MD Anderson GCC - Foundations of Cancer Therapeutics, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024

# EXPERIENCES, INSIGHTS AND NEW POSSIBILITIES IN CANCER THERAPEUTICS COMMERCIALIZATION

Philip Jones Vice President, Research Strategy, Transformation & Operations

> MDAnderson Cancer Center

Making Cancer History®



## How did I get here?



#### MD Anderson

#### **MENTORSHIP ENABLED ME TO DEVELOP AS A DRUG HUNTER**

J. Med. Chem. 2008, 51, 5843-5855

5843

#### Discovery of Raltegravir, a Potent, Selective Orally Bioavailable HIV-Integrase Inhibitor for the Treatment of HIV-AIDS Infection

Vincenzo Summa,\*1 Alessia Petrocchi,<sup>†</sup> Fabio Bonelli,<sup>†</sup> Benedetta Crescenzi,<sup>†</sup> Monica Donghi,<sup>†</sup> Marco Ferrara,<sup>†</sup> Fabrizio Fiore,<sup>†</sup> Cristina Gardelli,<sup>†</sup> Odalys Gonzalez Paz,<sup>†</sup> Daría J. Hazuda,<sup>‡</sup> Philip Jones,<sup>†</sup> Olaf Kinzel,<sup>†</sup> Ralph Laufer,<sup>†</sup> Edith Monteagudo,<sup>†</sup> Ester Muraglia,<sup>†</sup> Emanuela Nizi,<sup>†</sup> Federica Orvieto,<sup>†</sup> Paola Pace,<sup>†</sup> Giovanna Pescatore,<sup>†</sup> Rita Scarpelli,<sup>†</sup> Kara Stillmock,<sup>†</sup> Marc V. Witmer,<sup>†</sup> and Michael Rowley<sup>†</sup>

Istituto Di Ricerche Di Biologia Molecolare, P. Angeletti SpA (Merck Research Laboratories, Rome), Via Pontina Km 30, 600, 00040 Pomezia, Italy, Department of Antiviral Research, Merck Research Laboratories, West Point, Pennsylvania



#### Discovery of 2-{4-[(3S)-Piperidin-3-yl]phenyl}-2H-indazole-7-carboxamide (MK-4827): A Novel Oral Poly(ADP-ribose)polymerase (PARP) Inhibitor Efficacious in BRCA-1 and -2 Mutant Tumors

Philip Jones,\* Sergio Altamura, Julia Boueres, Federica Ferrigno, Massimiliano Fonsi, Claudia Giomini, Stefania Lamartina, Edith Monteagudo, Jesus M. Ontoria, Maria Vittoria Orsale, Maria Cecilia Palumbi, Silvia Pesci, Giuseppe Roscilli, Rita Scarpelli, Carsten Schulter-Zademrecht, Carlo Toniatti, and Michael Rowley



DOI: 10.1021/jm901188v

Niraparib



Chemistry

Article













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## What does it take to be a successful drug hunter?

## DRUG HUNTING IS A REWARDING CAREER. NOT FOR THE FAINT HEARTED

Its going to take, lots of:

- Talent
- Sweat and tears
- Perseverance
- Team work
- Willingness to learn
- Time
- Money

- Focus on what you are trying to achieve
- Be prepared to get stuck in to get stuff done
- Surround yourself with people who are smarter than you
- Have willingness to learn along the way
- Keep you eyes wide open
- Be stringent
- Be honest. Would your treat a loved one?
- Expect road bumps and be prepared to pivot

### WE'VE COME A LONG WAY



body but particularly destructive treatment. More than sixty others airport here today by the New to bone marrow and lymph glands, have been made in the chemical Jersey Wing of the Civil Air Pa-Most white and red blood cells laboratory and it is among them trol. The air show will be repeatare formed in the bone marrow, that the medical division will ed tomorrow when it is expected

Other white blood cells and lym- search for better cancer drugs. that Army planes will participate.

#### The New England Journal of Medicine

Conversions 1948, by the Massachusetta Medical Societ JUNE 3, 1948

Number 23

Volume 238

TEMPORARY REMISSIONS IN ACUTE LEUKEMIA IN CHILDREN PRODUCED BY FOLIC ACID ANTAGONIST, 4-AMINOPTEROYL-GLUTAMIC ACID (AMINOPTERIN)\*

SIDNEY FARBER, M.D., † LOUIS K. DIAMOND, M.D., ‡ ROBERT D. MERCER, M.D., \$ ROBERT F. SYLVESTER, JR., M.D., ¶ AND JAMES A. WOLFF, M.D.

BOSTON

#### JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION Vol. 43 No. 4



#### An Evaluation of Folic Acid Antagonists in Adults with Neoplastic Diseases: A Study of 93 Patients with Incurable Neoplasms\*

JANE C. WRIGHT, M.D., AARON PRIGOT, M.D., BARBARA P. WRIGHT, M.D. SOLOMON WEINTRAUB, M.D., AND LOUIS T. WRIGHT, M.D. Cancer Research Foundation, Harlem Hospital, Department of Hospitals, New York City

#### **Construction** of MD Anderson in 1952





Our World in Data

### **MADE A LOT OF PROGRESS**

Five-year cancer survival rates in the USA, All races, total, 1977 to 2013 Percentage of cancer patients surviving at least five years since diagnosis, by cancer type. This data is available to view by sex and race.





Age-standardized death rates from various forms of cancer in males and females, measured as the number of deaths per 100,000 individuals. Age-standardization is based on normalisation to the standard US population structure in the year 2000.



Our World in Data

https://ourworldindata.org/

## **DRUGS / THERAPEUTICS COME IN MANY FLAVORS**



#### Hormone (endocrine) therapy



#### **Targeted Therapy**



#### Monoclonal antibodies



#### **CAR T-Cell Therapy**



#### **Cancer vaccines**



#### Immune checkpoint inhibitors

**NNNh (mak** 



#### Antibody-drug conjugates



## EMBRACE MULTI-MODALITY THERAPY WITH "CURATIVE INTENT" FOR DURABLE RESPONSE



## **STILL GOT A LOT TO DO**

• Not everyone responds



Narrow therapeutic index





- A B 15-weeks C 23-weeks
- Chemotherapy induced peripheral neuropathy (CIPN), & "Chemobrain"

I cannot distinguish between car accelerator or brake, have difficulty tying shoes, and fall often. I cannot write; cannot hold small objects." – Mr. Book

J. Clin. Oncol. 2011, 29, 3085-96

#### **ALL GOT OUR OWN PERSONAL STORIES**















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# What does it take to have a successful drug discovery & development project?

## **GEORGE W. MERCK**

"...We try never to forget that medicine is for the people. ..... The profits follow, and if we have remembered that, they have never failed to appear. The better we have remembered it, the larger they have been."



## What is the unmet medical need you are targeting?

## Thinking about playing field 3-7 years from now

Monitor your competition during the lifetime of your project

## **CLINICAL LANDSCAPE CHANGES WITH TIME**

#### Approved therapeutics for non-small cell lung cancer



#### **BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL PROJECT THERE ARE FOUR KEY PIECES**



Comprehensive understanding about how a target impacts on disease

Has all the attributes to make it succeed in the humans Early proof of biology and activity response read-outs Distinct clinical populations

Focus and alignment on task/issue to hand, with strong camaraderie

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DRUG DISCOVERY & DEVELOPMENT?

- Hypothesis testing:
  - Changing the abundance or activity of a "target" [usually a protein or RNA] through an intervention of some sort, will impact or cure a disease, or ameliorate its symptoms

## WHERE DO IDEAS COME FROM?

## **Clinical Research**

- Driver mutations/fusions
- Mechanism of resistance
- Impact of tumor microenvironment
- "-omics" profiling

## **Basic scientific discovery**

- Understanding of fundamental biological processes
- High-throughput functional genomic screens

## **DISEASE RELEVANT BIOLOGY -** IDEALLY SOMETHING THAT HAS MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON THE DISEASE



## **TARGET PROFILE: WHAT IS A GOOD DRUG TARGET?**

- Relevance
  - Good understanding of biological function, including substrates & signaling pathways.
     Supporting "omics" data, & cross species relevance. <u>Strong preclinical validation</u>
- Tractability
  - Druggability, viable screening cascade, appropriate preclinical models
- Clinical development path
  - Clinical need, biomarkers, clear clinical hypothesis for POC
- Issue Awareness
  - Therapeutic window, competition/differentiation, intellectual property
- Clear Go/No-Go decision points
  - Key executable experiments with unambiguous results

## YOU CARE ABOUT THE "LABEL" THE FDA/EMEA ARE GOING TO GIVE YOU

#### -INDICATIONS AND USAGE-

ZEJULA is a poly(ADP-ribose) polymerase (PARP) inhibitor indicated for the maintenance treatment of adult patients with recurrent epithelial ovarian, fallopian tube, or primary peritoneal cancer who are in a complete or partial response to platinum-based chemotherapy. (1)

> The trial demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in PFS for patients randomized to ZEJULA as compared with placebo in the gBRCAmut cohort and the non-gBRCAmut cohort (Table 6, and Figures 1 and 2).

IN CENTORE STODIES

Trial 1 (NOVA) was a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial in which patients (n=553) with platinumsensitive recurrent epithelial ovarian, fallopian tube, or primary peritoneal cancer were randomized 2:1 to ZEJULA 300 mg orally daily or matched placebo within 8 weeks of the last therapy. All patients had received at least two prior platinum-containing regimens and were in response (complete or partial) to their most recent platinum-based regimen.

What is clinical readout people (regulatory, payers, patients) care about? *i.e. What is the endpoint of your pivotal clinical trial? Reimbursement from payers depends on the label* 

## HOW ARE YOU GOING TO KILL CANCER CELLS IN PATIENTS SELECTIVELY WITH A THERAPEUTIC?







Significant engineering problem

**Pre-Treatment** 

## **QUALITY THERAPEUTIC MODALITY**

- Need an agent that can effectively modulate the target in the desired manner
  - Where in a cell, and in the human body, does it need to get?
    - There are a lot of physical barriers to be overcome
- Need to think about
  - Potency
  - Selectivity
  - PK profile
    - Need fast on/off action, or sustained exposure?
  - Safety profile
  - Route of administration/convenience
  - Dosage
  - And more....



## KNOW AT ONSET WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DO – TARGET PRODUCT PROFILE (TPP)

	Clinical Candidate		
Biochemical potency (IC <sub>50</sub> nM)	≤ 50 nM		
Cell Target Engagement (IC <sub>50</sub> nM)	≤ 250 nM		
Cell Phenotypical (CC <sub>50</sub> nM)	≤ 250 nM What disease relevant phenotype?		
Non-responder (CC <sub>50</sub> nM)	> 10000 nM		
Desired selectivity profile	100 fold over anti-targets; Is selectivity within family good or bad?		
Kinome / CEREP selectivity	What can you tolerate?		
hERG patch clamp (IC <sub>50</sub> uM)	>30 uM		
Safety-pharmacology	Clean at 10 uM		
PhysicoChemical properties	<ul> <li>Solubility: &gt; 60uM (pH 7)</li> <li>Permeability<sub>WT</sub> A-B/B-A(x10<sup>6</sup> cm/s):&gt;10</li> <li>Efflux: No</li> </ul>		
РК	What human PK do you want? How long do you need to hit target?		
PD/Efficacy	<ul> <li>Which model?</li> <li>What is compelling efficacy?</li> <li>What checks and balances on pharmacological audit trail?</li> </ul>		
Tolerability	Well tolerated at efficacious doses How large window do you need?		

Does it modulate target in vitro

Does it modulate target in cells, & modulate the biology

Is it selective? Does it have unwanted offtargets?

Does it have adequate PK properties?

Does it modulate the disease in preclinical in vivo models? What dose and exposure?

Is it safe?

## DRUG DISCOVERY & DEVELOPMENT IS A LONG PROCESS. ALL ABOUT GETTING THE BEST THERAPEUTIC POSSIBLE





### **PARP** INHIBITORS AS CONTEXT-SPECIFIC ANTI-CANCER AGENTS



#### Specific killing of BRCA2-deficient tumours with inhibitors of poly(ADP-ribose) polymerase

Helen E. Bryant<sup>1</sup>, Niklas Schultz<sup>2</sup>, Huw D. Thomas<sup>3</sup>, Kayan M. Parker<sup>1</sup>, Dan Rower<sup>1</sup>, Bena Lopez<sup>1</sup>, Suzanne Kyle<sup>3</sup>, Mark Meuth<sup>1</sup>, Nicola J. Curtin<sup>3</sup> & Thomas Helleday<sup>1,2</sup>

#### Nature, April 2005.

#### Targeting the DNA repair defect in *BRCA* mutant cells as a therapeutic strategy

Hannah Farmer<sup>1,2</sup>\*, Nuala McCabe<sup>1,2</sup>\*, Christopher J. Lord<sup>2</sup>\*, Andrew N. J. Tutt<sup>2,3</sup>, Damian A. Johnson<sup>2</sup>, Tobias B. Richardson<sup>2</sup>, Manuela Santarosa<sup>2</sup>†, Krystyna J. Dillon<sup>4</sup>, Ian Hickson<sup>4</sup>, Charlotte Knights<sup>4</sup>, Niall M. B. Martin<sup>4</sup>, Stephen P. Jackson<sup>4,5</sup>, Graeme C. M. Smith<sup>4</sup> & Alan Ashworth<sup>1,2</sup>



## **EVENTUALLY YOU WILL HAVE A THERAPEUTIC WITH ALL** THE DESIRABLE ATTRIBUTES









33

860

10

1.300

45

2,200

90

23

18

20

20

3.200

> 5.000

> 5.000

Vehicle QD



#### MDA-MB-436 (BRCA1mut) xenograft



1 5 8 14 21 29 33 DAY

% Body Weigh 8 8 8 8

100 mpk, p.o

## PHARMACOLOGICAL AUDIT TRAIL CONNECTS CONCENTRATION OF YOUR DRUG WITH ITS EFFECT



## **CLINICAL DEVELOP PLAN FOCUSED ON MEDICAL NEED**

Ensure test the hypotheses well

- Well thought out experiment
- Do good science
- Stratify patients
- Quantitative endpoints
- Establish PK PD efficacy relationships



A. du Bois, A. González-Martín, P. Follana, B. Benigno, P. Rosenberg, L. Gilbert, B.J. Rimel, J. Buscema, J.P. Balser, S. Agarwal, and U.A. Matulonis, for the ENGOT-OV16/NOVA Investigators\*



## LIVING IN GOLD AGE FOR CANCER THERAPEUTIC



Nature Reviews Drug Discovery, 2023, 22, 625

## **EXPLOSION ON NEW TARGETS AND MODALITIES**



Nature Reviews Drug Discovery, 2023, 22, 625

### SOTORASIB (AMG-510) – FIRST-IN-CLASS KRAS G12C INHIBITOR



Dose (mg/kg)

J. Med. Chem. 2020, 63, 52-65



#### Sotorasib for Lung Cancers with KRAS p.G12C Mutation

F. Skoulidis, B.T. Li, G.K. Dy, T.J. Price, G.S. Falchook, J. Wolf, A. Italiano, M. Schuler, H. Borghaei, F. Barlesi, T. Kato, A. Curioni-Fontecedro, A. Sacher, A. Spira, S.S. Ramalingam, T. Takahashi, B. Besse, A. Anderson, A. Ang, Q. Tran, O. Mather, H. Henary, G. Ngarmchammarith, G. Friberg, V. Velchei, and R. Govindan



N Engl J Med 2021; <u>384</u>, 2371-2381

## TRIGGERED AN EXPLOSION OF EXCITEMENT IN RAS TARGETING THERAPIES



Nature Reviews Clinical Oncology 2022, 19, 637

## MOLECULAR GLUES - CC-90009: CEREBLON E3 LIGASE MODULATOR THAT PROMOTES GSPT1 DEGRADATION FOR AML

NB4

🛨 U937 🖛 KG-1

OCI-AML3

MOLM-13

HL60

🛨 MV4-11 + KG-1

Tubulin

- KASUMI-1 HNT-34

OCI-AML2



#### Relative reduction in LSC numbers in mice treated with CC-90009 compared with vehicle



J. Med. Chem. 2021, 64, 1835 Blood 2021, 137, 661

## **ARV-110 - ANDROGEN RECEPTOR (AR) PROTAC DEGRADER**, IN METASTATIC CASTRATION-RESISTANT PROSTATE CANCER



PSA reductions were seen across all subgroups in the ARDENT trial, most notably in patients with AR T878X/H875Y mutant tumors



Bavdegalutamide showed robust duration of treatment in Phase 1 and ARDENT trial patients with AR T878X/H875Y mutant tumors



## **TRASTUZUMAB DERUXTECAN (T-DXD) FOR HER2-LOW BREAST CANCER -** LINKS TRASTUZUMAB, A HER2 MONOCLONAL ANTIBODY, TO DERUXTECAN, A TOPOISOMERASE LINHIBITOR



Clin Cancer Res 2016, 20, 5097 N Engl J Med 2022; 387, 9-20

Activity of DS-8201a against tumors with low HER2 levels



#### The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

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#### Trastuzumab Deruxtecan in Previously Treated HER2-Low Advanced Breast Cancer

S. Modi, W. Jacot, T. Yamashita, J. Sohn, M. Vidal, E. Tokunaga, J. Tsurutani, N.T. Ueno, A. Prat, Y.S. Chae, K.S. Lee, N. Niikura, Y.H. Park, B. Xu, X. Wang, M. Gil-Gil, W. Li, J.-Y. Pierga, S.-A. Im, H.C.F. Moore, H.S. Rugo, R. Yerushalmi, F. Zagouri, A. Gombos, S.-B. Kim, Q. Liu, T. Luo, C. Saura, P. Schmid, T. Sun, D. Gambhire, L. Yung, Y. Wang, J. Singh, P. Vitazka, G. Meinhardt, N. Harbeck, and D.A. Cameron, for the DESTINY-Breast04 Trial Investigators\*

#### Overall Survival in Hormone Receptor-Positive Cohort

ESTABLISHED IN 1812



Trastuzumab dematecan 331 325 323 319 314 309 303 293 285 280 268 260 250 228 199 190 168 144 116 95 163 151 145 143 139 135 130 124 115 109 104 98 96 89 80 71 56 45 37 29 Physician's choice

#### **Overall Survival among All Patients**



No. at Risk

Trastuzumab deruxtecan 373 366 363 357 351 344 338 326 315 309 296 287 276 254 223 214 188 158 129 104 90 78 Physician's choice 184 171 165 161 157 153 146 138 128 120 114 108 105 97 88 77 61 50 42 32 28 25 18 16 7 5 3

#### **BLINATUMOMAB – CD19 BISPECIFIC T-CELL ENGAGER** (BITE) Peripheral B-cell counts and apoptosis



Amgen website Blood 2012, 119, 6226 J Clin Onc 2014, 36, 4134





## CAR T CELLS: ENGINEERING PATIENTS' IMMUNE CELLS TO TREAT THEIR CANCERS

#### 4 ) IN THE BODY CART cell Dying cancer cell Target Cancer cell IN THE CLINIC Blood is The white blood cells. taken including T cells, are from the separated out, and patient the rest of the blood is returned to the patient. The CART cells identify the cancer The receptors are attracted to cells with the target antigens and kill them. CART cells may remain in the targets on the T cells are sent surface of the body for some time to help prevent to the cancer cells. the cancer cells from returning. lab. IN THE CLINIC CART cells are put back into the patient's bloodstream, typically after chemotherapy is given to make space, and continue to multiply. IN THE LAB/MANUFACTURING FACILITY T cells are engineered to find and kill cancer cells. Modified T cells (now called An inactive virus is The genes cause the T cells CART cells) are multiplied used to insert genes to make special receptors, until there are millions of into the T cells. called CARs, on their surfaces. these attacker cells. © Fran Milner 2017

#### Autologous CAR T-Cell Therapy Process



FDA-approved CAR T cell therapies

#### Five-Year Follow Up to tisagenlecleucel





https://www.lls.org/treatment/types-treatment/immunotherapy/chimeric-antigen-receptor-car-t-cell-therapy Nature Reviews Clinical Oncology 2023, <u>20</u>, 359–371. N Eng J Med, 2021, <u>384</u>, 673

## **TCR-ENGINEERED T CELL THERAPY IN SOLID TUMORS**



Antigen	Expression in normal tissue	Expression in tumor	Features
Tumor-associated antigen (TAA) Tissue differentiation antigen (TDA) Cancer germline antigen (CGA)		Antigen overexpression	Easy assessment of expression     profile (RNA-seq, IHC)     Toxicity on normal tissues     Potential immune tolerance
Tumor-specific antigen (TSA) Mutation-associated neoantigen Viral antigen Altomative tumor-specific antigen			+ Tumor-specific, less toxicity Personalized approach - Specific bioinformatic pipeline fo alternative antigens





J Hematology and Oncology 2021, <u>14</u>, 102 Science Advances 2023, <u>9</u>, 3700 Cancer Discovery 2018, 944

## PERSONALIZED CANCER VACCINE, MRNA-4157/V940, TAILORED TO NEOANTIGENS FOUND IN A PATIENT'S TUMOR

#### mRNA-4157-P201/KEYNOTE-942 (NCT03897881) Study Design

Randomized, phase 2, open-label study in adjuvant resected melanoma patients at high risk of recurrence



#### Primary Efficacy Endpoint: RFS<sup>1</sup>



#### mRNA-4157 (V940) Mechanism of Action

- mRNA-4157 (V940) is an individualized neoantigen therapy designed to target an individual patient's unique tumor mutations and encodes up to 34 neoantigens<sup>1,2</sup>
- Therapies targeting neoantigens can increase endogenous **neoantigen T-cell responses and induce epitope spreading** to novel antigens with the ability **to drive antitumor responses** and **maintain memory** with cytolytic properties, potentially **producing long-term disease control** for patients<sup>3-7</sup>



## IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ADVANCING YOUR SCIENCE AND COMMERCIALIZING, TALK TO YOUR COLLEAGUES

- People who've done it previously
- Your chair and other faculty members
- Your Office Technology Commercialization (OTC)
- BioPharma Community here in Houston and Elsewhere

- Options:
  - Advance project within your institution Internal + External collaborations
  - Found company with VC Small % ownership. Focused effort, Success depends on hiring
  - License to pharma Very small licensing fee, no idea if project will survive portfolio reorgs

# THE FUTURE SO BRIGHT

K

## STAY FOCUSED ON UNMET MEDICAL NEED, DO DATA-DRIVEN SCIENCE, AND BE PASSIONATE THE RESULTS WILL SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Sharon is participating in a clinical trial of MK4827 which is **Merck's PARP inhibitor**. She entered the trial in August 2009 with **4 tumors on her CT scan and CA125 of almost 1,000**. As of her latest follow-up the **four tumors have almost disappeared from her CT scan and her CA125 was 38**. I can confirm from first hand knowledge there are **ZERO side effects** from this PARP inhibitor. Based on my conversations with other researchers conducting trials of other PARP inhibitors, the only side effects reported are mild and the same as cancer symptoms meaning they probably aren't drug related.

Best of luck to you and yours,

George