

J. Müller 1991

Immunobiology

Zeitschrift für Immunitätsforschung

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Gustav Fischer Verlag · Stuttgart · New York · 1990

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J.10 Detection of autoantibodies against exocrine pancreas by double immunodiffusion testing

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Autoantibodies against a component of pancreatic juice (PAb) occur in 39% of patients with Crohn's disease (CD), as determined by indirect immunofluorescence (IIF; 1). In the

present study double immunodiffusion (DID) testing was used as an alternative method for the detection of PAb, and results were compared to those of IIF. Serum samples from 70 patients with CD were tested, 35 of which were PAb-positive in IIF, the other 35 were PAb-negative. Furthermore, 35 sera from patients with different diagnoses were used which were PAb-negative in IIF. DID was performed with 1 % agarose gels in 0.1 M Tris buffer, pH 8.0, containing 2.5 % polyethyleneglycol 6000. Monoclonal antibody HL-1 to PAg was used as a positive control. PAg was enriched from homogenized human pancreas by size exclusion chromatography and ammonium sulphate precipitation. Gels were incubated for 7 days at 4 °C, dried and stained with Serva blue R. Of 35 sera positive in IIF, 30 showed clear precipitation lines. In 2 other cases precipitation was only weak. Three IIF-positive samples did not react in DID. All sera which were negative in IIF were negative in DID. Reactions of identity were seen with most positive sera, but 5 precipitation lines crossed over, indicating that autoantibodies to exocrine pancreas may react with different epitopes or even different components of the crude antigen preparation used. The epitopes recognized by HL-1 seemed to be different from those reacting with PAb of serum samples. Despite long incubation times, DID is a convenient, easy to handle complementary method for the detection of autoantibodies against exocrine pancreas which enables the diagnosis of many cases of CD in laboratories where IIF testing is not established.

1. STÖCKER, W. et al. 1987. *Scand. J. Gastroenterol.* 22 Suppl. 139: 41–52.