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REPORTS

Proviral DNA of a retrovirus, human T-cell leukemia virus, in two patients with AIDS

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Science 20 May 1983:
Vol. 220, Issue 4599, pp. 862-865
DOI: 10.1126/science.6601822

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Abstract

The acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is characterized by T-lymphocyte dysfunction and is frequently accompanied by opportunistic infections and Kaposi's sarcoma. Human T-cell leukemia virus (HTLV) is associated with T-cell malignancies and can transform T lymphocytes in vitro. In an attempt to find evidence of HTLV infection in patients with AIDS, DNA from samples of peripheral blood lymphocytes from 33 AIDS patients was analyzed by Southern blot-hybridization with a radiolabeled cloned HTLV DNA probe. Analysis of DNA from both the fresh (uncultured) lymphocytes and from T cells cultured with T-cell growth factor revealed the presence of integrated HTLV proviral sequences in lymphocytes from two of the patients, both of whom had antibody to HTLV. The proviral sequences could not be detected in blood samples obtained from these individuals at a later date, consistent with the possibility that the population of infected cells had become depleted.

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