Genetic changes may provide a target for advanced liver cancer.

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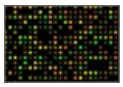

Liver cancer (hepatocellular carcinomaor HCC) is responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths each year. Even with the advent of targeted drugs like sorafenib, most patients with HCC do not have a viable treatment option.

One possible target for treatments are changes in the genome that are termed 'epigenetic. Epigenetic changes can alter the way a cell behaves without changing the sequence of affected genes Chemicals currently exist that can interfere with epigenetic changes.

This research, in cell culture and with animal models, suggests that HCC cancers may be divided into two types: 1)those that are sensitive to drugs that block epigenetic changes and 2) those that are resistant to these types of drugs.

The discovery paves the way for the development of treatments and diagnositic tests that can be used to treat those liver cancer patients most likely to respond well to drugs that interfere with epigenetic changes.

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http://stm.sciencemag.org/content/2/54/54ra77.abstract
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