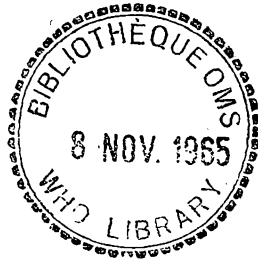


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(avec résumé en français)

PLASMODIUM SIMIOVALE SP. NOV., A NEW SIMIAN MALARIA PARASITE FROM CEYLON¹

by

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Two new malaria parasites were recently described from Macaca sinica in Ceylon (Dissanaïke, Nelson & Garnham, 1965). Since then, another parasite that was isolated earlier in the year, has been found to differ in many respects from hitherto reported species from monkeys. This parasite is described in the present paper, and is named Plasmodium simiovale n. sp. This name denotes that the parasite is a simian counterpart of the human P. ovale.

In March 1965, two toque monkeys, Macaca sinica, were shot near the Mi-Oya river, by the seven-mile post on the Puttalam-Anduradhapura road in north-west Ceylon. This was the same locality from which the original isolations of P. cynomolgi ceylonensis and P. shortti (Ceylon strain) were made. Both monkeys (M 73 and M 74) were negative by ordinary blood examination, but when blood, taken from the hearts of these monkeys, was inoculated into two clean toque monkeys (M 66 and M 68 respectively) parasites appeared after two weeks, M 66 showing P. shortti and another parasite which seemed to be "new", and M 68 P. shortti alone.

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Blood from M 66 was later inoculated into another laboratory toque monkey (M 78) and the same two species of parasites appeared. At this stage, chilled blood from M 78 was sent to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and was inoculated into a Rhesus monkey, No. 377. Table 1 summarizes the isolations and subsequent transfer of the parasite. It will be noted that mosquito transmission got rid of the P. shortti, and sporozoites of P. simiovale alone appeared. A pure line was thus obtained and is preserved at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine at a temperature of -70°C and maintained by passage in rhesus monkeys.

Sporogonic stages of P. simiovale

Laboratory bred Anopheles maculipennis atroparvus and A. stephensi, maintained at a temperature of 26°C , were used in the studies. Other than a five-day-old oocyst (15 μ in diameter, with the pigment in lines on the periphery) seen in the gut of one A. stephensi, no stages were found in this mosquito.

In A. m. atroparvus, oocysts measuring 23-35 μ were seen on the seventh day. The pigment was in the form of dark, discrete grains, arranged in irregular lines. On the ninth day, the oocysts were 35-45 μ . The pigment granules were obscure in some, and concentrated over a small area in others. On the 11th day, oocysts measured 40-50 μ and sporozoites were present. The sporozoites measured 12-14 μ and invaded the salivary glands on the 13th day.

Blood stages of P. simiovale

The shortest prepatent period after sporozoite infection was found to be 24 days. After the inoculation of a small quantity of infected blood, parasitaemia could be detected in five days or less.

P. simiovale exhibits a striking synchronism of asexual development in the blood. The periodicity is tertian, and schizonts rupture between 11 a.m. and noon on alternate days. Schizogony (i.e. division of the nucleus) begins about twelve hours before this; one hour after rupture of the mature schizonts, only rings are found in the blood stream. The uninucleate state is thus seen to occupy three-quarters of the 48 hours' cycle.

The parasite invades mature corpuscles. The young ring forms (about two hours' old and measuring 1.5 μ) are non-amoeboid, with a round nucleus often projecting into or lying inside the vacuole. Quite early, the invaded corpuscle

begins to increase in size (7.5μ instead of the normal 7μ) and stippling commences in the erythrocyte, when the parasite is still a small ring. A little later, the surface of the cytoplasm may exude small dimples, but neither at this stage nor later is the parasite actively amoeboid; it preserves a compact form. The cytoplasm of the larger rings soon begins to show a few vacuoles, which are such conspicuous features of the older parasite.

At 10 hours, the ring has grown to 3μ , in a corpuscle of 8μ , stippling is greater, the nucleus is larger and vacuoles are more obvious in the cytoplasm. The infected erythrocyte is now pinker than a normal one and eight hours later (18th hour of the cycle), the reddening of the corpuscle is most striking. This coloration continues until the parasite is fully grown. The trophozoites of this stage are 4.5μ in diameter, while the red blood cell is 8.5μ . Small brownish-yellow grains of pigment appear in the cytoplasm which remains compact, and the central vacuole begins to disappear.

At 26 hours, the trophozoite has usually entirely lost its vacuole, and the large nucleus of the parasite is displaced to one side. Pigment granules are more numerous and vacuoles more conspicuous, but the characteristic feature of this stage is the marked distortion of the corpuscle, which becomes oval and/or fimbriated in about 60% of the infected cells. The trophozoite now measures about 5μ and the average dimension of the cell is 9μ ($12 \times 7 \mu$).

This effect upon the corpuscle is not absolutely limited to this period of growth, but at other times, the distortion is much less frequently seen; it is not the result of a more rapid drying of the blood film, because films dried immediately in a current of hot air, do not show the phenomenon to any extent at other times of the cycle.

At 34 hours, most of the infected corpuscles (9.5μ in size) no longer appear oval or fimbriated, and they contain large round parasites (7.5μ) with a big nucleus, many grains of coarse pigment, and several well-marked vacuoles in the cytoplasm.

Eight hours later (42nd hour of the cycle), the uninucleate bodies are replaced by schizonts, containing two to six nuclei, but little altered in size. White circular or cleft like vacuoles are prominent in the blue staining cytoplasm, in which the pigment granules still remain discrete. The nuclei are particularly large and measure $1.1 \mu - 2.3 \mu$.

The nuclei undergo further division during the next six hours and 12 to 14 are found in the mature form at noon on the third day. The schizont is about 9μ in size, while the infected cell has enlarged to a diameter of 10μ . The cell is usually round, though occasionally it has an oval shape. Vacuoles are still conspicuous and the pigment does not conglomerate until the final separation of the parasite into merozoites. Twelve to 14 ovoid merozoites (3μ in length) are produced and these are usually rather haphazardly arranged around the brownish-yellow pigment granules, at last clumped together. The erythrocyte at this stage has been greatly changed and it often balloons out into a large sac before the final rupture.

The cytoplasm of the parasite throughout schizogony stains a bright blue colour with a Romanowsky stain, and this is perhaps due to the concentration of all the pigment into granules, so that none remains in the cytoplasm.

Spherical gametocytes (9μ in diameter) appear soon after the establishment of asexual parasitaemia, and females appear to be much more numerous than males, though the identification of the former is difficult because the large asexual parasites often nearly fill the corpuscle before the nucleus starts to divide, and the pigment remains unclumped until schizogony is completed. The nucleus of the macrogametocyte lies on the margin of the parasite, and numerous pigment granules, but apparently no vacuoles are present in the cytoplasm. The microgametocyte stains the characteristic pink colour with Giemsa's stain and the diffuse nucleus occupies about a third of the total area of the parasite. The pigment resembles that of the female.

Course of infection with *P. simiovale*

In rhesus monkeys parasitaemia mounts slowly and apparently never reaches a high level; in fact, in nature, the infection is occult and can only be detected by subinoculation of blood into clean animals. In the rhesus, the density of parasitaemia, though low, is higher than that attained by *P. fieldi* in this species of monkey.

The duration of the infection is as yet unknown, but at the end of the second week, the blood picture becomes much disturbed; there is a considerable drop in the polymorphonuclear leucocytes and an increase in the lymphocytes and mononuclears, but the unusual character is the appearance of many normoblasts; without, at this time, any marked anisocytosis or other signs of anaemia. In one rhesus monkey, on the 13th day of parasitaemia, the blood count was as follows: total red blood count: 2 480 000 per m^3 with 11% of normoblasts in the nucleated cells, polymorphonuclear leucocytes 23%, lymphocytes 36%, large mononuclears 30%.

The blood changes later become profound, and in splenectomized animals the monkey dies of severe anaemia; in one instance, a moribund monkey was revived by injections of iron.

Discussion

In the first place, P. simiovale has to be differentiated from the other species of malaria parasites found in monkeys in Ceylon. P. fragile is a much smaller organism, which rapidly erodes the erythrocyte and spends much of its asexual cycle outside the peripheral circulation. P. shortti is at once identifiable by its quartan periodicity and lesser degree of stippling. P. cynomolgi ceylonensis presents more of a difficulty, because, like P. simiovale, it produces Schüffner's dots and has a tertian cycle; the new parasite, however, is not amoeboid, and is characterized by the curious and unique vacuoles in the cytoplasm and the fimbriating effect on the erythrocyte between the 25th and 28th hours of the cycle. No other mammalian species of Plasmodium is known to give rise to this type of vacuolation, though a somewhat similar appearance is characteristic of P. matutinum both in its erythrocytic and exoerythrocytic stages. Another point of distinction between P. cynomolgi and P. simiovale is the greater length of sporogony in the latter (13 days instead of 10 days at a temperature of $26^{\circ}C$). There are other minor differences which help in differentiation, such as the large size of the nuclei (P. simiovale: 2.3μ ; P. cynomolgi: 2μ at the two nucleated stage), their late division, the high degree of synchronism of schizogony, and retention of discrete granules of pigment until the very end of schizogony. The production of 12 to 14 merozoites is less than in most strains of P. cynomolgi.

P. simiovale bears some resemblance to the human P. ovale, from which it differs however in the temporary distorting effect on the corpuscle, the lighter colour of the pigment, the greater number of merozoites, the shorter duration of sporogony and the non-infectibility of man.

P. simiovale and P. fieldi appear to possess affinities, although a point of difference, easy to recognize, is the much greater enlargement of the corpuscle produced by P. simiovale; moreover, the characteristic eosinophilic masses in the infected erythrocyte are absent in infections with the Ceylon parasite. The lack of amoeboidicity is characteristic of both species.

P. simium of howler monkeys in southern Brazil resembles P. simiovale to some extent, particularly in the prominent Schüffner's dots and the presence of large nuclei, but many more merozoites are produced by P. simium, while the pigment is finer and the cytoplasm more amoeboid (Deane, 1964).

Table 2 gives the principal diagnostic characters of these species.

Summary

A new species of malaria parasite, Plasmodium simiovale, from Macaca sinica of Ceylon is described in its blood and mosquito stages. This parasite was transmitted to rhesus monkeys through A.m. atroparvus.

The parasite has a tertian periodicity of a very high degree of synchronism and apparently has affinities with P. ovale, P. fieldi and P. simium.

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RESUME

Plasmodium simiovale, nouvelle espèce d'hématozoaire simien, a été isolée de Macaca sinica de Ceylan. Le présent travail décrit les stades sanguins ainsi que les formes sporogoniques chez le moustique au cours de la transmission en laboratoire au singe rhésus par Anopheles maculipennis atroparvus. Cet hématozoaire a une périodicité tierce très prononcée et montre des affinités avec P. ovale, P. fieldi et P. simium.

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TABLE 1. PROCEDURE OF ISOLATION OF P. SIMIOVALE

In Ceylon	<u>Macaca sinica</u> M 73	Negative	<u>Macaca sinica</u> M 74	Negative
	<u>Macaca sinica</u> M 66	<u>P. shortti</u> and "new" parasite	<u>Macaca sinica</u> M 68	<u>P. shortti</u> only
	<u>Macaca sinica</u> M 78	<u>P. shortti</u> and "new" parasite		
In London	<u>Macaca mulatta</u> 377	<u>P. shortti</u> and <u>P. simiovale</u>		
	378 (- ve)			
	379	<u>P. simiovale</u>		
	380	<u>P. simiovale</u>		

Note: Numbers 377, 378, 379 and 380 refer to rhesus monkeys (Macaca mulatta).
Single line denotes blood inoculation.
Double line denotes mosquito infection.

TABLE 2. DIFFERENTIAL CHARACTERS OF CERTAIN SPECIES OF PLASMODIA IN PRIMATES

	Vertebrate host	Locality	Periodicity	Effect on Erythrocyte			Amoeboidicity	Number of merozoites	Other characters	Duration of sporogony at 26 C
				Enlargement	Distortion	Stippling				
<u>P. simiovale</u>	<u>M. sinica</u>	Ceylon	48 hours	Present	Temporary fimbriation	Schüffners, pink flush	Nil	12-14	Large nuclei, vacuoles	13 days
<u>P. shortti</u>	<u>M. sinica</u> and <u>M. radiata</u>	Ceylon and India	72 hours	Slight	Nil	Ziemanns	Present	12-14	-	12 days
<u>P. cynomolgi ceylonensis</u>	<u>M. sinica</u>	Ceylon	48 hours	Present	Nil	Schüffners, slight pink flush	Present	12-16	-	8 days
<u>P. fieldi</u>	<u>M. nemestrina</u>	Malaya	48 hours	Nil	Occasional fimbriation	Schüffners	Nil	12-13	Eosinophilic masses	-
<u>P. simium</u>	<u>Alouatta fusca</u>	Brazil	48 hours	Present	Occasional fimbriation	Heavy Schüffners	Present	12-27	Large nuclei	-
<u>P. ovale</u>	Man	Cosmopolitan chiefly Africa	49 hours	Present	"ovale"	Heavy Schüffners	Nil	8-12	Large nuclei	15 days

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