Preface

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The annual workshop 'Eosinophils in Allergy', which commenced in 1988, most recently took place in Tokyo on June 21-22, 1996. From among the papers presented, 21 selected articles are published in this Proceedings, which report new interesting facts on the biological importance of eosinophils in allergic inflammation, such as chemokine generation, mechanisms of eosinophil signal transduction, clinical significance of expression of eosinophil surface molecules, and diagnostic importance of serum levels of eosinophil-derived substances as a symptom monitor. Let us ask a few key questions on this particular occasion. Firstly, among the chemoattractants, which is most responsible for the selective eosinophilia seen in affected local tissues, and further for the migration of eosinophils into the nasal and bronchial cavities?

Although there have been many studies even at the micromolecular level this question still remains unresolved. Investigation of CC chemokines has been a highlight of recent years, and has been reviewed by Alam [J Allergy Clin Immunol 1997;99:273-277] as well as Teran and Davies [Clin Exp Allergy 1996;26:1005-1019]. It appears that the relationship between CC chemokines, especially eotaxin, and bronchial/nasal epithelial cells may hold the key to explaining the mechanism of selective eosinophil mobility.

Secondly, what direct evidence do we have indicating that eosinophil-derived substances contribute to hypersensitivity of the mucosa, e.g. upregulation of mediator receptors on nerves, glands, and vessels? Based on several reported observations, it seems certain that the tissue damage caused by eosinophil-derived substances does not completely explain the mechanism of hypersensitivity to mediators and even to irritants.

We believe that these questions are related directly to the development of a better therapeutic strategy for allergic inflammation, i.e. how to treat 'the eosinophils'.

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