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Quantitative PCR was performed on the ABI 5700 (Applied Biosystems) using the qPCR Core kit and uracyl *N*-glycosylase (both obtained from Eurogentec). Two housekeeping genes, cyclophilin A (also called peptidyl-prolyl isomerase A [PPIA]) and GAPDH, were selected with the human endogenous control plate kit (Applied Biosystems) using unstimulated and stimulated astrocytes and PBMCs. The total amount of RNA transcribed and used per PCR reaction was 30–50 nanograms. The following primers and FAM/TAMRA labeled probes were selected to be intron spanning and tested not to amplify genomic DNA up to 100 ng per reaction: BAFF, forward, (exon 5) 5'-CAAAATATGCCTGAAACACTACCCA-3', reverse (exon 6) 5'-ATCTCCATCCAGTGATATTTGTGC-3', probe (exon 5/6) 5'-TCCTGCTATTCAGCTGGCATTG-CAAAACT-3'; BAFF-R, forward (exon 2) 5'-CTGGTCCTGGTGGGTCTGGT-3', reverse (exon 3) 5'-CCCGGAGACA-GAATGATGACC-3', probe (exon 2/3) 5'-AGACAAGGACGCCCCAGAGCCC-3'; BCMA, forward (exon 2) 5'-TCTTTGGCAGTTTTTCGTGCTAATG-3', reverse (exon 3) 5'-CCAGTCCTGCTCTTTTCCAGGT-3', probe (exon 2/3) 5'-AAAACACAGGATCAGGTCTCCTGGGCAT-3'; and TACI, forward (exon 3) 5'-GAAGGTACCAAG-GATTGGAGCAC-3', reverse (exon 4) 5'-CTGTAGACCAGGGCCACCTGA-3', probe (exon 3/4) 5'-AGGCTCA-GAAGCAAGTCCAGCTCTCCC-3'. Primers spanning exon 3 of BAFF were designed to differentiate between full length (467-bp amplicon) and the splice variant  $\Delta$ BAFF (410-bp amplicon) (5'-AAATAAGCGTGCCGTTTCAGG-3', 5'-ACAGCAGTTTCAATGCACCAA-3').