

AMA Manual of Style

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Complement

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It is estimated that one C3b deposited on an organism can become four million in about 4 min. M. K. Liszewski and J. P. Atkinson(p922) The term complement refers to a group of serum proteins activated sequentially and rapidly in a cascade that produces molecules providing resistance to pathogens. The system was named in 1899 for its complementarity with antibodies in destroying microbes. Current nomenclature derives largely from the 1968 World Health Organization Bulletin “Nomenclature of Complement,” with subsequent modifications as mechanisms of action were further elucidated. Three complement activation pathways are recognized: the classical pathway (activation by antibody), the