Panepoxydone Targets NF-κB and FOXM1 to Inhibit Proliferation, Induce Apoptosis and Reverse Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition in Breast Cancer

Ritu Arora1, Clayton Yates2, Bernard D. Gary1, Steven McClellan1, Ming Tan1, Yaguang Xi1, Eddie Reed1, Gary A. Piazza1, Laurie B. Owen1, Windy Dean-Colomb1*

1 Department of Oncologic Sciences, Mitchell Cancer Institute, University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama, United States of America, 2Department of Biology and Center for Cancer Research, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Alabama, United States of America

Abstract

Background: Triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) is a highly diverse group that is associated with an aggressive phenotype. Its treatment has been challenging due to its heterogeneity and absence of well-defined molecular targets. Thus, there is an urgent need to identify novel agents with therapeutic application. NF-κB is over-expressed in many breast cancers; thus, inactivation of the NF-κB pathway could serve as a therapeutic target. Here we report for the first time the anti-tumor activity of panepoxydone (PP), a NF-κB inhibitor isolated from an edible mushroom, in several breast cancer cell lines.

Methods: We investigated the effects of PP on cell growth, migration-invasion, apoptosis and EMT-related proteins expression in MCF-7 and TNBC cell lines MDA-MB-231, MDA-MB-468 and MDA-MB-453.

Results: Significant antitumor activity was seen in all cell lines, with differential responses noted in cell-line specific manner. Treatment with PP resulted in significant cytotoxicity, decreased invasion, migration and increased apoptosis in all cell lines tested. Up-regulation of Bax and cleaved PARP and down-regulation of Bcl-2, survivin, cyclin D1 and caspase 3 were noted in PP-treated breast cancer cells. The antitumor effect of PP appeared related to its ability to inhibit the phosphorylation of inhibitor of NF-κB (IkB) with cytoplasmic accumulation. PP treatment also down-regulated FOXM1 which resulted in a reversal of EMT. Similar results were obtained after silencing of NF-κB and FOXM1.

Conclusion: Altogether, these studies show, for the first time the antitumor activity of PP against breast cancer cells, in particular TNBC cells. Furthermore, it highlights the concept that optimal treatment of TNBC warrants attention to the differential sensitivity of various TNBC subtypes to therapeutic agents. These results suggest that the PP may be a potentially effective chemopreventive or therapeutic agent against breast cancer. However, additional studies are required to more fully elucidate the mechanism of antitumor effect of PP.

Citation: Arora R, Yates C, Gary BD, McClellan S, Tan M, et al. (2014) Panepoxydone Targets NF-κB and FOXM1 to Inhibit Proliferation, Induce Apoptosis and Reverse Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition in Breast Cancer. PLoS ONE 9(6): e98370. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0098370

Editor: Rajeev Samant, University of Alabama at Birmingham, United States of America

Received March 14, 2014; Accepted May 1, 2014; Published June 4, 2014

Copyright: © 2014 Arora et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Data Availability: The authors confirm that all data underlying the findings are fully available without restriction. All data are included within the manuscript.

Funding: This study was supported by the University of South Alabama Mitchell Cancer Institute Research Award to Dr. Windy Dean-Colomb and US4706CA118948 (NIH/NCI) [CY]. The funders had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

Competing Interests: Dr. Ming Tan, a co-author, is on the PLOS ONE Editorial Board. This does not alter the author’s adherence to PLOS ONE Editorial policies and criteria.

* E-mail: windydean@usouthal.edu

Introduction

Breast cancer is one of the most common malignancies in women worldwide and the second leading cause of cancer-related mortality in women. According to the latest cancer statistics report, it was estimated that about 235,030 new cases of breast cancer would be diagnosed in 2014 and 40,430 deaths would occur [1].

Triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) is one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer. It is typically characterized as a morphologically high grade tumor demonstrating lack of expression of estrogen (ER), progesterone (PR) and human epidermal growth factor receptors (Her-2). However TNBCs comprise a heterogeneous group of breast cancers and represents 10–20% of all breast cancer, with the majority expressing a basal-like phenotype [2–6]. Clinically, TNBCs behave more aggressively, with patients affected having a worse overall and disease-free survival when compared to other breast cancer subtypes. This has been partially attributed to the insensitivity of TNBCs towards available targeted treatment strategies, such as endocrine and anti-Her-2 therapies [7–8].

Nuclear factor kappa-B (NF-κB), a transcription factor, has been shown to be significantly increased in TNBC tumors, which is consistent with the aggressiveness of these tumors [9]. In the cytoplasm, NF-κB is bound to a group of inhibitory proteins known as inhibitors of NF-κB (IκB) [10]. The accumulation of non-phosphorylated IκB prohibits the translocation of NF-κB...
from the cytoplasm to nucleus, resulting in inactivation of NF-κB and its resultant downstream targets. NF-κB has been shown to promote the transcription of several key regulators of cancer invasion and progression, including cytokines, chemokines, cell adhesion molecules and inducible pro-inflammatory enzymes.

Additionally, NF-κB has been postulated to be a useful marker of epithelial-mesenchymal transformation (EMT) and invasiveness in breast cancers [11–12]. Thus, targeting genes induced by NF-κB activation, or inactivation of the NF-κB pathway, could serve as therapeutic targets for treatment of TNBC. EMT is one of the hallmarks of aggressive breast cancers and is associated with increased metastatic potential. EMT markers are overexpressed in TNBCs [13]. In particular FOXM1, which is an oncogenic transcription factor of the Forkhead family, has a well-defined role in cell proliferation and cell-cycle progression. Additionally, FOXM1 is over-expressed in breast cancer [14] and has been linked to EMT in pancreatic cancer [15].

Natural products have received increasing attention in recent years for utilization as novel anticancer agents [16]. Several natural compounds such as, withaferin A, honokiol, curcumin, cucurbitacin B and tanshinones, have been tested against breast cancer and revealed anticancer activity [17–24]. It has been known for many years that selected mushrooms of higher Basidiomycetes origin have anticancer properties [25–27]. Panepoxydone (PP), a compound isolated from Lentinus crinitus (an edible mushroom), interferes with the NF-κB mediated signal transduction by inhibiting the phosphorylation of IkB [28]. Additionally, PP has been shown to inhibit tumor necrosis factor α (TNFα)-induced activation of NF-κB in COS-7 cells via inhibiting phosphorylation and degradation of IkB [28]. Furthermore, DNA microarray analysis of PP treated MonoMac6 cells showed decrease in the expression of thirty-three NF-κB-dependent pro-inflammatory genes without significant effects on the expression of house-keeping genes [29]. However, the role of PP against breast cancer is unexplored. Herein we report that PP has significant antitumor activity in breast cancer, with cell-line specific differential responses based upon tumor subtyping. For example, treatment with PP resulted in significant cytotoxicity, decreased invasion and migration, and increased apoptosis in all cell lines tested. Additionally, these changes correlated with changes in apoptosis-related protein expression, including up-regulation of Bax and cleaved PARP and down regulation of Bcl-2, survivin, cyclin D1 and caspase 3 in all breast cancer cell lines tested. However, there was difference in sensitivity of the cell lines to PP treatment, with resultant difference in their antitumor response, especially with the TNBC cell lines.

The antitumor effect of PP appeared to be related to its ability to inhibit the phosphorylation of IkBα, with cytoplasmic accumulation of NF-κB. PP treatment also down-regulated FOXM1, vimentin, zeb1, slug, and up regulated E-cadherin expression, which was similar to that observed after NF-κB silencing. These studies for the first time highlight the effect of PP on inhibiting aggressive breast cancer subtypes.

**Materials and Methods**

**Drug and Reagents**

Panepoxydone was procured from Alexis Biochemicals (San Diego, CA). Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO, vehicle control), Triton X-100, and bovine serum albumin (BSA) were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO). Formaldehyde (16%) and 4',6-diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI) were purchased from Fisher Scientific (Suwanee, GA). Dulbecco’s Modified Eagle Medium (DMEM), fetal-bovine serum (FBS), trypsin-EDTA, penicillin and streptomycin were purchased from Invitrogen (Carlsbad, CA).

For growth inhibition analysis, the CellTiter-Glo Assay was purchased from Promega (Madison, WI). Difl-Qucik stain for invasion and migration analysis was purchased from Fisher Scientific (Newark, USA). PE Annexin V apoptosis detection kit I was obtained from BD Bioscience (San Diego, CA). For the translocation assay, the NF-κBp65 primary antibody was obtained from BD Transduction Laboratories (San Diego, CA) and the Alexafluor 488 immunofluorescence antibody was purchased from Invitrogen (Carlsbad, CA). siFOXM1 and siNF-κB was obtained from Santa Cruz Biotechnology (Santa Cruz, CA) and Cell Signaling Technology (Beverly, MA), respectively.

Primary antibodies against survivin, cyclin D1, poly (ADP-Ribose) polymerase (PARP, FOXM1, p21, CDK1, CDK2 and NF-κBp65) were purchased from Santa Cruz Biotechnology (Santa Cruz, CA) and Bax, IκBα, pIκBα, caspase 3, cleaved PARP, E-cadherin, vimentin, zeb1, slug, cyclin E, cyclin B1 were procured from Cell Signaling Technology (Beverly, MA). Anti-rabbit, antimouse and anti-goat horseradish peroxidase-conjugated secondary antibodies were obtained from Santa Cruz Biotechnology (Santa Cruz, CA). The β-actin (mouse monoclonal) antibody was procured from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO).

**Human breast cancer cell lines and culture conditions**

The estrogen receptor positive MCF-7 and TNBC cells lines (MDA-MB-231, MDA-MB-468 and MDA-MB-453) were purchased from ATCC (Manassas, VA) and cultured in DMEM supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum, penicillin (100 U/ml) and streptomycin (100 μg/ml) in a humidified 5% CO2 incubator at 37°C. Cells were sub-cultured biweekly with a split ratio of 1:3. For treatments, stock solution of PP was prepared in DMSO (50 mM) and stored at −20°C in aliquots. At the time of experiments, dilutions were freshly prepared in complete growth medium. An equal volume of DMSO (final concentration, 0.2%) was added to the control.

**Cell proliferation assay**

Breast cancer cells were seeded in 96-well plates at a density of 5 × 10³ cells/well and after 18–20 hrs of incubation, cells were treated with PP or DMSO (0.2%, vehicle control) and incubation was continued for 72 hrs at 37°C. The inhibition of cell growth was determined using the luminescent CellTiter-Glo assay which measures viable cells based on adenosine triphosphate (ATP) content. Luminescence was measured using a VictorV (PerkinElmer, Waltham, MA) plate reader. GraphPad Prism 5 (GraphPad Software, Inc., La Jolla, CA) was used to construct graphs and calculate inhibitory concentration 50 (IC₅₀) value.

**Cell cycle analysis**

Cell cycle analysis cells were seeded in the 6 well plates with the density of 2 × 10⁶ cells per well, treated with different concentrations of PP and incubated at 37°C. After 24 hrs cells were fixed in methanol, stained with Popidium iodide/RNase binding buffer for 30 min at 37°C and analyzed by using flow cytometry on a BD-FACS CantoTM II (Becton-Dickinson, San Jose, CA) to calculate the percentage of cell population in various phases of cell cycle using Mod Fit LT software (Verity Software House, Topsham, ME).

**Cell Apoptosis Assay**

Cells were seeded in the 6-well plates at a density of 1 × 10⁶ cells/well and after 24 hrs, treated with increasing concentrations of PP.
of PP (based on IC_{50} values) for 24 hrs. Cells were then harvested and stained using the PE Annexin V apoptosis detection kit to identify apoptotic cells according to the manufacturer’s instructions followed by flow cytometry. This assay was used to quantify viable cells, early apoptotic cells and late apoptotic cells. Percentage of cell population in apoptosis was calculated using Mod Fit LT software (Verity Software House, Topsham, ME).

**Cell Migration/Invasion Assay**

For *in-vitro* assessment of metastasis, migration and invasion assays were performed using a matrigel invasion chamber. The matrigel coated plates were rehydrated in warm DMEM serum-free medium for 2 hrs at 37°C. Cells in serum-starved media were seeded at the density of 5×10^5 cells/well in 6-well inserts with 8 μm pore polycarbonate membranes for migration and in matrigel-coated inserts for invasion, and chemoattractant (DMEM with 10% FBS) was added in the plate chamber. Cells were incubated in 5% CO_2 atmosphere at 37°C for 24 hrs. Non-invading cells were removed from the upper surface of the membrane by scraping using cotton swabs and cells which invaded through the matrigel to the bottom of the insert were fixed and stained with Diff-Quick cell staining kit and mounted on slide. Cells were observed under microscope and photographed using Nikon Eclipse TE2000-U fluorescence microscope system (Nikon Instruments Inc., Melville, NY).

**siRNA transfection**

siRNA targeting FOXM1 and NF-kBp65 was used for the silencing of FOXM1 and NF-kBp65, respectively in MDA-MB-231 cells. Scrambled non-target siRNA was used as a negative control. For siRNA transfections, 2×10^5 cells suspended in 2 ml of medium were seeded into a 6-well plate. After incubation for 24 hrs, cells were transfected with 50 nM siRNAs by using RNAiMax (Invitrogen, CA) according to the manufacturer’s instructions. After 72 hrs proteins were collected and gene silencing efficiency was measured using immunoblotting. Expression of FOXM1 and EMT associated markers were checked on the silen proteins.

**Evaluation of Apoptosis, Cell cycle and EMT Related Protein Expression**

Cells exposed to various concentrations of PP for 24 hrs were lysed and protein concentration was determined using DC protein assay kit (Biorad, Hercules, CA) following manufacturer’s instructions. Total proteins (80 μg) in each cell lysate were subjected to resolution on 10% of sodium dodecyl sulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE) and electro-transferred onto polyvinyldene difluoride (PVDF) membranes. The membranes were incubated with blocking buffer (5% non-fat dry milk in phosphate-buffered saline) for 1 hour at room temperature (RT) and then further incubated with specific antibodies diluted in 5% non-fat dry milk overnight at 4°C. After washing with tris-buffered saline solution containing 0.1% Tween 20 (TBST), membranes were incubated with horseradish peroxidase-conjugated secondary antibodies for 2 hrs at RT followed by the washing with TBST. Blots were then treated with chemiluminescence reagents using a Super Signal West Femto Kit (Pierce, Rockford, IL) and the signal detected by using an LAS-3000 image analyzer (Fuji Photo Film Co., Tokyo, Japan). Each membrane was stripped and reprobed with anti-β-actin antibody to ensure equal protein loading. Densitometry was performed using an AlphaImager (Alpha Innotech Corp., San Leandro, CA).

**NF-kB Immunofluorescence Assay**

MCF-7, MDA-MB-231, MDAMB-468 and MDAMB-453 cells (5×10^5) were seeded in 6-well plate and after overnight incubation at 37°C, treated with the top dose of PP (D3) as mentioned in Table 1 or same volume of 0.2% DMSO for 24 hrs. Cells were washed and fixed in 4% formaldehyde for 15 min at RT. The cells were then permeabilized with 1% Triton X-100 for 15 min at RT and blocked with 1% BSA for 30 min at RT. Cells were then incubated with NF-kBp65 antibody (1:1000 in BSA) at 4°C overnight. After washing with PBS, the cells were incubated with the Alexaflour 480 antibody (1:1000 in BSA) containing DAPI for 1 hour at 37°C. After washing, pictures were taken using the Nikon TE2000-U fluorescence microscope system (Nikon Instruments Inc., Melville, NY).

**Statistical Analysis**

All the experiments were performed at least twice independently and data presented as mean ± standard error mean. All data analysis was done using GraphPad Prism version 5.0 software. Statistical significance of difference was calculated using student’s *t*-test with significant differences defined as at least a p value of < 0.05.

**Results**

**Anti-proliferative effect of PP in human breast cancer cells**

To determine the effectiveness of PP, increasing concentrations of PP (0–50 μM) was exposed to MCF-7, MDA-MB-231, MDA-MB-468 and MDAMB-453 cells and measured for inhibition of cell proliferation by CellTiter-Glo assay. PP exhibited a time and dose-dependent decrease in cell proliferation as early as 24 hrs and this continue to 72 hrs of exposure (Figure 1A), with IC_{50} values of 4, 5, 6 and 15 μM for MDA-MB-453, MCF-7, MDA-MB-468 and MDA-MB-231 cells, respectively (Figure 1B). Interestingly, MDA-MB-453 cells were the most sensitive, whereas the MDA-MB-231 was least sensitive to PP. Thus, for the reminder of experiments we utilized the half of IC_{50} values (D1), IC_{50} values (D2) and double IC_{50} values (D3) in the treatment of each cell line. Additionally, after PP treatment, morphologically, all cells appeared more rounded and many had become less adherent to the flask surface (Figure 1C).

**PP blocks cell cycle progression and modulates cell cycle regulatory proteins.**

We next asked if PP mediated growth suppression was due to its cell cycle intervention. To determine the effect of PP on the cell cycle alteration, all cell lines were evaluated by propidium iodide flow cytometry at 24 hrs. After PP treatment, MCF-7 cells showed 1.61 fold (10%–16.18%) whereas MDA-MB-468 revealed 2.52 fold (14.28%–35.94%) increase in G2 phase. Likewise MDA-MB-231 and MDA-MB-453 cells showed 1.76 fold (10%–16.18%) and 1.61 fold (10%–16.18%) whereas MDA-MB-453 cells showed 1.76 fold (10%–16.18%) and 1.61 fold (10%–16.18%) respectively in the treatment of each cell line. Additionally, after PP treatment, morphologically, all cells appeared more rounded and many had become less adherent to the flask surface (Figure 1C).

**PP induces apoptosis and increased cell survival proteins**

Next we sought to determine if PP induces apoptosis. Apoptosis was quantitatively measured using the PE Annexin V staining flow cytometry method. PP treatment resulted in a significant increase
in the number of apoptotic cells in all breast cancer cell lines, but to varying degrees (Figure 3A). Interestingly, highest dose (10 μM) of PP in MCF-7 cells showed a relatively low percentage of apoptotic cells (1.2 fold), as compared to MDA-MB-231 (2 fold), MDA-MB-468 (2.9 fold) and MDA-MB-453 (5.2 fold) when compared with their respective controls (Figure 3B).

Bax and Bcl-2 belong to a multi-gene family of proteins that play an important role in the regulation of apoptosis. Bcl-2 is anti-apoptotic protein and promotes cell survival, whereas Bax is pro-apoptotic protein and promotes cell death.

Table 1. Dose escalation of panepoxydone (PP) based on IC50 value.

| Breast cancer cell lines | PP (μM) D1 | PP (μM) D2 | PP (μM) D3 |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| MCF-7                    | 2.5       | 5         | 10        |
| MDAMB-453                | 2         | 4         | 8         |
| MDAMB-468                | 3         | 6         | 12        |
| MDA-MB-231               | 7.5       | 15        | 30        |

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0098370.t001

Figure 1. Inhibitory effects of panepoxydone on the proliferation of human breast cancer cells. MCF-7, MDA-MB-231, MDA-MB-468 and MDA-MB-453 breast cancer cells were grown in 96 well microtitre plates (5000 cells/well) and treated with increasing concentrations of PP or with DMSO (0.2% vehicle control) and analyzed by CellTiter Glow assay. (A) Time-dependent anti-proliferative effect of PP on breast cancer cells. Data are presented as the means ± SD (n = 2). (B) Dose-dependent anti-proliferative effect of PP on breast cancer cells after 72 hrs. Data are presented as the means ± SD (n = 4). PP inhibited cell viability in a dose-dependent manner for all the cell types suggesting anti-cancer activity of PP. (C) Morphological changes of breast cancer cells after treatment with PP. Based on the IC50 value, 3 doses were selected for subsequent experiments: D1 (half of IC50), D2 (IC50) and D3 (2×IC50). Cells (1.5×10⁴ cells/well) were seeded in 6-well plates and incubated with increasing concentrations of PP or DMSO (0.2% vehicle control) for 24 hrs. Morphological changes were observed under the inverted phase-contrast microscope and photographed. Representative micrographs are from one of the random fields of view (magnification 200X) of cells.

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0098370.g001
apoptotic protein and antagonizes the effect of Bcl-2 [30]. Following PP treatment, in all the cell lines there was an increase in Bax expression, with concomitant decrease in Bcl-2 protein expression, which is consistent with increased apoptosis (Figure 3B & 3C). Furthermore, the ratio of Bax/Bcl2, a commonly used measure of overall apoptosis effect, was significantly increased in all the TNBC cell lines. The ratio of Bax/Bcl2 was highest for the MDA-MB-453 (32 folds) (Figure 3D).

To confirm that PP induces apoptosis, we assayed both cyclin D1, survivin, and caspase expression at the protein level in the presence of PP. Cyclin D1 and survivin both were down-regulated (2–7.5 folds) in a dose-dependent manner as demonstrated by western blot, in all breast cancer cell lines after PP treatment (Figure 3C). Caspase 3 expression was decreased in all TNBC cell lines; with the exception of MCF-7 cells, which are caspase 3 deficient [31]. Treatment with PP also triggered PARP cleavage (2-4 folds) in the TNBC cell lines. In the absence of caspase 3, no cleaved PARP was detected in MCF-7 cells (Fig 3C).

PP inhibits NF-kB activation and translocation

NF-kB is normally localized in the cytoplasm in an inactivate form and bound to non-phosphorylated IkBz. During activation, IkBz is phosphorylated and thus dissociates from NF-kB. This then allows NF-kB to translocate from the cytoplasm to the nucleus where it then regulates the expression of several genes. The effect of PP on the expression of IkBz and its phosphorylated form (pIkBz) was evaluated by western blot. Figure 4A reveals that there was a dose-dependent down-regulation of pIkBz, with concomitant up-regulation of IkBz, in response to PP treatment in all the cell lines tested.

Again, differences between MCF-7 and the TNBC cell lines were noted. When the ratio of pIkBz/IkBz was calculated, there was at least a two-fold difference between the MCF-7 cell line and the TNBC cells as a whole. Furthermore, again the MDA-MB-453 cells appeared to be more sensitive to PP, with the ratio of pIkBz/ IkBz highest in this group (up to 7-folds) following PP treatment (Figure 4B).

To determine if the resultant increase in non-phosphorylated IkBz results in a decreased translocation of NF-κB from the cytoplasm to nucleus, we performed an immunofluorescence assay...
for the localization of NF-kB following PP treatment. Visualization of cells after PP treatment showed reduced expression of NF-kB in the nucleus in all the cell lines evaluated (Figure 4C).

**PP reduces cell migration and invasion**

NF-kB is well recognized to be a multi-functional protein involved not only in the regulation of cell proliferation, but in cell migration and invasion as well [32]. Since numerous reports have demonstrated that PP targets NF-kB, we next sought to determine the effect of PP on the migratory and invasiveness of TNBC cells. Migration (Figure 5A) and invasion (Figure 5B) of breast cancer cells was evaluated by using noncoated and matrigel-coated chambers, respectively. A dose-dependent decrease in migration and invasion was noted in all of the cell lines following treatment with increasing concentrations of PP. Cell-line specific sensitivity to PP was noted between MCF-7 and the TNBC cells, with significant decrease in migration and invasion noted only at the highest dose of PP in MCF-7 cells. Furthermore, although general cytotoxicity to PP in MCF-7 cells was close to that of its counterpart, the luminal-type triple negative MDA-MB-453 cells (Figure 1C), breast cancer subtype-associated differences were noted with regard to migration and invasion (Figure 5A, 5B). For example, there was a marked difference in the effect of PP on migration and invasion capabilities of MCF-7 cells when compared to MDA-MB-453 at the highest dose tested (1.72 vs 3.95/1.82 vs 2.77-folds over control), which correlates to the aggressiveness in TNBCs.
Studies have shown that down-regulation of FOXM1 in breast cancer cells by RNA interference led to inhibition of proliferation, migration and invasion of cancer cells [33]. Using in silico analysis we determined that the FOXM1 promoter has a binding site for NF-κB. Thus, we were interested to examine the relationship between FOXM1 and NF-κB. PP treatment significantly reduced FOXM1 expression in MCF-7 and MDA-MB-231 (1.7 and 2.4-fold, respectively, p < 0.05) but not in MDAMB-453 and MDAMB-468 cells when analyzed through western blot analysis. The effect of PP on decreasing FOXM1 expression was comparable to si-NF-kB treatment in MDAMB-231 cells (Figure 6A). Furthermore, we identified that treatment with PP resulted in alteration of EMT-associated proteins with a significant increase in epithelial marker, E-cadherin (1.8 to 4.2-fold, p < 0.05) and a decrease in mesenchymal markers, vimentin, slug and zeb1 in the MDA-MB-231 cells (1.5–4.2 fold, p < 0.05). To further elucidate the relationship between FOXM1 on EMT reversal, we then silenced FOXM1 and NF-kB in MDA-MB-231 cells and evaluated its effect on the EMT-associated markers. Again we noted up-regulation of E cadherin (3.5-fold, p < 0.01) and down-regulation of vimentin, slug and zeb1 (4-fold, p < 0.01) (EMT reversal) in si-FOXM1 and si-NF-kB treated cells, which was similar to what we observed in the PP-treated MDA-MB-231 cells (Figure 6B & 6C).

**Discussion**

Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer in women worldwide [1]. Based on gene expression profiling, breast cancer have been classified into four main subtypes - luminal A, luminal B, Her-2+ enriched and basal-like. This classification is used to direct the use of targeted therapies such as endocrine-based therapy for hormone receptor positive (HR+) breast cancer and Her2-based therapy such as trastuzumab, lapatinib and pertuzumab for Her2-enriched cancers [34–35]. The use of this molecular-based approach in the treatment of breast cancer has revolutionized how we treat breast...
cancer in the last several decades and is the main contributor to the decreased mortality noted. However, approximately 20% of all breast cancers are diagnosed as TNBC. Because TNBC lacks all three of the molecular targets such as ER, PR and Her2, it cannot be treated with currently available targeted therapies such as hormone therapies or Her2-based therapies. Furthermore, since the genes linked to TNBCs are not well understood at this time, targeted therapies directed to TNBC do not yet exist. Therefore, TNBC is usually treated with some combination of surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. Thus, due to aggressive nature of this disease, and with few treatment options and no targeted therapies specifically for TNBC, a continuous search for better treatment options is warranted.

Traditionally, the term TNBC has been used synonymously with basal-like breast cancer. Most TNBCs are basal-like and most basal-like tumors are triple negative. However, not all TNBCs are basal-like and not all basal-like tumors are triple negative. In fact, recently, TNBCs have been classified into 6 subclasses based upon the presence of unique gene expression profiles. These include two basal-like (BL1 and BL2), an immunomodulatory (IM), a mesenchymal (M), a mesenchymal stem-like (MSL), and a luminal androgen receptor (LAR) subtype [36]. It is expected that selection of TNBC tumor subtypes will be helpful in the development of targeted agents and also serve as a key model for preclinical studies. Additionally, it is expected that this information would be useful to further identify biomarkers that can be used for patient selection in the design of clinical trials for TNBC, as well as to monitor their response to treatment.

NF-κB has been shown to have increased expression in TNBC tumors and may account for the aggressiveness of these tumors. It is well known that NF-κB plays a significant role in many signaling pathways including those that are involved in cancer development and progression [37]. For example, NF-κB promotes the transcription of several cytokines (e.g. TNF-α, IL-1β, IL-6, IL-8), chemokines (IL-8), macrophage inflammatory protein-1 α (MIP-1α), cell adhesion molecules (e.g. E-selectin, ICAM-1, VCAM-1) and inducible pro-inflammatory enzymes like NO synthase II and cyclooxygenase-2 [38]. Furthermore, increased NF-κB activity is associated with enhanced cancer cell survival, by inhibiting apoptosis in breast and pancreatic cancer [39-40], through transcriptional regulation of anti-apoptotic proteins [IAPs, FLIP, and Bcl-XL] and cyclin D1 [41]. Thus, it’s reasonable to

Figure 5. Panepoxydone decreases migration and invasion properties of breast cancer cells. MCF-7, MDA-MB-231, MDA-MB-468 and MDA-MB-453 cells were seeded on noncoated or matrigel-coated membranes for motility (A) and invasion (B) assays, respectively and incubated for 24 hrs. DMEM containing 10% fetal bovine serum in the lower chamber was used as a chemoattractant. After incubation, cells that had migrated or invaded through the membrane/matrigel to the bottom of the insert were washed, fixed, stained and counted in ten random microscopic fields. The histograms show mean of two independent experiments and the error bar represent SEM. * indicates statistically significant difference between PP treated and untreated cells at p<0.05 (*), p<0.01(**), and, p<0.001(***) levels by student’s t-test. Results indicate reduction in the migrated and invaded cells after PP treatment in a dose dependent manner.

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0098370.g005
assume that inhibition of the NF-kB pathway and its target genes, could serve as a therapeutic target for the treatment of TNBC.

Although several synthetically derived NF-kB inhibitors have been proposed [42], there are few studies that have investigated the effect of natural compounds on NF-kB expression and/or translocalization. Panepoxydone (PP), which is isolated as a secondary metabolite from Basidiomycetes (*Lentinus crinitus*), was first identified as an important regulator of inflammation, autoimmune diseases and apoptosis [29] and was subsequently found to be a natural NF-kB inhibitor [28–29]. However, there are only a limited number of reports investigating the effect of this natural metabolite in cancer, and none to our knowledge in breast cancer.

Our results indicate that PP has significant anti-tumor activity against all breast cancer cells in a dose- and time-dependent manner with MDA-MB-453 cells demonstrating the most sensitivity and lowest IC50 value. Indeed, the effect of PP appears to be mediated though NF-kB, as we observed nuclear to cytoplasmic translocation shift, which coincides with decreased pIkB expression and increased total IkB expression in all cell lines, which is responsible for release of NF-kB from the cytoplasm where it can then be transported into the nucleus [43].

Several reports have shown that nuclear localization (activation) of NF-kB and the expression of Bcl-2 serve as an important component for resistance to therapy in human cancers [44–47]. A key determinant in the apoptotic process is the balance of anti-and pro-apoptotic proteins with an increased ratio of pro-apoptotic proteins (Bax and Bim) to anti-apoptotic proteins (Bcl-2 and Bcl-xL) leading to apoptosis and eventually cell death. PP significantly decreased Bcl-2 expression and increased Bax expression in all cell lines, with overall net increase in the Bax/Bcl-2 ratio, with MDA-MB-453 cells demonstrating significantly higher ratios. These results were corroborated with flow cytometry analysis of Annexin V staining, and subsequent PARP cleavage through activation of increased caspase 3 expression, which are well established indicators of apoptosis. Thus, it is plausible that PP’s inhibitory effect is mediated through the Bcl-2 pathway.

Cyclin D1 is one of the most commonly overexpressed proteins in breast tumors and involved in regulation of transition from the G1 to S phase during the cell cycle [48]. Furthermore, a high level of survivin expression is associated with poorer patient prognosis in breast carcinoma [49–50]. Survivin, a member of the inhibitor of apoptosis (IAP) family is highly expressed in most human tumors including breast cancer and plays a critical role in both control of cell division and inhibition of apoptosis [51–53]. PP treatment resulted in decreased expression of cyclinD1 and survivin. Collectively, these results show the mechanisms by which PP is exerting its anti-tumor affect, specifically via modulation of PARP cleavage. More importantly, it emphasizes the ability of a targeted therapy, such as an NF-kB inhibitor, to trigger a diverse

---

**Figure 6. Panepoxydone modulates EMT related markers.** Total protein was isolated from control and PP-treated breast cancer cells and subjected to immunoblotting of proteins. Membranes were stripped and re-probed with anti-actin antibody to ensure equal protein loading. (A) Immunoblotting of FOXM1 after PP treatment and silencing of FOXM1 and NF-kB. (B) Immunoblot of cell lysates treated with PP or silenced FOXM1 and NF-kB for E cadherin, vimentin, slug and zeb-1. (C) Bar diagram indicate the fold difference in the EMT markers after PP treatment and above specified silencing. * indicates statistically significant difference between PP treated and untreated cells at p<0.05 (*) and p<0.01(**) levels by student’s t-test. Altogether this data indicate the PP induced EMT reversal is through FOXM1 in breast cancer cells.

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0098370.g006

Panepoxydone Targets NF-kB and FOXM1 in Breast Cancer
cascade of events that can lead to breast cancer cell death, particularly in the luminal A subtype of TNBC.

Tumor cell migration and invasion are key steps in the development of metastasis and play a significant role during the process of distant metastasis [54]. TNBC cells are considered more aggressive than other breast cancer cells and are characterized by increased migration and invasion capabilities. Our results demonstrate that treatment with PP has a direct effect on aggressive features of breast tumors, such as cell migration and invasion, however as with the cytotoxicity experiments, there is differing effectiveness in the cell lines. For example, although MCF-7 cells and MDAMB-468 and MDA-MB-453 cells shared very close IC50 values, PP treatment differed with regard to inhibiting their invasion capability. A significant reduction in migration and invasion was observed at IC50 dose (dose D2) in all the TNBC cells; however, it was not significant for the MCF-7 cells. The fact that PP was able to have a significant general effect on invasion was observed at IC50 dose (dose D2) in all the TNBC cells lines; however, it was not significant for the MCF-7 cells. The fact that both MCF-7 and MDA-MB-453 cell lines showed similar IC50 values compared to the other TNBC cell lines, but demonstrated a different inhibitory effect on the migratory and invasion capability, further highlights that PP is most effect in luminal type tumors. This is not surprising, since TNBC cells (MDA-MB-453, luminal type) are more aggressive in nature as compared to ER positive (MCF-7) cells.

The fact that PP was able to have a significant general effect on cytotoxicity in all the breast cancer cell lines, but also exhibit cell-line specific effects on critical features associated with the aggressiveness of TNBC is of extreme importance. It highlights the role of utilizing therapeutic agents to help in elucidating the underlying mechanisms involved in specific tumor biology, prior to clinical translation. The pattern of anti-tumor activity of PP (MDA-MB-453 > MDA-MB-468 > MDA-MB-231) in all three TNBC cell lines is similar to that reported for 17-dimethylamino-17-demethoxygeldanamycin (17-DMAG), a heat shock protein (Hsp90) inhibitor [35]. Hsp90 has been identified as a critical and multimodal target for the treatment of TNBC. Reports have already shown the significance of Hsp90 inhibitors (PF-4942847, PU-H71) for the development of targeted therapies against TNBC [55–56] and an interesting future study would be to determine the effect of PP on Hsp90 expression.

An essential feature of metastasis is an epithelial to mesenchymal transition (EMT) or loss of E-cadherin expression [57–58]. This allows for increased cell migration, local or distant invasion. The TNBC cell culture models, MDA-MB-468, MDA-MB-453, and MDA-MB-231 [36], are all highly migratory and have the mesenchymal phenotype. FoxM1 is known to be a key regulator of transition from G1 to S phase as well as for the progression to mitosis [59–60], Members of the FOXM1 family involved in the development and progression of breast, liver, prostate, brain, and lung cancers through their ability in driving cell cycle progression and evasion of growth arrest [61]. FOXM1 expression has been shown to correlate with increased proliferation in prostate and lung cancer [62–63]. In breast cancer FOXM1 down-regulation leads to inhibition of proliferation, migration and invasion of breast cancer cells indicating the new approach for treatment of breast cancer [33].

We found that treatment with PP caused a down-regulation of FOXM1. Interestingly, silencing NF-kB reduces the expression of FOXM1, similarly to PP treatment, which is concomitant to upregulation of E-cadherin expression and down regulation of (vimentin, slug and zeb1). Thus, our results indicate the potential of PP in down-regulating FOXM1 and well established mesenchymal markers as well as induce the expression of epithelial marker, E-cadherin in breast cancer cells. Altogether these results highlight that the PP induced EMT reversal is through inhibition of FOXM1 in breast cancer cells (Figure 7).

A recent report indicated that FOXM1 promotes EMT in breast cancer cells by stimulating the transcription of EMT-related genes and metastasis of breast cancer cells in vivo [64–65]. In silico analysis of the FOXM1 promoter revealed the presence of NF-kB binding sites. The fact that PP decreases FOXM1 possibly through inhibition of NF-kB activity further strengthens the rationale that targeting NF-kB is a rationale clinical approach to treat breast tumors, particularly TNBC.

Figure 7. Schematic diagram of PP-induced cell death mechanism and EMT reversal.
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0098370.g007

Conclusions

In summary, our results demonstrate that targeting NF-kB with PP can have significant anti-tumor activity against breast cancer cells, through inhibition of cell growth, and a reversal of EMT. Furthermore, our observation that PP has cell line specific differences in the TNBC cell lines, highlights the need to employ a more rational and evidence-based approach in evaluation of novel therapeutic agents in the treatment of cancer. Given the recent sub-classification of TNBC, and our findings that cell lines representing different subtypes of TNBC have varying responses to PP, supports the contention that not all TNBC should be treated the same. In fact, these findings correlate well with clinical findings observed in the treatment of patients with TNBC; with many patients having chemotherapy-sensitive associated with a complete pathological responses and thus a favor outcome. However, other
TNBC patients tend to have very aggressive disease with very poor prognosis. At this point, we have not yet been able to preselect which patients may respond to chemotherapy.

Thus, these results highlight the need for a more evidence-based selection of therapies in patients with TNBC to achieve optimal response. Use of targeted therapies, such as PP, can not only help further characterize the molecular processes involved in the aggressiveness of this disease, but also provide a rational approach to discover potential new targets for the treatment of TNBC.

A limitation to this study is that these are only in vitro experiments. Further studies will be required to check the effect of PP on healthy breast cancer cells and also appropriate in vivo models. These additional studies are required to establish PP as a therapeutic agent for the treatment of triple negative breast cancer.

Acknowledgments
Authors thank Dr. Joel Andrews, Manager, Cellular and Biomolecular Imaging Facility, USA-MCI for his help with microscopy.

Author Contributions
Conceived and designed the experiments: RA WDC. Performed the experiments: RA BDG. Analyzed the data: RA CY WDC. Contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools: SM. Contributed to the writing of the manuscript: MT YX ER GAP LBO.

References
1. Siegel R, Ma J, Zou Z, Jemal A (2013) Cancer statistics, 2014. CA Cancer J Clin 63:1–29.
2. Agrawal G, Chen JH, Baick CH, Chen AE, Melia RS, et al. (2007) Pathological complete response in triple negative poorly differentiated invasive ductal breast carcinoma detected during pregnancy. J Clin Oncol 25: 2618–2620.
3. Carey LA, Dees EG, Sawyer L, Gatti L, Moore DT, et al. (2007) The triple negative paradox: primary tumor chemosensitivity of breast cancer subtypes. Clin Cancer Res 13: 2329–2334.
4. Dent R, Trudeau M, Pritchard KI, Hanna WM, Kahn HK, et al. (2007) Triple-negative breast cancer: clinical features and patterns of recurrence. Clin Cancer Res 13: 4298–4304.
5. Reis-Filho JS, Tutt AN (2008) Triple negative tumours: a critical review. Histopathology 52: 108–118.
6. Schneider BP, Winer EP, Foulkes WD, Garber J, Perou CM, et al. (2008) Triple-negative breast cancer: risk factors to potential targets. Clin Cancer Res 14: 8010–8018.
7. Bauer KR, Brown M, Cress RD, Parise CA, Caggiano V (2007) Descriptive analysis of estrogen receptor (ER)-negative, progesterone receptor (PR)-negative, and HER2-negative invasive breast cancer, the so-called triple-negative phenotype, in a population-based study from the California cancer Registry. Cancer 109:1721–1728.
8. Rhee J, Han SW, Oh DY, Kim JH, Im SA, et al. (2008) The clinicopathologic characteristics and prognostic significance of triple-negativity in node-negative breast cancer. BMC Cancer 8:307. doi: 10.1186/1471-2407-8-307.
9. Wang X, Belgue K, Kersual N, Kirsch KH, Mineva ND, et al. (2007) Oestrogen signalling inhibits invasive phenotype by repressing Rb1 and its target BCL2. Nat Cell Biol 9:470–478.
10. Verma IM, Stevenson J, Schwartz EM, Van Antwerp D, Miyamoto S (1995) NF-kappaB targets BCL2. J Cellular Biochem 105:1461–1471.
11. Podo F, Buydens LM, Degani H, Hilhorst R, Klipp E, et al. (2010) Triple-negative breast cancer: a review with emphasis on recent advances. Breast Cancer Res Treat 117:219–221.
12. Huber MA, Azoitei N, Baumann B, Gru¨nert S, Sommer A, et al. (2004) NF-
13. Karin M, Ben-Neriah Y (2000) Phosphorylation meets ubiquitination: the nuclear factor-NB in breast cancer. Cancer Res 9:3810–3818.
14. Yang C, Chen H, Yu L, Shan L, Xie L, et al. (2013) Inhibition of FOXM1 kappaB is essential for epithelial-mesenchymal transition and metastasis in a model of breast cancer progression. J Clin Investig 114:589–591.
15. Liu H, Zang C, Enede A, Planas-Silva MD, Rosche M, et al. (2008) Apoptosis of human breast cancer cells is mediated by inactivation of NF-
16. Liu H, Zang C, Enede A, Planas-Silva MD, Rosche M, et al. (2008) Apoptosis of human breast cancer cells is mediated by inactivation of NF-
17. Liu H, Zang C, Enede A, Planas-Silva MD, Rosche M, et al. (2008) Apoptosis of human breast cancer cells is mediated by inactivation of NF-
18. Liu H, Zang C, Enede A, Planas-Silva MD, Rosche M, et al. (2008) Apoptosis of human breast cancer cells is mediated by inactivation of NF-
19. Liu H, Zang C, Enede A, Planas-Silva MD, Rosche M, et al. (2008) Apoptosis of human breast cancer cells is mediated by inactivation of NF-
20. Liu H, Zang C, Enede A, Planas-Silva MD, Rosche M, et al. (2008) Apoptosis of human breast cancer cells is mediated by inactivation of NF-
21. Liu H, Zang C, Enede A, Planas-Silva MD, Rosche M, et al. (2008) Apoptosis of human breast cancer cells is mediated by inactivation of NF-
22. Ramasamy S, Wahab N, Ahmad Y, Manickam S (2013) Effect of extracts from Phyllanthus watsonii aira shoot on cell apoptosis in cultured human breast cancer MCF-7 cells. Exp Toxicol Pathol 65: 341–349.
23. Duangmano S, Sa-lim P, Saksarnar O, Patascharawan P, Domman F (2012) Cucurbitacin B Causes Increased Radiation Sensitivity of Human Breast Cancer Cells via G2/M Cell Cycle Arrest. J Oncology. doi:10.1153/2012/061602.
24. Gong Y, Li Y, Abdulmaksoud HM, Li L, Zhou J-R (2012) Tanshinones inhibit the growth of breast cancer cells through epigenetic modification of Aurora A expression and function. PLoS ONE, 7(4); e33656. doi:10.1371/journal.
25. Mizuno T, Saito H, Nishitoba T, Kasugai H (1995) Anti-tumoractive substances from mushrooms. Food Rev Int 11: 23–61.
26. Waterman SP, Weis AL (1999) Therapeutic effects of substances occurring in higher Basidiomycetes mushrooms: A modern perspective. Crit Rev Immunol 19: 65–96.
27. Waterman SP (2002) Medicinal mushrooms as a source of antiinmunomodulating polysaccharides. Appl Microbiol Biotechnol 60:258–274.
28. Erkel G, Anke T, Sterner O (1996) Inhibition of NF-
29. Erkel G, Anke T, Sterner O (1996) Inhibition of NF-
30. Erkel G, Anke T, Sterner O (1996) Inhibition of NF-
31. Ja¨nicke RU (2009) MCF-7 breast carcinoma cells do not express caspase-3. Breast Cancer Res Treat 117:219–221.
32. Helbig G, Christopherson KW, Bhat-Nakshatri P, Kumar S, Kishimoto H, et al. (2003) NF-kappaB promotes breast cancer cell migration and metastasis by inducing the expression of the chemokine receptor CXCR4. J Biol Chem.278:21631–21638.
33. Ahmad A, Wang Z, Kong D, Ali S, Li Y, et al. (2008) FOXM1 down-regulation leads to inhibition of proliferation, migration and invasion of breast cancer cells through the modulation of extra-cellular matrix degrading factors. Breast Cancer Res Treat. 122:337–346.
34. Perea CM, Solrie T, Eisen MB, van de Rijn M, Jeffrey SS, et al. (2000) Molecular portraits of human breast tumours. Nature, 406:747–752.
35. Sørlie T, Perou CM, Tibshirani R, Aas T, Geider S, et al. (2001) Gene expression patterns of breast carcinomas distinguish tumor subclasses with clinical implications. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA, 98:10969–10974.
36. Lehmann BD, Bauer JA, Chen Xi, Sanders ME, Chakravarthy AB, et al. (2011) Identification of human triple-negative breast cancer subtypes and preclinical models for selection of targeted therapies J Clin Invest, 121: 2750–2767.
37. Karin M, Ben-Neriah Y (2000) Phosphorylation meets ubiquitination: the control of NF-
38. Blackwell TS, Christman JW (1997) The role of nuclear factor-kappa B in cytokine gene regulation. Am J Resp Cell Mol Biol 17:3–9.
39. Romieu-Mourez R, Landesman-Bollag E, Seldin DC, Traish AM, Mercurio F, et al. (2003) Cancer subtype-specific regulation of NF-
40. Ramachandran PV, Yip-Schneider M, Schmidt CM (2009) Natural and synthetic \( \alpha, \beta \)-unsaturated carbonyls for NF-
41. Ramachandran PV, Yip-Schneider M, Schmidt CM (2009) Natural and synthetic \( \alpha, \beta \)-unsaturated carbonyls for NF-
42. Ramachandran PV, Yip-Schneider M, Schmidt CM (2009) Natural and synthetic \( \alpha, \beta \)-unsaturated carbonyls for NF-
43. Ramachandran PV, Yip-Schneider M, Schmidt CM (2009) Natural and synthetic \( \alpha, \beta \)-unsaturated carbonyls for NF-
44. Buchholz TA, Garg AK, Chakravarthi N, Aggarwal BB, Esteva FJ, et al. (2005) The nuclear transcription factor kappaB/bcl-2 pathway correlates with TNBC patients.
pathologic complete response to doxorubicin-based neoadjuvant chemotherapy in human breast cancer. Clin Cancer Res 11:8398–8402.

45. Wu K, Bonavida B (2009) The activated NF-kappaB-Snail-RKIP circuitry in cancer regulates both the metastatic cascade and resistance to apoptosis by cytotoxic drugs. Crit Rev Immunol 29:241–254.

46. Kostanovka-Poliakova D, Sabova I. (2005) Anti-apoptotic proteins-targets for chemosensitization of tumor cells and cancer treatment. Neoplasma 52:441–449.

47. Kang MH, Reynolds CP. (2009) Bcl-2 inhibitors: Targeting mitochondrial apoptotic pathways in cancer therapy. Clin Cancer Res 15:1126–1132.

48. Gillett C, Faufl V, Smith R, Fisher C, Bartek J, et al. (1994) Amplification and overexpression of cyclin D1 in breast cancer detected by immunohistochemical staining. Cancer Res 54:1812–1817.

49. Tanaka K, Iwamoto S, Gou G, Nohara T, Iwamoto M, et al. (2000) Expression of survivin and its relationship to loss of apoptosis in breast carcinomas. Clin Cancer Res 6:127–134.

50. Span PN, Sweep FC, Wieringer MC, Vrijenouw MC, Manders P, et al. (2004) Survivin is an independent prognostic marker for risk stratification of breast cancer patients. Clin Chem 50:1986–1993.

51. Altieri DC (2001) Cytokinesis, apoptosis and survivin: three for tango? Cell Death Differ 8: 4–5.

52. Blanc-Brude OP, Mesri M, Wall NR, Plescia J, Dohi T, et al. (2003) Therapeutic targeting of the survivin pathway in cancer: induction of mitochondrial apoptosis and suppression of tumor-associated angiogenesis. Clin Cancer Res 9:2003–92.

53. Li F, Ling X (2006) Survivin study: an update of "what is the next wave"? J Cell Physiol 208:476–486.

54. Zhen C, Chen L, Zhao Q, Liang B, Gu YX, et al. (2012) Gankyrin promotes breast cancer cell metastasis by regulating Rac1 activity. Oncogene. doi: 32:3452–3460.

55. Mehta PP, Whalen P, Baxi SM, Kung PP, Yamazaki S, et al. (2011) Effective targeting of triple-negative breast cancer cells by PF-4942847, a novel oral inhibitor of Hsp 90. Clin Cancer Res. 17:5432–5442.

56. Caldas-Lopes E, Cerraietti L, Ahn JH, Clement CC, Robles AI, et al. (2009) Hsp90 inhibitor PU-H71, a multimodal inhibitor of malignancy, induces complete responses in triple-negative breast cancer models. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2009 19;106:8368–8373.

57. Kallergi G, Papadaki MA, Politi E, Mavroudis D, Georgoulia V, et al. (2011) Epithelial to mesenchymal transition markers expressed in circulating tumour cells of early and metastatic breast cancer patients. Breast Cancer Res. 13:R59.

58. Wang Y, Zhou BP (2011) Epithelial-mesenchymal transition in breast cancer progression and metastasis. Chin J Cancer. 30:603–611.

59. Ye H, Holterman AX, Yoo KW, Franks RR, Costa RH (1999) Premature expression of the winged helix transcription factor HFH-11B in regenerating mouse liver accelerates hepatocyte entry into S phase. Mol Cell Biol 19:8570–8580.

60. Yang C, Kiyokawa H, Demnesitz MB, Costa RH (2012) The forkhead box m1b transcription factor is essential for hepatocyte DNA replication and mitosis during mouse liver regeneration. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 99:16881–16886.

61. Miyata SS, Lam EW (2007) The emerging roles of forkhead box (Fox) proteins in cancer. Nat Rev Cancer 7:497–499.

62. Kalin TV, Wang IC, Ackerson TJ, Major ML, Detrisac CJ, et al. (2006) Increased levels of the FoxM1 transcription factor accelerate development and progression of prostate carcinomas in both TRAMP and LADY transgenic mice. Cancer Res 66:1712–1720.

63. Kim IM, Ackerson T, Ramakrishna S, Tretiakova M, Wang IC, et al. (2006) The forkhead box M1 transcription factor stimulates the proliferation of tumor cells during development of lung cancer. Cancer Res 66:2153–2161.

64. Guarino M (2007) Epithelial-mesenchymal transition and tumour invasion. Int J Biochem Cell Biol 39:2153–2160.

65. Yang C, Chen H, Tan G, Gao W, Cheng L, et al. (2013) FOXM1 promotes the epithelial to mesenchymal transition by stimulating the transcription of slug in human breast cancer. Cancer Lett. 340:104–112.