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Detection of Mycobacterium Leprae DNA in Blood of the Subclinical Leprosy

Abstract

Subclinical Leprosy (SL) is attributed to healthy individuals living in endemic leprosy area, without any clinical signs of leprosy, but showing a high specific antibody level to leprosy bacilli. This laboratory finding indicates that a certain amount of Mycobacterium leprae (M. leprae) have entered the body and induces specific antibody. Due to the potential progress from SL to overt (manifest) leprosy, the management of SL is important in Leprosy Control Program. The aim of this study was to detect M. leprae DNA in the blood of SL cases, using Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) technique. Two ml peripheral blood samples from 29 SL cases diagnosed by clinical examination and serological test (ELISA : IgM anti PGL-1 antibody > 600 u/ml) were collected. DNA extraction was performed using Takara technique. Lp1 – Lp4 nested primers was used in PCR to amplify the RLEP sequence (99 bp) that is specific and sensitive for M. leprae. After running in the electrophoresis field, the results were observed by UV transilluminator. Results revealed that from 29 blood samples of SL cases, 6 (20.69 %) showed positive in PCR test. No significant differences the level of anti PGL-1 antibody was observed between positive and negative PCR results. In conclusion, M. leprae DNA can be found in peripheral blood of SL cases. This finding supports the opinion that SL cases need anti-leprosy treatment to prevent progression towards manifest leprosy.

Keyword : Mycobacterium, leprae, DNA, subclinical, leprosy,