DEVELOPMENT OF B LYMPHOCYTES IN
MICE HETEROZYGOS FOR THE
X-LINKED IMMUNODEFICIENCY (xid) MUTATION

xid Inhibits Development of All Splenic and Lymph Node B Cells at
a Stage Subsequent to Their Initial Formation in Bone Marrow

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The xid (X-linked immunodeficiency) mutation in the CBA/N mouse strain has been used extensively in studies of the functional and lineage relationships of B lymphocyte subpopulations (1–7). Defects associated with CBA/N (xid/xid) mice include the inability to respond to some thymus-independent antigens, hyporesponsiveness to some B cell mitogens and unresponsiveness to others, and inability to produce B lymphocyte colonies in soft agar after mitogen stimulation (8–12). These functional defects have been associated with the absence of at least one subset of mature B cells, first detected in the spleens of normal mice at 2–3 wk of age and characterized by expression of Lyb-5 antigens (12), minor lymphocyte-activating determinants (13, 14), a high concentration of membrane Ig (mIg)1 δ chains and a low concentration of membrane μ chains (12, 15). The successful maturation of donor B cells in CBA/N mice given normal B cell progenitors suggests that the defect is intrinsic to affected B cells, rather than humoral or microenvironmental (16).

Other subpopulations of mIg-bearing B cells and pre-B cells are present in normal numbers in CBA/N mice (17, 18), which suggests that they may be unaffected by the mutation. The defects described above have been demonstrated in either the homo- or hemizygous-recessive environment, or by comparing normal cells with xid-bearing cells that have matured in a recessive environment. Further insight into the defects associated with xid may be obtainable if ontogeny and development can be followed in a heterozygous environment.

We have studied the development of xid B cells in xid/+ heterozygous mice by exploiting the existence of a second X-chromosome gene that serves as a marker to distinguish between cells in which the normal or the xid-carrying chromosome is active (7, 19). This gene is Pgk-1, of which there are two allelic forms, a and b;
these encode forms of phosphoglycerate kinase (PGK) that can be distinguished electrophoretically (20) and measured relative to each other (21). Female mice can be produced that are heterozygous for both xid and Pgk-1. X inactivation results in only one of the X chromosomes being active per cell. In such heterozygotes, cells in which the xid-carrying X chromosome is active express one PGK allozyme, while activity of the putatively normal X chromosome is marked by the other allozyme. Females heterozygous at X-linked loci are normally mosaics for their respective gene products. If, however, mutations at X-linked loci (such as xid) are lethal to particular cells, or place them at a selective disadvantage, the population of those cells will either be nonmosaic or show disproportionately low expression of the appropriate marker gene. Relative measurement of the A and B forms of PGK-1, after electrophoresis of cell lysates has therefore been used to determine the effect of the xid mutation on subpopulations of B cells, as well as on pre-B cells and cells of other hematopoietic lineages.

Materials and Methods

Mice. All mice were bred and maintained in this laboratory under conventional conditions. CBA/Ca-Pgk-1+ males were mated to either CBA/N females to produce xid/+;Pgk-1/ba female F1 hybrids or to CBA/Ca females to produce control +/+;Pgk-1/ba mice. Reciprocal crosses were also made to assess any parental effects on X chromosome inactivation.

Preparation of Cell Suspensions. Subcutaneous lymph nodes, thymus, and spleen were dissociated in 1 ml RPMI 1640 medium containing 0.05% wt/vol BSA and 0.1% wt/vol sodium azide (RPMI-BSA) with the aid of a ground glass homogenizer. The resulting cell suspension was poured through a fine stainless steel sieve to remove stroma. Bone marrow cavities were flushed with RPMI-BSA, and the marrow plug was aspirated through a 25-gauge needle to obtain a single-cell suspension. Erythrocytes were removed from the spleen and bone marrow cell suspensions by hypotonic shock (22). Viability was determined by staining with a solution of acridine orange and ethidium bromide and examination under a fluorescence microscope (23).

Isolation of B-lineage Cells. Fluorochrome-labelled cell suspensions were analyzed and sorted in a modified fluorescence-activated cell sorter (FACS IV; Becton Dickinson Immunocytometry Systems, Mountain View, CA) equipped with argon ion and tunable dye lasers.

All staining steps were performed at 4°C for 40 min at a cell concentration of 5 x 10⁶ cells/ml in RPMI-BSA. Cells were washed three or four times in cold RPMI-BSA after each staining step, and were resuspended to a concentration of ~10⁶ cells/ml for FACS analysis and sorting.

Fluorescein isothiocyanate-conjugated rabbit anti-mouse immunoglobulin antiserum (Miles-Yeda, Rehovot, Israel) was used to isolate mature B lymphocytes from lymphoid cell suspensions. A total of 2.5 x 10⁶ lymph node or spleen cells and 7.5 x 10⁶ bone marrow cells were stained with 5 and 15 μl antisera respectively. Pre-B cells were isolated from bone marrow by means of a rat monoclonal antibody (14.8) (17) against B220, the 220 kD B lineage–specific form of the leukocyte-common glycoprotein family (24). 6 x 10⁶ bone marrow cells were incubated with 30 μl of 14.8 antibody (10-fold concentrated, purified culture supernatant, kindly given to us by Dr. P. W. Kincade, Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation). After washing, cells were incubated with 80 μl fluorescein-labelled goat antiserum to rat immunoglobulin (Tago Inc., Burlingame, CA). This monoclonal antibody differentially stains B and pre-B lymphocytes. Cells that stain brightly have been shown by two-color FACS analysis to express membrane Ig (our unpublished data), and are therefore considered to be B cells. Cells that stain relatively dully with 14.8 express no mlg and are considered to be B lymphocyte precursors.

Nonlymphocytic cells were isolated from blood and bone marrow on the basis of their
TABLE I
Relative X Chromosome Activity in Erythrocytes of xid/+ and +/+ Mice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental strains</th>
<th>Genotype of offspring</th>
<th>Mean ratio PGK1B:PGK1A</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBA/Ca*</td>
<td>CBA-Pgk-1*</td>
<td>+/+; Pgk-1a/6^a</td>
<td>28:72</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBA-Pgk-1*</td>
<td>CBA/N</td>
<td>+/xid; Pgk-1a/6^b</td>
<td>26:74</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBA/N</td>
<td>CBA-Pgk-1*</td>
<td>xid/+; Pgk-1a/6^b</td>
<td>24:76</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Reciprocal crosses of these lines showed no significant difference in X chromosome activity (25), and so were pooled.
† The probability of X chromosome inactivation is considered to depend on the Xce locus, closely linked to Pgk-1 (40). These mice are heterozygous (Xce^+/-), which results in the unequal proportions of the two allozymes observed. All values shown are the means of at least two replicate electrophoretic analyses for each individual.

Results

Erythrocyte Mosaicism. In initial experiments, erythrocyte mosaicism in CBA/N × CBA-Pgk-1* hybrids was compared with that in control CBA/Ca × CBA-Pgk-1* mice; reciprocal crosses were also studied. No significant differences were observed (Table I). This showed that cells in which the xid-carrying X chromosome was active (henceforth referred to simply as xid cells) were not at any disadvantage to non-xid cells in the erythroid lineage. Against this background, subsequent experiments, were designed to investigate the effect of xid...
EFFECTS OF xid MUTATION

Figure 1. Activity of xid-carrying X chromosome (marked by the PGK-1B allozyme) in various cell populations obtained from female xid/+ (black bars) and control +/+ (white bars) mice (mean ± SD of the number of mice shown). These mice were selected for relatively high (>30%) expression of the B allozyme in erythrocytes. Granulocytes were isolated from peripheral blood by FACS sorting of cells showing high wide-angle scatter.

Figure 2. Two-color immunofluorescence analysis of spleen cells from female CBA/Ca-Pgk-1° (+/+), CBA/N xid/xid (B), and an F1 hybrid between them (xid/+). Cells were stained with fluorescein-labeled anti-δ and Texas Red-labeled anti-μ antisera. The positions of populations I, II, and III are shown in D, and the boundaries of the rectangular sorting windows that were used are marked in C. Total B cell numbers in xid/xid mice were about half those in +/+ animals, xid/+ heterozygotes being intermediate (data not shown).

B Lymphocyte Subpopulations. As previously reported by Hardy et al. (15), B lymphocytes were divided by two-colour FACS analysis into three subpopulations (arbitrarily designated populations I, II, and III) on the basis of their relative expression of membrane μ and δ chains (Fig. 2). In agreement with the earlier description (15), we found population I (high δ, low μ) to be reduced or missing in CBA/N xid/xid mice. In xid/+ mice, all three populations were present in similar proportions to controls. However, analysis of populations I, II, and III sorted from the spleens of xid/+ mice 3–18 months of age showed that all three

on mosaicism in other hematopoietic lineages. For these experiments mice were selected that had >30% PGK-1B in their erythrocytes.

Mosaicism in Lymphocytes and Granulocytes. PGK-1 phenotypes of several cell types isolated from xid/+ mice were compared with those in +/+ mice (Fig. 1). There was virtually no PGK-1B allozyme in B lymphocytes isolated from lymph nodes and spleen (4 and 2%, respectively) of xid/+ mice, while in erythrocytes, thymocytes, granulocytes, and non-B cells of both sets of mice, and in B cells of +/+ mice, the expected proportion of PGK-1B (30–40%) was observed. These data showed that the xid gene inhibited the development of B cells in heterozygotes, and suggested that other lineages were unaffected.
TABLE II
Activity of the xid-bearing X Chromosome in Erythrocytes, Splenic Non-B Cells, and Splenic B Cell Subpopulations Isolated from Four 3-18-mo-old xid/+ Mice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cells</th>
<th>Percent* PGK-1B in individuals:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erythrocytes</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-B cells</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population I</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population III</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The xid-bearing chromosome also carried the gene for PGK-1B; hence, the percentage of this allozyme provides an estimate of the percentage of xid cells. Control (+/+ ) mice showed 34-38% PGK-1B in all cell types.

* All values shown are means of at least two replicate electrophoretic analyses.
$ Populations I, II, and III were defined by their relative expression of membrane $\delta$ and $\mu$ chains (see text).

TABLE III
Activity of the xid-bearing X Chromosome in Erythrocytes, Splenic Non-B Cells, and Splenic B Cell Subpopulations from 2- and 6-wk-old xid/+ Mice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cells</th>
<th>2-wk-old</th>
<th>6-wk-old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erythrocytes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splenic non-B</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splenic population I</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splenic population II</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splenic population III</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The xid-bearing chromosome also carried the gene for PGK-1B; hence, the percentage of this allozyme provides an estimate of the percentage of xid cells. Control (+/+ ) mice showed 34-38% PGK-1B in all cell types.

* All values shown are means of at least two replicate electrophoretic analyses.
$ Populations I, II, and III were defined by their relative expression of membrane $\delta$ and $\mu$ chains (see text). There were insufficient cells in population I for analysis in mice 2 and 3.

populations were nonmosaic for PGK-1 (Table II). This shows that it was not only population I whose development was affected by the xid mutation.

A similar analysis of 2- and 6-wk-old mice showed that xid cells were rare or absent in population I. Such cells were present in populations II and III, but usually in subnormal proportions (Table III).

Bone Marrow B Lineage Cells. Bone marrow cells from xid/+ and +/+ mice were sorted into 14.8-bright, 14.8-dull, mlg+, and mlg− fractions. 14.8-dull cells were taken as the pre-B lymphocyte population, 14.8-bright and mlg+ cells as mature B lymphocytes. The mlg− fraction included high wide-angle light-scattering, nonlymphocytic cells. Differences in the proportions of PGK-1B between the various cell populations are listed in Table IV. The mosaicism in the pre-B
EFFECTS OF xid MUTATION

TABLE IV
Difference in Proportion of PGK-1B Allozyme between B, Pre-B, and Non-B Cell Populations Isolated from Bone Marrow of xid/+ and +/+ Mice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mice</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Difference between:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mlg⁻ vs. mlg⁺ (non-B vs. B)</td>
<td>14.8-dull vs. 14.8-bright (pre-B vs. B)</td>
<td>mlg⁻ vs. 14.8-dull (non-B vs. Pre-B)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean ± SD</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Mean ± SD</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Mean ± SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xid/+ Mice aged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 wk</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 ± 2</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–6 wk</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7 ± 3</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
<td>6 ± 4</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
<td>2 ± 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–6 mo</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13 ± 6</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
<td>11 ± 9</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
<td>2 ± 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–20 mo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24 ± 11</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>22 ± 12</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
<td>1 ± 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+/+ Control mice aged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 wk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–6 mo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1 ± 3</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>1 ± 1</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>1 ± 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In xid/+ mice, PGK-1B serves as a marker for activity of the xid-bearing X chromosome. All values shown are calculated from means of at least two replicate electrophoretic analyses for each individual. Statistical comparisons were done by paired Student's t test.

The development of thymocytes, T cells, and granulocytes appeared unaffected by the mutation. This agrees with previous observations that T cell function was normal in CBA/N mice (12, 26, 27), and that after transplantation of mixtures of normal and CBA/N bone marrow to lethally irradiated hosts,
both sets of marrow contributed to the repopulated T cell pool in the expected proportions (6, 7).

In contrast, B cells isolated from the spleen and peripheral lymph nodes of xid/+ mice were virtually nonmosaic. This showed that xid cells, being in direct competition with normal non-xid B cells, made up, at most, a very small proportion of the B cell pool. This was confirmed by the absence of mosaicism in the separated splenic B lymphocyte subpopulations I, II, and III of adults. The fact that only xid B cells were absent in these animals confirms earlier suggestions (16, 19) that a cell-intrinsic effect is involved.

These results may be compared with previous reports that, in CBA/N (xid/xid-homozygous) mice, only population I cells (high-δ, low-μ, Lyb-5+) are deficient (15). CBA/N mice are also able to give T cell–dependent antibody responses, indicating that the expression of the xid mutation does not necessarily prevent the differentiation of some components of the mature B cell pool. The lineage relationships between the three populations are unclear, but our data suggest that the expression of the xid gene blocks completely the differentiation of the population I cells, and renders the other two populations at a competitive disadvantage. The disadvantage is less marked in 2–6-wk-old mice. The splenic xid B cells in such mice cannot, however, be assumed to be the functional equivalents of B cells in adult mice; rather, they may be immature cells produced in a spleen that is still hematopoietic, and thus be analogous to newly-formed bone marrow B cells in the adult.

There was no evidence that pre-B xid cells were selected against in the bone marrow: they showed normal mosaicism for PGK. Pre-B cells are present in normal numbers in CBA/N mice (17, 18, and our unpublished observations), and pre-B and small lymphocyte production proceeds at a similar rate in CBA/N and normal mice (28). All the data suggest, therefore, that xid pre-B cells, whether in the homozygous xid/xid mouse or in competition with normal cells in the heterozygote, are unaffected by the mutation. The status of xid B cells in the bone marrow is less clear. At 2 wk of age, these cells showed normal mosaicism. By 4–6 wk of age, however, mosaicism began to be unbalanced in favor of non-xid cells. This imbalance became more marked with increasing age. The rate of B lymphocyte production in rodents is high, sufficient to replace the entire B cell pool every 4 d (29, 30). The longevity of B cells in the secondary lymphoid organs (31, 32) implies that a large proportion of the B cells produced in the marrow never become established in the peripheral pool (33). The presence of mIg+ xid cells in the marrow of heterozygous mice, but not in the spleen, lymph nodes, and blood suggests that it is at the point of selection into the peripheral pool that these cells are at a disadvantage. The increasing mosaic imbalance that develops in the bone marrow B cells is readily explained by the observation that mature B cells circulate through the marrow and that the number of such cells increases with age (34).

Recent evidence suggests that the xid mutation has occurred within a family of genes on the X chromosome named XLR (X-linked lymphocyte-regulated genes) (35, 36). Probing various lymphocyte cell lines with cDNA clones of this region has shown that XLR mRNA is present in IgD-expressing B cell, but not pre-B cell lines. mRNA associated with this region has also been described in
mature T cells (36), where xid appears not to be expressed. The data of several authors suggest the existence of other X-associated mutations that affect immune responses in the mouse (37–39). The analysis of mosaic imbalance as reported in this paper may prove useful for the study of these and other mutations that affect the hematopoietic system.

Summary

CBA/N mice were crossed with CBA/Ca-Pgk-1a to produce female F1 hybrids that were heterozygous for both xid and the phosphoglycerate kinase 1 (PGK-1) allozymes. PGK acted as a quantifiable marker for the frequency of cells in which the xid-bearing X chromosome was active in lymphocytic and other cell populations. In adults, such cells (termed xid cells) were virtually absent in FACS-sorted splenic and lymph node B cells, and in all three splenic subpopulations distinguished on the basis of their relative expression of membrane μ and δ chains. Thus, the xid mutation appeared to compromise the development of all B cells. Erythrocytes, thymocytes, T cells, and granulocytes were unaffected. Selection against xid cells was less pronounced in the spleens of 2–6-wk-old mice. In the bone marrow, there was evidence for selection against xid in the production of B cells (except at 2 wk of age), but not at the pre-B cell level. These data suggest that, in competition with normal non-xid cells, newly-formed xid B cells were less likely to be incorporated into the peripheral B cell pool.

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References


