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Mast cells as immune regulators in atherosclerosis

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MAST CELLS AS IMMUNE REGULATORS IN ATHEROSCLEROSIS

Propositions:

1. Atherosclerosis development is not a matter of debate over the power of lipid or immune responses, but rather an intricate interrelation between them. (*this thesis*)
2. The role of the immune system is crucial in atherosclerosis, as in any disease; thus, modifying the immunological function is the future in the treatment of cardiovascular diseases. (*this thesis*)
3. Mast cells are more than the unspecific degranulating machinery of the immune system. Attempting to inhibit their overall function will also deprive them of their more delicate actions. (*this thesis*)
4. The character of a mast cell is shaped *in situ*, according to the local inflammatory status. The distinct attributes they possess have such remarkable power as to differentially fine-tune both the innate and adaptive immune responses. (*this thesis*)
5. Anti-inflammatory therapies in cardiovascular disease turned from a speculative discussion into an actual pharmaceutical advancement. The surprising fact is that the same type of treatment can prove beneficial not only in cardiovascular disease but also in cancer. (Ridker P.M. et al., *Lancet* 2017; doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(17)32247-X.)
6. Female scientists are underrepresented in top-of-the-field laboratories managed by male investigators; no such bias exists in female-led labs. The solution possibly lies in creating feasible conditions for women to remain in academia. (Sheltzer J.M. & Smith J.C., *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 2014; 111, 10107–10112)
7. One in two PhD students suffers from psychological distress issues, such as constant pressure and sleep disorders. This can be so extensive as to affect the ability to enjoy simple everyday activities. Unless we redefine the goals of a PhD degree as to include the student's well-being, both the quantity and quality of research will decline. (Levecque K. et al., *Res. Policy*, 2017; 46, 868–879)
8. To thrive in academia, you need to cherish your passion for science and collect skills rather than high impact papers. The ultimate question PhD-candidates should ask themselves, upon deciding to stay or not in the academic community, is whether they acquired qualities that helped them grow into independent scientists while enjoying the process. (Yewdell J., *Nat Rev Mol Cell Biol.* 2008; 9(5): 413–416)
9. Scientific progress is achieved only through cordial exchange of substantiated arguments; when no one is there to offer skepticism over our work, we should do so ourselves.
10. The “lazy Greek” stereotype sounds entirely misguided considering that, at this moment, brains are the country's number one export product.
11. The most efficient way to hush a complainer is by trying to address the problem.
12. Any medical term one finds difficult to pronounce has, most probably, Greek roots.