Cancer Immunology Essentials: A Preface

Glenn Dranoff, MD
Department of Medical Oncology and Cancer Vaccine Center, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts

As cancer immunology enters the mainstream of cancer research and cancer medicine, there arises within the general community a pressing need for an easily accessible and expert resource devoted to the discipline. Indeed, cancer immunology encompasses a diverse range of activities that extend from basic genetic and structural studies to clinical investigations in cancer patients. An understanding of the logic of the immune response, an important first step toward embarking on innovative cross-disciplinary work, derives in part from familiarity with the whole system. The acquisition of this broad knowledge in turn requires some fluency with the language of immunology, comfort with immunologic techniques and models, and an appreciation for the intricacies of the molecular and cellular components of immunity.

As part of our didactic mission to serve the cancer community, Cancer Immunology Research is proud to launch with this issue "Cancer Immunology Essentials" (CIE) as an online resource. CIE is available on the journal website and at http://canimmesentials.aacrjournals.org and draws upon the Masters of Immunology primers and the Cancer Immunology at the Crossroads perspectives for content. Each contribution reflects the thinking of a leading scholar(s) in the field and is crafted at a level appropriate to a scientifically sophisticated reader with only limited background in immunology. Attractive graphics that illustrate key principles under consideration are embedded within the individual pieces, and a glossary of relevant terms is provided for easy reference. The articles are organized along mechanistic and thematic elements, which should highlight the inter-relationships among immunologic concepts. In the fullness of time, the wide spectrum of topics relevant to cancer immunology will be explored, whereas particular subjects will be revisited periodically in the light of substantive progress, assuring that CIE evolves in accordance with new ideas and discoveries. CIE will also highlight cancer immunology achievements in "Milestones in Cancer Immunology," and summarize research advances presented at tumor immunology conferences in "Meeting Reports." We hope that this unique electronic resource benefits both students and experts, and stimulates further inquiry into the complex interplay of immunity and cancer.

Glenn Dranoff, MD
Editor-in-Chief
Cancer Immunology Research
Published online April 4, 2014.

doi: 10.1158/2326-6066.CIR-14-0043

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