

DEVELOPMENT



The University of Manchester

CANCER

# Embryonic gene module re-expression in melanoma yields insights into a Hdac2-driven mechanism of plastic adaptation

Kerrie Marie, PhD

#### Metastatic Colonisation – a highly selective process

1 week post colonisation



- 1. Colonisation point of extreme vulnerability
- Selects highly adaptable cells 2.
- Good target for the adjuvant setting 3.

### Fully involved lung – therapy resistant and heterogeneous



#### Adaptation at the cellular level



# Hypothesis: A cell's capacity for cell-state switching determines its capacity for metastasis and therapy resistance



## Can we learn more from single embryonic melanocytes?

#### E15 iDct-GFP mouse



#### **GFP<sup>+</sup> cells at stem cell niche & hair follicles**



Dct-rtTA; tre-H2B-GFP Zaidi et al., 2011

#### A Melanoblast reporter mouse





Zaidi et al., 2011

## Multiple subpopulations identified





#### **Embryonic melanocyte** precursors SCP.E SCP.2 NPC.1 NPC.2 Mel.E 0-SCP.1 UMAP\_2 Mel Neural -10-Mes.2 Mes.1 Mes.3 -10 10 -5 Ó 5 UMAP\_1

#### **Developmental Gene Module expression in melanomas**



Vishaka Gopalan

Van Allen, et al., 2015 Gide, et al., 2021 Liu, et al., 2019

# SCPs are multipotent progenitors at peripheral nerves



CD31-AF647 NGFR-Co555 GFP-Co488 DAPI

#### Four main cell identities







#### Hybrid states in cancer

![](_page_11_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Gene expression correlation

![](_page_11_Figure_3.jpeg)

#### Hybrid states in metastases

![](_page_12_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_12_Figure_2.jpeg)

#### Adaptation at the cellular level

![](_page_13_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Adaptation at the cellular level

![](_page_14_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Hybrid states in treatment resistance

![](_page_15_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Predicting mechanisms of gene regulation

![](_page_16_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### HDACi sensitises cells to $TNF\alpha$

![](_page_17_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_17_Figure_2.jpeg)

#### HDACi sensitises cells to $TNF\alpha$

![](_page_18_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### HDACi sensitises cells to anti-PD-1 therapy

![](_page_19_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Hdac2 KD sensitises cells to TNF $\alpha$ and to therapy

![](_page_20_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Hdac2 KD sensitises cells to TNF $\alpha$ and to therapy

![](_page_21_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Hdac2 KD sensitises cells to TNF $\alpha$ and to therapy

![](_page_22_Figure_1.jpeg)

# Summary

![](_page_23_Picture_1.jpeg)

Targeting embryonic-specific pathways in adults may have less side effects

# Summary

- Melanoma cell states are conserved from development
- DGMs can predict patient outcome with embryonic gene signatures
- Hybrid state cells are associated with metastatic adaptation and nonresponse to therapy
- Hdac2 is critical for survival of melanoma cells following TNF  $\alpha$  and anti-PD-1
- Hybrid state cells could be a type of *intermediate* melanoma cells

# Manchester

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![](_page_25_Figure_7.jpeg)

![](_page_25_Picture_8.jpeg)

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