

Major Kaposi's sarcoma discovery announced

April 6 2006

Government scientists say they've found a human cell surface molecule involved with the Kaposi's sarcoma herpes virus.

The researchers at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease say the molecule xCT is a major gateway the herpes virus uses to enter human cells and might also play a role in the development of Kaposi's sarcoma and other syndromes associated with the virus.

The natural function of xCT is to transport molecules necessary for protecting against stress into cells. When cells are stressed, they express more xCT. Such stress can be caused by KSHV itself and that, scientists say, suggests the virus may cause itself to be more effective.

"Understanding the mechanisms of cell entry of Kaposi's sarcoma herpes virus is a landmark achievement in and of itself," said NIAID Director Dr. Anthony Fauci. "But the connection between the virus and expression of its own receptor on a cell is even more provocative because it might change the way we think about (Kaposi's sarcoma herpes virus-associated) diseases and their treatment."

The research appears in the journal *Science*.

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