

Special Issue

Reproductive Immunology: Immunoregulatory Mechanisms during Healthy and Pathological Pregnancies

Message from the Guest Editors

Pregnancy is a natural model for optimal immune tolerance mechanisms. Although the embryo (and the placenta) is partially of paternal origin, and there is ample evidence that these foreign antigens are recognized, the immune system of the mother tolerates the semi-allogenic fetus. However, while creating a favorable environment for the fetus, the maternal immune system must be prepared to control possible emerging infections. Immunoregulation typically manifests itself in the activation of negative pathways leading to the exhaustion of specific immune responses and cellular interactions. Downregulation inflammatory responses are mediated by a complex network of cellular and molecular interactions with the predominant role of regulatory T cells as cellular components of the immune system and an increased number of soluble and membrane-bound molecules with immunoregulatory capacity, like cytokines and immune checkpoint molecules. Disturbances in the tight control that maintains immune tolerance during pregnancy can trigger the development of pregnancy complications ranging from pre-eclampsia to fetal growth restriction or miscarriage.

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