

B-cell stimulatory factor 1 and not interleukin 2 is the autocrine growth factor for some helper T lymphocytes

(T cell growth factors/interleukin 1/T cell clones/lymphokines)

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ABSTRACT Clonal expansion of T lymphocytes of the helper/inducer class is generally thought to be mediated by an interleukin 2 (IL-2)-dependent autocrine mechanism. Thus, T cells stimulated by antigens or mitogenic lectins secrete IL-2 and, under appropriate conditions, express membrane receptors for IL-2, and the specific hormone-receptor interaction induces cellular proliferation. Recent studies indicate that B-cell stimulatory factor 1 (BSF-1) is secreted by T cells and is capable of stimulating T-cell proliferation. We now report that BSF-1 and not IL-2 is the sole autocrine growth factor for certain cloned lines of inducer T lymphocytes. On stimulation by the lectin concanavalin A, anti-receptor antibody, or specific antigen with antigen-presenting cells, such clones secrete a lymphokine that stimulates DNA synthesis by the "IL-2 indicator line," HT2, but is identified as BSF-1 by specific inhibition with monoclonal antibodies. The proliferative response of such BSF-1-secreting clones to receptor-mediated signals is dependent on BSF-1 and not IL-2. These results demonstrate a function of BSF-1 and confirm the existence of a previously unknown autocrine pathway of T-cell activation.

Proliferation and differentiation of lymphocytes are mediated by a variety of lymphokines. Until recently, the major or only growth factor that has been identified for T lymphocytes is interleukin 2 (IL-2). Thus, it has been thought that helper/inducer T lymphocytes, recognizing antigens in association with products of class II major histocompatibility genes (Ia molecules), are stimulated to secrete IL-2 and to express high-affinity surface receptors for IL-2. Subsequent proliferation of these T cells is a consequence of the autocrine IL-2-receptor interaction (1). Several stimuli have been shown to induce and/or enhance the expression of IL-2 receptors (IL-2R). These include the monokine, interleukin 1 (IL-1) (2), and IL-2 itself (3). Recently, it has become apparent that in different situations, T-cell expansion does not correlate with expression of IL-2R (4) and that IL-2-independent pathways of T-cell proliferation exist (5). The nature of such pathways is unknown.

B-cell stimulatory factor 1 (BSF-1; provisionally termed interleukin 4) was originally identified as a helper/inducer T-cell-derived lymphokine that acted, together with anti-immunoglobulin antibodies, as a costimulator for proliferation of resting B lymphocytes (6). More recent studies using highly purified and recombinant DNA-derived BSF-1 have shown that this lymphokine also stimulates the proliferation of T lymphocytes and mast cells, induces IgG1 and IgE antibody production, and enhances the expression of Ia molecules on resting B cells (7-11). During experiments analyzing lymphokine production by murine helper/inducer T-cell clones, we observed that some clones secreted a factor that stimulated DNA synthesis by the prototypical "IL-2

indicator line," HT2 (12), but it was not IL-2. We now report the identification of this factor as BSF-1. More importantly, cloned T cells that secrete BSF-1 in response to receptor-mediated signals exclusively utilize this lymphokine as their autocrine growth factor, whereas clones that secrete IL-2 proliferate via an IL-2-dependent mechanism. Thus, BSF-1 represents a newly defined, IL-2-independent autocrine pathway for T-cell activation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Cell Lines. The following murine helper/inducer T-cell clones have been used in the experiments described in this paper: D10.G4 (specific for conalbumin and I-A^k determinants) (13), CDC 25 [specific for rabbit immunoglobulin (RGG) and an I-A^{k/d} F₁ hybrid determinant] (14), and 10G11 (specific for ovalbumin and I-A^d), which we derived by limiting dilution cloning of immune lymph node T cells in the presence of antigen, irradiated BALB/c splenocytes, and Con A-induced rat spleen cell supernatant. All clones were maintained by restimulation every 2 weeks with antigen, 1500 R irradiated splenocytes, and Con A supernatant. For lymphokine assays we used the HT2 line, which synthesizes DNA in response to IL-2 and is, therefore, considered to be an IL-2 indicator cell.

Lymphokines, Monokines, Antigens, and Antibodies. BSF-1 was purified from the culture supernatant of the phorbol ester-stimulated EL4 thymoma cell line by high pressure liquid chromatography (15) and was kindly provided by J. Ohara and W. Paul (National Institutes of Health). Units of BSF-1 are expressed as described (15). Recombinant murine IL-2 was obtained from Genzyme (Boston), and purified human monocyte IL-1 was from Cistron (Pine Brook, NJ); concentrations of both are expressed in units used by the suppliers.

The rat monoclonal antibody specific for murine BSF-1, 11B11, was produced and provided as ascitic fluid by J. Ohara and W. Paul (16). For inhibiting the effects of IL-2, we used a combination of two rat anti-IL-2R monoclonal antibodies, 7D4 (17) and PC61 (18). Globulin fractions (concentrated 20 times) of anti-IL-2R hybridoma culture supernatants were prepared by precipitation in 45% ammonium sulfate, mixed in equal proportions, and used at the final dilutions indicated. The mouse monoclonal antibody specific for the clonotypic receptors of D10.G4, 3D3, was produced by Kaye *et al.* (13) and was generously provided as ascitic fluid by C. Janeway (Yale University School of Medicine).

The antigens, conalbumin and ovalbumin, and the lectin Con A, were purchased from Sigma. 2,4,6-Trinitrophenyl (TNP) conjugates of conalbumin were prepared as described

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Abbreviations: APC, antigen-presenting cells; BSF-1, B-cell stimulatory factor 1; IL-1, interleukin 1; IL-2, interleukin 2; IL-2R, interleukin 2 receptors; RAMG, rabbit anti-mouse immunoglobulin; RGG, rabbit immunoglobulin; TNP, 2,4,6-trinitrophenyl.

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(19). RGG (Sigma) and affinity-purified rabbit anti-mouse immunoglobulin (RAMG) were digested with pepsin and F(ab')₂ fragments purified by protein A-Sepharose chromatography, and are referred to as RGG and RAMG, respectively.

Cell Cultures and Assays. Viable cells of different cloned T-cell lines were purified by centrifugation over Ficoll-Isopaque and cultured with various stimulants in flat-bottomed microculture plates in duplicate or triplicate. Each well contained 2×10^4 T cells in a total volume of 0.2 ml of RPMI 1640 medium supplemented with 2 mM L-glutamine, penicillin, streptomycin, nonessential amino acids, 1 mM sodium pyruvate, 10% heat-inactivated fetal calf serum, and 50 μ M 2-mercaptoethanol. Cells were stimulated with Con A, antireceptor antibody, various lymphokines, or antigen and antigen-presenting cells (APC). The APC used were 1500 R irradiated splenocytes (5×10^5 per well) from AKR mice (for D10.G4), (C3H \times DBA/2)F₁(C3D2F₁) mice (for CDC 25) or BALB/c mice (for 10G11). In some experiments, we used 5×10^4 900 R irradiated TNP-specific splenic B cells from normal mice purified by binding to and eluting from TNP gelatin-coated dishes as described (20). This was done to exclude the possibility of T-cell lymphokines being derived from the APC populations. We have shown that such hapten-specific B lymphocytes are highly efficient at presenting hapten-proteins to T-T hybridomas (20, 21), as well as cloned lines such as D10.G4 (19). TNP-binding B cells also present low concentrations of TNP-RGG and RAMG to the CDC25 clone (A.H.L., H. P. Tony, D. C. Parker, and A.K.A., unpublished data). Although purified B cells and antigen are sufficient for stimulating lymphokine secretion, maximal T-cell proliferation requires the presence of IL-1 (19).

Lymphokine secretion was measured in cultures incubated for 16–20 hr at 37°C in a humidified atmosphere of 5% CO₂/95% air. Aliquots of supernatants (0.1 ml) were transferred to fresh microculture plates, and 10^4 HT2 cells were added with and without anti-BSF-1 or anti-IL-2R, to a final vol of 0.2 ml. These cultures were incubated for 16 hr at 37°C,

pulsed for 5–6 hr with 1 μ Ci of [³H]thymidine (Amersham) per well and samples were harvested in a PHD cell harvester (Cambridge Technology, Cambridge, MA). [³H]Thymidine incorporation was measured by scintillation counting and was used as an index of DNA synthesis; all results are expressed as mean cpm per culture.

T-cell proliferation was measured in cultures incubated for 48 or 60 hr at 37°C, pulsed with [³H]thymidine for the final 6–8 hr, and harvested as described above. Controls included in all experiments showed that the irradiated APC populations did not secrete IL-2 or BSF-1 or proliferate when cultured alone, and that neither anti-BSF-1 nor anti-IL-2R antibodies alone stimulated DNA synthesis by HT2 cells or by any of the T-cell clones studied.

RESULTS

The studies described below evolved from our initial observation that antigen and APC-induced supernatants of the D10.G4 clone stimulated DNA synthesis by HT2 cells, but this stimulation could not be inhibited by concentrations of anti-IL-2R antibodies that completely abrogated the response of HT2 cells to recombinant murine or human IL-2 (200 units/ml). This finding suggested that another HT2-stimulating lymphokine, possibly BSF-1, was present in these supernatants. We, therefore, developed an assay for distinguishing IL-2 from BSF-1 using HT2 cells as the test system. As shown in Fig. 1, both recombinant IL-2 and HPLC-purified murine BSF-1 stimulate the proliferation of HT2 cells. At maximal concentrations, the response to IL-2 is 2–5 times the response to BSF-1; similar results have recently been reported with purified recombinant BSF-1 (11). More importantly, the response to BSF-1 is specifically blocked by a monoclonal antibody, 11B11, reactive with this lymphokine (15), while the response to IL-2 is inhibited by antibodies specific for IL-2R (Fig. 1 C and D). Neither antibody shows any cross-inhibition, and control rat monoclonal antibodies specific for mouse Lyt1 or LFA1 are not inhibitory (data not shown).

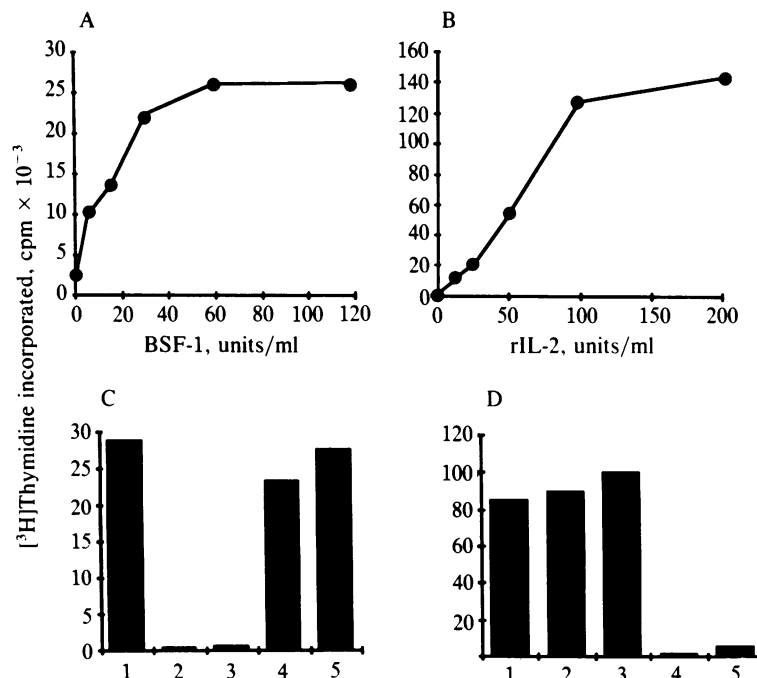


FIG. 1. Stimulation of HT2 cells by BSF-1 and IL-2. Duplicate cultures of 10^4 HT2 cells were stimulated with HPLC-purified BSF-1 (A, as shown; C, 30 units/ml) or recombinant murine IL-2 (rIL-2) (B, as shown; D, 100 units/ml). In C and D, cultures also contained anti-BSF-1 antibody or anti-IL-2 receptor antibodies. Data shown are means of radioactivity incorporated (cpm) per culture. Both antibodies selectively and completely inhibit the activity of the respective lymphokine. Bars: 1, no antibody; 2, anti-BSF-1 diluted 1:1000; 3, anti-BSF-1 diluted 1:5000; 4, anti-IL-2R diluted 1:100; 5, anti-IL-2R diluted 1:500.

Table 1. T-cell clones D10.G4 and CDC 25 secrete BSF-1

T-cell clone	Supernatant [†] Stimulus	Proliferation of HT2 cells*, [³ H]thymidine incorporation in the presence of		
		No antibody	Anti-BSF-1	Anti-IL-2R
D10.G4	Con A	55,691	942	43,550
D10.G4	3D3	26,649	2,269	20,960
D10.G4	Spleen + conalbumin	28,326	1,447	21,491
D10.G4	TNP-B + TNP-conalbumin	30,868	746	23,489
CDC 25	Con A	65,610	3,003	43,175
CDC 25	Spleen + RGG	26,426	2,282	21,689
CDC 25	TNP-B + RAMG	50,984	4,227	37,327
10G11	Con A	159,042	164,375	6,448

Results are expressed as mean cpm of duplicate cultures. Standard deviations were <10% of the mean. [³H]Thymidine incorporation into HT2 cells obtained with supernatants of unstimulated T cells or T cells cultured with APC alone was <3000 cpm. Each T-cell supernatant has been tested for HT2 stimulating activity in three to five experiments; representative data are shown.

*Supernatants from 18-hr stimulated T-cell clones were assayed at 50% vol/vol in 0.2-ml microcultures containing 10⁴ HT2 cells in the presence or absence of anti-BSF-1 antibody (11B11, 1:1000 dilution of ascites) or anti-IL-2R antibody (7D4 + PC61, 1:100 dilution).

[†]Supernatants were prepared by stimulating 2 × 10⁴ cloned T cells with Con A (2 μg/ml), 3D3 antireceptor antibody (1:1000 dilution of ascites); 5 × 10⁵ spleen cells + 100 μg/ml of conalbumin or RGG, or 5 × 10⁴ TNP-B cells + TNP-conalbumin (10 μg/ml) or RAMG (0.1 μg/ml), as shown and detailed in *Materials and Methods*.

Thus, differential inhibition by these monoclonal antibodies provides a reliable means of distinguishing two lymphokines, BSF-1 and IL-2, both of which stimulate T-cell proliferation.

Using this approach, we sought to define the type of lymphokine secreted by D10.G4 cells in response to Con A, the anti-receptor antibody, 3D3, or antigen and AKR(H-2^k) APC. As shown in Table 1, all of these stimuli induce the secretion of BSF-1 but not IL-2 from D10.G4 cells. [Anti-IL-2R antibodies at the dilution used in these assays (1:100) frequently cause ≈20% inhibition of T-cell proliferation, even in response to purified BSF-1; this is presumably a nonspecific effect due to antibody binding to responding cells.] Another T-cell clone we have analyzed in detail is CDC 25. When stimulated with Con A or antigen and C3D2F1APC, CDC 25, like D10.G4, secretes BSF-1 and not IL-2 (Table 1). Moreover, the addition of IL-1 does not alter the pattern or quantity of lymphokine secretion by these clones (data not shown). In a survey of 17 additional cloned lines of different antigen specificities and Ia restrictions, we have identified 12 that secrete only IL-2 and 5 that secrete only BSF-1 in response to stimulation by Con A or antigen and APC. Results with a prototypical IL-2-producing clone, 10G11, are shown in Table 1.

These results raised the unexpected possibility that the

proliferation of T-cell clones such as D10.G4 and CDC 25 is mediated by BSF-1 and not IL-2. To test this hypothesis, we assessed the ability of antibodies to BSF-1 or IL-2R to block the proliferative responses of these clones to Con A, antireceptor antibody, or antigen and APC, in the presence of exogenous IL-1 (since IL-1 is necessary for maximal proliferation) (13, 19). As shown in Table 2, the responses to lectin or receptor-mediated stimulation are markedly inhibited by anti-BSF-1 but are not significantly affected by anti-IL-2R antibodies. Several important controls are also illustrated in Table 2. D10.G4 cells proliferate in response to IL-2 or to BSF-1 and IL-1 (but not BSF-1 alone) and the antibodies show a completely specific pattern of inhibition, as demonstrated with HT2 cells (Fig. 1). Moreover, in the absence of IL-1, the D10.G4 cells respond weakly or not at all to any stimuli except IL-2, confirming earlier observations (13, 22). Thus, these results establish that the proliferative responses of two T-cell clones to lectins or to signals delivered via antigen receptors are mediated largely or solely by BSF-1, even though these clones are capable of responding to exogenous IL-2. Finally, the proliferative response of the prototypical IL-2-secreting clone, 10G11, to antigen and APC is selectively inhibited by anti-IL-2R but not by anti-BSF-1 antibodies (Table 2). This confirms the specificity of the

Table 2. Inhibition of D10.G4 and CDC 25 T-cell proliferation with anti-BSF-1 antibody

T-cell clone	APC/factor	Antigen/mitogen	No antibody	[³ H]Thymidine incorporation in the presence of			
				Anti-BSF-1		Anti-IL-2R	
				1:250	1:1000	1:100	1:500
D10.G4	IL-1	Con A (2 μg/ml)	37,630	3,169	3,301	33,463	30,727
D10.G4	IL-1	3D3 (1:5000)	52,966	ND	4,070	58,474*	ND
D10.G4	TNP-B + IL-1	TNP-conalbumin (10 μg/ml)	63,298	8,526	12,100	64,247	57,079
D10.G4	Spleen	Conalbumin (100 μg/ml)	107,438	12,658	17,496	85,051	88,779
D10.G4	—	IL-2	25,285	34,297	32,079	5,521	ND
D10.G4	—	BSF-1	4,784	ND	ND	ND	ND
D10.G4	IL-1	BSF-1	25,049	4,382	1,108	18,681	ND
CDC 25	TNP-B + IL-1	RAMG (0.1 μg/ml)	74,995	8,184	13,313	64,232	79,240
10G11	Spleen	Ovalbumin (100 μg/ml)	34,064	ND	29,334	1,522	ND

Cultures containing 2 × 10⁴ cloned T cells were incubated with the indicated stimulants, with and without antibodies, for 48 or 60 hr, and pulsed with 1 μCi of [³H]thymidine (1 Ci = 37 GBq) per well for the final 6–8 hr. Purified human IL-1 was used at 1 unit/ml, recombinant murine IL-2 was used at 100 units/ml and HPLC-purified BSF-1 was used at 30 units/ml. Results are expressed as mean cpm of duplicate determinations. Standard deviations were <10% of the mean. [³H]Thymidine incorporation of T cells incubated with antigen or APC alone was <3000 cpm. ND, not done.

*Anti-IL-2R was used at 1:25 dilution in this experiment.

antibody-blocking experiments and further demonstrates that the lymphokine detected in the Con A supernatants of these three T-cell clones is the primary autocrine growth factor involved in the physiologic response of each clone to antigen. The same result has been observed with six other T-cell clones that have been analyzed similarly—i.e., the proliferative response of each clone to antigen and APC is dependent on the lymphokine (IL-2 or BSF-1) that it secretes following receptor-mediated stimulation (data not shown).

DISCUSSION

The data presented in this report establish the role of BSF-1 as an autocrine factor for the activation of a subset of helper/inducer T-lymphocyte clones. Of the panel of clones specific for different protein antigens and I-A/I-E determinants that we have examined, about one-third secrete BSF-1 and the remainder secrete IL-2 after lectin or antigen activation. Other investigators have reported similar data, in that about one-half of helper/inducer lines secrete IL-2 (and γ -interferon), and the remainder secrete a lymphokine now identified as BSF-1 (22). To date, we have detected no phenotypic differences between these T-cell subsets—all are specific for antigen and Ia, and all are L3T4⁺ Lyt2⁻. The factors, such as culture conditions or cloning techniques, that promote the growth of one or the other subset and their relative proportions in normal T-cell populations have not been determined.

The most significant finding from our experiments is that the lymphokine secreted by a particular T cell—i.e., IL-2 or BSF-1—is also the lymphokine that mediates the proliferative response of that T cell to antigen receptor-specific signals (Tables 1 and 2). The recognition of BSF-1 as an autocrine T-cell growth factor may resolve unexplained discrepancies between T-cell activation and IL-2R expression (4) and help to explain proliferative responses to T cells that are clearly independent of IL-2 (5). Recently, the gene for the human BSF-1 equivalent has been cloned and the recombinant protein was shown to have biologic effects similar to murine BSF-1 (J. de Vries, personal communication). Whether human helper/inducer T-cell subsets will show similar IL-2- and BSF-1-mediated autocrine pathways is unknown. It should be pointed out that since BSF-1-producing T cells (such as D10.G4 and CDC25) do express receptors for IL-1, they are capable of responding to IL-2 secreted by other cells in their microenvironment. Whether all T cells exhibit autocrine as well as “bystander” responses is unknown.

Our results also raise questions about functional differences between these two subsets of T cells. It is tempting to speculate that the BSF-1-producing and responsive T cells are particularly efficient at helping B lymphocytes, whereas inducer T cells that secrete IL-1 (and γ -interferon) play a role in macrophage activation and cell-mediated immune responses. There is, however, no direct evidence to support such a hypothesis. Finally, our data suggest that the role of IL-1 in T-cell activation should be reevaluated, since the ability of IL-1 to stimulate IL-2 secretion (23) or IL-2 receptor expression (2) may be of no consequence to BSF-1-producing and responsive T cells. Moreover, although IL-2 alone is capable of stimulating IL-1-dependent T cells such as D10.G4, the response to BSF-1 (like the response to lectin, antigen, or antireceptor antibody) requires the presence of exogenous

IL-1 (Table 2). This supports the view that receptor-specific stimulation is mediated by BSF-1 in these T cells, and it also suggests that BSF-1 and IL-1 may provide two independent signals that are necessary for commitment to DNA synthesis and proliferation. More precise quantitative assays for BSF-1 secretion, receptor expression, and intracellular biochemical alterations in the presence and absence of IL-1 will undoubtedly resolve such questions.

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