Host susceptibility to non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections



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Non-tuberculous mycobacteria cause a broad range of clinical disorders, from cutaneous infections, such as cervical or intrathoracic lymphadenitis in children, to disseminated infections at all ages. Recognition of the underlying immune defect is crucial for rational treatment, preventive care, family screening, and, in some cases, transplantation. So far, at least seven autosomal mutations (in IL12B, IL12RB1, ISG15, IFNGR1, IFNGR2, STAT1, and IRF8) and two X-linked mutations (in IKBKG and CYBB), mostly presenting in childhood, have been reported to confer susceptibility to disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection. GATA2 deficiency and antiinterferon y autoantibodies also give rise to disseminated infection, typically in late childhood or adulthood. Furthermore, isolated pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection has been increasing in prevalence in people without recognised immune dysfunction. In this Review, we discuss how to detect and differentiate host susceptibility factors underlying localised and systemic non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections.

Introduction

Non-tuberculous mycobacteria are ubiquitous in soil, water, and man-made environments.1-3 Infections caused by these largely non-pathogenic organisms seem to be increasing worldwide and are now more prevalent than those caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis in developed countries.45 Clinical diseases caused by non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections include lymphadenitis, skin and soft tissue infections, pulmonary disease, and disseminated infection (figure 1). Although disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections are opportunistic in patients with overt immunodeficiency, such as the late stages of HIV infection, hairy cell leukaemia, and individuals taking specific immunosuppressive therapies,6-8 refractory or recurrent non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections, especially of the airways, are also seen in otherwise healthy individuals.

Patients with immunodeficiencies, whether primary or acquired, often have poor responses to antimicrobial drugs alone. In some primary immunodeficiencies, adjunctive immunotherapy or cytokine replacement might be beneficial, and in some cases a cure might necessitate haemopoietic stem cell transplantation. An understanding of the distinct type of non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection directs the relevant testing for underlying causes, selection of optimum therapy, and long-term prophylaxis. Furthermore, definitive molecular diagnoses are essential for prognostic assessment and genetic counselling.

Natural immunity to mycobacteria relies on the interleukin 12-interferon y pathway, connecting myeloid cells (monocytes, macrophages, and dendritic cells) to lymphoid cells (T cells and natural killer cells).9 Patients with severe combined immunodeficiencies, complete DiGeorge syndrome, X-linked hyper-IgM syndrome, and chronic granulomatous disease, have distinct immune defects affecting this pathway and are prone to other infections including Mycobacterium bovis BCG, but not non-tuberculous mycobacteria.10 Susceptibility to nontuberculous mycobacteria infection is, therefore, not the result of generic susceptibility to mycobacterial infections. Susceptibility to infection varies according to organism and anatomic location. In this Review, we focus on the specific host immune deficiencies that predispose individuals to disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial and isolated pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections.

Disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial diseases

Immunity to mycobacterial infection needs effective interplay between myeloid and lymphoid compartments (figure 2). After engulfing mycobacteria, mononuclear phagocytes produce interleukin 12, which stimulates T cells and natural killer cells through the interleukin-12 receptor, a heterodimer of IL12RB1 and IL12RB2. The interleukin-12 receptor signals via TYK2 and JAK2, leading to STAT4 phosphorylation, homodimerisation, and nuclear translocation to induce interferon y production (figure 2). Interferon y in turn binds to its receptor, IFNGR, which consists of heterodimers of IFNGR1 and IFNGR2. Binding of interferon y to its receptor leads to phosphorylation of JAK2, JAK1, and STAT1, and phosphorylated STAT1 (pSTAT1) homodimerisation. The pSTAT1 homodimer (interferon y-activating factors, GAF) then translocates to the nucleus and binds to interferon y activation sequence (GAS) elements, upregulating interferon γ-responsive gene transcription. This gene transcription enables macrophage activation, differentiation, and further upregulation of the expression of interleukin 12 and tumour necrosis factor (TNF) α, which is essential for granuloma formation.^{11,12} These events create activated macrophages capable of killing intracellular microbes by helping with the maturation of the mycobacterial phagosome, nutrient deprivation, induction of autophagy, and exposure to antimicrobial peptides and reactive oxygen species.13 The NFκB essential modulator (NEMO)-mediated pathway¹⁴ and the oxidative burst produced by macrophages are also crucial for protective immunity against mycobacterial infection¹⁵ (figure 2).

Mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease

Disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections in children are often caused by inborn errors in the interleukin 12-interferon y pathway. These diseases are

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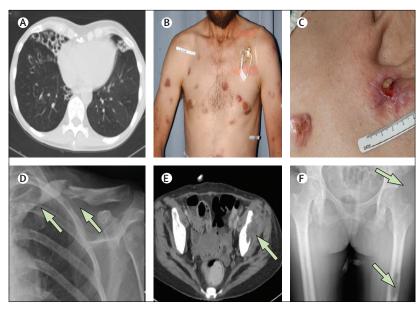


Figure 1: Clinical pictures of isolated pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial and disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections

Chest CT showing typical bronchiectasis in the right middle lobe and lingula in a 73-year-old white woman with Lady Windermere syndrome caused by Mycobacterium abscessus (A). Diffuse nodular skin lesions caused by Mycobacterium avium intracellulare complex in a 39-year-old white man with GATA2 deficiency (B). Diffuse soft tissue and lytic bone lesions caused by Mycobacterium avium intracellulare complex over left proximal and mid clavicle (C and D), left pelvis (E), and femur (F) in a 60-year-old Asian woman with anti-interferon γ autoantibodies. White arrows show lesion sites.

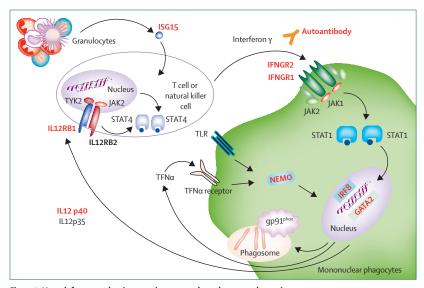


Figure 2: Host defence mechanisms against non-tuberculous mycobacteria
Defects leading to disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection are shown in red.

sometimes grouped together by syndrome and referred to as mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease. Individuals with any of these genetic defects are characterised by a predisposition to infections with weakly virulent mycobacteria, such as BCG and non-tuberculous mycobacteria. This pathway also controls the response to other intracellular pathogens, including *Salmonella* spp (in up to half of patients dependent on the genetic

defect), Histoplasma spp, Coccidioides spp, and some other bacteria and viruses¹⁸⁻²⁹ (table 1). So far, mutations in at least seven autosomal and two X-linked mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease genes have been identified, expressed in recessive, dominant, and haploinsufficient forms (table 1). Three of the autosomal genes are implicated in the control of interferon γ production: IL12B, IL12RB1, and ISG15.60 Four other autosomal genes are implicated in interferon γ responsiveness: IFNGR1, IFNGR2, STAT1, and IRF8.59 Allelic heterogeneity further subdivides some of these disorders into complete and partial forms in addition to dominant and recessive traits43 (table 1). Specific mutations in IKBKG and CYBB cause X-linked mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease. IFNGR1 and IL12RB1 deficiency are the most common cause of mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease, accounting for almost 80% of all genetically diagnosed cases. 16 However, about half of patients with disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial diseases have no identified defects in the interleukin 12-interferon y axis.

IFNGR deficiency

Mutations in IFNGR1 and IFNGR2, which encode the IFNGR subunits, can manifest as autosomal dominant, or autosomal recessive mutations that are subdivided into complete or partial forms. Worldwide, about 110 patients with IFNGR1 mutation have been reported.74 Recessive complete IFNGR1 deficiency, the first mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease identified, is usually associated with severe BCG or mycobacterial infection presenting in infancy or early childhood.²⁶ Salmonellosis (around 14%) has been less frequently reported than with defects in the interleukin-12 receptor or ligand deficiency. Severe listeriosis and viral infections have occasionally been described (table 1).16,24,29 More than 50% of children with recessive complete IFNGR1 deficiency die before 10 years of age. Most deaths are attributed to severe nontuberculous mycobacterial infection.^{26,75} The only curative treatment is haemopoietic stem cell transplantation, but the success rate has been fairly low because of impaired engraftment and occurrence of severe complications.75 Recessive partial IFNGR1 deficiency is less frequent, presents in late childhood or even early adulthood, and is usually associated with less severe mycobacterial infections than recessive complete disease. 32,34-37

Dominant partial IFNGR1 deficiency, the most common form of IFNGR1 deficiency, predisposes individuals to milder disease with fewer organs involved, good treatment response, less recurrence, and better survival than those with recessive partial IFNGR1 deficiency. Whereas the mean age of disease onset in patients with recessive complete IFNGR1 deficiency is 3·1 years, it is 13·4 years for dominant partial IFNGR1 deficiency. Almost 80% of patients with dominant partial IFNGR1 deficiency have mycobacterial osteomyelitis, which has therefore been thought of as a hallmark of the disease,

	Inheritance	Disease onset	BCG infection	Systemic salmonella infection	Other possible infections	Granuloma formation	Response to antimicrobial therapy	Indication for immunotherapy	Prognosis
Early onset									
IFNGR1/R2									
Complete ^{16,24,26,30,31}	AR	Infancy/early childhood	Yes	Yes	Listeriosis, herpes virus, respiratory syncytial virus, parainfluenza virus infections, tuberculosis	No	Very poor	No	Poor
Partial ^{32-39.}	AR	Late childhood	Yes	Yes	Tuberculosis	No report	Favourable	Variable	Good
Partial ^{26,40-42}	AD	Late childhood/ adolescence	Yes	Yes	Histoplasmosis, tuberculosis	Yes	Favourable	Yes	Good
IL12B ^{43,44}	AR	Infancy/early childhood	Yes (97%)	Yes (25%)	CMC, disseminated tuberculosis, nocardia, <i>Klebsiella</i> spp infection	Yes	Favourable	Yes	Fair
IL12RB1 ⁴⁵⁻⁴⁸	AR	Early childhood	Yes (76%)	Yes (43%)	Tuberculosis, CMC (24%), Klebsiella spp infection	Yes	Favourable	Yes	Fair
STAT1 LOF									
Complete ⁴⁹⁻⁵¹	AR	Infancy (die early without HSCT)	Yes	No	Tuberculosis, fulminant viral infection (mainly herpes)	Yes	Poor	No	Poor
Partia ^{27,28,52-54}	AR	Infancy/early childhood/ adolescence	Yes	Yes (50%)	Severe, curable viral infection (mainly herpes)	No report	Favourable	Yes	Fair
Partial ⁵⁵⁻⁵⁸	AD	Infancy/early childhood/ adolescence	Yes	No	Tuberculosis	Yes	Favourable	Yes	Good
IRF8 ⁵⁹	AR	Infancy	Yes	No	CMC	Poorly formed	Poor	No	Poor
IRF8 ⁵⁹	AD	Late infancy	Yes	No	No report	Yes	Favourable	No	Good
ISG15 ⁶⁰	AR	Infancy	Yes	Yes	No report	No report	Favourable	Yes	Good
NEMO ⁶¹⁻⁶⁴	XR	Early to late childhood	Yes	No	Invasive Hib infection, tuberculosis	Yes	Variable	Yes	Fair
CYBB ¹⁵	XR	Infancy/early childhood	Yes	No	Tuberculosis	Yes	Fair	No	Fair
Late onset									
GATA2 ⁶⁵⁻⁶⁹	AD	Late childhood/ adulthood	No	No	HPV, CMV, EBV, Clostridium difficile infections, histoplamosis, aspergillosis	Yes	Poor	Yes	Poor
Anti-interferon-γ autoantibodies ⁷⁰⁻⁷³	Acquired	Young adult to elderly	No	Yes	Salmonella spp, Penicillium spp, Histoplasma spp, Cryptococcus spp, Burkholderia pseudomallei, VZV, CMV infections	Yes	Poor	No	Fair

AR=autosomal recessive. AD=autosomal dominant. CMC=chronic mucocutaneous candidiasis. LOF=loss of function. HSCT=haemopoietic stem cell transplantation. Hib=Haemophilis influenzae type b. HPV=human papillomavirus. CMV=cytomegalovirus. EBV=Epstein-Barr virus. VZV=varicella zoster virus.

Table 1: Primary and acquired immune deficiencies associated with disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection

and about a third of patients have no other apparent site of mycobacterial disease. Notably, patients with dominant negative STAT1 deficiency can occasionally present with multifocal mycobacterial osteomyelitis. 26,37,40

IFNGR2 deficiency is rarer than IFNGR1 deficiency for reasons that are unclear. Recessive complete IFNGR2 deficiency can result in absence of IFNGR2 expression or non-functional IFNGR2, whereas the five reported patients with recessive partial IFNGR2 deficiency had normal to slightly lower IFNGR2 expression and residual interferon γ responses. IFNGR2 expression and residual interferon γ responses. IFNGR2 haploinsufficiency can also confer dominant partial IFNGR2 deficiency, a can dominant negative mutations. Generally, recessive complete mutations result in more severe disease than partial deficiencies. $^{30.38,42,76}$

Flow cytometry can be used to detect surface IFNGR1 on peripheral blood mononuclear cells.11 IFNGR1 is absent in most cases of recessive complete IFNGR1 deficiency, but increased in dominant partial IFNGR1 deficiency because of impaired removal or recycling of the receptors from the cell surface. 11,47,78,79 IFNGR2 expression is low and might need Epstein-Barr virus-transformed B cells to improve detection. 11,33 Some rare instances of patients with recessive complete IFNGR2 deficiency and recessive partial IFNGR1 or IFNGR2 deficiencies who have normal surface expression of hypofunctional receptors exist, 32,34,38,76 suggesting that genetic sequencing, a test for IFNGR function, or both must be used to confirm the diagnosis. Functional competence of IFNGR relies on stimulation with interferon y, examining either receptor proximal events (eg, STAT1 phosphorylation) or more distal ones

(eg, TNF α , interleukin 12, CD64, HLA class I or class II, CXCL9, and CXCL10). Detection of interferon γ -stimulated intracellular pSTAT1 is rapid, simple, and fairly inexpensive. PSTAT1 immunostaining is generally absent in cells from patients with recessive complete IFNGR deficiencies, whereas partial IFNGR-deficient cells have reduced pSTAT1 staining. Plasma from patients with complete recessive IFNGR1 deficiency has been reported to have high concentrations of interferon γ , which is thought to represent high production and impaired metabolism of the cytokine. However, data for serum interferon γ concentrations in the setting of severe illness are sparse, and the reliability of serum interferon γ testing for diagnosis of IFNGR deficiency is undefined.

IL12RB1-IL12B deficiency

IL12RB1 encodes the β1 chain of the interleukin 12 and interleukin 23 receptors, and IL12B encodes the p40 subunit of interleukin 12 and interleukin 23. Worldwide, mutations in IL12RB1, so far reported in more than 200 patients, are probably the most common genetic cause of mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease,45 whereas mutations in IL12B are fairly rare (19 published cases). 43,44 Similar to recessive complete IFNGR deficiencies, patients with recessive complete IL12RB1 and IL12B deficiency are prone to disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection in infancy or early childhood. However, clinical manifestations are usually less severe and they have increased salmonella susceptibility. The first clinical symptoms in patients with IL12RB1 deficiency typically occur at around 2.9 years of age, whereas patients with IL12B deficiency typically present around 1 year, and symptoms are most frequently caused by BCG. 43,45 Overall clinical penetrance is around 80% for both diseases. 43-45,82 IL12RB1 mutations are rarely identified in North America, presumably because of low exposure to BCG, low prevalence of tuberculosis, and low rates of salmonellosis.82 IL12RB1 mutations might be manifesting in different ways in North America, as suggested by the development of both pneumococcal bacteraemia and mycobacteraemia in one patient.48 Nontyphoidal, extraintestinal salmonellosis is the second most common infection in patients with IL12RB1 (43%) and IL12B (25%) deficiency after mycobacterial infection, and recurrent salmonellosis is even more frequent than recurrent BCG in both groups of patients. 43,45 Recurrent non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection is uncommon in IL12RB1 deficiency, and previous BCG infection seems to protect against subsequent non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection.45,46 Despite the overall sense that IL12RB1 deficiency might be milder than complete IFNGR deficiency, mortality is around 30% and is mostly attributable to severe non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection, suggesting other associated factors that are not yet recognised.45

Surface expression of IL12RB1 is detectable only after lymphocyte activation, meaning that flow cytometric

study of IL12RB1 necessitates lymphocyte stimulation, typically with a mitogen such as phytohaemagglutinin. Activated T cells and natural killer cells from patients with IL12RB1 deficiency do not usually express the receptor on the surface.46 Consequently, intracellular staining of pSTAT4 is absent or diminished after interleukin-12 stimulation. Failure to increase interferon γ production after stimulation with phytohaemagglutinin plus interleukin 12 compared with phytohaemagglutinin alone is another way to show defective signalling in the interleukin-12 receptor pathway. Peripheral blood mononuclear cells from patients with IL12B deficiency have neither detectable interleukin 12 p40 nor p70 subunit secretion, and reduced production of interferon y after in-vitro stimulation with mitogens, which can be corrected by the addition of recombinant interleukin 12.43,44,83

STAT1 deficiency

STAT1 has a crucial role in the signal transduction of type I (interferon α/β), type II (interferon γ), and type III (interferon λ) interferons, and interleukin 27. STAT1 therefore plays a crucial part in controlling not only intracellular responses to bacteria, but also viruses through formation of STAT1-STAT2 heterodimers (ISGF3), which bind to type I interferon-stimulated response elements (ISRE) in the promoter region of target genes. STAT1 deficiencies have a tight correlation between cellular and clinical phenotypes, with patients with complete deficiencies having more severe and earlier infections than those with partial deficiencies. People with recessive complete and recessive partial STAT1 deficiency are highly vulnerable to both mycobacterial and viral (typically herpes viruses) infections.⁴⁹ The three patients reported to date with complete homozygous mutations all had disseminated BCG infection and died in infancy because of severe viral infection. 50,51 Epstein-Barr virus-transformed B cells from these patients did not express STAT1 or activate STAT1containing transcription factors (GAF, induced by interferon γ ; and ISGF3, induced by interferon α or β). 50,51 By contrast, recessive partial STAT1 deficiency has been associated with severe, but curable, intracellular bacterial and viral infections, because STAT1 phosphorylation and DNA-binding activity in response to type I and II interferons are impaired but not eliminated. 27,28,52-54

Dominant *STAT1* mutations come in two types: loss-of-function and gain-of-function. The dominant-negative loss-of-function mutations predispose patients primarily to mycobacterial infections due to selective impairment of the interferon γ -STAT1-GAF pathway and sparing of the type II interferon-mediated immunity. ^{55–58} Similar to patients with dominant partial IFNGR deficiency, those with dominant negative STAT1 deficiency have a mild clinical phenotype and low clinical penetrance; the levels of pSTAT1 and TNF α production, and expression of interferon γ target genes in response to interferon γ or

other mitogen stimulation are reduced, but present. S8.84 However, the cellular response to interferon α or β is generally preserved, which accounts for the scarcity of severe viral infections in these patients. S8

Dominant STAT1 gain-of-function mutations confer a much broader phenotype than loss-of-function mutations, ranging from chronic mucocutaneous candidosis, recurrent viral infections (herpes simplex virus, varicella zoster virus, and respiratory syncytial virus), to deep infections caused by mycobacteria, dimorphic fungi (histoplasmosis, coccidioidomycosis), JC virus (progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy), and both mild and severe autoimmunity. 20,85-88 Chronic mucocutaneous candidosis is the predominant clinical manifestation of dominant STAT1 gain-of-function mutations, whereas infections with M tuberculosis and Mycobacterium avium complex have been less frequently described.87 These mutations cause excessive STAT1 phosphorylation, which seems to be associated with enhanced STAT1-PIAS1 association, and hypomethylation of STAT1, leading to upregulated DNA binding, transactivation, and impaired response to interferon γ re-stimulation resulting in tachyphylaxis.^{20,87} Diminished numbers of interleukin-17producing T cells are found in some patients with chronic mucocutaneous candidosis.85,86

IRF8 deficiency

Human interferon regulator factor 8 (IRF8) is expressed primarily in macrophages and dendritic cells and is needed for their ontogeny, maturation, and production of interleukin 12 in response to interferon γ, thereby mediating protection against mycobacteria. 89,90 Recessive IRF8 deficiency caused by a Lys108Glu mutation was reported in one patient and associated with opportunistic BCG and viral infections, an absence of monocytes and dendritic cells, and myeloproliferative syndrome necessitating haemopoietic stem cell transplantation.59 The patient had impaired interleukin-12 production in response to BCG, phytohaemagglutinin, and lipopolysaccharide stimulation.⁵⁹ Interferon γ production was also poor, but was partly restored when cells were preincubated with interleukin 12.59 By contrast, dominant negative heterozygous mutation Thr80Ala reported in two patients caused fairly mild recurrent disseminated BCG infection with selective depletion of CD11+CD1c+ circulating dendritic cells.⁵⁹ The level of interleukin-12 production by stimulated peripheral blood mononuclear cells was low, but not abolished.59

ISG15 deficiency

Interferon-stimulated gene (ISG)15 is an intracellular ubiquitin-like molecule involved in antiviral defence through ISGylation of various proteins. It can also act as an extracellular cytokine secreted by granulocytes, monocytes, and lymphocytes, to induce interferon γ production by T cells and natural killer cells. In Three patients with ISG15 deficiency have had impaired, but

not abolished interferon γ production, leading to mycobacterial disease. ⁶⁰ ISG15 concentrations were not detectable in cells, or in the supernatants of BCG-treated or interferon α -treated leucocytes. Although peripheral blood mononuclear cells from these patients produced normal amounts of interleukin 12 when stimulated with BCG plus interferon γ , ⁶⁰ only small amounts of interferon γ were produced in response to BCG plus interleukin 12, which could be partly or completely restored by the addition of recombinant ISG15. ⁶⁰

X-linked mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease

NEMO deficiency

NFκB is a transcription factor that plays a key part in immune and inflammatory responses.94,95 Latent in the cytoplasm, NFκB is activated when its inhibitor (IκB) is degraded after phosphorylation by IkB kinase (IkK), which is a heterotrimer of α , β , and γ (also called NEMO) chains. The X-linked IKK-y gene (IKBKG) that encodes NEMO is necessary for transducing signals from Tolllike receptors, interleukin 1, and $TNF\alpha$ in the immunological pathways, and signalling through the receptor ectodysplasin in the developmental pathway.¹⁴ Complete defects in NEMO causing incontinentia pigmenti in girls are lethal in male fetuses. Partial defects confer phenotypes ranging from anhidrotic ectodermal dysplasia with immunodeficiency, to osteoporosis and lymphoedema.94 Increased susceptibility to non-tuberculous mycobacteria, encapsulated bacteria, some herpes viruses, and Pneumocystis jirovecii is commonly seen in these patients.⁶¹ In view of the fact that NFkB also regulates development of tissues such as skin, hair, and teeth, patients with NEMO deficiency might also display somatic features, including hypodontia, sparse hair, and abnormal hair whorls.⁶² Notably, there are also cases without obvious ectodermal dysplasia. 63,96 The invitro signature of NEMO deficiency is variable and unreliable.64 Some patients with NEMO deficiency have abnormal immunoglobulin concentrations, especially an increased concentration of IgM, or low concentration of IgG or IgA.95

CYBB deficiency

CYBB encodes the gp91phox subunit of the phagocyte NADPH oxidase and is expressed strongly in all phagocytic cells and, to a lesser extent, in B cells. Most CYBB mutations cause classic chronic granulomatous disease and lead to recurrent bacterial and fungal infection as well as granuloma formation due to defects in the phagocyte NADPH oxidase. However, two discrete mutations in CYBB (Q231P and T178P) seem to confer only a limited BCG susceptibility phenotype rather than the broader infection susceptibility of X-linked chronic granulomatous disease. These two mutations cause selective functional impairment of superoxide production limited to monocyte-derived macrophages and B cells, although

normal superoxide formation in fresh monocytes and granulocytes is maintained. 15,99 However, the production of interleukin 12 and interferon γ in peripheral blood mononuclear cells from patients in response to BCG is normal. A flow cytometric dihydrorhodamine 123 assay can be used to measure intracellular hydrogen peroxide production, which is defective in macrophages and B cells, but not in granulocytes or monocytes from patients with CYBB deficiency. 15

GATA2 deficiency

GATA2 is a transcription factor implicated in early haemopoietic, lymphatic, and vascular development. 65,66 GATA2 haploinsufficiency^{67,100} gives rise to a wide range of phenotypes previously called monocytopenia with M avium complex syndrome; 67,68 dendritic cell, monocyte, B and natural killer lymphoid deficiency;101,102 Emberger syndrome; 103,104 and familial myelodysplastic syndrome or acute myeloid leukaemia. 69,105 GATA2 deficiency has complete clinical penetrance, but variable expression with onset spanning from early childhood to late adulthood (ages 3–80 years). 100,106 Most patients had human papillomavirus (70%) followed by disseminated nontuberculosis mycobacterial infection. Other infections include disseminated histoplasmosis, cryptococcal meningitis, invasive aspergillosis, and severe Clostridium difficile infection. 106,107 Non-infectious conditions including pulmonary alveolar proteinosis, erythema nodosum, and lymphoedema also occur. 66,67,102,106,108 Progression to aplastic anaemia, hypoplastic myelodysplastic syndrome or acute myeloid leukaemia are serious complications of GATA2 deficiency.106

Profoundly decreased or absent circulating monocytes, dendritic cells, natural killer cells, and B cells are characteristics of patients with *GATA2* mutation. Notably, cytopenias can exist for prolonged periods before a diagnosis is made, but cell counts are typically normal in early childhood. 67,107,109 Cytokine production and proliferation of peripheral blood mononuclear cells in response to phytohaemagglutinin stimulation are impaired, but can be restored by addition of normal monocytes. 67 Besides a severe reduction of natural killer cells, patients with GATA2 deficiency also have depletion of the CD56 bright subset and marked functional impairment of these cells on 51Cr cytotoxicity assay. 110

Bone marrow biopsy samples frequently show multilineage dysplasia. ¹⁰⁶ Interestingly, GATA2 myelodysplastic syndrome is typically hypocellular, by contrast with usual myelodysplastic syndrome. ^{106,111} Plasma cells are present, but abnormal in half of patients. ¹¹¹ Atypical megakaryocytes are also noted in more than 90% of patients, even in those without overt myelodysplastic syndrome. ¹⁰⁶

Anti-interferon y autoantibodies

By contrast with the genetic diseases mentioned, antiinterferon γ autoantibodies cause an acquired susceptibility to non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections (especially rapidly growing mycobacteria) and other opportunistic infections. All cases are adult-onset with high titre, neutralising anti-interferon γ autoantibodies, which completely block interferon y activation, negating the interferon γ-interleukin-12 pathway.¹⁰⁹ The sex distribution of this syndrome in Asia is equal, but outside Asia most patients are female. The fact that most of these patients are Asians born in Asia,70 and the association of the disease with HLA alleles DRB*16:02 and DRB*05:0271 suggest both genetic and environmental factors. Because of the late disease onset,71,72 these patients do not get BCG infections, but other opportunistic infections resemble those in patients with mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease and advanced HIV infection, including Salmonella spp, Penicillium marneffei, Histoplasma spp, Cryptococcus spp, Burkholderia pseudomallei, cytomegalovirus, and varicella-zoster reactivation. 72,73,112,113 Interestingly, these infections are not associated with tuberculosis, suggesting that the mechanisms predisposing patients to severe tuberculosis and severe non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections might be distinct; of course, this might also reflect patient selection bias.

Patients with anti-interferon γ autoantibodies, although presenting with disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection or other opportunistic infection, generally have normal immunological parameters, including CD4+ T cells, monocyte numbers, IFNGR and interleukin-12 receptor expression. Anti-interferon γ autoantibody titres can be established by a particle-based technology or ELISA. Biologically, anti-interferon γ autoantibodies block production of downstream mediators of interferon γ activity including STAT1 phosphorylation, TNF α , and interleukin 12. Definitional assays, therefore, can be done to establish the capacity of patient serum to neutralise interferon γ activity in control cells.

Diagnosis

Although genotyping is the gold standard for the diagnosis of genetic defects, molecular assays are not available in all clinical settings. Nevertheless, some diagnostic clues, from age at onset, sex, pattern of inheritance, pathological features, concomitant infections, and complications can help to refine clinical decision making (table 1).

Early versus late onset

Patients with mendelian susceptibility to mycobacterial disease often have onset of infections in childhood, and BCG infection is common. IIS Recessive complete deficiencies tend to present early in life. 26,31,59 By contrast, disease due to recessive partial and dominant defects tends to present later in childhood or in adulthood. X-linked recessive disorders, such as NEMO and CYBB mutations, should be suspected in the setting of multiple maternally related males with non-tuberculous

mycobacterial infection, which usually presents in early childhood.

NEMO deficiency should be especially suspected in patients with several infections other than mycobacterial, or with somatic features. GATA2 deficiency and anti-interferon γ autoantibodies should be considered in adult patients with disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection.

Laboratory assessment

Figure 3 summarises general approaches to a definitive diagnosis of a patient with disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection. A complete blood count with differential and HIV testing should be done in every patient with disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection.119 Standard immunophenotyping by flow cytometry might be very helpful to differentiate GATA2 deficiency (low number of monocytes, natural killer cells, or B cells) from IRF8 deficiency (low number or absence of dendritic cells and monocytes). Immunoglobulins probably do not have a role in susceptibility to mycobacterial infection, as shown by the absence of mycobacterial disease in patients with X-linked agammaglobulinaemia, but IgG concentration can be low and IgM concentration can be high in patients with NEMO deficiency. Although flow cytometric and functional assays are guides to a more definitive diagnosis, with rapidly changing technology it is likely that sequence-based diagnostics will be cheaper and easier to use than these assays in the near future.

Speciation of the offending organism in non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection is of value in identification of the appropriate set of drugs to consider for therapy. The value of specific in-vitro antibiotic testing for non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection is less clear than it is for

tuberculosis and is largely restricted to a few classes of antibiotics (eg, macrolides and aminoglycosides). Useful guidelines for treatment of non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection are reviewed elsewhere.⁸

Isolated pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection in adults

Pulmonary disease is the most common manifestation of non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection. Despite the wealth of information regarding these infections, underlying immune defects have not been well characterised in patients with isolated pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections (table 2).

Patients with structural lung abnormalities

Pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection was first described in elderly male smokers (peak incidence in the sixth decade of life) with cavitary lung disease or emphysema, 122 and was thought to reflect altered lung architecture. 123 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, bronchiectasis, emphysema, pneumoconiosis, previous tuberculosis, silicosis, pulmonary alveolar proteinosis, and $\alpha\text{-}1\text{-}antitrypsin}$ deficiency are some of the major determinants of the development of adult-onset pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections (table 2). 124,125 Although cystic fibrosis and primary ciliary dyskinesia usually present in childhood or adolescence, some patients with hypomorphic mutations might have late or atypical presentation. 126,127

Cystic fibrosis

Cystic fibrosis is due to mutations in cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator (*CFTR*) on chromosome 7, resulting in abnormal viscous mucoid

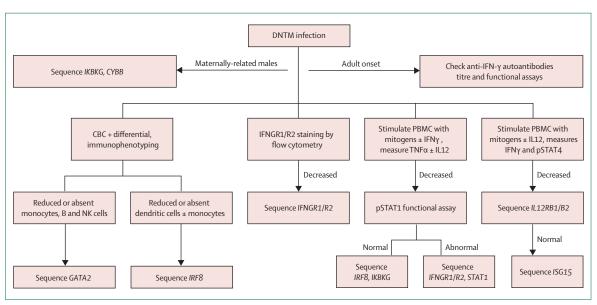


Figure 3: Stepwise approach to diagnosis of patients with disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial (DNTM) infection IFN=interferon. IL=interleukin. CBC=complete blood count. NK=natural killer.

	Diagnostic test			
Impaired local immunity				
Bronchiectasis, emphysema, pneumoconiosis, previous cavitary tuberculosis, silicosis, COPD	Clinical history, chest imaging, pulmonary function tests			
Cystic fibrosis	Sweat chloride test, nasal potential difference, CFTR genotyping			
Primary ciliary dyskinesia	Measurement of nasal nitric oxide and mucociliary clearance ciliary beat frequency and ultrastructure; genotyping			
Pulmonary alveolar proteionsis	Assay for anti-GM-CSF autoantibodies			
α-1-antitrypsin deficiency	Serum α-1-antitrypsin concentration, genotyping			
Impaired systemic immunity				
STAT3 deficiency	Total IgE level, cardinal clinical features and family history, STAT3 genotyping			
Immunosuppressant use				
Tumour necrosis factor-α blockers	Drug history			
Lady Windermere syndrome	Clinical history with exclusion of the above susceptible factors, special body morphotypes, CFTR genotyping			
COPD=chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.				

secretions in several organs (eg, upper and lower respiratory tract, pancreas, reproductive tract) principally in people who are white. Cystic fibrosis is strongly associated with bronchiectasis and pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections, ranging from 6.6% to 13.7%. However, when pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection was investigated in patients with cystic fibrosis who were more than 40 years of age, the rates were closer to 50%. Aspergillus fumigatus is more frequently isolated from pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial-infected patients with cystic fibrosis than it is from those who are mycobacteria culture-negative. 128,131

Primary ciliary dyskinesia

Pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections are common in patients with primary ciliary dyskinesia, an increasingly recognised recessive disorder affecting ciliary function of the respiratory tract, sperm tail, cilia of the embryonic node, and the fallopian tubes. Clinical manifestations of primary ciliary dyskinesia include recurrent respiratory tract infections, chronic sinusitis, rhinitis, otitis media, infertility, and laterality defects such as situs inversus totalis or heterotaxy. More than 15% of patients with primary ciliary dyskinesia have at least one sputum culture positive for non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection. 133

The specialised tests needed to diagnose primary ciliary dyskinesia are not standardised or readily available. Ultrastructural defects, ciliary motility on airway epithelial cells, and low nasal nitric oxide concentrations have been used to diagnose the disease, 134 but with low sensitivity. Mutations in 28 genes have been reported to cause primary ciliary dyskinesia, but account for the genetic cause in only about 70% of

cases. 135 DNAH5 and DNAI1 are most frequently found and account for about a third of the cases. 136

Lady Windermere syndrome

Pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection in North America occurs mostly in non-smoking postmenopausal women without any known predisposing factors. 137-139 Lady Windermere syndrome was the eponym applied to these patients, who tend to be taller and leaner with more scoliosis, pectus excavatum, and mitral valve prolapse than their peers. 65,66,105,137,138 The most common organisms isolated are from the M avium and Mycobacterium abscessus complexes.¹³⁷ On chest imaging, these patients are frequently noted to have nodular bronchiectasis involving the right middle lobe and lingula, as opposed to the cavitary lesions frequently noted in other patients pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection (figure 1). 140-142 These patients have increased prevalence of heterozygous mutations in CFTR (up to 50% of cases), usually without a clinical diagnoses of cystic fibrosis. 137,143 Several clear family clusters in a dominant pattern indicate that genetic factors probably underlie at least some cases of pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection.¹⁴⁴ Defects that overlap with primary ciliary dyskinesia including impaired nasal nitric oxide concentration, low ciliary-beat frequency, and impaired Toll-like responses in respiratory epithelial cells were also reported in these patients. 145

Despite extensive study, no reproducible defect in immune function in adult patients with isolated lung disease has been found (Wu, personal communication). ^{137,146-154} The absence of consistent immunological abnormalities, the late age of disease onset, and the lack of disseminated disease in patients with extensive and fatal pulmonary disease (and vice versa) suggest that this entity is not due to a major underlying immune defect. Recent whole exome studies suggest that the patients with Lady Windermere syndrome have a complex condition involving additive genetic variants in immune, ciliary, connective tissue and CFTR genes. ¹⁵⁵

Miscellaneous conditions

Job's syndrome (hyper-IgE recurrent infection syndrome) is due to dominant negative mutations in STAT3. Patients have recurrent staphylococcal skin abscesses, eczema, and pulmonary infections¹⁵⁶ along with scoliosis, joint hypermobility, and a high arched palate.¹⁵⁷ About a third of patients have non-tuberculous mycobacteria isolated from at least one sputum culture, and 16% of patients met American Thoracic Society criteria for pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection,¹²¹ several of whom had severe disease that necessitated long-term therapy. Structural damage due to previous pulmonary infection might be the major predisposing factor for pulmonary non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection in these patients. However, despite their underlying

Search strategy and selection criteria

We searched PubMed for articles published from Feb 1, 1979, to March 31, 2015, with the terms "nontuberculous mycobacteria", "MSMD", "GATA2", "NEMO", "CYBB", "ISG15", "anti-interferon γ autoantibodies", "cystic fibrosis", "primary ciliary dyskinesia", "pulmonary", and "intrathoracic". Only papers published in English were used.

immune defect, no cases of disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection have been noted.

TNF α helps to control intracellular bacterial, fungal, viral, and especially mycobacterial infection, ¹⁵⁸ as well as the formation and maintenance of granulomata. ^{159,160} TNF α blockers, therefore, predispose individuals to reactivation of tuberculosis, and to de-novo nontuberculous mycobacterial infections. ^{161,162} The incidence of mycobacterial diseases in patients with rheumatoid arthritis who are using TNF α blockers was five-to-ten-times higher than background levels without TNF α blockers. ¹⁶¹ Non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections are now more common than tuberculosis in association with the use of TNF α blockers, and patients with a non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection are more likely to die than those with tuberculosis in the anti-TNF α setting. ^{161,163}

In otherwise immunocompetent children, non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection usually presents as isolated cervical lymphadenitis, 164 although isolated pulmonary disease is usually associated with cystic fibrosis. 165-167 Rarely, non-tuberculous mycobacterial disease can also manifest as endobronchial disease or hilar adenopathy in immunocompetent children usually presenting with cough or wheezing. 168,169 To date, neither *CFTR* mutations nor other primary immune defects have been often noted in these patients. 4,168 Generally, irrespective of initial management, the cure rates are almost 100%, and the recurrence rate after clearance of the infection is essentially nil. 168,169

Conclusions

Despite being ubiquitous in the environment, non-tuberculous mycobacteria can cause severe diseases in patients with immune or respiratory epithelial defects. Frequent treatment failures, the need for treatment with several drugs, prolonged treatment courses, drug toxicities, and drug interactions are signs that new and better treatment strategies are needed. Recognition of the underlying defects in the host defences against infection will not only facilitate the development of more effective therapies specifically targeted at different diseases (eg, therapies that modulate innate or acquired immunity), but also assist clinicians in planning individualised prophylaxis and family screening. Although susceptibility to disseminated non-tuberculous mycobacterial infections is attributed to systemic immune

defects mostly involving the interleukin-12–interferon γ pathway, localised non-tuberculous mycobacterial diseases might represent some impairment of local host defences instead of a major immune defect. Separate diagnostic approaches to identify the underlying host factors in non-tuberculous mycobacterial infection, with or without the need for genetic assessment, should be adopted on the basis of disseminated versus localised non-tuberculous mycobacterial diseases, as well as early-onset versus late-onset infections.

Contributors

U-IW did the literature review and wrote the drafts of the paper. SMH provided critical review of the paper and edited the final version of the manuscript.

Declaration of interests

We declare no competing interests.

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