



# RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice: a heavy-chain-only antibody platform for the generation of nanobody therapeutics

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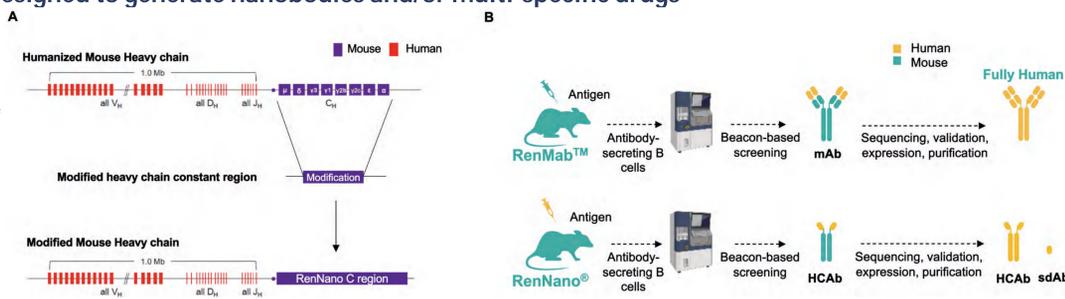
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## INTRODUCTION

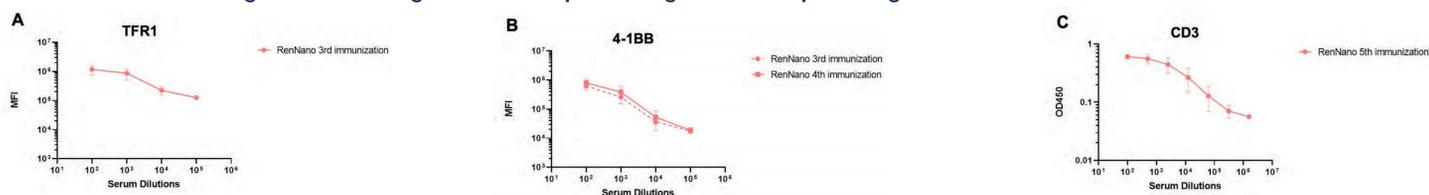
Monoclonal antibodies have been used to successfully treat various diseases, including tumors, autoimmune diseases, and infectious diseases. Traditional antibodies are comprised of a tetramer of two heavy chains and two light chains, totaling 150 kDa in molecular weight. However, the large size of antibodies can limit the therapeutic application; in particular, the penetration of tumors and the blood brain barrier (BBB) is not always feasible. In contrast to traditional antibodies, heavy chain-only antibodies (HcAbs) are significantly smaller (~75 kDa), as they contain only two heavy chains. Since the heavy chain variable domain of HcAbs (i.e., VHH or single domain antibody, sdAb, or nanobody) is solely responsible for antigen recognition, nanobodies can function independently as a therapeutic molecule, which may be advantageous for penetrating tumors or the BBB. Previously, we generated a fully human antibody mouse platform, RenMab<sup>™</sup>, in which the murine heavy chain and kappa light chain variable domains were replaced by the full human heavy chain and kappa light chain V(D)J loci *in situ*. Here, we have further modified the RenMab<sup>™</sup> model to generate a fully human heavy-chain-only antibody mouse model, termed RenNano<sup>®</sup>. The modified heavy chain constant regions of RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice allow them to spontaneously produce HcAbs. Flow cytometry and biolayer interferometry confirmed that RenNano<sup>®</sup>-derived HcAbs can bind antigens without light chains. Despite this reliance on the heavy chain only variable regions for antigen specificity, RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice can generate antigen-specific antibodies with high affinity ( $10^{-8}$ - $10^{-9}$  KD) upon immunization with various antigens. In addition, many RenNano<sup>®</sup>-derived HcAbs exhibited a longer CDR3 length, which could promote the recognition of difficult-to-reach epitopes. Furthermore, RenNano<sup>®</sup>-derived HcAbs have favorable diversity, and excellent developability properties such as a higher degree of hydrophilicity. Anti-4-1BB HcAbs can also activate 4-1BB-NF- $\kappa$ B signaling in a dose-dependent manner, as demonstrated in reporter assays. In summary, the full human heavy-chain-only antibody mice, RenNano<sup>®</sup>, can produce human HcAbs with high affinity and good efficacy. Thus, RenNano<sup>®</sup> is a powerful platform to discover HcAb/nanobodies for various therapeutic applications.

## The RenNano<sup>®</sup> platform is designed to generate nanobodies and/or multi-specific drugs

**Generation of the RenNano<sup>®</sup> mouse and its applications for sdAb and multispecific antibody discovery.** **A.** Using chromosome engineering, the entire variable region of the mouse heavy chain was replaced by its human counterpart *in situ* (to generate RenMab<sup>™</sup> fully human antibody mice). To generate RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice, further modifications were made to the RenMab<sup>™</sup> constant region to produce humanized heavy-chain-only antibodies (HcAb). **B.** RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice produce HcAbs upon immunization by various antigens. The variable region of HcAbs can be developed into drugs alone as SdAbs, or two HcAbs/SdAbs can be easily assembled to construct multispecific antibody drugs.



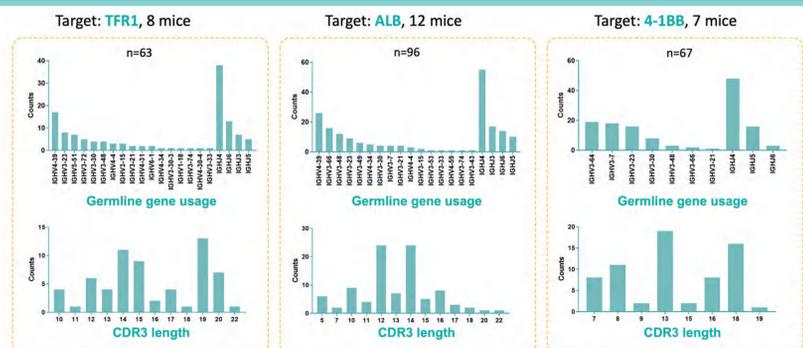
## RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice generate strong immune responses against multiple antigens



**RenNano<sup>®</sup> immune responses against TFR1, 4-1BB and CD3.** **A and B.** Sera from RenNano mice immunized with TFR1 or 4-1BB were diluted and incubated with antigen-expressing CHO cells. Alexa Fluor 647-conjugated anti-mIgG secondary antibody was used to label the HcAb bound to the surface of the CHO cells, and mean fluorescence intensity (MFI) was measured using flow cytometry to indicate the antigen-specific antibody titer. **C.** ELISA was used to evaluate the antigen-specific antibody titer in RenNano mice immunized against CD3. Serum from immunized RenNano mice were incubated with the antigen-coated plates, and detected by HRP-conjugated anti-mIgG. OD450 measurements were used to determine the antigen-specific antibody titer.

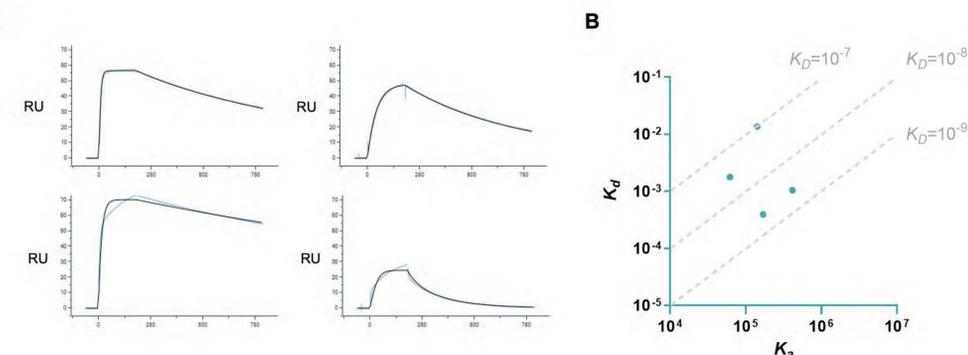
## Sequence diversity of antigen-specific HcAbs derived from RenNano<sup>®</sup> Mice

HcAbs derived from RenNano mice are diverse and many contain longer CDR3 regions. Sequences of HcAbs with antigen specificity were analyzed by their heavy chain germline usage and CDR3 length. Analysis indicates broad IGHV germline diversity, indicating normal heavy chain recombination. For CDR3 length, most CDR3 lengths observed were longer than 12 AA, with some longer than 17 AA, which is commonly seen in HcAbs.



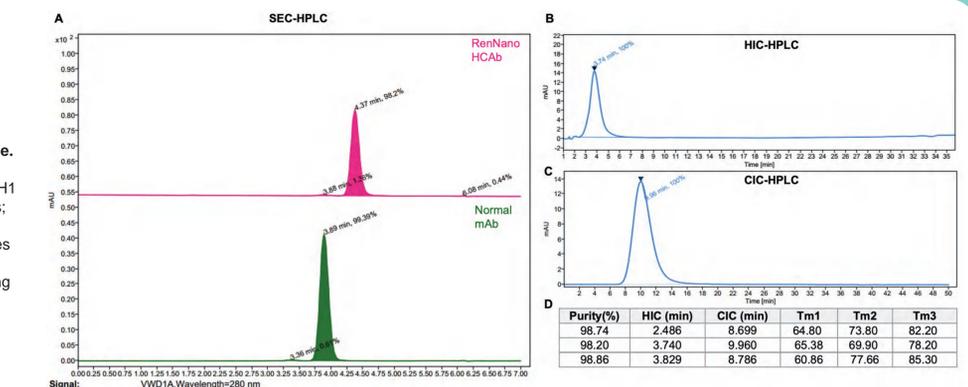
## High affinity of HcAbs derived from RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice

**RenNano HcAbs bind antigen with high affinity.** **A.** 4 purified RenNano<sup>®</sup> anti-h4-1BB HcAbs were immobilized on a protein A conjugated sensor chip as the ligand, then binding of the analyte (antigen h4-1BB protein) was measured under flow. Response was recorded as resonance units (RU) and displayed as a sensogram in real time. **B.** The kinetic binding constants were presented in a scatter plot. The  $K_D$  of 2 HcAbs were lower than the  $10^{-8}$  level.



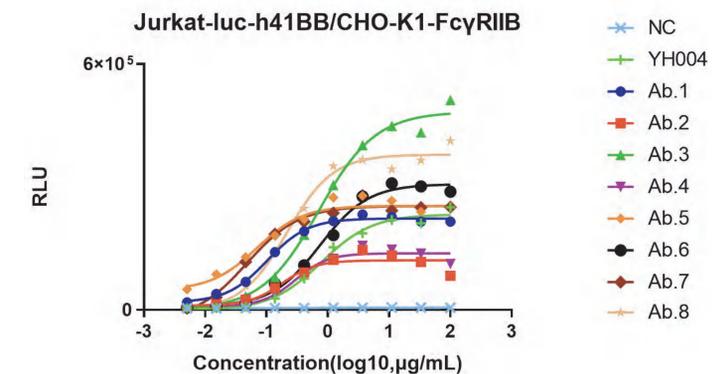
## Favorable developability of HcAbs derived from RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice

**Favorable developability of HcAbs derived from RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice.** **A.** RenNano HcAbs show high purity after one step purification, as measured by SEC-HPLC. Due to the absence of light chains and CH1 domain, the molecular size of HcAb is lower than normal antibodies; therefore, HcAb showed longer retention time in the SEC-HPLC. **B-C.** Short retention time (RT) in HIC-HPLC and CIC-HPLC indicates superb hydrophilicity and specificity of RenNano HcAbs. **D.** Reasonable thermostability was confirmed by differential scanning fluorimetry (DSF). Summary chart of developability of three RenNano HcAbs.



## In vitro function of RenNano<sup>®</sup> anti-4-1BB HcAbs

**Anti-4-1BB HcAbs activate 4-1BB-NF- $\kappa$ B signaling in a dose-dependent manner.** PBS(NC), YH004 (an anti-4-1BB mAb as positive control) or RenNano HcAb Ab.1-Ab.8 were incubated with 4-1BB reporter Jurkat cells simultaneously co-cultured with Fc $\gamma$ RIIB-expressing CHO-K1 cells. The activation of NF- $\kappa$ B signaling triggers luciferase expression in the reporter cells, which was quantified by luminescence after substrate addition.



## SUMMARY

- RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice contain all human V, D, and J genes *in situ* with a modified murine constant region designed to generate HcAbs *in vivo*.
- RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice mount immune responses in response to multiple antigens.
- RenNano<sup>®</sup>-derived HcAbs exhibit diversity in germline gene usage and CDR3 length, and demonstrate high affinity and favorable developability characteristics.
- RenNano<sup>®</sup>-derived HcAbs are functional *in vitro*.
- RenNano<sup>®</sup> is a robust and powerful platform to discover HcAb/nanobodies for various therapeutic applications.





# Discovery of RenNano<sup>®</sup>-derived human heavy-chain-only antibodies that cross the blood-brain barrier

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## INTRODUCTION

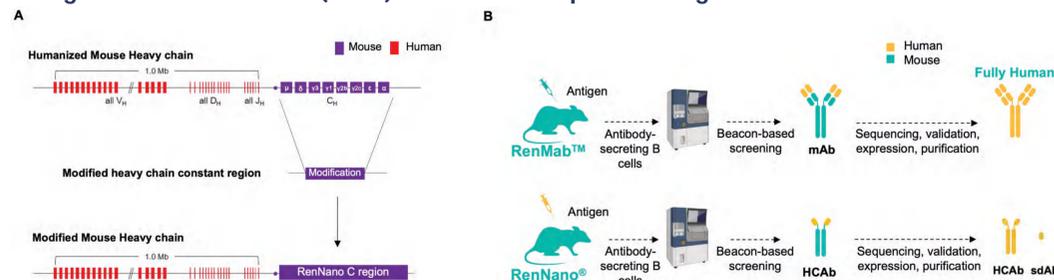
The utility of conventional antibodies for neurological conditions is limited by the blood-brain barrier (BBB). Several strategies to address this issue have been reported, including receptor-mediated transcytosis (RMT) of antibodies using transferrin receptors. We hypothesize that this strategy could be further improved by the use of single-domain antibodies (sdAbs), which are significantly smaller, and therefore could be used to more efficiently transport drugs of interest across the BBB.

To this end, we developed anti-transferrin receptor 1 (TFR1) HCAs utilizing our full human heavy-chain-only antibody mice (RenNano<sup>®</sup>). We immunized RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice with recombinant TFR1 proteins, isolated the B cells from spleen and lymph nodes, and performed single B cell antibody screening using the Beacon<sup>®</sup> Optofluidic system. Most of the antibodies tested were cross-reactive to human and monkey TFR1. The affinity of these HCAs can reach  $10^8$ – $10^9$  ( $K_D$ ). Of the 7 HCAs we tested, 6 were internalized into the human brain microvascular endothelial cell line, hCMEC/D3.

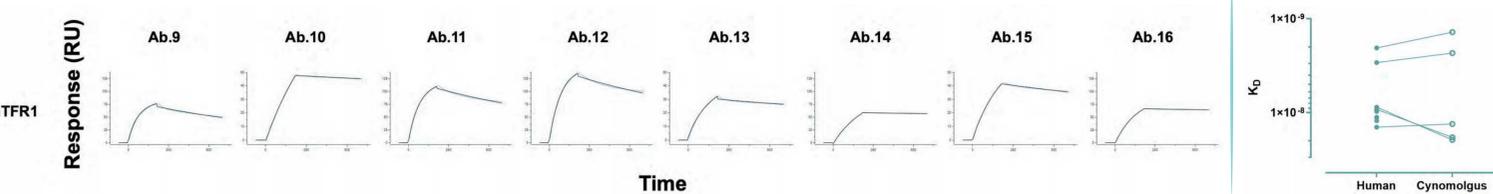
To assess brain penetration of these antibodies *in vivo*, mice expressing human TFR1 (hTFR1 mice) received a tail vein injection with either isotype control, Pabinafusp Alfa (a BBB-penetrating anti-TFR1 antibody conjugate) analog as positive control, or RenNano derived HCAs. After 0.5, 6, 24, 72 h of exposure, mice brains were dissected for the quantification of hIgG and immunofluorescence. The level of anti-TFR1 HCAs in the brain parenchyma was significantly higher than isotype controls and JR-141 analog. In brain sections, HCAs can be clearly observed in the parenchyma, and were colocalized with mTUJ1 cells (neurons). These results demonstrate that HCAs developed from RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice are able to penetrate the BBB. Taken together, these data highlight the tremendous potential for HCAs and its variable domain sdAbs for transporting cargo across the BBB.

## The RenNano<sup>®</sup> platform is designed to generate nanobodies (sdAb) and/or multi-specific drugs

**Generation of the RenNano<sup>®</sup> mouse and its applications for single-domain antibody (sdAb) and multispecific antibody discovery.** A. Using chromosome engineering, the entire variable region of the mouse heavy chain was replaced by its human counterpart *in situ* (to generate RenMab<sup>™</sup> fully human antibody mice). To generate RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice, further modifications were made to the RenMab<sup>™</sup> constant region to produce humanized heavy-chain-only antibodies (HCAb). B. RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice produce HCAs upon immunization by various antigens. The variable region of HCAs can be developed into drugs alone as SdAbs, or two HCAs/SdAbs can be easily assembled to construct multispecific antibody drugs.



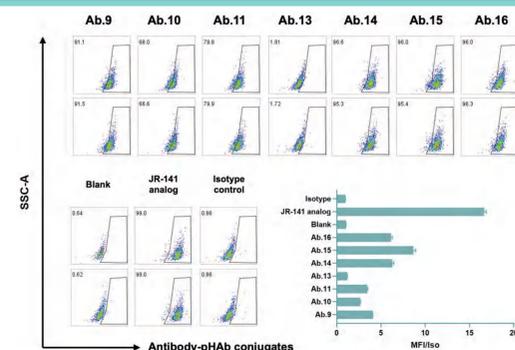
## High affinity of TFR1 HCAs screened from RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice



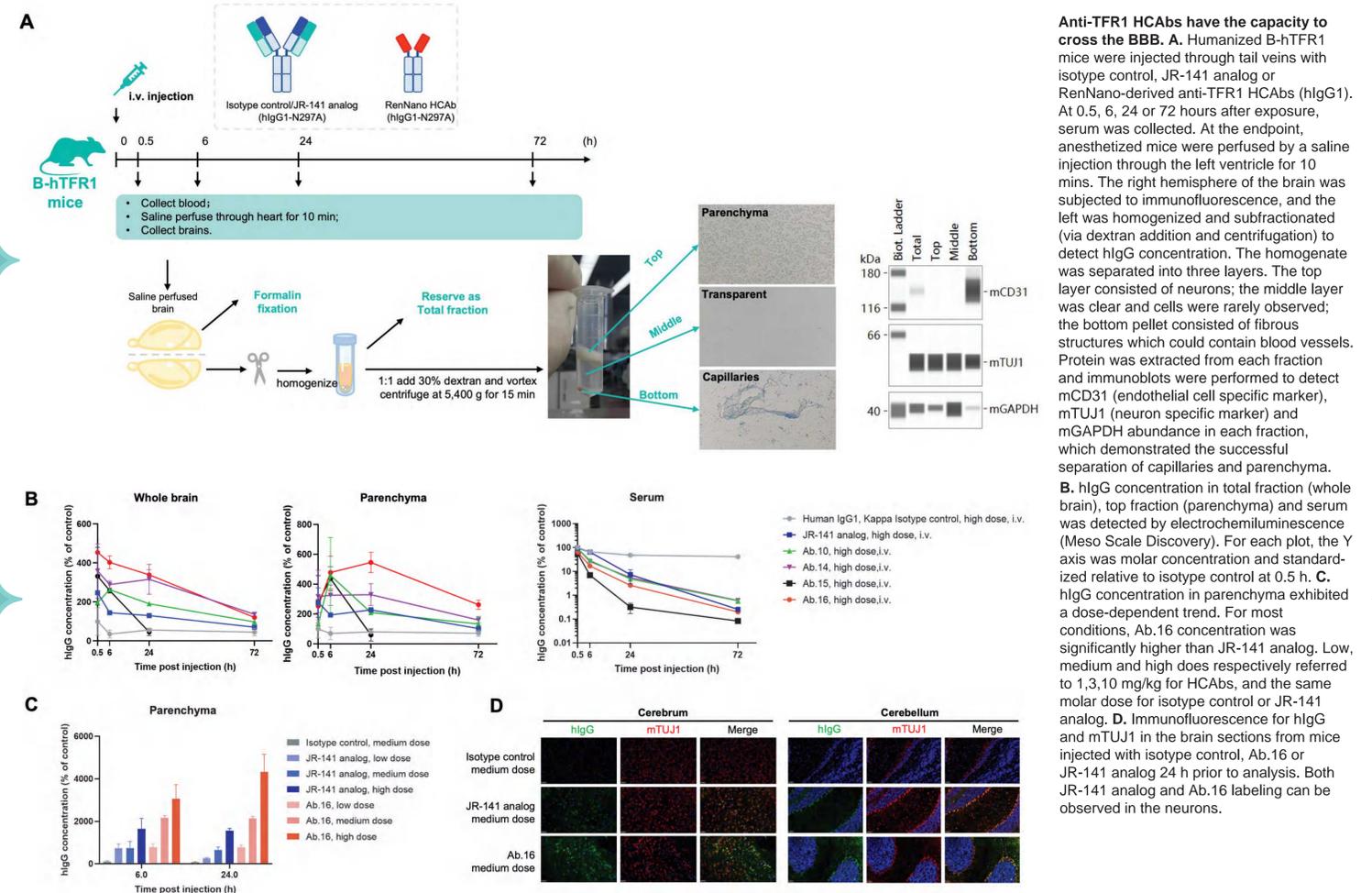
RenNano<sup>®</sup>-derived HCAs (screened from 4 mice) exhibited high affinity and cross-species reactivity to TFR1. 5/8 of the purified antibodies tested demonstrate affinity in the nm range as assessed by SPR. 5/8 were cross-reactive to cynomolgus TFR1.

## *In vitro* internalization of HCAs from RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice

Anti-TFR1 HCAs can be efficiently internalized by hCMEC/D3 cells. Mechanistically, anti-TFR1 crosses the BBB via transcytosis initiated by TFR1-expressing cells in the BBB. Internalization of the antibodies is the primary step. The isotype control, JR-141 analog (positive control) or RenNano HCAs were conjugated to pHAb Amine- and Thiol-Reactive Dyes. pHAb dye-conjugated antibodies were then incubated with hCMEC/D3, a human brain microvascular cell line which expresses TFR1. Upon receptor-mediated internalization, antibody-pHAb conjugates traffic through the endosome and lysosomal system. At low pH, the antibody-pHAb conjugates fluoresce, which was detected by flow cytometry.



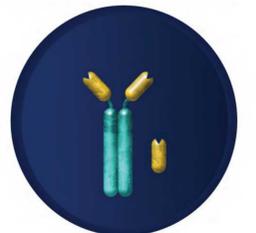
## Penetration of anti-TFR1 HCAs across the blood-brain barrier



## SUMMARY

- TFR1-targeting HCAs developed from RenNano<sup>®</sup> mice have high affinity to human TFR1, and have functional capabilities, including internalization capacity.
- hTFR1-targeting HCAs are able to penetrate the BBB efficiently, as evidenced by fractionation studies and histological analyses.
- Together, these data highlight the tremendous potential for HCAs and its variable domain sdAbs for transporting cargo across the BBB. Due to their smaller size and simpler structure, sdAbs could ultimately provide therapeutic benefit for neurodegenerative diseases, and offer promising potential for tumor penetration.

RenNano<sup>®</sup>



# Targeting Intracellular Tumor Antigens Using Fully Human TCR Mimic Antibodies Derived From HLA Transgenic RenMice™

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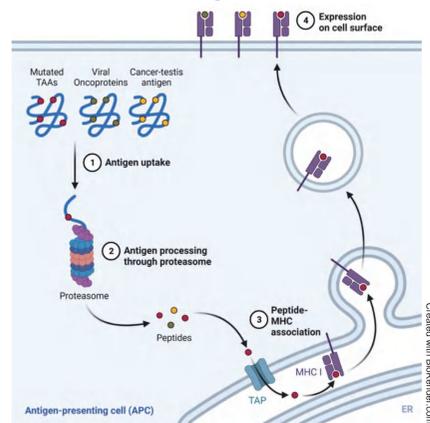
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## ABSTRACT

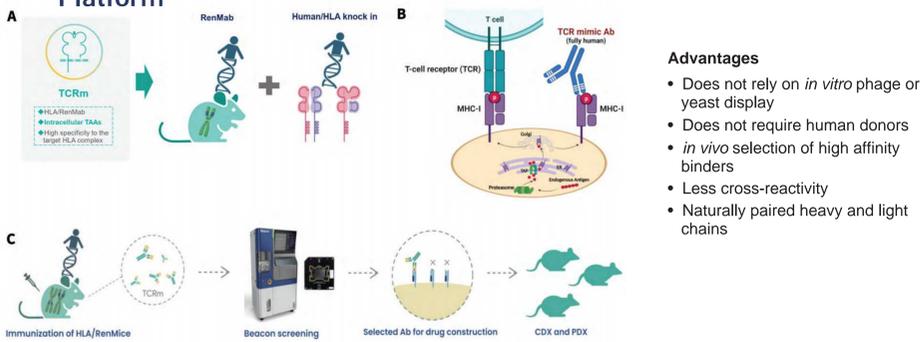
Therapeutic antibodies have ushered in a new age of cancer immunotherapy. Historically, these therapies have targeted a limited subset of soluble and cell surface tumor-associated antigens (TAAs). T cell receptors (TCRs) on cytotoxic CD8<sup>+</sup> T cells recognize peptide antigens bound to major histocompatibility class I (MHC-I) proteins, called HLA-A/B/C in humans. By this pathway, antigen is regularly sampled from the intracellular peptidome, processed, and presented to cytotoxic T cells. Expanding TCR-based recognition of soluble, intracellular TAAs presented on the surface of malignant cells by this mechanism is a propitious therapeutic strategy. Here we describe a novel platform for generating T cell receptor mimic (TCRm) antibodies using our humanized immunoglobulin (RenMab™) mice engineered to express HLA. TCRm antibodies have the same binding properties as endogenous TCRs and recognize processed, HLA-bound peptides including intracellular tumor associated antigens, viral oncoproteins, and cancer-testis antigen (CTA). TCRm antibodies bind peptide-HLA with high specificity and up to nanomolar affinity. Our optimized immunization protocols and high-throughput screening methods allow for one-step TCRm antibody generation. TCRm antibodies can also be used to assemble bispecific T cell engaging antibodies (BiTEs) to enhance tumor targeting of cytotoxic T cells. Biocytogen's TCRm antibodies are a flexible and powerful tool for cancer immunotherapy. By enabling TCR-mediated recognition of an unrestricted repertoire of cancer neoantigens, TCRm antibodies may find broad clinical application.

## Strategy to target intracellular tumor-associated antigens

- An abundance of potential tumor-associated antigens (TAAs) exist inside tumor cells, including mutated proteins, viral oncoproteins, and cancer-testis antigen (CTA).
- Peptide/MHC-I complexes (pMHC), derived from intracellular antigens, are presented on the cell membrane for recognition by T cells.
- Can we discover a novel approach to target intracellular TAAs/pMHC to expand cancer therapeutic possibilities, in addition to recognition by endogenous T Cell Receptors (TCR)?

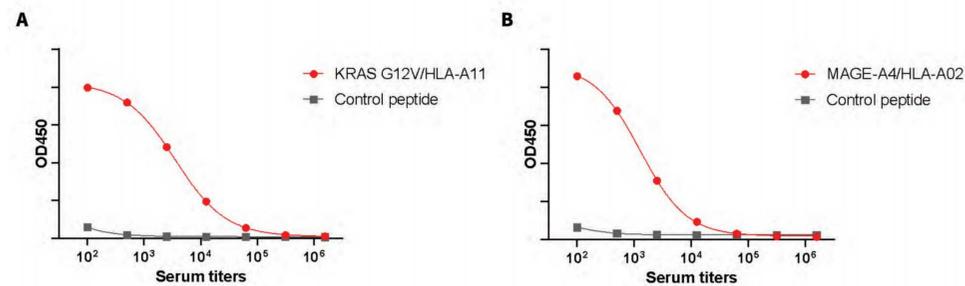


## Biocytogen's Fully Human TCR-mimic (TCRm) Antibody Discovery Platform



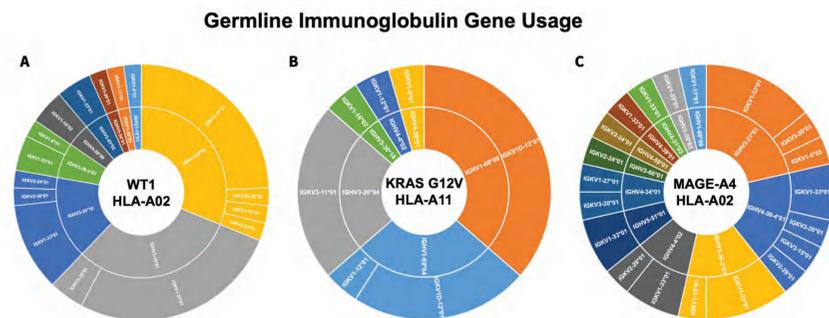
**TCRm Platform Overview.** A. Knock-in of Human HLA on RenMab™ background (fully human antibody mouse) results in antibodies with fully human variable domain sequences that can recognize pHLA. B. Mechanism of TCR-mimic antibody recognition of the pHLA complex. C. Biocytogen's fully human TCRm antibody discovery workflow. Following a proprietary immunization procedure to generate TCRm antibodies *in vivo*, tissues from the mice are subjected to Beacon® on-chip screening for fast, high-throughput discovery. Binders are selected for further *in vitro* and *in vivo* screening.

## HLA-humanized RenMab mice generate specific immune responses to pHLA



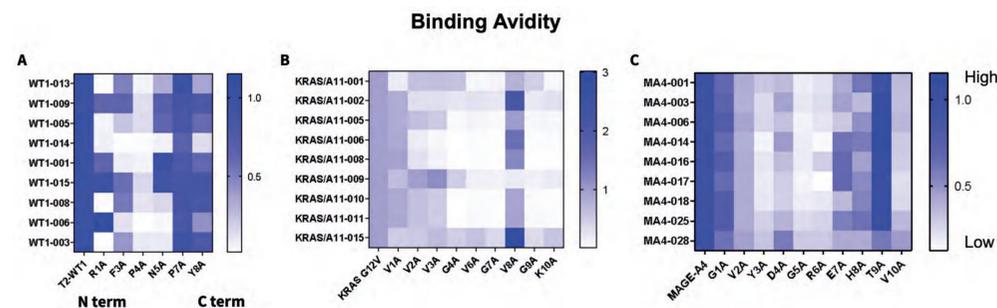
Sera from immunized HLA/RenMab mice were assessed by ELISA. A. Serum titration of KRAS G12V/HLA-A11. B. Serum titration of MAGE-A4/HLA-A02.

## Biocytogen's TCRm platform enables genetic diversity of antibody sequences



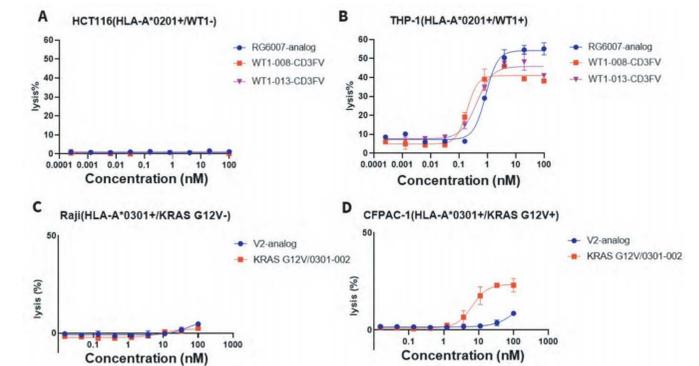
A variety of fully human antibody sequences can be generated from HLA/RenMab mice. Heavy chain and light chain germline usage of A. WT1/HLA-A02(tumor-associated antigen); B. KRAS G12V/HLA-A11 (mutation antigen); C. and MAGE-A4/HLA-A02 (cancer-testis antigen).

## Diverse recognition sites ensure high specificity of antibody discovery



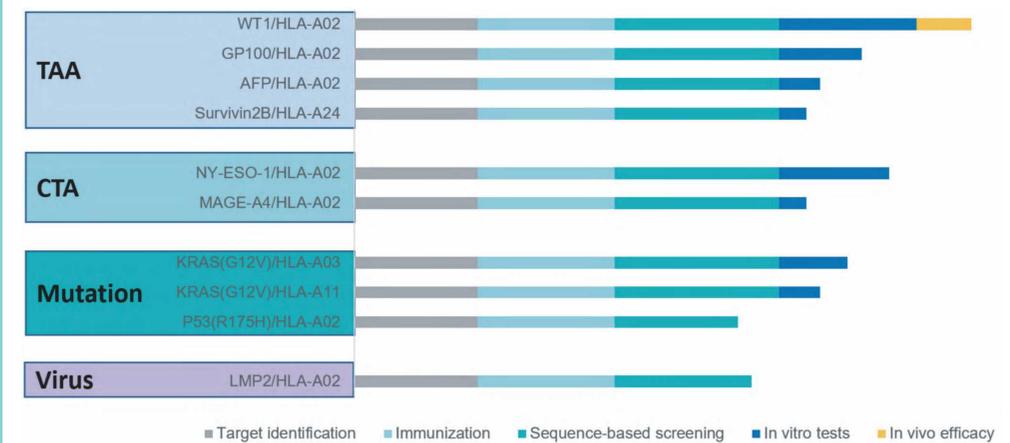
**Binding avidity of WT1, KRAS G12V and MAGE-A4 alanine substituted peptides, as determined by flow cytometry MFI relative to isotype.** WT1, KRAS G12V and MAGE-A4 peptide are used as control, and the positions are arranged from N-terminus (left) to C-terminus (right). Multiple WT1 antibodies bind to the N-terminal half of the peptide (Fig. A), KRAS G12V antibodies bind strongly to the C-terminal half of the peptide (Fig. B), while the MAGE-A4 antibodies show specific reactivity toward middle fraction of the peptide (Fig. C).

## TCRm antibodies promote tumor cell killing in an antigen-specific manner



**Cytotoxicity of TCRm antibodies.** A-B. The cytotoxic activity of WT1/HLA-A\*02:01 x CD3 bispecific antibody against HCT116 (HLA-A\*0201<sup>+/+</sup>/WT1<sup>+/+</sup>) cells or THP-1 (HLA-A\*0201<sup>+/+</sup>/WT1<sup>+/+</sup>) cells was assessed by LDH. Target cells were incubated with antibody and human CD3<sup>+</sup> T cells in 10:1 E:T for 24h (RG6007 analog, in-house). C-D. The cytotoxic activity of KRAS G12V/HLA-A\*03:01 x CD3 bispecific antibody against Raji (HLA-A\*0301<sup>+/+</sup>/KRAS G12V<sup>+/+</sup>) cells or CFPAC-1 (LA-A\*0301<sup>+/+</sup>/KRAS G12V<sup>+/+</sup>) cells was assessed by LDH. Target cells were incubated with antibody and human CD3<sup>+</sup> T cells in 10:1 E:T for 72h (V2 analog, in-house).

## Pipeline of Biocytogen's TCRm discovery



Biocytogen's TCRm discovery progress. Each potential peptide will generate an antibody library through immunization.

## SUMMARY

- Biocytogen's TCR-mimic (TCRm) antibody platform can be deployed to generate antibodies *in vivo* to target pHLA complexes for mutated proteins, viral oncoproteins, and cancer-testis antigen (CTA)
- Germline gene usage and avidity assessments demonstrate the diversity of TCRm antibodies that can be generated using the platform
- When assembled via a T Cell engager strategy, TCRm sequences discovered using our platform demonstrate the ability to kill tumor cells in an antigen-specific manner



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# The RenMice™ HiTS (Hyperimmune Target Specific) Platform Facilitates Identification of Novel Therapeutic Antibodies for Challenging Targets

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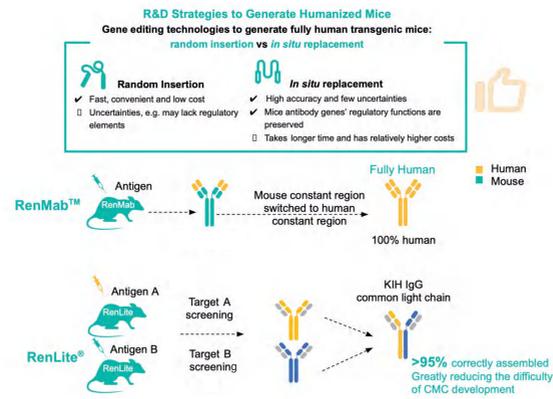
<sup>1</sup>Biocytogen Pharmaceuticals (Beijing) Co., Ltd., Beijing, China; <sup>2</sup>Biocytogen Boston Corporation, Wakefield, MA, USA

## ABSTRACT

In recent years, an increasing number of therapeutic antibodies have shown to be effective for the treatment of cancer and other diseases. However, limitations in the traditional discovery process, including immune tolerance of highly homologous genes, challenges with antibody sequence humanization, clone selection, and model selection for drug efficacy and safety evaluation, often hinder the process of identifying new therapeutic antibodies. The RenMice™ HiTS (Hyperimmune Target Specific) Platform is a library of chromosome engineered mice with fully human immunoglobulin variable domains replacing the mouse loci, each with a specific drug target gene knocked out. These mice are designed to establish robust immune responses and generate antibodies that bind to more epitopes of the target protein, including conserved domains. The platform is ideal for challenging targets, such as proteins with high homology across species, or multi-pass transmembrane proteins (e.g. GPCRs/ion channels). Here, we show that the platform can be used to generate antibodies that cross-react with multiple species, like human, monkey, dog, and mouse targets, by immunizing with both human and mouse or dog antigen. We provide examples for newer campaigns, including species cross-reactivity and internalization of novel antibodies targeting NECTIN-4, and high-throughput in vivo efficacy screening of novel anti-PD-1 antibodies in wild-type mice. In the future, we will evaluate the preliminary toxicity of these cross-reactive antibodies in preclinical animal models. Thus, selection of the best antibody candidate based on in vivo efficacy and safety allows for a streamlined and successful preclinical phase. In conclusion, the RenMice™ HiTS platform facilitates the generation of developable antibodies that recognize novel epitopes and challenging targets.

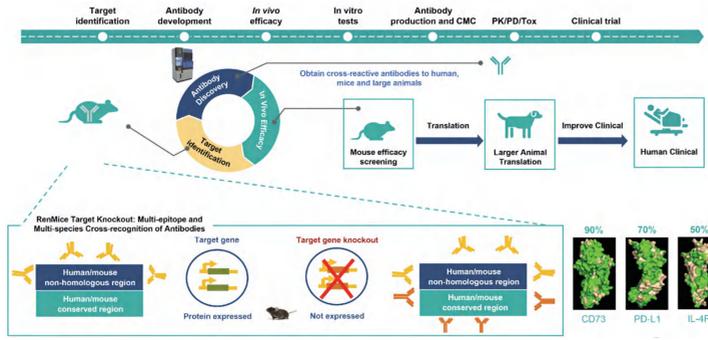
## Introduction to RenMice™

**Overview of RenMab and RenLite mice generation.** Both models were modified to contain human antibody variable domains using in situ replacement, which has several advantages over random insertion. RenMab mice contain the full human variable domain, while RenLite mice generate antibodies with a common human kappa light chain. Once antibodies are generated in the mice, the murine constant region is swapped, yielding fully human antibodies.

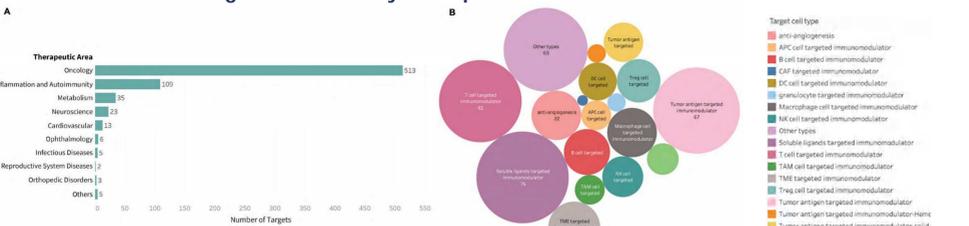


## Introduction to RenMice™ HiTS Platform

**Overview of the RenMice HiTS (Hyperimmune Target Specific) Platform.** The platform utilizes specialized strains of RenMice modified to lack the target gene of interest, thereby resulting in a more robust immune response and cross-recognition of both human and mouse antigens. The platform is ideal for antigens with high levels of homology between mouse and human. After the cross-reactive antibodies are generated and selected, they can be screened for efficacy in mice and larger animals.

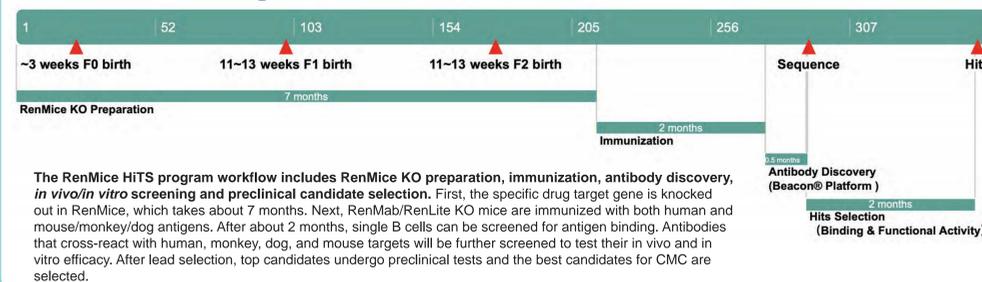


## HiTS Platform Targets Classified by Therapeutic Areas and Mechanism of Action



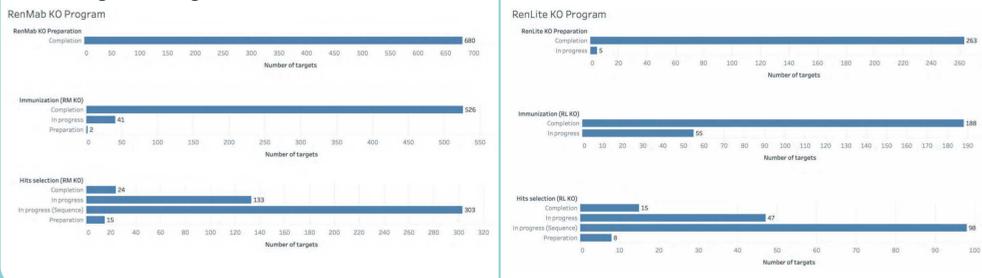
Therapeutic areas and mechanisms targeted by the RenMice HiTS Platform. For a full list of targets, visit RenMab.com/ko-library.

## RenMice™ HiTS Program Workflow

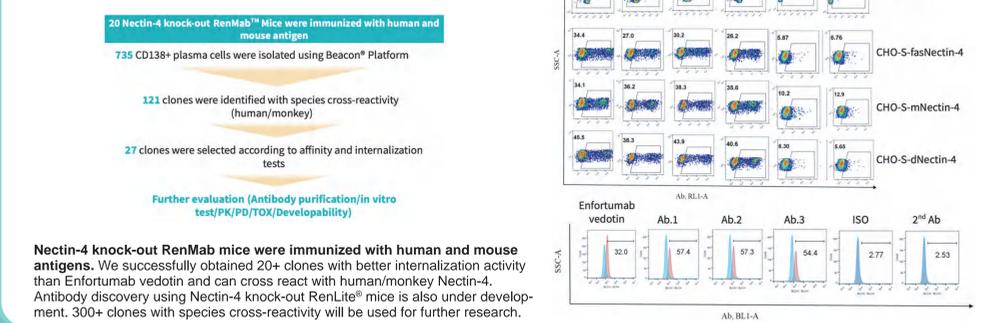


The RenMice HiTS program workflow includes RenMice KO preparation, immunization, antibody discovery, *in vivo/in vitro* screening and preclinical candidate selection. First, the specific drug target gene is knocked out in RenMice, which takes about 7 months. Next, RenMab/RenLite KO mice are immunized with both human and mouse/monkey/dog antigens. After about 2 months, single B cells can be screened for antigen binding. Antibodies that cross-react with human, monkey, dog, and mouse targets will be further screened to test their in vivo and in vitro efficacy. After lead selection, top candidates undergo preclinical tests and the best candidates for CMC are selected.

## Program Progress

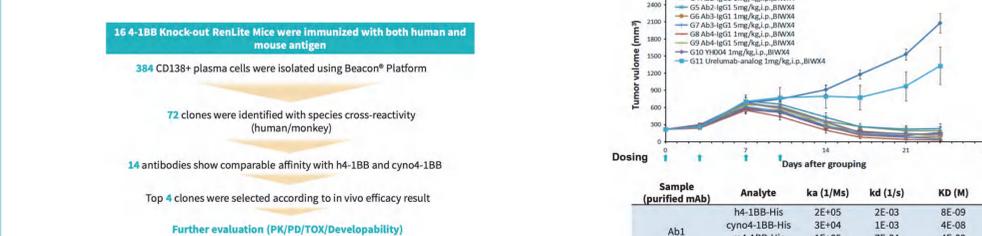


## Example 1 - Anti-Nectin-4 Campaign Using RenMice™ HiTS Platform

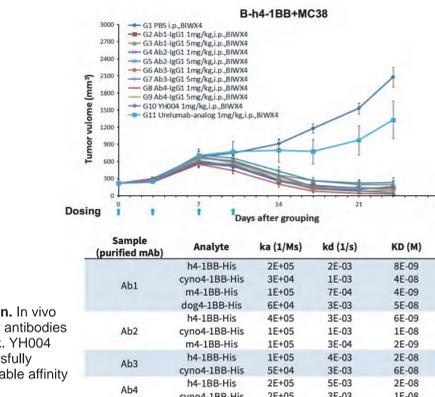
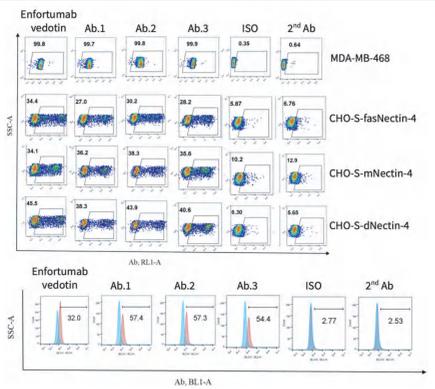


Nectin-4 knock-out RenMab mice were immunized with human and mouse antigens. We successfully obtained 20+ clones with better internalization activity than Enfortumab vedotin and can cross react with human/monkey Nectin-4. Antibody discovery using Nectin-4 knock-out RenLite® mice is also under development. 300+ clones with species cross-reactivity will be used for further research.

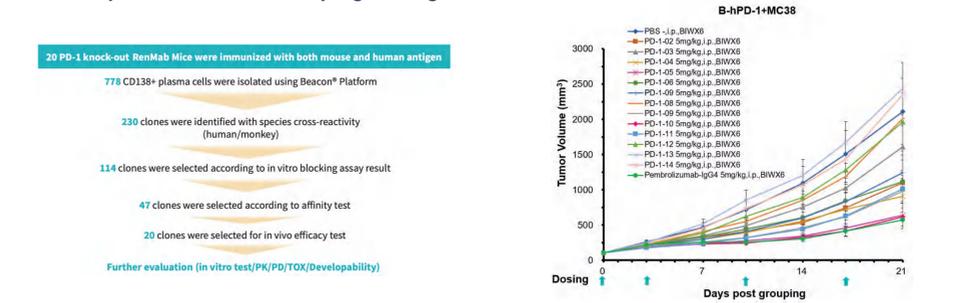
## Example 2 - Anti-4-1BB Campaign Using RenLite® HiTS Platform



**4-1BB knock-out RenLite® Mice were immunized with human and mouse antigen.** In vivo efficacy was tested in humanized B-h4-1BB mice inoculated with MC38 cells. PBS or antibodies were dosed at day 0, 3, 7, 10 and the tumor volume was calculated twice every week. YH004 (developed by Biocytogen) and Urelumab were used as positive controls. We successfully obtained TOP4 clones which exhibit better efficacy than Urelumab and show comparable affinity with h4-1BB and cyno4-1BB.

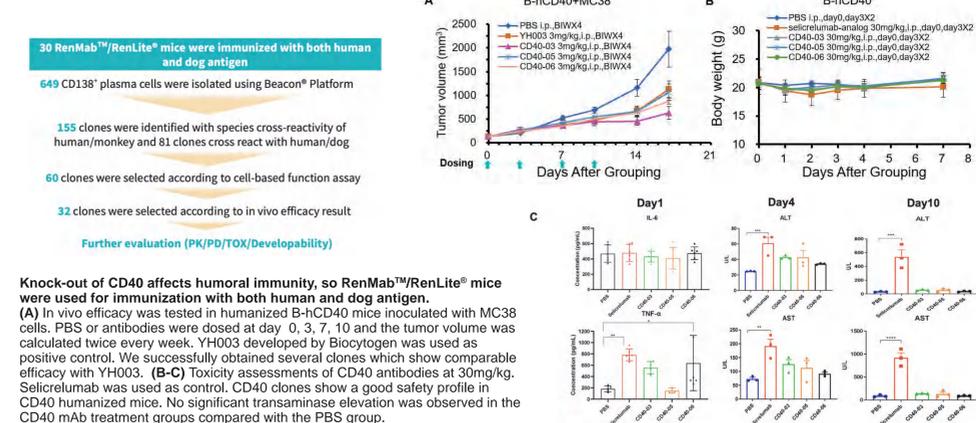


## Example 3 - Anti-PD-1 Campaign Using RenMab™ HiTS Platform



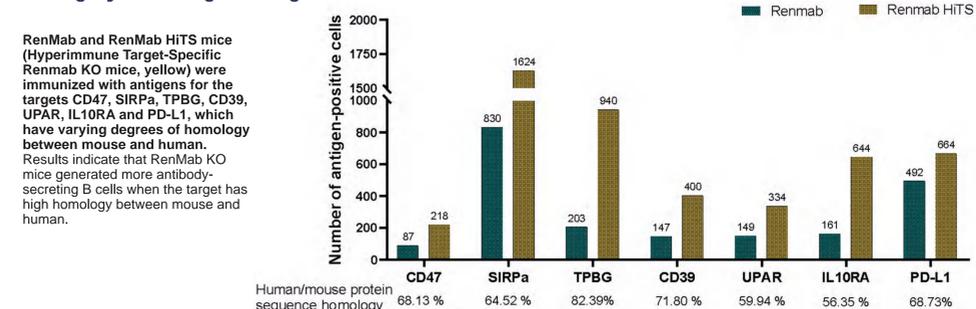
Clones cross-reactive with both human and monkey PD-1 were tested in humanized B-hPD-1 mice inoculated with MC38 cells. PBS or antibodies were dosed at day 0, 3, 10, 17 and the tumor volume was calculated twice every week. Pembrolizumab was used as a positive control. Several PD-1 clones exhibit efficacy comparable with pembrolizumab. Some clones cross react with human/mouse/monkey/dog PD-1.

## Example 4 - Anti-CD40 Campaign Using RenMice™ Platform



Knock-out of CD40 affects humoral immunity, so RenMab™/RenLite® mice were used for immunization with both human and dog antigen. (A) In vivo efficacy was tested in humanized B-hCD40 mice inoculated with MC38 cells. PBS or antibodies were dosed at day 0, 3, 7, 10 and the tumor volume was calculated twice every week. YH003 developed by Biocytogen was used as positive control. We successfully obtained several clones which show comparable efficacy with YH003. (B-C) Toxicity assessments of CD40 antibodies at 30mg/kg. Selicrelumab was used as control. CD40 clones show a good safety profile in CD40 humanized mice. No significant transaminase elevation was observed in the CD40 mAb treatment groups compared with the PBS group.

## The RenMab™ HiTS Platform Facilitates Antibody Discovery for Highly Homologous Targets



RenMab and RenMab HiTS mice (Hyperimmune Target-Specific RenMab KO mice, yellow) were immunized with antigens for the targets CD47, SIRPa, TPBG, CD39, UPAR, IL10RA and PD-L1, which have varying degrees of homology between mouse and human. Results indicate that RenMab KO mice generated more antibody-secreting B cells when the target has high homology between mouse and human.

## SUMMARY

In conclusion, the RenMice™ HiTS (Hyperimmune Target Specific) Platform enables accelerated identification of fully human antibodies with increased diversity of antibody paratopes and species cross-reactivity, using fully human antibody mice engineered to lack the target antigen. The RenMice™ HiTS Program is focusing on identifying more first-in-class drug targets across a range of therapeutic areas.