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► **To cite this version:**

Laure Michel, Mélanie Chesneau, Philippe Manceau, Alexandra Garcia, Marion Salou, et al.. No lack of regulatory B cells in patients with Multiple Sclerosis. 7th European Workshop on Immune-Mediated Inflammatory Diseases, Nov 2012, Noordwijk aan Zee, Netherlands. pp.O4. inserm-00758218

**HAL Id: inserm-00758218**

**<https://inserm.hal.science/inserm-00758218>**

Submitted on 28 Nov 2012

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ORAL PRESENTATION

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# No lack of regulatory B cells in patients with Multiple Sclerosis

Laure Michel<sup>1,2,3\*</sup>, Mélanie Chesneau<sup>1,3</sup>, Philippe Manceau<sup>1</sup>, Alexandra Garcia<sup>1,3</sup>, Marion Salou<sup>1,3</sup>, Annie Elong Ngonu<sup>1,3</sup>, Annaïck Pallier<sup>1,3</sup>, Marylène Jacq-Foucher<sup>2</sup>, Fabienne Lefrère<sup>2</sup>, Sandrine Wiertlewski<sup>2</sup>, Jean-Paul Soullillou<sup>1,3</sup>, Nicolas Degauque<sup>1,3</sup>, David-Axel Laplaud<sup>1,2,3†</sup>, Sophie Brouard<sup>1,3†</sup>

From 7th European Workshop on Immune-Mediated Inflammatory Diseases Noordwijk aan Zee, the Netherlands. 28-30 November 2012

## Background

Recent data support a prominent role for B cells in MS physiopathology. Recently it has emerged that subsets of B cells secreting IL-10 negatively regulate disease symptoms in Experimental Autoimmune Encephalomyelitis (EAE). However, the involvement of such regulatory B cells in MS remains unclear.

## Aim

We aimed to study the frequency, phenotype and function of regulatory B cells in MS patients as compared to Healthy Volunteers (HV).

## Methods

Sixty-three untreated MS patients and 58 HV were included in this study. IL-10 secretion by B cells and phenotype of IL-10<sup>+</sup> B cells were studied after 5h (B10 cells) and 48h of stimulation (B10pro cells) by CD40L and ODN. Coculture assays with prestimulated B cells and responding CD4<sup>+</sup>CD25<sup>-</sup> T cells were performed for 3 days.

## Results

No significant difference was found either for IL-10 secretion ability of B cells after 5h or 48h of stimulation. The analysis of B10pro cells phenotype revealed mainly a memory phenotype in MS and HV, even if both naïve and immature subsets were also able to secrete IL-10. Prestimulated B cells from MS inhibited CD4<sup>+</sup>CD25<sup>-</sup> T cell proliferation in the same manner than HV by a contact dependent mechanism, independently of IL-10 and TGF- $\beta$  secretion.

## Conclusion

Altogether, our data show that regulatory B cells have a conserved frequency, phenotype and function in the blood of patients with MS suggesting that B cells do not contribute to the physiopathology of the disease.

## Acknowledgements

This work was funded by ARSEP.

## Author details

<sup>1</sup>INSERM, UMR 1064, Nantes, France. <sup>2</sup>CHU Nord Laennec, Service de Neurologie, Nantes, France. <sup>3</sup>CHU de Nantes, ITUN, Nantes, France.

Published: 28 November 2012

doi:10.1186/1479-5876-10-S3-O4

Cite this article as: Michel et al.: No lack of regulatory B cells in patients with Multiple Sclerosis. *Journal of Translational Medicine* 2012 **10**(Suppl 3):O4.

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† Contributed equally

<sup>1</sup>INSERM, UMR 1064, Nantes, France

Full list of author information is available at the end of the article