LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS: INFLAMMATORY RESPONSE TO WOLBACHIA BACTERIA IN FILARIAL WORMS

M. Bonofiglio, J. Hay, C. McPherson

Medical Illustrator (MB), Biomedical Communications and Academic Advisor (JH), Department of Immunology (JH), University of Toronto, and Poster Presenter (CM), Lymphovenous Canada

LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS: inflammatory response to Wolbachia bacteria in filarial worms

© Marisa Bonofiglio (contact: marisa.bonofiglio@gmail.com)
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An initial acute inflammatory response is the natural reaction to any foreign substance that enters the body. In the case of filariasis, defense cells attack the worm, releasing the intracellular endosymbiotic bacterium (Wolbachia spp.). Wolbachia induces TNF-α (tumor necrosis factor alpha), which in turn induces a granulomatous inflammatory response, triggering the symptoms associated with lymphedema: vessel dilatation, intramural polyposis, hypertrophy of vessel walls and, eventually, “fibrosis” in the vessel walls. This diminishes normal lymphatic function.

Over time, fibrosis and obstruction of lymph flow within the lumen lead to advanced elephantiasis of the affected part. The lymph node itself enlarges, and adult worms reside within the dilated afferent lymphatic vessels and node. Lymph node enlargement, however, is due to the immune response to the infection rather than to the growth of adult worms. This discovery is of particular importance as clinical research has recently demonstrated the efficacy of doxycycline as the first effective treatment for filariasis.

REFERENCES


For more information, view the following publications:


Marisa Bonofiglio, Bsc, MScBMC
Biomedical Communications
University of Toronto, Canada
Medical Sciences Building
Room 2356
1 King’s College Circle
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1A8 Canada

(Personal mailing address: )
35 Longview Cres.
Woodbridge, Ontario
L4H 1A8 Canada
E-mail: marisa.bonofiglio@gmail.com
(or marisa.bonofiglio@utoronto.ca)
Webpage: www.marisabonofiglio.com