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Roles of RUNX Family in Cancer

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Message from the Guest Editors

RUNX genes are frequently deregulated in various human cancers, indicating their prominent roles in cancer pathogenesis. RUNX1 is best known as a hematopoietic stem cell factor with essential roles in lineage specification. RUNX2 is a master regulator of osteogenesis that is critical for the differentiation of mesenchymal stem cells. Increased RUNX2 expression is strongly associated with osteosarcoma, breast cancer, and bone metastasis. RUNX3 is frequently silenced by epigenetic modification in multiple cancer types, including bladder, lung, and gastric cancers. It has been proposed that RUNX3 silencing is an early event during the development of these cancers. Mechanistically, RUNX3 has been shown to restrain proliferation through interaction with major oncogenic signaling pathways. However, elevated RUNX3 expression has been observed in various metastatic cancers, suggesting pro-metastatic involvement. Growing evidence suggests that the roles of RUNX genes in carcinogenesis are cell type-specific and context-dependent. A deeper understanding of the RUNX genes may inform clinical decisions during diagnosis and therapy of their related cancers.



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