Welcome to DirectMD!

Cancer Researchers at Yale Have Identified a New Target for Anti-Cancer Therapies

A tiny RNA with a big role in melanoma

A Yale-led study has identified a key mechanism in the development and spread of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. The study, published in Cell Reports, identifies a microRNA called miR-146a as a potential target for developing therapies to inhibit tumor progression and metastasis.

The researchers, led by Dr. Rogerio Lilenbaum, Chief Medical Officer of Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven, found that miR-146a regulates a critical epigenetic switch that sets the stage for cancer cell proliferation. This discovery opens up new avenues for developing therapies that can target this mechanism.

By inhibiting miR-146a, scientists can prevent the development of melanoma and inhibit the spread of cancer cells. This could lead to the development of new treatments that target the Notch pathway, a well-known oncogene that accelerates inactivity in the presence of these mutations.

The study was supported by the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) and the Society of Surgical Oncology (SSO), which have collaborated to create a consensus guideline on margins for breast-conserving surgery with whole-breast irradiation in stages I and II invasive breast cancer.

The guideline document represents an intensive collaboration among experts in the radiation oncology and surgical oncology fields, led by Yale researchers. The goal is to establish a closer communication from Smilow Cancer Hospital and the Yale Cancer Center to patients. Our physicians look forward to working with you to ensure that your patients' needs are met and the treatment plan is coordinated with you.

For more information, visit http://bit.ly/1kTU6Yx.

Visit http://bit.ly/1gdoHPm to learn more.

Welcome to DirectMD, a new quarterly newsletter from Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven. Subscribe now to stay informed on the latest developments in cancer research and treatment.

Contact Cancer Answers for further information:

P.O. Box 208028
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, CT 06520-8028

(203) 200-1344

canceranswers@yale.edu

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Welcome to DirectMD!

Welcome to our inaugural issue of DirectMD, a new communication from Smilow Cancer Hospital and Yale Cancer Center intended to establish a closer dialogue with physicians throughout Connecticut and the Northeast region. Yale Cancer Center is a National Cancer Institute designated comprehensive cancer center and Smilow Cancer Hospital/Yale Cancer Center were recently named to the reputable National Comprehensive Cancer Network. Together our institutions are where the most advanced treatment options and innovative clinical research are offered to patients. Our physicians look forward to working with you to ensure that your patients’ needs are met and the treatment plan is coordinated with you.

Each issue of DirectMD will provide updates on the services offered at Smilow Cancer Hospital as well as the newest clinical trials available for your patients. Our full list of clinical trials are always available online (http://bit.ly/1f6WBDg) and each principal investigator would be happy to discuss individual patients and their eligibility for a study. I hope you find this information useful and that our quarterly newsletter brings our practices close together. Please don’t hesitate to call me at (203) 200-1344 or email canceranswers@yale.edu with any questions or concerns so that we can best assist you in the care of your patients.

Rogerio Lilenbaum, MD
Professor of Medicine
Yale School of Medicine
Chief Medical Officer
Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven
Yale Cancer Center

CLOSER TO FREE

Last fall, dozens of cancer survivors from Smilow Cancer Hospital, along with family, friends and caregivers, gathered on Water Street in New Haven to share in the spirit of community. The project they participated in was the painting of a mural. They battled some of the most difficult forms of cancer. Yet thanks to the amazing advancements we have made in research and treatment, and through their own remarkable determination, they came together to beautify a neighborhood. And they delivered a powerful message: That cancer can be beaten. And that through science, compassion and the sheer belief in what is possible, the world is closer to free.

Visit http://bit.ly/1gdoHPm to learn more.

Gene regulator critical for breast cancer metastasis to the lung is identified

Yale Cancer Center researchers have identified a regulator of gene expression that is responsible for the progression of breast cancer and its metastasis to the lung. The study appears online in Cell Reports.

The Yale researchers analyzed gene expression datasets of human breast tumors, as well as those of cancer cells, and found that overexpression of the enzyme RBP2 is critical for breast cancer metastasis to the lung. Loss of RBP2, they also found, suppressed tumor formation in mouse models.

The authors say their evidence suggests that RBP2 regulates a critical epigenetic switch that sets the stage for tumor metastasis. They say the enzyme offers a novel target for development of therapies designed to inhibit tumor progression and metastasis.

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The Yale team identified a microRNA called miR-16-5p that accelerates in activity in the presence of these oncoproteins by activating a cancer promoting signaling pathway called Notch.

Visit http://bit.ly/1s9ph1a to learn more.

ASTRO and SSO issue consensus guideline on margins for breast-conserving surgery with whole-breast irradiation

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“Our hope is that this guideline will ultimately lead to significant reductions in the high re-excision rate for women with early-stage breast cancer undergoing breast-conserving surgery. Based on the consensus panel’s extensive review of the literature, the vast
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RESEARCH IN THE NEWS

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The authors say their evidence suggests that RBP2 regulates a critical epigenetic switch that sets the stage for tumor metastasis. They say the enzyme offers a novel target for development of therapies designed to inhibit tumor progression and metastasis. Visit http://bit.ly/1j6MT6x to learn more.

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CLINICAL TRIAL SUMMARIES

HIC # 1305012020
Principal Investigator: Zin Hsiao, MD
A Randomized Phase II trial of the Conjugate Cetuximab vs. Docorubicin/Cyclophosphamide (AC) in Women with Newly Diagnosed Breast Cancer and Germline BRCA Mutations
Neoadjuvant Cetuximab is being compared for effectiveness against Docorubicin/Cyclophosphamide (AC) in women with BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutations and newly diagnosed breast cancer. Previous studies have shown that BRCA carriers are more sensitive to Cetuximab, and preliminary findings suggest the pCR rate for BRCA carriers receiving Neoadjuvant Cetuximab to be at 70% over 22% for those receiving AC. Since a patient’s status as a BRCA/2 carrier must be confirmed before enrolling in the therapeutic portion of the study, Dr. Hsiao, PI for the trial’s Yale Cancer Center site, is appealing to surgical oncologists and medical oncologists with strong working relationships with surgical oncologists for assistance in identifying potential participants. Visit http://bit.ly/1w9Yr to learn more.

HIC # 1303011107
Principal Investigator: Daniel Petrylak, MD
A Phase I/II Study of Cabazitaxel Combined with Abiraterone Acetate and Prednisolone in Patients with Metastatic Castrate Resistant Prostate Cancer (mCRPC) with Disease that has Progressed after Docetaxel Chemotherapy
The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have approved Abiraterone acetate and cabazitaxel to treat prostate cancer that has spread to other parts of the body such as the lymph nodes or bone. These drugs, approved independently, provide new options for use when the cancer has become resistant to other treatments, including chemotherapy with docetaxel. The combination of these two drugs has not been approved, so the research team will study the safety and effectiveness of the combination. Visit http://bit.ly/1w1Hk00 to learn more.

HIC # 1203009888
Principal Investigator: Kevin Becker, MD
A Phase I/II Study of the Combination of BKM120 and Bevacizumab, Glisoblastoma Multiforme
This Phase II study is showing great promise as a potential therapeutic for relapsed Glisoblastoma Multiforme (GBM) that has progressed after first-line treatment. BKM120, an oral inhibitor of P13 kinase, which is a major driver of growth for most GBM tumors, is being paired with bevacizumab (Avastin), a traditional therapeutic GBM medication, to test the combination’s effectiveness and safety. Reductions in tumors, increased longevity, and improvements in quality of life have been reported. One of the more common side effects is mood alteration. Patients with a history of depression may be put on a preventative anti-depressant, and questionnaires to evaluate mood as well as other symptoms will be collected repeatedly. Participation involves a pre-treatment medical exam, taking BKM120 as a capsule daily, receiving Bevacizumab intravenously every two weeks, and coming to the trial site the week following every treatment for a short medical exam which includes a blood sample. Additionally, an MRI of the brain is required approximately every eight weeks. Visit http://bit.ly/1g7GhO to learn more.

HIC # 1310103066
Principal Investigator: Paul Elder, MD
A Phase I/II, Open-label Study of Nivolumab Monotherapy or Nivolumab combined with Ipilimumab in Subjects with Advanced or Metastatic Solid Tumors
To investigate the safety and efficacy of Nivolumab as a single agent or in combination with ipilimumab in refractory solid tumor types - triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), gastric cancer (GC), pancreatic adenocarcinoma (PC), and small cell lung cancer (SCLC). Visit http://bit.ly/1T5Ub81 to learn more.

NEW FACES

Barbara Bruntes, MD
Office: (203) 785-2360 | Appointment: (203) 200-4622
Barbara Bruntes, MD, has joined Medical Oncology at Yale Cancer Center, and will serve as Co-Leader of the Developmental Therapies Program and Clinical Research Unit for the Head and Neck Cancer Program at Smilow Cancer Hospital. Dr. Bruntes is internationally recognized for her research in head and neck cancer, she chairs the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group Head and Neck Cancer Committee, and leads national and international clinical trials of targeted therapy in head and neck cancers and leads the Fox Chase Cancer Center’s role in the Developmental Therapies Program and was Chief of Head and Neck Oncology.

Steven Gore, MD
Office: (203) 200-4622 | Appointment: (203) 200-4363
steven.gore@yale.edu
Dr. Gore received his medical degree from Yale University. He completed his internal residency and at the University of Chicago Hospitals and Clinics and his fellowship in oncology at Yale University. He has authored more than 250 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on hematologic malignancies and myelodysplastic syndromes.

Jennifer Moltiterno Gueili, MD
Office: (203) 785-7269 | Appointment: (203) 785-7269
jennifer.moltiterno@yale.edu
Jennifer Moltiterno Gueili, MD, has joined the Department of Neurosurgery and the Clinical Research Unit for the Head and Neck Cancer Program at Smilow Cancer Hospital. Dr. Moltiterno joins us from the Department of Neurosurgery at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center where she led a brain tumor fellowship. She received her medical degree from The University of Florida and completed her internship and residency at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Dr. Moltiterno’s primary focus is on the surgical management of all types of brain tumors.

Laura Morrison, MD
Office: (203) 200-2725 | Appointment: (203) 200-2725
laura.morrison@yale.edu
Laura Morrison, MD, has joined our Palliative Care Program under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Moltiterno. She completed her palliative care fellowship at the University of California San Francisco and at the University of Virginia and has published in several palliative care journals. Dr. Morrison is a Board certified in palliative medicine and specializes in hospice care and symptom management.

Courtney Quinn, MD
Office: (203) 737-6777 | Appointment: (203) 737-6427
courtney.quinn@yale.edu
Courtney Quinn, MD, has joined our Endocrine Oncology as an Assistant Professor of Surgery. Dr. Quinn’s clinical interests include surgery of the thyroid, parathyroid, adrenal gland, and endocrine pancreas, including minimally invasive and robotic endocrine surgical techniques. She obtained her MD from Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, Richmond, VA.