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Perspective

Understanding the Role of Cancer Progression and Therapeutic Implications

Thai Jean*

Department of Medicine, Taipei Medical University-Shuang Ho Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan

DESCRIPTION

The Fibroblast Activation Protein (FAP) is best recognized for being overexpressed in tumor stroma. This atypical serine protease also functions as a dipeptidyl peptidase and an endopeptidase, cleaving substrates at a post-proline link. FAP expression is difficult to detect in non-diseased adult organs, but it is highly elevated in tissue remodeling locations such as liver fibrosis, lung fibrosis, atherosclerosis, arthritis, tumors, and embryonic tissues.

FAP is emerging as a novel therapeutic target due to its limited expression pattern and dual enzymatic activity. However, strategies for exploiting and targeting this protease are growing faster than knowledge of FAP's underlying biology. This study emphasizes the importance of properly defining FAP's substrate repertoire and expression patterns in order to clarify its function in biological and pathological processes.

Numerous cellular players contribute to cancer growth and metastasis in the complex microenvironment of malignancies. Fibroblast activation protein, a cell surface glycoprotein produced on the surface of Cancer-Associated Fibroblasts (CAFs), is one such essential role. Because of its distinctive features and possible consequences in diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy, FAP has emerged as an intriguing target for cancer research. In this study, they will search into the world of FAP and investigate its involvement in tumor-stromal interactions. FAP expression is quite low in the majority of adult tissues under physiological settings. FAP is expressed during embryonic development as well as in adults in pancreatic alpha cells, Multipotent Bone Marrow Stromal Cells (BM-MSC), and uterine stroma.

The FAP gene encodes a type II integral membrane protein of the serine protease family called Fibroblast Activation Protein (FAP). FAP was discovered on fibroblasts in the reactive stroma of healing wounds and rose to prominence due to its overexpression in the tumor microenvironment, particularly in the stroma of epithelial malignancies. TAFs are activated fibroblasts that play an important role in the tumor microenvironment. FAP is usually associated with TAFs.

FAP has been linked to tumor development, metastasis, and immune evasion in multiple ways. In many malignancies, its expression in the tumor stroma is associated with a bad prognosis. FAP promotes tumor growth by altering the Extracellular Matrix (ECM) proteolytic action, according to several studies. FAP has the enzymatic functions of dipeptidyl peptidase and endopeptidase, allowing it to destroy ECM components and modify the tumor microenvironment. Furthermore, FAP's proteolytic action can induce angiogenesis, which is essential for tumor survival and spread. FAP promotes the development of new blood vessels that sustain tumor growth by activating pro-angiogenic proteins and encouraging endothelial cell migration.

FAP has sparked interest as a possible diagnostic and therapeutic target due to its distinct expression pattern and functional importance in cancer. FAP expression has been found in several cancer types, including breast, lung, pancreatic, colorectal, and prostate cancer, making it a viable biomarker for cancer diagnosis and monitoring.

FAP expression in malignancies has been visualized using imaging modalities such as Positron Emission Tomography (PET). This imaging method enables for the non-invasive detection of FAP-positive lesions and can benefit in treatment planning and therapeutic response monitoring. FAP has gained interest as a therapeutic target for innovative anti-cancer treatments. Small molecule inhibitors, antibody-drug conjugates, and immunotherapeutic treatments are among the options being investigated. FAP-targeted preclinical investigations have yielded promising results, showing the potential of FAP-directed therapeutics to increase anti-tumor immune responses and treatment outcomes.

Fibroblast Activation Protein (FAP) is an intriguing element of the complex puzzle that is the tumor microenvironment. Its unusual expression pattern, functional significance in tumor-stromal interactions, and implications in cancer development make it an enthralling research and therapeutic target. Understanding the precise processes by which FAP promotes tumor development, angiogenesis, and immune evasion is critical to designing effective cancer-fighting therapies.

Correspondence to: Thai Jean, Department of Medicine, Taipei Medical University-Shuang Ho Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan, E-mail: thaichag@hotmail.com

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