**In Focus**

A Tale of Metabolites: The Cross-Talk between Chromatin and Energy Metabolism ............. 497
B. Martinez-Pastor, C. Cosentino, and R. Mostoslavsky

**REVIEW**

Molecular Dissection of Microsatellite Instable Colorectal Cancer ............... 502
E. Vilar and J. Tabernero

**RESEARCH BRIEF**

Histone H3.3 Mutations Drive Pediatric Glioblastoma through Upregulation of MYCN ....................... 512

Précis: Histone variant H3.3 glycine-34 mutations induce differential genome-wide histone H3 lysine 36 trimethylation and lead to upregulation of MYCN in the developing forebrain.
See commentary, p. 484

**RESEARCH ARTICLES**

Relief of Feedback Inhibition of HER3 Transcription by RAF and MEK Inhibitors Attenuates Their Antitumor Effects in BRAF-Mutant Thyroid Carcinomas ............. 520

Précis: Lineage-specific HER3 upregulation and ligand-dependent HER2/HER3 activation confer resistance to MAPK pathway inhibitors in BRAF-mutant thyroid cancer cells.
See commentary, p. 487

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**IN THIS ISSUE**

Highlighted research articles ......................... 471

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

Important news stories affecting the community .................. 474

**NEWS IN DEPTH**

Q&A: Powel Brown on Cancer Prevention Research .......... 477

Two Drugs Deemed Breakthrough Therapies ...... 478

**RESEARCH WATCH**

Selected highlights of recent articles of exceptional significance from the cancer literature ............ 479

**ONLINE**

For more News and Research Watch, visit Cancer Discovery online at http://CDnews.aacrjournals.org.

**VIEWS**

In The Spotlight

G34, Another Connection between MYCN and a Pediatric Tumor ............. 484
M. Huang and W.A. Weiss
See article, p. 512

Déjà Vu: EGF Receptors Drive Resistance to BRAF Inhibitors .................. 487
M.R. Girotti and R. Marais
See article, p. 520

Two Is Better Than One: Combining IGF1R and MEK Blockade as a Promising Novel Treatment Strategy Against KRAS-Mutant Lung Cancer ......................... 491
R. Chen and E.A. Sweet-Cordero
See article, p. 548

Discovering What Makes STAT Signaling TYK in T-ALL ........ 494
L. Fontan and A. Melnick
See article, p. 564
De-Repression of PDGFRβ Transcription Promotes Acquired Resistance to EGFR Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitors in Glioblastoma Patients. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 534
Précis: Transcriptional derepression of PDGFRβ in response to EGFR inhibition renders EGFR-mutant glioblastomas dependent on PDGFRβ for survival.

Coordinate Direct Input of Both KRAS and IGF1 Receptor to Activation of PI3 Kinase in KRAS-Mutant Lung Cancer . . . . . . . . . . . 548
M. Molina-Arcas, D.C. Hancock, C. Sheridan, M.S. Kumar, and J. Downward
Précis: KRAS-mutant NSCLC cells are selectively sensitive to inhibition of IGF1R, which is required for KRAS-mediated activation of PI3K signaling.
See commentary, p. 491

TYK2–STAT1–BCL2 Pathway Dependence in T-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia . . . . . . . . . . . 564
Précis: Activation of tyrosine kinase 2 (TYK2) by mutation or autocrine interleukin-10 signaling promotes T-ALL cell survival through activation of STAT1 and upregulation of BCL2.
See commentary, p. 494

Bone Marrow–Derived Gr1+ Cells Can Generate a Metastasis-Resistant Microenvironment Via Induced Secretion of Thrombospondin-1 . . . . . . 578
Précis: Metastasis-incompetent tumors systemically reprogram bone marrow–derived myeloid cells in the premetastatic niche to produce TSP-1 to suppress metastatic outgrowth.

Montero-Conde and colleagues show that BRAF-mutant thyroid cancer cells are resistant to RAF and MAP/ERK (MEK) inhibitors. Reactivation of RAS signaling in these cells was associated with de-repression of HER3 transcription due to decreased binding of C-terminal binding protein 1 and 2 (CTBP1/CTBP2) to the HER3 promoter. RAF/MEK inhibition also triggered increased HER3 phosphorylation and activation of HER2/HER3 heterodimers specifically in BRAF-mutant thyroid cancer cells. This effect was dependent on autocrine production of the HER3 ligand neuregulin 1 in thyroid cancer cells, identifying a lineage-specific mechanism of MAPK inhibitor resistance. Treatment with lapatinib sensitized thyroid cancer cells to RAF/MEK blockade and inhibited the growth of murine thyroid tumors, suggesting that this combination may overcome resistance in patients with thyroid cancer. For details, please see the article by Montero-Conde and colleagues on page 520.

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