

TERMINOLOGICAL AND MEDICAL TEACHING CONFUSIONS AROUND UTERINE NK CELLS

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The most prominent cell population at the maternal-fetal interface is the population of uterine natural killer cells (uNK) cells. Despite the name, their primary function is to secrete a rich palette of cytokines with regulatory commitments. In present research, we will focus on three lesser-known areas of knowledge about uNK cells. First, from the point of view of histology, we will comprehensively map the history of the discovery of these cells. To be brief, the discovery of uNK cells is generally attributed to Herwig Hamperl, one of the most influential and prominent representatives of German pathology in the 20th century, and his co-worker, Gisela Hellweg. Secondly, we will discuss the interesting aspect of terminology, since uNK cells are probably one of the human cells with the highest number of synonymous names, leading to significant discrepancies in their descriptions in scientific literature. From the first description of this cell type, they were referred to as endometrial granulocytes, granular endometrial stromal cells, or large granular lymphocytes until the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s of the last century, when the first publications appeared where the name "uterine NK cells" was used. The third area of present review is medical teaching of histology and clinical embryology. We can confirm that uNK cells are, in most textbooks, overlooked and almost forgotten cells despite their enormous importance. In the present poster, we summarize the lesser-known historical and terminological facts about uNK cells. We can state that within the textbooks of histology and embryology, this important cell population is still "overlooked and neglected" and is not given the same importance as in fields of clinical research and clinical practice.

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