Preface

Biologics in Otolaryngology: Triumphs, Challenges, and New Possibilities

Therapeutic agents derived from living sources, including microorganisms, plants, animals, and humans, are known as “biologics.” These agents have had a major impact on all subspecialties of otolaryngology in recent decades. For example, botulinum toxin has diverse applications in laryngology, facial plastic surgery, and the treatment of some salivary gland disorders. Monoclonal antibodies targeting specific cytokines have become indispensable to rhinologists for the treatment of nasal polyposis. Exciting advancements in head and neck oncology have centered on monoclonal antibodies targeting immune checkpoints, such as programmed cell death-1. A variety of growth factors, anti-inflammatory biologics, and gene therapies have been explored for hearing loss and other otologic disorders.

In this issue of Otolaryngologic Clinics of North America, we begin with an overview article highlighting some of the major advances in the use of biologics in otolaryngology. The next section highlights current evidence on the use of biologics for nasal polyposis and other allergic diseases. The next several articles summarize current practices and future directions in the use of biologics for neoplastic diseases of the head and neck, including recurrent respiratory papillomatosis and head and neck squamous cell carcinoma. Since immunotherapy is the most rapidly evolving area in head and neck oncology, one article provides an overview on immunotherapeutic strategies, followed by articles with more detailed information on cetuximab, resistance to immune checkpoint blockade, and adoptive cell therapy. The final section begins with an overview of biologics used for otologic diseases, followed by two more articles on biologics for skull-base diseases (with a focus on neurofibromatosis type II) and autoimmune ear disease. One of our aims in this issue was to provide practical information that applies to current patient care, but we also highlight exciting areas of ongoing
investigation in the use of biologics. Decades of translational research in otolaryngology have led to the advent of these agents, enabling us to take better care of our patients.

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