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The incidence and pattern of ras oncogene mutations in human malignancies demonstrate geographic and racial differences. For example, specificity of alterations is found in cholangiocellular carcinomas in Thai patients with a different etiology from those in Japanese patients. In the present study, a comparison of ras gene mutations in thyroid papillary carcinomas from Japanese and Thai patients was performed using single-strand conformation polymorphism and direct sequencing analyses. The incidence of ras mutation differed markedly in Japanese (two of 24 carcinomas, 8.3%) and Thai (five of 10 carcinomas, 50%) patients. In addition, all but one ras mutation occurred at codon 12 of the K-ras gene in the Thai cases. These results suggest that thyroid cancers in Thailand may be due to specific genetic and/or environmental factors.

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