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Gonadotropin, Prolactin, and Thyrotropin Secretion in Lepromatous Leprosy

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Gonadotropin, PRL, and TSH secretion was determined in 14 patients (27 to 56 years of age) with lepromatous leprosy and in 28 controls. Each subject received LHRH (100 µg), TRH (200 µg), and the dopaminergic antagonist, metoclopramide (10 mg), at 30-minute intervals, with periodic blood sampling. On the basis of the LH response to LHRH, the patients were divided into two groups. Group I consisted of nine patients with an exaggerated LH response to LHRH. The remaining five patients of Group II had a normal response to LHRH. Mean basal and peak FSH responses to LHRH were increased in both groups, but were greater in Group I. Mean 17β-estradiol (E₂) levels were increased in both groups, whereas, testosterone values were normal. Basal PRL levels were similar to those in controls, but there was an increased PRL response to both TRH and metoclopramide in Group I patients. In contrast, Group II patients had PRL responses identical to controls. Both groups had increased TSH responses to TRH in the presence of normal basal thyroxine (T₄) and triiodothyronine (T₃) levels. The PRL response to TRH correlated with both basal and peak FSH responses to LHRH, but not with LH, E₂, nor testosterone. The TSH response did not correlate with either gonadotropins, E₂, or thyroid hormone levels. Similar abnormalities in PRL and TSH secretion have been described in patients with primary testicular failure.

Key words: gonadotropin, prolactin, thyrotropin, lepromatous leprosy

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