Comparative proteogenomic analysis of right-sided colon cancer, left-sided colon cancer and rectal cancer reveals distinct mutational profiles

Robin Imperial, University of Missouri
Zaheer Ahmed, University of Missouri
Omer M. Toor, University of Missouri
Cihat Erdogan, Namik Kemal University
Ateeq Khaliq, University of Missouri
Paul Case, University of Missouri
James Case, St Lukes Health System Kansas City
Kevin Kennedy, St Lukes Hospital
Lee S. Cummings, University of Missouri
Niklas Melton, Missouri University of Science & Technology

Only first 10 authors above; see publication for full author list.

Journal Title: Molecular Cancer
Volume: Volume 17, Number 1
Publisher: BMC (part of Springer Nature) | 2018-12-21, Pages 177-177
Type of Work: Article | Final Publisher PDF
Publisher DOI: 10.1186/s12943-018-0923-9
Permanent URL: https://pid.emory.edu/ark:/25593/tmtrk

Final published version: http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12943-018-0923-9

Copyright information:
© 2018 The Author(s).
This is an Open Access work distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Accessed September 7, 2019 10:24 PM EDT
Comparative proteogenomic analysis of right-sided colon cancer, left-sided colon cancer and rectal cancer reveals distinct mutational profiles

Robin Imperial1, Zaheer Ahmed1, Omer M. Toor1,2, Cihat Erdoğan3, Ateeq Khaliq2, Paul Case2, James Case4, Kevin Kennedy5, Lee S. Cummings5, Niklas Melton7, Shahzad Raza1,2, Banu Diri8, Ramzi Mohammad9, Bassel El-Rayes10, Timothy Pluard1,2, Arif Hussain11,12, Janakiraman Subramanian1,2* and Ashiq Masood13*

Abstract

Right-sided colon cancer (RCC) has worse prognosis compared to left-sided colon cancer (LCC) and rectal cancer. The reason for this difference in outcomes is not well understood. We performed comparative somatic and proteomic analyses of RCC, LCC and rectal cancers to understand the unique molecular features of each tumor sub-types. Utilizing a novel in silico clonal evolution algorithm, we identified common tumor-initiating events involving APC, KRAS and TP53 genes in RCC, LCC and rectal cancers. However, the individual role-played by each event, their order in tumor development and selection of downstream somatic alterations were distinct in all three anatomical locations. Some similarities were noted between LCC and rectal cancer. Hotspot mutation analysis identified a nonsense mutation, APC R1450* specific to RCC. In addition, we discovered new significantly mutated genes at each tumor location. Further in silico proteomic analysis, developed by our group, found distinct central or hub proteins with unique interactomes among each location. Our study revealed significant differences between RCC, LCC and rectal cancers not only at somatic but also at proteomic level that may have therapeutic relevance in these highly complex and heterogeneous tumors.

Keywords: Right-sided colon cancer, Left-sided colon cancer, Rectal cancers, Clonal evolution, Proteomics, Hotspot mutations

Often grouped as one disease, right-sided colon cancer (RCC, originating from cecum, ascending colon, hepatic flexure) and left-sided colon cancer (LCC, originating from splenic flexure, descending colon, sigmoid colon) represent clinically distinct entities with significant differences in their prognosis and treatment outcomes [1, 2]. Therefore, given their anatomic continuity, the reason for these clinical differences presumably lie at the molecular level delineated by embryological origin. Previous studies have sought to identify these differences by analyzing significantly mutated genes and RNA expression [3, 4]. However, molecular differences including significant specific amino acid alterations (hot spots), proteomic differences and order of mutations in clonal evolution of these tumors have not been studied. We used somatic and proteomic data of colorectal cancers from The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) [4, 5], Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) [6] and The Cancer Proteome Atlas (TCPA) [7] to study proteogenomic differences in these tumors (See Additional files 1 and 2).

Results and discussion

Clonal evolution trajectories

Understanding the mutational timing and evolutionary trajectory of tumors is key to investigate the molecular
Fig. 1 (See legend on next page.)
underpinnings of cancer development and progression. Thus, we applied the PiCnIc (Pipeline for Cancer Inference) algorithm to our data to study ensemble-level cancer progression models and predict the evolutionary mutational trajectories between RCC, LCC and rectal cancers in the TCGA cohort (see Additional file 3). All three cancer locations had mutations in APC, TP53 and KRAS, possibly reflecting common initiating somatic events (Fig. 1). However, there were differences in the hierarchical groupings of mutations that surrounded these events.

In RCC \((n = 135; \text{Fig. 1a; Additional file 4: Table S1})\), APC somatic mutations and TP53 somatic mutations were independent events. APC somatic mutations ‘selected’ for KRAS mutations or amplifications. APC somatic mutations also ‘selected’ for SMAD4 somatic mutations or deletions, BRAF mutations and amplification. KRAS and BRAF showed mutual exclusivity. Interestingly, alterations in FBWX7, TCF7L2, and SMAD2 clustered in RCC tumors harboring APC and PIK3CA mutations. With respect to TP53, alterations in this location were associated with CTNNB1, MYC or/and BRCA2 mutations.

In LCC \((n = 143; \text{Fig. 1b; Additional file 4: Table S2})\), KRAS somatic mutations ‘selected’ for BRCA2 amplification, PTEN deletions or somatic mutations, PIK3CA somatic mutations, IGF2 amplification or somatic mutations and ERBB2 amplification or somatic mutations. Unlike RCC, alterations in PIK3CA were a late event in LCC and IGF2 amplification via CTNNB1. APC seemed to ‘select’ for TP53, but this did not reach statistical significance \((p = 0.06)\). Similarly, APC somatic mutations ‘selected’ for BRCA2 mutations and TCF7L2 somatic mutations or deletions, but this association also did not reach statistical significance \((p = 0.3\) and \(p = 0.2\), respectively).

In rectal cancers \((n = 76; \text{Fig. 1c; Additional file 4: Table S3})\), key initial mutations are split between TP53 and KRAS. TP53 ‘selects’ for MYC amplification, SMAD4 deletion and BRCA2 somatic mutation or amplification. KRAS ‘selects’ for PTEN deletion or somatic mutations, PIK3CA somatic mutations, IGF2 amplification and ERBB2 amplification or somatic mutations. Among rectal cancer patients with AURKA mutations there is clustering of NRAS amplifications.

Our model shows significant differences in the mutational profiles of genes between RCC and LCC; the early common somatic gene mutations are associated with the ‘selection’ of different subsequent genomic events in RCC compared to LCC. Our results suggest that although LCC and rectal cancers have some similarities in the tumor progression model wherein KRAS ‘selected’ for several genes in common (such as PIK3CA, IGF2, and ERBB2 alterations), significant differences were also noted between these two sites. Taken altogether, our results show non-adherence to the established Vogelstein linear progression model of colorectal cancer progression from normal mucosa to adenoma to carcinoma [8]. Further, our data suggest that RCC, LCC and rectal cancers have distinct mutational behavior in the context of their evolutionary trajectories, mutational timing during cancer development and progression. However, initial events such as mutation in the gatekeeper gene, APC, appear to be similar in colorectal cancers irrespective of location.

**Mutation hotspot analysis**

We studied somatic mutations at the residue sites that can disrupt functional protein domains leading to tumorigenesis and clonal evolution via selective pressure (see Methods in Additional file 3). We found APC R1450* to be a significant mutation specifically enriched in RCC \((12–15\%)\) compared to LCC \((1\%)\) and rectal tumors \((1\%)\) in both the TCGA and MSKCC datasets \((p < 0.001, \text{Fig. 2a})\). To our knowledge, this is the first report to describe the APC R1450* mutation as being predominantly located in RCC. This particular hotspot in APC is exclusively a truncation mutation and lies within the MCR domain \((\text{residues 1282–1581; [9]})\) of the protein, which is a highly mutated area. The resulting truncated mutant conserves beta-catenin binding sites \((15 \text{ AA repeats})\) but loses all three axin-binding sites \((\text{SAMP repeats})\) and microtubule interaction via EB1 and PdZ domains. Unlike APC R1450*, the frequency of other mutations within this region is relatively similar among the TCGA and MSKCC data sets. The relative frequencies of non-R1450* mutations within the MCR domain of APC for RCC were 63 and 64% in the TCGA and MSKCC data sets, respectively, for LCC 52 and 51%, respectively, and for rectal cancers 64% vs 58% (which did not meet statistical significance, \(p = 0.35\)). APC R1450* mutations are mutually exclusive from beta-catenin destruction complex genes suggesting that they may be
Fig. 2 a shows the frequency of APC hotspot the R1450 residue in (i) right-sided colon cancers, (ii) left-sided colon cancers and (iii) rectal cancers in TCGA (left) and MSKCC (right) datasets. Y-axis represent total number of mutations at each residue. b shows the mutual exclusivity of APC R1450* (APC_1450) compared to other genes of β-Catenin destruction complex in RCC. “APC_MCR” represents other APC mutations within the MCR region that are not at the 1450 residue. The bar plot above the oncoplot represents total mutations in each sample.
Fig. 3 (See legend on next page.)
early events in right-sided colon cancer tumorigen-

sis (Fig. 2b). Given the recent findings by Zhang et al. demonstrating the efficacy of TASIN-1 (small mole-
cule inhibitor) in a murine xenograft model of hu-

tan colorectal cancer harboring a truncation muta-
tion (A1309*) similar to APC R1450* suggests

that this mutation may be viable therapeutic target
[10]. In addition, we performed significantly mutated
gene analysis and discovered newer driver genes at
each location (see Additional file 5: Figure S1).

Proteogenomic analysis

Using The Cancer Proteome Atlas (TCPA) data, we

examined RCC, LCC and rectal cancers by proteomic
cancer co-expression subnetworks using association
estimators methodology previously described by our

group (see Methods in Additional file 3). Interestingly,

no common protein emerged as having a centralized
role (hub protein) across all 3 cancer locations. Within
protein-protein interaction networks, several hub pro-
teins, and their respective interactomes, were found
to be unique to each of the locations (Fig. 3, see
Additional file 6: Table S4).

Several hub proteins that might have a major role in

RCC were identified: BAP1 (tumor suppressor gene)
CASP8 (apoptosis) PCNA (DNA repair) NRAS (RTK-
RAS pathway) PEA15 (apoptosis and RET signaling)
DVL3 (cell proliferation and ATM-dependent DNA
damage response) and PDPK1 (growth regulation) (Fig.
3a). The potentially significant hub proteins in LCC
were: BAP1, BAK1 (apoptosis and prognostic in breast
cancer) COG3 (protein glycosylation/golgi function)
CCNB1 (mitosis and prognosis in breast cancer) SRSF1
(RNA splicing and prognosis in small cell lung cancer)
DIRAS3 (tumor suppressor gene) and LCK (resistance
to apoptosis) (Fig. 3b). Hub proteins unique to rectal
cancers were: IGF1R (proliferation, invasion, migration),
TSC1 (cell growth) BRCA2 (DNA repair) and COP5S
(multiple pathways) (Fig. 3c).

BAP1 was found to have a prominent role in both

RCC and LCC. Although there are several conserved in-

teractions, the BAP1 interactome of LCC diverges from

that of RCC. Among the conserved interacting proteins
are: BRD4, ADAR, GAB2, SLCA15, EIF4G1, ERCC5 and
TP53BP1, BRD4, ADAR, MSH6, FOXM1 and XRCC5.
Specific to LCC, BAP1 showed interactions with ERCC1,
PRKCA, GATA6, JAK2, RAD51, TSC1, RSC1, NOTCH1,
BCL2, KIT, PRKCD, CDH2, ARID1A, ASNS, SQSTM1 and
DVL3. Specific to RCC, BAP1 was noted to interact
with CDH1, MAPK14, MRE11A, MET, YAP1, STK11,
ERBB3, PIK3CA, PXN, CHEK1, CTNNB1, STAT5A,
EEF2K, G6PD, COG3, RBM15, BCL2A1, SYK, RELA
and ANXA1.

Our results suggest BAP1 may have an essential role
in carcinogenesis of colon cancer with conserved as well
as divergent evolutionary interactions with other pro-
teins in RCC and LCC that are largely absent in rectal
cancers.

A somewhat surprising observation from this analysis is
that the protein hubs and their interactomes are distinct
for each of the anatomically defined tumor sites examined.
Further, these protein signatures are not necessarily con-
cordant with the somatic tumor profiles. Identifying alter-
ations in tumor DNA and RNA have been of paramount
importance. Clarifying post-transcriptional events and
protein-protein interactions will also be highly relevant to
understanding the variations in tumor biology and clinical
behavior of these tumors. Prospective studies are needed
to validate our findings and their implications in the clin-
ic outcomes.

Additional files

Additional file 1: Patients demographics from TCGA. (DOCX 19 kb)
Additional file 2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for somatic mutation
analysis. MSI-H, POLE mutation samples, rectosigmoid and transverse
colon cancers were excluded for analysis (highlighted green). (TIF 666 kb)
Additional file 3: Methods section. (DOCX 52.9 kb)
Additional file 4: Tables S1-S3. PicNiC statistics (bic and aic) for RCC,
LCC and rectal cancers. (XLSX 43 kb)
Additional file 5: Somatic mutation analysis for RCC, LCC and rectal
cancers. (DOCX 433 kb)
Additional file 6: Table S4. Proteomics pathway and gene level
analysis results. (XLSX 47 kb)

Abbreviations
AIC: Akaike information criterion; BIC: Bayesian information criterion;
CAPRI: Cancer progression inference algorithm; KDE: Kernel density
estimator; LCC: Left colon cancer; MSKCC: Memorial sloan kettering
cancer center; PicNic: Pipeline for cancer inference; PMID: Pubmed
identifier; RCC: Right colon cancer; TCGA: The cancer genome atlas;
TCPA: The cancer proteome atlas

Acknowledgements
Part of A.H.’s time was supported by a Merit Review Award (I01 BX000545),
Medical Research Service, Department of Veterans Affairs.
Funding
Not applicable.

Availability of data and materials
TCGA somatic mutation data for colorectal cancers can be obtained from the GDC legacy archive and Broad GDC Firehose. Proteomic data can be downloaded from The Cancer Proteome Atlas (TCPA). The datasets used and analyzed in the current study are also available from the corresponding author in response to reasonable requests.

Authors’ contributions
RI and AH contributed to the design of study, involved in acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data, involved in drafting the manuscript and revising it critically for important intellectual content. ZA, OMT, CE, AK, PC, JC, KK, NM, BD involved in data acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data and involved in drafting the manuscript. LSC, SR, RM, BE, TP, AH, JS were involved in revising the manuscript critically for important intellectual content. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethics approval and consent to participate
Not applicable.

Consent for publication
Not applicable.

Competing interests

Consent for publication
Not applicable.

Publisher’s Note
Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Author details
1Department of Medicine, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine, Kansas City, MO 64108, USA. 2Division of Oncology, Saint Luke’s Cancer Institute, University of Missouri School of Medicine, 4321 Washington St, Kansas City, MO 64111, USA. 3Department of Computer Engineering, Namik Kemal University, Tekirdag, Turkey. 4ASPIRE Foundation, Saint Luke’s Health System of Kansas City, Kansas City, MO 64111, USA. 5Division of Cardiovascular Research, Saint Luke’s Hospital, Kansas City, MO 64111, USA. 6Department of Surgery, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO 64108, USA. 7Department of Computer Sciences, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla, MO 65409, USA. 8Department of Computer Engineering, Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey. 9Wayne State University, Karmanos Cancer Institute, Detroit, MI 48201, USA. 10Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology, Winship Cancer Institute, Emory University, Atlanta, GA 30322, USA. 11Division of Oncology, University of Maryland Greenebaum Comprehensive Cancer Center, Baltimore, MD 20201, USA. 12Baltimore Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Baltimore, MD 21201, USA. 13Division of Hematology/Oncology and Cell Therapy, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, IL 60612, USA.

Received: 28 August 2018 Accepted: 30 November 2018 Published online: 21 December 2018

References