



INNOVATIONS
In Cancer Prevention and Research Conference



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Coming up after the break:

- **Epigenome and Cancer: From Biology to Therapy**
Francis Moody Ballroom
- **Reaching Rural Communities - Discussion**
Floral Hall A



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Epigenome and Cancer: From Biology to Therapy

Epigenome and Cancer: From Biology to Therapy
Pre-malignant Tumor Progression, Prevention and
Interception

Stephen B. Baylin and colleagues

Components Of The Talk

- A little bit of history including our group's entry into the field
- Molecular mechanisms underlying origins of an epigenetic abnormality we have been studying for over 30 years – **very recent insights**
- An exciting era – cancer evolution from normal cells of tumor origin and the role of their epigenetic “state”, dependency of epigenetic changes for **a)** progression of these cells to point of cancer initiation and **b)** allowing driver mutations to induce cell transformation
- Some basic translational implications including manipulating epigenetic aspects of tumor immunology

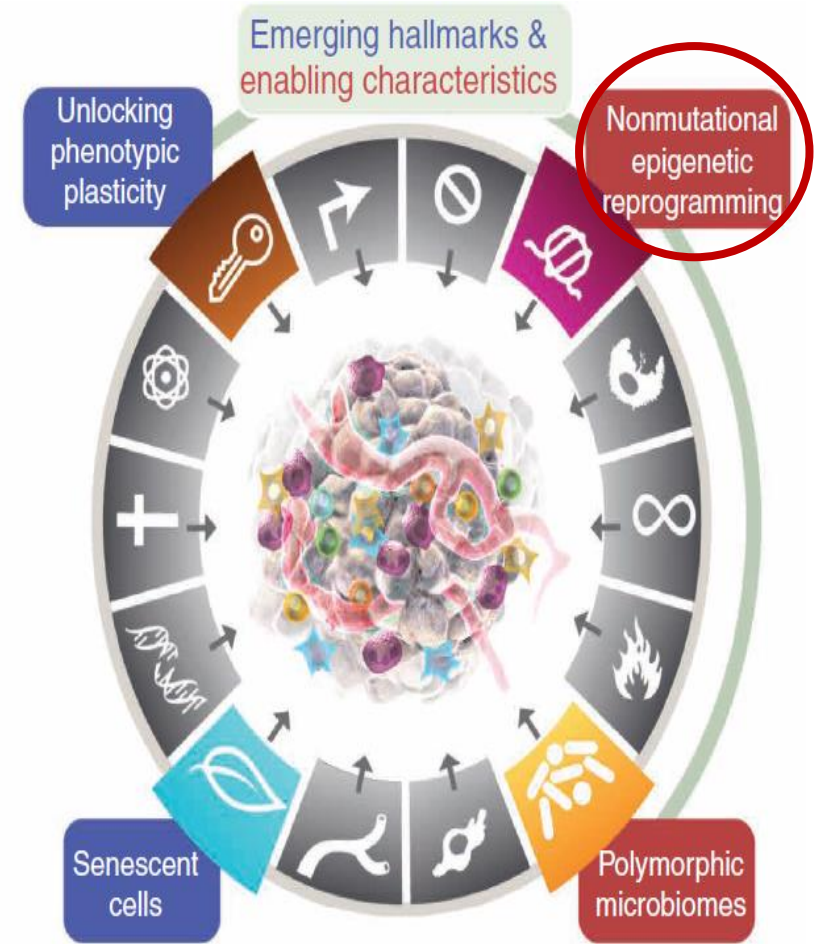
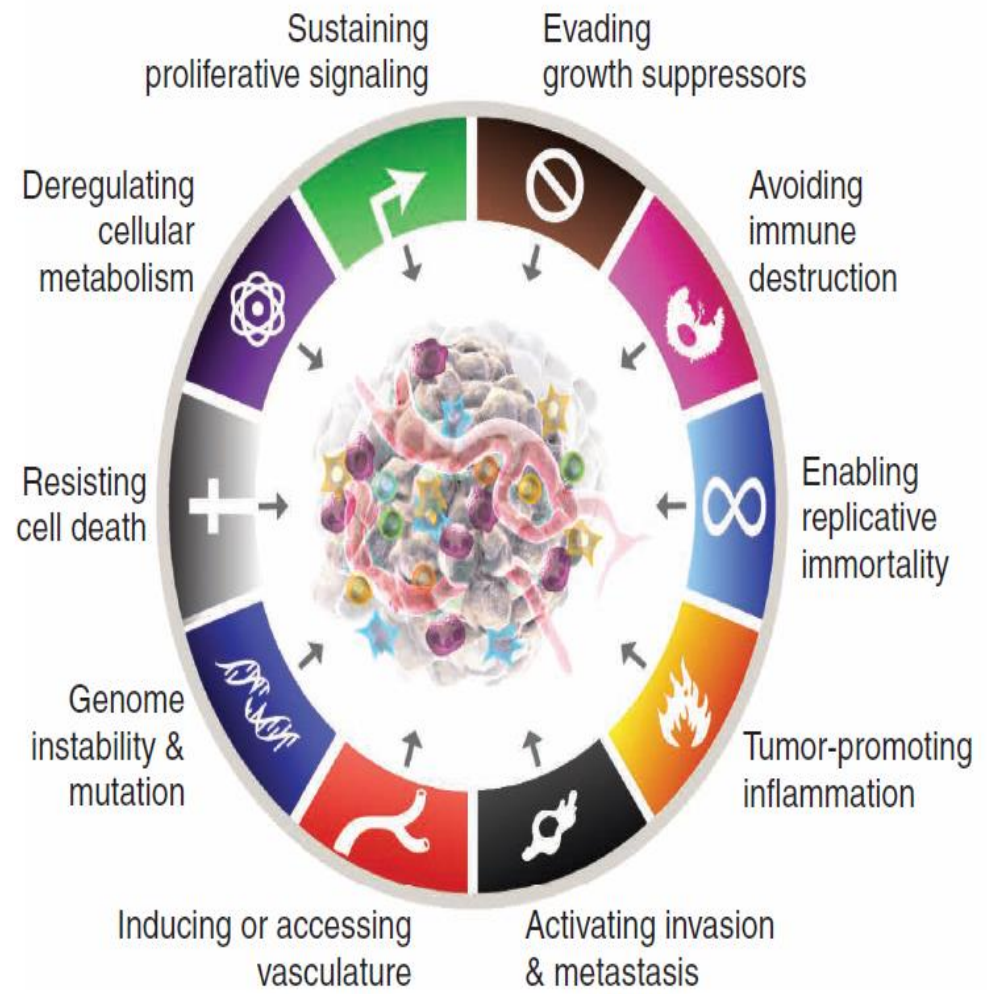
Who Drives Cancer?



The Economist 2012

When, How?
www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-14/

**Epigenetic
Genetic** } **Abnormalities ?**



Epigenetics = the cell, not the DNA does the work!

Martinez Arias's apparent goal, like Ireland's, is to push aside Occam's razor and free us from the inclination to accept simple answers. Sometimes the truth is the murky old news that's been sitting right in front of us the whole time — undiluted, unsavory and complex.

“Since the discovery of the structure of DNA,” Martinez Arias writes, “it's become common to refer to DNA as the ‘book of life,’ a text made up of a sequence of letters — A's, G's, C's and T's — that serves as an instruction manual for building organisms. But what are the instructions for, and who carries them out?”

Frankenstein Experiment

Martinez Arias builds his argument against the supremacy of DNA around Frankenstein-like experiments that involve borrowing a gene from one organism and dropping it into another. Take, for instance, the fruit fly **PAX6 gene**. **When this gene is mutated, flies develop without eyes. Yet when a human version of PAX6 is swapped in for the fly gene, it makes a fly with fly eyes, not a fly with human eyes = the cell, not the DNA does the work!**

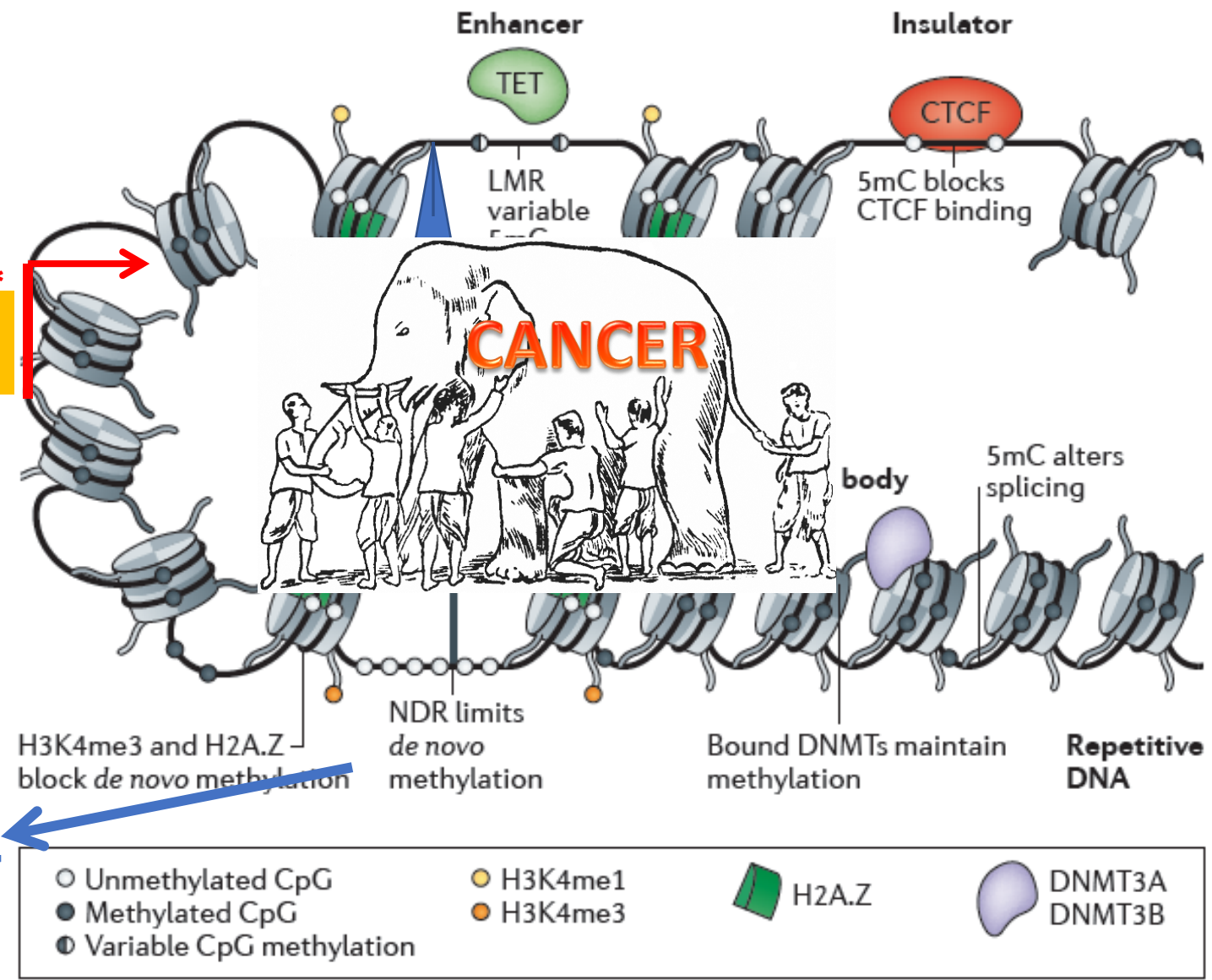
NY Times Book Review – The Master Builder by Alfonso Martinez Arias, developmental biologist for over 40 years

Putative Therapeutic Target -The Epigenome

- 1) What is the balance – between the regions, and the types, of change?
- 2) Who are the passengers vs drivers?

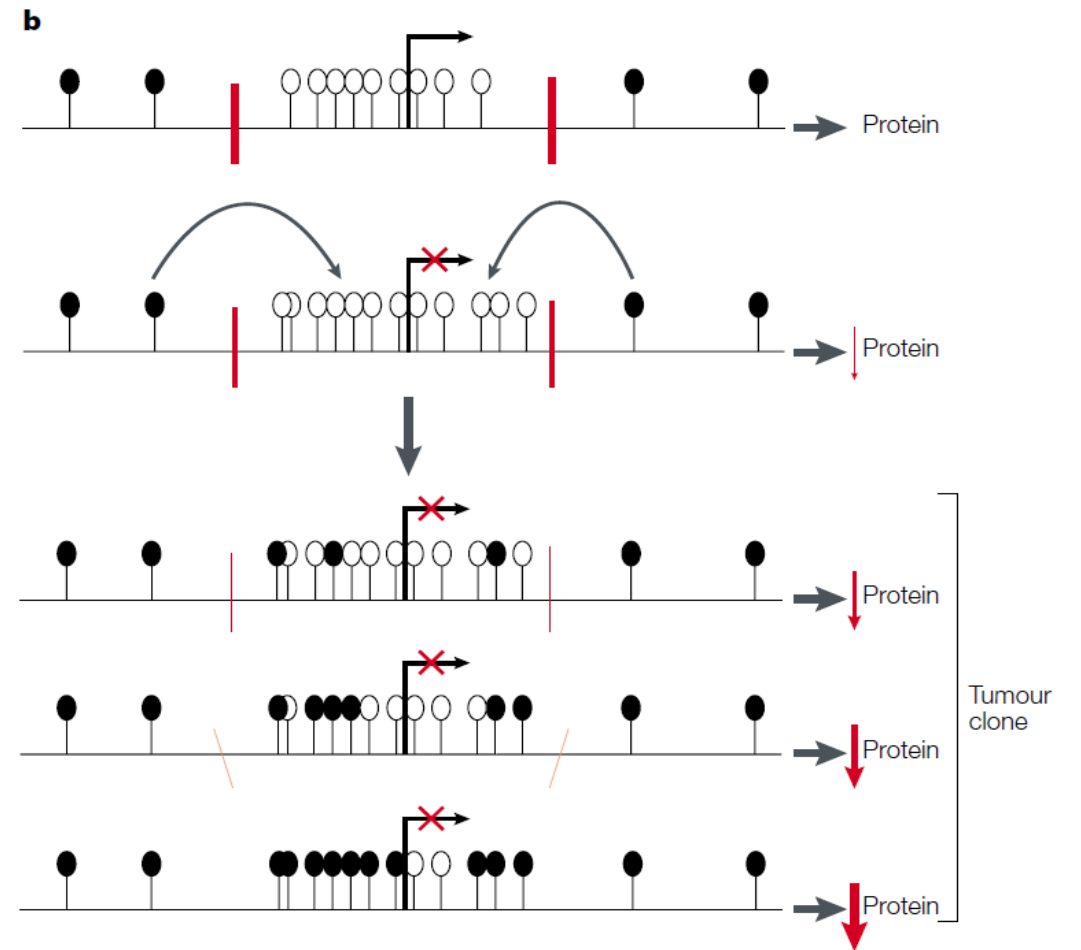
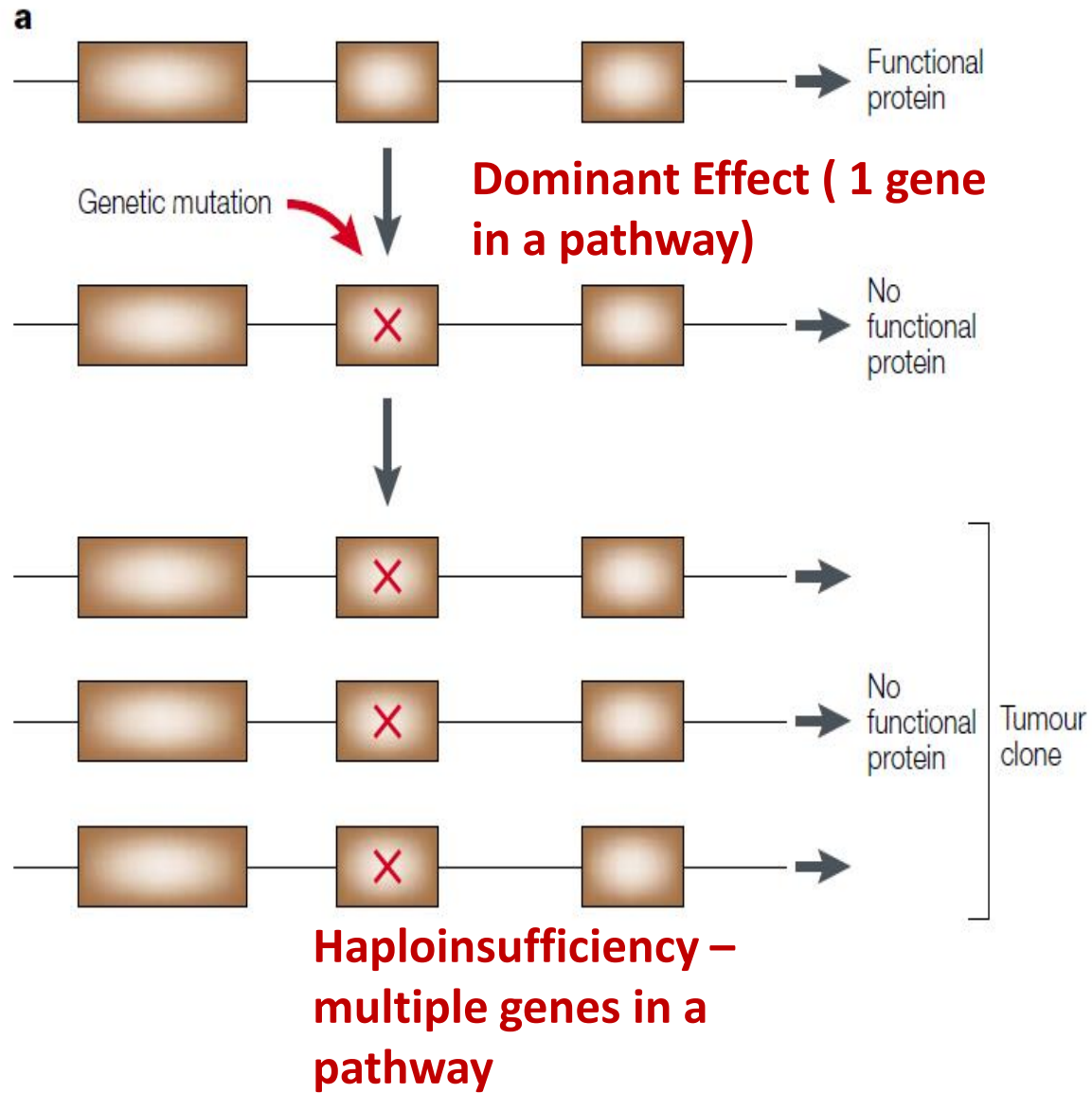
MiRNA's
LncRNA's
Key repeat
sequences
including
ERV's

Tumor Suppressors
*****CDKN2a (p16)**
*****Rb**
*****BRCA1**
ECAD
VHL



60 to 80% - PcG, bivalent promoter genes

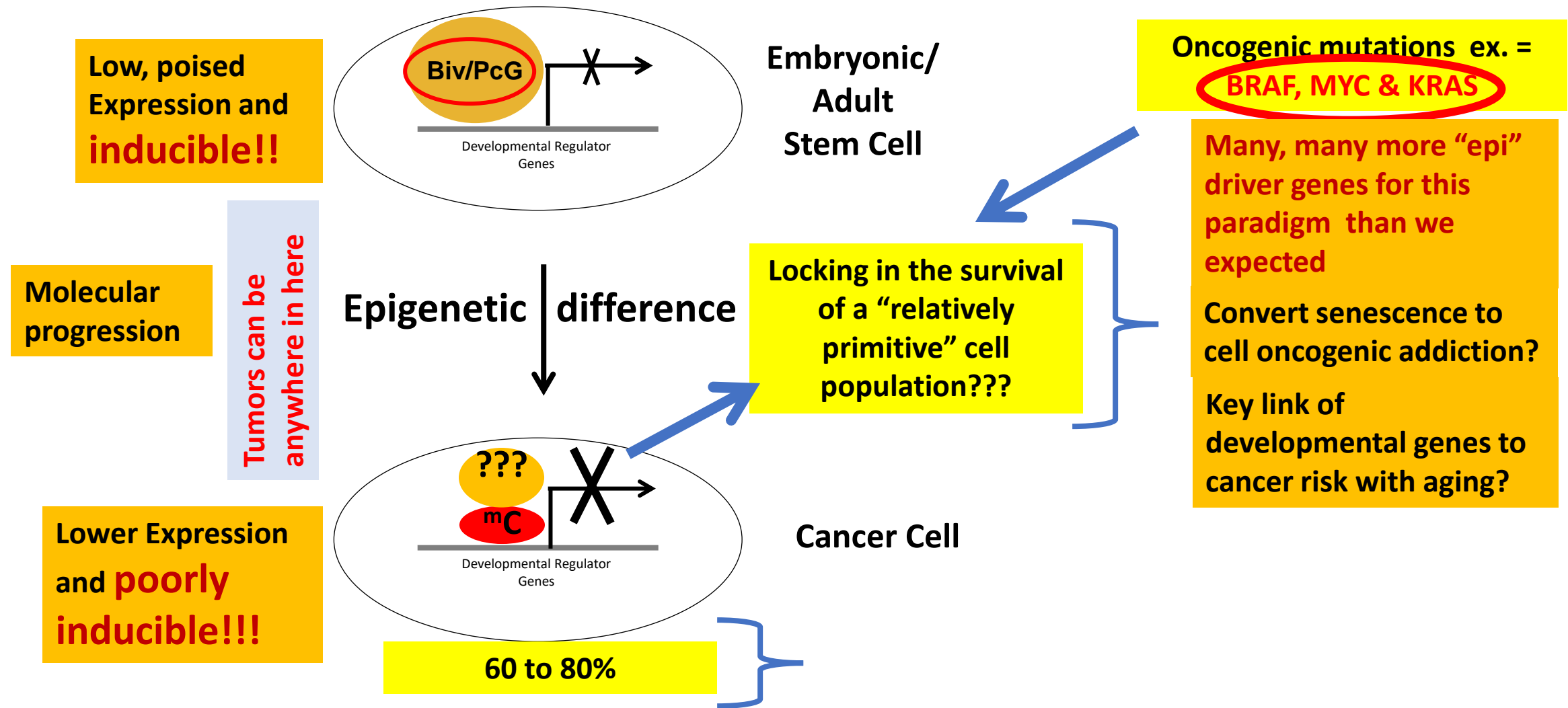
Genetic Alteration vs Promoter Hypermethylation



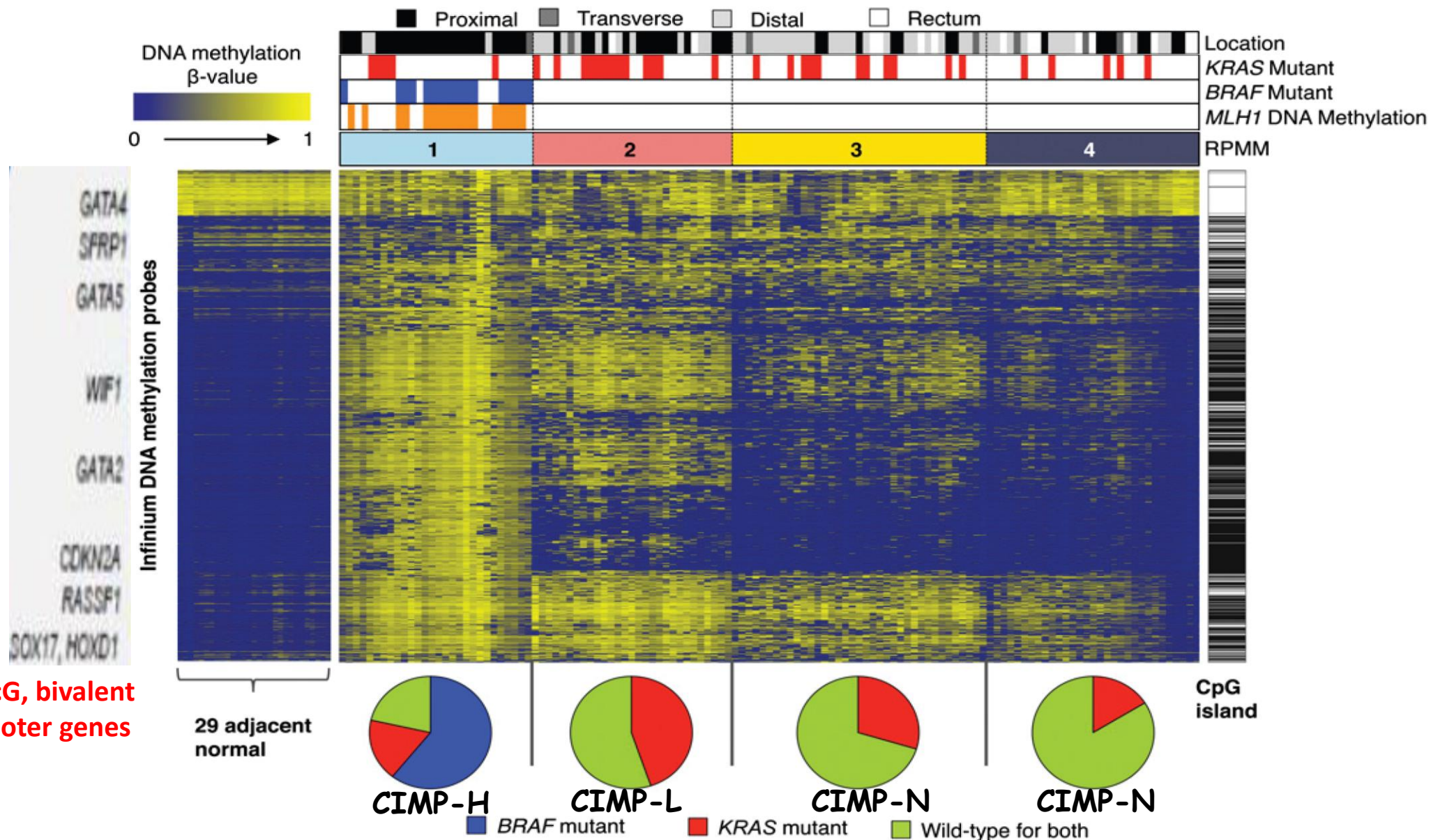
How and when does this evolve in tumorigenesis?

Jones and Baylin, Nat Rev Genet, 2002

Hypotheses for Molecular Progression to DNA Hypermethylation of Many PcG Target Genes in Cancer – **Cancer As An Epigenetic and Genetic Disease**



DNA methylation subtypes in colorectal cancers



All PcG, bivalent promoter genes

What Are The Mechanisms Underlying CIMP?

- Role of DNA damage, especially ROS Exposure
- Role Of Altered Transcription Factor Expression (**PcG genes dominate**)

DSB's and Oxidative Damage Inducing A Systemic Signal for Repair in GC/CpG Rich Regions



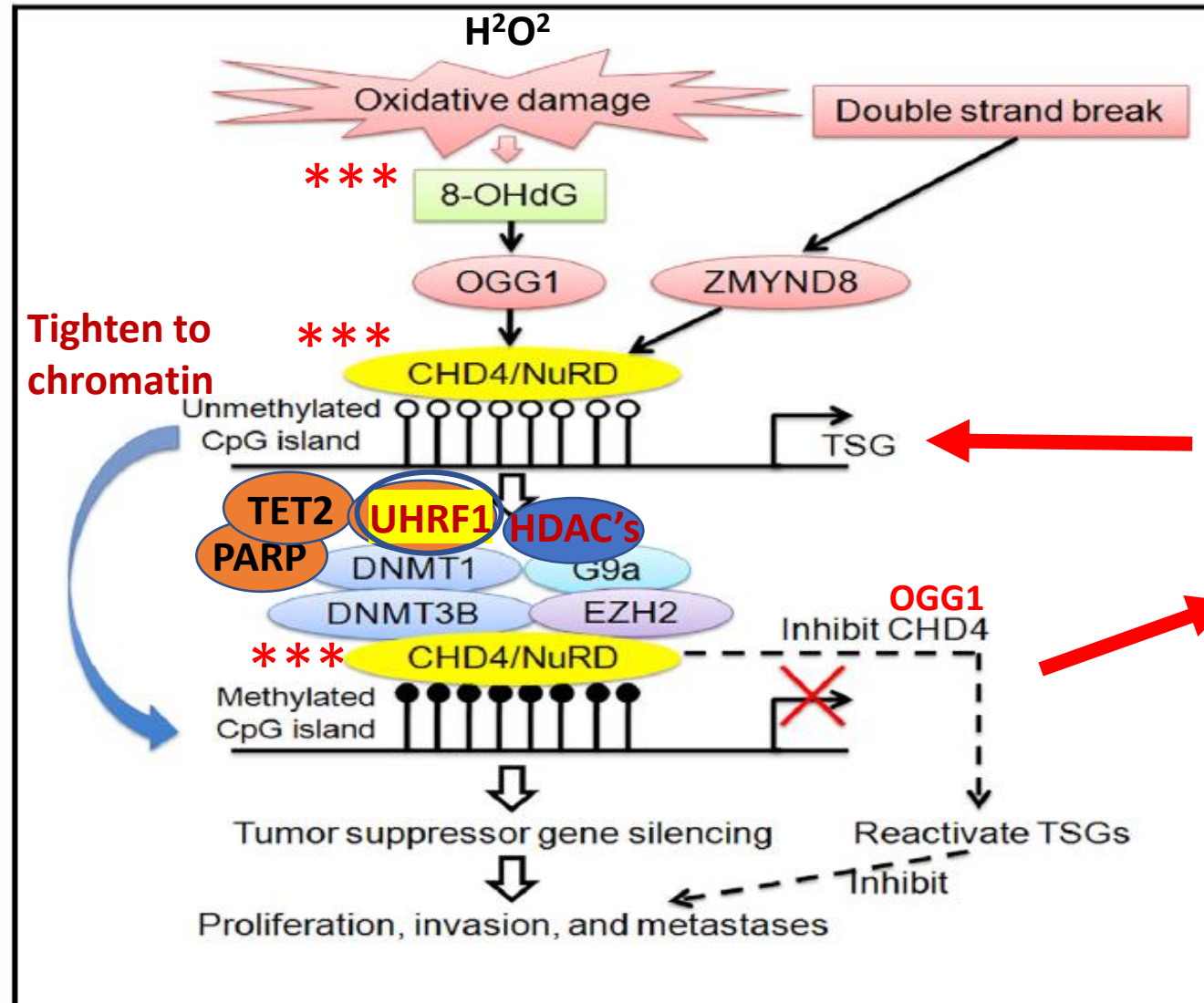
Heather O'Hagan



Feyruz Rassool



Limin Xia
State Key Laboratory of Cancer Biology, Fourth Military Medical University



Inflammation
Aging
Cancer risk

60 to 80% developmental genes

Genes induced!

- CDH1*
- WIF1*
- TIMP2*
- TIMP3*
- MLH1*
- CDKN2A*
- SFRP4*
- SFRP5*

Cai et al, Oncogene, 2012

O'Hagan et al Cancer Cell, 2011

Muvarak et al, Cancer Cell, 2016

Zhang et al, Mol Cell, 2017

Xia et al, Cancer Cell, 2017

A TF Drive To Sculpting Our Microcosm Of The Cancer Epigenome

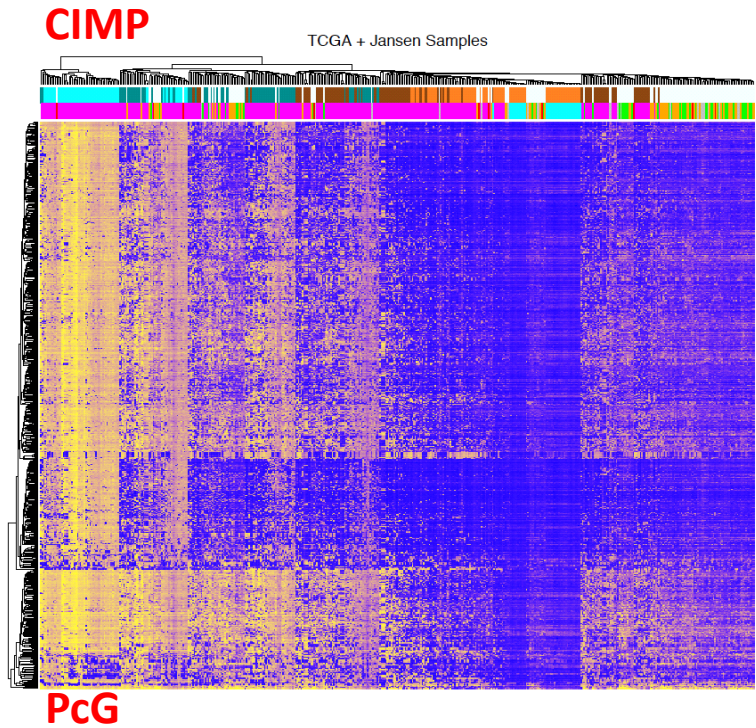


Hari Easwaran

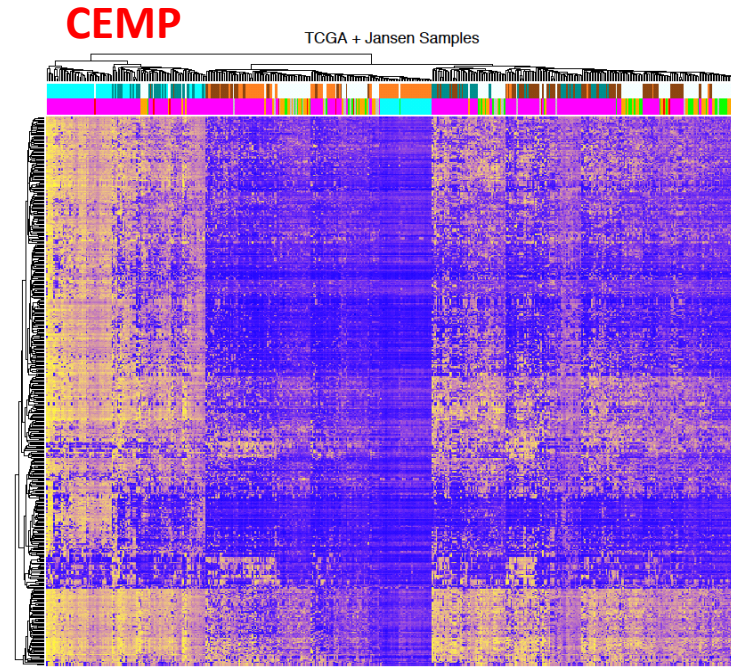
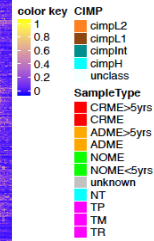


Yuba Bhandari

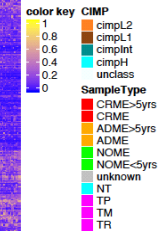
Promoter Methylation (CIMP) versus Enhancer Enhancer Methylation (CEMP)



CpG Promoters Probes (739)

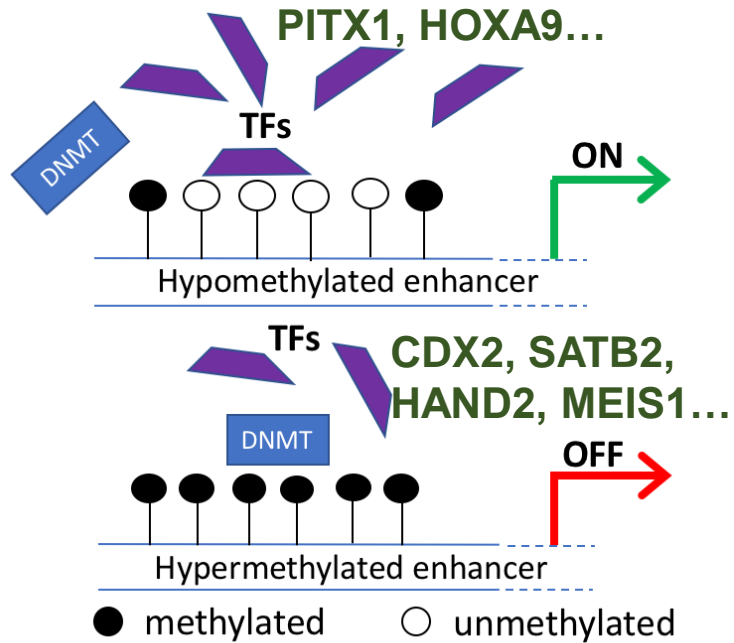


Phantom5 Enhancer Probes (501)

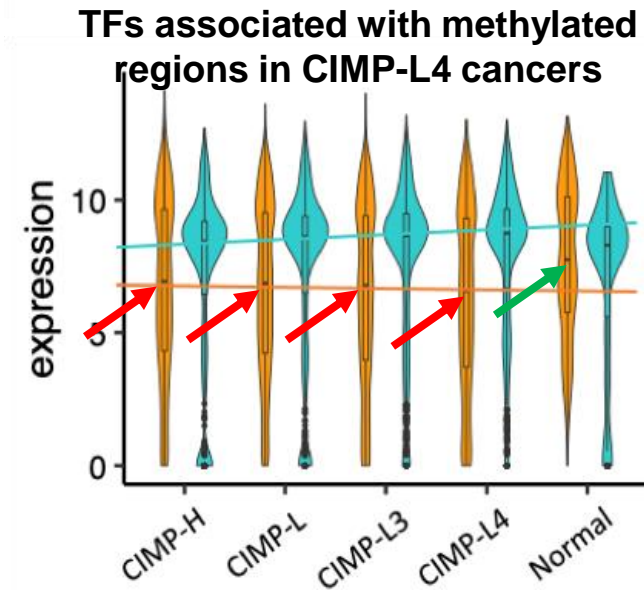
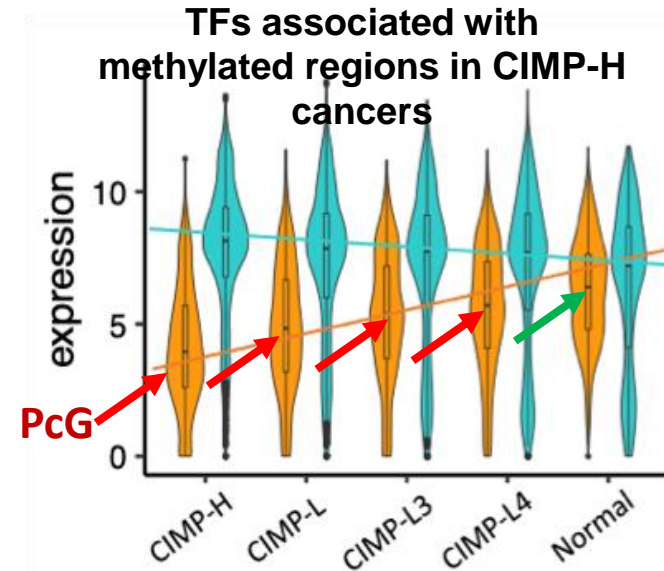


TF's (PcG) and their binding sites are linked for the cancer specific DNA hypermethylation of enhancers and the promoters of their designated target genes and expected gene expression relationships

TF repertoire forms a basis for setting the DNA methylation landscape



■ Hypermethylated
■ Hypomethylated



Importance Of “Fixing” Cell States And Oncogenesis



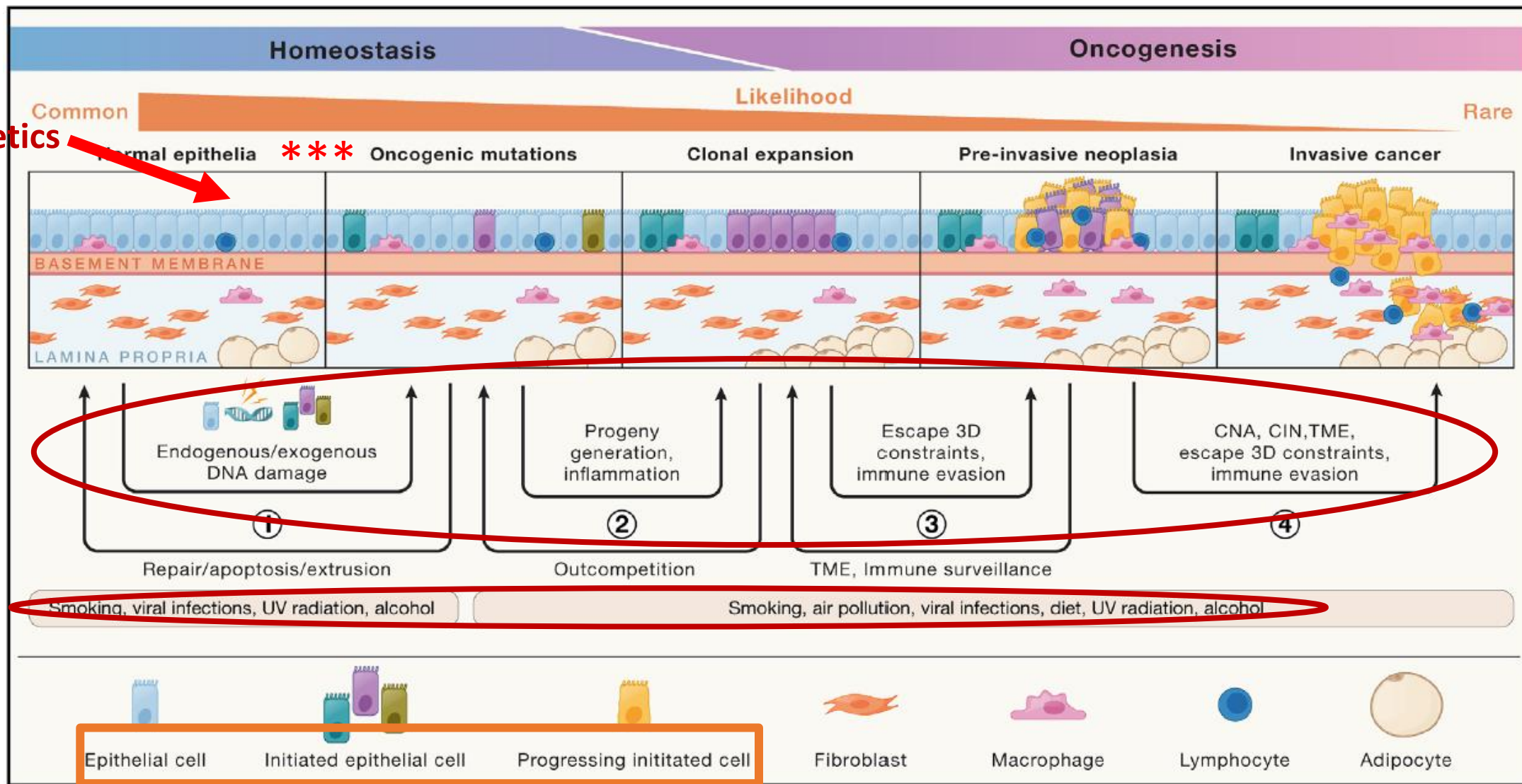
James DeGregori

Our lab seeks to understand how carcinogenic conditions promote cancer evolution and to discover pathway dependencies in cancers that can be exploited therapeutically.

- **Evolutionary based model for cancer development, Adaptive Oncogenesis.**
- **In this model, mutations (including oncogenic mutations) face fitness landscapes (**cell states and memory thereof = epigenetics!**)**
- **We propose that long-lived multicellular organisms have evolved stem cell populations with high fitness = serving to maintain the status quo, preventing somatic evolution.**
- **But in stem cell pools damaged by aging, irradiation or other insults, the fitness landscape will be dramatically altered = selection for mutations and epigenetic events that improve perverse fitness and fixation of oncogenically initiated cells.**
- **These studies could lead to discovery of adjuvants to current therapies that will more effectively treat or possibly even cure leukemias.**

Importance Of "Fixing" Cell States And Oncogenesis

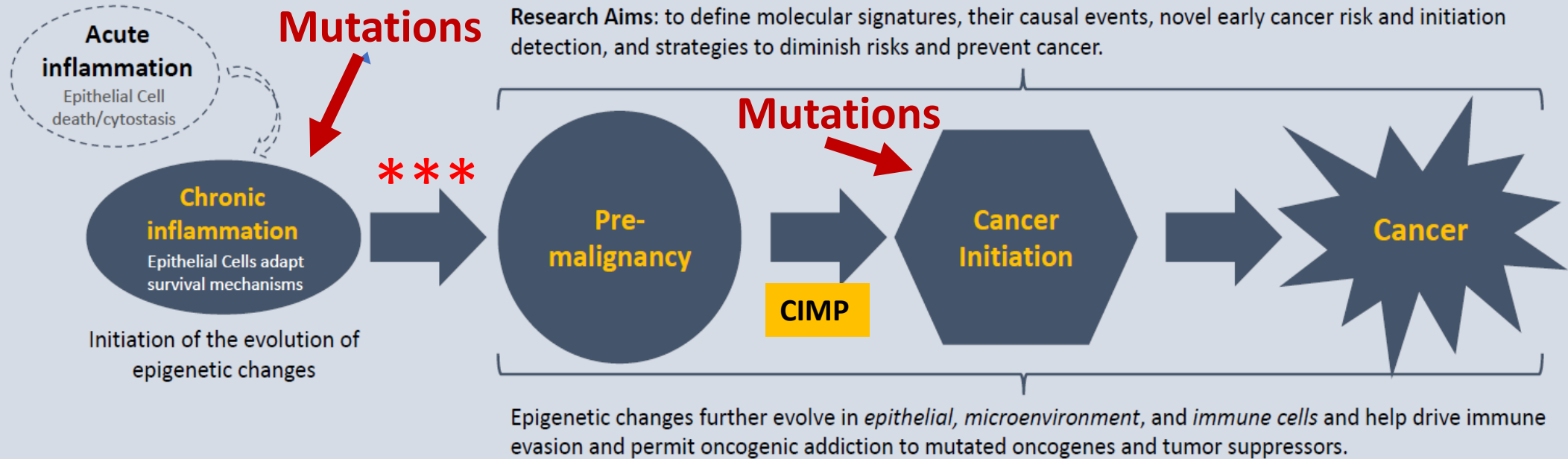
Epigenetics



Parent cell of tumor origin fate!! Determined in development and parent stem cell renewal in adults

Swanton and colleagues, Cell 186, April 13, 2023

Inflammation as a Driving Agent in Tumorigenesis through Epigenetic Remodeling



Above Evolution of Events Can Be Causal for Key Cancer Risk Factors:

- Aging
- Environmental exposures
- Dietary habits (high fat/carb = metabolic imbalance)
- Obesity
- Exposure to pathogens/infections

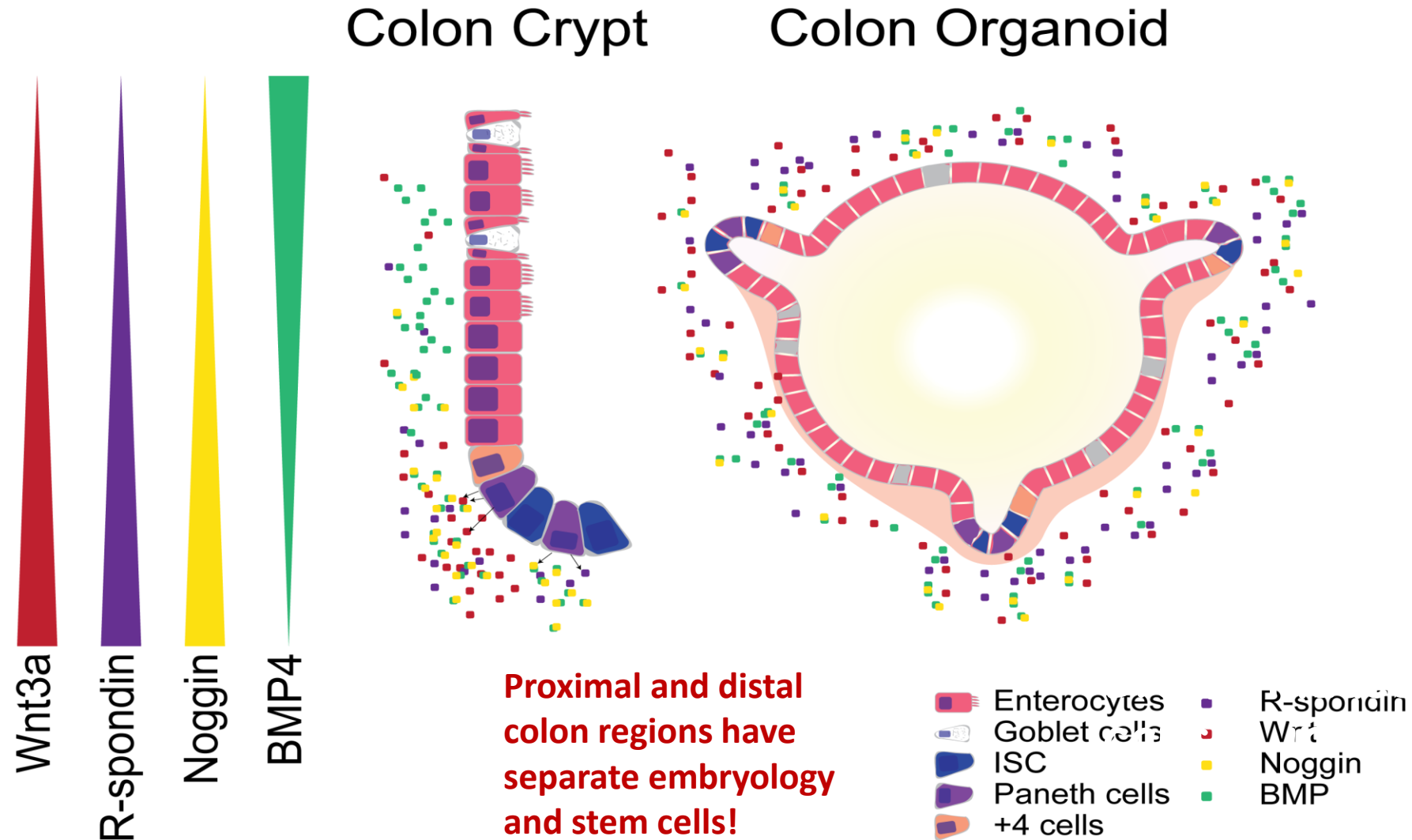
VIRUSES
Mitochondria



Contributions for evolution of and causal effects for Chronic Inflammation driving cancer risk and initiation

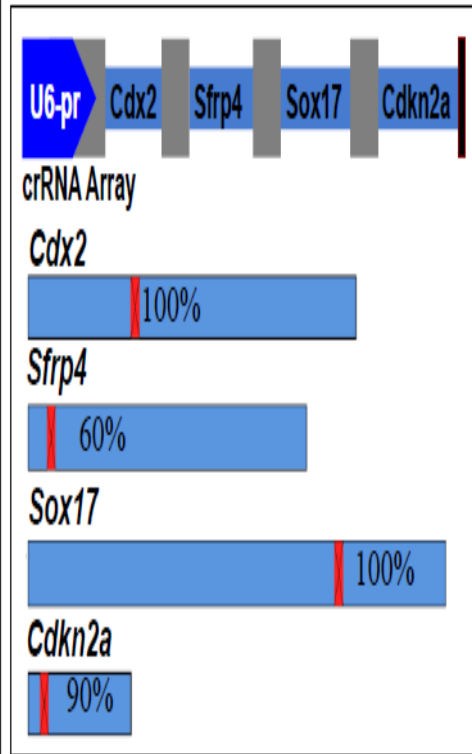
Translational implications: targeting epigenetic reprogramming to derive prevention, interception, early cancer therapy, and biomarker strategies

Ex vivo modeling of early steps in tumorigenesis using colon organoids



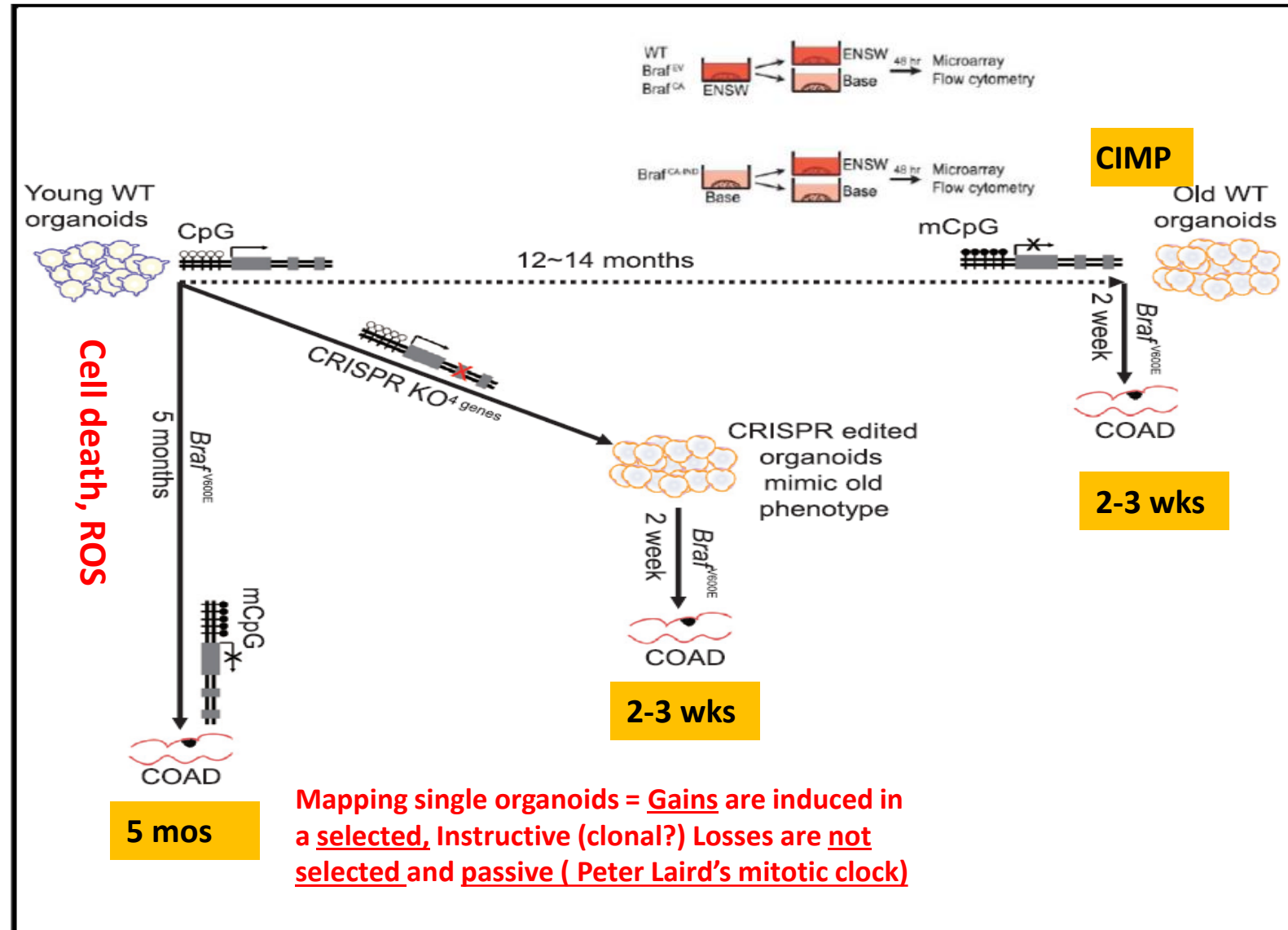
CIMP For Developmental Genes Is Functional For Aging Organoids And Susceptibility to Transformation

CRISPR-Cpf1



Daniel Petkovich

Removal Of Developmental Genes From Young Organoids = Old Organoids



Easwaran



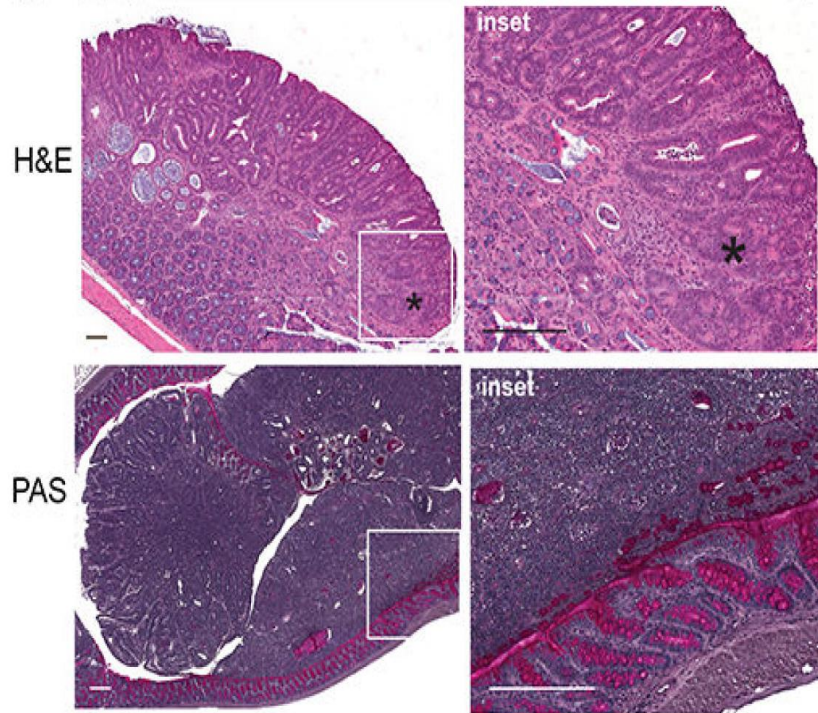
Byunghak KANG



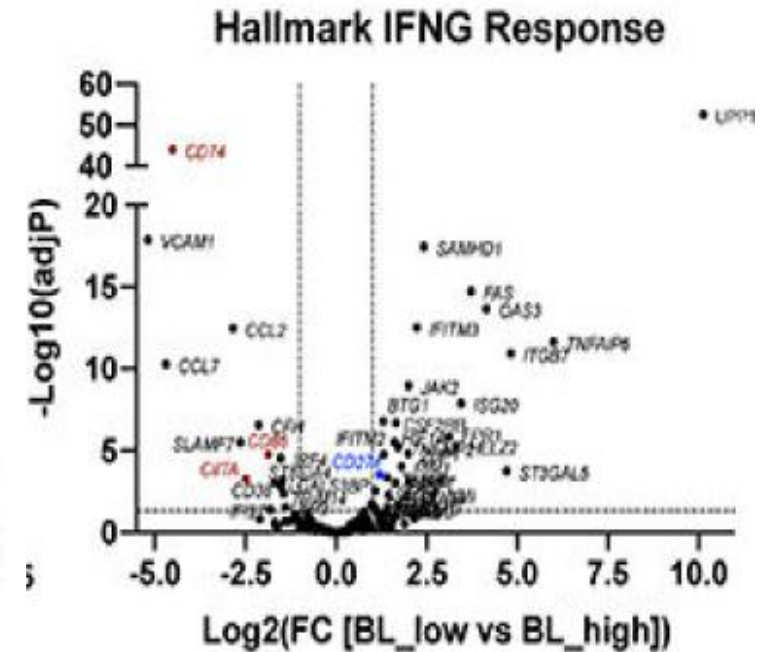
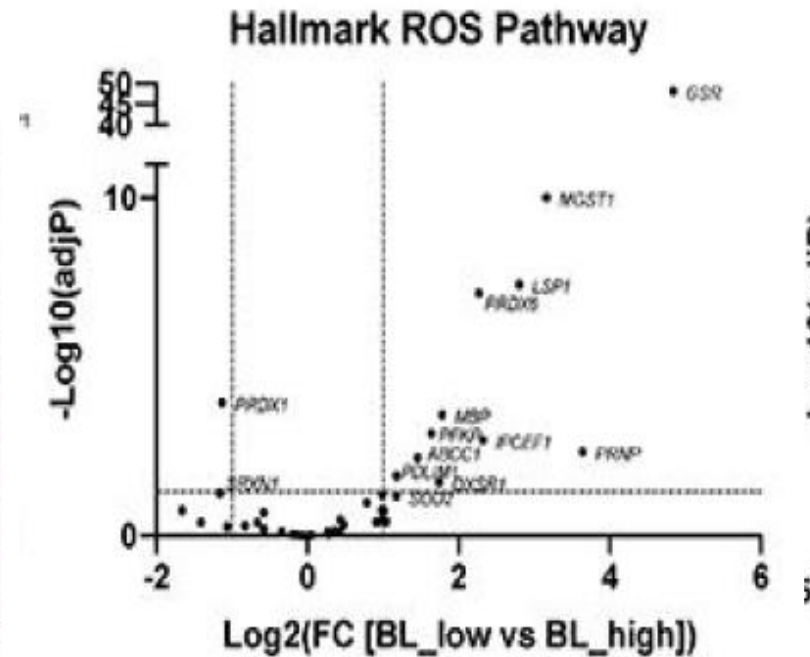
Yong Tao

Daniel A. Petkovich

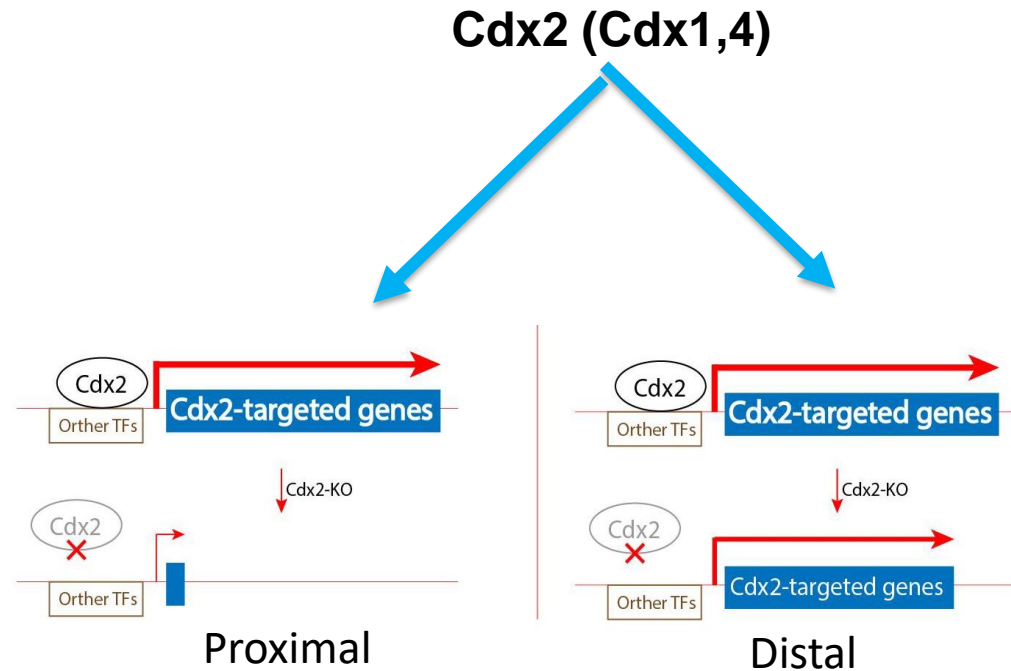
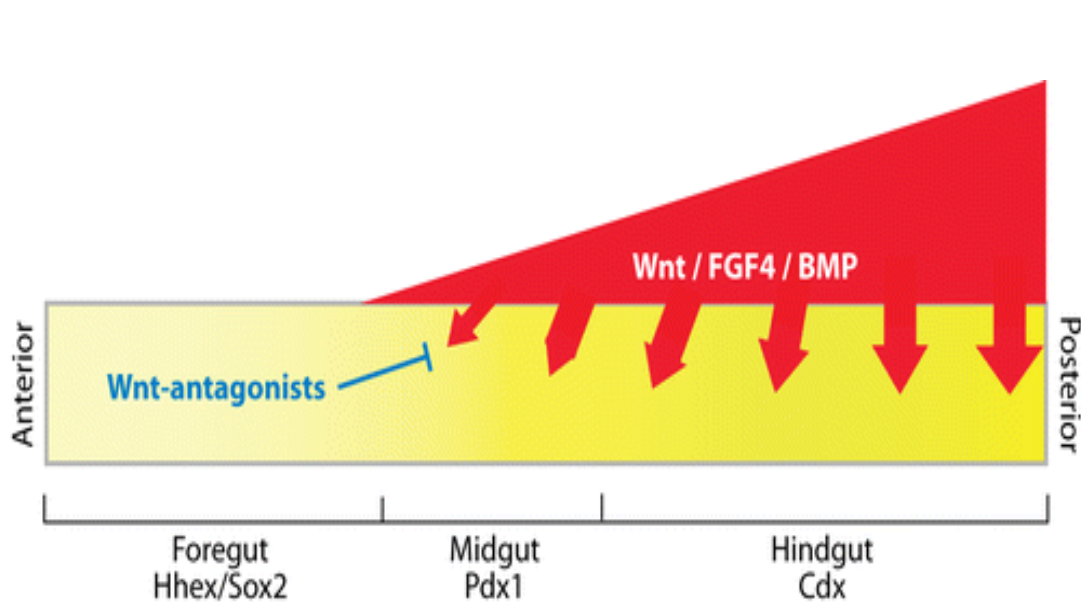
Inducing *BRAF* Mutation *In-Vivo* In Setting Of ETBF Challenge



Preceded By Proximal Colon Cell
Mucinous Cell Hyperplasia, then serrated
polyps and followed by mucinous CRC



Different epigenetic and transcriptional landscape in proximal and distal colon define BRAF-driven CRC initiation



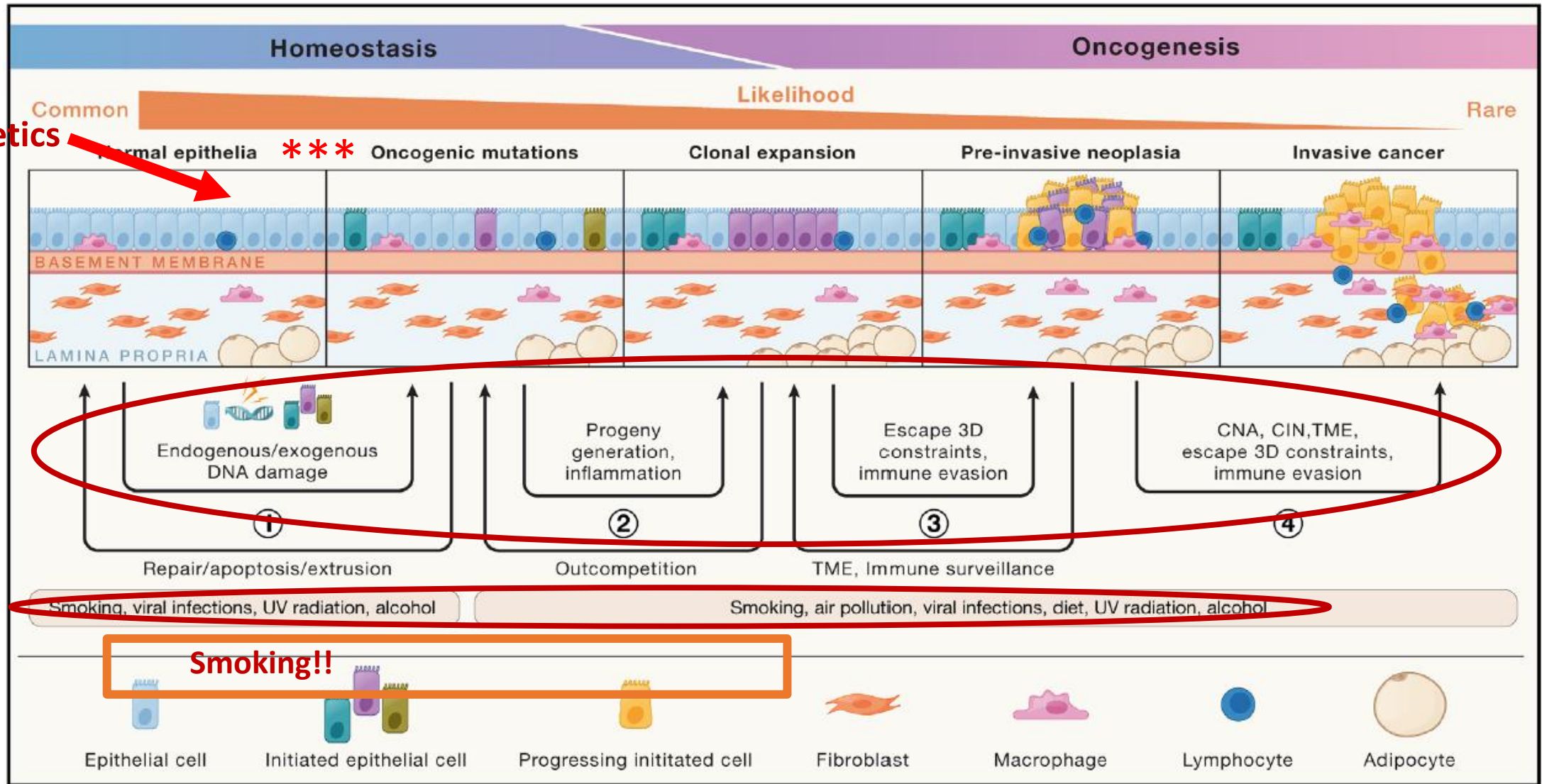
AR Zorn AM, Wells JM. 2009.
Annu. Rev. Cell Dev. Biol. 25:221–51

Easwaran and colleagues

In revision, please do not post

Influence of cancer risk factors on carcinogenesis

Epigenetics



Parent cell of tumor origin fate!! Determined in development and parent stem cell renewal in adults

Swanton and colleagues, Cell 186, April 13, 2023

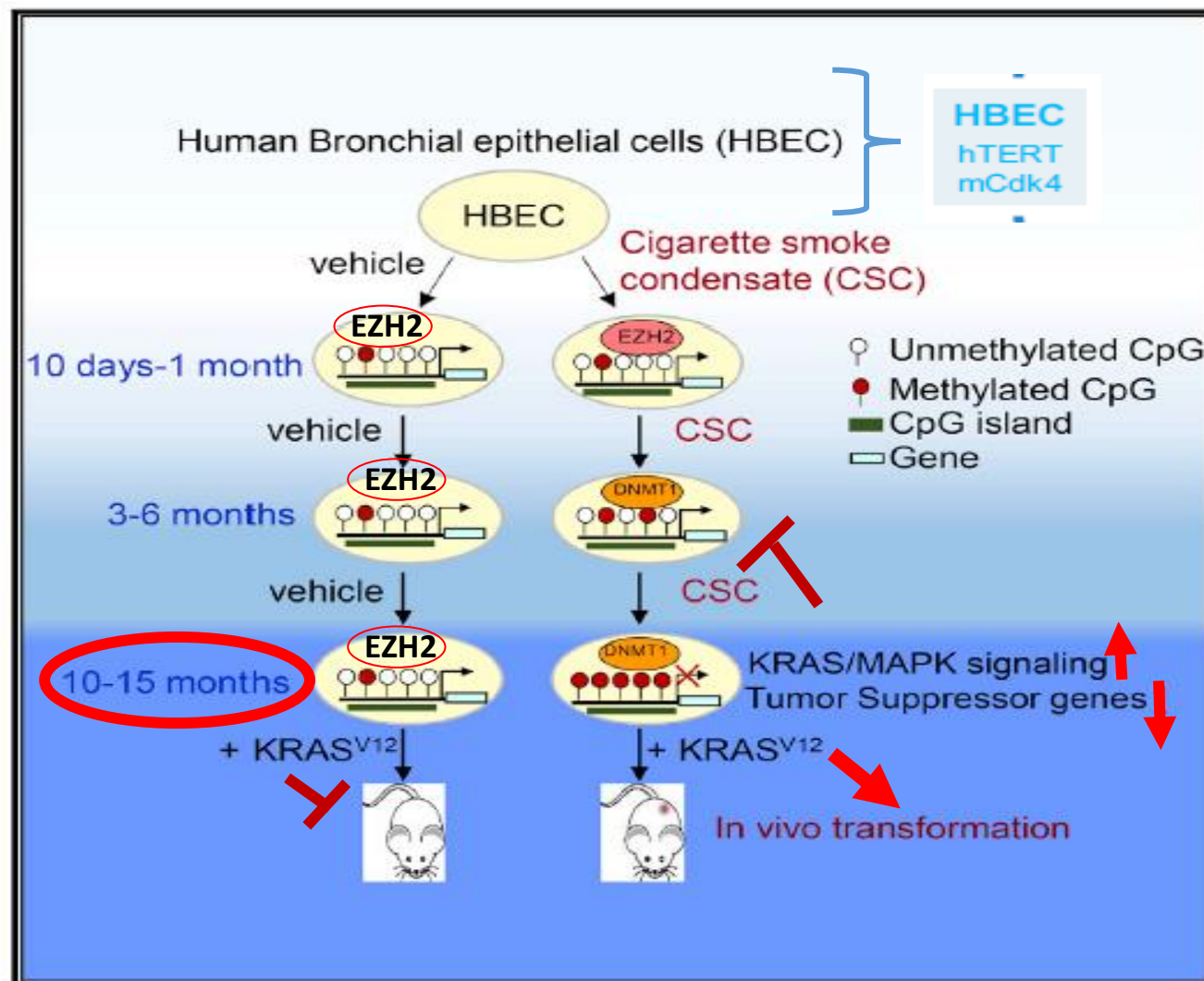
Smoke-Induced Changes To The Epigenome Provide Fertile Ground For *KRAS* Oncogenic Mutation In NSCLC



Michelle Vaz



Hari Easwaran



Damage complex tightens – cell death

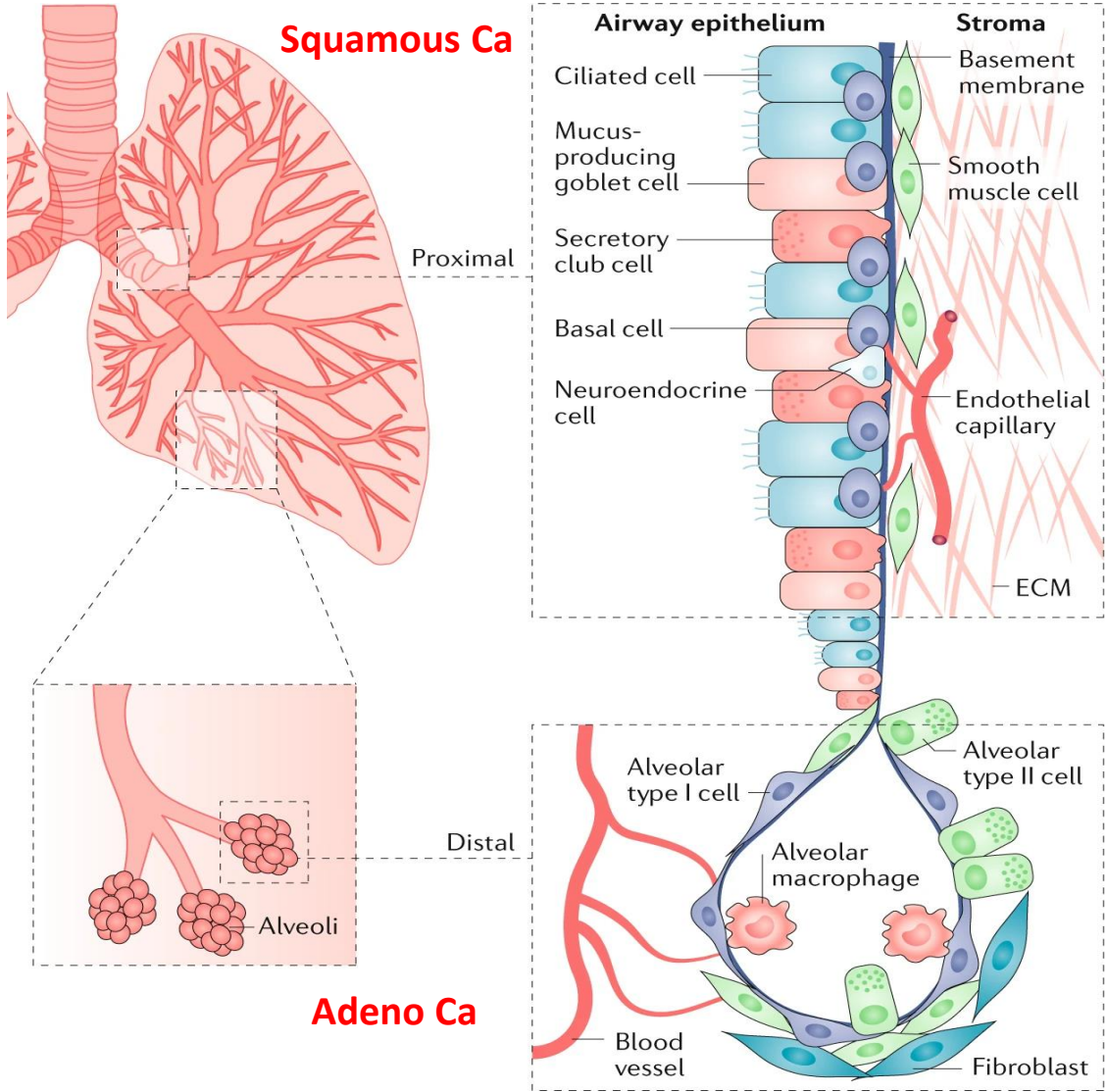
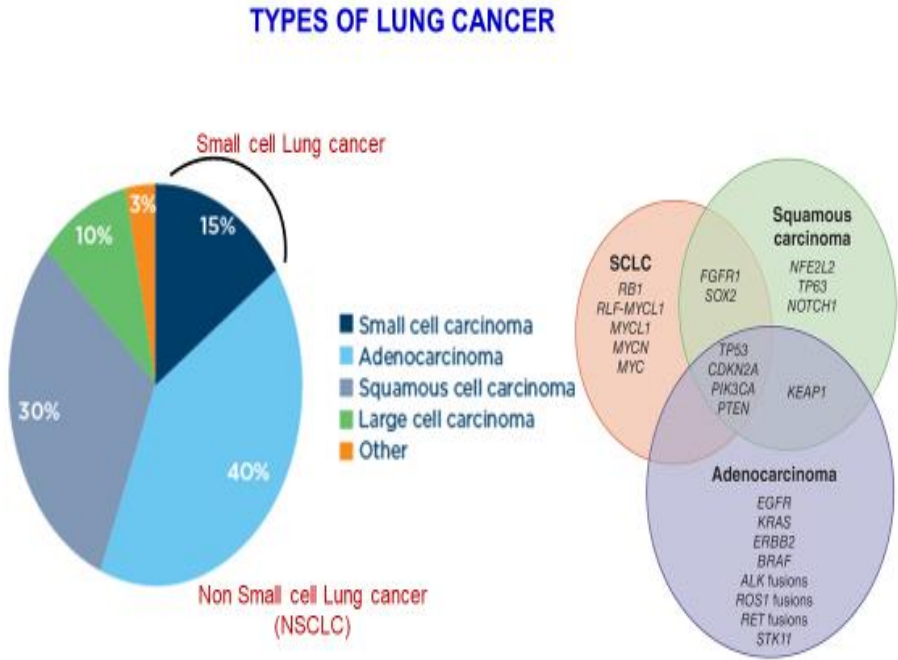
- 1) No driver mutations;
- 2) Stemness;
- 3) Anchorage independence;
- 4) EMT

SUMMARY - Airway, Normal Cell Organoids

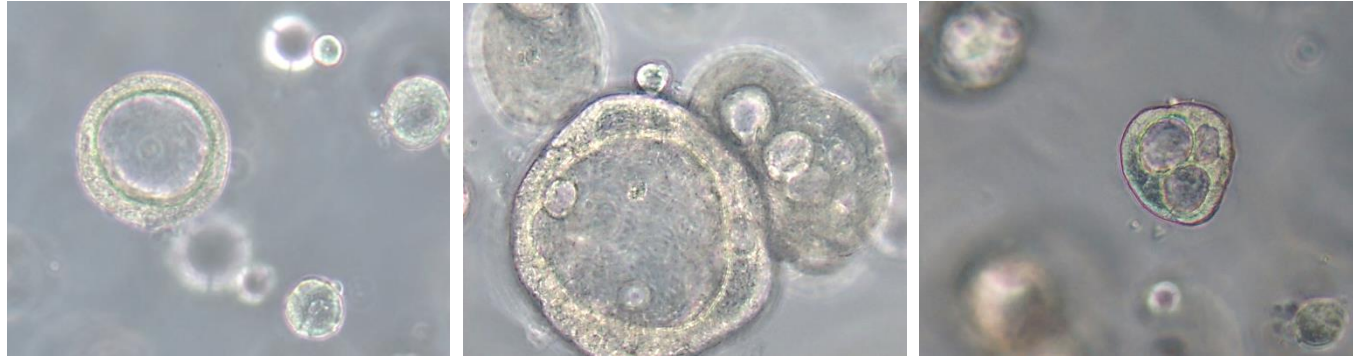
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- CSC treated organoids modulate the function of key immune cells associated with lung tumorigenesis from a pro- to an anti-inflammatory phenotype over the course of prolonged exposure.
- Growth capability in factor free media + induced driver mutations = NSCLC

Unpublished, please do not post

Probing The Evolution of NSCLC With Normal Airway Cell Organoids - Michelle Vaz



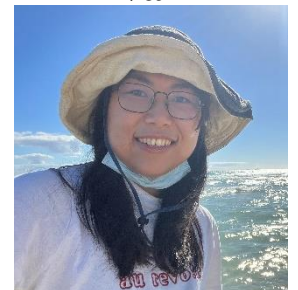
**PHASE CONTRAST IMAGES SHOWING MORPHOLOGY OF
NORMAL HUMAN LUNG ORGANOID (AIRWAY ORGANOID)**



**PHASE CONTRAST IMAGES SHOWING MORPHOLOGY OF
MURINE LUNG ORGANOID**



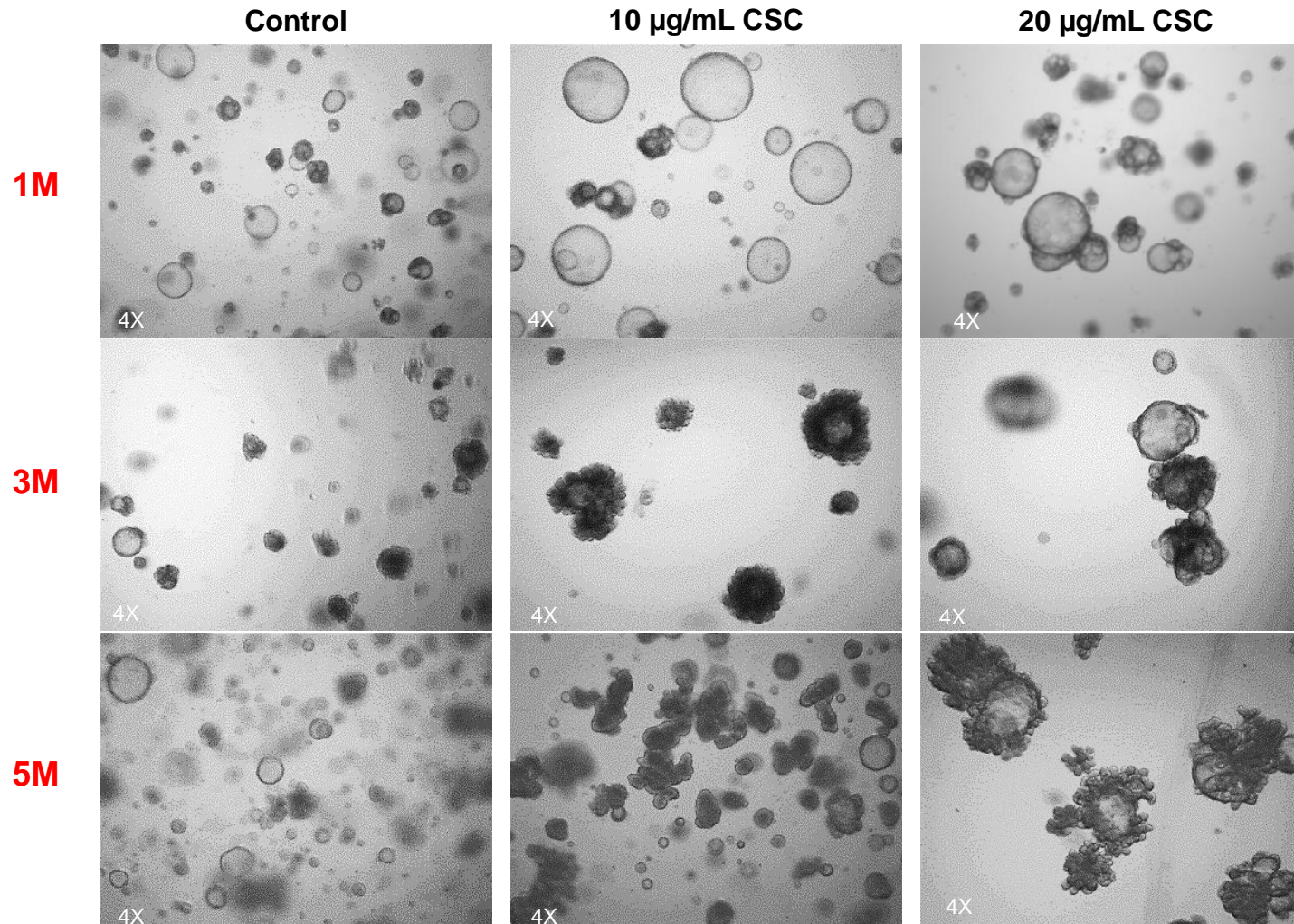
**Michelle
Vaz**



Na Wang

Unpublished, please do not post

CSC-INDUCED MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGES IN MURINE LUNG ORGANOID

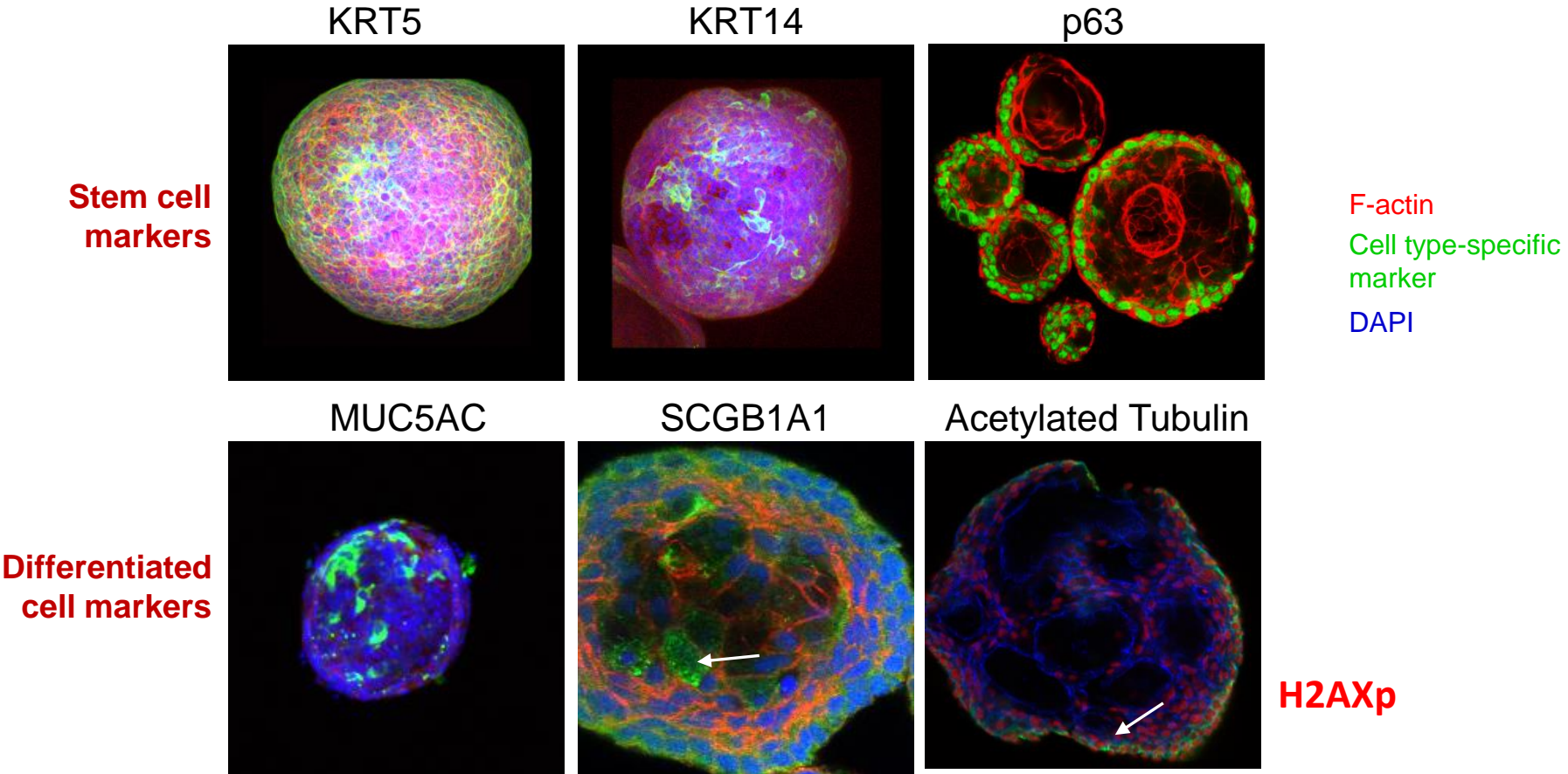


After CSC exposure:

- Larger size;
- Higher density.

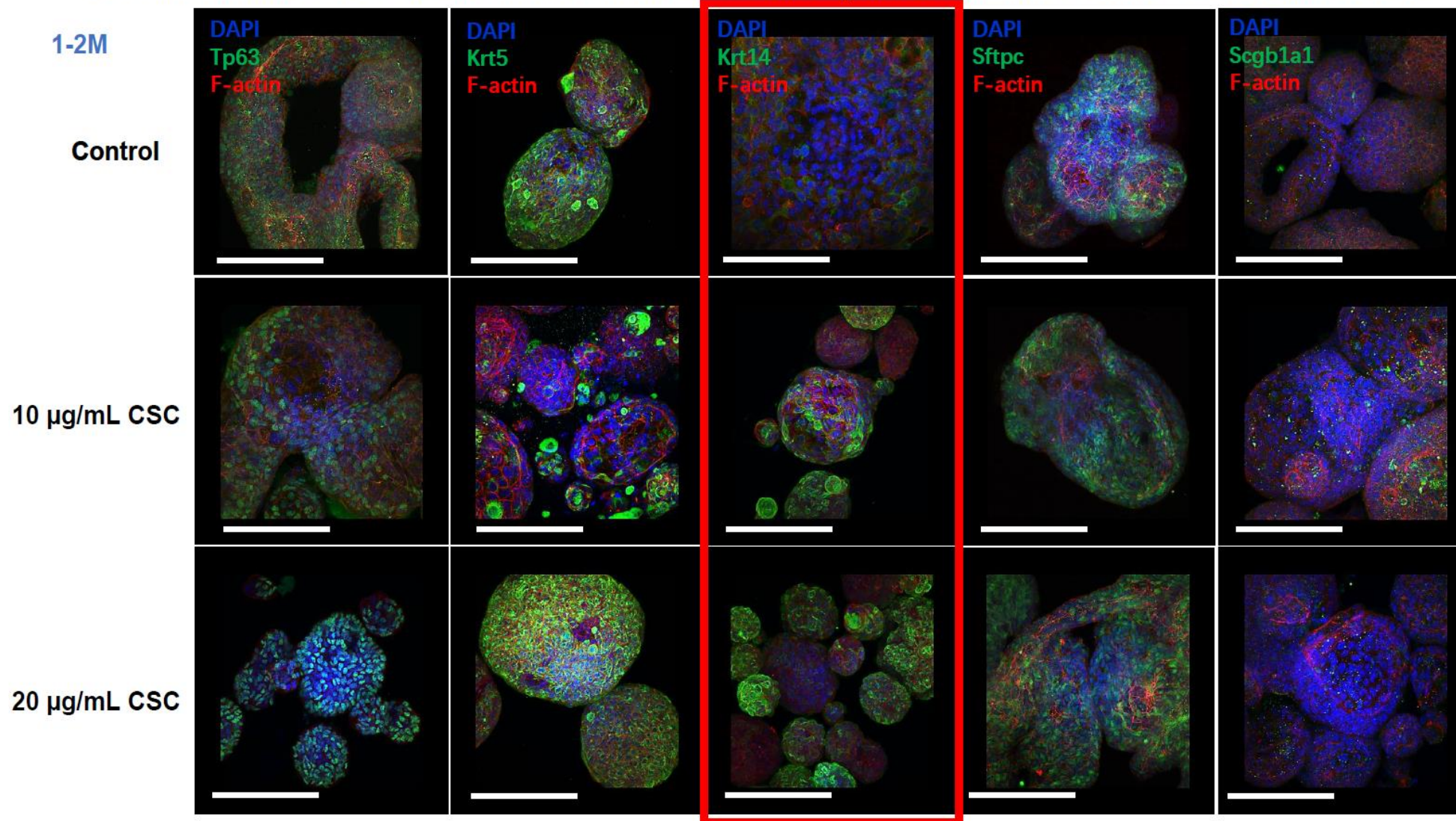
Unpublished, please do not post

IMMUNOFLUORESCENT STAINING OF CELL TYPE-SPECIFIC MARKERS IN HUMAN LUNG ORGANOIDS



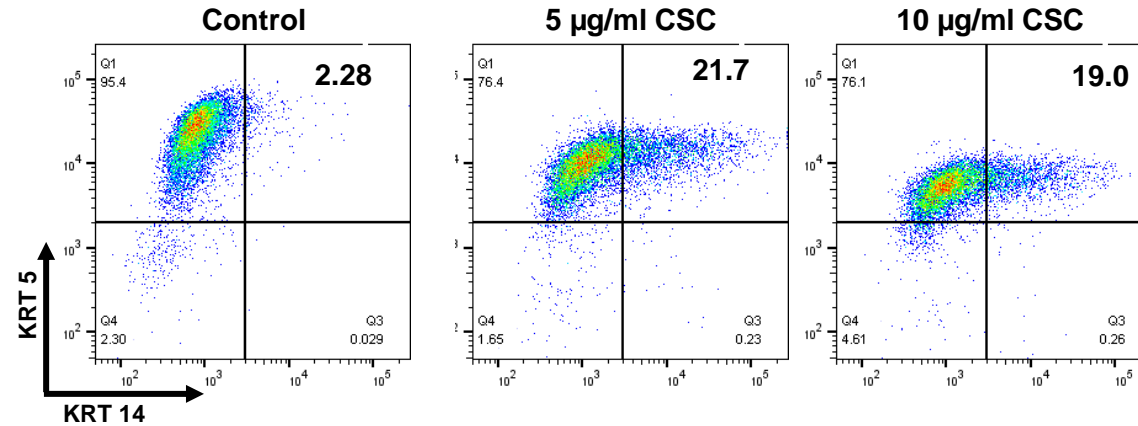
Unpublished, please do not post

CSC Treatment Causes A Shift in the Basal Stem Cell Population From P63⁺Krt5⁺ TO P63⁺Krt5⁺Krt14⁺



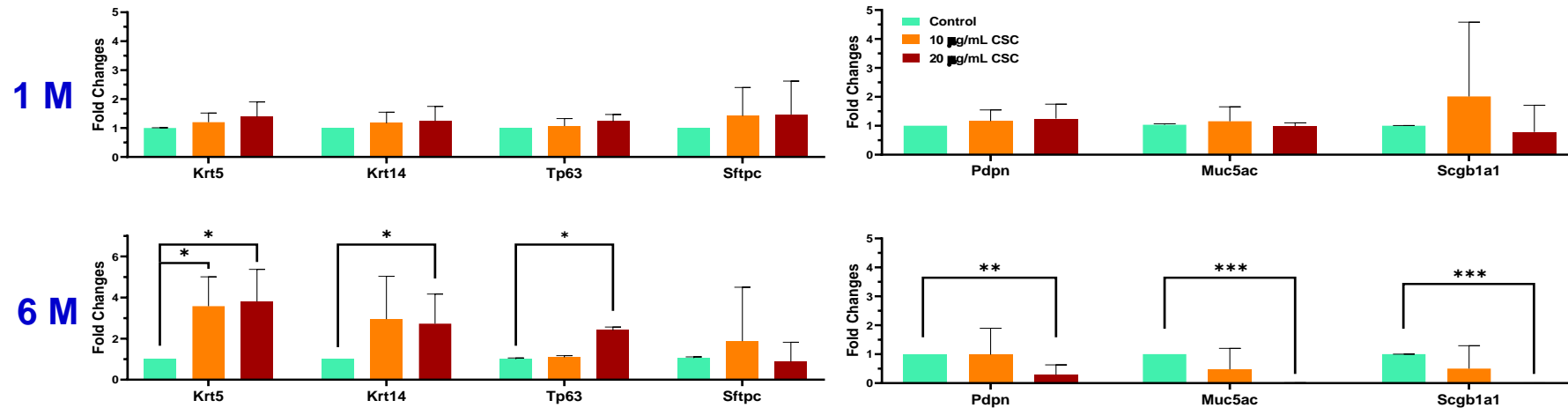
Unpublished, please do not post

CSC EXPOSURE INDUCES SUBSTANTIAL SHIFTS IN BASAL STEM CELL AND DIFFERENTIATED CELL POPULATIONS



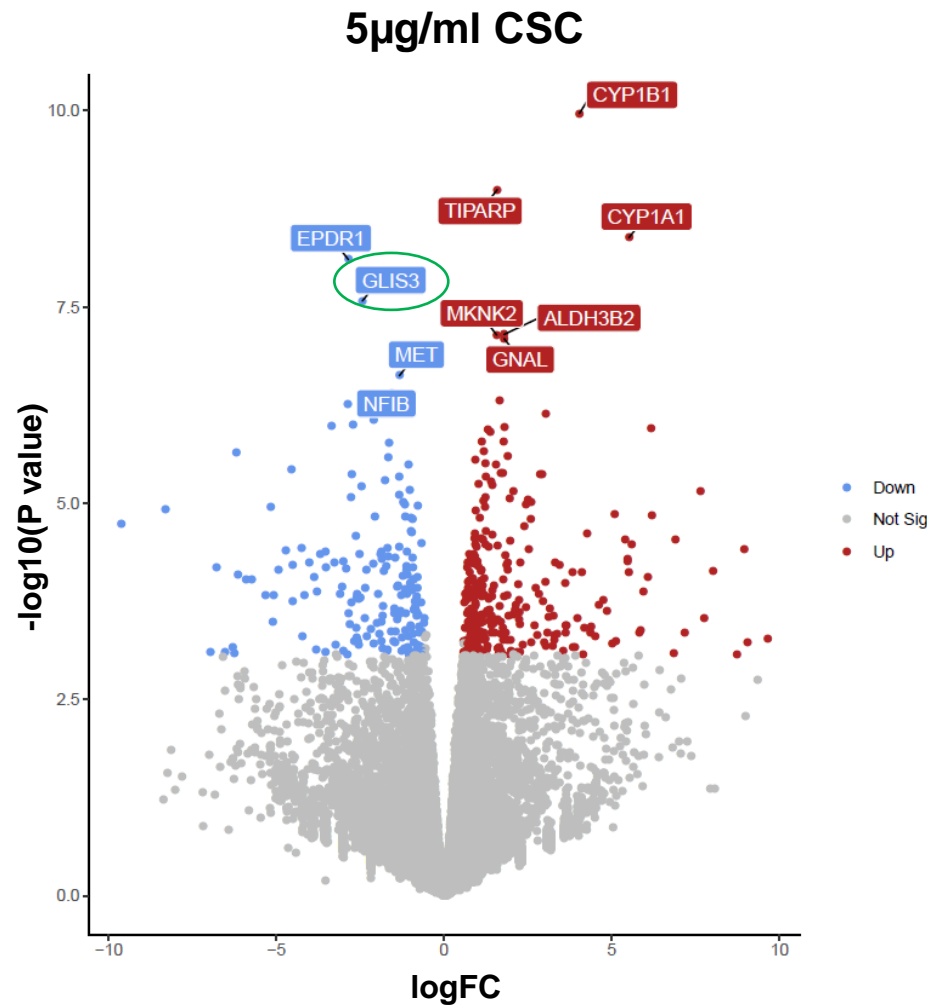
Markers of Stem Cells

Markers of Differentiated Cells

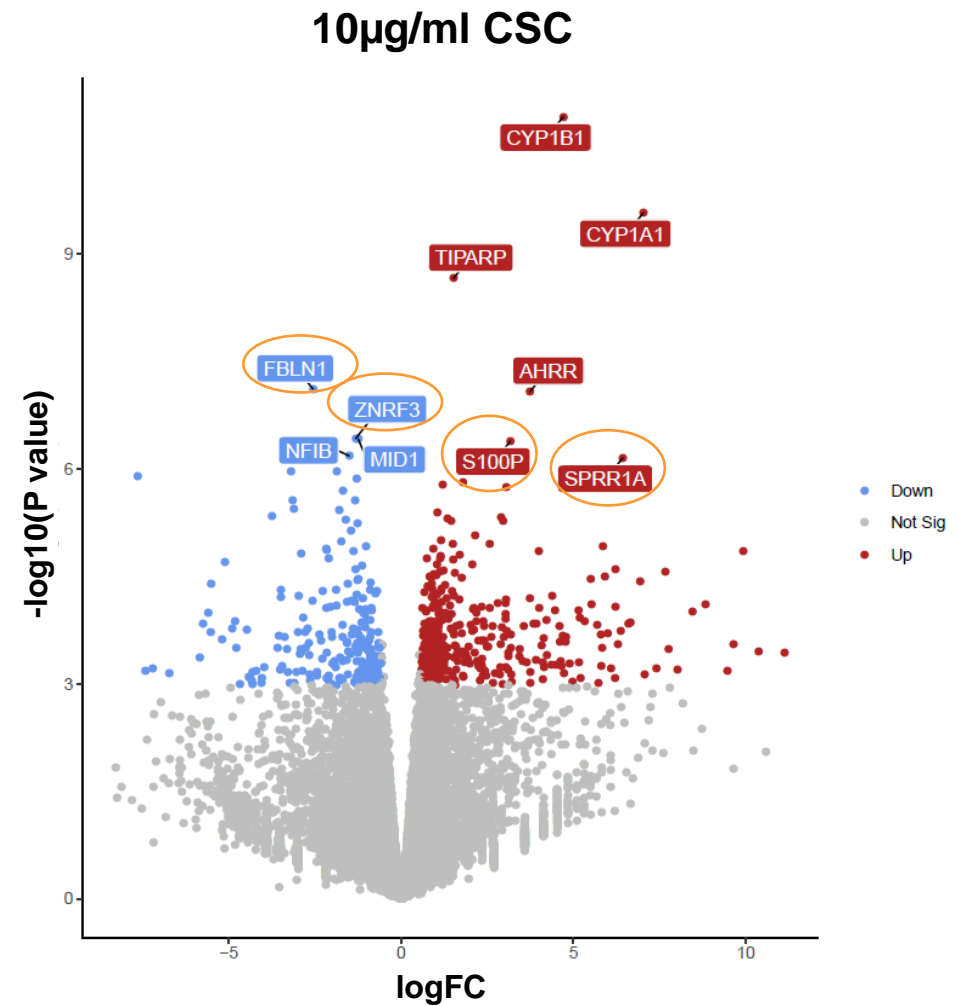


Unpublished, please do not post

CSC-INDUCED DIFFERENTIALLY EXPRESSED GENES AT 3 MONTHS



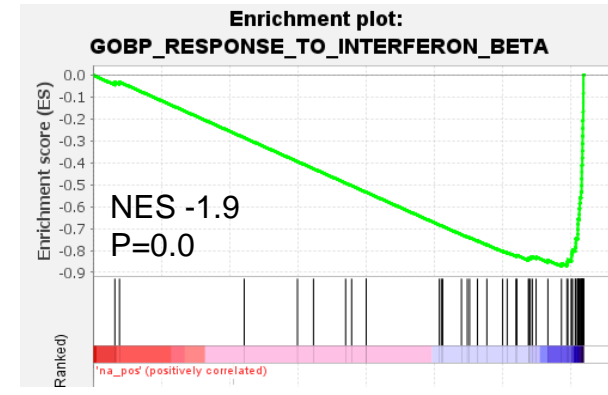
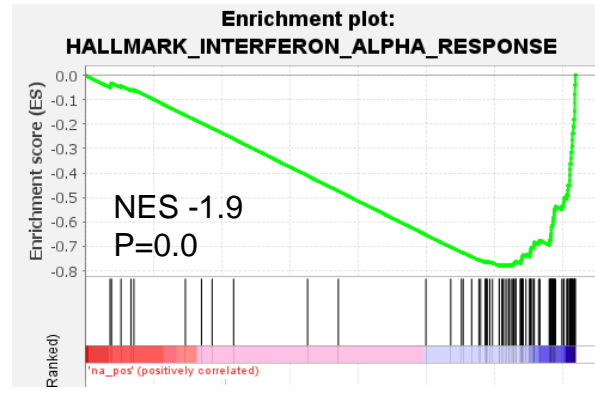
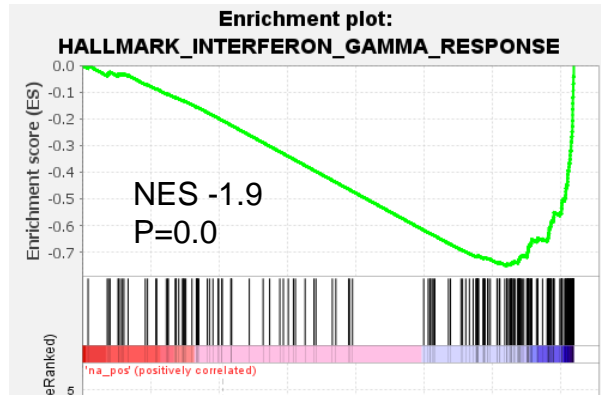
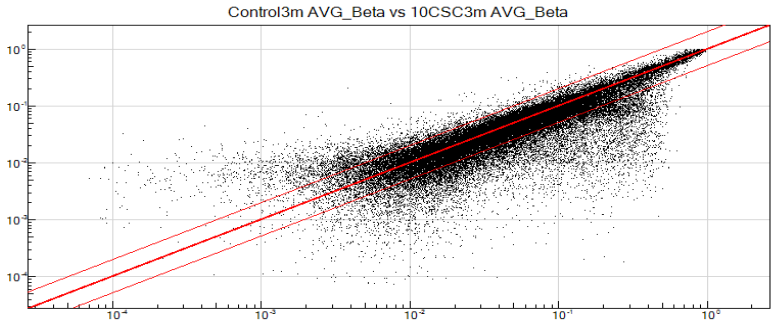
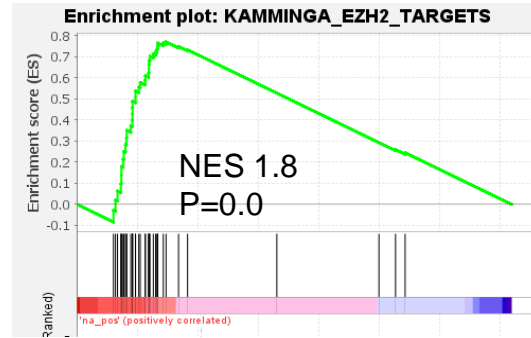
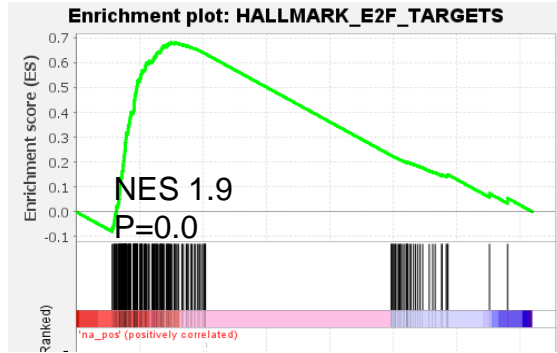
Upregulated (Log2 FC) : 199
Downregulated (Log2 FC) : 133



Upregulated (Log2 FC) : 247
Downregulated (Log2 FC) : 165

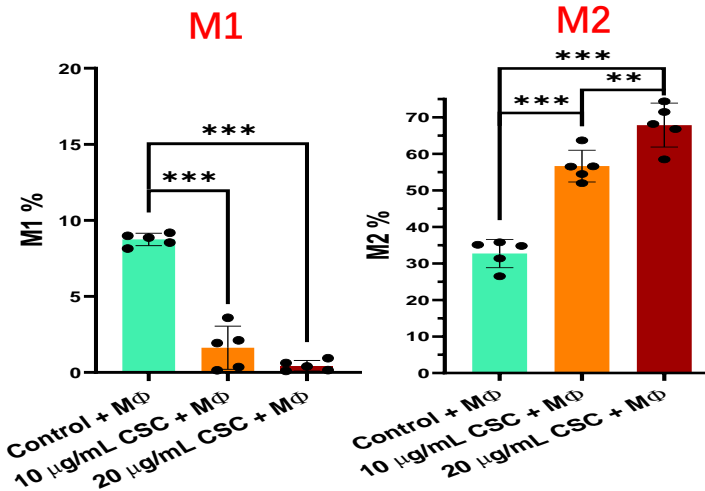
Unpublished, please do not post

GSEA analysis of CSC-induced differentially expressed genes at 3 months



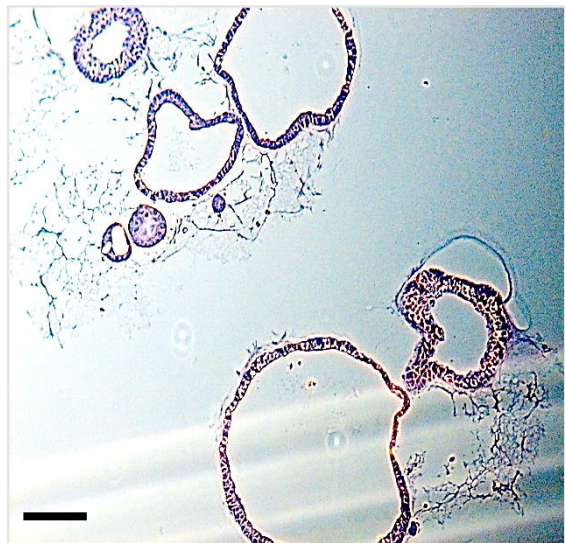
DOWNREGULATION OF IFN SIGNALING PATHWAYS

6M →



Representative images of H&E-stained sections of control and CSC-treated lung organoids at 6 months.

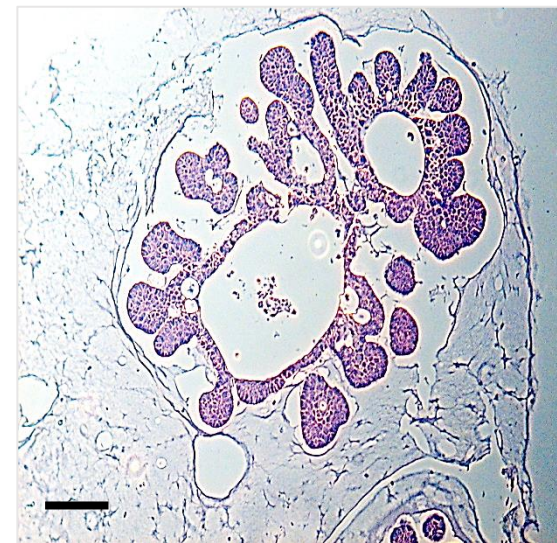
Control



10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ CSC



20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ CSC



+

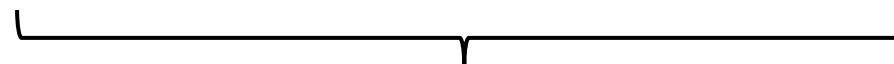
Kras^{G12V}

+

Kras^{G12V}

+

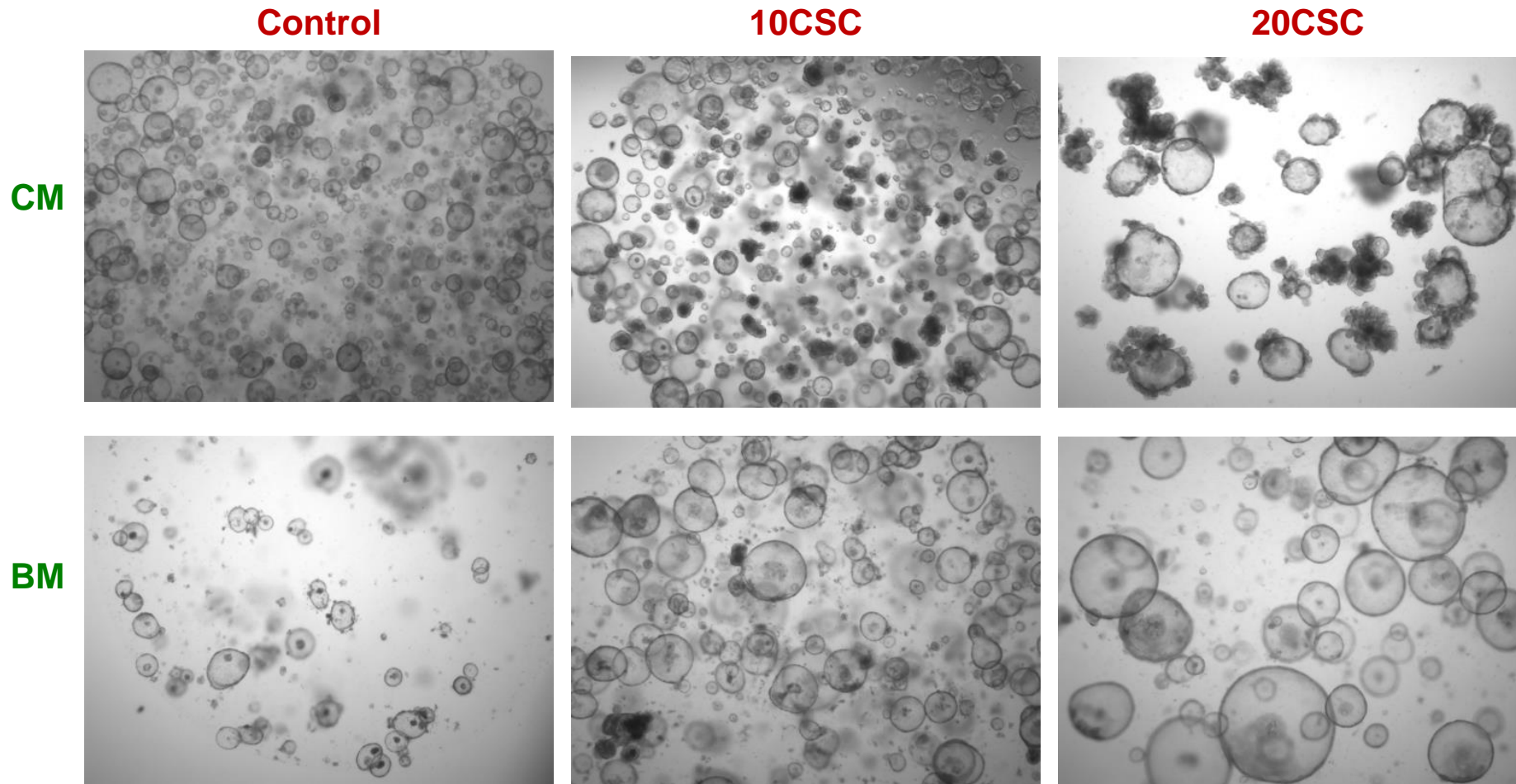
Kras^{G12V}



In vivo tumor formation
(6-8 weeks post injection)

Unpublished, please do not post

**MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGES SUGGESTIVE OF GROWTH FACTOR
INDEPENDENCY IN MURINE ORGANOIDS TREATED WITH CSC FOR 6 MONTHS**



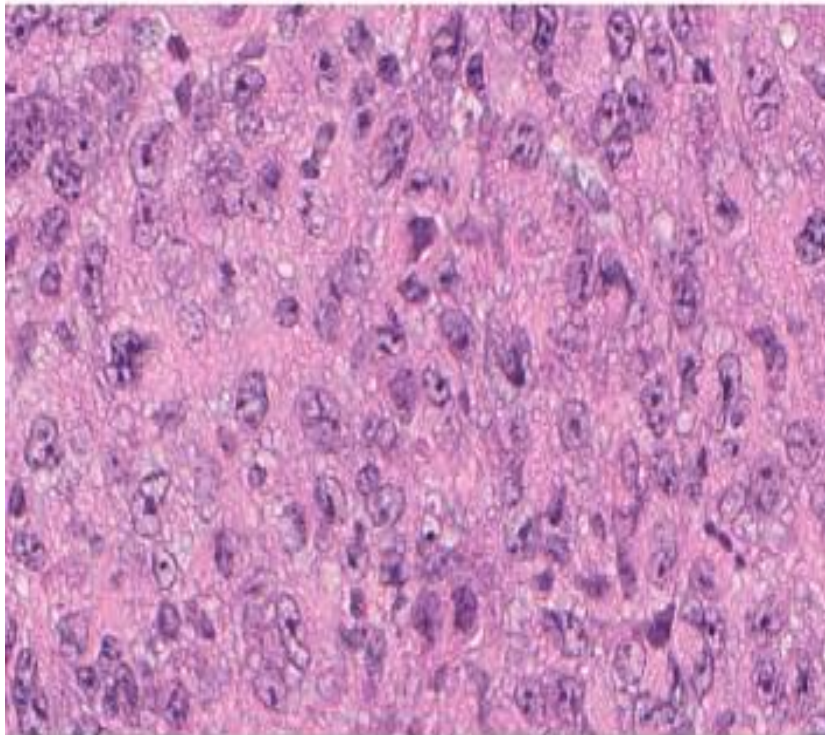
CM : Complete medium
BM: Base medium

Preliminary data suggest that the CSC treated organoids are susceptible to KRAS induced transformation.

**Unpublished,
please do not post**

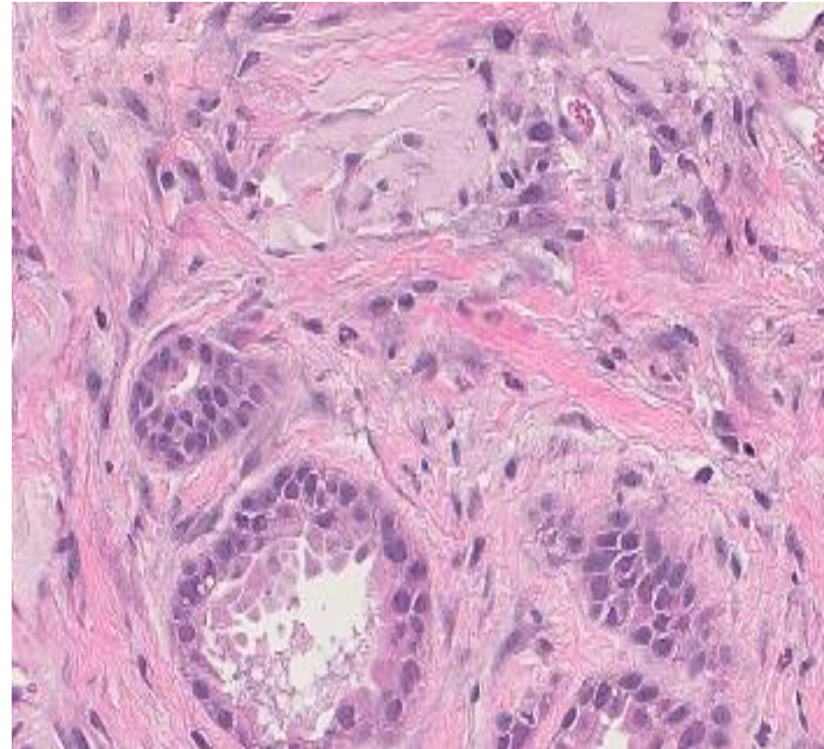
Induction Of A *KRAS* Mutation Or A *P53* Deletion At Time Of Organoid Growth In Basal Media

***KRAS*^{G12V}**



Adenocarcinoma
Highly metastatic to lung

Tp53 KO



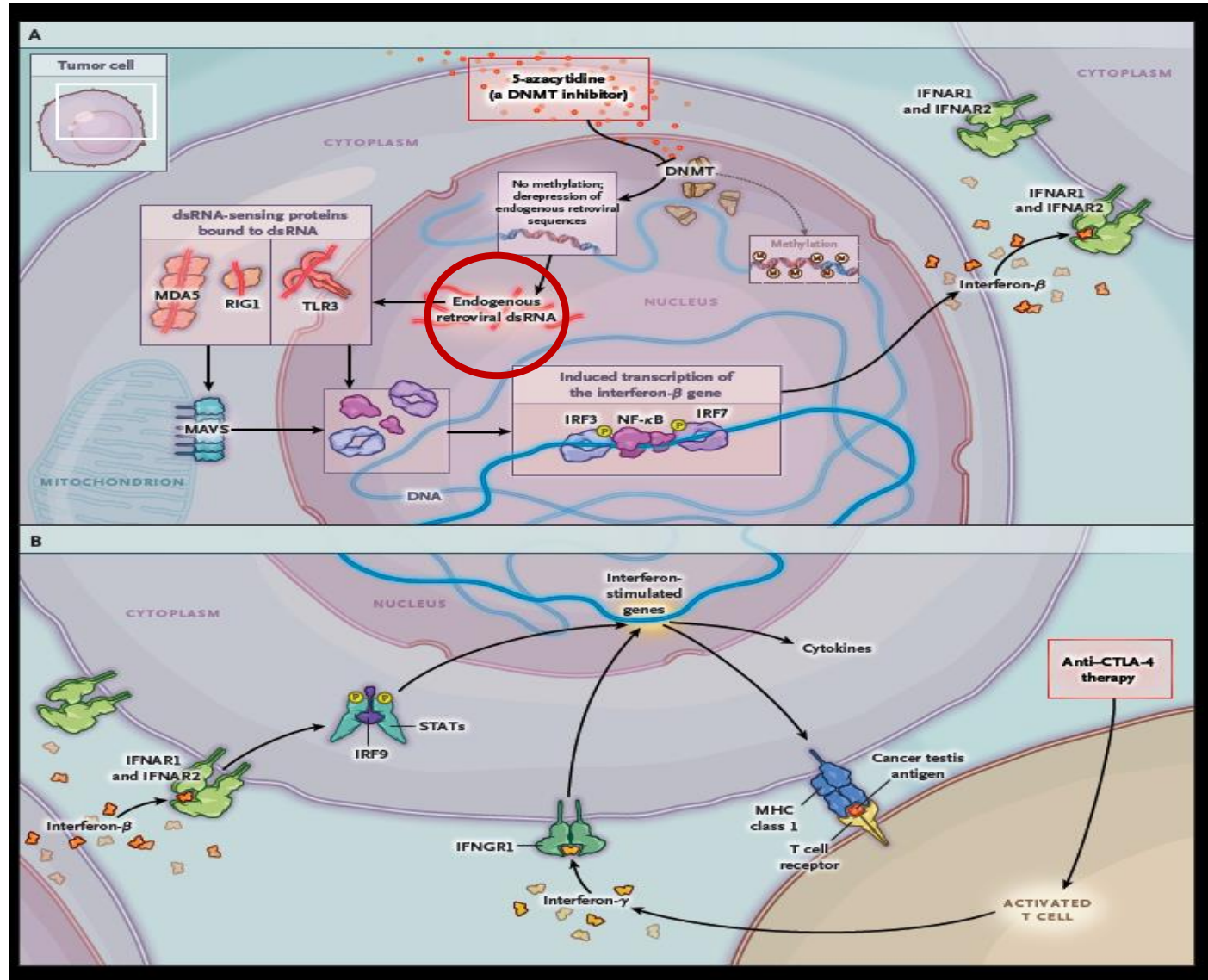
Squamous CA

Unpublished, please do not post

SUMMARY

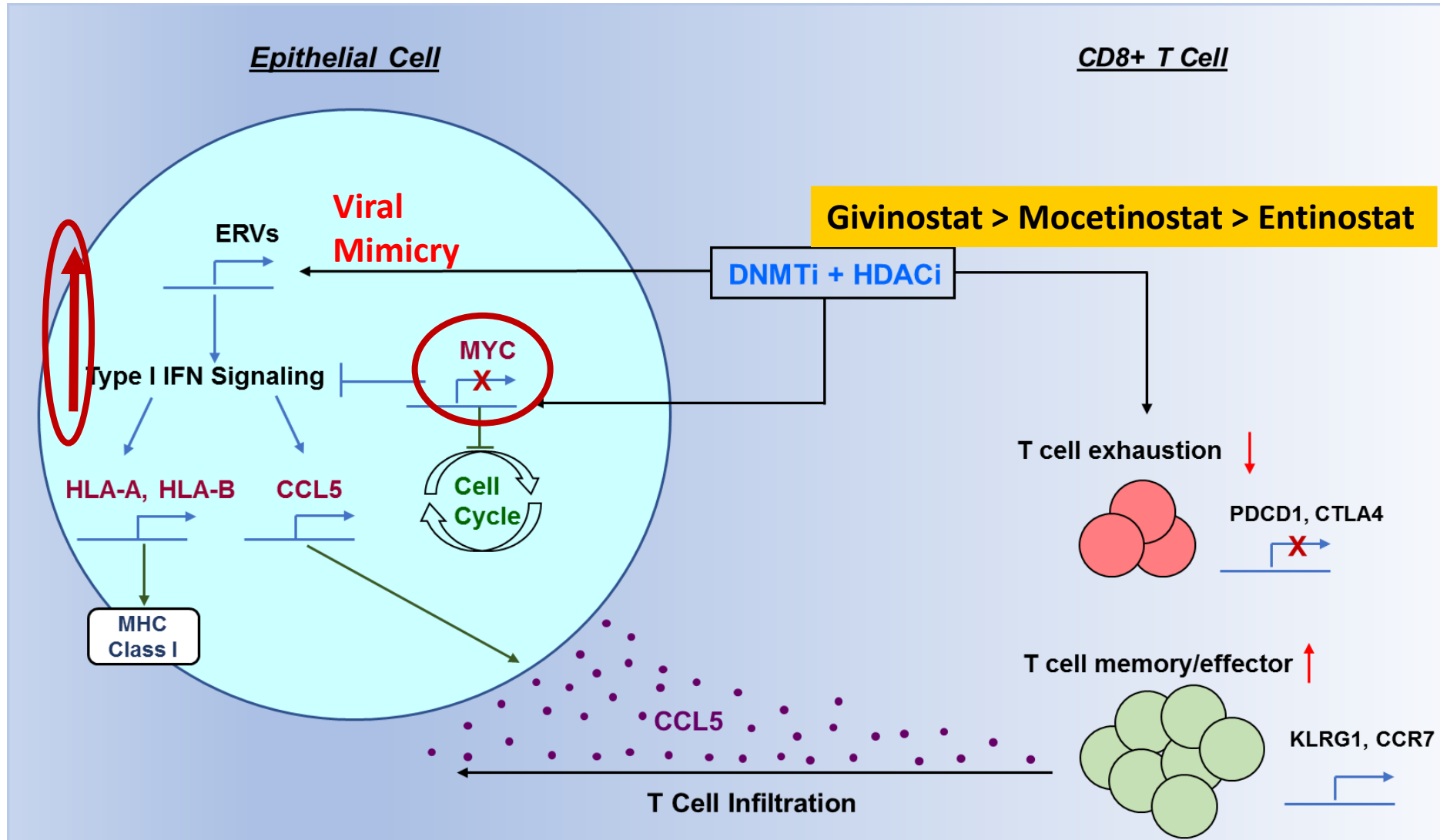
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- CSC treated organoids modulate the function of key immune cells associated with lung tumorigenesis from a pro- to an anti-inflammatory phenotype over the course of prolonged exposure.
- Growth capability in factor free media + induced driver mutation = NSCLC

Viral Mimicry Review



**Increase
efficacy
of IO?**

Combining DNMTi's And HDACi's To Enhance Immune Checkpoint Therapy



Michael Topper

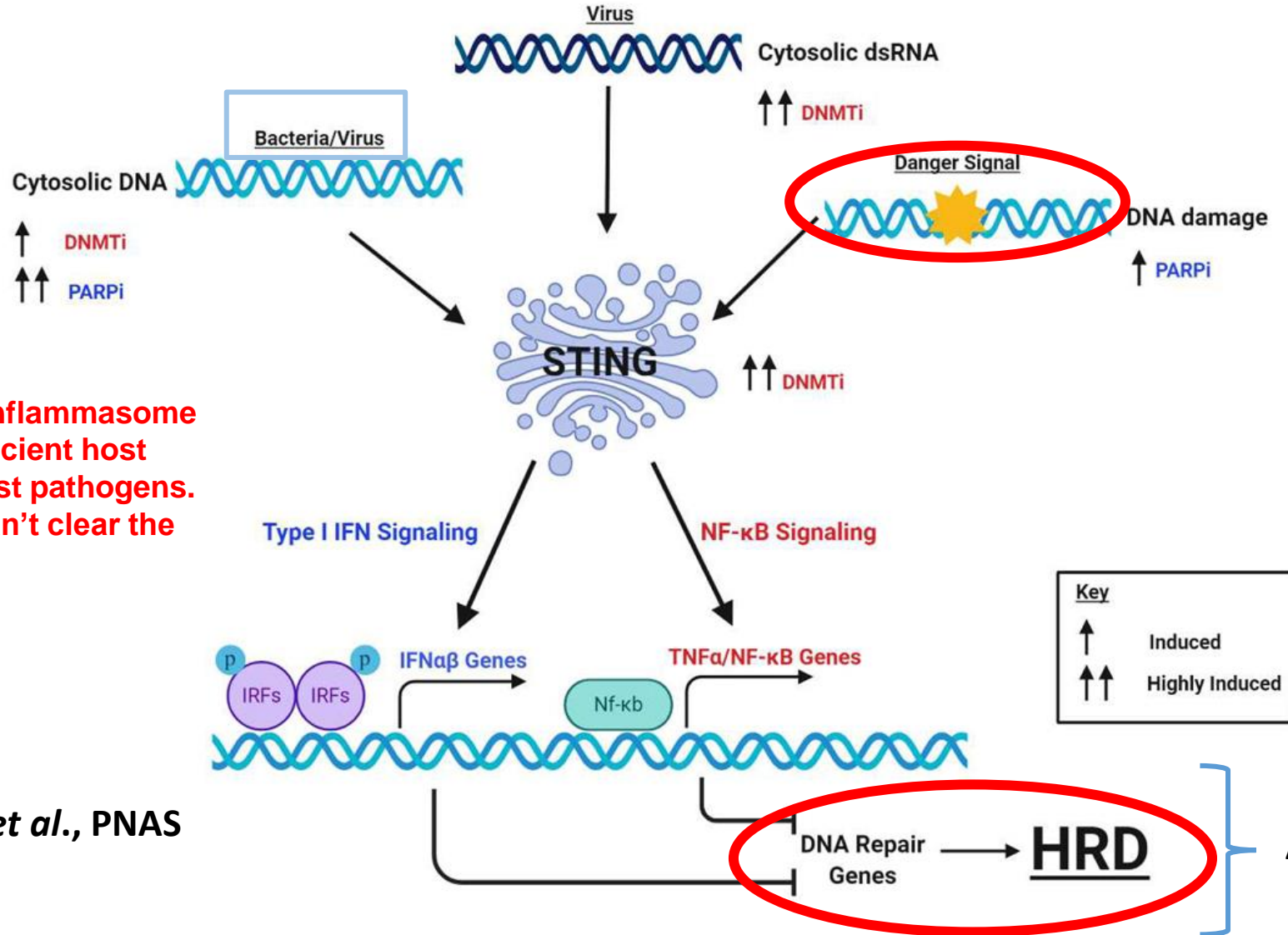


Michelle Vaz

Gerard Evan's findings – Cell, 2017!

Topper, Vaz et al, Cell, 2017

Pathogen Mimicry Response (PMR): DNMTi and PARPi induce STING-dependent interferon/inflammasome signaling leading to HRD in TNBC and OC



This is part of inflammasome signaling, an ancient host response against pathogens. Kill cells that can't clear the pathogen.



Michael Topper
JHSM



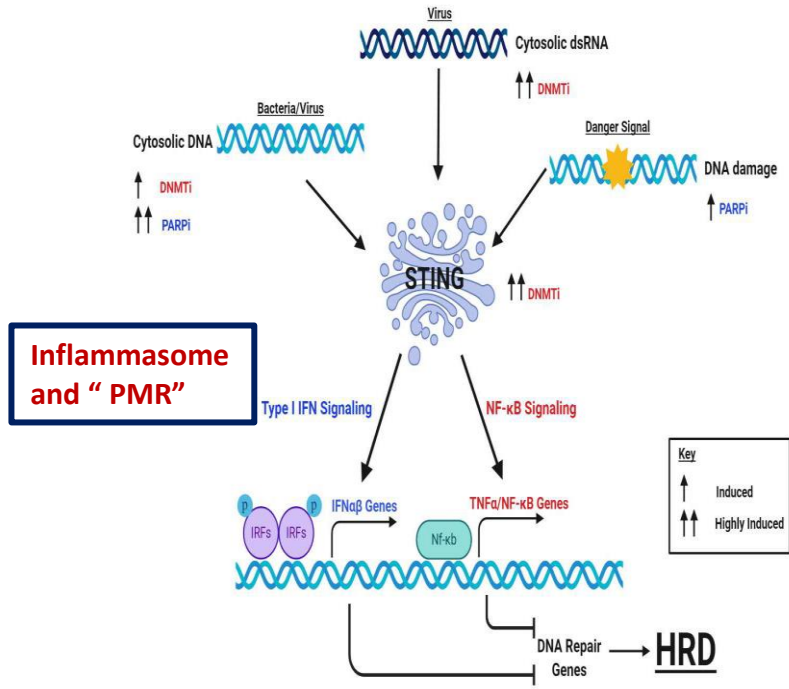
Feyruz Rassool

Rassool lab at UMD

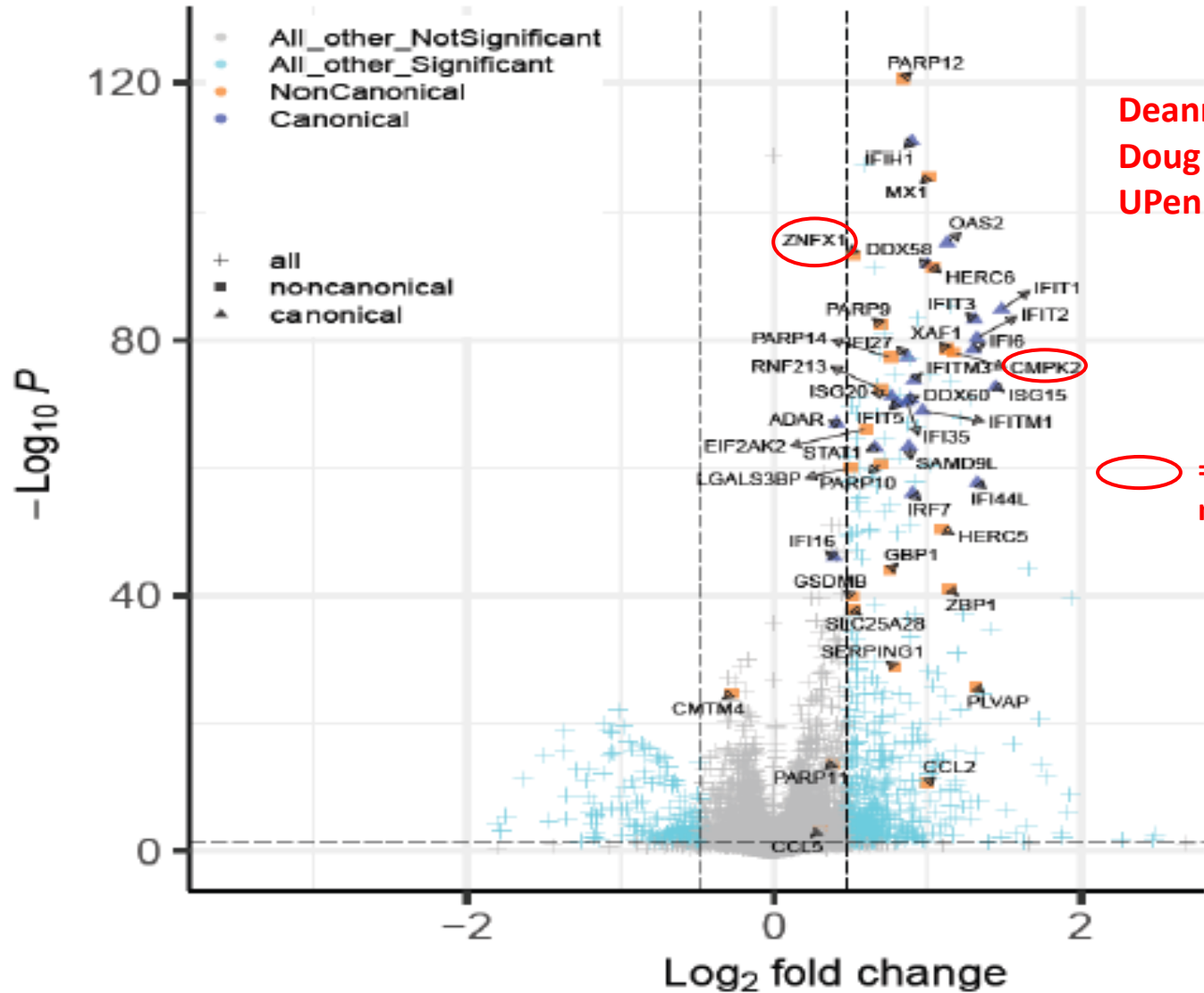
Fey Rassool *et al.*, PNAS 2020, 23

AML, Breast CA

Covid And Epigenetic Rx Viral mimicry



Fey Rassool *et al.*,
 PNAS 2020, 23



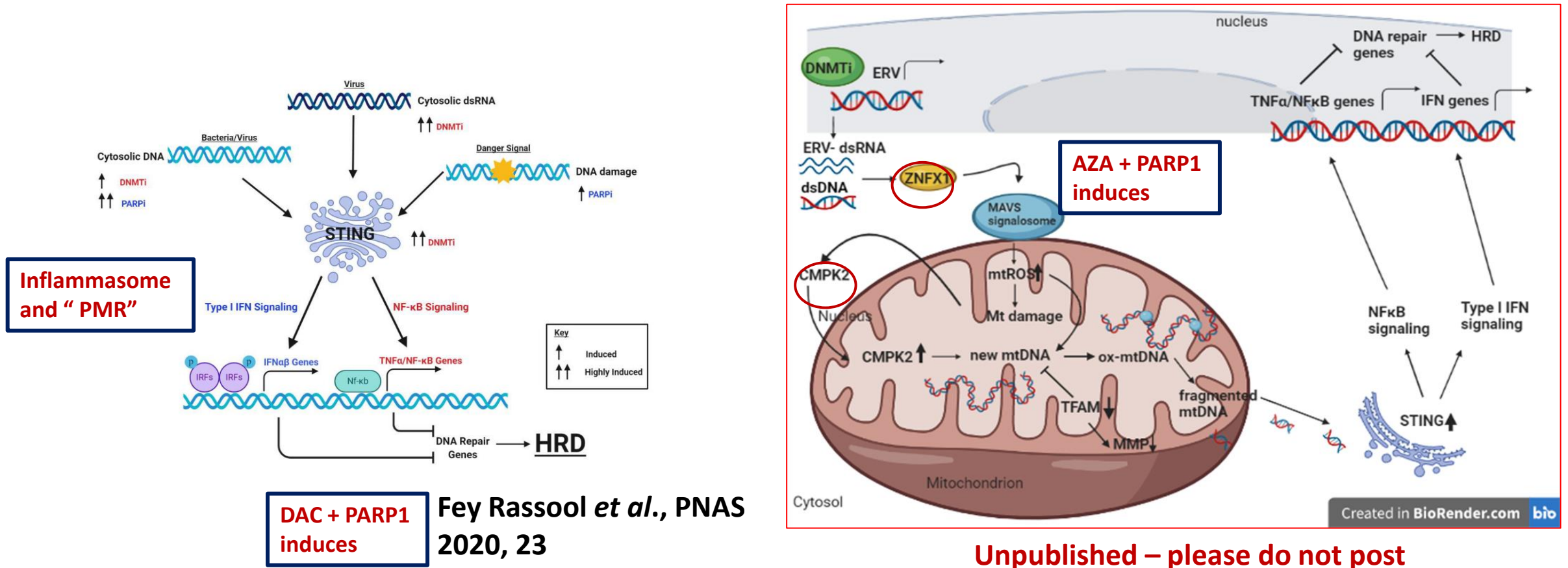
Deanne Taylor,
 Doug Wallace
 UPen

COVIRT Consortium (Beheshti) Baylin, Topper, and Rassool
 Unpublished, please do not post

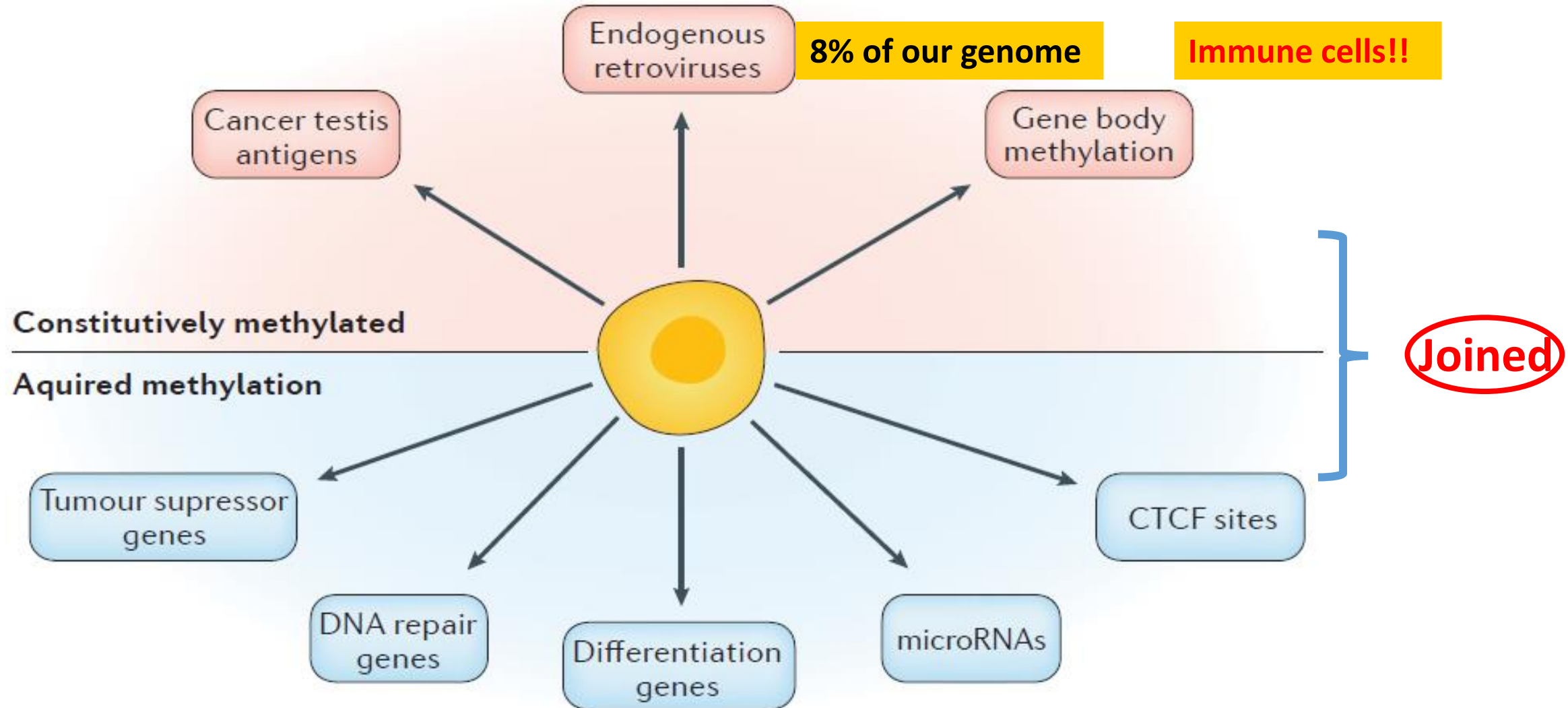
MT ARE THE GATEWAY TO IFN/INFLAMMASOME SIGNALING

Hypothesis

DNMTi and PARPi treatment in BRCA wild-type EOC triggers mt dysfunction and cytoplasmic mtDNA release that activates STING-mediated inflammatory signaling, leading to HRD



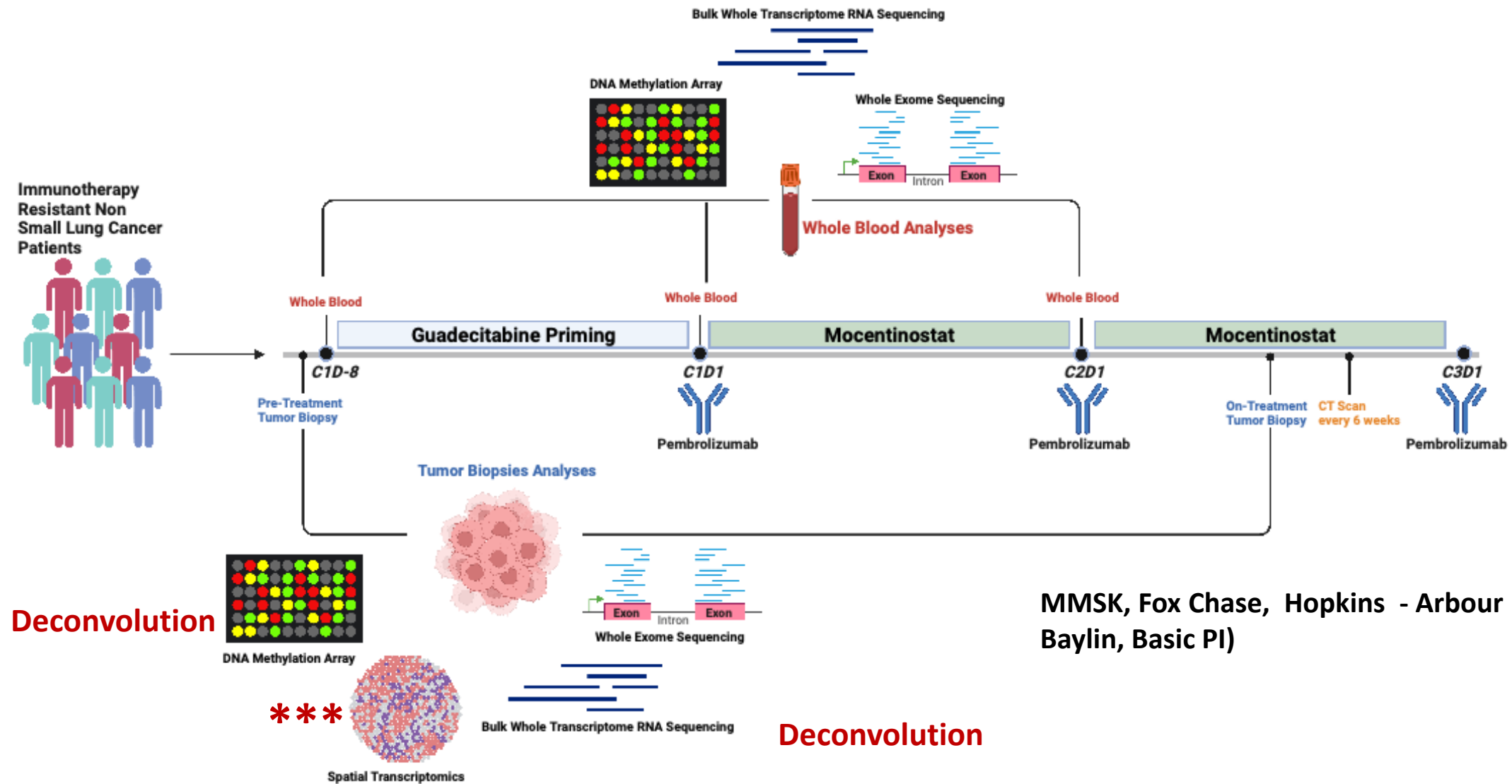
The Tumor As A Target Of Epigenetic Therapy -The Triad



Intermediate CpG island densities
Controlling Genes – many have CpG poor promoters

Clinical Trial Schema: Reversing IO Resistance –NSCLC

SU2C Merck Catalyst Trial



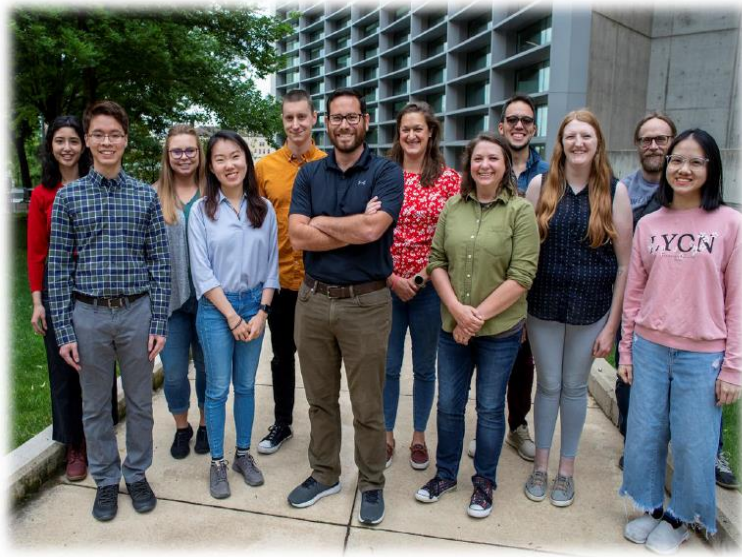
MMSK, Fox Chase, Hopkins - Arbour Trial Clinical PI; Baylin, Basic PI)

Conclusions to date

- Kras, TP53 co-mutations are associated with response.
- Basal responders have high inflammatory signaling.
- Differential expression to therapy is modest, DEGs detected are associated with STAT3, TAM and DC recruitment
- Inflammatory pathways are augmented by therapy, MYC suppressed
- Calcium signaling associated with response in whole blood samples.

Widening A Research Effort Without Walls

Rothbart Lab



Feyruz Rassool



Hari Easwaran

Competitive renewal

Multiple PI NIEHS Grant – Role Of Inflammation And Increased ROS Induced Epigenetic Changes In The Genesis Of CRC

Peter Jones



Discipline based SPORE to develop Cancer Epigenetic based therapies - Issa, Jones, Baylin

DSB's and Oxidative Damage Inducing A Systemic Signal for Repair in GC/CpG Rich Regions



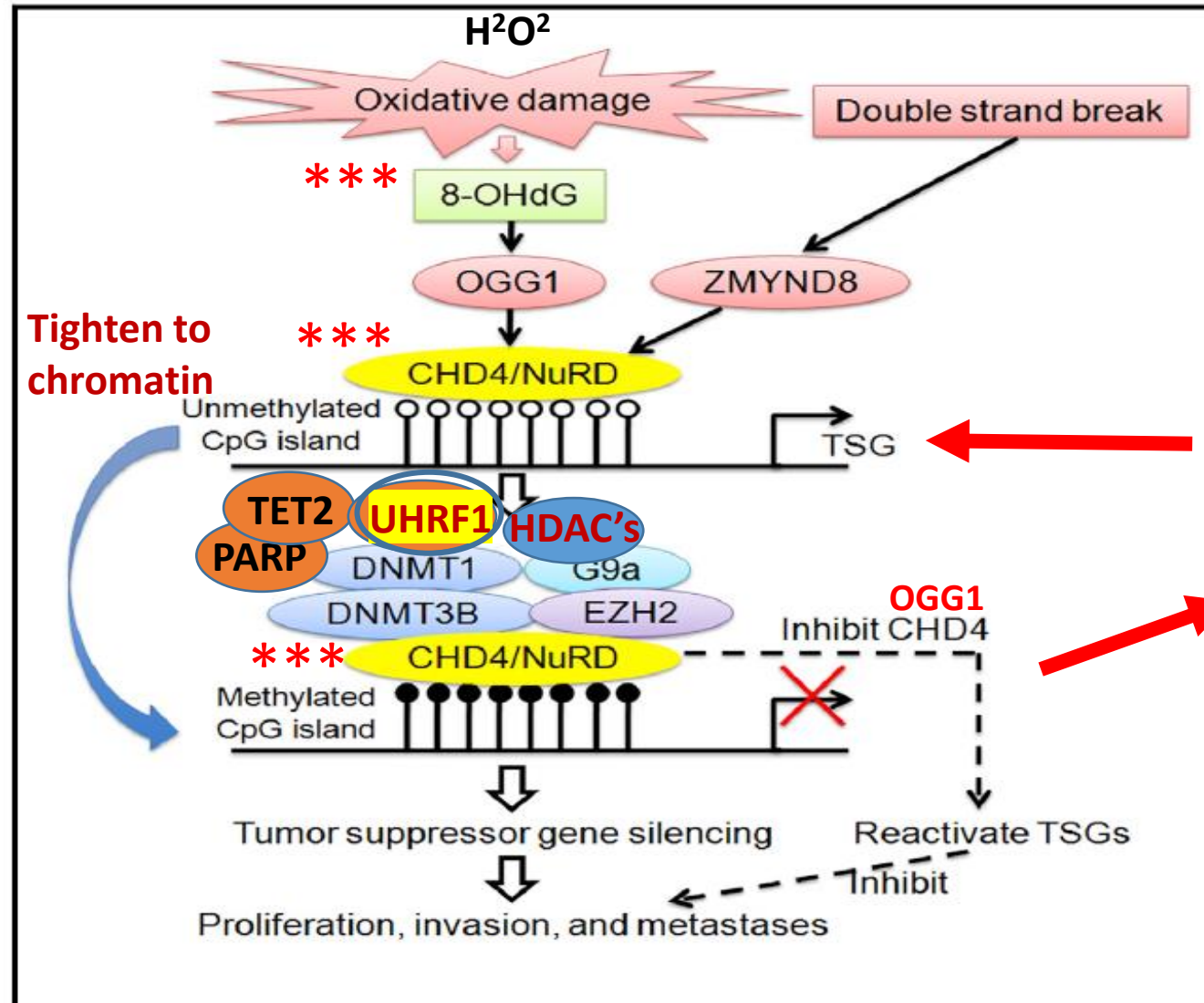
Heather O'Hagan



Feyruz Rassool



Limin Xia
State Key Laboratory of Cancer Biology, Fourth Military Medical University



**Inflammation
Aging
Cancer risk**

**60 to 80%
developmental genes**

Genes induced!

- CDH1*
- WIF1*
- TIMP2*
- TIMP3*
- MLH1*
- CDKN2A*
- SFRP4*
- SFRP5*

Cai et al, Oncogene, 2012

O'Hagan et al Cancer Cell, 2011

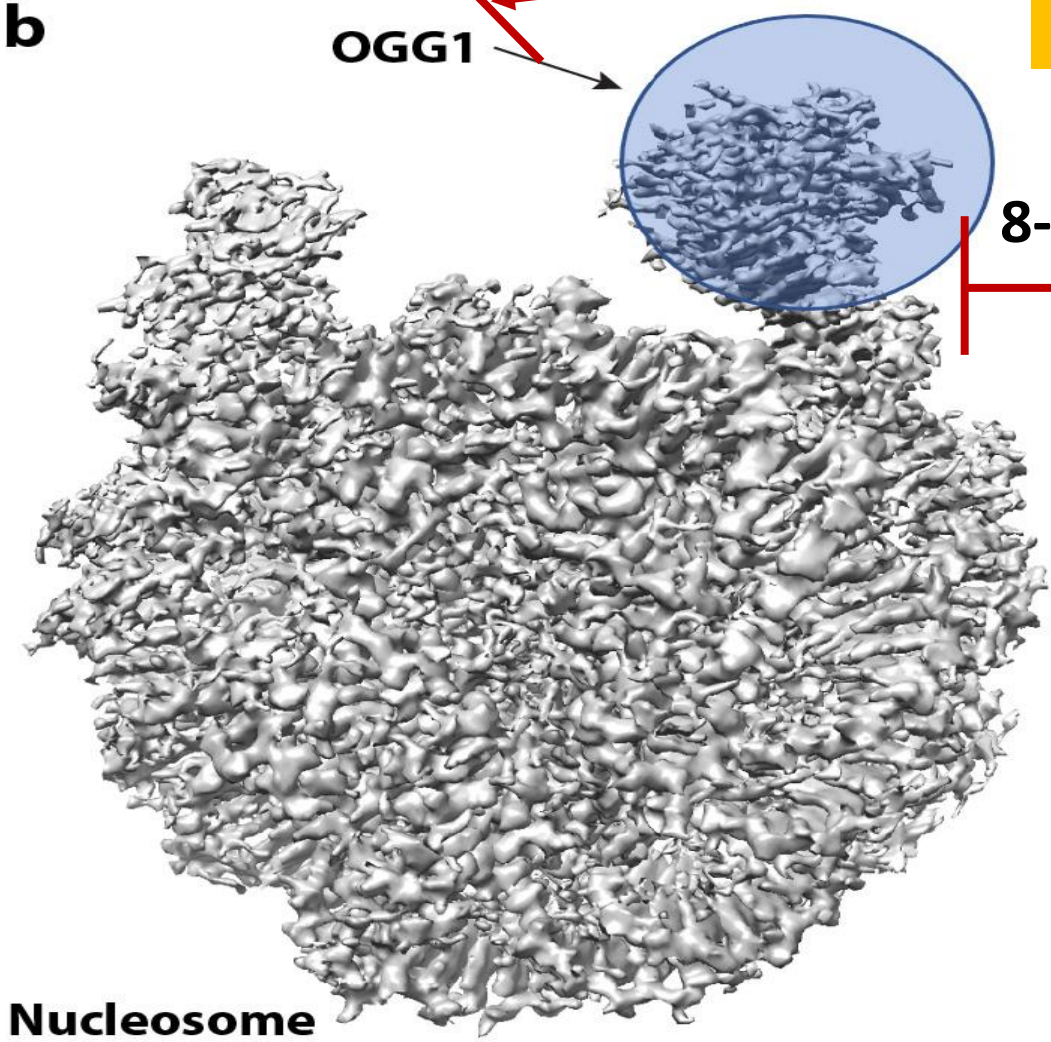
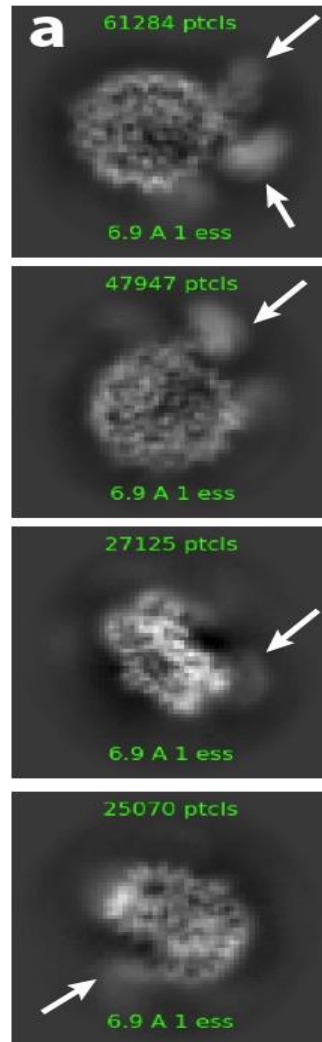
Muvarak et al, Cancer Cell, 2016

Zhang et al, Mol Cell, 2017

Xia et al, Cancer Cell, 2017

How Does OGG1 Work?

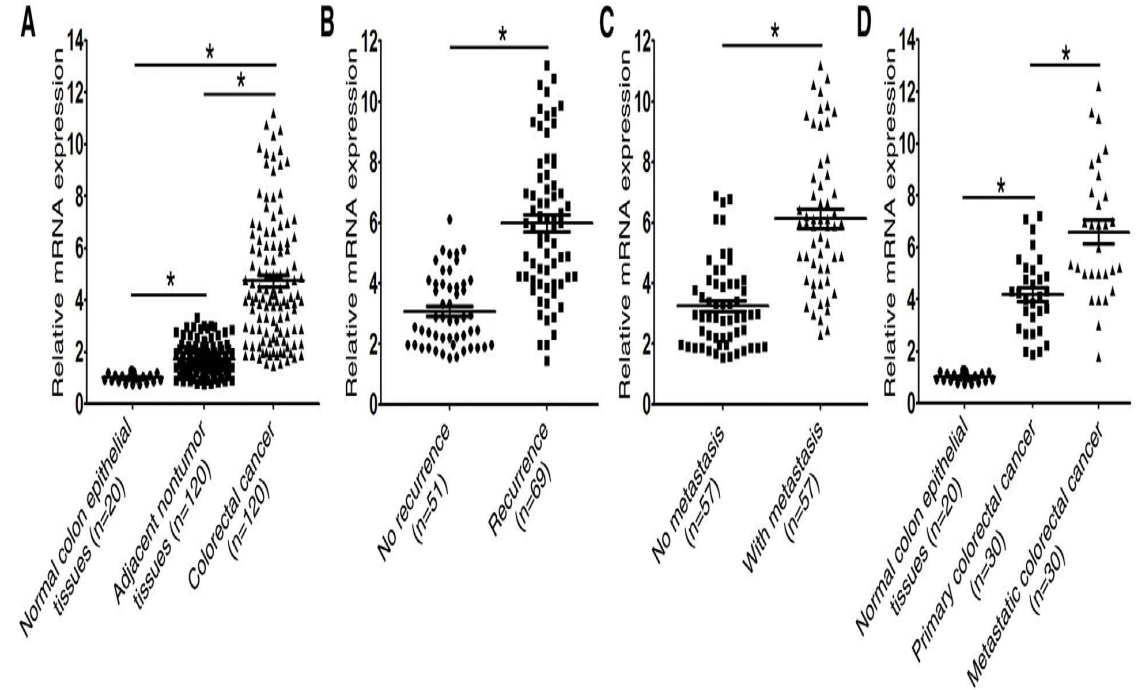
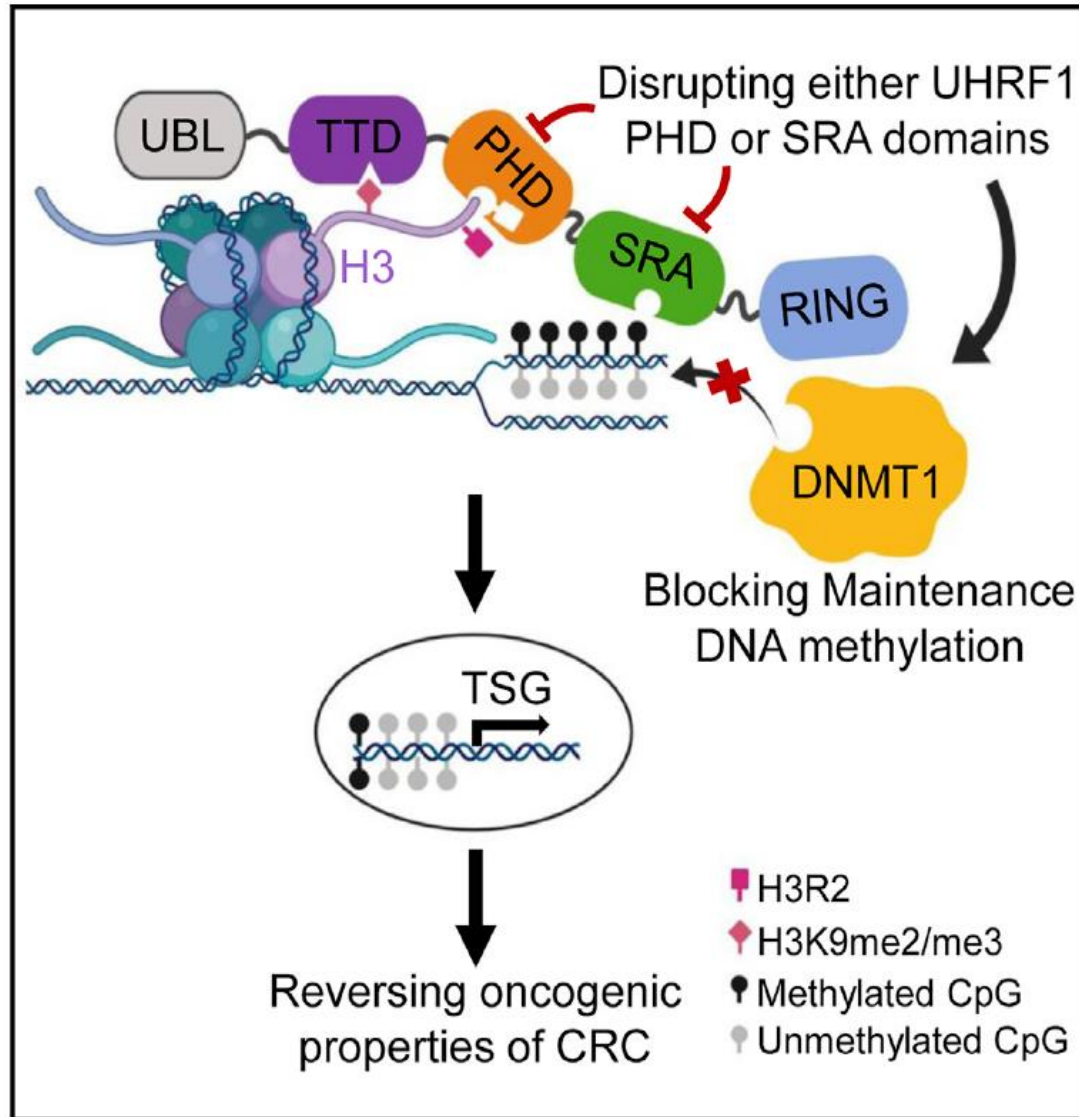
Small molecule inhibitors



In preparation, You, Qinglong, Yi Cai, S Baylin, Huilin Li

Unpublished—
do not post

UHRF1 MAINTAINS ABNORMAL DNA METHYLATION IN CANCER – ELEVATED EXPRESSION CORRELATES WITH POOR OUTCOMES IN HUMAN COLORECTAL CANCER



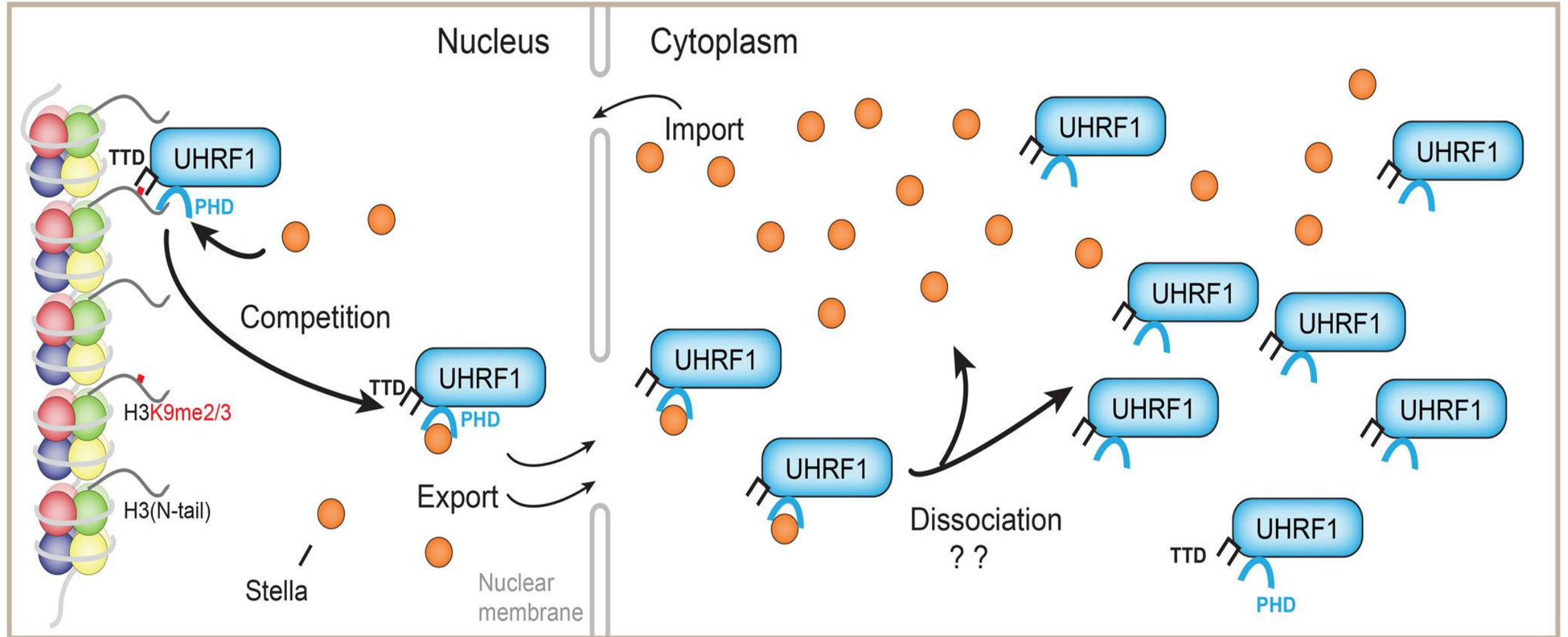
Rothbart



Xiangqian Kong
(Baylin Lab)

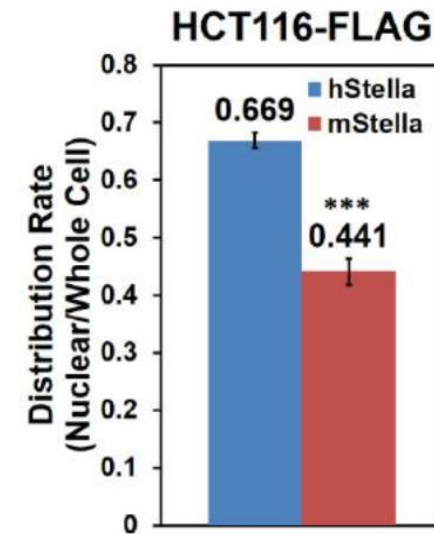
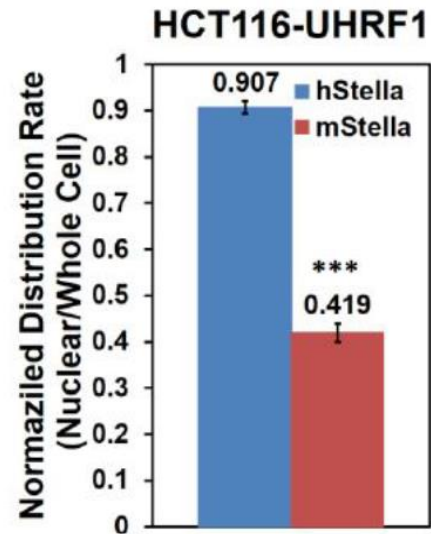
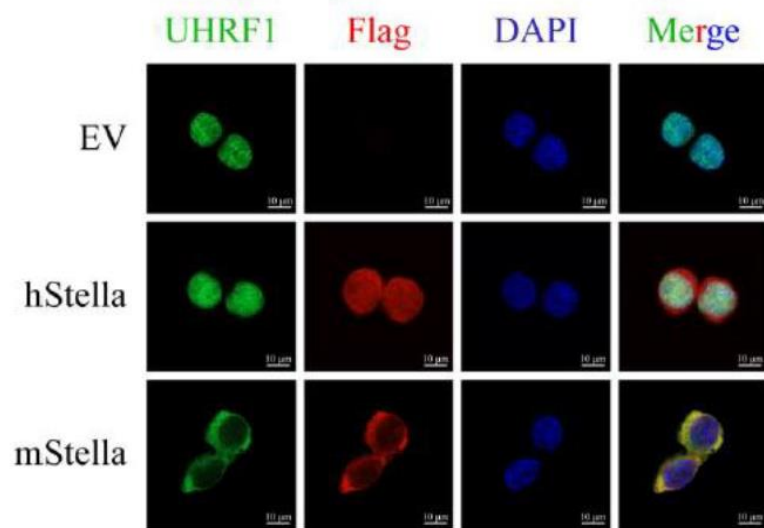
Guangzhou
Institutes of
Biomedicine and
Health, Chinese
Academy of
Sciences

FUNCTION OF STELLA (DPPA1), A NATURAL INHIBITOR OF UHRF1

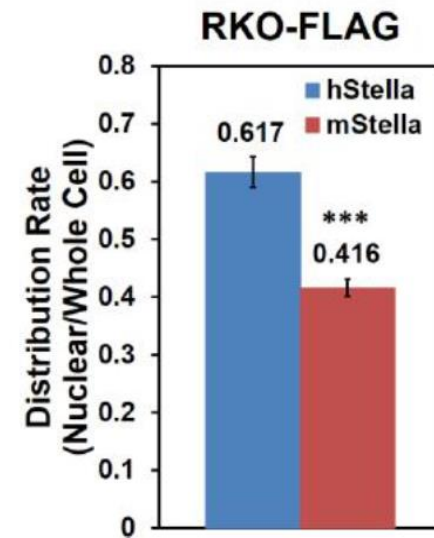
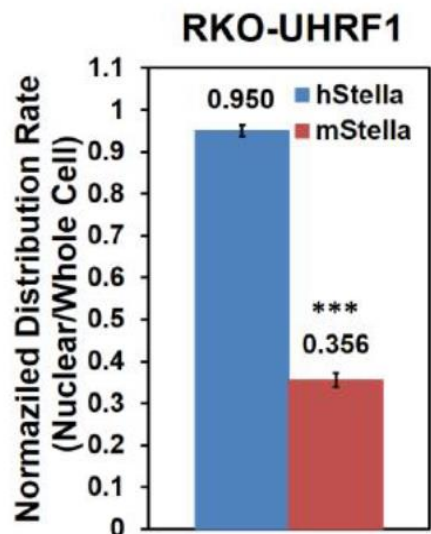
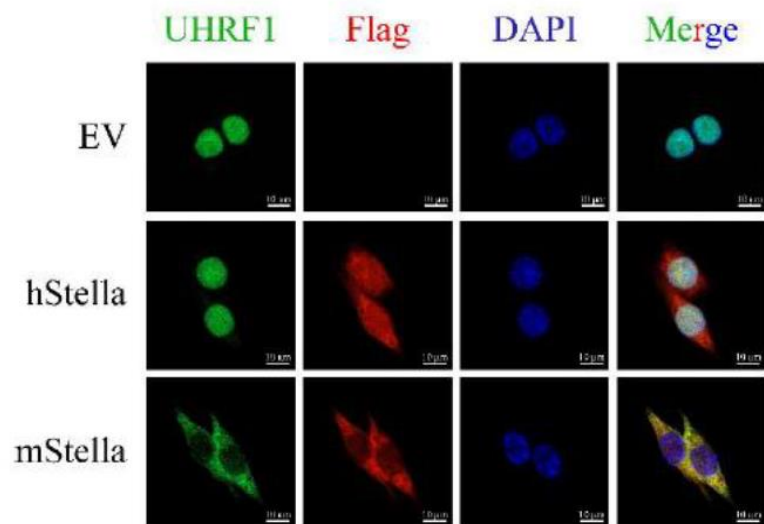


MOUSE, BUT NOT HUMAN STELLA ACTS AS AN INHIBITOR OF UHRF1 IN HUMAN CANCER CELLS

HCT-116

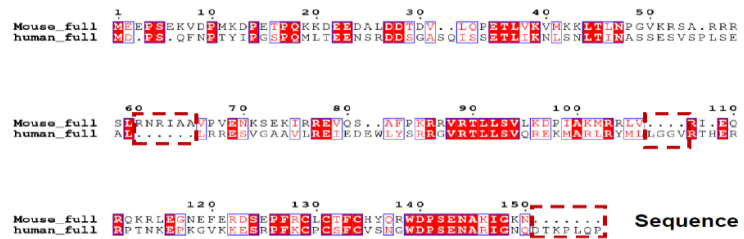
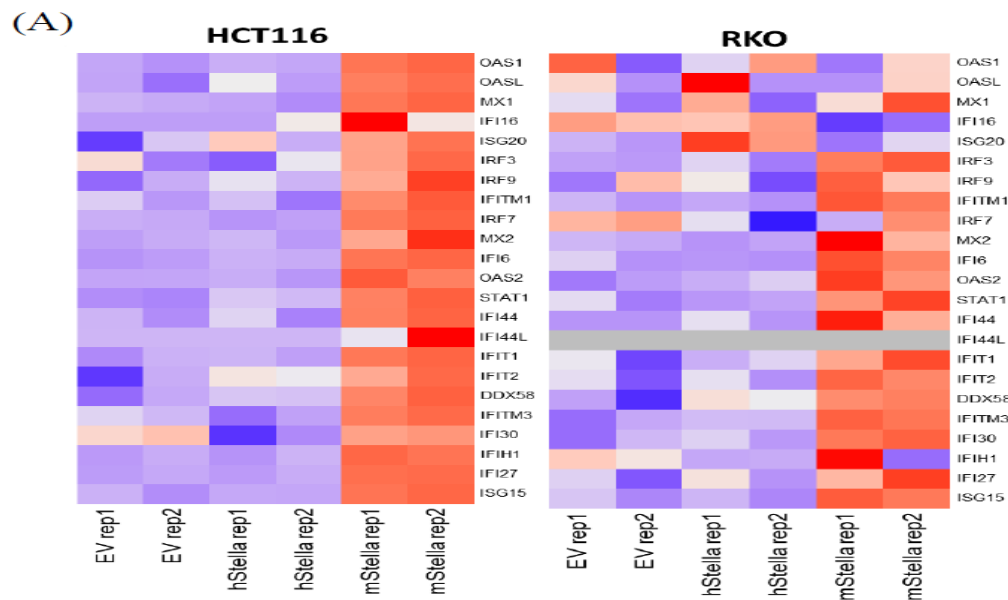


RKO

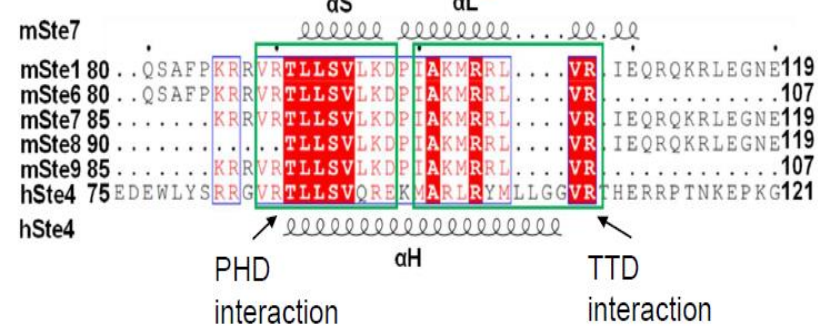
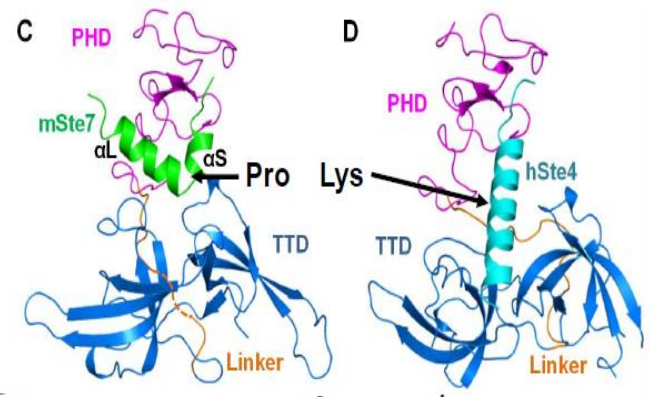
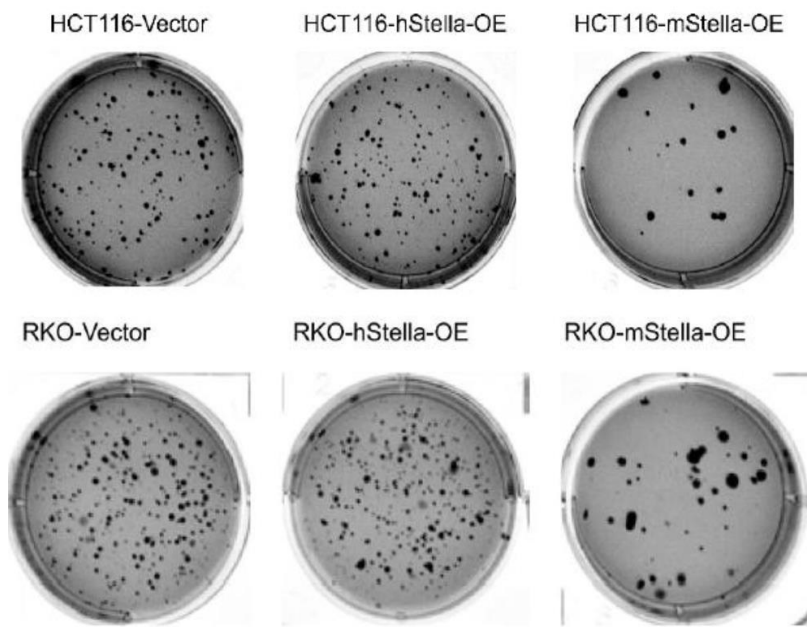
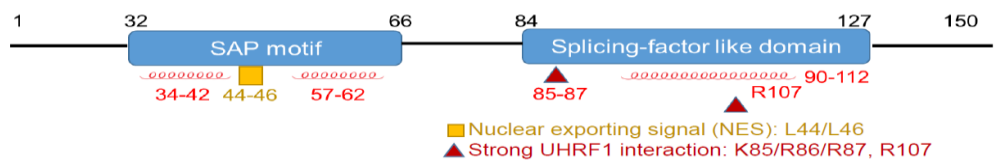


Xiangqian Kong
(Baylin Lab)

Guangzhou Institutes of Biomedicine and Health,
Chinese Academy of Sciences



Sequence identity: 33%



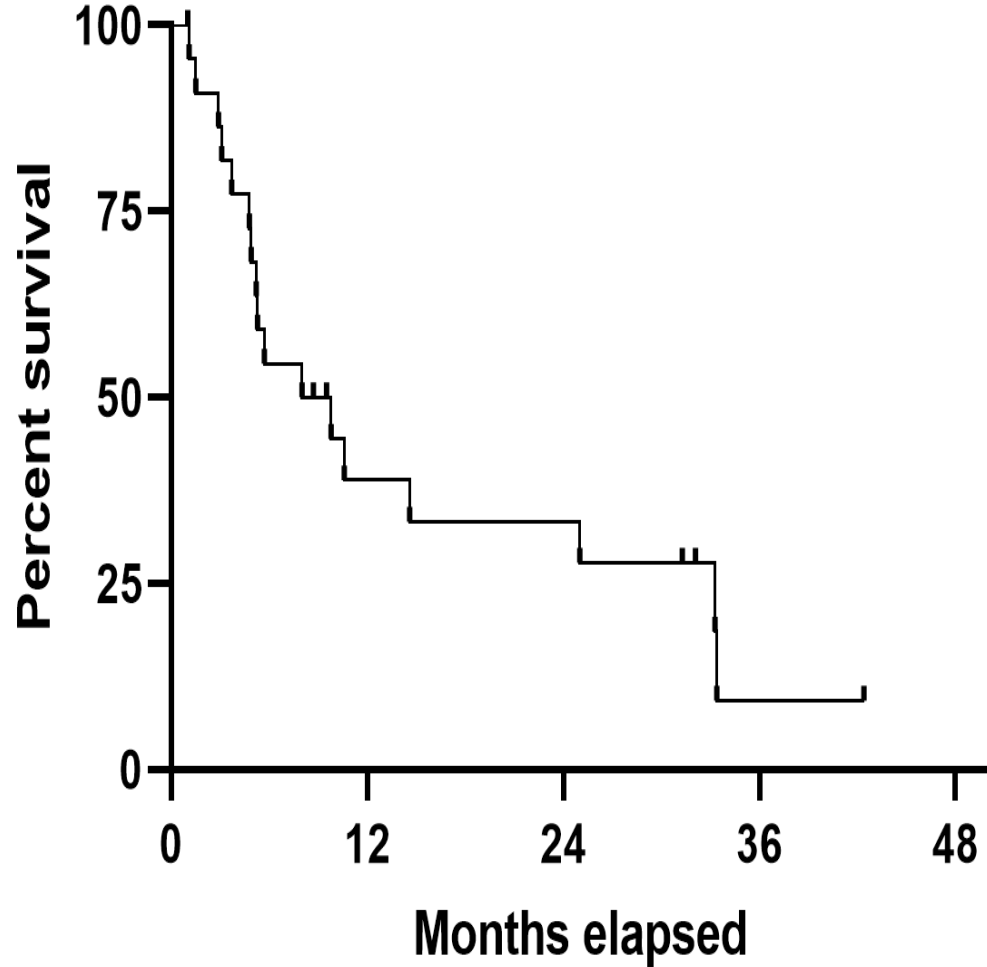
Xiangqian Kong
(Baylin Lab)

**Guangzhou Institutes
of Biomedicine and
Health, Chinese
Academy of Sciences**

Components Of The Talk

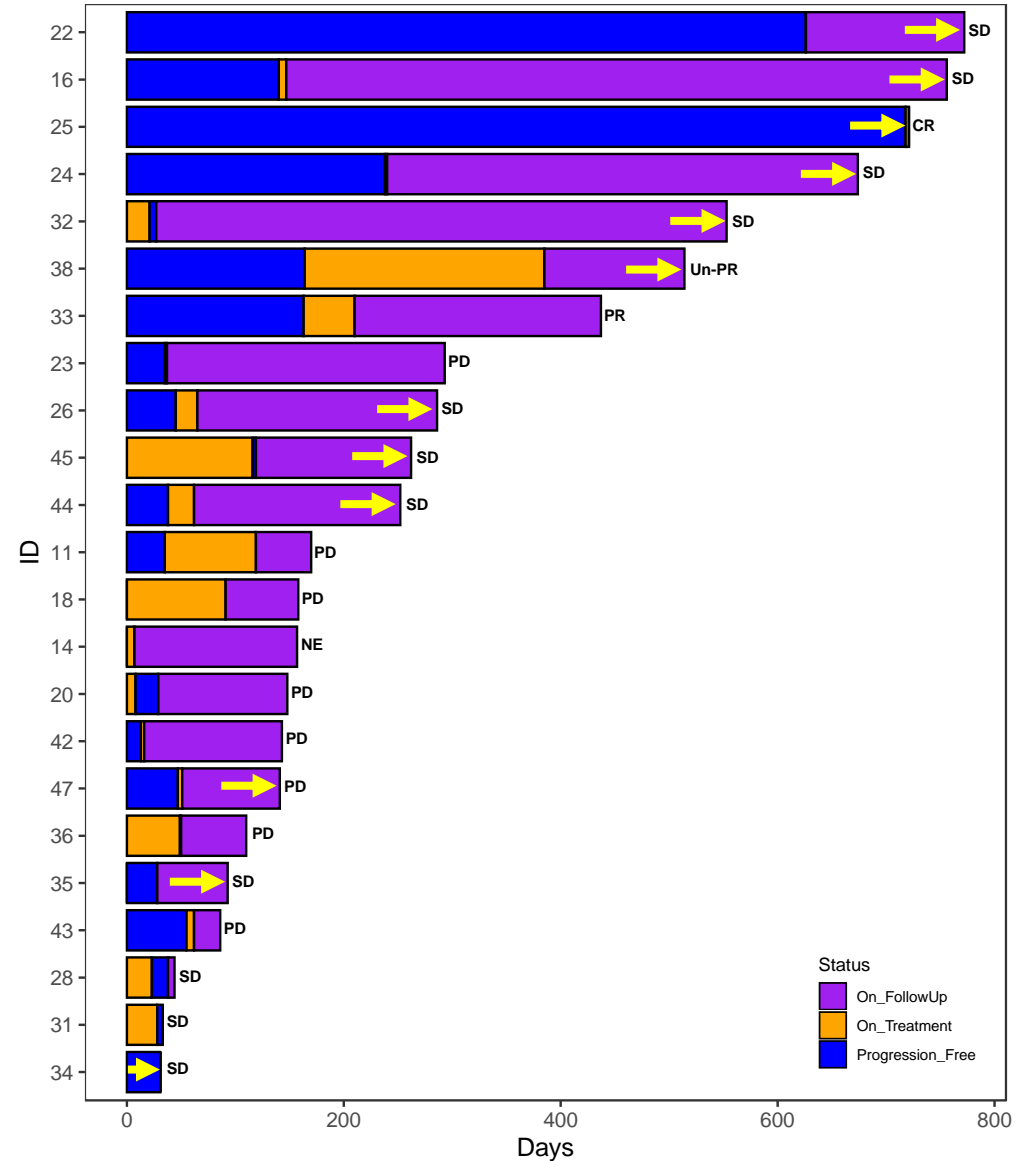
- A little bit of history including our group's entry into the field
- Molecular mechanisms underlying origins of an epigenetic abnormality we have been studying for over 30 years – **very recent insights**
- An exciting era – cancer evolution from normal cells of tumor origin and the role of their epigenetic “state”, dependency of epigenetic changes for **a)** progression of these cells to point of cancer initiation and **b)** allowing driver mutations to induce cell transformation
- Some basic translational implications including manipulating epigenetic aspects of tumor immunology

Survival Analysis of Combination Epigenetic and Immunotherapy in α PD-1 Resistant NSCLC

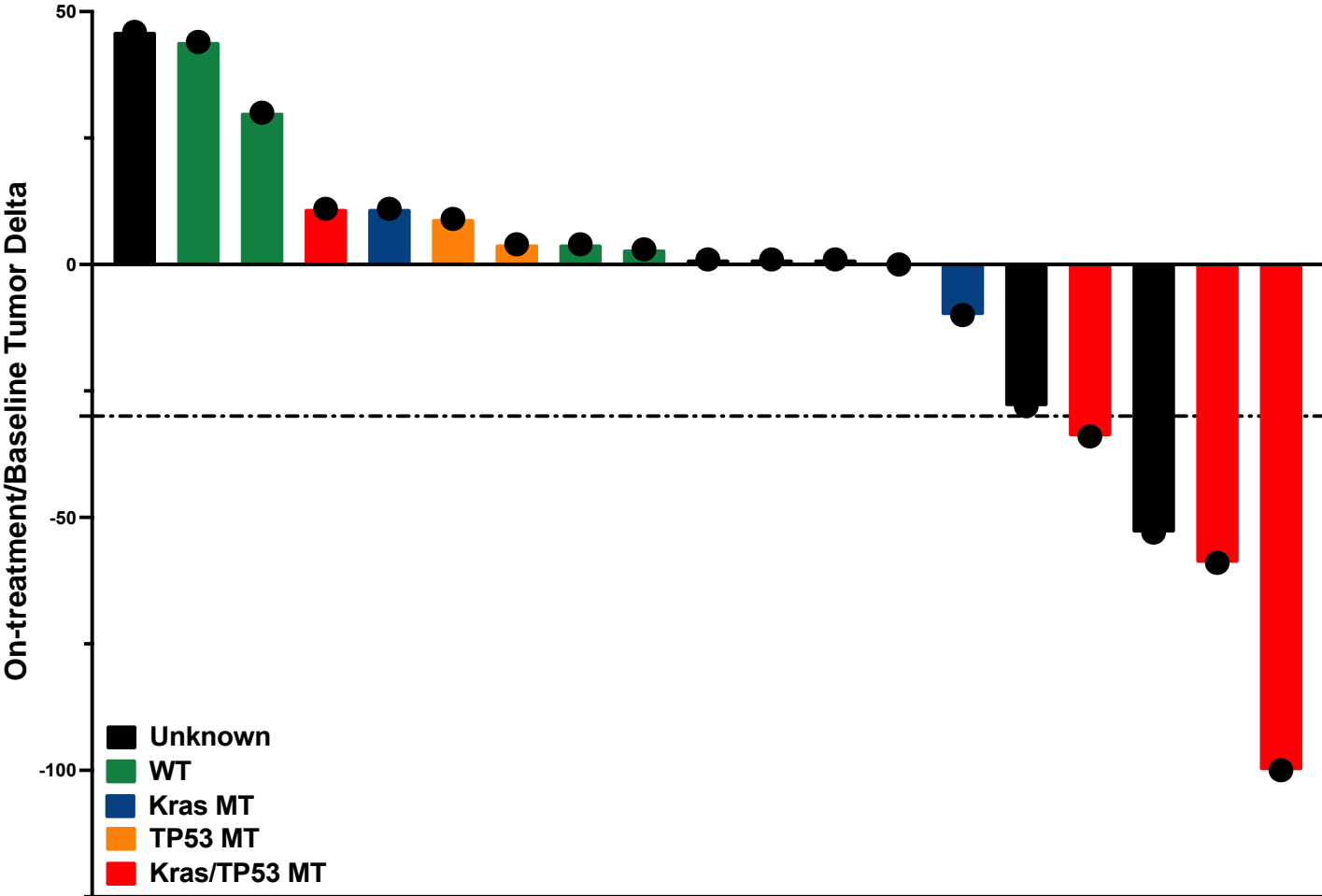


Topper, Arbour, et al

Unpublished— please do not post



Targeted Mutational Profiling (MSK-IMPACT) - Association Between Kras/TP53 Co-mutation and Tumor Regression

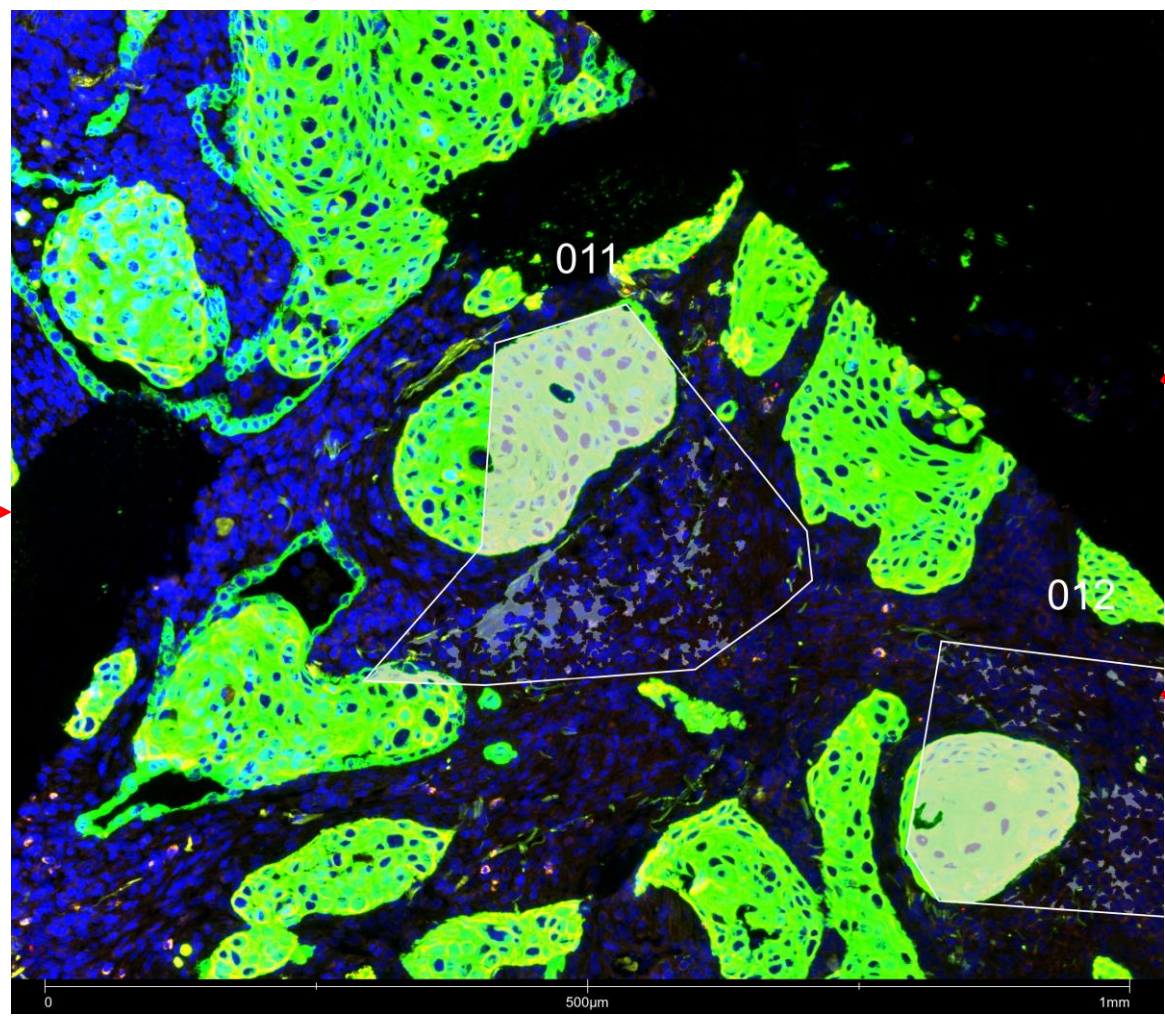


Mutation	w/ Unknown Samples
WT both	NS
Kras MT	NS
TP53 MT	NS
Kras MT, TP53 MT	P-value: 0.0103

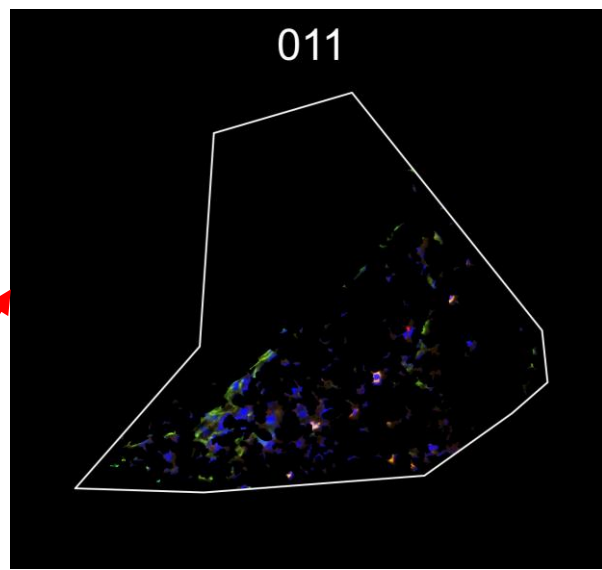
Nanostring GeoMX DSP ROI Selection and Segmentation



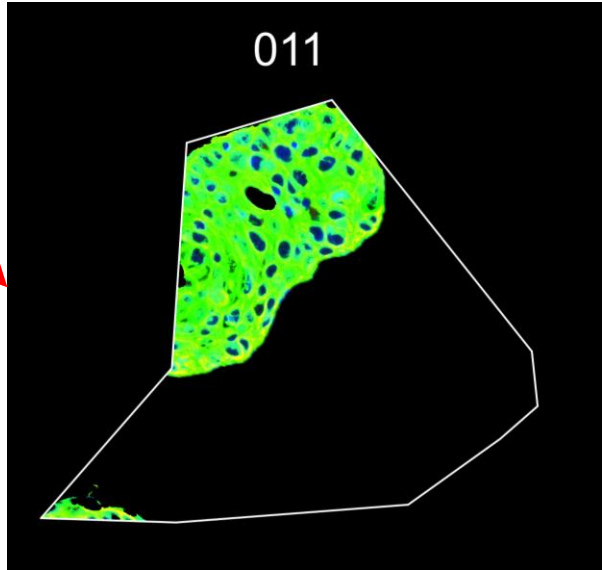
Region of Interest Selection:
Tumor and Immune Cells in Direct Contact (Pathologist Guided)



CD45 Segmentation



PanCK Segmentation



Channels:
FITC/525nm : SYTO 13 : DNA (Blue)
Cy3/568nm : Alexa 532 : PanCK (Green)
Texas Red/615nm : Alexa 594 : CD45 (Red)

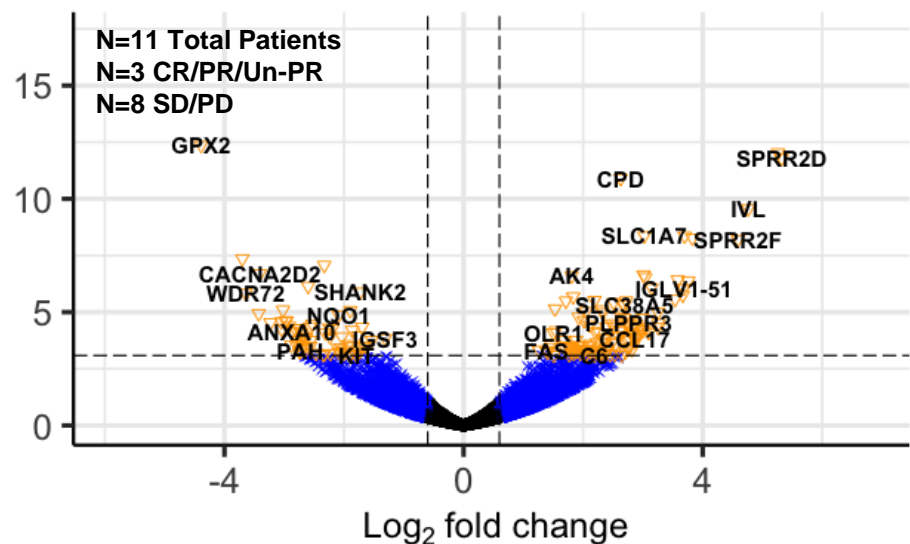
Basal Transcriptome of Responders Display Differential Enrichment of Inflammatory and Kras Pathways Relative to Non-Responders

CR/PR v. SD/PD Baseline

Enhanced Volcano

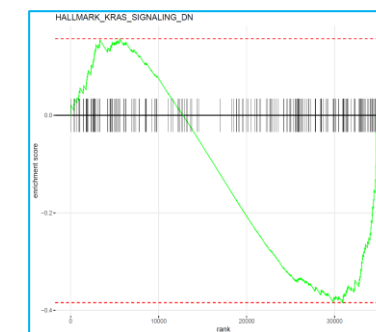
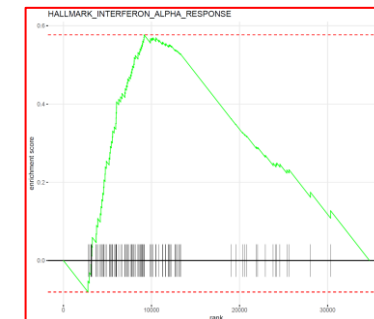
○ NS × Log₂ FC ◇ p-value ▽ p-value and log₂ FC

Resistance?



total = 19055 variables

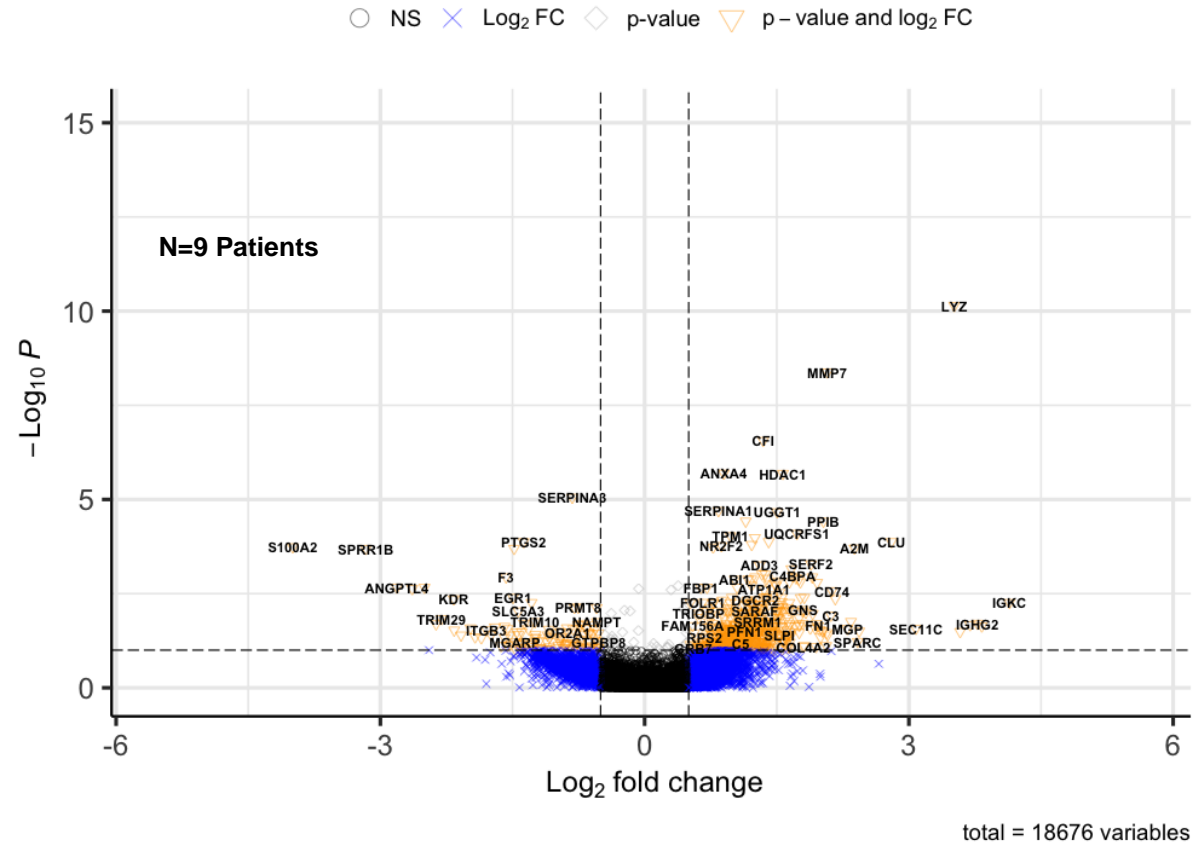
Pathway	Gene ranks	NES	pval	padj
HALLMARK_INTERFERON_ALPHA_RESPONSE		1.99	2.8e-04	2.9e-03
HALLMARK_HEME_METABOLISM		-1.61	2.9e-04	2.9e-03
HALLMARK_INTERFERON_GAMMA_RESPONSE		2.03	3.3e-04	2.9e-03
RK_EPITHELIAL_MESENCHYMAL_TRANSITION		2.24	3.3e-04	2.9e-03
HALLMARK_ALLOGRAFT_REJECTION		1.74	3.3e-04	2.9e-03
HALLMARK_PANCREAS_BETA_CELLS		-1.92	3.4e-04	2.9e-03
HALLMARK_INFLAMMATORY_RESPONSE		1.52	9.8e-04	7.0e-03
HALLMARK_IL6_JAK_STAT3_SIGNALING		1.54	4.8e-03	3.0e-02
HALLMARK_APOPTOSIS		1.40	7.9e-03	4.4e-02
HALLMARK_IL2_STAT5_SIGNALING		1.36	9.5e-03	4.7e-02
HALLMARK_MYOGENESIS		-1.37	1.2e-02	5.5e-02
HALLMARK_OXIDATIVE_PHOSPHORYLATION		-1.35	1.6e-02	6.2e-02
HALLMARK_ANGIOGENESIS		1.54	1.6e-02	6.2e-02
HALLMARK_COMPLEMENT		1.31	2.1e-02	7.3e-02
HALLMARK_KRAS_SIGNALING_DN		-1.33	2.2e-02	7.3e-02



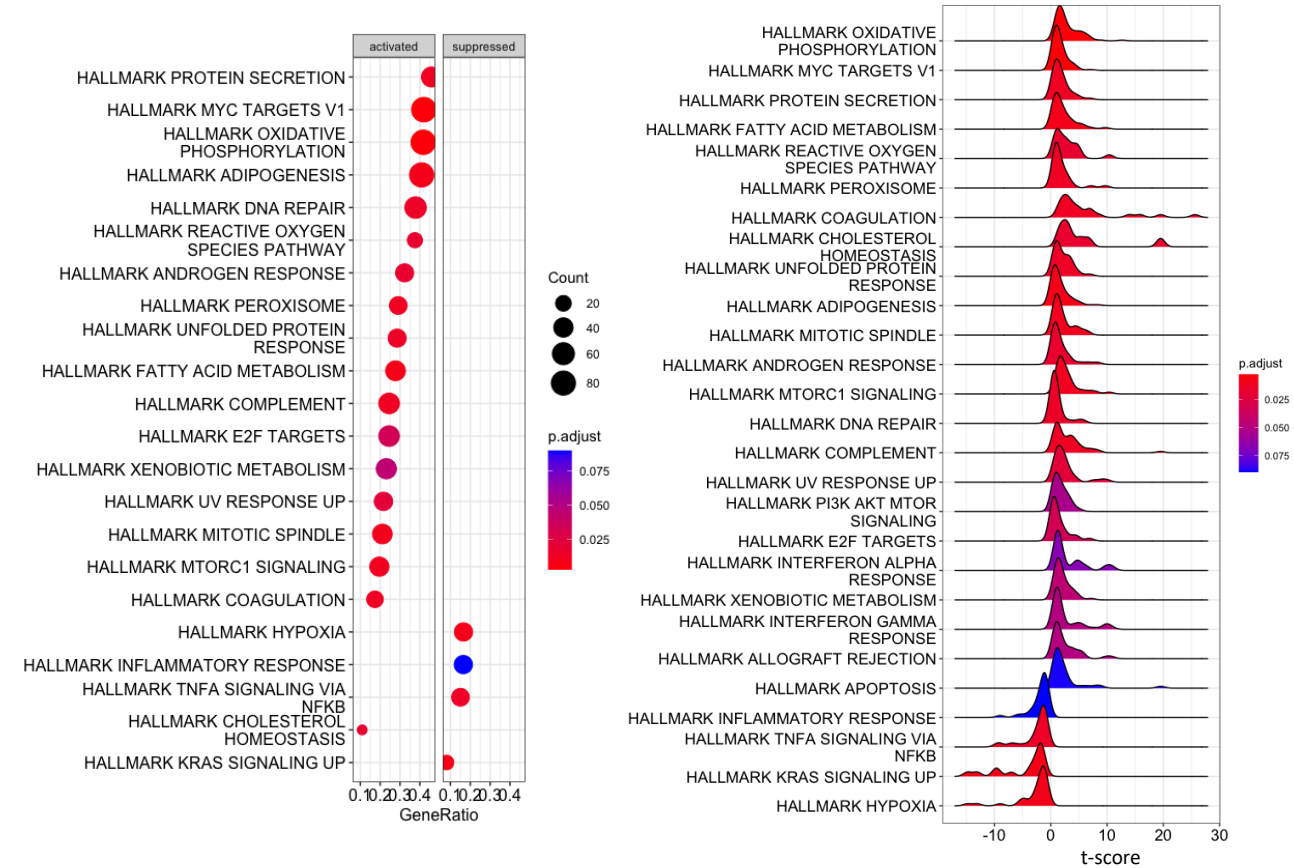
Basal Responder vs Non-Responder based on RECIST Response; all CR/PR patients have achieved DCB (6 Mos. No PD)
 DE analysis: High Class II APC, inflammatory genes and immunotherapy target MUC16
 Pathways: Interferon and Allograft pathways (Up)

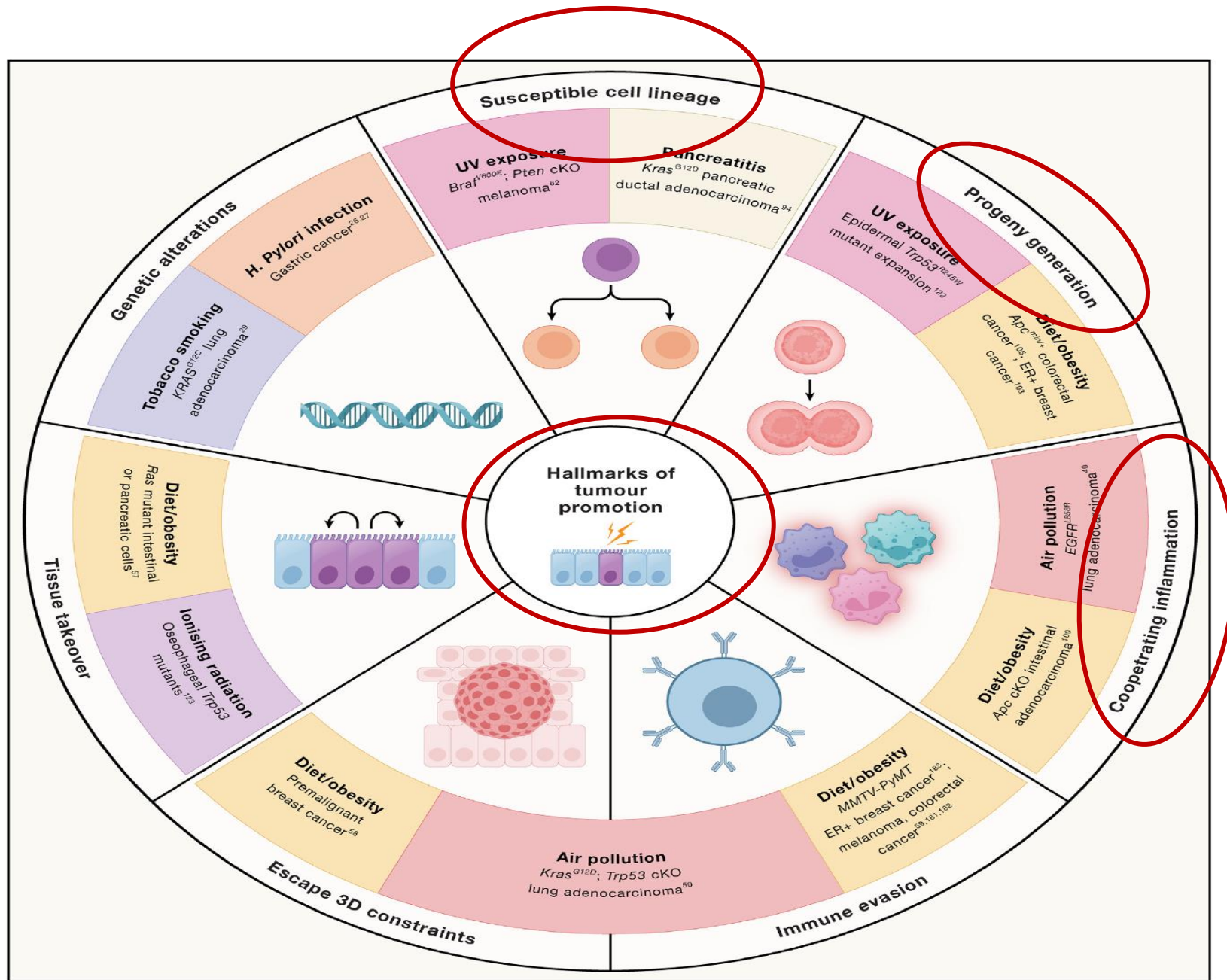
Responders Basally Present with Transcriptional MYC Activation and Interferon Suppression vs. Non-Responders in PanCK+ Tumor Cells

Differential Expression Analysis



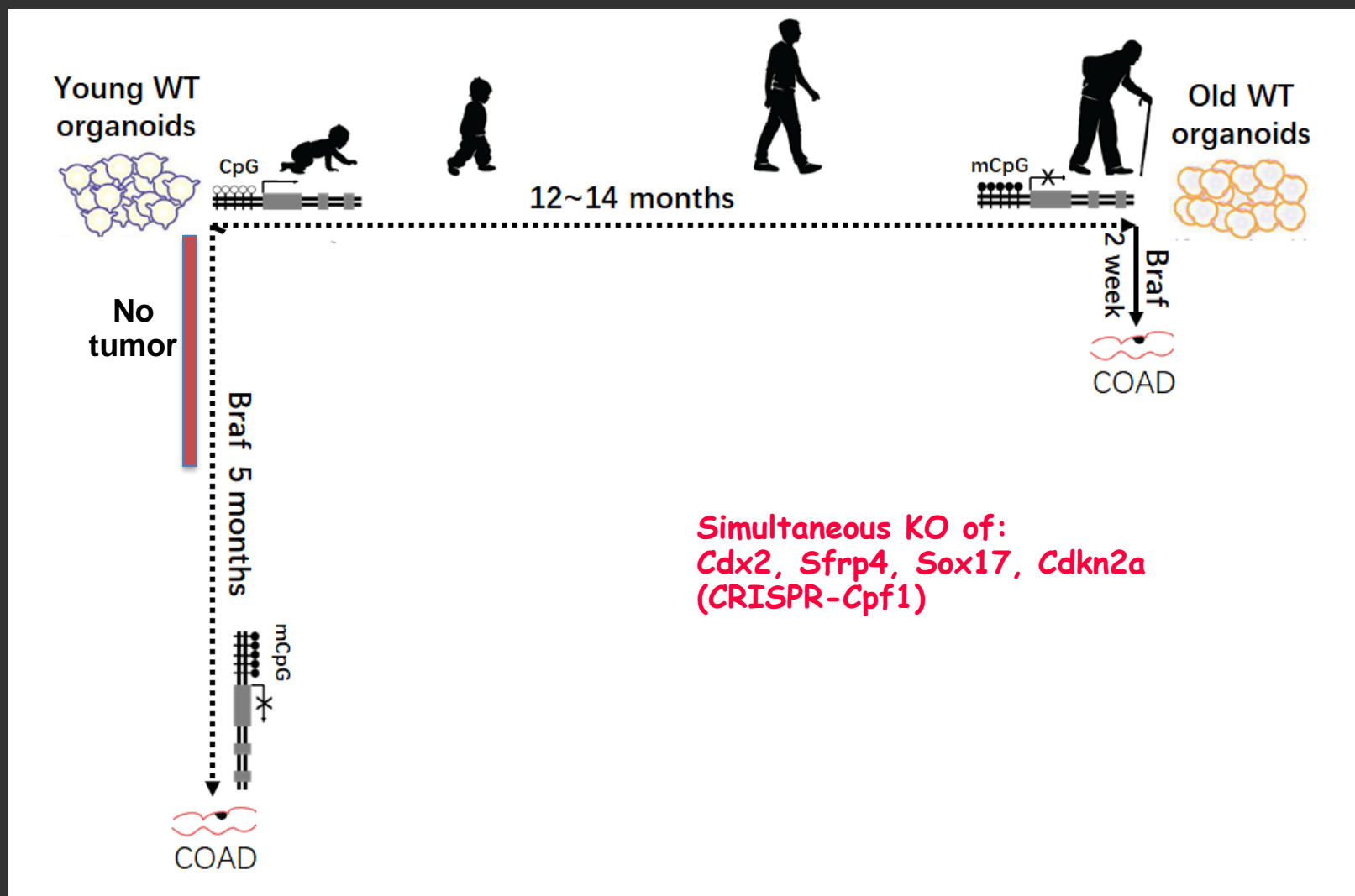
MSigDB: Hallmark



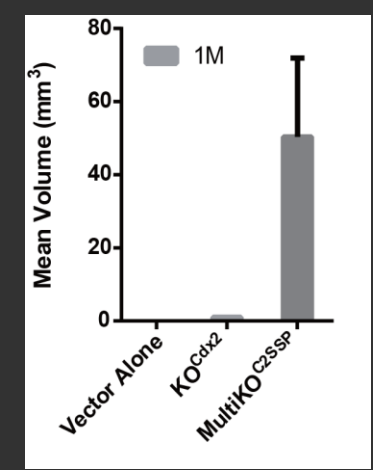
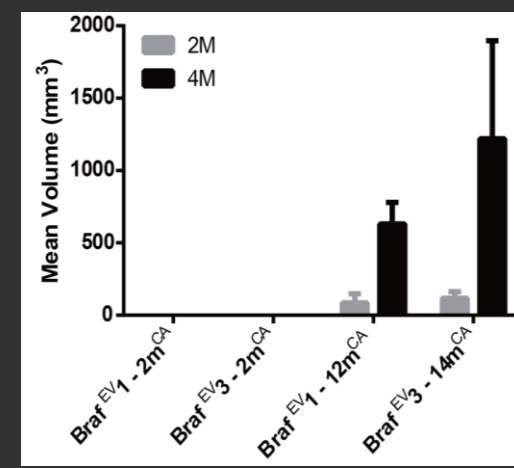


Swanton and
colleagues, Cell, 2023

Ageing-associated DNA methylation provides the permissive state for oncogenic mutations

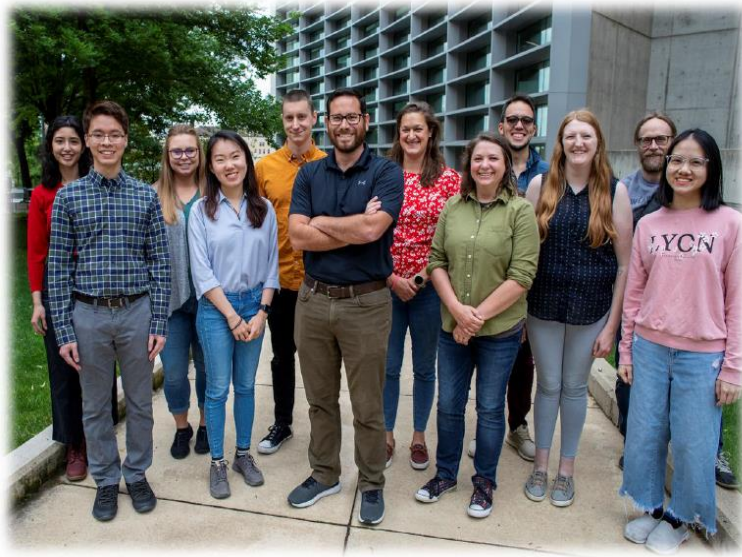


Simultaneous KO of:
Cdx2, Sfrp4, Sox17, Cdkn2a
 (CRISPR-Cpf1)



Widening A Research Effort Without Walls

Rothbart Lab



Feyruz Rassool



Hari Easwaran

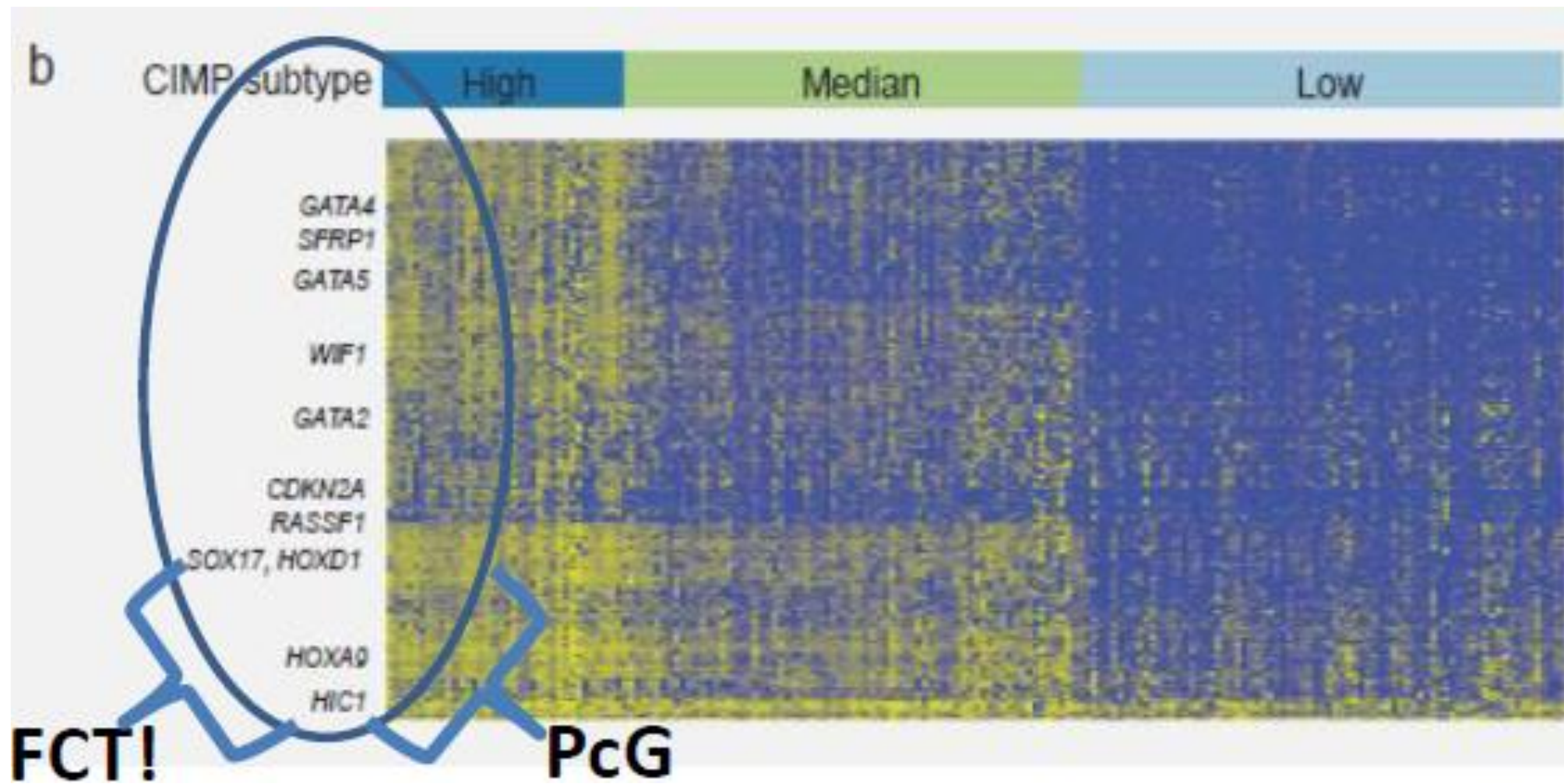
Competitive renewal

Multiple PI NIEHS Grant – Role Of Inflammation And Increased ROS Induced Epigenetic Changes In The Genesis Of CRC

Peter Jones

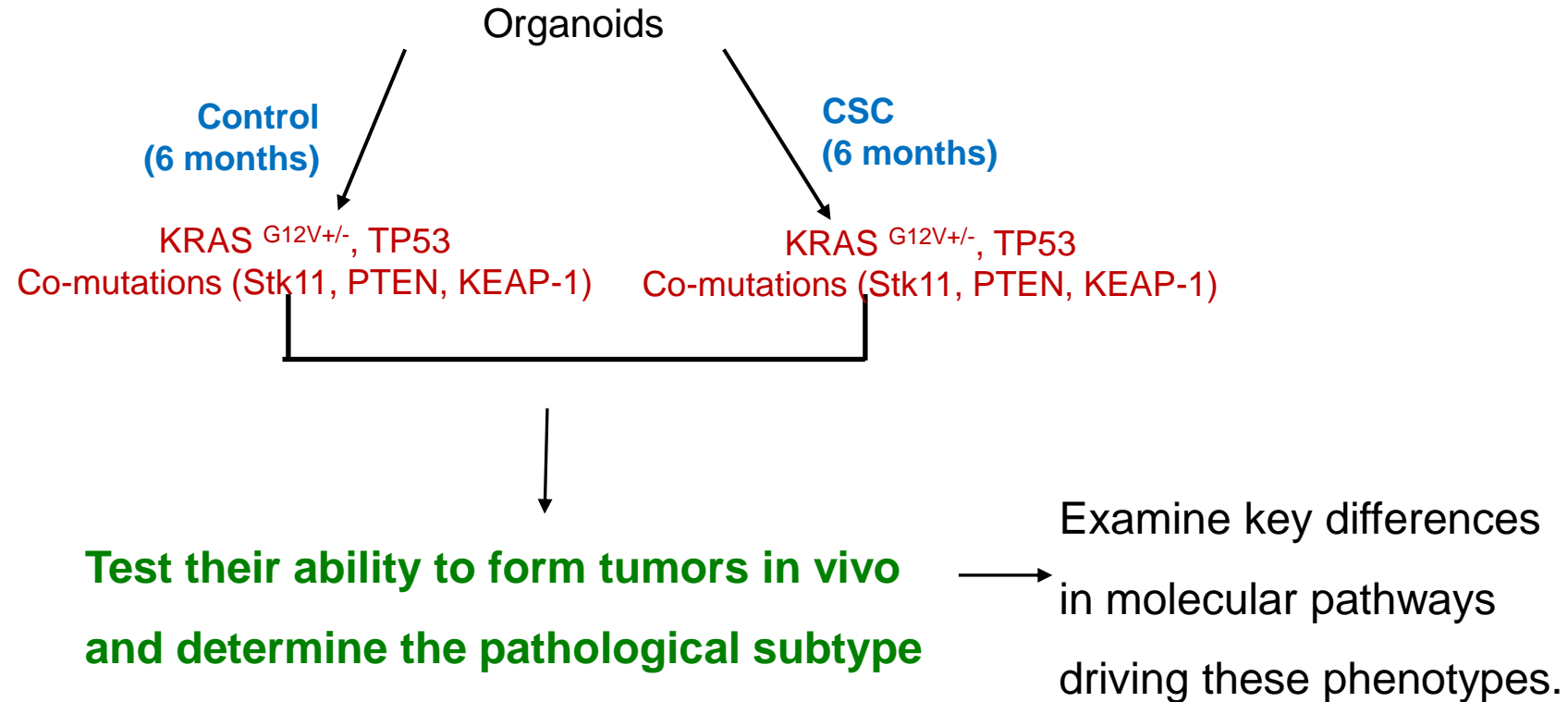


Discipline based SPORE to develop Cancer Epigenetic based therapies - Issa, Jones, Baylin

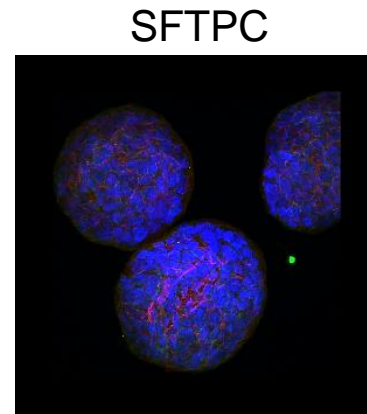
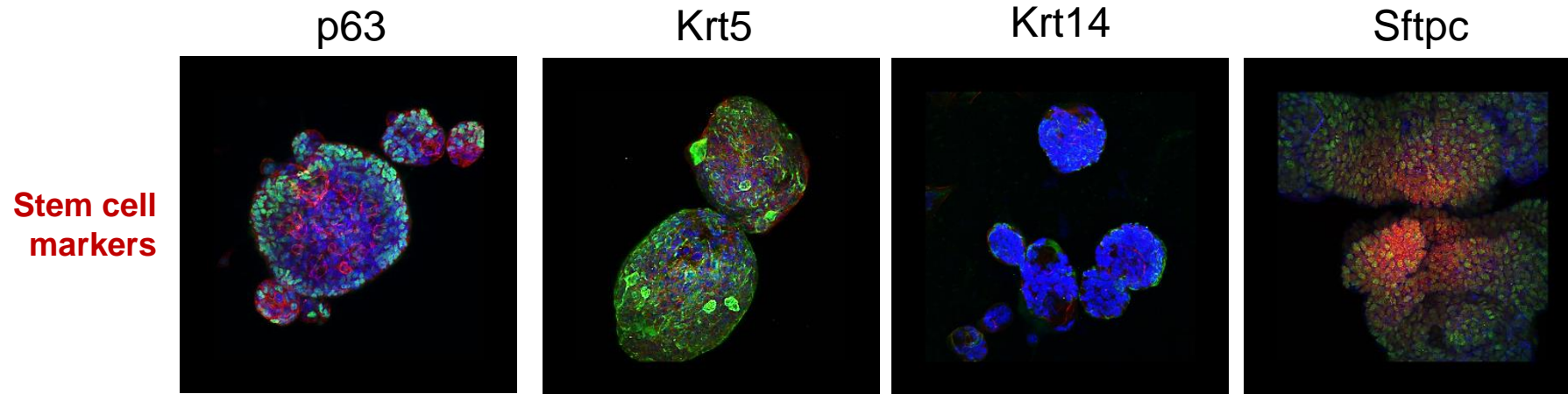


Cope, Danilova, Laird, Weisenberger, and the TCGA Consortium, Nature 2014

Role of epigenetic alterations in sensitizing to key genetic driver events to drive specific pathological subtypes of NSCLC



IMMUNOFLUORESCENT STAINING OF CELL TYPE-SPECIFIC MARKERS IN MURINE LUNG ORGANOIDS

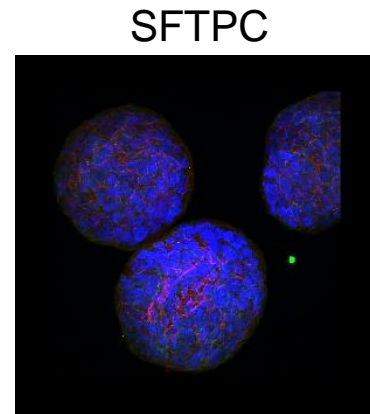
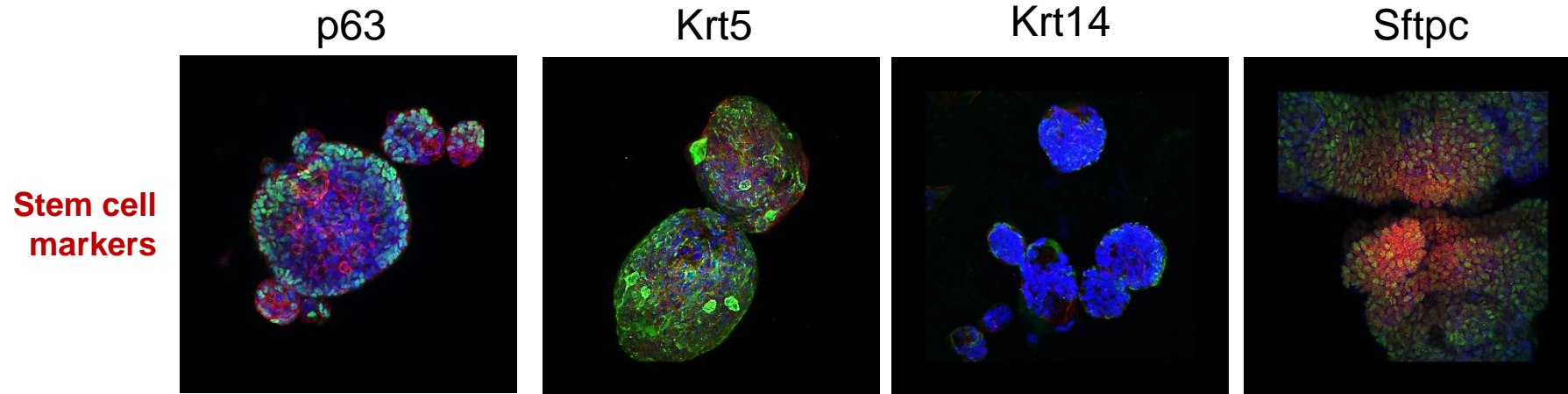


Human lung organoids

F-actin
Cell type-specific
marker
DAPI

Unpublished, please do not post

IMMUNOFLUORESCENT STAINING OF CELL TYPE-SPECIFIC MARKERS IN MURINE LUNG ORGANOIDS



Human lung organoids

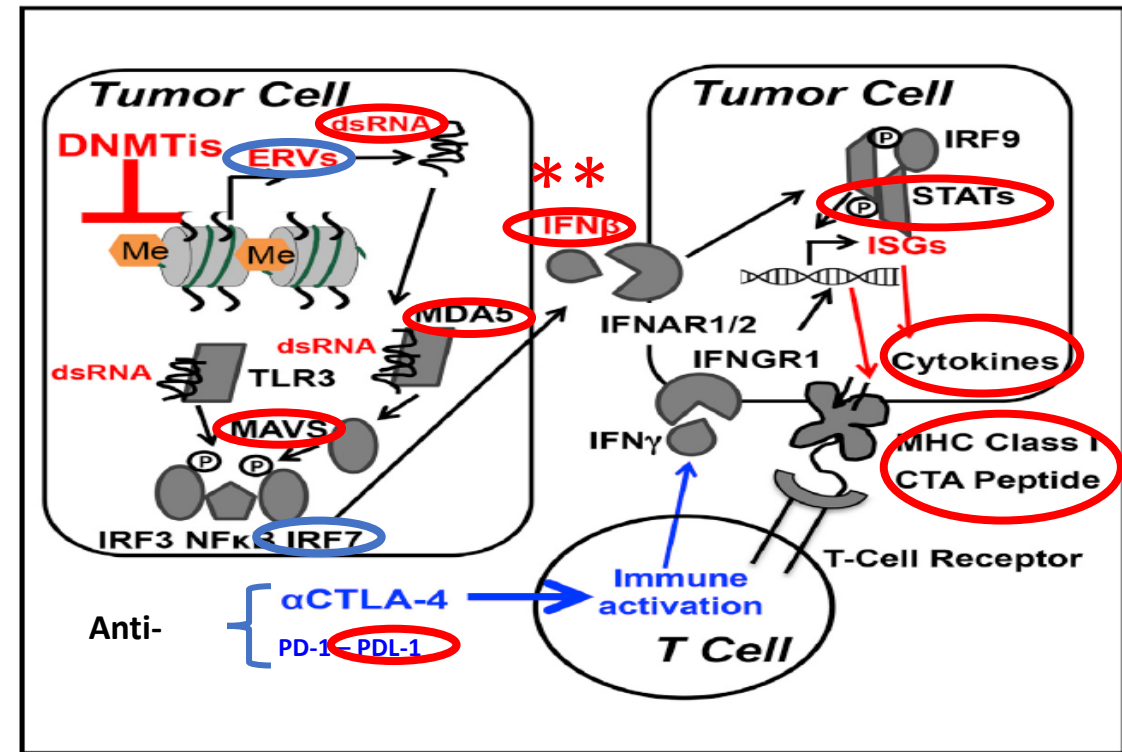
F-actin
Cell type-specific marker
DAPI

Unpublished, please do not post

“Viral Mimicry” by DNMTi’s – A Key Mechanistic Underpinning of our Hypothesis



Important – occurring within, and collaboratively with, a broader inflammasome and DNA repair response



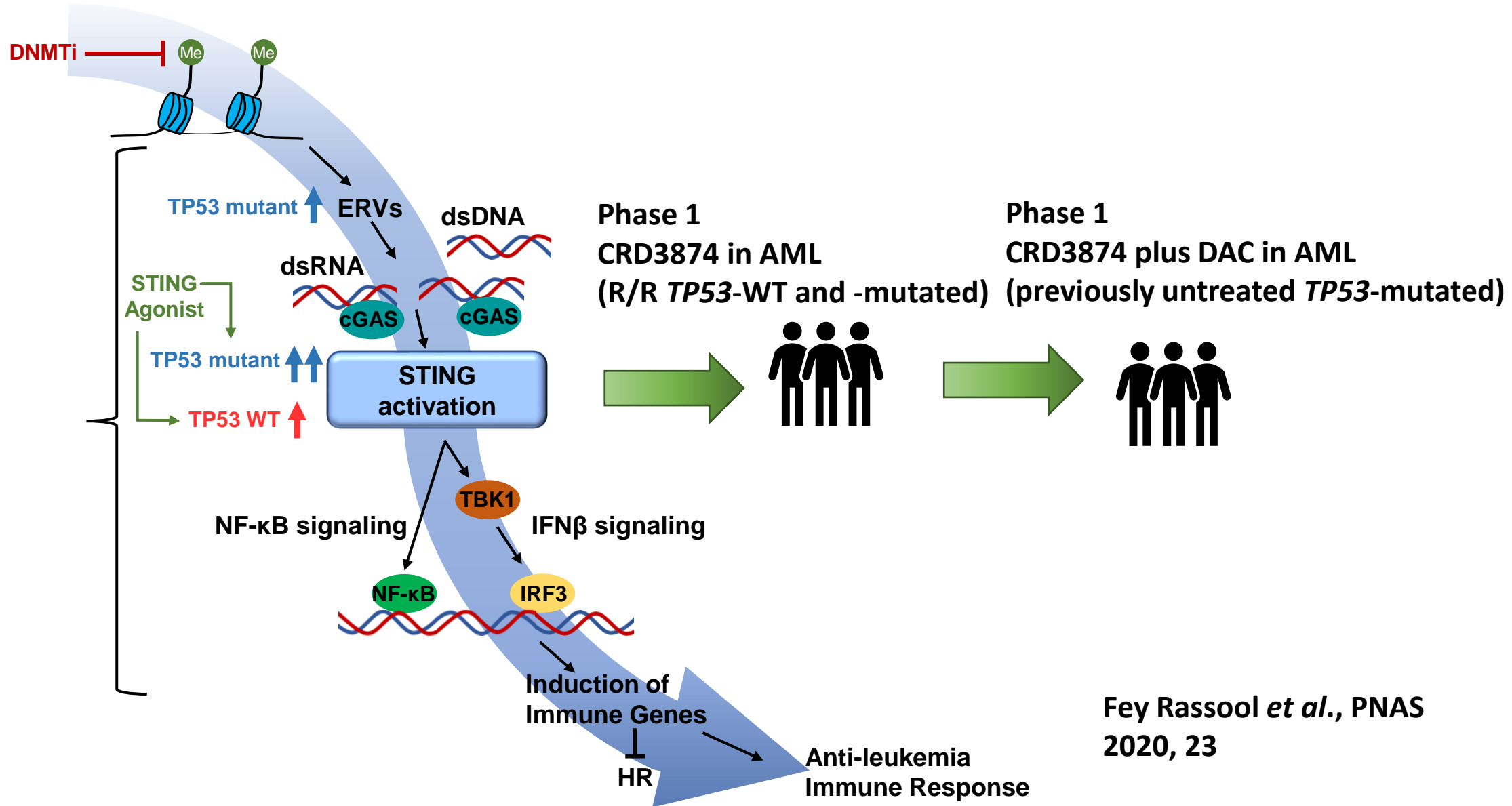
mechanisms; correlative science; trial parameters

MMSK (Chan) and Erlangen, Germany

Roulois et al, Cell, 2015

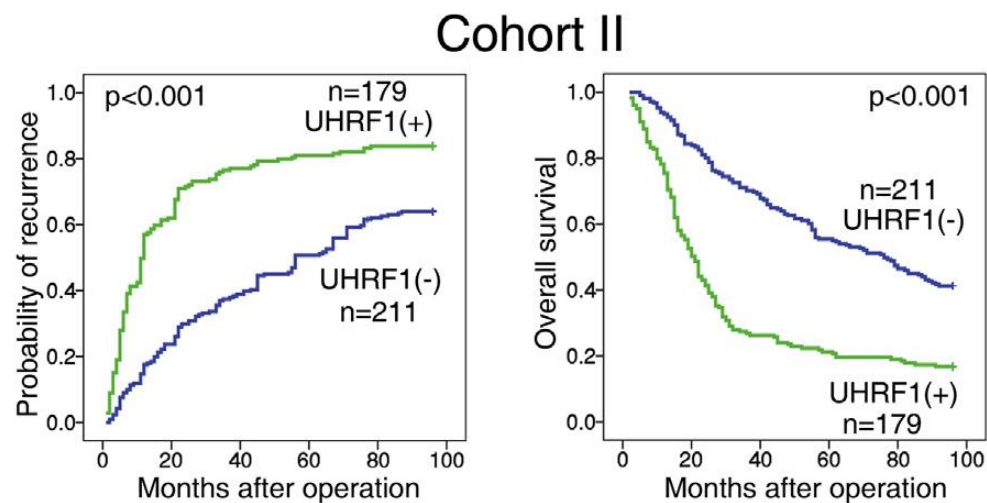
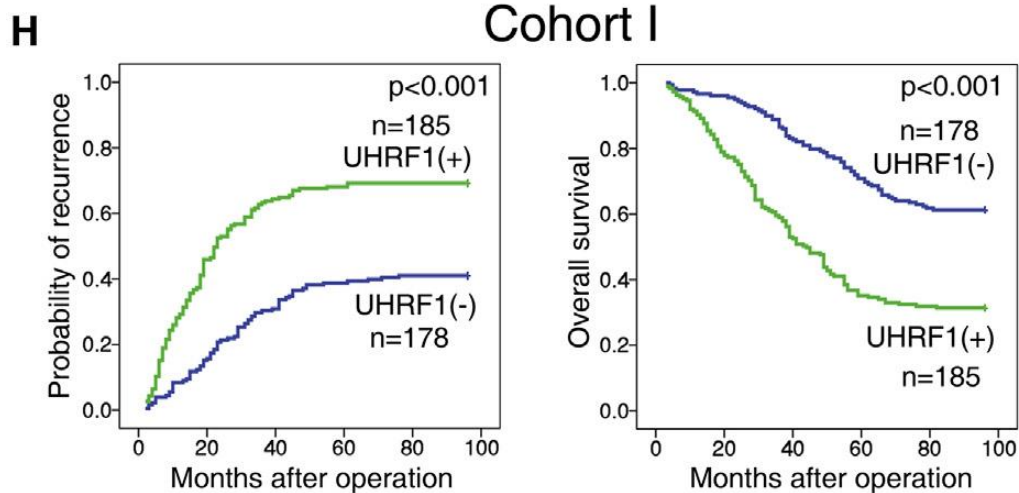
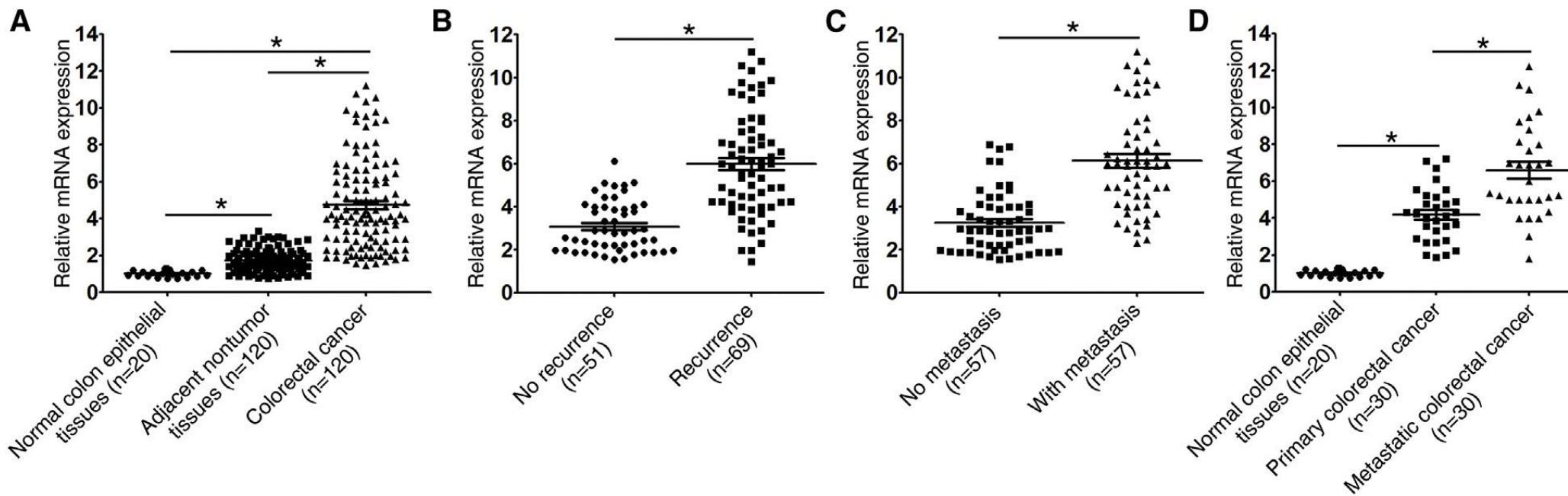
Chiappinelli, et al, Cell, 2015

Clinical Trial Strategy with STING agonist CRD5500 in AML



Fey Rassool *et al.*, PNAS
2020, 23

ELEVATED UHRF1 EXPRESSION CORRELATES WITH POOR OUTCOMES IN HUMAN COLORECTAL CANCER



Rothbart



Xiangqian Kong
(Baylin Lab)