Response to Abcouwer and Roybal

We are writing in response to a letter from Drs Abcouwer and Roybal regarding our recent article in Circulation Research and the accompanying commentary.

Drs Abcouwer and Roybal claim that we did not acknowledge prior work linking ATF-4 to VEGF-A expression. They pointed to papers from their own group published in 2004 and 2005, as well as other studies by Chakraborty et al (published January 2008) and Oskolkova et al (May 2008). However, our article did, in fact, cite both Roybal articles (Refs 25 and 40; see pages 386 to 387 of Malabanan et al) and the Chakraborty article (Ref 39; see page 387 of Malabanan et al). Indeed, our article clearly states (see page 381, column 1, paragraph 2) that “previous studies have demonstrated the existence of a single functional ATF-4 binding site in the VEGF-A gene.” And after this statement, we cite Roybal et al. Our article even cites a third report from Dr Abcouwer and colleagues (Luo et al [Ref 26]; page 386 of Malabanan et al). Thus, we cited no fewer than 3 articles by Abcouwer and colleagues on ATF-4. We were not aware of the report by Oskolkova et al until after the publication of our article; Oskolkova et al was published online ahead of print only a few weeks before our report was published.

The above notwithstanding, in our report, we demonstrate the existence of an fibroblast growth factor-2/ATF-4/VEGF-A axis in vascular smooth muscle cells in the context of wound repair after balloon angioplasty, which clearly differs in disease context and stimuli from any of these prior studies. Even then, we demonstrate that the role of ATF-4 in the reparative response to injury is not confined to VEGF-A alone. The findings of the report “open up opportunities of exploring the role of ATF-4 in the regulation of pathophysiologically relevant genes besides VEGF-A” (Malabanan et al; page 384, column 2, paragraph 2), some of which, as reiterated by Dr Chin, we have already begun to establish (Figure 4B, page 382, Malabanan et al).

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References
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