Department of Microbiology and Immunology Division of Infectious Genetics 感染遺伝学分野

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Immune cells express multiple Toll-like receptors (TLRs) that are simultaneously activated by various pathogen-derived products from microorganisms and viruses. Recent reports have demonstrated that imbalances in TLR responses can result in the development of autoimmune diseases. Nucleic acid(NA) -sensing TLRs detect not only bacterial and viral NAs, but also host-derived NAs. To prevent excessive immune responses to host-derived NA, there may exist regulatory mechanisms that control TLR expression, localization, and function. Based on this hypothesis, it is believed that TLRs are involved not only in autoimmune diseases, but also in the pathogenesis of a variety of other diseases. Our research endeavors to uncover the regulatory mechanisms that control TLR-mediated recognition of pathogenic ligands, as well as the identification of endogenous ligands. Our research goal is to clarify the pathogenic mechanisms of histiocytosis and autoimmune diseases that are thought to be mediated by TLRs.

1. Endosomal abnormalities in dendritic cells cause autoimmune liver diseases

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Autoimmune hepatitis (AIH) and primary biliary cholangitis (PBC) are autoimmune liver diseases with unknown etiologies. Although T cells are thought to drive these liver diseases, little is known about the underlying mechanism of T cell activation in these liver diseases. Since antigen presentation is regulated by endosome maturation which Rab7a controls, we investigated the changes in the immune response that occur upon blocking endosome maturation by Rab7a deficiency in dendritic cells (DCs). As a result, DC-specific Rab7a-deficient mice developed AIH and PBC. Failure to suppress Vps34-dependent endosome fusion due to Rab7a deficiency markedly enhanced cross-presentation by forming giant endosomes and altering MHC class I transport. MHC class I was accumulated in the giant endosomes. Hyperactivated CD8+ T cells caused fibrosis around portal veins and central veins, a hallmark of AIH. Female mice had a

worse condition of PBC. $\alpha\beta$ T cell ablation protected the mice against AIH, but not PBC, where cytotoxic $\gamma\delta$ T cells were localized around the bile duct. $\alpha\beta$ - and $\gamma\delta$ -T cell deficiency in the mice ameliorated both AIH and PBC. This study revealed that endosomal abnormalities in DCs strongly enhanced cross-presentation and $\gamma\delta$ T cell activation resulting in autoimmune liver diseases. CD8+ T cells and $\gamma\delta$ T cells are potential therapeutic targets for AIH and PBC.

2. Nucleosides drive histiocytosis in SLC29A3 disorders by activating TLR7

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Loss-of-function mutations in SLC29A3 cause lysosomal nucleoside storage and histiocytosis: phagocyte accumulation in multiple organs. However, little is known about the mechanism by which lysosomal nucleoside storage drives histiocytosis. Herein, histiocytosis in Slc29a3-/- mice was shown to depend on Toll-like receptor 7 (TLR7), which senses a combination of nucleosides and oligoribonucleotides (ORNs). TLR7 increased phagocyte numbers by driving the proliferation of Ly6C^{hi} immature monocytes and their maturation into Ly6C^{low} phagocytes in *Slc29a3^{-/-}* mice. Downstream of TLR7, FcRy and DAP10 were required for monocyte proliferation. Histiocytosis is accompanied by inflammation in SLC29A3 disorders. However, TLR7 in nucleoside-laden splenic macrophages failed to activate inflammatory responses. Enhanced production of pro-inflammatory cytokines was observed only after stimulation with ssRNAs, which would increase lysosomal ORNs. Patient-derived monocytes harboring the G208R SLC29A3 mutation showed enhanced survival and proliferation in a TLR8 antagonist-sensitive manner. These results demonstrated that non-inflammatory TLR7/8 responses to lysosomal nucleoside stress drive SL-C29A3 disorders.

3. Anti-TLR7 antibody protects against lupus nephritis in NZBWF1 mice by targeting B cells and patrolling monocytes

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Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is an autoimmune disease characterized by autoantibody production and multiple organ damage. We found that inhibition of Toll-like receptor 7 (TLR7) rescues NZBWF1 mice from lethal nephritis by reducing the activation of B cells and monocytes. Immunohistochemistry analysis of the kidneys revealed that Ly6C-negative/ FcγRIV-positive patrolling monocytes (PatMCs) infiltrated into glomeruli. To clarify the role for PatMCs in nephritis, we focused on the molecules expressing in PatMCs. We performed RNA-sequencing and antibody array screening by comparing PatMC and Ly6C-positive classical monocytes, with or without TLR7 inhibition. In results, expression of several lupus-related molecules, for example, IL-10, PD-L2, and PECAM-1 were induced by TLR7 signaling. We are analyzing the mechanisms of these molecules as further study.

Publications

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