The decline to low or undetectable SBA and IgG antibody levels within a year after completion of primary MACC immunization (table 1) indicates that long-term protection can be achieved only if children are primed for memory responses and can rapidly produce specific IgG of relatively high avidity on encounter with the appropriate antigen.

Further studies to investigate the kinetics of the serum and mucosal antibody responses after nasal challenge with meningococcal serogroup A antigen are warranted. In addition, it is unclear why immunologic memory is not induced in children immunized with the same MACC vaccine in The Gambia, as determined by the magnitude of the booster response to a polysaccharide challenge [3]. Investigation of avidity maturation in this population may be informative.

Helen Joseph,1 Elizabeth Miller,2 Maureen Dawson,2 Nick Andrews,1 Ian Feavers,2 and Ray Borrow1

1Meningococcal Reference Unit, Manchester Public Health Laboratory, Withington Hospital, and 2Manchester Metropolitan University, Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science and Engineering, Manchester, 3Immunisation Division, Public Health Laboratory Service, Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre, London, and 4Division of Bacteriology, National Institute for Biological Standards and Control, Potters Bar, United Kingdom

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Reprints or correspondence: Dr. Ray Borrow, Meningococcal Reference Unit, Manchester Public Health Laboratory, Withington Hospital, Manchester, M20 2LR, United Kingdom (rborrow@nw.phls.nhs.uk).

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Prolactin and NK Cells in Maternal Malaria

To the Editor—The important finding of the selective absence of NK cells in maternal malaria, as reported by Ordi et al. [1], is one more piece in the growing puzzle concerning malaria in pregnancy. To those researchers who are interested in maternal malaria, it has occurred to many of them recently that there must be more to the story than just chondroitin sulfate A. Another interesting bit of information was the recent report by Diagne et al. [2], which showed that pregnant women are more susceptible to malaria during their second and third trimesters and ≤60 days postpartum.

There may be a connection that is not immediately obvious between these two recent studies. First, it should be remembered that, starting at the second trimester and continuing through to the postpartum period (lactation), increased pulsatile levels of prolactin are witnessed. Second, prolactin has two hats—in the endocrine literature, it is considered to be a hormone, but, to immunologists, it is now being viewed as a cytokine. Montero et al. [3] recently pointed out that prolactin acts on NK cells to induce their differentiation to prolactin-activating killer (PAK) cells.

Remarkably, there has been only one brief mention of prolactin (elevated) in all the literature on malaria [4] (searching MEDLINE and Web of Science). It would be interesting to know whether PAK cells are also absent in maternal malaria.

Roy Douglas Pearson
Gerstein Science Information Centre, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

References


4. Wartofsky L, Burman KD, Dimond RC, et al. Studies on the nature of thyrotropin (elevated) in all the literature on malaria [4] (searching MEDLINE and Web of Science). It would be interesting to know whether PAK cells are also absent in maternal malaria.

Roy Douglas Pearson
Gerstein Science Information Centre, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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4. Wartofsky L, Burman KD, Dimond RC, et al. Studies on the nature of thyrotropin (elevated) in all the literature on malaria [4] (searching MEDLINE and Web of Science). It would be interesting to know whether PAK cells are also absent in maternal malaria.

Reprints or correspondence: Roy Douglas Pearson, Gerstein Science Information Centre, University of Toronto, 9 Kings College Circle, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A5 (pearsonr@library.utoronto.ca).

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