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JOURNAL ARTICLE

The relation between reactive oxygen species and cytokines in andrological patients with or without male accessory gland infection

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The presence of various cytokines, namely hepatocyte growth factor (HGF), interleukin-1 receptor antagonist (IL-1 RA), and interleukins (IL-1 alpha, IL-6, and IL-8), as well as the production of reactive oxygen species (ROS) was investigated in seminal plasma of fertile and infertile patients in order to evaluate the possible value of

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measuring these substances for the diagnosis of male accessory gland infection, and to assess the possible relationship between oxidative stress and cytokines during leucocytospermia and male accessory gland infection (MAGI). Our findings indicate that all of the measured cytokines seem to be produced locally as well as by white blood cells (WBC) and that, due to the presence of higher numbers of WBC, accessory gland infection may exert a deleterious effect on sperm quality through the production of ROS and/or of particular cytokines such as IL-1 alpha, IL-1 RA, and IL-8. The most specific marker for a sensitivity of 95% in discriminating between cases with or without MAGI is the measurement of IL-6 in seminal plasma. In the absence of WBC several cytokines are constitutively produced and correlate with sperm concentration (HGF, IL-8), alpha-glucosidase (IL-6), and gamma-glutamyltransferase activity (HGF). The measurement of these cytokines in semen may provide clinically useful information for the diagnosis of male accessory gland infection, as well as in the absence of WBC where it can provide information about certain mechanisms of male reproductive function and dysfunction.

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