

Breast cancer gene predicts survival

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Researchers say a gene expressed during breast cancer may help predict the outcome of the disease.

Vincent Cryns and colleagues at Northwestern University report that the protein alpha-basic-crystallin, which is commonly expressed in a subtype of breast cancer tumors, is predictive of poor survival in breast cancer patients, independently of other prognostic markers.

The study, published in the January 4, 2006 issue of the Journal of Clinical Investigation, reveals that alpha-basic-crystallin is over-expressed in mammary epithelial cells and causes dysregulated growth, changes in cell structure, diminished programmed cell death, and the formation of invasive carcinomas that is linked to activation of the ERK/MAPK signaling pathway.

The authors of the study say the results may facilitate the development of tailored therapies that are active against this signaling pathway.

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