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Circular RNA ciRS-7 accelerates ESCC progression through acting as a miR-876-5p sponge to enhance MAGE-A family expression

Meixiang Sang, Lingjiao Meng, Yang Sang, Shina Liu, Pingan Ding, Yingchao Ju, Fei Liu, Lina Gu, Yishui Lian, Juan Li, Yunyan Wu, Xiaochong Zhang, Baoen Shan

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## Abstract

As the most well-known circular RNA, ciRS-7 (also termed CDR1as) has been reported to act as a miR-7 sponge, resulting in reduced miR-7 activity and increased miR-7-targeted transcripts. Here, we showed that ciRS-7 is up-regulated in esophageal squamous cell carcinoma (ESCC), and is associated with the poor clinicopathological parameters of ESCC patients. Moreover, over-expression of ciRS-7 increased the proliferation, migration and invasion of ESCC cells. Mechanistic studies revealed that ciRS-7 contains nineteen miR-876-5p binding sites and acts as a miR-876-5p sponge. Over-expression of ciRS-7 resulted in the reduced tumor-repressive function of miR-876-5p on its downstream target MAGE-A family. In animal experiments, enforced ciRS-7 increased ESCC tumor growth and metastasis through targeting miR-876-5p/MAGE-A family axis. Collectively, our study provided novel evidence that ciRS-7 accelerates ESCC progression by acting as a miR-876-5p sponge to enhance MAGE-A family expression.

Keywords: ESCC; circular RNA; ciRS-7; miR-876-5p; MAGE-A

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