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Structural insights into PROTAC[®]induced proximity

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Overview of today's presentation

• Brief background on PROTAC[®] degraders

- CryoEM success stories enabled by our optimized cryoEM workflow
 - Structural insights into ARV-471-induced proximity between the estrogen receptor (ER) and the CRBN E3 ligase
 - Mechanistic & structural basis of substrate-recruitment by a novel, PROTACable E3 ligase, KLHDC2



PROTAC[®] protein degraders harness the ubiquitin-proteasome system to induce the degradation of disease-causing proteins





Structural insights into **ARV-471-induced** proximity between the estrogen receptor (ER) and the **CRBN E3 ligase**



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ARV-471: Induces proximity between CRBN E3 ligase & the estrogen receptor



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• ER-LBD is pulled into a higher mw complex with CRBN:DDB1 by the presence of ARV-471

• The ER:ARV-471:CRBN ternary complex can be separated by size-exclusion chromatography

Although robust ternary complex formation occurs in solution, this is not the case once frozen.

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Trip 1 Trip 2 Trip 3...

• 2D classification yields apo-DDB1



Optimization of crosslinking of ternary complex 600



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 ER:ARV-471:CRBN complex can be crosslinked for cryoEM studies



presented at the NESBA symposium on Jan 24, 2023

Crosslinked ternary complex also does not show robust ER density.

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Ultra-fast vitrification yields first evidence of ER in ternary complex by cryoEM



- 2D classification yields ~356k good particles
- Non-uniform refinement
- 3D variability analysis and cluster display





 ER:ARV-471:CRBN complex frozen using Chameleon[™] grid prep

Mechanistic insights into a clinical stage PROTAC

ARV-471: Induces proximity between CRBN E3 ligase & the estrogen receptor, leading to ER degradation

- . . . FR-IBD А 6.7 4.7 2.7 DDB1 -**Δ**Β
- Highly dynamic ternary complex as imaged by cryoEM
- ER is flexible, and it is not possible to define a single ER binding pose
- CRBN in "closed" conformation
 - DDB1 resolved to 2.7Å



* Chameleon[™] grid prep / single particle cryoEM on Krios[™] G4 (E-CFEG) / Selectris Falcon 4 / CryoSPARC on AWS / ThermoFisherScientific cryoEM collaboration

Mechanistic insights into a clinical stage PROTAC

ARV-471: Induces proximity between CRBN E3 ligase & the estrogen receptor, leading to ER degradation

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- Highly dynamic ternary complex as imaged by cryoEM
- ER is flexible, and it is not possible to define a single ER binding pose
- CRBN in "closed" conformation
- DDB1 resolved to 2.7Å
- ARV-471 not resolved



Mechanistic & structural basis of substraterecruitment by **KLHDC2**





PROTAC discovery - one case study from the Arvinas E3 repertoire

•••• The next frontier is discovering new E3 ligases for TPD - how do we discover them?



E3 ligand-to-PROTAC discovery → novel CRL2^{KLHDC2} PROTAC degraders Discovery & characterization of KLHDC2 ligands for PROTAC applications:

- 1) Rapid de novo ligand design by CADD & ligand evolution
- 2) Ligand-to-PROTAC conversion & on-mechanism activity validation
- 3) Mechanistic & structural understanding of E3 assembly



KLHDC2 is an active E3 ligase that can be exploited for PROTAC discovery



- KLHDC2 is a CRL2-associated substrate receptor
- KLHDC2 has been shown to recognize C-terminal glycine residues as a high affinity degron
- C-term Gly recognition has been structurally elucidated

In-house validation of KLHDC2 as a C-terminal degron targeting CRL2 E3 ligase using NanoLuc-degron (NLD) fusions



Structure-based, *de novo* ligand design by CADD & rapid ligand evolution yielded potent and novel KLHDC2 ligands





- Multiple co-crystal structures solved
 with our CADD-based KLHDC2 ligands
- KLHDC2 ligands extensively occupy and fill the substrate-binding pocket
- Crystal structures allow rational design of an E3-dead analogue; and illuminate multiple exit vectors for PROTAC development



KLHDC2_{KD}: compound Y @ 1.8 Å

KLHDC2_{KD}: compound W @ 1.6 Å



The full-length KLHDC2/EloB/EloC ligase complex is a dynamic oligomer



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elution V [mL] / fractions



The KLHDC2/EloB/EloC complex is self-regulated.







- The C-terminus of KLHDC2 ends in -GlySer
- The substrate (SelK) peptide ends in -GlyGly
- A possible scenario: loosely held together complex via KLHDC2 C-term is outcompeted by a substrate

KLHDC2 can bind itself in trans



KLHDC2 C-term peptides display low affinity to KLHDC2



SEC traces of KBC + peptide

complexes

dissociating complex

apo + control peptide

70

+ E3 pep-1

+ substrate peptide

Co-crystal structures of $KLHDC2_{KD}$ + peptides



KLHDC2-KD:SelK-Cterm (PPPMAGG) – pdb: 6DO3 KLHDC2-KD:KLHDC2-Cterm (NNTSGS) – Arvinas

KLHDC2 C-term co-crystallized with KLHDC2_{KD}, adopting the conformation of the SelK peptide



Oligomeric KLHDC2 complex organization is dynamic upon substrate binding, which can be recapitulated by small molecule ligand binding

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KLHDC2/EloB/EloC complex is a dynamic oligomer

C-terminal KLHDC2 mutant purifies as a monomer



CryoEM structure of the apo KLHDC2/EloB/EloC complex reveals a tetrameric arrangement, consistent with the model





CryoEM structure of the complex supports oligomerization mediated by C-terminus



- 4 individual KLHDC2/EloB/EloC complexes have good density & can be visualized in the final complex
- Focusing on one KBC reveals an extended C-terminus of KLHDC2



KLHDC2 targeting small molecules alter oligomeric assembly of KBC



Continuing to look at assembly of:

- KBC bound to substrate-peptides
- KBC bound to small molecules
- KBC bound to PROTACs & PROTAC-POI complexes
- KBC bound to full CRL2 complex -/+ substrates/cmpds
 → understanding these offers insight into PROTACs

KLHDC2 oligomerization can <u>also</u> be altered by high affinity small molecule ligands





PROTACs based on KLHDC2 ligands ubiquitylate target proteins



Using purified, full-length KLHDC2/EloB/EloC complex in cell-free, biochemical ubiquitination assays, PROTACs ubiquitylate a target in an KLHDC2-recruitmentdependent manner



KLHDC2-based PROTAC optimization using JQ1 yields potent pan-BET degraders

- Our novel KLHDC2-based BET-family PROTACs are:
 - ✓ robust → greater than 90% D_{max}
 - ✓ potent → DC_{50} in the low nM range
 - ✓ on-mechanism → sensitive to KLHDC2 siRNA

PROTAC-able E3 ligase is now structurally and functionally enabled for TPD

- This E3 ligase can degrade target proteins using our PROTAC technology.
- PROTAC design is enabled by the quaternary structure of this E3 in its fulllength, wild-type form.
- Extensive optimization of the protein complex and freezing conditions on the Vitrobot did not permit high-resolution structural determination.
- Freezing on the chameleon with optimized protein complex allowed highresolution structural determination.
- We are excited to pursue more high-throughput, streamlined, cryoEM structural determination with the in-house chameleon instrument.

Acknowledgements - the entire Arvinas Team (now 400+!)

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Thank you!

presented at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute Targeted Protein Degradation Webinar on Dec 15, 2022 $\ 27$