Psoriasis: Keratinocytes or Immune Cells – Which Is the Trigger?

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Keywords

Psoriasis · Keratinocytes · Immune cells

Abstract

Background: Psoriasis is a common, chronic inflammatory skin disorder, which can significantly impact quality of life. Despite major breakthroughs in our understanding of the pathogenesis of psoriasis, the chronological order of the underlying mechanisms leading to the development of psoriatic plaques remains to be completely understood. **Summary:** Although psoriasis is classically perceived as a T-cell disease, it is now well recognized that T lymphocytes do not function in exclusivity. This theory is supported by evidence from transgenic murine models that develop marked psoriasisiform disease. In addition, immune cells and cytokines regulate both early and late events involved in the pathogenesis of psoriasis. **Key Messages:** Psoriasis is a complex disease – a dynamic interplay between immune cells, keratinocytes, and various other skin-resident cells, such as endothelial and immune cells. The contribution of each cell type is crucial in the initiation and maintenance phases of psoriatic alterations.

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Introduction

Psoriasis is one of the commonest and most researched immune-mediated chronic skin disorders, affecting approximately 3% of the population worldwide [1]. Beyond its dermatological manifestations, psoriasis can have significant impact on a patient's quality of life [2]. Chronic plaque psoriasis, referred to as psoriasis vulgaris, is characterized by well-demarcated, erythematous, scaly plaques, which can involve any part of the skin but most commonly the extensor surfaces (such as the elbows and knees) and the scalp.

In 1985, Heng et al. [3] attempted to describe the microscopic sequence of events associated with psoriasis by studying the different stages of psoriatic plaques induced by tape-stripping. At the time, the research concluded that the proliferation of the epidermis was maintained and clearly identified.

It is now well established that psoriasis is the product of interactions between environmental factors and a complex genetic background [1]. Psoriatic plaques are characterized by (1) an abnormal proliferation and differentiation of keratinocytes leading to epidermal hyperplasia, (2) dermal infiltration of the dermis by various immune cells, and (3) increased dermal capillary density, with enhanced

permeability in wide-caliber vessels [4]. Despite the major breakthroughs made in understating the pathophysiology of psoriasis, the sequence of how these pathognomonic changes arise is not completely understood.

Psoriasis is mainly studied as an autoimmune condition [5]; nevertheless, other potential triggers of psoriasis have been evaluated. The skin epidermis has been identified as a key player in the early pathogenic steps of psoriasis by contributing to the activation of the immune response as well as the recruitment of inflammatory and endothelial cells [6]. Moreover, the elucidation of the major influence exerted by the psoriasis susceptibility gene has allowed for a fine tuning of the understanding of the pathophysiology of psoriasis [7–9].

This extensive review aims to discuss the contributions of immune cells and keratinocytes to the pathogenesis of psoriasis and to highlight the specificity of each category.

Results

We conducted a review of the literature investigating the role of keratinocytes and immune cells in the pathogenesis of psoriasis. The primary review of the scientific literature was conducted in PubMed, Science Direct, and Google Scholar. Mesh terms used were “psoriasis,” “pathophysiology,” “pathogenesis,” “keratinocyte,” “PSORS,” “genetics,” “immunity” and “HLA.” The Boolean operators used were AND and OR. No exclusion criteria were defined. The pertinence of each article was evaluated with an attentive and critical view regarding the type and content of the article, the date of publication, and the impact factor of the publishing journal.

Psoriasis: An Immune-Driven Disease

Loci within the Major Histocompatibility Complex Confer the Risk of Psoriasis

In view of its association with multiple diseases, ranging from autoimmune to malignant diseases [10], the major histocompatibility complex (MHC) located on the short arm of chromosome 6 is one of the most studied areas of the human genome. Among all the MHC loci, the best characterized is undoubtedly the classic human leukocyte antigen (HLA). It has long been established that the HLA is associated with psoriasis [11]. The MHC is recognized as a major susceptibility locus for psoriasis; indeed, class I molecules on antigen-presenting cells are involved in activating T cells that are crucial in psoriasis pathophysiology [12].

Within the MHC class 1 region, psoriasis susceptibility locus 1 (*PSORS1*) is the most significant genetic determinant of psoriasis [13]. This locus accounts for 50% of the genetic variance in psoriasis [14]. Patients with early-onset psoriasis exhibit HLA-Cw6 allele variability in the HLA-C locus, compared to patients with sporadic, late-onset psoriasis [7, 15]. The presence of HLA-Cw6 has been shown to affect different aspects of psoriasis, including genetic susceptibility, clinical manifestation, comorbidity, and treatment efficacy [16]. HLA may prime the immune response and in addition HLA-C is a subunit of MHC I, which allows antigen presentation to CD8+ T cells and regulates their activation, proliferation, and cytotoxicity (according to the Cluster 17 Collaboration, 2005). However, given the complex nature of psoriasis pathogenesis more studies are needed to elucidate the functional role of HLA-Cw6 in psoriasis.

Characterization of the Main Skin-Infiltrating Immune Cells in Psoriasis

The predominant cell type in human skin is the keratinocyte. Skin turnover involves a series of programmed changes that transform basal keratinocytes into anucleate corneocytes. This transformation occurs over the span of approximately 50 days in healthy skin but takes only 5 days in lesional psoriatic skin – a testament to the increased cell turnover in this disease [17]. Various other cells with immunoregulatory properties lie interspersed among keratinocytes [18].

Plasmacytoid Dendritic Cells

Although the pathophysiology of psoriasis remains to be fully elucidated, the roles of various cells in the development of psoriasis have been described [18]. A crucial cell in the initiation phase of psoriasis is the plasmacytoid dendritic cell (PDC). Viral and bacterial particles can stimulate PDCs by activating toll-like receptor (TLR)7 and TLR9, the secretion of type 1 IFN- α [19] bringing about the inflammatory response associated with psoriasis through the activation of myeloid dendritic cells (MDCs) [20].

Understanding the role of TLRs is pivotal in unraveling the pathophysiology of psoriasis. TLRs are fundamental to the ability of dendritic cells to recognize antimicrobial particles and influence the adaptive immune system [21]. TLR7 and TLR9 are highly homologous [22], but the recognition of unmethylated CpG DNA expressed by bacteria is attributed to TLR9 [23], and the recognition of imidazoquinoline-like viral RNA particles is attributed to TLR7 [22].

The mechanism by which PDCs initiate a psoriasiform reaction can be partly explained by observational studies conducted with imiquimod [24, 25] – a synthetic imidazoquinoline recognized by TLR7 [22]. Application of imiquimod to nonlesional skin of susceptible patients [25] induces PDCs to release type I IFN- α [24, 25] and interferon regulatory factor 7 (IRF7) [26]. This response is similar to that observed when PDCs recognize bacterial and viral peptides [24, 25].

The antimicrobial peptide, LL37, is identified as a key activator of PDCs in vivo. It has been suggested that the release of LL37 by activated keratinocytes and the subsequent binding of the molecule to self-DNA in susceptible individuals might cause conformational changes to the bound DNA molecule, transforming this otherwise innocuous molecule into an aggregated, dense structure that is recognized by early ribosomal TLR9, which results in IFN- α production, but not PDC maturation [27, 28]. Consequently, LL37-activated PDCs migrate into the epidermis, where they recognize keratinocyte-expressed autoantigens, which might then perpetuate the pathogenic mechanism. This hypothesis suggests that dysregulated LL37 might be the link between keratinocytes and PDCs in the pathophysiology of psoriasis [28]. LL37 is also associated with the activation of both CD4+ and CD8+ LL37-specific psoriatic T cells through its interaction with HLA-DR and class-I alleles [27].

Myeloid Dendritic Cells

In addition to PDC activation, MDCs are activated by other triggering factors, such as the skin microbiome, drugs, and trauma. These factors can stimulate keratinocytes to release CCL20, leading to PDC-independent MDC activation and T-helper 17 (Th17) cell recruitment [29]. Once activated, MDCs orchestrate the inflammatory phases of psoriasis. Psoriatic skin is dominated by two subtypes of MDC, namely CD11c+BDCA-1+ (which is also found in normal skin) and pathogenic CD11c+BDCA-1-. Both MDC subtypes secrete interleukin (IL)-12, a chemokine involved in T-cell proliferation and the polarization of Th1 cells [30]. BDCA-1 MDCs, referred to as “inflammatory MDCs,” are responsible for the IL-23-mediated stimulation of Th17 cells, which subsequently release IL-17, IL-22, and INF- γ [30]. Inflammatory MDCs also co-express cytokines, including tumor necrosis factor α (TNF- α), enzyme inducible nitric oxide synthetase (iNOS), and IL-12, which are all well-known mediators of inflammation. TNF- α (also produced by keratinocytes) not only activates MDCs and Langerhans cells but also stimulates the transformation of macrophages to dendritic cells [31].

Myeloid Dendritic Cells: The IL-12/IL-23 and IL-17 Axis. The IL-12/IL-23 pathway has been highlighted in the pathophysiology of psoriasis [32]. IL-12 is a heterodimer, composed of IL-12p35 and IL-12p40 subunits. These subunits can stimulate Janus kinase 2 (JAK2) and tyrosine kinase 2 (TYK2), upregulating the signal transducer of transcription (STAT) transcription factors, particularly STAT4 [32]. IL-12 skews the differentiation of naïve CD4 cells to IFN- γ -secreting Th1 [33].

Similar to IL-12, IL-23 is a heterodimer, composed of IL-12p40 (IL-12B) and IL-23p19 (IL-12A) subunits. IL-23 is highly expressed in psoriatic skin [34]. IL-23 is also involved in the induction of JAK2 and TYK2, resulting in the preferential upregulation of STAT3 [33]. Sources of IL-23 include monocytes (also under the influence of CCL20 [29]) in the dermis, and keratinocytes and Langerhans cells in the epidermis. Binding of IL-23 to the IL-23 receptor expressed by Th17 cells triggers intracellular downstream signaling that results in the production of IL-17A (the most potent IL-17 activator [35]) and IL-17F [36] (less potent than IL-17A, despite being 50% homologous [35]). On the other hand, IL-12 receptor activation leads to Th1 maturation and IFN- γ secretion [33].

This pathological cycle is completed by the IL-17A- and IL-17F-mediated activation of epidermal keratinocytes, which subsequently release a barrage of inflammatory mediators, including (but not limited to) IL-8 and chemokine CXC ligands (CXCL) 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, and 20. This culminates in the attraction of more T cells into the dermis and epidermis [37]. IL-23 also drives IL-17 synthesis in dermal $\gamma\delta$ T cells, which further expands the Th17 pool [38]. The influence of IL-17 extends beyond T cells. The chemokine has pleiotropic effects on keratinocytes and fibroblasts, which subsequently upregulate mediators of inflammation, such as IL-6, IL-1 β , TNF- α , granulocyte-macrophage colony stimulating factor, matrix metalloproteinases, and antimicrobial peptides. This upregulation results in the recruitment of neutrophils, lymphocytes, and myeloid cells to the area [37].

Biologics targeting the IL-12/IL-23/IL-17 axis are therapeutic modalities for the treatment of psoriasis [5]. Ustekinumab is a human MAB targeting IL-12p40, a subunit shared by both IL-12 and IL-23 [39]. Tildrakizumab is a humanized IgG1/ κ MAB, which has high affinity for IL-23p19, but no affinity for IL-12 or IL-23p40 [40]. Secukinumab is a first-in-class IgG1 κ , fully human MAB targeting IL-17A [41]. Ixekizumab is a humanized IgG4 MAB that neutralizes IL-17A [42]. Brodalumab is a fully human, IgG2 anti-IL-17RA MAB, which binds IL-17RA with high affinity; this activity impedes the interaction

between the receptor and IL-17A/E/F, which thereby disrupts the IL-17 pathway [43] (Appendix).

Myeloid Dendritic Cells: The TNF- α Axis. The role of TNF- α in psoriasis cannot be underestimated. TNF recognizes two receptors: TNFR1 which is universally expressed, and TNFR2, which is expressed in lymphocytes, endothelial cells, and neurons. TNFR1 and TNFR2 bind both TNF- α and lymphotoxin- α [44]. TNF- α induces the expression of endothelial adhesion molecules ECAM and ICAM on dermal endothelial cells. The latter subsequently release CCL20, thereby stimulating MDCs. The TNF- α -driven CCL20 release is mediated by keratinocytes and dermal fibroblasts [45]. Upregulation of these proinflammatory cytokines by TNF- α is facilitated through the activation of Nf- κ B [46] – a transcription factor that is constitutively activated in psoriatic epidermis [47]. Elevated levels of Nf- κ B facilitate keratinocyte hyperproliferation by inhibiting the cell cycle regulator protein, phosphatase 6, via the upregulation of the microRNA miR-31 [47]. Three TNF- α inhibitors are approved for the treatment of psoriasis: infliximab, adalimumab, and etanercept. Infliximab and adalimumab are bivalent IgG1 MABs, which bind the Fc portions.

T Lymphocytes

The success of cyclosporine A for treating psoriasis [48, 49] highlights the crucial role played by T cells in the pathophysiology of psoriasis [50]. The rapid immunosuppressive action of cyclosporine is related to the suppression of T lymphocytes and the subsequent drop in IL-2 levels [48]. These observations led to the notion that psoriasis was a T-cell-mediated disease [51]. However, the concept of psoriasis as a strictly Th1/Th2 disease has been recently challenged by the discovery of other T cells such as CD4⁺ Th17 cells (which produce IL-17 [65], IL-23 [52], IL-22 [53], IFN- γ , and TNF- α) and Th22 cells which produce IL-22 exclusively. Elevated plasma IL-22 levels have been associated with a worse disease severity [53]. Th22 cells may work in concert with other IL-22-producing cells in the epithelium, such as NK22 cells [53], and normalization of IL-22, IL-17, and INF- γ mRNA levels [54].

Other T cells involved in the pathophysiology of psoriasis include the dermal $\gamma\delta$ [55], dendritic epidermal [56], and V γ 9V δ 2 [38] cells. Dermal $\gamma\delta$ T cells constitutively express IL-23 receptors, making them susceptible to the actions of cytokines and the subsequent release of IL-17. Cutaneous antigen-positive and CCR-6-positive V γ 9V δ 2 T cells were shown to gravitate towards stressed skin, activating keratinocytes by the release of IL-17A and

subsequently, TNF- α and INF- γ . Successful treatment of active psoriatic plaques results in the elevation of circulating V γ 9V δ 2 T cells to normal levels, suggesting that the V γ 9V δ 2 T cells were redistributed from skin lesions to the peripheral circulation [38]. At the opposite end of the spectrum, in patients with chronic plaque psoriasis, CD-25^{high}, CTLA-4⁺, and Fox3^{high} (CD4⁺CD25^{high}) cells, known as regulatory T cells, are deficient in their capacity as T-cell response suppressors [57].

On another note, T-cell-mediated molecular mimicry has been suggested as a potential explanation for the close relationship between the skin microbiome [58] and psoriasis. The streptococcal M surface antigens are known to be highly homologous to human keratins, particularly type 1 keratin [59]. This homology can result in cross-reactivity with subsequent T-cell-mediated responses [60].

Psoriasis: A Keratinocyte-Driven Disease

Intrinsic alterations in epidermal keratinocytes might also contribute to various aspects of psoriasis pathogenesis in an autocrine or paracrine manner. This potential contribution has further challenged the concept of psoriasis as a disease mediated exclusively by T-cell activation [18, 61]. This theory is supported by murine models in which transgenic mice lacking B and T lymphocytes were transplanted with either healthy or nonlesional skin, but only developed a psoriasiform reaction in the former subset of mice upon the injection of immunocytes [62].

The Immunomodulatory Functions of Keratinocytes

The epidermal barrier is the first line of defense against skin injury and invading pathogens. Keratinocytes are a major source of inhibitory cytokines. These cytokines allow the skin to remain inflammatory quiescent, in the absence of triggers that would otherwise activate local dendritic cells [63]. However, an imbalance between anti- and proinflammatory signals may lead to the development of chronic inflammatory skin diseases, such as psoriasis and atopic dermatitis [61]. Through the cell surface receptors, keratinocytes are also able to regulate the immune response. As mentioned previously, psoriatic skin is infiltrated by various immune cells [18]. Moreover, upon activation, keratinocytes can indirectly attract immune cells into the skin through the release of potent chemokines. The role of CXCL8 has been highlighted, as it is believed to be responsible for the accumulation of intraepidermal neutrophils [64]. Other cytokines, such as CCL2, CCL5, CXCL10, and CXCR3 ligands, predominantly attract monocytes and Th1 cells [65]. In contrast,

CCL20 and IL-18 recruit Langerhans cells, dendritic cells, and CLA⁺ T cells [66, 67].

Another important role of keratinocytes is their ability to function as antigen-presenting cells initiating or enhancing the activity of immune cells by expressing HLA antigens [68]. As mentioned previously, HLA-Cw 0602 is the disease allele in the *PSORS1* locus [69]. It is known that keratinocytes can express class I and II HLA antigens upon stimulation [70, 71], but the function of this ability in the pathogenesis of psoriasis remains to be understood.

Cell surface receptors enable keratinocytes to play an important role as key regulators of both the innate immunity as well as in adaptive immunity. These receptors interact with conserved microbial structures, referred to as pathogen-associated molecular patterns (PAMPs), such as lipopolysaccharide and CpG DNA. The TLR family is the most important group of cell surface receptors expressed, mainly by immune cells and keratinocytes, under pathological conditions [72, 73]. TLR expression in psoriatic epidermis has been studied, but the results have not provided a coherent picture. In one study, TLR2 expression was enhanced in the upper epidermis in psoriasis, but expression was stronger in the lower layers of normal and nonlesional skin [74]. Another study showed that TLR5 expression was reduced in basal keratinocytes of lesional psoriatic skin when compared to normal skin [75]. Yet another study showed that TLR1 was highly expressed in the psoriatic epidermis [76]. Beyond the essential role of TLRs in both innate immune responses and adaptive immune systems, the functional roles of TLR expression in keratinocytes remain to be investigated.

Intrinsic alterations in epidermal keratinocytes may be involved in regulating major inflammatory pathways. This notion was illustrated in a transgenic mouse model, which carried an epidermal keratinocyte-specific deletion of I κ B, a negative regulator of the NF- κ B transduction pathway, which is involved in the synthesis of important proinflammatory cytokines. Those mice developed a severe inflammatory skin disease shortly after birth [77].

The idea of the epidermis as the primary site for orchestrating epidermal and distant inflammation associated with skin inflammatory disease was also substantiated in studies with transgenic mice models. By studying transgenic mice with the deletion of tristetraprolin (TTP/*Zfp36*; a keratinocyte-specific gene), Andrianne et al. [78] illustrate how TTP acts as an RNA-binding protein that downregulates the expression of genes that encode proinflammatory cytokines in the skin epidermis. Such mice developed a psoriasiform phenotype associated with a strong inflammatory reaction. Furthermore, this inflam-

matory reaction did not occur when TTP was specifically deleted in immune cells, such as dendritic cells or leukocytes. In another transgenic murine model, mice depleted of the IL-1 antagonist receptor (IL1rn) (an endogenous inhibitor of the proinflammatory cytokine, IL-1) developed severe psoriasis-like disease that histologically mimicked human psoriatic skin. Moreover, the researchers demonstrate that this psoriasis-like disease developed in a TNF- α dependent manner [79]. Interestingly, this psoriasis-like disease also occurred in *IL-1rn*^{-/-} SCID mice [80]. Consequently, such data suggested that T lymphocytes are not essential for the development of psoriasis.

Keratinocyte Autoantigen Loop in Psoriasis

The recently described “psoriasis autoantigens” LL37 [27] (cathelicidin – an antimicrobial peptide) and a disintegrin-like and metalloprotease domain containing thrombospondin type 1 motif-like 5 (ADAMTSL5) might shed new insights into the pathophysiological mechanism of psoriasis. Autoantigens can be described as chemokines released by native cells which initiate or sustain a pathological state against self.

ADAMTSL5, previously thought to be related exclusively to melanocytes, was found to be highly expressed by keratinocytes and playing a role in the activation of IL-17-releasing psoriatic cells [81] as well as microfibril modulation [82]. LL37 and ADAMTSL5 are both potential antigens found at significantly higher concentrations in lesional skin, but they are also expressed by immune cells that are classically associated with psoriasis, namely, dendritic cells and macrophages [83]. These autoantigens also appear to be under the influence of well-established psoriatic treatment, with the concentration of ADAMTSL5 and LL37 downregulated by etanercept, ixekizumab, and brodalumab [83].

Self-DNA can also be considered as a psoriasis autoantigen by virtue of its potential to activate PDCs after undergoing electrostatic LL37-induced conformational changes which subsequently allow the molecule to interact with the cells’ TLR9 receptors [28]. LL37 is also able to form complexes with self-RNA, which then interact with TLR7 and TLR8, activating both PDCs and classical myeloid dendritic cells, respectively [84]. Interestingly, complexes of LL37 and self-DNA and self-RNA released at sites of trauma may partly explain the isomorphic phenomenon in psoriasis [85].

The Proangiogenic Role of Keratinocytes

Keratinocytes are a reservoir of growth factors for endothelial cells such as vascular endothelial growth factor

Fig. 1. Summary of the main pathogenesis steps leading to psoriasis plaque formation.

(VEGF), hypoxia-inducible factors, angiopoietins, and proangiogenic cytokines, such as $\text{TNF-}\alpha$, IL-8, and IL-17 [86].

Proangiogenic VEGF is the main factor overexpressed in psoriatic skin. VEGF can be released by activated keratinocytes and immune cells [87], contributing to an increase in the density of psoriatic dermal capillaries, in addition to enhanced permeability and dilatation [88]. Dilated capillaries support a pathologically hyperproliferative epidermis and regulate immune cell trafficking by expressing intercellular adhesion molecules (ICAM-1). In addition to its proangiogenic effects, VEGF can act in an autocrine manner and stimulate the proliferation of tumor cells in skin malignancies [89, 90]. A potential autocrine effect of VEGF on keratinocytes remains to be investigated.

Altered Proliferation and Differentiation in Psoriatic Keratinocytes

Epidermal homeostasis is maintained by a tightly regulated balance of renewal and differentiation processes [91]. This homeostatic balance is disturbed in chronic inflammatory diseases, such as psoriasis, leading to abnormal differentiation associated with a shortened cellular turnover time [92].

PSORS4 is a psoriasis susceptibility gene in the chromosome 1q21 region. The 1q21 region harbors the epidermal differentiation complex (EDC) [93], which contains major genes involved in epidermal differentiation. EDC genes are divided into 3 main families that encode (a) the cornified envelope precursor proteins (loricrin, involucrin, small proline-rich proteins, and the family of late cornified envelope proteins), (b) the keratin filament-

associated proteins (filaggrin, trichohyalin, repetin, horn-
erin, and cornulin), and (c) the S100 calcium-binding
proteins [94]. Altered epidermal differentiation is an im-
portant hallmark of psoriatic skin; therefore, the EDC
genes have been considered psoriasis gene candidates.

Psoriatic skin has exhibited overexpression of the cal-
cium-binding proteins, S100A7, S100A8, and S100A9
[95]. S100 proteins are key regulators of intra- and extra-
cellular biological pathways that regulate cell prolifera-
tion, differentiation, death, and immune responses.
S100A8/S100A9 proteins, referred to as the calprotectin
complex, were shown to be overexpressed in a transgenic
murine model of psoriasis, which lacked epidermal ex-
pression of cJun and JunB [96, 97]. cJun and JunB belong
to the transcriptional factor activator protein 1 (AP-1)
family, which includes dimers principally composed of
the critical epidermal homeostatic factors, Jun and Fos
[98]. Interestingly, *JunB* is located in the *PSORS6* locus
[96]. As previously mentioned, the psoriasis phenotype
was observed in *Rag-2* mice, which have epidermal dele-
tions of cJun and JunB. This observation suggested that
dysregulated AP-1 activity might be causally involved in
the initiation of disease development, before inflamma-
tion takes place [96].

During the psoriasis process, keratinocyte growth is
promoted through the activation of an autocrine loop.
This loop involves various growth factors, such as insu-
lin-like growth factor, keratinocyte growth factor, trans-
forming growth factor α (TGF- α), amphiregulin, and
members of the inhibitory TGF- β family [99, 100].

Conclusions

Psoriasis remains one of the most researched chronic
inflammatory skin diseases [101, 102]. Early murine
models of psoriasis and response of disease to immuno-
suppressive therapies supported the idea of psoriasis as a
T-cell disease.

Despite the undisputed fact that activated T cells are
crucial to the development and persistence of psoriatic
lesions, the disease pathophysiology cannot be explained
by the role of T lymphocytes exclusively. Other resident
skin cells, including (but not limited to) keratinocytes and
dendritic cells, contribute to the development of psori-
atic plaques. This cellular contribution is combined with
a strong, complex genetic influence.

In this review, we have highlighted, and attempted to
associate, the major scientific breakthroughs that have re-
vealed clues to the pathophysiology of psoriasis. We aimed

to provide order to the various pathophysiological mech-
anisms that contribute to the development of psoriatic
plaques (Fig. 1). The exact sequence of events that lead to
the initiation of the psoriasis cascade remains unknown,
but the identification of early triggers and the role played
by keratinocytes may provide novel, promising therapeu-
tic targets for the prevention and control of psoriasis.

Key Message

Keratinocytes and immune cells play key roles in the pathogen-
esis of psoriasis.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Dr. Muscat Gordon (Department of
Medicine, Mater Dei Hospital, Msida), who helped with the design
of Figure 1.

Statement of Ethics

The authors have no ethical conflicts to disclose.

Disclosure Statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Author Contributions

F.B. designed the structure of the manuscript. F.B. and D.M.
wrote the manuscript. V.M. supervised the redaction of the manu-
script.

Appendix

IL-12/23 and IL-17 are therapeutic targets of psoriasis.

Monoclonal antibody target	Therapeutic agents
IL-12p40	Ustekinumab
IL-23p40	Briakinumab
IL-23p19	Tildrakizumab
	Guselkumab
IL-17A	Secukinumab
	Ixekizumab
IL-17RA	Brodalumab

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