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Androgen receptor – an update of mechanisms of action in prostate cancer

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Abstract Androgen receptor (AR), a key nuclear transcription factor in the prostate gland, is expressed in all histological types and stages of prostate cancer. The AR regulates proliferation of prostate cancer cells by stimulation of cyclin-dependent kinases. However, in some prostate tumors AR stimulates expression of cell cycle inhibitors, thus leading to down-regulation of cellular proliferation. Androgens, by activation of the AR, control differentiation of prostate cells and synthesis of neutral lipids. There are several mechanisms by which prostate cancer cells adapt to an environment with low androgen supply during endocrine therapy. The AR expression and activity increase in several cell lines that are used as an in vitro model for monitoring changes during long-term androgen ablation. Mutant ARs are of importance for monitoring the natural course of the disease and for determining the response to anti-androgens in metastatic lesions from prostatic carcinoma. In addition, AR activity is up-regulated by various stimulators of intracellular protein kinases. Current research efforts are focused on elucidation of function of AR coregulatory proteins, coactivators and corepressors. Their inappropriate expression and/or function might critically influence cellular events in advanced carcinoma of the prostate. It is hoped that information on these coregulatory proteins will serve as a basis for a more efficient pharmacological inhibition of the AR in advanced carcinoma of the prostate.

Key words Androgen receptor · Prostate cancer · Androgen-regulated genes · Cell cycle · Prostate-specific antigen · Mutation · Non-steroidal activation · Anti-androgen · Coregulatory proteins

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Introduction

Our understanding of the biology of advanced prostate cancer has been changed since it has become clear that the androgen receptor (AR) is expressed in nearly all prostate cancers, including therapy-refractory tumors and their metastases. This recognition has important implications for basic and translational research in carcinoma of the prostate, especially for the development of new therapies. In the past, it was presumed that AR expression is down-regulated in patients with advanced prostate cancer. This hypothesis was based on results obtained in various in vitro model systems which show a reduced or absent AR expression [82, 97]. Immunohistochemical visualization of the AR in target tissues, including prostate, was made possible by use of monoclonal and polyclonal antibodies which were raised after cloning of the AR [8, 66, 96, 99, 101]. Presence of the AR in relapsed tumors was first reported in the early 1990s [85, 101]. These studies also revealed that the percentage of AR-positive cells in tumor specimens does not correlate with duration of responsiveness to endocrine therapy. In contrast to prostatic epithelial and stromal cells, the AR is not expressed in rare small cell cancer of the prostate and in neuroendocrine cells which are present to some extent in nearly all prostate cancers [58, 101]. The stromal AR is a primary target of androgen action and its functionality appears to be particularly important during prostate development for maintaining the function of the normal prostate. It is needed for stromal to epithelial interactions that include various growth factor loops. In contrast, in late stage prostate cancers in tumor-adjacent stroma AR expression decreases [78]. In vivo growth of androgen-responsive PC 82 prostate cancer cells is dependent on their own AR pathway and not on the AR-expressing stromal cells [29]. These data suggest that there is a stromal independence of prostate tumors. The reasons why some prostate cancer cells do not express the AR were

recently studied. These studies revealed that, in DU-145 cells, methylation of the promoter CpG island is associated with the loss of AR expression [47]. In prostate cancer metastases, AR expression was first studied in those of lymph node. These samples were obtained from patients who had undergone radical prostatectomy [39]. Since these patients did not present with therapy-refractory cancer, it was not surprising that nearly all metastases were AR-positive. In 1995, it was shown by using the Northern blot technique and immunohistochemistry that distant metastases from patients who do not respond to endocrine therapy are also largely AR-positive [38, 94]. These findings greatly stimulated studies on AR function in normal and pathological situations.

AR structure

In this paper, only a brief overview of AR structure will be presented. More detailed information, can be found in comprehensive endocrinological reviews [81]. The AR is a ligand-activated transcription factor of the nuclear receptor superfamily which is composed of 919 amino acids [8]. The AR gene is located at the short arm of the chromosome X and consists of eight exons. The AR protein is composed of the three domains: (1) the well-conserved ligand-binding, (2) the DNA-binding and (3) the variable N-terminal domain. Present in the N-terminal domain are polymorphic glutamine and glycine repeats, the length of which influences receptor functional activity. The N-terminal domain is encoded by exon 1 of the AR gene. Exons 2 and 3 contain sequences for the DNA-binding domain. The DNA-binding domain amino acids are structurally organized into two zinc fingers, with each "finger" being composed of four cysteine residues bound to a zinc ion. The DNA-binding domain is involved in receptor dimerization. A part of exon 4 contains information for the hinge region that is located between the DNA- and the ligand-binding domains. The ligand-binding domain is encoded by a part of exon 4 and entire exons 5–8. Experiments in which AR deletion mutants generated by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) mutagenesis were expressed in heterologous cells revealed that the ligand-binding domain-truncated AR is active in the absence of a hormone [49]. Constitutively active receptors, however, were not detected in specimens obtained from prostate cancer patients. The hinge region is important for nuclear translocation. Transcription activation function (TAF-1, amino acids between residues 141 and 338) is located mainly in the N-terminal region but the regulatory sequences are also located in the ligand-binding domain (TAF-2) [49, 70]. The unliganded AR is distributed through the cytoplasm and nucleus and is complexed with heatshock proteins 90, 70 and 56 that prevent constitutive activation of the receptor. Ligand binding leads to the dissociation of heat-shock proteins and causes a

typical conformational change in the ligand-binding domain [52].

AR expression and function in prostate cells

Expression of AR mRNA and protein are regulated differentially in the prostate. Androgen administration leads to a rapid decrease of AR mRNA but it also stabilizes the protein and the net effect is an increased expression of the AR protein [59]. Such regulation is not observed in each target tissue. For example, in bone, AR mRNA is up-regulated by androgens [106]. Besides androgens, different peptides are involved in the regulation of the AR in prostate cells. Substances that increase intracellular cAMP up-regulate activity of the human AR promoter [69]. The AR expression is also up-regulated by $1-\alpha$, 25-dihydroxyvitamin D_3 and this up-regulation correlates with the inhibition of tumor cell proliferation [44]. The relationship between AR expression and prostate cancer cell proliferation is very complex and will be discussed later in detail. The AR mRNA and protein expression are inhibited in LNCaP cells by epidermal growth factor (EGF) [37]. Down-regulation of AR protein, but not mRNA was observed after treatment with basic fibroblast growth factor [11]. It is not clear, however, which signaling pathways are utilized by these growth factors to inhibit AR expression. The AR down-regulation in connection with inhibition of tumor proliferation was observed after treatment of prostate cancer cells with conditioned media from activated T lymphocytes and peripheral blood monocytes [16, 43]. While the mediator of effects of T lymphocytes on AR expression has not been identified, we have shown that monocytederived interleukin- 1β (IL- 1β) exhibits negative effects on AR and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) expression as well as on LNCaP cell proliferation [16]. Modulatory effects of monocyte-conditioned media on LNCaP cells were abolished after pretreatment of these supernatants with the anti-IL-1 β antibody. An important intracellular event that leads to induction of apoptosis and down-regulation of AR mRNA and protein is an elevation of intracellular calcium levels [11, 32].

By activation of the AR, androgen regulates proliferative and secretory responses in prostate cancer cells as well as the synthesis of prostatic lipids and fatty acid synthase, an enzyme that is overexpressed in several human malignancies [62, 91, 92] (Table 1). Proliferation of LNCaP cells is stimulated at concentrations of dihydrotestosterone (DHT) of 10^{-9} M and lower. The mechanisms responsible for this biphasic regulation are not understood. It has been proposed that transforming growth factor- β (TGF- β) induction by higher androgen doses causes a decrease in growth rate [54].

Recent studies have provided new insights into regulation of prostate cell proliferation by androgens [64,

Table 1 Androgen-regulated genes in the prostate

Gene	Androgens cause	Significance	Reference
EGFR	Stimulation	Proliferation	87
TGF-β	Repression	Negative growth factor	60
KGF	Stimulation	Stromal-epithelial intractions	23, 108
NEP	Stimulation	Cleavage of neuropeptides	79
ARA 70	Stimulation	Enhancement of AR function	33
CDK 2 and 4	Stimulation	Cell cycle regulation	64
p16	Repression	Cell cycle regulation	64
p21	Stimulation	Anti-apoptotic effect	5, 65
p27	Stimulation	Cell cycle arrest (LNCaP)	57
•	Repression	Proliferative effect (MDA PCa)	109
bcl-2	Repression	Pro-apoptotic effect	61
PSA	Stimulation	Differentiation function	62
hGK 2	Stimulation	Differentiation function	72
Fatty acid synthase	Stimulation	Malignant phenotype	92
VEGF	Stimulation	Angiogenesis	25, 50, 63
IGF-BP-5	Stimulation	Potentiation of IGF action	34
IGF-BP-5	Inhibition		75

65, 109]. Androgenic hormones induce the expression of cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK) 2 and 4 and down-regulate the cell cycle inhibitor p16 [64]. A CDK inhibitor that is up-regulated by activation of the AR is p21 (waf1/cip1) [65]. However, it was recently suggested that p21 may have anti-apoptotic properties in prostate cancers in vivo. High expression of p21 was significantly associated with high Gleason score, DNA aneuploidy, high S-phase fraction, expression of Ki-67, bcl-2 and cyclin A and D proteins [1]. The p21 overexpression was found in a subgroup of patients with advanced prostate cancer with a high proliferation rate [5]. Androgenic hormones also down-regulate the expression of the cell survival protein bcl-2 [61]. The AR is implicated in the repression of expression of the TGF- β gene, which is the major negative growth factor in the prostate [60]. It should be mentioned that the stromal AR is activated by androgen to induce expression of the keratinocyte growth factor (KGF) gene, which is essential for signal transduction from stromal to epithelial cells in the prostate [23, 108]. The AR is also important for regulation of expression of the insulin-like growth factor (IGF)-binding protein 5. However, these studies that were carried out in two different tumor models yielded divergent results [33, 34, 75]. The AR is indirectly involved in the regulation of neuropeptide-induced prostate tumor proliferation. The enzyme neutral endopeptidase (NEP) 24.11 which cleaves inactivates neuropeptides is down-regulated in prostate cancer cells which do not express the AR [79].

Recent studies convincingly demonstrated involvement of androgens in the induction of angiogenesis. Proliferation of endothelial cells rapidly declines after castration in adult rats [25]. Up-regulation of the vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) by androgen was shown by several research groups [46, 50, 63].

In contrast to the biphasic regulation of cellular proliferation, prostatic specific-proteins, such as PSA and human glandular kallikrein 2 (hGK 2), are up-regulated by androgenic hormones in a concentration-dependent manner [71, 113]. Prostatic lipids and enzymes

involved in their synthesis are also regulated by androgen in a concentration-dependent manner [91, 92].

Alterations of AR function after long-term androgen withdrawal

Cell lines derived from independent laboratories after long-term androgen ablation share some common properties. These cell lines are valuable tools for studying molecular changes during endocrine therapy and prostate cancer progression. During long-term androgen ablation, AR mRNA and protein increase gradually. In transactivation assays, androgen induces reporter gene activity more efficiently in these ablated cells [17, 30, 56]. The AR amplification, which occurs in about one third of the patients with therapy-resistant carcinoma of the prostate, was not observed in any of the sublines developed after androgen ablation in vivo [17, 57]. There are also specific alterations in AR function in individual cell lines generated after longterm withdrawal of androgenic hormones. One of the most important changes is acquisition of agonistic properties of the non-steroidal anti-androgen bicalutamide in LNCaP-abl cells generated in our laboratory [17]. Although reporter gene activity measured in response to bicalutamide alone was lower than that induced by androgens, consistent stimulatory effects on proliferation in vitro and tumor growth in vitro were observed in these androgen-depleted cells. Induction of apoptosis by retinoic acid was delayed in the long-term steroid-deprived cell line compared to parental LNCaP cells [30]. Up-regulation of the AR in ablated cells is, most probably, associated with a selective up-regulation of androgen-responsive genes. One would expect that, in cells that express a hyperactive AR, the PSA gene is up-regulated. However, long-term androgen ablation is obviously associated with progressive dedifferentiation in vitro and thus there is no evidence that PSA expression is enhanced in androgen-ablated sublines [17, 30].

AR structural alterations: implications for endocrine therapy

When grown in steroid-depleted medium, LNCaP cells are stimulated not only by androgens but also by estrogenic and progestagenic steroids and non-steroidal anti-androgens hydroxyflutamide and nilutamide [105]. The AR in LNCaP cells was sequenced and the mutation in the exon H of the AR gene was detected [36, 102]. This mutation leads to an exchange of the wildtype threonine at position 877 to alanine and to an increased binding affinity for estradiol, progesterone, synthetic progestin R5020, progestagenic anti-androgen cyproterone acetate, hydroxyflutamide and nilutamide [103]. The LNCaP AR, in contrast to many mutant ARs found in patients with androgen insensitivity syndromes, binds androgens and its transcriptional activity could be induced by ligands [102]. As with androgen, it was shown that hydroxyflutamide enhances nuclear translocation of the AR and promotes the dissociation of a heat shock protein-receptor complex [104]. Transcriptional activity of the LNCaP AR is upregulated by estrogenic and progestagenic steroids, hydroxyflutamide and nilutamide [102]. Although in the majority of clinical studies a low frequency of AR mutations was reported, there is still an uncertainty as to the percentage of tumor cells bearing mutations. The AR was sequenced in both early prostate cancers and in the therapy-resistant disease [7, 12, 13, 21, 22, 74]. However, in the study by Tilley and associates AR point mutations were detected in 11 out of 25 primary prostate cancers sampled prior to initiation of hormonal therapy [98]. In that patient collective, altogether 15 missense, one nonsense and seven silent mutations were detected. Patients with AR point mutations showed a poor response to subsequent hormonal therapy. Tilley et al. used single-strand conformational polymorphism analysis to detect AR mutations [98]; however, this approach was also used by other investigators [7, 21, 22, 89]. In primary tumors there may be a contamination of samples with benign tissue and mutations may thus remain undetected. In metastatic lesions from human prostate cancer, AR point mutations may occur more frequently than in primary tumors. Point mutations in the AR gene were detected in bone lesions from five out of ten patients examined [94]. Unfortunately, studies on AR structure in metastatic lesions are hampered because of a limited availability of these samples. In prostate cancer, both somatic [12, 74] and germ-line mutations [22] were detected.

In the case of the LNCaP AR, increased activation occurs as a consequence of an increased receptor binding affinity for other steroids and anti-androgens. However, changes in functional activity are not always associated with alterations in binding affinity. The mutant ARs $715\text{val} \rightarrow \text{met}$, $726\text{arg} \rightarrow \text{leu}$ and $730\text{val} \rightarrow \text{met}$ do not show discernible changes in relative binding affinity but are more efficiently activated by steroid hormones other

than androgen [12, 21, 80]. We also demonstrated that the increased transactivation by the mutant receptors did not result from measurable changes in conformation of the liganded receptors [80]. Thus, the mechanism responsible for AR functional alterations in prostate cancer remains elusive.

The results from several laboratories imply that AR point mutations may be relevant to the natural course of the disease and to responsiveness to pharmacological agents. Adrenal androgens and DHT metabolites induce a weak transactivational activity of the wild-type AR but are more potent in the presence of mutated ARs 715val \rightarrow met, 730val \rightarrow met, 874his \rightarrow tyr and 877thr \rightarrow ala [12, 80, 93]. Although the effects of adrenal androgens on proliferation of prostate cells that express mutant ARs have not been assessed, it is likely that the mechanism described contributes to a progressive tumor growth. In addition to adrenal steroids, the effects of estradiol on mutant ARs might also contribute to proliferation of these tumor cells. Estradiol is generated by aromatization of testosterone and has an important role in the pathogenesis of prostate diseases.

Major differences between hydroxyflutamide and bicalutamide have been observed in several functional studies on mutant ARs. Hydroxyflutamide acts as a partial agonist at higher concentrations even with the wild-type AR; it promotes DNA binding of the hormone-receptor complex and enhances reporter gene activity [80, 107]. It should be kept in mind that plasma levels of hydroxyflutamide in prostate cancer patients are in the micromolar range [6]. Enhanced AR activation by hydroxyflutamide is described in the presence of the mutated ARs 715val \rightarrow met, 730 val \rightarrow met, 874 his \rightarrow tyr, 877 thr \rightarrow ser and 877 thr \rightarrow ala [24, 80, 93, 102]. Up until now, there is no evidence of an agonistic effect from bicalutamide with any of the mutated receptors being detected in patient tissue. However, a paradoxical improvement of the clinical status after cessation of bicalutamide from therapeutic protocols has been reported [76, 87, 88]. At present, data on the AR sequence in patients who have experienced a paradoxical response to anti-androgens are lacking; a direct association between the anti-androgen withdrawal syndrome and an AR mutation was reported in Japanese patients who were treated with the progestagenic anti-androgen chlormadinone acetate [90]. Interestingly, in a subgroup of patients who received bicalutamide after flutamide treatment failed, a clinical improvement was observed [51]. The AR mutations were found in five out of 16 patients who received complete androgen blockade with flutamide. Those patients responded to the second-line treatment with bicalutamide [95]. Collectively, these clinical and basic science findings suggest that any of the anti-androgens currently available might contribute to tumor progression. Agonist/antagonist balance of a particular compound might be influenced by structure of AR and by duration of treatment.

Control of AR function by protein kinase activators

Similarly to other steroid receptors, the wild-type AR is involved in cross-talk with the signaling pathways of growth factors, neurotransmitters and peptide hormones. The evidence for AR interaction with other signal transduction cascades is increasing (Table 2). In DU-145 cells transfected with an androgen-inducible reporter gene and an AR expression plasmid, the three polypeptide growth factors, IGF-I, KGF and EGF, activated the AR to different extents in the absence of androgen [14]. Ligand-independent activation of the AR was also reported for substances which directly activate the protein kinase A and C signaling pathways [18, 72, 73, 84]. All these substances were able to potentiate the effects of low concentrations of androgen thus reducing a concentration of steroid needed for a maximal activation of the AR [15]. This type of activation may be particularly important in patients with advanced prostate cancer in which serum levels of androgen are continuously suppressed. The outcome of non-steroidal activation of the AR depends on a cellular and promoter context [19, 83]. Mechanisms responsible for AR activation by protein kinase activators are only partly understood. It seems that multiple signaling pathways are required for AR non-steroidal activation, as evidenced in experiments in which inhibitors of protein kinase pathways were used [40, 73]. The protein kinase A pathway that is activated by substances which increase intracellular cyclic adenosine monophosphate is needed for both steroidal as well as for non-steroidal activation. Administration of a specific protein kinase A inhibitor, PKI, caused a partial inhibition of androgen-induced reporter gene activity whereas it completely abolished the effects of non-steroidal activators. In addition, mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) and protein kinase C pathways are involved in AR activation by interleukin-6 (IL-6) [40]. IL-6 is a pleiotropic cytokine which causes a dose-dependent inhibition of proliferation of LNCaP cells but induces prostate-specific proteins by activation of the AR. These data show that AR activation is not necessarily associated with stimulation of tumor cell proliferation.

In several experimental studies on non-steroidal activation of the AR, anti-androgens showed a consistent inhibitory effect on reporter gene activity [14, 15, 35, 40,

72, 73, 83]. However, in the case of AR activation by the protein kinase C activator phorbol ester (TPA), inability of hydroxyflutamide to efficiently inhibit reporter gene activity was reported [18]. As stated above, frequently anti-androgens are capable of effectively antagonizing non-steroidal activation of the AR. Thus, they differ from several antagonists of the estrogen, progesterone and glucocorticoid receptors which switch to transcriptional agonists in the presence of substances which elevate intracellular cAMP levels [27, 77, 86].

In 1999, new data on non-steroidal modulation of AR signaling have been obtained. In the LAPC-4 prostate cancer xenograft, overexpression of the HER-2/ neu receptor tyrosine kinase resulted in ligand-independent tumor growth [10]. The PSA promoter could be induced by HER-2/neu in a ligand-independent and synergistic fashion. Similar activation was observed in LNCaP cells in which it was demonstrated that the MAP kinase pathway is essential for induction of androgen target genes [112]. Hydroxyflutamide blocked the induction of the PSA promoter only incompletely. Nonsteroidal stimulation of the AR by MAPK kinase kinase 1 activates apoptosis in prostate cancer [3]. Taken together, the results of these studies show that ligandindependent activation of the AR is implicated in the regulation of proliferation, apoptosis and differentiation. Interestingly, D-type cyclins which were found to induce estrogen receptor activity inhibit AR transcriptional transactivation ability [55].

AR coactivators in prostate cancer

Activity of a steroid receptor in a particular cell line depends not only on the levels of expression of a receptor protein itself, but also on those of coregulatory proteins. Steroid receptors activate transcription of target genes by binding to the hormone response element in promoter regions and formation of the stable form of the preinitiation complex. Receptor cofactors are large nuclear proteins that bridge the receptors to the preinitiation complex. Some steroid receptor coactivators acetylate histones thus leading to the loosening of the structure of nucleosomes and making the DNA more accessible to transcription factors [100]. Interaction of the AR with several steroid receptor coactivators was reported [45]. This interaction usually leads to a ligand-

Table 2 Compounds that activate the androgen receptor (AR) in a ligand-independent and/or synergistic manner. *TR* transfected AR, *EN* endogenous AR, *AA* anti-androgens, *PK* protein kinase

Activator	Activation of	Blockade by	Reference
IGF-I	TR, EN	AA	14
KGF	TR. EN	AA	14
EGF	TR, EN	AA	14, 35
TPA (PKC)	TR	AA (incomplete)	18, 19
Forskolin (PKA)	TR, EN	AA, PK inhibitors	72, 73, 84
db cAMP	TR, EN	AA	15
IL-6	TR, EN	AA, PK inhibitors	40
LHRH	TR	AA	15
Her-2/neu	EN	AA (incomplete), PK inhibitors	10

dependent enhancement of AR activity. The steroid receptor coactivator CREB (cAMP-response element binding protein)-binding protein (CBP) is a limiting factor for regulation of AR activity by the AP-1 complex, which is composed of Fos and Jun oncoproteins [2, 26]. A series of AR coactivators, ARAs, has been discovered: ARA 70, ARA 54, ARA 55, ARA 24 and ARA 160 [28, 41, 42, 53, 110] (Table 3). Initially, it was postulated that ARA 70 is an AR-specific coactivator [110]. However, latter studies revealed interactions between ARA 70 and human estrogen and glucocorticoid receptors [4]. In addition, the magnitude of enhancement of reporter gene activity by ARA 70 differs in various reports [4, 31, 110]. However, Chang's group reported that ARA 70 promotes acquisition of agonistic effects of non-steroidal anti-androgens hydroxyflutamide and bicalutamide and enhances AR activation by estradiol and δ 5-androstanediol [67, 68, 111].

The role of ARA 70 in modulation of AR-mediated effects remains elusive. Studies on regulation of expression of ARA 70 in prostate cancers were performed in the human prostate cancer xenograft CWR 22 [33]. ARA 70 is up-regulated by androgens but its level increases when the tumor relapses. One possible explanation for this regulation is that protein kinase activators substitute for androgen in the stimulation of ARA70 gene expression. At present, data on expression of these AR-coregulatory proteins in human prostate cancer are not available. It could be speculated that overexpression of AR coactivators or reduced expression of corepressors leads to a hyperstimulation of an androgen signaling cascade and increased expression of AR-regulated genes. In breast cancer cells, there is development of estrogen receptor hypersensitivity following long-term estradiol deprivation [48]. However, it has been reported that the expression of coactivator SRC-1 does not differ between parental cells and an estrogen-hypersensitive breast cancer subline.

Inhibition of AR expression and function in carcinoma of the prostate

In contrast to breast cancer in which some pure steroid receptor antagonists down-regulate receptor levels, AR

Table 3 Regulation of cellular events by androgen receptor coregulatory proteins. DHT dihydrotestosterone, OHF hydroxyflutamide

Coactivator	Cellular event regulated	Reference
ARA 70	Promotion of agonistic effects of anti-androgens	68
	Stimulation of AR by oestradiol	111
	AR activation by androstanediol	67
ARA 54	Interaction with the LNCaP AR	53
ARA 55	Stimulation of AR by DHT, OHF and oestradiol	28
СВР	Reverses inhbition of AR activity by the AP-1 complex	2, 26

down-regulation has not been reported for any of the pharmacological agents currently used for therapy. In vitro down-regulation of the AR by a hammerhead ribozyme was recently achieved [9]. This approach is based on cleavage of the rat AR mRNA at the position 1827/1828. The ribozyme caused a decline of AR immunoreactivity and inhibition of androgen-inducible CAT activity by 70%. Morphologically detectable cellular abnormalities were not observed after application of the ribozyme. Another approach which may be useful in AR inhibition is application of AR antisense oligonucleotides [20]. However, AR has also a profound role in differentiation of prostate cells and therefore much more information from basic science is needed to assess possible effectiveness of this therapy. Therapeutic approaches may also include modulation of expression and function of AR-coregulatory proteins, coactivators and corepressors in carcinoma of the prostate.

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