

S20. Epstein-Barr-Virus-Associated tumours, Pathogenesis and Perspectives on Prevention

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Infection with the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) is ubiquitous in human populations. Infection is generally clinically silent but can be associated with an infectious mononucleosis syndrome. EBV is aetiologically linked with numerous Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin lymphomas subtypes but also with carcinomas of the stomach and of the nasopharynx. Defining the precise contribution of EBV to malignant transformation is a very active area of research. Why only a small percentage of the infected population will be affected by cancer remains a cen-

tral question. So far, attempts to prevent EBV-associated diseases, e.g. by vaccination, have met limited success. This might be related, among other reasons, to the complexity of the virus and to the high density of infection in the general population.

Here we will review some of the current models of EBV-transformation with a particular emphasis on EBV-associated carcinomas. We will also review potential vaccination strategies.