Association analysis of miRNA-related genetic polymorphisms in miR-143/145 and KRAS with colorectal cancer susceptibility and survival

CURRENT STATUS: UNDER REVIEW

BMC Medical Genetics  ■ BMC Series

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DOI: 10.21203/rs.2.19326/v1

SUBJECT AREAS  Medical Genetics

KEYWORDS
MicroRNA, colorectal cancer, KRAS
Abstract

**Background** MicroRNAs have important roles in tumorigenesis. There is accumulating evidence of aberrant expression of miR-143 and miR-145 and their target gene *KRAS* has been described in colorectal cancer (CRC). We hypothesize that single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) within or near mRNA-miRNA binding sites may affect miRNA/target gene interaction, resulting in differential mRNA/protein expression and promoting the development and progression of CRC.

**Methods** We conducted a case-control study of 507 CRC cases recruited from a tertiary hospital and 497 population-based controls to assess the association of genetic polymorphisms in miR-143/145 and the *KRAS* 3′ untranslated region (3′ UTR) with CRC susceptibility and survival. Deaths and causes of death among the CRC cases were identified using the Hangzhou Cancer Registration System and Death Surveillance System. Genetic variations of genomic regions located from 500 bp upstream to 500 bp downstream of the miR-143/miR-145 gene and the 3′ UTR of *KRAS* were selected using the Haploview and HaploReg software.

**Results** Using publicly available expression profiling data, we found that miR-143/145 and *KRAS* expression were all reduced in rectal cancer tissue compared with adjacent normal mucosa. The Rs74693964 C/T variant located 65 bp downstream of miR-145 genomic regions was observed to be associated with CRC susceptibility (adjusted odds ratio 2.414, 95% CI: 1.385–4.206). Among non-smokers, the miR-143 rs41291957 GA genotype and miR-145 rs74693964 CT genotype were borderline significantly associated with an increased risk of rectal cancer. However, there was no interaction effect between selected SNPs and smoking status. Cumulative effects of miR-143 and miR-145 on CRC risk were
observed ($P_{trend}=0.03$). CRC cases carrying variant genotype TT of *KRAS* rs712 had poorer survival (log-rank $P=0.044$, adjusted hazard ratio 4.328, 95% CI: 1.236–15.147).

**Conclusions** Our results indicate that miRNA-related polymorphisms in miR-143/145 and *KRAS* are likely to be deleterious and represent potential biomarkers for CRC susceptibility and survival.

**Introduction**

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is one of the most commonly occurring malignancies worldwide. According to The Global Burden of Cancer 2013, colon and rectal cancer ranked third for cancer incidence and fourth for cancer deaths [1]. In China, CRC incidence and mortality statistics for 2014, published by the National Cancer Center, showed a similar trend, with CRC ranking in third and fifth place for cancer incidence and cancer deaths, respectively [2].

The development of CRC is a multifactorial and multistep process involving the gain and maintenance of specific genomic alterations [3]. Over the past few decades, many associations have been identified between the variation of protein-coding genes and CRC. In recent years, high-resolution maps of the human transcriptome have led to the discovery of a large number of non-protein-coding RNA genes and brought about a paradigm shift in our understanding of the function of variations in non-coding RNAs (ncRNAs) [4]. The ncRNAs include a class of short RNA molecules termed microRNAs (miRNAs), which are endogenous small ncRNAs that repress protein-coding genes by binding to target sites in the 3′ untranslated region (3′ UTR) of mRNAs. These miRNAs are involved in the regulation of almost all physiological and pathological processes, including cell proliferation, differentiation,
and apoptosis [5].

MiR-143 and miR-145, which are located close to each other on 5q33, are co-transcribed from a single promoter and generate a primary transcript containing both miRNAs [6]. In 2003, miR-143 and miR-145 were reported to be downregulated in colorectal tissue for the first time [7]. Subsequently, a series of studies confirmed these results [8-10]. Decreased expression of these two miRNAs is involved in various cancer-related events, including proliferation, invasion, and migration, suggesting that they have anti-tumorigenic activity [11-13]. The KRAS oncogene is an important upstream mediator of the MAPK pathway, and its overexpression can lead to increased activation of the RAF/MEK/MAPK pathway, thereby promoting tumorigenesis [14]. KRAS is an important target of miR-143/145, which has been identified not only by computational predictions using software such as TargetScan, miRanda, and PicTar, but also by experimental validation [15, 16].

It is proposed that mutations in either miRNAs or their coexpressed miRNA binding sites are often deleterious, which can affect miRNA/target gene interaction, resulting in differential mRNA or protein expression and increased susceptibility to common diseases [17]. This view was supported by some studies of miRNA-related genetic alterations with different types of cancer, including CRC[18-20]. However, published evidences for genetic variations of miR-143/145 and the 3’UTR of KRAS with CRC susceptibility are limited and not comprehensively investigated. Therefore, we conducted a case-control study to assess the association between these candidates biomarkers with CRC risk.

Materials and Methods

Study population
This study was conducted in Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China. A total of 507 CRC patients and 497 cancer-free controls were enrolled in the study from May 2014 to May 2015. CRC patients were recruited from a tertiary hospital in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China. Eligible cases were newly diagnosed and histologically confirmed CRC without radiotherapy or chemotherapy. The control population was recruited from among the individuals who came to the community health service center for medical examinations. The controls had no cancer history or intestinal diseases. All participants were Han Chinese and had lived in Zhejiang Province for more than 20 years.

The study was approved by the Medical Ethical Committee of Hangzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention. All participants supplied informed written consent. Face-to-face interviews were conducted by trained interviewers who administered a structured questionnaire asking about demographic characteristics, family history of cancer, previous medical history, and lifestyle-related factors. Smoking history was defined as having smoked at least one cigarette per day for more than 1 year. Alcohol drinking or tea drinking was defined as having consumed an alcoholic drink or tea at least once per day for more than 3 months.

**Polymorphism selection and genotyping**

First, single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) of genomic regions located from 500 bp upstream to 500 bp downstream of the miR-143/miR-145 gene and the 3′ UTR of KRAS were downloaded from 1000 Genomes (http://www.internationalgenome.org/) if they had minor allele frequency > 0.05 within the Southern Han Chinese population. Then, tagSNPs representing SNPs with pairwise correlation of $r^2 > 0.8$ were further selected using the tagger algorithm implemented in the Haploview software. The function of the tagSNPs was predicted using RegulomeDB and
HaploReg. Finally five polymorphisms were selected for study: *KRAS* rs712, rs1137196, miR-143 rs41291957, miR-145 rs74693964, and rs80026971. Detailed information regarding the selected SNPs are listed in Supplementary table.

Genomic DNA was extracted from peripheral blood samples using a magnetic bead method with KingFisher Flex (Thermo Scientific, USA). The concentration and purity of the DNA samples were determined using a NanoDrop2000 spectrophotometer (Thermo Scientific, USA). Genotyping was performed using the Agena MassArray Genotyping Platform (Agena Inc. San Diego, CA, USA). Five percent blinded samples were repetitively genotyped and a negative control was interspersed throughout the genotyping assays. The detection rates of all SNP genotyping assays were ≥96%. The concordance rates for duplicated samples were 100%.

**Gene expression analysis**

The miR-143/145 microarrays were downloaded from the Gene Expression Omnibus (GEO) database (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo), accession no. GSE38389. From this dataset, 66 paired samples from rectal tumor tissue and normal samples were collected, and microRNA expression profiles were detected using the GPL11039 platform (Exiqon miRCURY LNA microRNA array v.9.2 Extended Version).

We used Oncomine (www.oncomine.org last accessed on Dec 5, 2019) to conduct a meta-analysis for *KRAS* gene expression. We extracted the qualified datasets by key words as follows: Gene “*KRAS*” ; Cancer type: “Colorectal cancer” ; Analysis type: “Cancer vs. Normal Analysis”; Data Type: “mRNA” from the the Oncomine database.

There are 8 arrays (Kaiser Colon, Sabates-Bellver Colon, Skrzypczak Colorectal 2, TCGA Colorectal, Skrzypczak Colorectal, Gaspar Colon, Hong Colorectal, Gaedcke Colorectal) including 639 colorectal cancer cases and 202 controls involved in the meta-analysis.
**CRC death surveillance**

A follow-up survey of CRC cases with Hangzhou household registration was conducted using the Cancer Registration System and Death Surveillance System of Hangzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The date of censorship was Jan 1 2019. We applied the identification card (ID) number and name of CRC cases to match and acquire the survival outcome from the Surveillance Systems. Date and cause of death were recorded for the survival analysis.

**Statistical analysis**

A two-sided student’s t-test was used to compare the differences in the quantitative data, and a chi-square test was used to compare categorical data between the two groups. Departures from Hardy–Weinberg equilibrium were tested using goodness-of-fit chi-square test. Multivariate logistic regression analysis was performed to explore the association between the selected SNPs and CRC risk with adjustment for age, sex, and family history of cancer. A likelihood ratio test was used to assess the interaction effects between the SNPs and smoking with respect to CRC. The Cochran-Armitage test was used for trend analysis. Kaplan-Meier survival analysis and log rank test were used to assess survival outcome, that is, overall survival in relation to the genotypes. Multivariate Cox regression analysis was performed to calculate relative risk [hazard ratio (HR)] and 95% confidence interval (CI) associated with genetic polymorphisms from cancer diagnosis until the end of the study or death. Statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS V.17.0 and SAS V.9.2 software. A P value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

**Results**

**Characteristics of the study population**
A total of 507 CRC patients (209 colon cancer cases and 298 rectal cancer cases) and 497 cancer-free controls were involved in our study. The baseline characteristics and lifestyle factors are shown in Table 1. There was no significant difference in age between the cases and controls, but the proportion of males was higher in the case group (64.89% vs. 57.95%). CRC patients were more likely to have a lower education level and lower body mass index ($P<0.05$). CRC patients also reported higher percentages of family history of cancer and history of appendicitis in comparison with controls ($P=0.034$, $P<0.001$ respectively). However, no significant differences were found between the case and control groups with respect to tobacco smoking, alcohol drinking, or tea drinking.

**mRNA expression analysis of miR-143, miR-145, and KRAS**

We extracted published microarray data from GEO datasets GSE38389 and compared the mRNA expression of miR-143, miR-145 between rectal cancer tissue and adjacent normal mucosa. As shown in Figure 1, miR-143 expression was under-expressed (log2-fold difference<-1) 26 out of 66 matched pairs of rectal tumor samples and normal samples ($P$ value for paired $t$ test $<0.001$). MiR-145 showed the same trend, with decreased expression(log2-fold difference<-1) in 28 out of 66 pairs of samples ($P$ value for paired $t$ test $<0.001$). (Figure1, 2)

We performed a statistical comparison of KRAS expression from multiple colorectal cancer studies published in Oncomine database. Eight independent microarray studies comprising a total of 639 colorectal cancer and 202 normal colorectal mucosa samples were evaluated from meta-analysis data by Oncomine. Meta-analysis identified that KRAS mRNA was under-expressed no matter in colon cancer or rectal cancer($P<0.001$, $P=0.016$ respectively).

**Polymorphisms of miR-143, miR-145, and KRAS 3’ UTR and CRC risk**
KRAS rs712 and rs1137196, miR-143 rs41291957, and miR-145 rs74693964 and rs80026971 were genotyped in this study. The genotype distribution of the five SNPs in the control group all conformed to Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium; their associations with the risk of CRC are presented in Table 2. As shown in the table, subjects with the heterozygous genotype CT of rs74693964 were more than twice as likely to have CRC as subjects with the wild genotype CC [adjusted odds ratio (OR)=2.414, 95% CI:1.385–4.206]. MiR-145 rs74693964 was associated with a significantly increased risk of CRC. However, KRAS rs712 and rs1137196, miR-143 rs41291957, and miR-145 rs80026971 showed no association with the risk of CRC.

In the subgroup analysis, rs41291957 and rs74693964 were found to be associated with an increased risk of rectal cancer but not colon cancer (rs41291957 GA vs. AA: adjusted OR=1.367, 95% CI: 1.005–1.860; rs74693964 CT vs. CC: adjusted OR=2.820, 95% CI: 1.547–5.140) (Tables 2, 3).

When stratified by smoking status, we found that the genotype distributions of miR-143 rs41291957 among non-smokers differed significantly between cases and controls. Compared with the GG genotype, those carrying heterozygous genotype GA had a nearly 40% increased risk for developing CRC (adjusted OR=1.397, 95% CI: 1.007–1.936). In non-smokers, miR-145 rs74693964 remained a significant risk factor for CRC among subjects carrying the CT genotype (adjusted OR =3.086, 95% CI: 1.468–6.484). Interaction analyses of the two SNPs and tobacco smoking were conducted using a multiplicative model; neither interaction effect showed statistical significance (Table 4).

Although miR-143 and miR-145 located close to each other on 5q33, our analysis showed no linkage disequilibrium between them. To evaluate the potential cumulative effects of miR-143 and miR-145, we defined at-risk genotypes as those
with OR values greater than 1 under a dominant model of rs41291957 and rs74693964. We compared the distributions of the number of at-risk genotypes between cases and controls. CRC risk increased with the number of at-risk genotypes ($P_{\text{trend}}=0.003$). When split by cancer type, individuals harboring two at-risk genotypes had an increased risk of rectal cancer relative to those with none (OR=3.738, 95% CI: 1.725–8.101) (Table 5).

**Polymorphisms of miR-143, miR-145, and KRAS 3′ UTR and CRC survival**

We collected and evaluated the overall survival time of 222 CRC cases with Hangzhou household registration from the Cancer Registration System and Death Surveillance System of Hangzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Of the 222 cases recruited between May 2014 and May 2015, a total of 34 had died of CRC by Jan 1 2019. Associations between polymorphisms of miR-143, miR-145, and the KRAS 3′ UTR and CRC survival were explored. First, we used the Kaplan–Meier method to compare overall survival among different genotypes of selected SNPs. Then, adjusted HRs were obtained by Cox regression analysis for further confirmation of the relationships between the genotypes and CRC survival. The results showed that the mutant homozygote TT of rs712 was associated with decreased survival time in CRC (log-rank $P=0.044$). Compared with the reference genotype GG of rs712, the CRC cases with TT genotype had a significant increase in number of deaths (adjusted $HR=4.328$, 95% CI: 1.236–15.147). The polymorphisms of miR-143 and miR-145 did not show any statistical association with prognosis of CRC cases (Table 6).

**Discussion**

MiR-143 and miR-145 which are located on 5q23 may originate from the same
primary miRNA. Michael et al. showed that miR-143 and miR-145 displayed consistently decreased expression levels of mature miRNA at the colorectal neoplasm stages, in comparison with healthy colon mucosa. Several other studies have confirmed this finding [9, 21]. Our study found that both miR-143/145 showed reduced expression in rectal cancer compared with adjacent normal mucosa based on microarray gene expression datasets from GEO, which is consistent with previous studies. KRAS is one of the most frequently mutated genes associated with CRC risk. A number of recent studies have demonstrated the significance of KRAS mutation in CRC carcinogenesis [15, 22]; however, KRAS gene expression status in CRC has been less reported. We conducted a meta-analysis for KRAS gene expression from multiple colorectal cancer studies published in Oncomine database. We found that KRAS expression was downregulated in CRC tissues, especially in rectal cancers. Mazza et al. evaluated of the miRNAome and transcriptome of matched pairs of tumour and adjacent non-tumorous mucosa samples of CRC. He found concurrent downregulation of KRAS and the miR-143/145 cluster in CRC tissue [16]. This result was interpreted in terms of a feed-forward mechanism in which the miR-143/145 polycistronic cluster targets the RAS-responsive element-binding protein RREB1 and KRAS, which, in turn, induce downregulation of the cluster [14].

Emerging evidence has shown that miRNA-related SNPs may alter an individual’s susceptibility to CRC by disrupting miRNAs’ procession, expression, or interaction with target mRNA [23]. However, no SNP of the miR-143 and miR-145 genes could be identified by the HapMap and dbSNP database retrieval. Thus we selected the SNPs within the miRNA regulatory region/transcription factor-binding sites for further study. MiR-145 Rs74693964 is located 65 bp downstream of miR-145. According to functional predictions based on HaploReg annotations [24] and the
RegulomeDB database [25], this SNP has been identified as a promoter histone modification or enhancer histone modification region in more than 20 tissues, including colonic mucosa and rectal mucosa. We observed that individuals with the CT genotype of rs74693964 in the Chinese population had a two-fold increased risk for developing CRC compared with those carrying the CC genotype. After stratification by smoking status, miR-145 rs74693964 was found to be significantly associated with an increased risk of CRC among non-smokers. To date, only two studies have reported an association of miR-145 rs74693964 with risk of cancer; one was a study of cervical cancer and the other of non-small-cell lung cancer [26, 27]. No similar study involving CRC has yet been reported. To our knowledge, the present work is the first investigation of the link between miR-145 rs74693964 and CRC risk in the Chinese population.

In previous studies, Li et al. [28] reported a significant effect of mutant genotypes or alleles of rs41291957 on CRC risk, although Ying et al. [29] failed to find any association between rs41291957 and CRC susceptibility. In our study, rectal cancer risk was shown to be associated with the rs41291957 heterozygous genotype. Rs41291957 is located 91 bp upstream of miR-143. Saini et al. demonstrated that up to 60% of miRNAs have transcription factor binding sites within 1 kb of the start of the pre-miRNA [30], indicating that rs41291957 in the promoter region may be involved in the transcriptional activation of miR-143. Furthermore, bioinformatic predictions using HaploReg and RegulomeDB indicated that rs41291957 is probably involved in epigenetic modifications that promote colorectal tumorigenesis.

The cumulative effects of significant polymorphisms of miR-143 and miR-145 were evaluated. CRC risk increased with the number of at-risk genotypes, especially in rectal cancer. The average SNP density of clustered miRNAs was significantly lower
than that of the individual miRNAs, which may to some degree reflect the critical biological functions regulated by clustered miRNAs [31]. The miR-143/145 cluster coordinately plays an important part in the carcinogenesis of CRC [32]. It is thus a reasonable assumption that the more mutations occur in the miR-143/145 cluster, the greater the risk of CRC.

KRAS is a direct target of miR-143/145. In this study, no SNP was identified within the binding region of miR-143/145, nor was there any association with CRC risk. However, our results indicated that the rs712 G > T polymorphism in the 3’ UTR of the KRAS gene may modulate survival outcome in CRC. Multiple miRNAs, including miR-200b, miR-200c, and miR-429, target rs712. The miR-200 family (miR-200b, miR-200c, and miR-429) has been widely investigated with regard to its role in tumor metastasis [33]. Pichler et al. found that miR-200 family expression was associated with poor prognosis in CRC patients and with cancer stem cell properties in CRC [34]. Therefore, the rs712 G > T change might attenuate its binding capacity with the miR-200 family. Although the association between the KRAS rs712 polymorphism and cancer risk has been widely studied [35–37], the effects of this polymorphism on CRC survival are still unclear. Schneiderova et al. [38] indicated that individuals with colon cancer carrying the heterozygous GT genotype had longer overall survival. The survival impact of rs712 on CRC survival was not significant in a study by Dai[39]. Our study suggests that a poor prognosis in CRC is associated with the homozygous TT genotype. The limited and conflicting results on the prognostic value of KRAS rs712 as a predictor for CRC survival indicate that larger studies are required.

There were some limitations to this study. First, owing to the lack of RNA samples for the study population, we were unable to carry out functional validation tests.
The biological functions of the selected SNPs in CRC were inferred and predicted using the available online tools. Second, the participants in the case group and control group were collected from a hospital and from the community, respectively; thus, selection bias cannot be ignored. Finally, the relatively small sample size, especially for the survival analysis, may have hindered the ability of the study to detect weak gene-disease associations and gene-environment interactions.

Conclusions

In conclusion, our results suggest that rs74693964 C/T and rs41291957 G/A in the miR-143/145 cluster might have cumulative effects on rectal cancer risk. Rs712 G/T in KRAS might be associated with poorer survival in CRC. Further large population-based prospective studies as well as functional validation are warranted to advance our understanding of the role of these factors in CRC.

Declarations

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Funding

This work was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (Grant No. 81302506), Zhejiang Provincial Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (No. 2018ZA068) and Education of Zhejiang Province (No. Y201738284).

Availability of data and materials

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published article.

Authors’ contributions
Danyang Wang and Bing Liu designed the study and Bing Liu applied for Research Ethics Board approval. Danyang Wang, Bing Liu, and Xin Wang recruited the participants and collected the data. Bing Liu and Yan Zhang conducted the experiments. Qingmin Liu and Yanjun Ren analyzed the data and prepared the tables. Danyang Wang and Bing Liu drafted and completed the manuscript. All authors approved the final manuscript.

**Ethics approval and consent to participate**

The study was approved by the Medical Ethical Committee of Hangzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention. All participants supplied informed written consent.

**Consent for publication**

Not applicable.

**Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Abbreviations**

3′-UTR 3′-untranslated region;
CRC colorectal cancer;
TagSNPs tag single nucleotide polymorphisms;
GEO Gene Expression Omnibus;
ncRNAs non-coding RNAs;
miRNAs microRNAs;
FDR false discovery rate;
OS overall survival;
OR odds ratio
HR hazard ratio;
CHS Southern Han Chinese
TFBS transcription factor binding site
ID identification card

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Tables

Table 1 Baseline characteristics of study population
| Characteristics                          | Cases n=507 | Controls n=497 | Statistics |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| **Age (years), (mean±SD)**              | 62.55±11.88 | 62.75±11.99    | 0.264      |
| **Gender, N (%)**                       |             |                |            |
| Males                                   | 32964.89%   | 28857.95%      | 5.109      |
| Females                                 | 17835.11%   | 20942.05%      |            |
| **Former BMI (kg/m2), N (%)†**          |             |                |            |
| <18.5                                    | 183.56%     | 153.27%        | 13.038     |
| 18.5~23.9                               | 29858.89%   | 21947.71%      |            |
| >=23.9                                  | 19037.35%   | 22549.02%      |            |
| **Education level, N (%)**              |             |                |            |
| Illiterate                               | 6312.45%    | 255.20%        | 63.428     |
| Primary school                          | 18235.97%   | 9118.92%       |            |
| Middle school and above                 | 26151.58%   | 36575.88%      |            |
| **Marital status, N (%)**               |             |                |            |
| Married                                  | 50499.41%   | 41284.08%      | 78.418     |
| Unmarried                                | 30.59%      | 7815.92%       |            |
| **Family history of cancer, N (%)**     |             |                |            |
| No                                       | 40080.47%   | 42585.51%      | 4.511      |
| Yes                                      | 9919.53%    | 7214.49%       |            |
| **History of appendicitis**             |             |                |            |
| No                                       | 47794.08%   | 48998.39%      | 12.787     |
| Yes                                      | 305.92%     | 81.61%         |            |
| **Smoking, N (%)**                      |             |                |            |
| No                                       | 32463.91%   | 33869.12%      | 0.353      |
| Yes                                      | 18336.09%   | 15130.88%      |            |
| **Alcohol consumption, N (%)**          |             |                |            |
| No                                       | 35970.81%   | 35371.03%      | 0.772      |
| Yes                                      | 14829.19%   | 14428.97%      |            |
| **Tea consumption, N (%)**              |             |                |            |
| No                                       | 23045.36%   | 23948.09%      | 0.046      |
| Yes                                      | 27754.64%   | 25851.91%      |            |

*Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel test, adjusted by sex

† BMI of five years before investigation

Table 2 Genetic association analyses of selected SNPs with colorectal cancer risk

| Gene symbol | Genotype | Cases (N%) | Controls (N%) | OR(95%CI)* |
|-------------|----------|------------|---------------|------------|
| **KRAS**    | rs712    |            |               |            |
| GG          | 301 (60.4%) | 313 (64.1%) | 1.0          |
| GT          | 179 (35.9%) | 159 (32.6%) | 1.190 (0.911-1.555) |
| TT          | 18 (3.6%)   | 16 (3.3%)   | 1.184 (0.591-2.372) |
| G allele    | 781 (78.4%) | 785 (80.4%) |               |
| T allele    | 215 (21.6%) | 191 (19.6%) |               |
| **KRAS**    | rs1137196 |            |               |            |
| CC          | 295 (59.7%) | 299 (62.2%) | 1.0          |
| CA          | 180 (36.4%) | 167 (34.7%) | 1.078 (0.849-1.446) |
| AA          | 19 (3.8%)   | 15 (3.1%)   | 1.108 (0.849-1.446) |
| C allele    | 770 (77.9%) | 765 (79.5%) |               |
| A allele    | 218 (22.1%) | 197 (20.5%) |               |
| **miR-143** | rs41291957 |            |               |            |
| GG          | 208 (41.4%) | 226 (46.1%) | 1.0          |
| GA          | 246 (48.9%) | 210 (42.9%) | 1.075 (0.979-1.662) |
| AA          | 49 (9.7%)   | 54 (11%)    | 0.977 (0.634-1.505) |
| G allele    | 662 (65.8%) | 662 (67.5%) |               |
| A allele    | 344 (34.2%) | 318 (32.5%) |               |
| **miR-145** | rs74693964 |            |               |            |
| CC          | 462 (91.1%) | 470 (96.1%) | 1.0          |
| CT          | 45 (8.9%)   | 19 (3.9%)   | 2.414 (1.385-4.206) |
| C allele    | 969 (95.6%) | 959 (98.1%) |               |
| T allele    | 45 (4.4%)   | 19 (1.9%)   |               |
| **miR-145** | rs80026971 |            |               |            |
| GG          | 497 (98%)   | 487 (98.6%) | 1.0          |
| GC          | 10 (2%)     | 7 (1.4%)    | 1.220 (0.457-3.258) |
| C allele    | 1004 (99.0%) | 981 (99.3%) |               |
| T allele    | 10 (1.0%)   | 7 (0.7%)    |               |

* OR(95%CI) adjusted by age, sex and family history of cancer.
Table 3 Genetic association analyses of selected SNPs with colon cancer and rectal cancer risk

| Gene symbol | Genotype | Cases(N%) | Controls(N%) | OR(95%CI)* | P value |
|-------------|----------|-----------|--------------|------------|---------|
| KRAS        | rs712    | GG        | 118(57.8)    | 315(64.3)  | 1.0     | 0.1     |
|             |          | GT        | 74(36.3)     | 159(32.4)  | 1.260(0.889-1.787) | 0.194 |
|             |          | TT        | 12(5.9)      | 16(3.3)    | 1.998(0.916-4.362) | 0.082 |
| KRAS        | rs1137196| CC        | 113(55.9)    | 301(62.3)  | 1.0     | 0.1     |
|             |          | CA        | 78(38.6)     | 167(34.6)  | 1.269(0.897-1.796) | 0.01  |
|             |          | AA        | 11(5.4)      | 15(3.1)    | 1.943(0.864-4.372) | 0.1   |
| miR-143     | rs41291957| GG       | 88(42.3)     | 226(45.9)  | 1.0     | 0.3     |
|             |          | GA        | 97(46.6)     | 212(43.1)  | 1.177(0.833-1.663) | 0.3   |

Table 4 Association of selected SNPs with colorectal cancer risk after stratification by smoking status
| Gene symbol | Genotype | Cases (N%) | Controls (N%) | OR (95%CI) * | P value |
|-------------|----------|------------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| KRAS        | rs712    | GG         | 108(60.3%)   | 100(66.7%)   | 1.0     | 0.202   |
|             |          | GT         | 66(36.9%)    | 48(32.0%)    | 1.361(0.848-2.184) | 0.314   |
|             |          | TT         | 5(2.8%)      | 2(1.3%)      | 2.358(0.444-12.514) | 0.155   |
|             |          | GT+TT      | 71(39.7%)    | 50(33.3%)    | 1.402(0.880-2.232) | 0.155   |
| Multiplicative Interaction |          |            |              |              |          |         |
| KRAS        | rs1137196| CC         | 105(59.7%)   | 98(66.7%)    | 1.0     | 0.212   |
|             |          | CA         | 65(36.9%)    | 47(32.0%)    | 1.354(0.841-2.180) | 0.210   |
|             |          | AA         | 6(3.4%)      | 2(1.4%)      | 2.835(0.555-14.479) | 0.210   |
|             |          | CA+AA      | 71(40.3%)    | 49(33.4%)    | 1.415(0.887-2.259) | 0.145   |
| Multiplicative Interaction |          |            |              |              |          |         |
| miR-143     | rs41291957| GG         | 78(43.1%)    | 66(44.0%)    | 1.0     | 0.748   |
|             |          | GA         | 83(45.9%)    | 67(44.7%)    | 1.079(0.677-1.721) | 0.905   |
|             |          | AA         | 20(11.0%)    | 11(11.3%)    | 0.956(0.460-1.986) | 0.818   |
|             |          | GA+AA      | 93(49.4%)    | 77(45.5%)    | 1.053(0.677-1.640) | 0.370   |
| Multiplicative Interaction |          |            |              |              |          |         |
| miR-143     | rs74693964| CC         | 167(91.3%)   | 140(94.0%)   | 1.0     | 0.257   |
|             |          | CT         | 16(8.7%)     | 9(6.0%)      | 1.672(0.687-4.070) | 0.411   |
| Multiplicative Interaction |          |            |              |              |          |         |
| miR-145     | rs80026971| GG         | 181(98.9%)   | 150(99.3%)   | 1.0     | 0.838   |
|             |          | GC         | 2(1.1%)      | 1(0.7%)      | 1.290(0.113-14.738) | 0.076   |

* OR(95%CI) adjusted by age, sex and family history of cancer

Table 5 Genetic association analyses of number of at-risk genotypes within rs41291957 and rs74693964 with colon cancer and rectal cancer risk
* OR(95%CI) adjusted by age, sex and family history of cancer

Table 6 Kaplan-Meier survival estimation of mean survival and hazard ratios (HRs) of selected SNPs

| Gene symbol | Genotypes | N%     | Mean Survival (in months) | Log rank, P value | HR(95%CI)*, |
|-------------|-----------|--------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| KRAS        | rs712     |        |                           |                   |             |
|             | GG        | 137(62.5) | 51.94                     | 0.044             | 1.0         |
|             | GT        | 74(33.8)  | 48.66                     |                   | 1.672(0.815-3.4) |
|             | TT        | 8(3.7)    | 37.00                     |                   | 4.328(1.236-15.1) |
| KRAS        | rs1137196 |        |                           |                   |             |
|             | CC        | 131(61.5) | 52.28                     | 0.098             | 1.0         |
|             | CA        | 75(35.2)  | 47.49                     |                   | 1.860(0.913-3.7) |
|             | AA        | 7(3.3)    | 41.29                     |                   | 3.030(0.676-13.1) |
| miR-143     | rs41291957|        |                           |                   |             |
|             | GG        | 93(42.5)  | 47.49                     | 0.123             | 1.0         |
|             | GA        | 105(47.9) | 52.07                     |                   | 0.573(0.280-1.1) |
|             | AA        | 21(9.6)   | 48.82                     |                   | 0.375(0.078-1.6) |
| miR-145     | rs74693964|        |                           |                   |             |
|             | CC        | 201(90.5) | 51.14                     | 0.441             | 1.0         |
|             | CT        | 21(9.5)   | 49.43                     |                   | 0.491(0.117-2.0) |
| miR-145     | rs80026971|        |                           |                   |             |
|             | GG        | 218(98.2) | 51.34                     | 0.557             | 1.0         |
|             | GC        | 4(1.8)    | 41.25                     |                   | 1.481(0.195-11.1) |

*HR(95%CI) adjusted by age, sex, tumor stage

Figures
Fig. 1 miR-143 expression in rectal cancer and matched normal mucosa in the rectal cancer study identified a significant decrease in expression (Log₂ Fold Difference > 0.5) in rectal cancer tissue compared with adjacent normal controls (P value for paired t-test < 0.001).
Figure 2
MiR-145 Expression in Pairs Samples for Rectal cancer - Normal Mucosa

Supplementary Files
This is a list of supplementary files associated with the primary manuscript. Click to download.
Descriptions of selected SNPs of miR.docx