Allergy-immunology glossary

Zeinab A. El-Sayed
Professor of Pediatrics, Ain Shams University

Towards a clear designation of some of the terms used in allergology and immunology.

**Interleukin 5 (IL-5)**

Interleukin-5 (IL5) is a Th2 homodimeric cytokine involved in the differentiation, maturation, migration, development, survival, trafficking and effector function of blood and local tissue eosinophils, in addition to basophils and mast cells. IL-5 and IL-5R drive allergic and inflammatory immune responses characterizing numerous diseases, such as asthma, atopic dermatitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases, hyper-eosinophilic syndrome, Churg-Strauss syndrome and eosinophilic nasal polyposis. IL-5 has been proposed as a potential molecular target in the treatment of these diseases. In studies of asthmatics, anti-IL-5 showed minimal efficacy in patients with moderate, controlled asthma. In patients with severe, refractory asthma associated with eosinophilia, however, clinical trials have demonstrated significant reductions in asthma exacerbations.

**Interleukin 6 (IL-6)**

IL-6 is a pleotropic cytokine that, together with TNF-α and IL-1β, has been traditionally considered as a biomarker of ongoing inflammation more than as a regulatory cytokine with potential to modulate the immune response. Specifically, IL-6 has been shown to promote Th2 differentiation of CD4+ T cells while suppressing Th1 differentiation through independent pathways. IL-6 can also modulate the intensity of the immune response by inhibiting T regulatory (Treg) cell development. Some studies suggest that IL-6 synergizes with IL-1β to promote Th17 differentiation. Thus, IL-6 may be a key factor in determining the balance of CD4+ T cells in becoming Treg or inflammatory Th17 cells.

**REFERENCES:**