Reverse engineering signalling networks in cancer Defense *for the academical degree* Doctor rerum naturalium (Dr. rer. nat.)

Mathurin Dorel



submitted to the Faculty of Life Sciences of Humboldt Universität zu Berlin

26/09/2022

Section 1

Cancer and signalling

Cancer is a signalling disease



Hanahan and Weinberg (2011)

Cancer is a signalling disease



Cancer is a signalling disease



Section 2

Modelling of signalling networks

Variable	Name	Differential Equations
K1	c-Jun	$\frac{dx_1}{dt} = \beta_1 \left(\frac{K_1 \cdot x_3}{1 + \left(\frac{y_2}{h_D}\right)^{\eta_D}} - x_1 \right)$
K2	MKP-1	$\frac{dx_2}{dt} = \beta_2 \left(\frac{x_3^{n_{23}}}{k_{23}^{n_{23}} + x_3^{n_{23}}} - x_2 \right)$
K2	MAPK	$\frac{dx_3}{dt} = B_3(LPS - x_3)$
K4	TNFα	$\frac{dx_4}{dt} = B_4 \left(\frac{K_4 \cdot x_1^{B_{41}}}{k_{41}^{B_{41}} + x_1^{B_{41}}} - x_4 \right)$
K _S	ΙΚΚε	$\frac{dx_5}{dt} = \beta_5 (LPS - x_5)$
¢6	C/EBPô	$\frac{dx_6}{dt} = B6 \left(\frac{K_{61} \cdot x_1^{n_{66}}}{k_{61}^{n_{61}} + x_1^{n_{66}}} + \frac{K_{66} \cdot x_5^{n_{66}}}{k_{66}^{n_{66}} + x_6^{n_{66}}} \cdot \frac{x_5^{n_{66}}}{k_{65}^{n_{65}} + x_5^{n_{66}}} - x_6 \right)$
K7	LCN2	$\frac{dx_7}{dt} = \beta_7 \left(\frac{K_7 \cdot x_6^{p_{36}}}{k_{76}^{p_{36}} + x_6^{p_{36}}} - x_7 \right)$
МКР-		$\begin{array}{c} & & & \\$

Glaros et al. (2012)

Variable	Name	Differential Equations
<i>x</i> 1	c-Jun	$\frac{d\mathbf{x}_1}{dt} = \beta_1 \left(\frac{K_1 \cdot \mathbf{x}_3}{1 + \left(\frac{\delta_2}{k_{12}} \right)^{n_{12}}} - \mathbf{x}_1 \right)$
x ₂	MKP-1	$\frac{dx_2}{dt} = \beta_2 \left(\frac{x_3^{u_{23}}}{k_{23}^{u_{23}} + x_3^{u_{23}}} - x_2 \right)$
x ₃	MAPK	$\frac{dx_3}{dt} = \beta_3(LPS - x_3)$
x4	TNFα	$\frac{dx_4}{dt} = \mathbb{E}_4 \left(\frac{K_4 \cdot x_1^{n_{44}}}{k_{44}^{n_{44}} + x_1^{n_{44}}} - x_4 \right)$
xs	ΙΚΚε	$\frac{dx_5}{dt} = B_5(LPS - x_5)$
x ₆	C/EBPô	$\frac{dx_6}{dt} = B6 \bigg(\frac{K_{61} \cdot x_1^{h_{64}}}{k_{61}^{h_{64}} + x_1^{h_{64}}} + \frac{K_{66} \cdot x_5^{h_{66}}}{k_{66}^{h_{66}} + x_6^{h_{66}}} \cdot \frac{x_5^{h_{66}}}{k_{56}^{h_{65}} + x_5^{h_{66}}} - x_6 \bigg)$
X7	LCN2	$\frac{dx_7}{dt} = \beta_7 \left(\frac{K_7 \cdot x_6^{p_{96}}}{k_{76}^{p_{96}} + x_6^{p_{96}}} - x_7 \right)$
MKP-	LPS + TR - MAPK - - - - - - - - - - - - -	$\begin{array}{c} & & \\$

Parameter	Value	Description
β1	2.1×10^{-2}	Degradation rate of x1 (based on Western Blot data)
β2	1.0×10^{-3}	Degradation rate of x ₂
β3	1.5×10^{-2}	Degradation rate of x ₃
β4	$5.0 imes 10^{-2}$	Degradation rate of x ₄ (based on RT-PCR data)
βs	$1.1 imes 10^{-3}$	Degradation rate of x ₅
β6	1.1×10^{-2}	Degradation rate of x_{6r} based on (2)
β7	2.9×10^{-3}	Degradation rate of x7 (based on RT-PCR data)
К1	2.1	Weighted factor
К4	11.0	Weighted factor
K ₆₁	8.6	Weighted factor
K66	1.3	Weighted factor
K ₇	1.2	Weighted factor
k ₁₂	1.2×10^{-1}	Threshold of x_2 to inhibit x_1
k ₂₃	1.5×10^{-2}	Threshold of x_3 to activate x_2
k41	1.7	Threshold of x_1 to activate x_4
k ₆₁	1.4	Threshold of x_1 to activate x_6
koo	$1.7 imes10^{-1}$	Threshold of x_6 to activate x_6 (auto-regulation)
k ₆₅	4.6×10^{-1}	Threshold of x_5 to activate x_6
k76	3.0×10^{-1}	Threshold of x_6 to activate x_7
n ₁₂	4	Coefficient of nonlinearity for x_2 to inhibit x_1
n ₂₃	4	Coefficient of nonlinearity for x_3 to activate x_2
n ₄₁	4	Coefficient of nonlinearity for x_1 to activate x_4
n ₆₁	4	Coefficient of nonlinearity for x_1 to activate x_6
n ₆₆	4	Coefficient of nonlinearity for x_6 to activate x_6
n ₆₅	4	Coefficient of nonlinearity for x_5 to activate x_6
n ₇₆	4	Coefficient of nonlinearity for x_6 to activate x_7

Glaros et al. (2012)

Modelling biological systems

Differential equation describe the evolution of a biological system: $\dot{x} = f(x, p)$



Niederdorfer et al. (2020)

Modular Response Analysis

Differential equation describe the evolution of a biological system: $\dot{x} = f(x, p)$

$$\frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{dx_i}{dp_j} = \frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} + \sum_{k \neq i}\frac{x_k}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta x_k}\frac{p_j}{x_k}\frac{dx_k}{dp_j}$$

$$\frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{dx_i}{dp_j} = \frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} + \sum_{k \neq i}\frac{x_k}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta x_k}\frac{p_j}{x_k}\frac{dx_k}{dp_j}$$

Global response coefficient: $R_{kj} = \frac{p_j}{x_k} \frac{dx_k}{dp_j} = \frac{d\log(x_k)}{d\log(p_j)}$

$$\frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{dx_i}{dp_j} = \frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} + \sum_{k\neq i}\frac{x_k}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta x_k}\frac{p_j}{x_k}\frac{dx_k}{dp_j}$$

Global response coefficient: $R_{kj} = \frac{p_j}{x_k} \frac{dx_k}{dp_j} = \frac{d \log(x_k)}{d \log(p_j)}$ Sensitivity to perturbation: $s_{ij} = \frac{p_j}{x_i} \frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} = \frac{d \log(x_i)}{d \log(p_j)}$

$$\frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{dx_i}{dp_j} = \frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} + \sum_{k\neq i}\frac{x_k}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta x_k}\frac{p_j}{x_k}\frac{dx_k}{dp_j}$$

Global response coefficient: $R_{kj} = \frac{p_j}{x_k} \frac{dx_k}{dp_j} = \frac{d\log(x_k)}{d\log(p_j)}$ Sensitivity to perturbation: $s_{ij} = \frac{p_j}{x_i} \frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} = \frac{d\log(x_i)}{d\log(p_j)}$ Local response coefficient: $r_{ik} = \begin{cases} \frac{x_k}{x_i} \frac{\delta x_i}{\delta x_k} & \text{for } k \neq i \\ -1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$

$$\frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{dx_i}{dp_j} = \frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} + \sum_{k\neq i}\frac{x_k}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta x_k}\frac{p_j}{x_k}\frac{dx_k}{dp_j}$$

Global response coefficient: $R_{kj} = \frac{p_j}{x_k} \frac{dx_k}{dp_j} = \frac{d\log(x_k)}{d\log(p_j)}$ Sensitivity to perturbation: $s_{ij} = \frac{p_j}{x_i} \frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} = \frac{d\log(x_i)}{d\log(p_j)}$ Local response coefficient: $r_{ik} = \begin{cases} \frac{x_k}{x_i} \frac{\delta x_i}{\delta x_k} & \text{for } k \neq i \\ -1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$

$$-s_{ij} = -R_{ij} + \sum_{k \neq j} r_{ik}R_{kj} = \sum r_{ik}R_{kj}$$

$$\frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{dx_i}{dp_j} = \frac{p_j}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} + \sum_{k \neq i}\frac{x_k}{x_i}\frac{\delta x_i}{\delta x_k}\frac{p_j}{x_k}\frac{dx_k}{dp_j}$$

Global response coefficient: $R_{kj} = \frac{p_j}{x_k} \frac{dx_k}{dp_j} = \frac{d \log(x_k)}{d \log(p_j)}$ Sensitivity to perturbation: $s_{ij} = \frac{p_j}{x_i} \frac{\delta x_i}{\delta p_j} = \frac{d \log(x_i)}{d \log(p_j)}$ Local response coefficient: $r_{ik} = \begin{cases} \frac{x_k}{x_i} \frac{\delta x_i}{\delta x_k} & \text{for } k \neq i \\ -1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$

$$R = -r^{-1}S$$





$$\mathbf{r} = \begin{pmatrix} A & B & C & D & E \\ -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ r_{CA} & r_{CB} & -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & r_{DC} & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & r_{DE} & 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$







Maximum likelihood MRA

$$-log(\mathcal{L}) = RSS = \sum_{i,j,p} \left(\frac{-r_{ij}^{-1} \Delta p - R_{ij,p}^{\text{measured}}}{\text{s.e.m}_i} \right)^2$$

Klinger et al. (2013)

$$-log(\mathcal{L}) = RSS = \sum_{i,j,p} \left(\frac{-r_{ij}^{-1} \Delta p - R_{ij,p}^{\text{measured}}}{\text{s.e.m}_i} \right)^2$$

 $abs(RSS_{complete} - RSS_{reduced}) \sim \chi^2(rank_{complete} - rank_{reduced})$

Klinger et al. (2013)



Dorel et al. (2018)



Dorel et al. (2018)



Raue et al. (2009), Dorel et al. (2018)



Raue et al. (2009), Dorel et al. (2018)

Section 3

Reverse engineering neuroblastoma signalling pathways

• Most common extracranial tumor in childhood (6-10% of childhood cancers)

- Most common extracranial tumor in childhood (6-10% of childhood cancers)
- Most lethal childhood cancer (15% of cancer death in children)

- Most common extracranial tumor in childhood (6-10% of childhood cancers)
- Most lethal childhood cancer (15% of cancer death in children)
- Spontaneous regression in about 50% of cases

- Most common extracranial tumor in childhood (6-10% of childhood cancers)
- Most lethal childhood cancer (15% of cancer death in children)
- Spontaneous regression in about 50% of cases
- High risk disease have less than 40% survival rate



Maris et al. (2016)

Neuroblastoma risk factors



Hazard ratio (95% confidence interval)

Ackermann et al. (2018)

Neuroblastoma risk factors



Ackermann et al. (2018)

Neuroblastoma cell lines represent high risk tumors



Collaboration: Joern Toedling and Matthias Zhiem
Neuroblastoma cell lines show heterogeneous response to MEK, ALK and mTORC1 inhibitions



MEK inhibition sensitivity is bimodal



A perturbation panel was used to investigate drug resistance in neuroblastoma



The panel of neuroblastoma cell lines shows high variability in perturbation response



The panel of neuroblastoma cell lines shows high variability in perturbation response



A fixed parameter strategy to homogenize the models despite different topologies



A fixed parameter strategy to homogenize the models despite different topologies



A fixed parameter strategy to homogenize the models despite different topologies



$ERK \rightarrow RAF$ feedback intensity varies between cell lines



$ERK \rightarrow RAF$ feedback intensity varies between cell lines



Model parameters

		CHP212 -	LAN6	SKNAS -	KELLY	SKNSH	IMR32
	AKT->mTORC1	1.1	1.3	0.73	0.1	0.75	0.82
Intracellular signalling	ASK1->MEK	-0.23	-0.51	0	0	0	-20*
	ASK1->p38	-0.038	-0.048	-0.023	-0.003	-0.047	-0.27*
	ERK->cJUN	0.28	0.63	-0.010	0.98	0.29	0.093
	ERK->S6K	0.59	2.4	1	5.7	0.49	0.21
	MEK->ERK	1.8	0.43	0.83	0.49	1.2	0.75
	mTORC1->S6K	0.9	0.93	1.3	1.9	0.9	0.74
	p38−>S6K	-9.5	-4.6	-4.6	-110	0	0
	PI3K->AKT	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.87	1	0.26
	RAF->ERK->RAF	-2.9	-2.6	-1.4	-8	-1.8	-8.1

Cell lines resistant to MEK inhibition tend to have a strong MEK feedback



Cell lines resistant to MEK inhibition tend to have a strong MEK feedback











Vertical inhibition can break the feedback-mediated resistance



Conclusion: Neuroblastoma signalling (Dorel et al. (2021))

• Neuroblastoma cell lines represent very high risk tumors.

- Neuroblastoma cell lines represent very high risk tumors.
- Sensitivity to MEK, ALK and mTORC1 inhibition varies.

- Neuroblastoma cell lines represent very high risk tumors.
- Sensitivity to MEK, ALK and mTORC1 inhibition varies.
- Sensitivity to MEK inhibition seems related to the strength of the ERK feedbacks.

- Neuroblastoma cell lines represent very high risk tumors.
- Sensitivity to MEK, ALK and mTORC1 inhibition varies.
- Sensitivity to MEK inhibition seems related to the strength of the ERK feedbacks.
- MEK inhibitor resistance can be overcome with IGFR or RAF vertical inhibition.

Section 4

Role of NF1 in neuroblastoma

NF1 is RAS GTPase-activating protein



An NF1 KO isogenic panel sheds light on the role of NF1 in neuroblastoma



Collaboration with Mareike Berlak.

An NF1 KO isogenic panel sheds light on the role of NF1 in neuroblastoma



Collaboration with Mareike Berlak.

NF1 deletion weakens the ERK \rightarrow RAF feedback



NF1 deletion weakens the ERK \rightarrow RAF feedback



NF1 deletion weakens the ERK \rightarrow RAF feedback



NF1 deletion desensitizes to ALK inhibition but increases sensitivity to MEK inhibition



Collaboration with Mareike Berlak and Tomasso Mari.

Conclusion: NF1 KO in neuroblastoma (Berlak, Tucker, Dorel et al. (2021))

• NF1 KO decrease MEK feedback strength.

Conclusion: NF1 KO in neuroblastoma (Berlak, Tucker, Dorel et al. (2021))

- NF1 KO decrease MEK feedback strength.
- MAPK pathway is desensitized to ALK inhibition by the loss of NF1.

Conclusion: NF1 KO in neuroblastoma (Berlak, Tucker, Dorel et al. (2021))

- NF1 KO decrease MEK feedback strength.
- MAPK pathway is desensitized to ALK inhibition by the loss of NF1.
- ALK inhibitor resistance can be overcome by an additional MEK inhibition.

Section 5

Conclusion

Conclusion

During this thesis, I :

• Developed an R package called STASNet to build and analyze MRA models

Dorel et al. Bioinformatics (2018).

During this thesis, I :

• Developed an R package called STASNet to build and analyze MRA models

Dorel et al. Bioinformatics (2018).

- Isoform-specific Ras signaling is growth factor dependent, Hood, Klinger et al. Molecular Biology of the Cell (2019).
- Cell type-dependent differential activation of ERK by oncogenic KRAS in colon cancer and intestinal epithelium,

Brandt, Sell et al. Nature Communication (2019).

• The Impact Of Double X-Dosage On Signaling Pathways Implicated In Pluripotency,

Sultana et al. (pending submission)

During this thesis, I :

• Developed an R package called STASNet to build and analyze MRA models

Dorel et al. Bioinformatics (2018).

- Isoform-specific Ras signaling is growth factor dependent, Hood, Klinger et al. Molecular Biology of the Cell (2019).
- Cell type-dependent differential activation of ERK by oncogenic KRAS in colon cancer and intestinal epithelium,

Brandt, Sell et al. Nature Communication (2019).

• The Impact Of Double X-Dosage On Signaling Pathways Implicated In Pluripotency,

Sultana et al. (pending submission)

Suggested new combinations to sensitize high risk neuroblastoma to MEK inhibition

Dorel et al. PLoS Computational Biology (2021).
During this thesis, I :

• Developed an R package called STASNet to build and analyze MRA models

Dorel et al. Bioinformatics (2018).

- Isoform-specific Ras signaling is growth factor dependent, Hood, Klinger et al. Molecular Biology of the Cell (2019).
- Cell type-dependent differential activation of ERK by oncogenic KRAS in colon cancer and intestinal epithelium,

Brandt, Sell et al. Nature Communication (2019).

• The Impact Of Double X-Dosage On Signaling Pathways Implicated In Pluripotency,

Sultana et al. (pending submission)

Suggested new combinations to sensitize high risk neuroblastoma to MEK inhibition Dorel et al. PLoS Computational Biology (2021).

 Helped elucidate how NF1 inactivation leads to ALK inhibitor resistance but also induces MEK inhibitor sensitivity Berlak, Tucker, Dorel et al. Molecular Cancer (2022). • Improve STASNet performance to model larger networks.

- Improve STASNet performance to model larger networks.
- Characterize the MAPK feedbacks and associated resistance in more neuroblastoma cell lines as well as patient samples.

- Improve STASNet performance to model larger networks.
- Characterize the MAPK feedbacks and associated resistance in more neuroblastoma cell lines as well as patient samples.
- \bullet Investigate how exactly knockout of NF1 weakens the ERK \rightarrow RAF feedback.

- Improve STASNet performance to model larger networks.
- Characterize the MAPK feedbacks and associated resistance in more neuroblastoma cell lines as well as patient samples.
- \bullet Investigate how exactly knockout of NF1 weakens the ERK \rightarrow RAF feedback.
- Screen how neuroblastoma could overcome MEK combination therapies.

TerminateNB consortium



Nils Blüthgen Bertram Klinger Anja Sieber and the whole Blüthgen group



Jasmin Wünschel (Deubzer lab) Jörn Tödling Mareike Berlak Falk Hertwig Johannes Schulte

BERLIN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH Charité & Max Delbrück Center

Eric Blanc Clemens Messerschmidt

Dieter Beule (CUBI)

Matthias Ziehm Michal Nadler-Holly Tomasso Mari Matthias Selbach (MDC)

TerminateNB consortium



Nils Blüthgen Bertram Klinger Anja Sieber and the whole Blüthgen group



Jasmin Wünschel (Deubzer lab) Jörn Tödling Mareike Berlak Falk Hertwig Johannes Schulte

BERLIN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH Charité & Max Delbrück Center

Eric Blanc Clemens Messerschmidt

Dieter Beule (CUBI)

Matthias Ziehm Michal Nadler-Holly Tomasso Mari Matthias Selbach (MDC)

Boolean networks



Niederdorfer et al. (2020)

Correlation between drug resistance and selected mutations



Mathurin Dorel

Correlation between drug resistance and selected gene expression



Receptor expression in the neuroblastoma cell lines panel



Receptor stimulations are the main source of variation between cell lines



Adapters and ERBB receptor family expression in the neuroblastoma cell lines panel



Response of pMEK to MEK inhibition correlates with MEK inhibitor sensitivity



Combination of MEK and RAF inhibition does bring down pMEK and pERK



NF1 deletion induces proliferation and replicative stress



NF1 deletion induces proliferation and replicative stress





NF1 deletion induces proliferation and replicative stress



Collaboration with Mareike Berlak and Tomasso Mari.

$$P_l = \prod_{j,k} (r_{jk})^{a_{jkl}}$$

$$P_{l} = \prod_{j,k} (r_{jk})^{a_{jkl}}$$
$$\log P_{l} = \sum_{j,k} a_{jkl} \log r_{jk}$$

$$P_{I} = \prod_{j,k} (r_{jk})^{a_{jkl}}$$
$$\log P_{I} = \sum_{j,k} a_{jkl} \log r_{jk}$$
$$[A, -I] \times (\log r_{11}, r_{12}, \dots, \log r_{NN}, \log P_{1}, \dots, \log P_{M})^{T} = 0$$
Klinger et al. (2013)





$$G = \begin{bmatrix} A' & G_1 \\ \hline 0 & G_2 \end{bmatrix}$$
(1)

SHP2 KO show a differential activation pattern of the MAPK and PI3K pathways



SHP2 KO show a differential activation pattern of the MAPK and PI3K pathways





An activation of mTOR by ERK suggested by STASNet improves the quality of the model

from	to	value	residual	adj_pval
RPS6	mTOR	1.25	48.25	2.23E-02
ERK	mTOR	0.24	48.25	2.23E-02
MEK	mTOR	0.21	48.25	2.23E-02
p90RSK	mTOR	1.09	48.25	2.23E-02

An activation of mTOR by ERK suggested by STASNet improves the quality of the model



An activation of mTOR by ERK suggested by STASNet improves the quality of the model



SHP2 KO weakens MEK/ERK signalling, including the feedback, but not PI3K/AKT



STASNet quantitatively predicts the effect of different RAF inhibitors



STASNet quantitatively predicts the effect of different RAF inhibitors



Modular response analysis

 $-r^{-1} = R$
Modular response analysis

$$\begin{array}{cccccc} S & A & B & C & D & ^{-1} \\ S \\ A \\ - B \\ C \\ D \\ \end{array} \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ r_{SA} & -1 & r_{BA} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & r_{AB} & -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & r_{BC} & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & r_{CD} & -1 \end{pmatrix} =$$

R

Modular response analysis



Modular response analysis

