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Editorial

Lymphatics: Where the Circulation Meets the Immune System

Stanley G. Rockson, MD

On November 12, 2012, a group of investigator-scientists was convened to the campus of the National Institutes of Health by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID). In many cases, these individuals were making an acquaintance for the first time.

Of great forward-reaching potential, this workshop was devoted to the topic of Lymphatic Function and the Immune Response to Microbial or Viral Infection. The one-day, interactive series of presentations and discussions was the stimulus for lively discussion and the promotion of new investigative ideas.

The presentations were far-reaching and varied, encompassing such topics as the influenza virus, viral-endothelial interaction, HIV, lymphatic contractility in the context of immune function, direct chemical analysis of human lymph, lymphatic filariasis, dendritic-endothelial interactions, lymphatic influences on the natural history of pneumonia, and explorations of lymphatic function in mouse models of head and neck inflammation. The general discussions were spirited, embracing such topics as a definition of the knowledge gaps in this topic area, identification of needed research support, and suggestions for an investigative agenda in moving the field forward.

The lymphatic system has historically been mistaken as a simple fluid conduit. In the pages of this journal, and elsewhere,[1] we have long advocated the concept that the immune functions of the lymphatic system are at least as important as those that contribute to fluid homeostasis. The subject matter of the NIAID-sponsored symposium has, in large measure been embraced by *Lymphatic Research and Biology*.[2–10]

Our lymphatic research community is indebted to NIAID for taking a bold and innovative step in organizing the workshop whose proceedings are published in the pages of this issue. *Lymphatic Research and Biology* is honored to have the opportunity to disseminate this information, especially in light of the stimulus that it is likely to provide for further investigation of immune mechanisms as they relate to the lymphatic circulation.

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Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford, California.