

Effect of YQ23 as Radiation Sensitizer in a Hepatoma Model

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Disclosures

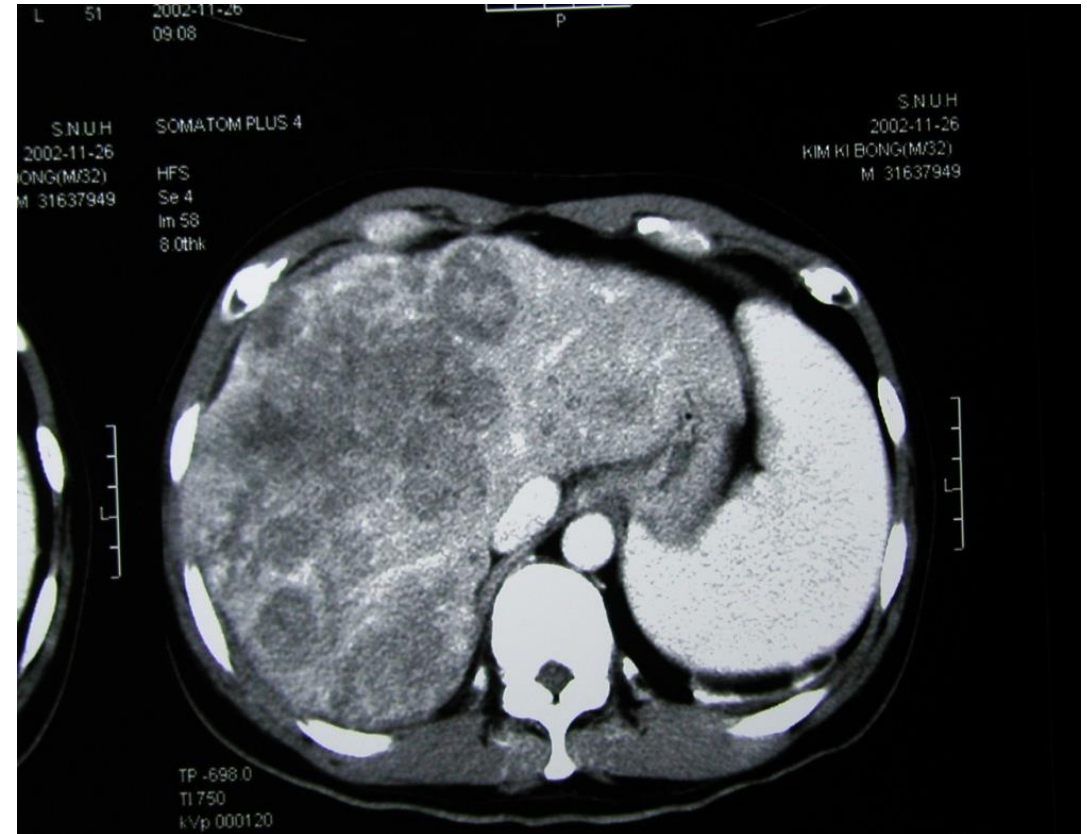
- Research grants last 5 years
 - *Bayer AG*
 - *Sirtex Medical Ltd*
 - *Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD)*
 - *New B Innovative Pte Ltd*
 - *NMRC Singapore, BMRC Singapore*
 - *IQVIA (previously Quintiles and IMS Health)*
- Advisory Board, honorariums, travel grants last 5 years
 - *Ipsen Pharma Singapore Pte Ltd*
 - *OncoSil Medical Ltd*
 - *Sirtex Medical Ltd*
 - *Bristol-Myers Squibb*
 - *F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd*
 - *New B Innovative Pte Ltd*

Significant Gaps in Hepatocellular Carcinoma

- More than **1 million new cases** a year, **80% in the Asia-Pacific**, but few efficacious therapies
 - **20%** of patients are diagnosed at an **early stage** and benefit from potentially curative therapies – *resection, transplantation, radiofrequency ablation* - **recurrences** common and limit long term survival
 - No adjuvant therapy
- **Challenges**
 - Currently few efficacious systemic therapies: **4 TKIs, 1st line (2) 2nd line (2)**
 - **Hypoxia** is associated with resistance to chemo- or radio-therapy and results in poor disease prognosis.
- Targeting tumor hypoxia could be a **strategy** for cancer therapy and drug-resistance

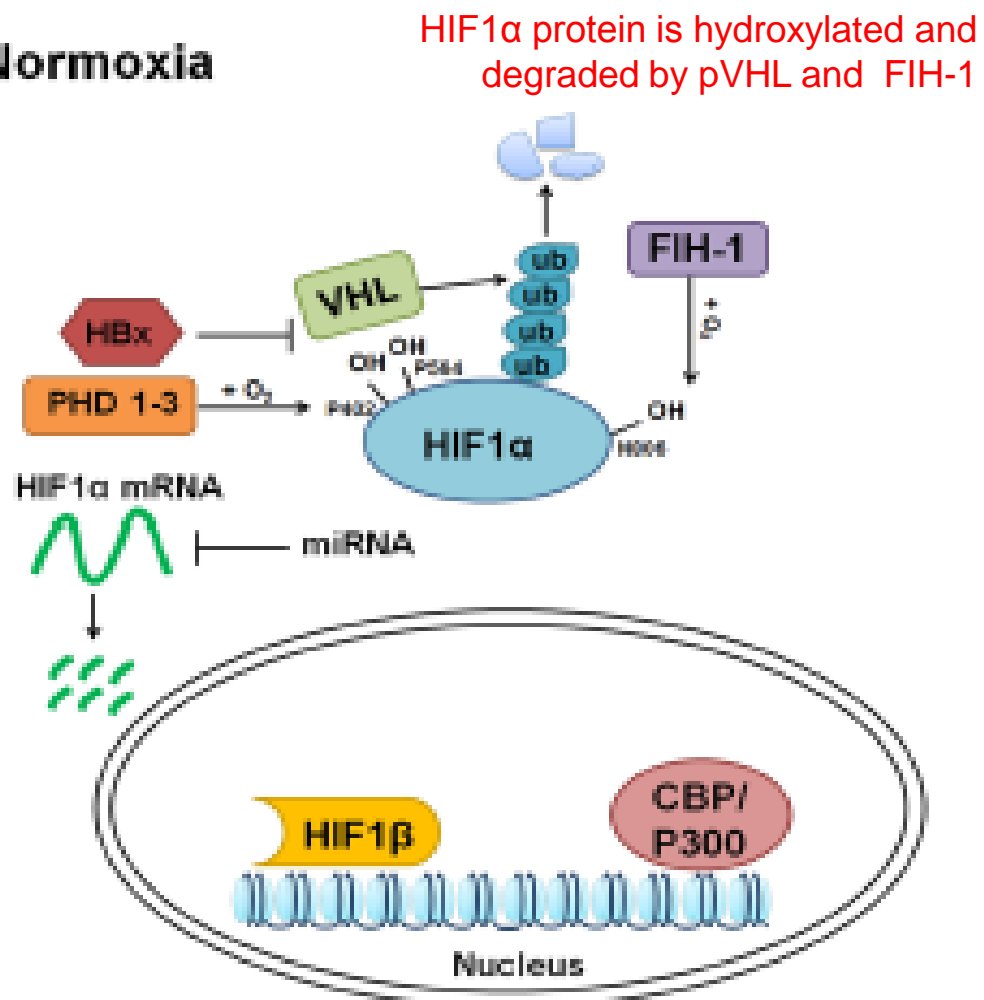
Hypoxia and Hepatocellular Carcinoma

- HCC is one of the **most hypoxic tumors** with median oxygen level as low as 0.8%.
 - McKeown Br J Radiol. 2014
- Inadequate intra-tumoral oxygen level is known to **trigger** a vast array of molecular and cellular responses mediated through **HIFs** which influence:
 - tumor aggressiveness
 - therapeutic response



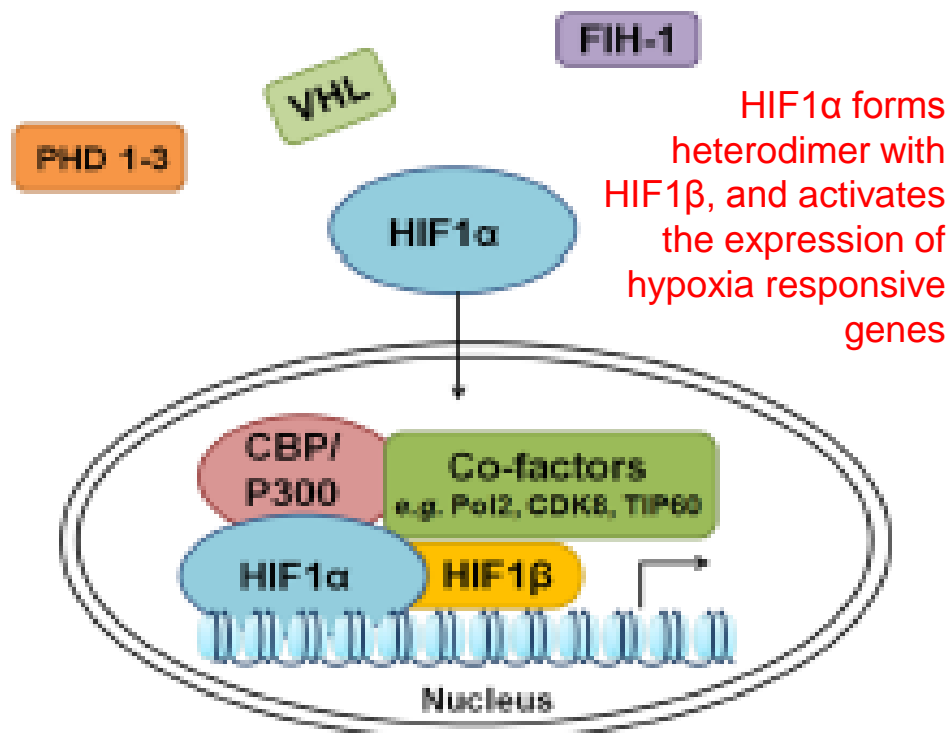
Hypoxia inducible factors (HIFs) in Cancer

Normoxia



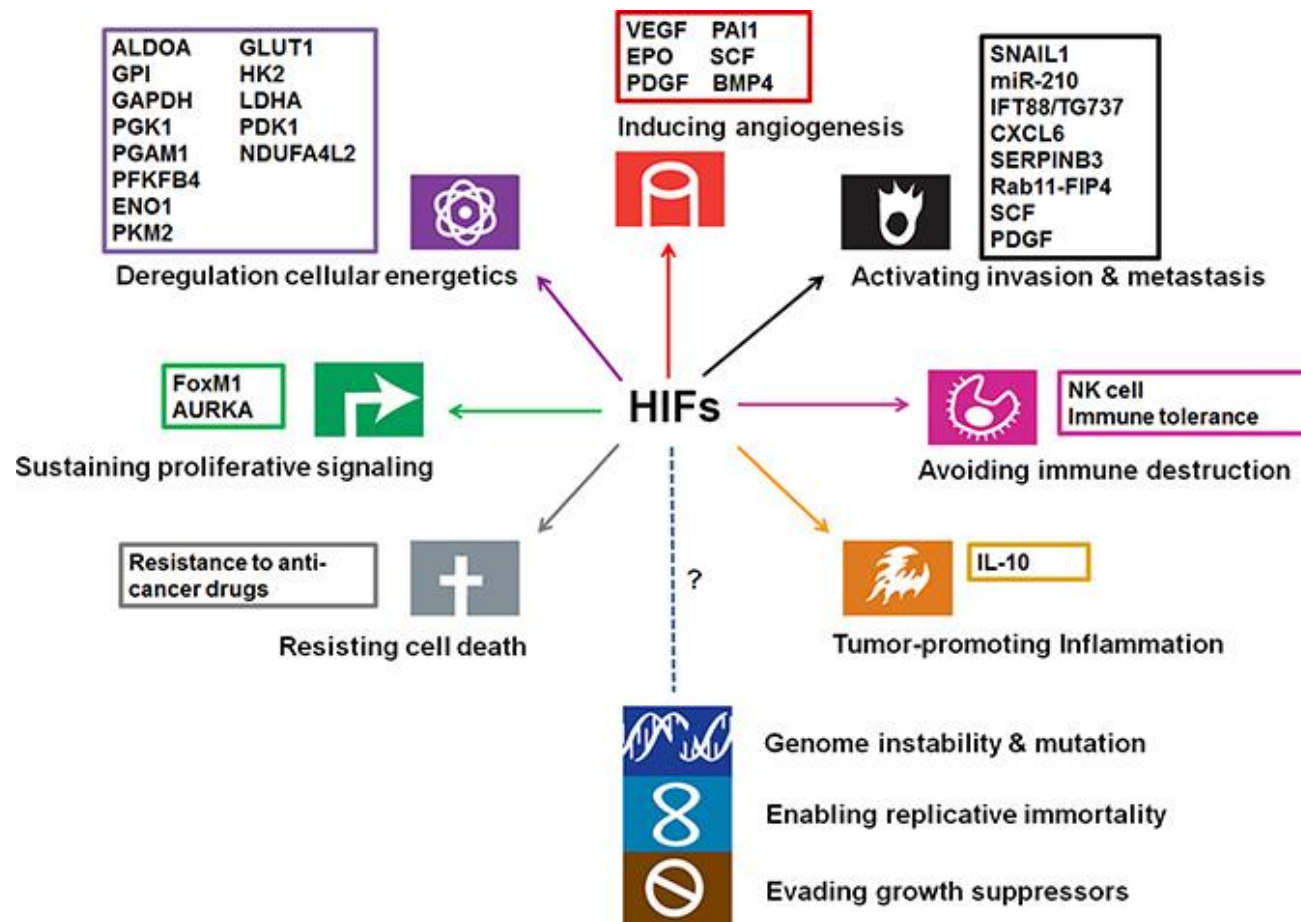
Hypoxia

Hypoxia blocks degradation of HIF1 α , leads to stabilization and nuclear translocation.



Hypoxia in Hepatocellular Carcinoma

- Hypoxia inducible factors (HIFs) is **overexpressed** in human HCC samples and associated with poor disease prognosis.
- Currently, **indirect genetic evidences** have reported the identification and function of HIF target genes in HCC



Chu Chen and Tao Lou Oncotarget, 2017, Vol. 8, (No.28), pp: 46691-46703

Therapeutic Targeting of Hypoxia in HCC

- Inhibitors targeting hypoxia in clinical trials:

RO7070179	HIF1 α mRNA Antagonist	Hepatocellular Carcinoma	Phase 1	NCT02564614
EZN-2968	HIF1 α antisense oligonucleotide inhibitor	Advanced Solid Tumors/ Lymphoma/Advanced Solid Tumors With Liver Metastases	Phase 1 completed	NCT02564614
OXY111A	Anti-hypoxic molecule	Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Neoplasm	Phase 1 and 2	NCT02528526
TH-302	Hypoxia-Activated Prodrug	Advanced Kidney Cancer or Liver Cancer	Phase 1 and 2 suspend	NCT01497444
		Hepatocellular Carcinoma	Phase 1	NCT01721941
Tirapazamine	Hypoxia-Activated Prodrug	Hepatocellular Carcinoma Combined with Transarterial embolization	Phase 1	NCT02174549

Hemoglobin-Based Oxygen Carrier – Novel Strategy for Cancer Therapy?

- **YQ23** (crossed-linked hemoglobin) – by New B Innovation Limited, Hong Kong, was developed as a oxygen carrier for transfusion.
- Features:
 - A stabilized bovine-derived **non-polymeric cross-linked tetrameric hemoglobin** (65 kDa). **PCT/US12/46130**
 - Undetectable/ low level of dimeric hemoglobin (32 kDa)
 - Low phospholipid, DNA and protein impurities
- Specifications:
 - pH **7.4 – 8.4**
 - Osmolality > 250 mOsm/kg

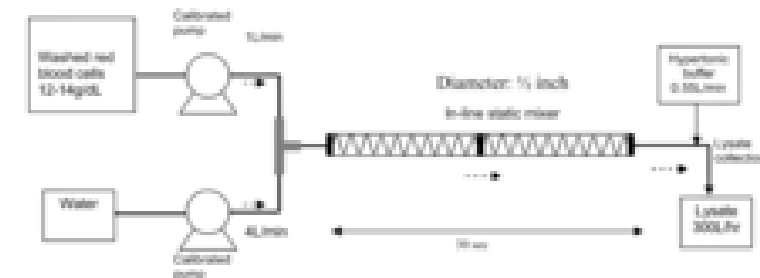
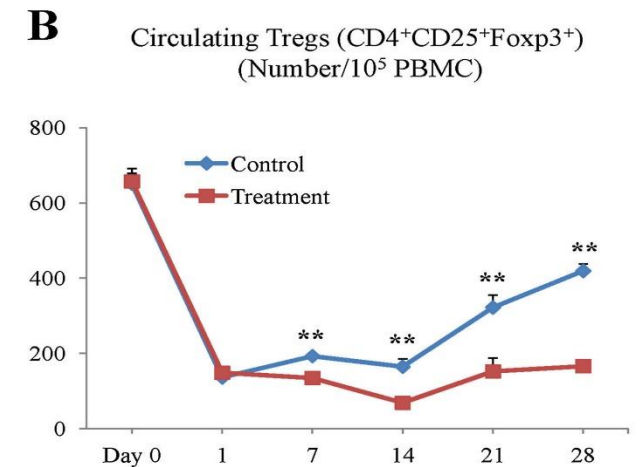
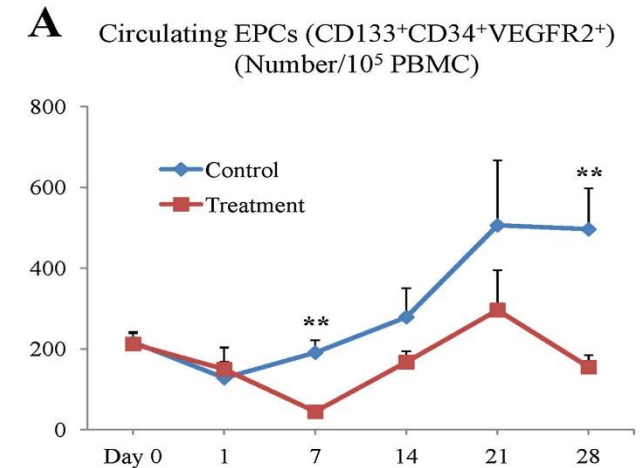


FIG. 3

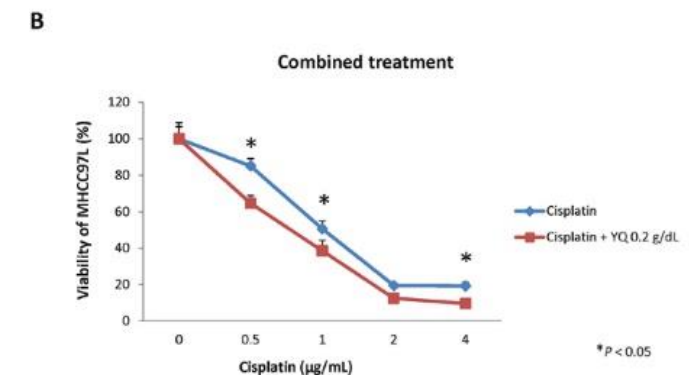
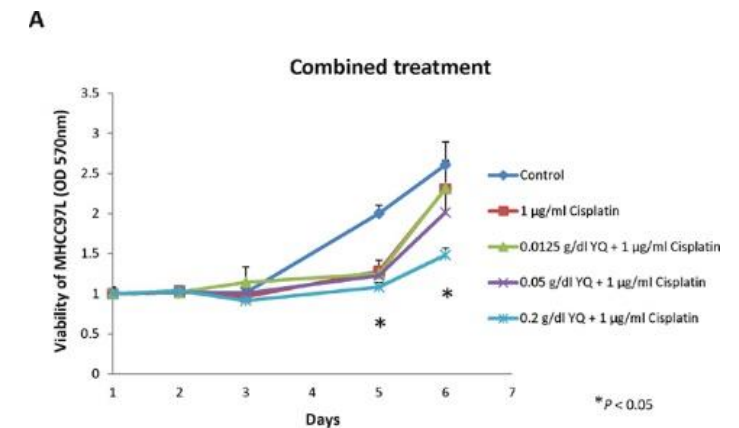
YQ23 suppresses HCC metastases and decreases circulatory EPC and Tregs

- inhibited **intrahepatic and lung metastases** in hepatocellular carcinoma after hepatectomy and ischemic reperfusion injury in an **orthotopic rat model**
- Possibly due to reduced circulating **endothelial progenitor cells (EPC)** and **Treg**
- Down-regulated CXCR3, TNF-alpha and IL6 after ischaemic\reperfusion injury
- increased **liver pO2** levels



YQ23 sensitizes Cisplatin-based chemotherapy in HCC cells and xenografts

- Significantly **suppressed proliferation** of **HCC cells** under Cisplatin treatment
- Significantly sensitizes Cisplatin treatment in **orthotopic xenograft** model
- It increased **ROS generation**, caused irreversible DNA damage/intrinsic apoptosis.
- **inhibit angiogenesis** through the **Hypoxic Inducible Factor 1 alpha** signaling pathway
- Confocal microscopy shows YQ23 is accumulated in HCC cells **1 – 3 days**, and also accumulated around tumor tissues



Radiation Therapy in Oncology

- **Radiotherapy** is a major therapeutic modality in Oncology together with **Surgery** and **Systemic Therapy** (chemotherapy, immunotherapy)
- It works by damaging DNA **directly** or by creating charged particles (**free radicals**) within the cells that can in turn damage the DNA.

Direct Route



DNA damage



Cell death

Indirect Route



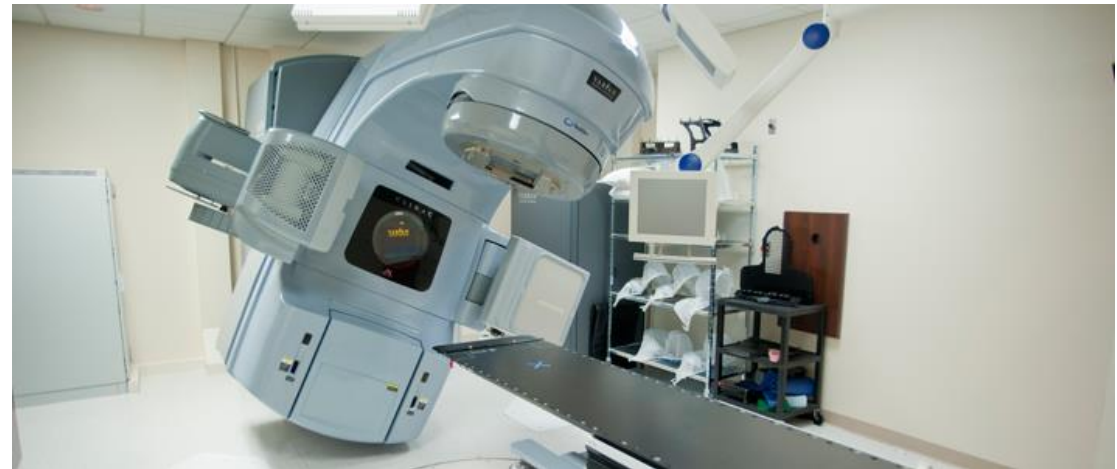
Free radicals



DNA damage



Cell death



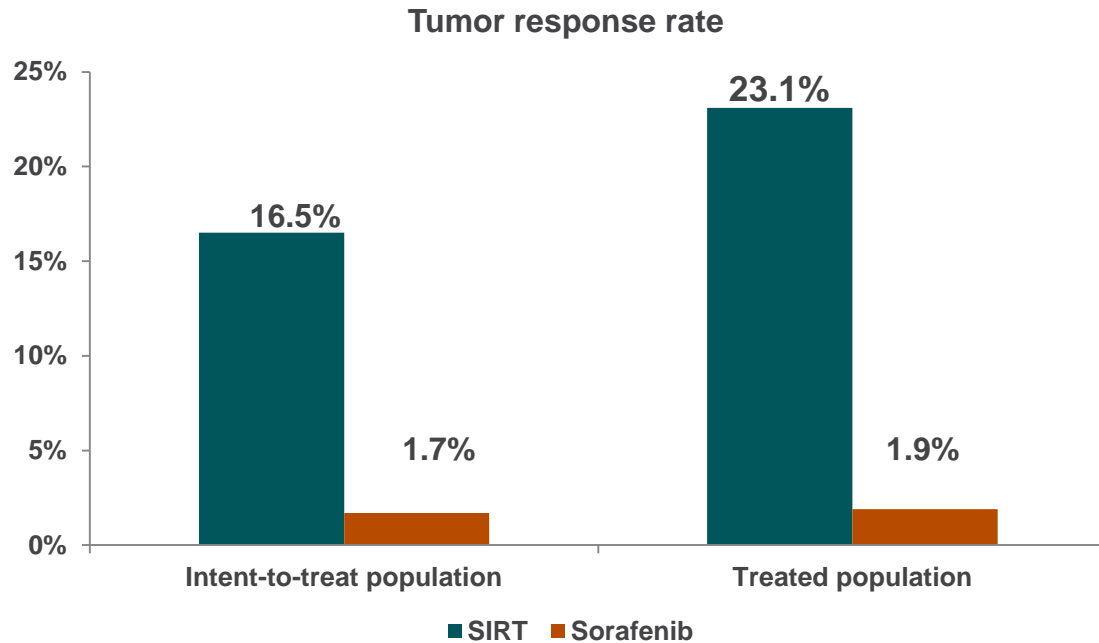
Generation of free radicals is oxygen dependent

Radiation Therapy in HCC: Yttrium-90

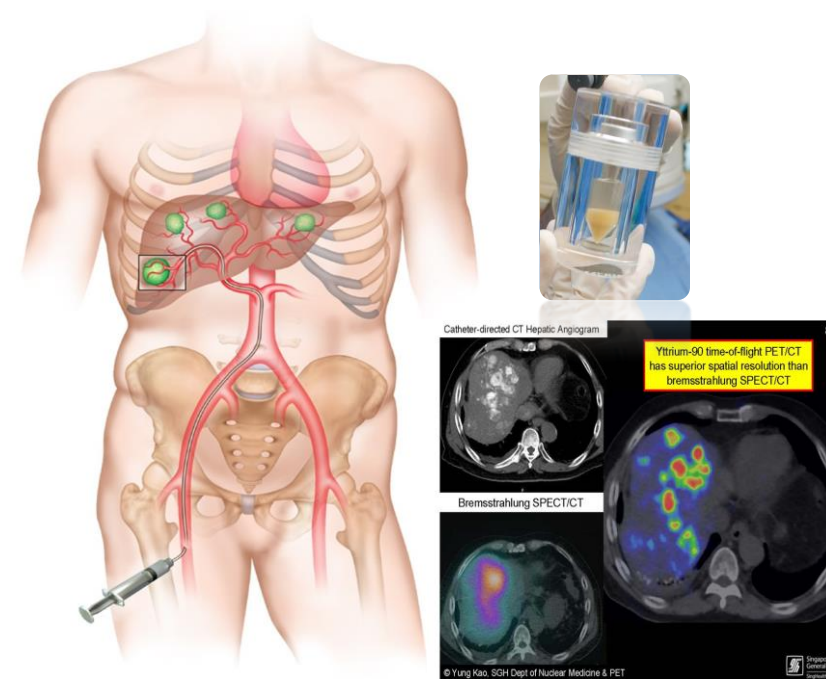
AHCC06 SIRveNIB Phase III Randomized Controlled Trial

	Intent-to-treat population			Treated population		
	SIRT (N = 182)	Sorafenib (N = 178)	P-value	SIRT (N = 130)	Sorafenib (N = 162)	P-value
Tumor response rate (CR + PR), n (%)	30 (16.5)	3 (1.7)	<.001	30 (23.1)	3 (1.9)	<.001
Disease control rate (CR + PR + SD), n (%)	76 (41.8)	76 (42.7)	0.915	76 (58.5)	76 (46.9)	0.059

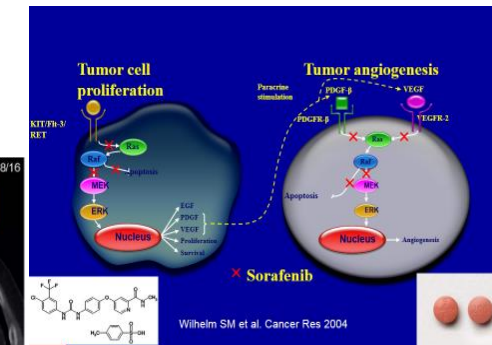
CR: Complete response; PR: Partial response; SD: Stable disease



Chow P et al ASCO 2017

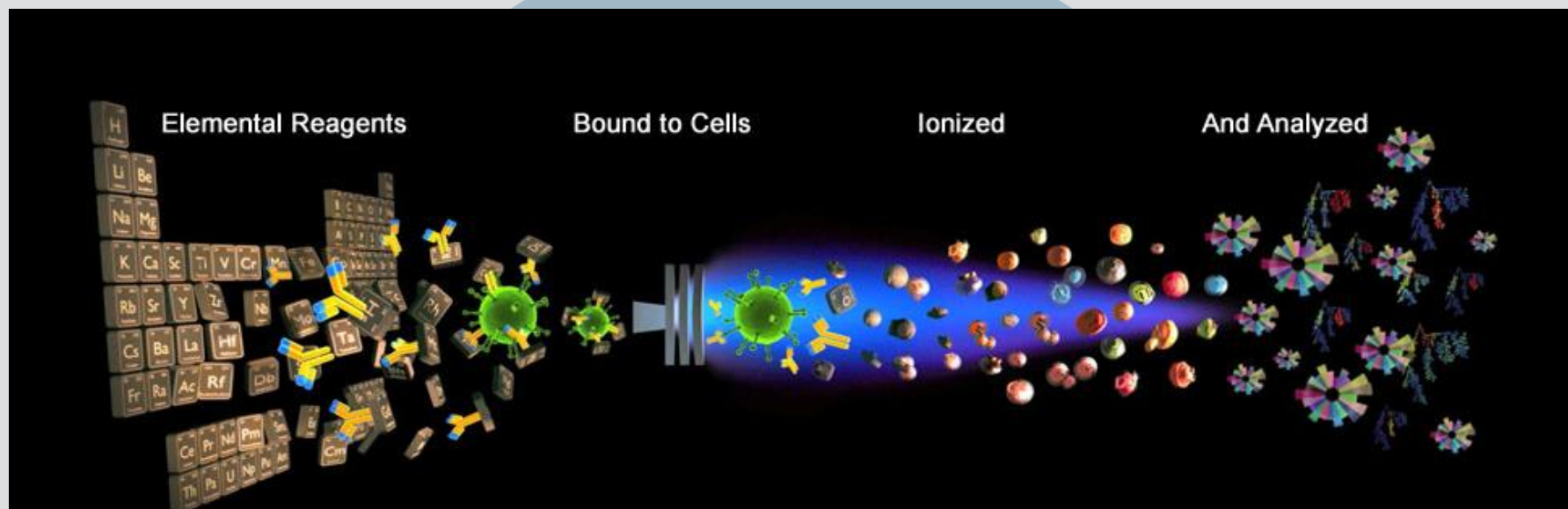


Selective Internal Radiation Therapy with
Yttrium-90 **SIRSphere®**



Sorafenib

Assessment of Immuno-modulation by Time of Flight Mass Cytometry (CyTOF)



Ref: dvsscience.com



Panel Design: up to 41 parameters

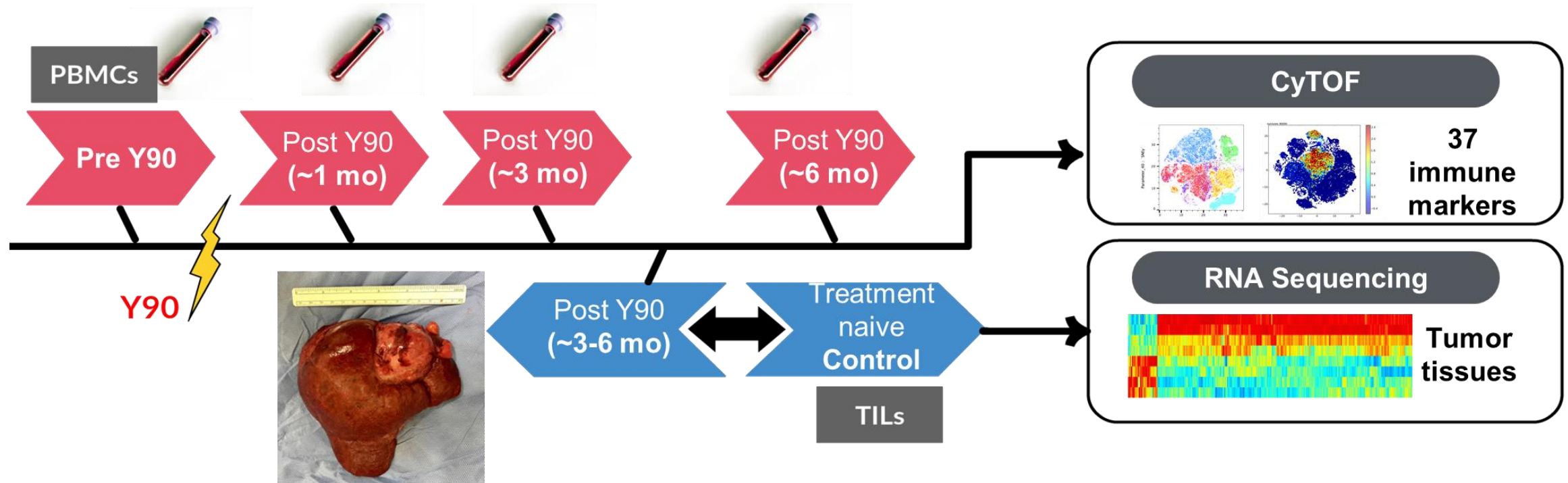
Process optimisation: Lower cell requirement

Barcoding

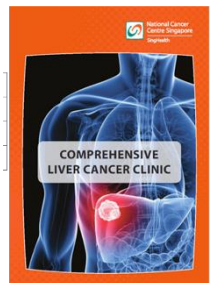
In-house analysis pipeline

National Cancer Center and SingHealth Translational Immunology and Inflammation Center

SIRT-Y90 RE in HCC: study design and biomarker plan



- 41 patients
 - 36 patients treated with Y90
 - 7 subsequently resected after downstaging
 - 7 matched resected HCC without prior Y90



SIRT-Y90 RE in HCC: resection after downstaging with SIRT-Y90

Example

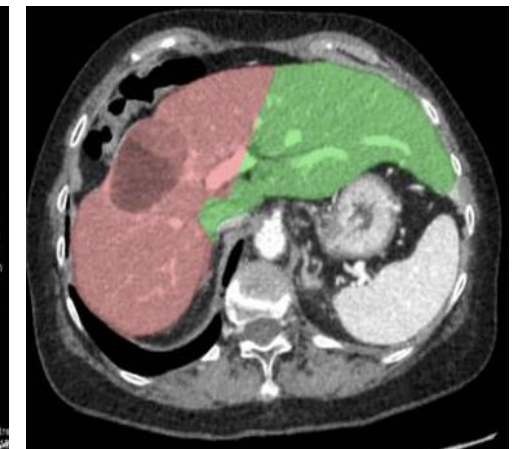
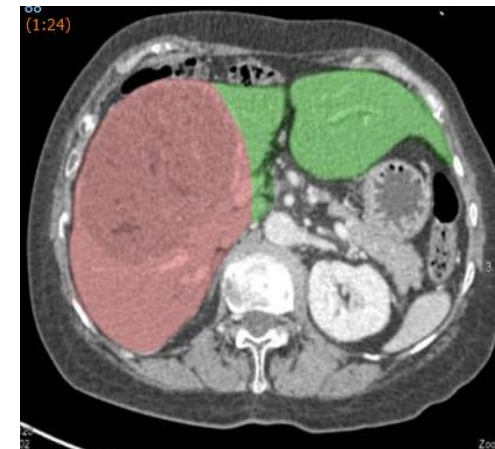
- Single delivery of Y90
- HCC regressed from **11.1cm** to **5.5cm**
- Increased future liver remnant: hypertrophied from **27%** to **43%**



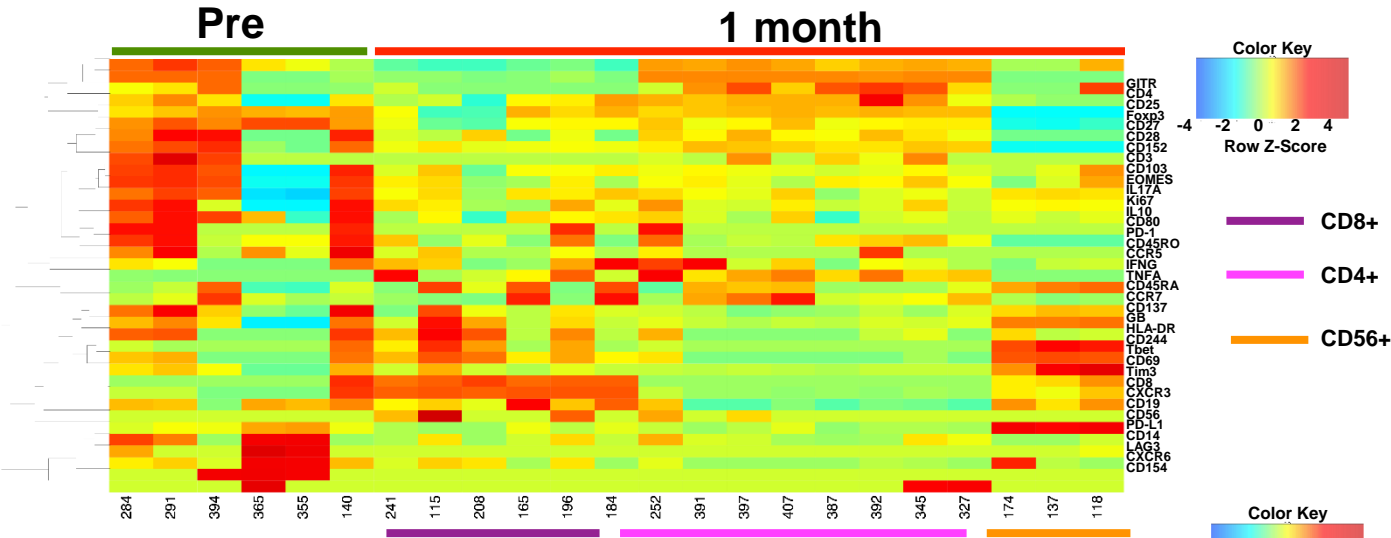
Pre-treatment



Post-treatment

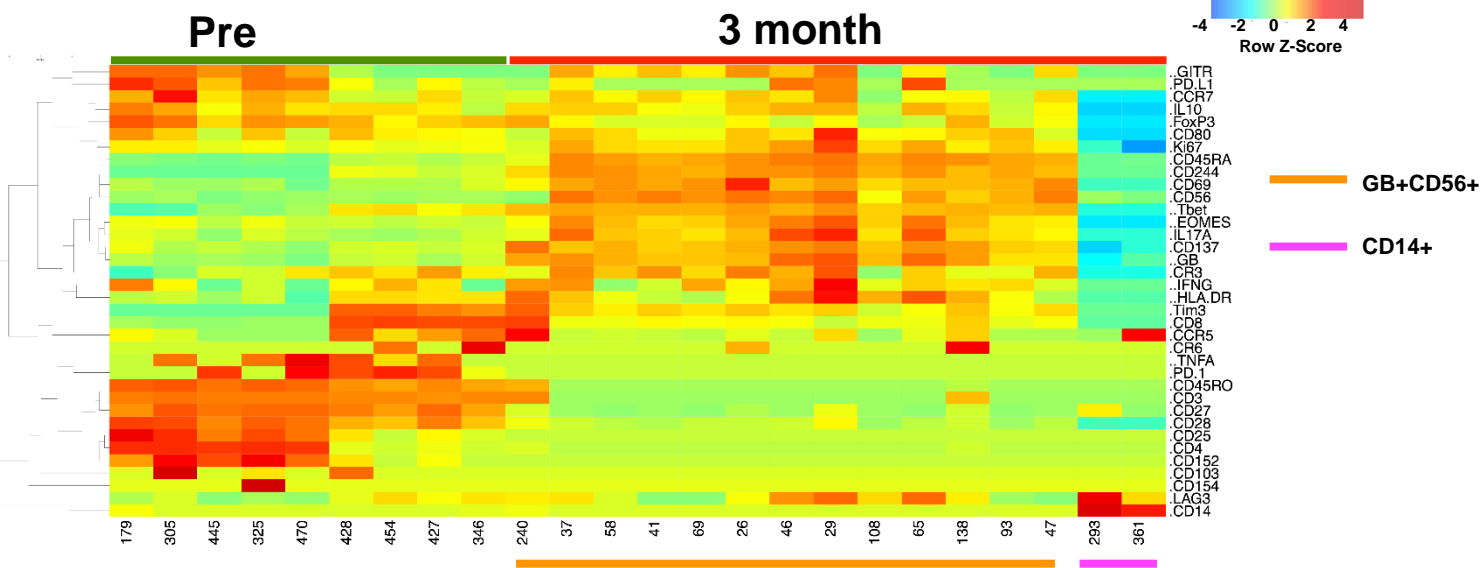


SIRT-Y90 RE in HCC: **systemic immune** upregulation of pre- vs post-Y90 peripheral PBMC



At one month:

- Increased TNFalpha expression in
 - CD8+Tims3
 - CD4+ T cells

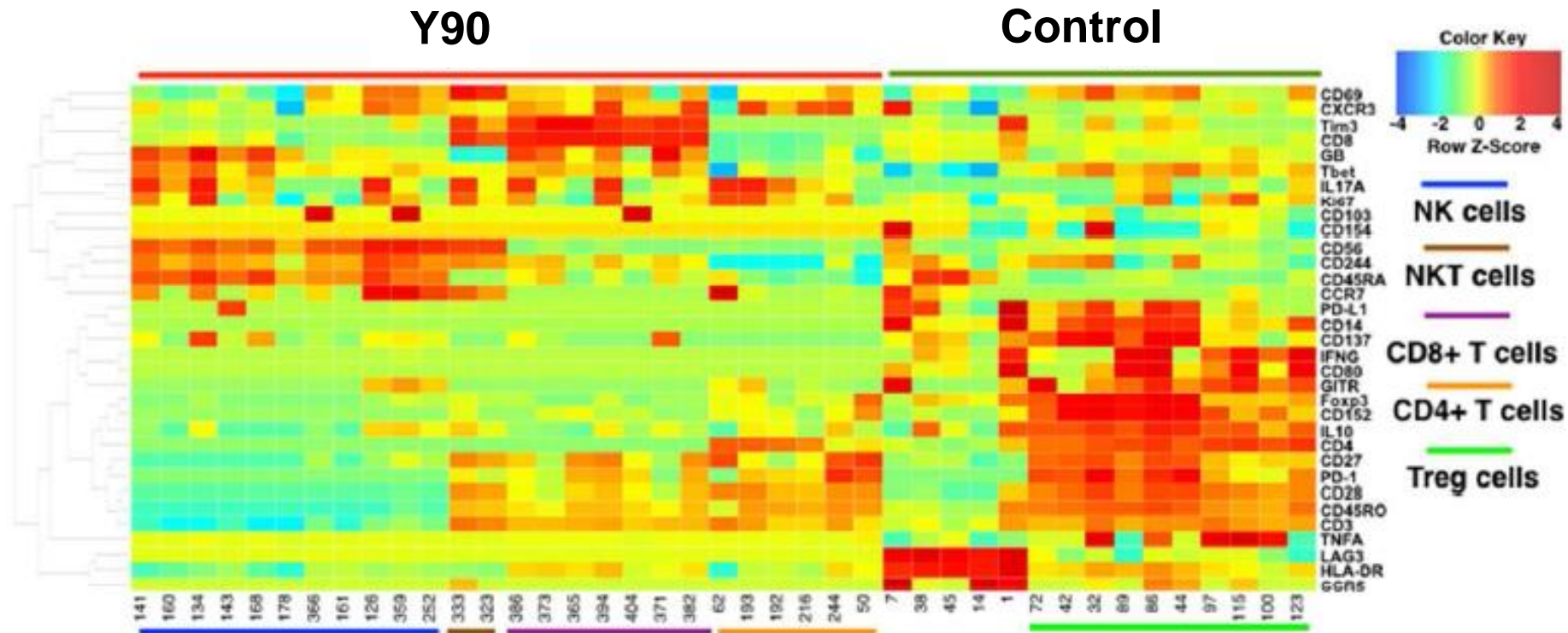


At three months:

- Increased proportion of CD14+HLADR+ APC

SIRT-Y90 RE in HCC: immune upregulation in resected HCC comparing matched post-Y90 vs treatment naïve control tumors

Immune profiles of tumor infiltrating leukocytes (TILs) isolated from Y90-RE-treated and treatment-naïve tumors: 2D heat map showing the differential expression of immune markers by nodes enriched in TILs isolated from post Y90-RE (red bar) or treatment naïve (control; green bar) HCC tumors, n=7



- Enriched immune subsets in TILs from **post Y90-RE** were CD56+ natural killer (NK) cells, CD8+CD56+ NKT cells, CD8+Tim3+ T and CD4+CD45RO+ T cells while regulatory T_{reg} cells were enriched in TILs from control HCC

Rhenium- 188 (Re-188)

- Important therapeutic radioisotope in cancer, **metastatic bone** pain palliation, **peptide radionuclide** therapy, **radioimmunotherapy**, **radiosynovectomy** and for **intravascular radionuclide therapy**.
- Emission of high energy of beta- particle (maximal 2.12 MeV) and gamma photon (155 KeV, 15%).
- Half-life **16.9 hrs**
 - Short half-life of Re-188 makes it safer for patients, staff and environment.
- **β - emission** provides optimal therapeutic dose for affecting tumors.
- **γ -component** enables the monitoring in patient's body using SPECT.

Objectives

- To investigate the effect of YQ23 as Radiation Sensitizer in **HepG2 xenografts** treated by **Re-188**.
- **Hypothesis**
 - **YQ23 a novel oxygen carrier** can decrease hypoxia in the tumor and thus sensitize radiation treatment with **Re-188** in HepG2 xenografts in nude mice giving rise to better tumor response.
 - **YQ23** monotherapy has intrinsic anti-tumor effects on HepG2 xenografts in nude mice.

Study Outline

- **Xenograft model:**
 - Species: balb/c nude mice (ARC)
 - Age: 6 - 8 w.o.
 - Cell Line: HepG2
 - Cell inoculation: 5×10^6 cells in 0.1 ml (50% matrigel in serum free media), s.c.
- Tumor volume was measured by caliper and estimated by equation

$\frac{L \times W^2}{2}$ where L is length (the longest dimension) and W is width



Treatment Plan

- Treatment of **Re-188 (3mCi)** suspended in normal saline, injection volume 0.1-0.2 ml. Obtained from Nuclear Medicine, SGH.
- **YQ23 (400mg/kg)** started when tumor volume reached $\geq 300\text{mm}^3$
 1. Control (normal saline, *i.v.*)
 2. **YQ23** once a week (*i.v.*)
 3. **Re-188** single dose (*i.t.*)
 4. **Re-188** single dose (*i.t.*) + **YQ23** single dose (*i.v.*)
 5. **Re-188** single dose (*i.t.*) + **YQ23** once a week (*i.v.*)
 6. **YQ23** twice a week (*i.v.*)
 7. **Re-188** single dose (*i.t.*) + **YQ23** twice a week (*i.v.*)
- No of animal per group = 6

SingHealth Experimental Medicine Center

- Creation of Mouse Ectopic Hepatoma Model**
- 42 male nude mice
 - Subcutaneously injected with human HCC Hep G2 into the right flank

Baseline 18F-FMISO microPET Scan on day 14 and 18F-FDG microPET scan on day 16

Animals are divided into 7 groups and treated as follows on day 19:

Group	Treatment
1	Control with IP normal saline on day 19
2	YQ23 IV (0.4 g/kg in 0.5mL) once a week (on days 19, 26, 33, and 40)
3	One single dose intratumoral injection of 20 mCi of Re-188 in 0.05mL on day 19
4	One single dose intratumoral injection of 20 mCi of Re-188 in 0.05mL plus One dose YQ23 IV (0.4 g/kg in 0.5mL) on day 19*
5	One dose of Re-188 intratumoral injection at 20 mCi in 0.05mL plus One dose of YQ23 at 0.4 g/Kg in 0.5mL IV on day 19* followed by one dose of YQ23 per week at 0.4 g/Kg in 0.5mL IP in week 2, week3, and week 4 (days 16, 33, and 40)
6	2 doses of YQ23 at 0.4 g/Kg in 0.5mL IV per week for 4 weeks (day 19, day 22, day 26, day 29, day 33, day 36, day 40, day 43)
7	One dose of Re-188 intratumoral injection at 20 mCi in 0.05mL Plus One dose of YQ23 at 0.4 g/Kg in 0.5mL IV on day 19*, followed by another dose of YQ23 at 0.4 g/Kg in 0.5mL IV on day 22, and then 2 doses of YQ 23 at 0.4 g/kg in 0.5mL in week 2, week 3, and week 4 (day 26, day 29, day 33, day 36, day 40, day 43)

*For groups 4, 5 and 7, Re-188 will be administered 4hrs after YQ23 IV injection. After Re-188 injection, the animal will be placed inside the SEMC Rodent Imaging Holding room for up to 10 X half life time of the radioisotope to ensure safe limit of remaining radioactivity before returning the animal to the animal holding room (i.e. 7 days).

Treatment response is monitored by measuring:

- Tumour size by calipers every other day
- SUV by 18F-FMISO microPET scan: (Days 21, 28, 35, 42)
- SUV by 18F-FDG microPET scan (Days 23, 30, 37, 44)

All animal will be sacrificed on week 5 after baseline scans

Tumours will be removed for histological and immune-histo studies

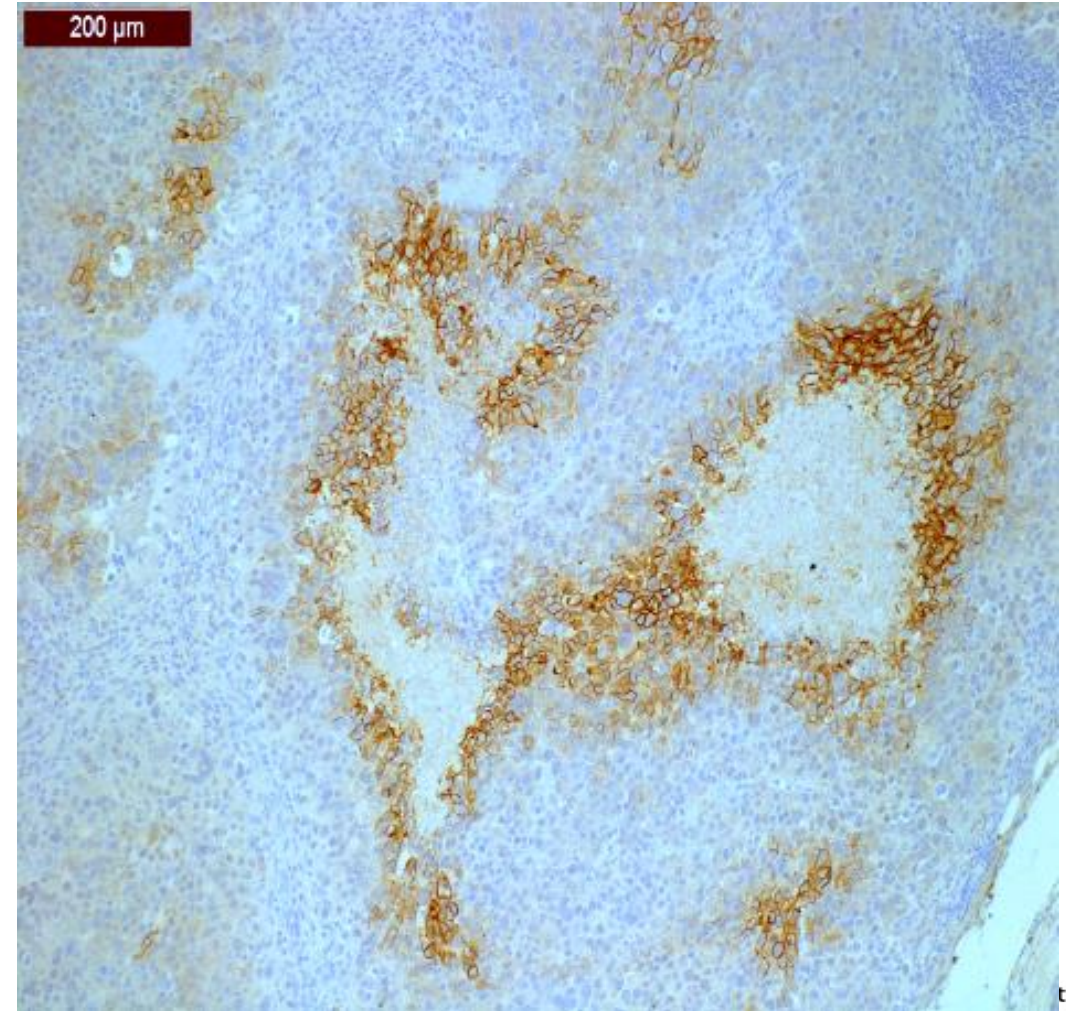
Research was carried out at a **AAALAC** accredited academic core facility at the SingHealth Academic Medical Center, Singapore

Research was approved by SingHealth **IACUC**

PI: Prof Pierce Chow
National Cancer Center Singapore
Duke-NUS Medical School

Assessment of HIF1-a activity

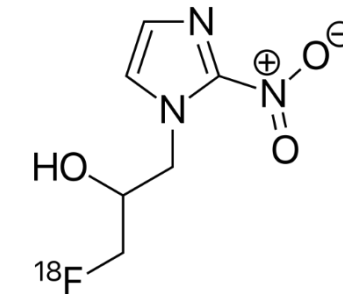
- **Carbonic anhydrase 9** (CA9) is a hypoxic marker directly regulated by HIF1-a.
- **Immuno-histochemistry** of CA9 expression in YQ23 treated group compared to control.
- IHC carried out by **New B Innovative, Hong Kong**



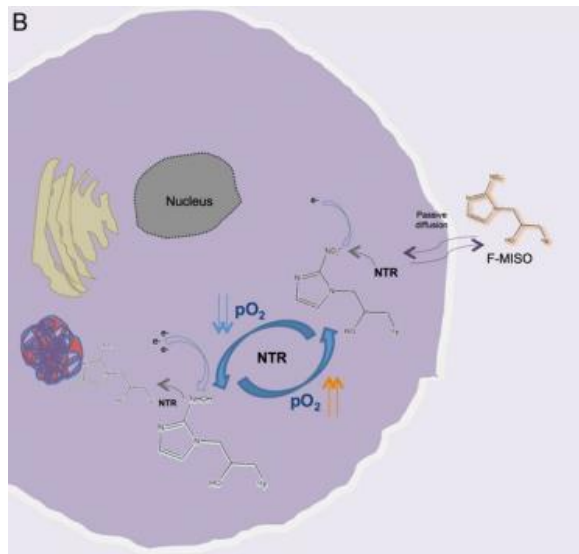
Imaging of Hypoxia and Metabolism

The hypoxic level and blood flow in tumor was assessed by FMISO and FDG PET imaging respectively

- FMISO (18F- Fluoromisonidazole)
 - Rapid and high uptake in tumor-to-normal tissue ratios.
 - Selective uptake in **tumor hypoxia**.



Structure of FMISO



After passive diffusion through the membrane, FMISO is **retained according to the oxygen tension (pO₂) present in the intracellular environment**: in the presence of reduced pO₂, F-MISO undergoes progressive reduction by the **nitroreductase enzyme (NTR)**; Both processes are reversible in the presence of sufficient O₂, and the molecules of F-MISO are free to leave the cell. In contrast, the reduced F-MISO is covalently bound to the **intracellular proteins**.

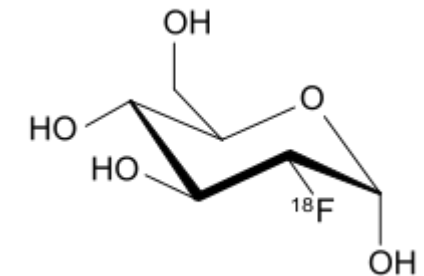
FDG (18F- Flourodeoxyglucose)

- **FDG (18F- Flourodeoxyglucose)**
 - Like glucose, is actively transported into the cells by **glucose transporter**. Tumors are known to have increased consumption of glucose, which provides energy for cell growth and also provides precursors for nucleotide and lipid synthesis. Indicator of vascularization.

PET radiopharmaceuticals for imaging of tumor hypoxia

Table 2. Principal radiopharmaceuticals applied in PET imaging of tumor hypoxia

Uptake mechanism	Tracer	Tumors imaged	Benefits	Limitations
Pasteur effect (anaerobic glycolysis) [25]	¹⁸ F-FDG (¹⁸ F-fluorodeoxyglucose)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSCLC [23, 27, 32, 37] Head and neck tumors [31] Oral squamous cell carcinoma [40, 41] Gastric cancer [39] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good correlation with tumor aggressiveness and prognosis Easily reproducible and broad availability 	Overlap between uptake in normoxic (Warburg effect) [26] and hypoxia tumor tissue
Nitroimidazole-like uptake: reduction into RNO ₂ radicals and RNHOH compounds in hypoxic conditions. Then covalent binding to macromolecules [21, 59]	¹⁸ F-MISO (¹⁸ F-fluoromisonidazole)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head and neck tumors [35, 42-45] Locally advanced HNSCC [35, 46] Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) [37, 47, 48] Breast cancer [49] NSCLC [32, 33, 50] Renal cell carcinoma [51] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadest evidence of value as a hypoxia tracer. Good correlation with immunohistochemistry and prognosis in most cases. Good availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of correlation in all tumors Low tumor-to-background ratio Variable reproducibility



Structure of FDG by Anypodetos

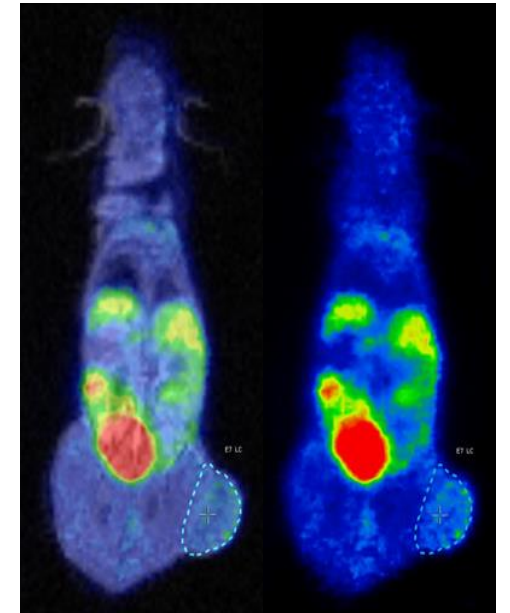
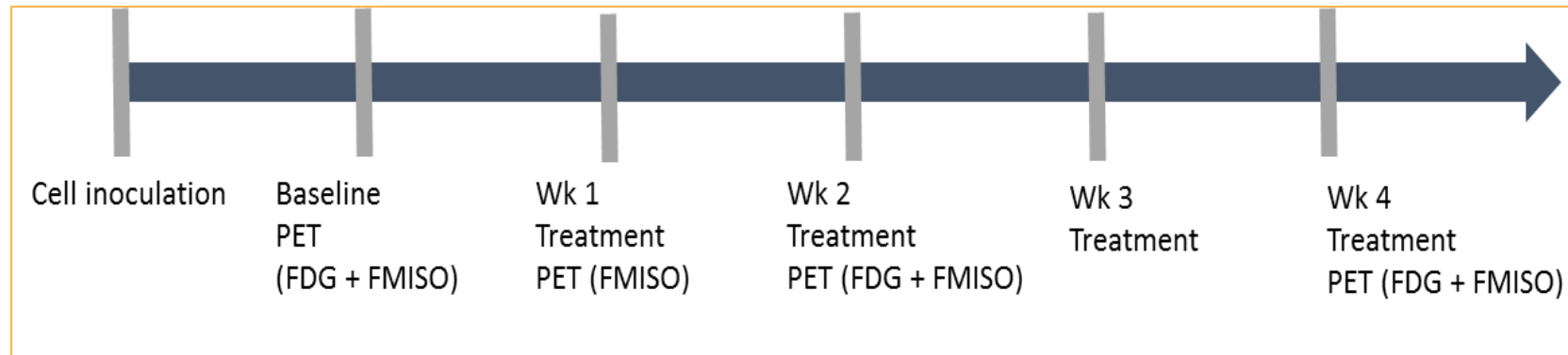
- FMISO PET- was used to **visualize tumor hypoxia**.
- FDG PET - was used to visualize where tumor was **metabolically active**.
- **Procedure:**
 - Fasting hrs = 4
 - F-18 FDG or F-18 FMISO activity ~20MBq in <0.2ml were injected, *i.v.*
 - Incubation time 60 mins
 - **Anesthesia:** 1.5 – 2 % isoflurane.
 - Scan time: 20 mins static PET scan; 12 mins **MRI (material map)**
- **Image Reconstruction: Nucline software**
 - The region of interest (ROI) was traced manually around the tumor's boundary by visual inspection using Interview Fusion v3.01 software.
- The percentage of injected dose (% ID) was calculated as follows:

$$\% ID = ROI \text{ activity (MBq/ml)} / \text{Injected Dose (MBq)} \times 100$$



Study Workflow

- **FMISO PET** at baseline, wk 1, wk 2 and wk 4.
- **FDG PET** at baseline, wk2 and wk 4.
- Tumor tissues collected were stained for **IHC** targeting hypoxia



Results – Tumor volume

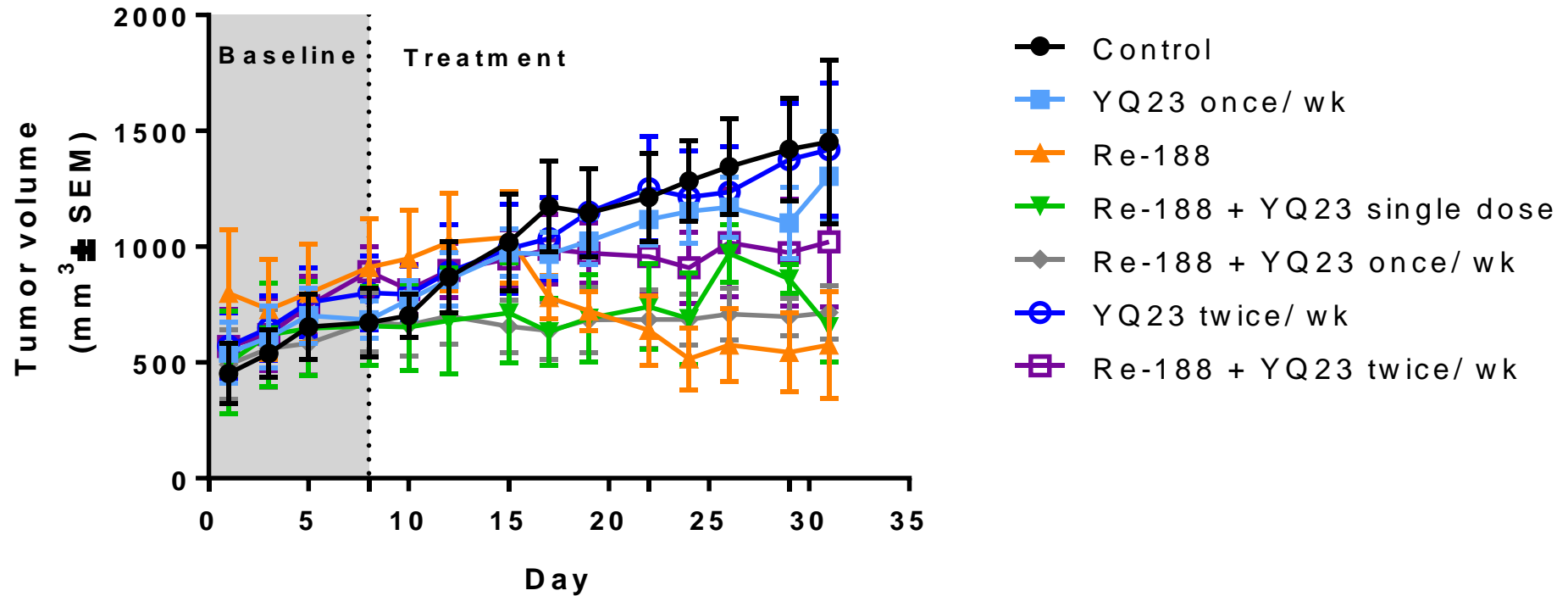


Figure 1: In vivo efficacy study in HepG2 xenograft model. Points, mean tumor volume; bars, SEM

Mean Tumor volume

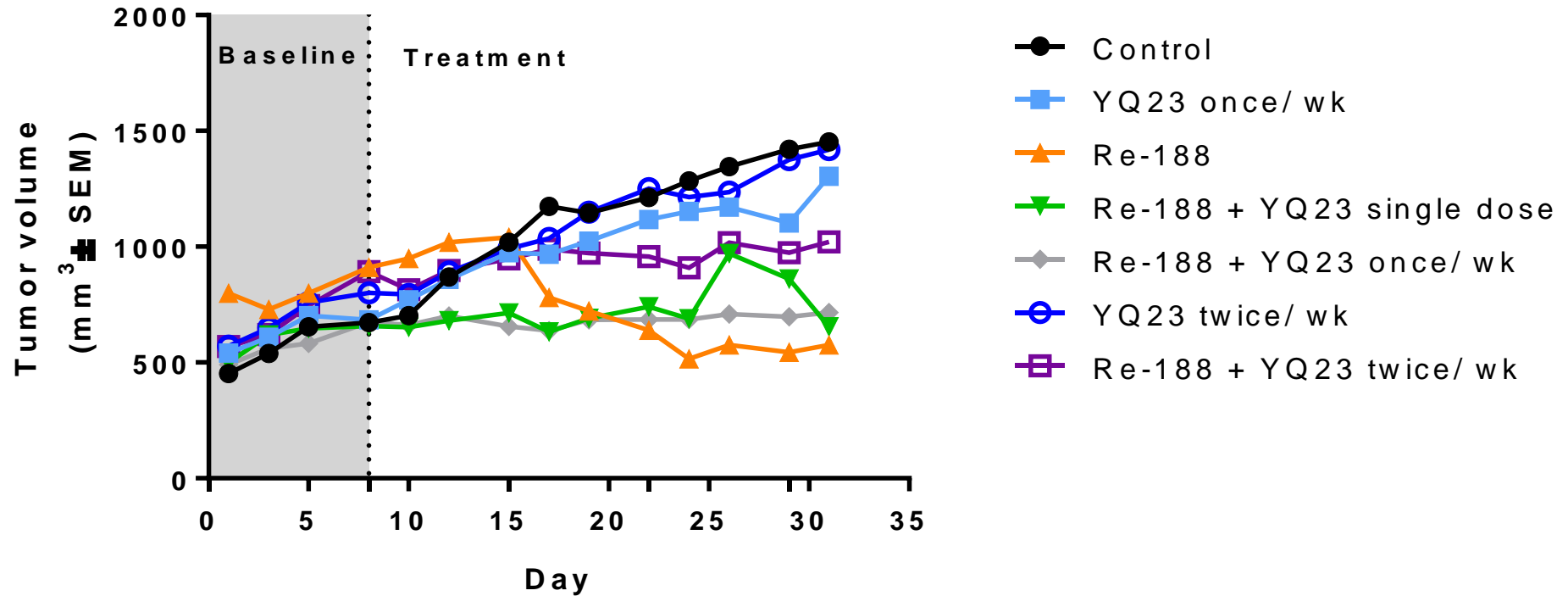


Figure 1: In vivo efficacy study in HepG2 xenograft model. Points, mean tumor volume; bars, SEM

Results – Re-188 therapy

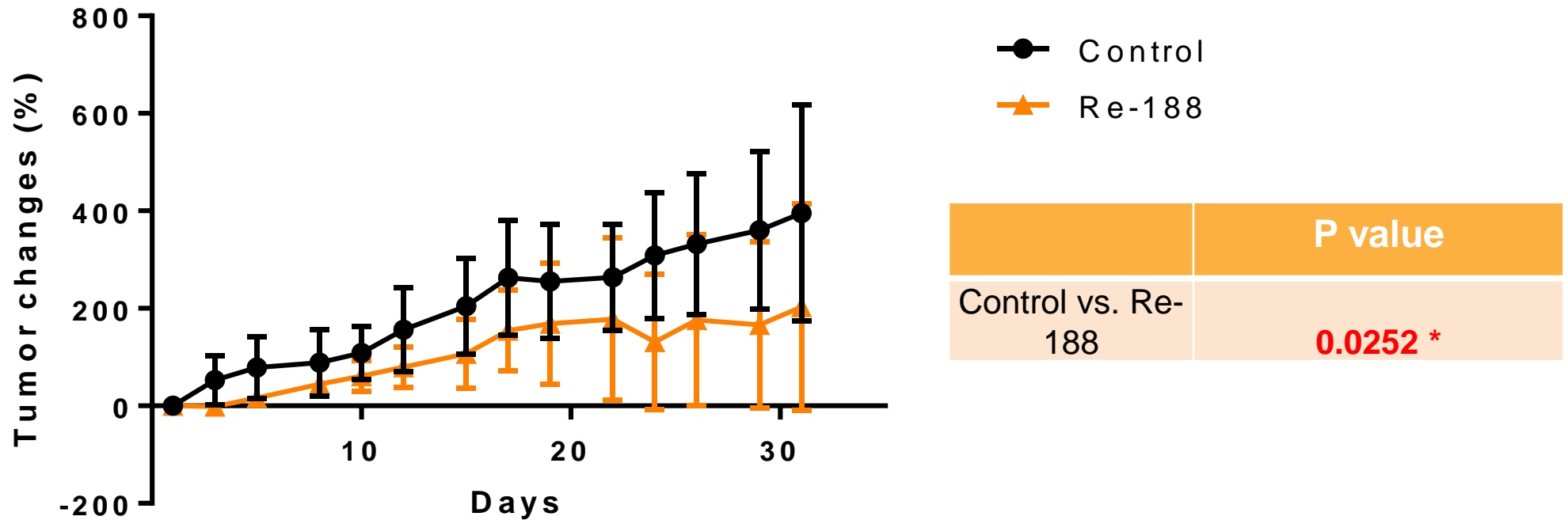


Figure 2: Tumor volume changes in % after treatment the treatment started. One-way ANOVA Bonferroni's Multiple Comparison Test (GraphPad Prism)

Results – YQ23 once a week

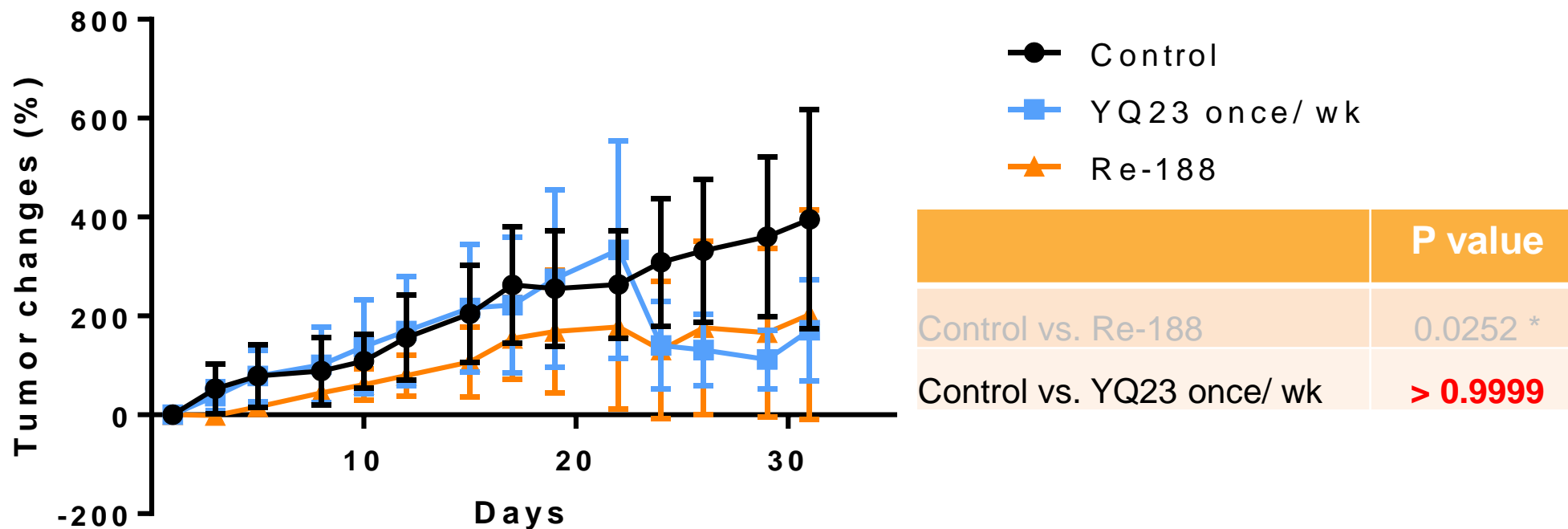


Figure 2: Tumor volume changes in % after treatment the treatment started. One-way ANOVA Bonferroni's Multiple Comparison Test (GraphPad Prism)

Results – YQ23 twice/ wk

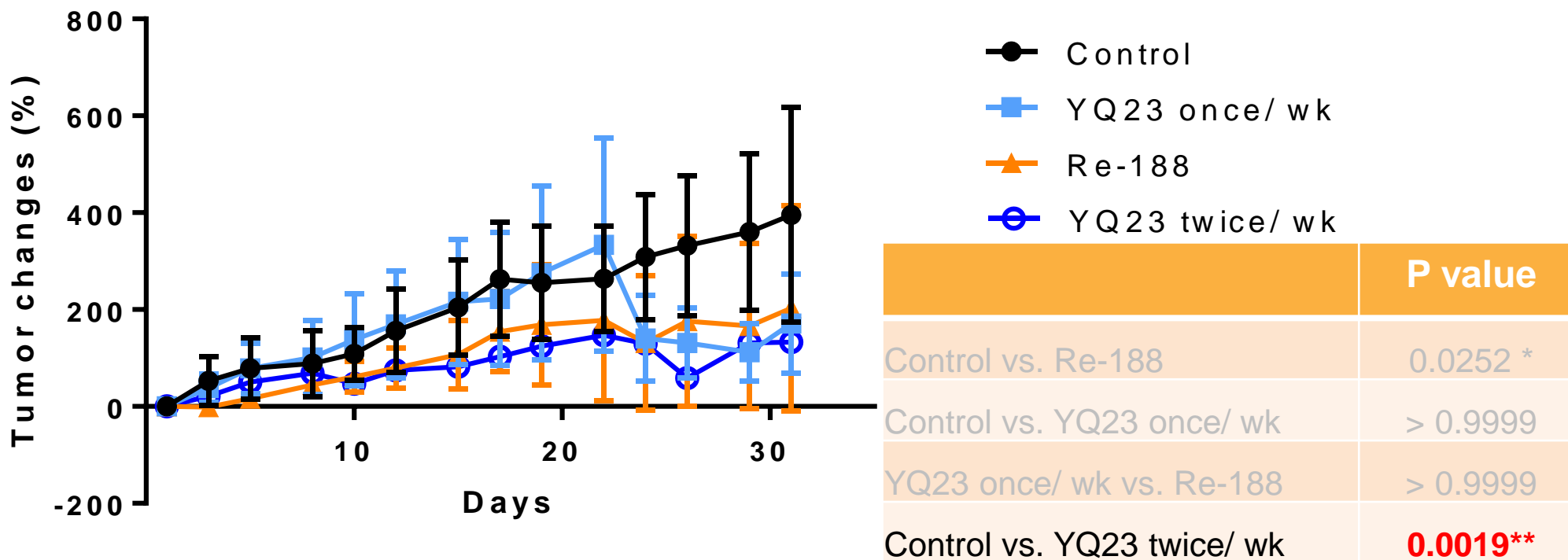


Figure 2: Tumor volume changes in % after treatment the treatment started. One-way ANOVA Bonferroni's Multiple Comaprison Test (GraphPad Prism)

Results – Re-188 + YQ23

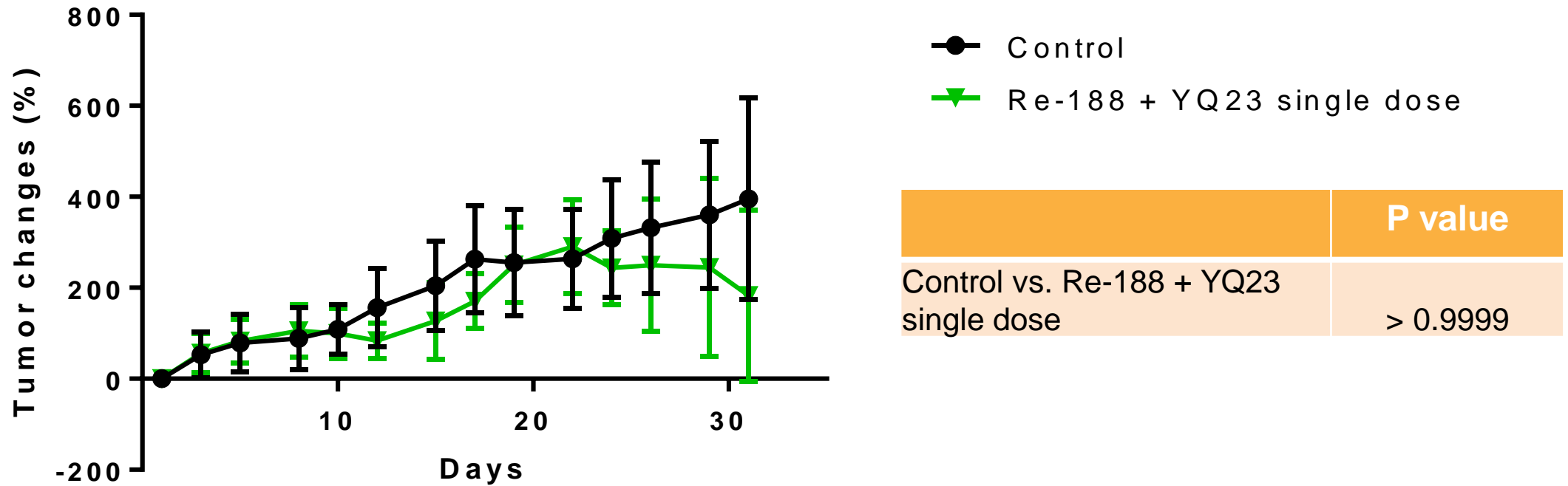


Figure 2: Tumor volume changes in % after treatment the treatment started. One-way ANOVA Bonferroni's Multiple Comparison Test (GraphPad Prism)

Results – Re-188 + YQ23 once/ wk

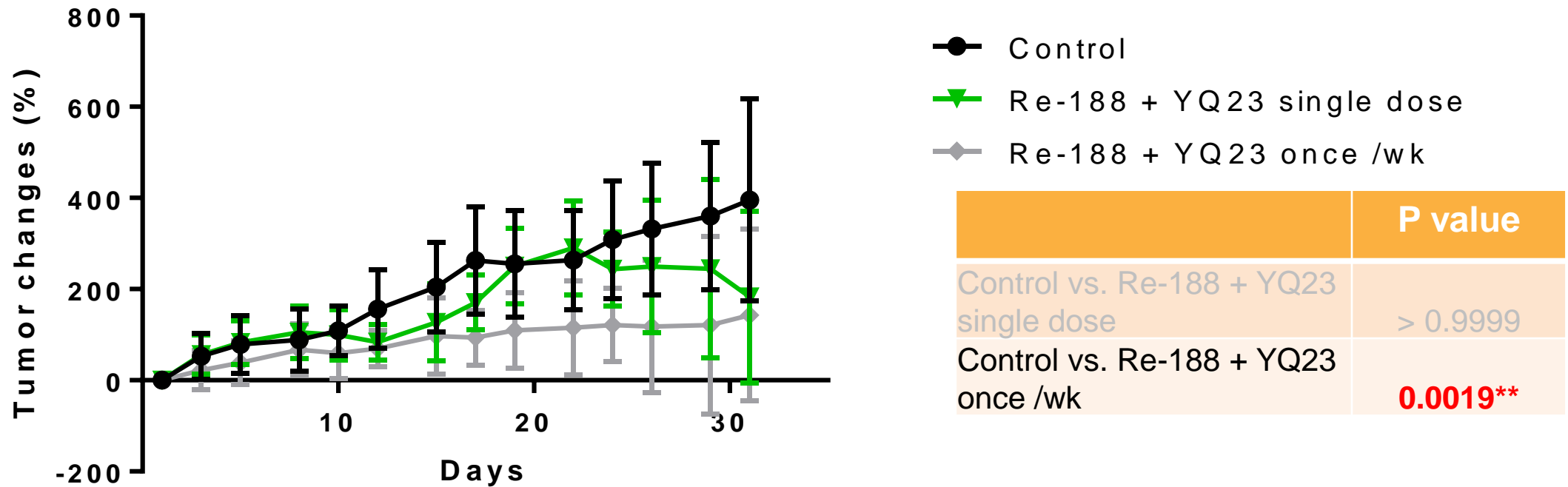


Figure 2: Tumor volume changes in % after treatment the treatment started. One-way ANOVA Bonferroni's Multiple Comparison Test (GraphPad Prism)

Results – Re-188 + YQ23 twice/ wk

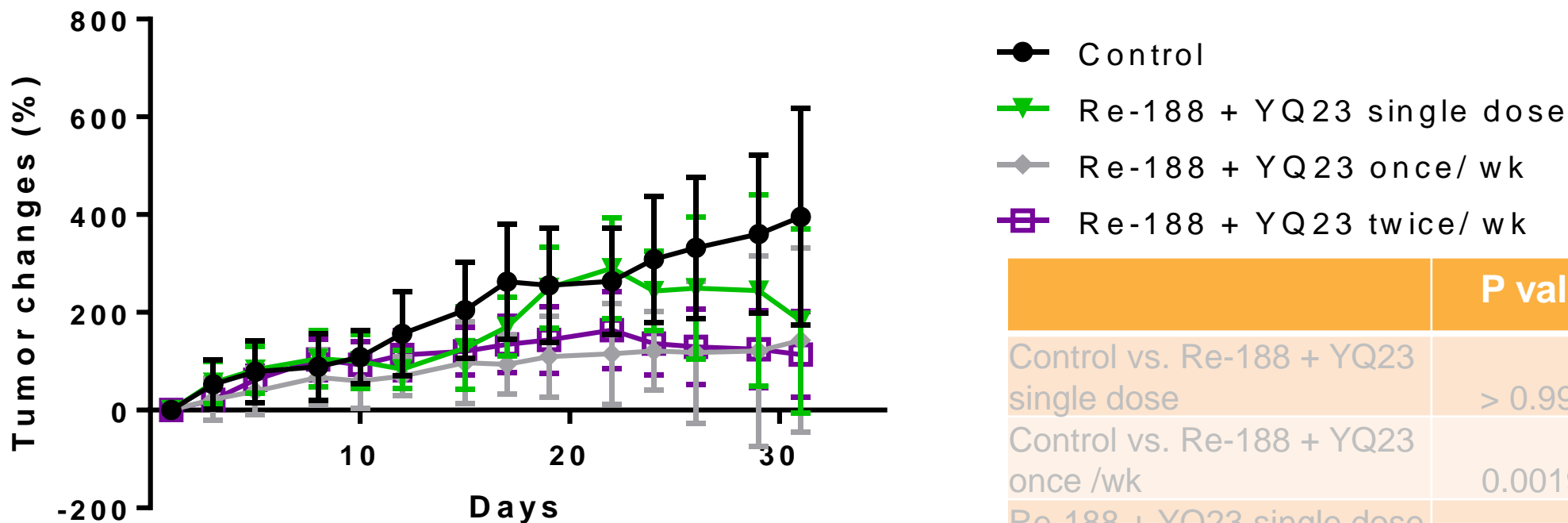


Figure 2: Tumor volume changes in % after treatment the treatment started. One-way ANOVA Bonferroni's Multiple Comparison Test (GraphPad Prism)

	P value
Control vs. Re-188 + YQ23 single dose	> 0.9999
Control vs. Re-188 + YQ23 once /wk	0.0019**
Re-188 + YQ23 single dose vs. Re-188 + YQ23 once /wk	0.3477
Control vs. Re-188 + YQ23 twice/ wk	0.0207*

Results

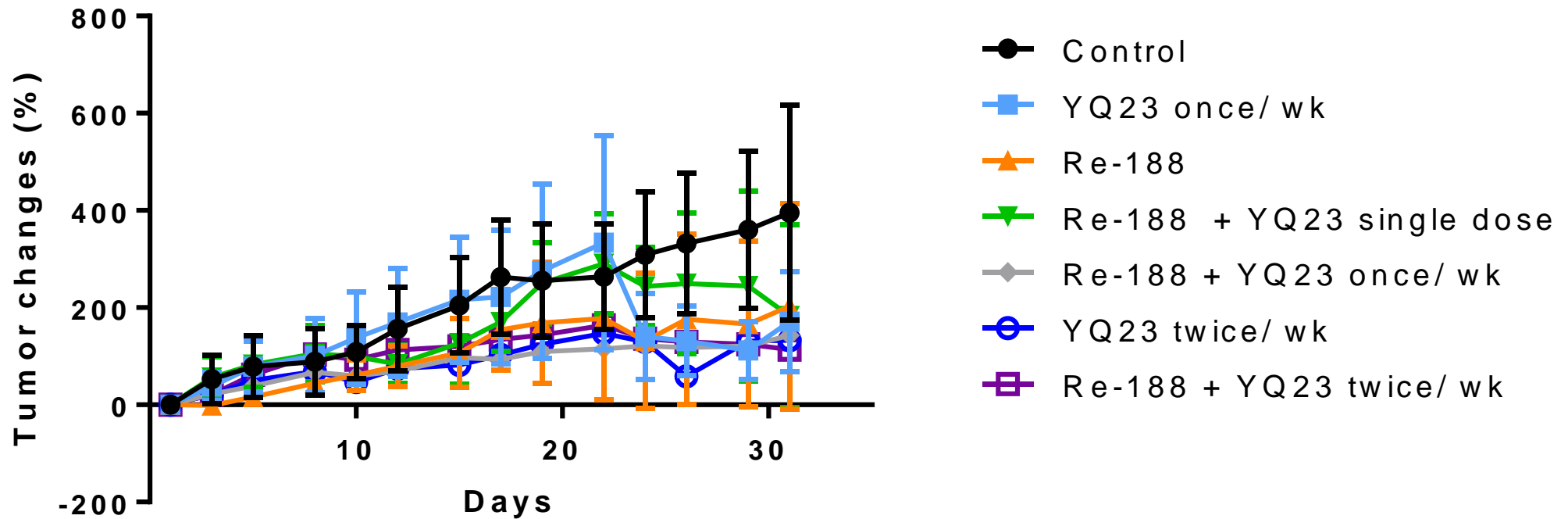
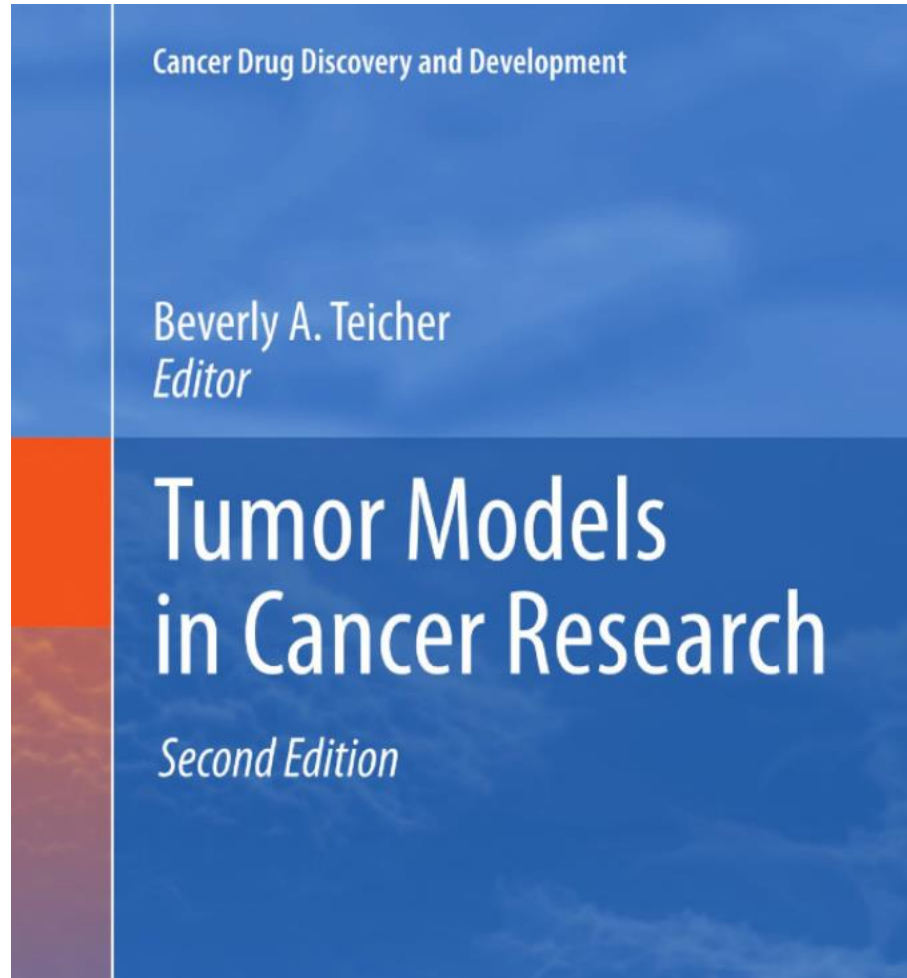


Figure 2: Tumor volume changes in % after treatment the treatment started. One-way ANOVA Bonferroni's Multiple Comparison Test (GraphPad Prism)

Results – Treatment/ control ratio (T/C %)



5 Human Tumor Xenograft Efficacy Models

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- qd × 4 (once daily for consecutive 4 days)
- qd × 5 (once daily for consecutive 5 days)
- q4d × 3 (once every 4 days for three times)
- q7d × 3 (once every 7 days for three times)

At each dose or schedule level, each drug was ranked by five efficacy levels:

- 0 = inactive, % *T/C* (change in tumor weight, each treated [*T*] or control [*C*] group of mice) > 40
- 1 = tumor inhibition, % *T/C* range 1–40
- 2 = tumor stasis, % *T/C* range 0 to –49
- 3 = tumor regression, % *T/C* range –50 to –100
- 4 = % *T/C* range –50 to –100 with > 30% tumor-free mice

To screen and prioritize compounds for testing in the xenograft models, so-called hollow fiber assays were used, in which tumor cells are cultured in sealed hollow fibers and implanted either subcutaneously or intraperitoneally in the nude mouse. After drug treatment for 6–8 days, cell survival is quantified by MTT dye conversion measurements [82]. The *in vivo* drug sensitivity profiles of these human tumor xenografts have served as worldwide benchmarks for the testing of new agents.

More recently, xenograft tumor models have been used to evaluate molecularly targeted therapies. Efforts devoted to such “target-oriented” drug discovery have produced fruitful results [83–86, 87]. Table 5.3 lists examples of therapeutics and xenograft models representing such achievements. One successful example of this effort has focused on the epidermal growth factor receptor tyrosine kinase

Results – Treatment/ control ratio (T/C %)

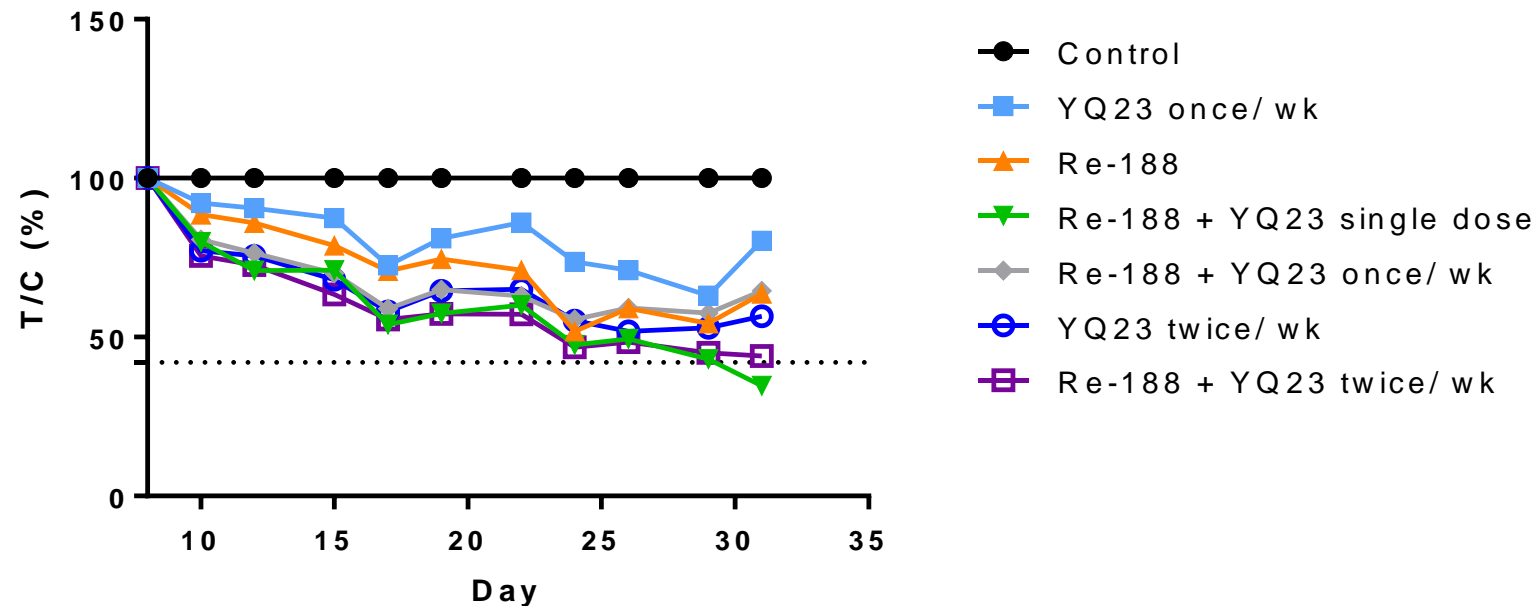
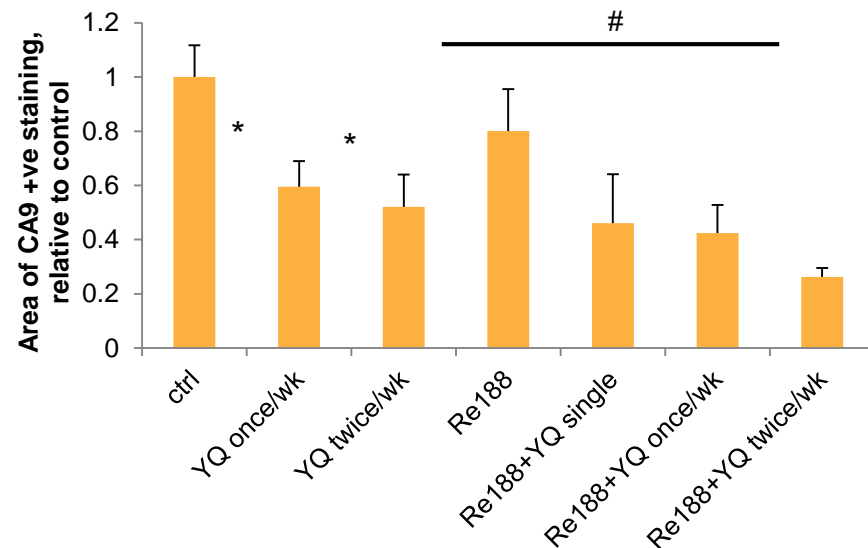


Fig 2: Re-188 + YQ23 single dose shows significant tumor inhibition effect (< 40%) on D31. The T/C% are 80.3% (YQ23), 63.7% (Re-188), **34.7% (Re-188 + YQ23)**, 64.6% (Re-188 + YQ23 once/wk), 56.6% (YQ23 twice/wk) and 44% (Re-188 + YQ23 twice/wk) respectively.

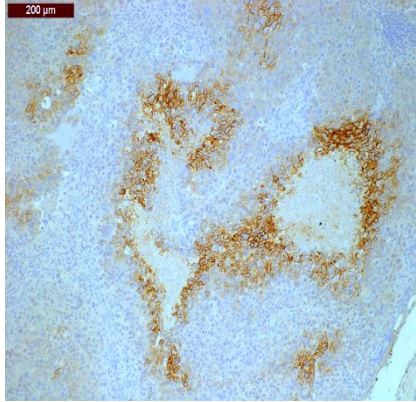
Histology – CA9 IHC staining

- **Carbonic anhydrase 9 (CA9)** is a hypoxic marker directly regulated by HIF1- α .
- Results showed a significant **decrease in CA9 expression** on **YQ23 treated group** compared to control.
- For **Re-188 treated group**, only Re188+ YQ twice/week showed significant decrease in CA9 compared to Re-188 alone.

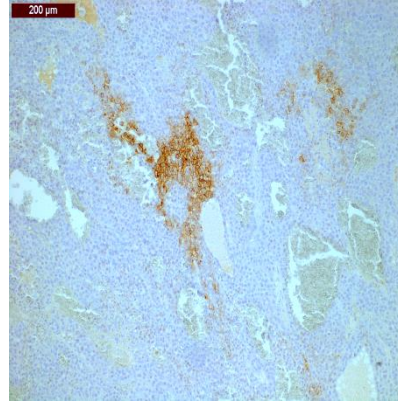


- $p < 0.05$ vs control; # $p < 0.05$ vs Re188

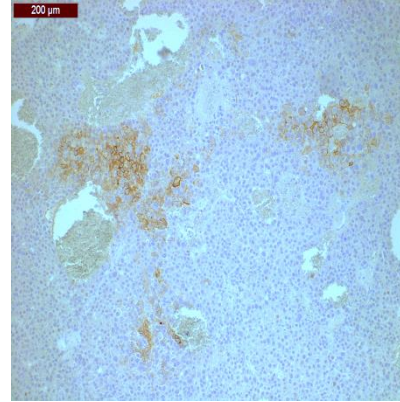
CA9 IHC staining



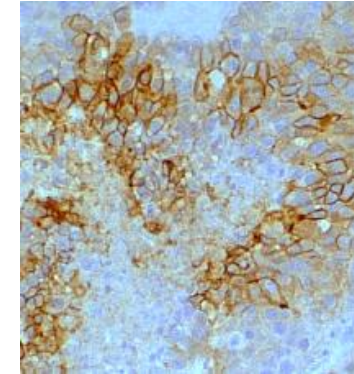
control



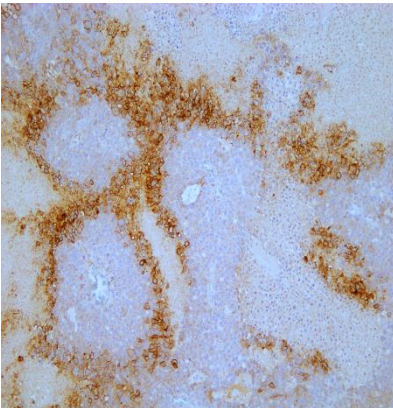
YQ23 once/week



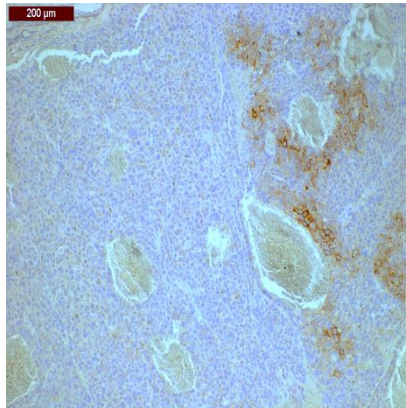
YQ23 twice/week



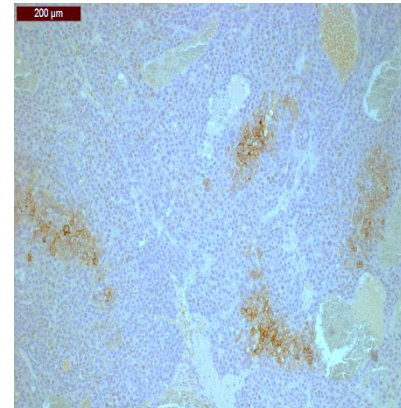
Larger image



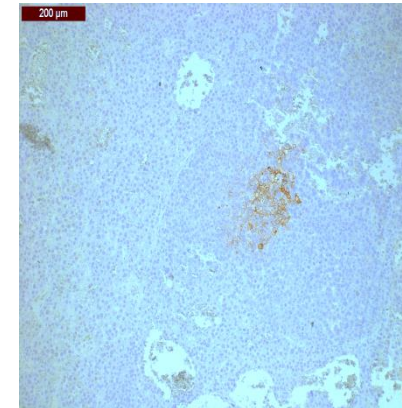
Re-188



Re-188
+ YQ23 single dose



Re-188
+ YQ23 once/wk



Re-188
+ YQ23 twice/wk

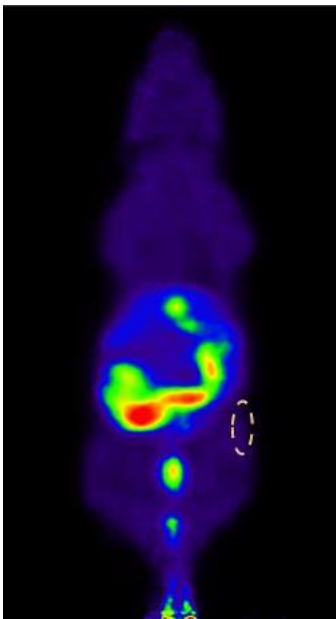
Image courtesy from Mr. Eddie Ho (New B Innovative)

FMISO PET Imaging

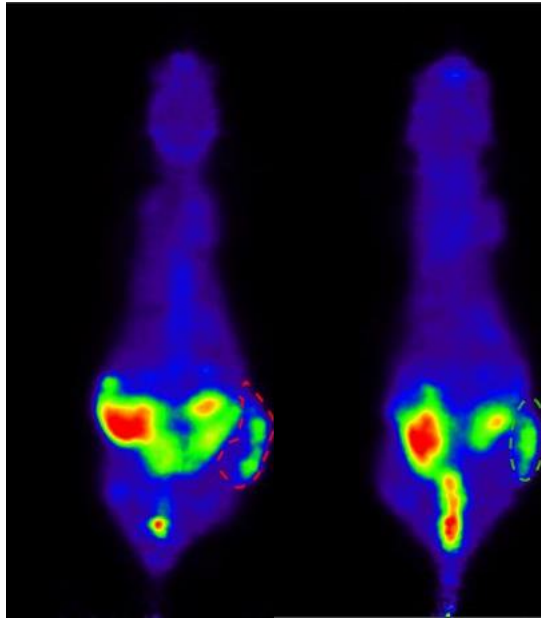


FMISO Baseline Wk 1 Wk 2 Wk 4 Material map

Control



Wk 1
No Scan

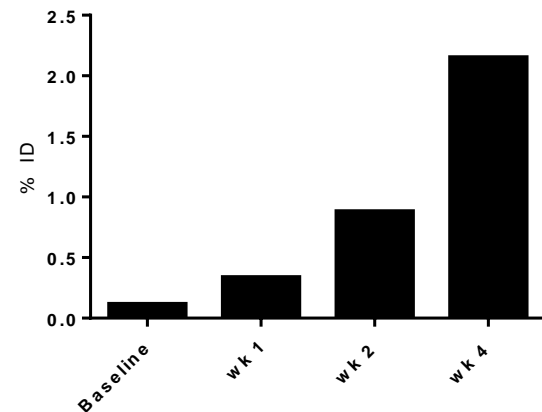


1000
(kBq/ml)

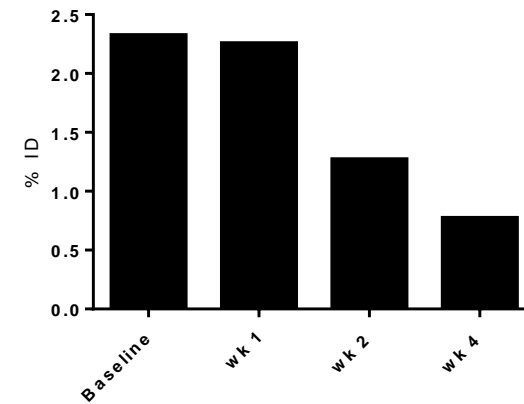
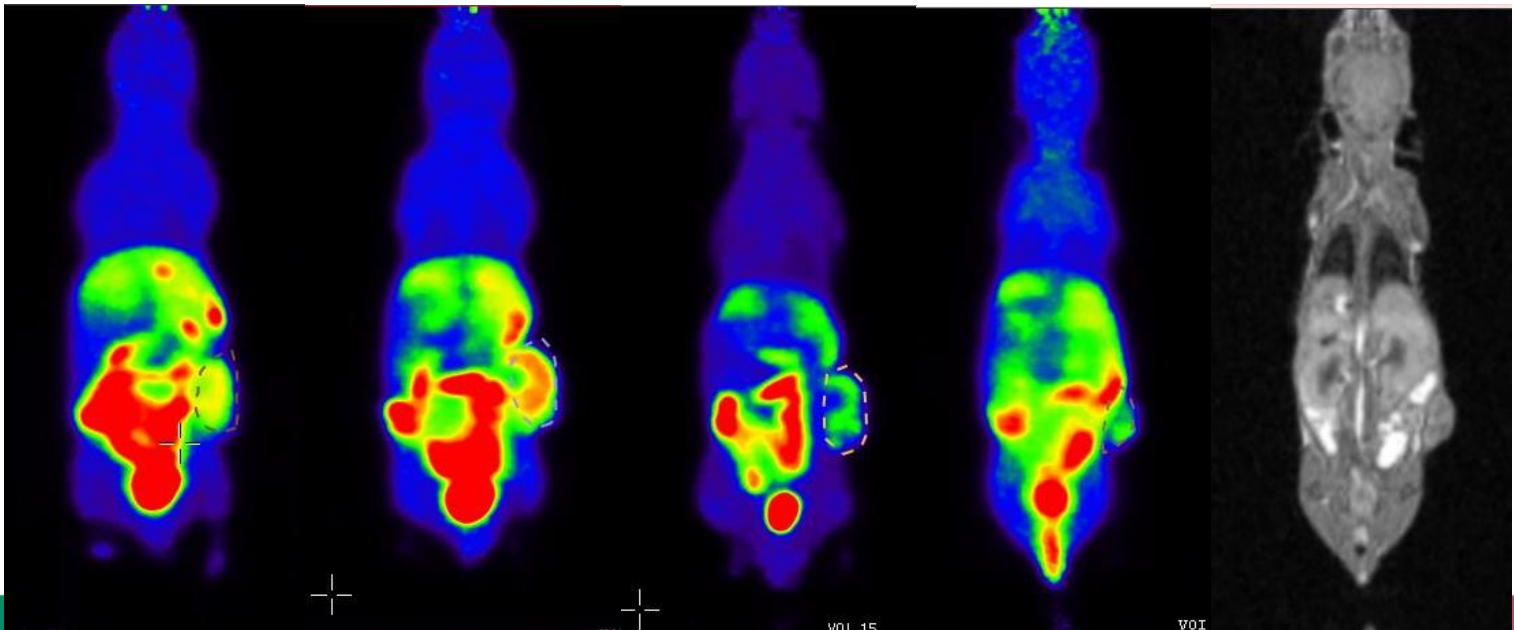


0

% ID = ROI activity (MBq/ml) / Injected Dose (MBq) x 100



Re-188 + YQ23 twice/wk



Conclusion

- **Re-188** has significant tumoricidal effect on HepG2 xenografts
- **YQ23** has significant tumoricidal effect on HepG2 xenografts
- The addition of **YQ23** to **Re-188** has a synergistic effect in HepG2 xenograft model in nude mice giving rise to better tumor response
- **YQ23 a novel oxygen carrier** can decrease hypoxia in HepG2 xenografts
- **The data supports a potential role for combining YQ23 with radiation therapy in HCC**

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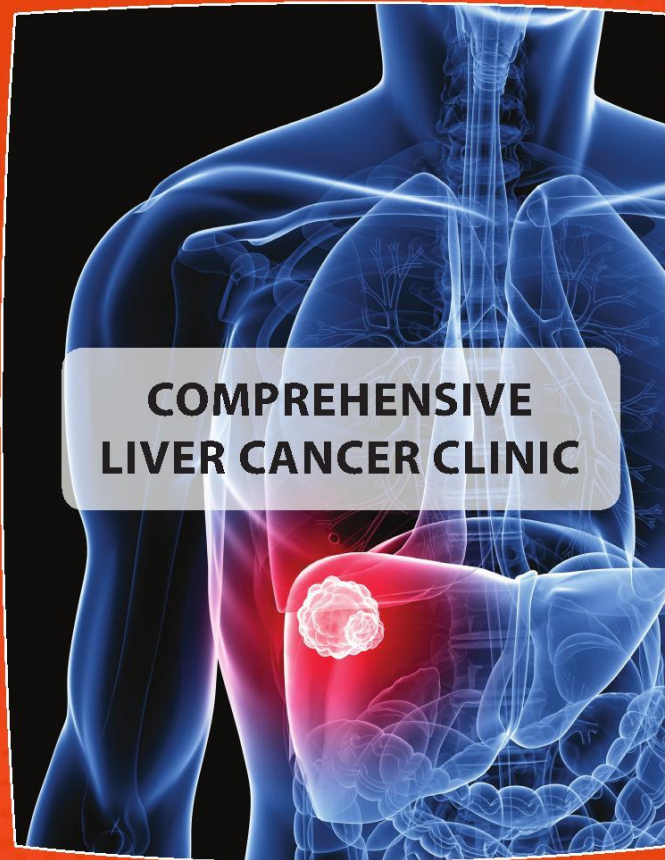
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*Thank
You!*

National Cancer Center Singapore Guidelines on Liver Cancer

http://www.nccs.com.sg/PatientCare/ComprehensiveLiverCancerClinic/Documents/CLCC_guideline_Final_Ver_to_upload_PDF_26092014.pdf