

Lymphology 28 (1995) 196-207

**IMMUNE SURVEILLANCE OF THE ORAL CAVITY AND
LYMPHOCYTE MIGRATION: RELEVANCE FOR ALCOHOL
ABUSERS**

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ABSTRACT

The health of the oral cavity is threatened by a variety of microorganisms. Impaired immune surveillance of the oral environment contributes to the development of infectious processes and tumors of the mouth. Elucidation of the physiological mechanisms that determine and control oral immune surveillance is crucial to an understanding of these oral diseases. The ability of lymphocytes to migrate is critical for successful immune surveillance. The cardinal facets of lymphocyte migration are reviewed here in the context of the oral cavity. One mechanism by which alcohol acts as an important cofactor in the onset and development of oral diseases is hypothesized to be through impaired lymphocyte migration to and from peri-oral lymphoid tissue.