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RAF, RAS and mismatch repair

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Researchers recently reported mutations in the BRAF gene in melanomas. In a Brief Communication in the August 29 Nature, Rajagopalan *et al.* report their analysis of *RAF* and *RAS* mutations in 330 colorectal tumour samples (*Nature* 2002, 418:934). They found 32 mutations in *BRAF* and 169 mutations in *KRAS* (often in larger adenomas), but never both at the same time. They also found that colorectal tumors unable to repair DNA mismatches had a high incidence of *BRAF* mutations and a lower incidence of *KRAS* mutations, highlighting that the mutation spectrum depends on the nature of the tumor genetic instability. Thus *BRAF* and *KRAS* mutations appear to be equivalent in their tumorigenic effect, both playing a role after initiation and before malignant conversion.

References

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