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Cancer stem cells in the central nervous system--a critical review.

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Abstract

The cancer stem cell hypothesis postulates that tumors arise from, and are maintained by, a small subpopulation of cancer stem cells. This concept has recently become increasingly controversial, following a series of conflicting results. The cell-surface epitope CD133 has been proposed as a brain cancer stem cell marker, whereas a growing number of studies clearly show a tumorigenic potential among CD133(-) cells as well. Diverging results suggest that assays for isolating cancer stem cells impose a selection bias on which cells are defined as cancer stem cells. Here, we highlight some recent developments, with an emphasis on reports that call for caution in the acceptance of the brain cancer stem cell hypothesis.

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