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## Differential Outcomes in Codon 12/13 and Codon 61 *NRAS*-Mutated Cancers in the Phase 2 NCI-MATCH Trial of Binimetinib in Patients with *NRAS*-Mutated Tumors

James M. Cleary<sup>1</sup>, Victoria Wang<sup>2</sup>, Rebecca S. Heist<sup>3</sup>, E. Scott Kopetz<sup>4</sup>, Edith P. Mitchell<sup>5</sup>, James A. Zwiebel<sup>6</sup>, Kevin S. Kapner<sup>1</sup>, Helen X. Chen<sup>7</sup>, Shuli Li<sup>2</sup>, Robert J. Gray<sup>2</sup>, Lisa M. McShane<sup>8</sup>, Larry V. Rubinstein<sup>8</sup>, David R. Patton<sup>9</sup>, Funda Meric-Bernstam<sup>3</sup>, Melissa S. Dillmon<sup>10</sup>, P. Mickey Williams<sup>11</sup>, Stanley R. Hamilton<sup>4</sup>, Barbara A. Conley<sup>12</sup>, Andrew J. Aguirre<sup>1</sup>, Peter J. O'Dwyer<sup>13</sup>, Lyndsay N. Harris<sup>12</sup>, Carlos L. Arteaga<sup>14</sup>, Alice P. Chen<sup>15</sup>, Keith T. Flaherty<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts USA

<sup>2</sup>Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Massachusetts USA

<sup>3</sup>Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

<sup>4</sup>University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas USA

<sup>5</sup>Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA

<sup>6</sup>Investigational Drug Branch, Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland USA

<sup>7</sup>Cancer Therapy Evaluation Program, Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland USA

<sup>8</sup>Biometric Research Program, Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland USA

<sup>9</sup>Center for Biomedical Informatics & Information Technology, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland USA

<sup>10</sup>Harbin Clinic Medical Oncology and Clinical Research. Rome, Georgia USA

<sup>11</sup>Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research, Frederick, Maryland USA

<sup>12</sup>Cancer Diagnosis Program, Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland USA

<sup>13</sup>University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA

<sup>14</sup>UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas USA

<sup>15</sup>Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland USA

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**Correspondence:** James Cleary, MD, PhD, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, 450 Brookline Ave, Boston, MA 02215 USA; Tel: 617-632-6073; Fax: 617-632-5370; james\_cleary@dfci.harvard.edu.

## Abstract

**Purpose:** Preclinical and clinical data suggest that downstream inhibition with a MEK inhibitor, such as binimetinib, might be efficacious for *NRAS*-mutated cancers.

**Patients and Methods:** Patients enrolled in the NCI-MATCH trial master protocol underwent tumor biopsy and molecular profiling by targeted next-generation sequencing. Patients with *NRAS*-mutated tumors, except melanoma, were enrolled in subprotocol Z1A, a single-arm study evaluating binimetinib 45 mg twice daily. The primary endpoint was objective response rate (ORR). Secondary endpoints included progression-free survival (PFS) and overall survival (OS). A *post-hoc* analysis examined the association of *NRAS* mutation type with outcome.

**Results:** In total, 47 eligible patients with a refractory solid tumor harboring a codon 12, 13, or 61 *NRAS* mutation were treated. Observed toxicity was moderate, and 30% of patients discontinued treatment because of binimetinib-associated toxicity. The ORR was 2.1% (1 of 47 patients). A malignant ameloblastoma patient harboring a codon 61 *NRAS* mutation achieved a durable partial response (PR). A *NRAS* codon 61 mutated colorectal cancer patient had an unconfirmed PR, and two other *NRAS* codon 61 mutated colorectal patients had stable disease for at least 12 months. In an exploratory analysis, colorectal cancer patients bearing a *NRAS* codon 61 mutation (n = 8) had a significantly longer OS (p = 0.03) and PFS (p = 0.007) than those with codon 12 or 13 mutations (n = 16).

**Conclusions:** Single-agent binimetinib did not show promising efficacy in *NRAS*-mutated cancers. The observation of increased OS and PFS in codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancer patients merits further investigation.

## Keywords

MEK inhibitor; *NRAS*; targeted therapy; ameloblastoma; colorectal cancer; cholangiocarcinoma

## Introduction

*RAS* mutations result in upregulation of the mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) pathway and are thought to be key driver mutations in many malignancies (1). The importance of *RAS* mutations is underscored by their high prevalence in human malignancies. *RAS*, which has three highly homologous isoforms (*KRAS*, *NRAS*, and *HRAS*), is mutated in approximately 19% of human malignancies (2). *NRAS*-mutated tumors are less common than *KRAS*-mutated malignancies and are found in approximately 8% of human cancers (3,4). Although the *NRAS* mutation is most frequently found in melanoma, these mutations are seen in many other solid malignancies including colorectal, thyroid, biliary tract, endometrial, and ovarian cancers (5–11).

While recently there has been some progress in developing G12C *KRAS* inhibitors, by and large, efforts to directly target *RAS* have been unsuccessful (4,12,13). Clinical trials testing numerous strategies have not demonstrated biological activity (4). Interestingly, preclinical studies have shown *NRAS*-mutated cell lines to be more sensitive to MEK inhibition than *KRAS*-mutated cell lines (14–16). For example, one study found that 5 of 6 tested *NRAS*-mutated lung cancer cell lines were sensitive to MEK inhibitors (14).

In agreement with *in vitro* observations, the most successful effort in targeting *RAS* mutations has been in *NRAS*-mutated melanoma. The randomized phase 3 NEMO trial (17) compared the efficacy of binimetinib (MEK162, ARRY-162), a potent oral inhibitor of MEK1 and MEK2 (18,19), with that of dacarbazine in chemotherapy-naïve advanced melanoma patients with a codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated tumor. The NEMO trial demonstrated that binimetinib-treated patients, compared with those treated with dacarbazine, had an improved median PFS (2.8 months verse 1.5 months) and objective response rate (ORR) (15% verse 9%) (17). However, there was no difference in overall survival (OS) between the two arms (17).

On the basis of these preclinical and clinical data, we hypothesized that the binimetinib MEK inhibitor might be efficacious in other *NRAS*-mutated malignancies. Here, we report the results of the subprotocol of the NCI-MATCH basket trial that evaluated the anti-tumor efficacy of single agent binimetinib in patients with a refractory *NRAS*-mutated malignancy.

## METHODS

### NCI-MATCH Trial Study Design

The NCI-MATCH trial ([NCT02465060](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/study/NCT02465060)) is a multicenter open-label phase 2 trial evaluating targeted therapy directed by molecular profiles. Eligible patients have histologically documented solid tumor, lymphoma, or multiple myeloma who require therapy after progression on at least one line of standard systemic therapy. Patients were required to have an Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) performance status 1 and measurable disease. Adequate renal, hematologic, and liver function were required.

Patients enrolled in the NCI-MATCH trial master protocol underwent a tumor biopsy and molecular profiling with the following investigational assays: an adapted OncoPrint AmpliSeq™ (OCP) panel (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) and immunohistochemistry assays for PTEN, MLH2, MSH2, and Rb expression in protocol-designated CLIA-accredited laboratories (20,21). Patients whose tumor had a molecular alteration targeted by one of the treatments included in the trial were offered enrollment onto a subprotocol according to the NCI-MATCH treatment assignment algorithm (MATCHbox). The treatment-assignment algorithm was designed to enroll patients in the treatment subprotocol that had the highest level of evidence for their therapeutic agent and alteration.

This study was conducted according to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and the International Conference on Harmonization Good Clinical Practice guidelines. The study was approved by the NCI Central Institutional Review Board (CIRB). All patients were provided with and signed CIRB-approved consent forms before enrollment.

### Study Population for the *NRAS* Subprotocol Arm

Patients eligible for the *NRAS* subprotocol had a tumor harboring a codon 12, 13, or 61 *NRAS*-mutation. Melanoma patients were excluded from this subprotocol because binimetinib has already been extensively investigated in this population. Exclusion criteria included prior treatment with a MEK inhibitor, a history of retinal pathology and left

ventricular ejection fraction < 50%. Patients needed to have completed chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery 4 weeks before starting this subprotocol.

### Treatment and Evaluations for *NRAS* Subprotocol

Patients assigned to the *NRAS* subprotocol were treated with open label, orally administered binimetinib 45 mg twice daily continuously until disease progression or the development of unacceptable toxicity. A cycle was defined as 28 days. Decrease in the binimetinib dose below 30 mg twice daily was not allowed. Safety assessments performed included MUGA/echocardiography at the end of the second cycle and every 4 cycles thereafter. Retinal examinations were performed after the first cycle and then every 2 cycles.

Radiological tumor assessments, evaluated according to RECIST, version 1.1, were performed every 8 weeks (2 cycles) for the first 4 cycles and every 3 cycles thereafter (22). Adverse events assessment was performed according to the Common Toxicity Criteria for Adverse events (CTCAE), version 4.0.

### Statistical Analyses

This subprotocol was designed to accrue 35 patients; to ensure the enrollment of 31 eligible patients. Unexpectedly, 18 of the first 25 subjects enrolled in this subprotocol were colorectal cancer patients. Because of the predominance of colorectal cancer patients on this subprotocol, enrollment of patients with this diagnosis was halted after 24 had been registered to increase the number of non-colorectal cancer patients. The subprotocol was amended so that after the first 35 patients were enrolled, non-colorectal cancer patient accrual was allowed to continue for up to 6 more months to enroll a maximum of 35 additional patients or until response data were available on at least 31 patients, whichever came first. A maximum of 10 patients per tumor type was enforced during accrual beyond the first 35 patients.

This subprotocol's primary objective was assessment of the ORR (complete response + PR) according to RECIST, version 1.1. If an objective response was detected in 5/31 patients (16%), the agent was considered promising and worthy of further testing. The subprotocol had 91.8% power to conclude that the agent is promising if the true ORR was 25%. The type I error rate (1-sided) was 1.8% under a null response rate of 5%.

Secondary objectives included assessment of PFS, 6-month PFS, and OS. PFS was defined as the time between the start of binimetinib treatment and disease progression or death from any cause, censored at the date of last disease assessment for patients who had not progressed. OS was defined as the time between initiation of binimetinib and death or the patient was censored at the date of last contact. Kaplan-Meier methodology was used to estimate survival distributions (23).

Exploratory analyses to assess differences in ORR and PFS by mutation codon were conducted using Fisher's exact test (ORR) or log-rank (PFS) test. Testing was two-sided, level 0.05 without adjustment for multiple comparisons due to the exploratory nature of these analyses.

## Analysis of Databases Containing Genomically Annotated Cancer Patient Survival Data and Cancer Cell Line Drug Sensitivity

Survival data on *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancer patients was obtained from the Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) database on cBioPortal ([www.cbioportal.org](http://www.cbioportal.org)) (24,25). MEK inhibitor sensitivity data from the Genomics of Drug Sensitivity in Cancer Database and the Cancer Cell line Encyclopedia database was obtained from the Cancer Dependency Map portal (<https://depmap.org/portal/>) (26–28). Data from codon 61 and codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated cell lines were analyzed for sensitivity to MEK inhibitors by analyzing the area under the fitted dose response curve (AUC). Statistical significance was determined using two-tailed Welch's t-test.

## RESULTS

Between June 6, 2016 and July 24, 2017, 4,889 patients were screened for the MATCH trial (Figure 1). Of those patients, 114 had tumors harboring an *NRAS* mutation, and 53 of the 114 were subsequently enrolled in the *NRAS* subprotocol. Of the 53 patients enrolled, 50 patients started binimetinib treatment. Ultimately, 3 patients were excluded because they were found ineligible for the study, leaving 47 eligible patients who were treated on this subprotocol (Figure 1). The median age of the 47 eligible patients was 60 years (Table 1). In total, 31 patients (66%) had an ECOG performance status of 1 (Table 1). Most patients had been heavily pretreated, and 53% had received four or more prior lines of treatment (Table 1).

More than half the patients had metastatic colorectal adenocarcinoma (24/47, 51.1%). In agreement with other studies, our data demonstrated that *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancers are most frequently mutated in codon 12 (13/24, 54.1%) (Table 2), and they occur mainly in left-sided colon and rectal tumors (21/24, 87.5%) (Table 1) (29). There were no significant differences in age, gender, race, performance status or prior lines of therapy between colorectal cancer patients harboring codon 12/13 and codon 61 *NRAS* mutations (Supplemental Table 1).

The most common non-colorectal cancers were cholangiocarcinoma (15%), low-grade papillary serous carcinoma of the ovary (6.4%), and endometrioid endometrial adenocarcinoma (6.4%) (Table 1). In contrast to colorectal adenocarcinoma, other cancers harbored predominantly codon 61 mutations (14/23, 60.9%) compared with codon 13 (5/23, 21.7%) and codon 12 (4/23, 17.4%) mutations ( $p = 0.03$ ) (Table 2). Analysis of genomic alterations co-occurring with an *NRAS* mutation revealed that the *TP53* mutation was most common (23/47, 48.9%) (Supplemental Figure 1). *APC* genomic alterations were also frequent (19/47, 40.4%), but these were observed only in colorectal cancers (19/24, 79.2%).

As of the data cut-off of May 3, 2019, all 47 patients had discontinued study treatment. The most common reason for withdrawal was progressive disease (62%). The median follow-up for patients was 24 months (range 4–30 months).

## Efficacy

The study failed to demonstrate a promising level of activity and did not meet the primary endpoint. The observed ORR was 2.1% (90% CI 0.1–9.7%), and the null hypothesis of 5% ORR (deemed a non-promising level of activity) could not be rejected (Figure 2A). For the efficacy population (n = 47), the 6-month PFS was 29.2% (90% CI 19.4–44.0%), the median PFS was 3.5 months (95% CI 1.8–5.8 months), and the median OS was 10.5 months (95% CI 5.3–13.2 months) (Supplemental Figure 2A and 2B).

The median PFS for patients with *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancer was 1.8 months (90% CI 1.7–3.7 months) compared with 4.4 months (90% CI 3.6–8.5 months) for patients who had other cancer types (p = 0.07) (Supplemental Figure 3). The median PFS for patients with cholangiocarcinoma (n = 7) was 3.6 months (90% CI 1.8–not reached months) (Supplemental Figure 4).

The sole confirmed PR was observed in a patient with a Q61R mutation *NRAS*-mutated malignant ameloblastoma. This patient had developed the ameloblastoma 19 years prior to enrollment and had metastatic lung lesions measuring up to 6 cm. The patient received binimetinib for 26 months before discontinuing the subprotocol because of grade 2 myalgias. There was also one unconfirmed PR in a colorectal cancer patient whose tumor harbored an *NRAS* codon Q61R mutation along with a *TP53* and *APC* mutation. This patient had a 48.2% tumor reduction according to RECIST criteria after cycle 4 (Supplemental Figure 5). Restaging scans at cycle 7 showed new metastatic lesions, and the patient was removed from this subprotocol. Two additional colorectal cancer patients harboring *NRAS* Q61K mutations remained on this subprotocol for 12 and 17 months with stable disease before ultimately developing progressive disease.

In a *post-hoc* analysis, patients with colorectal cancer harboring *NRAS* codon 61 mutations who were treated with binimetinib (n = 8) had a significantly longer OS (hazard ratio [HR] 0.34, 95% CI 0.12–0.95; p = 0.03) and PFS (HR 0.23, 95% CI 0.07–0.74; p = 0.007) than those with *NRAS* codon 12/13 mutations (n = 16) (Figure 3A and 3B). Similarly, when all tumor types were examined, binimetinib-treated patients with codon 61-mutated tumors also had significantly longer OS and PFS than those with codon 12/13-mutated tumors. Binimetinib-treated patients with codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated tumors had a median OS of 13.1 (90% CI 9.1–not reached) months compared to a median OS of 5.5 (90% CI 4.7–11.6) months for tumors harboring a codon 12 or 13 *NRAS* mutation (p = 0.04) (Supplemental Figure 6A). The median PFS for binimetinib-treated patients with codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated tumors was 1.8 months (90% CI 1.8–3.7 months) compared with 5.8 months (90% CI 2.5–9.1 months) for binimetinib-treated patients whose tumor harbored an *NRAS* codon 61 mutation (p = 0.006) (Supplemental Figure 6B). In contrast to colorectal cancer patients, binimetinib-treated patients with other tumor types with codon 61 *NRAS* mutations (n = 14) did not have a significantly longer PFS (HR 0.67, 95% CI 0.25–1.76; p = 0.4) and OS (HR 0.84, 95% CI 0.31–2.27; p = 0.70) than those with codon 12/13 *NRAS* mutations (n = 9). (Supplemental Figure 7A and 7B).

One explanation for the improved clinical outcomes of binimetinib-treated codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancer patients is that codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancers have

a more indolent natural history than codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancers. We examined survival data of *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancer patients (Supplemental Table 2) in the TCGA database (24,25) and found that codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancer patients (n=14) did not have an improvement in OS compared to codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancer patients (n=16) (HR 1.06, 95% CI 0.23–4.94; p=0.94) (Supplemental Figure 8).

We next examined the hypothesis that codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated tumors are more sensitive to MEK inhibition by examining MEK inhibitor drug sensitivity testing performed in large cancer cell line collections. Using *NRAS*-mutated cell lines from the Genomics of Drug Sensitivity in Cancer database (28), we found that codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated cancer cell lines were significantly more sensitive than codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated cancer cell lines to 5 different MEK inhibitors (refametinib, selumetinib, trametinib, PD-0325901, and PD-184352) (Figure 4), although more limited data from the Cancer Cell Line Encyclopedia did not demonstrate a statistically significant difference (Supplemental Figure 9) (27).

## Safety

Toxicities that are known to be caused by MEK inhibitors, including rash, diarrhea, retinal abnormalities, decreased ejection fraction, elevated creatinine phosphokinase levels, and hypertension, occurred in 43 (86%) of the 50 patients who started treatment. Grade 3 or 4 toxicities that were considered to be possibly, probably, or definitely binimetinib-related are shown in Table 3. One death, which was from multiorgan failure, was assessed as possibly related to binimetinib.

Among the 50 patients treated on this subprotocol, 30% discontinued treatment because of adverse events. Binimetinib dose reduction was required in 44% of patients. The first dose reductions occurred at a median of 2.6 weeks into the trial. There was no difference in the rate of early discontinuation of binimetinib, for reasons other than progressive disease or death, between colorectal cancer patients harboring codon 12/13 and codon 61 *NRAS* mutations. Among the 24 binimetinib-treated colorectal patients, the vast majority of patients (21) discontinued therapy due to disease progression or death. Two colorectal cancer patients discontinued therapy because of adverse events (both tumors harbored a codon 12/13 *NRAS* mutation) and one colorectal cancer patient withdrew consent (this patient's tumor harbored a codon 61 *NRAS* mutation).

## Discussion

Targeted therapy for *RAS*-mutated malignancies represents an enormous yet critical challenge in clinical oncology. This subprotocol evaluated whether a single-agent MEK inhibitor, binimetinib, might be an effective therapy in patients with non-melanoma *NRAS*-mutated malignancies. Similarly to the lack of efficacy of MEK inhibitor monotherapy in *KRAS*-mutated cancers (19,30,31), single-agent binimetinib did not show a promising ORR in patients with *NRAS*-mutated solid tumors. The modest efficacy of binimetinib monotherapy was disappointing. In the NEMO trial, while binimetinib did not improve OS compared to dacarbazine in codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated melanoma, it did result in a modest increase in PFS over dacarbazine, and it had an ORR of 15% (17). Possible reasons for

the lower ORR in this subprotocol compared to the NEMO trial include lineage or allelic differences between the two study populations. Melanoma patients who participated in the NEMO trial were treatment-naïve, with the exception of immunotherapy, while more than half the patients registered on this subprotocol had received four or more prior lines of therapy. However, taken together, data from the NEMO trial and this subprotocol clearly indicate that MEK inhibitor monotherapy is inadequate to provide clinical benefit to most patients with *NRAS*-mutated tumors.

Preclinical data suggests that *NRAS* mutation allelic differences can generate functionally significant phenotypic distinctions (32–34). Mechanistically, codon 61 *NRAS* mutations activate NRAS differently than codon 12 and 13 *NRAS*-mutations. Codon 61 *NRAS* mutations block the hydrolysis of GTP to GDP (35), while codon 12 and 13 mutations interfere with the binding of GTPase-activating proteins, which ordinarily would accelerate the hydrolysis of GTP to GDP (36). We explored whether the outcomes of binimetinib-treated patients with codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated tumors were different than binimetinib-treated patients with codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated tumors. Binimetinib-treated colorectal cancer patients whose tumor harbored a codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated tumor had a significantly longer OS and PFS than binimetinib-treated colorectal cancer patients with a codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated tumor. Similarly, an analysis of all binimetinib-treated patients, regardless of tumor type, also demonstrated that patients with codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated tumors had a superior OS and PFS compared to patients with a codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated tumor. However, when colorectal cancer patients were excluded from the analysis, the improvement in OS and PFS was no longer statistically significant. Given the colorectal cancer patient predominance in this trial, it is unclear whether this improvement in OS and PFS was solely attributable to colorectal cancer or that it is more generalizable to other tumor types.

One possible explanation for the superior OS and PFS of binimetinib-treated colorectal cancer patients with codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated tumors is that these tumors have a more indolent natural history than codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated cancers. Using the TCGA database, where 80% of patients had pathologically staged I to III colorectal cancers, we found no difference in the OS of colorectal cancer patients with codon 12/13 *NRAS* mutations and codon 61 *NRAS* mutations. Cercek and colleagues performed a similar analysis and found that *NRAS*-mutated metastatic colorectal cancer patients with exon 3 (codon 60 and 61) *NRAS* mutations had a shorter OS than metastatic colorectal cancer patients with exon 2 (codon 12 and 13) *NRAS* mutations (37). Potential reasons for the differences observed between these two analyses include the different stage distribution of the two data sets and the relatively small sample size.

Since codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancer does not appear to have a more indolent natural history than codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancer, an alternative explanation is that codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated colorectal cancers are more susceptible to binimetinib. All the colorectal cancer patients that either achieved an unconfirmed PR or stable disease for longer than 12 months harbored a codon 61 *NRAS* mutation. Consistent with the findings observed in our trial, we found that codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated cell lines were more sensitive to MEK inhibitors compared to codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated cell lines in the Genomics of Drug Sensitivity in Cancer Database. While analysis of MEK inhibitor



sensitivity in more limited data from the Cancer Cell Line Encyclopedia cell line collection did not replicate these findings, previous work has noted inconsistent results between these two large pharmacogenomic databases (38). To more rigorously assess the hypothesis that cancers with *NRAS* codon 61 mutations are more sensitive to MEK inhibition than cancers with *NRAS* codon 12/13 mutations, future preclinical studies could explore whether the differential sensitivity of MEK inhibitors is observed in experimental systems, such as isogenic cell lines or transgenic mice, that only differ in the *NRAS* codon that is mutated. Interestingly, a phosphoproteomic study demonstrated that while *NRAS* codon 61 mutated tumors exhibit hyperactivation of the MAPK pathway, tumors harboring *NRAS* codon 12 mutations were more reliant on the PI3K/AKT pathway (39). If this finding is confirmed, this differential downstream signaling could explain how *NRAS* codon 61 mutated cancer are more sensitive to MEK inhibition than *NRAS* codon 12/13 mutated cancers.

Although MEK inhibitor monotherapy is insufficient to treat *NRAS*-mutated cancers, the modest activity observed in this subprotocol and in *NRAS* codon 61-mutated melanoma suggests that MEK inhibitor combinations may potentially be an effective treatment strategy. In an *NRAS*-mutated murine model of melanoma, single-agent MEK inhibition was cytostatic, whereas combined MEK and CDK4/6 inhibition resulted in significant tumor regression (40). In this model, MEK inhibitor monotherapy induced apoptosis but did not block cell cycle arrest, while combined MEK and CDK4/6 inhibition was more potent because it stimulated both apoptosis and cell cycle arrest. Consequently, the strategy of combined MEK and CDK4/6 inhibition is undergoing clinical testing. In addition to MEK inhibitor-based strategies, encouraging anti-tumor activity has recently been reported in trials using MRTX849 and AMG510, which are novel covalent inhibitors of *KRAS* G12C (13,41). These data raise the possibility that similar compounds might have activity in *NRAS* G12C- or G13C-mutated tumors. Data from this subprotocol indicate that *NRAS* G12C mutations were present in 1 of 17 (5.8%) codon 12-mutated tumors and 2 of 8 (25%) codon 13-mutated tumors.

A patient with a codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated malignant ameloblastoma had a durable 26-month PR to binimetinib. Malignant ameloblastoma is a rare odontogenic tumor that appears to be driven by the MAPK pathway. More than 80% of malignant ameloblastomas harbor either an *RAS* or a *BRAF* mutation; most (46–62%) are V600E *BRAF* mutations, and the minority (6%) are *NRAS* mutations (42,43). V600E *BRAF*-mutated malignant ameloblastomas have been reported to have durable responses to *BRAF* inhibition (44,45). Although this patient had indolent tumor for 19 years prior to accrual to the trial, the patient's 26-month response to binimetinib further supports the sensitivity of this *NRAS*-mutated tumor type to MAPK inhibition (44,45).

High percentages of patients in this subprotocol discontinued treatment (30%) and required dose reductions (44%) because of binimetinib-associated toxicity. This finding is similar to the experience reported for patients with melanoma treated with binimetinib in the NEMO trial, in which 25% of patients discontinued binimetinib because of toxicity (17).

In conclusion, MEK inhibitor monotherapy is an insufficient treatment for *NRAS*-mutated solid tumors. A *post-hoc* analyses suggested that binimetinib-treated colorectal cancer

patients with an *NRAS* codon 61-mutated tumor had a significantly longer OS and PFS than binimetinib-treated colorectal cancer patients with an *NRAS* codon 12- or 13-mutated tumor. The design of future clinical trials targeting *NRAS* should carefully consider differentiating between codon 12/13 and codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated tumors as these two populations appear to have important biological differences and therapeutic sensitivities.

## Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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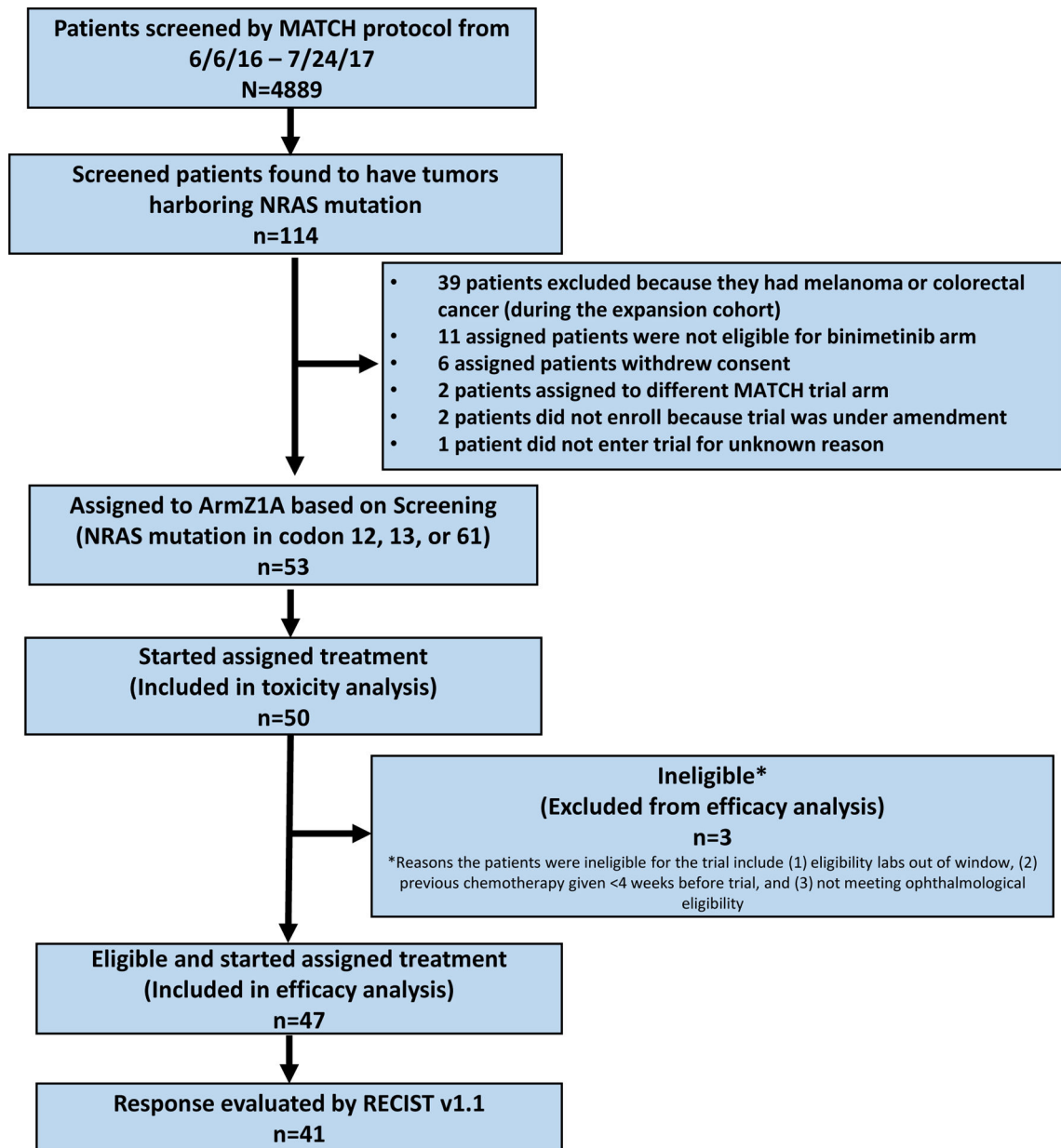
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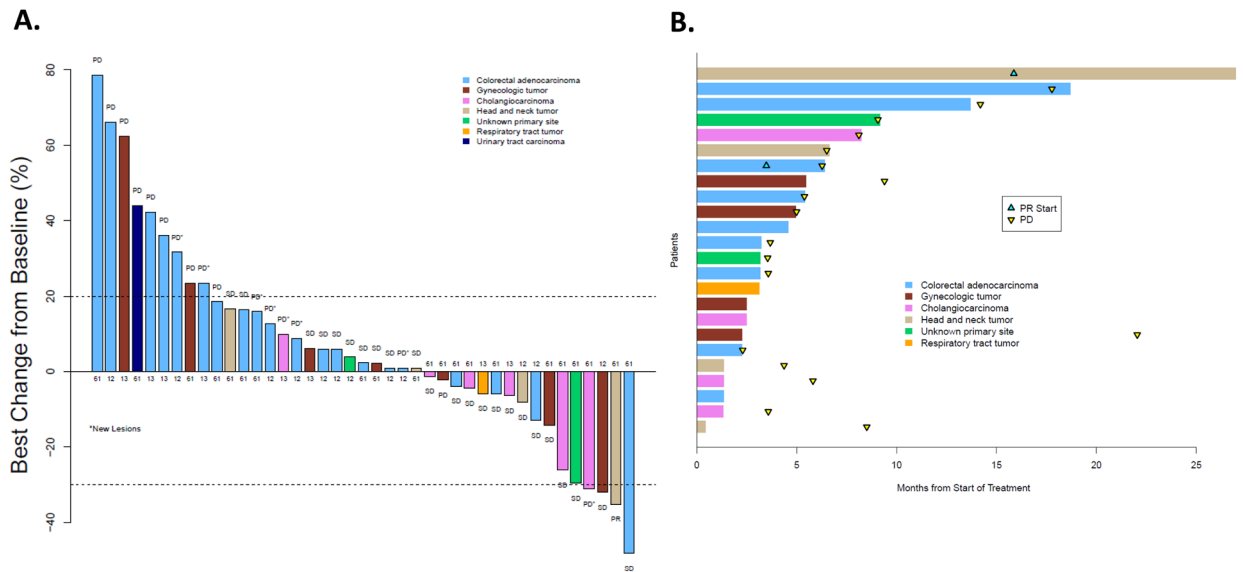
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### Statement of Translational Relevance

Therapeutic targeting of *RAS*-mutated malignancies is an elusive but highly sought-after goal in clinical oncology. Whereas MEK inhibitor monotherapy is ineffective in *KRAS*-mutated cancers, preclinical data and clinical studies in *NRAS*-mutated melanoma suggest that single-agent MEK inhibition may be efficacious in *NRAS*-mutated cancers. We treated 47 patients with *NRAS*-mutated non-melanoma cancers with the MEK inhibitor binimetinib. Although a malignant ameloblastoma patient had a durable response and two colorectal cancer patients remained on binimetinib for 12 months, the trial did not meet its primary endpoint. Subsequent analysis revealed a potentially important biological difference between codon 61 and codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated tumors. Colorectal cancer patients with codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated tumors had superior survival outcomes after binimetinib treatment than patients with tumors harboring codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutations. Preclinical studies have also revealed significant biological differences between *NRAS* mutation alleles, and future studies should explore how to exploit these differences.

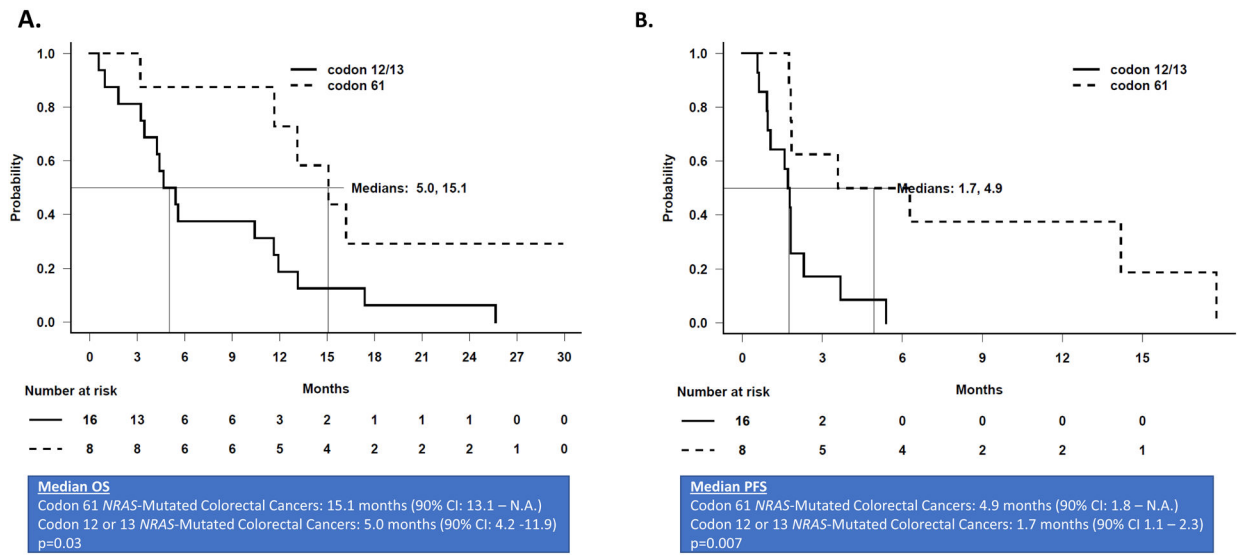


**Figure 1:**  
CONSORT diagram

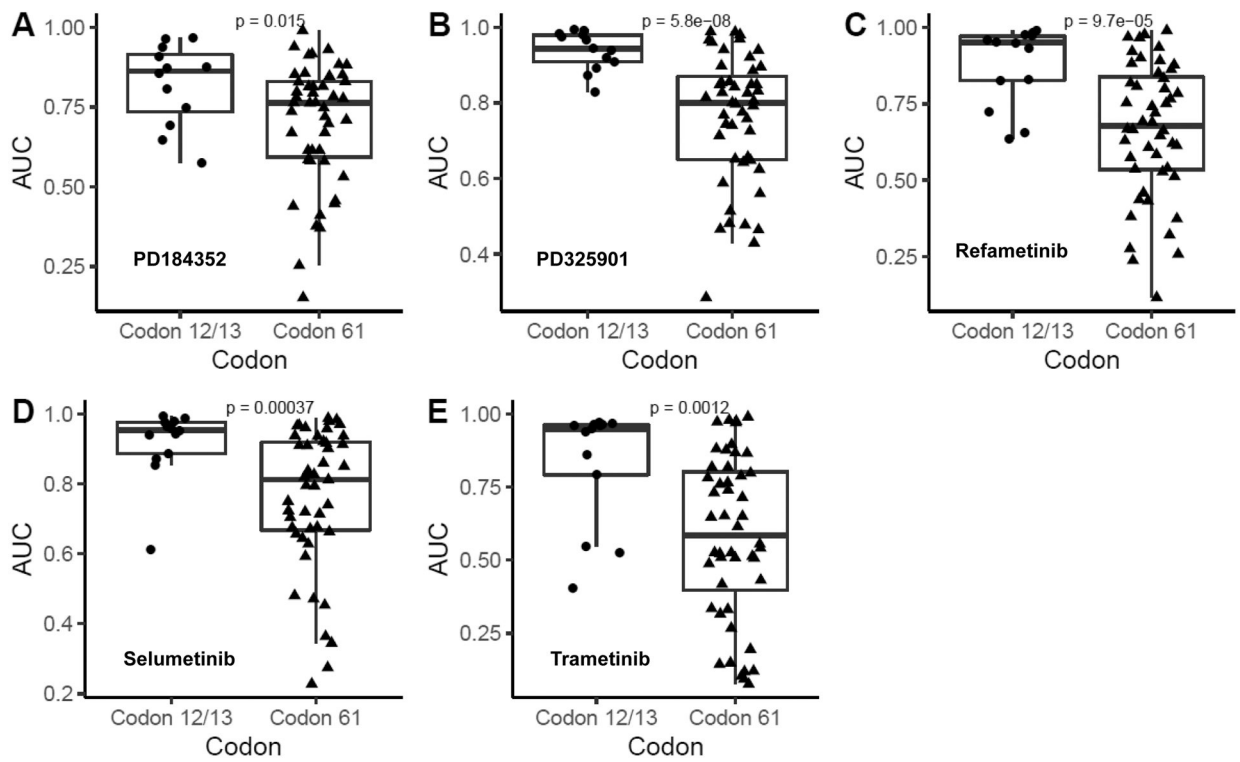


**Figure 2:**  
 (A) Best overall response according to RECIST criteria in the 41 evaluable patients who remained on this subprotocol. The number associated with each tumor designates the *NRAS* codon that was mutated. (B) treatment duration of the 24 patients whose best response was stable disease or a partial response. Abbreviations: Progressive disease (PD), stable disease (SD), and PR (partial response).





**Figure 3:**  
 (A) Kaplan-Meier estimates of OS; (B) PFS comparing binimetinib-treated colorectal cancer patients with tumors harboring codon 61 *NRAS* mutations to colorectal cancer patients with tumors harboring codon 12 or 13 *NRAS* mutations.



**Figure 4:** Comparison of MEK inhibitor sensitivity between codon 61 *NRAS*-mutated cell lines and codon 12/13 *NRAS*-mutated cell lines in the Genomics of Drug Sensitivity in Cancer Database. MEK inhibitors evaluated include PD184352 (A), PD325901 (B), Refametinib (C), Selumetinib (D), Trametinib (E). Drug sensitivity was measured by analyzing the area under the fitted dose response curve (AUC) and significance was determined using two-tailed Welch's t-test.

**Table 1:**

Baseline Patient Characteristics for Eligible Patients Who Started Protocol Treatment

Characteristic	Total (n=47)
Median Age, yr (range)	60 (30–84)
<b>Sex</b>	
Female	29 (62%)
Male	18 (38%)
<b>ECOG Performance Status</b>	
0	16 (34%)
1	31 (66%)
<b>Prior Lines of Therapy</b>	
0–1	11 (23%)
2	4 (9%)
3	7 (15%)
>3	25 (53%)
<b>Race</b>	
White	40 (85%)
Black	3 (6%)
Asian	2 (4%)
Not reported	2 (4%)
<b>Tumor Type</b>	
<b>Gastrointestinal tract malignancies</b>	
Colorectal adenocarcinoma	24 (51%)
Right colon (n=3)	
Left colon and rectum (n=21)	
Cholangiocarcinoma	7 (15%)
Intrahepatic (n=6)	
Not specified (n=1)	
<b>Gynecologic malignancies</b>	
Low-grade papillary serous carcinoma of ovary	3 (6%)
Endometrioid endometrial adenocarcinoma	3 (6%)
Granulosa cell tumor of ovary, juvenile type	1 (2%)
<b>Head/neck and respiratory tract malignancies</b>	
Thyroid carcinoma	2 (4%)
Papillary thyroid cancer (n=1)	
Follicular thyroid cancer (n=1)	
Adenoid cystic carcinoma of maxillary sinus	1 (2%)
Malignant ameloblastoma of mandible	1 (2%)
<b>Respiratory tract tumor</b>	
Epithelioid mesothelioma of pleura	1 (2%)

Characteristic	Total (n=47)
Adenoid cystic carcinoma of trachea	1 (2%)
<b>Urinary tract malignancies</b>	
Mucinous adenocarcinoma of urinary bladder	1 (2%)
<b>Unknown primary site</b>	2 (4%)

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**Table 2:**Distribution of *NRAS*-Mutations in Eligible Patients Who Started Protocol Treatment

	Colorectal (n=24)	Cholangiocarcinoma (n=7)	Other (n=16)	Total (n=47)
<b>Codon 12</b>	13 (54.2%)	0 (0%)	4 (25%)	17 (36.2%)
Gly12Asp	8 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	3 (18.8%)	11 (23.4%)
Gly12Cys	1 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.1%)
Gly12Ser	1 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.1%)
Gly12Val	3 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.2%)	4 (8.5%)
<b>Codon 13</b>	3 (12.5%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (18.8%)	8 (17%)
Gly13Arg	1 (4.2%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (6.2%)	4 (8.5%)
Gly13Asp	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.2%)	1 (2.1%)
Gly13Cys	1 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.2%)	2 (4.3%)
Gly13Val	1 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.1%)
<b>Codon 61</b>	8 (33.3%)	5 (71.4%)	9 (56.2%)	22 (46.8%)
Gln61Arg	1 (4.2%)	3 (42.9%)	6 (37.5%)	10 (21.3%)
Gln61His	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Gln61Leu	2 (8.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.3%)
Gln61Lys	5 (20.8%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (18.8%)	10 (21.3%)

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**Table 3:**

Grade 3 to 5 Adverse Events Possibly, Probably, or Definitely Associated with Study Treatment

Toxicity Type	Subprotocol		
	EAY131-Z1A (n=50)		
	Grade		
	3	4	5
	(n)	(n)	(n)
Heart failure	1	-	-
Myocardial infarction	1	-	-
Eye disorders	1	-	-
Mucositis oral	1	-	-
Nausea	1	-	-
Small intestinal obstruction	1	-	-
Fatigue	1	-	-
Multi-organ failure	-	-	1
Edema limbs	1	-	-
Urinary tract infection	1	-	-
Alanine aminotransferase increased	1	-	-
Alkaline phosphatase increased	1	-	-
Aspartate aminotransferase increased	1	-	-
CPK increased	2	-	-
Lymphocyte count decreased	2	-	-
White blood cell decreased	1	-	-
Ejection fraction decreased	1	-	-
Anorexia	1	-	-
Dehydration	1	-	-
Hypoalbuminemia	1	-	-
Hyponatremia	1	-	-
Hypophosphatemia	1	-	-
Muscle weakness lower limb	1	-	-
Muscle weakness upper limb	1	-	-
Syncope	1	-	-
Rash acneiform	3	-	-
Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders	1	-	-
Hypertension	6	-	-