**Cancer systems biology: understanding non-genetic mechanisms of metastasis**

Metastasis, the process of invasion of cancer into multiple organs of the body, is the cause of more than 90% of cancer mortality. Due to the lack of understanding of mechanism of metastasis, it is untreatable in the current medical scenario. A popular hypothesis is that cancer cells hijack naturally occurring processes that allow them to switch between different functional forms, an ability known as phenotypic plasticity, enabling them to evade immune system and drug treatment. A team led by Mohit Kumar Jolly at Indian Institute of Science studied one such process, called EMP. Using computational techniques, they investigated the nature(s) of interaction between proteins related to EMP that can lead to plasticity. Their analysis suggests that when these proteins increase their own production directly or indirectly, the chance of switching increases. By disrupting the certain interactions of this nature, one can reduce the plasticity of cancer cells and potentially reduce metastasis.