



FUNCTIONAL STATE OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM DURING SPORTS

Masharipova Rano Yusupovna
Tashkent State Medical University
ranowmasharipova@gmail.com

Abstract

In sports today, the increased incidence of illness among athletes and the development of secondary immunodeficiency states due to excessive physical and psycho-emotional stress are pressing issues. Among the numerous studies devoted to this issue, phenomenological studies of changes in the immune system during a single physical activity or a short adaptation period predominate, preventing a thorough understanding of the role and place of the immune system in the structure of adaptive changes in the body during the long-term training of highly qualified athletes. However, effective management of the training process, the safe use of preventive and rehabilitative measures, and immunocorrection agents are only possible based on a thorough, comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of adaptation and the role of the immune system in this process. Current experimental data indicate the active involvement of the immune system in the development of adaptation syndrome, and that changes in it during physical training can significantly depend on the stage of adaptation. However, these areas of research, while having important theoretical and practical significance, remain underdeveloped. Changes in the immune system under the influence of physical exercise are currently considered primarily within the framework of the classical stress response. According to the tenets of adaptation theory, the stress response, as classically conceptualized, manifests itself only in the initial, imperfect, acute stage of adaptation, which, with repeated implementation, progresses to the next stage—perfect, long-term adaptation or training. Each of these stages accomplishes specific tasks through specific quantitative and qualitative changes in functional systems, among which the immune system occupies a significant place.



The unfolding of the adaptation process is determined by the cause-and-effect relationships of two groups of factors: internal factors, such as the functioning of the body's regulatory and executive systems, and external factors, such as the influence of the athlete's training program. To develop fitness for a specific factor, the athlete's body must consistently undergo all stages of adaptive changes. The training program is planned based on the competition schedule, utilizing multidirectional physical loads in training sessions, micro-, meso-, and macrocycles. The relationship between the temporal structure of the training program and the body's own adaptive dynamics can be identified as an important research problem.

To study the dynamics of adaptive changes in the body, criteria for defining the stages of adaptation are necessary. It is known that the development of stress syndrome during the acute stage of adaptation induces free radical oxidation, one manifestation of which is lipid peroxidation (LPO). Therefore, its level can be used as a non-specific indicator reflecting the development of the acute stage of adaptation. Another non-specific sign of the acute stage of adaptation is the activation of protein catabolism, which can be manifested by an increase in blood urea levels. Since the state of an athlete's immune status during the training process depends on many factors (genetic characteristics, the functional state of the immune system, the athlete's level of training, the magnitude and bioenergetic focus of physical activity, etc.), experimental models on laboratory animals can reduce the number of these factors and control most of them. Analysis of the results obtained in such models will allow for a more definitive identification of the immune system's behavioral strategies during both the acute and long-term stages of adaptation to physical activity.

The aim of the work is to investigate the dynamics of changes in immune parameters during the process of adaptation to physical activity in an experimental model on laboratory animals and during training of swimmers.



Research objectives:

To assess the intensity of lipid peroxidation and urea levels during adaptation to physical exercise in an experimental animal model. To investigate changes in immune parameters during adaptation to physical exercise in experimental animal models and to analyze their relationship with the dynamics of lipid peroxidation and urea.

Study results

For the first time, the use of free radical oxidation and urea levels in the blood as non-specific criteria for determining the stages of adaptation made it possible, within the framework of experimental animal models, to distinguish the urgent stage of adaptive restructuring and the stage of transition to long-term adaptation. Specific changes in immune parameters characteristic of each of these stages were discovered. The similarity of the dynamics of the studied parameters in experiments on two types of biological objects (mice and rats) indicates the commonality of the discovered patterns in the changes in immune parameters during the adaptation process in animals. During long-term observation of the adaptation process in athletes-swimmers, a dependence of changes in the population composition of athletes' leukocytes on the loads imposed as part of the training program was found. An increase in the volume of mixed energy supply work leads to a decrease in the proportion of segmented neutrophils and an increase in lymphocytes. An increase in anaerobic work causes a decrease in eosinophils, while aerobic work causes an increase in the proportion of basophils. Differences in the blood leukocyte ratio were identified between swimmers and individuals who do not regularly engage in sports. As a result of long-term training, swimmers had a reduced percentage of band neutrophils and an increased proportion of lymphocytes. This study expands our understanding of the immune system's role in adaptive changes that occur in the body during physical exercise under training conditions. Using an experimental training model, we found that under conditions of daily, identical-intensity physical exercise over the course of a month, the body sequentially undergoes stages of adaptive changes. The nature of changes in immune parameters varies at different



stages of adaptation and reflects its patterns, which must be taken into account when studying the impact of physical exercise on the immune system. Understanding the patterns of immune parameter dynamics during adaptation opens the possibility of more accurately defining the boundaries of physiological norms, expanded by adaptive processes. Training is a controlled process of adaptation with direct and feedback loops.

Conclusions

Analysis of immune parameters' dynamics demonstrates the influence of the structure and content of the training program, but these changes are not simply a consequence of changes in the quantitative and qualitative parameters of the physical activity performed. These circumstances complicate the training process monitoring system, but also allow for more precise immune correction if necessary. The study's results can be used in teaching physiology, sports medicine, physical education theory and methodology, and in training management.

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