Ovarian Apoptosis

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The fate of ovarian cells (i.e. proliferation, differentiation and apoptotic cell death) is determined by complex actions of endocrine and paracrine factors and is dependent on cell-cell and cell-matrix interactions. Apoptosis in the ovary is the cellular basis of important physiological processes including follicular atresia and ovulation, and also occurs in disease conditions such as cancer and chemoresistance. This special issue provides a current overview of the molecular and cellular mechanisms involved in the regulation of ovarian cell survival and apoptosis in these contexts. It reviews the role and regulation of granulosa cell apoptosis by gonadotropins, growth factors and cytokines during follicular atresia at different stages of development as well as the importance and relative expression of intraovarian survival and death-inducing proteins. Emphasis is placed on the crosstalk between the death and survival signalling pathways, and their role in follicular selection in both mammals and higher vertebrates. The involvement of apoptosis and tissue remodelling in the ovulatory process is examined. Cell adhesion protein-mediated cell-cell and cell-extracellular matrix interactions are important cell survival determinants in human ovarian epithelial cancer cells. The role deregulation plays in the expression of tumor suppressor and/or cell survival genes as well as in the processing of their products in ovarian tumorigenesis and chemoresistance is also discussed. Researchers, clinicians and educators will find this current reference source and teaching material very useful.



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