Tumor immunology and immunotherapy.

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Introduction

Although the first hints of the immune system's role in cancer control date back more than a century, tumor immunology is still considered a young field that complements and completes oncology. Indeed, the last two decades have seen a rebirth in tumor immunology, with the demonstration of two essential concepts that highlight the importance of pre-existing adaptive immunity within tumors: immunosurveillance and immune editing as well as the significance of immunological contexture [1,2]. The positive findings acquired with the use of emerging cancer immunotherapies, such as Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors (ICIs), demonstrated the immune system's ability to combat and possibly destroy the illness. The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2018, which was granted for the finding that blocking the negative immunological regulation of T cells might be used as a strong anti-cancer technique, cemented the field's recognition.

Numerous researches followed these pioneering findings, demonstrating how diverse immune system components influence or contribute to disease progression, exposing their role in the tumor's natural history as well as their prognostic value. Indeed, it is now recognized that innate and adaptive immune cells play a direct and indirect role in cancer evolution, even at the pre-cancerous stage.

Tumor immunology has a long history that dates back to the eighteenth century. In 1863, Rudolf Virchow discovered a relationship between inflammation and cancer. Virchow proposed that cancer is produced by severe tissue irritation; nevertheless, his theory-dubbed "chronic irritation theory"-was not supported by strong evidence until the 1990s, at least in certain cancer forms [3].

The innate and adaptive immune systems protect the host from external diseases and are generally tolerant of host tissues, distinguishing between "self" and "non-self" antigens properly [4]. The immune system is likely exposed to multiple, previously unknown antigens as a result of genetic aberrations in the setting of a developing tumour. Surprisingly, certain cancers are thought to be detectable and eliminated by the immune system early in their growth. However, the notion of immunoediting, which includes the process of immunosurveillance, argues that certain cancers can break free from an immune-mediated equilibrium and become clinically significant. Oncologists and cancer researchers are concentrating their efforts on deciphering these processes and developing novel (often combinatorial) cancer immunotherapy treatments. Therapeutic cancer vaccines, adoptive T cell treatment, anti-tumor antibodies, and immune checkpoint inhibition are just a few of the techniques that have been developed to elicit an anti-tumor immune response. Combining these techniques with additional therapies like immunomodulators (cytokines, cyclic dinucleotides, IDO inhibitors), cytotoxic chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or molecularly targeted therapies could unlock immunotherapy's actual potential in the future care of cancer patients [5]. Over the last decade, our understanding of the immune system's function has grown tremendously. This has led to the realisation that the immune system is capable of not only distinguishing non-self from self, but also of recognising "altered-self" in the context of cancer development. Though these connections may have a role in preventing the genesis or progression of certain malignancies, there are certainly circumstances in which endogenous anti-tumor immune responses are suppressed by a variety of mechanisms.

As a result, continuing research into the innate and adaptive immune systems is critical for developing cancer immunotherapy therapeutics. Dendritic cells, cancer vaccines, anti-tumor antibodies, adoptive T cell therapy, immune checkpoint blockade, and combinations of these methods with other modalities such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy have all seen significant advances. Furthermore, there are still many problems and roadblocks to overcome in fully achieving immunotherapy's potential, and there are substantial implications for clinical trial design in the era of personalised medicine.

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