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

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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 Plasmo-dium vivax malarial infections [1]. It is the practice here and at most centres in tropical Africa, to administer curative followed by prophylactic antimalarials 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 59.0×10^6 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 62.9×10^6 during an infection with P. falciparum. Margination of the leucocytes during malaria is the most probable explanation of this phenomenon.

References

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