

VZV GLYCOPROTEINS gpI AND gpII ARE PRESENT IN DERMAL CELLS WITHOUT THEIR CORRESPONDING GENOME.

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During varicella-zoster virus {VZV} infection, the envelope glycoprotein gpI has been shown to be present in epidermal and dermal cell populations.

In order to establish whether the dermal gpI presence was due to "in situ" synthesis or to phagocytosis, we compared in 16 acute VZV infections the distribution of 2 VZV glycoproteins, namely gpI and gpII {monoclonal antibodies VL8 and VL2} to their corresponding genome sequences (digoxigenin labeled DNA probes and in situ hybridization).

In formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded biopsies, single and double immuno-labelings with VL8, VL2 and Factor XIIIa antibodies revealed a positive staining of keratinocytes and dermal dendrocytes. In situ hybridization with the corresponding DNA probes was positive in the epidermis and follicular epithelium. However, we never disclosed the presence of gpI and gpII related nucleic acids in dermal cells.

These results indicate that the presence of VZV gpI and gpII in dermal dendrocytes is due to phagocytosis rather than to in situ synthesis.