

ENHANCED PRODUCTION OF MURINE INTERFERON γ
BY T CELLS GENERATED IN RESPONSE TO
BACTERIAL INFECTION*

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It is generally accepted that T cells produce lymphokines during the generation and expression of cell-mediated immunity (reviewed in 1). Lymphokine preparations often exhibit antiviral activity that is known to be mediated by interferon (IFN).¹ This IFN, because of its distinct antigenic and physicochemical properties, has been designated IFN γ to differentiate it from the IFN α and IFN β classes (2). In addition to its distinct molecular nature, IFN γ has been reported to be relatively more active than other classes of IFN in its ability to directly inhibit the growth of neoplastic cells (3, 4) as well as in its ability to function as an immunomodulator (5, 6). Because of its T cell origin and pronounced actions on immune responses, it is conceivable that the primary role of the lymphokine IFN γ might be one other than its antiviral action.

IFN γ has been detected in sera of immunized mice after injection of sensitizing antigen (7) or in vitro after exposure of lymphoid cells of immune animals to antigen (8, 9). In place of specific antigenic stimulation, polyclonal T cell mitogens such as phytohemagglutinin (PHA) or concanavalin A (Con A) have been used in vitro to induce the synthesis of low levels of IFN γ from lymphoid cells of nonimmune animals (10, 11). Because polyclonal mitogens stimulate a far greater number of T cells than does specific antigen, it was considered of interest to determine whether lymphocytes from animals actively expressing T cell-mediated immunity might produce higher IFN γ levels in response to PHA or Con A. The studies presented in this paper show that spleen cells from animals given an immunizing infection with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes* consistently produced 10- to 20-fold more IFN γ than cells from normal mice after exposure to PHA or Con A. This finding has enabled the development of a reproducible method for the production of high-titered murine IFN γ (MuIFN γ). These studies also reveal a striking parallel between the development of T cell-mediated anti-*Listeria* immunity (12, 13) and an enhanced ability of spleen cells from the responding mice to produce IFN γ in response to PHA or Con A stimulation. Some physicochemical properties of mitogen-induced MuIFN γ are also presented.

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¹ *Abbreviations used in this paper:* C, complement; Con A, concanavalin A; FBS, fetal bovine serum; HuIFN γ , human interferon γ ; IFN, interferon; LDH, lactic dehydrogenase; MuIFN γ , murine interferon γ ; NDV, Newcastle disease virus; PHA, phytohemagglutinin; SDS-PAGE, sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis; SEA, staphylococcal enterotoxin A; TPA, diterpene ester 12-*O*-tetradecanoylphorbol-13-acetate.

Materials and Methods

Animals. Male and female AB6F₁ mice (A/Tru × C57BL/6 Tru) 8–12 wk of age were used in these studies. Animals were supplied by the Trudeau Institute Animal Breeding facility, Saranac Lake, NY, and were shown to be free of 11 common murine viruses according to tests by Microbiological Associates Viral Testing Service, Cockeysville, MD. Also, mice were found free of lactic dehydrogenase (LDH) virus as determined by the failure of an injection of AB6F₁ sera to raise the serum level of LDH enzyme in germ-free mice (14). Serum levels of LDH were measured with an LDH diagnostic kit (500) from Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO.

New Zealand white rabbits were originally purchased from Dutchland Laboratories, Denver, PA and have been randomly bred at the Trudeau Institute for a generation. Rabbit sera was used as a source of complement (C).

Bacteria. *L. monocytogenes* (strain EGD, serotype 3b) was grown to log phase in Trypticase soy broth (BBL Microbiology Systems, Becton, Dickinson & Co., Cockeysville, MD), dispensed in 1.0-ml aliquots, and frozen at -70°C . An inoculum of bacteria was prepared for intravenous injection by diluting bacteria in saline and injecting 0.2 ml of the appropriate dilution. The standard inoculum for intravenous immunization was 2×10^9 , and 10^5 was used for challenge in the studies on the passive transfer of immunity.

Listeria Antigen. The soluble *Listeria* antigen used in these studies was prepared according to published procedures (15). Briefly, *L. monocytogenes* was grown in 1,000 ml of low molecular weight Trypticase soy broth at 37°C with agitation for 72 h. The culture supernatant containing antigen was concentrated 10-fold by ultrafiltration on an Amicon XM-50 membrane (Amicon Corp., Scientific Sys. Div., Lexington, MA). The antigen was then precipitated from the concentrate by the addition of solid $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$ to a final concentration of 75% saturation. The precipitate was resuspended in sterile H_2O and dialyzed overnight against running tap H_2O . The antigen was sterilized by $0.45\text{-}\mu\text{m}$ millipore filtration, and protein concentration determined by the method of Lowry (16), and lyophilized. The resulting antigen preparation was assessed as to its relative potency by its ability to elicit delayed-type hypersensitivity in the footpads of 6-d *Listeria*-immune mice and its failure to cause an increase in footpad size of nonimmune animals.

MuIFN γ Induction in Spleen Cell Cultures. Spleens were removed aseptically from groups of mice and placed in serum-free RPMI 1640 (Gibco Laboratories, Grand Island Biological Co., Grand Island, NY) containing 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$ gentamycin. Cells were separated from the spleen capsule by holding the spleen stationary and gently pressing out the cords of cells from the cut ends with a glass rod. The cell cords were dispersed into a single cell suspension by several cycles of aspiration with a pasteur pipette. The cells were washed two times with medium and counted in a hemacytometer. Cell viability was always $>95\%$ as determined by exclusion of trypan blue. Spleen cells were suspended at a concentration of 10^7 cells/ml and 2 ml of this suspension was placed into 35 × 22-mm tissue culture dishes (Costar, Data Packaging, Cambridge, MA), and IFN synthesis was induced by incubating the cultures with the designated concentration of mitogen for 24 h unless specified otherwise.

Passive Transfer of Anti-Listeria Immunity with Spleen Cells. Passive transfer of anti-*Listeria* immunity was measured by removing spleens from control or *Listeria*-injected mice and preparing spleen cells as described in the preceding section, except that cells were suspended in RPMI 1640 supplemented with 1% fetal bovine sera (FBS) (Gibco Laboratories, Grand Island Biological Co.). The cell suspension was filtered through gauze, washed two times with medium, and then one spleen equivalent was injected intravenously into recipient mice as previously reported (17). 30 min before cell infusion, the recipients were injected intravenously with 10^5 *L. monocytogenes*. The level of immunity transferred is expressed as the \log_{10} protection, which was determined by subtracting the number of bacteria in the spleens of immune cell recipients from the number present in the spleens of normal cell recipients 48 h after injection of bacteria.

Rabbit Anti-Mouse IgG Serum. Rabbits were immunized by administering two sequential intramuscular injections, 2 wk apart, of 200 μg of purified mouse IgG emulsified in complete Freund's adjuvant. The mouse IgG was purified by protein A-Sepharose (Pharmacia Fine Chemicals, Div. of Pharmacia Inc., Piscataway, NJ) affinity chromatography (18). 3 wk after the last injection, the rabbits were bled, and the specificity of the antisera was determined

against whole mouse serum and purified IgG by immunoelectrophoresis. The rabbit anti-mouse IgG (1:10) destroyed 50% of murine spleen cells in C-mediated lysis.

Identification of MuIFN γ -producing Cells. The MuIFN γ -producing cells were tested for their susceptibility to C-mediated lysis after treatment with monoclonal antibodies directed against Thy-1.2, Lyt-1.2, Lyt-2.2, and I-A^k. The monoclonal anti-Thy-1.2 was originally produced by Marshak-Rothstein et al. (19) and obtained from the Salk Institute, La Jolla, CA. The anti-Lyt-1.2 and anti-Lyt-2.2 was purchased from New England Nuclear, Boston, MA. Anti-I-A^k antibody was produced from a hybridoma derived by Oi et al. (20) and obtained from the Salk Institute. Rabbit serum C was prescreened on thymocytes to determine lytic activity and was found at all dilutions tested to give <10% spontaneous lysis. Hybridomas secreting anti-Thy-1.2 antibody or anti-I-A^k were propagated in RPMI 1640 supplemented with 10% FBS. Supernatants from these cultures were used as a source of antibody at a 1:10 dilution. The anti-Lyt antibodies were used at a two- to fivefold excess of that required for lysis of the specific cell type in the preparation.

Spleen cells from animals immunized 6 d earlier with *L. monocytogenes* were suspended at 5×10^6 cells/ml in 1.0 ml of RPMI 1640 containing 1% FBS and 10 μ g/ml gentamycin. The desired concentration of antibody was added to the appropriate tubes and the suspension incubated in a 37°C water bath. 10 min later, C was added to a final dilution of 1:10. After a 1-h incubation, cells were washed free of antibody, and cell death was quantitated by exclusion of ethidium bromide (21).

For the C-mediated cytolytic studies, a modification of the procedure outlined above for induction of MuIFN γ synthesis was used. The antibody-treated cells were distributed in 0.2-ml quantities to wells of a 96-well microtiter plate (Costar, Data Packaging). PHA was added to a final concentration of 5 μ g/ml to each experimental group consisting of triplicate wells. After 24 h incubation, the supernatants from each well of the respective experimental group were pooled and assayed for IFN activity.

Chemicals and Reagents. Purified Con A (type IV) was purchased from Sigma Chemical Co., and purified PHA was obtained from Burroughs Wellcome, Research Triangle Park, NC. Staphylococcal enterotoxin A was produced by the Microbiology Biochemistry Branch, Division of Microbiology, Food and Drug Administration, Cincinnati, OH. Stock solutions (1 mg/ml) of the mitogens were prepared in sterile distilled H₂O.

Cultures of L cells (strain Lpa) and pure bone marrow-derived macrophages were induced with either Newcastle disease virus (NDV) or polyinosinic-polycytidylic acid (poly [I]·poly [C]) according to published procedures (22–24) to provide preparations of MuIFN α and MuIFN β for use in these studies.

IFN and Antiserum Neutralization Assays. IFN assays were carried out as previously reported (25) using the L929B strain of L cells and vesicular stomatitis virus as the challenge virus. Because no MuIFN γ standard is available, included in each assay was the MuIFN international standard (G-002-904-511), and all titers were corrected against this international standard.

The antiserum neutralization assays of antiviral activities were done as described by Havell et al. (26) also using L929B cells and vesicular stomatitis virus. The anti-L cell MuIFN serum used was the kind gift of Dr. Erwin Braude and Dr. W. E. Stewart II (Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, NY). This antiserum, which neutralizes both MuIFN α and MuIFN β , was raised in a goat by immunization with NDV-induced L cell IFN (specific activity, 10⁶ U/mg) known to possess both MuIFN α and MuIFN β activity (27, 28). The rabbit anti-MuIFN γ neutralizing serum was the kind gift of Dr. Juana Wietzerbin (Curie Institute, Paris, France). This antiserum was raised according to published procedures (29).

Molecular Weight and Isoelectric Point Determinations. Molecular weight determinations were carried out by means of gel filtration column chromatography using Bio-Gel P-60, 100–200 mesh (Bio-Rad Laboratories, Richmond, CA) as the column matrix. The column buffer was 0.05 M Na citrate with 1 M NaCl, pH 6.0. The column (73 \times 2.5 cm) was run at 4°C and calibrated with the following molecular weight markers: rabbit IgG, 150,000; ovalbumin, 43,000; myoglobin, 18,500; and cytochrome C, 12,000. 1-ml fractions were collected at a column flow rate of 15 ml/h.

Chromatofocusing, a technique originally described by Sluyterman et al. (30, 31), was used to determine the isoelectric points of the IFN in various preparations. A chromatofocusing kit

containing the ion exchanger PBE 94 as well as the polybuffer exchangers, polybuffers 96 and polybuffer 74, were purchased from Pharmacia Fine Chemicals, Div. of Pharmacia, Inc. Samples and the ion exchanger PBE 94 were equilibrated in starting buffer (0.025 M Tris-acetate, pH 8.4), and the column was packed (14×0.5 cm) with PBE 94. The sample to be chromatofocused was then run into the column bed, and the generation of a pH gradient (5.0–8.0) was achieved by elution with the polybuffer system (3% polybuffer 96 and 7% polybuffer 74, adjusted to pH 5.0 with acetic acid). The column was run at room temperature with a flow rate of 15 ml/h. 1-ml fractions were collected and assayed for IFN activity, and the pH of each sample measured at room temperature.

Results

Enhanced IFN Production by Spleen Cells from Listeria-immune Mice. Because T cell mitogens are inducers of IFN γ in nonimmune animals (10, 11), it was considered of interest to determine the relative ability of spleen cells obtained from mice actively expressing T cell-mediated antibacterial immunity to produce IFN in response to polyclonal T cell activators. Spleen cells from both control and mice infected intravenously 6 d earlier with *Listeria* were incubated for 24 h with the designated concentrations of the mitogenic agents (Table I). The results of these studies show that spleen cells from *Listeria*-immune animals produced levels of IFN at least 16-fold higher than similarly treated cultures from nonimmune mice. It was repeatedly observed in 20 separate experiments that spleen cell cultures from *Listeria*-immune mice produced 10–20 times more antiviral activity than normal cells induced with Con A or PHA, although the absolute IFN units fluctuated two- to fourfold between experiments. Specific antigenic stimulation of spleen cells from *Listeria*-immune mice with a preparation of soluble *Listeria* antigen(s) resulted in the synthesis of low levels of IFN, but the antigen failed to elicit IFN in nonimmune spleen cell cultures. Marginal levels of IFN activity (≤ 2) were detected in supernatants from *Listeria*-immune spleen cell cultures not incubated with the mitogens.

Characterization of Immune Spleen Cell IFN. The γ class of interferons is characterized as being inactivated at low pH (2.0) and by the failure of antisera raised against IFN α and IFN β to neutralize its antiviral activity (32, 33). In the following studies,

TABLE I
*MuIFN γ Production after Mitogenic or Antigenic Stimulation of Spleen Cells
from Normal or Listeria-immune Mice*

Spleen cell source	Mitogenic agent*	24-h IFN titer
Control mice	PHA (5 μ g/ml)	U/ml 256
	Con A (1 μ g/ml)	64
	<i>Listeria</i> antigen (5 μ g/ml)	<2
	None	<2
+6-D <i>Listeria</i> - immune mice	PHA (5 μ g/ml)	4,096
	Con A (1 μ g/ml)	3,072
	<i>Listeria</i> antigen (5 μ g/ml)	32
	None	≤ 2

* 2-ml cultures of spleen cells (10^7 cells/ml) were incubated for 24 h with the designated final concentrations of mitogenic agents.

the IFN produced by *Listeria*-immune spleen cell cultures stimulated with Con A or PHA were analyzed as to their stabilities at pH 2.0 and to their antigenic properties. Murine IFN preparations containing both MuIFN α and MuIFN β were included as controls in these experiments. These MuIFN were produced by L cells and by pure cultures of macrophages induced with NDV or poly (I) · poly (C) (22–24). All samples were dialyzed at 4°C against a pH 2.0 buffer for 5 d and returned to pH 7.4 by dialysis against PBS. The results in Table II show that acidification of the L cell and macrophage IFN preparations resulted in no more than a twofold decrease in antiviral activities, whereas the mitogen-induced spleen cell IFN were found to be relatively more acid labile. In repeated pH 2.0 lability studies, it was observed that each MuIFN γ preparation produced in vitro possesses a fraction (3–15% of the original activity) that was not inactivated by the 5-d acid treatment.

The antigenic classification of the IFN preparations used in the pH stability studies was done through the use of specific anti-MuIFN sera. A goat anti-MuIFN serum possessing both anti-MuIFN α and anti-MuIFN β activity and a rabbit anti-MuIFN γ serum were used to determine the degrees to which the antiviral activities of each test IFN could be neutralized (Table II). The antiserum possessing specific populations of antibodies directed against MuIFN α and MuIFN β exhibited very high neutralizing titers for the macrophage and L cell IFN but failed to inhibit the antiviral activities of either the PHA or Con A-induced spleen IFN preparations. Conversely, the rabbit anti-MuIFN γ serum neutralized only the mitogen-induced spleen cell IFN. Similar neutralization studies performed with the acid-stable portion of the PHA-induced spleen cell IFN showed that it also was IFN γ by its antigenic properties (data not shown). Thus, based on the relative acid lability and the serological results, the major IFN activity produced by the spleen cell cultures was MuIFN γ . However, it should be mentioned that, whereas the major antiviral activity in these preparations is MuIFN γ , we cannot exclusively eliminate the possible presence of low levels of other antigenic

TABLE II
Properties of Different MuIFN Preparations

Source of MuIFN	Inducing agent	pH 2.0 treatment*		Neutralizing titer of \ddagger	
		Before	After	Anti-MuIFN ($\alpha + \beta$) \S	Anti-MuIFN γ
Lpa cells	NDV	12,288	8,192	14,746	<12
	poly(I) · poly(C)	3,072	1,536	52,428	<12
Bone marrow macrophages	NDV	4,096	2,048	6,554	<12
	poly(I) · poly(C)	512	512	39,322	<12
<i>Listeria</i> -immune spleen cell cultures	PHA	1,024	32	<32	50
	Con A	384	64	<32	50

* Samples dialyzed at 4°C for 5 d against Clark Lubs pH 2.0 KCl-HCl buffer, followed by dialysis for 1 d against PBS, pH 7.4.

\ddagger The antiserum neutralizing titer is expressed as the reciprocal of the highest dilution of antiserum that when mixed with an equal volume of test IFN (20 U/ml) neutralizes 50% of the antiviral activity of the IFN.

\S Antiserum possessing anti-MuIFN γ and anti-MuIFN β neutralizing antibodies.

classes of MuIFN. In the antibody neutralization studies, a final concentration of 10 U/ml of antiviral activity is reacted, and if <10% of the activity (<1 unit) is mediated by an IFN molecule not neutralized by the antibody, its antiviral activity would not be detected in this neutralization assay (34).

Temporal Relationship between the Development of Anti-Listeria Immunity and Enhanced Capacity of Spleen Cells to Produce MuIFN γ . The following experiments were designed to determine whether the enhanced production of MuIFN γ by spleen cells from *Listeria*-immune mice coincided with the peak of the antibacterial-immune response. This was tested by measuring the capacity of spleen cells harvested against time of *Listeria* infection to produce PHA-induced MuIFN γ and to passively transfer antibacterial immunity to normal recipients. The results illustrated in Fig. 1 clearly demonstrate a parallel between the development of antibacterial immunity and the ability of spleen cells to produce high-titered MuIFN γ . Thus, the ability of spleen cells to produce MuIFN γ and to transfer protective immunity developed, peaked, and declined at the same times.

Cellular Origin of MuIFN γ . Evidence indicates that T cells are the major producers of lymphokines, although B cells have also been implicated as potential contributors of these soluble mediators (35, 36). In the following studies, monoclonal antibodies and C were used to determine the nature of the spleen cells producing MuIFN γ . The findings presented in Table III reveal that treatment of cells with anti-Thy-1.2 plus C virtually abolished production of MuIFN γ . It should be noted that the low level of IFN activity that was produced after anti-Thy-1.2 plus C treatment was identified as MuIFN γ by its lability at pH 2.0 and by its antigenic properties (results not shown). The synthesis of this residual MuIFN γ could conceivably be attributed to small numbers of T cells possessing little or no Thy-1 antigen (37). In contrast to the almost total elimination of MuIFN γ production by anti-Thy-1.2, destruction of B lympho-

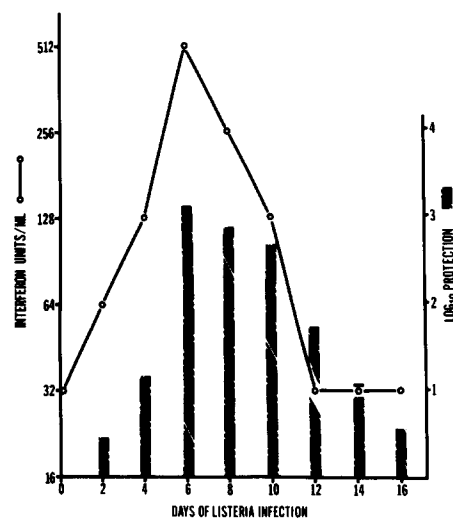


FIG. 1. Development of anti-*Listeria* immunity and the capacity for enhanced MuIFN γ synthesis by spleen cells from *Listeria*-infected mice. At the indicated day after intravenous injection of 2×10^8 *L. monocytogenes*, pooled spleen cells from groups of five mice were either induced with $5 \mu\text{g/ml}$ of PHA for 24 h to determine their ability to produce MuIFN γ (line graph) or tested for their ability to adoptively transfer anti-*Listeria* immunity (bar graph).

TABLE III
T Cell Dependence of MuIFN γ Synthesis in Spleen Cultures from Mice Immunized with Listeria Monocytogenes

Spleen source	Spleen cell treatment*	24-h IFN yield U/ml
Nonimmune control mice	None	16
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	None	2,048
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Antibodies - C (separate groups treated with either anti-Thy-1.2, anti-I-A ^k , or anti-IgG)	1,024
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	C	1,024
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-Thy-1.2 + C	32
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-I-A ^k + C	2,048
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-IgG + C	2,048
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-Thy-1.2 + I-A ^k + C	16

* Spleen cells were suspended at 5×10^6 cells/ml in 1.0 ml of RPMI 1640 supplemented with 1% FBS and 10 μ g/ml gentamycin. Antibody and C were added to the designated experimental groups. After antibody treatment, all cells were induced with PHA (5 μ g/ml).

TABLE IV
Lyt Phenotype of MuIFN γ -producing T Cells

Spleen source	Spleen cell treatment*	24-h IFN yield U/ml
Nonimmune control mice	None	16
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	None	2,048
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Antibody - C (separate groups treated with either anti-Thy-1.2, anti-Lyt-1.2, or anti-Lyt-2.2)	2,048
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	C	1,024
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-Thy-1.2 + C	32
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-Lyt-1.2 + C	64
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-Lyt-2.2 + C	384
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-Lyt-1.2 + Lyt-2.2 + C	16
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-Lyt-1.2 + anti-Lyt-1.2 + C‡	96
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Anti-Lyt-2.2 + anti-Lyt-2.2 + C‡	512
6-d <i>Listeria</i> -immune mice	Recombination of anti-Lyt-1.2 + C-treated cells with anti-Lyt-2.2 + C-treated cells.	1,024

* Spleen cells suspended at 5×10^6 cells/ml in 1.0 ml of RPMI 1640 supplemented with 1.0% FBS and 10 μ g/ml gentamycin. Antibody plus C was added to the appropriate groups as described in Materials and Methods. After antibody treatment, all groups were induced with PHA (5 μ g/ml).

‡ After antibody plus C treatment, viable cells were determined by exclusion of ethidium bromide, and the number of viable cells was then adjusted to 5×10^6 cells/ml before the addition of PHA.

cytes with anti-IgG plus C or anti-I-A plus C had no detectable effect on the titer of PHA-induced MuIFN γ .

Similar studies were performed to identify the T cell subpopulation(s) producing MuIFN γ through the use of specific cytolytic monoclonal antibodies directed against Lyt differentiation antigens. In Table IV, it is shown that the T cells producing MuIFN γ were more susceptible to destruction by anti-Lyt-1.2 plus C than with anti-

Lyt-2.2 and C. The combined effects of the two anti-Lyt antibodies reduced by MuIFN γ titer to slightly below that of the anti-Thy-1.2 plus C-treated cells.

Reduced MuIFN γ titers were also observed when cells treated with anti-Lyt-1.2 plus C were restored to the original number per culture (5×10^6 cells/ml). Based on this observation, it is reasonable to conclude that the T cell subpopulations not destroyed by anti-Lyt-1.2 plus C are not the contributors of the major portion of the MuIFN γ activity. This finding does not rule out the possibility that for maximum MuIFN γ production, Lyt-1 $^+$ 2 $^-$ cells might have to interact with other cell population(s). This is based on the additional findings presented in Table IV, which show that almost maximum MuIFN γ titers were obtained by (a) restoring the cells remaining after anti-Lyt-2.2 plus C treatment to the original number of cells per culture (5×10^6 cells/ml) or (b) by combining cells surviving after treatment with anti-Lyt-1.2 with those surviving after treatment with anti-Lyt-2.2 plus C. However, the increase in titers in each of the above cases might be on the borderline of significance because the MuIFN γ titer after anti-Lyt-2.2 plus C treatment was only threefold (384) lower than C-treated controls (1,024). Thus, this difference falls close to the inherent twofold error of the interferon assay.

Kinetics of MuIFN γ Release. The kinetics of MuIFN γ release from 6-d *Listeria*-immune spleen cell cultures stimulated with either 5 μ g/ml of PHA or 1 μ g/ml of Con A are presented in Fig. 2. Similar patterns of IFN release were exhibited by cultures induced with either T cell mitogen. IFN was first detected in the culture

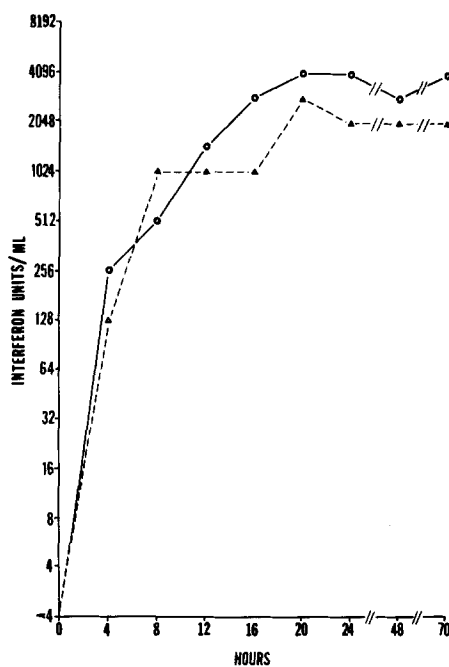


FIG. 2. Kinetics of MuIFN γ release from spleen cell cultures. Replicate cultures of 6-d *Listeria*-immune spleen cells (10^7 cells/ml) were incubated with PHA (5 μ g/ml) or Con A (1 μ g/ml). Supernatants of duplicate cultures from each mitogen-treated group were collected at the times indicated, pooled, and centrifuged. The supernatants were stored at 4°C until they were assayed for antiviral activity. Δ , Con A; \circ , PHA.

supernants as early as 4 h after the addition of the mitogens, with peak levels occurring at 18 h. After this time, MuIFN γ levels remained constant for an additional 48 h. From the slopes of the production curves and the levels of IFN released, it is concluded that the rate of synthesis and quantities of MuIFN γ produced by cultures of *Listeria*-immune spleen cells was the same when PHA or Con A were used as inducers. The kinetics of MuIFN γ release are similar to those reported for alloantigen-induced MuIFN γ (38).

MuIFN γ Induction by Different Concentrations of T Cell Mitogens. A series of studies was carried out to establish the optimum concentrations of T cell mitogens required to induce the maximum synthesis of MuIFN γ in spleen cell cultures from *Listeria*-immune and control mice. In addition to Con A and PHA, staphylococcal enterotoxin A (SEA) was included in these studies because it has been reported to be a potent inducer of IFN γ in both murine and human cell systems (11, 39). The findings presented in Table V reveal that the MuIFN γ levels from the *Listeria*-immune spleen cells were at least 10-fold greater than the corresponding yields from similarly treated nonimmune control cells. MuIFN γ production plateaued in immune spleen cell cultures incubated with PHA concentrations in the range of 0.5–10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$, whereas Con A elicited the highest titers of MuIFN γ activity in both control and immune cultures at a concentration of 1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$. The SEA failed to induce MuIFN γ in nonimmune control cultures with any of the concentrations tested. In fact, SEA was only effective in inducing MuIFN γ in immune spleen cell cultures, with the highest level of antiviral activity being detected in cultures incubated with the highest concentration (10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$) of SEA tested.

The diterpene ester 12-*O*-tetradecanoylphorbol-13-acetate (TPA) and the structurally related compound-mezerein have been reported (40) to enhance the levels of human IFN γ (HuIFN γ) produced by primary cultures of human leukocytes stimulated by PHA or several other T cell mitogens. Therefore, experiments were performed to determine whether these esters might also further augment the yield of MuIFN γ produced by *Listeria*-immune spleen cells. In these studies, cultures of spleen cells from immune mice were incubated with different concentrations of TPA or mezerein 3 h before the addition of PHA (5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$). Little or no enhancement in interferon yields

TABLE V
MuIFN γ Production by Normal and Listeria-immune Spleen Cell Cultures Induced with Different Concentrations of T Cell Mitogens

Source of spleen cells	Mitogen	24-h IFN yield (U/ml) induced by mitogen concentrations ($\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$)					
		0.05	0.1	0.5	1	5	10
Control	PHA	ND‡	<4	16	32	128	128
<i>Listeria</i> immune*	PHA	ND	80	1,024	1,024	1,024	1,536
Control	Con A	<4	<4	8	32	<4	<4
<i>Listeria</i> immune*	Con A	<4	4	256	768	384	32
Control	SEA	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8
<i>Listeria</i> immune*	SEA	<8	24	48	32	128	192

* Spleen cell cultures obtained from mice injected intravenously 6 d before with 2×10^8 *L. monocytogenes*.

‡ Not done.

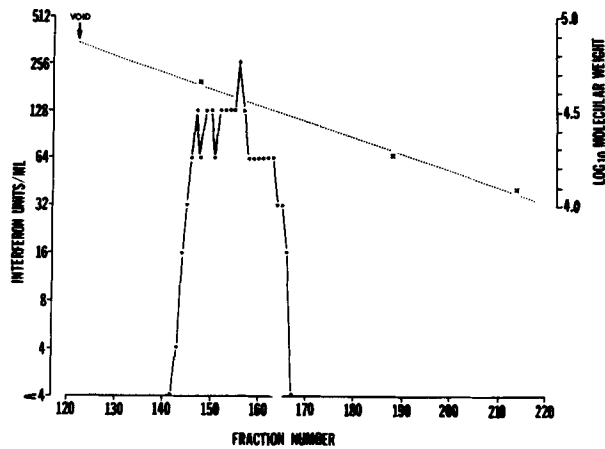


FIG. 3. Molecular weight estimation of MuIFN γ by Bio-gel P-60 filtration chromatography. Column buffer was 0.05 M Na citrate with 1 M NaCl, pH 6.0. Column dimensions and conditions for elution are given in Materials and Methods. Interferon activities (\bullet) were determined on each 1-ml fraction. Column void volume was determined by exclusion of rabbit IgG, and calibration was done with the following markers (X): ovalbumin, 43,000; myoglobin, 18,500; and cytochrome C, 12,000.

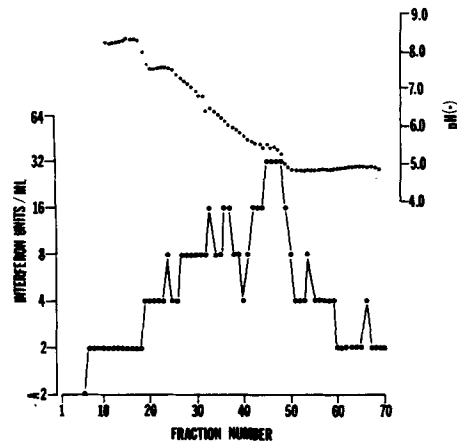


FIG. 4. Isoelectric point determination of MuIFN γ by chromatofocusing. 1 ml of MuIFN γ , equilibrated in starting column buffer (0.025 M Tris-acetate, pH 8.4), was applied to the chromatofocusing column. Conditions of elution and generation of the pH gradient are as presented in Materials and Methods. 1-ml fractions were assayed for antiviral activity, and the pH of each fraction was determined at room temperature. The MuIFN γ unitage applied was 1,536 units, and the total units recovered was 484.

was observed in the cultures pretreated with either agent in the concentration ranges (1–50 η g/ml) reported by others to enhance HuIFN γ levels (results not shown).

Molecular Weight of MuIFN γ . The availability of high-titered MuIFN γ preparations produced by PHA-induced *Listeria*-immune spleen cells has enabled the analysis of certain of its physicochemical properties. Molecular weight determinations were made by gel filtration chromatography using Bio-Gel P-60 under nondenaturing conditions. It would have been preferable to estimate the molecular weight of MuIFN γ by sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE), however, treatment

of MuIFN γ with SDS (0.1 or 1%) under both reducing and nonreducing conditions performed at a number of temperatures consistently resulted in substantial losses of antiviral activity. Treatment of HuIFN γ with this anionic detergent has also been reported to cause a $\geq 90\%$ loss in HuIFN γ antiviral activity (41). The elution profile of MuIFN γ from the Bio-Gel P-60 column is presented in Fig. 3. The MuIFN γ activity has an estimated $38,000 \pm 4,000$ mol wt, and the recovery of antiviral activity was in the order of 50% of the applied unitage.

Isoelectric Point of MuIFN γ . The isoelectric point of MuIFN γ was determined by chromatofocusing (30, 31). Preliminary isoelectric focusing studies using ampholytes to generate a pH gradient in acrylamide gels revealed that, unlike MuIFN α and MuIFN β (42), the MuIFN γ focused in the acidic region of the gradient. Therefore, the polybuffer system used to develop a pH gradient during chromatofocusing was adjusted to generate a linear pH gradient between pH 5.0–8.0. The resulting elution profile of MuIFN γ activity from the chromatofocusing column is presented in Fig. 4. Greater than 90% of the recovered MuIFN γ focused between pH 5.0–7.0, and the MuIFN γ is shown to exhibit considerable molecular charge heterogeneity. A major peak of MuIFN γ activity focused between pH 5.0–5.6, with a second extremely disperse region of activity from pH 5.8–7.0.

Discussion

The studies presented in this paper show that T lymphocytes from the spleens of animals with an ongoing T cell-mediated immune response to *Listeria* infection acquire the ability to produce significantly more MuIFN γ than splenic T cells from uninfected mice. In addition, it was revealed that the ability of spleen cells from immune mice to produce high-titered MuIFN γ developed and declined concordantly with the production and loss of T cells capable of passively transferring anti-*Listeria* immunity. Prior studies have shown that a number of other parameters of cellular activity associated with an ongoing cell-mediated anti-*Listeria* response display similar kinetics of generation and decay. These include spleen cell proliferation, spleen cellularity, delayed sensitivity to *Listeria* antigens (17), and macrophage activation (43). Our results indicate that during the generation of anti-*Listeria* immunity, there is an enlargement of a T cell subpopulation capable of producing MuIFN γ . An alternative explanation is that the T cells in the normal spleen that are capable of producing low titers of MuIFN γ are individually activated to produce more IFN as a result of infection. Although we have only quantitated the enhancement of MuIFN γ synthesis by spleen cells stimulated with T cell mitogens during the generation of antibacterial immunity, it would be of interest to determine whether the production of other mitogen-induced lymphokines is also enhanced.

The T cell origin of MuIFN γ was established by showing that treatment with anti-Thy-1.2 plus C greatly diminishes the production of this lymphokine. In contrast, treatment of cells with anti-I-A or anti-IgG to destroy B cells did not inhibit MuIFN γ synthesis. The MuIFN γ -secreting T cells were relatively susceptible to C-mediated lysis with anti-Lyt-1.2, which reduced the MuIFN γ titer to nearly the same level as treatment with anti-Thy-1.2. This is not surprising because published studies have shown that virtually all T cells outside the thymus display Lyt-1 antigens on their surface, though not all are susceptible to C-mediated lysis (37). Treatment of spleen cells with anti-Lyt-2.2 + C, on the other hand, only slightly reduced the titer of

MuIFN γ . If the MuIFN γ -secreting lymphocytes displayed Lyt-1⁺2⁺, then they should be equally susceptible to destruction by either anti-Lyt-1 or anti-Lyt-2. Therefore, there can be little doubt that the Lyt-1⁺2⁻ T lymphocyte is the main producer of MuIFN γ in this system. A small contribution by Lyt-1⁻2⁺ T cells must be considered, however, even though the reduced production caused by anti-Lyt-1⁻2⁺ antibody is close to the limitations of the inherent twofold error of the IFN assay. These findings are in contrast to an earlier publication (44) that reported that an Lyt-1⁻2⁺ T cell was the major source of MuIFN γ in animals immunized with Calmette-Guerin bacillus and challenged with specific antigen. These authors also reported the MuIFN γ -producing cell was destroyed by anti-Ia and anti-IgG. It might be significant that T cells within the Lyt-1⁺2⁻ population are known to secrete interleukin 2 and that interleukin 2 is generated without participation of other T cells (45).

The criterion most widely used to differentiate IFN γ from other IFN is its loss of antiviral activity after acidification. It has been repeatedly observed that MuIFN γ is relatively more labile at pH 2.0 than other MuIFN. However, we have always detected a variable fraction (3–15% of the total pre-acidified unitage) within MuIFN γ preparations that remains active after 5 d pH 2.0 treatment. Similar findings were reported by Wietzerbin et al. (46). A potent rabbit antiserum raised against a partially purified MuIFN γ (5×10^5 U/mg protein) neutralized the acid-stable MuIFN γ component, whereas a neutralizing antiserum possessing specificity for both MuIFN α and MuIFN β did not neutralize this activity. Thus, based on this serological analysis, it is possible that not all MuIFN γ molecules are acid labile. The heterogeneity of the MuIFN γ molecules in the PHA-induced preparations is evidenced by additional findings in this paper. For example, isoelectric point determinations by means of chromatofocusing revealed that the MuIFN γ molecules are primarily acidic proteins focusing in a broad pH range from 5.0–7.0. Additional studies (E. A. Havell and G. L. Spitalny, manuscript submitted for publication) have shown that MuIFN γ antiviral activity focusing between pH 5.0 and 5.6 binds specifically to a Con A affinity column, which indicates its glycoprotein nature. Molecular weight determinations by means of gel filtration chromatography on Bio-gel P-60 revealed the molecular weight of MuIFN γ to be $38,000 \pm 4,000$. Studies by others have established the molecular weight of other murine lymphokines to be within a similar size range (47, 48). However, because our molecular weight studies were carried out under nondenaturing conditions, we cannot rule out the possibility of complexes of low molecular weight MuIFN γ yielding an apparent 38,000 mol wt under the conditions used for the molecular weight estimations. With regard to this last point, Yip et al. (48) originally reported that the molecular weight of HuIFN γ estimated by gel filtration chromatography to be 58,000, but later found (41) that the remaining activity after SDS treatment could be resolved by SDS-PAGE into 25,000- and 20,000-mol wt components. This suggests the molecular aggregates cause the apparent higher molecular weight forms observed under nondenaturing conditions. The molecular diversity of MuIFN γ could conceivably result from a variety of factors that have been shown to be responsible for the molecular heterogeneity within other IFN preparations. These include (a) distinct IFN gene classes and their differential induction in different cell types (50, 51), (b) multigene IFN families within antigenically distinct IFN classes (52), and (c) microheterogeneity caused by differing degrees of post-translational processing, such as in the glycosylation of IFN proteins (53, 54).

The exact role, if any, played by MuIFN γ in the regulation of immunity is still a matter of conjecture. Although there is no direct evidence for a function of MuIFN γ in anti-*Listeria* immunity, the parallel development of T cells that exhibit enhanced production of MuIFN γ and of T cells that mediate immunity is perhaps suggestive of an important role for MuIFN γ in cell-mediated immunity in general. The elucidation of the possible functional role(s) of MuIFN γ in immunity will be made more difficult in view of the fact that distinct molecular populations of MuIFN γ are produced by T cells.

Summary

Spleen cell cultures derived from animals infected 6 d earlier with *Listeria monocytogenes* produced 10–20-fold more murine interferon γ (MuIFN γ) than spleen cells from nonimmune mice in response to stimulation with T cell mitogens. A striking temporal association was found between the enhanced synthesis of MuIFN γ and the development of anti-*Listeria* immunity in that both the potential for increased MuIFN γ production and the generation of *Listeria*-protective T cells developed and then decayed in unison. Treatment of spleen cells with monoclonal anti-Thy-1.2 plus complement virtually abolished the ability of cells from *Listeria*-immune mice to synthesize MuIFN γ . The T cells producing MuIFN γ were found to be more susceptible to complement-mediated lysis with monoclonal anti-Lyt-1.2 than with monoclonal anti-Lyt-2.2. The production of MuIFN γ was not affected by treating spleen cells with anti-IgG antisera or with a monoclonal antibody directed against I-A specificities. MuIFN γ was detected 4 h after the beginning of mitogenic stimulation of spleen cell cultures, and peak levels of MuIFN γ were reached by 18 h. The IFN synthesized by mitogen-induced spleen cells derived from *Listeria*-immune mice were relatively labile at pH 2.0 and neutralized by a rabbit anti-MuIFN γ serum but not by an antiserum having specificities for MuIFN α and MuIFN β . The apparent molecular weight of the MuIFN γ , as estimated by molecular sieving on a Bio-gel P-60 column, was estimated to be 38,000, and the isoelectric point as determined by chromatofocusing was extremely heterogeneous, ranging between pH 5.0 and pH 7.0.

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