

Preface

It has been 27 years since the discovery of IL-12—one of the most interesting cytokines of the immune system with great potential in tumor immunotherapy. Unfortunately, in early clinical trials, IL-12 did not demonstrate sufficient clinical activity when administered systemically and its use was associated with severe toxicities. Nonetheless, this key regulatory cytokine was recognized at the National Cancer Institute workshop in 2007 as one of the most promising agents for use in cancer therapy.

Two years ago we published a review on the antitumor effect of IL-12 (*Cancer Immunology, Immunotherapy* 63: 419–435, 2014). In light of great interest in the topic, we were encouraged by the editor to broaden and update this subject in the book of Springer Briefs series.

This overview provides the current knowledge on the use of IL-12 in both experimental models and clinical settings in oncology. At present, there is a surge of clinical trials in which this cytokine is applied in novel treatment strategies, for example, in the form of local (intratumoral) injections combined with gene therapy. We believe that the renewed interest in the application of IL-12 in oncology will lead soon to adding the cytokine to the arsenal of anticancer drugs.

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