The effect of intravenous immunoglobulin on the in vitro function of human neutrophils

John W.M. Lawton¹, J. Paul Robinson² and Gerd O. Till²

¹Department of Pathology, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, and ²Department of Pathology, University of Michigan, MI, U.S.A.

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Abstract: Three commercially available preparations of human immunoglobulin for intravenous use (IVIgG), namely Gamimune N, Sandoglobulin and Intraglobin F, were tested for their ability to modulate human neutrophil function in vitro. IVIgG consistently stimulated the neutrophil respiratory burst at concentrations of 0.5 to 1 mg/ml, concentrations readily achieved in vivo by moderate-dose therapy. Superoxide (O₂⁻) release was increased by 3.5-4.5 nmol per 5 × 10⁶ cells at these concentrations of IVIgG, and H₂O₂ production increased in a dose-dependent fashion up to 8 mg/ml IVIgG. Luminescence-dependent chemiluminescence (CL) was also directly stimulated by IVIgG. In addition, the effects of both soluble and particulate stimulators (N-formylmethionyl-leucyl-phenylalanine, phorbol myristate acetate and opsonized zymosan) on the neutrophil respiratory burst were enhanced by IVIgG. In a filter assay of neutrophil migration, using a modified Boyden chamber, no consistent effect on neutrophil locomotion or chemotaxis could be demonstrated. The effect of IVIgG on neutrophil metabolism may contribute to its beneficial therapeutic effect in severe, life-threatening infections.

Key words: Neutrophil; Intravenous immunoglobulin; Superoxide; Hydrogen peroxide; Chemiluminescence; Chemotaxis

Introduction

The use of intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIgG) is established in the treatment of idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP); it may be utilized as first-line therapy in children and as second-line therapy in adults who are refractory to steroids (Imbach et al., 1981; Newland, 1987). It is also effective in the treatment of alloimmune neonatal neutropenia (Barlund et al., 1982) and post-transfusion purpura (Mueller-Eckhardt et al., 1983). Regular infusion of IVIgG in primary hypogammaglobulinemia and related disorders may, in fact, be superior to conventional replacement regimens using intramuscular IgG (McClelland and Yap, 1987). It is of value in the treatment of infants with AIDS (Calvello and Rubinstein, 1986); however, its place in the treatment of severe infections in the immuno-compromised host has not yet been clearly defined (Yap, 1987).

The mechanism by which IVIgG decreases cell destruction in the immune cytopenias has been a subject of speculation (Imbach, 1983; Salama et al., 1983). Jungi et al. (1986) demonstrated that IVIgG preparations could interact with Fc receptors of hu-
man monocytes and macrophages to inhibit the phagocytosis of IgG-sensitized erythrocytes. High-dose IV IgG may also modulate the immune response by reducing the lymphocyte CD4:CD8 ratio and by reducing B-cell immunoglobulin synthesis (Tsubakio et al., 1983; Dannebrog et al., 1986). Since the neutrophil is central to the acute inflammatory response and in defence against most bacterial pathogens, it is important to know whether neutrophil functions are in any way modulated by IV IgG in the concentrations achieved by high-dose therapy. In the present study we set out to examine the effect of three commercially available IV IgG preparations on neutrophil function in vitro; i.e., superoxide ion (O₂⁻) release, H₂O₂ production, chemiluminescence (CL) and chemotaxis.

Materials and Methods

Intravenous immunoglobulin

Three IV IgG preparations were used in this study: Intraglobin F (Biotest Pharma GmbH, Dreieich, F.R.G., lot 412087), Sandoglobulin (Sandoz Pharmaceuticals Corp., East Haven, NJ, lot 7.369.157.0) and Gamimune N (Cutter Biological, Berkeley, CA, lot 40C13A). Sandoglobulin is prepared by the method developed by the Swiss Red Cross; Cohn effluent III IgG from pooled human plasma is treated at low pH (4–4.5) in the presence of a very low concentration of porcine pepsin. Gamimune is made by essentially the same method except that pepsin is omitted. In contrast, Intraglobin F is chemically modified; Cohn effluent III IgG is treated with β-propiolactone. These preparations all contain >98% IgG. Gamimune N contains negligible amounts of aggregates, dimers and fragments. Sandoglobulin contains <1% aggregates, 9–10% dimers and no detectable fragments. Intraglobin F contains no detectable aggregates, 3–4% dimers and 9–10% fragments (Lundblad et al., 1987).

Intraglobin F and Gamimune N are supplied as solutions of 50 mg protein/ml. For convenience these were diluted to 40 mg/ml with Hank’s balanced salt solution (HBSS), pH 7.4, so that when further diluted 1/10 under experimental conditions a final concentration of 4 mg/ml was obtained. Sandoglobulin was supplied freeze-dried, and was reconstituted in HBSS at a concentration of 40 mg/ml. Doubling dilutions were made in HBSS for dose-response experiments. Concentrations of IV IgG used in vitro ranged from 0.25 mg/ml to 8 mg/ml. High-dose IV IgG therapy is known to achieve serum concentrations of the order of 8 mg/ml (Pirofsky, 1987).

Each IV IgG contains carrier sugar as a stabilizer and it has been shown previously that both maltose and glucose inhibit the stimulatory effect of IV IgG on neutrophils, measured by O₂⁻ release (Koch et al., 1984). Therefore, in all experiments the equivalent concentration of the sugar was added to control tubes which did not contain IV IgG. Intraglobin F, 40 mg/ml, contained glucose 18 mg/ml in excess of glucose in HBSS. Sandoglobulin, 40 mg/ml, contained sucrose 67 mg/ml. Gamimune N, 40 mg/ml, contained maltose 80 mg/ml. The control sugar concentrations are referred to below as ‘carrier-sugar’.

pH effect of IV IgG

When added to HBSS Intraglobin F at 8 mg and 4 mg/ml reduced the pH by 0.1 and 0.05 respectively. Sandoglobulin reduced the pH by 0.02 and 0.01. In contrast, Gamimune N reduced the pH by 0.8 at 8 mg/ml and by 0.3 at 4 mg/ml. Because of this effect, the highest final concentration of Gamimune N used experimentally was 4 mg/ml. A maximum drop in pH from 7.4 to 7.1 was considered acceptable in the assay systems of PMN function.

Cell stimulants

Particulate and soluble stimulants of the neutrophil respiratory burst were employed to determine whether the stimulated response was modified by the presence of IV IgG. Opsonized zymosan (OZ) was used as the particulate stimulant. Zymosan (Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO) was boiled in normal saline for 1 h, washed once in HBSS and resuspended in HBSS at 50 mg/ml as a stock suspension which was stored at 4°C. Zymosan stock was opsonized by incubation with an equal volume of fresh normal human serum at 37°C for 30 min.
After washing twice in HBSS it was resuspended in HBSS at 10 mg/ml and stored at 4°C. OZ was used within one week of preparation. Phorbol myristate acetate (PMA, LC Services Corp., Woburn, MA) and N-formyl-L-methionyl-L-leucyl-L-phenylalanine (FMLP, Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO) were the soluble stimulants employed.

**Chemooattractant**
Zymosan-activated serum (ZAS) was the standard chemoattractant. Fresh human serum was incubated with washed Zymosan (5 mg Zymosan to 1 ml of serum) at 37°C for 30 min. The Zymosan was spun down and the serum pipetted off ZAS was aliquoted and stored at −70°C. A 1/7 dilution of ZAS was used in all experiments.

**Use of cell stimulants in respiratory burst assays**
OZ was added to the cells to a final concentration of 1 mg OZ per 5 × 10^6 cells. PMA was used at a final concentration of 10 ng/ml and FMLP at 10^-6 M. In each case stock solution was diluted in HBSS to an appropriate dilution and 0.1 ml of this dilution was added to 0.9 ml of the cell reaction mixture. The modifying effect of IVIgG on the stimulation of the respiratory burst was also examined by adding 0.1 ml of the appropriate dilution of IVIgG immediately before the stimulant.

**Separation of neutrophils from blood**
Human blood was taken from healthy volunteers and anticoagulated with preservative-free heparin (Elkins-Sinn Inc., Cherry Hill, NJ) at 10 U/ml of blood. Neutrophils were separated by buoyant density centrifugation over Ficoll/Hypaque according to the method of Ferrante and Trong (1980). Seven ml of blood were layered over 4 ml of Neutrophil Isolation Medium (Los Alamos Diagnostics, Los Alamos, NM) in a 15 ml tube and centrifuged at 400 × g for 30 min. After discarding the plasma and mononuclear cell/platlet layers, the neutrophil layer was carefully separated using a Pasteur pipette and immediately diluted in HBSS. The neutrophils together with the contaminating erythrocytes were spun down at 500 × g for 5 min, and the erythrocytes were lysed by 20 s exposure to distilled H₂O₂, two cycles. Leukocytes were then washed once in HBSS, resuspended in HBSS and kept on ice until tested for respiratory burst activity or chemotaxis. The final cell preparation contained 88–99% neutrophils (mean, 95.5%) and viability was greater than 99% by trypan blue exclusion.

**Superoxide release assay**
Release of superoxide ion (O₂⁻) was measured by the superoxide dismutase (SOD) method to reduce the cytochrome c as described by McCord and Fridovich (1969). The test was performed in 5 ml polypropylene tubes (Sarstedt, Numbrecht, W. Germany). Neutrophils were suspended in HBSS to a concentration of 1 × 10⁶ cells/ml; 0.5 ml of cell suspension was added to each tube together with 1 mg/ml of ferricytochrome c (Sigma Type III, Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO). Control tubes contained 0.023 mg/ml of SOD (Diagnostic Data, Mountainview, CA). Volumes were adjusted to 1 ml with HBSS. Tubes were incubated in a shaking water bath for 20 min at 37°C and the reaction was stopped in the tubes without SOD by adding 0.023 mg of SOD in 100 µl. The volumes in all tubes were then made up to 1.8 ml with HBSS and the cells were spun down at 1500 × g for 5 min at 4°C. Finally, the reduction of cytochrome c was measured by reading the absorbance of the supernatant at 550 nm in a spectrophotometer, taking the SOD-containing supernatant as the reference. The difference between the −SOD and +SOD tubes was calculated. Using an extinction coefficient of 18.5 cm⁻¹ mM⁻¹ for cytochrome c (reduced-oxidized) at 550 nm, the difference in absorbance was multiplied by 97 to obtain nm O₂⁻/ml (Morgaliash and Frohwirt, 1959). Addition of IVIgG and stimulants was carried out as described above.

**Intracellular H₂O₂ production**
The assay used was that originally described by Keston and Brandt (1965) and adapted for flow cytometry by Bass et al. (1983). It depends on the use of the nonfluorescent hydrophobic compound 2',7'-dichlorofluorescin diacetate (DCFH-DA) which penetrates the cell membrane and is trapped intracellularly by hydrolytic deacetylation to 2',7'-di-
chlorofluorescein (DCFH). This compound is readily oxidized by H$_2$O$_2$, in the presence of peroxidase, to the fluorescent compound 2',7'-dichlorofluorescein (DCF). The conversion to DCF can be measured by flow cytometry, thus giving a quantitative assessment of H$_2$O$_2$ production within the cells. Freshly isolated neutrophils were suspended in PBS containing 0.1% gelatin, pH 7.4, at 5.5 × 10$^5$ cells/ml; DCFH-DA (Molecular Probes, Eugene, OR) was added to give a concentration of 20 μM and the cells were incubated at 37°C for 15 min. To each 5 ml polystyrene tube was added 0.45 ml of the DCFH-DA labelled cell suspension and after addition of 0.05 ml of IV IgG and/or cell stimulant the tubes were incubated at 37°C for 45 min in a water bath. Three thousand cells were examined in a flow cytometer (EPICS-541, EPICS Division, Coulter Electronics, Hialeah, FL) equipped with an argon laser set at an excitation wavelength of 488 nm. Green fluorescent emission (510–550 nm) was recorded. Fluorescing neutrophils were separated from other contaminating cell types by electronic gating. Cell fluorescence was expressed as the mean channel number after correction for the gain setting of the photomultiplier tube. Dose responses to IV IgG preparations were done with single samples. In experiments to examine the modulating influence of IV IgG on the effect of cell stimulants, samples were run in triplicate.

Chemiluminescence assay

The Luminol-amplified chemiluminescent response (CL) of neutrophils was assayed essentially as described by Robinson and Penny (1982). Freshly isolated neutrophils were suspended in HBSS at 2 × 10$^5$ cells/ml. 0.5 ml aliquots of the cell suspension were added to glass scintillation vials, followed by 0.05 ml of a 10$^{-3}$ M stock solution of 5-amino-2,3-dihydro-1,4-phthalazinedione (Luminol, Eastman Kodak, Rochester, NY) and HBBS so that the final reaction volume was 1 ml. IV IgG and/or stimulants were added and the vials were immediately placed in a liquid scintillation counter (Beckman LS 5801, Beckman Instruments, Fullerton, CA) set for single-photon counting. Chemiluminescence was measured at ambient temperature (23°C). Samples were recycled for up to 1 h and CL was recorded as peak counts per minute (cpm). All CL experiments were performed using single samples because of the need to recycle vials at short time intervals to measure the peak CL response.

Chemotaxis assay

This was performed by measuring the distance of cell migration through a 5 μm-pore-size nitrocellulose filter in a modified Boyd chamber. Chemoattractant (ZAS) or HBSS was pipetted into the lower chambers. The filters (Schleicher & Schuell, Keene, NH) were saturated in HBSS containing 0.1% BSA and clamped between the lower and upper chambers. Neutrophils suspended in HBSS with 0.1% BSA (1.5 × 10$^6$ cells/ml) were dispensed into the upper chambers and cell migration was allowed to proceed at 37°C for 50 min, after which the filters were stained with haematoxylin. The distance of cell migration was measured by the leading-front method of Zigmund and Hirsch (1972) using a standard microscope micrometer. A reading was made in five different fields of each filter and the mean distance migrated was calculated in micrometers. All assays were run in duplicate. The effect of IV IgG on chemokinesis or ZAS-induced chemotaxis was examined by adding IV IgG or carrier-sugar to the cell suspension immediately before dispensing cells into the chambers.

Statistical analysis

The significance of differences between test groups and controls was calculated using the one-tailed t test of Student.

Results

Effect of IV IgG on O$_2^-$ release and H$_2$O$_2$ generation

The effect of the three IV IgG preparations on O$_2^-$ release by human neutrophils in vitro was tested over a range of concentrations from 0.13 mg/ml to 8 mg/ml. The results are summarized in Table I. Stimulation at levels of statistical significance was seen in the concentration range 1–2 mg/ml. Sandoglobul-
lin had the greatest stimulatory effect, and the maximum increment of 4.7 nm was seen at a dose of 1 mg/ml. Intraglobin F was inhibitory at the highest concentration used (8 mg/ml).

To exclude the possibility that this stimulation of $O_2^-$ release was simply due to protein, human serum albumin (HSA) was added to neutrophils at concentrations of 2 and 4 mg/ml and $O_2^-$ release was compared with control cells to which no HSA was added. HSA inhibited $O_2^-$ release at these concentrations.

In contrast to the effect on $O_2^-$ release, Intraglobin F and Sandoglobulin resulted in increased $H_2O_2$ production by neutrophils in a dose-dependent fashion up to the highest concentration (8 mg/ml). Peak stimulation by Gaminune N was seen at 1 mg/ml (Fig. 1.)

Further experiments were performed to determine whether IVlgG had any enhancing or additive effect on stimulated $O_2^-$ release and $H_2O_2$ production when OZ, PMA and FMLP were used as stimulants. The stimulants were added to the cells immediately after the IVlgG (or control sugar solution). The results of these experiments are summarized in Table II. Sandoglobulin enhanced $O_2^-$ release in the presence of all three stimulants, whereas Gaminune N enhanced only FMLP stimulation and Intraglobin significantly decreased PMA stimulation.

All three IVlgG preparations enhanced the stimulatory effects on $H_2O_2$ production, with the single exception that Gaminune N had no additional effect in the presence of PMA.

**Effect of IVlgG on neutrophil chemiluminescence**

Both Intraglobin F and Gaminune N stimulated Luminol-amplified chemiluminescence at concentrations in the region of 0.5–1 mg/ml. Stimulation indices (SI = peak stimulated cpm : peak control cpm) were in the range 1.5 to 2.3. Sandoglobulin, on the other hand, stimulated only at the highest dose (8 mg/ml), SI 2.7.

Assays were carried out to determine the effect of the presence of IVlgG on CL stimulated by OZ particles. IVlgG (or control sugar solution) was added to the cells immediately before the OZ. Intraglobin had no additive effect and was inhibitory at 4 and 8 mg/ml. Sandoglobulin and Gaminune N both showed a dose-dependent enhancing effect, maximal at 1 mg/ml. The results using Gaminune N are

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**TABLE I**

Effect of IVlgG on $O_2^-$ release from human neutrophils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IVlgG (mg/ml)</th>
<th>$\Delta O_2^-$ release (nmol)</th>
<th>Intraglobin F</th>
<th>Sandoglobulin</th>
<th>Gaminune N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>–2.16</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\Delta O_2^-$ release is the increase in $O_2^-$ release in nanomoles per 5 $\times$ 10$^4$ cells above controls containing carrier sugar in place of IVlgG.

NT: not tested.

p < 0.05.
TABLE II
Effect of IV IgG on stimulated O$_2^-$ release and H$_2$O$_2$ production by human neutrophils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV IgG</th>
<th>Stimulant</th>
<th>$\Delta$O$_2^-$ (amol)$^a$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$\Delta$Fluorescence$^a$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intraglobin F, 4 mg/ml</td>
<td>OZ</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
<td>NS$^c$</td>
<td>1277</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PMA</td>
<td>-8.58</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FMLP</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>NS$^c$</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandoglobulin, 4 mg/ml</td>
<td>OZ</td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PMA</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FMLP</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamimune N, 1 mg/ml</td>
<td>OZ</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>NS$^c$</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PMA</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>NS$^c$</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>NS$^c$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FMLP</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>0.0003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ $\Delta$O$_2^-$ is the increase in O$_2^-$ release in nanomoles per 5 x 10$^6$ cells; $\Delta$Fluorescence is the net increase in green fluorescence expressed as the increase in mean channel number above controls containing appropriate carrier-sugar in place of IV IgG.

$^b$ OZ, 1 mg/ml; PMA, 10 ng/ml; FMLP, 10^{-6} M.

$^c$ NS = not significant, $p > 0.05$.

shown in Table III, and the effect of Sandoglobulin is shown in Fig. 2.

Effect of IV IgG on neutrophil locomotion and chemotaxis

In this part of the study only three concentrations of IV IgG were utilized: 0.25, 1 and 4 mg/ml. When the lower chamber contained only HBSS, migration of cells through the filter was significantly increased only by Intraglobin 0.25 mg/ml and Gamimune N 1 mg/ml. ZAS-induced directed migration of neutro-

TABLE III
Enhancing effect of Gamimune N on neutrophil chemiluminescence response to OZ 0.2 mg/ml

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gamimune N (mg/ml)</th>
<th>$\Delta$CL$^a$ (cpm x 10^{-6})</th>
<th>Stimulation index$^b$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-14.4$^c$</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ $\Delta$CL; increase in peak chemiluminescence response above controls containing carrier-maltose in place of IV IgG.

$^b$ Stimulation index; ratio of peak CL responses with and without IV IgG.

$^c$ Depressed response probably accounted for by fall in pH at highest concentrations of Gamimune N.

TABLE IV
Effect of IV IgG on neutrophil locomotion and ZAS-induced directed migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV IgG (mg/ml)</th>
<th>$\Delta$Cell migration (µm)$^a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HBSS lower chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intraglobin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>12.4$^b$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandoglobulin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamimune N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24.8$^b$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ $\Delta$Cell migration; increase in distance travelled compared to control cells with carrier-sugar in place of IV IgG. (A negative value indicates an actual decrease in distance travelled compared to control cells.)

$^b$ $p < 0.05$.

$^c$ Cells migrated through filters. Figure is increase in mean cells per HPF.
phil's was decreased by most concentrations of Intralobin and Sandoglobulin, and in the presence of Gamimmune N migration was increased; these differences did not reach levels of statistical significance (Table IV).

Discussion

Various mechanisms have been proposed to explain how IVIgG reduces cell destruction in the immune cytopenias (Imbach, 1983). The most popular theory is that IVIgG interacts with Fc receptors of mononuclear phagocytes, thereby inhibiting the phagocytosis of cells (red cells, platelets or neutrophils) opsonized by autoantibody (or alloantibody). There is in vitro experimental evidence to support this concept (Jungi et al., 1986). An equally attractive hypothesis is that infused immunoglobulin binds to red blood cells which are then preferentially sequestered by macrophages; support for this mechanism is provided by the clinical finding that the injection of anti-Rho(D) is effective in treating ITP (Salama et al., 1983; Baglin et al., 1986). In addition to the effect of macrophage blockage, IVIgG may modulate the immune response by altering the proportions of T-cell subsets or by non-specific inhibition of B-cell responsiveness (Tsubiakio et al., 1983; Dammacco et al., 1986; Stohl, 1986).

The beneficial effect of IgG replacement therapy in hypogammaglobulinemia is presumably due largely to passive immunization with preformed specific antibodies; such antibodies against a wide range of bacterial and viral pathogens can readily be demonstrated in human IgG for both IV and IM use (Yap, 1987). However, experimental and clinical evidence indicates that IVIgG may interact with macrophage Fc receptors and, in other unspecified ways, modulate the immune response, as already discussed. This raises the possibility that it may also influence neutrophil function. Koch et al. (1984) showed that IVIgG can stimulate neutrophil O$_2^-$ release and chemiluminescence in vitro; the present study was designed to further investigate this effect. The neutrophil respiratory burst was examined using three assays: O$_2^-$ release, H$_2$O$_2$ production and Luminol-dependent chemiluminescence (CL). The CL response of activated neutrophils correlates well with metabolic activation (Allen et al., 1972), but there has been considerable controversy as to what is the chief oxidizing species measured in Luminol-dependent CL. De Chatellet and Shirley (1981) have argued that it is largely due to HOCl which diffuses extracellularly and reacts with Luminol to form aminophthalate ions and light generation.

In all three types of assay our results indicated that IVIgG can directly stimulate the neutrophil respiratory burst. The maximum increase in O$_2^-$ release was of the order of 3.5–4.55 nmol (per $5 \times 10^5$ cells) and this was achieved by concentrations of 0.5–1 mg/ml IVIgG, concentrations which are readily achieved in moderate-dose IVIgG therapy. High-dose therapy can achieve serum concentrations of the order of 8 mg/ml (Pirofsky, 1987). In this case of H$_2$O$_2$ production, the stimulatory effect on H$_2$O$_2$ was more clearly dose-dependent, and for two IVIgG preparations it appeared that the maximal H$_2$O$_2$ response was not reached in the range of concentrations used. The stimulatory effects of OZ, PMA and FMLP were enhanced by IVIgG and this enhancing effect was more clearly seen in the H$_2$O$_2$ assay.
CL responses also indicated that IV IgG can directly stimulate neutrophils, as well as being able to enhance the metabolic response following ingestion of OZ.

There are few published reports on the effects of IV IgG on neutrophils, either in vivo or in vitro. Koch et al. (1984), using a blood leukocyte preparation consisting of both neutrophils and mononuclear cells, demonstrated that the neutrophil respiratory burst was stimulated in vitro by IV IgG. The maximal increases in O$_2^-$ release, 5 nmol per 10$^6$ cells, was quite consistent with our own findings. Redd et al. (1988) reported that human IV IgG reduced the severity of neutropenia in newborn rats after intraplumonic injection of group B streptococci. This was thought to be due to increased release of neutrophils from the marrow and egress from the blood into infected tissue. IV IgG did not affect the production of neutrophils in vitro or in vivo.

Of the three IV IgG preparations used in the present study, Intraglobin F (Biotest) has the highest content of dimers and aggregates (Lundblad et al., 1987). If the observed stimulation of neutrophils was initiated by the interaction of aggregated IgG with Fc receptors, we would have expected Intraglobin F to give consistently higher levels of stimulation. This was not observed. Monomeric IgG is known to attach to Fc receptors of human monocytes (Kurlander, 1980) and, in the same way, must be able to bind to Fc receptors of neutrophils. The stimulating effect of IV IgG on neutrophil metabolism could not be reproduced by another serum protein (HSA), suggesting that Fc receptor–monomeric IgG interaction may be the initiating event.

There is no doubt that the benefit of IV IgG therapy in hypogammaglobulinemia, and in severe infection in the immunocompromised host, is primarily due to the passive provision of preformed antibodies. However, the findings of this study suggest that host defence may benefit secondarily from the direct stimulation of neutrophil metabolism by IV IgG.

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