Abstract

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Lymphocyte life-span and memory.

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BACKGROUND: Differentiation of immature T and B cells in the primary lymphoid organs gives rise to a pool of long-lived lymphocytes that recirculate through the secondary lymphoid tissues. On the basis of their surface markers, T and B cells comprise a mixture of naïve and memory cells with differing life-spans. Immunization (and vaccination) causes naïve lymphocytes to proliferate and differentiate into effector cells and memory cells.

CONCLUSIONS: Whether the survival of memory cells is innate or requires persistent contact with residual antigen is controversial. Resolving this issue may be crucial for designing optimal vaccines.

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