

Review Article

Research progress on the mechanism of $\gamma\delta$ T cells in pathogenic microbial infection

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Abstract: Depend on the difference of T cell receptor, the T cells are divided into two categories: the $\alpha\beta$ T and the $\gamma\delta$ T cells. $\gamma\delta$ T cells belong to small number of subgroup, and for the recognition of antigen, the antigen do not need the processing and presenting progress and do not have the MHC restriction, showing the different characteristics from $\alpha\beta$ T cells. The number of $\gamma\delta$ T cells is small, but they play an important role in the anti-infection of organism, anti-tumor and immune regulation. In this review, research progress of $\gamma\delta$ T cells about the biological characteristics, the antigen recognition characteristics and their mechanisms in pathogenic microbial infections are summarized.

Keywords: $\gamma\delta$ T cells, pathogenic microorganisms, research progress

Introduction

According to the differences among the types of T cell receptors (TCR), T cells can be divided into $\alpha\beta$ T cells and $\gamma\delta$ T cells. $\alpha\beta$ T cells play an important role in the adaptive immune response; $\gamma\delta$ T cells play a unique role in innate immunity due to their distribution characteristics and non-MHC (major histocompatibility complex) restriction of immune response. As the research progresses, its role in the adaptive immune response is gradually revealed. Recent studies have shown that, $\gamma\delta$ T cells not only directly recognize and kill target cells, but also participate in early anti-HIV natural immunity, and the various cell factors secreted by them can help induce an adaptive immune response, $\gamma\delta$ T cells play an important role in anti-tumor, anti-infection and immune regulation [1-3]. In this review, the research progress on the biological characteristics of $\gamma\delta$ T cells and the mechanism of action in viral infectious diseases are summarized as follows.

Overview of $\gamma\delta$ T cells

Production, development and distribution of $\gamma\delta$ T cells

Human $\gamma\delta$ T cells occur in the thymus medulla of normal fetus at 7-8 weeks, and their develop-

ment is similar to that of $\alpha\beta$ T cells, successively undergo the functional TCR expression and negative selection, then obtain autoimmune tolerance. The process of studying its development and function found that the formation of various functional characteristics of $\gamma\delta$ T cells began in the thymus and matured in the peripheral circulation. The formation and development of its function can be divided into three stages: 1) In the thymus, $\gamma\delta$ T cells are regulated by TCR signaling pathway to complete the differentiation of thymocyte progenitor to $\gamma\delta$ T cells. At this time, $\gamma\delta$ T cells preliminarily have a certain function. After induction, they can secrete some cytokines such as TNF- α and IFN- γ [4, 5]. 2) $\gamma\delta$ TCR+ thymocytes leave the thymus and become $\gamma\delta$ T cells in the peripheral circulation [6]. At this stage, $\gamma\delta$ T cells can express MHC II molecules and possess the antigen-presenting functions [7], thus having an ability to function rapidly in the innate immune response and beginning to serve as a bridge for acquired immune responses. 3) After $\gamma\delta$ T cells have undergone the first two stages, the immune function of the subtype cells has been basically improved, but different subtype of cells express different functional characteristics under the same incentive, and in the third stage $\gamma\delta$ T cells can be differentiated into a single oligoclo-

nal cell subtype via the induction of TCR ligand's related molecules [8]. Depending on the difference of their δ -chain, $\gamma\delta$ T cells can be divided into two sub-populations, V δ 1 and V δ 2. The V δ 1 sub-population is mainly distributed in mucosa and subcutaneous tissues, such as 10-18% in human-intestinal epithelial lymphocytes (IEL), and accounts for 25~37% of IEL in the human large intestine. The V δ 2 subgroup is mainly present in the peripheral blood, and the V γ 2V δ 2 subtype (also called V γ 9V δ 2) is the main form of circulating cell and accounted for 0.5 to 5% in the peripheral blood of adults. Mucosa and epithelial tissue are the first line of defense against pathogen invasion and often is the site of tumor development. The high proportion of $\gamma\delta$ T cells in mucosa and epithelial tissues suggests that $\gamma\delta$ T cells play an important role in anti-microbial, parasitic and tumor immunity [1-3].

Genetic characteristics of $\gamma\delta$ T cells

The TCR $\gamma\delta$ gene is composed of four groups of V, D, J, and C genes; the V region is a functional region of the TCR recognition antigen peptide-MHV (mouse hepatitis virus) complex. The γ chain and the δ chain have 10 and 7 V gene fragments, 2 and 0 D gene accounted for 0.5 to 5%, 2 and 2 J gene fragments respectively, and these gene fragments can be combined to form 500 types of TCR $\gamma\delta$ genes, thereby providing TCR $\gamma\delta$ a possibility of diversity. However, due to the use of specific V γ V δ and junction (J region) sequences in the $\gamma\delta$ T cell subset, the TCR $\gamma\delta$ structure lacks diversity [9]. Therefore, in adult peripheral blood, more than 90% of $\gamma\delta$ T cells belong to the V γ 9V δ 2 subtype [10]. As a result, the $\gamma\delta$ T gene diversity is less than that of $\alpha\beta$ T cells, and the gene rearrangement is limited compared with $\alpha\beta$ T cells, and the recognized antigens are different. The antigen reaction is often MHC-independent [11], and has the activity of natural killer cells (NK) and lymphokine activated killer cells (LAK). Because of its similar function to innate immune-related cells, $\gamma\delta$ T cells were originally thought to be an important part of the body's natural immunity.

Antigen recognition characteristics of $\gamma\delta$ T cells

Since $\gamma\delta$ T cells have partial functions of $\alpha\beta$ T cells and can also function as immunoglobulins, they are the main cell group involved in the innate immune response and are the key com-

ponents of non-specific immunity. Its antigen recognition characteristics are as follows: 1) Compared with $\alpha\beta$ T cells, the molecular structure and antigen binding properties of $\gamma\delta$ T cells are more similar to those of immunoglobulins, and can directly recognize antigens. 2) The antigen recognition of $\gamma\delta$ T cell is MHC-independent, and the polypeptide does not need to be processed into small peptide fragments, which can be recognized in the intact form to make a rapid immune response to the antigen. 3) $\gamma\delta$ T cells do not recognize the polypeptide-MHC molecular complex, but can respond to antigens presented by some MHC-I molecules, and have a special affinity for heat shock proteins. 4) Different tissues of $\gamma\delta$ T cells can express different TCRs and recognize antigens with different properties, while $\gamma\delta$ T cells in the same tissue express the same TCR and recognize antigens of the same nature [12].

Biological and immunological functions of $\gamma\delta$ T cells

$\gamma\delta$ T cells are mostly CD4- and CD8- cells, a few are CD4+ or CD8+ cells. CD4+ $\gamma\delta$ T cells secrete cytokines and participate in immune regulation. CD8+ $\gamma\delta$ T cells are mainly involved in immune response. Activated $\gamma\delta$ T cells have a variety of biological and immunological functions: 1) Non-specific immune response: no need for APC (antigen-presenting cells) presentation, can be directly activated by its TCR recognition of a variety of bacterial, viral and other antigenic components, and play a significant role in non-specific immune responses. 2) Antigen presentation: partially activated $\gamma\delta$ T cells can differentiate into APC, which surface can highly express MHC class II molecules and CD80, CD86 and CCR7 (chemokine receptors), processing antigens, cross-presenting to $\alpha\beta$ T cell to stimulate specific immune response [13]. 3) Stabilize the body's immune environment: $\gamma\delta$ T cells have the effect of inhibiting the excessive activation of $\alpha\beta$ T cells, which in turn regulates the relative balance of $\alpha\beta$ T cells and $\gamma\delta$ T cells [14]. 4) By immunizing, inhibiting or recruiting other immune cells to play an immune role. For example, dendritic cells, granulocytes, macrophages, Langerhans cells, $\alpha\beta$ T cells and B cells are closely related to the anti-infective function of $\gamma\delta$ T cells [15]. 5) Immune surveillance: memory $\gamma\delta$ T cell surface can prevent the spread of the virus, resist opportunistic infections, and play an immune surveillance role through high

expression of CCR7, CD161, etc. [16]. 6) Immunomodulatory function of $\gamma\delta$ T cells: activated $\gamma\delta$ T cells can inhibit the proliferation of Foxp3⁺ Tregs (regulatory T cells) [17], and can also produce IL-10 and TGF- β (transforming growth factor- β) to play an immunomodulatory role [18]. 7) By directly acting on B cells, most $\gamma\delta$ T cells are directly stimulated by antigen and produce IL-4, stimulating B cell proliferation and secreting immunoglobulin (Ig). Also, some subgroups' $\gamma\delta$ T cells can inhibit B cells to produce Ig. 8) Direct lysis of target cells: activated $\gamma\delta$ T cells can directly lyse target cells through the granzyme-perforin pathway, and can also induce target cell apoptosis via Fas-FasL (transmembrane protein/transmembrane protein cytokine) and IFN- γ [19, 20]. 9) Antibody-dependent cytotoxicity: $\gamma\delta$ T cells exert ADCC (antibody-dependent cell-mediated cytotoxicity) via certain membrane surface receptors such as Fc γ R (IgG Fc-segment receptor) and enhance its cytotoxicity by secreting IL-2 [21]. 10) Production of cytokines [22-24]: in intracellular bacterial infection, $\gamma\delta$ T cells produce interleukin 2 (IL-2) and interferon-gamma (IFN- γ), showing Th1 (helper lymphocyte type 1 cells) -like effects. In the case of extracellular parasite infection, $\gamma\delta$ T cells produce IL-4, IL-5 and IL-10, which stimulate B cells and exhibit Th2 (helper lymphocyte type 2 cell)-like effects. In addition, the IL-10 produced in the above process can also inhibit the proliferation of $\gamma\delta$ T cells and the secretion of the cytokine IFN- γ [25]. 11) Promote wound healing: $\gamma\delta$ T cells can respond quickly to skin damage. $\gamma\delta$ T cell aggregation can be detected at the wound site in 4 hours [26], and produce a small amount of vascular endothelial growth factor and fibroblast growth factor 2 [27]. Activated $\gamma\delta$ T cells promote epidermal cell proliferation and re-epithelialization of wounds by expressing KGFs and IGF-1 [28], as well as the ability to repair intestinal damage tissue [29]. 12) Identification and killing of tumor cells: $\gamma\delta$ T cells can recognize the stress-inducing molecules MICA, MICB, ULBP and RA-ET1 as well as apolipoprotein A1, Toll-like receptors such as ectopic expression on the surface of the tumor [30]. MICA/B and ULBPs are expressed in different types of tumor epithelial cells. $\gamma\delta$ T cells recognize tumor cells in a non-limiting manner similar to NK cells by MHC2D receptors, suggesting that $\gamma\delta$ T cells still have the ability to clear target cells in the absence of human leukocyte antigens or tumor antigens [31]. In addition, $\gamma\delta$ T cells are similar to $\alpha\beta$ T

cells, and bind to specific receptor molecules on endothelial cells by molecules such as CD44, CD11a (LFA21) and MEL-14 (mouse CD62L APC-labeled fluorescent monoclonal antibody), so that $\gamma\delta$ T cells adhere to endothelial cells, which mediate their recycling and homing.

$\gamma\delta$ T cells and viral infectious diseases

Coxsackie virus

Coxsackie virus is an enterovirus. It is a common type of virus that infects the human body through the respiratory tract and alimentary canal. It can cause infectious myocarditis after infection. The mouse experiment of myocarditis induced by the virus showed that the occurrence of myocarditis depends on the expression of $\gamma\delta$ TCR by T cells, and only the mice in which the myocardium accumulates $\gamma\delta$ T cells show the apoptosis of cardiomyocytes, which indicates that the occurrence of Coxsackie myocarditis is closely related to $\gamma\delta$ T cells [32, 33]. In the past, Coxsackie myocarditis was thought to be mediated by CD4⁺ IFN- γ ⁺ cells, but studies have found that [34], antibody blocking $\gamma\delta$ T cell response can inhibit the occurrence of Coxsackie myocarditis. At this time, in the spleen as well as the heart, CD4⁺ IFN- γ ⁺ cells decreased, while CD4⁺ and Foxp3 (regulatory T cell factor 3) (+) cells increased significantly. The $\gamma\delta$ T cell-deficient mice infected with Coxsackie virus and the CD4⁺ T cells of normal mice were adoptively transferred to normal mice, and one month later, the Coxsackie virus was used for challenge. The former caused more serious myocarditis. At the same time, CD4⁺ IFN- γ ⁺ cells were reduced. Thus, $\gamma\delta$ T cells may contribute to the development of myocarditis by promoting CD4⁺ IFN- γ ⁺ cell responses through inhibiting CD4⁺ Foxp3⁺ cells. It can be seen that $\gamma\delta$ T cells play a role in regulating the acquired immune response and may be an initiating factor in Coxsackie infection.

Rotavirus

Rotavirus is one of the main pathogens causing diarrhea in infants. It mainly infects intestinal epithelial cells, causing cell damage and diarrhea. Studies have found that CD2⁺ CD4⁻ and CD4-CD8- $\gamma\delta$ T cells can directly secrete IFN- γ or promote CD4⁺ $\alpha\beta$ T cell proliferation and secrete IFN- γ to regulate T cell expression; while CD2⁺ CD4⁺ $\gamma\delta$ T cells mainly secrete IL-10

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and TGF- directly, or promote CD4+ $\alpha\beta$ T cell proliferation and secrete IL-10, TGF- β and express Foxp3+ to regulate T cell expression [35]. It has also been reported that $\gamma\delta$ T cells resist and suppress rotavirus by increasing the expression of TLR2 (Toll-like type 2 receptor), TLR4 and TLR9, and secreting and releasing IFN- γ , TGF- β [36].

Influenza virus

Influenza virus is an RNA virus that causes influenza in humans, dogs, horses, pigs and poultry, etc. Proliferating and activating human V γ 9V δ 2T cells by IPP (isopentenyl pyrophosphate) in vitro can kill macrophages infected influenza through NKG2D, direct contact between cells, Fas-FasL and perforin-granzyme, thereby inhibiting viral replication. V γ 9V δ 2T cells can also be used as APC to present antigens of cells infected influenza or virus particles themselves to CD4+ or CD8+ T cells, inducing a specific immune response [37]. During the infection, V γ 9V δ 2 T cells can rapidly produce IFN- γ , mediating cytotoxic effects on cells infected with the virus. In the later stages of infection, $\gamma\delta$ T cells can recognize HSP (heat shock protein) expressed by viral infection, produce a regulatory immune response, and secrete regulatory cytokines to attenuate the intensity of the immune response [12]. In addition, $\gamma\delta$ T17 cells may be activated by $\gamma\delta$ TCR-independent action mode, and participate in the early inflammatory injury process of lung tissue in mice infected with severe H1N1 by releasing IL-17A [38].

Cytomegalovirus

Cytomegalovirus (HCMV), also known as cell inclusion virus, is a herpesvirus DNA virus. Both humans and animals can be infected, mainly causing genitourinary infections. There is an imbalance in the expression of $\gamma\delta$ T cells and Treg cells in HCMV-infected infants [39]. Studies have found that $\gamma\delta$ T cells recognize HSP65 and other antigens through the TCR/CD3 pathway, activate and express high levels of IFN- γ , TNF- α , TGF- β , natural killer cell receptors and cytotoxic regulators to clear infected cells [40, 41].

Herpes simplex virus

Herpes simplex virus can cause human corneal conjunctivitis, gingivitis, encephalitis, and

inflammation of the genitourinary system. Studies have found that $\gamma\delta$ T cells can recognize stress molecules (such as HSP) or phosphorylated antigens produced by infected cells, rapidly activate and highly express Th2 cytokines such as IFN- γ , TNF- α , IL-8, MIP-1 α and CCL5, and then act as a cytotoxic agent to clear the virus. When the skin is infected with the virus, $\gamma\delta$ T cells can induce apoptosis and block E-cadherin down-regulation, preventing the Langerhans cells that have been infected with the virus from moving, thereby inhibiting the further spread of infection [42].

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a lentivirus that infects cells of the human immune system and is a type of retrovirus. 1) The role of $\gamma\delta$ T cells in anti-HIV infection: During HIV infection, V γ 9V δ 2T cells exert antiviral function directly or indirectly through non-specific recognition of HIV; activated V γ 9V δ 2T cells can secrete Th1 cytokines (such as TNF- α , IFN- γ). IPP-stimulated V γ 9V δ 2T cells produce macrophage inflammatory protein 1 α (MIP-1 α), MIP-1 β and lymphotactin [43], and can also express multiple β -chemokines receptors (e.g., CCR1, CCR5 and CCR8) [44]. In addition, $\gamma\delta$ T cells are similar to NK cells, and under the "missing self" mechanism, they can secrete perforin, granzyme or play a cytotoxic effect through the Fas/FasL apoptotic pathway, directly killing cells infected with HIV [45]. Second, activated V γ 9V δ 2T cells compete with HIV for CCR5 costimulatory molecules or release antiviral factors, thereby inhibiting HIV replication [46]. 2) The effect of HIV infection on $\gamma\delta$ T cells: compared with normal people, the ratio of V δ 2T cells/V δ 1T cells in peripheral blood was significantly reversed in HIV-infected patients, which was caused by the loss of V δ 2T cells and the increase of V δ 1T cells in peripheral blood. Loss of V γ 9V δ 2T cells is associated with viral load. By sexually transmitted with HIV, the V γ 9V δ 2T cell loss in circulation increases with increasing HIV load, which may be due to the induction of Fas/FasL on the cell surface after HIV invasion, and causes apoptosis in V γ 9V δ 2T cells [47]. Thus, HIV infection leads to a decrease in the number of $\gamma\delta$ T cells and inhibits the function of $\gamma\delta$ T cells [48, 49], resulting in immune escape. In this regard, the cytotoxicity and ADCC effect of the activation of $\gamma\delta$ T cells may be eliminated by means of adop-

tive treatment, which deserves further study. In addition, in the study of chimpanzees infected with HIV [50], it was found that the ratio of $\gamma\delta$ 2T cells/ $\gamma\delta$ 1T cells in peripheral blood did not reverse, and chimpanzees could control the progression of the virus so that no disease occurred. The chimpanzee's $\gamma\delta$ T cells subset is similar to human $\gamma\delta$ T cells, and studying chimpanzee's immune system compared to humans will help improve the human immune system and thus controlling the occurrence of HIV disease. $\gamma\delta$ T cells also have the ability to clear the HIV-1 reservoir, and autologous or allogeneic adoptive immunotherapy based on $\gamma\delta$ T cells is expected to be a new strategy to clear the reservoir and cure HIV-1 infection [51].

West Nile virus

West Nile virus is an infectious disease caused by West Nile virus (WNV), a mosquito-borne single-stranded RNA virus. In recent years, West Nile virus disease has appeared in temperate regions of Europe and North America, posing a threat to the health of humans and animals. The serious harm of this disease is that humans and horses are suffering from deadly encephalitis and death of birds and chickens. The researchers used a mouse model to demonstrate that mice deficient in $\gamma\delta$ T cells were more susceptible to WNV than wild-type mice. After TCR δ ^{-/-} mice were infected with WNV, the number of viruses that transmit to the central nervous system will increase significantly. When $\gamma\delta$ T cells were transplanted into TCR δ ^{-/-} mice, the susceptibility of mice to WNV was significantly reduced. $\gamma\delta$ T cells produce these effects by producing IFN- γ and directly or indirectly regulating cytotoxicity [52].

Vaccinia virus

Some scholars used Cowpox virus to infect normal C57BL/6 mice and β TCR knockout mice, demonstrating that $\gamma\delta$ T cells produce a rapid antiviral innate immune response [53]. Compared with normal mice, $\gamma\delta$ T cell-deficient mice have significantly higher virus titers and a significant increase in mortality. After the virus infects the body, the number of $\gamma\delta$ T cells that can produce IFN- γ in the peritoneal cavity and spleen of normal mice is rapidly increased, and the changes in amount is caused by vaccinia virus infection.

$\gamma\delta$ T cells and bacterial infectious diseases

Escherichia coli

It was found that when $\gamma\delta$ T cells were deleted, the resistance of mice to *Escherichia coli* was significantly decreased [54]. $\gamma\delta$ T cells activated after *Escherichia coli* infection further activate macrophages by producing IFN- γ and release IL-15 to induce $\gamma\delta$ T cells to gather at the site of infection and participate in local anti-inflammatory. Neutrophils were also recruited through self-released IL-17 to play an anti-infective function. When blocked with anti-IL-15 monoclonal antibody, the number of $\gamma\delta$ T cells decreased significantly, and mice were more susceptible to *Escherichia coli*. It can be seen that $\gamma\delta$ T cells mediate the accumulation of $\gamma\delta$ T cells by activating macrophages to release IL-15, thus participating in its protective effect. In addition, some scholars have used confocal microscopy, transmission electron microscopy and functional antigen presentation analysis to find that $\gamma\delta$ T cells in human peripheral blood can recognize and capture *Escherichia coli* mediated by antibody modulins and CD16 molecules. Then the expressed MHC-II accumulator played the role of antigen presentation [55, 56]. Therefore, $\gamma\delta$ T cells can be used as an effector cell, activated by antigen, through the secretion of cytokines.

Mycobacterium tuberculosis

Mycobacterium tuberculosis is an intracellular parasite. After mice are infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, $\gamma\delta$ T cells accumulate in the lungs. These cells secrete IFN- γ and have cytotoxicity, which can kill macrophages phagocytosis of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* [57]. Alveolar macrophages of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection can secrete chemokines to aggregate $\gamma\delta$ T cells and play their anti-inflammatory effects [58].

Salmonella typhimurium

In 2011, Pieper found that $\gamma\delta$ T cells expressing CD8 α in the blood and spleen of chicks infected with *Salmonella typhimurium* proliferated rapidly and increased the transcription of Fas, IL-2R α (human interleukin 2 receptor α) and IFN- γ [59]. In 2012, Li studied the intestinal infection model of *Salmonella typhimurium*,

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and found that the $\gamma\delta$ T cell subtypes of intestinal epithelial lymphoid tissue could play the role of immune monitoring and clearance of infected epithelial cells by expressing NKG2D (activated receptor of NK cells), CD8 α , FasL and IFN- γ [60]. It is also related to the secretion of keratinocyte growth factor by epithelial cells, which can promote the regeneration of epithelial cells and limit the further invasion of pathogenic bacteria.

Helicobacter pylori

Gastric mucosa was the main site of *Helicobacter pylori* invasion and colonization. In peripheral blood of patients with *Helicobacter pylori* infection, the number of $\alpha\beta$ T cells was not significantly different from that of uninfected patients, but the number of $\gamma\delta$ T cells was significantly increased [61]. IL-7 and IL-1 β were also significantly increased [62]. The number of $\gamma\delta$ T cells was also closely related to the severity of gastritis, and the number of $\gamma\delta$ T cells decreased significantly after clearance of *Helicobacter pylori* [63]. Whether this phenomenon is related to anti-inflammatory factors secreted by $\gamma\delta$ T cells or Toll-like receptors (Toll-like receptors, TLR) on the surface needs to be further studied.

Brucella

Brucella is a kind of intracellular parasitic glomerular bacilli, which can infect human beings and animals, and has a high degree of infectivity. When infected, $\gamma\delta$ T cells can directly dissolve macrophages phagocytic with *Brucella*, and reduce the number of bacteria through Fas-Fas ligands, thus limiting the spread of infection [64].

Leptospira

Leptospira can be divided into pathogenic and non-pathogenic categories, and pathogenic *Leptospira* can cause human and animal leptospirosis. Some researchers have found that scavenger receptors interfering with the surface of $\gamma\delta$ T cells can significantly reduce the ability of *Leptospira* to stimulate the proliferation of $\gamma\delta$ T cells and secrete IFN- γ by RNA interference technique. Whether this is related to Toll receptor needs to be further explored [65].

Chlamydia trachomatis

In 2015, Wang Yue established a model of *Chlamydia trachomatis* pneumonia using *Chla-*

mydia mu-ridarum (Cm), and used flow cytometry to detect the percentage of CD3+ TCR $\gamma\delta$ + T cells in mice. Intracellular cytokine staining technique detects the production of IFN- γ and IL-17 in $\gamma\delta$ T cells [66]. It was found that a certain dose of Cm respiratory infection could induce the accumulation and activation of $\gamma\delta$ T cells in mice. During the whole infection process, $\alpha\beta$ T cells and $\gamma\delta$ T cells secreted IFN- γ and IL-17, but $\gamma\delta$ T cells activated and secreted IFN- γ and IL-17 are earlier than $\alpha\beta$ T cells, which are the main cell types secreting IFN- γ and IL-17 early in the host anti-*Chlamydia* immune response. Whether there is also an interaction between $\alpha\beta$ T cells and $\gamma\delta$ T cells, and whether $\gamma\delta$ T cells have an effect on the adaptive immune response induced by *Chlamydia trachomatis* infection remains to be further studied.

Conclusion and outlook

$\gamma\delta$ T cells differ in their expression of TCR, and their subpopulations have different distributions and functions. $\gamma\delta$ 2T cells present in peripheral blood can produce a large amount of IFN- γ and TNF- α , which have cytotoxic effects, while $\gamma\delta$ 1T cells present in tissues have less cytotoxic effects, mainly producing cytokines such as IL-4, IL-17 and etc. When stimulated by antigens such as pathogenic microorganisms, two cell populations of $\gamma\delta$ T cells can express chemotactic receptors associated with their respective functions and metastasize to the site of inflammation of extracellular tissues to exert an anti-infective effect. As a type of T cells which have unique composition and function, $\gamma\delta$ T cells have received more and more attention from researchers in recent years. The academic community has reached a consensus on the antigen recognition mode and MHC-free restriction of $\gamma\delta$ T cells, but the infection immune mechanism mediated by them is still not fully understood. Therefore, it is worthy of further in-depth study to determine the function and mechanism of $\gamma\delta$ T cells in viral infectious diseases and whether they can be used as a means of adoptive treatment for immunodeficiency diseases. On the basis of clear mechanisms, $\gamma\delta$ T cells will have wider application prospects in immunologically related diseases.

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

None.

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