The “Long and Winding Road” to Our Goal of Primary Prevention of Allergic Diseases

In *Allergology International* (AI) Vol. 63 No. 1, we offer a set of review articles entitled “The Long and Winding Road” that focuses on our goal of primary prevention of allergic diseases, as well as original articles and letters to the editor. We believe that this issue will be of great help for both clinical and basic investigators working in this field.

Establishment of a primary prevention strategy for allergic diseases is the ultimate goal of all research projects in this field. Although quite commendable basic research has been carried out by many groups, their work has still not culminated in any clinically useful agents that directly modulate innate or acquired immunity for allergy prevention. The currently available strategy for primary prevention of asthma is mainly avoidance of exposure to irritants and aeroallergens. We have chosen “The Long and Winding Road,” a famous ballad written and composed by the Beatles, as the title for this review series because finding a successful means of preventing allergic diseases is proving to be a lengthy scientific journey.

Immune responses at the host-environment interface are largely mediated by the commensal microbes on the mucous membranes or the skin surface. In this issue, Prof. Renz and his colleagues summarize our current understanding of the roles of microbes in both the outer and inner (i.e., intestinal microbiota) environments in the development of host immunity and allergic diseases. They discuss the potential use of microbes or microbial components as primary prevention strategies, and their review provides much food for thought.

Prof. Prescott, a well-known leader in the field of pediatric allergy and immunology, has contributed an excellent article focusing on the pandemic of non-communicable diseases, proposing approaches to solving this world-wide problem. We believe that her article is worthy of special attention from all our readers.

Among the twelve original articles and six letters to the editor in this issue, Takahashi et al. summarize 36 patients in Japan with oral mite anaphylaxis by surveying the databases and adding their own experiences. Surprisingly, 94% of these cases were caused by ingestion of okonomiyaki mix, a Japanese-style pancake mix. It is assumed that mites contaminated the mix while packages were kept open and stored for months at ambient temperature. This article suggests the importance of okonomiyaki or takoyaki as a cause of oral mite anaphylaxis in Japan. Hiragun et al. report establishment of an ELISA system for MGL 1304. The authors’ group recently found that MGL 1304 is a major allergen in sweat and that it induces histamine release in basophils derived from atopic dermatitis patients. They show in the present report, by using ELISA kits, that the levels of MGL 1304-specific IgE are significantly high in atopic dermatitis patients. The ELISA system for MGL 1304 may be a powerful tool in medical care for atopic dermatitis.

We offer our appreciation to all the authors for their contributions to the present issue of *Allergology International*.

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