Beta-catenin up-regulates the expression of the urokinase plasminogen activator in human colorectal tumors

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Expression of the urokinase plasminogen activator (uPA) increases during the progression of colorectal tumors from adenomas to carcinomas. The highest amounts of uPA are found at the invasion front of carcinomas, which also displays a strong expression of nuclear beta-catenin and is therefore a region expressing beta-catenin target genes at high levels. Here we show that beta-catenin contributes to the transactivation of uPA. Therefore, beta-catenin might have an impact on the capacity of colorectal tumors for invasion and metastasis, as well as dormancy, which are hallmarks of cancer.

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