

Advances in Analyzing Virus-Induced Alterations of Host Cell Splicing

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| 34 | |

35 Abstract

36 Alteration of host cell splicing is a common feature of many viral infections which is 37 underappreciated because of the complexity and technical difficulty of studying alternative 38 splicing regulation. Recent advances in RNA sequencing technologies revealed that up to 39 several hundreds of host genes can show altered mRNA splicing upon viral infection. The 40 observed changes in alternative splicing events can either be a direct consequence of viral 41 manipulation of the host splicing machinery or result indirectly from the viral-induced innate 42 immune response or cellular damages. Analysis at a higher resolution with single-cell 43 RNAseq and a higher scale with the integration of multiple omics datasets in a systems 44 biology perspective will be needed to further comprehend this complex facet of virus-host 45 interactions.

46

48 Alteration of cellular splicing: a complex facet of virus-host interactions

49 In higher eukaryotic cells most genes are transcribed as precursor messenger RNAs (pre-50 mRNAs) that undergo splicing, a maturation process through which RNA sequences (introns) 51 are removed and the remaining sequences (exons) are ligated together. Splicing occurs in 52 the nucleus and is catalyzed by the spliceosome, a large and highly dynamic 53 ribonucleoprotein complex [1, 2]. Most mammalian pre-mRNAs are subject to alternative 54 splicing (AS), and human genes contain on average 8.8 exons and 7.8 introns per gene, giving 55 rise to an average of 3.4 alternatively spliced isoforms [3, 4]. The most common types of AS 56 events are the use of alternative donor and acceptor splice sites, exon skipping, alternative 57 use of mutually exclusive exons, and intron retention. Alternative splicing expands the 58 diversity of proteins that can be expressed from a given gene, and can also modify cis-59 regulatory elements that govern the stability and translation of mRNAs. In recent years, 60 head-to-tail back-splicing events that result in the formation of non-coding circular RNAs 61 (circRNAs) have also been observed to play key regulatory roles in a variety of biological 62 processes, including antiviral immunity [5, 6]. Splicing is tightly coupled to transcription, and 63 is controlled by cis- and trans-acting elements as well as through chromatin structure and 64 signalling pathways [3, 5, 7]. The advent of high-throughput RNA sequencing technologies 65 (RNAseq) has opened up a new era in studying how AS is regulated and shapes the cellular 66 proteome in response to changes in environmental conditions (e.g. [8]).

67 Viruses modulate host gene expression in order to favor viral replication and evade antiviral 68 responses. They have evolved mechanisms to affect cellular transcription, mRNA processing 69 and nuclear export, mRNA decay, and translation [9-11]. RNAseq, proteomic and 70 interactomic studies are now beginning to provide a global view of viral-induced alterations 71 of cellular splicing and insights into how they may impact viral pathogenesis. Herein, we 72 review the recent developments in the field, we discuss how current limitations could be 73 overcome in the future, and what advances may be expected from the integration of splicing 74 isoforms datasets into a systems biology perspective.

75

76 Viral manipulation of the host splicing machinery

77 Viruses that replicate in the nucleus of infected cells and gain access to the splicing
78 machinery (e.g. adenoviruses, herpesviruses, and influenza viruses) have evolved an

79 expansion of their coding capacity by producing spliced viral mRNAs. However, manipulation 80 of the host splicing machinery is not exclusive to nuclear viruses and has also been observed 81 with viruses that replicate in the cytoplasm such as picornaviruses or flaviviruses (Table 1). 82 This can be accounted for by the nucleo-cytoplasmic shuttling of some viral proteins (e.g. the 83 dengue virus NS5 protein [12]) and splicing factors (e.g. SR proteins [13]), increased nuclear 84 permeability upon viral infection [14] or signaling pathways triggered by viral infection [15]. 85 Components of the splicing machinery commonly targeted across different virus families are 86 the small nuclear ribonucleoproteins (snRNPs), serine/arginine-rich (SR) proteins, and 87 heterogeneous nuclear ribonucleoproteins (hnRNPs). The U1 to U6 snRNPs are core 88 components of the spliceosome, whereas SR and hnRNP proteins are involved in the 89 regulation of constitutive and alternative splicing. Different viruses appear to induce similar 90 types of alterations, *i.e.* changes in the level of expression, protein-protein or protein-RNA 91 interaction pattern, localization, phosphorylation and/or intrinsic activity of splicing factors 92 (Table 1).

93 Among the genes that appear differentially expressed upon viral infections in transcriptomic 94 and proteomic datasets, the overall enrichment of splicing-related genes is generally not 95 reported. However, particular splicing factors can undergo significant changes in expression 96 upon viral infection. As an example, expression of EFTUD2, a U5-snRNP associated factor, 97 was found to be decreased upon HCV infection of cultured cells and in liver samples from 98 HCV-infected patients; downregulation of EFTUD2 impairs the splicing of RIG-I and MDA5 99 pre-mRNAs and therefore enables the virus to circumvent the innate antiviral response [16]. 100 Phosphoproteomic profiling provides an additional layer of information by revealing viral-101 phosphorylation status of host proteins. induced changes in the Dynamic 102 phosphorylation/dephosphorylation is known to regulate the function of splicing factors, 103 most notably SR proteins [17]. HIV-1 entry triggers early changes in the phosphorylation of 104 five SR proteins, including SRRM2 which regulates the splicing of HIV-1 transcripts [18]. Later 105 in infection there is evidence that the HIV-1 protein Vpr modulates the activity of SR protein-106 specific kinases and the phosphorylation of SRRM2 [19]. In the pre-omics era, the 107 herpesvirus ICP27, adenovirus E4-ORF4 and papillomavirus E1^E4 proteins have also been 108 reported to regulate SR proteins phosphorylation in order to facilitate their replication [20109 22] (Table 1). Altogether these findings point to changes in SR phosphorylation as a110 mechanism commonly triggered by multiple viruses to co-opt the splicing machinery.

111 Interrogation of the VirHostNet 2.0 public database dedicated to virus-host protein-protein 112 interactions (PPIs) [23] reveals that a large proportion of known splicing factors have at least 113 one reported interaction with a viral protein, pointing to the spliceosome as a frequent viral 114 target (Figure 1A and 1B). Most of the data derive from a yeast two-hybrid or affinity-115 purification mass spectrometry screen with no systematic experimental validation of the 116 interactions and therefore cannot be assumed a priori as high confidence data [14]. However 117 data integration helps reveal splicing factors which are found to be associated with multiple 118 viral species and represent potentially relevant targets for onward studies, e.g. DDX5 and 119 FUS (Figure 1C). Some PPIs have been identified in low throughput studies and are well 120 documented such as the recently identified interaction between the reovirus protein μ^2 and 121 the SR protein SRSF2, which alters SRSF2 function and determines the virus ability to 122 counteract the interferon response [24]. Additional PPIs and associated effects on the host splicing machinery are listed in Table 1. Furthermore, viral RNAs can act on the splicing 123 124 machinery, as exemplified by the changes in AS events observed upon sequestration of the 125 HuR protein by the 3'UTR of Sindbis virus [25], (Table 1).

126

127 Peering into viral-induced alterations of host alternative splicing events

128 To date there are only a few studies that performed transcriptome-wide micro-array or 129 RNAseq analysis of cellular AS events in virus-infected cells (Table 2). They concern 130 herpesviruses [26-28], reoviruses [24, 29], dengue viruses (DENV) [12, 30], Zika virus [31] 131 and influenza viruses [32], and reveal several hundreds of host genes that show altered 132 mRNA splicing upon infection. When examined, no correlation was found between changes 133 in AS events and changes in mRNA expression levels. Validation by RT-PCR or RT-qPCR of a 134 selected subset of the predicted differential AS events is compulsory and usually performed 135 to sort out and confirm RNAseq findings. Validation rates can only be determined if a large enough number of AS events is assayed, and are likely to depend on the metrics and 136 137 statistical analysis that are used. In the few studies which provide GO terms enrichment 138 analysis on the list of differentially spliced genes in virus-infected cells, an enrichment in 139 genes related to cell cycle, gene expression and/or RNA metabolism was reported [24, 27, 140 30-32]. Consistently with previous reports that the AS landscape varies between human tissues [33], neural progenitor cells infected with the human cytomegalovirus (HCMV) 141 exhibited fewer AS changes compared to fibroblasts and only half of altered exon-skipping 142 143 overlapped in both cell types [26]. Exon-skipping, which is most frequently detected in the 144 human transcriptome [33] accounts for the largest share of infection-altered AS events in all 145 except the DENV5 study [12]. Interestingly intron retention (IR) which, although identified 146 early on in spliced viral mRNAs, was until recently considered a rare event in mammalian 147 cells, was found to represent a substantial proportion (> 20%) of infection-altered AS events 148 in herpes simplex virus-1 (HSV-1) and DENV5-infected cells [12, 27]. These observations align 149 with recent findings that IR is actually a common AS event in mammalian cells, although the 150 fate of intron-retaining mRNAs regarding nucleo-cytoplasmic export or nonsense mediated 151 decay is not fully understood [34]. Taken together with a recent report that influenza virus 152 NS1 protein primarily binds intronic sequences [35], they suggest that some viruses may 153 have evolved specific mechanisms to alter host cell expression through increased IR. Finally, 154 within the last couple of years the first reports of viral-induced alterations of cirRNAs were 155 published. Notably, cirRNAs were found to be expressed and associated with the 156 NF90/NF110 factor at lower levels upon Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV) infection, which 157 results in increased NF90/NF110 binding to viral mRNAs in the cytoplasm and thereby likely 158 contributes to the antiviral immune response [36]. A global dysregulation of circRNAs was 159 observed upon infection with HSV-1, which could potentially modulate the cellular 160 transcriptional responses through the miRNA sponge function of circRNAs [37].

161 Splicing alterations observed upon infection potentially result from the combination of two 162 types of mechanisms: i) they can be caused by a viral manipulation of the splicing machinery, 163 as described above; or ii) they can be related to viral-induced cellular damages or innate 164 immune responses (Figure 2). Indeed, there is increasing evidence that AS is a mechanism to 165 regulate the immune responses to pathogens [38-40] (Box 1), as well as apoptosis [41], DNA 166 damage response [42] and endoplasmic reticulum stress response [43]. Integration of multi-167 omics data will probably be key to distinguishing between direct and indirect effects of viral infection on the cellular splicing machinery and uncovering of the complex mechanisms by 168 169 which the host-cell splicing landscape is modified (see below).

170 In some instances, differences in viral-induced splicing changes were reported when viral 171 variants were compared. Reovirus strain T1L, compared to strain T3D which differs in that its 172 μ 2 protein does not localize to nuclear speckles, triggered more splicing changes *i.e.* 369 compared to 142, with an overlap of only 35 changes. The cellular processes which were 173 174 most affected by T1L infection, *i.e.* gene expression and RNA post-transcriptional 175 modification, were not strongly affected by T3D infection [24]. Comparison of a subset of AS 176 events upon infection with DENV2 and DENV4 revealed differences, suggesting a possible serotype specificity in AS alteration [12]. However the molecular mechanisms that lead to 177 178 specific alterations of the splicing landscape remain largely unknown. The only evidence for 179 a sequence recognition mechanism comes from Tang et al. who showed that the ICP27 180 protein of HSV-1 mediates splicing alterations in genes that are GC-rich, with suboptimal 181 splicing sites and cytosine-rich sequences close to the 5' splice site [44]. The presence of a 182 conserved 41 nucleotide motif was observed in 93 out of 240 AS events that were 183 dysregulated upon infection with the reovirus strain T3D [29], however this motif does not 184 correspond to a predicted RNA regulatory motif and the significance of this observation 185 remains to be demonstrated.

186 Importantly, transcriptomics studies revealed that not only splicing but also other features of 187 cellular mRNAs can be altered upon viral infection. For instance, DENV1 was found to induce 188 alterations in the relative usage of transcriptional start sites, in addition to splicing changes 189 [30]. Infection with herpesviruses was shown to trigger widespread disruption of 190 transcription termination of cellular mRNAs [26-28], which in the case of HCMV infection 191 was attributed to a strong induction of the host RNA-binding protein CPEB1 [26]. 192 Transcription extends over thousands of nucleotides beyond poly(A) sites and into 193 downstream genes, it interferes with the analysis of transcriptional and splicing regulation of 194 the downstream gene and can generate novel intergenic splicing between exons of two 195 neighbouring genes [28]. Defective transcription termination of cellular mRNAs was also very 196 recently reported in influenza virus-infected cells [45-47]. While most studies provide 197 information about the steady-state levels of mRNA isoforms, a few of them rely on the NET-198 Seq method [45] or on 4sU tagging of mRNAs [28] to provide a real-time view of viral-199 induced changes in co-transcriptional RNA processing. As these methods allow to detect 200 actively or newly transcribed mRNAs, they can also help avoid biaises due to isoform-specific

differences in the stability of mRNA. Transcriptomic analysis and mechanistic understanding of how viral infection impacts cellular mRNA co- and post-transcriptional processing is an expanding field, constantly evolving in response to progress in cellular biology (e.g. the recent findings on the biogenesis and function of circRNAs) and in technologies (as discussed below).

206

207 Towards a more accurate view: methodological challenges

208 RNAseq transcriptomic analysis of AS is a challenging issue, and even more so when 209 performed on a virus-host system. Accurate quantification of isoform abundance requires a 210 high read number (about 50 millions paired-end reads of at least 75 bp are recommended 211 for the human transcriptome), which to date can only be provided by the Illumina 212 technology. However a serious limitation of Illumina RNAseq is that it relies on short reads, so that the resolution of exon connectivity and full-length isoform structure cannot be 213 214 achieved (Box 2). Upon viral infection the reads mapping to viral mRNAs may represent 5-215 75% of the total number of reads (Table 2), therefore the sequencing depth of virus- and 216 mock-infected samples must be adjusted accordingly. The degree of variability of AS viral-217 induced perturbations also need to be taken into account when setting the sequencing 218 depth and the number of biological replicates, in order to differentiate biologically relevant 219 changes from transcriptional noise.

220 Many viruses induce host-cell transcription shut-off [10] although specific genes (e.g. IFN-221 stimulated genes, cytokines) can escape this shut-off and be up-regulated. Marked 222 differences between the gene expression profiles of mock- and virus-infected cells poses a 223 challenge for accurate comparison of isoform abundance. Commonly used RNAseq 224 normalization methods [48] make the assumption that a core set of genes is not 225 differentially expressed and mainly correct for sequencing depth. Normalization methods 226 taking into account other variability factors (e.g. the average amount of cellular RNA per cell) 227 besides sequencing depth for host-pathogen dual RNAseq experiments need to be 228 developed [49].

Another methodological challenge of viral-host RNAseq lies in the ability to deal with cell-tocell heterogeneity during infection. Usually high multiplicities of infection are used and it is verified or assumed that almost all cells are infected. However, single-cell RNAseq

232 (scRNAseq) experiments revealed extensive variability from one individual cell to another in 233 terms of production of intracellular viral RNAs and cellular responses [50-52]. RNAseq 234 experiments on polyadenylated mRNAs or circRNAs extracted from bulk cell cultures or 235 tissues are providing an average measure of isoform abundance; they are potentially 236 masking heterogeneity that occurs in the dynamics of infection and/or specific 237 transcriptomic profiles in a subset of cells which could be relevant to the viral phenotype. 238 Single cell RNAseq can be used for transcriptome-wide differential splicing isoform 239 quantification, however this requires specific bioinformatics tools and normalization 240 procedures to be developed, to cope with the low reads counts, the heterogeneity and noise 241 in the datasets [53-55].

242 So far, most RNAseq analyses of splicing events in virus-infected cells have been conducted 243 with cancer cell lines and/or viral laboratory strains. Such experimental conditions have 244 practical advantages (ready availability, ability to infect almost 100% of the cells, and higher 245 reproducibility), however they may not accurately reflect physiological infection. The 246 development of scRNAseq, which allows discrimination between infected and uninfected 247 cells, will probably encourage the use of field viral isolates and more relevant cellular 248 systems such as primary cells or tissue explants. Novel perspectives will be opened by the 249 use of induced human pluripotent cells (iPS) which upon differentiation can serve as 250 convenient surrogates for primary cells that are difficult to isolate and culture [56], and 3D 251 organoid cultures which can provide an accurate model for the micro-anatomy of an organ 252 [57].

253

254 Integration of isoforms datasets in a systems biology perspective

255 The rapid advancement of high-throughput technologies has led to the development of the 256 systems biology field, which aims at modeling the properties of complex biological systems, 257 and predicting their response to biological or chemical perturbations. The commonly used 258 "top down" systems biology approach turns RNAseq measurement of expression levels into 259 a variable which can be included in a mathematical model, such as a generalized linear 260 model or a multivariate analysis (Principal Component Analysis, Singular Value 261 Decomposition, Partial Least Square). The variance across genes or isoforms, samples and 262 conditions is computed to identify statistically significant transcriptomics signatures, *i.e.* 263 particular combinations of thousands of genes or isoform expression levels. The mechanistic 264 interpretation of these signatures and the prioritization of candidate genes for downstream experimental validation remain challenging tasks. However, the use of transcriptomic 265 266 signatures has already allowed genetically close viral strains to be robustly distinguished 267 [58], species-specific responses to infection outlined [59] and the outcome of viral infections 268 predicted [60]. It can also pave the way towards the discovery of relevant biomarkers [61]. 269 Transcriptomic signature analysis has become a routine at the gene level, but little has been 270 done so far at the isoform-level. Recent methodological developments - such as splicing 271 signature comparison workflows for the discovery of candidate splicing regulatory elements 272 - have been applied to psoriasis studies [62, 63] and could be transferred to the analysis of 273 infected-cells in the future. Further progress in the field will also be enhanced by the 274 accessibility and the integration of published RNAseq datasets within open access 275 knowledge bases (e.g. ArrayExpress, Gene Expression Omnibus), which allows meta-analyses 276 to be conducted.

277 The integration of RNAseq datasets with other omics datasets, so far mostly proteomics, 278 interactomics and metabolomics datasets, has become a new way to rationalize the deconvolution of the transcriptomics signal, and has been applied to virus-infected cells [64-279 280 66] or patients [67]. To facilitate this integration step, network-based methods such as 281 correlation network (e.g. WGCNA) or probabilistic models (e.g. MERLIN) are currently being 282 investigated (reviewed in [68]). The main objective is to infer the transcriptional gene 283 regulatory network and to prioritize a set of candidate genes, transcriptional factors or 284 functional modules that are involved in viral infection. A growing number of studies combine 285 newly generated experimental data with published datasets available in open access 286 databases to identify the most relevant molecular pathways. For example, by combining 287 proteomics and RNA-seq experimental data along with available gene-regulatory and 288 protein-protein interaction networks Sychev et al. successfully implemented a 289 computational model based on the Prize-Collecting Steiner Forest algorithm, which 290 highlighted peroxisome lipid metabolism as an important function involved in KSHV (Kaposi's 291 sarcoma associated herpesvirus) latent infection [65].

292 One should stress that integration is for now only performed at the gene-level. Gene 293 annotation knowledge bases (GO, Interpro, and KEGG) are exploited to investigate 294 enrichment of specific biological or molecular functions (GSEA). Although they are 295 continuously being improved, gene annotations are still far from being complete [69], and 296 even more so at the isoform level and for non-model organisms. Gene annotations often 297 relate to a "reference isoform" which is assumed to be the predominant one, whereas the 298 relative proportion of splicing isoforms may differ from one tissue to another. Alternative 299 splicing may lead to the gain or loss of functional domains, catalytic sites and/or protein-300 protein interfaces. However, the full set of alternative isoforms that effectively contribute to 301 proteomic diversity and represent "functional alloforms" remains to be characterized [70, 302 71]. Available Exon Ontology resources can be used to readily identify enriched functions of 303 gene isoform subsets but they restrict the analysis at the exon-level [72]. The systematic 304 characterization of AS isoforms function is a challenging task and might be accelerated 305 through bioinformatics prediction [72-74] or experimentally by using interactomics 306 approaches [75, 76].

307 As molecular approaches to study virus-host interactions at a high level of mechanistic detail 308 are also making steady progress, the "bottom up" systems biology approach also seem 309 promising. In this approach the knowledge generated by the molecular and biochemical 310 characterization of a subsystem and its response to perturbations is used to generate 311 specific sub-networks, which can subsequently be integrated together with high-throughput 312 data into larger molecular interaction networks [77-79]. In the case of the spliceosome 313 machinery, subnetwork modeling is making progress through Bayesian probability modeling 314 [80], food-web modeling [81], or deep-learning approaches [82], which offers advanced 315 tools for studying its involvement and vulnerability upon viral infection. In return, research 316 on the virus-spliceosome interplay will likely contribute to a better definition of the complex 317 set of rules that can predict the splicing pattern of each isoform based on a comprehensive 318 catalogue of cis-regulatory elements and their functional molecular interactions in various 319 physiological and pathological conditions.

320

321 Concluding remarks

The importance of characterizing the transcriptome landscape of virus-infected cells at the splicing level is highlighted by recent studies, which reveal significant AS alterations in response to viral infections. The observed changes in AS events, which are regulated through

325 a very complex protein-RNA interaction network, can either be a direct consequence of viral 326 manipulation of the host splicing machinery or result indirectly from viral-induced immune 327 responses or cellular damages. Integration of multiple omics datasets in a systems biology 328 perspective will be needed to comprehend this complex facet of virus-host interactions. 329 Beyond proteomics and interactomics, which have been most commonly combined with 330 RNAseq analysis so far, epigenomics and epitranscriptomics would also be relevant. Indeed, 331 viral infections may induce epigenetic [83, 84] or epitranscriptomic [85] modifications, and 332 both types of modifications may in turn affect splicing [86, 87]. Genetic mutations that affect 333 AS, and consequently may determine phenotypic variability and individual susceptibility to 334 viral diseases, is also an interesting direction for future research [88]. Species-dependent AS 335 patterns of cellular genes could possibly be determinant for viral host-range, as suggested 336 recently for influenza viruses [89]. As technological advances in RNA sequencing and RNA 337 genomics will allow to study the interplay between cellular AS and viral infections at an 338 increasing scale and resolution, major challenges in terms of computational analysis and 339 storage of the corresponding datasets will need to be addressed, and the building of 340 pluridisciplinary research teams along the lines of the European Virus Bioinformatics Center 341 (http://evbc.uni-jena.de) [90] will be paramount. Integration of splicing isoform datasets 342 with other omics data may well contribute to the development of personalized prognosis 343 and management of infectious diseases and lead to therapeutic innovations.

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Box 1 : Role of alternative splicing in shaping immune responses.

354 In the recent years there has been growing evidence for a role of AS in shaping both innate 355 and adaptative immune responses [38-40]. Different isoforms have been found for key 356 players of the antiviral innate immunity, including pattern-recognition receptors (e.g. TLRs, 357 RIG-I, and MDA5), downstream signaling proteins (e.g. MyD88, MAVS, STING, TBK1, and 358 IRF3), and effectors (IFN Type I, IFNAR, cytokines and chemokines). The splicing factors 359 involved are known in a few cases : EFTUD2 regulates the splicing of RIG-I, MDA5 and 360 MyD88 [91], while SF3A1 affects the splicing of several genes of the TLR signaling pathway 361 including MyD88 [92]. In several instances, splice variants exert a negative feedback loop on 362 the signaling pathway, thereby probably controlling the intensity and duration of the 363 antiviral and inflammatory responses. Notably, RIG-I and STING splice variants whose 364 expression are up-regulated upon viral infection strongly inhibit RIG-I and STING signaling 365 pathways, respectively [93, 94]. A viral-induced, alternatively spliced isoform of TPK-1 366 disrupts the interaction between RIG-I and MAVS and inhibits IFN-beta signaling [95]. Short isoforms of MAVS negatively regulate TLR3-mediated nucleic acid sensing [96], and limit self-367 aggregation of the full-length MAVS protein thereby preventing accidental antiviral innate 368 369 immune signaling [97]. The contribution of AS to the regulation of humoral and cellular 370 adaptative immune responses is also clearly recognized, however the mechanisms involved 371 remain largely unknown. In B cells two mechanisms were recently uncovered : the HuR 372 protein, by regulating mRNA splicing upon B cell activation, is essential for antibody 373 response to a variety of antigens [98], while the ZFP318 factor regulates the AS-dependent 374 balance between IgM and IgD immunoglobulins [99]. In T cells, one of the best documented 375 examples is the AS of CD45 in response to antigen receptor-mediated signaling, which is 376 differentially regulated depending on the T cell lineage and the stage of activation (reviewed 377 in [39, 40]).

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- 379

381 Box 2 : Resolving alternative splicing by short- or long-reads sequencing technologies.

Currently Illumina is the most commonly used RNAseq technology for transcriptome-wide analysis of AS. However Third Generation Sequencing (TGS) technologies, such as the Pacific Biosciences (PacBio) and Oxford Nanopore (ON) technologies, are emerging as alternative platforms for AS analysis [100].

386 The major advantage of Illumina over the TGS technologies is its higher sequencing depth 387 (up to 400 million reads instead of 1 million for TGS), even more so in the case of dual 388 RNAseq when both the viral and host transcriptome need to be sequenced. High depth is 389 needed for the detection of minor isoforms and the robust quantification and statistical 390 analysis of AS events [101]. Another advantage of Illumina resides in its higher sequencing 391 accuracy (about 0.1% error rates instead of 10-15% for TGS), which is particularly 392 advantageous when working on poorly annotated genomes of non-model organisms. 393 However, a major limitation of Illumina is that it generates short reads (75-300 bp) which 394 provides only local information about AS events and entails a challenging computational 395 reconstruction of full-length isoforms. The strength of TGS is their read length (1-100 kb), 396 which allows the direct characterisation of full-length transcripts with information not only 397 on alternative splicing and the coordination of distant exons [102] but also on alternative 398 transcription start and termination sites [103]. Moreover long reads allow to resolve 399 repetitive sequences, that are posing a major challenge for sequence assembly or alignment 400 from short-read datasets.

Future advances may lie in the Hybrid-Seq approach which combines short and long-read technologies [101], the Synthetic Long-Read technology which exploits the assets of Illumina with a short-read barcoding system to reconstruct full-length transcripts [104], or the very swift evolution of long-read technologies. Particularly promising is the perspective of direct RNA sequencing proposed by ON, which would avoid reverse-transcription- and amplification-related biases in isoforms quantification [105].

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- 408
- 409

Table 1. Viral targeting of the splicing machinery.

| Virus | Viral factor | Cellular Target | Associated cellular changes ^a | References | |
|---|--------------|---|---|------------|--|
| HSV-1 | ICP27 | Binding to, relocalisation and inhibition of SRPK1 | Altered phosphorylation of SR proteins | [22] | |
| HSV-1 | ICP27 | Binding to SF3B2* | ND | [106] | |
| HIV-1 | Vpr | Binding to SF32B* | Altered splicing of pre-mRNAs | [107] | |
| EBV | SM | Binding to SRSF3 | Altered splicing of STAT1 pre-mRNA | [108] | |
| HPV1 | E1^E4 | Binding to and inhibition of SRPK1 | Altered phosphorylation of SR proteins | [21] | |
| HPV16 | E2 | Transactivation of SRSF1-3 promoters | ND | [109] | |
| Adenovirus | E4-ORF4 | Binding to SRSF1, SRSF9 | Modulation of pre-mRNA splicing | [20] | |
| Influenza V | NS1 | Binding to U6snRNA | Inhibition of pre-mRNA splicing | [110] | |
| Influenza V | NS1 | Relocalisation of SRSF2 | ND | [111] | |
| Influenza V | NS1 | Binding to and relocalisation of NS1-BP | Altered splicing of some pre-mRNAs regulated by NS1-BP | [112, 113] | |
| Poliovirus | 2A | Relocalisation of HuR, TIA-1, TIAR | Modulation of Fas6 pre-mRNA splicing | [114] | |
| Poliovirus | 2A | Relocalisation of SRSF3 | ND | [115] | |
| EV-71 | 3D (Pol) | Binding to and inhibition of PRPF8** | Blockage of pre-mRNA splicing and mRNA synthesis | [116] | |
| FMDV | 3C (Pro) | Cleavage and relocalisation of Sam68 | ND | [117] | |
| Reovirus | μ2 | Binding to and relocalisation of SRSF2 | Altered splicing of pre-mRNAs | [24] | |
| Rotavirus | NSP2, NSP5 | Association with and relocalisation of hnRNPs and HuR | ND | [118] | |
| Sindbis V | nsP2 | Binding to hnRNPK | ND | [119] | |
| Alphaviruses | 3' UTR | Binding to and relocalisation of HuR | Altered stability, splicing and poly- adenylation of mRNAs | [25, 120] | |
| HCV | 3'UTR | Binding to and relocalisation of HuR | ND | [121] | |
| DENV-1 | NS5 protein | Binding to CD2BP2 DDX23** | Altered pre-mRNA splicing in vitro | [12] | |
| VSV | Μ | Relocalisation of hnRNPH | ND | [122] | |
| ^a ND: not determined, * component of the U2 snRNP, ** component of the U5 snRNP, | | | | | |

^aND: not determined, * component of the U2 snRNP, ** component of the U5 snRNP,

Table 2. Transcriptome-wide analyses of AS in virus-infected cells.

| | Rutkowski et al. 2015 [28] | Hu et al. 2016 [27] | Batra et al. 2016 [26] | Boudreault et al. 2016 [29] | Rivera-S et al. 2017 [24] | Sessions et al. 2013 [30] | De Maio et al. 2016 [12] | Hu et al. 2017 [31] | Fabozzi et al. 2018 [32] |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Virus | HSV-1 | HSV-1 | HCMV | Reovirus | Reovirus | Dengue V | Dengue V | Zika V | Influenza V |
| Host-cell model ^a | Human Fibroblasts | Human Fibroblasts | Human Fibroblasts & NPC | Murine L929 cells | Murine L929 cells | Human HuH7 cells | Human A549 cells | Human NPC | Human BEAS-2B cells |
| Number of replicates | n=2 | n=3 pooled | n=1 | n=3 | n>1 pooled | n=3 | n=3 | n=2 | n=3 |
| Sequencing library | ribo- depleted | polyA+ | polyA+ | polyA+ | polyA+ | polyA+ | polyA+ | polyA+ | ribo- depleted |
| Sequencing platform | HiSeq 2500 | HiSeq 2000 | HiSeq | HiSeq 2000 | NextSeq 500 | HiSeq 2000/ GA II x | HiSeq 4000 | NextSeq 500 | HiSeq 2000 |
| Reads features ^a | 2 x 101 nt | 2 x 90 nt | 1 x 101 nt | 2 x 100 nt | 2 x 50 nt | 2 x 75 nt | 2 x 90 nt | 2 x 75 nt | 2 x 50 nt |
| Sequencing depth | > 25 x 10 ⁶ reads | ~ 26 x 10 ⁶ reads* | ~ 130-230 x 10 ⁶ reads | > 40 x 10 ⁶ reads | NA | ~ 20-100 x 10 ⁶ reads | > 20 x 10 ⁶ reads | ~ 7 x 10 ⁶ reads | ~ 30 x 10 ⁶ reads |
| Fraction of viral reads ^b | 27% | 30% | 22-68% | NA | NA | NA | 30-40% | NA | ~5-75%** |
| Mapping | Context Map | TopHat2 | GSNAP | Bowtie2 | TopHat | TopHat | TopHat2 | TopHat2 | TopHat2 |
| Gene expression analysis | RPKM | Cufflinks | RPKM | RSEM | NA | Cufflinks | NA | Cufflinks | DESeq2 |
| Alternative splicing analysis | Home- made scripts | Cufflinks ASD DaPars | Olego Quantas MISO | RSEM | MISO | Cufflinks MISO | ASpli edgeR | Cufflinks ASD | MISO |
| Data availability ^b | GSE59717 | NA | GSE74250 | GSE81017 | NA | NA | GSE84285 | GSE78711 | GSE61517 |

419 ^a NPC: Neural Progenitor Cells

420 ^b nt: nucleotide

421 ^c NA: not available

422 * number of reads for the pooled samples, ** depending on the viral strain and time-point

426 Figure legends.

427

428 Figure 1. Virus-spliceosome protein-protein interaction network.

429 A. Summary of virus-spliceosome protein-protein interactions, as recorded in the VirHostNet 430 database, January release 2018 [23]. For each viral family, the number of viral species (as 431 defined by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses and the National Center for 432 Biological Information or NCBI) and viral proteins (as defined by the NCBI Reference 433 Sequence and the UniProt databases) reported to interact with at least one cellular 434 spliceosomal factor (among the list of 244 factors defined in [123]) is indicated. The number 435 of viral proteins obtained upon merging of homologous proteins derived from different 436 strains or isolates of a single viral species, grouped thereafter under the name "viral proteins 437 types" and represented as a single node in B, are indicated into brackets.

438 B and C. Interaction network between viral proteins (B) or viral species (C) and cellular 439 spliceosomal proteins. The network was built with Cytoscape (version 3.2.1). Nodes and 440 edges between nodes represent protein and protein-protein interactions, respectively. Core 441 and regulatory spliceosomal factors are represented by square and triangular black nodes, 442 respectively. B. Viral proteins types, as defined in A, are represented by colored nodes (the 443 color code is according to the Table in A). The size of the viral protein nodes is proportional 444 to their degree of connectivity (i.e. the number of interacting partners of a protein) and the 445 layout is done according to their centrality in the network. C. Viral species are represented 446 by colored nodes (the color code is according to the Table in A). The size of the spliceosomal 447 factor nodes is proportional to their degree of connectivity and the layout is done according 448 to their centrality. The five spliceosomal factors showing the highest degree of connectivity 449 (interaction with 11 to 15 distinct viral species) are indicated with a white star and edges 450 representing their protein-protein interactions with viral species are highlighted in red.

451

452 Figure 2. Direct and indirect mechanisms for viral-induced splicing alterations.

Red arrows represent viral manipulation of the splicing machinery and the resulting AS
changes, which have in turn the potential to modulate innate immunity [16, 95] or apoptosis
[124]. Blue arrows represent viral-induced cell damages and innate immune responses and
the subsequent AS changes in the infected cell [40-43]. Grey arrows represent viral-induced

- 457 B- and T-cell immune responses, which are subject to AS-mediated regulation [38-40]. UPR:
- 458 Unfolded Protein Response. DDR : DNA Damage Response.

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В

С

Α

| Viral family | Viral species | Viral proteins (non-redundant) |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Papillomaviridae | 9 | 34(34) |
| Retroviridae | 8 | 17(17) |
| Herpesviridae | 5 | 49(36) |
| Flaviviridae | 4 | 9(4) |
| Togaviridae | 3 | 3(3) |
| Paramyxoviridae | 2 | 4(3) |
| Polyomaviridae | 2 | 3(3) |
| Coronaviridae | 2 | 2(2) |
| Parvoviridae | 2 | 2(2) |
| Rhabdoviridae | 2 | 2(2) |
| Orthomyxoviridae | 1 | 27(11) |
| Poxviridae | 1 | 13(12) |
| Filoviridae | 1 | 2(2) |
| Pneumoviridae | 1 | 2(2) |
| Adenoviridae | 1 | 1(1) |
| Circoviridae | 1 | 1(1) |
| Hepadnaviridae | 1 | 1(1) |
| Peribunyaviridae | 1 | 1(1) |
| Phenuiviridae | 1 | 1(1) |
| Reoviridae | 1 | 1(1) |
| Total | 49 | 175(139) |



