

Fig. 5. Cytokine levels evaluated by cytometric bead array. *A*: representative dot plots show cytokine (IL-2, IL-4, IL-6, IL-10, TNF- $\alpha$ , IFN- $\gamma$ ) levels of prestimulated (0 h) and poststimulated PBMCs incubated with 20 nmol/l renin for 24 h. *B*: cytokine levels at 0, 6, or 24 h after renin stimulation (2 or 20 nmol/l) as evaluated by cytometric bead array ( $n = 6$ ). Filled circle and bold line represent outlier and median, respectively. *C*: dot plots of cytokine release from isolated cells from PBMCs stimulated by renin using flow cytometry ( $n = 6$ ). IL-6 was released by mainly monocytes. Bold lines represents mean. \* $P < 0.05$  compared with monocytes.

under ERK1/2 inhibitor U0126 using PBMCs from four healthy subjects. The expression of *COX-2* was significantly increased by renin stimulation, and this expression was inhibited in the presence of U0126 (Fig. 7).

*(P)RR knockdown and ERK1/2 phosphorylation.* To examine the response of ERK1/2 phosphorylation to renin via (P)RR, we knocked down (P)RR expression using siRNA in a human mono-

cyte cell line (U937) because (P)RR expression was highest in monocytes and was expressed in macrophages infiltrating ANCA-associated GN. Human recombinant renin induction of ERK1/2 phosphorylation was renin concentration and time dependent in U937 cells (Fig. 8, *A* and *B*). The greatest reduction of (P)RR expression (50%) was observed 48 h after (P)RR siRNA treatment (Fig. 8*C*). The knockdown of (P)RR in U937 cells did not

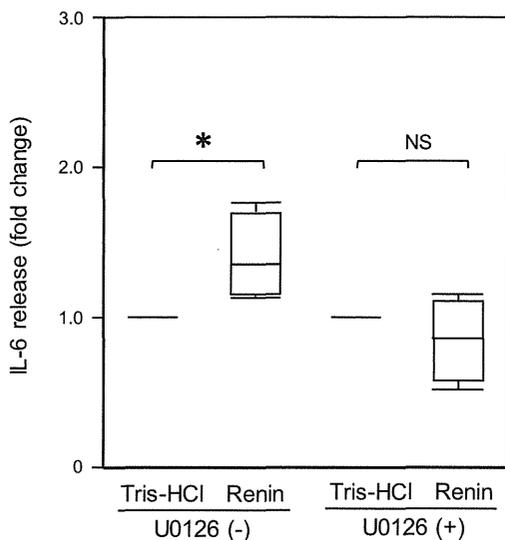


Fig. 6. Cytokine levels in human PBMCs ( $n = 4$ ) evaluated by cytometric beads array in the presence of ERK1/2 inhibitor (U0126). Values are presented as the median (central line), interquartile range (box), and range (whiskers). U0126 (+), in the presence of U0126; U0126 (-), in the absence of U0126. NS, not significant.  $*P < 0.05$ .

affect cell growth or viability (Fig. 8D). ERK1/2 phosphorylation was significantly decreased by (P)RR siRNA treatment in U937 cells compared with control siRNA (Fig. 8E).

**(P)RR expression in human crescentic GN.** To test whether (P)RR is expressed by inflammatory cells responsible for GN, renal tissues from three cases of ANCA-associated GN were stained (Fig. 9). High numbers of macrophages (Fig. 9J) infiltrated around glomeruli. There were few infiltrating T cells (Fig. 9A), B cells (Fig. 9D), and NK cells (Fig. 9G). Infiltrating T cells (Fig. 9B), B cells (Fig. 9E), NK cells (Fig. 9H), and macrophages (Fig. 9K) around glomeruli with crescent formation and in the tubulointerstitium (Fig. 10A) were stained with (P)RR. By contrast, lymphocytes and macrophages did not infiltrate around glomeruli or the mesangium and tubulointerstitial area in the tissues of a control model, MCNS (Fig. 10B).

## DISCUSSION

The present study revealed the expression and functional role of (P)RR in human lymphocytes and monocytes, and (P)RR expression in tissue-infiltrating T cells and macrophages, that have a major role in the pathophysiology of ANCA-associated GN (40, 48). (P)RR was present in the cellular cytosolic region. Both full-length and soluble forms of (P)RR were expressed in primary isolated PBMCs (Fig. 1C). However, there is no visible band for THE soluble form of (P)RR (Fig. 1D). This discrepancy might be due to the kinetics of soluble (P)RR. Generally, protein secretion has two distinct pathways: the regulated secretory pathway and the constitutive pathway (22). Soluble (P)RR is considered to be secreted through the latter pathway and to be cleaved in the intracellular compartments of cells and secreted into the extracellular space over a short period of time without storage in post-Golgi vesicles (49). The expression level of (P)RR was not affected by renin stimulation (data not shown). ERK1/2 phosphorylation, inflammatory cytokine secretion, and *COX-2* expression

were observed after renin stimulation. Thus (P)RR expressed by inflammatory cells is functionally active. In addition, (P)RR expression in infiltrating macrophages from the glomeruli and interstitium was observed in renal biopsy tissues from human crescentic GN. Feldt et al. showed ERK1/2 activation via (P)RR using various blockers, but not siRNA, in U937 cells. However, we used (P)RR siRNA and evaluated ERK1/2 phosphorylation in the same cell line.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to demonstrate that functional (P)RR are expressed in a human monocyte cell line (13), primary isolated monocytes and lymphocytes, and infiltrating T cells and macrophages of ANCA-associated GN. Moreover, renin stimulation induced secretion of inflammatory cytokines and expression of *COX-2*, an important enzyme for the inflammatory reaction, independently of angiotensin receptors.

Previous studies showed a relationship between the RAS and immunoreactions. The RAS exerts a deleterious effect through the induction of inflammatory responses. Inflammatory cells such as macrophages and T cells were significant sources of tissue ACE and contributed to increased local ANG II in atherosclerotic plaques of human coronary arteries (11). Broad immunosuppression during ANG II-induced renal damage reduced albuminuria, inflammatory cell infiltration of the kidney, and renal structural damage through a blood pressure-independent mechanism (34). Furthermore,  $AT_1R$  is involved in the pathogenesis of glomerular injury in active immune complex-mediated GN. ACE inhibitors and ANG II receptor blocker could have renoprotective benefits such as the reduction of proteinuria, glomerular extracellular matrix deposition, mesan-

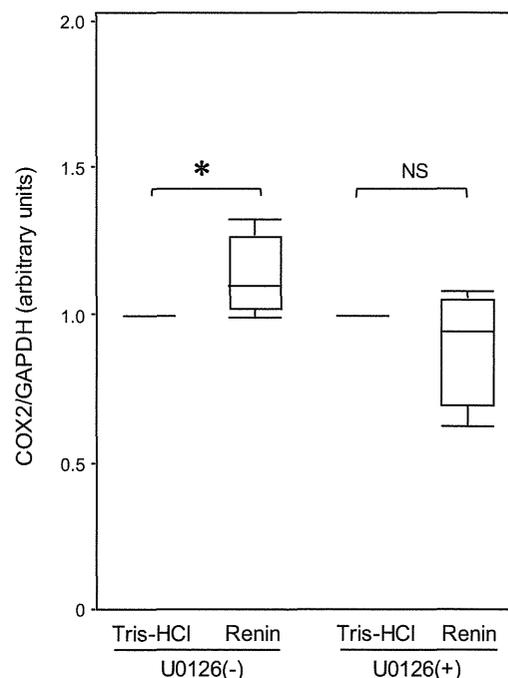


Fig. 7. Expression level of *cyclooxygenase-2* (*COX-2*) in human PBMCs. *COX-2* expression in PBMCs in 4 healthy subjects after renin stimulation is shown. *GAPDH* was used as an internal control. The expression of *COX-2* was significantly increased by renin stimulation, and this increase was inhibited in the presence of U0126, a specific ERK1/2 inhibitor.  $*P < 0.05$ .

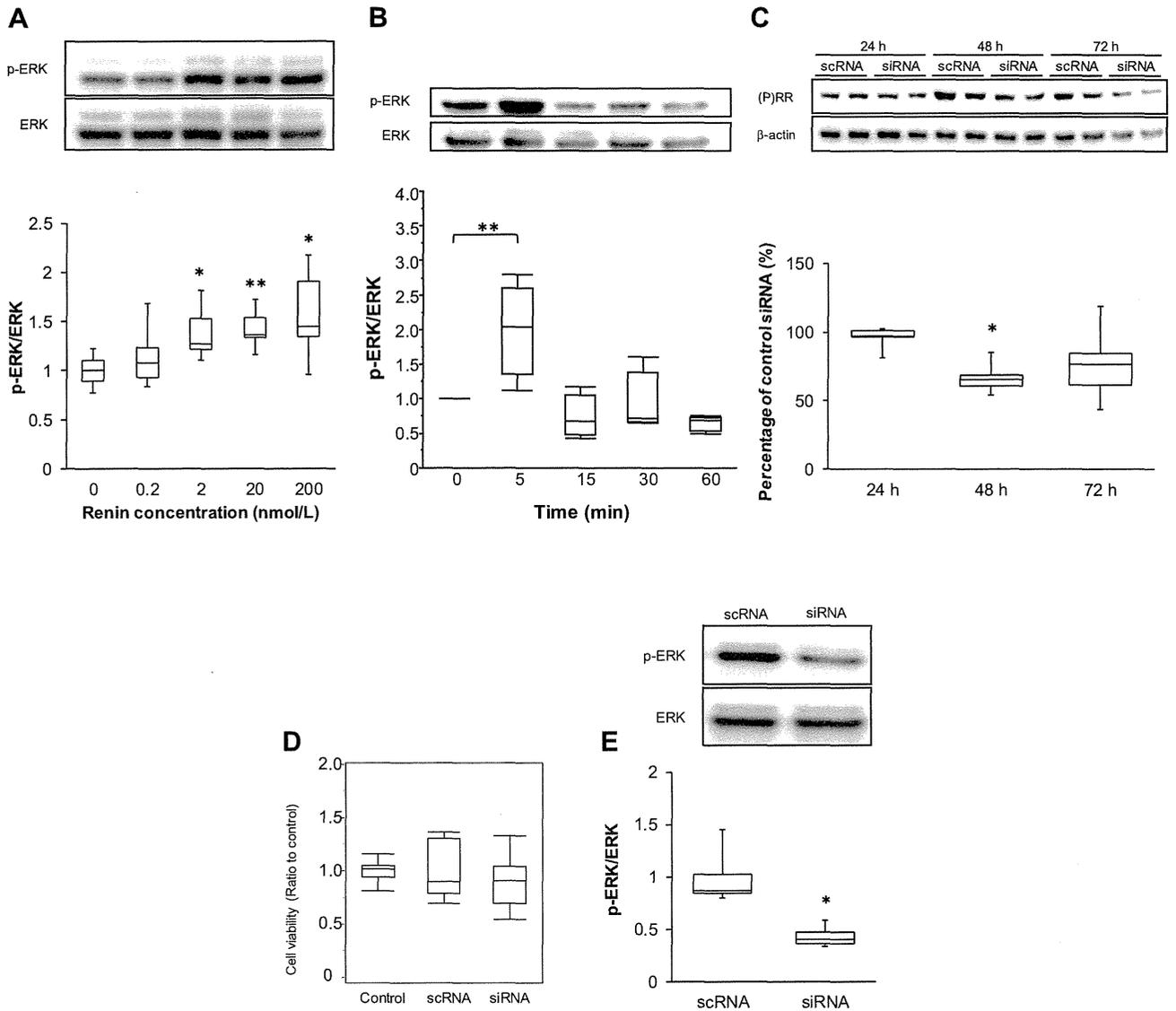
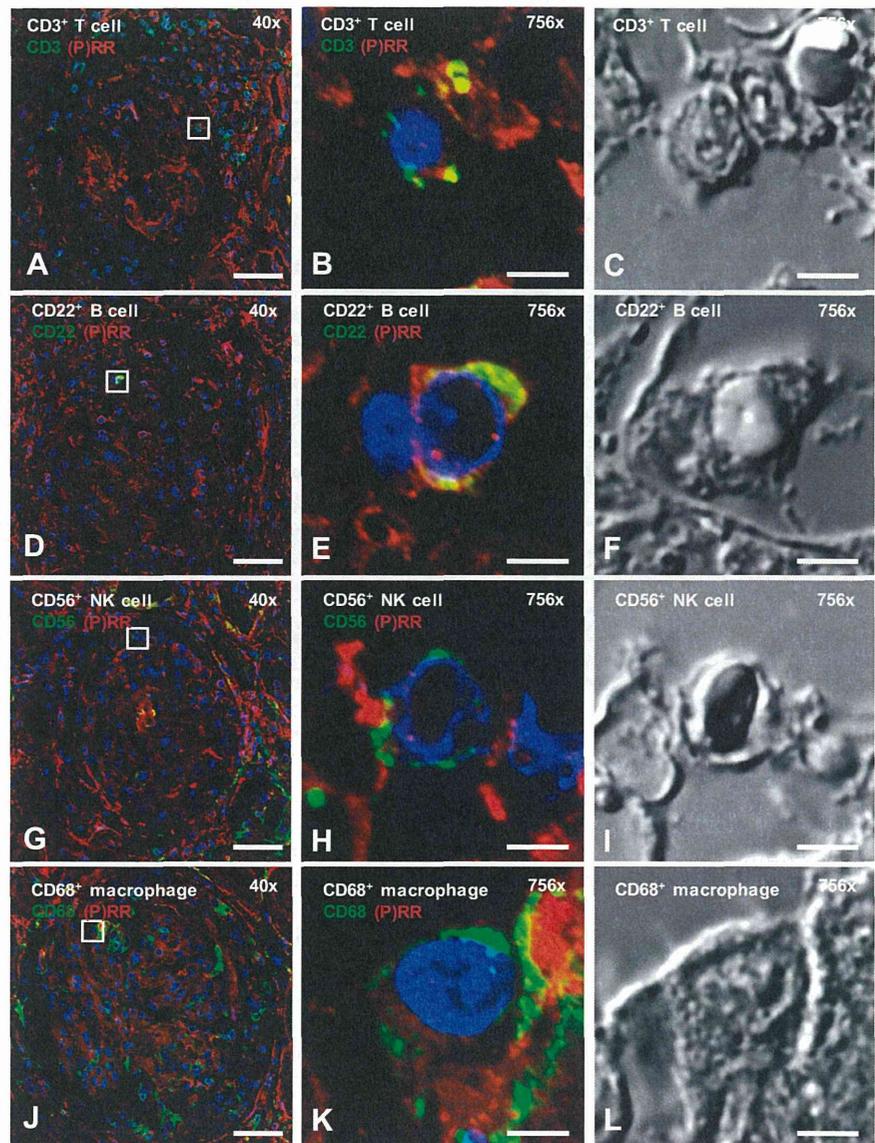


Fig. 8. ERK1/2 phosphorylation of U937 cells. **A**: U937 cells were incubated for 5 min in the presence of various concentrations of renin, and Western blotting was performed. Graphs show the ratio of p-ERK and total ERK in the presence of various concentrations of renin. Values are presented as the median (central line), interquartile range (box), and range (whiskers). \*\* $P < 0.01$  vs. 0 nmol/l. \* $P < 0.05$  vs. 0 nmol/l. **B**: U937 cells were incubated in the presence or absence of 20 nmol/l renin for the indicated times, and Western blotting was performed. Graphs show the ratio of p-ERK and total ERK in the presence of 20 nmol/l for the indicated times. Values are presented as the median (central line), interquartile range (box), and range (whiskers). \*\* $P < 0.01$  vs. 0 min. **C**: expression of (P)RR in U937 cells transfected with (P)RR small interfering RNA (siRNA) or nontargeting siRNA (scRNA). Values are presented as the median (central line), interquartile range (box), and range (whiskers). The levels of proteins were quantified by densitometric analysis. \* $P < 0.05$  compared with scRNA. **D**: cell viability in U937 cells with knocked down (P)RR by (4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide (MTT) assay. **E**: ERK1/2 phosphorylation by renin stimulation was decreased in (P)RR siRNA-transfected U937 cells. Values are presented as the median (central line), interquartile range (box), and range (whiskers). \* $P < 0.05$  compared with scRNA.

gial cell activation, and renal plasminogen activator inhibitor-1 (PAI-1) independently of blood pressure control (17). Moreover, ANG II induces various responses in human inflammatory cells, including NF- $\kappa$ B activation (24), chemotaxis in monocytes (23), and modulation of intracellular redox status in neutrophils (12) as well as upregulating tissue RAS levels that activate T cells (9). These results indicated the RAS is responsible for active GN and the immune responses derived from AT<sub>1</sub>R signaling. In this study, immune responses such as ERK1/2 phosphorylation, cytokine release, and COX-2 expres-

sion by renin stimulation in the presence of AT<sub>1</sub>R and AT<sub>2</sub>R blockers were observed in human inflammatory cells. We observed that induction of ERK1/2 phosphorylation was renin concentration dependent in the nanomolar range (Fig. 4A), as previously reported (13). However, plasma concentrations of prorenin and renin are in the picomolar range, and thus the interaction between renin/prorenin and (P)RR seems impossible except for renin/prorenin-synthesizing organs (25). (P)RR may contribute to the activation of the ERK1/2 pathway directly and induces cytokines release independently of the

Fig. 9. Immunohistochemical study of (P)RR in human anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody-associated crescentic glomerulonephritis. Low-power field (*left*) and high-power field (*middle*) show lymphocytes or macrophages stained with the indicated specific antibodies (green). *A* and *B*: CD3<sup>+</sup> T cells. *D* and *E*: CD22<sup>+</sup> B cells. *G* and *H*: CD56<sup>+</sup> NK cells. *J* and *K*: CD68<sup>+</sup> macrophages, (P)RR antibody (red), and 4,5-diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI; blue). *Right*: differential interference contrast of the same cross section with high-power field panels. (P)RR colocalized with CD3<sup>+</sup> T cells and CD68<sup>+</sup> monocytes. Scale bars = 50  $\mu$ m (*A*, *D*, *G*, and *J*) and 5  $\mu$ m (*B*, *C*, *E*, *F*, *H*, *I*, *K*, *L*).



ANG II generation pathway in PBMCs after infiltration of the kidney.

(P)RR is a 350-amino acid protein with a single transmembrane domain (36). When prorenin binds to (P)RR, it generates ANG I in the absence of cleavage of the prosegment (36), and directly activates MAPK ERK1/2 signaling in several cell types, including mesangial cells (21, 36), collecting duct cells (2), vascular smooth muscle cells (3, 14), monocytes (13), and neurons (8). A previous study suggested that direct renin/prorenin-induced ERK1/2 activation resulted in increased profibrotic gene expression, including TGF- $\beta$ 1 and PAI-1, and thereby increased cell proliferation (51). However, the activated ERK1/2 pathway in lymphocytes and monocytes induces secretion of cytokines including IL-6 and TNF- $\beta$  in T cells (29) and IL-6 (27) and TNF- $\alpha$  (26) in monocytes. Moreover, ERK1/2 activation occurred in a rat Thy-1 model of mesangioproliferative nephritis, and blocking the ERK1/2 pathway resulted in a significant reduction of mesangial cell prolifera-

tion (5). In addition, ERK1/2 activation in human renal injury is associated with cell proliferation, histological deterioration, and renal dysfunction (31). In our study, all experiments were performed in the presence of an AT<sub>1</sub>R blocker and AT<sub>2</sub>R blocker. These blockers did not have any effect on ERK1/2 phosphorylation and completely blocked ERK1/2 phosphorylation via the renin/ANG II pathway (data not shown). These findings with our study showing that renin stimulation of PBMCs induces ERK1/2 phosphorylation, cytokine release and COX-2 expression indicates (P)RR contributes to the pathophysiology of GN and renal injury via renin/prorenin-induced ERK1/2 activation.

The (P)RR expression level in monocytes was high in our study. Monocytes/macrophages have inflammatory roles in renal disease and are implicated in the induction of injury and fibrosis. Many human biopsy studies have shown glomerular or interstitial macrophages correlate with poor outcomes, including progression of disease, severity of histopathological pre-

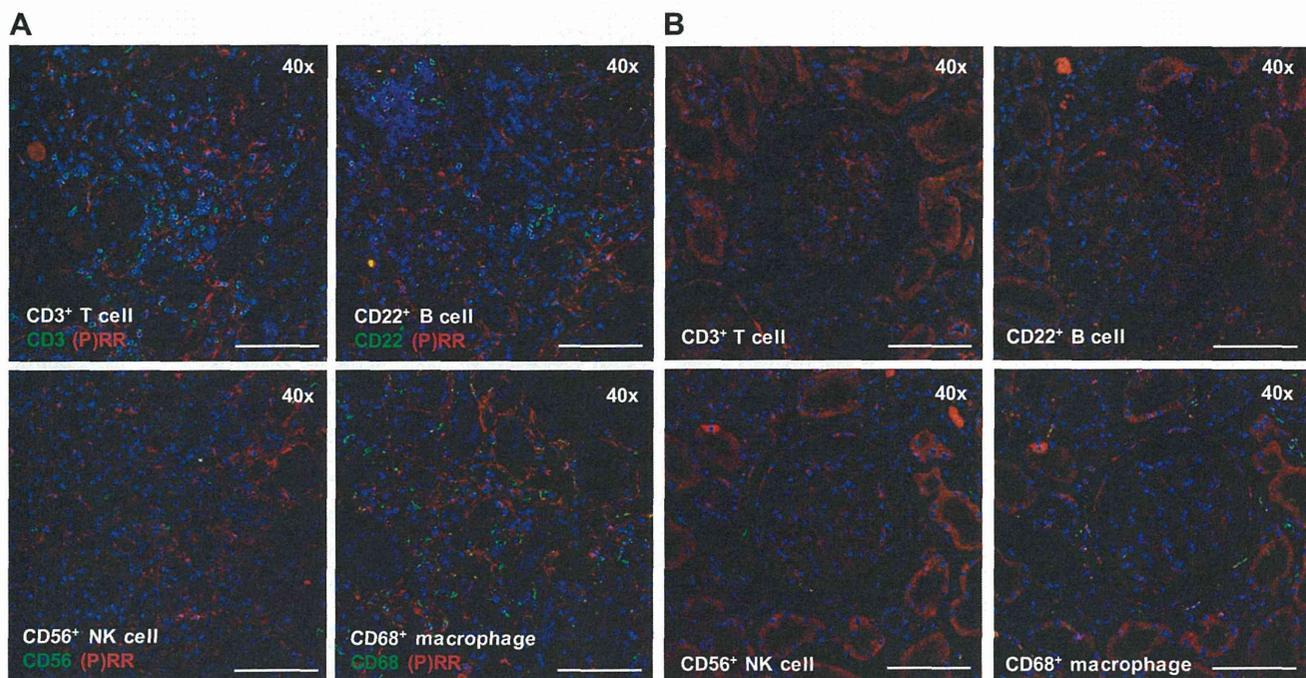


Fig. 10. Immunofluorescence of (P)RR in the tubulointerstitial area of human anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody-associated crescentic glomerulonephritis (A) and human minimal-change nephrotic syndrome (B). Lymphocytes and monocytes were stained with specific antibodies for CD3<sup>+</sup> T cells, CD22<sup>+</sup> B cells, CD56<sup>+</sup> NK cells, and CD68<sup>+</sup> macrophages. (P)RR stained with (P)RR-specific antibody (red), and nuclei stained with DAPI (blue). Scale bars = 100  $\mu$ m.

sentation, likelihood of future fibrosis, or tubular atrophy (4, 15). Through intracellular signaling pathways including MAPK, macrophages release several proinflammatory cytokines such as TNF- $\alpha$  and IL-6 and proinflammatory chemokines such as monocyte chemoattractant protein (MCP), which is involved in the pathogenesis of crescentic GN (46). Ozawa et al. (38) demonstrated chronic ANG II infusion in rats activated MCP-1 and TGF- $\beta$ 1, which induced macrophage infiltration in renal tissues. Furthermore, TGF- $\beta$ 1 is also associated with crescent formation in GN (41), and MCP-1 and TGF- $\beta$ 1 release is mediated by the RAS. Further studies are required to determine whether MCP-1 and TGF- $\beta$ 1 are released by (P)RR stimulation.

In this study, we demonstrated that IL-6 was secreted from PBMCs stimulated by renin under AT<sub>1</sub>R and AT<sub>2</sub>R blockers. Actually, IL-6 was produced by a variety of cells including T cells and monocytes/macrophages (1, 45), and IL-6 could contribute to the pathogenesis or progression of the renal diseases (16). Moreover, the ERK1/2 pathway is considered to be important for the regulation of the production of IL-6 in the human kidney (28). Therefore, (P)RR expressed in lymphocytes and monocytes may be involved in immune inflammatory responses mediated by proinflammatory cytokines such as IL-6 via the ERK1/2 pathway. Moreover, we demonstrated that COX-2, an important enzyme for the inflammatory reaction, was increased by renin and suppressed under an ERK inhibitor in human PBMCs. These experiments were performed in the presence of AT<sub>1</sub>R and AT<sub>2</sub>R blockers. Thus these immunoreactions including cytokine release and COX-2 expression were induced via (P)RR-mediated direct activation of the ERK1/2 pathway independently of ANG II in human primary PBMCs.

Finally, our flow cytometric data demonstrated that expression patterns of (P)RR in PBMCs differed among participants. Interestingly, some subjects had a higher percentage of (P)RR-positive cells than others (Fig. 3C). We did not identify specific characteristics, such as sex, age, habit, past history, shape of the body, or biomarkers that may have accounted for this difference. Therefore, the cause of different (P)RR expression levels is unclear and should be studied further. We also examined the relationship between T cell subpopulations and (P)RR expression because T cells have an important role in GN. However, we did not identify a significant correlation between T cell subpopulations and (P)RR expression.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. It was very difficult to transfect siRNA into human lymphocytes and monocytes and maintain cell viability. Our results also revealed that (P)RR expression in monocytes was high and that (P)RR was expressed by ANCA-associated GN-infiltrating macrophages. Therefore, we used a human leukemic monocyte lymphoma cell line, U937 cells, to overcome these issues. Moreover, we showed that (P)RR was expressed in lymphocytes and macrophages infiltrating in GN. However, the number of samples was insufficient, and the pathophysiological functions of (P)RR in GN are still unclear. We examined the expression of (P)RR in PBMCs from healthy subjects, and future studies should investigate (P)RR expression in GN patients. Although the role of soluble (P)RR in inflammation is unclear, there is no currently available antibody that fully discriminates the soluble and full-length forms of (P)RR. In addition, further investigations using larger human sample sizes and various disease conditions, and animal models of GN such as ANCA-treated or transgenic mice models, are required

to clarify the association of lymphocyte (P)RR expression and the immune system.

In conclusion, the present study demonstrated for the first time that functional (P)RR is expressed by human immune cells, especially monocytes and NK cells, and is expressed in infiltrating lymphocytes and macrophages during active GN such as ANCA-associated GN. These findings indicate that (P)RR contributes to inflammation as a RAS component during active GN, independently of the AT<sub>1</sub>R pathway.

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#### DISCLOSURES

No conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, are declared by the authors.

#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author contributions: K.N., T.H., E.S., and T.M. provided conception and design of research; K.N., T.H., E.S., K.K., M.I., and K.T. performed experiments; K.N., T.H., and E.S. analyzed data; K.N., T.H., E.S., and T.I. interpreted results of experiments; K.N., T.H., and E.S. prepared figures; K.N., T.H., and E.S. drafted manuscript; K.N., T.H., E.S., T.M., A.I., G.N., H.S., and S.I. edited and revised manuscript; K.N., T.H., and E.S. approved final version of manuscript.

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厚生労働科学研究費補助金 難治性疾患等政策研究事業（難治性疾患政策研究事業）

## 資 料

# 市民公開講座

## 「腎臓病・糖尿病に負けない生き方」 ～腎臓病・糖尿病とともに生きる～

腎臓病の症状は悪くなくてもあまり自覚症状がなく見過ごされるケースが多くあります。

腎臓病の早期発見と治療を呼びかける専門医による講演会を開催します。

日常の注意点から治療方法まで、役立つ情報が満載です。

とき **9/20日**  
12:00開場 13:00開演  
[15:20終了予定]

ところ **朝日ホール**  
名古屋市中区栄1-3-3 朝日会館15階  
\* 地下鉄東山線・鶴舞線「伏見」駅下車  
7番出口を西へ徒歩3分  
\* JR「名古屋」駅下車徒歩15分



坪井 直毅先生



和田 隆志先生



丸山 彰一先生



武藤 智先生



小関 裕二先生



田中 文彦先生

●開会挨拶 名古屋大学 総長 松尾 清一先生

- プログラム
- 講演 1 「気にしていますか、あなたの腎臓」 (15分)  
名古屋大学 腎臓内科 講師 坪井 直毅先生
  - 講演 2 「糖尿病からあなたの腎臓を守りましょう!」 (20分)  
金沢大学大学院 血液情報統御学 教授 和田 隆志先生
  - 講演 3 「腎炎・ネフローゼと言われたら」 (20分)  
名古屋大学 腎臓内科 准教授 丸山 彰一先生
  - ～ 休憩 (20分) ～
  - 講演 4 「多発性<sup>のうほうじん</sup>嚢胞腎ってどんな病気?」 (20分)  
帝京大学 准教授 武藤 智先生
  - 講演 5 「体験! あなたにもできる簡単エクササイズ」 (20分)  
増子記念病院 リハビリテーション科 課長 小関 裕二先生
  - 講演 6 「これだけは知っておきたい! 腎臓にやさしい食事」 (20分)  
名古屋大学 栄養管理部 田中 文彦先生

※プログラム及び講師につきましては変更する場合がありますので、あらかじめご了承ください。

### 応募方法

郵便番号、住所、氏名、年齢、電話番号、参加希望人数(5名様まで)を明記の上、往復はがき、FAX、e-mailのいずれかで下記のあて先までお送りください。  
※往復はがきで応募の方は、返信用はがきにもあなたの郵便番号、住所、氏名を記入。

### あて先

◎往復はがき 〒466-8550  
名古屋市中区鶴舞 65 番地  
名古屋大学医学部附属病院 腎臓内科  
「腎臓病・糖尿病セミナー」係

◎FAX 052-744-2209

◎e-mail  
jin-shogai@med.nagoya-u.ac.jp

※応募締め切り/9月11日(金)必着

応募多数の場合は抽選とします。

当選者の発表は招待状の発送をもってかえさせていただきます。

※お送りいただきました個人情報、名古屋大学でとりまとめ、案内状の発送および個人を特定しないデータとして利用させていただきます。

**300名様無料で招待!**  
この機会にぜひご参加ください!

### お問い合わせ先

名古屋大学医学部附属病院 腎臓内科  
TEL(052)741-2111(代表)  
◎9:00~17:00(土・日・祝を除く)

◎主催 厚生労働科学研究費補助金難治性疾患等政策研究事業(難治性疾患政策研究事業)「難治性腎疾患に関する調査研究」班/日本医療研究開発機構研究費(難治性疾患等実用化研究事業(腎疾患実用化研究事業))「糖尿病性腎症の進展予防にむけた病期分類-病理-バイオマーカーを統合した診断法の開発」班/日本慢性腎臓病対策協議会(J-CKDI)

◎後援 朝日新聞社広告局

[IgA腎症・急速進行性糸球体腎炎・ネフローゼ症候群・多発性嚢胞腎]症例数が少なく、原因が不明で、治療法が確立されていない疾患で、長期間生活に支障を及ぼすものについて、研究班を設置し、原因の究明・治療法の確立に取り組む、厚生労働省の事業。

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最近のブログ記事

- ▶ 小児慢性腎臓病患者における移行医療についての提言(8/27)
- ▶ エビデンスに基づく診療ガイドライン2014 英語版(8/25)
- ▶ ◆研究管理推進委員会(8/25)

【病気の解説】

○ IgA腎症

IgA nephropathy

○ 急速進行性糸球体腎炎

Rapidly progressive glomerulonephritis; RPGN

○ ネフローゼ症候群

Nephrotic syndrome

○ 多発性嚢胞腎

Polycystic kidney disease

症例数が少なく、原因が不明で、治療法が確立されていない疾患で、長期間生活に支障を及ぼすものについて、研究班を設置し、原因の究明・治療法の確立に取り組む、厚生労働省の事業。

→ 詳細を見る

小児慢性腎臓病患者における 移行医療についての提言

■小児慢性腎臓病患者における移行医療についての提言  
—思春期・若年成人に適切な医療を提供するために—  
→こちらをご覧ください(PDFファイル)

2015年8月27日

エビデンスに基づく診療ガイドライン2014 英語版

■IgA 腎症

Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines for IgA Nephropathy 2014

→こちらをご覧ください(PDFファイル)

■急速進行性糸球体腎炎

Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines for Rapidly Progressive Glomerulonephritis 2014

→こちらをご覧ください(PDFファイル)



難治性腎疾患に関する調査研究班 班長 丸山 彰一

国民の皆さんや腎臓病と闘っておられる患者さんに貢献できるように、活動しています。

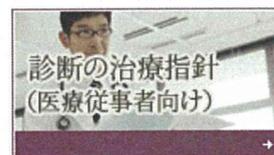
→ 研究班班長のご挨拶

月別 アーカイブ

- ▶ 2015年8月(3)
- ▶ 2014年12月(12)
- ▶ 2013年7月(1)
- ▶ 2013年2月(2)
- ▶ 2012年11月(1)
- ▶ 2012年9月(1)
- ▶ 2012年3月(6)
- ▶ 2012年2月(4)
- ▶ 2012年1月(1)



患者様向けQ&A



診断の治療指針(医療従事者向け)

