



Immunology

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14:00 – 14:30

Cytomegalovirus immunoevasin reveals the physiological role of “missing self” recognition in NK cell dependent virus control in vivo

Stipan Jonjic

University of Rijeka, Croatia

Stipan Jonjic, MD, PhD is a Professor and Chair at the Department of Histology and Embryology and Center for Proteomics at Medical Faculty University of Rijeka.

Most of his research over 25 years has focused on elucidating the antiviral immune response mechanisms using the MCMV as a model. Working in close collaboration with several international groups, his lab was first to show that immune control of CMV latency was organized in a hierarchical and redundant manner by distinct elements of both innate and acquired immunity. Meanwhile, his research interest shifted towards viral immunoevasion mechanisms. His lab was also first to show that MCMV prevents NK cell activation by down-modulating cellular ligands for the activating NK cell receptor NKG2D. They characterized four viral proteins involved in downregulation of all mouse NKG2D ligands. More recently he is involved in studies of MCMV proteins able to specifically activate NK cells via Ly49 receptors. Long-term interest of Jonjic and his lab in CMV pathogenesis continues with studies on MCMV model of congenital CMV infection of CNS.

Stipan Jonjic received his MD (1976) and PhD (1985) from the University of Rijeka Faculty of Medicine. He is the recipient of number of honors and awards including Croatian National Prize for Science and Award of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts for Scientific Achievements. He is also Raine Foundation Visiting Professor at the University of Western Australia. In 1998, when he became the Dean of the Medical Faculty, he managed to build up a modern animal facility with a capacity of up to 40.000 mice, which is a key institution for the development of biomedical science, both on the regional and national level.