

1 Oncogenic kinases and perturbations in protein synthesis machinery and energetics in neoplasia

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22 Abstract

23 Notwithstanding that metabolic perturbations and dysregulated protein synthesis are salient
24 features of cancer, the mechanism underlying coordination of cellular energy balance with
25 mRNA translation (which is the most energy consuming process in the cell) is poorly
26 understood. In this review, we focus on recently emerging insights in the molecular
27 underpinnings of the cross-talk between oncogenic kinases, translational apparatus and cellular
28 energy metabolism. In particular, we focus on the central signaling nodes that regulate these
29 processes (e.g. the mechanistic/mammalian target of rapamycin MTOR) and the potential
30 implications of these findings on improving the anti-neoplastic efficacy of oncogenic kinase
31 inhibitors.

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43 **1. Introduction**

44 Protein synthesis is a complex process involving the interaction of ribosomes, mRNAs,
45 tRNAs, and auxiliary proteins known as translation factors (Hershey, et al. 2012). Protein
46 synthesis must be tightly regulated as it affects crucial cellular processes (e.g. proliferation,
47 growth, differentiation and development) (Hershey et al. 2012). Dysregulated mRNA translation
48 is implicated in most hallmarks of cancer including aberrant cell proliferation, survival,
49 angiogenesis and cellular energetics (Hanahan and Weinberg 2011; Johnson, et al. 1976; Kevil,
50 et al. 1996; Larsson, et al. 2007; Larsson, et al. 2006; Topisirovic and Sonenberg 2011). The
51 observation that protein synthesis is altered in malignant cells is not recent. Neoplastic cells were
52 shown to have enlarged and abnormally shaped nucleoli, which are ribosome-producing
53 factories, over a century ago (G. 1896). A positive correlation has been observed between cancer
54 cell proliferation and the rate of protein synthesis (Johnson et al. 1976). Moreover, the function
55 and/or the expression of several components of the translation machinery is perturbed in cancer
56 cells (Ruggero 2013). Oncogene activation and the inactivation of tumour suppressors, which
57 drive the development of cancer, converge on the translation machinery (Ruggero 2013).
58 Dysregulation of the components of the translational machinery results in translational
59 reprogramming that favours the development of drug resistance, angiogenesis, survival,
60 proliferation, and metastasis. For instance, high levels of eukaryotic translation initiator factor
61 4E (**EIF4E***) have been linked to increased cell cycle progression, neoplastic growth, and
62 chemoresistance (Byrnes, et al. 2007; Larsson et al. 2007).

63 mRNA translation plays a central role in the regulation of gene expression, leading to
64 immediate changes in protein levels (Sonenberg and Hinnebusch 2009), which are required for
65 adaptation to stress (Guan, et al. 2017; Spriggs, et al. 2010). The importance of gene expression

* Proteins written in bold are represented in the figures.

66 regulation at the translational level is evident as steady-state mRNA levels are thought to have
67 low

68 concordance with the proteome (Schwanhausser, et al. 2011), although the scope of this
69 phenomenon is still being discussed (Li, et al. 2014b). mRNA translation is one of the most
70 energy demanding cellular processes, requiring ~20%–30% of the total ATP (Buttgereit and
71 Brand 1995; Rolfe and Brown 1997). Thus, in order to sustain elevated protein synthesis
72 required for neoplastic growth, malignant cells must adjust their energy metabolism. MTOR is a
73 key regulator of translation (Sonenberg and Hinnebusch 2009). AMP-activated protein kinase
74 (**AMPK**) acts as an intracellular energy sensor and is activated when nutrients or oxygen are in
75 short supply and the ratio of cellular AMP to ATP is elevated (Kahn, et al. 2005; Shaw 2009).
76 Activated **AMPK** results in the downregulation of protein synthesis, which is accompanied by
77 reduced cell growth and proliferation via the **MTORC1** (mechanistic/mammalian target of
78 rapamycin complex 1) signaling pathway (Shaw, et al. 2004a). Consequently, the
79 **AMPK/MTORC1** signaling pathway links cellular energy status to mRNA translation rates.

80 It was discovered in the 1920s that cancer cells reprogram their metabolism and reduce
81 glucose to lactate even in the presence of oxygen (Warburg 1925). Tumor cells exhibit elevated
82 glucose uptake as well as lactate production when compared to normal tissues in the presence of
83 oxygen (Warburg 1956). This metabolic reprogramming is referred to as the Warburg effect or
84 “aerobic glycolysis” (DeBerardinis, et al. 2008; Hsu and Sabatini 2008). Although the
85 conversion of glucose to lactate through glycolysis produces far less ATP per glucose molecule
86 than glucose catabolism through oxidative phosphorylation to carbon dioxide and water, during
87 glycolysis ATP is produced at a faster rate, and this may be important to fuel the rapid
88 proliferation of cancer cells (Locasale and Cantley 2011; Shestov, et al. 2014; Vander Heiden, et
89 al. 2009). Thus, increasing glucose uptake and glycolytic flux represents a strategy to quickly
90 generate ATP (Pfeiffer, et al. 2001). Importantly, glycolysis also fuels neoplastic growth through

91 providing intermediates required for the biosynthesis of lipids, nucleotides, NADPH, and amino
92 acids (Lunt and Vander Heiden 2011). Furthermore, the lactic acid produced as the end product
93 of aerobic glycolysis has been found to favor cancer cell invasion (Smallbone, et al. 2005), used
94 as an alternate tricarboxylic acid cycle (TCA) carbon source (Faubert, et al. 2017), and may
95 interfere with local anti-cancer immune responses (Choi, et al. 2013). The consumption of large
96 amounts of glucose by cancer cells may also suppress the immune response by reducing the
97 glucose concentration in the tumor microenvironment and depriving immune effector cells of
98 glucose (Chang, et al. 2015; Ho, et al. 2015). Moreover, alterations in the tumor
99 microenvironment (such as blood flow, oxygen and nutrient supply) *in vivo* can also contribute
100 to metabolic plasticity (Dang, et al. 2011; Hsu and Sabatini 2008; Jessani, et al. 2004).

101 In this review, we highlight recent findings related to the role of cancer-relevant signaling
102 pathways in coordinating protein synthesis and metabolic activities in the cell. Furthermore, we
103 speculate on the potential implication of these findings in improving the efficacy of current
104 therapies and in developing future cancer therapeutics.

105

106 **2. PI3K/AKT – mechanisms of activation and regulation of metabolic functions**

107 The phosphatidylinositol-4,5-bisphosphate 3-kinase (**PI3K**)/**AKT**/**MTOR** signaling
108 pathway regulates many essential processes including cell growth, mRNA translation,
109 proliferation, survival, apoptosis, and metabolism (Kauffmann-Zeh, et al. 1997; Laplante and
110 Sabatini 2009b; Yao and Cooper 1995). Aberrant signaling via this pathway has been implicated
111 in pathological conditions including diabetes and cancer, whereby its hyperactivation in general
112 is tumor-promoting (Laplante and Sabatini 2012; Porta, et al. 2014).

113 The **PI3K/AKT** signaling cascade is activated when receptor tyrosine kinases (**RTKs**) such
114 as insulin receptors are bound by their ligands, including insulin and/or growth factors (Ruggero
115 and Sonenberg 2005) (Figure 1). The extracellular binding of the ligands results in intracellular
116 autophosphorylation of tyrosine residues on the receptors (Lemmon and Schlessinger 2010;
117 Schlessinger 2002). The phosphorylated tyrosine residues recruit **PI3K** to the membrane
118 (Domchek, et al. 1992). At the membrane, **PI3K** phosphorylates phosphatidyl inositol-4,5-
119 biphosphate (PIP_2) to produce phosphatidyl inositol-3,4,5-triphosphate (PIP_3) (Figure 1) (Cantley
120 2002). PIP_3 then acts as a second messenger and is responsible for translocating downstream
121 signaling proteins such as **AKT/protein kinase B (PKB)** to the cell membrane where they are
122 phosphorylated and activated by **PDK1** (3-phosphoinositide dependent protein kinase 1)
123 (Figure 1) (Alessi, et al. 1997; Fresno Vara, et al. 2004). **AKT** is a serine/threonine protein
124 kinase that regulates cell survival, growth, and proliferation (Myers and Cantley 2010; Wan, et
125 al. 2007). **AKT** carries out its functions through various downstream effectors including MTOR
126 (Slomovitz and Coleman 2012). A major negative regulator of **AKT** is **PTEN** (phosphatase and
127 tensin homolog) (Stambolic, et al. 1998), which catalyzes the conversion of PIP_3 to PIP_2 and acts
128 as a tumor suppressor (Figure 1). **AKT** activity is increased in various cancer types, either due to
129 mutations or amplifications of the *AKT1* gene, or due to the dysregulation of upstream regulators
130 (e.g. **PTEN**) and mitogenic factors (e.g. hormones, growth factors) (Cheng, et al. 2005; Malanga,
131 et al. 2008).

132 The **PI3K/AKT** pathway has been implicated in glucose metabolism and lipid synthesis
133 (Elstrom, et al. 2004; Whiteman, et al. 2002). Specifically, **AKT** has been shown to mediate the
134 translocation of glucose transporter SLC2A4 (solute carrier family 2 member 4; GLUT4) to the
135 plasma membrane (Kohn, et al. 1996) and stimulate glycolysis through the phosphorylation and

136 activation of 6-phosphofructo-2-kinase (PFK2) (Deprez, et al. 1997). It also indirectly stimulates
137 glycogen synthase to produce glycogen through the phosphorylation and inactivation of
138 glycogen synthase kinase 3 (GSK3) alpha and beta isoforms (Cross, et al. 1995). In addition,
139 **AKT** inhibits gluconeogenesis by phosphorylating and inhibiting forkhead box O1 (FOXO1)
140 transcription factor (Accili and Arden 2004). **AKT** has been implicated in activating ATP-citrate
141 lyase (ACLY), an enzyme involved in fatty acid synthesis in adipocytes (Berwick, et al. 2002).
142 In addition to these findings highlighting the role of **PI3K/AKT** signaling pathway in glucose
143 and lipid metabolism, the **PI3K/AKT** pathway affects cellular metabolic programs via the
144 MTOR pathway (discussed in more detail below).

145

146 **3. MTOR**

147 MTOR is a conserved serine/threonine kinase that is part of the phosphoinositide kinase-
148 related family which stimulates anabolic processes in the cell, including lipid and protein
149 synthesis (Laplante and Sabatini 2009a; Wang and Proud 2006). It integrates extracellular and
150 intracellular signals emanating from environmental cues, nutrient availability and cellular
151 energetic status (Liu, et al. 2009; Zhou and Huang 2011). In turn, it regulates cell growth,
152 proliferation, protein synthesis, survival, autophagy, and energy metabolism (Shimobayashi and
153 Hall 2014). MTOR is the catalytic subunit of 2 functionally and structurally distinct multiprotein
154 complexes: **MTORC1** and **MTORC2**. One of the main modulators of **MTORC1** activity is the
155 **PI3K/AKT** pathway (Hay and Sonenberg 2004).

156

157 **3.1. Regulation of MTORC1 activity**

158 Upon activation of the pathway, **AKT** phosphorylates TSC complex subunit 2 (**TSC2**),
159 which heterotrimerise with TSC complex subunit 1 (**TSC1**) and TBC1 domain family member 7
160 (**TBC1D7**) (Zech, et al. 2016) (Figure 1). Phosphorylation of **TSC2** leads to the inhibition of the
161 **TSC** complex. Since the **TSC** is a GTPase Activating Protein (GAP) complex for the Ras
162 homolog, enriched in brain (**RHEB**), the inhibition of **TSC2** results in increased **RHEB:GTP**
163 levels (Long, et al. 2005; Sancak, et al. 2007). GTP-bound **RHEB** activates **MTORC1** (Figure
164 1) (Long et al. 2005; Sancak et al. 2007).

165 In addition to growth factors, hormones and cytokines, which regulate MTOR activity
166 chiefly via **AKT**, the **TSC** integrates other upstream signals to regulate via **MTORC1**. High
167 AMP:ATP and/or ADP:ATP ratios lead to AMP and/or ADP binding to **AMPK** (Figure 1). This
168 leads to its activation, which is further potentiated by serine/threonine kinase 11 (STK11) (Shaw,
169 et al. 2004b). **AMPK** phosphorylates **TSC2**, leading to its activation and the suppression of
170 **MTORC1** signaling (Inoki, et al. 2006). **AMPK** can also be activated by glucose deprivation
171 through an AMP/ATP-independent mechanism (Figure 1), which is triggered by a glucose
172 deprivation-induced decrease in fructose-1,6-bisphosphate levels and mediated by aldolase
173 (Zhang, et al. 2017).

174 Other signal transduction pathways converge on the **TSC** to exert their effects on
175 **MTORC1**. For instance, the **RAS-RAF-MEK-MAPK** signaling pathway, which is activated by
176 growth factors and frequently upregulated in cancer, can phosphorylate **TSC2** directly or
177 indirectly, via ribosomal protein S6 kinase A1 (**RPS6A1**), leading to stimulation of **MTORC1**
178 (Memmott and Dennis 2009; Roux, et al. 2004) (Figure 1). In addition, studies have shown that
179 **DDIT4** (DNA damage inducible transcript 4) downregulates **MTORC1** activity via **TSC2**
180 (Brugarolas, et al. 2004; DeYoung, et al. 2008) (Figure 1). In response to hypoxia, **DDIT4**

181 mediated the dissociation of inhibitory 14–3–3 from the **TSC2** protein so as to inhibit **MTORC1**
182 activity (DeYoung et al. 2008). Overall, **MTORC1** acts as an integrator of major regulatory
183 inputs in the form of hypoxia, nutrients, energetic stress and growth factors, mostly via **TSC**.

184 Another important regulator of **MTORC1** activity, the level of amino acids, is discussed
185 in more detail in section 5.2.

186

187 **3.2. MTORC1 and the regulation of mRNA translation**

188 mRNA translation occurs in 4 sequential steps: initiation, elongation, termination and
189 ribosome recycling (Hershey et al. 2012). It is mainly regulated at the initiation phase which is
190 composed of two rate-limiting steps (Sonenberg and Hinnebusch 2009). This includes (i) the
191 formation of the 43S pre-initiation complex (PIC) and (ii) the assembly of the **EIF4F** complex
192 on the mRNA cap (Sonenberg and Hinnebusch 2009). The initiation phase of mRNA cap-
193 dependent translation involves the assembly of a 43S pre-initiation complex, which comprises
194 the eukaryotic initiation factors (EIFs) EIF1, EIF1A, EIF3 and EIF5, the 40S ribosomal subunit
195 and the ternary complex (TC). Furthermore, the TC comprises the EIF2 (containing alpha-,
196 beta- and gamma-subunits), bound to GTP and tRNA_i^{Met} (Hinnebusch 2014). The **EIF4F**
197 complex contains 3 subunits: **EIF4E** (mRNA cap-binding subunit), **EIF4A** (DEAD box RNA
198 helicase) and **EIF4G** (scaffolding protein) (Figure 2). The 43S PIC binds to the **EIF4F** complex
199 via the interactions between EIF3 of the 43S PIC and EIF4G to create the 48S PIC (Hinnebusch
200 2014). The 43S PIC scans the 5' untranslated region (UTR) for the AUG start codon
201 (Hinnebusch 2014). This is an ATP-dependent process that requires the helicase activity of
202 **EIF4A** to unwind secondary structures present in the 5'UTR of mRNAs (Rogers, et al. 1999).
203 The recognition of the AUG start codon causes release of EIFs (Hinnebusch 2014). In addition,

204 the 60S ribosomal subunit joins the 40S subunit to form the 80S ribosome (Hinnebusch 2014).
205 This process is facilitated by EIF5B-GTP hydrolysis (Hinnebusch 2014). Assembly of the 80S
206 ribosome marks the beginning of mRNA translation elongation.

207 During the elongation phase of mRNA translation, which is mediated by eukaryotic
208 translation elongation factors (EEFs) (Mohr and Sonenberg 2012), the mRNA codons dictate the
209 sequence of specific tRNAs that go through the acylation-peptidyl-exit (APE) sites of ribosomes
210 to form newly synthesized polypeptides (Jan, et al. 2016). EEF1A (a G-protein), when bound to
211 GTP, loads an amino-acyl charged tRNA into the A-site of the ribosome (Mohr and Sonenberg
212 2012). The bound GTP is hydrolyzed when the anticodon of the incoming tRNA is matched
213 against the corresponding mRNA codon (Agirrezabala and Frank 2009). This process results in
214 the formation of a peptide bond (Mohr and Sonenberg 2012). The activity of EEF1A is regulated
215 by EEF1B [a guanine exchange factor (GEF)] (Mohr and Sonenberg 2012). EEF2 facilitates the
216 translocation of the ribosome along the mRNA molecule (Taylor, et al. 2007), leading to the
217 uncharged tRNA molecule moving to the E-site and the freeing of the A-site (Starosta, et al.
218 2014). The hydrolysis of another GTP molecule is required to catalyze the translocation of the
219 ribosome (Stark, et al. 2000). Elongation of the newly synthesized polypeptide continues until a
220 stop codon is encountered on the mRNA molecule. For the termination step of mRNA
221 translation, eukaryotic release factors (eRFs) recognize the stop codons, release the newly
222 synthesized polypeptide and detach the 80S ribosome from the mRNA transcript (Dever and
223 Green 2012). ETF1 (eukaryotic translation termination factor 1) mediates the hydrolysis of
224 peptidyl-tRNA (Alkalaeva, et al. 2006), in cooperation with GSPT1 (eRF3) (Alkalaeva et al.
225 2006). After this step, the mRNA and deacetylated tRNA are released and the ribosome
226 dissociates into its subunits and is recycled (Kiel, et al. 2007).

227 Malignant cells are characterized by their ability to proliferate uncontrollably, which
228 correlates with their increased protein synthesis. The ability of cells to upregulate protein
229 synthesis in response to increased physiological demands is in part mediated at the level of
230 ribosome biogenesis (van Riggelen, et al. 2010). Similar to protein synthesis, ribosome
231 biogenesis is a complex multifactorial process that requires careful coordination and regulation.
232 The role MTOR plays in regulating ribosome biogenesis has been extensively reviewed
233 (Gentilella, et al. 2015).

234 **MTORC1** acts as a regulator of both translation initiation and elongation processes
235 (Hsieh, et al. 2012; Proud 2013; Thoreen, et al. 2012; Wang, et al. 2001). To date, eukaryotic
236 translation initiation factors 4E binding proteins (**EIF4EBP1-3** in mammals) and ribosomal
237 protein S6 kinases (**RPS6KB1** and **RPS6KB2** in mammals) represent the best understood
238 mediators of the effects of MTOR on protein synthesis (Figure 2). **MTORC1** phosphorylates
239 **EIF4EBPs** (at Thr 37/Thr 46, followed by Thr 70 and finally Ser 65 in human **EIF4EBP1**)
240 (Brunn, et al. 1997; Gingras, et al. 2001). Unphosphorylated **EIF4EBPs** sequester **EIF4E** and
241 prevent its association with **EIF4G** (Figure 2). Upon **EIF4EBPs** phosphorylation, **EIF4E** is
242 released to form the active **EIF4F** complex (Sonenberg and Hinnebusch 2009). In addition,
243 MAPK (mitogen-activated protein kinase) interacting serine/threonine kinases (MKNKs)
244 regulate mRNA translation through the phosphorylation of **EIF4E** residue on Ser209
245 (Waskiewicz, et al. 1999). MKNK1 and MKNK2 phosphorylate **EIF4E** following MAPK14 and
246 **MAPK1/3** signaling pathways activation in response to cellular stress and mitogens, respectively
247 (Flynn, et al. 1997; Knauf, et al. 2001; Waskiewicz, et al. 1997). The **EIF4F** complex associates
248 with MKNK1 via the carboxyl terminus of **EIF4G** (Pyronnet, et al. 1999). The phosphorylation
249 of **EIF4E** has been shown to affect EIF4E:mRNA cap association rates (Slepenkov, et al. 2006).

250 This suggests that EIF4E phosphorylation may affect the EIF4F complex assembly and/or
251 binding of EIF4E to the mRNA cap (Scheper, et al. 2002). Indeed, EIF4E phosphorylation
252 increases the oncogenic potential of EIF4E (Topisirovic, et al. 2004; Wendel, et al. 2007) and is
253 required for metastatic spread of the disease by selectively increasing translation of mRNAs
254 encoding pro-survival (MCL1), pro-metastatic proteins [e.g. SNAIL (snail family transcriptional
255 repressor 1), MMPs (matrix metalloproteinases)] and cytokines (Furic, et al. 2010; Robichaud, et
256 al. 2015). Overall, **EIF4F** assembly is required for recruiting mRNAs to the ribosome, which an
257 essential step in initiating cap-dependent mRNA translation (Gingras, et al. 1999; Pause, et al.
258 1994).

259 **MTORC1** also controls protein synthesis through the phosphorylation and activation of
260 **RPS6KBs** (Roux and Topisirovic 2012). Activated **RPS6KBs** phosphorylate ribosomal protein
261 S6 (**RPS6**; a component of the 40S ribosomal subunit) (Banerjee, et al. 1990), **EIF4B** (an
262 auxiliary factor which stimulates **EIF4A** helicase) (Raught, et al. 2004), and programmed cell
263 death 4 (**PDCD4**; a negative regulator of the **EIF4A** function) (Chauvin, et al. 2014; Dorrello, et
264 al. 2006; Holz, et al. 2005) (Figure 2). Consequently, **RPS6KBs** indirectly increase **EIF4A**
265 function in two ways: by activating its binding partner **EIF4B** and by phosphorylating and
266 targeting for degradation its negative regulator **PDCD4**, to release it from the **PDCD4-EIF4A**
267 complex (Dennis, et al. 2012; Dorrello et al. 2006). In addition to mediating the effects of
268 **MTORC1** on translation initiation, **RPS6KBs** influence translation elongation. **RPS6KBs**
269 phosphorylate and inactivate eukaryotic elongation factor 2 kinase (**EEF2K**), thereby preventing
270 the phosphorylation and repression of its target **EEF2** on the Thr56 residue. This facilitates
271 translation elongation (Carlberg, et al. 1990; Wang et al. 2001). **EEF2K** can also be directly
272 phosphorylated by MTOR and **AMPK** (Browne, et al. 2004; Browne and Proud 2004). mRNA

273 translation-related processes which are regulated by different signaling pathways have been
274 recently reviewed [in (Roux and Topisirovic 2018)].

275

276 Although the activation of **MTORC1** correlates with increased global protein synthesis,
277 it also leads to qualitative perturbations of the translome (Meyuhas and Drazzen 2009).
278 **MTORC1** preferentially enhances the translation of a subset of mRNAs bearing a series of 4-14
279 pyrimidines following the C nucleotide found immediately after the 5' mRNA cap structure
280 (Meyuhas and Drazzen 2009). This motif is referred to as the 5' terminal oligopyrimidine (5'
281 TOP) motif. The vast majority of TOP mRNAs encode components of the translational
282 machinery such as ribosomal proteins, **EEF2** and poly (A)-binding proteins (PABPs), and their
283 translation is dramatically suppressed by MTOR inhibitors (Hsieh et al. 2012; Meyuhas and
284 Drazzen 2009). Initially, it was proposed that the **RPS6KBs/RPS6** axis mediated the
285 regulatory effects of MTOR on the translation of TOP mRNAs (Jefferies, et al. 1997;
286 Jefferies, et al. 1994). Subsequently, it was however found that there was no difference in the
287 translation of TOP mRNAs when cells deficient in **RPS6KBs** and expressing non-
288 phosphorylatable **RPS6** (i.e. **RPS6** knock-in) were compared to wild type cells (Pende, et al.
289 2004; Ruvinsky, et al. 2005). In addition, although **EIF4EBPs** have been implicated in
290 regulation of TOP mRNA translation (Thoreen et al. 2012), it has been shown that this is
291 likely not the case in response to physiological stimuli (Miloslavski, et al. 2014). Several
292 additional factors recently emerged as potential mediators of **MTORC1** signaling on the
293 translation of TOP mRNA transcripts, such as La ribonucleoprotein domain family member 1
294 (LARP1) and TIA1/TIAL1 (Fonseca, et al. 2015; Hong, et al. 2017; Philippe, et al. 2018;

295 Tcherkezian, et al. 2014). Furthermore, the context in which translation takes place is known
296 to affect the translation of TOP mRNAs.

297 In addition to TOP mRNAs, other subsets of mRNAs have been shown to be affected by
298 changes in MTOR activity (Gandin, et al. 2016; Larsson, et al. 2012). These mRNAs, commonly
299 referred to as “EIF4E-sensitive”, are highly dependent on **EIF4E** levels and/or availability. They
300 mostly have long and highly structured, G/C-rich 5’ UTRs and have a high requirement for the
301 helicase activity of **EIF4A**, activity that is potentiated when **EIF4A** is present in the **EIF4F**
302 complex (Koromilas, et al. 1992; Silvera, et al. 2010; Svitkin, et al. 2001) (Figure 2). Some of
303 these mRNAs encode cell cycle regulators such as cyclins (cyclin D1), pro-survival proteins
304 [**BCL2**, **MCL1**, **BCL2L1** (**BCL2** like 1) and **BIRC5**], oncogenes (**MYC**, **PIM1**) and other
305 proteins critical to cell proliferation [ornithine decarboxylase 1(**ODC1**)] (De Benedetti and Graff
306 2004; Mamane, et al. 2004; Martelli, et al. 2012; Martelli, et al. 2011). The translational
307 regulation of these mRNAs is EIF4EBP-dependent, underlying the major role of **EIF4EBPs** in
308 mediating the effects of MTOR on cell proliferation (Dowling, et al. 2010).

309 A subset of “EIF4E-sensitive” mRNAs harbors very short 5’UTRs, which are enriched in
310 TISU elements (Translation Initiator of Short 5’ UTR; SAASATGGCGGC, in which S is C or
311 G) (Elfakess, et al. 2011). Many of the “EIF4E-sensitive” genes with very short 5’UTR encode
312 proteins involved in mitochondrial activity and biogenesis (discussed in more detail below)
313 (Morita, et al. 2013) (Figure 2) and are less dependent on **EIF4A** activity (Gandin et al. 2016).
314 This differentiates them from mRNAs with long 5’ UTRs, encoding pro-proliferative and pro-
315 survival proteins, which are both EIF4E- and EIF4A-sensitive (Gandin et al. 2016). As a
316 consequence, the changes in the translational program induced by the inhibition of **EIF4A** differ

317 from those induced by **EIF4E** inhibition and lead to a different metabolic and cell fate effect,
318 which will be described in more detail in the following sections (section 7) (Gandin et al. 2016).

319

320 **3.3. MTOR (MTORC1): master metabolic hub**

321 Malignant cells are characterized by uncontrolled cell proliferation and growth, which are
322 made possible in part through translational and metabolic rewiring (Hanahan and Weinberg
323 2011). In response to nutrients (glucose and amino acids), energetic requirements and growth
324 factors (Dibble, et al. 2012; Efeyan, et al. 2013; Gwinn, et al. 2008; Inoki, et al. 2003; Zoncu, et
325 al. 2011), **MTORC1** regulates different metabolic processes, such as the biosynthesis of
326 proteins, lipids and nucleotides, and autophagy (Ben-Sahra, et al. 2013; Duvel, et al. 2010; Holz
327 et al. 2005; Kim, et al. 2011).

328

329 **3.3.1. MTOR regulates glucose and glutamine metabolism**

330 **MTORC1** stimulates glycolysis in part through the translational regulation of
331 transcription factors such as **MYC** and hypoxia inducible factor 1A (**HIF1A**) (Duvel et al. 2010;
332 Gordan, et al. 2007). In some cell types, **MTORC1** regulates **HIF1A** translationally via
333 **EIF4EBP1** and **RPS6KB1** (Dodd, et al. 2015) (Figure 2). **MTORC1** also enhances the
334 transcription of *HIF1A* mRNA by phosphorylating **STAT3** (signal transducer and activator of
335 transcription 3), which leads to **HIF1A** protein accumulation during hypoxia (Dodd et al. 2015).

336 **HIF1A** stimulates glucose flux and glycolysis through the activation of SLC2A1 (solute
337 carrier family 2 member 1) transporter and of glycolytic proteins such as hexokinase, pyruvate
338 kinase and phosphofructokinase (Keith, et al. 2011; Semenza 2000; Wenger 2000). **MYC** has
339 also been shown to upregulate the transcription of genes involved in glucose metabolism

340 (Gordan et al. 2007; Stine, et al. 2015). In fact, various proteins involved in glucose metabolism,
341 such as lactate dehydrogenase (LDHA), phosphofructokinase, glucose transporter SLC2A1,
342 hexokinase and PKM2 (pyruvate kinase M2) are both **MYC** and **HIF1A** targets (Kim, et al.
343 2007; Osthus, et al. 2000; Shim, et al. 1997).

344 Glutamine is one of the most readily available nonessential amino acids used by
345 malignant cells. It serves as an important source of energy, carbon and nitrogen for various
346 anabolic reactions (Reitzer, et al. 1979; Wise, et al. 2008). Glutamine is the main contributor to
347 the TCA cycle anaplerosis (replenishment of TCA cycle intermediates) (DeBerardinis, et al.
348 2007), whereby TCA intermediates are used for lipid, nucleotide and amino acid synthesis (Wise
349 and Thompson 2010). Activated **MTORC1** stimulates glutaminolysis, whereby glutamine is
350 converted to glutamate by glutaminase (**GLS**) (Figure 2) (Csibi, et al. 2013). α -ketoglutarate,
351 which is produced from glutamate by glutamate dehydrogenase (**GLUD1**), feeds into the TCA
352 cycle (Csibi et al. 2013). One of the mechanisms by which **MTORC1** promotes glutamine TCA
353 anaplerosis is by indirectly inducing the transcriptional repression of **SIRT4** (sirtuin 4), an
354 inhibitor of **GLUD1** activity, leading to **GLUD1** activation (Csibi et al. 2013). This is achieved
355 by MTORC1-mediated degradation of **ATF2** (activating transcription factor 2), which is a
356 transcription factor for **SIRT4** (Csibi et al. 2013) (Figure 2). Another mechanism by which
357 **MTORC1** activates TCA anaplerosis and affects glutamine metabolism is by positively
358 regulating **GLS** levels through RPS6KB1-dependent regulation of **MYC** (Csibi, et al. 2014).
359 **RPS6KB1** modulates the phosphorylation of **EIF4B**, which is necessary to the unwinding of the
360 structured 5'UTR of **MYC** by **EIF4A** (Csibi et al. 2014) (Figure 2).

361 In conclusion, **MTORC1** modulates the uptake and/or metabolism of glucose and
362 glutamine, the two main nutrients fueling cancer cells, through multiple mechanisms and layers
363 of regulation.

364

365

366

367 **3.3.2. MTORC1 in regulating amino acids homeostasis**

368 Amino acids are not only required for protein synthesis but also serve as substrates for a
369 variety of metabolic pathways and are major regulators of **MTORC1** activity (Saxton and
370 Sabatini 2017). In mammals, heterodimeric **RRAG** (Ras related GTP binding) GTPases regulate
371 **MTORC1** signaling in response to amino acid levels (Figure 1) (Kim, et al. 2008; Sancak, et al.
372 2008). **RRAGs** form heterodimers of **RRAGA** or **RRAGB** in combination with **RRAGC** or
373 **RRAGD**, respectively (Kim et al. 2008; Sancak et al. 2008). **RRAG** heterodimers associate with
374 lysosomal membrane through their interaction with the Ragulator complex. The Ragulator
375 complex, also known as **LAMTOR** (late endosomal/lysosomal adaptor, MAPK and MTOR
376 activator), is comprised of CDKN2C (cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor 2C), CDKN2A (cyclin-
377 dependent kinase inhibitor 2A), LAMTOR3, LAMTOR4 and LAMTOR5 (Sancak, et al. 2010).
378 **LAMTOR** acts as a GEF towards **RRAGs** (Bar-Peled, et al. 2012; Sancak et al. 2010). The
379 presence of amino acids stimulates **RRAG** heterodimers whereby **RRAGC/D** and **RRAGA/B**
380 are GDP- and GTP-bound, respectively (Sancak et al. 2008) (Figure 1). Active **RRAG**
381 heterodimers recruit **MTORC1** to the lysosomal surface via the interaction between the **RRAGs**
382 and the **MTORC1** subunit RPTOR (regulatory associated protein of MTOR complex 1), where
383 **MTORC1** becomes activated by **RHEB** (Bar-Peled et al. 2012). More recently the mechanistic

384 insights in the complexity of the control of **MTORC1** activity by amino acids have been
385 unraveled. For instance, the lysosomal v-ATPase interacts and stimulates the GEF activity of the
386 **LAMTOR** complex in response to amino acids (Zoncu et al. 2011). Lysosomal amino acid
387 transporter SLC38A9 has been implicated in interacting with the **RRAG-LAMTOR-v-ATPase**
388 complex, which is necessary for arginine-dependent activation of **MTORC1** (Jung, et al. 2015).
389 In addition, GATOR1 and GATOR2 complexes have been identified as regulators of **MTORC1**
390 signaling through their interaction with the **RRAGs** (Bar-Peled, et al. 2013). The GATOR1
391 complex, which is composed of DEPDC5 (DEP domain containing 5), NPRL2 (NPR2 like), and
392 NPRL3 (NPR3 like), is a negative regulator of **MTORC1** (Bar-Peled et al. 2013). It acts as a
393 GAP for **RRAGA/B** (Bar-Peled et al. 2013). GATOR2 complex is composed of MIOS (meiosis
394 regulator for oocyte development), WDR24 (WD repeat domain 24), WDR59, SEH1L (SEH1
395 like nucleoporin), and SEC13 and is a positive regulator of **MTORC1** signaling (Bar-Peled et al.
396 2013). A newly identified complex called KICSTOR, which is composed of KPTN (kaptin, actin
397 binding protein), ITFG2 (integrin alpha FG-GAP repeat containing 2), C12orf66 (chromosome
398 12 open reading frame 66), and SZT2 has been shown to interact with GATOR1 on the
399 lysosomal surface (Wolfson, et al. 2017). The complex is important for sensing amino acid or
400 glucose deprivation (Wolfson et al. 2017). In addition, Cellular Arginine Sensor for **MTORC1**
401 (CASTOR1) has been shown to interact with GATOR2 and is necessary for arginine
402 deprivation-induced downregulation of **MTORC1** (Chantranupong, et al. 2016). It is only
403 recently that these different amino acids sensors were discovered and found to modulate the
404 activities of **MTORC1**, opening the possibility for the existence of more amino acid sensors that
405 may modulate **MTORC1** via **RRAGs**.

406 In addition to being regulated by amino acid availability, **MTORC1** is also involved in
407 stimulating the synthesis of non-essential amino acids. Indirectly, MTOR regulates the synthesis
408 of nonessential amino acids by stimulating glycolysis, TCA cycle and pentose phosphate
409 pathways (Duvel et al. 2010; Yecies and Manning 2011), which provide key metabolites
410 necessary for amino acids synthesis (Duvel et al. 2010; Yecies and Manning 2011) and
411 regulating the translation of mRNAs encoding key enzymes involved in the synthesis of non-
412 essential amino acids (Hulea *et al.*, Cell Metabolism, in press; bioRxiv 160879; doi:
413 <https://doi.org/10.1101/160879>) .

414 Rapamycin, an allosteric inhibitor of **MTORC1**, causes acute **MTORC1** inhibition by
415 binding to FK506-binding protein (FKBP) which interacts with MTOR and narrows its active
416 site cleft (Harding, et al. 1989; Siekierka, et al. 1989; Yang, et al. 2013) . Rapamycin can also
417 lead to **MTORC2** inhibition after prolonged treatment, in certain cell lines and hepatocytes *in*
418 *vivo* (Lamming, et al. 2012; Sarbassov, et al. 2006). Rapamycin has been shown to increase the
419 expression of argininosuccinate synthase 1 (ASS1), which stimulates synthesis of arginine (Peng,
420 et al. 2002). Via **MYC**, **MTORC1** indirectly regulates serine hydroxymethyltransferase 2
421 (SHMT2), involved in glycine synthesis (Nikiforov, et al. 2002). Rapamycin-mediated MTOR
422 inhibition also leads to a decrease in the levels of asparagine, which is linked to a decrease in
423 expression of asparagine synthetase (ASNS) (Peng et al. 2002). Interestingly, it was proposed
424 that asparagine functions as an amino acid exchange factor, regulating the uptake of amino acids
425 (in particular serine, arginine and histidine) (Krall, et al. 2016) and thus stimulating **MTORC1**
426 activity.

427 These findings add to the increasing amount of evidence highlighting the complexity of
428 regulatory mechanisms whereby **MTORC1** senses amino acids and regulates their utilization
429 and synthesis.

430

431 **3.3.3. MTOR stimulates lipid synthesis**

432 Rapidly dividing malignant cells require increased synthesis of lipids, which are the main
433 components of plasma and organelle membranes (Menendez and Lupu 2007). **MTORC1**
434 regulates *de novo* lipid synthesis by relaying mitogenic and oncogenic signals to downstream
435 effectors that are important for lipogenesis. Lipid biosynthesis is regulated by the sterol
436 responsive element binding proteins (**SREBP1a**, **1c** and **2**), which are activated by low sterol
437 levels. **SREBPs** are transcription factors that regulate the expression of genes involved in the
438 biosynthesis of fatty acids and sterols (Horton, et al. 2002). **MTORC1** activates **SREBPs** in a
439 RPS6KB-dependent manner (Duvel et al. 2010; Li, et al. 2016; Porstmann, et al. 2008) (Figure
440 2). Consistently, rapamycin downregulates the expression of **SREBP** gene targets including
441 *ACLY*, *ACACA* (acetyl CoA carboxylase alpha) and *FASN* (fatty acid synthase (Brown, et al.
442 2007; Porstmann et al. 2008). **MTORC2** inhibition has been shown to reduce the activity of
443 **SREBP1** and the expression of its target genes, such as *ACACA* and *FASN*, which suppresses
444 lipogenesis (Li et al. 2016). The phosphatidic acid phosphatase **LPIN1** has also been implicated
445 in the regulation of lipid metabolism by **MTORC1**. In addition to its role in triglyceride
446 synthesis, by converting phosphatidic acid to diacylglycerol, **LPIN1** is a regulator of **SREBP1**
447 activity (Peterson, et al. 2011). **MTORC1** phosphorylates **LPIN1**, which prevents its
448 translocation to the nucleus and thereby prevents the **LPIN1**-dependent suppression of **SREBP**
449 activity (Peterson et al. 2011) (Figure 2). Finally, **MTOR** can activate **SREBP1** by

450 phosphorylating CREB regulated transcription coactivator 2 (CRTC2) (Han, et al. 2015),
451 which attenuates CRTC2 inhibitory effects on the processing of **SREBP1** (Han et al. 2015).

452 In addition to **SREBPs**, **MTORC1** influences lipid metabolism by upregulating the
453 activity of peroxisome proliferator activated receptor gamma (**PPARG**) (Kim and Chen 2004)
454 (Figure 2). Hyperactivation of the **MTORC1** pathway stimulates PPARG-dependent
455 adipogenesis (Zhang, et al. 2009), whilst rapamycin leads to the reduction of both mRNA and
456 protein levels of **PPARG** and the inhibition of adipogenesis (Cho, et al. 2004; Kim and Chen
457 2004). There is evidence showing that **MTORC1** mediates its effects on the regulation of
458 **PPARG** via **EIF4EBPs** and **RPS6KB1** (Le Bacquer, et al. 2007; Um, et al. 2004). Disruption of
459 **EIF4EBP1** and **EIF4EBP2** in mice led to increased sensitivity to diet-induced obesity driven by
460 increased expression of CCAAT/enhancer-binding proteins (CEBPD, CEBPA) and **PPARG** (Le
461 Bacquer et al. 2007). This was associated with reduced energy expenditure, reduced lipolysis,
462 and greater fatty acid re-esterification in the adipose tissue (Le Bacquer et al. 2007).
463 Furthermore, resistance to insulin in **EIF4EBP1** and **EIF4EBP2** double knockout mice was
464 associated with increased **RPS6KB** activity, which impaired **AKT** signaling in muscle, liver, and
465 adipose tissue. **LPIN1** also plays a role in the regulation of **PPARG**, acting as its transcriptional
466 coactivator (Koh, et al. 2008) (Figure 2). On the basis of these findings, **MTORC1** regulates
467 lipid synthesis chiefly by perturbing activity of **SREBPs** and **PPARG**.

468

469 **3.3.4. MTOR and the regulation of PPP and nucleotide synthesis**

470 Pentose phosphate pathway (PPP) is required to generate ribose 5-phosphate from
471 glucose and regenerate NADPH via its oxidative arm (Dickens and Williamson 1956; Glaser
472 and Brown 1955; Horecker, et al. 1951). NADPH is an important reducing equivalent

473 necessary to fuel various metabolic reactions including lipid biosynthesis and plays an
474 important role in protection from oxidative damage (Oudejans, et al. 1983; Winkler, et al.
475 1986). Ribose 5-phosphate, which is converted to 5'-phosphoribosyl-1'-pyrophosphate, is an
476 essential precursor for nucleotide synthesis (Hove-Jensen 1989). **MTORC1** has been shown to
477 regulate expression of PPP genes partly through **SREBPs** (Figure 2) (Duvel et al. 2010),
478 whilst **PI3K** inhibition has been shown to inhibit the PPP (Wang, et al. 2009).

479 The **MTORC1/RPS6KB1** signaling axis stimulates *de novo* pyrimidine synthesis via
480 the phosphorylation of glutamine-dependent carbamoyl-phosphate synthetase 2, aspartate
481 transcarbamylase, and dihydroorotase (**CAD**) (Ben-Sahra et al. 2013; Robitaille, et al. 2013)
482 (Figure 2). This enzyme mediates the formation of the pyrimidine ring (Ben-Sahra et al. 2013;
483 Robitaille et al. 2013). In addition, **MTORC1** transcriptionally regulates multiple enzymes
484 involved in purine synthesis via the ATF4-dependent expression of methylenetetrahydrofolate
485 dehydrogenase 2 (**MTHFD2**) (Ben-Sahra, et al. 2016) (Figure 2). **MTHFD2** is an essential
486 enzyme for the mitochondrial tetrahydrofolate cycle, which provides one-carbon units for
487 purine synthesis (Shuvalov, et al. 2017). Finally, in MYC-transformed cells, phosphoribosyl
488 pyrophosphate synthetase 2 (**PRPS2**) mRNA is translationally regulated in a EIF4E-dependent
489 manner, leading to increased nucleotide biosynthesis (Cunningham, et al. 2014).

490 By regulating nucleotide synthesis, **MTORC1** provides the building blocks for RNA
491 and DNA synthesis, needed for ribosome biogenesis, cellular growth and proliferation.

492

493 **3.3.5. The role of MTOR in the regulation of mitochondrial biogenesis and**
494 **activity**

495 Considering that mRNA translation is a highly energy consuming cellular process, it is
496 closely coordinated with cellular energy production (Topisirovic and Sonenberg 2011). To this
497 end, malignant cells must meet the heightened energy requirement caused by elevated energy
498 consumption by the protein synthesis apparatus (Ruggero 2013; Ward and Thompson 2012). It
499 has been reported that **MTORC1** activity is positively correlated with ATP production (Morita
500 et al. 2013). Rapamycin reduces oxygen consumption and ATP synthetic capacity (Schieke, et al.
501 2006). **MTORC1** regulates energy production in the mitochondria in a EIF4EBP1-dependent
502 manner, by regulating the translation of nuclear-encoded mitochondria-related mRNAs such as
503 components of complex I and V, mitochondrial ribosomal proteins and transcription factor a,
504 mitochondrial (TFAM) (Figure 2) (Morita et al. 2013). The vast majority of these proteins are
505 encoded by mRNAs harboring short 5'UTR/TISU elements (Gandin et al. 2016), and their
506 translation is EIF4E-sensitive, but not affected by **EIF4A** inhibition, as previously discussed
507 (Roux et al. 2004) (Figure 2). Finally, the **MTORC1/ EIF4EBP** axis has been shown to regulate
508 mitochondrial dynamics by modulating translation of mitochondrial fission process 1 (MTFP1)
509 (Morita, et al. 2017).

510 In addition to translational regulation, **MTORC1** regulates the transcription of
511 mitochondrial genes via PPARG coactivator 1 alpha (**PPARGC1A**) (Figure 2) (Cunningham, et
512 al. 2007). The inhibition of **MTORC1** by rapamycin decreased the expression of mitochondrial
513 transcriptional regulators **PPARGC1A**, estrogen related receptor A (ESRRA) and nuclear
514 respiratory factors (NRF), which resulted in reduced mitochondrial gene expression and
515 oxygen consumption (Cunningham et al. 2007). Further analysis identified the transcription
516 factor Yin-Yang 1(**YY1**) as the common target of MTOR and **PPARGC1A** that is required
517 for rapamycin-dependent repression of those genes (Figure 2) (Cunningham et al. 2007).

518 Future work is required to establish the coordination of MTORC1-dependent translational and
519 transcriptional programs that govern mitochondrial biogenesis and functions. **MTORC2** was
520 also shown to be important for maintaining mitochondria associated ER membrane integrity
521 (Betz, et al. 2013). **MTORC2** deficiency causes increases in mitochondrial membrane potential,
522 ATP production and calcium uptake (Betz et al. 2013).

523

524 **3.3.6. Nuclear activity of MTOR**

525 In addition to the previously discussed roles of MTOR in regulating translation, it has
526 emerged that MTOR can directly influence the transcription of metabolic genes of prostate
527 cancer cells via its interaction with androgen receptor in the nucleus (Audet-Walsh, et al. 2017).
528 Interestingly, in castration-resistant prostate cancer cells, MTOR transcriptional activity and
529 modulation of metabolic programs occurred even in the absence of androgens (Audet-Walsh et
530 al. 2017). These results bring forward the importance of nuclear MTOR and the need for
531 additional work to uncover its role in this cellular compartment.

532

533 **3.3.7. Role of MTORC2 in metabolic regulation**

534 **MTORC2** is known to regulate cell survival, metabolism, cytoskeletal organization and
535 cell migration (Oh and Jacinto 2011; Populo, et al. 2012; Soukas, et al. 2009). **MTORC2** also
536 regulates metabolic processes such as glycolysis, glutaminolysis, lipogenesis and nucleotide
537 metabolism (Masui, et al. 2014). Abrogation of **MTORC2** in the liver impaired glycolysis and
538 lipogenesis and led to constitutive gluconeogenesis (Hagiwara, et al. 2012). Consequentially, this
539 led to systemic hyperglycemia, hyperinsulinemia, and hypolipidemia (Hagiwara et al. 2012). In
540 addition, **MTORC2** in adipose tissue appears to systemically affect whole-body growth

541 (Cybulski, et al. 2009). **MTORC2** has been shown to regulate glycolysis and glutaminolysis
542 indirectly by regulating **MYC** levels through FOXO1 and FOXO3 acetylation (Masui, et al.
543 2013). However, compared to **MTORC1**, the role of **MTORC2** in metabolic regulation is
544 largely understudied.

545

546 **4. Therapeutic implications of the cross-talk between translome and metabolome**

547 The hypothesis that drugs can exploit cancer specific metabolic vulnerabilities (Vander
548 Heiden et al. 2009) is attractive. Since protein synthesis, which is the most energy consuming
549 process in the cell, is also dysregulated in cancer, targeting the translational machinery has also
550 been considered to increase the efficacy of anti-cancer treatments (Hagner, et al. 2010).

551 Since **MTORC1** acts as a pivotal regulator of major metabolic pathways and protein
552 synthesis, targeting **MTORC1** represents an appealing strategy to simultaneously target
553 translational apparatus and cancer energetics. By inhibiting **MTORC1**, rapamycin induces
554 changes in cellular metabolism, including decrease in mitochondrial activity, amino acid
555 biosynthesis, pentose phosphate pathway, and sterol and lipid biosynthesis (Cunningham et al.
556 2007; Duvel et al. 2010; Peng et al. 2002; Ramanathan and Schreiber 2009; Schieke et al. 2006).
557 At the organismal level, rapamycin treatment result in hyperglycemia, hyperlipidemia, a decrease
558 in glucose-stimulated insulin synthesis and secretion, and weight loss (Fraenkel, et al. 2008).
559 Overall, rapamycin suppresses key metabolic processes by inhibiting **MTORC1**.

560 Rapamycin and its analogues (rapalogs; Figure 1) are FDA approved for the treatment of
561 renal cell carcinomas, mantle cell lymphomas and pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours (Li, et al.
562 2014a). However, the efficacy in the clinic is not as good as initially hoped (Fasolo and Sessa
563 2008). This can be justified in part by the activation of **AKT** via the suppression of the

564 **RPS6KB1-IRS1-PI3K-AKT** regulatory feedback, as well as by rapamycin's inability of to
565 inhibit certain **MTORC1** outputs including phosphorylation of **EIF4EBPs** (Dowling et al. 2010;
566 Faes, et al. 2017). To this end, more efficient means to target MTOR were developed, including
567 active site MTOR inhibitors (asTORi), which target ATP binding pocket of MTOR, and third-
568 generation MTOR inhibitors (RapaLink-1), which combine allosteric and active site inhibition
569 (Benjamin, et al. 2011; Rodrik-Outmezguine, et al. 2016; Roux and Topisirovic 2012) (Figure 1).
570 The new generation of MTOR inhibitors efficiently suppress **EIF4EBP** phosphorylation and
571 reduce **AKT** signaling via inhibition of **MTORC2** (Benjamin et al. 2011). These inhibitors are
572 presently under investigation in clinical trials and are expected to exhibit enhanced efficacy in
573 the clinic as compared to rapalogs.

574 In addition to MTOR inhibitors, the vast majority of oncogenic kinase inhibitors
575 indirectly suppress **MTORC1** and are thus positioned to alter the crosstalk between translational
576 machinery and energy metabolism in neoplasia. Lapatinib is a dual receptor tyrosine kinase
577 inhibitor (TKI) (Figure 1) of epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) and human epidermal
578 growth factor receptor 2 (HER2), which is used for treating HER2-positive breast cancer
579 (Geyer, et al. 2006). Lapatinib inhibits the **RAS-RAF-MEK-MAPK** and **MTORC1** signaling
580 pathways (Brady, et al. 2015). Furthermore, lapatinib inhibits glycolysis and reduces
581 mitochondrial membrane potential (Paech, et al. 2017). Vemurafenib is a **BRAF V600E**
582 serine/threonine kinase inhibitor used in the treatment of advanced melanoma (Young, et al.
583 2012). It downregulates the **RAS-RAF-MEK-MAPK** and **MTORC1** signaling pathways (Zhan,
584 et al. 2015) (Figure 1). Similar to lapatinib, vemurafenib inhibits glycolysis in melanoma cells
585 (Delgado-Goni, et al. 2016). Furthermore, vemurafenib increases oxidative and anaplerotic
586 pyruvate carboxylase (**PC**) mitochondrial metabolism and decreases lipid synthesis (Delgado-

587 Goni et al. 2016). Imatinib is another TKI that suppresses abnormal activation of the
588 **PI3K/AKT/MTORC1** pathway downstream of a constitutively active BCR/ABL kinase present
589 in chronic myelogenous leukemia (Hirao, et al. 2018). Consistent with most kinase inhibitors
590 (KI), imatinib also inhibits glucose uptake and glycolysis (Boren, et al. 2001; Gottschalk, et al.
591 2004). Moreover, its ability to alter metabolic enzyme activities involved in fatty acid and *de*
592 *novo* nucleic acid synthesis demonstrates the mechanism by which it inhibits leukemia cell
593 growth (Boren et al. 2001).

594 While kinase inhibitors suppress MTOR signaling, their inability to impede **EIF4F**
595 complex assembly dramatically reduces their anti-neoplastic efficacy. For example, in
596 BRAF(V600)-mutated melanoma, resistance to anti-BRAF and anti-MEK therapies, can be
597 overturned by altering **EIF4F** complex activity by using **EIF4A** inhibitors (Boussemart, et al.
598 2014). In a model of mammary epithelial cells, resistance to PI3K/MTOR inhibitor BEZ235 was
599 induced by either **MYC** or **EIF4E** amplification (Ilic, et al. 2011). Resistant cells showed
600 elevated 5' cap-dependent protein translation, supporting the importance of **EIF4F** activity in
601 development of resistance to KI (Ilic et al. 2011). In breast cancer xenografts, over-expressing
602 **EIF4E** induces resistance to HER2 and EGFR inhibitors including lapatinib (Zindy, et al. 2011).
603 Similarly, high **EIF4F** and cap-dependent translation levels occur in non-small cell lung cancer
604 cells resistant to EGFR inhibitor erlotinib (Patel, et al. 2013). More generally, a high
605 **EIF4E/EIF4EBP** ratio was shown to dramatically decrease the efficacy of MTOR inhibitors
606 across multiple cancer cell lines and *in vivo* (Alain, et al. 2012a; Alain, et al. 2012b). Overall,
607 these findings underscore the role of translation machinery in determining the efficacy of MTOR
608 targeted therapies and suggest that the inability of such approaches to suppress mRNA
609 translation may facilitate metabolic adaptations of cancer cells to KIs.

610 Combinations of kinase inhibitors that impinge on **EIF4F** (e.g. MTOR inhibitors) with
611 oncogenic kinase inhibitors (e.g. TKIs) have been explored. The BOLERO-3 clinical trial has
612 tested a combination of everolimus, a rapalog, and trastuzumab, which targets the HER2 receptor
613 (Andre, et al. 2014). Based on the initial results of the BOLOERO-3 trial, it appears that such
614 combination represents a promising therapeutic strategy to target patients with advanced HER2+
615 breast cancer developing resistance to conventional therapy (Andre et al. 2014). However, in a
616 subset of patients, high **EIF4E/EIF4EBP** ratio may result in resistance to
617 trastuzumab/everolimus combinations (Alain et al. 2012a). Notably, alternative possibilities of
618 targeting the translation machinery have been developed (e.g. **EIF4A** inhibitors). These therapies
619 target directly the formation of the **EIF4F** complex and could provide good candidates for
620 combination with kinase inhibitors to manage resistance. They are discussed in more detail in the
621 next section.

622

623 **5. Cancer metabolism and therapeutic implications**

624 Although metabolic reprogramming in cancer is thought to provide sufficient therapeutic
625 window to selectively target malignant cells, while not causing excessive toxicity in normal
626 tissues, changes in metabolic and associated translational programs are also linked to the
627 development of drug resistance (Deblois, et al. 2016; Han et al. 2015; Zhao, et al. 2010). For
628 example, sustained MTOR activation observed in SKBr3 lapatinib-resistant cells, leads to
629 dysregulated expression of ESSRA, which mediates lapatinib resistance through increased
630 glutamine metabolism and ROS detoxification (Deblois et al. 2016). Moreover, ESRRA
631 mediates the intrinsic resistance of breast cancer cells to PI3K/MTOR inhibitors (Park, et al.
632 2016). ESRRA regulates the expression of genes that allow utilization of lactate as an energy

633 source, which enables breast cancer cells to adapt to extended periods of glucose deprivation
634 (Park et al. 2016). Vemurafenib-resistant cells have been shown to reactivate their MAPK
635 signaling pathway and/or to have high MTOR and **EIF4F** activity (Boussemart et al. 2014;
636 Poulidakos, et al. 2011). These cells also uptake glutamine at a faster rate compared to non-
637 resistant cells (Hernandez-Davies, et al. 2015). In addition, vemurafenib resistance induces an
638 oxidative phosphorylation gene program, mitochondrial biogenesis, and increase expression of
639 **PPARGC1A** (Han et al. 2015). Imatinib-resistant chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML) cells
640 have been shown to have increased glycolytic rate and HIF1A-dependent activation of the non-
641 oxidative PPP transketolase enzyme (Zhao et al. 2010). Hence, metabolic reprogramming at least
642 in part mediates the resistance of malignant cells to kinase inhibitors, which is further
643 exacerbated by the seemingly outstandingly plasticity of malignant metabolomes.

644 Strategies to overcome metabolic adaptations of cancer cells to kinase inhibitors,
645 whereby combinatory drugs are used to disrupt metabolic reprogramming processes which
646 underpin development of resistance, are being developed. For example, the inhibition of ESRRA
647 with compound C29, used in combination with lapatinib, may be effective in treating
648 lapatinib-resistant cells (Deblois et al. 2016). This is because C29 impedes the ESRRA-
649 mediated glutamine addiction that results from lapatinib treatment (Deblois et al. 2016).
650 Metformin is a biguanide drug which is commonly used for treatment of type 2 diabetes
651 (Pollak 2010). Biguanides (Figure 1) induce energetic stress by reducing oxidative
652 phosphorylation through the partial inhibition of complex I of the mitochondrial respiratory
653 chain (Andrzejewski, et al. 2014; Bridges, et al. 2014; Wheaton, et al. 2014). This leads to
654 increased glucose uptake and elevated dependence on glycolysis (Javeshghani, et al. 2012).
655 Hence, there is a rationale for combining BRAF inhibitors (BRAFi), which suppress glycolysis,

656 and biguanides (Zhao et al. 2010). Indeed, phenformin -a more potent inhibitor of mitochondrial
657 complex I- and BRAF inhibitors exhibits synergistic anti-tumorigenic effects in melanoma
658 (Bridges et al. 2014; Yuan, et al. 2013). Furthermore, BRAFi resistant melanoma cells have an
659 increased reliance on glutaminolysis, as they were shown to be more sensitive to glutamine
660 starvation and glutaminase inhibitors compared to BRAFi-sensitive cells (Baenke, et al. 2016;
661 Hernandez-Davies et al. 2015). These examples suggest that using drug combinations that alter
662 metabolic adaptations which underlie resistance to KIs may constitute an effective therapeutic
663 strategy.

664 Consistently, combination of phenformin with various kinase inhibitors (lapatinib,
665 vemurafenib, imatinib) results in synergistic anti-proliferative effects, which are paralleled by
666 **MTORC1** inhibition, disruption of the **EIF4F** complex and the downregulation of the
667 translational control of genes involved in non-essential amino acid synthesis (NEAA) (serine,
668 aspartate, asparagine): phosphoglycerate dehydrogenase (**PHGDH**), phosphoserine
669 aminotransferase 1 (**PSAT1**), **PC** and **ASNS** (Hulea *et al.*, Cell Metabolism, in press; bioRxiv
670 160879; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/160879>) (Figure 2). However, cells lacking **EIF4EBP1** and
671 **EIF4EBP2**, in which **MTORC1** inhibition is uncoupled from **EIF4F** disassembly, show
672 dramatically reduced sensitivity to the phenformin/KI combinations enzymes (Hulea *et al.*, Cell
673 Metabolism, in press; bioRxiv 160879; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/160879>). This at least in part
674 is a consequence of their inability to suppress NEAA biosynthesis and translation of mRNAs
675 encoding corresponding enzymes (Hulea *et al.*, Cell Metabolism, in press; bioRxiv 160879; doi:
676 <https://doi.org/10.1101/160879>). A similar phenomenon was observed in cells depleted of von
677 Hippel–Lindau (VHL) tumor suppressor, the major regulator of **HIF1A** protein stability
678 (Semenza 2007). VHL-null cells maintain high **HIF1A** protein levels under normoxic conditions

679 (Maxwell, et al. 1999) and are less sensitive to the phenformin/KI combinations, at least in part
680 due to changes in the glutamine metabolic program in these cells (Hulea *et al.*, Cell Metabolism,
681 in press; bioRxiv 160879; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/160879>). Collectively, these findings
682 emphasize the plasticity of translational and metabolic programs of cancer cells, which allows
683 them to rapidly adapt to therapeutic insults.

684 One way of circumventing the problems associated with plasticity of cancer cells may be
685 a direct targeting of the **EIF4F** complex. **EIF4A** inhibitors (EIF4Ai), but not MTOR inhibitors,
686 lead to specific translational reprogramming, which results in mitochondrial depolarization and
687 cancer cell death (Gandin et al. 2016) (Figure 2). The cytotoxic effect of EIF4Ai is noteworthy,
688 as the effect of MTOR inhibitors on cancer cells is cytostatic (Gandin et al. 2016). The cytostatic
689 effect of MTOR inhibition can be explained by modification in the translational program that
690 reduce both energy production and energy utilization (Morita et al. 2013), leading to metabolic
691 dormancy. These studies highlight the superiority of EIF4Ai and other drugs directly affecting
692 the **EIF4F** complex formation and, in light of what has been discussed above, warrant additional
693 effort into better understanding their effects on cancer cell metabolism. SBI-756 is a compound
694 which was shown to bind to **EIF4G1** and disrupt the **EIF4F** complex independently of the
695 **MTOR/EIF4EBP** axis (Feng, et al. 2015). Most importantly, SBI-756 eradicated BRAF-
696 inhibitor resistant melanoma cells, as well as **EIF4EBP** null cancer cells, which are resistant to
697 MTOR inhibitors (Feng et al. 2015).

698 In the context of combination therapy with drugs inducing energetic stress, therapies
699 resulting in reduced energy consumption, leading to metabolic dormancy and a cytostatic effect,
700 are not very effective. Therefore, in order to effectively kill cancer cells by inducing energetic
701 stress, the ideal drug combination would be one that on one hand reduces energy production, and

702 on the other hand affects dysregulated oncogenic signal while maintaining energy consumption
703 (e.g. by carrying specific translational reprogramming without greatly affecting global translation
704 levels).

705

706 **6. Future perspectives**

707 Although significant efforts have been made to therapeutically target cancer metabolism,
708 progress remains limited. It is becoming apparent that intratumor heterogeneity severely hinders
709 the success of therapeutic efforts aiming to target metabolic vulnerabilities. It is likely
710 impossible to develop effective treatments that eliminate the dozens of aberrant signalling
711 pathways that are present within a single resistant tumor. However, considering that the
712 abnormal regulation of mRNA translation, resulting in metabolic reprogramming, is a “final
713 common pathway” downstream of driver mutations, we can assume that therapies that restrain
714 abnormal translation may have utility independent of the nature of upstream drivers. Of
715 particular interest would be the opportunities for synthetic lethality whereby one drug induces a
716 metabolic stress while the other impedes adaptation of cancer cells to that stress. Further research
717 is thus warranted to grasp the full complexity and plasticity of cancer metabolomes.

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722 There is no conflict of interest that could be perceived as prejudicing the impartiality of the
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Figure legends

Figure 1. **Schematic representation of signaling pathways upstream of MTORC1.** MTOR exists in two functionally and structurally distinct complexes: MTORC1 and MTORC2. MTORC1 is activated by hormones (e.g. insulin) or growth factors (e.g. EGF, FGF) via receptor tyrosine kinases. This sets off a signaling cascade leading to the activation of PI3K which inactivates TSC2 via AKT. In addition, TSC2 is inhibited by the MAPK/RSK pathway, and activated by DDIT4 and AMPK in response to hypoxia, and nutrient/energy depletion, respectively. TSC inactivation leads to MTORC1 activation, though the intermediary of RHEB. Amino acids stimulate LAMTOR, a GEF for the heterodimeric RRAF complex, which in turn activates MTORC1. Pharmacological inhibitors that potentially impact on the cross-talk between mTOR-dependent translational and metabolic programs are indicated. Further explanations are provided in the text.

Abbreviations: MTOR, mechanistic target of rapamycin kinase; MTORC1, mechanistic target of rapamycin complex 1; MTORC2, mechanistic target of rapamycin complex 2; EGF, epidermal growth factor; FGF, fibroblast growth factor; PI3K, phosphoinositide 3-kinase; TSC2, tuberous sclerosis complex 2; MAPK, mitogen-activated protein kinase; RSK, p90 ribosomal S6 kinase; DDIT4, DNA damage inducible transcript 4; AKT, protein kinase B; AMPK, AMP-activated protein kinase; RHEB, ras homolog, MTORC1 binding; LAMTOR, late endosomal and lysosomal adaptor and MAPK (mitogen-activated protein kinase) and MTOR (mechanistic target of rapamycin) activator; GEF, guanine nucleotide exchange factor; RRAF, ras-related GTP-binding protein.

Figure 2. **Schematic representation of effectors downstream of MTORC1.** MTORC1 controls various metabolic processes via transcriptional and/or translational regulation. MTORC1 stimulates nucleotide synthesis (via ATF4), pentose phosphate pathway and lipid

biosynthesis (via SREBP1), adipogenesis (via PPARG), glutamine metabolism (via ATF2 and MYC) and mitochondrial biogenesis (via PPARGC1A and YY1). The MTORC1/RPS6KB axis stimulates SREBP1 and CAD, which are essential for lipid and nucleotide biosynthesis, respectively. MTORC1 also stimulates lipid synthesis by controlling the nuclear localization of LPIN1, a negative regulator of SREBP1. In addition, MTORC1 phosphorylates LPIN1, facilitating its role as a co-activator for PPARG during adipogenesis. To date, the best characterized mediators of the effects of MTOR on protein synthesis are EIF4EBPs and RPS6KBs. MTOR stimulates the EIF4F complex assembly (comprised of EIF4E, EIF4G and EIF4A), by inactivating EIF4EBPs. In turn, RPS6KBs phosphorylate components of the translational machinery (PDCD4, RPS6, EIF4B and EEF2K). In respect to cancer energetics, the MTORC1/EIF4EBP/EIF4F axis regulates translation of mRNAs encoding mitochondrial factors (e.g. TFAM, ATP5O), central metabolic regulators (MYC and HIF1A) and enzymes involved in non-essential amino acid synthesis (PHGDH, PSAT1, PC and ASNS). The effects of EIF4A inhibitors and SBI-756 on MTOR-dependent translational and metabolic programs in explained within the text.

Abbreviations: ATF4, activating transcription factor 4; SREBP1, sterol regulatory element-binding transcription factor 1; PPARG, peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor gamma; ATF2, activating transcription factor 2; PPARGC1A, peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor gamma coactivator 1-alpha; YY1, Yin Yang 1; RPS6KB, ribosomal protein S6 kinase; CAD, carbamoyl-phosphate synthetase 2, aspartate transcarbamylase, and dihydroorotase; LPIN1, lipin 1; EIF4EBP, eukaryotic initiation factor 4E-binding protein; EIF, eukaryotic initiation factor; PDCD4, programmed cell death 4; RPS6, ribosomal protein S6; EEF2K, eukaryotic elongation factor 2 kinase; TFAM, transcription factor A, mitochondrial; ATP5O, ATP synthase subunit O; HIF1A, hypoxia-inducible factor 1A; PRPS2, phosphoribosyl pyrophosphate synthetase 2; PHDH, phosphoglycerate

dehydrogenase; PSAT1, phosphoserine aminotransferase1; PC, pyruvate carboxylase; ASNS, asparagine synthetase.

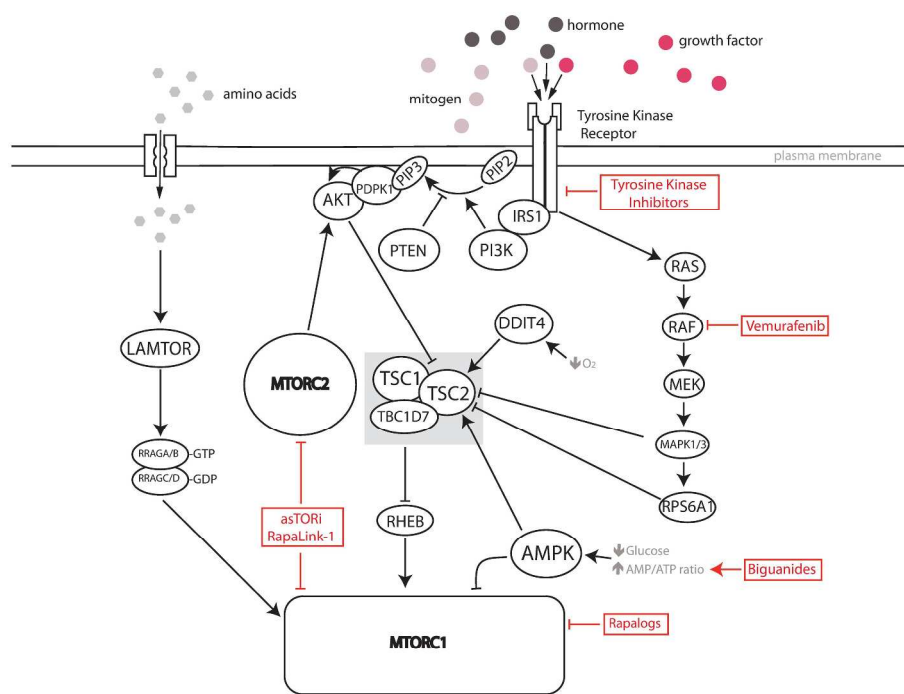


Figure 1. Schematic representation of signaling pathways upstream of MTORC1.

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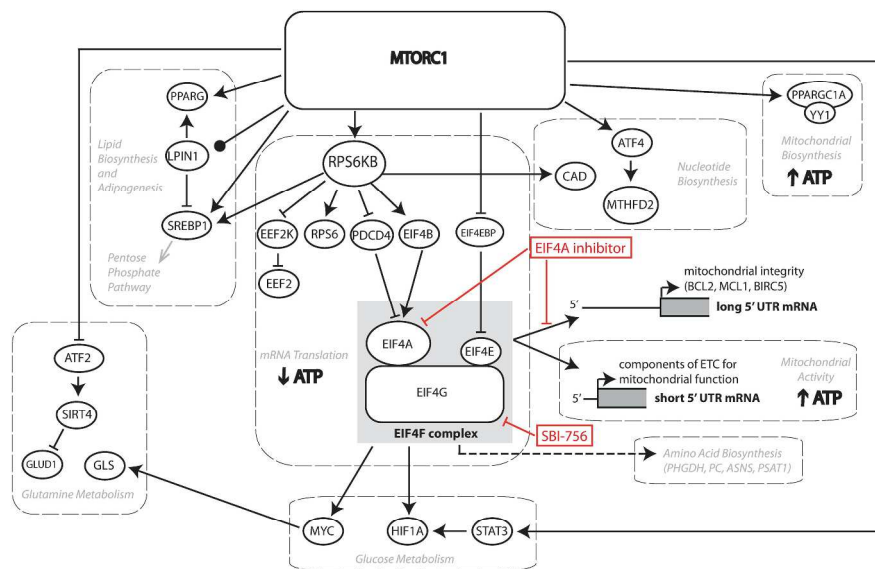


Figure 2. Schematic representation of effectors downstream of MTORC1.

MTORC1 controls various metabolic processes via transcriptional and/or translational regulation. MTORC1 stimulates nucleotide synthesis (via ATF4), pentose phosphate pathway and lipid biosynthesis (via SREBP1), adipogenesis (via PPARG), glutamine metabolism (via ATF2 and MYC) and mitochondrial biogenesis (via PPARGC1A and YY1). The MTORC1/RPS6KB axis stimulates SREBP1 and CAD, which are essential for lipid and nucleotide biosynthesis, respectively. MTORC1 also stimulates lipid synthesis by controlling the nuclear localization of LPIN1, a negative regulator of SREBP1. In addition, MTORC1 phosphorylates LPIN1, facilitating its role as a co-activator for PPARG during adipogenesis. To date, the best characterized mediators of the effects of MTOR on protein synthesis are EIF4EBPs and RPS6KBs. MTOR stimulates the EIF4F complex assembly (comprised of EIF4E, EIF4G and EIF4A), by inactivating EIF4EBPs. In turn, RPS6KBs phosphorylate components of the translational machinery (PDCD4, RPS6, EIF4B and EEF2K). In respect to cancer energetics, the MTORC1/EIF4EBP/EIF4F axis regulates translation of mRNAs encoding mitochondrial factors (e.g. TFAM, ATP5O), central metabolic regulators (MYC and HIF1A) and enzymes

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