

HTLV-I was first isolated in 1980 from a patient originally thought to have a cutaneous lymphoma. It became clear that it was a distinct form of lymphoma, which was designated as acute T-cell leukemia/ lymphoma (ATL). Some years later, different groups in Martinique and Japan described an association between a chronic disease of the spinal cord and HTLV-I infection, which was later named HTLV-I associated myelopathy/tropical spastic paraparesis (HAM/TSP). Since then, several other conditions have been linked to HTLV infection.