upregulated genes in the advanced GC, and the levels of expression as measured by quantitative reverse transcription–polymerase chain reaction were significantly associated with tumor invasion.[32–34] Although it has been reported that LI-cadherin is expressed in some intestinal metaplasias and the intestinal-type GC of Lauren,[21–23] to our knowledge this is the first demonstration that LI-cadherin expression is significantly associated with I-type GC.

Caudal-type homeobox (CDX) 1 and CDX2 are members of the caudal-related homeobox gene family, and CDX proteins act as intestine-specific transcription factors and increase expression of goblet-specific MUC2 gene.[34,35] Expression of CDX1 and CDX2 is strongly associated with intestinal metaplasia and I-type GC.[5,34,36] CDX2 binds to the promoter of the LI-cadherin gene and upregulates gene expression.[37] However, unlike classical cadherins, in which reduced expression is associated with tumor progression, the mechanism by which overexpression of LI-cadherin is associated with tumor progression remains unknown. Biological study should be performed in the near future.

In conclusion, our results provide some molecular characterization of the distinct mucin phenotypes of differentiated-type GC and suggest that LI-cadherin may be associated with the biological behavior of I-type GC.

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tumour was not of endometrioid subtype. Papers were excluded if they consisted of cases that had been included in other studies, had no follow-up or were in a foreign language with no English translation. A case of carcinomatous transformation in a focus of adenomyosis was excluded. It is perhaps a little disappointing that none of the series included control groups with which the outcome of these patients could have been compared, but this may reflect the difficulty of defining such groups in pathology series.

A total of 136 cases were recorded. Following aggregation of the data, 41 cases had residual or recurrent atypical polypoid adenomyoma [30.1%, confidence interval (CI) 23.1, 38.8], 12 had evidence of background endometrial hyperplasia (8.8%) and 12 had endometrial adenocarcinoma (8.8%, CI 23.1, 38.8). Carcinoma was identified in the adjacent endometrium in three cases, whilst in the remaining nine cases the carcinoma was located within the atypical polypoid adenomyoma or in association with its base.

Aggregating the published series indicates an average risk of endometrial carcinoma in women with atypical polypoid adenomyoma of 8.8%, which is considerably higher than the overall risk of 0.8% reported in a recent series of endometrial polyps,[2] although this increased to 32.6% (24.3–41.2%) in another series[3] of women with polyps aged over 65 years but is less than that described in complex atypical hyperplasia, where an overall frequency of cancer of up to 45% has been described.[4,5] Persistence of complex atypical hyperplasia has been described in 14% of cases,[5] whilst in atypical polypoid adenomyoma it was 8.8%.

These results have originated from a variety of case reports and series described over the years by pathologists, many with recognized expertise in gynaecological pathology and indicate that in some cases at least, atypical polypoid adenomyoma is associated with adenocarcinoma, suggesting that this lesion should be carefully evaluated and cannot be automatically regarded as being a totally benign entity. The presence of recurrent or residual atypical polypoid adenomyoma in 30.1% of the cases described would seem to indicate a continued risk for the development of malignant disease in patients in whom complete excision of the atypical polypoid adenomyoma cannot be guaranteed.

M K Heatley

Department of Histopathology, St James' University Hospital, Leeds, UK

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Lack of pericryptal fibroblastic cells adjacent to intestinal epithelial metaplastic gastric glands

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Sir: In colorectal mucosa, fibroblasts are located in two different sites, randomly distributed throughout the lamina propria or in the pericryptal fibroblast sheath surrounding the crypts and in the most superficial portion of the lamina propria, tightly apposed to the subepithelial basement membrane complex.[1,2] Fibroblasts in the pericryptal areas, namely pericryptal fibroblasts (PCFs), express not only α-smooth muscle actin (ASMA) but also, high-molecular-weight caldesmon (HCD), suggesting that PCFs are well-differentiated pericryptal smooth muscle cells rather than pericryptal myofibroblasts/fibroblasts.[3] Colorectal PCFs play an important role in the inhibition of tumorigenesis and tumour invasion[4–6] and progression of inflammatory bowel disease to dysplasia.[7]

In order to examine the distribution of PCFs in areas adjacent to intestinal epithelial metaplasia in gastric mucosa, we performed immunostaining for HCD in gastric mucosa with intestinal epithelial metaplasia. A total of 51 gastric neoplastic tissues and associated non-neoplastic mucosa (28 surgically resected intestinal-type gastric carcinomas and 23 endoscopically resected gastric adenomas and their non-neoplastic tissues) from the Surgical Pathology Files of the Department of Pathology, Kochi Medical School, Kochi University and its affiliated hospitals from 1994 to 2002 were examined. All of the 51 non-neoplastic gastric tissues contained areas of intestinal epithelial metaplasia. The definitions used for histological classification were based on the criteria of Lauren[8] and our previous report.[9] Immunohistochemical studies were performed using a Histofine SAB-PO (multi) kit

(Nichirei, Tokyo, Japan). A monoclonal antibody against HCD (clone h-CD; Dakopatts (Glostrup, Denmark), 1 : 50 dilution, microwave treatment) was used.[3] We regarded HCD-positive stromal cells adjacent to glands to be PCFs.[3] Vascular media and muscularis mucosa served as positive controls for HCD.

No HCD-positive stromal cells were detected adjacent to intestinal epithelial metaplastic gastric glands in any of the cases examined, i.e. no PCFs were detected adjacent to intestinal epithelial metaplastic gastric glands (Figure 1). HCD-positive thin smooth muscle bundles arising from the muscularis mucosa and extending vertically up to the surface of the mucosa were detected (Figure 1). No HCD-positive stromal cells were observed in the areas adjacent to non-neoplastic non-metaplastic gastric glands (not shown). As in the gastric mucosa with intestinal metaplasia, HCD-positive thin smooth muscle bundles arising from the muscularis mucosa and extending vertically up to the surface of the mucosa were seen (not shown). No HCD-positive stromal cells were detected in the areas adjacent to neoplastic glands (not shown).

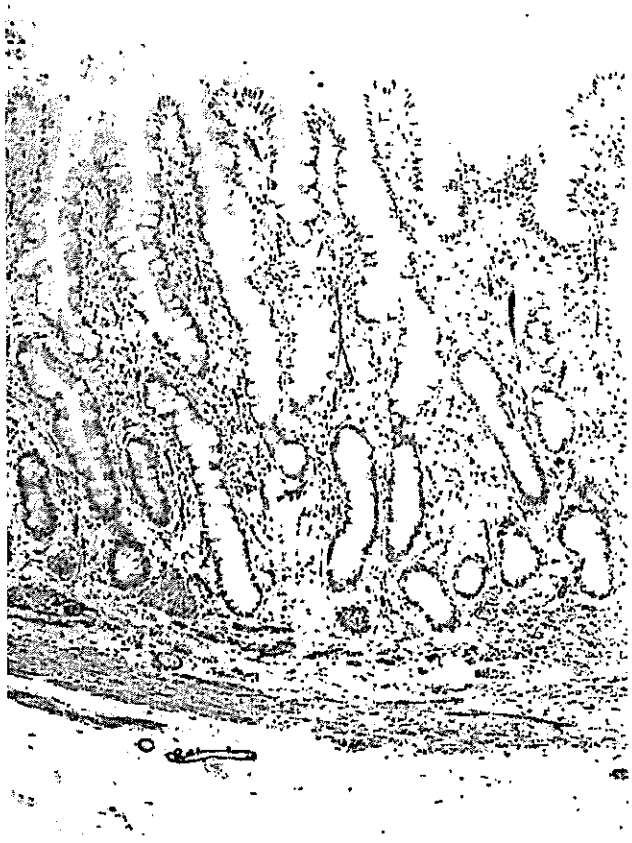

Figure 1. Immunoreactivity for high-molecular-weight caldesmon (HCD) in gastric mucosa with intestinal metaplasia. No HCD-positive stromal cells are detected in the areas adjacent to intestinal epithelial metaplastic gastric glands: HCD is positive in thin smooth muscle bundles extending from the muscularis mucosa vertically up to the surface of the mucosa.

Fetal gut mesenchymal cells modulate epithelial cell differentiation.[4] Reciprocal stromal–epithelial interactions in the digestive tract are maintained beyond embryonic life;[4] mature colonic mucosa contains PCFs exhibiting smooth muscle morphological features and regulating the growth and differentiation of adjacent epithelial cells.[4]

Reduction of PCFs is associated with colorectal tumorigenesis and tumour progression. PCFs gradually decrease in the sequence of adenoma, intramucosal carcinoma, and submucosal invasive carcinoma.[5] Depressed adenomas are considered to be a subtype of flat adenomas.[6] The depletion of PCFs seems to correlate with the depressed growth of colorectal adenoma.[6] Reduction of PCFs in background mucosa may relate to the development of villous change and dysplasia in ulcerative colitis.[7]

Intestinal metaplasia is proposed to be a precancerous lesion of intestinal-type gastric carcinoma.[8] In the present study, no PCFs surrounding intestinal epithelial metaplastic gastric glands were detected. Neoplastic intestinal-type gastric glands also have no accompanying PCFs. The stromal environment adjacent to intestinal epithelial metaplastic gastric glands may be similar to that adjacent to colorectal depressed adenoma glands, but quite different from that adjacent to normal colorectal crypts. There is a possibility that the stromal environment lacking PCFs makes intestinal epithelial metaplastic gastric glands unstable. Thin bundles of smooth muscle from the muscularis mucosa penetrate into the lamina propria.[3] These smooth muscle cells are not PCFs.[10]

In conclusion, intestinal metaplasia is intestinal epithelial metaplasia without PCFs. There is a possibility that lack of PCFs is associated with gastric epithelial tumorigenesis. Further molecular and biological investigations are needed into those areas adjacent to intestinal epithelial metaplastic gastric glands.

H Nakayama
H Enzan[1]
W Yasui

Department of Molecular Pathology, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, and
[1]Department of Pathology, Kochi Medical School, Kochi University, Kochi, Japan

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Expression of CD73 and its ecto-5′-nucleotidase activity are elevated in papillary thyroid carcinomas

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Sir: CD73, known as ecto-5′-nucleotidase, is a glycosylphosphatidylinositol-linked 70-kDa molecule whose enzymatic activity involves catalysing the dephosphorylation of ribo- and deoxyribonucleotide 5′-monophosphates to their corresponding nucleosides. This surface antigen may regulate the availability of adenosine for interaction with the cell surface adenosine

Figure 1. Immunohistochemistry for CD73. A, Papillary thyroid carcinoma. CD73 is strongly immunopositive at the apical cell membrane. B, Normal thyroid. CD73 is negative in follicular epithelial cells, while endothelial cells are immunopositive. C, Nodular goitre. CD73 is immunonegative in hyperplastic follicular epithelial cells which are forming papillary structures. D, Follicular adenoma. CD73 is immunonegative in benign neoplastic follicular epithelial cells which are forming follicle structures.

Characterization of SEZ6L2 cell-surface protein as a novel prognostic marker for lung cancer

Nobuhisa Ishikawa,[1,2] Yataro Daigo,[1,7] Atsushi Takano,[1] Masaya Taniwaki,[1] Tatsuya Kato,[1] Sonosuke Tanaka,[2] Wataru Yasui,[3] Yukio Takeshima,[4] Kouki Inai,[4] Hitoshi Nishimura,[5] Eiju Tsuchiya,[6] Nobuoki Kohno[2] and Yusuke Nakamura[1]

[1]Laboratory of Molecular Medicine, Human Genome Center, Institute of Medical Science, The University of Tokyo, 4-6-1 Shirokanedai, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108-8639; Departments of [2]Molecular and Internal Medicine, [3]Molecular Pathology, and [4]Pathology, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Hiroshima University, 1-2-3 Kasumi, Minami-ku, Hiroshima 734-8551; [5]Department of Thoracic Surgery, Saitama Cancer Center, 818 Ina-machi, Kita-Adachi-gun, Saitama 362-0806; and [6]Kanagawa Cancer Center Research Institute, 1-1-2 Nakao, Asahi-ku, Yokohama 241-0815, Japan

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To identify molecules that might serve as biomarkers or targets for development of novel molecular therapies, we have been screening genes encoding transmembrane/secretory proteins that are up-regulated in lung cancers, using cDNA microarrays coupled with purification of tumor cells by laser microdissection. A gene encoding seizure-related 6 homolog (mouse)-like 2 (SEZ6L2) protein, was chosen as a candidate for such molecule. Semi-quantitative RT-PCR and western-blot analyses documented increased expression of *SEZ6L2* in the majority of primary lung cancers and lung-cancer cell lines examined. SEZ6L2 protein was proven to be present on the surface of lung-cancer cells by flow cytometrical analysis using anti-SEZ6L2 antibody. Immunohistochemical staining for tumor tissue microarray consisting of 440 archived lung-cancer specimens detected positive SEZ6L2 staining in 327 (78%) of 420 non-small cell lung cancers (NSCLCs) and 13 (65%) of 20 small-cell lung cancers (SCLCs) examined. Moreover, NSCLC patients whose tumors revealed a higher level of SEZ6L2 expression suffered shorter tumor-specific survival compared to those with no SEZ6L2 expression. These results indicate that SEZ6L2 should be a useful prognostic marker of lung cancers. (*Cancer Sci* 2006; 97: 737–745)

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide, and non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) accounts for nearly 80% of those cases.[1] Regardless to histological subtypes, the 5-year survival rate of lung-cancer patients is around 10–15%[1,2] and even that of patients diagnosed at stage IA is less than 80%.[2,3] Within the last decade several newly developed cytotoxic agents such as paclitaxel, docetaxel, gemcitabine, and vinorelbine have begun to offer multiple choices for treatment to patients with advanced lung cancer, but each of these regimens confers only a modest survival benefit compared with cisplatin-based therapies.[4,5] Hence, novel therapeutic strategies such as molecular-targeted drugs, siRNAs and immunotherapies (antibodies and cancer vaccines) are eagerly expected. Although the precise pathways involved in lung tumorigenesis still remain unclear,[6] some evidences indicate that tumor cells express cell-surface markers unique to each histological type at particular stages of differentiation. Since cell-surface proteins or secretory autocrine-growth factors are considered to be more accessible to immune mechanisms and drug-delivery systems, identification of cancer-specific cell-surface and/or secretory proteins is likely to be an effective approach to develop novel diagnostic markers and therapeutic strategies.

We have been screening genes encoding molecules that are up-regulated in lung cancers, using cDNA microarrays and tumor cells purified by laser-capture microdissection.[7–15] To verify the biological and clinicopathological significance of the respective gene-products, we have been performing tissue microarray analysis of clinical lung-cancer materials.[11–15] This systematic approach combined with the search of cell-surface and/or secretory proteins by bioinformatics tools identified that SEZ6L2, seizure related 6 homolog (mouse)-like 2 (alias PSK-1), was frequently transactivated in a large population of lung cancers.

Application of multiple strategies for the identification of genes that encode secreted and transmembrane molecules, termed the Secreted Protein Discovery Initiative (SPDI), indicated SEZ6L2 to be one of novel transmembrane proteins.[16] *SEZ6L2* was also identified as a highly homologous gene to mouse *SEZ6* that had been first identified in the course of differential screening of mRNA from cortical neurons treated with pentylentetrazole (PTZ), a drug known to induce epileptic seizures.[17] The *SEZ6L2* encodes a 92.5-kDa protein with a N-terminal signal peptide, five SUSHI domains (SCR repeat), three CUB (initials of the first three identified proteins containing such domains: *c*omplement factor C1r/C1s, embryonic sea urchin protein *u*EGF, and *b*one morphogenetic protein 1) domains, and a C-terminal transmembrane domain. Although there is little information about the function of proteins including SUSHI and CUB domains, they have been postulated that they would be mainly involved in developmental process, cell–cell interaction, and cell adhesion. A previous study using cDNA microarray combined with bioinformatics analysis demonstrated that *SEZ6L2* is one of the 703 genes that are highly expressed in human hepatocellular carcinoma, although its physiological significance in carcinogenesis or its clinicopathological importance has not been clarified.[18]

[7]To whom correspondence should be addressed. E-mail: ydaigo@ims.u-tokyo.ac.jp
Characterization Of SEZ6L2 Cell-Surface Protein As A Novel Prognostic Marker For Lung Cancer.

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In this study, we reveal over-expression of SEZ6L2 protein in a considerable portion of lung cancers, and suggest that SEZ6L2 could be a novel prognostic marker and also a potential target for development of therapeutic antibodies for treatment of the majority of lung tumor.

Materials and Methods

Cell lines and clinical tissue samples

The 23 human lung-cancer cell lines used in this study included nine adenocarcinomas (ADCs; A427, A549, LC319, NCI-H1373, PC-3, PC-9, PC-14, NCI-H1666, and NCI-H1781), nine squamous-cell carcinomas (SCCs; EBC-1, LU61, NCI-H520, NCI-H1703, NCI-H2170, RERF-LC-AI, SK-MES-1, NCI-H226, and NCI-H647), one large-cell carcinoma (LCC; LX1), and four small-cell lung cancers (SCLCs; DMS114, DMS273, SBC-3, and SBC-5). A human bronchial epithelial cell line, BEAS2B (American Type Culture Collection; ATCC) was also included in the panel of the cells used in this study. All cells were grown in monolayers in appropriate media supplemented with 10% fetal calf serum (FCS) and were maintained at 37°C in an atmosphere of humidified air with 5% CO_2. Surgically resected primary NSCLC samples had been obtained earlier with informed consent.[7] A total of 420 formalin-fixed samples of primary NSCLCs (stage I-IIIA) including 263 ADCs, 116 SCCs, 28 LCCs, 13 adenosquamous carcinomas (ASCs) and adjacent normal lung tissues, had been obtained earlier along with clinicopathological data from patients undergoing surgery at Saitama Cancer Center (Saitama, Japan). ADCs were also classified into two groups: 129 mixed subtypes with bronchioloalveolar-cell carcinoma (BAC) components and 134 unmixed subtypes without BAC (non-BAC). SCLCs from postmortem materials (20 individuals) obtained from Hiroshima University (Hiroshima, Japan), were used in this study. NSCLC specimen and five tissues (heart, liver, lung, kidney, and pancreas) from postmortem materials (2 individuals with ADC) were also obtained from Hiroshima University. This study and the use of all clinical materials obtained with written informed consent were approved by the Institutional Research Ethics Committees. The histological classification of the tumor specimens was performed by the WHO criteria.[19] The postsurgical pathologic tumor-node-metastasis stage was determined according to the guidelines of the American Joint Committee on Cancer.[20]

Semi-quantitative RT-PCR analysis

Total RNA was extracted from cultured cells and clinical tissues using Trizol reagent (Life Technologies, Inc. Gaithersburg, MD, USA) according to the manufacturer's protocol. Extracted RNAs and normal human-tissue polyA RNAs were treated with DNase I (Roche Diagnostics, Basel, Switzerland) and then reversely transcribed using oligo $(dT)_{12-18}$ primer and Super-Script II reverse transcriptase (Life Technologies, Inc.). Semi-quantitative RT-PCR experiments were carried out with synthesized *SEZ6L2* gene-specific primers (5′-GGGAGTAT-GAAGTTTCCATCTG-3′ and 5′-GGATGCTGGTTTATTTA-CTGTAGG-3′), or with beta-actin (*ACTB*)-specific primers (5′-ATCAAGATCATTGCTCCTCCT-3′ and 5′-CTGCGCAA-GTTAGGTTTTGT-3′) as an internal control. All PCR reactions involved initial denaturation at 94°C for 2 min followed by 22 (for *ACTB*) or 30 cycles (for *SEZ6L2*) of 94°C for 30 s, 54–60°C for 30 s, and 72°C for 60 s on a GeneAmp PCR system 9700 (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA).

Northern-blot analysis

Human multiple-tissue blot (16 normal tissues including heart, brain, placenta, lung, liver, skeletal muscle, kidney, pancreas, spleen, thymus, prostate, testis, ovary, small intestine, colon, and peripheral blood leukocyte; BD Biosciences Clontech, Palo Alto, CA, USA) was hybridized with a ^{32}P-labeled PCR product of *SEZ6L2*. The cDNA probes of *SEZ6L2* were prepared by RT-PCR using primers, 5′-GCTATGAGGG-CTTTGAGCTTATC-3′ and 5′-AGAAGCAAAGGTGGAGA-GACTGT-3′. Pre-hybridization, hybridization, and washing were performed according to the supplier's recommendations. The blots were autoradiographed with intensifying screens at –80°C for one week.

Preparation of anti-SEZ6L2 polyclonal antibody

Rabbit antibodies specific for extracellular portion of SEZ6L2 were raised by immunizing rabbits with 6-histidine fused human SEZ6L2 protein (codons 737–787; accession No. NM_012410), and purified with standard protocols using affinity columns (Affi-gel 10; Bio-Rad Laboratories, Hercules, CA, USA) conjugated with the 6-histidine fused protein. On Western blots we confirmed that the antibody was specific to SEZ6L2, using lysates from NSCLC tissues and cell lines as well as normal lung tissues.

Western-blot analysis

Cells and tissues were lyzed in lysis buffer; 50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0), 150 mM NaCl, 0.5% NP-40, 0.5% deoxycholate-Na, 0.1% SDS, plus protease inhibitor (Protease Inhibitor Cocktail Set III; Calbiochem Darmstadt, Germany). We used an ECL western-blotting analysis system (GE Healthcare Bio-sciences, Piscataway, NJ), as previously described.[12,13] SDS-PAGE was performed in 7.5% polyacrylamide gels. PAGE-separated proteins were electroblotted onto nitrocellulose membranes (GE Healthcare Bio-sciences) and incubated with a rabbit polyclonal antihuman SEZ6L2 antibody. A goat antirabbit IgG-HRP antibody (GE Healthcare Bio-sciences) was served as the secondary antibodies for these experiments.

Flow-cytometric analysis

Lung-cancer cells (1×10^6 cells) were incubated with a rabbit polyclonal antihuman SEZ6L2 antibody for detecting the extracellular domain of the protein (0.34 mg/mL) or control rabbit IgG (0.34 mg/mL; Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Santa Cruz, CA, USA) at 4°C for 1 h. The cells were washed in PBS and then incubated with AlexaFluor 488-conjugated antirabbit IgG (Molecular Probes, Eugene, OR, USA) at 4°C for 30 min. The cells were washed in PBS and analyzed on a FACScan flow cytometer (Becton Dickinson Labware, Bedford, MA, USA) and analyzed by ModFit software (Verity Software House, Inc. Topsham, ME, USA).

Immunohistochemistry and tissue microarray

Tumor-tissue microarrays were constructed using 440 formalin-fixed primary lung cancers (420 NSCLCs and 20 SCLCs), according to the method published previously.[21–23] The tissue

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area for sampling was selected by visual alignment with the corresponding HE-stained section on a slide. Three, four, or five tissue cores (diameter 0.6 mm; height 3–4 mm) taken from a donor tumor block were placed into a recipient paraffin block using a tissue microarrayer (Beecher Instruments, Sun Prairie, WI, USA). A core of normal tissue was punched from each case, and 5-μm sections of the resulting microarray block were used for immunohistochemical analysis.

To investigate the presence of SEZ6L2 protein in clinical samples that had been embedded in paraffin blocks, we stained the sections as previously described.[11–15] Briefly, 16.25 μg/mL of a rabbit polyclonal antihuman SEZ6L2 antibody was added after blocking of endogenous peroxidase and proteins. The sections were incubated with HRP-labeled antirabbit IgG as the secondary antibody. Substrate-chromogen was added and the specimens were counterstained with hematoxylin.

Three independent investigators assessed SEZ6L2 positivity semiquantitatively without prior knowledge of clinicopathological data. The intensity of SEZ6L2 staining was evaluated using following criteria: strong positive (2+), dark brown staining in more than 50% of tumor cells completely obscuring membrane and cytoplasm; weak positive (1+), any lesser degree of brown staining appreciable in tumor cell membrane and cytoplasm; absent (scored as 0), no appreciable staining in tumor cells. Cases were accepted only as strongly positive if reviewers independently defined them as such.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analyses were performed using the StatView statistical program (SaS, Cary, NC, USA). We used contingency tables to analyze the relationship between SEZ6L2 expression and clinicopathological variables in NSCLC patients. Tumor-specific survival curves were calculated from the date of surgery to the time of death related to NSCLC, or to the last follow-up observation. Kaplan-Meier curves were calculated for each relevant variable and for SEZ6L2 expression; differences in survival times among patient subgroups were analyzed using the log-rank test. Univariate and multivariate analyses were performed with the Cox proportional-hazard regression model to determine associations between clinicopathological variables and cancer-related mortality. First, we analyzed associations between death and possible prognostic factors including age, gender, histological type, pT-classification, and pN-classification, taking into consideration one factor at a time. Second, multivariate Cox analysis was applied on backward (stepwise) procedures that always forced strong SEZ6L2 expression into the model, along with any and all variables that satisfied an entry level of a P-value less than 0.05. As the model continued to add factors, independent factors did not exceed an exit level of $P < 0.05$.

RNA interference assay

Using the vector-based RNA interference (RNAi) system, psiH1BX3.0, which we had established earlier to direct the synthesis of siRNAs in mammalian cells,[10,12,13,15] we transfected 10 μg of siRNA-expression vector with 30 μL of Lipofectamine 2000 (Invitrogen) into two NSCLC cell lines (A549, LC319) that endogenously over-expressed *SEZ6L2*. The transfected cells were cultured for five days in the presence of appropriate concentrations of geneticin (G418). Cell numbers and viability were measured by Giemsa staining and MTT assay in triplicate. The target sequences of the synthetic oligonucleotides for RNAi were as follows: control-1 (EGFP: enhanced green fluorescent protein (GFP) gene, a mutant of *Aequorea victoria* GFP), 5′-GAAGCAGCACGACTTCTTC-3′; control-2 (LUC, luciferase gene from *Photinus pyralis*), 5′-CGTACGCGGAATACTTCGA-3′; control-3 (Scramble: Chloroplast *Euglena gracilis* gene coding for the 5S and 16S rRNA), 5′-GCGCGCTTTGTAGGATTCG-3′; siRNA-SEZ6L2-1 (si-1), 5′-CCAACCGGCTGCTTCTGCA-3′; siRNA-SEZ6L2-2 (si-2), 5′-CTGGAAGTGACCCAGACCA-3′; siRNA-SEZ6L2-3 (si-3), 5′-GCTTCAGGGAAAGTCCCTT-3′. To validate our RNAi system, individual control siRNAs were tested by semiquantitative RT-PCR to confirm the decrease in expression of the corresponding target genes that had been transiently transfected to COS-7 cells. Down-regulation of *SEZ6L2* expression by functional siRNA, but not by controls, was also confirmed in the cell lines used for this assay.

Results

SEZ6L2 expression in lung tumors, cell lines, and normal tissues

To search for novel target molecules for development of therapeutic agents and/or diagnostic markers for NSCLC, we first screened genes that showed more than a 3-fold higher level of expression in cancer cells than in normal cells, in half or more of the 37 NSCLCs analyzed by cDNA microarray.[7] Among 23 040 genes screened, we identified the *SEZ6L2* transcript as a good candidate (3-fold or higher expression in 81% of the NSCLC cases), and confirmed its transactivation by semiquantitative RT-PCR experiments in 12 of 15 additional lung-cancer tissues and in 19 of 23 lung-cancer cell lines (NSCLC and SCLC samples), while its expression in normal lung tissue cells or a human bronchial epithelial cell line, BEAS2B, was hardly detectable (Fig. 1a,b).

We subsequently generated rabbit polyclonal antibody specific to human SEZ6L2 and confirmed by western-blot analysis an expression of SEZ6L2 protein in 4 cancer cell lines of lung, in which the *SEZ6L2* transcript had been detected at a high level (Fig. 1c). We found no band in two cell lines, which expressed no *SEZ6L2* transcript. As SEZ6L2 was suggested to be a type I membrane protein, we attempted to validate SEZ6L2 expression on the surfaces of lung-cancer cells using flow-cytometry with anti-SEZ6L2 polyclonal antibody. This analysis indicated that the antibody bound to A549 and EBC-1 cells, in which *SEZ6L2* transcript had been detected at a high level, but not to NCI-H647 cells, which had not expressed *SEZ6L2* (Fig. 1d). We also examined expression of SEZ6L2 protein in NSCLC tissues using the same antibody. Western-blot analysis revealed the increased SEZ6L2 protein expression in tumor tissues in representative pairs of ADC samples analyzed (Fig. 2a). Immunohistochemical analysis of tumor tissues detected positive staining for SEZ6L2 specifically in cancer cells in 7 of the 10 NSCLC cases examined, but the staining was hardly detectable in surrounding normal lung epithelial cells (Fig. 2b–d). Interestingly, the invasive border of the tumor adjacent to the non-cancerous cells showed the tendency of strong staining. SEZ6L2 localized at the plasma membrane as well as in the cytoplasm of tumor cells (Fig. 2e–g).

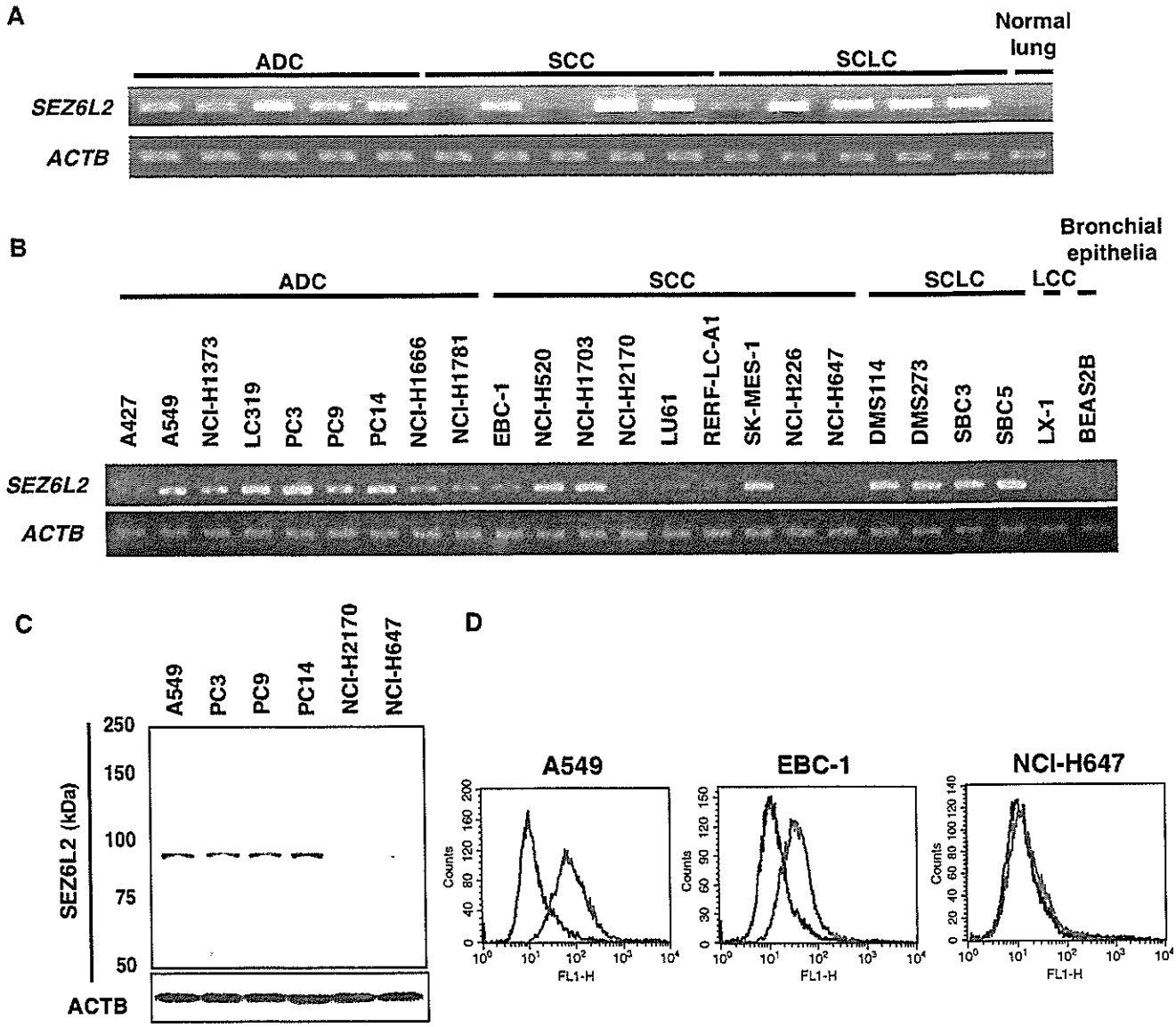

Fig. 1. Validation of SEZ6L2 expression and localization in lung cancers. (a) Expression of *SEZ6L2* in 15 clinical lung-cancer samples, examined by semiquantitative RT-PCR. (b) Expression of *SEZ6L2* in 23 lung-cancer cell lines, examined by semiquantitative RT-PCR. (c) Expression of SEZ6L2 protein in 6 lung-cancer cell lines, examined by western-blot analysis. (d) Expression of SEZ6L2 protein on cell surfaces in lung-cancer lines A549, EBC-1, and NCI-H647, evaluated by flow-cytometric analysis. Signal intensity values (*Y*-axis) of cells treated with antihuman SEZ6L2 polyclonal antibody (red) or cells treated with rabbit IgG (control; black) were shown.

Northern-blot analysis using human *SEZ6L2* cDNA as a probe detected a 3.2-kb transcript of weak signal only in brain, pancreas, prostate, and testis among the 16 normal human tissues (data not shown). We also examined expression of SEZ6L2 protein with anti-SEZ6L2 antibody on five normal tissues (heart, liver, lung, kidney, and pancreas), and found that it was hardly detectable in these tissues (Fig. 3a–e) while positive SEZ6L2 staining appeared in lung tumor tissues (Fig. 3f).

Association of SEZ6L2 expression with poor prognosis of NSCLC patients

To verify the biological and clinicopathological significance of SEZ6L2, we additionally examined the expression of SEZ6L2 protein by means of tissue microarrays containing lung-cancer tissues from 440 patients. We classified a pattern of SEZ6L2 expression on the tissue array ranging from absent (scored as 0) to weak/strong positive (scored as 1+ ~ 2+) (Fig. 4a–d). Of the 420 NSCLC cases examined, SEZ6L2 was strongly stained in 31 (7.4%; score 2+), weakly stained in 296 (70.5%; score 1+), and not stained in 93 cases (22.1%; score 0) (details are shown in Table 1). Weak positive staining (score 1+) was observed in 65% (13 of 20) of SCLC cases examined. As shown in Table 1, gender (higher in female; $P = 0.007$ by Fisher's exact test) and hisotological type (higher in ADC; $P < 0.001$ by Fisher's exact test) were significantly associated with the SEZ6L2 positivity (score 1+ ~ 2+). The median survival time of NSCLC patients was significantly related to the expression levels of SEZ6L2 (3172 days in score 0

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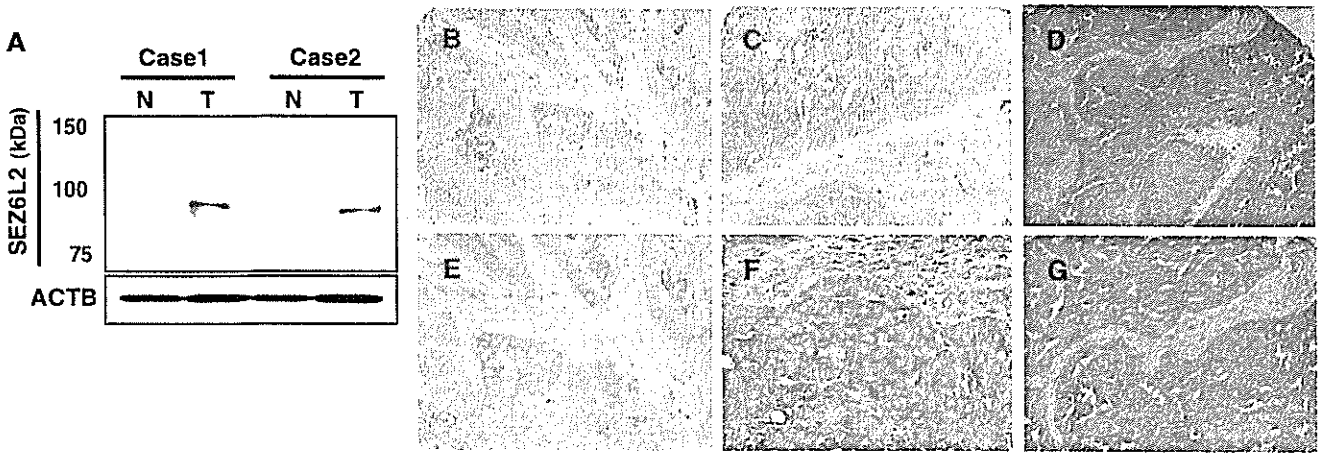

Fig. 2. Expression and localization of SEZ6L2 in clinical lung cancer tissues. (a) Western-blot analysis of SEZ6L2 protein in two representative pairs of lung adenocarcinoma samples. (b–g) Representative images of immunohistochemical analysis of SEZ6L2 protein in lung adenocarcinoma tissues. Magnification, ×100 (b, c, d) and ×200 (e, f, g).

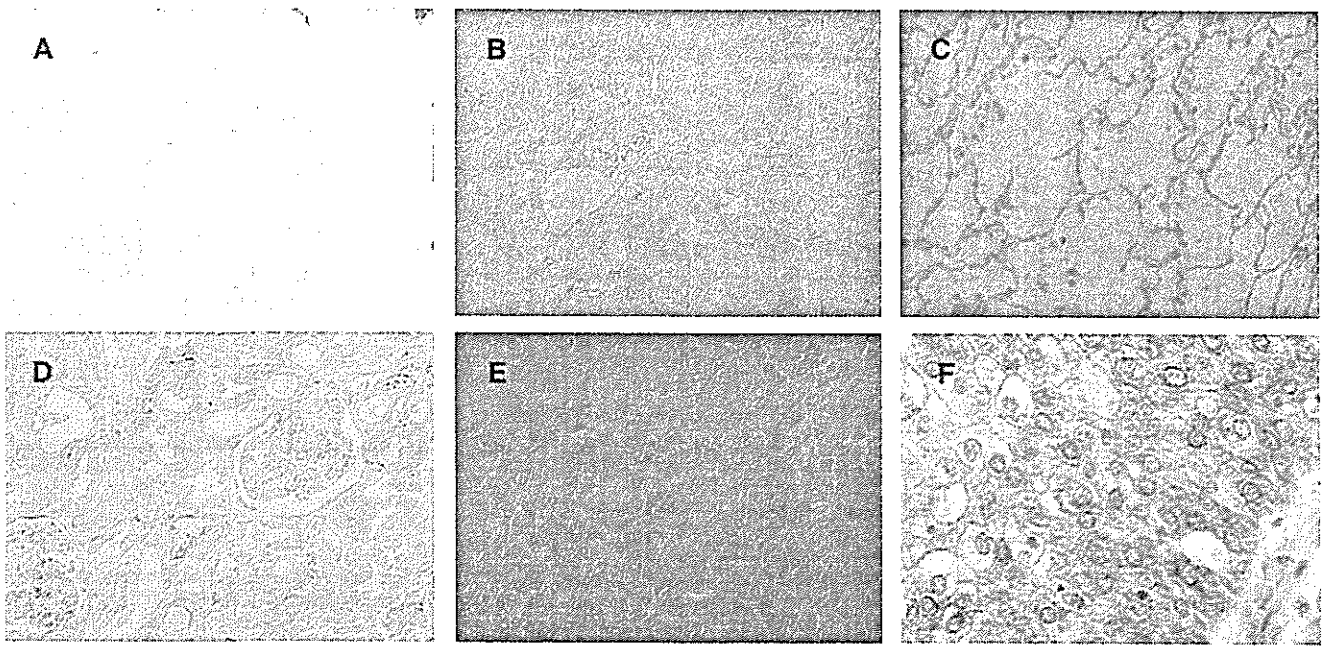

Fig. 3. Expression of SEZ6L2 protein in normal organ tissues.(a–f) Immunohistochemical evaluation of SEZ6L2 protein in representative normal tissues; adult heart (a), liver (b), lung (c), kidney (d), and pancreas (e), as well as lung adenocarcinoma tissues (f). Magnification, ×200.

cases, 2346 days in 1+, and 1134 days in 2+; $P = 0.0209$ by log-rank test; Fig. 4e). By univariate analysis, pT stage (T3, T4 *versus* T1, T2), pN stage (N1, N2 *versus* N0), age (≥ 65 *versus* < 65), gender (Male *versus* Female), histological classification (ADC *versus* other histological types), and strong SEZ6L2 positivity (score 2+ *versus* 0, 1+) were all significantly related to poor tumor-specific survival among NSCLC patients ($P = < 0.0001, < 0.0001, 0.0038, 0.0027, 0.0102$, and 0.0138, respectively; Table 2). In multivariate analysis of the prognostic factors, pT stage, pN stage, age, and strong SEZ6L2 expression were indicated to be an independent prognostic factor ($P = 0.0001, < 0.0001, < 0.0001, 0.0144$, respectively; Table 2).

Inhibition of endogenous *SEZ6L2* expression by siRNA in NSCLCs

To assess whether up-regulation of SEZ6L2 plays a role in growth or survival of lung cancer cells, we constructed three independent plasmids that were designed to express siRNA against *SEZ6L2* (si-1, si-2, and si-3), along with three different control plasmids (siRNAs for EGFP, LUC and Scramble). The treatment of NSCLC cells with the three effective and specific siRNAs could reduce expression of *SEZ6L2*, but did not suppress cell growth significantly (data not shown), suggesting that up-regulation of SEZ6L2 is not directly related to growth or survival of cancer cells.

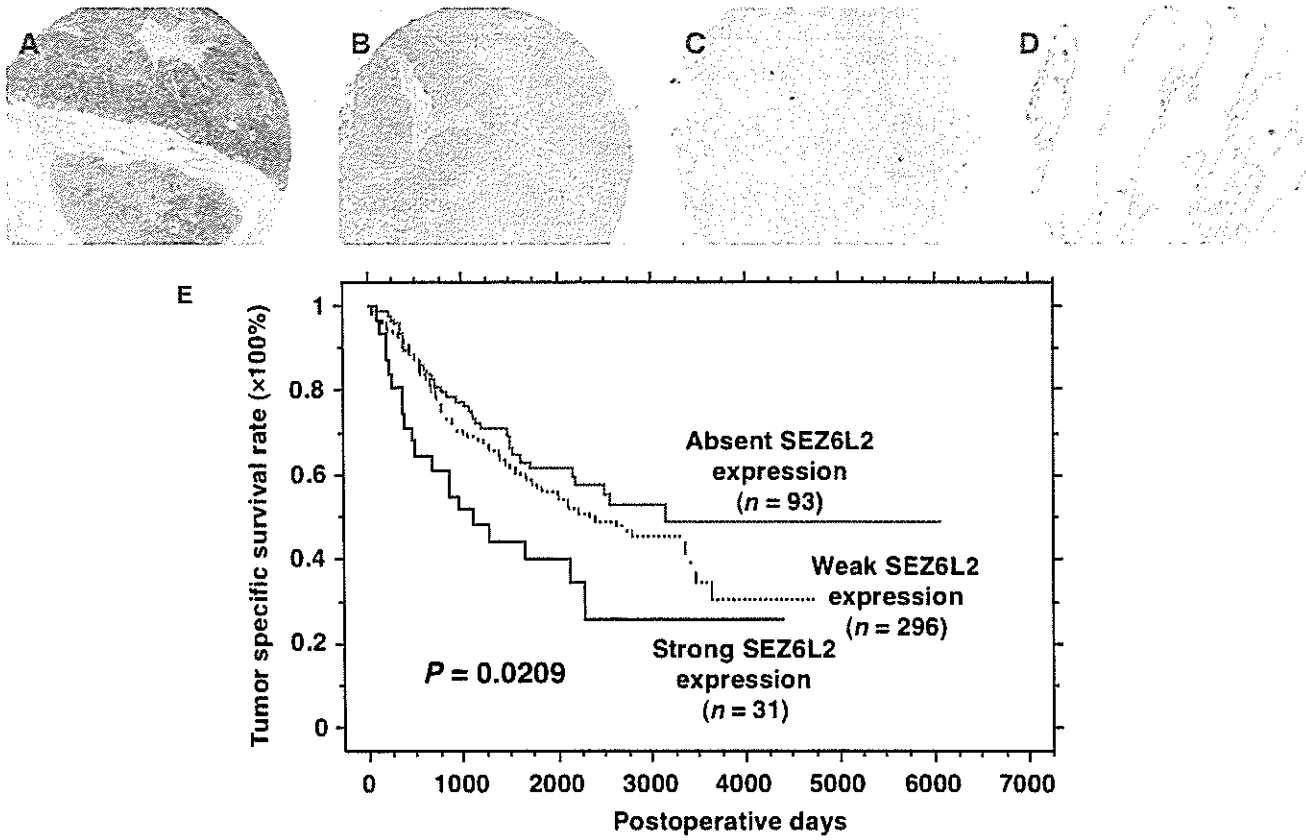

Fig. 4. Association of increased SEZ6L2 expression with poorer clinical outcomes among NSCLC patients. (a–d) Immunohistochemical evaluation of SEZ6L2 protein expression on tissue microarrays. Examples are shown for strong (a), weak (b), or absent (c) SEZ6L2 expression in lung SCCs, and for no expression in normal lung (d). Magnification, ×100. (e) Kaplan-Meier analysis of tumor-specific survival in 420 patients with NSCLCs according to the level of SEZ6L2 expression ($P = 0.0209$; log-rank test).

Table 1. Associabon between SEZ6L2-positivity in NSCLC tissues and patients' characteristics ($n = 420$)

	Total $n = 420$	SEZ6L2 strong positive $n = 31$	SEZ6L2 weak positive $n = 296$	SEZ6L2 absent $n = 93$	P value strong/ weak vs absent
Gender					
Male	290	20	195	75	
Female	130	11	101	18	0.007†
Age (years)					
< 65	207	15	147	45	
≥ 65	213	16	149	48	NS
Histological type					
ADC	263	24	198	41	
SCC	116	3	77	36	< 0.001*†
Others	41	4	21	16	
pT factor					
T1+T2	301	22	212	67	
T3+T4	119	9	84	26	NS
pN factor					
N0	259	14	180	65	
N1+N2	161	17	116	28	NS
Smoking history					
Never smoker	129	10	96	23	
Smoker	291	21	200	70	NS

ADC, adenocarcinoma; SCC, squamous cell carcinoma.
Others, large cell carcinoma plus adenosquamous cell carcinoma.
*ADC versus other histology.
†$P < 0.05$ (Fisher's exact test).
NS, no significance.

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Table 2. Cox's proportional hazards model analysis of prognostic factors in patients with NSCLCs

Variables	Hazards ratio	95% CI	Unfavorable/Favorable	*P*-value
Univariate analysis				
SEZ6L2	1.789	1.126–2.841	Strong(+)/ Weak(+) or (–)	0.0138*
Age (years)	1.520	1.145–2.018	65 ≥ / < 65	0.0038*
Gender	1.640	1.187–2.265	Male / Female	0.0027*
Histological type	1.444	1.091–1.912	others/ADC†	0.0102*
pT factor	1.889	1.411–2.528	T3+T4/T1+T2	< 0.0001*
pN factor	2.930	2.197–3.908	N1+N2/N0	< 0.0001*
Multivariate analysis				
SEZ6L2	1.814	1.126–2.922	Strong(+)/ Weak(+) or (–)	0.0144*
Age (years)	1.930	1.442–2.581	65 ≥ / < 65	< 0.0001*
Gender	1.413	0.989–2.019	Male / Female	0.0572
Histological type	1.184	0.861–1.628	others ADC†	0.2982
pT factor	1.787	1.329–2.404	T3+T4/T1+T2	0.0001*
pN factor	2.356	1.761–3.153	N1+N2/N0	< 0.0001*

†ADC, adenocarcinorna.
*$P < 0.05$.

Discussion

Molecular-targeted therapies are expected to be highly specific to malignant cells, with minimal adverse reactions due to their well-defined mechanisms of action. Equally desirable prospects are minimally invasive, and highly sensitive and specific new diagnostic methods that would adapt readily to clinical settings. From this point of view, tumor-specific transmembrane/secretory proteins should have significant advantages because they are located either at the cell surface or within the extracellular space; if they are present in serum, it makes them easily accessible as molecular markers. Some tumor-specific markers already available, such as CYFRA or Pro-GRP, are transmembrane/secretory proteins.[24,25] In addition, an example of rituximab (Rituxan), a chimeric monoclonal antibody against CD20-positive lymphomas, provides proof of the concept that targeting specific cell-surface molecules can result in significant clinical benefits.[26] During the course of our attempt to identify novel cancer-specific cell-surface or secretory proteins, we have been exploiting the power of genome-wide expression analysis to select genes that are over-expressed on the surface of cancer cells.[11,14] Functional and immunohistochemical analysis of candidate molecules on tissue microarray has revealed that SEZ6L2 is likely to be a potential target for development of novel tools for diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer.

SEZ6L2 was indicated to be a type I transmembrane protein with extracellular SUSHI and CUB domains by the bioinformatics tools.[16] SUSHI domains are known as complement control protein (CCP) modules, which exist in a wide variety of complements and adhesion proteins,[27] and are involved in protein-protein or protein–ligand interactions.[28] On the other hand, CUB domains are structurally related to immunoglobulins and play important roles in cell adhesion.[29] Some members of the proteins with these domains that include a number of serine protein kinases, complement components, cubulin, spermadhesin, bone morphogenetic protein 1, and others involved in cell adhesion or interaction with extracellular matrix components, were shown to have key functions in embryonic development.[30–34] In this study, we demonstrated that SEZ6L2 protein was expressed in a great majority of surgically resected NSCLC specimens, whereas it was scarcely expressed in normal tissues. Furthermore, the higher SEZ6L2 expression level was associated with shorter cancer-specific survival periods. This is, to our best knowledge, the first study to show prognostic value of SEZ6L2 expression in human cancers. Our observations implied that over-expressed SEZ6L2 may be associated with further malignant progression or unique phenotype in a subset of NSCLCs. However, reduction of SEZ6L2 expression by siRNA against *SEZ6L2*, did not suppress cell growth significantly, suggesting that up-regulation of SEZ6L2 is unlikely to be essential to growth or survival of cancer cells.

Recently, CUB domain-containing protein 1 (CDCP1), a novel member of CUB family proteins, was described as a marker for metastatic tissues over-expressed in colorectal cancer as well as in breast and lung carcinomas.[35] In mice models, expression levels of CDCP1 protein correlated with the metastatic ability of human epidermoid carcinoma cell line, HEp3 variant.[36] The CDCP1 molecule also contains intracellular binding sites for SH2 and SH3 domains and was phosphorylated at tyrosine residues by an Src kinase family member.[36] Since SEZ6L2 has a short C-terminal cytoplasmic domain with the sequence of Asn-Pro-X-Tyr, this motif is a potential target for tyrosine phosphorylation by Src family proteins.[37] A combination of our results and possible biological functions of the proteins with similar domains, suggest that activation of SEZ6L2 in cancer cells may modulate the cell adhesion, or the interaction and communication of cancer cells with the extracellular matrix or ligands, and may also function in some signal transduction, which possibly result in the promotion of tumor cell motility or invasion, and their subsequent highly malignant phenotype. In fact, immunohistochemical study demonstrated that SEZ6L2 localized at the plasma membrane as well as in the cytoplasm of tumor cells. Furthermore, SEZ6L2 protein expression was likely to increase at the invasive border of the tumor adjacent to the non-cancerous cells, thus partly supporting our hypothesis (Fig. 2b–g). Further elucidation of the mechanism implied by these observations should reveal important new information

about cell-cell communication, differentiation, and cancer progression.

Tumor tissue microarray is a powerful method to validate clinicopathological significance of candidate molecular markers using a large number of clinical samples, however, considerable heterogeneity exists within lung cancer with respect to morphology and the expression of biomarkers. We took 3–5 tissue-cores from each donor tumor block, all of which were carefully reviewed by the pathologists to cover most of histological subtypes within each tumor, which enabled us to correlate more detailed tumor subtypes with SEZ6L2 expression. Lung ADC has been classified in five histological subtypes; BAC, acinar, papillary, solid with mucin, and ADC with mixed subtypes. BAC is the subtype showing no invasive features, and good prognosis can be expected for patients with non-invasive BAC, although most lung ADC have mixed subtypes, which have invasive components.[38–40] We divided the 263 ADC cases into two subgroups with or without BAC component. Of the 129 cases with BAC subtype, 16 (12.4%) revealed strong positive staining of SEZ6L2 and 92 (71.3%) showed weakly positive staining. Of the 134 cases with non-BAC subtype, 8 (6.0%) were judged to be strong positive and 101 (75%) were to be weak positive, suggesting that SEZ6L2 staining was not associated with these BAC histology.

In summary, we have shown that over-expressed SEZ6L2 is likely to be an essential contributor to malignant features of NSCLCs. The data reported here imply the possibility of SEZ6L2 as a potential prognostic marker for lung cancers. Moreover, this molecule is a possible target for development of therapeutic approaches such as molecular-targeted antibodies to any types of cancers over-expressing this molecule on the cell surface.

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ONCOGENOMICS

Systematic search for gastric cancer-specific genes based on SAGE data: melanoma inhibitory activity and matrix metalloproteinase-10 are novel prognostic factors in patients with gastric cancer

PP Aung[1], N Oue[1], Y Mitani[1], H Nakayama[1], K Yoshida[2], T Noguchi[3], AK Bosserhoff[4] and W Yasui[1]

[1]*Department of Molecular Pathology, Hiroshima University Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Hiroshima, Japan;* [2]*Department of Surgical Oncology, Research Institute for Radiation Biology and Medicine, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan;* [3]*Department of Oncological Science (Surgery II), Oita University Faculty of Medicine, Oita, Japan and* [4]*Institute of Pathology, University of Regensburg, Regensburg, Germany*

Gastric cancer (GC) is one of the most common malignancies worldwide. Genes expressed only in cancer tissue will be useful molecular markers for diagnosis and may also be good therapeutic targets. However, little is known about cancer-specific genes, at least in GC. In this study, we searched for GC-specific genes by serial analysis of gene expression (SAGE) data analysis and quantitative reverse transcription (RT)–PCR. Comparing GC SAGE libraries with those of various normal tissues in the SAGEmap database, we identified 54 candidate GC-specific genes. Quantitative RT–PCR analysis of these candidates revealed that *APin protein* (*APIN*), *taxol resistance-associated gene 3* (*TRAG3*), *cytochrome P450, family 2, subfamily W, polypeptide 1* (*CYP2W1*), *melanoma inhibitory activity* (*MIA*), *matrix metalloproteinase-10* (*MMP-10*), *dickkopf homolog 4* (*DKK4*), *GW112, regenerating islet-derived family, member 4* (*REGIV*), and *HORMA domain-containing 1* (*HORMAD1*) were expressed much more highly in GC than in 14 kinds of normal tissues. Immunohistochemical staining for MIA, MMP-10, and DKK4 was found in 47 (31.1%), 68 (45.0%), and two (1.3%) of 151 GCs, respectively, and staining for both MIA and MMP-10 was correlated with poor prognosis in advanced GC ($P=0.0001$ and 0.0141, respectively). Moreover, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay showed high levels of MMP-10 (65/69, 94.2%) in serum samples from patients with GC. Levels of MIA were raised in a small proportion of serum samples from patients with GC (4/69, 5.8%). In Boyden chamber invasion assays, MIA-transfected GC cells were up to three times more invasive than cells transfected with empty vector. Taken together, these results suggest that MMP-10 is a good marker for the detection of GC and that MIA and MMP-10 are prognostic factors for GC. As expression of MIA and MMP-10 is narrowly restricted in cancer, these two molecules may be good therapeutic targets for GC.

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Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, gastric cancer (GC) is the fourth most common malignancy worldwide, with approximately 870 000 new cases occurring yearly. Mortality due to GC is second only to that due to lung cancer (Ohgaki and Matsukura, 2003). Cancer develops as a result of multiple genetic and epigenetic alterations (Yasui *et al.*, 2000; Ushijima and Sasako, 2004). Better knowledge of changes in gene expression that occur during gastric carcinogenesis may lead to improvements in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. Identification of novel biomarkers for cancer diagnosis and novel targets for treatment is a major goal in this field (Yasui *et al.*, 2004). Genes encoding transmembrane/secretory proteins expressed specifically in cancers may be ideal biomarkers for cancer diagnosis (Buckhaults *et al.*, 2001). If the function of the gene product is involved in the neoplastic process, this gene may constitute a therapeutic target.

We previously performed serial analysis of gene expression (SAGE) on four primary GC samples (Gene Expression Omnibus accession number GSE 545; SAGE Hiroshima GC tissue) and identified several genes and tags that are potentially involved in invasion, metastasis, and carcinogenesis (Oue *et al.*, 2004; Yasui *et al.*, 2004). In this study, to identify potential molecular markers for diagnosis of GC and molecular therapeutic targets, we systematically searched for GC-specific genes in SAGE libraries. Comparing GC SAGE libraries with those of various normal tissues in the SAGEmap

Correspondence: Dr W Yasui, Department of Molecular Pathology, Hiroshima University Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, 1-2-3 Kasumi, Minami-ku, Hiroshima 734-8551, Japan.
E-mail: wyasui@hiroshima-u.ac.jp
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database (Lal *et al.*, 1999), we identified 54 candidate GC-specific genes in GC libraries but not in libraries from 14 normal tissues, including brain, lung, and heart. We also performed quantitative reverse transcription (RT)–PCR to investigate the specificity of these candidate GC-specific genes. We show that *APin protein* (*APIN*), *taxol resistance-associated gene 3* (*TRAG3*), *cytochrome P450, family 2, subfamily W, polypeptide 1* (*CYP2W1*), *melanoma inhibitory activity* (*MIA*), *matrix metalloproteinase-10* (*MMP-10*), *dickkopf homolog 4* (*DKK4*), *GW112*, *regenerating islet-derived family, member 4* (*REGIV*), and *HORMA domain-containing 1* (*HORMAD1*) were much more highly expressed in GC than in normal tissues. Among these genes, overexpression of *REGIV* and *GW112* in GC has been reported (Oue *et al.*, 2004, 2005; Zhang *et al.*, 2004). Immunohistochemical analysis of MIA, MMP-10, and DKK4 in 151 GC samples revealed that MIA and MMP-10 are frequently overexpressed in GC. We also measured MIA and MMP-10 in serum and peritoneal wash fluid from patients with GC to investigate the potential utility of these measurements in cancer diagnosis.

Results

Identification of genes expressed more highly in GC than in normal tissues

To identify genes expressed specifically in GC, we compared tags from each GC SAGE library to the normal SAGE libraries (white matter, cerebellum, thalamus, heart, lung, stomach, colon, liver, kidney, leukocyte, peritoneum, skeletal muscle, spinal cord, and lymph node) as described in Materials and methods. We obtained 24 candidates from W226T, 15 candidates from W246T, 27 candidates from S219T, and 13 candidates from P208T. In total, we identified 54 individual candidate genes in our GC libraries but not in the normal libraries (Table 1). To confirm that these candidates were GC-specific, quantitative RT–PCR was performed to measure the expression of these candidates in nine GC samples and in 14 normal tissues (heart, lung, stomach, small intestine, colon, liver, pancreas, kidney, bone marrow, peripheral leukocytes, spleen, skeletal muscle, brain, and spinal cord). Representative results are shown in Figure 1. Expression of the 54 candidate genes was not necessarily specific for GC. However, several genes showed much higher expression in GC than in normal tissues. We then focused on cancer specificity. We calculated the specificity index for each gene. First, we identified the normal tissue in which the target gene expression was highest (mRNA expression levels are shown as A, Table 1). We then identified the GC among nine in which the target gene expression was highest (mRNA expression levels are shown as B, Table 1). The specificity index (B/A ratio) for each gene is shown in Table 1. Of the 54 candidates, nine genes: *APIN*, *TRAG3*, *CYP2W1*, *MIA*, *MMP-10*, *DKK4*, *GW112*, *REGIV*, and *HORMAD1* were found to show high specificity for GC.

mRNA expression of high-specificity genes for GC

Expression of the nine high-specificity genes for GC was analysed by quantitative RT–PCR in an additional 44 GC samples and corresponding non-neoplastic mucosa samples. We calculated the ratio of target gene mRNA expression levels between GC tissue (T) and corresponding non-neoplastic mucosa (N). T/N ratios >2-fold were considered to represent overexpression. Genes showing overexpression in >40% of the samples included *GW112* (25/44, 56.8%), *MMP-10* (23/44, 52.3%), *CYP2W1* (22/44, 50.0%), *HORMAD1* (20/44, 45.5%), and *TRAG3* (18/44, 40.9%). Other genes were overexpressed in <30% of the samples examined (*MIA*, 13/44, 29.5%; *APIN*, 12/44, 27.3%; *DKK4*, 11/44, 25.0%). mRNA expression levels of *GW112* were correlated with T grade (depth of tumor invasion, $P<0.0001$), N grade (degree of lymph node metastasis, $P=0.0089$), and tumor stage ($P=0.0019$; Table 2). Those of *MIA* were also correlated with T grade ($P=0.0007$), N grade ($P=0.0335$), and tumor stage ($P=0.0068$; Table 2).

Immunohistochemical staining for MIA, MMP-10, and DKK4 in GC and noncancerous tissues

To confirm overexpression of genes whose expression by RT–PCR was much higher in GC than in normal tissues, we performed immunohistochemical analysis of MIA, MMP-10, and DKK4 because antibodies against these three proteins are available. Immunohistochemical analysis was performed in noncancerous tissues with the highest mRNA expression to serve as positive controls. Immunostaining of MIA and MMP-10 in the lung, in which mRNA expression of both 2 genes was the highest, showed staining of chondrocytes in peribronchial cartilage, but not of epithelial components (Figure 2a, b). Both MIA and MMP-10 are reported to be expressed in cartilage (Dietz and Sandell, 1996; Kevorkian *et al.*, 2004). Little is known about DKK4 expression. *DKK4* mRNA is reported to be undetectable in all human adult and fetal tissues examined by Northern blotting (Krupnik *et al.*, 1999). As our quantitative RT–PCR showed the highest expression of *DKK4* in the duodenum, immunostaining for DKK4 was performed in the duodenum, and staining for DKK4 was observed in a small number of epithelial cells (Figure 2c). Staining was absent with antibody preincubated with DKK4 protein (data not shown).

Immunohistochemistry was then performed on 151 GC samples (Figure 2d–f). Of these, 47 (31.1%) were positive for MIA staining, 68 (45.0%) were positive for MMP-10 staining, and two (1.3%) were positive for DKK4 staining. We analysed the relation between staining for each of these three proteins and clinicopathologic characteristics. Staining for MIA was correlated with T grade ($P=0.0002$), N grade ($P=0.0015$), and tumor stage ($P<0.0001$) (Supplementary Table 1). Staining for MMP-10 was correlated with T grade ($P=0.0306$) (Supplementary Table 2). There was no clear correlation between DKK4 staining and clinical characteristics (data not shown). We also analysed the

Table 1 Summary of quantitative RT–PCR analysis of candidate genes specifically expressed in gastric cancer

Gene name	*Normal organ with highest expression*		*GC with highest expression mRNA expression level (B)*	*Specificity index (B/A)*	*GC case no. with two-fold mRNA expression over that of normal organ with highest expression*	*GC case no. with 10-fold mRNA expression over that of normal organ with highest expression*
	Organ name	*mRNA expression level (A)*				
High specificity						
APIN	Stomach	1.0[a]	202.3[a]	202.3	3	1
TRAG3	Spleen	27.3	1038.3	38.1	4	3
CYP2W1	Small intestine	17.4	604.7	34.8	3	2
MIA	Lung	1.0	29.7	29.7	3	1
MMP10	Lung	3.1	63.6	20.8	10	2
DKK4	Small intestine	4.6	89.9	19.6	3	1
GW112	Small intestine	8.7	147	16.9	2	2
REGIV	Pancreas	8.9	112.2	12.6	1	1
HORMAD1	Leukocyte	43.7	448.8	10.3	2	1
Low specificity						
PPARBP	Brain	5.7	52.7	9.3	1	
SULT1C1	Kidney	1.1	6	5.5	3	
BIRC5	Bone marrow	2.7	13.5	4.9	3	
FLJ10036	Pancreas	1.8	6.2	3.4	5	
SH3BGRL2	Brain	4.5	12	2.7	1	
FLJ36666	Pancreas	3.5	7.8	2.2	2	
No specificity						
ETS2	Skeletal muscle	6.5	12.5	1.9		
TD-60	Pancreas	1.9	3.3	1.7		
MGC20806	Brain	4.2	6.1	1.5		
MYBL2	Bone marrow	3.5	4.4	1.3		
alpha4GnT	Pancreas	1.2	1.4	1.2		
GPP34R	Pancreas	12.6	12.7	1		
MLL4	Pancreas	4.9	4.6	0.9		
AQR	Pancreas	5.6	5	0.9		
TAPBP	Leukocyte	4.8	4.2	0.9		
KIF4A	Bone marrow	5	4.2	0.8		
ALDH7A1	Liver	1.1	0.8	0.7		
MAPK13	Pancreas	7.9	5.5	0.7		
FXYD3	Colon	4.3	2.8	0.6		
THBS3	Pancreas	6.2	3.5	0.6		
CCT3	Pancreas	10.6	5.4	0.5		
STAT2	Liver	5.2	2.7	0.5		
LMO6	Skeletal muscle	32.0	14.7	0.5		
TMLHE	Heart	21.4	9.4	0.4		
SFRS9	Pancreas	7.4	2.7	0.4		
C4orf9	Skeletal muscle	8.5	3	0.4		
SEC31L2	Skeletal muscle	13.1	4.6	0.3		
TYRO3	Brain	25.3	8.7	0.3		
HOXA10	Skeletal muscle	6472	1937.5	0.3		
JUN	Skeletal muscle	12.9	3.7	0.3		
ATPIF1	Heart	28.4	7.4	0.3		
ATE1	Heart	11.9	2.8	0.2		
BRD4	Skeletal muscle	11.8	2.7	0.2		
PEGASUS	Heart	9.6	2.1	0.2		
IL16	Brain	9.6	2.1	0.2		
TPT1	Pancreas	17.8	3.6	0.2		
PRKAG1	Skeletal muscle	13	2.6	0.2		
RPL8	Pancreas	11.6	2.2	0.2		
GITA	Heart	31.8	4.7	0.1		
NEK9	Heart	15	2.1	0.1		
IFRD1	Pancreas	20.8	2.4	0.1		
NIPSNAP3B	Skeletal muscle	49.5	5.6	0.1		
CBFA2T3	Pancreas	34.1	1.7	0.1		
DEFA6	Small intestine	108.4	1.7	0		
DEFA5	Small intestine	280.1	3.5	0		

[a]The units are arbitrary. Target mRNA expression levels were standardized to 1.0 μg total RNA from normal stomach as 1.0.

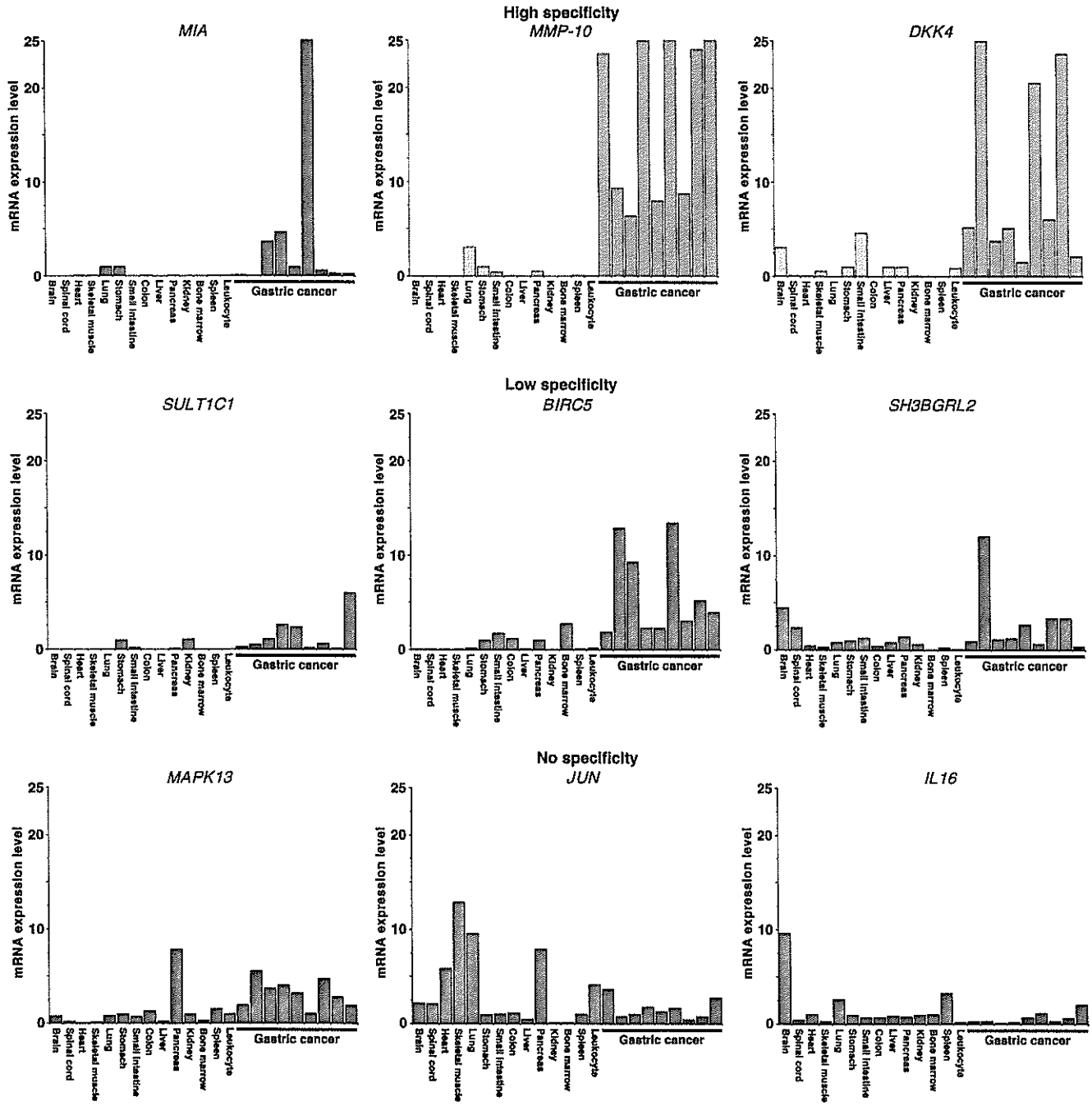

Figure 1 Quantitative RT–PCR analysis of candidate cancer (at least GC)-specific genes in 14 normal tissues and nine GC samples. Definitions of high specificity, low specificity, and no specificity are as described in Materials and methods. mRNA expression levels of *MIA*, *MMP-10*, and *DKK4* were much higher in GC samples than in normal tissues. In contrast, mRNA expression levels of *MAPK13*, *JUN*, and *IL16* were not significantly different between GC and normal tissues.

prognostic value of MIA and MMP-10 staining. The prognosis of patients with MIA- or MMP-10-positive tumors was significantly worse in the group of 58 advanced GC (invading through the muscularis propria into the serosa) patients ($P=0.0001$ and 0.0141, respectively, log-rank test) (Figure 2g). In corresponding non-neoplastic gastric mucosa from GC patients, staining for MIA and MMP-10 was weak or negative, whereas DKK4-positive cells were detected in intestinal metaplasia of the stomach (data not shown).

MIA and MMP-10 levels in serum and peritoneal wash fluid from patients with GC

MIA and MMP-10 are reported to be secreted (Blesch *et al.*, 1994; Ramos *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, we

Table 2 Relation between mRNA expression and clinicopathologic characteristics in gastric cancer

Gene name	*TNM stage*	*mRNA expression*		P-*value*[b]
		Overexpression[a]	*Not over-expression*	
GW112	T grade			
	T1/2	5 (23.8%)	16	<0.0001
	T3/4	20 (87.0%)	3	
	N grade			
	N0	4 (26.7%)	11	0.0089
	N1/2/3	21 (72.4%)	8	
	Stage			
	Stage I/II	7 (31.8%)	15	0.0019
	Stage III/IV	18 (81.8%)	4	
	Histologic type			
	Intestinal	13 (54.4%)	11	0.7662
	Diffuse	12 (60.0%)	8	
MIA	T grade			
	T1/2	1 (4.8%)	20	0.0007
	T3/4	12 (52.2%)	11	
	N grade			
	N0	1 (6.7%)	14	0.0335
	N1/2/3	12 (41.4%)	17	
	Stage			
	Stage I/II	2 (9.1%)	20	0.0068
	Stage III/IV	11 (50.0%)	11	
	Histologic type			
	Intestinal	7 (29.2%)	17	1.0000
	Diffuse	6 (30.0%)	14	

[a]We calculated the ratio of target gene mRNA expression levels between GC tissue (T) and corresponding non-neoplastic mucosa (N). T/N ratios >2-fold were considered to represent overexpression. [b]Fisher's exact test.

determined whether these proteins can be detected in sera from patients with GC by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA). Among the 151 GC cases analysed by immunohistochemistry, serum samples were available for ELISA from 69 GC cases. MIA is known to be a tumor marker to detect metastatic disease in patients with malignant melanomas (Bosserhoff *et al.*, 1997), but MIA levels in serum from patients with GC have not been investigated. MIA levels were significantly higher in four of 17 serum samples from patients with stage IV GC than in those of healthy individuals (Figure 3a). MIA serum levels were not significantly different between patients with stage I, II, or III GC and healthy individuals. Of 20 serum samples from patients with gastritis, one showed a high MIA level. But, levels of MIA in all 20 serum samples were below 15 ng/ml. When the cutoff level for MIA was set at 20 ng/ml, the sensitivity for detection of GC was only 5.8% (4/69), but specificity was 100.0% (60/60). We compared the protein expression status obtained by immunostaining with serum levels of the MIA measured by ELISA in 69 GC cases. Levels of MIA in serum samples from the patients with GC showing MIA-positive immunostaining ($n=29$, mean$\pm$s.e. 7.7 ± 2.1 ng/ml) did not differ significantly from those with GC showing MIA-negative immunostaining ($n=40$, 4.1 ± 0.3 ng/ml) ($P=0.7656$, Mann–Whitney U-test). We also measured MIA levels in peritoneal wash fluid from patients with GC (Figure 3a). Of two peritoneal wash cytology-positive samples, one showed a very high MIA level.

To our knowledge, although some MMPs are good serum markers for cancer detection (Zucker *et al.*, 1999), there are no reports regarding MMP-10 levels in serum from patients with cancer including GC. MMP-10 was also detected in serum samples. In contrast to levels of the MIA, high levels of MMP-10 were detected in serum samples from most of the patients with GC (mean$\pm$s.e.; stage I, 455.8 ± 38.1 pg/ml; stage II, 526.5 ± 68.5 pg/ml; stage III, 574.1 ± 61.1 pg/ml; stage IV, 546.0 ± 51.0 pg/ml), even at stage I (Figure 3b). Levels of MMP-10 in serum samples from the patients with GC showing MMP-10-positive immunostaining ($n=34$, 553.0 ± 38.3 pg/ml) were higher than those with GC showing MMP-10-negative immunostaining ($n=35$, 451.0 ± 33.7 pg/ml), but not statistically significant ($P=0.1770$, Mann–Whitney U-test). High levels of MMP-10 were also detected in serum samples from some healthy individuals (81.4 ± 25.5 pg/ml) and some patients with gastritis (47.8 ± 23.0 pg/ml). When the cutoff level for MMP-10 was set at 200 pg/ml, the sensitivity and specificity for detection of GC was 94.2% (65/69) and 85.0% (51/60), respectively. Sensitivity for patients with stage II–IV GC was 100%. Levels of MMP-10 in all 27 peritoneal wash cytology-negative samples were below 50 pg/ml (Figure 3b). Two peritoneal wash cytology-positive samples showed levels of MMP-10 that were significantly higher than those in peritoneal wash cytology-negative samples.

Effect of MIA on cell growth and invasive activity of MKN-28 cells

High levels of MIA mRNA expression were correlated with T grade, N grade, and tumor stage in GC tissues. In addition, immunostaining for MIA protein was correlated with T grade, N grade, tumor stage, and poor prognosis. MIA acts as a potent tumor cell growth inhibitor for malignant melanoma cells (Blesch *et al.*, 1994) but not for pancreatic cancer cells (El Fitori *et al.*, 2005), whereas overexpression of MIA enhances the invasiveness of both melanoma cells and pancreatic cancer cells (Bosserhoff *et al.*, 2001; El Fitori *et al.*, 2005). To investigate the biologic significance of MIA in GC, the MKN-28 GC cell line was stably transfected with vector expressing MIA. MKN-28 cells were selected for low MIA expression (data not shown). Cells were transfected with plasmid vectors capable of expressing MIA constitutively. Clones were selected in G418 and examined for MIA expression by MIA ELISA (Figure 4a). Clones that expressed MIA at significantly increased levels relative to the parent are designated as MKN-28-1, MKN-28-2, and MKN-28-3. To determine the effect of MIA on cell growth, MTT assays were performed. Cell growth of MKN-28 cells expressing higher levels of MIA did not differ from that of cells transfected with empty vector up to days 2 (Figure 4b). We then performed Boyden chamber

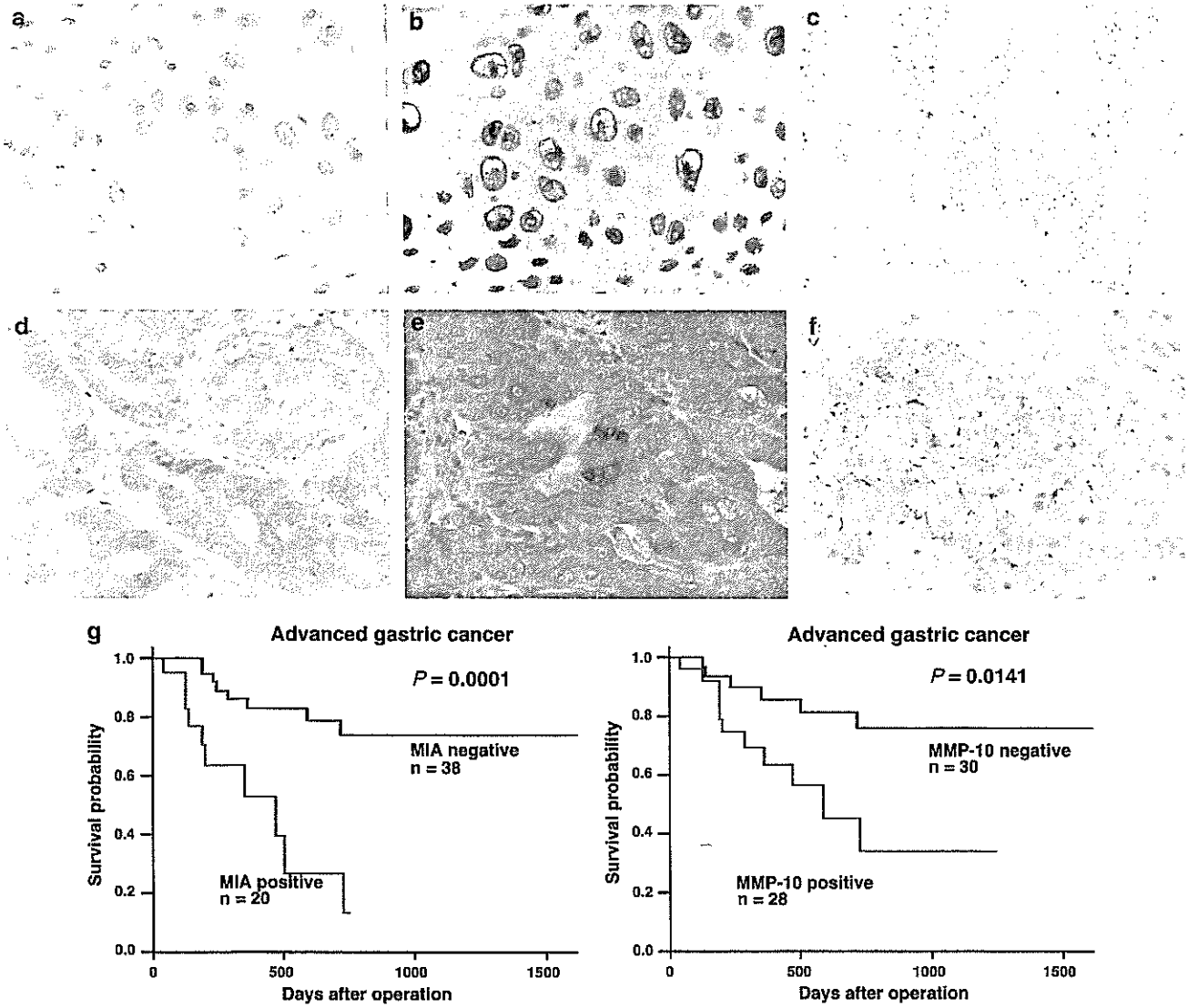

Figure 2 Immunohistochemical analysis of MIA, MMP-10, and DKK4 in noncancerous tissue and GC tissue. Staining for MIA (**a**) and MMP-10 (**b**) was found in peribronchial cartilage of the lung. DKK4 staining (**c**) was detected in a small number of epithelial cells in the duodenum. In GC samples, staining for MIA (**d**), MMP-10 (**e**), and DKK4 (**f**) was found in GC cells. Original magnifications, **a**, **b**, and **d**–**f**, ×400; **c**, ×200. (**g**) Prognostic value of MIA and MMP-10 staining. The prognosis of patients with MIA- or MMP-10-positive tumors was significantly worse in the group of 58 advanced GC patients ($P = 0.0001$ and 0.0141, respectively, log-rank test).

invasion assays. MIA-transfected MKN-28 cells were up to three times more invasive than cells transfected with empty vector on day 2 (MKN-28-1, $P = 0.014$; MKN-28-2, $P = 0.046$; MKN-28-3, $P = 0.025$) (Figure 4c).

Discussion

Several tumor (breast cancer, lung cancer, and renal cell cancer)-specific genes have been identified by a combination of subtractive hybridization and cDNA microarray technology (Amatschek *et al.*, 2004). In this study, we searched for GC-specific genes by SAGE data analysis and quantitative RT–PCR. True cancer-specific genes were not found, but *APIN*, *TRAG3*, *CYP2W1*, *MIA*, *MMP-10*, *DKK4*, *GW112*, *REGIV*, and *HORMAD1* were expressed much more highly in GC than in 14 types of normal tissues. As these genes were identified by SAGE and quantitative RT–PCR analysis of bulk GC tissues, immunohistochemistry was required to determine which cells expressed these genes. Antibodies against MIA, MMP-10, and DKK4 were available, and staining for all three proteins was confirmed in GC cells. But, DKK4 expression was present in only two out of 151 GC cases and generally absent.

MIA was first isolated as an 11-kDa protein secreted by malignant melanoma cell lines (Blesch *et al.*, 1994). MIA is a potent inhibitor of proliferation of malignant melanoma cells and other neuroectodermal tumor cells (Blesch *et al.*, 1994). Overexpression of MIA has been reported in breast cancer (Bosserhoff *et al.*, 1999),