

## Søren Egedal Degn

### Title: Beyond antibodies - Pleiotropic functions of B cells in autoimmune disease

Abstract: The incidence of autoimmune disease has risen rapidly in the past decades, particularly in Western societies. Today, autoimmune disease ranks third on the list of most prevalent causes of morbidity and mortality in the Western world. Many autoimmune diseases, such as systemic lupus erythematosus or rheumatoid arthritis, are characterized by affinity-matured antibodies recognizing autoantigens. Such autoantibodies can be generated by progeny of B cells in extrafollicular foci or in germinal centers in secondary lymphoid tissues, and autoantibody generation is a well-recognized component of B cell-driven autoimmunity. However, beyond their role as precursors of antibody-producing cells, numerous recent studies have suggested additional roles for B cells in driving autoimmune disease, including in autoimmune conditions traditionally considered T cell-driven. Using a novel chimeric model of lupus-like autoimmunity, my group is investigating these pleiotropic roles, and I will present recent data on the contribution of autoreactive B cells to early events in break of tolerance.

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