

Department of Internal Medicine

Division of Rheumatology

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General Summary

An internist must aim to practice patient-oriented medicine that is well grounded in medical science. Therefore, our department encourages its staff members to do basic and clinical research. Major fields of research are clinical and experimental immunology.

Research Activities

Clinical and experimental studies of autoimmune disease were performed

1. Analysis of the effects of neovascularization inhibitors in animal models of rheumatoid arthritis

Several studies have reported the arthritis-inhibiting effects of neovascularization inhibitors in animal models of rheumatoid arthritis. We evaluated the effects of the neovascularization inhibitor endostatin in an animal model of collagen-induced arthritis. Furthermore, we are analyzing the mechanism of the arthritis-inhibiting effects of endostatin.

2. Analysis of telomerase activity in peripheral blood mononuclear cells of patients with autoimmune disease

The activation of telomerase has been observed in healthy cells, including normal lymphocytes. An increase in telomerase activity is associated with the activation of lymphocytes. Much attention has been paid to the role of telomerase in immunocytes. We measured telomerase activity in peripheral blood mononuclear cells obtained from patients with autoimmune diseases, especially systemic lupus erythematosus.

3. Clinical studies aimed at standardizing immunosuppressant therapy for autoimmune disease

Many immunosuppressant drugs have been used to treat severe autoimmune diseases, such as amyopathic dermatomyositis with interstitial pneumonia, but the efficiency and treatment strategy of these drugs have not been clarified. We performed a clinical trial to establish a strategy for the treatment of severe autoimmune diseases. Clinical studies aimed at standardizing immunosuppressant therapy for autoimmune disease were performed.

Publications

Kurosaka D, Yasuda J, Yoshida K, Yoneda A, Yasuda C, Kingetsu I, Toyokawa Y, Yokoyama T, Saito S, Yamada A. Abnormal telomerase activity and telomere length in T and B cells from

patients with systemic lupus erythematosus. *J Rheumatol* 2006; **33**: 1102-7.

Yoshida M, Tsuji M, Kurosaka D, Kurosaka D, Yasuda J, Ito Y, Nishizawa T, Yamada A.

Autoimmunity to citrullinated type II collagen in rheumatoid arthritis. *Mod Rheumatol* 2006; **16**: 276-81.

Reviews and Books

Kurosaka D. Abnormalities in lymphocyte telomerase activity and telomere length in systemic lupus erythematosus. *Nihon Rinsho Meneki Gakkai Kaishi* 2007; **30**: 29-36.