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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Comment to "Molecular approach to the classification of chronic fibrosing lung disease—there and back again"

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Dear Editors,

As a compulsive, picky, and avid reader, I have been pleased to read in the journal, over the years, novelties in all fields of pathology, a sign of a robust health.

Among these, I just read a well-written and comprehensive review of the chronic fibrosing lung diseases [1]. This field has been revolutionized by single-cell biology techniques [2, 3], hardly a surgical pathologist-friendly topic, and by a lightning-fast preprint flood, rather than manuscripts on peer-reviewed journals.

What struck me, however, was the use in the review of the term "Krebs von den Lungen-6 (KL-6)" for a well-studied biomarker.

KL-6 is an insular term for an internationally defined and codified protein, MUC1 (Mucin 1) [4]. Other names for MUC1 are epithelial membrane antigen (EMA), Ca15-3, CD227, and etc.

An international effort to define a common nomenclature for leukocyte antigens (human leukocyte differentiation antigens; HLDA), to which I did participate, began in 1982 [5], followed by a similar effort to adopt a common nomenclature for mucins [4] and other molecules. The aim of these initiatives was to implement a standard nomenclature for unique proteins over multiple independent assays and research fields. Nobody these days uses Leu2 for CD8; analogously, one should not use KL-6 for MUC1 or, at least, reference in parenthesis the designed standard name.

I believe that pathology journals should join the efforts, spearheaded by more generalistic journals, to enforce the use of such standard nomenclature, in order to favor cross-field research, comparison, and immediate recognition of unique entities. The future of pathology in a rapidly evolving "multi-omic" scientific field, as shown by the forceful entrance of single-cell transcriptomics in lung fibrosis, is at stake.

Author contribution Solely the author.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The author declares no competing interests.

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