393732, rs2393782, and rs4948488 with pre-B hyperdiploid-ALL children. The G allele at rs2893881 confers major risk for pre-B hyperdiploid-ALL in Mexican (OR, 2.29) than in Hispanic children (OR, 1.71). The genetic background of our population could influence the susceptibility to ALL and explain its high incidence in Mexico.

Keywords Acute lymphoblastic leukemia · *ARID5B* gene · Single nucleotide polymorphisms · Susceptibility · Mexican children

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Introduction

Acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) is characterized by the uncontrolled proliferation and malignant transformation of lymphoid progenitor cells in the bone marrow. It is the most common subtype of leukemia diagnosed in children under 18 years [24].

The incidence of childhood ALL in the United States of America (USA) varies according to race or ethnic group. For example in Hispanic children, ALL incidence is higher (40.9/1,000,000/year) than in Asian (35.6/1,000,000/year), White (33/1,000,000/year), and Black (16/1,000,000/year) children [23, 41]. In Mexico, cancer is the second leading cause of childhood mortality and ALL represents 83% of the leukemia cases. According to the statistics of the Popular Medical Insurance Program (PMIP), the national ALL incidence is 79.8 cases per million per year and it is significantly increasing [32].

ALL is a multifactorial disease, in which environmental (prenatal exposure to X-rays, pesticides, and radiation), biological (viral infections), and genetic (Bloom syndrome, ataxia telangiectase, neurofibromatosis, B-thalassemia, and constitutional trisomy 21) factors play an important role in the development of the disease [7, 10]. However, these factors are not enough to explain the etiology of ALL and the high incidence of childhood ALL in our country. In addition to these factors, genetic variations such as single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) could also contribute to the development of the disease in children. Recently, the presence of several SNPs in genes including *IKZF1* (7p12.2), *ARID5B* (10q21.2), *DDC* (7p12.1), *CEBPE* (14q11.2), *CDKN2A* (9p21.3), *GATA3* (10p14), and *PIP4K2A* (10p12.2) have been associated with the susceptibility to develop ALL in different populations around the world [5, 13, 14, 20, 25–27, 30, 36, 38, 40, 41]. Apparently, the treatment outcome, prognosis, and overall survival of childhood ALL depend on race (Asian, Black, White, and Native American) or ethnicity (Hispanic, and Non-Hispanic) [6, 18].

Interestingly, specific SNPs of *ARID5B* (rs7089424, rs10994982, rs10740055, rs10821936, rs2393732, rs17215180, and rs2393782), *CDKN2A* (rs3218018, rs3731249, and rs3731217), *IKZF1* (rs4132601 and rs7780012), *CEBPE* (rs4982731, rs10143875, rs2239633, and rs2239635), and *PIP4K2A* (rs7901152, rs11013046, rs7088318, and rs7075634) are more associated with ALL risk in Hispanic than in White children [8, 16, 37, 39, 40]. Furthermore, some of them (rs10821936, rs7089424, rs7088318, rs2239633, and rs3731217) are highly correlated with the increase of Native American ancestry [37, 39]. Although the C risk allele of rs10821936 has been associated with susceptibility to childhood ALL in both Hispanic and White populations, the allelic frequency was higher in Hispanic (0.47) than in White (0.33) and Black (0.16) children, showing that there are differences among populations [39].

Although some SNPs of *ARID5B* have been more related with ALL risk in Hispanic children, these observations are not necessarily representative of the situation in Mexico, since the proportion of Mexican patients included in these studies is unknown. It is essential for us to know if the genetic variants of *ARID5B* confer susceptibility to the development of the disease in our population and if these variants contribute to the higher incidence of childhood ALL in Mexico. This study helps to understand the biologic mechanisms involved in the etiology of childhood ALL considering the Mexican genetic background. The aim of this study was to determine the association between the presence of the risk alleles of the seven SNPs of *ARID5B* gene and the susceptibility to develop ALL in Mexican children.

Materials and methods

Study population

A total of 298 patients under 18 years of age with a diagnosis of ALL (precursor B cells or T cells) were studied (Table 1). Patients were recruited at any stage of the disease (diagnosis, treatment, relapse, and surveillance) between August 2012 to July 2016 at the Servicio de Hematología y Oncología del Instituto Nacional de Pediatría in Mexico City, and the Hospital de Especialidades Pediátricas de Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico. The diagnosis was established by cytomorphology, immunophenotyping, molecular biology for the most common translocations, and DNA index. The blast lineage was determined by the expression of different CD (cluster of differentiation) cell surface markers; the expression of CD10, CD19, CD20, and CD22 defines pre-B lineage, and CD1, CD2, CD3, CD5, and CD7 defines T-lineage. The patient's clinical and laboratory data were obtained from the clinical records.

The control group consisted of 384 randomly selected, healthy, unrelated volunteers with no family history of hematological cancer. They were recruited from August 2013 to July 2016. Personal information was obtained through a direct interview with the volunteers, or with parents or legal tutors for individuals younger than 18 years old.

Patients and controls were Mexican mestizo residents in our country, with parents and grandparents born in Mexico.

This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Research and Ethics Committees from both participant Institutions in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Volunteers, parents, or legal tutors were previously informed about the study, and before biological samples were collected, they provided a signed, written informed consent letter to participate.

Table 1 Clinical characteristics of the patients

Clinical characteristics	pre-B ALL (284 patients) <i>n</i> (%)	T-ALL (14 patients) <i>n</i> (%)	Total (298 patients) <i>n</i> (%)
Gender			
Male	166 (58.5)	12 (85.7)	178 (59.7)
Female	118 (41.5)	2 (14.3)	120 (40.3)
Age at diagnosis (years)			
1–9	188 (66.2)	7 (50)	195 (65.5)
< 1 or ≥ 10	96 (33.8)	7 (50)	103 (34.5)
White blood cell (WBC) count			
< 50 × 10 ⁹ /L	228 (80.3)	3 (21.4)	231 (77.5)
≥ 50 × 10 ⁹ /L	56 (19.7)	11 (78.6)	67 (22.5)
Gene fusions			
Negative	246 (86.6)	12 (85.8)	258 (86.7)
Positive	38 (13.4)	2 (14.2)	40 (13.3)
<i>ETV6-RUNX1</i>	15 (5.3)	0	15 (5)
<i>TCF3-PBX1</i>	12 (4.2)	0	12 (4)
<i>BCR-ABL1</i>	6 (2.1)	0	6 (2)
<i>KMT2A-MLL3</i>	2 (0.7)	0	2 (0.7)
<i>KMT2A-EPS15</i>	2 (0.7)	0	2 (0.7)
<i>KMT2A-AFF1</i>	1 (0.4)	0	1 (0.3)
<i>TAL-1</i>	0	1 (7.1)	1 (0.3)
<i>TRD-LMO2</i>	0	1 (7.1)	1 (0.3)
Numerical abnormalities			
Diploid	183 (64.4)	6 (42.8)	189 (63.4)
Hypodiploid	22 (7.7)	6 (42.8)	28 (9.4)
Hyperdiploid	39 (13.7)	0	39 (13.1)
Unknown	40 (14.1)	2 (14.3)	42 (14.1)

ARID5B genotyping analysis

Saliva samples were collected from all patients according to commercial kit instructions (Oragen DNA kit, DNA Genotek Inc. Ottawa, ON, Canada). Peripheral blood samples from controls were collected in EDTA-supplemented tubes. Saliva and peripheral blood samples were processed according to the genomic DNA extraction protocols prepIT-L2P kit (DNA Genotek Inc. Ottawa, ON, Canada) and QIAamp DNA Blood kit (QIAGEN, Hilden, Germany), respectively. Genomic DNA integrity was confirmed by 1% agarose gel electrophoresis stained with GelRed (Nucleic Acid Gel Stain, Biotium Inc. Fremont, CA, USA) and visualized in a transilluminator (GelDoc-It Imaging Systems, UVP, LLC. CA, USA). Genomic DNA was quantified using an Epoch Microplate Spectrophotometer (BioTek Instruments, Inc. Winooski, VT, USA).

Genotyping analysis was performed by real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) in a StepOne Real-Time PCR equipment (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA) under standard conditions. Seven SNPs (rs10821936, rs10994982, rs7089424, rs2393732, rs2393782, rs2893881, and rs4948488)

of *ARID5B* gene were genotyped with a pre-designed TaqMan assay (VIC/FAM dye-labeled fluorescent probes; Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA). Total volume of the amplification reaction was 25 µL, containing 20 ng of genomic DNA, 2x TaqMan Universal PCR Master Mix No AmpErase UNG (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA), 20x TaqMan genotyping assay-human probe (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA), and DNase-free sterile-filtered water. The thermal cycle program consisted of an initial denaturation at 60 °C for 30 s and 95 °C for 10 min, followed by amplification step of 40 cycles of 15 s at 95 °C and 60 s at 60 °C; final step consisted of 30 s at 60 °C. Each experiment included one negative control and three positive controls (allele 1 homozygous, heterozygous, and allele 2 homozygous). Amplification was repeated on 30% of the samples randomly, and absolute replication and concordance were observed.

Ancestry analysis

Ten ancestry informative markers (AIMs) rs2695, rs2862, rs3340, rs17203, rs203096, rs223830, rs722098, rs1800498, rs2065160, and rs2814778 were used for

ancestry analysis in patients (KASP assay); this panel has been previously used in case-control studies to distinguish the European and Native American ancestry ($d > 0.44$) in Mexican population [22]. For the control group, the ancestry analysis was carried out with the genotypes obtained from the Infinium OncoArray-500K (Illumina, Inc. USA).

To estimate the proportion of European and Native American ancestry in each patient and control, the STRUCTURE program v2.3 was utilized [17]. The parameters of the analysis were as follows: a burn-in period of 500,000 repetitions, followed by an analysis period of 500,000 repetitions under the admixed model with a value of $K=2$ (K =ancestral populations). The GLU struct.admix module (<http://code.google.com/p/glu-genetics/>) was used to define the ancestry proportions among controls. The ancestry proportions of the controls and patients were compared using the Student t test, and p values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

Statistical analysis

All SNPs were analyzed for deviation from Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium (HWE) (DeFinetti software; <https://ihg.gsf.de/cgi-bin/hw/hwa2.pl>), and the genotype and allelic frequencies were calculated. Two-tailed Fisher's exact test (GraphPad Software, Inc. La Jolla, CA, USA) was used to calculate the genotype distribution in controls and patients, and to compare the differences between both groups; p values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. The association of each SNP with the susceptibility to ALL, pre-B-hyperdiploid ALL, and gene fusions was determined by the p value. Odds ratio (OR) with 95% confidence intervals (95% IC) (DeFinetti software; <https://ihg.gsf.de/cgi-bin/hw/hwa2.pl>) was calculated to estimate the risk of developing childhood ALL in the presence of risk alleles.

Seven SNPs were submitted to haplotype analysis using the Haploview program [3] to know if they were in linkage disequilibrium (LD) ($D' > 0.80$); the haplotype blocks formed were submitted to association analysis with susceptibility of ALL; the p values were obtained by permutation analysis (100,000 repetitions). A positive association with ALL susceptibility was considered with a p value < 0.05 .

Data availability The datasets generated during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Results

Characteristics of controls and patients

Of the 384 controls studied, 220 (57.3%) were males and 164 (42.7%) were females, with a ratio of 1.3:1. Mean age was 35 years (range 4 to 62 years).

Of the 298 patients studied, 178 (59.7%) were males and 120 (40.3%) were females with a ratio of 1.4:1. Mean age at diagnosis was 8 years (range 11 months to 18 years). Most of the patients were diagnosed with precursor B cells ALL (pre-B ALL) (95.3%) and the remaining with T cells ALL (T-ALL) (4.7%) (Table 1). *ETV6-RUNX1* was the most frequently observed fusion, whereas the poor prognosis fusions *BCR-ABL1* and those that involved the *KMT2A* gene were detected in few patients. Only 2 patients with T-ALL harbored gene fusions (Table 1). In 14.1% (40/284) of the pre-B ALL patients, it was not possible to obtain the DNA index results; of the pre-B ALL analyzed patients, 16% (39/244) were hyperdiploid (Table 1).

SNPs of *ARID5B* gene associated with ALL susceptibility

The estimated proportion of Native American and European ancestry was not statistically different between controls and patients ($p > 0.05$).

All the SNPs in *ARID5B* were in HWE in both control and patient samples; therefore, the seven SNPs were included in the association studies. The frequency of homozygotes for the risk alleles was significantly increased in patients compared with controls (Table 2). The frequency of the risk alleles was also higher in patients than in controls, but only three SNPs (rs10821936, rs10994982, and rs7089424) showed statistically significant differences (Table 2). The seven SNPs studied were associated with ALL susceptibility (Table 3).

When patients were separated according to B or T lineage, all homozygotes for the risk alleles were significantly more frequent in pre-B ALL patients than in controls. In this group, the frequency of risk alleles of four SNPs (rs10821936, rs10994982, rs7089424, and rs2393732) was significantly higher in patients with pre-B ALL compared with controls. In the pre-B ALL patients, the C allele of the SNP rs4948488 did not reach significance but its p value was at the borderline ($p = 0.0507$) (Table 2). All SNPs were associated with pre-B ALL susceptibility in our population (Table 3). No association between SNPs in *ARID5B* and T-ALL was found, although the frequencies of the risk homozygotes and risk alleles at rs10821936, rs10994982, and rs7089424 were slightly higher in patients with respect to controls (Table 2).

Logistic regression analysis showed that patients who carried two copies of the risk alleles of the SNPs rs10821936,

Table 2 Genotypic and allelic frequencies of the seven SNPs of *ARID5B* gene

SNPs	384 controls <i>n</i> (%)	298 patients <i>n</i> (%)	<i>p</i> ^a	284 pre-B ALL patients <i>n</i> (%)	<i>p</i> ^a	14 T-ALL patients <i>n</i> (%)	<i>p</i> ^a
rs10821936							
TT	90 (23.4)	35 (11.7)	< 0.0001*	33 (11.6)	0.0001*	2 (14.3)	0.5366
TC	195 (50.8)	118 (39.6)	0.0041*	110 (38.7)	0.0028*	8 (57.1)	0.7874
CC	99 (25.8)	145 (48.7)	< 0.0001*	141 (49.6)	< 0.0001*	4 (28.6)	0.7628
C risk allele	0.51	0.68	< 0.0001*	0.69	< 0.0001*	0.57	0.7881
rs10994982							
GG	65 (16.9)	31 (10.4)	0.0194*	29 (10.2)	0.0135*	2 (14.3)	1.000
GA	190 (49.5)	109 (36.6)	0.0008*	102 (35.9)	0.0005*	7 (50)	1.000
AA	129 (33.6)	158 (53)	< 0.0001*	153 (53.9)	< 0.0001*	5 (35.7)	1.000
A risk allele	0.58	0.71	0.0004*	0.72	0.0003*	0.61	1.000
rs7089424							
TT	92 (23.9)	36 (12.1)	< 0.0001*	34 (12)	0.0001*	2 (14.3)	0.5343
TG	192 (50)	120 (40.3)	0.0131*	112 (39.4)	0.0075*	8 (57.1)	0.7868
GG	100 (26.1)	142 (47.6)	< 0.0001*	138 (48.6)	0.0001*	4 (28.6)	0.7649
G risk allele	0.51	0.68	< 0.0001*	0.68	0.0001*	0.57	0.7877
rs2393732							
GG	182 (47.4)	123 (41.3)	0.1207	114 (40.1)	0.0700	9 (64.3)	0.2782
GA	173 (45)	128 (42.9)	0.5874	123 (43.3)	0.6938	5 (35.7)	0.5898
AA	29 (7.6)	47 (15.8)	0.0009*	47 (16.5)	0.0005*	0	0.6118
A risk allele	0.30	0.37	0.0596	0.38	0.0313*	0.18	0.5677
rs2393782							
GG	169 (44)	121 (40.6)	0.3909	111 (39.1)	0.2057	10 (71.4)	0.0553
GC	172 (44.8)	125 (41.9)	0.4838	121 (42.6)	0.5819	4 (28.6)	0.2812
CC	43 (11.2)	52 (17.4)	0.0254*	52 (18.3)	0.0101*	0	0.3800
C risk allele	0.34	0.38	0.2268	0.40	0.1040	0.14	0.1576
rs2893881							
AA	170 (44.3)	114 (38.3)	0.1180	107 (37.7)	0.0955	7 (50)	0.7863
AG	169 (44)	128 (42.9)	0.8155	121 (42.6)	0.7523	7 (50)	0.7858
GG	45 (11.7)	56 (18.8)	0.0122*	56 (19.7)	0.0061*	0	0.3836
G risk allele	0.34	0.40	0.0927	0.41	0.0621	0.25	0.7808
rs4948488							
TT	108 (28.1)	68 (22.8)	0.1336	64 (22.5)	0.1078	4 (28.6)	1.000
TC	185 (48.2)	132 (44.3)	0.3158	124 (43.7)	0.2720	8 (57.1)	0.5919
CC	91 (23.7)	98 (32.9)	0.0096*	96 (33.8)	0.0052*	2 (14.3)	0.5353
C risk allele	0.48	0.55	0.0757	0.55	0.0507	0.43	0.7899

^a*p* values by Fisher's exact test*Statistically significant *p* value

rs10994982, rs7089424, and rs2393732 had a significantly higher risk for developing childhood ALL and pre-B ALL (OR from 2.33 to 3.85, *p* values from 0.0011 to 2.20e⁻⁰⁸). Particularly, the presence of these SNPs is significantly more associated with susceptibility to childhood ALL and pre-B ALL (Table 3).

Although we found that several risk homozygotes are more frequent in patients than in controls, these SNPs were not

associated with the risk of developing ALL in the 40 patients who presented gene fusions (Supplementary data, Table A). Moreover, individual fusions did not present an association with specific alleles. In addition, 22 out of 40 patients (55%) carry at least one of the risk homozygotes of the seven SNPs studied. Fourteen of 22 (63.6%) patients with a gene fusion presented the homozygotes of risk CC (rs10821936), AA (rs10994982), and GG (rs7089424), and 9 of 22 patients (40.9%) with *ETV6*-

Table 3 Association of the SNPs in *ARID5B* with ALL susceptibility in Mexican patients

SNPs	ALL patients			pre-B ALL patients		
	Risk allele frequency	OR (95% CI)	<i>p</i> ^a	Risk allele frequency	OR (95% CI)	<i>p</i> ^a
rs10821936	0.68			0.69		
T vs C		2.06 (1.64 to 2.57)	1.72e ^{-10*}		2.11 (1.68 to 2.65)	7.97e ^{-11*}
TT vs TC		1.55 (0.99 to 2.44)	0.0544		1.53 (0.96 to 2.44)	0.0667
TT vs CC		3.74 (2.34 to 5.96)	1.33e ^{-08*}		3.85 (2.39 to 6.20)	1.01e ^{-08*}
rs10994982	0.71			0.72		
G vs A		1.76 (1.40 to 2.22)	9.15e ^{-07*}		1.81 (1.43 to 2.28)	4.67e ^{-07*}
GG vs GA		1.20 (0.73 to 1.96)	0.4581		1.20 (0.73 to 1.98)	0.4674
GG vs AA		2.55 (1.56 to 4.13)	0.0001*		2.64 (1.60 to 4.34)	0.0009*
rs7089424	0.68			0.68		
T vs G		2.01 (1.61 to 2.52)	4.90e ^{-10*}		2.06 (1.64 to 2.59)	2.44e ^{-10*}
TT vs TG		1.59 (1.02 to 2.49)	0.0395*		1.57 (0.99 to 2.49)	0.0494*
TT vs GG		3.62 (2.28 to 5.76)	2.20e ^{-08*}		3.73 (2.33 to 5.97)	1.74e ^{-08*}
rs2393732	0.37			0.38		
G vs A		1.36 (1.08 to 1.71)	0.0075*		1.41 (1.12 to 1.78)	0.0027*
GG vs GA		1.08 (0.78 to 1.50)	0.6063		1.12 (0.81 to 1.56)	0.4704
GG vs AA		2.33 (1.39 to 3.91)	0.0011*		2.51 (1.49 to 4.23)	0.0004*
rs2393782	0.38			0.40		
G vs C		1.23 (0.98 to 1.54)	0.0648		1.29 (1.03 to 1.62)	0.0235*
GG vs GC		1.01 (0.73 to 1.40)	0.9289		1.07 (0.76 to 1.49)	0.6868
GG vs CC		1.68 (1.05 to 2.69)	0.0269*		1.84 (1.15 to 2.94)	0.0103*
rs2893881	0.40			0.41		
A vs G		1.32 (1.06 to 1.65)	0.0128*		1.36 (1.09 to 1.71)	0.0062*
AA vs AG		1.12 (0.81 to 1.57)	0.4698		1.13 (0.81 to 1.59)	0.4523
AA vs GG		1.85 (1.17 to 2.93)	0.0078*		1.97 (1.24 to 3.13)	0.0034*
rs4948488	0.55			0.55		
T vs C		1.32 (0.71 to 1.64)	0.0093*		1.36 (1.09 to 1.69)	0.0054*
TT vs TC		1.13 (0.77 to 1.65)	0.5151		1.13 (0.77 to 1.69)	0.5292
TT vs CC		1.69 (1.11 to 2.56)	0.0130*		1.76 (1.15 to 2.68)	0.0083*

^a *p* values by Fisher's exact test

*Statistically significant *p* value

RUNX1, *E2A-PBX1*, *KMT2A-MLL3*, *KMT2A-EPS15*, and *KMT2A-AFF1* were positive to the homozygotes of risk CC (rs10821936), AA (rs10994982), GG (rs7089424), and CC (rs4948488). Interestingly, one patient with *ETV6-RUNX1* was positive for all the homozygotes of risk analyzed.

In contrast, all SNPs conferred risk for developing pre-B ALL in the 39 patients with hyperdiploidy (Supplementary data, Tables A and B). In this study, we found a positive association between the SNPs rs2393732, rs2393782, and rs4948488 with childhood pre-B hyperdiploid ALL.

We also analyzed our population based on the distribution of patients according to the age at diagnosis, and 3 age peaks of incidence were found (Supplementary data, Fig. B). The first and main peak occurs between 3 and 7 years of age and includes 127 (44.7%) patients. The second peak occurs

between 8 and 10 years of age and comprises 45 (15.8%) patients. A third peak occurs between 11 and 14 years of age and includes 63 (22.2%) patients (Supplementary data, Table A). All SNPs of *ARID5B* were associated with the risk of developing pre-B ALL in the first group, 4 out of seven SNPs (rs10821936, rs10994982, rs7089424, and rs4948488) were associated with pre-B ALL susceptibility in the second group, and the same SNPs except rs4948488 were associated with the susceptibility to develop the disease in the third group (Supplementary data, Table B).

All SNPs of *ARID5B* gene were subjected to haplotype analysis to determine their association with childhood ALL. The analysis revealed a strong linkage disequilibrium (LD) ($D' = 0.96$) between rs4948488 and rs2893881 (block 1), this block covered 3 kb and carried the risk alleles C and G.

SNPs rs10821936, rs10994982, and rs7089424 also were in LD ($D' = 0.96$) and formed block 2, which covered 42 kb and carried the risk alleles C, A, and G. Only the CAG haplotype showed a statistically significant association with ALL risk ($p < 0.00001$) after a 100,000 permutation test; this haplotype was present in 57.3% of our patients.

Discussion

The ancestry analysis in our patients and controls did not reveal statistical differences; therefore, the possibility of spurious associations by population stratification was diminished.

In this study, we observed that frequencies of the risk alleles of the seven SNPs of *ARID5B* gene are higher in Mexican controls and patients than those documented in other populations (Supplementary data, Figs. C and D respectively). For example, the frequency of the C risk allele at rs10821936 in ALL children is lower in Caucasian (0.44 to 0.48) [11, 39], African-American (0.32 to 0.33) [15, 40, 41], Chinese (0.45) [38], Indian (0.61) [5], and Hispanic-American (0.59 to 0.63) [39, 40], than in Mexicans (0.68); and it is slightly lower than that reported in Guatemalan (0.73) patients [2]. Interestingly, the frequency of the C allele in healthy Zapotec population from Mexico is very close to that found in our controls (0.52 vs 0.51 respectively) [39]. These differences are fundamental in the genetic predisposition, since the Amerindian component could influence the high frequency of the risk alleles in our Mexican mestizo population.

Recently, it has been described that the CGAACACAA haplotype formed by the SNPs rs6479778, rs6479779, rs7073837, rs10994982, rs10740055, rs7923074, rs10821936, rs7896246, and rs10821938 of *ARID5B* can contribute to the increased risk of ALL in Yemeni population [1]. It is possible that we have a similar behavior, because each SNP of *ARID5B* confers an individual effect on the risk for developing the disease, and the presence of the CAG (rs10821936, rs10994982, and rs7089424) haplotype is strongly associated with ALL susceptibility. Therefore, this could play an important role in increasing the risk of childhood ALL and also could contribute to the higher incidence of ALL in our population.

There is no direct evidence of the biological effect of the SNPs rs10821936, rs10994982, rs7089424, rs2393732, rs2393782, rs2893881, and rs4948488 on the function of *ARID5B*, which limits establishing the real impact of the presence of these SNPs with the development of pre-B ALL. Recent studies indicate that risk alleles at rs7090445 cause low expression of *ARID5B* inducing abnormal growth and development of lymphoid cells by histone demethylation, which produces inactivation of tumor suppressor genes as *p53* [12, 19, 33]. Similar to rs7090445, the SNPs rs10821936 and rs7089424 are located in intron 3

(GRCh38.p7); therefore, these SNPs could be reducing the expression of *ARID5B*. In order to know if the risk alleles of the SNPs evaluated in this study produce a similar effect as rs7090445 in *ARID5B*, an expression analysis must be performed in our patients.

The risk allele of the SNP rs2393782 was not significantly higher in our ALL and pre-B ALL studied population (p values of 0.2268 and 0.1040 respectively), although it was significantly associated in Hispanics from USA ($p = 0.0290$) [39]; we must emphasize that the sample size analyzed in both studies was not very different (330 Hispanic children and 298 Mexican children). This suggests that each population has a genetic background with specific genetic variations such as SNPs, which could be influencing the susceptibility or protection for the development of diverse diseases, including ALL [4].

For us, it is essential to understand the relationship between the SNPs of *ARID5B* and the susceptibility to develop childhood ALL, since there is limited information regarding Mexican children. Although Mexicans are Hispanic, the proportion of European, Native American, and African ancestry depends on the geographical region and is very different between them [9]. This ancestry differences could thus contribute to the increased risk of susceptibility and could also explain the high incidence of ALL in Mexicans. It is important to mention that all controls and patients included were Mexican mestizos with a high proportion of Amerindian ancestry (51 to 54%) in contrast to Colombians (19%), and Puerto Ricans (15%), and a low proportion of African ancestry (5%), compared with Colombians (10%) and Puerto Ricans (18%) [31, 34]. These differences are fundamental in the genetic predisposition, since some authors have proposed that Amerindian ancestry may represent a potential risk factor for developing ALL and could be in part the basis of the higher risk of relapse in Native Americans and Hispanics [2, 8, 37]. On the other hand, the C risk allele at rs10821936 presented a high prevalence in healthy indigenous population as Zapotecs (0.52), Mixa (0.64), Mixe (0.83), Kaqchikel (0.72), and Kiche (0.76), and its frequency has a positive association with Native American ancestry [39].

Similar to other authors, we did not find any association between SNPs of *ARID5B* and T-ALL susceptibility [21, 26, 35, 38]; however, the number of T-ALL patients studied was small (14 of 298 patients). We did not find an association between the SNPs and gene fusions including *ETV6-RUNX1* and *TCF3-PBX1* neither [39].

To our knowledge, this is the first report showing the positive association between SNPs rs2393732, rs2393782, and rs4948488 with the risk to childhood B-hyperdiploid ALL. Based on previous reports, we showed that the frequency of all risk alleles was higher in Mexican pre-B ALL patients with hyperdiploid with respect to other populations [21, 26, 28, 39, 41] (Supplementary data, Fig. A). In our population, the presence of G allele at rs2893881 conferred a greater risk of

developing pre-B-hyperdiploid ALL (OR, 2.29) than in Hispanic children (OR, 1.71) [16]. The SNPs rs10821936, rs10994982, and rs7089424 have been previously associated with high susceptibility to pre-B-hyperdiploid ALL subtype in pediatric White, Black, Hispanic, French-Canadian [8, 15, 21, 26, 28, 39, 41], and now in Mexican patients.

Considering the age peak of incidence, our first peak is similar to the 4–7-year peak documented by Rivera-Luna (personal communication) in 5861 patients with ALL from the Popular Medical Insurance; this is a program which provides oncological treatment to children with cancer in Mexico. The age range of the second peak is the same reported by Pérez-Saldivar [29]. Interestingly, this study suggests that rs2393732, rs2393782, rs2893881, and rs4948488 do not confer pre-B ALL susceptibility in older children and adolescent patients.

Our findings suggest that the genetic background of the Mexican population could be positively influencing the susceptibility to ALL development, specifically pre-B ALL, and inherited genetic variants such as SNPs of *ARID5B* could increase the risk for the disease. In this case, the Native American ancestry could be related to high frequencies of the risk alleles.

In Mexican children, the SNPs rs10821936, rs10994982, rs7089424, and rs2393732 of *ARID5B* gene are significantly more associated with an increased risk for developing childhood ALL, specifically pre-B ALL. The frequency of all risk alleles was higher than those reported in the Hispanic population from the USA. This could partially explain the high incidence of childhood ALL in Mexico.

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Compliance with ethical standards

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

Ethical approval This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Research and Ethics Committees from both participant Institutions in accordance with the ethical principles of the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent All volunteers, parents, or legal tutors were previously informed about the study, and before biological samples were collected, they provided a signed, written informed consent letter to participate.

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