HIF-1α protein expression (by immunohistochemistry) between restricted and repleted tumors.
We conclude that during tumor growth the requirements for ascorbate in immunity and the degradation of HIF-1 are superceded by the requirement for ascorbate in angiogenesis. Furthermore, we speculate that ascorbate and prolyl hydroxylases may prove to be useful targets for the development of anti-angiogenic compounds.

88 POSTER

Identification of a small molecule drug that post transcriptionally inhibits production of VEGF protein by targeting 5′ UTR-dependent translation

C. Trotta, L. Cao, C. Romfo, J. Bombard, N. Almstead, J. Colacino, J. Babiak, S. Peltz, T. Davis. *PTC Therapeutics, South Plainfield, NJ, USA*

Background: Using a phenotypic high-throughput screening platform, termed GEMS (Gene Expression Modulation by Small molecules) we have identified small molecules that modulate the expression of target proteins through the regulatory functions of the untranslated region (UTR) of their mRNAs. Utilizing a reporter gene under the control of the 5′ and 3′ UTRs from the mRNA encoding vascular endothelial growth factor A (VEGF), the development candidate PTC299 was identified. PTC299 is an orally bioavailable small molecule that post transcriptionally inhibits the production of VEGF, thus inhibiting tumor angiogenesis. PTC299 inhibits the expression of all major isoforms of VEGF in cell culture, with EC_{50} values in the low nanomolar range and is highly selective for inhibition of VEGF expression when compared to a number of other growth factors, cytokines, and intracellular proteins.
Materials and Methods: The abundance of VEGF mRNA was assessed via RT-PCR. Polysome-associated VEGF message was isolated via sucrose gradient centrifugation followed by northern blot analysis. The dependence on the VEGF 5′UTR for PTC299 activity was demonstrated by transfecting cells with reporter constructs containing the wild type 5′UTR or various deletions thereof. Pulse-chase studies were conducted with ^{35}S-methionine and experimental conditions included inhibitors of translation, secretion, and proteosome activity.
Results: Studies to elucidate the mechanism of VEGF inhibition demonstrated that PTC299 does not alter the steady-state levels of VEGF mRNA, nor does it measurably affect polyribosome association with VEGF message, strongly suggesting that PTC299 affects neither VEGF mRNA stability nor the initiation of VEGF translation. Utilizing both reporter gene (luciferase) expression and epitope-tagged VEGF, we have demonstrated that the VEGF 5′ UTR is critical for PTC299 activity. In pulse-chase immunoprecipitation studies, PTC299 does not cause intracellular accumulation of VEGF, either in the presence or absence of proteasome inhibitors, suggesting that PTC299 does not inhibit VEGF expression by accelerating the degradation of the protein.
Conclusions: Taken together, these results demonstrate that PTC299 inhibits the 5′ UTR-dependent translation of VEGF. Future studies will focus on identifying the cis-acting elements within the 5′ UTR that are necessary and sufficient for PTC299 activity and the trans-acting factor(s) that bind to the cognate region in the UTR.

89 POSTER

Contribution of nitric oxide and epidermal growth factor receptor in antimetastatic potential of paclitaxel in human liver cancer cell (HebG2)

M. Ali, M. Sayed. *National Cancer Institute – Cairo University, Biochemistry unit – Cancer Biology Dept., Cairo, Egypt*

Background: Paclitaxel is a general antineoplastic drug used against different types of experimental and human tumors. Several anti-cancer drugs have been shown to stimulate nitric oxide (NO) production, which has been shown to affect many aspects of tumor biology.
Objective: This study was initiated to determine if paclitaxel stimulates NO production in HebG2 cells, and if so, whether NO interferes with the metastatic potential of HebG2 cells and contributes to paclitaxel cytotoxicity. In addition, we sought to determine the relationship between NO production and the expression of epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) and matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs) in HebG2 cells.
Materials and Methods: The effects of paclitaxel (0.1000 nM) on surviving fraction, NO production and the expression of EGFR, MMP-2 and MMP-9 were studied in human cancer cells (HebG2).
Results: Paclitaxel resulted in a significant dose-dependent decrease in the surviving fraction of HebG2 cells. A 62% and 86% decrease in the surviving fraction was attained at 10 nM and 100 nM paclitaxel, respectively. Paclitaxel produced a significant increase in NO production, starting from 1 nM. A 64% and 111% increase in NO production was attained after exposure to 10 nm and 100 nM of paclitaxel, respectively. In all of the HebG2 cells treated with paclitaxel (1−1000 nM), mRNA specific for EGFR, MMP-2 and MMP-9 were undetectable. However, untreated HebG2 cells and those treated with paclitaxel (0.1 nM) expressed mRNA specific for these markers.
Conclusion: This study suggests that: (1) increased production of NO may contribute to the toxicity of paclitaxel aganist HebG2 cells, (2) paclitaxel may inhibit metastasis via inhibition of the expression of EGFR and MMPs and (3) an inverse correlation exists between NO production and expression of EGFR and MMPs.

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Inhibition of VEGF (vascular endothelial growth factor)/VEGF receptor system activation and in vivo tumor-induced angiogenesis by an anti-angiogenic small molecule epoxyquinol B

H. Kamiyama[1,2], H. Kakeya[1], H. Osada[1,2]. *[1]RIKEN, Antibiotics Lab., Discovery Research Institute, Saitama, Japan; [2]Saitama University, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Saitama, Japan*

Angiogenesis is recognized as critical process in the growth and metastasis of tumor cells and many pathological conditions. Effective inhibition of this process should be a promising strategy to cure angiogenesis-related diseases, including cancer. In this regard, we have discovered several novel angiogenesis inhibitors using cell-based screening systems from microbial metabolites; i.e. epoxyquinols A and B, epoxytwinol A, azaspirene, and RK-805. Here, we present the biological activities of the highly functionalized pentaketide dimer epoxyquinol B on VEGF (vascular endothelial growth factor)-induced signaling pathway in HUVECs (human umbilical vein endothelial cells) as well as in vivo tumor angiogenesis. Epoxyquinol B inhibited endothelial-cells migration induced by VEGF-A at ED_{100} value of 3 μM without significant cell toxicity. Epoxyquinol B also inhibited capillary tube formation in 3-D-cultures system of HUVECs in a dose-dependent manner. Moreover epoxyquinol B blocked activation of VEGFR2-PLCγ signaling pathway through the inhibition of VEGFR2 activation by VEGF-A in HUVECs. Next, the ability of epoxyquinol B to inhibit the in vivo tumor-induced angiogenesis was examined using mouse renal carcinoma xenograft cells. As a result, numbers of blood vessels oriented towards the tumor was significantly decreased by treatment of epoxyquinol B. VEGFR2 is the major mediator of the mitogenic, angiogenic, survival and permeability-enhancing effects of VEGF-A in endothelial cells. Taken together, our results demonstrated that epoxyquinol B would provide a new insight into development of a promising angiogenesis inhibitor with a unique structure different from other drugs currently under clinical trial.

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Impact of tumor VEGF expression level on the in situ efficacy of the VEGFR2 associated tyrosine kinase inhibitor ZD6474

D. Siemann[1], C. Norris[2]. *[1]University of Florida, Radiation Oncology, Gainesville, USA; [2]University of Florida, Experimental Pharmacology, Gainesville, USA*

Background: Since it is widely accepted that tumors must elicit an angiogenic response for survival, growth, and metastasis, there has been a great deal of interest in targeting this process therapeutically and lead agents developed for this purpose have entered clinical trials. Given its key role in tumor angiogenesis, vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) inhibition represents a prime strategy in angiogenesis inhibition. The present studies were conducted to examine how a tumor's inherent level of VEGF expression influences its response to such therapy.
Material and Methods: Clonal cell lines of a human colorectal carcinoma (HT29) were created via infection with a recombinant adeno-associated virus (rAAV) that contained the human gene for VEGF. Three clones were chosen: the first expressed VEGF at a level comparable to the parental (non-infected) cell line, the second expressed VEGF at an intermediate level (20-fold greater), and the third expressed VEGF at ~60-fold higher concentration.
Results: The response of the clones expressing various VEGF levels in vitro and when grown as xenografts in nude mice to the VEGFR2 associated tyrosine kinase inhibitor ZD6474 was then assessed. In vitro neither the growth kinetics nor their inherent sensitivity to ZD6474 differed significantly between the clonal and the parental cell lines. In situ the tumor vascularity and growth rate increased significantly with increasing VEGF expression. To determine the effect of ZD6474 treatment on angiogenesis in vivo an intradermal assay was used. The results showed that ZD6474 effectively inhibited the number of blood vessels that could be induced by both parental and high expressing VEGF tumor cell inoculates. Therapeutically, ZD6474 treatment led to growth delays in xenografts irrespective of the VEGF expression level of the tumor cells. However, the anti-tumor effect was significantly greater in tumors arising from the high expressing VEGF clonal cell line. For example, a 2-week ZD6474