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Preview

Bmi1 and Cell of Origin Determinants of Brain Tumor Phenotype

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Summary

Glioblastomas frequently express oncogenic EGFR and loss of the *Ink4a/Arf* locus. *Bmi1*, a positive regulator of stem cell self renewal, may be critical to drive brain tumor growth. In this issue of *Cancer Cell*, Bruggeman and colleagues suggest that brain tumors with these molecular alterations can be initiated in both neural precursor and differentiated cell compartments in the absence of *Bmi1*; however, tumorigenicity is reduced, and tumors contain fewer precursor cells. Surprisingly, tumors appear less malignant when initiated in precursor cells. *Bmi1*-deficient tumors also had fewer neuronal lineage cells, suggesting a role for *Bmi1* in determination of cell lineage and tumor phenotype.

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