

Intestinal epithelial cells and T cells differentially recognize and respond to *Candida albicans* yeast and hypha.

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Abstract

Inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) are a multifactorial disorder. Our understanding of the role of bacteria in the pathogenesis of IBD has increased substantially; however, only scarce data exist regarding the role of commensal fungi in maintaining intestinal homeostasis and triggering IBD. *Candida albicans* (*C. albicans*) is a member of the intestinal mycobiome and proposed to contribute to IBD pathogenesis. We aimed to investigate the influence of the two morphologies of *C. albicans*, yeast and hypha, on epithelial cells and T cells from IBD patients versus healthy controls. We found that *C. albicans* was recognized by both epithelial cells lines and T cells. In the intestinal epithelial cell line, Caco-2, response to hypha was different than to yeast cells, and this was mimicked by synthetic β -glucans and Pam3CSK4. Unstimulated T cells exhibited increased

activation and pro-inflammatory cytokine secretion upon exposure, while there was no effect on apoptosis or proliferation. In contrast, *C. albicans*-challenged CD3-stimulated T-cells exhibited decreased activation, cytokine secretion, apoptosis, and proliferation, suggesting reciprocal responsiveness to *C. albicans*. Glycans alone did not mimic abovementioned influences on T cells, suggesting alternative modes of recognition. In conclusion, we provide evidence for glycan dependent and independent recognition of *C. albicans* by epithelial cells and T cells.

Beteiligte Forschungseinheiten

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