

Membranous Nephropathy: Further Evidence against the Involvement of Renal Tubular Epithelial Antigen

Renal tubular epithelial antigen (RTEA) produces membranous nephropathy (MN)-like lesions in experimental animals [1]. In man, however, it has been associated mostly with proliferative glomerulonephritis [2, 3]. Neither glomerular-bound RTEA [4] nor anti-RTEA antibodies [5] have been detected in the sera of patients with MN.

We have reported the presence of RTEA in the glomeruli of 60% of 53 renal biopsies obtained from patients with systemic lupus erythematosus [3]. Only the patients with proliferative glomerulonephritis had this antigen; the 2 patients with MN did not. One of the MN patients initially had diffuse proliferative glomerulonephritis and glomerular RTEA, but a repeat biopsy after 9 months of immunosuppressive therapy demonstrated typical MN and no detectable RTEA.

A recent extension of our study to 6 patients with idiopathic MN has revealed no RTEA in their glomeruli. These findings reinforce the doubt that RTEA is involved in the immunopathogenesis of human MN.

References

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