

Abstract

Chancroid, the most common cause of genital ulceration in Africa, is known to be associated epidemiologically with heterosexual transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The pathophysiological mechanisms by which chancroid might facilitate the spread of HIV are obscure. To investigate the role of chancroid in HIV transmission, the authors studied the histological features of biopsies from 11 men with penile chancroid lesions including five who were serologically positive for HIV. The histomorphologic and immunophenotypic nature of the inflammatory infiltrates suggests that there is a significant role for cell-mediated immunity in the host response to *Haemophilus ducreyi* infection. This response may be critical to the role of chancroid in HIV transmission.