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# Dual targeting of the p38 MAPK-HO-1 axis and cIAP1/XIAP by demethoxycurcumin triggers caspase-mediated apoptotic cell death in oral squamous cell carcinoma cells

Ming-Hsien Chien, Wei-En Yang, Yi-Chieh Yang, Chia-Chi Ku, Wei-Jiunn Lee, Meng-Ying Tsai, Chiao-Wen Lin, Shun-Fa Yang

#### Supplementary materials and methods

#### Cell viability assay (MTS assay)

OSCC cells were plated at a density of 3000 cells/well in 96-well plates with complete media and incubated overnight. Cells next received different treatments as indicated for 24 h, and then subjected to a cell-viability assay (MTS assay; Promega, Madison WI) according to the manufacturer's instructions. The absorbance (A) was read at 490 nm using a microplate reader (MQX200; Bio-Tek Instruments, Winooski, VT). Data were collected from three replicates.

#### Supplementary data



**Supplementary Figure S1.** Effect of demethoxycurcumin (DMC) on apoptosis-related proteins in oral squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) cells. SCC-9 cells were treated with indicated concentrations of DMC for 24 h, and a Western blot analysis was used to detect expression levels of heme oxygenase (HO)-1, cellular inhibitor of apoptosis 1 (cIAP1), X-chromosome-linked IAP (XIAP), and cleaved caspase-8/-9/-3. The  $\beta$ -actin protein levels were used to adjust the quantitative results of these protein levels.



**Supplementary Figure S2.** Activation of p38 mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) is involved in demethoxycurcumin (DMC)-induced heme oxygenase (HO)-1 expression and cell apoptosis in SCC9 cells. (A) SCC-9 cells were exposed to the vehicle or DMC (12.5~50  $\mu$ M) for 24 h, then phosphorylation status of p38 MAPK were analyzed by a Western blot analysis. (B) SCC-9 cells were pretreated with SB203580 (10  $\mu$ M) for 1 h followed by another 24-h vehicle or DMC (50  $\mu$ M) treatment. Levels of cleaved caspase-3, -8, and -9, and HO-1 were analyzed by a Western blot analysis.



**Supplementary Figure S3.** Levels of endogenous epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) were analyzed by a Western blotting analysis in HSC-3 and SCC-9 oral squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) cells.



**Supplementary Figure S4.** Demethoxycurcumin (DMC) potentiates the growth inhibitory effect of gefitinib on oral squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) cells. (A) SCC-9 and HSC-3 cells were treated with indicated concentrations of DMC for 24 h, and a Western blot analysis was used to detect expression levels of phosphorylated epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) and total EGFR. (B) SCC-9 and HSC-3 cells were treated with gefitinib (20  $\mu$ M) in the presence or absence of the DMC (25  $\mu$ M) for 24 h, the cell viability was determined by MTS assay. Columns, mean (n=3); bars, SD. \*\*\*p < 0.001 compared with the vehicle group. ###p < 0.001 compared with the gefitinib-treated only group.

#### Whole Blots for Western Blot analysis

#### Figure 3B



#### Figure 3D





pro-caspase-9 (CS9502: 47 kDa)

DMC (µM)

100: 107: 106: 100

0

55

12.5 25 50





#### Figure 4A



# Figure 4B



# Figure 4E



# Figure 4I



# Figure 5A



# Figure 5C



# Figure S1



# Figure S2A



#### Figure S2B



# Figure S3









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