COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DOT-IMMUNOGOLD SILVER STAINING AND DOT-ELISA FOR THE DETECTION OF SERUM ANTIBODIES AGAINST WUCHERERIA BANCROFTI

Liu Yi-sheng1 Du Wen-ping1 Chen Ming2 and Wu Zhong-xing3

1Department of Parasitology, Xuzhou Medical College, Xuzhou, Jiangsu 221002, China; 2Department of Infectious Diseases, Xuzhou Medical College; 3Institute of Parasitic Diseases of Jiangsu Province, Wuxi, Jiangsu 214064, China

Abstract. Dot-immunogold silver staining (Dot-IGSS) and Dot-ELISA, using the soluble antigen of Brugia malayi, were employed to detect anti-Wuchereria bancrofti antibodies in 50 cases of Wuchereria bancrofti microfilaremia. The positive rates were 100% and 90% in Dot-IGSS and Dot-ELISA respectively. The average titer in the 45 positive cases was 1:184 (1:10-1:2560) for Dot-IGSS and 1:50 (1:10-1:2560) for Dot-ELISA, with 30 cases showing the same titer in both tests, 13 cases showing higher titer in Dot-IGSS than in Dot-ELISA and 2 cases in the former showing lower titers than in the latter. There was a linear relationship between the titers of antibodies detected by Dot-IGSS and by Dot-ELISA (r = 0.8443). Dot-IGSS, similar to Dot-ELISA, is easy to carry out and the result is easy to read. It is seen that Dot-IGSS is highly sensitive and specific and is practicable for immunodiagnosis and surveillance of filariasis.

INTRODUCTION

The detection of specific antibody is important in the diagnosis and epidemiological survey of filariasis, especially in regions where the disease has been basically eliminated. Immunological methods, such as indirect fluorescent antibody test (IFAT; Sethumadhavan et al, 1988), indirect hemagglutination test (IHAT; Kaliraj et al, 1981) and enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA; Chantea et al, 1991) have been used for diagnosis. Recently an immunoenzyme staining test (IEST; Chen et al, 1992) and Dot-ELISA (Yuan et al, 1992) were also used to detect serum antibody against filaria. Dot-immunogold silver staining (Dot-IGSS) has been reported as a diagnosis method for some parasitic diseases, including clonorchiasis (Wu et al, 1989), schistosomiasis (Wu et al, 1991) and cysticercosis (Du et al, 1993). In order to further study the value of Dot-IGSS in serodiagnosis and surveillance of filariasis, we compared Dot-IGSS with Dot-ELISA in the detection of serum anti-filarial antibodies of patients infected with W. bancrofti.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Antigen: The soluble antigen of B. malayi adult was provided by the Institute of Parasitic Diseases, Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine. Its nitrogen concentration was 2.1mg/ml and its working dilution was 1:10.

Sera: Six sets of sera were examined: (1) Sera from 50 cases of W. bancrofti microfilaremia, who lived in Guzhen County, Anhui Province, with the number of microfilariae 1–186 per 60 μl peripheral blood (provided by the Institute of Parasitic Diseases, Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine); (2) Sera from 40 schistosomiasis japonica patients with stools positive for Schistosoma japonicum ova by hatching method (provided by the Institute of Parasitic Diseases of Jiangxi Province); (3) sera from 40 patients with cysticercosis diagnosed by CT, x-rays or clinically, and confirmed by Dot-ELISA; (4) Sera from 40 clonorchiasis patients with the eggs found in their feces by Stoll's method; (5) Sera from 35 healthy blood donors; and (6) Sera from staff members of our medical college. The sera of patients with microfilaraemia were diluted 1:40–1:2560 in the test, while the other sera were tested at 1:40 dilution.
Sheep anti-human IgG labeled with chloroaeric acid (GSAHIgG): The sheep anti-human IgG was labeled according to Slot's method (1985) in our laboratory with colloidal gold 5 nm in diameter. The GSAHIgG was used 1:40 dilution.

Solutions used in Dot-IGSS: The blocking solution was pH 8.2 0.02 mol/l Tris-HCl buffer saline (TBS) containing 10% bovine serum albumin (BSA) and 10% sheep serum (SS). The diluting solution was pH 8.2 0.02 mol/l TBS containing 10% calf serum, which was used to dilute serum samples and GSAHIgG. The developer was prepared with 3 solutions: (i) citrate buffer (pH3.5), containing citric acid 25.5 g and sodium citrate 23.5 g in double distilled water 100 ml; (2) hydroquinone 1.7 g in double distilled water 88 ml; (3) silver nitrate 0.044 g in double distilled water 2 ml. Ten ml of solution A and 88 ml of solution B were mixed carefully and 2 ml of solution C was added immediately before use (Danscher, 1981).

Dot-IGSS procedure: Mixed cellulose ester micropore filter membrane (MCE, pore size 0.22 μm) was divided into small squares (0.4 × 0.4 cm) by drawing with a pencil. Two μl of B. malayi antigen was spotted on to the center of each small square and the paper was dried at 37°C for 15 minutes. The MCE paper was then cut into squares and blocked for 10 minutes at room temperature. The blocked MCE squares each were placed in the wells on a 40-well flat-bottom polystyrene plate containing the diluted sera to be tested. The plate was incubated at 37°C for 2 hours and then washed 3 times for 5 minutes each with pH 8.2 0.02 mol/l TBS. Blocking was repeated once at room temperature for 15 minutes. Fifty μl of GSAHIgG was added to each well and the plate was incubated for 1 hour at 37°C, then washed 5 times, twice with pH 8.2 TBS, twice with deionized water and once with double distilled water sequentially. The developer was added and the plate put aside at room temperature to react. Color developed in 5 to 10 minutes. The plate was then washed twice with deionized water and once with double distilled water, then left to dry. The positive reaction was decided by the appearance of brown-yellow or brown-grey dots at the center of MCE squares. The intensity of color was arbitrarily judged with the naked eye as 1 +, 2 +, 3 + or 4 +.

Dot-ELISA: The technique was developed by modifying Hawkes' method (1982). The MCE was used as a vehicle to replace nitrocellulose filter and pH 7.4% 0.05 mol/l TBS containing 10% calf serum was used as blocking and diluting solution. The substrate was 4-chloro-l-naphthol. The peroxidase-conjugated anti-human IgG obtained from Sino-American Biotechnology Company Shanghai Branch was diluted 1:40 before use.

RESULTS

The results of Dot-IGSS and Dot-ELISA for anti-W. bancrofti antibodies in 225 human sera are presented in Table 1. All of the 50 microfilaremic subjects gave

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of sera</th>
<th>No. cases detected</th>
<th>Dot-IGSS</th>
<th>Dot-ELISA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No. Positive</td>
<td>Positive rate (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microfilaremia</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonorchiasis</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schistosomiasis</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cysticercosis</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy donors</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff members of the college</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a positive reaction in Dot-IGSS, while only 45 of them were positive in Dot-ELISA. In the control groups, the positive rates in Dot-IGSS lower than in Dot-ELISA, except in the staff member group.

The distribution of titers of the microfilaremic sera detected by Dot-IGSS and by Dot-ELISA is shown in Fig 1. All of the microfilaremic sera were positive to Dot-IGSS at 1:10 dilution and the mean titer was 1:184 (range 1:10-1:2560), while to Dot-ELISA only 45 showed positive reaction, with a mean titer of 1:150 (range 1:10-1:2560).

The relationship between the titers of sera from microfilaremic subjects detected by two methods is shown in Fig 2. The correlation between the two assays was highly significant ($r = 0.8445$, $p<0.001$). The rectilinear regression equation was $Y = 1g^{-1} (0.9712 \lg x - 0.1333)$, where $Y$ is the reciprocal titer of the sera detected by dot-IGSS; $X$, the reciprocal titer of the sera detected by Dot-ELISA. There was no correlation between the serum titers and the blood microfilariae counts.

**DISCUSSION**

Since Wu et al (1989) used Dot-IGSS to detect antibodies against *Clonorchis sinensis*, we have used it to study the serum specific antibodies in schistosomiasis patients and cysticercosis patients separately and have found that Dot-IGSS has higher specificity and sensitivity than Dot-ELISA (Wu et al, 1991; Du et al, 1993). In the present study, the positive concordance rate between Dot-IGSS and examination of peripheral blood microfilariae was 100%, as against 90% in the case of Dot-ELISA. The positive rate of Dot-IGSS obtained was higher than that of Dot-ELISA, as well as higher than that of ELISA reported by Sumati et al, (1990) (80%-95%) and El-Ganayni (1992, 92.8%-95.3%). The antibody titer determined by the 2 immunoassays showed a highly significant correlation, indicating that Dot-IGSS is very reliable for detection of anti-filaria antibodies. It was noticed that some normal staff members showed positive results. It is possible that these people had been infected with filaria or had a latent infection, for Xuzhou has been an epidemic region of bancroftian filariasis, although the disease has been basically eliminated. The clonorchiasis patients, schistosomiasis patients and other healthy donors were all negative to Dot-IGSS, but positive to Dot-ELISA in 3, 2 and 1 case
respectively, showing that specificity of Dot-IGSS is higher than that of Dot-LISA.

Among the 50 cases of *W. bancrofti* microfilaremia, the blood microfilaria count was less than 5 microfilariae/60 μl of blood in 24 cases, with only one microfilaria found in 60 μl of blood in 10 of them, so false negatives can hardly be avoided if blood examination is used as a unitary surveillance means in regions where the infection is mild or the disease has been under control. However this shortcoming is now overcome by immunoassays, especially the Dot-IGSS, which is specific and sensitive.

Dot-IGSS is similar to Dot-ELISA in procedure, yet has other advantages: (1) the labeling of IgG with colloidal gold is simple; (2) the solutions used in Dot-IGSS are stable; (3) the substrate is harmless to the operator; (4) the results can be judged with the naked eye. Besides, only a tiny amount of blood is required for a Dot-IGSS and a 20 μl blood sample can easily be taken from the ear lobe or finger tip as we did in an epidemiological survey of clonorchiasis in rural areas (Liu et al., 1993).

REFERENCES


Wu ZX, Du WP, Rong YW, Yuan SY, Ji XH. Studies on the detection of the antibodies from the sera of the patients with clonorchiasis by immunogold- silver staining, Dot-ELISA and Dot-IGSS. *Chin J Parasitic Dis Control* 1989; 2 : 278-81.
