The immunology of influenza and bacterial superinfection

Influenza virus infection ("flu") constitutes an important public health issue and is associated with a significant socio-economic burden. The discovery of new antivirals and a better understanding of antiviral immunity might offer new options for preventing or controlling flu infections. A better understanding of the underlying pathomechanism might also prompt the discovery of key molecules whose activity could be modulated in a clinical setting. Lastly, the development of new immunomodulators and immunostimulants might compensate for impaired host defense mechanisms and improve resistance to secondary bacterial infections, since the latter significantly worsen the clinical status of influenza-infected patients.

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