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Immunosuppression after measles vaccination

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Abstract

The influence of conventional live attenuated measles vaccine on cellular immune responsiveness was investigated in Sweden and Guinea-Bissau. Sixteen children in a residential area in Bissau and 16 living in southern Stockholm were examined before and 8-10 days after vaccination. Lymphoproliferation was measured to concanavalin A (con-A), PPD and tetanus toxoid (TT) using a whole-blood 3H-thymidine incorporation assay. Stimulation indices were significantly lower after vaccination than before, in the case of con-A ($p = 0.03$) and TT ($p = 0.01$) in the Guinean children and in the case of PPD ($p = 0.009$) and TT ($p = 0.03$) in the Swedish children. Stimulation of lymphocytes from measles-immune children with measles antigens resulted in weak lymphoproliferative responses. These observations may be relevant to the increased mortality found in children immunized with high-titre measles vaccines, as compared to controls, in recent studies. The study confirms the applicability and usefulness under field conditions of the whole blood version of the thymidine incorporation assay.

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