

Untersuchung molekularer Grundlagen der Pathogenese des klassischen Hodgkin Lymphoms

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1 Zusammenfassung

Das klassische Hodgkin Lymphom (cHL) ist eines der häufigsten Lymphome der westlichen Welt. Ein Kennzeichen der für das cHL charakteristischen Hodgkin- und Reed-Sternberg (HRS)-Zellen ist die konstitutive Aktivierung verschiedener Signalwege, zu denen auch der Janus Kinassen / Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (JAK/STAT)-Signalweg gehört. In unserer Arbeitsgruppe wurde erstmals gezeigt, dass STAT6 ein wichtiger Überlebensfaktor für HRS-Zellen ist. Genexpressionsanalysen von HRS-Zellen mit reprimierter STAT6-Expression lieferten eine Reihe neuer potentieller STAT6-Zielgene im cHL. In dieser Arbeit wurde die Regulation einiger funktionell interessanter Gene durch STAT6 validiert und charakterisiert.

Da im cHL neben STAT6 auch weitere STAT-Proteine sowie andere Signalwege dauerhaft aktiviert vorliegen, wurde zunächst in einem induzierbaren System untersucht ob diese Gene auch transient STAT6-abhängig reguliert werden. Dafür wurden Ramos-B-Zellen verwendet, in denen STAT6 durch Interleukin (IL)-4 transient aktiviert werden kann. Für *EPHB1*, *HERC3*, *USP2*, *USP6*, *CASP7*, *PTPRC (CD45)* und *NFAT5* konnte eine IL-4-abhängige Regulation nachgewiesen werden. Mittels *in silico*-Analysen der Promotorbereiche von *EPHB1*, *USP2*, *CASP7*, *PTPRC (CD45)* und *NFAT5* wurden potentielle STAT-Bindestellen identifiziert. In anschließenden Chromatinimmunpräzipitations (ChIP)-Experimenten konnte die Bindung von STAT6 an deren Promotorregionen auch *in vivo* nachgewiesen werden. Damit konnten fünf neue STAT6-Zielgene in HRS-Zellen identifiziert werden, über deren Regulation STAT6 an der gestörten Entwicklung der HRS-Zellen bzw. an der Inhibition der Apoptose beteiligt sein könnte. Das Ausschalten der STAT6-Expression in L1236-Zellen führte ferner zu einer erhöhten Expression und Aktivierung von STAT1, für das bereits in T-Zell-Lymphomen, Magenkrebs und Melanomen eine pro-apoptotische Funktion beschrieben wurde. Durch lentivirale Überexpression von STAT1 konnte nachgewiesen werden, dass dies zur Induktion von Apoptose in HRS-Zellen beiträgt. Das deutet darauf hin, dass sich STAT6 und STAT1 in HRS-Zellen gegenseitig regulieren und wichtige antagonistische Funktionen in der Regulation der Apoptose von HRS-Zellen besitzen.

Ein weiteres wichtiges Merkmal der HRS-Zellen, die nach heutiger Kenntnis in der Mehrheit von prä-apoptotischen B-Zellen lymphatischer Keimzentren abstammen, ist deren weitgehender Verlust der Expression des B-Zell-Rezeptors (BCR) sowie wichtiger nachfolgender Komponenten des BCR-Signalwegs. Da B-Zellen lymphatischer Keimzentren ohne BCR normalerweise effektiv durch Apoptose eliminiert werden, HRS-Zellen aber überleben, wurde vermutet, dass der Verlust des B-Zell-spezifischen Genexpressionsmusters zum Überleben der HRS-Zellen beiträgt. In diesem Zusammenhang wurde in dieser

Arbeit die epigenetische Regulation von B-Zell-spezifischen Genen durch den Polycomb Repressive Complex (PRC)2 Komplex untersucht.

Dabei konnte gezeigt werden, dass eine Reihe typischer B-Zell-Gene in HRS-Zellen mit trimethyliertem Lysin 27 am Histon H3 (H3K27me3), einer für stillgelegtes Chromatin stehenden Modifikation, assoziiert sind. Ebenfalls konnte eine Assoziation dieser Gene mit SUZ12, einer Komponente des Polycomb Repressive Complex (PRC)2, der diese Modifikation katalysiert, gezeigt werden. Die Inhibition des PRC2 bzw. der H3K27me3 führte mit drei verschiedenen Ansätzen (Behandlung von cHL-Zelllinien mit einem PRC2-Inhibitor, stabile Transduktion mit shRNAs gegen PRC2-Komponenten, sowie Überexpression der katalytischen Domäne einer H3K27me3-Demethylase) sowohl zu einem Anstieg der Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene in cHL-Zelllinien, als auch zur Induktion von Apoptose.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass diese Arbeit einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Verständnis der molekularen Grundlagen der Pathogenese des cHL geleistet hat. So konnten eine Reihe neuer potentieller STAT6-Zielgene in cHL-Zellen identifiziert und bestätigt werden und eine antagonistische regulatorische Funktion von STAT6 und STAT1 aufgezeigt werden. Des Weiteren konnte gezeigt werden, dass die Assoziation von B-Zell-spezifischen Genen mit H3K27me3 zu deren Stilllegung in cHL-Zellen beiträgt. Zusammen mit der Identifikation von Komponenten des PRC2 als Überlebensfaktoren für diese Zellen konnten somit verschiedene neue Ansatzpunkte für Therapiemöglichkeiten des cHL identifiziert werden.

2 Summary

Classical Hodgkin Lymphoma (cHL) is one of the most frequent lymphomas in the western world. The cHL is characterized by its typical Hodgkin and Reed-Sternberg (HRS)-cells. One hallmark of cHL is the constitutive activation of a number of signaling pathways, such as the Jak Kinase / Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (JAK/STAT)-pathway. In previous work our group demonstrated for the first time that STAT6 is an essential survival factor for HRS cells. Gene expression analysis of HRS-cells with repressed STAT6-expression led to the identification of a number of new potential STAT6-target genes with important regulatory functions.

Because further STAT proteins and other signaling pathways are constitutively active in HRS-cells besides STAT6, it was first analyzed whether these genes are also transiently regulated in a STAT6 dependent manner. Therefore Ramos B-cells were used, in which STAT6 can be activated transiently by stimulation with Interleukin (IL)-4. For *EPHB1*, *HERC3*, *USP2*, *USP6*, *CASP7*, *PTPRC* (*CD45*), and *NFAT5* an IL-4 dependent gene expression could be proven. *In silico* analysis of the promoter regions of *EPHB1*, *USP2*, *CASP7*, *PTPRC* (*CD45*) and *NFAT5* led to the identification of potential STAT binding sites. STAT6 binding to these promoter regions was confirmed *in vivo* with chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP) experiments. Thereby five new STAT6 target genes were identified via their regulation STAT6 could be involved in the disturbed B-cell development and inhibition of apoptosis in HRS-cells. Moreover, knockdown of STAT6 resulted in an increased expression and activation of STAT1, which was described earlier to show pro-apoptotic functions in several malignancies. Overexpression of STAT1 led also to the induction of apoptosis in cHL cell line L1236. This indicates that STAT6 and STAT1 act as important antagonistic regulators of apoptosis in HRS-cells.

HRS-cells, which are thought to be derived from pre-apoptotic germinal centre (GC) B-cells have lost the expression of the B-cell receptor (BCR) and the B-lineage specific gene expression program. Because normally GC B-cells without functional BCR are eliminated by apoptosis quickly, whereas HRS-cells are able to survive, it was assumed that the loss of the B-lineage transcription program may prevent these cells from apoptosis. In this context epigenetic regulation of B-cell specific genes mediated by the Polycomb repressive complex 2 (PRC2) was analyzed within this work. Thereby it was shown that a number of these silenced B cell specific genes are associated with trimethylated lysine 27 on histone H3 (H3K27me3), a mark of silenced chromatin. These genes were also associated with SUZ12 a part of the Polycomb repressive complex 2 (PRC2), which catalyzes this chromatin modification. Inhibition of PRC2 respectively H3K27me3 with different approaches led to

increased expression of B cell specific genes in cHL cell lines as well as to the induction of apoptosis.

Taken together this work contributes to the understanding of the molecular basis of the pathogenesis of cHL. A number of new potential STAT6 target genes in cHL cell lines could be identified and an important antagonistic regulatory function of both STAT6 and STAT1 could be shown. Moreover the association of H3K27me to B-cell specific genes in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 was shown to contribute to their silencing. Together with the identification of PRC2 components as survival factors for these cells these results offer new starting points for therapeutic approaches to treat cHL.

3 Einleitung

3.1 Das klassische Hodgkin Lymphom

Das klassische Hodgkin Lymphom (cHL) ist eine maligne Erkrankung des Lymphsystems und wurde erstmals 1832 von Thomas Hodgkin beschrieben (1). Mit einer Erkrankungsrate von jährlich drei bis vier Fällen pro 100000 Menschen ist es eines der häufigsten Lymphome in der westlichen Welt (2). Die Symptome sind eine Schwellung der Lymphknoten begleitet von Fieber und Gewichtsverlust. In späteren Stadien folgen die Degeneration des Immunsystems und Störungen des Nervensystems. Das cHL war der erste Krebs, der nicht chirurgisch sondern mit Strahlen- und Chemotherapie behandelt wurde (2). Durch Fortschritte bei beiden Behandlungsmethoden liegt die Überlebensrate der Patienten bei über 90%. Dies gilt insbesondere dann, wenn die Behandlung in den frühen Krankheitsstadien erfolgt. Allerdings tritt das cHL häufig bei jungen Erwachsenen auf, und es besteht ein hohes Risiko, an sekundären Neoplasien wie Brustkrebs oder Lungenkrebs zu erkranken. Ein weiteres Problem stellen häufig später auftretende kardiovaskuläre Erkrankungen und Sterilität der Patienten dar (3, 4). Somit kommt der Entwicklung neuer therapeutischer Strategien in der Behandlung des cHL eine große Bedeutung zu.

3.1.1 Die molekularen Ursachen der Pathogenese des klassischen Hodgkin Lymphoms

Eine Besonderheit des cHL sind dessen Tumorzellen, die großen einkernigen Hodgkin- und die vielkernigen Reed-Sternberg-Zellen (HRS-Zellen). Sie stellen nur etwa 1% der Tumormasse dar. Der Großteil besteht aus einem Infiltrat an T-Zellen, Eosinophilen, Histiozyten, Lymphozyten und Plasmazellen (5, 6). Nach heutigem Stand der Forschung geht man davon aus, dass die Mehrheit der HRS-Zellen von prä-apoptotischen B-Zellen des Keimzentrums (7) und nur ein kleiner Teil (etwa 2%) von T-Zellen abstammt (8, 9). Lange Zeit war die Herkunft der HRS-Zellen unbekannt. Dies ist auf die geringe Anzahl der HRS-Zellen in der Tumormasse zurückzuführen, sowie darauf, dass die HRS-Zellen einen Großteil der für B-Zellen charakteristischen Gene nicht mehr oder nur in einem sehr geringen Maße exprimieren (10, 11). Durch den Verlust der Expression B-Zell-typischer Gene (wie *CD19*, *CD20*, *CD79A*, *CD79B*, *TNFRSF17*, *BLNK*, *SYK* und *LYK*) und der Koexpression von Markern verschiedener anderer hämatopoetischer Linien zeigen die HRS-Zellen einen Phänotyp, der unter den B-Zell Lymphomen einzigartig ist. Der B-Zellursprung der HRS-Zellen kann dennoch durch einige Fakten untermauert werden.

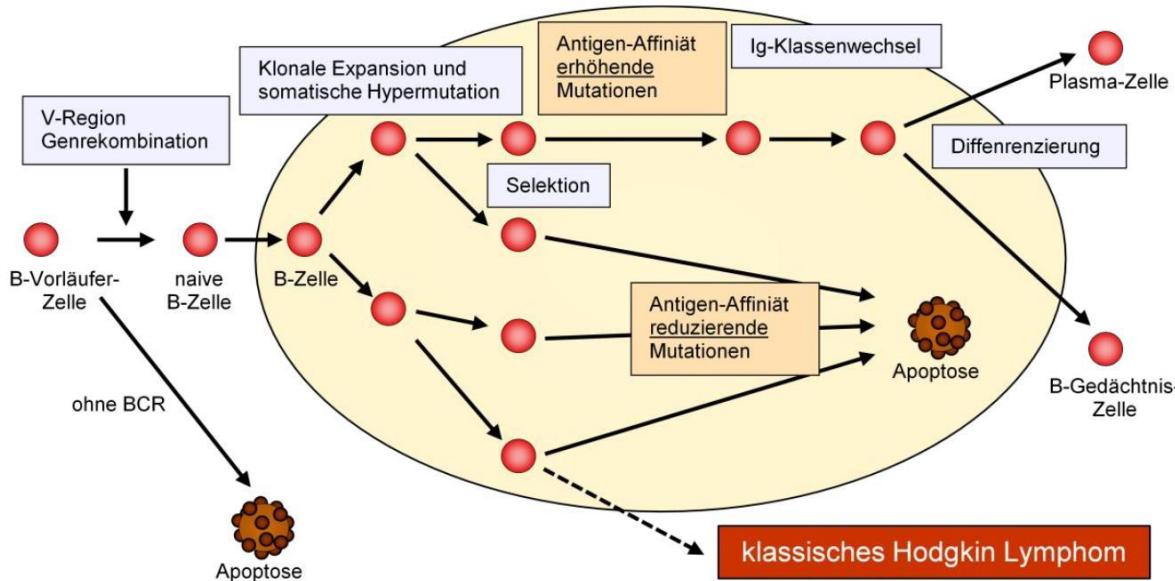


Abb. 1
B-Zell-Differenzierung in der Keimzentrumsreaktion

Nach der erfolgreichen Rekombination der leichten und schweren Ketten der Immunglobuline (Ig) und der Präsentation eines funktionellen B-Zell-Rezeptors (BCR) differenzieren B-Vorläufer-Zellen weiter zu reifen (naiven) B-Zellen. B-Zellen ohne funktionellen BCR werden durch Apoptose eliminiert, während die naiven B-Zellen durch Antigen-Bindung an den BCR und T-Helfer-Zellen aktiviert werden können. Die so aktivierten B-Zellen treten in sogenannte Keimzentren ein. Dort proliferieren sie stark (klonale Expansion). Zusätzlich werden in ihre Ig-Gene zahlreiche Mutationen (somatische Hypermutation) eingeführt, die die Affinität ihres BCR zum Antigen verändern. Die meisten verringern die Affinität zum Antigen und führen zur Apoptose dieser Zellen. Wenige B-Zellen des Keimzentrums erwerben Mutationen die die Affinität ihres BCR zum Antigen erhöhen. Diese werden positiv selektiert, durchlaufen einen Ig-Klassenwechsel und differenzieren weiter zu Antikörper produzierenden Plasma-Zellen oder B-Gedächtniszellen. Die Hodgkin- und Reed-Sternberg-Zellen des klassischen Hodgkin Lymphoms stammen vermutlich von prä-apoptotischen B-Zellen des Keimzentrums ab. Abb. adaptiert von (12)

HRS-Zellen zeigen eine komplettete Genrekombination der leichten und schweren Immunglobulin (Ig)-Ketten, wie sie nur in B-Zellen gefunden wird (13) (s. Abb. 1). Die etablierten Zelllinien des cHL und vermutlich auch primäre HRS-Zellen haben den Ig-Klassenwechsel vollzogen, was nur in Antigen-aktivierten B-Zellen geschieht (14, 15). Des Weiteren zeigen HRS-Zellen somatische Mutationen in rekombinierten Ig-V-Regionen, die zumindest initial nach Funktionalität selektiert werden, was ebenfalls nur in Antigen-aktivierten B-Zellen funktioniert (7). All diese Fakten untermauern, dass HRS-Zellen von prä-apoptotischen B-Zellen des Keimzentrums entstammen und eine gestörte Expression des B-Zell-Rezeptors (BCR) zeigen. Normalerweise werden B-Zellen des Keimzentrums, die auf Grund von somatischer Hypermutation keine Expression des BCR mehr zeigen, zügig durch Apoptose eliminiert (16, 17), den HRS-Zellen dagegen ist es möglich, auch ohne funktionellen BCR zu überleben. Eine Ursache für das Überleben der HRS-Zellen ohne BCR könnte sein, dass nicht nur die Expression des Rezeptors selbst gehemmt ist, sondern auch verschiedene Komponenten der BCR-Signaltransduktion massiv gestört sind. So sind die Tyrosinkinasen SYK, LYN, BLK, die normalerweise durch den BCR aktiviert werden, nicht oder nur sehr schwach in HRS-Zellen exprimiert (18). Außerdem ist die Expression des von SYK phosphorylierten BLNK gestört. BLNK ist ein wichtiges Bindeglied zwischen der BCR-

Aktivierung und den nachfolgenden Signalwegen und spielt in der B-Zell-Entwicklung eine bedeutende Rolle (19). Eine gestörte Expression zeigen ebenso Phospholipase γ (PLC- γ) und VAV1, welche den Ca^{2+} -Strom sowie die Aktivierung der Proteinkinase C (PKC) und der Mitogen-aktivierten Proteinkinase (MAPK) kontrollieren, sowie CD72 und SHP1, die in die negative Regulation des BCR-Signalweges involviert sind (20, 21). Diese massiven Veränderungen nicht nur des BCR selbst, sondern auch der nachfolgenden Signalwege könnten ein Grund sein, warum die HRS-Zellen nicht durch Apoptose eliminiert werden. Man vermutet, dass die Abhängigkeit von der BCR-Expression auf einem B-Zell-typischen Genexpressionsmuster basiert, welches in den HRS-Zellen ebenfalls fehlt (11, 22). Damit würde der Verlust der B-Zellidentität wesentlich zum Überleben der HRS-Zellen beitragen.

3.1.2 Grundlagen für den Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps in HRS-Zellen

Der Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps ist ein essentieller Bestandteil der Pathogenese des cHL. Es gibt eine Reihe von Erkenntnissen, welche Prozesse in den Verlust der B-Zellidentität der HRS-Zellen involviert sind (s. Abb. 2). HRS-Zellen zeigen eine Störung einer ganzen Reihe von Transkriptionsfaktoren, die eine wichtige Rolle in der B-Zell-Entwicklung spielen. So führt der hohe Expressionslevel von MSC (ABF1) und ID2 in HRS-Zellen zu einer Inaktivierung des wichtigen Transkriptionsfaktors TCF3 (E2A). Dabei verhindert ID2 die DNA-Bindung von TCF3, während MSC zwar die Transkriptionsaktivierung der TCF3-Zielgene verhindert, nicht aber die Bindung des Transkriptionsfaktors an die DNA (6, 10, 23). Die Inaktivierung von E2A hat nicht nur die geringere Expression von B-Zell-spezifischen Genen zur Folge, sondern resultiert auch in einer erhöhten Expression von B-Zell-untypischen Genen wie GATA3, TCF7 und MAF (23). Ein weiterer negativer Regulator der B-Zellentwicklung, der T-Zell-typische Transkriptionsfaktor NOTCH1, zeigt einen hohen Expressionslevel in HRS-Zellen, während sein Inhibitor DELTEX1 nur sehr gering exprimiert wird (24). NOTCH1 selbst wiederum bindet an PAX5, einen weiteren wichtigen Transkriptionsfaktor, und könnte damit den Funktionsverlust von PAX5 in HRS-Zellen erklären (24, 25). Des Weiteren inhibiert NOTCH1 die Aktivität von E2A und Early B-Cell Factor (EBF), einem ebenfalls wichtigen Transkriptionsfaktor für die B-Zellentwicklung, der in HRS-Zellen nur in sehr geringem Maße exprimiert wird (23, 26)(s. Abb. 2).

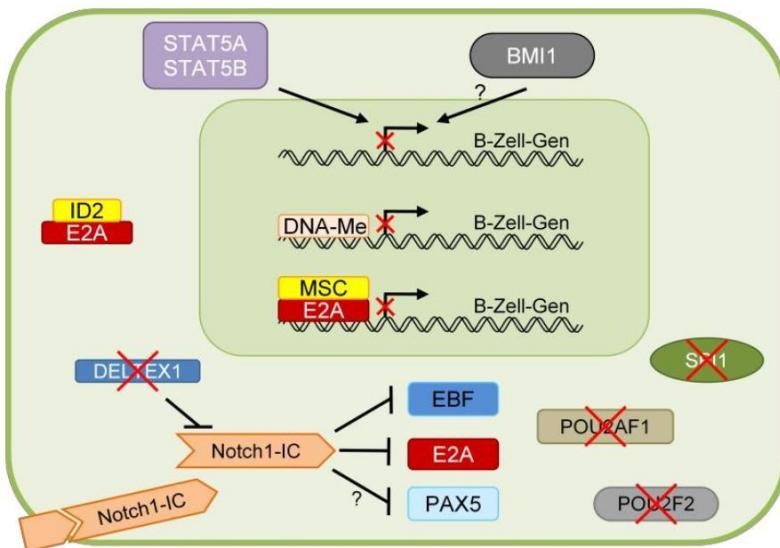


Abb. 2
Verlust der Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene in HRS-Zellen

Unterschiedliche Mechanismen sind am Verlust der Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene in HRS-Zellen beteiligt. Dazu zählen: Die erhöhte Expression von B-Zell-Protein-Inhibitoren wie inhibitor of differentiation and DNA binding 2 (ID2), die geringe Expression von B-Zell-spezifischen Transkriptionsfaktoren wie SPI1, POU2AF1 und POU2F2 sowie epigenetische Modifikationen wie DNA-Methylierung. ID2 bindet an den B-Zell-Transkriptionsfaktor E2A und verhindert dessen Bindung an die DNA. Die Heterodimere aus MSC und E2A können zwar noch an die DNA binden, können die B-Zell-Genexpression jedoch nicht mehr

aktivieren. Notch1 ist durch verschiedene in der cHL-Umgebung exprimierte Liganden und das Fehlen seines Inhibitors Deltex1 dauerhaft aktiviert und inhibiert seinerseits E2A, early B-cell factor (EBF) und vermutlich auch PAX5. Auch aktivierte STAT5A und STAT5B sowie BMI1, ein Gen des Polycomb Repressive Complex 2 (PRC2) sind vermutlich an der verringerten Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene beteiligt. IC, intrazellulär. Die Abb. ist adaptiert aus (27).

Auch die für die Aktivierung zahlreicher B-Zell-Gene wichtigen Transkriptionsfaktoren POU2F2 (Oct2), POU2AF1 (BOB1) und SPI1 (PU.1) werden in HRS-Zellen nicht exprimiert, was letztlich die fehlende Expression ihrer Zielgene zur Folge hat (28-30). Zwar konnte die ektopische Expression von POU2F2, POU2AF1 und SPI1 die Transkription von kotransfizierten Reportergenkonstrukten mit B-Zellgenpromotoren in HRS-Zellen aktivieren, die Transkription von endogenen B-Zellgenen war jedoch nicht möglich (26, 29, 31, 32). Daraus lässt sich folgern, dass es noch andere Mechanismen geben muss, die zur Stilllegung der B-Zell-Genexpression im cHL beitragen.

In den letzten Jahren wurden verschiedene epigenetische Veränderungen identifiziert, die in den Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps der HRS-Zellen involviert sind. So wurde eine verstärkte Assoziation von dimethyliertem Lysin 9 an Histon H3 (H3K9me2), einem Marker für stillgelegtes Chromatin, mit der Promotorregion von IgH in cHL-Zelllinien beobachtet. Es wurde gefolgert, dass diese Modifikation für den Verlust der Immunglobulinexpression im cHL verantwortlich ist (33). Außerdem konnte DNA-Methylierung von CpG-Inseln in den Promotorregionen einer Reihe von B-Zell-relevanten Genen wie CD19, CD20, CD79B, TNFRSF17, SYK und LYK sowie den Transkriptionsfaktoren POU2F2 und SPI1 identifiziert werden. Die Behandlung von cHL-Zelllinien mit dem DNA-Demethylierungsagenz 5-Aza-2'-deoxycytidin (5-aza-dC) führte zu einer erhöhten Expression dieser Gene (34, 35). Im Gegensatz dazu beobachteten Ehlers und Kollegen jedoch, dass die Behandlung mit 5-aza-dC zwar die Expression von B-Zell-Genen in cHL-Zelllinien erhöhte, dass aber das Expressionsniveau von typischen B-Zellen bei weitem nicht erreicht wurde. Auch eine zusätzliche Behandlung mit Histondeacetylaseinhibitoren (HDACi) kann die Expression nicht auf das Niveau von typischen B-Zellen anheben (36). Die Behandlung von B-Zellen mit

5-aza-dC und HDACi Trichostatin A (TSA) führte dagegen zu einer erhöhten Expression von typischen cHL-Genen in B-Zellen und einem radikalen Rückgang der Expression von B-Zell-typischen Genen (36). Diese Tatsachen untermauern die wichtige Rolle von epigenetischen Modifikationen bei der Etablierung der veränderten Genexpression in HRS-Zellen. Sie lassen aber auch vermuten, dass noch weitere epigenetische Einflüsse bei diesem Prozess eine Rolle spielen können. Die Untersuchung dieser potentiell relevanten Modifikationen ist ein wesentlicher Teil dieser Arbeit.

3.1.3 Deregulation von wichtigen Signalwegen im cHL

Neben dem beschriebenen Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps sind die cHL-Zellen durch die Deregulation bedeutender Signaltransduktionswege gekennzeichnet. Die wichtigsten von ihnen sind der IKK/NF-κB-, der MAPK/AP1- und der JAK/STAT-Signalweg. NF-κB spielt bei der Regulation der Immunantwort und der Entzündungsreaktion eine wichtige Rolle. Normalerweise erfolgt die NF-κB-Aktivierung nur transient. In cHL-Zellen konnte dagegen eine permanente und sehr starke Aktivierung gezeigt werden (37, 38). Eine Reihe von NF-κB-Zielgenen konnte im cHL identifiziert werden, die eine entscheidende Bedeutung für die HRS-Zellen haben. Unter ihnen sind positive Regulatoren des Zellzyklus wie Cyclin D1, anti-apoptotische Gene wie Bcl-xL und c-FLIP, verschiedene Zytokine und Chemokine sowie deren Rezeptoren, die alle in HRS-Zellen aberrant exprimiert werden (38). Eine Inhibition von NF-κB in HRS-Zellen führt zur Hemmung des Wachstums und der Induktion von Apoptose (37, 38). Ähnliches gilt für den MAPK/AP-1-Signalweg. Auch dieser ist normalerweise nur transient aktiv. In HRS-Zellen wurde jedoch eine konstitutive Aktivierung von AP1 gefunden (39, 40). Ebenso wie die Inhibition von NF-κB führt auch die Blockade der MAPK/AP-1-Aktivität in HRS-Zellen zu einer Hemmung des Wachstums und belegt damit die wichtige Rolle dieses Signalweges im cHL. Zu den durch den MAPK/AP-1-Signalweg induzierten Genen im cHL gehören CD30, ein Mitglied der Tumor Nekrosis Faktor Rezeptor (TNFR) Familie, ID2, welches an der Reprogrammierung der HRS-Zellen beteiligt ist (s.u.) und Galectin 1, welches eine effiziente Immunreaktion gegen die HRS-Zellen verhindert (39-41). Der dritte wichtige deregulierte Signalweg im cHL ist der JAK/STAT-Signalweg, auf den im Folgenden genauer eingegangen wird, da insbesondere die Rolle der beiden STAT-Familienmitglieder STAT6 und STAT1 im cHL in dieser Arbeit untersucht wurde.

3.2 Der JAK/STAT-Signalweg

Die Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (STAT)-Proteine bilden eine Gruppe von latenten Transkriptionsfaktoren, die normalerweise einer strengen Regulation unterliegt. Ihre zwei wesentlichen Funktionen sind die Weitergabe von Signalen von der Zelloberfläche in den Zellkern und die Transkriptionsaktivierung ihrer Zielgene. In nicht aktivierte Zellen sind die STATs vor allem im Zytoplasma lokalisiert (42). Die transiente Aktivierung der STAT-Proteine erfolgt durch verschiedene Zytokine wie Interleukine, Interferone und Peptidhormone. Durch Bindung dieser Signalmoleküle an ihre Rezeptoren wird deren Multimerisierung induziert, was in der Autophosphorylierung und Aktivierung der Rezeptor-assoziierten Januskinasen (JAKs) resultiert. Die aktivierte JAKs phosphorylieren wiederum konservierte Tyrosinreste in der zytoplasmatischen Domäne der Rezeptoren und schaffen damit Bindestellen für die Src-Homologie 2 (SH2)-Domäne der STAT-Proteine. Die Rezeptor-gebundenen STAT-Proteine werden dann an einem konservierten Tyrosinrest von den JAKs phosphoryliert. Die phosphorylierten STATs bilden nun jeweils durch Interaktion der SH2-Domäne des einen STATs mit dem phosphorylierten Tyrosinrest des zweiten STATs reziprok Homo- oder Heterodimere (43, 44). Die dimerisierten STATs können in den Zellkern translozieren und binden dort an eine spezifische DNA-Bindesequenz im Promotorbereich ihrer Zielgene, das sogenannte Gamma activated Sequence (GAS)-Element und initiieren damit die Transkription dieser Gene (44). Lediglich STAT1-STAT2-Heterodimere binden nach Stimulation mit Typ I-Interferonen (IFN) an IFN- α/β responsive elements (ISREs). Zuvor assoziieren sie mit dem IFN regulatory factor 9 (IRF-9) und bilden den ISGF-3 Komplex (45).

3.2.1 Die Familie und Struktur der STAT-Proteine

Die STAT-Familie umfasst sieben Mitglieder (STAT1, STAT2, STAT3, STAT5A, STAT5B und STAT6), die sich in Struktur und funktionellen Domänen gleichen. Die hochkonservierte N-Terminale Domäne (NTD) vermittelt die Interaktion zweier STAT-Dimere und spielt bei der Translokation in den Zellkern eine wichtige Rolle (46). Sie ist auch für die Bildung von unphosphorylierten antiparallelen STAT1-Homodimeren verantwortlich (42). Die coiled-coil-Domäne besteht aus vier langen α -Helices und ist an Protein-Protein-Interaktionen beteiligt. Die DNA-Bindedomäne (DBD) ist für die Bindung der STAT-Dimere an ihre Zielsequenz verantwortlich und hat eine Immunglobulin-ähnliche Struktur. Die Linker Domäne stellt die Verbindung der DBD zur folgenden SH2-Domäne dar und ist essentiell für die Struktur der STAT-Proteine (45). Die SH2-Domäne ist die am höchsten konservierte Domäne der STATs und spiegelt damit ihre wichtige Rolle bei der Rekrutierung zum Rezeptor und der

Dimerisierung wider (s.o.). Die C-terminale Transaktivierungsdomäne (TAD) variiert dagegen zwischen den einzelnen STAT-Familienmitgliedern und ist vermutlich für die Spezifität der einzelnen STATs verantwortlich. Die TAD spielt auch bei der Rekrutierung von Koaktivatoren der STAT-Proteine eine wichtige Rolle (47). Die für die Aktivierung der STATs notwendige Tyrosinphosphorylierung findet ebenfalls im C-terminalen Bereich der STATs statt.

3.2.2 Negative Regulation der STAT-Proteine

Eine strenge Regulation des JAK/STAT-Signalweges ist wichtig für eine kontrollierte Zytokinantwort. Normalerweise sind die STAT-Proteine nur transient aktiviert und werden durch eine Reihe von Regulationsmechanismen zügig wieder inaktiviert. Die Inaktivierung kann durch Phosphotyrosinphosphatasen (PTPs), durch proteasomalen Abbau oder durch interagierende Proteine erfolgen. Für die Inaktivierung der STAT-Proteine durch Dephosphorylierung sind PTPs verantwortlich wie z.B. SH2 containing phosphatase 1 (SHP1) und SHP2. Sie können die Aktivierung der STATs inhibieren, indem sie entweder an den zytoplasmatischen Teil der Rezeptoren, an die JAKs oder an die STATs direkt binden und diese dephosphorylieren (48). Ein Großteil der negativen Regulation wird in einem negativen Feedback-Loop von der Gruppe der Suppressor Of Cytokine Signalling (SOCS) Proteine übernommen, deren Expression ebenfalls von Zytokinen bzw. von den aktivierte STATs selbst induziert wird. Bislang wurden acht Mitglieder der SOCS-Familie identifiziert, die sich durch einen gemeinsamen Aufbau ihrer SH2-Domäne und ein kurzes Sequenzmotiv, die sogenannte SOCS-Box, auszeichnen (49). Unabhängig von ihrer ähnlichen Struktur inhibieren die einzelnen SOCS-Proteine den JAK/STAT-Signalweg z.T. auf verschiedene Art und Weise. So können sie zum einen die Tyrosinphosphorylierung der STATs verhindern, indem sie entweder an die zytoplasmatische Domäne des Rezeptors oder aber an die JAKs direkt binden (50-53). Zum anderen können sie die proteasomale Degradation der aktivierte STATs fördern, indem sie den Elongin-BC Ubiquitin-Ligase Komplex durch ihre SOCS-Box rekrutieren und damit zum proteasomalen Abbau der aktivierte STATs führen (54, 55). Eine weitere wichtige Gruppe negativer STAT-Regulatoren sind die Protein inhibitors of activated STATs (PIAS). Die PIAS-Proteinfamilie besteht aus fünf Mitgliedern mit hoher Spezifität. So inhibiert PIAS3 die STAT3-Aktivierung, indem es dessen Bindung an die DNA verhindert, während PIAS1 spezifisch die DNA-Bindung von STAT1 inhibiert (56). Außerdem können PIAS-Proteine als Small Ubiquitin-Like Modifier (SUMO)-Ligasen fungieren oder Koregulatoren wie Histondeacetylasen (HDACs) oder CREB Binding Protein (CREBBP/CBP) rekrutieren (57).

3.2.3 Die Rolle der STAT-Proteine bei der Krebsentstehung

Der JAK/STAT-Signalweg ist an der Regulation zahlreicher Gene beteiligt, die fundamentale biologische Prozesse wie Zellproliferation, Apoptose, Angiogenese und Immunantwort kontrollieren. Somit spielen auch der JAK/STAT-Signalweg und insbesondere seine strenge Gegenregulation eine wichtige biologische Rolle. Auch für die Beteiligung dieses Signalweges an der Krebsentstehung und -progression gibt es zahlreiche Beispiele, insbesondere wenn er konstitutiv aktiviert ist. So wurde zunächst die STAT3-Aktivierung mit Kopf-Halskrebs sowie mit multiplen Myelomen in Verbindung gebracht (58). Später wurde die konstitutive Aktivierung von STAT3 in weiteren verschiedenen soliden Tumoren (Melanom, Ovar-, Brust-, Lungen-, Prostata- und Pankreaskarzinom) sowie in zahlreichen Tumoren des Blutes (Leukämien und Lymphomen) beschrieben (58). Auf die Rolle von STAT3 im cHL wird unter 3.2.4 genauer eingegangen.

STAT1 und STAT5 sind ebenfalls in verschiedenen humanen Krebsarten konstitutiv aktiv. Dabei wird die Rolle von STAT1 im Bezug auf seine Beteiligung an der Krebsentstehung kontrovers diskutiert. So hat STAT1 unter anderem eine pro-apoptotische Funktion und der Verlust von STAT1 wird bei Magenkrebss (59), T-Zelllymphomen (60) und Melanomen (61, 62) beschrieben. Auf der anderen Seite wurde eine konstitutive Aktivierung von STAT1 für Brustkrebs, Leukämien und das cHL beschrieben (58, 63). Das deutet darauf hin, dass die Funktion von STAT1 vom Zell- oder Gewebetyp abhängig sein könnte. Welche Funktion STAT1 im cHL einnimmt, ist bislang unklar.

Relativ wenig ist bislang zur Funktion von STAT6 bei der Krebsentstehung bekannt. STAT6 wird durch IL-4 und IL-13 aktiviert und spielt bei der humoralen Immunabwehr eine wichtige Rolle. Während der Immunantwort können antigenstimulierte naive CD4⁺-T-Zellen in zwei verschiedene Unterarten von T-Helfer (T_H)-Zellen differenzieren, T_{H1} - und T_{H2} -Zellen. IL-4 und IL-13 vermitteln über STAT6 die Polarisierung naiver T_H -Zellen zu den für die humorale Immunabwehr zuständigen T_{H2} -Zellen.

3.2.4 Die Rolle des JAK/STAT-Signalweges im cHL

Neben der Bedeutung der zuvor beschriebenen Deregulation des NF-κB- und des MAPK/AP-1-Signalweges spielt insbesondere der JAK/STAT-Signalweg eine bedeutende Rolle im cHL. So sind die Familienmitglieder STAT1, STAT3, STAT5A, STAT5B und STAT6 in HRS-Zellen konstitutiv aktiviert (38, 64-68). Dabei spielt insbesondere die konstitutive Aktivierung von STAT5 eine wichtige Rolle in der Pathogenese des cHL. Die ektopische Expression von STAT5 in primären humanen B-Zellen führt zur Ausbildung von

immortalisierten B-Zellen mit einem cHL-Phänotyp sowie zu einer verringerten Expression des BCR (67). Als mögliche Ursache für die dauerhafte Aktivierung der STATs in HRS-Zellen kommt unter anderem eine erhöhte Expression der STAT-aktivierenden Kinase JAK2 in verschiedenen CD30⁺-Hodgkin-Zellen in Frage (69). Des Weiteren wurde in HRS-Zellen eine Inaktivierung des STAT-Inhibitors SOCS1 durch somatische Mutationen nachgewiesen (70). Die Überexpression von SOCS1 und SOCS3 führt dagegen in der cHL-Zelllinie L428 zu einer Wachstumshemmung (65). Neben STAT5 spielen die anderen konstitutiv aktivierte STATs ebenfalls eine bedeutende Rolle für das Überleben der HRS-Zellen in der Pathogenese des cHL. So führt die Inhibition von STAT3 durch chemische Inhibitoren oder RNAi zu verminderter Proliferation und zur Induktion von Apoptose (64-66, 71). Auch das im cHL durch die autokrine Sekretion von IL-13 dauerhaft aktivierte STAT6 (68, 72, 73) ist für das Überleben der HRS-Zellen essentiell. Dies wird zumindest indirekt durch die Induktion von Apoptose in cHL-Zelllinien nach dem Einsatz neutralisierender Antikörper gegen den STAT6-Aktivator IL-13 deutlich (74). Ob und inwieweit STAT6 selbst für das Überleben der Zellen wichtig ist und welche Zielgene es im cHL reguliert, wurde bislang nicht detailliert geklärt und ist unter anderem Gegenstand dieser Arbeit. Bislang ist bekannt, dass die Aktivierung von STAT6 unter anderem zu einer erhöhten Expression des STAT6-Zielgenes CCL17 (TARC) führt. Es wird vermutet, dass dieses wiederum zur Rekrutierung von aktivierten T_{H2}-Zellen in die Nähe von HRS-Zellen beiträgt und somit die Tumorausbreitung fördert (75, 76).

3.3 Epigenetische Modifikationen

Die Epigenetik ist momentan ein sehr intensiv untersuchtes und stark expandierendes Gebiet in der molekularen Biologie. Dies wird auch daran deutlich, wie viele verschiedene und in der Vergangenheit häufig veränderte Definitionen für die „Epigenetik“ existieren. Die wohl älteste Definition stammt von Waddington aus dem Jahr 1942, in dem er die Epigenetik als den Mechanismus beschreibt, der dafür verantwortlich ist, welchen Phänotyp ein Genotyp hervorbringt (77, 78). Im Jahr 1987 beschrieb Holliday die Epigenetik als Modifikationen der DNA-Methylierung, welche wiederum Veränderungen in der Genaktivität nach sich ziehen (79). Heute lautet die am weitesten verbreitete Definition: Die Epigenetik beschreibt die Studie von vererbaren Veränderungen der Genomfunktion ohne Veränderung der DNA-Sequenz (80). Die Epigenetik umfasst neben der DNA-Methylierung auch Chromatin- und Histonmodifikationen sowie das immer größer werdende Feld der regulatorischen RNAs. Da für die Pathogenese des cHL bereits bekannt ist, dass insbesondere DNA-Methylierung und die Methylierung von Histonen eine wichtige Rolle

spielen, werden im Folgenden nur diese beiden Mechanismen der Epigenetik genauer behandelt.

3.3.1 DNA-Methylierung

Die DNA-Methylierung war der erste beschriebene epigenetische Mechanismus und ist bis heute auch der am besten erforschte. DNA-Methylierung erfolgt bei Säugern an der C5-Position des Cytosinrings von CpG-Dinukleotiden. Da dieses Dinukleotid im Säugergenom unterrepräsentiert ist, sind nur ca. 1% der DNA-Nukleotide, aber ca. 70-80% der CpG-Dinukleotide methyliert (81). Im Bereich der sogenannten CpG-Inseln dagegen, liegt der größte Teil der CpG-Dinukleotide in normalen Zellen unmethyliert vor und zwar unabhängig von Gewebeart oder Entwicklungsstadium (82). CpG-Inseln sind Regionen mit hohem GC-Gehalt, die vornehmlich im proximalen Promotorbereich der Gene im Säugergenom lokalisiert sind. Ungefähr die Hälfte aller Promotoren im humanen Genom besitzen solche CpG-Inseln in ihrem Promotor (82). Sind diese CpG-Inseln nicht methyliert, kann das folgende Gen transkribiert werden, während stromabwärts von methylierten CpG-Inseln liegende Gene nicht transkribiert werden können. Die Methylierungsmuster werden normalerweise während des Zellzyklus bei der semikonservativen Replikation weitergegeben und damit auch die epigenetischen Informationen an die nachfolgenden Zellgenerationen vererbt. Bei Säugern wird die Methylierung von DNA-Methyltransferasen (DNMT) katalysiert (DNMT1, DNMT3A, DNMT3B und DNMT3L). Dabei ist DNMT1 für die Erhaltung der Methylierungsmuster während der Replikation verantwortlich (83, 84). Es gibt jedoch auch Veränderungen des Methylierungszustandes verschiedener CpG-Inseln. So erfolgt beispielsweise die Methylierung einiger CpG-Inseln in bestimmten Phasen während der Entwicklung. Man spricht in einem solchen Fall von einer *de novo* Methylierung. Diese *de novo* Methylierung wird von den DNA-Methyltransferasen DNMT3A und DNMT3B im Komplex mit DNMT3L katalysiert (85, 86) und ist beispielsweise am genomischen Imprinting und der Inaktivierung des zweiten X-Chromosoms (X-Inaktivierung) beteiligt (87-90). Auch in der Krebsentstehung spielt die *de novo* Methylierung eine wichtige Rolle. So sind beispielsweise eine Reihe von Tumorsuppressorgenen durch erhöhte Methylierung von CpG-Inseln in ihrem Promotorbereich stillgelegt (91, 92).

3.3.2 Histon-Modifikationen

Im Zellkern liegt die DNA im Komplex mit Proteinen vor, dem Chromatin. Die grundlegende Einheit des Chromatins ist das Nukleosom. Dieses besteht aus einem Oktamer von jeweils

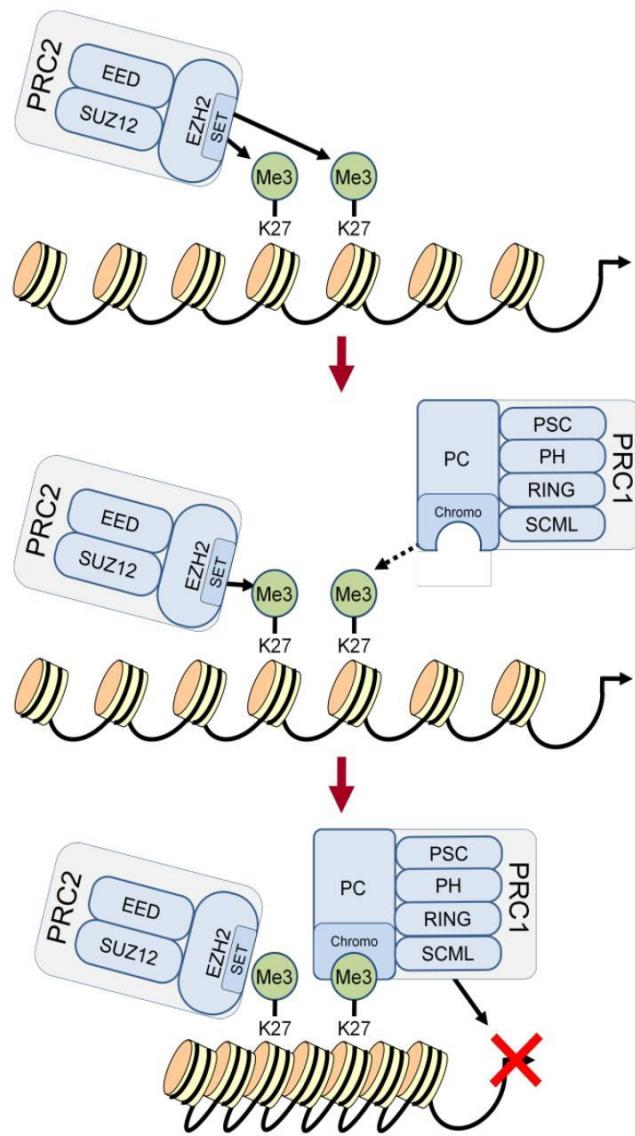
zwei der vier nukleosomalen Histone H2A, H2B, H3 und H4. Um dieses Oktamer ist die DNA-Doppelhelix mit insgesamt 147 Basenpaaren (bp) zweimal gewickelt. Die nukleosomalen Histone haben einen globulären Kern und ihre N-terminalen Enden ragen aus der Kernstruktur heraus. Diese Enden enthalten einen hohen Anteil an den basischen Aminosäuren Lysin und Arginin. Mit den positiven Ladungen in den Seitenketten dieser Aminosäuren binden die basischen Histone an die negativ geladenen Phosphatgruppen der DNA. Des Weiteren werden diese Aminosäuren häufig modifiziert. Mindestens acht verschiedene Arten von Modifikationen an Histonen sind bislang bekannt. Am besten untersucht sind Acetylierung, Methylierung und Phosphorylierung, aber auch Ubiquitylierung, Sumoylierung, ADP-Ribosylierung, Deaminierung und Prolin-Isomerisierung sind beschrieben (93). Die Modifikationen der Histone haben zwei wesentliche Funktionen. In der einen Funktion rekrutieren sie eine Reihe verschiedener Nicht-Histon-Proteine. Abhängig von der Gesamtheit aller vorkommenden Modifikationen an einem bestimmten Histon, können bestimmte Gruppen von Proteinen verstärkt an das Chromatin binden oder von einer Bindung ausgeschlossen werden. Diese Proteine haben wiederum Enzymfunktionen (z.B. ATPasen), die zu weiteren Modifikationen des Chromatins führen. Die Bindung dieser Proteine wird durch spezifische Domänen vermittelt. So wird eine Histon-Methylierung von den Chromo-Domänen der Royal Familie (Chromo, Tudor, MBT) und von PHD-Domänen erkannt, während Histon-Acetylierung von Bromo-Domänen und Histon-Phosphorylierung von einer Domäne der sogenannten 14-3-3-Proteine erkannt wird (93). Die zweite wichtige Funktion der Histonmodifikationen ist die Unterbrechung der Kontakte zwischen den Nukleosomen, wodurch das Chromatin für die Transkriptionsmaschinerie zugänglich wird. Je nach Zustand des Chromatins spricht man von Euchromatin, welches zugänglich für Transkription ist, oder von Heterochromatin, welches eng gepackt vorliegt und damit für die Transkription nicht zugänglich ist (93). Dies kann in einem lokal begrenzten Abschnitt sein, wie z.B. bei der Transkriptionsregulation eines bestimmten Genes, einer bestimmten Genregion oder aber global wie z.B. bei der DNA-Replikation und der Chromosomenkondensation. Beide Zustände, Hetero- und Euchromatin, sind mit einer bestimmten Reihe von Modifikationen verbunden. So ist Histon-Acetylierung generell assoziiert mit Transkriptionsaktivierung und wird durch Histon-Acetyltransferasen (HAT) vermittelt (94-96). Die von Histon-Deacetylasen (HDAC) vermittelte Deacetylierung von Histonen dagegen korreliert mit transkriptioneller Repression (93). Eine weitere wichtige Modifikation ist die Methylierung von Lysin in den N-terminalen Enden der Histone, welche durch Histon-Methyltransferasen (HMT) katalysiert wird. Diese haben, verglichen mit den HATs, eine deutlich höhere Spezifität. Sie modifizieren gewöhnlich ein einziges Lysin an einem bestimmten Histon. Methylierungen an Histonen können zu einer Aktivierung oder zu einer Repression der Transkription führen, je nachdem an welchem Rest

sie stattfinden (93, 97). Außerdem gibt es Mono- (me1), Di-(me2) und Trimethylierungen (me3) an den verschiedenen Lysinresten. Bislang sind drei Methylierungsstellen bekannt, die zur Transkriptionsaktivierung führen. Dies sind die Methylierung von Lysin 4 (H3K4), von Lysin 36 (H3K36) und von Lysin 79 (H3K79) an Histon H3 (93). Histon-Lysin-Methylierungsstellen, die mit einer Repression der Transkription korrelieren, sind H3K9, H3K27 und H4K20 (98). Besonders auf Promotoren von Genen, die die Entwicklung in embryonalen Stammzellen (ES) steuern, sind die beiden Modifikationen H3K4me (transkriptionsaktivierend) und H3K27me (transkriptionsinaktivierend) parallel anzutreffen. Man spricht von sogenannten „bivalenten“ Domänen. Diese bivalenten Domänen wandeln sich häufig, abhängig vom entstehenden Zelltyp, während der Differenzierung der embryonalen Stammzellen entweder in die aktive (H3K4me3) oder in die inaktive Form (H3K27me3) um. Andere Domänen bleiben dagegen bivalent (99, 100). Es wird vermutet, dass diese bivalenten Domänen evtl. wie ein Schalter wirken. Zunächst sind beide Möglichkeiten offen. Wird der Schalter einmal durch bestimmte Stimuli umgelegt, bleibt der neue Zustand stabil erhalten (100).

Im Folgenden wird näher auf die Methylierung von H3K27 (H3K27me) eingegangen, die an einer Reihe wichtiger Prozesse beteiligt ist. H3K27me spielt beispielsweise bei der Stilllegung der HOX-Gene, der X-Inaktivierung und dem genomischen Imprinting eine wichtige Rolle (101-103). Ebenso ist die Methylierung von H3K27 an der Entstehung von Tumoren beteiligt (104), worauf später noch detaillierter eingegangen wird.

3.3.3 Die Gruppe der Polycomb Group (PcG)-Proteine

Vermittelt wird die Methylierung von H3K27 von den sogenannten PcG-Proteinen, die erstmals durch ihre Funktion bei der Stilllegung der HOX-Gene in *Drosophila melanogaster* identifiziert wurden (101). Die PcG-vermittelte Stilllegung der Genexpression spielt eine wichtige Rolle bei der Entwicklung mehrzelliger Organismen, der Regulation der Stammzellbiologie (sowohl embryonaler als auch adulter Stammzellen) und bei der Krebsentstehung (104-108). Allerdings ist für die meisten PcG-Zielgene bislang nicht genau bekannt, in welchen Zellen des Körpers das PcG-System ihre Expression reguliert und wie genau der Mechanismus funktioniert.



Im Wesentlichen sind zwei Proteinkomplexe für die P_cG-vermittelte Unterdrückung der Genexpression verantwortlich: der Polycomb repressive complex 1 (PRC1) und 2 (PRC2). Dabei induziert der PRC2 die Methylierung von H3K27, während PRC1 erst später durch die bereits etablierte Trimethylierung von H3K27 rekrutiert wird und vermutlich letztendlich für die Stilllegung der Transkription verantwortlich ist (109) (s. Abb. 3).

Abb. 3
Polycomb repressive complex (PRC)

Bislang wurden zwei wichtige PRCs beschrieben. Der PRC2 setzt sich aus enhancer of zeste homologue 2 (EZH2), embryonic ectoderm development (EED) und suppressor of zeste 12 (SUZ12) zusammen und katalysiert die Trimethylierung von Lysin 27 am Histon H3 (H3K27me3). Die hierfür verantwortliche katalytische Aktivität liefert die SET-Domäne der Histon-Methyltransferase (HMT) EZH2. Vom PRC1 existieren verschiedene Formen. Sie enthalten Kombinationen aus Chromobox (CBX)-, Posterior sex comb (PSC)-, Polyhomeotic (PH)-, RING-, und Sex combs on midleg (SCML)-Proteinen. Der PRC1-Komplex wird vermutlich durch die Affinität der Chromodomäne (Chromo) der Chromobox-Proteine (CBX) zu der H3K27me3-Modifikation rekrutiert und ist wichtig für die Stilllegung der Transkription. Die Abb. ist adaptiert von (110).

Die Suche nach einem Mechanismus der Rekrutierung von PRC1 und PRC2 an deren Zielgene führte zur Identifikation von DNA-Sequenzelementen, sogenannten Polycomb response elements (PREs), und trans-wirkenden Faktoren, die die PREs erkennen (im Folgenden als Rekrutierungsfaktoren bezeichnet). Während für *D. melanogaster* die DNA-Bindestellen für das Zinkfingerprotein Pleiohomeotic (PHO) als generelle Schlüsseleinheiten in PREs identifiziert sind (111, 112), konnten bei Säugern bislang keine PREs gefunden werden. Ein möglicher Kandidat für ein Säuger-PRE könnte die Bindestelle von Yin und Yang 1 (YY1), das humane Homolog zu PHO, sein. Dessen Knockout entfernt die PRC2-Untereinheit Enhancer of zeste homologue 2 (EZH2) und H3K27me von seinen Zielgenen in murinen Myoblasten (113). Des Weiteren wurde bei einer genomweiten Studie gefunden, dass 97% der PRC2-positiven Zielgene mit CpG-Inseln korrelieren (114). Auch nicht kodierende RNAs (ncRNAs) könnten P_cG-Rekrutierungsfaktoren sein. Sowohl HOX-

Gencluster als auch das inaktive X-Chromosom und Imprinting-Stellen produzieren lange ncRNAs und akkumulieren H3K27me (109).

3.3.4 Der Polycomb repressive complex 2 (PRC2)

Das trimethylierte H3K27 (H3K27me3) wird als die wichtigste Modifikation in der PcG-vermittelten Geninaktivierung postuliert. Seine Verteilung im Genom deckt sich sehr genau mit der Verteilung der PcG-Komplexe (115-117). Die Verteilung von H3K27me1 und H3K27me2 korreliert dagegen deutlich weniger mit der PcG-Verteilung (118), weshalb die beiden Modifikationen in diesem Zusammenhang nicht so bedeutend zu sein scheinen. Für das Anfügen von den bis zu drei Methylgruppen an H3K27 sind die Proteine des PRC2-Komplexes verantwortlich. Dieser besteht aus den vier Untereinheiten EZH2, Suppressor of Zeste 12 (SUZ12), Embryonic Ectoderm Development (EED) und Retino Blastoma Binding Protein p48 (RBAP48). Dabei ist EZH2 mit der SET-Domäne die für die Methylierung verantwortliche katalytische Untereinheit des PRC2. Für sich alleine ist EZH2 allerdings inaktiv. Katalytisch aktiv wird EZH2 erst nach Assemblierung mit zumindest SUZ12 und EED (119, 120). Der genaue Mechanismus der Aktivierung von EZH2 durch SUZ12 und EED ist bislang nicht bekannt. Es gibt jedoch Hinweise darauf, dass die katalytisch inaktiven Untereinheiten des PRC2 mit dem Nukleosom interagieren (121). Zusätzlich kann PRC2 mit einem weiteren PcG-Protein, PHF1, interagieren. Obwohl PHF1 keine Kernuntereinheit des PRC2-Komplexes ist, kann seine Assoziation mit dem Komplex dessen Funktion beeinflussen (122, 123). Insbesondere die PRC2-vermittelte Konversion von H3K27me2 zu H3K27me3 scheint durch PHF1 stimuliert zu werden (122, 124).

3.3.5 Histon-Lysin-Demethylasen

Lange Zeit ging man davon aus, dass die PcG-vermittelte Methylierung von H3K27 und die damit verbundene Expressionsinaktivierung der Zielgene irreversibel oder zumindest sehr stabil sind. Erst mit der Entdeckung der Histon-Lysin-Demethylasen wurde deutlich, dass die durch Histonmethylierung vermittelte Bildung von Heterochromatin ein dynamischerer Prozess ist als zuvor vermutet wurde. Die erste und bislang am besten untersuchte Histon-Lysin-Demethylase ist Lysine Specific Demethylase 1 (LSD1), die für die Demethylierung von H3K4 und H3K9 verantwortlich ist (125, 126). Während LSD1 nur Mono- und Dimethylierungen entfernen kann, können die später entdeckten Proteine der Jumonji C-Familie (JmjC-Domain-containing histone demethylases; JHDMS) sowohl Mono- und Di- als auch Trimethylierung an Histon-Lysinresten entfernen (127). Jumonji ist die japanische Bedeutung für „kreuzförmig“. Der Name wurde ursprünglich einem Transkriptionsfaktor gegeben, dessen Ausschalten in Mäusen in einer kreuzförmigen Deformation der

Neuralplatte resultiert (128). Dieser Transkriptionsfaktor und die beiden humanen Proteine Smcx und RBP2 haben je zwei konservierte Sequenzen. Diese beiden Sequenzen wurden basierend auf ihrer Lokalisierung zueinander und im Protein selbst JmjN und JmjC benannt. Erst später wurde die JmjC-Domäne in ca. 100 Proteinen identifiziert (127, 129) und gezeigt, dass sie katalytische Aktivität für die Demethylierung von Histonen besitzt (130, 131).

3.3.6 H3K27-Demethylasen

Klose *et. al* teilen die JHDMs in insgesamt sieben Familien ein (127). Dabei fassen sie UTX, UTY und JMJD3 auf Grund ihrer Ähnlichkeit sowohl innerhalb als auch außerhalb der JmjC-Domäne in eine Familie zusammen. Die beiden Familienmitglieder UTX und JMJD3 sind spezifisch für die Demethylierung von H3K27me2 und H3K27me3, wobei H3K27me3 ihr bevorzugtes Substrat darstellt (132-135). UTY war dagegen in der gleichen Untersuchung inaktiv (134), was darauf schließen lässt, dass es entweder zusätzliche Kofaktoren benötigt oder keine aktive Demethylase für H3K27me2/3 ist. Generell ist die Aktivität von JMJD3 und UTX auf nukleosomalen Substraten sehr gering. Das könnte bedeuten, dass sie zur Histonerkennung weitere Kofaktoren benötigen (100). Dass Histondemethylasen auch eine Verbindung von Signaltransduktionswegen mit Chromatinmodifikationen darstellen, zeigt die NF- κ B-abhängige Induzierbarkeit von JMJD3 durch Lipopolysaccharid (LPS) in Makrophagen (133). Dabei hat die LPS-induzierte Aktivierung von JMJD3 die Expressionsaktivierung einer Reihe inflammationsinduzierter Pcg-Zielgene zur Folge wie z.B. BMP-2. Vor seiner Aktivierung ist der BMP-2-Promotor bivalent markiert. Nach LPS-Behandlung sinkt der Level an H3K27me3 während der H3K4me-Level unverändert bleibt. Damit spielt JMJD3 eine wichtige Rolle bei der Umwandlung vom bivalenten Status in den transkriptionell aktiven Status. In ähnlicher Weise führt die IL-4 Behandlung in alternativ aktivierten (M2) Makrophagen in Abhängigkeit von STAT6 zu einer erhöhten JMJD3-Expression (136). Diese korreliert mit einem verringerten Methylierungslevel von H3K27 auf den Promotoren der M2-Makrophagen-Markergene. Zusätzlich induziert die IL-4-Behandlung die vermehrte Methylierung von H3K4 (136). Auch für UTX konnte eine Assoziation mit H3K4-Methyltransferasen gezeigt werden (137, 138), was darauf schließen lässt, dass die Verknüpfung von H3K27-Demethylasen mit H3K4-Methyltransferasen vielleicht ein generelles Phänomen sein könnte. Auch eine Assoziation von H3K27-HMTs und H3K4-HDMs konnte jüngst nachgewiesen werden. So wurde gezeigt, dass Jarid2 (eine weitere JHDM) den PRC2 inhibiert. Jarid2 kolokalisiert mit PRC2 und H3K27me3 auf dem Chromatin und interagiert *in vitro* direkt mit SUZ12 (139, 140). Da diese Kolokalisation aber nahezu hundertprozentig ist, kann die pure An- oder Abwesenheit von Jarid2 alleine zur Regulation nicht ausreichen, und eine Beteiligung weiterer Faktoren ist wahrscheinlich.

Neben UTX und JMJD3 wurde vor kurzem eine weitere HDM gefunden, die H3K27 demethyliert, und als KMD7 bezeichnet. Allerdings konnte bislang nur die Demethylierung von H3K27me2 und H3K27me1 sowie von H3K9me2 und H3K9me1 nachgewiesen werden. Der Level von H3K27me3 wird durch KMD7 nicht verringert (141).

3.3.7 Zusammenhang zwischen Histonmodifikationen und DNA-Methylierung

Neben der Interaktion von transkriptionsaktivierenden und transkriptionsinhibierenden HMTs und HDMs gibt es auch zahlreiche Hinweise auf ein Zusammenspiel zwischen Histonmodifikationen und DNA-Methylierung. Dieses Zusammenspiel scheint in beide Richtungen zu funktionieren. Histonmethylierung kann eine Voraussetzung für DNA-Methylierung sein und DNA-Methylierung kann eine Vorlage für Histonmodifikationen nach der Replikation darstellen (142). Dies könnte durch eine direkte Interaktion von Histon- und DNA-Methyltransferasen vermittelt werden. Im Folgenden wird vor allem auf den Einfluss von Histonmodifikationen auf die DNA-Methylierung eingegangen.

Es wird beispielsweise vermutet, dass die basale DNA-Methylierung während der frühen Entwicklung durch Histonmodifikationen vermittelt wird (143). Ein weiterer Hinweis auf die Beeinflussung der DNA-Methylierung durch vorangegangene Histonmodifikationen ist, dass die von der HMT G9a katalysierte Methylierung von H3K9 die Bindung von heterochromatin protein 1 (HP1) ermöglicht. Dies führt zur lokalen Bildung von Heterochromatin und schließlich zur Rekrutierung der *de novo* DNA-Methyltransferasen DNMT3A und DNMT3B (144, 145). Auch für Zielgene der PcG-Proteine konnte eine Verbindung zur DNA-Methylierung hergestellt werden. So werden eine ganze Reihe von EZH2-Zielgenen unter bestimmten Umständen, beispielsweise bei der Differenzierung von ES-Zellen, *de novo* methyliert, die ursprünglich von dem PRC2 Komplex markiert wurden (146, 147). Ein Bindeglied für die Induktion von DNA-Methylierung durch PcG-Proteine könnte die direkte Interaktion von EZH2 mit DNMTs sein. So kann EZH2 mittels seiner Homologie Domäne II (HII) *in vitro* mit DNMT3A, DNMT3B und DNMT1 interagieren und ist *in vivo* mit DNMT-Aktivität assoziiert (148). Außerdem konnte durch DNA-Methylierungsanalysen gezeigt werden, dass EZH2 für die DNA-Methylierung seiner Zielgene notwendig ist. Auch im Kontext von Darmkrebs konnte eine Verbindung von PcG-vermittelter H3K27-Trimethylierung und *de novo* DNA-Methylierung gezeigt werden. So sind promotormethylierte Gene in Krebszellen spezifisch mit trimethyliertem H3K27 assoziiert. Diese Assoziation erfolgt in der frühen Entwicklung und wird durch die Anwesenheit des EZH2 enthaltenden PRC2 erhalten. Die Präsenz des PRC2-Komplexes an unmethylierten CpG-Inseln führt jedoch nur in Krebszellen durch die Rekrutierung von DNMTs zu deren *de*

novo Methylierung, während diese CpG-Inseln in normalen Zellen unmethyliert bleiben (149). Ähnliche Ergebnisse lieferte die Entdeckung, dass krebsspezifische DNA-Promotorhypermethylierung in ES-Zellen zwölfmal häufiger bei PcG-Zielgenen als bei Nicht-PcG-Zielgenen gefunden wird (150). Auch für Lymphome konnte ein Zusammenhang von PcG-Zielgenen und *de novo* DNA-Methylierung gezeigt werden. So konnte in ES-Zellen verschiedener Lymphome eine signifikante Anreicherung von PcG-Zielgenen in der Gruppe der untersuchten *de novo* DNA-methylierten Gene nachgewiesen werden (151).

3.4 Die Rolle von epigenetischen Modifikationen bei der Krebsentstehung

Die am längsten bekannte und am besten untersuchte Verbindung epigenetischer Modifikationen mit der Krebsentstehung ist die Stilllegung von Tumorsuppressorgenen durch DNA-Hypermethylierung der Promotorbereiche dieser Gene. In nahezu allen Arten humaner Neoplasien kann die Hypermethylierung der Promotoren von Tumorsuppressorgenen nachgewiesen werden und resultiert in deren transkriptioneller Stilllegung (91). Diese Promotorhypermethylierung von klassischen Tumorsuppressoren in humanen Krebsarten ist genauso häufig anzutreffen wie Mutationen dieser Gene. Ungefähr die Hälfte aller Gene, deren Mutation in der Keimbahn Krebs verursacht, zeigt in verschiedenen Krebsarten transkriptionelle Inhibition durch DNA-Methylierung (91). Außerdem existiert eine ständig wachsende Liste potentieller Tumorsuppressorgene, die durch Hypermethylierung stillgelegt werden. Zu den bekannten Tumorsuppressoren, deren Promotormethylierungen zur Tumorentstehung beitragen, zählen CDKN2A (Melanome und verschiedene Tumore), CDKN2B (maligne hämatologische Erkrankungen), MLH1 und APC1 (Colorectale Karzinome), RB1 (Retinoblastome) und TP53 (verschiedene Tumore) (152). Auf den Einfluss der DNA-Methylierung auf den Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps im cHL wurde bereits zuvor näher eingegangen.

Neben der Unterdrückung von Tumorsuppressorgenen durch DNA-Methylierung gibt es zahlreiche Hinweise auf eine Beteiligung von Histonmodifikationen an der Tumorentstehung. Insbesondere die Gruppe der PcG-Proteine stand dabei in jüngster Zeit im Fokus der Tumorforschung. So wird die Stilllegung der Tumorsuppressoren CDKN2A und CDKN2B nicht nur durch DNA-Methylierung, sondern auch durch die Beteiligung der PcG-Proteine induziert (110). Für ein Zusammenspiel von PcG-Genregulation und DNA-Methylierung bei der Tumorentstehung gibt es zahlreiche weitere Beispiele. Unter ihnen befinden sich Wilms tumor 1 (WT1), retinoic acid receptor-β (RARβ), kruppel-like factor 4 (KLF4), inhibitor of DNA-binding 4 (ID4), GATA binding protein 3 (GATA3), chromodomain helicase DNA binding

protein 5 (CHD5) und der Transkriptionsfaktor SPI1 (153). Auch in Lymphomen konnte ein solcher Zusammenhang zwischen PcG-Zielgenen und DNA-Methylierung gezeigt werden. So umfasst die Gruppe der Gene, die in allen untersuchten aggressiven B-Zell-Lymphomen *de novo* methyliert sind, einen signifikant erhöhten Anteil an PcG-Zielgenen (151). Ähnliche Beobachtungen wurden in Kolonkarzinomzellen gemacht. Auch hier konnte gezeigt werden, dass in Krebszellen ein Zusammenhang zwischen H3K27me3 und DNA-Methylierung besteht. Vermittelt durch EZH2 und PRC2 werden DNMTs rekrutiert, was nur in Krebszellen zu *de novo* Methylierung dieser Gene führt, nicht aber in normalen Zellen (149). Insbesondere in Krebszellen ist die Assemblierung von PcG-Proteinen mit CpG-Inseln also häufig Voraussetzung für die Stilllegung der folgenden Gene durch *de novo* DNA-Methylierung. Bislang ist allerdings unklar, was zu diesem Phänomen führt. Eine mögliche Erklärung wäre eine stark erhöhte Expression von PcG-Proteinen, wie sie in einigen Krebszellen gefunden wird (104). So ist beispielsweise BMI1 (eine Untereinheit des PRC1) in B-Zell-Lymphomen überexprimiert und fungiert als Onkogen in Kooperation mit Myc im Mausmodell (154-157). Besonders interessant ist, dass die Expression von BMI1 auch im cHL erhöht ist (158-160). Des Weiteren konnte eine Koexpression der beiden PcG-Proteine BMI1 und EZH2 in HRS-Zellen und HRS-Zelllinien gezeigt werden, während deren Expression in folliculären Lymphozyten, den normalen Gegenstücken der HRS-Zellen, streng getrennt ist (158). Die erhöhte Expression von BMI1 wird durch das onkogen wirkende latent membrane protein 1 (LMP1) des Epstein-Barr-Virus induziert und durch den NF-κB-Signalweg vermittelt, der im cHL konstitutiv aktiv ist. Der Knockdown von BMI1 in cHL-Zellen verringert deren Überlebensfähigkeit und führt zur erhöhten Expression einer Reihe von Tumorsuppressorgenen (160). Dadurch wird deutlich, dass epigenetische Modifikationen, insbesondere Proteine der PcG-Gruppe auch im cHL eine wichtige Rolle spielen.

3.5 Epigenetische Ansätze in der Krebstherapie

Da epigenetischen Veränderungen bei der Krebsforschung eine immer größer werdende Bedeutung zukommt, ist es nur logisch, dass auch die Nutzung von Arzneimitteln, die auf epigenetische Veränderungen Einfluss nehmen, in der Krebstherapie immer mehr Gegenstand der aktuellen Forschung ist. Am weitesten fortgeschritten ist der Einsatz von DNA-Methylierungsinhibitoren. Diese lassen sich generell in die Gruppe der Nukleosid-Analoga und der Nicht-Nukleosid-Analoga einteilen. Insbesondere Stoffe aus der Gruppe der Nukleosid-Analoga befinden sich bereits in Phase III von klinischen Studien. So werden 5-Azacytidine und 5-aza-2'-Deoxycytidine bereits für die Therapie hämatologischer Neoplasien, sowie bei Cervix- und Lungenkarzinomen eingesetzt (161, 162). Ein weiterer Wirkstoff, der DNMT1-Inhibitor Zebularine, wurde erfolgreich im Mausmodell gegen das

T-Zell-Lymphom eingesetzt (163). Die Inaktivierung von DNMTs führt in einer Reihe von Ansätzen zu einer effektiven Inhibierung der DNA-Methylierung und der Wiederherstellung „normaler“ Methylierungsmuster. Dennoch führt die mangelnde Spezifität solcher Inhibitoren auch zu einer generellen Hypomethylierung des Genoms. Dies kann wiederum zu einer Verschlechterung der Situation führen, wenn auch der Methylierungslevel von Onkogenen verringert wird (164). Die Suche nach möglichst spezifischen DNMT-Inhibitoren ist also nach wie vor unabdingbar.

Eine weitere Gruppe bisher eingesetzter epigenetischer Krebstherapeutika sind die HDACis. Zu ihnen gehören z.B. Valproinsäure (VPA), die in klinischen Studien bei der Therapie von akuter myeloischer Leukämie (AML) und weiterer Leukämien eingesetzt wird (165, 166). Des Weiteren wird Butyrat in der Therapie von Kolorektalkarzinomen getestet (162). Weitere bekannte in der Krebstherapie getestete HDACis sind Trichostatin A (TSA) und Suberoylanilide Hydroxamic Acid (SAHA). Sie wurden bei hämatologischen und soliden Tumoren in verschiedenen präklinischen und klinischen Studien eingesetzt (167, 168). Für die Behandlung von Lymphomen wurden insbesondere Depsipeptide (FK-228, FR901228, NSC-630176, romidepsin) in verschiedenen klinischen Studien eingesetzt (169-171). Auch in cHL-Zellen wurden bereits verschiedene HDACis getestet. So führt die Behandlung mit Depsipeptid in cHL-Zellen zu einer erhöhten Expression von CDKN1A sowie zu einem Zellzyklusarrest und zur Induktion von Apoptose (172). Auch die Behandlung von cHL-Zellen mit dem HDACi Vorinostat induziert die Expression des Tumorsuppressors CDKN1A, verringert den Expressionslevel von BCL-xL und resultiert letztlich in Zellzyklusarrest und Apoptose von cHL-Zellen (75). Somit stellen auch die HDACi bei der Entwicklung neuer Behandlungsstrategien des cHL ein sehr interessantes Forschungsgebiet dar.

Im Gegensatz zu den schon zahlreich vorhandenen therapeutischen Ansätzen mit DNMT- und HDACis gibt es bislang nur wenige Studien zur Anwendung von HMT-Inhibitoren. Die therapeutische Anwendung solcher HMT-Inhibitoren ist vielversprechend, denn insbesondere die Proteine des PRC2 und die resultierende Trimethylierung von H3K27 werden häufig mit der Entstehung verschiedener Neoplasien in Verbindung gebracht (s.o.). Ein solcher HMT-Inhibitor ist 3-Deazaneplanozin (DZNep). DZNep ist ein S-Adenosylhomocystein-Hydrolase-Inhibitor, der die zellulären Expressionslevel der PRC2-Proteine EZH2, SUZ12 und EED effektiv herabsetzt und damit auch die assoziierte Trimethylierung von H3K27 verhindert (173). Das krebstherapeutische Potential von DZNep wurde erstmals 2007 deutlich. So resultiert die DZNep-Behandlung von Brustkrebs-, Kolorektalkarzinom-, Prostatakrebs- und Leberkrebszelllinien in der Induktion von Apoptose, während in verschiedenen anderen Nicht-Tumorzelllinien keine Apoptose ausgelöst wurde (173). Die Expression einer Reihe von PRC2-Zielgenen konnte sowohl durch RNA

interference (RNAi) gegen PRC2-Proteine, als auch durch DZNep-Behandlung reaktiviert werden, was ein weiterer Hinweis auf das therapeutische Potential von DZNep ist. Bereits im Mausmodell wurde eine Kombination von DZNep-Behandlung mit dem HDACi Panobinostat (PS) getestet und führte zu einer erhöhten Überlebensrate in NOD/SCID Mäusen mit AML. Interessanterweise führt diese Kombinationsbehandlung, verglichen mit der Einzelbehandlung, zu einem deutlich erhöhten Abbau von EZH2 und einer deutlich erhöhten Apoptoserate in AML, nicht aber in normalen Knochenmarkvorläuferzellen (174). Ähnliche synergistische Effekte wurden in der Kombination von DZNep mit dem HDACi TSA gemacht (175, 176). Bislang wurden weder DZNep noch eines seiner aktiven Analoge im Menschen getestet. PS dagegen befindet sich in Phase-I/II-Studien von Patienten mit verschiedenen hämatologischen Krebserkrankungen wie AML, non-Hodgkin-Lymphom und eben auch cHL (177, 178). Der Anwendung von DZNep alleine oder in Kombination mit HDACi im cHL könnte also eine vielversprechende neue Behandlungsstrategie dieses Lymphoms werden.

4 Zielsetzung

Ein wesentliches Kennzeichen der HRS-Zellen des cHL ist die konstitutive Aktivierung einiger wichtiger Signalwege zu der auch der JAK/STAT-Signalweg gehört. STAT6 wurde zuvor in unserer Arbeitsgruppe als Überlebensfaktor von cHL Zelllinien identifiziert. Durch Genexpressionsanalysen der cHL Zelllinie L1236 nach Ausschalten von STAT6 wurden zahlreiche potentielle STAT6-Zielgene mit wichtigen regulatorischen Funktionen identifiziert. Deren Regulationsmechanismus wurde in dieser Arbeit untersucht. Die STAT6-abhängige Regulation sollte zunächst in einem induzierbaren System untersucht werden, in dem andere Signalwege, die im cHL koaktiviert sind, nicht aktiviert vorliegen. Als Modellsystem hierfür dienten Ramos-B-Zellen, in denen sich STAT6 durch Behandlung mit IL-4 transient aktivieren lässt. Nach einer Bestätigung, sollten die Promotorbereiche dieser Gene *in silico* nach STAT6-Bindestellen durchsucht werden und die Bindung von STAT6 mittels Chromatinimmunpräzipitations (ChIP)-Analysen *in vivo* bestätigt werden. Potentiell interessante durch STAT6 regulierte Gene sollten auf Ihre Funktion in HRS-Zellen hin analysiert werden. Damit sollte untersucht werden, auf welche Weise STAT6 zum Überleben der cHL-Zellen beiträgt.

Ein zweites wesentliches Merkmal der HRS-Zellen ist der Verlust des B-Zellphänotyps, der ebenfalls als Überlebensmechanismus der Tumorzellen diskutiert wird. Die bereits identifizierte Stilllegung der B-Zell-spezifischen Gene durch DNA-Methylierung kann deren Repression nur teilweise erklären. Im Rahmen dieser Arbeit sollte untersucht werden, welche Rolle Histonmodifikationen bei der Stilllegung B-Zell-spezifischer Gene in HRS-Zellen spielen und welchen Einfluss die Inhibition einer solchen Modifikation auf die Expression dieser Gene in HRS-Zellen hat. Da insbesondere in Krebszellen die Trimethylierung von H3K27 als Voraussetzung für *de novo* DNA-Methylierung beschrieben ist, war die Untersuchung dieser Modifikation und der Demethylasen, die diese Modifikation inhibieren von besonderem Interesse.

Mit beiden Ansätzen sollten die Kenntnisse über die molekularen Zusammenhänge in der Pathogenese des cHL erweitert werden und somit zur Suche nach neuen Ansatzpunkten für mögliche Therapien beigetragen.

Biology and Impact of Signal Transducers and Activators of Transcription and Their Regulators as Targets in Cancer Therapy

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FINAL

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Abstract: While chemo- and radiotherapy is far developed and successfully employed by default for cancer treatment, severe side effects point to the urgent need for more specific therapies based on the molecular mechanisms of this disease. Strategies to specifically inhibit signaling pathways that are known to force proliferation, prevent apoptosis or promote angiogenesis are expected to have a substantial impact on the future direction taken in cancer therapy. The Janus Kinase (JAK) / Signal transducer and activator of transcription (STAT) pathway is one major signaling pathway converting the signal of cytokines, growth factors and hormones into gene expression programs regulating essential cellular functions like proliferation, differentiation and survival. The suppressors of cytokine signaling (SOCS) as well as phosphatases normally tightly regulate the JAK/STAT pathway. Frequently, however this pathway is constitutively activated in a wide variety of human malignancies and substantially contributes to carcinogenesis. Consequently, new strategies for targeting the JAK/STAT pathway have been developed. This review discusses the biology of the JAK/STAT signaling pathway, which offers several molecular strategies for therapeutic interruption.

Key Words: STAT, JAK, cancer, cytokine, SOCS, signaling, inhibitors.

INTRODUCTION

The communication between individual cells through soluble factors in multicellular organisms is essential for the regulation and coordination of complex processes like growth, differentiation, migration and apoptosis. Constant disturbance of the cellular communication results in pathological changes like cancer. Extracellular polypeptide hormones like growth factors and cytokines generate by binding to cell surface receptors signals which activate a multitude of signal transduction pathways and networks regulating these essential biological processes. The crucial point of most signal transduction pathways is the activation of factors, which alter the gene expression program of the cells. The signal transducers and activators of transcription (STAT) proteins are latent transcription factors, which fulfill two essential functions: the transduction of the signal from the cell surface to the nucleus and the activation of gene transcription. Since the first STAT proteins and their activating Janus kinases (JAKs) were identified as mediators of interferon signaling, a plethora of cytokines and growth factor receptors were shown to use the JAK/STAT pathway for translating the extracellular signal in an altered gene expression program. Cell culture studies as well as targeted deletion of STAT genes in mice demonstrate the vital function of individual STAT proteins as essential regulators of cell proliferation, differentiation and survival in numerous biological processes. The finding that deregulated STAT proteins can increase angiogenesis and enhance survival of tumor cells supports the critical role of STATs in malignant transformation and oncogenesis. Moreover, STAT proteins are essential regulators of the immune system and have crucial roles in maintaining peripheral immune tolerance and tumor surveillance. In summary, all these recent studies

indicate that STAT proteins are pivotal targets for molecular based cancer therapy. This review summarizes the recent findings about the role of STAT proteins in malignant transformation and discusses molecular strategies for targeting the JAK/STAT signaling pathway for therapeutic intervention.

THE JAK/STAT SIGNALING PATHWAY

STAT proteins were originally discovered as mediators of interferon signaling. An obligatory role of STAT proteins in transmitting signals of growth factors, cytokine receptors and also oncogenic kinases has been established subsequently [1-3].

The JAK/STAT signaling pathway is normally only transiently activated in response to cytokines like interleukins (IL), interferons (IFN) and certain peptide hormones. The binding of these signaling molecules to their cognate receptor induces receptor oligo-multimerization, resulting in the autophosphorylation and activation of receptor associated JAK kinases (JAK1, JAK2, JAK3 and Tyk2) (Fig. 1) [4]. Upon activation, the JAK kinases phosphorylate conserved tyrosine residues in the cytoplasmic tail of the receptors, thereby creating docking sites for the Src-homology (SH2)-domain of the STAT proteins [5]. The receptor bound STAT proteins are subsequently phosphorylated on a conserved tyrosine residue by JAK kinases [4]. This allows homo- or heterodimerization of STAT proteins via reciprocal SH2-phosphotyrosine interaction [6]. The STAT dimers translocate to the nucleus [7], where they bind to specific DNA elements, the gamma interferon-activated sequence (GAS-element), represented by the palindromic consensus TTCN(3-4)GAA in the promoter of their target genes [8]. They modulate transcription through recruitment of transcriptional coactivators or repressors to the promoter [9]. The coactivators, e.g. the histone acetyl transferases Creb-binding protein (CBP) and p300 are essential for the

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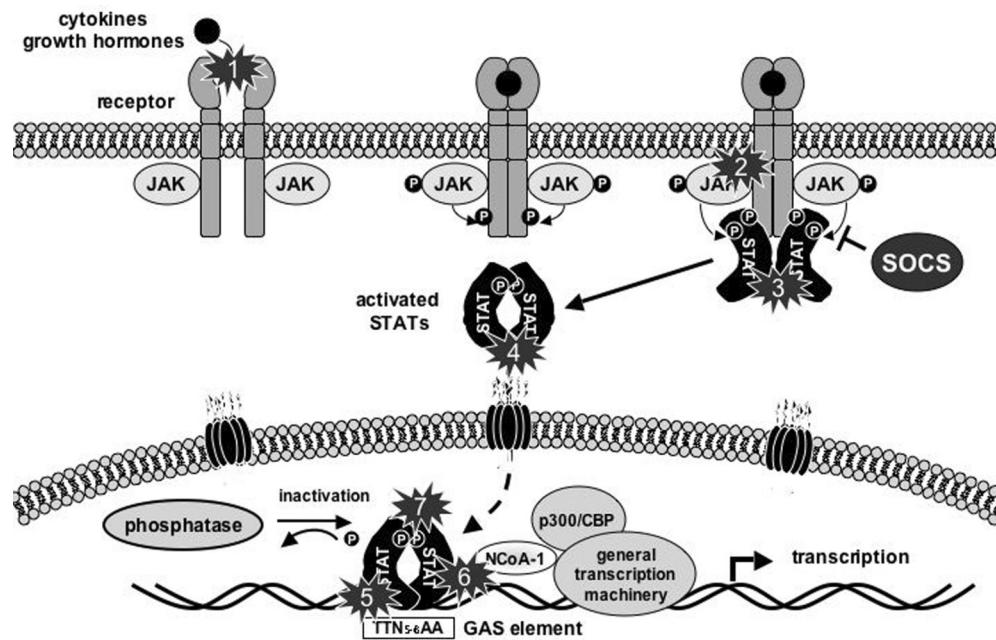


Fig. (1). A schematic illustration of the JAK/STAT signaling pathway is shown. Upon ligand binding, receptors di- or multimerize and will be phosphorylated by JAKs. This generates docking sites for STAT molecules, which are activated via tyrosine phosphorylation mediated by JAKs. Activated STATs homo- or heterodimerize, translocate into the nucleus where they bind defined DNA sequences within promoter regions of their target genes and initiate transcription by interacting with coactivators and the general transcription machinery. The pathway provides various possibilities for blocking signal transduction. (1) Inhibition of the complete signaling cascade on the receptor level includes the application of ligand and receptor antagonists or neutralizing antibodies. (2) Other approaches target the pathway on the level of kinases. (3) A specific inhibition of single STATs can be obtained with the use of sequence specific antisense oligonucleotides or siRNAs which silence gene expression. Phosphopeptide-based approaches are applied to block the recruitment of STATs to the receptor and prevent dimer formation and DNA binding. (4) Dimers can also be destabilized with G-quartet oligonucleotides. (5) Furthermore decoy duplex oligonucleotides target STAT binding to the promoters. A direct inhibition of STAT transcriptional activity can be achieved by expression of dominant negative STATs. (6) Additional intervention potential provides the recruitment of coactivators to the STATs, which are required for fully transcriptional activity. (7) Also the blockade of secondary modifications may affect STAT function.

transactivation of STAT target genes [10-15]. They promote transcriptional initiation by opening of the chromatin structure and by recruitment of general transcription factors [16].

New evidence for STAT dimerization, receptor binding and nuclear-cytoplasmic shuttling indicates, that this well accepted paradigm of JAK/STAT signaling has to be modified. Recent studies on STAT proteins prior to tyrosine phosphorylation revealed that STATs can exist as stable, non-phosphorylated dimers in the absence of cytokine stimulation [17]. The structures of unphosphorylated STAT1 and STAT5 fragments have recently been solved [18,19]. The STAT5 fragment comprises the core without N-terminal domain and transactivation domain [19]. The STAT1 fragment contains in addition the N-terminal domain [18,19]. Although the overall structure of these unphosphorylated STATs is very similar to the phosphorylated ones, they dimerize in a completely different manner. An anti-parallel orientation of the core fragments was found in both structures and is therefore probably of biological relevance. Docking of the N-terminal domain dimer onto this antiparallel core fragment dimer based on charge and surface complementarity helps to understand the observed stabilizing function of the N-terminal domains for unphosphorylated STAT dimers [20]. In addition, a parallel conformation involving the N-terminal domain dimer has been recognized

for STAT1. This parallel conformation has been postulated to be the receptor-binding competent form of STATs [18]. But also the anti-parallel arrangement, which is energetically much more favorable than the parallel arrangement, might qualify as the receptor interacting dimer. These insights gained, from the structures of unphosphorylated STATs can reveal important information about how STATs bind to the cytokine receptors and might offer new strategies to inhibit STAT function.

In contrast to the general paradigm of STAT nuclear translocation several studies demonstrated nuclear-cytoplasmic shuttling of unphosphorylated STATs in the absence of cytokine stimulation [21-26]. Based on these studies it can now be assumed, that only the phosphorylated STAT proteins are retained in the nucleus until dephosphorylation by nuclear phosphatases whereas the unphosphorylated STAT proteins constantly shuttle between the cytoplasm and nucleus [27,28]. This suggests that nuclear retention and not translocation of the phosphorylated STAT proteins is the important feature of cytokine-induced STAT signaling.

STAT STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS

Thus far, seven mammalian STATs have been identified (STAT1, 2, 3, 4, 5a, 5b, 6), which share the same structure and functional domains (Fig. 2). The region that determines

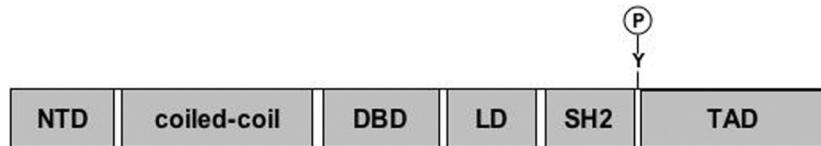


Fig. (2). The figure shows a schematic presentation of the structural and functional domains of the STAT proteins. The phosphorylated tyrosine is depicted. The N-terminal domain (NTD) mediates interactions among dimers.

The coiled-coil domain is necessary for protein-protein interactions. Specific DNA-binding activity is mediated by the DNA-binding domain (DBD). A linker domain (LD) separates the DBD and the SH2 domain. The Src-homology domain (SH2) is the mostly conserved part and is responsible for receptor binding and dimerization of STATs. The transactivation domain (TAD) is situated at the C-terminal part of the protein. This domain contains a conserved tyrosine residue which is phosphorylated by JAKs. The TAD is responsible for transcription of STAT target genes.

the DNA-binding function is located between amino acids 400 and 500 [29]. The STAT molecules are able to bind to core GAS-elements on the DNA with high affinity as homo- as well as heterodimers. Since STAT family members recognize similar GAS-elements, slightly different sequences of the motifs and flanking regions as well as their arrangement in the promoter region of the target genes determine the binding specificity and transcriptional regulation [29,30]. Purified, recombinant STATs can bind in a tetrameric form to tandemly linked non-consensus GAS-motifs found in naturally occurring promoters [29,31,32]. The N-terminal domain mediates protein interaction of two STAT dimers on such tandem GAS-motifs [33,30]. Crystallization studies of the isolated STAT4 N-terminal domain confirm the protein interaction function of this domain [20]. In addition to tetramer formation the N-terminal domain has further functions in receptor recognition and phosphatase recruitment [34,35].

The crystal structure of the phosphorylated STAT1 and STAT3 homodimeric core fragments, lacking the N-terminal domain and the transactivation domain (TAD) bound to DNA revealed that STAT DNA-binding domains have the general structure of an immunoglobulin variable fold similar to the NF-kappa-B/Rel proteins [36,37]. Crystal structure analysis also determined the structure of the coiled-coil domain (amino acid 145 to 330), which consists of 4 long alpha-helices [36,37]. Its exposed position in the protein indicates that this domain potentially functions as a protein interaction domain. The STAT SH2-domain mediates association with the activated receptor [5,38] and dimerization *via* reciprocal SH2-phosphotyrosine interactions [6]. The interaction of the STAT SH2-domain with the activated receptor and the activated STAT monomer seems to be highly specific [39]. Short phosphotyrosine-peptides that mimic docking sites of the activated receptor or the sequences of the activated STAT monomer bind competitively to the STAT SH2-domain and have been shown to disrupt STAT homo- and heterodimerization [6,40,41].

The C-terminal part of the STATs constitutes the transactivation domain (TAD) [42,43]. The TAD shows the least conservation among the STAT protein family and considerable differences between the effectiveness of each TAD exist [13]. So far, the overall structure of the STAT TAD is unknown and might be evident only after binding to other proteins like coactivators or components of the general

transcription machinery. It seems that STAT proteins use specific structural motifs for contacting coactivators [44-46]. STAT6 uses distinct interaction motifs to contact CBP and nuclear receptor coactivator 1 (NCoA-1), a member of the p160/SRC/NCoA (p160/steroid receptor coactivators/nuclear receptor coactivator) family of coactivators [46]. The crystal structure of the NCoA-1 interaction domain bound to the STAT6 binding-peptide revealed, that an LXXLL motif in the STAT6 TAD builds an amphipathic, alpha-helical structure, which binds mostly through hydrophobic interactions to NCoA-1. Secondary structure models predict also the presence of an alpha-helix within the STAT5 TAD [47]. This region (spanning amino acids 751-762) and in particular the hydrophobic amino acids have been shown to be critical for the transcriptional activity of STAT5a [48,49]. NCoA-1, which has also a pivotal role in STAT5-dependent gene expression was shown to target an FDL motif (amino acids 751-753) within the alpha-helix of the STAT5a TAD [44].

Several naturally occurring isoforms of STATs, which lack the C-terminal TAD (termed STAT β in comparison to the full-length STAT α form) have been described in the literature. They are generated by alternative [50] or incomplete splicing [51] or by proteolysis [52,53]. Such isoforms have been identified for STAT1, STAT3, STAT4, STAT5a, STAT5b and STAT6 in many different cell types [51,52,54-56]. Although the truncated isoforms are activated like the full-length forms in response to cytokine signaling, they are transcriptionally inert and behave as functionally dominant negative proteins, which down-regulate transcriptional activation of the wild-type proteins, when coexpressed. However, physiologically truncated STAT versions are not always transcriptionally inert. STAT3 β for example is capable of mediating at least some of the gene activation of the full-length form [57,58]. The ability of STAT3 β to induce transcription appears to be due to the recruitment of cooperating transcription factors like c-Jun. In addition, gene-deletion studies in mice and observations in normal and cancer cells indicate, that STAT α and STAT β forms seem to have specific, non-overlapping functions [59-61].

NEGATIVE REGULATION OF THE JAK/STAT SIGNALING PATHWAY

The tight regulation of JAK/STAT signaling is important in controlling the cytokine response. The pathway can be

regulated in a number of ways [62-64]. STATs can be dephosphorylated by tyrosine phosphatases, degraded by the ubiquitin-proteasome and interacting proteins can inhibit their function [63,65]. Dominant negative forms of the STAT proteins generated by alternative splicing or specific proteases are also able to inhibit cytokine signaling as discussed above [66]. A major pathway of regulation is represented through proteins that are induced by cytokines and inhibit cytokine signaling in a classical negative feedback loop. A family of inhibitor proteins referred to as suppressor of cytokine signaling (SOCS), also known as cytokine-inducible SH2 protein (CIS), JAK binding protein (JAB) or STAT-induced STAT inhibitors (SSI) are direct target genes of the STAT proteins that are transcriptionally upregulated in response to cytokine signals [67-69]. Until now, eight members of the SOCS family have been identified, which share common modular organization of an SH2-domain and a short motif called SOCS-box [71,70]. Despite of their structural similarity, SOCS family members have distinct mechanisms of inhibition (for review see [72]). They can inhibit STAT tyrosine phosphorylation by binding to the cytokine receptor or to JAK kinases. As an additional mode of inhibition, SOCS proteins promote degradation of activated signaling molecules by recruiting the elongin BC ubiquitin-ligase complex *via* their SOCS-box [73]. Protein inhibitors of STATs (PIAS) proteins represent another family of proteins, which can directly inhibit the function of STAT proteins [74]. The PIAS protein family consists of five family members each, with a certain kind of specificity. PIAS3 interacts with activated STAT3 and inhibits STAT DNA-binding, whereas PIAS1 acts specifically on STAT1. In addition to this function PIAS proteins can act as small ubiquitin-like modifier (SUMO)-ligases and can recruit coregulators such as the histone deacetylases (HDACS) or CBP (for review see [74]).

ONCOGENIC ROLE OF STATS

Persistent STAT activation has been convincingly implicated in cancer development and progression. In normal cells STAT phosphorylation is tightly controlled in such a way that activation is a transient process. Based on immunohistochemistry with antibodies recognizing specifically phosphorylated STATs and on functional STAT DNA-binding assays persistent STAT activities are found in many primary tumors and tumor derived cell lines from blood malignancies including leukemias, lymphomas, and multiple myelomas, as well as in tumors of solid tissue such as head and neck, breast, prostate, pancreas, lung, kidney and thyroid [75-78]. In many tumors more than one STAT is permanently activated. Often STAT1, STAT3 and/or STAT5 are simultaneously activated [79]. The role of particularly STAT3 and STAT5 in cellular transformation and oncogenesis has been established by several *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies. The function of STAT1 in contrast has been associated with growth suppression rather than malignant transformation [76]. Recent studies show that STAT3 is not only important in promoting tumor cell survival and proliferation, but also in regulating tumor angiogenesis, metastasis and immune evasion [80-82]. Determining how individual STATs participate in malignant transformation and tumor progression is still under investigation.

MECHANISM OF CONSTITUTIVE STAT ACTIVATION IN CANCER

Various mechanisms for constitutive activation of STATs have been described. Uncontrolled cytokine secretion in an autocrine or paracrine loop may activate STAT proteins, as seen in IL-6-mediated JAK/STAT3 signaling in multiple myelomas [83]. Constitutive activity of receptor tyrosine kinases resulting from gain-of-function mutation or overexpression can also lead to permanent STAT activation. This has been shown for the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR), platelet-derived growth factor receptor (PDGFR) and c-Met, which signal through STAT proteins [84-86]. In head and neck tumors the EGFR is frequently overexpressed and autocrine tumor growth factor α (TGF α) secretion mediates EGFR signaling and persistent STAT3 activation, which is essential for tumor cell survival as shown in tissue culture and xenograft models [87,88]. In melanoma, hepatocyte growth factor (HGF)-induced tumorigenesis requires STAT3 signaling through c-Met receptor [85]. STAT3 regulates the transcription of HGF and could therefore be directly involved in an autocrine mitogenic stimulation of melanoma cells [89]. A hallmark of classical Hodgkin Lymphoma (cHL), a malignant lymphoid disorder primarily derived from germinal center B-cells, is the abnormal expression of cytokines, including the well-known activators of the JAK/STAT pathway IL-6 and IL-13 [90]. Constitutive phosphorylation of STAT1, STAT3, STAT5 and STAT6 has been found in several cHL cell lines as well as in cHL biopsies. Recent studies support the regulatory function of distinct components of the JAK/STAT pathway in growth and survival of cHL cell lines [91,92]. Moreover, JAK kinase inhibitors and the specific downregulation of STAT3 by siRNA or the overexpression of SOCS1 and SOCS3 decrease cell proliferation and/or induce apoptosis in distinct cHL cell lines [93,94].

For human acute myelogenous leukemia (AML), the activation of receptor tyrosine kinases Kit and Flt3 by mutations causes tyrosine phosphorylation and DNA-binding of STAT3 or STAT5, respectively, which have essential functions in leukemogenesis [95,96].

In addition, chromosomal translocation could be responsible for constitutive activation of the JAK/STAT pathway by affecting expression and activity of kinases or directly of STAT proteins. Anaplastic large cell lymphomas are typically defined by a t(2;5) translocation, resulting in the expression of the oncogenic NPM-ALK fusion protein kinase. NPM-ALK leads to the activation of STAT3 [97,98]. Recent gene targeting studies confirmed the essential function of STAT3 in the regulation of growth and survival of human and mouse NPM-ALK-transformed cells [99]. In chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), the BCR-ABL oncogene tyrosine kinase expressed from the t(9;22) chromosomal break point could be responsible for phosphorylation of STAT5 [100,101]. In BCR-ABL positive cells, expression of a dominant negative STAT5b impairs cell growth rate, diminishes cell viability and increases sensitivity to chemotherapeutic agents [102]. The chimeric fusion of JAK2 and the transcription factor TEL (TEL-JAK2), which is found in some cases of AML leads to the constitutive activation of STAT5 [103,104]. STAT5 knockout mouse models show, that BCR-ABL

induced leukemia does not require STAT5, whereas STAT5 is essential for the myelo- and lymphoproliferative disease induced by TEL-JAK2 [105,106]. A chromosomal translocation that directly incorporated STAT5b and fused it to the retinoic acid receptor α (RAR α) was described in a single case of acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL) with a chromosome 17 interstitial deletion [107]. Expression of STAT5b-RAR α fusion protein impairs differentiation in response to vitamin D and all-trans retinoic acid in hematopoietic cell lines [108]. STAT5b-RAR α binds in complex with the corepressor silencing mediator for retinoid and thyroid receptors (SMART) to retinoid acid response DNA elements and thereby inhibits transactivation by RAR-RXR [109].

In addition, to these fusion proteins many more oncogenes were described to transform cells in a STAT-dependent manner. v-Src and v-Eyk transformation capacity is dependent on STAT3 [110,111]. v-Ros, v-Fps, v-Sis, Lck and probably other oncogenic derivatives of non-receptor tyrosine kinases can induce constitutive STAT3 signaling [75]. Furthermore, viral infection of cells could lead to constitutive STAT activation. Retrovirus HTLV-I (human T-cell leukemia virus I)-transformed cells as well as HTLV-1 seropositive patients with adult T-cell leukemia (ATLL) show constitutively activated STAT5 and STAT3 [112,113]. Constitutive activation of JAK3 as well as STAT5 is found in Abelson murine leukemia virus (A-MuLV)-transformed pre B-cells and is related to the oncogenic v-Abl tyrosine kinase [114,115]. In addition, constitutive activity of STAT1 and STAT3 was reported to be related to the presence of Epstein-Barr virus DNA in Burkitt lymphoma cells. This is associated with the enhanced expression of IL-10 and Bcl-2 [116].

An alternative mechanism of aberrant STAT activation entails abrogation of STAT negative regulation due to genetic or epigenetic alteration. In fact, methylation-induced silencing of SOCS genes has been reported in several types of cancer. In hepatocellular carcinomas (HCC) aberrant methylation in the CpG-islands of SOCS1 was found in the majority of analyzed tumor samples. Restoration of SOCS1 in cells with methylation silenced SOCS1 and constitutively activated JAK results in a suppressed cell growth rate [117]. Aberrant methylation of SOCS1 correlating with transcriptional silencing was also found in multiple myeloma cell lines and multiple myeloma patient samples [118]. In addition, frequent silencing of SOCS3 by promoter methylation occurs in human lung cancer. The restoration of SOCS3 expression results in growth suppression, induction of apoptosis and down-regulation of activated STAT3 [119].

Although these results indicate that silencing of SOCS genes might be important in malignant transformation, epigenetic silencing of SOCS1 is still a matter of debate [120-122]. In contrast to SOCS1 methylation, hypermethylation of the tyrosine phosphatase SHP1 promoter, which also leads to an activation of JAK/STAT-signaling could be detected in acute leukemias and multiple myelomas, suggesting that instead of SOCS1 methylation, SHP1 promoter methylation is an important factor in the pathogenesis of leukemia and myeloma [121]. In support of this, no methylation of the SOCS1 promoter could be

detected in samples from patients with mantle cell lymphomas and follicular lymphomas, whereas methylation of the SHP1 promoter could be detected in the majority of these samples [123]. Recent studies identified that STAT3 binds in cooperation with DNA-methyltransferase 1 (DNMT1) and histone deacetylase 1 (HDAC1) to the SHP1 promoter and probably induces epigenetic silencing of SHP1 in malignant T-lymphocytes [124].

Instead of an epigenetic deregulation of SOCS1, a biallelic mutation of SOCS1 has been found in a mediastinal lymphoma cell line, which results in an impaired JAK2 degradation and thus seems to be responsible for elevated JAK2 levels. Furthermore SOCS1 mutations could be detected in primary mediastinal B-cell lymphomas [125]. PIAS3 seems also to be involved in malignant transformation. Some ALK-positive T/null-cell lymphoma cells have been described to lack PIAS3 expression and thereby lost this kind of negative STAT3 regulation [98].

EFFECT OF ABERRANT STAT ACTIVATION ON MALIGNANT TRANSFORMATION

It is generally believed, that STAT proteins exert their function mainly by regulating gene expression. Deregulation of gene expression by constitutively active STAT proteins will alter the genetic program of tumor cells. STAT target genes control fundamental biological processes such as apoptosis, cell proliferation, angiogenesis and immune evasion. Several STAT target genes may thus play an integral part in development and progression of malignancy.

Protection from apoptosis is frequently observed in tumor cells. STAT3 and STAT5 were described to attribute to the up-regulation of anti-apoptotic proteins including Bcl-xL, Bcl-2 and Mcl-1 [83,126-133]. Activated STAT3 also induced the expression of the anti-apoptotic protein Survivin, a member of the inhibitor of apoptosis (IAP) family [133,134]. STAT3 not only activates the expression of anti-apoptotic proteins it also inhibits the expression of apoptosis inducers. In cooperation with c-Jun, STAT3 is capable to inhibit Fas induced cell death by repressing the expression of the Fas receptor [135]. Moreover, STAT3 directly binds to the p53 promoter and inhibits the transcription of p53 [136]. Both STAT3 and STAT5 can modulate cell cycle control and increase cell proliferation of tumor cells via transcriptional upregulation of c-Myc and D-Cyclins (D1 and D2, respectively) [126,130,137-139]. Although constitutive STAT3 and STAT5 activation often correlates with the expression of these important regulators of cell cycle and apoptosis, direct regulation of these genes by STATs must not always be the crucial event. The extent to which the different tumor cells depend on the STAT-mediated gene activation varies and a direct binding of the STAT proteins to the promoters of these potential target genes in tumor cells remains to be shown [75,79].

Neovascularization by stimulating angiogenesis is essential in order to provide tumors of a certain size with oxygen and nutrients [140]. STAT3 activates the transcription of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), the most potent pro-angiogenic factor [141-143]. STAT3 is also required for the expression of hypoxia-inducible factor (HIF-1 α), which is a key regulator of VEGF [82,144]. STAT3 seems to have

an even more important function in angiogenesis by mediating signal transduction in response to the VEGF receptor in endothelial cells and by regulating migration of endothelial cells and vessel formation [145,146]. Matrix metalloprotease 2 (Mmp-2) is another STAT3 target gene, which seems to have a critical role in metastasis of melanoma cells [81].

An often underestimated process in tumorigenesis is the ability of tumors to evade the immune system [147]. Recent studies show that STAT3 is able to influence the interplay between tumor cells and the immune system. STAT3 signaling in both tumor and immune cells facilitates immune evasion [80,148-150]. Inhibition of STAT3 in tumor cells increases the expression of pro-inflammatory cytokines and chemokines that activate dendritic cells, resulting in tumor-specific T-cell response [80].

STRATEGIES TO INHIBIT THE JAK/STAT SIGNALING CASCADE

A number of strategies has been developed to target different points in the JAK/STAT signaling pathway. These strategies comprise the inhibition of the upstream activating events (cytokine binding, receptor function, kinase activity), the blockage of the transcription factors (STAT expression and function) and the restoration of the negative regulation (see Fig. 1). Progress in the structural and functional analysis of the JAK/STAT pathway has made it possible to screen compound libraries with high-throughput assays and to design small molecules, which inhibit specific functions of the JAK/STAT pathway.

DEFINING THE APPROPRIATE TARGET

Both strategies targeting upstream and downstream events of the JAK/STAT pathway have assets and drawbacks. Inhibition of the upstream regulators (ligands and receptors) has the advantage, that also several different oncogenic pathways, activated by these receptors, which contribute to malignant transformation, can be addressed. However, such a strategy can cause toxic side effects, when signaling pathways essential for growth and survival of normal cells are affected. The central role that STAT3 and STAT5 play in many malignancies, as discussed above, provides a strong justification for the development of therapeutic cancer strategies that will specifically target these transcription factors. In addition, it can be suggested that inhibition of STAT3 may not be grossly toxic to cells, since STAT3-positive tumor cells seem to be more sensitive than normal cells to apoptosis induction by blocking STAT3 [99,137,151]. Targeting the STATs directly, has the advantage of neutralizing a multitude of genetic aberrations, which acts *via* these signaling proteins. However, the drawback here could be that other transcription factors might adopt the oncogenic functions of the STATs. The following discussed strategies are currently used or being developed to interfere with the JAK/STAT signaling pathway.

LIGAND AND RECEPTOR ANTAGONISTS

Autocrine and paracrine activation of the JAK/STAT pathway by cytokines is frequently found in cancer. Targeting the cytokine receptors with monoclonal antibodies or by receptor antagonists is a useful strategy to block this process.

Antagonistical molecules are often structurally related to the physiological cytokine-ligand, but lack the activating properties. Such an antagonist is the IL-6 superantagonist Sant7. Sant7 blocks constitutive STAT3 activation and is a potent inducer of apoptosis in multiple myeloma cell lines [152]. Also monoclonal antibodies against IL-6 were successfully used in the treatment of a patient with plasma cell leukemia [153]. Antibodies targeting the EGFR family members are currently used in clinical studies [154]. Such therapeutics could also be useful for blocking the autocrine TGF α /EGFR loop in head and neck tumors. This strategy should lead to the inhibition of STAT3 activation and induction of apoptosis [88]. Adenoviral delivery of a soluble IL-13 decoy receptor decreases proliferation and induces apoptosis of a classical Hodgkin lymphoma (cHL) cell line. cHL is characterized by the abnormal expression of cytokines, which activate the JAK/STAT pathway e.g. IL-6 and IL-13 [90,155].

SMALL MOLECULE INHIBITORS OF THE JAK/STAT PATHWAY

During the last years, high-throughput screenings with compound libraries (up to 500,000 compounds) identified a subset of naturally occurring substances with potent anti-cancer activity. To validate the potential of these compounds biochemical as well as cell-based assays are used. These assays are often based on stable cell lines, which express a STAT3-dependent reporter construct that allows the quantification of STAT3-mediated gene expression [156]. In addition, a high-throughput assay, based on fluorescence polarization, was developed. This assay allows screening for small molecules, which bind to the SH2-domain of STAT3 and thereby inhibit its activity [157]. Moreover, virtual database screenings are applied to identify low-molecular weight compounds that inhibit STAT3 function [158].

A number of compounds has been identified on the basis of such assays. Some of them are listed in Table 1. Protein kinases in general are the most exploited molecular targets for therapeutic intervention in human cancer. Selective inhibitors for tyrosine kinases are currently developed, which are expected to cause fewer side effects in cancer treatment [159]. Several drugs were identified to block the JAK/STAT signaling pathway on the level of kinases. In this context, the tyrosine kinase inhibitors tyrphostins are probably the best characterized. Tyrphostins such as AG490, AG25 and AG17 are tyrosine kinase inhibitors, which exert their function based on ATP-competitive inhibition [94,160-162]. AG490 was originally identified from kinase assays to inhibit ErbB1 and ErbB2; but was subsequently shown to inhibit also JAK2 and JAK3 and to block STAT1, STAT3, STAT5 and STAT6 activation [162]. Application of AG490 inhibits in a subset of cell lines derived from cancer of breast, prostate, head and neck, lymphoma and leukemia the expression of STAT3-regulated target genes as well as growth and survival of these cells *in vitro* [83,99,91,151,163-168]. Although AG490 is used in numerous publications to demonstrate the functional significance of JAK2-dependent pathways, the inhibitor is not JAK2-specific and acts equipotent on several other tyrosine kinases [169]. A variety of compounds, which selectively inhibits JAK3 have been identified or designed on structural bases [169-171]. Among

Table 1. The Table Summarizes Some of the Compounds Identified to Interfere with the JAK/STAT Signaling Cascade in Several Tumor Cell Systems. Some Potential Applications are Listed for the Different Inhibitors

| Substance | Gene targeted | Application | References |
|---|------------------------|--|---|
| none sequence-specific | | | |
| AG17, AG25, AG490 (Tyrophostins) | JAK2/STAT3 | multiple myeloma, lymphoma, breast cancer, colon cancer, | Bharti <i>et al.</i> 2003, Alas <i>et al.</i> 2003, Catlett-Falcone <i>et al.</i> 1999, Holtick <i>et al.</i> 2005, Meydan <i>et al.</i> 1996 |
| WHI-P154, WHI-P131 (Dimethoxyquinazoline Derivatives) | JAK3 | autoimmune disease, leukemia, lymphoma, | Luo <i>et al.</i> 2004, Amin <i>et al.</i> 2003, Uckun <i>et al.</i> 2001 |
| CP690550 CMP6 | JAK3 JAK2/TYK2/JAK3 | organ transplantation, myeloproliferative syndromes, | Changelian <i>et al.</i> 2003, Sykes 2003 Thompson <i>et al.</i> 2002, Lucet <i>et al.</i> 2006 |
| curcumin | STAT3 | lymphoma, multiple myeloma | Uddin <i>et al.</i> 2005, Bharti <i>et al.</i> 2003 |
| cucurbitacin I cucurbitacin Q | JAK2/STAT3 STAT3 | breast cancer breast cancer | Blaskovich <i>et al.</i> 2003 Sun <i>et al.</i> 2005 |
| indirubin | STAT3 | breast cancer | Nam <i>et al.</i> 2005 |
| arsenic compounds (As2O3) | STAT3 | cancer of the liver | Cheng <i>et al.</i> 2004 |
| platinum compounds (e.g. IS3 295) | STAT3 | cancer of the liver, breast cancer, prostate cancer, multiple myeloma | Turkson <i>et al.</i> 2004, Turkson <i>et al.</i> 2005 |
| piceatannol | JAK1/STAT3 | lymphoma, multiple myeloma | Alas <i>et al.</i> 2003 |
| farnesyltransferase inhibitor R115777 | STAT3 | pancreatic cancer | Venkatasubbarao <i>et al.</i> 2005 |
| sequence-specific | | | |
| antisense oligonucleotides (PTOs) | | | |
| antisense oligonucleotides (ISIS 345794) | STAT3 | lymphoma, prostate cancer preclinical studies for multiple myeloma | Chiarle <i>et al.</i> 2005, Barton <i>et al.</i> 2004 Gleave <i>et al.</i> 2005 |
| siRNAs | STAT3 | breast cancer, prostate cancer, astrocytomas, laryngeal cancer | Ling <i>et al.</i> 2005, Lee <i>et al.</i> 2004, Konnikova <i>et al.</i> 2003, Gao <i>et al.</i> 2005 |
| decoy oligonucleotides | | | |
| G-quartet oligonucleotides (T40214, T40231) | STAT3 | head and neck cancer breast and prostate cancer | Leong <i>et al.</i> 2003 Jing <i>et al.</i> 2004 |
| peptide aptamers | STAT3 | multiple myeloma | Nagel-Wolfrum <i>et al.</i> 2004 |
| phosphopeptides, peptidomimetics | STAT3 | breast cancer, lung cancer | Turkson <i>et al.</i> 2001, Turkson <i>et al.</i> 2004 |

these compounds are dimethoxyquinazoline derivatives, such as WHI-P154 and WHI-P131, which are reported to be specific for JAK3 [161,172]. According to the literature, the most potent and specific JAK inhibitors at the moment are the JAK3 inhibitor CP690550 developed by Pfizer and the JAK2/TYK2/JAK3-selective inhibitor CMP6 developed by Merck Research Laboratories [171,173-175]. The Pfizer compound (CP690550) was shown to prevent organ transplant rejection, because of the function of JAK3 in cytokine based immune regulation [173]. Some of these JAK3 inhibitors have been shown to be effective in animal models of immune regulation [176,177]. Specific JAK inhibitors could be useful in a variety of therapeutic settings including autoimmune diseases, cardio-vascular diseases, myeloproliferative syndromes as well as cancers such as leukemias and lymphomas.

The BCR-ABL kinase that is present in virtually all CML patients functions as an upstream activator of STAT5 [102,130,168,178]. Probably the most prominent pharmaceutical compound, which inhibits BCR-ABL is ST1571 (Gleevec, Imatinib) [179;180]. This molecular compound blocks STAT5 activation and already entered clinical trials. [181,182]. Interestingly, AG490 synergizes with ST1571 to inhibit cell proliferation induced by BCR-ABL tyrosine kinase [183].

Every effort was made on the screening of plant or fungal extracts for natural inhibitory substances. Compounds such as curcumin (diferuloylmethane) from the plant *Cucuma Longa* are reported to inhibit cell proliferation and induce apoptosis in a dose-dependent manner by blocking STAT3-mediated signals [184,185]. Cucurbitacin I (JSI-124) and Cucurbitacin Q, both analogs derived from the plant *Cucurbita*

andreaana, are able to block STAT3 activation in a subset of different tumor cells, including *v-Src* transformed NIH-3T3 cells, human lung adenocarcinoma cells as well as breast carcinoma cells [156,186]. In contrast to Cucurbitacin I, Cucurbitacin Q is reported to specifically inhibit STAT3 without affecting JAK2 whereas Cucurbitacin I inhibits both [186].

Other natural occurring substances with potent anti-tumor activity include piceatannol, which was successful in sensitizing resistant non-Hodgkin lymphomas and multiple myelomas to chemotherapeutic drug-mediated apoptosis [187]. Additionally, indirubin, an active compound of traditional Chinese herbal medicine, was shown to induce apoptosis in breast cancer cells [188]. Both compounds exert their inhibitory function *via* the blockade of STAT3-mediated signals. Recently, the farnesyl transferase inhibitor R115777 was reported to block the activation of STAT3 in pancreatic carcinomas [189]. Furthermore 15-deoxy-delta12, 14-prostaglandin J (2) (15d-PGJ(2)), a natural ligand of the peroxisome proliferators-activated receptor family (PPAR- γ), inhibited the IL-10-induced activation of STAT3 in primary human monocytes and macrophages [190]. The same compound was also able to block IL-6-induced activation of STAT3 in lymphocytes [191]. Also platinum compounds such as CPA-1, CPA-7 and platinum (IV) tetrachloride are gaining importance as specific inhibitors of STAT3 activation *in vitro* in a colon cancer cell model [192]. Another platinum compound IS3 295 was shown to induce apoptosis in various breast cancer cell lines as well as multiple myelomas [193]. Most of the substances that are randomly identified *via* high-throughput screening still need to be tested for toxicity and specificity. In addition, the mechanism of how these substances inhibit STAT3 function is still not yet well characterized.

DIRECT INHIBITION OF STAT MOLECULES

Since STAT proteins are activated by a multitude of activating molecules with oncogenic potential, targeting of the STAT proteins directly offers the opportunity to block all these pathways by targeting only two molecules, STAT3 and STAT5, which are the most relevant targets. The STAT proteins can be targeted by specific inhibition of their expression or by the inhibition of distinct function, e.g. receptor binding, dimerization, DNA-binding or transcriptional activation (see Fig. 1).

INHIBITION OF STAT EXPRESSION

In order to abolish the expression of STATs, antisense-oligonucleotides (ODN) were initially used. Since the major drawback of the first generation of unmodified antisense-oligonucleotides is the short half-life of the molecules within the cell, several strategies were developed to prevent rapid degradation by endo- and exonucleases. Meanwhile modified oligonucleotides such as phosphorothioates or morpholinos, which are more resistant are widely used [99]. Such an antisense-molecule designed to block STAT3 (ISIS 345794) already entered preclinical trials for the treatment of multiple myelomas [194]. Moreover, several siRNAs (small interfering RNAs) against STAT3 were developed and successfully tested *in vitro* and *in vivo* in various different cancer

models [74,195-199]. The advantage of this approach is its high specificity. Targeting of STAT5b but not STAT5a for example decreased growth of head and neck cancer cells *in vitro* [200]. The inhibition of STAT expression could be an even more important strategy, because recent data suggest that also unphosphorylated STAT3 can participate in transformation through a non-canonical mechanism [201].

INHIBITION OF STAT FUNCTION

Besides inhibition of STAT expression, the activation process of STATs provides possibilities to intervene. Activation of STAT proteins includes phosphorylation on critical tyrosine residues, dimer formation, translocation into the nucleus, interaction with regulatory proteins (e.g. coactivators), as well as transcriptional activation of target genes. In this context, phosphopeptide-based approaches are developed. This strategy targets e.g. STAT3 SH2-interactions and inhibits the recruitment of the protein to receptor complexes as well as dimer formation [40,78,202,203]. Such phosphopeptides are designed to represent the sequence surrounding the highly conserved tyrosine phosphorylation site that is required for activation of the STAT protein. The application of a peptide specific for STAT3 Y705 was successful in inhibiting STAT3 DNA-binding and suppressed *v-Src*-induced and STAT3-mediated transformation [40]. Based on this peptide, a peptidomimetic compound (ISS 610) was derived, which is selective and even more potent in blocking STAT3 activity [204]. Another peptide-based approach is a peptide-aptamer, which binds to the STAT3 DNA-binding domain and which was shown to inhibit STAT3 activity and induced apoptosis in multiple myeloma cells [205]. This peptide-aptamer was identified in a peptide library screening based on a yeast-two-hybrid system.

Recently, a new class of sequence-specific small molecule inhibitors was developed. G-quartet oligonucleotides (GQ-ODN) directly target and occupy sites within the molecule. E.g. a GQ-ODN against STAT3 is designed to interact with the SH2-domain of STAT3 and thereby destabilizes the STAT3 homodimer formation and prevents DNA-binding. Successful application of two STAT3 specific GQ-ODNs (T40214, T40231) dramatically inhibited the growth of prostate, breast and other tumor xenografts in nude mice [206]. In this system the G-quartet structure, derived from the inter- and intramolecular four-stranded structures of G-rich DNA and RNA, prevents degradation through endonucleases.

Another approach targets protein binding to special promoter-regions of target genes. For this purpose decoy duplex oligonucleotides are developed. Treatment of head and neck cancer *in vitro* with a STAT3 decoy oligonucleotide was shown to inhibit proliferation and STAT3-mediated expression of genes. The STAT3 decoy oligonucleotide was a 15-mer double-stranded oligonucleotide, which represents the response-binding element of the c-fos promoter [206].

Inhibition of STAT transcriptional activity is another approach that directly decreases the expression of STAT target genes. For this purpose dominant negative STAT variants are used. Probably, the best characterized dominant

negative STAT molecule is the naturally occurring splice variant of STAT3: STAT3 β . This molecule lacks the C-terminal part of the gene harboring the transactivation domain. It was shown that STAT3 β significantly reduced tumor growth and induced apoptosis *in vivo* [207,208]. Interestingly, this effect could be achieved although the delivery of STAT3 β *in vivo* was limited due to low transfection efficiencies. A bystander effect, resulting from soluble factors (pro-inflammatory cytokines) secreted by the STAT3-depleted tumor cells has been discussed. The expression of such factors should be repressed by activated STAT3 in tumor cells. Re-expression of these factors by blocking STAT3 activity would favor a tumor-specific T-cell response [80].

A novel strategy for the inhibition of STAT transcriptional activation could be an approach, which targets the recruitment of coactivators by STAT proteins. STAT6 as well as STAT5 possess distinct interaction motifs, which form an α -helical structure and bind to their coactivator NCoA-1 mainly by hydrophobic interactions [44,45,209]. Similar interaction motifs are already targets for the inhibition of protein-protein interactions [210,211]. Small peptides as well as antibodies are able to disrupt the interaction between STAT6 and its essential coactivator NCoA-1, while the binding of this coactivator by other transcription factors was not affected [45]. Inhibition of coactivator recruitment in cells was shown to decrease the expression of the endogenous target genes [45]. Based on this study it might be feasible to develop small drug inhibitors that will be able to inhibit specific STAT-coactivator interactions *in vivo*.

INHIBITION OF STAT SECONDARY MODIFICATION

Secondary modifications like acetylation, methylation, sumoylation, glycosylation, isoylation and ubiquitination have been shown to regulate transcriptional activity of transcription factors by affecting protein-protein interaction of other functions e.g. DNA-binding. Likewise, STAT proteins are targets for post-translational modifications [15,212-219]. The best-characterized one is the serine phosphorylation of the transactivation domain. Other signaling pathways, which induce STAT serine phosphorylation can cross-talk with the JAK/STAT by affecting the transactivation function of STAT proteins [212]. Although the effect (positive or negative) that phosphorylation of serine residues has on STAT activity might differ, regarding the cell type and STAT molecule, inhibitors, which interfere with STAT serine phosphorylation have already been identified [220]. The arginine methylation of STAT1 and its functional significance is still a matter of debate [221]. Data concerning STAT-acetylation are also puzzling. Reports have been ambiguous concerning the effect of STAT-acetylation on transcriptional activity [222]. It remains to be seen whether all the STAT modifications are functionally relevant in regard to the function of STATs in malignancies. These recent findings however clearly indicate, that when the understanding of the enzymatic modification of STAT proteins increases, additional interesting pharmacologically strategies can be developed. Histone deacetylase inhibitors, which might also act on STAT-acetylation are already used as novel drugs for cancer treatment [223].

RESTORATION OF THE NEGATIVE REGULATION OF THE JAK/STAT PATHWAY

As discussed above, the negative regulation of the JAK/STAT pathway is getting more and more attention as important for the constitutive activation of this pathway in several diseases. SOCS proteins, first of all SOCS1 and SOCS3, seem to play important roles in diverse malignancies, assigning them as new attractive targets for cancer therapy. Phosphatases like SHP1, SHP2, TC45 and TC-PTP are also implicated in STAT signaling [224-227]. Novel approaches based on increasing or restoring the expression of the wild-type negative regulator genes might be relevant for therapy. DNA-hypomethylating agents like, 5-aza-2'-deoxycytidine, which have already been shown to exert clinical efficacy in patients with myelodysplastic syndrome [228] could be used to restore expression of methylation-silenced SOCS1, SOCS3 and SHP1. The re-expression of the wild-type SOCS protein in a gene therapy approach would be a strategy when the endogenous gene is mutated.

CONCLUSION

It is now clear that the JAK/STAT pathway plays an important role in oncogenic transformation. In particular STAT3 and STAT5 are attractive targets for novel cancer therapy. Several small compounds have been identified by high-throughput screenings as JAK/STAT inhibitors. These substances still need to be tested for toxicity and specificity. The increasing knowledge on the structure of JAK/STAT signaling components e.g. the structure of the unphosphorylated STATs and new findings regarding the regulation of STAT activity by secondary modification will offer new options for rational drug design and enzyme inhibitors. In addition, the identification of STAT interaction partners and a better understanding of the gene-regulation by STAT proteins will offer a lot more possibilities to inhibit STAT signaling.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| AML | = Acute myelogenous leukemia |
| A-MuLV | = Abelson murine leukemia virus |
| APL | = Acute promyelocytic leukemia |
| ATLL | = Adult T-cell leukemia |
| CBP | = Creb binding protein |
| CHL | = Classical Hodgkin lymphoma |
| CIS | = Cytokine inducible SH2 protein |
| CML | = Chronic myelogenous leukemia |
| DNMT1 | = DNA methyltransferase1 |
| EGFR | = Epidermal growth factor receptor |

| | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| GAS | = | γ -activated sequence |
| GQ-ODN | = | G-quartet oligonucleotide |
| HCC | = | Hepatocellular carcinoma |
| HDAC | = | Histone deacetylase |
| HGF | = | Hepatocyte growth factor |
| HIF-1 | = | Hypoxia-inducible factor 1 |
| HTLV-1 | = | Human T cell leukemia virus |
| IAP | = | Inhibitor of apoptosis |
| IFN | = | Interferon |
| IL | = | Interleukin |
| JAB | = | JAK binding protein |
| JAK | = | Janus kinase |
| Mdm2 | = | Matrix metalloprotease 2 |
| MSP | = | Methylation specific primers |
| NCoA-1 | = | Nuclear receptor coactivator 1 |
| NPM-ALK | = | Nucleophosmin-anaplastic lymphoma kinase |
| ODN | = | Antisense oligonucleotide |
| PIAS | = | Protein inhibitor of activated STATs |
| PDGFR | = | Platelet-derived growth factor receptor |
| PPAR γ | = | Peroxisome proliferators-activated receptor γ |
| RAR α | = | Retinoic acid receptor α |
| siRNA | = | Small interfering RNA |
| STAT | = | Signal transducer and activator of transcription |
| SH2 | = | Src-homology domain 2 |
| SOCS | = | Suppressor of cytokine signaling |
| SSI | = | STAT-induced STAT inhibitor |
| TAD | = | Transactivation domain |
| TGF | = | Tumor growth factor |
| VEGF | = | Vascular endothelial growth factor |

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5 Manuscript 1

Biology and impact of Signal Transducers and Activators of Transcription and their Regulators as Targets in Cancer Therapy

Chemo- und Strahlentherapie werden bereits lange erfolgreich in der Krebstherapie eingesetzt, aber deren schwere Nebenwirkungen machen die Suche nach spezifischeren Therapiemethoden notwendig. Ein guter Ansatzpunkt für spezifische Krebstherapie sind Signalwege, die an der Regulation der Proliferation, der Inhibition von Apoptose oder der Angiogenese beteiligt sind. Insbesondere die konstitutive Aktivierung solcher Signalwege, zu denen auch der JAK/STAT-Signalweg gehört, trägt in verschiedenen Tumoren zu deren Wachstum bei. Dieser Review diskutiert Ansatzpunkte für eine mögliche Krebstherapie am JAK/STAT-Signalweg.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

STAT6 and STAT1 are essential antagonistic regulators of cell survival in classical Hodgkin lymphoma cell line

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Classical Hodgkin lymphoma (cHL) is a malignant lymphoid disorder characterized by aberrant activation of signaling pathways. Constitutive activation of several components of the Janus Kinase/Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (JAK/STAT) pathway has been observed in Hodgkin and Reed/Sternberg cells, the tumor cells of cHL. In this study, we investigate the function of STAT6 in cHL cell lines and show that STAT6 promotes survival of these cells. Microarray expression analysis of STAT6-shRNA (short hairpin RNA)-expressing cHL cell lines was carried out to analyze the STAT6-mediated survival mechanism. Some of the identified genes with potentially important regulatory functions were also interleukin (IL)-4 dependently regulated in Ramos B cells and binding of STAT6 to the regulatory regions of several genes could be confirmed, indicating that these are direct STAT6 target genes. Importantly, STAT6 knockdown increased the expression and activation of STAT1 as well as the expression of known STAT1 target genes, indicating a cross-regulation between these signaling molecules. Forced expression of STAT1 was able to induce apoptosis in cHL cell line L1236. These findings indicate that both STAT6 and STAT1 can act as important antagonistic regulators in the pathogenesis of cHL.

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Introduction

Classical Hodgkin lymphoma (cHL) is characterized by the presence of a malignant cell population consisting of mononucleated Hodgkin cells and multinucleated Reed–Sternberg (HRS) cells.^{1,2} The tumor cells of cHL represent only about 1% of the tumor mass, whereas the bulk is reactive infiltrate composed of eosinophils, histiocytes, plasma cells, lymphocytes and stromal cells. Although HRS cells are derived from germinal-center B cells indicated by the expression of rearranged immunoglobulin genes, somatic hypermutation and crippled immunoglobulin, they lack the expression of typical B-cell-lineage markers.^{3–5} Recent findings indicate that aberrant expression of transcription regulators that mediate intrinsic inhibition of the B-cell-specific transcription factor, E2A, can

cause an extensive reprogramming of neoplastic B cell in cHL.⁶ However, although a large variety of secondary molecular aberration has been defined for cHL, no cHL-specific transforming event has been identified.

HRS cells as well as the infiltrating cells express high amounts of cytokines including interleukin (IL)-5, IL-6, IL-7, IL-9, IL-10, IL-13 and granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor. Autocrine and paracrine cytokine secretion is believed to contribute to lymphoma cell survival and proliferation.^{7,8} Aberrant activation of Janus Kinase/Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (JAK/STAT) signaling in cHL is believed to result from abnormal cytokine expression. In addition, genetic defects that affect positive and negative regulators of this signaling pathway might also lead to the constitutive activation of several STAT proteins.^{9–11} STAT3, STAT5 and STAT6 were shown to be constitutively activated in cHL cell lines as well as in tissue samples of tumor patients.^{7,9,12–14} Both STAT3 and STAT5 are regulators of cell proliferation and survival, which are often constitutively activated in various tumors and hematological disorders.^{15,16} STAT3 has already been described as an essential oncogenic factor for cHL cells, as knockdown of STAT3 with specific inhibitors or short hairpin RNAs (shRNAs) results in a decreased proliferation and induction of apoptosis in cHL cell lines.^{9,17} STAT5 may also contribute to Hodgkin lymphomagenesis, as ectopic expression of a constitutive active mutant of STAT5 in primary human B cells resulted in immortalization and modification to large multinucleated cells. Certainly, it has to be clarified to what extent these cells correspond to HRS cells.¹⁸ The function of other activated STATs in cHL is less clear. STAT6 is activated by IL-13, a cytokine that can support cHL cell survival.¹⁹ However, IL-13 can also activate STAT3 and STAT5.²⁰

In this study, we investigate the function of STAT6 in two cHL cell lines using lentiviral-delivered STAT6-specific shRNAs. Knockdown of STAT6 led to enhanced apoptosis in both cHL cell lines, but with a more dramatic effect in L1236 cells. To elucidate the mechanism how STAT6 prevents apoptosis in cHL and to identify relevant STAT6 target genes, a large-scale gene expression profiling of STAT6-shRNA-expressing L1236 cells was carried out. A large number of up- and downregulated genes were identified, among which there are genes related to apoptosis, cell cycle, transformation and immune response. The STAT6-dependent regulation of selected new STAT6 target genes was confirmed by quantitative (q) reverse transcription-PCR (RT-PCR). Part of these genes was also found to be regulated in an STAT6-dependent manner in L428 cells. In addition, IL-4-dependent regulation in a non-Hodgkin lymphoma cell line and recruitment of STAT6 to potential regulatory

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regions support the fact that some of these genes are direct STAT6 target genes. Intriguingly, we observed also an increased expression and activation of STAT1 in STAT6-shRNA-expressing cells but not in control cells. To prove the relevance of STAT1 in STAT6-shRNA-induced apoptosis, STAT1 was overexpressed in the cHL cell line L1236. This approach also resulted in enhanced apoptosis, indicating that both STAT1 and STAT6 are involved in the regulation of apoptosis in L1236 cells. Our data indicate that STAT1 and STAT6 are cross-regulated and act in an antagonistic manner in cHL cell line L1236.

Materials and methods

Cell lines and culture conditions

The Hodgkin lymphoma cell lines L428²¹ and L1236,²² as well as Ramos cells from Burkitt lymphoma²³ were grown in RPMI 1640 medium supplemented with 10% fetal calf serum, 2 nM L-glutamine and penicillin/streptomycin.

Plasmids and viral infection

The lentiviral vector pVIG (derived from K Überla, Bochum, Germany) and the packaging plasmids Δ sp2²⁴ and pHIT-G²⁵ were kindly provided by K Brocke-Heidrich (University Hospital Leipzig, Germany). The STAT6-shRNA sequence was kindly provided by J Rippman (Boehringer-Ingelheim, Germany).²⁶ STAT6-shRNA coding sequences (given in Supplementary Table 1) were cloned together with the H1 Polymerase III RNA gene promoter into the pVIG vector. The *STAT1* sequence was amplified by PCR and cloned behind the spleen focus-forming virus promoter of pVIG. Transfection of packaging cells and transduction of lymphoma cells were performed as described earlier.⁹

Flow cytometry

To examine lentiviral transduction efficiencies, expression of green fluorescent protein was monitored. Cell-cycle analysis of ethanol-fixed cells was carried out using propidium iodide staining as described earlier.²⁷ Annexin V-APC (BD Pharmingen, Heidelberg, Germany) was used for early apoptosis detection. Samples were analyzed using FACS Calibur with CellQuest Pro Software and FACSCanto using Diva Software (BD Biosciences, Heidelberg, Germany). The FACS analysis shown represents one out of three independently performed experiments.

Cell viability assay

Proliferation was determined using CellTiter-Glo Bioluminescent Assay (Promega, Mannheim, Germany) according to the manufacturer's protocols.

Preparation of lysates and immunoblotting

Cells were lysed in the RIPA (radioimmunoprecipitation assay) buffer (0.12 M NaCl, 0.5% desoxycholate, 0.1% sodium dodecyl sulfate (SDS), 0.05 M Tris-HCl (pH 8), 1 mM sodium orthovanadate, 10 μ M Na₂O₇, 1 mM Pefabloc, 1% Triton X-100, 0.1 mM benzamidine, 0.1 mM dithiothreitol and 10 μ g/ml of each aprotinin, pepstatin and leupeptin).

Protein extracts (60 μ g) were subjected to SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis and analyzed by western blot analysis. ECL plus Western blotting Detection System (GE Healthcare, Munich, Germany) was used for visualization. The following

antibodies were used: STAT1 (sc-346) and STAT3 (sc-482) from Santa Cruz Biotechnology (Heidelberg, Germany), phospho-STAT1 (Tyr701, #9171) from Cell Signaling (Frankfurt, Germany), STAT5 (S21520) and STAT6 (#611290) from Transduction Laboratories (Heidelberg, Germany), and actin (#A2066) and tubulin (#T5168) from Sigma (Munich, Germany). The western blot analysis shown represent one out of three independently performed experiments.

Quantitative RT-PCR

Total cellular RNA was extracted using TriFast (Peqlab, Erlangen, Germany) according to the manufacturer's protocol. Aliquots of total cellular RNA (2 μ g) were subjected to first-strand cDNA synthesis using Omniscript Reverse Transcriptase (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany). For transcript quantification, the iQ5 Real Time PCR Cycler (Bio-Rad, Munich, Germany) and Absolute QPCR SYBR Green Master Mix (Thermo, Dreieich, Germany) were used. mRNA levels were normalized against endogenous 18S mRNA. Sequences of primers used for PCR are given in Supplementary Table 1. Unless otherwise stated, the results of qRT-PCR are presented as mean \pm s.d. of three independently performed experiments.

DNA microarray analysis and pathway analysis

Total RNA was prepared from L1236 cells transduced with STAT6- and scrambled-shRNA-expressing lentiviral vectors 72 h after transduction when efficient downregulation of STAT6 could be detected by western blot analysis in parallel and when 20–40% of the STAT6-shRNA-expressing cells were apoptotic. Samples for Human Genome Survey (V2.0) hybridization were prepared according to Applied Biosystems (Darmstadt, Germany) instructions. Data analysis was carried out using the Expression Array System Software (Version 1.1.1; Applied Biosystems) and the Spotfire Decision Site Software, Spotfire DecisionSite 8.1 (Spotfire, Palo Alto, CA, USA). The quality of all microarrays was as recommended by Applied Biosystems. A list of differentially expressed genes was prepared by using the unpaired *t*-statistic. The following genes are excluded in the final differentially expressed gene list: Genes that are differentially expressed ($P \leq 0.05$, fold change ≥ 2 or ≤ -2) between non-infected L1236 and scrambled-shRNA-transduced cells. Furthermore, genes that have a Flag value ≥ 5000 are excluded according to the Applied Biosystems 1700 Chemiluminescent Microarray Analyzer—User Guide. A detailed description of the data analysis is given in Supplementary Information. The analysis was carried out with two independent biological replicates.

Pathway analysis and analysis of over-represented genes with distinct molecular functions were carried out based on PANTHER (Protein ANalysis THrough Evolutionary Relationships) database of protein function and pathways.²⁸

Chromatin immunoprecipitation

Cells (5×10^6 cells per immunoprecipitation (IP)) were cross-linked with a final concentration of 1% formaldehyde and incubated for 10 min at room temperature. Crosslinking was stopped by the addition of glycine to a final concentration of 100 mM. The cells were washed two times with cold phosphate-buffered saline and re-suspended in 150 μ l of the lysis buffer (1% SDS, 10 mM EDTA, 50 mM Tris, pH 8.1) per IP, and incubated on ice for 10 min followed by sonification (four times for 10 s each time at amplitude maximum of 50% using a Branson 250 D

sonifier, Danbury, CT, USA). After sonification, samples were centrifuged at 16 000 g for 10 min at 4 °C and supernatant was diluted 10 times with the dilution buffer (0.01% SDS, 1% Triton X-100, 1.2 mM EDTA, 16.7 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.1, 167 mM NaCl). Lysis and dilution buffers were supplemented with phosphatase inhibitor cocktail I and II (1:100; Sigma) and the Protease Inhibitor Complete (1:25, Roche, Mannheim, Germany). Preclear was performed using 60 µl protein agarose A slurry (50%) for 1 h at 4 °C. An antibody (4 µg) was added and incubated overnight at 4 °C. Antibody/DNA complexes were collected after the addition of 60 µl protein agarose A slurry and incubation for 1 h at 4 °C. The complexes were washed each step with the following buffer with 1 ml for 5 min with rotation at 4 °C: one time with the low-salt buffer (0.1% SDS, 1% Triton X-100, 2 mM EDTA, 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.1, 150 mM NaCl), one time with the high-salt buffer (0.1% SDS, 1% Triton X-100, 2 mM EDTA, 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.1, 500 mM NaCl), one time with the LiCl buffer (0.25 M LiCl, 1% NP-40, 1% deoxycholic acid, 1 mM EDTA, 10 mM Tris, pH 8.1) and two times with the TE buffer (10 mM Tris-HCl, 1 mM EDTA, pH 8.0). Afterward, the complex was eluted with 250 µl elution buffer (1% SDS, 0.1 M NaHCO₃) for 30 min at 900 r.p.m. at room temperature. De-crosslinking was performed at 65 °C overnight followed by proteinase K digestion and DNA purification using the PCR Purification Kit (Qiagen). The antibodies used for the chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP) analysis are STAT6 (sc-981) and IgG (sc-2027) from Santa Cruz Biotechnology. Primers for PCR analysis of the ChIP are listed in Supplementary Table 1.

Results and discussion

Knockdown of STAT6 induces apoptotic cell death in cHL cell lines

IL-13, a regulator of STAT6 activation, is frequently expressed in cHL and regulates cell proliferation and apoptosis in cHL cell lines.^{7,29} Moreover, a soluble IL-13Ralpha2 decoy receptor inhibits cHL growth *in vitro* and *in vivo*.³⁰ However, as IL-13 can also activate other signaling pathways and STAT family members, this approach is not sufficient to prove the function of STAT6 in lymphomagenesis. To investigate the specific functions of STAT6, we stably expressed shRNAs against STAT6 by lentiviral transduction in the cHL cell lines, L428 and L1236. Transduction efficiencies (~80%) were confirmed by the FACS analysis on the basis of green fluorescent protein co-expression (data not shown). Non-targeting (scrambled) shRNAs were used as a control. To confirm downregulation of STAT6, western blot analysis was carried out 72 h after transduction. Two shRNAs targeting distinct sites in STAT6 (shSTAT6A and shSTAT6B) were tested and both were able to downregulate STAT6 in L428 and L1236 cells, although with different efficiency (Figure 1a). Expression of STAT3 and STAT5 was as expected, not affected by STAT6-specific shRNAs (Supplementary Figure 1).

To examine the effect of STAT6 depletion on the proliferation of cHL cells, cell-cycle profiles were obtained by flow cytometry using propidium iodide staining. This analysis showed an increased amount of cells in the sub-G1 population in both cell lines transduced with different STAT6-shRNAs as compared with scrambled shRNA-expressing cells (Figure 1b). The values of the G1 and G2 cell populations were not affected, indicating that knockdown of STAT6 has the strongest effect on cell survival and does not induce cell-cycle arrest. This effect was more pronounced in L1236 cells as compared with L428 cells, although shRNA-mediated downregulation was even more

efficient in L428 cells. To investigate whether apoptosis is involved in this process, we performed Annexin V staining of both cell lines transduced with the most powerful STAT6-shRNA. We detected increased levels of Annexin V-positive cells in STAT6-shRNA-expressing cells in comparison with the cells transduced with the scrambled control (Supplementary Figure 2). Similar to the cell-cycle profile, Annexin V staining showed more apoptotic cell death in L1236 cells when compared with the L428 cells, indicating that L1236 cells are more dependent on STAT6 signaling for survival. Treatment of transduced L1236 cells with the pan-Caspase inhibitor, Z-VAD-FMK, prevented cell death, thus further confirming that STAT6-shRNA-expressing cells die by apoptosis (Figure 1c).

Taken together, our results clearly show that STAT6 acts as a survival factor in cHL cell lines, although it seems to be of different importance in the cell lines analyzed. As also STAT3 and STAT5 have been described as essential regulators of proliferation and survival of cHL cells,^{9,17,18} cHL cells are essentially dependent on several transcription factors from this signaling pathway.

STAT6-dependent gene profiling in L1236 cells

Our analysis so far implies that the presence of STAT6 inhibits apoptosis in cHL cell lines. To determine the STAT6-mediated anti-apoptotic signaling and to identify essential STAT6 target genes, a gene expression profiling was performed. As L1236 cells were more sensitive in our analysis, we chose this cell line for further experiments. This cell line has been characterized as a Reed–Sternberg-derived cell line^{4,22} and is therefore the best model cell line available.

STAT6-shRNA- and scrambled-shRNA-expressing L1236 cells were subjected to microarray analysis (for details, see Material and methods). For data analysis, genes that were found to be differentially expressed between control-shRNA transduced and untransduced cells were deleted to exclude genes induced by virus infection itself. A total of 641 genes including 255 unknown genes met the criteria that expression was considered as decreased or increased upon depletion of STAT6 in L1236 cells with a fold change of >2 in each of the independent duplicates (Supplementary Table 2). A list of the 386 known genes differentially regulated in response to STAT6 depletion is given in Supplementary Information. It is interesting that more of these genes were upregulated than downregulated after STAT6 depletion in L1236 cells. Our data are consistent with a recent study on the gene expression of IL-4-stimulated B cells from STAT6-deficient mice, where also more genes were found to be expressed at higher levels and support that STAT6 can act as a positive as well as a negative regulator of gene expression.³¹ Classical STAT6 target genes such as *CD23* or *IL4R* were not affected in our analysis. Only few of the genes had already been described as IL-4-regulated genes in normal B cells stimulated by IL-4³² and are direct STAT6 targets in other cells.³³ This suggests that constitutive activation of STAT6 in cHL leads to the expression of a different set of transcriptionally regulated genes. In addition, the specific autocrine cytokine milieu found in cHL cells could influence gene expression of STAT6 target genes.^{18,34} Simultaneous activation of several STAT family members and other important survival factors such as nuclear factor- κ B might also influence the transcriptional regulation by STAT6.³⁵

Next, the ontology of the identified genes based on the molecular function, pathway and biological process was analyzed using the PANTHER Protein Classification System (Supplementary Table 3) to identify functional annotations that

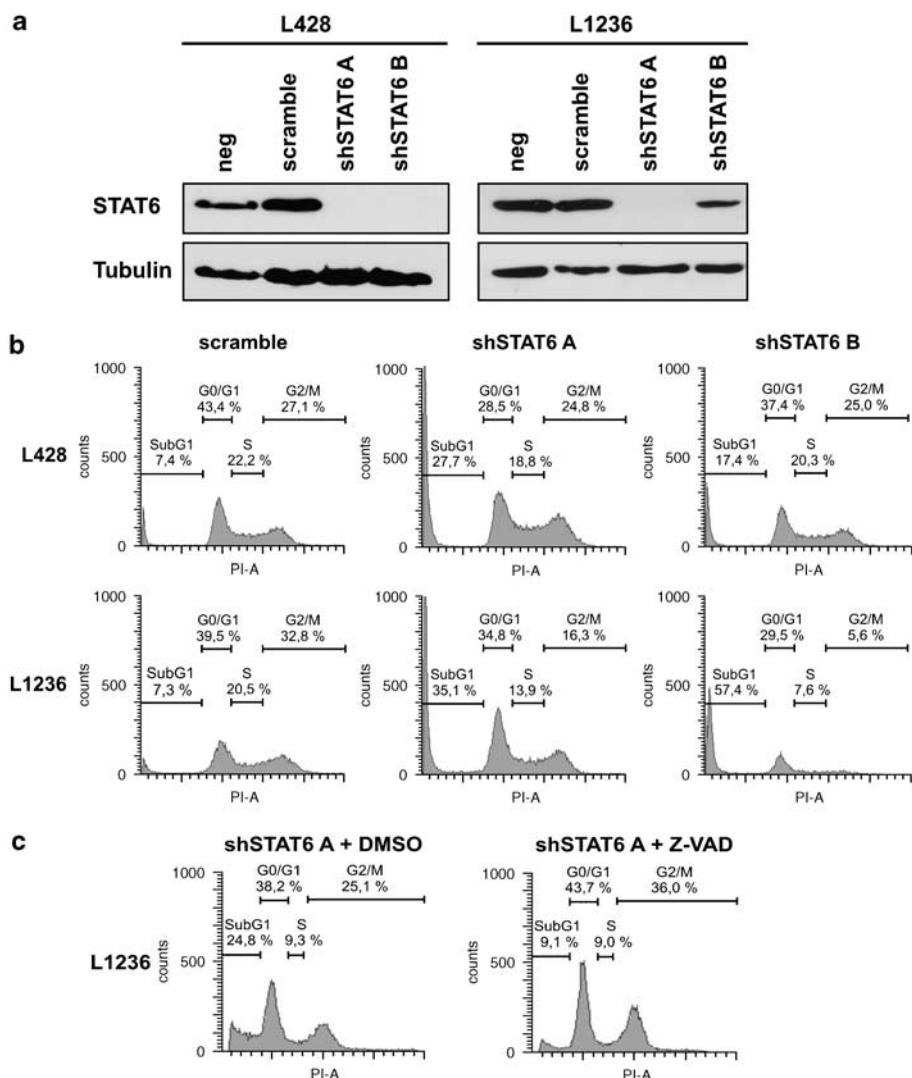


Figure 1 Depletion of STAT6 in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 induces apoptotic cell death. (a) Western blot analysis of the cHL cell lines, L428 and L1236, after stable transduction with two different shRNAs against STAT6 and one scrambled control. At 72 h after transduction, protein extracts were prepared and STAT6 expression was determined. Equal loading was confirmed by detection of Tubulin. (b) Cell-cycle profile of cHL cells transduced with shRNA-expressing lentiviral vectors. (c) To block apoptosis, STAT6-shRNA-expressing cells were incubated 48 h after transduction with either the pan-caspase inhibitor, Z-VAD-FMK, or DMSO. Blots and cell-cycle profiles shown represent one out of three independently performed experiments.

were significantly enriched in the STAT6-dependent regulated genes. This analysis showed that the genes involved in signaling and with regulatory functions, such as cytokine receptors, kinase inhibitors and modulators, were over-represented. As expected, the IL signaling pathway and the JAK/STAT signaling pathway were significantly represented. Although genes involved in several enzymatic functions and pathways, including cysteine proteases and ubiquitin protein ligases, were identified to be enriched, no specific oncogenesis associated and apoptosis-regulating pathways were identified by this analysis.

Some of the STAT6-dependent genes are essential regulators

To prove our experimental design, we focused on a selection of 20 genes out of the 386 differentially regulated known genes (Figure 2). These genes were selected based on their potential regulatory function in important cellular processes, including regulation of proliferation, apoptosis or invasiveness with the

preference on genes with high rate of fold change after STAT6 depletion. In accordance with the pathway analysis (Supplementary Table 3), we also included regulators of immune response and ubiquitin pathway in our analysis.

STAT6-dependent regulation of these genes could be confirmed by the qRT-PCR analysis of scrambled versus STAT6-shRNA-expressing L1236 cells (Figure 2a). As the presence of STAT6 protects L1236 cells from apoptotic cell death, we expected apoptosis-related genes to be differentially expressed in a STAT6-dependent manner. Indeed, increased expression of the pro-apoptotic genes, *CASP7*, *TNFSF10* and *XAF1*, was detected in L1236 cells after STAT6 knockdown and was confirmed by qRT-PCR. In addition to the upregulated genes with pro-apoptotic function, we identified and confirmed a number of genes with anti-apoptotic or tumor-promoting functions with decreased expression after STAT6 depletion. These include *CDK6*, a member of the cyclin-dependent protein kinase family, *MYC*, a known oncogene and *EPHB1* (a tyrosine kinase receptor already known to be expressed and activated in

a

| gene symbol | accession number | fold change | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | array | p-value | RT-PCR | p-value |
| apoptosis related genes | | | | | |
| CASP7 | NM_03339.2 | 2,6 | 0,040441 | 3,1 | 0,039181 |
| TNFSF10 (TRAIL) | NM_003810.2 | 8,3 | 0,011889 | 24,7 | 0,000060 |
| XAF1 | NM_199139.1 | 2,2 | 0,017375 | 3,5 | 0,000000 |
| immune response related genes | | | | | |
| GBP1 | NM_002053.1 | 16,5 | 0,002536 | 11,6 | 0,001725 |
| TRIM22 | NM_006074.2 | 18,0 | 0,007141 | 32,6 | 0,005794 |
| STAT1 | NM_139266.1 | 8,3 | 0,015498 | 3,6 | 0,000003 |
| tumour related genes | | | | | |
| PARP9 | NM_031458.1 | 3,9 | 0,010979 | 4,2 | 0,020387 |
| PTPRC (CD45) | NM_002838.1 | 3,4 | 0,003807 | 4,9 | 0,003852 |
| RARRES3 | NM_004585.2 | 6,6 | 0,042430 | 4,1 | 0,047973 |
| AIM2 | NM_004833.1 | 8,4 | 0,011663 | 5,8 | 0,000038 |
| CDK6 | NM_001259 | - | 3,4 | 0,022382 | - |
| MYC | NM_002467.2 | - | 2,4 | 0,013179 | - |
| EPHB1 | NM_004441.2 | - | 3,0 | 0,001842 | - |
| ubiquitin related genes | | | | | |
| HERC3 | NM_014606.1 | - | 2,3 | 0,040748 | - |
| UBE2D4 | NM_015983.2 | - | 2,1 | 0,049258 | - |
| USP2 | NM_171997.1 | - | 2,1 | 0,019701 | - |
| USP6 | NM_004505.1 | - | 3,4 | 0,026664 | - |
| transcription factors | | | | | |
| EOMES | NM_005442.2 | - | 4,3 | 0,033560 | - |
| NFAT5 | NM_173215.1 | - | 2,4 | 0,049509 | - |
| IPO4 | NM_024658.2 | - | 2,1 | 0,019628 | - |
| miscellaneous genes | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

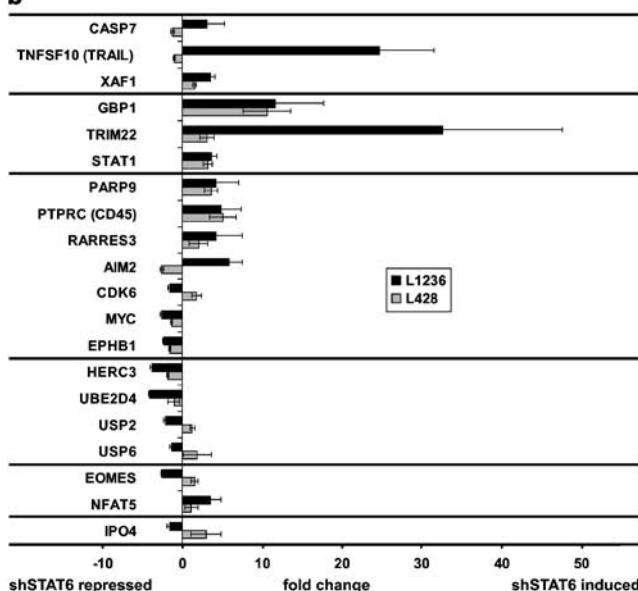
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Figure 2 STAT6 depletion leads to differential gene expression. (a) Microarray analysis was carried out using RNA preparations of STAT6-shRNA-expressing L1236 cells and scrambled-shRNA-expressing cells for comparison. Different expression of a selection of 20 genes out of the microarray analysis sorted according to their function. qRT-PCR analysis was carried out with different RNA preparations from cells after transduction with STAT6-shRNA and scrambled-shRNA expression vectors. Relative fold changes from microarray analysis and qRT-PCR with P-values are shown. Genes repressed by STAT6-shRNA are marked by minus sign (-). (b) Comparison of gene expression after STAT6 depletion in L1236 (black bars) and L428 cells (gray bars). Data are presented as means \pm s.d. of two independent biological experiments carried out in triplicates.

HRS cells from cHL patients but not in normal B cells.³⁶ It is interesting that, PTPRC (CD45), a JAK phosphatase, which negatively regulates cytokine signaling, is upregulated after STAT6 depletion, indicating that STAT6 could repress the expression of this essential regulator of B-lymphocyte maturation.³⁷ Another group of genes with decreased expression after STAT6 depletion belongs to the ubiquitin pathway, suggesting a role of STAT6 in regulating the proteasomal degradation system,

which is essential in cHL cells.³⁸ Taken together, we identified a number of new potential STAT6 target genes in cHL cells, which themselves have important functions in cellular processes and are involved in the regulation of survival and proliferation in several cells and tissues.

We next analyzed whether STAT6-dependent regulation of the selected genes could also be detected in L428 cells that exhibit a better viability in response to STAT6 depletion (Figure 1b). Out of the 20 selected genes, 12 were also STAT6-dependent regulated in L428 cells, even though the fold regulation that was detected by qRT-PCR was always lower. Interestingly, two of the apoptosis regulators (CASP7 and TNFSF10/TRAIL) are directly opposed regulated in L428 and L1236 cells (Figure 2b). The different regulation of these genes in both cHL cell lines seems to display the well-known heterogeneousness of the cHL cell lines.³⁹ Moreover, L1236 and L428 cells are derived from different cHL subtypes (mixed cellularity and nodular sclerosis, respectively), which express a different set of tyrosine kinase receptors.³⁶ This might affect the STAT6-dependent regulation that is modified by additional signaling pathways, for example, the mitogen-activated protein kinase pathway.⁴⁰ Although the majority of the genes are regulated in both cell lines, different regulation of apoptosis regulators might reflect different sensitivity of the cells to shSTAT6-induced apoptosis.

Some of the novel STAT6-dependent genes in cHL cells are inducible by IL-4

As also transcription factors, such as NFAT5 and EOMES, were affected by STAT6 depletion (Figure 2), we wondered whether the identified genes are direct STAT6 target genes. For further verification, we analyzed whether the identified potential new STAT6 target genes can also be regulated by transient STAT6 activation. Such analysis could not be carried out in cHL cell lines in which STAT6 is already constitutively phosphorylated.⁹ We used, therefore, Ramos Burkitt lymphoma cells where IL-4 stimulation leads to transient STAT6 activation (data not shown). About one-third of the selected genes were also regulated by the IL-4 signaling pathway in this non-Hodgkin lymphoma cell line. The regulation (activation versus repression) corresponds to the results obtained in the STAT6-eliminated cHL cell line L1236 (Figures 3a and b). For the other genes, no regulation was observed (for example, PARP9, UBE2D4, IPO4), or they were regulated in a different direction (for example, XAF1, GBP1, TRIM22, CDK6, STAT1) or could not be detected at all at significant levels (for example, TNFSF10, RARRES3, AIM2, EOMES) (data not shown).

Although we performed our experiments after 4, 6, 14 and 24 h IL-4 induction, we cannot exclude that the non-responsive genes might be affected at different time points. Otherwise, the regulation of these genes might require constitutive STAT6 activation or the presence of other transcription factors that are activated in cHL, such as nuclear factor- κ B or activator protein 1.^{41,42}

STAT6 recruitment to regulatory regions of novel STAT6 target genes

Direct transcriptional regulation of the identified genes by STAT6 should require the binding of STAT6 to a conserved binding element. We therefore carried out a recognition site analysis for putative STAT and STAT6 binding sites by the MatInspector program (Genomatix, Munich, Germany). For CASP7, PTPRC (CD45), EPHB, USP2 and NFAT5, we could

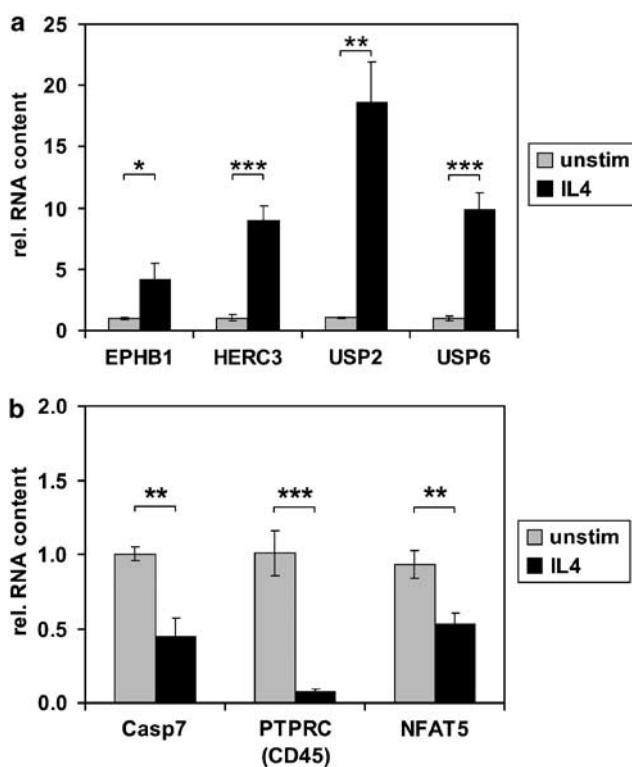


Figure 3 IL-4 induced the expression of potential STAT6 target genes in Ramos Burkitt lymphoma. qRT-PCR analysis of Ramos B cells treated with 10 ng/ml IL-4 for 6 h (a) or for 14 h (b). (a) IL-4-induced genes. (b) IL-4-repressed genes. Data are presented as means \pm s.d. ($n=9$). Statistical analysis was carried out using Student's *t*-test, (* $P<0.05$; ** $P<0.005$; *** $P<0.0005$).

identify at least one or more STAT binding sites in a region 3500 bp upstream to 250 bp downstream of the transcriptional start side (Figure 4a and Supplementary Table 4). Next, ChIP assays were performed in L1236 cells to detect the binding of STAT6 to the putative binding sites. The precipitated chromatin was analyzed by qPCR using primer pairs flanking the putative binding sites and as control primer pairs flanking regions at least 1000 bp downstream of the transcriptional start site, where no STAT6 binding site had been detected. In all cases, we were able to precipitate chromatin fragments containing the putative STAT6 binding sites at higher amounts by STAT6 antibody as compared with the control precipitation by IgG (Figure 4b). In addition, lower amounts of the control chromatin fragments without STAT binding sites were precipitated, supporting that STAT6 specifically binds to the proposed binding sites. Detailed analysis of further binding sites is currently carried out and preliminary results indicate that STAT6 can bind to several sites in the identified genes.

STAT6 depletion leads to the activation of STAT1 and STAT1 target genes

Our initial gene expression profiling of STAT6-shRNA-expressing cHL cell line showed strong activation of numerous genes related to interferon (IFN)-mediated immunity (Figure 2 and Supplementary Tables 2 and 3). Strongest induction was observed for *GBP1*, *TRIM22* and *AIM2*, which are already described as IFN-responsive genes. Similarly, STAT1, the mediator of IFN signaling, and IFN genes themselves are activated in response to STAT6 depletion in L1236 cells (Supplementary Table 2). As STAT1 is an essential regulator of

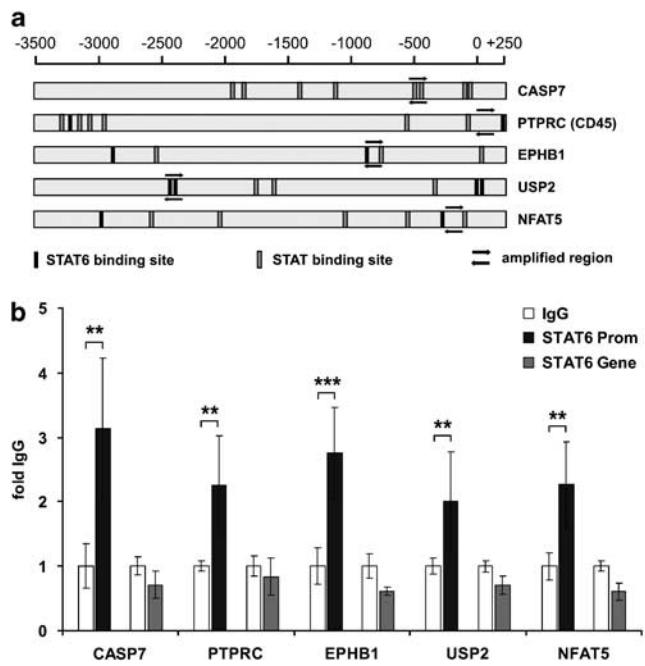


Figure 4 STAT6 recruitment to regulatory regions of novel STAT6 target genes. (a) Schematic representation of potential STAT and STAT6 binding sites in regions 3500 bp upstream to 250 bp downstream of the predicted transcriptional start site. Potential STAT binding sites were identified using MatInspector algorithm from Genomatix (<http://www.genomatix.de>). (b) ChIP analysis of identified potential STAT binding sites using antibodies against STAT6. Primer pairs flanking potential STAT binding sites shown as arrows in panel A and primer pairs flanking regions at least 1000 bp downstream of the transcription start were used to amplify precipitated DNA fragments with qPCR. Relative amount of chromatin fragments precipitated with STAT6 antibody (black for promoter and gray for downstream regions) is shown relative to the precipitates with the control IgG (white bars), which were set to 1 for clarity. Results are presented as means \pm s.d. of three independently performed experiments, each carried out in triplicates. Statistical analysis was carried out using Student's *t*-test (** $P<0.005$; *** $P<0.0005$).

anti-viral response, we at first assumed that infection of the cells with lentiviral vectors or expression of shRNA account for the induction of these genes. However, no induction was observed when cells were transduced with scrambled-shRNA-expressing lentiviral vector, indicating that the observed effect is specific and depends on the downregulation of STAT6. As STAT1 mediates inhibition of proliferation and induction of apoptosis in several cell systems, it could be an indirect mediator of apoptosis induction after STAT6 depletion.^{43,44} To test this hypothesis, we analyzed the induction of STAT1 in response to STAT6 depletion by western blot analysis. Knockdown of STAT6 led to the induction of STAT1 on RNA and protein levels (Figures 5a and b). This was accompanied by an increase in the activated, phosphorylated form of STAT1 as determined by phospho-STAT1-specific antibody. Lentiviral expression of scrambled-shRNA neither affected STAT1 expression nor the activation of STAT1, confirming that the activation of STAT1 was not merely induced by viral infection or shRNA expression.

Overexpression of STAT1 induces apoptosis in cHL cell line L1236

To investigate whether STAT1 contributes to apoptosis of cHL cells depleted of STAT6, we overexpressed STAT1 in L1236 cells by a lentiviral vector (Figure 6a). The increased amount of

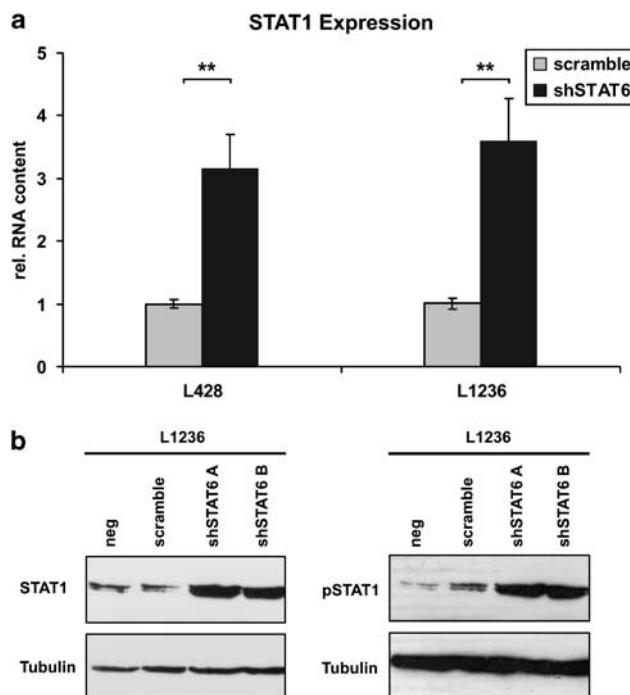


Figure 5 STAT6 depletion leads to enhanced expression and activation of STAT1. (a) qRT-PCR analysis of STAT1 from RNA preparations of L428 and L1236 cells transduced with STAT6-shRNA-expressing lentiviral vector or scrambled-shRNA control vector. The relative amount of scrambled-shRNA transduced cells was set to 1 for clarity. Data are presented as means \pm s.d. ($n = 9$). Statistical analysis was carried out using Student's *t*-test (** $P < 0.005$). (b) Western blot analysis of L1236 cells expressing STAT6-shRNA or scrambled-shRNA using antibodies against STAT1 and phospho-STAT1. Equal loading was confirmed by the detection of Tubulin.

STAT1 expressed in transduced versus control cells was determined by western blot analysis (Figure 6a). Cell viability assays indicate decreasing amounts of metabolic active cells, when L1236 cells were transduced with STAT1-expressing lentiviral vectors as compared with cells transduced with an empty vector control (Figure 6b). Treatment of the cells with IFN did not significantly enhance this effect (data not shown). Cell-cycle analysis of the STAT1 overexpressing cells showed an increase in the sub-G1 population as compared with cells transduced with an empty vector, suggesting an induction of apoptosis in these cells. This was further confirmed by the addition of the pan-caspase inhibitor Z-VAD-FMK, which reduced the sub-G1 population to the levels similar to the control transduced cells (Figure 6c).

Taken together, we show that inhibition of STAT6 results in the induction of apoptosis in cHL cell lines. We identified a number of new potential STAT6 target genes in cHL cells with important functions in the regulation of proliferation and apoptosis. The heterogeneity of cHL might prevent that all of the identified genes are STAT6-dependent regulated in either case as already observed for a cHL cell line derived from a different cHL subtype. However, some of the genes might contribute to the STAT6-mediated survival of the cells. Besides the identification of new potential STAT6 target genes with apoptosis-related functions, we could show an interplay of STAT6 and STAT1 in cHL cells. Strikingly, STAT6 depletion by shRNA enhanced STAT1 expression and activation, as well as induction of several well-known STAT1 target genes. Nuclear expression of STAT1 had been detected in HRS cells by immunohistochemistry.⁴⁵ We would expect that the amount of STAT1 contribute to the decision on apoptotic cell death. Our present data suggest that constitutively active STAT6 inhibits STAT1 expression and activation in cHL. To prove whether this model applies to cHL, we will analyze the activation state of

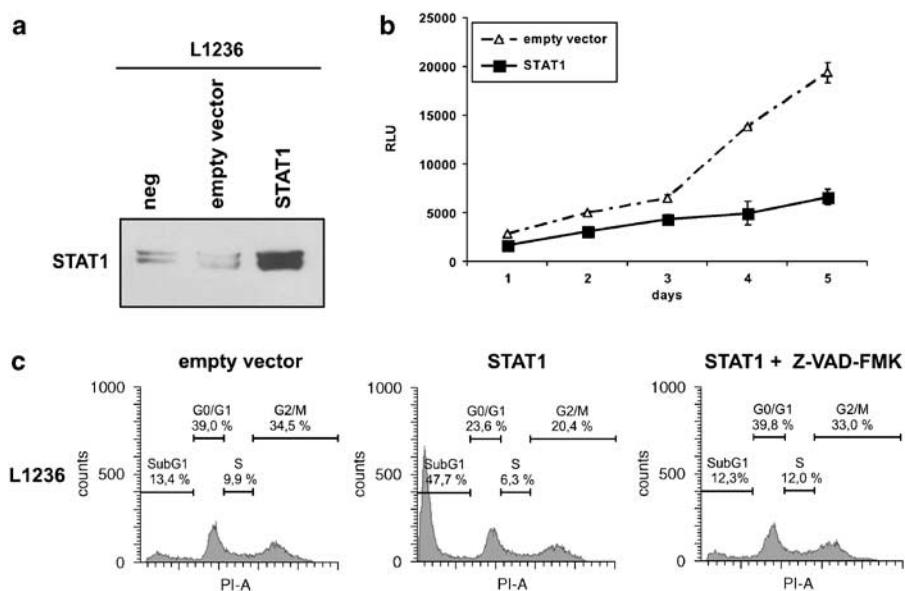


Figure 6 Overexpression of STAT1 leads to decreased proliferation and induction of apoptosis in L1236 cells. (a) Western blot analysis of STAT1 in L1236 cells transduced with either STAT1-expressing lentiviral vector or the empty vector as a control. (b) Cell viability assay of L1236 cells overexpressing STAT1. Cells transduced with an empty viral vector were used as a control. Values are representative for three independent experiments performed in triplicates (\pm s.d.). (c) Cell-cycle profile of L1236 cells stably transduced with either STAT1-expressing vector or with an empty vector control. To block apoptosis, STAT1 overexpressing cells were incubated with the pan-caspase inhibitor, Z-VAD-FMK.

STAT6 and the amount of STAT1 expression in parallel by immunohistochemistry of primary HRS cells. It has already been described that IL-4-stimulated STAT6 is able to repress STAT1 function and vice versa IFN-activated STAT1 inhibits STAT6.^{46,47} The mechanism for this is not fully understood but involves transcriptional activation by STAT6. A cross-talk between STAT6 and STAT1 can be mediated by SOCS1, which is a target of both STATs and acts as a negative regulator of IFN signaling.⁴⁸ However, the SOCS1 gene is often mutated in HRS cells, and overexpression of SOCS1 did not affect the proliferation of L1236 cells.^{9,10} These observations argue against a function of SOCS1 in the STAT6/STAT1 interplay in cHL. Although we could not yet discover the mechanism how STAT6 depletion enhances STAT1 expression and activation, suppression of STAT1 seems to be important for the survival of cHL cells as overexpression of STAT1 leads to an induction of apoptosis in L1236 cells. This might be mediated by STAT1-regulated target genes, which we found to be expressed at higher levels in our microarray of STAT6-depleted L1236 cells. In summary, all these results support that STAT6 and STAT1 are essential oppositional regulators of apoptosis, at least in distinct, cHL subtypes.

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Supplementary Information accompanies the paper on the Leukemia website (<http://www.nature.com/leu>)

Titles and legends to Supplementary Figures

Supplementary Figure 1

Specificity of STAT6-shRNA.

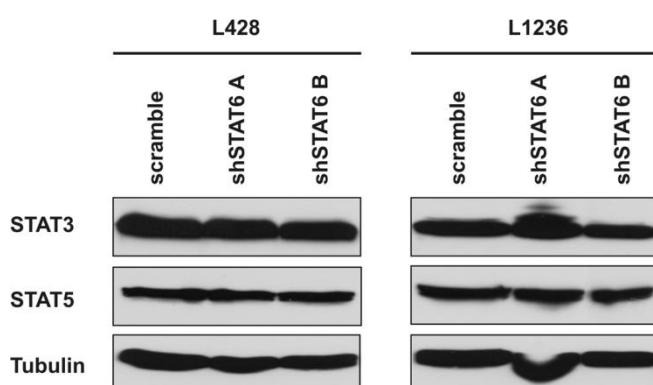
Western Blot analysis of STAT3 and STAT5 in L428 and L1236 cells transduced with either scrambled-shRNA, STAT6A-shRNA or STAT6B-shRNA. Equal loading was confirmed by detection of tubulin.

Supplementary Figure 2

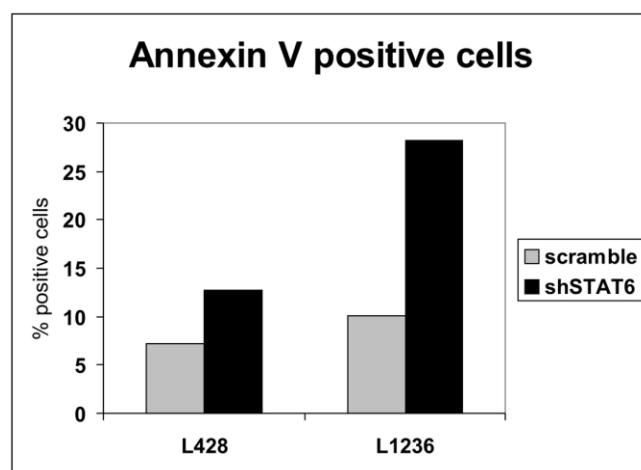
Depletion of STAT6 in cell lines L428 and L1236 induces apoptotic cell death

Annexin V Staining was performed using L428 and L1236 cells stably transduced with shRNAs against STAT6 and a scrambled sequence as control. Staining was done 72 h after transduction.

Supplementary Figure 1



Supplementary Figure 2



Supplementary Methods :

Microarray data analysis

Data analysis yielding in some technical performance information (image inspection, number of detected genes, boxplots for and after normalization and calculation of the correlation coefficient between the replicates) was done using Expression Array System Software (Version 1.1.1, Applied Biosystems) and the Spotfire Decision Site Software (Spotfire®DecisionSite®8.1, AB1700Guides 081605). The quality of all microarrays is as recommended by Applied Biosystems. Probe intensity normalization for further analysis of gene expression was conducted using the percentile value (50%) of all genes. A list of differentially expressed genes was built by using the unpaired t-statistic (variance equal = TRUE). The correlation coefficient (Pearson Correlation) was above 0.96 in comparison of all genes of all replicates after percentile value normalization, which indicates a sufficient technical reproducibility. The complete analysis was done using the Spotfire Decision Site Software. The following genes are excluded in the final differentially expressed gene list:

Genes that are differentially expressed ($p \leq 0.05$, FC (fold change) ≥ 2 or ≤ -2) between L1236 and L1236 scramble. Also genes that have a Flag value ≥ 5000 are excluded (Applied Biosystems 1700 Chemiluminescent Microarray Analyzer - User Guide).

Some additional genes were found when the data was reanalyzed with the statistical computing environment R (1). Additional software packages (ab1700, rma, multtest) were taken from the Bioconductor project (2). These data are not shown, but two of the genes identified in the reanalysis: UBE2D4 and NFAT5 were included in the validation experiments by quantitative RT-PCR shown in Fig. 2.

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Supplementary Table 1

Oligonucleotides used for **B**, **E** and shSTAT6 cloning. f not especially named
 Oligonucleotides used for expression analysis were also used as primer pairs for qPCR
 negative control.

| Expression | |
|------------|--|
| h18s | 5'- CAGATGAG - 3' 5'- GATTAGCGAA - 3' |
| ASP | 5'- AAGGAGATGTG 3' 5'- GTTCGATGCC - 3' |
| TNSf0 | 5'- ATCATGATGGG 3' 5'- TTGTCGCTCTGAG 3' |
| XIF-fw1 | 5'- AGAAGAACGAGAAG 3' 5'- ACAAACGTTGG 3' |
| BP | 5'- GAATGCGAAAG 3' 5'- TGGGAGGCC - 3' |
| TRB2 | 5'- ATGGGCTGGG 3' 5'- TTAGTGGGGAG 3' |
| STAT1 | 5'- ATCTTGAGAATG 3' 5'- TGATGGGGG 3' |
| PRP | 5'- ATGGGAAAGG 3' 5'- GAAGCTAAAC - 3' |
| PRC5 | 5'- AGCAAGGAA - 3' 5'- TTACGGTCTTGT - 3' |
| RARRES3 | 5'- CAGGAACGG 3' 5'- TATAAGGCGT - 3' |
| AM | 5'- AACGTTGGTAT - 3' 5'- GGCGCATTTA - 3' |
| E | 5'- TCTCGATGAC 3' 5'- TGGGATATAG 3' |
| M | 5'- GCATGAGACAGG 3' 5'- CCACCTGAGCGAAC 3' |
| EB1 | 5'- CTTGAGGGG 3' 5'- ATGGGAAAGG 3' |
| BRG | 5'- CGATGGGAC - 3' 5'- TGTTCTCGATG 3' |
| BE2D | 5'- GGCGTACT - 3' 5'- GGCGGAGG - 3' |
| BP | 5'- CTGGGGGGG 3' 5'- TGTGGGCTGG 3' |
| BB | 5'- ATGAGTAAGG 3' 5'- GCATGTTGTT - 3' |
| EDS | 5'- GGCGAGATGG 3' 5'- TTGATGATGG 3' |
| NAT5 | 5'- GAAGGCTTAA - 3' 5'- ATGCTCTGTTG 3' |
| D | 5'- TGATGAGAAG 3' 5'- GGGGTTCTAG 3' |

| B | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Promotor | |
| ASP | 5'- ATGGGAGGGG 3' 5'- AGTGGGATCTTG 3' |
| PRC5 | 5'- TGAAAGGCTAG - 3' 5'- AGCTGATCGAG - 3' |
| EB1 | 5'- GGGAGTGGAT - 3' 5'- TGAGTTGGCTTT - 3' |
| BP | 5'- GTAGCTGGT - 3' 5'- TGTGAAAGGTTTG 3' |
| NAT5 | 5'- AGGGGTTGGG 3' 5'- GTCGCTGGGA - 3' |
| Primer for B neg control | |
| ASP -fw1 | 5'- GGGGGTTGG 3' 5'- AAAGGAGGG - 3' |
| EB1 | 5'- GGATGAGGG 3' 5'- GGGGTGGATGAA - 3' |
| BP | 5'- TGGGATGGAG 3' 5'- AAAGGGTTGGG 3' |

| Oligonucleotides for shSTAT6 cloning | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| shSTAT6-A-fw | 5'-GATCCCCGATGTGTGAAAC TTGAG GGTGGAGTTAAC TTTTGAAA-3' |
| shSTAT6-A-rev | 5'- CTTGTAAAAA GATGTGTGAAAC TTGAG TT GA GTTGGAGTTAAC GGG-3' |
| shSTAT6-B-fw | 5'-GATCCCC AGTTGACTGAA TT GGAG TTGGAGTGGGAACG TTTTTA-3' |
| shSTAT6-B-rev | 5'- AGTAAAAA AGTTGACTGAA T GGTGGAGTGGGAACG A ATTGGAGTGGGAACG GGG-3' |

Supplementary Table 2

List of known genes affected by STAT6 depletion in L1236 cells including fold change and p-values from the array.

Genes induced by STAT6-shRNA are highlighted.

| Gene Symbol | Gene Name | Accession No: | fold change (FC) | p-value |
|------------------|---|---------------|------------------|------------|
| cig5 | viperin | NM_080657.3 | 54,00515858 | 0,00302375 |
| TRIM22 | tripartite motif-containing 22 | NM_006074.2 | 18,68610692 | 0,00714100 |
| GBP1 | guanylate binding protein 1, interferon-inducible, 67kDa | NM_002053.1 | 16,50105955 | 0,00253619 |
| OAS1 | 2',5'-oligoadenylate synthetase 1, 40/46kDa | NM_002534.1 | 14,19812219 | 0,01704018 |
| IFNB1 | interferon, beta 1, fibroblast | NM_002176.1 | 11,83553049 | 0,03591450 |
| ENPP2 | ectonucleotide pyrophosphatase/phosphodiesterase 2 | NM_006209.2 | 11,00863207 | 0,04226626 |
| GPR15 | G protein-coupled receptor 15 | NM_005290.1 | 10,13861132 | 0,01268025 |
| UPB1 | ureidopropionate, beta | NM_016327.1 | 9,843001772 | 0,01203960 |
| DKFZP586N0721 | DKFZP586N0721 protein | NM_015400.1 | 9,676906516 | 0,01751316 |
| FLJ20073 | FLJ20073 protein | NM_017654.2 | 9,17316054 | 0,00784585 |
| AIM2 | absent in melanoma 2 | NM_004833.1 | 8,416249265 | 0,01166288 |
| TNFSF10 | tumor necrosis factor (ligand) superfamily, member 10 | NM_003810.2 | 8,347487039 | 0,01188884 |
| STAT1 | signal transducer and activator of transcription 1, 91kDa | NM_139266.1 | 8,309335481 | 0,01549790 |
| TRIM34 | tripartite motif-containing 34 | NM_130390.1 | 8,19265483 | 0,04919326 |
| FLJ11000 | hypothetical protein FLJ11000 | NM_018295.1 | 8,106769546 | 0,00384096 |
| CPNE5 | copine V | NM_020939.1 | 8,025589287 | 0,01077141 |
| IFIT4 | interferon-induced protein | NM_001549.2 | 7,962213059 | 0,01196316 |
| KCNN4 | potassium intermediate | NM_002250.2 | 7,804628834 | 0,04679058 |
| CCL7 | chemokine (C-C motif) ligand 7 | NM_006273.2 | 7,657292101 | 0,01542689 |
| PLEK | pleckstrin | NM_002664.1 | 7,593986241 | 0,04512378 |
| ITGAL | integrin, alpha L (antigen CD11A (p180), | NM_002209.1 | 7,541972102 | 0,04349040 |
| N4BP2 | Nedd4 binding protein 2 | NM_018177.2 | 7,523529837 | 0,00317956 |
| IFI16 | interferon, gamma-inducible protein 16 | NM_005531.1 | 6,995988588 | 0,02361593 |
| LOC389903;TRAG3 | similar to Taxol resistant associated protein 3 (TRAG-3) | NM_004909.1 | 6,905586316 | 0,01455514 |
| MX1 | myxovirus (influenza virus) resistance 1 | NM_002462.2 | 6,834547288 | 0,01417974 |
| EPSTI1 | epithelial stromal interaction 1 (breast) | NM_033255.1 | 6,830676224 | 0,02543220 |
| GBP4 | guanylate binding protein 4 | NM_052941.2 | 6,668320482 | 0,00465713 |
| CHI3L2 | chitinase 3-like 2 | NM_004000.1 | 6,606437403 | 0,00043617 |
| RARRES3 | retinoic acid receptor responder (tazarotene induced) 3 | NM_004585.2 | 6,606329849 | 0,04243031 |
| G1P2 | interferon, alpha-inducible protein (clone IFI-15K) | NM_005101.1 | 6,538811657 | 0,02276176 |
| PLSCR2 | phospholipid scramblase 2 | NM_020359.1 | 5,880855938 | 0,00857571 |
| CSAGE | chondrosarcoma associated gene 1 | NM_153479.1 | 5,85730121 | 0,00332122 |
| C1orf38 | chromosome 1 open reading frame 38 | NM_004848.1 | 5,728625904 | 0,00775456 |
| CASQ1 | calsequestrin 1 (fast-twitch, skeletal muscle) | NM_001231.2 | 5,46819888 | 0,00486295 |
| LPXN | leupaxin | NM_004811.1 | 5,15726617 | 0,01071888 |
| ARG2 | arginase, type II | NM_001172.2 | 5,064614389 | 0,00153353 |
| PLA2G4C | phospholipase A2, group IVC | NM_003706.1 | 4,990097819 | 0,01287034 |
| FLJ20701 | hypothetical protein FLJ20701 | AK000708.1 | 4,9077227 | 0,01035953 |
| DNAJD1 | DnaJ (Hsp40) homolog, subfamily D, member 1 | NM_013238.1 | 4,891350847 | 0,04417166 |
| HERC5 | hect domain and RLD 5 | NM_016323.1 | 4,822404111 | 0,00983332 |
| ATP1A4 | ATPase, Na+/K+ transporting, alpha 4 polypeptide | NM_144699.1 | 4,796879566 | 0,01980922 |
| S100A16 | S100 calcium binding protein A16 | NM_080388.1 | 4,699417598 | 0,03727243 |
| FLJ27505 | FLJ27505 protein | NM_207408.1 | 4,649472202 | 0,01808004 |
| UNC93A | unc-93 homolog A (C. elegans) | NM_018974.2 | 4,625914556 | 0,00554201 |
| C21orf42 | chromosome 21 open reading frame 42 | NM_058184.1 | 4,619493194 | 0,01372729 |
| FLJ31882 | hypothetical protein FLJ31882 | NM_152460.2 | 4,566329279 | 0,02967055 |
| FLJ12541 | stimulated by retinoic acid gene 6 | NM_022369.2 | 4,544126379 | 0,02230580 |
| LGP2 | likely ortholog of mouse D11gp2 | NM_024119.1 | 4,493592033 | 0,02906117 |
| CEACAM1 | carcinoembryonic antigen-related cell adhesion molecule 1 | NM_001712.2 | 4,48446298 | 0,00912011 |
| TM7SF1 | transmembrane 7 superfamily member 1 | NM_003272.1 | 4,443978168 | 0,02890802 |
| IFTM1 | interferon induced transmembrane protein 1 (9-27) | NM_003641.2 | 4,339853437 | 0,01758850 |
| STAG3 | stromal antigen 3 | NM_012447.1 | 4,331989681 | 0,02353773 |
| RECQL1 | RECQL-like 1 (yeast) | NM_005132.1 | 4,210422565 | 0,01761360 |
| FBXO39 | F-box protein 39 | NM_153230.1 | 4,142535755 | 0,01443759 |
| TRIM5 | tripartite motif-containing 5 | NM_033093.1 | 4,141397088 | 0,00173961 |
| PRG1 | proteoglycan 1, secretory granule | NM_002727.2 | 4,11632392 | 0,03169951 |
| LA4 | lymphocyte alpha-kinase | NM_025144.2 | 4,06601746 | 0,03743518 |
| MAGEB1;MAGEB4 | melanoma antigen, family B, 4 | NM_002367.2 | 4,040089946 | 0,00943285 |
| FUT3 | fucosyltransferase 3 | NM_000149.1 | 3,953560887 | 0,01178240 |
| BAL | B aggressive lymphoma gene (BAL; PARP9) | NM_031458.1 | 3,941998862 | 0,01097913 |
| SLC2A13 | solute carrier family 2 (facilitated glucose transporter) | NM_052885.1 | 3,861886262 | 0,01801622 |
| MAIL | molecule possessing ankyrin repeats | NM_031419.1 | 3,853950844 | 0,01517046 |
| HLA-G | HLA-G histocompatibility antigen, class I, G | NM_002127.3 | 3,808194469 | 0,01153281 |
| PRKAG2 | protein kinase, AMP-activated | NM_016203.2 | 3,799586832 | 0,04536767 |
| CDH1 | cadherin 1, type 1, E-cadherin (epithelial) | NM_004360.2 | 3,795325176 | 0,00725107 |
| SCRT2 | scratch homolog 2, zinc finger protein (Drosophila) | NM_033129.1 | 3,770432089 | 0,00527745 |
| FAT | FAT tumor suppressor homolog 1 (Drosophila) | NM_005245.1 | 3,733320767 | 0,03427800 |
| C9orf111 | chromosome 9 open reading frame 111 | NM_152286.2 | 3,683293209 | 0,02904733 |
| APOM | apolipoprotein M | NM_019101.2 | 3,646803384 | 0,00192565 |
| AGER;GPSM3;NOTCH | advanced glycosylation end product-specific receptor; | NM_172197.1 | 3,628391673 | 0,01322042 |
| KCNK1 | potassium channel, subfamily K, member 1 | NM_002245.2 | 3,551012079 | 0,03655406 |
| MAFB | v-maf musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma oncogene | NM_005461.3 | 3,51471235 | 0,03765233 |
| TSP-NY | testis-specific protein TSP-NY | NM_032573.3 | 3,514100884 | 0,02098523 |
| ZNF288 | zinc finger protein 288 | NM_015642.1 | 3,507921328 | 0,04871007 |
| C9orf55 | chromosome 9 open reading frame 55 | NM_017925.3 | 3,498950845 | 0,02273876 |
| MB | myoglobin | NM_005368.2 | 3,495239364 | 0,01714728 |
| RHOBTB3 | Rho-related BTB domain containing 3 | NM_014899.2 | 3,478359035 | 0,00028549 |
| PTPRC | PTPRC (CD45) | NM_002838.1 | 3,419527526 | 0,00380749 |
| NR6A1 | nuclear receptor subfamily 6, group A, member 1 | NM_033335.1 | 3,413283624 | 0,04100578 |
| PRM2 | protamine 2 | NM_002762.1 | 3,410720949 | 0,03114298 |
| SP110 | SP110 nuclear body protein | NM_004509.2 | 3,388172427 | 0,03759992 |
| ARPP-21 | cyclic AMP-regulated phosphoprotein, 21 kD | NM_198399.1 | 3,354627356 | 0,01489491 |
| FLJ39458 | FLJ39458 protein | NM_207506.1 | 3,294719988 | 0,01185501 |
| IL2RA | interleukin 2 receptor, alpha | NM_000417.1 | 3,293702842 | 0,02458366 |
| GRM4 | glutamate receptor, metabotropic 4 | NM_000841.1 | 3,280441308 | 0,00930509 |
| SEC31L2 | SEC31-like 2 (S. cerevisiae) | NM_015490.3 | 3,278728235 | 0,02064747 |
| FLJ14146 | hypothetical protein FLJ14146 | NM_024709.2 | 3,278358617 | 0,02671013 |
| PARG1 | PTPL1-associated RhoGAP 1 | NM_004815.2 | 3,247006537 | 0,03637752 |
| ZNF297B | zinc finger protein 297B | AB007874.1 | 3,237850562 | 0,04620379 |
| BXMAS2-10 | BXMAS2-10 | NM_145016.2 | 3,214770605 | 0,02817092 |
| CBS | cystathione-beta-synthase | NM_000071.1 | 3,20399667 | 0,01160091 |
| TXNDC6 | thioredoxin domain containing 6 | NM_178130.2 | 3,189743853 | 0,00997788 |
| MVP | major vault protein | NM_005115.3 | 3,141439629 | 0,03063225 |
| RPIB9 | Rap2-binding protein 9 | NM_138290.1 | 3,121523987 | 0,02365495 |
| COLM | collomin | NM_181789.1 | 3,115336873 | 0,04597942 |
| ALDH1A3 | aldehyde dehydrogenase 1 family, member A3 | NM_000693.1 | 3,084896354 | 0,02930150 |

| Gene Symbol | Gene Name | Accession No: | fold change (FC) | p-value |
|-----------------|--|----------------|------------------|------------|
| MGC14376 | hypothetical protein MGC14376 | NM_032895.1 | 3,049520511 | 0,01571426 |
| TREX1 | three prime repair exonuclease 1 | NM_033627.3 | 3,035806386 | 0,03496585 |
| SERPINA7 | serine (or cysteine) proteinase inhibitor, | NM_000354.2 | 2,97317476 | 0,04582613 |
| LIPH | lipase, member H | NM_139248.1 | 2,964528141 | 0,00441477 |
| CWF19L2 | CWF19-like 2, cell cycle control (<i>S. pombe</i>) | NM_152434.1 | 2,945894156 | 0,02421342 |
| 7A5 | putative binding protein 7a5 | NM_182762.2 | 2,939502041 | 0,02861668 |
| PLAT | plasminogen activator, tissue | NM_000931.2 | 2,939013628 | 0,04819515 |
| DNMT3A | DNA (cytosine-5-)methyltransferase 3 alpha | NM_175629.1 | 2,913286775 | 0,04223046 |
| LOC63928 | hepatocellular carcinoma antigen gene 520 | NM_022097.1 | 2,873089006 | 0,00541378 |
| ADAMTS16 | a disintegrin-like and metalloprotease (reprolysin type) | NM_139056.1 | 2,869025673 | 0,00746910 |
| GTDCL1 | glycosyltransferase-like 1 | NM_014118.1 | 2,864392902 | 0,01341838 |
| EDG4 | endothelial differentiation, G-protein-coupled receptor, 4 | NM_004720.4 | 2,86292859 | 0,01056566 |
| KIAA0913 | KIAA0913 | NM_015037.1 | 2,8557409 | 0,01016334 |
| GPR126 | G protein-coupled receptor 126 | NM_020455.3 | 2,855246426 | 0,00704191 |
| CYPB81 | cytochrome P450, family 8, subfamily B, polypeptide 1 | NM_004391.1 | 2,825709166 | 0,01737634 |
| SOCSS | suppressor of cytokine signaling 5 | NM_144949.2 | 2,81091763 | 0,04483906 |
| FAM31C | family with sequence similarity 31, member C | NM_024898.1 | 2,794687258 | 0,02822762 |
| CALCR | calcitonin receptor-like | NM_005795.2 | 2,782159474 | 0,03916652 |
| TEC | tec protein tyrosine kinase | NM_003215.1 | 2,778005853 | 0,00172758 |
| CDKN1A | cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor 1A (p21, Cip1) | NM_000389.2 | 2,757316452 | 0,03873845 |
| ADAMTS1;C9orf94 | ADAMTS-like 1;chromosome 9 open reading frame 94 | NM_052866.2 | 2,749385901 | 0,04135503 |
| ZBTB12 | zinc finger and BTB domain containing 12 | NM_181842.1 | 2,72222422 | 0,03644768 |
| LOC115811 | hypothetical protein BC013151 | NM_138451.1 | 2,717196816 | 0,00958733 |
| CAPN3 | calpain 3, (p94) | NM_000070.2 | 2,712566884 | 0,04511979 |
| TCIRG1 | T-cell, immune regulator 1, ATPase, | NM_006053.2 | 2,699922181 | 0,00462818 |
| TCL6 | T-cell leukemia/lymphoma 6 | NM_014418.2 | 2,671595869 | 0,02894931 |
| ZNF559 | zinc finger protein 559 | NM_032497.1 | 2,656392944 | 0,04555723 |
| KLF14 | Kruppel-like factor 14 | NM_138693.1 | 2,64745387 | 0,03286239 |
| LOC204474 | hypothetical protein LOC204474 | NM_174924.1 | 2,630449943 | 0,03894103 |
| CASP7 | caspase 7, apoptosis-related cysteine protease | NM_033339.2 | 2,622659425 | 0,04044119 |
| FLJ10891 | hypothetical protein FLJ10891 | NM_018260.1 | 2,616067441 | 0,02104495 |
| ERO1LB | ERO1-like beta (<i>S. cerevisiae</i>) | NM_019891.2 | 2,608637198 | 0,02525734 |
| C10orf39 | chromosome 10 open reading frame 39 | NM_194303.1 | 2,604350016 | 0,02061237 |
| FLJ36070 | hypothetical protein FLJ36070 | NM_182574.1 | 2,602561302 | 0,00701066 |
| C10orf6 | chromosome 10 open reading frame 6 | NM_018121.2 | 2,583796314 | 0,03349599 |
| UTX | ubiquitously transcribed tetratricopeptide repeat | NM_021140.1 | 2,562308949 | 0,01137166 |
| ATP6V1C2 | ATPase, H ⁺ transporting, V1 subunit C isoform 2 | NM_144583.2 | 2,549233828 | 0,04331001 |
| C6orf102 | chromosome 6 open reading frame 102 | NM_145027.3 | 2,547142584 | 0,00729412 |
| STK4 | serine/threonine kinase 4 | NM_006282.2 | 2,536630985 | 0,00084376 |
| USP25 | ubiquitin specific protease 25 | NM_013396.2 | 2,5122995 | 0,03622885 |
| MLLT3 | myeloid/lymphoid or mixed-lineage leukemia | NM_004529.1 | 2,486919746 | 0,04903236 |
| PAEP | progesterone-associated endometrial protein | NM_002571.1 | 2,466332128 | 0,03778479 |
| C3AR1 | complement component 3a receptor 1 | NM_004054.2 | 2,456756799 | 0,04544227 |
| BTBD4 | BTB (POZ) domain containing 4 | NM_025224.1 | 2,455907398 | 0,01778738 |
| EVG | Ellis van Creveld syndrome | NM_014556.2 | 2,4555053 | 0,04094060 |
| NFAT5 | nuclear factor of activated T-cells 5, tonicity-responsive | NM_173215.1 | 2,438933536 | 0,04950906 |
| FLJ37266 | hypothetical protein FLJ37266 | NM_175892.3 | 2,437117102 | 0,04946745 |
| MGC39650 | hypothetical protein MGC39650 | NM_152465.1 | 2,437033855 | 0,01164189 |
| ARK5 | AMP-activated protein kinase family member 5 | NM_014840.2 | 2,436469116 | 0,00935442 |
| SPEC1 | small protein effector 1 of Cdc42 | NM_020239.2 | 2,419335663 | 0,00973243 |
| SMURF2 | E3 ubiquitin ligase SMURF2 | NM_022739.2 | 2,416769054 | 0,04660635 |
| 10-Sep | septin 10 | NM_178584.1 | 2,413857856 | 0,02415259 |
| SLC39A12 | solute carrier family 39 (zinc transporter), member 12 | NM_152725.1 | 2,411401075 | 0,04965723 |
| B3GNT1 | UDP-GlcNAc: beta-1,3-N-acetylglucosaminyltransferase 1 | NM_032522.1 | 2,410432824 | 0,03673369 |
| HSD3B1 | hydroxy-delta-5-steroid dehydrogenase, | NM_000862.1 | 2,390298948 | 0,03169408 |
| GUCA2A | guanylate cyclase activator 2A (guanylin) | NM_035532.2 | 2,383258581 | 0,02243308 |
| TLR6 | toll-like receptor 6 | NM_006068.2 | 2,380954632 | 0,03128652 |
| GTPBP2 | GTP binding protein 2 | NM_019096.3 | 2,37768765 | 0,04847652 |
| NAPE-PLD | N-acyl-phosphatidylethanolamine-hydrolyzing phos-lip. D | NM_198990.3 | 2,354936767 | 0,02986417 |
| PC | pyruvate carboxylase | NM_022172.1 | 2,351921341 | 0,01832077 |
| HEM1 | hematopoietic protein 1 | NM_005337.2 | 2,348936925 | 0,04971760 |
| MYH3 | myosin, heavy polypeptide 3, skeletal muscle, embryonic | NM_002470.1 | 2,348418379 | 0,01777118 |
| RAB9A | RAB9A, member RAS oncogene family | NM_004251.3 | 2,344963273 | 0,03806699 |
| DAAM2 | dishevelled associated activator of morphogenesis 2 | NM_015345.2 | 2,334318189 | 0,00908985 |
| PKNOX2 | PBX/knotted 1 homeobox 2 | NM_022062.1 | 2,333276944 | 0,03096502 |
| CSMD3 | CUB and Sushi multiple domains 3 | NM_198124.1 | 2,330940849 | 0,02201410 |
| UNC119 | unc-119 homolog (<i>C. elegans</i>) | NM_054035.1 | 2,319381675 | 0,00481706 |
| DKFZp761H079 | hypothetical protein DKFZp761H079 | NM_144996.2 | 2,314822404 | 0,03600277 |
| PSTPIP2 | proline-serine-threonine phosphatase interacting protein 2 | NM_024430.2 | 2,312838162 | 0,03508797 |
| FLJ12700 | hypothetical protein FLJ12700 | NM_024910.1 | 2,301067679 | 0,00100431 |
| SALF;SBLF;ALF | stoned B-like factor;TFIIA-alpha/beta-like factor | NM_172196.1 | 2,282810464 | 0,02479016 |
| 1-Nov | 1-Nov | NM_144663.1 | 2,282797159 | 0,00473130 |
| CLECSF12 | C-type (calcium dependent) lectin, | NM_197947.1 | 2,270778105 | 0,00879400 |
| IFNA2 | interferon, alpha 2 | NM_000605.2 | 2,253055365 | 0,02511486 |
| KIAA1002 | KIAA1002 protein | NM_014925.2 | 2,250198993 | 0,02375170 |
| OMP | olfactory marker protein | NM_006189.1 | 2,247757523 | 0,02427758 |
| BHC80 | BRAF35/HDAC2 complex (80 kDa) | NM_016621.2 | 2,247732397 | 0,04584510 |
| HGXAPAF1 | XIAP associated factor-1 (XAF1) | NM_199139.1 | 2,244826642 | 0,01737525 |
| ITGB7 | integrin, beta 7 | NM_000889.1 | 2,22960485 | 0,00107226 |
| PCDH11Y;PCDH11X | protocadherin 11 Y-linked;protocadherin 11 X-linked | NM_014522.1 | 2,2292615 | 0,01233451 |
| RAP2C | RAP2C, member of RAS oncogene family | NM_021183.3 | 2,22530759 | 0,00851967 |
| THBS3 | thrombospondin 3 | NM_007112.3 | 2,198893546 | 0,00598044 |
| MGC27016 | hypothetical protein MGC27016 | NM_144979.2 | 2,185986916 | 0,04565646 |
| LOC201895 | hypothetical protein LOC201895 | NM_174921.1 | 2,177896355 | 0,00682707 |
| C9orf103 | chromosome 9 open reading frame 103 | NM_001001551.1 | 2,177891748 | 0,00209765 |
| FLJ20032 | hypothetical protein FLJ20032 | AK027819.1 | 2,172579817 | 0,03144891 |
| ZIC3 | Zic family member 3 heterotaxy 1 | NM_003413.2 | 2,160882552 | 0,03006964 |
| MOBKL2C | MOB1, Mps One Binder kinase activator-like 2C (<i>yeast</i>) | NM_145279.3 | 2,157266527 | 0,03115508 |
| HCST | hematopoietic cell signal transducer | NM_014266.3 | 2,156182594 | 0,01055487 |
| FLJ25421 | hypothetical protein FLJ25421 | NM_152512.3 | 2,149697956 | 0,02726543 |
| NRCAM | neuronal cell adhesion molecule | NM_005010.2 | 2,144473287 | 0,04983090 |
| C20orf17 | chromosome 20 open reading frame 17 | NM_173485.2 | 2,140577802 | 0,01607644 |
| PIP5K3 | phosphatidylinositol-3/5-phosphate-kinase | NM_152671.1 | 2,140485283 | 0,02089137 |
| HIF3A | hypoxia inducible factor 3, alpha subunit | NM_022462.2 | 2,135895776 | 0,03310173 |
| KIAA1160 | KIAA1160 protein | NM_020701.1 | 2,135510417 | 0,02291509 |
| LCMT1 | leucine carboxyl methyltransferase 1 | NM_016309.1 | 2,134363416 | 0,00201570 |
| CFLAR | CASP8 and FADD-like apoptosis regulator | NM_003879.3 | 2,132432376 | 0,00947382 |
| DIRC1 | disrupted in renal carcinoma 1 | NM_052952.1 | 2,118535791 | 0,04973284 |
| ZFP36L1 | zinc finger protein 36, C3H type-like 1 | NM_004926.2 | 2,11378227 | 0,03121649 |
| ASB5 | ankyrin repeat and SOCS box-containing 5 | NM_080874.2 | 2,110507761 | 0,00650149 |

| Gene Symbol | Gene Name | Accession No: | fold change (FC) | p-value |
|------------------|---|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| ZNF258 | zinc finger protein 258 | NM_145310.1 | 2,107376289 | 0,00163792 |
| MGC16186 | hypothetical protein MGC16186 | NM_032372.2 | 2,090457134 | 0,03641191 |
| GIT2 | G protein-coupled receptor kinase interactor 2 | NM_139201.1 | 2,083380966 | 0,04794696 |
| C9orf150 | chromosome 9 open reading frame 150 | NM_203403.1 | 2,070816096 | 0,00945331 |
| SIGLEC9 | sialic acid binding Ig-like lectin 9 | NM_014441.1 | 2,065835563 | 0,00020074 |
| FLJ13955 | hypothetical protein FLJ13955 | NM_024759.1 | 2,06328922 | 0,02852857 |
| RBAF600 | retinoblastoma-associated factor 600 | NM_020765.1 | 2,06011734 | 0,01040183 |
| C6orf33 | chromosome 6 open reading frame 33 | NM_133367.1 | 2,059823454 | 0,00093696 |
| DMN | desmuslin | NM_145728.1 | 2,056127007 | 0,03970368 |
| FLJ22494 | hypothetical protein FLJ22494 | NM_024815.2 | 2,055005312 | 0,02619692 |
| BTN3A2 | butyrophilin, subfamily 3, member A2 | NM_007047.2 | 2,053547241 | 0,00406539 |
| C19orf33 | chromosome 19 open reading frame 33 | NM_033520.1 | 2,049116848 | 0,01859646 |
| KIAA2028 | similar to PH (pleckstrin homology) domain | NM_172069.1 | 2,046234344 | 0,01162111 |
| NADSYN1 | NAD synthetase 1 | BC020977.1 | 2,04603847 | 0,01348070 |
| MLL4 | myeloid/lymphoid or mixed-lineage leukemia 4 | NM_014727.1 | 2,045807737 | 0,04695099 |
| SCN3B | sodium channel, voltage-gated, type III, beta | NM_018400.2 | 2,033674554 | 0,01731094 |
| EPB41L3 | erythrocyte membrane protein band 4.1-like 3 | NM_012307.2 | 2,029438025 | 0,04233787 |
| SEMA4D;LOC349236 | sema domain, immunoglobulin domain (Ig), melanoma antigen, family A, 9 | NM_006378.2 | 2,026099134 | 0,01748204 |
| MAGEA9 | hypothetical protein LOC153684 | NM_005365.4 | 2,024355948 | 0,04615893 |
| LOC153684 | SH2 domain containing phosphatase anchor protein 1 | NM_030764.2 | 2,009595725 | 0,03854293 |
| SPAP1 | KIAA1160 protein | NM_020701.1 | 2,006511461 | 0,02336444 |
| KIAA1160 | fibroblast growth factor 12 | U76381.2 | 2,004053859 | 0,01171737 |
| MLLT1 | myeloid/lymphoid or mixed-lineage leukemia | NM_005934.2 | 2,003102512 | 0,01796542 |
| ARS2 | arsenate resistance protein ARS2 | NM_182800.1 | -2,00586695 | 0,02152573 |
| ANAPC11 | APC11 anaphase promoting complex subunit 11 homolog | NM_016476.9 | -2,00885904 | 0,01546639 |
| PSAT1 | phosphoserine aminotransferase 1 | NM_058179.2 | -2,011395342 | 0,01586384 |
| SYNCRIP | synaptotagmin binding, cytoplasmic RNA interacting protein | NM_006372.3 | -2,014909549 | 0,00713723 |
| GPT2 | glutamic pyruvate transaminase (alanine aminotransferase) 2 | NM_133443.1 | -2,015240735 | 0,03881683 |
| MGC20806 | hypothetical protein MGC20806 | NM_144999.2 | -2,022269247 | 0,01523624 |
| C1orf33 | chromosome 1 open reading frame 33 | NM_016183.2 | -2,024577792 | 0,03321222 |
| PVRL4 | poliovirus receptor-related 4 | NM_030916.1 | -2,028834488 | 0,03975973 |
| PEX5 | peroxisomal biogenesis factor 5 | NM_000319.3 | -2,029524601 | 0,01987458 |
| NRF1 | nuclear respiratory factor 1 | NM_005011.2 | -2,029682769 | 0,01185409 |
| HCN2 | hyperpolarization activated cyclic nucleotide-gated potassium channel 2 | AF065164.2 | -2,030597007 | 0,01528560 |
| FLJ12363 | hypothetical protein FLJ12363 | NM_032167.1 | -2,033223845 | 0,00433207 |
| TIMM8A | translocase of inner mitochondrial membrane 8 homolog A (yeast) | NM_004085.2 | -2,034268334 | 0,01482639 |
| SPINT2 | serine protease inhibitor, Kunitz type, 2 | NM_021102.1 | -2,034785512 | 0,00816980 |
| GSTM4 | glutathione S-transferase M4 | NM_000850.3 | -2,037942398 | 0,00709319 |
| ALS2CR13 | amyotrophic lateral sclerosis 2 (juvenile) chromosome region | NM_173511.1 | -2,046427143 | 0,04619809 |
| TPD52L2 | tumor protein D52-like 2 | NM_199362.1 | -2,052058346 | 0,04210915 |
| PPAN | peter pan homolog (<i>Drosophila</i>) | NM_020230.4 | -2,054841453 | 0,04360489 |
| HIPK1 | homeodomain interacting protein kinase 1 | NM_198268.1 | -2,056819032 | 0,00736726 |
| TOP3A | topoisomerase (DNA) III alpha | NM_004618.2 | -2,077607955 | 0,03629560 |
| C14orf147 | chromosome 14 open reading frame 147 | NM_138288.2 | -2,080184743 | 0,03333446 |
| MRPS7 | mitochondrial ribosomal protein S7 | NM_015971.2 | -2,085724287 | 0,03393892 |
| HK2 | hexokinase 2 | NM_000189.4 | -2,097800161 | 0,03023144 |
| HIPK4 | homeodomain interacting protein kinase 4 | NM_144685.3 | -2,099897262 | 0,02091380 |
| ALDH7A1 | aldehyde dehydrogenase 7 family, member A1 | NM_001182.1 | -2,100909171 | 0,03875828 |
| SLC5A3;MRPS6 | mitochondrial ribosomal protein S6 | NM_006933.2 | -2,103104622 | 0,00252358 |
| SPATA5L1 | spermatogenesis associated 5-like 1 | NM_024063.1 | -2,106987906 | 0,01718065 |
| UBE2D4 | ubiquitin-conjugating enzyme E2D 4 | NM_015983.2 | -2,113566893 | 0,049258048 |
| PX19 | px19-like protein | NM_013237.2 | -2,116249027 | 0,04326830 |
| Pf52 | DNA replication complex GINS protein PSF2 | NM_016095.1 | -2,117574391 | 0,0447258 |
| C21orf70 | chromosome 21 open reading frame 70 | NM_058190.1 | -2,12012939 | 0,0000094 |
| CPA5 | carboxypeptidase A5 | NM_080385.2 | -2,12536276 | 0,04624879 |
| RRP22 | RAS-related on chromosome 22 | NM_006477.2 | -2,129068637 | 0,01982816 |
| USP2 | ubiquitin specific protease 2 | NM_171997.1 | -2,134536607 | 0,01970076 |
| THOP1 | thimet oligopeptidase 1 | NM_003249.3 | -2,135313982 | 0,04585149 |
| TUBGCP3 | tubulin, gamma complex associated protein 3 | NM_006322.3 | -2,137166477 | 0,01301735 |
| HK2 | hexokinase 2 | NM_000189.4 | -2,137536907 | 0,00105523 |
| IPO4 | importin 4 | NM_024658.2 | -2,151063302 | 0,01962826 |
| DNAH7 | dynein, axonemal, heavy polypeptide 7 | NM_018897.1 | -2,154407497 | 0,00153675 |
| FLJ20533 | hypothetical protein FLJ20533 | NM_017866.3 | -2,158058846 | 0,00464059 |
| CHC1 | chromosome condensation 1 | NM_001269.2 | -2,16041743 | 0,02336289 |
| PCK1 | phosphoenolpyruvate carboxykinase 1 (soluble) | NM_002591.2 | -2,161993336 | 0,01438210 |
| TYMS | thymidylate synthetase | BC013919.1 | -2,172409523 | 0,02927017 |
| EBPL | emopamil binding protein-like | NM_032565.1 | -2,178325633 | 0,02220149 |
| HRMT1L6 | HMT1 hnRNP methyltransferase-like 6 (<i>S. cerevisiae</i>) | NM_018137.1 | -2,182455588 | 0,00162215 |
| FLJ11127 | hypothetical protein FLJ11127 | NM_019018.1 | -2,208351821 | 0,03886897 |
| MRPS58 | hypothetical protein MGC35558 | NM_145013.1 | -2,211623476 | 0,03494888 |
| DUSP7 | dual specificity phosphatase 7 | AL110157.1 | -2,211750339 | 0,03674551 |
| ACTL6 | actin-like 6 | NM_016188.3 | -2,215679116 | 0,00682958 |
| GRWD1 | glutamate-rich WD repeat containing 1 | BC002440.2 | -2,22611337 | 0,04160308 |
| PAK6 | p21(CDKN1A)-activated kinase 6 | NM_020168.3 | -2,233564762 | 0,01023748 |
| MMP15 | matrix metalloproteinase 15 (membrane-inserted) | NM_002428.2 | -2,235290109 | 0,04341099 |
| MRPS26 | mitochondrial ribosomal protein S26 | NM_030811.3 | -2,235413897 | 0,01787866 |
| MGC21675 | hypothetical protein MGC21675 | NM_052861.1 | -2,236678001 | 0,03186664 |
| THOC3 | THO complex 3 | NM_032361.1 | -2,241823933 | 0,0283066 |
| LOC113179;SCAMP4 | secretory carrier membrane protein 4 | NM_079834.1 | -2,242931649 | 0,03278903 |
| NID2 | nidogen 2 (osteonidogen) | NM_007361.2 | -2,264096941 | 0,01348741 |
| C16orf34 | chromosome 16 open reading frame 34 | NM_144570.2 | -2,265922343 | 0,02817174 |
| AMHR2 | anti-Mullerian hormone receptor, type II | NM_020547.1 | -2,268574133 | 0,04084244 |
| PCDH8 | protocadherin 8 | NM_032949.1 | -2,279013562 | 0,03169250 |
| NDUFB10 | NADH dehydrogenase (ubiquinone) 1 beta subcomplex, 10 | NM_004548.1 | -2,279270097 | 0,00357239 |
| HTR5A | 5-hydroxytryptamine (serotonin) receptor 5A | NM_024012.1 | -2,301884813 | 0,01041717 |
| LSM4 | LSM4 homolog, U6 small nuclear RNA associated | NM_012321.2 | -2,303499616 | 0,02795631 |
| C6orf79 | chromosome 6 open reading frame 79 | NM_022102.1 | -2,304568204 | 0,04446803 |
| FLJ20397 | hypothetical protein FLJ20397 | NM_017802.2 | -2,304875948 | 0,02454071 |
| TRIO | triple functional domain (PTPRF interacting) | NM_007118.2 | -2,305160057 | 0,01439005 |
| BIN1 | bridging integrator 1 | NM_139346.1 | -2,30846765 | 0,00467360 |
| DDX48 | DEAD (Asp-Glu-Ala-Asp) box polypeptide 48 | NM_014740.2 | -2,314031169 | 0,03433923 |
| FGF10 | fibroblast growth factor 10 | NM_004465.1 | -2,320035192 | 0,01581471 |
| ASE-1 | CD3-epsilon-associated protein; antisense to ERCC-1 | NM_012099.1 | -2,336985203 | 0,01846882 |
| LIMS3 | LIM and senescent cell antigen-like domains 3 | NM_033514.1 | -2,339453361 | 0,00828320 |
| PBP | prostatic binding protein | NM_002567.2 | -2,357261293 | 0,03777504 |
| HADHSC | L-3-hydroxyacyl-Coenzyme A dehydrogenase, short chain | NM_005327.1 | -2,362922132 | 0,00060410 |
| AKR1B1 | aldo-keto reductase family 1, member B1 (aldo reductase) | NM_001628.2 | -2,364708053 | 0,02819258 |
| ENDOG | endonuclease G | NM_004435.1 | -2,378302711 | 0,04599230 |
| HERC3 | HERC3 | NM_014606.1 | -2,381734996 | 0,04074790 |

| Gene Symbol | Gene Name | Accession No: | fold change (FC) | p-value |
|-------------------|---|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| DC-UbP | dendritic cell-derived ubiquitin-like protein | NM_152277.1 | -2,408361678 | 0,02728291 |
| BLMH | bleomycin hydrolase | NM_000386.2 | -2,416912771 | 0,04764969 |
| S100P | S100 calcium binding protein P | NM_005980.2 | -2,417643749 | 0,04757642 |
| C1QBP | complement component 1, q subcomponent binding protein | NM_001212.3 | -2,431297863 | 0,01980644 |
| OLFM1 | olfactomedin 1 | NM_014279.2 | -2,433640944 | 0,04192518 |
| PTDSS2 | phosphatidylserine synthase 2 | NM_030783.1 | -2,443674332 | 0,02088310 |
| CDHJ | protocadherin protein CDHJ | NM_017639.2 | -2,445554847 | 0,00378160 |
| ANG;RNASE4 | angiogenin, ribonuclease, | NM_001145.2 | -2,468303899 | 0,03950273 |
| MYC | v-myc myelocytomatosis viral oncogene homolog (avian) | NM_002467.2 | -2,469565088 | 0,01317901 |
| CDX1 | caudal type homeo box transcription factor 1 | NM_001804.1 | -2,476249556 | 0,03503616 |
| UNG | uracil-DNA glycosylase | NM_080911.1 | -2,482121321 | 0,02885389 |
| MGC15396 | hypothetical protein MGC15396 | NM_052855.2 | -2,487936844 | 0,01130305 |
| CYP2A13 | cytochrome P450, family 2, subfamily A, polypeptide 13 | NM_000766.3 | -2,491197357 | 0,03046940 |
| LANCL2 | LanC lantibiotic synthetase component C-like 2 (bacterial) | NM_018697.2 | -2,502260917 | 0,04211887 |
| HSD17B12 | hydroxysteroid (17-beta) dehydrogenase 12 | NM_016142.1 | -2,512638648 | 0,04715323 |
| ZNF553 | zinc finger protein 553 | NM_152652.1 | -2,514376612 | 0,00752863 |
| LOC51337 | mesenchymal stem cell protein DSCD75 | NM_016647.1 | -2,516200014 | 0,00633027 |
| ANK2 | ankyrin 2, neuronal | NM_020977.1 | -2,527827868 | 0,04853083 |
| FLJ10504 | misato | NM_018116.2 | -2,539112942 | 0,03590107 |
| BCAR3 | breast cancer anti-estrogen resistance 3 | NM_003567.1 | -2,559740826 | 0,02080047 |
| FRK | fyn-related kinase | NM_002031.2 | -2,585541599 | 0,03535356 |
| LOC56931 | hypothetical protein from EUROIMAGE 1967720 | NM_020175.1 | -2,602495858 | 0,03508579 |
| CTSH | cathepsin H | NM_004390.2 | -2,624024906 | 0,04339733 |
| D21S2056E | NA segment on chromosome 21 (unique)266 | NM_003683.4 | -2,62455981 | 0,03561115 |
| FLJ20989 | hypothetical protein FLJ20989 | NM_023080.1 | -2,645161639 | 0,02111947 |
| ACHE | acetylcholinesterase (YT blood group) | NM_000665.2 | -2,668026948 | 0,00734898 |
| BRIP1 | BRIP1 binding protein | NM_080626.5 | -2,66828256 | 0,04666464 |
| CDKN2C | cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor 2C (p18, inhibits CDK4) | NM_001262.2 | -2,686245446 | 0,02267917 |
| CPA3 | carboxypeptidase A3 (mast cell) | NM_001870.1 | -2,734958037 | 0,00040421 |
| SLC14A2 | solute carrier family 14 (urea transporter), member 2 | NM_007163.2 | -2,748180246 | 0,03553609 |
| LOC374955 | hypothetical protein LOC374955 | NM_198546.1 | -2,748504614 | 0,04262976 |
| TRAP1 | heat shock protein 75 | NM_016292.1 | -2,749625687 | 0,00793220 |
| BDH | 3-hydroxybutyrate dehydrogenase (heart, mitochondrial) | NM_004051.3 | -2,758131364 | 0,02280323 |
| MAC30 | hypothetical protein MAC30 | NM_014573.1 | -2,764903421 | 0,01978673 |
| IL13RA1 | interleukin 13 receptor, alpha 1 | NM_001560.2 | -2,768124979 | 0,01321814 |
| PRKCDPB | protein kinase C, delta binding protein | NM_145040.2 | -2,778021332 | 0,00764047 |
| SIX4 | sine oculis homeobox homolog 4 (Drosophila) | NM_017420.1 | -2,788666377 | 0,03838255 |
| NPHP1 | nephronophthisis 1 (juvenile) | NM_207181.1 | -2,792482345 | 0,00542761 |
| F12 | coagulation factor XII (Hageman factor) | NM_000505.2 | -2,810107084 | 0,04859548 |
| SLC22A7 | solute carrier family 22 (organic anion transporter), member 7 | NM_153320.1 | -2,844537252 | 0,02535725 |
| ALOX15 | arachidonate 15-lipoxygenase | NM_001140.3 | -2,905903959 | 0,01733140 |
| SLC35B4 | solute carrier family 35, member B4 | NM_032826.2 | -2,911051702 | 0,01784955 |
| REPS2 | RALBP1 associated Eps domain containing 2 | NM_004726.1 | -2,919728695 | 0,00716315 |
| FLJ32499 | hypothetical protein FLJ32499 | NM_144607.2 | -2,940600992 | 0,01754642 |
| NUDT4 | nudix (nucleoside diphosphate linked moiety X)-type motif 4 | NM_019094.3 | -2,952090455 | 0,00069146 |
| HOMER2 | homer homolog 2 (Drosophila) | NM_199332.1 | -2,963952314 | 0,00897028 |
| CNIH | cornichon homolog (Drosophila) | NM_005776.1 | -2,978048426 | 0,02857460 |
| FLJ23322 | hypothetical protein FLJ23322 | NM_024955.4 | -2,983763111 | 0,03722551 |
| MDN1 | MDN1, midasin homolog (yeast) | NM_014611.1 | -3,023016524 | 0,03763176 |
| FLJ32949 | hypothetical protein FLJ32949 | NM_173812.3 | -3,030327156 | 0,00690048 |
| HCF1R1 | host cell factor C1 regulator 1 (XPO1 dependant) | NM_017885.1 | -3,04655466 | 0,03340812 |
| EPHB1 | EphB1 | NM_004441.2 | -3,077236743 | 0,00184240 |
| STAT6 | signal transducer and activator of transcription 6 | NM_003153.3 | -3,149635132 | 0,02113423 |
| FLJ44290;FLJ40427 | FLJ44290 protein;hypothetical protein FLJ40427 | NM_198564.1 | -3,152907721 | 0,00324281 |
| C9orf20 | chromosome 9 open reading frame 20 | NM_194252.1 | -3,15933808 | 0,03746551 |
| TBC1D14 | TBC1 domain family, member 14 | NM_020773.1 | -3,161111542 | 0,04015687 |
| ARG99 | ARG99 protein | NM_031920.2 | -3,161562977 | 0,02107504 |
| PTPLA | protein tyrosine phosphatase-like | NM_014241.2 | -3,213100401 | 0,03483291 |
| WASF1 | WAS protein family, member 1 | NM_003931.1 | -3,22989832 | 0,00418642 |
| TNFRSF11A | tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily, member 11a | NM_003839.2 | -3,232988469 | 0,01695019 |
| UNQ467 | KIPV467 | NM_207392.1 | -3,268451968 | 0,04318428 |
| p30 | nuclear protein p30 | NM_181716.1 | -3,305220443 | 0,04164248 |
| FADS3 | fatty acid desaturase 3 | NM_021727.3 | -3,305353354 | 0,03316236 |
| CA1 | carbonic anhydrase I | NM_001738.1 | -3,311572856 | 0,04357240 |
| APG-1 | heat shock protein (hsp110 family) | NM_014278.2 | -3,442031614 | 0,04006489 |
| USP6 | ubiquitin specific protease 6 (Tre-2 oncogene) | NM_004505.1 | -3,453328355 | 0,02666402 |
| GAD1 | glutamate decarboxylase 1 (brain, 67kDa) | NM_013445.2 | -3,476204576 | 0,02665116 |
| CDK6 | cyclin dependent kinase 6 | NM_0259 | -3,484443523 | 0,022382149 |
| FLJ39660 | hypothetical protein FLJ39660 | NM_173646.1 | -3,561837922 | 0,00944553 |
| GJA7 | gap junction protein, alpha 7, 45kDa (connexin 45) | NM_005497.1 | -3,603654302 | 0,03225836 |
| CAMKK1 | calcium/calmodulin-dependent protein kinase kinase 1, alpha | NM_172207.1 | -3,639015744 | 0,02374530 |
| FGF11 | fibroblast growth factor 11 | NM_004112.2 | -3,649328948 | 0,01238833 |
| NUP98 | nucleoporin 98kDa | NM_139132.1 | -3,723772134 | 0,02751998 |
| SAMD6 | sterile alpha motif domain containing 6 | NM_173551.1 | -3,762799547 | 0,02035659 |
| DHFR | dihydrofolate reductase | NM_000791.2 | -3,802491612 | 0,02419723 |
| LOC90736 | hypothetical protein BC000919 | NM_138362.1 | -3,866042153 | 0,04752496 |
| THR8 | thyroid hormone receptor, beta | NM_000461.2 | -3,982089039 | 0,01593348 |
| FLJ14721 | hypothetical protein FLJ14721 | NM_032829.1 | -3,991365859 | 0,00001311 |
| CHRNA6 | cholinergic receptor, nicotinic, alpha polypeptide 6 | NM_004198.2 | -4,075482568 | 0,00502794 |
| FLJ20366 | hypothetical protein FLJ20366 | NM_017786.1 | -4,109840547 | 0,01359293 |
| BAI2 | brain-specific angiogenesis inhibitor 2 | NM_001703.1 | -4,218868111 | 0,01046179 |
| EOMES | eomesodermin homolog (Xenopus laevis) | NM_005442.2 | -4,389573855 | 0,03355971 |
| SPP1 | secreted phosphoprotein 1 (osteopontin) | NM_000582.2 | -4,581280352 | 0,03351116 |
| FABP5 | fatty acid binding protein 5 (psoriasis-associated) | NM_001444.1 | -4,628203995 | 0,00444101 |
| KHDRBS3 | KH domain containing, RNA binding | NM_006558.1 | -5,173604555 | 0,03521303 |
| CST2 | cystatin SA | NM_001322.2 | -5,226390842 | 0,01574889 |
| GDAP1L1 | ganglioside-induced differentiation-associated protein 1-like 1 | NM_024034.3 | -5,323266182 | 0,02285970 |
| TRIB2 | tribbles homolog 2 (Drosophila) | NM_021643.1 | -6,171498205 | 0,01520587 |

Supplementary Table 3: Significantly over-represented Gene Ontology based on PANTHER annotation database

| Molecular Function | Observed Genes | P-value |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Kinase inhibitor | 5 | 2,88E-03 |
| Other transfer/carrier protein | 9 | 4,20E-03 |
| Cysteine protease | 8 | 6,10E-03 |
| Select regulatory molecule | 41 | 6,52E-03 |
| Ubiquitin-protein ligase | 12 | 6,54E-03 |
| Carbohydrate transporter | 4 | 8,17E-03 |
| Cytokine receptor | 6 | 1,44E-02 |
| Interleukin receptor | 4 | 1,45E-02 |
| Other enzyme regulator | 5 | 3,42E-02 |
| Molecular function unclassified | 308 | 3,60E-02 |
| Kinase modulator | 8 | 3,78E-02 |
| Other cytokine receptor | 2 | 4,62E-02 |

| Pathway | Observed Genes | P-value |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Interleukin signaling pathway | 16 | 3,75E-03 |
| Folate biosynthesis | 2 | 6,79E-03 |
| JAK/STAT signaling pathway | 3 | 1,71E-02 |
| Formyltetrahydroformate biosynthesis | 2 | 2,06E-02 |
| Fructose galactose metabolism | 2 | 4,04E-02 |
| Nicotine degradation | 2 | 4,62E-02 |

| Biological Process | Observed Genes | P-value |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Interferon-mediated immunity | 8 | 2,44E-02 |
| Lipid and fatty acid binding | 5 | 4,95E-02 |

Most significant molecular functions, pathways and biological processes over-represented by STAT6 dependent regulated genes in L1236 cells.
 Analysis is based on the classification by PANTHER TM Classification System
[\[http://www.pantherdb.org\]](http://www.pantherdb.org)

Supplementary Table 4

Potential STAT and STAT6 binding sites and their matrix similarity identified by using HMspector algorithm (www.genomatix.de) Binding site position is assigned from the predicted Transcriptional Start Site (TSS) of the named Ensemble Transcript (www.ensembl.org)

| potential STAT target gene | type of STAT | position from TSS | matrix similarity | sequence (ed: ci-value > capitals: core sequence) |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| sSTAT induced genes | | | | |
| ASP7 ENST003 | STAT | - 191 - 193 | 0.1 | tatatttca GGA taacct |
| | STAT | - 1877 - 1859 | 0.4 | aacatttg GGA catggg |
| | STAT | - 140 - 1385 | 0.6 | taacttag GGA aatct |
| | STAT | - 1186 - 1168 | 0.9 | ttacttt GGA accaca |
| | STAT | - 50 - 484 | 0.4 | gatcttcg GGA atattt |
| | STAT | - 444 - 426 | 0.72 | agctttgaa GGA gtacc |
| | STAT | - 6951 | 1 | gttgttccg GGA aaaaac |
| | STAT | - 37 - 19 | 0.6 | gctgtcccg GGA actgca |
| PTPRQ ENST008 | STAT | - 338 - 329 | 0.7 | cagg TTC aa gaataatgta |
| | STAT6 | - 3265 - 3247 | 0.43 | catc TC tctgaaaacctc |
| | STAT | - 320 - 3183 | 0.8 | tgttgtcaa GGA Acaggaa |
| | STAT | - 30 302 | 0.1 | agttttct GGA taaaaaaa |
| | STAT | - 206 - 208 | 0 | cactttag GGA gcacaca |
| | STAT | - 569 551 | 0.76 | ttagtttt GGA Agcagg |
| | STAT | - 37 - 19 | 0.1 | ctcttgc GGA gtcaaa |
| | STAT6 | -221 - 239 | 0.63 | cgtg TC taagaaacgc |
| NAT5 ENST006 | STAT6 | - 296 - 288 | 0 | aaat TTC caagaacccag |
| | STAT | - 2641 - 2623 | 0.9 | agaattgct GGA Acccagg |
| | STAT | - 201 - 263 | 0.9 | cacc TTC Ttgaaaaactg |
| | STAT | - 102 - 104 | 0.4 | cttt TTC Ttgaatcc |
| | STAT | - 544 - 526 | 0.9 | tgtc TTC Actgaatttgt |
| | STAT6 | - 344 - 326 | 0.3 | cttt TTC catgaaatga |
| | STAT | - 67 - 42 | 0.4 | agac TTC Tgagaaatttt |
| | | | | |
| sSTAT repressed genes | | | | |
| EPHB ENST005 | STAT6 | - 2820 280 | 0.42 | aggc TTC tgggagggtg |
| | STAT | - 2581 - 2563 | 0.13 | ccatgtc TTC GGAAggcgg |
| | STAT6 | - 874 - 856 | 0.49 | aggc TTC gcagaaaaaga |
| | STAT | - 733 - 715 | 0.6 | acag TTC Acagaacagtgc |
| | STAT | -70 88 | 0.3 | agcgctccg GGA gtccg |
| SP2 ENST001 | STAT6 | - 240 - 2383 | 0.73 | attt TTC cctgaaactta |
| | STAT6 | - 2360 2342 | 0.77 | ctaa TTC tcagaaaaatcc |
| | STAT | - 1788 - 1770 | 0.8 | cactttcga GGA gaacaa |
| | STAT | - 1658 - 1640 | 0.2 | tgcg TTC ta gaaggtaac |
| | STAT | - 339 321 | 0 | agtttttag GGA ggctaa |
| | STAT6 | -1 - 17 | 0.9 | gacc TC cggaaatcg |
| | STAT6 | -4 - 14 | 0.86 | cagc TC cggaaagagac |

6 Manuscript 2

STAT6 and STAT1 are essential antagonistic regulators of cell survival in classical Hodgkin lymphoma cell line

Das klassische Hodgkin Lymphom (cHL) ist unter anderem durch die konstitutive Aktivierung verschiedener Signalwege gekennzeichnet, zu denen auch der JAK/STAT-Signalweg zählt. Diese Arbeit zeigt, dass das Ausschalten von STAT6 durch shRNAs in cHL-Zelllinien zu Apoptose führt. Mit Hilfe von Microarray-Analysen wurde eine Reihe neuer interessanter potentieller STAT6-Zielgene im cHL identifiziert, die ihrerseits wiederum wichtige regulatorische Funktionen besitzen. Unter anderem führte das Ausschalten von STAT6 zu einer erhöhten Expression und Aktivierung von STAT1, dessen Überexpression in der cHL-Zelllinie L1236 ebenfalls Apoptose induzierte. Dies zeigt, dass STAT6 und STAT1 wichtige antagonistische Funktionen in der Pathogenese des cHL haben.

Histone lysine methylation by polycomb group proteins plays a major role in B-cell specific gene silencing and protects classical Hodgkin lymphoma cells from apoptosis

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Running title: B-cell gene silencing in cHL by PcG proteins

Abstract

Classical Hodgkin lymphoma (cHL) is characterized by downregulation of many B-cell specific genes. Several indications suggest epigenetic processes to be responsible for silencing of B-cell specific genes, especially DNA promoter methylation. Here, we show that besides DNA promoter methylation histone lysine methylation is also involved in silencing of B-cell specific genes in cHL cell lines. Trimethylation of lysine 27 on histone H3 (H3K27me3), a mark of silenced chromatin associate with B-cell specific genes in cHL cells, but not in Burkitt lymphoma cells. Several strategies were applied to determine the functional significance of this epigenetic modification. Polycomb repressive complex 2 (PRC2) proteins, which are responsible for H3K27me3 were down regulated by a specific inhibitor and by the expression of specific shRNAs. This resulted in a reconstitution of the expression of essential B-cell genes and an induction of apoptosis in cHL cell lines but not in Burkitt lymphoma cells. Furthermore, overexpression of the catalytic domain of JMJD3, which is capable to demethylate H3K27me3, also reconstitute B-cell gene expression and induced apoptosis in cHL thus confirming the reversibility of epigenetic gene silencing. Our results clearly demonstrate that H3K27me3 is essential for the loss of B-cell phenotype in cHL and support survival of these cells. Reexpression of B-cell specific genes by inhibition of PRC2 proteins correlates with the induction of apoptosis. Hence PRC2 inhibitors appear to be potential therapeutic agents for cHL treatment.

Keywords:

classical Hodgkin Lymphoma (cHL), Polycomb Repressive Complex 2 (PRC2), histone lysine methylation, histone lysine demethylases, apoptosis

Introduction

Classical Hodgkin Lymphoma (cHL) is a lymphoid neoplasm, whose malignant cells, the Hodgkin and Reed-Sternberg (HRS) cells are derived from germinal centre (GC) B-cells as indicated by the expression of rearranged immunoglobulin genes and somatic hypermutation (1-3). Despite their origin, HRS cells lack the expression of B-cell specific transcription factors like POU2F2/OCT2, POU2AF/BOB.1 and SPI1/PU.1 (4-6), which are important for proper B-cell function (7-9). Additionally, B-cell receptor (CD79A, CD79B) (10) and typical B-lymphocyte markers such as BLNK, CD19, CD20, SYK, TNFRSF17/BCMA and LCK are either not expressed or expressed by only a small proportion of the malignant HRS cells (11-14). The loss of B-cell phenotype is unique among B-cell lymphomas and is part of the neoplastic transformation process leading to cHL. B-cells lacking the expression of B-cell receptor (BCR) are normally eliminated by apoptosis. The loss of B-cell specific gene expression program is suggested to support the survival of the BCR-less HRS cell precursors (11, 15).

In the last years a number of approaches predicted epigenetic modifications to be responsible for the loss of B-cell phenotype, especially DNA promoter methylation. Promoters of POU2AF1/BOB1, SPI-1/PU1, CD79A, SYK and CD19 are silenced by DNA methylation (16, 17). However, recent work showed that DNA demethylation alone or in combination with histone acetylation is not able to restore B-cell gene expression in cHL cells at a level comparable to B-cells (18). Besides DNA methylation, histone lysine modification, namely dimethylation of lysine 9 on histone H3, was described to be responsible for the downregulation of immunoglobulin expression in cHL (19). Additionally, recent work predicted, that especially in cancer cells trimethylation of H3K27 (H3K27me3) premarks genes for DNA *de novo* methylation (20). A connection between these two epigenetic marks was also observed in aggressive B cell lymphomas. DNA Methylation analysis revealed that the group of *de novo* methylated genes in all analyzed lymphoma subtypes was significantly enriched for Polycomb Group (PcG) target genes of embryonic stem cells (21). The polycomb repressive complex 2 (PRC2) protein EZH2 was described to control DNA methylation directly (22). PcG proteins EZH2, SUZ12 and EED, which built the PRC2 mediate trimethylation of H3K27. All these observations raise the question, whether trimethylation of H3K27 is also involved in B-cell gene silencing in cHL and may serve as a prerequisite for *de novo* DNA methylation in these cells. An altered expression pattern of PcG proteins has already been described for Reed-Sternberg cells and Hodgkin lymphoma (23-26)

In this study, we could indeed detect enhanced trimethylation of H3K27 at B-cell specific genes in cHL cells but not in Burkitt lymphoma cells or cHL cells which do express these genes. This correlates with the binding of the SUZ12.

Since the recent discovery of histone demethylases it is well established that histone lysine methylation is a more dynamic process than previously assumed. Several studies suggest that deregulation of histone demethylases contribute to oncogenic transformation by enhancing histone methylation (27). We analyzed here, whether histone demethylases inhibiting H3K27me3 are also involved in the loss of B-cell phenotype. In fact, overexpression of the catalytic JmjC domain of JMJD3, a histone demethylase responsible for the demethylation of H3K27me3 increased expression of B-cell specific genes

The results from this study suggest an important role for H3K27me3 and PRC2 proteins in B-cell gene silencing and survival of cHL cells. Inhibition of H3K27me3 using the PRC2 inhibitor DZNep or shRNAs against the PRC2 proteins EZH2, SUZ12 or EED increased the expression of B-cell specific gene and induced apoptosis in cHL cell lines. This was also achieved by the over expression of the catalytic JmjC domain of histone lysine demethylase JMJD3. Our results propose H3K27me3 as target for therapeutic intervention in cHL, because inhibition of this epigenetic modification leads to restoration of the B-cell phenotype which correlates with the induction of apoptosis of cHL cells.

Materials and methods

Cell lines and culture conditions

The Hodgkin lymphoma cell lines L428 (28), L1236 (29) as well as Ramos cells from Burkitt lymphoma (30) were grown in RPMI 1640 medium supplemented with 10% fetal calf serum, 2 nM L-glutamine and penicillin/streptomycin.

Plasmids and viral infection

The lentiviral vector pVIG (derived from K. Überla, Bochum, Germany) and the packaging plasmids Δ sp2 (31) and pHIT-G (32) were kindly provided by K. Brocke-Heidrich (University Hospital Leipzig, Germany). The shRNA coding sequences (given upon request) were cloned together with the H1 Polymerase III RNA gene promoter into the pVIG vector. Transfection of packaging cells and transduction of lymphoma cells were performed as described earlier (33).

Flow cytometry

To examine lentiviral transduction efficiencies, coexpression of green fluorescent protein was monitored. Cell-cycle analysis of ethanol-fixed cells was carried out using propidium iodide staining as described earlier (34). Annexin V-APC (BD Pharmingen, Heidelberg, Germany) was used for early apoptosis detection. Samples were analyzed with FACS Canto using Diva Software (BD Biosciences, Heidelberg, Germany). The FACS analysis shown represents one out of three independently performed experiments.

Cell viability assay

Cell viability was determined by using the MTS assay, CellTiter 96® AQueous One Solution Cell Proliferation Assay (Promega, Mannheim, Germany) according to the manufacturer's protocols.

Preparation of lysates and immunoblotting

Cells were lysed in NETN buffer (0.1 M NaCl, 20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8), 1 mM EDTA, 1 mM dithiothreitol, 0,2 % (v/v) IGEPAL, 10 % (v/v) Glycerol supplemented with protease inhibitor Complete (1:25; Roche, Mannheim, Germany). Protein extracts were subjected to SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis and analyzed by western blot analysis. Immobilon™ Western HRP Substrate Luminol Reagent (Millipore, Eschborn, Germany) was used for visualization. The following antibodies were used: EED (sc-28701) from Santa Cruz Biotechnology (Heidelberg, Germany), EZH2 (pAB-039-050) from Diagenode (Liège,

Belgium), SUZ12 (07-479) and H3K27me3 (07-449) from upstate/Millipore (Eschborn, Germany), H3 (ab 1791-100) from Abcam (Cambridge, UK), flag (F3165) and tubulin (T5168) from Sigma (Munich, Germany).

Quantitative RT-PCR

Total cellular RNA was extracted using TriFast (Peqlab, Erlangen, Germany) according to the manufacturer's protocol. Aliquots of total cellular RNA (2 µg) were subjected to firststrand cDNA synthesis using First Strand cDNA Synthesis Kit (Fermentas, St. Leon-Roth, Germany). For transcript quantification, the iQ5 Real Time PCR Cycler (Bio-Rad, Munich, Germany) and absolute QPCR SYBR Green Master Mix (Thermo, Dreieich, Germany) were used. mRNA levels were normalized against endogenous 18S rRNA. Sequences of primers used for PCR are given in upon request. Unless otherwise stated, the experiments are performed three times independently and the results of qRT-PCR are presented as mean±SEM of three independently performed measurements.

Chromatin immunoprecipitation

Chromatin immunoprecipitation was performed as described earlier (33). The antibodies used for the chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP) analysis are H3K27me3 (07-449) and SUZ12 (07-379) from upstate/Millipore and IgG (sc-2027) from Santa Cruz Biotechnology. Primers for PCR analysis of the ChIP will be given upon request.

Results:

Gene expression pattern in different cHL and Burkitt lymphoma cell lines

HRS and cHL cell lines have lost their B-cell phenotype. In order to prove the distinct gene expression pattern, we first analyzed the expression of B-cell specific and cHL specific genes in several cHL-derived cell lines (L428, L1236, L540). We compared the expression levels of these genes to that in the Burkitt lymphoma cell line Ramos. Typical transcription factors important for proper B-cell development (POU2AF1/BOB1, POU2F2/Oct2, SPI1/PU.1) as well as genes encoding proteins involved in B-cell signaling (CD19, MS4A1/CD20, CD79A, CD79B, BLNK, LCK, SYK and TNFRSF17/BCMA) were analyzed. As expected Ramos cells expressed all analyzed B-cell specific genes at high levels, confirming their B-cell phenotype (Fig. 1A, B). In contrast to that, cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 did not express any of these typical B-cell genes. L540 cells reveal expression levels of the analyzed transcription factors in a range comparable to the expression level in Ramos B-cells. In line with this, the expression of *CD19*, *MS4A1/CD20* and *CD79A* was also increased in L540 cells when compared to cHL cell lines L428 and L1236, although it did not reach the expression level displayed by Ramos cells. The difference in gene expression of cHL cells compared to Ramos cells was confirmed at the level of genes described to be typical for cHL like *PHLDA2/IPL*, *TIMP*, *MUM*, *SYNDECAN* and *Rantes* (18, 35). Expression of these genes could only be detected in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 (Fig. 1C). Interestingly, L540 cells also showed no detectable expression levels of the typical cHL genes. These results led us to the conclusion that L428 and L1236 cell lines represent best the cHL typical loss of B-cell phenotype. Both cells lines showed the lowest expression levels of B-cell genes but the highest expression levels of typical cHL genes. L540 cells in contrast display a phenotype more close to B-cells. Taken together various components of the BCR signaling cascade are severely inhibited in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236. This includes the tyrosine kinase SYK which is normally activated by BCR crosslinking and the scaffold protein BLNK, which is phosphorylated by SYK and recruits further downstream signaling molecules of the BCR (36, 37). Thus, our data confirmed that HRS cells have not only lost the BCR but also the corresponding signaling pathway.

Trimethylation of lysine 27 on histone H3 and association of polycomb group proteins at B-cell genes in cHL cell lines

DNA methylation of B-cell specific genes has already been described in cHL cell lines (17). Since a number of recent publications revealed a connection between PRC2 mediated trimethylation of H3K27 and *de novo* DNA methylation (20, 22, 38), we wondered whether H3K27me3 contributes to silencing of B-cell phenotype in cHL. We therefore performed

chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP) in different cell lines with antibodies against H3K27me3 to analyze the presence of this epigenetic modification at typical B-cell genes. In cHL cell lines L428 and L1236, which do not express any of the analyzed B-cell genes. H3K27me3 modification could be detected at B-cell genes. No or only a very low level of this modification was detected at the B-cell genes in the Burkitt lymphoma cell line Ramos (Fig. 2A). L540 cells also showed no or low level of H3K27me3 at their B-cell specific genes. These results are consistent with the differences in gene expression that we observed between the different cell lines before and assign the L428 and L1236 cells as the best models for cHL. L540 represented the B-cell phenotype like Ramos B cells.

Our results indicate that the expression levels of B-cell genes in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 are not only silenced by DNA promoter methylation as described earlier (17), but also by the repressive chromatin modification H3K27me3. To analyze the involvement of Pcg proteins in silencing of B-cell genes in cHL, we performed ChIP experiments with an antibody against SUZ12. SUZ12 binding may defines an active PRC2 complex because a high degree of overlap between binding of SUZ12, EED and H3K27m3 modification has been observed in promoter microarray experiments (39). In fact, we detected binding of SUZ12 to the silenced B-cell specific genes in L428 and L1236 cells (Fig. 2B). Taken together these results draw to the conclusion that PRC2 mediated H3K27me3 plays a crucial role in silencing of B-cell specific genes in cHL cell lines.

Treatment with the PRC2 inhibitor 3-Deazaneplanocin results in an increased expression of B-cell genes and induction of apoptosis in cHL cells

The S-adenosylhomocysteine inhibitor 3-Deazaneplanocin (DZNep) has been described to effectively deplete cellular levels of the PRC2 components EZH2, SUZ12, and EED (40). It thereby inhibits the PRC2 mediated trimethylation of H3K27, but not the methylation of H3K9. We analyzed the impact of DZNep in the different cell lines. Efficient inhibition of the PRC2 proteins EED, EZH2 and SUZ12 by DZNep treatment was confirmed by western blot analysis. This correlated with a decreased level of H3K27me3 (Fig. 3A). Inhibition of PRC2 induced the expression of all of the silenced B-cell specific genes in the cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 (Fig 3B). A stronger induction of CD79A was observed in L1236, whereas LCK was better induced in L428 cells. In contrast to that, the expression level of these genes was only slightly increased in L540 and either not affected or even decreased in Ramos cells. These results confirm the important role of Pcg proteins and H3K27me3 for B-cell silencing in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236.

Treatment with DZNep not only increased the expression of the B-cell specific genes in cHL cell lines, it also decreased cell viability of L428 and L1236 cells, which was detected by MTS assay (Fig 3C). In contrast to that, no effect of DZNep treatment was observed on the viability of L540 and Ramos cells.

Cell cycle analysis by FACS showed, that DZNep treatment increased the SubG1 population in L428 and L1236 cells indicating enhanced cell death of these cells (Fig. 3D). The induction of apoptosis in L428 and L1236 cells by treatment with the PRC2 inhibitor was further confirmed by annexin V staining (Fig. 3E). No induction of apoptosis was observed when L540 and Ramos cells were treated (Fig. 3D). Hence, PRC2 is involved in B-cell gene silencing and essential for the survival of cHL cell lines L428 and L1236. The expression of the B-cell genes and the survival of L540 and Ramos Burkitt lymphoma cells is not dependent on PRC2 proteins.

Knockdown of individual PRC2 proteins leads to restoration of the B-cell phenotype and induction of apoptosis in cHL cell lines

To exclude unspecific effects of the PRC2 inhibitor, we designed shRNAs against the PRC2 proteins EED, EZH2 and SUZ12. ShRNAs were stably expressed by lentiviral transduction in L428, L1236, L540 and Ramos cells. Efficient transduction (~85%) was confirmed by FACS analysis on the basis of green fluorescent protein coexpression (data not shown). Non-targeting (scrambled) shRNAs were used as a control. A down regulation could be achieved for all of the different PRC2 proteins, but SUZ12 was most efficiently depleted (Fig 4A). Trimethylation of H3K27 decreased in correlation with the down regulation of the PRC2 proteins and led to a strong induction of B-cell specific genes CD79A, CD79B, CD19, MS4A1/CD20, BLNK, LCK and SYK in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 (Fig 4B). Knockdown even raised up the gene expression levels of CD79A, CD19 and MS4A1/CD20 in L428 and L1236 cells to the level detected in untreated Ramos cells, which reveal high levels of B-cell gene expression (Fig. 4C). The already high expression levels of B-cell genes in L540 and Ramos cells were not affected (Fig. 4B).

Corroborating our results observed after DZNep treatment, knockdown of individual PRC2 proteins by shRNAs also increased apoptosis in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 as indicated by the increased SubG1 population observed by FACS analysis. A detectable but much lower amount of apoptotic cell fraction was detected when L540 and Ramos cells were transduced with the shRNA expressing virus (Fig. 4D). Similar effects were detected when L1236 and L428 cells were transduced with the control vector (scr), thus indicating that this obviously resulted from viral transduction. Taken together, expression of PRC2 proteins EED, EZH2 and SUZ12 and trimethylation of H3K27 is essential for B-cell silencing and cell survival in cHL cell lines. This further confirmed our results from the inhibitor treatment.

Potential function of histone demethylases in restoration of B-cell phenotype and induction of apoptosis in cHL cell lines

We could not detect any significant differences in PRC2 protein expression levels in the different cell lines (data not shown), although an altered expression pattern of PcG proteins had been described for Reed-Sternberg cells and Hodgkin lymphoma (23-26). We therefore wondered whether the expression of histone lysine demethylases is altered in cHL. The expression of the two histone demethylases, JMJD3 and UTX which are known to remove the trimethylation of H3K27 was analyzed at the RNA level, because suitable antibodies were not available for us. We did not find a decreased expression but even detect an enhanced expression for JMJD3 in L428, L1236 and L540 cells and for UTX in L428 and L1236 cells (Fig 5A). We could not totally rule out a potential participation of these enzymes in H3K27me3 silencing of B cell genes in cHL cells, since the protein level and the function of these enzymes can still be altered. Interestingly, inactivating somatic hypermutations of UTX were recently described in multiple tumor types (41).

In order to analyze a potential function of histone demethylases on gene expression and cell survival of cHL cells as general as possible, we overexpressed the catalytic JmjC domain of JMJD3 in cHL and Burkitt lymphoma cell lines. This domain was shown to remove H3K27 trimethylation (42). Efficient expression of the catalytic domain was analyzed by western blot analysis in the different cell lines (Fig 5B). This correlates nicely with a decrease of the global H3K27me3 in the analyzed cell extracts indicating that the Flag-tagged domain is catalytic active. Overexpression of the JmjC domain induced the expression of several of the analyzed B-cell genes (Fig 5C) in cHL cells, whereas no effect was observed in Ramos and L540 cells (Fig. 5C). The induction of the B-cell specific genes was similar to that observed after shEZH2 knockdown (Fig. 4B) supporting that the JmjC domain functions mainly by counteracting the PRC2. However, some of the analyzed genes (*CD79A*, *CD20*, *LCK*, *SYK*) were more efficiently induced by PRC2 knockdown, indicating that here a specific targeting of demethylases are required (compare Fig. 4B and 5B and see supp. table 1). JmjC overexpression also increased the apoptotic cell death in L428 and L1236 cells as detected by an increased SubG1 fraction in FACS analysis (Fig. D). Although this effect was not as strong as the effect observed by PRC2 knockdown it supports the hypothesis that induction of B-cell specific gene expression may counteract cell survival in cHL.

Discussion

One of the characteristic features of cHL cells is their loss of B-cell phenotype, although they are mainly derived from B-cell origin. HRS cells do not express genes specific for B-cells but express markers of several lineages. Thus, providing a phenotype that is unlike any other cell of the hematopoietic system. This is unique among B-cell lymphomas (11, 35). It was postulated that HRS cells are derived from crippled preapoptotic B-cells with disturbed BCR expression. Normally GC B-cells that have lost BCR expression by somatic hypermutation rapidly undergo apoptosis (43, 44). However, B-lineage-derived HRS cells survive without a functional BCR. The loss of B-cell specific gene expression program is proposed to support the survival of the HRS cells and their precursors without BCR while it prevents apoptotic cell death (11, 15). The mechanism leading to the dramatic loss of B-cell phenotype and its relevance for the pathogenesis of cHL is still not fully understood.

We confirmed the loss of B-cell phenotype by comparing the expression of 11 B-cell specific genes coding for transcription factors (POU2F2 (Oct2) and POU2AF1 (BOB1)) and for proteins involved in BCR signaling (CD79A, CD79B, CD19, CD20, BLNK, LCK, SYK and TNFRSF17) in cHL cell lines and a Burkitt lymphoma cell line. The cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 express none of these genes which in contrast show high expression level in the Burkitt lymphoma cell line Ramos. Interestingly, cHL cell line L540 do express *CD79B*, *CD19* and *CD20* at a level up to half of the level that was detected in Ramos cells, indicating that these cells do not have fully lost the B-cell phenotype.

One explanation for the loss of B-cell phenotype of HRS cells is their deregulated transcription factor network. The transcription factors POU2F2 (Oct2), POU2AF1 (BOB1) and SPI-1 (PU.1), which are important for the activation of numerous B-cell genes, are not expressed in HRS cells. According to that, their target genes are also not expressed (4, 5, 45). Ectopic expression of POU2F2, POU2AF1, EBF and SPI1 can induce the activity of reporter gen constructs containing B-cell gene promoters. However, this was not sufficient to reactivate transcription of endogenous B-cell genes (4, 6, 46, 47). This suggests additional mechanisms being responsible for the defect B-cell gene expression in cHL.

Epigenetic modifications were identified to be involved in the loss of B-cell phenotype in cHL. CpG methylation of a number of B-cell genes, such as *CD19*, *CD20*, *CD79B*, *TNFRSF17*, *SYK* and *LCK* as well as the transcription factors *POU2F2* and *SPI1* had been described (16, 17). Treatment with the DNA demethylating agent 5-aza-dC resulted in reexpression of these genes in cHL cell lines. However, Ehlers and colleagues described that DNA demethylation alone or in combination with histone deacetylase inhibitor (HDACi) treatment (TSA) is not

able to restore expression of B-cell specific genes at a level that is comparable to that in cells which represent a B-cell phenotype (18). These results imply other mechanisms, beside the disturbed expression of transcription factors and DNA methylation, to be involved in silencing of B-cell specific genes in cHL.

We analyzed in this study the impact of the epigenetic modification H3K27 trimethylation which is mediated by the Pcg complex, since this mark was already estimated to premark genes for *de novo* methylation in cancer cells (20, 22). *De novo* methylation analysis of colorectal cancer and aggressive B-cell lymphomas revealed that DNA methylation mostly targets genes repressed by Pcg proteins in embryonic stem cells (21, 38). It was suggested that H3K27 trimethylation by Pcg complexes can lead to cancer-specific DNA hypermethylation which predisposed cells toward malignancy very early.

In fact, using ChIP analysis we could detect trimethylation of H3K27 at a number of B-cell genes silenced in cHL cell lines (Fig 2A). The involvement of PRC2 proteins was confirmed by the binding of SUZ12 to these genes in cHL cell lines (Fig 2B). SUZ12 was estimated to be a representative substitute for the active PRC2 complex before (39). These results, which demonstrate the involvement of PRC2 mediated H3K27me3 in B-cell gene silencing in cHL cell lines did not yet prove the functional consequence of this modification.

In order to analyze the impact of the H3K27me3 modification on B-cell specific gene silencing and on cHL transformation we employ three strategies: i) treatment with the inhibitor of H3K27me3/PRC2 (DZNep). ii) shRNA knockdown of specific PRC2 components and iii) overexpression of the catalytic domain of the H3K27me3 demethylase JMJD3. All three strategies confirmed that PRC2 mediated trimethylation of H3K27 is essential for B-cell specific gene silencing and also for the suppression of apoptotic cells death in cHL. This implicates an important role of H3K27me3 and the Pcg proteins in the pathogenesis of cHL.

DZNep was described to inhibit PRCs mediated H3K27me3 efficiently (40, 48). Treatment of HRS cells with this inhibitor resulted not only in an increased expression of B-cell genes in cHL cell lines, but also enhanced apoptotic cell death (Fig 3B, D and E). This effect was not observed when Ramos Burkitt lymphoma cells which already express all of the analyzed B-cell specific genes or L540 cHL cells which express CD79B, CD19 and CD20 were treated with the inhibitor. Our results would thus confirm, under the assumption that L540 cells do not represent the cHL phenotype, that loss of BCR-signaling is a prerequisite of HRS cells to escape apoptotic cell death (11, 15).

The Pcg gene silencing depends mainly on the two different PRC complexes PRC1 and PRC2. PRC2 induced the methylation of H3K27 via its catalytic subunit EZH2. PRC1 subsequently recognizes this modification and manifest the silencing of genes carrying this

modification (49). Increased expression of PcG proteins had already been described in numerous types of cancer (50). In B-cell lymphomas increased expression of the PcG protein BMI1 had been detected (51-54), which acts in cooperation with Myc as an oncogene in a mouse model (51, 53, 54). Increased expression of BMI1 was also detected in cHL (23, 24, 26). Here, BMI1 is coexpressed with EZH2 whereas these proteins are mutually exclusively expressed in subsets of normal germinal centre B cells (24). Knockdown of BMI1 in cHL cells diminished cell survival and led to increased expression of a number of tumor suppressor genes (26).

Since PRC2 are estimated to induce the first step in PcG mediated gene silencing we analyze the specific function of the different components of PRC2 in cHL. Knowdown of PRC2 members EZH2, SUZ12 or EED resulted in strong induction of apoptosis in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 (Fig 4D). This clearly indicates an important role of PcG proteins in protecting cHL cells against apoptotic cell death. Similar to the increased expression of B-cell specific genes after DZNep treatment, expression levels of these genes were strongly increased when PRC2 shRNAs are expressed. However, the induction level was much higher, up to 30.000-fold induction was achieved e.g. for *CD79B* in both cHL cell lines L428 and L1236 cells (Fig 4B and suppl. table 1). The weaker induction after DZNep treatment could probably be explained by the limited specificity of this inhibitor. It was described that DZNep in addition to trimethylation of H3K27m also inhibits trimethylation of H3K4, a transcriptional activating chromatin modification. In embryonic stem cells, genes which are poised for activation during differentiation contain “bivalent” domains with both modifications (55-57). It will be interesting to see if the B-cell marker genes in cHL also carry both modifications. This would explain why DZNep which inhibits both modifications, may counteract full activation of these genes.

The highest induction of gene expression in most of the analyzed B-cell genes was observed when EZH2 and SUZ12 were depleted. The expression level of *CD79A*, *CD19* and *CD20* in L428 and L1236 cells expressing EZH2-shRNA was comparable to that observed in Ramos cells (Fig 5C). This indicates that trimethylation of H3K27 by PcG is the essential silencing mechanism for these genes. DNA methylation and Histone deacetylation are obviously not so important. Although treatment of cHL with the DNA demethylating agent 5-aza-dC alone or in combination with the HDACi TSA can induce B-cell gene expression, the expression levels did by far not reached the level of compared B-cell cell lines (17, 18). Thus, our results are in line with studies in breast cancer cells. Treatment of the breast cancer cell line MCF7 with 5-aza-dC alone or also in combination with HDACi TSA was also not able to increase expression level of repressed genes in a range that was reached after upon PRC2 inhibition (40).

PcG mediated H3K27me3 can premark genes for *de novo* methylation while it recruits DNMT to the promoters of its target genes (20). An additional mechanism of H3K27me3 mediated gene silencing which is independent from DNA promoter methylation was observed in prostate cancer (58). Although we do not yet know whether H3K27me3 mediated B-cell gene silencing in cHL cell lines is accompanied with DNA methylation or whether it is an independent mechanism in cHL, we could clearly demonstrate the importance of PRC2 for the loss of B-cell gene expression and survival of cHL cell lines.

A disturbed balance between histone methylation and demethylation could be responsible for the increased H3K27me3 on B-cell specific genes in cHL cell lines. However, we did neither observe an elevation of the PRC2 components EZH2, SUZ12 or EED at the protein level nor a diminished RNA level of two known H3K27me3 specific demethylases, JMJD3 and UTX in cHL (Fig 5A). We even observed and increased expression level of the demethylases in L1236 cells. To prove if the B-cell gene silencing in cHL can still be abolished by demethylases, we over expressed the catalytic JmjC domain of JMJD3 in these cells. This resulted similar to the inhibition of PRC2 components in a highly increased expression of B-cell specific genes in cHL cells (Fig 5 C). For most of the genes the induction was not as strong as that observed by EZH2 or SUZ12 depletion, but stronger than that observed by DZNep treatment (suppl table 1). This might be due to the fact that the catalytic domain is not as efficiently recruited than the full length enzyme. Although is not known which demethylase regulates the balanced demethylation of the B-cell specific genes in cHL our results suggest that activation of demethylases can also be a strategy to revert B-cell gene silencing and induce apoptosis in cHL.

Taken together, we could clearly illustrate the important role of H3K27me3, for the loss of B-cell phenotype in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236. The inhibition of this modification using different approaches led to the restoration of the typical B-cell gene expression pattern and induced apoptosis of cHL cell lines. Although our results supports the hypothesis that the loss of B-cell specific transcription program prevent cHL cells from apoptosis, the expression of other genes involved in activation of apoptosis might also be silenced and reexpressed affected by our different strategies. Microarray analysis of cHL cell line L1236 expressing PRC2 shRNA in an inducible fashion will allow us to analyze this in future studies. Even if the mechanism how DZNep induces apoptosis in cHL cells is not yet clear, this inhibitor could open new possibilities for cHL therapy.

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Supplementary Information accompanies the paper on the leukemia website (<http://www.nature.com/leu>).

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Figure legends:

Figure 1

mRNA expression pattern of B-cell specific and B-cell inappropriate genes characteristic for cHL. qRT-PCR analysis of B-cell specific transcription factors **(a)**, B-cell specific genes with different function **(b)**, and genes characteristically expressed in cHL **(c)** was performed in cHL cell lines: L428, L1236 and L540 and in the Burkitt lymphoma cell line Ramos. Values are compared to each other in correspondance to each untreated sample. Data are presented as means \pm S.E.M. of three independent measurements.

Figure 2

Association of trimethylated lysine 27 of histone H3 and PRC2 component SUZ12 to B-cell-characteristic genes was analyzed by Chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP). ChIP analysis was performed with antibodies against **(a)** H3K27me3 and **(b)** SUZ12. As a control unspecific IgG was used. The amount of immunoprecipitated chromatin was analyzed by qPCR with primers amplifying different fragments of B-cell-specific genes. Results are shown as percentage of input DNAs in means \pm S.E.M of three independent measurements.

Figure 3

Inhibition of PRC2 proteins with DZNep. **(a)** Effects of DZNep on PRC2 proteins and H3K27me3. L428, L1236, L540 and Ramos cells were left untreated (-) or treated with 2,5 μ M DZNep for 72 h (+) and harvested for western blot analysis using antibodies detecting the indicated proteins. Equal loading was confirmed by detection of Tubulin and whole H3. **(b)** Effects of DZNep on the mRNA expression of B-cell specific genes in L428, L1236, L540 and Ramos cells. qRT-PCR analysis of B-cell specific genes in cells left untreated (neg) or treated with 2,5 μ M DZNep for 72 h (DZNep). Data are presented as means \pm S.E.M. of three independent measurements. **(c)** Effect of DZNep on the viability of L428, L1236, L540 and Ramos cells. Cells were treated with 2,5 μ M DZNep for 48 h and 72 h. Cell viability was measured by MTS assay. Differences in optical density of lysates from differentially treated cells are depicted as fold change. Values of untreated cells were set to 1 for clarity. Results are shown as the means \pm S.E.M. ($n = 4$). **(d)** Effects of DZNep on the cell cycle. Cell cycle profiles of cells left untreated or treated with 2,5 μ M DZNep for 72 h. **(e)** Induction of apoptosis in cHL cells after treatment with DZNep. Annexin V Staining was performed with L428 and L1236 cells 72 h after treatment with 2,5 μ M DZNep.

Figure 4

Depletion of PRC2 proteins restores B-cell gene expression and induces apoptotic cell death in cHL cell lines L428 and L1236. **(a)** Western blot analysis of L428, L1236, L540 and Ramos cells after stable transduction with lentiviral vectors expressing shRNAs against PRC2 proteins EED, EZH2 and SUZ12 and scrambled control. At 7d after transduction, protein extracts were prepared and PRC2 protein expression was determined. Equal loading was confirmed by detection of Tubulin. Trimethylation level of H3K27 was determined by western blot analysis using an antibody against H3K27me3. Equal amounts of histone H3 were confirmed by using an antibody against H3. **(b)** Reexpression of B-cell specific genes in cHL cell lines. qRT-PCR analysis of B-cell specific genes in L428, L1236, L540 and Ramos cells expressing shRNAs against PRC2 proteins EED, EZH2 and SUZ12 and scrambled control. Values are given as fold change corresponding to each scrambled control. **(c)** Comparison of B-cell specific gene expression of Ramos B-cell line to stably shEZH2 transduced cHL cell lines. Values are compared to each other in correspondance to untreated Ramos cells. Data shown are representative for at least three indepent experiments and presented as means ± S.E.M. of three independent measurements. **(d)** Cell cycle profiles of untreated cells (neg) and cells stably expressing shRNA against EED, EZH2, SUZ12 or a scrambled shRNA control. FACS analysis was performed 7d after transduction. Data shown represent one out of at least three independent experiments with similar results.

Figure 5

Role of histone lysine demethylases. **(a)** qRT-PCR analysis of JMJD3 and UTX in L428, L1236, L540 and Ramos cells. Results are shown as the means ± S.E.M. ($n = 3$). **(b)** Western blot analysis of L428, L1236, L540 and Ramos cells after stable transduction with lentiviral vectors expressing the catalytic JmjC domain of JMJD3 and empty vector as a control. At 7d after transduction, protein extracts were prepared and PRC2 protein expression was determined. Equal loading was confirmed by detection of Tubulin. Trimethylation level of H3K27 was determined using an antibody against H3K27me3. Equal amounts of histone H3 were confirmed by using an antibody against H3. **(c)** Reexpression of B-cell specific genes in cHL cell lines. qRT-PCR analysis of B-cell specific genes in L428, L1236, L540 and Ramos cells transduced with vectors as described in (a). Values are given as fold change corresponding to the gene expression level of cells transducer with the empty vector . Data shown are representative for at least three indepent experiments and presented as means ± S.E.M. of three independent measurements.. **(d)** Cell cycle profiles of cells left untreated or stably transduced with vectors as described in (a). FACS analysis was

performed 6 d after transduction. Data shown represent one out of at least three independent experiments with similar results.

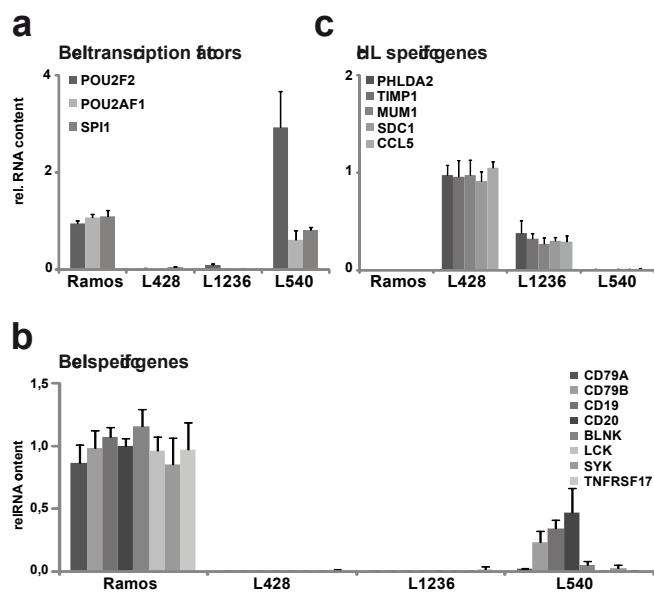
Figure 1

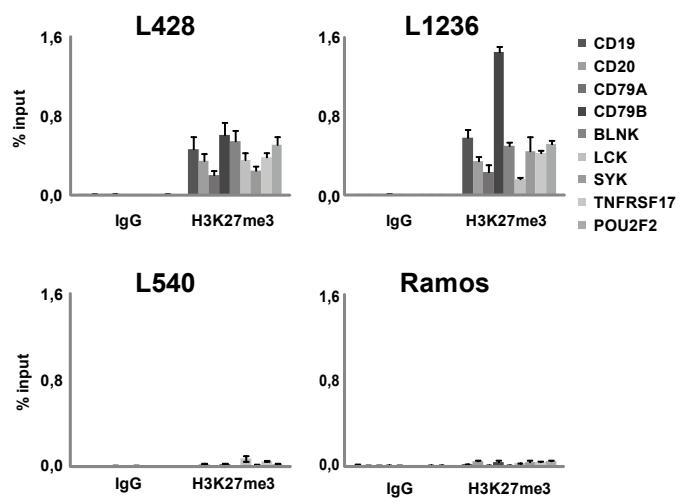
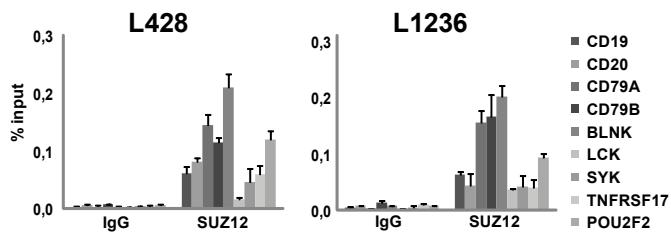
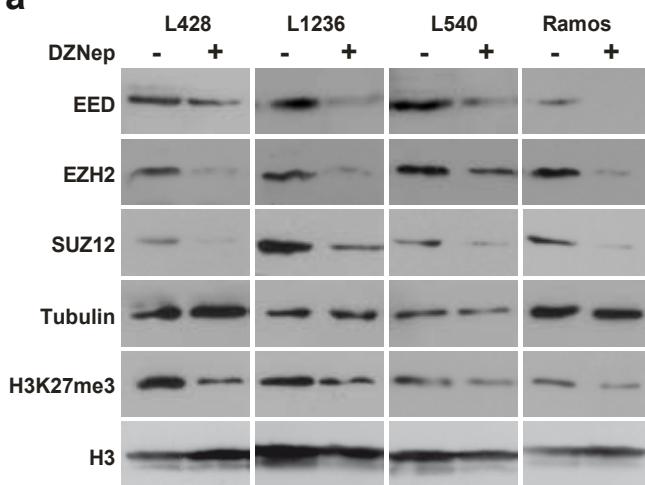
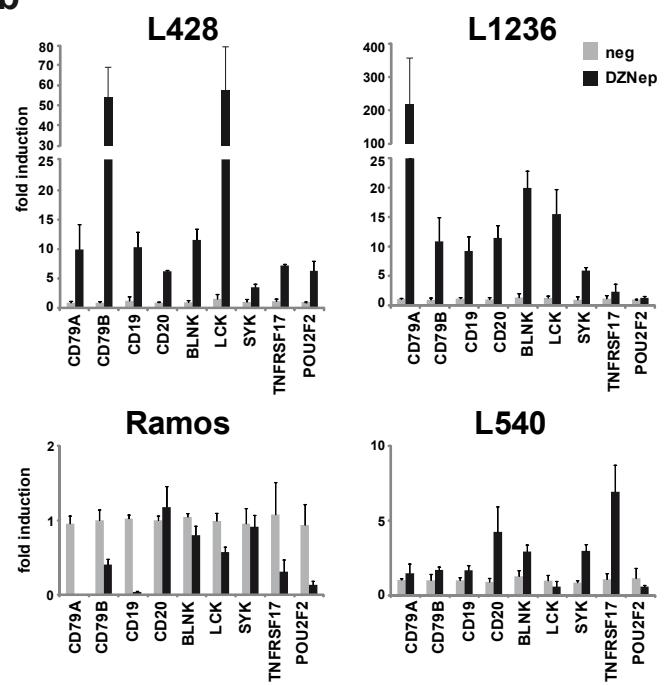
Figure 2**a****b**

Figure 3

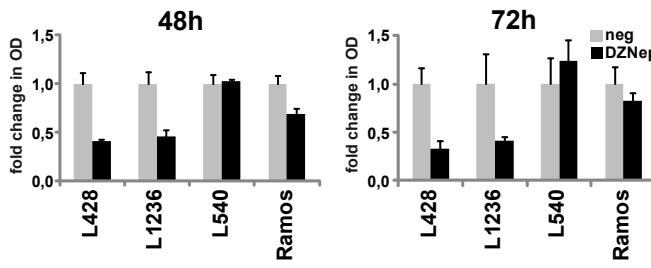
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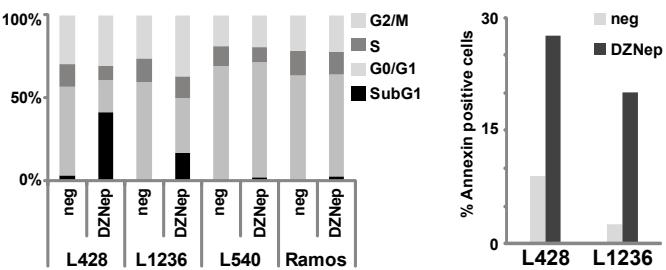
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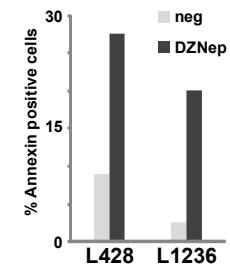
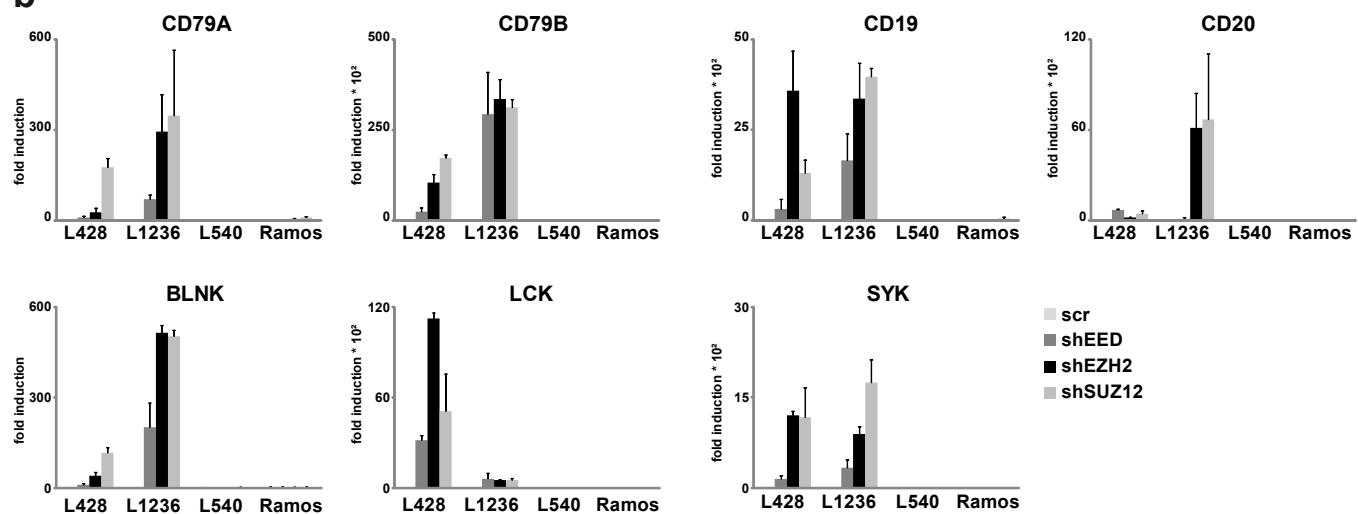


Figure 4

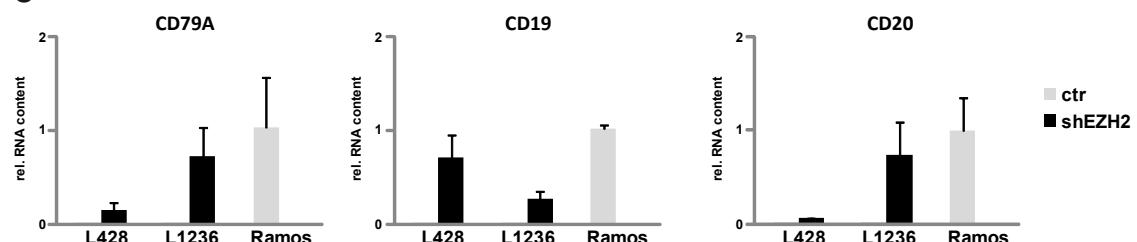
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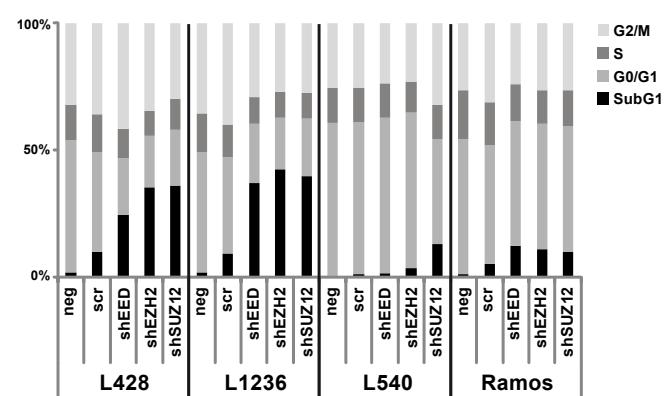
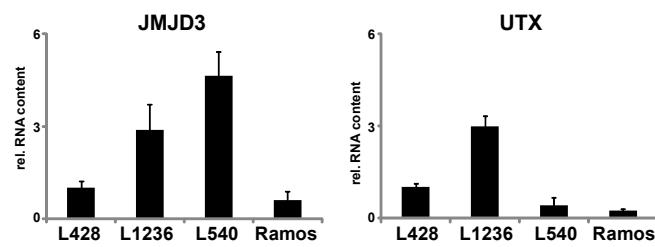
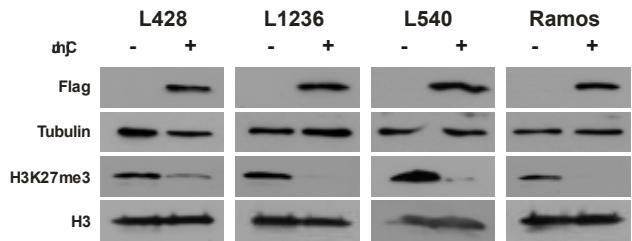


Figure 5

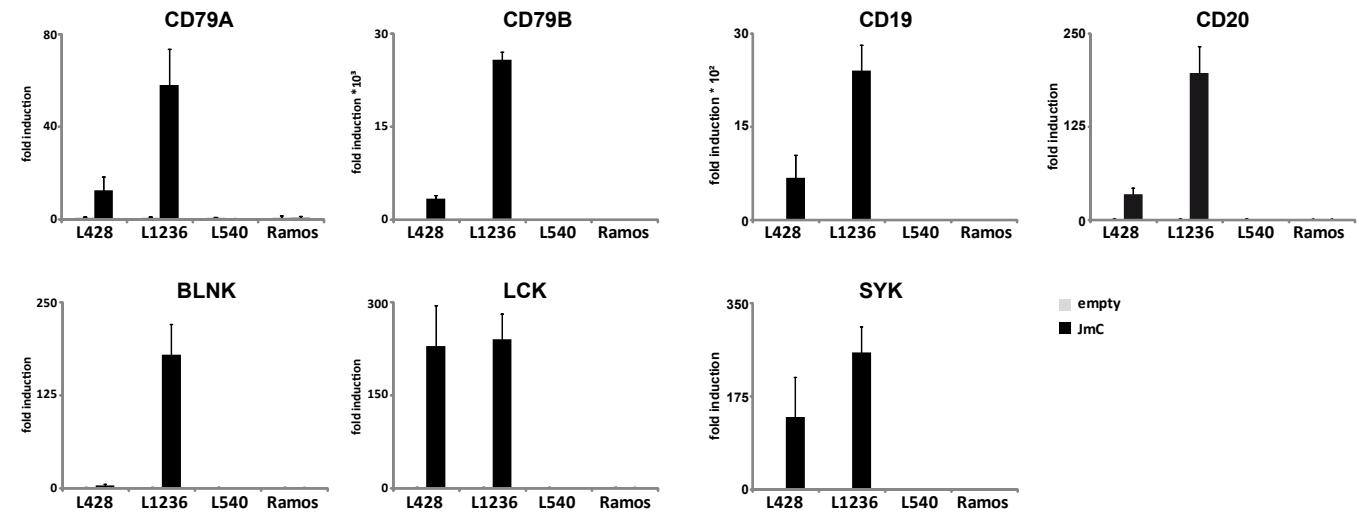
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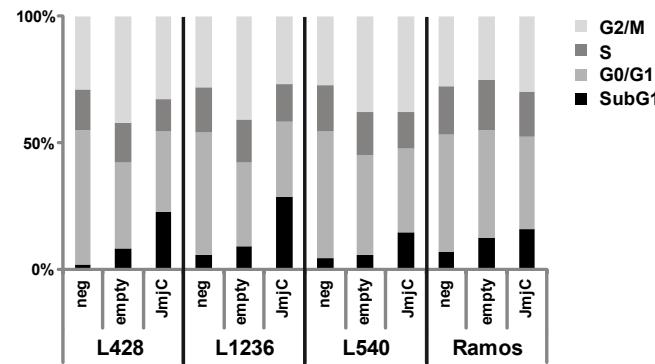
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7 Manuscript 3

Histone lysine methylation by polycomb group proteins plays a major role in B cell specific gene silencing and protects classical Hodgkin lymphoma cells from apoptosis

Neben der konstitutiven Aktivierung verschiedener Signaltransduktionswege ist das cHL durch die geringe oder gar nicht vorhandene Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene gekennzeichnet. In dieser Arbeit konnte gezeigt werden, dass die nicht exprimierten Gene mit trimethyliertem H3K27, einer Histon-Modifikation für stillgelegtes Chromatin, assoziiert sind. Die Inhibierung dieser Modifikation bzw. der für sie verantwortlichen Proteine des PRC2 durch verschiedene Ansätze führte zu einer erhöhten Expression der B-Zell-spezifischen Gene und der Induktion von Apoptose in cHL-Zelllinien und stellt damit einen möglichen Ansatzpunkt für die Entwicklung einer spezifischen Therapie zur Behandlung des cHL dar.

8 Diskussion

Erst in den letzten Jahren konnten die Herkunft und wesentliche molekulare Besonderheiten der für das cHL pathognostischen HRS-Zellen charakterisiert werden. Durch Zytokin- und Chemokinsekretion rekrutieren die HRS-Zellen verschiedene andere Zellen des Immunsystems wie z.B. T-Zellen, B-Zellen und Plasmazellen in das Lymphomgewebe. Die HRS-Zellen selbst machen nur ca. 1% der Tumorzellen aus. Charakteristisch für die vermutlich von prä-apoptotischen B-Zellen des Keimzentrums abstammenden HRS-Zellen sind unter anderem die konstitutive Aktivierung verschiedener Signalwege und der weitgehende Verlust der Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene. Ziel dieser Arbeit war die Untersuchung molekularer Grundlagen, die an diesen beiden wesentlichen Charakteristika der Pathogenese des cHL beteiligt sind.

8.1 Die Rolle von STAT6 im cHL

Das cHL zeichnet sich unter anderem durch die konstitutive Aktivierung einiger wichtiger Signaltransduktionswege aus (27). Neben dem IKK/NF- κ B-, und dem MAPK/AP1-Signalweg sind auch verschiedene STAT-Proteine im cHL konstitutiv aktiviert. So wurde die dauerhafte Aktivierung von STAT1, STAT3, STAT5A, STAT5B und STAT6 in HRS-Zellen bereits beschrieben (38, 64-68). Als Ursache für die konstitutive STAT6-Aktivierung im cHL wird die autokrine Sekretion von IL-13 angenommen (68, 72, 73). Der Einsatz neutralisierender Antikörper gegen IL-13 in cHL-Zelllinien führte zur Induktion von Apoptose, was auf die wichtige Rolle der STAT6-Aktivierung für das Überleben der HRS-Zellen hindeutet (74). Da IL-13 aber auch weitere Signalwege und andere STAT-Proteine aktiviert (179, 180), konnte mit diesem Ansatz nicht eindeutig geklärt werden, ob die Aktivierung von STAT6 direkt für das Überleben der HRS-Zellen notwendig ist. In dieser Arbeit vorausgegangenen Experimenten konnte Daniela Baus mit Hilfe von shRNAs gegen STAT6 zeigen, dass neben STAT3 und STAT5 auch STAT6 tatsächlich ein direkter Überlebensfaktor in den cHL-Zelllinien L428 und L1236 ist.

8.1.1 Identifikation STAT6-regulierter Gene in L1236-Zellen

Um mögliche Mechanismen zu erkennen, mit denen die konstitutive Aktivierung des Transkriptionsfaktors STAT6 zum Überleben der HRS-Zellen beiträgt, wurde nach STAT6-regulierten Genen in diesen Zellen gesucht. Zu diesem Zweck wurden cHL-Zellen mit intakter STAT6-Expression in Genexpressionsanalysen mit Zellen verglichen, in denen die

Expression von STAT6 durch shRNAs inhibiert worden war. Mit Hilfe dieser Analysen konnten 641 STAT6-abhängig regulierte Gene identifiziert werden. Darunter waren 386 bekannte und 255 bislang unbekannte Gene. Dass nur wenige bereits bekannte STAT6-Zielgene differentiell exprimiert gefunden wurden, könnte daran liegen, dass die durch autokrin sekretierte Zytokine verursachte dauerhafte Aktivierung von STAT6 die Expression von typischen STAT6-Zielgenen im cHL beeinflusst. Ebenso könnten andere im cHL aktivierte Transkriptionsfaktoren wie NF-κB oder weitere STAT-Familienmitglieder die Expression der STAT6-Zielgene beeinflussen. So konnte früher bereits gezeigt werden, dass STAT6 und NF-κB um überlappende DNA-Bindestellen kompetieren können (181). Ein weiteres interessantes Ergebnis dieser Analysen war, dass die Mehrzahl der nach STAT6-Ausschalten differentiell exprimierten Gene, eine erhöhte und nicht, wie es beim Ausschalten eines Transkriptionsfaktors zu erwarten wäre, eine verringerte Expressionsrate zeigten. Ähnliche Beobachtungen wurden bereits zuvor B-Zellen von STAT6-Knockout Mäusen gemacht, die mit IL-4 und Lipopolysaccharid (LPS) stimuliert wurden. Auch hier wurden nach dem Ausschalten von STAT6 mehr Gene mit einer höheren Expression, als Gene mit einer niedrigeren Expression identifiziert (182). Interessant ist, dass durch die LPS-Stimulation in diesen Zellen ein aktiverter NF-κB-Signalweg vorlag. Da dieser Signalweg auch in HRS-Zellen aktiviert ist, könnte eine Kompetition von STAT6 mit NF-κB um benachbarte Bindestellen also auch für diese Beobachtung eine Erklärung liefern.

Für weitere Untersuchungen wurden 20 Gene mit potentiellen regulatorischen Funktionen in verschiedenen zellulären Prozessen wie Proliferation, Apoptose oder Invasivität ausgewählt, die zusätzlich eine möglichst starke differentielle Expression im RNA-Expressions-Array zeigten. Deren STAT6-abhängige Expression wurde zunächst mit quantitativer Reverse Transkriptase-PCR (qRT-PCR) bestätigt. Da die Inhibition von STAT6 in cHL-Zellen zu Apoptose führt, waren besonders Gene, die an der Apoptose-Regulation beteiligt sind, interessant für weitere Analysen. Unter diesen Apoptose-relevanten Genen konnte eine erhöhte Expression der pro-apoptotischen Gene *CASP7*, *TNFSF10* und *XAF1* nach Reduktion der STAT6-Expression gezeigt werden. Zusätzlich konnte die verringerte Expression einiger anti-apoptotischer oder Tumor-fördernder Gene nach STAT6-Knockdown gezeigt werden. Dazu zählt *CDK6*, ein Mitglied der Zyklin-abhängigen Proteinkinasen, *MYC*, ein bekanntes Onkogen und *EPHB1*. Eine Beteiligung des Tyrosinkinase-Rezeptors EPHB1 an der Pathogenese des cHL wurde bereits zuvor vermutet, da er in HRS-Zellen exprimiert und aktiviert vorliegt, wohingegen er in normalen B-Zellen nicht exprimiert wird (183). Somit konnte gezeigt werden, dass STAT6 in L1236-Zellen an der Regulation einiger wichtiger Apoptose-relevanter Gene beteiligt ist.

Ein weiteres interessantes Gen, welches eine erhöhte Expression nach STAT6-Knockdown zeigt ist die JAK-Phosphatase *PTPRC* (*CD45*). *PTPRC* ist ein essentieller Regulator der B-Zell-Reifung. Sie inhibiert die Zytokin-aktivierte Signaltransduktion und wird in cHL-Zellen nur sehr schwach exprimiert (184-186). STAT6 könnte somit durch die Inhibition von *PTPRC* (*CD45*) wesentlich zur Fehlentwicklung der HRS-Zellen beitragen. Auffällig ist unter den differentiell regulierten Genen nach STAT6-Knockdown auch die Anhäufung von Genen, die im Zusammenhang mit proteasomalem Abbau stehen, wie *HERC3*, *UBE2D4*, *USP2* und *USP6*. Das deutet darauf hin, dass STAT6 im cHL über die Regulation dieser Gene indirekt auch an der Regulation des proteasomalen Abbaus beteiligt sein könnte. Die STAT6-abhängige Expression der Transkriptionsfaktoren *EOMES* und *NFAT5* liefert einen weiteren Hinweis darauf, dass STAT6 auch indirekt an der Regulation verschiedener Gene in L1236-Zellen beteiligt ist.

Diese Genexpressionsanalysen führten zur Identifikation einer ganzen Reihe interessanter Gene, die in cHL-Zellen eine STAT6-abhängige Regulation zeigen. Diese Gene mit ihrerseits wichtigen Funktionen bei zellulären Prozessen liefern wertvolle Hinweise darauf, mit welchen Mechanismen STAT6 an der Regulation von Überleben und Proliferation in verschiedenen Zellen und Geweben beteiligt sein könnte. Sie zeigen jedoch nicht, inwieweit die Regulation der Expression dieser Gene direkt durch STAT6 erfolgt, oder ob STAT6 die Expression dieser Gene nur indirekt, beispielsweise durch die Regulation antagonistischer Gene oder weiterer Transkriptionsfaktoren, beeinflusst. Zu diesem Zweck waren weitere Untersuchungen notwendig.

8.1.2 IL-4-abhängige Expression der neuen potentiellen STAT6-Zielgene

Um zu untersuchen, ob die durch STAT6-Knockdown differentiell regulierten Gene auch durch IL-4-Stimulation reguliert werden können, wurde ein induzierbares Zellsystem verwendet. In Ramos B-Zellen (eine Burkitt-Lymphom-Zelllinie) führt die Stimulation mit IL-4 zu einer transienten STAT6-Aktivierung. Dabei konnte allerdings nur für ein Drittel der untersuchten Gene eine IL-4-abhängige Verstärkung bzw. Verringerung der Expression gezeigt werden, die der in den cHL-Zellen mit und ohne STAT6 entspricht. Für die übrigen Gene konnte entweder keine Regulation, oder eine Regulation in die entgegengesetzte Richtung gezeigt werden. Eine dritte Gruppe der untersuchten Gene wurde in Ramos-Zellen gar nicht exprimiert. Obwohl die Experimente mit unterschiedlich langen IL-4-Stimulationen durchgeführt wurden, kann mit diesem Ansatz nicht ausgeschlossen werden, dass einige Gene zu einem anderen nicht gemessenen Zeitpunkt reguliert wurden. Eine weitere Erklärung für diese Diskrepanz könnte die Notwendigkeit weiterer aktiver

Transkriptionsfaktoren AP-1 sein, die in L1236-Zellen konstitutiv aktiv sind, nicht aber in Ramos-Zellen (37, 39).

Zu den STAT6-abhängig regulierten Genen, deren Expression auch durch IL-4-Stimulation erhöht wurde, gehören neben *EPHB1* auch die am proteasomalen Abbau beteiligten Gene *HERC3*, *USP2* und *USP6*. Während über *HERC3* außer seiner Funktion als HECT E3 Ligase bislang nicht viel bekannt ist, wurde für weitere Mitglieder der HECT E3 Ligasen eine Beteiligung an der Entwicklung verschiedener Krankheiten und Krebsformen gezeigt (187). Die Ubiquitin-spezifischen Proteasen *USP2* und *USP6* wurden verschiedentlich im Zusammenhang mit Tumorgenese beschrieben. Für *USP2* sind sowohl pro- als auch antiapoptotische Funktionen bekannt. *USP2* trägt auf der einen Seite mit seiner Beteiligung an der Deubiquitinierung des Protoonkoproteins Cyclin D1 zur Verhinderung des Tumorwachstums in verschiedenen humanen Krebszelllinien bei (188). Auf der anderen Seite ist *USP2* im Prostatakarzinom überexprimiert und inhibiert dort Apoptose über die Stabilisierung der Fatty Acid Synthase (FAS) (189). Somit wäre denkbar, dass STAT6 über die Erhöhung der *USP2*-Expression in cHL Zellen ebenfalls indirekt zur Stabilisierung von FAS und damit zur Verhinderung der Apoptose beiträgt. Während für *USP2* sowohl pro- als auch antiapoptotische Funktionen gefunden wurden, ist *USP6* bislang ausschließlich als Onkogen beschrieben. Die Überexpression von *USP6* in der aneurysmatischen Knochenzyste, einem aggressiven pädiatrischen Knochentumor, trägt vermittelt durch NF-κB-Aktivierung und die Expressionsaktivierung der Matrixmetalloprotease MMP-9, wesentlich zu dessen Tumorgenese und Vaskularisation bei (190, 191). Da der NF-κB-Signalweg auch im cHL konstitutiv aktiv ist, könnte die STAT6 induzierte Expression von *USP6* in HRS-Zellen in ähnlicher Weise zum Voranschreiten der Tumorgenese beitragen.

8.1.3 Direkte Bindung von STAT6 an seine potentiellen Zielgene

Eine Voraussetzung für die direkte Transkriptionsregulation der identifizierten potentiellen Zielgene durch STAT6 ist dessen Bindung an konservierte Bindestellen im Promotorbereich dieser Gene. *In silico*-Analysen der Bereiche 3500 bp strangauwärts bis 250 bp strangabwärts des Transkriptionsstarts führten in den Genen *USP2*, *EPHB1*, *NFAT5*, *PTPRC (CD45)* und *CASP7* zur Identifikation mehrerer potentieller STAT-Bindestellen. Durch Chromatinimmunpräzipitations (ChIP)-Experimente mit anschließenden quantitativen (q)PCR-Analysen konnte eine Bindung von STAT6 an die Regionen mit den potentiellen Bindestellen auch *in vivo* gezeigt werden. Zwar sind für definitive Aussagen weiterführende funktionelle Experimente wie Reportergen-Assays notwendig, doch zusammen mit den Ergebnissen der IL-4-Stimulation deuten die ChIP-Ergebnisse darauf hin, dass die

Transkription dieser fünf Gene tatsächlich durch STAT6 reguliert wird. Das würde bedeuten, dass STAT6 in L1236-Zellen unter anderem an der erhöhten Expression von *USP2* beteiligt ist, dessen antiapoptotische Funktion durch die Stabilisierung von FAS bereits im Prostatakarzinom gezeigt werden konnte (189). Die erhöhte Expression der Rezeptortyrosinkinase EPHB1 im cHL wurde bereits beschrieben und deren Beteiligung an der Pathogenese des cHL vermutet (183). Eine mögliche Ursache für die erhöhte Expression von EPHB1 konnte jedoch nicht gefunden werden. Unsere Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass STAT6 durch seine direkte Bindung an den Promotor von *EPHB1* dessen erhöhte Expression verursachen könnte.

Ein weiterer sehr interessanter Aspekt der ChIP-Ergebnisse ist, dass STAT6 auch an die potentiellen Bindestellen in den Promotoren von *NFAT5*, *PTPRC (CD45)* und *CASP7* bindet. Da die Expression dieser Gene durch den Knockdown von STAT6 erhöht wurde, sollte STAT6 die Expression dieser Gene inhibieren. Das würde bedeuten, dass die Bindung von STAT6 an seine Zielgene nicht nur zu deren erhöhter Expression, sondern auch direkt zur Verringerung ihrer Expression führen kann. Ungeklärt bleibt dabei, ob STAT6 die Expression direkt inhibiert, oder ob die Bindung von STAT6 beispielsweise zu einer kompetitiven Hemmung eines weiteren Transkriptionsfaktors führt.

Die Bindung von STAT6 an den NFAT5-Promotor liefert einen Hinweis darauf, dass STAT6 die Expression anderer Gene auch indirekt über die Expressionsregulation weiterer Transkriptionsfaktoren beeinflussen kann. Dagegen deuten die Bindung von STAT6 an den CASP7-Promotor, sowie die Ergebnisse aus den Genexpressionsanalysen, auf eine direkte Inhibition der Expression von CASP7 durch STAT6 hin. Somit könnte STAT6 über die verringerte Expression der Effektorcaspase CASP7 an der Inhibition von Apoptose in L1236-Zellen beteiligt sein. Ebenfalls interessant ist auch, dass STAT6 an den Promotor der Phosphatase PTPRC (CD45) bindet, für die bereits zuvor eine stark verringerte Expression in cHL-Zellen gezeigt wurde (186). Zusammen mit den Ergebnissen aus den Expressionsanalysen deutet dies auf eine direkte Inhibition dieser Phosphatase durch STAT6 hin. Da PTPRC nicht nur ein wichtiger Regulator der B-Zell-Reifung ist, sondern auch die Zytokin-aktivierte Signaltransduktion inhibiert, in dem es die JAKs dephosphoryliert (184, 185), könnte STAT6 auf diese Weise an der dauerhaften Aktivierung seines eigenen Signalwegs beteiligt sein (s. Abb. 4).

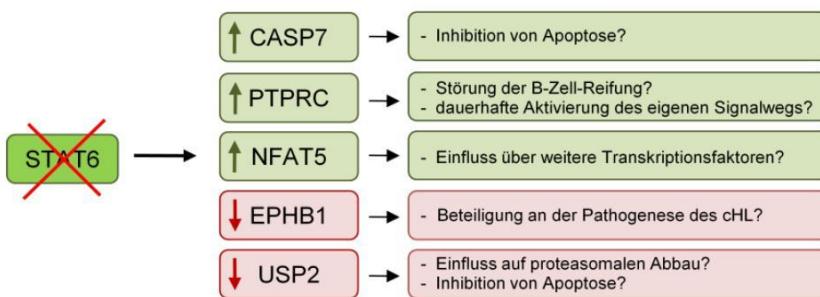


Abb. 4 Genexpressionsänderung potentieller STAT6-Zielgene in HRS-Zellen

Veränderung der Genexpression der neuen STAT6-Zielgene nach Ausschalten von STAT6 in HRS-Zellen und Einflussmöglichkeiten, die STAT6 damit in der Pathogenese des cHL haben könnte.

8.1.4 STAT6 und STAT1 als wichtige antagonistische Apoptose-Regulatoren in cHL-Zellen

Neben der STAT6-abhängigen Expression der bereits beschriebenen Gene, wurde die Induktion einiger Interferon-regulierter Gene nach STAT6-Knockdown beobachtet. Die Inhibition der STAT6-Expression führte nicht nur zur erhöhten Expression und Aktivierung von STAT1, sondern induzierte ebenfalls die Expression einiger bekannter STAT1-Zielgene. Während die Expression von STAT3 und STAT6 in cHL-Zellen überlebenswichtig ist, führte eine Überexpression von STAT1 in L1236-Zellen zu verringertem Wachstum und der Induktion von Apoptose. Im STAT1-Promotor konnten *in silico* keine STAT6-Bindestellen identifiziert werden. Die Inhibition von STAT1 durch STAT6 in cHL-Zelllinien erfolgt demnach vermutlich indirekt. Ein Zusammenspiel zwischen STAT6 und STAT1 wurde bereits zuvor in beide Richtungen beschrieben. So kann IL-4 stimuliertes STAT6 die Funktion von STAT1 inhibieren und umgekehrt ist Interferon-aktiviertes STAT1 in der Lage STAT6 zu inhibieren (192, 193). Das Zusammenspiel von STAT1 und STAT6 könnte durch SOCS1 vermittelt werden. SOCS1 ist ein Zielgen beider STATs und ein Gegenspieler des Interferon-Signalwegs (194). Gegen SOCS1 als Vermittler dieser Interaktion spricht allerdings, dass SOCS1 in HRS-Zellen häufig mutiert ist und eine Überexpression von SOCS1 keinen Effekt auf die Proliferation von L1236-Zellen hat (65, 70). Auch wenn durch diese Arbeit der hinter der STAT6/STAT1-Interaktion stehende Mechanismus nicht vollständig geklärt werden konnte, scheint die STAT6-induzierte Unterdrückung der STAT1-Expression wichtig für das Überleben der HRS-Zellen zu sein, da dessen erhöhte Expression Apoptose in L1236-Zellen induziert. Somit konnte gezeigt werden, dass STAT6 und STAT1 wichtige Gegenspieler bei der Proliferations- und Apoptoseregulation in cHL-Zellen sind (s. Abb. 5).

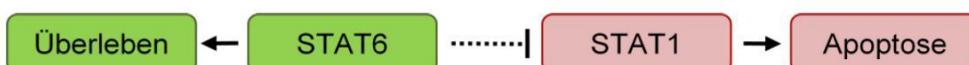


Abb. 5
STAT6 und STAT1 als Gegenspieler und wichtige Regulatoren von Apoptose in HRS-Zellen

Die Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit lassen darauf schließen, dass das in HRS-Zellen dauerhaft aktivierte STAT6 indirekt die Expression und Aktivierung von STAT1 und damit auch eine pro-apoptotische Funktion des Transkriptionsfaktors in diesen Zellen inhibiert.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass die Inhibition von STAT6 in cHL-Zelllinien zur Induktion von Apoptose und zur Identifikation einer Reihe neuer potentieller STAT6-Zielgene führte. Diese neuen potentiellen STAT6-Zielgene haben ihrerseits wiederum wichtige Funktionen in der Regulation von Proliferation und Apoptose inne. So deuten unsere Ergebnisse darauf hin, dass in L1236-Zellen die erhöhte Expression von USP2 und die erniedrigte Expression von CASP7 durch die Bindung von STAT6 an deren Promotor verursacht werden. Damit wurden zwei Gene identifiziert, durch deren Regulation STAT6 an der Verhinderung der Apoptose in L1236-Zellen beteiligt sein könnte. Ferner ist STAT6 an der verringerten Expression der JAK-Phosphatase PTPRC (CD45) beteiligt und könnte damit zur Fehlentwicklung der HRS-Zellen und zu seiner eigenen dauerhaften Aktivierung beitragen. Einen weiteren Beitrag zur Pathogenese des cHL könnte STAT6 auch über die erhöhte Expression der Tyrosinkinase EPHB1 leisten. Ferner legen unsere Ergebnisse nahe, dass STAT6 sowohl durch direkte Bindung an seine Zielgene als auch auf indirektem Weg, wie zum Beispiel durch Regulation von Proteinen des Ubiquitin-Proteasom-Systems oder durch Regulation weiterer Transkriptionsfaktoren wie NFAT5 an der Transformation der HRS-Zellen beteiligt ist. Neben diesen Ergebnissen ist insbesondere die Inhibition von STAT1 durch STAT6 in L1236-Zellen ein interessanter Aspekt. So deuten unsere Ergebnisse darauf hin, dass STAT6 und STAT1 essentielle antagonistische Regulatoren von Apoptose in L1236-Zellen und damit zumindest in bestimmten Subtypen des cHL sind.

8.2 Epigenetische Modifikationen als Ursache für den Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps im cHL

Neben der dauerhaften Aktivierung wichtiger Signaltransduktionswege ist der Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps ein charakteristisches Merkmal der HRS-Zellen. So werden nahezu alle Gene, die spezifisch für B-Zellen sind, in HRS-Zellen entweder gar nicht oder nur in einem sehr geringen Maß exprimiert (10, 11). Zu diesen B-Zell-typischen Genen, die in HRS-Zellen nicht exprimiert werden, gehören *CD79A*, *CD79B*, *CD19*, *MS4A1/CD20*, *BLNK*; *LCK*, *SYK*, *TNFRSF17* sowie die Transkriptionsfaktoren *POU2F2/OCT2*, *POU2AF1/BOB1* und *SPI1/PU.1* (10, 11). All diese Gene haben wichtige Funktionen in B-Zellen. So kodieren *CD79A* und *CD79B* die beiden Untereinheiten des B-Zell-Rezeptors (BCR) Ig- α und Ig- β . Mit diesen assembliert das Oberflächenmolekül CD19 und verstärkt das BCR-Signal, indem es den Grenzwert für die Antigen-Rezeptor-abhängige Stimulation herabsetzt (195). Die in HRS-Zellen nicht exprimierten Tyrosinkinasen *BLNK*, *LCK* und *SYK* sind an der Weiterleitung des BCR-Signals beteiligt und spielen ebenfalls bei der B-Zell-Differenzierung eine wichtige Rolle (18, 19, 195). Somit fehlt den HRS-Zellen nicht nur die Expression des BCR sondern auch wichtige Teile seines nachfolgenden Signalweges. Auch das

Oberflächenmolekül MS4A1/CD20 und der TNF-Rezeptor TNFRSF17 sind für der Entwicklung und Differenzierung von B-Zellen wichtig, werden in HRS-Zellen jedoch nicht exprimiert (196-200).

Normalerweise werden B-Zellen des Keimzentrums, die keinen funktionellen BCR tragen durch Apoptose eliminiert (16, 17). Dass HRS-Zellen dennoch überleben, könnte daran liegen, dass ihnen nicht nur die Expression des BCR fehlt, sondern auch die nachfolgenden Komponenten des Signalwegs nicht exprimiert werden. So wurde bereits in früheren Arbeiten vermutet, dass die Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene eine Voraussetzung dafür ist, dass Zellen ohne BCR durch Apoptose eliminiert werden (11, 22). Die fehlende Expression wichtiger B-Zell-Gene in HRS-Zellen könnte somit wesentlich zu deren Überleben beitragen.

8.2.1 Die veränderte Genexpression in cHL-Zelllinien

Die Expression der oben beschriebenen Gene wurde zunächst in verschiedenen B-Zelllinien untersucht und war in den untersuchten cHL-Zelllinien L428 und L1236 wie erwartet nicht oder nur sehr schwach vorhanden. In Ramos-Zellen, die aus dem Burkitt-Lymphom stammen und als Kontroll-B-Zelllinie den cHL-Zelllinien entgegen gestellt wurden, konnte dagegen eine deutliche Expression all dieser Gene gezeigt werden. Allerdings wurden die für die B-Zell-Entwicklung wichtigen untersuchten Transkriptionsfaktoren in der cHL-Zelllinie L540 in einem vergleichbaren Level wie in den Ramos-Zellen exprimiert. Ebenso war die Expression von CD19, MS4A1/CD20 und CD79A, verglichen mit den cHL-Linien L428, L1236 und KMH2 erhöht. Sie erreichte in L540-Zellen aber nicht das Expressionsniveau der Ramos-Zellen. Ähnliche Ergebnisse lieferte die Analyse einer Reihe Gene, die typischerweise im cHL exprimiert werden, wie PHLDA2/IPL, TIMP, MUM, SYNDÉCAN und RANTES (10, 36). Diese wurden in L428- und L1236-Zellen exprimiert, nicht aber in Ramos- und L540-Zellen. Aus diesen Expressionsanalysen lässt sich folgern, dass L428- und L1236-Zellen am deutlichsten den cHL-typischen Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps darstellen. Diese beiden Linien zeigten zum einen die niedrigste Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene und zum anderen eine deutliche Expression cHL-typischer Gene. Die L540-Zellen unterschieden sich dagegen in ihrem Expressionsmuster von diesen beiden cHL-Linien und scheinen eher einen B-Zell-Phänotyp zu repräsentieren. Aus diesem Grund wurden in den folgenden Experimenten die typischen cHL-Linien L428 und L1236 den Ramos-Zellen gegenübergestellt und mit den L540-Zellen verglichen.

8.2.2 Stilllegung B-Zell-spezifischer Gene durch Assoziation mit repressivem Chromatin

Eine mögliche Ursache für den Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps im cHL könnte die Störung einiger wichtiger Transkriptionsfaktoren und Signalwege sein. Zwar führte die ektopische Expression der Transkriptionsfaktoren POU2F2/OCT2, POU2AF1/BOB1 und SPI1/PU.1 in cHL-Zellen zur Transkriptionsaktivierung kcotransfizierter Reportergenkonstrukte, jedoch konnte sie nicht die Transkription endogener B-Zell-Gene aktivieren (26, 29, 31, 32). Das Fehlen der Transkriptionsfaktoren kann also nicht die alleinige Ursache für die Stilllegung der B-Zell-Gene im cHL sein. So rückten in den letzten Jahren verstärkt epigenetische Modifikationen als mögliche Ursache für den Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps im cHL in den Fokus der Forschung. Es wurde eine verstärkte Methylierung von CpG-Inseln im Promotorbereich typischer B-Zell-Gene wie CD79A, CD19, MS4A1/CD20, TNFRSF17, SYK und LYK sowie der Transkriptionsfaktoren POU2F2/OCT2 und SPI1/PU.1 gefunden (34, 35). Die Behandlung der cHL-Zellen mit dem DNA-Demethylierungsagent 5-aza-dC führte zwar zu einer erhöhten Expression dieser Gene in cHL-Zellen, das Expressionsniveau dieser Gene in typischen B-Zellen konnte damit jedoch nicht erreicht werden (34, 36). Dies war auch nicht der Fall, wenn die Zellen zusätzlich noch mit HDACi behandelt wurden (36). Diese Ergebnisse bestätigen auf der einen Seite die wichtige Rolle epigenetischer Modifikationen bei der Stilllegung der B-Zell-Gene im cHL, zeigen aber auf der anderen Seite auch, dass DNA-Promotormethylierung für den Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps nicht ausreicht. Besonders in Krebszellen scheint die Trimethylierung von H3K27 eine Voraussetzung für *de novo* DNA-Methylierung zu sein (148, 149). Für die Trimethylierung von H3K27 sind PcG-Proteine verantwortlich. Die Identifikation einer erhöhten Anzahl von PcG-Zielgenen unter *de novo* methylierten Genen in Kolorektalkarzinomen und aggressiven B-Zell-Lymphomen lieferte einen weiteren Hinweis auf einen solchen Zusammenhang (150, 151). Als möglicher Mechanismus wurde vermutet, dass die Histonmodifikation bereits an unmethylierten CpG-Inseln in der frühen Entwicklungsphase etabliert wird. Die Anwesenheit des mit dieser Modifikation assoziierten PRC2-Komplexes führt schließlich nur in Krebszellen, nicht aber in normalen Zellen zu einer Rekrutierung von DNMTs was letztlich in der *de novo* Methylierung dieser Gene resultiert (149). Diese Ergebnisse warfen die Frage auf, ob die Trimethylierung von H3K27 auch im cHL an der Stilllegung B-Zell-spezifischer Gene beteiligt ist. Um herauszufinden ob dies der Fall ist, wurden ChIP-Experimente mit einem Antikörper gegen H3K27me3 gemacht. In diesen ChIP-Experimenten konnten alle untersuchten B-Zellspezifischen Gene in den beiden cHL-Zelllinien L428 und L1236 mit dem Antikörper gegen H3K27me3 präzipitiert werden. In B-Zell-Gen exprimierenden Ramos-Zellen war eine Präzipitation dagegen nicht bzw. nur in einem sehr schwachen Umfang möglich. Das war ebenfalls für die cHL-Linie L540 der Fall. Diese cHL-Zelllinie zeigte auch in der

Genexpressionsanalyse zumindest für einen Teil der untersuchten Gene eine vergleichbare Expression wie Ramos-Zellen. Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen cHL-Zelllinien wurden auch bei dem Versuch der Wiederherstellung der B-Zell-Genexpression mit 5-aza-dC beschrieben (34). Diese Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass in den verschiedenen cHL-Zelllinien unterschiedliche Mechanismen an der Genregulation beteiligt sind und bestätigten uns darin, die beiden Linien L428 und L1236 als bestes Modellsystem für das cHL zu verwenden.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich zu den ChIP-Ergebnissen sagen, dass die untersuchten B-Zell-Gene, die in den beiden charakteristischen cHL-Zelllinien nicht exprimiert werden, in diesen Linien mit trimethyliertem H3K27 assoziiert sind. In den Zelllinien, in denen sie exprimiert werden, ist dies dagegen nicht der Fall. Daraus lässt sich folgern, dass die Expression der B-Zell-spezifischen Gene in den untersuchten cHL-Linien nicht nur durch Promotor-methylierung inhibiert ist, sondern dass sie auch durch die Assoziation mit der repressiven Chromatin-Modifikation H3K27me3 verhindert wird.

8.2.3 Beteiligung des PRC2 an der Stilllegung des B-Zell-Phänotyps in cHL-Zellen

Die Trimethylierung von H3K27 wird durch die Pcg-Proteine des PRC2 katalysiert, während die Proteine des PRC1 für die Erhaltung des Zustands verantwortlich sind (109, 201). Für B-Zell-Lymphome wurde bereits mehrfach eine erhöhte Expression des PRC1-Proteins BMI1 detektiert (154-157). Auch im cHL konnte eine erhöhte Expression von BMI1 nachgewiesen werden (158-160). Das Ausschalten von BMI1 in cHL-Zellen führte zu einer verringerten Überlebensrate und einer erhöhten Expression von Tumorsuppressorgenen (160). Zusätzlich zu der erhöhten Expression des PRC1-Proteins BMI1 alleine, wurde in cHL-Zellen auch eine Koexpression mit dem PRC2-Protein EZH2 festgestellt (158, 159). In follikulären Lymphozyten, den normalen Gegenstücken der HRS-Zellen dagegen war stets nur eines der beiden Gene exprimiert (158). Da die Komponenten des PRC1 vermutlich erst durch die Anlagerung des PRC2 und die damit verbundene Trimethylierung von H3K27 an die entsprechenden Stellen der DNA rekrutiert werden (109), lag es nahe auch die Rolle der PRC2-Proteine und deren Beteiligung an der Stilllegung der B-Zell-spezifischen Gene im cHL zu untersuchen. Das PRC2-Protein SUZ12 wurde in einer früheren Veröffentlichung als guter Repräsentant für einen aktiven PRC2 beschrieben (116). Um die Beteiligung des PRC2 an der Stilllegung der B-Zell-Gene zu untersuchen, wurden ChIP-Experimente in den beiden cHL-Zelllinien mit einem Antikörper gegen SUZ12 durchgeführt. Auch mit diesem Antikörper konnten die untersuchten B-Zell-Gene in den cHL-Linien präzipitiert werden. Das lieferte einen weiteren Hinweis darauf, dass diese Gene in HRS-Zellen durch PRC2-

vermittelte Trimethylierung von H3K27 mit repressivem Chromatin assoziiert sind und somit nicht transkribiert werden können.

8.2.4 Die Behandlung mit dem PRC2-Inhibitor 3-Deazaneplanocin führt zur erhöhten Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene

Um zu untersuchen, welchen Einfluss eine Inhibition der Trimethylierung von H3K27 auf die Expression der untersuchten B-Zell-Gene in HRS-Zellen hat, wurde der S-Adenosylhomocystein-Inhibitor 3-Deazaneplanocin (DZNep) verwendet. DZNep wurde in mehreren Arbeiten als Inhibitor der PRC2-Komponenten EZH2, SUZ12 und EED sowie der von diesen vermittelten H3K27me3 beschrieben (173, 174, 176). Western Blot Analysen bestätigen die erfolgreiche Verringerung der Proteinexpression der PRC2-Komponenten sowie die Verringerung der Menge an H3K27me3 in den Zellextrakten nach Behandlung mit DZNep. Die folgenden Genexpressionsanalysen zeigten eine deutliche Erhöhung der Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene in den beiden cHL-Linien L428 und L1236, wenn auch in unterschiedlichem Umfang. In L540-Zellen führte die DZNep-Behandlung jedoch nur zu einem sehr schwachen Anstieg der B-Zell-Genexpression, für LCK und POU2F2 sogar zu einer leichten Verringerung der Expression. Dies deutet erneut auf eine unterschiedliche Genregulation in den verschiedenen cHL-Linien hin. In Ramos-Zellen, die bereits physiologisch eine hohe Expression der B-Zell-Gene zeigten, konnte die Behandlung mit DZNep diese Expression nicht weiter steigern. Für die meisten untersuchten Gene führte sie sogar zu einer verringerten Expression. Eine mögliche Erklärung hierfür könnte sein, dass diese Gene normalerweise in Ramos-Zellen mit der transkriptionsaktivierenden Chromatin-Modifikation H3K4me3 assoziiert sind und diese Modifikation in Ramos-Zellen ebenfalls durch DZNep inhibiert wird. Eine solche Verringerung der Trimethylierung von H3K4 durch DZNep-Behandlung wurde neben der Inhibition von H3K27me3 in MCF-7- (humane Brustkrebszelllinie) und in SW480-Zellen (humane Kolonkarzinomzelllinie) gefunden (175, 176, 202). In OCI-AML3- und in HL-60-Zellen (Zelllinien der akuten myeloischen Leukämie) dagegen führte die Behandlung mit DZNep zu einer erhöhten Trimethylierung von H3K4. Der Effekt einer DZNep-Behandlung scheint demnach Zelltyp-spezifisch zu variiieren. Um die erhöhte Expression der B-Zell-Gene in den cHL-Linien L428 und L1236 eindeutig auf die Inhibition der PRC2-Proteine zurückzuführen, ist also eine spezifische Inhibition dieser Proteine notwendig.

8.2.5 Die spezifische Inhibition der PRC2-Komponenten durch shRNA führt zur Wiederherstellung des B-Zell-Phänotyps

Um unspezifische Effekte, wie sie evtl. bei der Behandlung der Zellen mit DZNep auftreten können, auszuschließen, wurden spezifische shRNAs gegen die drei Komponenten des PRC2 (EZH2, SUZ12, EED) entworfen und durch lentivirale Transduktion stabil in den verschiedenen Zelllinien exprimiert. Nach Bestimmung der Transduktionseffizienz (ca. 85%) mit Hilfe des koexprimierten Green Fluorescent Proteins (GFP) wurde die erfolgreiche Inhibition der PRC2-Proteinexpression und die verringerte Trimethylierung von H3K27 im Western Blot bestätigt. Als Negativkontrolle diente eine unspezifische (scrambled) shRNA. Die Inhibition der PRC2-Komponenten durch spezifische shRNAs führte zu einer starken Erhöhung der Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene in den beiden charakteristischen cHL-Linien L428 und L1236. In den beiden Linien mit ohnehin schon hoher Expression dieser Gene, konnte dagegen keine weitere Verstärkung der Expression erreicht werden. Zu den Genen deren Expression durch das Ausschalten der einzelnen PRC-Komponenten in L428- und L1236-Zellen stark erhöht wurde, gehörte neben CD79A und CD79B, die für die beiden Untereinheiten des BCR kodieren, auch der B-Zell-Korezeptor CD19, der das BCR-Signal durch Herabsetzen des Schwellenwertes erhöht (195). Auch die Expression der Tyrosinkinasen BLNK, LCK und SYK, wichtiger Komponenten des nachfolgenden BCR-Signalwegs (18, 19, 195), wurde durch das Ausschalten der PRC2-Komponenten stark erhöht. Somit konnte durch den PRC2-Knockdown nicht nur die Expression des BCR selbst wieder hergestellt werden, sondern auch die Expression wichtiger Teile des nachfolgenden Signalwegs. Die stärkste Induktion erfolgte in den meisten Fällen durch die shRNA gegen EZH2. Das ist vermutlich dadurch zu erklären, dass EZH2 die katalytische Untereinheit des PRC2 ist, die für die Trimethylierung von H3K27 verantwortlich ist. Das Ausschalten von EZH2 führte für CD79A, CD19 und CD20 zu einer so starken Erhöhung der Expression, dass annähernd das Expressionsniveau dieser Gene in Ramos-Zellen erreicht werden konnte. Damit wurde gezeigt, dass die Inhibition des PRC2-Komplexes zu einer deutlich effizienteren Steigerung der Expression von B-Zellgenen in cHL-Zellen führte, als dies durch Behandlung der Zellen mit DNA-Demethylierungsagenzien allein oder auch in der Kombination mit HDACi erreicht werden konnte (36). Ähnliche Beobachtungen wurden bereits in einer früheren Arbeit mit Brustkrebszellen gemacht. So führte auch in MCF-7-Zellen die Inhibition des PRC2 zu einer deutlich stärkeren Expression reprimierter Gene, als dies nach Behandlung mit dem DNMT-Inhibitor 5-aza-dC alleine oder auch in Kombination mit dem HDACi TSA der Fall war (173). Ein solcher Effekt könnte sich dadurch erklären lassen, dass die Assoziation von H3K37me3 im Bereich eines Promoters dessen *de novo* DNA-Methylierung begünstigt oder erst ermöglicht. So wurde in Kolonkarzinomzellen gezeigt, dass die PcG-vermittelte Trimethylierung von H3K27 DNMTs zu ihren Promotoren

rekrutiert und somit eine Voraussetzung für deren *de novo* Methylierung ist (149). Ein ähnlicher Mechanismus wäre auch für die Stilllegung der B-Zell-Gene im cHL denkbar und würde erklären, warum eine Behandlung mit DNMT-Inhibitoren nur einen vergleichsweise schwachen Effekt hat.

8.2.6 Der Einfluss von Histon-Demethylasen auf die Genexpression von HRS-Zellen

Die Proteinexpression der für die Trimethylierung von H3K27 zuständigen PRC2-Komponenten zeigte keinen signifikanten Unterschied in den untersuchten Zelllinien. Damit stellte sich die Frage, ob eine möglicherweise gestörte Expression von Histon-Demethylasen im cHL zur verstärkten H3K27me3 von B-Zell-spezifischen Genen im cHL führt. RNA-Expressionsanalysen der beiden bislang bekannten H3K27me3-Demethylasen, UTX und JMJD3 zeigten jedoch keine unterschiedliche Expression in den verschiedenen Zelllinien. Allerdings wurden jüngst in einer Reihe verschiedener Tumorarten somatische Mutationen in UTX gefunden, die zu dessen Inaktivierung führten (203). Solche inaktivierenden Mutationen von UTX oder auch von JMJD3 könnten ebenfalls an der H3K27me3-vermittelten Stilllegung der B-Zell-Gene im cHL beteiligt sein. Um den Einfluss der Histon-Demethylasen auf die Genexpression und das Überleben der cHL-Zellen so breit wie möglich zu untersuchen, wurde die katalytische JmjC-Domäne von JMJD3 in verschiedenen Zelllinien überexprimiert. Die katalytische JmjC-Domäne ist ein gemeinsames Kennzeichen einer Gruppe von Histon-Demethylasen, den sogenannten Jumonji-Proteinen, zu denen auch UTX und JMJD3 gehören (130, 204, 205). Für diese Domäne war beschrieben, dass sie H3K27 *in vitro* demethyliert (204). Auch in den von uns untersuchten Zelllinien führte die Überexpression der JmjC-Domäne zu einem verringerten Level an H3K27me3. Ebenso wie die Inhibition der PRC2-Komponenten durch DZNep-Behandlung oder mit Hilfe von shRNAs führte auch die Überexpression der JmjC-Domäne zu einer erhöhten Genexpression der untersuchten B-Zell-spezifischen Gene in L428- und in L1236-Zellen. In Ramos- und L540-Zellen dagegen konnte keine erhöhte Expression gezeigt werden. Vergleicht man die Steigerung der B-Zell-Genexpression durch die drei verschiedenen Ansätze der PRC2-Inhibition, so zeigt sich, dass die Überexpression der JmjC-Domäne zu einer stärkeren Erhöhung der Expression der B-Zell-Gene führte, als dies durch die DZNep-Behandlung erreicht wurde. Das hohe Expressionsniveau nach dem Ausschalten der PRC2-Komponenten durch shRNA konnte jedoch nicht erreicht werden. Das zeigt, dass die Überexpression der katalytischen JmjC-Domäne alleine weniger effizient in der Erhöhung der B-Zell-Genexpression ist, als die direkte Inhibition von EZH2 durch shRNAs. Unsere Ergebnisse schließen nicht aus, dass auch JmjC-Demethylasen an dem Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps in HRS-Zellen beteiligt sein könnten. Neben den oben beschriebenen inaktivierenden Mutationen in einer Demethylase könnte auch die fehlende Expression einer bislang noch nicht identifizierten H3K27me3-

Demethylase Ursache für ein mögliches Ungleichgewicht zwischen HMT und Histon-Demethylasen sein.

8.2.7 Induktion von Apoptose in cHL-Zellen durch Inhibierung der H3K27me3

Die drei verwendeten Ansätze zur Inhibition der Trimethylierung von H3K27 führten in den beiden cHL-Zelllinien L428 und L1236 nicht nur zu der oben beschriebenen Erhöhung der Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene sondern auch zu einer deutlichen Induktion von Apoptose. In L540- und Ramos-Zellen konnte dagegen nur eine leicht erhöhte Fraktion apoptotischer Zellen festgestellt werden. Diese Ergebnisse bestärken die Hypothese früherer Veröffentlichungen, dass der Verlust der B-Zell-Identität in cHL-Zellen dazu beiträgt, dass diese Zellen auch ohne funktionierenden BCR nicht durch Apoptose eliminiert werden (6, 11). Es ist jedoch durchaus möglich, dass die Verringerung des H3K27me3-Levels in HRS-Zellen auch die Expression weiterer Gene beeinflusst, die an der Aktivierung der Apoptose in diesen Zellen beteiligt sein könnten. In einem ersten Ansatz wurden von uns in nicht gezeigten Experimenten die Expression von Cyclin E1 sowie der Cyclin-abhängigen Kinaseinhibitoren CDKN1A, CDKN2A und CDKN1B nach Behandlung der Zelllinien mit DZNep bzw. mit DZNep in Kombination mit dem HDACi TSA untersucht. Für diese Gene war bereits zuvor eine Veränderung der Expression nach Behandlung mit diesem PRC2-Inhibitor beschrieben worden (174). In unseren Ergebnissen konnte jedoch kein signifikanter Unterschied in der Expression dieser Gene festgestellt werden. Die mittlerweile in unserer Arbeitsgruppe vorhandene stabile L1236-Zelllinie mit einer induzierbaren shRNA gegen SUZ12 erlaubt uns zusammen mit Microarray-Genexpressionsanalysen die Suche nach möglichen weiteren PRC2-regulierten Genen in HRS-Zellen.

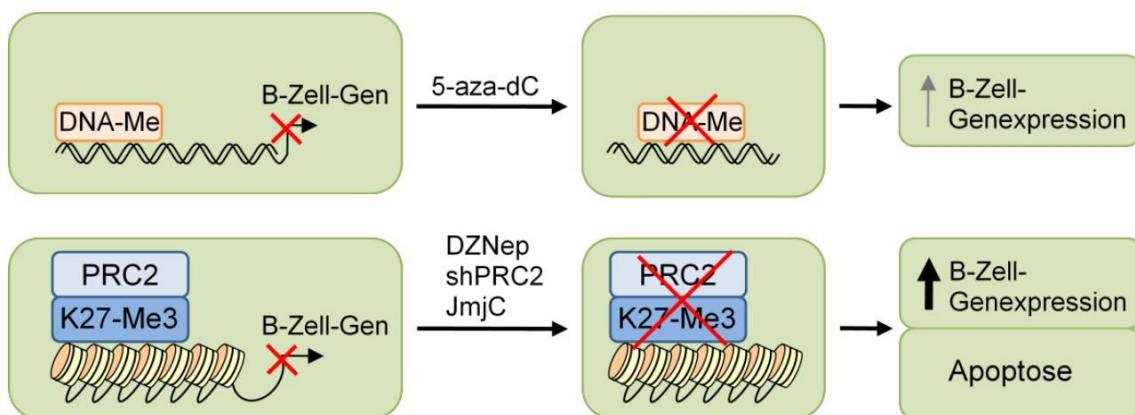


Abb. 6 Beitrag epigenetischer Modifikationen zum Verlust der Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene

Die Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene wird in HRS-Zellen durch DNA-Promotormethylierung und wie in dieser Arbeit gezeigt werden konnte, durch Assoziation mit H3K27me3, einer Histonmodifikation für stillgelegtes Chromatin, inhibiert. Während das Verhindern der DNA-Methylierung nur zu einer schwachen Erhöhung der Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene resultiert, führt die Inhibition der H3K27me3 mit Hilfe von verschiedenen Ansätzen zu einer stark erhöhten Expression B-Zell-spezifischer Gene und Induktion von Apoptose in diesen Zellen.

Auch wenn der Mechanismus, durch den DZNep in den cHL-Zelllinien Apoptose auslöst noch nicht mit Bestimmtheit geklärt ist, liefern diese Ergebnisse einen neuen möglichen Ansatzpunkt für die Therapie des cHL. Auch eine Kombination von DZNep mit HDAC- oder DNMT-Inhibitoren wäre ein interessanter Aspekt für weitere Untersuchungen.

8.3 STAT6 und der PRC2 tragen auf verschiedene Weise zur Pathogenese des cHL bei

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass diese Arbeit zu einem besseren Verständnis der molekularen Grundlagen der Pathogenese des cHL beigetragen hat. So konnte gezeigt werden, dass der Überlebensfaktor STAT6 auf verschiedene Weise an der Transformation der HRS-Zellen beteiligt ist. Es konnten direkte Zielgene identifiziert werden, die ihrerseits wichtige Funktionen in zellulären Prozessen und bei der B-Zell-Reifung haben. Dass verschiedene Komponenten des Ubiquitin-Proteasom-Systems unter den STAT6-regulierten Genen waren, deutet darauf hin, dass STAT6 auch indirekt das Überleben der HRS-Zellen über eine Beeinflussung des proteasomalen Abbaus reguliert. Eine indirekte Regulation durch STAT6 kann ebenfalls durch Transkriptionsfaktoren erfolgen deren Expression durch STAT6 reguliert wird. Ferner legen diese Ergebnisse nahe, dass STAT6 und STAT1 die Apoptose zumindest in bestimmten cHL-Formen antagonistisch regulieren.

Neben der Bedeutung von STAT6 für das Überleben der HRS-Zellen konnte auch gezeigt werden, dass die Komponenten des PRC2 nicht nur für den Verlust des B-Zell-Phänotyps sondern auch für das Überleben der HRS-Zellen eine wichtige Rolle spielen. Mit diesen Ergebnissen konnte zum einen gezeigt werden, dass die Komponenten des PRC2 bzw. die Trimethylierung von H3K27 für die Repression von essentiellen Genen in HRS-Zellen verantwortlich ist. Zum anderen deutet die Aktivierung der B-Zell-spezifischen Gene in Verbindung mit der Induktion von Apoptose nach Inhibition der PRC2-Komponenten darauf hin, dass der Verlust wichtiger Komponenten des BCR-Signalwegs tatsächlich wichtig für das Überleben der HRS-Zellen ist.

Zusammen zeigen diese Ergebnisse, dass letztlich vielfältige Prozesse zu den pathologischen Veränderungen der HRS-Zellen beitragen. Da sowohl STAT6 als auch die Komponenten des PRC2 offensichtlich wichtige Überlebensfaktoren der HRS-Zellen sind, liefert die Inhibition dieser Proteine zwei neue Ansatzpunkte für Therapiemöglichkeiten des cHL.

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10 Beteiligung an den Manuskripten

Manuskript 1: Das Manuskript wurde im Wesentlichen von E. Pfitzner geschrieben. Mein Anteil an dieser Publikation bestand in der Recherche und Vorlage für die negative Regulation des JAK/STAT-Signalwegs. D. Baus lieferte die Recherche und Vorlage für die Inhibition des JAK/STAT-Signalwegs.

Manuskript 2: Basierend auf einem Entwurf von D. Baus wurde das Manuskript von mir in Zusammenarbeit mit E. Pfitzner erstellt. D. Baus klonierte die shRNAs, lieferte die Daten für die Zellzyklusanalysen in Fig. 1 und präparierte die RNA für die Microarrays. Die Microarrays wurden von C. Döring und M. Frank im Institut von M-L. Hansmann erstellt und ausgewertet. Die Auswahl der weiter untersuchten Gene fand durch D. Baus und E. Pfitzner statt. D. Baus führte eine erste Bestätigung einzelner untersuchter Gene durch. Weitere Expressionsanalysen zur Bestätigung erfolgten von mir (Fig. 2b). Alle weiteren Experimente wurden von mir durchgeführt. Dabei wurde ich von S. Jankowski durch die Klonierung des lentiviralen STAT1, der Erstellung von Proliferationsassays (Fig. 6b) und durch Hilfe in der Zellkultur, insbesondere bei den Transduktionen unterstützt. Die Planung der Experimente, Auswertung und Interpretation der Daten erfolgte in Zusammenarbeit von E. Pfitzner, D. Baus und mir.

Manuskript 3: Das Manuskript wurde von mir in Zusammenarbeit mit E. Pfitzner erstellt. Alle Experimente zu diesem Manuskript wurden von mir durchgeführt. Die Planung der Experimente erfolgte in Zusammenarbeit mit E. Pfitzner.

Hiermit bestätige ich die oben beschriebene Aufteilung des Arbeitsanteils an den genannten Manuskripten.

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12 Eigenständigkeitserklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich, Frank Nonnenmacher, ehrenwörtlich, dass mir die Promotionsordnung der Biologisch-Pharmazeutischen Fakultät bekannt ist.

Ich erkläre, dass ich die vorliegende Dissertation selbständig angefertigt habe und keine Textabschnitte eines Dritten ohne Kennzeichnung übernommen habe. Weiterhin habe ich alle von mir benutzten Hilfsmittel, sowie persönliche Mitteilungen und Quellen meiner Arbeit angegeben.

Leute die mich bei der Auswahl und Auswertung des Materials und bei der Herstellung des Manuskriptes unterstützten sind in den jeweiligen Manuskripten als Koautoren benannt.

Die Hilfe eines Promotionsberaters wurde nicht in Anspruch genommen. Im Zusammenhang mit dem Inhalt dieser Arbeit wurden weder unmittelbar noch mittelbar geldwerte Leistungen vom Promovenden an Dritte gewährt.

Die vorliegende Dissertation wurde noch nicht als Prüfungsarbeit für eine staatliche oder andere wissenschaftliche Prüfung eingereicht.

Die vorliegende Dissertation wurde weder in Teilen, noch in Abwandlung bei einer anderen Hochschule als Dissertation eingereicht.

Außer dem vorliegenden Antrag bei der FSU Jena im Bereich der Biologisch-Pharmazeutischen Fakultät zur Eröffnung des Promotionsverfahrens sind von mir derzeit keine weiteren Promotionsverfahren eröffnet oder in der Vergangenheit eröffnet worden.

Jena, den 26.08.2010

Frank Nonnenmacher

13 Lebenslauf

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14 Publikationen

Veröffentlichungen in wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriften:

- 2010 **Nonnenmacher F**, Pfitzner E. Histone lysine methylation by polycomb group proteins plays a major role in B-cell specific gene silencing and protects classical Hodgkin lymphoma cells from apoptosis. 2010.
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- 2009 Baus D, **Nonnenmacher F**, Jankowski S, Doring C, Brautigam C, Frank M, et al. STAT6 and STAT1 are essential antagonistic regulators of cell survival in classical Hodgkin lymphoma cell line. *Leukemia* 2009; **23**(10): 1885-1893.
- 2006 Pfitzner E, **Nonnenmacher F**, Baus D. Biology and Impact of Signal Transducers and Activators of Transcription and Their Regulators as Targets in Cancer Therapy *Current Signal Transduction Therapy* 2006; **1**(3): 337-351.

Posterpräsentationen

Baus D, **Nonnenmacher F**, Pfitzner E. The Role of JAK/STAT-Signalling in Classical Hodgkin Lymphoma. *Poster Presentation, PD4, 10th Joint Meeting Signal Transduction, Weimar*

Nonnenmacher F, Jankowski S, Münz T, Kliem S, Pfitzner E. Identification of STAT6 Targets in Classiscal Hodgkin Lymphoma. *Poster Presentation, PC12, 10th Joint Meeting Signal Transduction, Weimar*

Nonnenmacher F, Zimmermann R, von der Ahe D. Differential Gene Expression in Vascular Smooth Muscle Cells after Stimulation with MCP-1 (Monocyte Chemoattractant Protein-1). *Z Kardiol 93: Suppl 3 (2004), Poster P149, 70. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Kardiologie*

Otte J, Hehlgans S, Wietelmann A, Zeyer A, Kubin T, **Nonnenmacher F**, Zimmermann R, von der Ahe D. Establishment of an inducible GeneSwitch system for analysis of RGS5 function in atherosclerosis. *Z Kardiol 93: Suppl 3 (2004), Poster P204, 70. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Kardiologie*