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Assistant Professor Susmit Suvas Unravels How the Immune System Works

T cells are a type of **white blood cell**, or **lymphocyte**, that plays a central role in our body's **immune system**. Following a **viral** infection that reduces the number of T cells, the immune system responds by replenishing the T cell population, a process called homeostatic expansion. Although such expansion is good for maintaining your body's ability to fight future infections, it can also trigger **autoimmunity**, where the immune system attacks your own body. Assistant Professor **Susmit Suvas**, of the **Department of Biological Sciences**, examined this process in a recent paper titled **Homeostatic Expansion of CD4+ T cells Upregulates VLA-4 and Exacerbates HSV-Induced Corneal Immunopathology** (**Microbes and Infection**, Volume 10, Pages 1192-1200, 2008). Suvas and his collaborators concluded that "homeostatic expansion of T cells, as could occur in a virus-induced lymphopenia, may generate cells with enhanced effector function that can contribute to tissue damage."

SUMMARY

T cells are a type of white blood cell, or lymphocyte, that plays a central role in our body's immune system. Following a viral infection that reduces the number of T cells, the immune system responds by replenishing the T cell population, a process called homeostatic expansion.

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