1

Systematic identification of cancer cell vulnerabilities to natural killer cell-mediated immune surveillance

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<u>Abstract</u>

Only a subset of patients respond to therapies that stimulate T-cell responses to cancer,

highlighting the need for alternative strategies to promote anti-cancer immunity. Here, we

performed genome-scale CRISPR-Cas9 screens in a human MHC-deficient leukemic cancer cell

line to systematically identify perturbations that enhance natural killer (NK) effector functions.

Our screens defined critical components of the tumor-immune synapse and highlighted the

importance of cancer cell interferon-γ (IFNγ) signaling in promoting NK activity. Surprisingly, we

found that loss of the cullin4-RING E3 ubiquitin ligase (CRL4) substrate adaptor DCAF15

strongly sensitized cancer cells to NK-mediated clearance. DCAF15 disruption led to an inflamed

state in leukemic cancer cells associated with increased expression of the lymphocyte

costimulatory molecule CD80, which triggered NK activation. Biochemical analysis revealed that

DCAF15 interacts directly with cohesin complex members SMC1 and SMC3. Treatment with

indisulam, an anticancer drug reported to function through DCAF15 engagement, was able to

phenocopy genetic disruption of DCAF15. In AML patients, reduced DCAF15 expression was

associated with improved survival. These findings suggest that inhibition of DCAF15 may have

useful immunomodulatory properties in the treatment of myeloid neoplasms.

<u>Introduction</u>

Major advances in tumor control have recently been achieved by targeting immune inhibitory

signaling pathways. Treatment with "checkpoint inhibitors," antibodies targeting PD1, PD-L1, or

CTLA4, lead to durable responses across a wide range of indications, but only in a subset of

patients. Treatment response is positively correlated with tumor mutational burden and infiltration

of CD8+ effector T cells, which recognize tumor cells via peptides bound to major

histocompatibility complex class I (MHC-I) molecules, suggesting that checkpoint inhibitors work

best at clearing highly immunogenic cancers with repressed T cell responses [1-3]. Substantial efforts

are being made to extend the benefits of immunotherapy to additional patients. This includes

approaches such as combining checkpoint inhibitors with other therapies, drugging additional

lymphocyte-suppressive pathways, and boosting the activity of other arms of the immune system

[4].

Resistance to therapy has long been a major problem in cancer treatment. Drugs targeting tumor

growth processes can profoundly reduce tumor burden, but resistance invariably arises, driven by

the substantial genetic and phenotypic heterogeneity present within human tumors [5]. Recent

clinical and experimental data have similarly highlighted the ability of cancer cells to escape

checkpoint inhibitor-induced immune control. B2M and JAK1/2 mutations have been identified

in melanoma patients with acquired resistance to checkpoint inhibitors [6,7]. These mutations impair

recognition of the tumor by the adaptive immune system, either by directly disrupting antigen

presentation or by rendering the cells insensitive to IFNγ, an important inducer of MHC-I

expression. Functional genetic screens using T cell-cancer cell cocultures have highlighted similar

mechanisms of resistance *in vitro* [8-11]. Even treatment-naïve tumors can be highly immuno-edited,

presenting with IFNγ pathway mutations, reduced MHC-I expression and loss of the peptide

sequences that can serve as antigens [12-15]. Together, these findings highlight a critical need for

therapies that can either increase MHC expression or work in a MHC-independent fashion.

Anti-tumor immunity is not solely mediated by the adaptive immune compartment. Innate immune

cells, most notably natural killer (NK) cells, can have both direct tumoricidal activity and also help

to fully elaborate long-lasting anti-tumor responses [16-19]. NK cells are cytotoxic lymphocytes

capable of mounting rapid responses to damaged, infected, or stressed cells, including cancer cells.

T and NK cells share effector functions, releasing cytokines and exocytosing lytic granules upon

activation to kill target cells. However, NK activation status is controlled by the integrated signals

from germline-encoded NK-activating and -inhibiting receptors (aNKRs/iNKRs). Generally

speaking, iNKR ligands are expressed by normal and healthy cells, whereas aNKR ligands are

upregulated after DNA damage or viral insult [19,20]. MHC-I molecules provide a potent inhibitory

signal sensed by NK cells, enabling the innate immune system to respond productively to MHC-

deficient cells. As a result, there is considerable interest in amplifying NK responses to cancers, as

well as developing NK-based cell therapies [18-20].

Here, we performed genetic screens in an MHC-deficient leukemic cell line to systematically

identify modulators of NK-mediated anti-cancer immunity. These screens, unexpectedly, pointed

to the potential therapeutic utility of targeting the CRL4 substrate adaptor DCAF15 in myeloid

malignancies. Disruption of DCAF15 strongly sensitized cancer cells to NK-mediated killing,

resulting from increased cancer cell expression of lymphocyte costimulatory molecules. Proteomic

experiments revealed that DCAF15 interacted with the cohesin complex components SMC1 and

SMC3. Treatment with indisulam, an anticancer drug that modulates DCAF15 function, reduced

interaction with cohesin members and mimicked DCAF15 loss-of-function immunophenotypes.

Results

A genome-scale CRISPR screen identifies modulators of NK effector functions

K562 human chronic myelogenous leukemia cells are a NK-sensitive cancer cell line that weakly

expresses MHC-I. To enable a genome-scale CRISPR screen to identify genes that affect the

susceptibility of K562 cells to NK-mediated killing in a co-culture assay, we employed NK-92

cells, a human lymphoma-derived cell line phenotypically similar to activated NK cells.[21] These

cells exhibit interleukin-2 (IL2)-dependent growth, express a large number of aNKRs and few

iNKRs [22], and display potent cytolytic activity against K562 cells. For screening purposes, a clonal

isolate of K562 cells expressing high levels of spCas9 was generated and validated (Fig. S1A-C).

In pilot experiments, labelled K562 cells were co-cultured with NK-92 cells to determine an

effector-to-target (E:T) ratio that applied sufficient selective pressure in the context of a screen

(Fig. S1D-F). IL2 was removed during the co-culture to promote the eventual death of NK-92

cells, allowing the collection of genomic DNA preparations undiluted by effector cell DNA. A

multi-day timeframe between NK challenge and screen readout was used to capture tumor cell

fitness changes related both to the direct cytolytic activities of NK cells as well as the longer-term

effects from NK-released cytokines.

For the co-culture screen, cas9-expressing K562 cells were infected with a genome-scale single

guide RNA (sgRNA) library targeting all unique coding genes and miRNAs, as well as one

thousand non-targeting controls. Seven days post-infection, cells were either grown normally or

challenged with NK-92 cells at a 1:1 or 2.5:1 E:T ratio, reducing K562 cell counts 19-fold or 43-

fold, respectively, by the end of the screen (Fig. 1A-B). Deep sequencing was used to compare

changes in sgRNA abundance between the challenged and unchallenged state after 8 days of co-

culture, and genes were ranked using the MAGeCK software [23]. (Fig. 1C, Table S2) There was

good agreement between the results from screens performed at the different E:T ratios (Fig. S2A).

Inspection of the screening results revealed two broad classes of "hits"— sgRNAs targeting

components of the tumor-immune synapse or components of the IFNγ signaling pathway (Fig. 1C-

D). Disruption of Intercellular Adhesion Molecule 1 (ICAM1) was the top-ranked NK evasion

mechanism, scoring many orders of magnitude stronger than any other gene—an observation

consistent with the critical role of ICAM1-LFA1 interactions in establishing initial target-

lymphocyte adhesion and polarizing cytotoxic granules towards the synapse [16]. Single guide RNAs

targeting multiple other tumor-immune synapse components were also enriched after NK

challenge, including NCR3LG1 (#26-ranked gene by MaGeCK score), the activating ligand for

NKP30 on NK cells [24]; CD58 (#37), an adhesion molecule that binds CD2 [25,26] ; and CD84 (#80),

a SLAM-related receptor that binds homotypically to promote activation and cytokine secretion in

lymphocytes [27,28]. Other than NECTIN2/PVRL2, sgRNAs targeting NK-inhibitory surface

proteins did not score prominently as NK-sensitization mechanisms, consistent with the weak

MHC-I expression on K562 cells and the limited repertoire of NK inhibitory receptors expressed

on NK-92 cells [22]. NECTIN2 transmits both stimulatory or inhibitory signals to NK cells,

depending on whether it is bound to DNAM1 (CD226) or TIGIT, respectively [29,30].

Besides ICAM1, the top 10 highest scoring NK evasion mechanisms were dominated by sgRNAs

targeting the proximal components of the IFNγ signaling pathway, including STAT1, JAK1,

IFNGR2, JAK2 and INFGR1 (Fig. 1D). Significantly, IFNγ is not directly cytotoxic or cytostatic

to K562 cells (see [31] and Fig. 5), suggesting that the sensitizing effect of the cytokine was

downstream of its immunomodulatory effects. Consistent with the important role of IFNγ pathway

engagement, sgRNAs targeting negative regulators of the interferon response were strongly

depleted after NK challenge. Disruption of the protein tyrosine phosphatases PTPN2 and PTPN1

were the #2 and #5 ranked NK-sensitizing mechanisms, respectively. Presumably, these proteins

suppress IFNγ-induced immunomodulation by dephosphorylating STAT and JAK proteins, as has

been reported in CRISPR screens using T-cell coculture systems or syngeneic tumor models [9,10].

Taken together, these findings indicate that our *in vitro* functional genomics screens effectively

revealed known components of physiologically-relevant immune synapse and cytokine pathways.

Prospective identification of novel genes affecting sensitization to NK cells

Mechanisms of NK sensitization identified in the screen were diverse, revealing many strongly-

scoring genes not previously linked to either interferon signaling or NK cell biology (Fig. 1E).

Most surprisingly, disruption of DCAF15, an uncharacterized substrate adaptor for CRL4

ubiquitin E3 ligases, was the top-ranked sensitization mechanism. DCAF15 is a member of the

large family of DDB1 and Cul4-associated factors (DCAFs) [32]. CRL4 complexes enable cells to

mark proteins for destruction by the proteasome system, thereby contributing to the regulation of

intracellular protein homeostasis. As substrate adaptors for CRL4, DCAF proteins provide

specificity to the complex, determining which client proteins are ubiquitinated [33]. As with most

substrate adaptors, the normal client repertoire of DCAF15 is undefined, and relatively little is

known about DCAF15's biological function.

We also noted that disruption of of two cohesin-related genes, STAG2 and HDAC8, scored as NK

sensitization factors (ranked #26 and #19, respectively). Cohesin is a ring-shaped complex

involved in chromatin replication, organization and repair, with STAG2 acting as a core complex
member and HDAC8 controlling chromatin accessibility [34]. Cohesin dysregulation has cell
context-specific consequences, including DNA damage and aneuploidy; in leukemic cells, cohesin
mutations are thought to enforce stem cell programs by altering chromatin organization [35].
156
157 **A phenotypic screen based on MHC-I upregulation to identify modulators of the**
158 **IFNγ response**
159
The prominent role for IFNγ signaling in the immune response to cancer cells, both clinically and
in our screens, prompted us to define more specifically which NK-sensitizing genes are involved
in modulating the IFNγ response. MHC-I levels are highly upregulated in K562 cells after IFNγ
exposure, increasing 5.9+/-0.98 fold after 24hrs of exposure to IFNγ. This induction was increased
to 10.01+/-1.63-fold when PTPN2 was disrupted, whereas no upregulation was detected when
STAT1 was disrupted (Fig. 2A-B and S3A-B). We therefore used IFNγ-induced cell surface MHC-
I expression as a proxy for the strength of the interferon response. K562 cells transduced with a
genome-scale CRISPR library were treated with IFNγ for 24hrs and MHC-I expression was
measured by flow cytometry. The brightest 20% and dimmest 20% of cells were sorted, and deep
sequencing was used to compare sgRNA abundance between the populations (Fig. 2C, Table S3).
170
As expected, cells with impaired MHC-I upregulation were highly enriched for sgRNAs targeting
the IFNγ-JAK-STAT pathway (IFNGR1/2, JAK1/2, STAT1, IRF1/2), as well as the antigen
processing/presentation machinery (B2M, TAP1/2, TAPBP, PDIA3, HLA-C/B) (Fig. 2D).
Conversely, disruption of PTPN2 or STAG2 scored well at inducing an exuberant MHC-I
response. Surprisingly, sgRNAs targeting epigenetic factors were highly enriched within the
brightest MHC-I expressing cells—most prominently, members of the BCOR complex PCGF1
and KDM2B, members of the PRC2 complex EZH2 and SUZ12, as well as factors affecting
histone methylation/acetylation status.
179
Rank-rank comparisons between the NK and MHC screens were informative in defining a core
group of genes that appear to play a role in the IFNγ response in K562 cells (Fig. 2E). Comparing
sgRNAs enriched after NK challenge with those causing impaired MHC-I upregulation clearly

delineated the known proximal components of the IFNγ signaling pathway (IFNGR1/2, JAK1/2,

STAT1), and highlighted several poorly characterized genes such as GSE1, SPPL3 and NR2F2

(Fig. 2E).

Surprisingly, comparing sgRNAs depleted after NK challenge with those causing an exaggerated

MHC-I response highlighted the CRL4 substrate adaptor DCAF15 most prominently, alongside

the cohesin members STAG2 and HDAC8 (Fig. 2E). As expected, negative feedback regulators

of the IFNγ pathway (PTPN1 and PTPN2) were also recovered by this analysis. We focused on

understanding the function of DCAF15, given its prominence in both the NK sensitization (#1

ranked hit at 2.5 E:T ratio; #12 ranked hit at 1:1 E:T ratio) and MHC upregulation (#13 ranked hit)

screens.

Disruption of DCAF15 enhances NK effector functions

We validated and benchmarked novel NK cell sensitizers using a FACS-based competitive co-

culture system that mimicked the conditions of the screen (Fig. 3A). Fluorescently-labelled K562

cells expressing control or test sgRNAs were co-cultured in the presence of NK cells, and changes

in the relative ratios of cell types were measured by flow cytometry after 48 hours (Fig. 3B-C and

S4A-D). Differences in the basal growth rates between genotypes were controlled for by co-

culturing the cancer cells in the absence of NK cells. As expected, deletion of the adhesion

molecule ICAM1 conferred very strong resistance to NK cells (19.7-fold, N=12). Disabling

signaling downstream of IFNγ by deleting STAT1 provided a more modest level of protection

(2.45-fold, N=8).

K562s are very sensitive to NK-mediated killing, thereby yielding a large dynamic range for

detection of resistance-promoting factors, while limiting the ability of the assay to detect similarly

large increases in sensitization. Nevertheless, we were able to validate that multiple independent

sgRNAs targeting DCAF15 promoted sensitization to NK cells (1.6-fold change, N=48). As

positive controls, disruption of NECTIN2 or PTPN2 induced a similar degree of sensitization

(NECTIN2: 1.95-fold change, N=6; PTPN2: 1.4-fold change, N=12). These findings implicate

DCAF15 as a novel modulator of NK-mediated cancer cell immunity.

Loss of the cullin-RING E3 ligase substrate adaptor DCAF15 leads to an inflamed state

distinct from dysregulated IFNγ signaling

DCAF15 was a strong hit in both the NK sensitization and MHC upregulation screens, suggesting

that DCAF15 disruption sensitizes K562 cells to NK-mediated killing by dysregulating the IFNγ

response. Consistent with the screening results, polyclonal cells expressing DCAF15 sgRNAs

("DCAF15 KO cells") displayed 2.45-fold higher levels of MHC-I than control knockout cells

after 24hrs of IFNγ exposure, an effect comparable in magnitude to PTPN2 disruption (Fig. 4A).

We then tested whether DCAF15 KO cells exhibited hallmarks of dysregulated JAK-STAT

signaling, using disruption of PTPN2 as a positive control. We were unable to see any difference

in induction of STAT1 phosphorylation after IFNγ exposure in DCAF15 KO cells, or differences

in steady state levels of STAT1/2, JAK1/2 or IFNGR1 (Fig. 4B and data not shown). DCAF15 KO

cells appeared healthy and proliferated at a normal rate (Fig. S5A). Upon long-term exposure to

IFNγ, DCAF15 disruption did not induce a synthetic fitness defect with IFNγ (Fig. 4C). In contrast,

PTPN2 KO cells showed higher levels of STAT1^{PY701} induction after IFNγ exposure, and their

proliferative rate was temporarily reduced after transient exposure to IFNγ, or more substantially

slowed down by continuous treatment with the cytokine (Fig. 4B-C).

To explore the mechanism by which DCAF15 was contributing to the NK response, RNA-seq was

performed on DCAF15 or PTPN2 KO cells basally and after 24hrs of IFNγ exposure. Clustering

analysis clearly showed that PTPN2 KO cells were transcriptionally distinct from control or

DCAF15 KO cells (Fig. 4D). PTPN2 KO cells clustered differentially along the IFNγ principal

component and were enriched for interferon-associated Gene Ontology (GO) terms both before

and after cytokine exposure (Fig. S5B-C). In contrast, DCAF15 KO cells did not show substantial

differences in their response to IFNγ (Fig. 4D). However, DCAF15 KO cells were enriched for

GO terms associated with NK-mediated cytotoxicity, antigen presentation and cell adhesion,

consistent with our phenotypic characterization of these cells (Fig. 4E). Together, these findings

indicate that while DCAF15 KO K562 cells exhibit a relatively normal response to IFNγ

stimulation, they are nonetheless in an inflamed state primed to interact with cytotoxic
lymphocytes.

Increased NK cell triggering by DCAF15 knockout cells mediated by CD80 expression

Intriguingly, differential RNA analysis showed that one of the most highly upregulated genes in
DCAF15 KO cells was CD80 (Fig. 4F; Q value 3.7e-23, Beta value 0.98). CD80 is an important
co-stimulatory molecule for lymphocytes. CD80 and other B7 family members regulate T cell
activation and tolerance by ligation to CD28, CTLA4 or PDL1 [36]. CD80 expression is typically
upregulated after the activation of antigen-presenting cells (APCs), providing critical secondary
signals to T cells [37]. While mostly studied in the context of T cell biology, B7 family molecules
are known to be activating receptors for NK cells, with both CD28-dependent and -independent
ways that NK cells receive this signal [38-42].

K562 cells are an undifferentiated and multipotential CML cell line, well-studied for their ability
to differentiate towards many different lineages, including APC-like states [43]. We hypothesized
that upregulation of CD80 in DCAF15 KO cells may reflect a broader acquisition of APC-like
properties. Immunophenotyping of unstimulated DCAF15 KO cells revealed higher levels of the
APC markers CD80, CD40 as well as class I and II MHC molecules (Fig. 5A; 2.23-fold CD80
increase; 2.01-fold CD40 increase; 1.44-fold MHC-I increase; 1.22-fold MHC-II increase).
DCAF15 KO cells did not display higher levels of the APC maturation marker CD83 (Fig. 5A) or
altered expression of various receptors identified in the screen to be important for NK adhesion,
activation, or inhibition (Fig. S6A). Importantly, the changes to the DCAF15 KO cell
immunophenotype could be rescued by constitutive expression of a sgRNA-resistant DCAF15
open-reading frame (Fig. S6B-D).

Transducing tumors with B7 family members can enhance anti-tumor immunity by enabling the
tumor cells to directly deliver antigenic and costimulatory signals to T and NK cells [38,39,44,45]. In
our model system, we confirmed that NK-92 cells were competent to receive CD80 stimuli--
expressing CD28 but not CTLA4 (Fig. S6E). K562 cells stably over-expressing wild-type CD80
were generated (Fig. 5B; 49-fold higher CD80 levels than endogenous). Over-expression was

sufficient to increase K562 sensitivity to NK-92 mediated killing (Fig. 5C), whereas
overexpression of a mutant form of CD80 carrying point mutations that abrogate CD28 binding [46]
(CD80^{Q65A,M72A}) had no effect.

We next determined whether the increased CD80 expression in DCAF15 KO cells was important
for their altered NK sensitivity. K562 cells were pretreated with either control or CD80 blocking
antibodies prior to exposure to NK-92 cells (Fig. 5D). NK sensitivity was measured by the ability
of K562 cells to trigger NK cell degranulation, as measured by NK cell CD107a expression. As
expected, ICAM1 KO cells triggered less NK degranulation than control cells (by 52±12%) and
were not significantly affected by CD80 antagonism (Fig. 5E). DCAF15 KO cells showed a 17±8%
increased ability to trigger NK cells and were approximately twice as sensitive to CD80
antagonism compared to control cells (Fig. 5E-F). Following CD80 antagonism, degranulation
triggered by DCAF15 KO was not significantly different from untreated control cells. Taken
together, these results indicate that DCAF15 disruption in K562 cells induces an APC-like
immunophenotype conducive to promoting lymphocyte responses, with higher CD80 expression
especially important for increased NK cell triggering.

The anti-leukemia drug indisulam inhibits DCAF15 function

Aryl sulfonamide drugs have demonstrated promising anti-cancer properties in hematological
malignancies [47]. Recently, it was discovered that these agents work via interaction with the CRL4-
DCAF15 E3 ubiquitin ligase, promoting its action on the essential splicing factor RBM39 as a
neosubstrate [48,49]. This mechanism of action is conceptually similar to that of the "IMiD"
thalidomide analogs, which interact with the CRL4-cereblon E3 ubiquitin ligase to promote
neosubstrate interactions with various lymphocyte transcription factors [50-52]. Presumably,
sulfonamides and IMiDs also impair the degradation of the normal client proteins when they
induce neomorphic activity of the substrate adaptor. This has not been proven, however, as it is
difficult to systematically determine the normal substrate repertoire of adaptor proteins.

We hypothesized that treating K562 cells with low concentrations of the aryl sulfonamide
indisulam would phenocopy DCAF15 depletion (Fig. 6A). Three-day dose-response experiments

revealed that K562 cells were sensitive to indisulam, and that DCAF15 disruption reduced this
sensitivity, consistent with previous reports ([49] and Fig. 6B). Dose-response experiments across a
panel of 16 hematological cancer cell lines confirmed the reported [48] positive relationship between
DCAF15 mRNA expression levels and indisulam sensitivity (Fig. S7A; R^2=0.33, P=0.02).

We empirically determined that 100nM indisulam treatment lowered RBM39 levels while
minimally affecting cell viability and proliferation over a four-day period (Fig. 6C-D and [49]).
Remarkably, this treatment regime was able to recapitulate the increased CD80 expression seen in
DCAF15 KO cells (Fig. 6E; 2.14-fold increase), and more modestly, the effects on MHC-I and
CD40 expression (1.36-fold and 1.27-fold increase, respectively). CD80 upregulation was first
detected 24hrs after treatment initiation and plateaued after 48hrs (Fig. S8B). Importantly,
indisulam treatment did not further upregulate CD80 in DCAF15 KO cells, suggesting that the
drug's effect on CD80 levels was entirely mediated through DCAF15 (Fig. 6F).

To extend these observations to other cell lines, a panel of hematological cancer cell lines was
screened to identify those with detectable CD80 expression (Fig. S7C). The CML cell line KU812
expressed similar levels of CD80 as K562, whereas the Daudi lymphoma cell line expressed
significantly higher basal CD80 levels. These cells lines were subjected to similar 4-day low-dose
regimes of indisulam, which only modestly affected the growth and viability of the cells (Fig.
S7D). Remarkably, both Daudi and KU812 cells up-regulated CD80 levels after indisulam
treatment, to an extent comparable to that which was observed in K562 cells (Fig. 6G; 2.45-fold
for Daudi, 1.71-fold for KU812). Indisulam was not able to induce *de novo* CD80 expression in
CD80-negative cell lines (Fig. S7E). Thus, in certain cellular contexts, aryl sulfonamides are
immuno-modulatory agents that alter co-stimulatory protein levels by disrupting the normal
functions of DCAF15.

Reduced DCAF15 expression is associated with improved survival in AML patients

Given the *in vitro* findings, we hypothesized that lower DCAF15 expression in myeloid
malignancies could be associated with better clinical outcomes. We tested this hypothesis using
publicly available acute myeloid leukemia (AML) datasets [53,54]. In both adult and pediatric AML,

lower expression of DCAF15 mRNA was associated with increased median overall survival time
(Fig. 6H-I). The improved survival of DCAF15-low patients was not driven by a correlation
between DCAF15 expression and more aggressive AML subtypes (Fig. S7F-G). Taken together,
these findings indicate that lower DCAF15 function, achieved pharmacologically or by genetic
means, is associated with favorable immunophenotypes *in vitro* and improved outcomes in AML
patients.

CRL4-DCAF15 directly interacts with cohesin complex members

The normal substrate repertoire of DCAF15 is unknown. To systemically identify direct DCAF15
client proteins, we undertook proximity-based proteomic analysis of DCAF15 interaction partners
(Fig. 7A). DCAF15 was fused to a promiscuous bacterial biotin ligase [55] ("DCAF15-BioID") and
stably expressed in K562 cells, enabling recovery of interaction partners by streptavidin pull-
down. In pilot experiments, we confirmed that exogenous C-terminally tagged DCAF15 was able
to rescue DCAF15 KO phenotypes and associate with CRL4 complex members DDB1 and
CUL4A (Fig. S6B-D, Fig. S8A). During stable DCAF15 overexpression, we observed that the
basal concentration of biotin in the media (~3μM) was sufficient to induce BioID activity in the
absence of exogenous (50μM) biotin supplementation (Fig. 7B). However, proteasome inhibition
by MG132 increased accumulation of DCAF15-BioID and biotinylated species. As a control,
results were compared to a GFP-BioID fusion, expected to generically biotinylate proteins. GFP-
BioID accumulated much more readily than DCAF15-BioID, and its biotinylation activity was not
affected by MG132 treatment.

After 24hrs of biotin and MG132 treatment, biotinylated protein species were recovered under
stringent denaturing conditions. Isobaric labelling and mass spectrometry were used to
quantitatively compare the DCAF15 interactome to the GFP interactome (Fig. 7C and Table S5).
This approach clearly recovered DCAF15 and the core CRL4 complex, including DDA1, DDB1
and CUL4A (DCAF15: 155.6-fold change, P=2.5e-152; DDA1: 24.5-fold change, P=6.5e-139;
DDB1: 4.86-fold change, P=8.1e-21; CUL4A: 3.8-fold change, P=8.5e-18).

Surprisingly, two of the most differentially biotinylated proteins were the cohesin complex members SMC1A and SMC3 (SMC1: 2.39-fold change, P=0.00098; SMC3: 2.76-fold change, P=5e-5). We confirmed the interaction between DCAF15-BioID and endogenous SMC1 and 3 by streptavidin-pulldown followed by western blotting (Fig. 7D). To determine whether this association with cohesin was a generic feature of CRL4 complexes or specific to the CRL4 loaded with DCAF15, we examined the interaction partners of a different substrate adaptor. DCAF16 is a nuclear-localized CUL4 substrate adaptor, which, like DCAF15, interacts with DDB1 despite lacking a canonical WD40 docking domain[32]. When stably expressed in K562 cells, DCAF16-BioID fusions accumulated similarly to DCAF15-BioID, interacted with DDB1 but did not biotinylate SMC proteins (Fig. 7E). As low concentrations of indisulam phenocopy certain aspects of DCAF15 depletion (Fig. 6), we wondered whether indisulam treatment would alter the interaction of DCAF15 with cohesin. DCAF15-BioID cells were treated with indisulam for 72hours, with biotin and MG132 added for the final 18hours. This treatment regime lead to substantial indisulam-dependent biotinylation of RBM39 and reduced recovery of biotinylated SMC proteins (Fig. 7E). These findings indicate that cohesin proteins may be *bona fide* ubiquitination substrates for DCAF15, as DCAF15 interacts with SMC proteins in a way that is increased by proteasome inhibition, reduced by indisulam treatment and specific to CRL4-DCAF15.

Discussion

T cell immunity necessitates antigen recognition in the context of MHC, a requirement unchanged by checkpoint inhibitor therapy. Clinical and experimental data have revealed that disrupting optimal antigen presentation levels is a common mechanism by which cancer cells escape recognition by the adaptive immune system. These findings have highlighted the need for therapeutic strategies that can promote antigen presentation, or that work in a MHC-independent fashion. One such approach involves modulating the NK cell compartment to promote anti-cancer immunity. NK cells integrate the signals from multiple activating and inhibitory receptors to strike the right balance between auto-immunity and sanitization. Here, we discovered that the combinatorial logical of NK activation proved particularly amenable to CRISPR screening, leading to the discovery and validation of a novel factor that enhances NK effector functions when

disrupted. The biology was explored within the context of co-cultured NK-92 and K562 cells, a
relatively simple model of the interaction between cancer cells and unlicensed NK cells. Despite
this limitation, the screens clearly identified known lymphocyte adhesion factors and aNKR
ligands, such as ICAM1, NCR3LG1, CD58 and CD84. Other strongly-scoring genes encoding cell
surface proteins, such as CEACAM7, IL23R and PTGFRN, may represent novel activating stimuli
for NK cells. Extending our genetic screening approach to other types of tumor cells and natural
killer subtypes will likely enable a more complete understanding of the relative importance of
various aNKRs and iNKRs, and could facilitate the identification of candidate ligands for orphan
NK receptors.
406
In this screening context, the dominant cytokine signature was clearly associated with IFNγ. There
was no evidence of a contribution from TNFα, the other prominent cytokine secreted by NK cells.
Unlike other published tumor:cytotoxic lymphocyte co-culture screens [8,10], neither TNFα nor IFNγ
was directly cytostatic or cytotoxic to our cancer cell model, likely explaining why components of
the immune synapse scored so much more prominently. The importance of IFNγ in our screen
reflected the immunomodulatory nature of the cytokine, helping to prime the cancer cells to
undergo a productive interaction with lymphocytes. A notable exception was seen with disruption
of PTPN2, a negative regulator of IFNγ signaling. Loss of PTPN2 both altered tumor cell
immunophenotypes and reduced tumor cell growth after IFNγ treatment. PTPN2 disruption has
proven to enhance activated T-cell mediated killing, as well as potentiate the effect of
immunotherapy in syngeneic tumor models [9,10,56]. These data suggest that targeting PTPN2 may
be a generalizable strategy to sensitize tumor cells to multiple arms of the immune system.
419
The importance of the cancer cell IFNγ response in promoting optimal lymphocyte responses
prompted us to systemically identify perturbations that augment cytokine-induced MHC-I
upregulation. As expected, this screen clearly delineated the proximal components of the IFNγ-
JAK-STAT pathway, as well as the antigen processing/presentation machinery. Surprisingly,
disruption of a poorly characterized substrate adaptor for the CRL4 E3 ligase was a top scoring hit
in both the MHC-I and NK screens. We therefore focused our efforts on understanding the role of
DCAF15 function. We determined that DCAF15 KO cells did not have a grossly dysregulated
response to IFNγ. Instead, the higher levels of MHC-I following DCAF15 disruption reflected a

broader phenotypic change reminiscent of APC activation, with the upregulation of a variety of

co-stimulatory and antigen-presenting molecules (Fig. 7F). The upregulation of CD80 in DCAF15

KO cells was especially important for increasing NK-92 cell triggering. Given the array of changes

elicited by DCAF15 disruption, it will be important to determine how the triggering of primary

NK cell populations is altered by DCAF15 KO cells. It is conceivable that unlicensed NK cells,

lacking expression of inhibitory self-MHC receptors, may be most responsive to the DCAF15 KO

immunophenotype.

Our data suggest that the surface factors upregulated by DCAF15 disruption are not direct client

proteins of the substrate receptor, but rather represent events secondary to altered turnover of the

normal DCAF15 client protein(s). We pioneered a novel approach to systemically purify substrates

of DCAF family members, as conventional biochemical methods are poorly suited to recover the

transient, low-affinity interactions between substrate adaptors and client proteins. The use of

DCAF-BioID fusion proteins and proteasome inhibition protects labile substrates from

degradation and robustly recovers biotinylated proteins under stringent, denaturing conditions. We

anticipate this will be a generalizable strategy for discovering client proteins for the whole family

of CUL4 CRL substrate receptors.

Proteomic analysis and subsequent validation experiments showed that DCAF15-BioID interacted

with core CRL4 complex members, and surprisingly, cohesin members SMC1 and SMC3. We

were intrigued by this interaction given the similar CRISPR screening scoring pattern of DCAF15

to the cohesin factors STAG2 and HDAC8 (Fig. 2E); the shared roles of cohesin and CRL4 E3

ligases in DNA metabolism, organization, replication and repair [34,57,58]; and the ability of cohesin

mutations to dysregulate hematopoietic differentiation in myeloid malignancies [35]. While not

proven here, we hypothesize that SMC1 and SMC3 are direct ubiquitination substrates for

DCAF15, given that their interaction was increased on proteasome inhibition, reduced by

indisulam treatment, and not seen with unrelated DCAF substrate adaptors. Rather than globally

controlling SMC protein levels, we speculate that CRL4-DCAF15 complexes ubiquitinate cohesin

at specific genomic sites to regulate chromatin topology or repair (Fig. 7F). In this model,

disruption of either STAG2, HDAC8 or DCAF15 impair cohesin function with overlapping

phenotypic consequences.

Recently, it was discovered that aryl sulfonamide drugs including indisulam are capable of binding

to DCAF15 and altering CRL-DCAF15 substrate specificity towards the splicing factor RBM39

[48,49]. The cytotoxic effects of indisulam were driven by splicing defects resulting from RBM39

degradation. Our studies confirmed indisulam-induced RBM39 degradation and the indisulam-

dependent interaction between DCAF15 and RBM39. We also discovered indisulam-induced

phenotypes attributable to inhibition of DCAF15's normal functions. Concentrations of indisulam

with limited RBM39 degradation or cytotoxicity had immunomodulatory properties that

phenocopied genetic DCAF15 disruption, and were sufficient to reduce the interaction of DCAF15

with SMC1/SMC3, putative endogenous client proteins. We also determined that AML patients

with naturally occurring lower levels of DCAF15 had improved overall survival. While these

clinical data are preliminary in nature, they provide a rationale for drugging DCAF15 in myeloid

neoplasms, achieved through judicious dosing of existing anti-cancer sulfonamides or the

development of pure DCAF15 inhibitors.

FIGURES

Figure 1. A genome-scale CRISPR screen identifies modulators of NK effector functions

A) Overview of the genome-scale NK CRISPR screening system.

B) K562 population doublings (PDs) during the CRISPR screen, as measured by total number of live cells. Note that early timepoints from the co-culture reflect the presence of both K562 and NK-92 cells.

C) Analysis of the NK CRISPR screen results. Changes in sgRNA abundance were compared between the 2.5:1 E:T co-culture condition and day 15 dropout cells using the MAGeCK algorithm. The top 10 enriched or depleted genes are shown, as rank-ordered by Mageck score; other manually selected genes are highlighted with their rank indicated. FDR, false discovery rate.

D) Overview of high-scoring components of the tumor-immune synapse and IFNγ signaling pathway recovered by the screen. sgRNAs against genes enriched after exposure to NK cells are marked in red, while depleted sgRNAs are marked in green.

Supplemental Figure 1.

A) Western blot showing spCas9 expression in clonal isolates of K562 cells infected with a Cas9-expressing lentivirus. Asterisk highlights the clone used for screening purposes.

B) Measurement of Cas9 activity using an EGFP disruption assay. Cas9-expressing K562 cells were infected at a low MOI with a lentivirus expressing EGFP and a sgRNA targeting EGFP. The percent of cells that lost EGFP expression was measured over time by flow cytometry.

C) Measurement of Cas9 activity using sgRNAs targeting mismatch-repair (MMR) complex members. A Cas9-expressing K562 clonal isolate was infected at a low MOI with a lentivirus expressing sgRNAs against core members of the MMR complex. Protein disruption was measured by western blot 10 days after sgRNA infection. Note that certain MMR complex members depend on other binding partners for stability.

D) Experimental design for determining selective pressure of different effector:target cell ratios. K562 cells were labelled with carboxyfluorescein succinimidyl ester (CFSE) prior to co-culture with NK-92 cells.

E) Effect of increasing effector:target cell ratio on total number of viable target cells over
time. During early timepoints, CFSE fluorescence was used to generate target cell counts.
At later timepoints, total cell counts accurately reflected target cell counts due to NK-92
cell death.

F) Representative image of K562:NK-92 co-cultures at 5:1 E:T ratio. NK-92 cells (unlabeled)
form aggregate structures enveloping the target cells (green). Scale bar, 250μM.

Supplemental Figure 2.

A) Analysis of the NK CRISPR screen results performed at a lower E:T ratio. sgRNA
abundance was compared between the 1:1 effector:target ratio co-culture condition and day
15 dropout cells using the MAGeCK algorithm. The computed false discovery rate (FDR)
is plotted against the -log10 transformation of the MAGeCK score. The top 5 enriched or
depleted genes are shown, as rank-ordered by MAGeCK score; other manually selected
genes are highlighted with their rank indicated in parentheses.

Supplemental Table 1. Design of genome-scale CRISPR library. sgRNA sequences and
coordinates of the intended target locus are provided.

Supplemental Table 2. NK CRISPR screen data. Normalized sgRNA counts and MAGeCK
analysis output are provided.

Figure 2. A phenotypic screen based on MHC-I upregulation to identify modulators of the
IFNγ response

A) Flow cytometry measurement of MHC-I expression in K562 cells transduced with the
indicated sgRNAs after 24hrs of 10ng/ml IFNγ treatment.

B) Fold upregulation of MHC-I expression after IFNγ treatment in K562 cells transduced with
the indicated sgRNAs. Mean and standard deviation are shown. *** P value= 0.0002, **
P value=0.03, Mann-Whitney test.

C) Design of CRISPR screen for IFNγ-induced upregulation of MHC-I expression. SSC, side-
scatter.

D) Analysis of the MHC-I upregulation CRISPR screen results. The MAGeCK algorithm was used to compare sgRNA abundance between cells in the bottom two and top two deciles of MHC-I expression. The false discovery rate (FDR) is plotted against the -log10 transformation of the MAGeCK score. The top 5 to 10 enriched or depleted genes are shown, as rank-ordered by MAGeCK score; other manually selected genes are highlighted with their rank indicated in parentheses.

E-F) Comparison of the NK and MHC screening results. Results of each screen were rank-ordered based on their MAGeCK score. Select genes are highlighted.

Supplemental Figure 3.

A) Western blot of total STAT1 levels in K562 cells infected with control or STAT1 sgRNAs.

B) Western blot of PTPN2 levels in K562 cells infected with control or PTPN2 sgRNAs.

Supplemental Table 3. Raw MHC-I screen data. Normalized protospacer counts and MAGeCK analysis output are included.

Figure 3. Disruption of DCAF15 enhances NK effector functions

A) Experimental design of competitive co-culture experiments, with FACS data illustrating a sgRNA that enhances NK-mediated killing.

B) Representative results from competitive co-culture experiments performed at a 2.5:1 E:T ratio.

C) Competitive co-culture results performed at a 2.5:1 E:T ratio and measured 48-96hrs after challenge with NK-92 cells. Mean and standard deviation are shown. *** P-value <0.0001, Mann-Whitney test.

Supplemental Figure 4.

A) Measurement of cell surface NECTIN2 expression by flow cytometry in K562 cells expressing control or NECTIN2 sgRNAs. Gates show background levels of fluorescence.

B) Measurement of cell surface ICAM1 expression by flow cytometry in K562 cells expressing control or ICAM1 sgRNAs. Gates show background levels of fluorescence.

565   C) Measurement of DCAF15 mRNA expression by RNAseq in K562 cells transduced with
566   control or DCAF15 sgRNAs.

568 Figure 4. DCAF15 disruption leads to an inflamed state distinct from dysregulated IFNγ-

569 JAK-STAT signaling

570   A) Flow cytometry measurement of cell surface MHC-I expression in K562 cells transduced
571   with the indicated sgRNAs after 24hrs of 10ng/ml IFNγ treatment. *** $P < 0.0001$; ** P=
572   0.0044, Mann-Whitney test.

573   B) Western blots against total and phosphorylated STAT1 after 30 minutes of 1ng/ml IFNγ
574   treatment in K562 cells infected with the indicated sgRNAs.

575   C) Growth rate of K562 cells expressing the indicated sgRNAs, cultured normally
576   ("untreated"), treated 24hrs with 10ng/ml IFNγ ("IFNγ pulse"), or retreated with 10ng/ml
577   IFNγ every day ("IFNγ constant").

578   D) Principle component analysis (for principle components (PC) 1 and 3) of transcriptomes
579   from K562 cells expressing the indicated sgRNAs and treated +/- 10ng/ml IFNγ for 24hrs.

580   E) Selected GO terms, identified by RNA-seq, enriched in DCAF15 KO cells. Negative log10
581   transformation of the Benjamini-Hochberg corrected P value.

582   F) Volcano plot of genes differentially expressed between DCAF15 KO cells compared to
583   control KO cells. Selected genes are highlighted. The FDR-corrected P-value generated
584   from a likelihood ratio test (Q-value) is plotted against an approximate measure of the fold
585   change in expression (Beta value).

587 Supplemental Figure 5.

588   A) Growth rate of K562 cells expressing sgRNAs against DCAF15 or a control gene. Results
589   from 2-3 independent experiments and 2-3 different sgRNAs per gene. Mean and standard
590   deviation are shown. DCAF15 sgRNAs, 1.1+/-0.01 population doublings per day. Control
591   sgRNAs, 1.13+/-0.03 population doublings per day.

592   B) Gene set enrichment analysis (GSEA) of genes differentially upregulated in PTPN2 KO
593   cells. nES, normalized enrichment score. Categories with a FDR Q-value of <0.1 are
594   shaded in blue.

595   C) GSEA of genes differentially upregulated in PTPN2 KO cells after IFNγ treatment.

Supplemental Table 4. List of differentially expressed genes determined by RNA-seq of control, DCAF15 or PTPN2 KO K562 cells.

Figure 5. Increased NK triggering by DCAF15 knockout cells mediated by CD80 expression

A) Flow cytometry measurements of the indicated cell surface markers in K562 cells expressing the indicated sgRNAs. N=9-24 samples per condition. *** P<0.0001, ** P=0.001, ns P>0.1, Mann-Whitney Test.

B) Flow cytometry measurement of CD80 surface expression in control K562 cells or those lentivirally over-expressing CD80. Gate shows level of background fluorescence in unstained cells.

C) Competitive co-culture results between indicated K562 cell types and NK-92 cells, performed at 1:1 E:T ratio. * P=0.005, ** P=0.0007, NS P>0.1, unpaired T test. CD80^{mut} refers to CD80^{Q65A,M72A} mutant.

D) Experimental design of CD80 blockade experiment.

E) Effect of blocking antibodies to CD80 on NK-92 activation, measured by CD107 flow cytometry on NK-92 cells after 4hrs of co-culture. Data points from experiments performed on the same day are joined by lines of the same color. ** P=0.03, * P=0.06, ns P>0.1, Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test. Experiment performed 4 times, 2x sgRNAs per condition.

F) Percent decrease in NK-92 degranulation after CD80 antibody treatment of indicated target cells. Data points from experiments performed same day are joined by lines. Mean is indicated. ** P=0.03, Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test.

Supplemental Figure 6.

A) Flow cytometry measurements of the indicated cell surface markers in K562 cells expressing the indicated sgRNAs. N=2-14 samples per condition. Ns P>0.1, * P=0.04, ** P=0.01, Mann-Whitney Test.

B) Experimental design for rescuing DCAF15 disruption in K562 by lentiviral expression of a sgRNA-resistant DCAF15 open reading frame.

C) Western blot of DCAF15 rescue construct expression.

627   D) Flow cytometry measurements of the indicated cell surface markers in K562 cells
628   expressing the indicated sgRNAs and rescue constructs. N=6-24 samples per condition.
629   *** P<0.0001, ** P=0.004, Mann-Whitney test.

630   E) Flow cytometry measurement of CTLA4 and CD28 expression on NK-92 cells. Gates show
631   background fluorescence levels in unstained cells.

633   Figure 6. The anti-leukemia drug indisulam inhibits DCAF15 function

634   A) Proposed model for DCAF15 gain- and loss-of-function phenotypes triggered by indisulam
635   treatment.

636   B) Dose response of K562 cells expressing the indicated sgRNAs to indisulam. Relative
637   viability measured by ATP content. N=2 experiments. Mean and standard deviation are
638   shown.

639   C) Growth of K562 cells treated with 0.1μM indisulam over 4 days. N=12 per timepoint.
640   Mean and standard deviation are shown.

641   D) Western blot for total RBM39 levels in K562 cells after 0.1μM indisulam treatment for the
642   indicated number of days.

643   E) Flow cytometry measurements of the indicated cell surface markers in K562 cells after
644   indisulam treatment. Mean and standard deviation are shown. *** P<0.0001, ** P=0.0085,
645   * P=0.013, mean significantly different from 1, one sample T test.

646   F) CD80 expression measured by flow cytometry in indisulam-treated K562 cells expressing
647   the indicated sgRNAs. Mean and standard deviation are shown. N=4-6 samples. **
648   P=0.0095, * P=0.0286, ns P>0.1, Mann-Whitney test.

649   G) Effect of indisulam treatment on CD80 expression in the indicated cell lines. N=3-12
650   samples. Mean and standard deviation are shown. *** P<0.0001, ** P= 0.0066, mean
651   significantly different from 1, one sample T test.

652   H) Kaplan-Meier analysis of overall survival in adult AML patients from TCGA LAML
653   project stratified by DCAF15 expression. "DCAF15 high" and "DCAF15 low" represents
654   patients in top or bottom 50% of DCAF15 expression, respectively. N=142 patients. 95%
655   confidence interval shown. Median survival, 16.17 vs 12.18 months. P-value from log-rank
656   test.

I) Kaplan-Meier analysis of overall survival in pediatric AML patients from TARGET project
stratified by DCAF15 expression. "DCAF15 high" and "DCAF15 low" represents patients
in top or bottom 20% of DCAF15 expression, respectively. N=76 patients. 95% confidence
interval shown. Median survival, 21.17 vs NA. P-value from log-rank test.

Supplemental Figure 7.

A) Relationship between DCAF15 mRNA expression and indisulam sensitivity across a panel
of cell lines.

B) Time-course of CD80 expression after indisulam treatment in K562 cells measured by flow
cytometry. Blue shading indicates period of CD80 upregulation. N=2-4 samples per
timepoint. Mean and standard deviation are shown.

C) CD80 expression measured by flow cytometry across a panel of cancer cell lines. Dashed
line indicates background level of antibody staining, with cell lines in red have expressing
above background levels of the protein. CML, chronic myelogenous leukemia. BL,
Burkitt's lymphoma. AML, acute myeloid leukemia. AMoL, acute monocytic leukemia.
T-ALL, T-acute lymphoblastic leukemia. MM, multiple myeloma. ALCL, anaplastic large
cell lymphoma.

D) Growth of Daudi and KU812 cells treated with 0.1μM indisulam over 4 days. N=3 per
timepoint. Mean and standard deviation are shown.

E) Fold change in CD80 expression in the indicated cell lines after 4 days treatment with
0.1μM indisulam.

F) Box and whisker plot of DCAF15 expression in TCGA LAML samples, stratified by
subtype using the French American British (FAB) AML classification scheme. Analysis
from UALCAN portal [59]. Subtypes with significantly different median expression values
are indicated.

G) FAB classification of adult AML patients in the TCGA LAML project, stratified by top
50% ("DCAF15 high") or bottom 50% ("DCAF15 low") of DCAF15 expression.

Figure 7. CRL4-DCAF15 directly interacts with cohesin complex members

A) Experimental system for discovering DCAF15 interaction partners by proximity ligation.

B) Indicated constructs were stabled expressed in K562 cells, and biotinylated proteins
detected by HRP-conjugated streptavidin ("α-biotin"). Asterisks denote major
endogenous biotin-containing proteins. "MG132" and "Biotin" refer to 18hrs treatment
with 5μM MG132 or 50μM biotin.
C) Proteins identified by quantitative mass spectrometry as differentially biotinylated by
DCAF15-BioID as compared to GFP-BioID. Log2-fold changes are plotted against
precision of the measurement (1/ coefficient of variation). Colors denote the posterior
probability that a protein fold change was small (referred to as "P-null" in the legend), as
explained in the methods.
D-E) Affinity capture of biotinylated proteins by streptavidin beads ("biotin IP") and detection
by western blot. Indicates constructs were stably expressed in K562 cells. "Indisulam"
refers to 48hrs 0.1μM indisulam treatment prior to MG132 and biotin addition.
F) Model of proposed DCAF15 function.
700
701   **Supplemental figure 8.**
702   A) Exogenous DCAF15 interacts with CRL4 core complex members. Indicated constructs
703   were stably expressed in K562 cells. Anti-Flag immunoprecipitations were performed and
704   analyzed by western blot.
705
706   **Supplemental Table 5.** Comparison of biotinylated proteins recovered from K562 cells
707   expressing DCAF15-BIoID or GFP-BioID using isobaric labelling and mass spectrometry.
708
709   **Supplemental Table 6.** List of sgRNA sequences used.
710
711   **Supplemental Table 7.** List of antibodies used.
712
713   **Supplemental Table 8.** Primer design for sequencing sgRNA libraries.
714

Materials and methods

Cell lines

All cell lines were purchased from ATCC and were tested monthly for mycoplasma contamination.
Cell lines other than NK-92 were maintained in RPMI supplemented with 10% FBS, 1mM
GlutaMAX and 1% antibiotic, antimycotic. NK-92 cells were grown in Myelocult H5100 (Stem
cell Technologies) supplemented with 100U/ml human IL-2 (Peprotech cat#200-02). IL-2 stock
solution was made by reconstituting lyophilized cytokine to 10e6 U/ml in 50mM acetic acid, 0.1%
BSA in PBS.

Construction of the CRISPR Library

CRISPR screening was performed using bespoke genome-scale libraries, to be described in detail
elsewhere. In brief, the sgRNA library was designed with 120,021 sgRNAs present, representing
6 guides each against 21,598 genes and 4 guides each against 1,918 miRNAs, as well as 1000 non-
targeting negative control guides (Table S1). sgRNAs targeting protein-coding genes were based
on the Avana libraries [60]. sgRNAs targeting miRNAs were based on the design of the Gecko v2.0
libraries [61]. The protospacer library was synthesized by Twist Biosciences. The synthesized oligo
library was amplified using emulsion PCR followed by purification. The vaccinia virus DNA
polymerase was used to clone the protospacers into a lentiviral construct (In-fusion, Takara). The
lentiviral construct was linearized by Bfua1 digestion (New England Biolabs). To ensure complete
digestion, Bfua1 activity was stimulated by addition of 500nM of a double-stranded oligo
containing a Bfua1 site (5' atagcacctgctata 3') (based on [62]).

The guide RNAs were expressed from a human U6 promoter, using a modified sgRNA design (A-
U flip, longer stem-loop) previously described [63]. An EF1a-Puro-T2A-cerulean-wpre ORF was
used for selection purposes and for measuring infection rates. The library was electroporated into
MegaX cells and plated across 37x 500cm^2 LB-carbenicillin plates. The library was recovered and
pooled by scraping and column-based plasmid purification (Zymopure GigaPrep).

Preparation of virions

16M 293T cells were plated onto 177cm^2 dishes (9x plates total). 24hrs later, cell media was

replaced with 32mls of DMEM+10% FBS (D-10). Cells were transfected with the library by

lipofection (per plate: 158ul lipofectamine 2000, 8mls of Optimem, 3.95μg of VSVG, 11.8μg of

Pax2, 15.78μg of library). The transfection mixture was left on the cells overnight, then changed

to 25mls of D-10. Viral supernatant was collected 48hrs later. Debris was removed by

centrifugation at 200g. Aliquots were flash-frozen and stored at -80°C.

Validation of the Cas9-expressing cell line used for screening

K562 cells were lentivirally infected with a EF1a-spCas9-T2A-blastR construct. Following

10μg/ml blasticidin selection, cells were dilution cloned. Clonal isolates with high levels of cas9

expression (as determined by western blot) were selected for further characterization. To determine

the kinetics and efficacy of gene cutting under screening conditions (*e.g.*, low MOI of the sgRNA

construct), cells were infected with a lentiviral construct expressing both EGFP and a sgRNA

targeting GFP. Following puromycin selection, the loss of EGFP expression was monitored by

flow cytometry. In other experiments, the ability to effectively deplete endogenous proteins was

determined by using a series of sgRNAs targeting the mismatch repair complex and measuring

protein depletion by western blot.

The NK cell screen

Five hundred million spCas9-expressing K562 cells were mixed with CRISPR sgRNA library

virions and 1L of media, then distributed across 34 6-well plates. Cells were spin-fected at 1900

rpm for 30 min at room-temperature with CRISPR library virus, conditions calculated to achieve

a MOI of ~0.3 and 1000 cells per sgRNA library representation. MOI was measured by tracking

the percent of the population expressing the cerulean marker found in the sgRNA library. Cells

were incubated overnight in viral supernatant prior to being pooled, spun down to remove virions,

and returned to spinner-flask culture (Bell-Flo Flask, Bellco Glass Inc). 24 to 48hrs post-infection,

2μg/ml puromycin selection was started for four days. Cells were maintained in log-growth phase

with a minimal representation of 500M cells. Seven days post guide-infection, NK cell challenge

was initiated. For the 2.5:1 E:T challenge, 100M K562 cells were mixed with 250M NK-92 cells

in 1L of Myelocult, and split across 25 177cm^2 dishes. For the 1:1 E:T challenge, 100M K562 cells

were mixed with 100M NK-92 cells in 400mls of Myelocult, and split across 10 177cm^2 dishes.

As a control, K562 cells were continuously propagated in RPMI media. 2 days after initiating the

NK-92 challenge, the co-culture was switched to RPMI media. NK-92 cells, when grown in RPMI

without IL-2, are rapidly lost from the culture. Six days after the media switch, 100M cell pellets

were generated for library construction. All cell pellets were stored cryopreserved in cell-freezing

media (Gibco #12648).

The MHC-based screen

Generation of K562 cells expressing the sgRNA library was performed as described above. On

day 8 post-guide infection, 150M cells were stimulated with 10ng/ml IFNγ (R&D Systems 285-

IF). 24hrs later, cells were spun down, washed, and stained in 3mls of 1:200 anti-HLA ABC-APC

(W6/32 clone, BioLegend) in PBS, 2% FBS for 30min at 4°c. Approximately 10M of the brightest

20% and dimmest 20% of cells were sorted (BD FACSAria Fusion). Cell purity was determined

to be >95% by re-analysis post-sorting. A replicate of this experiment was performed on day 14

post-guide infection.

CRISPR library preparation and sequencing

Genomic DNA was prepared by thawing cryopreserved cell pellets and proceeding with DNA

extraction using column-based purification methods (NucleoSpin Blood XL, Machery-Nagel).

Protospacer libraries were generated by a two-step PCR strategy, modified from [64]. In the first

round of PCR, 150μg of gDNA (equivalent to 15M K562 cells and 125-fold coverage of the

library) was used in a 7.5ml PCR reaction to amplify the protospacers. This reaction was performed

using a 500nM mixture of primers containing 0-9bp staggers, to ensure base-pair diversity during

Illumina sequencing (see supplemental table S7). The reaction was performed with Phusion master

mix (New England Biolabs) and 3% DMSO with the following cycling conditions: 1 cycle X 30 s

at 98°C, 21 cycles X 15 s at 98°C, 20 s at 63°C, 15 s at 72°C, 1 cycle X 2 min at 72°C. In the

second round of PCR, 4ul of the initial PCR product was used as the template in a 200ul PCR

reaction to make the sample compatible with Illumina chemistry and to add unique I5 and I7

barcodes to the sample. The reaction was performed with Phusion master mix (New England

Biolabs), 500nM primers and 3% DMSO with the following cycling conditions: 1 cycle X 30 sec

at 98°C, 12 cycles X 15 s 98°C, 20 s at 60°C, 15 s at 72°C, 1 cycle X 2 min at 72°C. The library

was size-selected first by a 1:1 SPRI bead selection (AMPure XP beads, Beckman Coulter),

quantified by high-sensitivity dsDNA Qubit (ThermoFisher Scientific), and pooled. An agarose

size selection step (PippinHT, Sage Science) was performed prior to sequencing on an Illumina

Hiseq4000.

Screen analysis

Libraries were sequenced to a depth of ~20 million reads per condition. Reads were aligned to the

sgRNA library using bowtie2. Protospacer count tables were generated from these alignments with

python scripts and processed with MAGeCK. MAGeCK analysis was used to score and prioritize

sgRNAs, using default settings in the algorithm [23]. A subset of genes, mostly from highly related

gene families, have more than 6 sgRNAs targeting them. As the MAGeCK scoring method tends

to prioritize consistency of effect over magnitude of effect, genes with more than 6 guides targeting

them were excluded from the analysis. MAGeCK scores were -log10 normalized, and values were

plotted against FDR values.

Competitive co-culture experiments

Cell were transduced at a high MOI with a lentiviral sgRNA construct expressing the guide of

interest, puromycin resistance and CMV promoter-driven expression of a red or green fluorescent

protein. Knockout cell populations were maintained in a polyclonal state. Gene disruption was

confirmed at the protein level by flow cytometry or western blot, and by RNA-seq when antibody

reagents were not available. Complete knockout in >90% of the population was routinely achieved

(Fig. S4A-D). Cells were counted and 0.25M red-labelled test cells were mixed with 0.25M green-

labelled control cells (expressing a sgRNA against an olfactory receptor gene). The mixture was

either grown in RPMI or mixed with 1.25M NK-92 cells in 4mls Myelocult media. The ratio of

red-to-green cells was measured 2 to 4 days post-challenge, with the fold-change normalized to

the ratio in the non-challenged state (to control for differences in basal cell growth rate).

Flow cytometry

0.5 to 1M cells were spun down and stained with APC-conjugated antibodies for 30mins at 4°c in

PBS with 2% FBS. Cells were analyzed on a BD LSRFortessa. The geometric mean fluorescence

intensity of singlet, DAPI-excluding cells was measured, and normalized to the background

fluorescence of that particular genotype of cells.

DCAF15 rescue experiments

The DCAF15 open reading frame was synthesized based off reference sequence NM_138353, but with silent mutations designed to confer resistance to all three sgRNAs. To ensure resistance to sgRNA-directed gene cutting, silent mutations were introduced to the PAM domain and the proximal region of the protospacer (guide #1: 5' GCTGCACACCAAGTACCAGGTGG to GCTGCACACCAAaTAtCAaGTaG. Guide #2: 5' TGACATCTACGTCAGCACCGTGG to TGACATCTACGTCtcCACaGTaG; Guide #3: 3' GCAGCTTCCGGAAGAGGCGAGGG to GCAGCTTCCGGAAtaaaCGtGGt).

The rescue construct was expressed lentivirally from an EF1a promoter, with a c-terminal 3-flag epitope tag. Rescue cells were selected with hygromycin. The rescue construct was introduced two weeks after the initial introduction of the DCAF15 sgRNAs, and stable cell lines generated by a week of selection in 375μg/ml hygromycin. Expression of the construct was confirmed by lysing cells in PBS+0.1% NP40 (as per [48]) and western blotting for the Flag tag.

CD80 blocking experiments

RFP-labelled target cells (0, 0.75M, or 2.5M) were resuspended in 0.5mls Myelocult + 5μg/ml control (MOPC-21 clone) or blocking CD80 (2D10 clone) antibodies. Cells were incubated for 30 mins at room temperature. 0.5M NK-92 cells in 0.5mls Myelocult were added to the well, as well as 1:200 anti-CD107a-APC antibody. Cells were co-cultured for 4hrs at 37°C. Flow cytometry was used to measured CD107A-APC expression in the NK-92 (RFP-negative) population. NK-92 cells were found to display a basal level of CD107a expression in the absence of effector cells. Increases above basal staining levels were used to define NK-92 degranulation. The experiment was repeated 4 times to establish biological replicates.

CD80 over-expression experiments

A full-length CD80 open reading frame, based on reference sequence NM_005191.4, was synthesized with a c-terminal 3x Flag tag and expressed lentivirally from the EF1a promoter. Over-expressing cells were selected with hygromycin. As a control construct, a mutant version of CD80 was synthesized with Q65A and M72A mutations in the "V-type" Ig-like domain. Each of these

residues makes contacts with CTLA4 in published CD80-CTLA4 co-crystal structures [65] and

alanine scanning experiments have shown that these residues are required for CD80 binding to

CD28 or CTLA4 [46].

sgRNA sequences used

See supplemental table 6.

Antibodies used

See supplemental table 8.

Cell viability after in vitro cytokine stimulation

Cells were plated at 0.25M/ml in media with or without 10ng/ml IFNγ. Every day, an aliquot of

cells was counted (Vi-CELL XR, Beckman Coulter), and cells were diluted in fresh media to

maintain them in logarithmic growth phase. Continuously-treated cells were re-fed with fresh

10ng/ml IFNγ every day, whereas pulse-treated cells only received 24hrs of cytokine treatment.

Western Blotting

Cells were counted, spun down and washed in PBS prior to lysis in NP40 lysis buffer (25mM

HEPES pH 7.5, 150mM NaCl, 1.5mM $MgCl_2$, 0.5% NP40, 10% glycerol, 2mM DTT) with

protease and phosphatase inhibitors. Lysates were normalized by cell count and/or protein

concentration. 20-40μg of lysates were used for western blot analysis using standard procedures.

Antibody binding was detected by enhanced chemiluminescence (SuperSignal Dura, Thermo

Scientific).

RNA-sequencing analysis

Cells were seeded at 0.33M/ml density. Twenty-four hours later, 2M cells were collected. RNA

was first purified by TRizol extraction and then further purified using column-based methods and

polyA selection. RNAseq libraries were constructed using TruSeq Stranded mRNA Library Prep

Kits (Illumina) and were sequenced on an Illumina Hiseq4000 machine using 150bp paired-end

reads. Transcript abundances were quantified using Salmon[66], with differential expression

analysis performed by Sleuth [67].

Indisulam treatment

Indisulam (Sigma SML1225) was reconstituted at 10mM in DMSO and stored in single use aliquots at -80°C. For indisulam dose-response experiments, 5000 cells were plated in 384-well plates (Greiner) and treated with indisulam over a 72hr period. A 12-point dose-response was performed between $10\mu M$ and $4.9\mu M$ of drug, as dispensed by a Tecan D300e. Cell viability was measured by ATP quantification (Cell Titer Glo, Promega). Dose-response measurements were fitted to a sigmoidal curve and an IC50 determined (Prism, GraphPad Software). DCAF15 expression data from different cell lines was downloaded from the Cancer Cell Line Encyclopedia [68] (https://portals.broadinstitute.org/ccle)

For low-dose indisulam experiments, cells were plated at 0.4M/ml in media with or without 100nM indisulam (1:100,000 dilution of stock). Cells were diluted every day in fresh media and drug to maintain them in logarithmic growth phase. Cells were analyzed for CD80 expression 96 hours after initiation of treatment.

AML survival analysis

FPKM RNAseq quantification for patient samples form the TARGET and TCGA LAML cohorts was obtained from the NIH NCI Genomic Data Commons DATA portal (https://portal.gdc.cancer.gov/) . Clinical data for that TARGET AML and TCGA LAML cohorts were obtained from the Genomic Data Commons DATA portal and the Broad Institute TCGA Genome Data Analysis Center (http://gdac.broadinstitute.org/) respectively. Patients with matching clinical and transcript abundance data patients were stratified by DCAF15 expression as indicated. Survival time and vital status were defined as 'Overall Survival Time in Days' and 'Vital Status' respectively for the Target AML cohort. For the TCGA LAML study survival time for deceased patients ('patient.vital_status'=dead) was defined as 'patient.days_to_death' while for living patients ('patient.vital_status'=alive) 'patient.days_to_last_followup' was used for survival time. Survival analysis and Kaplan–Meier plots were generated using lifelines software for python (https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2584900).

DCAF15 proximity ligation

K562 cells were infected with lentivirus expressing DCAF15-3flag-BioID-HA-T2A-BlastR,

DCAF16-3flag-BioID-HA-T2A-BlastR, or 3flag-GFP-T2A-BioID-HA-T2A-BlastR. Stable cell

lines were generated by 10μg/ml blasticidin selection. In triplicate, 20M cells were grown in media

supplemented with 50μm biotin and 5μm MG132. 18hrs later, cell pellets were washed three times

with ice cold PBS and lysed in mild lysis buffer (PBS 0.1% NP40 + PI/PPI), conditions determined

to maximize the solubility of over-expressed DCAF15. 1mg of clarified lysate was used for

enrichment of biotinylated species. Lysates were mixed with 60ul of streptavidin beads (Pierce

#88817) for 4hrs at 4c in 500μl total volume. Beads were collected on a magnetic column, washed

twice with 1ml RIPA buffer (25mM HEPES-KOH pH 7.4, 150mM NaCl, 1% Triton X-100, 0.5%

sodium deoxycholate, 0.1% SDS, 1mM EDTA) and three times with 1ml urea buffer (2M urea,

10mM TRIS-HCl- pH 8.0).

For western blotting experiments, after urea washing, beads were equilibrated in mild lysis buffer.

Elution was performed by incubating the beads 15min at 23°C, 15min at 95°C in 30μl 2.5X

Laemlli buffer supplemented with 10mM Biotin and 20mM DTT. The eluate was brought down

to 1X concentration with lysis buffer prior to western blotting. We note that detection of total

biotinylated species by western blot was extremely sensitive to detection conditions. Membranes

were blocked for 10min in PBS, 2.5%BSA, 0.4% Triton-X 100. 1ng/ml streptavidin-HRP in

blocking buffer was added for 25min at room temperature. The membrane was washed for

15minutes in PBS 0.4% TritonX-100 prior to ECL exposure.

To measure BioID activity after indisulam treatment, cells were treated for 48hours with 0.1μm

indisulam, followed by 24hrs in indisulam with 50μm biotin and 5μm MG132.

Proteomic analysis of DCAF15 interaction partners

For proteomics experiments, after the urea buffer washes, the samples were resuspended in

denaturing buffer (8M urea, 50 mM ammonium bicarbonate pH 7.8). Proteins were reduced with

dithiothreitol (5 mM, RT, 30min) and alkylated with iodoacetamide (15 mM RT, 45 min in the

dark). Excess iodoacetamide was quenched with dithiothreitol (5 mM, room temperature, 20 min

in the dark). The samples were diluted to 1 M urea using 50 mM ammonium bicarbonate and then

digested with trypsin (37°C, 16h). After protein digestion, samples were acidified with

trifluoroacetic acid to a final concentration of 0.5% and desalted using C18 StageTips [69]. Peptides

were eluted with 40% acetonitrile/5% formic acid then 80% acetonitrile/5% formic acid and dried

overnight under vacuum at 25°C (Labconco CentriVap Benchtop Vacuum Concentrator, Kansas

City, Mo).

For tandem mass tag (TMT) labelling, dried peptides were resuspended in 50μL 200mM

HEPES/30% anhydrous acetonitrile. TMT reagents (5 mg) were dissolved in anhydrous

acetonitrile (250μL) of which 10μL was added to peptides to achieve a final acetonitrile

concentration of approximately 30% (v/v). Following incubation at room temperature for 1 h, the

reaction was quenched with 5% hydroxylamine/200mM HEPES to a final concentration of 0.3%

(v/v). The TMT labelled peptides were acidified with 50μL 1% trifluoroacetic acid and pooled

prior to desalting with SepPak (Waters) and dried under vacuum.

The pooled TMT-labeled peptides were fractionated using high pH RP-HPLC. The samples were

resuspended in 5% formic acid/5% acetonitrile and fractionated over a ZORBAX extended C18

column (Agilent, 5μm particles, 4.6 mm ID and 250 mm in length). Peptides were separated on a

75-min linear gradient from 5% to 35% acetonitrile in 10mM ammonium bicarbonate at a flow

rate of 0.5mL/min on an Agilent 1260 Infinity pump equipped with a degasser and a diode array

detector (set at 214, 220, and 254nm wavelength) from Agilent Technologies (Waldbronn,

Germany). The samples were fractionated into a total of 96 fractions and then consolidated into 12

as described previously [70]. Samples were dried down under vacuum and reconstituted in 4%

acetonitrile/5% formic acid for LC-MS/MS processing.

Peptides were analyzed on an Orbitrap Fusion Lumos mass spectrometer (Thermo Fisher

Scientific) coupled to an Easy-nLC (Thermo Fisher Scientific). Peptides were separated on a

microcapillary column (100 μm internal diameter, 25 cm long, filled using Maccel C18 AQ resin,

1.8μm, 120A; Sepax Technologies). The total LC-MS run length for each sample was 180 min

comprising a 165 min gradient from 6 to 30% acetonitrile in 0.125% formic acid. The flow rate

was 300 nL/min and the column was heated to 60°C.

Data-dependent acquisition (DDA) mode was used for mass spectrometry data collection. A high

resolution MS1 scan in the Orbitrap (m/z range 500-1,200, 60k resolution, AGC 5 x 10^5, max

injection time 100 ms, RF for S-lens 30) was collected from which the top 10 precursors were

selected for MS2 analysis followed by MS3 analysis. For MS2 spectra, ions were isolated using a

0.5 m/z window using the mass filter. The MS2 scan was performed in the quadrupole ion trap

(CID, AGC 1 x 10^4, normalized collision energy 30%, max injection time 35 ms) and the MS3

scan was analyzed in the Orbitrap (HCD, 60k resolution, max AGC 5x10^4, max injection time

250 ms, normalized collision energy 50). For TMT reporter ion quantification, up to six fragment

ions from each MS2 spectrum were selected for MS3 analysis using synchronous precursor

selection (SPS).

1003

Mass spectrometry data were processed using an in-house software pipeline [71]. Raw files were

converted to mzXML files and searched against a composite human uniprot database (downloaded

on 29th March 2017) containing sequences in forward and reverse orientations using the Sequest

algorithm. Database searching matched MS/MS spectra with fully tryptic peptides from this

composite dataset with a precursor ion tolerance of 20 ppm and a product ion tolerance of 0.6 Da.

Carbamidomethylation of cysteine residues (+57.02146 Da) and TMT tags of peptide N-termini

(+229.162932 Da) were set as static modifications. Oxidation of methionines (+15.99492 Da) was

set as a variable modification. Linear discriminant analysis was used to filter peptide spectral

matches to a 1 % FDR (false discovery rate) as described previously [71]. Non-unique peptides that

matched to multiple proteins were assigned to proteins that contained the largest number of

matched redundant peptides sequences using the principle of Occam's razor [71].

1015

1016   Quantification of TMT reporter ion intensities was performed by extracting the most intense ion

1017   within a 0.003 m/z window at the predicted m/z value for each reporter ion. TMT spectra were

1018   used for quantification when the sum of the signal-to-noise for all the reporter ions was greater

1019   than 200 and the isolation specificity was greater than 0.75 [72].

1020

1021   Base 2 logarithm of protein fold-changes were estimated by fitting a previously described Bayesian

1022   model [73] to the peptide level intensities. Protein estimates are reported as the mean of the posterior

1023   distribution for each parameter. Similarly, coefficients of variation are calculated by taking the

1024   posterior variance divided by the posterior mean. The probability of a small change ("P_null") was

1025   estimated as the frequency of posterior samples that fall within the interval (-1,1) on the log2 scale.

1026

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1032

1033   **Competing Interests**

1034   All authors are employees of Calico Life Sciences, LLC.

1035

1036   **References**

1037

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1219

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. S1

Fig. S2

A

controls | STAT1 sgRNA

#1 #2 | #1

α-STAT1 — 75

α-tubulin — 50

B

control | PTPN2 sgRNA

#1 #2

α-PTPN2 → — 50
— 37

α-GAPDH — 37

Fig. S3

A

B

C

Fig. S4

Fig. S5

Fig. S6

Fig. S7

A

Fig. S8