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Restoration of polymorphonuclear leukocyte function in elderly subjects by thymomodulin.

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Abstract

Senescence is a specific physiological evolution of human beings associated with a reduction in the functionality of several apparatuses, including the immune system. Thymomodulin (TMD) contains **thymus** polypeptides (< 10,000 D) and it has been used in a variety of disorders associated with defective immunological functions. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect on polymorphonuclear leukocyte (PMNs) phagocytosis and oxidative burst of a 6-week treatment with 160 mg/day TMD orally in elderly subjects (85.5 +/- 9.7 years). Elderly subjects have impaired PMN phagocytosis and the following release of oxidant radicals. Treatment with TMD for 6 weeks had a restoring effect; phagocytosis and the phagocytic index were significantly improved, with increases of 132.6% and 112.5%. These findings indicate that TMD might be given to enhance the immunodefenses of immunocompromised elderly subjects. Luminol-dependent chemiluminescence was increased by 15.6%, which was not significant, indicating a different response between phagocytosis and release of oxidant radicals.

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