

Abstract

In a previous screening study, 16% of patients with psoriasis had IgA and/or IgG antibodies to gliadin (AGA). The aim of the present study was to evaluate the effect of a gluten-free diet (GFD) in 33 AGA-positive and six AGA-negative psoriasis patients. Of the 33 AGA-positive patients, two had IgA antibodies to endomysium (EmA) and 15 an increased number of lymphocytes in the duodenal epithelium, but in some this increase was slight. Two patients had villous atrophy. A 3-month period on a GFD was followed by 3 months on the patient's ordinary diet. The severity of psoriasis was evaluated with the psoriasis area and severity index (PASI). The examining dermatologists were unaware of the EmA and duodenal biopsy results throughout the study. Thirty of the 33 patients with AGA completed the GFD period, after which they showed a highly significant decrease in mean PASI. This included a significant decrease in the 16 AGA-positive patients with normal routine histology in duodenal biopsy specimens. The AGA-negative patients were not improved. After GFD, the AGA values were lower in 82% of those who improved. There was a highly significant decrease in serum eosinophil cationic protein in patients with elevated AGA. When the ordinary diet was resumed, the psoriasis deteriorated in 18 of the 30 patients with AGA who had completed the GFD period. In conclusion, psoriasis patients with raised AGA might improve on a GFD even if they have no EmA or if the increase in duodenal intraepithelial lymphocytes is slight or seemingly absent.