Neuromedin U (NmU) is a bioactive peptide, ubiquitously expressed in the gastrointestinal tract. Here, we analyzed the role of NmU in pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC) pathogenesis. NmU and NmU receptor-2 mRNA were significantly overexpressed in PDAC and in metastatic tissues. NmU and NmU receptor-2 were localized predominantly in cancer cells. NmU serum levels decreased after tumor resection. Although NmU exerted no effects on cancer cell proliferation, it induced c-Met and a trend towards increased invasiveness as well as an increased hepatocyte growth factor (HGF)-mediated scattering. Thus, NmU may be involved in the HGF-c-Met paracrine loop regulating cell migration, invasiveness and dissemination of PDAC.
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