

REVIEW ARTICLE

CXC chemokines mechanism of action in regulating tumor angiogenesis

Bethany B. Moore, Douglas A. Arenberg, Christina L. Addison, Michael P. Keane, Peter J. Polverini¹ and Robert M. Strieter

Department of Internal Medicine (Division of Pulmonary and Critical Medicine), University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-0642, USA. ¹Section of Oral Pathology, University of Michigan Dental School, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1078, USA

The CXC chemokines have recently been identified as a family of molecules which can regulate angiogenesis. Members of this family which contain the amino acid motif Glu–Leu–Arg in their amino terminus (ELR⁺) act as angiogenic factors, while ELR⁻ members act as angiostatic molecules. The balance of these angiogenic versus angiostatic factors is critical in regulating homeostasis. As we detail in this review, there is increasing evidence from a variety of tumor model systems to suggest that the angiogenic members of this family and their receptors may be playing an important role in the neovascular pathology of solid tumors. In contrast, the angiostatic effects of the ELR⁻ family members may provide novel therapeutic strategies for treating many tumors. [© 1998 Kluwer Academic Publishers]

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The angiogenic process

Angiogenesis is the growth of new blood vessels from pre-existing vessels and capillaries. It is a

biological process that is critical to a variety of physiological processes like embryogenesis and wound repair. However, it is also a process which can play a devastating role to the host in a number of pathological processes such as chronic inflammation, fibroproliferative disorders and also tumorigenesis.^{1–9} The angiogenic response in the microvasculature is associated with changes in cellular adhesive interactions between adjacent endothelial cells, pericytes and surrounding extracellular matrix.^{10–14} In the process of active neovascularization, endothelial cells reorganize their cytoskeleton, express cell surface adhesion molecules such as integrins and selectins, secrete proteolytic enzymes, and remodel their adjacent extracellular matrix.^{15–23} These events are followed by the formation of capillary buds. Auto-crine and/or paracrine angiogenic factors must be present to induce endothelial cell migration, proliferation, elongation, orientation and differentiation leading to the re-establishment of the basement membrane, lumen formation and anastomosis with other new or pre-existing vessels, eventually leading to the formation of intact microvessels.^{18,24,25} If there is a preponderance of angiogenic factors in the local milieu, the neovasculature may persist as capillaries, or differentiate into mature venules or arterioles. If instead, the local milieu changes such that there is a preponderance of angiostatic factors, the neovessels can regress. The angiostatic factors which mediate regression can do so either by inducing apoptosis or cell cycle arrest of endothelial cells.^{20,26,27} Thus the process of angiogenesis is regulated by a

Correspondence to R. M. Strieter, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care, 6200 MSRB III, 1150 West Medical Center Drive, University of Michigan Medical Center, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-0642, USA. Tel: (+1) 734 936-2612; Fax: (+1) 734 764-4556.

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complex balancing act between opposing angiogenic and angiostatic factors.

CXC chemokines

There have been a number of important angiogenic regulators described.^{2,9} Perhaps the best studied of the angiogenic factors have been the molecules vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF)^{28,29} and basic fibroblast growth factor (bFGF).³⁰ In addition, angiostatin has been widely studied as an inhibitor of angiogenesis.³¹ While there is no debating the importance of these factors in certain physiological processes (e.g. during embryogenesis), as well as during tumorigenesis, there is growing evidence that other angiogenic factors also play relevant roles. In 1992, a member of the CXC chemokine family, interleukin-8 (IL-8), was shown to be an angiogenic factor.³²⁻³⁴ As will be discussed in this review, more recent work has shown that members of the CXC chemokine family can be divided into both promoters of angiogenesis, as well as inhibitors of angiogenesis. Chemokines can be made by all nucleated cells in the body, which makes them good candidates to be involved in a wide variety of different solid tumors.³⁵⁻⁴⁸

The human CXC chemokine family consists of chemotactic polypeptides that are less than 10 kDa and are characteristically heparin binding proteins. On the structural level, this family displays four highly conserved cysteine amino acid residues, with the first two cysteines separated by one non-conserved amino acid residue, hence the name CXC.³⁴⁻⁴³ Although the CXC motif distinguishes this family from other chemokine families, a second structural domain within the CXC family members dictates their angiogenic potential (see below). The amino-terminus of the majority of the CXC chemokines contains three amino acid residues (Glu-Leu-Arg: the ELR motif) which precede the first cysteine amino acid residue of the primary structure of these chemokines.³⁵⁻⁴⁴ In general, those family members which contain the ELR motif have enhanced neutrophil binding capabilities and are angiogenic. In contrast, those members which do not contain the ELR motif are angiostatic. Table 1 lists some of the CXC chemokine

Table 1. The ELR⁺ and ELR⁻ CXC chemokines, and their responses in the corneal micropocket model of angiogenesis when tested alone or in combination

Chemokine	Angiogenic response in the CMP assay
IL-8	++++
ENA-78	++++
GRO- α	++++
GRO- β	ND
GRO- γ	++++
GCP-2	++++
PBP	ND
CTAP-III	ND
β -TG	ND
NAP-2	ND
PF4	-
IP-10	-
MIG	-
SDF-1	-
IL-8 + IP-10	-
IL-8 + MIG	-
ENA-78 + IP-10	-
ENA-78 + MIG	-
bFGF + IP-10	-
bFGF + MIG	-
VEGF + IP-10	-
VEGF + MIG	-

In addition, the effect of the ELR⁻ CXC chemokines was tested on bFGF- and VEGF-induced angiogenesis. ND means not done in these experiments. In addition, the chemokines which score positive in the CMP assay have also been determined to directly cause endothelial cell chemotaxis and proliferation.

family members which have been identified and separates them into whether they are angiogenic (ELR⁺) or angiostatic (ELR⁻) (reviewed elsewhere^{35-37,39,44,49}). The angiogenic members include IL-8, epithelial neutrophil activating protein-78 (ENA-78), growth related genes (GRO- α , - β and - γ), granulocyte chemotactic protein-2 (GCP-2) and platelet basic protein (PBP) as well as its amino-terminal truncated forms which are generated by proteolytic cleavage with monocyte-derived proteases and include connective tissue activating protein-III (CTAP-III), β -thromboglobulin (β -TG) and neutrophil activating protein-2 (NAP-2).⁵⁰ GRO- α , - β and - γ are closely related CXC chemokines, with GRO- α originally described for its melanoma growth stimulatory activity.⁵¹⁻⁵³ IL-8, ENA-78 and GCP-2 were all initially identified on the basis of neutrophil activation and chemotaxis.³⁵⁻⁴⁴

The angiostatic members include platelet factor 4 (PF4), which was originally described

for its ability to bind heparin and inactivate heparin's anticoagulation function.⁵⁴ Other ELR⁻, angiostatic CXC chemokines include monokine-induced by interferon- γ (MIG),⁴³ interferon- γ -inducible protein (IP-10)⁴³ and stromal cell-derived factor (SDF-1). SDF-1 recently gained notoriety when it was shown that SDF-1 induces lymphocyte migration and prevents infection of T cells by lymphotropic strains of HIV-1.^{43-48,55-67} Despite the name, IP-10 can be induced by all three interferons (IFN- α , - β and - γ), while MIG is unique in that it is only induced by IFN- γ .^{43-48,55-67} Interestingly, although IFN- γ induces the production of the angiostatic molecules IP-10 and MIG, it attenuates expression of the angiogenic molecules IL-8, GRO- α and ENA-78.^{68,69} This differential regulation of angiostatic versus angiogenic CXC chemokines by IFN- γ is likely to account for the previously documented angiostatic effects of IFN- γ on wound repair-associated angiogenesis.^{2-4,70}

While numerous *in vivo* and *in vitro* investigations have shown the importance of CXC chemokines in inflammation as chemotactic/activating factors for neutrophils and mononuclear cells, only recently has it become apparent that these CXC chemokines are important in the regulation of angiogenesis.

CXC chemokines are potent regulators of angiogenesis

In 1982, Taylor showed that PF4 could produce an avascular zone when tested in a chorioallantoic membrane (CAM) assay.⁷¹ In 1990, Maione and his colleagues had demonstrated that recombinant human PF4 (an ELR⁻ CXC chemokine) could inhibit angiogenesis, and cause growth inhibition of melanoma and colon carcinomas.⁷¹⁻⁷⁴ While these were the first documented results showing that CXC chemokines could negatively regulate angiogenesis, it was not until 1992 that it was discovered that CXC chemokines could also positively mediate angiogenesis. IL-8, an ELR⁺ CXC chemokine, was shown to be able to mediate both *in vitro* endothelial cell chemotactic and proliferative activity, as well as *in vivo* angiogenesis in the absence of preceding inflammation using bioassays

of angiogenesis.³²⁻³⁴ These experiments proved that IL-8 was having a direct effect on the endothelial cells and that this angiogenic activity was distinct from its ability to recruit neutrophils. These findings suggested that members of the CXC chemokine family function in a disparate manner and can behave as either potent angiogenic or angiostatic factors in regulating net neovascularization.

Based on these findings, we hypothesized that the 'ELR motif' of members of the CXC chemokine family is a structural/functional domain that dictates their angiogenic activity. To test this postulate, endothelial cell chemotaxis was performed in the presence or absence of varying concentrations of ELR⁺ (IL-8 and ENA-78) or ELR⁻ CXC chemokines (PF4 and IP-10) to ascertain whether CXC chemokines display disparate angiogenic activity. Both IL-8 and ENA-78 demonstrated a dose-dependent increase in endothelial migration with an EC₅₀ of 5 nM.⁴⁹ In contrast, neither PF4 nor IP-10 induced significant endothelial cell chemotaxis.⁴⁹ Other CXC chemokines were tested for their ability to induce endothelial cell migration, including ELR⁺ CXC chemokines GCP-2, GRO- α , GRO- β , GRO- γ , PBP, CTAP-III and NAP-2 or the ELR⁻ CXC chemokine MIG. All of the ELR⁺ CXC chemokines tested demonstrated significant endothelial cell chemotactic activity over background, whereas the endothelial cell chemotactic activity of MIG was similar to either PF4, IP-10 or background.⁴⁹ These studies established that CXC chemokines can be divided into two major groups (ELR⁺ and ELR⁻) with defined biological activities.

To confirm that PF4, IP-10 and MIG are inhibitors of angiogenesis, endothelial cell chemotaxis was performed in response to ELR⁺ CXC chemokines (IL-8 or ENA-78) or bFGF with or without varying concentrations of PF4, IP-10 or MIG. The ELR⁻ CXC chemokines (PF4, IP-10 or MIG) significantly inhibited endothelial cell migration in response to either the ELR⁺ CXC chemokines or bFGF with an IC₅₀ ranging from 50 pM to 1 nM.⁴⁹ In contrast to their ability to attenuate endothelial cell migration, neither IP-10 nor MIG inhibited IL-8-induced neutrophil chemotactic activity.⁴⁹

These *in vitro* studies were extended to an *in vivo* angiogenesis bioassay. ELR⁺ CXC chemokines (IL-8, ENA-78, GRO- α or GCP-2), bFGF or VEGF, either alone or in combination with ELR⁻ CXC chemokines (IP-10 or MIG) were implanted into a rat cornea using the cornea micropocket assay (CMP) of neovascularization.^{49,76,77} The ELR⁺ CXC chemokines (IL-8, ENA-78, GRO- α or GCP-2), bFGF or VEGF induced positive corneal angiogenic responses, whereas both IP-10 and MIG failed to induce a neovascular responses in the CMP. When combined with the ELR⁺ CXC chemokines (IL-8, ENA-78, GRO- α or GCP-2), bFGF or VEGF, IP-10 markedly abrogated the ELR⁺ CXC chemokine, bFGF, or VEGF-induced angiogenic response. Furthermore, MIG and SDF-1 similar to IP-10, inhibited IL-8-, ENA-78-, bFGF- and VEGF-induced corneal neovascularization (Table 1). The fact that both the ELR⁺ and ELR⁻ CXC chemokines exerted their angiogenic or angiostatic effects, respectively, in the absence of cellular infiltration again suggests that the ability to modulate angiogenesis is independent of the role these molecules play as leukocyte chemoattractants.

To establish that the 'ELR motif' is the critical structural/functional domain that dictates angiogenic activity for members of the CXC chemokine family, site-directed mutants were constructed that contained either TVR (from IP-10) or DLQ (from PF4) amino acid residue substitutions for the 'ELR motif' of wild-type IL-8.⁴⁹ In addition a site-directed mutant of MIG was produced, containing the 'ELR motif' immediately adjacent to the first cysteine amino acid residue of the primary structure of MIG.⁴⁹ Endothelial cell chemotaxis was used to assess the biological activity of these muteins. Both IL-8 mutants failed to induce endothelial cell migration; however, both mutants inhibited the maximal endothelial chemotactic activity of wild-type IL-8.⁴⁹ Extending these studies to the CMP assay, both IL-8 muteins also inhibited the angiogenic response of either wild-type IL-8 or ENA-78.⁴⁹ In addition, both mutants inhibited bFGF-induced angiogenic activity in the CMP assay.⁴⁹ In contrast, the ELR⁺ mutant of wild-type MIG induced a significant angiogenic response and wild-type MIG inhibited

the angiogenic response of this mutant in the CMP assay.⁴⁹ These studies support the contention that the 'ELR' motif of CXC chemokines is the important structural/functional domain that dictates the angiogenic activity of CXC chemokines. Furthermore, these findings support the contention that ELR⁻ CXC chemokines are potent inhibitors of not only ELR⁺ CXC chemokines, but also the unrelated angiogenic factors, bFGF and VEGF, a fact which could prove to be very useful therapeutically.

ELR⁺ CXC chemokines regulate tumorigenesis

Folkman was the first to popularize the idea that tumors cannot grow beyond the size of 2 mm³ in the absence of neovascularization and delivery of oxygen and nutrients.^{1,4,78,79} Tumor-associated vascular mass can show as much as a 400% increase over normal tissue vascular mass.⁴ Clearly then, an imbalance in the production of angiogenic, as compared to angiostatic, factors contributes to the pathogenesis of all solid tumor growth. Moreover, a number of studies have determined that the magnitude of tumor-derived angiogenesis is directly correlated with their metastatic potential.⁸⁰⁻⁸⁶ This suggests that tumor-associated angiogenesis is somehow dysregulated to allow the unchecked over-expression of the angiogenic factors or perhaps the inappropriate suppression of angiostatic ones.^{4,87,88} Members of the CXC chemokine family have now been shown to be important regulators of tumorigenesis in many different tumor model systems.

IL-8 has been found to be significantly elevated in non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).⁸⁸ In addition, IL-8 was determined to be a major angiogenic factor contributing to overall tumor-derived angiogenic activity in NSCLC.^{89,90} These studies were extended to an *in vivo* model system of human tumorigenesis, which employed a human NSCLC/SCID mouse chimera by injecting human NSCLC cell lines into SCID mice.⁹⁰ This model system demonstrated a progressive increase in tumor size that was directly correlated with tumor-derived IL-8⁹⁰ in both tumor homogenates and plasma. Interestingly, the histology of these

tumors demonstrated a paucity of infiltrating neutrophils despite an appropriate neutrophil chemotactic signal and the ability of murine neutrophils to respond to human IL-8.⁹¹ The lack of tumor neutrophil infiltration is similar to the previous observation of IL-8 in association with freshly isolated human NSCLC tumors.⁸⁹ This paucity of neutrophils is probably best explained by the fact that high circulating levels of IL-8 diminish the ability of the neutrophils to sense a chemotactic gradient leading to the site of local production. This simulates the phenomenon recently described in the IL-8 transgenic mouse.⁹¹ In these mice, human IL-8 overexpression is associated with increased circulating levels of IL-8, similar to what we have observed in the human NSCLC/SCID mice during tumorigenesis. The high circulating IL-8 levels correlated with a proportional decrease in L-selectin expression on neutrophils.⁹¹ The IL-8 transgenic mice demonstrated a defect in neutrophil recruitment to the peritoneal cavity after i.p. injection of either exogenous IL-8 or thioglycollate.⁹¹ The IL-8 transgenic mouse model exemplifies the importance of localized production of IL-8 in order to establish a chemotactic gradient and target leukocytes to sites of inflammation. Accordingly, our study establishes a potential mechanism whereby the tumor may evade an innate host response by releasing sufficient IL-8 into the circulation and attenuating neutrophil extravasation at the site of the tumor, yet at the same time promoting tumor-derived angiogenesis.

To ascertain whether IL-8 contributes to tumorigenesis of human NSCLC in SCID mice, animals were subjected to a strategy of IL-8 depletion. Tumor-bearing animals were either passively immunized with either neutralizing IL-8 or control antibodies, or not treated. Tumor-bearing animals treated with neutralizing antibodies to IL-8 demonstrated a greater than 40% reduction in tumor growth, that was paralleled by a reduction in spontaneous metastases to the lung.⁹⁰ To determine the mechanism of tumor growth inhibition, *ex vivo* angiogenic activity was evaluated from NSCLC tumor homogenates from animals that had been treated *in vivo* with either control or neutralizing anti-IL-8 antibodies. Eighty-five percent of tumor samples from control

antibody-treated animals induced positive corneal angiogenic responses. In contrast, less than 33% of tumor samples from anti-IL-8-treated animals induced a positive corneal neovascular response. The decreased angiogenic activity also correlated with a reduction in tumor vessel density. These studies demonstrated that a primary angiogenic signal for NSCLC neovascularization *in vivo* was directly mediated by tumor-associated IL-8.

ELR⁻ CXC chemokines regulate tumorigenesis

In an analogous manner, the angiostatic molecule IP-10 was shown to be an endogenous inhibitor of tumor formation. Squamous cell carcinomas, which in general are very slow growing lung cancers and grow poorly when xenotransplanted to SCID mice, were shown to have high endogenous levels of IP-10.⁹² If a neutralizing antibody to IP-10 was given during the course of squamous cell tumor growth (modeled by injecting Calu 1 cells into SCID mice), tumor formation was increased.⁹² Conversely, if recombinant IP-10 was given repeatedly to SCID mice injected with the aggressive A549 adenocarcinoma cell lines, tumor growth could be diminished by as much as 40%. The mechanism of growth inhibition by intratumor administration of recombinant human IP-10 was found to be correlated with a reduction in primary tumor-derived angiogenic activity and neovasculation. These studies demonstrate the existence of an imbalance in the over- and under-expression of angiogenic and angiostatic CXC chemokines, respectively, during tumorigenesis of NSCLC.

In a similar manner, work from Luan *et al.* has shown that GRO- α and - γ are critical oncogenic factors for melanoma.⁹³ This group was able to show by both message level and protein production, the expression of GRO- α in 70% of human melanoma lesions examined. Interestingly, immunohistochemical analysis revealed that GRO- α expression, as well as the expression of the putative GRO- α receptor (CXCR2) was present in both the tumor cells as well as the tumor-infiltrating endothelial cells of the microvessels in seven of the 11 tumors studied.⁹³ The biological consequence of this constitutive overexpression

was tested by transfecting the GRO- α , - β or - γ genes into mouse melan-a melanocytes, resulting in nearly 100% tumor formation when these clones were injected into SCID or Nude mice. In contrast, appropriate vector control transfections yielded tumors below 10% of the time. Furthermore, polyclonal antisera to GRO- α and - γ reduced tumor growth in the GRO- α and - γ transfected melan-a melanocyte tumor models, respectively.⁹² Conditioned media from both the transfected cells was able to induce a neovascular response in the CMP assay of angiogenesis and, as expected, antibodies against these angiogenic CXC chemokine molecules inhibited this response, clearly implicating the overexpression of the GRO- α and - γ chemokines, as positive regulators of angiogenesis, in the pathogenesis of melanoma. This group went on to suggest a mechanism by which melanoma cells might be turning on the constitutive overexpression of the GRO chemokines.⁹² In Hs294T melanoma cells, the half-life of the I κ B protein is shortened in comparison to normal retinal epithelial cells. This results in constitutive NF κ B localization to the nucleus in these cells. The authors propose that this constitutive NF κ B activation, in concert with other constitutively active transcription factors (i.e. the 115 kDa I κ R-binding factor), promotes constitutive expression of the GRO genes, resulting in an imbalance in the local production of angiogenic versus angiostatic factors. As one might predict, the expression of the angiostatic CXC chemokine IP-10 was very low in this system.⁹³

Kitadai *et al.*, working with human gastric carcinomas, examined IL-8 mRNA by Northern blot, *in situ* mRNA hybridization and IL-8 protein by ELISA in eight human gastric carcinoma cell lines and 39 gastric carcinomas.⁹⁴ High levels of IL-8 were found in six of eight gastric carcinoma cell lines and 32 of 39 gastric carcinoma specimens, as compared to normal mucosa control specimens. The levels of IL-8 in the neoplasms strongly correlated with the vascularity of the specimens as determined by vessel counting using antibodies to CD34 ($r = 0.812$, $p = 0.001$).⁹⁴ These data suggest that IL-8 produced by gastric tumor cells may regulate neovascularization, and hence the growth and metastasis of gastric carci-

noma. In addition, Lingen *et al.* have demonstrated that IL-8 is the major inducer of neovascularization produced by oral squamous cell carcinomas.⁹⁵

Finally, our unpublished observations working in a SCID model of human prostate cancer analogous to the one described above for NSCLC have shown that IL-8 is a positive regulator of tumor formation in SCID mice injected with the prostate cancer cell line PC-3. Conditioned media from this cell line is angiogenic in the CMP assay of angiogenesis and this activity is blocked in the presence of neutralizing antibody to IL-8. Furthermore, injection of neutralizing antibody to IL-8 reduced the growth of PC-3 tumors in SCID mice by 50%. In a similar manner, studies using another prostate cancer cell line, Du145 have shown that GRO- α , not IL-8, is the predominant CXC chemokine which regulates angiogenic activity in the CMP assay of angiogenesis. These studies highlight the fact that even within a particular type of tumor, different members of the CXC chemokine family can regulate angiogenic potential and tumorigenicity.

One important observation to note is that the ELR⁺ CXC chemokines can exert their effect directly on the endothelial cells themselves. *In vitro* chemotaxis assays and the CMP assays all demonstrate that IL-8, ENA-78, GCP-2, PBP, CTAP-III, NAP-2, and GRO- α , - β and - γ have direct proliferative and chemotactic activities on the endothelial cells themselves.⁴⁹ Although GRO- α and - γ have been shown to be mitogenic for melanoma cells,⁹² in the case of NSCLC and prostate cancer, we have clearly shown that the CXC chemokines are not having autocrine proliferative effects on the tumor cells themselves.

Chemokine receptors regulate angiogenesis

As mentioned earlier, the chemokines can be made by all nucleated somatic cells, and the receptors for these CXC chemokines have been cloned and identified to have specific ligand-receptor profiles. For example, IL-8 specifically binds to CXCR1, ELR⁺ CXC chemokines bind to CXCR2, IP-10 and MIG (ELR⁻ CXC chem-

okines) bind to CXCR3, and SDF-1 binds to CXCR4 (Table 2).^{44,96,97} Evidence suggests that the endothelial receptor for ELR⁺ CXC chemokines is the CXC chemokine receptor 2, CXCR2. In support of this concept is the following information: (1) both IL-8 and NAP-2 (ELR⁺ CXC chemokines) have been shown to bind endothelial cells,⁹⁷ (2) CXCR2 is the putative receptor for all ELR⁺ CXC chemokines on neutrophils^{42,98} and all ELR⁺ CXC chemokines are angiogenic,⁴⁹ (3) while the Duffy antigen receptor for chemokines (DARC) has been identified on post-capillary venule endothelial cells,¹⁰¹ this receptor binds not only ELR⁺ CXC chemokines, but also a variety of CC chemokines without apparent signal-coupling,¹⁰¹ (4) expression of CXCR2 in human burn wound (granulation tissue) is found in association with capillary endothelial cells in areas of neovascularization,¹⁰² (5) expression of CXCR2 in human melanoma is associated with both melanoma cells and microvessels within the tumor,⁹³ and (6) recent findings from our laboratory have demonstrated that neutralizing antibodies to murine CXCR2 attenuate the angiogenic activity of murine KC (a structural and functional homolog of human GRO- α), murine MIP-2 (a structural and functional homolog of human GRO- β and - γ) and human IL-8 in the rat CMP bioassay, without inhibiting the angiogenic activity of either bFGF or VEGF (unpublished observation). While these observations support the notion that CXCR2 may be the receptor which mediates ELR⁺ CXC chemokine-mediated angiogenesis, perhaps the most compelling evidence comes from the recent work studying the viral

etiology of the extremely vascular angiosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma.¹⁰³⁻¹⁰⁷

In 1994, Chang *et al.* discovered the Kaposi's sarcoma associated herpesvirus (KSHV or HHV-8).¹⁰⁸ This virus has been detected in every Kaposi's sarcoma biopsy, and is implicated in the pathogenesis of both Kaposi's sarcoma and of primary effusion B cell lymphomas (PELs).¹⁰⁸⁻¹¹³ The virus infects malignant and progenitor cells in these lesions, and encodes a number of putative oncogenes believed to be involved in the angiogenic pathogenesis of these diseases. ORF 74 of KSHV encodes a G-protein-coupled receptor (KSHV-GPCR) that stimulates signaling pathways leading to cell proliferation in a constitutive, agonist-independent manner.^{103,104} KSHV-GPCR is most homologous to the human receptor for the angiogenic chemokine IL-8 or CXCR2.^{103,104} Work by Bais *et al.* demonstrated that signaling through this KSHV-GPCR leads to transformation and tumorigenicity. They demonstrate that this constitutively active receptor activates two protein kinases, JNK/SAPK and p38MAPK, and triggers signaling cascades similar to inflammatory cytokines. Specifically, they suggest that the production of the transcription factor AP-1 leads to the activation and secretion of VEGF, which may in turn increase the angiogenic potential of the tumor.¹⁰⁴ Of interest, however, is that the IL-8 promoter is also strongly positively regulated by AP-1 (our unpublished observations)^{40,112} and it would be interesting to see if constitutive activation of this 'CXCR2-like' receptor leads to the autocrine production of ELR⁺ CXC chemokines. Regardless, the fact that a constitutively active CXCR2-like receptor has been pirated by a virus that induces an angiosarcoma supports the notion that CXCR2 is likely to be the 'angiogenic' receptor on endothelial cells and suggests that this might be an important therapeutic target to treat vascular neoplasms.

IP-10 appears to bind to a specific cell surface site on endothelial cells.²⁶ This receptor appears to be a heparin sulfate proteoglycan associated receptor, as either heparin together with IP-10 or heparinase pretreatment of endothelial cells attenuates IP-10 binding.²⁶ This binding site is specific for IP-10, as neither ELR⁺ CXC chemokines nor various CC chemokines compete for binding on

Table 2. CXC chemokine receptors and some of their putative ligands

CXC chemokines	CXC chemokine receptors			
	CXCR1	CXCR2	CXCR3	CXCR4
IL-8	+	+	-	-
ENA-78	- ^a	+	-	-
GRO- α	- ^a	+	-	-
IP-10	-	-	+	-
MIG	-	-	+	-
SDF-1	-	-	+ ^b	+

^aLow-affinity binding.

^bUnpublished observation

this site. Furthermore, binding of IP-10 to endothelial cells results in inhibition of proliferation independent of calcium flux and apoptosis, and dependent on reversible cell cycle arrest.²⁶ It is not clear if this receptor represents the recently identified receptor for IP-10/MIG (CXCR3) expressed on T cells.⁹⁶ These findings suggest that IP-10 and potentially MIG are unique members of the CXC chemokine family that share a heparin sulfate proteoglycan component of their receptor that accounts for their binding to endothelial cells and subsequent angiostatic activity.

Conclusion

Angiogenesis is regulated by an opposing balance of angiogenic and angiostatic factors. The above studies have demonstrated that as a family, the CXC chemokines behave as either angiogenic or angiostatic factors, depending on the presence of the 'ELR motif' that immediately precedes the first cysteine amino acid residue of the primary structure of these cytokines. Moreover, CXC chemokines appear to be important endogenous factors that regulate angiogenesis in association with tumorigenesis in a number of different neoplasms. These findings support the notion that therapy directed at either inhibition of angiogenic or augmentation of angiostatic CXC chemokine biology may be a novel approach in the treatment of solid tumors.

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