

### ACTIVATING THE POWER WITHIN

# **Development of eVLP Platform for Viral Associated Cancers**

World Vaccine & Immunotherapy Congress 2021

December 1, 2021



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# The Immuno-Oncology Renaissance Depends on an Ability to **Activate Anti-Tumor Immunity via Appropriate Antigen Selection**

#### Historic Context of Cancer Vaccines

- Historically, cancer vaccines have consisted of weakly immunogenic "self" tumor associated antigens (TAA)
  - Central tolerance naturally limits potent responses to "self" TAA
- PD-1 & CTLA-4 blockade success explained by mutation frequency - "neoantigens"
  - Occur in frequently mutating/inflamed/"hot" tumors
  - Enhance immunogenicity in the context of PD-1 or CTLA-4 mAb blockade
- Foreign viral antigens are inherently immunogenic
  - Our body has large repertoires of pre-existing anti-viral T cells (e.g. against CMV, EBV)
  - Opportunity for off-the-shelf therapy
- Tumor-associated viral antigens ("TAVA") make an ideal antigenic target





# Evidence for Cytomegalovirus (CMV) as a Target Antigen in GBM (1)

Multiple labs have confirmed presence of CMV antigens in GBM tumor samples but NOT in adjacent healthy tissue

- Cobbs CS (2002)
  - Immunohistochemical (IHC) staining with CMV pp65 antibody confirmed expression in 22/22 GBM tumor samples
  - No CMV expression in normal brain tissue (n=5), stroke tissue (n=4), and brain tissue from Alzheimer's subjects (n=3)
  - In situ hybridization (ISH) with CMV-specific probes confirmed reactivity in 8/8 GBM samples but no reactivity in normal brain tissue (n=4), stroke tissue (n=1) or Alzheimer's brain tissue (n=2)
- Mitchell DA (2007)
  - IHC staining with CMV IE-1 antibody confirmed expression in 42/45 GBM tumor samples with no expression in surrounding non-tumor brain tissue
  - IHC staining with CMV pp65 antibody confirmed expression in 30/33 GBM tumor samples but no adjacent areas of normal brain



• ISH with CMV IE1 probe confirmed reactivity in 16/16 GBM samples but not to blood vessels or normal brain

# **Evidence for CMV as a Target Antigen in GBM (2)**

#### Immuno-histochemical Staining of CMV in GBM Samples negative control Ab pp65 stained GBM sample



Lucas KG(2011)

#### Perinatal infection of mice with MCMV enhances tumor growth & mortality В CMV<sup>+</sup> Naive \*\*\* GL261luc2 - Naive 150 -Tumor volume (mm<sup>3</sup>) 100 (41 days) P < 0.0001 CMV+ Survival (%) 100 (32 days) 50 50 0 -20 30 10 20 40 0 60 Time (days) Time [days]

Krenzlin H (2020)

#### Primary GBM Tumors Present Antigens Recognized by CMV Specific T-cells





# Broad Clinical Evidence Supports CMV as an Immunotherapeutic Target in GBM

- Prins RM (2008) Autologous, GBM tumor lysate DC vaccine
  - Single imzn. increased CMV pp65-specific CD8+ T cells from 0.2% to 4.4%
- Crough T (2012) Single patient receiving 4 infusions of autologous CMV-specific T-cells
  - MRI revealed improvement with stable disease reported for 17 months
- Schuessler A (2014) 10 patients receiving 3-4 infusions of autologous CMV-specific T-cells
  - 10 recurrent GBM pts, 3-4 infusions of autologous CMV-specific T cells
  - Achieved median OS of 403 days and only minor adverse events
- Mitchell DA (2015) CMV-specific DC vaccine with tetanus pre-conditioning
  - OS (>36.6 months) vs. control cohort with median OS of 18.5 months
- Batich K (2017) CMV-specific DC vaccine with GM-CSF & Temozolomide
  - OS increased (>41.1 months) vs historic control
- Smith C (2020) Adoptive CMV-specific T cell therapy of patients with primary GBM
  - Improved overall survival when given prior to recurrence

# CMV Antigens are Present in Multiple Solid Tumors – An Ideal Target

CMV's immunomodulatory properties promote disease progression but its presence provides an opportunity for vaccine-induced tumor targeting & productive inflammation



# VBI's Cancer Vaccine Approach is Differentiated from Past Attempts







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# VBI-1901: Ongoing Phase I/II Trial in rGBM

# **GBM Phase I/IIa Clinical Study Design**

Two-part, multi-center, open-label, dose-escalation study of VBI-1901 in patients with recurrent glioblastoma (GBM)





# Encouraging Tumor Responses & Survival Benefit Observed in Phase 1 (Part A)

Exemplar Tumor Responses in Subjects Immunized Monthly at Highest Dose Level

500 -500 400 1 (mm<sup>2</sup>) 300-200 200 1 (mm<sup>2</sup>) 100-Lesion 400 -300  $12 (mm^{2})$ -200 -100 0-24 0 20 12 16 Time (weeks)

Patient 03-006

- ~60% reduction in primary tumor
- New tumor (black)
  prevented PR designation



Patient 03-004

- >50% reduction in primary tumor
- New tumor (black) prevented PR designation

#### Patient 03-003



 Presumed immune infiltration into tumor (pseudoprogression)



# VBI-1901 Demonstrated Excellent Safety & Promising Immunogenicity and Tumor Impact

#### Phase I (Part A) Summary

Vaccine Immunotherapeutic Candidate Safe & Well Tolerated

- No vaccine-associated SAEs
- No evidence for vaccine-induced cerebral edema

#### High Dose Selected for Phase 2a (Part B)

• 3/6 patients in the high dose cohort had evidence of stable disease by MRI compared to 1/6 and 0/6 patients in the low and intermediate dose cohorts



## **Can a Baseline Biomarker Be Identified Associated With Those Patients Responding to VBI-1901 Treatment?**

Baseline CD4/CD8 T cell ratio captures immunological fitness of patient which enables response to VBI-1901+GM-CSF





#### Part A of Trial

Normal CD4/CD8 ratio: median overall survival (mOS) = 409 days Reduced CD4/CD8 ratio: mOS = 260 days

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# Baseline CD4/CD8 Ratio is Not Associated with Those Patients Responding to VBI-1901 Treatment with $AS01_B$

AS01 may help overcome deficits in immune fitness (low CD4/CD8 ratio)





## **Phase IIa (Part B) : Biomarker Data & Baseline Characteristics**

Alternate Baseline Biomarkers are Not Associated with Those Patients Responding to VBI-1901 Treatment



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# **Phase IIa (Part B) : Tumor Response Data**

Disease Control Rates of 40% and 50% in GM-CSF and AS01B arms, respectively, in Part B of Trial



#### VBI-1901 + GM-CSF



VBI-1901 + AS01<sub>R</sub>

# **Phase IIa (Part B) : Clinical outcomes**

12-month Overall Survival (OS) rates of 60% and 70% compared to historical rate of ~30% (Taal *et al*, 2014)



#### VBI-1901 + GM-CSF



#### VBI-1901 + AS01<sub>R</sub>

VBI

- Additionally, VBI-1901 + GM-CSF demonstrated 30% 18-month OS rate
- VBI-1901 + AS01<sub>B</sub> 18-month OS not yet reached

## How Do We Evaluate a Vaccine-Induced Tumor Response in the CNS by Measuring Responses in the Peripheral Blood?

# CD4+ T cell responses are an often overlooked but critical component of productive tumor immunity

(Brightman SE (2020) J Leukoc Biol 107, 625-633; Borst J (2018) Nat Rev Immunol 18, 635-647)





CD4+ effector memory cells are the dominant T-cell subset that infiltrates the GBM microenvironment

## Dynamic Loss/Boosting of CMV-Specific CD4+ Effector Memory Cells in Peripheral Blood of Tumor Responders in GM-CSF extension arm of Part B





# Summary of CMV-Specific GBM Immunotherapeutic Candidate, VBI-1901

#### VBI-1901 has demonstrated encouraging tumor responses in Phase I/IIa clinical study

- VBI-1901 + GM-CSF : Phase I/II Preliminary Conclusions
  - VBI-1901+GM-CSF is safe and well tolerated
  - 7/16 tumor responses in patients receiving high dose of VBI-1901 + GM-CSF (Parts A & B of the study)
    - Two subjects experienced a Partial Response (>50% reduction)
    - Two others experienced 50% reduction in primary tumor, but new lesions prevented I-RANO designation of Partial Response
  - CD4/CD8 biomarker may identify those most likely to respond & derive benefit from VBI-1901 Tx
- VBI-1901 + AS01<sub>B</sub> : Phase I/II Preliminary Conclusions
  - + VBI-1901+AS01<sub>B</sub> is safe and well tolerated
  - 5/10 tumor responses in patients receiving high dose of VBI-1901 + AS01<sub>B</sub>
    - Three experienced pseudo progression strong indication of T-cell migration into tumor microenvironment
  - AS01<sub>B</sub> avoids reliance on CD4/CD8 biomarker (potentially increasing number of patients who may benefit)
  - Next Steps



• Q1 2022 : VBI expects to initiate expansion of ongoing study in recurrent GBM, increasing study size and adding a control arm