Special Issue

Natural Killer Cells, the Terminator of Aggressive Tumors: Development, Function Source and Effective Therapeutics

Message from the Guest Editors

Recently have we started to appreciate the significance of NK cells in tumor therapy. Identification of cancer stem cells or poorly differentiated tumors as prime targets of NK cells has finally shown the indispensable role in cancer therapy. Also, successful cancer therapy will require restoration of both NK and T cell functions in cancer patients, since each is likely designed to target different subsets of tumor cells with opposing degrees of cellular differentiation with differing expression of MHC class I. NK cells mediate successful control of the tumor cells by direct cytolytic effect and/or through antibody-mediated ADCC or indirectly through differentiation of tumor cells by IFN-g, which increases the efficacy of chemotherapeutic and radiotherapeutic targeting strategies.

Moreover, strategies should be designed to allow maintenance of good NK expansion and function in cancer patients, since not only are they capable of expanding cancer suppressing CD8+ T cells, but they are also key in limiting the expansion of immune suppressive cells. Mature allogeneic activated NK cells can be combined with other immunotherapeutic ways for the final goal of tumor eradication.

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