

# Journal of Cutaneous Pathology

Volume 34 Issue 11 Page 851-856, November 2007

**To cite this article:** Dante Simionato Neto, Luciana Pantaleão, Bianca Costa Soares de Sá, Gilles Landman (2007)

Alpha-v-beta3 integrin expression in melanocytic nevi and cutaneous melanoma

Journal of Cutaneous Pathology 34 (11), 851–856.

doi:10.1111/j.1600-0560.2007.00730.x

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## Alpha-v-beta3 integrin expression in melanocytic nevi and cutaneous melanoma

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Neto DS, Pantaleão L, Sá BCS, Landman G. Alpha-v-beta3 integrin expression in melanocytic nevi and cutaneous melanoma.

J Cutan Pathol 2007; 34: 851–856. © Blackwell Munksgaard 2007.

### Abstract

**Background:** Alpha-v-beta3 integrin ( $\alpha v\beta 3$ ) is a vitronectin ligand and plays an important role in melanoma progression.

**Objectives:** The purpose of the study was to evaluate the expression of  $\alpha v\beta 3$  in superficial spreading cutaneous melanoma, in both conventional and tissue microarray (TMA) paraffin-embedded-tissue specimens, and correlate with histopathological variables and patient survival.

Material and methods: A total of 159 tissue samples from compound nevi (n = 19), *in situ* melanoma (n = 5), thin melanoma (n = 34), thick melanoma (n = 72) and metastatic melanoma (n = 29) were studied.

Results: Compound nevus epithelioid cells had a mild expression of  $\alpha v\beta 3$ . *In situ* melanoma cells had the highest expression among all specimens, when compared to nevi ( $p = 0.0000$ ) and to invasive melanoma ( $p = 0.0003$ ). Expression of  $\alpha v\beta 3$  did not differ according to depth of invasion or did it increase in metastatic cells.

Conclusion: Our results suggested that  $\alpha v\beta 3$  integrin might have no impact on melanoma behavior. However, high levels of  $\alpha v\beta 3$ -integrin expression for *in situ* melanoma may be related to pre-invasive phenotype with marked potential to invade.

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## Experimental Dermatology

Volume 16 Issue 11 Page 927-935, November 2007

**To cite this article:** Myron K. Jacobson, Hyuntae Kim, W. Russell Coyle, Moonsun Kim, Donna L. Coyle, Ronald L. Rizer, Elaine L. Jacobson (2007)  
Effect of myristyl nicotinate on retinoic acid therapy for facial photodamage  
Experimental Dermatology 16 (11), 927–935.  
doi:10.1111/j.1600-0625.2007.00616.x

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