

FIG. 7. Patterns of virus replication and CD4⁺T cell dynamics in SHIV_{AD8} rapid progressors. The levels of plasma viremia (a), absolute numbers of peripheral CD4⁺ T cells (b), and percentages of BAL fluid CD4⁺ T cells (c) are shown. †, euthanized animals.

$>1 \times 10^7$ RNA copies/ml; rapid and irreversible loss of memory CD4⁺ T cells in the blood and at an effector site (BAL); and intractable diarrhea, anorexia, and weight loss requiring euthanasia between weeks 19 and 23 p.i.

DISCUSSION

The results presented clearly show that the generation of a pathogenic R5-SHIV was not a trivial undertaking. Animal-to-animal passaging eventually gave rise to SHIV_{AD8#2}, possessing greatly augmented infectivity for rhesus PBMC compared to the starting SHIV_{AD8} construct. Although it was not appreciated at the time, SHIV_{AD8#2} had also acquired improved *in*

vivo properties, as evidenced by its and its immediate derivatives' capacity to cause fatal immunodeficiency in 8 of 13 inoculated rhesus monkeys (Fig. 4 and Table 2). The most consistent and distinguishing property of the passaged SHIV_{AD8} family of viruses during infections of rhesus macaques was the slow and unremitting loss of both memory and naïve CD4⁺ T cells (Fig. 6), a pattern of depletion observed in all 10 NPs. Surprisingly, and in contrast to both SIV_{mac} and SIV_{mE} lineages, the pace of CD4⁺ T lymphocyte decline was not correlated with plasma virus loads. Although the geometric mean plasma viral-RNA level at week 50 in the SHIV_{AD8}-infected monkey cohort was 1.7×10^3 RNA copies/ml, the set-point virus loads varied widely in the 10 infected animals

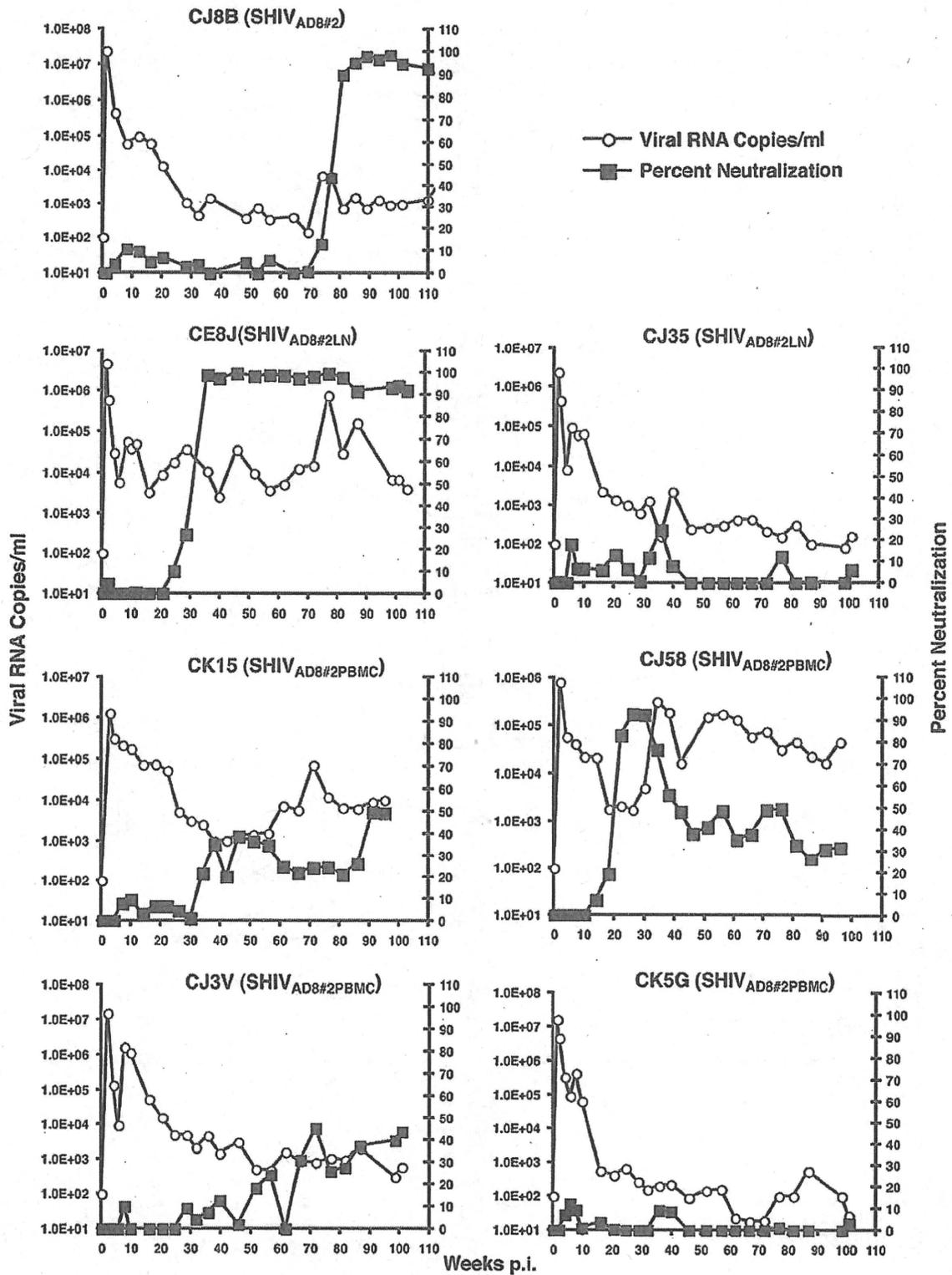


FIG. 8. Neutralizing-antibody activities detected in normal-progressor macaques following infection with SHIV_{AD8#2} or its immediate derivatives. Plasma samples (1:20 dilution) from the indicated SHIV_{AD8}-infected macaques were incubated in quadruplicate for 1 h at 37°C with the virus isolates shown in parentheses and then used as an inoculum to infect TZM-bl cells. The luciferase activity present in cell lysates at 28 h p.i. was measured, and the average percent neutralization activity in plasma at each time point was determined. Prechallenge plasma samples served as negative controls and baselines for zero neutralizing-antibody activity.

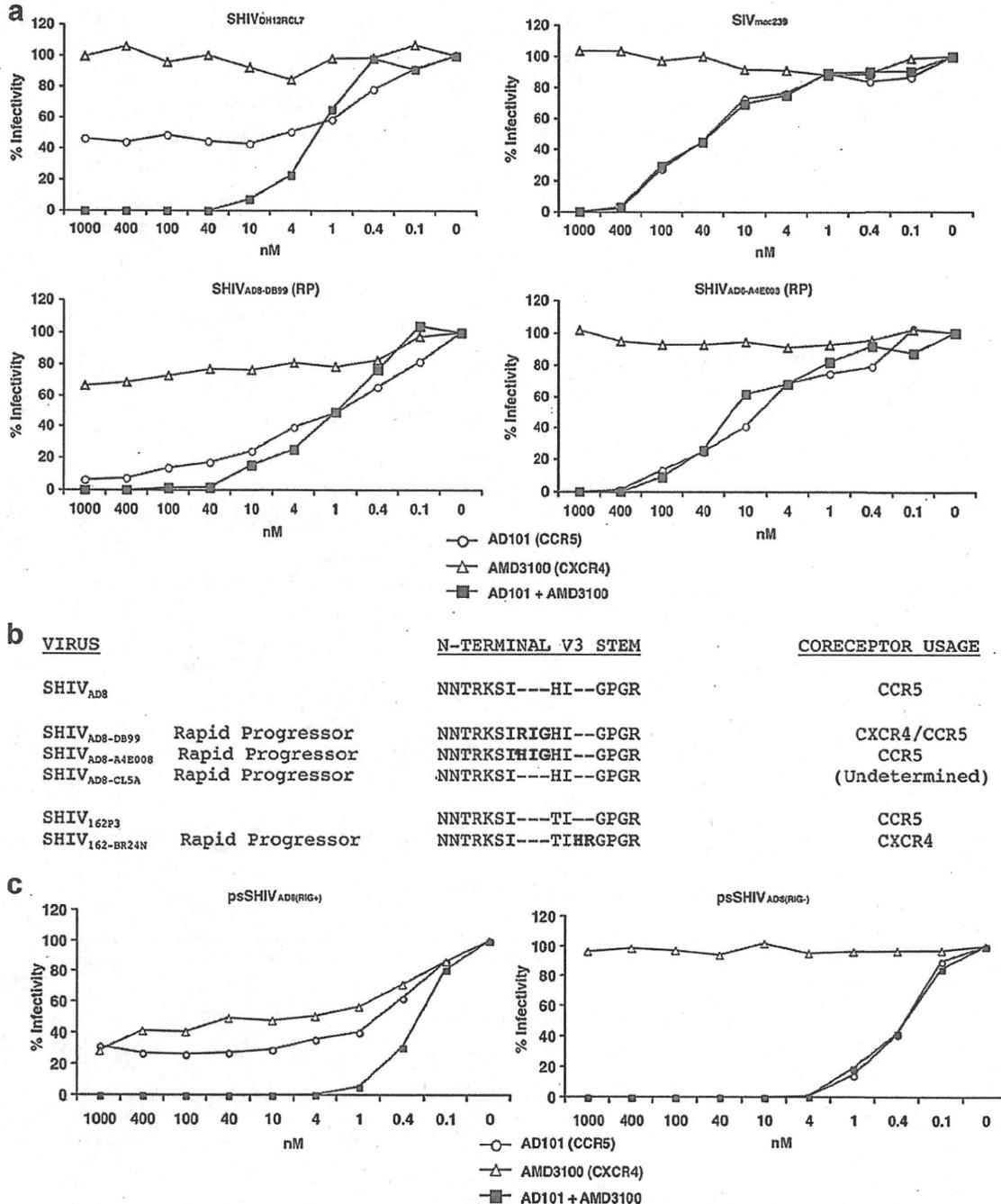


FIG. 9. Coreceptor utilization of SHIV_{AD8} derivatives isolated from rapid progressors. (a) TZM-bl cells were infected in quadruplicate with viruses (SHIV_{AD8-DB99} and SHIV_{AD8-A4E008}) recovered from rapid progressors DB99 and A4E008, respectively, in the presence of the indicated amounts of the small-molecule coreceptor inhibitors AD101 (CCR5), AMD 3100 (CXCR4), or both. SIV_{mac239} and SHIV_{DH12RCL-7} were also analyzed as representative R5-tropic and dual-tropic viruses, respectively. The luciferase activities present in cell lysates 24 h p.i. were measured, and percent infectivities were determined in the absence or presence of coreceptor inhibitors. (b) gp120 sequences from the N-terminal V3 regions of SHIV_{AD8} variants, recovered from three RP animals, were aligned with the starting SHIV_{AD8} V3 loop. The V3 regions of the R5-tropic SHIV_{SF162P3} and its SHIV_{SF162-BR24N} derivative, which also emerged in an RP, are included in the alignment. (c) Coreceptor utilization of virus, pseudotyped with Envs present in RP DB99 at the time of necropsy, containing or lacking the 3-aa RIG V3 loop insertion.

TABLE 2. Clinical and pathological findings in rhesus monkeys infected with SHIV_{AD8#2} and its immediate derivatives

Animal	Clinical data/pathological findings
CJ8B	Euthanized (wk 199); uncontrolled diarrhea; wt loss
CK15	Euthanized (wk 112); <i>P. carinii</i> pneumonia
CJ58	Total CD4 ⁺ T cells, 154/mm ³ (wk 111)
CE8J	Euthanized (wk 117); uncontrolled diarrhea, <i>C. coli</i> enteritis
CJ35	Total CD4 ⁺ T cells, 270/mm ³ (wk 129)
CJ3V	Euthanized (wk 135); uncontrolled diarrhea; typhlocolitis
CK5G	Total CD4 ⁺ T cells: 101/mm ³ (wk 101)
DB99	Euthanized (wk 23); rapid progressor
DA1Z	Total CD4 ⁺ T cells, 545/mm ³ (wk 65)
A4E008	Euthanized (wk 20); rapid progressor
DA4W	Total CD4 ⁺ T cells, 92/mm ³ (wk 64)
CL5A	Euthanized (wk 19); rapid progressor
CL98	Euthanized (wk 100); disseminated <i>M. avium</i>

(1.6×10^2 to 1.5×10^5 RNA copies/ml). This variability was also observed in pairs of animals inoculated with identical SHIV_{AD8#2} derivatives (*viz.* CK15 and CJ58, and DB99 and DA1Z). An extreme example of the nonlinkage between viral-RNA levels and CD4⁺ T cell loss with SHIV_{AD8} occurred with animal CK5G, which had 43 and 42 circulating naïve and memory CD4⁺ T cells/ μ l, respectively, at week 86 p.i. and a plasma viral load of only 5.4×10^2 RNA copies/ml. During the chronic phase of SHIV_{AD8} infections, the loss of naïve CD4⁺ T cells was more rapid and more marked than the depletion of the memory subset, as was previously observed in SIVsmE543-infected animals (35) (Fig. 6). By week 80, for example, NPs had sustained an 87 to 93% loss of naïve CD4⁺ T cells from their preinoculation levels, whereas the depletion of memory cells was significant, but not as pronounced. The dissociation of plasma virus loads and CD4⁺ T cell loss is reminiscent of the previously reported infection of pig-tailed macaques with SIV_{hoest} and SIV_{sun} (4). In that study, 8 of 12 infected animals developed immunodeficiency over a 5-year period while maintaining set-point viremia between 10^2 and 10^3 RNA copies/ml.

We do not presently understand why naïve CD4⁺ T lymphocytes are lost in SHIV_{AD8} NPs. Based on coreceptor expression, this T cell subset expresses CXCR4, not CCR5, on its surface and should therefore be refractory to infection by R5-tropic SHIVs and virus-induced cell killing. An assessment of the coreceptor utilization status of late-stage viruses recovered from SHIV_{AD8} NPs, in fact, revealed that a coreceptor switch had not occurred in these animals (see Fig. S2 in the supplemental material). Although a dissociation between viral-RNA levels and memory/naïve CD4⁺ T cell loss was observed, the NPs did experience increased memory CD4⁺ T lymphocyte turnover (see Fig. S1 in the supplemental material), even in animals with very low plasma virus loads. Activation-induced proliferation and killing of memory CD4⁺ T cells during the lengthy chronic SHIV_{AD8} infection might therefore be responsible for driving the differentiation of naïve CD4⁺ lymphocytes into memory cells and impose an unsustainable drain on this CD4⁺ T cell subset. It is also possible that SHIV_{AD8} infection of rhesus macaques negatively affects naïve CD4⁺ T lymphocyte homeostasis in the thymus, thereby impeding the differ-

entiation or emigration of this T cell subset. It has also recently been reported that the loss of naïve CD4⁺ T cells during SIVsmE543 infections was associated with the presence of autoreactive antibodies to CD4⁺ T lymphocytes, platelets, double-stranded DNA, and phospholipid (27). Increased numbers of circulating IgG-coated CD4⁺ T cells were observed in that study, and the levels of autoreactive antibodies were correlated with the extent of naïve CD4⁺ T cell depletion.

Approximately 20% of rhesus monkeys infected with SIVmac/SIVsm lineage viruses become RPs, experiencing persistently high virus set points, rapid and complete losses of memory CD4⁺ T cells, undetectable or transient antiviral antibody responses, and early onset (3 to 6 months p.i.) of symptomatic disease (6). Despite losing virtually all of their memory CD4⁺ T lymphocytes, SIV RPs, at the time of death, usually maintain preinoculation levels of naïve CD4⁺ T cells (35). This was not the case for SHIV_{AD8} RPs. Although all three experienced early and massive depletions of memory CD4⁺ T cells, two of the infected macaques had lost virtually all of their naïve CD4⁺ T cells at the time of euthanasia. In one of these animals (DB99), the virus recovered at the time of euthanasia, as well as a virus pseudotyped with an Env possessing the RIG insertion in the V3 loop, had acquired the capacity to infect cells expressing CXCR4 (Fig. 9a and c). Interestingly, coreceptor switching has been previously reported to occur during RP infections of macaques inoculated with a different R5-tropic SHIV, SHIV_{SF162P3} (18, 19, 47). In one of the SHIV_{SF162P3} coreceptor-switching events, the insertion of two positively charged amino acids (HR) immediately upstream of the V3 loop GPGR crown (Fig. 9b) was shown to confer X4 tropism (18). In the case of SHIV_{AD8-DB99}, a 3-aa (RIG) insertion, also located in the N-terminal V3 stem and which increased the net charge of the V3 loop from +3 to +5, was responsible for the acquisition of CXCR4 usage. The insertion of HIG at the same location of the SHIV_{AD8-A4E008} V3 region did not affect the net charge and did not confer tropism for CXCR4-expressing cells.

Independent and unrecognized cross-species transmissions and spread of SIVsm at different U.S. primate facilities during the 1970s contributed to the emergence of SIVmac and SIVsmE660 lineages with distinctive replicative and pathogenic phenotypes. The serial passaging of SHIV_{AD8} in rhesus monkeys described here also resulted in an AIDS-inducing primate lentivirus with its own characteristic properties. First, in contrast to commonly used pathogenic SIVs, SHIV_{AD8#2} and its immediate derivatives generated sustained but, as previously noted, highly variable set-point virus loads in NPs. Similarly variable viral loads were also observed in eight rhesus monkeys inoculated with four independent SHIV_{AD8} stocks prepared from macaques CK15, CE8J, CL98, and CJ58 at the time of their euthanasia (data not shown). Profound depletions of both memory and naïve CD4⁺ T cells, which accompany relatively low virus set points (geometric mean level, 1.7×10^3 RNA copies/ml) in NPs, is a second property that distinguishes the R5-tropic SHIV_{AD8} from pathogenic SIVs. Finally, unlike SIVs, SHIV_{AD8} RPs experience an initial loss of memory CD4⁺ T lymphocytes and a later rapid deletion of naïve CD4⁺ T cells prior to death, which in one animal occurred following a CCR5-to-CXCR4 coreceptor switch. Based on the results shown in Fig. 4 and Table 2, we plan to use and distribute

SHIV_{AD8#2LN}, SHIV_{AD8#2PBM}, or the SHIVs recovered from NPs at the time of euthanasia (SHIV_{AD8-CL98}, SHIV_{AD8-CK15}, or SHIV_{AD8-CE81}) as challenge viruses in vaccine experiments. Animals inoculated with cell-free preparations of the last group of viruses have experienced variable but sustained plasma viremia associated with a gradual but significant CD4⁺ T cell loss during 30 weeks of infection. Some of these macaques have developed a rapid-progressor clinical course.

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