

Perspective

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OPINION

Fusion of tumour cells with bone marrow-derived cells: a unifying explanation for metastasis

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The causes of metastasis remain elusive despite vast information on cancer cells. We posit that cancer cell fusion with macrophages or other migratory bone marrow-derived cells (BMDCs) provides an explanation. BMDC–tumour hybrids have been detected in numerous animal models and recently in human cancer. Molecular studies indicate that gene expression in such hybrids reflects a metastatic phenotype. Should BMDC–tumour fusion be found to underlie invasion and metastasis in human cancer, new approaches for therapy would surely follow.

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