



AUTOIMMUNE BULLOUS DISEASES

## **SPECIFIC IGE TO STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS SUPERANTIGENS IN PATIENTS AFFECTED BY BULLOUS PEMPHIGOID**

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**Introduction:** Bullous pemphigoid (BP) is an autoimmune blistering disease due to autoantibodies against hemidesmosomal antigens BP180 and BP230. The presence of high level of total IgE is frequently reported. Recently IgE antibodies to BP180/BP230 have been detected in sera and biopsy samples from BP patients.

**Objective:** To investigate whether the patients produce IgE antibodies specific to antigens other than BP180, if they have a personal or familial history of atopy and what correlation with the clinical outcome has the atopic condition.

**Materials and Methods:** We evaluated the total IgE value and the presence of specific IgE to the commonest allergens in our geographic area, including staphylococcal superantigens, together with the personal and familiar history of atopy in 120 patients: forty patients (23 men and 17 women, mean age 78 years) presented active BP, forty patients (28 men, 12 women mean age 76. years) were a control group affected by atopy, and forty patients (19 men, 21 women mean age 75 years) constituted the healthy control group.

**Results:** The mean value of total IgE was 1123.43 KU/l for the atopic group; 50.47 KU/l for the non-atopic group, and 739.8 KU/l for the pemphigoid group, with a statistically significant difference among the groups. Although the levels of specific IgE presented no statistically significant difference among the atopic and pemphigoid group, patients affected by BP presented higher level of specific IgE to staphylococcal superantigens compared with the healthy controls. Personal or familiar history of atopy determined different clinical findings. Patients with atopic history had worse clinical manifestations.

**Conclusions:** Patients affected by BP has specific IgE other than anti-BP180 antibodies; they are not related to disease severity and activity and are present also in very early stage of the disease. Moreover, the vast majority of patients present a personal or familiar history of atopy.

