

# Biomarker Testing in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer: What's New and What's Next

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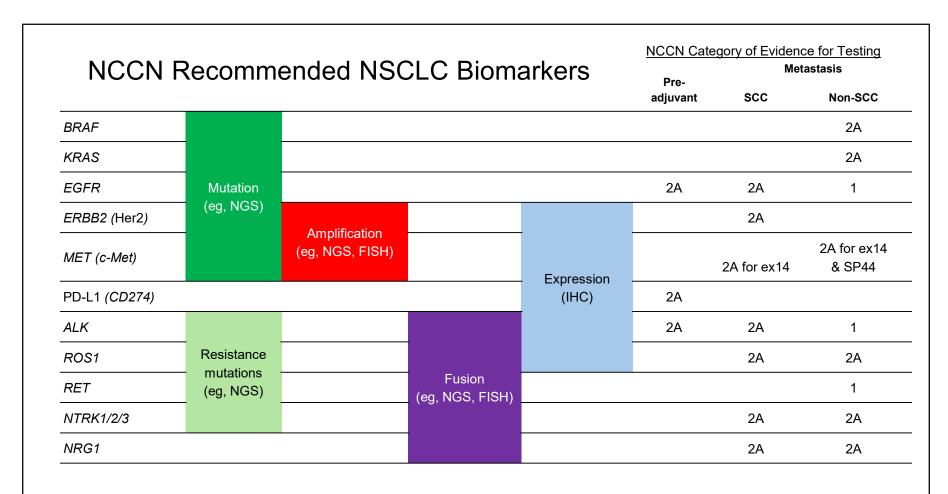


## Overview

- Brief review of established predictive genetic biomarkers
- Gene targets and assays for recent therapy approvals
- NCCN Emerging Biomarkers
- Biomarkers with *possible* significance for prognosis, ADC benefit prediction, and resistance to established therapies
- Liquid biopsy strategies and use cases in NSCLC
- Applications of Al and machine vision
- Barriers to comprehensive biomarker testing

## Scope

- Emphasis on individual rather than composite biomarkers
- Emphasis on molecular genetic rather than expression-based biomarkers



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# Common molecular genetic assays

## Single or limited analyte

- Sanger sequencing
- Pyrosequencing
- Tailored NGS panels (e.g., amplicon-based)
- PCR-based genotyping e.g.,
  - Allele-specific
  - Droplet digital
- Fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH)

## **Comprehensive Genomic Profiling**

- Broad profiling of genetic abnormalities from DNA +/-RNA
- Large multi-gene captures (>100) to whole exome or transcriptomes
- Germline comparison sequencing available from some laboratories

#### PRINCIPLES OF BIOMARKER-DIRECTED THERAPY FOR ADVANCED OR METASTATIC DISEASE

#### EGFR Exon 19 Deletion or L858R Mutation

- · First-line therapy
- ▶ Afatinib<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Erlotinib<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Dacomitinib<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Gefitinib<sup>4,5</sup>
- Osimertinib<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ (Carboplatin or Cisplatin)/ Osimertinib/Pemetrexed (nonsquamous)/
- Erlotinib + Ramucirumab<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ Erlotinib + Bevacizumab (nonsquamous)9
- ▶ Lazertinib + Amivantamab-vmjw<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ Lazertinib<sup>10</sup>
- Subsequent therapy
- ▶ Osimertinib<sup>11</sup>
- Carboplatin/Pemetrexed
- + Amivantamab-vmjw (nonsquamous)<sup>12</sup>
- Datopotamab deruxtecan-dlnk (nonsquamous)<sup>13</sup>
- Lazertinib + Amivantamabvmiw<sup>14,15</sup>

#### EGFR \$768I, L861Q, and/or G719X

#### Mutations

- First-line therapy
- Afatinib<sup>1,16</sup>
- ▶ Erlotinib<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Dacomitinib<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Gefitinib<sup>4,5</sup>
- ▶ Osimertinib<sup>6,17</sup>

#### EGFR S768I, L861Q, and/or G719X Mutations (continued)

- Subsequent therapy
- → Osimertinib<sup>11</sup>
- Datopotamab deruxtecan-dlnk (nonsquamous)<sup>13</sup>

#### EGFR Exon 20 Insertion Mutation

- · First-line therapy
- Carboplatin/Pemetrexed
- + Amivantamab-vmjw (nonsquamous)<sup>18</sup>
- Subsequent therapy
- ▶ Amivantamab-vmiw<sup>19</sup>
- ▶ Sunvozertinib<sup>20</sup>
- Datopotamab deruxtecan-dlnk (nonsquamous)<sup>13</sup>

#### KRAS G12C Mutationa

- Subsequent therapy
- ▶ Sotorasib<sup>21</sup>
- Adagrasib<sup>22</sup>

#### **ALK Gene Fusion**

- First-line therapy
- Alectinib<sup>23,24</sup>
- ▶ Brigatinib<sup>25</sup>
- ▶ Ceritinib<sup>26</sup>
- Crizotinib<sup>23,27</sup>
- ▶ Ensartinib<sup>28</sup>
- ▶ Lorlatinib<sup>29</sup>

#### ALK Gene Fusion (continued)

- Subsequent therapy
  - Alectinib 30,31
  - ▶ Brigatinib<sup>32</sup>
  - ▶ Ceritinib<sup>33</sup>
  - ▶ Ensartinib34
- ▶ Lorlatinib<sup>35</sup>

#### **ROS1** Gene Fusion

- First-line therapy
- Crizotinib36
- ▶ Entrectinib<sup>37</sup>
- ▶ Repotrectinib<sup>38</sup> ▶ Taletrectinib<sup>39</sup>
- Subsequent therapy
  - ▶ Lorlatinib<sup>40</sup>
- ▶ Entrectinib<sup>37</sup>
- ▶ Repotrectinib<sup>38</sup>
- ▶ Taletrectinib<sup>39</sup>

#### **BRAF V600E Mutation**

- First-line therapy
- ▶ Dabrafenib/Trametinib<sup>41</sup>
- ▶ Binimetinib/Encorafenib<sup>42</sup>
- ▶ Dabrafenib<sup>43</sup>
- Vemurafenib
- Subsequent therapy
- ▶ Dabrafenib/Trametinib<sup>43,44</sup>
- ▶ Binimetinib/Encorafenib<sup>42</sup>

#### NTRK1/2/3 Gene Fusion

- · First-line/Subsequent therapy
- Larotrectinib45
- ▶ Entrectinib<sup>46</sup>
- ▶ Repotrectinib<sup>47</sup>

#### MET Exon 14 Skipping Mutation<sup>a</sup>

- · First-line therapy/Subsequent
- therapy
- ▶ Capmatinib<sup>48</sup>
- Crizotinib<sup>49</sup>
- ▶ Tepotinib<sup>50</sup>

#### **RET Gene Fusion**

- First-line therapy
- > Selpercatinib<sup>51</sup>
- Pralsetinib<sup>52</sup>
- Subsequent therapy
- Cabozantinib<sup>53,54</sup>

#### ERBB2 (HER2) Mutation

- Subsequent therapy
- ▶ Fam-trastuzumab deruxtecan-nxkia,55
- Ado-trastuzumab emtansine<sup>a,56</sup>
- ▶ Zongertinib<sup>57</sup>

#### NRG1 Gene Fusion

- Subsequent therapy
- ▶ Zenocutuzumab-zbco<sup>58</sup>

#### HER2-positive IHC 3+

- Subsequent therapy
- ▶ Fam-trastuzumab
- deruxtecan-nxki59

#### HGFR (MET) (≥50% IHC 3+

- and EGFR wild-type) Subsequent therapy
- ▶ Telisotuzumab vedotin-tllv (nonsquamous)<sup>60</sup>

NSCL-J, 2 of 6. The NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®) for Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (V1.2026).

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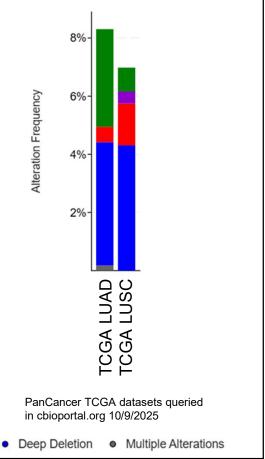
# Biomarkers for Recent FDA Drug Approvals & NCCN Emerging Biomarkers

# Her2 overexpression

- Associated with inferior prognosis<sup>2</sup>
- Correlates poorly with ERBB2 amplification status<sup>2</sup>
- Fam-trastuzumab deruxtecan-nxki: FDA approved on 4/5/24 for metastatic tumors with Her2 IHC of 3+
  - Recommended by NCCN¹ for patients with 3+ IHC, citing DESTINY-Lung01³ (although this trial included both 2+ and 3+ scores)

## NRG1

- Neuregulin 1 proto-oncogene
  - Growth factor ligand for Her3 RTK
- Binding initiates heterodimerization with Her2 and activation of MAPK and PI3K/MTOR pathways



Mutation
 Structural Variant

Amplification

## NRG1 fusion prevalence in NSCLC

#### **TCGA**

- 4 of 1053 samples (~0.4%) of NSCLC in TCGA data
  - SDC::NRG1 1 LUSC, 1 LUAD
  - SMAD4::NRG1 1 LUSC
  - THAP7::NRG1 1 LUSC

Queried from cBioportal.org<sup>5-7</sup> on 10/02/2025, see <a href="https://bit.ly/3Ky4q10">https://bit.ly/3Ky4q10</a>

### Bastard C, et al. 2025

- Observed by FISH in approximately 1% (N=4/446) of lung adenocarcinoma
- 2% (N=4/191) of cases with no alterations in EGFR, KRAS, BRAF, HER2, MET, ALK, ROS1 and RET

Bastard C, et al. Cancers (Basel). 2025 Jul 15;17(14):2347. doi: 10.3390/cancers17142347. PMID: 40723230

# NRG1 fusions detected by breakapart FISH

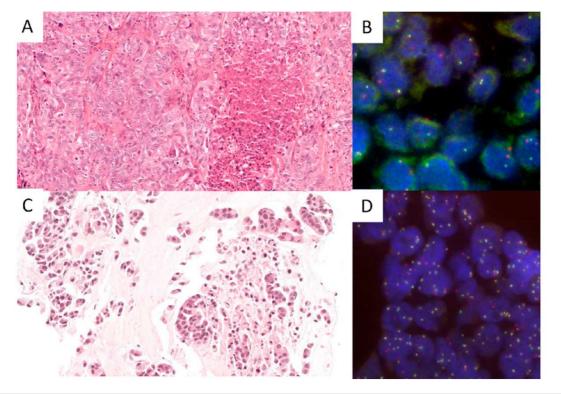


Figure adapted from Bastard C, et al. Cancers (Basel). 2025 Jul 15;17(14):2347. doi: 10.3390/cancers17142347. PMID: 40723230; PMCID: PMC12294116. Published under CC BY 4.0 license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

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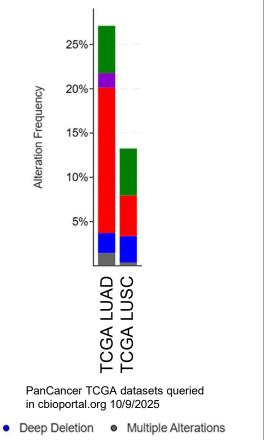
# Zenocutuzumab-zbco: eNRGy phase 2

- NRG1 fusions identified by NGS
- All tumors ORR 30% (95% CI 23-37), N=158
- NSCLC ORR 29% (95% CI 20-39), N=93
- FDA approval on 12/4/24 for NRG1 fusion-positive NSCLC and pancreatic adenocarcinoma

Schram AM, et al. Efficacy of Zenocutuzumab in *NRG1* Fusion-Positive Cancer. N Engl J Med. 2025 Feb 6;392(6):566-576. doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa2405008. PMID: 39908431; PMCID: PMC11878197.

## FGFR1, 2, 3, 4

- Fibroblast growth factor receptor family
  - Proto-oncogene RTKs
  - Activate PI3K/MTOR and MAPK pathways



Mutation
 Structural Variant

Amplification

# Erdafitinib; RAGNAR phase 2 trial

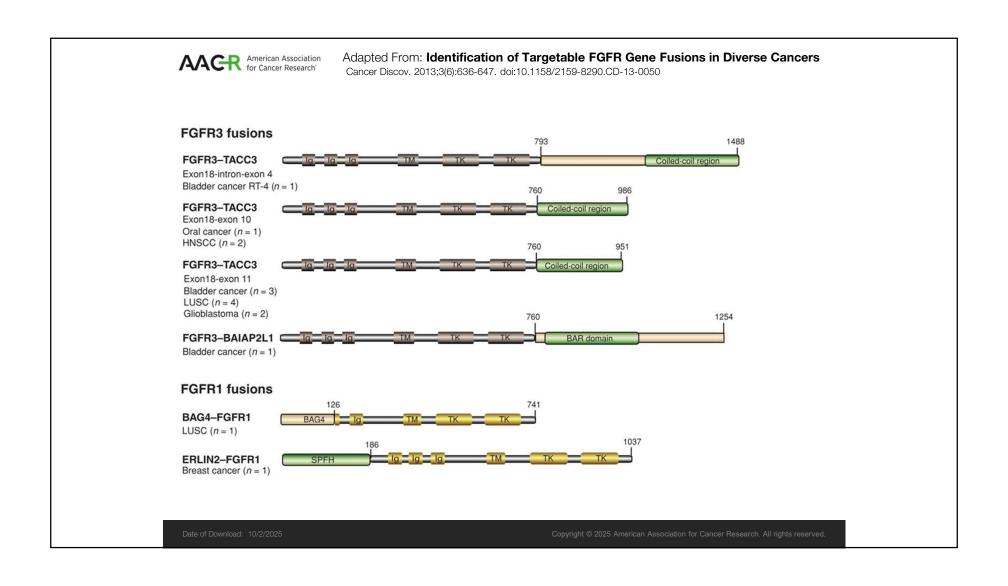
### All tumors, N=217

- ORR 30% (95% CI 24-36)
- FGFR3 alterations/fusions most common
  - FGFR3::TACC3, N=49 (23%)
  - FGFR3 p.S249C, N=25 (12%)
  - FGFR2::BICC1, N=12 (6%)
  - FGFR2 p.Y375C, N=8 (4%)
  - FGFR2::TACC2, N=7 (3%)

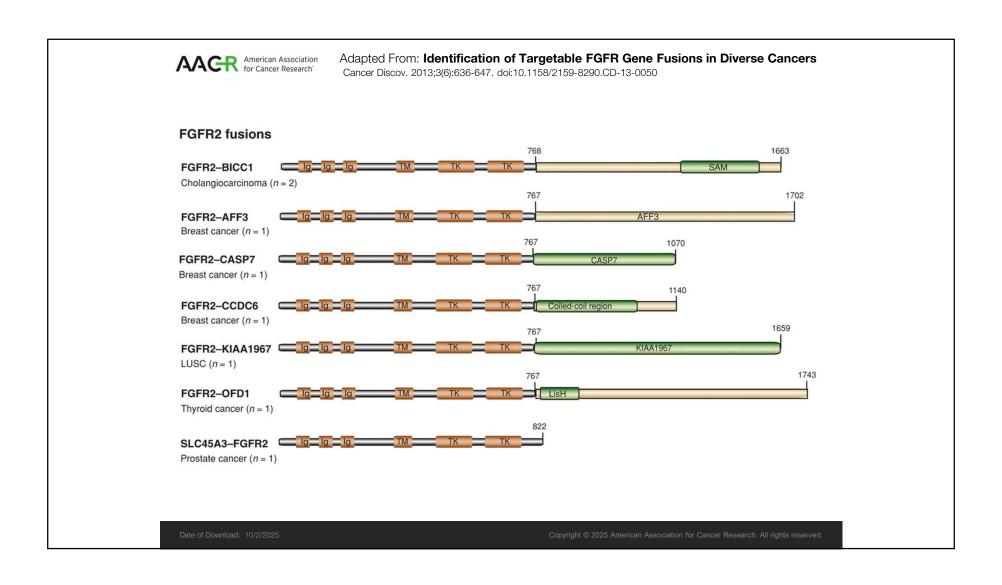
### NSCLC, N=23

- Squamous ORR 21% (CI 5-51)
  - FGFR3 predominates
- Nonsquamous ORR 33% (CI 8-70)
  - Balanced between FGFR2 and 3, fusions predominate

Pant S, et al. Lancet Oncol. 2023 Aug;24(8):925-935. PMID: 37541273



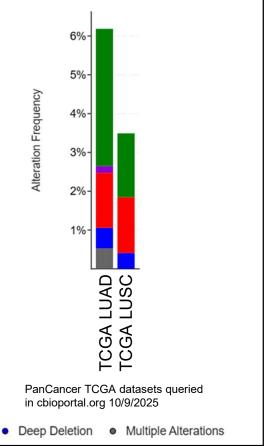
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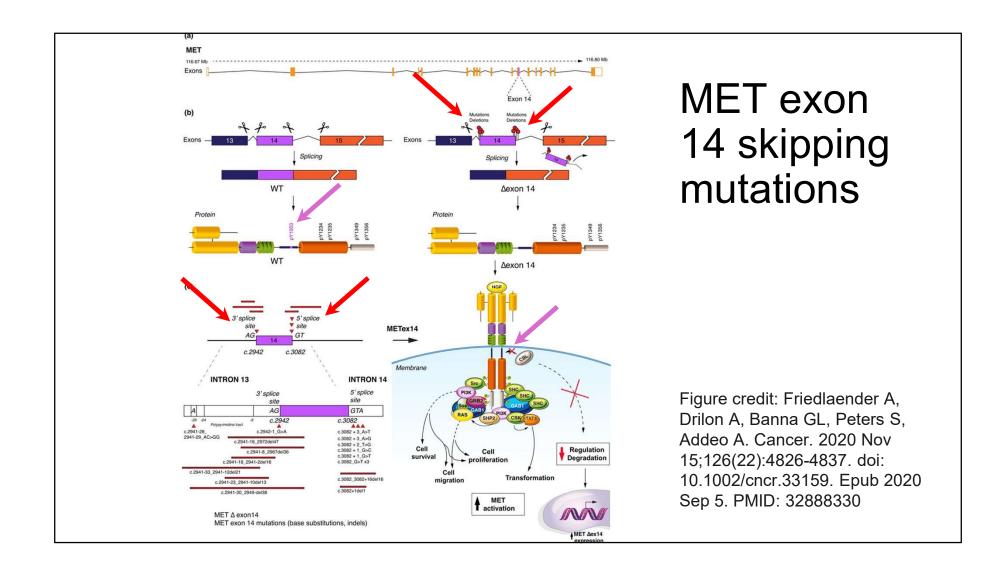
## MET

- "Mesenchymal Epithelial Transition" protooncogene, aka. c-MET
  - RTK for hepatocyte growth factor (HGF)
  - Activates PI3K/MTOR and MAPK pathways
- Exon 14-skipping mutation status is an established biomarker for response to capmatinib, crizotinib, and tepotinib
- High-level amplification is linked to inferior prognosis<sup>11, 12</sup>



Mutation
 Structural Variant

Amplification



# Telisotuzumab vedotin: LUMINOSITY ph 2

- 172 patients with nonsquamous EGFR-wt NSCLC with c-Met overexpression by IHC (SP-44)
  - High: >50% of tumor with IHC 3+
  - Intermediate: 25%-50% of tumor with IHC 3+
- Primary endpoint: ORR
  - c-Met high: 34.6% (95% CI 24.2-46.2, N=78)
  - c-Met intermediate: 28.6% (95% CI 21.7-36.2, N=83)
  - PFS 45.8 and 50.1 m, respectively; OS 14.6 and 14.2 m
- FDA approval for c-Met high via SP44 (5/24/2025)

Camidge DR, et al. J Clin Oncol. 2024 Sep 1;42(25):3000-3011. PMID: 38843488

# SP44 MET immunohistochemistry

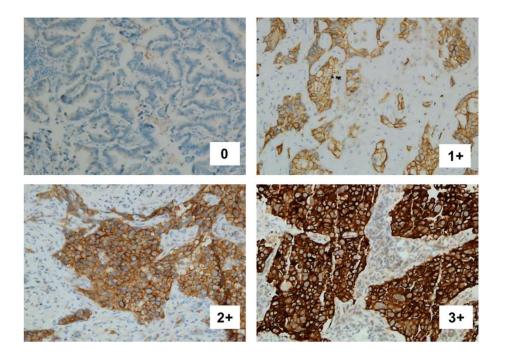


Figure source: Chen RL, et al. BMC Cancer. 2018 Nov 26;18(1):1171. PMID: 30477470; PMCID: PMC6258481. CC BY 4.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

# MET expression: more than mutations

- Guo, et al., analyzed Met expression in 181 patients with NSCLC
- MET IHC was positive in 39% (N=71)
- Of the 71 MET positive patients, only 3 demonstrated a genetic basis
  - 1 MET amplified
  - 2 METex14 mutation

Guo R, et al. J Thorac Oncol. 2019 Sep;14(9):1666-1671. PMID: 31228623

# High-level MET Amplification

	Assay	Threshold	Agent	ORR
Ou 2011 <sup>17</sup>	FISH	MET:CEP7 > 5	Crizotinib	100% (N=1)
Camidge 2021 <sup>18</sup>	FISH	MET:CEP7 > 4	Crizotinib	38.1% (N=21)
Wolf 2020 <sup>19</sup>	FISH	Copies >= 10	Capmatinib	(29% in prev. treated, N=69) 40% tx naïve (N=15)
Le 2023 <sup>20</sup>	ctDNA	Copies >= 2.5	Tepotinib	41.7% (N=24)

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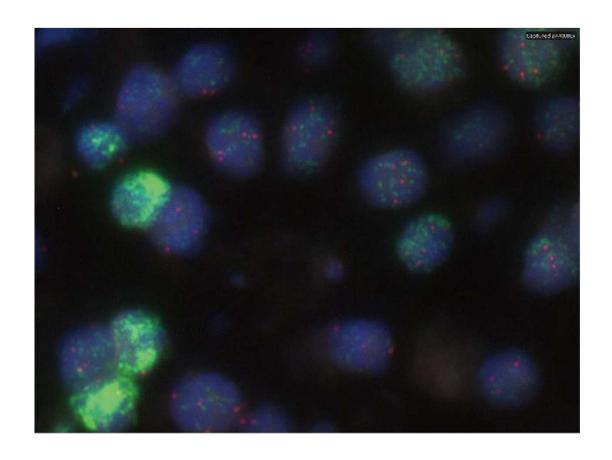
# MET amplification by FISH

MET: Green

probe

CEP7: Red probe

Champagnac A, et al. J Thorac Dis. 2020 May;12(5):2172-2178. PMID: 32642122. Published under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



# Additional Emerging and Exploratory biomarkers

Mandatory and highly recommended molecular biomarkers		Emerging molecular biomarkers			Exploratory and potential molecular biomarkers			
MANDATORY ESCAT I	ALK	Fusion Mutation as a mechanism of resistance	Predictive biomarkers for TARGETED THERAPY ESCAT III	BRAC1 BRAC2	Mutation		TP53 RB1	Mutation
	BRAF	V600E mutation		FGFR	Fusion Mutation	Predictive biomarkers for TARGETED THERAPY	RBM10	Mutation
	EGFR	Common mutation: Del19, L858R Uncommon mutation: G719X, L861Q, S7681 T790M mutation		HER2, HER3 B7-H3 CEACAM5 MET, TROP2	Protein expression		AKT CTNNB1 JAK2/3	Mutation
	MET	Mutation exon 14 skipping		РІЗКА	Mutation		NRAS	Mutation
	NTRK	Fusion		NRG1	Fusion		HRAS	Mutation
	RET	Fusion		KEAP1	Mutation	Predictive	High TCR clonality High CD8 density High dNLR/LIPI Adequate microbiota Gut and tumor DNA, metabolites, products	
	ROS1	Fusion Mutation as a mechanism of resistance	Predictive	МТАР	Protein expression			
Highly Ki RECOMMENDED Ki ESCAT II	<b>EGFR</b>	Exon 20 Insertion	biomarkers for	NOTCH	Mutation	biomarkers for		
	HER2	Mutations		STK11	Mutation	IMMUNO		
	KRAS	G12C mutation	THERAPY	SMARCA4	Mutation	THERAPY		
	MET	Amplification		тмв	Mutations			

Hofman P, et al. Virchows Arch. 2024 Feb;484(2):233-246. PMID: 37801103; PMCID: PMC10948551. Published under CC BY 4.0 license (<a href="http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>)

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# **Emerging Biomarkers: A Limited Survey**

Expression status (e.g., IHC) Genetic status (e.g., NGS)

HER3 KEAP1

B7-H3 *MTAP* 

CEACAM5 RBM10

TROP2 SMARCA4

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## HER3

- RTK proto-oncogene of the ERBB family altered by mutation or amplification
- Forms heterodimers with other ERBB family members, especially ERBB2 (HER2)
- Activates MAPK, PI3K/MTOR pathways among others
- Frequently overexpressed in NSCLC<sup>23, 24</sup>
- Proposed mechanism of resistance to EGFR, ALK TKIs<sup>25-28</sup>
- May be targetable by investigational monoclonal antibodies (lumretuzumab, seribantumab, patritumab) and ADCs (patritumab-DXd)

# B7-H3 (CD276)

- Immune checkpoint molecule and proto-oncogene in the B7 immunoglobulin superfamily
- Overexpression linked to inferior prognosis<sup>29-31</sup>
- Contributes to immune evasion, inhibits apoptosis<sup>32-34</sup>
- May predict of ICI resistance<sup>30, 33</sup>
- Therapeutic strategies include CAR-T, BiKE, and ADC<sup>35</sup>

# CEACAM5 (CD66e)

- Carcinoembryonic antigen-related cell adhesion molecule 5
- Cell-surface glycoprotein overexpressed in 20-25% of NSCLC<sup>36</sup>
- May enhance cell proliferation and migration through p38 pathway<sup>37</sup>
- Therapeutic strategies include investigational bispecific antibodies, CAR-T, ADCs (tusamitamab ravtansine)<sup>36, 38</sup>

# TROP2 (TACSTD2)

- Trophoblast cell-surface antigen 2
  - Transmembrane calcium signal transducer proto-oncogene
  - Overexpressed in NSCLC<sup>39, 40</sup>
  - Promotes cell proliferation via MAPK, PI3K/MTOR pathways
- Overexpression linked to ICI resistance<sup>41-42</sup>
- Target for ADCs, including Sacituzumab govitecan<sup>43-45</sup> and datopotamab deruxtecan (TROPION-Lung01, 05, 07/08)<sup>46-48</sup>

## KEAP1

- Tumor suppressor that depresses intracellular NRF2 levels
  - NRF2 otherwise activates antioxidant and cellular protective pathways
- Mutation associated with inferior prognosis<sup>49-52</sup>
- Also linked to resistance to chemoradiation, TKI, and ICI<sup>53-60</sup>
- Possible therapeutic strategies include glutaminase and mTOR pathway inhibition<sup>60</sup>

## MTAP

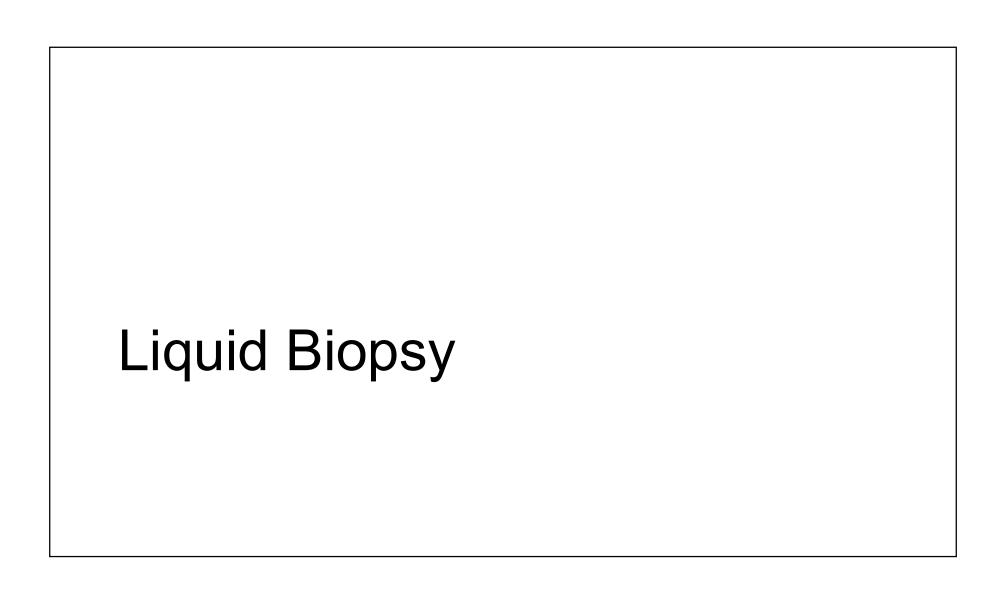
- Methylthioadenosine phosphorylase, tumor suppressor in the methionine salvage pathway
- Loss of function (e.g., deletion) leads to accumulation of 2methylthioadenosine (MTA)
- Inferior prognosis, especially when codeleted with CDKN2A (p16)<sup>61</sup>
- Resistance to immunotherapy<sup>62</sup>
- Exploratory therapeutic strategies include MAT2A and PRMT5 inhibition<sup>63-65</sup>

## RBM10

- RNA-binding motif protein 10, tumor suppressor
- Mutation/loss of expression may portend inferior prognosis,
   particularly with TP53 and KRAS comutation<sup>66-69</sup>
- Associated with late resistance to EGFR TKIs<sup>70, 71</sup>
- Spliceosome inhibitors<sup>71</sup> and WEE1 kinase inhibitors<sup>72</sup> may offer new therapeutic strategies

## SMARCA4

- Encodes the BRG1 subunit of the SWI/SNF chromatin remodeling complex, tumor suppressor
- Mutation associated with inferior prognosis<sup>73-76</sup> and response to chemotherapy<sup>75, 77-79</sup>
- Therapeutic strategies include:
  - SMARCA2 inhibition<sup>76</sup>
  - AURKA inhibition<sup>80</sup>
  - CDK4/6 inhibition<sup>81</sup>



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## Liquid biopsy: sample types, analytes, assays

## Sample types

- Blood/plasma
- CSF
- Sputum
- Effusions
- Bone marrow

## Plasma analytes

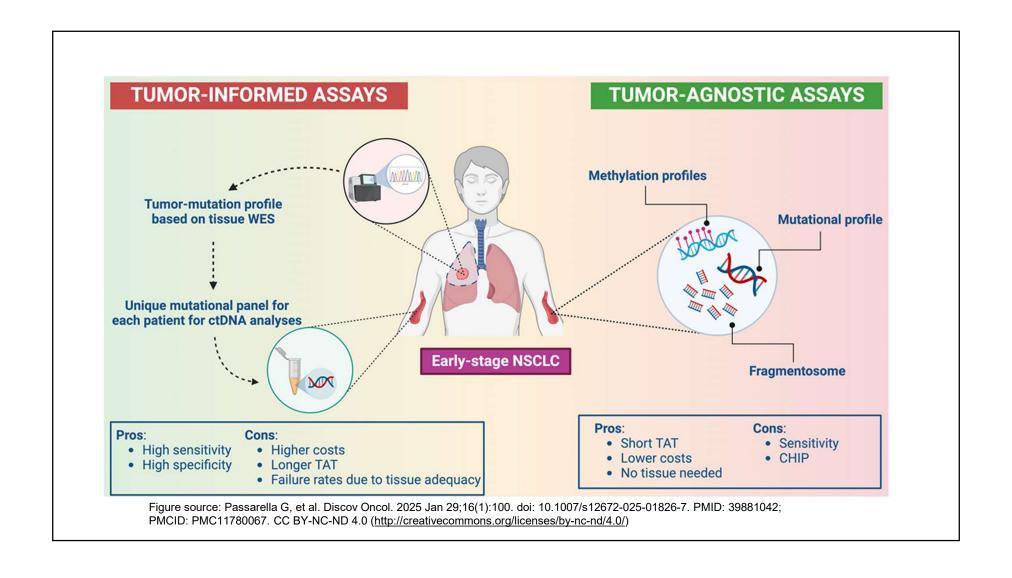
- ctDNA
- cfRNA
- Methyl-ctDNA
- Proteins
- Exosomes
- Tumor-educated platelets

## **Buffy coat**

- Circulating tumor cells
- Circulating endothelial cells, fibroblasts
- Immune cells

## **Assays in Current Use**

- PCR (e.g., ddPCR)
- NGS (e.g., DNA)



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## ctDNA versus Traditional Tissue Biopsy

#### **ctDNA**

- May better reflect genetic heterogeneity across multiple tumor sites
- Potential for false positive mutations from hematopoietic cells
- Sensitivity depends on tendency of a particular tumor to shed DNA

#### **Tissue**

- Combines molecular data with histologic typing, grade/stage, etc
- Represents only a snapshot of the molecular state of the tumor
- Sensitivity depends on adequate tumor purity for detection of mutation

### ctDNA Recommendations

#### NCCN (2A) [v1.2026, NSCL-H 7]

- Should not be used in lieu of tissue diagnosis
- Not recommended in stages I-III
- High specificity but "appreciable" false-negative rate
  - Complementary to tissuebased sequencing

#### **IASLC (2021)**

 "For patients with oncogeneaddicted NSCLC progressing after a targeted therapy,... [a] "plasma first" approach should be considered as a standard of care in this setting."

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Rolfo C, et al. J Thorac Oncol. 2021 Oct;16(10):1647-1662. PMID: 34246791.

## Additional considerations

- Variable concordance between tissue and ctDNA mutation detection across studies<sup>83-85</sup>
  - Better with advanced disease and higher ctDNA fraction in blood
- Some support the value of co-testing ctDNA and tissue<sup>86, 87</sup> for highest possible hit-rate of targetable mutations and increased Quality-Adjusted Life-Years<sup>88</sup>

# Liquid biopsy: positivity and purpose

#### **Definitions of positivity**

- Predictive oncogenic mutations (drivers) characteristic of the tumor (e.g. EGFR mutation)
- Drivers that are not specific to a single tumor and not therapeutically predictive (e.g. TP53)
- Non-oncogenic/driver alterations (passengers)

#### **Purpose**

- Targeted therapy selection
- Prognosis
- Minimal residual disease
- Adjuvant therapy decisionmaking
- Response monitor

# Role of ctDNA Prognostic or Predictive?

#### **Prognosis**

 Numerous studies support the prognostic value of ctDNA for disease/recurrence-free survival after curative-intent therapy<sup>89-102</sup>

#### **Predictive**

 Predictive value of ctDNA testing as yet undetermined

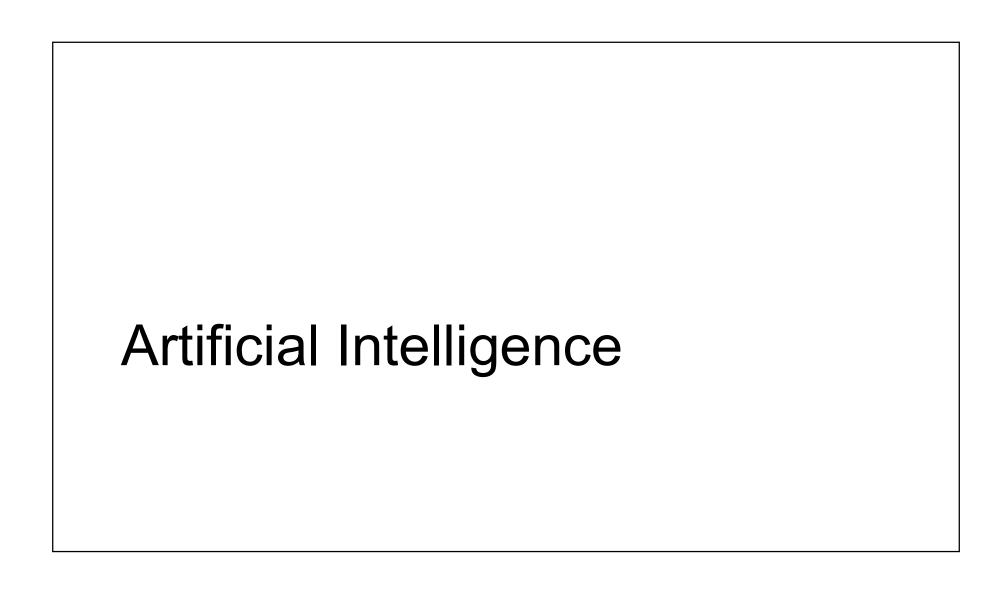
# ctDNA Predictive Studies in Progress

#### **Pending publication**

- MERMAID-1 (NCT04385368)
- MERMAID-2 (NCT04642469)

#### Recruiting

- ADAPT-E (NCT04585477)
- · NCT04585490



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# Digital pathology advances

The confluence of artificial intelligence and whole-slide imaging may generate clinically relevant data beyond histologic diagnosis:

- Prediction of molecular biomarkers (e.g., EGFR mutation) based on WSI morphology<sup>103-105</sup>
- Evaluation of PD-L1 status<sup>106</sup>
- Evaluation of tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes and other features of the microenvironment<sup>107-109</sup>
- Prognosis/recurrence after surgery or RT<sup>110, 111</sup>

# Multianalyte profiling and Al classifiers

Disease subtyping and prognostication algorithms can be trained on transcriptional or methylation profiling data, NGS or microarray

- A few examples in clinical translation:
  - Noninvasive detection of NSCLC using circulating oncRNA<sup>112</sup>
  - 27 gene RT-PCR predictor of ICI benefit in NSCLC<sup>113</sup>
  - Full transcriptome classifier for cancer of unknown primary<sup>114</sup>
- Limitations:
  - Availability limited to specific companies, laboratories
  - High tissue input requirements and assay cost for array, NGS
  - May require large (potentially expensive) datasets for training and validation (including prospective clinical trials)

# Five key challenge areas and recommendations for achieving comprehensive biomarker testing

Challenge 1. Knowledge gaps regarding the

value and indications for testing

Recommendation 1. Disseminate clear and

consistent educational materials for biomarker

testing to physicians and patients.

Challenge 2. Procuring adequate tissue for

evaluation

Recommendation 2. Provide education to proceduralists performing tissue sampling for potential lung cancer and guide the development of institutional policies promoting

adequate tissue collection.

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## Five key challenge areas, continued

Challenge 3. Choice of assay and turnaround

time

Recommendation 3. Promote the use of guideline-driven biomarker panel testing

through testing algorithms and implementation

of reflex testing.

Challenge 4. Accurate interpretation and

communication of testing results

Recommendation 4. Encourage standardized biomarker test reports and develop algorithms

that aid in directing treatment.

Challenge 5. Reimbursement, cost, and

coverage

Recommendation 5. Remove the disconnect

between payer policies and evidence-based

guidelines for comprehensive biomarker testing

to increase coverage and avoid delays.

Table adapted from: Fox AH, etc. Cancer. 2024 Dec 15;130(24):4188-4199. PMID: 39347617.

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## Barriers to comprehensive biomarker testing

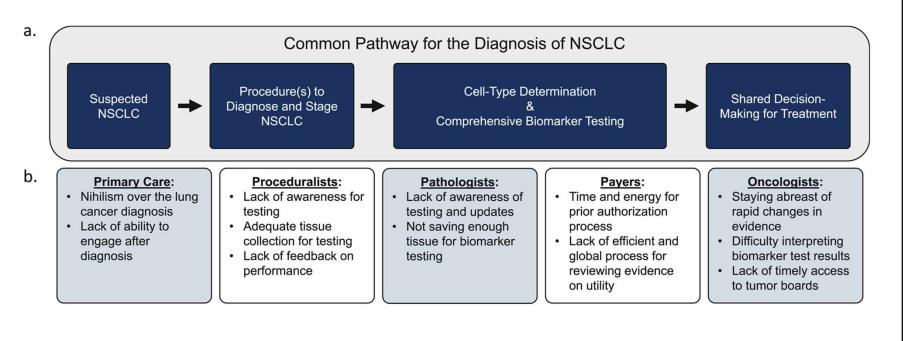


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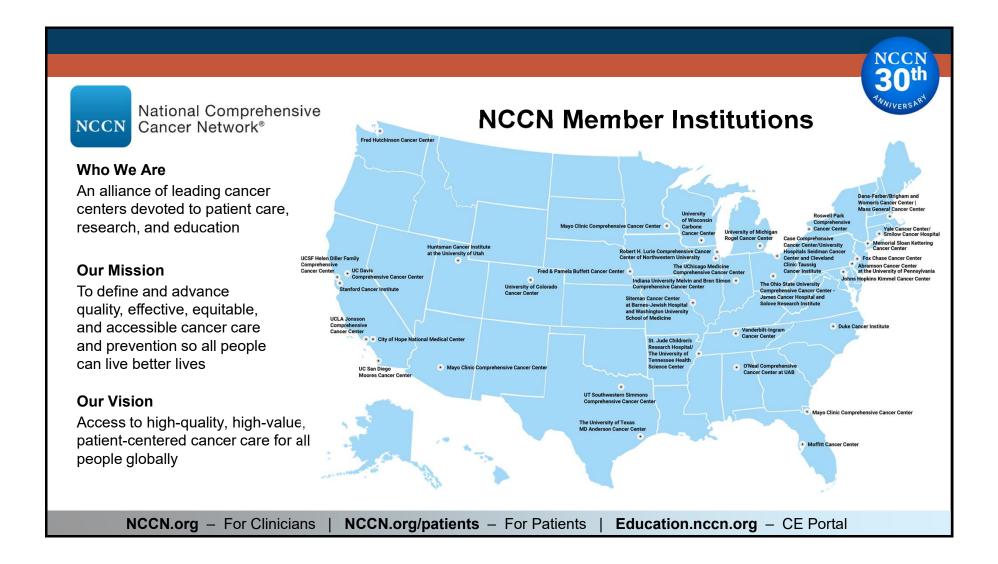
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