BREAKING ADVANCES

2023 Highlights from Recent Cancer Literature

REVIEWS

2025 Genetic Susceptibility to Triple-Negative Breast Cancer
Kristen N. Stevens, Celine M. Vachon, and Fergus J. Couch

2031 The Multifaceted Role of the Microenvironment in Liver Metastasis: Biology and Clinical Implications

PRIORITY REPORTS

2044 CUL3 and NRF2 Mutations Confer an NRF2 Activation Phenotype in a Sporadic Form of Papillary Renal Cell Carcinoma
Aikseng Ooi, Karl Dykema, Asif Ansari, David Petillo, John Snider, Richard Kahnoski, John Anema, David Craig, John Carpten, Bin-Tean Teh, and Kyle A. Furge

2052 Differential Contributions of STAT5A and STAT5B to Stress Protection and Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitor Resistance of Chronic Myeloid Leukemia Stem/Progenitor Cells

CLINICAL STUDIES

2059 Plasmin Is a Novel Marker for Circulating Tumor Cells Undergoing the Epithelial–Mesenchymal Transition and Is Associated with Colorectal Cancer Prognosis

PRECIS: This study establishes a superior blood-based prognostic marker to gauge the risk of relapse in metastatic colorectal cancer, surpassing existing clinicopathologic factors.

INTEGRATED SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGIES

2070 Targeting uPAR with Antagonistic Recombinant Human Antibodies in Aggressive Breast Cancer
Aaron M. LeBeau, Sai Duriseti, Stephanie T. Murphy, Francois Pepin, Byron Hann, Joe W. Gray, Henry F. VanBrocklin, and Charles S. Craik

PRECIS: Findings provide preclinical proof-of-concept that antagonistic human uPAR antibodies can provide useful diagnostic and therapeutic properties to improve treatment of aggressive triple-negative breast cancers.

2082 Enhanced Sonographic Imaging to Diagnose Lymph Node Metastasis: Importance of Blood Vessel Volume and Density
Li Li, Shiro Mori, Mizuho Kodama, Maya Sakamoto, Shoki Takahashi, and Tetsuya Kodama

PRECIS: Ultrasoundography methods to detect early changes in blood vessel volume and density in lymph nodes containing metastatic cells may offer earlier and more accurate criteria for diagnosis of lymph node metastasis, a critical staging and prognostic marker in many cancers.
A Multifunctional Chimeric Chaperone Serves as a Novel Immune Modulator Inducing Therapeutic Antitumor Immunity
Xiaofei Yu, Chunqing Guo, Huanfa Yi, Jie Qian, Paul B. Fisher, John R. Subjeck, and Xiang-Yang Wang

Précis: A novel strategy targets the immunosuppressive tumor environment using a chimeric immune chaperone, leading to systemic T cell-mediated tumor inhibition.

Aire Deficiency Promotes TRP-1–Specific Immune Rejection of Melanoma
Meng-Lei Zhu, Anil Nagavalli, and Maureen A. Su

Précis: Findings define a pathway of autoimmune control in thymic epithelial cells that can modulate immune responses against melanoma in otherwise healthy individuals, with implications for enhancing immune responses to this deadly skin cancer.

Autoimmune Gastritis Mediated by CD4+ T Cells Promotes the Development of Gastric Cancer

Précis: Findings provide the first direct evidence that autoimmune gastritis supports the development of stomach cancer and also offer a useful new model to deepen knowledge of how inflammation drives malignancy in this setting.

Anti-CD20 Antibody Promotes Cancer Escape via Enrichment of Tumor-Evoked Regulatory B Cells Expressing Low Levels of CD20 and CD137L
Monika Ehnman, Edoardo Missiaglia, Erika Folestad, John N. Rovira, Carina Strell, Janet Shipley, Arne Ostman, and Ulf Eriksson

Précis: Distinct patterns of ligand-dependent activity for the two major forms of PDGF signaling were found in either the stromal or tumor cell compartments of aggressive muscle cell tumors, both of clinical relevance.

Distinct Effects of Ligand-Induced PDGFRα and PDGFRβ Signaling in the Human Rhabdomyosarcoma Tumor Cell and Stroma Cell Compartments
Monika Ehnman, Edorado Missiaglia, Erik Folestad, Joanna Selle, Carina Strell, Khin Thway, Bertha Brodin, Kristian Pietras, Janet Shipley, Arne Ostman, and Ulf Eriksson

Précis: This study offers novel mechanistic insights into why Rb deficiency is so closely associated with the development of osteosarcoma.

FOXP3 Regulates Sensitivity of Cancer Cells to Irradiation by Transcriptional Repression of BRCA1
Weiquan Li, Hiroto Katoh, Hiroto Katoh, Li-hong Wang, Xiaochun Yu, Zhanwen Du, Xiaoli Yan, Pan Zheng, and Yang Liu

Précis: A transcription factor implicated in immune tolerance and mutated in prostate and breast cancer cells is reported here to regulate DNA repair through the BRCA1 pathway, possibly directly linking DNA repair processes to immune escape in cancer.

Sunlight UV-Induced Skin Cancer Relies upon Activation of the p38α Signaling Pathway
Kangdong Liu, Donghoon Yu, Yong-Yeon Cho, Ann M. Bode, Weiya Ma, Ke Yao, Shengqing Li, Jixia Li, G. Tim Bowden, Ziming Dong, and Zigang Dong

Précis: Solar UV, which includes UVA and UVB wavelengths contributing to skin cancers, must activate a MAPK-related stress pathway, with implications for prevention and treatment of these common malignancies.
FOXO3a Is a Major Target of Inactivation by PI3K/AKT Signaling in Aggressive Neuroblastoma
Evan E. Santo, Peter Stroeken, Peter V. Sluis, Jan Koster, Rogier Versteeg, and Ellen M. Westerhout

Precis: This study highlights a pivotal role for FOXO3a in understanding the pathobiology of neuroblastoma and suggests its utility as a biomarker for prognosis and therapeutic responses to PI3K/AKT inhibitors being developed clinically.

Proteomic Analysis of Ubiquitin Ligase KEAP1 Reveals Associated Proteins That Inhibit NRF2 Ubiquitination
Bridgid E. Hast, Dennis Goldfarb, Kathleen M. Mulvaney, Michael A. Hast, Priscilla F. Siesser, Feng Yan, D. Neil Hayes, and Michael B. Major

Precis: Findings offer mechanistic insight into the broad cytoprotection afforded cancer cells that activate the NRF2 transcription factor, as a route to escape killing by cytotoxic therapeutic treatments.

Therapeutics, Targets, and Chemical Biology

Erlotinib Prolongs Survival in Pancreatic Cancer by Blocking Gemcitabine-Induced MAPK Signals
Koji Miyabayashi, Hideaki Ijichi, Dai Mohri, Motohisa Tada, Keisuke Yamamoto, Yoshinari Asaoka, Tsuneo Ikemoue, Keisuke Tateishi, Yousuke Nakai, Hiroyuki Isayama, Yasuyuki Morishita, Masao Onnata, Harold L. Moses, and Kazuhiko Koike

Precis: Findings address clinical questions concerning why the EGFR inhibitor erlotinib benefits KRAS-mutant pancreatic cancer patients when combined with gemcitabine.

mTOR Inhibitors Block Kaposi Sarcoma Growth by Inhibiting Essential Autocrine Growth Factors and Tumor Angiogenesis

Precis: Findings offer a new disease model and preclinical proof-of-concept for the use of mTOR inhibitors to treat a major HIV-associated cancer as well as related tumors that are also derived from endothelial cells.

Targeting the Deregulated Spliceosome Core Machinery in Cancer Cells Triggers mTOR Blockade and Autophagy
Virginie Quidville, Samar Alsaftadi, Aicha Goubar, Frédéric Commo, Véronique Scott, Catherine Pioche-Durieu, Isabelle Girault, Sonia Baconnais, Eric Le Cam, Vladimir Lazar, Suzette Delaloge, Mahasti Saghatchian, Patricia Pautier, Philippe Morice, Philippe Dessen, Stéphan Vagner, and Fabrice André

Precis: Certain Sm components of snRNPs involved in RNA splicing may constitute appealing therapeutic targets for a generalized strategy to treat cancer.

HDAC6 Inhibition Restores Ciliary Expression and Decreases Tumor Growth
Sergio A. Gradilone, Brynn N. Radtke, Pamela S. Bogert, Bing Q. Huang, Gabriella B. Gajdos, and Nicholas F. LaRusso

Precis: HDAC6 is essential in epithelial cells for formation of the primary cilia, organelles that are essential and sufficient to organize normal cell structure, growth, and function but that are disrupted during neoplastic transformation.

Prevention and Epidemiology

Common Genetic Polymorphisms Modify the Effect of Smoking on Absolute Risk of Bladder Cancer

Precis: Smoking prevention strategies may have more public health impact on subsets of the population that are at elevated genetic risk.
Cisplatin Resistance Associated with PARP Hyperactivation

Precis: Results affect the use of PARP inhibitors in lung adenocarcinoma patients who relapse after cisplatin-based chemotherapy by suggesting a mechanism-based biomarker that can predict responses to PARP inhibitor monotherapy.

The Insulin Receptor Negatively Regulates the Action of Pseudomonas Toxin-Based Immunotoxins and Native Pseudomonas Toxin
Xiu Fen Liu, David J. FitzGerald, and Ira Pastan

Precis: Attenuating the expression of the insulin receptor can specifically enhance the cytotoxic action of certain immunotoxins and has potential utility for immunoconjugates used in cancer treatment.

Inhibition of Protein Kinase CK2 Reduces Cyp24a1 Expression and Enhances 1,25-Dihydroxyvitamin D3 Antitumor Activity in Human Prostate Cancer Cells
Wei Luo, Wei-Dong Yu, Yingyu Ma, Mikhail Chernov, Donald L. Trump, and Candace S. Johnson

Precis: Results suggest an approach to enhance the potency of the anticancer effects of vitamin D3 used to treat certain cancers by retarding the core mechanism in its degradation and clearance.

Downregulation of the Novel Tumor Suppressor DHRAS1 Predicts Poor Prognosis in Esophageal Squamous Cell Carcinoma
Ying-Hui Zhu, Li Fu, Lelei Chen, Yan-Ru Qin, Haibo Liu, Fajun Xie, Tingting Zeng, Sui-Sui Dong, Jiangchao Li, Yan Li, Yongdong Dai, Dan Xie, and Xin-Yuan Guan

Precis: A novel Ras-like protein is discovered to be pivotal to the pathogenesis of esophageal cancers that tend to be aggressive and rising in incidence in developed countries.

Cholesterol Loading and Ultrastable Protein Interactions Determine the Level of Tumor Marker Required for Optimal Isolation of Cancer Cells
Jayati Jain, Gianluca Veggiati, and Mark Howarth

Precis: This important study systematically determined the factors affecting the isolation of cancer cells, with the potential to generally improve cancer diagnosis, prognosis, and therapeutic monitoring in patients.

A CD90+ Tumor-Initiating Cell Population with an Aggressive Signature and Metastatic Capacity in Esophageal Cancer
Kwan Ho Tang, Yong dong Dai, Man Tong, Yuen Piu Chan, Pak Shing Kwan, Li Fu, Yan Ru Qin, Sai Wah Tsao, Hong Lok Lung, Maria L. Lung, Daniel K. Tong, Simon Law, Kwok Wah Chan, Stephanie Ma, and Xin Yuan Guan

Precis: This is the first study to reliably identify a cancer stem cell population in esophageal cancer, an often aggressive disease with a rising incidence in developed countries that has no effective treatment.

TGF-β Mediates Homing of Bone Marrow–Derived Human Mesenchymal Stem Cells to Glioma Stem Cells
Naoki Shinojima, Anwar Hossain, Tatsuya Takezaki, Juan Fueyo, Joy Gumin, Feng Gao, Felix Nwajei, Frank C. Marini, Michael Andreeff, Jun-Ichi Kuratsu, and Frederick F. Lang

Precis: Findings affect the possible use of bone marrow–derived mesenchymal stem cells as delivery vehicles to treat deadly brain cancers by targeting the cancer stem-like cells that sustain these cancers.

Pirfenidone Inhibits Pancreatic Cancer Desmoplasia by Regulating Stellate Cells
Shingo Kozono, Kenoki Ohuchida, Daiki Eguchi, Naoki Ikennaga, Kenji Fujiwara, Lin Cui, Kazuhiro Mizumoto, and Masao Tanaka

Precis: A promising antitumor agent may act by targeting the desmoplastic reaction in cancer, which generates a supportive fibroblast microenvironment particularly prevalent in pancreatic cancer.
Sirtuin-1 Regulates Acinar-to-Ductal Metaplasia and Supports Cancer Cell Viability in Pancreatic Cancer

Precis: This study addresses a key factor in the disruption of acinar cell differentiation in the pancreas, a situation that predisposes to the development of pancreatic cancer.

ST6Gal-I Protein Expression Is Upregulated in Human Epithelial Tumors and Correlates with Stem Cell Markers in Normal Tissues and Colon Cancer Cell Lines
Amanda F. Swindall, Angelina I. Londoño-Joshi, Matthew J. Schultz, Naomi Fineberg, Donald J. Buchsbaum, and Susan L. Bellis

Precis: Results identify a sialyltransferase that may serve as a regulator of the stem-like phenotype in both normal and cancer cell populations.

ABOUT THE COVER
Antibodies against epithelial cell adhesion molecule (EpCAM) and cytokeratins are commonly used to capture and detect circulating tumor cells (CTC). However, these approaches are potentially hampered by the fact that migratory cancer cells may undergo a process called the epithelial-mesenchymal transition that is characterized by downregulation of epithelial markers, including cytokeratins and EpCAM. Images are of EpCAM(−)/CD45(−) circulating tumor cells immunostained with antibodies against cytokeratin (red, top), PLS3 (green, middle), and vimentin (orange, bottom). All sections were counterstained with DAPI (blue). PLS3 was expressed on EpCAM(−) CTCs that displayed reduced cytokeratin staining, accompanied by strong staining for vimentin. For details, see article by Yokobori and colleagues on page 2059.