



Frances Lund

B cells and T cells: Together at last.

Antibodies made by B cells are critically important for immune protection to a variety of infectious agents. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that B cells do more than make antibodies and that B cells can both enhance and suppress immune responses. Furthermore, there is growing evidence that B cells modulate cellular immune responses by antibody dependent and independent mechanisms. Although we have a good understanding of the roles played by antibody-secreting effector B cells during immune responses, we know very little about the antibody independent “effector” functions of B cells in either health or disease. Given the recent data suggesting that B cells may contribute to autoimmune disease pathogenesis via an antibody independent mechanism and the increasing use of B cell depletion therapy in autoimmune patients, investigators are beginning to reassess the multiple roles for B cells during immune responses. In this lecture, we will review data describing the importance of antigen-presenting B cells in sustaining effector T cell and T follicular helper responses to pathogens and will discuss new data showing how cytokine-producing B cells modulate T cell responses by facilitating dendritic cell and T cell interactions in lymph nodes.

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