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CYTOKINES PROFILE IN THE IMMUNE RESPONSE IN PATIENTS WITH HEPATITIS C VIRUS INFECTION.

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Hepatitis C virus is rarely cleared in the acute phase of the infection and most patients become chronically infected; a proportion of these patients develop progressive liver disease and fibrosis. There is evidence that a vigorous type 1 immune response to viral proteins is required for viral elimination. **Objective:** To investigate the levels of cytokines secretion in the serum from patients with hepatitis C virus infection. **Material and Methods:** The individuals examined in this study were from pre-blood donors of the Foundation of Hematology and Hemotherapy of Bahia (HEMOBA). Were evaluated 45 positive pre-blood donor separated into two groups: anti-HCV⁺/RNA⁺ (n=32) and anti-HCV⁺/RNA⁻ (n=13). As controls were selected anti-HCV⁻/RNA⁻ (n=37). The two groups and control were tested by using the third generation ELISA for anti-HCV antibody determination, RT-PCR amplicon for HCV detection and genotyping study by Immunolipa assay. Also, the cytokine level of Th1 orTh2-type and pro-inflammatory were measured by the Cytometric Bead Array (CBA) test. **Results** The anti-HCV⁺/RNA⁻ group secreted the higher level of IFN-gamma compared to the control. In contrast, higher level of TNF-alfa was secreted by anti-HCV⁺/RNA⁺ group compared to control. No significant differences between groups were observed. IL-1B, IL-2, IL-4, IL-5, IL-6, IL-8, IL-10, and IL-12 were analyzed and no significant differences were observed. **Conclusions** These findings indicate a predominant Th1 response in the patients anti-HCV⁺/RNA⁻ and a predominant pro-inflammatory response was seen in patients anti-HCV⁺/RNA⁺ group.