

Antibodies attack immune proteins

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Two studies published online on February 1 in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine* reveal that patients with a rare autoimmune disease produce antibodies that attack microbe-fighting immune proteins called cytokines. These findings may help explain why these patients suffer recurrent yeast infections.

Autoimmune polyendocrine syndrome, or APS-I, afflicts one in 100,000 people and is characterized by disrupted thyroid and adrenal gland function and recurrent skin infections with one type of yeast. Normally, the [immune system](#) produces cytokines that help protect the body against airborne yeast and other environmental [pathogens](#).

Two teams of researchers—one led by Anthony Meager at the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (UK), and the other led by Desa Lilic at Newcastle University (UK) and Jean-Laurent Casanova at Rockefeller University (New York)—found that patients with APS-I produce autoantibodies that bind to and disarm these yeast-fighting cytokines.

It is not yet clear why these patients are prone to infection with only one type of yeast. But these studies suggest that cytokine replacement therapy might be considered in the treatment of APS-I patients.

More information:

- Kisand, K., et al. 2010. J. Exp. Med. [doi:10.1084/jem.20091983](https://doi.org/10.1084/jem.20091983)
- Puel, A., et al. 2010. J. Exp. Med. [doi:10.1084/jem.20091983](https://doi.org/10.1084/jem.20091983)

Provided by Rockefeller University

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