Special Issue

PD-L1, A Master Regulator of Immunity

Message from the Guest Editors

Receptor programmed cell death-1 (PD-1) is a co-inhibitory receptor that is mainly expressed on activated T cells. Through binding with its ligand, programmed death ligand-1 (PD-L1), PD-1 regulates the activity of T cells. As such, adaptive immune responses mediated by T cells against invading pathogens are strictly regulated, thereby avoiding collateral damage to the host. This regulatory circuit is however abused in several diseases such as chronic infection and cancer to dampen immune responses prematurely. Blocking the PD-1:PD-L1 immune checkpoint axis has therefore garnered substantial interest. In cancer, PD-1:PD-L1 blockade has resulted in unprecedented successes in individual patients across a variety of cancer types. However, a large cohort of patients fails to respond to PD-1:PD-L1 blockade. Insights into different mechanisms underlying this therapy failure are gradually gained. These highlight the complexity of the immune system and cancer as a disease. They further shed light on how combination with other therapies could enhance the response rates to PD-1:PD-L1 blockade.

Guest Editors

Prof. Karine Breckpot

Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Therapy, Department of Biomedical Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium

Dr. David Escors

Navarrabiomed Fundación Miguel Servet, Complejo Hospitalario de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain

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Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
ijms@mdpi.com

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Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Dr. Maurizio Battino
Department of Odontostomatologic and Specialized Clinical Sciences, Sez-Biochimica, Faculty of Medicine, Università Politecnica delle Marche, Via Ranieri 65, 60100 Ancona, Italy

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