

Original Article

Single-cell RNA-Seq analysis identifies a putative epithelial stem cell population in human primary prostate cells in monolayer and organoid culture conditions

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Abstract: Human primary prostate epithelial (PrE) cells represent patient-derived *in vitro* models and are traditionally grown as a monolayer in two-dimensional culture. It has been recently demonstrated that expansion of primary cells into three-dimensional prostatic organoids better mimics prostate epithelial glands by recapitulating epithelial differentiation and cell polarity. Here, we sought to identify cell populations present in monolayer PrE cells and organoid culture, grown from the same patient, using single-cell RNA-sequencing. Single-cell RNA-sequencing is a powerful tool to analyze transcriptome profiles of thousands of individual cells simultaneously, creating an in-depth atlas of cell populations within a sample. Organoids consisted of six distinct cell clusters (populations) of intermediate differentiation compared to only three clusters in the monolayer prostate epithelial cells. Integrated analysis of the datasets allowed for direct comparison of the monolayer and organoid samples and identified 10 clusters, including a distinct putative prostate stem cell population that was high in Keratin 13 (*KRT13*), Lymphocyte Antigen 6D (*LY6D*), and Prostate Stem Cell Antigen (*PSCA*). Many of the genes within the clusters were validated through RT-qPCR and immunofluorescence in PrE samples from 5 additional patients. *KRT13*⁺ cells were observed in discrete areas of the parent tissue and organoids. Pathway analyses and lack of EdU incorporation corroborated a stem-like phenotype based on the gene expression and quiescent state of the *KRT13*⁺ cluster. Other clusters within the samples were similar to epithelial populations reported within patient prostate tissues. In summary, these data show that the epithelial stem population is preserved in PrE cultures, with organoids uniquely expanding intermediate cell types not present in monolayer culture.

Keywords: Prostate, organoid, primary cell culture, 3D culture, single-cell RNA sequencing, 10X Genomics, ingenuity pathway analysis, immunofluorescent staining

Introduction

The prostate epithelium has a high incidence of neoplastic disease with prostate cancer being the second most common epithelial cancer in men [1, 2]. *In vitro* culture models have produced valuable insights into the biology of the prostate, however, the limited number of cell lines from early and intermediate stages of disease presents a significant obstacle to unifying data with clinically relevant findings [3, 4]. An alternative strategy is patient-derived primary cell culture, which preserves patient heterogeneity [5-10]. Primary prostate cell culture can

be a valuable tool for studying “normal” cells, but is restricted to selectively expand epithelial cells that display a homogenous, transit-amplifying phenotype and lack the luminal differentiation of prostate epithelium observed *in vivo* [11-14]. Organoids are three-dimensional (3D) structures grown in extracellular matrix that recapitulate many facets of prostate epithelial tissue morphology including structure and cell polarity [15-17]. Compared to their traditional two-dimensional (2D) monolayer counterparts, organoids can grow from a single stem or progenitor cell in the presence of charcoal stripped FBS and androgen to differentiate into both

basal and luminal epithelial populations [15, 16, 18].

The human prostate consists of stratified epithelial secretory glands surrounded by a fibromuscular stroma. The epithelial glands are composed of a basal layer, a secretory luminal layer, and a rare neuroendocrine population [19, 20]. Recently, single-cell RNA-Seq analysis of prostate tissue revealed two additional cell populations within the human prostate epithelium that exhibit stem cell characteristics [21]. Single-cell RNA-Seq (scRNA-Seq) is a method that lends itself to the identification of cryptic sub-populations within a heterogeneous sample using an unbiased analysis of individual expression profiles of cells. This approach involves the isolation of single cells into microfluidic droplets containing oligonucleotide-covered gel beads that capture and barcode the transcripts. Transcripts are converted to cDNA, sequenced, and aligned by barcode using computational analysis to create an individual transcriptome library for each cell. Libraries are then clustered into distinct cell populations using dimensional reduction analysis [22-25].

Here we use scRNA-Seq to compare the sub-populations present within primary prostate cells and organoids from the same patient specimen and identify previously unknown sub-populations of epithelial cells grown *in vitro*. Cell populations were validated in additional patient samples by RT-qPCR and immunofluorescence microscopy.

Materials and methods

Contact for reagent and resource sharing

Further information and requests for resources and reagents should be directed to and will be fulfilled by the Lead Contact, Larisa Nonn (lnonn@uic.edu).

Primary prostate epithelial cells

Human primary prostate cells were isolated and established from fresh male radical prostatectomy tissues. Radical prostatectomy patients consented prior to surgery and prostate tissue samples from benign regions of the peripheral zone were collected according to UIC Internal Review Board-approved protocol #2007-0694. A portion of tissue was reserved

for histologic inspection by a board-certified pathologist to verify the region as benign. Tissue samples were collected, formalin-fixed, paraffin-embedded, and 5 µm sections were stained with hematoxylin and eosin. Remaining tissue was digested in collagenase/trypsin to produce a single cell suspension. Cells were grown in Prostate Cell Growth Media (Lonza, Basel, Switzerland) to select for epithelial cells. When ~70% confluent, cells were trypsinized to single cells, counted and cryopreserved into multiple aliquots. Epithelial purity was authenticated with RT-qPCR, confirming the expression of epithelial markers *KRT5*, *KRT8*, *KRT18* and *TP63*, and the lack of stromal marker *TIMP3*. Patient information is listed within **Table 1**.

Monolayer and organoid culture

For standard monolayer culture, prostate epithelial (PrE) cells were thawed from primary passage into a collagen-coated dish and maintained in PrEGM (Lonza; Basel, Switzerland). For organoid culture, a separate aliquot of the same PrE cells was thawed and plated sparsely (500-5,000 cells per well) in a flat-bottom 96-well microplate into 33% growth factor reduced phenol red-free Matrigel (Corning Inc., Corning NY) on top of a solidified base layer of 50% Matrigel in media. 100 µL of organoids suspended in 33% Matrigel were maintained in keratinocyte serum-free media (Gibco, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) supplemented with 5% charcoal-stripped fetal bovine serum and 10 nM dihydrotestosterone (DHT) as previously described by our group [26]. Media was refreshed every 2-3 days for all cultures. Monolayer cells were collected at ~70% confluent for endpoints and organoids were grown for 8-14 days as detailed in the figure legends. Brightfield images of organoids were captured at 10 × and 20 × magnification using the Evos FL Auto 2 imaging System (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA), shown in **Figures 1** and **S4**.

10 × single cell separation, library prep and sequencing

Patient-matched epithelial cells were grown in monolayer and organoid culture as described above. Monolayer cells were collected by TrypLE (Gibco, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) dissociation. Organoids were harvested at day 8 by Dispase (STEMCELL Technologi-

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Table 1. Primary cell patient characteristics

PrE ID	Pathology	Age	Race	Prostate region of origin	Endpoints
PrE1	Benign, moderate chronic inflammation	58	AA	Peripheral zone, L5 Left Posterior (scRNAseq) Peripheral Zone, L2 Left Posterior (FFPE block)	scRNAseq RT-qPCR Tissue staining
PrE2	Benign	68	AA	Peripheral zone, L3 (whole mount and RNA) Peripheral zone, L5 (FFPE block)	RT-qPCR, Tissue staining, ICC, whole mount ICC
PrE3	Benign, mild chronic inflammation, atrophy	63	EA	Peripheral zone, L1 Left Anterior	RT-qPCR, Tissue staining, ICC, whole mount ICC
PrE4	Benign, mild chronic inflammation, focal atrophy	58	AA	Peripheral zone, L3 Left Posterior	RT-qPCR, Tissue staining, ICC, whole mount ICC
PrE5	Benign	71	AA	Peripheral zone, L5 Left anterior (whole mount, RNA) Peripheral zone, L3 Right anterior (FFPE block)	Tissue staining, ICC, whole mount ICC
PrE6	Benign	60	AA	Peripheral zone, L4 Left Anterior	ICC, whole mount ICC IF

AA = African American; EA = White European American (non-Hispanic).

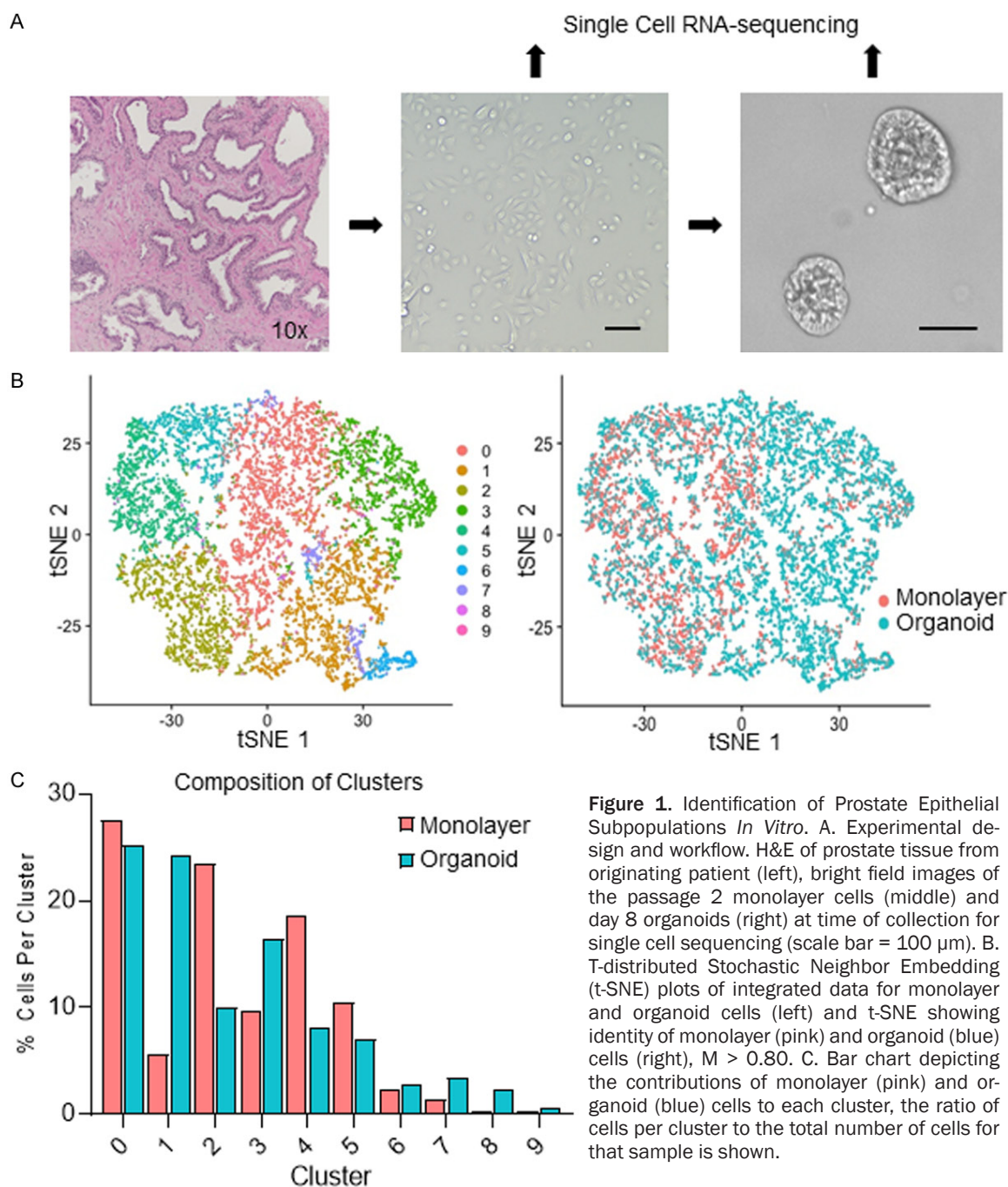
es, Vancouver, Canada) dissociation followed by a second dissociation to single cells using TrypLE. Cell number and viability were determined by a Trypan Blue exclusion assay quantified on a Cellometer Automated Cell Counter (Nexcelom, Lawrence MA). Both samples consisted of > 80% viable cells (**Table 2**) prior to proceeding with the 10X Genomics (Pleasanton, CA) protocol for 3' Transcript Capture and Single Cell Library Prep. Cell samples were loaded at a concentration to yield approximately 5×10^3 total captured cells on a $10 \times$ Chip A. GEM generation, RT, cleanup, cDNA amplification, fragmenting, end repair & A-tail prep, and sample index tagging were performed using the Chromium Single Cell 3' Library and Gel Bead Kit v2 per manufacturer's instructions. Libraries were labeled with a sample index and pooled for sequencing at 10 nM. Sample quantification and quality control were performed using Qubit Fluorometer (London, England) and TapeStation Bioanalyzer (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara CA). Sequencing was run on the HiSeq 4000 (Illumina, San Diego CA) at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC) DNA services. Samples were sequenced across 3 lanes of the HiSeq 4000, generating 100 base pair paired-end reads at a depth of 45,000 reads per cell. Leftover cells not used for scRNA-Seq were collected into TRIzol Reagent (Thermo Fisher, Waltham MA) and reserved for validation of the sequencing.

Single cell rna-seq analysis

Initial Read Alignment and Quality Control: Single-cell RNA sequencing samples were pro-

cessed and aligned to Ensembl genome GRCh38 using the Cell Ranger 3.0.0 pipeline by UIUC DNA Services. The Cell Ranger output was loaded into Seurat pre-release v3.0 for clustering [22]. Cells with high mitochondrial features (> 8% of total mapped reads) were struck from the analysis to remove the influence of dead cells. A small number of cells with unusually high or low numbers of mapped reads were also removed from the dataset, as these outliers could be doublets or poorly-captured cells [22-24]. Cells removed in QC totaled 29% of the initial input, see **Table 2** for full QC. Individual genes related to the cell cycle or with uniquely low unique molecular identifier (UMI) counts within the context of the dataset had their variance regressed out to minimize their influence on variance-based clustering.

Principal Component Determination: A JackStraw resampling method was used to select statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) principal components, shown in [Figure S1A](#) and [S1B](#) [23]. These components were used to identify the distance between cells for a k-nearest neighbors calculation and construction of a shared nearest neighbor graph. Modularity (M) was used as a quantitative measure of the independence of individual networks in the t-SNE plot, using $M > 0.8$ as a cut-off to ensure reproducibility. Principal components used were 27 and 40 for monolayer and organoid culture respectively in the individual analyses provided in [Figure S2](#). The integrated dataset was analyzed using 30 principal components to produce the t-SNE plot shown in **Figure 1**.



Identification of Clusters: Canonical correlative analysis was performed in Seurat to integrate the separate datasets and allow for direct comparison of populations between the monolayer and organoid samples [22]. Clusters were assigned identities based on their expression of previously reported epithelial markers listed in **Table 3**. Heat maps and dot plots were gener-

ated in Seurat, **Figure 2**. Highly expressed genes in each cluster are provided in [Table S1](#).

Pseudotime analysis: Monocle version 2.10 was used for unsupervised pseudotime analysis of the organoid sample [27], Cell Ranger output was uploaded into Monocle and data was subset to exclude cells with low and high

Table 2. Quality metrics for 10 × input, sequencing and analysis

Sample	Monolayer	Organoid
Viability at Collection	85.60%	81%
Aimed Recovery	5,000	5,000
TapeStation Yield (pmol/L)	173000	121000
Concentration (ng/μL)	44	31.4
Qubit Yield (ng/μL)	88	82
Achieved Cell Recovery	5,194	7,422
Mean Reads per Cell	31,629	41,116
Mean Genes per Cell	3,569	3,783
Reads Mapped Confidently to Genome	87.10%	86.90%
Number of Cells Remaining After Processing	3,687	5,322

numbers of mRNAs, removing dead cells and doublets (cells with < 9000 or > 45000 captured transcripts). Clustering of cells was performed unguided without the influence of marker genes, using 27 principal components as shown in [Figure S1](#). Monocle performed unsupervised selection of genes that define progress, performing dimensional reduction to produce a plot ordering cells in pseudotime, shown in [Figure 4](#).

Integrated tissue analysis: Canonical correlative analysis was used to integrate the monolayer, organoid and a publicly available human prostate tissue data set (D17_FACS_filtered GSE_117403, [21]) to allow for direct comparison of populations between the *in vitro* samples and *in vivo* tissue. 30 principal components ([Figure S2](#)) were used to yield a t-SNE with $M > 0.95$ ([Figure 4](#)). Clusters were assigned identities based on their expression of previously reported epithelial markers listed in [Table 3](#). A dot plot was generated in Seurat for genes highly expressed by each cluster, shown in [Figure S7](#). Highly expressed genes in each cluster are provided in [Table S1](#).

RT-qPCR gene expression

Multiple patient-derived epithelial cell cultures ([Table 1](#)) were grown as matched monolayer and organoid cultures as described above. Cells were stored in TRIzol Reagent before RNA isolation. Samples were homogenized by chloroform and RNA collected by alcohol precipitation and rehydration. RNA quantity and quality was determined by OD 260/280 and 260/230 on the NanoDrop Spectrophotometer (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham MA). cDNA was syn-

thesized with the High-Capacity cDNA Reverse Transcription Kit (Applied Biosystems, Beverly Hills CA) and qPCR run on LightCycler (Roche Applied Science, Penzberg, Germany). RQ was calculated from $\Delta\Delta CT$ to the reference gene *RPL13A* [28], primers are listed in [Table 4](#).

Immunofluorescence and Immunohistochemistry

Whole-mount immunocytofluorescent staining: Organoids were collected for whole-mount imaging by transferring to a chamber slide as

previously described by our group [26] and monolayer cells were seeded from P2 and grown on a chamber slide. Organoids and cells were fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde. Organoids and cells were permeabilized with Triton-X 100 (Sigma Aldrich, St. Louis MO). Cells were incubated first with primary and next secondary antibodies for 1 hour at room temperature, each. Organoids were incubated with primary antibodies over two nights at 4°C and secondary antibodies overnight at 4°C. Primary antibodies included monoclonal rabbit anti-Cytokeratin 13 (ab92551, Abcam) diluted at 1:200, monoclonal mouse anti-E-cadherin (ab76055) diluted at 1:100, and polyclonal guinea pig anti-Keratin 8/18 (03-GP11, American Research Products, Inc.) diluted at 1:200. Secondary antibodies included goat anti-rabbit Alexa Fluor 488, Alexa Fluor 647 goat anti-mouse, and goat anti-guinea pig Alexa Fluor 568 (Life Technologies) were used at a 1:200 dilution. Cells were counterstained with Alexa Fluor™ 647 Phalloidin (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Massachusetts) and DAPI, and imaged on the Zeiss LSM 710 confocal microscope (ZEISS, Oberkochen Germany), monolayer cells were counterstained with DAPI alone when E-cadherin primary was used. Shown in [Figures 3](#) and [S4](#).

Formalin fixed paraffin embedded staining: Organoids were formalin-fixed and paraffin-embedded as previously described by our group [26]. Briefly, organoids were dissociated in Dispase, resuspended in HistoGel™ (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham MA), solidified at 4°C, fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde for 1 hour, transferred to 70% ethanol, and paraffin-em-

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Table 3. Gene expression profiles for prostate cell types

	Pan-Epi	Luminal	Basal	Intermed	Stem
Henry [21]	CD326, CD324, TACSTD2 , ITGA6	DPP4, KRT8 , KRT18 , GP2, KLK3, MSMB ACPP, KLK4, PLA2G2A, MT1E, KLK2, SMB, SOCS2, TSPAN8	PDPN , KRT5 , TP63, CD104, CD271, RGCC KRT14 , DST, NOTCH4, LTBP2, DKK1 , KRT15	KRT19, KRT18 , KRT14	SCGB1A1, PSCA , KRT13 , LCN2 , LYPD3 , SERPINB1 , SCGB3A1, PIGR, WFDC2, FCGBP, CSTB , APOBEC3A
Zhang [40]	TACSTD2	AR, KLK3, ALOX15B, ACPP, TOX3, FOLH1, OSTADPP4, CKK, PLA2G2A, MB, CWH43, TRPV6, ELOVL2, CPNE4, ANO7, POTEM, MUC2, LMAN1L, DNAJC12, ASRGL1, DLL4, DOCK11, GPR98, SYT7, INHB8, TBXAS1, SERHL2, NPTX2, GFPT2, PTPRN2, CSGALNACT1, ST8SIA1, VNN3, C2, TRPM8, RAMP1PDE8B, SPDEF, LTB, HLA-DMB, LOC286002, FGF13, DCDC2, KRT20, FBP1, SLC2A12, TSPAN8	TP63, KRT5 , KRT14 , ITGA6 KRT6A , BNC1, KRT34, FAT3, SYNE1, TNC, FGFR3, DKK3, COL17A1, CSMD2, CDH13, FJX1, MUM1L1, MMP3, DLK2, FLRT2, IL33, GIMAP8, PDPN , FHL1, VSNL1, NRG, IGFBP7, ERG, HMGA2, IL1A, NOTCH3, THBS2, TAGLNSPARC, FOXI1, MSRB3, NGFR, NIPAL4, ANXABL2, COL4A6, KCNQs, JAG2WNT7A, KCNMA1, LTBP2, JAM3, SH2D5, MRC2, SERPINB13 , CNTAP3B, ARHGAP25, AEBP1, DLC1 , SERPINF1 , C16orf74, KIRREL		
Hu [33]					KRT13 , IGF2, CCL2, CARM1, LDH1A2, ALDH8A1, LIFRCAC15, PSCA , Nanog, SOX2, PCAT1, VEGFC Nestin, FOXA1, APRAC1
Moad [34]					SCNN1A, PPL, CENPF , DDIT4, KLK11 , DLK1,
Wang [41]		KRT8 , KRT18	KRT19, GSTpi, KRT5, TP63, KRT14	KRT19	
Schmelz [32]		TPJ1, KLK3	KRT5	KRT19	KRT6A

Markers observed in monolayer and organoid scRNA-Seq data are marked in red.

Single cell RNA sequencing of monolayer and organoid prostate epithelial cells

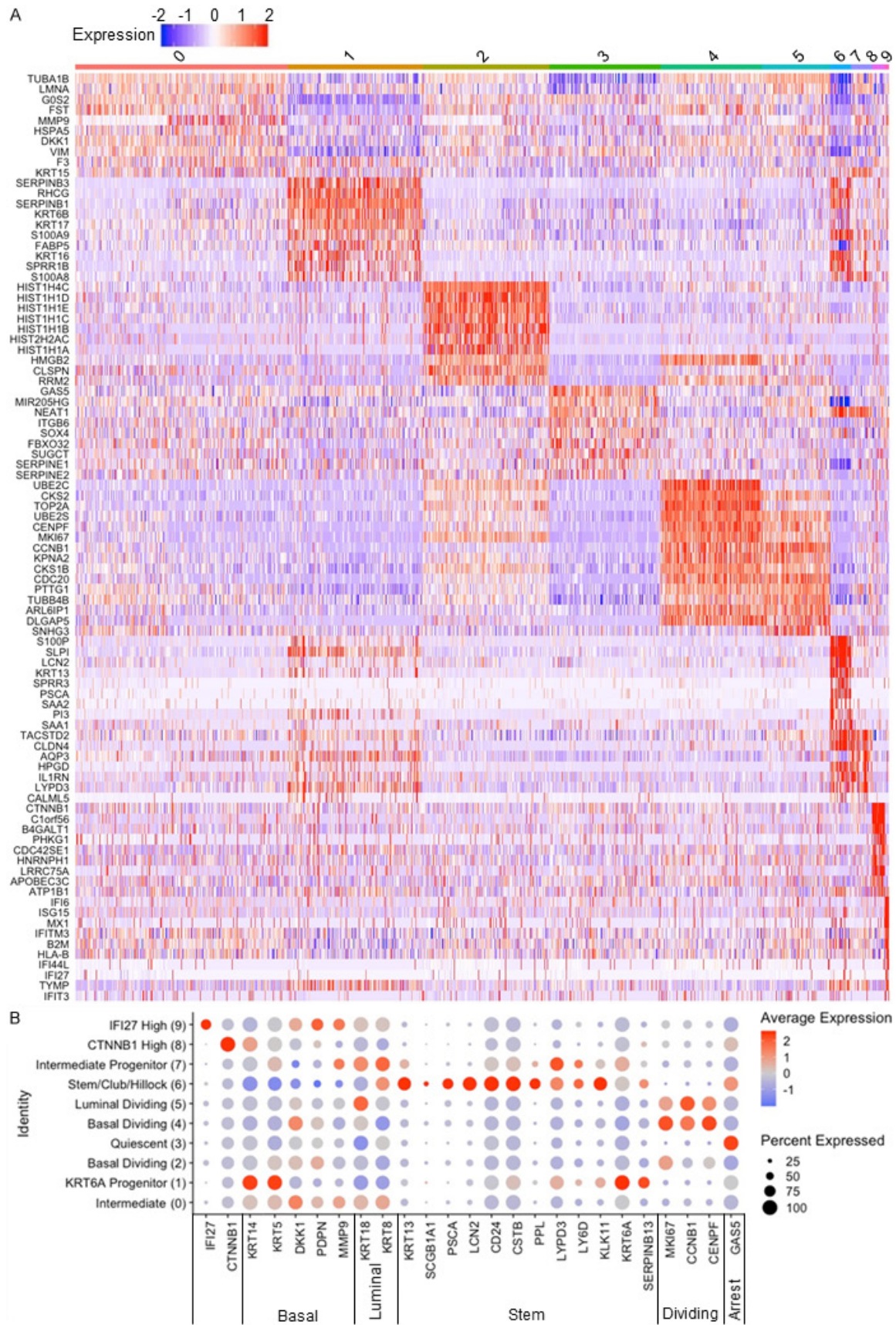


Figure 2. Gene expression of the 10 clusters identified. A. Heat map for top 10 genes expressed by each of the 10 clusters found in the integrated dataset. B. Naming assignments for the clusters and genes of interest shown by dot plot. Red is highly expressed and blue is lowly expressed, the size of the dot indicates the percentage of cells in that cluster that are expressing the gene.

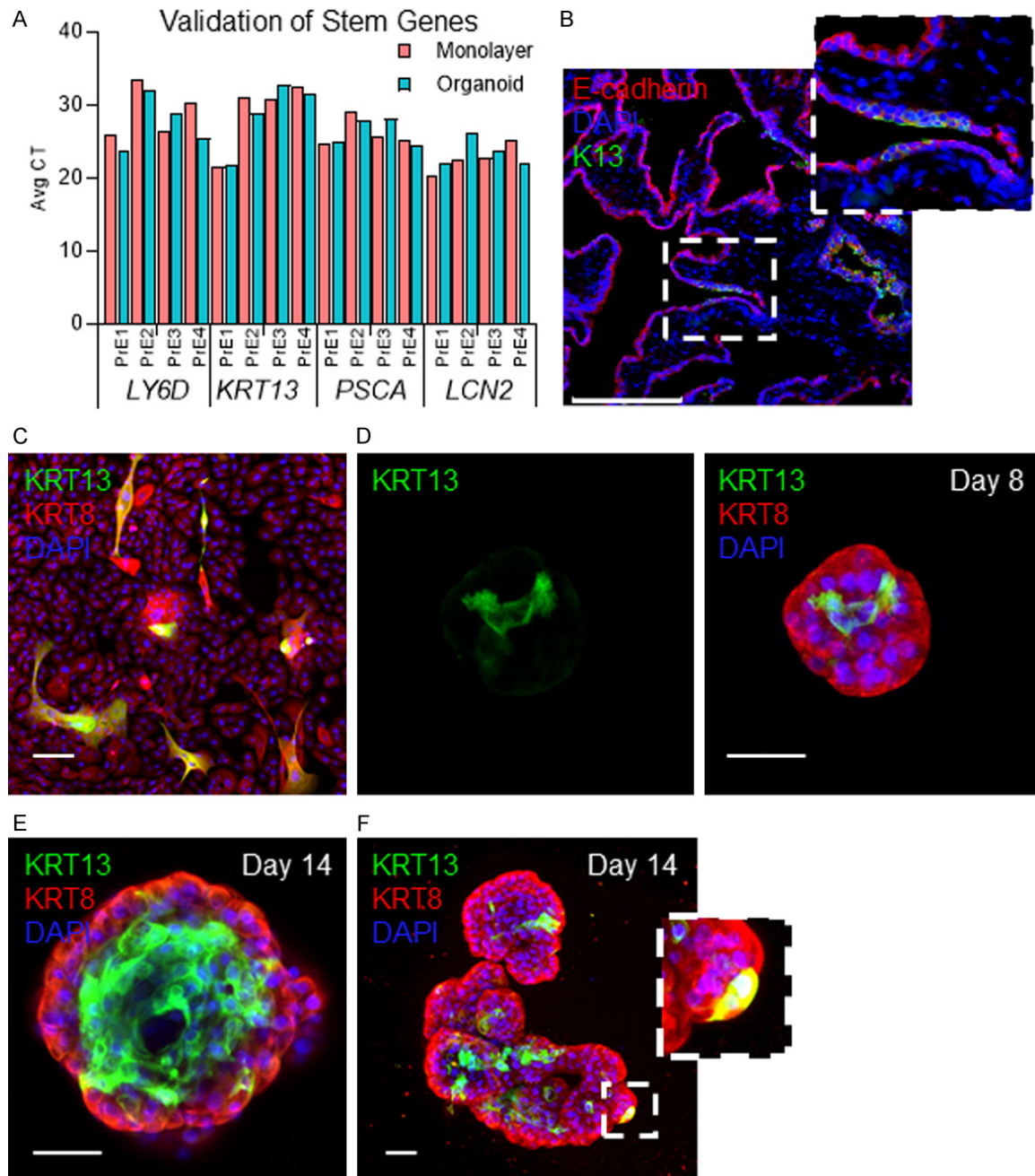


Figure 3. Presence of the KRT13+ population in tissue, monolayer cells and organoids. A. RT-qPCR analysis for stem cell markers in whole RNA extracts of monolayer and organoid samples derived from 4 patients. B. Immunofluorescent staining for KRT13, DAPI and E-cadherin on the scRNA-Seq patient tissue (scale bar = 200 μ m). C. Immunocytochemistry of monolayer cells derived from patient PrE2 stained for KRT13, KRT8, and DAPI (scale bar = 50 μ m). D. Whole-mount immunocytochemistry of day 8 organoid cells derived from patient PrE2 stained for KRT13, KRT8 and DAPI (scale bar = 50 μ m). E, F. Whole-mount immunocytochemistry of day 14 organoid cells derived from patient PrE2 stained for KRT13, KRT8, and DAPI, inset (right) shows KRT8+/KRT13+ cell (scale bar = 50 μ m).

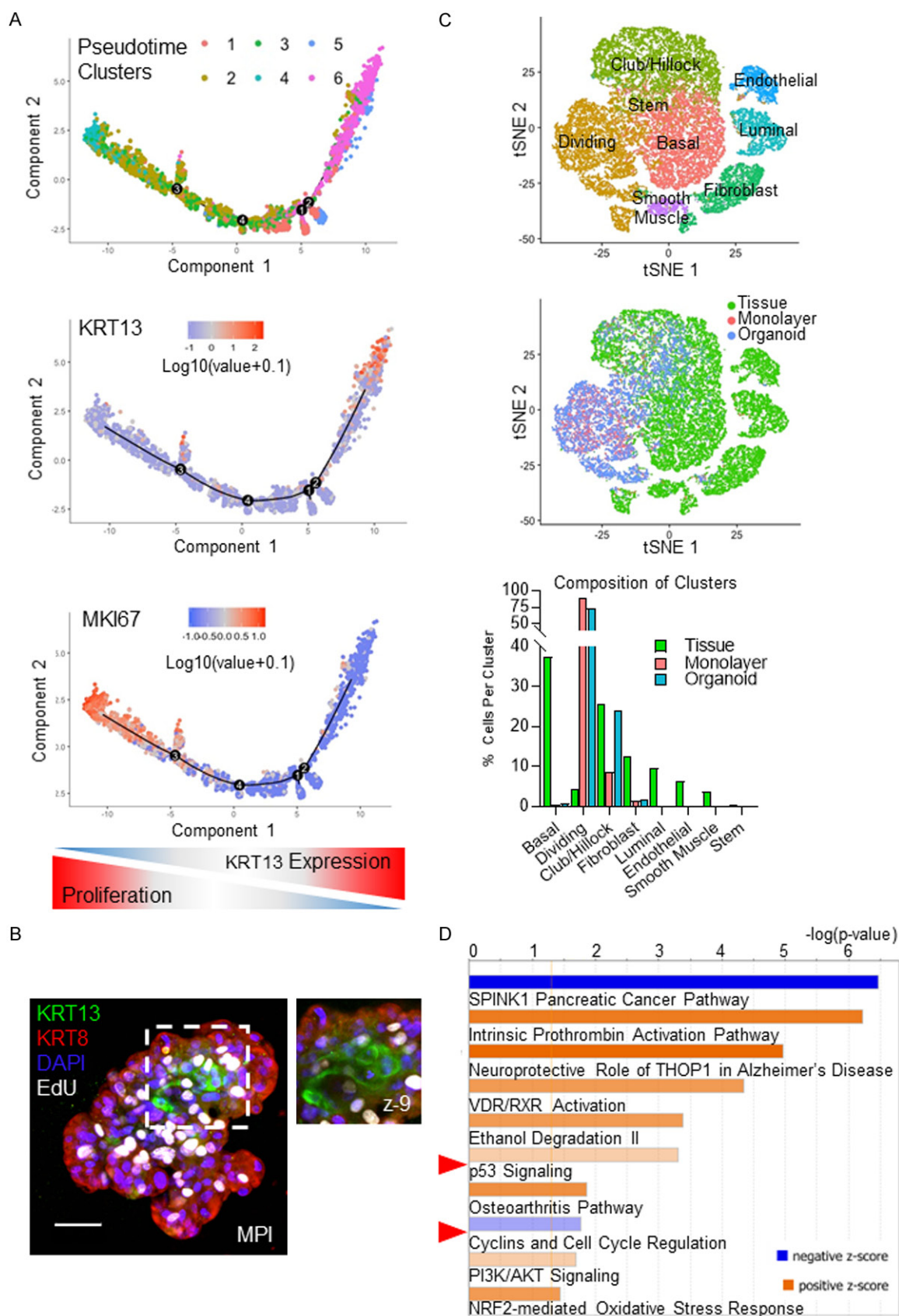


Figure 4. KRT13 Subpopulation is Quiescent. A. Pseudotime plots of organoid cell clusters (top), *KRT13* expression (middle) and *MKI67* expression (bottom). B. EdU incorporation and whole-mount immunocytochemistry of day 14

organoid cells derived from patient PrE3 stained for KRT13, KRT8 and DAPI (scale bar = 50 μ m). C. T-SNE plot of integrated data sets shows 8 cluster identities (top), sample identities (middle), bar chart depicting the contribution of sample to each cluster (bottom). D. Ingenuity pathway analysis of genes highly expressed by cluster 6.

bedded. 5 μ m sections were incubated overnight at 4°C with monoclonal rabbit anti-androgen receptor primary antibody (5153, Abcam, Cambridge UK) used at 1:400 dilution. AR was detected using the rabbit specific HRP/DAB (ABC) detection IHC kit (ab64261, Abcam, Cambridge UK) following the manufacturer's instructions. Slides were counterstained with hematoxylin and imaged on the EVOS FL Auto 2 (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham MA). Shown in [Figure S8](#).

EdU proliferation assay

Proliferating cells were visualized using Click-iT EdU AlexaFluor 647 Imaging Kit (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham MA) as previously described [26, 29]. Fully formed day 12 organoids were pulsed with EdU overnight to incorporate into dividing cells. The next day EdU was washed off and cells were given a night to recover prior to staining. On day 14, organoids were collected and fixed using the whole mount protocol described above. To visualize EdU, the Click-iT EdU protocol was followed according to manufacturer specifications. Briefly, cells were permeabilized with Triton-X 100, washed and given the AlexaFluor 647 reaction cocktail. After EdU detection was complete, organoids were stained for KRT13, KRT8 and counterstained with DAPI as described above, shown in [Figure 4](#).

Pathway analysis

Genes identified as highly expressed in each cluster compared to all other cells were uploaded into the IPA system and analyzed (QIAGEN Inc., Hilden Germany) [30]. Core analysis was performed using the Ingenuity Knowledge Base reference set. We report the enriched canonical pathways with predicted activation Z-scores > |1| and p -value < 0.05 ([Figures 4, S5](#)), and predicted upstream regulators (of class transcription regulator or ligand-dependent nuclear receptor) with predicted activation Z-scores > 2 and p -value < 0.05 ([Figure S6](#)).

Data and software availability

The single cell RNA-seq data discussed in this publication have been deposited in NCBI's

Gene Expression Omnibus (GEO) and are accessible through GEO Series accession number GSE130318.

Results

Organoid cultures contain more distinct populations of prostate epithelial cells than monolayer cultures

Patient-derived PrE cells can be grown in monolayer or organoid culture conditions as *in vitro* models of prostate cell biology and as useful tools for mechanistic studies. Here we compared the cell populations within these patient-derived models using scRNA-Seq analysis on monolayer epithelial cells and organoids from a single patient ([Figure 1A](#)). Seurat was used for clustering and analysis of the individual datasets separately, identifying 6 clusters in the organoids and only 3 within the monolayer cells ([Figure S2](#)) [24]. Integration of the monolayer and organoid datasets together increased the number of cells to allow for higher-granularity clustering with the same modularity cutoff, thus permitting greater separation of intermediate cell types and subpopulations [22]. Additionally, this integration allowed for the direct comparison of the two datasets on the same t-SNE plot to observe common cell populations across both culture conditions. Together, these factors informed our decision to use an integrated dataset. The resulting 10 clusters are shown on a t-SNE plot ([Figure 1B](#)) and the contribution of monolayer and organoid cells to each cluster is shown by bar graph ([Figure 1C](#)). Each cluster had varying representation of cells from both culture conditions, but clusters 1, 3, 8 and 9 were enriched in the organoid sample while cluster 2, 4 and 5 were enriched in the monolayer sample. Genes highly expressed by monolayer (*FST*, *IGFBP2*, *SFRP1*) or organoid (*INHBA*, *IGFBP3*, *SERPINB1*) cells were also tested by RT-qPCR in pooled sample of leftover scRNA-Seq RNA as a secondary validation to our data ([Figure S3](#)). This was supported using 3 additional patient samples, corroborating the trends established by our integrated scRNA-Seq comparison of the two culture conditions.

Identification of epithelial populations

The 10 integrated populations each expressed a unique set of biomarkers with some degree of overlap (**Figure 2A**). The cell type identity of each cluster was determined by cross-reference with previously reported gene expression profiles (**Table 3**) and is shown by dot plot (**Figure 2B**). Cluster 0 was identified as a group of quiescent cells expressing high levels of the basal marker *DKK1* [21], moderate levels of luminal markers *KRT8* and *KRT18*, as well as *MMP9*, a factor shown to be highly expressed by PC3 prostasphere cells compared to PC3 monolayer cells [31]. Cluster 1 is marked by the expression of *KRT6A* and *SERPINB13*, denoting its members as a previously described glandular epithelial cell with possible stem characteristics [32]. Cluster 2 contained cells expressing both the basal marker *PDPN* [21] as well as proliferation markers, indicating that this cluster contains proliferating basal cells. Cluster 3 exhibited high levels of cell cycle arrest gene *GAS5* as well as low expression of cell cycle progression genes including *CDC44* and *PCNA*, denoting its possible identity as a population of quiescent cells. This population was also notable for its low expression of epithelial markers, which could signify that these cells are in a relatively undifferentiated state. Cluster 4 constituted another proliferating basal population, marked by its expression of *MKI67* as well as the basal marker *DKK1*. Cluster 5 was also identified as a proliferating population, with high levels of the luminal marker *KRT18*. Cluster 6 exhibited high expression of numerous putative prostate epithelial stem cell markers including *KRT13*, *SERPINB1*, *LY6D*, *PSCA*, *KLK11* and *CSTB* [21, 33, 34]. These markers were also expressed by Cluster 7, with Clusters 6 and 7 differing by their expression levels of basal and luminal markers. Clusters 8 and 9 were difficult to identify as they both contain a very small number of cells. Cluster 8 highly expressed *CTNNB1* and Cluster 9 was enriched for cells expressing *IFI27* and *IFI6*, markers typically expressed by endothelial cells [21]. These markers indicate that Cluster 8 and Cluster 9 may be persisting stromal contaminants, however they also express *PDPN* and *MMP9* which are basal and PC3 prostasphere markers [21, 30].

We observed that the organoid culture condition was enriched for several cell populations

when compared to the monolayer condition, such as clusters 1, 3, 7, 8 and 9 (**Figure 1C**). Cells in clusters 1 and 7 were identified as progenitor populations according to their suite of expressed biomarkers (**Figure 2B**). Clusters 8 and 9, although very small, were present in the organoid condition (**Figure 1C**) and expressed some stromal genes (**Figure 2B**), although whether these cells are surviving stroma from the patient or represent epithelial-mesenchymal transition could not be determined from our study. These findings indicate that organoid culture conditions are conducive to the survival and proliferation of cell populations that are underrepresented from samples cultured in monolayer conditions.

Stem and progenitor populations found in both monolayer and organoid conditions

Cluster 6 was of considerable interest as it contained markers of a previously reported putative prostate epithelial stem cell population: *SERPINB1*, *KRT13*, *LYPD3*, *PSCA*, *LY6D*, *CSTB*, *LCN2* [21, 33]. It also was marked by low expression of cell cycle genes and high expression of the cycle-arrest gene *GAS5*, implying that the cells are quiescent. Cluster 6 was also the only cluster to express *PSCA*. This expression profile is similar to that of the KRT-13 label-retaining prostate stem cell described by Hu *et al.* [33]. RT-qPCR for *LY6D*, *KRT13*, *PSCA*, and *LCN2* validated their expression in both monolayer and organoid samples derived from multiple patients (**Figure 3A**), corroborating the presence of populations observed via scRNA-Seq.

To visualize the stem cell population and confirm protein expression, we stained the original parent tissue, 2D cells and 3D cells for the marker KRT13 (**Figures 3B-F, S4**). Tissue expression of KRT13 in the patient sample used for the scRNA-Seq is shown in **Figure 3B**, and we observed rare islets of KRT13 expression similar to the pattern previously described [21]. This phenomenon was also observed in 2D cells derived from 5 separate patients (**Figures 3C, S4**). At day 8, and in some cases at day 14, the organoids showed one or few KRT13 positive cells (**Figures 3D, S4B** white arrow), consistent with the idea that an organoid is maintained by a single resident stem cell. At day 8, the time point used for scRNA-seq, 3D cells showed KRT13 expressed by a

Table 4. Primers used for quantitative real time PCR

Target Gene	Primer sequence (5'-3')	PCR Product Size (bp)	Exons
RPL13A	F-GGAGCAAGGAAAGGGTCTTAG R-GGTTGCTCTTCTATTGGTCATA		8
LYPD3	F-GATGCTCCCGAACAAGATGA R-CAGCGAGAATTGTCCGTGGAT PrimerBank ID: 93004087C1	104	2/3
LY6D	F-GCTCCCAGACGACATCAGAG R-TGTTCTGTGGTCTTGCAGAAG	168	1/2
KRT13	F-AGGTGAAGATCCGTGACTGG R-GATGACCCGGTTGTTTCAA	134	1/2
PSCA	F-TGCTGCTTGCCCTGTTGAT R-CCTGTGAGTCATCCACGCA PrimerBank ID: 5031995A1	216	1/3
LCN2	F-ACAAAGACCCGCAAAAGATG R-GCAACCTGGAACAAAAGTCC	128	2/3
S100P	F-AAGGTGCTGATGGAGAAGGA R-ACTTGTGACAGGCAGACGTG	163	1/2
SERPINB1	F-CTGGCGTTGAGTGAGAACAA R-TCAACCGTGTGAAATGGAA	143	2/3
INHBA	F-GGAGGGCAGAAATGAATGAA R-AATCTCGAAGTGCAGCGTCT	95	2/3
IGFBP3	F-GTCAACGCTAGTGCCGTCAG R-CGGTCTTCTCCGACTCAC	107	1/2
FST	F-TCTGCCAGTTCATGGAGGAC R-TCCTTGCTCAGTTCGGTCTT	106	1/2
SFRP1	F-CTACTGGCCCGAGATGCTTA R-GCTGGCACAGAGATGTTCAA	169	1/2
IGFBP2	F-CCTCTACTCCCTGCACATCC R-CCCGTTCCAGAGACATCTTGC	79	3/4
AR	F-CCAGGGACCATGTTTGGCC R-CGAAGACGACAAGATGGACAA		1/2
KRT8	F-GCTGGTGGAGGACTTCAAGA R-TCGTTCTCCATCTGTACGC	66	2/3
KRT18	F-CACAGTCTGCTGAGGTTGGA R-CAAGCTGGCCTTCAGATTTT	110	6/7
KRT5	F-ATCGCCACTTACCGCAAGC R-CCATATCCAGAGGAAACACTGC	110	7/9

KRT13+ cells are quiescent and exhibit similar gene expression as KRT13+ cells derived from tissue

Stem cells are known to rarely proliferate in tissue and undergo asymmetric division in culture to maintain their quiescent state [33]. To visualize cellular state, Monocle was used to create a differentiation trajectory of the organoid sample in pseudotime based off gene expression. Pseudotime analysis showed that *KRT13*-expressing cells were found in a different state than *MKI67*-positive cells (**Figure 4A**). To validate this, we performed an EdU incorporation assay on fully-formed organoids. Organoids were pulsed with EdU overnight to mark actively dividing cells followed by fixation and staining for *KRT13*. As expected, *KRT13+* cells were EdU-negative, indicating that they proliferate slowly (**Figure 4B**). It has been shown that knock-down of *KRT13* in undifferentiated prostasphere culture leads to diminished sphere formation and self-renewal [33]. Our findings provide further support for *KRT13* as a quiescent prostate stem marker in the *in vitro* context and agree with the previously characterized role of *KRT13+* cells in stem cell maintenance.

Recently, Henry *et al.* identified a *KRT13+* “hillock” epithelial cell population within prostate tissue which may harbor stem characteristics *in vivo* [21]. Our monolayer and organoid data were integrated

small population of cells (**Figure 3D**), confirming our scRNA-Seq population size. When staining was performed on day 14, we observed that the *KRT13+* cells were located on the interior of the spheroid structure (**Figures 3E, S4B** yellow arrow) which may correlate to these stem cells generating the inner luminal cells. There were also instances of multiple clustered *KRT13+* cells that may represent different stages of stem/progenitor hierarchy (**Figures 3F, S4B**).

and compared with a publicly available human prostate single cell data set (GSE117403) from this study (**Figure 4C**). The *KRT13+* hillock population was present in all three samples, supporting our identification of Cluster 6 in our monolayer and organoid integrated analysis. Of note, there was enrichment for this cluster in the organoid sample to comparable levels as what is observed in tissue. Additionally, integrated analysis with the pros-

tate tissue supported that clusters 8 and 9 were stromal cell types.

To understand what regulatory pathways may be active in the KRT13+ cells, we performed Ingenuity Pathway Analysis (IPA) on genes highly expressed by this cluster. IPA Canonical Pathways that were significantly enriched and activated (positive z-score) or inactivated (negative z-score) are shown (**Figure 4D**). Of note, p53 signaling was predicted to be activated (z-score = 1.00) while cyclins were predicted to be inactivated (z-score = -1.00). Canonical pathways for other clusters are shown on [Figure S5](#). IPA upstream regulator analysis was used to identify the transcriptional regulators and nuclear receptors predicted to be active in Cluster 6 based upon genes upregulated in the cluster. KLF4 was projected to be active ([Figure S6](#)), which has recently been reported to regulate prostate stem cell homeostasis in mice and has been implicated with KRT13 expression [35]. Similarly, GLI1 and CTNNB1 also exhibited positive z-scores in this analysis, implying the activity of the Shh and Wnt morphogenic pathways; both pathways have been reported as significant contributors to prostate tissue regeneration in the murine context [36, 37].

Discussion

To experimentally investigate prostate function and disease, researchers utilize cell lines, primary cells and organoid culture for *in vitro* modeling. While it is known that monolayer cultures contain rare populations of stem and progenitor cells, most 2D cells observed consist of transit-amplifying epithelial phenotypes [11-14]. Prostate epithelial organoids grow out from a single cell and differentiate into basal and luminal cell types while maintaining a resident stem/progenitor cell that originated the organoid [15, 16, 18, 33]. While these basic profiles of *in vitro* epithelial cells are known, recent utilization of scRNA-Seq analysis has identified potentially novel populations of prostate epithelial cells from human prostate tissues [21]. To our knowledge, scRNA-Seq analysis of human primary prostate organoid models has not been performed. Using an integrated analysis, we identified 10 cell populations in monolayer and organoid culture, thus identifying more cell types than previously reported *in vitro*. Our analyses revealed populations of

cells at varying levels of differentiation along the basal and luminal lineages. More specifically, KRT13+ putative stem cell populations were identified in both monolayer and organoid conditions and had expression profiles similar to those previously reported for KRT13+ cells in tissue [21].

We identified three putative stem and progenitor populations by high KRT13 or KRT6A expression, which have been previously described to mark regenerative cells in tissue and prostatesphere culture [21, 32, 33]. The three populations also showed expression of LY6D, LYPD3, and CSTB and one specific cluster of the three had high expression of PSCA. PSCA and KRT13 were previously described by Henry *et al.* to mark two previously unknown clusters of epithelial cells, termed “club” and “hillock”, based off of their similarity to immunomodulatory and progenitor-like cells found in the mouse lung, respectively [21]. In contrast to the tissue-isolated cells in that study, which had distinct populations that were either PSCA+ (club) or KRT13+ (hillock), the *in vitro* cells had one PSCA^{High}/KRT13^{High} cluster and one PSCA^{Low}/KRT13^{High} cluster. KRT13 protein expression did vary greatly between organoid samples at day 8 and day 14, with day 14 organoids displaying multiple KRT13+ cells (**Figures 3F, S4B**). The two PSCA^{Low} clusters, 1 and 7, expressed stem markers LY6D, LYPD3, KLK11, and CSTB and also showed co-expression of basal and luminal markers. These cells may be more-committed basal and luminal progenitors that reside below the KRT13^{High}/PSCA^{High} cells on the stem-hierarchy. The degree of KRT13 expression has been shown to positively correlate with the level of stemness in other contexts, where differentiated daughters show less expression as they divide and differentiate [33]. This was observed in some organoids that showed double positive KRT8/KRT13 cells (**Figure 3F**) and is likely the explanation for the heterogeneity of KRT13 expression seen in the day 14 organoids (**Figures 3F, S4**).

KRT13+ hillock cells of the human prostate were named so because of their similarities to cells in the mouse lung that show a progenitor-like phenotype [21, 38]. In the organoids we observed some evidence of KRT13+ hillock cells exhibiting a capacity for branching morphogenesis due to their localization to the interior of branching organoids ([Figure S4](#) red

arrow) which may be similar to a “hillock” region seen in patient tissue. Recently, FACS-sorted mouse prostate epithelial cells that were analyzed using Fluidigm qPCR showed *LY6D* expression in a population of organoid-forming cells found in both the luminal and basal compartment [39]. The *LY6D*⁺ cells formed solid, acinar or translucent organoids, similar to the organoid morphologies that we observed in our culture (**Figures 3E, 3F, S4**). Human *DLK1*⁺ prostate basal cells have also been shown to form solid spheroids, spheroids with lumens and spheroids with tubules. *LY6D* and *KRT13* were co-expressed in population 6 and 7 in our 3D cells and had similar expression profiles to the reported *DLK1*⁺ cells [34]. *PPL* was highly expressed in cluster 6 and *KLK11* was highly expressed in clusters 1 and 6. These genes were published as being expressed by the proximal niches that maintain epithelial flow in human prostate and contain possible *DLK1*⁺ prostate stem cells [34]. Taking these reports together, there is substantial support for the *KRT13*⁺ cells to be a stem cell population in organoid culture and indicate that this model system would be useful for studying hillock biology and proximal niches *in vitro*.

It is important to note that the monolayer culture condition yielded numerous *KRT13*⁺ cells that exhibited a stretched morphology typical to terminally differentiated cells and notably different from other *KRT13*⁺ cell shapes (**Figure S4**, yellow arrow). These data introduce the possibility that *KRT13* may be an excellent stem cell marker when used in combination with secondary markers like *LY6D* and *PSCA*, but on its own it could mark a broad population that contains epithelial stem cells along with a small population of unhealthy squamous cells or differentiated daughter cells in this context.

The lack of expression of luminal markers *AR* and *KLK3* in the organoids by scRNA-Seq should be interpreted with caution. A limitation of all single cell sequencing technologies is that it captures only 10-20% of transcripts per cell (the 10 × Chromium Single Cell 3' v2 Kit used here has a capture rate of 14-15%), thus absence of the gene in the analysis is not conclusive evidence that it is not expressed. We did detect low *AR* expression by RT-qPCR of whole organoids (**Figure S7**) and confirmed *AR* protein expression was present in cells of day 14 organoids (**Figure S7**). Growth of fully differ-

entiated luminal cells with robust *AR* remains a challenge in the field of human prostate organoids.

Overall, we observed that both monolayer and organoid culture are capable of cultivating a rare population of putative stem-like cells that are marked by high expression of *KRT13*, *LY6D*, *LYPD3*, and *PSCA*. These cells are similar to cells found in the basal and luminal compartments of mouse prostate and human club/hillock regions, implying that we are describing the *in vitro* isolation and culture of a population of stem-like cells that reside in tissue. There were populations of intermediate cells that were overrepresented in the organoid condition, as well as a *KRT6A*⁺ progenitor population that was enriched in 3D. Our catalog of unique populations in these two *in vitro* models shows the preservation of a specific stem-like cell population as well as provides an in-depth atlas of the populations present in both monolayer and organoid models. This can serve as a valuable resource to the field, allowing for a deeper understanding of which cells are present in benign model systems and how they may change between *in vitro* and *in vivo* conditions.

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

None.

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Single cell RNA sequencing of monolayer and organoid prostate epithelial cells

Table S1. Genes Highly Expressed by Monolayer, Organoid and Integrated Clusters

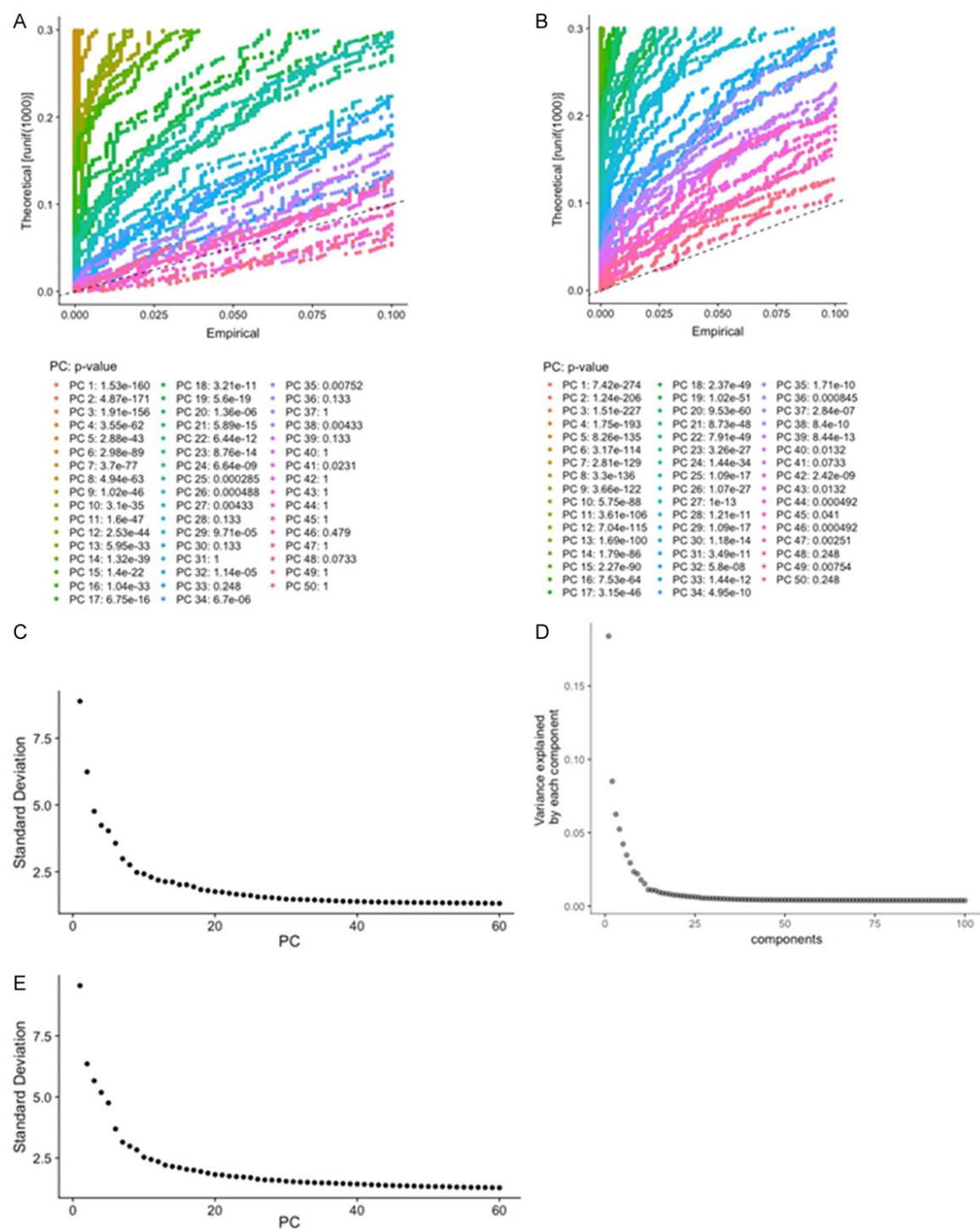
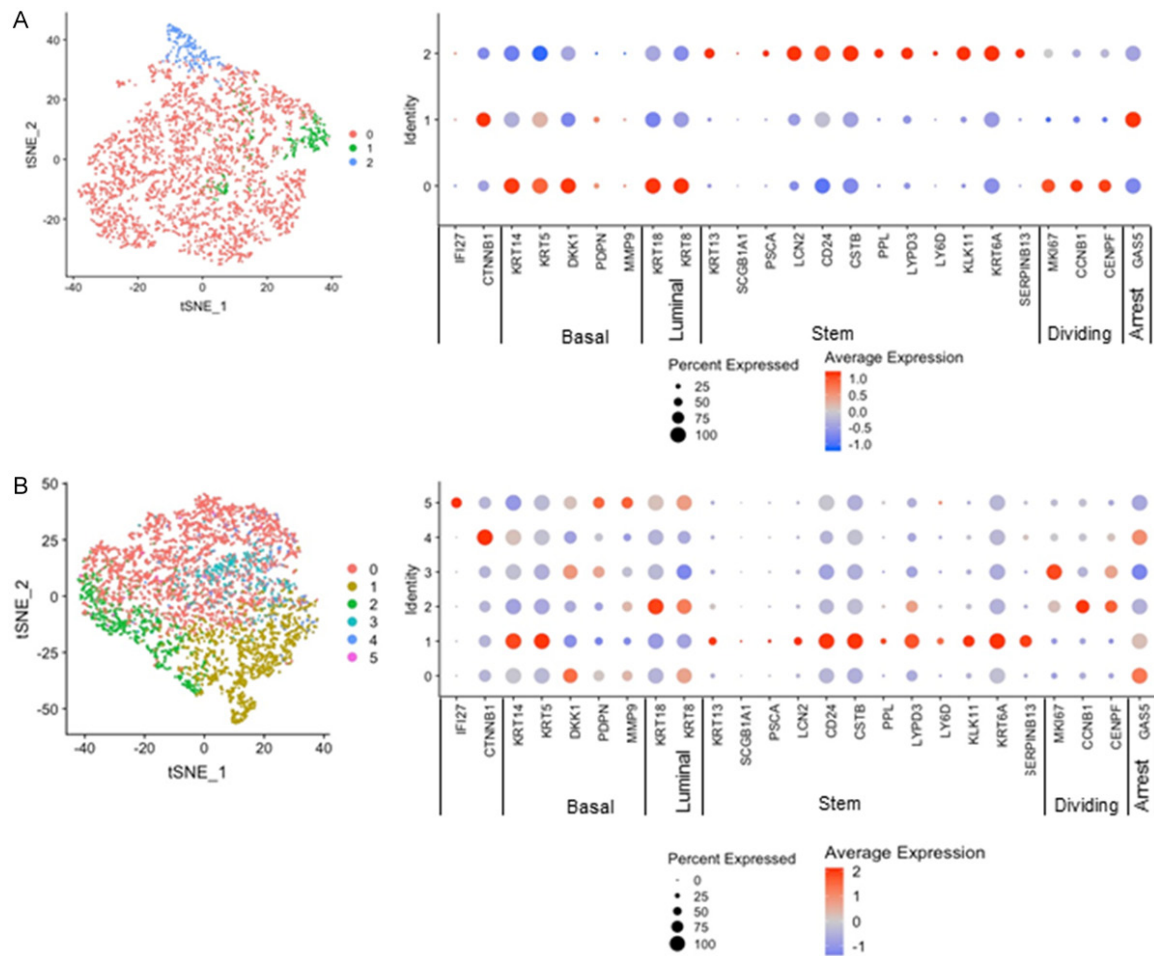


Figure S1. Principal component plots used to determine the significant number of components for Seurat and Monocle analyses. A. Jackstraw plot of PCs for monolayer cells. B. Jackstraw plot of PCs for organoid cells. C. Elbow plot of PCs for integrated monolayer and organoid cells. D. Elbow plot of PCs for organoid pseudotime clustering. E. Elbow plot of PCs for integrated monolayer, organoid, and tissue cells.

Single cell RNA sequencing of monolayer and organoid prostate epithelial cells



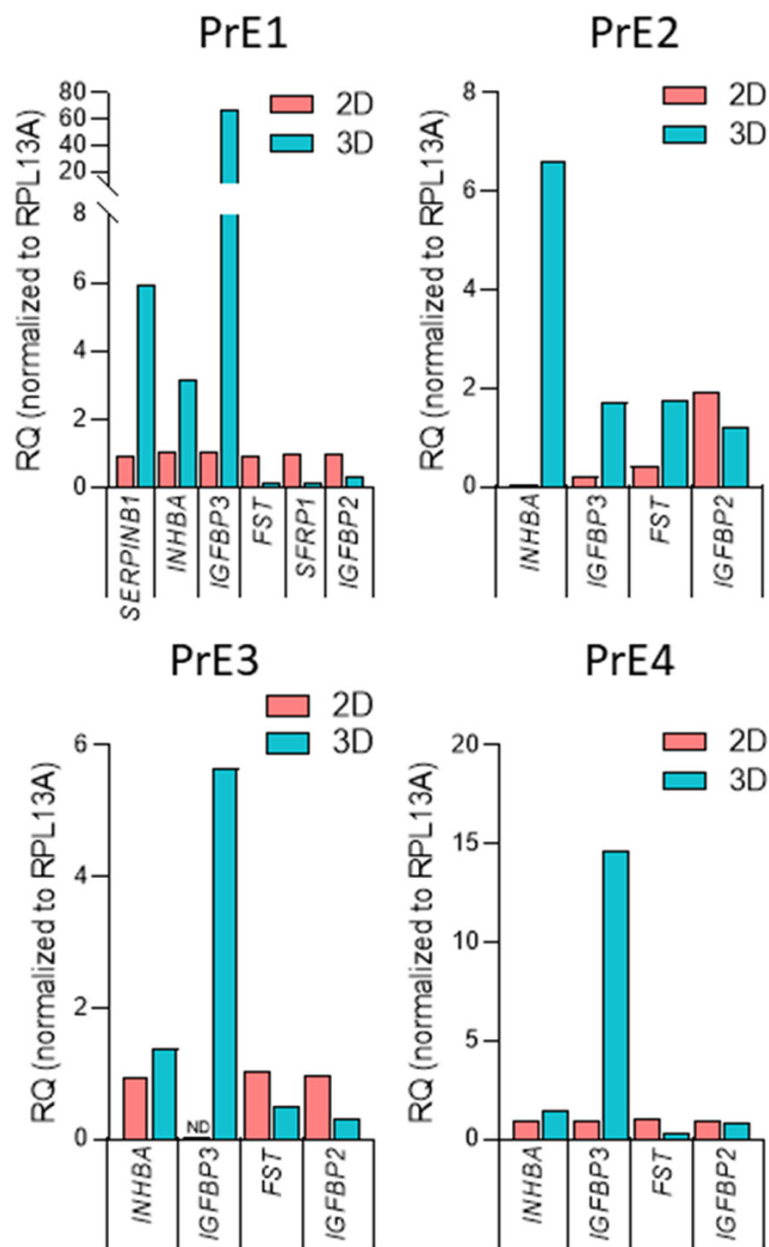


Figure S3. RT-qPCR validation of genes highly expressed by organoids or monolayer cells in pooled, non-single cell RNA samples derived from 4 patients (related to **Figure 2**). PrE1 was the patient used for scRNA-Seq.

Single cell RNA sequencing of monolayer and organoid prostate epithelial cells

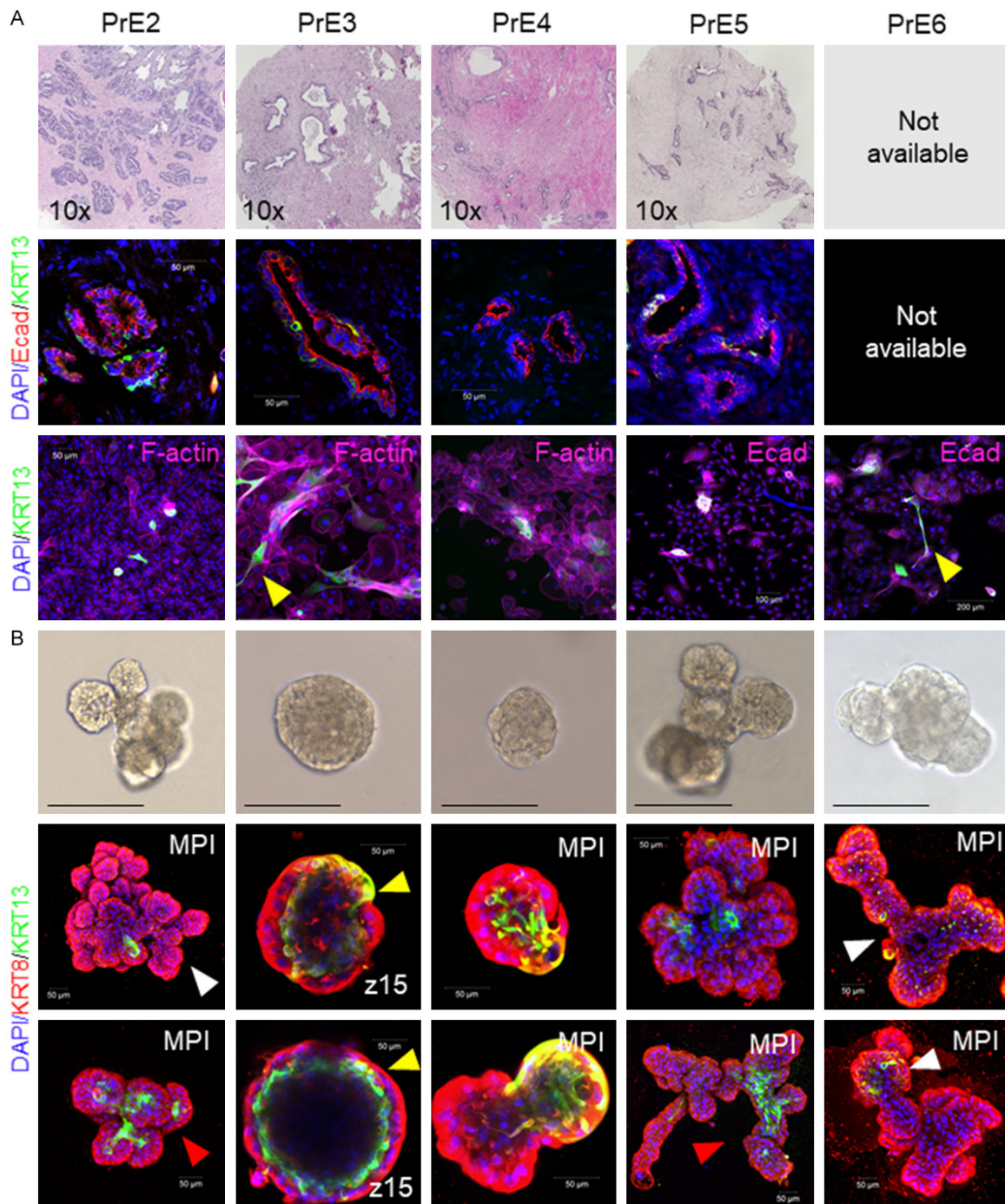


Figure S4. A. H&E of patient tissue (top), immunofluorescent staining of KRT13, DAPI and E-cadherin on patient tissue (middle, scale bar = 50 μm), immunocytochemistry of monolayer cells derived from patient tissue stained for KRT13, DAPI and Phalloidin or E-cadherin (bottom, scale bar = 50 μm). B. Bright field image of day 14 organoids derived from patient tissue (top, scale bar = 200 μm). Whole-mount immunocytochemistry of day 14 organoids stained for KRT13, DAPI, and KRT8, two examples shown per patient (bottom, scale bar = 50 μm). Related to **Figure 3**.

Single cell RNA sequencing of monolayer and organoid prostate epithelial cells

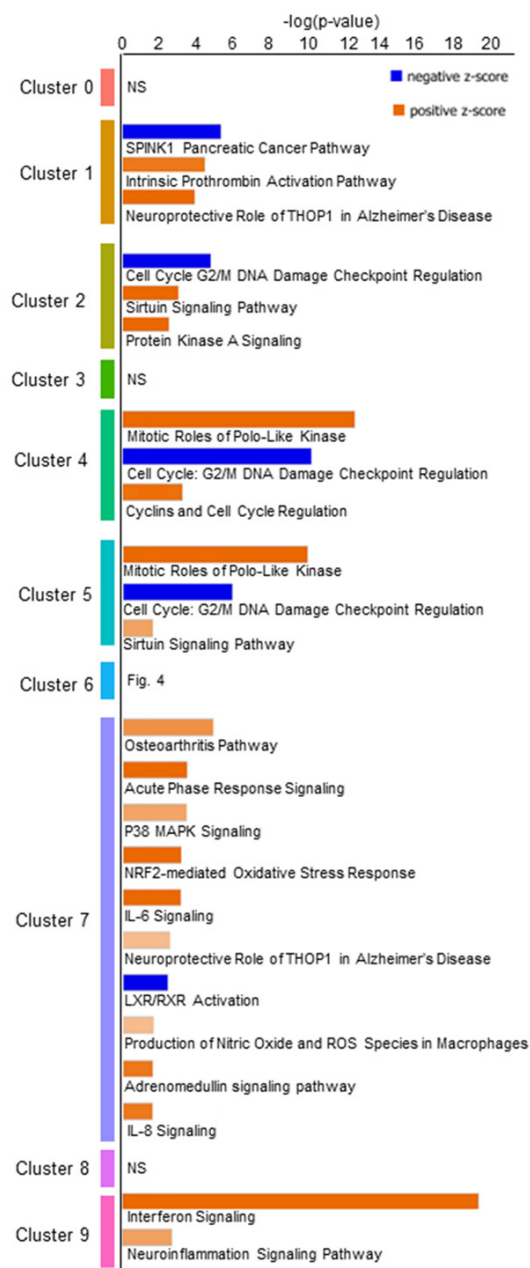


Figure S5. Ingenuity pathway analysis of genes highly expressed by each cluster, showing the IPA Canonical Pathways which were significantly enriched and activated (positive Z-score) or inactivated (negative Z-score). Cluster 0, 3 and 8 had ≤ 21 highly genes expressed in each cluster, so these clusters did not yield significant results for the IPA Canonical Pathways analysis (related to **Figure 4**).

Single cell RNA sequencing of monolayer and organoid prostate epithelial cells

Cluster 1			Cluster 6		
Upstream Regulator	Z-Score	P-value	Upstream Regulator	Z-Score	P-value
EHF	3	2.65E-12	EHF	4.472	1.51E-22
SMARCA4	2	1.20E-03	TP63	2.03	1.09E-13
Cluster 2			EZH2	2.316	4.74E-11
Upstream Regulator	Z-Score	P-value	PGR	2.376	2.86E-09
E2F3	2.828	1.84E-12	FOXO1	2.472	1.33E-07
RARA	2.449	4.29E-06	IRF2	2.646	3.16E-07
ESR1	2.449	7.96E-07	NFKBIZ	2.159	5.03E-07
Cluster 4			CTNNB1	2.226	1.02E-06
Upstream Regulator	Z-Score	P-value	TP53	2.538	3.91E-06
FOXM1	4.125	4.06E-30	KLF4	2.183	4.00E-06
ESR1	3.973	1.26E-12	TP73	2.545	5.63E-06
MITF	3.873	3.44E-18	FOXO3	2.362	7.05E-06
RARA	3.873	4.62E-14	CEBPB	2.009	1.02E-05
FOXO1	3.85	1.81E-19	SMARCA4	3.302	4.75E-05
E2F3	3.606	2.26E-16	PPRC1	2.191	2.25E-04
TAL1	2.828	6.42E-06	STAT1	2.183	5.38E-04
MYBL2	2.789	6.20E-20	RELA	2.145	1.52E-03
ATF6	2.236	3.32E-07	GLI1	2.417	2.23E-03
CREB1	2	1.33E-05	SREBF1	2.162	2.80E-03
Cluster 5			EP300	2.219	3.47E-03
Upstream Regulator	Z-Score	P-value	POU2F2	2	8.51E-03
ESR1	3.538	6.04E-13	Cluster 7		
RARA	3.317	4.10E-10	Upstream Regulator	Z-Score	P-value
FOXM1	3.234	2.21E-18	NUPR1	3.162	9.87E-04
MITF	3.162	1.43E-11	EHF	2.828	8.80E-09
FOXO1	2.961	7.59E-11	SMARCA4	2.813	1.15E-07
E2F3	2.828	2.08E-11	GLI1	2.745	3.42E-07
TAL1	2.449	1.54E-04	PGR	2.36	1.97E-17
MYBL2	2.2	1.58E-12	ECSIT	2.219	4.80E-07
			SP1	2.183	1.16E-10
			SPI1	2.065	3.65E-04
			FOXO1	2.057	6.91E-08
			Cluster 9		
			Upstream Regulator	Z-Score	P-value
			IFNL1	4.298	4.92E-39
			IFNG	4.274	6.17E-33
			PRL	4.123	3.22E-32
			IFNA2	3.674	3.22E-32
			SPI1	3.317	7.44E-20
			TNF	2.62	1.91E-14
			IRF3	2.385	6.38E-11
			SMARCA4	2.236	7.99E-07
			IFNL4	2.209	2.92E-12
			STAT1	2.098	3.11E-23

Figure S6. IPA upstream regulator analysis performed using the top genes expressed by each cluster compared to all other cells, regulator analysis predicts the transcriptional regulators and nuclear receptors that would be active in each cluster (related to **Figure 4**). Cluster 0, 3 and 8 had ≤ 21 highly genes expressed in each cluster, so these clusters did not yield results for the IPA upstream regulator analysis.

Single cell RNA sequencing of monolayer and organoid prostate epithelial cells

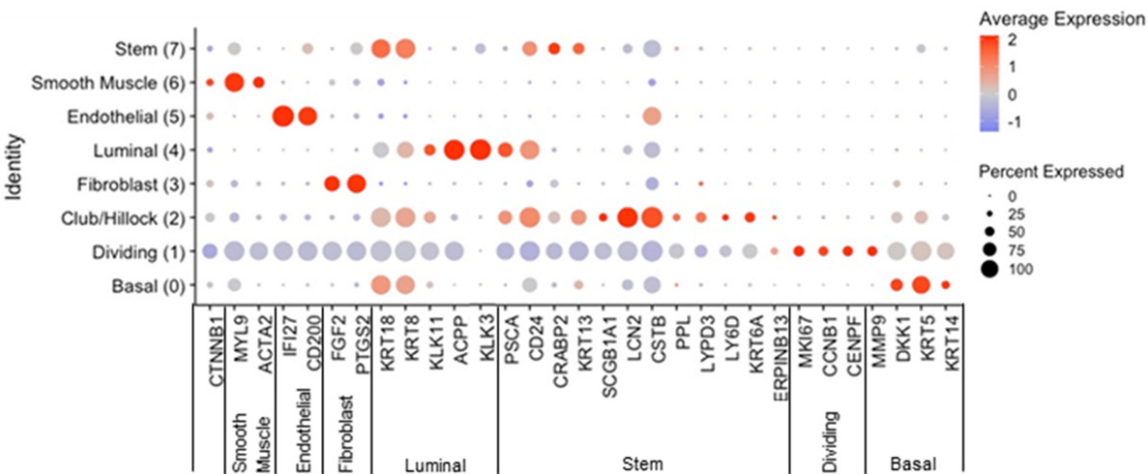


Figure S7. Dot plot showing expression of genes of interest across the 8 clusters for integrated monolayer cells, organoid cells and publically available patient tissue dataset used for cluster identification. Cluster names have been assigned by expression profile compared to tissue.

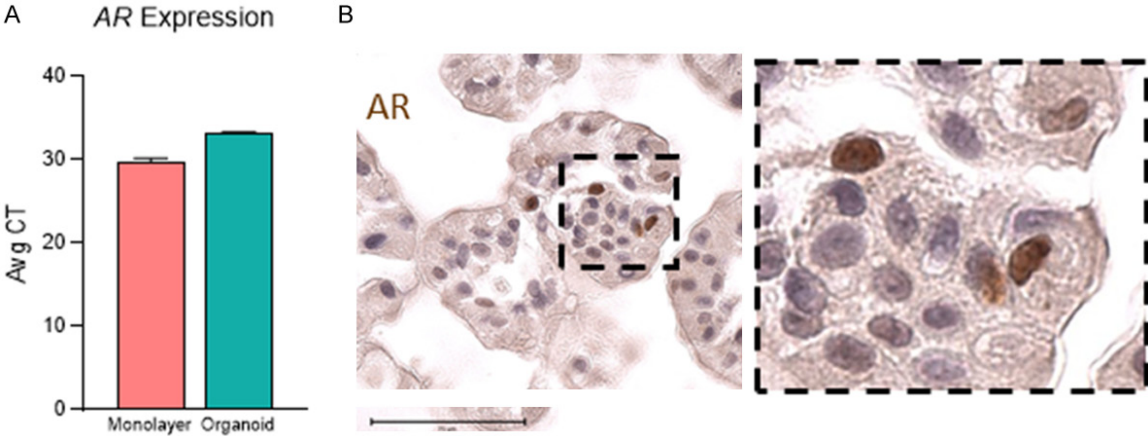


Figure S8. AR expression in organoid culture by RT-qPCR, (A) or by immunohistochemistry, (B) in day 14 PrE5 organoids.