



EBV and Autoimmune Disease

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Message from the Guest Editor

Epstein–Barr Virus (EBV), the first human tumor virus. EBV reactivation from latency induces host cells to differentiate into plasma cells as the virus starts expressing proteins of the lytic cycle to produce infectious progeny. Whilst much of what is known about EBV comes from its association with cancer, emerging evidence suggests that the virus may also play a critical role in pathogenesis of several autoimmune diseases, thus adding another complexity to the mosaic of autoimmunity. The large diffusion of this virus (95% people worldwide are infected) and the fact that EBV lodges in B lymphocytes, fundamental for adaptive humoral immunity, suggest a delicate balance between the virus and immune responses. Decades of research into how EBV escapes immune eradication has provided important information regarding the virus–host interaction, but the new challenge today is to clarify how EBV controls and triggers immune response and, as a consequence, sometimes leads to aberrant autoimmune reactions.





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