### AACR-NCI-EORTC International Conference on **MOLECULAR TARGETS AND CANCER THERAPEUTICS**

October 11-15, 2023 | Hynes Convention Center | Boston, MA

# Refining our understanding of ADCs: Drug development insights from 40 years of data

Raffaele Colombo, PhD Zymeworks Inc, Vancouver, BC, Canada.







### **Disclosure Information**

Molecular Targets and Cancer Therapeutics October 11-15, 2023 | Boston, MA



### Raffaele Colombo

I have the following relevant financial relationships to disclose: Employee of: Zymeworks Inc. Stockholder in: Zymeworks Inc., AstraZeneca

### 40 years of (clinical) ADC data





**305 ADCs have entered the clinic:** 

- 13 approved (11 by FDA)
- 175 in active clinical development
- 117 discontinued

Data from ~170 ADCs to drive correlations

~130 new ADCs in the clinic with no data (yet)

### Clinical ADC landscape has evolved over time



AAC

American Association

for Cancer Research

NATIONAL

#### AACR-NCI-EORTC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: MOLECULAR TARGETS AND CANCER THERAPEUTICS

### **Classic ADC dogma**

- 1. The therapeutic window dogma:
  - ADCs widen the therapeutic window of the conjugated drug by both *increasing the maximum tolerated dose* (MTD) and *reducing the minimum efficacious dose* (MED) of the drug





Figure from: M. M. Schutten, NorCal Society of Toxicology Meeting, September 27, 2012

#### AACR-NCI-EORTC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: MOLECULAR TARGETS AND CANCER THERAPEUTICS

### Classic ADC dogma

- The therapeutic window dogma: 1.
  - ADCs widen the therapeutic window of the conjugated drug by both increasing the maximum tolerated dose (MTD) and reducing the minimum efficacious dose (MED) of the drug

#### 2. The stability dogma:

A highly stable linker is paramount to the clinical success of the ADC

Figure from: J. Z. Drago et al. Nat. Rev. Clin. Oncol. 2021, 18, 327-344









AACR-NCI-EORTC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: MOLECULAR TARGETS AND CANCER THERAPEUTICS

### Classic ADC dogma

- The therapeutic window dogma: 1.
  - ADCs widen the therapeutic window of the conjugated drug by both increasing the maximum tolerated dose (MTD) and reducing the minimum efficacious dose (MED) of the drug

#### 2. The stability dogma:

- A highly stable linker is paramount to the clinical success of the ADC
- 3. The magic bullet dogma:
  - ADCs deliver conjugated drugs selectively to cancer cells • while sparing normal cells. If the payload is bystander active, it can then kill neighboring cancer cells.

Figure from: I. Cheng-Sánchez et al. Mar. Drugs. 2022, 20, 494







### **Classic ADC dogma**

#### 1. The therapeutic window dogma:

- ADCs widen the therapeutic window of the conjugated drug by both *increasing the maximum tolerated dose* (MTD) and *reducing the minimum efficacious dose* (MED) of the drug
- 2. The stability dogma:
  - A *highly stable linker* is paramount to the clinical success of the ADC
- 3. The magic bullet dogma:
  - ADCs deliver conjugated drugs *selectively to cancer cells* while sparing normal cells. If the payload is bystander active, it can then kill neighboring cancer cells.







## The ADC therapeutic window dogma was established in preclinical models





Example: T-DM1 showed better efficacy and tolerability than free DM1 preclinically



T-DM1 is significantly more efficacious than free DM1 in mouse models



## Conjugated DM1 is better tolerated than free DM1 in rats



Similar trends observed for numerous other ADCs

T. T. Junttila et al. *Breast Cancer Res. Treat.* **2011**, *128*, 347-356 K. A. Poon et al. *Toxicology and Applied Pharmacology* **2013**, *273*, 298-313

## Human MTD of approved ADCs is comparable to human MTD of related small molecules







\*approved by the NMPA of China

R. Colombo, J. R. Rich. Cancer Cell, 2022, 40, 1255-1263

## Approved ADCs don't have higher MTD than discontinued ADCs





## Revised representation of ADC therapeutic window (in humans)



Revised representation based on emerging clinical data



ADCs do not significantly increase the maximum tolerated dose (MTD) of the payload

- Minimum efficacious dose (MED) is not established in the clinic
- Comparison of clinical efficacy at their MTD/RP2D

R. Colombo, J. R. Rich. Cancer Cell, 2022, 40, 1255-1263

## ADCs improve ORR over related small molecules when dosed at MTD/RP2D



Selected cross-trial comparisons



#### Breast cancer

Legend:

- Blue = ADC ORR (%)
- Pink = Small molecule ORR (%)
- Darker bars = CR (%)
- Lighter bars = PR (%)

R. Colombo, J. R. Rich. Cancer Cell, 2022, 40, 1255-1263

## Efficacy of ADCs is improved over related small molecules in multiple indications





## Revised representation of ADC therapeutic window (in humans)



ADCs do not significantly increase the maximum tolerated dose (MTD) of their conjugated payloads

for Cancer Researc

NATIONA

- Minimum efficacious dose (MED) not
  established in clinical studies
- When dosed at their MTD/RP2D, **ADCs** can offer improved efficacy over related unconjugated small molecules (and, in certain cases, standard of care)

R. Colombo, J. R. Rich. Cancer Cell, 2022, 40, 1255-1263

•

## **Classic ADC dogma**

- 1. The therapeutic window dogma:
  - ADCs widen the therapeutic window of the conjugated drug by both *increasing the maximum tolerated dose* (MTD) and *reducing the minimum efficacious dose* (MED) of the drug

#### 2. The stability dogma:

- A highly stable linker is paramount to the clinical success of the ADC
- 3. The magic bullet dogma:
  - ADCs deliver conjugated drugs selectively to cancer cells while sparing normal cells. If the payload is bystander active, it can then kill neighboring cancer cells.









## There are two types of ADC drug-linker instability in circulation





= release of the whole drug-linker

R. Colombo et al. Cancer Research, 2023, 83(7\_Supplement), 1538

# Approved ADCs with antibody-linker instabilities

American Association for Cancer Research



Percentage of drug remaining conjugated to the antibody after 7 days in plasma



R. Colombo et al. Cancer Research, 2023, 83(7\_Supplement), 1538

## Approved ADCs with linker-drug instabilities





Percentage of drug remaining conjugated to the antibody after 7 days in plasma



\*sacituzumab govitecan has both linker-drug instability and antibody-linker instability, with the former more rapid

R. Colombo et al. Cancer Research, 2023, 83(7\_Supplement), 1538

## None of the approved ADCs are stable in circulation



\*sacituzumab govitecan has both linker-drug instability and antibody-linker instability, with the former more rapid



#### **Antibody-linker instabilities**

Linker-drug instabilities

R. Colombo et al. Cancer Research, 2023, 83(7\_Supplement), 1538

# Approved ADCs with thiol-maleimide conjugation



\*sacituzumab govitecan has both linker-drug instability and antibody-linker instability, with the former more rapid



Antibody-linker instabilities

Linker-drug instabilities

R. Colombo et al. Cancer Research, 2023, 83(7\_Supplement), 1538

ADCs with thiol-maleimide conjugation are susceptible to deconjugation



AAG

American Associatio

for Cancer Research

NIH

## Deconjugated drug-linker re-conjugates to albumin (thiol-exchange)



AAC

American Association

for Cancer Research

NIH

EORTC

## Deconjugated drug-linker re-conjugates to albumin (thiol-exchange)





## Approved ADCs with thiol-maleimide conjugation undergo deconjugation



Under physiological conditions, unhydrolyzed thiol-maleimide linkers undergo deconjugation



R. J. Christie et al. *J Control Release*. **2015**, 220(Pt B), 660–670 H. Habara et al. *Biopharm. Drug Dispos*. **2023** Aug 3. doi:10.1002/bdd.2371. Online ahead of print

#### AACR-NCI-EORTC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: MOLECULAR TARGETS AND CANCER THERAPEUTICS

### **Approved ADCs**

## Antibody-linker stability is not required for successful ADCs





T-DXd: DESTINY-Breast01: N. Engl. J. Med. 2020, 382, 610-621; DESTINY-Breast03: N. Engl. J. Med. 2022, 386, 1143-1154; DESTINY-Breast04: N. Engl. J. Med. 2022, 387, 9-20; DESTINY-Gastric01: N. Engl. J. Med. 2020, 382, 2419-2430; DESTINY-Gastric02: Lancet Oncology. 2023, 24, 744-756; DESTINY-Lung01: N. Engl. J. Med. 2022, 386, 241-251; BV: J. Clin. Oncol. 2012, 30, 2183-2189; EV: Lancet Oncol. 2021, 22, 872-882; PV: Lancet Oncol. 2015, 16, 704–715; TV: Lancet Oncol. 2021, 22, 609-619; Lonca-T: Lancet Oncol. 2021, 22, 790-800

## Approved ADCs with linker-drug instabilities





\*sacituzumab govitecan has both linker-drug instability and antibody-linker instability, with the former more rapid



#### **Antibody-linker instabilities**

R. Colombo et al. Cancer Research, 2023, 83(7\_Supplement), 1538

## MCC-DM1 linker is unstable resulting in spontaneous payload release



MCC deconjugation rate is similar to MC

AAC

American Associatio

for Cancer Research

Primary catabolites formed from mAb-MCC-DM1:

- **DM1** from linker instabilities (potent and permeable)
- Lys-MCC-DM1 from antibody catabolism (potent and less permeable)

J. He et al. *MAbs* **2018**, *10*, 960-967 J. F. Ponte et al. *Bioconjugate Chem.* **2016**, *2*7, 1588-1598 S. Park et al. *Appl. Sci.* **2021**, *11*, 9437

## SPDB-DM4 linker is unstable resulting in spontaneous payload release





#### Active metabolites formed from mAb-sSPDB-DM4:

- **DM4** (permeable)
- Me-DM4 (permeable)
- Oxidized derivatives of DM4 and Me-DM4 (less permeable)

C. Pouzin et al. J. Pharmacokinet. Pharmacodyn. 2022, 49, 381–394

## Calicheamicin ADC linker is unstable resulting in spontaneous payload release





ozogamicin (IO)

B.S. Vollmar et al. Mol. Cancer Ther. 2021, 20, 1112-1120

Sacituzumab govitecan linker is unstable resulting in spontaneous payload release





### Improving antibody-linker stability has been a major research focus: thiomab example



#### CD79b ADCs:

- **Pola-V** (less stable) •
- Ila-V (more stable) ٠

#### MUC16 ADCs:

**Native Cys** 

stochastic

(less stable)

🛑 and 🔵 = 🖓 🛴 🔍 🗓 🗶 🛚

- Sofi-V (less stable) •
- DMUC4064A (more stable) ٠



#### ADC MTDs



Increased antibody-linker stability didn't translate into

Polatuzumab vedotin (Pola-V): Lancet Oncol. 2015, 16, 704-715; Iladatuzumab vedotin (Ila-V): Clin. Cancer Res. 2022, 28, 1294-1301; Sofituzumab vedotin (Sofi-V): Ann. Oncol. 2016, 27, 2124-2130; DMUC4064A: Gynecol Oncol. 2021, 163, 473-480

Improving antibody-linker stability may result in emergence of unexpected toxicities

MC-VCit-PABC-MMAE



#### CD79b ADCs:

- Pola-V (less stable)
- Ila-V (more stable)

#### MUC16 ADCs:

- Sofi-V (less stable)
- DMUC4064A (more stable)



• and • =  $\frac{1}{2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} u_{n} \chi_{n} \chi_{n}$ 

## **Distinct clinical toxicities:** reduced hematological toxicities and neuropathy but increased incidence of ocular toxicities



Selected adverse events (lighter shade, G<3; darker shade, G≥3) Pola-V and Sofi-V (stochastic DAR4); Ila-V and DMUC4064A (thiomab site-specific DAR2 )

Polatuzumab vedotin (Pola-V): Lancet Oncol. 2015, 16, 704-715; Iladatuzumab vedotin (Ila-V): Clin. Cancer Res. 2022, 28, 1294-1301; Sofituzumab vedotin (Sofi-V): Ann. Oncol. 2016, 27, 2124-2130; DMUC4064A: Gynecol Oncol. 2021, 163, 473-480

## Maytansinoid ADCs with identical antibody, DAR, and dose showed distinct toxicities



Linker-drug instability



### T-DM1

- trastuzumab
- stochastic lysine, DAR = 3.5
- MTD = 3.6 mg/kg



**T-DM1 releases free payload** 

Pronounced hematological and liver toxicities for BAT8001 (discontinued) compared to T-DM1 (approved)



### Antibody-linker instability



- trastuzumab
- stochastic cysteine, DAR = 3.5
- MTD = 3.6 mg/kg



**BAT8001 releases linker-payload** 

Selected adverse events (lighter shade, G<3; darker shade, G $\geq$ 3)

T-DM1: J. Clin. Oncol. 2012, 30, 3234-3241; BAT8001: Cancer Commun. (Lond.) 2021, 41, 171-182.

## **Classic ADC dogma**

- 1. The therapeutic window dogma:
  - ADCs widen the therapeutic window of the conjugated drug by both *increasing the maximum tolerated dose* (MTD) and *reducing the minimum efficacious dose* (MED) of the drug
- 2. The stability dogma:
  - A highly stable linker is paramount to the clinical success of the ADC
- 3. The magic bullet dogma:
  - ADCs deliver conjugated drugs selectively to cancer cells while sparing normal cells. If the payload is bystander active, it can then kill neighboring cancer cells.









## Radiolabeled antibodies can reveal the fate of antibody-based therapeutics



Irrespective of the target, radiolabeled antibodies show high normal tissue distribution and <1% tumor uptake in humans



F. Bensch et al. *Theranostics* **2018**, *8*, 4295-4304

Less than 1% of antibody (and ADC) injected dose reaches the tumor sites





References:

- J. P. Mach et al. N. Engl. J. Med. 1980, 303, 5-10
- A.A. Epenetos et al. Cancer Res. 1986, 46, 3183-3191
- A. M Scott et al. *Clin. Cancer Res.* **2005**, *11*, 4810–4817
- E. C. Dijkers et al. Clin. Pharmacol. Ther. 2010, 87, 586-592
- J. A. Carrasquillo et al. J. Nucl. Med. 2011, 52, 1173–1180
- F. Bensch et al. Theranostics 2018, 8, 4295-4304
- A. N. Niemeijer et al. Nat. Commun. 2018, 9, 4664
- G. Lu et al. Nat. Commun. 2020, 11, 5667
- H. K. Gan et al. J. Nucl. Med. 2021, 62, 787–794
- J. Smit et al. J. Nucl. Med. 2022, 63, 686-693
- S. R. Verhoeff et al. J. Nucl. Med. 2022, 63, 1523-1530

...and others

## Antibody catabolism happens mainly in normal tissues and not in the tumor



Imaging time series of a patient with a HER2+ lung tumor post <sup>111</sup>In-Trastuzumab dose



Adapted from: Sietske B.M. Gaykema et al. Molecular Imaging. 2014, 13, 5

Platform toxicities and target independent MTD highlight normal tissue ADC disposition





### Payload-dependent toxicities\* ('Platform Tox')

**DM1:** thrombocytopenia, neuropathy, elevated liver enzymes **DM4:** ocular toxicity, neuropathy, elevated liver enzymes

**MMAE:** neutropenia, neuropathy **MMAF:** thrombocytopenia, ocular toxicity

**DXd:** nausea, neutropenia, anemia, ILD **SN38:** diarrhea, neutropenia, anemia

**PBDs:** edema, pleural effusion, elevated liver enzymes, neutropenia, thrombocytopenia

### **Target-independent MTDs\***



Selected common platform toxicities across multiple ADCs

\*On-target off-tumor exceptions exist

Selected MTDs and targets of auristatin ADCs

## ADC clearance generates payload in circulation: ADC is a source of payload





Circulating payload concentrations achieve pharmacologically active levels in humans



ADC and payload PKs in humans



## Payload exposure likely to contribute to ADC clinical efficacy:

 Activity in tumors with low antigen expression or no antigen expression

### ADC significantly alters payload PK:

- Payload half-life extended from hours (typical small molecule PK) to days
- Elimination of payload is limited by its formation

E. Tarcsa et al. Drug Discov. Today Technol. 2020, 37, 13-22

...but not in preclinical species (even non-human primates!)





Data adapted from: D. Toi et al. Lancet Oncol. 2017, 18, 1512-1522 and H. Habara et al. Biopharm. Drug. Dispos. 2023, 44, 380-384

## Contribution of circulating payload is underestimated in all the preclinical models



Exposure of payloads in humans is significantly higher than non-human species



### How do ADCs work?





- Efficacy is driven by a complex combination of targeted payload delivery, free payload exposure, and tumor subtype sensitivity.
- Target expression and ADC properties (including linker instabilities) influence sites and rates of ADC disposition, and in turn payload tumor, tissue, and systemic exposures
- ADC linker and payload properties (including linker stability, cleavability, and payload permeability) can influence the bystander effect of ADCs

R. Colombo et al. Cancer Research, 2023, 83(7\_Supplement), 1538

### Refining the ADC dogma: understanding ADCs to maximize their clinical success

- 1. The therapeutic window dogma:
  - ADCs don't increase the MTD but are more efficacious than small molecules when dosed at or near their MTDs
- 2. The stability dogma:
  - *Right stability is critical to balance efficacy and toxicity.* Unexpected toxicities have emerged when trying to overly stabilize ADCs
- 3. The magic bullet dogma:
  - ADC targeted and non-targeted uptake and linker instabilities contribute to sustained payload concentration at the tumor site

### Nuances of ADC properties have a large impact on efficacy and tolerability in patients Therefore, it is important to refine our understanding of ADCs in light of clinical data!







