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Conserved Pathways in Development and Cancer

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Message from the Guest Editors

Normal embryonic development is governed by genetic pathways that control a myriad of processes, ranging from cell division, migration and differentiation, to organ formation. These pathways are often co-opted and deregulated in common diseases of adulthood, including the progression of cancer. Many parallels exist between the normal cellular process required for the establishment of an embryo (such as asymmetric cell division in stem cells, epithelial to mesenchymal transitions in organ establishment, and formation of the vascular system required) with identical pathways that drive tumour initiation and progression. In effect, tumour growth can in many cases be thought of as the aberrant establishment of a new "organ" (Gerlitz et al., EMBO Reports 9: 730-734), utilising and corrupting precisely the same conserved genetic pathways required for normal growth. This special issue is devoted to understanding these parallels; by determining the normal pathways of tissue and organ establishment, we can better understand the consequences of their deregulation in the context of cancer development.



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Special issue



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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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