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Are we at the start of a new era for anti-microbial and anti-cancers therapies?

For many decades, antimicrobial therapies have not much evolved. Resistance to common bacteria has reached unforeseen levels in many regions of the world. Consequently, humanity faces a post-antibiotic era in the not too distant future in which common infections and minor injuries have renewed ability to claim live. In parallel and after decades of cytotoxic drugs discoveries, anti-cancers therapies have much evolved with the upcoming of monoclonal antibodies, tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKI), and, more recently, immunomodulators. This leads us to dream of cures of, at least, some cancers. We are probably at the start of a similar evolution for anti-microbial agent as a shift towards anti-microbial treatments other than bacteriotoxic or bacteriostatic drugs has begun. Besides TKIs and others, one of the currently hot areas for both anti-microbial and anti-cancer treatments development, is immunotherapy/immunomodulation that has the following assets:

- microbial, viral and cancerous diseases are, basically, the consequence of the failure of the immune system to prevent or contain such “infections”,
- viruses, cancer cells and, possibly, bacteria, develop immune-suppressive strategies,
- the immune system is mainly adaptive, hence reducing the risk of resistance. Of course, this does not pre-empt the utility of disease specific treatments such as therapeutic vaccines.

The future may well be a combination of existing and future burden-reducing drugs such as cytotoxics, antibiotics and TKIs with immunomodulators or therapeutic vaccines.

Biography

Didier Coquoz has completed his PhD in Clinical Pharmacology. He has more than 20 years of experience as Pharma R&D Executive (VP R&D and CEO). He has been instrumental in the development/regulatory management from drug candidate up to phase III and registration of close to 30 biologics, monoclonal antibodies, peptides, cell-based therapeutics, NCEs of which 4 reached the market world-wide. He held positions as CEO and VP R&D on both sides of the Atlantic. He currently acts through Copexis S.A. as Chief Development Officer, Chief Regulatory Affairs and Chief Business Development Affairs for different biotechs/mid pharma in Europe, mostly in immunology.

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