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Sommario/riassunto	Apoptosis, or programmed cell death, is a necessary process by which a cell may die without adversely affecting its environment. It plays a crucial role in normal development, and in the body's defence mechanisms against disease. Too much cell death is destructive, leading to neurodegenerative diseases and impaired development. Conversely, too little cell death can lead to an increased susceptibility

to cancer and sustained viral infection. Apoptosis is a matter of balanceDramatic progress has been made in the study of apoptosis over the past decade. One of the most rapidly expanding knowl