Liver-specific Natural Killer Cells: Phenotypic and Functional Features

**Professor Tian Zhigang**
Professor & Director, Institute of Immunology
Dean, School of Life Sciences
University of Science & Technology of China

Abstract
Liver is an unique immune organ with predominant innate immunity and characterized with very strong immunotolerant features. Understanding the innate immune features and mechanisms of immune tolerance of the livers are helpful to explore the therapeutic approaches to liver diseases including viral hepatitis and hepatocellular carcinoma. One of the particular features of liver is its high content of NK cells, for which we found a big subpopulation of hepatic NK cells which was almost not existed in other immune organs. This liver-specific NK cells are CD3-CD122⁺DX5⁺CD49a⁻ and characterized with many other features than those from DX5⁺CD49a⁻ NK cells in liver, spleen, lung, thymus, lymph nodes, blood and bone marrow. Recently, a study group found hepatic NK cells had a potential with adaptive immunith in contact hypersensitivity (CHS) mice, but the phenotypic feature is not clear. Interestingly, we found this liver-specific NK cell was able to deliver the memory of adaptive immunity in CHS wild type mice or RAG2⁻/⁻ mice. The mechanisms underlying the liver-specific NK cells-delivered adaptive immunity is studied.

Selective Publications


Dong Z, Zhang J, Sun S, Wei H, Tian ZG. Impairment of liver regeneration...