

1 **Targeting *de novo* lipogenesis and the Lands cycle induces ferroptosis in KRAS-**
2 **mutant lung cancer**

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34 **Running title:** Mutant KRAS lung cancer depends on FASN and the Lands cycle

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36

1 **Abstract**

2 Mutant *KRAS* (KM) is the most common oncogene in lung cancer (LC). KM regulates several
3 metabolic networks, but their role in tumorigenesis is still not sufficiently characterized to be
4 exploited in cancer therapy. To identify metabolic networks specifically deregulated in KMLC,
5 we characterized the lipidome of genetically engineered LC mice, cell lines, patient derived
6 xenografts and primary human samples. We also determined that KMLC, but not EGFR-mutant
7 (EGFR-MUT) LC, is enriched in triacylglycerides (TAG) and phosphatidylcholines (PC). We also
8 found that KM upregulates fatty acid synthase (FASN), a rate-limiting enzyme in fatty acid (FA)
9 synthesis promoting the synthesis of palmitate and PC. We determined that FASN is specifically
10 required for the viability of KMLC, but not of LC harboring EGFR-MUT or wild type *KRAS*.
11 Functional experiments revealed that FASN inhibition leads to ferroptosis, a reactive oxygen
12 species (ROS)-and iron-dependent cell death. Consistently, lipidomic analysis demonstrated that
13 FASN inhibition in KMLC leads to accumulation of PC with polyunsaturated FA (PUFA) chains,
14 which are the substrate of ferroptosis. Integrating lipidomic, transcriptome and functional analyses,
15 we demonstrated that FASN provides saturated (SFA) and monounsaturated FA (MUFA) that feed
16 the Lands cycle, the main process remodeling oxidized phospholipids (PL), such as PC.
17 Accordingly, either inhibition of FASN or suppression of the Lands cycle enzymes PLA2 and
18 LPCAT3, promotes the intracellular accumulation of lipid peroxides and ferroptosis in KMLC
19 both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Our work supports a model whereby the high oxidative stress caused by
20 KM dictates a dependency on newly synthesized FA to repair oxidated phospholipids, establishing
21 a targetable vulnerability. These results connect KM oncogenic signaling, FASN induction and
22 ferroptosis, indicating that FASN inhibitors already in clinical trial in KMLC patients
23 (NCT03808558) may be rapidly deployed as therapy for KMLC.

1 Introduction

2 Mutant *KRAS* (KM) lung cancer (LC) is associated with poor prognosis and resistance to
3 therapy. *KM* expression is not only sufficient to initiate LC but also essential for the viability of
4 KMLC (Fisher et al., 2001; Sunaga et al., 2011). Notwithstanding the notable exception of the
5 *KRAS^{G12C}* mutant (Canon et al., 2019; Hallin et al., 2020; Janes et al., 2018; McCormick, 2019),
6 KM remains undruggable. Furthermore, targeting the KM signaling network has proved to be
7 either ineffective or toxic (Tomasini et al., 2016). Finally, cancer immunotherapy benefits only a
8 minority of KMLC patients (Carbone et al., 2017; Reck et al., 2016). Therefore, there is an urgent
9 need for novel therapeutic strategies for KMLC.

10 KM reprograms cellular metabolism, promoting aerobic glycolysis and lipid
11 synthesis/uptake (Boroughs and DeBerardinis, 2015; Kamphorst et al., 2013a; Padanad et al.,
12 2016). Notably, KM regulates the expression of fatty acid synthase (FASN), the rate-limiting
13 enzyme of *de novo* lipogenesis (Gouw et al., 2017) and FASN inhibition is detrimental to several
14 cancer types (Baenke et al., 2013; Currie et al., 2013; Rohrig and Schulze, 2016). We reported that
15 acyl-CoA synthetase long chain family member 3 (ACSL3), which synthesizes fatty acyl-CoA
16 esters, is required for the viability of KMLC both *in vitro* and *in vivo* (Padanad et al., 2016). Also,
17 recent studies indicated that lipid metabolism mediates adaptations to oncogenic *KRAS^{G12C}*
18 inhibition (Santana-Codina et al., 2020). However, the mechanisms governing the interaction of
19 KM with FA metabolism and their functional consequences have not been characterized in
20 sufficient detail to inform cancer therapy.

21 FA are required for the synthesis of complex lipids, such as phospholipids (PL) or
22 triacylglycerides (TAG), which are used to build cellular membranes, to produce ATP through β -
23 oxidation (Baenke et al., 2013), or are stored in lipid droplets (Carracedo et al., 2013; Currie et al.,

1 2013). On the other hand, in the presence of reactive oxygen species (ROS), polyunsaturated FA
2 (PUFA), long-chain FA with multiple double bonds, undergo lipid peroxidation causing
3 ferroptosis, a form of nonapoptotic ROS-dependent programmed cell death (Yang et al., 2016).
4 Ferroptosis plays an important role in the regulation of cell survival in several physiologic as well
5 as pathologic processes, including cancer (Zheng and Conrad, 2020).

6 Three hallmark features define cancer cell sensitivity to ferroptosis: the presence of
7 oxidizable PL containing PUFA (PUFA-PLs), redox-active iron and inefficient lipid peroxide
8 repair (*e.g.* glutathione peroxidase 4, GPX4) (Dixon and Stockwell, 2019; Liu et al., 2018; Yang
9 et al., 2014). Consequently, the genes and metabolic pathways controlling lipid peroxide repair,
10 antioxidant response, or PUFA metabolism mediate the sensitivity to ferroptosis.

11 The Lands cycle is the main process through which PL are remodeled to modify their FA
12 composition (Lands, 1960). This process is conserved in the plant and animal kingdoms allowing
13 the generation of new PL, effectively bypassing *de novo* synthesis of the entire PL molecule.
14 Importantly, lung tissue synthesizes dipalmitoyl-PC (the major component of pulmonary
15 surfactant) through this pathway, by de-acylating PC at the sn₂ position and substituting a palmitic
16 acid (C16:0) moiety at this site. Moreover, the Lands cycle constitutes the major route for
17 incorporation and release of free arachidonic acid (AA, C20:4) and other PUFA into cellular PL,
18 a process that is dependent on intracellular phospholipase A2 (PLA2). Hence, the proper regulation
19 of the Lands cycle is important to control the accumulation of potentially toxic PL and FA, in order
20 to maintain the integrity of cellular membranes (Ferrara et al., 2019; Wang and Tontonoz, 2019).

21 Here, we demonstrated that KMLC has high levels of PL decorated with saturated FA
22 (SFA) and monounsaturated FA (MUFA). Moreover, FASN inhibition drastically reduces
23 SFA/MUFA availability, obligating KMLC cells to incorporate the highly reactive PUFA into PL,

1 thus decreasing the threshold for ferroptosis. Notably, silencing the key regulators of the Lands
2 cycle phospholipase A2 group IVC (*PLA2G4C*) and lysophosphatidylcholine acyltransferase 3
3 (*LPCAT3*), induces ferroptosis in KMLC cells. We demonstrated that these processes are KM-
4 dependent and confirmed our conclusions with metabolic flux analysis. This study provides the
5 rationale for targeting FA synthesis and the Lands cycle as an effective therapeutic strategy for
6 KMLC.

7 **Materials and Methods**

8 *Human LC samples and Human LC PDXs.* Human LC samples (n=6, Supplementary Table S1)
9 were obtained from University of Cincinnati Biorepository under usage agreement (SR
10 ID:TB0109). Frozen human LC PDXs (n=11, Supplementary Table S1) were obtained from
11 Hamon Cancer Center at UT Southwestern Medical Center. Representative CT-scan images of a
12 patient enrolled in the NCT03808558 trial were kindly provided by Dr. Gerber.

13 *Cell lines.* LC cell lines were obtained from the cell line repository of the Hamon Center for
14 Therapeutic Oncology Research (UT Southwestern Medical Center (1,2), IMR-90 human lung
15 fibroblasts were from ATCC, Dr. Monte M. Winslow kindly provided mouse KMLC cell lines
16 238N1, 802T4, 368T1, 593T5 derived from LSL-*Kras*^{G12D} lung tumors (Winslow et al., 2011).
17 Cells were maintained as previously described (Konstantinidou et al., 2013; Padanad et al., 2016).
18 For drug treatments, growth medium was replaced by HyClone RPMI medium (GE, SH30027)
19 supplemented with 5% heat-inactivated dialyzed FBS (SIGMA-ALDRICH, F0394).

20 *Drugs and enzymatic inhibitors.* TVB-3664 (FASNi) or the inactive isomer (TVB-2632) were
21 from Sagimet Biosciences (San Mateo, CA). ML162 (#20455) or Ferrostatin-1 (#17729) were
22 from Cayman. ARS-1620 (HY-U00418) was from MedChemExpress. 16:0-18:1 PC (hereafter PC

1 #850457P), Sodium palmitate (#P9767) and N-Acetyl-L-cysteine (#A7250) were from Millipore-
2 Sigma. CellROX™ Green Reagent (#C10444) was from Thermo Fischer Scientific.

3 *Mouse studies.* All animal studies were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use
4 Committee (IACUC) at University of Cincinnati (protocol 18-04-16-01). Both male and female
5 mice were included in the analysis. Power calculation was conducted using ClinCalc.com using
6 mean tumor burden from previous mouse experiments (Konstantinidou et al., 2009; Padanad et
7 al., 2016). The investigators were blinded during post-study data analyses.

8 *Transgenic mice.* *CCSP-rtTA/Tet-op-Kras^{G12D}* (FVB/SV129 mixed background) mice were
9 described previously (Fisher et al., 2001). We obtained lung-specific *Kras^{G12D}* expression (i.e.
10 KM) by feeding mice with doxycycline (doxy) -implemented food pellets (ENVIGO, TD 2018,
11 625 Dox, G) for 2 months. At this point, mice were randomly assigned to vehicle or FASNi. Lungs
12 of *CCSP-rtTA/Tet-O-EGFR^{L858R}* mice were kindly provided by Dr. Katerina Politi.

13 *Xenograft mouse models.* We performed xenograft studies in 6-week-old NOD/SCID mice
14 (Jackson Laboratory), as previously described (Konstantinidou et al., 2013; Padanad et al., 2016).
15 Briefly, 1×10^6 cells (A549 or H460) were injected in the right flank of NOD-SCID mice. Tumors
16 were measured twice a week using a digital caliper. Mice were euthanized when xenografts
17 reached 2 cm³.

18 *FASNi in vivo treatment.* TVB-3664 (60 mg/kg/100 µL/mouse) was dissolved in 0.2% DMSO-
19 PBS, sonicated and administered daily via oral gavage. We treated *CCSP-rtTA/Tet-op-Kras^{G12D}*
20 mice after feeding them with doxy for 2 months. We treated NOD/SCID mice when xenografts
21 reached ~30-50 mm³. At this time, mice were randomly assigned to either vehicle (0.2% DMSO
22 in PBS, control) or FASNi (TVB-3664) group.

1 *Blood and tissue collection.* We collected blood (150 μ L) from the submandibular vein and left at
2 RT until clot formation. Lung were harvested as previously described (Fisher et al., 2001). Briefly,
3 we cannulated the right heart and perfused anesthetized with PBS lacking calcium and magnesium.
4 Lung lobes were excised, then either fixed overnight in 4% paraformaldehyde at 4°C, or snap
5 frozen and stored at -80°C for further analyses.

6 *Viability assays.* For MTT assays, we plated 5000 cells/0.1 mL/well in 96-well plates. The day
7 after, we added 0.1 mL of medium containing appropriate concentrations of the compound under
8 study to each well. After 7 days (or 5 days for ARS-1620) of treatment, 10 μ L of MTT solution (5
9 mg/mL) was added into each well. After 4 hrs incubation, the medium was removed and the
10 formazan salts dissolved in 200 μ L DMSO/ well for 10 min at 37°C. The absorbance was read at
11 570 nm (OD 570 nm). Data are represented as mean \pm SD of 3 independent experiments.

12 *Crystal violet assays* were performed as previously described (Feoktistova et al., 2016). Briefly,
13 3-4 x 10⁴ cells/ well were seeded in 12-well plate. At the experimental endpoint, 0.25 mL/well of
14 crystal violet solution (0.5% of crystal violet powder in 20% methanol) was added to the plate and
15 incubated at RT for 20 min on an orbital shaker. After removing the crystal violet solution, the
16 plate was washed with water and let to dry overnight. Pictures were taken before adding 1 mL/well
17 of methanol. After shaking 20 min at RT, the absorbance was read at 570 nm (OD 570 nm).

18 *Cell cycle analysis.* We performed cell cycle analysis after 4 days of pharmacological treatments,
19 or 72 hrs after siRNA transfection or doxy-dependent induction of shRNAs, respectively. The cells
20 were fixed in ice-cold 70% ethanol for 30 min. RNA digestion was performed with 100 g/mL
21 RNase A (Sigma Aldrich, R6513) for 15 min at 37°C. DNA staining was performed with 50 μ g/mL
22 propidium iodide (Sigma Aldrich, P4170) for 30 min at 37°C. The cells were analyzed using a BD

1 LSRFortessa™ Flow Cytometer, and the cell cycle distribution was determined with FlowJo v8.7
2 Software.

3 *Oil Red Oil Staining.* We treated cells either with FASNi, 0.2 μM or with DMSO, 0.2% (i.e.
4 vehicle) for 4 days. Cells were rinsed with 1X PBS twice, fixed with formalin (3%) for 1 hour, and
5 washed again. Cells were incubated with isopropanol (60%) for 5 minutes and then with ORO
6 solution (ORO, 2mg/mL, Alfa Aesar, A12989) for 20 min. Nuclei were stained with hematoxylin
7 stain solution, Gill 1(RICCA, #3535-16). For quantification, ORO staining was extracted with
8 100% isopropanol. The absorbance was read at 492 nm.

9 *Protein extraction and Immunoblot.* Tissues or cell lines were lysed in ice-cold RIPA lysis buffer
10 containing cOmplete™ protease inhibitors cocktail and PhosSTOP™ phosphatase inhibitors
11 cocktail (Millipore Sigma). 30 μg of total protein were separated using Midi Criterion TGX Stain-
12 Free precast gels (Bio-Rad, 5678024), transferred onto nitrocellulose membranes (Bio-Rad,
13 1620112), and then blocked with 5% Blotting-Grade Blocker (Bio-Rad, 1606404) in TBS for 1 h,
14 at RT. The membranes were incubated overnight at 4°C with the indicated primary antibodies:
15 FASN (C20G5) rabbit mAb (CST, 1:1000 dil); SCD1 (C12H5) rabbit mAb (CST, 1:1000 dil);
16 AMPKα Antibody rabbit pAb (CST #2532, 1:1000 dil); phospho-AMPKα (Thr172) (40H9) rabbit
17 mAb (CST, 1:1000 dil); ACC1 (C83B10) Rabbit mAb (CST, 1:1000 dil); Phospho-ACC1 (Ser79)
18 (D7D11) rabbit mAb (CST, 1:1000 dil); KRAS (234-4.2) mouse mAb (Millipore Sigma, 1:700
19 dil); pan RAS (C-4) mAb (SCBT, 1:500 dil); Cofilin (D3F9) rabbit mAb (CST, 1:1000 dil). Cofilin
20 was used as loading control. Either goat anti-rabbit or anti-mouse IgG (H+L) cross adsorbed,
21 DyLight® 800 (Thermo Scientific, 1:5000 dil) was used as secondary antibody. Blots were
22 analyzed using Odyssey Scanner and Image Studio Software (LI-COR).

1 *Malonyl-CoA quantification.* Malonyl-CoA concentration was assessed using the human malonyl
2 Coenzyme A ELISA kit (MyBiosource, MBS705079), following manufacturer's instructions. Test
3 samples were prepared in triplicates.

4 *Measurement of fatty acid oxidation (FAO).* We used a fatty acid oxidation colorimetric assay kit
5 (Biomedical Research Service Center, State University of New York, E-141) as previously
6 described (Kwong et al., 2019). Samples were assayed in triplicate.

7 *NADPH quantification.* NADPH in lysates of cell lines or A549 xenografts was determined using
8 a colorimetric NADPH Assay Kit (Abcam's, ab186031), following the manufacturer's instructions
9 on LC cells and A549 xenografts treated with either FASNi or vehicle for 4 days. Test samples
10 were prepared in triplicates.

11 *AMP quantification.* We used a colorimetric AMP colorimetric assay kit (BioVision, K229-100)
12 to detect AMP in cell lysates ($\sim 1 \times 10^7$) and A549 xenografts (~ 10 mg) following the
13 manufacturer's instructions. Samples were assayed in triplicate. 1 mM AMP Standard was used as
14 positive control.

15 *Cu(I)-catalyzed azide-alkyne cycloaddition reaction (Click-iT chemistry).* Cells were grown on
16 coverslips in a 12-well plate and kept either with FASNi, 0.2 μ M or with vehicle (DMSO, 0.2%)
17 for 4 days. Then, we incubated them with 20 μ M arachidonic acid alkyne (Cayman Chemical,
18 10538) in RPMI with 2% ultra-fatty acid free BSA (SIGMA ALDRICH, A6003-25G) for 6 hrs.
19 After fixation with 3% paraformaldehyde in PBS for 15 min and permeabilization with 0.25%
20 Triton X100 in PBS for 15 min, cells were washed with 1% BSA in PBS. The Click-iT reaction
21 cocktail was prepared according to manufacturer's instructions (Kolb and Sharpless, 2003).
22 Briefly, Click-iT™ Cell Reaction Buffer Kit (Thermo Scientific, C10269) was mixed with CuSO₄
23 (1 mM final concentration) and Alexa-Fluor 488 azide (10 μ M final concentration, Thermo

1 Scientific, A10266). After staining nuclei with DAPI, cells were washed again, and mounted on a
2 slide using Fluoromount-G medium.

3 *C11-BODIPY staining.* We stained fixed cells with 2.5 μ M C11-BODIPY581/591 (SIGMA
4 ALDRICH, D-3861) for 60 min. The ROS-dependent oxidation of the polyunsaturated butadienyl
5 portion of this lipid probe results in a shift of the fluorescence emission peak from \sim 590 nm
6 (reduced: red) to \sim 510 nm (peroxidized: green) (Drummen et al., 2002; Pap et al., 1999). Briefly,
7 cells were treated with 0.2 μ M FASNi or 0.2% DMSO, for 4 days. In rescue experiments, cells
8 were co-treated with FASNi and one of the following: palmitate (100 μ M), phosphatidylcholine
9 (PC, 100 μ M), or Ferrostatin-1 (Fer-1, 1 μ M) for 4 days. 5 mM N-acyl-cysteine (NAC) was added
10 for 60 min after 4 days of FASNi treatment. For snap-frozen samples, we used 10 μ m-thick cryo-
11 sections of A549 xenografts (5 mice/group) and lungs of CCSP-rtTA/Tet-op-Kras (3 mice/group).
12 Samples were incubated with C11-BODIPY581/59, washed with PBS, fixed with 10% formalin
13 for 1 hour, counterstained with DAPI and mounted using Fluoromount-G medium (Thermo
14 Scientific). For cells, three images per slide were acquired using a Zeiss LSM 710 confocal
15 microscope equipped with a Plan-Apo 63x/1.4 oil DIC M27 objective. For tissues, three images
16 per sample were acquired using a Lionheart FX (BioTek) and Gen5 software (v3.06). We
17 quantified the images with ImageJ software (version 1.46; NIH, Bethesda, MD, USA).

18 *Plasmids and virus production.* *pBabe-Kras^{G12D}* (#58902) and *LT3GEPiR* (#111177) were from
19 Addgene. The insert expressing the shRNA was cloned into the vector *LT3GEPiR* in the XhoI and
20 EcoRI sites. The shRNAs target sequences were selected either from the library described by
21 Feldmann et al. (Fellmann et al., 2013) or from the splashRNA database (Pelosof et al., 2017)
22 (<http://splashrna.mskcc.org/>). The hairpin targeting sequences are: *shLPCAT3 #1* 5'-
23 GCCTCTCAATTGCTTATTTTA-3'; *shLPCAT3 #2* 5'-AAGGAAAGAGAAGTTAAA-3';

1 *shPLA2G4C* #1 5'-CAGAATGAATGTGATAGTTCA-3'; *shPLA2G4C* #2 5'-
2 ACATGGTTATCTCTAAGCAAA-3'; *shGPX4* #1 5'-GTGGATGAAGATCCAACCCAA-3';
3 *shGPX4* #2 5'-AGGCAAGACCGAAGTAAACTA-3'. *shKRAS* #10 5'-
4 AAGTTGAGACCTTCTTAATTGGT-3'; *shKRAS* #40 5'-TCAGGACTTAGCAAGAAGTTA-
5 3'. Production of lentiviruses was performed as previously described (Padanad et al., 2016).

6 *siRNA*. Predesigned FASN siRNAs were from Millipore Sigma (#1, SASI_Hs01_00057850; #2,
7 SASI_Hs01_00057851; #3, SASI_Hs02_00336920; #4, SASI_Hs01_00057849). A custom
8 siRNA library (Supplementary Table S2), universal MISSION® siRNA Universal Negative
9 Control #1 (cat. SIC001) and #2 (cat. SIC002) were from Millipore Sigma. We used the
10 DharmaFECT 4 Transfection Reagent (Thermo Scientific) for siRNA transfection. RNA was
11 extracted using TRIzol Reagent (cat. 15596, Life Technologies) and retrotranscribed using iScript
12 cDNA Synthesis kit (cat. 170-8891, Biorad). Knock-down efficiency was evaluated 48 hrs after
13 transfection via real-time PCR using the PowerUP™ SYBR® Green Master Mix (cat. A25742,
14 Thermo Fisher Scientific) and custom designed primers (Supplementary Table S2).

15 *RNA-seq and bioinformatic analysis*. We extracted total RNA with TRIzol. We removed residual
16 genomic DNA was removed with the Turbo DNA-free kit (AM1907, ThermoFisher). One µg of
17 total DNase-treated RNA was used for library preparation with the NEBNext Ultra II Directional
18 RNA Library Prep kit. Reads were aligned to the human hg38 reference genome using STAR
19 (v3.7.3a) (Dobin et al., 2013). Gencode annotation for human (version v37) was used as reference
20 alignment annotation and downstream quantification. Gene level expression was calculated using
21 featureCounts (v2.0.1) (Liao et al., 2014) using intersection-strict mode by exon. Counts were
22 calculated based on protein-coding genes from the annotation file. Low expressed genes were
23 filtered using a per time-point approach with RPKM ≥ 0.5 in all samples in one or the other time-

1 point. Differential expression was performed in R using *DESeq2* (Love et al., 2014). Surrogates
2 variables were calculated using *sva* (Leek et al., 2012) and included in the modelling. We estimated
3 log₂ fold changes and P-values. P-values were adjusted for multiple comparisons using a
4 Benjamini-Hochberg correction (FDR). Differentially expressed genes were considered for FDR
5 < 0.05. Gene list enrichment analysis was carried out using Enrichr (Chen et al., 2013; Kuleshov
6 et al., 2016) (<https://amp.pharm.mssm.edu/Enrichr/#>).

7 *Laser-capture microdissection (LMD) of tumor tissue.* LMD was performed at the Histopathology
8 Core of UT Southwestern Medical Center as previously described (Bonner et al., 1997). Briefly,
9 10 μm cryo-sections of tumors were mounted onto PEN membrane glass slides (Thermo Fisher
10 Scientific, LCM05220 Sections were then stained using Histogene™ Staining Solution (Thermo
11 Fisher Scientific, KIT0415), washed with HPLC-grade water and subjected to LMD using a Leica
12 LMD System. LMD sections were recovered in 0.2 mL tubes, immediately snap-frozen and stored
13 at -80°C until the analysis. 4 replicates per sample were prepared.

14 *Solvents and reagents.* All the HPLC or LC/MS grade solvents were from Sigma-Aldrich (St
15 Louis, MO, USA). SPLASH LipidoMix™ standards, were from Avanti Polar Lipids (Alabaster,
16 AL, USA). Fatty acid (FA) standards (FA(16:0^{{2}H₃₁}), FA(18:1^{ω9}^{{2}H₅}) and FA(20:4^{ω6}^{{2}H₈})
17 were from Cayman Chemical (Ann Arbor, MI, USA). An eVol® precision pipette equipped with
18 a glass syringe (Trajan Scientific, Austin TX, USA) was used for the addition of FA standards.

19 *Sample preparation for MS/MS^{ALL} and GC/MS.* Laser-captured microdissected samples, cell
20 pellets containing 2.5 × 10⁵ cells or 10 μL of serum were transferred to glass tubes for Liquid-
21 Liquid Lipid Extractions (LLE). For xenografts, 100 mg of tissue were transferred to a 2.0 mL pre-
22 filled Bead Ruptor tube (2.8 mm ceramic beads, Omni International, Kennesaw, GA, USA), and

1 homogenized in 1mL of methanol/dichloromethane (1:2, v/v) using a Bead Ruptor (Omni
2 International). Aliquots equivalent to 0.5 mg of tissue were used for LLE.

3 *MALDI Imaging Mass Spectrometry (MALDI-IMS)*. 10- μ m-thick sections were mounted on PEN
4 membrane glass slides and stored at -80°C. They were processed by the Chemical Imaging
5 Research Core, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center. Matrix was applied using the sublimation
6 method with a Shimadzu IM Layer (Shimadzu North America, Columbia, MD). Sampling was
7 performed using DHB for positive mode and 9-AA for negative mode. We used 300 laser shots at
8 1 KHz using a laser pulse energy with an average of 25 μ J. For DHB and 9-AA, the laser was
9 adjusted to 60% and 50%, respectively. The mass range was 50-1200 m/z, and the instrument was
10 calibrated using peak signals from red phosphorus. For MS/MS MSI analysis of taurodeoxycholic
11 acid, parent ion at m/z 498.295 was selected, and fragment ion at m/z 124.006 was monitored at a
12 collision trap voltage of 40 V. The laser shots were 500 shots per spot at 50% power. Data were
13 acquired using a Waters Synapt G2 Si (Waters Corporation, Milford, MA) at 60- μ m spot size with
14 100- μ m spacing. For relative quantitation, the MSI data were converted to msIQuant format via
15 imzML. Regions of interest (ROI) were annotated manually in msIQuant version 2.0 (Källback et
16 al., 2016). Total ion current (TIC) normalized average intensities of metabolites were exported
17 from each region for statistical analysis. Peak identification was manually done using LIPID
18 MAPS Lipidomic Database (LMSD).

19 *Lipidomic experiments*. After 4 days of treatment, with vehicle or FASNi, cells were either washed
20 twice with cold PBS and harvested for MS/MS^{ALL}, or incubated with 3 mM Ethyl Acetate-1,2 ¹³C₂
21 (SIGMA ALDRICH, 283819) for 7 hours (1 hour for the time-lapse experiment) to measure *de*
22 *novo* palmitate synthesis by GC/MS.

1 *Lipid profiling by direct-infusion MS/MS^{ALL}*. The LLE was performed at RT through a modified
2 Bligh/Dyer extraction technique. Briefly, 3mL of methanol/dichloromethane/water (1:1:1, v/v)
3 were added to the samples. The mixture was vortexed and centrifuged at 2671 g for 5 min. The
4 organic phase (bottom phase) was collected and dried under N₂. The extracts were resuspended in
5 600 μL of dichloromethane/methanol/isopropanol (2:1:1, v/v/v) containing 8mM ammonium
6 fluoride (NH₄F) and 33 μL of 3:50 diluted SPLASH LipidoMix™ internal standard. Extracts were
7 infused into a SCIEX quadrupole time-of-flight (QTOF) TripleTOF 6600+ mass spectrometer
8 (Framingham, MA, USA) via a custom configured LEAP InfusePAL HTS-xt autosampler
9 (Morrisville, NC, USA). Electrospray ionization (ESI) source parameters were, GS1 25, GS2 55,
10 curtain gas (Cur) 20, source temperature 300 °C and ion spray voltage 5500V and -4500V in
11 positive and negative ionization mode, respectively. GS1 and 2 were zero-grade air, while Cur and
12 CAD gas was nitrogen. Optimal declustering potential and collision energy settings were 120V
13 and 40eV for positive ionization mode and -90V and -50eV for negative ionization mode. Samples
14 were infused for 3 min at a flow rate of 10μL/min. MS/MS^{ALL} analysis was performed by
15 collecting product-ion spectra at each unit mass from 200-1200 Da. Analyst® TF 1.7.1 software
16 (SCIEX) was used for TOF MS and MS/MS^{ALL} data acquisition. Data analysis was performed
17 using an in-house script, LipPy. This script provides instrument quality control information,
18 isotopic peak corrections, lipid species identification, data normalization, and basic statistics.

19 *Fatty acid profiling by GC-MS*. Total fatty acid profiles were generated by a modified GC-MS
20 method previously described (Quehenberger et al., 2011). The lipid extract was spiked with 100uL
21 of 0.5μg/mL FA standard mixture (FA(16:0 {²H₃₁}), FA(20:4 ω₆ {²H₈}) and FA(22:6 ω₃ {²H₅}) in
22 methanol, then hydrolyzed in 1 mL of 0.5M potassium hydroxide solution prepared in methanol
23 at 80 °C for one hour. Hydrolyzed FA were extracted by adding 2mL of dichloromethane/water

1 (1:1, v/v) to the sample in hydrolysis solution. The mixture was vortexed and centrifuged at 2671
2 g for 5 min. The organic phase (bottom phase) was collected and dried under N₂. For the free FA
3 profile, the lipids were extracted by adding 500 μL of water, 500 μL of methanol containing 50
4 mM of HCL and 1mL of iso-octane to the glass tube containing the sample. The solution was
5 spiked with 100 μL of 0.5 μg/mL fatty acid standard mixture, shaken for 5 min, centrifuged at
6 2671 g for 5 min, and the organic phase (upper phase) was collected to a fresh glass tube. The
7 extraction procedure was repeated two times by adding 1mL of iso-octane to the mixture. The
8 organic phases were pooled together and dried under N₂. To analyze FA present in the polar lipid
9 fraction, a three-phase extraction method was performed, as already described (Vale et al., 2019).
10 Briefly, lipids were extracted with water, methyl acetate, acetonitrile (ACN) and Hexane
11 (1:1:0.75:1). After centrifugation, polar lipids (upper phase) were collected and dried. Total or
12 polar FA samples were resuspended in 50 μL of 1 % triethylamine in acetone, and derivatized with
13 50 μL of 1% pentafluorobenzyl bromide (PFBBBr) in acetone at RT for 25 min in capped glass
14 tubes. Solvents were dried under N₂, and samples were resuspended in 500 μL of isooctane.
15 Samples were analyzed using an Agilent 7890/5975C (Santa Clara, CA, USA) by electron capture
16 negative ionization (ECNI) equipped with a DB-5MS column (40m x 0.180mm with 0.18μm film
17 thickness) from Agilent. Hydrogen (carrier gas) flow rate was 1.6mL/min and injection port
18 temperature was set at 300 °C. Sample injection volume was 1μL. Initial oven temperature was
19 set at 150 °C, and then increased to 200 °C at a 25 °C/min, followed by an increase of 8 °C/min
20 until a temperature of 300 °C was reached and held for 2.2 min, for a total run time was 16.7 min.
21 FA were analyzed in selected ion monitoring (SIM) mode. The FA data were normalized to the
22 internal standards. Fatty acid with carbon length $C \leq 18$ were normalized to FA(16:0²H₃₁), $C =$

1 20 were normalized to FA(20:4 ω 6^{{2}H₈}), and C = 22 were normalized to FA(22:6 ω 3^{{2}H₅}). Data
2 were processed using MassHunter software (Agilent).
3 *HPLC-MS/MS*. PDXs and human lung cancer specimens were stored at -80 °C. LLE was
4 performed using a modified Bligh/Dyer extraction technique. The extracts were resuspended in 30
5 μ L of dichloromethane/methanol/isopropanol (IPA) (2:1:1, v/v/v) containing 8mM NH₄F and
6 SPLASH LipidoMix™ internal standards. Reversed-phase chromatographic separation was
7 achieved with the Acclaim C30 column: 3 μ m, 2.1 \times 150 mm (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham,
8 MA). The column was maintained at 35°C and tray at 20°C. Solvent A was composed of 10 mM
9 ammonium formate (AF, LC-MS grade) in 60:40 Acetonitrile (ACN):water (LC-MS grade) with
10 0.1% formic acid (FA, LC-MS grade). Solvent B was composed of 10 mM AF with 90:10
11 IPA:ACN with 0.1% FA. The flow rate was 250 μ L/min, and the injection volume was 10 μ L. The
12 gradient was 50% solvent A (3 to 50%). The Orbitrap (Thermo) mass spectrometer was operated
13 under heated electrospray ionization (HESI) in positive and negative modes separately for each
14 sample. The spray voltage was 3.5 and 2.4 kV for positive and negative mode, the heated capillary
15 was held at 350 °C and heater at 275°C. The S-lens radio frequency (RF) level was 45. The sheath
16 gas flow rate was 45 units, and auxiliary gas was 8 units. Full scan (m/z 250–1200) used resolution
17 30,000 at m/z 200 with automatic gain control (AGC) target of 2 \times 10⁵ ions and maximum ion
18 injection time (IT) of 100 ms. Normalized collision energy (NCE) settings were 25, 30, 35 %.
19 Lipid identification and relative quantification were performed with LipidSearch 4.1 software
20 (Thermo) as previously described (Breitkopf et al., 2017). The search criteria were as follows:
21 product search; parent m/z tolerance 5 ppm; product m/z tolerance 10 ppm; product ion intensity
22 threshold 1%; filters: top rank, main isomer peak, FA priority; quantification: m/z tolerance 5 ppm,

1 retention time tolerance 1 min. The following adducts were allowed in positive mode: +H, +NH₄,
2 +H—H₂O, +H—2H₂O, +2H, and negative mode: —H, +HCOO, +CH₃COO, -2H.

3 *Statistical analysis.* Data analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel for Mac (version 16.34)
4 and GraphPad Prism version 9 (GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA, USA, www.graphpad.com).

5 All data presented are expressed as mean ± SEM or ±SD of three or more biological
6 replicates/group (n values in each figure/figure legend). The significance of the results was
7 assessed using two-tailed unpaired Student's t test to compare two groups. When more than two
8 groups were compared, one- or two-way ANOVA was used followed by Dunnett's, Tukey's or
9 Sidak's post-test.

10 **Results**

11 **Mutant KRAS induces a specific lipid profile in lung cancer.**

12 *CCSP-rtTA/Tet-O-Kras^{G12D}* (hereafter *TetO-Kras^{G12D}*) and *CCSP-rtTA/Tet-O-EGFR^{L858R}*
13 (hereafter *TetO-EGFR^{L858R}*) mice, when fed doxy, invariably develop lung tumors which
14 recapitulate tumorigenesis and histological features of human LC (Fisher et al., 2001; Politi et al.,
15 2006). We performed mass spectrometry (MS) analysis on micro-dissected lung tumors and
16 unaffected parenchyma (Fig. 1A). We found that the two tumor types have different lipidomic
17 signatures. *TetO-Kras^{G12D}* LC shows a significant increase in PC and TAG, as well as of
18 sphingomyelins (SM) and phosphatidylethanolamine (PE), and a decrease in
19 lysophosphatylcholines (LysoPC), while *TetO-EGFR^{L858R}* preferentially has high
20 phosphatidylinositol (PI) and low TAG, (Fig. 1B, Supplementary Fig. S1A). Nevertheless, both
21 *TetO-Kras^{G12D}* and *TetO-EGFR^{L858R}* tumors have higher cholesteryl-esters (CE) and lower
22 diacylglycerides (DAG) than healthy lung (Fig. 1B, Supplementary Fig. S1A). In particular, *TetO-*
23 *Kras^{G12D}* tumors are enriched in PC species with SFA and MUFA acyl chains, but have less PUFA-

1 containing PC (and PE) than healthy lung (Fig.1C). To determine the spatial distribution of the
2 major lipid species identified by MS, we used Matrix Assisted Laser Desorption/Ionization
3 (MALDI) imaging. We confirmed that *TetO-Kras^{G12D}* tumors are enriched in TAG, SM and PC
4 (Fig. 1D). In particular, we observed that SFA- and MUFA-PC are preferentially localized within
5 the tumors, while PUFA-PC accumulate in the surrounding lung parenchyma (Fig. 1D). Notably, we
6 observed the same lipidomic pattern in KMLC patient-derived xenografts (PDXs) and primary
7 patient specimens (Fig. 1E-G; Supplementary Fig. S1B).

8 These data suggest that KM increases the intratumor availability SFA and MUFA for the
9 synthesis of TAG and PC (Supplementary Fig. S1C).

10 **Mutant KRAS induces a dependency on *de novo* lipogenesis**

11 To test whether the lipidome of KMLC depends on *de novo* lipogenesis, we used TVB-3664
12 (Sagimet Biosciences), a specific FASN inhibitor (FASNi), and *FASN* silencing on a panel of human
13 and mouse LC-derived cell lines (Gazdar et al., 2010; Phelps et al., 1996; Winslow et al., 2011) (Fig.
14 2A and Supplementary Fig. S2). Both approaches caused a G2/M cell cycle arrest in KMLC, without
15 affecting KRAS-WT and EGFR-MUT LC cells (Fig. 2B; Supplementary Fig. S2). Notably,
16 exogenous palmitate rescues the detrimental effects of FASNi, while an inactive FASNi isomer does
17 not affect the viability of KMLC cells (Fig. 2A and 2B). As previously reported (Gouw et al., 2017),
18 we found that KM correlates with FASN overexpression in *TetO-Kras^{G12D}* mice (Supplementary
19 Fig. S3A), in human KMLC cell lines (Supplementary Fig. S3B) and two independent tumor
20 microarrays (Supplementary Table S3; Supplementary Fig. S3C-S3F), while there is no significant
21 correlation with EGFR-MUT (Supplementary Fig. S3G and S3H).

22 To test whether *KM* expression is sufficient to establish a dependency on FASN, we
23 ectopically expressed *KM* in H522 and H661 KRAS-WT LC cells. KM induces upregulation of

1 FASN and its downstream enzyme, stearoyl-CoA desaturase 1 (SCD1) (Fig. 2C), accumulation of
2 lipid droplets (Fig. 2D; Supplementary Fig. S4A) and palmitate (Fig. 2E), sensitivity to FASN
3 inhibition and *FASN* silencing (Fig. 2F; Supplementary Fig. S4B and S4C). On the contrary, *KRAS*
4 silencing induces a significant decrease of FASN in KMLC cells (Fig. 2G), which also become
5 resistant to FASNi (Fig. 2H). Furthermore, the *KRAS*^{G12C} inhibitor ARS-1620 reverses the effects
6 FASNi in *KRAS*^{G12C} LC cell lines (Fig. 2I and 2J). All together these data demonstrate that KM
7 causes LC cells to become dependent on FASN.

8 **FASNi inhibits *de novo* lipogenesis independently of KRAS mutational status**

9 To gather mechanistic insights into the differential sensitivity to FASNi, we measured the
10 drug uptake, stability and its activity in LC cells.

11 Irrespective of the *KRAS* mutational status, FASNi readily accumulates intracellularly
12 (Supplementary Fig. S5A and S5B), inhibits *de novo* FA synthesis (Fig. 3A; Supplementary Fig.
13 S5C), causes a concomitant accumulation of malonyl-CoA (FASN substrate) and NADPH (FASN
14 cofactor) (Fig. 3B and 3C), depletion of lipid droplets (Fig. 3G; Supplementary Fig. S5D) and
15 downregulation of β -oxidation (Fig. 3E). Moreover, FASNi causes accumulation of AMP (Fig. 3F),
16 triggering the phosphorylation of AMPK and ACC1 in both genotypes (pACC1^{S79}) (Fig. 3G). This
17 observation is consistent with the notion that AMPK limits FA synthesis through direct
18 phosphorylation of ACC1, the enzyme that catalyzes the synthesis of malonyl-CoA, the substrate
19 of FASN (Garcia and Shaw, 2017). Thus, the activation of AMPK/ACC1 enhances the effect of
20 FASNi on FA synthesis (Fig. 3H). However, since these effects occur in both KM and *KRAS*-WT
21 LC cells, they do not provide an explanation for the specific dependency of KMLC cells on FASN.

22 **FASN inhibition induces accumulation of PUFA-phospholipids in KMLC cells**

1 To investigate the metabolic impact of FASN inhibition, we performed MS/MS^{ALL}
2 untargeted lipidomic analysis. We found that FASNi induces accumulation of LysoPC only in
3 KMLC cells. On the contrary, FASNi causes a concomitant decrease of TAG and an increase of
4 DAG irrespectively of *KRAS* status (Fig. 4A and 4B). No significant changes were found in the
5 activity of either the PC- specific phospholipase C (PLC) (Supplementary Fig. S5D) or the TAG-
6 specific lipase ATGL (Supplementary Fig. S5E), suggesting FASNi does not affect PC and TAG
7 lipolysis (Zechner et al., 2012). These findings suggest that KMLC uses *de novo* lipogenesis to fuel
8 the synthesis of TAG and PC. Notably, we found that KMLC cells accumulate PUFA in LysoPC
9 and PC upon FASNi (Fig. 4C-4F). In particular, LysoPC containing FA with two and four double
10 bonds account for the LysoPC increase in FASNi-treated KMLC cells (Fig. 4C and 4D). Moreover,
11 even though we did not detect a significant change in the total amount of PC (Fig. 4A and 4B), we
12 observed the accumulation of PUFA-PC and depletion of SFA- and MUFA-PC in FASNi-treated
13 KMLC cells ((Fig. 4E and 4F). This change in the composition of the acyl chains is specific for PC
14 and LysoPC of KMLC, because other lipid classes, such as TAG, do not increase their incorporation
15 of PUFA in response to FASNi (Fig. 4G and 4H). These data indicate not only that FASN provides
16 SFA and MUFA for the synthesis of TAG and PC in KMLC, but also that its inhibition causes the
17 incorporation of PUFA specifically in PC and LysoPC.

18 **The Lands cycle prevents the accumulation of PUFA in PC of KMLC**

19 PC are synthesized via the Kennedy pathway which conjugates phosphocholine to DAG
20 (KENNEDY and WEISS, 1956). However, the majority of PL synthesized via the Kennedy pathway
21 are remodeled through the Lands cycle, which consists in the de-acylation of PC and re-acylation of
22 LysoPC (Lands, 1960; Wang and Tontonoz, 2019; Zhao et al., 2008). To test whether FASN
23 inhibition induces uptake and incorporation of exogenous PUFA, we used arachidonic acid (AA, FA

1 20:4) as PUFA proxy (Fig. 5A-D). In mammals, AA is provided by exogenous dietary sources rich
2 either in AA or its parent molecule linoleic acid (LA, FA 18:2), which is desaturated and elongated
3 in the endoplasmic reticulum to yield AA (Hanna and Hafez, 2018). Even though FASNi increases
4 the total amount of AA in KMLC cells (Fig. 5A), ethyl acetate-2-¹³C metabolic flux analysis
5 revealed a decreased isotope incorporation in AA of FASNi-treated KMLC cells (Fig. 5B). These
6 data suggest that the intracellular pool of PUFA is dependent on their uptake from the
7 microenvironment. This conclusion is consistent with our MALDI imaging data showing that
8 PUFA-PC are enriched in the lung parenchyma surrounding the KM tumors (Fig. 1D-E).

9 To confirm this conclusion, we used click chemistry to conjugate AA-Alkyne to the Alexa
10 Fluor 488-azide (Gaebler et al., 2013; Gao and Hannoush, 2014; Robichaud et al., 2016). We
11 demonstrated that, even though the baseline AA uptake is lower in KMLC as compared to KRAS-
12 WT cells, FASNi treatment increases the incorporation of AA only in KMLC cells (Fig. 5C and
13 5D). Noteworthy, ectopic expression of KM significantly increases AA uptake during FASNi
14 treatment (H552-KM, Fig. 5C and 5D), indicating that this process is dependent on KM.

15 FASNi treatment upregulates several genes involved in the metabolism of lipids and lipoproteins
16 in both KM and wtKRAS LC cells (Fig. 5E; Supplementary Table S3). However, we found that only
17 FASNi-treated KMLC cells selectively upregulate metabolic genes such as *PLA2G4C*, *LPCAT3* and
18 *ACSL3* (Fig. 5F). These genes are involved in the remodeling of phospholipids through the Lands
19 cycle and in ferroptosis (Fig. 5G), a regulated form of cell death characterized by lipid peroxidation
20 (Dixon et al., 2012; Lands, 1960). In particular, *PLA2G4C* is a member of the PLA2 family, which
21 hydrolyses PL to produce free FA and lysophospholipids (LysoPL). *LPCAT3* inserts acyl groups
22 into LysoPL, specifically forming PC and PE (Zhao et al., 2008) and it is also required for cells to
23 undergo ferroptosis (Dixon et al., 2015; Kagan et al., 2017). *ACSL3* converts free long-chain FA

1 into fatty acyl-CoA esters which undergo β -oxidation or incorporation into PL (Yao and Ye, 2008).
2 ACSL3 is required for KMLC tumorigenesis (Padanad et al., 2016), it plays an important role in
3 AA metabolism in LC (Saliakoura et al., 2020) and protects cells from ferroptosis (Magtanong et
4 al., 2019; Ubellacker et al., 2020). To validate these RNA-seq data, we perform a custom siRNA
5 screen targeting 29 lipid metabolism genes. We found that 10 genes, including *PLA2G4C*, *LPCAT3*,
6 *LPCAT1*, *ACSL3* and glutathione peroxidase 4 (*GPX4*), which counteracts ferroptosis by catalyzing
7 the reduction of peroxidized PL (Liu et al., 2018; Viswanathan et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2014, 2016;
8 Zheng and Conrad, 2020), are selectively required for the viability of KM but not of KRAS-WT LC
9 cells (Fig. 5H and 5I).

10 Consistently, KMLC cells are more sensitive than KRAS-WT LC cells to ML162, a specific
11 inhibitor of GPX4 and an inducer of ferroptosis (Supplementary Fig. S6A and S6B), and we rescued
12 the effect of FASNi using the anti-ferroptotic molecule ferrostatin-1 (Fer-1) (Supplementary Fig.
13 S6A-S6F). Stable knock-down of *GPX4*, *LPCAT3* and *PLA2G4C* phenocopies the effect of ML162
14 or FASNi, inducing G2/M cell cycle arrest specifically in KMLC cells (Supplementary Fig. S6G and
15 S6H), a feature often associated with ferroptosis (Greenshields et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2016). These
16 results, along with the lipidomic profile of KMLC (Fig. 1; Fig. 4), indicate that the *de novo*
17 lipogenesis is necessary to repair/prevent lipid peroxidation in KMLC by feeding the Lands cycle
18 with SFA and MUFA. To demonstrate this hypothesis, we performed stable knock-down of *LPCAT3*
19 and *PLA2G4C* in KMLC cells. Then we subjected them to 3PLE extraction (Vale et al., 2019)
20 coupled with either ethyl acetate-2-¹³C metabolic flux analysis (Fig. 5J) or steady-state MS/MS^{ALL}
21 lipidomic analysis (Fig. 5K). We determined that silencing either *LPCAT3* or *PLA2G4C*
22 phenocopies FASN inhibition, decreasing the incorporation of *de novo* synthesized SFA, such as
23 palmitate (FA 16:0) (Fig. 5J), while increasing the AA (FA 20:4) content of PL (Fig. 5K). These

1 data demonstrate that both *de novo* FA synthesis and PL remodeling are necessary to prevent
2 PUFA accumulation and ferroptosis in KMLC cells (Fig. 5L and 5M).

3 **FASN and the Lands cycle are required to deflect ferroptosis in KMLC.**

4 Using the lipid peroxidation probe C11-BODIPY (581/591), we confirmed that FASNi
5 causes ferroptosis specifically in KMLC cells, leaving KRAS-WT cells unaffected (Fig. 6A and 6B).
6 Notably, ectopic expression of *KM* in KRAS-WT cells causes C11-BODIPY oxidation in response
7 to FASN inhibition (Fig. 6C and 6D), indicating that *KM* is required for the induction of ferroptosis.
8 *TP53*, *STK11* and *KEAP1/NFE2L2* (also known as *NRF2*) are frequently mutated in KMLC,
9 deregulating cellular metabolism and oxidative stress (Galan-Cobo et al., 2019; Hassannia et al.,
10 2019; Hayes and McMahon, 2009; Romero et al., 2017; Tarangelo et al., 2018). We did not find any
11 correlation between their mutational status and sensitivity to FASNi in the LC cell lines we used
12 (Supplementary Table S5). Therefore, these data indicate that the susceptibility of KMLC to
13 ferroptosis depends on *KM*, rather than on *KEAP1/NFE2L2*, *TP53* and *STK11* co-occurring
14 mutations.

15 Next, we used the 3PLE extraction method coupled with UV absorbance to measure the
16 FA oxidation in the neutral (*e.g.* TAG) and polar lipid (*e.g.* PL and LysoPL) fractions of KMLC
17 cells (Supplementary Figure S7A) (Vale et al., 2019). Indeed, as oxidation occurs in lipids
18 containing two or more double bonds, it causes an increase in the UV emission that can be used to
19 quantify the rate of primary lipid oxidation (Kim and LaBella, 1987). We found that FASNi induces
20 oxidation specifically of the polar lipid fraction of KMLC cells (Supplementary Figure S7B), without
21 perturbing neutral lipids (Supplementary Figure S7C). This finding is consistent with the observation
22 that in KMLC cells, FASNi leads to an enrichment of PUFA specifically in PC and LysoPC, but not

1 in TAG (Fig. 4). Accordingly, PC supplementation quenches ROS production and propagation in
2 KMLC cell treated with FASNi (Supplementary Figure S7D and Supplementary Video).

3 To further demonstrate that FASN and the Lands cycle are necessary to prevent ferroptosis,
4 we treated KMLC cells with FASNi and/or molecules targeting the cysteine/GSH/GPX4 system,
5 one of the mainstays restricting ferroptosis (Fig. 6E). Noteworthy, while PC, palmitate, ferrostatin-
6 1 (Fer-1), and N-acetyl-cysteine (NAC) rescue the C11-BODIPY oxidation induced by FASNi,
7 the PUFA linoleic acid (LA) does not (Fig. 6F, G). Furthermore, silencing of *LPCAT3* or
8 *PLA2G4C* induces significant C11-BODIPY oxidation in KMLC cells (Fig. 6H, I).

9 **Pharmacologic inhibition of FASN suppresses KMLC *in vivo*.**

10 We explored the preclinical significance of our findings using transgenic *TetO-Kras^{G12D}*
11 mice (Fig. 7A, B) and xenografts of A549 and H460 KMLC cells (Fig. 7C, D). In all the preclinical
12 mouse models, FASNi causes a potent anti-tumor effect without overt systemic toxicities (Fig. 7A-
13 D; Supplementary Fig. S8A-C), and it depletes intratumor and serum palmitate (Supplementary Fig.
14 S8D). Notably, FASNi induces lipid oxidation in both autochthonous and xenograft KMLC, as
15 demonstrated by C11-BODIPY staining (Fig. 7F-7H). In addition, lipidomic analysis (Fig. 7H) and
16 MALDI imaging (Supplementary Fig. S8E) confirmed that inhibiting *de novo* lipogenesis causes
17 accumulation of PUFA specifically in PC and Lyso-PC of KMLC tumors. On the other hand, TAG
18 are downregulated and DAG are upregulated, independently of the saturation of their acyl chains
19 (Fig. 7H; Supplementary Fig. S8E). These data phenocopy the findings obtained *in vitro* (Fig. 4)
20 providing further evidence that FASNi induces ferroptosis in KMLC. This preclinical evidence will
21 inform the ongoing clinical trial with the human specific FASN inhibitor TVB-2640, which is
22 showing promising results in KMLC patients (NCT03808558, Fig. 7I).

23

1 Discussion

2 KM is the most commonly mutated oncogene in cancer (Prior et al., 2020). There is a considerable
3 interest in determining the mechanisms underlying KM-driven tumorigenesis and KM-dependent
4 tumor survival. This knowledge is a prerequisite to develop novel therapies as well as to optimize
5 the use of existing drugs that target either KM or its downstream signaling pathways. It is well know
6 that KM contributes to the regulation of cancer metabolism; however, no metabolic network has
7 been established as *a bona fide* therapeutic target (Boroughs and DeBerardinis, 2015). Furthermore,
8 it is also emerging that metabolic adaptations mediate resistance to KRAS inhibitors (Santana-
9 Codina et al., 2020).

10 Here, we report that KMLC depends on *de novo* FA synthesis and PL remodeling to cope with
11 oxidative stress and to escape ferroptosis. In KMLC, KM upregulates FASN, whose inhibition
12 causes lipid peroxidation and ferroptosis. These effects are specific since metabolites immediately
13 downstream FASN (i.e. palmitate or PC) rescue this phenotype. We determined that KM, but not
14 EGFR-MUT, is necessary and sufficient to establish the dependency on FASN. On the contrary, we
15 found no correlation with *TP53*, *STK11/LKB1* or *NFE2L2/NRF2* which are frequently co-mutated
16 with KM and known to influence metabolism and oxidative stress (Galan-Cobo et al., 2019; Romero
17 et al., 2017).

18 It is a long-standing observation that *FASN* is overexpressed in several cancer types and that KM
19 upregulates its expression (Gouw et al., 2017). It has been proposed that FA meet the requirements
20 of highly proliferative cells providing building blocks for membranes, or sustaining ATP production
21 through β -oxidation (Baenke et al., 2013). However, the inhibition of these processes does not affect
22 KRAS-WT cells and does not explain the exquisite and specific dependency of KMLC on *de novo*
23 lipogenesis.

1 Our comprehensive metabolic and functional analysis shows, for the first time, that KM
2 upregulates FASN to increase the synthesis of SFA and MUFA to prevent and repair lipid
3 peroxidation in LC. Our conclusion is supported by unprecedented metabolic flux analysis showing
4 how FASNi induces the incorporation of PUFA into PL, in particular PC. When *de novo*
5 lipogenesis is impaired, KMLC increases the uptake of exogenous PUFA. However, even though
6 we demonstrated that cellular lipolysis does not account for this process, we cannot exclude that
7 other mechanisms like lipophagy and macropinocytosis (Kamphorst et al., 2013b; Kounakis et al.,
8 2019) might contribute to the enrichment of PUFA observed after FASN inhibition.

9 Because of their multiple double bonds, PUFA are the major substrate of lipid peroxidation
10 (Choi et al., 2011; Dixon et al., 2012; Hassannia et al., 2019). Therefore, cells use the Lands cycle
11 to limit the amount of PUFA incorporated in PL, reducing lipid peroxidation and the likelihood to
12 trigger ferroptosis (Pérez et al., 2006; Saliakoura et al., 2020; Surette et al., 1999). Accordingly, we
13 found that silencing key regulators of the Lands cycle induces PUFA accumulation in the side chains
14 of PL, leading KMLC to ferroptosis.

15 KM expression and/or activation of the RAS/MAPK pathway have been reported to
16 sensitize cells to ferroptosis inducers (Poursaitidis et al., 2017; Yagoda et al., 2007; Yang and
17 Stockwell, 2008). However, later studies challenged these conclusions (Yang et al., 2014). We
18 reason that this incongruency is explained by the fact that activation of KRAS pathway increases
19 the susceptibility to ferroptosis, but that cell context specific factors contribute to its execution.

20 Our data indicate that KMLC has a lipidomic profile that is reminiscent of alveolar type II
21 cells (AT2), which are considered the cells of origin of LC (Rowbotham and Kim, 2014). AT2 cells
22 are a major source for surfactant lipids secreted into the alveoli. Surfactant lipids comprise about
23 90% of pulmonary surfactant, a lipoprotein complex which decreases surface tension in the post-

1 natal lung and prevents alveolar collapse. PC are the most abundant surfactants lipids (Griese et al.,
2 2015). Notably, SFA and MUFA-PC like dipalmitoylphosphatidylcholine PC 32:0 (DPPC,
3 16:0/16:0), PC 32:1 (16:0/16:1) and PC 30:0 (16:0/14:0) are the most abundant members of
4 surfactant PC both in AT2 cells and in KMLC (Batenburg, 1992; Holm et al., 1996; Kyle et al.,
5 2018). Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that KM hijacks lung specific mechanisms evolved to
6 mitigate oxidative stress and ferroptosis under the high oxygen tension conditions found in the
7 pulmonary alveolus (Guo et al., 2019). Indeed, transitioning from the fetal hypoxic environment to
8 air breathing at birth requires the activation of adaptive responses, as demonstrated by the
9 observation that, mouse AT2 not only have high expression of *Kras* soon after birth, but they also
10 exhibit high expression of genes involved in the unfolded protein response (UPR), antioxidant
11 response and lipid synthesis (Guo et al., 2019). Hence, FASNi interferes with the PC-dependent
12 antioxidant function, decreasing the threshold to ferroptosis in the context of high ROS in KMLC.
13 In this scenario, we reason that the PUFA-rich lung environment, surrounding KMLC *in vivo*, may
14 represent a “ticking bomb” for KM tumors. This is in agreement with our observation that
15 exogenous palmitate bypasses FASNi-induced cell death and with previous studies showing that
16 exogenous MUFA confer resistance to ferroptosis (Magtanong et al., 2019). Future studies are
17 needed to determine whether FA deriving from dietary sources or the tumor microenvironment
18 could directly influence KMLC tumorigenesis and response to therapy.

19 Our data predict not only that FASNi will be effective in KMLC therapy, but also that other
20 inducers of ferroptosis may exert selective anti-tumor effects in KMLC. It is noteworthy that TVB-
21 2640, a FASNi derivative with improved pharmacokinetic properties, is showing promising results
22 in a phase II trial in KMLC (NCT03808558) and that several other FDA-approved drugs (*e.g.*
23 sorafenib, sulfasalazine, artesunate, lanperisone) are known to induce ferroptosis in certain cancers

1 (Eling et al., 2015; Gout et al., 2001; Li et al., 2020; Louandre et al., 2013, 2015; Shaw et al., 2011;
2 Zhang et al., 2019). Therefore, it is likely that cancers other than KMLC rely on FASN and the Lands
3 cycle to overcome ferroptosis and that this dependency could be exploited in the clinic.

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16 **Author contribution**

17 CB and CA equally contributed to this study; CB, CA and PPS designed the study; CB, CA,
18 GVDV, MM, ACC, DB performed experiments; SB and CA performed bioinformatic analysis;
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- 2 CB and PPS wrote the manuscript with comments from all authors.

3 **Data availability**

- 4 RNA-seq data were deposited in GEO under the accession number GSE168782.
- 5 All data supporting the findings of this work are available within the article and Supplementary
- 6 Information. Further requests for resources, reagents and data should be directed to and will be
- 7 fulfilled by the corresponding author.

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1 **Figure legends**

2 **Figure 1. KMLC has a specific lipidome in mouse and human samples (A, B)** Lipidomic analysis
3 of murine TetO-*Kras*^{G12D} tumors (n=4), TetO-*EGFR*^{L858R} (n=3) and unaffected healthy lung (n=3).
4 Each dot indicates a lung/tumor section. Data are expressed as mean ± SD. PC,
5 phosphatidylcholines; TAG, triglycerides; PE, phosphatidylethanolamines; CE, cholesteryl-esters;
6 PI, phosphatidylinositols; DAG, diacylglycerides; SM, sphingomyelins; Cer, ceramides; LysoPC,
7 lysophosphatidylcholines. Volcano plots in (B) show the lipid classes that are differentially
8 represented for each comparison. The adjusted P value and difference were calculated using
9 multiple t tests with alpha =0.05. (C) MS/MS and (D) MALDI imaging analyses showing lipid
10 differentially represented in TetO-*Kras*^{G12D} tumors as compared to unaffected healthy lung. (E)
11 Representative pictures of MALDI imaging analysis of lung cancer patient-derived xenografts
12 (PDXs) and primary human lung cancer specimens of the indicated genotype. (F, G) HLPC-
13 MS/MS analysis of lung cancer PDXs and primary human lung cancer specimens of the indicated
14 genotype. Volcano plots show lipid species identified by HLPC-MS/MS differentially represented
15 in KM *versus* KRAS-WT samples (PDXs, KM n=5 and KRAS-WT n=4; lung cancer patients,
16 n=3/group). P values and difference were calculated using multiple t tests (p<0.05). In (D) and (E)
17 rainbow scale represents ion intensity normalized against the total ion count (%) and black circles
18 represent the major tumor areas.

19 **Figure 2. KM is required to induce dependency on FASN. (A)** Viability assay of human LC
20 derived cell lines. Cell line, genotype and treatments are indicated. LF: lung fibroblasts. (B) Cell
21 cycle analysis of H460 and H522 cells, as representative examples of KM and KRAS-WT LC cells,
22 treated as indicated. (C) Immunoblot of FASN, SCD1 and pan-RAS in H522 and H661 cells
23 transduced as indicated. (D) Oil red O staining, relative steady-state quantification of palmitate (FA

1 16:0) (E) and crystal violet assay (F) of H522 and H522-KM cells treated as indicated. (G)
2 Immunoblot of FASN and KRAS in H460 and A549 cells transduced with doxy-inducible shRNAs
3 targeting *KRAS*. (H) MTT viability assay of H460 and A549 cells treated with FASNi before and
4 after induction of *KRAS* knock-down. (I) MTT viability assay of H2122, H1373 and HCC-44 cells
5 (*KRAS^{G12C}* mutant) treated with FASNi alone or in combination with the *KRAS^{G12C}* inhibitor ARS-
6 1620. Data are expressed as mean \pm SD. In (E) Student t test with **** $p < 0.0001$. In (J) one-way
7 ANOVA followed by Tukey's multiple comparison test with *** $p < 0.001$ and **** $p < 0.0001$.

8 **Figure 3. FASNi inhibits fatty acid synthesis and β -oxidation in both KM and KRAS-WT cells.**
9 (A) GC/MS quantification of newly synthesized FA in H460 and H522 cells after overnight ethyl
10 acetate-2-¹³C labelling, treated as indicated. Either M+2/M+0 or M+4/M+0 ratio is reported.
11 Palmitate, FA 16:0; palmitoleate, FA 16:1n7; vaccenate, FA 18:1n7; oleate, FA 18:1n9 (n=3
12 independent experiments). (B, C) Relative quantification of malonyl-CoA and NAPH of vehicle-
13 and FASNi-treated LC cells (n=3 independent experiments). (D) Oil red O staining for lipid droplets
14 in H460 and H522 cells. (E, F) Relative quantification of FA β -oxidation (FAO) and AMP in the
15 indicated cells treated with vehicle or FASNi. (G) Immunoblot of phospho-Ser79-ACC1
16 (pACC1^{S79}), ACC1, FASN, phosphor-Thr172-AMPK (pAMPK^{T172}) and AMPK. (H) Schematic of
17 the AMPK/ACC1/FASN axis. FASNi inhibits the synthesis of palmitate (FA 16:0) thereby
18 blocking the synthesis of complex lipids and β -oxidation (FAO) . These events trigger the
19 activation of AMPK which in turn phosphorylates and deactivates ACC1. ACC1 phosphorylation
20 blocks the synthesis of malonyl-CoA (the substrate for FA 16:0 synthesis) potentiating the
21 inhibitory effects of FASNi. Bars express mean \pm SD. Statistical analyses were done using two-
22 tailed unpaired Student's t test, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ and **** $p < 0.0001$.

1 **Figure 4. FASNi induces accumulation of PUFA-PC and PUFA-LysoPC in KMLC. (A)**
2 Variation of the lipid classes identified by MS/MS in KM and KRAS-WT LC cells. Bars represents
3 Log (fold change) of FASNi treatment over vehicle control. **(B)** Volcano plots of multiple t tests
4 representing the significant changes in lipid classes for the indicated comparisons (cutoff adj p<0.05).
5 **(C-H)** Relative double bonds quantification in the indicated lipid classes and volcano plots showing
6 the correspondent multiple t tests (cutoff adj p<0.05).

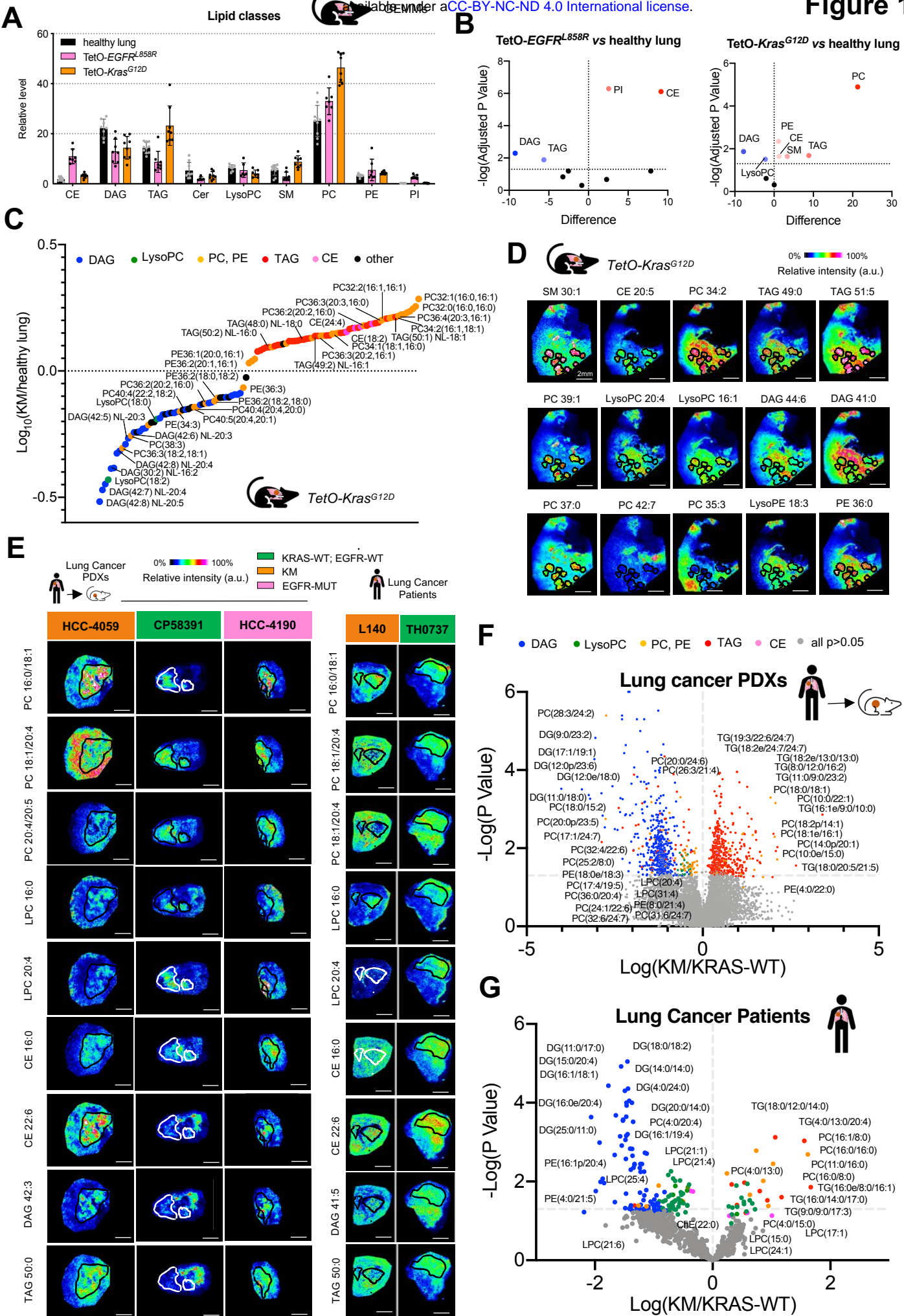
7 **Figure 5. FASN and the Lands cycle limit PUFA content of phospholipids of KMLC. (A, B)**
8 Quantification of total (A) and newly synthesized (B) arachidonic acid (FA 20:4) in the PL fraction
9 of the indicated cell lines. Tracer incorporation was measured after 7-hour incubation with Ethyl
10 Acetate-1,2 ¹³C₂. **(C, D)** Incorporation of arachidonic acid (AA) alkyne in the indicated cell lines
11 treated as indicated, and its quantification. n=20-42 cells/sample. **(E)** Venn Diagram of the
12 “metabolism of lipids and lipoproteins” (R-HSA-556833) genes upregulated in KM (H460, A549)
13 and KRAS-WT (H661, H522) LC cells treated with FASNi. **(F, G)** Gene expression volcano plot
14 and top KEGG pathways specifically upregulated in KMLC cells upon FASNi treatment. **(H, I)**
15 Cell viability after siRNA-mediated knockdown of the indicated genes. Venn diagram summarizes
16 lethal genes specific for KMLC cells (H460, A549, Dunnett’s multiple comparison test with cutoff
17 adj P<0.05). **(J, K)** Quantification of newly synthesized- palmitate (FA 16:0) and total arachidonic
18 acid (FA 20:4) in the PL fraction of indicated cell lines after shRNA-mediated knockdown of
19 lysophosphatidylcholine acyltransferase 3 (*LPCAT3*) or phospholipase A2 group IVC (*PLA2G4C*).
20 **(L, M)** Working model explaining the role of FASN in the regulation of the Lands cycle in KMLC.
21 FASN is active: KM induces ROS that oxidize the PUFA acyl chain on PC. PLA2 removes the
22 oxidized fatty acid (FA) on PC synthesizing a LysoPC. FASN and SCD1 produce saturated FA
23 (SFA) and MUFA, respectively. SFA/MUFA are transferred to CoA by ACSL3. These acyl-CoAs

1 are used by LPCAT3 to re-acylate the LysoPC forming again PC. Inhibition of FASN (J) causes
2 the depletion of SFA/MUFA and uptake of exogenous PUFA for the re-acylation of LysoPC. This
3 process increases the amount of PUFA-PC and PUFA-LysoPC which are oxidized under oxidative
4 stress (oxPUFA-PC and oxPUFA-LysoPC). Accumulation of these lipid species leads to cell death
5 via ferroptosis. Bars represent mean \pm SD. In (A,B), (D), (J, K) Statistical analyses were done using
6 two-tailed unpaired Student's t test with ns, not significant, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ and *** $p < 0.001$.

7 **Figure 6. FASN and the Lands cycle are required to deflect ferroptosis in KMLC. (A, D)** C11-
8 BODIPY staining in KM, KRAS-WT, and H522-KM LC cells. Oxidized and reduced C11-
9 BODIPY are indicated in red and green, respectively. Bars indicate the relative C11-BODIPY
10 oxidation (n, number of cells). **(E)** Schematic of the GPX4 axis of ferroptosis and some of its
11 regulators. Red=pro-ferroptosis; Green=anti-ferroptosis. NAC, N-acetyl cysteine; GSH,
12 glutathione; GSSG, glutathione disulfide; ML162, GPX4 inhibitor; Fer-1, ferrostatin-1; PUFA,
13 Polyunsaturated fatty acids; OxPUFA, oxidized PUFA; PL, phospholipids; MUFA,
14 monounsaturated fatty acids; SFA, saturated fatty acids; LA, linoleic acid; PC,
15 phosphatidylcholine. **(F, G)** C11-BODIPY rescue experiments in the indicated cell lines and their
16 quantification. **(H, I)** C11-BODIPY stain on A549 cell line transfected with the indicated siRNAs
17 (48hrs post transfection) and their quantification. Numbers in the bars indicate number of cells.
18 Bars represent mean \pm SD. In (B) and (D) two-tailed unpaired student t test, in (G) multiple t tests
19 with ns, $p > 0.05$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; **** $p < 0.0001$.

20 **Figure 7. FASNi is effective in KMLC *in vivo*. (A, B)** Representative H&E pictures of the lungs
21 of TetO-*Kras* mice treated as indicated and tumor burden quantification. n=number of mice. **(C, D)**
22 *In vivo* growth curves and post-resection pictures of H460 and A549 xenografts in NOD/SCID mice
23 treated as indicated. **(E-G)** Representative pictures of C11-BODIPY staining of the lungs of TetO-

1 *Kras* and of H460 xenografts, and their quantification. Dotted circles in (E) indicate lung tumor. **(H)**
2 Volcano plot showing lipid species identified by MS/MS differentially represented in FASNi
3 *versus* vehicle (n=5 mice/group). P values and difference were calculated using multiple t tests
4 ($p < 0.05$). **(I)** Serial CT-scans of a representative lung cancer patient enrolled in the NCT03808558
5 clinical trial with the FASNi derivative TVB-2640 (modified to improve pharmacokinetic
6 properties in humans). Note the 30% reduction of estimated tumor volume after 8 weeks of
7 treatment.



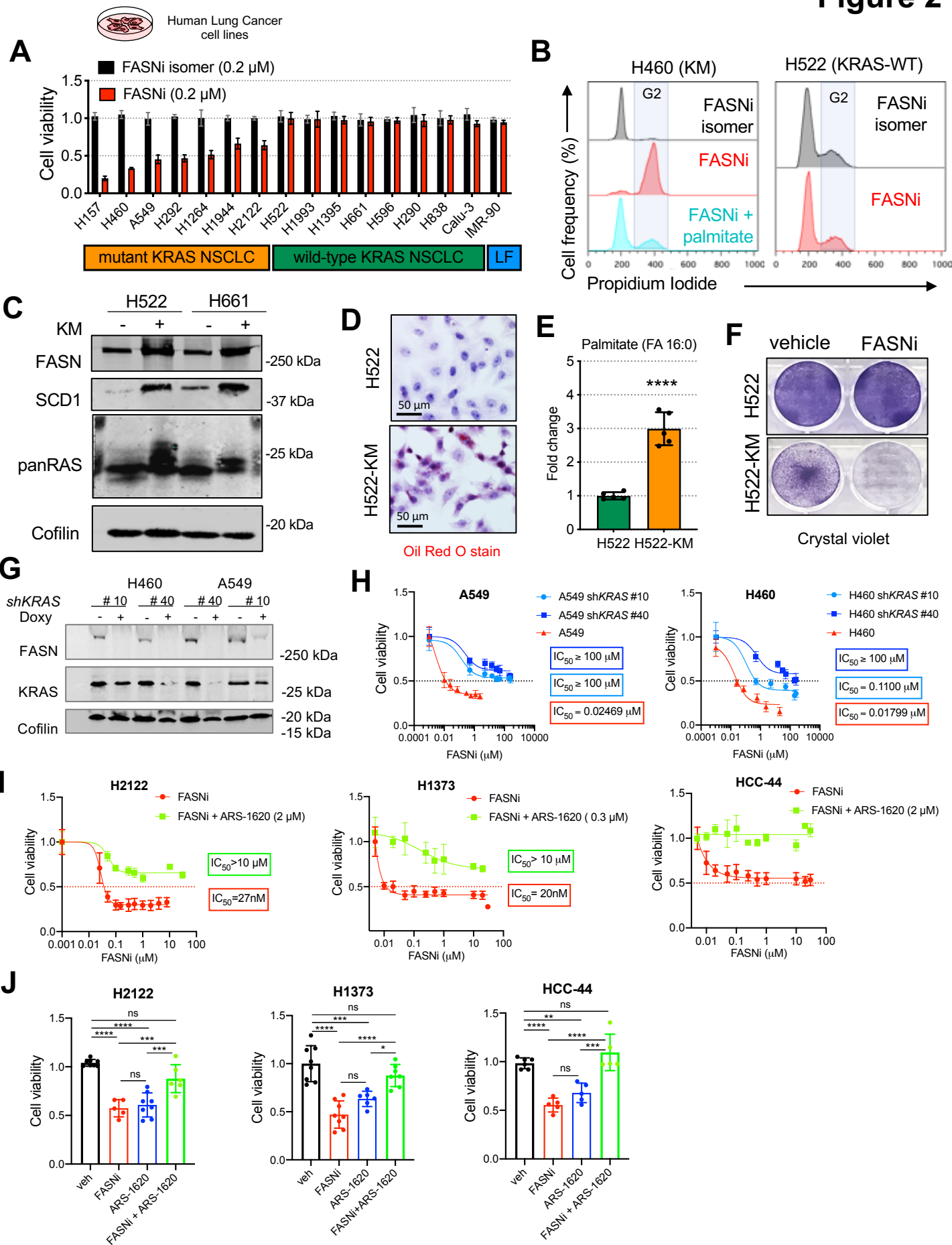


Figure 3

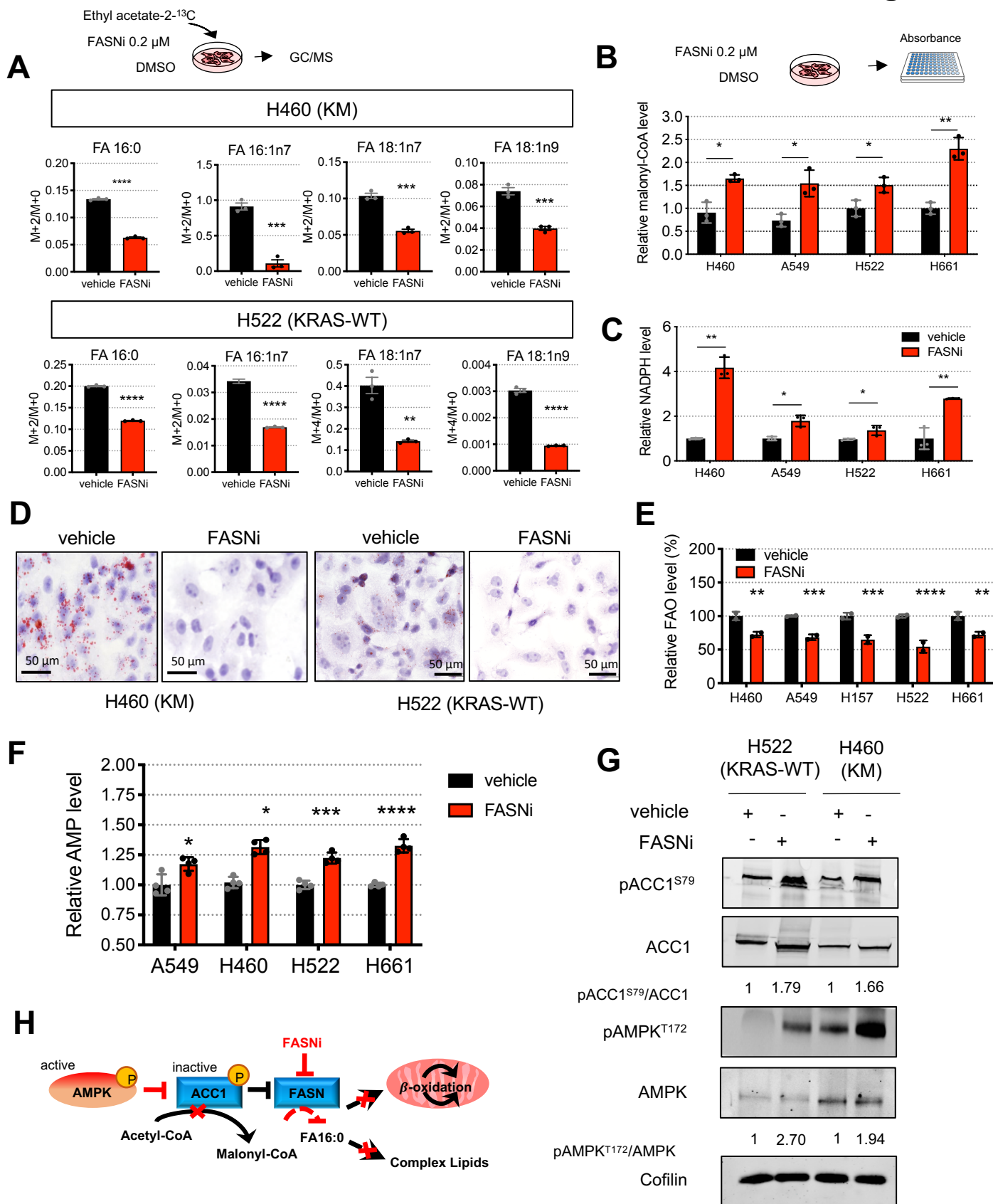


Figure 4

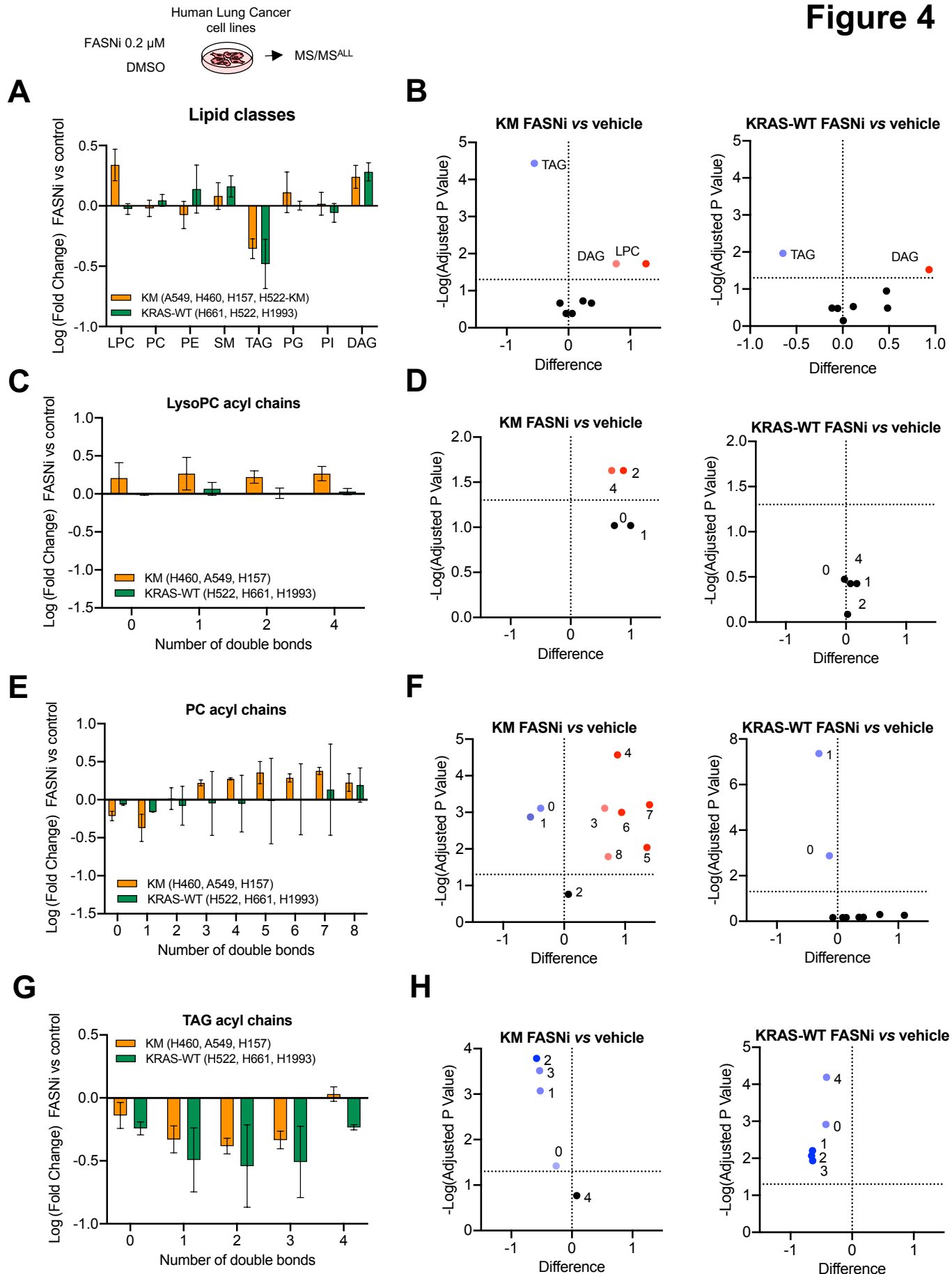


Figure 5

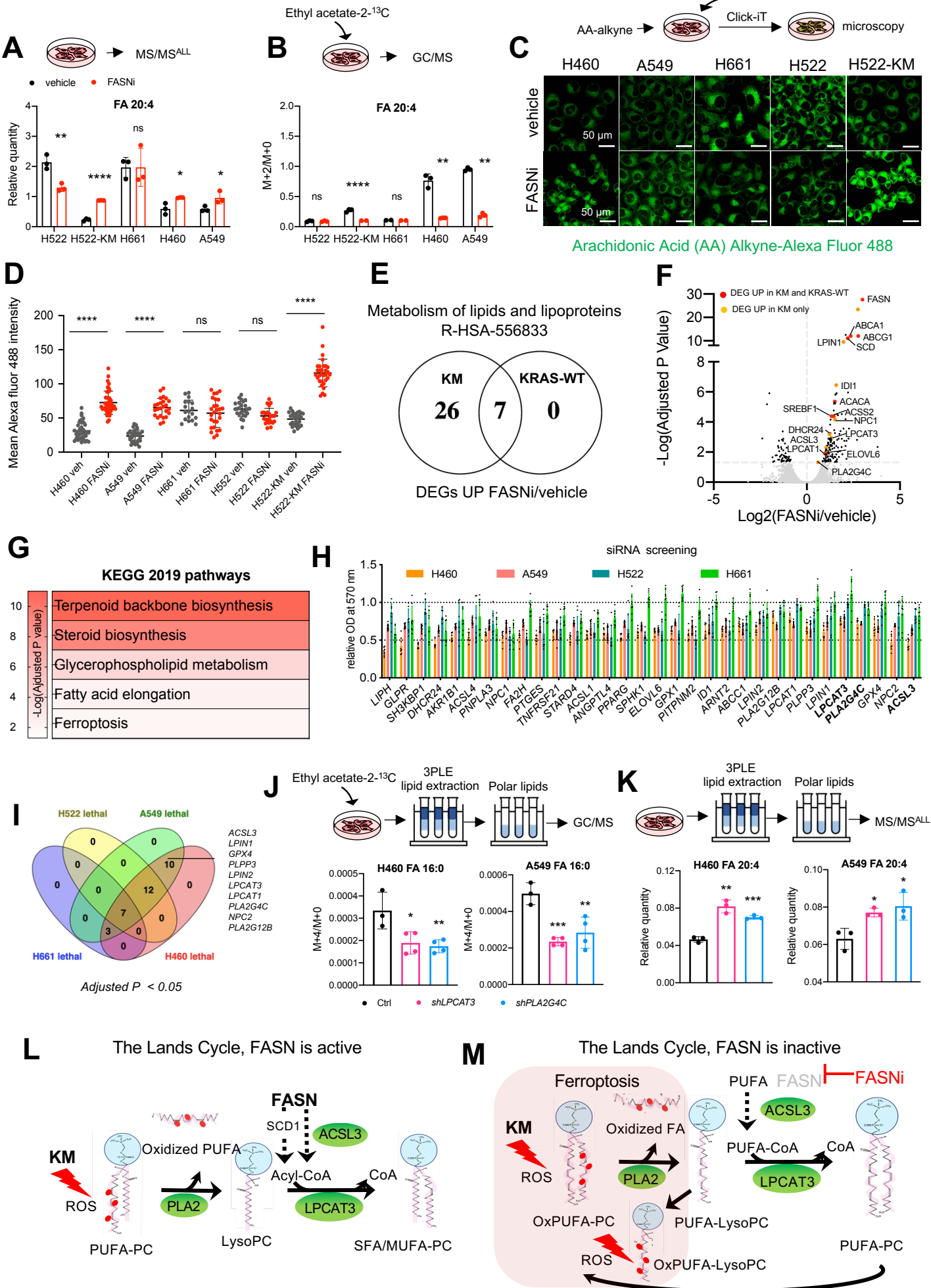


Figure 6

FASNi 0.2 μ M
DMSO
C11-BODIPY
30 min
Microscopy
Reduced
Oxidized

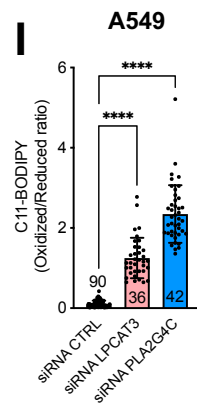
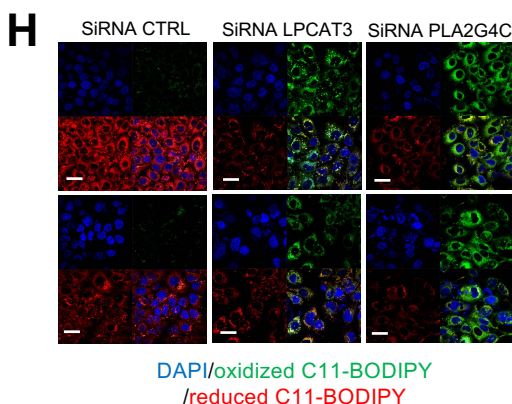
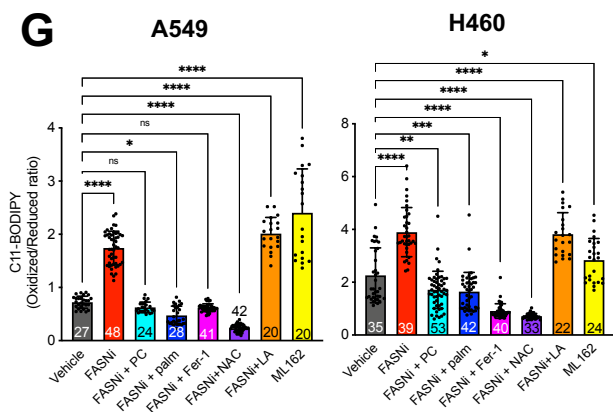
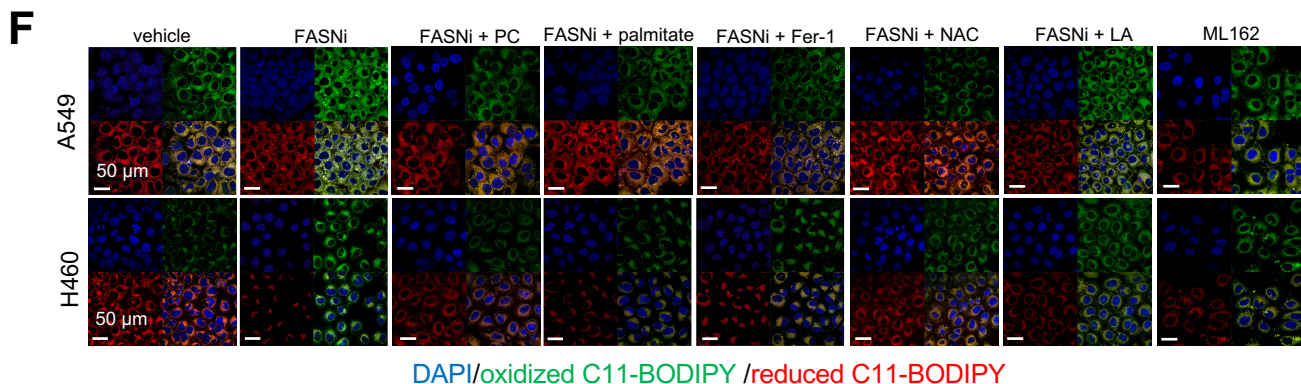
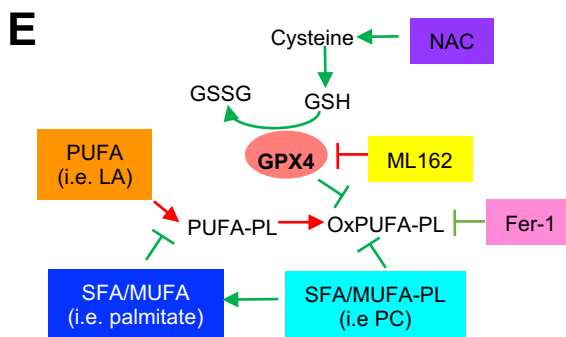
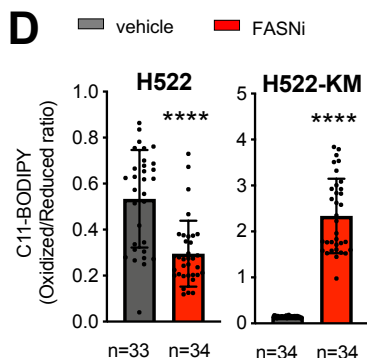
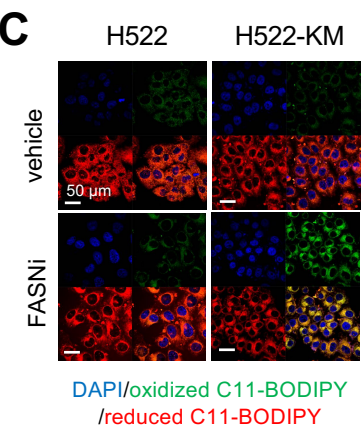
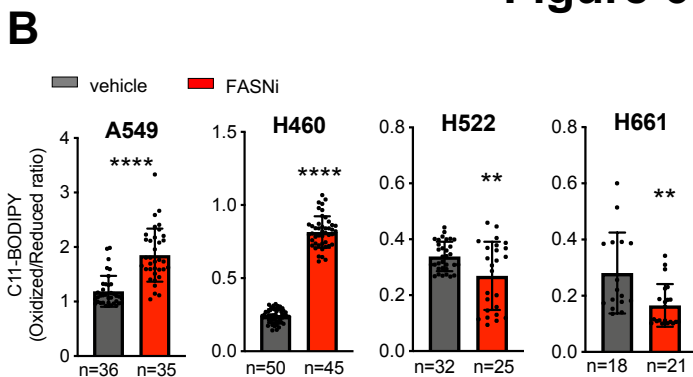
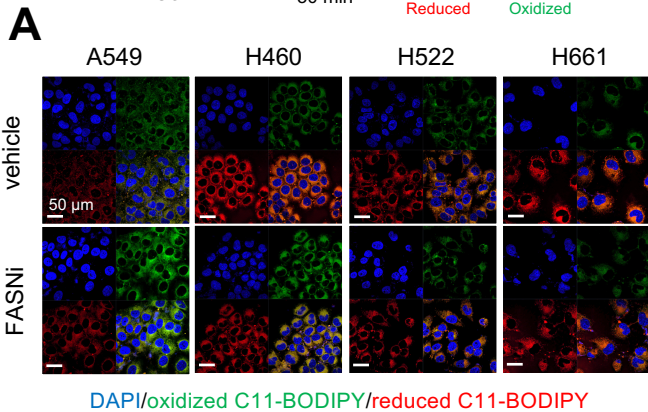


Figure 7

