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TITLE:  Universal Breast Cancer Antigens as Targets Linking Early Detection and Therapeutic Vaccination

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Background: Molecular targets to facilitate early detection and preventative therapy for women at high risk for breast cancer have not been characterized. Two recently characterized intracellular enzymes -- human telomerase reverse transcriptase (hTERT) and the cytochrome P450 isoform 1B1 (CYP1B1), each overexpressed in >90% of invasive breast cancers but rarely found in normal tissue -- may fill this gap. Such targets, if found at the earliest time of malignant transformation, may be ideally suited not only for early detection but also cancer prevention by vaccination. A growing clinical experience in advanced cancer patients has underscored the safety and feasibility of vaccination strategies. The universal expression of hTERT and CYP1B1 provide an opportunity for both early detection and cancer vaccination. Objective/Hypothesis: We hypothesize that immunologic responses can be elicited in advanced breast cancer patients using vaccines incorporating hTERT, providing a safety and feasibility platform for ultimately vaccinating women at high risk for breast cancer. Although we have not found ductal lavage a feasible strategy for the detection of tumor antigens, we have made significant progress on vaccination strategies in women with metastatic breast cancer.
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SPECIFIC AIMS OF THE PROJECT

1. Evaluation of molecular markers in ductal lavage fluid from BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers

2. Determine the safety and feasibility of vaccinating advanced breast cancer patients with hTERT peptide, assessing the generation of hTERT-specific immunity. Explore the role of intravenous cyclophosphamide prior to hTERT vaccination in boosting vaccine response by depleting regulatory T cells.

A. INTRODUCTION

This grant supports studies to understand the potential of universal tumor antigens for cancer immunotherapy, with a particular focus on the characterization of the human telomerase reverse transcriptase (hTERT) as tumor antigen. Telomerase is expressed by >90% of all human breast cancers but absent in most normal cells. Telomerase function has been directly linked to oncogenesis and its inhibition in telomerase-positive human tumors leads to growth arrest.

Dr. Domchek completed the three years of salary support on the DOD grant in 2006. Her ongoing obligations to the Department of Defense at this point are her five years of commitment to clinical breast cancer research. She has fulfilled these obligations. Dr. Domchek has published, or has in press, more than 20 publications since September of 2006. These publications involve work in BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers and also involve ongoing study of vaccination strategies in women with metastatic breast cancer. Funding has been obtained to continue Dr. Domchek’s work beyond the end of the Department of Defense grant. Dr. Domchek is funded by the Cancer Genetics Network of the National Cancer Institute, she is an investigator on RO1 grants held by Dr. Timothy Rebbeck and Dr. Robert Vonderheide at the University of Pennsylvania, and is also a co-Investigator on an Avon Progress for Patients and a Department of Defense grants with Dr. Chanita Hughes Halbert also of the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to all of this, and because of her acknowledged expertise in the field of clinical trials and clinical cancer genetics, Dr. Domchek has been promoted to Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

B. BODY

Aim 1: Evaluation of molecular markers in ductal lavage fluid from BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers
The last year has been spent studying genetic polymorphisms in BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers as a marker of cancer risk. One such study was published in Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention and examined AURKA F31I polymorphism and breast cancer risk in BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers. The AURKA oncogene is associated with abnormal chromosome segregation and aneuploidy and predisposition to cancer. Amplification of AURKA has been detected at higher frequency in tumors from BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers than in sporadic breast tumors, suggesting that overexpression of AURKA and inactivation of BRCA1 and BRCA2 cooperate during tumor development and progression. The F31I polymorphism in AURKA has been associated with breast cancer risk in the homozygous state in prior studies. We evaluated whether the AURKA F31I polymorphism modifies breast cancer risk in BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers from the Consortium of Investigators of Modifiers of BRCA1/2. Consortium of Investigators of Modifiers of BRCA1/2 was established to provide sufficient statistical power through increased numbers of mutation carriers to identify polymorphisms that act as modifiers of cancer risk and can refine breast cancer risk estimates in BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers. A total of 4,935 BRCA1 and 2,241 BRCA2 mutation carriers and 11 individuals carrying both BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations was genotyped for F31I. Overall, homozygosity for the 31I allele was not significantly associated with breast cancer risk in BRCA1 and BRCA2 carriers combined [hazard ratio (HR), 0.91; 95% confidence interval (95% CI), 0.77-1.06]. Similarly, no significant association was seen in BRCA1 (HR, 0.90; 95% CI, 0.75-1.08) or BRCA2 carriers (HR, 0.93; 95% CI, 0.67-1.29) or when assessing the modifying effects of either bilateral prophylactic oophorectomy or menopausal status of BRCA1 and BRCA2 carriers. In summary, the F31I polymorphism in AURKA is not associated with a modified risk of breast cancer in BRCA1 and BRCA2 carriers.

Aim 2: Determine the safety and feasibility of vaccinating advanced breast cancer patients with hTERT peptide, assessing the generation of hTERT-specific immunity. Explore the role of intravenous cyclophosphamide prior to hTERT vaccination in boosting vaccine response by depleting regulatory T cells.

Our second clinical trial involving telomerase, utilizing the hTERT I540 peptide is now *in press* at Cancer Research with data on 19 patients. Further corollary work examining cell lines of hTERT specific lymphocytes is also *in press* at Cancer Biology and Therapy, and could have major implication on how researchers very cell lines vs. clones in this type of work.

We have also completed a study examining the utility of using cyclophosphamide prior to vaccination in women with metastatic breast cancer. Data from this study is undergoing analysis, but initial analysis did not reveal a significant effect of this intervention. Finally, we have recently obtained IRB approval (UPCC 08107) for a clinical trial examining daclizumab prior to vaccination with hTERT (both I540 and heterolytic peptides) as well as survivin peptides. Funding has been sought and obtained from the Breast Cancer Research Foundation to explore telomerase vaccination in women with high risk breast cancer undergoing adjuvant therapy.

We remain enthusiastic about the prospect of using telomerase vaccination in cancer therapy. We are working to enhance the immunogenicity of our vaccine, while at the same time exploring the utility of vaccination women who do not have metastatic disease. It is these
women in whom a vaccine might have its greatest effect. Finally, vaccination in the adjuvant setting is another step toward the ultimate goal of vaccinating patients who are at high risk for, but who have not had, cancer.

KEY RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS
1. Promotion of Dr. Domchek to Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania
2. Dr. Domchek was awarded the Alavi Award for Excellence in Clinical Cancer Research at the University of Pennsylvania
3. More than 20 publication related clinical breast cancer research.

REPORTABLE OUTCOMES:

A. Publications During This Funding Period (2006-2007)


B. Abstracts

C. Funding
Dr. Domchek’s work in breast cancer genetics has resulted in a Cancer Genetics Network Contract through the National Cancer Institute as the University of Pennsylvania site PI. She is also co-investigator on several RO1 grants. The first permits the evaluation of I540 peptide as well as surviving peptide vaccination in combination with anti-CD25 mAb in a further attempt to boost immune response by depleting regulatory T cells. The principle investigator on the grant is Dr. Robert Vonderheide, and the grant number is Ro1 CA111377-01A1. Dr. Domchek will be the principle investigator on the clinical trial which will be part of the grant. In addition, Dr. Domchek is the clinical PI of a project entitled, “Telomerase Immunotherapy in Breast Cancer” funded by the Breast Cancer Research Foundation and aiming to move telomerase vaccination into the adjuvant setting. Dr. Domchek is also the lead clinical investigator on two RO1’s led by Dr. Timothy Rebbeck (RO1 CA102776 and RO1 CA083855). The first of these grants is examining the impact of prophylactic surgery on BRCA1/2 mutation carriers, with particular attention to tumor phenotype as well as interaction with hormonal therapy use. The second study is focused on modifier genes in BRCA1/2 mutation carriers. Dr. Domchek also collaborates closely with Dr. Chanita Hughes Halpert in her work on risk assessment in African American women, which has led to funding from the Department of Defense to examine genetic counseling issue, and from Avon Progress for Patients to examine risk assessment and behavioral interventions.
CONCLUSIONS

Data thus far from our current trials suggest that telomerase peptide vaccination is biologically active and leads to in vivo immune recognition of carcinoma by effector lymphocytes and tumor necrosis. This has great potential for biological therapy of breast cancer and required further exploration. If hTERT expression can be found in women at high risk for breast cancer, this may represent a marker to be used to target candidates for vaccination in the future.

REFERENCES (See “Publications” in “Reportable Outcomes”)

APPENDICES

1. Domchek CV
Susan M. Domchek

Address: 14 Penn Tower
Abramson Cancer Center
University of Pennsylvania
3400 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104 USA

If you are not a U.S. citizen or holder of a permanent visa, please indicate the type of visa you have:
one (U.S. citizen)

Education:
1990 BA Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH (Engineering Sciences)
1994 Oxford University, England (English Literature)
1995 MD Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA

Postgraduate Training and Fellowship Appointments:
1995-1996 Intern, Internal Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA
1996-1998 Resident, Internal Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA
1998-2001 Clinical Fellow in Hematology and Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA
2000 Chief Medical Resident, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA

Faculty Appointments:
2000-2001 Instructor in Medicine, Harvard University
2001-2007 Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
2007-present Associate Professor of Medicine at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

Hospital and/or Administrative Appointments:
2005-present Director, Cancer Risk Evaluation Program, Abramson Cancer Center, University of Pennsylvania

Specialty Certification:
1998 American Board of Internal Medicine
2001 American Board of Internal Medicine: Medical Oncology

Licensure:
1998 Massachusetts
2001 Pennsylvania

Awards, Honors and Membership in Honorary Societies:
1989 Choate Scholar, Dartmouth College
1989 Phi Beta Kappa, Dartmouth College
1990 Summa cum laude, Dartmouth College
1993 Marshall Scholar, Oxford University
1995 Magna cum laude, Harvard Medical School
2000 Chief Medical Resident, Massachusetts General Hospital
2001  Landenberger Scholar, University of Pennsylvania
2002-present  Ann B. Young Assistant Professor in Cancer Research, University of Pennsylvania
2002-2005  Tracey Starr Award
2003-2006  Department of Defense, Physician Scientist Award
2007  Alavi Award for Excellence for Cancer Research

Memberships in Professional and Scientific Societies and Other Professional Activities:
National:  
American Society of Clinical Oncology (Member, 1999-present)

Editorial Positions:
2000-present  Ad Hoc reviewer, Cancer
2001-present  Ad Hoc reviewer, Journal of Clinical Oncology
2002-present  Ad Hoc reviewer, Journal of Medical Genetics
2002-present  Ad Hoc reviewer, New England Journal of Medicine
2002-present  Ad Hoc reviewer, Clinical Cancer Research
2003-present  Ad Hoc reviewer, Journal of General Internal Medicine
2005-present  Ad Hoc reviewer, Breast Journal

Academic and Institutional Committees:
1999-2000  Member, Internship Selection Committee, Massachusetts General Hospital
2000-2001  Member, Teaching and Training Council, Internal Medicine Residency, Massachusetts General Hospital
2000-2001  Member, Training Program Council, Internal Medicine Residency, Massachusetts General Hospital
2003  Member, Educational Taskforce for Department of Medicine Strategic Planning Initiative, University of Pennsylvania
2006-present  Member, GEC Executive Committee, School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
2006  Member, Obstetrics and Gynecology Strategic Planning Committee, University of Pennsylvania

Major Academic and Clinical Teaching Responsibilities:
2001-present  Assistant Professor of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
   • Serve as inpatient attending for four weeks a year, supervising team of fellows, residents, interns and medical students
   • Serve as inpatient oncology consult four weeks a year, supervising oncology fellows
   • Preceptor to medical students and residents in outpatient clinic
   • Preceptor to residents in the Women's Health Elective
2002-present  "Cancer screening trials", Educational series for medical oncology fellows
2003-2006  "Breast cancer genetics", Medical student, endocrinology course. Yearly lecture
2003  "Tamoxifen decision-making", Medical student decision making course
2006-2007  "Breast cancer genetics" Lecture for Oncology Fellows
2006-2007  "Hereditary breast cancer lecture" for Arcadia College genetic counseling students

Lectures by Invitation:
Aug, 1998  Fellow Conference on Breast Cancer, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center "Predictors of skeletal complications in metastatic breast cancer", Houston, TX
Aug, 2000  "Chemotherapy concepts for house officers", Massachusetts General Hospital Medical Housestaff lecture series, Boston, MA
Feb, 2001  "Breast cancer", Massachusetts General Hospital Medical Housestaff lecture series, Boston, MA
Mar, 2001  Harvard Medical Student Subinternship teaching series, monthly presentation, Boston, MA
May, 2001  "Breast cancer, risk and prevention", Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Newton, MA
Jun, 2001  "Hormonal replacement therapy and the risk of breast cancer", Living Well series, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA
Jul, 2001  "Hormonal therapies in breast cancer", Educational series for radiation oncology residents, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA
Sep, 2001  "Breast cancer", Massachusetts General Hospital Medical Housestaff lecture series, Boston, MA
Oct, 2002  "What is a clinical trial?", Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition, Harrisburg, PA
Oct, 2002  "Breast cancer genetics: who to test and how to manage", Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA
Oct, 2002  "Breast cancer: risk, screening, prevention and management", Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA
Nov, 2002  "Hormone replacement therapy and breast cancer risk", FOCUS panel discussion, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Jan, 2003  "Management of BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers", San Antonio Update, Sponsored by Baylor College of Medicine, Washington D.C.
Jun, 2003  "Update on breast cancer susceptibility genes", Medical Grand Rounds, Chester County Hospital, West Chester, PA.
Aug, 2003  "Breast, ovarian and colon cancer genetics", Medical Grand Rounds, Pocono Medical Center, East Stroudsburg, PA
Sep, 2003  "Breast cancer genetics: Who to test and how to manage", Medical Grand Rounds, Lancaster General Hospital, Lancaster, PA
Sep, 2003  "Breast cancer genetics", Life After Breast Cancer Conference, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Jan, 2004  "Breast cancer genetics", Medical Grand Rounds, St. Joseph's Hospital, Reading, PA
May, 2004  "Update in adjuvant therapy for breast cancer", Teich Lecture, Beth-Israel Medical Center, New York, NY
Jun, 2004  "ASCO update: Breast cancer prevention, detection and genetics", University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Sep, 2004  "Breast cancer genetics update", Life After Breast Cancer Conference, Philadelphia, PA
Oct, 2004  "Breast cancer overview", Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA
Jan, 2005  "Telomerase immunotherapy of breast cancer", Breast Cancer Think Tank 15, Cuacao, Dutch Antilles
Apr, 2005  "Genetics and women at high risk for breast cancer", at the 1st Annual Women's Health Summit sponsored by the Cleveland Clinical Foundation Women's Health Center
Apr, 2005  "Hereditary breast and ovarian cancer syndroms" at the 1st Annual Women's Health Summit, sponsored by the Cleveland Clinic Foundation Women's Health Center, Cleveland, OH

May, 2005  "How to write a clinical trial", Educational Session at the American Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL


Oct, 2005  "Genetics Update", Breast Cancer: Early Detection is the Key Conference, Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia, PA

Apr, 2006  "Genetic susceptibility to breast cancer", Continuing Medical Education Course, Philadelphia, PA

Apr, 2006  "Breast Cancer Genetics", The Second Annual Helene Madeira Breast Cancer Symposium, Lankenau Hospital, Wynnewood, PA

Apr, 2006  "History of Breast Cancer", Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia, PA

Jun, 2006  "ASCO Update: Screening, Prevention and Genetics", Philadelphia, PA

Jun, 2006  "Low penetrance genes and breast cancer: a clinical perspective", American Society of Clinical Oncology Education Session, Atlanta GA

Jul, 2006  "Genetic Susceptibility to Breast Cancer", Oncology Seminar, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

Jun, 2007  "ASCO Update 2007: Prevention, screening and genetics", Philadelphia, PA

Apr, 2007  "Genetic susceptibility to breast cancer", Seventh Annual New Strategies in Breast Cancer, Center for Biomedical Continuing Education, Philadelphia, PA


Organizing Roles in Scientific Meetings:

May, 2005  Planning Committee Member, Education Committee, Tumor Biology and Genetics, American Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL

May, 2005  Chairperson, "Risk modifiers in hereditary cancer syndromes", American Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL

Jun, 2006  Planning Committee Member, Education Committee, Tumor Biology and Genetics, American Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA

Jun, 2006  Chairperson, Cancer Genetics Education Committee, American Society of Clinical Oncology, Atlanta, GA

Jun, 2007  Chairperson, "What oncologists need to know about hereditary gastric, kidney and thyroid cancers", ASCO 2007 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL

Jun, 2007  Planning Committee Member, Education Committee, Tumor Biology and Genetics, American Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL

Bibliography:

Research Publications, peer reviewed (print or other media):


Research Publications, peer-reviewed reviews:


Abstracts:


Editorials, Reviews, Chapters, including participation in committee reports (print or other media):


