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Progress in Humanized Mouse and Rat Models for Advancing HIV Research: Transitioning from Traditional Approaches to Innovative Strategies

Liis Tammik

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Progress in Humanized Mouse and Rat Models for Advancing HIV Research: Transitioning from Traditional Approaches to Innovative Strategies

Liis Tammik

Estonian Technical University, Estonia

Abstract

In the field of HIV research, humanized mouse and rat models have become indispensable tools, playing crucial roles as bridges between in vitro studies and clinical trials. This article explores the current landscape of these models, highlighting their pivotal contributions to investigating preventive and curative strategies against HIV infection and associated pathologies. The discussion encompasses various methodologies employed for the humanization of these animal models, addresses encountered challenges, and introduces emerging techniques that show promise in advancing HIV research. By examining the strengths and limitations of existing models, this article aims to steer researchers towards more effective strategies in the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) poses an ongoing global health challenge, prompting the continuous exploration of innovative therapeutic strategies. This study delves into the adoptive transfer of allogeneic gamma delta (γδ) T cells and its repercussions on HIV replication using a humanized mouse model. The research aims to unravel the potential risks and benefits associated with this therapeutic approach, with a specific focus on its effects on viral load, immune response, and overall host health.

Introduction

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) remains a formidable global health challenge, affecting millions of people worldwide. Despite significant progress in understanding the virus and developing antiretroviral therapies, a definitive cure for HIV/AIDS remains elusive[1]. Bridging the translational gap between in vitro studies and clinical trials is essential for advancing our understanding of HIV pathogenesis, immune responses, and developing effective prevention and cure strategies. In this context, the utilization of humanized mouse and rat models has emerged as a transformative approach, offering unique insights into the intricacies of HIV infection and associated pathologies[2].

HIV/AIDS, caused by the retrovirus HIV, has led to a global pandemic with profound social, economic, and health implications. Despite advances in antiretroviral therapy (ART) that have

transformed HIV from a once-fatal illness to a manageable chronic condition, challenges such as viral persistence, the emergence of drug resistance, and limited accessibility to treatment persist. Moreover, the lack of a preventive vaccine underscores the urgency for innovative research strategies to combat HIV at its roots[3].

Traditional animal models, such as mice and rats, have been invaluable in scientific research. However, they fall short in modeling HIV infection due to species-specific barriers[4]. Humanized mouse and rat models, engineered to incorporate human immune components, offer a revolutionary platform to study HIV in vivo, allowing researchers to overcome the limitations of conventional models[5].

Humanized mouse and rat models represent a groundbreaking leap in HIV research, providing a biologically relevant system to study the virus in the context of a human immune system. By incorporating human hematopoietic stem cells or tissues into these models, researchers can mimic key aspects of human physiology, enabling the investigation of HIV pathogenesis, immune responses, and the evaluation of potential therapeutic interventions in a more clinically relevant setting[6].

These models have proven instrumental in studying critical aspects of HIV infection, such as viral entry, replication, latency, and the dynamics of the host immune response. They serve as invaluable tools for preclinical testing of antiretroviral drugs and other therapeutic strategies, facilitating a more accurate prediction of treatment outcomes before advancing to human clinical trials[7].

This research article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of humanized mouse and rat models in HIV research. We will delve into the methodologies employed for humanization, explore their applications in investigating prevention and cure strategies against HIV, and discuss the challenges faced by researchers. Furthermore, we will spotlight emerging technologies that hold promise in advancing the field and improving the utility of these models[8].

As we navigate through the intricacies of humanized models, we aim to guide researchers, clinicians, and policymakers in their quest to understand, prevent, and ultimately cure HIV/AIDS. By critically assessing the strengths and limitations of existing models and highlighting emerging trends, this article seeks to contribute to the collective effort aimed at overcoming the challenges posed by HIV and forging a path towards a future free from this global health burden[9].

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection remains a global public health crisis, with an estimated 38 million people living with the virus worldwide. Despite significant advancements in antiretroviral therapy (ART) that have prolonged the lives of individuals with HIV, there is an ongoing need for innovative therapeutic strategies to combat the virus, address drug resistance, and ultimately achieve a functional cure. Adoptive immunotherapy has emerged as a promising

avenue for exploration, aiming to harness the unique properties of immune cells to enhance the host's ability to control and eliminate the virus[1].

Among the various immune cell subsets, gamma delta (γδ) T cells have garnered attention due to their distinct characteristics, including the ability to recognize antigens in a major histocompatibility complex (MHC)-independent manner and exert potent cytotoxic effects[2]. Allogeneic γδ T cells, sourced from healthy donors, offer the potential for an off-the-shelf therapeutic approach, presenting an alternative to autologous cell therapies that may be constrained by individual patient factors[3].

This research focuses on investigating the adoptive transfer of allogeneic γδ T cells and its impact on HIV replication within a humanized mouse model. Humanized mice, generated by engrafting immunodeficient mice with human hematopoietic stem cells, provide a valuable platform for studying human-specific immune responses in vivo[4]. The intricate interplay between allogeneic γδ T cells and HIV within this model system holds the key to understanding the potential risks and benefits associated with this novel immunotherapeutic strategy[5].

The rationale for exploring allogeneic γδ T cells lies in their unique biology and cytotoxic capabilities[6]. Unlike conventional αβ T cells, γδ T cells recognize a broad range of antigens, including stress-induced self-antigens and molecules expressed by infected or transformed cells, allowing for rapid and versatile responses to pathogens. However, the application of allogeneic γδ T cells in the context of HIV raises critical questions regarding their impact on viral replication, host immune responses, and overall safety[7].

This research aims to elucidate these questions by comprehensively analyzing the outcomes of allogeneic γδ T cell adoptive transfer in a humanized mouse model challenged with HIV infection. Key parameters such as viral load dynamics, alterations in immune cell populations, and the overall impact on host health will be systematically examined. Understanding the complex interactions between allogeneic γδ T cells and HIV within a physiologically relevant in vivo system is imperative for guiding the development of this immunotherapeutic strategy towards clinical applications[8].

As the global scientific community continues to seek effective and sustainable solutions for HIV/AIDS, this study contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding adoptive immunotherapy, providing insights that may shape future therapeutic approaches and advance the quest for a definitive cure for HIV infection[6].

Methodologies in Humanizing Mouse and Rat Models:

2.1 Overview of Humanization Techniques:

Discuss the various strategies employed to humanize mouse and rat models, including the use of human stem cells, transplantation of human tissues, and genetic modification.

2.2 Advancements in Genetic Engineering:

Explore recent advancements in genome editing technologies, such as CRISPR-Cas9, and their impact on creating more sophisticated and efficient humanized models.

Applications in HIV Research:

3.1 HIV Pathogenesis Studies:

Examine how humanized mouse and rat models have contributed to our understanding of HIV pathogenesis, including viral entry, replication, and the establishment of latent reservoirs.

3.2 Testing Antiretroviral Therapies:

Evaluate the role of these models in preclinical testing of antiretroviral drugs and other therapeutic interventions, providing insights into their efficacy and safety profiles.

Challenges and Limitations:

4.1 Immune System Complexity:

Discuss the challenges associated with recapitulating the complexity of the human immune system in rodent models and propose potential strategies for improvement.

4.2 Ethical Considerations:

Address ethical considerations related to the use of humanized animals in research, including animal welfare concerns and the need for ethical guidelines.

Emerging Techniques and Future Directions:

5.1 Organoid Technology:

Explore the potential of organoid technology in enhancing the humanization of mouse and rat models, offering a more physiologically relevant environment for studying HIV infection.

5.2 Microbiome Modulation:

Discuss the influence of the microbiome on HIV infection and how manipulating the gut microbiota in humanized models could provide new insights into the interplay between the virus and host.

Conclusion:

Summarize the key findings and insights from the review, emphasizing the crucial role of humanized mouse and rat models in advancing HIV research. Highlight the potential of

emerging technologies and the need for collaborative efforts to overcome existing challenges and pave the way for more effective prevention and cure strategies against HIV/AIDS.

By examining the current and emerging landscape of humanized mouse and rat models, this article aims to provide a comprehensive resource for researchers working towards a deeper understanding of HIV infection and the development of novel therapeutic approaches.

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