

Web watch

A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO IMMUNOLOGY

- <http://www.systemsimmunology.org>

Technological advances now allow immunologists to study the immune response to pathogens from many different angles, from genomic and cell-biology approaches to studies at the epidemiological level. An integrated understanding of these data will be essential to obtain a clear picture of how the immune system functions as a whole in the face of an infection. Now, a web site maintained by the Institute of Systems Biology and funded by the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, USA, has been launched to provide access to data from a multidisciplinary international consortium. This collaborative effort is made up of researchers from the Scripps Research Institute, the Institute for Systems Biology and Stanford University of the United States, together with the Australian National University.

Visitors to the web site will find information grouped into seven different 'cores', such as Forward Genetics, Proteomics and Human Correlation. The aims of each core are clearly explained, and links to data in raw and processed forms will be provided as new information becomes available. Also, detailed protocols for techniques such as chromatin immunoprecipitation and primary-cell isolations are made freely available.

A systems-biology approach is essential for understanding the effects of an invading pathogen so that improved predictive, preventive and therapeutic strategies can be developed. Although the power afforded by bioinformatics has facilitated systems-biology approaches in recent years, the communication of these data can be limiting if they are not presented in a way that is accessible to other researchers. Importantly, the data at [systemsimmunology.org](http://www.systemsimmunology.org) are to be made available "so that they may be explored without need for specialized training in computational analysis or bioinformatics."

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