

9. SUMMARY

The erithema nodosum leprosum (ENL) is a reactional episode seen in multibacillary patients which has been associated to immune complexes. The histopathologic data as well as the immune complexes demonstration in vessels with vasculitis observed in some studies served as a basis for the concept that the ENL would be a clinical manifestation of the ARTHUS phenomenon. Further studies didn't reproduce exactly this findings and some doubts are raised the immune complexes participation in ENL.

The present investigation had as an aim evaluate the participation of immune complexes in ENL, through routine histopathologic techniques associated immunofluorescence in skin biopsies performed during these reactional episodes.

Thirty-four biopsies were analysed in this study, twenty-five from which presented histopathologic picture proper to ENL and nine of them presented a non-reactional picture. This material is submitted to direct immunofluorescence, utilizing anti-serum for immune complexes detection.

The results indicated that:

- 1.) In biopsies of ENL lesions we often (52) detected immunoglobulin deposits and/or

complement in small vessel of the superficial dermis, medium sized vessels of the deep dermis and subcutaneous fat and at the basal membrane (BMZ) of epiderm. In the specific lesions without histopathologic alterations proper of ENL these deposits were detected only at BMZ.

- 2.) The deposits of the complement fractions in superficial small vessels didn't correspond to microscopic alterations proper of the vasculitis by immune complexes.
- 3.) The deposits of the complement fractions in medium sized vessels of the deep dermis and subcutaneous fat corresponded to exudate and necrotizing vasculites.
- 4.) Comparing these results with the literature data we have concluded:
 - 4.1. We found immune complexes biopsies in ENL, but the exact role of the elements in reaction pathogenesis remain unclear;
 - 4.2. The immune complexes deposits in BNIZ may represent non specific manifesta

tions within the picture of ENL;

4.3. Observing the immune deposits on the wall of the small vessels, without the corresponding vasculitis, we can conclude that these deposits are stimulating a reactivity as a exudative inflammatory reaction, without destruction of the elements components of the vascular wall;

4.4. There are strong evidences that the inflammatory involvement of medium sized vessels of the deep dermis and subcutaneous fat are related to the immune complexes formation on the wall of these vessels.