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Mitogen-Activated Protein Kinases: New Insights for Old Cell Signaling Pathways

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Message from the Guest Editors

The mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) signaling pathway is a family of protein kinases that regulates many physiological processes, including inflammatory responses, morphogenesis, cell proliferation, differentiation, survival and death. It is well established that mammals express three MAPK subfamilies: (a) the extracellular signal-regulated kinases (ERKs); (b) the c-Jun N-terminal kinases/stress-activated protein kinases (JNKs/SAPKs); and (c) the p38 MAPKs. Depending on distinct stimuli, each MAPK is activated by specific MAPKKs, which in turns can be activated by more than one MAPKKK, increasing the complexity and diversity of MAPK signaling. Importantly, deregulated activation of these signaling pathways are becoming the focus of screening strategies probing for new therapeutic approaches to treat human diseases such as diabetes, neurodegenerative conditions, cardiovascular abnormalities, cancer, inflammation and liver disease.



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