

AWARD NUMBER: W81XWH-22-1-0089

TITLE: Blood Types as Tumor-Associated Carbohydrate Antigens That Determine the Efficacy of Immune Checkpoint Inhibitor Therapy in Lung Cancer

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REPORT DATE: May 2023

TYPE OF REPORT: Annual

PREPARED FOR: U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE May 2023		2. REPORT TYPE Annual		3. DATES COVERED 01Apr2022-31Mar2023	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Blood Types as Tumor-Associated Carbohydrate Antigens That Determine the Efficacy of Immune Checkpoint Inhibitor Therapy in Lung Cancer				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER W81XWH-22-1-0089	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Zoltan Szallasi MD E-Mail:Zoltan.szallasi@childrens.harvard.edu				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Children's Hospital, Boston Massachusetts, 02215				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT Immune checkpoint inhibitors, such as nivolumab and pembrolizumab, is a novel class of cancer treatment that have dramatically improved the clinical outcome of advanced lung cancer. However, these checkpoint inhibitors show clinical activity in only a limited number of patients. It is not known, what determines response to this form of therapy. Despite significant research efforts, current predictors of response to checkpoint inhibitors, such as PD1/PD-L1 staining (the molecular target of these therapeutic agents) or tumor mutation burden (the estimated number of tumor antigens eliciting immune response) have rather limited ability to support clinical decisions. We are proposing here a radical shift in our research focus from neoepitope peptide-based mechanisms to tumor associated carbohydrates (TACAs). Carbohydrates are a completely different, rather understudied class of tumor antigens. If this is indeed the case and in lung cancer tumor associated carbohydrate antigens also contribute to the efficacy to immune checkpoint inhibitor treatment, then our results will have a major impact both on the diagnostic and treatment strategy aspects of immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy. First, tumor associated carbohydrate antigens such as the aberrant expression of the Forssman antigen may produce a more accurate way to predict response to this treatment modality. Second, if the induction of cross-reacting antibodies to tumor associated carbohydrate antigens significantly contributes to immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy then we could design					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Tumor associated carbohydrate antigens, blood groups, immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 5	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON USAMRDC
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

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Introduction:

Immune checkpoint inhibitors, such as nivolumab and pembrolizumab, is a novel class of cancer treatment that have dramatically improved the clinical outcome of advanced lung cancer. However, these checkpoint inhibitors show clinical activity in only a limited number of patients. It is not known, what determines response to this form of therapy. Despite significant research efforts, current predictors of response to checkpoint inhibitors, such as PD1/PD-L1 staining (the molecular target of these therapeutic agents) or tumor mutation burden (the estimated number of tumor antigens eliciting immune response) have rather limited ability to support clinical decisions. We are proposing here a radical shift in our research focus from neoepitope peptide-based mechanisms to tumor associated carbohydrates (TACAs). Carbohydrates are a completely different, rather understudied class of tumor antigens. If this is indeed the case and in lung cancer tumor associated carbohydrate antigens also contribute to the efficacy to immune checkpoint inhibitor treatment, then our results will have a major impact both on the diagnostic and treatment strategy aspects of immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy. First, tumor associated carbohydrate antigens such as the aberrant expression of the Forssman antigen may produce a more accurate way to predict response to this treatment modality. Second, if the induction of cross-reacting antibodies to tumor associated carbohydrate antigens significantly contributes to immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy then we could design strategies to enhance efficacy of treatment by e.g. boosting the plasma antibody levels against these antigens.

Keywords:

Tumor associated carbohydrate antigens, blood groups, immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy

Accomplishments:

We had to secure all appropriate IRB approvals for procuring tissue samples. This has taken longer than expected and we could not start research activities in earnest before the end of the first year of funding.

What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided? Nothing to report.

How were the results disseminated to communities of interest? Nothing to report.

What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals? We will start performing the experiments as proposed in the application

What was the impact on the development of the principal discipline(s) of the project? N/A

What was the impact on other disciplines? Nothing to report.

What was the impact on technology transfer? Nothing to report.

What was the impact on society beyond science and technology? Nothing to report

CHANGES/PROBLEMS:

Changes in approach and reasons for change: There are no changes.

Actual or anticipated problems or delays and actions or plans to resolve them:

Obtaining IRB approvals took longer than expected. Now we have all necessary approvals for the work.

Changes that had a significant impact on expenditures: Nothing to report.

Significant changes in use or care of human subjects, vertebrate animals, biohazards, and/or select agents: Nothing to report.

PRODUCTS:

Journal publications: Nothing to report

Books or other non-periodical, one-time publications: Nothing to report

Other publications, conference papers and presentations: Nothing to report

Website(s) or other Internet site(s): Nothing to report

Technologies or techniques: Nothing to report

Inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses: Nothing to report

PARTICIPANTS & OTHER COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

Name: Zoltan Szallasi, MD

Project Role: PI

Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): 0000-0001-5395-7509

Nearest person month worked: 2 months

Contribution to Project: Dr. Szallasi obtained the necessary IRB approvals

Funding Support: