Novel steps forward in the histopathology of non-celiac gluten sensitivity, authors' reply

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Dear Editor,

We have read with great interest the letter of Losurdo et al. commenting on our study published in Virchows Archiv [1]. We thank the authors for agreeing on many of the histopathological and clinical points that result from our experience, partially confirmed in their publication [2], and for their letter of comment when they write “support an additional hypothesis about NCGS pathogenesis: an allergic intolerance to foods other than wheat.”

The interesting point of this publication is that it highlights the number of mast cells (CD117+) as a marker of NCGS. In our opinion, the elevated number of mast cells is due to the increased number of eosinophils, which is a common feature of NCGS patients describe in our study [1]. In addition, Rothenberg et al. [3] demonstrated the pleiotropic role of eosinophils in activating mast cells, as well as their function in initiation, propagation and modulation of innate and adaptive immune responses. Our opinion is that NCGS is basically an allergic condition in which the peculiar T lymphocyte disposition and the increased number of eosinophils are the most important hallmark to consider in

the differential diagnosis with celiac disease since, to our knowledge, mast cells and other cellular components are co-authors of this pathological entity.

Ethical responsibilities of authors section All the authors are qualified for the following criteria:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the study; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the study
- Drafting the study or revising it critically for important intellectual content
- Final approval of the version to be published
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the study in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the study are appropriately investigated and resolved

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare that the study has been done according to ethical standards.

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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