The role of interleukin-17 in intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy
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Objective
Intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy (ICP) is the most common pregnancy-specific liver disease. It is characterised by pruritus, abnormal liver function, and elevated serum bile acid levels. The main cause of ICP has not yet been identified. Our aim was to provide a new perspective to the pathogenesis of ICP by investigating the possible association of circulating IL-17, that is a pro inflammatory cytokine recently discovered to be involved with ICP.

Methods
In this case control, cross-sectional study maternal venous blood samples were obtained from thirty-three consecutive pregnant women with ICP (15 with mild and 18 with severe forms of the disease) and 25 healthy women with uncomplicated pregnancies (as the control group) and IL-17 levels were compared among the groups.

Results
Although serum IL-17 levels were significantly higher in the severe ICP group than in the control group (p=0.022), there were no significant differences between the mild and severe ICP groups or between the control and mild ICP groups.

Conclusion
Explaining the mechanisms of hepatocyte injury might contribute to the existing therapeutic strategies for treating cholestatic diseases. Changes in IL-17 levels may shed light on the pathogenesis of ICP.