Cancer-associated fibroblasts (CAFs) are one of the most plentiful cell types in the diverse tumor microenvironment. There are, however, many subtypes of CAFs that are not easily identified with known biomarkers. There is a need to further study fibroblasts to understand how to mitigate the pro-tumor properties of some subtypes and harness the tumor-suppressive capabilities of others.

To better understand the functional properties of CAFs, this study evaluated the role of a CAF receptor, Endo180, which is predominantly expressed by fibroblasts with little to no expression in tumor cells. Using genetic analysis and a host of analytical methods, they discovered that Endo180 promotes tumor growth and its depletion is associated with impaired contractility and increased fibroblast apoptosis. This study elucidates the role of an important fibroblast marker in tumor survival and metastatic potential.