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SURFACE HETEROGENEITY OF TUMOR CELLS AND CHANGES UPON IONIZING RADIATION

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Abstract

Heterogeneous distribution of surface domains is a characteristic feature of the tumor cell surface and the distribution differs from that of normal cells. During the malignant transformation the heterogeneity may change or disappear. Cell lines with various metastasizing capacities show different distributions of membrane domains or other differences in membrane or surface organization. We have demonstrated that the amount and distribution of negatively charged sites of B 16 melanoma membranes changed upon ionizing radiation (X-ray, ^{60}Co-gamma). In the case of the P 388 lymphoma, however, only the amount of negatively charged sites change after irradiation, the distribution remains unaltered. Both features proved to be radioresistant in human lymphoid leukemic cells.

Key words: membrane domains on tumor cells, B 16 melanomas, human lymphoid leukemic cell, P 388 lymphoma, cationic ferritin binding, X-ray and gamma irradiation, electron microscopy.

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Introduction

Heterogeneous distribution of membrane domains is a characteristic feature of living cells (55,59,74,86). Some domains belong to special areas of plasma membranes as cell contacts, microvilli, ruffles or all apical, basolateral surface regions and they are stabilized by elements of cytoskeleton (6,12,14,74). Distribution of membrane domains are dependent on the functional state, shape, locomotion and confluency of cells (45, 48,55,74,87).

The tumor cells are different in many cell surface properties (composition, structure, function) from the normal cells (1,2,11,15,17,24,27-29,36,39,43,44,65,77, 92) and even the cell lines originating from the same tumors having different metastasizing ability may display different membrane properties (4,8,22,28,33,35,66, 68,70-72,82,88,90,92,93).

The first part of the present work is a brief survey of the relevant data reported in the literature on nonhomogeneous and polarized distribution of membrane domains in tumor cells and on the changes in domain localization in normal and tumor cell pairs, and in neoplastic cell lines of different metastasizing abilities.

In the second part of the review, we present our data on the topology of negatively-charged surface domains of cultured B 16 melanoma cells, P 388 lymphoma cells and a human leukemia line as well as their changes upon irradiation with X- and ^{60}Co gamma rays.

Heterogeneous distribution of membrane domains on the tumor cells

The morphologically distinct surface regions of tumor cells (microvilli, contacts, ruffles, trailing and leading edges) may differ from each other in the amount and types of ligand binding sites. For example, specific binding of cationized colloids (cationized ferritin, colloid iron) was observed on the microvilli of Ehrlich ascites carcinoma cells

Table 1.

Heterogeneous distribution of membrane domains on tumor cell surfaces

Cell types	Membrane domain	Distribution	References
A 431 cell	epidermal growth factor	heavily on villi	(10)
L 1210 cell	transferrin receptor	heavily on villi	(50)
L 1210 cell	transcobalamin receptor	heavily on villi	(50)
Human colon carcinoma	heparan sulphate	heavily on villi	(44)
Ehrlich ascites	negatively charged sites	heavily on villi	(85)
P 388 ascites	negatively charged sites	heavily on villi	present paper
Mouse mammary tumor cells	Con-A binding sites	heavily on villi	(64)
13762 rat mammary ascites	Con-A binding sites	heavily on villi	(89)
JEG 3 chorio-carcinoma	75 000 Mw protein	heavily on villi	(67)
HeLa	negatively charged sites	apical	(60)
HeLa	WGA binding sites	apical	(60)
B 16 melanoma	negatively charged sites	apical	present paper
PYS -2 cell	laminin, heparan sulphate	basal	(38,58)
M 21 melanoma	GD2, GD3 gangliosides	cell contacts	(20,21)
M 21 melanoma	fibronectin, vitronectin binding sites	cell contacts	(75)
AH 136 rat ascites	cell surface adhesive factor	cell contacts	(46)
F-9 embryonal carcinoma	galactosyl transferase	cell contacts	(73)
Giant HeLa cells	transferrin, LDL receptor	leading edge	(13)

(85), human colon carcinoma (43), SV 40 transformed fibroblasts (11) and the ascitic form of P 388 lymphoma cells, as shown on Fig. 1. The microvilli may contain binding sites for Concanavalin-A (64, 65), receptors for epidermal growth factor (EGF) (10), transferrin and transcobalamin (50); the microvillar localization of a 75000 D protein on JEG 3 chorioncarcinoma cells was also reported (67). Localization of gangliosides and glycoproteins in the cell contacts was observed in several types of cells (20,21,33,46, 58,73). The dominance of negative charged sites was found on the apical surface of HeLa cells (60) and we report here that the same phenomenon is characteristic for the B16 melanoma cells and its low metastasizing ability line as shown in Figs. 5,8,9.

The basal localizations of laminin and heparan sulphate on M 21 melanoma (75) and on teratocarcinoma-derived endothermal (PYS 2) cells (38) were observed. The uneven distribution of receptors and enzymes on trailing and leading edges of moving tumor cells is also known (5,13, see Table 1 for details).

Changes in the localization of membrane domains during malignant transformation

There are apparently differences in the fate of domains originally localized in cell contacts of normal cells after transformation; they can either remain at contact sites or spread out through the whole surface (15,17,30,36,40,74,76). The localization of membrane domains is deeply altered upon malignant transformation, however, and as a rule, the original distribution of the domains disappear. Villin, carcinoembryonic antigens and secretory components in colon cancers (1,84,92), limulin, leucine aminopeptidase in rat pancreatic acinal carcinoma cells (42,63), transferrin receptors and cell surface attachment (CSAT) complex in transformed cells (3,19,31) are well known examples of this phenomenon. In these cells the originally heterogeneous distribution of receptors becomes uniform during transformation. The randomization of membrane domains following malignant transformation is presumably due to reduction of the cell contacts and/or changing of cell shape. Those tumors or tumor cell lines which kept morphological similarities concerning cell contacts and shapes to that of the starting normal tissue cells usually returned the original distribution of various domains. The original arrangement of membrane domains, however, is usually lost in fully dedifferentiated cells (1,17,18,30,32,37,56,57,84,90,92). This relationship is well demonstrated in HT 29 cells the shape and nature of which can be modified by the culture conditions (30,32,56,57). The distribution of membrane domains on the surface of the undifferentiated form of the cell is usually uniform; however, it becomes polarized on differentiated forms. Membrane domains changing their distribution are the histocompatibility antigens, vasoactive intestinal peptide receptors, adenylate cyclase, villin and a 28 kD glycoprotein

Table 2.

Distribution of membrane domains on normal and tumor cell pairs

Membrane domain	Normal cell	Domain distribution	Tumor cell	Domain distribution	References
Milk fat globule membrane antigen (MFGM-A)	mammary epithelial cells	apical	T 470 breast carcinoma	uniform	(90)
Limulin	rat pancreas	apical	pancreatic carcinoma	uniform	(63)
Villin	colon	apical	colon carcinomas, HT 28 cell linea	uniform uniform	(92) (30)
Apical antigens	colon	apical	colon cancers HT 28 cell linea	uniform	(1,84) (56,57)
Basolateral antigens	colon	basolateral	colon cancers HT 28 cell linea	uniform uniform	(1,84) (56,57)
Leucin aminopeptidase	rat pancreas	basolateral	pancreatic carcinoma	uniform	(42)
Acetylcholine receptor	muscle fibers	clustered	RSV transformed muscle fibers	uniform	(3)
CSAT antigen	fibroblasts	clustered	transformed fibroblasts	uniform	(19)
Transferrin receptor	fibroblasts	leading lamella	A 8387 fibrosarcoma	uniform	(31)
Submembraneous cytoskeletal proteins	fibroblasts	focal contacts	RSV and VSV transformed cells	uniform at podosomes	(27,36,76) (15,75)
Cell surface urokinase	fibroblasts	focal contacts	transformed cell	uniform	(40)
Cationized ferritin binding sites	fibroblasts	clustered	SV-40 transformed cells	microclusters, increased on villi	(11)
Con-A binding sites	3T3 fibroblasts	randomly, small number clusters	SV-3T3 cells	large, randomly clusters on villi	(65)
Nucleoside triphosphatase	breast cells	uniform	breast cancer	clustered	(24)
La^{3+} binding sites	lymphocytes	uniform	leukemic cells	clustered	(2)
Cationized ferritin binding sites	lymphocytes	uniform	leukemic cells	clustered	present paper
Phospholipase A_2	rat kidney cells (CRL 1570)	ruffles	MSV transformed cells (CRL 1526)	ruffles	(5)
75 kD protein	fibroblasts	villi	carcinoma cells	villi	(67)
Alkaline phosphatase	placental cells	clustered	transformed placental cells	clustered	(47)

(30,32,37,56,57).

In some cases the uniform distribution of domains on normal cell surfaces disappears during the process of malignant transformations. Thus the disappearance of nucleoside triphosphatase on the surface of breast cells (24) and La^{+} and cationized ferritin binding as shown on Fig. 2 were reported [2, 52].

On the other hand, membrane domains and/or proteins exist which do not change localization during transformation. The microvillar 75 kD protein (67), the membrane-bound alkaline phosphatase (47) and the phospholipase A2 (5) of membrane ruffles are prominent examples of this type of behaviour. Data related to this topic are summarized in Table 2.

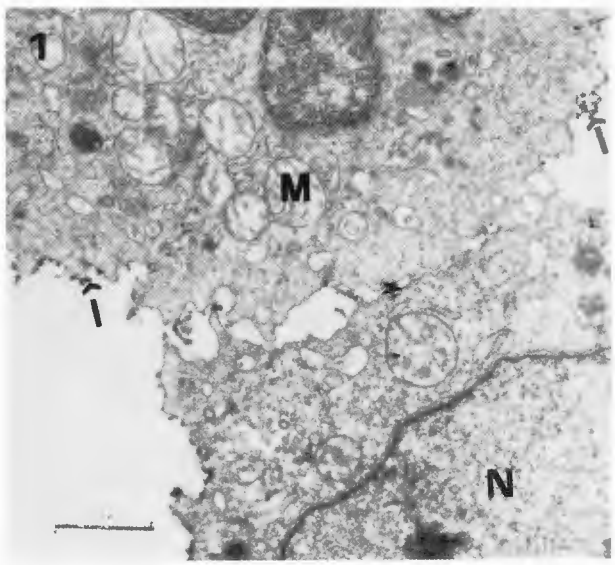


Figure 1. Cationized ferritin binding on P 388 lymphoma cells. The CF localized heavily on microvilli (➡). The contacts at adherent cells (*) are usually free of CF. M = mitochondria, N = nucleus. Bar = 0.5 µm.

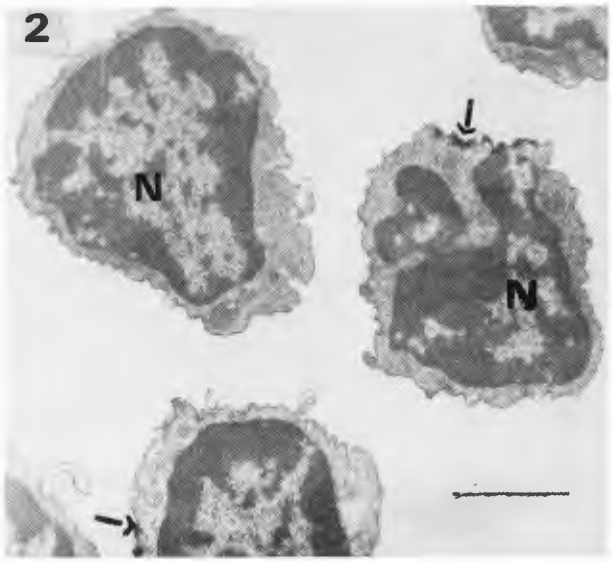


Figure 2. Cationized ferritin binding on human lymphoid leukemic cells. Some cells bind the ferritin uniformly, while others bind it in patches (➡). N = nucleus. Bar = 1 µm.

Positions of membrane domains on the surfaces of cells of different metastatic capabilities originating from the same tumor

Cell lines of different metastatic capabilities are also different in their cell surface organization (9,16,25, 33,35,49,66,68,70,72,82,93). Thus, increasing metastasizing capability is associated with the loss of binding sites for fibronectin and wheat germ agglutinin (WGA) in human melanoma cell lines (8, 35). A similar observation was made on colon and breast cancers where the localization of carcinoembryonic antigen, the secretory component, villin and fibronectin were investigated (1,22,92).

This phenomenon was studied in the following experiments in which the distribution of negative charges and Con-A binding sites were detected on B 16 melanoma cell lines of different metastatic capacities.

Materials and Methods

Cells and their treatments

Three types of tumor cells were used in our experiments, the B 16 melanomas, P 388 lymphoma and a human lymphoid leukemic cell type.

For the selection of differently metastasizing cell lines B 16 melanoma cells from "mixed" culture were inoculated into the foot pad of C 57 male mice, 200,000 cells per inoculation.

The pulmonary metastases were transmitted to culture and stabilized. The metastasizing capacities of stabilized cell lines were tested with reinoculation into the C 57 Black male mice. The metastatic potential was determined by counting the number of pulmonary colonies. The average numbers of colonies were 61, 47, and 7 for the cell lines "12.2". "10a", and "10" respectively. The cells lines were cultivated in RPMI (Rosewell Park Memorial Institute) medium supplemented with 20 per cent calf serum and antibiotics.

P 388 lymphoma cells (100,000 per inoculum) were inoculated into intraperitoneum of C 57 Black and DBA/2 hybrid male mice.

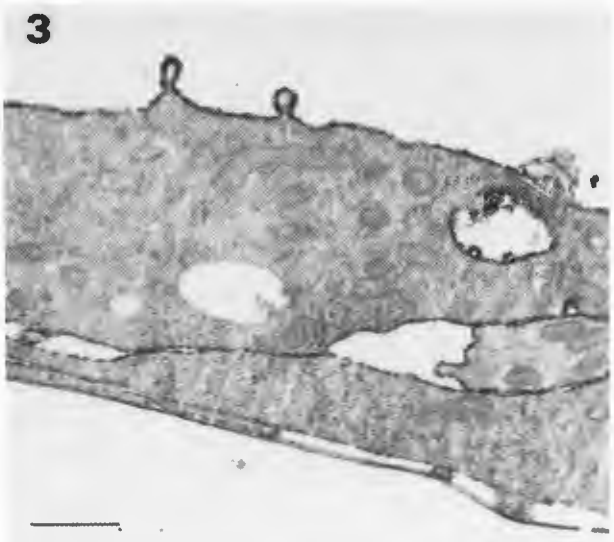
Human lymphoid leukemic cells were separated from a human leukemic patient's blood by ficoll density gradient centrifugation (54).

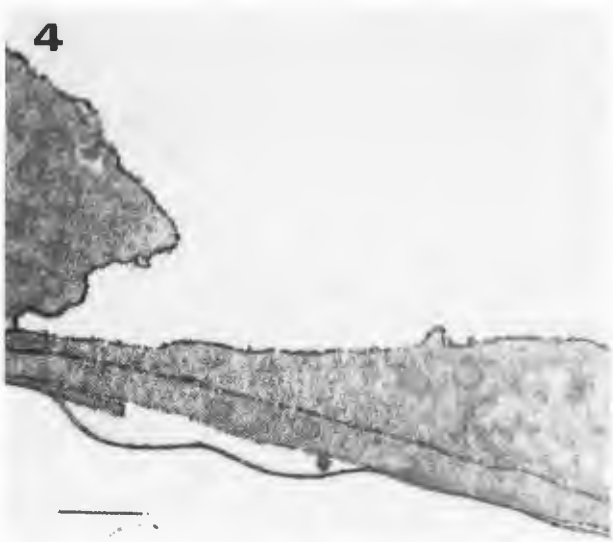
➡

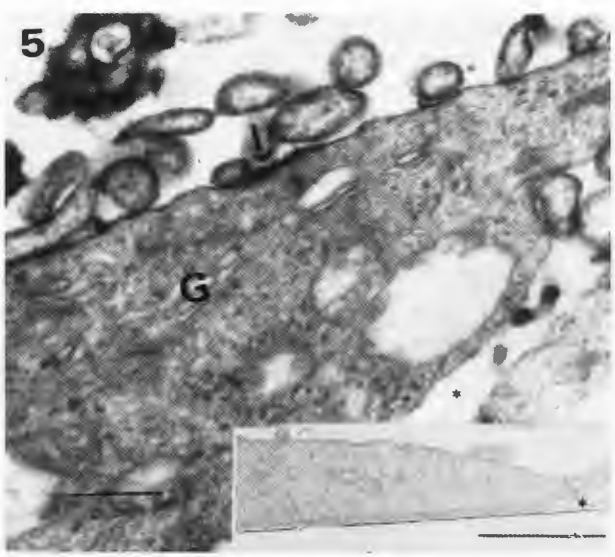
Figure 3. ConA binding on low metastasizing "18" B 16 melanoma cells. The reaction is uniform all over the surface. Bar = 0.5 µm.

Figure 4. ConA binding on high metastasizing "12/2" B 16 melanoma cells. The reaction can be seen on basal or apical surfaces. Bar = 0.5 µm.

Figure 5. Cationized ferritin binding on low metastasizing "18" B 16 melanoma cells. Negatively charged sites occur on the apical surface (➡). Basal surface = * , G = Golgi complex. Bar = 0.5 µm, insert = 1.5 µm.







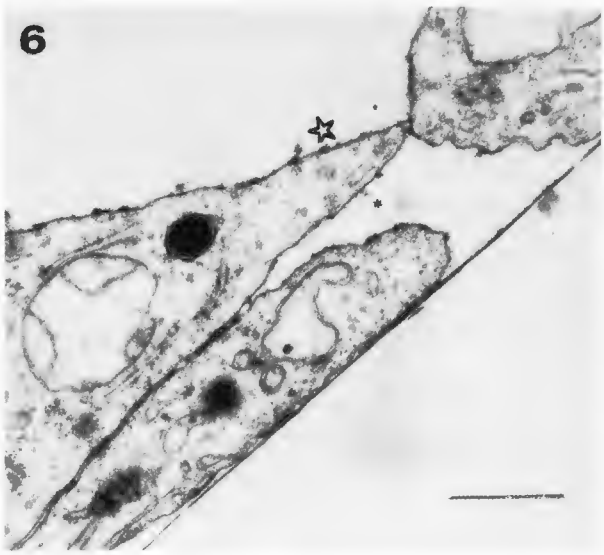


Figure 6. Cationized ferritin binding on high metastasizing "10a" B 16 melanoma cells. The small clusters of marker distributed uniformly over the whole surface. Apical (☆), basal surface (*). Bar = 0.5 /um.

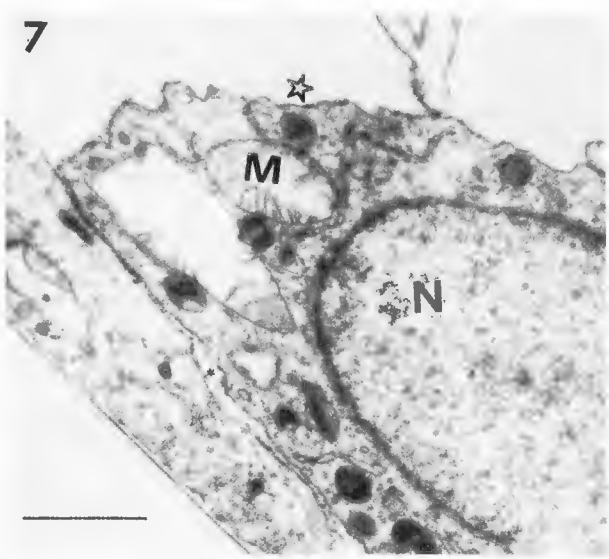
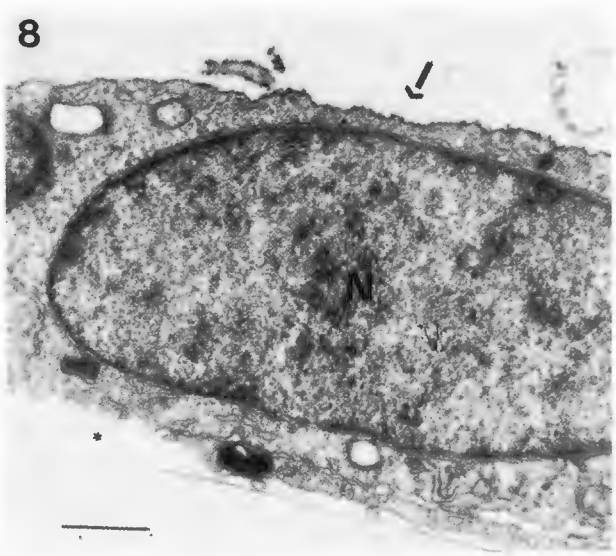
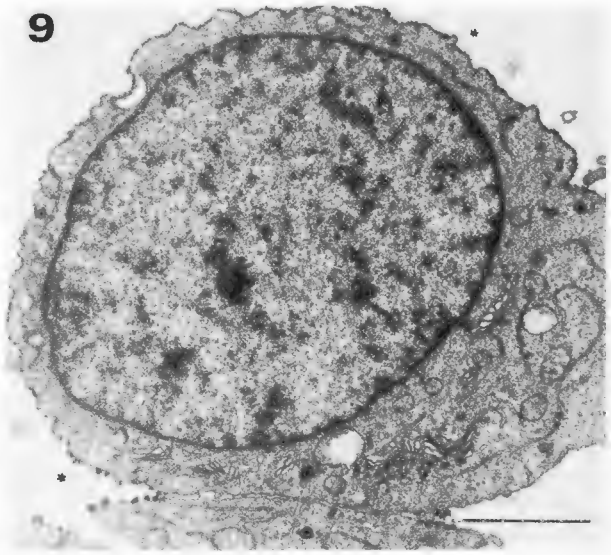


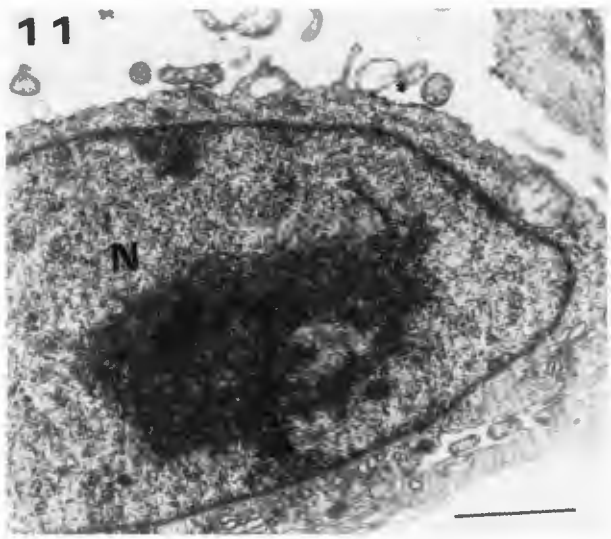
Figure 7. Cationized ferritin binding on high metastasizing "12/2" B 16 melanoma cells. The small clusters of marker distributed uniformly similarly to "10a" cells. M = mitochondria, N = nucleus, basal region = *, apical region = ☆. Bar = 0.5 /um.

X-irradiation was described in our previous work (80). ^{60}Co gamma-irradiation was performed with a Siemens Gammatron-3.

Cytochemistry: Cationized ferritin was used for the detection of negatively charged sites (26). For the detection of Concanavalin-A binding sites the Concanavalin-A peroxidase reaction was applied (7).







Electron microscopy (EM): The cells were fixed in phosphate (0.1M) buffered 2.5 per cent glutaraldehyde (pH 7.3; 4 °C) for 1 hour, postfixed in 1 per cent OsO_4, dehydrated with acetone and embedded in Durcupan AC (Fluka). The fixation was carried out either on coverslips or in suspension. The ultrathin sections were cut with diamond or glass knives on an LKB ultratome, and examined in JEM 6C or Tesla EMs.

Concanavalin-A binding of B 16 melanoma cell lines

As shown by the ConA-peroxidase reaction, the lectin binding sites are evenly distributed on the whole surfaces of cells of the three B 16 melanoma cell lines investigated (Figs. 3 and 4).

Cationized ferritin binding of B 16 melanoma cell lines

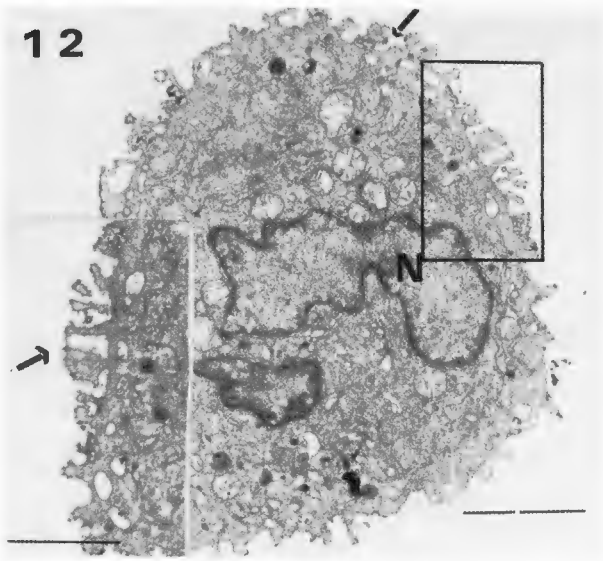
The cationized ferritin (CF) is bound

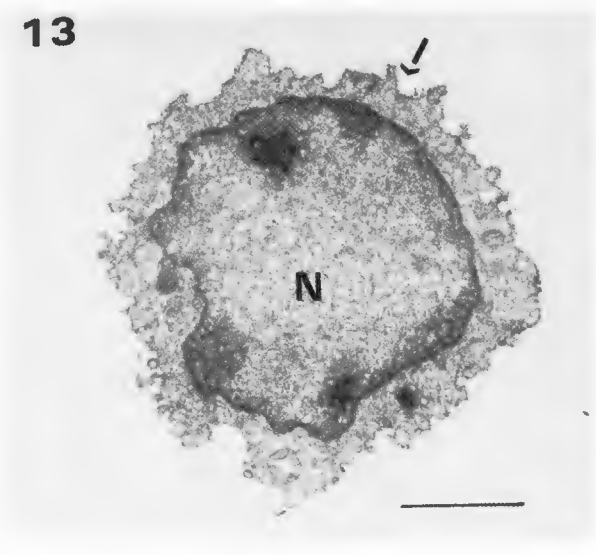
Figure 8. Cationized ferritin binding on B 16 melanoma cell. Bindings are seen exclusively on apical regions (➡). The asterisks indicate the basal region. Bar = 0.5 μm.

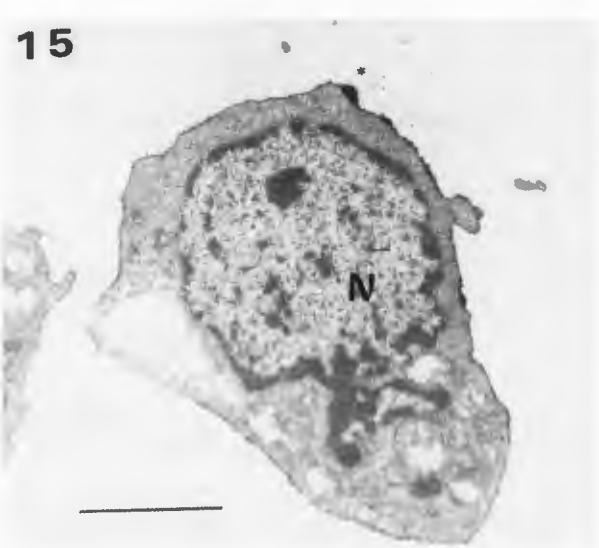
Figure 9. Cationized ferritin binding on B 16 melanoma cell. The ferritin particles are present on the apical and lateral surface (*) of rounded cells, too. Bar = 0.5 μm.

Figure 10. Cationized ferritin binding on B 16 melanoma cell 1 h after 2.5 Gy X-irradiation. The CF distributed on cell surface in clusters and patches (➡). Basal region = *. Bar = 0.5 μm.

Figure 11. Cationized ferritin binding on a B 16 melanoma cell 30 min after 2.5 Gy ^{60}Co gamma irradiation. The ferritin particles localized in small clusters and patches (*) on apical region of the cell. N = nucleus. Bar = 0.5 μm.







to the apical and lateral parts of the surfaces of cells of mixed B 16 melanoma cell cultures (Figs. 8 and 9) and the same distribution is seen on cells of the "18" line, which is a poorly metastasizing one (Fig. 5). In cell clones of high metastasizing capacities (in the "10a" and "12/2" clones) the polarity is less pronounced and this is manifested by a rearrangement of binding sites between the apical and basal surfaces (Figs. 6 and 7).
On the cells of these clones, CF is localized in clusters over the whole surface. Clustered distribution of CF was also observed by others on a breast adenocarcinoma (4) and also on B 16 melanoma cells (70).

High metastasizing capacity is usually accompanied by increased motility of

Figure 12. Cationized ferritin binding on P 388 lymphoma cell. Microvilli and other cytoplasmic projections are more pronounced (➡). N = nucleus. Bar = 0.5 μm, insert 1.5 μm.

Figure 13. Cationized ferritin binding on P 388 lymphoma cell 1 hour after 2.5 Gy X-ray irradiation. Number of ferritin particles decreased but the microvillar localization (➡) did not change. N = nucleus. Bar = 1 μm.

Figure 14. Cationized ferritin binding on human lymphoid leukemic cell. The CF bound in patches (*). N = nucleus. Bar = 1 μm.

Figure 15. Cationized ferritin binding on human lymphoid leukemic cell 1 h after X-irradiation with 2.5 Gy. The patched localization of CF (*) did not change. N = nucleus. Bar = 1 μm.

cells, decrease of their adherence to substrates and by increased numbers of rounded cells (6,33,35,66,68,71,91,93). These morphological alterations could also be observed in our material. Thus, the cells of poorly metastasizing melanoma clones were grown in multilayer. The culture contains mainly flat stretched-out cells among which numerous fibroblastic spindle-like bipolar cells are dispersed. There are a few blebbed cells. The shapes of cells of highly metastasizing clones are more variable. There are more non-adherent rounded cells here than in less metastasizing cultures (82).

As the shape and contacts determine the distribution of domains (23,34,48,55, 61,74,83) we suggest that the alterations of these features might explain the observed phenomena.

Effects of ionizing radiation on the distribution of membrane domains on the surfaces of tumor cells

The plasma membrane is sensitive to ionizing radiation (41,51-54,62,79-81) which is often used in the therapy of tumors. As mentioned above, the heterogeneous distribution of domains is a characteristic property of tumor cell membranes. It is known that irradiation alters the distribution of membrane domains in normal cells (41,53,54,80,81). Therefore, we raised the question whether this phenomenon can be induced in tumor cells, too.

In our experiments we used B 16 melanoma, P 388 lymphoma cells, and acute lymphoid leukemic lymphocytes and examined the distribution of sites of surface negative charges following X- and ^{60}Co-irradiation.

The B 16 melanoma cells have a considerable dominance of negatively charged sites on their apical and lateral surfaces (Figs. 8. and 9). Following irradiation the negatively charged sites decreased in a dose range between 0.5-2.5 Gy, similarly to the decrease that was observed on normal cells (Figs. 10-11) (78-80). It is often observable that the remaining number of charges is localized in apical regions in patch forms (Fig. 10 and 11).

It could be observed that, presumably due to radiation effects, the P 388 cells more or less lost their microvilli, but the microvillar dominance of negative sites did not change (Figs. 1, 12 and 13). It should be noted that the overall amount of surface negative charges also decreased (Fig. 13).

The distribution of surface charges on the lymphoid leukemic cells examined did not change in the dose range studied (Figs. 2,14 and 15). Radiation resistance of lymphoid leukemic cells is also indicated by their unchanged ConA binding capacity following irradiation (52,54).

These results suggest that as a result of the effect of radiation, the change of negative surface charge depends on the type of tumor cell, unlike various types of normal cells (53,80).

On the B 16 melanoma cell surfaces there is a special change in distribution of negative charges. The patched distribution of their membrane domains suggest a topological disorganization caused by radiation. Such changes in distribution have not been experienced in our previous studies with primary human fibroblasts and Green Monkey kidney cells (78-80).

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Discussion with Reviewers

T.M. Seed: In the discussion of changes in the localization of membrane domains during malignant transformation, the authors suggest that the apparent randomization of domains is due to reduction of cellular contacts and/or changes in cell shape. The latter is indeed highly probable. However, these changes are "late" effects of underlying subcellular and molecular changes involved in enhanced fluidity of the lipoidal and protein island domains. Would the authors care to briefly comment on this possible subcellular mechanisms?
Authors: Maintanence and development of membrane domain distribution are regulated by microfilament-microtubular system and cell contacts (it is recently summarized in our recent work Z. Somosy et al, 1989, Polarized membrane domains of fibroblasts. Scanning Microsc. 3, 579-590). This regulation may occur directly or indirectly, too. The filaments can attach to some domains causing their active movement or stabilization in determined surface areas (microvilli, contacts) (15). Membrane domaines have a restricted mobility in this areas (Geiger B et al. J. Cell Biol. 93, 595-500). The cell contact creates diffusion barriers also toward other localized membrane domains not involved in contact (Jesaitis AJ and Yguerabide, J 1986, J.Cell Biol. 102, 1256-1263). During malignant transformation the cell contacts disappear or change (15). Thus, the diffusion barriers also cease to exist. For these membrane domains, the diffusion is regulated by cell contacts, thus it became possible for the membrane domains to move freely along whole cell surface.

J.S. Hanker: Don't you feel, however, that we must keep in mind that levels of organization other than membrane domains or the plasma membrane, such as other surface domains or even cytoskeletal organization, are also affected?
G.M. Hodges: Is the change in the distribution of surface membrane domains in the irradiated B 16 melanoma cells associated with changes in cell cytoskeletal elements?
Is it possible that the radiation induced change in membrane domains of the B 16 melanoma cells may be but transient responses related to short-term cell-cell or cell-substrate attachment modifications?
Authors: The B 16 melanoma cells, similar to other cell types, display an increased ruffling activity upon irradiation, of course, these morphological changes show changes in distribution of cytoskeletal elements and modify cell contacts. As is known, there is a relationship between membrane domain mobility, cytoskeleton system and cell contacts (see answer to Dr. T. M. Seed above). This might explain the changes or at least, contribute to the explanation.

G.M. Hodges: What were the experimental conditions used for the cytochemical reactions? Was the cytochemistry carried out on cells in situ or on ultrathin sections?
Authors: The cytochemistry carried out on cells in situ. Previously the cells were fixed for 30 minutes by 0.025 per cent glutaraldehyde in phosphate buffer, at pH 7.3. Cationized ferritin (CF) (Sigma) was used for the detection of negatively charged sites (26). Cell cultures were incubated for 1 min in phosphate-buffered saline containing 0.3 mg/ml CF. The Concanavalin-A - peroxidase reaction was applied according to Bernhard and Avremas (7). For controlling the specificity of Con-A binding alpha-D-mannose (Sigma) was used in the concentration of 0.05 M in phosphate-buffered saline before incubation of lectin with cells.

T.M. Seed: How do the authors rule out the possibility that the noted non-uniform distribution of selected cell surface receptors (charged sialic acid residues) in normal, non-transformed mammalian cells is not simply the result of lack of penetrance of the cytochemical marker into restricted cell surface sites?
Authors: According to our experiments the polarized or non-uniform localization of studied membrane domains could not be explained by permeability barrier. The particles of cationized ferritin bound on a polarized manner on the fibroblast membrane while the native form of ferritin bound uniformly (80). Similar difference was observed with Concanavalin-A peroxidase and Wheat Germ Agglutinin-peroxidase reactions (80).

G.M. Hodges: At what culture time-points were the observations made?
Authors: For the experiments, semiconfluent asynchronous cultures were used, i.e. depending on the number of cells this level was reached within 48-72 hours.

G.M. Hodges: Were the radiation-induced changes retained over a number of passages in culture?
Author: The cells were not cultured in consequent passages after irradiation.