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Upregulation of long non-coding RNA *RAB1A-2* induces FGF1 expression worsening lung cancer prognosis

Wu Di, Binyao Yang, Jiansong Chen, Huali Xiong, Yinyan Li, Zihua Pan, Yi Cao, Jinbin Chen, Tiegang Li, Shiyu Zhou, Xiaoxuan Ling, Yongfang Wei, Guangjian Li, Yifeng Zhou, Fuman Qiu, Lei Yang, Jiachun Lu

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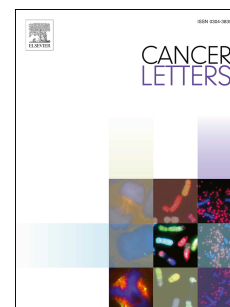
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Abstract

The chromosomal locations of lncRNAs (long non-coding RNAs, lncRNAs) infer their biological functions in cancer. *Lnc-RAB1A-2*, a Ras-related protein Rab-1A (RAB1A) upstream lncRNA, was chosen for assessment of its impact on lung cancer prognosis in a case-based analysis and investigation of its biological function through a series of functional assays. *Lnc-RAB1A-2* was significantly upregulated in 276 lung cancer tissues compared with corresponding non-tumor tissues, and its expression level was significantly correlated with clinical stage and metastasis status in lung cancer patients. Patients with high expression levels of this lncRNA had a shorter median survival time (16.0 months vs. 23.0 months, $P = 0.11$ in southern samples; 8.0 months vs. 19.0 months, $P = 0.020$ in eastern samples; 13.0 months vs. 19.0 months, $P = 0.002$ in merged samples) and a higher risk of death than those with lower levels (HR=1.52; 95% CI=1.01-2.26, in merged samples). Additionally, overexpression of *lnc-RAB1A-2* significantly promoted lung cancer cell proliferation *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Further analyses using digital gene expression tag profiling revealed that *lnc-RAB1A-2* could affect the expression of fibroblast growth factor 1 (FGF1), a gene involved in the PI3K/AKT/mTOR pathway that is largely activated by RAB1A. *FGF1* was confirmed to be a down-stream gene of *lnc-RAB1A-2*. Collectively, our study demonstrated that *lnc-RAB1A-2* is associated with poor lung cancer prognosis by promoting lung cancer development.

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