

Long noncoding RNA MALAT1 suppresses breast cancer metastasis

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MALAT1 has previously been described as a metastasis-promoting long noncoding RNA (lncRNA). We show here, however, that targeted inactivation of the *Malat1* gene in a transgenic mouse model of breast cancer, without altering the expression of its adjacent genes, promotes lung metastasis, and that this phenotype can be reversed by genetic add-back of *Malat1*. Similarly, knockout of MALAT1 in human breast cancer cells induces their metastatic ability, which is reversed by re-expression of *Malat1*. Conversely, overexpression of *Malat1* suppresses breast cancer metastasis in transgenic, xenograft, and syngeneic models. Mechanistically, the MALAT1 lncRNA binds and inactivates the prometastatic transcription factor TEAD, preventing TEAD from associating with its co-activator YAP and target gene promoters. Moreover, MALAT1 levels inversely correlate with breast cancer progression and metastatic ability. These findings demonstrate that MALAT1 is a metastasis-suppressing lncRNA rather than a metastasis promoter in breast cancer, calling for rectification of the model for this highly abundant and conserved lncRNA.

Long noncoding RNAs (lncRNAs) are transcripts longer than 200 nucleotides with no protein-coding capacity¹. The nuclear lncRNA MALAT1 (metastasis-associated lung adenocarcinoma transcript 1) is among the most conserved lncRNAs and is highly abundant in normal tissues^{2–4}. MALAT1 localizes to nuclear speckles⁴ and has been shown on the basis of in vitro knockdown effects to modulate alternative pre-messenger RNA splicing⁵. However, *Malat1*-knockout mice showed no phenotypic differences compared with wild-type mice, and genetic ablation of *Malat1* did not affect global gene expression, nuclear speckles, splicing factors, or alternative pre-mRNA splicing in mouse tissues^{2,6,7}.

Previous in vitro and xenograft studies demonstrated contradictory effects of MALAT1 on tumor-cell growth and invasion^{8–12}. Recently, mice were generated with a deletion of a 3-kb genomic region encompassing the 5' end of *Malat1* and its promoter². After breeding these animals to transgenic mice that provide a model of breast cancer—MMTV (mouse mammary tumor virus)-PyMT (polyomavirus middle T antigen)¹³ mice—a reduction in lung metastases was observed¹⁴, but the underlying mechanism remained unclear. Notably, this *Malat1*-deletion model exhibited substantial upregulation of *Malat1*'s adjacent genes, including *Neat1*, *Frmd8*, *Tigd3*, *Ehbp11l*, *Ltbp3*, and, to a lesser extent, *Map3k11*, *Kcnk7*, *Fam89b*, *Scyl1*, *Slc25a45*, *Dpf2*, and *Cdc42ep2* (ref. ²). It is unknown whether their upregulation was due to the loss of *Malat1* lncRNA or the deletion of regulatory sequences for these neighboring genes.

Questions have been raised as to whether phenotypes resulting from deleting a lncRNA-encoding gene can be unequivocally attributed either to the loss of the lncRNA per se or to the loss of overlapping regulatory elements¹⁵. A recent study revealed opposite effects from the gene deletion and insertional inactivation of the lncRNA *Haunt*, and the gene-deletion effect was attributed to the loss of *Haunt* genomic DNA¹⁶. Moreover, given the multiple examples of different or opposite phenotypes resulting from different strategies for inactivating the same lncRNA in vivo, it has been concluded that genetic rescue experiments from a separate transgene are crucial for separating lncRNA-specific effects from those arising from the manipulation of the underlying genomic DNA¹⁵. In addition to gene deletion, MALAT1 has been studied in experiments involving short hairpin RNA (shRNA) or small interfering RNA (siRNA), which is questionable for nuclear lncRNAs, and by means of antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs) in a few recent studies^{14,17,18}. However, emerging evidence revealed substantial nonspecific effects of antisense RNAs and invalidated certain putative anticancer targets^{19,20}. The MALAT1 gene deletion, ASO and siRNA effects have never been validated to be MALAT1 specific through rescue experiments.

In this study, we observed that metastasis was induced by germline insertional inactivation or somatic knockout of *Malat1* without alterations in the expression of adjacent genes, and we conducted genetic rescue experiments to demonstrate that this effect was specific to loss of *Malat1* lncRNA. Moreover, we found that MALAT1 binds and inactivates TEAD and suppresses metastasis in a

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TEAD-dependent manner. These findings defy the conclusions drawn from previous *Malat1* gene deletion and antisense RNA studies lacking rescue experiments.

Results

Genetic analyses identify *Malat1* as a metastasis suppressor. To study the role of *Malat1* in breast cancer, instead of using the *Malat1* gene deletion model showing upregulation of multiple *Malat1*'s adjacent genes², we used a different *Malat1*-knockout mouse model in which a transcriptional terminator (*lacZ* and the polyadenylation sequences) was inserted 69-bp downstream of the transcriptional start site of *Malat1* (ref. ⁷). This targeted inactivation strategy resulted in loss of *Malat1* RNA expression⁷.

MMTV-PyMT mice recapitulate the tumor stages, pathology, metastasis, and biomarkers of patients with metastatic breast cancer²¹. In this model, the breast cancer phenotypes of the FVB mouse strain are much more aggressive than those of the C57BL/6 (B6) strain^{13,22}, and thus we used either a B6 or an FVB background (instead of a mixed background) in our studies. First, we bred *Malat1*-knockout mice to MMTV-PyMT mice to generate MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} females on a B6 background. Similarly to ref. ¹⁴, MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/+} and MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} mice showed no significant difference in overall survival and mammary-tumor-free survival (Supplementary Fig. 1a,b). Moreover, the weight of mammary tumors was similar between the two groups (Supplementary Fig. 1c), and histopathological analysis of mammary tissues showed no substantial differences (Supplementary Fig. 1d). Unlike ref. ¹⁴, which showed that *Malat1*-deleted PyMT tumors were more differentiated with a dramatically increased cystic phenotype¹⁴, we found that *Malat1*-positive and *Malat1*-negative PyMT tumors exhibited similar degrees of cystic areas and high-grade carcinoma areas (Supplementary Fig. 1e). Notably, the *Malat1* gene deletion model showed significant upregulation of 12 *Malat1*'s adjacent genes², whereas the model used in our study had no significant changes in expression levels of these neighboring genes in normal tissues and in mammary tumors (Supplementary Fig. 2a–e).

In both MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/+} and MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} groups, most females were euthanized between 20 and 25 weeks of age because of the burden of primary mammary tumors. Unexpectedly, MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} mice showed an 8.3-fold increase in the number of visible metastatic nodules in the lungs, compared with MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/+} animals (4.9 versus 40.9 nodules, $P=0.015$; Fig. 1a,b). We also assessed metastatic lesions in hematoxylin and eosin (H&E)-stained lung sections (Fig. 1c), finding that MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} mice had a 7.2-fold increase in the number of metastatic foci (10.0 versus 72.2 foci, $P=0.0001$; Fig. 1d) and a 31-fold increase in the percentage of lung areas with metastatic lesions (1.1% versus 34.3%, $P<0.0001$; Fig. 1e).

The metastasis-promoting effect of *Malat1* inactivation contradicts the *Malat1* gene deletion effect¹⁴. We sought to address whether the observed phenotype was specific to the loss of *Malat1* lncRNA by using a genetic rescue approach. To this end, we generated mice with targeted transgenic expression of *Malat1* (*Malat1*^{Tg}) from the *ROSA26* locus (B6 background; Supplementary Fig. 3a). The *Malat1*^{Tg} mice showed normal development and growth and a 4- to 5-fold increase in *Malat1* RNA levels in mammary tissues, compared with the control *Malat1*^{LSL} mice (LSL is a transcriptionally inactive *LoxP*-STOP-*LoxP* allele; Supplementary Fig. 3a,b), whereas *Malat1* levels showed no significant difference between *Malat1*^{LSL} mice and wild-type mice (Supplementary Fig. 3c). We bred *Malat1*^{Tg} mice to MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} mice on a B6 background, which restored *Malat1* expression in mammary tumors (Fig. 1f) and reversed lung metastasis (an average of 2.4 metastatic nodules, 2.7 metastatic foci, and 0.2% metastatic area were observed in the MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-};*Malat1*^{Tg} triple mutant females; Fig. 1a–e). Using a PyMT-specific antibody²³ to detect circulating

tumor cells (CTCs), we found that the percentages of CTCs in MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} mice were significantly higher than those in MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/+} mice; this increase in CTCs was also reversed by genetic add-back of *Malat1* (Fig. 1g,h). Taken together, these data suggest that *Malat1* suppresses the dissemination and lung metastasis of mammary tumor cells.

Given that the PyMT tumor and metastasis phenotypes of the FVB strain are stronger than those of the B6 strain^{13,22}, we used the FVB strain to further determine the effect of overexpressing *Malat1*. To this end, we backcrossed *Malat1*^{Tg} mice and *Malat1*^{LSL} controls to FVB mice for six generations, bred these mice to MMTV-PyMT mice on an FVB background, and confirmed that MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{Tg} mice had a 3.2-fold increase in *Malat1* levels in their mammary tumors relative to the levels in MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{LSL} mice (Fig. 2a). In both groups, most females became moribund because of primary mammary tumor burdens between 12 and 13 weeks of age, and no significant difference in overall survival (Supplementary Fig. 3d), primary tumor weight (Fig. 2b), or tumor histology (Supplementary Fig. 3e) was found. By gross examination, MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{Tg} mice had many fewer visible metastatic nodules in the lungs than did MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{LSL} animals ($P=0.001$; Fig. 2c,d). We validated this observation by H&E staining (Fig. 2e), which showed a pronounced reduction in lung metastases in MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{Tg} mice, as gauged by the number of metastatic foci ($P=0.0007$; Fig. 2f) and the percentage of lung areas with metastatic lesions ($P=0.01$; Fig. 2g). Collectively, the targeted inactivation, restoration (rescue), and overexpression of *Malat1* in genetic models demonstrate that *Malat1* is a breast-cancer lung-metastasis suppressor.

***Malat1* suppresses the metastatic ability of breast cancer cells.** To study the relevance of MALAT1 to human breast cancer, we first examined MALAT1 expression levels in a panel of human mammary epithelial or breast cancer cell lines. The non-transformed mammary epithelial cell line MCF10A showed much higher levels of MALAT1 than did all 12 breast cancer cell lines examined (Fig. 3a). Moreover, MALAT1 expression was much lower in basal-like, triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) cells than in less aggressive/metastatic luminal-like breast cancer cells (Fig. 3a), which we further confirmed using the Cancer Cell Line Encyclopedia (CCLE)²⁴ panel (Fig. 3b). Interestingly, a highly lung-metastatic subline of MDA-MB-231 breast cancer cells, named LM2 (ref. ²⁵), showed lower MALAT1 expression than the weakly metastatic parental MDA-MB-231 cells (Fig. 3a).

Next, we studied the loss- and gain-of-function effects of MALAT1 on the metastatic ability of human breast cancer cells. It is difficult to target a nuclear lncRNA using shRNA or siRNA. Moreover, unlike protein-coding genes, lncRNAs cannot be depleted by single guide RNA (gRNA)-mediated frameshift mutations. Using a pair of MALAT1 gRNAs and a double-excision CRISPR knockout (DECKO) approach²⁶ (where CRISPR is clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats), we deleted around 650 bp in the 5' end of MALAT1 in luciferase-expressing MDA-MB-231 cells, and validated six MALAT1-deficient clones (Supplementary Fig. 4a,b). Whereas loss of MALAT1 did not affect the expression of adjacent genes (Supplementary Fig. 4c), cell proliferation (Supplementary Fig. 4d), or anchorage-independent growth (Supplementary Fig. 4e), MALAT1-knockout clones showed higher migratory and invasive ability than control cells expressing GFP gRNA (Supplementary Fig. 4f), an effect that was reversed by ectopic expression of mouse *Malat1* (Supplementary Fig. 4g,h; mouse *Malat1* was used because it is resistant to human MALAT1 gRNAs). Moreover, using time-lapse video microscopy, we observed a substantial increase in the speed of movement of MALAT1-knockout cells compared with control cells, which was reversed by *Malat1* re-expression (Supplementary Fig. 4i and Supplementary Videos 1–3). To determine the effect of

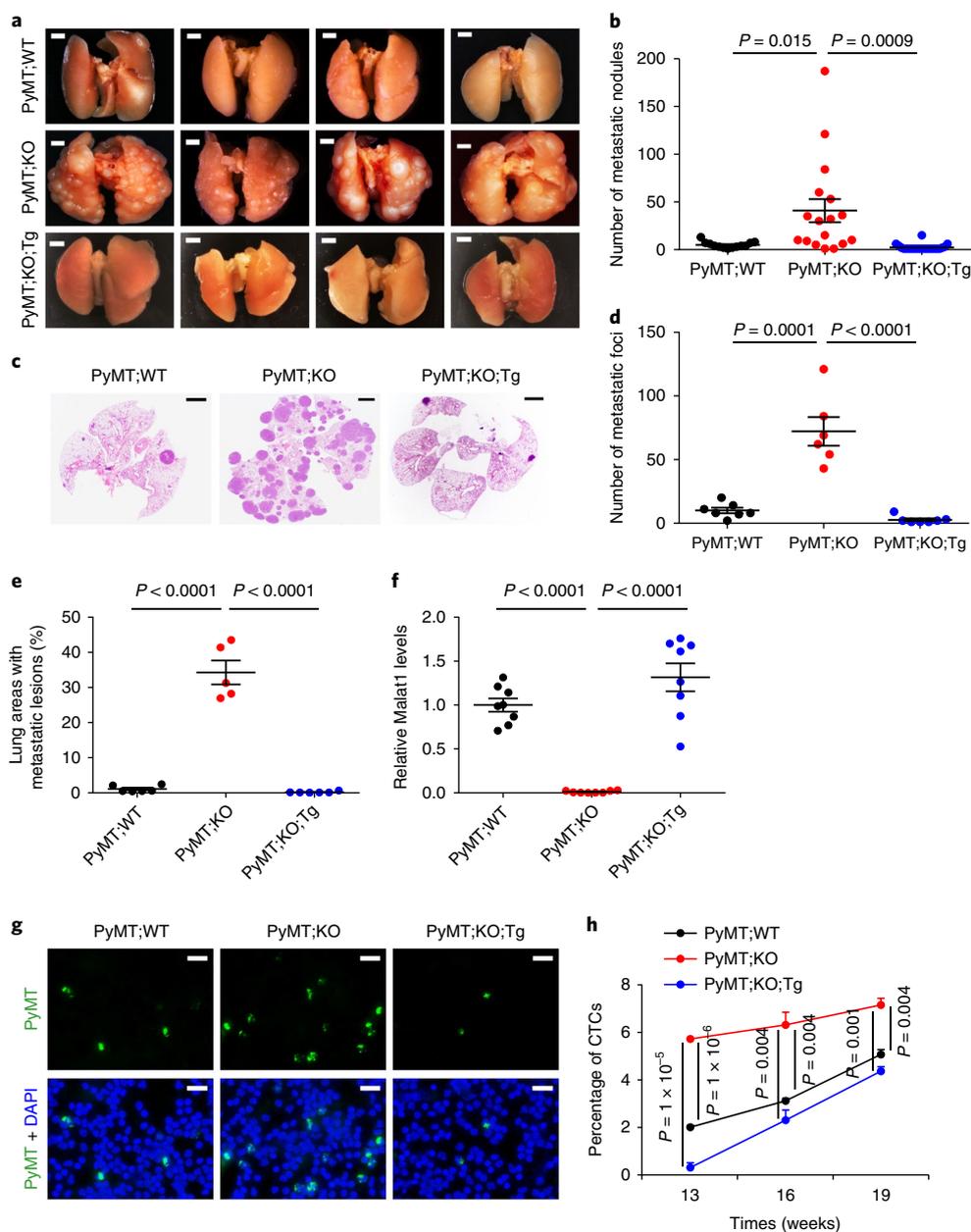


Fig. 1 | Targeted inactivation and restoration of Malat1 in mice suggest that Malat1 is a suppressor of breast cancer lung metastasis. a, b, Bright-field imaging (**a**) and number of metastatic nodules (**b**) in the lungs of MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/+} (PyMT;WT, $n = 13$ mice), MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} (PyMT;KO, $n = 17$ mice), and MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-};*Malat1*^{tg} (PyMT;KO;Tg, $n = 22$ mice) mice at the endpoint (20–25 weeks of age). **c–e**, H&E staining (**c**) and number (**d**) and relative area (**e**) of metastatic foci in the lungs of PyMT;WT, PyMT;KO, and PyMT;KO;Tg mice at the endpoint (20–25 weeks of age). $n = 7$, 6, and 7 mice per group in **d**; $n = 6$, 5, and 6 mice per group in **e**. **f**, qPCR of Malat1 in the mammary tumors of age-matched PyMT;WT, PyMT;KO, and PyMT;KO;Tg mice. $n = 8$ mice per group. **g, h**, Immunofluorescent staining (**g**) and percentages (**h**) of circulating tumor cells (CTCs) in the peripheral blood from PyMT;WT, PyMT;KO, and PyMT;KO;Tg mice. CTCs from 13-, 16-, and 19-week-old mice were immunostained with a PyMT-specific antibody (green) and nuclei were stained with DAPI (blue). $n = 3$ mice per group. Statistical significances in **b**, **d–f** and **h** were determined by unpaired *t*-tests. Error bars are s.e.m. All mice used in this figure are females on a B6 background. Scale bars: **a, c**, 2 mm; **g**, 20 μ m.

MALAT1 loss on lung metastatic colonization, we injected control cells (expressing *GFP* gRNA, which had similar metastatic behavior to the parental MDA-MB-231 cells; Supplementary Fig. 4j–l), MALAT1-knockout cells or Malat1-restored MDA-MB-231 cells into NSG (non-obese diabetic; severe combined immunodeficiency; interleukin-2 receptor gamma chain null) mice through the tail vein. Bioluminescent imaging of live animals (Fig. 3c, d) and whole lungs (Fig. 3e), as well as H&E staining of lung sections (Fig. 3f), suggested that the knockout of MALAT1 in MDA-MB-231 cells

strongly promoted lung metastasis in mice, and that this effect was fully reversed by restoration of Malat1 expression.

The lung-metastatic LM2 subline exhibited the lowest MALAT1 expression among all 13 cell lines examined (Fig. 3a). Stable transfection of luciferase-labeled LM2 cells with mouse Malat1 reduced cell movement, migration, and invasion (Supplementary Fig. 5a–c and Supplementary Videos 4 and 5) without affecting cell proliferation (Supplementary Fig. 5d). Similarly, overexpression of Malat1 in HCC1806 and Hs578t human breast cancer cell lines inhibited

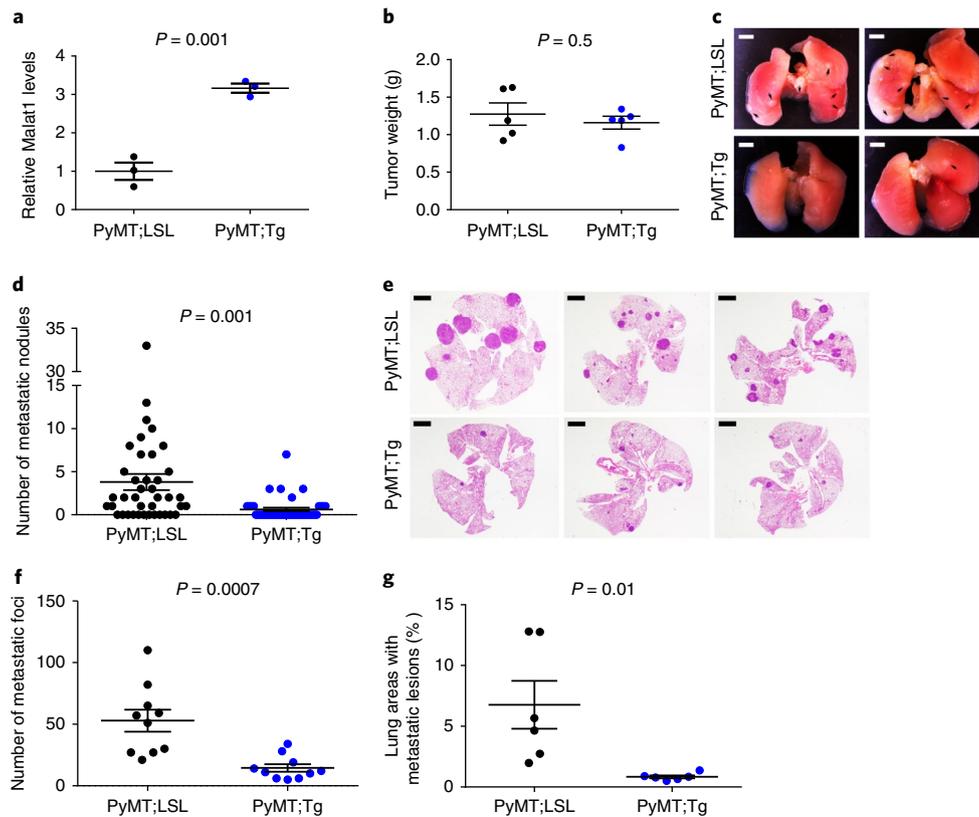


Fig. 2 | Targeted transgenic overexpression of Malat1 in mice inhibits breast cancer metastasis. **a**, qPCR of Malat1 in the mammary tumors of MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{LSL} (PyMT;LSL) and MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{fl} (PyMT;Tg) mice. $n = 3$ mice per group. **b**, Weight of the mammary tumors of PyMT;LSL and PyMT;Tg mice at 8 weeks of age. $n = 5$ mice per group. **c, d**, Bright-field imaging (**c**, arrows indicate metastases) and number of metastatic nodules (**d**) in the lungs of PyMT;LSL ($n = 40$ mice) and PyMT;Tg ($n = 42$ mice) mice at the endpoint (12–13 weeks of age). **e–g**, H&E staining (**e**) and the number (**f**) and relative area (**g**) of metastatic foci in the lungs of PyMT;LSL and PyMT;Tg mice at the endpoint (12–13 weeks of age). $n = 10$ mice per group in **f**; $n = 6$ mice per group in **g**. Statistical significances in panels **a**, **b**, **d**, **f** and **g** were determined by unpaired t-tests. Error bars are s.e.m. All mice used in this figure were females on an FVB background. Scale bars: **c**, **e**, 2 mm.

motility and invasiveness (Supplementary Fig. 5e–g). We performed tail-vein injection of LM2 cells into NSG mice. Bioluminescent imaging of live animals showed consistently less lung metastasis in recipients of Malat1-overexpressing LM2 cells (Supplementary Fig. 5h,i). At week 5, mice that had received Malat1-overexpressing LM2 cells exhibited a 74% reduction in lung metastases relative to the control group (Fig. 3g), which was confirmed by histopathological analysis (Fig. 3h). Similarly, stable transfection of 4T1 mouse mammary tumor cells with Malat1 (Supplementary Fig. 5j) markedly reduced their colonization of the lungs of syngeneic BALB/c mice, as gauged by live-animal imaging (Supplementary Fig. 5k,l), ex vivo lung imaging (Fig. 3i), and the number of visible metastatic nodules (Fig. 3j). These data provide additional in vivo proof that MALAT1 suppresses the metastatic ability of human and mouse mammary tumor cells.

We next analyzed the RNA-seq data from The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA)²⁷ and found that MALAT1 was significantly underexpressed in human breast tumors compared with normal mammary tissues (Supplementary Fig. 6a,b). Using an OncoPrint data-mining platform, we found that MALAT1 was substantially underexpressed in higher-grade breast tumors (Supplementary Fig. 6c), and that breast cancer metastases had lower MALAT1 expression than did primary mammary tumors (Supplementary Fig. 6d). In addition, Kaplan–Meier (KM) plotter²⁸ analysis showed that lower MALAT1 levels correlated with shorter distant metastasis-free survival both in total breast cancers and in luminal A and basal subtypes (Supplementary Fig. 6e).

To corroborate the observed correlation, we orthotopically implanted G418-resistant, luciferase-expressing 4T1 cells into syngeneic BALB/c mice, and isolated G418-resistant cells from mammary tumors and lungs. Interestingly, Malat1 levels were significantly lower in metastasized tumor cells than in paired primary tumor cells (Supplementary Fig. 6f). In addition, compared with 4T1 cells, the non-metastatic 67NR cell line and the weakly metastatic 168FARN and 4TO7 cell lines²⁹ showed higher Malat1 expression (Supplementary Fig. 6g). Taken together, these data demonstrate that higher MALAT1 levels are negatively associated with breast cancer progression and metastasis.

MALAT1 interacts with TEAD-family members. To elucidate the mechanism by which MALAT1 regulates metastasis, we attempted to identify its endogenous binding proteins by performing chromatin isolation by RNA purification coupled to mass spectrometry (ChIRP-MS)³⁰. We collected the tumors from MMTV-PyMT mice and pulled down endogenous Malat1 lncRNA using mouse Malat1-specific, biotinylated DNA probes and streptavidin beads. DNA probes for U1 nuclear RNA and probe-free conditions were included as negative controls to validate the specificity of Malat1 pulldown (Fig. 4a). Our ChIRP-MS analysis identified 970 Malat1-interacting proteins, including previously reported Malat1 interactors such as splicing factors and RNA-binding proteins^{5,8,9}. Most of them, however, interacted with both Malat1 and U1. Therefore, we screened for proteins specifically bound to Malat1 by excluding bound proteins in the two negative controls (U1 and probe-free

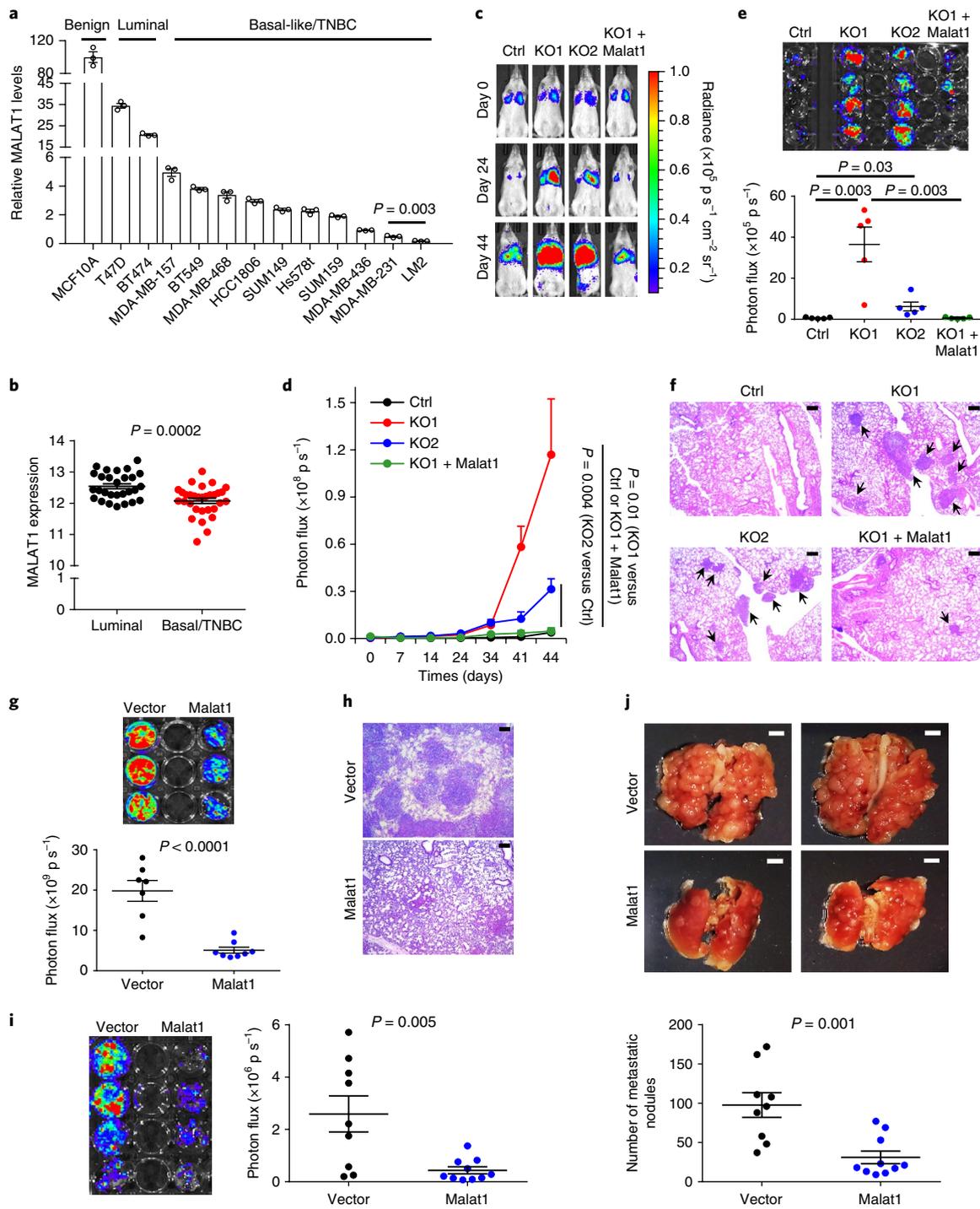


Fig. 3 | Malat1 inhibits the metastatic ability of breast cancer cells. **a**, qPCR of MALAT1 in a panel of cell lines. **b**, MALAT1 levels in luminal ($n=28$) and basal/triple-negative ($n=31$) breast cancer cell lines available in CCLE. **c,d** Bioluminescent imaging (**c**) and quantification of photon flux (**d**) of NSG mice with intravenous injection of control, MALAT1-knockout, or Malat1-restored MDA-MB-231 cells. Day 0: the day of tumor-cell injection. $n=5$ mice per group. **e,f**, Bioluminescent imaging (**e**, upper panel), quantification of photon flux (**e**, lower panel), and H&E staining (**f**) of the lungs from the mice described in **c,d**. $n=5$ mice per group in panel **e**. **g**, Bioluminescent imaging (upper panel) and quantification of photon flux (lower panel) of the lungs from NSG mice with intravenous injection of control ($n=7$ mice) or Malat1-overexpressing ($n=8$ mice) LM2 cells. **h**, H&E staining of the lungs described in **g**. **i**, Bioluminescent imaging (left panel) and quantification of photon flux (right panel) of the lungs from BALB/c mice injected with control ($n=9$ mice) or Malat1-overexpressing ($n=10$ mice) 4T1 cells. **j**, Bright-field imaging (upper panel) and number of metastatic nodules (lower panel) in the lungs of mice described in panel **i**. Statistical significances in panels **a**, **b**, **d**, **e**, **g**, **i** and **j** were determined by unpaired *t*-tests. Error bars are s.e.m. Scale bars: **f,h**, 200 μm ; **j**, 2 mm.

beads). Only 23 out of 970 proteins met this criterion; among them, the Tead family stood out because all four Tead proteins were identified as Malat1's binding partners (Supplementary Fig. 7a).

Next, we performed western blot analysis of ChIRP samples, which validated the interaction between endogenous Malat1 and Tead proteins in both PyMT tumors (Fig. 4b) and 4T1 cells

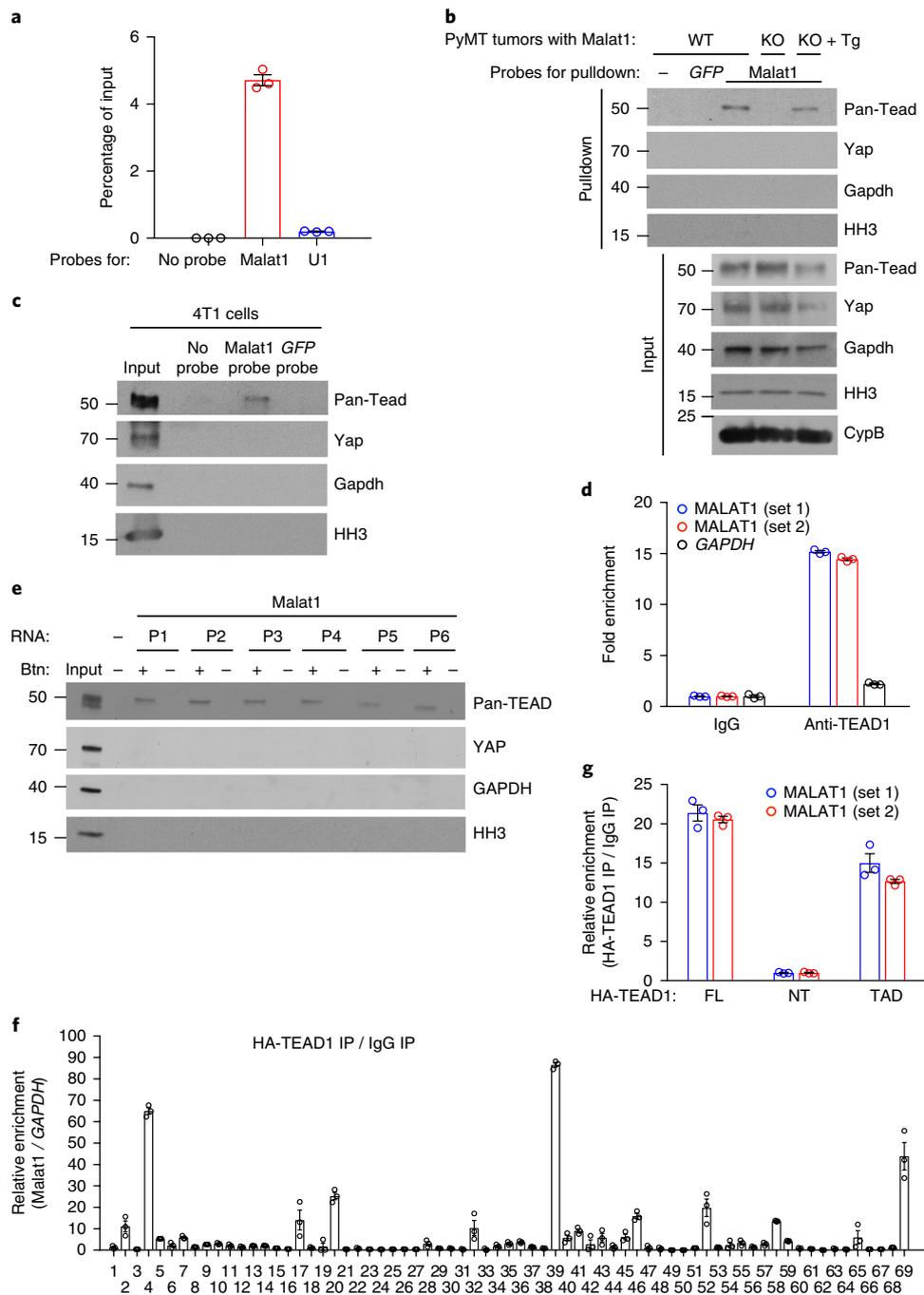


Fig. 4 | MALAT1 interacts with TEAD-family members. **a**, qPCR of Malat1 in ChIRP samples. Probes for mouse Malat1 or U1 nuclear RNA were used to pull down endogenous Malat1 or U1 from PyMT mammary tumor samples. **b,c**, Western blot analysis of ChIRP samples. Mouse Malat1-specific probes were used to pull down endogenous Malat1 from the mammary tumors of MMTV-PyMT; *Malat1*^{+/+} (WT), MMTV-PyMT; *Malat1*^{-/-} (KO), and MMTV-PyMT; *Malat1*^{-/-}; *Malat1*^{Tg} (KO + Tg) mice (**b**), or from 4T1 cells (**c**), followed by immunoblotting with antibodies against pan-Tead, Yap, Gapdh, and histone H3 (HH3). **d**, RNA immunoprecipitation assay. Endogenous TEAD1 was immunoprecipitated from cross-linked MDA-MB-231 cells. TEAD1-bound MALAT1 was quantitated by qPCR with two primer sets. *GAPDH* was used as a negative control. **e**, RNA pulldown assay. Unlabeled and biotinylated Malat1 fragments (P1–P6) were synthesized by *in vitro* transcription, incubated with HEK293FT cell lysate, and pulled down with streptavidin beads. The bound proteins were eluted in Laemmli sample buffer and immunoblotted with antibodies against pan-TEAD, YAP, GAPDH, and histone H3. Btn: biotinylation. **f**, CLIP-qPCR assay of HeLa cells overexpressing HA-TEAD1 and mouse Malat1. The protected Malat1 RNA segments bound by TEAD1 were detected by qPCR using 69 pairs of primers. **g**, RNA immunoprecipitation assay. HeLa cells were transfected with HA-tagged full-length TEAD1 (FL), N-terminal region (NT), or transactivation domain (TAD), cross-linked, and subjected to immunoprecipitation with an HA-specific antibody. TEAD1-bound MALAT1 was quantitated by qPCR with two primer sets. All error bars are s.e.m. Uncropped blots are shown in Supplementary Fig. 10.

(Fig. 4c). Importantly, the interaction was abolished in Malat1-null PyMT tumors, but was restored in tumors from the MMTV-PyMT; *Malat1*^{-/-}; *Malat1*^{Tg} mutants (Fig. 4b), suggesting that this

interaction is Malat1 RNA specific. In both PyMT tumors and 4T1 cells, Malat1 did not interact with the cytoplasmic marker Gapdh, the nuclear marker histone H3, or the Tead coactivator Yap (Fig. 4b,c).

To further corroborate our result, we pulled down TEAD1 protein from cross-linked MDA-MB-231, HeLa, BT549, or MDA-MB-468 human cells and isolated its associated RNAs. Reverse transcriptase (RT)-quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) analysis showed that MALAT1 lncRNA was highly enriched in TEAD1 immunoprecipitates (Fig. 4d and Supplementary Fig. 7b).

To identify the TEAD-binding region(s), we generated six non-overlapping biotinylated Malat1 fragments (P1–P6; 1.1–1.2 kb each) spanning full-length mouse Malat1 by *in vitro* transcription. All six fragments, but not U1, bound to TEAD proteins (Fig. 4e and Supplementary Fig. 7c,d), suggesting that the TEAD-binding sites may be distributed diffusely on Malat1 lncRNA. By contrast, GAPDH, YAP, and histone H3 did not interact with any region of Malat1 (Fig. 4e), validating the specificity of the Malat1–TEAD binding. To further map the TEAD-binding sites on Malat1, we performed a UV cross-linking-immunoprecipitation and qPCR (CLIP-qPCR) assay^{31,32} using 69 pairs of primers with overlapping 200-bp amplicons, which allowed detection of the protected Malat1 RNA segments bound by TEAD1 and the mapping of TEAD1-binding sites on Malat1 at 200-nucleotide intervals (Supplementary Fig. 7e). At a threshold enrichment value of 2, all six fragments (P1–P6) showed multiple peaks; at a threshold enrichment value of 10, each of the six fragments showed at least one major peak and a total of ten major peaks were detected (Fig. 4f), suggesting that Malat1 contains multiple TEAD-binding sites.

We sought to identify the Malat1-binding domain on TEAD1. TEAD1 consists of two functional regions: the N-terminal region (NT) containing the TEA domain responsible for DNA binding, and the C-terminal transactivation domain responsible for YAP binding³³ (Supplementary Fig. 7f). Accordingly, we generated two TEAD1 truncation mutants (Supplementary Fig. 7f,g) and performed RNA immunoprecipitation. Interestingly, Malat1 was enriched in the immunoprecipitates of full-length TEAD1 or the transactivation domain, but not in the immunoprecipitates of the N-terminal region (Fig. 4g), suggesting that Malat1 interacts with TEAD1's transactivation domain—the same domain that mediates the YAP–TEAD1 interaction³³.

MALAT1 inhibits the transcriptional activity of TEAD. The TEAD transcription factors and their coactivators YAP and TAZ promote tumor progression and metastasis through transcriptional activity³⁴. In the nucleus, TEAD proteins interact with YAP or TAZ to activate the expression of target genes, including the classical TEAD targets *CTGF*, *CYR61*, *ANKRD1*, *AMOTL2*, *AJUBA*, *AXL*, and *WTIP*^{35–38}. We investigated whether MALAT1 regulates TEAD's transcriptional activity. Indeed, ectopic expression of Malat1 reduced, while knockout of MALAT1 increased, the activity of a TEAD luciferase reporter containing tandem TEAD-binding sites³⁹ (Fig. 5a,b). However, fractionation assays and immunofluorescent staining demonstrated that TEAD proteins were localized exclusively in the nucleus of both control and MALAT1-knockout MDA-MB-231 cells (Supplementary Fig. 7h,i), suggesting that MALAT1 does not affect the nuclear localization of the TEAD proteins.

Because MALAT1 RNA is highly abundant², and because the TEAD-binding sites are distributed throughout MALAT1 (Fig. 4e,f), we speculated that MALAT1 may sequester TEAD, thereby blocking TEAD's ability to bind YAP and/or the target genes. To test this hypothesis, we first performed co-immunoprecipitation of TEAD1 and YAP. Upon Malat1 overexpression, we observed a clear reduction in YAP–TEAD1 interaction (Fig. 5c,d). Next, we analyzed YAP–TEAD target gene promoters by chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP) assays. Ectopic expression of Malat1 in LM2 cells significantly decreased the occupancy of three classical target gene (*ANKRD1*, *CTGF*, and *CYR61*) promoters by endogenous TEAD1 or YAP (Supplementary Fig. 8a); conversely, in MALAT1-knockout

MDA-MB-231 cells, the occupancy of these three gene promoters by endogenous TEAD1 or YAP was prominently increased (Fig. 5e).

YAP is a transcriptional co-factor that lacks a DNA-binding domain, and TEAD proteins mediate YAP's association with chromatin⁴⁰. Importantly, MALAT1 does not bind YAP (Fig. 4b,c,e). To further exclude the possibility that MALAT1 directly regulates YAP, we generated *GAL4* DNA-binding-domain (DBD)-fused YAP constructs (that is, TEAD-independent YAP mutants capable of binding to DNA without TEAD) and gauged their transcriptional activity using a *GAL4* DBD-responsive luciferase reporter. When fused to the *GAL4* DBD, both full-length YAP and its transactivating domain exhibited substantial transcriptional activity, which was not altered by overexpression of Malat1 (Supplementary Fig. 8b). This suggests that repression of YAP–TEAD's transcriptional activity by Malat1 is TEAD dependent.

We examined whether YAP–TEAD target gene expression is regulated by MALAT1. Indeed, in Malat1-overexpressing LM2 cells, the expression of four of seven classical target genes examined was significantly repressed (Supplementary Fig. 8c). Conversely, these target genes were upregulated in MALAT1-knockout clones of MDA-MB-231 cells (Supplementary Fig. 8d). Notably, compared with control PyMT mouse mammary tumors, Malat1-deficient PyMT tumors showed an increase in expression levels of these classical YAP–TEAD target genes, an effect that was reversed by genetic add-back of *Malat1* (Fig. 5f).

To determine the functional relevance to metastasis, we used shRNAs to knock down multiple TEAD-family members⁴¹ in MALAT1-knockout MDA-MB-231 cells (Fig. 5g). Notably, depletion of TEAD proteins reversed the migration, invasion, and *in vivo* metastasis (Fig. 5h–j and Supplementary Fig. 8e–g) induced by the loss of MALAT1, with only a marginal inhibitory effect on migration and invasion of control MDA-MB-231 cells (Supplementary Fig. 8f,g), suggesting that the metastasis-promoting effect of MALAT1 depletion is TEAD dependent. Conversely, overexpression of Malat1 in LM2, BT549, and SUM149 cells decreased migration and invasion, which was reversed by TEAD1 overexpression (Supplementary Fig. 8h,i), suggesting that Malat1 inhibits cell motility and invasiveness through TEAD.

***ITGB4* and *VEGFA* are TEAD-target genes regulated by MALAT1.**

In addition to validating that known TEAD-target genes are down-regulated by MALAT1, we sought to identify novel MALAT1-regulated genes. To this end, we performed RNA-seq analysis and identified nine genes that were most substantially upregulated in MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} tumors, compared with both MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/+} tumors and MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-};*Malat1*^{Tg} tumors (Fig. 6a). We also performed metastasis-gene-specific qPCR array analysis and identified three genes that were most substantially downregulated in Malat1-overexpressing LM2 cells (Supplementary Table 1). Two of these 12 Malat1-downregulated genes, *Itgb4* and *Vegfa*, are well-established metastasis promoters and have been shown to be bound by YAP–TEAD⁴². In addition, from the paired-end RNA-seq analysis, we found that only 51 out of 16,034 cassette exons (0.3%) exhibited significant changes in the splicing pattern in Malat1-knockout PyMT tumors compared with Malat1 wild-type PyMT tumors (Supplementary Fig. 9a). Thus, Malat1 has little effect on global pre-mRNA splicing.

ITGB4 encodes integrin $\beta 4$, which forms a heterodimer with integrin $\alpha 6$ to promote tumor progression and to direct lung-tropic metastasis^{43–46}. *VEGFA* encodes vascular endothelial growth factor, a promoter of angiogenesis and metastasis⁴⁷. By RT-qPCR analysis, we confirmed that *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* mRNA levels were significantly upregulated by the loss of Malat1 both in PyMT tumors (Fig. 6b) and in MDA-MB-231 cells (Fig. 6c), while re-expression of Malat1 in MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} mice (Fig. 6b) and in MALAT1-knockout MDA-MB-231 cells (Fig. 6c) reversed the induction of

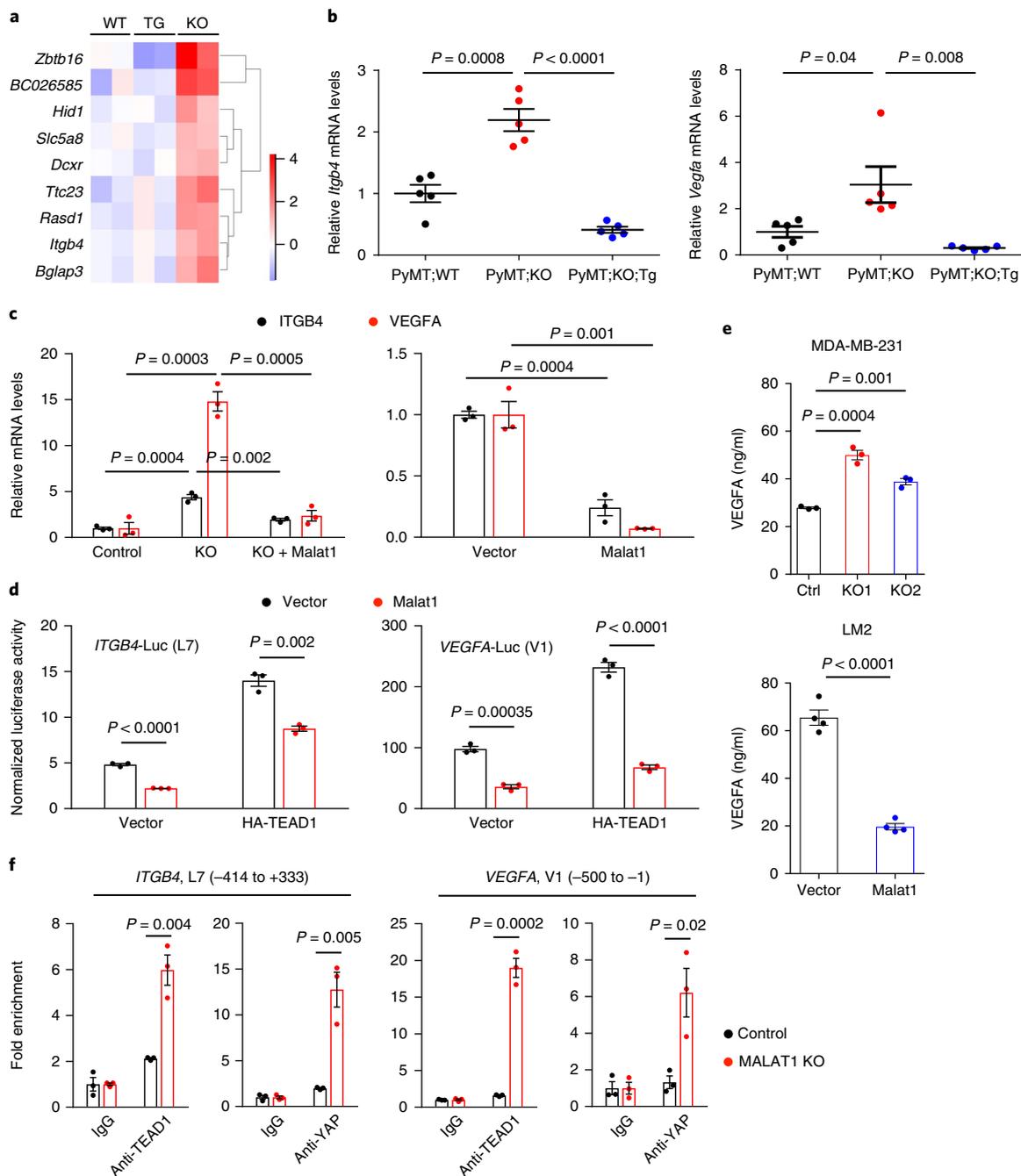


Fig. 6 | *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* are TEAD target genes and are regulated by MALAT1. **a**, Heat map of nine genes that were identified by RNA-seq analysis to be commonly upregulated in MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} tumors (KO), compared with both MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/+} tumors (WT) and MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-};*Malat1*^{tg} tumors (TG). $n = 2$ mice per group. **b**, qPCR of *Itgb4* (left panel) and *Vegfa* (right panel) in the mammary tumors of MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/+} (PyMT;WT), MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} (PyMT;KO), and MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-};*Malat1*^{tg} (PyMT;KO;Tg) mice. $n = 5$ mice per group. **c**, qPCR of *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* in control, MALAT1-knockout, and Malat1-restored MDA-MB-231 cells (left panel), and in control and Malat1-overexpressing LM2 cells (right panel). **d**, Luciferase activity in HEK293FT cells co-transfected with Malat1, HA-TEAD1, an *ITGB4* (left panel) or *VEGFA* (right panel) luciferase reporter, and a Renilla luciferase reporter. $n = 3$ cell culture replicates per group. **e**, ELISA of VEGFA secreted by MALAT1-knockout MDA-MB-231 cells (upper panel; $n = 3$ cell culture replicates per group) and by Malat1-overexpressing LM2 cells (lower panel; $n = 4$ cell culture replicates per group). **f**, ChIP-qPCR analysis showing the occupancy of *ITGB4* (two left panels) and *VEGFA* (two right panels) promoters by TEAD1 or YAP. Endogenous TEAD1 and YAP were immunoprecipitated from control or MALAT1-knockout MDA-MB-231 cells. Statistical significances in panels **b–f** were determined by unpaired *t*-tests. Error bars are s.e.m.

ITGB4 and *VEGFA* expression. Moreover, ectopic expression of Malat1 in LM2 cells reduced *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* levels (Fig. 6c).

We next investigated whether the expression of *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* is activated by TEAD and whether Malat1 opposes it. By

testing a series of upstream regulatory regions of the human *ITGB4* or *VEGFA* gene cloned into a luciferase-reporter vector^{48,49}, we identified two regions, named L7 and V1 respectively, as the minimal promoter/enhancer regions of *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* that are

responsive to TEAD (Supplementary Fig. 9b–d). Next, using the luciferase construct containing the L7 or V1 region, we found that overexpression of Malat1 suppressed the transcriptional activity of *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* promoters both at the basal level and upon TEAD1 overexpression (Fig. 6d). *VEGFA* is a secreted protein, and ELISA assays showed that secreted *VEGFA* was upregulated by MALAT1 depletion in MDA-MB-231 cells and was downregulated by Malat1 overexpression in LM2 cells (Fig. 6e). Furthermore, ChIP assays showed that knockout of MALAT1 increased (Fig. 6f), while overexpression of Malat1 reduced (Supplementary Fig. 9e), the occupancy of the *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* promoters by TEAD1 and YAP. Taken together, these data demonstrate that *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* are TEAD-target genes and are negatively regulated by MALAT1.

VEGFA is known for its function in angiogenesis⁵⁰. Moreover, tumor cells respond to autocrine and paracrine *VEGFA* signals through their VEGF receptor tyrosine kinases and neuropilins^{47,51–54}, and autocrine *VEGFA* signaling stimulates cancer-cell migration and invasion^{47,52,54}. Indeed, we found that recombinant human *VEGFA*₁₆₅ (the most abundant isoform)⁵³ promoted invasion by MDA-MB-231 cells (Supplementary Fig. 9f). Furthermore, knockdown of *VEGFA* in MALAT1-knockout MDA-MB-231 cells reversed the induction of cell invasiveness (Supplementary Fig. 9g–i). Thus, *VEGFA* may be a functional YAP–TEAD target that is upregulated by MALAT1 depletion.

Discussion

Using both genetically engineered mouse models and xenograft models, we have found that MALAT1 overexpression inhibits, while MALAT1 deficiency induces, breast cancer metastasis; the effect of MALAT1 deficiency can be reversed by adding back this lncRNA. We have also found that MALAT1 sequesters the transcription factor TEAD, leading to inhibition of TEAD's transcriptional activity. Although our findings represent a big departure from the literature, our approaches are highly rigorous. There is no evidence that the previously reported *Malat1* gene deletion or ASO/siRNA phenotype was specific to loss of Malat1 lncRNA. By contrast, several critical considerations have been taken into account in our study. First, we used a transcriptional terminator insertion strategy that inactivates the *Malat1* gene without altering the expression of its neighboring genes, rather than deleting a genomic region of several kilobases and thereby causing the upregulation of multiple genes adjacent to *Malat1*. Second, we conducted genetic rescue experiments to demonstrate that the metastasis induction by MALAT1 germline insertional inactivation or somatic knockout was specific to loss of MALAT1 lncRNA. Third, we found that overexpression of Malat1 suppressed breast cancer metastasis in transgenic, xenograft, and syngeneic models. Fourth, we used either a B6 or an FVB background (instead of a mixed background) for all compound mouse mutants, which is crucial for breast cancer models. Mechanistically, we captured an endogenous MALAT1–TEAD interaction in primary mammary tumors, and discovered that MALAT1 binds and inactivates the prometastatic transcription factor TEAD. Taken together, our results reveal the unexpected function of MALAT1 through comprehensive targeted inactivation, restoration (rescue), and overexpression approaches in multiple in vivo models. Our findings highlight a need to reassess ongoing efforts to target MALAT1 as an antimetastatic therapeutic strategy, and provide a general framework for rigorous characterization of lncRNAs.

URLs. Howard Chang's laboratory protocol, http://changelab.stanford.edu/RNA_pull-down_assay.pdf; Quantas Documentation, https://zhanglab.c2b2.columbia.edu/index.php/Quantas_Documentation; Cancer Cell Line Encyclopedia, <https://portals.broadinstitute.org/ccle>; Oncomine data-mining platform, <https://www.oncomine.org>; Gene Expression Omnibus, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/>; Kaplan Meier Plotter, <http://kmpplot.com/analysis/>.

Online content

Any methods, additional references, Nature Research reporting summaries, source data, statements of data availability and associated accession codes are available at <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41588-018-0252-3>.

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Author contributions

J.K., Y.S. and L.M. conceived and designed the study. J.K. performed most experiments. H.-L.P. cloned mouse *Malat1*. B.-J.K. and M.J.E. performed mass-spectrometric analysis. F.Y. and Z.X. generated some constructs and cell lines and performed some experiments. Z.H. and M.-C.H. assisted with microscopy. Y.W. and H. Liang performed RNA-seq and other computational data analyses. A.N.S., S.E.L. and B.N.T. maintained and managed mouse colonies. H. Lee, Z.Z. and B.G. provided reagents and technical assistance. S.N. provided *Malat1*-knockout mice. M.J.Y. performed histopathological analysis. Y.S. generated some constructs and provided substantial intellectual input. J.K. and L.M. wrote the manuscript with input from all other authors. L.M. provided scientific direction, established collaborations, and allocated funding for this study.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Additional information

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Methods

Mouse models. The 7-kb full-length mouse *Malat1* gene (NR_002847), including a 47-bp upstream genomic sequence and 19-bp downstream genomic sequence, was cloned into the pGEM-T vector (Promega, number A362A) and then subcloned into the RMCE (recombinase-mediated cassette exchange) vector (Supplementary Fig. 3a). The subsequent generation of targeted *Malat1* transgenic mice was performed at Taconic (see Supplementary Note for details).

Malat1-knockout mice with targeted disruption of *Malat1* (*Malat1*^{-/-}) were from S. Nakagawa's lab stock. We bred MMTV-PyMT males (on a C57BL/6 background, provided by W. Muller, McGill University, Canada) to *Malat1*^{-/-} females, and then further bred MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/-} males to *Malat1*^{+/-} females to obtain MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} mice. To restore *Malat1* expression in MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} mice, we bred *Malat1*^{-/-} mice to *Malat1*^{Tg} mice and further mated their offsprings to produce *Malat1*^{-/-};*Malat1*^{Tg} mice. MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-} males were then bred to *Malat1*^{-/-};*Malat1*^{Tg} females to obtain MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-};*Malat1*^{Tg} triple mutants. All mice described here were on a C57BL/6 background.

To generate *Malat1*^{Tg} animals on an FVB/N background, we backcrossed *Malat1*^{Tg} mice on C57BL/6 to FVB/N mice for six generations. Then *Malat1*^{Tg} females on FVB/N were bred to MMTV-PyMT males on FVB/N (The Jackson Laboratory, stock #002374) to produce MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{Tg} mice. MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{Tg} mice were generated and used as the control.

Genotyping of MMTV-PyMT transgenic mice and *Malat1*-knockout mice was performed as described^{7,23}. Primer sequences for PCR genotyping are listed in Supplementary Table 2. The purity of all mouse strains used in this study is greater than 98%.

Cell culture. The HEK293FT cell line was from ThermoFisher Scientific. HeLa, MCF10A, and a panel of breast cancer cell lines (Fig. 3a, except SUM149 and SUM159) were from the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) and were cultured under conditions specified by the manufacturer. SUM149 and SUM159 cell lines were from L.M.'s lab stock (originally from S. P. Ethier, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, USA) and were cultured in Ham's F-12 medium supplemented with 5% fetal bovine serum (FBS), 10 mM HEPES, 1 μ g ml⁻¹ hydrocortisone, and 5 μ g ml⁻¹ insulin. 67NR, 168FARN, 4TO7, and 4T1 cell lines were from L.M.'s lab stock (originally from F. R. Miller, Wayne State University School of Medicine, Detroit, MI, USA) and were cultured in DMEM medium supplemented with 10% FBS. The luciferase-expressing LM2 cell line was from X. Zhang (Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX, USA) and the G418-resistant, luciferase-expressing 4T1 cell line was from M.-C.H.'s laboratory stock; both were cultured in DMEM supplemented with 10% FBS. Short tandem repeat (STR) profiling and mycoplasma tests were done by ATCC and MD Anderson's Characterized Cell Line Core Facility.

Tumor and metastasis studies in GEM models. All animal studies were performed in accordance with a protocol approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of MD Anderson Cancer Center. Mammary-tumor-free survival was determined by palpation. Mice were euthanized when they met the institutional euthanasia criteria for tumor size (2 cm in diameter) or overall health condition. MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{+/-}, MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-}, and MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{-/-};*Malat1*^{Tg} female mice on a C57BL/6 background were euthanized at 13, 16, and 19 weeks of age and at the endpoint (20–25 weeks of age, upon euthanasia notice). MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{Tg} and MMTV-PyMT;*Malat1*^{Tg} female mice on an FVB/N background were euthanized at 8 weeks of age and at the endpoint (12–13 weeks of age, upon euthanasia notice). Whole mammary glands or tumors and lung tissues were collected, weighed, and processed for histopathological analysis. Lung metastases were analyzed by gross examination of freshly dissected lungs and histopathological review of H&E-stained lung sections.

Circulating tumor cell isolation and staining. Around 150 μ l of peripheral blood was collected from live animals via retro-orbital bleeding, and red blood cells were lysed with red blood cell (RBC) lysis buffer (Gibco, number A10492-01). Nucleated cells were spun onto glass slides using Cytospin and fixed in 10% formalin. For immunofluorescent staining of the PyMT protein, fixed cells were permeabilized with 0.25% Triton X-100 in phosphate-buffered saline (PBS). Endogenous peroxidase was blocked with 1.5% H₂O₂ in 0.05% Tween-20 in PBS (PBST). The cells were then incubated with a PyMT-specific primary antibody (Abcam, number ab15085, 1/200) and horseradish peroxidase conjugated anti-rat secondary antibody (Vector laboratories, PI-9401, 1/500). The signal was amplified using a tyramide signal amplification kit (Perkin Elmer, NEL741001KT). Stained slides were mounted with VECTASHIELD antifade mounting medium with DAPI (Vector Laboratories, H-1200). For CTC quantification, the ratio of PyMT⁺;DAPI⁺ cells to total DAPI⁺ cells was calculated.

Experimental metastasis assays. Tumor cells were injected into the tail vein of 6- to 8-week-old female mice: NSG mice were injected with 2 \times 10⁵ MDA-MB-231 cells or 1 \times 10⁵ LM2 cells, and BALB/c mice were injected with 5 \times 10⁵ 4T1 cells. Metastasis was monitored by luciferase imaging of live animals using an IVIS-200 bioluminescence imaging system (Perkin Elmer) after intraperitoneal injection

of 100 μ l *D*-luciferin substrate (25 mg ml⁻¹ in PBS, Perkin Elmer). Mice were euthanized when they met the institutional euthanasia criteria for overall health condition. The lungs were collected, imaged with *D*-luciferin substrate (150 μ g ml⁻¹ in PBS), and then processed for histopathological analysis.

Immunoblotting. Cells were lysed in RIPA lysis buffer (Millipore) containing protease inhibitors and phosphatase inhibitors (GenDEPOT). Proteins were resolved on 4–20% precast gradient gels (Bio-Rad) and transferred to a polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) membrane. After blocking with 5% non-fat milk in Tris-buffered saline with 0.05% Tween-20 (TBST), membranes were incubated with the primary antibody followed by the secondary antibody conjugated with horseradish peroxidase. After washing, the bands were visualized with enhanced chemiluminescence substrate (Denville). Primary antibodies used are as follows: antibodies against pan-TEAD (1/1,000, Cell Signaling Technology, 13295), FLAG (1/5,000, Sigma, F7425), hemagglutinin (HA; 1/2,000, Santa Cruz Biotechnology, sc-7392), cyclophilin B (1/5,000, ThermoFisher Scientific, PA1-027A), YAP (1:1,000, Cell Signaling Technology, 14074), histone H3 (1/1,000, Cell Signaling Technology, 9715), lamin B1 (1/1,000, Cell Signaling Technology, 12586), α -tubulin (1/1,000, Sigma, T5168), heat-shock protein (HSP)90 (1/5,000, BD Biosciences, 610419), and glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH; 1/1,000, ThermoFisher Scientific, MA5-15738).

Lentiviral vectors and lentivirus production. Lentiviral vectors containing a pair of gRNAs targeting human *MALAT1* (pDECKO_*MALAT1*_C, Addgene number 72622)²⁶ and CRISPR-associated protein 9 (Cas9; lentiCas9-Blast, Addgene #52926)²⁵ were from Addgene. Two shRNAs targeting TEAD1/3/4 (ref. 41) were cloned by restriction enzymes *Age*I and *Eco*RI into the pLKO.1-neo vector (Addgene number 13425). The FU-luciferase-CRW/RFP vector was from L. Xin (Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX, USA). HEK293FT cells were co-transfected with the lentiviral vector, an envelope plasmid (pCMV-VSV-G, Addgene number 8454), and a packaging plasmid (pCMV-dR8.2 dvpr, Addgene number 8455)²⁶. Two days post transfection, viral supernatant was harvested, filtered through a 0.45- μ m filter, and added to target cells.

Malat1 overexpression and CRISPR-Cas9-based MALAT1 knockout. MDA-MB-231 and 4T1 cells were infected with the FU-luciferase-CRW/RFP lentivirus and sorted by red fluorescent protein (RFP). Luciferase-labeled MDA-MB-231 cells were then infected with the lentiCas9-Blast lentivirus and selected with blasticidin (10 μ g ml⁻¹). Surviving cells were infected with the pDECKO_*MALAT1*_C lentivirus and selected with puromycin (1.5 μ g ml⁻¹). After selection, single cells were plated in 96-well plates using a flow cytometer and grown for one to two weeks. The isolated single clones were subjected to qPCR, PCR, and DNA sequencing for knockout validation. DNA-sequencing results showed that nucleotides 871–1,539 and 857–1,539 of *MALAT1* were deleted in KO1 and KO2 (the two knockout clones used for functional assays), respectively. For qPCR of *MALAT1*, we used the *MALAT1* TaqMan probe (ThermoFisher Scientific, Hs00273907_s1) and five sets of qPCR primers, including four previously described sets²⁶ (primer sequences are listed in Supplementary Table 2). We used gRNAs targeting *GFP* (pDECKO_*GFP*, Addgene, 72619) as control gRNAs and the control cells were bulk population. To restore *Malat1* in *MALAT1*-knockout MDA-MB-231 cells and to overexpress *Malat1* in LM2 and 4T1 cells, we subcloned full-length mouse *Malat1* from the pGEM-T vector to the pcDNA3.1(-)-hygro vector, and transfected it into cells using Lipofectamine 2000 (Invitrogen). Three days post transfection, hygromycin (300 μ g ml⁻¹ for LM2 and 800 μ g ml⁻¹ for 4T1) was added to select for stable cell lines.

Chromatin isolation by RNA purification. The procedure was adapted and modified from a previous publication²⁷. Buffers (lysis buffer, hybridization buffer, wash buffer, and RNA proteinase K buffer) were used as described²⁷. Mammary tumors from MMTV-PyMT female mice were collected and frozen in liquid nitrogen. Around 300 mg of frozen tumor tissues were pulverized using a sample pulverizer (Covaris). Cells or pulverized tissues were cross-linked in 4% formaldehyde in PBS by inverting at room temperature for 30 min. The cross-linking reaction was quenched with 1/10 volume (0.125 M) of 1.25 M glycine at room temperature for 5 min. After centrifugation and removal of the supernatant, the pellet was washed with chilled PBS, resuspended in lysis buffer containing protease inhibitors (GenDEPOT), phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride (PMSF; 1 mM), and RNase inhibitor (Ambion), and sonicated. After centrifugation of sonicated samples, the supernatant was pre-cleared twice with streptavidin beads (Invitrogen) by shaking at 37°C for 30 min. 1% of pre-cleared lysate was saved for RNA and protein input. 1 μ l 3'-biotinylated DNA probes (100 μ M of 32 *Malat1* probes or a probe for U1 or GFP; see probe sequences in Supplementary Table 3) was added to 1 ml lysate, and then a 2 \times lysate volume of hybridization buffer containing protease inhibitors, PMSF (1 mM), and RNase inhibitor was added to the lysate. Hybridization was performed at 37°C with shaking overnight. Next day, streptavidin beads were added to the hybridization reaction and incubated at 37°C with shaking for 30 min (100 μ l beads per 100 pmole probes). After five washes, the beads were resuspended in wash buffer. A 1/10 volume was transferred to a new tube for RNA isolation and a 9/10 volume was used for protein elution. Wash buffer was removed from the tube containing a 9/10 bead volume.

For RNA isolation from the input and streptavidin-bound samples, RNA proteinase K buffer was added to the input and streptavidin-bound samples (total 95 μ l and 195 μ l, respectively). Then 5 μ l proteinase K (Ambion) was added and incubated at 50 °C with shaking for 45 min. After a brief spin-down and boiling at 95 °C for 10 min, the samples were chilled on ice and 500 μ l TRIzol reagent was added. Tubes were vortexed for 10 s and incubated at room temperature for 10 min. RNA was isolated using the miRNeasy Mini Kit and DNase I (Qiagen). One-step RT-qPCR (Bio-Rad, 1725150) was performed on the isolated RNA to examine Malat1 levels.

For protein elution from the streptavidin-bound samples, wash buffer was removed from the beads, and the bound proteins were eluted by boiling in Laemmli buffer and subjected to Western blot analysis or mass spectrometric analysis (see the Supplementary Note for details).

Chromatin immunoprecipitation assay. A ChIP assay kit from Millipore (17-371) was used according to the manufacturer's protocol. Briefly, HeLa cells were transfected with pPGS-3HA-TEAD1 (Addgene number 33055)³³ and/or pcDNA3.1(-)-Malat1. After cross-linking, 5 μ g of the antibody against HA (Abcam, ab91110), YAP (Cell Signaling Technology, 14074), or normal rabbit immunoglobulin G (IgG; Santa Cruz Biotechnology, sc-2027) was added to immunoprecipitate HA-tagged TEAD1 or endogenous YAP. For MALAT1-knockout MDA-MB-231 and Malat1-overexpressing LM2 cells, 5 μ g of the antibody to TEAD1 (BD Biosciences, 610922), YAP (Cell Signaling Technology, 14074), normal mouse IgG (Santa Cruz Biotechnology, sc-2025), or normal rabbit IgG (Santa Cruz Biotechnology, sc-2027) was added to immunoprecipitate endogenous TEAD1 or endogenous YAP. After immunoprecipitation, protein-DNA cross-links were reversed and DNA was purified to remove the chromatin proteins and used for qPCR. Primers specific for known YAP-TEAD target-gene promoters (*ANKRD1*, *CTGF*, and *CYR61*) were from a previous study⁴⁰. Primers specific for *ITGB4* and *VEGFA* promoters were designed in this study. Primer sequences are listed in Supplementary Table 2. The results are presented as fold enrichment (normalized to IgG).

RNA pulldown assay. Full-length mouse *Malat1* (NR_002847) was divided into six non-overlapping pieces (P1–P6, 1.1–1.2 kb each) and each piece was cloned into the pGEM-T vector (Promega, number A362A). At the 3' end of each piece in the vector, *NotI* was used to linearize the vector and produce 5' overhangs. The linearized vectors were gel purified and used as templates for T7 RNA polymerase mediated in vitro transcription (ThermoFisher Scientific, number K0441). The genomic sequence of full-length U1 nuclear RNA was amplified from mouse genomic DNA by PCR using the primer pair containing the T7 promoter at the 5' end; the PCR product was gel purified and used as a template for T7 RNA polymerase-mediated in vitro transcription. Biotin-16-UTP (Roche, number 11388908910) was used to biotinylate the RNAs. Nonbiotinylated RNAs and biotinylated U1 were synthesized as negative controls. After in vitro transcription, synthesized RNA was isolated using the RNeasy Mini Kit (Qiagen) with DNase I treatment to remove the template DNA. The subsequent RNA-pulldown procedure was adapted from H. Chang's laboratory protocol (see URLs). Briefly, 3 μ g of biotin-labeled or biotin-free RNA was heated at 90 °C for 2 min and chilled on ice for 2 min. After RNA structure buffer (2 \times ; 20 mM Tris-HCl at pH 7.4, 0.2 M KCl, 20 mM MgCl₂, 2 mM dithiothreitol (DTT)) containing RNase inhibitor was added, RNA samples were placed at room temperature for 20 min for proper secondary-structure formation. Subconfluent HEK293FT cells were harvested, washed, lysed in radioimmunoprecipitation assay (RIPA) buffer (150 mM KCl, 25 mM Tris-HCl at pH 7.4, 0.5 mM DTT, 0.5% NP-40) containing 1 mM PMSF, protease inhibitors (GenDEPOT), and RNase inhibitor (Ambion), and sonicated. Cell lysate was precleared twice with streptavidin beads (Invitrogen) at room temperature. We added 3 mg of precleared cell lysate to each folded RNA sample and incubated at room temperature overnight. Streptavidin beads were added and incubated at room temperature for 1 h. The bound proteins were eluted by boiling in Laemmli buffer and subjected to western blot analysis.

RNA immunoprecipitation assay. The RNA-immunoprecipitation (RIP) procedure was adapted from a previous publication⁵⁸. Briefly, subconfluent cells in two 15 cm dishes were harvested, washed in PBS, and cross-linked with 1% formaldehyde. Glycine (0.125 M) was added to quench the formaldehyde. Cells were pelleted by centrifugation and washed with PBS. Immunoprecipitation (IP) lysis buffer (50 mM HEPES at pH 7.5, 0.4 M NaCl, 1 mM ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA), 1 mM DTT, 0.5% Triton X-100, 10% glycerol) containing 1 mM PMSF, protease inhibitors (GenDEPOT), and RNase inhibitor (Ambion) was added to the cell pellet. After sonication, cell lysate was precleared with washed protein G agarose (Millipore). 5 μ g of the antibody against HA (Abcam, ab91110; control: normal rabbit IgG, Santa Cruz Biotechnology, sc-2027) or the antibody against TEAD1 (BD Biosciences, 610922; control: normal mouse IgG, Santa Cruz Biotechnology, sc-2025) was added to precleared cell lysate and incubated at 4 °C overnight. Washed protein G agarose was added and incubated at 4 °C for 1 h. Agarose beads were washed with IP lysis buffer and pelleted by centrifugation. RIP buffer (50 mM HEPES at pH 7.5, 0.1 M NaCl, 5 mM EDTA, 10 mM DTT, 0.5% Triton X-100, 10% glycerol, 1% SDS) containing RNase

inhibitor was added to the pellet and incubated at 70 °C to reverse the cross-links. After centrifugation, the supernatant was used for RNA extraction using the RNeasy Mini Kit (Qiagen) and DNase I treatment. One-step RT-qPCR (Bio-Rad, 1725150) was performed with primers listed in Supplementary Table 2. The results are presented as fold enrichment (normalized to IgG).

UV cross-linking-immunoprecipitation assay. The CLIP procedure was adapted from previous publications^{31,32}. HeLa cells overexpressing both HA-TEAD1 and mouse Malat1 were plated in eight 15 cm dishes. At 16 hours before UV cross-linking, 4-thiouridine (4-SU) was added to the cells to a final concentration of 100 μ M. Next day, cells were washed in ice-cold PBS, and PBS was removed completely. Plates were placed in a UV cross-linker and irradiated with 150 mJ cm⁻² of UVA (365 nm). Cells were harvested in PBS and lysed in NP-40 lysis buffer (20 mM Tris-HCl at pH 7.5, 100 mM KCl, 5 mM MgCl₂, 0.5 % NP-40) supplemented with protease inhibitor and 1 mM DTT. Clear lysate was collected by centrifugation and incubated with RNase T1 (Life Technologies, number EN0541) at 1 unit per μ l at 22 °C for 5 min to digest RNAs that were not protected from bound proteins. Protein A/G agarose beads (Life Technologies, #26159) were incubated with 10 μ g of the HA-specific antibody (Abcam, number ab91110) or normal rabbit IgG in NT2 buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl at pH 7.5, 150 mM NaCl, 1 mM MgCl₂, 0.05 % NP-40) at 4 °C. RNase T1 treated cell lysate was incubated with the washed antibody-protein A/G agarose complex at 4 °C overnight, and then the beads were pelleted and washed in NP-40 lysis buffer. Supernatant was completely removed from the beads and proteinase K buffer (100 mM NaCl, 10 mM Tris-Cl at pH 7.0, 1 mM EDTA, 0.5% SDS) was added to the pelleted beads. Proteinase K (Ambion, number AM2546) was added at 0.5 mg ml⁻¹ and incubated at 55 °C for 30 min. 500 μ l TRIzol was added and vortexed. Total RNA was isolated using the PureLink RNA Mini Kit (Life Technologies, number 12183018 A) with DNase I treatment. After RNA isolation, one-step RT-qPCR (Bio-Rad, number 1725150) was performed using 69 primer pairs covering the full-length mouse Malat1. Data are normalized to IgG (HA-TEAD1 IP/IgG IP) and to *GAPDH* as described³¹.

Quantitative PCR. For gene-expression analysis, total RNA from human cells or mouse tissues were isolated using the RNeasy Mini Kit (Qiagen) and DNase I treatment was carried out according to the manufacturer's protocol. For ChIP-qPCR assays, chromatin samples were obtained from chromatin immunoprecipitation as described above. Real-time PCR and data collection were performed with SYBR Green reagent (Bio-Rad) or TaqMan reagent (ThermoFisher Scientific) on a CFX96 instrument (Bio-Rad). Primer sequences are listed in Supplementary Table 2. For all qPCR assays of cell lines, we used $n = 3$ technical replicates per sample, and a representative set from two to three independent experiments is shown.

RNA-seq analysis. Malat1 wild type (WT), Malat1-knockout (KO), and Malat1-restored (TG) PyMT mammary tumor samples (duplicates per group) were subjected to mRNA sequencing at MD Anderson's Sequencing and Microarray Core Facility. The sequencing platform was HiSeq4000 and the paired end reads were in 2 \times 76 bp. We mapped FASTQ raw reads and performed differential gene-expression analysis using Tophat2 alignment with default parameters, HTSeq-count with mode 'union', followed by EdgeR. We identified differentially expressed genes by comparing WT versus KO and KO versus TG using the EdgeR likelihood ratio test. Genes that were commonly upregulated (by twofold or more) in MMTV-PyMT;Malat1^{-/-} tumors (KO1 and KO2), compared with both MMTV-PyMT;Malat1^{+/+} tumors (WT1 and WT2) and MMTV-PyMT;Malat1^{-/-};Malat1^{TG} tumors (TG1 and TG2), were selected for further analysis.

Luciferase reporter assay. Two days post-transfection, firefly and Renilla luciferase activities were measured using a dual-luciferase reporter assay system (Promega, E1910) on a Gen5 microplate reader (BioTek). For NanoLuc luciferase assays with firefly-luciferase-labeled cells, NanoLuc luciferase activity and β -galactosidase enzyme activity were measured using the Nano-Glo dual-luciferase reporter assay system (Promega, N1610) and the β -galactosidase enzyme assay system (Promega, E2000), respectively (see Supplementary Note for details).

TCGA and computational data analysis. To compare MALAT1 RNA expression levels between normal and tumor tissues, we used TCGA breast cancer RNA-seq data (generated by the Illumina HiSeq 2000 RNA Sequencing Version 2 analysis platform) and performed the Wilcoxon test on the log2-transformed expression values (that is, RNA-seq by expectation maximization, RSEM). From the Cancer Cell Line Encyclopedia (CCLE; see URLs), 66 human breast cancer cell lines are available and 59 of them have MALAT1-expression data. We grouped these 59 cell lines into two subtypes, luminal ($n = 28$) and basal/TNBC ($n = 31$), according to previous reports⁵⁹⁻⁶¹, and performed an unpaired *t*-test to compare MALAT1-expression levels between the two subtypes. To compare MALAT1 levels in human breast tumors by tumor grades and tumor sites (primary versus metastatic), we performed OncoPrint data analysis (see URLs). To compare tumors of different grades, we applied a threshold *P* value of 0.005 to screen

data sets associated with published papers. To compare tumors of different sites, we applied a threshold P value of 0.05 to screen data sets associated with published papers. Original data sets were downloaded and an unpaired t -test was performed on the relative expression level (log₂ median-centered intensity). To assess the correlation of MALAT1 expression with clinical outcomes, we used the KM plotter²⁸ and performed a log-rank test to compare high and low expression groups. To examine the expression of genes adjacent to *Malat1* in the *Malat1*-knockout mouse model used in this study, we used the microarray data (downloaded from the NCBI Gene Expression Omnibus under code [GSE37707](#)) from a previous study⁷.

Statistical analysis. The experiments were repeated two to three times. Unless otherwise noted, data are presented as means \pm s.e.m., and a two-tailed t -test (unpaired or paired, as indicated) was used to compare two groups of independent samples. The log-rank test was used to compare KM survival curves. Statistical methods used for RNA-seq analysis and TCGA data analysis were described above. $P < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Reporting Summary. Further information on research design is available in the Nature Research Reporting Summary linked to this article.

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The RNA-seq data have been deposited at the Gene Expression Omnibus under accession number [GSE110239](#).

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Reporting Summary

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When statistical analyses are reported, confirm that the following items are present in the relevant location (e.g. figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section).

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- The exact sample size (n) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
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- A description of all covariates tested
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- For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. F , t , r) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and P value noted
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- For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings
- For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes
- Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's d , Pearson's r), indicating how they were calculated
- Clearly defined error bars
State explicitly what error bars represent (e.g. SD, SE, CI)

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) may be useful.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection

No computer code was used.

Data analysis

We used Proteome Discoverer 2.0 Mascot engine (ThermoFisher Scientific) for mass spectrometric analysis; Living Image® software (Perkin Elmer, for the Xenogen IVIS-200 imaging system) for bioluminescent image analysis; JASPAR for analysis of transcription factor (TEAD) binding sites on target genes; Olego and Quantas for RNA splicing pattern analysis; and Imaris image analysis software for live imaging analysis.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request. The RNA-Seq data have been deposited at the Gene Expression Omnibus (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/>) under the accession number GSE110239.

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Life sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Sample size	Based on the literature and our previous studies, we chose the sample size routinely used for animal experiments, reporter assays, quantitative PCR, migration and invasion assays, soft agar assays, cell proliferation assays, and ELISA.
Data exclusions	No data were excluded.
Replication	The experiments were repeated 2-3 times. All replication attempts were successful.
Randomization	No method of randomization was used.
Blinding	Investigators were not blinded to group allocation.

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

Materials & experimental systems

n/a	Involved in the study
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Unique biological materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Antibodies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eukaryotic cell lines
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Palaeontology
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Animals and other organisms
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Human research participants

Methods

n/a	Involved in the study
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ChIP-seq
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Flow cytometry
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> MRI-based neuroimaging

Antibodies

Antibodies used

Anti-pan-TEAD, Cell Signaling Technology Cat#13295; RRID: AB_2687902
 Anti-FLAG, Sigma Cat#F7425; RRID: AB_439687
 Anti-HA, Santa Cruz Biotechnology Cat#sc-7392; RRID: AB_627809
 Anti-cyclophilin B, ThermoFisher Scientific Cat#PA1-027A; RRID: AB_2169138
 Anti-YAP, Cell Signaling Technology Cat#14074; RRID: AB_2650491
 Anti-histone H3, Cell Signaling Technology Cat#9715; RRID: AB_331563
 Anti-Lamin B1, Cell Signaling Technology Cat#12586; RRID: AB_2650517
 Anti-tubulin, Sigma Cat#T5168; RRID: AB_477579
 Anti-HSP90, BD Biosciences Cat#610419; RRID: AB_397799
 Anti-GAPDH, ThermoFisher Scientific Cat#MA5-15738; RRID: AB_10977387
 Anti-HA, Abcam Cat#ab9110; RRID: AB_307019

Anti-TEAD1, BD Biosciences Cat#610922; RRID: AB_398237

Anti-PyMT, Abcam Cat#ab15085; RRID: AB_301631

Validation

Pre-validated antibodies were purchased from reputable sources. All proteins are well studied and all antibodies are widely used in the literature. The catalog number and RRID are provided for each antibody. We validated the antibodies for endogenous and transfected proteins in knockdown and overexpression settings.

Eukaryotic cell lines

Policy information about [cell lines](#)

Cell line source(s)

MCF10A, ATCC CRL-10317; RRID: CVCL_0598
 T47D, ATCC HTB-133; RRID: CVCL_0553
 BT474, ATCC HTB-20; RRID: CVCL_0179
 MDA-MB-157, ATCC HTB-24; RRID: CVCL_0618
 BT549, ATCC HTB-122; RRID: CVCL_1092
 MDA-MB-468, ATCC HTB-132; RRID: CVCL_0419
 HCC1806, ATCC CRL-2335; RRID: CVCL_1258
 Hs578t, ATCC HTB-126; RRID: CVCL_0332
 MDA-MB-436, ATCC HTB-130; RRID: CVCL_0623
 HeLa, ATCC CCL-2; RRID: CVCL_0030
 SUM149, Stephen P. Ethier
 SUM159, Stephen P. Ethier
 4T1 (G418-resistant, luciferase-expressing), Mien-Chie Hung
 MDA-MB-231, ATCC HTB-26; RRID: CVCL_0062
 LM2 (luciferase-expressing), Xiang Zhang
 HEK293FT, ThermoFisher Scientific Cat#R70007; RRID: CVCL_6911
 67NR, Fred R. Miller
 168FARN, Fred R. Miller
 4TO7, Fred R. Miller
 4T1, Fred R. Miller

Authentication

Short tandem repeat (STR) profiling was done by ATCC and MD Anderson's Characterized Cell Line Core Facility.

Mycoplasma contamination

Cell lines were tested for mycoplasma contamination with a mycoplasma detection kit and treated with Plasmocin for the prevention of mycoplasma contamination.

Commonly misidentified lines
(See [ICLAC](#) register)

No cell lines used in this study are in the database of commonly misidentified cell lines.

Animals and other organisms

Policy information about [studies involving animals](#); [ARRIVE guidelines](#) recommended for reporting animal research

Laboratory animals

Species: mouse.

Strains:

NSG mice, MD Anderson's internal supply
 BALB/c mice, The Jackson Laboratory Stock#000651; RRID: IMSR_JAX:000651
 MMTV-PyMT mice (C57BL/6), William Muller
 MMTV-PyMT mice (FVB), The Jackson Laboratory Stock#002374; RRID: IMSR_JAX:002374
 CMV-Cre mice (C57BL/6), The Jackson Laboratory Stock#006054; RRID: IMSR_JAX:006054
 Malat1 knockout mice (transcriptional terminator insertion at the Malat1 locus; C57BL/6), Shinichi Nakagawa
 Malat1 transgenic mice (targeted transgenic expression from the ROSA26 locus; C57BL/6 and FVB), generated in this study

Age: (1) for tumor cell implantation: 6 weeks old at the time of tumor cell injection. (2) For genetically engineered mouse models: from birth to the endpoint (i.e., moribund due to tumor burdens or poor body condition).

Sex: female.

Wild animals

The study did not involve wild animals.

Field-collected samples

The study did not involve samples collected from the field.