

Abstract

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Telomerase activation. One step on the road to cancer?

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BACKGROUND: Ever since the discovery that telomeres are short in cancer cells and telomerase is activated in immortal cells, telomerase has been an oncogene wannabe. Oncogenes have been the glamour genes of molecular biology for 20 years, garnering flashy headlines and name recognition.

DISCUSSION: More recently, tumor-suppressor genes have joined oncogenes on center stage. Recent evidence has shown that MYC upregulates the catalytic subunit of telomerase, TERT, and that TERT cooperates with HPV E7 in cell immortalization.

CONCLUSION: This evidence now supports the placement of telomerase among the cancer gene elite.

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