

Professor discovers way to slow the growth of malignant melanoma

July 8 2010

New Queen's University research has shown that the growth of melanoma, one of the most deadly forms of skin cancer, can be slowed when a little known gene called MicroRNA 193b is added.

Victor Tron, head of pathology and [molecular medicine](#), focused on miR-193b when he discovered that it was deficient in [melanoma](#) tumors and because there were very few studies done about the gene. The miRNA-193b gene is found in people's DNA and was unknown until 10 years ago.

"Our experiment was a bit of a fishing expedition in the beginning. We thought 193b might be important but the fact we got such a tremendous reaction - the melanoma really slowed down when we added 193b - was really startling," says Dr. Tron, who worked with eight other Queen's researchers. "It's a totally new discovery."

In experiments, increased levels of miR-193b increased in [melanoma cells](#) led to lower levels of a well-known [protein](#) called cyclin D1, and decreased melanoma cell growth.

Lab experiments with tissue samples proved that miR-193b plays a role in the melanoma process. Further studies will be needed to find out what causes miR-193b levels to go up and down.

"This is the first step in a long road towards finding a melanoma cure," says Professor Tron.

Melanoma is one of the least common forms of skin cancer, yet causes 75 per cent of skin cancer deaths.

More information: The study was recently published in the American Journal of Pathology.

Provided by Queen's University

Citation: Professor discovers way to slow the growth of malignant melanoma (2010, July 8) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

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