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Myasthenia Gravis
Disease Mechanisms and Immune Intervention

This book will present the current concept of autoimmune myasthenia gravis (MG) pathogenesis and strategy for specific therapy or cure for MG. MG is a classical autoimmune disease of the nervous system for which the target antigen, nicotinic acetylcholine receptor, has been cloned, sequenced and biochemically characterized. Antibodies to acetylcholine receptors and complement destroy acetylcholine receptor at the neuromuscular junction, thus leading to defective neuromuscular transmission, muscle fatigue and weakness. Target antigens have been characterized for only a very few other autoimmune diseases. Therefore, MG serves as a prototype for other autoimmune diseases, especially antibody-and/or complement-mediated autoimmune diseases (e.g., Graves disease, SLE, hemolytic anemia, pemphigus, etc.)

In the last few years, rapid advances have been made in unraveling the cellular and molecular mechanisms involved in the pathogenesis of MG, both in the animal model of experimental autoimmune MG (EAMG), and in human MG. Significant advances are being made in characterizing the cells and molecules involved in the autoimmune response to the acetylcholine receptor (AChR) and the MUSK protein. Preclinical and clinical trials have been performed utilizing the information gained in basic research. These advances are leading to the development of specific methods of immune intervention for MG.

Since there are rapid advances and numerous publications on MG and EAMG, it is important to compile the literature on MG research containing a timely review of specific topics. Thus, this book focuses on recent published data and how it is integrated into the present knowledge of MG. The chapters in this book have been contributed by world-renowned authors in US, Europe and China working in the area of MG.

Part I of the book chapters focuses on the clinical features, diagnosis, lab investigation, immunopathogenesis and current treatment of all forms of MG. Included in Part I are chapters on the genetics of MG and the role of thymus and BAFF in MG pathogenesis. Lambert Eaton syndrome and congenital MG are discussed in Parts II and III, respectively. Part IV deals with the role of T cells, B cells, complement, cytokines and chemokines in the experimental autoimmune MG. Further the immunopathogenesis of the new mouse model of MUSK-induced EAMG is discussed. The pre-clinical trial section is Part V. Here the role of regulatory cells, dendritic cells, IV Ig and Pixantrone in immune modulation is reviewed. Other avenues of treatment of MG by blocking classical complement pathway and IL-6 and antigen specific apheresis are also discussed. Also there is a chapter on antisense cholinesterase inhibitor. The book concludse with a clinical trial section in Part VI. Clinical trials on etanercept and retuximab are presented.

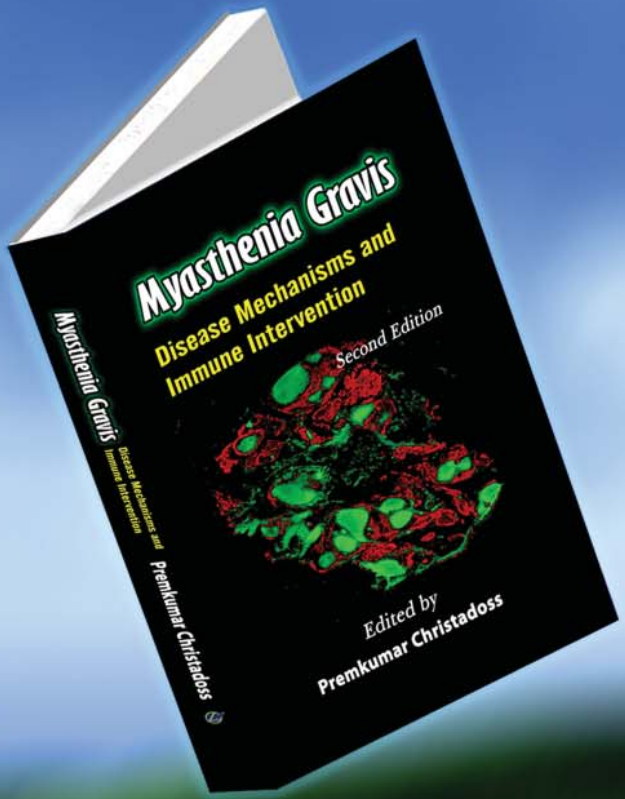
The target audience consists of basic scientists and clinical scientists in the university, as well as clinicians, industry researchers, graduate students, medical students and postdoctoral fellows interested in autoimmune disease or neuroimmunology research. The purpose is to educate the physician on the newest clinical trials and to educate the scientists on the complexity of the immune system in antibody-and complement-mediated diseases. Medical students and clinicians will learn the current diagnosis and treatment of MG. Graduate students will not only be interested in reading the latest in EAMG/MG research, but also will find information to help them develop a future strategy to unravel the precise mechanism of disease and development specific therapy. Further, the book will be an ideal tool to apply basic and clinical knowledge gained in MG research to other autoimmune disease research.

Premkumar Christadoss, M.B.B.S.

Myasthenia Gravis

Disease Mechanisms and Immune Intervention

Second Edition



Edited by

Premkumar Christadoss

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