CIRCULATING PROTEIN PROFILES IN PANCREATIC DUCTAL ADENOCARCINOMA REVEAL DISTINCT EARLY-STAGE DISEASE-ASSOCIATED ALTERATIONS

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Circulating immune-related proteins are significantly altered in pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, with particularly pronounced changes in early-stage disease (stage I–II), supporting their potential as minimally invasive biomarkers for early detection.

KEY POINTS

- In early-stage PDAC (stage I–II), 11 proteins showed the most pronounced differences compared to healthy controls: CD40-L, EGF, MCP-1, CSF-1, MCP-3, CAIX, TNFSF14, CCL20, MUC-16, IL-8, and ARG1, all significantly upregulated (adjusted $p < 0.05$, LOOCV AUC = 0.75, 95% CI: 0.62–0.88).
- The study analyzed 312 PDAC patients across all stages (151 males/161 females; mean age 67.3 ± 10.8 years) and 172 healthy controls (84 males/88 females; mean age 62.7 ± 11.2 years) using the Olink Immuno-Oncology panel with proximity extension assay technology.
- A broad set of circulating immune-related proteins was significantly altered in PDAC patients compared to healthy controls, indicating systemic immune dysregulation associated with the disease.
- The identified protein panel reflects systematic alterations in immune cell recruitment, inflammatory signaling, and tumor–microenvironment interactions, with a consistent pattern suggesting a coordinated systemic response may be detectable prior to advanced tumor progression.
- Further studies of larger scale early-stage PDAC cohorts are warranted to validate these findings and assess their performance in early detection settings.

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