

DOI: 10.58240/1829006X-2025.21.8-454



REVIEW ARTICLE

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF ENDOGLIN EXPRESSION IN AMELOBLASTOMA, ODONTOGENIC KERATOCYST, AND DENTIGEROUS CYST: AN INSTITUTIONAL STUDY WITH A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEWNausathkhan Ubayathulla¹, M.R. Muthusekar², Pratibha Ramani^{3*}, Abilasha Ramasubramanian⁴, Kavya Dharmaraj⁴

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Received: Aug 9, 2025; Accepted: Aug Sep 8, 2025; Published: Sep 20, 2025

ABSTRACT

Background: Odontogenic cysts and tumors are common areas of interest for Oral and maxillofacial surgeons and pathologists with their unique characteristics and prevalence. Angiogenesis has recently stimulated greater interest in lesion dynamics as vascularity provides nutrient supply responsible for proliferation activities.

Objectives: In order to comprehend its function in the biological behavior of these lesions, the study seeks to evaluate and compare the expression of the putative angiogenic marker CD105 in dentigerous cysts, odontogenic keratocysts, and ameloblastomas.

Methods: A total of N=36 histopathologically diagnosed cases of OKC, DC and Ameloblastoma were selected with control (Angiomatous Granuloma). Immunohistochemistry was performed using a CD105 marker.

Result: Angiogenesis was found to be increased in ameloblastoma followed by OKC and Dentigerous cyst and the results were statistically significant in comparison with that of the control.

Keywords: Angiogenesis, Ameloblastoma, CD105, Cyst, Endoglin

INTRODUCTION

Odontogenic cysts and tumors possess unique characteristics and prevalence of which, Dentigerous cyst and Odontogenic keratocyst (OKC) are common

with the prevalence of 13.4% and 14.9% respectively^{1,2}. The most common and invasive odontogenic tumor is Ameloblastoma with the annual global incidence determined to be 0.92 per million/person^{4,5}.

Though Dentigerous cyst is an innocuous cyst, it behaves like a niche for transformation into squamous cell carcinoma, mucoepidermoid carcinoma and ameloblastoma thus demanding the detection of influencing factors⁶. With variations in incidence, disease progression, and malignancy potential, these three lesions are more prevalent and more aggressive locally than other odontogenic lesions.

Because vascularity provides the nutrients required for proliferation, angiogenesis recently draws increased interest in the study of lesion dynamics⁷. In oral squamous cell carcinoma, angiogenesis (new blood vessel formation) is linked to tumor recurrence⁸. It has also been extensively researched in a number of tumors, such as colorectal, hepatic, and breast cancers, as well as in a number of oral disorders, including odontogenic lesions, oral lichen planus, and oral squamous cell carcinoma, where it occasionally has a prognostic significance. Using immunohistochemistry with antibodies such as CD31, CD34, Factor VIII, VEGF, and CD105, tumor angiogenesis has been evaluated to estimate the tumor progression and survival⁹⁻¹³. This demonstrates the importance of angiogenesis in tumor growth, survival, and prognosis. Finding an accurate and trustworthy prognostic marker for angiogenesis aids in the selection of high-risk patients which further allows for more efficient management strategies.

Numerous markers are available for vascularization, in which CD105 (Endoglin) has been utilized for its own potential to detect angiogenesis in a pathological lesion, reflecting the prognosis^{14, 15}. CD105 is a transforming growth factor β (TGF- β) transmembrane co-receptor required for angiogenesis¹⁶, and is highly expressed on the surface of actively proliferating microvascular endothelial cells, forming immature, highly permeable tumor neovessels¹⁷. CD105 is specific for tumor neovascularization and is not expressed on pre-existing/mature vasculature and on large vessels, unlike the other endothelial markers¹⁸. Thus, CD105 for angiogenesis could be a promising prognostic marker in odontogenic pathology.

The objectives of the current study were to assess and compare the mean vascular density (MVD) of Ameloblastomas, OKCs, and Dentigerous cysts in a South Indian population using the CD105 marker and to ascertain whether CD105 influences the biological activity of these lesions. To further investigate the function of CD105 in odontogenic diseases, a thorough literature analysis was carried out.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ethical approval:

The study was approved by the institutional review board of Saveetha Dental College and Research Institute, Chennai. This was a cross sectional comparative study where patients with surgical resection or biopsy of their primary tumor/cyst at the Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals from 2017 to 2023 were retrospectively reviewed.

Study population:

A total of N = 51 formalin fixed specimens were randomly retrieved, processed and embedded. Pre-diagnosed cases of Dentigerous cyst, Ameloblastoma and OKC were selected and the criteria used are, histopathologically confirmed cases of DC, AM and OKC, primary lesions, and no history of previous surgery or therapy.

Tissues of peripheral AM, malignant AM, specimens with inadequate tissue, specimens with no clinical details were excluded. As a result, the study included 12 cases of DC (Group 1), 12 cases of OKC (Group 2), 12 cases of AM (Group 3) and 5 cases of PG (control) by random sampling.

Immunohistochemistry analysis:

The cases were then stained with CD105 antibody using the methods of immunohistochemistry. Totally 5 cases of pyogenic granuloma were used as positive control. Formalin-fixed, paraffin-embedded blocks were sectioned into three-millimeter pieces, which were then placed on slides covered in gelatin. The pieces were then rinsed in distilled water after being dehydrated in 100% alcohol for five minutes and deparaffinized in xylene for ten minutes. Using a pH 9.0 Tris-EDTA buffer solution, heat-mediated antigen retrieval was carried out in a pressure cooker for five minutes. Under flowing water, the pressure cooker was depressurized to 37°C. For thirty minutes, endogenous peroxidase activity was inhibited. Primary antibodies against human p53 (Dako, Monoclonal mouse anti-human p53 protein, Denmark) and human cyclin D1 (Dako, Monoclonal mouse anti-human cyclin D1, Denmark) were incubated on the sections for one hour at room temperature. The Polyxcel HRP/DAB detection system (Pathnsitu, conjugated by goat anti-mouse/rabbit IgG) was used for the detection. Then Mayer's hematoxylin counterstaining was done followed by xylene mounting. Every run had both positive and negative controls. Brown cytoplasmic positivity is considered as positive. The presence and frequency of

micro vessels were then assessed by observing the slides under the light microscope.

Mean vascular density (MVD) is a measure of tumor angiogenesis. Various studies have shown that MVD correlates with tumor aggressiveness and poor prognosis^{19, 20}. Evaluation of endoglin staining under light microscopy was done using the hot spot method proposed by Weidner et al²¹. MVD was evaluated using an Olympus microscope according to the procedure suggested by Weidner et al. (1993). Sections were screened at a magnification of $\times 100$ ($\times 10$ ocular and $\times 10x$ objective) and 10 highly

vascularized regions (hotspots) were selected. Micro vessels were counted at $\times 400$ magnifications ($\times 10$ ocular and $\times 40x$ objectives) (field size 0.18 mm^2) in each of the 10 fields. The mean density of the micro vessels was recorded in Microsoft Excel. Slides were simultaneously evaluated by two operators using a double-headed microscope, and both had to agree on each of the individual micro vessels before being included in the count (Figure 1,2,3).

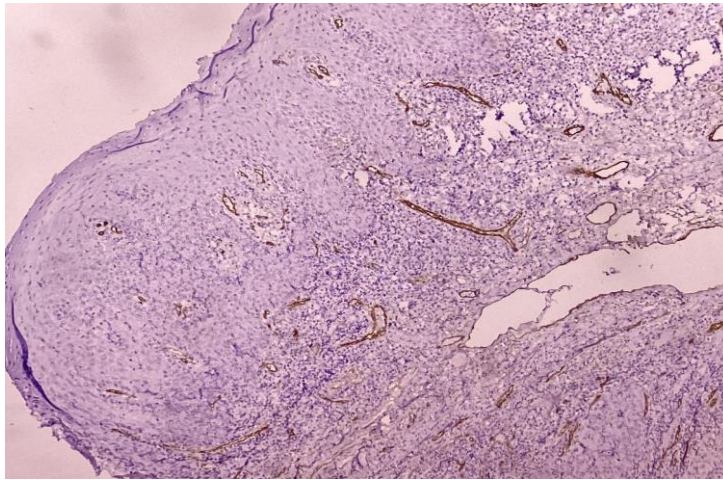


Figure 1. Microvessels in the connective tissue wall of dentigerous cyst

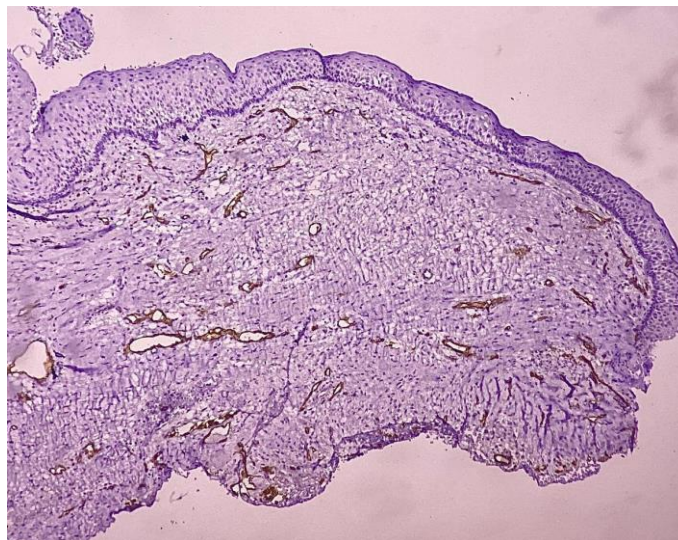


Figure 2. Microvessels beneath the epithelium in odontogenic keratocyst expressed by CD105 antibody

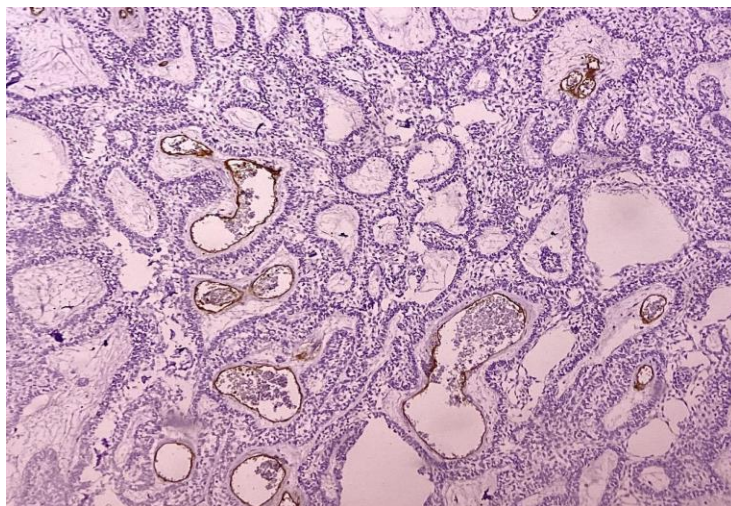


Figure 3. CD105 positive microvessels adjacent to the epithelial islands in ameloblastoma

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis was performed using ANOVA to compare the outcomes among the groups. Post Hoc multiple comparison test was employed to compare between individual groups. $p < 0.05$ was considered as statistically significant. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 14) software was used for computations.

RESULTS

In the present study, the mean MVD of AM was high (14.17 +- 2.552) when compared with that of OKC (13.00+-3.593) and DC (11.50 +- 5.419). However statistically significant results were obtained with all the three lesions in comparison with that of the control (Table 1) (Figure 4, 5).

Table 1 Statistical Comparison of the Mean Vascular Density (MVD) between the 4 groups (AM, OKC, DC and PG).

Multiple Comparisons					
Dependent Variable: Mean Vascular Density					
	(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
LSD	Dentigerous Cyst	Ameloblastoma	-2.667	4.538	0.56
		Odontogenic Keratocyst	-1.5	4.538	0.743
		Pyogenic Granuloma	-23.083*	4.538	0

	Ameloblastoma	Dentigerous Cyst	2.667	4.538	0.56
		Odontogenic Keratocyst	1.167	4.538	0.798
		Pyogenic Granuloma	-20.417*	4.538	0
	Odontogenic Keratocyst	Dentigerous Cyst	1.5	4.538	0.743
		Ameloblastoma	-1.167	4.538	0.798
		Pyogenic Granuloma	-21.583*	4.538	0
	Pyogenic Granuloma	Dentigerous Cyst	23.083*	4.538	0
		Ameloblastoma	20.417*	4.538	0
		Odontogenic Keratocyst	21.583*	4.538	0
Bonferroni	Dentigerous Cyst	Ameloblastoma	-2.667	4.538	1
		Odontogenic Keratocyst	-1.5	4.538	1
		Pyogenic Granuloma	-23.083*	4.538	0
	Ameloblastoma	Dentigerous Cyst	2.667	4.538	1
		Odontogenic Keratocyst	1.167	4.538	1
		Pyogenic Granuloma	-20.417*	4.538	0
	Odontogenic Keratocyst	Dentigerous Cyst	1.5	4.538	1
		Ameloblastoma	-1.167	4.538	1
		Pyogenic Granuloma	-21.583*	4.538	0
	Pyogenic Granuloma	Dentigerous Cyst	23.083*	4.538	0
		Ameloblastoma	20.417*	4.538	0
		Odontogenic Keratocyst	21.583*	4.538	0

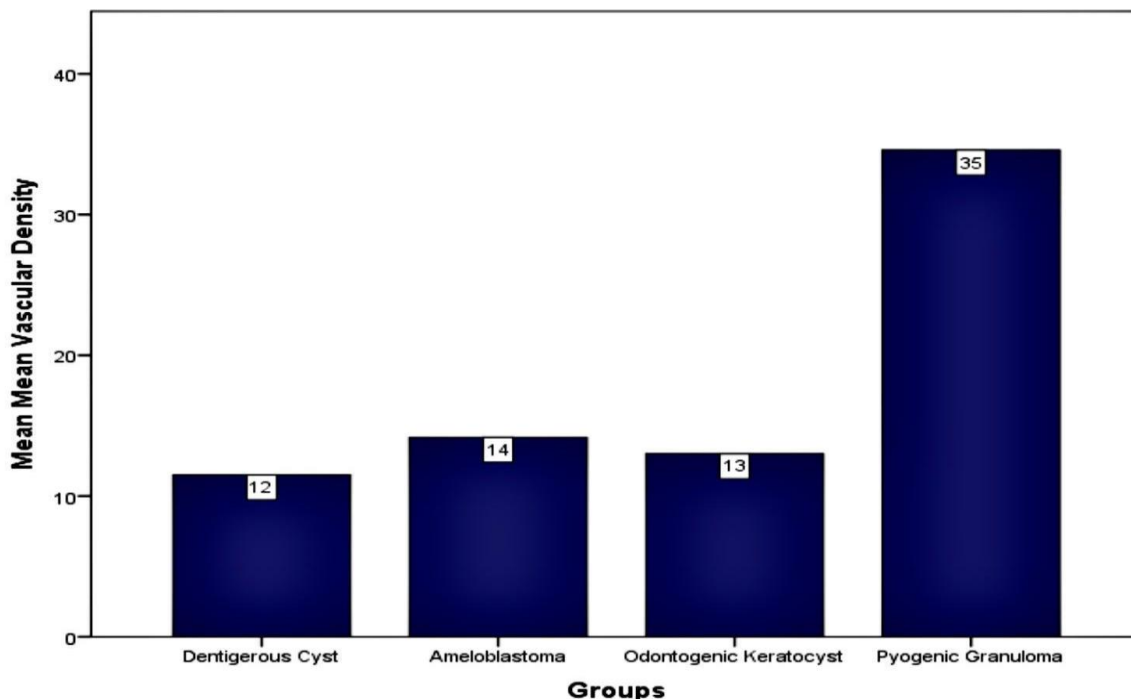


Figure 4. Mean Vascular Density (MVD) of AM, OKC and DC comparison with PG

Table 2. Summary of notable findings from literature analysis on CD105 in odontogenic pathologies

Author, Year	Location	Odontogenic pathology assessed (Sample size)	IHC marker used	Results of CD105	Findings
Hande et al, 2011 ⁹	Maharashtra	AM (20), UAM (15), Normal (10)	CD105	MVD: AM = 35 ± 12.93 UA = 31.13 ± 10.54 N = 15.80 ± 5.67	No significant difference in MVD between AM and UA reflecting the fact that though clinical behaviour, histopathological presentation and prognosis of AM and UA differ, the process of angiogenesis is not different
Santos et al, 2011 ²²	Brazil	OKC (20), DC(20), RC (20)	NF-B, MMP, CD105	MVC of RCs = 16.9, range 2.0-44.0, DCs = 12.1, range 0.0-48.0 OKCs (10.0, range 1.7-39.0	MMP-9 and NF-B high expression confirmed the more aggressive biologic behavior of OKCs, and the differences in the biologic behavior of the lesions studied were not associated with the angiogenic index.

Lima et al, 2011 ²³	Brazil	RC (24), PG (24)	CD105, CD34, Tryptase	CD105-positive vessels in 50% of RCs, 70.8% of PGs showed areas of close association with MCs.	Highest concentration of tryptase-positive MCs showed association with CD34-positive vessels rather than CD105-positive vessels, although there was no difference in angiogenesis and MC density between RC and PG, and it suggests that MCs have a role in vascular compartment maintenance.
Gadbail et al, 2011 ²⁴	Maharashtra	OKC (38), DC (27)	CD105, Ki67	MVD: OKC = 51.67 ± 14.81 , DC = 5.99 ± 6.59 , Normal = 15.25 ± 13.67	CD105 was strongly expressed in micro vessels of OKC compared to that of Dentigerous cyst and normal oral mucosa, suggesting that angiogenesis might be associated with locally aggressive biological behavior of OKC.
Jamshidi et al, 2014 ²⁵	Iran	OKC (10), AM (30)	CD105, CD34	MVD: AM = 14.47 ± 3.8 , OKC = 9.6 ± 2.9	The MVD was significantly higher in ameloblastoma than odontogenic keratocyst, which suggests that angiogenesis is one of the potential mechanisms involved in the more aggressive biologic behavior of ameloblastoma compared to OKC.
Kumar et al, 2014 ²⁶	Maharashtra	AM (20), DC (20), OKC (20)	CD105	MVD: AM = 7.98 ± 2.70 , OKC = 6.25 ± 2.88 , DC = 3.75 ± 1.42	AM and OKC demonstrated a higher mean value of MVD than DC, suggesting that angiogenesis possibly contributes to different biological behaviors of OKC, DCs and solid AMs
Chandran et al, 2016 ²⁷	Thailand	OKC (39)	p53, p63, p73, CD105	MVD: 26.7 ± 15.8	Three members of the p53 protein family were expressed in OKCs, and their expression relates to angiogenesis in these tumors
Galván et	Mexico	Odontogenic myxoma (18), dental follicles	CD105	MVD: OM =	The odontogenic myxoma smaller than 3 cm showed a

al, 2016 ²⁸		(18)		0.29 ± 0.32, DF = 1.27 ± 1.06	greater MVD than those larger than 3 cm in size, and it was lower in large OMs than dental follicles, suggesting that the vascular proliferation has a limited role in the growth mechanisms and the aggressive behavior of this neoplasm.
Lotfy et al, 2020 ²⁹	Egypt	RC (15), DC (15), OKC (15)	CD 105,	MVD: RC = 18.10 ± 8.38, DCs = 12.38 ± 5.42, OKC = 17.88 ± 7.11.	Increase in angiogenesis of OKC confirms that aggressive lesions require a larger number of blood vessels, and highlights the concept of unique clinical behavior of this cyst.
Ali et al, 2020 ³⁰	Pakistan	AM (16), OKC (16), CGCL (16), PG (16)	CD105	CGCL = 32.99 ± 0.77, OKC = 7.21 ± 0.75 AM = 8.07 ± 0.36 PG = 14.7 ± 0.96	CGCL was the most aggressive, with highest MVD among the investigated odontogenic lesions
Ibrahim et al, 2022 ³¹	Egypt	AM (15), Ameloblastic fibroma (15)	AgNORs, CD105	AM = 27.52 ± 7.85 Ameloblastic fibroma = 18.2 ± 3.57	Higher MVD reflects a higher proliferative activity and a more locally aggressive biologic behavior of ameloblastoma when compared to ameloblastic fibroma
Anjali et al, 2022 ³²	Mumbai	OKC (25), DC (25), PG (10)	CD105	OKC = 13.25 ± 2.94, DC = 12.87 ± 2.4, PG = 13.02 ± 1.07	There was no statistically significant difference in the mean MVD values of OKC, DC and PG.

AM: Ameloblastoma, UA: Unicystic ameloblastoma, CD105: Cluster differentiation 105, MVD: Mean vascular density, OKC: Odontogenic Keratocyst, DC: Dentigerous cyst, RC: Radicular cyst, MMP-9: Matrix metalloproteinase-9, NF-B: MVC: Micro Vessel Count, PG: Pyogenic granuloma, CD34: Cluster differentiation 34, MC: Mast cells, OM: Odontogenic myxoma, CGCL: Central giant cell lesions.

DISCUSSION

Newly formed blood vessels were precisely evidenced by the expression of CD105 (Endoglin), a key indicator of angiogenesis used in this study. The mean vascular density in ameloblastoma was found to be higher, averaging 14.17 ± 2.552 than in OKC and DC which had mean values of 13.00 ± 3.593 and 11.5 ± 5.419 respectively. According to the study's findings, ameloblastoma's high MVD is indicative of its greater neovascularization, which is linked to its more aggressive behavior, while cysts show less aggression.

According to a study by Sefi et al., there was a substantial statistical significance (p-value of less than 0.001) and a significant difference in the MVD between OKC and DC³³, and MVD in OKC was significantly lower than that in ameloblastoma. These results are consistent with the current study's findings, which show that AM has a greater MVD than both OKC and DC. The consistent results across the studies highlight the AM's aggressive nature, which is demonstrated by its increased vascularization. The main conclusions of a survey of the literature on CD105 in odontogenic diseases are compiled in Table 2. The elevated MVD seen in AM is probably caused by the overexpression of angiogenic factors like CD105. As oxygen and nutrients are required to sustain the rapid growth of the tumor the metabolic needs are supported by the improved blood vessel formation in AM²⁶. Furthermore, the increased expression of other factors, such as matrix metalloproteinases (MMP-2 and MMP-9), transforming growth factor-beta (TGF- β), fibronectin, tenascin, and stromal myofibroblasts (MF), which are known to promote neovascularization and metabolic activity in the connective tissue, may also contribute to this increase in MVD. By improving vascular supply of tumor, the aforementioned molecules support vital processes like signaling cascades, extracellular matrix remodeling, and cell adhesion. Hence, in comparison to OKC and DC, AM had a greater MVD²². Additionally, this increased vascularization has been found to be influenced by anastomosed micro vessels, which are more frequently seen in AM cases³⁰. The growth and metabolic needs of the tumor are supported by these interconnected networks of blood vessels, which enhance blood flow and nutrition supply. The results of the current study are in line with earlier research by Jamshidi et al., where angiogenesis was observed to be higher in ameloblastoma than in OKC and implied that angiogenesis is crucial for both tumor growth and

cellular metastasis. It could also be used to forecast patient survival, metastasis, and tumor progression³⁴⁻³⁶.

In contrast to AM, OKC and DC had lower MVD, which suggests less neovascularization and less aggressive behavior. Despite the fact that both DC and OKC are cystic lesions, the higher MVD in OKC than DC might be due to its higher MMP expression. Browne et al. were among the first to propose that the connective tissue wall of OKC plays a substantial role in the pathophysiology of the lesion^{29, 37}. MMPs are enzymes that promote angiogenesis and tissue remodeling by breaking down different extracellular matrix components. The inducement of new blood vessel formation and a rise in MVD are directly associated with the increased expression of MMPs in OKC³². Hence, the clinically aggressive behavior of OKC has been linked to increased MMP expression, which could be the reason for its greater invasiveness and chance of recurrence in comparison to DC.

Furthermore, compared to DC and normal oral mucosa (NOM), CD105-positive juvenile micro vessels in OKC have slightly aberrant shape, with convoluted and dilated lumens. A high Ki-67 labeling index may imply a quick fluid transfer to maintain the OKC epithelium, which is highly proliferative²⁴. According to a study by Kouhsoltani et al., radicular cysts had a greater MVD than OKC, which was linked to a high level of inflammatory infiltration in these lesions³⁸. Additionally, inflammatory cells might encourage angiogenic activity in these cysts, according to Graziani et al., Nonaka et al., and Tete et al.³⁹⁻⁴¹. However, in OKC, high blood vessel concentrations are observed in both locations with low inflammation as well as substantial inflammation. The higher tissue metabolism in OKC, which suggests a more aggressive biological behavior, may be the cause of increased angiogenesis in OKC relative to DC²⁹. Therefore, our data supports the classification of OKC as aggressive lesion, as evidenced by CD105 expression and angiogenesis, regardless of whether they are categorized as cysts or tumors.

Compared to other groups, PG has a higher mean MVD (CD105 - 34.58 ± 21.108 , VEGF - 19.83 ± 2.78); however, this does not always signify that the lesion is aggressive. The different pathogenic mechanisms that encourage angiogenesis can be the cause of this²⁶. In addition to angiogenesis, the underlying mechanisms that cause it also affect how aggressive the lesion is⁴². The drawbacks of the current investigation include a limited sample size and the fact that it is a retrospective analysis, which restricts how broadly the findings can be applied to this particular demographic⁴³. Multicenter randomized

controlled trials (RCTs) with standardized methodology should be carried out to evaluate CD105 in both benign and malignant odontogenic lesions in order to obtain a thorough understanding of the function of angiogenesis in the biological behavior of odontogenic lesions^{44, 45}.

Hence, more aggressive growth and a higher chance of recurrence are associated with enhanced neovascularization in odontogenic lesions⁴⁶. Higher vascular density in lesions indicate a worse prognosis and require more intensive therapy with close observation. Anti-angiogenic treatments might also be useful in treating certain cases of aggression. In general, the prognosis and therapeutic approach for these pathologies are greatly influenced by neovascularization. The findings of the study, which used the CD105 marker to compare the mean vascular density of ameloblastomas, OKCs, and dentigerous cysts, indicate that when evaluating the prognosis of lesions based on angiogenesis, factors like the underlying process, precise classification, lesion variants, and the presence of inflammatory reactions should be taken into account. Therefore, employing CD105 to assess the lesion aggressiveness through angiogenesis helps clinicians in grouping patients into high- and low-risk categories. This might ultimately influence the treatment planning and patient outcome.

CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, there was a statistically significant difference between the study groups and the control group when comparing the mean vascular density (MVD) of DC, OKCs, and AM using the CD105 marker. Ameloblastoma had a higher mean vascular density than DC and OKC. Despite being statistically insignificant, the differences between the study groups showed a good association with the biological behavior of odontogenic lesions. For additional research, more thorough investigations with bigger sample sizes and more precise criteria are required.

DECLARATIONS

Funding

This research received no external funding or financial support.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval

This study was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Institutional Medical Ethics Committee.

Acknowledgments

none

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