

A CONCEPT MAP TO BUILD A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF B-CELL IMMUNOLOGISTS

The long-term objective of this initiative is to establish a European network of B cell immunologist to optimize the use of resources, exchange research ideas, train young people as experts in B cell immunology, start cooperations, and establish research groups funded by the European Union. Research on adaptive humoral immunity started in Europe at the end of the 19th century with the discovery of antibodies and continued at the highest level until today. European B cell immunologists produce outstanding work, but they are dispersed across the continent and have only few occasions to exchange their results, build cooperative networks and provide an international platform to students and young researchers. At large international and national meetings, B cell themes are usually hidden within more general symposia.

To change this situation at the national level, the German Society of Immunology (DGfI) established 12 years ago a DGfI Research Study Group that concentrates on B cell immunology (<http://www.b-lymphocytes.de/>). The research focus group *B Cells*, which consists of about 25 groups located in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, meets annually to discuss their findings in basic and clinical topics of B cell biology. Everyone who interested to attend the yearly Research Focus meeting can submit an abstract and give a presentation. The costs for travel, lodging and food are covered by each participant.

Based on this concept, we wish to establish a EFIS Research Focus Group for B cell immunologists working in Europe. Our initiative, which is supported by the respective national immunological societies, will combine national activities in European countries in one strong consortium and will allow us to successfully compete with strong B cell groups in Japan, Australia and the United States.

To reach our main goal we will organize the 1st EFIS workshop on B Cells in summer 2018 only with group leaders working on basic, translational and clinical aspects of B cell biology from European institutions. The short-term aim of the first workshop is to develop a concept for a network of European B cell immunology. The network will be the basis for future constructive research cooperations, scientific exchange, short-term laboratory rotations, and rapid scientific exchange of ideas and reagents. In addition, the network will give members working on the same question, but using with different strategies and experimental models to exchange their ideas. Finally, it will allow us to develop an educational platform for young Europeans working in the field in B cell immunology.

A concept map starts from a simplified view. Thus, future efforts of the European B Cell Network will focus on two main problems of B cell immunology: protective immunity and immunologic disorders such as autoimmunity, allergy, immunodeficiency and cancer, all of them include basic, translational and clinical aspects.

July 2017

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