

Viral Infections Trigger Autoimmune Conditions

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The new research on autoimmunity is evolving so fast it is difficult to follow. That's one of the reasons I love the webinars by Dr. Alex Vasquez. There is no way the average clinician can read all the journals that he does and still practice. And the fact that he has doctorates in naturopathy, chiropractic and osteopathy give him the skills to take the data and translate it accurately into natural strategies that we can use. If you are not watching his monthly webinars, I implore you to watch them.

In the past he has made the case for dysbiosis and toxins being a major factor in autoimmunity. But recently he made a connection between autoimmunity and viruses that I may have heard but it never really "sunk in." Viruses can certainly cause immune dysregulation but they also cause mitochondrial dysfunction adding to further inflammation. So let's review the data about viruses and how they contribute to autoimmunity and then some therapeutic strategies.



Dr. Vasquez lists five categories of viruses: epigenomic viruses, endogenous viruses, bacteriophages, viral transactivation and bacterial immunosuppression.

"Epigenomic viruses" are often common viruses like herpes, Epstein Barr, cytomegalovirus, human papilloma virus, etc. Most of the population contain these viruses although the immune system keeps them inactive unless a major stressor occurs and they become active. This group exists outside of our DNA.

Another group "endogenous viruses" sometimes called

human endogenous retroviruses are embedded in our DNA. Dr. Vasquez compared them to software that comes with your computer. Just as the software is in the computer whether you are aware of it or not, so we have viral DNA embedded in our human DNA. Science tells us we may not have the full virus but there are fragments of the virus, like the capsule, that can cause inflammation.

Bacteriophages" are another category of viruses that don't infect us directly but target the bacteria in our gut. Remember the bacteria in our gut have a major influence on

both inflammation and our immune response. In both lupus and Crohn's disease researchers found almost twice as many bacteriophages in the gut compared to a normal population.

The next category is called "viral transactivation" and refers to the process where if one virus is activated it can create a domino or cascade effect activating other silent viruses.

The body has many dormant viruses that our immune system keeps in check. However when one virus is activated other dormant viruses can be activated and now the body is fighting multiple viruses at once.

His final category "bacterial immunosuppression" is based on the fact that some bacteria and fungi have immunosuppression functions and as the immune system is suppressed, previously protected or silent viruses become active. The combination of these viruses and bacteria create a type of poly-dysbiosis.

Viruses add to the total microbial load or as Dr. Vasquez calls it, the TML. The TML will create a total inflammatory load.

So his position is that people with autoimmune conditions have an elevated microbial load, mitochondrial dysfunction from toxins, and nutritional deficiencies. This is why some people get better accidentally by trying radically different programs. They inadvertently lower their microbial load and ultimately their inflammatory load and autoimmune symptoms are abated. But as we identify the pieces to the autoimmune puzzle we can systematically address the underlying causes. Take a look at the link below and get familiar with the nutrients that are available to slow the replication of viruses.

Here's a focal point that may help you through names and formulas. When I read the literature I am struck by the pattern that many of the studies identifying nutrients and their

ability to slow viral replication were done with patients who were already low in particular nutrients. And as they become sufficient in those nutrients they became immunologically stronger.

Dr. Vasquez recommends daily therapeutic levels of selenium (600-800 mcg) vitamin A (100,000-300,000 IU), and vitamin D (10,000-50,000 IU) for short term to build cellular reserves.

So yes, when we see chronic autoimmune conditions we have to be aggressive in our therapies short term. But our goal as wellness clinicians is to build cellular reserves long before the total microbial load reaches the threshold where inflammation overwhelms the system and autoimmunity expresses itself.

I get excited learning about the mechanisms of viral patterns, how dysbiosis adds to one's total microbial load and about the amazing therapeutic effects of nutrients. But I am more excited in applying this knowledge before silent viruses are activated, before the healthy bacteria in one's gut is compromised.

Let's help our patients attain nutrient sufficiency early through a clean diet and aggressive supplementation to get their cellular levels to the point where they can optimally fight any disease whether it is autoimmunity or cancer.

In light of this conversation, Dr. Vasquez's recommendation to eat good food, take a multiple like ProMulti-Plus, vitamin D as Bio-D- Mulsion Forte and a probiotic like BioDoph-7 Plus take on a whole new meaning. Always remember that we are offering health and hope on so many levels when we make these seemingly mundane suggestions.

Thanks for being a part of this exciting movement. I'll see you next Tuesday.