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## Profiles of metastasis

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William Wells

Email: wells@biotext.com

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In the 3 August *Nature* Clark *et al.* use DNA microarrays to find genes that are up- or down-regulated in metastatic (versus non-metastatic) melanoma cells (*Nature* 2000, **406**:532-535). Variable results suggest that there is more than one way of becoming metastatic, but three genes - encoding fibronectin, thymosin  $\beta$ 4, and RhoC - come up in three independent samples from both human and mouse cells. Extracellular fibronectin probably lays down a permissive track for moving cells, and the actin-buffering thymosin  $\beta$ 4 probably aids cell movement. RhoC is more of a surprise: Clark *et al.* show that overexpressing RhoC in non-metastatic cells is sufficient to make them metastatic, and a dominant inhibitory mutant inhibits metastasis. Bittner *et al.* analyze patterns of gene expression in samples of melanoma cells and find that two distinct clusters robustly emerge from the analysis (*Nature* 2000, **406**:536-540). Melanomas from the larger expression cluster show reduced motility and invasive ability, and initial patient data, although not yet statistically significant, suggest that the group may have better survival prospects.

## References

1. Nature magazine, [<http://www.nature.com/nature/>]