

Identifying the ‘Achilles Heel’ of type 1 diabetes

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Abstract

When Thetis dipped her son Achilles into the River Styx to make him immortal, she held him by the Heel, which was not submerged, and thus created a weak spot that proved deadly for Achilles. Millennia later, Achilles Heel is part of today’s lexicon meaning an area of weakness or a vulnerable spot that causes failure. Also implied is that an Achilles Heel is often missed, forgotten or underappreciated, until it is under attack, and then failure is fatal. Paris killed Achilles with an arrow ‘guided by the Gods’. At the International Congress of the Immunology of Diabetes Society, 2018, five leading experts were asked to present the case for a particular cell/element that could represent the Achilles Heel of T1D. Their arguments are summarized here, to make this case.

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