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Authors' Reply

Soheil S. Dadras,* Richard J. Lin,[†] and David E. Fisher*[†]

From the Cutaneous Biology Research Center and Department of Dermatology,* Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Charlestown; and the Department of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology,[†] Melanoma Program in Medical Oncology, Boston, Massachusetts

We thank Dr. Benilde Jiménez Cuenca and colleagues for bringing to our attention the research by Fernandez-Barral et al¹ reporting the regulatory and functional relationship imposed by microphthalmia-associated transcription factor (MITF) on pigment epithelium-derived factor (PEDF) in melanoma. We assure the authors that we were completely unaware of their publication, presumably because both

manuscripts were likely under review at the same time. By the time our manuscript² was accepted for publication (September 5, 2014), their article had only recently been published (June 2014).

Nevertheless, we are pleased that our *in vitro* findings were independently confirmed by another group of investigators. The two papers have indeed taken similar approaches in demonstrating the transcriptional control of PEDF by MITF *in vitro* and decreased PEDF expression during melanoma progression. In addition, our focus was more clinical by taking a cohort of 102 patients with well-defined and characterized melanocytic tumors to be investigated for PEDF expression by immunohistochemistry. We also correlated the expression of PEDF to the extent of measured angiogenesis in the melanoma biopsies, American Joint Committee on Cancer melanoma staging, and patient clinical outcome. Our finding of inverse correlation between PEDF expression and Breslow's depth of tumor invasion is a critical clinical parameter related to tumor progression. Depth of tumor invasion, along with ulceration and mitotic index, are currently the most important criteria to predict prognosis for melanoma patients. Thus we enthusiastically agree that Fernandez-Barral et al¹ have made significant contributions to the field. We also wish to highlight the value of extending the field by addition of the clinical correlations that our study provides.

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Current address of S.S.D., Department of Dermatology, University of Connecticut, Farmington, CT; of R.J.L., New York University Langone Medical Center, New York, NY.