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Persistent activation of pancreatic stellate cells creates a microenvironment favorable for the malignant behavior of pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma

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Pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC) is one of the most common malignant tumors with poor prognosis due to extremely high malignancy, low rate of eligibility for surgical resection and chemoradiation resistance. Increasing evidence indicates that the interaction between activated pancreatic stellate cells (PSCs) and PDAC cells plays an important role in the development of PDAC. By producing high levels of cytokines, chemotactic factors, growth factors and excessive extracellular matrix (ECM), PSCs create desmoplasia and a hypoxic microenvironment that promote the initiation, development, evasion of immune surveillance, invasion, metastasis and resistance to chemoradiation of PDAC. Therefore, targeting the interaction between PSCs and PDAC cells may represent a novel therapeutic approach to advanced PDAC, especially therapies that target PSCs of the pancreatic tumor microenvironment.

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