

BOOK REVIEWS

Checkpoint Responses in Cancer Therapy

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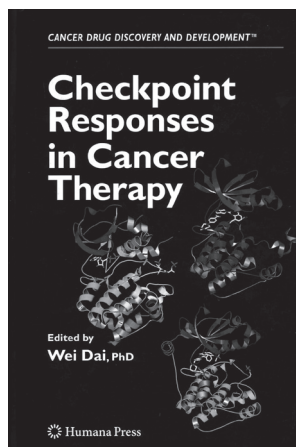
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This volume summarises a broad range of potential and current therapeutic checkpoints relevant to cancer.

I found the presentation generally consistent and well set out. The topics addressed ranged from those checkpoints associated with older, empirically identified, non-targeted therapeutic agents (such as etoposide and paclitaxel), to those



which are very early in preclinical development and clearly form the basis for rationally designed therapeutic agents. As an example of the latter, the chapter on the spindle checkpoint, for which selective agents are yet to enter the clinic, promises much for tumours exhibiting aneuploidy.

Excitingly, there were several chapters on pathways in early clinical development. Of particular interest to this reviewer was the chapter on the p53 pathway, given the significant efforts to bring MDM2 antagonists to the clinic. This target is amplified or over-expressed in over 10% of all cancers, and one of the authors of this chapter, Lyubomir Vassilev, has played a major part in developing the lead compound in the clinical arena, nutlin 3a. Watch this space with interest.

Lastly, the section on understanding how histone deacetylase inhibitors effect anti-tumour activity reminds us that not all novel therapies arise from clear and rational bases. We still do not know how these agents work, nor why they seem to be particularly effective in some cancer types, but not others.

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