



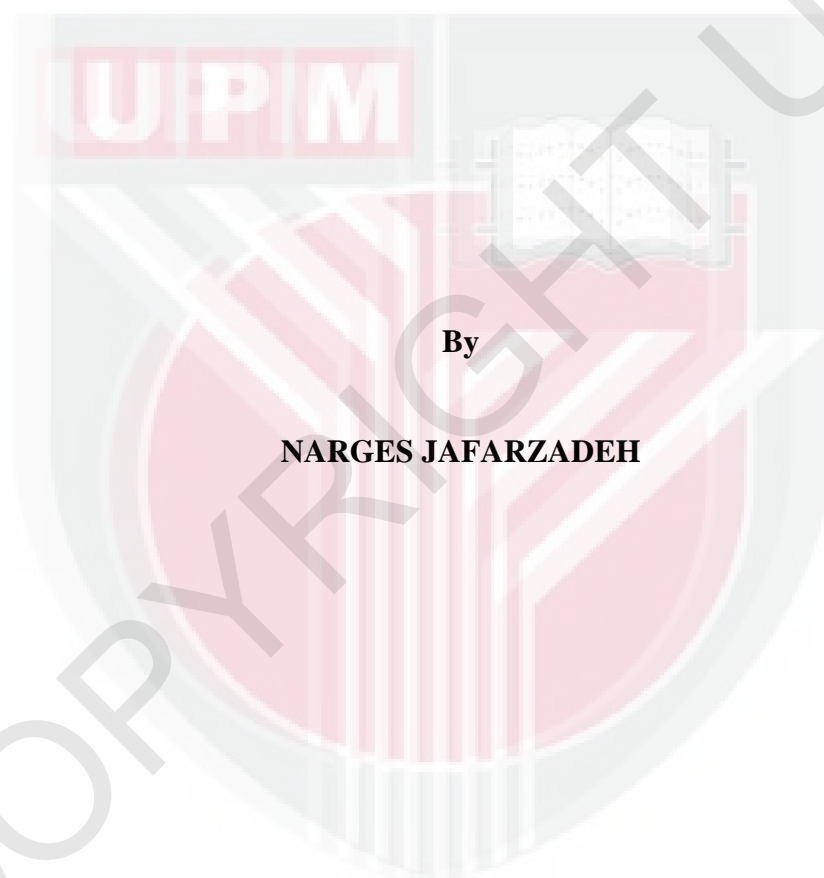
**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISATION OF FLOTILLIN-2 AS A  
MOLECULAR TARGET IN BREAST AND  
BLADDER CANCERS***

**NARGES JAFARZADEH**

**IB 2013 7**

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BLADDER CANCERS**



**By**

**NARGES JAFARZADEH**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**January 2013**

## DEDICATION

**This thesis is dedicated to my parents.**



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISATION OF FLOTILLIN-2 AS A  
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**NARGES JAFARZADEH**

**January 2013**

**Chairman : Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam, PhD**

**Faculty : Bioscience**

Invasive breast and bladder cancers are associated with poor clinical outcome and are characterised by a genotype that is distinct from superficial disease. Predicting the invasive and metastatic potential of tumours at the time of diagnosis remains a major challenge in cancer management. Exploiting a multi-component data-mining *in silico* strategy, genes associated with an invasive phenotype were targeted. These bioinformatics screens were conducted on previously published and publicly available datasets derived from various high-throughput genome-wide experimental data based on gene expression arrays and array-based comparative genomic hybridisation. Differentially expressed genes between high and low-risk cancers were functionally annotated by gene ontology and compared to available expression datasets. Overexpression of a lipid raft associated protein, Flotillin 2 (*FLOT2*) in invasive cancers was identified. The *FLOT2* locus (17q11-q12) was associated with copy number gains in 15% of tumours. Flotillin-2 is an important lipid raft marker and is predicted to be involved in cell-matrix adhesion, cell migration and signal

transduction. Immunohistochemistry was used to evaluate flot2 expression and localisation in formalin fixed paraffin-embedded malignant and non-malignant breast cancers. Flot2 localisation varied from a cytoplasmic distribution in normal cells to a more cell-cell contact distribution in malignant cells. A correlation was found between flot2 overexpression in the invasive compartments of tumour tissues and clinical stage. The staining intensity in the invasive compartment increased with cancer progression. Flot2 protein expression was tested in an independent bladder cancer tissue microarray series by immunohistochemistry. Flot2 protein expression increased with bladder cancer progression as well. Subsequently, *FLOT2* was knocked down in bladder and breast cancer cells *in vitro* by siRNA. Migration and invasion assays were employed to determine the phenotypic effects of *FLOT2* inhibition. The inhibition of *FLOT2* expression in knockdown cells was confirmed by RT-qPCR and Western blotting. Knockdown of *FLOT2* led to a significant reduction in the invasive and migratory cellular phenotypes. The precise mode of action of flot2 remains to be elucidated but it is predicted to play an important role in transmembrane signal transduction, cell adhesion and endocytosis. Incidentally, *FLOT2* overexpression has also been shown to enhance the spreading of cells, formation of filopodia as well as melanoma progression and metastasis. This study identifies and confirms flot2 overexpression as a common feature of invasive breast and bladder cancers. In addition, the functional targeting experiments and gene-dosage dependent *FLOT2* overexpression in invasive breast and bladder cancers confirm a link between *FLOT2* and a pro-invasive cancer phenotype.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGENALPASTIAN DAN PENCIRIAN FLOTILLIN-2 SEBAGAI SASARAN MOLEKUL DALAM ARAH PAYUDARA DAN PUNDI KENCING**

Oleh

**NARGES JAFARZADEH**

**January 2013**

**Pengerusi : Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam, PhD**

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Barah payudara dan pundi kencing yang invasif dikaitkan dengan diagnosis yang kurang memuaskan dan dicirikan dengan genotip yang berbeza daripada barah yang tidak invasif. Kebolehan untuk meramal potensi invasif dan metastatik tumor semasa diagnosis masih menjadi satu cabaran utama dalam pengurusan pesakit barah. Melalui penggunaan strategi perlombongan data pelbagai komponen secara '*in silico*', gen-gen yang dikaitkan dengan fenotip invasif telah disiasat. Penyaringan bioinformatik telah dijalankan terhadap dataset-dataset umum dan yang diterbitkan sebelum ini, hasil daripada pelbagai data eksperimen seluruh genom pemrosesan tinggi berdasarkan tatasusunan ekspresi gen dan perbandingan hibridisasi genomik berasaskan tatasusunan. Pembezaan ekspresi gen-gen diantara barah berisiko tinggi dan rendah dipadankan kepada fungsi molekular secara ontologi dan dibandingkan kepada dataset ekspresi yang sedia ada. Kami mengenal pasti ekspresi berlebihan protein yang berkaitan dengan rakit lipid, Flotillin 2 (*FLOT2*) dalam barah invasif. Locus *FLOT2* (17q11-q12) dihubungkan dengan penambahan bilangan salinan dalam 15% tumor. *FLOT2* merupakan penanda rakit lipid yang penting dan

dijangka terlibat dalam pelekatan sel-matriks, perpindahan sel dan transduksi isyarat. Imunohistokimia digunakan bagi menilai ekspresi flot2 di dalam tisu barah payudara malignan dan bukan malignan yang diawet dengan formalin dan dibenamkan di dalam parafin. Penyentempatan flot2 berbeza-beza daripada taburan sitoplasma di dalam tisu normal kepada taburan yang mempunyai lebih banyak pertemuan antara sel di dalam tisu malignan. Suatu perkaitan didapati antara ekspresi berlebihan flot2 di dalam bahagian invasif tisu tumor dengan peringkat klinikal. Tahap pewarnaan di dalam bahagian invasif semakin meningkat apabila peringkat barah semakin meningkat. Ekspresi protein flot2 diuji di dalam satu siri mikroatur tisu pundi kencing. Ekspresi protein flot2 turut meningkat dengan perkembangan barah pundi kencing juga. Berikutan itu, ekspresi *FLOT2* dilenyapkan di dalam sel barah pundi kencing dan payudara secara 'in vitro' dengan menggunakan siRNA. Ujian perpindahan dan pencerobohan digunakan bagi mengenal pasti kesan perencatan *FLOT2* dari segi fenotip. Perencatan ekspresi *FLOT2* di dalam sel disahkan melalui RT-qPCR dan blot Western. Pelenyapan ekspresi *FLOT2* menyebabkan pengurangan signifikan fenotip sel yang berciri invasif. Cara tindakan khusus flot2 masih belum dicirikan tetapi diramalkan berperanan penting dalam transduksi isyarat merentasi membran, pelekatan sel dan endositosis. Ekspresi berlebihan *FLOT2* juga didapati meningkatkan penyebaran sel, pembentukan filopodia, dan juga perkembangan melanoma dan metastasis. Kajian ini mengenal pasti dan mengesahkan ekspresi berlebihan flot2 sebagai ciri subset barah payudara dan barah pundi kencing yang invasif. Di samping itu, eksperimen-eksperimen yang mensasarkan fungsi dan ekspresi berlebihan *FLOT2* yang bergantung pada gen-dos mengesahkan hubungan antara *FLOT2* dengan fenotip barah proinvasif.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on September 2012 to conduct the final examination of Narges Jafarzadeh on her thesis entitled "**IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISATION OF FLOTILLIN-2 AS A MOLECULAR TARGET IN BREAST AND BLADDER CANCER**" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the relevant degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

---

**NARGES JAFARZADEH**

Date: 4 January 2013

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>DEDICATION</b>	ii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	vii
<b>APPROVAL</b>	ix
<b>DECLARATION</b>	x
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xv
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xvi
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	xix
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	1
Problem Statement	3
Study objectives	4
<b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	5
2.1 Origins of cancer	6
2.2 Tumourigenesis and metastasis	9
2.2.1 Breast cancer	12
2.2.1.1 Epidemiology	12
2.2.1.2 Risk factors	12
2.2.1.3 Genetics	14
2.2.1.4 Oestrogen receptors	15
2.2.1.5 Staging and classification	16
2.2.1.6 Breast cancer formation and progression	18
2.2.1.6.1 Carcinoma <i>in situ</i>	18
2.2.1.6.2 Invasive breast cancer	19
2.2.1.6.3 Invasive ductal carcinoma	21
2.2.1.7 Grading of invasive carcinoma	22
2.2.1.8 Detection and diagnosis	23
2.2.2 Bladder cancer	23
2.2.2.1 Incidence and prevalence	23
2.2.2.2 Age	24
2.2.2.3 Gender and ethnicity	25
2.2.2.4 Geographical variation	26
2.2.2.5 Aetiology	26
2.2.2.6 Histopathology	27
2.2.2.6.1 Staging and grading	27
2.2.2.6.2 Recurrence and progression	30
2.2.2.7 Diagnosis	30
2.2.2.8 Bladder cancer molecular pathology	31

	2.2.2.8.1	Overview of tumourigenesis	31
	2.2.2.8.2	Oncogenes	35
	2.2.2.8.3	Tumour suppressor genes	37
2.3		Molecular markers in human cancers	38
2.4		Targeted therapy of cancer	40
2.5		Lipid rafts	41
	2.5.1	Caveolae	41
	2.5.2	Lipid raft distribution and trafficking	43
	2.5.3	Subsets of lipid rafts	45
	2.5.4	Lipid rafts in signal transduction	46
	2.5.4.1	Tyrosine kinase family: Epidermal growth factor receptor	48
	2.5.4.2	EGF survival signaling pathway	48
	2.5.4.2.1	RAS/ERK signaling pathway	49
	2.5.4.2.2	PI3K/AKT signaling pathway	50
	2.5.4.2.3	JAK/STAT signaling pathway	51
	2.5.4.3	c-Src non-receptor tyrosine kinase	51
	2.5.4.4	Estrogen receptor signaling	52
2.6		Flotillins	53
	2.6.1	Discovery of reggies/flotillins	53
	2.6.2	Evolutionary conservation of flotillins	54
	2.6.3	Proteins containing the SPFH domain	55
	2.6.4	Subcellular localisation of flotillins	58
	2.6.5	Structure of flotillins	59
	2.6.6	Flotillin-2 functions	61
	2.6.6.1	Endocytic pathway	61
	2.6.6.2	Growth factor signaling	62
	2.6.6.3	Cell spreading and actin cytoskeleton remodelling	65
	2.6.6.4	Tumour growth	66
	2.6.7	Regulation of flotillin-2	66
<b>3</b>		<b>MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>	<b>67</b>
3.1		Materials	68
	3.1.1	Human breast and bladder tissues	68
	3.1.2	Tissue sectioning	68
	3.1.3	Cancer cell lines	69
3.2		Methods	69
	3.2.1	Immunohistochemistry	69
	3.2.1.1	Hematoxylin and eosin staining	69
	3.2.1.2	Immunohistochemistry	70
	3.2.1.3	Scoring	71
	3.2.2	Cell freezing and thawing	72
	3.2.3	Culture conditions	72
	3.2.4	Cell counting	73

3.2.5	Cell line RNA extraction	73
3.2.6	RNA quantification and quality assessment	74
3.2.7	Agarose gel electrophoresis	75
3.2.8	Reverse transcription-quantitative PCR (RT-QPCR)	75
3.2.8.1	Reverse transcription	75
3.2.8.2	Sequences of the oligonucleotide primers used for PCR amplification	76
3.2.8.3	Gradient PCR	76
3.2.8.4	Quantitative PCR	77
3.2.8.5	Generation of standard curve	78
3.2.9	Western blot analysis	79
3.2.9.1	Cell line protein extraction	79
3.2.9.2	Total protein quantification using Bradford assay	79
3.2.9.3	SDS-PAGE analysis	80
3.2.9.4	Western blotting	81
3.2.10	Knockdown of FLOT2 using siRNA technology	82
3.2.10.1	Optimisation of siRNA transfection efficiency	84
3.2.10.2	Analysis of RT-QPCR data	85
3.2.10.3	Relative quantification using two standard curve method	85
3.2.10.4	Statistical analysis	86
3.2.11	Phenotypic assay	86
3.2.11.1	MTT assay	86
3.2.11.2	<i>In vitro</i> cell migration assay	87
3.2.11.3	<i>In vitro</i> matrigel invasion assay	88
3.2.12	<i>In silico</i> functional annotation and analysis of differentially expressed genes	90
<b>4</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>90</b>
4.1	Introduction	91
4.2	Gene ontologies of differentially expressed genes	91
4.3	Tissue mining tool data	93
4.4	<i>FLOT2</i> DNA copy number variation from retrospective analysis of 1Mb aCGH analysis	99
4.5	Confirmation of <i>FLOT2</i> expression in bladder cancers	99
4.6	Immunohistochemistry analysis	102
4.6.1	Optimisation of flot2 protein in human breast tissues	102
4.6.2	Staining pattern of flot2 protein	104
4.6.3	Immunohistochemistry expression pattern of flot2 protein in bladder tumours	108
4.6.4	Immunohistochemical labelling of breast tumour tissues for flot1 protein	110
4.7	Assessment of nucleic acid quantity and quality	113
4.8	Optimisation of <i>FLOT2</i> amplification to find best annealing temperature	116

4.9	Amplification of <i>FLOT2</i> over a range of template concentration	116
4.10	<i>FLOT2</i> and <i>GAPDH</i> RT-QPCR expression	119
4.11	Determination of basal <i>flot2</i> protein expression in cancer cells	123
4.12	Knockdown of <i>FLOT2</i> gene expression	127
4.12.1	Optimisation of <i>FLOT2</i> siRNA <i>in vitro</i>	127
4.12.2	Relative quantification of gene expression in <i>FLOT2</i> knockdown cells	131
4.12.3	Time course analysis of <i>flot2</i> protein expression in knockdown cells	136
4.12.4	Morphology of knockdown <i>FLOT2</i> cells	140
4.13	Phenotypic assay	142
4.13.1	MTT assay	142
4.13.2	Migration assay	144
4.13.3	Invasion assay	146
<b>5</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>172</b>
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>176</b>
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>197</b>
	<b>BIODATA OF STUDENT</b>	<b>215</b>