



The vascular NMDA receptor in Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension, an out-of-the-box academic scientific strategy towards therapeutic innovation

Sylvia Cohen-Kaminsky

sylvia.cohen-kaminsky@universite-paris-saclay.fr



Innovations to fight respiratory diseases Prevention, research and treatments

December 3-4th 2024 Biocitech

Out of Breath? Think of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH)



PAH, an unmet medical need with no cure



Since 1995, vasodilators, me-too non-healing drugs



PAH, the clinical need to solve



- Real technological/clinicalprogress with epoprostenol
- Combination therapy: Impact on survival ?

Meeting the challenge...



We still loose 10% patients/year, despite current PAH management strategies (combined therapies)

NIH, National Institutes of Health. Humbert M et al. 2010;



increase despite the so-called « specific therapies » Georges P et al Pulmonary Circulation 2011 Pulmonary Veno-Occlusive Disease (PVOD): the most severe form of PAH, with no solution

10% of PAH patients

Low blood O₂ level

Non-responders to existing PAH drugs



Lung transplant is the only option, if eligible



Montani D. *et al.*, 2023, PVOD French registry [2006-2022], personal communication

2 out of 3 patients dye within 2





It is urgent to change the game... Which solution?



New drugs able to change the course of PAH are eagerly awaited

Tomorrow: antivascular remodeling drugs, e.g. sotatercept (approved Mars 2024)

Today: bi- and tri-therapies, well-established combinations of vasodilators

1995-2005: First therapeutic revolution with the launch of the first vasodilators (epoprostenol, bosentan, sildenafil)





The NMDAR, a new therapeutic target in respiratory diseases



The NMDA Receptor pathway is engaged in PAH patients

Mass spectrometry imaging on human lung sections



Immunohistochemistry on human lung sections



PAH

GluN1 (C2)

ontrol

control

PAH

GluN1 (C2')

P-896 GluN1/ACTB expression in hPAs (Fold change)

- The NMDAR is engaged, i.e. phosphorylated, only in remodeled PAH arteries
- Glutamate and its precursor glutamine accumulate only in remodeled PAH arteries



Working hypothesis

The NMDAR promotes lung vascular remodeling leading to PAH

Dumas et al., Circulation, 2018, 137(22):2371-2389

NMDAR an unexpected ion channel player in PAH in cross talk with the ET-1 and PDGF pathways

NMDA-Type Glutamate Receptor Activation Promotes Vascular Remodeling and Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension

Sébastien J. Dumas, Gilles Bru-Mercier, Audrey Courboulin, Marceau Quatredeniers, Catherine Rücker-Martin, Fabrice Antigny, Morad K. Nakhleh, Benoit Ranchoux, Elodie Gouadon, Maria-Candida Vinhas, Matthieu Vocelle, Nicolas Raymond, Peter Dorfmüller, Elie Fadel, Frédéric Perros, Marc Humbert, and Sylvia Cohen-Kaminsky 🖂

в

Dumas S et al. Circulation. 2018



 NMDAR blockade inibits PDGF-dependent smooth muscle cell proliferation



Genetic inactivation or pharmacological inhibition of NMDAR reduces the development of PAH



Dumas S et al. Circulation 2018; Quatredeniers M et al., Am J Physiol Lung Cell Mol Physiol. 2019

NMDAR blockade, decreases right heart hypertrophy and fibrosis, and resolves perivascular lung and right heart inflammation



In total, 19 disease-relevant parameters modulated *in vivo* by MK801, a reference NMDAR antagonist blocker

 Hemodynamics ↓ mean pulmonary arterial pressure ↓ right ventricular systolic pressure ↓ total pulmonary resistance ↑ Pulmonary Artery Acceleration Time without effect on systemic pressure 	 Lung vascular remodeling ↓ medial hypertrophy of large arteries ↓ % of muscularized arterioles ↓ % of occluded arterioles
 Cardiac RV remodeling ↓ RV thickeness ↓ Fulton index ↑ RVFS (myocardial contractility) ↓ RV cardiomyocyte hypertrophy ↓ RV fibrosis ↓ RV fibrosis ↓ RV inflammation Cardiac output not significantly improved 	 Disrupting NMDAR/glutamate axis ↓ NMDAR engagement in PAs ↓ GLS1 (Glutaminase) expression ↓ vascular cell proliferation ↓ vascular cell apoptosis resistance ↓ endothelial dysfunction (sE-selectin) ↓ perivascular adventitial inflammation

A long road from the target to the drug candidate



Achievements and maturation program

ALSYMC



https://satt-paris-saclay.fr/vitrine-technologique/nuts-mat/

SATT

PARIS-SACLAY L'innovation en confiance

ALSYMO solution based on breakthough innovations the target...and the drug candidate



ALSYMO

WO/2017/017116 WO/2017/216159 Patents granted worldwide and licensed-

PARIS-SACLAY L'innovation en confiance 17

System biology approach: de-risking NMDAR as a therapeutic target





Quatredeniers, PhD Thesis Dec 2017, Quatredeniers et al, AJP-Lung 2019

ALSYMO



NMDAR, a molecular hub at the cross-roads of known PAH pathways



19

Biomarqueurs Innovants des Hypertensions Artérielles Pulmonaires par l'Imagerie

CONFIDENTIAL

Rational BIHAPI

There are currently no biomarker for pulmonary vascular remodeling. Diagnosis based on remodeling could lead to earlier diagnosis and a better response to current and future treatments.

BIHAPI challenge

BIHAPI combines multidisciplinary basic research and translational research to meet this challenge and propose innovative biomarkers for PAH, including PVOD, using molecular imaging.

Objectives BIHAPI

1/to develop a **molecular tracer** for imaging pulmonary vascular remodeling in PAH, as a theranostic compagnon biomarker 2/to characterize the **spatial molecular signatures** of pulmonary vascular remodeling in PAH, including PVOD





A therapeutic innovation that has successfully mobilized the French ecosystem





Alsymo team and world-renowned KOLs working together on the Bicêtre Hospital campus

Co-founders



A clinical development plan conceived with KOLs ... to make it happen within 5 years

Development steps towards clinical Proof-of-Concept



Clinical trial strategy

PVOD patients first

The most severe form of PAH:
Pulmonary Veno-Occlusive Disease
2 out of 3 die within 2 yrs

A niche opportunity

- To test the drug candidate as monotherapy in naive patients
- To penetrate the market

M&A activity in PAH

Pharma acquisition in PAH

- Actelion \$30 billion to J&J
- Acceleron \$11.5 billon to Merck & C°





Thanks for attention

https://satt-paris-saclay.fr/2022/10/03/alsymo-faire-reculer-lhypertension-arterielle-pulmonaire/ https://www.satt.fr/alsymo/



If there is no way, create one. Banksy

ALSYMO

Missions and vision

We innovate with commitment to patients SMART DRUGS

> To tackle Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension

> And make it happen within 5 years

ALSYMC



Backup slides

LS-Lead : Life Science Leadership School

- Destinée aux créateurs de startup innovantes en sciences de la vie
- 40 journées interactives en distanciel sur 1 an
- 80 experts, 60 participants formés, 20 start up crées
- formation certifiée Qualiopi N°2023/103749.1

<u>Parcours 1 : CONDUIRE UN PROJET DE CREATION D'ENTREPRISE EN SCIENCES DE LA VIE</u> (voir programme détaillé slide suivante)
<u>Parcours 2</u> : CREATION et REPRISE D'ENTREPRISE EN SCIENCES DE LA VIE
L'IDEATION « Analyser son marché & définir sa cible »
LA CREATION « Choisir son statut juridique & financer son activité »
LA STUCTURATION « Formaliser son business plan, commercialiser& piloter son projet »
LA COMMUNICATION « Savoir communiquer sur son projet & asseoir sa posture d'entrepreneur »

Ce que m'a apporté LS Lead

- culture entrepreneuriale très spécifique liée aux sciences de la vie et de la santé
- gain en assurance face à mes interlocuteurs, en particulier les investisseurs
- sentiment d'appartenance à une communauté, une grande familles solidaire et amicale
- accès à un réseau de mentors et d'experts sur qui je sais que je peux compter

LSLEAD est éligible aux financements publics de la formation continue : OPCO, Pôle emploi, BPI-PU https://ls-lead.com/

Ecosysteme SDV Sante DM, Médicament Business plan Juridique PI, pacte actionnaire, contrat Négociation Management Droit social Communication, Pitch Market access Financement, Levées de fond, comptabilité Partage d'expérience etc..



PARCOURS DE FORMATION DE LIFE SCIENCES LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

- J1 Comment développer votre médicament
- J2 Comment piloter votre projet en Sciences de la Vie (project management)
- J3 Comprendre les passerelles public / privé
- J4 Quand et comment créer votre entreprise
- J 5 Comprendre les différentes formes de financement
- J6 Comment intégrer le réglementaire dans la stratégie de développement
- J7 Comment accéder au marché (market access) drug dans les Sciences de la Vie
- J8 Connaitre les modes d'hébergement des startups
- J9 Comment développer votre dispositif médical
- J10 Comment préparer votre Business Plan dans les Sciences de la Vie
- J11 Comment protéger au mieux ses innovations dans les Sciences de la Vie
- J12 Connaître l'écosystème des Sciences de la Vie
- J13 Comment protéger ses intérêts par le contrat
- J14 Comment réaliser les premières levées de fonds (seed et series A)
- J15 Comprendre la comptabilité et savoir gérer son cash
- J16 Comprendre le fonctionnement des sociétés
- J17 Comment gérer les relations avec les actionnaires investisseurs
- J18 Partage d'expériences de créateurs d'entreprises en Sciences de la Vie (Part I)
- J19 PREPARATION AU PITCH GAGNANT (PART I)
- J20 Comment préparer et maîtriser sa communication

- J21 Comment maîtriser les meilleures techniques de négociation
- J22 Comment négocier sa prise de licence (in licensing)
- J23 Motivation et performance
- J24 Questions ouvertes des stagiaires Part I
- J25 Comment négocier et gérer ses accords de développement
- J26 Comment négocier et maitriser la fabrication de ses produits de santé
- J27 Comment développer votre médicament en Oncologie
- J28 Comment Réaliser Les Levées De Fonds Série B Et Suivantes
- J29 Comprendre le pacte d'actionnaires
- J30 Comment éviter les ennuis en droit social
- J31 Partage d'expériences de créateurs d'entreprises en Sciences de la Vie (Part II)
- J32 Comment négocier sa concession de licence (out licensing)
- J33 Comment gérer ses alliances stratégiques dans les Sciences de la Vie
- J34 Questions ouvertes des stagiaires (Part II)
- J35 Préparation au pitch gagnant (Part II)
- J36 Découvrir les opportunités en Chine
- J37 Comment développer votre médicament de thérapie cellulaire
- J38 Comprendre les impératifs de qualité
- J39 Préparation au pitch gagnant (Part III)
- J40 PARTAGE D'EXPERIENCES PART III & JOURNEE DE SOUTENANCE DE PITCH DEVANT LE JURY LS LEAD

Single cell analysis in pulmonary hypertension reveals importance of treatment with NMDAR blockers

> Am J Respir Crit Care Med. 2020 Oct 6. doi: 10.1164/rccm.202006-2169OC. Online ahead of print.

Single-cell Study of Two Rat Models of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension Reveals Connections to Human Pathobiology and Drug Repositioning

Jason Hong ¹, Douglas Arneson ², Soban Umar ³, Gregoire Ruffenach ³, Christine M Cunningham ³, In Sook Ahn ², Graciel Diamante ², May Bhetraratana ², John F Park ³, Emma Said ², Caroline Huynh ², Trixie Le ², Lejla Medzikovic ², Marc Humbert ², Florent Soubrier ⁴, David Montani ⁵, Barbara Girerd ⁶, David-Alexandre Trégouët ⁷, Richard Channick ², Rajan Saggar ⁸, Mansoureh Eghbali ², Xia Yang ²

Affiliations + expand PMID: 33021809 DOI: 10.1164/rccm.202006-2169OC





Integrative analysis of rat scRNA-seq DEGs with **human PAH genetics** points to the relevance of the DEGs to human PAH



- Integration of DEGs with Connectivity Map identifies potential candidate drugs for repositioning.
- Two NMDAR antagonists in the top 10 among 2429 drug tested

*Guaifenesin, a drug with expectorant properties, may also have NMDAR antagonist actions (half life 1 hour, kidney metabolisms) * Memantine, a well known NMDAR blocker, authorized for the treatment of Alzheimer disease

NMDAR, a target linked to known PAH pathways





- Regulated calciumdependent release of glutamate from vesicles equipped with VGLUT1

- ET-1 induces glutamate release through ET_AR

- ET1, PDGF and VEGF receptor activation induce NMDAR phosphorylation and mobilization at the cell membrane, thus inducing NMDAR-dependent vascular cell proliferation

A model of glutamatergic communication via NMDARs in vascular cells in cooperation with known PAH pathways

Dumas PhD Thesis (Nov 30, 2015) Dumas et al Circulation 2028

Summary - Target identification and validation



→ Activation of the NMDA-type glutamate receptor contributes to vascular remodeling and PAH

Targets for established and emerging therapies in PAH



Sotatercept:

Fusion protein, ligand trap of activins and GDFs

Phase 3 Stellar trial

Adults with PAH receiving stable background therapy
Sotatercept s.c. every 21 days resulted in a greater improvement in exercise capacity over a period of 24 weeks than placebo.
FDA approved and Lauched in March 2024

Hoepper MM et al New Englang J Medicine 2023 Humbert M, Eur Resp J 2023

Latest Phase 2 & 3 trials in PAH



Weatherald et al., Lancet 2022, 400: 1884–98

	Phase	Estimated size	Key eligibility criteria	Primary outcome	
Ralinepag, prostacyclin receptor agonist					
ADVANCE (NCT03626688)	3	700	WHO/NYHA Class II-IV	Time to first clinical worsening event	
ADVANCE CA PACITY (NCT04084678)	3	193	WHO/NYHA Class II or III, Vr/VCO, ≥38, VO, ≥10 to <18 mL/kg per min	Change in peak VO, at week 28	
/ardenafil DPI (RT234), inhaled phosphodiesterase type-5 inhibitor					
VIPAH-PRN (NCT04266197)	2	86	WHO/NYHA Class II–IV	Treatment-emergent adverse events, change in blood pressure, change in peak VO,	
MK-5475, inhaled soluble guanylate cyclase stimulator					
NSIGNIA-PAH (NCT04732221)	2/3	450	WHO/NYHA Class II–IV	Phase 2, change in PVR at week 12; phase 3, change in 6MWD at week 12	
Sotatercept, TGFβ superfamily modulator					
STELLAR (NCT04576988)	3	324	WHO/NYHA Class II or III, PVR ≥5 WU	Change in 6MWD at week 24	
HYPERION (NCT04811092)	3	662	Newly diagnosed, intermediate and high risk	Time to clinical worsening, defined as the first confirmed morbidity event or death	
ZENITH (NCT04896008)	3	200	WHO/NYHA Class III and IV at high risk	Time to first confirmed morbidity or mortality event, defined as all-cause death, lung transplantation, or pulmonary arterial hypertension-worsening-related hospitalisation of ≥24 h	
Seralutinib, inhaled PDGF-R, CSF1R, and c-KIT inhibitor					
TORREY (NCT04456998)	2	86	WHO/NYHA Class II or III, PAWP or LVEDP ≤12 if PVR ≥5 and <6·25 WU, or PAWP or LVEDP ≤15 if PVR ≥6·25 WU	Change in PVR at week 24	
matinib DPI (AV-101), inhaled tyrosine kinase inhibitor					
MPAHCT (NCT05036135)	2b/3	462	WHO/NYHA Class II–IV	Phase 2b, change in PVR at week 24; phase 3, change in 6MWD at week 24	
Rodatristat ethyl, tryptophan hydroxylase inhibitor					
ELEVATE-2 (NCT04712669)	2	90	WHO/NYHA Class II or III, PAWP or LVEDP ≤12 if PVR ≥4·4 and <6·25 WU, or PAWP or LVEDP ≤15 if PVR ≥6·25 WU	Change in PVR at week 24	
Apabetalone, BRD4 inhibitor					
APPROACH-2 (NCT04915300)	2	72	WHO/NYHA Class II or III, mPAP >20 mm Hg, PVR >5 WU	Change in PVR at week 24	

6MWD=6-minute walking distance. BRD4=bromodomain containing protein 4. c-KIT=stem-cell factor receptor. CSF1R=colony stimulating factor 1 receptor. DPI=dry powder inhaler. LVEDP=left ventricular end-diastolic pressure. PAWP=pulmonary artery wedge pressure. mPAP=mean pulmonary arterial pressure. PDGF-R=platelet-derived growth factor receptor. PETCO₂= partial pressure of expired carbon dioxide. PVR=pulmonary vascular resistance. TGFβ=transforming growth factor β. V_k/VCO₂=minute ventilation to carbon dioxide output ratio. VO₂=oxygen consumption. WHO/NYHA=WHO/New York Heart Association. WU=wood units.

Table: Summary of investigational pulmonary arterial hypertension therapies and mechanisms currently in phase 2 and 3 trials

Glutamatergic communication in the CNS





- 1. Interaction with synaptic adhesion molecules \rightarrow Synaptogenesis
- 2. Recrutment of pre and postsynaptic elements
- 3. Calcium signal \rightarrow vesicular secretion of glutamate in the synaptic cleft
- 4. Activation of postsynaptic receptors and signal integration
- 5. Glutamate recapture

*Gls : Glutaminase *Vglut : Vesicular glutamate transporters



Ionotropic glutamate receptor, Voltage-dependent

- Calcium permeable channel, 4 subunits
- 2xGluN1 : obligatory

2xGluN2 (A,B,C or D) modulate channel properties NMDAR activation: glutamate, co-activator glycine

Widely expressed in the NCNS

- Neurons (synaptic communication), astrocytes
- Microvascular endothelial cells in the brain
- Neuronal plasticity...neurodegenerative diseases...

Coincident glutamate release and NMDAR activation



How the NMDA receptor is engaged at the cell membrane and activated ?

Vascular cell (and immune cells) are equipped for synaptic glutamatergic communication

Dumas et al Circulation 2018, Dumas PhD thesis 2015, Affaticati et al PhD thesis, Affaticati et al Cell death differentiation 2011)

The NMDAR, a molecular hub at the crossroads of key pathways leading to PAH

Glutamatergic communication in the vascular wall

NMDARs are present, quiescent or engaged, in both endothelial and smooth muscle cells, the two vascular cell types involved in PAH

NOTE: schematic representation on the basis of the the knowlege on NMDAR in vascular biology

Sébastien Dumas

Marceau Quatredeniers

Florent **Dumont**

Guillaume **Bernadat**

Key PAH pathways are NMDAR engagers

Key properties of ASM01

