Tumour immunology

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- 65 -SUlIIlCIryThe host of a malignat tumour was found to beactive against the process of malignant induction andprogression. It offers immunologic defences againstthe emerging malignant process (Old and Boyse, 1973).It was shown that prognosis in many types ofcarcinoma was related to the degree of lymphoidinfiltration in the primary tumour and the presence ofsinus histocytosis in the draining lymph nodes(Block et eL, , 1955 & 1956).However the general aims of immun~diagnasis andimmuno therapy of cancer are not new. They are rootedin the 19 ih century studies of Von Behring on diphtheriaantitoxin and of Hericourt and Richet on antisera againstostegenie sareoma. Paul Ehrlich, the patron saint of thefield, argued at the turn of the century for the use of”bodies which possess a particular affinity for a certainorgan as acarrier by which to bring therapeuticallyactive groups to the argan in question ”(Weinstein, 1984).The manipulation of the immune system might resultinthe regression of malignant tumours is a compelling ideathat has stimulated scientefic experimentation for> 80 years.- 66 -At the turn of the century, Coley ottempted to stimulateresistance to humon tumours by the administration ofbacteria and bacterial toxins. In 1940, Gross discoveredthat mice could immunized against atumaur that developedin a mouse of the samestrain. At that time this workreceived little notice.In 1950s’ Prehn and main demonstrated the existenceof tumour specific transplantation ontigens on chemicallyinduced murine neoplasms. By 1970, some daring investigationswere using immunomodulating agent~ to treat humonconcers. By 1980 the results of hundreds of clinicalImmunotherapy trials hod been published. Yet in 1984, theonly fair and accurote evaluotion of human concerImmunotherapy is that its efficacy is unproven anduncertain. Is cancer Immunology one of mistakenideasdeserving of nothing more than a few lines in a text bookon the history of science? or have we expected too much,too soon from tumour Immunology and has its clinicalapplication been hasty and premature? the better understandingof basic Immunology will leod to successful application oftumour Immunology to clinical medicine. (~anstrangelo, 1984).