

# 10. The role of fibroblast growth factors and related oncogenes in tumor growth

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## The FGF family

### *Introduction*

The fibroblast growth factors (FGF) constitute a family of seven mitogenic and structurally homologous polypeptides found in a variety of cells and tissues [for reviews see 1–9]. The FGF family includes acidic FGF (aFGF), basic FGF (bFGF), *int-2*, *hst/K-fgf*, FGF-5, FGF-6, and keratinocyte growth factor (KFGF) (Table 1). A simplified nomenclature has been proposed in which the FGF family members are named FGF-1, FGF-2, FGF-3, FGF-4, FGF-5, FGF-6, and FGF-7, respectively. Structurally, the homologies between the seven FGF family members is 35–45%, with the homologies being greatest in the internal regions of these proteins. Their molecular weights range from 18 to 30 kDa. They all share with aFGF and bFGF the 3 exon-2 intron structure and the conservation of two cysteine residues. An important structural difference between the FGF family members is that, unlike the others, aFGF and bFGF lack signal peptide sequences and are not secreted proteins. Members of the FGF family, in particular bFGF [10], are also characterized by their strong affinity for heparin. The affinity of bFGF for heparin is manifested in its ability to bind to cell surface heparan sulfate proteoglycan (HSPG), an activity that is required for binding to high-affinity FGF receptors [9]. A schematic representation of the FGF family members portraying domains of sequence homology and signal peptides is shown in Fig. 1.

The biological significance of cell-associated aFGF and bFGF is still a matter of conjecture, while the other five FGFs are thought to be involved in typical paracrine and autocrine growth mechanisms. An important biological distinction is that aFGF, bFGF, and KGF do not transform the cells that produce them, while *int-2*, *hst/K-fgf*, FGF-5, and FGF-6 are oncogenes. Unlike aFGF and bFGF, which are found ubiquitously in adult tissue, these oncogenes are expressed primarily during embryogenesis, neonatal development, and in many tumors. KGF is associated mostly with the epithelium.

In this chapter, we will review the structural and biological properties of

Table 1. Members of the FGF family

	Common name	MW	Originally found in
FGF-1	acidic FGF (HBGF-1)	18,000	Adult tissue (neural)
FGF-2	basic FGF (HBGF-2)	18,000	Most adult tissue
FGF-3	<i>int-2</i>	27,000	Site of MMTV integration, breast carcinoma
FGF-4	<i>hst/K-fgf</i>	23,000	Human stomach tumor ( <i>hst</i> ), Kaposi's sarcoma ( <i>KFGF</i> )
FGF-5	<i>FGF 5</i>	29,000	Bladder carcinoma, hepatoma
FGF-6	FGF 6	?	Homologous to <i>hst</i>
FGF-7	Keratinocyte Growth factor (KGF)	28,000	Epithelial tissue stromal cells

**FGF FAMILY**

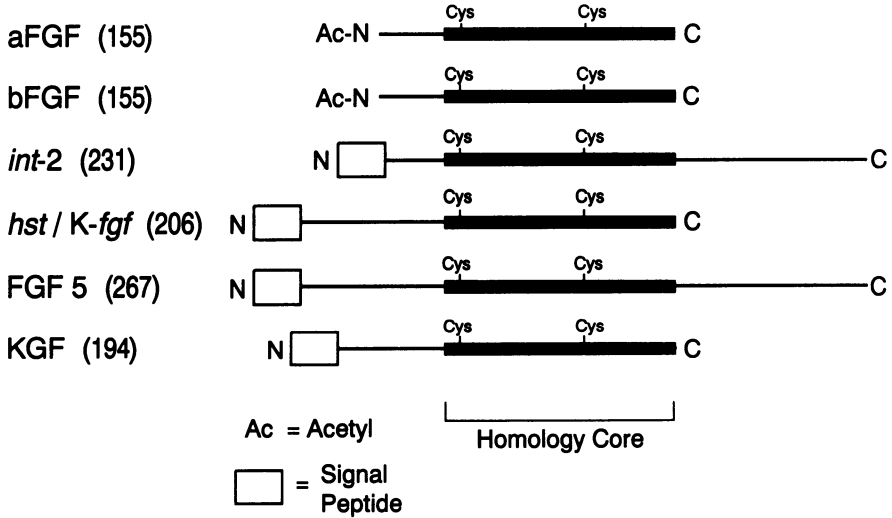


Figure 1. Schematic representation depicting FGF family structural features. The numbers in parentheses represent the numbers of amino acids in the open reading frames. Also depicted are the presence or absence of signal peptide sequences, the N-terminal amino acids blocked by acetylation, the regions of structural homology, and the presence throughout the family of two homologous cyst residues.

the individual FGF family members, with an emphasis on their perceived role in tumorigenesis.

*aFGF and bFGF (FGF-1 and FGF-2)*

Acidic FGF and basic FGF will be discussed together, since only subtle physiological differences have been found between these two well-charac-

terized proteins. Acidic FGF and bFGF have a 53% protein sequence homology [11]. Both are single-chain polypeptides of 154 amino acids with molecular weights of about 18 kDa, as predicted from their cDNA nucleotide sequence. The gene for aFGF is located on chromosome 5 [12], while that of bFGF is located on chromosome 4 [13]. They also have other important structural differences [6,13–15]. Acidic FGF is an anionic protein with a pI of 5.6 [15], while bFGF is very cationic with a pI of about 10 [16]. In addition, there are forms of bFGF containing more than 154 amino acids that have molecular weights of 22–25 kDa [17–19]. These higher molecular weight forms of bFGF are generated by an unusual mechanism in which synthesis is initiated on the CUG start codons, rather than the typical AUG codon that initiates the 18 kDa form [18,19].

An important property of aFGF and bFGF is their interaction with heparin [20,21]. Both bind tightly to columns of immobilized heparin, a property that has facilitated their purification [1,10,15,20]. In addition, heparin stabilizes aFGF and bFGF, and protects them from heat, acid [21], and proteolytic degradation [22]. Acidic FGF and bFGF also bind to heparin-like molecules that are associated with cells. These include heparan sulfate proteoglycans (HSPG) in extracellular matrix and on cell surfaces. It has been suggested that aFGF and bFGF are sequestered or “stored” in the extracellular matrix [23–25] as part of a highly stable FGF-HSPG complex and are released during injury by a combination of proteases and heparinases [23]. The binding of bFGF to cell surface HSPG is a prerequisite for FGF’s ability to bind to the FGF high-affinity receptor [9,26] as well as for bFGF mitogenic activity. Thus, heparin binding is an important property that modulates FGF structure, stability, *and* function. Interestingly, bFGF also maintains a high affinity for betacyclodextrin-tetradecasulfate, which structurally resembles heparin [27].

The biological activities of aFGF and bFGF are very similar. Both are important components of endothelial cell growth and differentiation, and stimulate new blood vessel growth, i.e., they are angiogenic *in vivo* [1]. Their angiogenic activity stems from the ability to stimulate many components in the formation of new blood vessels, such as (1) endothelial cell migration [28], (2) endothelial cell proliferation [29], (3) protease production [30], (4) matrix degradation [31], (5) plasminogen activator activity [32], and (6) capillary tube formation [33].

Acidic FGF and bFGF also stimulate the proliferation of a variety of other cell types *in vitro*, including fibroblasts [34], vascular smooth muscle cells [35], granulosa cells [36], osteoblasts [37], ovarian epithelial cells [38], oligodendrocytes [39], and keratinocytes [40].

There has been considerable effort to analyze the activities of aFGF and bFGF *in vivo*. One fruitful area has been the role of these growth factors in modulating wound healing. Since endothelial cells and fibroblasts are critical components of wound healing, mitogens of these cell types, such as aFGF and bFGF, might be expected to accelerate wound repair. In one of the first

studies to elucidate the role of fibroblast growth factor in wound healing, it was demonstrated that bFGF administered to a wound stimulates the formation of a highly vascular granulation tissue [41]. Subsequently, it was found that topical application of bFGF increased tensile strength in sutured linear incisions in rats [42] and accelerated the rate of closure of partial-thickness wounds in pigs [43]. If bFGF is blocked in vivo by local application of antibodies, the wound will not heal, suggesting that bFGF has a natural critical role in wound healing [44].

Folkman and colleagues hypothesized that duodenal ulcers are similar to surgical wounds that require bFGF to heal. Therefore they administered an acid-resistant oral form of bFGF to rats and found that angiogenesis was stimulated in the ulcer bed and the ulcers healed significantly more rapidly [45].

Acidic FGF is also active in vivo. When applied in Gelfoam implants in the peritoneal cavities of rats [46], aFGF stimulates angiogenesis.

One potential important therapeutic use for aFGF, bFGF, and KFGF in patients may be to reverse impaired wound healing. In rodents, the application of topical bFGF has been demonstrated to reverse wound healing impairments produced by systemic steroids and genetic obesity [47], genetically induced diabetes [48], and local bacterial contamination [49]. These results may be applicable to humans as well.

Fibroblast growth factor may also be useful in stimulating a variety of regenerative processes in the central nervous system. For example, bFGF increases neuronal preservation [50] and nerve regeneration [51].

### *int-2 (FGF-3)*

*int-2* was the first FGF-like oncogene to be described [52–55]. It was so named because of the initial discovery that it was induced to become transcriptionally active after integration (*int*) of the mouse mammary tumor virus into the mouse genome [53]. The *int-2* gene is expressed in very specific time periods and locations from midgestation until birth in amphibia [56–58]. The *int-2* gene induces mesoderm in *Xenopus laevis* animal pole cells and stimulates DNA synthesis in mammalian fibroblasts [59]. Based on these studies and others, it has been designated a developmental control gene [56].

Once the structure of *int-2* was determined its homology to bFGF became apparent. The *int-2* gene encodes for a protein of 231 amino acids that has a 46% homology to bFGF [60]. As expected for a secreted protein with a signal peptide, the *int-2* protein can be detected in the endoplasmic reticulum of transfected cells [61]. However, the *int-2* protein has not, to date, been shown to be an active mitogen and its mechanism in transforming cells is unclear.

As an oncogene induced by mammary tumor virus, *int-2* would be expected to be expressed by breast tumors. Expression of *int-2* in transgenic

mice results in epithelial cell hyperplasia in mammary and salivary glands, as well as prostatic epidermal hypertrophy, which results in male sterility [62]. Amplification of the *int-2* gene has been found in a variety of human tumors, particularly in breast carcinomas [63–66] and squamous cell carcinomas of the head and neck region [66–69]. The clinical implications of these findings appear to be relatively insignificant, since they occur in less than a majority of patients with these tumors and have not been shown to have a significant correlation with outcome in patients in whom *int-2* is expressed. In breast carcinoma, for example, the percentage of patients who show *int-2* amplification is usually less than 30% [63–66].

*Int-2* is expressed during embryogenesis and tumorigenesis; however, further work is needed to understand its function in oncogenically transforming cells. Since it is rarely found in adult preneoplastic cells, one possible function for *int-2* is as a clinical prognosticator. Furthermore, its diagnostic significance may be amplified when it is found in the presence of other oncogenes [70–72]. The coamplification of oncogenes may be important for many oncogenes that have not yet had significant clinical impact when expressed in and of themselves. One exception is the expression of *N-myc* in neuroblastomas, which has clinical significance when it is singularly expressed [73].

#### *hst/K-fgf (FGF-4)*

The *hst/K-fgf* oncogene was isolated from two sources simultaneously. One source was NIH-3T3 cells transfected with the Kaposi sarcoma DNA, hence the name Kaposi FGF (K-*fgf*) [74,75]. The other source was NIH-3T3 cells transfected with DNA from a human stomach tumor, hence the name *hst* [76–78]. *hst/K-fgf* is located on chromosome 11 band q13 [77], approximately 40–50 kb from the *int-2* gene. The *hst/k-fgf* has 43%, 38%, and 40% sequence homologies to aFGF, bFGF, and *int-2*, respectively.

*hst/K-fgf* has similar biological activities to aFGF and bFGF, but it has different structural features. In particular, the *hst/K-fgf* gene encodes for a 206 amino acid primary translation product that contains a hydrophobic signal peptide sequence. In distinction to aFGF and bFGF, the mature 23-kDa 176 amino acid protein of *hst/k-fgf* is glycosylated and secreted [75]. The gene for *hst/K-fgf* is rarely expressed in adult cells or in adult tissues [79]. It is expressed, however, in embryogenesis, specifically during mid-stage mouse embryogenesis. *hst/k-fgf* also stimulates DNA synthesis in mammalian fibroblasts [59]. As expected for an oncogene, *hst/K-fgf* synthesis has been demonstrated in a variety of solid tumors, including germ cell [80], esophageal [81], gastric [82], and breast tumors [83]. On the other hand, it is not expressed in hematopoietic tumors, such as leukemias [83]. Interestingly, although *hst/K-fgf* was first isolated from cells transfected with Kaposi sarcoma DNA, it has not been detected in the secreted material from cultured Kaposi sarcoma cells [84,85].

It has been suggested that *hst/K-fgf* induces the transformed phenotype by binding to cell surface receptors, thereby creating an autocrine closed loop [75]. No specific receptor has been identified for the *hst/K-fgf* protein, but it is thought to bind to the same receptor as aFGF and bFGF [85].

### *FGF-5*

FGF-5 was originally isolated by transfection of a human bladder tumor DNA into NIH-3T3 cells [86]. Its gene sequence has 40–50% homology to aFGF and bFGF [87]. The FGF-5 gene is found on human chromosome number 4 [88] and encodes for a 267 amino acid protein with a signal sequence. There is some evidence that FGF-5 synthesis is dramatically increased if there is a deletion or a point mutation in an upstream open reading frame [89].

The FGF-5 protein is secreted as glycoprotein molecules of heterogeneous sizes [89]. It is a potent mitogen for endothelial cells and fibroblasts [87]. Messenger RNA transcripts for FGF-5 are found in nearly all phases of embryogenesis [90] and in the neurons of adult brains [91]. The protein for FGF-5 is also secreted from bladder carcinoma, endometrial carcinoma, and human hepatoma cell lines [87].

### *FGF-6*

FGF-6 is an oncogene originally isolated from a mouse plasmid library by screening with the *hst/K-fgf* gene [92]. The FGF-6 gene is found on chromosome 12 band p13, unlike *int-2* and *hst/K-fgf*, which are localized on chromosome 11 band q13 [93]. Transfection of NIH-3T3 cells with the FGF-6 gene transforms them. The amino acid sequence for FGF-6 is 70% identical to the aFGF product at the C terminus. FGF-6 is the least characterized of the FGF family members and there are very little data to date on expression of the FGF-6 protein.

### *KGF*

The keratinocyte growth factor (KGF) has a 39% homology to bFGF [94]. The KGF gene encodes for a primary translation product of 194 amino acids, and the mature protein does have a signal peptide and is secreted. KGF is present in stromal cells (i.e., fibroblasts) derived from epithelial tissues and is present in embryonic and adult tissue [94]. It has not to date been identified in tumor cells. Unlike other FGF family members, it is neither an endothelial cell growth/angiogenesis factor nor is it an oncogene. Instead, it is a highly specific mitogen for epithelial cells, in general, and for keratinocytes in particular [94]. Thus it differs from aFGF and bFGF, which do not show such target cell specificity.

Table 2. Presence of fibroblast growth factors in human tumors

Tumor	aFGF	bFGF	<i>int-2</i>	<i>hst/K-fgf</i>	FGF-5	References
Adrenal carcinoma		+				175
Basal cell carcinoma		+				177
Bladder carcinoma		+			+	86,147
Brain tumors						
Glioblastoma	+	+				170–173
Meningioma		+				171
Acoustic neuroma		+				150
Pituitary tumors		+				151
Astrocytoma		+				174
Breast carcinoma		+	+	+		63–66,83, 152–155 169
Cervical carcinoma		+				160
Cholangiocellularcarcinoma		+				156
Colon carcinoma		+				78,179
Embryonal carcinoma		+		+		157,163
Endometrial carcinoma					+	87
Esophageal squamous cell carcinoma			+	+		67–69,81 72,158,159
Gastric adenocarcinoma				+		72,77,78,82
Hepatoma		+				87,160–162
Kaposi sarcoma		+				164,181
Laryngeal squamous cell carcinoma			+			67
Melanoma		+	+	+		70,160,177
Neuroblastoma	+	+				165,177
Oral cavity & tongue			+			67
Osteosarcoma		+				177
Ovarian carcinoma			+			166
Pancreatic adenocarcinoma		+				167
Renal cell carcinoma		+				147,149,168
Rhabdomyosarcoma	+	+				178,180
Teratocarcinoma		+	+	+		80,176
Tonsil squamous cell carcinoma			+			67

### The FGF family and tumor growth

Members of the FGF family are expressed in animal and human tumors (for human tumors see, Table 2). The four FGF oncogenes, *int-2*, *hst/K-fgf*, FGF-5, and FGF-6 are involved in autocrine transformation of cells. The role of aFGF and bFGF is less clear, since they are found in both normal and tumor cells. Furthermore, tumorigenicity has not been directly correlated with aFGF or bFGF expression. Normal endothelial cells synthesize more bFGF than is expressed in many tumor cell lines [24,95]. The normal phenotype of these endothelial cells is maintained, even though these cells have FGF receptors and could in theory participate in autocrine transformation. Secondly, aFGF and bFGF are not secreted. Thus, even if expressed by tumor cells they may not be able to induce autocrine trans-

formation, which typically requires interaction of a *secreted* growth factor with its receptor on the same cell type. Lack of active secretion also limits possible paracrine activity, unless aFGF or bFGF are released by alternative mechanisms, such as cell death.

There are conditions, however, in which aFGF or bFGF might induce autocrine cell transformation; for example, acquisition by FGF of a signal peptide. Cells transfected with native bFGF cDNA and overexpressing bFGF acquire an enhanced proliferation rate and a higher saturation density, evidence of a transformed phenotype. However, they remain density arrested and are nontumorigenic in syngeneic mice [96], suggesting that transformation *in vitro* is not necessarily correlated with tumorigenicity *in vivo*. Cells transfected with native aFGF cDNA are similarly nontumorigenic [97]. One possible explanation is that cells overexpressing the FGFs might release small but sufficient amounts of growth factor for stimulating autocrine growth *in vitro* but that *in vivo* this material diffuses away. Alternatively, aFGF and/or bFGF transform cells in culture by some type of internal autocrine mechanism in which FGFs are not released but interact with intracellular FGF receptors. This might occur *in vitro* to stimulate transformation but for some unknown reason may be insufficient to induce tumorigenicity *in vivo*.

Cells transfected with a construct in which bFGF cDNA is altered by addition of a signal sequence undergo autocrine transformation and exhibit morphological and biochemical alterations characteristic of highly transformed cells [96,98]. The signal peptide bFGF (spbFGF)-transformed cells have an accelerated proliferation rate, are not density arrested, and are capable of anchorage-independent growth. spbFGF cells possess few functional FGF receptors at the cell surface, supporting the idea that these cells are transformed by constitutive interaction with and downregulation of the FGF receptor. Most importantly, the spbFGF-transformed cells are highly tumorigenic and metastatic. It has been suggested that spbFGF transforms cells via an internal autocrine loop, since these cells do not secrete biologically active bFGF, despite the presence of a signal peptide, and their proliferation rate is not affected by neutralizing antibodies to bFGF.

The molecular mechanism by which a signal peptide-bearing bFGF leads to transformation is yet to be determined. It is possible that a structural, posttranslational modification of FGF, being processed through the endoplasmic reticulum and golgi apparatus, may lead to an atypical interaction with the FGF receptor. The localization of bFGF-receptor interaction might play an important role in autocrine transformation. While native bFGF can interact with the FGF receptor only at the cell surface, spbFGF might be able to bind the receptor inside the cell anywhere along the secretory pathway. Such an intracellular interaction may activate different modes of signal transduction by exposing novel substrates to the tyrosine kinase activity of the FGF receptor.

In summary, the four FGF oncogenes and their respective proteins are



the most likely to stimulate tumor growth. The reason for their oncogenic potential could be that, unlike aFGF and bFGF, these four oncogenes have naturally occurring signal sequences and encode for secreted proteins that appear to be involved in the autocrine transformation of cells possessing FGF receptors. In this regard, the distribution of *int-2*, *hst/K-fgf*, and FGF-5 is quite different than that of aFGF or bFGF. The oncogenes are rarely found in normal adult tissue. Rather, they appear to be mostly expressed during embryogenesis and in tumors. It is possible that FGF-related oncogenes are the forms of FGF preferentially expressed during periods of intense proliferation.

### **The FGF family and tumor vascularization**

Proliferation of blood vessels is necessary for the normal growth and development of tissue. In the adult, angiogenesis occurs infrequently. Exceptions are found in the female reproductive system, where angiogenesis occurs in the follicle during its development, in the corpus luteum during ovulation, and in the placenta during pregnancy. These periods of angiogenesis are relatively brief and tightly regulated. Normal angiogenesis also occurs as part of the body's repair processes; for example, in the healing of wounds and fractures. By contrast, uncontrolled angiogenesis is usually pathological. For example, the ability of tumors to stimulate angiogenesis or new capillary blood vessel growth allows them to grow in an exponential manner [1,5,99–109]. The corollary of this principle is that without the ability of tumors to stimulate new blood vessels, the tumors will remain in a small, avascular state. Vascularization of a tumor also enhances metastatic potential. It has been recently demonstrated that in breast cancer patients there is a strong correlation between the number and density of microvessels in the primary tumor and the incidence of breast cancer metastases [110].

A number of growth factors have been shown to be angiogenic, including aFGF, bFGF, angiogenin, platelet-derived endothelial cell growth factor, vascular endothelial growth factor, tumor necrosis factor, and transforming growth factors- $\alpha$  and - $\beta$  [1,4,7,111–114]. Acidic FGF and bFGF are the best characterized of all the angiogenesis factors. These FGFs stimulate angiogenesis in the classical bioassays, such as the normally avascular cornea and the chick chorioallantoic membrane [115, 116]. Acidic FGF and bFGF modulate endothelial cell activity in vitro in a manner consistent with being stimulators of angiogenesis in vivo. For example, in culture FGF stimulates endothelial cell chemotaxis [28] and proliferation [29] for endothelial cells. Endothelial cells themselves secrete substantial amounts of bFGF [29,95], most of which is associated with the subendothelial cell extracellular matrix [23–25,117–120]. FGF found in the endothelial cell extracellular matrix is an essential component required for blood vessel growth. It has been suggested that capillary growth is regulated locally by bFGF stored in

capillary basement membrane that is released to stimulate capillary endothelial cells in an autocrine manner [25,117]. Basic FGF has been shown to support tumor growth by stimulating blood vessel growth [121–123]. For example, colon carcinoma can be stimulated by the application of bFGF in vivo [121]. Since FGF receptors do not appear on the colon cancer cells themselves but are found on the endothelial cells in the tumor, it appears that colon carcinoma growth is mediated by bFGF-induced neovascularization. Neutralizing FGF antibodies significantly reduce the tumor volume, further suggesting an endothelial cell-stimulating paracrine role for FGF in the growth of some tumors [121,122]. Furthermore, when fibroblasts were transfected with a gene possessing a signal sequence fused to bFGF, large tumors grew in nude mice [123]. Antibodies to bFGF administered systemically resulted in approximately a 75% decrease in the size of these tumors [123].

An important question remains: How can bFGF, which is not normally secreted, become a paracrine vascularization factor? Several possible mechanisms of FGF release by tumors have been postulated, including tumor necrosis, tumor cell leakiness, acquisition of signal peptide, and induction of multidrug resistant genes that encode for proteins that are involved in FGF export. A possible mechanism involving differential bFGF export by normal and tumor cells has been reported [124]. In these studies, transgenic mice carrying the bovine papilloma virus genome (BPV-1) at first produced benign avascular dermal fibromatoses. Eventually, there was a transition from the avascular tumors to the formation of highly vascular malignant fibrosarcomas. The *switch* from avascular to vascular tumors was accompanied by a change in bFGF release profiles. Basic FGF was expressed in both normal dermal fibroblasts and in benign fibromatoses but was cell associated, a typical property of bFGF that has no signal peptide for secretion. In contrast, the fibrosarcoma cells had very little cell-associated bFGF and a substantial amount of exported bFGF-like activity, which was neutralized by anti-bFGF antibodies. Since bFGF is angiogenic, it may be that its export by fibrosarcoma cells results in a paracrine stimulation of blood vessel growth in the tumors. Tumor angiogenesis might not occur in the avascular fibromatoses because bFGF is not released by these tumor cells. The mechanism by which the fibrosarcoma cells export bFGF is not understood. The cells might have special pathways for exporting proteins, or alternatively, the bFGF in these cells might be altered structurally and exported. The precise nature of this mechanism is not understood to date.

## Conclusions and future directions

Members of the FGF family are important modulators of tumor growth. The four FGF oncogenes — *int-2*, *hst/K-fgf*, FGF-5, and FGF-6 — are the most likely candidates to be involved in stimulating autocrine tumor growth and

tumor neovascularization because they are secreted. The role of aFGF and bFGF in tumor growth is less clear. Since they are not secreted proteins, it is not clearly understood how they could be involved in cell transformation. Recent studies have suggested some possible mechanisms that allow aFGF and bFGF to be involved in tumor growth. For example, internal autocrine loops may occur in which aFGF and bFGF interact with their receptors within cells. Another possible mechanism is the alteration of FGF structure or of the tumor cell that allows specific FGF export, resulting in the stimulation of tumor angiogenesis.

Given the possibility that FGF is involved in tumor growth, anti-bFGF therapy might have therapeutic value. Several strategies have been attempted. These include the following: (1) the use of neutralizing antibodies that would inhibit exported members of the FGF family [123], (2) the use of antisense oligonucleotides that inhibit FGF synthesis. Basic FGF antisense has been used to inhibit melanoma growth [125]. (3) The use of drugs that inhibit the interaction of FGF with its receptor. Suramin has been shown to inhibit FGF-FGF receptor interactions and to revert the phenotype of tumors dependent on FGF production [126,127]. (4) The use of reagents that degrade cell surface heparan sulfate proteoglycans (HSPG). It has been shown that bFGF needs to bind to cell surface HSPG in order to be mitogenic [9,26,128]. Inactivating cell surface HSPG with heparinase or with specific peptides that bind to HSPG might be a way to block the mitogenic activity of FGF family members in a tumor. (5) The use of angiogenesis inhibitors. These compounds include a synthetic laminin peptide [129], AGM 1470 [130–133]), minocycline [134], thrombospondin [135,136], cartilage-derived inhibitor [137], penicillamine [138,139], platelet-factor 4 [140], and modulators of collagen metabolism [141]. Angiostatic steroids with or without heparin [142,143] or with betacyclodextrin-tetradecasulfate [144] have also been found to be potent angiogenesis inhibitors. The extent to which these angiogenesis inhibitors interfere with FGF expression remains to be elucidated.

The presence of FGF family members in tissues and biological fluids [145–147] may have diagnostic value. Methods that could be used to detect these growth factors include immunocytochemistry of tumor tissue, in situ hybridization to detect FGF family transcripts, and ELISA analysis [148,149].

There is a great deal still to be learned about the FGF family, including questions of structure, localization, biosynthesis, regulatory mechanisms, and involvement in angiogenesis. More detailed information regarding these FGF properties might continue to provide information that can be translated into further advances in the diagnosis and therapy of benign and malignant diseases.

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