M15.53 Prioritization report

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1. **Composition**

The module M15.53 belongs to Aggregate A37 from the BloodGen3 fixed module repertoire(1,2). This module aggregate is associated with circulating erythroid cells. It was found to be associated with RSV disease severity (3). We showed in the same study that the abundance of A27 transcripts is also elevated in the blood of patients with stage IV melanoma (3).

It comprises 25 genes: BRD4, C16ORF35, CDKL1, DPM2, EPB41, HMBS, HPS1, IQWD1, KLC3, LOC643008, LOC648434, LOC650898, MAP2K3, MICAL2, MICALCL, MXI1, RAB3IL1, RP11-529I10.4, SLC38A5, SLC6A8, TCP11L2, TGM2, TMPRSS9, TTC25, WNK1.

2. **Functional convergence**

3. **Scoring and prioritization**

Genes were scored on six criteria using GPT-4 and Claude. The scores were averaged, and candidate genes ranked according to their cumulative scores (**Figure 1**, Methods: Step 3 and Step 4).

The two LLMs were requested to score each gene on the following six statements:

- a. The gene is associated with erythroid cells or erythropoiesis.
- b. The gene is currently being used as a biomarker in clinical settings.
- c. The gene has potential value as a blood transcriptional biomarker.
- d. The gene is relevant to circulating leukocytes immune biology.
- e. The gene is a known drug target.
- f. The gene is therapeutically relevant for immune-mediated diseases.

Figure 1: The stacked bar graph shows cumulative scores across six criteria for the 25 M15.53 genes.

The top five genes selected for further evaluation were: TGM2, MAP2K3, EPB41, HMBS and BRD4 **(Figure 2**).

Figure 2: The radar plot represents individual scores for the 5 top scoring genes: TGM2, MAP2K3, EPB41, HMBS and BRD4.

4. **Knowledge-driven evaluation of top five candidates**

Justifications given by the GPT-4 and Claude for the scores provided across the 6 criteria were compiled and summarized by GPT-4 (Methods: Step 5). For each statement pertinent references were retrieved using GPT-4 or Claude, with the relevance of each reference checked and attributed manually by researcher authoring this report.

Function: The BRD4 gene encodes a member of the bromodomain and extra-terminal (BET) family of proteins, critical for transcription regulation through interaction with acetylated chromatin and involved in cell cycle progression, erythropoiesis, and cancer (4,5). TGM2 encodes a calcium-dependent enzyme, transglutaminase 2, responsible for protein cross-linking and involved in various cellular processes such as tissue repair, cell death regulation, and extracellular matrix stabilization; its aberrant activation is associated with celiac disease and neurodegenerative disorders(6–8). MAP2K3 encodes a dual specificity protein kinase that activates the p38 MAP kinase, playing a role in cellular responses to stress and cytokines, as well as in cell proliferation and differentiation (9,10). EPB41 encodes protein 4.1, a structural component of the red blood cell cytoskeleton, which is essential for regulating cell shape, flexibility, and membrane stability (11,12). HMBS encodes hydroxymethylbilane synthase, also known as porphobilinogen synthase, which catalyzes a key step in heme biosynthesis, essential for oxygen transport in blood cells (13).

a. Relevance to erythroid cells and erythropoiesis: BRD4 plays a pivotal role in erythropoiesis, specifically in terminal erythroid differentiation (14,15). It is highly expressed during erythroid maturation and regulates key erythroid transcription factors such as GATA1 and KLF1 (16,17). In contrast, while TGM2 is ubiquitously expressed across various cell types (18), there is no direct evidence to suggest its specialized role in erythroid cells or erythropoiesis(19). Similarly, MAP2K3, despite its broad role in cellular stress responses and proliferation (20), lacks specific evidence pointing to its involvement in erythroid development. EPB41, however, is intrinsically related to erythroid cells, as it is highly expressed in the erythroid lineage and serves as a critical structural protein in erythrocyte membranes (11,21). HMBS, though involved in heme biosynthesis (22), which is essential for hemoglobin function in red blood cells, is ubiquitously expressed (23) and has not been directly linked to erythroid cells or erythropoiesis.

b. Is used as a clinical biomarker: As of the latest information available, BRD4 is emerging as a potential biomarker in clinical settings, particularly for some types of cancer (5). Its inhibition has been shown to downregulate NF-kB-mediated inflammatory pathways and reduce cytokine production (24), making it a target for clinical trials involving BET inhibitors like JQ1 for autoimmune diseases (25). TGM2, while not a broad clinical biomarker, has been investigated for its role in celiac disease (26). MAP2K3 is not widely recognized as a clinical biomarker, but alterations in its signaling pathways have been implicated in specific diseases (20). EPB41 is not generally used as a clinical biomarker, but mutations in the gene are linked to hereditary elliptocytosis (21), and reduced levels may serve as an indicator for certain hemolytic anemias (27). HMBS mutations are clinically relevant for diagnosing a subset of porphyrias, specifically acute intermittent porphyria, where its enzyme activity is used for diagnostic purposes (28).

c. Potential relevance as a blood transcriptional biomarker: BRD4 shows preliminary evidence of being a valuable blood transcriptional biomarker in cancer (5) and could also serve to assess erythropoiesis status, as it regulates key erythroid genes and its expression levels may reflect erythroid progenitor cell activity (15). TGM2 also holds promise as a potential blood transcriptional biomarker, particularly in the context of celiac disease (26), although further research is needed for confirmation. MAP2K3, given its role in cellular stress response (20), could likewise serve as a blood transcriptional biomarker, pending additional research. EPB41, due to its critical role in red blood cell integrity (21), has potential value as a blood transcriptional biomarker that could provide insights into erythropoiesis status based on its expression levels. Finally, HMBS could be valuable as a blood transcriptional biomarker specifically for diagnosing acute intermittent porphyria (28), and its enzyme levels may indicate erythropoietic activity and the rate of hemoglobin production.

d. Relevance to leukocytes immune biology: BRD4 has been implicated in the regulation of inflammatory responses (25), including the function of macrophages, a type of leukocyte (29). However, its role in leukocytes is not well-defined, and there is limited evidence to consider it as a leukocyte-specific biomarker. TGM2 is relevant to immune biology due to its roles in apoptosis (30) and cellular adhesion (31), which can affect

leukocyte function. TGM2 inhibitors are under development for treating conditions like fibrosis (32), cancer (33), and neurodegeneration (8). MAP2K3 is implicated in inflammatory responses (20), suggesting a role in leukocyte biology, although specific functions are yet to be fully elucidated. In contrast, EPB41 and HMBS are not directly relevant to circulating leukocytes' immune biology. EPB41 is specific to erythroid cells, and no evidence suggests its relevance to leukocytes (11). HMBS has a general housekeeping role and is not specifically relevant to circulating leukocytes

e. Is a known drug target: BRD4 is a well-recognized drug target with multiple inhibitors such as JQ1 and OTX015 in pre-clinical and clinical development for cancer treatment(34). BET inhibitors targeting BRD4 are also under investigation for potential applications in inflammation and cardiovascular disease (25). TGM2 has been proposed as a potential drug target due to its involvement in various pathological conditions, including neurodegenerative diseases (8) and cancer (35). While TGM2 is linked to inflammatory conditions like celiac disease, its specific role in autoimmunity remains unclear(26). MAP2K3 is another potential drug target being explored for its role in the MAPK pathway(20), commonly dysregulated in cancer. It also regulates proinflammatory signaling pathways in immune cells and may be a target for immune-mediated diseases (36). Conversely, EPB41 and HMBS are not major drug targets. Although drugs inducing HMBS expression could potentially treat acute porphyrias (28), it is not considered a primary drug target. No evidence indicates that EPB41 serves as a drug target.

f. Potential therapeutic relevance for immune-mediated diseases: BRD4 is therapeutically pertinent to immune-mediated diseases due to its role in regulating inflammatory responses (25). Studies indicate that BET inhibitors (37), which target BRD4, are under investigation for potential treatment of immune disorders such as SLE and multiple sclerosis. In a different context, TGM2 is associated with immune-mediated diseases, notably in celiac disease (26), where the immune response to this enzyme is crucial to the disease's development. While TGM2's involvement in inflammatory conditions like celiac disease is established, its precise function in autoimmunity remains undefined. MAP2K3 has emerged as another molecule of interest in the realm of immune-mediated diseases because of its influence on inflammatory responses (20). There's strong evidence to suggest that MAP2K3 plays a role in modulating proinflammatory signaling pathways in immune cells, positioning it as a prospective target for therapeutic interventions (36). However, no therapeutic relevance has been identified for EPB41 in the context of immune-mediated diseases.

5. **Examining expression patterns of top 5 candidates across leukocyte populations**

The expression patterns of the top 5 candidate genes were examined across diverse leukocyte populations and hematopoietic precursors using two reference transcriptomic datasets.

5.1 Densely interconnected transcriptional circuits control cell states in human hematopoiesis – (GSE24759)

<http://developmentalimmunology.gxbsidra.org/dm3/geneBrowser/show/4000026>

Figure 3: This stacked bar graph shows the expression levels of five candidate genes. ERY3-5 populations are CD71+ GLYA+ erythroid cells. The original article provides full experimental details: (38). The web link above also provides access to more complete information about this dataset as well as individual gene profiles.

5.2 Next generation sequencing of human immune cell subsets across diseases – (GSE60424)

<http://cd2k.gxbsidra.org/dm3/geneBrowser/show/4000098>

Figure 4: This stacked bar graph shows the expression levels measured by RNAseq of the five candidate genes across six leukocyte populations and whole blood. The abundance is shown for each gene in each population for an average of up to 20 samples. Additional experimental details are accessible via the link provided above and is available as part of this sample series GEO record [\(GSE60424\)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/query/acc.cgi?acc=GSE60424) (39).

6. BloodGen3 reference cohorts (GSE100150)

Figure 5: The box plot in panel A shows the changes in abundance of transcripts comprising the M13.30 module, expressed within a cohort as the percentage of genes showing differential expression between each patient and the respective set of control subjects for this cohort. Differential expression is based on fixed cut-off (Log2 Fold Change >1.5, difference>10). These values are expressed as % module activity and can range from 100% (all genes are upregulated) to -100% (all genes are downregulated). The box plot in panel B show expression levels for the top 5 scoring M15.74 genes in patient cohorts relative to respective control subjects matched for demographic variables.

7. Overall pick(s) for M15.53

We aim to establish a universal immune profiling assay that measures transcript abundance of a panel of genes in whole blood using small- or meso-scale molecular profiling technology. Compelling candidates identified here from the M15.53 selection pool will be subjected to more in-depth evaluation using a pre-established workflow (40,41).

Claude and GPT-4 were prompted to select a top candidate on the basis of the information summarized above in section 4, taking into account all six scoring criteria equally (Methods: Step 6).

Claude chose BRD4:

"Based on the provided criteria, I recommend BRD4 as the top candidate gene for inclusion in the targeted blood transcriptional profiling panel. The key reasons are:

- BRD4 plays a critical role in erythropoiesis and is highly expressed during erythroid maturation. This makes it very relevant to erythroid cells and erythropoiesis.

- BRD4 is emerging as a potential biomarker in cancer and shows promise as a blood transcriptional biomarker that could provide insights into erythropoiesis status.

- BRD4 regulates inflammatory pathways and macrophage function, suggesting relevance to leukocyte immune biology, although its specific role requires further research.

- BRD4 is an established drug target with multiple inhibitors under development for cancer, inflammation, and cardiovascular disease, making it therapeutically relevant.

While TGM2, MAP2K3, EPB41, and HMBS have merits in some criteria, BRD4 best satisfies the provided criteria collectively as a biomarker reflective of erythroid biology with relevance to immune function and therapeutic targeting. The evidence highlights its potential value as a representative biomarker on a targeted transcriptional profiling panel intended for the stated applications."

GPT-4 chose BRD4:

"Based on the extensive information provided and weighing each of the six criteria equally, the BRD4 gene appears to be the top candidate gene to include in a targeted blood transcriptional profiling panel for the following reasons:

- 1. Relevance to erythroid cells and erythropoiesis: BRD4 plays a key role in erythropoiesis, specifically in terminal erythroid differentiation. It regulates crucial erythroid transcription factors such as GATA1 and KLF1 and is highly expressed during erythroid maturation.
- 2. Current use as a biomarker: BRD4 is emerging as a biomarker in clinical settings, particularly for some types of cancer. It also shows potential for tracking erythropoiesis status based on its high expression during erythroid maturation.
- 3. Potential use as a blood transcriptional biomarker: Given its role in erythropoiesis and cancer, BRD4 could serve as a valuable blood transcriptional biomarker, providing both a measure of erythroid activity and indications for specific disease states like cancer.
- 4. Relevance to leukocyte immune biology: Although not as strongly tied to leukocytes as some other genes, BRD4 has been implicated in inflammatory responses and in the function of macrophages, a type of leukocyte. This suggests potential relevance to immune biology.
- 5. Status as a known drug target: BRD4 is a well-known drug target, with inhibitors like JQ1 and OTX015 in pre-clinical and clinical development. It is also targeted for potential applications in inflammation and cardiovascular diseases.
- 6. Therapeutic relevance for immune-mediated diseases: Its inhibition has been shown to downregulate NF-kB-mediated inflammatory pathways and reduce cytokine production, which has led to its inclusion in clinical trials involving BET inhibitors for autoimmune diseases.

In summary, BRD4 satisfies all six criteria to varying degrees but is particularly strong in its relevance to erythroid cells and erythropoiesis, its emerging status as a clinical biomarker, its potential as a blood transcriptional biomarker, and its well-established role as a drug target. Therefore, BRD4 would likely provide the most comprehensive and relevant insights in a targeted blood transcriptional profiling panel based on your criteria."

7. Overall pick for M15.53 based on summarized justifications and reference transcriptional datasets.

Through multi-tier prompting, GPT-4 and Claude were requested to select a top candidate, based on the fact-checked justifications summaries generated earlier, but this time also taking into account the transcriptional profiles from the three reference datasets described above.

This was achieved using multiple prompts. This strategy was successful when using Claude but we GPT-4 could not follow our directives from start to finish when presented with large amounts of textualized transcriptional data.

7. **References**

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