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The Role of Cytomegalovirus in Alopecia Areata: PCR and "Nested" PCR Study

Thesis

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Faculty of Medicine Tanta University 2001 This work is dedicated to

The Memory of my Father and Mother

and

to My Wife and Children

بسم الله الرحمن الرحبم

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List of Abbreviations

AA Alopecia areata

ALL Acute lymphoplastic leukemia

CMI Cell mediated immunity

CML Chronic myeloid leukemia

CMV Cytomegalovirus

CTCL Cutaneous T cell lymphoma

DEBR Dundee experimental bald rat

EBV Epstien Barr virus

GVHD Graft-Versus-Host Disease

HF Hair follicle

HLA Human leukocytic antigen

HPV Human papillomavirus

HSV Herpes simplex virus

ICAM Intercellular Adhesion Molecule

IL-1 Inter-leukin-1

KD Kilo Dalton

LAH Loose anagen hair

MHC Major histocomptability complex

MG Myasthenia gravis

nDNA Native DNA

nm Nanometer

nPCR Nested PCR

PA Pili annulati

PAS Periodic acid Schiff

Pb pair base

PCR Polymerase chain reaction

SCID Severe combined immunodeficiency

TCR T cell receptor

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INTRODUCTION & AIM OF THE WORK

Alopecia areata (AA) is one of the most common non-cicatricial alopecias. It is an inflammatory, usually reversible disorder, characterized by the spontaneous appearance of circumscribed patches of complete hair loss, which, when severe, can result in loss of all scalp (alopecia totalis) and body (alopecia universalis) hair (Bystryn and Tamesis, 1991)¹.

It is not possible to attribute all or indeed any case of AA to a single cause. Among the many factors that appear to be implicated, in at least a proportion of cases, are the patient's genetic constitution, non-specific immune and organ-specific autoimmune reactions and possibly emotional factors (Madani and Shapiro, 2000)².

Many different lines of therapy have been used for AA. However, the subsequent studies have done little more than reinforcing, the generally held belief, that both genetic predisposition and the atopic state influence prognosis but the triggering mechanisms remain obscure (Dawber et al., 1998)³.

Occasional epidemics of AA observed among subjects living in closed communities have suggested a viral etiology (Thiers and Galbraith, 1986)⁴. Support for this possibility comes from the report, by Grimes, of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) evidence of cytomegalovirus (CMV) in 12 of 13 cases of vitiligo, a closely related condition (Grimes, et al., 1996)⁵.

Skinner et al., (1995)^{6, 7} used PCR technique to detect CMV DNA in paraffin block sections of AA lesions. They suggested that hair root could be a site of latency for CMV, which would explain much of the behavior of AA with its tendency to intermittent remissions and relapses. It is known that if any virus is implied in the etiology of certain disease, it means that it must be found in a significant percentage of the skin lesions of this disease.

Hence, the aim of this work is to search for CMV in the lesional tissue in patients of AA by PCR and nested PCR in order to shed a light on the possibility of a role for CMV in this disease.

