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# Reactivity of Anti-Human Brain Serum With Human **Lymphocytes**

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Specific anti-human T-cell serum was prepared in rabbits by multiple subcutaneous injections of human brain homogenates in incomplete Freund's adjuvant. The serum was exhaustively absorbed with human RBCs, lyophilized human liver, lyophilized normal human serum, and peripheral blood lymphocytes from patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). Specificity of the antiserum for human T lymphocytes was tested by indirect immunofluorescence. It stained 70 to 80% of lymphocytes in circulation, 95% of thymus, 27 to 35% of spleen, 5 to 10% of tonsil lymphocytes, and over 90% of phytohemagglutinin-stimulated lymphocytes in vitro. Only T-dependent areas of cryostat-sectioned human lymph nodes stained with the antiserum. It did not stain circulating lymphocytes which formed HEAC rosettes, plasma cells in marrows of multiple myeloma patients or macrophages. After removal of HEAC rosettes by centrifugation in Ficoll-Hypaque, 75% of interface cells formed E rosettes and 65 to 75% stained with the antiserum. The antiserum was used in studies of lymphocytes in chronic and acute lymphocytic leukemias, lymphomas, and other lymphoproliferative diseases. Numbers and distribution in the circulation, spleen, and nodes of lymphocytes bearing the T marker were significantly altered in patients with these disorders. (Am <sup>J</sup> Pathol 86:1-16, 1977)

THE T-LYMPHOCYTE POPULATION is functionally heterogenous, composed of antigen-reactive cells,<sup>1,2</sup> T-helper cells,<sup>3,4</sup> T-effector or killer cells,<sup>5,6</sup> and T-suppressor cells.<sup>7-9</sup> These different populations of T cells mav express surface markers that vary in quality and/or quantity from one subpopulation to another.<sup>10,11</sup> The expression of surface markers may be affected bv the degree of activation, stage of differentiation, or mitotic activity of lymphocytes.<sup>12,13</sup> It is reasonable to expect that disease processes, particularly those involving the lvmphorecticular system, may either affect or alter the expression of such surface markers.

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Two markers commonly used for identifying circulating T cells are their ability to form spontaneous rosettes with SRBCs 14,15 and their reactivity with anti-T cell serum.<sup>16</sup> The T-cell populations identified by these two assays have been reported to either overlap  $16,17$  or not to overlap.<sup>18</sup> This suggests that some circulating T cells bear only one kind of T receptor. Experiments of Williams et  $al.^{19}$  and Bentwich et  $al.^{20}$  suggested that thymocytes possess two distinct T markers, one of which is expressed on CLL lymphocytes. If human T cells indeed express distinct T antigens at each stage of development, differentiation, or dedifferentiation, then the ability to identify these antigens on lymphoid cells is of importance in clinical medicine.

This communication describes the preparation and properties of an anti-human T-cell serum and its use in studying changes in distribution and numbers of T lymphocytes in circulation and lymphoid organs in patients with various lymphoproliferative diseases.

#### Materials and Methods

#### Immunization

White albino rabbits weighing 5 to 6 lbs were injected subcutaneously into multiple sites at weekly intervals. Normal human cerebrum was obtained at autopsy, homogenized in a Sorvall Omni-mixer [2 mg/ml phosphate-buffered saline (PBS), pH 7.4] dispensed into tubes and stored frozen at  $-70$  C. Tubes were thawed when needed, and their contents emulsified with an equal volume of complete (4 mg Mycobacterium tuberculosis H37 RA/ml) (CFA) or incomplete (IFA) Freund's adjuvant (Difco). Each rabbit received 300 mg (wet weight) of brain per injection. Rabbits immunized with brain and IFA received <sup>a</sup> total of seven injections. Most rabbits were test bled from the ear after four injections and bled by cardiac puncture after immunization was terminated. Rabbits injected with brain and CFA all developed acute experimental encephalomyelitis and some had to be exsanguinated after the third injection. Sera were heat inactivated at 56 C for 30 minutes and stored at  $-20$  C.

#### Preparation of Lymphoid Cell Suspensions

Human peripheral blood lymphocytes (PBL) were isolated on Ficoll-Hypaque as detailed elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> Thymocytes were obtained from fresh thymus glands surgically removed from young children during open-heart surgery. Thymic tissue was pressed through <sup>a</sup> fine stainless steel mesh into <sup>a</sup> small volume of PBS, pH 7.2, containing 0.1% disodium salt of ethylenediamine tetracetate (EDTA-Na2). The suspension of thymocytes was centrifuged at 250g briefly to remove tissue clumps, and its concentration was adjusted as needed.

Lymph nodes and spleens from patients with leukemias or lymphomas were processed immediately after surgical removal by pressing the chopped lymphoid tissue through a mesh screen and Ficoll-Hypaque centrifugation of the resulting lymphocyte suspensions.

Viability of lymphocytes in suspensions was determined by trypan blue dye exclusion and was generally  $\geq 90\%$ .

#### Immunofluorescent Staining

Aggregate-free monospecific fluorescein-labeled antihuman IgG, IgA, IgM,  $\kappa$ , and  $\lambda$ antisera (Meloy Laboratories, Springfield, Va.) were used to detect surface immunoglobuJanuary 1977

lins on lymphocytes. The antisera were tested for monospecificity as described elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> The direct method used for staining of lymphocytes was detailed elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

The indirect method was employed to detect the presence of T antigen. Lymphocytes in suspension  $(2 \times 10^6 \text{ cells/ml})$  were incubated with appropriately diluted (usually 1:16, depending on the batch of antiserum), anti-human brain serum for 30 minutes at 4 C. The cells were washed twice with PBS and then reacted with fluorescein-conjugated goat antirabbit immunoglobulin serum (7S, Melov Laboratories) for 30 minutes at room temperature. As control, lymphocytes were reacted directly with labeled goat antirabbit globulin without the antibrain sera. To test for nonspecific staining, controls with fluorescein-labeled human albumin were run simultaneously with specimens. Controls were always negative.

Cryostat sections of lymphoid tissues ( $4 \mu$  thick) were fixed in acetone for 2 minutes, air dried, washed in PBS, and reacted with fluorescein-labeled antiimmunoglobulin sera or with antibrain serum followed by labeled goat antirabbit globulin. All sections were stained for 30 minutes at room temperature and washed three times with PBS, each wash lasting 10 minutes. The sections were mounted in PBS-glycerol and examined in a Zeiss Photoscope II.

#### **Rosette Formation**

T rosettes with sheep red blood cells (SRBC) were formed by the method of Jondal, Holm, and Wigzell <sup>14</sup> modified as follows. Washed lymphocvtes were resuspended in GVB buffer (Cordis Laboratories) to a final concentration of  $4 \times 10^6$  cells/ml. Equal volumes  $(0.25 \text{ ml})$  of the lymphocyte suspension and of 1%  $(v/v)$  suspension of SRBC in PBS were combined in a small tube. The mixture was centrifuged at 200g for 5 minutes and then placed at 4 C ovemight. Next morning, the pellet was resuspended by gentle tapping of each tube, and the percentage of rosette-forming cells (Iymphocytes with three or more SRBC) was determined in a hemacytometer by counting 200 or more lymphocvtes in several fields.

B rosettes were determined by a modified technique of Mendes et al.<sup>23</sup> Human red blood cells (type A, Rh negative) were coated with heat-inactivated anti-A serum at a subagglutinating dilution. Anti-A serum was made in rabbits by a single subcutaneous injection of human A-type red blood cells in complete Freund's adjuvant followed by bleeding 6 or 7 days later. Serum-coated erythrocytes were then incubated with 0.2 ml of mouse serum as a source of complement. The indicator cells (0.3 ml) were added to an equal volume of the lymphocyte suspension at the concentration of  $2 \times 10^6$  cells/ml in GVB buffer. The mixture was centrifuged at 200g for 5 minutes, the pellet resuspended after addition of a drop of toluidine blue (0.2% in PBS), and the number of rosettes determined by counting at least 200 lymphocytes in consecutive fields.

In some experiments both immunofluorescence and rosetting were performed with the same cell preparation, lymphocytes were stained as described above, washed gentlv, resuspended at the cell concentration suitable for rosette formation, and reacted with either SRBC or C`-coated indicator cells. Duplicate tubes were set up, one for counting rosettes in a hemocytometer, the other for examining rosettes in the fluorescent microscope.

#### **Rosette Inhibition**

Lymphocytes were resuspended in PBS at the concentration of  $5 \times 10^6$  cells/ml. An aliquot of this suspension was mixed with an equal volume of undiluted antibrain serum and incubated for 30 minutes at room temperature. Normal rabbit serum was used as control. After incubation, lymphocytes were centrifuged at 500g, washed twice with PBS, and allowed to form rosettes with SRBC as described. An untreated lvmphocvte control was always included.

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#### Cytotoxicity Testing

Peripheral blood lymphocytes, thymocytes, or lymphocytes isolated from spleen and/or lymph nodes were suspended in barbital buffer and a two-step microcytotoxicity assay was performed as described by Amos.24

#### Absorptions of Antisera

Rabbit antisera reactive with PBL in the immunofluorescence and cytotoxic assays were absorbed twice with human RBC type AB, Rh+. Equal volumes of antisera and washed packed RBCs were combined, agitated gently, and incubated at room temperature for 30 minutes. Antisera were then absorbed twice with homogenized and lyophilized normal human liver at the concentration of 50 mg/ml for <sup>1</sup> hour at <sup>4</sup> C and with lyophilized normal human serum (40 mg/ml). To amplify the specificity of the antiserum for T cells, absorptions with lymphocytes from two different patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia followed. Approximately  $2 \times 10^7$  lymphocytes from each patient were used, and the absorptions were judged complete if the antisera gave no positive reactions with absorbing CLL lymphocytes in indirect immunofluorescence or cytotoxicity assays. Following each absorption, the antisera were centrifuged at 200,00Og for <sup>1</sup> hour in the Beckman ultracentrifuge model L2 (rotor 50 Ti). Centrifuged antisera were filtered through <sup>a</sup> 0.22 nm Millipore filter (Millipore Corp., Bedford, Mass.) and stored frozen in small aliquots.

## **Results**

#### Properties of Anti-Human Brain Serum

Anti-human brain serum raised in rabbits and absorbed as described in Materials and Methods was tested against human lymphocytes by three different procedures: immunofluorescence, cytotoxicity, and T-rosette inhibition. The potency and ability of the antisera to stain, lyse, or inhibit T rosettes depended on the length of immunization and type of adjuvant used. Rabbits immunized with brain emulsified in complete Freund's ajuvant all developed acute experimental encephalomyelitis and had to be bled out, usually after the third injection. For that reason, antiserum obtained had a low titer and was reactive only in immunofluorescence (at 1:2 dilution after absorption). With the use of IFA, antibrain serum with higher titers was obtained following seven subcutaneous injections into multiple sites (Table 1).

Some of the properties of anti-human brain serum made with IFA are listed in Table 2. A partial inhibition of spontaneous rosettes was observed when lymphocytes or thymocytes were preincubated with the undiluted antiserum. This partial inhibition indicates that the receptors for sheep erythrocyte rosettes are distinct from the receptors defined by the anti-T cell serum. Thus, the observed partial inhibition may have resulted from the steric hindrance by the antibody rather than direct blocking of the rosette receptor site.

The anti-T cell serum lysed PBL and thymocytes in the presence of rabbit serum as a source of complement. The preferential in vitro cytoJanuary 1977



Table 1-Properties of Absorbed Anti-Human Brain Serum Made in Rabbits and Tested on Circulating Human Lymphocytes and Thymocytes

\* Immunofluorescence titer is defined as the reciprocal of the highest dilution at which 70 to 75% of peripheral blood lymphocytes and  $\geq$ 95% of thymocytes were stained.

t Cytotoxicity titer is defined as the reciprocal of the highest dilution at which 50% of cells were lysed in presence of rabbit complement.

xicitv toward thymocytes is suggestive of the presence of increased quantities of the T antigen on thymocytes as compared to circulating T cells.

#### Specificity of the Antiserum for T Cells

Absorbed anti-human brain serum was tested for its specificity to T lymphocytes by immunofluorescence. Freshly prepared cell suspensions from human blood, thymus, spleen, and tonsils were stained with the antiserum previously titrated to a plateau with PBLs (Table 3). In addition, PBLs cultured in the presence of various mitogens were stained. Lymphocytes stimulated with PHA and con A, the putative T-cell mitogens, all stained with the anti-T cell serum, $22$  while lymphocytes transformed with PWM did not. As the antiserum was absorbed with human RBCs and CLL cells, it did not stain these cells in suspension. The antiserum failed to stain plasma cells in bone marrow preparations of patients with multiple myeloma. Macrophages, defined as those cells in normal human circulation that stick to glass and/or plastic, were negative.

To exclude the possibility that the antiserum reacts with  $B$  lymphocytes, complement-receptor lymphocytes (CRLs), which can be identified by their abilitv to form HEAC rosettes, were labeled with fluores-





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Table 3-Staining Properties of the Absorbed Anti-T Cell Serum (Indirect Immunofluorescence)



Numbers of specimens tested are given in parentheses.

cein-conjugated polyvalent anti-Ig serum or with the anti-T-cell serum as described in Materials and Methods. Lymphocytes forming HEAC rosettes stained only with the polyvalent anti-Ig serum. Further, when HEAC rosettes were removed by Ficoll-Hypaque centrifugation, the majority of lymphocytes left at the interface (presumably T cells) simultaneously stained with the anti-T cell serum and formed T rosettes.

The distribution of cells stained with the anti-T-cell serum in a section of normal human lymph node is shown in Figure 1. As can be seen, only T-dependent paracortical regions of the node are stained, while follicular areas are negative. Figure 2 shows a section through human thymus with intensely and uniformly stained thymocytes. Finally, Figure 3 is an example of the kind of surface staining that is obtained if PBLs are stained with the anti-T cell serum. It is our impression that two distinct subsets of positive cells can be detected with the antiserum: strongly stained cells (about one fourth or one third of all positive) and weakly stained cells. Similar observation was reported by Brown and Greaves.<sup>16</sup>

These data point to <sup>a</sup> high degree of specificity of the antiserum for T Iymphocytes.

# Distribution of T Cells in Lymphoproliferative Disorders

The anti-T cell serum was used for studying the distribution of T cells in the circulation and lymph nodes of patients with various lymphoproliferative diseases. The T cells were identified by spontaneous rosette formation in suspensions of PBLs and/or lymph nodes and by positive immunofluorescence with the anti-T cell serum. Table 4 summarizes our data on the T cell distribution in various blood dyscrasias.

Patients with acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) generally fall into one of several categories: those with neither marker detectable, those with one January 1977

	In circulation		In lymph nodes	
<b>Disorder</b>	marker	T rosettes	l marker	T rosettes
Acute lymphocytic leukemia (6)	0 or N	0 or N	<b>ND</b>	<b>ND</b>
Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (30)			Large masses	<b>ND</b>
Hairy cell leukemia (7)		Ц	<b>Diffused</b>	
Sézary's syndrome (2)	₩	Ħ	<b>ND</b>	<b>ND</b>

Table 4-Distribution of T Cells in Patients With Blood Dyscrasias

 $N =$  normal,  $ND =$  not determined. The number of patients studied is given in parentheses.

marker at a normal proportion and the other missing, and those with decreased proportions of either one or both markers.

Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) patients were studied with the anti-T cell serum which was not absorbed with CLL cells. These patients had increased numbers of lymphocytes bearing the T marker: 60 to 90% of circulating cells stained with the antiserum. At the same time, the majority of these cells stained with labeled anti-Ig sera, an indication that leukemic lymphocytes, unlike the normal B cells, share antigenic markers with the T lymphocytes.<sup>25</sup> The total number of cells rosetting with SRBCs was increased in all CLL patients.<sup>25</sup> In addition, distribution of the T cells in their lymph nodes was altered, with large compact masses of T-positive lymphocytes infiltrating the node. Figure 4 illustrates such a mass in a node obtained from <sup>a</sup> CLL patient.

Hairy cell leukemia (HCL) was characterized by a marked depletion of the T-rosetting subpopulation in blood as well as in lymph nodes and a significant increase in the T-marker-bearing circulating lymphocytes. Controls with trypsin-treated cells as well as staining of fixed cell preparations confirmed that the T marker was synthesized by the cells and was not absorbed to the "hairy" cell surfaces from the serum. In lymph nodes, T-marker-bearing cells were densely scattered throughout, so that the normal organization into T- and B-dependent areas was obliterated by diffusing T-positive cells.

In patients with Sézary's syndrome, both T-marker and T-rosetting lymphocyte subpopulations in peripheral blood were characteristically elevated. For example, in <sup>1</sup> patient, over 85% of PBLs formed T rosettes and over 95% stained with the anti-T cell serum.

Patients with lymphomas were arbitrarily divided into four groups (Table 5). Only small numbers of patients were investigated so far. The numbers and distribution of T lymphocytes in nodes and circulation of patients with Hodgkin's varied with the stage of disease, the later stages

Lymphomas	In circulation		In lymph nodes	
	T marker	T rosettes	T marker	T rosettes
Hodgkin's disease	$ $ or N	÷	Depleted or diffused	or T
Nodular	⊥ or0		Small islands	
<b>Diffuse</b>	N to $\perp$	П	Small islands or diffused	
<b>Histiocytic</b>	N to $\perp$	N to $\perp$	$0 \text{ to } \perp$	

Table 5-Distribution of T Cells in Lymphoproliferative Disorders

 $N = normal$ .

being characterized by decreased numbers of T-marker and T-rosetting-bearing lymphocytes in both circulation and lymph nodes. In some Hodgkin's nodes the T-marker lymphocytes were depleted, while those forming T rosettes were elevated. This lack of correlation between Tmarker and T-rosetting populations was also seen in peripheral circulation of some Hodgkin's patients.

In non-Hodgkin's malignant lymphomas, either nodular or diffuse, circulating lymphocyte pool was generally depleted in both kinds of T subpopulations. The most pronounced changes were seen in the lymph nodes. Small nodule-like deposits of cells positive for T marker were scattered throughout the node of a patient with nodular lymphoma (see Figure 5B). These foci of T cells were much smaller than the nodules of abnormal lymphocytes identified in paraffin-embedded sections. In fact, a nodule, such as that seen in Figure 5B, contained several foci of T-positive cells.

In lymph nodes from patients diagnosed to have diffuse malignant lymphomas, two types of T-cell topography were seen. Either the Tpositive cells were limited to randomly scattered small islands of strongly fluorescing lymphocytes or they were seen infiltrating the entire node, a more common picture in our experience (Figure 6).

# **Discussion**

Attempts to prepare anti-T cell sera have, by and large, been limited to thymocytes as <sup>a</sup> source of human T antigen. Ablin and co-workers <sup>26</sup> prepared anti-human thymocyte serum which reacted in immunodiffusion and immunofluorescence with an antigen present only on fetal thymus cells but absent from PBL. Smith et  $al$ ,<sup>27</sup> using thymus cells obtained from fetuses and small infants, prepared a rabbit antiserum which caused selective lysis of thymocytes and other cells of probable thymic origin. The cells sensitive to this antiserum all expressed an antigenic marker tentatively designated as the human thymic lymphocyte antigen (HTLA) by the authors. Several other investigators raised antithymocyte sera in various animals, including primates,"9 and each of the resultant anti-T cell sera had a somewhat different reactivity in terms of cytotoxicity, inhibition of spontaneous T rosettes, and effects on responses to mitogens and to allogeneic stimulation.<sup>28,29</sup> These studies indicate that such reactivity of antithymocyte sera is a reflection of heterogeneity within the T-cell population.<sup>28</sup> The situation in humans may be roughly equivalent to that in the mouse where antisera directed against thymocytes detect the antigen, and antisera to leukemia antigen and to lymphocyte-defined antigen identify various subpopulations among  $T$  cells.<sup>30,31</sup>

Several years ago, T cell-specific antisera were first produced by heteroimmunizations with mouse brain.<sup>32</sup> There is a reason to believe that the same approach may be used for preparation of anti-human T cell sera. Takada et al.<sup>33</sup> have recently reported that human brain has antigenic determinants identical or very similar to those found on the thymusderived Molt cell line. Brown and Greaves <sup>16</sup> used anti-human brain serum, made T-cell specific by appropriate absorptions, to label the cell population that formed spontaneous rosettes with sheep erythrocytes. We have prepared antiserum reacting with human thymocytes and T lymphocytes, but not B cells, by injecting rabbits with human cerebrum emulsified in incomplete Fruend's adjuvant. Many investigators failed to produce a specific anti-T cell serum by heteroimmunization with human brain (e.g., the work of Schlesinger and Galili<sup>34</sup> and that of Thiele et al.<sup>35</sup>). It could be that this failure is due to differences in brain preparations and/or different immunization schedules. The use of complete and incomplete Freund's adjuvant for immunization of our animals and differences in reactivities of the resulting sera illustrates the difficulty. The distribution and concentration of T-cell antigens in brain may vary between individuals. In addition, some rabbits have been known to respond well and others poorly in terms of antibody synthesis to human brain antigens.<sup>36</sup>

In order to use the antiserum for tagging of T cells in disease states, it is imperative to ascertain its specificity. The prepared antiserum was extensively absorbed to remove nonspecific antibodies directed to human species antigens, immunoglobulins, and other lymphocyte antigens. Further, the specificity of the antiserum for T cells was checked by several criteria as detailed in Tables 2 and 3. Unfortunately, working with human cells,

we were restricted by the availability of pure T-cell populations that can be used for testing. Thymocytes represent the best source of human T cells. However, recent evidence pointing to a high degree of heterogeneity among T cells suggests that thymocytes constitute but one subpopulation of T cells. Thus, in evaluating specificity, it appears more important to show that B cells (CRLs and SIg-bearing lymphocytes) do not react with the antiserum than to demonstrate positive reactivity with all T cells. However, it must be remembered that mitogen-stimulated<sup>22</sup> and antigen-activated <sup>37</sup> T cells may express immunoglobulins on their surfaces.

It has been emphasized that the tests for specificity should demonstrate reciprocity and coincidence with other membrane markers such as receptors for complement and for SRBC.38 While the antiserum we prepared did not stain normal peripheral lymphocytes forming HEAC rosettes, the overlap between cells rosetting with SRBC and T marker-positive cells was not complete. This indicated that more T cells in circulation carried the T marker than receptors for SRBC. In contrast to the small discrepancy between the two T-cell markers in the normal peripheral circulation, striking differences in their distribution were observed in the circulation and lymph nodes of patients with various lymphoproliferative disorders (Tables 4 and 5).

Little is known about the qualitative and quantitative distribution and about functional significance of the different T antigens in humans. Several lines of evidence indicate, for example, that thymocytes and PBL have distinct T determinants in addition to the ones they share.<sup>19</sup> Using the antiserum to human thymic lymphocyte antigens, Woody et al.<sup>28</sup> demonstrated that con A-responsive PBL, the responder cells in MLC, and killer T cells react with the antiserum, while the peripheral lymphocytes responding to PHA and pokeweed mitogen and those producing MIF and TF are not affected in their functions by treatments with the antiserum. Our results indicate that different T-cell subpopulations may predominate in the circulation and lymphoid organs in the course of a lymphoproliferative disease. It is likely that these changes may reflect altered functional capabilities of the infiltrating cells. In order to define how these changes affect the course and progression of disease, we are beginning to correlate clinical manifestations with the distribution of T cells in the circulation and lymphoid organs of patients with lymphoproliferative diseases.

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**Figure 1—A cryostat section of a normal human lymph node stained with the anti-human brain serum. The follicular area is negative, while the T-dependent paracrotical region is stained. (Indirect immunofluorescence,**  $\times$ 



Figure 3—Peripheral blood lymphocytes stained with the anti-human brain serum. Note that some cells are stained more strongly than others (*white arrows*). (Indirect immu-<br>nofluorescence,  $\times$  400) Figure 4—A cryostat sec



**Figure 5—Paraffin (A) and cryostat (B) sections of a lymph node from a patient with nodular lymphoma. The nodules of abnormal lymphocytes seen in the paraffin section (A) contain scattered focal deposits of T-positive ce** 



**Figure 6—A** cryostat section of a submandibular lymph node from a patient with diffuse malignant lymphoma stained with the anti-human brain serum. The node is infiltrated by the T-positive cells. (Indirect immunofluoresc