

Hindering HIV-1-fighting immune cells

December 14 2009

Immune proteins called HLA molecules help to activate killer T cell responses against pathogens. But according to a study that will be published online on December 14th in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*, one particular group of HLA molecules cripples this activation, perhaps explaining why HIV-infected individuals who express these HLAs progress to AIDS more rapidly than others.

AIDS develops more rapidly in individuals who express HLA B*35-Px than in those who express the highly related HLA B*35PY proteins. The new study, lead by Xu Yu at Massachusetts General Hospital, shows that B*35-Px molecules bind to and activate an inhibitory receptor on dendritic cells—cells that are needed to activate protective <u>T cells</u>. These findings suggest that inhibitory dendritic <u>cell receptors</u> should be taken into consideration during future efforts to design HIV-1 vaccines and therapies.

<u>More information:</u> Huang, J., et al. 2009. J. Exp. Med. <u>doi:10.1084/jem.20091386</u>

Source: Rockefeller University (<u>news</u> : <u>web</u>)

Citation: Hindering HIV-1-fighting immune cells (2009, December 14) retrieved 24 May 2024 from <u>https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-12-hindering-hiv-fighting-immune-cells.html</u>

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