

Review Article

Exploring the Potential of Transient Receptor Potential: Troubleshooting Troublesome Calcium Thoroughfares in Biomedicine

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Abstract: Transient Receptor Potential-Canonical (TRPC) channels are the border guards residing in the supra-molecular assembly of plasma membrane. TRPCs represent a family of channels that have dual functions of store-operated and second messenger-operated channels in a diversity of cell types. Any disruption in the spatio-temporal organization drastically influences the calcium homeostasis. This review summarizes current interpretations on the infrastructure and characteristic divalent ions regulation in molecular anomalies. A specific targeting of these channels will enable us to get a step closer to personalized medicines.

Keywords: TRPV, TRPC, Oncogenesis, STIM, Therapeutic interventions.

Introduction

Calcium is one of the repertoires of the cell. Calcium ions trigger multifarious processes. It implicates these processes by promoting or suppressing the interplay between proteins. These aspects range from cellular proliferation to apoptosis. Although both these parameters are paradigm in parallax, still opposite sides of the same coin. Ca²⁺ mediated signal transduction is engaged in tumorigenesis or various facets of tumor progression like metastasis, angiogenesis or invasion. Ca²⁺ is often given superficial attention or viewed simplistically as a switch. Paradoxically Ca²⁺ homeostasis must be controlled in a precise manner. There is a list of membrane associated proteins directly implicated in Ca²⁺ homeostasis and amplitude. There is no hardcore profile for variations in Ca²⁺ channel expression in cancer cells.

TRP: TR(I)P to a planet of multitasking channels

Transient receptor potential (TRP) channels behave as multifunctional cellular sensors and are engaged in appropriate switching and tuning of cellular growth factor signaling. Following literature will provide an overview of current awareness about the discrete role of TRP channels in various diseases. On the basis of phylogenetic categorization there are three major families. The TRPC or canonical TRP family, with seven members (TRPC1 through TRPC7), TRPV family comprises six members (TRPV1-6) and the TRPM family encompasses eight

members (TRPM1-8). On the basis of structural and functional commonalities, TRPC splits into four different subfamilies: TRPC1, TRPC2, TRPC3, 6 and 7 and TRPC4 and 5 (Reviewed by Montell [49]).

Increase in plasma membrane Ca^{2+} channel expression (for example in prostate cancer cells there is an up-regulation of TRPM8 and TRPV6) and reduced expression of Ca^{2+} pumps that limit the drastic increase in the ions. This malpractice would augment Ca^{2+} incline in cytosol thus facilitating proliferative signaling pathways. Significant changes in Ca^{2+} homeostasis and amplitude may take place. Ca^{2+} channel localization was altered in neoplastic cell. Expression of Ca^{2+} channel on the ER could result in Ca^{2+} leak from ER and resistance of apoptotic stimuli. In human prostate cancer cell line LNCaP, TRPM8 leaves plasma membrane and localizes to ER membrane [62]. Conversely, when overexpressed in Human Embryonic Kidney 293 Cells (HEK-293 cells), Transient receptor potential melastatin 8 (TRPM8) appeared both in plasma membrane and ER membrane.

GPCR: A versatile signalling orchestrator

Traditionally, it has been presumed that the constituents of signaling pathways show pathway fidelity and act with a high degree of autonomy. However, substantial fraction of information confirms that linear transduction cascades undergo integration. The linear pathways are often shared between multiple pathways. G protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs) respond to various ligands, such as hormones, neurotransmitters. It is quite often that GPCR-interacting partners directly mediate receptor signaling or they might act as scaffolds to operate the downstream signaling. Furthermore, GPCR-interacting proteins can have a big impact on the regulation of TRPC activities.

Agonists stimulate G-protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs 1-3), in the cell membrane (Fig. 1). GPCR1 activates the $G\alpha_s$ protein, which results in the generation of cyclic AMP (cAMP) by adenylyl cyclase (AC). Protein kinase A (PKA) is also activated which phosphorylates various substrates. $G\beta\gamma$ -complex activates mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) cascade, which results in the activation of extracellular signal-regulated kinase-1/2 (ERK1,2) to trigger transcriptional responses [20-22].

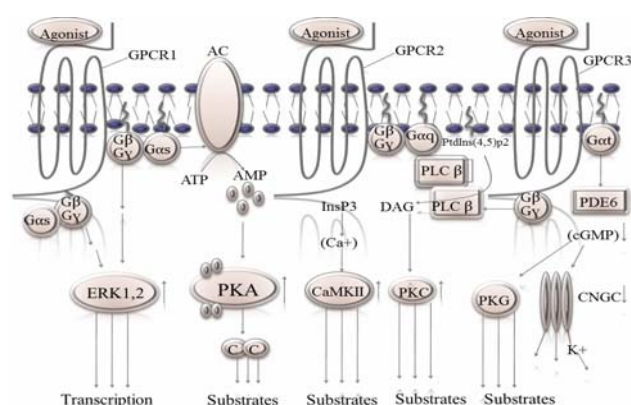


Fig. 1 Diagrammatic presentation of GPCR signaling

GPCR2 activates G protein Alpha Subunit Q polypeptide ($G\alpha_q$). Phospholipase C β (PLC β), generates inositol-1,4,5-triphosphate ($InsP_3$) and diacylglycerol (DAG) from phosphatidylinositol-4,5-bisphosphate ($PtdIns(4,5)P_2$). $InsP_3$ regulates intracellular Ca^{2+} ions ($[Ca^{2+}]_i$) mobilization and the activation of Ca^{2+} /calmodulin-activated protein kinase II (CaMKII) [83]. DAG activates protein kinase C (PKC) [65]. CaMKII and PKC can

phosphorylate multiple substrates [66]. GPCR3 activates G protein Alpha Subunit Transducing activity ($G\alpha_t$), which induces bipartite signaling [54], the activation of PLC β by G $\beta\gamma$ -complex and the activation of phosphodiesterase-6 (PDE6). PDE6 reduces cyclic GMP, protein kinase G (PKG) activity and cyclic-nucleotide-gated channel (CNGC) activity [12, 29, 30, 64, 73].

STIM and ORAI: Dealing with TRPC in a friendly manner

A shortfall of Ca^{2+} content within the endoplasmic reticulum (ER) has to be replenished. This is triggered by receptor activation that stimulates phospholipase C (PLC) to increase inositol-1,4,5-trisphosphate (InsP₃) [71], leads to the opening of plasma membrane embedded Ca^{2+} release-activated Ca^{2+} (CRAC) channels. These channels are selective for Ca^{2+} and result in a cytoplasmic rise in Ca^{2+} levels. A decline in Ca^{2+} concentration below the threshold value is sensed by stromal interaction molecule 1 (STIM1), which communicates this to ORAI calcium release-activated calcium modulator (ORAI1), the pore-forming subunit of the CRAC channel (Fig. 2). STIM1 is embedded in ER membrane. Framework of the protein comprises an EF hand that binds Ca^{2+} , a “hidden” EF hand that does not bind Ca^{2+} and the sterile α -motif (SAM) domain that promotes STIM1 oligomerization. Cytoplasmic domain is equipped with functional domains, coiled-coil domain, an ezrin-radixin-moesin (ERM) domain and serine or proline-rich (S/P-rich) and lysine-rich (K-rich) segments. The CRAC activation domain (CAD) is compulsory for ORAI1 gating [1]. ORAI1 has four transmembrane domains (TM1–TM4), with intracellular amino and carboxyl termini [36-38].

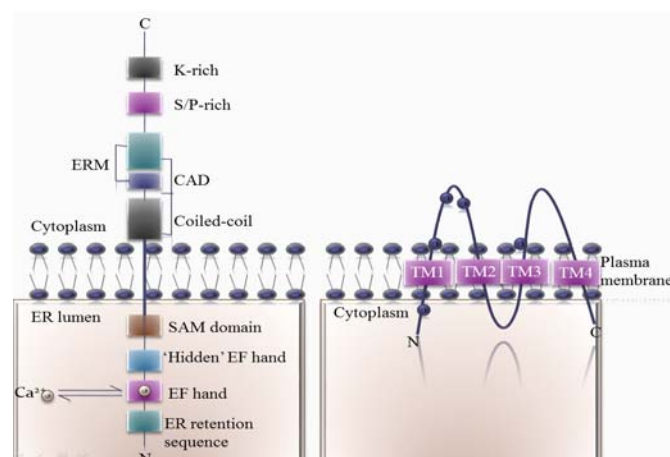


Fig. 2 Illustration of STIM and ORAI infrastructure and framework

STIM is a protein that resides in the endoplasmic reticulum [33]. It has calcium binding domains in it [18]. In the absence of calcium concentration there is a shuttling of STIM from endoplasmic reticulum to PM-ER junction [52]. It gets coupled to the Transient receptor potential canonical (TRPC) and facilitates the trafficking of calcium ions [68, 69, 75]. This phenomenon of Store operated calcium entry (SOCE) is switched on because of Ca^{2+} store depletion. There are two domains of STIM which are involved in protein aggregation/oligomerization [39, 43]. It was observed that K⁶⁸⁴, K⁶⁸⁵ residues of STIM, that are involved in making indirect attachment with TRPC [82]. As STIM gets indirectly attached to heteromultimerized TRPC [36, 77, 81]. It first enhances heteromultimerization of TRPC isoform then gets attached to that complex. Attachment of STIM1 to TRPC dissociates pre existing interactive complex of TRPC and caveolin [50]. TRPC harbors STIM binding domain in the C terminal region of the channel while N-Terminal region holds binding site for caveolin. STIM C-terminal interacts with C-Terminal region of TRPC [23, 40].

There is a very tight involvement of ER stored calcium in pulmonary constriction. The induced mobilization of Ca^{2+} out of ER infringed the vasoconstriction. There is threshold calcium amplitude that is necessary in cytoplasm to instigate contraction. This threshold can be maintained either by ER stored depletion or influx of Ca^{2+} ions via TRPC channels. In agreement with this assumption another parameter that cannot be ruled out is that elevated cytosolic amplitude of Ca^{2+} is mediated by upstream and downstream avenues which are Ca^{2+} influx via plasma membrane localized channel and Ca^{2+} efflux via stored Ca^{2+} reservoirs in ER to sustain Ca^{2+} amplitude in cytosol. Hence it is obvious and outstanding situation in which cytosolic calcium is the licensing factor for proliferation and vasoconstriction. Both these mechanisms are bolstered by Ca^{2+} ions in cytoplasm. If this threshold amplitude of Ca^{2+} is extinguished by inhibiting Ca^{2+} mobilization via ER or abrogating influx via TRP channels, both patterns of constriction and proliferation can be attenuated [9, 28, 45, 60, 61].

TRP's are potential candidates that indicate a transitional switch from uterine quiescence to contraction during labor. Various isoforms of TRPC are localized in myometrium. Henceforth similar contractions are induced by increase in cytosolic Ca^{2+} ions which facilitate the process [16, 17]. Pulmonary vasoconstriction is a phenomenon associated with constriction of pulmonary arteries in hypoxia (low oxygen level) without hypercapnia (high carbon dioxide level). This hypoxic stress redirects blood flow to higher oxygen content region i.e is alveoli. Vasoconstriction is more pronounced in distal pulmonary artery than proximal artery. This vasoconstriction is triggered by co-interaction of TRPC and STIM-C that impinges store operated calcium entry [41, 42]. IP₃ mediated Icat (IP₃ induced nonselective cation current) activation and vasoconstriction by IP₃R1 and TRPC3 present in arterial myocytes [72]. C terminal calmodulin and IP₃R binding (CIRB) domain are present in myocyte TRPC3 and TRPC6 channels [2, 8, 25, 70] determined the role of TRPC in pulmonary vasoconstriction. They used epoxyeicosatrienoic acid (EET) in TRPC heterozygous and homozygous mice to explore the involvement of TRPC6 in pulmonary vasoconstriction. There was a remarkable vasoconstriction in TRPC heterozygous mice but contrarily, there was no effect of compound EET on the mice, that were homozygous recessive for TRPC. These observations strengthen our understanding regarding role of TRPC in pulmonary vasoconstriction. TRPC is activated by G-protein coupled receptor signaling in an indirect manner. PLC once switched on because of GPCR signaling acts on Phosphatidylinositolbisphosphate (PIP₂) and subsequently generation of IP₃ and DAG takes place [32, 34]. Both entities are implicated in activation of TRPC [46]. TRPC4 expression is upregulated in diabetic vessels whereas TRPC1 and TRPC6 are downregulated [14].

Heteromultimer TRPC6/TRPC7 is strongly influenced by extracellular Ca^{2+} concentration. Increase in Ca^{2+} concentration attenuates heteromultimer mediated current. Same trend was observed after knockout of STIM which compromised trafficking of Ca^{2+} ions after store depletion. STIM ablation prevented metastatic dissemination but bolstered proliferation [44].

BDNF and TRPC: Hands in glove

The binding of brain derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) to Tropomyosin-Related Kinase B (TrkB) activates phospholipase C γ (PLC- γ) which generates diacylglycerol (DAG) and inositol triphosphate (IP₃) [5, 15]. DAG directly activates TRP family channels [3, 35, 59], whereas IP₃ may trigger store-operated Ca^{2+} release mechanisms [63, 76, 79]. Ca^{2+} influx via TRPC3 and TRPC6 channels activates extracellular receptor kinase (Erk) and Calcium/calmodulin-dependent protein kinase type IV (CaMKIV). This activates cAMP responsive element binding (CREB) transcriptional pathways that integrate with

Akt-dependent pathways to potentiate survival of neurons. Ca^{2+} -dependent survival pathways are induced via activity-dependent opening of L-type Ca^{2+} channels as well (Fig. 3).

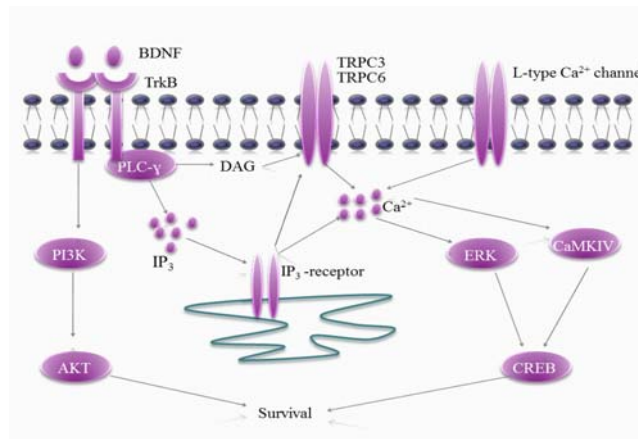


Fig. 3 BDNF-induced and activity-dependent survival mechanisms are potentiated by intricate Ca^{2+} -dependent signaling pathways

Activation cascades of TRPC

TRPC is susceptible to stimulation by multiple factors. Sustainability of TRPC6 in plasma membrane is bolstered by Ras-like proteins (Rab 9 and Rab 11). Both the proteins are actively involved in recycling of TRPC6 to plasma membrane (Fig. 4) [11]. Substance P (subp) and IP3 are implicated in activating TRPC's. IP3 displaces PIP2 mediated inhibition of TRPC7 subunits [6, 24].

SEC14 domain and spectrin repeat-containing protein 1 (SESTD1) gets docked to calmodulin and IP3 receptor domain in TRP-like protein (TRPL). SESTD1 harbors a lipid binding SEC14 domain. Multiple phospholipids get attached to SESTD1 which render it active and enhance its affinity for TRPC [47]. TRPC mediated inward trafficking of calcium ions facilitates the expression of vascular cell adhesion molecule (VCAM) via tumor necrosis factor (TNF) and Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) [57, 58]. Notch signaling modulates transcription of TRPC via NUMB [13, 31].

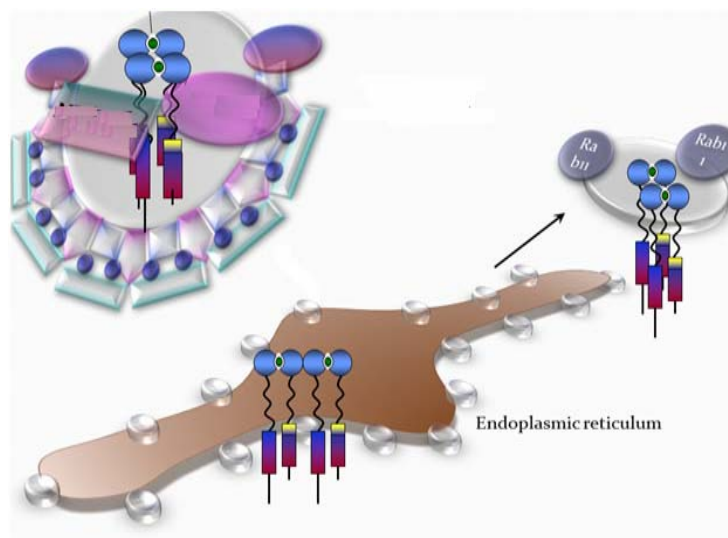


Fig. 4 Tight regulation of TRPC by Rab proteins

TRPC: Partners and partnerships in the crime

Facts advocate that up-regulation of TRPC channels is entailed in the development of cardiac hypertrophy and heart failure. Moreover it contributes in vascular remodeling and pulmonary hypertension. TRP channels are imperative novel pharmacological targets for the clinical management of cardiovascular disease.

Atrial natriuretic peptides (ANP) and brain natriuretic peptides (BNP) are actively involved in mediating antihypertrophic effects in the heart via their common receptor, guanylyl cyclase (GC)-A. It generates cGMP, for activation of protein kinase (PK)G. Protein kinaseG (PKG) suppresses TRPC6 activity and cardiac hypertrophy. It was unclear whether PKG suppresses cardiac hypertrophy through inhibition of TRPC. PKG activated by Phosphodiesterase5 (PDE5) inhibition phosphorylated TRPC6 proteins at Thr(69). This interferes with the calcium trafficking. Substitution of Ala for Thr(69) in TRPC6 impaired the anti-hypertrophic effects of PDE5 inhibition. PDE5 inhibitors induce TRPC6 phosphorylation that plays an active role in prevention of pathological hypertrophy by PDE5 inhibition. Overexpressed TRPC6 in GC-A compromised cells exacerbated cardiac hypertrophy as TRPC channel blocker, considerably decreased the cardiac hypertrophy. There is an existence of an interactive pathway encompassing TRPC activation via cardiac ANP/BNP-GC-A pathway. TRPC6 blockade is an effective therapeutic strategy for management of pathological cardiac remodeling [26, 27, 51].

In cardiomyocytes, alterations in the frequency or amplitude of calcium results in induction of hypertrophy. Some pivotal receptor-ligand engagements regulate the switching of calcium channels in a diversified manner. Angiotensin (Ang) II modulates pathogenesis of cardiac hypertrophy by nuclear factor of activated T cells (NFAT), a calcium responsive transcriptional factor. PLC-mediated production of diacylglycerol (DAG) results in robust activation of diacylglycerol (DAG)-responsive canonical transient receptor potential (TRPC) subfamily channels (TRPC3 and TRPC6) triggers membrane depolarization. Ablation of either TRPC3 or TRPC6 completely hampered agonist-induced hypertrophic responses, highlighting that TRPC3 and TRPC6 undergo heterotetramerization and targeting of either member of the family disrupts the synergy.

A recent swing of emphasis towards endogenous TRPC proteins has resulted in a mounting body of substantiation indicating that a combinatorial scheme is observed in TRPC channels. These proteins work synchronously to form native heteromeric SOCs. TRPC proteins are involved in the formation of multiple native channel types. Heteromultimerization of variety of TRPC proteins, results in assembly into multifarious channel types.

Interestingly there is an antagonistic interaction that prevails between TRPC3/TRPC6 and TRPC1/TRPC5. TRPC6 channels evoked by Ang II are rendered functionally inactive by TRPC1/C5-mediated Ca^{2+} influx and stimulation of PKC which phosphorylates TRPC6 subunits. This unmasks a novel interaction between two distinctive vasoconstrictor-activated TRPC channels expressed in the same VSMCs. The endothelin-1 (ET-1) receptor subtypes have a dual mode of activation of TRPC's. The alternative pathways of PIP2 and PIP3 are utilized in a precise manner to trigger the activation of the channels. This appears to be a "double edged sword" as any medication that solely targets any of the members will be incompetent to produce desired results because of the probabilistic switching mode of the signaling. Mechanistic activation of TRPC1/C5/C6 channels (termed TRPC1 channels) by stimulation of (ET-1) receptor subtypes is intriguingly diverse. Activation of native

TRPC1/C5/C6 channels executed by endothelin-1 can be achieved by both PIP3 and PIP2 [53, 55].

In pulmonary arterial smooth muscle cells (PASMCs), Ca^{2+} influx occurs primarily through store-operated Ca^{2+} channels. Exposure to prolonged hypoxia results in an upregulated TRPC1 and TRPC6 expression in PASMCs. Sildenafil, a type V phosphodiesterase inhibitor is a remarkable agent for treatment of pulmonary hypertension that elevates cellular cGMP. It alters basal calcium level in PASMCs by decrease in SOCE through TRPC1/TRPC6 expression inhibition and decreasing the vascular tone of pulmonary arteries [41, 67].

Many receptor tyrosine kinases potentiate the activities of TRPC. A “transactivation” mechanism, which links these events in one signalling chain. Platelet driven growth factor (PDGF) mediated pulmonary artery smooth muscle cell proliferation is associated with upregulation of TRPC6 expression. Increase in capacitative Ca^{2+} entry (CCE) facilitate return of Ca^{2+} to sarcoplasmic reticulum and promote pulmonary artery smooth muscle cell (PASMC) growth [74]. Intracellular Ca^{+} depletion activates capacitative Ca^{2+} entry (CCE) which takes part in Pulmonary artery (PA) concentration through TRP Ca^{2+} channels [7, 45]. Arg8-vasopressin (AVP) acts as a ligand and gets attached to vasopressin receptor present on the surface of the cell. As soon as ligand receptor engagement takes place, there is a medley of receptors which synchronize and orchestrate calcium trafficking. TRPC might work in collaboration with Platelet-driven growth factor receptor (PDGFR), because the G-protein mediated calcium mobilization was observed in case of Platelet-driven growth factor receptor (PDGFR) activation. It had very tight interaction with TRPC that acts as a channel for calcium trafficking [48]. JAK-STAT pathway induced the expression of TRPC. STAT3 moves in the nucleus, it gets attached to response elements specified for binding of STAT3. This attachment induces expression of TRPC, however if TRPC is abolished, the trafficking of calcium through this channel will be impaired despite the activation of vasopressin receptor or PDGFR.

Patients suffering from glioblastoma multiforme, the most aggressive form of glioma, have a median survival of around 12 months. Some members of the Ca^{2+} -permeable transient receptor potential canonical (TRPC) family of channel proteins are instrumental to uncontrolled division of cells. TRPC6 might be a new target for therapeutic intervention of human glioma as manipulating the pathways augmenting the dynamics of these proteins can help a lot in standardization of therapy [19].

Role of TRP's in prostate cancer progression

Prostate cancer is a multifactorial disease. A wide range of proteins have been characterized and incriminated to be involved in the disease progression. A confluence of observations indicates that super-families of transient receptor potential (TRPs) channel are instrumental in prostate carcinogenesis. TRPC6 [78] is associated with the disease exacerbation and knocking down of TRPC6 (69) and TRPV6 [80] was growth inhibitory in prostate cancer cell lines. Recently a research group documented a tight association of TRPV with ATM. They registered that activation of TRPV1 with capsaicin resulted in the activation of ATM alongwith induction of apoptosis [4]. A closer look at the credentials of ATM indicates that it has bipartite activities. Either it is involved in the induction of apoptosis or it is engaged in DNA repair in a faithful manner. Despite the growing evidence that these channels and genomic rearrangements have wide contributions in disease aggressiveness, no study to date addresses the tight association of the abrogation of channels and genomic rearrangements. In a set of experimentations we have evaluated influence of TRP channels in chromosomal

fusions. Silencing of these channels alongwith erlotinib resulted in activation of ATM which triggered faithful recapitulation of genome (Ammad Farooqi unpublished observations).

Gastric cancers: Opportunities and existing challenges

TRPC6 has an imperative role in human gastric cancer development. While drawing a parallel between gastric cancer cells and normal gastric epithelial cells, expression of TRPC is enhanced in former. Drug treatment of human gastric cancer cell lines, with SKF96365, an agent known to inhibit TRPC channels, detained cell cycle and cell growth [10]. Oesophageal squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) is one of the foremost causes of cancer-related death worldwide. TRPC6 is robustly expressed in OSCC and is essential for cell proliferation and cell cycle. Inhibition of TRPC6 channels in human OSCC cells brings forth anti proliferative effects and induces G2/M phase arrest [56].

Conclusion and future directions

The next decade of research on TRPC channels should focus on several issues. First, it is essential to bridge the existing gaps in the literature that limit understanding of the modes of regulation of these channels. Interpreting and evaluating the range of effects of expression and factors that potentiate or blunt the expression can help to streamline these inconsistencies. As a final point, there is a need to move towards investigation of their molecular insights of cells in actual physiological systems. To this end, requirement to rely on a greater extent on knock-down strategies such as knock-out animals and RNAi gene silencing cannot be overlooked. Optimistically in the near future a sharper picture of the mechanistic insights for TRPC channels will be achieved.

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