

Molecular Mechanisms of Lymphatic Invasion in Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma.

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Molecular Mechanisms of Lymphatic Invasion in Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma

 Kalnisha Naidoo

PhD Thesis

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For the shades...

'Matter, that thing the most solid and well-known, which you are holding in your hands and which makes up your body, is now known to be mostly empty space. Empty space and points of light. What does this say about the reality of the world?

Jeanette Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*

DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own, except where stated otherwise in the text and this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified. The work was performed between September 2008 and December 2011 in the Centre for Molecular Oncology, Barts Cancer Institute, Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London.

> (Kalnisha Naidoo) May 2012

ABSTRACT

Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma (PDAC) is one of the five leading causes of cancer-related deaths in the West, and this, largely, is due to metastatic disease. In order to better understand PDAC metastatic spread and identify novel therapeutic targets, we analysed the proteome of primary tumours and matched lymph node (LN) metastases. As frozen specimens of metastatic lesions are scarce, we examined formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded (FFPE) tissues. Whilst such tissue is in routine diagnostic use, the cross-linkages induced by fixation have, in the past, precluded proteomic investigation for research purposes. Recent technological advances have, however, overcome this technical limitation.

Using laser capture microdissection (P.A.L.M system), we isolated malignant epithelia from seven FFPE primary PDAC tumours and matched LN metastases. Following dissection, samples were analysed in duplicate using Multidimensional Protein Identification Technology (MudPIT); this resulted in the identification of 1504 proteins, 854 of which were common to all samples analysed. Comparison of the obtained proteins with data from previous proteomics studies on pancreatic tissue, pancreatic juice, serum and urine resulted in a less than 30 % overlap, indicating that our study has expanded the current database of proteins expressed in this malignancy substantially. Statistical analysis further showed that 115/854 proteins (13.5%) were significantly differentially expressed (g-value \geq 3.8). Two proteins, S100P and 14-3-3 sigma, with highly significant g-values were confirmed to be significantly differentially expressed (S100P: $p = 0.05$ and 14-3-3 sigma: $p < 0.001$)

in a larger series of 55 cases of matched primary PDAC and LN metastases using immunohistochemistry.

We chose to investigate further the roles of S100P in lymphatic invasion *in vitro* and *in vivo*. By co-culturing a Panc1 S100P-overexpressing clone (S5L), or a vector control clone (V3L), with human dermal lymphatic endothelial cells (HDLEC), we were able to show that different receptors mediate S5L adhesion to resting and activated HDLEC as opposed to V3L; and that the presence of S5L cells in these cocultures significantly increased permeability at one ($p = 0.02$), four ($p = 0.002$) and eight ($p = 0.007$) hours post-seeding, and significantly increased translymphatic endothelial migration at 72 hours ($p = 0.006$). Using the V3L and S5L cell lines, which were transduced to express luciferase, we also created an orthotopic mouse model of PDAC, as well as experimental metastatic mouse models, in CD1 nude mice. These models were used to evaluate the effects of S100P on primary tumour growth, metastasis and site-specific growth. S100P was only found to significantly increase primary tumour growth in this model ($n = 10$ animals/group), both by bioluminescence ($p = 0.002$) and tumour weight ($p = 0.01$). No metastases (spontaneous and/or experimental) were seen however. Thus, this model can be used to evaluate the anti-tumour efficacy of novel therapies to S100P in the future.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma

Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma (PDAC) causes an estimated 227,000 deaths per year worldwide, and ranks as one of the five leading causes of cancer-related deaths in the Western world. The five-year survival rate for PDAC is less than 5%, regardless of age, race and/or sex (1,2). These statistics reflect the fact that little progress has been made in the past 30 years in the management of this disease. Due to the latent, non-specific nature of the symptoms, most patients present late, once metastases already are present. Thus, there is an urgent need to increase our understanding of the pathogenesis of PDAC; improve our capacity both to diagnose this disease earlier and monitor its progression; and to develop novel therapies to treat metastatic disease.

1.1.1 Multi-step Tumourigenesis

The multi-step model of PDAC progression is well-established (**Figure 1**). It describes the histological and genetic changes that occur in the pancreatic ductal epithelia as cancer develops (3–5).

Initially, the normal epithelium undergoes premalignant change, transitioning through three stages of 'Pancreatic Intra-epithelial Neoplasia' (PanIN). These lesions, characteristically, are contained by an intact basement membrane, and are classified according to the amount of cytological and architectural atypia present. The normal

pancreatic duct is lined by simple cuboidal epithelium. In PanIN-1, cells undergo metaplasia in which a change from cuboidal to columnar epithelium occurs (PanIN-1A). In addition, cells adopt either a papillary, micropapillary or basally pseudostratified architecture (PanIN-1B). PanIN-2 lesions, by definition, show nuclear abnormalities, e.g. loss of polarity, hyperchromatism, nuclear crowding, enlarged nuclei and pseudostratification. Mitotic figures are rare at this stage but, if present, they should be nonluminal and not atypical. In PanIN-3 (carcinoma in-situ), the dysplasia is more pronounced at a cytonuclear level. Architecturally, cells begin budding into the lumen (cribriforming), and luminal necrosis may be present. Invasive cancer is defined by a breach of basement membrane, with cells moving out into the surrounding tissue (3–5).

Figure 1 Progression model for the development of PDAC. Histological changes showing a progressive increase in cytological and architectural atypia are paralleled by a sequence of molecular alterations. These changes are thought to follow a linear temporal progression. However, the total number of mutations acquired is more important than the order in which they appear (Adapted from Robbins and Cotran Pathological Basis of Disease (5)).

Concurrent with these histological changes, a number of genetic changes occur.

Telomere shortening is the earliest genetic change seen in PDAC (6). These structures are located at the ends of chromosomes and in humans contain the tandemly repeated hexanucleotide sequence 5'-TTAGGG-3' in conjunction with a number of telomere-binding proteins such as TRF1 and POT1 (7,8). These together form the functional telomere, which acts as a 'protective shield', preventing chromosomes from fusing with one another. Telomere loss occurs with every cell division, resulting ultimately in breakage-fusion-bridge cycles, and a resultant increase in chromosomal instability (9–13). Whilst it has been shown that telomere loss is important for the initiation of carcinogenesis, equally important is the emergence of the holoenzyme telomerase (hTERT) at a later stage in carcinogenesis, particularly at the point of conversion from a premalignant lesion to an invasive one (14). There are conflicting data at present as to the relevance of hTERT expression in PDAC. Current reports of hTERT mRNA quantification in PDAC tissues range from 41% to 83% (15,16). Whilst hTERT quantification in pancreatic juice indicates expression in the majority of PDACs, such tests currently are unable to distinguish benign from malignant disease (16,17). Furthermore, mouse data suggest that pancreatic carcinogenesis can progress in the absence of functional telomerase, raising the question of whether or not an alternative lengthening of telomeres (ALT) mechanism exists in PDAC (18). Finally, even in the absence of hTERT or ALT, the high prevalence of p53 mutations in PDAC (see below) may accelerate progression to invasive PDAC by allowing chromosomally unstable cells to proliferate by failing to initiate apoptosis and/or crisis (19).

In PanIN-1, the functional alteration of two proto-oncogenes, HER-2/Neu and KRAS, permanently activates intracellular signalling pathways, affecting proliferation, cellcycle, apoptosis, cell shape and motility.

HER-2/Neu, a tyrosine kinase receptor of the epidermal growth factor receptor family, rarely is over-expressed in histologically normal pancreatic ducts, but is overexpressed in 80% of PanIN-1 lesions (20). However, the expression levels of HER-2/Neu in PDAC are significantly lower, averaging across studies at less than 30% (20–24). These HER-2/Neu positive tumours typically result from increased transcription and translation of this receptor, with gene amplification being present in fewer cases; no mutations or receptor truncations have been identified, as yet (23,25). Several studies have shown that a positive HER-2/neu status significantly correlates with tumour stage, and negatively affects survival (23,26). However, no positive association with tumour grade has been demonstrated (26,27). In fact, HER-2/Neu has been shown to be absent in poorly differentiated PDAC tumours, and strongly expressed in moderately or well differentiated tumours. The use of anti-HER-2/Neu antibodies as adjuvant therapy for PDAC currently is under clinical investigation (28).

KRAS undergoes a point mutation in 80–90% of PanIN-1 lesions - predominantly at codon 12, although codons 13 and 61 also can be affected (5,29). This results in constitutive activation of this GTP-binding protein. Furthermore, the expression of oncogenic KRAS in the pancreas of animal models, without other genetic abnormalities, is sufficient to induce the development of PanIN lesions which closely resemble human morphology (30,31). Interestingly, as oncogenic KRAS expression

in mouse models is driven by PDX-1 in the islet cells and P48/PTF-1A in the acinar cells of the pancreas, these models suggest that PDAC originates in the acinar, rather than the ductal, epithelia. Recently however, Shi et al. used the 'almost ubiquitous' expression of KRAS mutations in PDAC to trace the 'cell of origin' from which PDAC arises in human tissue samples (32). Acinar and stromal cells were found to express wild-type KRAS in this study, whilst cells from PanIN lesions expressed mutated KRAS. Of note, only acino-ductal metaplastic (ADM) lesions associated with PanIN, and not isolated ADM, harboured KRAS mutations. Furthermore, each ADM mutation found was identical to the mutation found in the associated PanIN lesion(s). Thus, the authors suggest that pancreatic neoplasia does not originate in acinar cells, in contrast to data obtained from mouse models

Activation of tumour oncogenes is followed by loss of tumour suppressor genes in PanIN-2 and PanIN-3. This allows cells to overcome senescence, resulting in unopposed proliferation. The three most common tumour suppressor genes inactivated in PDAC are CDKN2A/p16^{ink4A}, TP53 and DPC4/SMAD4. Furthermore, for all three of these genes, inactivation is due largely to loss of heterozygosity (LOH). A summary of these genes, including chromosomal location, mechanism of action and prevalence can be found in **Table 1** (5).

Table 1 The chromosomal location, normal mechanisms of action, and prevalence of three tumour suppressor genes commonly affected in PDAC (5).

The gene CDKN2/INK4A encodes the protein p16, which inhibits cell cycle progression from G1 into S phase by binding to the cyclin-dependent kinases Cdk4 and Cdk6, thus preventing these molecules from binding to cyclin D1 (33). Mechanisms of p16 loss include homozygous deletion, intragenic mutation with loss of the second allele and epigenetic silencing by promoter methylation (34–36). Loss of nuclear p16 is found in PanINs associated both with cancer and chronic pancreatitis, although the frequency is lower in chronic pancreatitis (37).

The bi-allelic inactivation of the TP53 gene almost always is due to a combination of intragenic mutation with loss of the second allele (38). Loss or alteration of p53 protein allows cells to bypass DNA damage checkpoints and evade apoptosis (39). In addition, as mentioned above, there is now evidence that p53 loss may contribute to the genomic instability seen in PDAC (19,40). Generally, p53 loss is considered to be a late event in PDAC progression, with accumulation of this protein being seen in advanced PanIN 3 lesions (41).

Lastly, loss of the Deleted in Pancreatic Cancer 4 or DPC4 gene (also known as SMAD4 or MADH4) results in an interference with intracellular signalling downstream of the transforming growth factor β (TGF- β) family of cell surface receptors, decreasing growth inhibition and increasing proliferation (33,42). DPC4 loss is a late event in PDAC progression, and is evident only in PanIN 3 lesions (43).

Interestingly, the combination of each of these tumour suppressor genes with KRAS mutations in mice results in the development of invasive pancreatic cancer; a phenomenon whose utilisation has increased the number of mouse models available for preclinical investigation (40,44,45).

1.2 Metastasis

1.2.1 Tumour Evolution and Spread

Metastasis has been defined as 'the spread of cells from the primary neoplasm to distant organs, and their relentless growth' (46).

It has long been thought that tumours invade and spread through a series of sequential steps termed 'the invasion-metastasis cascade' (**Figure 2**) (46). According to this model, locally invasive cancer cells gain entry into blood or lymphatic vessels (intravasate), survive and travel in these vessels to distant sites, where they move out of the vessels (extravasate) into foreign environments. Secondary tumour growth (colonisation) occurs initially as micrometastases (i.e. single or small clumps of cells) which, over time, adapt and grow into macrometastases (> 2 mm in diameter).

Figure 2 The 'invasion-metastasis cascade'. **a.** Cellular transformation and primary tumour growth. **b.** Extensive vascularisation (angiogenesis) must occur for the primary tumour to exceed 1-2 mm in diameter. **c.** Intravasation. **d.** Survival inside the lymphatic and blood circulatory systems. **e.** Extravasation. **f.** Colonisation (46)

According to the classic theory of metastasis (46), metastatic tumours are derived from a single clone. As a tumour grows, the tumour population becomes increasingly genetically unstable, giving rise to 'intra-lesional heterogeneity'. Within this evolving population, selection pressures and epigenetic mechanisms then govern which clone(s) will be able to metastasise. Thus, each metastatic tumour arises from a single progenitor cell (inter-lesional heterogeneity) which then establishes a heterogenous metastatic tumour via the same process that occurred in the primary tumour. This theory was founded largely on the work of Fidler and Kripke, and is based on data obtained from experiments in which cell lines (predominantly melanoma) were grown and/or injected into mouse models (46–48). A variety of techniques were used in order to create clones with varying metastatic capacities, including the *in vitro* and *in vivo* selection of clones from parental cell lines, and radiation-induced genetic instability. An intriguing finding of these studies, and one which often is forgotten, is that tumour heterogeneity exerts a stabilising effect on the tumour population. Indeed, a parental cell line maintains its metastatic capacity for years *in vitro*, whilst individual clones which are either isolated from this parental population or subjected to a strong selection pressure, e.g. chemotherapy, show an increased metastatic potential. When these clones are once again merged into a polyclonal population however, equilibrium is restored. Thus, 'the society of tumour cells imposes regulatory constraints upon its individual members'. For Fidler and Hart, the very existence of this phenomenon argues against the random nature of metastasis, and suggests that, as this process is regulated, it can be successfully manipulated by therapeutic intervention (46–48).

The advent of sequencing technology has allowed for these analyses to be extended to human tissues. Using 'comparative lesion sequencing' in colorectal cancers, in conjunction with a mathematical model derived from the passenger mutation rate, Jones et al. have proposed that it takes approximately 17 years for benign adenomas to develop into advanced carcinomas whilst, thereafter, the ability to metastasise is acquired fairly quickly though a relatively small number of additional mutations (49). Based on sequencing data obtained from 13 patients, the authors propose two evolutionary models: in model A, none of the cells within the primary tumour are able to metastasise, but require only a few genetic alterations in order to gain that

capacity; and in model B, all of the cells within the primary tumour have the ability to metastasise, without any further genetic alterations being required. Whilst it could be argued that model A represents the classic theory of metastasis, model B could represent an alternative theory - that of the early 'metastatic gene signature'. In contrast to the classic theory, this suggests that metastatic potential is a preordained feature of certain primary solid tumours, and is not governed by selection pressures. In 2003, Ramaswamy et al. published a 17 metastatic gene signature that could be associated with medulloblastomas and a number of adenocarcinomas (lung, breast, prostate), but not with diffuse large B cell lymphomas (50). This signature comprised genes originating from both the epithelial and stromal compartments of the analysed tumours, and reflects the fact that tumours were not laser capture microdissected before profiling. Thus, the authors emphasise that metastasis arises from the interplay of various cell populations within the tumour mass, and not from the epithelial component in isolation; a concept which reflects the hallmarks of cancer as proposed by Weinberg and Hanahan (51). Ramaswamy's paper raises an interesting question: does 'heterogeneity' exist in the epithelial population, as originally thought, or is 'heterogeneity' a product of crosstalk between a community of varied cell populations? For Fidler and Kripke, the divergence of these two models represents our inability to monitor the development of tumour heterogeneity in real time (52). If one concedes that gene expression signatures represent a snapshot in primary tumour evolution, then one cannot rule out the possibility that, if profiling were performed on a polyclonal epithelial tumour population in aggregate, some clones within the tumour mass could show a change in metastatic genes, whilst other clones simultaneously could show a change in genes governing proliferation. Thus, whilst comparing primaries and their

metastases provides us with clues as to how metastasis occurs, it cannot accurately quantify its kinetics. What is perhaps of more practical significance, however, is that analysing primary tumours for such 'signatures' increases our capacity to predict which tumours are most likely to metastasise, and therefore, to stratify patients in terms of risk and treatment. Thus, a move towards the molecular classification of solid tumours was established.

According to Bernards and Weinberg, one of the major implications of the 'metastatic gene signature' theory is that metastatic genes do not exist *per se*, but rather, that metastasis is governed by the same oncogenes and tumour suppressor genes which have been studied for years (53). The authors reason that if this were not the case, then cells with a metastatic phenotype would constitute only a small proportion of the primary tumour, which, if one considers the low success rate of individual cells trying to metastasise, would make metastasis almost impossible. Thus, the mutations that confer a replicative advantage to tumours early in tumourigenesis, must also confer a metastatic advantage later on in tumour evolution. In essence, this paper emphasises the importance of the genomic instability generated by increased proliferation, rather than tumour size, as the driver behind metastasis.

This view has been challenged by the parallel progression model (54). According to this theory, the early dissemination of cancer cells from primary tumours to various mesenchymal tissues in the body allows for the simultaneous growth of primary tumours and metastases. Evidence for this model derives, in part, from the whole genome analysis of disseminated tumour cells (DTC) isolated from pre-operative patients with breast, prostate and oesophageal cancers (55–61). In these studies,

DTCs from patient bone marrows harboured fewer genetic aberrations than their matched primary tumours. Thus, the authors conclude, dissemination must have occurred prior to the acquisition of whole genome instability. Further evidence for the early escape of cancer cells from premalignant lesions came from Husemann et al. who used transmission electron microscopy to capture cells escaping from atypic ductal hyperplastic (ADH) lesions in a Balb-NeuT transgenic mouse model; dormant cells with malignant potential were also demonstrated in the bone marrows and lungs of these mice at this premalignant stage (62). These findings were extended to 607 human breast cancer samples, in which the number of DTCs found in patient bone marrows did not correlate with tumour size, and thus, stage. The final paper challenging Weinberg's 'progression puzzle' was published in 2008 by Podsypanina et al., and showed that oncogene expression does not affect survival and extravasation of DTCs, but rather that these genes are required only for secondary tumour growth (63). These experiments were conducted in experimental metastatic mouse models; untransformed mouse mammary cells in which the transgenes MYC and KRAS, or polyoma middle-T, could be expressed inducibly, were injected into the tail veins of Rag1^{-/-} mice. Lung tumours developed in the recipient mice only upon doxycycline administration at various time-points. Thus, the untransformed cells were able to survive in the bloodstream and extravasate into the lungs, remaining dormant without oncogene activation.

Finally, the 'seed and soil' theory, as originally proposed by Paget in 1889, emphasises the importance of the tumour microenvironment in the metastatic process (64). By recognising the importance of 'congenial soil' in determining the growth of a metastatic clone, Paget was the first to highlight the intricacies of the

colonisation step in the metastatic cascade. By acknowledging the importance of the 'seed', he recognised the importance of tumour as heterogenous tissue. And by emphasising the interaction of seed with soil, he recognised the selective nature of the metastasic process. His observations still hold true today.

1.2.2 Metastasis in PDAC

Little is known about the metastatic process in PDAC. This is largely due to the limited availability of tissue samples for analysis, as patients with metastatic disease are not amenable to surgery. Access to tissue samples has improved since the establishment of the Johns Hopkins Gastrointestinal Cancer Rapid Medical Donation Program (GICRMDP) which harvests rapid autopsy frozen samples for research (65); however access to surgically resectable PDAC samples and/or metastases remains difficult. Prior to the GICRMDP, only two studies had analysed the gene expression profiles (GEP) associated with PDAC metastases by correlating data obtained from fresh frozen primary tumours with clinicopathological parameters; the metastatic tissue itself was not analysed. In 2004, Nakamura et al. compared the GEP of laser microbeam microdissected PDAC to that of adjacent histologically normal ductal epithelia ($n = 18$ in total; $n = 13$ with known lymph node status) (66). Of the 606 differentially expressed genes found, 76 genes (35 up–regulated and 41 down-regulated) showed a positive association with lymph node (LN) metastases. In 2007, Kim et al. analysed the GEP of 10 macrodissected PDAC samples, five of which had positive LNs (67). In this study, 194 differentially expressed genes (66 up– regulated and 128 down-regulated) were found to positively correlate with LN metastases. Comparison of the gene sets obtained from these two studies showed
virtually no overlap, which most likely reflects the technical differences between the two studies. Firstly, Nakamura et al. isolated a pure population of cancer cells using laser microbeam microdissection, whereas Kim et al. analysed whole tissue samples which contained stromal tissue; secondly, the DNA microarray used by Kim et al. contained approximately 15,000 more genes than that used by Nakamura et al.; and lastly, Nakamura et al. analysed their data by first comparing all pancreatic cancer samples to adjacent histologically normal pancreatic tissue, and then stratified the cancer samples into those with or without LN metastases, whilst Kim et al. only compared the GEP of PDACs with LN metastases to those PDACs without LN metastases.

In 2008, Jones et al. sequenced 24 autopsy-derived primary PDAC samples, obtained from seven patients, in order to catalogue the somatic mutations found in PDAC (68). Of the 69 altered gene sets found, 31 were validated at a transcript level using serial analysis of gene expression (SAGE). Importantly, this transcriptome could be classified into 12 core signalling pathways, which are now considered to be central to PDAC pathogenesis. Although not stated in the article, these 12 pathways can, in turn, be classified into the six hallmarks of cancers (51). Importantly, the authors suggest that future therapies should aim to target the point at which these aberrations converge (i.e. the processes which they affect), rather than the genetic defects themselves.

In the same year, Campagna et al. found that very few changes occur between the transcriptomes of primary pancreatic tumours and their metastases (69). As RNA from half of the 60 available samples had degraded following macrodissection, 30

matched and unmatched frozen tissue samples ultimately were analysed, representing five surgically-resected primary PDACs; five autopsy-derived primary tumours; and 20 autopsy-derived metastases from liver, lung, peritoneum and lymph nodes. Interestingly, although no appreciable change was demonstrated between primary tumours and metastases when analysed *en masse*, differential expression was found between each matched pair, suggesting that tumours did evolve within each patient. Furthermore, 242 genes were found to be differentially expressed between the primary tumours obtained from surgery (pT2 or pT3), and the primary PDACs with co-existent metastatic disease (pT4) obtained at autopsy. Thus, it is possible that early stage primary lesions do differ significantly from metastatic lesions. As the surgical lesions were unmatched however, such a comparison was not possible in this study.

More recently, Yachida et al. (70) sequenced autopsy-derived PDAC metastases from seven patients, whose primary tumours previously had been sequenced by Jones et al. (68). Using comparative lesion sequencing, in conjunction with the mathematical model previously established for colorectal cancer (49), the authors propose a linear clonal evolution model for PDAC, in which, a 'therapeutic window of opportunity' of approximately 10 years exists during which metastasis may be prevented. A caveat to this model however, is that the kinetics are calculated using data obtained from patients with advanced metastatic disease, and may not accurately reflect the spatio-temporal evolution of metastases in real time. Furthermore, if at least 5 years are needed for metastasis to develop, as is suggested in this paper, why then do most patients with PDAC die within 5 years of diagnosis? The answer to this is not clear at present: either this model accurately

reflects the kinetics of metastasis in real time, and mortality is compounded by other factors e.g. late presentation, or the fact that the pancreas is a vital organ, loss of which results in pathophysiological disturbances which accelerates disease progression; or this model fails to include a variant of PDAC which metastasises at a faster rate.

In 2010, Campbell et al. (71) showed that genomic instability persists after dissemination in PDAC; emphasising the importance of selection and adaptation of cancers to new 'soils' as originally proposed by Paget. As in the above-mentioned studies, comparative lesion sequencing was performed on rapid autopsy-derived samples. However, for 10 of the 13 patients recruited to this study, sequencing was performed on cell lines derived from patient tissues - three representing resected primary tumours and seven representing index metastases. It could be argued, therefore, that this is the reason why the data obtained from this study match data derived from mouse studies, i.e. does altering the 'seed', for example by deriving cell lines *in vitro* from human tissue, alter the manner in which it interacts with the 'soil' in mouse models, and/or the sequencing data obtained *ex vivo*? However, evidence of clonal selection did extend to the two patients in which actual tissues (three metastases per patient) were sequenced.

To date, only one proteomic study analysing 10 primary pancreatic cancers with or without LN metastases has been performed on fresh frozen, needle microdissected samples using 2D-DIGE combined with MALDI-TOF (72). When the results of this study were correlated to clinicopathological parameters, 18 up- and 15 downregulated proteins were found; of these, moesin, radixin and c14orf166 were

confirmed, by Western blot (WB) and Immunohistochemistry (IHC), to be upregulated in primary PDAC with associated LN metastasis. No therapeutic targets were identified. And, most importantly, the LN metastases themselves were not analysed.

Although fresh frozen PDAC/metastatic tissues are limited in supply, a substantial archive of formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded (FFPE) tissues exists that is more readily accessible. These tissues traditionally have been considered sub-optimal for proteomic analysis; however, there is now mounting evidence that valuable information, comparable to data obtained from frozen specimens, can be retrieved from FFPE samples from a variety of human tissues (73–77), including the pancreas (78).

Whilst this 'equivalence of fresh/frozen and FFPE proteomes' was initially reported on prostatic tissues (73), the most comprehensive analysis was performed by Sprung et al. in 2009 (77). In this study, colon adenoma samples of a fixed dimension (60 µm diameter) were either snap-frozen or fixed in 10% formalin for 24 hours. All samples then underwent tryptic digestion, with subsequent iso-electric focusing in order to separate the complex peptide mixtures into 20 fractions, each of which was analysed using LC/MS/MS. The rationale behind using tissues of fixed dimensions was to ensure that equal, accurate quantities of protein were analysed between fresh frozen and FFPE samples, as it is known that those amino acids which contribute to copper reduction in bicinchoninic acid (BCA) assays are also modified by formalin during fixation. Indeed, this study showed that protein measurements of FFPE samples were consistently 56% lower than that of their fresh

frozen counterparts (77). Thus, a corrective factor was introduced prior to tryptic digestion to ensure equal protein loading. Furthermore, as formalin induces intraand inter-molecular cross-linkages at the primary amines of lysine side-chains, the authors questioned if C-terminal lysine-containing peptides would be underrepresented following shotgun proteomics; a hypothesis which proved to be true upon further analysis. However, this qualitative difference in peptide production was not found to alter protein identification; rather, it was shown that data analysis is the most important determinant of protein identification. The authors showed that a combined database search of both fresh frozen and FFPE inventories simultaneously yielded better results (90% overlap) than separate database searches (67% overlap) (77). The reason for this discrepancy lies in the two peptide requirement for peptide identification i.e. at least two fragmented peptides (see below) which are obtained via MudPIT must be realigned or matched to the parent protein in order for that to count as a positive result. Whilst this reduces the number of false positives, it can increase the number of false negatives. If, for example, a protein is identified by two peptides in fresh frozen tissue, but produces only a single peptide for identification in the FFPE tissue, then it would incorrectly be logged as being present in fresh frozen tissue but absent in FFPE tissue. If the data sets are analysed simultaneously however, the fresh frozen dataset 'rescues' that FFPE single peptide in terms of protein identification, correcting this error. Thus, whilst the two peptide criteria serve to increase the sensitivity of MudPIT, simultaneous searches using multiple databases aim to improve its specificity. In addition to the significant overlap found between the two tissue types using this method, the subcellular compartmental distributions of proteins found from both fresh frozen and FFPE tissues were nearly identical. Thus, the authors conclude that human FFPE

proteomes are equivalent to human fresh frozen proteomes. Finally, this study examined the effects of the duration of formalin fixation and storage on protein yield, proving that a fixation time of up to 2 days, and long-term storage of up to 10 years duration, did not affect proteomic analysis adversely (77).

These findings were extended to the human pancreas in 2009 by Reimel et al. (78), who showed a 69% overlap in peptide identification between frozen (340 proteins in total) and FFPE (370 proteins in total) human pancreatic samples. These samples had been macrodissected, digested in trypsin and analysed using nano-LC/MS/MS (78). The authors do not specify how the data were analysed in this study however; it would be interesting to note if the fresh frozen and FFPE data had been analysed simultaneously or not, as this would explain why only a 68% overlap was obtained (77). Nevertheless, these data are particularly relevant to the current study, as they validated, for the first time, the use of FFPE pancreatic tissues for proteomic analysis. The study also widened the scope of PDAC research; as patients with early stage PDAC who are amenable to surgery routinely have metastatic lymph node tissue processed for diagnostic purposes, these tissues now were considered eligible for research proteomics. Any data obtained from such FFPE samples also could be crucial to both understanding and potentially preventing metastasis.

A number of technological advances which increase the number of proteins that can be recovered from FFPE have emerged in the past decade. The Liquid Tissue MS Protein Prep Kit, which has been available commercially since 2005 (79), has been shown to retrieve unique peptides reproducibly from laser capture microdissected (LCM) FFPE specimens for downstream 'shotgun' proteomics (73,80).

Improvements to this reagent over the past few years have resulted in a 10-fold decrease in the amount of starting material required for proteomic analysis (200,000 LCM cells to 20,000 LCM cells over a period of three years) (73,80), which is of great benefit in diseases where specimens are scarce, like metastatic PDAC.

The parallel development of large-scale, high-throughput proteomic technologies has further increased the amount of data that can be obtained from relatively small amounts of tissue. Multidimensional Protein Identification Technology (MudPIT) is one such technique that separates peptides in a complex mixture in two dimensions; first on the basis of charge, and then on the basis of hydrophobicity (81) (**Figure 3**). This added dimension, or 'pre-fractionation' step, further reduces sample complexity; thus MudPIT has been shown to considerably increase the number of proteins identifiable by mass spectrometry (82–84). The principle behind MudPIT is basically one of fragmentation. A protein is fragmented, both enzymatically (trypsin) and via collision-induced dissociation (CID) (mass spectrometry), in order to decrease the likelihood that mistakes are made during the *in silico* analysis when the peptide is realigned for identification. Theoretically, as the length of the fragmented peptide increases, the margin of error for realignment (and thus identification) decreases (85). If one considers that there are 20 amino acids, and if one assumes that all amino acids are equal in terms of their capacity to bind each other (which is not necessarily true), then the probability of a single amino acid occupying a particular position in a peptide sequence is 1 in 20. Thus, for a peptide that has six amino acids residues, the theoretical probability of an amino acid occupying a particular position in a peptide is 1 in 20 6 (or 1 in 64,000,000). Even with these odds however, false positives do occur (85).

Figure 3 Multidimensional protein identification technology (MudPIT). Total cell lysate (e.g. laser capture microdissection PDAC tissue) first undergoes enzymatic digestion (e.g. using trypsin). This produces a complex peptide mixture, which subsequently is separated in two dimensions: first on the basis of charge via strongcation exchange (SCX), and then on the basis of hydrophobicity using reverse-phase (RP) liquid chromatography. The resulting simplified or 'fractionated' peptide mixture then is analysed using mass spectrometry. The fragmented peptides resulting from this process are then realigned *in silico* in order to determine the protein composition of the starting material (Adapted from Whitelegge et al. (86)).

This is largely because protein identification is further complicated by the concept of 'peptide detectability' (87,88). This refers to the likelihood of observing a peptide in a standard proteomics experiment, and is determined by four factors: the chemical properties of the peptide (and the parent protein); the limitations of the peptide identification method – including sample processing and digestion, the MS instrumentation, and the database(s) used; the abundance of the peptide in the sample; and the other peptides in the sample which compete with the peptide in question during the identification procedure. It could be argued, therefore, that the likelihood that a peptide will be seen in a sample is an intrinsic property of the peptide – determined directly by its primary amino acid sequence, and the location that it occupies within the composite protein. Thus, abundance alone does not determine detection (87,88). Rather, it is the quality of the method, as well as the quantity of starting material, which determines the output.

The stochastic nature of data acquisition during mass spectometry was carefully studied by Liu et al. in 2004, in order to determine the optimum conditions for sample analysis (89). Nine LC/LC/MS/MS experiments were performed on the soluble fraction of whole cell yeast lysates, during which the experimental conditions were held constant across all sample runs i.e. samples did not differ in complexity, separation resolution, and data acquisition. Even having corrected for all these variables, inter-sample reproducibility was only 76%. It was determined that, in light of this limited reproducibility, the same data could be acquired from three sample replicates as from nine, irrespective of sample origin (89). The authors also investigated how best to quantitate protein abundance in these samples by spiking four different mixtures with known quantities of six proteins. Spectral counting was shown to be an accurate measure of relative protein abundance, with a linear correlation over a dynamic range of two orders of magnitude. Spectral counts reflect the number of matched peptides, and the number of times those peptides were

observed. Thus, spectral counts can be used as a semi-quantitative measurement of protein concentrations in unlabelled protein mixtures, as well as to evaluate any changes in protein composition between different samples (89).

There has been little consensus on the statistical analysis of label-free proteomics data, particularly with regards to calculating differential protein expression. In 2006 however, Zhang et al. compared five statistical tests in evaluating differential protein expression, namely the G-test, AC test, Fisher's exact test, t-test and Local-Pooled-Error (LPE) test (90). This was done by comparing the false positive rates obtained with each statistical test when one to three sample replicates of *S. Cerevisiae* cell lysates, which had been spiked with six proteins of known concentration, were analysed using LC/MS/MS. It was found that when a large fold-change (i.e. five- to ten-fold) in protein concentration was present, the G-test, AC-test and Fisher's exact test yielded false positive rates of < 0.7%. However, when a two-fold change in differential expression was present, the t-test yielded the lowest false positive rates when > 3 replicates were used, whilst the G-test, AC-test and Fisher's exact test were superior when ≤ 2 replicates were used. Thus, the authors conclude that the ttest should be used when three or more replicates are analysed, whilst the G-test, AC-test or Fisher's exact test should be used when less than three replicates are available (90).

1.2.3 S100P in PDAC

S100P, a 10.4 kDa EF-hand calcium-binding protein, has been a long-standing focus in our laboratory. A number of previous studies have investigated the importance of

this protein in PDAC (91–97). We have shown that S100P (transcript and protein) is absent in normal pancreatic ductal epithelia, progressively increased in PanIN lesions, and is expressed in > 90% of primary PDACs in human tissue samples (91,92). In a similar study performed by Logsdon et al., S100P was confirmed to be expressed exclusively in the neoplastic epithelial compartment of PDAC, using GEP with subsequent IHC validation (93). Importantly, analysis of S100P expression in this study included a comparison with tissue samples of chronic pancreatitis, a condition which is often difficult to differentiate from PDAC (93). In 2004, Arumugam et al. showed that S100P binds to the receptor for advanced glycation end-products (RAGE), hereby increasing the proliferation and survival of NIH3TC fibroclasts (97). The authors went on to investigate the effects of S100P expression in pancreatic cell lines and in orthotopic mouse models of PDAC (95,96). They showed that S100P increased pancreatic cancer growth, survival and invasion both *in vitro* and *in vivo*; a mechanism of action which could be targeted using cromolyn, or analogues thereof (95,96). In 2007, we showed that S100P increases invasion by mediating changes in the actin cytoskeleton and up-regulating cathepsin D *in vitro* (94). These experiments were conducted using a Panc-1 cell line, which was engineered in-house to overexpress S100P or a vector control (S5 and V3 cell lines respectively). Finally, we recently have found S100P to be a potential candidate gene involved in the haematological dissemination of PDAC (Sayka Barry, PhD Thesis 2009). These data were obtained from GEP experiments performed on unmatched human PDAC and liver metastases, with subsequent *in vitro* (transendothelial migration assays) and *in vivo* confirmation (Zebrafish model of metastasis). Thus, evidence for a causative role for S100P in PDAC metastasis is accumulating. However, the potential role of this protein in lymphatic metastasis has not been investigated to date.

1.3 The Biology of the Lymphatic Vasculature

The lymphatic system regulates fluid homeostasis, immune function and fat absorption. It also is involved in a number of pathological processes, including tumour metastasis. Despite this, our understanding of the molecular mechanisms controlling the lymphatic system is still in its infancy. This is due to a historical lack of defining molecular markers to establish unequivocal provenance of putative cells of the lymphatic system, as well as to the fact that lymphatic cells are difficult to observe and manipulate both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Whilst much progress has been made in this field of late, the precise molecular features that determine cellular and fluid entry into lymphatics remain poorly understood (98,99).

1.3.1 Lymphatic Markers

Several lymphatic markers have been identified recently, although few if any are expressed exclusively by the lymphatic endothelium. The three most commonly used markers are the lymphatic vessel endothelial hyaluronan receptor 1 (LYVE-1); the transmembrane glycoprotein, podoplanin (PDPN); and the homeobox transcription factor, Prox-1 (98–100).

The transmembrane glycoprotein, LYVE-1, first described by Banerji et al. in 1999, is a member of the Link protein superfamily, which binds hyaluronic acid (HA) via a conserved link module domain (101). Developmentally, LYVE-1 is expressed as the lymphatic system starts to sprout from a subpopulation of endothelial cells in the cardinal vein (98,99). In adult tissues, it is expressed on lymphatic endothelial cells

(LEC), liver sinusoidal endothelial cells and some populations of tissue macrophages (102). However, despite its expression in lymphatic progenitor cells, the absence of LYVE-1 in mice does not impede lymphatic development; indeed, knockout mice have a normal structural and functional lymphatic system (103). LYVE-1, therefore, does not appear to be essential for lymphatic specification or lymphangiogenesis. Furthermore, LYVE-1 null mice are comparable to wild type controls in a number of pathophysiological processes, including leukocyte development and compartmentalisation; dendritic cell trafficking/migration; acute inflammation; tumour growth; tumour-associated lymphangiogenesis and HA turnover (103). A possible explanation for the latter is that LYVE-1 is 'functionally silenced' in normal LEC by autoinhibitory glycosylation, and requires activation in order to bind HA (102). Despite this, the receptor itself can still be endocytosed and degraded without binding HA (104). These contradictory findings illustrate the complexity of LYVE-1, which requires further investigation.

PDPN (podoplanin), a 38 kDa membranous glycoprotein, is expressed by lymphatic, but not blood vascular, endothelium. However, in normal human tissues, it also is expressed in kidney podocytes, skeletal muscle, in the placenta, lung and heart, in myofibroblasts of the breast and salivary glands, in osteoblasts and in mesothelial cells (105). Developmentally, like LYVE-1, PDPN is up-regulated in a subpopulation of progenitor cells in the cardinal vein, under the control of Prox-1 (see below) (98,99). In contrast to LYVE-1 however, the homozygous deletion of PDPN in mice is embryonically lethal; mice die of respiratory failure due to a shortage of type I alveolar epithelial cells (106). In addition, these mice show extensive cutaneous lymphoedema due to lymphangiectasia. Recently, it has been shown that PDPN

interacts with the platelet membrane lectin, CLEC-2, during lymphatic development, inducing platelet aggregation, which allows for the separation of lymph sacs from the cardinal vein (107,108). PDPN has also been shown to promote LEC adhesion to fibronectin (FN) and type I collagen, as well as to increase LEC migration towards fibronectin (106). Interestingly, PDPN is expressed at the invasive front in a number of squamous cell carcinomas, ovarian cancers, mesotheliomas and a subset of CNS tumours (109–114). However, contradictory evidence exists at present as to the molecular mechanisms underlying tumour migration as a consequence of podoplanin expression (105). In the Rip1Tag2 transgenic mouse model, progression of benign adenomas to carcinomas in the pancreas has been shown to involve a switch from E-cadherin to N-cadherin. This 'cadherin switch' is considered to herald epithelialmesynchymal transition (EMT), and thus, single cell migration of cancer cells. Trangenic expression of podoplanin in these β–islet cell tumours was shown to prevent this 'cadherin switch' from occurring, and to promote collective cancer cell migration as opposed to single cell migration (105). Similar results were found when podoplanin was over-expressed in both human keratinocytes and MCF-7 breast cancer cells (105). In the latter, podoplanin expression resulted in a down-regulation of RhoA activity, which resulted in an increase in collective cell migration (114). Conversely, the expression of podoplanin in MDCK cells has been found to increase RhoA activation, resulting in an EMT, and increased single cell migration (115). Thus, it would appear that podoplanin can modulate cell migration in two different ways by modulating RhoA (114,115).

Finally, the homeobox transcription factor, Prox-1, has been described as the 'master control gene' of LEC (100). Prox-1 has been conserved throughout

evolution; its expression heralds lymphatic specification in mice, zebrafish, frogs and chicks (98). Loss of Prox-1 expression results in lymphatic agenesis, whilst overexpression of Prox-1 in blood vascular endothelial cells results in conversion to a lymphatic phenotype (98–100). Although the initial cues governing Prox-1 upregulation require further elucidation, there is evidence that SOX-1 (SRY-related HMG domain transcription factor), MYC, Slug and Twist can induce Prox-1 expression, whilst TGFβ can inhibit its expression (98). Prox-1 has also been shown to up-regulate a number of lymphatic markers, including LYVE-1, podoplanin, VEGFR-3 and α9 integrin (98–100). In fact, it has been shown that LEC migration towards VEGF-C and VEGF-D is mediated by the integrin α9β1 and VEGFR-3, and that the expression of both these receptors is dependent on Prox-1 expression (116). This was shown in a series of experiments on human umbilical venous endothelial cells (HUVECS) and mouse embryonic stem cell derived endothelial cells, which utilised adenoviruses encoding wild-type and mutant Prox-1 and VEGFR-3 constructs, siRNA knockdown of Prox-1 and neutralising antibodies to the integrin α9β1 to study the effects of Prox-1 on LEC migration (116).

1.3.2 The Anatomy of the Lymphatic System

Most human tissues are drained by a network of blind-ending lymphatic capillaries, with the exception of the CNS and bone marrow; these initial lymphatics also are absent between striated muscles fibres and within hepatic lobules (117). A recent ultrastructural study by Baluk et al. has challenged the traditional view that lymphatics display little or no intercellular junctions (118). This study, which was conducted in mice, showed that lymphatic capillaries consist of an oak-leaf shaped endothelium, which is secured to the surrounding extra-cellular matrix (ECM) by anchoring filaments comprising emilin and fibrillin. In contrast to blood vessels, these capillaries lie on a discontinuous basement membrane (BM), and lack pericytes. In addition, these capillaries are considerably larger than venules in size (both in terms of the dimensions of the constituent cells, as well as in vessel diameter). Uniquely, these initial lymphatics have discontinuous 'button-hole' junctions which contain parallel segments of VE-Cadherin. These buttons act as specialised anchoring junctions, allowing for the interdigitation of the adjacent cell membranes in between these buttons. These interdigitations or 'flaps' effectively function as one way valves, allowing for the easy passage of fluid and macromolecules (**Figure 4**). Thus, the repeated assembly and disassembly of cell junctions is avoided as fluid moves passively through these 'flaps' which then close, preventing the fluid from escaping out into the surrounding tissue. PECAM-1 (or CD31), a molecule common to both blood and lymphatic vasculature, also is expressed on the tips of these flaps. Functional studies in PECAM-1 null mice, however, showed that PECAM-1 was not essential for vessel function and leukocyte migration (118).

These initial lymphatics drain into collecting lymphatics, which have continuous 'zipper' junctions, again expressing VE-Cadherin (118). The LEC become spindleshaped, and pericytes are recruited to assist with the propulsion of lymph against gravity. Initially, these pericytes form a thin monolayer around lymphatic vessels, but as the vessels enlargen, more pericytes are recruited, resulting in a more complex multilayer, which is arranged in a basket-weave fashion around the lymphatic endothelial monolayer (117,119). These smooth muscle cells have been shown to stain positive for c-kit and vimentin, suggesting that they share a common origin with

the pacemaker cells of the gastrointestinal tract (the interstitial cells of Cajal) (119). In fact, there is evidence that these cells are able to contract independently, initiating contraction in sheep lymphatics over a distance of at least 80 mm (117,120,121). Thus, collecting vessels may possess an intrinsic pump, and may not be wholly dependent on the action of the muscles surrounding them for the maintenance of lymph flow (117). Collecting vessels also contain bi-leaflet valves which prevent backflow of lymph (117,118).

Lymph passes from the periphery through a series of LNs (117). Before entering the LN, these afferent lymphatic vessels divide into smaller ducts, which enter through the lymph node capsule into the cortical sinuses. From here, lymph drains through the medullary sinuses to the LN hilum, where lymph then enters the efferent lymphatic vessels (117). This 'percolation' of lymph allows for the interaction of antigens with immune cells, leading to an appropriate immune response when necessary. Eventually, the lymphatic system drains into the thoracic duct and the right lymphatic duct, which drain into the blood circulatory system at the left brachiocephalic vein in the angle between the left subclavian vein and left internal jugular vein, and the right subclavian vein, respectively (122).

Figure 4 Schematic diagram (**A**) showing the two types of junctions between lymphatic endothelial cells. Initial lymphatics (**B**; dashed lines in **A**) are distinguished by oak-leaf endothelium with button-hole junctions, which contain VE-Cadherin (red). In between these junctions, the tips of the flaps (**C** and **D**) formed by adjacent cells express PECAM-1 (green) and function as one-way valves allowing for the easy passage of fluid and macromolecules from the interstitium into lymphatic vessels. Collecting lymphatics are distinguished by spindle-shaped endothelium with continuous zipper junctions. These collecting vessels are also surrounded by pericytes (not shown) (Adapted from Baluk et al. (118)).

1.3.3 Developmental Lymphangiogenesis

The rate of LEC turnover in adults *in vivo* is extremely low; Tritiated thymidine incorporation rates of 0.6% have been observed in LEC, implying that LECs have a half-life in the range of several years (117). Although these rates increase during embryogenesis (11.5%) and wound healing (6.8%), lymphangiogenesis, or the growth of lymphatic vessels, usually occurs slower and later than haemangiogenesis (117). In the developing human, the first lymphatic structures, the lymph sacs, can be observed at 6 to 7 weeks gestation, approximately a month after the first blood vessels are seen to develop (117,123).

Molecular profiling recently has validated the 'centrifugal' theory of lymphangiogenesis as originally proposed by Sabin in 1902 (99,100,118,124). As mentioned above, lymphangiogenesis begins with cells in the venous system. These cells begin to express Prox-1, which commits them to a lymph lineage. Once specified, LEC must proliferate and migrate into the surrounding tissue to form functional vessels. This process is governed by VEGF-C and its receptor, VEGFR-3, although a minor role for VEGF-D also has been shown (98–100,125). Both these growth factors exist as either full-length or mature forms; only the full-length forms can activate VEGFR-3, whilst only the cleaved, mature forms can activate VEGFR-2 (126). Upon activation, VEGFR-3 can form either homodimers or heterodimers with VEGFR-2 and Neuropilin-2 (98,125). Thus, mutations in these co-receptors can affect lymphangiogenesis adversely. Furthermore, the integrin α 9 β 1 has also been shown to be a receptor for VEGF-C and VEGF-D, and is important for the structural integrity of forming lymphatics (127).

In contrast to this 'centrifugal' theory, lymphangiogenesis has also been described to originate in the mesenchyme, in which cells fuse with each other and lymphatics form in a 'centripetal' manner (98,117,128). This theory has been largely supported by work conducted on avian embryos (98,117,129,130).

Once formed, vessels undergo remodelling and expansion. A number of genes have been found to be important in this process, including FOXC2, EFNB2, ANGPT2 and EMILIN1 (98). Podoplanin has been shown to be important for the adhesion and migration of LEC, as well as in the formation of connecting lymphatics between the superficial and deep lymphatic plexuses (106–108).

1.3.4 Interaction of Lymphatic Capillaries with the Tissue Interstitium

As lymphatic capillaries have a discontinuous BM, LEC are in direct contact with the ECM and interstitial fluid. Thus, lymphatic organisation and function is directly influenced by ECM components, by the presence or absence of growth factors within the matrix, and by changes in lymph flow (131).

Fibrillar collagens (types I, II, III, V and XI), which entrap proteoglycans and glycoproteins, provide the primary scaffold for this surrounding matrix. It has been shown that, unlike blood vascular endothelial cells, LEC can survive and form tubes in collagen type I matrices *in vitro*, even in the absence of growth factors (131,132). Under experimental conditions of flow, however, LEC organise better in a fibrin-only matrix (131,133). The high expression of collagen I and fibrin during wound healing has been shown to increase lymphangiogenesis *in vivo*. However, it has also been shown that fragments of other collagens, such as endostatin and neostatin 7 (fragments of collagen XVIII), can inhibit lymphangiogenesis (131,134,135).

HA is a polymer of repeating D-glucuronic acid and D-N-acetylglucosamine disaccharides, ranging from 10^4 to 10^7 Da in size (136). Due to its hygroscopic properties, HA plays a key role in regulating matrix turgor and stability. There is a rapid turnover of HA in the body, with one third of HA being degraded in lymph nodes following its removal by lymphatic vessels. HA is made intracellularly, under the control of HA synthases, after which it can be extruded through the plasma membrane into the ECM, firmly anchored in the plasma membrane via synthases, or linked to cell surface receptors, like LYVE-1 or CD44 (136). By binding these receptors HA has the potential to initiate a number of signalling pathways in various cell types. The pathophysiological effects of HA are complex, and depend predominantly on the size of the HA polymer involved. With regards to LEC however, HA-rich stroma tends to stimulate lymphangiogenesis (131).

Lastly, LEC are surrounded by patches of FN. By virtue of the fact that it binds VEGF-C, trapping it within the ECM, FN has been shown to increase LEC proliferation (131,137,138). There is evidence that the splice variant, EDA FN (139), is important for normal lymphatic valve development *in vivo* through its interaction with α 9 integrin (127), as well as evidence that EDA FN stimulates lymphatic tubulogenesis in tumour stroma (137). Importantly, there is an emerging role for the fibronectin-binding integrins, α 9 β 1, α 5 β 1, and α 4 β 1 in the lymphatic vasculature. These dynamic heterodimeric glycoproteins play a crucial role in relating changes in the extracellular microenvironment to the intracellular space, and *vice-versa* (140–

143). Thus, integrins mediate adhesion, proliferation and migration of LEC under both physiological and pathological conditions. In addition to FN, α9β1 is known to bind VEGF-C, VEGF-D, tenascin C, collagen, laminin, thrombospondin and VCAM-1 (131). The RGD binding integrin, α 5 β 1, has been shown to be involved in inflammation-induced lymphangiogenesis. It has also been shown to associate constitutively with VEGFR-3 *in vitro*, thus increasing VEGFR-3 mediated lymphangiogenesis (138). Finally, it has been reported that α4β1 mediates the adhesion, migration, invasion and survival of proliferating lymphatic endothelial cells (144). Conversely, inhibition of this integrin decreases both lymphangiogenesis as well as lymph node metastasis *in vivo* (144).

1.3.5 The Biology of Tumour Lymphatics

Whilst lymphatics represent a common route of spread for most cancers (99), including PDAC (145,146), little is known about the mechanisms underlying this process. In terms of collective cell migration, it is known that pre-existing lymphatics can serve as a conduit for cancer cells (147). However, the detailed mechanisms determining both single cell and collective translymphatic migration have yet to be elucidated.

While the concept of endothelial cell activation is well-established for blood vascular endothelium, the importance of activation for lymphatic endothelium is still unclear. Activation of blood vascular endothelium is defined by five core changes: expression of adhesion molecules; increased cytokine production; a loss of vascular integrity; up-regulation of HLA molecules and a change from anti- to pro-thrombotic activity

(148–150). At present, only the up-regulation of adhesion molecules and an increase in cytokine production have been shown to occur following activation of the lymphatic vasculature (99,125,151–158).

In 2006, Johnson et al. showed that the stimulation of LEC by a number of cytokines, particularly TNF-α (10 ng/ml) and IFN-γ (100 ng/ml), resulted in the up-regulation of ICAM-1, VCAM-1 and E-selectin (151). However, this study only investigated the importance of these adhesion molecules in immune function, and not in the context of cancer i.e only the effects of exogenous commercially available cytokines (and not conditioned media from cancer cells) on human dermal lymphatic endothelial cells (HDLEC) was investigated *in vitro*; the *in vitro* co-cultures experiments assessed only the interactions of dendritic cells, and not cancer cells, with activated HDLEC; and the *in vivo* experiments evaluated the presence of antigen-presenting cells attracted to the ear skin of mice following oxalozone-induced hypersensitivity; no mouse models of carcinogenesis were used in this study (151).

It was only two years later that Kawai et al. showed that conditioned media from metastatic MDA-MB-231, but not non-metastatic MCF-7, breast cancer cells increased ICAM-1 expression on human LEC (152). Furthermore, the up-regulation of ICAM-1 led to the increased adhesion of MDA-MB-231 cancer cells to human LEC, potentially through the paracrine effects of cancer cell ATP production or leakage (152). However, no other adhesion molecules were evaluated in this study.

Another molecule, the common lymphatic endothelial and vascular endothelial receptor, CLEVER-1 (also known as FEEL-1 and Stabilin-1), has been shown to be

expressed in peritumoural and intratumoural lymphatics in head and neck, and breast cancers (153). Furthermore, the intensity of CLEVER-1 expression in peritumoural lymphatics in breast carcinoma was shown to correlate positively to tumour grade ($n = 72$; $p = 0.025$) (153). However, its expression on intra- and peritumoural lymphatics in both head and neck (n = 17), and breast cancers (n = 72) showed no association with lymph node infiltration at the time of diagnosis (153). CLEVER-1 is a large glycoprotein which is expressed on lymphatics and high endothelial venules, and has been shown to be involved in scavenging, cell adhesion and angiogenesis (154). Exon 27 of this gene can be alternatively spliced in various tissues; however, once translated, CLEVER-1 contains 7 fasciclin domains, a proteoglycan link protein-like sequence, 22 EGF repeats and 2 RGD motifs. Most published studies on CLEVER-1 have been aimed at understanding its role in leukocyte trafficking, and not in cancer (153,154). Although blocking CLEVER-1 has been shown to decrease the transmigration of peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC) *in vitro*, CLEVER-1 blockade tended to increase the adhesion of PBMC to lymphatics in static conditions (154). This raises an important question regarding the interplay between adhesion and transmigration: if PBMC binding to lymphatics decreases upon CLEVER-1 blockade, does this suggest that PBMC preferentially bind to LEC receptors for which they have a weaker affinity in order to transiently 'stick', thus facilitating migration through the lymphatic endothelium? This possibility has yet to be explored.

An emerging concept in the context of LEC activation in cancer is that of tumour-LEC crosstalk. Shields et al. have shown that the migration of the metastatic melanoma cell line A375 is dependent on CCL21 secretion by LEC (155). In addition, A375 cells

were shown to express CCR7, the receptor for CCL21 (155). This migration was proven both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Notably, A375 cells only migrated towards LEC and not towards blood vascular endothelial cells. Furthermore, the non-metastatic melanoma subclone A375P did not migrate towards LEC. Thus, the authors suggest that CCR7 is up-regulated on melanoma cells during metastasis in response to CCL21 secretion by lymphatics, resulting in the migration of cancer cells towards lymphatics. In addition, A375 cells were found to produce VEGF-C, which induced LEC migration towards cancer cells. It was found subsequently that VEGF-C secretion by cancer cells stimulates the secretion of CCL21 by LEC via VEGFR-3. CCL21 in turn attracts cancer cells expressing the receptor CCR7 (159). Thus, chemokine crosstalk between LEC and cancer cells is a potentially important cause of lymphatic invasion as it induces the migration of cancer cells towards existing lymphatics; an action independent of their role in stimulating lymphangiogenesis (**Figure 5**).

Figure 5 Cross-talk between melanoma cells and lymphatic vessels. Melanoma cells secrete VEGF-C which binds to VEGFR3 on lymphatic cells, stimulating lymphangiogenesis and inducing lymphatic endothelial cell migration. This also stimulates lymphatics to secrete CCL21, which causes cancer cells expressing the cognate receptor CCR7 to migrate towards the lymphatic vasculature (Adapted from Issa et al. (159)).

These data are in keeping with a number of other studies which have demonstrated a positive role for VEGF-C and VEGF-D in inducing lymphangiogenesis and lymphatic metastasis in melanoma (156), breast (157) and pancreatic cancer (158). With regards to the latter, it could be argued that some of these studies were suboptimal, since they were performed in the Rip1Tag2 mouse model of pancreatic cancer (160,161), which is representative of endocrine neoplasms and not PDAC *per se*, and/or using pancreatic cancer cell lines *in vitro* (162). Furthermore, the role of VEGF-induced lymphangiogenesis in human tissue studies remains unclear. In 2004, Kurahara et al. evaluated 58 PDACs (pancreatic head), from patients who had undergone curative resection without neoadjuvant therapies, for VEGF-C and VEGF-D expression using IHC (163). Expression of both VEGF-C ($p = 0.015$) and VEGF-D $(p = 0.02)$ at the tumour margins, but not at the centre of the tumours, was found to be associated with a higher incidence of LN invasion. It was also shown in this study, by Kaplan-Meier analysis, that tumours expressing both VEGF-C and VEGF-D at the tumour margins had a worse prognosis than those expressing only one or none of these growth factors ($p = 0.017$). In 2005 however, Schneider et al. showed that whilst VEGF-C mRNA expression was significantly higher in PDAC ($n = 36$) than in normal pancreatic tissue ($n = 30$; $p < 0.001$; with expression being confirmed at a protein level by IHC), no association was found in this study between VEGF-C expression in PDAC and survival (164). Finally, Sipos et al. showed in a study involving 98 PDAC samples, that VEGF-C and VEGF-D were not up-regulated in primary PDAC (165). Even though the mRNA quantification and ELISAs were performed on a subset of these 98 cases, IHC confirmation of VEGF-C (but not VEGF-D) protein expression was performed on all 98 cases, and showed that only six of these expressed VEGF-C. Thus, these findings contradict those of the previous studies, concluding that VEGF-C does not influence lymphatic metastasis in PDAC.

Whilst it has been shown that lymph node metastasis correlates to intratumoural lymphatic vessel density (LVD) for some tumours, such as thyroid carcinoma, melanoma, and head and neck cancers (99,166–168), there are conflicting reports for other cancers, including PDAC. Both Sipos et al. and Schneider et al. demonstrated a paucity of intra-tumoural lymphatics in PDAC, with a relative predominance of peri-tumoural lymphatics (164,165). Furthermore, no correlation between LVD and patient survival was seen in either study. Thus, the authors conclude that lymphangiogenesis did not contribute to lymphatic metastasis in PDAC (164,165). Sipos et al. confirmed these findings in three orthotopic mouse models of pancreatic cancer, in which the HPAF2, PancTu1 and PT45P1 cell lines were used, all of which showed high rates of lymphatic invasion and LN metastasis, but not increased LVD. The findings in these mouse models thus mirrored those found in the human tissue samples, supporting the conclusion that lymphangiogenesis does not contribute to lymphatic metastasis in PDAC (165).

In contrast, Bailey et al. have shown that Sonic Hedgehodge (SHH) paracrine signalling increases lymphangiogenesis in an orthotopic mouse model of pancreatic cancer, resulting in an increase in primary tumour growth, as well as an increase in both vascular and lymphatic metastasis (169). This occurs via paracrine signalling; the pancreatic cancer cells secrete SHH, a morphogenic signalling protein, which binds to a 12-pass transmembrane protein called Patched (Ptch). This binding releases the inhibitory effects of Ptch on the serpetine receptor Smoothened (SMO), which is expressed on primary cilia in the surrounding stromal cells. Primary cilia are microtubule-based organells that project into the extracellular environment from the centriole of quiescent cells. In this paper, the authors demonstrate the presence of SMO on LYVE-1 positive cells in mouse orthotopic tumours containing hTERT-HPNE pancreatic cells that had been engineered to over-express SHH. These

findings were confirmed in four human tissue samples from patients with PDAC. Furthermore, treating the orthotopic tumours with a neutralising antibody to SHH decreased lymphangiogenesis and tumour size, and decreased the number of metastatic LN. Thus, the authors suggest that SHH increases lymphangiogenesis, directly influencing metastasis, and that targeting the SHH pathway would decrease metastatic disease (169). Shultz et al. have reported that inducible re-expression of p16 decreases lymphangiogenesis and lymph node metastasis in an orthotopic mouse model of PDAC, providing further evidence for a direct association between lymphangiogenesis and LN metastasis (170).

Taken together, these data highlight the lack of consensus regarding the importance of lymphangiogenesis with regards to lymphatic invasion in PDAC, as well as to the molecular mechanisms underlying lymphangiogenesis in PDAC (160–162,169,170). However, it is clear that at present, data from human tissue samples do not seem to support a direct association between lymphangiogenesis and lymphovascular invasion in PDAC (164,165).

1.3.6 Lymph Node Status in PDAC

Although the molecular mechanisms underlying lymphatic metastasis are currently unclear, it is recognised that lymph node status is an important predictor of survival in PDAC (146). 70% of PDAC patients will have positive LNs at the time of presentation, and will benefit from extended lymphadenectomy during surgery (145). However, as sentinel lymph node mapping is not feasible for pancreatic cancer, we currently are unable to identify the 30% of patients who are LN-negative, and who

would thus unnecessarily experience the morbidity associated with extensive LN dissection (145). Importantly, for the vast majority of patients who are LN-positive, the pattern of lymph node involvement has recently been shown to correlate with survival (146).

In a retrospective analysis of 380 patients with pT3 invasive PDAC, patients with direct invasion of ≤ 2 peripancreatic LN ($n = 35$) showed the same overall survival as patients with node-negative disease ($n = 97$) (146) (The American Joint Committee on Cancer TNM classification of pancreatic cancer is shown in **Table 2**). However, patients in whom true lymphatic invasion was seen in LN ($n = 248$), as opposed to those patients whose tumours had directly invaded into the surrounding LNs, showed a worse overall survival when compared with patients with node-negative disease ($p < 0.001$), regardless of the number of LNs involved. Thus, the ability of cancer cells to enter into and travel through lymphatics negatively affects prognosis. Interestingly, there was a trend towards patients bearing tumours with direct LN invasion ($n = 35$) having an improved survival compared with patients who had true lymphatic metastasis in one or two LN $(n = 42)$. However, this did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.056$).

These data highlight the importance of identifying molecular markers that differentiate true lymphatic invasion in PDAC from direct extension into the surrounding LN, as these patients clearly are at higher risk and require more aggressive therapies. They also highlight the importance of determining what facilitates lymphovascular invasion in PDAC, as targeting the molecules involved potentially could prevent metastasis, and significantly decrease mortality. Finally, the

data also suggest, as Hart and Fidler concluded earlier, that the nature of lymphatic invasion in PDAC is not entirely stochastic, and that by virtue of this fact, it is both preventable and controllable (48).

Table 2 American Joint Committee on Cancer TNM classification of pancreatic cancer.

1.4 Orthotopic Mouse Models of PDAC

The orthotopic mouse model has, for many years, served as a translational bridge which allows for the preclinical evaluation of primary tumour growth, metastasis, and potential drug therapies. The first orthotopic pancreatic xenograft model was performed in 1989, and characterised the differences between MIAPaCa2 cell growth in the pancreata of young and old nude mice over a period of two years (171). This study concluded that orthotopic implantation was feasible and superior to subcutaneous implantation in terms of tumour growth; pancreatic tumour growth was more reproducible in younger nude mice; spontaneous liver metastases were more likely to occur in experiments that lasted longer than 45 days; and primary tumour growth most often resulted in local invasion rather than haematological dissemination to the lungs and liver (171).

Subsequent experiments have shown that the rate of primary pancreatic tumour growth and the development of spontaneous metastasis is largely cell-line dependent (172). Thus, a limitation of these models is that primary orthotopic tumours do not often metastasise spontaneously. However, various ways of circumventing this problem have emerged over the past few years e.g. the inclusion of synthetic ECM (e.g. Matrigel) into the injected cell suspension (173) and/or the coinjection of pancreatic stellate cells (174,175), with such modifications being shown to enhance the development of spontaneous metastasis; and the implantation of tumour fragments, preferably from human pancreatic tumours but also from subcutaneous xenografts, has been shown to better simulate the clinical development of metastatic PDAC and create a more relevant model for drug testing

(176). In addition, a number of experimental metastasis models, largely based on the work of Nicolson, Hart and Fidler have been developed to evaluate the extravasation and colonisation steps of the metastatic cascade (177–179). In such experiments, cells are injected into the tail veins of nude mice in order to 'seed' these cells into the vasculature. Thus, intravasation from the primary tumour site is obviated, and any subsequent tumour development is seen as a direct result of the interaction of 'seed' with 'soil' (64). The technique has been modified to include intrasplenic injections (180,181), which seed cancer cells to the liver, and more recently, the intranodal injection of cancer cells into the right axillary LN for imaging purposes (182).

In addition to these models, a number of transgenic models of PDAC are available, in both zebrafish and mice (30,31,40,45). One of these mouse models, developed in 2003, targeted mutated $K RAS^{G12D}$ to the mouse pancreas (30). This mutation is commonly found in human PDAC, and results in a glycine to aspartic acid substitution, resulting in constitutive activation of the GTPase protein. These mice develop PanINs which are histologically similar to those premalignant lesions seen in humans (30). When these KRAS^{G12D} mice were crossed with mice containing the Li Fraumeni mutant TP53 allele, mice developed invasive PDAC with widespread metastatic disease (40). It has also been shown that concommitent expression of KRASG12D and the tumour suppressor gene DPC4/SMAD4 in mice results in mucinous cystic neoplasms of the pancreas, a distinct class of pancreatic tumours (45). Whilst these transgenic models provide us with an invaluable tool for the evaluation of novel therapeutic agents, they are costly to implement. Furthermore,

the 'human element' of the orthotopic transplantation model is lost, which could affect the evaluation of specific types of novel therapies e.g. antibody therapies.

Finally, the emergence of various imaging techniques has allowed for the real-time imaging of primary tumour growth and metastasis in small animal models. As these models can be used to monitor and quantify any responses to novel therapies using imaging data, they provide an alternative to the more traditional method of killing animals at specific time-points with subsequent histological examination. In other words, they reduce and refine the evaluation of carcinogenesis and novel therapies in small animal models. Imaging modalities can broadly be divided into two categories: those which have been modified and adapted from the clinic for application in small animals; and those based on macroscopic imaging using photonics (183). With regards to the latter, both fluorescence and bioluminescence have been used previously for the real-time evaluation of primary orthotopic pancreatic tumour growth (96,184,185). However, it has been shown that image resolution is complicated by tissue depth and photon scattering; this is of particular relevance to the retroperitoneal pancreas (183). Bioluminescence imaging relies on the conversion of an administered substrate (luciferin) to light in the presence of ATP, whilst fluorescence emits light following excitation of a fluorochrome at a particular wavelength. The gut, in particular, shows a high level of auto-fluorescence due to endogenous chromophores (e.g. elastin, collagen, porphyrins, tryptophan and NADPH), and chlorophyll from alfalfa, a common ingredient in laboratory murine food (186). This results in lower imaging contrast than that seen with bioluminescence (183). Thus, although both techniques will allow for adequate visualisation of the pancreas, bioluminescence is superior.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1. To compare the proteins expressed in the epithelia of primary PDAC to the proteins expressed in LN metastatic PDAC epithelia using laser capture microdissection and MudPIT. This analysis would be performed in matched samples, i.e. primary PDAC and LN metastases were to be taken from the same patient.
- 2. To validate candidate proteins that are differentially expressed between primary PDAC and matched LN metastases using IHC in a larger series of matched cases. Of note, S100P would be given preference as a candidate protein should it be found to be differentially expressed.
- 3. To investigate the potential effects of a selected candidate protein (potentially S100P) on lymphatic invasion both *in vitro* and *in vivo*.
- 4. To create an orthotopic mouse model for future use in the preclinical evaluation of potential therapies that will be developed based on the proteomic screen.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Cell lines

Both vector control (V3), and S100P over-expressing (S5), Panc-1 cell lines which had previously been engineered in our laboratory (94), were further engineered to stably express luciferase using a lentiviral vector by Dr David Gould (Bone and Joint Research Unit, William Harvey Research Institute, John Vane Science Centre, London, UK). These new cell lines, termed V3L and S5L, subsequently were used in all the *in vitro* and *in vivo* experiments.

Cells were grown in Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Media (DMEM) high glucose 4.5 g/L (PAA Laboratories, Somerset, UK), supplemented with 10% heat-inactivated foetal calf serum (FCS; PAA Laboratories, Somerset, UK) and Penicillin/Streptomycin (PAA Laboratories, Somerset, UK) at a 1:100 dilution. Selection of stable cell lines was established with G418 as previously described (94). Human Dermal Lymphatic Endothelial Cells (HDLEC; PromoCell, Heidelberg, Germany), were grown in Endothelial Cell Basal Media MV2 (PromoCell, Heidelberg, Germany), supplemented with Supplement Mix (PromoCell, Heidelberg, Germany); Penicillin/Streptomycin (PAA Laboratories, Somerset, UK) at a 1:100 dilution and VEGF-C (R & D Systems, Abingdon, UK) at 5 ng/100 ml. Cells were grown in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37 $^{\circ}$ C).

During passage, cells were harvested from subconfluent cultures in exponential growth phase by overlaying the cells with a thin layer of trypsin EDTA (1% trypsin
EDTA for V3L and S5L cells; 10% trypsin EDTA for HDLEC; PAA Laboratories, Somerset, UK). Following a 3 minute incubation in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37°C), the 75 cm² flask or 10 cm plate (see below) was tapped sharply to dislodge any adherent cells. An equal volume (to that of trypsin) of DMEM supplemented with 10% FCS then was added in order to inactivate the trypsin. Cell suspensions subsequently were transferred to 15 ml Falcon tubes (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK), and centrifuged at 12,000 x g for 3 minutes in order to produce a pellet; the overlying media was aspirated off, and the pellet was resuspended in 10 ml of the appropriate growth medium. V3L and S5L cells were passaged into 75 cm² flasks (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK). HDLEC were passaged into 10 cm plates (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK) which had been coated with 0.5 mg/ml of FN. Cell passage was performed routinely every third day.

For the *in vivo* experiments, V3L and S5L viability was assessed prior to injection using trypan blue. Cells were resuspended at a 1:1 ratio with trypan blue, after which viability was assessed by counting the number of cells that were able to exclude trypan blue using a haemocytometer, and multiplying by a dilution factor of 2. Only cell suspensions that were > 90% viable were used in the *in vivo* experiments.

For long term storage, cells were centrifuged at 12,000 x g for 3 min, after which the pellet was resuspended in freezing media: for V3L and S5L cells, this contained 90% FCS and 10% dimethyl sulphoxide (DMSO); for HDLEC cryomedia (PromoCell, Heidelberg, Germany) was used. Cell suspensions were transferred to cryovials, frozen overnight at -80˚C, and then transferred to liquid nitrogen for storage. Cell pellets were produced by washing cells in PBS and then detaching using trypsin

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EDTA. Detached cells were spun at 12,000 x g for 3 min to produce a pellet, any remaining PBS was removed and the pellets snap-frozen on dry ice. Pellets were stored at -80˚C until use.

3.2 Human Tissues

In total, 55 FFPE blocks of matched primary PDAC and LN metastases were obtained from the Pathology Departments of the General Hospital of Osijek, Croatia (17 cases) and Barts and the London (BTL) NHS Trust (38 cases). All tissues were obtained with full ethical approval from the host institutions. Clinicopathological data pertaining to all the used specimens (which I collected and collated from the two pathology departments) are shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3 Clinicopathological data. Relevant clinical and pathological parameters for the 55 cases of primary PDAC and matched LN metasatases; 38 of which were obtained from Barts and the London Hepato-Biliary Centre, London, UK, and 17 of which were obtained from the Clinical Hospital Centre Osijek, Croatia. (*grade not specified for two cases; $IQR =$ inter-quartile range).

3.3 Mice

Female CD1 nude mice (Charles River Laboratories, Kent, UK) were purchased at four weeks of age. All animals were maintained in a sterile environment on a daily 12-hour light/dark cycle. Surgical procedures were conducted when animals were five weeks of age, under aseptic conditions in a laminar flow hood. All animal work was conducted in accordance with the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act of 1986.

3.4 RNA Isolation

3.4.1 Cell Lines

RNA was isolated from cell line pellets using the RNAqueous Total RNA isolation kit (Ambion, California, USA) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Briefly, 5 x $10⁶$ cells were lysed in 700 μ l of lysis/binding solution and cells were passed through a 25 gauge needle (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK) in order to shear DNA. An equal volume (700 μl) of 64% ethanol was then added to precipitate the RNA out of solution, and this mixture was transferred to spin columns. Following centrifugation for 1 minute at 12,000 x g, columns were washed with Wash Solution and centrifuged for 1 minute at 12,000 x g three times. The flow-through was discarded after each spin. RNA was then eluted in 40 μl of pre-warmed elution solution (at 75˚C) into a fresh collection tube by centrifuging at 12,000 x g for 30 seconds.

3.4.2 Mouse Tissue

For each sample, 50-100 mg of frozen mouse tumour was homogenised in 1 ml of TRIzol Reagent (Invitrogen, Paisley, UK) using a power homogeniser (IKA ULTRA-TURRAX, T25 basic, IKA, Staufen. Germany). Following centrifugation at 12,000 x g for 10 minutes at 4° C, the supernatant was transferred to a fresh tube and incubated for 5 minutes at room temperature to permit the complete dissociation of nucleoprotein complexes. Chloroform (0.2 ml) was then added and mixed into the solution with vigorous shaking for 15 seconds. This mixture was incubated at room temperature for 3 minutes and centrifuged thereafter at 12,000 x g for 15 minutes at

4°C. Chloroform separates the mixture into two phases: the colourless upper aqueous phase (containing RNA) and the pink organic phase (containing proteins). The colourless upper aqueous phase (containing RNA) was transferred to a new tube. In order to precipitate RNA isopropanol alcohol (0.5 ml) was then added; incubated at room temperature for 10 minutes; and centrifuged at 12,000 x g for 10 minutes at 4° C. The RNA pellet was then washed with 1 ml of cold 75% ethanol, airdried for 5-10 minutes, and dissolved in diethyl pyrocarbonate (DEPC) treated water in order to inactivate RNase enzymes and prevent RNA degradation.

3.5 RNA quantification

Samples were assessed and quantified using a NanoDrop ND-1000 spectrophotometer (NanoDrop Technologies, Thermoscientific, Wilmington, USA), with an A260/A280 ratio of > 1.95 being considered acceptable. In addition, RNA quality was assessed by gel electrophoresis for the presence of 28S and 18S rRNA (ratio 2:1). Briefly, 500 ng of the RNA was diluted in 6x blue gel loading dye (Sigma-Aldrich, Poole, UK) and run on a 1% agarose gel containing 0.5 μg/ml GelRed (Sigma, Poole, UK) at 60V for 20 minutes. Gels were visualised using a UVidoc system (UVitec, JENCONS PLS, Cambridge, UK).

3.6 Quantitative Real Time (qRT) PCR

cDNA was synthesised from 1 µg of total RNA using QuantiTect Rev. Transcription Kit (Qiagen, West Sussex, UK). Briefly, 2 µl of gDNA Wipeout Buffer (7x) was added to 1 µg of RNA and RNase-free water to a final volume of 14 µl. Following incubation at 42° C for 2 minutes, the samples were placed immediately on ice. 5 µl of master mix (containing 1 µl Quantiscript Reverse Transcriptase, 1 µl RT Primer Mix and 4 µl of Quantiscript RT Buffer, 5x) was then added, resulting in a 20 µl final reaction volume. This was incubated at 42° C for 15 minutes, followed by a 3 minute incubation at 92°C to inactivate Quantiscript Reverse Transcriptase. qRT-PCR was then performed on approximately 20 ng of cDNA per sample using the QuantiTect SYBR Green PCR Kit (Qiagen, West Sussex, UK) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Briefly, a total reaction volume of 20 µl was used containing the following: 10 µl of SYBR MM Buffer; 0.6 µl of each primer (at a final concentration of 0.3 µM); 2 µl cDNA (approximately 20 ng) and 6.8 µl of RNase-free water. Primers for S100P (Sigma, Poole, UK) were forward 5' TGCAGAGTGGAAAAGACAAGGAT 3' and reverse 5' CCACCTGGGCATCTCCATT 3'; primers for the human ribosomal gene S16 (Sigma, Poole, UK), which was used as a control, were forward 5' GTCACGTGGCCCAGATTTAT 3' and reverse 5' TCTCCTTCTTGGAAGCCTCA 3'. The PCR was run on the ABI7500 detection system (Applied Biosystems, California, USA). Relative quantification was performed using Ct values.

3.7 Protein Isolation

Cell line pellets were lysed in 200 µl of NP40 lysis buffer (50 mM Tris pH 7.4, 150 mM NaCl, 1 % NP40, 2 complete, EDTA-free protease inhibitor cocktail tablets (Roche Applied Sciences, Mannheim, Germany). Following lysis, samples were centrifuged at 10,000 x g for 1 minute, after which the supernatant was collected and stored at -20°C until analysis.

3.8 Protein Quantification

Proteins were quantified using Pierce Coomassie Plus Assay Reagent (Thermofischer Scientific, Leicestershire, UK), according to the Bradford method. Briefly, 2 µl of sample was added together with 198 µl of Pierce Coomassie Plus Assay Reagent in a 96-well plate (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK). Samples were always quantified in triplicate in relation to a BSA standard curve. Absorbance was read at 595 nm using the Dynex Revelation 4.04 program (MTX Lab Systems Inc., Virginia, USA).

3.9 Laser Capture Microdissection (LCM)

This protocol was optimised in a series of experiments performed over a period of two months, using PDAC sections that had been fixed in the same manner as the tissue which I was going to use for the final LCM. Over that time, various conditions were changed:

- I cut sections ranging in thickness from 4 to 10 µm, using the Leica RM2255 rotary microtome (Leica Microsystems, Milton Keynes, UK), in order to determine the optimal thickness for LCM;
- I changed the dehydration and rehydration times of the recommended protocol, ranging from 1 to 5 minutes in each ethanol solution, in order to decrease staining time in an effort to decrease contamination;
- I tried varying concentrations of ethanol in different combinations in order to improve the quality of staining;
- I tried staining with haematoxylin (1-5 minutes) and crystal violet (1–5 minutes), alone or in combination with eosin (10-60 seconds) in order to optimise the visualisation of sections on the P.A.L.M. system (*P.A.L.M.* Microlaser Technologies AG, Bernried, Germany). LCM was also attempted on unstained sections;
- I practised LCM area estimation on the P.A.L.M. system intra-dissection in order to improve my ability to dissect the same number of cells between cases.

The final LCM was performed over a period of three months, which included administrative delays e.g. booking times for use of the P.A.L.M. system. On average, three slides per day were dissected. Sections were cut the day before dissection; staining then commenced at 8 am in order to allow sections to air-dry adequately in order to commence LCM at midday. Thereafter, over a period of 8–10 hours, at least 10,000 cells/slide could be captured.

The final protocol can be described as follows:

Following histological examination of haematoxylin and eosin (H&E) sections, seven cases (i.e. seven primary PDAC and seven matched LN metastases) were selected for LCM. 8 μ m sections were dewaxed in xylene twice, initially for 4 minutes followed by a second incubation for 3 minutes, and rehydrated through a series of graded alcohols (1 minute in 100% ethanol, 1 minute in 85% ethanol and 1 minute 70% ethanol). After staining with Mayer's haematoxylin for 2 minutes, sections were dehydrated (1 minute in 70% ethanol, 1 minute in 85% ethanol and 1 minute in

100%) and cleared in xylene for 2 minutes. Sections were then left to air-dry in a fume hood until LCM.

Approximately 10,000 to 15,000 cells per block were microdissected using the P.A.L.M. system (*P.A.L.M.* Microlaser Technologies AG, Bernried, Germany). Initially, four matched cases were dissected and pooled (PDAC1 and LN1, respectively), followed by the remaining three cases (PDAC2 and LN2, respectively). This resulted in two sample groups (PDAC and LN Metastasis), each represented by two pools; each pool comprising 40,000 to 45,000 cells. The samples were processed using Liquid Tissue (Expression Pathology Inc., Maryland, USA). Briefly, they were heated in 20 μ Liquid Tissue Buffer at 95 $\mathrm{^{\circ}C}$ for 90 min. 1 μ of proteomics grade porcine trypsin was then added to each sample, after which samples were left to digest overnight in a waterbath at 37° C. The peptide mixtures were then quantified using MicroBCA Assay Kit (Thermofischer Scientific, Leicestershire, UK). 2 µl of DTT was then added; samples were heated at 95° C for 5 minutes before being stored at - 20° C.

3.10 Multidimensional Protein Identification Technology (MudPIT)

The MudPIT experiment was performed in duplicate; the first experiment was performed on PDAC1 and LN1 and the second on PDAC2 and LN2. 10 μg of each sample was diluted 20-fold in 5% acetonitrile (0.1% FA) and injected onto a 100 μm x 6 cm SCX column. The flow-through and nine subsequent fractions were collected during a 20 minute gradient separation. Buffer A was 5% acetonitrile (0.1% FA) and buffer B was 1M ammonium acetate, 5% acetonitrile (0.1% FA). Each fraction was analysed using LC/MS/MS with a 1 hour gradient on a LTQ Orbitrap XL mass spectrometer (Thermo Scientific, San Jose, California, USA). MS/MS data were searched against the concatenated forward and reverse IPI Human v3.53 database using the Mascot (www.matrixscience.com) search engine. The database was appended with the common Repository of Adventitious Proteins (cRAP) to prevent false assignment of peptides derived from those proteins. This repository aims to identify proteins that are commonly observed in proteomics experiments, and which are classified into three general categories: common laboratory proteins; contaminant proteins which are added accidentally through dust and/or physical contact; and proteins used as molecular weights or mass spectrometry quantitation standards. Mascot output files were parsed into the Scaffold program for collation into non-redundant lists per sample (i.e. to avoid repetition of proteins in the final output) and filtering to assess false discovery rates to allow only correct protein identifications. Parameters for LTQ Orbitrap XL data require a minimum of two unique peptides matching per protein with minimum probabilities of 95% at the protein level and 50% at the corresponding peptide level. Spectral counts per protein were the output; these represent a semi-quantitative measure of abundance across samples (89). Spectral count reflects the number of matched peptides and the number of times those peptides were observed. The mass spectrometry experiments were performed at NextGen Sciences (Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA) by Dr Richard Jones.

3.11 Western Blotting

50 µg of protein per sample were incubated with 5x Laemmli buffer (0.225 mM Tris pH 6.8, 50% glycerol, 5% SDS, 0.05% bromophenol blue, 0.25 mM DTT) at 95° C for 5 minutes. Samples were then loaded onto NuPAGE 4-12 % Bis-Tris gels (Invitrogen, Paisley, UK). Following transfer onto polyvinylidene difluoride Immobilon-P membrane (Millipore, Watford, UK), non-specific binding was blocked by incubating in 3% BSA in TBS-T for 30 minutes. Membranes were then incubated with anti-V5 antibody (1:1000; Invitrogen, Paisley, UK) overnight at 4° C, followed by a 30 minute incubation with horseradish peroxidase (HRP)-conjugated goat antimouse immunoglobulin (Ig) (1:2000 Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Heidelberg, Germany) at room temperature. Bound immunocomplexes were visualised using enhanced chemiluminescence reagent (GE Healthcare, Hertfordshire, UK). HSC-70 was used as a loading control.

3.12 Immunocytochemistry (ICC)

5 x 10⁴ HDLEC were seeded onto 13 mm coverslips (Sigma, Poole, UK) in a 24-well plate (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK) and left to settle overnight. The next day, following fixation in 4% paraformaldehyde and permeabilisation with 0.1% Triton X-100, non-specific binding sites were blocked with 2% bovine serum albumin. Cells were then incubated with commercially available primary antibodies at the following dilution: anti-human LYVE-1 (RELIATech, Wolfenbüttel, Germany) 1:1000; and antihuman PDPN (Abcam, Cambridge, UK) 1:1000. Secondary antibodies were Alexa Fluor 488–conjugated donkey anti-rabbit IgG (1:1000; Invitrogen Molecular Probes, Paisley, UK), and Alexa Fluor 568–conjugated goat anti-mouse IgG, respectively. All experiments were conducted in the absence of primary antibody as a negative control.

3.13 Flow Cytometry (FC)

V3L and S5L cells were grown to confluency in 75 cm^2 flasks, trypsinised, centrifuged and re-suspended in FC media (DMEM with 0.1 % BSA) to a concentration of 4 x 10 6 cells/ml. 50 µl of cell suspension was then added to a series of 1.5 ml Eppendorf tubes (Sigma, Poole, UK) on ice, to which 50 μl of FC media containing either a primary antibody (**Table 4**); isotype control (Dako, Cambridgeshire, UK) or no primary antibody (negative control), were added. Following a 45 minute incubation on ice, cells were washed with FC media and recovered by centrifugation at 10,000 x g for 5 minutes. Following the removal of FC media, 50 μl of a 1:125 diluted, Alex-488 conjugated secondary antibody (Invitrogen Molecular Probes, Paisley, UK) was added and the suspension was incubated for a further 30 minutes on ice, in the dark. Following a second wash with FC media and recovery by centrifugation, samples were re-suspended in 300 µl of FC media, and transferred to 5 ml, round bottom tubes (BD Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK) for immediate analysis by FC. 10,000 events were acquired on a FACScalibur cytometer (Becton Dickinson Immunocytometry Systems, Oxford, UK) using CellQuest Pro software version 4.0.2, which also was used to analyse the data by gating live cells on a plot of forward scatter (FSC-H, which represents cell size) against side scatter (SSC-H, which represents cell granularity). A plot of fluorescence (FL1-H) against cell counts was used to quantify the number of live cells positive for the protein of interest by manually setting the marker to incorporate < 1 % of the isotype and negative control cells. The geometric mean was then used to determine the positivity of the cells, with an arbitrary value of 5 being classified as positive. This value was set because the geometric mean of the negative control and the isotype control was between 2 and 4.

The same procedure was followed for HDLEC, except that cells initially were resuspended in FC media (Optimem 1 Reduced Serum Media with 0.1% BSA; Invitrogen, Paisley, UK) to a final concentration of 3×10^5 cells/ml. HDLEC were either stimulated with IFNγ (100 ng/ml, Peprotech, London, UK) or TNFα (10 ng/ml, R&D Systems, Abingdo, UK), or left in media alone, for 24 hours prior to FC.

Table 4 Antibodies used for flow cytometry and adhesion function blocking experiments.

3.14 Tissue Microarray (TMA)

For IHC validation, in-house tissue microarrays (TMA) were constructed of 0.6 mm representative cores of the 18 primary PDAC Croatian cases spotted in triplicate with a manual arrayer (Beecher Scientific). Normal donor pancreas was used for orientation. The 40 cases of primary PDAC from BTL had been included previously on a TMA of 80 cases of primary PDAC (kind gift from Mr Hemant Kocher). The matched metastatic LNs were analysed as whole sections due to the limited amount of malignant infiltrate in some of the cases.

3.15 Immunohistochemistry (IHC)

Three candidate proteins were selected for IHC validation on 4 µm sections using the Discovery XT system according to the manufacturer's protocols (Ventana Medical Systems Inc., Illkirch, France) using commercially available antibodies at the following dilutions: S100P (R&D systems, Abingdon, UK) 1:100; 14-3-3 sigma (Abcam, Cambridge, UK) 1:50 and moesin (Abcam, Cambridge, UK) 1:200. All sections were scored by two independent observers, with any discrepancies being resolved by consultation. Sections were evaluated for both intensity ($0 =$ no stain; $1 =$ background; $2 = \text{mild}$; $3 = \text{moderate}$; $4 = \text{severe}$) and percentage of epithelial cells that stained positive $(0 = 0.5 \%)$; 1 = 6-25 %; 2 = 26-50 %; 3 = 51-75 %; 4 = > 75 %). Total scores were derived from a sum of the intensity and percentage of immunoreactive cells (187). A total score of > 2 was considered positive.

4 um sections of FFPE mouse tissue (orthotopic pancreatic tumours and peripancreatic LN) were stained with anti-mouse LYVE-1 (Abcam, Cambridge, UK) at a 1:100 dilution in order to visualise lymphatics, and anti-human cytokeratin-8 (Epitomics, California, USA) in order to visualise pancreatic cancer cells.

3.16 Functional Assays

3.16.1 Proliferation Assays

2.5 x 10⁴ cells/well were plated into 24-well plates (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK), and left to adhere overnight in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37°C). Cells remained in this humidified atmosphere for the duration of the experiment, and were removed only for quantitation. At this time, cells were overlayed with 500 µl of 1% trypsin EDTA. Following a 3 minute incubation in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$) at 37° C), the plate was tapped sharply to dislodge any adherent cells. 500 µl of DMEM supplemented with 10% FCS then was added to each well in order to inactivate the trypsin. The cell suspensions from each well then were transferred to 1.5 ml Eppendorf tubes. Cells were counted using a haemocytometer every 24 hours for a period of five days.

3.16.2 siRNA Transfection

 2×10^5 S5L cells were plated into six-well plates (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK) and incubated overnight in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37°C). A standard Interferin (Polyplus) protocol was then followed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Briefly, S100P or non-targeting siRNA (both from Dharmacon, Chicago, USA) were diluted to a final concentration of 50 nM in serum-free media (Sigma, Poole, UK) with Interferin (Polypus, Strasbourg, France) and incubated with the cells for 24 hours in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37°C). The cells were incubated in DMEM media supplemented with 10% FCS thereafter for a further 48 hours in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37°C), at which time cells were harvested for Western Blot analysis.

3.16.3 Invasion Assays

Invasion assays were done using Biocoat Matrigel Invasion Chambers with 8 µm pores (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK). 2.5 x 10⁴ cells in 500 µl serum-free DMEM were added to the upper chamber, and 700 µl DMEM supplemented with 10% FCS was added to the lower chamber; cultures were incubated for 48 h in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37^oC). Cells that had moved through the pores were fixed in 100% methanol and stained with 1% Giemsa blue (Sigma, Poole, UK). The number of invaded cells was counted by averaging five random fields (x20 objective, Zeiss Axiophot microscope, Hertfordshire, UK).

3.16.4 Cancer cell – HDLEC Adhesion Assays

Adhesion assays were performed using 96-well plates (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK). Initially, 50 µl of FN (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK) at a 0.5 µg/ml concentration was added to each well and left to set for one hour at 37° C. 1.5 x 10^4 HDLEC were then seeded into each well and left to settle overnight in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37°C). The following day, HDLEC were either stimulated with IFNγ (100 ng/ml, Peprotech, London, UK) or TNFα (10 ng/ml, R&D Systems, Abingdo, UK), or left in media alone, for 24 hours. The next day, V3L or S5L cells were labelled with the red fluorescent dye DilC₁₂ (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK) at a final concentration of 10 μ g/ml for one hour at 37 \degree C. Medium containing the relevant cytokines was removed from HDLEC; HDLEC were washed with PBS and 1 \times 10⁴ fluorescent cancer cells in a 50 µl volume of Optimem I Reduced Serum Media (Invitrogen, Paisely, UK) then were added to each well. Co-cultures were incubated for 45 minutes in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37°C), after which, each well was washed thrice with PBS to remove any non-adherent cancer cells. Fluorescence was quantified using the Fluostar Optima (BMG Labtech, Ortenberg, Germany) in relation to a standard curve to determine the absolute number of adherent cancer cells.

For function blocking experiments, HDLEC were incubated with 50 µl of the appropriate blocking antibodies (**Table 4**) for 1 hour in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37^oC), with any unbound antibody thereafter being washed off with PBS, prior to the addition of fluorescently-labelled cancer cells.

3.16.5 Hyaluronic Acid (HA) Binding Assays

These assays were performed in 96-well plates (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK). 50 µl of fluorescein hyaluronic acid (Sigma, Poole, UK) at a 1 mg/ml concentration was added to each well, and left to set for one hour at 37° C. 1 x 10^4 V3L or S5L cells suspended in 50 µl of Optimem I Reduced Serum Media (Invitrogen, Paisley, UK) were then added per well, and left to incubate at 37° C for one hour. Wells were washed three times with PBS to remove any non-adherent HA. The amount of remaining HA in each well was quantified using the Fluostar Optima (BMG LabTech, Ortenberg, Germany) in relation to a standard curve.

3.16.6 Fibronectin (FN) Binding Assays

These assays were performed in 96-well plates (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK). 50 µl of FN (BD Biosciences, Oxford, UK) at a 20 µg/ml concentration was added to each well, and left to set overnight at 4° C. The next day, V3L or S5L cells (1 x 10^4 per 50 µl of Optimem I Reduced Serum Media (Invitrogen, Paisley, UK)), which had been labelled with the red fluorescent dye $DiIC_{12}$ (BD Biosciences, Oxford, UK) earlier that day, then were added to each well, and left to incubate in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37°C) for 45 minutes. Wells were washed three times with PBS to remove any non-adherent cells. The number of adherent cells was then quantified on the Fluostar Optima (BMG LabTech, Ortenberg, Germany) in relation to a standard curve.

3.16.7 Permeability and Translymphatic Endothelial Migration (TLEM) Assays

These assays were performed in 24-well Migration Chambers with 8 µm pores (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK). Initially, 100 µl of FN at a 0.5 µg/ml concentration (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK) was added to the upper chamber of each well and left to set at 4° C overnight. At D0, 2.5 x 10⁵ HDLEC were seeded onto the FN, and left overnight in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37°C) to form a confluent monolayer. At D1, 5×10^5 V3L or S5L cells were seeded onto this monolayer in 500 µl of Optimem I Reduced Serum Media (Invitrogen, Paisley, UK) containing 2 million MW FITC-Dextran (Sigma, Poole, UK) at a 1 mg/ml concentration (**Figure 6**). 700 µl of Optimem I Reduced Serum Media (without FITC-Dextran) was then added to the lower chamber, in order to establish a diffusion gradient. Permeability through the HDLEC monolayer was quantified by measuring the amount of FITC-Dextran that permeated into the lower chamber at 1, 4, 8, 12 and 24 hours post-seeding in relation to a standard curve on the Fluostar Optima (BMG Labtech, Ortenberg, Germany) (**Figure 7**). For example, at one hour post-seeding, the inserts were moved into new wells containg 700 µl of Optimem I Reduced Serum Media (without FITC-Dextran), which were used for the next time-point. Then 50 µl of media from each of the inital wells was transferred to a 96-well plate containing a standard curve of FITC-Dextran (serial 1:2 dilutions of 1 mg/ml stock concentration) from which the FITC-Dextran concentration of each test sample was extrapolated. Standards and test samples were measured in triplicate.

At D2, the inserts containing the co-cultures (**Figure 8**) were moved into a new 24 well plate (Becton-Dickinson, Oxford, UK). Upper chambers were replenished with 500 µl Optimem I Reduced Serum Media, whilst 700 µl of DMEM containing 10% FCS was added to the bottom chamber as an attractant. The number of cells which had migrated into the lower chamber was quantified 72 hours later using the Coulter Counter (Beckman Coulter, Inc., High Wycombe, UK).

Figure 6 Permeability assay schema. 5 x 10⁵ cancer cells (blue) were seeded onto a HDLEC monolayer (mauve) in 500 µl of Optimem I Reduced Serum Media containing 1 mg/ml of FITC-Dextran (2 million MW; green). This insert, which contained both cell types, was then inserted into a 24-well plate; each well contained 700 µl Optimem I Reduced Serum Media without FITC-Dextran (fawn). The red arrow represents the diffusion gradient. The amount of FITC-Dextran that permeated through the HDLEC monolayer over time was used as a measure of permeability.

Figure 7 Measuring permeability. At each time-point, inserts were moved to new wells containing 700 µl Optimem I Reduced Serum Media (red arrow). Then 50 µl of media from each used well was transferred (in triplicate) to a 96-well plate (blue arrow). The amount of FITC-Dextran that had permeated through the HDLEC monolayer into the bottom well at each time-point was quantified in relation to a standard curve (green) using a fluorescent plate-reader.

Figure 8 Translymphatic endothelial migration assay schema. Inserts containing cancer cells (blue) and HDLEC (mauve), which had been used to measure permeability over 24 hours, were moved into new 24-well plates. The top wells were replenished with 500 µl Optimem I Reduced Serum Media (Serum-free media; fawn), whilst 700 µl of DMEM (grey) which had been supplemented with 10% FCS was added to the lower wells. The latter served as a chemoattractant. The migration of cancer cells through the HDLEC monolayer then was quantified over 48 hours.

3.16.8 Luciferase Assay

Quantification of luciferase expression of V3L and S5L cells *in vitro* was done using the Luciferase Assay System (Promega, Southampton, UK). Briefly, 5 x 10 5 cells were lysed in 1 x lysis buffer. The sample was centrifuged at 12,000 x g for 15 seconds at room temperature, after which the supernatant was transferred to a new 1.5 ml Eppendorf tube. Serial 1:10 dilutions were performed on these stock samples. These samples then were quantified using a VICTOR 1420 Multilabel Counter (Perkin Elmer, Massachusetts, USA).

3.16.9 Soft Agar Assays

A total of 200 cells in a single-cell suspension were mixed, on ice, in 5 ml of DMEM medium with 0.3% agarose (Sigma, Poole UK). After 20 minutes, 1 ml of DMEM containing 10% FCS was added. Cultures were incubated in a humidified atmosphere (5% $CO₂$ at 37^oC) for 18 days, at which point the wells were photographed on a Stemi SV11 microscope (Zeiss, Hertfordshire, UK). The total number of colonies was counted, and the total area of the colonies was determined using ImageJ software. Briefly, the microscopy images initially were converted into grey-scale format using Adobe Photoshop CS4 software; these grey-scale images were then opened in ImageJ. Colonies were highlighted using the 'wand' tool, and the total area then was quantified using the 'measure' tool.

3.17 Mouse Models

Mice were anaesthetised using inhalation anaesthesia (Isoflurane with Oxygen and Nitrous Oxide) for both induction and maintenance.

For the orthotopic pancreatic mouse model ($n = 10$ per group), a 2 cm incision was made in the abdominal wall, parallel to the ribcage. After exteriorisation of the pancreas and spleen, 40 μ l of cell suspension (containing 6.5 x 10⁵ V3L or S5L cells suspended in PBS) was injected into the tail of the pancreas using an insulin syringe, and a 29 gauge x ½ inch needle (Southern Syringe Services, Leicester, UK). The injection site was dabbed gently with a cotton swab (Southern Syringe Services, Leicester, UK) immediately following injection to ensure that no leakage occurred. Skin and muscle were sutured using Vicryl 4.0 (Southern Syringe Services, Leicester, UK). Immediately after surgery, mice were transferred to a 'recovery cage', which contained food and water, and which was heated externally using a heater. As only inhalation anaesthesia was used for induction and maintenance, recovery usually occurred within 30 minutes post-operatively. Mice were monitored daily thereafter, initially to ensure that the sutures had healed adequately, and thereafter to ensure that they were not showing signs of ill health. Mice were imaged weekly from week 1 post-operation using the IVIS imaging system to monitor both the growth of the primary tumour and the potential development of metastases (see below). The experiment was terminated at 10 weeks post-injection.

In order to assess site-specific growth, mice ($n = 7$ per group) were subjected to the above-mentioned procedure, with the following modifications:

 5×10^5 V3L or S5L cells were injected in a 40 ul volume into the spleen in order to seed to the liver; and 1 x 10^5 V3L or S5L cells were injected in a 10 ul volume using a 30 gauge x 5 mm custom syringe (Hamilton Syringes) into the right axillary lymph node, following a 1 cm incision into the overlying skin. The former experiment was terminated at 6 weeks, the latter at 10 weeks, post-injection.

Lastly, 5×10^5 V3L or S5L cells in a 200 µl volume were injected directly into the tail vein in order to assess experimental metastasis. No anaesthesia was given for this procedure. Mice were pre-warmed using warm air in order to dilate the blood vessels. This experiment was terminated at 4 weeks post-injection.

3.18 Bioluminescence Imaging *in vivo*

Mice received an intraperitoneal injection of 150 µl of D-luciferin (Caliper Life Sciences, Cheshire, UK) diluted with distilled water to a final concentration of 15 mg/ml. Thereafter, they were anaesthetised using inhalation anaesthesia (Isoflurane with Oxygen and Nitrous Oxide) for the duration of the imaging procedure. Images were taken using the IVIS-100 (Xenogen, Caliper Life Sciences, Cheshire, UK) at 10 minutes post-injection. Regions of interest (ROI) were calculated for each mouse. ROI calculates the signal intensity for a standardised area for each mouse, and is a quantitative measure of bioluminescence, and thus tumour growth. The ROI for each mouse were plotted weekly until each experiment was terminated. In addition, average ROIs for each experimental group (i.e. V3L and S5L) were calculated for the duration of each experiment.

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3.19 Processing of Mouse Tissues

Harvested tissues (tumours, normal pancreas, duodenum, liver, lungs, any tissue suspicious for metastasis, and lymph nodes) were either formalin-fixed and paraffinembedded, or snap-frozen in liquid nitrogen. Frozen tissue was stored in 2 ml cryovials at -80° C. All tumours were weighed prior to processing.

3.20 Ingenuity Pathway Analysis (IPA)

Proteomics data were analysed using IPA (version 4.0), a web-based application (http://www.ingenuity.com/) that identifies biologically relevant pathways from gene and/or protein expression data. This software is based on the IKPB (Knowledge Base database), one of the largest curated bioinformatics databases containing millions of computable relationships between genes, proteins, drugs and diseases. IPA builds biological networks and explores signalling pathways based on entered experimental data and known published associations. Furthermore, scores are generated for each network, quantifying the likelihood of associations not being due to chance alone (e.g., a score of 2 gives a 99% confidence, with higher scores signifying greater confidence). Based on these scores, IPA prioritises networks, identifies associated proteins, and assigns the most significant biological functions to each network. The global functional analysis feature calculates this significance using a right-tailed Fisher's exact test, with a p-value \leq 0.05 being considered significant.

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3.21 Statistics and Target Selection

3.21.1 Normalisation of MudPIT data

Proteins initially were filtered to exclude those that appeared only in MudPIT experiment 1 or experiment 2. The remaining proteins, common to both experiments, then were filtered according to spectral count. Data were normalised to correct for the differences in spectral counts between samples as follows:

Spectral count of individual protein x ((Total LN spectral count \div Total PDAC spectral $count$ + 0.01)

A corrective factor of 0.01 was used to eliminate any zeroes for g-test calculations. As two experiments were performed, a mean spectral count was calculated for PDAC and LN samples, respectively. All proteins with a mean spectral count between 0 and 5 in both samples were excluded from downstream analysis due to the limited sensitivity of the mass spectrometer, particularly when dealing with a low number of replicate samples.

3.21.2 G-test Analysis of MudPIT data

For the remaining proteins a g-test was performed. The g-test (likelihood ratio; goodness-of-fit) has been shown to be superior for samples with less than three measurements (90). It calculates the x^2 -distribution with one degree of freedom. A gvalue of ≥ 3.8 is considered significant.

The original equation used for the calculation of the g-value is as follows:

$$
g = 2f_{\text{obs}}1 \ln(f_{\text{obs}}1/f_{\text{exp}}1) + 2f_{\text{obs}}2 \ln(f_{\text{obs}}2/f_{\text{exp}}2)
$$

Where $f_{obs}1 = observed$ value in sample 1

 $f_{obs}2$ = observed value in sample 2

 $f_{exp}1 =$ expected frequencies in sample 1

 f_{exp} 2= expected frequencies in sample 2

The null hypothesis is that there is no differential expression between the 2 samples. **Therefore**

$$
f_{\text{obs}} 1 = f_{\text{obs}} 2 = (f_{\text{obs}} 1 + f_{\text{obs}} 2)/2
$$

This also is equal to the mean of the observed counts between all samples (mean_T).

Therefore the equation becomes

$$
g = 2 f_{\text{obs}} 1 \ln(f_{\text{obs}} 1/\text{mean}_{\text{T}}) + 2 f_{\text{obs}} 2 \ln(f_{\text{obs}} 2/\text{mean}_{\text{T}})
$$

Which becomes

$$
g = 2 \left[(f_{obs} 1 \ln(f_{obs} 1/mean_{T}) + f_{obs} 2 \ln(f_{obs} 2/mean_{T}) \right]
$$

3.21.3 IHC Validation

For IHC validation, the average score for each matched case was calculated, and a Mann-Whitney test was performed to determine differential expression between primary PDAC and metastatic LN samples. A p-value \leq 0.05 was considered significant.

3.21.4 Experiments conducted *in vitro*

All the *in vitro* experiments were repeated three times in triplicate. A paired Student's t-test was then performed, with a p-value of \leq 0.05 being considered significant. Error bars show standard error of the mean (SEM).

3.21.5 Experiments conducted *in vivo*

A Mann-Whitney test was performed on all data, with a p-value of ≤ 0.05 being considered significant. Error bars show standard error of the mean (SEM).

4. RESULTS (Part I): PROTEOMICS

4.1. LCM and MudPIT Analysis

In order to differentiate the malignant epithelia from the surrounding connective tissue, sections were stained with haematoxylin before LCM. Seven matched cases (10,000 - 15,000 cells/case) were dissected in total, with four and three cases subsequently being pooled. This resulted in four pooled samples – two PDACs and two matched LN metastases – each comprising 10 µg of protein (40,000 - 45,000 cells) that were used for downstream Multidimensional Protein Identification Technology (MudPIT) analysis. Representative sections of a malignant pancreatic duct before and after LCM are shown in **Figure 9**, together with the subsequent workflow for analysis.

Figure 9 Laser Capture Microdissection (LCM). Representative images (100x magnification) show a malignant pancreatic duct before (**A)** and after (**B)** LCM. The workflow for LCM is shown in (**C)**.

In total, 1504 proteins were identified across both experiments. **Table 5** displays the total number of proteins identified, as well as the total spectral counts, for each sample. Spectral counts reflect the number of peptides identified *in silico* and the number of times those matched peptides were observed. Spectral count has been shown to be a semi-quantitative measure of abundance across samples, with a linear correlation to relative abundance over a two order of magnitude linear dynamic range (89). This correlation is seen in our samples – the higher the number of total spectral counts, the higher the number of identified proteins. On average, a lower number of proteins were seen in primary PDACs as opposed to LN metastases. However, this did not affect the statistical analysis, as samples were normalised before being tested for differential expression. Normalisation corrects for the differences in total spectral count seen between samples, and ensures a 'level playing field' before differential expression is calculated. The False Discovery Rate (FDR), which represents the number of false positives or the number of peptides that were incorrectly identified, was < 1.5% for all samples.

Table 5 MudPIT results. The total number of proteins, as well as the total spectral counts, identified in PDAC samples and matched LN metastases. The false discovery rate (FDR) for all samples was <1.5%.

The relationship between the proteins found across both experiments is illustrated in the Venn diagram in **Figure 10**. Of the 1504 proteins found, 650 were found in only one of the two MudPIT experiments and were thus excluded from further analysis. The remaining 854 proteins were commonly expressed in both experiments (**Appendix I**); these represent the proteome of primary PDAC and LN metastases. Following filtering on the basis of spectral count, a statistical g-test was performed – this resulted in a list of 115 significantly differentially expressed proteins (g-value ≥ 3.8) (**Table 6**).

Table 6 List of 115 significantly differentially expressed proteins. The 854 proteins common to all four samples were subjected to a g-test to determine which proteins were significantly differentially expressed ($g \ge 3.8$). Of these, S100P (high g-value), 14-3-3 sigma (intermediate g-value) and moesin (low g-value; all three proteins are highlighted in red), were selected for validation using immunohistochemistry (IHC). The IHC served to validate the statistical approach used, as well as to validate the up-regulation of the candidate proteins.

Figure 10 Relationship between the proteins found using MudPIT. Of the 1504 proteins found in total, 854 proteins were seen in all four samples analysed. Of these 854 proteins, 115 proteins were found to be significantly differentially expressed following a statistical g-test (g-value \geq 3.8).

Quantification of the subcellular compartmental distribution (**Figure 11**) showed that most of the classified proteins were cytoplasmic (57.6%) and nuclear (18.3%). Cell membrane constituted 8.9% of the proteome. 8.5% of the proteome was found to be extracellular, whilst the remaining proteins (6.7%) could not be classified or were unknown.

Figure 11 Subcellular compartmentalisation of 854 proteome. The majority of the 854 proteins were cytoplasmic (57.6%) and nuclear (18.3%), with cell membrane (CM) proteins being less well represented. Some proteins in the proteome (8.5%) originated from the extracellular space (ECS). The remaining 6.7% of the 854 proteome could not be classified or were unknown, and thus, are depicted as 'other'.

IPA analysis demonstrated that the top five biological functions within the 854 discovered proteins were: cellular growth and proliferation (165 proteins); cell death (132 proteins); cellular movement (90 proteins); cell-to-cell signalling (69 proteins) and protein synthesis (44 proteins) (**Figure 12**). Qualitative analysis of this proteome highlighted a number of proteins involved in these top five biological functions: integrins α2, α3, αV, β1, and β4 (growth and proliferation, cellular movement and signalling); eight of the 21 known S100 proteins, namely S100A4, S100 A6, S100A8, S100A9, S100A10, S100A11, S100A16 and S100P (growth and proliferation, cellular movement and signalling); IQGAP1 and IQGAP2 (cellular movement and signalling); cathepsins B, G and Z (cellular movement); and lastly, α –, β – and δ – catenin (signalling). In addition, six out of seven members of the 14-3-3 family of regulatory proteins (14-3-3- β/ α , γ , ζ/δ, η, θ, and σ), which have the capacity to bind various signalling molecules also appeared in the proteome; moreover, all of these were significantly differentially expressed between PDAC and LN metastasis.

Comparison of our 854 proteins with previously reported proteomic data on the pancreas (tissues, pancreatic juice, serum and urine) using the Pancreatic Expression Database [\(http://www.pancreasexpression.org\)](http://www.pancreasexpression.org/), showed a 29% overlap; the proteins common to all studies, including ours, are listed in **Appendix II**.

Figure 12 Top five biological functions associated with the 854 proteome. Ingenuity Pathway Analysis (IPA) ranked cell growth and proliferation as the top biological function associated with the 854 identified proteins. This was followed by cell death, cellular movement, cell-to-cell signalling and protein synthesis.

4.2 Validation of MudPIT Data using IHC

Three proteins with high, intermediate and low g-values, respectively were chosen for further validation by IHC in a larger series of 55 matched cases of primary PDAC and LN metastases The IHC served both to validate the statistical approach used to analyse the MudPIT data, as well as to confirm the up-regulation of the candidate proteins in LN metastases. Proteomic analysis showed that S100P (g-value = 20.66) and 14-3-3 sigma (g-value = 11.12) were significantly up-regulated in metastatic LN specimens (**Table 6** – highlighted in red). Although moesin had an equivocal g-value of 3.76, we chose to investigate it further as it had previously been shown to be upregulated in association with LN metastasis.

S100P was successfully analysed in 52/55 cases; whilst 14-3-3 sigma and moesin were successfully analysed in 51/55 cases. Some cases had to be omitted from the final analysis due to technical loss of tissue cores. Both S100P ($p = 0.05$) and 14-3-3 sigma ($p < 0.001$) were confirmed to be significantly up-regulated in LN metastatic epithelia by IHC (**Figures 13** and **14**). All of the 52 cases analysed showed high levels of S100P expression in both the primary PDAC and LN metastases, with S100P localising to both the cytoplasm and nucleus (**Figure 13A-D**). In contrast, 14- 3-3 sigma expression was restricted to the cytoplasm of malignant epithelia (**Figure 14A-D**). Only six primary PDACs did not express 14-3-3 sigma, and of those, four showed up-regulation in matched LN metastases, whilst two metastatic LN were negative for 14-3-3 sigma expression.

Figure 13 IHC validation of S100P differential expression (n = 52). Representative images of primary PDAC (**A** and **C**) and matched LN metastases (**B** and **D**; 100x magnification) show that S100P was strongly expressed in both primary PDACs and LN metastases, localising to the nucleus and cytoplasm. In addition, a graphical representation of the IHC scores (median with inter-quartile range) is shown in **E**; thus, S100P was confirmed to be up-regulated in LN metastases ($p = 0.05$).

Figure 14 IHC validation of 14-3-3 sigma differential expression (n = 51). Representative images of primary PDAC (**A** and **C**) and matched LN metastases (**B** and **D**; 100x magnification) show that 14-3-3 sigma was expressed exclusively in the cytoplasm of malignant epithelia. LN metastases showed an increase in 14-3-3 sigma expression relative to primary PDAC ($p < 0.001$), in keeping with MudPIT data. Quantification of differential expression is shown in **E** (IHC scores: median with inter-quartile range).

Moesin (**Figure 15**) was variably expressed by the epithelial components of both primary PDAC and metastatic LN. Only 15/51 matched cases expressed moesin; with four cases showing higher expression in matched LN metastases. Thus, moesin was not found to be significant differentially expressed ($p = 0.88$). In addition, moesin was expressed by various stromal elements in both primary PDAC and LN metastases. Of note, the LN parenchyma stained strongly positive for moesin.

Figure 15 IHC validation of moesin expression (n = 51). Representative images of primary PDAC (**A** and **C**) and matched LN metastases (**B** and **D**; 100x magnification) show that moesin was not expressed in the malignant epithelia of most of the cases analysed; moreover it was expressed by stromal elements in both primary PDACs and LN metastases. As can be seen in **B**, the LN parenchyma was highly immunoreactive. A graphical representation of the IHC scores (median with interquartile range) is shown in **E**; moesin was not found to be significantly differentially expressed.

5. DISCUSSION (Part I): PROTEOMICS

Using the Liquid Tissue MS Protein Prep Kit, we were able to analyse the proteomes of primary PDAC and matched LN metastases from FFPE tissues. As these samples were obtained from patients who qualified for surgical resection, we consider these proteins to be particularly relevant for therapeutic target discovery. Pre-fractionation of our samples during MudPIT greatly increased the number of proteins identified, yielding 1504 proteins from only 10 µg of tissue per sample; thus, the obtained proteome is, to our knowledge, the first and certainly the largest of its kind within the field. The full proteome will be made publically accessible through the Pancreatic Expression Database (188).

It has been shown that increasing the number of sample replicates in MudPIT analysis increases the number of commonly identified proteins by 30% per replicate (i.e. two replicates result in a 60% overlap, whilst three replicates result in a 90% overlap) (89,189). This is in keeping with our results, where 854 proteins (57%) were common to both experiments. Interestingly however, whilst these previously reported experiments were conducted on replicates of homogenous tissue (e.g. normal mouse liver), our samples were from seven different donors, with individual heterogenous tumours. Despite this heterogeneity, only 115 of the 854 proteins (13.5%) were significantly differentially expressed, suggesting that LN metastases largely resemble their tumours of origin, which is in keeping with published transcriptomic data (69).

A caveat to this interpretation however, is that whilst MudPIT increases protein yield, it remains an evolving technology which only 'scratches the surface' of the complex mammalian proteome. Thus, considering that the technique itself is approximately 75% reproducible (89); in light of the fact that duplicates were analysed which select for a 60% overlap (89); and bearing in mind that the G-test quantitates larger foldchanges better than smaller changes in differential protein expression (90), one has to wonder if these data reflect the limitations of current day proteomics, rather than biological diversity of the samples analysed. Had we not been limited by the scarcity of tissue samples, time and/or by cost, it would have been interesting to test if adding a third sample replicate, or adding more patient samples to the LCM pool would have altered the results. Furthermore, considering that homeostasis often is maintained by incremental or qualitative changes (e.g. phosporylation) to protein expression, it is also plausible that by sampling the most abundant proteins with the greatest foldchanges in expression between the two anatomical sites, one actually misses those proteins that are potentially responsible for the dynamic, pathophysiological changes occurring during carcinogenesis and metastasis. However, in order to overcome this, one would need either to increase the amount of starting material used in the analysis, which was not possible in this study, or select for these qualitative changes during peptide separation, which would have decreased substantially the number of proteins observed overall. Thus, whilst questions remain as to how much variability is needed for lymphatic metastasis to occur, the 854 protein proteome of PDAC and matched LN metastases is a valuable, initial step towards understanding the proteomic changes underlying metastatic PDAC.

The IHC served both to validate the statistical approach used to analyse the MudPIT data, as well as to confirm the up-regulation of the candidate proteins in LN metastases. Even though moesin had an equivocal g-value, we wished to investigate its expression using IHC as it previously had been identified as a marker of lymphatic metastasis in PDAC (72). As only 29% of matched primary PDAC and LN metastatic epithelia in our study showed moesin expression, our data do not support the previous findings. Thus, the IHC findings were in agreement with the MudPIT data for this protein. Interestingly, Cui et al. did find that 15 of the 42 (35.7%) moesin positive primary PDACs analysed in their study expressed moesin in various stromal cells as well as in the ductal epithelia (72). We found moesin expression to be predominantly stromal, both in primary PDAC and LN metastases. This is perhaps of more practical significance, as it precludes its choice as an epithelial-specific therapeutic target.

We chose to validate one member of the 14-3-3 protein family, as six of these seven evolutionarily-related proteins were found to be significantly differentially expressed between primary PDAC and LN metastases. These proteins can bind more than 100 different proteins, and can potentially affect many processes within the cell, including signal transduction, apoptosis, cell cycle regulation and cytoskeletal organisation (190). The precise mechanisms of action of the 14-3-3 protein family are still poorly understood. Broadly speaking however, they can regulate enzyme activity; act as localisation anchors, localising various proteins to specific compartments within the cell; and are scaffolds or adaptor molecules, facilitating protein-protein interactions (190).

14-3-3 sigma, or stratifin, has been shown previously to be absent in the normal pancreas, but up-regulated in PanINs and primary PDAC (93,191–193). We have now confirmed that 14-3-3 sigma expression is up-regulated in LN metastases relative to primary PDAC. Interestingly, 14-3-3 sigma is expressed solely by epithelial cells and almost exclusively forms homodimers (other members of the family can form heterodimers) (194), and is therefore more amenable to specific targeting. Furthermore, in normal cells, 14-3-3 sigma is up-regulated by TP53 and BRCA1, halting the cell cycle in response to DNA damage (194). This raises interesting questions as to why 14-3-3 sigma expression is increased in primary PDAC, in which TP53 mutations are commonly found. In addition, the observed upregulation of 14-3-3 sigma in LN metastatic lesions is also seemingly counterintuitive. There are two possible explanations for this. 14-3-3 sigma has been observed in the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) of patients who have undergone traumatic brain injury or transient cerebral ischaemia (195). Although it was not found to have any functional effects in the CSF of these patients, it was noted as a marker of tissue damage. Thus, it could serve the same role in PDAC. A more intriguiging explanation, however, comes from studies of co-cultures human keratinocytes and fibroblasts (196–198). Not only is 14-3-3 sigma a marker of differentiation in skin epithelia, but differentiated keratinocytes also can secrete 14-3-3 sigma, which then is taken up by surrounding fibroblasts (196). This secreted form of the protein has been shown to increase matrix metalloproteinase-1 (MMP-1) and MMP-3 expression in the stromal compartment (196,197). The role of the MMPs in cancer metastasis is well-established, and it would be interesting to explore this potential cross-talk mechanism in the context of PDAC. This could be done in various ways. One could screen a number of pancreatic cancer cell lines, with varying metastatic capabilities,

for 14-3-3 sigma secretion. Having established that these cells do indeed secrete this protein, one could then modify the above-mentioned co-cultures to include pancreatic cancer cells in combination with pancreatic stellate cells, in order to determine if 14-3-3 sigma secretion by the cancer cells stimulates MMP secretion by the stellate cells *in vitro*. In addition, primary PDAC samples could be stained, using IHC, for 14-3-3 sigma and MMP-1 and MMP-3, in order to determine the relevance of this hypothesis in human tissues.

As described in 1.2.3 (pg 43-44), S100P, a 10.4 kDa calcium-binding protein, already has been associated with PDAC (91–97). We have shown previously that S100P is absent in normal pancreatic ductal epithelia, progressively increased in PanIN lesions, expressed in > 90% of primary PDACs, and that it increases invasion by mediating changes in the actin cytoskeleton and up-regulating cathepsin D *in vitro* (91,92,94). S100P also has been shown to be expressed at higher levels in PDAC as compared to chronic pancreatitis (93). Furthemore, S100P has been shown to bind to the receptor for advanced glycation end-products (RAGE), increasing pancreatic cancer growth, survival and invasion both *in vitro* and *in vivo*; a mechanism of action which is potentially targetable using cromolyn, or analogues thereof (95–97). Through this study, we have shown that S100P is up-regulated in LN metastases with a high g-value using MudPIT analysis, and a marginally significant p-value ($p = 0.05$) using IHC. This discrepancy could be due to two technical factors. Firstly, both primary PDAC and LN metastases stained strongly positive for S100P, resulting in a minimal quantitative difference. Secondly, despite the high g-value, the observed spectral counts obtained for S100P with MudPIT were low; this most likely reflects the limited sensitivity of mass spectrometry at present. It could also indicate that S100P is masked by a more abundant protein during MudPIT, or that some inherent physicochemical property of the protein causes it to be lost during fractionation, resulting in it being underrepresented. However, the spatio-temporal expression pattern of S100P, as well as its well-established role in PDAC growth and invasion, makes it a viable therapeutic target.

Interestingly, S100P recently has been shown to directly interact with IQGAP1 (199), one of the significantly differentially expressed proteins found in this study (**Table 6**). IQGAP1, a member of the IQGAP family, is a multidomain protein that can interact with a number of partners, affecting intracellular signal transduction and cellular movement by modulating the actin cytoskeleton and microtubule dynamics (199,200). Heil et al (199) showed that calcium-bound S100P, through its interaction with IQGAP1, down-regulates MEK signalling downstream of the EGF receptor. Importantly, this interaction does not affect IQGAP1's ability to bind Cdc42 and Rac1. Thus, S100P potentially can affect cell movement and cellular proliferation in different ways. Furthermore, it has been shown that S100P can activate ezrin (201), increasing transendothelial migration of non-small cell lung cancer cells *in vitro* (202). Both these mechanisms could also, therefore, potentially affect lymphatic invasion in PDAC.

Thus, we have shown in this study that comparative proteomic analysis of FFPE tissue is a valid approach for the investigation of pancreatic malignancy. In addition to establishing the first proteome of primary PDAC and matched LN metastases, we have identified S100P and 14-3-3 sigma as two proteins that may represent viable epithelial-specific targets for the treatment of both primary and metastatic disease.

6. RESULTS (Part II): THE ROLE OF S100P IN LYMPHATIC METASTASIS IN PDAC

6.1 Analysis of S100P in Lymphatic Metastasis in PDAC *in vitro*

As described in 1.2.3 (pg 43-44), S100P has been a long-standing focus of interest in our laboratory. We have shown that S100P is absent in normal pancreatic ductal epithelia, progressively increased in PanIN lesions, expressed in > 90 % of primary PDACs, and that it increases invasion by mediating changes in the actin cytoskeleton and up-regulating cathepsin D *in vitro* (91,92,94)*.* Recently, we have shown S100P to be a potential candidate gene involved in the haematological dissemination of PDAC, increasing transendothelial migration both *in vitro* and *in vivo* (Sayka Barry, PhD Thesis, 2009). Furthermore, the secretion of S100P by pancreatic cancer cells has been reported to stimulate primary tumour growth, survival and metastasis by interacting with RAGE (95). Evidence is thus accumulating that S100P contributes to metastasis in PDAC, but the role of this protein in lymphatic metastasis in PDAC is still unknown. Having validated the relative increase in S100P expression in LN metastases, we chose to further investigate its potential role in lymphatic invasion *in vitro* and *in vivo*.

6.1.1 Creation and Characterisation of V3L and S5L Cell Lines

We aimed to create an orthotopic pancreatic mouse model to evaluate the effects of S100P on primary tumour growth, as well as its potential role in metastasis. As

S100P is not expressed endogenously in mice (203), the transgenic KRAS^{G12D} and/or the KRAS^{G12D}/TP53 mouse models, would not be relevant to the investigation of S100P without further engineering. In order to allow for the imaging of tumours and/or metastases in real-time *in vivo*, the V3 and S5 cell lines (94) were further engineered to express luciferase using a lentivirus (204). This was performed with the help of Dr David Gould, Bone and Joint Research Unit, William Harvey Institute. Following transduction, characterisation of the V3 Luciferase⁺ (V3L) and S5 Luciferase⁺ (S5L) cell lines was performed in order to ensure that the luciferase transfection had not resulted in functional alteration, i.e. proliferation, invasion and anchorage-independent growth.

6.1.1.1 Confirmation of S100P over-expression

S100P expression was evaluated in V3L and S5L cells at both the transcript (**Figure 16**) and protein levels (**Figure 17**). S5L cells were found to express significantly higher levels of both S100P mRNA ($p = 0.04$) and protein ($p = 0.03$). However, I was only able to show protein expression using a V5 antibody, and not using an antibody to S100P. In order to confirm that the observed protein was, in fact, S100P, a transient silencing experiment was performed. The Western blots and siRNA knockdown experiments also were performed by Kate Lines, a fellow PhD student in the laboratory, after I had optimised the protocols, in order to ensure that the data were reproducible.

Figure 16 qPCR for S100P *in vitro.* Extracted mRNA from V3L and S5L cell lines was analysed for S100P transcript; S5L cells express significantly higher levels of S100P mRNA than V3L cells $(p = 0.04)$.

Figure 17 Confirmation of S100P protein expression. Representative Western blots (**A** performed by me; **B** performed by Kate Lines) showing the expression of V5 tagged S100P in V3L and S5L cells, as well as in the S5L cell line following knockdown with either non-targeting control siRNA (NT siRNA) or siRNA to S100P. Densitometry (**C**) confirmed that S100P protein is significantly over-expression in S5L cells ($p = 0.03$). The silencing experiments were performed in order to confirm the specificity of the V5-antibody in detecting S100P protein, as well as to show that the Western blot could be reproduced by someone else in the lab. HSC-70 and actin were used as loading controls.

6.1.1.2 Functional Characterisation

In order to confirm that the luciferase transduction was successful, and that it did not alter the behaviour of the V3L and S5L cell lines *in vitro*, a series of functional characterisation experiments were performed.

Quantification of luciferase expression *in vitro* showed that the V3L and S5L cell lines expressed equivalent amounts of luciferase (**Figure 18**), i.e 50 V3L cells expressed the same amount of luciferase as 50 S5L cells; the same result was seen when 5 x 10^5 cells were used. Thus, any differences in bioluminescence imaging seen *in vivo* would represent a true difference in growth or metastasis, and not reflect a difference in luciferase transduction between the two cell lines.

Figure 18 Quantification of luciferase expression *in vitro*. Luciferase quantification was performed on serial 1:10 dilutions of 5 x 10⁵ V3L and S5L cells following lentiviral transduction. No differences were seen between the two cell lines.

In the V3 and S5 cell lines, no difference in proliferation between the two cell lines had been seen up to 96 hours *in vitro* (94). The same result was obtained using the V3L and S5L cell lines (**Figure 19**).

Figure 19 Proliferation assays. At Day 0, 2.5 x 10⁴ V3L and S5L cells were seeded into 24-well plates. Daily counts were performed using a haemocytometer. The experiment lasted five days in total. No differences were seen between the two cell lines, in keeping with data obtained using the V3 and S5 cell lines.

It had previously been shown that the S5 cell line was significantly more invasive than the V3 cell line in Matrigel assays *in vitro* (94). Thus, these assays were repeated using the luciferase-expressing cell lines. As can be seen in **Figure 20**, the S5L cells were significantly more invasive than V3L cells ($p = 0.0002$), in keeping with previous data.

Figure 20 S100P increases invasion *in vitro*. Invasion assays were performed on V3L and S5L cells in Matrigel-coated transwell chambers. A significantly higher number of S5L cells had invaded through the Matrigel barrier after 48 hours ($p =$ 0.0002). (HPF = high power field; $x20$ objective)

Soft agar assays were performed to assess the tumourigenicity of both these cell lines (**Figure 21**). No significant differences, neither in the total number, nor in the average area of colonies formed, were observed, indicating that S100P does not affect anchorage-independent growth.

Figure 21 Soft agar assays. 200 V3L or S5L cells in a single suspension were mixed in 0.3% agarose and left to grow for 18 days $(A = \sqrt{3}L; B = \sqrt{5}L;$ both images taken at 40x magnification). The average number of colonies (**C**), as well as the average area of the colonies formed (**D**), was then quantified using ImageJ software. No differences were seen between the two cell lines.

6.1.2 Interaction of the V3L and S5L Cell Lines with Human Dermal Lymphatic Endothelial Cells

Human Dermal Lymphatic Endothelial Cells (HDLEC), which were purchased at passage three and used until passage seven, were used as a proxy for pancreatic lymphatics *in vitro*. Co-cultures, containing V3L or S5L cells in combination with HDLEC, were established to investigate cancer cell adhesion to HDLEC; permeability through a HDLEC monolayer; and translymphatic endothelial cell migration.

6.1.2.1 Confirmation of the Lymphatic Lineage of HDLEC

HDLEC were fluorescently stained for the lymphatic-specific markers LYVE-1 and podoplanin (**Figure 22**) to verify that these cells were truly lymphatic, and not blood vascular, endothelial cells. All experiments were conducted between passage three and seven, as cells became senescent thereafter.

Figure 22 Verification of the lymphatic lineage of human dermal lymphatic endothelial cells (HDLEC). In order to ensure that a pure population of lymphatic cells was used in all experiments, cells were immunofluorescently stained for the lymphatic markers LYVE-1 (**B**) and podoplanin (**C**). A merged image is shown in (**D**). (All images at 63x magnification under oil immersion)

6.1.2.2 Activating HDLEC

For the functional assays, HDLEC were stimulated with either IFN γ (100 ng/ml) or TNF α (10 ng/ml) for 24 hours prior to the addition of V3L or S5L cells. These concentrations were chosen based on previously published data (151). ICAM-1, VCAM-1 and E-selectin were used as markers of activation status following determination of basal levels of expression on resting HDLEC by flow cytometry (**Figure 23**), as these three markers previously had been shown to increase following $TNF\alpha$ stimulation of HDLEC (151). At rest, HDLEC did not express VCAM-1 or E-selectin, but did express ICAM-1. Following stimulation with IFNγ, ICAM-1 expression was maintained at levels equivalent to that at rest ($p = 0.36$), and cells did not express VCAM-1 or E-selectin. TNF α stimulation significantly increased ICAM-1 ($p = 0.04$) and E-selectin ($p = 0.04$) expression. Whilst VCAM-1 expression did increase following treatment with $TNF\alpha$, the increase was not statistically significant ($p = 0.07$). Representative histograms (for ICAM-1) of the flow cytometry experiments, including statistical quantification of the number of positive cells, are shown in **Figure 24**. The geometric mean was used as a measure of mean fluorescent intensity (MFI) and indicates expression levels, and has been shown on all subsequent graphs.

Figure 23 Cell surface expression of ICAM-1, VCAM-1 and E-selectin on HDLEC. As can be seen in **A**, resting HDLEC express ICAM-1. IFNγ stimulation (100 ng/ml) maintained ICAM-1 expression at equivalent levels to those seen at rest ($p = 0.36$) whilst TNF α stimulation (10 ng/ml) significantly up-regulated ICAM-1 expression (p = 0.04). In contrast, VCAM-1 and E-selectin are not expressed on resting HDLEC (**B**), nor are they expressed following IFNγ stimulation. Although VCAM-1 expression did increase upon TNF α stimulation, this increase was not statistically significant (p = 0.07). TNF α stimulation did significantly increase the cell surface expression of Eselectin ($p = 0.04$).

Figure 24 Representative histograms of the flow cytometry experiments. Histograms are shown for a negative control (**A**), IgG control (**B**) and ICAM-1 cell surface expression at rest (**C**) and following IFNγ (100 ng/ml; **D**) and TNFα (10 ng/ml; **E**) stimulation. The geometric mean was used as a measure of mean fluorescent intensity (MFI) which is shown on all subsequent graphs.

Flow cytometry was performed to assess the cell surface expression of LYVE-1 (**Figure 25**), both to confirm the lymphatic lineage by a method other than ICC, and as it previously had been shown that $TNF\alpha$ stimulation ablates LYVE-1 expression on HDLEC (104,151). We were able to reproduce these findings. LYVE-1 was found to be significantly expressed on resting HDLEC ($p = 0.01$), relative to the negative and IgG controls. Cytokine stimulation with both IFN_Y ($p = 0.02$), and TNF α ($p =$ 0.007), significantly decreased LYVE-1 surface expression relative to levels observed on resting HDLEC.

Figure 25 Cell surface expression of LYVE-1 on HDLEC. Resting HDLEC express significant levels of LYVE-1 ($p = 0.01$). This confirms that these endothelial cells are lymphatic in lineage. LYVE-1 expression significantly decreased following IFNγ stimulation (100 ng/ml; $p = 0.02$) and TNF α stimulation (10 ng/ml; $p = 0.007$). (MFI = mean fluorescent intensity)

Having reproduced the data reported by Johnson et al. (104,151), flow cytometry was performed on resting and cytokine-stimulated HDLEC to assess the cell surface expression of CLEVER-1 and the fibronectin-binding integrins α 4β1, α 5β1 and α 9β1, both at rest and following cytokine stimulation (**Figures 26 - 28**).

CLEVER-1 (**Figure 26**) was expressed on resting HDLEC (geometric mean = 8.9), and this expression was significantly higher than the IgG control ($p = 0.0009$). Of note, CLEVER-1 expression was constant i.e. the levels seen on resting HDLEC were similar to levels seen on activated HDLEC (geometric mean following IFNγ stimulation = 8.5 (p = 0.75), and $TNF\alpha$ stimulation = 10.3 (p = 0.07)).

Figure 26 Cell surface expression of CLEVER-1 on HDLEC. Resting HDLEC express CLEVER-1 at the cell surface at significantly higher levels than the IgG control (p = 0.0009). Following cytokine stimulation with both IFN_γ (100 ng/ml) and TNF α (10 ng/ml), CLEVER-1 expression is maintained at levels similar to that seen on resting HDLEC. (MFI = mean fluorescent intensity)

HDLEC expressed high levels of α 5β1 integrin at rest, relative to the IgG control (p = 0.0003) (**Figure 27**). Interestingly, expression of this integrin decreased significantly following IFN_γ treatment (p = 0.04), but increased significantly following TNF α (p = 0.02) stimulation, compared to levels seen at rest. In contrast, HDLEC were found to express low levels of α 4β1 and α 9β1 at rest (geometric means: α 4β1 = 6.7 and α 9β1 $= 9.3$) (**Figure 28**). As was the case for α 5β1 integrin, IFN_γ stimulation decreased the cell surface expression of these integrins (geometric means: α 4 β 1 = 4.8 and α 9 β 1 = 5.3) whilst TNFα stimulation increased their expression (geometric means: $α4β1 =$ 10.5 and $α9β1 = 15.0$). None of these changes reached statistical significance however.

Figure 27 Cell surface expression of α5β1 integrin on HDLEC. Resting HDLEC express α 5β1 at the cell surface, relative to IgG control (p = 0.0003). Following IFN_γ (100 ng/ml) stimulation, expression significantly decreased ($p = 0.04$) as compared to levels seen at rest. However, following TNFα (10 ng/ml), $α5β1$ expression significantly increased ($p = 0.02$). (MFI = mean fluorescent intensity)

Figure 28 Cell surface expression of α4β1 and α9β1 integrins on HDLEC. Resting HDLEC express low levels of α 4 β 1 and α 9 β 1. Following cytokine stimulation with IFNγ (100 ng/ml), cell surface expression of both these integrins decreases to levels seen on negative and IgG controls. Although both α 4 β 1 and α 9 β 1 increased following TNF α stimulation (10 ng/ml) expression, these increases did not reach statistical significance. (MFI = mean fluorescent intensity)

6.1.2.3 S100P Increases Adhesion to Activated HDLEC

The adhesion of V3L and S5L cells to resting and activated HDLEC was tested to determine if S100P affects adhesion (**Figure 29**). At rest, no differences were seen between the adhesive behaviour of the two cell lines. Following IFN γ stimulation, S5L cells were significantly better able to adhere to HDLEC than V3L cells ($p = 0.01$). Interestingly, stimulation with $TNF\alpha$ significantly decreased the adhesion of V3L cells as compared with basal V3L adhesion to resting HDLEC ($p = 0.03$), but did not alter the number of adherent S5L cells in comparison to that seen at rest. Thus, this decrease in V3L adhesion resulted in a significant difference between V3L and S5L cell adhesion following TNF α stimulation (p = 0.02). These results indicate that cancer cell adhesion to HDLEC is not activation dependent, but also show that V3L cells are less able to bind to activated HDLEC than S5L cells.

Figure 29 Adhesion of V3L and S5L cells to HDLEC. The ability of V3L and S5L cells to adhere to HDLEC was tested at rest and following HDLEC activation. No differences were seen between the two cell lines in adhesion to resting lymphatics. However, S5L cells were significantly better able to bind to IFN- γ (100 ng/ml) activated HDLEC than V3L cells (p = 0.01). Although S5L adhesion to TNF- α (10 ng/ml) stimulated HDLEC was equivalent to that seen at rest, V3L adhesion following TNF- α stimulation was significantly decreased (p = 0.03). Thus, S5L cells appear to adhere better to TNF- α activated HDLEC than V3L cells (p = 0.02).

In order to assess whether or not these differences in adhesion were due to the effects of S100P, the experiments were repeated using recombinant S100P (100 nM), which was added to the media surrounding both HDLEC and V3L cells (**Figure** **30**). Surprisingly, the presence of recombinant S100P in the assay significantly decreased the adhesion of V3L cells to resting HDLEC ($p = 0.03$). No change in adhesion was seen when HDLEC were stimulated with IFNγ. However, V3L adhesion to HDLEC which had been stimulated with $TNF\alpha$ for 24 hours significantly increased in the presence of recombinant S100P ($p = 0.008$).

Figure 30 The effects of recombinant S100P on V3L adhesion to HDLEC. In order to assess if the observed differences in adhesion to activated HDLEC between the V3L and S5L cell lines were mediated by S100P, recombinant S100P (100 nM) was added to the media surrounding both HDLEC and V3L cells, and adhesion was quantified after 45 minutes. The presence of recombinant S100P significantly decreased adhesion to resting HDLEC ($p = 0.03$). No change in adhesion was seen when HDLEC were stimulated with IFNγ (100 ng/ml) for 24 hours. However, the presence of recombinant S100P significantly increased the adhesion of V3L cells to HDLEC which had been stimulated with TNF α (10 ng/ml) for 24 hours (p = 0.008).
6.1.2.4 V3L and S5L Cells Adhere to HDLEC via Different Receptors

6.1.2.4.1 Function Blocking Assays

In order to determine which receptors might be involved in and/or mediate the observed differences in adhesion of V3L and S5L cells to HDLEC, function blocking experiments were performed using antibodies to ICAM-1, VCAM-1, E-selectin, LYVE-1, β1 integrin, α4 integrin, α9β1 integrin, α5β1 and CLEVER-1 (**Figures 32 – 37;** summarised in **Table 7** below). A function blocking antibody to the epithelialspecific β6 integrin was used as a negative control, since HDLEC, V3L and S5L cells do not express this integrin (**Figure 31**). β6 blockade did not alter the binding of cancer cells to resting HDLEC, or of S5L cells to IFNγ-stimulated and TNFαstimulated HDLEC. Whilst β6 blockade did appear to have an effect on the binding of V3L cells to activated HDLEC, this did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.07$) following IFN_Y-stimulation and $p = 0.08$ following TNF α -stimulation).

V3L adhesion to resting HDLEC is mediated by multiple receptors, including LYVE-1 (p = 0.02), CLEVER-1 (0.04), α 4 integrin (p = 0.03), α 9 β 1 (p = 0.02), and β 1 integrin (p = 0.03) (**Figures 32 and 33**). However, only CLEVER-1 and α5 integrin appear to be involved in V3L adhesion to activated HDLEC. Surprisingly, CLEVER-1 and α 5 integrin blockade significantly increased V3L adhesion to IFNγ-stimulated HDLEC (CLEVER-1: $p = 0.003$; α 5 integrin: $p = 0.008$) and TNF α -stimulated HDLEC (CLEVER-1: $p = 0.03$; α 5 integrin: $p = 0.003$). α 5 integrin does not appear to be involved in V3L adhesion to resting HDLEC.

Figure 31 V3L and S5L cells do not express β6 integrin at the cell surface. Flow cytometry for β6 integrin was negative on both the V3L and S5L cell lines. Thus, β6 function blocking antibody was used as a control in the integrin function blocking experiments.

Figure 32 LYVE-1 and CLEVER-1 mediate V3L adhesion to HDLEC. Functional blocking antibodies to LYVE-1 and CLEVER-1 were used to evaluate if these molecules are involved in V3L adhesion to resting and activated HDLEC. As can be seen in **A**, LYVE-1 blockade significantly decreased adhesion to resting HDLEC (p = 0.02), but not to activated HDLEC. Conversely, CLEVER-1 blockade (**B**) significantly decreased V3L adhesion to resting HDLEC ($p = 0.04$), but significantly increased V3L adhesion to IFN_Y-stimulated (p = 0.003) and TNF α -stimulated (p = 0.03) HDLEC.

Figure 33 The β1 integrins (α4β1, α5β1 and α9β1) appear to mediate V3L adhesion to resting HDLEC. Function blocking antibodies to the integrin subunits β1 (**A**, p = 0.03), α 4 (**B**, $p = 0.03$), and to the integrin α 9 β 1 (**C**, $p = 0.02$), significantly decreased adhesion to resting HDLEC. None of these integrins appear to mediate V3L adhesion to activated HDLEC. In contrast, functional blockade of α5 (**D**) significantly increased V3L adhesion to IFN_Y-stimulated (p = 0.008) and TNF α -stimulated (p = 0.003) HDLEC, but did not appear to be involved in V3L adhesion to resting HDLEC. Functional blockade of the integrin β6 (**E**, negative control) did not affect adhesion to resting HDLEC but did appear to have some effect on V3L binding to activated HDLEC. This did not reach statistical significance however.

Blocking LYVE-1 significantly decreased S5L adhesion to resting HDLEC ($p =$ 0.004), as well as to HDLEC stimulated with IFNγ (p = 0.03) (**Figure 34**). In contrast to V3L cells, CLEVER-1 did not appear to play a role in S5L adhesion to both resting and activated HDLEC. None of the β1 integrins were found to mediate S5L adhesion to resting HDLEC (**Figure 35**). Rather, these integrins appear to be recruited following HDLEC activation. Whilst β1 blockade significantly decreased adhesion after IFN_Y (p = 0.001) and TNF α (p = 0.02) stimulation, α 4 (p = 0.01) and α 9 β 1 (p = 0.01) were found to mediate adhesion to IFNγ-stimulated HDLEC. However, neither of these integrins appear to mediate adhesion to $TNF\alpha$ -stimulated HDLEC. Functional blockade of the integrin α5 did not affect S5L adhesion to resting and/or activated HDLEC.

Figure 34 LYVE-1, but not CLEVER-1, appears to mediate S5L adhesion to HDLEC. Function blocking antibodies to LYVE-1 (**A**) and CLEVER-1 (**B**) were used to determine if these molecules mediate S5L adhesion to resting and activated HDLEC. As can be seen in **A**, S5L adhesion to resting ($p = 0.004$) and IFN γ -stimulated HDLEC ($p = 0.03$) significantly decreased following LYVE-1 functional blockade; S5L adhesion to TNFα-stimulated HDLEC was unaffected. Functional blockade of CLEVER-1 did not affect S5L adhesion to resting or activated HDLEC (**B**).

Figure 35 The β1 integrins (α4β1 and α9β1) appear to mediate S5L adhesion to activated, but not resting, HDLEC. A function blocking antibody to the integrin subunit β1 significantly decreased S5L adhesion to IFNγ–stimulated (**A**, p = 0.001) and $TNF\alpha$ -stimulated (A, $p = 0.02$) HDLEC. Functional blockade of the integrin subunit α4 significantly decreased S5L adhesion to IFNγ–stimulated HDLEC (**B**, p = 0.01), as did a function blocking antibody to the integrin α 9 β 1 (C, p = 0.01). However, neither of these integrins appear to affect S5L adhesion to TNFα–stimulated HDLEC. Functional blockade of the integrins α5 (**D**), and β6 (**E**, negative control) did not affect S5L adhesion to resting and/or activated HDLEC.

ICAM-1, VCAM-1 and E-selectin were not found to mediate cancer cell adhesion to HDLEC, neither at rest, nor following activation (**Figures 36** and **37**).

Figure 36 ICAM-1, VCAM-1 and E-Selectin do not appear to mediate V3L adhesion to HDLEC. Function blocking antibodies to ICAM-1, VCAM-1 and E-Selectin were used to evaluate if these molecules mediated V3L adhesion to resting and activated HDLEC. As VCAM-1 and E-selectin are not expressed on the surface of resting HDLEC (shown in Figure 22), these molecules were only functionally blocked on activated HDLEC. None of these molecules appear to mediate adhesion to resting and/or activated HDLEC.

Figure 37 ICAM-1, VCAM-1 and E-Selectin do not appear to mediate S5L adhesion to HDLEC. Function blocking antibodies to ICAM-1, VCAM-1 and E-Selectin were used to evaluate if these molecules mediated S5L adhesion to resting and activated HDLEC. As VCAM-1 and E-selectin are not expressed on the surface of resting HDLEC (shown in Figure 22), these molecules were only functionally blocked on activated HDLEC. None of these molecules appear to mediate adhesion to resting and/or activated HDLEC.

Table 7 Summary of the adhesion molecules involved in V3L and S5L adhesion to resting and activated HDLEC. Experiments utilising function blocking antibodies to the tabulated adhesion molecules showed that V3L adhesion to resting HDLEC is mediated by LYVE-1, CLEVER-1, and the β 1 integrins (α 4 β 1, α 5 β 1 and α 9 β 1). Only CLEVER-1 and α 5 β 1 integrin were found to mediate V3L adhesion to activated HDLEC, and functional blockade of both these molecules was found to increase V3L adhesion to activated HDLEC. In contrast, only LYVE-1 was found to mediate S5L adhesion to resting HDLEC. In addition, LYVE-1, together with the integrins α4β1 and α9β1, were found to mediate S5L adhesion to IFNγ-stimulated HDLEC. A function blocking antibody to the integrin subunit β1 did significantly decrease S5L adhesion to TNF-stimulated HDLEC; however no other integrin subunit was found to mediate this adhesion.

Having identified which HDLEC adhesion receptors mediate the adhesion of cancer cells to lymphatic endothelium, V3L and S5L cells were examined for any adhesion receptors that could bind directly to these receptors, namely VCAM-1 (which binds the integrins $α4β1$ and $α9β1$) and CD44 (which can bind LYVE-1), using flow cytometry. In addition, as both LYVE-1 and the β1 integrins can bind ECM as previously described (101,104,127,131,140–144), cancer cells were analysed for the cell surface expression receptors that are known to bind to HA (CD44 and ICAM-1). A previous screen of the Panc-1 parental cell line, from which the V3L and S5L cells were derived, had shown that these cells express the FN-binding integrins, α v β 3, αvβ5, αvβ8 and α5. We had hoped to analyse the V3L and S5L cells for these integrins, but no antibodies for the three αv integrins were available at the time at which these experiments were performed. The flow cytometry results are shown in **Figure 38**. Both V3L and S5L cells expressed equivalent levels of the hyalurononbinding receptors ICAM-1 and CD44. Neither cell line expressed VCAM-1. Thus, the V3L and S5L cells appear to express adhesion molecules that bind preferentially to ECM components, rather than receptors that can directly interact with cognate receptors on HDLEC.

Figure 38 Cancer cell flow cytometry. V3L and S5L cells were analysed for the cell surface expression of adhesion molecules that could directly bind to the adhesion molecules expressed by HDLEC, namely VCAM-1 and CD44. Cells were also tested for adhesion receptors that could bind the ECM protein, hyaluronic acid (HA) i.e CD44 and ICAM-1. Both V3L and S5L cells expressed CD44 (which can bind LYVE-1 directly) and ICAM-1 which can bind HA at equivalent levels. Neither of the cell lines expressed VCAM-1 (which can directly bind to the integrins $α4β1$ and $α9β1$).

6.1.2.4.3 Hyaluronic Acid and Fibronectin Binding Assays

As no obvious changes in the adhesion receptor profiles tested were seen between V3L and S5L cells, we wondered if the differences in adhesion might be due to differences in the ability of these cells to bind to the ECM components, HA and FN. Thus, binding assays were performed. No differences were seen between the two cell lines in their ability to bind HA (**Figure 39**). However, a significantly higher number of S5L cells were able to bind FN (**Figure 40**; $p = 0.03$).

Figure 39 V3L and S5L cells show equivalent binding to hyaluronic acid. 1x10⁴ V3L or S5L cells were plated onto FITC-labelled hyaluronic acid (HA; 1 mg/ml). One hour later, the HA was washed off and the amount of bound HA was quantified in relation to a standard curve using a fluorescent plate reader. No differences were seen between the two cell lines in their capacity to bind HA.

Figure 40 S5L cells bind FN better than V3L cells. 1 x 10⁴ V3L or S5L cells were plated onto fibronectin (20 µg/ml; FN). After 45 minutes, any non-adherent cells were washed off and the number of bound cells was quantified in relation to a standard curve using a fluorescent plate reader. A significantly higher number of S5L cells were able to bind FN than V3L cells $(p = 0.03)$.

6.1.2.5 S100P Increases Permeability and Migration through a HDLEC Monolayer

In order to assess the effect of S100P on translymphatic endothelial migration (TLEM), we first had to establish a confluent HDLEC monolayer *in vitro*. A series of optimisation experiments were performed to determine the number of HDLEC that had to be plated to allow for a confluent monolayer to form overnight. Structurally, the monolayer was visualised by H&E staining following fixation. Functionally, monolayer integrity was assessed through the quantification of permeability to FITC-Dextran (2 million MW). Initially, 1 x 10⁵ and 2 x 10⁵ cells were seeded onto membranes coated with fibronectin (0.5 µg/ml). The following day, the permeability of these cell layers was tested. Although the permeability decreased as the number of HDLEC increased (**Figure 41**), histological assessment showed that membranes were not completely covered by HDLEC. Thus, the number of cells initially seeded was increased to 2.5 x 10⁵. As can be seen in Figure 42, this resulted in an adequate HDLEC monolayer, both structurally and functionally.

Figure 41 Pilot FITC-Dextran evaluation of HDLEC monolayer. Either 1 x 10⁵ (A - C) or 2 x 10⁵ HDLEC (**D - F**) were seeded onto fibronectin (0.5 µg/ml) and left to settle overnight. The integrity of the monolayer was then assessed by measuring permeability to FITC-Dextran (2 million MW) at 20 minutes (**G**). Membranes onto which the HDLEC has been seeded were fixed in methanol, and stained with H&E; representative images of these membranes are shown (**A** and **D** at 50x magnification; **B** and **E** at 100x magnification; **C** and **F** at 200x magnification). Neither concentration of cells resulted in a complete monolayer, though permeability to FITC-Dextran decreased as the number of seeded HDLEC increased. ($n = 1$ in duplicate).

Figure 42 Optimal HDLEC monolayer. 2.5 x 10⁵ HDLEC were seeded onto fibronectin (0.5 µg/ml) and left to settle overnight. **A** (50x magnification) shows a representative membrane, with images taken at five different points in order to construct a composite image. As can be seen, the entire transwell membrane is covered with HDLEC; fibronectin (FN) is also visible between HDLEC. The centre of the membrane is shown at 100x magnification in **B**. Functionally (**C**), this monolayer was significantly less permeable to FITC-Dextran (2 million MW) than monolayers comprising 1 x 10⁵ HDLEC were (p = 0.04). (n = 1 in triplicate).

Having established a confluent monolayer, permeability and TLEM assays were performed. Co-cultures containing S5L cells caused monolayers to become significantly more permeable to FITC-Dextran at one ($p = 0.02$), four ($p = 0.002$) and eight (p = 0.007) hours (**Figure 43**), as compared to co-cultures containing an equal number of V3L cells. As a fixed concentration of FITC-Dextran was used, this trend continued up to 24 hours, but was not significant after eight hours. No cells had migrated through the monolayer at 24 hours.

Figure 43 S100P increases permeability through a HDLEC monolayer. 5 x 10⁵ V3L or S5L cells were plated onto HDLEC monolayers in 500 µl of Opti-MEM Reduced Serum Medium I containing 1 mg/ml of FITC-dextran (2 million MW). The permeability of the monolayer was assessed by quantifying the amount of FITC-Dextran in the bottom well over 24 hours. The permeability of S5L wells was significantly higher at one ($p = 0.02$), four ($p = 0.002$) and eight hours ($p = 0.007$), than wells containing an equal number of V3L cells. No cells had migrated through the monolayers at 24 hours (the wells were analysed at this time for cells using a Coulter counter).

The migration of cancer cells through the monolayer over the next 48 hours was quantified (i.e. an end-point measurement was taken at 72 hours after seeding of cancer cells onto the monolayer). A significantly higher number of S5L cells had migrated through the HDLEC monolayer at 72 hours (**Figure 44**; $p = 0.006$).

Figure 44 S100P increases translymphatic endothelial migration (TLEM). The increase in permeability seen in the first 24 hours after seeding was followed by an increase in cancer cell migration over the next 48 hours. Thus, at 72 hours, the number of migrated S5L cells was significantly higher than the number of migrated V3L cells ($p = 0.006$).

6.2 Analysis of the Roles of S100P *in vivo*

As mentioned previously, because mice do not express endogenous S100P (203), the transgenic KRAS^{G12D} and/or the KRAS^{G12D}/TP53 mouse models would not be relevant for preclinical therapeutic evaluation of S100P targeting therapies without further engineering. Thus, together with Dr Wasfi Alrawashdeh, a clinical research fellow in our laboratory, a CD1 nude mouse orthotopic model of pancreatic cancer was created using the V3L and S5L cells. Using bioluminescence, we aimed to investigate the potential roles of S100P in primary pancreatic tumour growth and the potential occurrence of spontaneous metastasis (lymphatic and haematological). We hoped that this model would be useful for the future evaluation of novel therapies.

6.2.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was performed in order to determine if the parental V3 and S5 cells would grow orthotopically in the pancreas; if any metastases would spontaneously develop; and if the pancreas and/or metastases could be adequately imaged and quantified using bioluminescence.

Three groups ($n = 5$ animals per group) of mice were used. The first two groups had either 2 x 10^6 V3 or S5 cells injected orthotopically into the pancreas. Mice were

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killed at various time-points, with organs being harvested for histological examination (**Figure 45**). The experiment was terminated at four months post-injection. All 10 animals grew pancreatic tumours (tumour sizes ranged from 1 x 1 mm² to 15 x 23 $mm²$), but no metastases (lymphatic or haematological) were seen in either group.

Figure 45 A representative orthotopic S5 tumour. 2 x 10⁶ V5 or S5 cells were orthotopically injected into the pancreas of CD1 nude mice. A macroscopic tumour (**A**) excised at four months post-injection, together with the corresponding H&E section (**B**; 100x magnification), is shown above. Arrows highlight areas of central necrosis. Orthotopic implantation of both V3 and S5 cells resulted in primary tumour growth.

The third, or imaging, group had S5 cells injected subcutaneously and orthotopically into the pancreas. The rationale behind this double injection was that we hoped to use the size of the subcutaneous tumours as an indirect guide as to when to image the orthotopic pancreatic tumours. A smaller number of cells, 6.5 x 10⁵ cells, were injected in this group due to a technical error (i.e. cells were incorrectly counted prior to suspension in PBS for injection). Despite this error, however, four of the five animals grew tumours (sizes ranged from 4 x 5 mm² to 7 x 8 mm² for subcutaneous tumours, and from 10 x 14 mm² to 12 x 25 mm² for orthotopic pancreatic tumours). In addition, lymphatic metastases were seen in the peri-pancreatic LNs (**Figure 46**). In fact, lymphatic invasion of the pancreatic lymphatic vasculature was seen as early as six weeks post-injection. No haematological metastases were seen in any of the mice, as evidenced by histological examination of livers and lungs which were resected from these animals post-mortem.

Figure 46 S5 cells metastasise to peri-pancreatic lymph nodes (LN). An imaging group (n = 5), in which 6.5×10^5 S5 cells had been injected, developed LN metastases. Representative images of a peri-tumoural lymphatic vessel (100x magnification) stained for the anti-human epithelial marker, cytokeratin-8 (**A**), and the murine lymphatic marker LYVE-1 (**B**) showed that S5 cells had invaded these vessels. Furthemore, cytokeratin-8 positive S5 cells were seen in peri-pancreatic LN (**C**; 100x magnification. **D** shows a peri-pancreatic LN stained for LYVE-1 (100x magnification).

Lastly, in order to confirm that the orthotopic pancreatic tumours could be imaged using bioluminescence, tumours were imaged using a luciferase-expressing Vaccinia virus (kind gift from Dr Yaohe Wang). The virus was injected intravenously by Dr Crispin Hiley (clinical research fellow working with Dr Wang), followed by an intraperitoneal injection of D-luciferin (15 mg/ml). Thereafter, animals were imaged using the IVIS system. We were able to image orthotopic tumours reproducibly, while they were as small as 2 mm³ (**Figure 47**).

Figure 47 Bioluminescence imaging of S5 orthotopic pancreatic tumours. A luciferase-expressing Vaccinia virus was injected into the tail veins of S5 imaging mice, followed by the intra-peritoneal administration of D-luciferin (15 mg/ml). This mouse was killed after imaging; at this point, the tumour was excised and measured. The tumour shown above measured 2 mm³.

6.2.2 Orthotopic Pancreatic Mouse Model using Luciferase-Transduced Cells

After the pilot study, the V3L and S5L cell lines were created and characterised as described in 6.1.1 (pages 119-126). The orthotopic pancreatic injections were repeated using 6.5 x 10⁵ V3L and S5L cells (n = 10 per group) in order to evaluate the effects of S100P over-expression on primary pancreatic tumour growth, as well as to determine if the lymphatic invasion seen in the pilot study was reproducible. Mice were imaged from one week post-injection on a weekly basis for real-time assessment of primary tumour growth and the occurrence of spontaneous metastasis.

6.2.2.1 S100P Accelerates Primary Pancreatic Tumour Growth

From as early as week one post-injection, larger pancreatic tumours were seen in S5L animals as compared with V3L animals using bioluminescence (**Figure 48**). One S5L mouse had to be killed at operation due to peri-operative trauma, resulting in only nine S5L animals being used in the experiment. The experiment was terminated at nine weeks post-injection for two reasons: firstly, the earliest evidence of lymphatic invasion was seen at six weeks post-injection in the pilot study; and secondly, a significant difference in bioluminescence imaging between V3L and S5L tumour growth was seen by eight weeks (**Figure 49**; p = 0.002). Upon killing, tumours were harvested and weighed (**Figure 50**). S5L tumours weighed significantly more than V3L tumours ($p = 0.01$). One S5L mouse became ill, and had to be killed at an earlier time-point, and thus was excluded from the analysis. A tumour was present in this mouse, but it measured 1 mm³ and could not be weighed.

Figure 48 Bioluminescence imaging of orthotopic pancreatic tumours at week 1 post-injection. The orthotopic pancreas mouse model was repeated using 6.5 x 10^5 V3L and S5L cells following *in vitro* characterisation, in order to confirm the results of the pilot study. V3L animals ($n = 10$) are shown in the upper panel, with S5L animals $(n = 9;$ one mouse had to be killed at operation due to peri-operative trauma) shown in the lower panel. Orthotopic tumours are already present in both groups, with larger tumours being seen in the S5L group (quantification shown in Figure 48).

Figure 49 S5L orthotopic pancreatic tumours grow at a faster rate than V3L orthotopic pancreatic tumours. Regions of interest (ROI) were quantified weekly for each animal, and the average bioluminescence was plotted for each group. ROI calculates the signal intensity for a standardised area for each mouse, and is a quantitative measure of bioluminescence, and thus tumour growth. The S5L group (n $= 9$) showed a significantly higher rate of tumour growth than the V3L group (n=10; p = 0.002), as calculated by a linear regression of the weekly plots of average bioluminescence for each group.

Figure 50 S5L orthotopic pancreatic tumours are larger than time-matched V3L orthotopic pancreatic tumours. V3L and S5L orthotopic pancreatic tumours were allowed to grow for nine weeks, after which tumours were harvested and weighed. S5L tumours ($n = 8$) were significantly larger than V3L tumours ($n = 10$; $p = 0.01$). One S5L animal had to be excluded from the analysis as it became ill, and had to be killed at an earlier time-point. A 1 mm³ tumour could be seen at necropsy which could not be weighed.

Harvested tumours were analysed for S100P mRNA expression (**Figure 51**). S5L tumours expressed approximately three times more S100P transcript than V3L tumours $(p = 0.01)$.

Figure 51 S5L orthotopic pancreatic tumours express higher levels of S100P transcript. qPCR was performed on RNA extracted from fresh frozen V3L and S5L orthotopic pancreatic tumours for S100P expression. On average, S5L tumours expressed 3x more S100P transcript than V3L tumours ($p = 0.01$).

However, in this experiment, lymphatic invasion was seen in both V3L and S5L primary tumours (**Figure 52**), both peri- and intra- tumourally. A 24-point Chalkley graticule was used to evaluate tumours for lymphatic vessel density (LVD) and the percentage of cancer-filled lymphatics. No significant differences were seen between the V3L and S5L tumours. Furthermore, no invaded LNs were found in either experimental group.

Figure 52 Quantification of peri-tumoural and intra-tumoural lymphatic invasion. Cancer cells were noted inside peri-tumoural (**A** and **B**) and intra-tumoural (**C** and **D**) lymphatic vessels in both V3L (**A** and **C**) and S5L (**B** and **D**) animals. Representative sections (100x magnification) from time-matched orthotopic pancreatic tumours were stained for LYVE-1; tumours were then assessed for the percentage area of cancerfilled lymphatics (**E**) and for lymphatic vessel density (LVD) (**F**) using a 24-piece Chalkley graticule. No differences were found between the two groups, both in terms of percentage area of cancer-filled lymphatics ($p = 0.07$) and LVD ($p = 0.08$).

We attempted to confirm these findings by repeating the orthotopic pancreatic injections ($n = 7$ per group). We also had planned on lengthening the duration of the experiment, in order to determine if a larger primary tumour size would select for spontaneous metastasis. Unfortunately, due to an outbreak of infection in both V3L and S5L cages, the experiment was compromised and had to be terminated at ten weeks post-injection. Data from this experiment were thus inconclusive.

6.2.3 The Effects of S100P on Site-Specific Growth *in vivo*

A previous experiment conducted in our laboratory had shown that S5 cells (18/18 mice) grew better subcutaneously than V3 cells (3/18 mice) in nu/nu mice. This, in conjunction with the data from the CD1 nude orthotopic pancreatic mouse model described above, led us to explore if S100P could affect site-specific tumour growth. Thus, we created three experimental metastasis mouse models to determine if the expression of S100P by cancer cells accelerated tumour growth in the liver ($n = 7$) per group), lungs ($n = 7$ per group) or right axillary LN ($n = 7$ per group).

6.2.3.1 Tail Vein Injections

 5×10^5 V3L or S5L cells were injected directly into the tail vein of CD1 nude mice (n = 7 per group). Mice were imaged weekly using bioluminescence. The experiment was terminated at four weeks post-injection, at which time the lungs, pancreas, spleen, liver, duodenum and pancreatic LN were harvested from each mouse for histological examination. No evidence of tumour growth was seen in either group (**Figure 53**).

Figure 53 Tail vein injections of V3L and S5L cells. 5 x 10⁵ V3L or S5L cells were injected into the tail veins of CD1 nude mice ($n = 7$ per group). Mice were imaged weekly using bioluminescence (**A**), and the experiment was terminated at four weeks post-injection. Representative H&E sections through the lungs of a V3L (**B**) and S5L (**C**) animal at 100x magnification are shown. No tumours grew in either group.

6.2.3.2 Intrasplenic Injections

 5×10^5 V3L or S5L cells were injected into the spleen, in order to seed cells to the liver. Mice were imaged weekly using bioluminescence. The experiment was terminated at six weeks post-injection, at which time the lungs, pancreas, spleen, liver, duodenum, small bowel and large bowel and pancreatic LN were harvested from each mouse for histological examination. No evidence of tumour growth was seen in either group (**Figure 54** and **55**).

Figure 54 Intrasplenic injections of V3L and S5L cells. 5 x 10⁵ V3L or S5L cells were injected orthotopically into the spleens of CD1 nude mice ($n = 7$ per group) in order to induce liver metastasis experimentally. Animals were imaged weekly using bioluminescence until 6 weeks post-injection, at which time the experiment was terminated. Neither group grew tumours in the liver (representative H&E images of the liver of a V3L animal (**A**) and S5L animal (**B**) are shown at 50x magnification. Furthermore, no positive peri-pancreatic lymph nodes (LN) were seen in any of the 14 animals (representative H&E images of peri-pancreatic LN from a V3L (**C**) and S5L (**D**) animal are shown at 50x magnification). Only one S5L animal grew an orthotopic pancreatic tumour (**E**) as well as a splenic tumour (**F**); representative H&E images shown at 50x magnification.

Figure 55 Bioluminescence imaging of mice after orthotopic intrasplenic injections. Although differences in bioluminescence were seen between the two groups, these were not statistically significant.

6.2.3.3 Intranodal Injections

1 x 10^5 V3L or S5L cells were injected directly into the right axillary lymph node of CD1 nude mice $(n = 7 \text{ per group})$. Mice were imaged weekly using bioluminescence. The experiment was terminated at ten weeks post-injected, at which time axillary, inguinal and pancreatic lymph nodes were harvested, together with pancreas, spleen, liver and duodenum for histological examination. No evidence of tumour growth was seen in either group (**Figure 56**).

Figure 56 Intranodal injections of V3L and S5L cells. 1 x 10⁵ V3L or S5L cells were injected into the right axillary lymph nodes of CD1 nude mice ($n = 7$ per group). Mice were imaged weekly using bioluminescence (**A**), and the experiment was terminated at nine weeks post-injection. **B** and **C** show representative H&E sections through the right axillary LN of a V3L (**B**) and S5L (**C**) animal at 50x magnification. No tumours grew in either group.
7. DISCUSSION (Part II): THE ROLE OF S100P IN LYMPHATIC METASTASIS IN PDAC

As discussed earlier, S100P, a 10.4 kDa calcium-binding protein, previously has been found to contribute to the progression of PDAC, in a number of studies (91– 97), many of which were performed in our laboratory (91,92,94). Thus, we decided to investigate the potential roles of S100P in lymphatic invasion further, both *in vitro* and *in vivo*.

We were able to show that the luciferase transduction did not alter the expression of S100P in the V3L and S5L cell lines, neither at a mRNA nor at a protein level. Furthermore, the functional behaviour of these two cell lines *in vitro* did not change i.e. V3L and S5L cell lines mirrored the parental V3 and S5 cell lines in terms of proliferation and invasion (94). We also were able to show that both cell lines expressed equivalent levels of luciferase, and were able to grow in soft agar, a surrogate for tumourigenic capacity. Thus, we concluded that these cell lines probably could be used to develop a CD1 nude orthotopic mouse model of PDAC.

The co-culture experiments performed using cancer cells in conjunction with HDLEC yielded some intriguing results. These experiments aimed to evaluate if cancer cell adhesion to HDLEC governs migration into lymphatic vessels, or if TLEM can proceed even in the face of weak binding between cancer cells and HDLEC. In 1981, GL Nicolson published a paper entitled 'Metastatic tumour cell attachment and invasion assay utilizing vascular endothelial cell monolayers', which describes his analysis of the 'intravasation' step of the metastatic cascade (179). These experiments were performed using co-cultures of endothelial cells and melanoma cell lines with varying metastatic capacities. Nicolson found that intravasation was initiated by tumour cell attachment to a blood vascular endothelial cell monolayer. Indeed, tumour cell lines that were more metastatic attached better to these monolayers than less metastatic cell lines. Furthermore, tumour cells preferentially attached at or near endothelial intercellular junctions, and this attachment facilitated endothelial cell retraction (**Figure 57**). Retraction was defined as the 'breaking of intercellular junctions between endothelial cells, a retraction of the endothelial cell edges, and subsequent cell rounding with exposure of the basal lamina'. Once cells had retracted, a haptotactic gradient was established; as cancer cells bound slowly and weakly to endothelial cells, but bound quickly and strongly to basal lamina, cells preferentially moved towards the basal lamina underlying the endothelial cell monolayer. Invasive cells were then able to degrade and migrate through the basal lamina beneath the endothelial cell monolayer.

Figure 57 Endothelial retraction allows for the transmigration of tumour cells. A tumour cell attaches to the abluminal surface of blood endothelium, near the intercellular junctions (**A**). This causes the endothelial cells to retract (**B**). The tumour cell then migrates through the retracted endothelium, due to a haptotactic gradient between the endothelial cells (to which tumour cells can bind weakly) and the basal lamina (to which tumour cells can bind strongly) (**C**). Once the tumour cell has migrated through the monolayer, the endothelial intercellular junction reforms (**D**). The tumour cell can then migrate through the basal lamina. (179)).

A variety of endothelial cells were used in Nicolson's study: bovine aortic endothelial cells; HUVECs and murine lung and brain capillary endothelial cells. Thus, the experiments comprehensively represented all branches of the blood vascular tree (i.e. in terms of vessel size) (179). Interestingly, none of the melanoma cells were able to adhere to aortic endothelia, whilst most cells (melanoma, sarcoma, and platelets) were able to bind to murine capillary endothelia and HUVECs. This suggests that adhesion to endothelium probably is more important in smaller vessels. Notably, fibroblasts were unable to bind to capillary endothelia (179). This is interesting in light of the more recent emergence of the concept of fibroblast-led cancer cell invasion (205). Fibroblast-led invasion has been shown to occur during collective cell invasion; fibroblasts at the leading edge of tumours create 'tracks' in ECM along which epithelial cancer cells invade. It would be interesting to adapt the 3D co-cultures used in these experiments to include endothelial cells, to determine if or how this fibroblast-led invasion changes during intravasation. Nicolson's experiments also were conducted in the absence of flow, or under static conditions. Whilst this is not truly representative of the blood vasculature, it is relevant to lymphatics where propulsion of lymph occurs at a relatively slow rate.

The concept of 'retraction', as applied to blood vascular endothelium, has been developed substantially over the last three decades (206–208). Endothelial permeability has been shown to be controlled by a variety of chemical and mechanical stimuli, originating both in the blood (e.g. thrombin from activated platelets and pulsatile blood flow) and in the tissues surrounding blood vessels (e.g. histamine released from mast cells and TNFα secreted by activated leukocytes) (208). Furthermore, confluent blood vascular endothelial cells (BVEC) behave differently from sparse BVEC (206). When confluent, BVEC exhibit an epitheliod phenotype with apical-basal polarity. Cell-to-cell contact inhibits growth and motility, and protects the cells from apoptosis. Under sparse conditions, like angiogenesis, however, BVEC become fibroblastic and motile, and begin to proliferate. Blood vessel integrity is maintained by the stability of intercellular junctions, and by changes in the actomyosin cytoskeleton within endothelial cells. Many adhesion molecules have been shown to play a role in mediating junctional stability, and their involvement is usually governed largely by the nature of the stimulus. However, VEcadherin as emerged as being central to maintaining blood vessel integrity (206). Indeed, VE-cadherin knockout mice are embryonically lethal due to vascular insufficiency (209). Furthermore, this member of the calcium-dependent cadherin family of proteins has been found to serve as an interface between the ECM and the intracellular compartment. In quiescent BVEC, VE-cadherin couples with VEGFR-2, preventing endocytosis of VEGFR-2, securing the endothelial cell barrier (210). In the presence of VEGF however, VE-cadherin is internalised, destabalising intercellular junctions (211–213). In addition, VE-cadherin has been shown to stimulate the Rho GTPases Rac and Cdc42, which aids in the assembly and maturation of endothelial cell junctions (214,215). In the context of metastasis, it has been shown that adhesion of breast MDA MB231 cancer cells to the HUVECs alters VE-cadherin intercellular localisation and permeability (216). Furthermore, it has been shown that the pancreatic cancer cell lines MiaPACA2 and Panc1 increase permeability through a HUVEC monolayer via two mechanisms: first, by redistributing VE-cadherin and PECAM, destabalising intercellular junctions; and second by mediating changes in the actin cytoskeleton (217). Whilst these phenomena are well-established for BVEC, their relevance to the lymphatic vasculature has yet to be explored.

Indeed, only one study to date has evaluated 'retraction' in the context of the lymphatic vasculature. This study, in essence, recreated Nicolson's original experiment: M21 melanoma cells were seeded onto bovine lymphatic endothelial cells (obtained from the thoracic duct) under static conditions; cultures were fixed,

stained and analysed using scanning electron microscopy. The M21 melanoma cells were found to induce a retraction of the LEC monolayer, resulting in TLEM (218). A flaw of this study is that only LEC obtained from collecting lymphatics, and not capillary lymphatics, were used. It is these lymphatic capillaries which serve as a point of entry during metastasis. Furthermore, only one melanoma cell line was used; the authors could have included cell lines with different metastatic potentials, as Nicolson did (179). However, it must be remembered that this study, however flawed, for the first time, established the relevance of endothelial cell retraction to the lymphatic vasculature and that this phenomenon occurs in the presence of added cancer cells.

We sought to evaluate the effects of S100P over-expression in pancreatic cancer on the interaction of tumour cells with the lymphatic endothelium. To that end, the V3L and S5L cells were tested for their ability to migrate through a HDLEC monolayer. Our data suggest that, at least in the context of S100P over-expression, cancer cell adhesion to resting lymphatic endothelium is not essential for TLEM. This conclusion can be drawn from two results: firstly, V3L cells adhered just as well to resting HDLEC as S5L cells; and secondly, a significantly higher number of S5L cells migrated through a resting HDLEC monolayer at 72 hours. This suggests that the observed difference in TLEM is not mediated by cell-to-cell contact. Rather, it suggests that a greater haptotactic gradient for migration exists when S100P is overexpressed. The FN binding assays showed a statistically significant difference between V3L and S5L binding. Thus, theorectically, as V3L and S5L cells bind equally as well to HDLEC, but S5L cells bind better to FN, a greater haptotactic gradient exists for S5L TLEM than V3L TLEM. However, as the observed difference in FN binding between the two cell lines was small (12.5%), the biological relevance of this remains doubtful. There is a possibility that the concentration of FN used in these assays was suboptimal for adhesion. Thus, had I had more time, I would have liked to have repeated the assay using a range of FN concentrations. An alternative to this co-culture model is one in which V3L and S5L adhesion to mouse tissue explants containing the throrac duct, and/or smaller lymphatic capillaries (if possible), is tested. Finally, the invasion assays showed S5L invasion through Matrigel to be significantly higher than V3L invasion *in vitro*. This supports the argument that S100P over-expression increases degradation of, and thus invasion through, the basal lamina underlying the intima following TLEM.

We aimed to assess 'retraction' functionally using the permeability assays. Our data show that permeability through a resting HDLEC monolayer from one to eight hours in culture was significantly higher for S5L cells than V3L cells. As the assays were conducted on resting HDLEC, we assume that there was no difference in the adhesion of V3L and S5L cells to the lymphatic monolayer. Thus, this increase in permeability was not mediated by cell-to-cell contact. As this change began at one hour post-seeding, it suggests that retraction of the lymphatic endothelium, rather than apoptosis (which usually occurs within six to eight hours), is responsible for this increased permeability; however this requires further investigation. This could have been confirmed by treating HDLEC with recombinant S100P, V3L conditioned media (CM), S5L CM, and a negative control, after which cells could have been fixed and stained for phalloidin to allow for the quantification of intercellular 'gaps'. Alternatively, the potential retraction of HDLEC could have been imaged in real-time using time-lapse microscopy. In order to confirm that these effects were due to S100P, the experiment would also have to include conditioned media harvested from cells in which S100P had been silenced using siRNA.

Finally, both the permeability and the TLEM assays would need to be repeated using additional pancreatic cancer cell lines which express high levels of endogenous S100P, such as the BXPC3 cell line. This would serve to validate the increase in permeability and TLEM seen with the S5L cell line, in which S100P had been induced. Furthermore, transient knockdown of S100P, both in the S5L and BXPC3 cell lines using siRNA, would need to be performed in order to confirm that the observed increase in permeability and TLEM was indeed due to S100P. Unfortunately, by the time I had arrived at this point in my investigations, there simply was no time available to conduct these experiments.

As the data from these functional studies had not highlighted cell-to-cell contact as being central to the interaction between V3L or S5L cells and HDLEC, we wanted to investigate the paracrine effects of cancer cell supernatant on HDLEC. It has been reported previously that S100P is secreted by pancreatic cancer cells, and interacts with RAGE on these cells, creating an autocrine loop that promotes growth, survival and invasion both *in vitro* and *in vivo* (95,96). Thus, we questioned if a similar paracrine mechanism exists between the S5L cells and HDLEC.

Unfortunately, our attempts to quantify S100P protein expression in the supernatants of V3L and S5L cells by Western blotting were inconclusive. The detection of the product from the S100P construct in cell lysates required much optimisation since most commercially available S100P antibodies (from various companies, both mono-

and poly- clonal, and directed at both the N- and C-terminals) were unable to detect S100P in the S5L cell line. We were only able to detect intracellular S100P using a V5-antibody, which recognised the tagged C-terminus of our construct. This antibody failed to detect S100P in conditioned media from the S5L cell line. Thus, although this suggests that S100P might not be secreted by S5L cells, we cannot confidently exclude the possibility that this represents a technical shortcoming. Furthermore, there are no commercial ELISA kits which adequately detect S100P in cell supernatants available at present. Had I had more time, I would liked to have tried to develop an ELISA assay in-house, using the V5-antibody and a few different S100P antibodies, in order to analyse V3L and S5L supernatants for the presence of this protein. In addition, HDLEC were negative for RAGE using flow cytometry. Again, this experiment needs to be repeated using a different RAGE antibody to exclude technical error. However, it seems unlikely that secreted S100P, at least in the S5L cell line, stimulates HDLEC via RAGE.

In order to assess the potential functional effects of secreted S100P on cancer cell adhesion to HDLEC, recombinant S100P was added to the media surrounding both cancer cells and HDLEC for the duration of the assay. Interestingly, recombinant S100P significantly decreased V3L adhesion to resting HDLEC. A possible explanation for this could be that S100P binds calcium, which is essential for integrin activation. This hypothesis could be confirmed by repeating the assay using calciumdepleted media, or by adding a calcium-binding molecule like EDTA. Alternatively, it suggests that secreted S100P does not activate HDLEC in the same manner as IFN_{γ} and TNF α . Had I had more time, I could have confirmed this by repeating the

flow cytometry experiments following pre-treatment of HDLEC with recombinant S100P.

Conversely, the addition of recombinant S100P significantly increased V3L adhesion to $TNF\alpha$ activated HDLEC, resulting in levels comparable to those seen with S5L cells. This effect was not seen following IFNγ stimulation of HDLEC. These data could support the premise that recombinant S100P decreases integrin activation, as the flow cytometry results showed that $TNF\alpha$ upregulated integrin expression, perhaps to a level that adequately compensates for the calcium-binding effects of recombinant S100P. Alternatively, it is known that S100P over-expression in our cell line results in the translocation of S100P to the nucleus (94). Furthermore, as mentioned previously, S100P can bind to RAGE receptors on pancreatic cancer cells, activating NF-KB signalling (190,199), which, in turn, can increase TNF α production (219). Thus, S100P over-expression could result in an increase in TNF α production by pancreatic cancer cells, which then would activate the lymphatic endothelium. This hypothesis would need to be confirmed by quantifying $TNF\alpha$ levels in V3L and S5L supernatant. Should this prove true, then the observed increase in S5L adhesion to activated HDLEC becomes important, as it may confer a metastatic advantage in the context of cancer inflammation.

Not only can differences in adhesion facilitate different rates of cancer cell invasion, but the molecules facilitating adhesion have long been recognised as a defining factor in the type of cancer cell movement underlying invasion (147). Thus, we sought to define what mediated V3L and S5L attachment to HDLEC. Our results highlight the complexity of these interactions.

Whilst we were able to show that V3L cells adhere to resting lymphatic endothelium via LYVE-1, CLEVER-1 and the integrin subunits $α4$, $α9$ and $β1$, we have yet to define what mediates V3L attachment to activated lymphatic endothelium. Interestingly, function blocking antibodies to CLEVER-1 and the integrin subunit α 5 significantly increased V3L adhesion to activated HDLEC. Whilst this may seem counter-intuitive, the same trend has been observed with CLEVER-1 blockade in relation to dendritic cell cell adhesion to lymphatic endothelium (154). Perhaps of even greater significance however, is that whilst CLEVER-1 blockade increased dendritic cell adhesion to lymphatics, it decreased dendritic cell TLEM (154). A similar mechanism might, therefore, exist for V3L TLEM and should be investigated further. The observed increase in adhesion to activated HDLEC seen with α5β1 blockade also warrants further investigation. This could be done by repeating the TLEM assay, using the same function blocking antibodies which were used in the adhesion assays.

S5L cells adhered to HDLEC in a different fashion. S5L adhesion to resting endothelium was mediated by LYVE-1. This receptor also mediated attachment to IFNγ-stimulated HDLEC. CLEVER-1 and α5β1 blockade had no effect on S5L adhesion to HDLEC, resting or activated. In contrast to V3L cells, β1 integrindependent adhesion occurred only when HDLEC were activated. Specifically, α4β1 and α9β1 integrin mediated S5L adhesion to IFNγ-stimulated HDLEC. This raises an interesting question regarding the type of cell movement adopted by S5L cells in the context of inflammation. Collective cell migration is known to be β1-dependent (147), and our results indicate that S5L preferentially use β1-integrins to adhere to IFNγstimulated HDLEC. Furthermore, a previous gene expression profiling experiment of

the parental V3 and S5 cell lines showed a significant increase in E-cadherin in the S5 cells (Sayka Barry, PhD Thesis, 2009); again suggesting an increase in epithelial cohesion. However, further investigation is required to resolve this.

None of the molecules analysed appear to mediate S5L adhesion to $TNF\alpha$ stimulated HDLEC. This suggests that other molecules which have not been decribed in the literature may be present on HDLEC, and mediate functional interactions between lymphatic endothelium and cancer cells. Furthermore, the fact that blocking one adhesion molecule at a time resulted only in a small, yet significant, decrease in cancer cell adhesion to HDLEC suggests that adhesion potentially is mediated by a number of receptors acting in concert together. It would be interesting to repeat the function blocking experiments using combinations of different antibodies, to see if cancer cell adhesion to HDLEC can be totally ablated. Unfortunately, I was unable to perform these experiments due to a shortage of time.

The lack of cognate adhesion receptors on V3L and S5L cells seen using flow cytometry suggests that it is possible that the ECM plays an important role in cancer cell adhesion to HDLEC (**Figure 58**). Whilst we were able to show that V3L and S5L cells express equivalent levels of the HA binding molecules CD44 and ICAM-1, we have yet to determine which FN-binding integrin(s) are expressed by these cells. Regardless, it is possible that FN and HA potentially act as a bridge between cancer cells and lymphatic endothelial cells. The importance of HA in facilitating cancer cell adhesion to blood endothelium, as well as its importance in haematological metastasis, has been described previously (220–222). In 1995, Zhang et al. showed, using a melanoma cell line expressing high levels of HA (HA-H) and a melanoma cell

line expressing low levels of HA (HA-L), that the HA-H cells formed a greater number of metastatic nodules in the lungs of C57BL/6 mice than HA-L cells, following tail vein injection (220). Furthermore, the survival of mice into which HA-H cells had been injected was significantly decreased. Interestingly, this paper also assessed the ability of these two cell lines to bind to CD44 positive, SV40-transformed lymphoid endothelial cells (SVEC4-10). HA-H cells were better able to adhere to SVEC4-10 cells, and this adhesion was significantly decreased in the presence of hyaluronidase and/or function blocking antibodies to CD44 (220). HA has been shown subsequently to facilitate adhesion and transendothelial migration in both prostate and colon carcinoma *in vitro* (221,222). Had I had more time, I would have liked to have repeated the HA binding assays incorporating hyaluronidase, to assess the importance of HA in mediating V3L and S5L adhesion to HDLEC.

As lymphatics are responsible for clearing debris and ECM, it may be beneficial for cancer cells to tether themselves to these matrix components in order to gain entry into lymphatics. Furthermore, due to the presence of button-hole junctions, lymphatics theoretically are easier to enter than blood vessels. It is possible that instead of having to 'unzip' the VE-cadherin in lymphatics, cancer cells can use the ECM to increase traction on the lymphatic vasculature, causing a 'bulging' of these button-holes, and allowing cancer cells to gain entry. This is however speculative, and requires further elucidation. I would have like to have tried to image this *in vitro*, had time permitted. This could have been done by establishing co-cultures of HDLEC with V3L or S5L cells; each cell type could have been fluorescently labelled with cell trackers, and the cells could have been placed in fluorescently-labelled

ECM (either HA or FN). Using confocal microscopy, I then would have tried to image these potential 'bridges'.

Figure 58 Schematic diagram depicting the potential mechanism through which the extracellular matrix (ECM) facilitates binding between cancer cells and lymphatic endothelium, allowing for translymphatic endothelial migration (TLEM). V3L and S5L cells express the hyaluronic acid binding molecules CD44 and ICAM-1, as well as fibronectin binding integrins. These allow cancer cells to bind to the ECM. The ECM, in turn, acts as a 'bridge', allowing cancer cells to bind to the lymphatic endothelium. In addition, the traction forces generated by this binding open up gaps in between lymphatic endothelial cells, allowing for paracellular transmigration. (Adapted from Nourshargh et al. (223))

Thus, whilst these *in vitro* experiments provide valuable clues as to the roles of S100P in lymphatic invasion, further investigation is required to determine the precise mechanisms through which it operates.

It has been shown previously, in an orthotopic mouse model, that cromolyn decreases the growth and invasion of S100P-expressing tumours (96). Thus, we wanted to develop a CD1 nude orthotopic mouse model in our laboratory in which these drugs (i.e. cromolyn and its analogues), as well as any other novel therapies to S100P, could be investigated preclinically. Furthermore, we hoped to use this model to confirm the effects of S100P over-expression on primary pancreatic tumour growth, and/or the occurrence of spontaneous metastases.

We were able to confirm, in the pilot study, that establishing a S100P overexpressing orthotopic mouse model was feasible: there was no peri- or postoperative morbidity or mortality associated with the surgical procedure; and the animals showed no signs of illness up to four months post-injection, at which point tumour growth was substantial. We were able to confirm that both V3 and S5 cells grow orthotopically in the pancreas of CD1 nude mice. Furthermore, data from the imaging group suggested that using a smaller number of injected cells could be beneficial as it resulted in lymphatic invasion. Thus, 6.5 x 10⁵ cells were used in subsequent experiments. In addition, as caliper tumour measurements were found to be user-dependent and thus variable, we decided that tumour weight would be a more objective measure of tumour growth upon killing. Lastly, we concluded that

bioluminescence imaging adequately measured primary pancreatic tumour growth in real time.

The findings of the pilot, and subsequent two repeats, of the orthotopic injections highlight the difficulties associated with animal models. Firstly, whilst we observed LN metastases in the pilot study, we were unable to reproduce these data in the subsequent experiment. One possible explanation for this is that the parental V3 and S5 cell lines were used in the pilot study, whilst the V3L and S5L cell lines were used in the second experiment. Thus, although the *in vitro* data did not show any functional alterations in the V3L and S5L cell lines, it is possible that the luciferase transduction did alter the behaviour of these cell lines *in vivo*. This could have been confirmed by repeating the orthotopic injections using the parental V3 and S5 cell lines, however, this would preclude bioluminescent imaging, and thus, was not performed. Secondly, it is possible that a larger number of cells was injected during the pilot study than was thought, as an error with cell counting occurred prior to orthotopic injection. Thus, it is possible that larger tumours occurred earlier in the pilot study than in the repeat experiment, and that these larger tumours were more prone to direct invasion of the surrounding LN, as well as true lymphovascular invasion (observed on H&E sections). We were unable to confirm this, as tumours were not weighed in the pilot study. In addition, caliper measurements were taken only in two dimensions, and thus were sub-optimal for calculated conversions. Thirdly, in the pilot experiment, cells were injected at two sites i.e. subcutaneously and into the pancreas. There is emerging evidence that soluble factors released from primary subcutaneous tumours may result in the formation of a premetastatic niche, which increases haematological dissemination (224). Hiratsuka et al. showed, in C57BL/6 mice bearing subcutaneous Lewis Lung Carcinoma (LLC) and B16 melanoma tumours, that S100A8 and S100A9 are up-regulated in the lung premetastatic niche. These soluble factors increased the extravasation of cancer cells following tail vein injection, and thus increased the number of lung metastases. In addition, the observed increase in lung metastases significantly decreased in the presence of neutralising antibodies to S100A8 and S100A9. Furthermore, pretreatment of normal controls with serum from tumour-bearing mice resulted in the upregulation of S100A8 and S100A9 in the lungs, and an increase in lung metastases following tail vein injection (224). Thus, it is possible that the presence of subcutaneous tumours in the pilot experiment contributed to development of metastasis. And finally, the third experiment, which was meant to resolve these discrepancies, had to be terminated early due to an infection contracted postoperatively. This highlights the complexities of animal experiments, and emphasises the importance of ensuring that neoplasms are kept free of mouse pathogens in order to obtain interpretable data (225).

Despite this, we were able to show reproducibly that S100P accelerates primary tumour growth, in keeping with data obtained in the previous study by Arumugam et al. (95). Furthermore, we were able to adequately monitor this growth from as early as one week post-injection using bioluminescence. Thus, this model can be used in the future to evaluate the effects of novel therapies against S100P on primary tumour growth.

We were also able to demonstrate the presence of both V3L and S5L cells in periand intra-tumoural lymphatic vessels in our model. This confirms that both the V3L

and S5L cell lines are able to intravasate into lymphatics. The *in vitro* TLEM data suggest that the S5L cells would invade at a faster rate. Thus, as no positive peripancreatic LN were found at ten weeks, the data from the repeat experiment suggest that lymphovascular invasion occurs within ten weeks post-injection. It would be interesting to define when the first evidence of lymphovascular invasion arises, as well as to test if this occurs at an earlier time-point when S100P is over-expressed as compared to the control cells that show no endoegenous S100P. This could be done by repeating the orthotopic experiment using the V3L and S5L cell lines, and killing at least five mice weekly, looking for histological evidence of lymphovascular invasion.

As no evidence of spontaneous metastases was seen in this model, we decided to experimentally induce metastasis in CD1 nude mice in order to assess if the V3L and S5L are able to survive in vessels, extravasate and colonise distant tissues. Our data suggest that neither of these cell lines can survive in blood vessels (tail vein injections); extravasate from blood vessels (tail vein injections and splenic injections); or establish growth at specific sites i.e. liver, lungs and lymph nodes. However, it is possible that the strain of mouse used affected the results obtained. Thus, as all of these experiments were conducted in the CD1 nude mouse, they could be repeated in a different immunodeficient mouse strain in order to evaluate if this affected the occurrence of metastasis or not.

Thus, although the data from the *in vivo* studies clearly show a role for S100P in accelerating primary pancreatic tumour growth, and although there is evidence that S100P is involved in the process of communication between carcinoma cells and the

lymphatic endothelium, these data do not support a causative role for S100P in inducing lymphatic and/or haematological metastasis.

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although lymphatic invasion is known to be an early and important step in the dissemination of PDAC, few studies have analysed the molecular mechanisms underlying this process (66,67,69–72). Only one previous study had examined this process at a protein level, by analysing primary pancreatic tumours using MALDI-TOF and correlating the data obtained to clinicopathological parameters (72). For that reason, we sought to analyse the molecular mechanisms underlying lymphatic invasion in PDAC using a shotgun proteomics approach. This is the first study to analyse the metastatic LN from patients with resectable PDAC; to compare protein expression from primary PDAC epithelia to protein expression in LN metastatic epithelia; and to use LCM FFPE tissue samples for the proteomic investigation of metastatic PDAC.

From our analysis, we were able to validate that two candidate molecules, S100P and 14-3-3 sigma, were up-regulated significantly in LN metastases relative to primary PDAC. As the study was performed on tissue which had been fixed at a specific point in disease progression however, it is important to note that these findings could be co-incidental, and do not imply a causative role for either of these proteins in PDAC pathogenesis. Further investigation would be required in order to prove a causal association. Regardless, both of these molecules represent viable therapeutic targets. These data have been published (226), and will be made available to the general public through the Pancreatic Expression Database (188).

Due to its well-established role in PanIN progression and PDAC in human tissue samples (91,93), and based on previously published data supporting a causative role for S100P in PDAC invasion both *in vitro* and *in vivo* (92,94–97), we went on to investigate the roles of S100P in lymphatic invasion in PDAC.

This is the first study to attempt to co-culture pancreatic cancer cell lines with HDLEC, and to use these co-cultures to investigate the interactions of pancreatic cancer cells with lymphatic endothelial cells. Furthermore, it is the first study to look specifically at the effects of S100P over-expression on the adhesion of pancreatic cancer cells to HDLEC; on permeability through a HDLEC monolayer; and on TLEM. We feel that the data arising from these studies are promising in some regards, though disappointing in others. Using the V3L and S5L cell lines, we were able to show that S100P over-expression alters the molecules involved in adhesion to resting and activated HDLEC, and increases permeability and TLEM through a HDLEC monolayer. Further work, however, is required both to confirm that these data are of a general significance (e.g. by repeating the experiments using addition pancreatic cancer cell lines which express high levels of endogenous S100P), and to prove that these functional changes are mediated by S100P specifically (e.g. using siRNA knockdown). So far, however, the data seem to suggest a causative role for S100P in lymphovascular invasion.

This conclusion was challenged by our *in vivo* data. Whilst we were able to show that S100P over-expression accelerates primary pancreatic tumour growth, we were not able to demonstrate that S100P over-expression causes spontaneous lymphatic and/or haematological metastasis. Furthermore, although lymphovascular invasion was noted in primary tumours, this was seen in both V3L and S5L orthotopic tumours to the same extent. In addition, the experimental metastasis and sitespecific growth experiments did not result in growth in the lungs, liver and/or LN. Thus, we conclude that S100P alone does not cause lymphatic invasion in the CD1 nude mouse. It is possible that the strain of mouse used affected the outcome, and thus, these experiments would need to be confirmed in a different immunodeficient mouse strain, before concluding that they are a true representation of the impact of S100P expression on *in vivo* behaviour.

Finally, we were able to develop a CD1 nude orthotopic mouse model that can be used for the preclinical evaluation of novel therapies targeting S100P in our laboratory. Specifically, this model can be used to assess the effects of such therapies on primary tumour growth and this, in itself, might well be a useful system to exploit in seeking novel anti-PDAC therapeutic approaches.

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Appendix I

Appendix I tabulates the 854 proteome of PDAC and matched LN metastases in alphabetical order ($MW = molecular weight$).

Appendix II

Appendix II tabulates the comparison of the 854 proteome with previous published proteomic studies on pancreatic juice, blood and urine, and shows those proteins common to all studies analysed. This comparison was performed using the Pancreatic Expression Database [\(http://www.pancreaticexpression.org\)](http://www.pancreaticexpression.org/) (188).

