

Dysfunction of the Immune System in the Elderly

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ABSTRACT

Physical and physiological frailty associated with human ageing has a significant impact on the immune system. In this setting, ageing is linked to innate and adaptive immune reductions known as immunosenescence. The term "immunosenescence" describes the reorganisation of innate and adaptive immune functions that occurs with ageing. Therefore, chronic low-level inflammation, greater infection rates, and chronic illnesses are typically found in aged people. A biomarker for assessing immunological senescence therapy may be discovered through research on immune system changes that occur with ageing. The interaction of innate and adaptive immunity leads to the immune system, although it is unknown how ageing affects this process. This article investigates how the immune system works as we age.

Keywords: aging, immunosenescence, adaptive immunity, innate immunity, inflammation.

INTRODUCTION

Physical and physiological weakness are characteristics of human ageing. The immune system and the predisposition for aberrant immunity change fundamentally with advancing age (Weyand et al. 2014). Adaptive and innate immunity both suffer reductions with age (Lutz and Quinn 2012, Golomb et al. 2015, Wong and Goldstein 2013). Although numerous variables contribute to the increased prevalence of infections, cancer, and autoimmune illnesses in the elderly, immunosenescence—the age-related remodelling of the immune

system—plays a significant role (Bueno et al. 2014; Mocchegiani et al. 2009; Sharma et al. 2014).

According to Baeza et al. (2011) and Dace and Apte (2008), immunosenescence is the remodelling of innate and adaptive immunological processes that occurs with ageing. Immunosenescence, which describes changes including the ageing process of immune responses, is made up of inappropriate elevations, reductions, and dysregulated immune responses that make bacterial and viral infections more serious and limit the effectiveness of immunisation (Montgomery and Shaw 2015). According to Campos et al. (2014), pro-inflammatory cytokines are produced at higher rates by effector memory and senescent T cells and macrophages in elderly people, perhaps as a result of continuous antigen exposure and compromised immune function. Additionally, in patients with advanced clinical status, there may be disease deterioration due to a reduced adaptive immune response brought on by the immune system's accelerated ageing (Moro-Garcia et al. 2014). Innate and adaptive immunity interact to form the immune system, but it's not known how ageing affects this process. This article investigates how the immune system works as we age.

IMMUNOSENESCENCE

Immune function declines in a number of domains are linked to ageing (Burns and Goodwin 1997). There is a paradoxical relationship between ageing and increasing autoimmune, inflammation, and immunodeficiency (Sardi et al. 2011). A novel idea called immunosenescence captures the immunological alterations brought on by ageing. (2014) (Boraschi and Italiani, Fulop et al., Poland et al.

The three following theories each attempt to explain one aspect of immunosenescence:

Autoimmunity Theory

Walford was the one who initially put forth the autoimmune theory of ageing (1969). This idea contends that autoimmunity—immune responses against one's own body proteins—is proof that the immune system is generally inefficient and dysfunctional (Diggs 2008). According to Pietilä et al. (2015), heterogeneous accumulation of senescent cells in tissues/organs and variable rates of senescent cell accumulation in immune system and target tissue/organ are two age-related mechanisms that contribute to autoimmune disorders. These two processes, either separately or together, are the basis of autoimmune disorders (Manestar-

Blazic and Volf 2009). The buildup of clonal T cells with activation from "neoantigens" throughout ageing is thought to be a secondary cause of autoantibody synthesis secondary to thymus involution with a loss in naive T cells (Prelog 2006). Indeed, an imbalance in the system regulating the immune response against self antigens is caused by an increase in CD5+ B cells in the older population (Bulati et al. 2011, Weksler 2000).

Immunodeficiency Theory

As people age, their bodies become less able to protect themselves against diseases, which is harmful (van Deursen 2014, Childs et al. 2014). According to clinical data, immune responses to recall antigens may still be preserved as people age, but their capacity to develop primary immunological responses to novel antigens greatly decreases. A high susceptibility to infectious illnesses may come from a compromised capacity to develop immunological responses to novel antigens (Fagnoni et al. 2000; Ahmed and Gray 1996). The presence of naive T cells is necessary for the immunological responses to novel antigens (Fagnoni et al. 2000). This condition renders the body practically devoid of virgin T cells, making it likely more susceptible to a variety of infectious and non-infectious diseases (Franceschi et al. 2000, Fagnoni et al. 2000). This condition occurs in conjunction with age-related thymic involution and the ensuing age-related decrease of thymic output of naive CD8+ T-cell reservoir.

Deregulation Theory

Numerous writers have proposed that these age-related disorders could be explained, at least in part, by a general dysregulation in the immune system response because ageing is associated with a variety of alterations in immunological parameters (McElhaney and Effros 2009; Franceschi et al. 2007). This is backed by evidence showing the balance of alternatively expressed isoforms for a subset of genes is disrupted with ageing, suggesting that mRNA processing may change as people age (Harries et al. 2011). The observed downregulation of toll-like receptors (TLRs) and nod-like receptors (NLRs) over ageing may be a factor in the body's inability to effectively recognise commensal bacteria or invading pathogens. As a result of this effect, abnormal secondary immune cells are activated, which may significantly increase morbidity and mortality in older people (rosenstiel et al. 2008, Montoya-ortiz 2013).

EFFECTS OF AGING ON THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Innate and adaptive immunity are two types of immune system response mechanisms (Dunkelberger and Song 2010, Iwasaki and Medzhitov 2015). First, there are unspecific cellular responses that are mediated by monocytes, natural killer (NK), and dendritic cells, which are related to anatomical and biochemical barriers (Vesely et al. 2011).

The second is related to the fact that B and T cells mediate the response to certain antigens (Denson 2013). Both are implicated in immunological senescence, a process that is primarily affected by the adaptive response (Franceschi et al. 2000).

INNATE IMMUNITY

The first line of protection for the host against viruses is the innate immune system.

Skin and Mucous: These are the body's first line of defence against pathogens. As we age, our skin loses cells more quickly, sweat production decreases, structural changes to epithelial cells occur, Langerhans and melanocyte cells are depleted, and subcutaneous tissue atrophy occurs (Kottner et al. 2013, Campisi and d'Adda di Fagagna 2007, Chilosi et al. 2014).

According to Kinn et al. (2015), general epidermal thinning, reduced barrier function, a pro-inflammatory state, and a deteriorating epidermal immune response are all symptoms of ageing in the skin. In addition to showing extreme structural abnormalities, the mucus membranes of hair cells, which are crucial for eliminating infections, are reduced in quantity and movement. The main component of secretions, immunoglobulin (Ig) A, levels rise until the age of 60, following which a marked decline in levels starts (Jafarzadeh et al. 2010, Smith et al. 1987, Ebersole and Steff en 1989). As a result, anatomical and physiological changes brought on by intrinsic ageing as well as the environment might significantly increase an elderly person's susceptibility to dermatological problems. For instance, immunologic senescence in the elderly also prepares the ground for potential Varicella zoster virus reactivation, in which early skin involvement spreads to the major sensory ganglia (Farage et al. 2009; Kim et al. 2015).

Dendritic Cells: According to Rainham et al. (2012), dendritic cells (DC) control NK, T, and B lymphocytes as well as the first detection of pathogens. Thus, DC serve as a link between

innate and adaptive immunity, and as people age, certain of them—such as skin's Langerhans cells and plasmocytes—may become less active (Agrawal and Gupta 2011).

As evidenced by lower m, decreased ATP turnover and coupling efficiency, decreased baseline oxidative phosphorylation, and increased proton leak and reactive oxygen species (ROS) generation, aged DC exhibited severe symptoms of mitochondrial malfunction (Chougnet et al. 2015). Therefore, the ability of DC to respond to antigen absorption, phagocytose apoptotic cells, and migrate appears to be compromised with age (Gupta 2014).

Neutrophils: IL-1 and IL-8 in particular are the primary cytokines and chemokines that attract neutrophils to the infection site (Sica et al. 1990, Kunkel et al. 1991). During phagocytosis, neutrophil extracellular traps (NETs), degranulation, and the production of ROS are all involved in the removal of the pathogen from our body (Zawrotniak and Rapala-Kozik 2013, Borregaard 2010). Additionally, they help the DC that will start the adaptive immune response to develop and migrate (Solana et al. 2012).

The action of pro-inflammatory cytokines like INF-1 and the stimulating factor granulocyte-monocyte colony of (G-CSF), which increase the spontaneous death of neutrophils, is lessened as we age because the activation of the JakSTAT pathway changes (Fortin et al. 2007, Kojima et al. 2013). Additionally, an innovative mechanism of immunosenescence in neutrophils is identified by the substantial fall in TCRL(n) repertoire variety with ageing (Fuchs et al. 2012).

Macrophages: In addition to processing and presenting antigens to T cells and taking part in adaptive immunity, macrophages also play a major role in phagocytosis, which involves the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines such TNF-, IL-1, IL-6, and IL-8 (Weiskopf et al. 2009, Shi and Pamer 2011). There are now two main subsets of activated macrophages: those with a proinflammatory (M1) or an antiinflammatory (M2) characteristic. IFN- and LPS promote classical activation, which results in cells with the M1 phenotype, while IL-4 and IL-13 induce alternative activation, which results in M2 cells. According to Fuentes et al. (2013), M1 and M2 cells express a variety of chemokines differently and have different metabolic programmes. Accordingly, ageing did not result in a bias towards the M1 or M2 phenotype as seen by the lower expression of both M1 and M2 markers in adherent splenocytes from

elderly mice (Mahbub et al. 2012). In older mice compared to younger animals, there may be a decrease in splenic F4/80+IL-4R+ cells, which could contribute to the lowered expression of M2 markers (Mahbub et al. 2012).

Microglial Cells:The central nervous system (CNS), which makes up around 12% of the brain, is home to microglia, which act as the brain's immune system. Because they are not produced from the neuroectoderm, microglia cells differ from neurons, oligodendrocytes, and astrocytes (Dheen et al. 2007). In the CNS's ability to maintain homeostasis throughout development, adulthood, and ageing, microglia cells are crucial. The CNS microenvironment tightly controls microglia function, and mounting data indicates that perturbations like neurodegeneration and ageing may have significant effects on microglial phenotype and function (Perry and Teeling 2013). A growing body of research suggests that activated microglia are a persistent source of several neurotoxic substances, such as TNF-, NO, IL-1, and ROS, which cause gradual neuronal damage, especially in Parkinson's disease (Lull and Block 2010, Graeber et al. 2011).

ADAPTIVE IMMUNITY

The development of a wide range of antigen receptors on T and B cells, followed by activation and clonal proliferation, are essential for the adaptive immune system. In addition to the specific antigen receptor being recognised, the activation of adaptive immunity also relies on crucial signals that are supplied by the innate immune system (Schenten and Medzhitov 2011). The reduction of T and B cell de novo production is a well-known age-related immune system modification (Stervbo et al. 2015).

B Lymphocytes:According to Tedder et al. (1997) and Gitlin and Nussenzweig (2015), the generation of antibodies in response to pathogen infection is the main role of B lymphocytes. With time, the B cell component of adaptive immunity changes significantly. According to studies by Bufa et al. (2013), Ademokun et al. (2010), and Visentini et al. (2011), older adults have poor B cell responses and faulty antibody synthesis, which affects their ability to respond to viruses and bacteria effectively.

As a result, donors with a mean age of 61 years had considerably lower antibody production following immunisation against hepatitis B virus infection than donors with a mean age of 33 years (Rosenberg et al. 2013).

T Lymphocytes: In the context of MHC, these can be classified as CD4 and CD8 recognising antigens (Lenardo et al. 1999; Arsenio et al. 2014; King et al. 2008). An increased vulnerability to illness and infection is linked to ageing. Additionally, it has been linked to decreased functioning and changed immune cell dispersion, particularly T cell distribution (Vasudev et al. 2014; Tesar et al. 2006).

A decrease in the production of naive T cells is linked to age-related thymus regression (MoroGarcia et al. 2012, Chou and Effros 2013, AlonsoArias et al. 2011). This is believed to be a factor in the decline in T cell variety found in elderly people, which has been related to an increased risk of infection, autoimmune illness, and cancer (Palmer 2013). Age reduces lymphocyte susceptibility to damage-induced cell death and raises proinflammatory state, which promotes activation-induced cell death due to oxidative stress and chronic antigenic load (Sikora 2015).

BIOMARKERS OF SENESENCE

Given the enhanced senescence's function in age-related disorders, senescence biomarkers should be usable in vivo (Bernardes de Jesus and Blasco 2012). A biological hallmark of rapid immunosenescence is the CD8+CD28CD27+ cell and antithymocyte globulin (ATG)-induced CD4(+) T cell lymphopenia (Ng et al. 2015, Crepin et al. 2015).

Senescence is thought to be initiated in a transitional stage where the tumour first appeared but did not fully develop into malignancy, which typically corresponds with the healthy operation of the two main barriers, p53 and p16 (Collado et al. 2005). In addition, older heart patients had more senescent cells (p16, p21, p53-positive, and with short telomeres), which, along with the previously described traits, led to the development of cardiac failure (Chimenti et al. 2003; Torella et al. 2004).

CONCLUSIONS

Immune senescence, a process that happens as we age, impacts the entire immune system. It corresponds to a number of immune system changes, which raise the prevalence of infections and disorders. Additionally, immune system changes associated with age may offer a potentially helpful biomarker for the assessment of immunological senescence therapies.

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