Salivary interleukin-1β and *Streptococcus mutans* level in oral cavity

SYLWIA MAŁGORZATA SŁOTWİŃSKA¹, MARZANNA ZALESKA²

¹Department of Conservative Dentistry, Medical University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
²Department of Surgical Research and Transplantology, Institute of Medical Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

Abstract

Many studies have revealed correlation between serum or salivary immunoglobulin concentration and the progress of caries. Pathogens residing in the oral cavity can stimulate immune cells to produce cytokines. Antibacterial cellular reaction of T-cells in course of caries is related to the expression of superficial antigens of *Streptococcus mutans*. Interleukin-1β (IL-1β) – one of the most important cytokines in the human immune system – plays pivotal role in the anti-bacterial defense system. The aim of the presented study was to assess the IL-1β level in saliva, as well as to evaluate the *Streptococcus mutans* prevalence in the oral cavity. The statistical analysis of results revealed a relevant correlation between salivary IL-1β concentration and *Streptococcus mutans* level in oral cavity, thus suggesting the IL-1 significance in caries etiopathogenesis or denoting the modulation of cytokine concentration by bacterial antigens.

Key words: dental caries, *Streptococcus mutans*, host response, interleukin-1β.
Results

The presence of Streptococci viridans (mutans streptococci) was stated in 71 out of 86 analyzed salivary samples (82.56% patients). In 15 patients no countable amount of Streptococcus mutans was observed. Low bacteria levels (class 1) were recorded in 27 patients (31.40%), abundant growth (class 2 and 3) was observed in 28 (32.56%) and 16 (18.60%) participants, respectively. In most of the patients (n = 76; 88.37%) the IL-1β salivary concentration belonged to the range of 9 to 11 pg/ml. The IL-1β salivary concentration in the other patients varied between 3 and 9 pg/ml (n = 9; 10.47%), while in only one person it exceeded 11 pg/ml (amounting to 11.50 pg/ml). The statistical analysis of study results revealed significant correlation between IL-1β salivary concentration and Streptococcus mutans level in oral cavity: Pearson coefficient \( r = 0.47252; P < 0.05 \) (Fig. 1).

Discussion

Human reaction to the invasion of cariogenic bacteria is mainly based on humoral immune response [4, 5]. Many studies have revealed correlation between serum or salivary immunoglobulin concentration and the advancement of caries [6, 7]. Still the defense factors against caries probably include cellular immune response as well. Antibacteri-
al cellular reaction of T-cells in course of caries is related to the expression of superficial antigens of Streptococcus mutans, mainly class I/II proteins and serotype f rhamnose-glucose polysaccharide, as well as Streptococcus mutans-derived glucosyltransferase D [8]. Cellular immune response (T-cells), similarly to humoral immune response (B-cells), increases when the cell membrane of lymphocytes gets bound to glucosyltransferase D [9]. The studies concerning these factors aimed at developing dental caries vaccine. Yet these attempts remained unsuccessful, mainly because of numerous side effects. Eventually the adverse effects surpassed expected benefits. The trials on this area remain still in the experimental phase. In HIV-positive children a significant correlation has been observed between increased DMFT/dmft values and decreased CD4/CD8 proportion (below 0.5) [1, 3]. Children of lower caries frequency present significantly higher levels of cellular immune response indicators as compared to the children exhibiting high caries frequency [10]. The correlation between caries advancement and major histocompatibility complex (MHC) antigens has also been subject of studies [11]. The multidirectional character of discussion concerning the role of immune system in dental caries etiopathogenesis indicates necessity for further studies on this field [12, 13]. An especially important element of antibacterial defense are cytokines [14-16]. The presented study is the first to discuss the possible correlation between cariogenic bacteria prevalence in oral cavity and salivary IL-1β concentration. It cannot be excluded that the oral cavity colonization by cariogenic bacteria is secondary to the genetically determined specific cytokines concentration. On the other hand, many antigens present in the oral cavity can stimulate cytokine production. In the presented study in most of the patients (n = 76; 88.37%) the IL-1β salivary concentration varied between 9 and 11 pg/ml, that could be recognized as a physiological range of this cytokine in the studied population. The statistical analysis of results revealed a relevant correlation between salivary IL-1β concentration and Streptococcus mutans level in oral cavity, thus suggesting the IL-1 significance in caries etiopathogenesis or denoting the modulation of cytokine concentration by bacterial antigens. It’s hard to formulate an unambiguous conclusion. The susceptibility or immunity against caries is definitely determined by immune forces of human body. The results presented above are encouraging and raise hope for possible new perspectives in dental caries prophylaxis and treatment.

References