

Publication

Anti-fibrotic effects of nintedanib in lung fibroblasts derived from patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis

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BACKGROUND: Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is a progressive lung disease with poor prognosis. The kinase inhibitor nintedanib specific for vascular endothelial growth factor receptor (VEGFR), platelet-derived growth factor receptor (PDGFR) and fibroblast growth factor receptor (FGFR) significantly reduced the rate of decline of forced vital capacity versus placebo. **AIM:** To determine the in vitro effect of nintedanib on primary human lung fibroblasts. **METHODS:** Fibroblasts were isolated from lungs of IPF patients and from non-fibrotic controls. We assessed the effect of VEGF, PDGF-BB and basic FGF (bFGF) +/- nintedanib on: (i) expression/activation of VEGFR, PDGFR, and FGFR, (ii) cell proliferation, secretion of (iii) matrix metalloproteinases (MMP), (iv) tissue inhibitor of metalloproteinase (TIMP), and (v) collagen. **RESULTS:** IPF fibroblasts expressed higher levels of PDGFR and FGFR than controls. PDGF-BB, bFGF, and VEGF caused a pro-proliferative effect which was prevented by nintedanib. Nintedanib enhanced the expression of pro-MMP-2, and inhibited the expression of TIMP-2. Transforming growth factor-beta-induced secretion of collagens was inhibited by nintedanib. **CONCLUSION:** Our

data demonstrate a significant anti-fibrotic effect of nintedanib in IPF fibroblasts. This effect consists of the drug's anti-proliferative capacity, and on its effect on the extracellular matrix, the degradation of which seems to be enhanced.

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