Highlights from Recent Cancer Literature

Anti-VEGF/VEGFR Therapy for Cancer: Reassessing the Target
Basel Sitohy, Janice A. Nagy, and Harold F. Dvorak

Nodal Expression and Detection in Cancer: Experience and Challenges
Luigi Strizzi, Katharine M. Hardy, Dawn A. Kirschmann, Lars Ahrlund-Richter, and Mary J.C. Hendrix

Detection of Redundant Fusion Transcripts as Biomarkers or Disease-Specific Therapeutic Targets in Breast Cancer

Concordant Release of Glycolysis Proteins into the Plasma Preceding a Diagnosis of ER+ Breast Cancer
Lynn M. Amon, Sharon J. Pitteri, Christopher I. Li, Martin McIntosh, Jon J. Laid, Mary Disis, Peggy Porter, Chee Hong Wong, Qing Zhang, Paul Lampe, Ross L. Prentice, and Samir M. Hanash

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Dermatan Sulfate Is Involved in the Tumorigenic Properties of Esophageal Squamous Cell Carcinoma
Martin A. Thelin, Katrin J. Svensson, Xiaofeng Shi, Mariam Bagher, Jakob Axellson, Anna Isinger-Ekstrand, Toin H. van Kuppevelt, Jan Johannsson, Mef Nilbert, Joseph Zaia, Mattias Belting, Marco Maccarana, and Anders Malmstrom

Genetic Deficiency in Plasma Protein HRG Enhances Tumor Growth and Metastasis by Exacerbating Immune Escape and Vessel Abnormalization

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1964
Densely Granulated Murine NK Cells Eradicate Large Solid Tumors
Rebecca B. Liu, Boris Engels, Ainhoa Arina, Karin Schreiber, Elizabeth Hyjek, Andrea Schietinger, David C. Binder, Eric Butz, Thomas Krausz, Donald A. Rowley, Bana Jabri, and Hans Schreiber
Précis: If present, high levels of a cytokine implicated in immune memory in the tumor microenvironment will promote the accumulation of densely granulated natural killer cells that are capable of eradicating large solid tumors.

1975
Increased CD8+ T-cell Function following Castration and Immunization Is Countered by Parallel Expansion of Regulatory T Cells
Shuai Tang, Miranda L. Moore, Jason M. Grayson, and Purnima Dubey
Précis: Findings show that androgen ablation expands both the effector and inhibitory arms of the immune response to tumors, resulting in only a transient enhancement of immune function.

1986
A Potent Vaccination Strategy That Circumvents Lymphodepletion for Effective Antitumor Adoptive T-cell Therapy
Hyun-Il Cho, Eduardo Reyes-Vargas, Julio C. Delgado, and Esteban Celis
Précis: Findings suggest a simple, effective strategy to improve adoptive T-cell therapy for melanoma treatment that avoids complications associated with lymphodepletion and high-dose interleukin-2 treatment.

1996
p53/HMGB1 Complexes Regulate Autophagy and Apoptosis
Précis: These insights provide a novel link between a chromatin-binding factor and p53 in the cross-regulation of apoptosis and autophagy during cell stress, providing insights into carcinogenesis during stress-associated tumor development.

2006
INT6/EIF3E Interacts with ATM and Is Required for Proper Execution of the DNA Damage Response in Human Cells
Christelle Morris, Nozomi Tomimatsu, Derek J. Richard, David Cluet, Sandeep Burma, Kum Kum Khanna, and Pierre Jalinot
Précis: Findings reveal a novel and important function in DNA repair that may be closely involved in the onset of breast cancers initiated by defects in the DNA damage response.

2017
FGFR2 Isoforms Support Epithelial–Stromal Interactions in Thyroid Cancer Progression
Miao Gao, Wei Liu, Stefano Serra, Sylvia L. Asa, and Shereen Ezzat
Précis: This study highlights the importance of the context in the tumor of the regulatory properties of different growth factor receptor isoforms by illustrating how alternative splicing can confer different functions depending on whether the receptor is expressed in tumor versus tumor stromal cells.

2028
Effect of Depo-Medroxyprogesterone Acetate on Breast Cancer Risk among Women 20 to 44 Years of Age
Christopher I. Li, Elisabeth F. Beaber, Mei Tzu Chen Tang, Peggy L. Porter, Janet R. Daling, and Kathleen E. Malone
Précis: The most common injectable contraceptive may increase breast cancer risk among young women who use it.

2036
Characterization of Gene–Environment Interactions for Colorectal Cancer Susceptibility Loci
Précis: This study reveals a colon cancer risk locus variant that appears to be modified by vegetable consumption, motivating further work to elucidate environmental influences on cancer susceptibility genes.
AZD4547: An Orally Bioavailable, Potent, and Selective Inhibitor of the Fibroblast Growth Factor Receptor Tyrosine Kinase Family

Precis: A potent and highly selective small-molecule inhibitor may offer a broad-based approach for treatment of many kinds of tumors that involve activation of the fibroblast growth factor receptor.

Intratracheal Administration of a Nanoparticle-Based Therapy with the Angiotensin II Type 2 Receptor Gene Attenuates Lung Cancer Growth
Atsushi Kawabata, Abdulgader Baoum, Naomi Ohta, Stephanie Jacquez, Gwi-Moon Seo, Cory Berkland, and Masaaki Tamura

Precis: Findings offer a preclinical validation for a nontoxic cationic, peptide-based nanoparticle vector that can deliver genes via the trachea for effective treatment of lung cancers.

Common Variation at BARD1 Results in the Expression of an Oncogenic Isoform That Influences Neuroblastoma Susceptibility and Oncogenicity

Precis: Genetic predisposition studies not only can identify mechanisms of cancer susceptibility but also can reveal therapeutically relevant oncogenic vulnerabilities that may be exploitable clinically.

Tumor Vascular Microenvironment Determines Responsiveness to Photodynamic Therapy
Amanda L. Maas, Shirron L. Carter, E. Paul Wileto, Joann Miller, Min Yuan, Guoqiang Yu, Amy C. Durham, and Theresa M. Busch

Precis: Collagen in the basement membrane of vascular cells is a site of drug localization and treatment effect in photodynamic therapy, with implications that may help to improve the effectiveness of these treatments for cancer.

Deficiency in Mammalian Histone H2B Ubiquitin Ligase Bre1 (Rnf20/Rnf40) Leads to Replication Stress and Chromosomal Instability

Precis: Genomic instability caused by deficiency in a histone ubiquitin ligase may be an important initial step in acquisition of an invasive phenotype by an early-stage noninvasive tumor.

Mitigating Age-Related Immune Dysfunction Heights the Efficacy of Tumor Immunotherapy in Aged Mice

Precis: The ability of the immune system to control cancer is increasingly compromised with a patient's age, but emerging strategies to reprogram immunity in the elderly may heighten these patients' ability to respond efficiently to cancer immunotherapy.

"OA02" Peptide Facilitates the Precise Targeting of Paclitaxel-Loaded Micellar Nanoparticles to Ovarian Cancer In Vivo
Kai Xiao, Yuanpei Li, Joyce S. Lee, Abby M. Genik, Tiffany Dong, Gabriel Fung, Eduardo Sanchez, Li Xing, Holland R. Cheng, Juntao Luo, and Kit S. Lam

Precis: Findings offer preclinical proof-of-concept for a peptidyl nanoformulation with significant potential to improve treatment of patients with ovarian cancer.

Type I and II IFNs Inhibit Merkel Cell Carcinoma via Modulation of the Merkel Cell Polyomavirus T Antigens
Christoph Willmes, Christian Adam, Miriam Alb, Lena Völker, Roland Houben, Jürgen C. Becker, and David Schrama

Precis: Merkel cell carcinoma, a rare but highly aggressive skin cancer driven by a polyomavirus tumor antigen, may be susceptible to IFN therapies found to modulate the antigen's expression.
CDK8 Maintains Tumor Dedifferentiation and Embryonic Stem Cell Pluripotency

Adam S. Adler, Mark L. McCleland, Tom Truong, Shari Lau, Zora Modrusan, Tim M. Soukup, Merone Roose-Girma, Elizabeth M. Blackwood, and Ron Firestein

Précis: Therapeutic targeting of the cyclin-dependent kinase CDK8 may specifically blunt stem-like properties in cancer cells.

Expression of a Truncated Active Form of VDAC1 in Lung Cancer Associates with Hypoxic Cell Survival and Correlates with Progression to Chemotherapy Resistance

M. Christiane Brahimi-Horn, Danya Ben-Hail, Marius Ilie, Pierre Gounon, Matthieu Rouleau, Véronique Hofman, Jérôme Doyen, Bernard Mari, Varda Shoshan-Barmatz, Paul Hofman, Jacques Pouyssegur, and Nathalie M. Mazure

Précis: Blockade of a mitochondria anion channel may improve response to lung cancer therapy by restoring apoptotic sensitivity and circumventing chemoresistance in hypoxic tumor cells.

ABOUT THE COVER

The HIV-1 TAT peptide was dimerized and used to formulate a nanoparticle vector (dTAT NP) to leverage efficient tumor-targeted gene delivery following intratracheal administration. In vitro expression efficiency for dTAT NP–encapsulated luciferase or angiotensin II type 2 receptor (AT2R) plasmid DNA (pDNA) revealed effective pDNA transfection with negligible cytotoxicity. In orthotopic tumor grafts, immunohistochemical analysis confirmed that dTAT NP successfully delivered pDNA to the tumor, and gene expression in tumor tissues persisted at least 14 days after intratracheal administration. Bolus administration of dTAT NP–encapsulated AT2R or TRAIL pDNA, both endogenous apoptosis inducers, markedly attenuated tumor growth. For details, see article by Kawabata and colleagues on page 2057.

OBITUARY

Ricardo Renzo Brentani: In Memoriam (1937–2011)

Luisa L. Villa and Eduardo L. Franco