and 6 MHI). Following a single dose of E: M C_{max} 1.16 (0.620–1.87) vs 1.28 (0.241–2.35) μg/mL, T_{max} 2 (1–6) vs 6 (2–8) hours, M AUC_{0-inf} 30.9 (21.0−79.5) vs 41.5 (4.71−80.5) μg hr/mL, and M clearance 4.86 (1.89–7.15) vs 3.88 (1.86−31.9) L/hr in the AHF and MHI cohorts respectively. Plasma PB data available for 10 pts (7 AFH and 3 MHI) shows the percent of E bound is 97.3 (96.6−98.2) in AHF vs 97.2 (96.2−98.0) in MHI. Clinical data are available for 22 pts (16 AHF and 6 MHI). One MHI pt discontinued study prior to starting drug and is not included in the safety discussion. Common grade 1–2 adverse events related to E include diarrhea [4 (25%) vs 1 (17%)], nausea [6 (38%) vs 2 (33%)], acneiform rash [3 (19%) vs 2 (33%)], anorexia [4 (25%) vs 1 (17%)] and fatigue [4 (25%) vs 0 (0%)] in the AHF and MHI cohorts respectively. In the AHF cohort, 3 pts (19%) experienced tx related to E, including 1 pt (6%) with grade 3 diarrhea and 2 pts (13%) with grade 3 acneiform rash. No grade 3 related tx have been reported in the MHI cohort. There have been no grade 4 tx or serious adverse events related to E reported in either cohort. Preliminary data suggests that MHI may increase systemic exposure to E with no effect on plasma PB and drug-related tx. Enrollment into the MHI cohort is ongoing. Updated information will be presented.

413 POSTER

Discovery and characterization of a series of Axl kinase inhibitors using the CLIMB process

C. Grand, H. Vankayalapati, J. Lamb, D. Bearss. *SuperGen, Incorporated, Salt Lake City, USA*

Axl is a unique receptor tyrosine kinase, which has been implicated in inhibition of apoptosis, especially through counteraction of the pro-apoptotic activities of E1A, and is emerging as a viable target for a number of human malignancies, both solid and hematological. This protection is believed to operate through the action of Src and PI3K (via the Akt pathway), which are known proto-oncogenes themselves. Expression of Axl and its substrate, Gas6, has been implicated in defense against apoptosis in a variety of tumor subtypes. Overexpression of Axl in cells of the myeloid lineage also leads to a non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus-like, or Type II diabetes phenotype. For these reasons, it is clear that there is an unfilled need for small molecule inhibitors of Axl kinase in the clinic, and we have set out to create such an entity. We have developed a proprietary drug discovery process, called CLIMB™, which we utilized for the identification of novel Axl modulating compounds with therapeutic potential. In traditional small molecule screening, as many as several million compounds may be tested in order to identify the few that interact selectively with a disease-related protein target. CLIMB™ can achieve similar results by screening as few as several hundred computationally selected compounds. CLIMB™ screening is based on the clustering of representative chemical structures and pharmacophores that embody our large virtual library of nearly 50 million compound structures. A homology model for Axl kinase was built using the known crystal structures for insulin-like growth factor-1 receptor and c-Met tyrosine kinases, and subjected to docking with an expansive virtual library of in-house and commercially available compounds. After passage through a series of in silico filters designed to predict pharmacological and physicochemical parameters, the “most drug-like” candidates with favorable predicted binding energies were selected for further biological and biochemical testing. Several compounds resulting from the computational screen bore significant activity (low micromolar to nanomolar) against recombinant Axl protein in an in vitro assay, validating the effectiveness of the CLIMB™ process in reducing time and cost of early lead identification. These compounds also demonstrate potent cell-based activity in a variety of tumor cell lines and in xenograft animal models, making them promising anti-cancer therapeutic leads.

414 POSTER

Discovery and characterization of a small molecule inhibitor for pim-1 kinase

D. Bearss, C. Grand, J. Lamb, M. Lloyd, H. Vankayalapati. *SuperGen, Incorporated, Salt Lake City, USA*

The Pim-1 serine/threonine kinase is known to be involved in a number of cytokine signaling pathways as a downstream effector. Once activated, Pim-1 kinase causes progression of the cell cycle, inhibition of apoptosis, and modulation of other signal transduction pathways, including its own. Pim-1 kinase is also shown to effect activation of transcription factors like NFAT, p100, c-Myb, and Pap-1 and inhibition of others such as HP1. Normal expression of Pim-1 kinase is seen in cells of hematopoietic origin, such as fetal liver, thymus, spleen, and bone marrow, additionally expression is also seen in prostate and oral epithelial cells. Pim-1 kinase is believed to be involved in the initiation or progression of malignant transformation leading to malignancies including Burkitt’s lymphoma, prostate cancer, oral cancer, and diffuse large cell lymphomas, among others. We have identified a series of Pim-1 kinase inhibitors, based on a heretofore-unexploited pharmacophore, using our proprietary CLIMB™ drug discovery process. Through the use of CLIMB™, the published Pim-1 kinase crystal structure was used as a substrate for docking of a very large virtual library, composed of in-house and commercially available small molecules, to generate a subset of leads based on calculated binding energies. These leads were then screened using a number of in silico physicochemical and ADMET prediction algorithms to determine “druggable” leads which were most likely to be successful in a biological context. Lead candidates were initially screened using biochemical enzyme-based or cell-based assays. Cell-based activity was determined in Panc-1 (pancreas), A549 (non-small cell lung), and PC-3 (prostate) cancer cell lines. At an initial concentration of 100 micromolar numerous candidates inhibited cell growth by over 60% compared to untreated controls in a preliminary screen. In the Pim-1 in vitro kinase assay two candidates exhibited inhibitory activity with IC_{50} concentrations in the low micromolar range. The lead candidates for pim-1 kinase inhibitors discovered through the CLIMB™ process have shown good biochemical and biological activity, based off of physical screening of less than 100 compounds, chosen from a library of millions, each of which show activity at a considerable level. Based off of the two most promising lead candidates a series of analog candidates are currently being produced to refine inhibitory activity and pharmacokinetic characteristics.

415 POSTER

Discovery and characterization of novel small molecule inhibitors of polo-like kinase-1, using a computational development process

C. Olsen, C. Grand, H. Vankayalapati, X. Zhang, J. Redman, J. Sunseri, M. Lloyd, D. Bearss. *SuperGen, Incorporated, Salt Lake City, USA*

Polo-like kinases belong to a family of well-conserved kinases found throughout the eukaryotes. In humans, high levels of polo-like kinase-1 (Plk1) have been associated with poor prognosis in numerous cancer types including breast, colon, non-small cell lung cancer, and the difficult-to-treat pancreatic cancer, along with others, and has been validated as a target in these tumor types. Polo-like kinase-1 is a mitotic serine-threonine kinase which plays a very important role in the processes of centrosome separation, spindle formation and sister chromatid segregation. As well, it drives progression through the G2/M checkpoint by virtue of phosphorylation of Cdc25c, leading to an active Cdk1/CyclinB1 complex. RNA interference has shown that disruption of Plk-1 leads to such effects as mitotic arrest, cytokinetic failure and induction of apoptosis. Using our proprietary CLIMB™ drug discovery process, we have identified and synthesized a series of polo-like kinase-1 inhibitors. Using the Cdk1 crystal structure as a backbone, a homology model of polo-like kinase-1 was built and subjected to virtual docking algorithms in the context of a large in-house virtual collection of small molecules from a diversity of sources. Through the employment of several in silico predictors, compounds with strong binding interactions were ranked according to calculated ADMET properties and chemical characteristics (including solubility, partition coefficient, expected permeabilities and physical properties) before any in vitro assays were undertaken. This has allowed us to remove “non-druggable” leads before time and resources are wasted on development of undesirable compounds. Screening of lead candidates for inhibitory activity using the Z′-LYTE biochemical assay, which measures phosphorylation of a serine or threonine residue on a synthetic FRET-peptide by recombinant polo-like kinase-1, demonstrated that multiple lead candidates exhibited IC_{50} activities below 10 μM for the inhibition of polo-like kinase-1. This is significant, given that relatively few (less than 75) compounds from the computational screens have been tested, and all bear activity to some extent against the recombinant target. Cell-based testing on tumor cells also revealed considerable activity in cell culture. Analogs of these initial leads have been synthesized to improve their activity and specificity, giving way to a series of preclinical candidates for the treatment of a variety of cancer diseases.

416 POSTER

Identification of molecular targets in hepatocellular carcinoma

S.T. Cheung, S.T. Fan. *The University of Hong Kong, Surgery, HKG, Hong Kong*

Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is the major histological type of primary liver cancer. HCC is the fifth most common cancer and the third leading cancer killer worldwide, and is responsible for about half million new cases and almost as many deaths per year. Surgical resection in the form of partial hepatectomy or liver transplantation is the mainstay for curative treatment. However, only 20% of all patients are eligible for surgery because the majority of patients are diagnosed at advanced stage with intra- and/or extra-hepatic metastasis. Nonetheless, recurrence is still common after curative surgery with approximately 50% at 5-year. Prognosis

for unresectable HCC is even worse as chemotherapy response rate is low (less than 20%) with median survival duration less than a year. As HCC is highly malignant, there is an urgent need for an alternative novel therapeutic approach in addition to conventional clinical management.
Targeted cancer therapy is promising to limit non-specific toxicity and to improve therapeutic efficiency compared to conventional chemotherapy. Clinically approved therapeutic antibodies include trastuzumab (Herceptin) for metastatic breast cancer, bevacizumab (Avastin) for colorectal/lung cancer, and cetuximab (Erbitux) for colorectal cancer. However, no therapeutic antibody has been approved for HCC, and the research literatures on the molecular targets in HCC are limited. To address this issue, we have systematically examined the global gene expression profiles of various liver tissues by cDNA microarray to better understand the molecular signatures of liver cancers (Cancer Res 2002; Mol Biol Cell 2002). More than 200 liver samples have been examined, and genes differentially expressed between HCCs and their adjacent non-tumor liver tissues (chronic hepatitis and cirrhosis), and normal liver tissues have been identified. Differential expression of a number of genes was shown to associate with aggressive tumor features, including GPAA1, CLDN-10, AA454543, GEP and CYP2E1. Down-regulation of expression in some of these genes by anti-sense approach revealed inhibition of growth and invasion, and these genes would be promising novel therapeutic target for HCC.

417 POSTER

Membrane Type 1-Matrix Metalloproteinase (MT1-MMP) is overexpressed in lung cancer and can cleave peptide-conjugates

J. Atkinson[1], R. Falconer[1], C. Pennington[2], S. Martin[1], V. Anikin[3], A. Mearns[3], D. Edwards[2], L. Patterson[1], P. Loadman[1], J. Gill[1]. *[1]Institute of Cancer Therapeutics, University of Bradford, Bradford, United Kingdom; [2]School of Biological Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom; [3]Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Bradford Royal Infirmary, Bradford, United Kingdom*

Matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) activity is required for tumour growth and metastasis. This study assessed the expression of membrane-type 1 MMP (MT1-MMP) in human Non Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) specimens and paired histologically normal lung tissue. Analysis of cell lines, xenografts and NSCLC specimens (representative of all stages and grades), as well as corresponding histologically normal lung tissue, was undertaken by quantitative Real Time PCR (qRT-PCR). A statistically higher level of MT1-MMP expression was observed in tumour tissue relative to histologically normal lung samples. MT1-MMP activity, as measured in cell lines and xenografts by ELISA assay, demonstrated a strong correlation between MT1-MMP activity and gene expression levels. This indicates that qRT-PCR data gives a realistic indication of MT1-MMP activity in NSCLC. Following demonstration of selective expression, an MT1-MMP targeted peptide-conjugate was synthesised using solid-phase peptide synthesis. This targeted peptide conjugate is shown by liquid chromatography mass spectrometry techniques to be preferentially cleaved in MT1-MMP expressing tumour homogenates relative to mouse plasma and liver homogenates. Cell lines and xenografts expressing MT1-MMP (as determined by qRT-PCR and western blotting) efficiently cleave the peptide-conjugate to release the active agent, whilst those negative for MT1-MMP do not. Clinically derived NSCLC tumours expressing MT1-MMP are also able to release the active agent whereas the peptide-conjugate was stable in serum from the same patients. This study shows that MMPs are potential therapeutic targets in NSCLC.

418 POSTER

H_2O_2-associated DNA-damage induces acetylation-dependent upregulation of p21WAF1 expression in colorectal cancer cells

C. Habold[1], H. Gali-Muhtasib[3], K. Korkmaz[4,5], R. Hartig[6], A. Roessner[2], R. Schneider-Stock[2]. *[1]CNRS, DEPE, Strasbourg, France; [2]University of Magdeburg, Institute of Pathology, Magdeburg, Germany; [3]American University of Beirut, Lebanon; [4]Ege University, Engineering Faculty, Izmir, Turkey; [5]Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center, San Diego, USA; [6]University of Magdeburg, Institute of Immunology, Magdeburg, Germany*

Background: Tumor cells are frequently subjected to oxyradicals generated by immune cells or after treatment with anticancer drugs. It is only poorly understood how oxidative stress contributes to histone modifications and associated alterations of gene expression
Material and Methods: To address this question, we studied the p53 target gene and cell cycle regulator $p21^{WAF1}$ after H_2O_2 treatment (30mM, 3min) with and without pre-treatment with the histone deacetylase inhibitor trichostatin A (TSA) in HCT116 colorectal cancer cells. The MTT and cytotoxicity assay was used to measure cell viability and cytotoxicity. mRNA expression was determined by *real-time* RT-PCR on a LightCycler, and protein expression was detected by Western Blotting. Promoter status of the $p21^{WAF1}$ gene was analyzed by chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP). HDAC activity was determined using a HDAC fluorimetric assay.
Results: In HCT116 cells, H_2O_2 caused G_2/M arrest that was accompanied by a strong increase in p53 and $p21^{WAF1}$ expression. Chromatin immunoprecipitation experiments demonstrated that the oxidative stress induced the recruitment of p53 to the $p21^{WAF1}$ promoter and concomitant histone H4 acetylation. Pretreatment of the cells with TSA reinforced these effects through several pathways. Firstly, TSA prevented H4 deacetylation. Secondly, it caused the dissociation of HDAC1 from the $p21^{WAF1}$ promoter, thus allowing for higher p53 binding efficiency. Finally, TSA enhanced acetylation of p53, increasing its binding efficiency at the $p21^{WAF1}$ promoter. All these mechanisms contributed to the increase in $p21^{WAF1}$ expression and to the ensuing G_2/M arrest.
Conclusions: These results suggest that the acetylation-dependent up-regulation of $p21^{WAF1}$ seems to be a common principle after H_2O_2-based DNA damage. TSA in combination with a H_2O_2-based anticancer drug might have remarkable antiproliferative activity in colorectal cancer cells.

419 POSTER

Defining Hsp90 as inhibitor of apoptosis in small cell lung cancer

G. Chiosis, A. Rodina, J. Kim, J. Aguirre, K. Moulick, E. Caldas Lopes, N. Wu, Y. She. *Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Medicine and Molecular Pharmacology & Chemistry, New York, USA*

Apoptosis plays an essential role in the elimination of mutated or transformed cells from the body. In order to survive, cancer cells and their precursors must develop highly efficient, and usually multiple, mechanisms to avoid apoptosis. The complexity of apoptosis resistance in lung cancer is especially apparent; in many such cancers there is not only loss of proapoptotic proteins, but also activation or overexpression of anti-apoptotic molecules. Among these, several caspases including caspase-1, -4, -8 and -10 are either not expressed or are inactivated in small cell lung cancer (SCLC) cell lines and tumors, suggesting that major perturbations in the death receptor pathway and other aspects of apoptosis characterize this tumor type. These defects ultimately result in resistance to routine chemotherapy accounting for the poor prognosis of SCLC. Whereas this disease often initially responds well to chemotherapy, relapses occur almost without exception, and these are usually resistant to cytotoxic treatment. It is thus of major importance for SCLC treatment to identify novel targets whose sensitivity is not perturbed in chemotherapy-resistant tumors. We identify Hsp90 as one such target in SCLC. Probing selective Hsp90 inhibition in SCLC cells by pharmacological means, we show that both chemotherapy naive and resistant SCLC cells exhibit a strong apoptotic response when challenged with an Hsp90 inhibitor. Apoptosis in SCLC cells is independent of upstream caspase activity and occurs through a mitochondrion-mediated pathway, via caspase-9 activation and employing caspase-3 as effector caspase. Induction of apoptosis is restricted to SCLC cells, as normal lung fibroblasts are unaffected by Hsp90 inhibition. These effects of Hsp90 inhibitors are maintained in animal models of SCLC. Further, treatment of mice bearing xenografted tumors established from SCLC cells harvested from a patient whom had failed several lines of chemotherapy, resulted in both tumor growth inhibition and reduction of metastasis. With several Hsp90 inhibitors, such as 17AAG, 17DMAG and the purine-scaffold CNF2024 currently in clinic in Phase I and II evaluations, and with more novel scaffold small molecules to soon follow, these findings provide a strong platform for the introduction of Hsp90 in clinic as a novel target in the treatment of patients with SCLC.

420 POSTER

Measuring alpha-folate receptor expression levels on ascites tumour cells may help to identify patients that are more likely to respond to alpha-FR targeted therapy

M. Forster, M.G. Ormerod, R. Agarwal, S. Kaye, A.L. Jackman. *Institute of Cancer Research, Section of Medicine, Sutton, United Kingdom*

The alpha-folate receptor (α-FR) is a folate transporter with very restricted expression levels in normal tissues but is overexpressed in several cancers, particularly epithelial carcinomas. This offers a novel therapeutic target for new selective imaging and cytotoxic agents including BGC 945, an α-FR targeted TS inhibitor. Tumour specimens from >90% of patients with non-mucinous ovarian cancer homogenously overexpress α-FR. However, tumour samples are often unavailable if patients subsequently relapse. A number of these patients develop ascites that is often rich in tumour cells. A novel three antibody flow cytometric method to assess α-FR expression on tumour cells from ascites has been developed. An antibody to BerEP4, an epithelial cell marker expressed on >90% of ovarian cancers, and an α-FR