Zinc transporters: New insights for cancer therapy

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Pancreatic cancer is the number one cancer killer with 5-year survival less than 5%. It is urgently needed to identify novel molecular markers and therapeutic targets in pancreatic cancer that could lead to more effective treatment for this deadly disease. Our recent study suggests that a dietary zinc transporter, ZIP4, is over expressed in pancreatic cancer and brain tumor, and promotes cancer growth and metastasis. Those results indicate that ZIP4 and zinc transport pathway is a novel therapeutic target for cancers. Our results also suggest that ZIP4 can serve as a cancer master switch gene to impact the downstream signaling pathways including cytokines, microRNAs, and transcriptional factors.

Biography

Min Li got his Ph.D. from Emory University in 2002. He then moved on to Baylor College of Medicine and started his career in cancer research as an Assistant Professor in 2004. He joined the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Medical School in 2010 as the Director of Cancer Research Program. His research interests include pancreatic cancer and brain tumor. Dr. Li's group is the first one to identify ZIP4 as a novel molecular target in pancreatic cancer. He has published more than 100 papers and serves as an editorial board member of many peer reviewed journals.

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