Regulatory T Cells, Allergic Diseases, and Cancer

To the Editor:

Larchè in his excellent review in a recent issue of CHEST (September 2007) highlighted the potential defective function of regulatory T cells (Tregs) in patients with allergic diseases, and suggested that the induction of Treg development might be useful in this field. However, he did not discuss the effects of Tregs on immunopathology in cancer patients.

Tregs play an essential role in immune homeostasis and protection against autoimmunity, but also exert a detrimental action in the generation of host-vs-tumor immunity via the suppression of tumor-specific effector T-cell responses and the development of immune tolerance to neoplastic cells. Indeed, many of the mechanisms that impede antitumor immunity result in the development of Tregs. Animal models for cancer have shown that Treg depletion improves antitumor immunity and the success of immunotherapy; the hypothesis that a reduction of Treg function in cancer patients could be therapeutic is currently investigated. Therefore, the therapeutic manipulation of Tregs should always consider the double-edged sword of this action.

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REFERENCES

Errata

In the January 2008 issue, in the editorial by Irwin and Welch, “Becoming the Journal of the Future” (Chest 2008; 133:1–3), on page 2, the sentence beginning on line 3 of the first column contained errors. It should read: “In the spirit of improving the accuracy of reporting results, we will be requiring that all new submissions of the following types of studies, beginning February 4, 2008, follow the standardized requirements of reporting that can be found in the Uniform Requirements and our Instructions to Authors: randomized controlled trials must follow the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) requirements; studies of diagnostic accuracy, the Standards for Reporting of Diagnostic Accuracy (STARD) requirements; meta-analyses and systematic reviews, the Quality of Reporting of Meta-Analyses (QUOROM) requirements; observational studies in epidemiology, the Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) requirements; and meta-analyses of observational studies in epidemiology, the Meta-Analyses of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (MOOSE) requirements.”