**Introduction**

Interleukin-1 (IL-1α and IL-1β) is a family of pluripotent pro-inflammatory cytokines found in high concentrations in the normal epidermis and synthesized by keratinocytes in *vivo*. IL-1 has been reported to stimulate keratinocyte proliferation *in vitro* and to stimulate IL-1β. IL-1 also stimulates the synthesis of keratinocyte prostaglandin (PG) E₂, a cyclooxygenase (CO) metabolite of arachidonic acid (AA), which enhances the proliferation of basal keratinocytes in culture and epidermal thymidine uptake *in vivo*. It is possible, therefore, that the stimulation of keratinocyte proliferation reported for IL-1 is mediated via an increase in PGE₂ synthesis. However, the absence of inflammatory/proliferative reactions in the normal epidermis indicates that interactions between keratinocytes and IL-1 are tightly controlled. Keratinocyte eicosanoid synthesis varies with its state of differentiation and proliferating keratinocyte cultures synthesize greater concentrations of PGE₂ than confluent ones. It is possible, therefore, that sensitivity to IL-1 is a function of the proliferative state/state of differentiation of the target cell and that proliferating and confluent keratinocyte cultures may also show differences in sensitivity towards IL-1 *in vitro*. Using cultured keratinocytes as a model system, alterations in the sensitivity of these cells towards IL-1α with time in culture were investigated, and assayed as changes in IL-1α stimulated PGE₂ synthesis. IL-1α was used in these experiments as it is the biologically active form of IL-1 present in the epidermis. However, IL-1α and IL-1β have been shown to be equally potent in stimulating keratinocyte PGE₂ synthesis. In order to determine the specificity of any changes observed we also monitored the effect of IL-1α on keratinocyte IL-6 and TNF-α secretion and the effect of TNF-α on keratinocyte PGE₂ synthesis.

**Materials and Methods**

*Materials*: Antisera against PGE₂ were bought from Advanced Magnetics (Cambridge, MA, USA) and radiolabelled PGE₂ and AA from Amersham International plc (Amersham, UK). Standard PGE₂, AA, the calcium ionophore A23187 and actinomycin D were obtained from Sigma Chemical Company (St Louis, MO, USA). The IL-6 kits were bought from Amersham International plc (Amersham, UK) and Advanced Magnetics Inc. (Cambridge, MA, USA). Human recombinant IL-1α (HiIL-1α, activity = 10 U/ng) was a gift of S. Gillis, Immunex Research and Development Corp., Seattle, Washington, USA, and the L929 cell line was a gift of W. Fiers, State University of Ghent, Belgium. Chemicals and media for cell culture were obtained from the following companies: hydrocortisone, Sigma Chemical Co., St Louis, USA; epidermal growth factor, Gibco Laboratories, Life Technologies, New York, USA; cholera toxin, List Biological Laboratories Inc., Campbell, CA, USA; media powders, Flow Laboratories, McLean, VA, USA.
Keratinocyte culture conditions: Keratinocytes were isolated from human breast skin, obtained from patients undergoing mammary reduction, and cultured in the presence of a 3T3 feeder layer in three parts Dulbecco's modified Eagles medium and one part Ham's F12 (DNEM/F12) supplemented with 5% foetal calf serum, 0.4 μg/ml hydrocortisone, 8.4 ng/ml cholaer toxin and 10 ng/ml epidermal growth factor (complete medium) as previously described. Confluent cells were trypsinized and 10^4 cells/cm^2 re-seeded on a fresh feeder layer in complete medium. The day before the cultures were used, remnants of the feeder layer were removed by vigorous washing. Cultures were sometimes incubated overnight in complete medium before being used in experiments. Secondary keratinocyte cultures usually reach confluency after 8 days. For the experiments, keratinocytes were used after 7 or 14 days in culture.

The release of prostaglandin E2, TNF-α and IL-6 from keratinocytes: Keratinocyte cultures were incubated (37°C, 5% CO2) for 3 h or 24 h in 1 ml complete medium or DMEM/F12 with or without IL-1α. Portions of the incubation media were stored at −30°C for later analysis of PGE2 and IL-6 by radioimmunoassay. Analyses for TNF-α were performed immediately after the incubation period using a modification of the L929 cytoxicity assay. L929 cells were cultured in complete RPMI medium (RPMI supplemented with 10% FCS, 2 mM glutamine, 100 U/ml penicillin/streptomycin and 5 × 10⁻⁵ M mercaptoethanol). For use in the cytoxicity assay 10⁴ viable cells (trypan blue exclusion) in 0.1 ml complete RPMI medium were transferred to 96-well plates and allowed to equilibrate overnight. The next day, 25 μl actinomycin D (final concentration 1 μg/ml) was added together with 25 μl TNF-α standard (0–500 U/ml final concentration) or 25 μl sample. The microtitre plates were then incubated overnight, the media were discarded and remaining viable cells were stained with crystal violet (0.2% in 2% ethanol) for 10 min. Microtitre plates were rinsed 5 × with tap water and the stained cells solubilized using 0.1 ml of 1% sodium lauryl sulphate. Absorbance was measured at 595 nm using a Bio-Rad model 3500 microtitre plate reader and the TNF-α activity in the samples calculated on the basis of the standard curve. Sensitivity of the assay was 0.5 U/ml TNF-α.

Cells were dissolved in sodium hydroxide and protein was measured using Bio-Rad reagent (reagent instructions). Eicosanoids, IL-6 and TNF-α are expressed in ng or units (U) per mg protein.

Results
Basal and IL-1α stimulated synthesis of eicosanoids, IL-6 and TNF-α by 7 and 14 day keratinocyte cultures: Synthesis of PGE2 during the 24 h incubation period directly following removal of the feeder layer was greater than in the subsequent 24 h period, indicating that the washing process stimulated PG formation. PGE2 formation was stimulated by FCS (Table 1). The basal rate of PGE2 synthesis was greater by 7 day than by 14 day keratinocyte cultures both in
Table 1. Prostaglandin (PG) E₂ synthesis by 7 day and 14 day keratinocyte cultures: the influence of (i) removing the feeder layer and (ii) foetal calf serum (FCS)

|          | 7 day                  | 14 day                  |
|----------|------------------------|-------------------------|
|          | -FCS                   | +FCS                    |
| First 24h| 19.6 ± 5.8* (9)        | 49.8 ± 22* (27)         |
| Second 24h| 3.63 ± 0.38 (6)       | 25.25 ± 7.5 (13)       |
|          | 0.87 ± 0.52* (6)       | 3.65 ± 0.7 (6)          |
|          | 0.69 ± 0.11 (6)        | 2.81 ± 1.4 (12)        |

Results, ng PGE₂/mg protein, are mean values ± SD. Value in brackets gives the number of replicates. Significance was calculated using the Mann-Whitney U-test. Keratinocytes were cultured on a 3T3 feeder layer in culture medium. On days 7 or 14 the feeder layer was washed away. Some cultures were then incubated for 24 h in DMEM/F12 or complete medium (first 24 h) while others were allowed to equilibrate for 24 h in complete culture medium before incubating for 24 h in DMEM/F12 or complete medium (second 24 h). * p < 0.05 vs. -FCS and 7 day vs. 14 day cultures. Synthesis of PGE₂ during the first 24 h was higher than during the second 24 h period with the exception of 14 day cultures incubated with FCS. This effect was most marked using 7 day cultures.

In order to avoid problems associated with any nonspecific effect of washing, we used cultures 24 h after removal of the feeder layer were used. IL-1α (1–100 U/ml) stimulated the synthesis of PGE₂ (Fig. 1) by 7 day keratinocyte cultures during a 24 h incubation period, in the presence and absence of FCS. In contrast, IL-1α had no effect on PGE₂ synthesis by 14 day cultures (PGE₂ ng/mg protein, mean values of 4 cultures ± S.D.; DMEM/F12 control = 0.64 ± 0.14, 100 U/ml IL-1α = 0.75 ± 0.2; complete medium control = 4.18 ± 1.6, 100 U/ml IL-1α = 4.7 ± 0.9). As FCS was not essential for IL-1α stimulated PG synthesis DMEM/F12 was used in subsequent experiments. It was found that IL-1α (100 U/ml) stimulated the synthesis of PGE₂ by 7 day cultures during two successive 3 h incubation periods (Fig. 2). However, the stimulatory effect during the first 3 h period was not constant whereas the effect during the second period was reproducible (Table 2).

Neither IL-6 (limit of detection of assays 0.1 ng/ml, Amersham and Advanced Magnetics kits) nor TNF-α (limit of detection of bio-assay 0.5 U/ml) could be detected in the incubation medium of 7 day and 14 day cultures (incubation periods: 3 h and 24 h, with or without FCS, with or without 100 U/ml IL-1α).

The effect of arachidonic acid and the calcium ionophore A23187 on keratinocyte prostaglandin E₂: While AA and A23187 stimulated the synthesis of PGE₂ by both 7 and 14 day keratinocyte cultures, PGE₂ synthesis (ng/ml) was greater when 7 day cultures were used (Table 3). Whereas the relative stimulatory effect of AA was similar for 7 day and 14 day cultures, the relative increase in PGE₂ synthesis when A23187
Table 2. The effect of preincubating 7 and 14 day keratinocyte cultures with IL-1α on the subsequent synthesis of prostaglandin (PG) E₂

| Treatment | Time in culture | First 3 h | Second 3 h | First 3 h | Second 3 h |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|           | 7 days         | Day 7 cultures |          | Day 14 cultures |          |
| Expt. 1   | control        | 4.64 ± 0.84  | 17.94 ± 1.1 | 0.36 ± 0.11 | 0.88 ± 0.14 |
|           | + IL-1α        | 5.86 ± 0.22* | 22.6 ± 1.9* | 0.44 ± 0.04 | 0.87 ± 0.26 |
| Expt. 2   | control        | 8.28 ± 0.72  | 9.96 ± 1.3  | 1.88 ± 0.28 | 2.52 ± 0.50 |
|           | + IL-1α        | 9.52 ± 0.72  | 12.76 ± 1.2* | 1.84 ± 0.08 | 3.66 ± 1.28 |
| Expt. 3   | control        | 5.2 ± 1.6    | 7.4 ± 1.4   | N/D        | N/D        |
|           | + IL-1α        | 7.8 ± 0.2*   | 20.0 ± 1.0* | N/D        | N/D        |

Results, ng PGE₂/mg protein, are mean values ± SD of triplicate incubations. Significance was calculated using the Mann–Whitney U-test. *p < 0.05 vs. corresponding control. Keratinocytes were cultured for 7 or 14 days. The feeder layer was then removed and the cells allowed to equilibrate overnight. They were then incubated for 3 h in DMEM/F12, with or without 100 U/ml IL-1α (first 3 h). The cultures were then washed with DMEM/F12 and incubated for a second, consecutive 3 h period without IL-1α (second 3 h). After each 3 h the incubation media were analysed for PGE₂. 14 day values were significantly lower than 7 day values.

The effect of IL-1α on the metabolism of radiolabelled arachidonic acid by 7 and 14 day keratinocyte cultures:
Radiolabelled AA was metabolized by 7 day keratinocyte cultures to a variety of CO and lipoxygenase metabolites. Conversion of AA, during the 20 min incubation, was small and less than 1% of added radioactivity was associated with metabolites recovered from the incubation medium. There was some variation between replicates and only metabolites detected in three separate experiments are mentioned. Eicosanoids co-eluting with [³H-PGD₂, PGE₂, 6-keto-PGF₁₂, 15–hydroxyeicosatetraenoic acid (15–HETE), leukotriene (LT) C₄, LTB₄ and a non-enzymic hydrolysis product of LTB₄, epi-LTB₄, were detected. An HPLC trace showing the positions of [³H]- and [¹⁴C]-eicosanoids is given in Figure 3. Preincubating 7 day keratinocyte cultures with IL-1α (1–100 U/ml) resulted in a small increase in the synthesis of radiolabelled PGE₂ in those cultures incubated with 100 U/ml (mean dpm ± S.D., n = 3, control = 320 ± 10, IL-1α 100 U/ml = 560 ± 50; % of total metabolite dpm, control = 23% ± 4.0, IL-1α 100 U/ml = 34% ± 6.0). There were no significant increases in the synthesis of other eicosanoids.

Table 3. Arachidonic acid (AA) and calcium ionophore (A23187) stimulate prostaglandin (PG) E₂ synthesis by 7 day and 14 day old keratinocyte cultures

| Treatment | Time in culture | 7 days | 14 days |
|-----------|----------------|--------|--------|
|           |                | Expt. 1 | Expt. 2 | Expt. 1 | Expt. 2 |
| Control   |                | 1.30   | 1.86   | 0.69   | 0.23   |
|           | ± 0.20         | ± 0.37 | ± 0.11 | ± 0.02 |
| AA        |                | 29.66  | 21.70  | 13.67  | 4.12   |
|           | ± 2.70*        | ± 6.00* | ± 1.38* | ± 1.33* |
|           | (22.82)        | (11.67) | (19.80) | (17.91) |
| Control   |                | 2.52   | 2.22   | 0.94   | 0.25   |
|           | ± 0.74         | ± 0.80 | ± 0.07 | ± 0.03 |
| A23187    |                | 11.34  | 7.44   | 1.63   | 0.73   |
|           | ± 0.50*        | ± 1.2* | ± 0.18* | ± 0.20* |
|           | (4.50)         | (3.35) | (1.73) | (2.92) |

Results, ng PGE₂/mg protein, are mean values ± SD of triplicate incubations. Significance was calculated using the Mann–Whitney U-test. *p < 0.05 vs. corresponding control. Values in brackets give the relative increases in PGE₂ synthesis due to AA and A23187. Keratinocytes were cultured for 7 or 14 days and the feeder layer washed off. The cells were then cultured overnight in complete medium before incubating them in DMEM/F12 for 20 min, with or without AA or A23187.

FIG. 3. Reversed phase HPLC separation of eicosanoids produced by adherent human skin keratinocytes after incubation with radiolabelled arachidonic acid. Retention times of non-labelled and labelled standard eicosanoids are indicated above the trace (t). m = Peak width of both [¹⁴C]-labelled metabolites and [³H]-labelled standards used to calculate eicosanoid dpm.
Keratinocyte sensitivity towards cytokines

Table 4. The effect of tumour necrosis factor alpha (TNF-α) on keratinocyte prostaglandin (PG) E₂ synthesis by 7 and 14 day old keratinocyte cultures

|            | 7 day  | 14 day |
|------------|--------|--------|
| Control    | 7.18 ± 1.02 | 4.24 ± 1.13 |
| TNF-α (100 U/ml) | 17.54 ± 2.48* | 4.83 ± 1.04 |

Results, ng PGE/mg protein, are mean values ± SD (n = 3). Significance was calculated using the Mann-Whitney U-test. *p < 0.05 vs. corresponding control. Keratinocytes were cultured for 7 or 14 days. The feeder layer was then removed and the cells allowed to equilibrate overnight. They were then incubated for 3 h in DMEM/F12 with or without 100 U/ml TNF-α.

The effect of TNF-α on keratinocyte eicosanoid synthesis: TNF-α (100 U/ml) stimulated the synthesis of PGE₂ by 7 day keratinocyte cultures during a 3 h incubation. It had no effect on PG formation by 14 day cultures (Table 4).

Discussion

The sensitivity of human keratinocytes towards IL-1α and TNF-α in vitro varied with time in culture. It was found that IL-1α and TNF-α stimulated PGE₂ synthesis by keratinocytes after 7 days, but not 14 days, in culture. This loss of sensitivity towards IL-1α and TNF-α was associated with a reduction in both basal and stimulated (AA and A23187) PGE₂ formation. Although PGE₂ synthesis was enhanced when foetal calf serum was added to the incubation medium, maybe due to the presence of AA in the serum, IL-1α and TNF-α stimulation of PGE₂ synthesis was not dependent on the presence of serum or added growth factors. The finding that pre-exposure of keratinocytes to IL-1α was sufficient to stimulate PG synthesis (first and second 3 h incubations) is consistent with reports that IL-1α stimulated AA turnover in fibroblasts and keratinocytes is dependent on de novo protein synthesis.

Data obtained using radiolabelled AA are in general agreement with reports indicating that keratinocytes are capable of synthesizing different cyclooxygenase (CO) (PGD₂, 6-keto PGF₁α, PGE₂) and lipooxygenase (15-HETE, LTB₄ and leukotriene C₄) metabolites of AA. However, it appears from our data that the stimulatory action of IL-1α could be selective for PGE₂ although this has to be confirmed using RIA. AA stimulated PGE₂ synthesis by 7 day keratinocyte cultures, calculated as the relative increase, was the same as for 14 day cells. The differences in AA stimulated PGE₂ formation by 7 and 14 day cultures can, therefore, be ascribed to changes in keratinocyte CO concentrations. The stimulatory effect of A23187 on 7 day cultures was, in contrast, greater in both absolute (per mg protein) and relative terms than its effect on 14 day cultures. This finding suggests that intra-cellular, Ca²⁺ sensitive, mechanisms controlling the level of free AA are up- or down-regulated depending on the degree of differentiation of the culture. Increases in de novo CO and phospholipase A₂, a Ca²⁺ sensitive enzyme which releases AA from membrane phospholipid stores, have been shown to occur in fibroblasts after exposure to IL-1. It is possible therefore that an increase in the synthesis of these enzymes is coupled to those mechanisms regulating keratinocyte proliferation/differentiation. As IL-1α and TNF-α were without effect on 14 day cultures it appears that there are also specific alterations in the receptor mediated signal transduction system by which these cytokines stimulate PGE₂ formation. Our data are consistent with the concept that, as keratinocyte cultures proliferate and become confluent, there are changes in basal and stimulated PGE₂ synthesis which can be attributed to alterations at receptor, second messenger and CO levels.

The present results support previous publications showing that non-confluent keratinocyte cultures release higher concentrations of PGE₂ than confluent ones. However data obtained using different isolated epidermal cell populations is contradictory and authors have reported that both differentiated and basal keratinocytes are the most active in metabolizing AA. These differences have yet to be reconciled. Concentrations of IL-6 and TNF in keratinocyte incubation media were below the levels of detection of the assays used, for all the experiments performed. This finding is in contrast to other publications reporting that IL-6 release from keratinocytes is enhanced by IL-1. Those authors assayed IL-6 using the B9 cell bioassay however and we are not aware of any report where the release of IL-6 from keratinocytes was measured by RIA. It is possible that the different assay systems do not yield compatible results, although IL-6 secretion by human fibroblast was easily detected using the Amersham kit. In view of the lack of effect on secretion of IL-6 or TNF-α, it is unlikely that the stimulatory effect of IL-1α on keratinocyte PGE₂ synthesis was mediated via a stimulation of secondary cytokines.

In summary, it has been shown that there are alterations in the sensitivity of keratinocytes towards IL-1α and TNF-α as keratinocyte cultures become confluent and begin to differentiate. The down-regulation of PGE₂ synthesis observed, as keratinocytes begin to differentiate, occurs at the receptor, second messenger and CO levels. Such changes in the sensitivity of keratinocytes towards inflammatory cytokines could be an important mechanism by which the response of the epidermis...
to injury (re-epithelialization) or noxious stimuli (hyperplasia) is regulated.

References

1. Schmitt A, Hauser C, Jaunin F, Dayer JM, Sauvat JH. Normal epidermis contains high amounts of natural tissue IL-1. Biochemical analysis by HPLC identifies a MW 17 kDa form with a PI 5.7 and a MW 30 kDa form. *Lymphokines* 1986; 5: 105-118.

2. Kupper T, Ballard DW, Gau AO, et al. Human keratinocytes contain mRNA indistinguishable from monocyte interleukin 1α and β mRNA. *J Exp Med* 1986; 164: 2095-2100.

3. Partridge M, Chantry D, Turner M, Feldman M. Production of interleukin-1 and interleukin-6 by human keratinocytes and squamous cell carcinoma cell lines. *J Invest Dermatol* 1991; 96: 771-776.

4. Riskow H. A major factor contributing to epidermal proliferation in inflammatory skin disease appears to be interleukin-1 or a related protein. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* 1987; 84: 1940-1944.

5. Sauder DN. Biological properties of epidermal thymocyte-activating factor (ETAF). *J Invest Dermatol* 1985; 84: 176S-182S.

6. Pentland AP, Mahoney MG. Keratinocyte prostaglandin synthesis is enhanced by IL-1. *J Invest Dermatol* 1990; 94: 43-46.

7. Pentland AP, Needleman P. Modulation of cellular confluence determines injury-induced prostaglandin E2 synthesis by human keratinocyte cultures. *Biochem Biophys Acta* 1987; 919: 71-78.

8. Mol MAE, de Ruijter BC, Luijvers AW. NAD+ levels and glucose uptake of cultured epidermal cells exposed to sulfur mustard. *Toxicol Appl Pharmacol* 1989; 96: 150-165.

9. Elliott G, van de Meent D, van Dijk J. Interleukin-1-stimulated fibroblast eicosanoid synthesis is not mediated by interleukin-6. *Eur J Pharmacol* 1992; 214: 253-259.

10. Zilz MF, Vincent JJ. Determination of leukotrienes and prostaglandins in [3H] arachidonic acid labelled human lung tissue by high-performance liquid chromatography and radioimmunoassay. *J Chromatography* 1984; 311: 30-50.

11. Ruff MB, Gifford GE. Tumor necrosis factor. In: Pick F, ed. *Lymphokines*. New York: Academic Press, 1981; 235.

12. Van der Haan AC, Korn WL, Zilz MF, Vermeere MA, Jekel J. Eicosanoid profile of healing colon anastomosis and peritoneal macrophages in the rat. *Cyt* 1983; 31: 807-811.

13. Godfrey RW, Johanson WJ, Hoffstein SY. Interleukin-1 stimulation of phospholipase activity in rat synovial fibroblasts. *Arthritis Rheum* 1988; 31: 1431-1438.

14. Korn JH, Dowrie E, Roth GJ, Ho SY. Synergy of interleukin 1 (IL-1) with arachidonic acid and A23187 in stimulating prostaglandin E synthesis in human fibroblasts: IL-1 stimulates fibroblast cyclooxygenase. *Clin Immunol Immunopathol* 1989; 50: 196-204.

15. Kvedar J, Levine L. Modulation of arachidonic acid metabolism in a cultured newborn rat keratinocyte cell line. *J Invest Dermatol* 1985; 85: 64-69.

16. Rosenbach T, Czerniecki J, Hecker M, Czarnetzki B. Comparison of eicosanoid generation by highly purified human Langerhans cells and keratinocytes. *J Immunol* 1990; 145: 104-107.

17. Kiewel R, Kock A, Schwarz T, et al. IFN-β, B cell differentiation factor 2, or hybridoma growth factor (IL-6) is expressed and released by human epidermal cells and epidermoid carcinoma cell lines. *Immunol* 1989; 142: 1922-1928.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. We pleased to acknowledge the excellent technical assistance of Anne-Mari de Vries who cultured the keratinocytes.

Received 1 September 1992: accepted in revised form 16 September 1992