Effect of Plasmodium falciparum Infection on Leucocyte Count in Chronic Leukaemia Patients

A.F. Alan F. Fleming

Zaria

Alan F. Fleming, Department of Haematology and Blood Transfusion, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (Nigeria)

Dr. Garewal and his colleagues reported to you recently that there were significant reductions of total leucocyte counts (TCL) in 4 patients with chronic 2 granulocytic leukaemia (CGL) and 2 with chronic lymphatic leukaemia (CLL) who developed Plasmodium vivax malarial infections [1]. It is the practice here and at most centres in tropical Africa, to administer curative followed by prophylactic anti-malarials as a supportive therapy to all patients with leukaemia. As a result, I do not have any original observations to offer, but Macfie [2] in the first published account of leukaemias diagnosed in tropical Africa, reported a 36-year-old woman in Accra who had CLL and in whom the TLC fell from 286.0 to 59.0 × 10^9/l during a period of P. falciparum parasitaemia. Macfie [3] later reported an 18-year-old male with CGL whose TCL declined over 2 weeks from 326.25 to 62.9 × 10^9/l during an infection with P. falciparum. Margination of the leucocytes during malaria is the most probable explanation of this phenomenon.

References