AUTOIMMUNITY

Risk of thyroid dysfunction in autoimmune diabetes mellitus

Patients with type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM) or latent autoimmune diabetes in adults (LADA) with a high titer of antibodies against glutamate decarboxylase (GAD) frequently develop thyroid autoimmunity and, thus, may benefit from annual TSH screening to minimize the risk of undiagnosed thyroid dysfunction.

LADA is a subgroup of T1DM which shares some characteristics with T2DM at onset, and patients eventually develop the need for insulin. Although an association between T1DM and autoimmune thyroid diseases is accepted, little is known about the risk for thyroid autoimmunity in Chinese patients with LADA.

Jin *et al.* aimed to predict the risk of thyroid autoimmunity in patients with T1DM or LADA by evaluating the immunological and genetic factors involved in its development in Chinese patients with these disorders.

“Our findings show that LADA, similar to T1DM, is often associated

with thyroid autoimmunity. But we did not find an association between *CTLA4* polymorphisms and LADA, which indicates that LADA and T1DM with thyroid autoimmunity have different genetic backgrounds,” comments Zhiguang Zhou (Central South University, Changsha, Hunan, China).

A high titre of GAD antibodies was a strong predictor of the development of thyroid autoimmunity. Jin *et al.*, therefore, suggest screening for thyroid antibodies and TSH in patients with T1DM or LADA with high GAD antibody titer at onset and every 1–2 years thereafter, as a safe and cost-effective strategy in clinical practice.

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Original article Jin, P. *et al.* High titre of anti-glutamic acid decarboxylase autoantibody is a strong predictor of the development of thyroid autoimmunity in patients with type 1 diabetes and latent autoimmune diabetes in adults. *Clin. Endocrinol. (Oxf.)* doi:10.1111/j.1365-2265.2011.03976.x