
Preface

Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is an autoimmune disease that affects five to six million people worldwide. Autoantibodies are generated and directed against multiple organs, including the heart, brain, lungs, kidney, and skin. The diagnosis of SLE can be a long and slow process due to the manifestation of a diverse set of symptoms, which include psychological, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, and nephrology complications. Molecular biological techniques are being rapidly developed and adapted to provide insight into the molecular mechanisms of this multisystem autoimmune disease. SLE can take a number of years to diagnose, the disease can lead to the release of a multitude of inflammatory cytokines, and breakdown of immune tolerance can exasperate disease activity, leading to immune complex formation between host proteins and autoantibodies ultimately leading to organ pathology. This volume describes a number of genetic, biochemical, and immunological techniques that are advancing our understanding of the pathology, breakdown of the immune system, and therapeutic challenges of SLE in both humans and animal models. The volume should appeal to biomedical and clinical scientists in a number of pathology disciplines at the doctoral and postdoctoral level.

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