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Characterization of Multiple Myeloma Vesicles by Label-Free Relative Quantitation

Sean W. Harshman1,2,¥, **Alessandro Canella**2,¥, **Paul D. Ciarlariello**2, **Alberto Rocci**7, **Kitty Agarwal**4,6, **Emily M. Smith**2, **Tiffany Talabere**2, **Yvonne A. Efebera**3, **Craig C. Hofmeister**3, **Don M. Benson Jr.**3, **Michael E. Paulaitis**5,6, **Michael A. Freitas**1,2,*, and **Flavia Pichiorri**3,* ¹Department of Molecular Virology, Immunology and Medical Genetics, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

²Comprehensive Cancer Center, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

³Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Hematology, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

⁴Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

⁵Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

⁶Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

⁷Myeloma Unit, Division of Hematology, University of Turin, Azienda Ospedaliera Cittá della Salute e della Scienza di Torino, 10126 Torino, Italy

Abstract

Multiple myeloma (MM) is a hematological malignancy caused by a microenviromentally aided persistence of plasma cells in the bone marrow. The role that extracellular vesicles, microvesicles and exosomes, released by MM cells have in cell-to-cell communication and signaling in the bone marrow is currently unknown. This paper describes the proteomic content of extracellular vesicles derived from MM.1S and U266 MM cell lines. First, we compared the protein identifications between the vesicles and cellular lysates of each cell line finding a large overlap in protein identifications. Next, we applied label-free spectral count quantitation to determine proteins with differential abundance between the groups. Finally, we used bioinformatics to categorize proteins with significantly different abundances into functional groups. The results illustrate the first use of label-free spectral counting applied to determine relative protein abundances in extracellular vesicles.

Keywords

Extracellular vesicles; Microvesicles; Exosomes; Proteomics; Label-Free; LC-MS/MS

*Address reprint requests to: Dr. Michael A. Freitas, The Ohio State University Medical Center, 460 West 12th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210, USA. Phone (614) 688-8432, Fax (614) 688-8675, freitas.5@osu.edu or Dr. Flavia Pichiorri The Ohio State University Medical Center, 460 West 12th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210, USA. Phone 614-688-8071 Fax (614) 688-8675,

flavia.pichiorri@osumc.edu. ¥These authors contributed equally to this work.

INTRODUCTION

Multiple myeloma (MM) is the second most common hematological malignancy accounting for more than 10,000 deaths annually [1]. Recent improvements in antineoplastic drugs including proteasome inhibitors and immune modulating drugs (IMiD's) have improved overall patient outcomes [2]. There is a tight relationship between MM plasma cells (PC's) and the bone marrow (BM) stromal cells (BMSC's), and this stroma has a pivotal role in the regulation of MM cell growth and survival, as well as soluble factors and adhesion molecules [3]. Although important soluble factors and adhesion molecules, such as TNFand CD49d have been identified, small lipid-membrane bound vesicles are hypothesized to also play a role in cell-cell signaling [3–5]. Microvesicles or exosomes (called extracellular vesicles or EV), released by almost all cell types, are small structures based on a lipid bilayer and are recognized as important in facilitating intercellular communication without cell-to-cell contact. Recently, several studies have focused on the role of circulating extracellular vesicles in cancer biology. These vesicles increase tumor survival and expansion by carrying bioactive mRNA, miRNA and proteins into the extracellular space allowing for functional manipulation of the surrounding tumor microenvironment [4,5].

Mass Spectrometry based proteomics is a powerful tool used to characterize the protein content of extracellular vesicles [6–31]. In this manuscript we used shotgun proteomics to identify proteins contained in vesicles derived from two distinct MM cell lines. We further applied label-free spectral count relative quantitation to assess the differences in protein abundances [32,33]. This approach revealed proteins of variable abundance across these MM cell-derived vesicles. Our results establish a foundation for further functional studies of MM biology through the identification of proteins associated with vesicle targets.

EXPERIMENTAL

Cell Line Tissue Culture

MM.1S and U266 cell lines were obtained from American Type Culture Collection (ATCC, Manassas, VA, USA) and cultured using modified conditions originally described by Goldman-Leikin et al. and Nilsson et al. [34,35]. Briefly, cells were maintained at 0.4×10^6 cells/ml by incubation at 37 °C with 5 % $CO₂$ in RPMI-1640 media supplemented with 10 % fetal bovine serum (FBS), 2 mM glutamine (GlutaMAX), 50 U/mL penicillin-G and 50 μg/mL streptomycin (Life Technologies, Grand Island, NY). To eliminate artifacts from serum-derived vesicles, 48 hours before analysis, $100-200 \times 10^6$ cells were pelleted at 300 \times g for 10 min and resuspended in serum free media at $1-1.5 \times 10^6$ cells/ml.

Vesicle Isolation

The method used for isolation of cell line derived vesicles was previously described by Théry et al. [36]. In short, serum starved cells and media were centrifuged at $300 \times g$ for 10 min at 4 °C. Supernatant was collected and centrifuged again at $2000 \times g$ for 20 min at 4 °C. The cell pellets were frozen and stored at −80 °C for later use. Supernatant was harvested and vacuum ultracentrifuged at $10,000 \times g$ for 30 min at 4 °C to remove residual cell debris. Supernatant was collected and ultracentrifuged at $100,000 \times g$ for 70 min at 4 °C with vacuum. The resulting supernatant was discarded, pellets from multiple tubes were resuspended in 1 ml of PBS, pooled into a single tube, and ultracentrifuged at $100,000 \times g$ as described previously. Supernatant was eliminated and pellets of vesicles were frozen and stored at −80 °C.

Flow Cytometry

MM.1S and U266 cell lines were analyzed for Annexin V and propidium iodide staining. Following serum starvation, cells were washed 1x with PBS and Annexin V and Propidium Iodide staining solution (Clonetech Laboratories, Mountain View, CA) was added. Samples were allowed to stand for 15 min in the dark. Cells were washed 1x with PBS and immediately analyzed. All analyses were completed on a Beckman Coulter CXP flow cytometer (Beckman Coulter, Brea, CA).

Cryo-Transmission Electron Microscopy (cryo-TEM)

Vesicles derived from MM1. S and U266 cells were prepared for cryo-TEM within a controlled environment (22°C and 95% relative humidity) of an automated vitrification device (FEI Vitrobot Mark IV, FEI, Hillsboro, OR). To prepare vitrified specimens, 4 μl suspensions of extracellular vesicles were applied to glow discharged lacey carbon coated copper grids (400 mesh, Pacific Grid-Tech, San Francisco, CA) and flash-frozen in liquid ethane. The vitrified samples were stored under liquid nitrogen before transferring to a Gatan Cryo holder (Model 626.DH) and visualized in a FEI Tecnai G2 F20 ST transmission electron microscope (TEM, FEI, Hillsboro, OR). The microscope was operated at 200kV and under low dose mode to minimize radiation damage to the samples. Images were captured using a $4k \times 4k$ Gatan Ultrascan CCD camera at a magnification of 38,000 \times .

Dynamic Light Scattering (DLS)

Number distributions of extracellular vesicle hydrodynamic diameters were derived from DLS measurements using a Nano Zetasizer Zen3600 (Malvern Instruments Ltd., Worcestershire, United Kingdom). Samples were diluted to the required count rate of 50– 300 kilocounts per second and equilibrated at 25°C. All measurements were made in triplicate. The Stokes-Einstein relation was used to calculate particle diameters from measured translational diffusion coefficients.

Preparation of Samples for Mass Spectrometry

The preparation of both the cell-derived vesicles and the global lysates was done following a modified method previously developed in our lab [32]. Briefly, triplicates of vesicle isolations or 48 h serum starved cell pellets (100,000 cells) were resuspended in 50 mM ammonium bicarbonate (Sigma Aldrich, St. Louis, MO) supplemented with 0.5 % Rapigest SF surfactant (Waters, Milford, MA). 800 ng of sequencing grade modified trypsin (Promega, Madison, WI) was added to each sample and incubated overnight (>16h) at 37 °C. The reaction was suspended and Rapigest was precipitated through the addition of 98% formic acid (Acros Organics, Geel, Belguim) to approximately 30 % v/v. Samples were returned to 37 °C for 30 min. Solutions were centrifuged 3x at 21,000 \times g removing the supernatant following each centrifugation. Peptides were speedvac'd to dryness and resuspended in 20 μl of 2 % acetonitrile with 0.1 % formic acid (aq). Final peptide concentrations were measured by 280 nm absorbance using a NanoDrop ND-1000 (NanoDrop, Wilmington, DE) spectrometer.

Liquid Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS/MS)

1–2 μg of peptides were loaded for RP-HPLC separation on a Dionex Ultimate 3000 capillary/nano HPLC (Dionex, Sunnyvale, CA) and mass analyzed by a ThermoFisher LTQ Orbitrap XL mass spectrometer (ThermoFisher, Waltham, MA). The LTQ Orbitrap XL was fitted with a micro/nanospray ionization source (Michrom Bioresources Inc, Auburn, CA). HPLC separations were carried at a flow rate of 2 μ /min on a 0.2 mm × 150 mm C18 column (5 μm, 300 Å, Michrom Bioresources Inc., Auburn, CA). Mobile phases were HPLC water (J.T. Baker, Center Valley, PA) and acetonitrile (EMD Millipore, Billerica, MA) each

supplemented with 0.1 % (v/v) formic acid. The 300 minute HPLC gradient was as follows. Starting at 2 % mobile phase B the gradient was increased linearly to 5 % at 12 min, 15 % at 40 min, 30 % at 170 min, 55 % at 240 min, 85 % at 265 min and 90% at 270 min. The column was held at 90 % for five minutes, followed by equilibration at 2 % for 24 min. The heated capillary temperature and electrospray voltage on the LTQ Orbitrap XL were 175 °C and 2.0 kV, respectively. Top 5 data dependent mode was utilized in positive ion mode with dynamic exclusion of: repeat count=3, repeat duration=30.00, exclusion list size=500, exclusion duration=350 s and exclusion mass width of \pm 1.50 m/z. Protein identifications were obtained using the MassMatrix search engine (v 2.4.2) and the UniprotKB complete H. sapiens proteome (as of 18Sep12) [37–40]. Search parameters included three trypsin missed cleavages, precursor ion tolerance of \pm 10 ppm and a product ion tolerance of \pm 0.8 ppm. Cytoskeletal, epidermal and cuticle keratin identifications were recognized as contaminant proteins and removed from the analysis (listed in Supplemental Data 4–8). The false discovery rate (FDR) was estimated using the reversed sequences of the target database. The parsing of protein identifications and spectral counts was conducted from each data file and combined using an in-house python application [41]. For combined protein lists, the protein matches were retained based on an FDR threshold of 5 % and 2 unique peptide matches or a max decoy cutoff of 2 for each set of protein identifications.

Label-Free Relative Quantitation

Relative quantitation of the LC-MS/MS data was performed using the label-free approach described by Liu et al. and Colinge et al. [42,43]. The spectral counts used in the analysis did not include modified, semi-tryptic or shared peptides, including those from multiple protein isoforms. Protein lists were generated as follows. Search results were combined into a single harmonized table. This table contains the protein ID, the number of spectral counts, the number of peptides, sequence coverage and protein scores. Proteins were grouped based on common peptide sets. Each protein group is represented by the protein ID with the highest number of spectral counts. Spectral count quantitation was performed using only the the top protein matches that had tow or more distinct peptide sequences in at least one sample and protein scores above the decoy match discriminant score threshold. The decoy match discrimanty score was determined by taking the the protein score for the third decoy match or the decoy score that exceeds the target-decoy false dicovery rate of 5%. Spectral count quantitation was performed on the proteins that had a minimum of 5 total spectral counts across all samples. These criteria are very conservative and may reduce the apparent limit of detection because rare protein matches with low counts are removed from the quantitative analysis. The spectral count data and their estimated FDRs are provided in Supplemental Data 5–8. Significance analysis of relative protein abundance from spectral count data was determined by using the edgeR bioconductor package [44]. Peptide spectral count distributions were modeled using a Poisson/negative binominal distribution and normalized to the respective spectral count library size [44–46]. Differences in protein abundance were evaluated based upon an exact text for the overdispersed data [46]. False discovery was controlled by applying a Benjamini-Hochberg multi-test correlation $($ 0.05) to final p-values [47]. Counts per million (CPM) were calculated as the base 2 log of the normalized average counts across a row divided by one million.

Computational Annotations, Clustering and Bioinformatics

Venn diagrams were created using the BioVenn web application ([http://www.cmbi.ru.nl/](http://www.cmbi.ru.nl/cdd/biovenn/) [cdd/biovenn/](http://www.cmbi.ru.nl/cdd/biovenn/)) [48]. Clustering analysis and visualization was performed using open source software Cluster 3.0 and Java Tree View (ver. 1.1.6r2). Bioinformatic annotations of gene ontology for identified proteins were searched against the PANTHER Classification System [\(http://www.pantherdb.org/\)](http://www.pantherdb.org/) [49,50].

Immunoblotting

Cell and vesicles were lysed using a modified RIPA buffer (50 mM Tris pH 7.5, 150 mM NaCl, 10 % Glycerol, 1.0% % NP-40, 0.1% SDS and protease and phosphatase inhibitors). Protein concentrations of the lysates were determined by Bradford assay (Bio-Rad, Richmond, CA). Equivalent amounts of global lysates and vesicle lysates were run in a 4–15 % Tris-HCl SDS-PAGE TGX gel (Bio-Rad, Richmond, CA), transferred to nitrocellulose and blotted for CD9, CD44, Actin and Nucleolin (NCL, Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Santa Cruz, CA), glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH, Cell Signaling Technology, Boston, MA), and IgG Kappa Light Chain, Major Histocompatibility Complex Class I, and Bone Marrow Stromal Cell Antigen 2 (IgG LC, MHC Class I, BST-2, Abcam, Cambridge, MA). Chemiluminescent detection was performed using anti-mouse & antirabbit IgG-HRP (GE Healthcare, Piscataway, NJ) and either ECL Western Blotting Detection Reagents (GE Healthcare, Piscataway, NJ) or SuperSignal West Femto Kit (Pierce Biotechnology, Rockford, IL). HeLa (CD9) and ARH77 (IgG LC) global lysates were used as positive controls for the immunoblots.

RESULTS

Size Distribution and Structural Characteristics of MM derived Vesicles

The MM cell-derived vesicles were imaged by cryo-TEM to obtain morphological characteristics. Figures 1A & 1B show representative cryo-TEM images of vesicles derived from the MM.1S and U266 cell lines. The images depict vesicles that are spherical in shape with a single lipid bilayer, and hydrodynamic diameters that range from roughly 50 to 200 nm. Several vesicles are observed to contain daughter vesicles (Figure 1A, **Top**) or internal, electron dense material (Figure 1B, **Top**). Dynamic light scattering (DLS) was performed to assess the size distributions of the enriched vesicles. The DLS analysis of the U266 derived vesicles shows a monomodal distribution of vesicle diameters ranging from 80–200 nm (average diameter of 138 nm), while the MM.1S vesicle diameters are somewhat larger, ranging from 100–200 nm (average diameter of 177 nm) with a small population of even larger vesicles with diameters between 240 and 260 nm (Figure 1C). Collectively, these results indicate that our MM cell-derived vesicle preparations yield extracellular vesicles with similar size distributions and similar spherical morphologies for the two cell lines [4].

It has been shown that apoptotic cells release organelle-containing vesicles as part of their death program [51]. It is possible therefore that vesicle isolations may contain apoptotic bodies. To address the possibility of apoptotic body contamination in our vesicle preparations, Annexin V/popidium iodide flow cytometry was conducted on serum starved cells prior to vesicle isolation. Supplemental Data 1 shows greater than 98 % of cells are negative for Annexin V/popidium iodide staining. Confirming that the majority of the vesicles are derived from cells that are non-apoptotic. Taken together, the data indicate that vesicles obtained from nonapoptotic MM.1S and U266 MM cell lines have diameters between 0–200 nm.

Proteomics of MM Cell Line Derived Vesicles

Vesicles isolated from the MM.1S and U266 cell lines and the corresponding global cell lysates were characterized by liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/ MS) proteomic analysis. An overview of the proteomic workflow used is provided in Supplemental Data 2. The LC-MS/MS base peak chromatograms for the vesicles and cell lysates (Supplemental Data 3 & 4) show high similarity. A database search of the LC-MS/ MS from three experimental replicates (starting from cells grown from separate cultures) for each of the vesicles yielded 311 and 272 protein identifications for the MM.1S and U266 cell lines, respectively (Supplemental Data 5 & 6). The LC-MS/MS analysis of the global

MM.1S and U266 cell lysates yielded 279 and 353 protein identifications (Supplemental Data 7 & 8). Venn diagrams are provided in Figures 2A & 2B to show the overlap in protein identifications between the cell-derived vesicles and their global lysates. While there is a high number of overlapping protein IDs, unique proteins were observed in the cell line derived vesicles (24%, 72 for MM.1S and 15%, 49 for U266) and the lysates (18%, 55 for MM.1S and 35%, 111 for U266).

Recent literature on protein composition of vesicles obtained from many cell lines reported that several proteins are similar irrespective of cell of origin [52–54]. However, vesicles may also harbor proteins unique to the cell of origin. To determine if this hypothesis holds true for our data set, we compared the protein IDs in MM.1S and U266 vesicles. The Venn diagram in Figure 2C shows 32 (10%) proteins unique to the MM.1S vesicles and 13 (4%) proteins unique to U266 with 324 common proteins. Additionally, comparison of the MM. 1S and U266 vesicle identifications to the downloadable ExoCarta database of EV identified proteins yield a large number of previously identified proteins (83% MM.1S and 77% U266, Supplemental Data 5 $\&$ 6) [30,31]. These results are consistent with recent proteomic analyses of extracellular vesicles [30,31,53,54].

Label-Free Comparison of Cellular Proteins and Vesicles

The LC-MS/MS data show a high similarity in protein IDs between the cell-derived vesicles and their corresponding cellular lysates. Hierarchical cluster analysis reveals significant differences in the relative protein spectral counts between vesicle and cellular proteins. Cluster heat maps are provided along with ontological classification of the protein molecular functions and biological processes (Figure 3). Label-free spectral count quantitation was then used to determine the significance of relative differences in protein abundance [32,33]. Relative quantitation determined 298 and 366 proteins with significant differences in protein spectral counts between the MM.1S and U266 vesicles and their corresponding cellular lysates ($p < 0.05$) (Supplemental Data 9). Classification of significant proteins by molecular functions and biological processes determined, using the PANTHER gene ontological search software, that vesicles have significantly different protein abundance than their cell of origin (Figure 3).

Hierarchical clustering of the MM.1S and U266 vesicles shows tight grouping by cell of origin (Figure 4A). Label-free relative quantitation determined 125 proteins with significantly different abundance between the MM.1S and U266 vesicles ($p < 0.05$) (Table 1) & Supplemental Data 9). The smear plot (constructed by plotting the log fold change (logFC) vs log counts-per-million (logCPM)) is provided in Figure 4C. The PANTHER gene ontological annotations for biological process and molecular function for those proteins with statistically different abundance are provided in Figure 4D. These data suggest the protein abundances in vesicles can distinguish between the cells of origin. Additionally, the results show that the measurement of these differences in relative abundance more closely reflects biologic function than protein ID alone.

The increase in the relative abundance of specific proteins in the vesicles could be attributed to higher protein expression in a given cell type rather than specific packaging of proteins into the vesicles. To determine if the differences in vesicular protein compositions are driven by cell type vs. packaging, we plotted the fold change (Log FC) of each protein in the MM. 1S vs. U266 vesicles vs. its corresponding change in the cellular protein. Figure 5A shows proteins with no significant change in vesicular abundance or cellular expression in the same direction (i.e. both increased/decreased in the vesicles and global lysates). As expected these data points cluster about a line with a slope of 1 indicating vesicle abundance was driven predominantly by expression in the parent cell type. Conversely, Figure 5B highlights the proteins with opposing significant differences between the vesicles and cellular lysates (i.e.

increased abundance or expression in one sample type while the other remains unchanged or decreases). These data primarily cluster about the 0 intercept. However, there are several proteins located in the upper left and lower right quadrant that are significantly enriched in the vesicle samples independent of changes in the cellular protein abundance (Figure 5C). For the complete list of proteins with independent changes in abundance see Supplemental Data 10. These results illustrate the power of the label free approach in establishing the patterns of abundance of vesicular proteins relative to cellular expression revealed in the global lysate expression.

Validation of LC-MS/MS Protein Identifications and Relative Quantitation

To validate proteomic identifications and relative quantitation, we conducted immunoblots on the cell-derived vesicles (Figure 6A) and both vesicles and parent cell lysates (Figure 6B). Based on the LC-MS/MS data (Table 1 & Supplemental Data 9) and antibody availability, several proteins were identified for validation by immunoblot. First, CD9 was selected, as it was not identified in the U266 derived vesicles while showing enrichment in the MM.1S released vesicles. Conversely, IgG kappa light chain (IgG LC) was selected due to LC-MS/MS identification in U266 derived vesicles while remaining undetected in the MM.1S vesicles. Next, Nucleolin was identified for validation because the MS data showed enrichment in the MM.1S vesicles compared to the U266 vesicles. Finally, glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH) was chosen as it was identified in both the MM.1S and U266 derived vesicles. The immunoblot shown in Figure 6A confirms the presence and relative abundances of CD9, IgG LC, Nucleolin and GAPDH in the vesicles derived from the respective cell lines as described above.

Further validation of the LC-MS/MS derived relative abundances was confirmed through a second immunoblot containing both vesicle and cell lysates (Figure 6B). First as above, CD9 was shown by mass spectrometry to be only identified in the vesicles of the MM.1S cell line. The blot in Figure 6B further confirms the MS data and Figure 6A for the identification of CD9. Additionally, the LC-MS/MS data shows CD44, MHC Class I and BST-2 were enriched in the vesicles of both cell lines when compared to the cell lysates. The immunoblot shown in Figure 6B confirms the mass spectrometry data shown in Table 1 and Supplemental Data 9 for CD9, CD44, MHC Class I and BST-2 proteins. Both GAPDH and Actin were blotted as housekeeping genes. However due to challenges in protein loading associated with vesicles, the common housekeeping genes are not completely adequate for normalization proposes in this sub-cellular fraction. Regardless, the immunoblots confirm the relative changes we observe in the proteomics experiments while also exposing challenges in normalization of protein abundances between vesicles and cells.

DISCUSSION

Cellular communication through soluble factors and cell-to-cell adhesion molecules has long been established for many hematological cell types including MM [55]. Until recently, the role of vesicular communication between cells has gone relatively unstudied. Limitations in sample management, purity and preparation yield make vesicle study challenging. The monomodal size distributions of the vesicles isolated from both MM cell lines suggest a single, monodisperse population of vesicles in each case. The MM.1S vesicles are somewhat larger (average diameter of 177 nm) and have a slightly broader size distribution (standard deviation of 6.2 nm) compared to the U266 vesicles: average diameter of 138 nm and a standard deviation of 5.6 nm. These average diameters and size distributions correspond approximately to the exosome sub-population of cell-secreted vesicles [4]. The similarity of the proteomic identifications between the vesicle populations also suggests similar vesicle populations for the two MM cell lines.

Proteomic analysis of cell-derived vesicles has become the primary tool for vesicular protein characterization. Mainly in the last decade, vesicles from many in vitro and in vivo origins have been analyzed by various MS methods [6–31]. Our study represents an advance in vesicular proteomics through the use of label-free relative quantitation to characterize MM cell-derived vesicles and global lysates. We identified 583 total vesicular proteins from the MM.1S and U266 vesicles. Although the LC-MS/MS data identified a number of common extracellular vesicle proteins, such as antigen presenting molecules (MHC class I and class II), adhesion molecules (tetraspanins and integrins), membrane transport and fusion molecules (annexins, flotillin and Rab proteins), cytoskeletal proteins (actin, tubulin and moesin), and many others such as pyruvate kinase, GAPDH, 14-3-3 proteins, HSP70, HSP90, elongation factor 1 and the histones H2B, H2A, and H4, we also identified 32 and 13 proteins unique to the vesicles derived from the MM.1S and U266 cell lines, respectively [52–54]. These results support the hypothesis that extracellular vesicles have common protein profiles in large part, but with small sets of unique proteins corresponding to the parent cells of origin [52–54]. Furthermore the exclusive presence of BST-2 in the EV compartment of MM cells strongly supports the specificity of our analysis.

While there are only a small number of different identifications between the MM.1S and U266 vesicles, the relative abundances of proteins in the MM cell-derived vesicles are more divergent. The label-free relative quantitation of the MM.1S and vesicle data sets shows 125 proteins with statistically different protein abundance. These proteins correspond to an array of functions both biologically and molecularly. For example, the RNA-binding protein Nucleolin (NCL) was shown to have higher abundance in the MM.1S vesicles. NCL is a highly conserved multifunctional protein, abundantly expressed in the nucleolus of normal cells [56]. It has long been known as a protein critical for ribosomal RNA biogenesis (rRNA) [56]. In the cytoplasm, NCL functions to regulate mRNA translation and stability of several tumor progression genes, including BCL2, thereby inhibiting apoptosis of cancer cells. NCL is an integral component of the DROSHA-DGCR8 microprocessor complex and recently we have shown that NCL promotes the maturation of a specific set of miRNAs that are implicated in the pathogenesis of several human cancers, such as miR-21, miR-103, miR-221 and miR-222, whose over-expression is often associated with greater aggressiveness and resistance to anti-neoplastic therapies [57–60]. The presence of NCL and other RNA binding proteins in MM extracellular vesicles may allow further studies that will focus on the understanding their role in RNA transfer in cancer cells.

Alignment of vesicular and global cell lysate protein identifications shows a low number of unique identifications between the samples. Similar to the vesicle-to-vesicle comparisons, more divergent protein abundance was found with the application of the label-free edgeR analysis to the data sets. These data show 298 (MM.1S) and 268 (U266) proteins with variable abundance. For example, MM.1S vesicles show an increased abundance of HLA class II histocompatibility antigens when compared to the MM.1S global cell lysate. These results are in line with previous studies of B-cell derived exosomes [61,62]. Raposo et al. showed the vesicular MHC class II complexes can stimulate T-cells in vitro [61]. MHC class I has been identified as classical vesicle marker in the serum of cancer patients. The mechanisms of tumor cell resistance to immune effector functions are diverse and can be both intrinsic and reactive. A central immune escape route is the partial or complete downregulation of this complex at the cell surface, thereby limiting or avoiding recognition by cytotoxic CD8+ T effector cells (CTLs) and the induction of apoptosis [63,64]. Based on these observations it is reasonable to hypothesize that the specific shedding of MHC class I can be a common characteristic of MM cells to avoid the immune system response and support their growth, although further studies in MM patients will be required to support this observation.

Finally, we are the first to apply a label-free approach to identify variably abundance among proteins in the vesicles and their parent cell. Our study reveals that only a small number of unique proteins are packaged into extracellular vesicles [52–54]. Our study also reveals a more divergent protein abundance in the vesicles of MM cell lines.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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Figure 1.

Cryo-transmission electron microscopy (cryo-TEM) images of the **A)** MM.1S cell-derived extracellular vesicles and **B)** U266 cell-derived extracellular vesicles, indicated by the black. The cryo-TEM carbon support grids (white arrows) are also seen these images. **C)** Number distributions of MM.1S and U266 extracellular vesicle diameters derived from Dynamic Light Scattering (DLS) measurements.

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CL = Global Cell Lysate EV = Vesicle

Figure 2.

Venn diagram renderings of overlapping and unique protein identifications. **A)** MM.1S vesicles (EV) v. global cell lysate (CL). **B)** U266 vesicles (EV) v. global cell lysate (CL). **C)** MM.1S vesicles (EV) v. U266 vesicles (EV). Data shows many overlapping protein identifications while also harboring unique IDs in each comparison.

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Figure 3.

Clustering of LC-MS/MS spectral counts and pie chart illustrations of the PANTHER gene ontology annotations for molecular function and biological process for those proteins with significantly different abundances between the cell line vesicles when compared to the parent cell lysate. **A)** Clustering of spectral count data for the MM.1S vesicles and parent cell lysate. **B)** Enlarged clustering of spectral count data for those proteins selected for validation from MM.1S cell line. **C)** PANTHER gene ontological annotations for the molecular function and biological process for proteins with statistically different abundances from the MM.1S cell line. **D)** Clustering of spectral count data for the U266 vesicles and parent cell lysate. **E)** Enlarged clustering of spectral count data for those proteins selected for validation from the U266 cell line. **F)** PANTHER gene ontological annotations for the

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molecular function and biological process for proteins with statistically different abundances from the U266 cell line. Results suggest variable abundance of specific proteins, which can confer different potential biological processes and molecular functions.

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Figure 4.

EdgeR label-free analysis for differentially expressed proteins from the MM.1S derived vesicles and the U266 derived vesicles. **A)** Hierarchal clustering of LC-MS/MS spectral count data. **B)** Enlarged clustering of spectral count data for those proteins selected for validation. **C)** Smear plot of the log fold change (log FC) by log counts-per-million (log CPM) for the vesicle data from each cell line. **D)** Pie chart illustrations of the PANTHER gene ontology annotations for molecular function and biological process for those proteins differentially expressed between the MM derived vesicles. Data suggests vesicular protein abundance distinguishes between the cells of origin allowing for differential functional potential.

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Figure 5.

Smear plot of log fold change by log fold change for the vesicles and global cell lysates. **A)** Proteins with no significant change in abundance between vesicles and global lysates changes in the same direction. **B)** Proteins with significant abundance differences in opposite directions between the vesicle and global lysate samples. **C)** Overlay of **A & B**. Those proteins with the greatest independent differences in abundance are labeled with Uniprot Accession numbers.

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Figure 6.

Validation of protein identifications and spectral count relative quantitation from the proteomic analysis of the MM.1S and U266 derived vesicles and global cell lysates by immunoblot. **A)** Immunoblot of vesicle identified proteins. Blot was probed for CD9, IgG LC, Nucleolin and GAPDH. **B)** Immunoblot for comparison of protein relative abundance between vesicles and cell lysates. Blots were probed for CD9, CD44, MHC Class I, BST-2, GAPDH and Actin. Data confirms the LC-MS/MS protein identifications and relative abundances observed in the data sets. HeLa (CD9) and ARH77 (IgG LC) global lysates were used as positive controls.

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Table 1

List of proteins with differential abundances based on the label-free analysis of the vesicles derived from both the MM.1S and U266 cell lines. List of proteins with differential abundances based on the label-free analysis of the vesicles derived from both the MM.1S and U266 cell lines.

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