Targeting Protein May Prevent Inflammation, Liver Cancer

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Researchers at the Georgia Health Sciences University Cancer Center may have found a new target for drug therapies to reduce the risk of serious liver damage and cancer in people with hepatitis, with the discovery that a protein in a group of liver cells triggers inflammation that can damage the organ. According to a paper published in the August 15 issue of Cancer Research, mice bred without a gene that promotes the production of the protein TREM-1 in ther livers' Kupffer cells remained free of cancer after being exposed to carcinogens, whereas mice with the gene and TREM-1 began showing signs of liver disease within 48 hours. "We have long suspected that chronic inflammation is a very powerful tool in the initiation of cancer, and also in the progression or metastasis of cancer," said lead author Anatolij Horuzsko, MD, PhD, in an accompanying news announcement. "TREM-1 could be a [therapeutic] target for any inflammation-associated cancer. We are already working in this direction."

To read the Cancer Research report (paid subscription required), click here.
To read the Georgia Health Sciences University news announcement, click here.