stage (p<0.05). In 3 cases cytokeratin positive dendritic-like cells were detected.

Conclusions: IM cell separation with cytocentrifugation and immuncyto-chemical labelling is a useful method in the detection of circulating colon cancer cells and clusters. Further studies are in progress to reveal the significance of the cytokeratin negative cluster cells and the dendritic-like cells. Our results showed an association between the size of circulating cell clusters and the TNM stages. Our human data are supported by the animal models about the importance of the circulating cell clusters.

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456   **POSTER**

Detection of circulating tumour cells in the peripheral blood of colorectal cancer patients using cytokeratin 20 RT-PCR and immuncytochemistry

A. Ladanyi, B. Molnar, L. Floro, Z. Tulassay. *Semmelweis University, 2nd Dept. of Med., Budapest, Hungary*

Background: The detection of circulating tumour cells and micrometastases may have important therapeutic and prognostic implications. Our objective was to compare the two gold stndard techniques, such as RT-PCR and immuncytochemistry (ICC), of circulating tumour cell detection in clinical samples with advanced disease.

Methods: 30ml of peripheral blood was obtained from 11 Dukes D colorectal cancer patients at two separate times within a month. The first 5ml after puncturing the skin were discarded. Five ml of the sample was used for mRNA isolation and subsequent RT-PCR with cytokeratin 20 primers. Twenty ml was subjected to immunmagnetic tumour cell enrichment with positive selection of cytokeratin 7/8 expressing cells on high-gradient magnetic columns (Carcinoma Cell Enrichment Kit, Miltenyi Biotech, Germany). The enriched cell fraction was cytocentrifuged on poly-L lysin coated slides. The cytospins were immuncytochemically labelled using a pancytokeratin antibody (DAKO, MNF116) and biotin-streptavidin-peroxidase technique (DAKO, LSAB2). In spiking experiments the sensitivity of both assays were in the 1 cell/ml range.

Results: Of the 22 samples in this study, 19 (86.36%) showed concordance between the two methodologies. The 3 disparity cases were due to RT-PCR positivity, but ICC negativity. With using RT-PCR 9/22 (40.90%) samples were positive, while with ICC 6/22 (27.27%) samples showed positive results. In 5 cases (45.45%) with RT-PCR and in 4 (36.36%) with ICC the result of the second sample conflicted with the first one.

Conclusion: Our results indicate that both RT-PCR and immunmagnetic enrichment with subsequent ICC are sensitive and reliable methods for circulating tumour cell detection. The concordance rate in our study is high, but because both techniques have significant limitations it may be advisable to use them complementary in further investigations. Even in advanced staged patients with a high probability of circulating tumour cells, multiple sampling can increase the risk of positive finding.

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457   **POSTER**

Damage-induced Bax N-terminal change and translocation to mitochondria occur regardless of cell fate

G. Makin[1], A. Thistlethwaite[1], B. Corfe[1], G. Griffiths[1], J. Hickman[2], C. Dive[1]. *[1] University of Manchester, School of Biological Sciences, Manchester, UK; [2] Institut de Recherches Servier, Suresnes, France*

Resistance to chemotherapy is the major obstacle to the successful treatment of neuroblastoma. A model system for the investigation of drug-resistance in vitro is described, exploiting two NB cell lines, SH-EP1 and SH-SY5Y, derived from the same parental background. These subclones show no difference in their sensitivity to the DNA damaging agent cisplatin, but have very different responses to the microtubule stabilising agent paclitaxel; SH-EP1 cells are sensitive, whilst SH-SY5Y cells are resistant. The protein product of the tumour suppressor gene p53 is stabilised to the same extent in SH-SY5Y cells following exposure to cisplatin, which readily engage apoptosis, as in those exposed to paclitaxel, which do not. Stabilised p53 is active in SH-SY5Y cells following paclitaxel exposure as reflected by the transcriptional upregulation of the cyclin dependant kinase inhibitor, p21WAF-1, a downstream effector of p53, after both drug treatments.

The pro-apoptotic Bcl-2 family protein Bax is latent in healthy cells and requires activation by drug-damage signals. Exposure of an epitope in the N-terminus of Bax was observed in both NB cell lines following both types of drug induced damage. This N-terminal exposure occurred to the same extent in settings of drug resistance as in those of drug sensitivity. The exposure of the N-terminus of Bax occurred in the cytosol, and was followed by the translocation of Bax to the mitochondria, again irrespective of cell

fate. The exposure of the N-terminus of Bax was also observed following detachment of NB cells into suspension. Thus the N-terminal changes in Bax represent a reversible response to disparate types of damage, and do not commit the cell to death. A model for the activation of Bax by drug-induced damage in NB cells is suggested that must require a second signal, after N-terminal epitope exposure and mitochondrial translocation, which is needed to commit the cell to apoptosis. This damage-induced second signal is suggested to be abrogated in SH-SY5Y cells after treatment with paclitaxel. Lack of the full activation of Bax may represent a novel method of drug resistance in NB cells.

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458   **POSTER**

A new approach for the detection of control sites in DNA

G.A.T. Mahon[1,2], M.A. Dicato[1,2]. *[1] Cancer Research Foundation, Luxembourg; [2] Hospital Center, Hematology-Oncology, Luxembourg*

Purpose: The concept of the consensus sequence of DNA control sites is well established. We have examined the variation of individual sequences about the consensus sequence. With the rapidly rising volume of reported DNA sequences, there is lively interest in automatic methods for detecting control sites or other short specific sub-sequences. We have developed an approach by which the statistical analysis of a reference set of sequences of a particular type of site allows one or more equations to be defined. If such an equation is satisfied by a new sequence then it is highly likely that the sequence corresponds to a site of the particular type. The definition of the equations makes use of the properties of the eigenvalues and vectors of the covariance matrix of suitably encoded sequences. In particular, the existence of one or more zero eigenvalues implies the existence of one or more such equations.

Methods: The approach is illustrated with the sequences of 173 promoters recognized by human RNA polymerase II. Many of these promoters are of particular interest in oncology and the database includes sequences for growth factors (e.g. GM-CSF, erythropoietin, various interleukins etc.), oncogenes and tumour viruses among others. Sub-sequences of 25 bases around the TATA box were extracted. Two bits were used to encode each base and the covariance matrix of the resulting 50 variables was determined. The eigenvalues and eigenvectors of the covariance matrix were calculated.

Results: The eigenvalues of the matrix ranged from 0.787 down to 0.035. This eigenvalue of 0.035 (almost zero) means that there is an equation which is (almost) satisfied by all the promoters in the dataset. A new sequence which (almost) satisfies this equation may be regarded as a putative promoter.

Conclusion: We have shown that promoter sequences contain correlations of such a nature that a rule can be derived which may be applied to detect other putative promoters. This regularity, not previously described, may be a common or indeed universal feature of sets of sequences with a common function.

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459   **POSTER**

Measurement of tumor blood flow using colored dye extraction microspheres in two rat tumor models

A. Iwamaru, M. Watanabe, S. Yu, T. Ohtsuka, H. Horinouchi, K. Kobayashi.

A technique that can measure tumor blood flow easily, accurately and economically is required to study tumor angiogenesis and angiogenesis inhibition. Using dye extraction colored microspheres, we measured tumor blood flow in Sato lung carcinoma (SLC) and ascites hepatoma LY80 in rats. Colored microspheres were infused into tumor-bearing rats via a catheter in the left ventricle. After removal of the tumor and the liver, the tissue samples were dissolved, and the microspheres were isolated. Dye was extracted, and the dye concentration was quantified by spectrophotometry. The dye concentration per gram of tumor was compared with that per gram of liver as follows (AU = absorbency units): [AU per gram of tumor]/[AU per gram of liver] x 100 = (%). Tumor blood flow corrected for wet weight was calculated as follows: [blood flow to tumor] = [AU per gram of tumor] x [reference withdrawal rate]/[AU per gram of reference blood]. Tumor blood flow rate was divided by tumor weight to yield ml Emin-1g-1. The tumors were also examined histologically, and casts of the tumor vasculature were prepared with silicone rubber. Blood flow 2 weeks after transplantation was equivalent to 1/10 and 1/2 at 1 week in SLC and LY80 tumors, respectively (SLC, P = 0.009, n = 10; LY80, P = 0.05, n = 10). These decreases in tumor blood flow were associated with underlying pathological and vascular change. Blood flow in LY80 tumors negatively correlated with tumor volume (P = 0.009, n = 10). We concluded that the colored microsphere method,

initially developed to measure organ blood flow, is also useful for estimating tumor blood flow in rats.

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460   POSTER

Soluble P-selectin correlates with plasma vascular endothelial growth factor (P-VEGF) levels in patients with thoracic carcinoma

I. McAllister[1], G.M. Spence[1], A.N.J. Graham[1], M.A. Armstrong[3], H.D. Alexander[4], F.C. Campbell[2], J.A. McGuigan[1]. [1] Royal Victoria Hospital, Department of Thoracic Surgery, Belfast, United Kingdom; [2] Queen's University, Department of Surgery, Belfast, United Kingdom; [3] Queen's University, Department of Microbiology/Immunobiology, Belfast, United Kingdom; [4] Belfast City Hospital, Department of Haematology, Belfast, United Kingdom

Introduction: Vascular endothelial growth factor regulates tumour angiogenesis. Debate exists as to whether P-VEGF measured in patients with cancer is derived from VEGF released from tumour cells or from in-vivo platelet activation. The aim of this study is to investigate how plasma soluble P-selectin (sP-selectin), a marker of in-vivo platelet activation, relates to P-VEGF levels in patients with thoracic cancer.

Methods: Blood was obtained from 91 patients with carcinoma of the lung (n=53) or thoracic oesophagus (n=38) and 36 controls. Seventy-three of the cancer patients had localised disease and 18 had advanced disease (mediastinal involvement or systemic dissemination). The P-VEGF (pg/ml) and plasma sP-selectin (ng/ml) levels were investigated using specific ELISA kits. The platelet count (x109/l) was measured using a Sysmex SE-9500 automated haematology analyser. Data were expressed as median, with statistical analysis by Mann-Whitney U Testing. Correlation analysis was undertaken using Spearman's Rank testing.

Results: Patients with advanced thoracic carcinoma had a significantly elevated median sP-selectin level compared to controls (60.3 vs. 40.1; p<0.0001). Plasma VEGF was raised in patients with advanced disease compared to controls (84.5 vs. 21.2; p<0.0001). There was no significant difference in P-VEGF levels between those with localised disease and the controls. The median platelet count was increased in the patients with localised disease compared to controls (258 vs. 234; p<0.05) and between patients with advanced carcinoma and controls (395 vs. 234; p<0.0001). The sP-selectin levels correlated with the P-VEGF levels in all the cancer patients (r=0.30; p<0.01) but not in the control patients. The platelet count in the cancer patients correlated with the sP-selectin and the P-VEGF levels (r=0.44; p<0.0001 and r=0.30; p<0.005 respectively). The platelet count did not correlate with sP-selectin nor P-VEGF levels in the control patients.

Conclusion: There is a correlation between sP-selectin and P-VEGF in patients with thoracic cancer and both are elevated in advanced disease. Further research should be directed in establishing if this has an independent effect on the progression of cancer.

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461   POSTER

Retinoic acid induced G1 arrest in hepatocarcinoma cell lines

J. Kim[1], S. Park[2], J. Yoon[3], H. Jung[3], J. Seo[1], C. Choi[1], S. Shin[1], B. Kim[1], Y. Kim[1]. [1] Korea University Medical College, Internal Medicine, Seoul, Korea; [2] Korea University, graduate School of Medicine, Seoul, Korea; [3] Korea University, graduate School of biotechnology, Seoul, Korea

Purpose: Retinoids (RA) have been known to regulate growth and differentiation of epithelial cells. Treatment of various types of cancer cells with RA resulted in growth inhibition and apoptosis. RAR beta has been suggested to play an important role in the biological functions of RA. RAR beta expression is suggested to associate with the cellular sensitivity to retinoid in cancer cells. It has been shown that RA treatment caused cell cycle arrest at G1 phase through enhanced expression of cyclin dependent kinase inhibitor p21 in leukemia cells and lung cancer cell lines. Therefore, we examined whether all-trans retinoic acid (atRA) caused to arrest a cell cycle, resulting in a growth inhibition in Korean hepatoma cell lines. We investigated the expression of proteins related to a cell cycle.

Methods: Korean hepatoma cell lines (SNU354, SNU449) were purchased from Korea Cell Line Bank. Cell lines were maintained in RPMI medium containing 10% fetal bovine serum. Cells were treated with 10 μM atRA as an indicated time period. Percent growth inhibition was calculated with cell number from atRA treated cells compared to that from control cells. After atRA treatment, cells were harvested and were lysed with RIPA buffer containing protease inhibitors. Total cell lysates were resolved on 8 - 12% SDS-PAGE gel and transferred to PVDF membrane. Blots were reacted

with desired antibodies. Cell cycle arrest was analyzed using FACScan after atRA treatment.

Results: Treatment of Korean hepatoma cells with atRA resulted in cell growth inhibition and the sensitivity of cells to atRA was related to induction of RAR beta expression. atRA-treated hepatoma cells showed cell cycle arrest at G1 phase starting from 3h treatment in atRA-sensitive SNU354 but it was delayed in atRA-less sensitive SNU449 cell line. Although increased expressions of both p21 and p27 proteins were observed in atRA-treated SNU354 cells, expression of p27 was not increased in SNU449 cells after atRA treatment. Since expression of p53 was not changed by atRA in both cell lines, induction of p21 and p27 could independently occur in atRA treated cells.

Conclusion: Based on our results, we concluded that retinoic acid treatment induced expression of p21 and p27 proteins, resulting in cell cycle arrest at G1 phase and inhibition of cell growth in Korean hepatoma cell lines. We suggested that expression of p27 was more likely related to the RA sensitivity of hepatoma cells.

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462   POSTER

PPARgamma expression in esophageal cancer and effect of PPARgamma ligands

T. Tanaka, S. Matono, H. Yamana, S. Sueyoshi, U. Toh, H. Fujita, K. Shirouzu. Kurume University, Surgery, Kurume, Japan

Purpose: Peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor gamma(PPAR)is a nuclear receptor that has a regulatory role in differentiation of adipocyte and its expression has also been shown in several types of cancers, such as colon cancer and breast cancer, in recent years. The present study examined the expression of the PPAR in human esophageal cancer cell lines and the effect of the PPAR ligands on cell growth of these cell lines. Methods: Expression of the PPAR in five esophageal cancer cell lines were examined by Reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) and Western blot analysis. Effect of the PPAR ligands, troglitazone and pioglitazone, on cell growth of the cell lines was investigated in vitro. Apoptotic assay and cell cycle analysis after PPAR ligand treatment were also performed. Results: PPAR expression was detected in all cell lines tested with RT-PCR and Western blot analysis. Both of PPAR ligands inhibited cell growth of esophageal cancer cell lines in dose-dependent manner. Fow cytometry demonstrated a increase fraction of GI phase and decrease of cells in S phase after PPAR ligand treatment, and apoptotic cells after treatment were slightly increased. Conclusions: PPAR is expressed in esophageal cancer. The cell growth of esophageal cancer cells is inhibited by PPAR ligands. Our results suggest that PPAR might be a promising target of anti-cancer treatment for esop

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463   POSTER

Studying of mechanisms involved in the maintenance of hepatoma differentiation status. Role of HNF4

N.L. Lazarevich, E.V. Varga, E.I. Kudryavtseva, O.A. Cheremnova, D.A. Ovchinnikov, O.V. Morozova, N.V. Engelhardt. Institute of carcinogenesis, Cancer Research Center, Lab. Immunochemistry, Moscow, Russia

Purpose of the study: We have obtained a new experimental model comprising a highly differentiated slow growing transplantable mouse hepatocarcinoma (sgHCC) and its dedifferentiated fast growing variant (fgHCC) aroused from sgHCC by rapid, possibly one-step progression. The aim of this study was comparative characterization of sgHCC and fgHCC variants and analysis of possible role of liver-specific transcription factors in the maintenance of hepatoma differentiaton status.

Materials and methods: RT-PCR, Northern blot hybridization analyses and immunohistochemical staining were used to investigate the levels of liver-specific genes expression and synthesis and localization of ECM components. Transient transfection analyses with luciferase reporter vectors were used to estimate the transcriptional activity of Hepatocyte Nuclear Factor 4 (HNF4) promoter.

Results: We have found that fgHCC differs from sgHCC by lose of cell polarity and striking decrease in cell-cell and cell-ECM adhesion. It is also characterized by complete loss or strong downregulation of the expression of HNF4, which is known to be an essential regulator of liver differentiation and can induce epithelial morphogenesis in dedifferentiated hepatomas. fgHCC variant failed to express wide number of liver-specific genes.

The expression of exogenous HNF4 in cultured fgHCC led to restoration of number of liver-specific functions. In some of HNF4 transfected clones we had observed partial transition to epithelial phenotype. In transient