

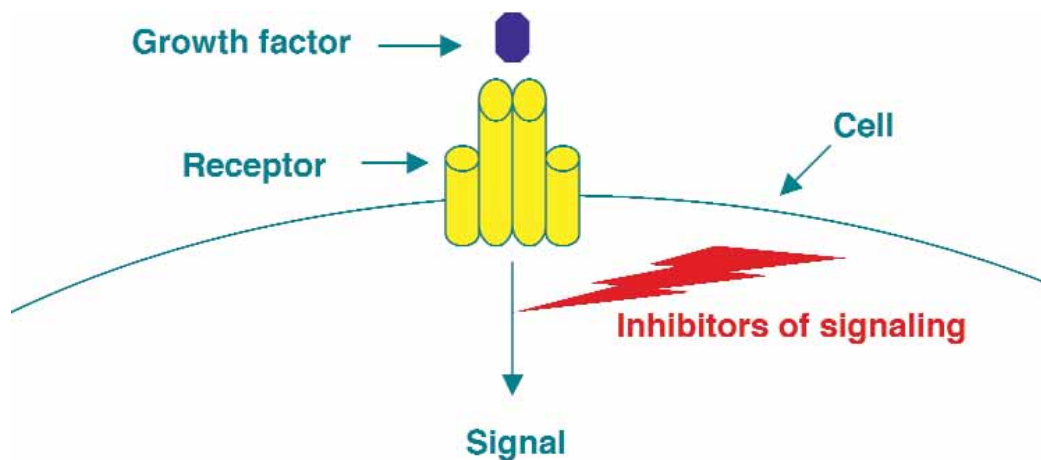
ADVANCES IN SCLERODERMA RESEARCH 2007



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The 2007 national meeting of the American College of Rheumatology held November 6-11, 2007, in Boston, MA, highlighted presentations on clinical and basic research by investigators from the US and abroad. New observations on systemic sclerosis (SSc) were described in the format of posters and oral presentations.

Several presentations focused on the role of growth factors in the development of fibrosis. These growth factors, such as transforming growth factor-beta ($TGF\beta$) and platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF), when added to fibroblasts (cells grown from the skin of healthy donors and patients with scleroderma), signal into the cell to 'turn on' certain genes such as collagen, making normal fibroblasts behave like scleroderma fibroblasts. Investigators are now focusing on blocking the effect of these growth factors via a variety of approaches, thus preventing them from signaling into the cell.



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