Defining the ordered pathway for ZAP-mediated RNA decay

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ABSTRACT

Zinc-finger Antiviral Protein (ZAP)-mediated RNA decay (ZMD) restricts replication of viruses containing CpG dinucleotide clusters. However, why ZAP isoforms differ in antiviral activity and how they recruit cofactors to mediate RNA decay is unclear. Therefore, we determined the ordered events of the ZMD pathway. The long ZAP isoform preferentially binds viral RNA, which is promoted by TRIM25. The endoribonuclease KHNYN then cleaves viral RNA at positions of ZAP binding. The 5' cleavage fragment undergoes TUT4/TUT7-mediated 3' uridylation and degradation by DIS3L2. The 3' cleavage fragment is degraded by XRN1. ZAP and TRIM25 interact with KHNYN, TUT7, DIS3L2 and XRN1 in a RNase-resistant manner. Viral infection promotes the interaction between ZAP and TRIM25 with these enzymes, leading to viral RNA degradation while also decreasing the abundance of many cellular transcripts. Overall, the long isoform of ZAP recruits key enzymes to assemble an RNA decay complex on viral RNA.

INTRODUCTION

A critical component of the innate immune response is the ability to distinguish between self and non-self nucleic acids. The best characterised non-self RNA detection systems include RIGI, IFIH1, EIF2AK2, OAS1-3 and ZBP1, which promote signalling that leads to antiviral gene expression, cap-dependent translation inhibition, global RNA degradation and cell death[1]. These pattern recognition receptors (PRRs) bind double-stranded RNA (dsRNA), which acts as the pathogen-associated molecular pattern (PAMP). In contrast, antiviral proteins that bind single-stranded RNA (ssRNA) often directly restrict viral replication by inhibiting viral RNA translation or targeting it for degradation[2]. Zinc-finger Antiviral Protein (ZAP, also known as PARP13 or ZC3HAV1) is a paradigmatic example of a ssRNA-binding protein critical for the cell autonomous innate immune response[3].

ZAP is encoded by an interferon-stimulated gene that restricts diverse viruses including retroviruses, alphaviruses, Ebola virus and human cytomegalovirus[4]. It has two primary mechanisms for inhibiting viral infection: promoting viral RNA decay[5] and inhibiting viral mRNA translation[6-8]. The RNA binding domain (RBD) in ZAP contains four zinc finger motifs (ZnF1-4) and directly binds a single CpG dinucleotide in pocket formed by ZnF2[5,9-12]. ZAP-mediated restriction requires the presence of multiple CpGs in a target RNA molecule[13]. To form a potent ZAP-response element (ZRE) in viral RNA, CpGs are optimally separated by ~15-30 nucleotides[14], indicating that multivalency is required for substrate recognition. Many mammalian RNA viruses have low CpG abundance, likely due to evolutionary pressure from ZAP[13,15]. ZAP also regulates cellular transcript expression[16-19] and this, in addition to CpG DNA

methylation[20], has been proposed to contribute to the selective pressure against CpG

dinucleotide abundance in cellular genes[18,21,22].

There are several ZAP isoforms, with ZAP-long (ZAP-L) and ZAP-short (ZAP-S) being

the most abundant[5,23,24]. ZAP-S expression is induced by type I interferon while ZAP-

L is constitutively expressed[24,25]. Both ZAP-S and ZAP-L contain the RBD and a

central domain that binds ADP-ribose[23,26,27]. ZAP-L also contains a catalytically

inactive ADP-ribosyl transferase-like (ART-like) domain and a C-terminal CaaX box

that mediates S-farnesylation[23,28]. This post-translational modification localises ZAP-L

to the cytoplasmic endomembrane system[17,28-30].

ZAP is the core of a multicomponent antiviral system. It has no enzymatic activity and

acts as a scaffold that recognises target transcripts to recruit cofactors that inhibit

translation or mediate RNA decay[3]. It has been reported to interact with a large number

of proteins, though it remains unclear which are relevant for ZAP-mediated RNA decay

(ZMD)[3]. ZAP was originally proposed to interact with the exosome to mediate ZMD[5,31].

It was also reported to recruit the decapping complex DCP1A-DCP2 through the RNA

helicase DDX17 as well as the deadenylase PARN[32]. Subsequently, ZAP was shown

to bind the endoribonuclease KHNYN through its RBD, which was proposed to

mediate endonucleolytic cleavage of viral RNA[33-35]. The KHNYN paralog N4BP1 has

also been implicated in ZMD and these proteins have at least partially redundant

activity for some transcripts[34,36,37]. ZAP also interacts with TRIM25[38,39], though it is

unclear how this E3 ubiquitin ligase regulates ZAP antiviral activity.

There are several therapeutic applications arising from understanding the targeting

specificity of the ZAP antiviral system and how it mediates ZMD. TRIM25, ZAP,

KHNYN and N4BP1 target mRNAs delivered by lipid nanoparticles when they do not

contain N^1-methylpseudouridine modifications, highlighting its importance for

therapeutic RNA design[40].   Synonymous CpG-recoding of ZAP-resistant viral

genomes has been shown to be a novel way to develop live-attenuated viral

vaccines[14,41,42]. ZAP expression is downregulated in some types of cancer and,

because ZAP-sensitive viruses would preferentially replicate in cancers with reduced

ZAP expression compared to healthy tissue, they have been proposed to be used as

oncolytic viruses for cancers with low ZAP expression[43].

However, several critical mechanistic questions regarding ZMD remain unanswered.

It is unclear whether ZAP targeting specificity is dictated solely by the RBD or whether

other factors modulate target recognition. ZAP isoforms have been proposed to have

different functions[25,29] and, while ZAP-L has been reported to have higher antiviral

activity against several viruses than ZAP-S[23,24,29,30], the mechanism for this is

unknown. Furthermore, of the substantial number of proteins that ZAP has been

reported to interact with[3], which of these are required for ZMD, and how they may act

in an ordered pathway, has not been defined.

In this study, we characterised the ZMD pathway to determine how ZAP interacts with

multiple enzymes to mediate viral RNA decay. Cells genetically engineered to only

express ZAP-L or ZAP-S show that, even though both isoforms contain the RBD, ZAP-

L is the predominant isoform that inhibits retroviral replication due to increased binding

to viral RNA and KHNYN. TRIM25 promotes ZAP binding to viral RNA, further

indicating that the specificity of the ZAP RBD is not sufficient to discriminate ZMD

targets. We then show that ZAP and TRIM25 interact with multiple RNA decay

enzymes including KHNYN, XRN1, TUT7 and DIS3L2 and order these enzymes into

a decay pathway. *In cellulo* identification of KHNYN cleavage sites shows that KHNYN

mediates endonucleolytic cleavage of the viral RNA in regions with high levels of ZAP

binding. The 5' cleavage fragment is 3' uridylated by the paralogs TUT4/TUT7 and

then degraded by DIS3L2. XRN1 degrades the 3' cleavage fragment. Viral infection

increases binding of ZAP and TRIM25 to several components of this pathway and

promotes regulation of cellular genes by ZAP, TRIM25 and KHNYN. Overall, ZAP acts

as a core scaffold for several enzymes to mediate ZMD.

RESULTS

Differential activity between ZAP isoforms correlates with binding viral RNA and

KHNYN

ZAP restricts a wide range of viruses[4]. For this study, we used HIV-1 as a molecularly

tractable model virus to define the ordered events of the ZMD pathway. Wild-type HIV-

1 (HIV-WT) is substantially depleted in CpG dinucleotides and the paucity of these is

due to strong selective pressure, likely from ZAP[13,22,44,45]. Mutations that introduce a

CpG in HIV-1 have a substantial fitness cost and CpG abundance in HIV-1 *env* is

linked to disease progression[46-48]. Because HIV-1 is substantially depleted in CpGs,

these can be introduced through synonymous genome recoding to create HIV-CpG,

which contains a potent ZRE in *env* (Figure 1A)[13,33]. This allows isogenic viruses to be

analysed in which ZAP restricts HIV-CpG but not HIV-WT (Figure 1B). This restriction

can be quantified, showing that HIV-CpG infectious virus production is ~1% of HIV-WT

(Figure 1B). Importantly, both viruses produce similar levels of infectious virus

production when ZAP is knocked out. These paired viruses allow components of the

ZAP antiviral system to be characterised under conditions in which the *cis*-acting ZRE

is either absent or present in the virus, allowing ZMD substrate specificity to be

determined in each experiment.

The relative contribution of the two primary ZAP isoforms (Figure 1C) to ZMD is

controversial. While several papers have reported that ZAP-L is more active than ZAP-

S, others have proposed that ZAP-S, or shorter fragments of ZAP, are sufficient for

antiviral activity[23,24,28,29,34,48,49]. However, many of these experiments were performed

by overexpressing ZAP isoforms in wild-type cells or reconstituting ZAP isoforms in

CRISPR knockout cells, often by transient transfection, leading to non-physiological

protein levels. Furthermore, the mechanism by which ZAP-L may be more active than

ZAP-S is unclear. Therefore, we used a set of previously described HEK293T cells

that were CRISPR-engineered to only express ZAP-L or ZAP-S by targeting splice

sites and poly(A) sites in the endogenous *ZC3HAV1* locus[17]. These cells allow the

antiviral activity of ZAP-L or ZAP-S to be characterised without ectopic expression

(Figure 1D). ZAP-L knockout eliminated almost all ZAP antiviral activity against the

HIV-CpG while ZAP-S knockout had only a minor effect (Figure 1E and S1A-B),

demonstrating that in this system, ZAP-L is the essential mediator of viral restriction.

ZAP-L has previously been reported to interact more strongly with TRIM25 and

KHNYN than ZAP-S, though one or more of these proteins was often overexpressed

in the experimental conditions[30,38,50]. To determine if ZAP-L and ZAP-S preferentially

interact with TRIM25 or KHNYN when all the proteins are expressed from their

endogenous locus, we performed co-immunoprecipitation experiments in the wild-

type, ZAP-L and ZAP-S knockout cell lines. While ZAP-L or ZAP-S knockout did not

affect the interaction of the other ZAP isoform with TRIM25, ZAP-L knockout led to a

substantial decrease in ZAP interacting with KHNYN whereas ZAP-S knockout had

only a marginal effect (Figure 1F).

ZAP directly binds KHNYN through its N-terminal RBD[34,35]. Therefore, both ZAP

isoforms contain the KHNYN interaction domain even though ZAP-L is more

competent to assemble the RNA decay complex than ZAP-S. One possible

mechanism for this may be that ZAP-L assembles on the ZRE more efficiently than

ZAP-S. To test this hypothesis, we used iCLIP[51] to quantify the binding of each isoform

to HIV-WT and HIV-CpG RNA (Figure 1G and S1C-E). There are three major ZAP

binding peaks in HIV-CpG, with the first at the 5' end in the viral genome, the second

in the 5' region of *env* covering the sequence that has been CpG recoded, and the

third in the 3' region of *env*. As expected, ZAP binding is most pronounced in Peak 2

covering the engineered ZRE. Interestingly, the CpG clusters underlying Peaks 1 and

Peak 3, which are present in both HIV-WT and HIV-CpG, show lower levels of binding

in HIV-WT than HIV-CpG RNA (Figure S1C), indicating that high ZAP binding to the

engineered region promotes additional ZAP recruitment at non-contiguous regions in

the viral RNA containing clustered CpGs. In cells depleted for ZAP-S, high levels of

ZAP-L binding to HIV-CpG RNA were observed (Figure 1G and S1E). By contrast, in

ZAP-L knockout cells, ZAP-S showed low levels of RNA binding, correlating with its

low antiviral activity (Figure 1G and S1D). In sum, ZAP-L is the primary antiviral

isoform against HIV-CpG due to increased binding to HIV-CpG RNA and a stronger

interaction with KHNYN.

Assembly of the ZAP-TRIM25-KHNYN complex is regulated by viral infection

To determine if the presence of a substantial amount of ZAP substrate during HIV-CpG infection affects the interaction between ZAP, TRIM25 and KHNYN, we performed co-immunoprecipitation experiments in mock infected, HIV-WT and HIV-CpG infected HeLa cells. Interestingly, upon HIV-WT or HIV-CpG infection, there was a small increase in the RNase-resistant interaction between ZAP and TRIM25 and, more potently, between TRIM25 and KHNYN (Figure 2A-B), even though the abundance of these proteins was unchanged. Therefore, viral infection appears to promote assembly of the ZAP-TRIM25-KHNYN complex, but this does not require the strong ZRE present in HIV-CpG.

We then analysed whether TRIM25 or KHNYN modulate ZAP assembly on the HIV-CpG ZRE. In TRIM25 knockout cells, there was a moderate decrease in ZAP bound to HIV-CpG (Figure 2C and S2A-B). By contrast, KHNYN depletion did not substantially affect ZAP binding (Figure 2D). RNA-immunoprecipitation experiments also showed that TRIM25 promotes ZAP binding to HIV-CpG RNA (Figure 2E). Of note, while TRIM25 has been proposed to regulate the specificity of ZMD in addition to its potency[34], we did not observe any substantial change in ZAP antiviral activity against HIV-WT in TRIM25 knockout cells (Figure S2C). Furthermore, the relative position of ZAP binding to HIV-CpG RNA did not change in TRIM25 knockout cells (Figure 2C, Spearman correlation of relative crosslink signal at each nucleotide in CRISPR control and TRIM25 knockout cells = 0.92) and there was no substantial increase in the number of cellular mRNAs with multiple ZAP binding peaks in our iCLIP data (Figure S2D). Therefore, TRIM25 appears to promote ZAP binding to viral RNA but does not change the specificity for the transcripts that ZAP targets.

As there are three consistent, predominant ZAP-binding peaks on HIV-CpG (Figures

1G, 2C-D), we used the iCLIP data to determine the width of each peak and whether

ZAP binding spreads beyond the recoded region in CRISPR control and KHNYN

knockout cells (Figure S2E-F). Each ZAP binding peak in HIV-CpG contains several

clustered CpGs. Peak 1 is ~250 nucleotides (nt) wide in the 5' leader region and *gag*,

which contain a highly structured packaging element[52]. Peak 2 encompassing the CpG

recoded region in HIV-CpG *env* (Figure 1A, 475 nt long[33]) is ~900 nt long, indicating

that ZAP binding extends beyond the recoded region. Peak 3 is ~800 nt long and

covers splice acceptor 7 (SA7, nt 7904-7915)[53]. Consistent with ZAP oligomerisation

and the hypothesis that multivalent binding of ZAP to multiple CpGs is likely required

for its antiviral activity[14,34,54], the iCLIP data implies assembly of ZAP molecules that

cover wide, non-contiguous regions on the viral RNA.

XRN1 degrades the 3' fragment after KHNYN cleavage

Since KHNYN is an active endoribonuclease that directly binds ZAP, it has been

hypothesised that ZAP recruits KHNYN to cleave viral RNA[33-35]. However, KHNYN

enzymatic activity has only been tested on *in vitro* substrates using purified

KHNYN[34,35,55]. To test this hypothesis directly in cells, we first used iCLIP to map

KHNYN binding sites on HIV-CpG. Because we have not found an antibody that

efficiently immunoprecipitates KHNYN, we identified KHNYN binding sites on viral

RNA using a previously characterised stable cell line expressing an active KHNYN-

GFP fusion protein[50]. KHNYN had substantial binding within areas of high CpG

abundance, including the CpG recoded region of HIV-CpG (Figure 3A). As KHNYN

has no known RNA binding specificity[35,37], this supports the hypothesis that ZAP

recruits KHNYN to target RNA.

We then aimed to identify authentic KHNYN cleavage sites in target viral RNAs *in*

cellulo using RACE-seq. Importantly, identifying and inactivating the downstream

degradation of such cleavage products is likely to substantially increase the chances

of detecting the sites of KHNYN cleavage. Furthermore, since many viruses produce

substantial amounts of viral RNA, full degradation of these transcripts after KHNYN

cleavage would be important to prevent accumulation of RNA fragments that may

disrupt cellular function. Therefore, we sought to determine how exonucleolytic RNA

decay enzymes modulate ZMD.

Several proteins that mediate or regulate RNA degradation have been linked to ZAP

including CNOT1, PARN, EXOSC5, EXOSC3, EXOSC7, DCP2, XRN1, DDX17 and

DDX30[3,31,32,56-59]. To identify whether any of these proteins are required for ZAP

antiviral activity on HIV-CpG, we depleted them using RNAi. While siRNA-mediated

depletion of ZAP, TRIM25 and KHNYN increased HIV-CpG infectious virus production,

none of the other potential ZAP cofactors had an effect (Figure S3A-D), in agreement

with a previous study[13], and consistent with the hypothesis that cleavage by KHNYN

effectively renders the viral RNA non-infectious and incompetent for translation.

However, it is possible that these proteins could exert their effects downstream of

KHNYN cleavage by mediating decay of the resulting RNA fragments. Therefore, we

designed a probe to potentially identify the 3' cleavage fragment of HIV with the

presumption that many KHNYN cleavage sites will be near the major ZAP binding site

in the CpG-recoded region (probe 2 (p2) in Figure 3B). Of note, due to the complex

HIV-1 alternative splicing program[53], only the unspliced and singly spliced HIV-1

transcripts will contain the ZAP-sensitive CpG-recoded region and the fully spliced

RNAs are not subject to ZMD[13,33] (Figure 3B). To quantify only ZAP-sensitive

transcripts, p2 was designed to span SA7, which is the last sequence that is specific

to the singly and unspliced transcripts. Notably, this sequence is within ZAP binding

peak 3 (Figure S2E-F). RNAi-mediated depletion of CNOT1, PARN, EXOSC3,

EXOSC5, EXOSC7, DDX17 or DHX30 did not affect HIV-CpG RNA abundance using

the probe for the 3' fragment (Figure S3E-F), but depletion of the major 5'-3'

exonuclease XRN1 led to a significant increase in abundance (Figure 3C and S3D).

We then used 5' RACE to identify potential ZAP cleavage sites using a HIV specific

primer at the 3' end of the viral genome (Figure 3B). Visualising the RACE products

on an agarose gel showed that a novel band appeared for the control siRNA HIV-CpG

sample (3' cleavage fragment in Figure 3D). When ZAP was depleted, this band was

not present and the abundance of the band increased when XRN1 was knocked down.

Therefore, we hypothesised that this band could be a KHNYN cleavage product that

is further degraded by XRN1.

To map the 5' cleavage sites, we used Oxford Nanopore sequencing for the total 5'

RACE reactions and identified the 5' end of each read. In XRN1 knockdown cells, HIV-

CpG 5' ends clustered in ZAP binding Peaks 2 and 3 (Figure 3E). This indicates that

ZAP likely recruits KHNYN to these sites to mediate cleavage and that the ZAP binding

in Peak 3 is sufficient for KHNYN cleavage. This also suggests that the increase in 3'

cleavage fragment abundance when XRN1 is depleted (Figure 3C) may be

underestimated because the probe (Figure 3B) covers the site of endonucleolytic

cleavage in ZAP binding Peak 3. However, as described above, this is the most distal

3' sequence that the probe can cover and still be specific for the ZRE-containing RNA.

Importantly, the 5' RACE assay has a 3' bias in that if KHNYN cuts multiple times in a

transcript, the 5' end closest to the RACE primer will be identified, so the relative

frequency of cleavage sites in Peaks 2 and 3 should not be directly compared. The

sequence underlying Peak 3 is identical between HIV-WT and HIV-CpG, suggesting

that ZAP binding in Peak 2 not only promotes ZAP binding in Peak 3 (Figure S1C and

S2A) but that this binding is functional, leading to endonucleolytic cleavage.

To determine if ZAP and TRIM25 interact with XRN1, we performed co-

immunoprecipitation experiments in the absence and presence of HIV-1 infection

(Figure 3F-G). Both proteins interact with XRN1 in a RNase-resistant manner and the

interaction between TRIM25 and XRN1 is strongly stimulated by either HIV-WT or HIV-

CpG infection. Overall, we hypothesise that a ZAP-TRIM25 complex recruits XRN1 to

degrade the 3' KHNYN cleavage product.

3' uridylation by TUT4/7 regulate the abundance of the 5' cleavage fragment

We then screened the RNA degradation proteins linked to ZAP to determine if they

regulate the abundance of the 5' cleavage fragments using a qRT-PCR assay with a

primer-probe set upstream of Peak 2 (probe 1 in Figure S4A). Surprisingly, depletion

of three exosome subunits, EXOSC3, EXOSC5 or EXOSC7, had no effect on the

abundance of the 5' cleavage fragment (Figure S4B). Depletion of CNOT1, PARN,

XRN1, DDX17 or DHX30 also had no effect, indicating that degradation of the 5'

fragment was not regulated by known ZAP-interacting proteins linked to RNA decay.

Therefore, we performed 3' RACE to identify the location and identity of the 3' ends of

the 5' cleavage fragment (Figure 4A and S4A). A potential 5' cleavage fragment was

observed specifically in cells infected with HIV-CpG and was not present when ZAP

was depleted. We cloned this band and sequenced seven clones using Sanger

sequencing. Interestingly, reads terminated within ZAP binding Peak 2 and several

had non-templated uridines at the 3' end (Figure 4B). This result raised the possibility

that the 5' fragment was modified by 3' uridylation.

Several members of the TENT family of polymerases add non-templated nucleotides

at the 3' end of transcripts and TUT1, TUT4 and TUT7 are three proteins that

specifically add non-templated uridines[60]. TUT1 is a nuclear protein that had no effect

when it was depleted (Figure 4C). In contrast, depletion of two cytoplasmic paralogs

that are often functionally redundant, TUT4 and TUT7, promoted an increase in the

abundance of the 5' cleavage fragment (Figure 4C and S4C). As expected, TUT4/7

depletion had no effect on infectious virus production, indicating that it acts

downstream of KHNYN cleavage (Figure 4D), or the abundance of the 3' cleavage

fragment (Figure S4D). We then analysed whether ZAP and TRIM25 interacted with

TUT7. Both proteins interacted with it in an RNase-resistant manner and this

interaction was increased in the presence of HIV-WT or HIV-CpG infection (Figure 4E-

F).

DIS3L2 degrades the 5' KHNYN cleavage fragment

DIS3L2 is an exosome-independent, 3'-5' exoribonuclease that degrades transcripts

with 3' terminal uridylation[61-63]. Depleting its expression increased expression of

transcripts using the 5' probe but not the 3' probe (Figure 5A and S5A-B), indicating

that it is required to degrade the 5' KHNYN cleavage fragment. DIS3L2 depletion does

not affect HIV-CpG infectious virus production (Figure S5C), indicating that it also acts

after KHNYN cleavage. ZAP and TRIM25 interact with DIS3L2 in an RNase-resistant manner, and the interaction between TRIM25 and DIS2L2 is increased by HIV infection (Figure 5B-C). We then used 3' RACE-seq to map internal cleavage sites in HIV-CpG after DIS3L2 depletion and found that they are concentrated in ZAP binding Peak 2 (Figure 5D). We also determined proportion of 3' uridylation and length. When DIS3L2 is depleted, ~50% of the reads have at least one non-templated nucleotide and a substantial portion have at least 10 non-templated nucleotides (Figure 5E). These non-templated nucleotides are highly enriched in uridine, indicating a poly-uridine tail. In contrast, when ZAP is depleted, few reads contain non-templated tails and the strong enrichment for uridine is not present. These data indicate that after KHNYN cleavage, 5' cleavage products of the viral RNA become 3'-polyuridylated by TUT4/7 and are then degraded by DIS3L2.

HIV-1 infection induces ZMD for cellular transcripts

HIV-1 infection strongly increased the interaction between TRIM25 and KHNYN, XRN1, TUT7 and DIS3L2 (Figures 2B, 3G, 4F, 5C). Gene set enrichment analysis of differentially expressed genes between HIV-WT or HIV-CpG infected cells compared to mock infected cells showed a substantial change in transcripts associated with pathogen signalling including TNFα signalling, inflammatory response, interferon-α and interferon-γ responses (Figure 6A-B). This suggests that the increase in ZMD complex assembly correlates with an overall antiviral response and we posited that HIV-1 infection may stimulate ZMD activity. While the effect of ZMD on viral RNA cannot be analysed in the absence of viral infection, we hypothesised that, if infection induces ZMD, then the number of cellular transcripts regulated by the ZAP-TRIM25-KHNYN pathway would be increased.

We determined how HIV-WT and HIV-CpG infection affected transcripts regulated by

ZMD. Because ZMD leads to RNA degradation, we focused on transcripts upregulated

when ZAP, TRIM25 or KHNYN were knocked out. HIV-WT or HIV-CpG infection

increased the number of genes expressing transcripts upregulated by ZAP or TRIM25

by ~2-3-fold and KHNYN-upregulated transcripts by ~5-fold (Supplemental Figure 6A-

C, significantly upregulated transcripts defined by adjusted $p < 0.05$)). Analysis of

genes encoding transcripts co-upregulated by ZAP, TRIM25 and KHNYN showed an

~10-fold increase in both HIV-WT and HIV-CpG infected cells compared to mock

infected cells (Figure 6C-D). Transcripts encoded by 102 genes were upregulated in

ZAP, TRIM25 and KHNYN knockout cells in both HIV-WT and HIV-CpG infected cells.

These are enriched for encoding proteins associated with the endoplasmic reticulum

(Figure 6E), which correlates with ZAP-L localisation and the previous observation that

ZAP-L preferentially regulates transcripts encoding membrane proteins[16,17]. Overall,

HIV infection increases TRIM25 interaction with ZAP and KHNYN and this correlates

with an increase in the number of genes that are co-regulated by ZAP, TRIM25 and

KHNYN, implying that an infectious stimulus modulates the activity of ZMD on host

transcripts.

DISCUSSION

Overall, these experiments lead to a comprehensive model for ZMD (Figure 7). ZAP-

L forms a complex with TRIM25 and KHNYN to direct KHNYN-mediated

endonucleolytic cleavage in regions of high ZAP binding. After KHNYN cleavage, ZAP

and TRIM25 interact with additional RNA decay machinery to mediate degradation of

the resultant fragments. XRN1 degrades the 3' cleavage fragment, likely due to a

monophosphate being present on the 5' end after KHNYN cleavage. The 5' cleavage

fragment is uridylated by TUT4/7 and then degraded by DIS3L2. This allows the entire

viral RNA to be degraded after its recognition by ZAP.

How ZMD is targeted to specific transcripts remains unclear. A simple model is that

ZAP binds CpG dinucleotides through ZnF2 in its RBD and clustered CpGs are

sufficient to mediate specificity[13,14]. Supporting this model, ZAP has high affinity for

RNAs containing a CpG dinucleotide and CpG recoding can sensitise diverse viruses

to ZAP-mediated restriction[11-13,41,42,64]. However, some regions of viral RNA appear to

be more sensitive to CpG-mediated ZAP restriction and high levels of CpG abundance

sometimes does not sensitise viral RNA to ZAP[42,48,65-68]. In addition, UpA recoding

has been reported to sensitise viral RNA to ZAP[41,64]. Our data indicate that, while the

RBD is present in both ZAP-L and ZAP-S, only ZAP-L is potent for binding HIV-CpG

RNA and targeting it for decay. Furthermore, TRIM25 promotes ZAP binding to CpG

clusters in HIV-CpG RNA, consistent with a previous study that showed that TRIM25

promotes the interaction of ZAP with a reporter transcript that is regulated by ZAP at

the level of translation[39]. Therefore, the simple model in which the ZAP RBD is

sufficient to determine substrate specificity by binding clustered CpG dinucleotides

likely needs to be revised.

In addition to the sequence specificity in its RBD, ZAP target recognition could be

modulated by protein cofactors or its subcellular localisation. While KHNYN has two

KH domains, they show no evidence of RNA binding and form an extended di-KH

domain that may instead function as a protein-protein binding domain[35,37]. TRIM25

has multiple modes of RNA binding[69-71] but whether this regulates ZAP targeting of

viral RNA is unclear. Overall, the relative contribution of TRIM25

ubiquitylation/ISGylation activity[38,39,72,73], multimerisation through the N-terminal RING

domain[34,74] and RNA binding[69-71] for regulating ZAP antiviral activity remains to be

determined, especially considering that RNA binding and E3 ubiquitin ligase activity

are linked[69-71]. ZAP-L restriction has been shown to require both the ART-like domain

and the CaaX box that mediates S-farnesylation, which are not present in ZAP-

S[23,29,30]. While the function of the ART-like domain remains unknown, localising ZAP

to the cytoplasmic endomembrane system through S-farnesylation may provide a

physical scaffold that promotes ZAP binding or multimerization on viral RNA and as

well as interaction with KHNYN. Such compartmentalisation may also be important for

restricting the activity of the ZAP and KHNYN to avoid off target effects and reinforce

substrate specificity. Therefore, we propose that ZAP substrate specificity is

determined by at least three components: the specificity in the ZAP RBD, ZAP

cofactors such as TRIM25 and ZAP subcellular localisation determined by S-

farnesylation.

Depletion of the 5' degradation fragment requires TUT4/7 and DIS3L2. An interesting

property of DIS3L2 is that it can degrade structured RNA[75]. The HIV-1 genome has

several regions of RNA structure[76] and this property of the enzyme may be required

to completely degrade the viral RNA. It should be noted that many ZAP-sensitive

viruses produce viral RNA that comprise a substantial percentage of total poly(A)

RNA[77-79]. Efficient degradation of the RNA may be important to prevent incompletely

degraded RNA species from sequestering cellular RNA binding proteins, stimulating

the innate immune response or otherwise dysregulating cellular RNA metabolism.

HIV infection increased ZAP and TRIM25 interaction with KHNYN, XRN1, TUT7 and

DIS3L2. Importantly, this is not due to an increase in ZAP-specific RNA substrate

because the effect was observed for both HIV-WT and HIV-CpG infection. Increased

binding of ZAP and TRIM25 to RNA decay enzymes correlates with increased

repression of cellular transcripts by ZAP, TRIM25 and KHNYN. Therefore, it appears

that HIV infection activates this antiviral pathway and this may both restrict viral

replication and alter cellular gene expression.

METHODS

Cell lines, viruses and infection

HEK293T CRISPR cells, HeLa, HeLa CRISPR cells and TZM-bl cells were maintained

in high-glucose DMEM supplemented with GlutaMAX (Thermo Fisher Scientific), 10%

fetal bovine serum, 100 U/mL penicillin and 100 µg/mL streptomycin and grown with

5% CO_2 at 37°C.

HIV-WT and HIV-CpG stocks were produced by co-transfecting pHIV-WT or pHIV-CpG

with pVSV-G into HEK293T CRISPR ZAP cells, harvested at 48h post-transfection

and titered on TZM-bl cells as described below.

Unless otherwise stated, cells were infected at MOI=3. The medium was replaced 18

hours (h) post inoculation. Cell lysates and supernatants were collected at 48 hours

post-infection. Cell-free supernatants were produced by centrifugation at 300 ×g for

five minutes.

siRNA transfection and infection

siRNA were purchased from Horizon Discovery and transfected using Lipofectamine

RNAiMAX (Invitrogen). siRNA were reverse-transfected with 1 uL lipofectamine at 25

nM final concentration for 90,000 HeLa cells in a 24-well plate. 24 hours later, the

medium was replaced, and cells were transfected again with siRNA at 25 nM final

concentration with 1uL lipofectamine. 6-8 hours later, cells were infected with HIV at

MOI=3. The medium was replaced 18 hours post inoculation. Supernatant and cell

lysates were collected 48 hours post-infection as described above.

TZM-bl infectivity assay

The TZM-bl cell line was used to quantify the amount of infectious virus[80-82]. 1E+4 cells

per well were seeded in 96-well plates and infected by incubation with virus stocks or

supernatants of infected cells. At 40-48 hours post-infection, the cells were lysed and

infectivity was measured by β-galactosidase expression using the Galacto-Star assay

system as per the manufacturer instructions. β-galactosidase activity was quantified

as relative light units per second using a PerkinElmer luminometer.

Immunoblotting

Cell lysates for immunoblotting were prepared in Laemmli buffer. Virions were pelleted

from culture supernatant by centrifugation at 20,000 x g for 2 hours at 4°C through a

20% sucrose cushion in phosphate-buffered saline (PBS). Viral pellets were

resuspended in 2x Laemmli buffer. Samples were boiled for 10 min at 95°C then

separated on 8-16% gradient precast gels then transferred to nitrocellulose or PVDF

membranes. Membranes were briefly rinsed in PBS then blocked in blocking buffer

(PBS, 5% non-fat milk, 0.1% Tween 20) for 30 minutes at RT. Membranes were

incubated with primary antibodies diluted in blocking buffer at 4°C overnight, then

washed 3 times for 5 min in PBS-T (PBS, 0.1% Tween 20), then incubated with

secondary antibodies diluted in blocking buffer for 1h at RT, then washed for 3 times

for 5 min in PBS-T. Membranes were imaged using an Odyssey FC (LI-COR)

measuring secondary antibody fluorescence, or using Amersham ECL Prime Western

Blotting Detection reagent (Cytiva) for HRP-linked antibodies with an Amersham

ImageQuant 800 (Cytiva). Antibodies used in this study are reported in the STAR

methods table.

Coimmunoprecipitation

1.5 mg Dynabeads protein A (Invitrogen) per sample were incubated in lysis buffer

(0.5% Nonidet P 40 substitute, 10mM HEPES pH=7.5, 150mM KCl, 3mM MgCL2,

protease inhibitor) supplemented with 5% BSA for 30 min at RT and under gentle

agitation. 4 ug of antibody per sample was bound to the beads for 30 min at RT and

under gentle agitation. The unbound antibody was then washed off and the beads

were resuspended in 50 uL lysis buffer per sample. Cells cultivated in a 10-cm dish

were lysed on ice in 1mL lysis buffer. In case of infected cells (MOI=3), cells were lysed

48 hours post-infection. Lysates were gently mixed on a rotator for 30 min at 4°C, then

centrifuged at 20,000 ×g for 10 min to pellet the nuclear fraction. 75 µL of the post-

nuclear supernatant was saved as the input lysate and mixed with 1 volume of

Laemmli buffer. 900 uL of the remaining post-nuclear supernatant was incubated with

the prepared beads under gentle agitation over night at 4°C. The samples were then

washed four times in wash buffer (0.05% Nonidet P 40 substitute, 10mM HEPES

pH=7.5, 150mM KCl, 3mM MgCL2, protease inhibitor) before being resuspended in

90 uL Laemmli buffer. For experiments including an RNase I treatment, the samples

were washed twice in wash buffer after the overnight incubation with the prepared

beads, then resuspended in 100 uL wash buffer. The samples were incubated with

300 U RNase I for 30 min at 37°C and washed three times in wash buffer before being

resuspended in 90 uL Laemmli buffer. Input lysates and samples were analysed by

immunoblotting as described above.

qRT-PCR

Total RNA was extracted using the RNeasy Mini Kit (Qiagen). cDNA was synthesised

using the High-Capacity cDNA RT kit (Applied Biosystems) following the

manufacturer's instructions. cDNA was diluted 20 times in RNase-free water and

quantified by qPCR using Applied Biosystems TaqMan Universal PCR Master Mix

(Applied Biosystems) in a QuantStudio 5 qPCR System (Applied Biosystems).

Relative cDNA quantities were determined using the $\Delta\Delta^{Ct}$ method. Primer-probes sets

used in this study are reported in the STAR methods table.

RNA Immunoprecipitation

HeLa CRISPR control/TRIM25/KHNYN cells were plated in 6-well plates and

transfected using TransIT-LT1 transfection reagent with 500 ng of HIV-WT or HIV-CpG

proviral DNA, and medium was replaced 4-6 hours later. 48 hours post-transfection

cells were washed with PBS prior to 'on-dish' irradiation with 400mJ/cm2 using a UV

Stratalinker 2400 (Stratagene). Cells were then pelleted and lysed with RIPA buffer

(50mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4; 150mM NaCl; 0.1% SDS; 0.5% sodium deoxycholate, 1%

Nonidet P 40 substitute and protease inhibitors), and then sonicated. Cleared lysates

were immunoprecipitated overnight at 4°C with anti-ZAP antibody (Abcam) and

Dynabeads protein G (Invitrogen). Following 3 washes with RIPA buffer, beads were

resuspended in 100 µl of RIPA and boiled for 10min to decouple protein/RNA

complexes from the beads. Finally, input and pulldown samples were incubated with

proteinase K (Thermo Fisher) for 1 hr at 37°C, and then boiled for 10 minutes to

inactivate the enzyme. Samples were stored at -20°C for downstream RNA extraction

and qRT-PCR analysis.

RNA from the input and pulldown samples was extracted using QIAzol (QIAGEN).

cDNA synthesis was performed using the High-Capacity cDNA RT kit as described

above. Of the final reaction, 5 µl were subjected to qPCR using the primer/probe sets

for human GAPDH and HIV-1 genomic RNA reported in the STAR methods table.

Serial dilutions of HIV-WT proviral DNA were used in standard curves as calibrator for

quantification of HIV-1 RNA copies in the pull-down fractions.

ZAP and KHNYN iCLIP

Cells were infected at MOI=3 and media was replaced 18 h post-inoculation with

DMEM supplemented with 2% fetal bovine serum. At 48hpi, cells were washed with

ice-cold PBS, irradiated once with 150 mJ/cm2 in a Stratalinker 2400 at 254 nm,

harvested by scraping in PBS, pelleted by centrifugation then resuspended in lysis

buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.4; 100 mM NaCl; 1% Igepal CA-630; 0.1% SDS; 0.5%

sodium deoxycholate; protease inhibitor) and stored at -80°C until use.

Individual cross-linking and immunoprecipitation (iCLIP) was performed according to

the previously published protocol[83], with the following details. For ZAP iCLIP, 4 µg of

anti-ZAP antibody (GeneTex, GTX120134) was used for immunoprecipitation per

sample. For the KHNYN KO, TRIM25 KO and ZAP-L KO samples, the membrane was

cut above 110 kDa. In the ZAP-S KO experiments, the membrane was cut from 130

kDa upwards. For KHNYN-GFP iCLIP, 4 µg anti-GFP antibody (Roche, ref.

11814460001) was used for immunoprecipitation per sample. The membrane was cut

from 130 kDa upwards. RNA-seq libraries were sequenced by Novogene as paired-

end 150 bp reads on Illumina Novaseq 6000. Each iCLIP experiment was performed

with three biological replicates.

iCLIP data processing

Reads were mapped to the human GRCh38.p13 genome build with GENCODE v38

annotation. The HIV-1$_{WT}$ or HIV-1$_{CpG}$, genome and annotation were merged with the

human genome build and annotation files. The reads from biological replicates for

each sample set were pooled, and all subsequent analyses were performed on the

combined datasets. Pair-end reads were pre-processed using a custom script written

in Bash. Briefly, the unique molecular identifiers (UMIs) were extracted using *UMI-*

tools extract[84] (https://github.com/CGATOxford/UMI-tools,*--extract-method=regex*)

and the paired-end reads merged with *BBTools' BBMerge*[85]

(https://sourceforge.net/projects/bbmap/, *mininsert=0, minoverlap=5*). The processed

reads were analysed according to the standardised iCLIP workflow with the *nf-*

core/clipseq v1.0.0 pipeline[86,87] (https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4723017), which was

run with *Nextflow v22.10.0*[88] and the following parameters: *--deduplicate true, --*

smrna_org human, --peakcaller paraclu[89]*.* In addition, the crosslink BED files

generated during the iCLIP analysis were used to call peaks on the HIV-1 genome

with *Clippy v1.5.0* tool (https://github.com/ulelab/clippy). The following parameters

were used: *--window_size 100, --min_prom_adjust 1, --min_height_adjust 1.5, --*

min_gene_counts 20, --min_peak_counts 5.

To account for the variability in library size and RNA abundance across experiments,

the crosslink signal was normalised in two steps. First, crosslink counts were scaled

to counts per million (CPM) using the *clipplotr v1.0.0* command-line tool[90]

(https://github.com/ulelab/clipplotr) to adjust for differences in library size. Second, to

control for variations in HIV-1 RNA abundance between samples, CPM-normalised

crosslink counts were further adjusted using mean HIV-1 RNA abundance values,

calculated from the DESeq2 normalised RNA-seq data across all three biological

replicates. The standard error of the mean, shown as the error band on the iCLIP plots,

was calculated from the standard deviation of three biological replicates. The data was

smoothed using a rolling mean of 100.

RNA-seq

RNA was extracted using the Direct-zol RNA Miniprep Plus Kit (Zymo Pure) from cells

grown and infected in the same conditions as the iCLIP experiments. Poly(A)+ RNA

library preparation and sequencing were performed by GENEWIZ. Sequencing reads

were processed using the *nf-core/rnaseq v3.17.0* pipeline[86]

(https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13986791) run on *Nextflow v24.04.2*[88] with default

parameters. Differentially expressed genes were identified with DESeq2 using the *nf-*

core/differentialabundance v1.2.0 pipeline (https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7846648).

To account for transcript length bias, the analysis utilized the raw gene count matrix

(salmon.merged.gene_counts.tsv)   and   transcript   length   matrix

(salmon.merged.gene_lengths.tsv) generated by the *nf-core/rnaseq* pipeline. The

pipeline was run with *Nextflow v24.04.2*[88] using default settings. Differentially

expressed genes were defined as adjusted p <0.05 and a basemean >500.

Gene set enrichment analysis (GSEA) was performed using the R package

clusterProfiler v4.12.6[91] and human gene sets from the 50 Hallmark pathways

obtained using the package *msigdbr v7.5.1* (https://CRAN.R-

project.org/package=msigdbr). Gene expression relationships between different

sample sets were analysed and visualised using the R packages *VennDiagram*

v1.7.3[92] and *eulerr v7.0.2* (https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=eulerr). The

packages *ggplot2 v3.5.1* (https://ggplot2.tidyverse.org) and *pheatmap v1.0.12*

(https://github.com/raivokolde/pheatmap) were used to create heat maps of gene

expression.

5' and 3' RACE-seq

Total RNA was extracted using the Direct-zol RNA Miniprep Plus Kit. The 5' RACE was

performed from 1 ug total RNA using the SMARTer RACE 5'/3' Kit according to the

manufacturer's instructions. In order to make cleaved RNA compatible with the 3'

RACE cDNA synthesis step, the total RNA was poly(A) tailed using *E. coli* Poly(A)

polymerase (NEB) and then purified with the Monarch Spin RNA Cleanup Kit (NEB).

The 3' RACE was performed from 500 ng purified poly(A) tailed RNA using the

SMARTer RACE 5'/3' Kit according to the manufacturer's instructions. The HIV specific

primers used for 5' and 3' RACE are reported in the STAR methods table. RACE

sequencing libraries were prepared using the Native Barcoding Kit 24 V14 (Oxford

Nanopore Technologies). Sequencing of 5' RACE product libraries was performed on

R10.4.1 flowcells (FLO-MIN114, Oxford Nanopore, UK). 3' RACE sequencing libraries

were sequenced on PromethION with R10.4.1 flowcells.

For the 5' RACE-seq, basecalling of *FAST5* files for the first replicate was completed

using *guppy_basecaller* (v6.4.6). Dorado (v0.5.1) was used to basecall *POD5* files

generated from 5' RACE-seq replicates 2 and 3 as well as the 3' RACE-seq replicates.

Reads were basecalled and demultiplexed using the Super High Accuracy (SUP)

model (v4.3.0). Additional command-line arguments were implemented to ensure that

only reads with identical nanopore barcodes at both ends were considered, as well as

excluding any reads containing barcodes in the middle. Bash scripts submitted to

KCL's CREATE HPC for basecalling are available on Github (5' RACE-seq:

https://github.com/Tycour/HIV1-ZAP_RACEseq;   3'   RACE-seq:

https://github.com/GregaGD/ZAP_HIV-1_3-prime_RACE-seq), along with the bash

scripts and custom Python and R scripts used in the downstream analysis.

Following basecalling, the FASTQ files were filtered with *NanoFilt v2.8.0*[93] to eliminate

low-quality reads and retain reads with an average quality score > Q20. The quality

metrics of the filtered reads were evaluated using *NanoPlot v1.42.0*[93]. A custom

Python script was implemented to identify and retain reads containing primer

sequences at both ends that were used in the RACE reaction. For the 5' RACE

reaction,   the   5'   primer   was

CTCACTATAGGGCAAGCAGTGGTATCAACGCAGAGTACATGGG   and   the   3'

primer was CCAGCAGCAGATGGGGTGGGAGCAGTAT. For the 3' RACE reaction,

the 5' primer was TGGTGGGCGGGGATCAAGCAGGAATTTGGC and the 3' primer

was   GTACTCTGCGTTGATACCACTGCTTGCCCTATAGTGAG.   Reads   without

internal primer sequences were filtered out to ensure specificity in the downstream

analysis.

Based on the infection conditions, the processed reads were aligned to either the HIV-

1_{WT} or the HIV-1_{CpG} reference genome using *Minimap2[94,95] v2.17-r941*, with the splice-

aware argument (*--splice*). The alignment files in SAM format were converted to a

sorted and indexed BAM format using *samtools (v1.10 or* v1.19). Each read was

oriented to the leading or lagging strand using a custom Python script to facilitate

downstream processing.

Bedtools (v2.31.1) converted the *BAM* file containing deduplicated reads to *BED*

format. For the 5' RACE-seq, an *awk* (v20200816) command was employed to extract

the 5' start positions for reads. These positions were then analysed using a custom

script that maps and plots the distribution of read starts along the reference genome.

To examine the cleavage sites and detect non-templated nucleotides for the 3' RACE-

seq, the alignment files in BAM format were analysed using a custom R script. Using

the *GenomicAlignments* (Lawrence et al., 2013) and *Biostrings*

(https://bioconductor.org/packages/Biostrings) packages, the final mapped position of

the read was determined by parsing the CIGAR string. Specifically, the last mapped

segment was extracted from the CIGAR string and the corresponding 3′ end nucleotide

position was recorded. This was used in later steps to determine if any nucleotides

beyond the mapped part of the read were non-templated.

Similarly, the *GenomicAlignments[96]* and *Biostrings*

(https://bioconductor.org/packages/Biostrings) packages were used to identify

stretches of poly(A) nucleotides added during the 3' RACE protocol. The 3′ end soft-

clipped segment of the read was extracted based on the CIGAR string and analysed

to detect poly(A) segments of at least 15 consecutive adenosines, allowing up to two

mismatches. The position of the poly(A) start in the read sequence was recorded and

only reads with recognised poly(A) segments were selected for downstream analysis.

The non-templated nucleotides were defined as the sequence between the final

mapped position and the start of the poly(A) sequence in each read. The length

distribution and nucleotide composition of these regions were analysed, and the length

distribution was visualised with bar charts, while the nucleotide composition per

sequence length was visualised with stacked bar charts. The package *ggplot2 v3.5.1*

(https://ggplot2.tidyverse.org) was used to generate all charts.

Statistics

Unless otherwise stated, data are represented as mean ± standard deviation.

Statistical significance for infectious virus production data and qRT-PCR data was

determined by one-way ANOVA from log-transformed data using GraphPad Prism10

(GraphPad Software Inc.). Significance was ascribed to p values < 0.05 compared to

control conditions.

Data and code

The RNA-seq data reported in this paper are available at ArrayExpress (E-MTAB-

15071, E-MTAB-15072, E-MTAB-15077, E-MTAB-15065, E-MTAB-15056, E-MTAB-

15061, E-MTAB-15060, E-MTAB-15095, E-MTAB-15064). Custom scripts for the 5'

and 3' RACE analysis are available at https://github.com/Tycour/HIV1-ZAP_RACEseq

and https://github.com/GregaGD/ZAP_HIV-1_3-prime_RACE-seq.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: C.M.S, S.J.D.N, J.U; Software: A.M.C.; Formal analysis: C.B., G.G.D., M.J.L, R.P.G, T.C., H.W., P.H., H.M., A.M.C., Investigation: C.B., G.G.D., M.J.L., R.P.G, H.W.; Writing - Original Draft: C.M.S, C.B., G.G.D., Writing - Review & Editing: all authors; Visualization: C.B., G.G.D, M.J.L, R.P.G., T.C.; Supervision: J.U., S.J.D.N, C.M.S.; Funding acquisition: M.P., J.U., S.J.D.N., C.M.S.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no competing interests.

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1098 **FIGURE LEGENDS**

1099 **Figure 1: ZAP isoforms differ in their activity to restrict HIV-CpG and interact**

1100 **with KHNYN and viral RNA.**

(A) Genomic organisation and localisation of CpG dinucleotides of HIV-WT and HIV-CpG.

(B) Relative infectious HIV production (left) in HEK293T CRISPR control and ZAP cells, and HIV-CpG production expressed as % infectious HIV-WT production (right). Error bars represent standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-transformed data, compared to HIV-CpG production in HEK293T CRISPR control cells.

(C) Schematic representation of ZAP's main isoforms, ZAP-L and ZAP-S. ZnF: zinc finger. ART-like: ADP-ribosyltransferase-like domain. CaaX: CaaX box that mediates S-farnesylation.

(D) Immunoblotting of uninfected isoform-specific HEK293T CRISPR ZAP cells.

(E) Infectious HIV-CpG production, expressed as % infectious HIV-WT production, in isoform-specific HEK293T CRISPR ZAP cells. Error bars represent standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-transformed data, compared to HIV-CpG production in HEK293T cells.

(F) Immunoblotting of ZAP coimmunoprecipitations and corresponding input lysates obtained from isoform-specific HEK293T CRISPR ZAP cells at steady state level.

(G) Normalised ZAP iCLIP signal mapped to HIV-CpG gRNA in isoform-specific HEK293T CRISPR ZAP cells. The average signal of three independent experiments and the SEM (shading) are plotted. Localisation of CpG dinucleotides on HIV-CpG gRNA are indicated by vertical bars. Pink bars represent the 36 added CpG dinucleotides in HIV-CpG.

Figure 2: TRIM25 modulates ZAP binding to HIV RNA.

(A) Immunoblotting of ZAP coimmunoprecipitations and corresponding input lysates obtained from infected HeLa cells. Samples were treated with RNase I after pulldown.

(B) Immunoblotting of TRIM25 coimmunoprecipitations and corresponding input lysates obtained from infected HeLa cells. Samples were treated with RNase I after pulldown.

(C) ZAP iCLIP signal mapped to HIV-CpG gRNA in HeLa CRISPR TRIM25 and control. The average signal of three independent experiments and the SEM (shading) are plotted.

(D) ZAP iCLIP signal mapped to HIV-CpG gRNA in HeLa CRISPR KHNYN and control. The average signal of three independent experiments and the SEM (shading) are plotted.

(E) Relative levels of ZAP-associated HIV gRNA measured by qRT-PCR in HeLa CRISPR control (left), CRISPR TRIM25 (middle) and CRISPR KHNYN (right) cells transfected with proviral DNA. Error bars represent standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by unpaired two-tailed t test, compared to ZAP-associated HIV-WT gRNA.

Figure 3: Degradation of HIV-CpG 3' cleavage fragment by XRN1.

(A) KHNYN iCLIP signal mapped to HIV-CpG gRNA in HeLa CRISPR KHNYN + GFP and HeLa CRISPR KHNYN + CRISPR-resistant KHNYN-GFP. The average signal of three independent experiments and the SEM (shading) are plotted.

(B) Genomic organisation of HIV-WT and HIV-CpG and localisation of CpG dinucleotides. The qRT-PCR probe used to quantify the 3' cleavage fragment (probe 2 (p2)), and the HIV specific primer used for the 5' RACE (5'R) are shown.

(C) Level of HIV-CpG 3' cleavage fragment measured by qRT-PCR in cells transfected with siRNA targeting XRN1. Results are expressed as % 3' cleavage fragment in HIV-

WT infected cells. The dotted line represents the level of 3' cleavage fragment in cells

treated with a non-targeting siRNA control. Error bars represent standard deviation. *p

<0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-transformed data, compared to the level

of 3' cleavage fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control.

(D) Agarose gel electrophoresis of 5' RACE reactions. Sizes in kilobases are indicated

on the left.

(E) 5' RACE DNA was sequenced by long-read sequencing and the 5' end of each

molecule was identified and mapped onto HIV gRNA. The number of 5' end at every

position was determined and compared between experimental conditions. iCLIP

signals for ZAP (from Figure S2B) and KHNYN (from panel A) are shown for reference.

(F) Immunoblotting of ZAP coimmunoprecipitations and corresponding input lysates

obtained from infected HeLa cells. Samples were treated with RNase I after pulldown.

(G) Immunoblotting of TRIM25 coimmunoprecipitations and corresponding input

lysates obtained from infected HeLa cells. Samples were treated with RNase I after

pulldown. Note that the experiment shown here was performed alongside the

experiment shown in Figure 2C, thus the input blots for TRIM25, PABPC1, GAPDH,

and gp160/gp120 are identical between the two figures.

1167

Figure 4: HIV-CpG 5' cleavage fragment abundance is regulated by TUT4/TUT7.

(A) Agarose gel electrophoresis of 3' RACE reactions. Sizes in kilobases are indicated

on the left.

(B) Non-templated nucleotides are found in the 3' end of HIV-CpG 5' cleavage

fragments amplified by 3' RACE and determined by Sanger sequencing. The 3' end

positions shown here all fall within the CpG-enriched region of HIV-CpG.

(C) Level of HIV-CpG 5' cleavage fragment measured by qRT-PCR in cells transfected with siRNA targeting TUTs. Results are expressed as % 5' cleavage fragment in HIV-WT infected cells. The dotted line represents the level of 5' cleavage fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control. Error bars represent standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-transformed data, compared to the level of 5' cleavage fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control.

(D) Infectious HIV-CpG production, expressed as % infectious HIV-WT production in HeLa cells transfected with siRNA targeting TUTs. The dotted line represents HIV-CpG production in cells transfected with a non-targeting control siRNA. Error bars represent standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-transformed data, compared to HIV-CpG production in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control.

(E) Immunoblotting of ZAP coimmunoprecipitations and corresponding input lysates obtained from infected HeLa cells. Samples were treated with RNase I after pulldown.

(F) Immunoblotting of TRIM25 coimmunoprecipitations and corresponding input lysates obtained from infected HeLa cells. Samples were treated with RNase I after pulldown.

Figure 5: HIV-CpG 5' cleavage fragment is degraded by DIS3L2.

(A) Level of HIV-CpG 5' cleavage fragment measured by qRT-PCR in cells transfected with siRNA targeting DIS3L2. Results are expressed as % 5' cleavage fragment in HIV-WT infected cells. The dotted line represents the level of 5' cleavage fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control. Error bars represent standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-transformed data, compared to the level of 5' cleavage fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control.

Note that this experiment was performed alongside the experiment shown in Figure

5C and therefore shared the same control and ZAP values.

(B) Immunoblotting of ZAP coimmunoprecipitations and corresponding input lysates

obtained from infected HeLa cells. Samples were treated with RNase I after pulldown.

(C) Immunoblotting of TRIM25 coimmunoprecipitations and corresponding input

lysates obtained from infected HeLa cells. Samples were treated with RNase I after

pulldown.

(D) 3' RACE DNA was sequenced by long-read sequencing and the 3' end of each

molecule was identified and mapped onto HIV gRNA. The number of 3' end at every

position was determined and compared between experimental conditions. iCLIP

signals for ZAP (from Figure S2B) and KHNYN (from Figure 3A) are shown for

information.

(E) The sequence and length of non-templated nucleotides was extracted for every

sequenced 3' end in HIV-CpG infected cells transfected with siRNA control or siRNA

targeting ZAP or DIS3L2.

1213

Figure 6: HIV infection increases the number of cellular genes that are

coregulated by ZAP, TRIM25, and KHNYN.

(A-B) Hallmark gene set enrichment plot of differentially expressed genes in HIV-WT

(A) or HIV-CpG **(B)** infected HeLa CRISPR control cells. Black dots are non-

significant, blue and pink dots are significant. Pink dots show functional groups

highlighted in the text.

(C) Heat map indicating differentially expressed genes that are co-upregulated in ZAP,

TRIM25 and KHNYN CRISPR cells compared to CRISPR control cells in mock, HIV-

WT or HIV-CpG infected cells.

(D) Venn-diagram showing differentially expressed genes that are co-upregulated in

ZAP, TRIM25 and KHNYN CRISPR cells compared to CRISPR control cells in mock,

HIV-WT or HIV-CpG infected cells.

(E) Gene ontology analysis of the 102 genes that are upregulated in the absence of

ZAP, TRIM25 and KHNYN upon HIV-WT and HIV-CpG infection. Black dots are non-

significant, blue and pink dots are significant. Pink dots show functional groups

highlighted in the text.

1230

Figure 7: Model of the ZAP-mediated RNA decay

ZAP triggers the assembly of ZAP-TRIM25-KHNYN complexes around CpG

dinucleotides. This leads to RNA cleavage by KHNYN. The 3' cleavage fragment is

then degraded by the 5'-3' exoribonuclease XRN1, while the 5' cleavage fragment is

uridylated by TUT4/7 and then degraded by the 3'-5' exoribonuclease DIS3L2. Created

in BioRender. Bouton, C. (2025) https://BioRender.com/f8zm1lm

1237

SUPPLEMENTAL FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure S1: ZAP isoforms differ in their activity and their interaction with viral

RNA.

(A) Relative infectious virus production in isoform-specific HEK293T CRISPR ZAP

cells. The dotted line represents HIV-CpG production in HEK293T cells. Error bars

represent standard deviation.

(B) Immunoblotting of cell lysates and virions from HIV-WT- or HIV-CpG-infected

isoform-specific HEK293T CRISPR ZAP cells.

(C-E) Normalised ZAP iCLIP signal mapped to HIV gRNA in HEK293T cells **(C)**,

HEK293T ZAP-L KO **(D)** and HEK293T ZAP-S KO **(E)**. The average of three

independent experiments and the SEM are plotted.

1249

Figure S2: TRIM25 modulates ZAP binding to HIV RNA but does not alter its

target specificity.

(A-B) Normalised ZAP iCLIP signal mapped to HIV gRNA in HeLa CRISPR control **(A)**

or CRISPR TRIM25 cells **(B)**.

(C) HIV-WT or HIV-CpG infectious virus production from CRISPR control, ZAP,

TRIM25 or KHNYN knockout cells.

(D) Venn-diagrams of genes encoding transcripts with >5 ZAP peaks in HeLa CRISPR

control and TRIM25 knockout cells infected with HIV-WT (top) or HIV-CpG (bottom).

(E-F) ZAP binding peaks on HIV-CpG RNA in HeLa CRISPR control **(E)** and KHNYN

knockout cells **(F)**. Peaks were called by Clippy and their coordinates are indicated.

1260

Figure S3: Depletion of CNOT1, PARN, EXOSC3, EXOSC5, EXOSC7, DDX17,

DHX30 or DCP2 does not affect HIV-CpG infectious virus production.

(A) Infectious HIV-CpG production, expressed as % infectious HIV-WT production in

HeLa cells transfected with siRNA targeting ZAP, TRIM25 or KHNYN. The dotted line

represents HIV-CpG production in cells transfected with a non-targeting control siRNA.

Error bars represent standard deviation. $*p < 0.05$ calculated by one-way ANOVA on

log-transformed data, compared to HIV-CpG production in cells treated with a non-

targeting siRNA control.

(B-C) Infectious HIV-CpG production, expressed as % infectious HIV-WT production

in HeLa cells transfected with siRNA targeting potential ZAP cofactors. The dotted line

represents HIV-CpG production in cells transfected with a non-targeting control siRNA.

Error bars represent standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on

log-transformed data, compared to HIV-CpG production in cells treated with a non-

targeting siRNA control.

(D) Immunoblotting of HeLa cells transfected with siRNA targeting the genes in (B)

and (C), then infected with HIV-WT.

(E-F) Level of HIV-CpG 3' cleavage fragment measured by qRT-PCR in cells

transfected with siRNA targeting potential ZAP cofactors. Results are expressed as %

3' cleavage fragment in HIV-WT infected cells. The dotted line represents the level of

3' cleavage fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control. Error bars

represent standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-

transformed data, compared to the level of 3' cleavage fragment in cells treated with

a non-targeting siRNA control.

1284

Figure S4: Depletion of CNOT1, PARN, EXOSC3, EXOSC5, EXOSC7, XRN1,

DDX17, or DHX30 does not affect the abundance of the 5' HIV-CpG RNA cleavage

fragment.

(A) Genomic organisation of HIV-WT and HIV-CpG and localisation of CpG

dinucleotides. The qRT-PCR primer/probe set used to quantify the 5' cleavage

fragment (probe 1 (p1)) and the HIV-specific primer used for the 3' RACE (3'R) are

shown.

(B) Level of HIV-CpG 5' cleavage fragment measured by qRT-PCR in cells transfected

with siRNA targeting potential ZAP cofactors. Results are expressed as % 5' cleavage

fragment in HIV-WT infected cells. The dotted line represents the level of 5' cleavage

fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control. Error bars represent

standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-transformed data,

compared to the level of 3' cleavage fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting

siRNA control.

(C) Immunoblotting of HeLa cells transfected with siRNA targeting TUT4 and TUT7

then infected with HIV-WT.

(D) Level of HIV-CpG 3' cleavage fragment measured by qRT-PCR in cells transfected

with siRNA targeting TUTs. Results are expressed as % 3' cleavage fragment in HIV-

WT infected cells. The dotted line represents the level of 3' cleavage fragment in cells

treated with a non-targeting siRNA control. Error bars represent standard deviation. *p

<0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-transformed data, compared to the level

of 3' cleavage fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control.

1307

Figure S5: Depletion of DIS3L2 does not affect HIV-CpG infectious virus

production or abundance of the 3' cleavage fragment.

(A) Immunoblotting of HeLa cells transfected with siRNA targeting DIS3L2 then

infected with HIV-WT.

(B) Level of HIV-CpG 3' cleavage fragment measured by qRT-PCR in cells transfected

with siRNA targeting DIS3L2. Results are expressed as % 3' cleavage fragment in

HIV-WT infected cells. The dotted line represents the level of 3' cleavage fragment in

cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control. Error bars represent standard

deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-transformed data, compared

to the level of 5' cleavage fragment in cells treated with a non-targeting siRNA control.

This experiment was performed alongside the experiment shown in figure S5D and

therefore shared the same control and ZAP values.

(C) Infectious HIV-CpG production, expressed as % infectious HIV-WT production in

HeLa cells transfected with siRNA targeting DIS3L2. The dotted line represents HIV-

CpG production in cells transfected with a non-targeting control siRNA. Error bars

represent standard deviation. *p <0.05 calculated by one-way ANOVA on log-

transformed data, compared to HIV-CpG production in cells treated with a non-

targeting siRNA control. This experiment was performed alongside the experiment

shown in figure 5D and therefore shared the same control and ZAP values.

1327

Figure S6: HIV-1 infection increases the number of ZAP, TRIM25 or KHNYN-

regulated genes.

(A) Heat map indicating differentially expressed genes that are upregulated in ZAP,

TRIM25 or KHNYN CRISPR cells compared to CRISPR control cells in mock, HIV-WT

or HIV-CpG infected cells.

(B) Number of upregulated genes in ZAP, KHNYN or TRIM25 knockout cells compared

to CRISPR control cells in mock, HIV-WT or HIV-CpG infected cells.

(C) Venn-diagram showing differentially expressed genes that are upregulated in ZAP,

TRIM25 or KHNYN CRISPR cells compared to CRISPR control cells in mock, HIV-WT

or HIV-CpG infected cells.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

HIV-CpG

Figure 7