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49 ubiquitin ligases (STUbLs), which bear tandem SIM motifs and recognize poly-SUMOylated or  
50 multi-mono-SUMOylated proteins and target them for ubiquitination and subsequent degradation.  
51 Human STUbLs include RNF111/Arkadia (Poulsen et al., 2013) and RING finger 4 (RNF4) (Tatham  
52 et al., 2008). Processing of SUMOylated proteins by RNF4 is part of the correct progression of DSB  
53 signalling and SUMOylation of MDC1, RIF1 and BRCA1-BARD1 result in their interaction with  
54 RNF4 and subsequent degradation after DNA damage (Galanty et al., 2012; Kumar and Cheok, 2017;  
55 Kumar et al., 2017; Luo et al., 2012; Vyas et al., 2013; Yin et al., 2012). RNF4 may also regulate  
56 RPA residency on ssDNA (Galanty et al., 2012; Yin et al., 2012).

57

58 Enzymes with the ability to counter SUMO and Ub modifications have the potential to regulate DNA  
59 damage signalling and DNA repair. However, since many SUMOylated factors, and the SUMO  
60 machinery itself (Kumar et al., 2017) are eventually processed by STUbLs and degraded by the  
61 proteasome, it is also possible that the reversal of SUMO conjugation plays only a minor role in the  
62 response. Characterisation of de-ubiquitinating enzymes has shown tremendous diversity and  
63 complexity in ubiquitin regulation of the response (Nishi et al., 2014; Uckelmann and Sixma, 2017)  
64 but the extent of deSUMOylation enzyme involvement is not known.

65

66 Here we establish two mechanisms of DSB repair regulation by the Sentrin Specific Protease 2,  
67 SENP2. Firstly we uncover a specific requirement for SENP2 in promoting early DSB signalling by  
68 protecting MDC1 from inappropriate SUMOylation and consequent RNF4-VCP processing. We show  
69 interaction between SENP2 and MDC1 is released on damage to allow MDC1 SUMOylation required  
70 for its clearance. Secondly we reveal that HR repair has a greater need for SUMO conjugates than  
71 NHEJ, and thus requires SUMO proteases to contribute to the supply or re-distribution of SUMO. We  
72 propose that deSUMOylation is critical to the tuning of both major DSB repair pathways.

73

## 74 **Results.**

75

### 76 **SENP2 promotes DNA damage signalling and DNA repair.**

77 In a prior siRNA screen of SUMO proteases using integrated reporters to measure HR and NHEJ we  
78 noted that siRNA to SENP2 resulted in impairment of both repair pathways (Garvin et al., 2013). To  
79 address whether SENP2 has a role in DNA repair we compared irradiation (IR) induced  $\gamma$ H2AX foci  
80 clearance, indicative of DNA repair, and cellular sensitivity to irradiation of wild type (WT) and  
81 *SENP2* CRISPR knock out HAP1 cells (*SENP2* KO). *SENP2* KO cells showed both delayed  $\gamma$ H2AX  
82 foci clearance and greater sensitivity to IR than WT cells (Fig S1A-C).

83

84 SENP2 localises to several subcellular compartments, and is enriched at nuclear pores (Chow et al.,  
85 2014; Goeres et al., 2011; Hang and Dasso, 2002; Makhnevych et al., 2007; Odeh et al., 2018; Panse  
86 et al., 2003; Tan et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2002). We generated a siRNA-resistant, *SENP2*<sup>WT</sup>,  
87 catalytic mutant (C548A) and a mutant with reduced nuclear pore targeting (NPm - as previously  
88 described (Goeres et al., 2011; Odeh et al., 2018) illustrated in S1D). Depletion of SENP2 in HeLa  
89 resulted in radio-sensitivity that could be complemented with siRNA-resistant *SENP2*<sup>WT</sup> and  
90 *SENP2*<sup>NPm</sup> but not by *SENP2*<sup>C548A</sup> in colony assays (Fig 1A, S1E). Survival in response to  
91 Camptothecin (CPT) and Olaparib and measures of both HR and NHEJ repair were also dependent on  
92 the catalytic activity of SENP2 (Fig S1F, Fig 1B-C). These data illustrate a need for catalytically  
93 competent SENP2 in DNA DSB repair.

94

95 SUMO1 and SUMO2/3 co-localise with  $\gamma$ H2AX foci in response to genotoxic stress such as IR  
96 (Galanty et al., 2009; Morris et al., 2009), however following IR we observed less SUMO co-

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97 localisation in siSENP2 cells (Fig 1D & S1G). Since a potential cause of SUMO conjugate loss at  
98 DSBs is a reduction in the recruitment of proteins on which SUMOylation occurs (Galanty et al.,  
99 2009; Morris et al., 2009) we examined cells for DSB repair factor foci. MDC1 is recruited to  $\gamma$ H2AX  
100 and begins a Ub signalling cascade involving the E3 Ub ligases RNF8/RNF168 to promote the  
101 recruitment of the BRCA1-A complex and 53BP1-complex (reviewed in (Panier and Boulton, 2014)).  
102 In siSENP2 cells MDC1 co-localization with  $\gamma$ H2AX was observed shortly after IR, however RNF8,  
103 RNF168, Ub conjugates linked through lysine-63 (K63-Ub), 53BP1 and BRCA1 showed incomplete,  
104 or severely reduced, recruitment (Fig 1E). Together these data indicate a role for SENP2 in early DSB  
105 signalling.

106

### 107 **RNF4-VCP is responsible for defective DNA damage signalling in SENP2 depleted cells.**

108 To determine the signalling breakpoint in SENP2 deficient cells we examined MDC1, GFP-RNF168  
109 and 53BP1 foci kinetics following IR. Depletion of SENP2 severely reduced the accumulation of  
110 53BP1 and RNF168 foci throughout the time course, however MDC1 foci initially formed in  
111 siSENP2 and *SENP2-KO* cells and then rapidly became undetectable (Fig 1F & S1H-I). The  
112 formation of both MDC1 and 53BP1 foci at later time points, 4 hours after IR, were restored in  
113 *SENP2*<sup>WT</sup> but not *SENP2*<sup>C548A</sup> complemented cells (Fig 1I-K) suggesting deSUMOylase activity is  
114 important to the persistence of MDC1 at sites of damage and to the accumulation of 53BP1 foci.

115

116 To address which factor(s) are responsible for the rapid clearance of MDC1 in SENP2 deficient cells  
117 we first investigated RNF4, whose activity has been implicated in MDC1 turn-over (Galanty et al.,  
118 2012; Hendriks et al., 2015; Hendriks and Vertegaal, 2015; Luo et al., 2012; Yin et al., 2012). Co-  
119 depletion of RNF4 with SENP2 resulted in foci kinetics of MDC1, RNF168 and 53BP1 similar to that  
120 of control-treated cells (Fig 1F-H). The pattern of total SUMO conjugates seen follow IR suggested a  
121 similar relationship between SENP2 and RNF4. Control cells exhibited a global increase in high  
122 molecular weight SUMO conjugates, particularly for SUMO2/3, after treatment (Fig S2A-B).  
123 Whereas in siSENP2 cells, SUMO conjugates were constitutively higher in untreated cells and  
124 showed only a slight increase after IR (Fig S2A-B), consistent with the observation of poor DDR  
125 protein recruitment and SUMO IRIF formation. Conjugate patterns after siRNF4+siSENP2 co-  
126 depletion resembled those seen in siNTC cells (Fig S2A-B) consistent with the near normal DDR foci  
127 kinetics observed on co-depletion. Intriguingly loss of the closely related protease, SENP1, did not  
128 have a similar impact on SUMO conjugates and depleted cells showed an exaggerated induction of  
129 SUMO conjugates following IR (Fig S2C).

130

131 RNF4 dependent substrate ubiquitination is frequently followed by processing through VCP (Valosin  
132 Containing Protein) hexameric AAA ATPase (Dantuma et al., 2014; Torrecilla et al., 2017). We  
133 compared the effects of proteasome (MG132) or VCP inhibition (CB-5083) on MDC1 foci loss after  
134 IR. As proteasome inhibition depletes the free Ub pool, in turn causing a failure in Ub signalling in  
135 DSB repair (Butler et al., 2012), we also transfected the cells with myc-Ub. MG132 treatment resulted  
136 in increased MDC1 foci retention, but in cells expressing additional myc-Ub, foci numbers were  
137 reduced, suggesting Ub, rather than the proteasome is critical to MDC1 foci clearance (Fig S2D-E). In  
138 contrast, MDC1 foci persistence in the presence of VCP inhibition was unaffected by Ub expression  
139 (Fig S2D-E). Moreover in SENP2 depleted cells, the addition of CB-5083 restored near-normal  
140 MDC1 foci kinetics and the ability to support downstream 53BP1 foci (Fig 1L-M). Thus RNF4-VCP  
141 contributes to the rapid MDC1 foci kinetics in SENP2 deficient cells.

142

143 In a further test for potential nuclear pore involvement we examined cells depleted for nuclear pore  
144 sub-complex components and known SENP2 interacting proteins; NUP153 and NUP107 (Goeres,

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145 2011 #8625). Reduction in NUP107, had no effect on MDC1 kinetics, and NUP153 depletion  
146 modestly increased foci clearance (Fig S2F), confirming no substantial involvement of the nuclear  
147 pore in MDC1 kinetics. In contrast when we co-depleted the ligase responsible for MDC1  
148 SUMOylation, PIAS4 (Luo et al., 2012), we found that siPIAS4 (but not siPIAS1), slowed MDC1  
149 foci clearance in siSENP2 cells (Fig S2G). These data consolidate the notion that SUMOylation  
150 contributes to the rapid loss of MDC1 foci observed on SENP2 loss.

151

### 152 **MDC1 is a SENP2 substrate and hypo-SUMOylation of MDC1 permits DDR signalling.**

153 Lysine 1840 is the main SUMO acceptor site on MDC1 (Fig S3A). To test if MDC1 is a substrate of  
154 SENP2 we generated cells expressing myc-MDC1<sup>WT</sup> or MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup> and assayed foci kinetics in  
155 SENP2 depleted cells. MDC1<sup>WT</sup> underwent accelerated clearance in siSENP2 cells, as observed for  
156 endogenous MDC1. However MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup> was resistant to the effects of siSENP2, showing the same  
157 foci retention in control and siSENP2 cells. Further, expression of this mutant also permitted the  
158 formation of downstream 53BP1 foci in siSENP2 treated cells (Fig 2A-B & S3B). Since loss of the  
159 main MDC1 SUMOylation site renders damage signalling resistant to the effects of SENP2  
160 repression, these data suggest the impact of SENP2 loss occurs through modification at K1840-  
161 MDC1.

162

163 We purified His<sub>6</sub>-SUMO1 and His<sub>6</sub>-SUMO2 from untreated and IR-treated cells (harvested 1 hour  
164 after IR to capture the MDC1 clearance phase) to test the impact of SENP2 on MDC1-SUMOylation.  
165 In untreated siSENP2 or *SENP2-KO* cells we observed an enrichment of MDC1 in SUMO2  
166 conjugates (Fig 2C & S3C-E). Following exposure to IR, cells with SENP2 deficiency exhibited a  
167 reduction in SUMOylated MDC1, whereas control cells showed an increase in SUMOylated MDC1  
168 (Fig 2C & S3C-E). In siRN4+siSENP2 co-depleted cells the IR-dependent reduction of MDC1-  
169 SUMO2, seen in siSENP2 cells, was not observed, and instead increased MDC1-SUMO2 was evident  
170 as in control cells (Fig 2C & S3C-E). We also confirmed directly that SENP2 could deSUMO2ylate a  
171 fragment of MDC1 encompassing K1840 *in vitro* using recombinant SENP2 catalytic domain. (Fig  
172 S3F). Next we tested if MDC1 and SENP2 interact and found immunoprecipitated myc-MDC1 co-  
173 purified with FLAG-SENP2 in untreated cells, but intriguingly co-precipitation was decreased after  
174 IR (Fig 2D). Together these data suggest SENP2 interacts with and restricts MDC1 SUMOylation in  
175 untreated cells.

176

### 177 **A conserved coiled-coil region of SENP2 contributes to MDC1 regulation.**

178 In a search for regions of SENP2 that may contribute to regulation of MDC1-SUMO, we noted a  
179 conserved coiled-coil (CC) domain (Fig S4A-B). We generated a 28 aa deletion mutant, removing the  
180 region ( $\Delta$ CC) and found no changes in protein localisation or activity (Fig S4C-F). However, unlike  
181 SENP2<sup>WT</sup> this mutant retained interaction with MDC1 after exposure to IR (Fig 2D). In  
182 complementation assays, SENP2<sup>WT</sup> permitted increased MDC1 SUMO-2ylation after IR, but cells  
183 expressing SENP2 <sup>$\Delta$ CC</sup> failed to increase MDC1 SUMOylation (Fig 2E). Moreover cells complemented  
184 with SENP2 <sup>$\Delta$ CC</sup> failed to clear MDC1 foci and were radiosensitive (Fig 2F-H). These data suggest that  
185 dissociation of SENP2 from MDC1 requires the SENP2 CC domain and that dissociation is essential  
186 for the IR dependent SUMOylation of MDC1, foci resolution and proper IR repair.

187

### 188 **Requirement for SENP2 can be bypassed by increased K63-Ub signalling.**

189 We observe an initial association of MDC1 at DSBs in siSENP2 cells (Fig 1F & S1H-I), leading to  
190 the question of what element of the DDR is effected by rapid loss of MDC1 from damage sites.  
191 Intriguingly a similar impact is seen on DSB signalling when MDC1 turn-over is increased, but  
192 steady-state foci are only slightly altered, following loss of the DUB Ataxin-3 (ATXN3) (Pfeiffer et

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193 al., 2017). We note that SENP2 and ATXN3 both contribute to the longevity of MDC1 foci and  
194 colony survival in response to IR (Fig S5A-B), so that together these observations suggest that MDC1  
195 residency, or quality of MDC1 at sites of damage promotes downstream signalling. MDC1 is involved  
196 in two positive feedback loops that may require its prolonged association. It contributes to signal  
197 amplification of  $\gamma$ H2AX around DNA break sites with MRN and ATM (Chapman and Jackson, 2008;  
198 Savic et al., 2009; Stucki et al., 2005) and to the amplification of K63-Ub linkages on Histone H1 and  
199 L3MBTL2 (Nowsheen et al., 2018; Thorslund et al., 2015) with RNF8 and, downstream, RNF168  
200 (reviewed in (Panier and Boulton, 2014)). Since we observed no loss of  $\gamma$ H2AX foci in SENP2  
201 deficient cells (Fig S1A, S1H) we tested whether insufficient K63-Ub generation contributes to DDR  
202 signal failure by manipulating the K63-Ub machinery. Over-expression of RNF8, which catalyses the  
203 initial K63-Ub contribution (Lok et al., 2011; Thorslund et al., 2015) and the depletion of the K63-Ub  
204 specific ubiquitin protease, BRCC36 (depletion of which increases K63-Ub at sites of damage (Shao  
205 et al., 2009)) were capable of restoring 53BP1 foci in siSENP2 cells (Fig S5C-E). These data suggest  
206 normal turn-over kinetics of MDC1 at damage sites is needed for sufficient Ub conjugate generation.

207

### 208 **RNF4-VCP is responsible for the IR-sensitivity of SENP2 depleted cells.**

209 Prompted by our findings that RNF4 is responsible for rapid MDC1 foci kinetics in siSENP2 depleted  
210 cells we next assessed if RNF4 contributes to their radiosensitivity. Depletion of RNF4 or SENP2  
211 individually increased cell sensitivity to IR, but co-depletion resulted in IR resistance similar to  
212 siNTC cells (Fig 3A). Expression of RNF4<sup>WT</sup> restored resistance to RNF4 depleted cells, however,  
213 critically, on a siSENP2 + siRNF4 background re-introduction of RNF4<sup>WT</sup> resulted in IR sensitivity  
214 (Fig 3B) demonstrating the toxicity of RNF4 in siSENP2 cells. Complementation with RNF4 proteins  
215 that reduce interaction with Ub loaded E2 conjugating enzyme, prevent RNF4 dimerization or  
216 interaction with SUMO (Kung et al., 2014; Plechanovova et al., 2012; Rojas-Fernandez et al., 2014)  
217 allowed survival on siRNF4 + siSENP2 backgrounds, but not cells treated with siRNF4 alone (Fig  
218 3B). We confirmed the corollary of these findings; that SENP2 protease activity contributes to the  
219 toxicity of IR in siRNF4 cells (Fig 3C). Moreover VCP inhibition restored IR-resistance to siSENP2  
220 cells (Fig 3D). Thus the SUMO-targeting and Ub ligase function of RNF4 and VCP activity  
221 contributes to the IR sensitivity of SENP2 depleted cells. Amongst the SENP family of SUMO  
222 proteases SENP2 is alone in contributing significantly to the lethality of IR in RNF4 depleted cells  
223 (Fig S5F). Together our data reveal a strong reciprocal relationship between RNF4 and SENP2 in the  
224 cellular response to IR, consistent with their opposing influences on MDC1 in DSB damage  
225 signalling.

226

### 227 **SENP2 is not relevant to S-phase clearance of MDC1.**

228 We expected to see a role for SENP2 in regulating MDC1 at repair foci throughout the cell cycle.  
229 However, when we labelled cells with a nucleotide analogue to differentiate S-phase cells we found  
230 that SENP2 depletion had no influence on MDC1 in S-phase marked cells (Fig 4A-C). Expression of  
231 the MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup> SUMO-site mutant results in cellular IR sensitivity, due to a failure of the mutant to  
232 clear from sites of DNA damage (Luo et al., 2012). We confirmed these data (Fig 4D-E), but also  
233 challenged cells with CPT and Olaparib, agents that require HR repair for resistance, and found  
234 MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup> did not increase sensitivity to these agents (Fig 4F-G). Moreover the MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup> mutant  
235 had no negative impact on RAD51 foci formation in S-phase cells (Fig 4H). While MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup>  
236 expression increased 53BP1 foci numbers in EdU- cells, as previously reported (Luo et al., 2012), it  
237 did not alter 53BP1 foci number in EdU+ cells (Fig 4I). Moreover unlike the response to IR, co-  
238 depletion of RNF4 and SENP2 did not improve survival of cells challenged by CPT or Olaparib and  
239 did not substantially improve HR reporter activity nor improve RAD51 foci accumulations over single  
240 depletions (Fig 4J-N). We conclude S-phase cells turn-over MDC1 from broken DNA ends

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241 independently of its major SUMO-acceptor site and of SENP2, suggesting the role of SENP2 in HR  
242 repair occurs in another pathway.

243

#### 244 **Homologous recombination is highly sensitive to the supply of SUMO.**

245 Since we observed increased high molecular weight SUMO-conjugates in untreated cells depleted of  
246 SENP2 (Fig S2A) we speculated that SENP2 loss may disable HR through reduced availability of  
247 SUMO for conjugation. We over-expressed conjugation proficient and deficient SUMO in siSENP2  
248 cells and examined survival in response to IR, CPT or Olaparib. We also assessed MDC1 foci 4 hours  
249 after IR and RAD51 foci in S-phase cells. SUMO expression had no influence on IR-resistance nor  
250 MDC1 foci (Fig 5A-C) but conjugation competent SUMO isoforms, particularly SUMO2, improved  
251 CPT and Olaparib resistance and restored RAD51 foci in SENP2 depleted cells (Fig 5D-F).  
252 Intriguingly SENP2 depletion had no impact on RPA foci accrual suggesting a role for SENP2 in  
253 RAD51 loading but not DNA end resection (Fig S5G). To test the hypothesis that differential  
254 requirements for SUMO availability exist between different repair mechanisms we performed a  
255 partial depletion of SUMO2/3 (Fig 5G-H). Remarkably, partial SUMO2/3 depletion resulted in CPT  
256 and Olaparib, but not IR, sensitivity and impaired HR but not NHEJ in integrated repair assays (Fig  
257 5I-J), indicating that the HR-pathway is more sensitive to SUMO availability.

258

#### 259 **High levels of SENP2 disrupt DSB repair.**

260 The *SENP2* gene maps to chromosome 3q26-29, a region commonly amplified in epithelial cancers of  
261 the lung, ovaries, oesophagus and head and neck (Cancer Genome Atlas, 2015; Qian and Massion,  
262 2008) (Fig S6A-B). In lung cancer high SENP2 mRNA levels correlate both with copy number and  
263 reduced patient survival (Fig S6C-D). Since our data shows a critical role for SENP2 in DSB repair  
264 we explored whether increased SENP2 expression alters repair. Elevation of SENP2 expression  
265 resulted in increased 53BP1 and MDC1 dependent resistance to IR (Fig 6A-B) and was accompanied  
266 by persistent MDC1 foci at 2 hours after IR (Fig 6C-D). With the exception of SENP6 no other SENP  
267 expression slowed MDC1 clearance (Fig S6E-F). High expression of SENP2 also induced a 2.5 fold  
268 increase in NHEJ measured from an integrated substrate (Fig 6E-F). Thus increased SENP2 results in  
269 slower MDC1 clearance correlating with increased IR resistance and improved NHEJ.

270 Increased expression of SENP2 reduces high molecular weight SUMO conjugates (Fig S4E-F)  
271 leading us to speculate whether persistent removal of SUMO may also influence HR. High SENP2  
272 expression resulted in reduced HR reporter product, reduced RAD51 foci and reduced CPT resistance  
273 (Fig 6G-H). Examination of chromosome aberrations in cells acutely over-expressing SENP2 showed  
274 increased chromosomal gaps suggesting an overall reduced repair ability despite improved resistance  
275 (Fig 6I).

276

277 The 3q amplification carries two more genes involved in DNA repair; the Ub ligase RNF168, and the  
278 de-ubiquitinating enzyme USP13 (Fig 7A), which contribute to DNA damage signalling (Chroma et  
279 al., 2017; Doil et al., 2009; Li et al., 2017; Nishi et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2009). We compared the  
280 influence of high expression of each repair gene in HeLa<sup>FipIn</sup> stable doxycycline inducible cells. Of the  
281 three genes, SENP2 had the greatest influence on IR-resistance, while increased SENP2 and USP13  
282 reduced CPT resistance (Fig 7B-D)

283

#### 284 **Discussion.**

285 The sequential action of PTMs is essential for the proper cellular response to DSBs. While cross-talk  
286 between SUMOylation and ubiquitination is important for the integration of signalling cues for the  
287 response, the extent of a role for deSUMOylation was poorly defined. Here we provide evidence that  
288 deSUMOylation is required prior to the onset of DSB signalling to govern correct PTM timing

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289 following damage. Mechanistically we identify two distinct pathways in which deSUMOylation is  
290 required (Fig S7).

291

292 We show that interaction between MDC1 and SENP2 in untreated cells is associated with MDC1-  
293 hypoSUMOylation and with Ub signalling in the damage response. In the absence of SENP2, PIAS4-  
294 mediated SUMOylation facilitates rapid RNF4-VCP-mediated MDC1 turn-over and a failure of  
295 down-stream signalling. MDC1 SUMOylation and RNF4-processing is induced on chromatin (Luo et  
296 al., 2012) so one question arising from our study is why constitutive interaction with a SUMO  
297 protease is needed? MDC1-SUMO is detected in untreated cells (Galanty et al., 2012; Hendriks et al.,  
298 2015; Hendriks and Vertegaal, 2015; Luo et al., 2012; Vyas et al., 2013; Yin et al., 2012), suggesting  
299 a constitutive propensity to modification, even in the presence of SENP2. Thus interaction with a  
300 SUMO protease may be needed to prevent the accumulation of a heavily modified protein capable of  
301 driving its own removal.

302

303 We show that a novel, conserved coiled-coil region (aa203-228) is needed to release MDC1-SENP2  
304 interactions following IR and to allow subsequent MDC1 SUMOylation needed for its eventual  
305 clearance from damaged chromatin. The SENP family of SUMO proteases contain relatively few  
306 functionally annotated domains outside of the C-terminal catalytic regions (Mukhopadhyay and  
307 Dasso, 2007). How the coiled-coil allows IR-regulated dissociation remains to be discovered. Its  
308 conservation in evolution as far as chicken and zebrafish (Fig S4B) suggests an important role for the  
309 motif.

310

311 Surprisingly we find that the role of SENP2 in S phase has no relationship with the MDC1-processing  
312 pathway. Instead measures of HR, repressed in SENP2-deficient cells, are rescued by the expression  
313 of exogenous SUMO2/3. SUMO conjugation is required for both main pathways of DSB repair so  
314 that a total loss of SUMO availability/conjugation restricts both mechanisms (Galanty et al., 2009;  
315 Morris et al., 2009), what is striking in our findings is evidence for a level of SUMO availability at  
316 which NHEJ can function but HR cannot. The degree to which each repair process captures available  
317 SUMO is not known. The differential requirement may reflect the greater number of SUMOylated  
318 factors in HR over NHEJ, a greater need for group-modification in HR, or a greater need for the  
319 promotion of particular interactions, for example between BLM, RPA and RAD51 (Bologna et al.,  
320 2015; Dou et al., 2010; Eladad et al., 2005; Galanty et al., 2012; Garvin and Morris, 2017 ; Hendriks  
321 and Vertegaal, 2016; Ouyang et al., 2009). Alternatively, cells in S-phase may have greater need for  
322 available SUMO in replicative processes, reducing availability to HR.

323

324 In the HeLa<sup>FlpIn</sup> cells used in the current study we detected no free SUMO pool and no accumulation  
325 of exogenous SUMO2 in a free SUMO2/3 pool, suggesting the increase in SUMO2 availability was  
326 immediately captured within conjugates. In some cell types the vast majority of SUMO exists in  
327 conjugates, for example shifting from 93% of SUMO2/3 in conjugates to 96% and 98% on MG132  
328 and heat shock, respectively in HEK293T cells (Hendriks et al., 2018). In these contexts induced  
329 SUMO conjugation in stress responses may be reliant on SUMO synthesis and recycling from  
330 SUMOylated proteins.

331

332 We show that acute, high level expression of SENP2 results in increased NHEJ correlating with  
333 extended MDC1 foci longevity and 53BP1-dependent IR-resistance, consistent with extended defence  
334 of MDC1-SUMO. SENP2 over-expression also reduces global SUMO-conjugates, and we speculate  
335 strips SUMO from HR-proteins during the damage response. In both pathways SENP2 levels  
336 dramatically influence repair outcomes.

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337

338 Many cancers have altered SUMOylation (Seeler and Dejean, 2017) and SENP2 transcription can be  
339 upregulated by NF- $\kappa$ B (Lee et al., 2011) activation of which is a hallmark of cancer development.  
340 SENP2 is one of several genes on the amplified region of chromosome 3q with the capacity to  
341 influence survival to DNA-damaging therapeutics. Evidence of SUMO-pathway addiction, has been  
342 found in Myc and Ras driven cancers (Kessler et al., 2012; Yu et al., 2015) while those with low  
343 SUMOylation may be sensitive to further targeting of the SUMO system (Licciardello et al., 2015).  
344 Differential needs for SUMO conjugation and de-conjugation therefore could expose tumour-  
345 specific vulnerabilities. SUMO E1 and E2 inhibitors have been described (He et al., 2017; Kumar et  
346 al., 2016; Lu et al., 2010) and our data implies that partial SUMO-conjugation inhibition could disable  
347 HR, but not NHEJ, increasing the mutation load relevant to immune blockade and sensitivity to HR-  
348 directed therapies. Moreover our data suggest that development of SENP2 inhibitors, beyond  
349 currently available tool compounds (Kumar et al., 2014; Madu et al., 2013), could have utility in the  
350 treatment of certain common 3q-amplified tumours while sparing normal tissue. Aerodigestive-track  
351 cancers often receive post-operative radiotherapy so further investigation into the potential of  
352 targeting SENP2 in the context of chromosome 3q amplification is warranted.

353

354 In summary the need for the SUMO protease, SENP2, in aspects of mammalian DSB repair presented  
355 here reveal unexpected requirements for SUMO deconjugation, and its regulation, in the DNA  
356 damage response and place the need for the activity largely in undamaged cells before the stress of  
357 DSBs occurs. We find deSUMOylation by SENP2, prevents engagement of RNF4-VCP with MDC1,  
358 restricting an 'over-before-it-has begun' repair response and promotes SUMO supply, critical to the  
359 completion of HR, while increased SENP2 expression dramatically dysregulates DSB repair  
360 mechanisms.

361

## 362 **Materials and Methods**

363

### 364 **Colony survival assays**

365

366 Cells were plated at  $2.5 \times 10^5$  cells/ml in a 24 well plate. For siRNA transfections, cells were  
367 transfected 24 hr post plating for an additional 48 hr. For over-expression cells were treated with  
368 doxycycline (1 $\mu$ g / mL) for 72 hr. Cells were treated with the indicated dose of DNA damaging agent  
369 prior to plating at limiting dilution in 6 well plates to form colonies and grown on for 10 days (3 wells  
370 / technical repeat). Colonies were stained 0.5% crystal violet (BDH Chemicals) in 50% methanol and  
371 counted. Colony survival was calculated as the % change in colonies versus untreated matched  
372 controls. Graphs shown are combined data from a minimum of 3 independent experiments and error  
373 bars show SEM.

374

### 375 **Transfections**

376

377 Small interfering RNA (siRNA) transfections (10nM) were performed using Dharmafect1  
378 (Dharmacon) and DNA plasmids using FuGENE 6 (3  $\mu$ l:1  $\mu$ g FuGENE: DNA) (Promega) following  
379 the manufacturer's protocols. SMARTpools were from Dharmacon and individual sequences were  
380 from Sigma. See table 3 for siRNA sequences. Cells were grown for 48-72 hr post-transfection before  
381 treatment and harvesting.

382

### 383 **Drug treatments**

384



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385 Irradiation was performed with a Gamma-cell 1000 Elite (Cs<sup>137</sup>) radiation source. The following  
386 chemicals were used, CB-5083 / VCPi (0.1 μM) (Selleck chemicals), Camptothecin (1 μM) (Sigma),  
387 Olaparib (10 μM) (Selleck chemicals), EdU (10 μM) (Life Technologies), MG132 (10 μM) (Sigma),  
388 Colcemid (Sigma).

389

#### 390 **NHEJ and HR assays**

391

392 U2OS-DR3-GFP (gene conversion), and U2OS-EJ5-GFP (Non-homologous end-joining) were a  
393 generous gift from Jeremy Stark (City of Hope, Duarte USA). U2OS reporter cell lines were  
394 simultaneously co-transfected with siRNA using Dharmafect1 (Dharmacon) and DNA (RFP, or Flag-  
395 SENP2 and *I-SceI* endonuclease expression constructs) using FuGene6 (Promega) respectively. After  
396 16 hr the media was replaced and cells were grown for a further 48 hr before fixation in 2% PFA. RFP  
397 and GFP double positive cells were scored by FACS analysis using a CyAn flow cytometer and a  
398 minimum of 10000 cells counted. Data was analysed using Summit 4.3 software. Each individual  
399 experiment contained 3 technical repeats and normalized to siRNA controls or to WT-complemented  
400 cells. Graphs shown are combined data from a minimum of 3 independent experiments and error bars  
401 show standard error.

402

#### 403 **Immunofluorescence**

404

405 Cells were plated on 13 mm circular glass coverslips at a density of 5 x 10<sup>4</sup> cells/ml, treated as  
406 required. For RPA, and RAD51 staining cells were pre-extracted in CSK buffer (100 mM sodium  
407 chloride, 300 mM sucrose, 3 magnesium chloride, 10 mM PIPES pH 6.8) for 1 minute at room  
408 temperature, For all other staining's cells were first fixed in 4% PFA and permeabilised with 0.5%  
409 Triton X100 in PBS. After blocking in 10% FCS, cells were incubated with primary antibody for 1 hr  
410 (unless otherwise stated) and with secondary AlexaFluor antibodies for 1 hr. The DNA was stained  
411 using Hoechst at 1:20,000. In some images the DNA stain has been drawn around (but not shown) to  
412 illustrate the location of the nucleus.

413 RAD51 foci: Cells were labelled with 10 μM EdU 1 hr prior to IR using a Gamma-cell 1000 Elite  
414 irradiator (caesium-137 source). At 4 hr post-IR cells were washed briefly in CSK buffer (100 mM  
415 sodium chloride, 300 mM sucrose, 3 mM magnesium chloride, 10 mM PIPES pH 6.8) before fixation  
416 with 4 % Paraformaldehyde for 10 min. For IF staining cells were permeabilised with 0.2%  
417 TritonX100 in PBS for 10 min before blocking in 10 % FBS in PBS. EdU was visualised by Click-  
418 iT® chemistry according to the manufacturer's protocols (Life Technologies) with Alexa-647-azide.  
419 Cells were incubated with primary antibody overnight, washed three times in PBS and incubated with  
420 secondary AlexaFluor antibodies for 1 hr.

421 With the exception of Figure 1G-H all immunofluorescent staining was imaged using the Leica  
422 DM6000B microscope using a HBO lamp with 100W mercury short arc UV bulb light source and  
423 four filter cubes, A4, L5, N3 and Y5 to produce excitations at wavelengths 360 488, 555 and 647 nm  
424 respectively. Images were captured at each wavelength sequentially using the Plan Apochromat HCX  
425 100x/1.4 Oil objective at a resolution of 1392x1040 pixels. Detection of SUMO IRIF was performed  
426 according to (Morris 2009).

427

#### 428 **Cloning**

429

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430 **SENP2** was cloned with an N terminal FLAG tag into the *KpnI* and *EcoRV* sites in pCDNA5/FRT/TO  
431 vector (Invitrogen). Synonymous mutations were made in the SENP2 cDNA to generate siRNA  
432 resistance (see table 4). SENP2 cDNA was also cloned into pCDNA3.1 mRFP vector using *ClaI*. All  
433 site directed mutagenesis was performed using Pfu polymerase (Promega) and mutations were  
434 confirmed by Sanger sequencing (Source Biosciences Nottingham). To generate a nuclear pore  
435 binding mutant of SENP2 we truncated amino acids 1-65 and mutated the SENP2 NES to prevent  
436 nuclear export. The coiled coil deletion mutant was generated using the megaprimer method with  
437 primers that flank the deleted region and external primers to generate the megaprimer. The PCR  
438 product was then used for site directed mutagenesis. **MDC1**, the longest isoform of human MDC1  
439 (NM\_014641.2) was used to generate synthetic MDC1 cDNA that was extensively codon optimised  
440 by GenScript to remove repetitive DNA sequences to enable gene synthesis. The optimised cDNA has  
441 an N terminal myc tag, synonymous mutations to enable resistance to two siRNA targeting Exon 11  
442 and multiple silent mutations that disrupt restriction enzyme recognition sites. The myc-MDC1 cDNA  
443 was cloned into *AflIII* and *BamHI* sites in pCDNA5/FRT/TO. The K1840R mutation was made by  
444 GenScript. To generate the MDC1 fragments for in vitro SUMOylation / deSUMOylation, WT and  
445 K1840R MDC1 were and cloned into pCA528 containing a His-SUMO n terminal tag using *BsaI* and  
446 *BamHI* sites. **RNF4**, human RNF4 (NM\_002938.4) cDNA was synthesised by GenScript to contain  
447 resistance to two siRNA sequences, an N terminal HA tag, and cloned into pCDNA5/FRT/TO *HindIII*  
448 and *BamHI* sites. Site directed mutagenesis was used to generate the RNF4 mutants. The SIM mutant  
449 of RNF4 was generated by SDM of SIM2 and SIM3 followed by the megaprimer method using a  
450 forward primer that contained mutations in SIM1 and a reverse primer that contained mutations in  
451 SIM4. **RNF168** was cloned from pEGFP-RNF168 (a kind gift of Grant Stewart, University of  
452 Birmingham). The two *BamHI* sites were silenced with synonymous mutations by site directed  
453 mutagenesis, and the resulting cDNA was sub-cloned into pCDNA5/FRT/TO using *BamHI*-*XhoI*  
454 sites. **SUMO1 and SUMO2** (NM\_003352.4, NM\_006937.3) cDNA (both in their processed forms)  
455 were cloned into pCDNA5/FRT/TO with an N terminal 6x Histidine - myc tag. GA mutations that  
456 prevent SUMO conjugation were generated by incorporating mismatches in the cloning primers.  
457 **USP13** (NM\_003940) was synthesised by GenScript to incorporate an N terminal HA tag, two sites of  
458 siRNA resistance and loss of *BamHI* and *BglII* sites by synonymous mutations. The cDNA was  
459 cloned into *BamHI*-*XhoI* sites. The following plasmids were from Addgene FLAG-SENP1 (#17357,  
460 Edward Yeh (Cheng et al., 2007)) GFP-SENP3, GFP-SENP5 (#34554, #34555 Mary Dasso, (Yun et  
461 al., 2008)) and FLAG-SENP6 (#18065, Edward Yeh, (Dou et al., 2010)).

462

### 463 **Cell lines**

464

465 The growth conditions and vendors for all cell lines are details in table 2. FlpIn stable cell lines were  
466 generated using HEK293<sup>TrEx-FlpIn</sup> (Invitrogen) and HeLa FlpIn (a gift from Grant Stewart, University  
467 of Birmingham) cells transfected with pCDNA5/FRT/TO based vectors and the recombinase pOG44  
468 (Invitrogen) using FuGene6 (Promega). After 48 hr, cells were placed into hygromycin selection  
469 media (100 µg/ml) and grown until colonies formed on plasmid-transfected plates but not controls.  
470 HAP1 SENP2 knockout cells (128bp deletion in exon 3, HZGHC002974c003) and parental cells were  
471 from Horizon Discovery and were cultured according to manufacturer's instructions.

472

### 473 **Co-IP**

474

475 HEK293<sup>FlpIn</sup> myc-MDC1<sup>WT</sup> were seeded on 10cm plates in the presence of doxycycline (1µg/mL) for  
476 24 hr prior to transfection with FLAG-SENP2 (3µg / plate) for a further 48 hr. Cells were treated with

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477 4 Gy IR and pelleted 1 hr later in cold PBS. Cell pellets were lysed in 0.5mL hypotonic buffer (10mM  
478 HEPES pH 7.8, 10mM KCl, 1.5mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 340mM Sucrose, 10% glycerol 0.2% NP40, protease and  
479 phosphatase inhibitor cocktails) for 5 minutes on ice and centrifuged at 3,000 rpm for 3 minutes. The  
480 nuclear pellet was lysed in nuclear buffer (0.05% NP40, 50mM Tris pH 8, 300mM NaCl, protease and  
481 phosphatase inhibitor cocktails) and rotated for 30 minutes at 4°C. Lysates were briefly sonicated and  
482 clarified at 12,000 rpm for 10 minutes to remove debris. Cleared lysates (0.9mL) were incubated with  
483 either myc (Thermo-Fisher) or M2 (Sigma) agarose (20µL packed bead volume) at 4°C with rotation  
484 for 16 hr. Beads were washed 3x with NETN buffer (100mM NaCl, 20mM Tris-HCl pH 8, 0.5mM  
485 EDTA and 0.5% NP40) before elution with 4X Lamelli buffer.

486

#### 487 **His-SUMO Pulldown**

488

489 HEK293<sup>FlpIn</sup> 6xHis-myc-SUMO1 or SUMO2 were seeded on 10cm plates in the presence of  
490 doxycycline (1µg/mL) for 24 hr prior to knockdown with indicated siRNA for a further 48 hr. Cells  
491 were treated with 10 Gy IR and pelleted 1 hr later in cold PBS. Cell pellets were lysed in 8M Urea  
492 buffer (8M urea, 0.1M Na<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>/NaH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, 0.01M Tris-HCl, pH 6.3, 10mM β-  
493 mercaptoethanol, 5mM imidazole plus 0.2% Triton-X-100) with vigorous pipetting. Lysates were  
494 left on ice for 30 minutes prior to sonication and clarification at 12,000 rpm for 10 minutes. Cleared  
495 lysates (0.9mL) were incubated with Nickel-agarose (HIS-Select, Sigma) (30µL packed bead  
496 volume) at 4°C with rotation for 16 hr. Beads were washed 3x with 8M Urea buffer before elution  
497 with 4X Lamelli buffer.

498

#### 499 **Metaphases**

500 HeLa<sup>FlpIn</sup> or HeLa<sup>FlpIn</sup> SENP2<sup>WT</sup> cells were plated on 60mm plates in the presence of doxycycline for  
501 48 hr prior to irradiation at 2 Gy. Eighteen hr later cells were incubated with Colcemid (0.05 µg/ml) 6  
502 hr. Cells were then trypsinized and centrifuged at 1200 rpm for 5 minutes. Supernatant was discarded  
503 and cells re-suspended. 5 ml of ice-cold 0.56% KCl solution was then added and incubated at room  
504 temperature for 15 min before centrifuging at 1200 rpm for 5 min. Supernatant was discarded and cell  
505 pellet broken before fixation. Cells were then fixed in 5 ml of ice-cold methanol: glacial acetic acid  
506 (3:1). Fixation agents were removed and 10 µl of cells suspension was dropped onto alcohol cleaned  
507 slide. Slides were allowed to dry at least 24 hr and then stained with Giemsa solution (Sigma) diluted  
508 1:20 for 20 min. Slide mounting was performed with Eukitt (Sigma).

509 Overexpression and purification of MDC1<sup>WT</sup> and MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup> (aa 1818-2094) C-terminal domains.

510 The expression of His-SUMO MDC1<sup>WT</sup> and His-SUMO-MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup> in BL21(DE3\*)/pCA528-  
511 MDC1 was induced by the addition of 1 mM Isopropyl-β-d-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG), and the  
512 proteins were produced in LB medium containing 100 µg/ml of kanamycin overnight at 18°C. For  
513 purification of the His-SUMO MDC1<sup>WT</sup> and His-SUMO MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup> products, the cells were  
514 harvested and re-suspended in 20 mM HEPES potassium salt, pH 7.4, 50 mM Imidazole, 500 mM  
515 NaCl, 1.0 mM TCEP [tris(2-carboxyethyl)phosphine], complete EDTA-free protease inhibitor  
516 cocktail tablet (Roche). Cells were lysed using an Emulsiflex-C3 homogenizer (Avestin) and broken  
517 by three passages through the chilled cell. The lysate was centrifuged at 75,000 xg using a JA 25 rotor  
518 (Beckman Coulter) and filtered through a 0.45-µm filter. The clarified lysate was applied onto a 5-ml  
519 HisTrap HP column (GE Healthcare). The column was washed extensively using the same buffer, and  
520 the protein was eluted using buffer containing 500 mM imidazole.

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521 Fractions containing a band of the correct size were concentrated using a Vivaspin 20-ml concentrator  
522 (10,000 molecular weight cut-off [MWCO]) (GE Healthcare) and gel purified using an Akta Pure 25  
523 (GE Healthcare LS) with a prepacked Hi-Load 10/300 Superdex 200 PG column.

524 For removal of the His-SUMO tag, 1ul of ULP-1 (20mg/ml) was added to 5ml of His-SUMO  
525 MDC1<sup>WT</sup> and His-SUMO-MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup> and left overnight at 4°C. The samples were concentrated to  
526 500µl using a Vivaspin 4-ml concentrator (10,000 molecular weight cut-off [MWCO]) (GE  
527 Healthcare) and gel purified on a Hi-Load 10/300 Superdex 75 PG column in order to separate the  
528 untagged proteins from the ULP-1 protease and the cleaved His-SUMO tag.

### 529 ***In vitro* SUMOylation assay**

530 *In vitro* SUMOylation assay reactions were typically performed in a total volume of 20 µl with 200 ng  
531 recombinant Human SUMO E1 (SAE1/UBA2) (R&D Systems), 100 ng of Ubc9 (Boston Biochem), 1  
532 µg of SUMO2, (Boston Biochem), 1 µg of recombinant untagged-MDC1 (aa1818–2094) and  
533 untagged MDC1<sup>K1840R</sup>. Reaction buffer (50 mM HEPES, 50 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 0.5 mM DTT) was added to  
534 a final 1x concentration and supplemented with 4 mM ATP-Mg. Reactions were incubated at 30C for  
535 1h and stopped by addition of 2x Laemmli loading buffer.

### 536 ***In vitro* deSUMOylation assay.**

537

538 For de-SUMOylation; the *in vitro* SUMOylation reaction was split in two and SENP2 catalytic  
539 domain (Boston Biochem) was added to a final concentration of 50 nM. Reactions were incubated at  
540 30°C for 0.5 hr and stopped by addition of 2x Laemmli loading buffer (Sigma).

### 541 **Statistics.**

542

543 Unless otherwise stated all statistical analysis was by two-sided Students T-test throughout. \*<p0.05,  
544 \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.005 \*\*\*\*P<0.001. All centre values are given as the mean and all error bars are  
545 standard error about the mean (s.e.m). Data was analysed using GraphPad Prism 7.03.

546

### 547 **Quantification.**

548

549 All Western Blot or Image analysis for quantification was done using ImageJ unless otherwise  
550 specified.

551

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558

559 **Author contributions.** Cloning and generation of stable cell lines (AJG, AW and RMD), Co-IP and  
560 pulldowns (AJG). IF analysis (AJG, AW, MDM, HRS), FACS analysis (AW and RMD), Metaphase  
561 spreads (KS). Immunoblots (AJG, AW, ASC, HM). The paper was written and project conceived by  
562 AJG and JRM. All authors reviewed the manuscript.

563

564 **Declaration of conflict of interest.**

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565 The authors declare they have no conflict of interest.

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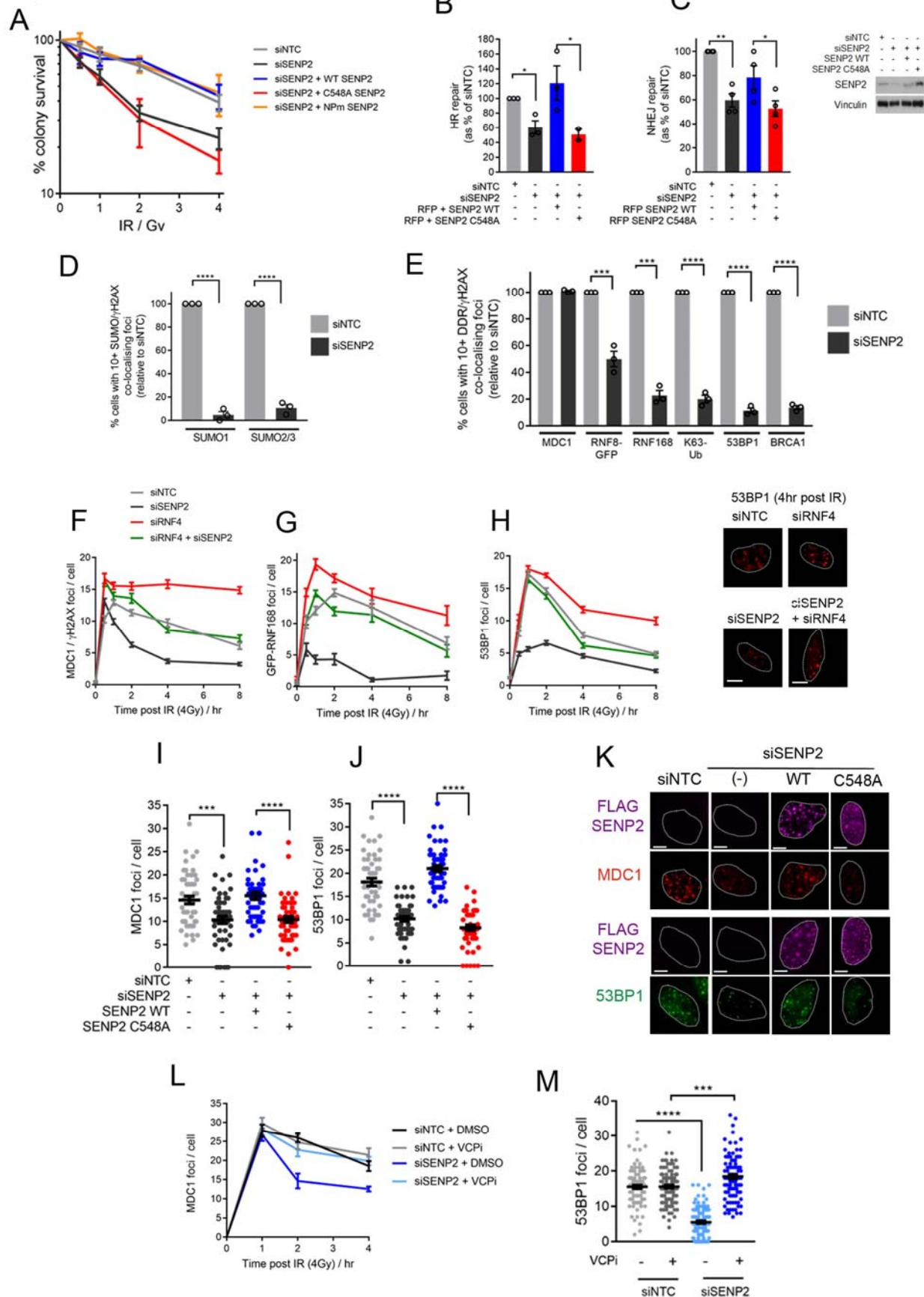
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## Figure 1



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**Figure 1. SENP2 promotes DNA damage signalling and DNA repair.**

**A.** IR colony survival in HeLa treated with siNTC or siSENP2 for 72 hr. Cells were treated concurrently with dox (1 $\mu$ g/mL) to induce siRNA resistant forms of SENP2, n=4.

**B-C.** HR (U2OS DR3-GFP) or NHEJ (U2OS-EJ5-GFP) assays using siSENP2 or siNTC treated cells transfected with RFP, *I-SceI* and SENP2<sup>WT</sup> or SENP2<sup>C548A</sup>. GFP+ cells were normalised to RFP-transfection efficiency. %-repair is given compared to siNTC. Western blot shows SENP2 knockdown efficiency and restoration with siRNA resistant cDNA, n=3.

**D-E.** SUMO /  $\gamma$ H2AX co-localising foci in HeLa siNTC or siSENP2 cells fixed 1 hr post 5 Gy IR. **E)** as for D with indicated DDR factors, n=3.

**F-H.** Time course of MDC1 (n=200), GFP-RNF168 (n=50) or 53BP1 (n=150) foci in HeLa treated with indicated siRNA. Representative images for 53BP1 foci at 4 hr post IR are shown.

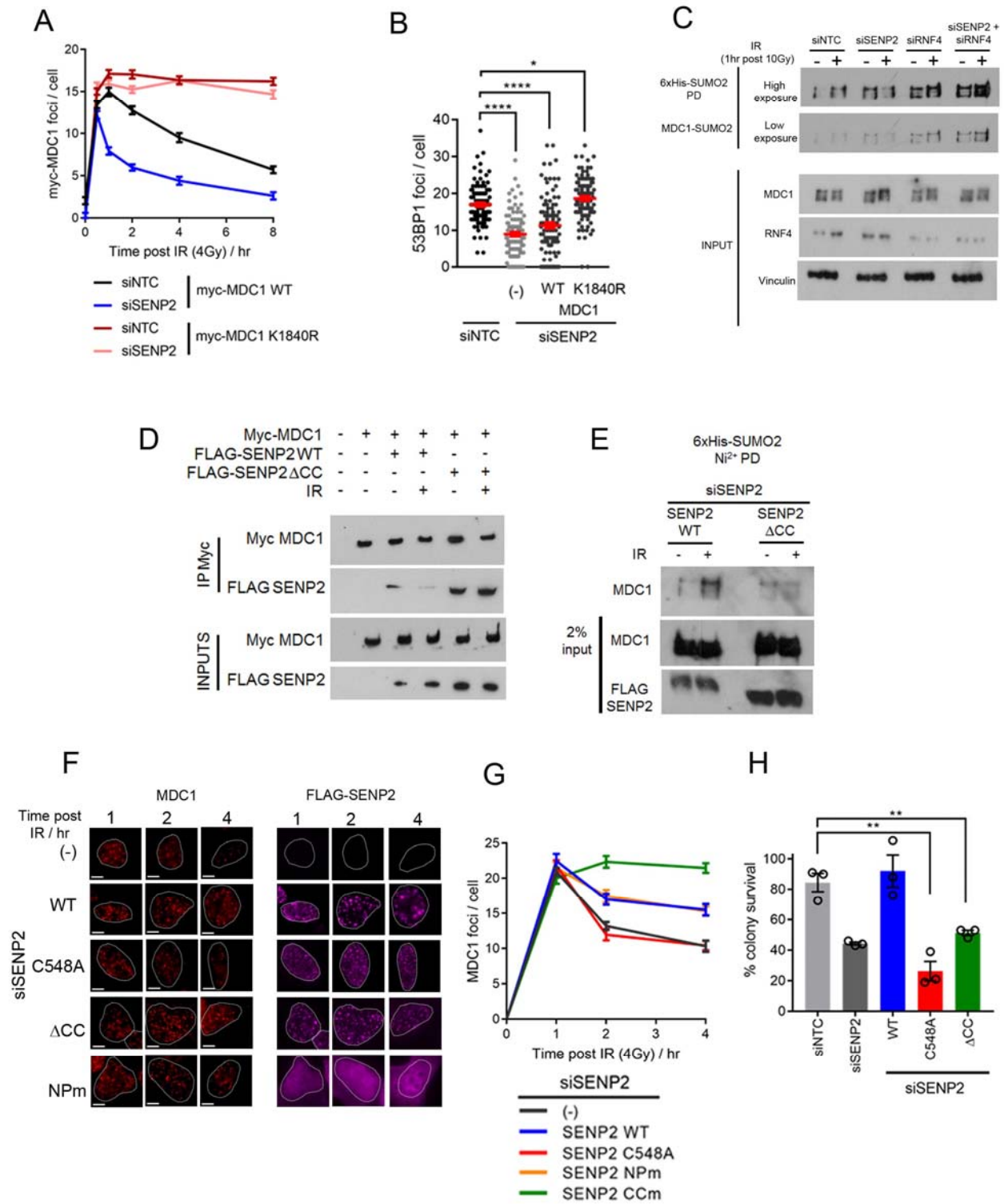
**I-K.** MDC1 and 53BP1 foci/cell respectively 4 hr post 4 Gy IR in siNTC or siSENP2 HeLa. **K)** representative images related to I), n=100 cells.

**L-M.** HeLa (siNTC / siSENP2) irradiated with 4 Gy and 0.5 hr later treated with DMSO / 0.1 $\mu$ M VCPI, CB-5083. Cells were fixed at the indicated times and scored for MDC1 foci. **M)** As for L but 53BP1 foci in cells fixed at 2 hr, n=100 cells.



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Figure 2



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**Figure 2. MDC1 is a SENP2 substrate and hypo-SUMOylation of MDC1 permits DDR signalling.**

**A-B.** HeLa treated with siRNA and induced with dox (72 hr) to express WT or K1840R myc-MDC1. Data shows kinetics of foci/cell for the indicated times post treatment with 4 Gy IR. **B)** As for A but 53BP1 foci at 2 hr. n=100.

**C.** HEK293 6x-His-myc SUMO2 treated with indicated siRNA (48 hr), irradiated (10 Gy), lysed 1 hr later and subjected to Ni<sup>2+</sup> agarose purification, followed by immunoblotting with MDC1 antibodies to determine the relative enrichment in SUMO2 conjugates. PD = Pulldowns.

**D.** HEK293 myc-MDC1<sup>WT</sup> transiently transfected with FLAG-SENP2<sup>WT</sup> or SENP2<sup>ACC</sup> and treated with dox (72 hr). Cells were irradiated (4 Gy) and lysed 1 hr later followed by immunoprecipitation with myc-agarose.

**E.** As for C, but cells were transfected 24 hr post siRNA knockdown with SENP2<sup>WT</sup> or SENP2<sup>ACC</sup>.

**F-G.** HeLa treated with siSENP2. 24 hr later cells were transfected with FLAG-SENP2 for 48 hr, irradiated (4 Gy) and fixed at indicated times. **G)** MDC1 foci/cell were measured in cells co-staining with FLAG-SENP2, n=50.

**H.** Colony survival in IR (2 Gy) HeLa treated with siNTC, siSENP2 or siSENP2 plus dox to induce expression of SENP2 mutants, n=3.



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**Figure 3. RNF4-VCP is responsible for the IR-sensitivity of SENP2 depleted cells.**

**A.** IR colony survival HeLa treated with indicated siRNA. Right panel western blot of siRNA depletions.

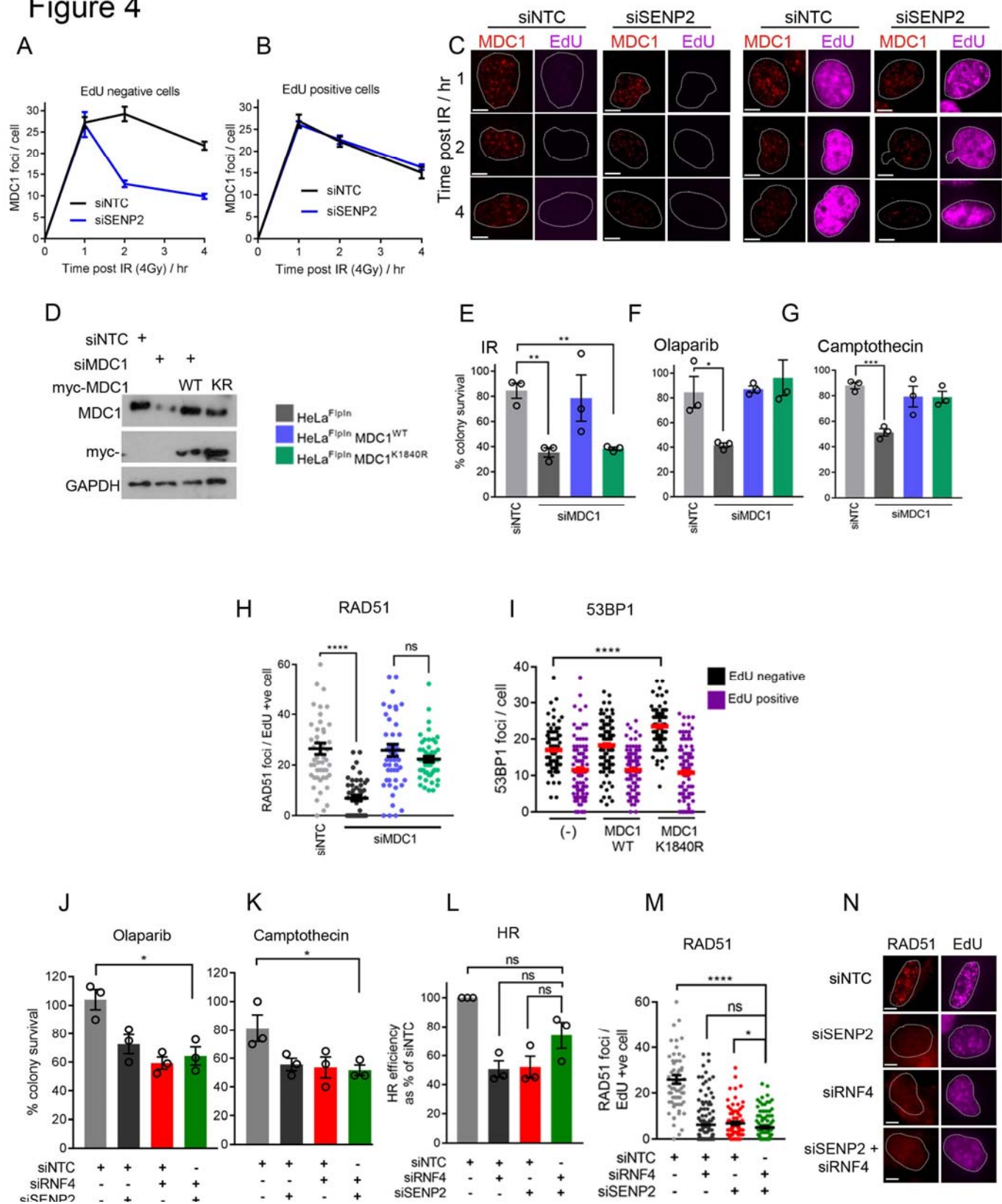
**B.** Colony survival in HeLa RNF4 treated with indicated siRNA and dox to induce expression of RNF4 and its mutants for 72 hr prior to 2 Gy IR, n=3. RNF4 antibody will also detect exogenous protein.

**C.** As for B, but using HeLa SENP2, n=3. SENP2 antibody will also detect exogenous protein.

**D.** Colony survival of HeLa treated with siRNAs shown and 4 Gy IR. Thirty minutes post irradiation cells were treated with DMSO, VCP inhibitor CB-5083 (0.1 $\mu$ M), n=3.

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## Figure 4



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**Figure 4. SENP2 is not relevant to S-phase clearance of MDC1.**

**A-B.** HeLa treated with siNTC or siSENP2 for 72 hr, pulsed with 10 $\mu$ M EdU 1 hr prior to IR (4 Gy). Cells were fixed at indicated times and subjected to Click-It labelling with 647 nm azide to detect EdU incorporation into nascent chromatin. MDC1 foci/cell in (A) EdU negative and (B) EdU positive (S phase) cells. 50 cells were scored per condition from a total of 3 experiments.

**C.** Representative images relating to (A-B).

**D.** Western blot showing MDC1 knockdown and expression in HeLa myc-MDC1

**E-G.** HeLa myc-MDC1<sup>WT</sup> and K1840R cells siRNA depleted for endogenous MDC1 and treated with dox to induce MDC1. After 72 hr cells were treated with (E) 2 Gy IR, (F) 10 $\mu$ M Olaparib or (G) 2.5  $\mu$ M CPT (2 hr) and subjected to colony survival analysis, n=3.

**H.** HeLa treated as for (A), but stained with RAD51, n=100 cells.

**I.** HeLa treated with dox to induce expression of myc-MDC1<sup>WT</sup> or K1840R for 72 hr. 1 hr prior to IR (4 Gy) cells were pulsed with EdU and fixed at 2 hr later. Cells (100 from a total of 3 experiments) were scored for 53BP1 foci/cell in EdU -/+ cells.

**J-K.** Colony survival in HeLa treated with siRNA and drug as for (F-G), n=3.

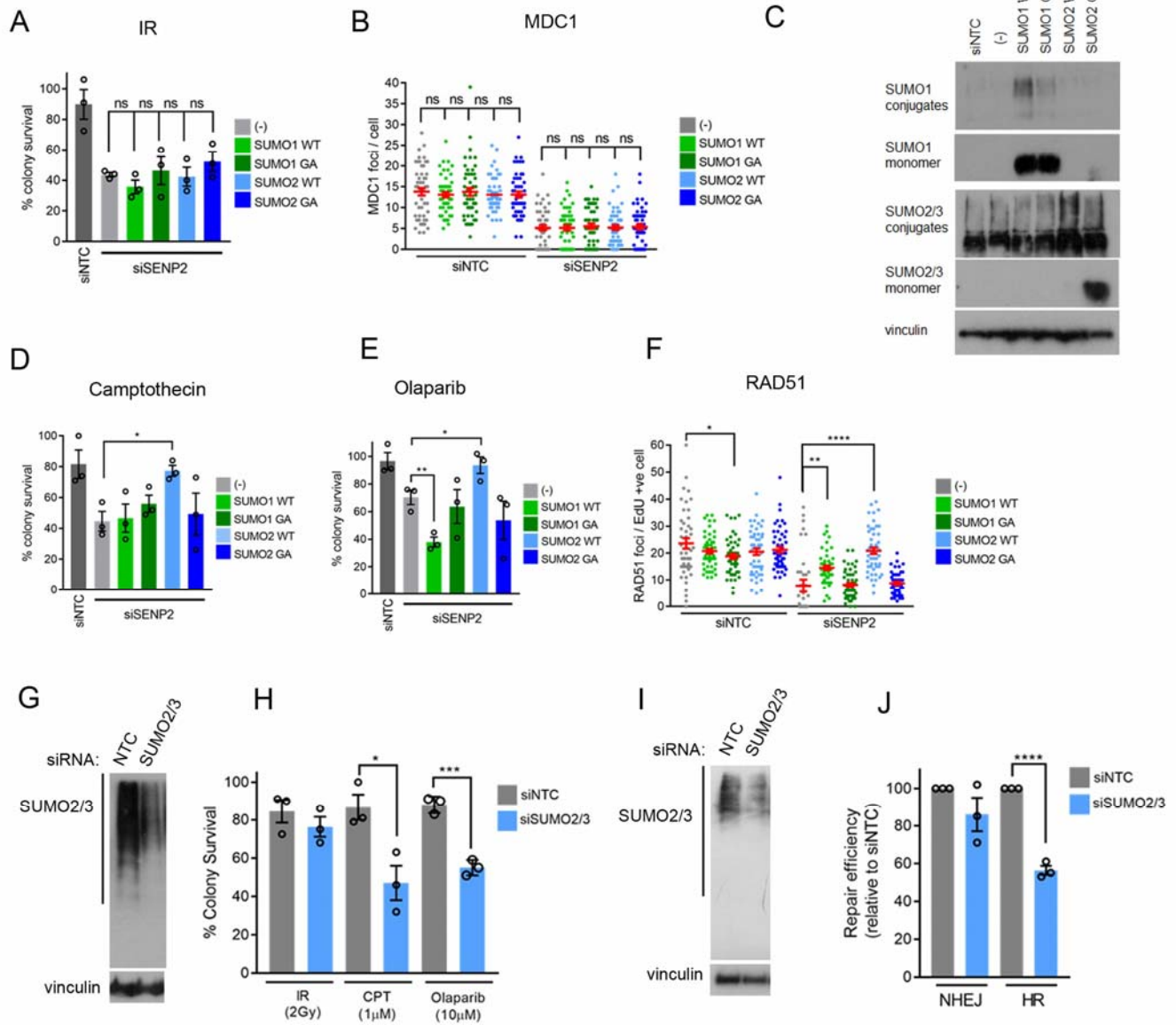
**L.** U2OS-DR3 homologous recombination reporter cells treated with siRNA for 24 hr prior to transfection with *i-Sce-I* nuclease and RFP (to control for transfection efficiency) for a further 48 hr. The % RFP/GFP positive cells relative to siNTC is shown for 3 experiments.

**M.** RAD51 foci in HeLa treated as for (H), n=100.

**N.** Images relating to (M).

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## Figure 5



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**Figure 5. HR is sensitive to the supply of SUMO.**

**A.** Colony survival after 2 Gy IR in HeLa 6xHis-myc SUMO in siNTC / siSENP2 depleted cells. GA indicates di-glycine → alanine mutants in SUMO isoforms that prevent conjugation, n=3.

**B.** HeLa treated with siRNA for 24 hr before transfection with myc-SUMO, cells were treated with 4 Gy IR 48 hr later and immunostained for MDC1 in myc-SUMO expressing cells, n=100.

**C.** Western blot of SUMO conjugates relating to (A-B).

**D-E.** As for (A) but using (D) 1 μM CPT or (E) 10 μM Olaparib for 2 hr before plating for colony survival, n=3.

**F.** As for (B), but 1 hr prior to fixation cells were incubated with 10μM EdU to label replicating cells and stained for RAD51.

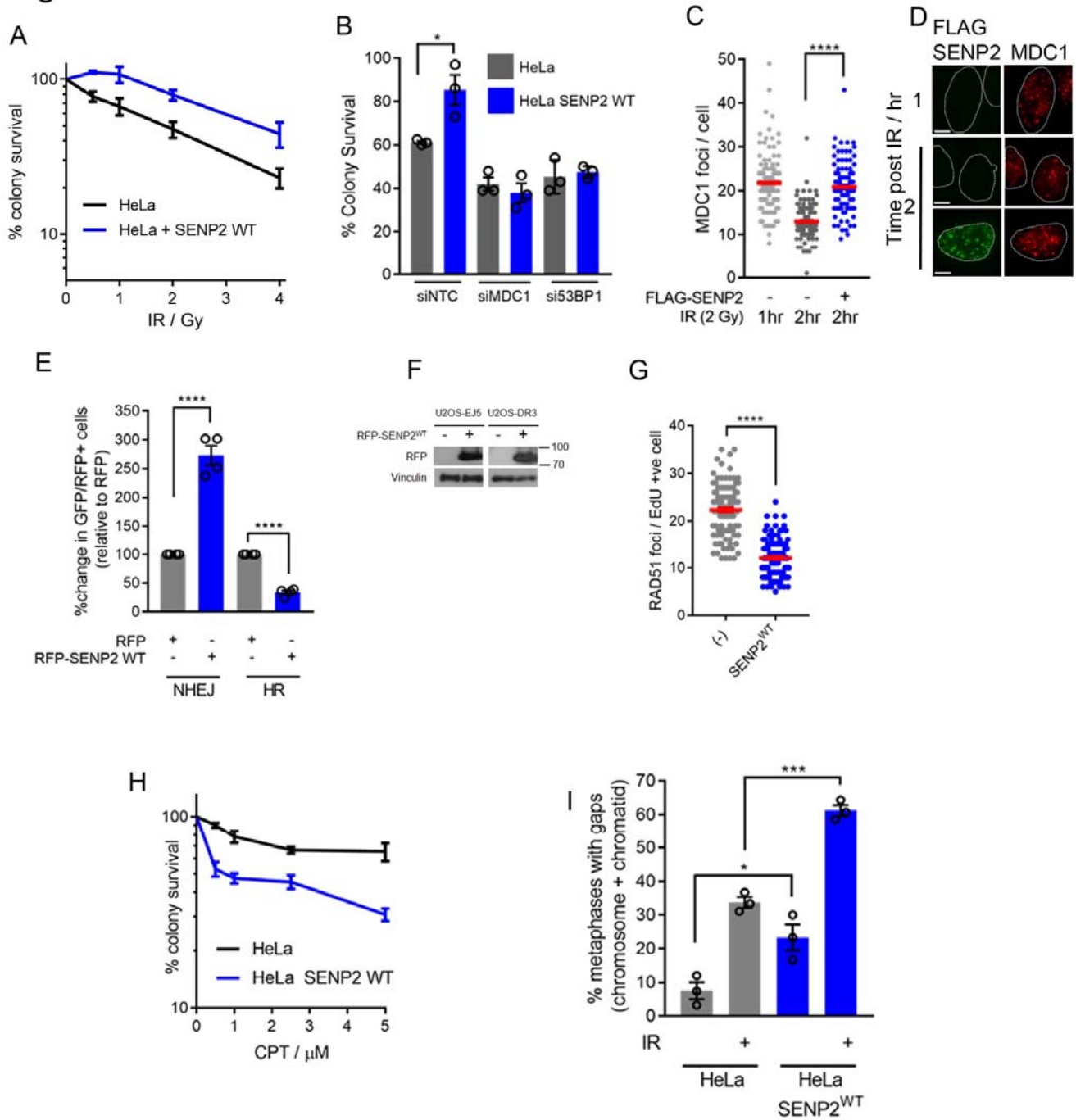
**G-H.** Western blot showing partial depletion of SUMO2/3 conjugates in HeLa. **H)** Colony survival in HeLa depleted with siNTC or siSUMO2/3 followed by treatment with 2 Gy IR, 1 μM CPT or 10 μM Olaparib.

**I-J.** Western blot showing SUMO2/3 knockdown. **J)** U2OS HR and NHEJ reporters treated with siNTC or siSUMO2/3 and transfected with *i-Sce-I* and RFP for 72 hr. HR and NHEJ efficiency was set at 100% for siNTC.



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Figure 6



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**Figure 6. SENP2 over-expression disrupts responses to DSBs.**

**A-B.** HeLa SENP2<sup>WT</sup>  $-/+$  dox for 72 hr were treated with indicated dose of IR and subjected to colony survival analysis. (B) Colony assay performed as for (A) but with siRNA transfection concurrent with Dox addition. IR = 2 Gy, n=3.

**C-D.** HeLa transfected with SENP2<sup>WT</sup> for 48 hr prior to 4 Gy IR and fixation 2 hr later. MDC1 foci / cell were scored in FLAG-SENP2 positive cells n=100. **D)** representative images of C.

**E-F.** HR and NHEJ U2OS reporters expressing RFP or RFP-SENP2 and *I-SceI* GFP-positive cells were normalised to RFP-transfection efficiency. %-repair is given compared to NTC. **F)** Western blot showing expression of RFP-SENP2, n=4.

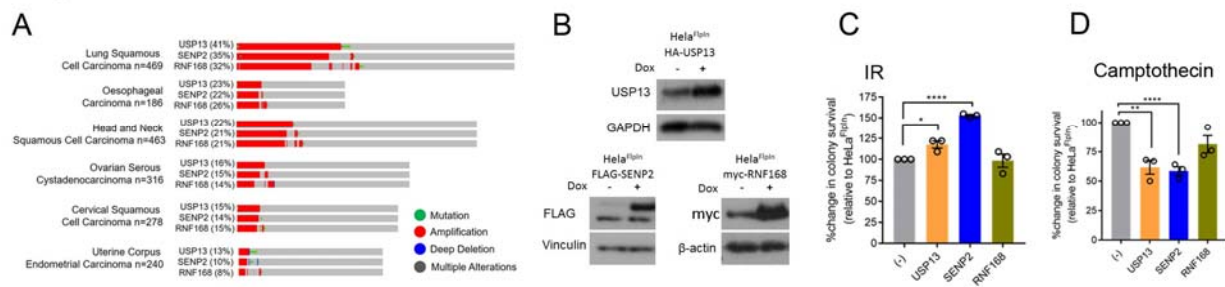
**G.** As for (C) except cells were treated with EdU to label replicating cells. EdU positive cells were scored for the number of RAD51 foci / cell.

**H.** As for (A) but using 2 hr treatment of 2.5  $\mu$ M CPT prior to plating.

**I.** HeLa SENP2<sup>WT</sup> or HeLa treated with dox for 72 hr prior to IR 2 Gy, 18 hr later cells were treated with colcemid for 6 hr and processed for metaphase spread analysis. Data shows % metaphases with chromosome/chromatid gaps from 3 experiments.

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Figure 7



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**Figure 7. SENP2 is part of a DSB-repair disruptive amplicon on 3q.**

**A.** Oncoprints adapted from Cbioportal TCGA datasets (August 2018) for USP13, SENP2 and RNF168 genomic amplification (red) in indicated cancer types. Values in parenthesis indicate % of samples with amplification.

**B** Western blot of USP13, RNF168 and FLAG-SENP2 expression.

**C-D** Colony survival IR (2 Gy) or CPT (1  $\mu$ M 2 hr) in HeLa over-expressing USP13, SENP2 or RNF168 n=3.

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