AUTOIMMUNE BULLOUS DISEASES

DETECTION OF IGE AUTOANTIBODIES IN MUCOUS MEMBRANE PEMPHIGOID AND THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH CLINICAL FEATURES

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Background: Mucous membrane pemphigoid (MMP) is an autoimmune disease characterized by scarring lesions at mucosal sites. Although the pathogenic role of specific IgG and/or IgA has been already demonstrated and the detection of these immunoglobulins is a criterion in the diagnosis of MMP, little is known about IgE role in this disease.

Objectives: To assess the presence of circulating and tissue-bound IgE in patients with MMP and their possible correlations with clinical presentation and disease course.

Materials and Methods: We conducted a retrospective study on 29 patients affected by MMP, recruited from a single centre. Direct and indirect immunofluorescence studies were assessed to analyse the presence of specific IgE directed against the basal membrane zone. Clinical features evaluated were the MMP Disease Area Index (MMPDAI), the number of affected sites, the involvement of specific mucous or cutaneous sites and the time to achieve quiescence.

Results: By direct immunofluorescence linear deposits of C3, IgG and IgA were present in 86.2%, 62% and 37.9% of cases respectively, while the presence of IgE linear deposits were detected in 17 out of 29 patients (58.6%) including one case with isolated IgE positivity. Circulating IgE and IgA anti-BMZ were present in 7 (24.1%) and 5 (17.2%) patients, respectively. Both the presence of circulating IgA and of tissue-bound IgE deposits correlated with MMPDAI ($P<0.014$).

Conclusions: Our results demonstrated the presence of IgE autoantibodies in MMP, particularly in more severe cases. Thus, IgE detection may represent an additional useful diagnostic tool in this disease.