



Figure 3 Genomic alteration of the *CD20* gene in SD07. (A) Genomic DNA was isolated from SD07 cells using a Quick Gene-800 (Fujifilm, Tokyo, Japan). The Human Genome CGH Microarray 244K (Agilent Technologies, Palo Alto, CA, USA) was used for copy number measurement. Bone marrow DNA of this patient without infiltration of lymphoma cells was used as a reference. (B) Southern hybridization of the *CD20* gene of SD07 using *CD20* Exon 1 as a probe. Twenty micrograms of genomic DNA was digested with *EcoRI*. A monocytic leukemia cell line, U937, was used as a positive control.

We could not analyze precisely the status of the *CD20* gene in lymphoma cells at the time this patient was diagnosed because the tissue that remained from the needle biopsy was not sufficient for DNA analysis. Therefore, it is still not known whether the B-cell lymphoma cell clones that proliferated with *CD20* deletion at relapse appeared *de novo* after immune-chemotherapy with rituximab or whether the B-cell lymphoma cell clones with pre-existing (minor) *CD20* gene deletion were selected and then proliferated as a result of the immune-chemotherapy. In this case, an immunohistochemical analysis with the *CD20* antibody at diagnosis was not helpful in determining the origin of the *CD20* gene-deleted lymphoma cell at relapse, because more than 80% of the lymphoma cells were positive for *CD20* in the initial diagnostic biopsy.

The copy number loss of 11q12 of DLBCL is uncommon as analyzed by CGH array, suggesting that the reduced expression of *CD20* observed in the case of DLBCL at diagnosis is not likely to be the result of deletion of the *CD20* gene (7). Loss of 11q12 also was not reported in the relapse in DLBCL, although this particular CGH analysis was performed before the introduction of rituximab in B-cell lymphoma chemotherapy (8).

The alteration of the *CD20* gene is reported to be infrequent at *CD20*-negative relapse in B-cell lymphoma (3, 5).

However, the previous observation, obtained primarily through PCR analysis, possibly missed the deletion-related mutation of the *CD20* gene in lymphoma tissue at relapse. This study suggests the alteration of the *CD20* gene needs to be studied carefully in diffuse large B-cell lymphoma cases involving the loss of expression of *CD20*.

Loss of *CD20* expression is important not only because of the potential loss of a therapeutic target at relapse/disease progression in the case of DLBCL, but because it is often associated with a poor prognosis of the patient at relapse. In newly diagnosed cases of DLBCL, reduced expression of *CD20* at diagnosis is associated with a low chance of survival (9). Studies showed reduced expression of *CD20* in DLBCL is associated with chemorefractory phenotypes, such as those that are positive for *CD5* and *bcl-2*(9). Down-regulation of *CD20* was observed in double-hit lymphoma cases involving *c-myc* and *BCL2* or *BCL6*, which are also known as chemorefractory phenotypes (10). In SD07, array CGH showed several genomic regions with copy number loss that is possibly involved in a refractory phenotype of SD07. These include 10q23 (phosphatase and tensin homolog, *PTEN*) (Figure S5). The deregulated *PTEN/Akt/PI3K* pathway is important in B-cell lymphomagenesis (11). Because *PTEN* is involved in the anti-proliferative effect mediated by

the anti-CD20 antibody (12), deletion of both CD20 and PTEN might contribute to disease progression in this case. In SD07, we found copy number loss in the 11q12 region. The region contains the membrane-spanning 4A gene family (MS4A1) cluster, which includes *MS4A8B*, *MS4A13*, *MS4A12*, *MS4A5*, *MS4A14*, *MS4A10*, *MS4A7*, and *MS4A15* in addition to *MS4A1* (*CD20*). Of these, *MS4A7* and *MS4A8B* are expressed in B-cell lymphoma cell lines (13). Members of the MS4A gene family, as well as CD20, have recently been reported to be involved in the cell cycle progression of lymphocytes and signal transduction of the immune response (14, 15). The loss of function(s) of the MS4A family gene(s), in addition to CD20, may be involved in tumorigenicity in SD07.

Molecular pathways that regulate expression of CD20 and how CD20 affects the phenotype in B-cell lymphoma remains to be studied, although CD20 physiologically has a function in B-cell activation, regulation of B-cell growth, and transmembrane calcium flux. We are now studying the functional role(s) of expression of CD20 in lymphomagenesis in the case of DLBCL using SD07 as a model.

In summary, we have established a DLBCL cell line with loss of CD20 expression because of the homozygous deletion of the CD20 gene. This represents refractory B-cell lymphoma cells that appeared at CD20-negative relapse after rituximab-containing chemotherapy. Deletion of the *CD20* gene is a molecular mechanism of CD20-negative relapse in a subset of DLBCL. Because SD07 represents chemo-refractory DLBCL with the loss of CD20 expression, an analysis of SD07 is expected to provide a therapeutic rationale to overcome DLBCL relapse following immuno-chemotherapy treatment with rituximab.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Mrs. Atsuko Nagasawa and Mrs. Mutsumi Oouchi for their technical assistance in this study. This work was supported in part by the High-Technology Research Center Project from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

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Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:

Figure S1. PCR assay for immunoglobulin (Ig) kappa (κ) chain gene rearrangement.

Figure S2. The karyotype of the CD20-negative DLBCL cell line and SD07.

Figure S3. The expression of CD20 mRNA and protein in SD07.

Figure S4. Effects of rituximab on the cell proliferation of B-cell lymphoma cell lines Daudi, N8, TK, and SD07.

Figure S5. Genomic alteration of the *PTEN* gene in SD07.

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