

Cellular and Molecular Pathogenic Mechanisms of Type I Diabetes

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Cumulative evidence suggests that Type I Diabetes (Insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus: IDDM) results from progressive destruction of insulin producing pancreatic β -cells. Genetic susceptibility appears to be a prerequisite for the development of IDDM but, as the concordance rate for IDDM between identical twins approaches only 40%, environmental factors must also be involved in the clinical expression of the disease. Humoral autoimmunity precedes the onset of IDDM; however, it appears that the islet cell autoantibodies detected in the sera of patients with IDDM are a secondary phenomenon, generated by autoantigens released from damaged β -cells. The presence of these autoantibodies is valuable for the prediction and diagnosis of IDDM. Indications of the involvement of cell-mediated autoimmune responses in the pathogenesis of IDDM have come from autopsies performed on patients who have died from acute onset diabetes. Their pancreata show CD8+ -rich lymphocytic infiltrates, which also contain macrophages, CD4+ T-cells, and natural killer cells. In animal models for IDDM, such as the BioBreeding (BB) rat and the non-obese diabetic (NOD) mouse, macrophages and CD4+ and CD8+ T-cells appear to be involved in the destruction of pancreatic β -cells. Macrophages play an important role in the initiation of insulinitis, as evidenced by the prevention of further autoimmune processes when they are inactivated.

Several β -cell autoantigens, including a 64 kD protein (glutamic acid decarboxylase (GAD)), 37 kD/40 kD tryptic fragments of 64 kD protein, a 38 kD protein, a 52 kD protein, and a 69 kD heat shock protein, have been identified, although the precise roles of these β -cell autoantigens in the pathogenesis of IDDM have not been elucidated. It has been hypothesized that presentation of β -cell autoantigens, released during spontaneous turnover of β -cells, through antigen presenting cells, such as macrophages and dendritic cells, to CD4+ T helper cells, in conjunction with MHC class II molecules, might be the initial step in the development of autoimmune IDDM. Activated CD4+ helper T-cells can secrete cytokines, such as interleukin-2. While this process is taking place, β -cell autoantigen-specific CD8+ precytotoxic T-cells may be recruited to the islets and differentiated into effector cells by the interleukin-2 and other cytokines released by CD4+ T helper cells. The autoantigen-specific CD8+ cytotoxic T-cells, as final effectors, may recognize the antigens expressed on the many unaffected β -cells, in conjunction with MHC class I molecules. Free radicals and cytokines, such as interleukin-1, released by macrophages may act synergistically with the CD8+ effector T-cells, leading to the destruction of pancreatic β -cells. Development of autoimmune IDDM can be prevented by either induction of immunological tolerance using β -cell autoantigens or by induction of suppressor T-cells by microbial agents or bacterial products. In addition, T-cell receptor diversity in the pathogenesis of IDDM, use of transgenic mice for studies on diabetes, and induction of immunological tolerance will also be discussed in this chapter.

Key Words: Autoimmunity, Genetic susceptibility, Environmental factor, Autoantigen, Suppressor T-cell

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INTRODUCTION

Type I diabetes, also known as insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM), results from the destruction of insulin-producing pancreatic β -cells, which leads to hypoinsulinaemia and hyperglycaemia. During the past few decades, genetic factors, environmental factors (viral infections, diet, toxins), and autoimmunity have been extensively studied as the possible causes of pancreatic β -cell destruction (Fig. 1)¹⁻². Evi-

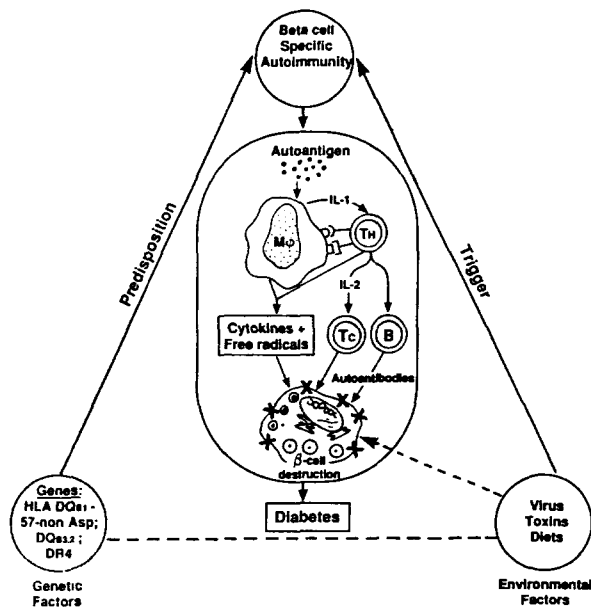


Fig. 1. Aetiology of IDDM. Genetic susceptibility (e.g. major histocompatibility complex genes (including DQB1*0302) and/or other genes) appears to be a prerequisite in most, if not all, cases of IDDM. However, as the concordance rate for the development of IDDM by identical twins appears to be around only 35%, non-genetic, environmental factors such as viruses, diet, and β -cell toxins must influence the clinical expression of genetic susceptibility. Certain environmental factors, such as viruses and toxins, may act as primary injurious agents to pancreatic β -cells or as triggering agents for autoimmunity in humans and animals. Once β -cell-specific autoimmunity has developed, autoimmune-mediated destruction of β -cells results in IDDM. β -cell-specific autoantigens, macrophages, helper T-cells, and autoantigen-specific cytotoxic T-lymphocytes (CTLs) are involved in the autoimmune process. In addition, free radicals and cytokines released from macrophages and T-cells act synergistically in β -cell destruction with the autoantigen-specific T-effector cells.

dence indicates that autoimmunity is involved in the destruction of β -cells in the majority of patients with IDDM³⁻⁶. Cumulative data supporting an aetiological role for autoimmunity include mononuclear cell infiltration of pancreatic islets⁷, the presence of circulating islet cell autoantibodies (ICAs)⁸, recurrence of diabetes in pancreatic transplants from non-affected monozygotic twins⁹, and delay of the disease or reduction of its incidence by cyclosporin treatment¹⁰⁻¹¹. The infiltrating immunocytes in the pancreatic islets of individuals affected by IDDM are composed of a variety of T- and B-lymphocytes, monocytes, and macrophages¹². These cells surround and infiltrate the pancreatic islets during the acute phase of IDDM and disappear in the chronic phase of the disease, leaving in their wake an islet in which β -cells, but not other endocrine cells (α , δ , and pancreatic polypeptide producing cells), have been destroyed indicating a selective destruction β -cells. Although the autoimmune pathogenesis of IDDM has been extensively studied, precise mechanisms for the initiation and the process of β -cell destruction are poorly understood.

Studies using animal models for IDDM, such as the Bio-Breeding (BB) rat and non-obese diabetic (NOD) mouse, have enhanced our understanding of the pathogenic mechanisms for the disease. The BB rat was first described in 1974 among Wistar-derived rats in Canada¹³. IDDM develops in 60~80% of BB rats within 110 days after birth. The pattern of the disease in the BB rat is similar to human IDDM, except for the association with T-cell lymphopenia in the BB rat¹⁴ (Table 1). Mononuclear cell infiltration of BB rat pancreatic islets can be seen prior to the onset of hyperglycaemia and ketoacidosis¹⁵. Islet cell autoantibodies, such as islet cell surface antibodies (ICSAs) can also be detected as early as 40 days of age in the BB rat¹⁵, Concanavalin A (Con A) treated splenocytes from acutely diabetic BB rats can induce diabetes when injected into young, non-diabetic rats. In addition, recurrence of diabetes in the BB rat occurs when it is transplanted with non-diabetic pancreatic islets. Furthermore, diabetes in the BB rat can be prevented by several forms of immunotherapy¹⁶⁻¹⁷. Another animal model for spontaneously developed IDDM is the NOD mouse, which was originally developed in Japan from a CTS-subline of outbred ICR mice¹⁸. The diabetic syndrome in NOD mice is similar to that of humans and BB rats, except for sex differences (Table 1). In the NOD mouse,

Table 1. Comparison among human, BB rat and NOD mouse

Characteristic	Human	BB rat	NOD mouse
Clinical features			
Insulin dependence	+	+	+
Equal sex distribution	+	+	-
Insulinitis	+	+	+
Humoral immunity			
ICA	+	+	+
ICSA	+	-	+
Insulin autoantibody	+	+	+
Cellular immunity			
Lymphopenia	-	+	-
Passive transfer	ND*	+	+
MHC association	+	+	+
Prevention by immunosuppression	ND*	+	+
Associated with other autoimmune diseases	+	+	+

*ND: not determined

there is a high prevalence of the disease in females (70~80%), as compared with males (10~20%).

Establishment of these animal models and development of powerful molecular biological tools, such as transgenic technology^{19~22} and the polymerase chain reaction (PCR)²³, have fostered enormous progress in diabetes research over the last decade. In spite of this progress, the precise pathogenic mechanisms for the initiation and process of β -cell destruction remain still shrouded. In this paper, we will briefly discuss the role of autoimmunity in the pathogenesis of IDDM in conjunction with genetic and environmental factors, and the possible prevention of the disease.

Genetics

Genetic susceptibility to human IDDM appears to be a prerequisite for the development of the disease. If one parent has IDDM, the risk of the offspring developing the disease is about 8~10% and this risk increases to over 23% if both parents have IDDM²⁴. That susceptibility to IDDM has a genetic basis has been further supported by results from molecular and cellular analyses of human leukocyte antigen (HLA) genes^{25~26}. A strong association has been observed between susceptibility to IDDM and specific alleles of HLA

genes. Certain HLA class II alleles (HLA-DR3 and HLA-DR4) were found to be more strongly associated with IDDM than class I alleles (HLA-B8, HLA-B15) in linkage disequilibrium with HLA-DR3 and HLA-DR4²⁷. As definition of HLA alleles became more precise, it became clear that HLA-DQ was more strongly associated with the disease than HLA-DR²⁸ and that the shifting association could be explained by linkage disequilibrium. In Caucasians, HLA-DQ β chains with an amino acid different from aspartic acid at position 57 are associated with susceptibility to IDDM^{29~30}. However, later studies found that the HLA association with IDDM did not depend exclusively on DQ β position 57, but on its combination with allelic variants encoded by other polymorphic loci^{31~32}. While the actual significance of the association of the 57th amino acid residue with susceptibility to IDDM and its function are unknown, the association does suggest that the HLA-DQB1 gene is, by itself, a susceptibility factor. The DQB1*0302 (DQ3.2) gene, especially, appears to be the most likely susceptibility gene for IDDM in the Caucasian population^{33~34}. This gene (DQB1*0302) is one specific allele, or polymorphic variant, encoded by the DQB1 locus, which encodes upwards of 20 different alleles. The HLA class II region contains several linked genetic loci and particular genes such as the DQB1*0302 (DQ3.2) at the DQB1 locus are linked to other HLA genes at the HLA-DR locus. The DQB1A*0302 gene is linked specifically DR genes which encode the HLA-DR4 type.

The DQB1*0302 (DQ3.2) gene encodes a polypeptide component of the class II molecule antigen-binding cell surface glycoprotein. The DQB1*0302 gene is structurally related to another DQB1 allele DQB1*0301 (HLA-DQ3.1) which is not associated with IDDM. Both DQB1*0301 and DQB1*0302 are associated with HLA-DR4; however, they are found on distinct DR4-positive haplotypes. Their gene products (DQB1*0301 and DQB1*0302) differ from each other by six amino acid residues, four of which lie in the NH₂-terminal domain of the HLA class II molecule. This molecule appears to be responsible for critical antigen and T-cell interactions. Each of these four codons appears to play an important role in immune recognition^{35~37}. The presence of glycine at codon 45 is key DQB1*0302 serological specificity and influences T-cell recognition of the molecule. The predominant T-cell recognition epitopes on the DQB1*0302 molecule are com-

plex. Most T-cell recognition parameters appear to be influenced by α -chain polymorphism. Single residue substitutions within the DQB1*0302 β -chain at codon 26 or 57 were sufficient to abolish or restore recognition by specific T-cell clones³⁵. These effects were dependent on the specific DQ α -chain present³³.

In contrast to the Caucasian population, amino acid residue 57 of the HLA-DQ β chain (DQB1) is not correlated with IDDM susceptibility in oriental populations, including the Japanese³⁸, Koreans and Chinese. Thus the hypothesis that the presence of aspartic acid at amino acid residue 57 of the HLA-DQ β chain protects against the development of IDDM is not tenable for oriental IDDM patients.

There is also a familial association of IDDM with other autoimmune diseases. In particular, there is a strong association of IDDM with autoimmune thyroid disease (ATD). A recent study of families with both IDDM and ATD has indicated that HLA polymorphism, especially at the DQ β 1 locus, modulates the susceptibility to each disease in a complex fashion, with each chromosome playing a role³⁹.

In the BB rat, a number of investigations have correlated the inheritance of phenotypic markers, such as the BB rat's severe T-lymphopenia, and genetic markers for the major histocompatibility complex (MHC) with the development of diabetes⁴⁰⁻⁴³. Results from these studies indicate that F1 animals are not lymphopenic and do not develop diabetes. When a series of different normal rat strains (which are not RT1^u class II) are used to produce F2 crosses, only approximately 2% of the F2 animals develop overt diabetes. Development of diabetes correlates with the inheritance of both severe lymphopenia and the BB rat's MHC⁴². While development of diabetes in non-lymphopenic BB-derived rats has been observed in rare instances⁴⁴, no permanently non-lymphopenic strain of rat which spontaneously develops diabetes has been created. It is therefore likely that the severe lymphopenic phenotype of the BB rat, inherited in an autosomal recessive fashion, is not essential for the development of diabetes but increases the probability of its development. Recently, a lymphopenic gene was mapped to chromosome 14⁴⁵.

A series of breeding studies indicates that the development of diabetes by BB rats is strongly linked to a gene within the MHC^{41-42,46}. Using rats bearing recombinant MHC⁴⁷⁻⁴⁸, found that the MHC-associated diabetes susceptibility genes

mapped to the class II region on chromosome 20 in the BB rat⁴¹. It appears that all RT1 haplotypes expressing class II genes, which are *u*, are diabetogenic, independent of class I alleles. The development of diabetes has been attributed to a lack of T-lymphocytes expressing the RT6 cell surface alloantigen⁴⁹. These studies are the strongest evidence to date that a class II gene is essential for diabetes susceptibility in the BB rat. It is noteworthy that Lewis rats, whose class II region is not diabetogenic, and BB rats, whose class II region is diabetogenic, both lack aspartic acid at position 57 of their DQ β chain⁵⁰. This suggests that the allelic amino acid at this position in the BB rat probably does not serve as a disease marker and that there may be other unidentified class II allelic differences involved in susceptibility to IDDM in the BB rat. T-cell receptor polymorphisms have not been linked to diabetes in the BB rat.

Early genetic studies in mice revealed that the susceptibility of NOD mice to IDDM is also linked to the major histocompatibility complex (H-2 of mice) and is inherited as a recessive trait⁵¹⁻⁵². Later studies in H-2 congenic strains of NOD mice revealed that the susceptibility provided by H-2 (*idd-1*) is not recessive, but rather a dominant trait with incomplete penetrance⁵³⁻⁵⁴. The NOD mouse is unique in that its H-2 complex encodes for novel I-A molecules (*A α^d* and unique *A β*) in which aspartic acid at position 57 of the β -chain is replaced by serine^{55,30} and that it lacks I-E expression⁵¹. Studies in NOD transgenic mice expressing normal I-E or other I-A molecules, and which did not develop diabetes, indicated that the unique H-2 complex of the NOD mouse plays a direct role in its susceptibility to IDDM⁵⁶⁻⁵⁸. However, expression of I-E in NOD mice itself is not sufficient to prevent insulinitis or diabetes. Although non-NOD MHC products confer protection from diabetes, they cannot do so if only expressed in the thymus and not in bone-marrow-derived cells⁶⁰.

IDDM susceptibility in the NOD mouse is also determined by at least eight other unlinked loci (*idd-2* through *idd-9*)^{51-52,54,61-62}. The *idd-2* gene(s) is weakly linked to the Thy1/Alp-1 cluster on chromosome 9. *Idd-3* has been associated with a defective Fc receptor for IgG, encoded on chromosome 3⁶³ and is associated with both insulinitis and diabetes. This mutation has been associated with increased antibody-dependent cellular cytotoxicity (ADCC) by monocytes, which are an essential component in the onset of insulinitis and diabetes in

NOD mice. Idd-4, which maps to chromosome 11, is especially associated with early onset of IDDM and may influence the frequency of insulinitis and control the progression of severe insulinitis to overt diabetes. Idd-5 is linked to the interleukin-1 (IL-1) receptor and the Lsh/Ity/Bcg genes on chromosome 1⁶⁴. IL-1, an antigen-presenting-cell-derived cofactor in T-cell activation, is β -cell cytotoxic⁶⁵. The Lsh/Ity/Bcg genes, which control susceptibility or resistance to infection by *Leishmania donovani*, *Salmonella typhimurium*, and *Mycobacterium bovis*⁶⁶⁻⁶⁸, are also expressed in macrophages and could thus play a role in insulinitis and diabetes.

Another non-MHC-linked gene associated with peri-insulinitis and sialitis is linked to the Bcl-2 locus on chromosome 1⁶⁹. Interestingly, the Bcl-2 gene increases cellular resistance to signals that induce apoptosis⁷⁰⁻⁷¹. Expression of a Bcl-2 transgene in T-cells inhibits T-cell death and perturbs thymic negative selection⁷¹ and, when expressed on mouse B cells, can cause a lupus-like syndrome⁷². The Bcl-2 gene may play an important role in the early events that lead to IDDM. It thus appears likely that a series of alleles at different loci, each necessary but not sufficient for the development of diabetes by NOD mice, underlie its susceptibility to diabetes.

Environmental factors

As described above, susceptibility to IDDM is determined by genetic factors; however, the concordance for IDDM between monozygotic twins approaches only 35~36%⁷³, suggesting that, along with genetic factors, non-genetic, environmental factors influence the clinical expression of the disease (Fig. 2). Environmental factors such as viruses, toxins, diet and stress have all been implicated as possible environmental determinants of IDDM⁷⁴ (Fig. 1).

1) **Viruses:** Regarding the induction of diabetes by viruses, there are at least two different mechanisms by which viruses can cause IDDM. One mechanism involves the direct infection of β -cells and viral replication within them. The replication of virus in β -cells results in their lysis and the infected animal or human subsequently becomes hypoinsulinaemic and hyperglycaemic. The second mechanism involves the triggering of β -cell-specific autoimmunity by the virus, leading to autoimmune destruction of the β -cells. Several ways in which viruses might trigger β -cell-specific autoimmunity have been put forward. If the virus incorporates host antigens into its

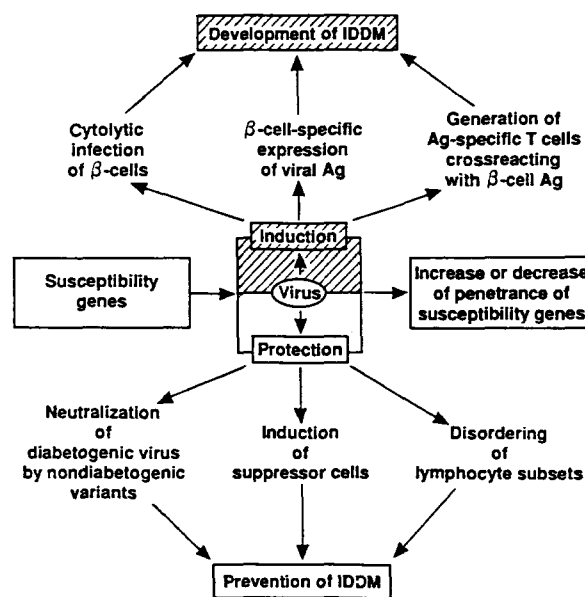


Fig. 2. Role of viruses in the destruction of pancreatic β -cells leading to an increase or decrease in the penetrance of susceptibility genes. Genetic susceptibility appears to be a prerequisite for the development of IDDM; however, environmental factors such as viruses may act as inducible agents or preventative agents. With regard to inducible agents, some viruses including EMC-D virus and Coxsackie B4 virus can induce diabetes by infecting and destroying β -cells in a genetically susceptible host (cytolytic infection of β -cells). In addition, certain viruses (e.g. retrovirus in NOD mice and rubella virus in hamsters and humans) may alter a normally existing β -cell antigen into an immunogenic form or might induce a new antigen which may trigger β -cell-specific autoimmune IDDM (β -cell-specific expression of viral antigens). Furthermore, other viruses (e.g. Kilham's rat virus in DRBB rats) may generate antigen-specific effector T-cells which may cross-react with β -cell-specific autoantigens, leading to autoimmune IDDM (generation of antigen-specific T-cells cross-reacting with β -cell antigens). With regard to preventative agents, diabetogenic EMC-D virus-induced diabetes in mice can be prevented by vaccination with a non-diabetogenic EMC-B virus (neutralization of infectious virus). Certain viruses may induce suppressor T-cells which can prevent T-cell-mediated autoimmune IDDM (induction of suppressor T-cells). Some other viruses such as lymphocytic choriomeningitis virus (LCMV) may prevent IDDM in NOD mice by selectively depleting the CD4+ T-cell subset (disordering of lymphocyte subsets). Thus, viruses as environmental factors may affect the penetrance of susceptibility genes.

envelope or modifies host antigens, the virus may render the infected cell or some component of it foreign to the host⁷⁵⁻⁷⁷. Alternatively, certain viruses trigger autoimmunity by des-

stroying or stimulating subpopulations of lymphocytes (e.g. helper or suppressor T-cells), resulting in a problem with immunoregulation. A third possible mechanism involves viral generation of viral-antigen-specific T effector cells which recognize β -cell-specific antigens on the β -cells by molecular mimicry⁷⁸⁻⁷⁹.

(1) Encephalomyocarditis virus; The best-studied model of virus-induced IDDM is the encephalomyocarditis (EMC) virus, which acts as a primary injurious agent in damaging β -cells⁸⁰⁻⁸². Susceptibility to EMC-virus-induced diabetes is controlled by genetically determined host factors^{81,83-85}. A role for T-cells in β -cell destruction in EMC-M-infected mice was originally suggested in early studies⁸⁶⁻⁸⁸; however, later studies with EMC-D virus did not support a T-cell-mediated mechanism⁸⁹⁻⁹⁰. More recent studies in our laboratory have revealed that macrophages play a critical role in the process of β -cell destruction at the early stage of EMC-D virus infection⁹¹. Mice infected with pure diabetogenic EMC-D virus developed long-term complications, such as glomerulosclerosis, changes in the cornea and retinal vessels and decreases in bone formation and mineralization, similar to those seen in humans with IDDM⁹²⁻⁹³. It has also been learned that development of EMC-induced diabetes is controlled by a single gene of the host and a single amino acid of the polypeptide of the virus⁹⁴.

(2) Coxsackie B4 virus; Coxsackie B4 virus has been shown to induce diabetes in SJL/J mice and in Patas monkeys by infecting and destroying beta cells⁹⁵⁻⁹⁷. Early epidemiological studies showed that patients with IDDM of recent onset had higher neutralizing antibody titres to Coxsackie B4 virus than either normal non-diabetic subjects, or patients who had had IDDM for longer than three months. These studies suggested that human IDDM may sometimes be associated with Coxsackie B4 virus infection⁹⁸⁻⁹⁹. Further support for the concept that Coxsackie B4 virus might trigger some cases of human IDDM came 15 years ago when a variant of Coxsackie B4 virus isolated from the pancreas of a diabetic patient was found to induce diabetes in mice¹⁰⁰. Several later epidemiological studies also described an association between IDDM and Coxsackie B4 viral infection¹⁰¹⁻¹⁰⁵. It is thought that Coxsackie B4 viral infection enhances the expression of a 64 kD autoantigen, glutamic acid decarboxylase (GAD)¹⁰⁶⁻¹⁰⁷. In humans, there is homology between GAD and a Coxsackie

B4 viral protein, suggesting that the viral protein may trigger β -cell-specific autoimmunity¹⁰⁸.

(3) Rubella virus; The congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) provides additional evidence that viral infections may sometimes play a role in human diabetes¹⁰⁹⁻¹¹⁶. These reports, as well as a large prospective study of 242 patients¹¹⁷, have shown that approximately 12~20% of individuals with CRS develop diabetes in 5 to 20 years. Because islet cell and anti-insulin antibodies were found in more than 20% of non-diabetic patients with CRS and in 50~80% of diabetic patients with CRS, it is thought that CRS might have an autoimmune basis. Patients with CRS and diabetes have a significantly increased frequency of HLA-DR3 and a significantly decreased frequency of HLA-DR2¹¹⁸. A majority of patients with CRS also have an abnormal carbohydrate metabolism¹¹⁷⁻¹¹⁸.

We have developed a diabetic animal model that closely corresponds to the diabetes observed in human with CRS¹¹⁴. After infection with β -cell-passaged rubella virus, neonatal Golden Syrian hamsters develop diabetes. In these animals there is evidence of an autoimmune process taking place. This evidence includes the detection of mononuclear cell infiltration and measurable circulating islet cell antibodies.

(4) Cytomegalovirus; A case report of a 13 month old child with congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection who developed IDDM has implicated CMV in the development of IDDM¹²⁰. CMV is known to infect pancreatic islet cells¹⁰³ and in combination with more lethal betatropic agents may also be a causal factor in diabetes¹²¹.

It has been shown, using both dot and *in situ* hybridization techniques, that 20% of IDDM patients appear to have cytomegaloviral genome in their pancreatic islets¹²². Furthermore, 80% of patients who had both anti-CMV antibodies and cytomegaloviral genome also had islet cell autoantibodies, suggesting that CMV is associated with IDDM. Our recent study showed that human CMV can induce an islet cell autoantibody that reacts with a 38 kD islet cell autoantigen¹²³. This reaction probably results from similar epitopes being shared by islet-cell-specific proteins and antigenic determinants of CMV. In addition, insulinitis and CMV-like particles have been observed in the pancreas of a spontaneously diabetic rodent, *Octodon degus*¹²⁴.

(5) Mumps virus; Gamble¹²⁵ demonstrated that mumps infec-

tion apparently precedes the development of diabetes in some newly diagnosed diabetic children, implicating this virus in the development of IDDM. Since some children appear to develop islet cell autoantibodies during parotiditis, it has been hypothesized that an infection with mumps virus may also induce autoimmunity¹²⁶.

(6) Retrovirus; β -cell-specific expression of endogenous retroviruses has been associated with the development of insulinitis and diabetes in NOD mice¹²⁷⁻¹²⁸. Studies conducted during the mid-1980s found that C-type-like retrovirus particles were present in pancreatic β -cells from both C3H-db/db¹²⁹ and NOD¹³⁰ mice. As well, intracisternal A-type particles (IAPs) were also found in β -cells from genetically diabetic mice including C57BL/KSJ (db/db), DBA/2J (DB/DB) and CheB/FeJ (db/db) mice¹³¹. The presence of retrovirus particles in β -cells clearly correlated with the presence of insulinitis lesions¹³⁰. Two separate studies using NOD mice, each employing different methods, showed that retroviral gag protein was present exclusively in β -cells, and not other pancreatic cells¹³²⁻¹³³. The precise pathogenic role of retroviral gene expression and/or gene product in β -cells in autoimmune IDDM in NOD mice is not known. Possibly, presentation of retrovirus antigen on the β -cells by antigen-presenting cells may be the initial step in the autoimmune destruction of β -cells. An immune response to a specific antigen on the target cell involves the activation of CD4+ T-cells, which are only activated when they interact with antigens presented on the surface of a macrophage or other antigen presenting cell. Our previous experimental results support this possibility, since elimination of antigen-presenting macrophages resulted in the prevention of β -cell-specific autoimmune processes in NOD mice¹³⁴. Alternatively, retroviral genomes (e.g. IAPs) in NOD β -cells may alter the expression of cellular genes possibly resulting in a β -cell-specific altered antigen(s). This altered antigen might be perceived as foreign by immunocytes, thus leading to β -cell-specific autoimmunity. Either possibility, β -cell-specific expression of retrovirus-group-specific antigens or retrovirus-induced β -cell-specific altered antigens, could result in the eventual generation of cytotoxic cross-reactive effector T-lymphocytes which recognize specific determinants of 'self-proteins' on β -cells. This would lead to the development of β -cell-specific autoimmune IDDM in NOD mice. Alternatively, retroviral gene expression

may be a phenomenon secondary to the disease process.

(7) Kilham's rat virus; Another virus that has recently been implicated in animal diabetes is Kilham's rat virus (KRV), which has been shown to cause autoimmune diabetes in diabetes-resistant BB (DRBB) rats, without distinct infection of β -cells¹³⁵. A further study has suggested that wide spread infection of peripancreatic and other lymphoid tissue, but not pancreatic β -cell, by KRV triggers autoimmune diabetes by perturbing the immune system of genetically predisposed DRBB/Wor rats¹³⁶. It has also been speculated that KRV infection may generate antigen-specific cytotoxic T-cells and that the KRV-specific effector T-cells may then attack β -cells¹³⁷.

2) Toxins: A number of chemically dissimilar agents, such as alloxan, streptozotocin, chlorozotocin, vacor and cyproheptadine, can cause diabetes in rodents¹³⁹. Vacor has also been shown to be diabetogenic in humans. Diabetogenic chemicals may destroy β -cells by several different mechanisms. They may generate oxygen free radicals and alter endogenous scavengers of these reactive species. Through breakage of DNA, they may also increase the activity in β -cells of the enzyme depleting nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide, poly-ADP ribose synthetase. A third possible mechanism by which diabetogenic chemicals may induce diabetes is through the inhibition of active calcium transport and calmodulin-activated protein kinase activity. The effect of each of the chemicals listed above has been previously reviewed in detail elsewhere⁷⁴.

3) Diet: Food diabetogens have been shown to affect the expression of the diabetic syndrome in BB rats and NOD mice. The source of dietary protein seems to be the most important factor^{53,139-144}, and intact protein appears to be required for full expression of genetic susceptibility for developing diabetes in BB rats. Wheat gluten, soybean meal, alfalfa, and skim milk powder have been identified as the most likely sources of dietary diabetogens in rodents^{139,143,145-146}. There is some circumstantial evidence suggesting that diet plays a role in the development of human autoimmune IDDM^{141,147-148}.

Autoimmunity

Several immunologic abnormalities precede the clinical onset of IDDM. The involvement of humoral autoimmunity is indicated by the detection of various circulating autoanti-

bodies, while cell-mediated autoimmune responses against islet antigens have also been observed. In this section humoral and cell-mediated autoimmunity in IDDM will be discussed.

1) Humoral autoimmunity: Over twenty years ago, Bottazzo et al⁸, and MacCuish et al¹⁴⁹ first reported the detection of antibodies directed against pancreatic islets. Since that time it has been shown in several studies that antibodies are prevalent in patients with IDDM. In addition to islet cell antibodies, the sera of patients with IDDM may also contain antibodies directed against the islet cell surface¹⁵⁰⁻¹⁵¹, thyroid and adrenal cortex¹⁵², the adrenal medulla¹⁵³, thymic hormones and HLA-DQ molecules¹⁵⁴, pancreatic cytokeatin¹⁵⁵ and lymphocyte surfaces¹⁵⁶. Sera from diabetic patients containing islet cell surface antibodies (ICSAs) may be specifically cytotoxic to β -cells in the presence of complement^{150,157}, but it has not, however, been proven that *in vivo* administration of such antibodies can induce diabetes. Moreover, diabetes has not been observed in the infants of mothers who developed IDDM while pregnant. Transplacental passage of anti-islet antibodies can be demonstrated in the umbilical blood of newborn infants of mothers positive for islet cell antibodies¹⁵⁸. Recurrence of insulinitis in transplanted pancreatic islets obtained from an identical twin or other sibling occurs in the absence of islet cell antibodies¹⁵⁹, suggesting that autoantibodies may not play a critical role in β -cell destruction; rather, a large body of accumulated data from studies in NOD mice, BB rats, and humans indicate that IDDM is a cell-mediated disease. It is generally accepted that autoantibodies detected in the sera of patients with IDDM are a secondary phenomenon, generated by autoantigens released from damaged β -cells. Despite this, the presence of some of the above autoantibodies are valuable for the prediction and diagnosis of IDDM.

(1) Islet cell antibodies; ICAs can be detected in over 60% of newly diabetic IDDM patients¹⁶⁰⁻¹⁶¹ and in their first-degree relatives who develop diabetes¹⁶². Of first-degree relatives of an IDDM patient, 1 in 50 express high titres of ICA (> 80 JDF units), and approximately 8% per year develop diabetes¹⁶³. Enzymatic digestion and blocking experiments using islet extracts suggest that the target antigens had the properties of a glycolipid with sialic acid¹⁶⁴. Additional studies have revealed that the possible candidates for these target autoantigens are GT3¹⁶⁵ and a ganglioside on thin layer chro-

matography (TLC) migrating between GM2 and GM1¹⁶⁶.

(2) Anti-insulin antibodies; Anti-insulin antibodies (IAAs), which bind insulin molecules have been found in over 59% of patients with late preclinical/recent onset IDDM¹⁶⁷⁻¹⁶⁸. Interestingly, cross-reactivity exists between insulin and an islet-expressed retroviral antigen p73¹⁶⁹. Insulin is the only known β -cell-specific IDDM antigen and oral intake of insulin is reported to retard disease progression in the NOD mouse¹⁷⁰. The pathological role of IAAs and insulin-reactive T-cells deserves further study.

(3) Antibodies against glutamic acid decarboxylase (64 kD protein); Autoantibodies precipitating a 64 kD protein from human islets have been detected in the sera from the majority of patients with preclinical/recent onset IDDM¹⁷¹⁻¹⁷². This 64 kD protein has been identified as the autoantigen, glutamic acid decarboxylase (GAD)¹⁷³. Antibodies against 37 or 40 kD tryptic fragments of GAD are distinct from those against GAD and are highly sensitive markers for the development of IDDM¹⁷⁴⁻¹⁷⁵. Sequence homology between isoforms of GAD65 and GAD67, and a Coxsackie B virus protein has been found¹⁰⁸ and antibodies against GAD have also been detected in NOD mice¹⁷⁶⁻¹⁷⁷.

(4) Antibodies against a 38 kD protein; In the above reports where sera from patients with IDDM immunoprecipitated GAD, a protein band of 38 kD was also immunoprecipitated. Autoantibodies against this 38 kD protein are also found in sera from BB rats¹⁷⁸. The 38 kD membrane-bound islet-cell-specific autoantigen was not detected early in the life of DPBB rats, but later appeared to be correlated with ongoing insulinitis¹⁷⁶. This phenomenon may account for the decreased antigenicity of islet grafts obtained from neonatal BB rats, which are preserved in diabetic BB rats into whom they are transplanted¹⁷⁹. The delayed expression of the 38 kD autoantigen in BB rats may trigger the development of autoimmune IDDM. Interestingly, CMV can also induce antibodies against the 38 kD autoantigen in humans¹²³.

(5) Antibodies against carboxypeptidase H; Carboxypeptidase H (CPH) is probably involved in the cleavage of proinsulin. The autoantibody against CPH was detected in sera from 40% of preclinical subjects¹⁸⁰.

(6) Antibodies against bovine serum albumin; Antibodies against bovine serum albumin (BSA) have been found in patients with IDDM¹⁸¹, NOD mice¹⁸² and BB rats¹⁸³. A recent

report suggested that ABBOS (a region of the BSA molecule extending from position 152 to position 168) was responsible for the binding site of this antibody, which cross-reacts with γ -interferon-induced 69 kD heat shock proteins on β -cells¹⁴⁸. It is proposed that BSA protein in milk may be a trigger molecule during infancy and later leads to the development of diabetes through islet cross-reactive autoimmunity.

(7) Antibodies against glucose transport protein (GLUT-2); IgG from subjects with recent onset IDDM specifically inhibits high K_m glucose uptake by dispersed rat islets¹⁸⁴. This effect is abolished by the adsorption of IgG against GLUT-2 expressing cells, indicating the presence of anti-GLUT-2 autoantibodies. However, there is no direct evidence of these antibodies in patients with IDDM.

(8) Other aspects of humoral autoimmunity; Patients with IDDM who have ICSAs also have increased numbers of B-lymphocytes, and the proportion of these lymphocytes secreting immunoglobulin is also increased¹⁸⁵⁻¹⁸⁷. Increases in CD5+ B-lymphocytes, which are normally only seen in foetal and perinatal individuals, have been reported in patients with IDDM¹⁸⁸⁻¹⁹¹ as well as with other autoimmune diseases. Autoantibodies that bind to self and exogenous antigens are produced by CD5+ B-lymphocytes, although this autoantibody production could also be a function of alterations in the role of T-cells¹⁹².

2) Cell-mediated autoimmunity: Indications of the involvement of cell-mediated autoimmune responses in the pathogenesis of IDDM have been provided by autopsies performed on acute-onset patients whose pancreata show lymphocytic infiltration. As well, activated T-cells expressing MHC class II antigens are found in the insulitic islets of recent-onset patients¹⁹³⁻¹⁹⁵ and there are increased numbers of activated helper/inducer T-cells circulating in the sera of patients with recent-onset IDDM^{193,195-198}. T-cells expressing interleukin-2 (IL-2) receptors are also increased¹⁹³ in some patients with IDDM, indicating the involvement of the immune system.

Functional lymphocyte abnormalities may also be present in patients with IDDM, in addition to changes in subpopulations. Using the leukocyte migration test, it has been shown that leukocytes in IDDM patients are sensitized to pancreatic antigens and inhibit cell migration¹⁹⁹⁻²⁰¹. Lymphocytes from an acutely diabetic child were found to be cytotoxic in vitro

to a human insulinoma line²⁰². Most recent studies have shown that pancreatic islets from acutely diabetic patients contain macrophages, CD4+ and CD8+ T-cells, as well as natural killer (NK) cells²⁰³⁻²⁰⁴ and there is evidence that T-cells as well as macrophages are involved in the destruction of β -cells. The role of cell-mediated autoimmunity in the pathogenesis of IDDM has been extensively studied in animal models such as the BB rat and NOD mouse. In this section the role of immunocytes and islet cell autoantigens in the pathogenesis of IDDM will be discussed.

(1) Role of macrophages and autoantigens in the initiation of β -cell-specific autoimmunity; Despite clear evidence for the involvement of cell-mediated autoimmunity in the development of diabetes in BB rats and NOD mice, the initial event which triggers β -cell destruction remains unidentified²⁰⁵. Examination of immunocytes infiltration the islets and their correlation with the time course of insulinitis gives some insight into this initial event. Several studies have found that the major population of infiltrating cells during the early stages of insulinitis are macrophages/dendritic cells²⁰⁶⁻²⁰⁹. These cells precede invasion by T-lymphocytes, NK cells, and B-lymphocytes²¹⁰. Electron microscopy has found that most of the single cells present at an early stage of insulinitis in BB rats are macrophages²⁰⁶. Silica, known to be toxic to macrophages, when administered intraperitoneally to young BB rats and NOD mice, completely prevents the development of insulinitis and diabetes. This suggests that macrophages play an important role in the initiation of insulinitis^{134,211}. Our further experimental results showed that early, long-term silica treatment can deplete or inactivate macrophages, which in turn may prevent the development of β -cell-specific effectors. Late, short-term silica treatment, however, does not affect the destruction of β -cells by pre-existing effectors in NOD mice²¹². In BB rats, ConA-activated spleen cells prepared from silica-treated BB rats did not induce insulinitis and diabetes in BB neonates, whereas ConA-activated spleen cells from untreated BB rats did, indicating that administration of silica particles to BB rats results in the loss of ability by splenocytes to transfer adoptively insulinitis and diabetes²¹³. Short-term silica administration to BB rats did not, however, alter the ability of splenocytes to adoptively transfer insulinitis and diabetes after ConA activation.

Further investigation of splenocytes from silica-treated BB

rats revealed that silica treatment results in a significant reduction in the percentage and number of immunocytes, including CD4+ T-lymphocytes, CD8+ T-lymphocytes and NK cells²¹³. The prevention of insulinitis and diabetes in silica-treated BB rats probably results from a decrease in the number of macrophage-dependent T-lymphocytes and a reduction in NK cell cytotoxicity.

Macrophages are antigen-presenting cells (APCs) and present processed antigens to helper T-cells, in the context of MHC class II molecules present on the cell surface^{179,214-215}. It is hypothesized that, prior to the development of insulinitis, there might be antigenic changes on the β -cells which can be recognized as non-self, and which are processed and presented by APCs. The presentation of β -cell autoantigens by macrophages to CD4+ helper T-cells might be the initial step in the development of autoimmune diabetes^{179,216}.

Islet cell autoantigens which are the targets of autoimmune attack in IDDM have proven difficult to identify and have been studied largely by investigating the specificities of circulating autoantibodies present in the sera of most IDDM patients and also in animals. It is known that peripheral CD4+ T-cells from prediabetic and early diabetic patients proliferate in response to autoantigens recognized by IDDM-associated autoantibodies. They include islet cell autoantigens (which are thought to be glycolipids conjugated with sialic acid¹⁶³), insulin, a 52 kD protein (carboxypeptidase H), a 69 kD heat shock protein, a 64 kD protein (GAD), 37 kD and 40 kD tryptic fragments of tyrosine phosphatase, and a 38 kD autoantigen. Among these autoantigens, the 64 kD protein, GAD, and the 38 kD protein have been implicated as playing a role in the initiation and/or process of autoimmune IDDM.

The precise role of GAD in the pathogenesis of autoimmune IDDM is not known. GAD is not β -cell specific, but is expressed in the testes, ovaries, thymus and stomach²¹⁷⁻²¹⁸, as well as in human pancreatic α , δ and pancreatic polypeptide producing cells²¹⁹ and in *Escherichia coli* strains present in the gut²²⁰. Some investigators had speculated in earlier studies that GAD may act as an immuno-modulator in the pathogenesis of IDDM, as some prokaryotic products, such as lipopolysaccharides and staphylococcal enterotoxins (superantigens), can act as immunomodulators²²¹⁻²²²; however, two recent studies in NOD mice have suggested that GAD is a key target antigen in the induction of murine IDDM¹⁷⁶⁻¹⁷⁷.

These studies suggest that autoimmunity to GAD triggers T-cell responses to other β -cell antigens and that spontaneous autoimmune disease can be prevented in NOD mice by tolerization to GAD. Whether GAD is a target antigen in the initiation of murine autoimmune IDDM remains to be confirmed.

One recent study showed that a 38 kD autoantigen is expressed at about 30 days of age, the same time at which circulating antibodies against the 38 kD antigen are first detected²²³. Similar autoantibodies have also been reported in humans¹⁷¹. In this study, autoantibodies in the sera from all four tested new-onset IDDM patients immunoprecipitated a 38 kD islet cell protein prepared from HLA-DR3-positive donor islets. To date, the 38 kD protein the only delayed-expressed islet cell autoantigen whose antibody is consistently found in acutely diabetic BB rats²²³. Adams et al²²⁴ showed that delayed expression of a transgene in β -cells resulted in a failure to establish self-tolerance and consequently produced autoimmune lesions in the pancreatic islets of several lines of mice. In contrast, mice that expressed this transgene early in life were tolerant. In non-diabetic WF rats, the 38 kD islet-cell-specific protein is expressed in both neonatal and adult islets. This early expression of the 38 kD protein is comparable with early expression of the transgene seen in the transgenic mice studied by Adams et al²²⁴. Buschard et al²²⁵ reported that diabetes in BB rats could be prevented by neonatal stimulation of β -cells. This procedure is thought to induce early antigen expression on β -cells and subsequent tolerance. It is thus speculated that the presentation of 38 kD autoantigens, released during spontaneous turnover of β -cells, in conjunction with MHC class II molecules, might be the initial step in the development of autoimmune IDDM in BB rats. This hypothesis is supported by earlier reports that inactivation of macrophages by silica treatment stops further immune processes and leads to the prevention of insulinitis and diabetes.

Roep et al²²⁶ identified a 38 kD antigen that is recognized by a T-cell clone established from a newly diagnosed patient with IDDM. Subcellular fractionation studies using rat insulinoma cells indicated that the antigenic determinant recognized by this T-cell clone is an integral membrane component of the insulin secretory granule²²⁶. Granular membrane proteins are transiently exposed to the cell surface during

exocytosis and their accessibility to components of the immune system is thought to be a function of the secretory activity of β -cells. At the present time, it is not known whether there are any molecular similarities between this 38 kD protein isolated from insulinoma cells and the membrane-bound, delayed-expressed 38 kD islet cell autoantigen.

On the basis of the above studies, we suggest that the delayed expression of a gene encoding for a β -cell-specific 38 kD autoantigen may result in a breakdown in self-tolerance, leading to the initiation of β -cell-specific autoimmunity in the BB rat.

(2) The role of T-cells in the destruction of pancreatic β -cells; Time course studies have shown that β -cell infiltration by macrophages is followed by that of T-lymphocytes leading to insulinitis and diabetes^{12,203,227~228}. In both transplanted^{9,229~232} and non-transplanted^{12,203} diabetic patients most of the infiltrating lymphocytes at the time of diagnosis are CD8+ T-cells. This finding suggests a role for these cells late in the disease process.

Two phenomena have been observed that indicate that T-cell-mediated autoimmunity is clearly involved in the destruction of β -cells in the BB rat. First, BB rats treated with monoclonal antibodies (OX19) against antigens expressed on the surface of all T-cells do not develop insulinitis or thyroiditis, indicating the important role played by T-cells in diabetogenesis in the BB rat¹⁷. The development of diabetes in BB rats could also be prevented by performing neonatal thymectomies or by immune suppression^{16,233~237}. Second, when non-diabetic BB or Wistar-Furth rats were injected with conA-stimulated spleen cells derived from acutely diabetic BB rats, diabetes was adoptively transferred²³⁸.

As with human IDDM, insulinitis is seen in the NOD mouse both at the time of and prior to hyperglycaemia. Both CD4+ and CD8+ islet-cell-specific T-cell lines and clones have been isolated from NOD islets^{216,239~245}, but the role of each T-cell subset in the diabetogenic process is poorly understood. Although certain adoptive transfer studies using islet-specific CD4+ T-cell clones have questioned whether CD8+ T cells have a role in autoimmune murine IDDM^{240,242}, other studies using cloned and uncloned T-cells have indicated that both CD8+ and CD4+ T-cell subsets are required for the transfer of diabetes in NOD mice^{246~249}, NOD athymic nude mice²⁵⁰ and NOD-scid/scid mice²⁵¹. We have recently shown that a

single β -cell-specific CD8+ cytotoxic T-cell clone (CTL) can transfer severe insulinitis and disease to irradiated NOD mice, but only if co-injected with splenocytes depleted of CD8+ T-cells²⁵². When recipient mice were treated with anti-CD4 monoclonal antibody, neither insulinitis nor diabetes occurred²⁵². These studies indicate that, even when activated *in vitro*, CTL may require the assistance of CD4+ T-cells to effect β -cells damage. When considered together, these studies suggest that MHC class I restricted CD8+ cytotoxic T-cells may play an important role as final effectors of β -cell destruction, whereas CD4+ T-cells may be required for insulinitis.

How CD4+ and CD8+ islet-reactive T-cells interact to destroy β -cells is not known and deserves further study. Recently, it has been suggested that linkage of helper and killer epitopes on the surface of one antigen-presenting cell is a prerequisite for productive interaction between the two cells²⁵³. In that case, the APC must process external antigens for MHC class I restricted presentation. It has been postulated that dendritic cells, which appear to be the primary APCs in spontaneous IDDM²⁵⁴, could perform this activity²⁵⁵. Furthermore, it has been shown that the CD4+ and CD8+ epitopes do not have to be part of the same molecule and that neither the MHC restriction specificities of the interacting T-cells nor the MHC molecules they express have an influence on their capacity to collaborate. Direct T-T cell contact does not appear to be required and interleukin-2 and γ -interferon play a crucial role in this process²⁵³. Because, even when fully differentiated, β -cell-specific CD8+ cytotoxic T-cells cannot home into islets in the absence of T-cell help²⁵², we postulate that CD4+ T-cells recruited to the site may induce expression of CD8+ specific homing receptors on pancreatic endothelial cells which, in turn, may promote influx of precytotoxic precursors into the islets. The latter, if bearing β -cell-specific T-cell receptors, may differentiate into effector CTLs and destroy β -cells. This hypothesis is represented in Fig. 3.

These studies do not exclude other effector mechanisms for the destruction of pancreatic β -cells in NOD mice, such as non-MHC-restricted β -cell cytotoxicity^{256~257}. For example, islet-reactive CD4+ T-cell clones can accelerate the development of diabetes in young NOD mice²⁴⁰, transfer insulinitis to irradiated I-E-transgenic mice²⁴² and destroy grafted islets in

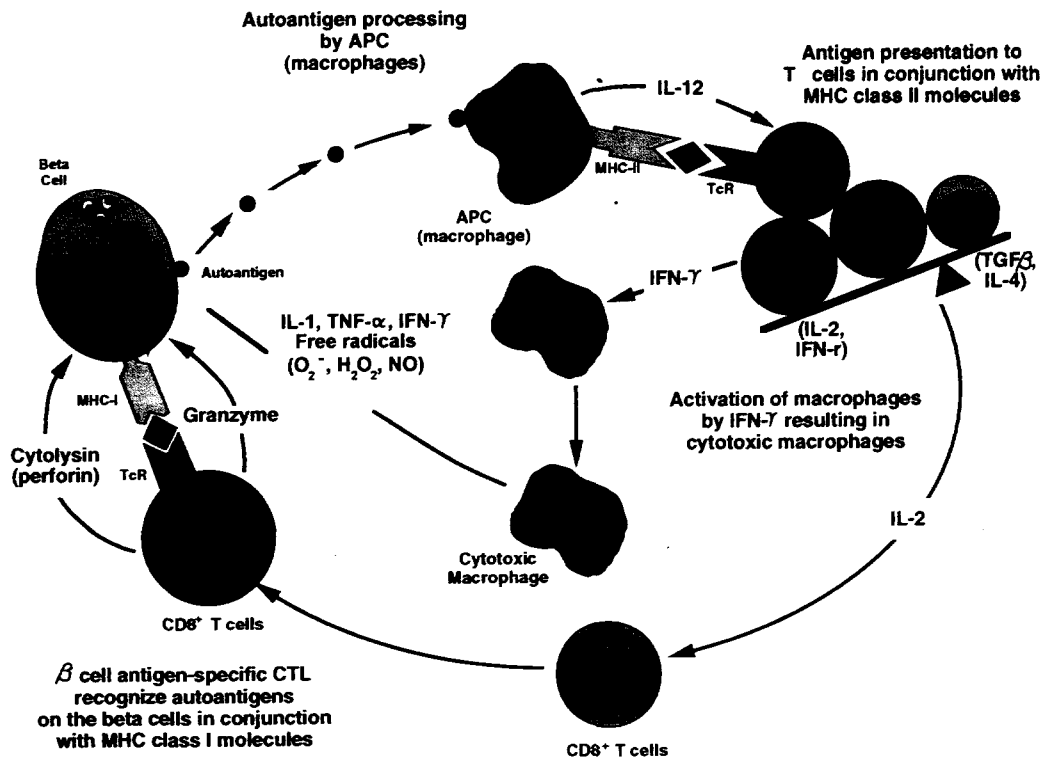


Fig. 3. Schematic diagram of hypothesis for the possible collaboration of macrophages, CD4+ T cells, and CD8+ T cells in the destruction of beta cells in conjunction with MHC-class I and II molecules. β -cell autoantigens may be released from β -cells during spontaneous turnover. The antigens are then processed by macrophages and presented to helper T-cells in association with MHC class II molecules. While this process is taking place, β -cell-specific pre-cytotoxic T cells may be recruited to the islets and differentiated into effector T-cells by IL-2 and other cytokines released by CD4+ helper T-cells. IFN- γ released by helper T-cells (T_H1) can cause macrophages to become cytotoxic macrophages. The cytotoxic macrophages release substantial amounts of β -cell-toxic cytokines (including IL-1, TNF- α , and IFN- γ) and free radicals. In addition, the helper T-cells secrete interleukins that activate other helper T-cells, B-lymphocytes and cytotoxic T-cells. The autoantigen-specific CD8+ cytotoxic T cells, as final effectors, may recognize the autoantigens expressed on the many unaffected β -cells, in conjunction with MHC class I molecules. These CTL also release granzyme and cytolysin (perforin) which are toxic to β -cells. In this way, free radicals, cytokines, macrophages, helper T-cells and cytotoxic T-cells may act synergistically in the destruction of beta cells, leading to the clinical onset of IDDM.

diabetes-resistant mice²⁵⁸. Since diabetes and insulinitis can occur even when responding T-cells are unable to recognize islet-specific antigen directly on β -cells²⁵⁴, autoreactive CD4+ T-cells may be able to effect β -cell damage by non-specific inflammatory mechanisms, such as by releasing β -cell-toxic cytokines. It has been shown that IL-1 and tumour necrosis factor have a cytotoxic effect on BB rat pancreatic β -cells in vitro^{65,259}. However, this may be only one of several mechanisms that cause β -cell loss in IDDM, especially since the well-established HLA-associations with IDDM do not correlate with the monokine secretory phenotype (high in subjects with IDDM-associated HLA genotypes and low in subjects with

HLA genotypes providing resistance to IDDM)²⁶⁰.

It is thought that regulatory T-cells are present in the islet tissue of NOD mice²⁴⁴. The islets of NOD mice may contain both effector cells and cells capable of inhibiting these effector cells. It is believed that the immuno-regulatory balance can be shifted in favour of either suppression of the effector cells, impairing β -cell destruction, or the enhancement of the effector cells, leading to β -cell destruction²⁴⁹.

(3) T-cell receptor diversity and the pathogenesis of T-cell-mediated autoimmunity; Most CD4+CD8- and CD4-CD8+ T-cells express α - β T-cell receptors (TcRs) and recognize antigenic epitopes presented by MHC class II and

class I molecules respectively. CD4-CD8-peripheral T-cells constitute approximately 0.5-10% of the total T-cell population, and the great majority of CD4-CD8-T-cells express a TcR composed of γ - and δ -chains²⁵⁴. Each TcR chain is encoded by several genes (D and/or J and V) which rearrange during T-cell ontogeny to generate functional TcR rearrangements. In the germline, these genes are organized into multiple families, each composed of several members sharing > 75% sequence homology; 14V γ (4 families), 7V δ (6 families), over 50V α (22 families) and over 50V β (20 families) genes have been described in humans²⁶¹⁻²⁶⁴. The high degree of variability already determined by differential J-(D)-V usage is increased by the enormous diversity of the junctional region, where all 20 amino acids may be found at each residue. Studies using specific antigenic systems have indicated that although conservation of the predominant α - and β -chain gene sequences is not required for antigen/MHC specificity, there is a significant correlation between selective usage of certain TcR sequences and recognition of certain antigen/MHC complexes²⁶⁵.

Studies on several animal models of autoimmunity have suggested an association between autoimmune responses and selective T-cell receptor usage; the most striking results have been reported in the autoimmune disease experimental allergic encephalomyelitis (EAE), an animal model for multiple sclerosis (MS)²⁶⁶. In contrast, studies of NOD mouse insulinitis T-cells²⁶⁷⁻²⁶⁸ and islet-reactive T-cell clones²⁴²⁻²⁴⁴ have suggested a diverse TcR repertoire. Of special note is the observation that islet-infiltrating T-cells from young NOD mice (4-6 weeks of age) use a limited TcR repertoire^{267,269-270}. Since the predominant V β elements were strikingly different in each case, such restricted TcR usage may not play a major role in the disease process. Studies of insulinitis CD8+ and γ δ + T-cells isolated from the pancreatic grafts of transplanted diabetic patients undergoing recurrence of IDDM have also revealed restricted TcR usage and oligoclonality. However, as in mice, the predominant clonotypes in each patient were different and junctional sequences (VDJ) showed considerable heterogeneity within and between patients. Altogether, these findings suggest that these islet-infiltrating T-cells may recognize multiple MHC-peptide complexes on β -cells or may be recruited to the site by superantigen-like antigen²⁷¹. Therefore, any hypothesis attempting to explain the immuno-

pathogenesis of IDDM must take this diversity into consideration (Fig. 3).

(4) Involvement of cytokines and free radicals in β -cell destruction;

① **Cytokines;** So far we have discussed the possibility that β -cells are targeted by autoreactive immunocytes, such as T-cells, macrophages and natural killer cells. Biochemical mediators of cytotoxicity, including cytokines, perforins, and proteases, may also selectively destroy β -cells²⁷². Interleukin-1 (IL-1) has been extensively studied as one candidate cytokine for this selective destruction²⁷³⁻²⁷⁵ and has been reported to be selectively cytotoxic in vitro²⁷⁶. In the same report, IL-1 was also shown to induce transient diabetes in normal rats²⁷⁶, and it has been suggested that IL-1 receptors are present on β -cells²⁷⁷. While arguments about whether IL-1 selectively affects only β -cells and not other endocrine cells, or not have been ongoing, it has been shown that seven days of exposure to IL-1 β did produce ultrastructural degenerative changes only in β -cells²⁷⁸. Several further studies have shown that IL-1 β cytotoxicity in a certain time-dose window is clearly restricted to β -cells²⁷⁹⁻²⁸¹. The effects of IL-1 are potentiated by tumour necrosis factor (TNF)²⁵⁹. In vitro studies have shown that the effects of cytokines, interleukin-6 (IL-6), TNF, lymphotoxin, and γ -interferon are additive²⁸² and that these mediators, acting alone or synergistically, may destroy islet islets or islets in cell cultures²⁸³⁻²⁸⁶. On the basis of these observations, it is likely that cytokines may play an important role in the destruction of β -cells. The precise mechanisms whereby cytokines effect the destruction of β -cells remain to be determined. One study on TNF showed that it enhances IL-1 cytotoxicity in vitro, but that it protects NOD mice from developing diabetes²⁸⁷. Regarding BB rats, Kolb and his colleagues have shown that human recombinant IL-2 when administered to BB rats increased the incidence of diabetes and that an earlier age of onset was observed²⁸⁸. In contrast, higher doses of IL-2 were not seen to have any effect on the incidence of diabetes in other studies²⁸⁹. Expression of interferon- γ in transgenic mice was seen to correlate with their development of an immune form of diabetes, suggesting that interferon- γ may play a role in the pathogenesis of autoimmune IDDM²⁹⁰. One recent paper has demonstrated that the expression of interferon- α in β -cells, of transgenic mice can induce diabetes. In these animals, the

selective loss of β -cells, but the relative sparing of pancreatic α -cells and δ -cells, was associated with a mixed inflammation centred on the islets²⁹¹. These results suggest that activation of local macrophages and natural killer cells by interferon- α may be the primary cause of the β -cell loss.

② **Free radicals;** Several studies have implicated the role of oxygen-derived radicals and their metabolites in macrophage/ neutrophil-mediated tissue injury. Macrophages and neutrophils undergo a respiratory burst in response to their activation by particulate and/or specific soluble inflammation mediators²⁹²⁻²⁹⁴. This is associated with a 2-to 20-fold increase in oxygen consumption and increased glucose metabolism via the hexose monophosphate shunt, depending on the cell and nature of the stimulus²⁹⁵. In conjunction with an increase in oxygen consumption, neutrophils and macrophages have been shown to generate both the superoxide anion (O_2^-) and hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2). The superoxide anion may act as either an oxidant or a reductant, depending on the substance with which it reacts. It may act as an oxidant, gaining an electron to form H_2O_2 . When two superoxide anions react with each other to form H_2O_2 and O_2 in a dismutation reaction, one anion acts as an oxidant and the other as a reductant. H_2O_2 may also be formed by phagocytic cells, which involves the direct double reduction of oxygen without the intermediate formation of the superoxide anion. An example of this reaction is the formation of H_2O_2 by the interaction of glucose and glucose oxidase. It appears that the toxic effect of activated macrophages on eukaryotic cells is mediated through the superoxide anion and hydrogen peroxide, although the mechanisms of cell injury are not clearly understood.

As discussed above, the cellular and molecular mechanisms for mediating the effect of cytokines on β -cells are unknown. Among the various mechanism proposed, generation of oxygen free radicals in the targets cells has been implicated²⁹⁶ as islet cells contain very low oxygen free radical scavenging activities²⁹⁷⁻²⁹⁸ and are very vulnerable to free radicals²⁹⁸. It has been suggested that the cytokine products of infiltrating macrophages and lymphocytes may contribute to β -cell damage by inducing the production of oxygen free radicals in the islet cell²⁸².

③ **Transgenic mice, immunological tolerance and insulindependent diabetes mellitus;** Thymic tolerance has

been well established as the primary mechanism for inducing tolerance to self-antigens. T-cell tolerance to antigens expressed in the thymus results in clonal deletion²⁹⁹⁻³⁰⁹ or functional inactivation (anergy)³¹⁰⁻³¹³ of self-reactive T-cells. Anergic T-cells express self-reactive T-cell receptors but cannot be activated by self antigen either in vivo or in vitro or by anti-TcR antibodies in the absence of interleukin-2³¹⁴⁻³¹⁷. T-cells can also undergo tolerance induction in the periphery. Peripheral clonal deletion has been demonstrated for antigen-specific and MIs-specific T-cells³¹⁸⁻³²⁰. Down-regulation of TcR or co-receptors by self-reactive T-cells in the periphery can result in peripheral unresponsiveness, which may or may not be restored in vitro by polyclonal stimulation or stimulation with antigen³²¹⁻³²². Unresponsiveness to antigens expressed in the periphery has also been demonstrated in studies of transgenic mice expressing selected proteins (viral proteins, allogenic MHC molecules, and cytokines) in various organs during the development of the immune system^{224,291,323-328}. Some of these models, including those expressing interferon- γ and interferon- α in β -cells, developed lymphocytic infiltration of the islets of Langerhans and diabetes, although the effector cell population and the mechanisms which triggered the infiltration were not characterized in detail^{224,291,327-328}. Other models developed a non-immunologically-mediated form of hyperglycaemia, possibly as a result of over-expression of the transgene leading to perturbation of protein synthesis or transport^{290,325,329}. With the exception of the model of Morahan et al³²⁶, neither thymocytes nor peripheral T-cells from transgenic mice could mount a transgenic antigen-proliferative response, suggesting the involvement of thymic tolerance. Recently, Heath et al³³⁰ have suggested that thymic tolerance may have also been involved in the model of Morahan et al³²⁶, owing to intrathymic expression of the allogenic MHC molecules. Other groups have found that the potential transgene-reactive T-cells were present and able to proliferate in response to the transgenic antigen in vitro, but an autoimmune response in the transgenic animal was not seen³³¹⁻³³³. In the model of Oldstone et al³³⁴, lymphocytic choriomeningitis virus (LCMV)-transgenic mice (expressing LCMV in β -cells) were able to generate virus-specific CTL response upon restimulation with the infecting virus. This response, however, was retarded in their development in several sublines, suggesting a temporary state of T-cell hyporesponsiveness. Simi-

lar studies were carried out by Ohashi et al³⁵ in mice transgenic for both a LCMV-specific TcR and LCMV. In this model, self-reactive T-cells remained functionally silent, apparently because of the inability of the β -cells to activate an immune response properly. Despite the enormous progress that has been made in our understanding of how tolerance is imposed upon self-reactive T-cells, the precise mechanism responsible for the breakdown of tolerance to β -cells in IDDM remains to be determined.

CONCLUSION

The development of IDDM is multifactorial and it is therefore not easy to simplify the pathogenic mechanisms involved in the aetiology of the disease. Both genetic and environmental factors are involved in the autoimmune process leading to pancreatic β -cell destruction (Fig. 1). Macrophages are clearly involved early in this process since inactivation of macrophages results in the prevention of autoimmune IDDM. Accordingly, it is possible that the presentation of β -cell-specific autoantigens by macrophages to CD4+ T helper cells in conjunction with MHC class II molecules might be the initial step in the development of autoimmune diabetes. Most of the infiltrating lymphocytes at the time of diagnosis in diabetic patients are CD8+ T-cells, suggesting that CD8+ T-cells play a major role in the destruction of pancreatic β -cells at a later stage of the autoimmune process (Fig. 3). In animal models, CD4+ T-cells are required for the destruction of pancreatic β -cells by CD8+ T-cells, which may act as final effectors. Free radicals and cytokines, such as interleukin-1, released by macrophages and monocytes may work synergistically with the action of the CD8+ effector T-cells, to destroy pancreatic β -cells, leading to autoimmune IDDM.

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