

Lactoferrin, a key molecule in immune and inflammatory processes¹

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RÉSUMÉ

La lactoferrine (Lf) appartient à la famille des molécules antimicrobiennes constituant la principale ligne de défense des invertébrés. Chez l'Homme, leurs rôles dépassent largement les propriétés antimicrobiennes. En effet, la Lf est impliquée dans les immunités innée et acquise où ses effets modulateurs procurent à l'hôte une protection contre les microbes et les conséquences néfastes de l'inflammation. De tels effets ont été observés lors d'expérimentations utilisant la Lf dans l'alimentation, mais où les mécanismes d'action n'ont pas toujours pu être expliqués. Des effets sur les immunités mucoale et systémique ont en effet souvent été détectés, rendant les rôles de la Lf difficiles à préciser. Il est désormais admis que les propriétés immunomodulatrices de la Lf sont dues à sa capacité d'interaction avec de nombreuses cibles moléculaires et cellulaires. A l'échelle cellulaire, la Lf module la migration, la maturation et les fonctions des cellules immunitaires. A l'échelle moléculaire, les propriétés modulatrices de la Lf sont dues à sa capacité à fixer le fer, mais aussi et surtout à ses interactions avec de nombreuses cibles, solubles ou exprimées à la surface des cellules. Cette revue fait le point de nos connaissances sur les mécanismes pouvant expliquer les propriétés régulatrices de la Lf dans les processus immunitaires et inflammatoires.

Mots-clés : lactoferrine, immunité, inflammation, protéine du lait

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