SUMMARY

Interleukin 2 (IL-2) production by freshly isolated PBMC were measured in thirteen SLE patients and thirteen normal subjects (same age range). All patients were diagnosis to have active SLE by clinical and laboratory criteria. The mean of IL-2 production by freshly isolated PBMC were significantly lower than those of normal subjects ($p < 0.01$). The decreased IL-2 production did not correlate with the activity or duration of SLE. The mean of IL-2 production by rested PBMC were not significantly different from freshly isolated PBMC. This was demonstrated both in normal subjects and SLE. These SLE patients had significantly decreased suppressor T cells demonstrated by decreased autorosetting T cells (AR^+ cell). The decreased percentage of circulating AR^+ cells in SLE patients were also not correlated with disease activity, disease duration and IL-2 production of freshly isolated PBMC of SLE patients. Therefore, in our SLE patients, the decreased IL-2 production of SLE was not be from increased suppressor T cell number in these patients. Whether it might be from hyperfunction of suppressor T cells activity. It was found that the ability of AR^+ cells of SLE patients to suppress IL-2 secretion by autologous rested PBMC or heterologous rested normal PBMC were not significantly different from those of normal subjects. In conclusion, IL-2 production in SLE was lower than normal controls which was not due to exhausted T cells, nor excessive number of suppressor cells nor hyperfunction of these suppressor cells (AR^+ cells).

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