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### Anti-SARS-coronavirus treatment based on molecular interaction

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# Anti-SARS-coronavirus treatment based on molecular interaction

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## Abstract.

SARS-CoV-2 belongs the family betacoronavirus in Coronaviridae; it is known to have single strand RNA which is enveloped. The first case is reported late 2019 in China. From there it is circulate around the world, causing the COVID-19 pandemic situation with higher fatality rates. At the beginner of April 2021 SARS-CoV-2 has infected more than 130 million people and led to 2.84 million death. There are several strategies for cure of SARS-CoV-2 infection, to date the number of drugs who are used for treatment is increased depends of these drugs are used alone or in combination form. FDA has approved remdesivir who have the ability to neutralized antibodies, although clinical effects were controversial. Here we discuss for development of new strategies for therapeutic reason in patients infected by SARS-CoV-2.

**Keywords:** SARS-CoV-2, replication, human proteins, small and large molecules

## 1 Introduction

The term coronavirus came from crown-like spikes on the surface of the virus. The coronavirus are known to envelop positive strand RNA viruses; the coronavirus have ability to infect various vertebrates, including humans. In the 1960s, two kind of human coronavirus are discovered; alpha and beta. They are known to cause disorders such as respiratory illness of mild to moderate severity [1, 2]. The whole world is currently in a pandemic situation since the first case of patients infected with SARS virus appeared in late of December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The patients were exhibit common symptoms like fever, dry cough, sore throat, breathlessness, and tiredness. Before the spread of COVI-19 [3, 4], SARS appear as an epidemic in 2003, followed by Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) 2012, both caused by a novel coronaviruses assigned to the genus Beta coronavirus [5]. Coronavirus contain positive single strand RNA as a genetic inherited material, which is 30kb in length. This single strand RNA is protected from double fatty layer and help virus to evade host immune system inside host cell [6, 7]. The subfamily of Coronavirinae is divided into fourth genera: alpha, beta, gama, and delta [8]. The SARS –CoV-2 genome consist from 12 open reading frame (ORF). In 5' end ORF 1a is overlapped by ORF1b, which encodes the RNA polymerase and other non-structural proteins. Genes encoding non-structural proteins such as S (spike), M (membrane), E (enveloped), and N (nucleocapsid) are in the remaining part of the genome (one-third) spanning from the 5' to the 3' terminal along with several gene encoding non-structural proteins (NSP). Besides they belong the same serogroup, there is a slight differences in the nucleotide number, sequences, gene order and expression [9-12]. Last time is

reported that some nucleotide substitution has occurred in the gene which encode the S protein, such as NSP15, NSP12, NSP16, NSP9, NSP10, NSP8, NSP2, NSP3, NSP1 [13-15]. The NPS3 is the most strongly enriched protein, NPS6 play pivotal role in formation of double membrane vesicles [16]. Mutation of NPS2 and NPS3 believed to enhance infection of coronavirus [17, 18]. The genetic mutation in RNA help perhaps virus to escape the host immune system and develop drug resistance. The research has found in many infection patients minor mutation in genotype SARS-CoV-2 [19].

SARS-CoV-2, use ACE2 (angiotensin-converting enzyme 2) receptors to have access inside human cells; the MERS-CoV is shown to bind with specific DPP4 (dipeptidyl peptidase 4) receptors [20, 21].

### **1.1 Replication of SARS-CoV-2**

The coronavirus start to login inside cell by connection with host receptor of the S glycoprotein present on their surface. The S protein contain the RBD (receptor-binding domain). In some type of coronavirus, the RBD is found to be present at the N terminus region of S protein, whereas in SARS-CoV-2, it is placed at the C-terminus region [22, 23]. After the SARS-CoV-2 is inside of host cell via membrane fusion, it shown to release +ve ssRNA genome into the cytoplasm, where start the translation of ORF1a and ORF1b from ribosome, and came to formation of two large polyproteins (pp1a and pp1ab). After that came to activation of proteases which interact with polyproteins to cleavage them into 16 non-structural proteins (NSP1-16), which eventual have the possibilities to create the viral RNA polymerase and other accessory proteins for virus assembly [24-26].

The glycoprotein E is shown to be incorporated into rough endoplasmatic reticulum or Golgi membrane. The single strand RNA have possibilities to interact with capsid and to form nucleocapsid, followed by budding of assembled virus particles in the ER-Golgi intermediate compartment [27].

### **1.2 Human proteins who bind SARS-CoV-2 RNA**

The expanded SARS-CoV-2 RNA encompassed include 104 human proteins and included 13 SARS-CoV-2 encoded proteins. The majority of human RNA interactome proteins (100 proteins), have been identify previously-during the study of attract proteins that crosslink to RNA [26]. Only 10 of the 332 proteins that is found to link during the recombination of SARS-CoV-2 proteins in uninfected cells, also bound directly to viral RNA in cells which are infected with virus [28].

### **1.3 Pathogenesis of SARS-CoV-2**

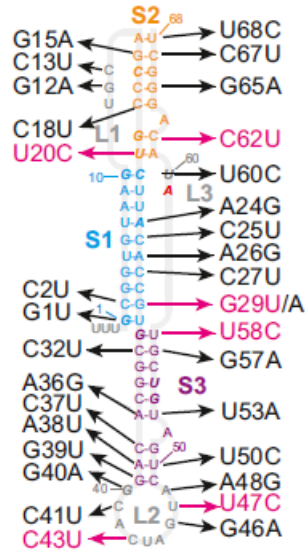
SARS-CoV-2 arrived to lung via the naso-oral cavity. After the virus came to lung, it is shown to interact with ACE receptors and initiate its replication [29-31]. This is a first phase which lasts 1-2 days, during this time the virus have possibilities to multiply in the upper respiratory tract. After that came second phase who begin from

day 2 and lasts till day 14 which is manifested with different symptoms (see above). In this phase patients start to exhibit enhance activity of pro-inflammatory cytokines response that lead to viral sepsis accompanied by other complication. The infect patients rarely are manifested by intestinal symptoms like diarrhea [32]. The patients who are sick from other diseases such as asthma, obesity, hypertension, diabetic, heart, and kidney, liver are also in higher risk to acquire the disease [33]. The autopsy of patients who die by SARS-CoV-2 infection show multi-organ dysfunction, higher viral titers in lung and immune cells in circulation, thus damaging immune system and lung [34, 35]. In children affected with SARS-CoV-2 show severe symptoms but with rare death and better prognosis [36]. The researcher unsuspected for two ways. One is ACE2 receptor activity is higher in children aged 4-13 years; after that ACE2 receptors start to decline until adolescences. The second way is differential CD4+ and CD8+ T cell population are found in children compared with adults [37, 38].

#### **1.4 Structure and function of the -1 PRF (programmed -1 ribosomal frameshift) signal of SARS-CoV-2**

SARS-CoV-2 use a molecular mechanism called programmed -1 ribosomal frameshift (-1PRF) to control gene expression and protein synthesis. The -1PRF signal is very important for SARS-CoV-2: the frameshift gene product including RNA polymerase is required for replication. Many research paper show on SARS-CoV show that mutation suppressing -1 PRF significantly in cell culture [39-41]. Frameshift –stimulatory structure are shown to be a potential target for anti-viral drugs [42].

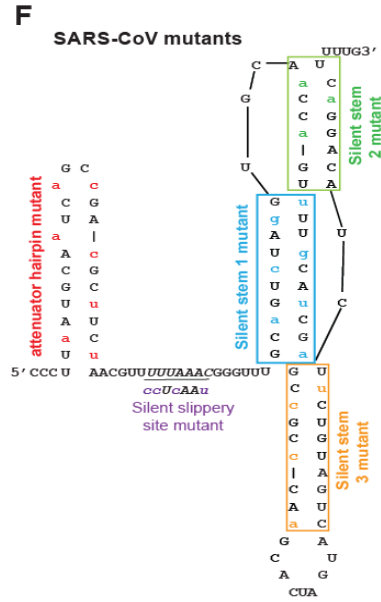
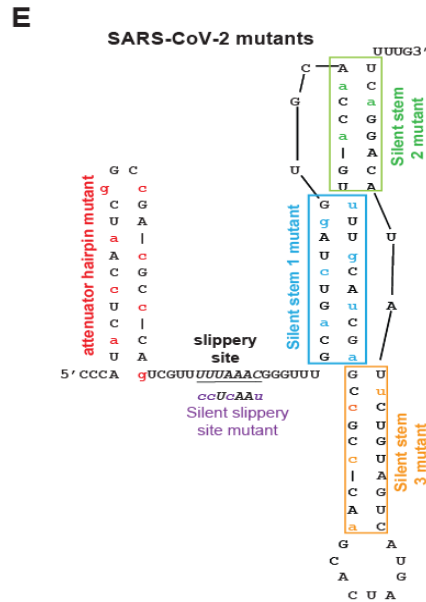
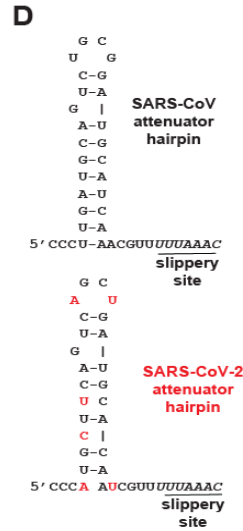
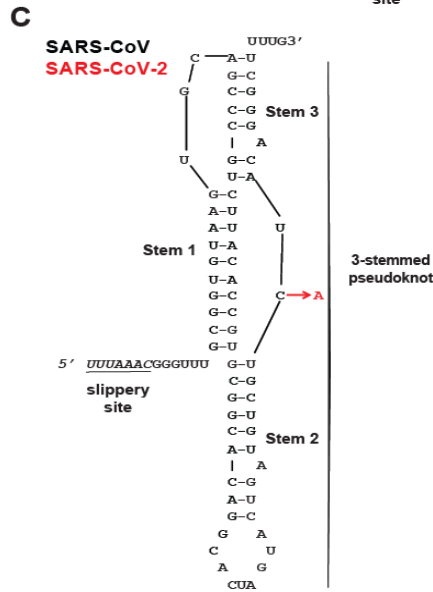
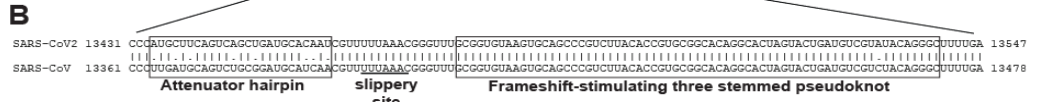
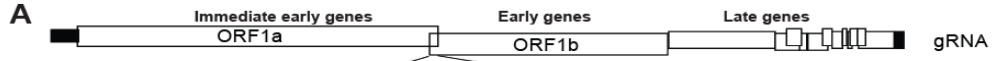
The pseudoknot stimulating –1 PRF is shown to have three stem architecture; this is characteristic just for coronaviruses, in contrast many viruses have two stem pseudoknots [43]. The pseudoknot sequences are much conserved between coronaviruses [44], several mutation in this part are identify in SARS-CoV-2 during the COVID-19 pandemic [45]. Some of these mutation are found in one patients; others are found in different patients from different countries of word (Figure 1).



**Fig 1.** Natural of mutation in SARS-CoV-2 pseudoknot. The mutation are found in patients affected by SARS-CoV-2 in structure of pseudoknots (figure adapted from Neupane et al, 2020) [42].

How these mutation affect -1 PRF in SARS-CoV-2; it is not known well, but understanding these mutation is a good issue for future therapies [42]. The major mutation in these position are transition (purine-purine or pyrimidine-pyrimidine conservation) rather than transversions. The majority of these mutation approximately 62% in the stem keep it in original state the wild -type base pairing by conserving pairs G:C to G:U, A:U to G:U to G:C [42].

The -1PRF of SARS-CoV-2 begins with U UUA AAC slippery site, continue by a 6-nt spacer region and then three-stemmed mRNA pseudoknot that stimulates -1PRF. A second regulatory element is attenuator hairpin, which located at 5' at the slippery site; this part is much conserved sequences (Figure 2) [39].



**Fig 2.** The structure of SARS-CoV-2. A) Cartoon who describe genome organization of SARS-CoV-2 including a -1 PRF. B) pairwise analysis of the -PRF signals. C) structur of the SARS-CoV -1PRF. D) comparison of SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2-1PRF elements. E and F) silent mutations in slippery side in the SARS-CoV2 and SARS-CoV-1PRF (figure adapted from Kelly et al, 2020) [47].

### **1.5 Small and large molecules who have possibilities to inhibit SARS-CoV-1PRF**

Based on conservative sequence of the frameshift SARS-CoV-2, the possibilities to inhibit -1 PRF is only by small molecules. This is reported by Kelly et al, [47] when they tested the small molecule who have possibilities to bind with pseudoknot and suppress -1 PRF, 2-([4-(2-methyl-thiazol-4-methyl)-[1,4]diazepane-1-carbonyl]-amino)-benzoic acid ethyl ester, hereafter denoted as MTDB [48, 49]. This provide concrete evidence for small-molecule frameshifting inhibitors in SARS-CoV-2 and support the hypothesis that the frameshift - stimulatory pseudoknot may be an attractive therapeutic target [42, 47]. The small compound FR6 referred as 1,3-dimethyl-6H-pyrrolo [3,4-d] pyrimidine-2,4-dione, have the affinity to complex with NSP9 COVID-19 and to accommodate orientation of motifs GxxxG [50].

Large molecule such as merafloxacin, belongs antibacterial compound known as fluoroquinolones [51]. Fluoroquinolones is tested for inhibition of -1 PRF, and it is shown the ability to inhibit the -1 PRF [52].

The modification of RNA is known to play pivotal role in different process in our organism. One form of modification is N6-methyladenosine (m6A) who control gene expression. The m6A modification is performed by a nuclear methyltransferase complex (METTL3/METTL14/WTAP) that include the essential methyltransferase-like enzyme 3 (METTL3) catalytic subunit [53]. m6A modification of RNA are recognized by a number of RNA-binding proteins, so called “the readers”, including nuclear YTHDC1 and three other paralogs who are placed in cytoplasm such as YTHDF1, YTHDF2, and YTHDF3 as well as other RNA binding proteins [54, 55]. Understanding of modification in this case m6A may have influence in future therapy opportunities to interfere in virus replication and spread of SARS-CoV-2 [56].

Oxidation is another type of modification which is shown to be involved in replication of genetic inheritance material in virus. Oxidation of iron-sulfur cluster by the stable nitroxide TEMPOL caused their disassembly, and inhibited the RdRp, and blocked SARS-CoV-2 replication in cell culture. These iron-sulfur cluster it is possibilities to serve as a target therapy of COVID-19 [57].

### **1.6 Non-structural protein as a target for cure of SARS-CoV-2**

Non-structural protein gene is known to encode S protein. As we mention above there are a huge number of NSP, which play pivotal role during the infection of host cell. Some of NSP are involved in replication/transcription process, such as NSP7 and NSP8 [58-60]. In vitro is shown that NSP7, NSP8 and NSP12 are involved in in the RNA-dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp) activity [61]. But transcription of full genome is facilitated by NSP9 and NSP13 [24, 62, 63]. The coronavirus NSP9 is single strand RNA binding proteins, who can be repurposed to direct interface with nucleotidyltransferase or NiRNA, domain of NSP12 [64]. The NSP9 is reported to

have ability to insert into enzymatic site and to recruit NSP10 and NSP14 [65]. The NSP8 may bind to 7SL RNA discrete region and to involve in modification of host protein trafficking [66].

### **1.7 Treatment strategies for SARS-CoV-2**

Till today they are not approved any specific drug for SARS-CoV-2 treatment. FDA- has approved some antiviral drugs, vaccines and immunotherapy already have being used to treat COVID-19. The molecular, structural, and functional relationships SARS-CoV-2 with SARS-CoV might define the use of existing anti-viral drugs against COVID-19 [67, 68]. The increasing knowledge of the genetic, immunological, and pathologic pathway might help in developing specific treatment approaches for COVID-19 in the future.

#### **1.7.1 Vaccine design strategies**

The number of researcher who are working hard to develop vaccine and to stop the pandemic situation caused by SARS-CoV-2. Development of vaccine is not easy task, as a huge number of clinical trials are required before approval for patients. The common strategies are used for develop of vaccine, such as monoclonal antibodies, virus vectors, protein vaccine, and DNA/RNA-vaccine [69-72].

An adenovirus vector-based vaccine candidate, is developed by Oxford University (AstraZeneca) for used against SARS-CoV-2, and has been reported both humoral and cell mediated immune response when tested in rhesus monkey [73]. Another group have used a recombinant adenovirus type 5 (Ad5-nCoV) and has been very effective in generating humoral and T-cell response post immunization [74]. Another type of vaccine is neutralization of specific regions such S1-NTD, or the S2 region and in this form came to blocking the interaction of virus with the receptors [75]. The monoclonal antibody has been identify, who target the conserved region S-RBD and came to effective neutralization of SARS-CoV-2 [76]. The new technologies of the microneedle array has been approved for delivering SARS-CoV-2 S1 subunit vaccine, which is very helpful in the treatment of patients infected with SARS-CoV-2 [77].

## **2 Conclusion**

Considering the current situation more than 8 million of people has been infected, and number of death every day is going to be higher and higher. There is an urgent need to control the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The government authorities in every country have approved guidelines and take action of quarantines for infected people, to break the spread infection in the community. Different antibodies, vaccines, and potential drugs could be used for treatment of infected people. Combination of different drugs can be used for neutralization of -1 PRF or S protein. Among different antiviral compound has been approved by FDA, such as chloroquine/hydroxychloroquine has shown to have good outcomes in infected patients.



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