Special Issue

Immune- and Neurobiology of Prothymosin Alpha

Message from the Guest Editors

Prothymosin alpha (ProT□), an immunoreactive polypeptide, was isolated from rat thymus in 1984. Initially, ProT□ was thought to be a precursor of thymosin □1, but subsequent studies that suggested ProT□ may have intrinsic biological actions different from those of thymosin □1. Since then, two important findings have been reported. Jiang et al. (2003) reported that ProT□ disrupts apoptosome functions by binding to ApaF1. Interestingly, a later study (2007) revealed that ProT□ converts starvation-induced neuronal necrotic cell death to an apoptotic one. A series of studies by the latter group have further revealed that ProT□is is released from neurons due to several intense stresses in a non-classical and non-vesicular way. These reports suggest that ProT□ may have distinct cell type-specific actions in cell death mechanisms. Further studies have recently suggested that ProT□ exhibits neurogenerative actions, possibly through a putative cell surface receptor as a DAMPs/alarmins member. Here, we intend to invite ProT□-related studies and to sort out and understand the immunobiology and neurobiology of ProT□.

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