**High sensitivity and maximal specificity for primary membranous nephropathy (MN)**

Ideally suited for differentiation of primary and secondary MN

Antibody titer allows assessment of therapy success, disease course and risk of relapse

### Clinical significance

Primary MN is a chronic inflammatory disease of the glomeruli which is accompanied by a progressive impairment of the kidney function. The underlying autoimmune mechanism, which was first discovered and described in 2009, is the result of autoantibodies reacting with phospholipase A2 receptors (PLA2R), which are expressed in human glomeruli on the surface of podocytes. As a result, the podocytes are damaged and protein enters the primary urine (proteinuria). Primary MN is the most frequent kidney disorder with nephrotic syndrome. With increasing proteinuria, the long-term risk of kidney failure with major morbidity and mortality rises, particularly in connection with thromboembolic and cardiovascular complications. Primary MN is prevalent in all ethnic groups and genders, with men over 40 years of age and of white skin colour being more frequently affected. In young women with suspected primary MN, lupus nephritis should be considered. Primary MN is rare in children (only 2% to 3% of kidney disorders in children).

Primary MN should be discriminated from secondary membranous nephropathy, which is a secondary disease that can occur in infections, in drug therapy or abuse or intake of toxins, in collagenoses and other autoimmune diseases and in tumours, and which improves with treatment of the underlying disease. The treatment of primary MN improves prognosis, particularly with respect to nephrotic syndrome and hypertonicity.

### Diagnostic application

Autoantibodies of class IgG against phospholipase A2 receptors (PLA2R) are highly specific for the diagnosis of primary MGN. They can be detected in the serum of up to 70% to 75% patients. The ELISA allows qualitative and quantitative determination of human autoantibodies of class IgG against PLA2R. The anti-PLA2R antibody titer is suited for assessing the therapy success. A titer increase, decrease or disappearance precedes a change in the clinical status. Thus, the determination of the antibody titer has a high predictive value with respect to clinical remission or relapse and risk estimation after kidney transplantation.
Reference range

The levels of anti-PLA,R antibodies were investigated in 191 sera from healthy blood donors using the EUROIMMUN Anti-PLA,R ELISA (IgG). The mean concentration of antibodies against PLA,R was 0.4 RU/ml and the values ranged from 0.0 to 5.0 RU/ml. With a cut-off of 20 RU/ml no blood donor was anti-PLA,R positive.

Reproducibility

The reproducibility was investigated by determining the intra- and inter-assay coefficients of variation using three sera. The intra-assay CVs are based on 20 determinations and the inter-assay CVs on three determinations performed in ten different test runs.

Sensitivity and specificity

The anti-PLA,R antibody concentrations were determined in 198 sera from patients with primary membranous nephropathy (MN), 545 sera from a control panel with other diseases (e.g., lupus type V, ANCA-associated vasculitis, systemic lupus erythematosus, systemic sclerosis, Sjögren’s syndrome) and in 291 sera from healthy blood donors using the EUROIMMUN Anti-PLA,R ELISA (IgG). The ELISA achieved a sensitivity of 96% and a specificity of 99.9%. Borderline samples were excluded from the calculation.

Literature