Abstract

Background and aims. Despite available evidence for the role of herpes viruses in destructive periodontal diseases, no cause-and-effect relationship has been found to date. This study compared the titer of immunoglobulin G (IgG), immunoglobulin M (IgM) against human cytomegalovirus (HCMV) in gingival crevicular fluid between individuals with periodontitis and with healthy periodontium.

Materials and methods. Thirty samples of gingival crevicular fluid (ten from infected sites and ten from non-infected sites from ten individuals with periodontitis and ten from ten individuals with healthy periodontium) were provided. The titer of IgG and IgM were evaluated. Data was analyzed by one-way ANOVA, Kruskal-Wallis test, t-test, Duncen’s test and Pearson’s correlation coefficient.

Results. There were no statistically significant differences in the means of IgM titers of the three groups under study (P>0.05), but there were significant differences in IgG titers between the three groups (P<0.001).

Conclusion. Within the limits of the present study, it can be concluded that IgG titers against the human cytomegalovirus can increase in patients with periodontal diseases but the IgM titers do not show a significant increase in these individuals.

Key words: Chronic periodontitis, cytomegalovirus, gingival crevicular fluid, immunoglobulin G, immunoglobulin M.
**Introduction**

Periodontal diseases are the inflammation of supporting structures of the teeth, caused by a complex community of bacterial species that interact with host tissues and cells.\(^1\) Although the key factor in periodontitis is specific infectious agents, it is unlikely that only a single agent or even a small group of pathogens is the only cause or modulator of this heterogeneous disease. Herpes viruses have emerged as pathogens in different types of periodontal diseases since mid-1990s\(^2\) and recent studies have shown a relationship between herpes viruses, especially Epstein Barr virus-1 (EBV-1) and human cytomegalovirus (HCMV), and periodontitis, especially the severe types.\(^5\)\(^6\)

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) has detected human cytomegalovirus in saliva and periodontal pockets, especially in periodontitis lesions, than in periodontally healthy sites.\(^8\)\(^9\) Chalabi et al\(^5\)\(^9\) showed a relation between human cytomegalovirus and periodontitis; it has been proven that sites affected by herpes virus-associated periodontitis, harbor elevated levels of periodontopathic bacteria, including *Tannerella forsythia*, *Porphyromonas gingivalis*, *Prevotella intermedia*, *Prevotella nigrescens*, *Treponema denticola*, *Campylobacter rectus* and *Aggregatibacter actinomycetemcomitans*.\(^6\)\(^10\)\(^12\) This theory supports the idea that infection with viruses may help bacteria in the development of periodontal diseases by compromising the immune system.\(^6\)

Human cytomegalovirus infects monocytes, macrophages and T lymphocytes of periodontium and Epstein Barr infects B lymphocytes.\(^13\) Saygunet al\(^14\)\(^15\) showed a relationship between the presence of human cytomegalovirus in gingival crevicular fluid (GCF) and changes caused by periodontitis. They declared that there is a relationship between the presence of human cytomegalovirus and EBV-1 in the subgingival plaque and gingival attachment loss; therefore, periodontal treatment decreases the amount of human cytomegalovirus and EBV-1 in saliva.\(^14\)\(^15\) They also reported that in periodontally compromised patients a correlation between gingival tissues and salivary counts of human cytomegalovirus DNA and Epstein barr DNA can be detected, which suggests that the periodontal pocket may be a reservoir for salivary herpes viruses.

The number and prevalence of herpes viruses in periodontal pockets may vary according to the age, ethnicity, type of periodontal disease, genetic predisposition and immune status of patients.\(^16\)\(^20\)

This research was performed to compare the titration of antibodies against human cytomegalovirus between patients with periodontitis and patients with healthy periodontium to investigate the histimmunologic responses against this virus.

**Materials and Methods**

In this observational, uni-center, diagnostic, single-arm study, ten patients with healthy periodontium (control group) and ten patients with chronic periodontitis (test group) were studied. All the patients had at least twenty teeth, no systemic diseases, no history of periodontal therapy in the last year and no history of anti-viral therapy in the last six months. Individuals with chronic periodontitis had at least three sites with 5 mm of probing pocket depth and 3 mm of clinical attachment loss.

The diagnosis of chronic periodontitis was settled by clinical attachment loss (CAL) and probing pocket depth (PPD) measurements in six areas of each tooth. The patients were asked to rinse their mouth for two minutes with water and samples were retrieved from three sites (two sites with periodontitis and one healthy site) by means of a #15 paper point after proper isolation. Each paper point was placed in the sampling site for four minutes and then was placed in test tubes containing diluents of commercially available diagnostic kit for human cytomegalovirus. In each patient, sampling was performed at two sites with periodontitis and the mean of the gained titer served as the titer of immunoglobulin for the diseased sites. Samples of the people that were healthy and had proper conditions for the study were acquired by the same method only from one site and these samples served as the control group.

Three groups were analyzed in this study:

- **Group A**: diseased sites in individuals with periodontitis
- **Group B**: healthy sites in individuals with periodontitis
- **Group C**: healthy sites in individuals with healthy periodontium

The tubes sent to laboratory were prepared for evaluation by means of a Human Cytomegalovirus ELISA kit (Creative Diagnostics, New York, USA). All the preparation steps were followed according to the provider’s instructions. The titration of immunoglobulin M (IgM) and immunoglobulin G (IgG) was finally evaluated with a Microplate Reader STAT FAX 2100 (Awareness Technology, Inc. New York, USA) at a wavelength of 450 nm.

One-way ANOVA, Kruskal-Wallis test, \(t\)-test, Duncen’s test and Pearson’s correlation coefficient were used to analyze data.
**Results**

Table 1 shows the means of probing pocket depths and clinical attachment loss in patients with periodontal diseases. The mean of the IgG and IgM titers are shown in Figure 1.

One-way ANOVA showed no statistically significant differences in the means of IgM titers of the three study groups (P>0.05), but there was a significant difference in IgG titers between the three groups (P<0.001). The mean of IgM titers in non-infected areas was lower than the infected areas in individuals with periodontal diseases, but Kruskal-Wallis analysis showed no significant differences (P=0.7).

Although the mean of IgM titers was higher in the test group compared to the control group, but t-test analysis showed no significant differences (P=0.14). This statistical test also showed that the mean of IgG was significantly higher in individuals with periodontitis (groups A and B) than healthy individuals (group C) (P<0.001).

Duncan’s test showed a significant difference in the mean of Ig G between the three groups, but the difference between the infected areas and the non-infected sites in individuals with periodontitis was not significant and Kruskal-Wallis analysis confirmed this result as well (P<0.001).

Pearson’s correlation coefficient revealed a non-significant inverse relationship between the sum of IgM titers in infected and non-infected sites and full-mouth probing pocket depths (P=0.128). The same was observed for the sum of IgG titers in infected and non-infected sites and full-mouth probing pocket depths (P=0.113). The other results of this analysis are shown in Table 2. It must be pointed out that all the relations found were non-significant.

**Discussion**

Available knowledge about the conversion of gingivitis sites into periodontitis sites and the reason of laterally symmetrical pattern of tissue breakdown progress in localized periodontitis is very limited.21,22 The etiology of periodontal disease is a complex process that involves multifactorial interactions between microbial and host factors and a variety of different modulating environmental factors.23 There are some aspects in periodontal diseases that are not interpretable by their bacterial etiology. These aspects include the rapid periodontal tissue breakdown in the presence of minimal plaque, phases of disease activity and quiescence, progression to advanced periodontal destruction that occurs in a fraction of a given population and site specificity in periodontal diseases.23,24

It has been estimated that 50–80% of adolescents and adults in developed countries are infected by human cytomegalovirus.23 Also, this data suggests that this virus is usually present in an inactive state.23 Reactivation of this virus and other herpes viruses in periodontal sites can comprise an important pathogenic event in the development of periodontal diseases.23 Contreras et al detected human cytomegalovirus in monocytes, macrophages and T-lymphocytes.25 Therefore, these infected immune cells may not mount a proper immune response against periodontopathogenic bacteria and predispose the periodontal tissues to microbial superinfection.23,25

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**Table 1. The means of probing pocket depths (PPD) and clinical attachment loss (CAL) in patients with periodontal diseases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPD of infected sites</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPD of non-infected sites</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full mouth PPD</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAL of infected sites</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAL of non-infected sites</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 2. The relation between IgG and IgM titers and probing pocket depths (PPD) and clinical attachment loss (CAL) in patients with periodontal diseases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Infected sites</th>
<th>Non-infected sites</th>
<th>Infected sites + non-infected sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PD</td>
<td>CAL</td>
<td>PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IgM</td>
<td>Reverse</td>
<td>Reverse</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IgG</td>
<td>Reverse</td>
<td>Reverse</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Viruses in destructive periodontal diseases may vary due to ethnicity, immune status, type of periodontal disease and genetic predisposing factors. Therefore, it must be noted that the present understanding of the potential role of this virus as an etiopathologic factor in destructive periodontal disease is credible but not decisive and additional studies in other populations are necessary to find the association of this virus in periodontal diseases.

There are studies available that have found an associations between the presence of human cytomegalovirus and periodontal diseases. The present study found a significant difference in the mean of IgG between individuals with periodontal disease and individuals with healthy periodontium, but there was no significant difference in the means of IgG and IgM titers between the infected sites and non-infected sites in individuals with periodontitis. The means of IgM and IgG titers in individuals with periodontitis was higher than individuals with healthy periodontium. This amount was significant for IgG but non-significant for IgM. In addition, there was a relation between the IgG and IgM titers and probing pocket depths and clinical attachment loss in the test and control groups but all of them were non-significant (more details are available in Table 2).

Conclusion
Within the limits of the present study, it can be concluded that the titer of IgG against the human cytomegalovirus can increase in patients with periodontal diseases but the titer of IgM does not show a significant increase in these individuals.

References
15. Saygun I, Kubar A, Ozdemir A, Slots J. Periodontitis lesions


HCMV Antibody Titer in Gingival Crevicular Fluid 65


