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Commentary

Targeting the epidermal growth factor receptor for therapy of carcinomas

This review is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Peter Alexander. The authors were privileged to work with Peter for several years before his death in December 1993. His insight, optimism, and enthusiasm remain an inspiration.

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Abstract

As a group, the carcinomas represent a substantial proportion of all human malignancies, but, with relatively few exceptions, current treatments are ineffective. Modification of existing chemotherapeutic agents has not led to significant improvements in the survival of carcinoma patients, and development of new therapeutic strategies is imperative. It is now becoming apparent that activation of the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGF-R) has much wider implications than a straightforward stimulation of cell division. The pleiotropic effects of EGF-R signalling may influence tumour behaviour and the response of carcinomas to treatment; these are important considerations for the development of

new therapies that aim to exploit the expression or modulate the function of the EGF-R in these tumours. BIOCHEM PHARMACOL 51;9:1101â€“1110, 1996.

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Keywords

epidermal growth factor receptor; growth factors; proliferation; cancer; therapy

Abbreviations

EGF, epidermal growth factor; EGF-R, epidermal growth factor receptor; TGFÎ±, transforming growth factor-alpha; AR, amphiregulin; HB-EGF, heparin-binding EGF-like growth factor; BTC, betacellulin; EMT, epithelial-mesenchymal transition; TCC, transitional cell carcinoma; MDR, multidrug resistance; Pgp, P-glycoprotein; HSPG, heparan sulphate proteoglycans

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