



(51) International Patent Classification:

A61K 35/17 (2015.01) C12N 5/00 (2006.01)
C07K 16/28 (2006.01) C12N 5/0783 (2010.01)
C07K 16/46 (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:

PCT/US2016/055722

(22) International Filing Date:

6 October 2016 (06.10.2016)

(25) Filing Language:

English

(26) Publication Language:

English

(30) Priority Data:

62/237,835 6 October 2015 (06.10.2015) US

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,

AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DJ, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IR, IS, JP, KE, KG, KN, KP, KR, KW, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, ST, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

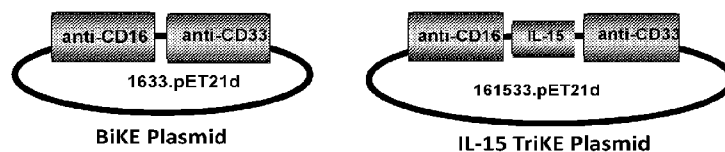
Published:

- with international search report (Art. 21(3))
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments (Rule 48.2(h))
- with sequence listing part of description (Rule 5.2(a))

(54) Title: THERAPEUTIC COMPOUNDS AND METHODS

Fig. 1

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(57) Abstract: This disclosure describes engineered compounds that engage NK cells and methods of using the compounds. Generally, the compound includes an NK engaging domain, a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell, and an NK activating domain operably linking the NK engaging domain and the targeting domain.

WO 2017/062604 A1

5 THERAPEUTIC COMPOUNDS AND METHODS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/237,835, filed October 6, 2015, which is incorporated herein by reference.

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GOVERNMENT FUNDING

This invention was made with government support under CA111412 and CA65493, awarded by the National Institutes of Health, and under CA36725, CA72669, and CA197292, awarded by the National Cancer Institute. The government has certain rights in the invention.

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SEQUENCE LISTING

This application contains a Sequence Listing electronically submitted via EFS-Web to the United States Patent and Trademark Office as an ASCII text file entitled "2016-10-06-SequenceListing_ST25.txt" having a size of 85 kilobytes and created on October 6, 2016. The information contained in the Sequence Listing is incorporated by reference herein.

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SUMMARY

This disclosure relates to the design, construction, and use of trispecific killer engager (TriKE) molecules.

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This disclosure describes, in one aspect, a molecule engineered to possess an NK engaging domain, an NK activating domain operably linked to the NK engaging domain, and a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell and is operably linked to the NK activating domain and the NK engaging domain.

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In some embodiments, the NK activating domain can include at least a portion of a cytokine.

In some embodiments, the NK engaging domain can include a moiety that selectively binds to an NK cell. The moiety that selectively binds to the NK cell can activate NK cells

and/or block inhibition of NK cells. In some embodiments, the NK engaging domain can include an antibody or a fragment thereof.

In some embodiments, the target cell can be a tumor cell or a cell infected by a virus. In some embodiments, the targeting domain can include an antibody or a fragment thereof. In other
5 embodiments, the targeting domain can include a ligand or small molecule that selectively binds to the target cell.

In some embodiments, the molecule may be designed to include a second targeting domain, a second NK activating domain, or a second NK engaging domain.

In another aspect, this disclosure describes a molecule engineered to include a T cell
10 engaging domain, a T cell activating domain operably linked to the T cell engaging domain, and a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell and is operably linked to the T cell activating domain and the T cell engaging domain.

In some embodiments, the T cell activating domain can include at least a portion of a cytokine.

15 In some embodiments, the T cell engaging domain can include a moiety that selectively binds to a T cell. The moiety that selectively binds to the T cell can activate T cells and/or block inhibition of T cells. In some embodiments, the T engaging domain can include an antibody or a fragment thereof.

In some embodiments, the target cell can be a tumor cell or a cell infected by a virus. In
20 some embodiments, the targeting domain can include an antibody or a fragment thereof. In other embodiments, the targeting domain can include a ligand or small molecule that selectively binds to the target cell.

In some embodiments, the molecule may be designed to include a second targeting domain, a second T cell activating domain, or a second T cell engaging domain.

25 In some embodiments of either aspect, the molecule can include a flanking sequence between any two of the domains summarized immediately above. In some cases, the molecule can have more than one flanking sequence.

In another aspect, this disclosure describes a method that involves administering any
30 embodiment of the engineered molecule summarized above to a subject in an amount effective to induce NK-mediated killing of the target cell or T-cell-mediated killing of the target cell, as may be appropriate for the particular molecule that is administered.

The above summary of the present invention is not intended to describe each disclosed embodiment or every implementation of the present invention. The description that follows more particularly exemplifies illustrative embodiments. In several places throughout the application, guidance is provided through lists of examples, which examples can be used in various combinations. In each instance, the recited list serves only as a representative group and should not be interpreted as an exclusive list.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Figure 1. 161533 **trisppecific killer engager** (TriKE) (SEQ ID NO:1) elicits superior purification properties over 1633 **bisppecific killer engager** (BiKE) (SEQ ID NO:2). (A) Schematic of coding region placement of the BiKE (left) and TriKE (right) domains in the pET expression vector. (B) Absorbance tracing for 1633 BiKE (left) eluted from the ion exchange column as the first phase in drug purification using a three-step elution protocol. The first peak eluted from the column represents the product. In the case of 161533 TriKE (right), the absorbance of peak 1 nearly doubles indicating superior yield. Similar quantity of inclusion bodies were refolded and purified. All protein was removed from the column. (C) SDS-PAGE gel and Coomassie Blue staining after a second step purification over a size exclusion column. Densitometry analysis indicates that the product is over 95% pure.

Figure 2. 161533 TriKE elicits superior NK cell function against targets. The release of the isotope chromium-51 (^{51}Cr) is often used to measure NK cell function (killing). (A) Freshly isolated PBMCs were cultured with chromium loaded HL-60 cells for four hours at E:T ratios of 20:1, 6.6:1, and 2:1. Noted reagents were added at the beginning of co-culture at a 20 nM concentration. Data is displayed as % NK cell cytolytic activity. Given the number of conditions, significance only noted between 1633 and 161533 molecules. $n = 3$. (B) To evaluate specificity of 161533 TriKE, ^{51}Cr release assay was performed against CD33 $^+$ EpCAM $^+$ HT29 targets. EpCAM1533 TriKE was used as a positive control. $n = 2$. (C) NK cells were enriched from normal donor PBMCs utilizing magnetic beads and placed in culture with HL-60 targets (10:1) alone or in the presence of 1633 BiKE or 161533 TriKE for 24 hours. At the end of the incubation supernatants were taken from each of the cultures and frozen down for later assessment of secreted IFN γ , TNF α , GM-CSF, and MIP1a through Luminex multiplex assay ($n = 5$). Points and Bars represent mean \pm SEM.

Figure 3. The 161533 TriKE mediates NK cell proliferation and expansion. Post-transplant patient PBMCs were loaded with CELLTRACE proliferation dye (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) and co-cultured with HL-60 Targets at a 5:1 (E:T) ratio for seven days in the presence of 50 nM 1633 BiKE or 161533 TriKE. At the end of the incubation CD56⁺CD3⁻ NK cells were assessed for viability through Live/Dead Near IR staining. (A) Individual histogram and (B) pooled analysis of viability in the NK cell population treated with the 1633 BiKE (gray) or 161533 TriKE (black). (C) Proliferation was then assessed by CELLTRACE dilution in the live CD56⁻CD3⁺ T cells (gray) and CD56⁺CD3⁻ NK cells (black) within the TriKE group. (D) Pooled analysis demonstrating % cells divided (top) and expansion index (bottom), which is a calculation of the fold expansion within the population given the amount of CELLTRACE dilution. Individual dots represent separate post-transplant samples (n = 8).

Figure 4. 161533 TriKE potently rescues NK cell function in post-transplant samples. Post-transplant patient PBMCs were thawed and rested overnight. The next night they were incubated with no drug, 1633 BiKE (50 nM), or 161533 TriKE (50 nM). The next morning they were washed and given same treatment as the night before (to ensure that there are no issues with molecule internalization). (A) PBMCs with noted treatment groups were incubated with chromium loaded HL-60s for four hours and % cytolytic activity was calculated. Dot and bars denote mean ± SEM (n = 9). (B) Representative histograms and (C) pooled data of CD107a (left panels), IFN γ (center panels), and TNF α (right panels) expression on CD56⁺CD3⁻ NK cells after four-hour incubation with HL-60 targets. Dots denote individual patient samples (n = 10).

Figure 5. 161533 TriKE enhances NK cell function against primary AML blasts compared to BiKE. Post-transplant patient PBMCs were thawed and rested overnight. The next night they were incubated with 1633 BiKE (50 nM), or 161533 TriKE (50 nM). The next morning they were washed and given same treatment as the night before (to ensure that there are no issues with molecule internalization). Primary AML blasts from apheresis products of two separate patients were thawed and rested overnight. Treated post-transplant patient PBMCs (n = 6) were incubated with the two different primary AML blasts (n = 12 total) for four hours and NK cell function was assessed by flow cytometry. NK function can be assessed by measuring lytic degranulation in the form of CD107a. (A) Representative histograms denoting CD107a (left), IFN γ (center), and TNF α (right) expression on post-transplant patient NK cells treated with 1633 BiKE (gray) or 161533 TriKE (black) after four-hour incubation with primary AML

blasts. (B) Pooled data for CD107a (left), IFN γ (center), and TNF α (right) expression on post-transplant patient NK cells treated with 1633 BiKE and 161533 TriKE and incubated with primary AML blasts. Each box represents a separate post-transplant patient sample incubated against two separate patient AML blast targets, denoted by filled and open boxes (n = 12 total).

5 Figure 6. 161533 TriKE limits HL-60 tumor growth in vivo better than 1633 BiKE. HL-60-luc cells were injected iv (7.5×10^5 cells/mouse) into NSG mice and three days later one million human NK cells activated overnight with IL-15 were infused. The 1633 BiKE and 161533 TriKE groups received HL-60-luc and NK cells, while the control group only received HL-60-luc cells. Drug (50 μ g/kg) was administered MWF throughout the study. (A) Individual
10 mouse photoluminescence at day 14 (top) and day 21 (bottom) of study in a two-minute exposure (n = 5 per treatment (unless mice died), representative of two separate experiments). (B) Quantification of luminescence in mice from the three treatment groups at day 14 (left) and day 21 (right). Each dot represents a different mouse and bars denote mean \pm SEM (n = 5, representative of two separate experiments). (C) Blood was collected on day 20 from the mice in
15 each of the experiential treatment groups. Circulating CD56+CD3- human NK cells were quantified by flow cytometry. Events were collected over 60 seconds and the number of human NK cell events was calculated. Representative dot plots are shown denoting the number of NK (CD56+.CD3-) cell events within the CD45+ gate. (D) Aggregate data demonstrating the number of human NK cell events in each treatment group at day 20. Individual dots represent different
20 mice and bars denote mean SEM (n=3 for HL-60-luc group [two mice died], n=5 for the 1633 BiKE and 161533 TriKE groups).

Figure 7. The flanking sequences and the orientation of the TriKE molecule both influence its function. In order test the influence of the flanking sequences, a variant of 161533 (161533NL, SEQ ID NO:5) was constructed that lacked the flanking sequences
25 (PSGQAGAAASESLFVSNHAY, SEQ ID NO:3; and EASGGPE, SEQ ID NO:4) on either side of the IL-15 domain of the 161533 construct. Freshly isolated PBMCs (containing 3.5% NK cells for this example) from two independent donors (PB1 and PB2) were cultured with chromium loaded HL-60 cells for four hours at an E:T ratio of 20:1. Noted reagents were added at the beginning of co-culture at a 20 nM concentration. Data is displayed as % NK cell cytolytic
30 activity. 161533 reflects the construct that includes the modified IL-15 NK activating domain with the flanking sequences intact. The data indicate that the IL-15 NK activating domain with

flanking sequences enhances TriKE function. To examine the effects of orientation, the construct was synthesized with IL-15 on either the N terminus (151633; SEQ ID NO:6) or the C terminus (163315; SEQ ID NO:7) and compared to wildtype 161533 with IL-15 as a cross-linker. The data generated IL-15 in the center of the molecule optimizes NK cytolytic activity.

5 Figure 8. 1615EpCAM TriKE (SEQ ID NO:8) elicits superior purification properties over EpCAM16 BiKE. (A) Schematic of placement of the coding regions for the TriKE (1615EpCAM) domains in the pET expression vector. (B) Schematic of placement of coding regions for the BiKE (16EpCAM) domains in the pET expression vector. (C) Absorbance tracing of the TriKE (1615EpCAM) eluted from the ion exchange column as the first phase in drug
10 purification using a three-step elution protocol. The first peak eluted from the column represents the product. (D) Absorbance tracing of the BiKE (16EpCAM) eluted from the ion exchange column as the first phase in drug purification using a three-step elution protocol. The first peak eluted from the column represents the product, recovered at a lower yield than the TriKE. (F) SDS-PAGE gel and Coomassie Blue staining after a second step purification (E) over a size
15 exclusion column. Densitometry analysis indicates that the product is over 95% pure.

 Figure 9. Evaluation of the activity of the 1615EpCAM TriKE (SEQ ID NO:8) in chromium release assays. Freshly isolated Natural killer (NK)-cells were added to HT-29 cells (human colorectal carcinoma cell line) with the respective effector:target ratios as indicated. Donors were chosen with naturally different levels of circulating NK cells (A) peripheral blood
20 mononuclear cells (PBMC) with 3.8% NK cells, (B) PBMC with 6.4% NK cells, (C) 15% and (D) > 80% NK cells enriched from PBMC. (E) Higher levels of kill with 1615EpCAM correlated with donors with naturally higher levels of NK killing. In (E), only the curves for 1615EpCAM were compared for the four donors, emphasizing the direct correlation between NK presence and cytolytic activity induced by the drug. (F) shows that in the case of 16EpCAM, no such
25 correlation exists.

 Figure 10. Lytic degranulation in different EpCAM expressing target cancer cell lines. As mentioned, NK function can be measured by quantitating CD107a expression as a measure of lytic degranulation. CD107a expressing cells were evaluated within the gated CD56⁺CD3⁻ NK cell population. Effector PBMCs were incubated with different EpCAM bearing target cell lines
30 including (A) BT-474, (B) SK-BR-3, (C) PC-3, (D) DU145, (E) UMSCC-11B, (F) NA, and (G) SKOV-1. TriKE added to effector and target cells induced a higher percentages of CD107a-

expressing cells compared to controls and also compared to bispecific 16EpCAM. P-values were estimated with one-way-ANOVA and presented with SD. *evaluation against controls; #evaluation 1615EpCAM against EpCAM16.

Figure 11. Proliferation capabilities of 1615EpCAM TriKE. (A) In order to evaluate NK cell expansion, peripheral blood mononuclear cells were treated with 1615EpCAM TriKE or EpCAM16 BiKE. The discrete peaks in the histograms mark successive generations of NK cells after cell division leading in a repetitive slight reduction of florescence intensity. Whereas NK cells show a typical proliferation pattern, T-cells do not. Shown is a representative of five independent experiments. (B) PBMCs cells were co-cultured with the TriKE and the BiKE and NK cell proliferation was evaluated. Shown is a representative of five independent experiments. (C) PBMCs cells were co-cultured with the TriKE, the BiKE, anti-CD16scFv [CD16], Interleukin (IL)-15, anti-EpCAM scFv [EpCAM] and DT2219, a targeted toxin comprised of Diphtheria enterotoxin linked to anti-CD22 and anti-CD19 scFv. Evaluation of the NK cell Expansion Index showed a significantly ($p < 0.001$) enhanced index in the 1615EpCAM construct and with IL-15 alone, marked with *, ($n=5$). (D) Purified NK cells were exposed to the TriKE and the BiKE. After seven days a reactive dye was used to differentiate alive and dead cells. The reactive dye permeates the impaired membranes of dead cells, resulting in more intense staining (right peak) whereas failure to penetrate the membrane of live cells results in a weaker staining (left peak).

Figure 12. Lytic degranulation and IFN- γ expression in HT-29 cells. To study NK cell activity, CD107a-expressing cells were evaluated within the gated CD56⁺/CD3⁻ NK cell population. (A) Cells treated with the 1615EpCAM TriKE (SEQ ID NO:8) showed precipitously elevated degranulation of EpCAM-expressing HT-29 target cells, while controls did not. E:T alone, E:T plus anti-EpCAM scFv devoid of 1615, E:T plus anti-CD16 alone, and E:T plus a combination of IL-12 and IL-18 (which does not augment lytic degranulation) did not have any effect. (B) IFN- γ production from the same CD56⁺/CD3⁻ NK cell population was analyzed. Only 1615EpCAM showed an enhanced percentage of IFN- γ -expressing cells. Values did not approach values seen with the IL12+IL18 combination that is known to stimulate cytokine production at supraphysiologic levels. (C) No CD107a expression cells were observed when NK cells incubated with EpCAM- HL-60 myeloid leukemia cell targets were studied. (D) Only the E:T controls treated with IL12+IL18 showed precipitous expression of IFN- γ .

Figure 13. Schematic of the placement of the polynucleotide encoding 1615EpCAM133 (SEQ ID NO:9) domains in the pET expression vector. Synthesis and assembly of the hybrid polynucleotide encoding 1615EpCAM133 was accomplished using DNA shuffling and DNA ligation techniques. The fully assembled coding region has, from the 5' end to the 3' end, an NcoI restriction site; an ATG initiation codon; coding regions encoding the V_H and V_L regions of human CD16 (NM3E2) derived from a phage display library, a 20 amino acid segment (PSGQAGAAASESLFVSNHAY; SEQ ID NO:3), modified IL-15, a seven amino acid segment (EASGGPE; SEQ ID NO:4), the humanized anti-EPCAM scFv from the antibody MOC-31, a 15 amino acid mutated human IgG1 hinge region, and the anti-CD133 scFv from clone 7; and finally a NotI restriction site. The resultant 2715 bp NcoI/NotI fragment polynucleotide was spliced into the pET28c expression vector under control of an isopropyl-β-D-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG) (FischerBiotech, Fair Lawn, NJ) inducible T7promoter. DNA sequencing analysis (Biomedical Genomics Center, University of Minnesota, MN, USA) was used to verify that the polynucleotide was correct in sequence and had been cloned in frame.

Figure 14. Activity of 1615EpCAM133. An extra scFv recognizing CD133 expressed on cancer stem cells was added to 1615EpCAM to make 1615EpCAM133 TetraKE. (A) and (B) show the activity of 1615EpCAM133 evaluated with ⁵¹Cr release assays. Freshly isolated NK cells from two donors (PT 1 and PT 2) were added to the human colorectal carcinoma cell line Caco-2 (CD133⁺, EpCAM⁺). Cells were co-cultured with targets at noted effector to target (E:T) ratios for four hours and ⁵¹chromium release was then evaluated. In (C) and (D), NK cells from two donors were exposed to human colorectal carcinoma cell line HT-29 (EpCAM⁺, CD133⁻) and ⁵¹chromium release was measured in the same manner as described above.

Figure 15. Just like 1615EpCAM, 1615EpCAM133 shows enhanced expansion due to the presence of IL-15. (A) Binding assays against HT-29 cells and (B) Caco-2 cells were performed using FITC-labeled 1615EpCAM133 TetraKE (200 nM) competed with excess unlabeled noted scFvs (1000 nM). Experiments were repeated with 200 nM of 1615EpCAM133 and a lower block with 500 nM of the scFv. Results were reproducible. (C) Purified NK cells were stained with CELLTRACE (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) to measure proliferation and co-cultured with an anti-CD16 scFv [CD16], anti-CD133 scFv [CD133], 1615EpCAM133 TetraKE, DT2219 (mutated diphtheria toxin linked to an anti-CD22 and an anti-CD19 scFv), anti-EpCAM scFv [EpCAM], EpCAM16 BiKE, or IL-15 [IL15] for seven days (n=5). Graph shows pooled

data of the expansion index for each of the groups. (D) Representative histogram of PBMCs stained with CELLTRACE dye and co-cultured with 30 nM of 1615EpCAM133 TetraKE or EpCAM16 BiKE for seven days. (E) Representative histogram comparing proliferation on CD56⁺CD3⁻ NK cells with CD56⁻CD3⁺ T cells. (F) Representative histogram illustrating survival (by means of Live/Dead dye exclusion) of purified NK cells exposed to the 1615EpCAM133 TetraKE or EpCAM16 BiKE for seven days. Dead cells display inclusion of the dye (high peak) while live cells exclude it (low peak). P-values were estimated with one-way-ANOVA and presented with standard deviation.

Figure 16. Schematic of placement of the coding regions for 1615133 (SEQ ID NO:10) in the pET expression vector. The hybrid polynucleotide encoding 1615133 was synthesized using DNA shuffling and DNA ligation techniques. The fully assembled polynucleotide has, from the 5' end to the 3' end, a NcoI restriction site; an ATG start codon; coding regions encoding anti-human CD16 scFv, a 20 amino acid segment (PSGQAGAAASESLFVSNHAY; SEQ ID NO:3), mutated human IL-15, a seven amino acid linker (EASGGPE; SEQ ID NO:4), and anti-CD133 scFv; and a NotI restriction site. The resultant 1884 base pair NcoI/NotI fragment polynucleotide was spliced into the pET28c expression vector under control of an isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG) inducible T7 promoter.

Figure 17. ⁵¹Chromium release and binding of TriKE 1615133. (A, B) For evaluation of activity, ⁵¹Chromium release assays using two donors were performed. 1615133 TriKE, 16133 BiKE, anti-CD16 scFv [CD16], or anti-CD133 scFv [CD133] was co-cultured with CD133⁺ Caco-2 cells and PBMCs at labeled E:T ratios. (C) PBMCs and Caco-2 cells were exposed to different TriKE concentrations (1 nM, 5 nM, 10 nM) and titered in their E:T ratio (20:1, 6.6:1, 2.2:1, 0.75:1, 0.23:1, 0.08:1). (D) FITC-labeled 1615133 TriKE was incubated at labeled concentrations with Caco-2 cells. In the same experiment, the same amount of FITC labeled 1615133 was added with 200 nM of a monomeric CD133 scFv for blocking.

Figure 18. Expansion and survival. (A) Purified NK cells were exposed to anti-CD16 scFv (CD16), anti-CD133 scFv (CD133), 16133 BiKE, 1615133 TriKE, DT2219 (a targeted toxin consisting of an anti-CD22 and anti-CD19 scFv linked to a diphtheria toxin), or NCI-derived IL-15. Only the TriKE and IL-15 significantly increased proliferation (n=5). Graph shows pooled data of the expansion index, calculated in Flowjo software, for each of the groups. (B) Purified NK cells were exposed to 1615133 TriKE and 16133 BiKE and incubated for seven

days. The representative histogram illustrates a higher amount of live cells with the TriKE compared to the BiKE construct without the IL-15 moiety. Significance was estimated with one-way-ANOVA and presented with standard deviation.

Figure 19. ⁵¹Chromium release assays were performed with several different new TriKEs to show that any scFv that targets cancer cells can be made into functional TriKEs. (A) EpCAM+CD133+NG2+ non-small cell lung cancer NCI-H460 cells plus NK cells were incubated with 1615EPCAM133 TriKE or 1615NG2 TriKE (neuron glial antigen 2 or CSPG4). Both 1615NG2 and 1615EPCAM133 had activity at several different E:T ratios (20:1, 10:1, and 5:1). (B) Mesothelin+EpCAM-CD133-NG2 MDA-435A melanoma cells were incubated with 1615EPCAM TriKE (SEQ ID NO:8) or the 1615Meso TriKE (SEQ ID NO:11) TriKE. Only 1615Meso had activity. (C) Mesothelin+NG2+ ovarian cancer cells (Ovcar3 cells) were incubated with 1615NG2 TriKE or 1615SS1 TriKE. 1615Meso and 1615NG2 had activity. (D) Raji cells were cultured with NK cells and studied in ⁵¹Cr release assays. TriKE 16152219 (SEQ ID NO:12) simultaneously targets the B cell markers CD19 and CD22. Only 16152219, 162219, and Rituximab killed the CD22+CD19+ targets. The controls did not.

Figure 20. TriKEs have been synthesized that work with IL-2 and stimulate the expansion of T cells rather than NK cells. In order to determine if other cytokines work in place of IL-15, CD3-IL-2-EpCAM (SEQ ID NO:13) was constructed using the same flanking sequences on either side of IL-2 that were used on either side of the IL-15 domain in the NK-activating TriKE constructs. PBMCs were CELLTRACE (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) labeled and placed in culture with no treatment (neg control), 1615EPCAM TriKE (pos control), CD3EpCAM BiTE, CD3-IL-2-EpCAM TriKE, 10 ng/ml IL-2, or 100 ng/ml IL-2. The CD3-IL2-EpCAM TriKE stimulated CD3+ T cells much greater than 1615EPCAM TriKE, CD3EpCAM BiTE, or IL-2 at either 10 ng/ml or 100 ng/ml.

Figure 21. The CD3 portion of CD3-IL2-EpCAM was tested and intact. (A) and (B): the same anti-CD3 scFv was spliced to diphtheria toxin and incubated with CD3+ HPBMLT target cells. CD3-IL2-EpCAM was added to see if it blocked the ability of the DT3 (CD3 targeted toxin) to kill HPB-MLT cells. Blocking activity of CD3-IL-2-EpCAM was dose dependent in the presence of 0.1 nM DT3 (A) and 1.0 nM DT3 (B), indicating that the CD3 moiety of CD3-IL2-EpCAM was intact. (C) and (D): the ability of CD3-IL2-EpCAM to block the killing of negative control CD3- Raji cells by DT2219 (anti-CD22 and CD19 targeted toxin).

Figure 22. CD16 nanobody was derived from a published llama nanobody (GeneBank sequence EF561291). The CD16 nanobody was spliced to CD19 to test the ability of this CD16 engager to drive NK cell killing. (A) The CD16 nanobody showed cytolytic NK activity similar to rituximab-mediated killing in a chromium release assay with CD19+Raji targets. (B) The CD16 CDRs were cloned into a humanized camelid scaffold in order to generate HuEF91, a humanized CD16 engager. HuEF91 binding was equivalent to CD16scFv binding, indicating that the humanized HuEF91 did not hinder the specificity of the molecule. (C) The llama161533 TriKE (SEQ ID NO:14) is capable of expanding NK cells.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

Natural killer (NK) cells are cytotoxic lymphocytes of the innate immune system capable of immune surveillance. Like cytotoxic T cells, NK cells deliver a store of membrane penetrating and apoptosis-inducing granzyme and perforin granules. Unlike T cells, NK cells do not require antigen priming and recognize targets by engaging activating receptors in the absence of MHC recognition.

NK cells express CD16, an activation receptor that binds to the Fc portion of IgG antibodies and is involved in antibody-dependent cell-mediated cytotoxicity (ADCC). NK cells are regulated by IL-15, which can induce increased antigen-dependent cytotoxicity, lymphokine-activated killer activity, and/or mediate interferon (IFN), tumor-necrosis factor (TNF) and/or granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GM-CSF) responses. All of these IL-15-activated functions contribute to improved cancer defense.

Therapeutically, adoptive transfer of NK cells can, for example, induce remission in patients with refractory acute myeloid leukemia (AML) when combined with lymphodepleting chemotherapy and IL-2 to stimulate survival and in vivo expansion of NK cells. This therapy can be limited by lack of antigen specificity and IL-2-mediated induction of regulatory T (Treg) cells that suppress NK cell proliferation and function. Generating a reagent that drives NK cell antigen specificity, expansion, and/or persistence, while bypassing the negative effects of Treg inhibition, can enhance NK-cell-based immunotherapies.

This disclosure describes generating a tri-specific molecule that includes two domains capable of driving NK-cell-mediated killing of tumor cells (e.g., CD33⁺ tumor cells and/or EpCAM⁺ tumor cells) and an intramolecular NK activating domain capable of generating an NK

cell self-sustaining signal. The tri-specific molecule can drive NK cell proliferation and/or enhance NK-cell-driven cytotoxicity against, for example, HL-60 targets, cancer cells, or cancer cell-derived cell lines.

Bi-specific fusions have been made that incorporate an anti-human anti-CD16 scFv
5 derived from a human phage display library technology (McCall et al., 1999. *Mol Immunol.*
36:433-445). NK cells mediate antibody-dependent cell-mediated cytotoxicity (ADCC) through
the CD16 (FcγRIII) receptor. Signaling through the CD16 receptor induces calcium fluxes and
phosphorylation of ITAMs, triggering the release of lytic granules and cytokines such as
interferon (IFNγ) and tumor necrosis factor (TNFα). A bi-specific molecule has been designed to
10 trigger the CD16 receptor in conjunction with other targeting molecules (Gleason et al. *Blood.*
2014 (19):3016-26), a so-called bispecific killer engager (BiKE). With one scFv recognizing NK
cells and a second scFv recognizing a tumor antigen, BiKEs can markedly enhance cytotoxic
killing in various human cancers. One exemplary BiKE targeted CD33 and enhanced NK cell
responses against acute myeloid leukemia (AML) and myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS). MDS is
15 a clonal heterogeneous stem cell disorder characterized by normal or hypercellular bone marrow
(BM) with peripheral blood (PB) cytopenias and an increased risk of progressing to AML.

NK cells are responsive to a variety of cytokines including, for example, IL-15, which is
involved in NK cell homeostasis, proliferation, survival, activation, and/or development. IL-15
and IL-2 share several signaling components, including the IL-2/IL-15Rβ (CD122) and the
20 common gamma chain (CD132). Unlike IL-2, IL-15 does not stimulate Tregs, allowing for NK
cell activation while bypassing Treg inhibition of the immune response. Besides promoting NK
cell homeostasis and proliferation, IL-15 can rescue NK cell functional defects that can occur in
the post-transplant setting. IL-15 also can stimulate CD8⁺ T cell function, further enhancing its
immunotherapeutic potential. In addition, based on pre-clinical studies, toxicity profiles of IL-15
25 may be more favorable than IL-2 at low doses.

IL-15 plays a role in NK cell development homeostasis, proliferation, survival, and
activation. IL-15 and IL-2 share several signaling components including the IL-2/IL-15Rβ
(CD122) and the common gamma chain (CD132). IL-15 also activates NK cells, and can restore
functional defects in engrafting NK cells after hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT)..

30 This disclosure describes, in one aspect, tri-specific killer engager (TriKE) molecules that
generally include one or more NK cell engager domains (e.g., CD16, CD16+CD2,

CD16+DNAM, CD16+NKp46), one or more targeting domains (that target, e.g., a tumor cell or virally-infected cell), and one or more cytokine NK activating domains (e.g., IL-15, IL-12, IL-18, IL-21, or other NK cell enhancing cytokine, chemokine, and/or activating molecule), with each domain operably linked to the other domains. As used herein, the term “operably linked”
5 refers to direct or indirect covalent linking. Thus, two domains that are operably linked may be directly covalently coupled to one another. Conversely, the two operably linked domains may be connected by mutual covalent linking to an intervening moiety (e.g., and flanking sequence). Two domains may be considered operably linked if, for example, they are separated by the third domain, with or without one or more intervening flanking sequences.

10 The NK engaging domain can include any moiety that binds to and/or activates an NK cell and/or any moiety that blocks inhibition of an NK cell. In some embodiments, the NK engaging domain can include an antibody that selectively binds to a component of the surface of an NK cell. In other embodiments, the NK engaging domain can include a ligand or small molecule that selectively binds to a component of the surface of an NK cell. As used herein, the
15 term “selectively binds” refers to the ability to differentiate between two or more alternatives such as, for example, having differential affinity, to any degree, for a particular target. As used herein, “antibody” refers generally an immunoglobulin or a fragment thereof and thus encompasses a monoclonal antibody, a fragment thereof (e.g., scFv, Fab, F(ab')₂, Fv or other modified forms), a combination of monoclonal antibodies and/or fragments thereof, and/or a
20 combination of polyclonal antibodies. Thus, for brevity, reference to an antibody that selectively binds to a component of the surface of an NK cell includes any antibody fragment that exhibits the described binding character. Similarly, reference to a ligand that selectively binds to a component of the surface of an NK cell includes any fragment of the ligand that exhibits the described binding character.

25 In some embodiments, the NK engaging domain can selectively bind to a receptor at least partially located at the surface of an NK cell. In certain embodiments, the NK engaging domain can serve a function of binding an NK cell and thereby bring the NK into spatial proximity with a target to which the targeting domain—described in more detail below—selectively binds. In certain embodiments, however, the NK engaging domain can selectively bind to a receptor that
30 activates the NK cell and, therefore, also possess an activating function. As described above, activation of the CD16 receptor can elicit antibody-dependent cell-mediated cytotoxicity. Thus,

in certain embodiments, the NK engaging domain can include at least a portion of an anti-CD16 receptor antibody effective to selectively bind to the CD16 receptor. In other embodiments, the NK engager cell domain may interrupt mechanisms that inhibit NK cells. In such embodiments, the NK engager domain can include, for example, anti-PD1/PDL1, anti-NKG2A, anti-TIGIT, anti-killer-immunoglobulin receptor (KIR), and/or any other inhibition blocking domain.

One can design the NK engaging domain to possess a desired degree of NK selectivity and, therefore, a desired immune engaging character. For example, CD16 has been identified as Fc receptors Fc γ RIIIa (CD16a) and Fc γ RIIIb (CD16b). These receptors bind to the Fc portion of IgG antibodies that then activates the NK cell for antibody-dependent cell-mediated cytotoxicity. Anti-CD16 antibodies selectively bind to NK cells, but also can bind to neutrophils. Anti-CD16a antibodies selectively bind to NK cells, but do not bind to neutrophils. A TriKE embodiment that includes an NK engaging domain that includes an anti-CD16a antibody can bind to NK cells but not bind to neutrophils. Thus, in circumstances where one may want to engage NK cells but not engage neutrophils, one can design the NK engaging domain of the TriKE to include an anti-CD16a antibody.

While described herein in the context of various embodiments in which the NK engaging domain includes an anti-CD16 receptor scFv, the NK engaging domain can include any antibody or other ligand that selectively binds to the CD16 receptor. Moreover, the NK engaging domain can include an antibody or ligand that selectively binds to any NK cell receptor such as, for example, the cell cytotoxicity receptor 2B4, low affinity Fc receptor CD16, killer immunoglobulin like receptors (KIR), CD2, NKG2A, TIGIT, NKG2C, LIR-1, and/or DNAM-1.

The targeting domain can include any moiety that selectively binds to an intended target such as, for example, a tumor cell, a target in the cancer stroma, a target on an inhibitory cell such as myeloid derived suppressor cells that are CD33+, or a target on a virally-infected cell. Thus, a targeting domain can include, for example, an anti-tumor antibody such as rituximab (anti-CD20), afutuzumab (anti-CD20), trastuzumab (anti-HER2/neu), pertuzumab (anti-HER2/neu), labetuzumab (anti-CEA), adecatumumab (anti-EpCAM), citatumumab bogatox (anti-EpCAM), edrecolomab (anti-EpCAM), arcitumomab (anti-CEA), bevacizumab (anti-VEGF-A), cetuximab (anti-EGFR), nimotuzumab (anti-EGFR), panitumumab (anti-EGFR), zalutumumab (anti-EGFR), gemtuzumab ozogamicin (anti-CD33), lintuzumab (anti-CD33), etaracizumab (anti-integrin $\alpha_v\beta_3$), intetumumab (anti-CD51), ipilimumab (anti-CD152), oregovomab (anti-CA-

125), votumumab (anti-tumor antigen CTAA16.88), or pentumumab (anti-MUC1), anti-CD19, anti-CD22, anti-CD133, anti-CD38 anti-mesothelin, anti-ROR1, CSPG4, SS1, or IGFR1.

In other embodiments, the targeting domain can selectively bind to a target on a cell infected by a virus such as, for example, an adenovirus, HIV, CMV, and/or HPV.

5 In certain particular embodiments, the targeting domain can include an anti-CD33 antibody. In other particular embodiments, the targeting domain can include an anti-epithelial cell adhesion molecule (EpCAM) antibody.

The NK activating domain can include an amino acid sequence that activates NK cells, promotes sustaining NK cells, or otherwise promotes NK cell activity. The NK activating domain can be, or can be derived from, one or more cytokines that can activate and/or sustain NK cells. As used herein, the term “derived from” refers to an amino acid fragment of a cytokine (e.g., IL-15) that is sufficient to provide NK cell activating and/or sustaining activity. In 10 embodiments that include more than one NK activating domain, the NK activating domains may be provided in series or in any other combination. Additionally, each cytokine-based NK activating domain can include either the full amino acid sequence of the cytokine or may be an amino acid fragment, independent of the nature of other NK activating domains included in the TriKE molecule. Exemplary cytokines on which an NK activating domain may be based include, for example, IL-15, IL-18, IL-12, and IL-21. Thus, while described in detail herein in the context of an exemplary model embodiment in which the NK activating domain is derived from IL-15, a 15 TriKE may be designed using an NK activating domain that is, or is derived from, any suitable cytokine.

For brevity in this description, reference to an NK activating domain by identifying the cytokine on which it is based includes both the full amino acid sequence of the cytokine, any suitable amino acid fragment of the cytokine, and or a modified version of the cytokine that 25 includes one or more amino acid substitutions. Thus, reference to an “IL-15” NK activating domain includes an NK activating domain that includes the full amino acid sequence of IL-15, an NK activating domain that includes a fragment of IL-15, or an NK activating domain such as, for example, IL-15N72D or IL-15N72A, that includes an amino acid substitution compared to the wild-type IL-15 amino acid sequence.

30 The use of an IL-15 NK activating domain in a TriKE can provide sustained NK cell activity—as evidenced in a mouse model showing human NK cells are dramatically elevated and

cancer reduced—even after three weeks. NK cells are activated in mice to produce an array of anti-cancer factors and cytokines. Moreover, Figure 1 shows that an IL-15 NK activating domain somehow alters the chemistry of these molecules so that they refold more easily and/or are recoverable in greater yield, thus rendering the TriKE molecules more suitable for clinical scale-up.

In some embodiments, the molecule can further include a flanking sequence that can link two of the above-described domains. In some embodiments, the presence of the flanking sequence can further increase NK cell activation. One exemplary flanking sequence includes the 20 amino acids of SEQ ID NO:3. Another exemplary flanking sequence includes the seven amino acids of SEQ ID NO:4. Certain embodiments (e.g., the 161533 TriKE, SEQ ID NO:1) can include more than one flanking sequence. As one example, SEQ ID NO:1 includes the flanking sequence of SEQ ID NO:3 to link the NK engaging domain (e.g., anti-CD16 receptor scFv) with the NK activating domain (e.g., IL-15). SEQ ID NO:1 also includes the flanking sequence of SEQ ID NO:4 to link the NK activating domain with the targeting domain (e.g., anti-CD33 scFv). Figure 7 shows data demonstrating that constructs that lack a flanking sequence exhibit reduced activity compared to constructs that possess the flanking sequence.

Synthesis and purity of a 161533 TriKE

To create an exemplary model therapeutic TriKE that is antigen specific and self-sustains the NK cell response against leukemia, a human modified IL-15 cross-linker was introduced into the 1633 BiKE creating a 161533 TriKE (Figure. 1A). The FPLC profile of the TriKE indicated a high yield product from a bacterial expression system that required refolding (Figure 1B). The IL-15 NK activating domain reduced the isoelectric point by two pH units, creating more favorable conditions for purification and enhancing yield. Despite purification beginning with identical amounts of inclusion bodies, the final yield of 161533 TriKE was twice the yield of the comparable BiKE (1633, with no IL-15 NK activating domain), indicating more favorable purification dynamics. Products were >95% pure by SDS-PAGE gel analysis and Coomassie Blue Staining (Figure 1C). To verify that binding and specificity remained intact in the new TriKE molecule, selectivity was measured by direct binding and blocking flow cytometry assays against CD33⁺ EpCAM⁻ HL-60 cells and CD33⁻ EpCAM⁺ HT-29 cells (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1. Binding of BiKE and TriKE Measured by Flow Cytometry

	<u>Reagent</u>	<u>Cell Line</u>	<u>Drug Amount (μg)</u>	<u>% Positive Cells</u>
	Unstained	HL-60	-	0.1
5	161533-FITC	HL-60	10	63
	161533-FITC	HL-60	20	75
	161533-FITC	HL-60	40	78
	161533-FITC	HT-29	10	4
	EpCAM-FITC	HL-60	20	1.4
10	EpCAM-FITC	HT-29	2	100
	1633-FITC	HT-29	4	1
	1633-FITC	HL-60	4	62
	1633-FITC	HL-60	15	74
	16-FITC	HL-60	20	0.1
15	33-FITC	HL-60	20	98

Table 2. Specificity Determined by Antigen Blockade

	<u>Reagent</u>	<u>Cell Line</u>	<u>Blocking Agent</u>	<u>% Positive Cells</u>
20	1633-FITC	HL-60	None	52
	1633-FITC	HL-60	anti-CD33	1
	161533-FITC	HL-60	None	85
	161533-FITC	HL-60	anti-CD33	4
25	161533-FITC	HL-60	anti-CD45	73

161533 TriKE increases NK cell function

To determine whether inclusion of IL-15 retained the ability of bioengineered 1633 to mediate ADCC, 1633 and 161533 were compared in a 4-hour chromium release assay where PBMCs from healthy donors were tested for their ability to kill CD33⁺ HL-60 targets (Figure 2A). The 161533 TriKE induced higher NK cell mediated killing than the BiKE, particularly at the 20:1 ratio ($58.3 \pm 2.3\%$ vs. $33 \pm 4\%$, $P = 0.0184$). Control samples of anti-CD16 and anti-CD33 did not augment the response compared to the untreated controls showing no activity of these components alone. To test specificity in a cytotoxic assay the 161533 TriKE was incubated with NK cells and CD33⁻ HT-29 target cells (Figure 2B). The 161533 TriKE showed no significant increases in killing of HT-29 cells when compared to the no treatment control. To ensure that HT-29 target cells are not merely more resistant as an explanation for specificity, the HT-29 cells were incubated with a novel IL-15 TriKE containing an anti-EpCAM scFv instead of anti-CD33. This TriKE robustly killed EpCAM⁺ HT-29 cells, highlighting the versatility of

the IL-15 NK activating domain TriKE platform against both hematologic malignancy and solid tumor malignancies.

Besides redirected cytotoxicity, another function of NK cells is to produce cytokines and chemokines upon target cell recognition. To test if the TriKE enhances this process NK cells and HL-60 targets were incubated without molecules, with 1633 BiKE, or with 161533 TriKE and supernatants were collected after 24 hours and analyzed for inflammatory cytokines and chemokines (Figure 2C). When compared to no drug or the BiKE, the TriKE significantly induced IFN γ , TNF α , GM-CSF, and MIP-1 α secretion. These data indicate that the IL-15 molecule in the TriKE can induce pro-inflammatory cytokine and chemokine secretion which may increase the anti-tumor activity of NK cells.

161533 TriKE induces survival and expansion of post-transplant NK cells

One therapeutic advantage of IL-15 is that it is involved in homeostasis and expansion of NK cells. Thus, the 161533 TriKE was tested to evaluate if these biological functions remain active within the TriKE molecule. To test this in a physiologically relevant context, early post-transplant patient samples were used. These samples provide a setting where NK cell reconstitution is needed to mediate anti-tumor graft versus leukemia (GvL) responses. Evaluation of time points early after transplant are of particular interest because defects in NK-cells mediated target-cell-induced cytokine production at these same time points, which may account for early relapse (Foley et al., 2014. *Immunol Rev* 258(1):45-63). Post-transplant patient PBMCs (either day 100 [n=5] or earlier 20-44 [n=5] after transplant) were labeled with CELLTRACE dye (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) to measure proliferation, incubated with HL-60 targets and either 1633 BiKE or 161533 TriKE for seven days, and then labeled with Live/Dead dye to measure NK cell survival. Within the PBMCs that were incubated with the 1633 BiKE, most of the NK cells incorporated Live/Dead dye, indicating poor survival. In contrast, patient PBMCs incubated with the 161533 TriKE supported excellent NK cell survival (Figure 3A and 3B; $96.9 \pm 0.5\%$ vs. $21 \pm 5.4\%$; $P < 0.0001$). To understand if the IL-15 moiety in the 161533 TriKE also drove proliferation, CELLTRACE dye dilution in the viable NK cell population was evaluated. Unexpectedly, the 161533 TriKE induced robust and specific NK cell proliferation in the post-transplant patient samples, with minimal proliferation of T cells (Figure 3C and 3D) in the same sample ($79.1 \pm 2.5\%$ of the NK cells divided vs. $2.3 \pm 1.1\%$ of the T cells, $P < 0.0001$).

The NK cells also had a significantly higher expansion index than total T cells ($7.2 \pm 0.8\%$ vs. $1.1 \pm 0.1\%$, $P < 0.0001$), which represents total fold expansion. This suggests that the activity of IL-15 in the 161533 TriKE may be more NK cell specific as a result of the flanking scFv molecules in the construct. Moreover, incubating NK cells with the 161533 TriKE resulted in robust proliferation that mirrored expansion mediated by a saturating concentration of IL-15. Thus, an IL-15 NK activating domain in the TriKE is functionally active and capable of delivering a self-sustaining signal to healthy donor NK cells and/or can drive survival and proliferation of post-transplant patient NK cells, a setting where NK cell reconstitution is defective.

161533 TriKE rescues defective NK cell function early after transplantation

After allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplant, NK cells are increased in number and respond to IL-12 and IL-18 stimulation but exhibit hyporesponsiveness for more than six months when exposed to cancer cell line targets. In this setting, short-term exposure to overnight incubation with IL-15 can rescue NK cell function against K562 targets (Foley et al., 2011, *Blood* 118(10):2784-2792). Given the potential clinical development of the exemplary TriKE 161533 molecule as post-transplant immunotherapy, the TriKE and the comparable BiKE (1633) molecules were tested on post-transplant PBMCs from allogeneic sibling hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients (Figure 4). 1633 BiKE or 161533 TriKE were incubated with NK cells overnight, to allow for functional recovery, and cells were incubated with HL-60 targets the next morning and analyzed for function. Although incubation with the 1633 BiKE resulted in a doubling of killing of HL-60 targets when compared to just NK cells against HL-60 targets ($18.9 \pm 2.1\%$ versus $9 \pm 1.5\%$, $P < 0.0001$), incubation with the 161533 TriKE potently rescued NK cell-mediated cytotoxic function to a much greater degree ($52.1 \pm 3.5\%$) than by the BiKE (Figure 4A). The increase in cytotoxicity correlated well with increased degranulation measured by CD107a expression (Figure 4B and 4C left panel). Compared to the BiKE, the TriKE potently rescued IFN γ (BiKE = $2.6 \pm 0.5\%$ vs. TriKE = $21.7 \pm 4.4\%$, $P = 0.0012$) and TNF α (BiKE = $6.1 \pm 1\%$ vs. TriKE = $29.9 \pm 3.8\%$, $P < 0.0001$) production (Figure 4B and 4C center and right panels). In all assays, the TriKE induced increased functionality when compared to the BiKE. The magnitude of these changes clearly illustrate the immunotherapeutic potential of the 161533 TriKE in the early post-transplant setting.

161533 TriKE increases NK cell function against primary AML blasts

To compare the activity of 1633 BiKE and 161533 TriKE against primary AML blasts, PBMCs from post-transplant patients were incubated with primary AML blasts from two
5 different patients (AML1 and AML2). CD107a, IFN γ and TNF α induction was reduced against the primary blasts compared to HL-60 targets (Figure 5 vs. Figure 4). The decrease in function could be attributed in part to decreased expression of CD33 on primary blasts, but expression of inhibitory ligands or absence of activating receptor ligands may also contribute to the decreased function. While no significant differences were seen in NK cell activation between AML1 and
10 AML2 under the same conditions, PBMCs from post-transplant patient samples incubated with the 161533 TriKE significantly ($p < 0.05$) induced greater degranulation (CD107a) and cytokine production (IFN γ and TNF α) over the PBMCs incubated with the 1633 BiKE (Figure 5A and Figure 5B), suggesting that the combination of activation combined with IL-15 is potent against primary AML targets. Taken together, these in vitro data indicate that the 161533 TriKE can
15 make NK cells antigen specific against primary tumor cells.

161533 TriKE induces enhanced in vivo NK cell survival and function

Comparing the in vivo activity of BiKE and TriKE required the development of a murine xenograft model that simultaneously accommodated the progression of CD33⁺ leukemia and
20 human NK cells. HL-60 cells containing a luciferase reporter were injected intravenously (7.5×10^5 cells/mouse) and then three days later, 1 million human NK cells activated overnight with IL-15 were infused. Figure 6 shows imaging data depicting HL-60-luc tumor load in each of the treatment groups. While the control group received only HL-60-luc cells, but no drug or NK cells, the 1633 BiKE and 161533 TriKE groups received HL-60-luc cells and NK cells. Drug (50
25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$) was administered MTWThF throughout the study. On day 14 (Figure 6B), BiKE and TriKE groups significantly ($p < 0.05$) differed from the control group but not each other indicating that at early time points both BiKE and TriKE impact tumor progression similarly. On day 21, however, no significant differences could be found between the no drug group and the BiKE group in surviving, although two mice from the no drug group died by this point. The TriKE
30 group on the other hand significantly ($p < 0.05$) differed from the control group, and at this time

point also differed from the BiKE group, indicating superior control of the HL-60 tumor burden at later stages with 161533 TriKE therapy.

Given the NK cell survival and proliferation results noted in the in vitro experiments from Figure 3, the increased control of HL-60-luc tumor generated by the TriKE in vivo might be mediated, at least in part, by increased maintenance and expansion of the transferred NK cell population through IL-15 moiety in the 161533 TriKE molecule. Thus, mice were bled (20 μ L) at day 20 and the number of NK cell (CD56⁺CD3⁺) events acquired during a fixed acquisition time (60 sec) was evaluated. Neither the control nor the 1633 BiKE treated animals showed significant evidence of circulating CD56⁺CD3⁺ human NK cells showing poor survival and expansion under these conditions (Figure 6C and 6D). In marked contrast, all of the 161533-TriKE-treated animals showed high levels of human NK cells (4261 \pm 410.6 events). Mice treated with 161533 TriKE had NK cell levels that were nearly 200-fold greater than BiKE NK levels indicating a robust biological contribution of the IL-15 molecule as an NK activating domain within the TriKE molecule. Thus, use of an IL-15 NK activating domain in the TriKE can reduce the need for therapy to include providing exogenous IL-15 to sustain NK cell numbers.

Flanking Sequences and Orientation Influence TriKE Activity

A variant of the 161533 construct was designed without the flanking sequences on either side of IL-15 in order to test the influence of the flanking sequences on the functionality of the molecule. The new variant, identified herein as 161533NL (SEQ ID NO:5), was compared to the 161533 construct (SEQ ID NO:1) in chromium release killing assays. FIG 7 shows in two independent donors (PB-1 and PB2) that flanking sequences influence the activity of the TriKE. Orientation variants also were constructed with IL-15 in the N-terminus (151633; SEQ ID NO:6) and C-terminus (163315; SEQ ID NO:7) positions. Figure 7 also shows that the 161533 construct, which includes IL-15 in the center position as a cross-linker and possesses the flanking sequences, results in greater NK cell cytolytic activity. Without the flanking sequences, 161533NL exhibited cytotoxicity at an E:T ratio of 20:1 of 25% compared to the parental wildtype 161533 (57%), confirming that the flanking sequences generally increase the NK cell cytolytic activity induced of TriKE constructs.

1615EpCAM TriKE

To construct a self-sustaining hybrid immune engager, a 1615EpCAM TriKE (Figure 8A, SEQ ID NO:8) was assembled by incorporating human IL-15 into the EpCAM16 BiKE (Figure 8B). The TriKE construct contains DNA fragments encoding the V_H and V_L regions of an anti-CD16 scFv, spliced to IL-15 and then to the V_H and V_L regions of an anti-EpCAM scFv. The IL-15 DNA fragment is flanked on either side by a 20 amino acid (aa) segment (SEQ ID NO:3) and EASGGPE (SEQ ID NO:4). Absorbance tracing for 1615EpCAM TriKE and EpCAM16 BiKE eluted from the FFQ ion exchange column as the first phase in drug purification using a three-step elution protocol are displayed in Figure 8C and 8D, respectively. The first peak eluted from the column represents the product of interest. When a similar quantity of inclusion bodies were refolded and purified, yield was unexpectedly improved with the addition of the IL-15 cross linker. When compared to the EpCAM16 BiKE, absorbance nearly tripled in the 1615EpCAM TriKE indicating superior yield. SDS-PAGE gel and Coomassie Blue staining show purity after both ion exchange and size exclusion column purifications (Figure 8E and 8F) resulting in a product that is over 90% pure with a size of about 68860 kDa. Thus, just as observed with the 161533 TriKE (SEQ ID NO:1), incorporating IL-15 directly into a hybrid TriKE confers superior purification properties in comparison to the corresponding BiKE—in this case, EpCAM16 — lacking IL-15.

1615EpCAM TriKE induces Chromium-51 Release

To determine the functional activity of 1615EpCAM, its killing ability was measured in standard ⁵¹chromium release assays (Figure 9). To determine the effect of incorporating IL-15 into the EpCAM16 scaffold, NK-cell-mediated cytotoxicity was evaluated in a wide range of donors having different NK cell contents. Freshly isolated PBMCs were added to HT-29 cells at Effector (E):Target (T) ratios of 20:1, 6.6:1, and 2.2:1, generating cytolytic curves. The engineered reagents were added at the concentration of 30nM (maximum effective dose after titration experiments). Donors with 3.8%, 6.4%, 15%, and enriched NK cells >80% (as determined by flow cytometry) showed that the IL-15 component generally improves the killing capabilities of NK cells (Figure 9A, 9B, 9C, and 9D, respectively). In Figure 9E, only the donor curves for 1615EpCAM were graphed, emphasizing a direct correlation between increasing NK presence and cytolytic activity. Figure 9F shows that for EpCAM16, no such correlation exists.

Due to baseline variation, reproducibility was ensured by repetition with different donors. Together, the data indicate that greater the number of NK cells in the assay, the greater the observed NK cytolytic activity.

5 *1615EpCAM TriKE induces lytic degranulation and IFN- γ expression in various cell lines*

To determine whether other EpCAM-expressing target cell lines induced similar 1615EpCAM TriKE-mediated NK cell activation as the HT-29 target line, NK cell function was tested on a variety of targets in conjunction with different drug treatments. Breast cancer (Figure 10A and 10B), prostate cancer (Figure 10C and 10D), head and neck cancer (Figure 10E and 10F), and ovarian cancer cell lines (Figure 10G) were studied. All EpCAM⁺ carcinoma lines treated with 1615EpCAM (SEQ ID NO:8) induced significantly elevated NK cell degranulation (p<0.001) when compared to various controls including E:T alone, E:T plus IL-15, E:T plus CD16CD133 (an irrelevant BiKE), and E plus IL-12/IL-18. The E:T plus EpCAM16 BiKE also demonstrated marked percentages of cells expressing CD107a and cytotoxic activity since the 15 BiKE possesses cytotoxic activity but lacks the ability to expand. Thus, in all cases, the values observed using the EpCAM16 BiKE were significantly less than values observed for 1615EpCAM (p<0.001).

1615EpCAM TriKE induces NK cell proliferation

20 The ability of the 1615EpCAM TriKE (SEQ ID NO:8) to induce proliferation in NK cells is shown in Figure 11. When donor PBMCs were exposed to the TriKE, NK cells but not T cells showed a proliferation-specific pattern as measured by flow cytometry (Figure 11A). The results were identical in three of the four donors. When exposed to the TriKE, NK cells undergo a more robust proliferation than T cells. Figure 11B shows a direct comparison of NK-proliferation 25 induced by the EpCAM16 BiKE and the 1615EpCAM TriKE. The TriKE induces proliferation and expansion, but the BiKE does not. To exclude the possibility of other factors that could induce NK cell proliferation, PBMCs were exposed to TriKE, BiKE, anti-CD16 scFv alone, IL-15 alone, anti-EpCAM scFv alone, or DT2219 (a targeted toxin comprising diphtheria toxin, linked to an anti-CD22 scFv and anti-CD19 scFv). Only TriKE-treated groups and IL-15-treated 30 groups displayed significant NK cell proliferation, as indicated by the changes in expansion index (Figure 11C), which reflects the fold expansion of the cells. The group stimulated with the TriKE

showed higher NK cell survival while the group exposed to the BiKE contained predominantly dead cells, as confirmed with forward/side scatter flow cytometry (Figure 11D) and trypan blue staining. These data indicate that besides increasing priming of the cells, the IL-15 moiety in the 1615EpCAM TriKE also induces expansion and maintenance of the NK cells.

5

1615EpCAM TriKE induces lytic degranulation and IFN- γ expression against HT-29 target cells

To study lytic degranulation as a parameter of NK cell activity, CD107a expression was measured within a CD56⁺/CD3⁻ NK cell population incubated with EpCAM-expressing HT-29 targets. Cells incubated with EpCAM16 BiKE showed elevated CD107a expression when compared with effectors alone, effectors plus targets without drug, or effectors plus targets with anti-EpCAM scFv. The 1615EpCAM TriKE induced significantly more CD107a expression than the BiKE (Figure 12A). The 1615EpCAM also induced significantly elevated degranulation when compared to an extensive panel of controls (including E:T alone, E:T plus anti-EpCAM scFv devoid of 1615, E:T plus anti-CD16 ScFv alone, CD2219, and E:T plus a combination of IL-12 and IL-18) that did not have any effect. Two different sources of stand-alone IL-15, when combined with E:T, also failed to enhance lytic degranulation (IL-15 self, linker protein; IL-15 NCI, NCI derived). IFN- γ production also was enhanced in the 1615EpCAM TriKE-treated NK cells when compared to NK cells treated with the BiKE alone or the BiKE plus IL-15, indicating the biological ability of the IL-15 moiety within the TriKE to induce priming for cytokine secretion (Figure 12B). As before, an extensive panel of controls was tested against the TriKE, in which only IL-12/IL-18 supraphysiologic stimulation outperformed the TriKE.

In Figure 12C, no CD107a expression was observed when NK cells were incubated with control EpCAM⁻ HL-60 myeloid leukemia cells. No elevation of IFN- γ expression was observed as expected with negative control HL-60 targets, except for control cells treated with IL-12/IL-18, showing the IFN- γ assay was working (Figure 1D).

1615EpCAM133 induces Chromium-51 Release

The design of the engineered tetraspecific 1615EpCAM133 (SEQ ID NO:9) is shown in Figure 13. 1615EpCAM133 activity was evaluated with chromium release assays in order to measure NK cell killing. The assay was performed using Caco-2 (CD133⁺, EpCAM⁻) and HT-29 (CD133⁻, EpCAM⁺) targets and freshly isolated NK cells of two donors (PT1 and PT2) for each

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cancer cell line, with no antibody (No Ab), anti-CD16 scFv, anti-CD133 scFv, anti-EpCAM scFv, IL-15 alone, and the EpCAM16 BiKE run as controls. In all donors and in both cancer cell types, 1615EpCAM133 showed superior killing at increasing E:T ratios (Figure 14A-D). Controls showed minimal activity. These data show that targeting two different moieties on the
5 tumor cell is possible. In this case, one is a broader epithelial marker target (EpCAM) and the other is the more specific anti-cancer stem cell target CD133.

1615EpCAM133 induces NK cell proliferation

The ability of 1615EpCAM133 to selectively bind is shown in Figure 15A and 15B. The
10 ability of the IL-15 moiety within the molecule to induce proliferation and survival is shown in Figure 15C-F. Purified NK cells were exposed to an anti-CD16 scFv, anti-CD133 scFv, 1615EpCAM133, DT2219 (mutated diphtheria toxin linked to an anti-CD22 and an anti-CD19 scFv), anti-EpCAM scFv, EpCAM16 BiKE, or IL-15 alone (NCI). Expansion index, which determines overall expansion of the culture, showed significantly enhanced expansion in the
15 1615EpCAM133 and in the IL-15 groups ($p < 0.001$), (Figure 15C). To compare the ability of the IL-15 linker to induce proliferation, PBMCs or purified NK cells were cultured after staining with a reactive dye and exposed to the EpCAM16 BiKE or the 1615EpCAM133 tetraspecific molecule. After incubation, flow cytometry was performed on gated CD56⁺ CD3⁻ cells to evaluate NK cells and on CD56⁻ CD3⁺ cells to evaluate T-cells. In Figure 15D, only NK cells
20 treated with 1615EpCAM133 showed substantial proliferation. Treatment with the EpCAM16 BiKE did not. The ability to induce specific proliferation to NK cell is shown in Figure 15E; T cells did not proliferate after exposure to 1615EpCAM133.

To study the ability of 1615EpCAM133 to enhance survival of NK cells, purified NK cells were co-cultured for seven days and treated with 1615EpCAM133 or EpCAM16 BiKE.
25 After live- dead staining via flow cytometry, a much higher percentages of live NK cells were seen in the 1615EpCAM133 group (Figure 15F).

1615133 induces Chromium-51 Release

The design of the engineered 1615133 is shown in Figure 16. In order to evaluate
30 functional activity of the 1615133 TriKE, standard ⁵¹Chromium release assays were performed. To determine the effect of incorporating IL-15 into the 16133 scaffold, the cytotoxicity was

evaluated using NK cells of two separate donors and Caco-2 tumor targets at different E:T ratios (20:1, 10:1, and 5:1) and compared activity between 1615133 TriKE, 16133 BiKE, anti-CD16 scFv, anti-CD133 scFv, and no drug treatment (Figure 17A and 17B). Killing of Caco-2 targets was elevated in the TriKE compared to controls. Dose dependent titration of the 1615133 TriKE (1 nM, 5 nM, and 10 nM) with a broader spectrum of E:T ratios (20:1, 6.6:1, 2.2:1, 0.7:1, 0.23:1, and 0.08:1) showed highest impact of the drug activity at higher doses (Figure 17C). To evaluate specificity of binding, flow-cytometry-based fluorescence intensity was measured after incubating Caco-2 cells with FITC-labeled 1615133 TriKE in different concentrations (1 nM, 5 nM, 10 nM, 50 nM, 100 nM, 200 nM, or 500 nM). When an unlabeled anti-CD133 scFv (200 nM) was added along with the 1615133 TriKE, binding was potently reduced (Figure 17D), indicating that the 1615133 TriKE binds to target cells specifically through interaction with CD133. Together, these data indicated that the ADCC mediated by the TriKE is antigen directed.

1615133 induces NK cell proliferation

The proliferation induced by 1615133 (SEQ ID NO:10) was measured by CELLTRACE dye dilution in the viable NK and T cell populations. When donor PBMCs were exposed to 1615133 TriKE or 16133 BiKE, only the TriKE group induced proliferation (Figure 18A). Importantly, comparison to other control agents including anti-CD16 scFv, anti-CD133 scFv, DT2219 (a targeted toxin consisting of an anti-CD22 and anti-CD19 scFv linked to a diphtheria toxin), and NCI derived IL-15 showed that only the 1615133 TriKE and NCI IL-15 induced proliferation. To show the potential of 1615133 TriKE to induce prolonged survival, purified NK cells were incubated for seven days with 1615133 or 16133 BiKE. A reactive dye was used to quantify cell death in the different treatment groups. The TriKE group showed a greater amount of live cells, which do not incorporate the reactive dye, compared to the BiKE (Figure 18B). Together, the results indicate that the IL-15 present in the 1615133 TriKE induces NK cell proliferation and prolonged their survival.

TriKEs generally induce Chromium-51 Release

⁵¹Chromium release assays were performed with several different TriKEs to show that any scFv that targets cancer cells can be incorporated into a functional TriKE. Non-small cell lung cancer cells (NCI-H460) cells were incubated with the 1615EPCAM133 TriKE (SEQ ID

NO:9) or the 1615NG2 TriKE. Both 1615NG2 and 1615EpCAM133 had activity at several different E:T ratios (20:1, 10:1, and 5:1). Figure 19B shows melanoma cells were incubated with the 1615EPCAM133 TriKE. Mesothelin+EpCAM-NG2 MDA-435A melanoma cells were incubated with 1615EPCAM TriKE, or the 1615Meso TriKE (SEQ ID NO:11). Only 1615Meso had activity. Ovarian cancer cells (Ovcar3 cells) were incubated with the 1615NG2 TriKE or the 1615Meso TriKE. Both TriKEs induced NK cytolytic activity. Also, an anti-leukemic TriKE was made recognizing the leukemia markers CD19 and CD22. 16152219 TriKE was tested on CD22+CD19+ Raji cells and killed them very well (as well as rituximab). Together, these data show that any scFv can be inserted into the generalized TriKE structural platform of 1615X and the resulting TriKE can direct NK cells to respond to the scFv target and expand. Additional exemplary TriKE molecules are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Exemplary TriKE molecules

TriKE molecule	Target(s)	ADCC*	Expansion**	Activation***
161533	CD33	+	+	+
1615EpCAM	EpCAM	+	+	+
1615EpCAM133	EpCAM/CD133	+/+	+/+	+/+
1615133	CD133	+	+	+
1615NG2	NG2	+	+	+
1615Meso	mesothelin	+	+	+
1615ROR-1	ROR-1	+	+	+
16a1538	CD38	+	+	+
1615IGF-1	IGF1	+	+	+
1615Her2	Her2/neu	+	+	+
16152219	CD22/CD19	+/+	+/+	+/+
Llama161533	CD33	+	+	+
1615HIV	HIV	+	+	+

15 *ADCC or cytotoxic activity enhanced over 30% by TriKE platform

**Expansion: TriKE enhances expansion of NK cells, BiKE does not.

***Activation: TriKE enhances the production of various anti-cancer cytokines including INF γ and TNF α .

20 Several TriKEs have been produced and tested in an identical manner, but target different cancer markers. CD33 or Siglec-3 (sialic acid binding Ig-like lectin 3, SIGLEC3, SIGLEC-3, gp67, p67) is a transmembrane receptor expressed on cells of myeloid lineage. It is usually considered myeloid-specific. EpCAM, epithelial cell adhesion molecule, is a transmembrane glycoprotein mediating Ca²⁺-independent homotypic cell–cell adhesion in epithelia. CD133, also

known as prominin-1, is a glycoprotein that in humans is encoded by the *PROM1* gene and a member of pentaspan transmembrane glycoproteins (5-transmembrane, 5-TM), which specifically localize to cellular protrusions. NG2 is chondroitin sulfate proteoglycan 4, also known as melanoma-associated chondroitin sulfate proteoglycan (MCSP) or neuron-gial antigen 2 (NG2). It represents an integral membrane chondroitin sulfate proteoglycan expressed by human malignant melanoma cells. Mesothelin is a 40 kDa protein present on normal mesothelial cells and overexpressed in several human tumors, including mesothelioma and ovarian and pancreatic adenocarcinoma. ROR-1 is a receptor tyrosine kinase that modulates neurite growth. It is a type I membrane protein belonging to the ROR subfamily of cell surface receptors and is currently under investigation for its role in the metastasis of cancer cells. HER2 is a member of the human epidermal growth factor receptor (HER/EGFR/ERBB) family. CD38 (cluster of differentiation 38), also known as cyclic ADP ribose hydrolase, is a glycoprotein found on the surface of many immune cells. IGF-1 is insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1), also called somatomedin C. IGF-1 is a protein that in humans is encoded by the *IGF1* gene and associated with breast cancer. The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a lentivirus (a subgroup of retrovirus) that causes HIV infection and over time acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and Kaposi Sarcoma.

CD3-IL2-EpCAM TriKE selectively boosts proliferation of T cells

TriKEs have been synthesized that work with IL-2 in place of IL-15 with the same flanking sequences. These stimulate the expansion of T cells rather than NK cells. The T-cell-directed TriKE CD3-IL-2-EpCAM (SEQ ID NO:13) was synthesized and tested for its ability to stimulate T cells rather than NK cells (FIG. 20). IL-2 is known to be a better stimulant of T cell proliferation than IL-15. PBMCs were CELLTRACE (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) labeled and placed in culture. The histogram shows that CD3-IL-2-EpCAM drove robust proliferation of T cells, but not NK cells. CD3-IL-2-EpCAM showed better stimulation than any other agent tested including 1615EpCAM TriKE (pos control), CD3EpCAM BiTE, CD3-IL-2-EpCAM, IL-2, or no treatment. These data indicate that IL-2 works in the same manner as IL-15 when used as a cross-linker on this platform.

Thus, this disclosure describes the design and use of a tri-specific killer engager (TriKE) capable of creating immunologic synapses between NK cells and a target. A CD33⁺ myeloid

target was used as a model target for a model TriKE that included an anti-CD16 antibody as a model NK engaging domain, an anti-CD33 antibody as a model targeting domain that targeted the CD33⁺ myeloid target, a model IL-15-based NK activating domain, and flanking sequences on either side of the NK activating domain linking the NK activating domain to the remaining
5 domains. The flanking sequences are PSGQAGAAASESLFVSNHAY (SEQ ID NO:3) upstream of the NK activating domain and EASGGPE (SEQ ID NO:4) downstream of the NK activating domain. The flanking sequences influence the functional activity of the TriKE molecules and represents an entirely unexpected finding.

One exemplary model TriKE (161533, SEQ ID NO:1) exhibited increased function to a
10 comparable bi-specific killer engager (1633 BiKE, SEQ ID NO:2) in cytotoxicity, CD107a degranulation, and cytokine production assays of NK-cell-mediated responses against HL-60 targets. The activity of the exemplary model TriKE in a physiologic context was evaluated using patient NK cells collected early after allogeneic stem cell transplantation, a context where NK cell function is defective. Compared to the 1633 BiKE, the TriKE containing an IL-15 NK
15 activating domain induced NK cell but not T cell survival and proliferation. The exemplary model TriKE molecule also induced the hyporesponsive patient NK cells to mediate potent responses against primary acute myeloid leukemia targets. Lastly, the exemplary model TriKE molecule exhibited superior anti-tumor activity compared to the comparable BiKE, and induced in vivo persistence and survival of human NK cells for at least three weeks in a xenogeneic
20 model using HL-60-Luc and human NK cells.

The data presented herein establish the utility of the exemplary TriKE molecule and provides the foundation for the design and construction of alternative TriKE molecules. As described in detail above, a TriKE molecule may be designed using any suitable NK engaging domain and/or any suitable targeting domain.

25 The exemplary 161533 TriKE (SEQ ID NO:1) was used as a model because CD16 is expressed on the surface of NK cells. Thus, an scFv that selectively binds to NK cells can be used as an NK cell engaging domain. CD33 is expressed on AML acute myeloid leukemia cells (a common form of adult leukemia), but is also found on myelodysplastic cells that may signal a predisposition to AML. Thus, and anti-CD33 scFv can be used as a targeting domain.

30 In an alternative embodiment, however, an anti-EpCAM antibody can be used in the targeting domain of a TriKE. EpCAM is an epithelial cancer marker expressed on most types of

carcinoma including, for example, lung, breast, colorectal, prostate, pancreatic, GI, renal, and ovarian cancer. Data showing that a TriKE (1615EpCAM, SEQ ID NO:8) that includes an anti-EpCAM scFv enhances killing of colorectal cancer cells indicates that any suitable targeting domain (e.g., any suitable scFv) can be included in a TriKE based on the anti-CD16/IL15 platform with similar success. The 1615EpCAM TriKE includes an anti-CD16 scFv as the NK engaging domain, and IL-15 NK activating domain, and the anti-EpCAM scFv as the targeting domain.

In yet another alternative embodiment, CD38 is known to be expressed on multiple myeloma cells. Data showing that a TriKE (16a1538, SEQ ID NO:16) that includes an anti-CD38 scFv enhances killing of multiple myeloma cells in vitro further indicates the general modularity of the TriKE platform. The 16a1538 TriKE includes an anti-CD16a scFv as the NK engaging domain, an IL-15 NK activating domain, and an anti-CD38 scFv as the targeting domain. Finally, one can create a TetraKE (tetramer) by designing the molecule to include a second targeting domain. For example, one can design a TetraKE to include an anti-CD133 scFv (SEQ ID NO:17) to, for example, the 1615EpCAM TriKE (SEQ ID NO:8) to form an exemplary TetraKE (1615EpCAM133, SEQ ID NO:9). CD133 is an established marker on cancer stem cells. Cancer stem cells represent the small population of stem cells in a tumor that are responsible for tumor initiation, renewal, and chemotherapy resistance.

In some embodiments this disclosure describes an immune engager that simultaneously mediates ADCC and provides a self-sustaining signal inducing NK effector cell expansion and maintenance. Although a BiKE that includes anti-CD16 scFv spliced to anti-EpCAM scFv promoted formation of an immune synapse between NK effector cells and EpCAM-expressing carcinoma cells that resulted in cytotoxic degranulation culminating in ADCC of the target cells, both cytotoxic activity and NK longevity can benefit by the addition of a costimulatory signal that enhances effector cell expansion directly at the site of immune engagement. In some embodiments, this costimulatory signal is provided by adding an agent well-suited for expanding NK cells. For example, to facilitate selective NK expansion, IL-15 was cross-linked into EpCAM16 BiKE. As shown in Example 2, the molecular addition of IL-15 to an immune engager can mediated NK proliferation, can produce sustained ADCC activity, and can improve lytic degranulation and cytokine secretion of the immune engager.

In some embodiments, the NK cell engager can involve the use of a humanized CD16 engager derived from an animal nanobody. While an scFv has a heavy variable chain component and a light variable chain component joined by a linker, a nanobody consists of a single monomeric variable chain—i.e., a variable heavy chain or a variable light chain—that is capable of specifically engaging a target. A nanobody may be derived from an antibody of any suitable animal such as, for example, a camelid (e.g., a llama or camel) or a cartilaginous fish. A nanobody can provide superior physical stability, an ability to bind deep grooves, and increased production yields compared to larger antibody fragments.

In one exemplary embodiment, a nanobody-based NK engager molecule can involve a humanized CD16 nanobody derived from a published llama nanobody (GeneBank sequence EF561291; Behar et al., 2008. *Protein Eng Des Sel.* 21(1):1-10), termed EF91. Llama EF91 was initially constructed into a BiKE containing CD19 to test the ability of this CD16 engager to drive NK cell activation. It showed functionality similar to rituximab-mediated killing in a chromium release assay with Raji targets (Figure 22A). Upon confirming functionality of the molecule, the CDRs were cloned into a humanized camelid scaffold (Vincke et al., 2009. *J Biol Chem.* 284(5):3273-3284) to humanize the CD16 engager, now termed HuEF91. The binding of HuEF91 is shown in Figure 22B and is equivalent to binding observed using a standard CD16 scFv, indicating that incorporating the llama nanobody variable heavy chain into the humanized backbone has not hindered the specificity of the molecule. The use HuEF91 as an NK engager in the TriKE molecules described herein can increase drug yield, increase stability, and/or increase NK-cell-mediated ADCC efficacy.

In some embodiments, an immune engager as described herein can be used to stimulate a patient's own immune system to eliminate tumor cells. Although studies show that T cells, genetically modified to express chimeric antigen receptors (CARs), are powerful clinical mediators of anti-tumor activity, production of T-CARs is costly and complex. Other disadvantages include the risk of cytokine toxicity and long-term persistence of T-CARs resulting in interaction with healthy tissue or neoplastic transformation. As described herein, a tri-specific killer engager can serve as a mediator of ADCC and can expand NK cells without the need of extracorporeal genetic modification and gene therapy, providing a potential advantage over the T-CAR system. Because the immune engager is rapidly cleared, the response cannot be

indefinitely sustained, perhaps reducing the risk of cytokine toxicity of the immune engagers compared to T-CARs.

In some embodiments, a tri-specific killer engager includes a cytokine. In some embodiments, a tri-specific killer engager preferably includes IL-15. IL-15 does not induce T_{regs} and IL-15 is a regulator of NK cells. In addition to improving activation and cytotoxicity, IL-15 can regulate and initiate anti-apoptotic and proliferative signals on NK cells, leading to enhanced NK cell expansion and survival. These characteristics can be beneficial during the use of the tri-specific killer engager in the treatment against cancer. In some embodiments, including IL-15 in the tri-specific killer engager can mediate directed delivery of the TriKE to the NK/Target cell synapse, potentially causing IL-15 to accumulate at a tumor site more effectively than systemic IL-15.

In some embodiments, a tri-specific killer engager preferably includes IL-15, anti-CD16 scFv, and anti-EpCAM scFv (1615EpCAM TriKE). In some embodiments, IL-15 acts as a crosslinker between the anti-CD16 scFv and the anti-EpCAM scFv.

In some embodiments, the immune engager increases the secretion of an immune cell-mediated cytokine. In some embodiments, the cytokine secretion is preferably antigen specific. In some embodiments, this cytokine can include IFN- γ , GM-CSF, IL-6, IL-8, and/or TNF- α . In some embodiments, this cytokine production is preferably at physiologic levels. In some embodiments, this cytokine production is at a level lower than the level observed in an IL-12/IL-18 stimulated NK cell (Papadakis et al., 2004. *J Immunol.* 172:7002-7007). As shown in Example 2, measuring hallmark inflammatory cytokines including GM-CSF, IL-6, IL-8, TNF- α using a cytokine Luminex analysis demonstrates a statistically significant difference in GM-CSF secretion between BiKE and TriKE but no difference in the secretion of other cytokines.

In some embodiments, the immune engager increases proliferation of a lymphocyte. The lymphocyte can include, for example, an NK cell, a $\gamma\delta$ -T cell, and/or, a CD8 T cell.

Just as the 1615EpCAM133 TetraKE molecule includes more than one targeting domain, one can design a TetraKE, or larger molecule, that includes more than one NK cell engager domain and/or more than one NK activating domain.

In another aspect, this disclosure describes methods of killing a target cell in a subject. Generally, the method includes administering to the subject a TriKE molecule in an amount effective to induce NK-mediated killing of the target cells. "Treat" or variations thereof refer to

reducing, limiting progression, ameliorating, or resolving, to any extent, the symptoms or signs related to a condition. As used herein, “ameliorate” refers to any reduction in the extent, severity, frequency, and/or likelihood of a symptom or clinical sign characteristic of a particular condition; “symptom” refers to any subjective evidence of disease or of a patient’s condition; and “sign” or “clinical sign” refers to an objective physical finding relating to a particular condition capable of being found by one other than the patient.

A “treatment” may be therapeutic or prophylactic. “Therapeutic” and variations thereof refer to a treatment that ameliorates one or more existing symptoms or clinical signs associated with a condition. “Prophylactic” and variations thereof refer to a treatment that limits, to any extent, the development and/or appearance of a symptom or clinical sign of a condition. Generally, a “therapeutic” treatment is initiated after the condition manifests in a subject, while “prophylactic” treatment is initiated before a condition manifests in a subject. Thus, in certain embodiments, the method can involve prophylactic treatment of a subject at risk of developing a condition. “At risk” refers to a subject that may or may not actually possess the described risk. Thus, for example, a subject “at risk” for developing a specified condition is a subject that possesses one or more indicia of increased risk of having, or developing, the specified condition compared to individuals who lack the one or more indicia, regardless of whether the subject manifests any symptom or clinical sign of having or developing the condition. Exemplary indicia of a condition can include, for example, genetic predisposition, ancestry, age, sex, geographical location, lifestyle, or medical history. Treatment may also be continued after symptoms have resolved, for example to prevent or delay their recurrence.

In some cases, the treatment can involve administering the TriKE molecule to a subject so that the TriKE molecule can stimulate endogenous NK cells *in vivo*. Using a TriKE molecule as a part of an *in vivo* can make NK cells antigen specific with simultaneous co-stimulation, enhancement of survival, and expansion, which may be antigen specific. In other cases, the TriKE can be used *in vitro* as an adjuvant to NK cell adoptive transfer therapy.

In another aspect, the TriKE can be designed to activate T cells rather than NK cells. In this aspect, the TriKE can generally include one or more T cell engaging domains, one or more T cell activating domains, and one or more targeting domain (that target, e.g., a tumor cell or virally-infected cell), and one or more T cell activating domains (e.g., IL-2 or other T cell

enhancing cytokine, chemokine, and/or activating molecule), with each domain operably linked to the other domains.

The T cell engaging domain can include any moiety that binds to and/or activates a T cell and/or any moiety that blocks inhibition of a T cell. In some embodiments, the T cell engaging domain can include an antibody or fragment thereof that selectively binds to a component of the surface of a T cell. In other embodiments, the T cell engaging domain can include a ligand or small molecule that selectively binds to a component of the surface of a T cell.

In some embodiments, the T cell engaging domain can selectively bind to a receptor at least partially located at the surface of a T cell. In certain embodiments, the T cell engaging domain can serve a function of binding a T cell and thereby bring the T cell into spatial proximity with a target to which the targeting domain—described in more detail below—selectively binds. In certain embodiments, however, the T cell engaging domain can selectively bind to a receptor that activates the T cell and, therefore, also possess an activating function.

While described herein in the context of various embodiments in which the T cell engaging domain includes an anti-CD3 receptor scFv, the T cell engaging domain can include any antibody or other ligand that selectively binds to the CD3 receptor. Moreover, the T cell engaging domain can include an antibody or ligand that selectively binds to any T cell receptor such as, for example, an anti-CD4 antibody, an anti-CD8 antibody, an anti-LFA-1 antibody, an anti-LFA-2 antibody, an anti-CTLA4 antibody, an anti-TCR antibody, an anti-CD28 antibody, an anti-CD25 antibody, an anti-PD1 antibody, PD-1L, B7-1, B7-2, MHC molecules, CD80, CD86, B7H, an anti-SLAM antibody, or an anti-BTLA antibody.

The targeting domain can include any moiety that selectively binds to an intended target such as, for example, a tumor cell, a target in the cancer stroma, a target on an inhibitory cell such as myeloid derived suppressor cells that are CD33+, or a target on a virally-infected cell. Thus, a targeting domain can include, for example, any one of the targeting domains described above in the context of NK-activating TriKE molecules.

The T cell activating domain can include an amino acid sequence that activates T cells, promotes sustaining T cells, or otherwise promotes T cell activity. The T cell activating domain can be, or can be derived from, one or more cytokines that can activate and/or sustain T cells. As used herein, the term “derived from” refers to an amino acid fragment of a cytokine (e.g., IL-2) that is sufficient to provide T cell activating and/or sustaining activity. In embodiments that

include more than one T activating domain, the T activating domains may be provided in series or in any other combination. Additionally, each cytokine-based T activating domain can include either the full amino acid sequence of the cytokine or may be an amino acid fragment, independent of the nature of other T cell activating domains included in the TriKE molecule.

5 Exemplary cytokines on which a T cell activating domain may be based include, for example, IL-2 or any cytokine of the IL-2 family that shares a chain with the IL-2 receptor such as, for example, IL-15, IL-4, IL-7, IL-9, IL-21, and IL-13. Thus, while described in detail herein in the context of an exemplary model embodiment in which the T cell activating domain is derived from IL-2, a TriKE may be designed using a T cell activating domain that is, or is derived from,
10 any suitable cytokine.

For brevity in this description, reference to a T cell activating domain by identifying the cytokine on which it is based includes both the full amino acid sequence of the cytokine and any suitable amino acid fragment of the cytokine. Thus, reference to an “IL-2” T cell activating domain includes a T cell activating domain that includes the full amino acid sequence of IL-2 or
15 an T cell activating domain that includes a fragment of IL-2. In some embodiments, therefore, the T cell activating domain can include the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 18.

In another aspect, this disclosure describes methods of killing a target cell in a subject. Generally, the method includes administering to the subject a TriKE molecule in an amount effective to induce T-cell-mediated killing of the target cells. Here again, the treatment may be
20 therapeutic or prophylactic as described above in the context of methods that involve the use of an NK-activating TriKE.

Accordingly, a TriKE molecule—whether an NK-activating TriKE or a T-cell-activating TriKE—may be administered before, during, or after the subject first exhibits a symptom or clinical sign of the condition. Treatment initiated before the subject first exhibits a symptom or clinical sign associated with the condition may result in decreasing the likelihood that the
25 subject experiences clinical evidence of the condition compared to a subject to which the TriKE molecule is not administered, decreasing the severity of symptoms and/or clinical signs of the condition, and/or completely resolving the condition. Treatment initiated after the subject first exhibits a symptom or clinical sign associated with the condition may result in decreasing the
30 severity of symptoms and/or clinical signs of the condition compared to a subject to which the composition is not administered, and/or completely resolving the condition.

The TriKE molecule can be any embodiment of the TriKE molecule described above having a targeting domain that selectively binds to an appropriate target cell population. In some cases, the target cell can include a tumor cell so that the method can involve treating cancer associated with the tumor cells. Thus, in some embodiments, the method can include
5 ameliorating at least one symptom or clinical sign of the tumor.

In embodiments in which the target cell includes a tumor cell, the method can further include surgically resecting the tumor and/or reducing the size of the tumor through chemical (e.g., chemotherapeutic) and/or radiation therapy. Exemplary tumors that may be treated include tumors associated with prostate cancer, lung cancer, colon cancer, rectum cancer, urinary bladder
10 cancer, melanoma, kidney cancer, renal cancer, oral cavity cancer, pharynx cancer, pancreas cancer, uterine cancer, thyroid cancer, skin cancer, head and neck cancer, cervical cancer, ovarian cancer and/or hematopoietic cancer.

In various embodiments, the TriKE targeting domain can include a polypeptide that selectively binds to, for example, EGFR, HER2/neu EpCAM, CSPG4, HSPG2, IGF-1, CD38,
15 CD19, CD20, CD22, CD30, CD52, CD33, ROR-1, UPAR, VEGFR, CD33, LIV-1, SGN-CD70A, CD70, IL-3, IL-4R, CD133, mesothelin, the epithelial-mesenchymal transition (EMT), TRAIL, CD38, CD45, CD74, CD23, or cancer viral markers such as HIV.

As used herein, a “subject” can be any animal such as, for example, a mammal (e.g., dog, cat, horse, cow, sheep, goat, monkey, etc.). In certain embodiments, the subject can be a human.
20

A TriKE molecule described herein may be formulated with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier. As used herein, “carrier” includes any solvent, dispersion medium, vehicle, coating, diluent, antibacterial, and/or antifungal agent, isotonic agent, absorption delaying agent, buffer, carrier solution, suspension, colloid, and the like. The use of such media and/or agents for pharmaceutical active substances is well known in the art. Except insofar as any conventional
25 media or agent is incompatible with the active ingredient, its use in the therapeutic compositions is contemplated. Supplementary active ingredients also can be incorporated into the compositions. As used herein, “pharmaceutically acceptable” refers to a material that is not biologically or otherwise undesirable, i.e., the material may be administered to an individual along with a TriKE molecule without causing any undesirable biological effects or interacting in
30 a deleterious manner with any of the other components of the pharmaceutical composition in which it is contained.

A TriKE molecule may therefore be formulated into a pharmaceutical composition. The pharmaceutical composition may be formulated in a variety of forms adapted to a preferred route of administration. Thus, a composition can be administered via known routes including, for example, oral, parenteral (e.g., intradermal, transcutaneous, subcutaneous, intramuscular, intravenous, intraperitoneal, etc.), or topical (e.g., intranasal, intrapulmonary, intramammary, intravaginal, intrauterine, intradermal, transcutaneous, rectally, etc.). A pharmaceutical composition can be administered to a mucosal surface, such as by administration to, for example, the nasal or respiratory mucosa (e.g., by spray or aerosol). A composition also can be administered via a sustained or delayed release.

Thus, a TriKE molecule may be provided in any suitable form including but not limited to a solution, a suspension, an emulsion, a spray, an aerosol, or any form of mixture. The composition may be delivered in formulation with any pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, carrier, or vehicle. For example, the formulation may be delivered in a conventional topical dosage form such as, for example, a cream, an ointment, an aerosol formulation, a non-aerosol spray, a gel, a lotion, and the like. The formulation may further include one or more additives including such as, for example, an adjuvant, a skin penetration enhancer, a colorant, a fragrance, a flavoring, a moisturizer, a thickener, and the like.

A formulation may be conveniently presented in unit dosage form and may be prepared by methods well known in the art of pharmacy. Methods of preparing a composition with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier include the step of bringing a TriKE molecule into association with a carrier that constitutes one or more accessory ingredients. In general, a formulation may be prepared by uniformly and/or intimately bringing the active molecule into association with a liquid carrier, a finely divided solid carrier, or both, and then, if necessary, shaping the product into the desired formulations.

The amount of TriKE molecule administered can vary depending on various factors including, but not limited to, the specific TriKE molecule being used, the weight, physical condition, and/or age of the subject, and/or the route of administration. Thus, the absolute weight of TriKE molecule included in a given unit dosage form can vary widely, and depends upon factors such as the species, age, weight and physical condition of the subject, and/or the method of administration. Accordingly, it is not practical to set forth generally the amount that constitutes an amount of TriKE molecule effective for all possible applications. Those of

ordinary skill in the art, however, can readily determine the appropriate amount with due consideration of such factors.

In some embodiments, the method can include administering sufficient TriKE molecule to provide a dose of, for example, from about 100 ng/kg to about 50 mg/kg to the subject, although in some embodiments the methods may be performed by administering TriKE molecule in a dose outside this range. In some of these embodiments, the method includes administering sufficient TriKE molecule to provide a dose of from about 10 µg/kg to about 5 mg/kg to the subject, for example, a dose of from about 100 µg/kg to about 1 mg/kg.

Alternatively, the dose may be calculated using actual body weight obtained just prior to the beginning of a treatment course. For the dosages calculated in this way, body surface area (m^2) is calculated prior to the beginning of the treatment course using the Dubois method: $m^2 = (wt\ kg^{0.425} \times height\ cm^{0.725}) \times 0.007184$.

In some embodiments, the method can include administering sufficient TriKE molecule to provide a dose of, for example, from about 0.01 mg/m² to about 10 mg/m².

In some embodiments, a TriKE molecule may be administered, for example, from a single dose to multiple doses per week, although in some embodiments the method can be performed by administering a TriKE molecule at a frequency outside this range. In certain embodiments, a TriKE molecule may be administered from about once per month to about five times per week.

In some embodiments, the method further includes administering one or more additional therapeutic agents. The one or more additional therapeutic agents may be administered before, after, and/or coincident to the administration of a TriKE molecule. A TriKE molecule and the additional therapeutic agents may be co-administered. As used herein, "co-administered" refers to two or more components of a combination administered so that the therapeutic or prophylactic effects of the combination can be greater than the therapeutic or prophylactic effects of either component administered alone. Two components may be co-administered simultaneously or sequentially. Simultaneously co-administered components may be provided in one or more pharmaceutical compositions. Sequential co-administration of two or more components includes cases in which the components are administered so that each component can be present at the treatment site at the same time. Alternatively, sequential co-administration of two components can include cases in which at least one component has been cleared from a treatment site, but at

least one cellular effect of administering the component (e.g., cytokine production, activation of a certain cell population, etc.) persists at the treatment site until one or more additional components are administered to the treatment site. Thus, a co-administered combination can, in certain circumstances, include components that never exist in a chemical mixture with one
5 another. In other embodiments, the TriKE molecule and the additional therapeutic agent may be administered as part of a mixture or cocktail. In some aspects, the administration of TriKE molecule may allow for the effectiveness of a lower dosage of other therapeutic modalities when compared to the administration of the other therapeutic agent or agents alone, thereby decreasing the likelihood, severity, and/or extent of the toxicity observed when a higher dose of the other
10 therapeutic agent or agents is administered.

Exemplary additional therapeutic agents include altretamine, amsacrine, L-asparaginase, colaspase, bleomycin, busulfan, capecitabine, carboplatin, carmustine, chlorambucil, cisplatin, cladribine, cyclophosphamide, cytophosphane, cytarabine, dacarbazine, dactinomycin, daunorubicin, docetaxel, doxorubicin, epirubicin, etoposide, fluorouracil, fludarabine,
15 fotemustine, ganciclovir, gemcitabine, hydroxyurea, idarubicin, ifosfamide, irinotecan, lomustine, melphalan, mercaptopurine, methotrexate, mitoxantrone, mitomycin C, nimustine, oxaliplatin, paclitaxel, pemetrexed, procarbazine, raltitrexed, temozolomide, teniposide, tioguanine, thiotepa, topotecan, vinblastine, vincristine, vindesine, and vinorelbine.

In some embodiments, of the method can include administering sufficient TriKE
20 molecule as described herein and administering the at least one additional therapeutic agent demonstrate therapeutic synergy. In some aspects of the methods of the present invention, a measurement of response to treatment observed after administering both a TriKE molecule as described herein and the additional therapeutic agent is improved over the same measurement of response to treatment observed after administering either the TriKE molecule or the additional
25 therapeutic agent alone. In some embodiments, an additional therapeutic agent can include an additional agent that targets EpCAM including, for example, an EpCAM specific monoclonal antibody, such as, for example, Catumaxomab, a monoclonal hybrid antibody targeting EpCAM and CD3.

In the preceding description and following claims, the term “and/or” means one or all of
30 the listed elements or a combination of any two or more of the listed elements; the terms “comprises,” “comprising,” and variations thereof are to be construed as open ended—i.e.,

additional elements or steps are optional and may or may not be present; unless otherwise specified, “a,” “an,” “the,” and “at least one” are used interchangeably and mean one or more than one; and the recitations of numerical ranges by endpoints include all numbers subsumed within that range (e.g., 1 to 5 includes 1, 1.5, 2, 2.75, 3, 3.80, 4, 5, etc.).

5 In the preceding description, particular embodiments may be described in isolation for clarity. Unless otherwise expressly specified that the features of a particular embodiment are incompatible with the features of another embodiment, certain embodiments can include a combination of compatible features described herein in connection with one or more embodiments.

10 For any method disclosed herein that includes discrete steps, the steps may be conducted in any feasible order. And, as appropriate, any combination of two or more steps may be conducted simultaneously.

 The present invention is illustrated by the following examples. It is to be understood that the particular examples, materials, amounts, and procedures are to be interpreted broadly in
15 accordance with the scope and spirit of the invention as set forth herein.

EXAMPLES

Example 1*Cell Isolation, Patients and Samples*

PBMCs from age-matched normal donors were isolated from adult blood obtained from
5 Memorial Blood Center (Minneapolis, MN) by centrifugation using a Histopaque gradient
(Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO) and cryopreserved. For the post-transplant patient sample study,
matched sibling donor allogeneic hematopoietic cell transplant samples were used from an
immune reconstitution tissue bank. Recipient PBMCs were collected at either day 100 [n = 5] or
earlier (day 20-44) [n = 5] after transplant and cryopreserved for future use. All samples were
10 obtained after informed consent, using guidelines approved by the Committee on the Use of
Human Subjects in Research at the University of Minnesota in accordance with the Declaration
of Helsinki.

Cell Lines

15 HL-60, a CD33⁺ human acute promyelocytic leukemia cell line (ATCC, Manassas, VA),
was cultured in Iscove's medium (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA) supplemented with 20% FBS
(Gibco-Invitrogen) and 100 U/mL penicillin and 100 U/mL streptomycin (Invitrogen, Carlsbad,
CA) at 37°C and 5% CO₂. The control human colorectal carcinoma cell line HT-29 (ATCC) was
cultured at 37°C with 5% CO₂ in Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium (DMEM), high glucose
20 (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA) supplemented with 10% FBS and 100 U/mL penicillin and 100 U/mL
streptomycin.

Construction, Expression and Purification of BiKEs and TriKEs

The hybrid polynucleotide encoding 161533 (SEQ ID NO:1) was synthesized using DNA
25 shuffling and DNA ligation techniques (Vallera et al., 2013 *Cancer Biother Radiopharm* 4:274-
482; Vallera et al., 2009. *Leuk Res* 33(9):1233-1242). Coding regions for the V_L and V_H of each
scFv were linked by a fragment encoding G4S linker. In its final configuration, the 161533
NcoI/XhoI polynucleotide has a start codon followed first by coding regions for anti-human
CD16 scFv (McCall et al., 1999. *Mol Immunol.* 7:433-445), a 20 amino acid flanking
30 polypeptide (PSGQAGAAASESLFVSNHAY; SEQ ID NO:3), human IL-15N72D, a seven
amino acid flanking polypeptide (EASGGPE; SEQ ID NO:4), and then the anti-CD33 scFv. The

polynucleotide was spliced into the pET28c expression vector and inclusion bodies expressed. DNA-sequencing analysis (Biomedical Genomics Center, University of Minnesota) was used to verify that the polynucleotide was correct in sequence and cloned in frame.

The same components were used to construct a hybrid polynucleotide encoding 163315
5 (SEQ ID NO:7), except that the order of the components was CD16scFv, the flanking polypeptide PSGQAGAAASESLFVSNHAY (SEQ ID NO:3), anti-CD33 scFv, the flanking polypeptide EASGGPE (SEQ ID NO:4), then human IL-15.

Plasmid was transformed into the *Escherichia coli* strain BL21(DE3)(EMD, Madison
10 WI). Bacteria were grown in 600 ml Luria Broth supplemented with 100 µg/ml kanamycin in a 2 L flask at 37°C with shaking. Expression of the hybrid polynucleotide was induced by the addition of isopropyl-b-D-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG, FisherBiotech Fair Lawn, NJ). Two hours after induction, the bacteria were harvested by centrifugation. The cell pellets were suspended and homogenized using a polytron homogenizer. After sonication and centrifugation, the pellets were extracted with 0.3% sodium Deoxycholate, 5% Triton X-100, 10% Glycerin, 50
15 mM Tris, 50 mM NaCl, 5 mM EDTA, pH 8.0 and inclusion bodies extensively washed to remove endotoxin.

The proteins were refolded using a sodium N-lauroyl-sarcosine (SLS) air oxidation method modified from a previously reported procedure for isolating scFv (Vallera et al., 2005. *Leuk Res* 29(3):331-341). Refolded 161533 was purified by FPLC ion exchange chromatography
20 (Q Sepharose Fast Flow, Sigma, St. Louis, MO) using a stepwise gradient from 0.2 M to 0.5 M NaCl in 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 9.0 over four column volumes.

Flow Cytometry

Cells were immunophenotyped with the following fluorescent-labeled monoclonal
25 antibodies (mAb) against: PE-Cy7-conjugated CD56 (HCD56; BioLegend, Inc., San Diego, CA), ECD/PE-CF594-conjugated CD3 (UCHT1; Beckman Coulter, Brea, CA), APC-Cy7-conjugated CD16 (3G8; BioLegend, Inc.), Pacific Blue-conjugated CD45 (HI30; BioLegend, Inc.), PerCP-Cy5.5/FITC-conjugated anti-human CD107a (LAMP-1) (H4A3; BioLegend, Inc.), Pacific Blue/BV421-conjugated anti-human IFN-γ (4S.B3; BioLegend, Inc.), FITC/Alexa Fluor
30 647-conjugated TNF-α (MAb11; BioLegend, Inc.), FITC/PE-conjugated CD33 (P67.6; BD Biosciences), and APC-conjugated CD45 (HI30; BioLegend, Inc.), FITC-conjugated EpCAM;

(BioLegend, Inc.). Phenotypic acquisition of cells was performed on the LSRII (BD Biosciences) and analyzed with FlowJo software (Tree Star Inc., Ashland, OR).

CD107a and IFN γ /TNF α Functional Flow Assay

5 Post-transplant patient PBMCs or primary AML blasts were thawed and placed in RPMI-10 overnight. The next night, the PBMCs were incubated with 50 nM 1633 BiKE or 161533 TriKE. The next morning cells were washed and another round of 50 nM 1633 BiKE or 161533 TriKE was added to address any possible issues with molecule internalization. HL-60 Targets or primary AML blasts were added immediately after to generate a 5:1 effector to target ratio.
10 PBMCs, HL-60 targets or primary AML blasts, and BiKE or TriKE molecules were co-cultured for four hours and CD107a expression and intracellular IFN- γ and TNF- α production were evaluated as previously described (Vallera et al., 2013 *Cancer Biother Radiopharm* 4:274-282).

Proliferation Assay

15 PBMCs from post-transplant patients (day 100 or earlier [day 20-44]) were labeled with CELLTRACE Violet Cell Proliferation Dye (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA), per manufacturer's protocol, placed in culture medium with HL-60 target cells at 5:1 (E:T) ratio, and treated with 50 nM 1633 BiKE or 161533 TriKE. Cells were then harvested seven days later and analyzed for viability, through Live/Dead staining, and proliferation, through dilution of
20 CELLTRACE, in the NK cell (CD56⁺CD3⁻) population.

⁵¹Chromium Release Cytotoxicity Assay

Cytotoxicity was evaluated by 4-hour ⁵¹Cr-release assays. Briefly, resting PBMC from normal donors treated with the 1633 BiKE (10 μ g/mL), scFvCD16 control reagent (10 μ g/mL) or
25 no reagent were co-cultured for four hours with ⁵¹Cr-labeled or HL-60 targets at varying E:T ratios. For post-transplant study PBMCs cells were with HL-60 targets at a 20:1 (E:T) ratio in the presence of 50 nM 1633 BiKE or 50 nM 161533 TriKE. ⁵¹Cr release was measured by a gamma scintillation counter (Perkin Elmer, Walthman, MA) and specific target lysis was determined
(Vallera et al., 2013. *Cancer Biother Radiopharm* 4:274-282).

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In vivo Mouse Study and Imaging

NSG mice (n=5/group) were conditioned with 275 cGy and injected IV with 0.75×10^5 HL-60-luc S4 subcultured for tumor invasiveness. Drug treatment was begun on day 3. A single course of treatment consisted of an intraperitoneal (IP) injection of 20 μ g of drug given every day for a week (MTWThF) and mice were treated for three weeks. The control group received no NK cells while the 1633 BiKE and the 161533 TriKE groups received 1×10^6 NK cells, calculated from a CD3/CD19 magnetically depleted product, three days after injection of the HL-60-luc cells. The HL-60-luc cells contain a luciferase reporter, allowing for imaging of the mice each week to determine their bioluminescent activity and monitor cancer leukemia progression as described previously (Waldron et al., 2011. *Mol Cancer Ther* 10(10):1829-1838.). Briefly, mice were injected with 100 μ l of 30 mg/ml luciferin substrate 10 minutes prior to imaging and then anesthetized via inhalation of isoflurane gas. The mice were then imaged using the Xenogen Ivis 100 imaging system and analyzed with Living Image 2.5 software (Xenogen Corporation, Hopkington MA). On day 20, all the animals were bled and two-minute exposures were made and units for the regions of interest (ROI) were expressed as photons/sec/cm²/sr. The blood was analyzed by flow cytometry for presence of human CD45⁺CD56⁺CD3⁻ NK cells. A second experiment was performed to verify reproducibility of data.

Statistical Analysis

Grouped data were expressed as mean \pm standard error mean (SEM). Differences between two groups were analyzed by Student's t test. Multiple comparisons were analyzed by paired one-way ANOVA with Tukey correction. Analysis was carried out in Graphpad Prism software.

Example 2

Construction of 1615EpCAM TriKE

Synthesis and assembly of a hybrid polynucleotide encoding 1615EpCAM TriKE (SEQ ID NO:8) was accomplished using DNA shuffling and ligation techniques. The fully-assembled 1615EpCAM polynucleotide has, from the 5' end to the 3' end, an NcoI restriction site; an ATG initiation codon; coding regions encoding the V_H and V_L regions of human CD16 (NM3E2) derived from a phage display library produced by McCall et al. (*Mol Immunol.*, 1999, 36:433-

445), a 20 amino acid segment (PSGQAGAAASESLFVSNHAY; SEQ ID NO:3), modified IL-15N72D, a seven amino acid linker (EASGGPE; SEQ ID NO:4), and the humanized anti-EPCAM scFv from the antibody MOC-31; and finally a XhoI restriction site. The resulting 1914 bp NcoI/XhoI polynucleotide was spliced into the pET21c expression vector under control of an isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG) inducible T7 promoter. DNA sequencing analysis (Biomedical Genomics Center, University of Minnesota, MN, USA) was used to verify that the polynucleotide was correct in sequence and had been cloned in frame. Other constructs used in this study, were created in a similar manner but including coding regions for monospecific anti-CD16 scFv, and anti-EpCAM scFv.

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Inclusion Body Isolation

Bacterial protein expression was performed with *Escherichia coli* strain BL21 (DE3) (Novagen, Madison, WI, USA) by plasmid transformation. After overnight culture, bacteria were grown in 800 ml Luria broth containing 50 mg/ml kanamycin. Induction of gene expression occurred when culture media reached an optical density (OD) 600 of 0.65 with the addition of IPTG (FischerBiotech, Fair Lawn, NJ, USA). Two hours after induction, bacteria were harvested (from 5 liters cultured media a 43 g bacterial pellet was isolated). Next, the pellet was homogenized in a buffer solution (50 mM Tris, 50 mM NaCl, and 5 mM EDTA pH 8.0), sonicated and centrifuged. Pellets were extracted with 0.3% sodium deoxycholate, 5% Triton X-100, 10% glycerin, 50 mmol/L Tris, 50 mmol/L NaCl, 5 mmol/L EDTA (pH 8.0) and washed (final pellet weight: 12.5 g).

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Refolding and Purification

Refolding and purification was performed as previously described (Schmohl et al., 2016. *Target Oncol.* 11(3):353-361). Briefly, in order to refold, proteins from inclusion bodies (IB) were dissolved at 20:1 (mg wet weight/mL) in solubilization buffer (7 M Guanidine Hydrochloride, 50 mM Tris, 50 mM NaCl, 5 mM EDTA and 50 mM DTT, pH 8.0). Following a one-hour incubation at 37°C, pellets were removed by centrifugation. The supernatant was diluted (20-fold) with refolding buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl, 50 mM NaCl, 0.8 mM L-arginine, 20% glycerin, 5 mM EDTA and 1 mM GSSG, pH 8.0) at 4°C for two days. The buffer was removed by 10-fold dialysis against 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 9.0 in 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 9.0 over four

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column volumes. SDS-PAGE analysis was performed to evaluate purity. The fusion proteins were stained with Simply Blue life Stain (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA). The size of the TriKE was about 68860 Da.

5 *NK cell Isolation and Purification*

A histopaque gradient (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA) and SEPMATE tubes (Stemcell Technologies, Inc., Vancouver, Canada) were used to isolate peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) from adult blood (Memorial Blood Center, Minneapolis, MN, USA) of healthy volunteers and to obtain enriched NK cells via negative selection using magnetic
10 beads per the manufacturer's protocol (Stemcell Technologies, Inc., Vancouver, Canada). Samples were obtained after informed consent and in accordance with the University of Minnesota human subjects Institutional Review Board and the Declaration of Helsinki.

Tissue culture

15 The following cell lines were obtained from the American Type Culture Collection: Breast cancer cell lines BT-474, SK-BR-3; prostate cancer cell lines PC-3, DU145; head-and-neck cancer cell lines UMSCC-11B, NA; ovarian cancer cell line SKOV-1; colon carcinoma cell line HT-29; lung cancer cell line Calu-3; Burkitts lymphoma cell line Daudi; acute myeloid leukemia cell line HL-60; human glioblastoma cell line U87. Carcinoma and glioblastoma cell
20 lines were grown in monolayers using tissue flasks (Fogh et al., 1977. *J Natl Cancer Inst* 59:221-226), HL-60 and Daudi cell lines (Klein et al., 1968. *Cancer Res* 28:1300-1310) were grown in suspension. Cells were maintained in either RPMI 1640 (BT-474, SK-BR-3, PC-3, DU-145, HT-29, Daudi, HL60, Calu-3), DMEM (UMSCC-11B, NA, SK-OV-3, U87) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum and 2 mmol/L L-glutamine. In addition to the preceding supplements, BT-474
25 media contained 10 IU/mL insulin. Cells were incubated in a humidified constant 37C° atmosphere containing 5% CO₂. When cells were 90% confluent, they were passaged using trypsin-EDTA for detachment. Cell counts were conducted using a standard hemacytometer. Only cells with a viability >95%, as determined by trypan blue exclusion, were used for
30 experiments.

Binding/Blocking assay

To evaluate binding, 4×10^5 of the respective cancer cells (BT-474, PC-3, UMSCC-11B, Calu-3, Daudi, U87) were washed and incubated in 4°C with 10 nM Fluorescein isothiocyanate (FITC)-labeled anti-EpCAM scFv for 30 minutes. For the blocking assay 200 nM FITC labeled
5 1615EpCAM TriKE was added to either 500 nM of anti-EpCAM scFv or an anti-CD22-CD19 scFv construct and was incubated for 30 minutes in 4°C with HT-29 colon carcinoma cells. After washing, staining intensity was evaluated with an LSRII flow cytometer (BD Biosciences, San Jose, CA, USA).

10 *CD107a Degranulation Assay*

Flow cytometry assays measuring cytolytic degranulation via CD107a expression and IFN- γ presence were performed previously reported (Gleason et al., 2012. *Mol Cancer Ther* 11:2674-2684). PBMCs were incubated overnight (37°C, 5% CO₂) in RPMI 1640 supplemented with 10% fetal calf serum and with recombinant IL-12 10 ng/ml (PeproTech, Rocky Hill, NJ)
15 and IL-18 100 ng/ml (R&D Systems, Inc., Minneapolis, MN, USA) as a positive control. Cells were washed in 1X PBS, treated with 30 nM of 1615EpCAM TriKE or other drugs and incubated for 10 minutes at 37°C with 5% CO₂. FITC-conjugated anti-human CD107a monoclonal antibody (mAb) (LAMP-1) (BD Biosciences, San Jose, CA) was added and further incubated for one hour with respective target cells (BT-474, SK-BR-3, PC-3, DU-145, HT-29,
20 HL60, UMSCC-11B, NA, SK-OV-3). GolgiStop (1:1500) (BD Biosciences, San Jose, CA) and GolgiPlug (1:1000) (BD Biosciences, San Jose, CA) were added and cells were further incubated for three hours. Cells were washed in 1X PBS and stained with PE/Cy7-conjugated anti-CD56 mAb, APC/Cy 7-conjugated anti-CD16 mAb and PE-CF594-conjugated anti-CD3 mAb (BioLegend, Inc., San Diego, CA), incubated for 15 minutes and then fixed in 2%
25 paraformaldehyde. Then cells were prepared for intracellular stain using permeabilization buffer (BD Biosciences, San Jose, CA). Cells were incubated with Pacific Blue-conjugated anti-human IFN- γ (BioLegend, Inc., San Diego, CA) for 20 minutes, washed and evaluated by FACS analysis using a LSRII flow cytometer (BD Biosciences, San Jose, CA). For compensation CompBead Plus Anti-Mouse Ig, κ /Negative Control (BSA) Compensation Plus (7.5 μ m)
30 particles (BD Biosciences, San Jose, CA) were used.

Chromium-51 Release Cytotoxicity Assay

HT-29 target cells were labeled for 1 hour with 1 μ Ci of ⁵¹Cr per 1 \times 10⁵ target cells at 37°C, 5% CO₂. Washing procedures were performed to remove excess ⁵¹Cr. Labeled target cells were added to the wells of 96-well round-bottom plates (5 \times 10³ cells). Resting effector NK cells
5 treated with 1615EpCAM TriKE, EpCAM16 BiKE or negative controls were added to the plates. E:T ratio ranged between 20:1 and 0.08:1. The amount of ⁵¹Cr released, which corresponds to target cell death, was measured by a gamma scintillation counter, and the percent target cell lysis was calculated as follows: [(experimental lysis - spontaneous lysis)/(maximal lysis - spontaneous lysis)] \times 100. To determine maximal lysis, ⁵¹Cr-labeled target cells were treated with 3% Triton
10 X for four hours.

Luminex

For analysis of chemokines and cytokines, purified NK cells from six healthy volunteers were co-incubated in 96 well plates for 24 hours with HT-29 colon carcinoma cells at a 2:1 E:T
15 ratio and the respective drug in a concentration of 50nM at 37°C, 5% CO₂. After a 24 hour incubation time, cells were centrifuged and supernatants were collected and stored at -80°C until being analyzed. GM-CSF, IL-6, IL-8 and TNF- α (R&D Systems, Inc., Minneapolis, MN) were determined using the Luminex system (MAGPIX, Luminex, Austin, TX). Values represent pg/ml and were interpolated from standard curves of the recombinant human proteins by using
20 Xponent 4.2 software (Luminex, Austin, TX).

Proliferation and Viability assays

PBMCs or enriched NK cells from healthy donors were labeled with CELLTRACE Violet Cell Proliferation Dye (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA) according to the
25 manufacturer's protocol. After labeling, cells were cultured with 50 nM concentrations of the respective drugs. Cells were harvested after seven days, stained for viability with Live/Dead reagent (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA) and surface stained for anti-CD56 PE/Cy7 (BioLegend, Inc., San Diego, CA, USA) and anti-CD3 PE-CF594 (BD Biosciences, San Jose, CA) to gate on the viable CD3⁻CD56⁺ population. Data were analyzed with FlowJo software version 7.6.5. (FlowJo,
30 LLC, Ashland, OR, USA).

Statistical Analyses

Data are presented as mean +/- standard deviation. Differences between two groups were analyzed by Student's t test or one-way-ANOVA. Analysis and presentation of data was done with GraphPad Prism 5 (GraphPad Software, Inc., La Jolla, CA).

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Example 3

Construction of EF91 (llama anti-human IL16)-IL15-CD33

Synthesis and assembly of a hybrid polynucleotide encoding the TriKE EF91 (llama anti-human IL16)-IL15-CD33 (SEQ ID NO:14) was accomplished using DNA shuffling and ligation techniques. The fully-assembled polynucleotide has, from the 5' end to the 3' end, an NcoI restriction site; an ATG initiation codon; coding regions encoding the the V_H and V_L regions of EF91 (llama anti-human IL16), a 20 amino acid segment (PSGQAGAAASESLFVSNHAY; SEQ ID NO:3), modified IL-15, a seven amino acid linker (EASGGPE; SEQ ID NO:4), and the humanized anti-CD33 scFv; and finally a XhoI restriction site. The resulting NcoI/XhoI polynucleotide was spliced into the pET21d expression vector under control of an isopropyl-β-D-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG) inducible T7 promoter.

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Example 4

Construction of 1615 antiHIV

Since 1615x is a platform technology, it is also possible to use anti-viral scFvs that are or are not associated with cancer development. Synthesis and assembly of a hybrid polynucleotide encoding the TriKE 1615antiHIV (SEQ ID NO:19) was accomplished using DNA shuffling and ligation techniques. The fully-assembled polynucleotide has, from the 5' end to the 3' end, an NcoI restriction site; an ATG initiation codon; the V_H and V_L regions of the anti-CD16 scFv, a 20 amino acid segment (PSGQAGAAASESLFVSNHAY; SEQ ID NO:3), modified IL-15, a seven amino acid linker (EASGGPE; SEQ ID NO:4), and an anti-HIV scFv; and finally a XhoI restriction site.

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The complete disclosure of all patents, patent applications, and publications, and electronically available material (including, for instance, nucleotide sequence submissions in, e.g., GenBank and RefSeq, and amino acid sequence submissions in, e.g., SwissProt, PIR, PRF,

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PDB, and translations from annotated coding regions in GenBank and RefSeq) cited herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety. In the event that any inconsistency exists between the disclosure of the present application and the disclosure(s) of any document incorporated herein by reference, the disclosure of the present application shall govern. The foregoing detailed
5 description and examples have been given for clarity of understanding only. No unnecessary limitations are to be understood therefrom. The invention is not limited to the exact details shown and described, for variations obvious to one skilled in the art will be included within the invention defined by the claims.

Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers expressing quantities of components,
10 molecular weights, and so forth used in the specification and claims are to be understood as being modified in all instances by the term “about.” Accordingly, unless otherwise indicated to the contrary, the numerical parameters set forth in the specification and claims are approximations that may vary depending upon the desired properties sought to be obtained by the present invention. At the very least, and not as an attempt to limit the doctrine of
15 equivalents to the scope of the claims, each numerical parameter should at least be construed in light of the number of reported significant digits and by applying ordinary rounding techniques.

Notwithstanding that the numerical ranges and parameters setting forth the broad scope of the invention are approximations, the numerical values set forth in the specific
20 examples are reported as precisely as possible. All numerical values, however, inherently contain a range necessarily resulting from the standard deviation found in their respective testing measurements.

All headings are for the convenience of the reader and should not be used to limit the meaning of the text that follows the heading, unless so specified.

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SEQUENCE LISTING FREE TEXT

SEQ ID NO:1

MEVQLVESGG GVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 5 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNAKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RSLLEDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSL R SYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYYCN SRDSSGNHV FGGGTKLTVL
 PSGQAGAAAS ESLFVSNHAY NWNVISDLK KIEDLIQSMH IDATLYTESD VHPSCKVTAM
 KCFLLELQVI SLESGDASIH DTVENLIILA NDSLSSNGNV TESGCKECEE LEEKNIKEFL
 10 QSFVHIVQMF INTSEASGGP EQVQLVQSGA EVKKPGSSVK VSCKASGYTF TDYNMHWVRQ
 APGQGLEWIG YIYPYNGGTG YNQKFKSKAT ITADESTNTA YMELSSLRSE DTAVYYCARG
 RPAMDYWGQG TLVTVSSGGG GSGGGGSGGG GSDIQMTQSP SLSASVGDR VTITCRASES
 VDNYGISFMN WFQKPGKAP KLLIYAASNQ GSGVPSRFSG SSGTDFTLT ISSLQPDDFA
 TYYCQQSKEV PWTFGQGTKV EIK

15

SEQ ID NO:2

MEVQLVESGG GVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNAKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RSLLEDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSL R SYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 20 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYYCN SRDSSGNHV FGGGTKLTVL
 PSGQAGAAAS ESLFVSNHAY QVQLVQSGAE VKKPGSSVKV SCKASGYTFT DYNMHWVRQA
 PGQGLEWIGY IYPYNGGTGY NQKFKSKATI TADESTNTAY MELSSLRSED TAVYYCARGR
 PAMDYWGQGT LVTVSSGGG SGGGGSGGG SDIQMTQSPS SLSASVGDRV TITCRASESV
 DNYGISFMNW FQKPGKAPK LLIYAASNQ GSGVPSRFGS SSGTDFTLTI SSLQPDDFAT
 25 YYCQQSKEVP WTFGQGTKVE IK

SEQ ID NO:3

PSGQAGAAAS ESLFVSNHAY

30 SEQ ID NO:4

EASGGPE

SEQ ID NO:5

MEVQLVESGG GVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RLLFDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSL R SYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYCN SRDSSGNHVV FGGGTCLTVL
 5 NWVNVISDLK KIEDLIQSMH IDATLYTESD VHPCKVTAM KCFLELQVI SLESGDASIH
 DTVENLIILA NDSLSSNGNV TESGCKECE LEEKNIKEFL QSFVHIVQMF INTSQVQLVQ
 SGAEVKKPGS SVKVSCKASG YTFDYNMHW VRQAPQGLE WIGYIYPYNG GTGYNQKFKS
 KATITADEST NTAYMELSSL RSED TAVYYC ARGRPAMYD W GQTLTVTVSS GGGGSGGGGS
 GGGGSDIQMT QSPSSLSASV GDRVTITCRA SESVDNYGIS FMNWFQKPG KAPKLLIYAA
 10 SNQSGVPSR FSGSGGTDF TLTISLQPD DFATYYCQQS KEVPWTFGQG TKVEIK

SEQ ID NO:6

MENWVNVISD LKIEDLIQS MHIDATLYTE SDVHPCKVT AMKCFLELQ VISLESGDAS
 IHDTVENLII LANDSLSSNG NVTESGCKEC EELEEKNIKE FLQSFVHIVQ MFINTSPSGQ
 15 AGAAASESLF VSNHAYEVQL VESGGGVVRP GGSRLSCAA SGFTFDDYGM SWVRQAPGKG
 LEWVSGINWN GGSTGYADSV KGRFTISRDN AKNSLYLQMN SLRAEDTAVY YCARGRSLLF
 DWGQGTLVTVSRGGGGSGG GSGGGGSSE LTQDPAVVA LGQTVRITCQ GDSLRSYYAS
 WYQKPGQAP VLVIYGKNNR PSGIPDRFSG SSSGNTASLT ITGAQAEDEA DYCN SRDSS
 GNHVVFGGGT KLTVLEASGG PEQVQLVQSG AEVKKPGSSV KVSCASGYT FTDYNMHWVR
 20 QAPQGLEWI GYIYPYNGGT GYNQKFKSKA TITADESTNT AYMESSLRS EDTAVYYCAR
 GRPAMYDWG GTLVTVSSGG GSGGGGGSGG GSDIQMTQS PSSLSASVGD RVTITCRASE
 SVDNYGISFM NWFQKPGKA PKLLIYAASN QGSGVPSRFS GSGSGTDFTL TISSLQPDF
 ATYYCQQSKE VPWTFGQGTK VEIK

25 SEQ ID NO:7

MEVQLVESGG GVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RLLFDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSL R SYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYCN SRDSSGNHVV FGGGTCLTVL
 30 PSGQAGAAAS ESLFVSNHAY QVQLVQSGAE VKKPGSSVKV SCKASGYTFT DYNMHWVRQA
 PGQGLEWIGY IYPYNGGTGY NQKFKSKATI TADESTNTAY MELSSLRSED TAVYYCARGR
 PAMYDWGQGT LTVSSGGGG SGGGGSGGG SDIQMTQSPS SLSASVGD RV TITCRASEV
 DNYGISFMNW FQKPGKAPK LLIYAASNQG SGVPSRFSGS GSGTDFTLTI SSLQPDFAT
 YYCQQSKEVP WTFGQGTKVE IKEASGGPEN WVNVISDLKK IEDLIQSMHI DATLYTESDV

HPSCCKVTAMK CFLLELQVIS LESGDASIHD TVENLIILAN DSLSSNGNVT ESGCKECEEL
 EEKNIKEFLQ SFVHIVQMF I NTS

SEQ ID NO:8

5 MEVQLVESGG GVVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNANKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RLLFDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSL R SYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYYCN SRDSSGNHV FGGGTKLTVL
 PSGQAGAAAESL FVSNHAY NWNVISDLK KIEDLIQSMH IDATLYTESD VHPSCCKVTAM
 10 KCFLLELQVI SLESGDASIH DTVENLIILA NDSLSSNGNV TESGCKECEEE LEEKNIKEFL
 QSFVHIVQMF INTSEASGGP EDIQMTQSPS SLSASVGDRV TITCRSTKSL LHSNGITYLY
 WYQQKPGKAP KLLIYQMSNL ASGVPSRFSS SSGTDFTLT ISSLQPEDFA TYYCAQNLEI
 PRTEFGQTKV ELKRATPSHN SHQVPSAGGP TANSGETS GEV QLVQSGPGLV QPGGSVRISC
 AASGYTFTNY GMNWKQAPG KGLEWMGWIN TYTGESTYAD SFKGRFTFSL DTSASAAAYLQ
 15 INSLRAEDTA VYYCARFAIK GDYWGQGTLL TVSS

SEQ ID NO:9

MEVQLVESGG GVVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 20 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNANKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RLLFDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSL R SYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYYCN SRDSSGNHV FGGGTKLTVL
 PSGQAGAAAESL FVSNHAY NWNVISDLK KIEDLIQSMH IDATLYTESD VHPSCCKVTAM
 KCFLLELQVI SLESGDASIH DTVENLIILA NDSLSSNGNV TESGCKECEEE LEEKNIKEFL
 25 QSFVHIVQMF INTSEASGGP EDIQMTQSPS SLSASVGDRV TITCRSTKSL LHSNGITYLY
 WYQQKPGKAP KLLIYQMSNL ASGVPSRFSS SSGTDFTLT ISSLQPEDFA TYYCAQNLEI
 PRTEFGQTKV ELKRATPSHN SHQVPSAGGP TANSGETS GEV QLVQSGPGLV QPGGSVRISC
 AASGYTFTNY GMNWKQAPG KGLEWMGWIN TYTGESTYAD SFKGRFTFSL DTSASAAAYLQ
 INSLRAEDTA VYYCARFAIK GDYWGQGTLL TVSSEPKSSD KTHTSPPSPD IVLSQSPAIM
 30 SASPGEKVTI SCSASSSVSY MYWYQQKPGS SPKPWIYRTS NLAGVPARF SGSGSGTSYS
 LTISSMEAED AATYYCQQYH SYPPTFGAGT KLELKSSGGG GSGGGGGGSS RSSLEVKLVE
 SGPELKKPGE TVKISCKASG YTFDYSMHW VNQAPGKGLK WMGWINTETG EPSYADDFKG
 RFAFSLETS A STAYLQINNL KNEDTATYFC ATDYGDYFDY WGQGTTLTVS SAKTTPPSVT
 S

SEQ ID NO:10

MEVQLVESGG GVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNANKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RSLLEDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 5 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSLR SYYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYYCN SRDSSGNHV FGGGTKLTVL
 PSGQAGAAAS ESLFVSNHAY NWNVISDLK KIEDLIQSMH IDATLYTESD VHPCKVTAM
 KCFLLELQVI SLESGDASIH DTVENLIILA NDSLSSNGNV TESCCKECEEE LEEKNIKEFL
 QSFVHIVQMF INTSEASGGP EDIVLSQSPA IMSASPGEKV TISCASSSSV SYMYWYQQK
 10 GSSPKPWIYR TSNLASGVPA RFSGSGSGTS YSLTISSMEA EDAATYYCQQ YHSYPPTFGA
 GTKLELKSSG GGGSGGGGGG SSRSSLEVKL VESGPELKKP GETVKISCKA SGYTFDTYSM
 HWVNQAPGKG LKWMGWINTE TGEPSYADDF KGRFAFSLET SASTAYLQIN NLKNEDTATY
 FCATDYGDYF DYWGQGTTLT VSS

15 SEQ ID NO:11

MEVQLVESGG GVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNANKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RSLLEDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSLR SYYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYYCN SRDSSGNHV FGGGTKLTVL
 20 PSGQAGAAAS ESLFVSNHAY NWNVISDLK KIEDLIQSMH IDATLYTESD VHPCKVTAM
 KCFLLELQVI SLESGDASIH DTVENLIILA NDSLSSNGNV TESCCKECEEE LEEKNIKEFL
 QSFVHIVQMF INTSEASGGP EQVQLVQSGA EVKKGASVK VCKASGYSF TGYTMNWVRQ
 APGQGLEWMG LITPYNGASS YNQRFRGKAT MTVDTSTSTV YMELSSLRSE DTAVYYCARG
 GYDGRGFDYW GQGTLVTVSS GGGSGGGGS SGGGSDIQMT QSPSSLSASV GDRVTITCSA
 25 SSSVSYMHY QQKSGKAPKL LIYDTSKLAS GVPSRFSGSG SGTDFTLTIS SLQPEDFATY
 YCQQWSKHPL TFGQGTKLEI K

SEQ ID NO:12

MEVQLVESGG GVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 30 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNANKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RSLLEDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSLR SYYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYYCN SRDSSGNHV FGGGTKLTVL
 EPKSSDKTHT SPPSPNWNV ISDLKKIEDL IQSMHIDATL YTESDVHPSC KVTAMKCFLL
 ELQVISLESG DASIHDTVEN LIILANDSLS SNGNVTESGC KECEEELEKN IKEFLQSFVH

IVQMFINTSP SGQAGAAASE SLFVSNHAYD IQMTQSPSSL SASVGDRVTI TCRSTKSL LH
 SNGITYLYWY QQKPGKAPKL LIYQMSNLAS GVPSRFSSSG SGTDFTLTIS SLQPEDFATY
 YCAQNLEIPR TFGQGTKVEL KRATPSHNSH QVPSAGGPTA NSGTSGEASG GPEDIQMTQT
 TSSLSASLGD RVTISCRASQ DISNYLNWYQ QKPDGTVKLL IYYTSILHSG VPSRFSGSGS
 5 GTDYSLTISN LEQEDFATYF CQQGNTLPWT FGGGTKLEIK GSTSGSGKPG SGEGSTKGEV
 QLVESGGGLV KPGGSLKLSL AASGFAFSIY DMSWVRQTPE KRLEWVAYIS SGGGTYYYPD
 TVKGRFTISR DNAKNTLYLQ MSSLKSEDTA MYCARHSGY GTHWGVLFAY WGQGLVTVS
 AGGGGSDILL TQTPASLAVS LGQRATISCK ASQSVDDYDGD SYLNWYQQIP GQPPKLLIYD
 ASNLVSGIPP RFSGSGSGTD FTLNIHPVEK VDAATYHCQQ STEDPWTFFG GTKLEIKRGS
 10 TSGSGKPGSG EGSTKGQVQL QQSGAELVRP GSSVKISCKA SGYAFSSYWM NWWKQRPQGQ
 LEWIGQIWPQ DGDTNYNGKF KGKATLTADE SSSTAYMQLS SLASEDSAVY FCARRETTTV
 GRYYYYAMDYW GQGTSVTVSS

SEQ ID NO:13

15 MDIQMTQSPS SLSASVGDRV TITCRASQDI RNYLNWYQOK PDGTVKLLIY YTSRLHSGVP
 SKFSGSGSGT DYTTLTISNLE QEDIATYFCQ QGNTLPWTFA GGTKLEIKRG GGGSGGGGSG
 GGGSGGREVQ LVQSGAELVK PGATMKISCK ASGYSFTGYT MNWVKQSHGK NLEWMGLINP
 YKGVSTYNQK FKDKATLTVD TSTDTAYMEL LSLTSEDSAV YYCARSGYYG DSDWYFDVWG
 AGTTVTVSSP SGQAGAAASE SLFVSNHAYP TSSSTKKTQL QLEHLLLDLQ MILNGINNYK
 20 NPKLTRMLTF KFYMPKATE LKHLQCLEEE LKPLEEVLNL AQSKNFHLRP RDLISNINVI
 VLELKGSETT FMCEYADETA TIVEFLNRWI TFCQSIISTL TEASGGPEDI QMTQSPSSLS
 ASVGDRVTIT CRSTKSL LHS NGITYLYWYQ QKPGKAPKLL IYQMSNLASG VPSRFSSSGS
 GTDFTLTISS LQPEDFATYY CAQNLEIPRT FGQGTKVELK RATPSHNSHQ VPSAGGPTAN
 SGTSGEVQLV QSGPGLVQPG GSVRISCAAS GYTFNTYGMN WVKQAPGKGL EWMGWINTYT
 25 GESTYADSEK GRFTFSLDTS ASAAYLQINS LRAEDTAVYY CARFAIKGDY WGQGLTLLTVS
 S

SEQ ID NO:14

MKWVTFISLL FLFSSAYSQV QLVESGGGLV QPGGSLRLSC AASGLTFSSY NMGWFRQAPG
 30 QGLEAVASIT WSGRDTFYAD SVKGRFTISR DNSKNTLYLQ MNSLRAEDTA VYYCAANPWP
 VAAPRSGTYW GQGLVTVSS SGGGGSGGGG SGGGGSGGGG SGNWVNVISD LKKIEDLIQS
 MHIDATLYTE SDVHPSCKVT AMKCFLELEQ VISLESGDAS IHDTVENLII LANNLSNSG
 NVTESGCKEC EELEEKNIKE FLQSFVHIVQ MFINTSGSTS GSGKPGSGEG STKGQVQLVQ
 SGAEVKKPGS SVKVSCKASG YTFDTYNMHW VRQAPGQGLE WIGYIYPYNG GTGYNQKFKS

KATITADEST NTAYMELSSL RSEDTAVYYC ARGRPAMDYW GQGTLLVTVSS GGGGSGGGGS
GGGGSIDIQMT QSPSSLSASV GDRVTITCRA SESVDNYGIS FMNWFQQKPG KAPKLLIYAA
SNQGSVPSR FSGSGSGTDF TLTISLQPD DFATYYCQQS KEVPWTFGQG TKVEIKVDE

5 SEQ ID NO:15

NWVNVISDLK KIEDLIQSMH IDATLYTESD VHPSCVTAM KCFLLELQVI SLESGDASIH
DTVENLIILA NNSLSSNGNV TESGCKECEE LEEKNIKEFL QSFVHIVQMF INTS

10 SEQ ID NO:16

MEVQLVESGG GVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNGGSTG
YADSVKGRFT ISRDNKNSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RLLFDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
GGSGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSL RSYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYYCN SRDSSGNHV FGGGTKLTVL

15 PSGQAGAAAS ESLFVSNHAY NWVNVISDLK KIEDLIQSMH IDATLYTESD VHPSCVTAM
KCFLLELQVI SLESGDASIH DTVENLIILA NDSLSSNGNV TESGCKECEE LEEKNIKEFL
QSFVHIVQMF INTSEASGGP EAKVQLQESG PSLVQPSQRL SITCTVSGFS LISYGVHWVR
QSPGKGLEWL GVIWRGGSTD YNAAFMSRLS ITKDNSKSQV FFKMNSLQAD DTAIYFCAKT
LITTGYAMDY WGQGTTVTVS SGGGGSGGGG SGGGSDIEL TQSPSSFVS LGDRVTITCK
20 ASEDIYNRLA WYQQKPGNAP RLLISGATSL ETGVPSRFSG SGSGKDYTLS ITSLQTEDVA
TYYCQQYWST PTFGGGTKLE IKR

SEQ ID NO:17

MDIVLSQSPA IMSASPGEKV TISCSASSSV SYMYWYQQK GSSPKPWIYR TSNLASGVPA
25 RFSGSGSGTS YSLTISSMEA EDAATYYCQQ YHSYPPTFGA GTKLELKSSG GGGSGGGGGG
SSRSSLEVKL VESGPELKKP GETVKISCKA SGYTFTDYSM HWVNQAPGKG LKWMGWINTE
TGEPYADDF KGRFAFSLET SASTAYLQIN NLKNEDTATY FCATDYGDYF DYWGQGTTLT
VSS

30 SEQ ID NO:18

PTSSSTKKTQ LQLEHLLLDL QMILNGINNY KNPKLTRMLT FKFYMPKKAT ELKHLQCLEE
ELKPLEEVLN LAQSKNFHLR PRDLISNINV IVLELKGSET TFMCEYADET ATIVEFLNRW
ITFCQSIIST LT

SEQ ID NO:19

MEVQLVESGG GVVRPGGSLR LSCAASGFTF DDYGMSWVRQ APGKGLEWVS GINWNNGGSTG
 5 YADSVKGRFT ISRDNANKSL YLQMNSLRAE DTAVYYCARG RSLLEFDYWGQ GTLVTVSRGG
 GSGGGGGSGG GGSSELTQDP AVSVALGQTV RITCQGDSL R SYASWYQQK PGQAPVLVIY
 GKNNRPSGIP DRFSGSSSGN TASLTITGAQ AEDEADYYCN SRDSSGNHV V FGGGTKLTVL
 PSGQAGAAAS ESLFVSNHAY NWNVNISDLK KIEDLIQSMH IDATLYTESD VHPSCKVTAM
 KCFLLELQVI SLESGDASIH DTVENLIILA NDSLSSNGNV TESSGCKECEE LEEKNIKEFL
 10 QSFVHIVQMF INTSEASGGP EMGWSCIILF LVATATGVHS QVRLSQSGGQ MKKPGDSMRI
 SCRASGYEFI NCPINWIRLA PGKRPEWMGW MKPRHGAVSY ARQLQGRVTM TRDMYSETAF
 LELRSLTSDD TAVYFCTR GK YCTARDYYNW DFEHWGQGTP VTVSSASTKG PSVFPLAPSS
 KSTSGGTAAL GCLVKDYFPE PVTVSWNSGA LTSGVHTFPA VLQSSGLYSL SSVVTVPSSS
 LGTQTYICNV NHKPSNTKVD KKVEPKSCDK

15

SEQ ID NO:20

MKWVTFISLL FLFSSAYSQV QLVESGGGLV QPGGSLRLSC AASGLTFSSY NMGWFRQAPG
 QGLEAVASIT WSGRDTFYAD SVKGRFTISR DNSKNTLYLQ MNSLRAEDTA VYYCAANPWP
 VAAPRSGTYW GQGTTLVTVSS

20

What is claimed is:

1. A compound comprising:
an NK engaging domain;
5 an NK activating domain operably linked to the NK engaging domain; and
a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell and is operably linked to the NK
activating domain and the NK engaging domain.
2. The compound of claim 1 wherein the NK activating domain comprises a cytokine or
10 functional fragment thereof.
3. The compound of claim 2 wherein the cytokine comprises IL-15.
4. The compound of claim 3 wherein the portion of IL-15 comprises the amino acids
15 sequence of SEQ ID NO:15 or a functional variant thereof.
5. The compound of any preceding claim wherein the NK engaging domain comprises a
moiety that selectively binds to an NK cell.
- 20 6. The compound of claim 5 wherein the NK engaging domain activates an NK cell.
7. The compound of claim 6 wherein the NK engaging domain moiety selectively binds to a
portion of CD16.
- 25 8. The compound of claim 7 wherein the CD16 comprises CD16a.
9. The compound of claim 5 wherein the NK engaging domain blocks inhibition of an NK
cell.
- 30 10. The compound of any preceding claim wherein the NK engaging domain moiety
comprises an antibody or a binding fragment thereof.

11. The compound of claim 10 wherein the antibody fragment comprises an scFv, a F(ab)₂, or a Fab.
- 5 12. The compound of any preceding claim wherein the targeting domain comprises a moiety that selectively binds to a tumor cell.
13. The compound of claim 12 wherein the targeting domain moiety selectively binds to a portion of CD33.
- 10 14. The compound of claim 12 wherein the targeting domain moiety selectively binds to a portion of EpCAM.
- 15 15. The compound of claim 12 wherein the targeting domain moiety selectively binds to a portion of CD133, CD20, HER2, CEA, EpCAM, VEGF-A, EGFR, CD33, integrin $\alpha_v\beta_3$, CD51, CD152, CD125, CTAA16.88, MUC1, CD19, CD22, CD38, mesothelin, ROR1, CSPG4, SS1, or IGFR1, HIV cancer.
- 20 16. The compound of any preceding claim wherein the targeting domain comprises a moiety that selectively binds to a cell infected by a virus.
17. The compound of claim 16 wherein the virus comprises an adenovirus, HIC, CMV, or HPV.
- 25 18. The compound of any one of claims 12-17 wherein the targeting domain moiety comprises an antibody or a fragment thereof.
19. The compound of claim 18 wherein the antibody fragment comprises an scFv.
- 30 20. The compound of any preceding claim comprising at least one flanking sequence linking two of the domains.

21. The compound of claim 20 further comprising a second flanking sequence linking the two linked domains with the third domain.
- 5 22. The compound of claim 21 wherein the flanking sequences flank the NK activating domain.
23. The compound of claim 21 wherein a first flanking sequence is C-terminal to the anti-NK scFv and wherein a second flanking sequence is N-terminal to the anti-cancer scFv sequence.
- 10 24. The compound of any preceding claim further comprising a second targeting domain.
25. The compound of any one of claims 1-23 further comprising a second NK engaging domain.
- 15 26. The compound of any one of claims 1-23 further comprising a second NK activating domain.
27. A compound comprising:
a T cell engaging domain;
20 a T cell activating domain operably linked to the T cell engaging domain; and
a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell and is operably linked to the T cell activating domain and the T cell engaging domain.
28. The compound of claim 27 wherein the T cell activating domain comprises a cytokine or
25 functional fragment thereof.
29. The compound of claim 28 wherein the cytokine comprises IL-2.
30. The compound of claim 29 wherein IL-2 comprises the amino acids sequence of SEQ ID
30 NO:18.

31. The compound of any one of claims 27-30 wherein the T cell engaging domain comprises a moiety that selectively binds to a T cell.

32. The compound of claim 31 wherein the T cell engaging domain activates a T cell.

5

33. The compound of claim 31 wherein the T cell engaging domain moiety selectively binds to CD3.

34. The compound of claim 31 wherein the T cell engaging domain blocks inhibition of a T
10 cell.

35. The compound of any one of claims 27-34 wherein the T cell engaging domain moiety comprises an antibody or a binding fragment thereof.

15 36. The compound of claim 35 wherein the antibody fragment comprises an scFv, a F(ab)₂, or a Fab.

37. The compound of any one of claims 27-36 wherein the targeting domain comprises a moiety that selectively binds to a tumor cell.

20

38. The compound of claim 37 wherein the targeting domain moiety selectively binds to a tumor marker.

25 39. The compound of claim 38 wherein the tumor marker is CD133, CD20, HERer2, CEA, EpCAM, VEGF-A, EGFR, CD33, integrin α V β 3, CD51, CD152, CD125, CTAA16.88, MUC1, CD19, CD22, CD38, mesothelin, ROR1, CSPG4, SS1, or IGFR1.

40. The compound of any one of claims 27-39 further comprising at least one flanking sequence linking two of the domains.

30

41. The compound of claim 40 further comprising a second flanking sequence linking the two linked domains with the third domain.
42. The compound of claim 41 wherein the flanking sequences flank the T cell engaging domain.
43. The compound of one of claims 27-42 further comprising a second targeting domain.
44. The compound of any one of claims 27-42 further comprising a second T cell engaging domain.
45. The compound of any one of claims 27-42 further comprising a second T cell activating domain.
46. A compound comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.
47. A compound comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 13.
48. A composition comprising:
the compound of any preceding claim; and
a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
49. A method comprising:
administering to a subject the compound of any one of claims 1-26 in an amount effective to induce NK-mediated killing of the target cell.
50. The method of claim 49 wherein the compound comprises SEQ ID NO:1.
51. The method of claim 49 wherein the target cell is a cancer cell.
52. A method for stimulating expansion of NK cells *in vivo*, the method comprising:

administering to a subject an amount of the compound of any one of claims 1-26 effective to stimulate expansion of NK cells in the subject.

53. The method of claim 52 wherein the compound comprises the amino acid sequence of
5 SEQ ID NO:1.

54. A method of treating cancer in a subject, the method comprising:
administering to the subject an amount of the compound of any of claims 1-26 effective
for treating the cancer.

10

55. The method of claim 54 wherein the compound comprises the amino acid sequence of
SEQ ID NO:1.

56. The method of claim 54 wherein the cancer comprises prostate cancer, lung cancer, colon
15 cancer, rectum cancer, urinary bladder cancer, melanoma, kidney cancer, renal cancer, oral
cavity cancer, pharynx cancer, pancreas cancer, uterine cancer, thyroid cancer, skin cancer, head
and neck cancer, cervical cancer, ovarian cancer, or hematopoietic cancer.

57. The method of claim 54 further comprising administering the composition prior to,
20 simultaneously with, or following chemotherapy, surgical resection of a tumor, or radiation
therapy.

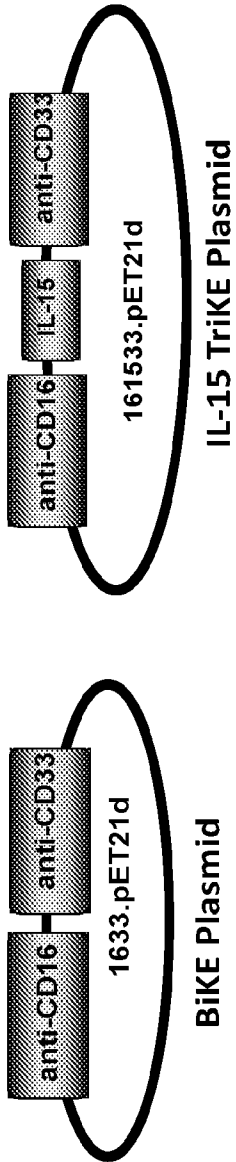
58. The method of claim 57 wherein the chemotherapy comprises altretamine, amsacrine, L-
asparaginase, colaspase, bleomycin, busulfan, capecitabine, carboplatin, carmustine,
25 chlorambucil, cisplatin, cladribine, cyclophosphamide, cytophosphane, cytarabine, dacarbazine,
dactinomycin, daunorubicin, docetaxel, doxorubicin, epirubicin, etoposide, fluorouracil,
fludarabine, fotemustine, ganciclovir, gemcitabine, hydroxyurea, idarubicin, ifosfamaide,
irinotecan, lomustine, melphalan, mercaptopurine, methotrexate, mitoxantrone, mitomycin C,
nimustine, oxaliplatin, paclitaxel, pemetrexed, procarbazine, raltitrexed, temozolomide,
30 teniposide, tioguanine, thiotepa, topotecan, vinblastine, vincristine, vindesine, and vinorelbine.

59. A method comprising:
administering to a subject the compound of any one of claims 27-47 in an amount effective to induce T-cell-mediated killing of the target cell.
- 5 60. The method of claim 59 wherein the compound comprises SEQ ID NO:13.
61. The method of claim 59 wherein the target cell is a cancer cell.
62. A method for stimulating expansion of T cells *in vivo*, the method comprising:
10 administering to a subject an amount of the compound of any one of claims 27-47 effective to stimulate expansion of T cells in the subject.
63. The method of claim 62 wherein the compound comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:13.
- 15 64. A method of treating cancer in a subject, the method comprising:
administering to the subject an amount of the compound of any of claims 27-47 effective for treating the cancer.
- 20 65. The method of claim 64 wherein the compound comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:13.
66. The method of claim 64 wherein the cancer comprises prostate cancer, lung cancer, colon cancer, rectum cancer, urinary bladder cancer, melanoma, kidney cancer, renal cancer, oral
25 cavity cancer, pharynx cancer, pancreas cancer, uterine cancer, thyroid cancer, skin cancer, head and neck cancer, cervical cancer, ovarian cancer, or hematopoietic cancer.
67. The method of claim 64 further comprising administering the composition prior to,
simultaneously with, or following chemotherapy, surgical resection of a tumor, or radiation
30 therapy.

68. The method of claim 67 wherein the chemotherapy comprises altretamine, amsacrine, L-asparaginase, colaspase, bleomycin, busulfan, capecitabine, carboplatin, carmustine, chlorambucil, cisplatin, cladribine, cyclophosphamide, cytophosphane, cytarabine, dacarbazine, dactinomycin, daunorubicin, docetaxel, doxorubicin, epirubicin, etoposide, fluorouracil, fludarabine, fotemustine, ganciclovir, gemcitabine, hydroxyurea, idarubicin, ifosfamaide, irinotecan, lomustine, melphalan, mercaptopurine, methotrexate, mitoxantrone, mitomycin C, nimustine, oxaliplatin, paclitaxel, pemetrexed, procarbazine, raltitrexed, temozolomide, teniposide, tioguanine, thiotepa, topotecan, vinblastine, vincristine, vindesine, and vinorelbine.
69. The compound of claim 4 wherein the functional variant of IL-15 comprises an N72D or N72A amino acid substitution compared to SEQ ID NO:15.

Fig. 1

A



B

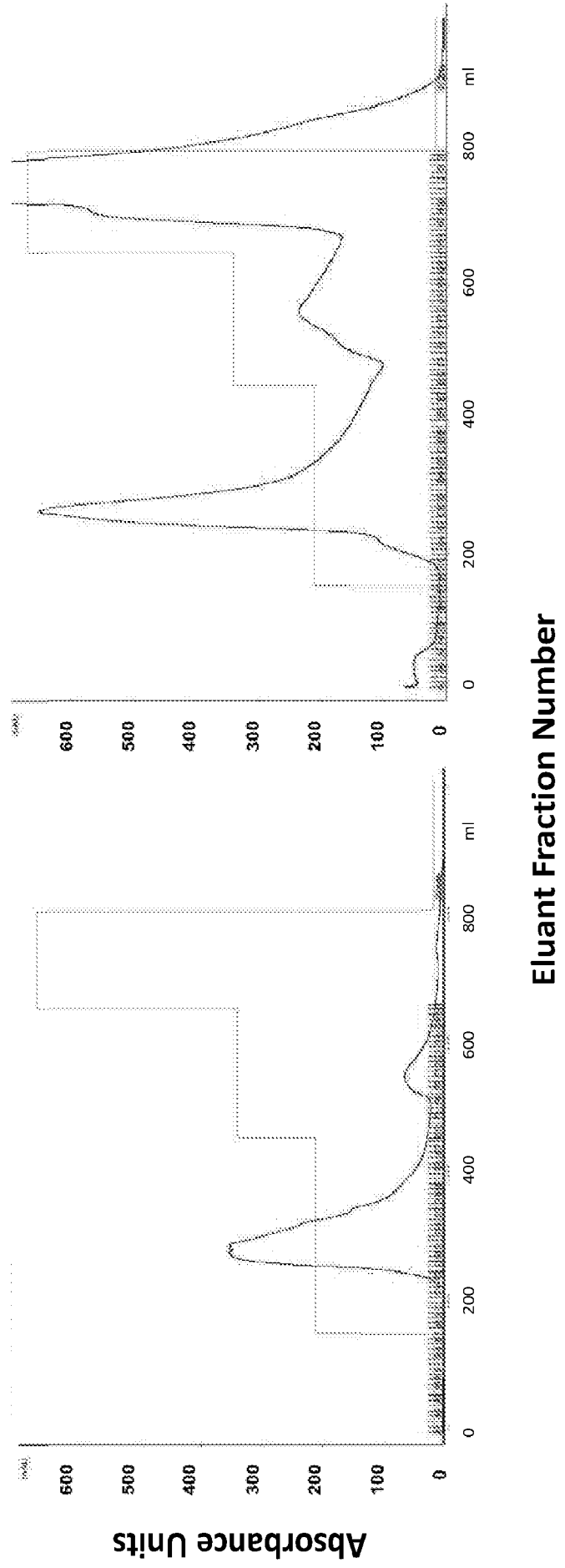


Fig. 1-A

C

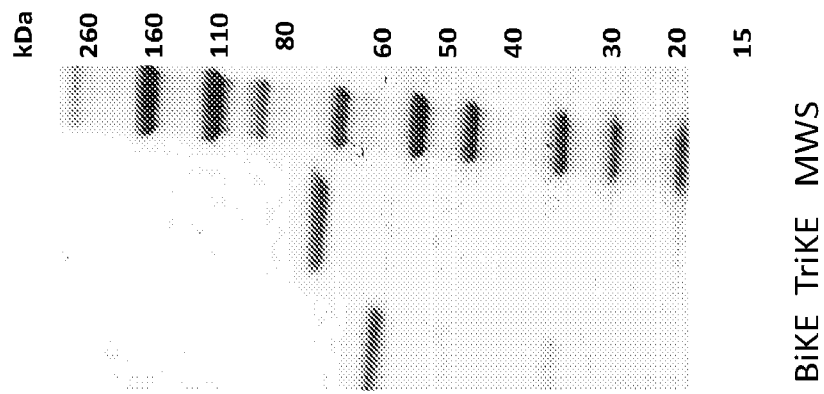


Fig. 2

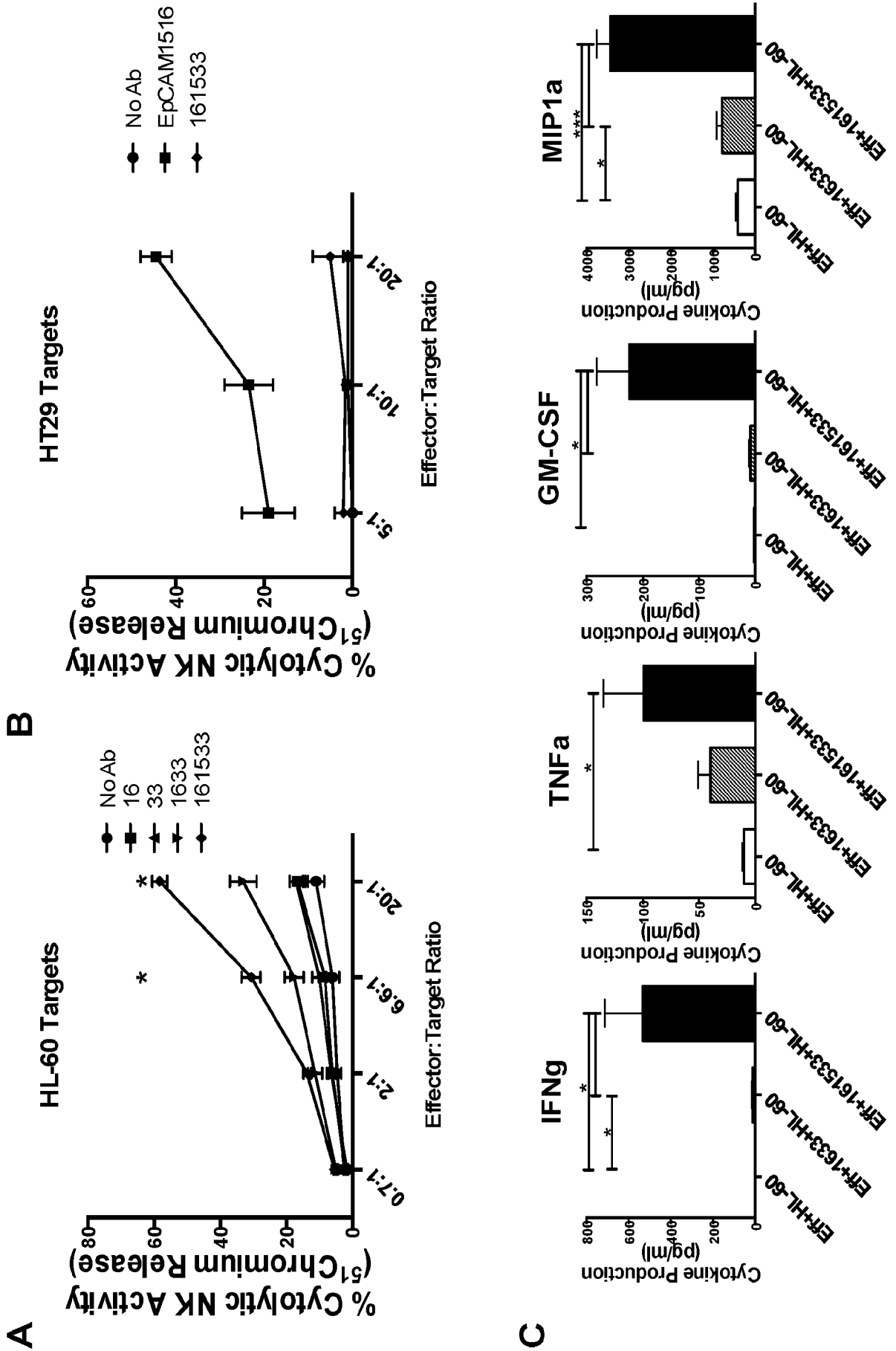


Fig. 4 A

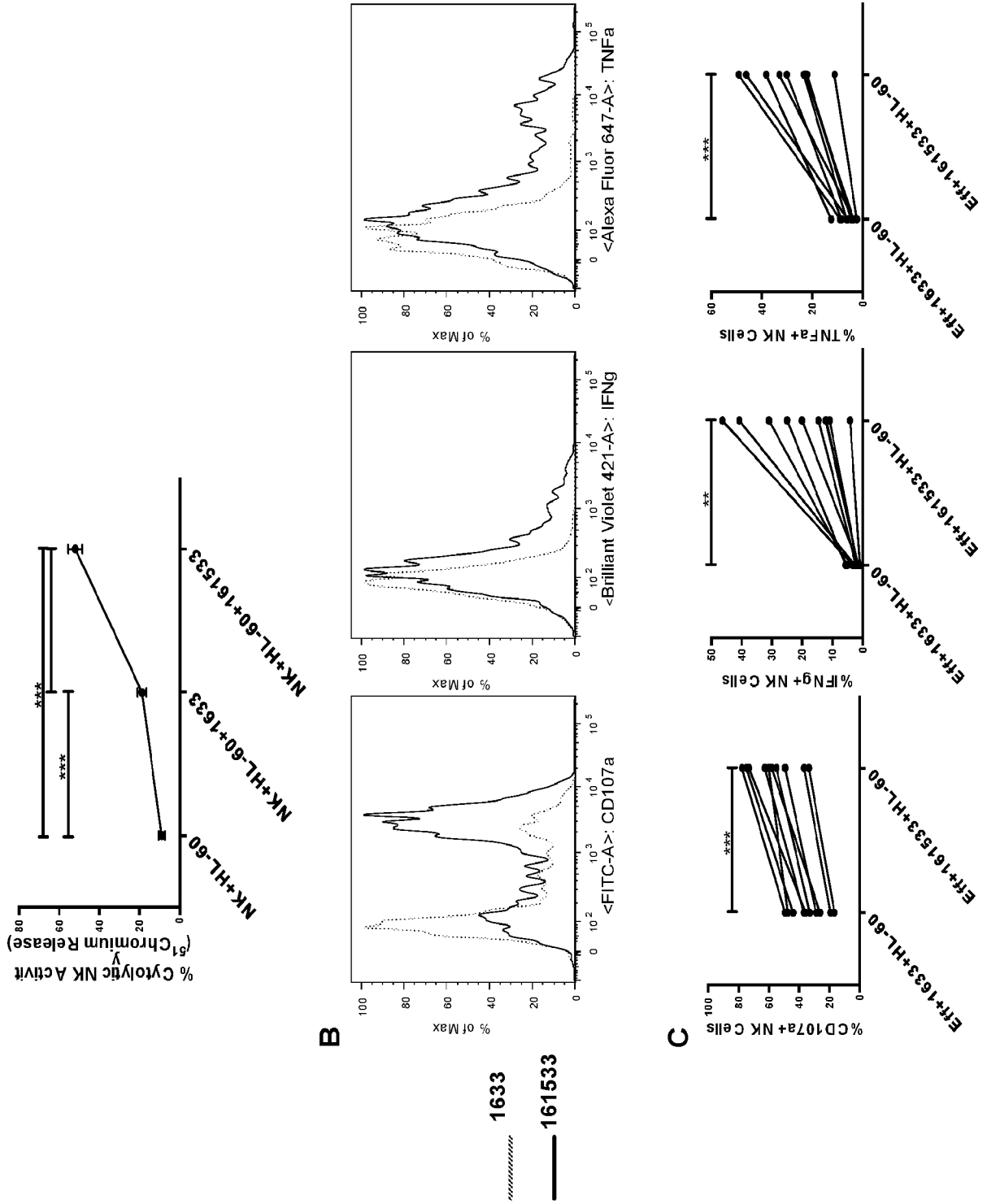
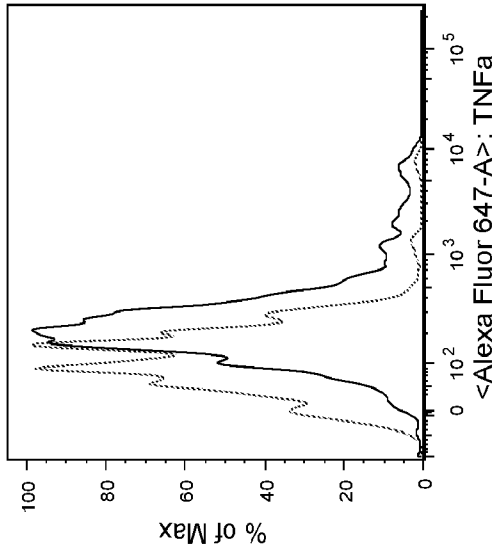
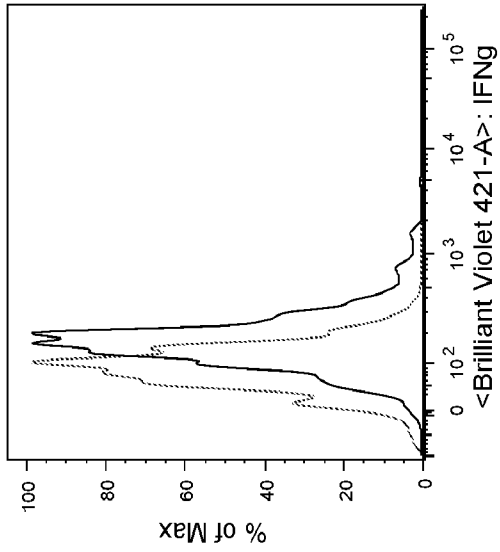
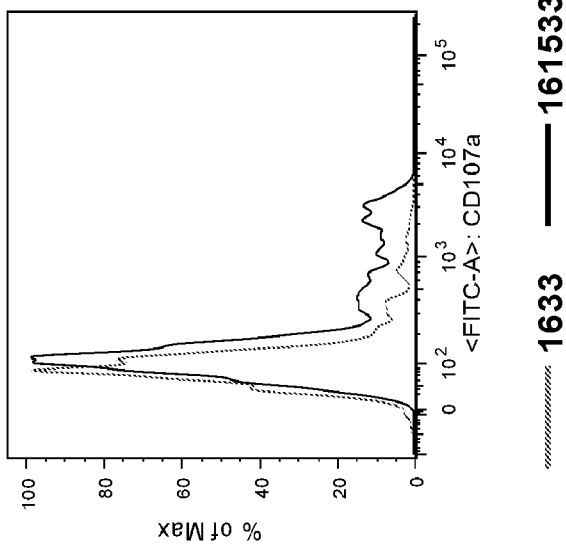


Fig. 5

A



B

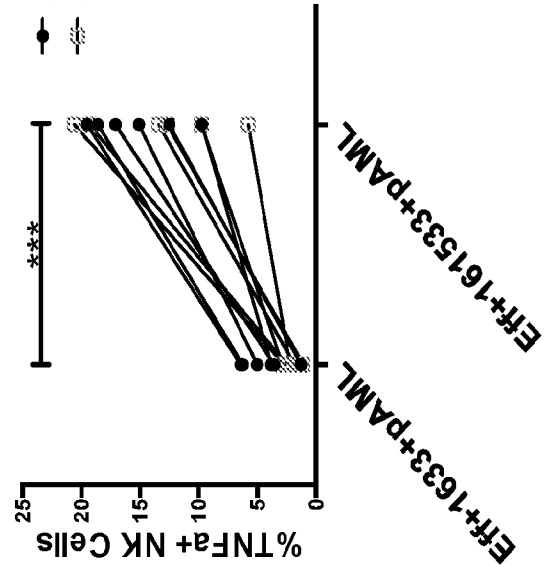
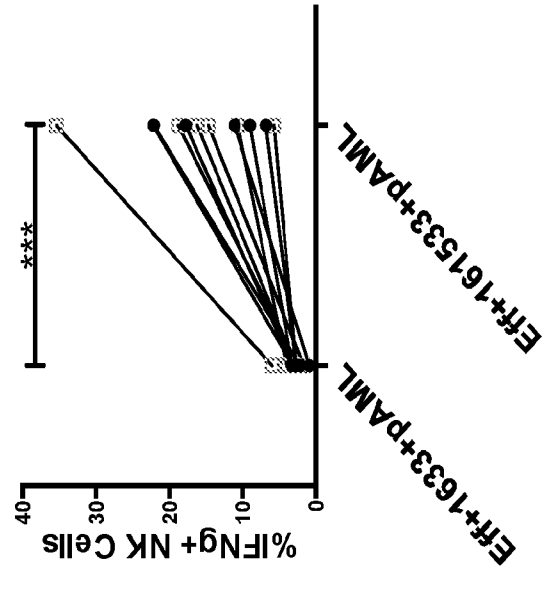
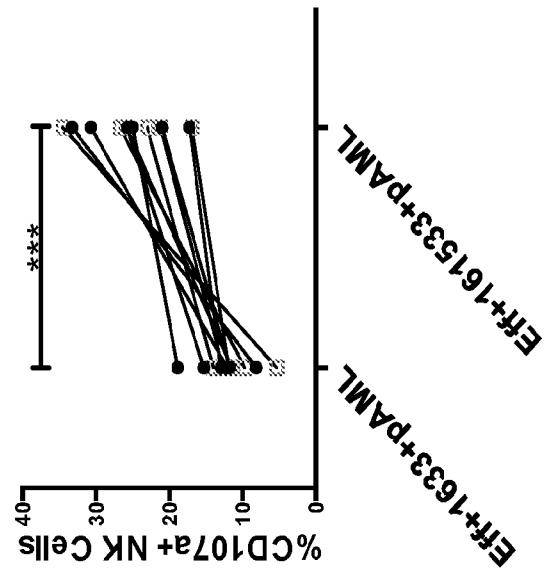


Fig. 6

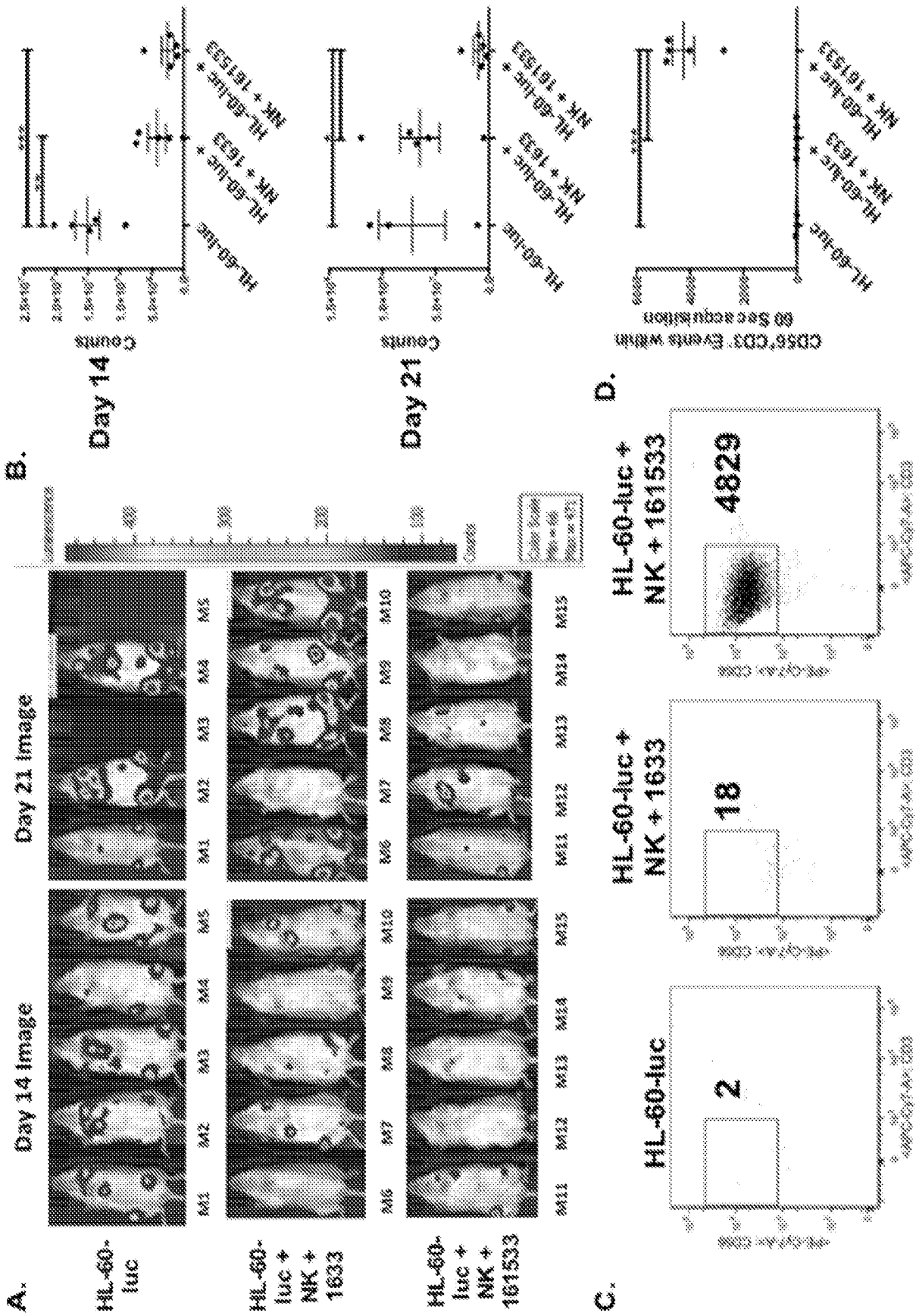


Fig. 7

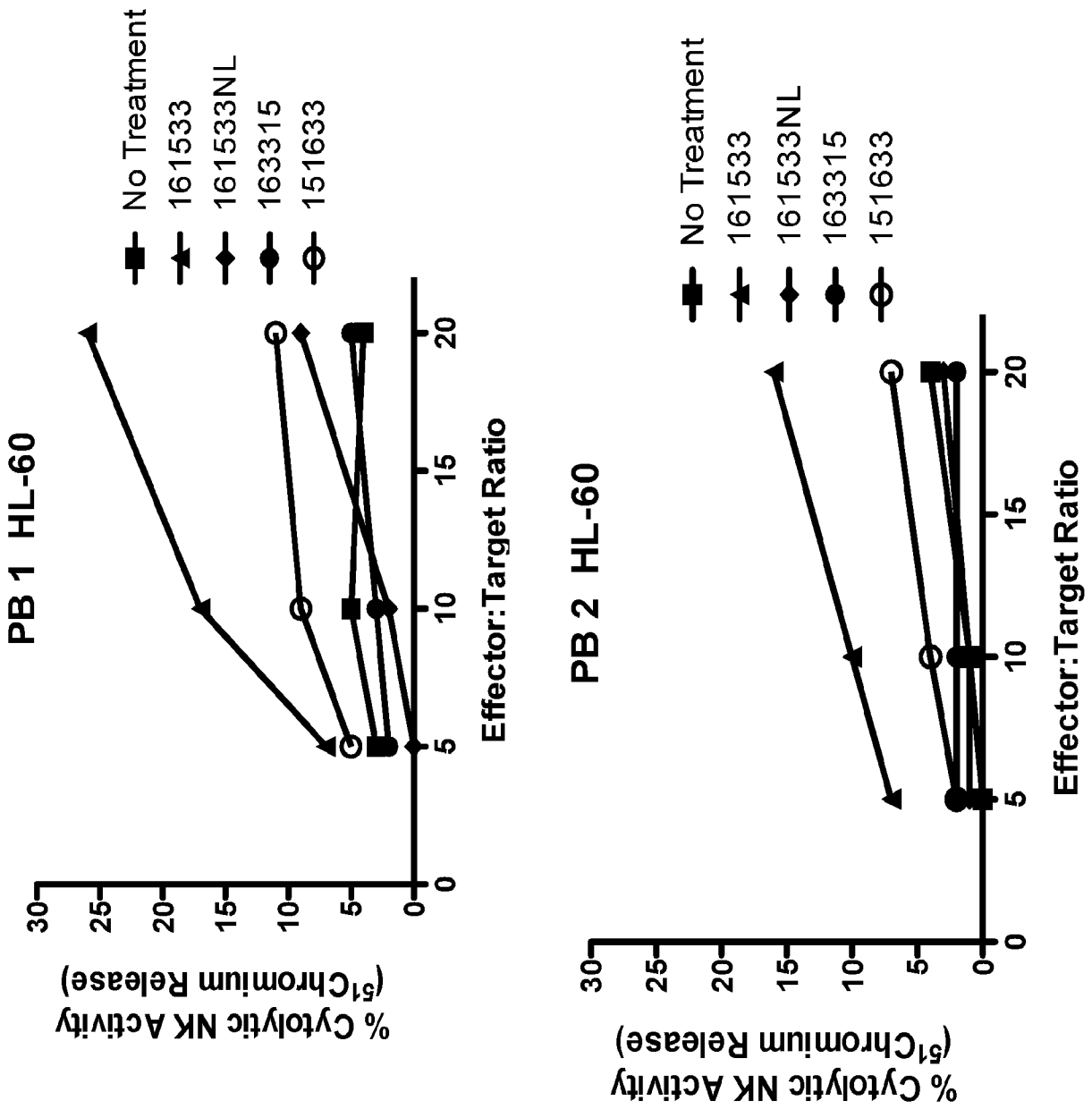
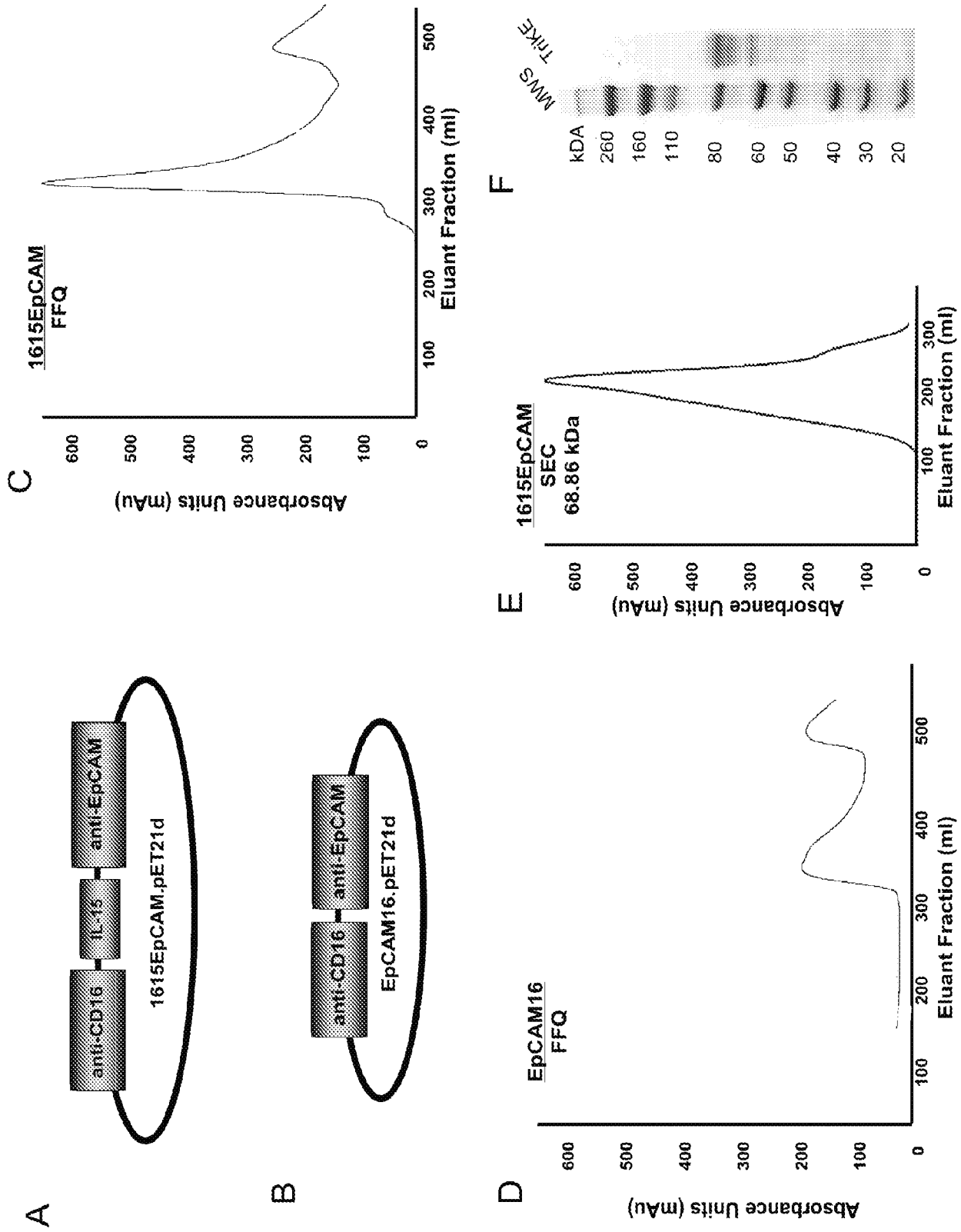


Fig. 8



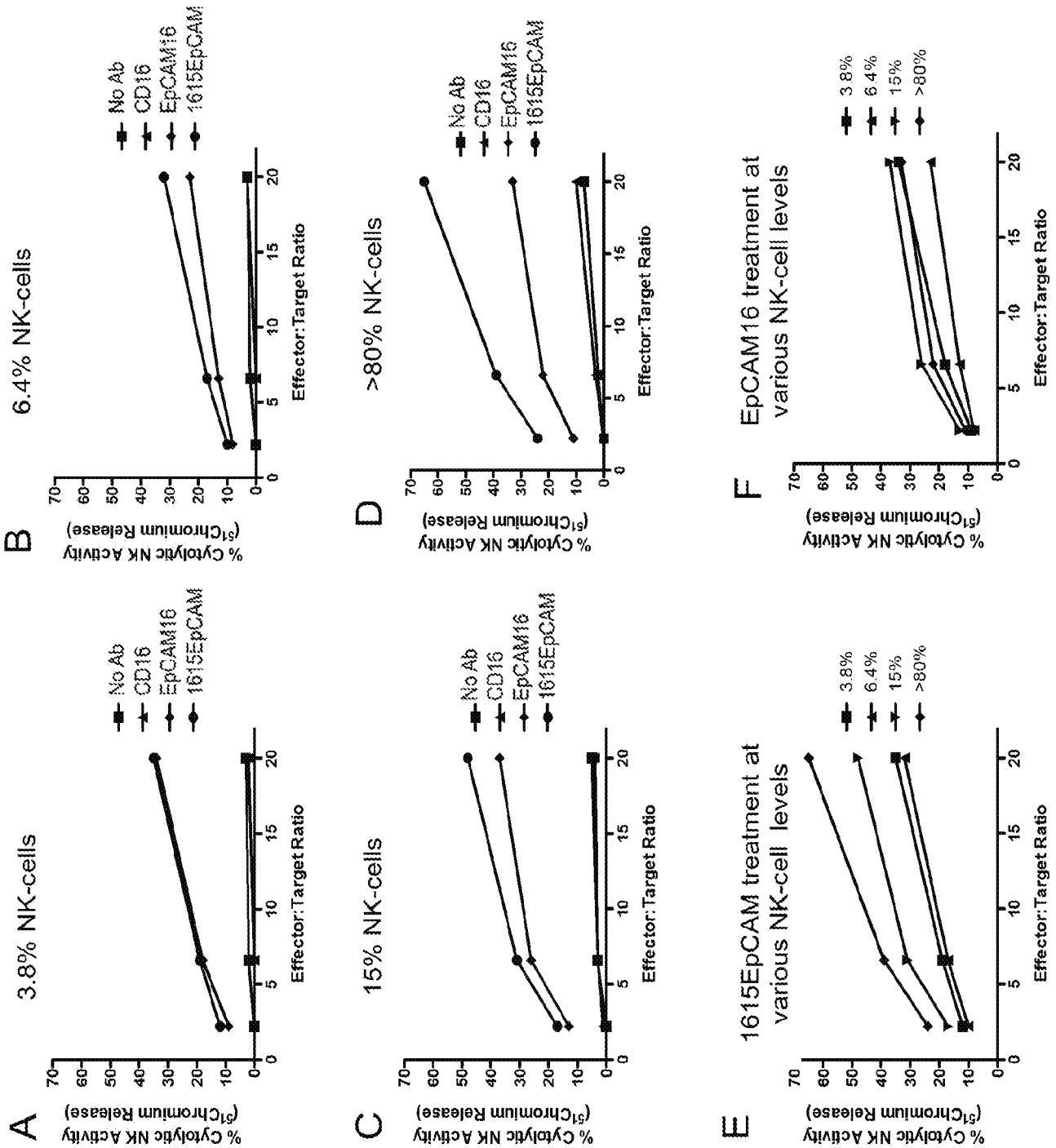


Fig. 9

Fig. 10

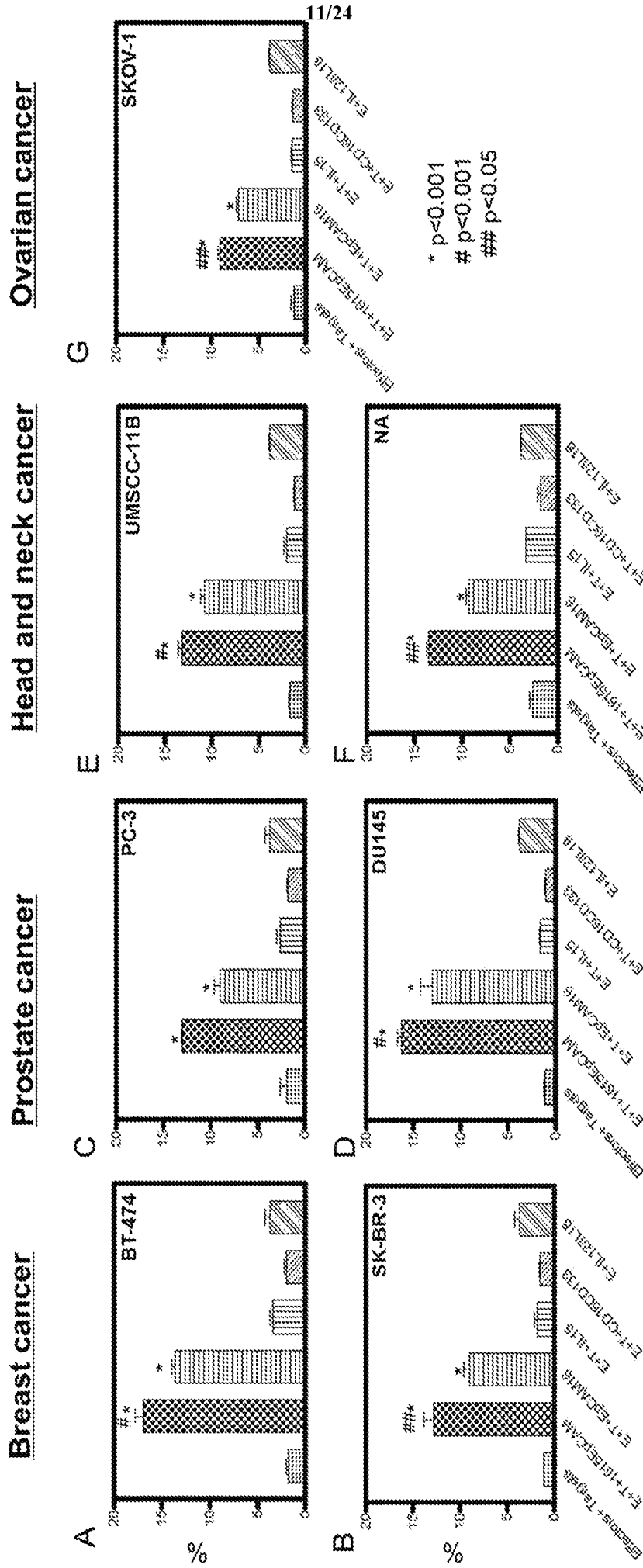
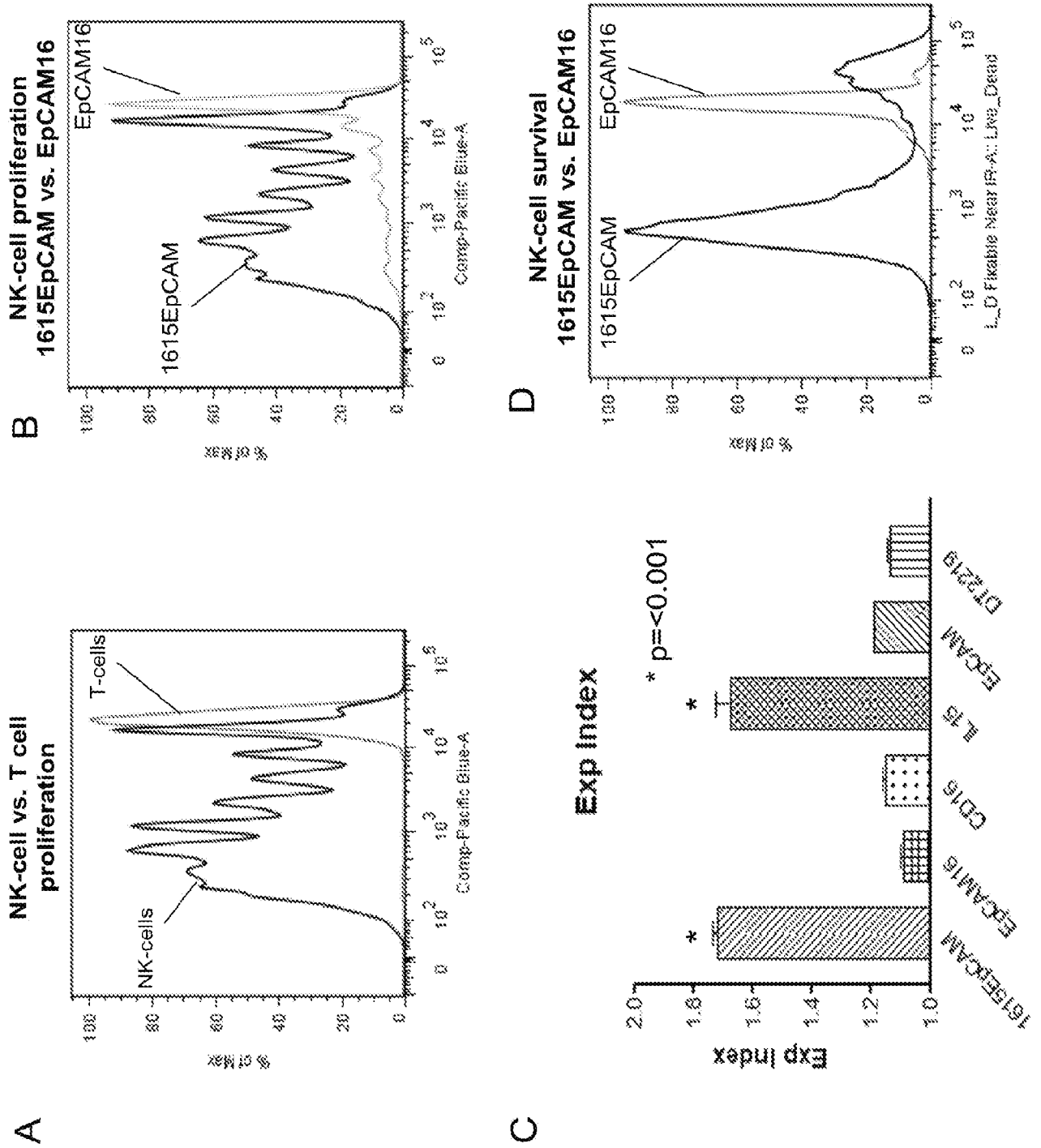


Fig. 11



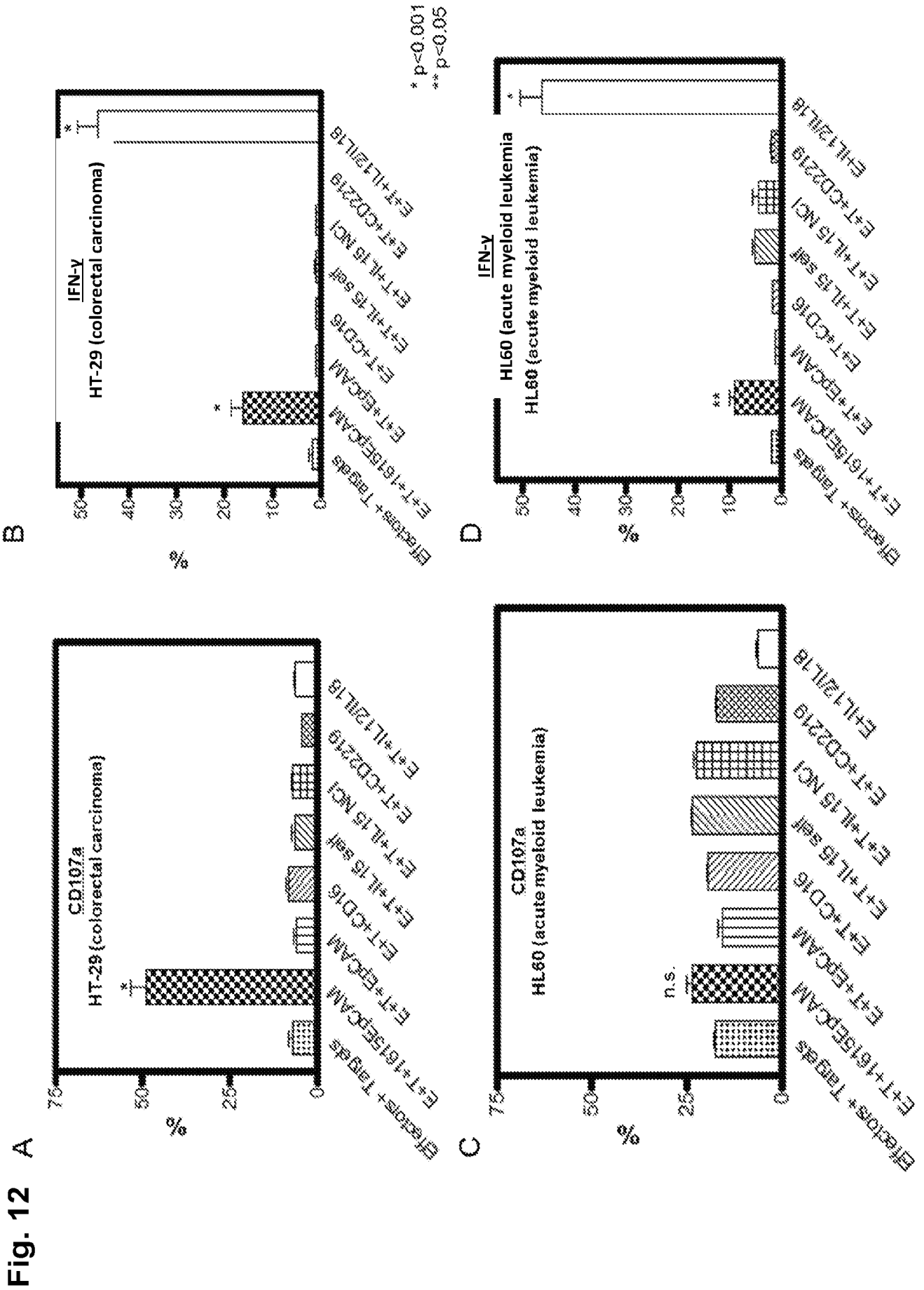


Fig. 13

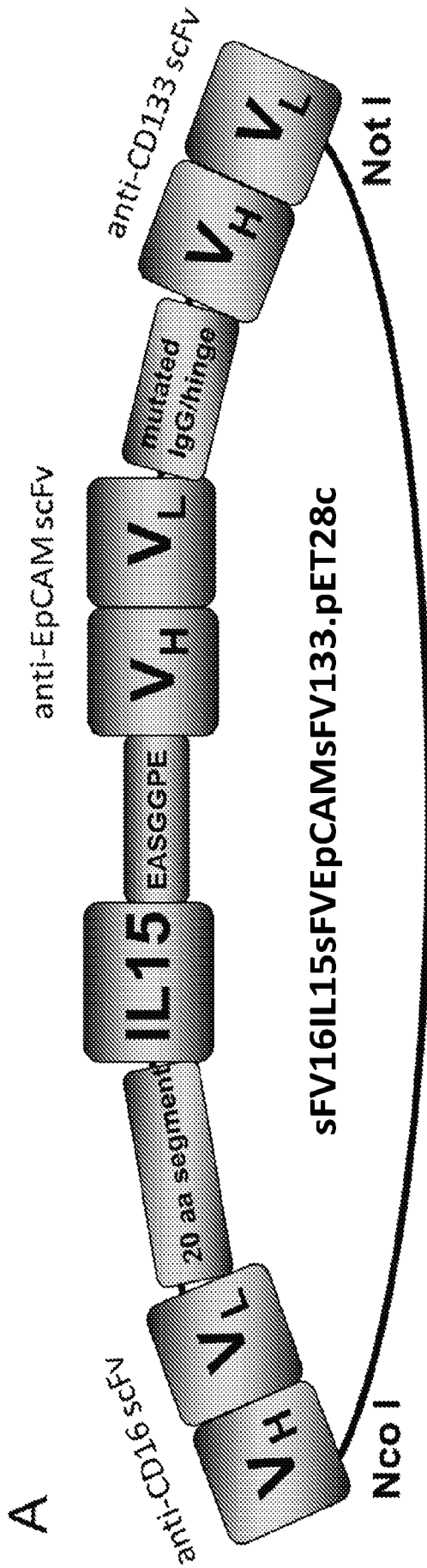


Fig. 14

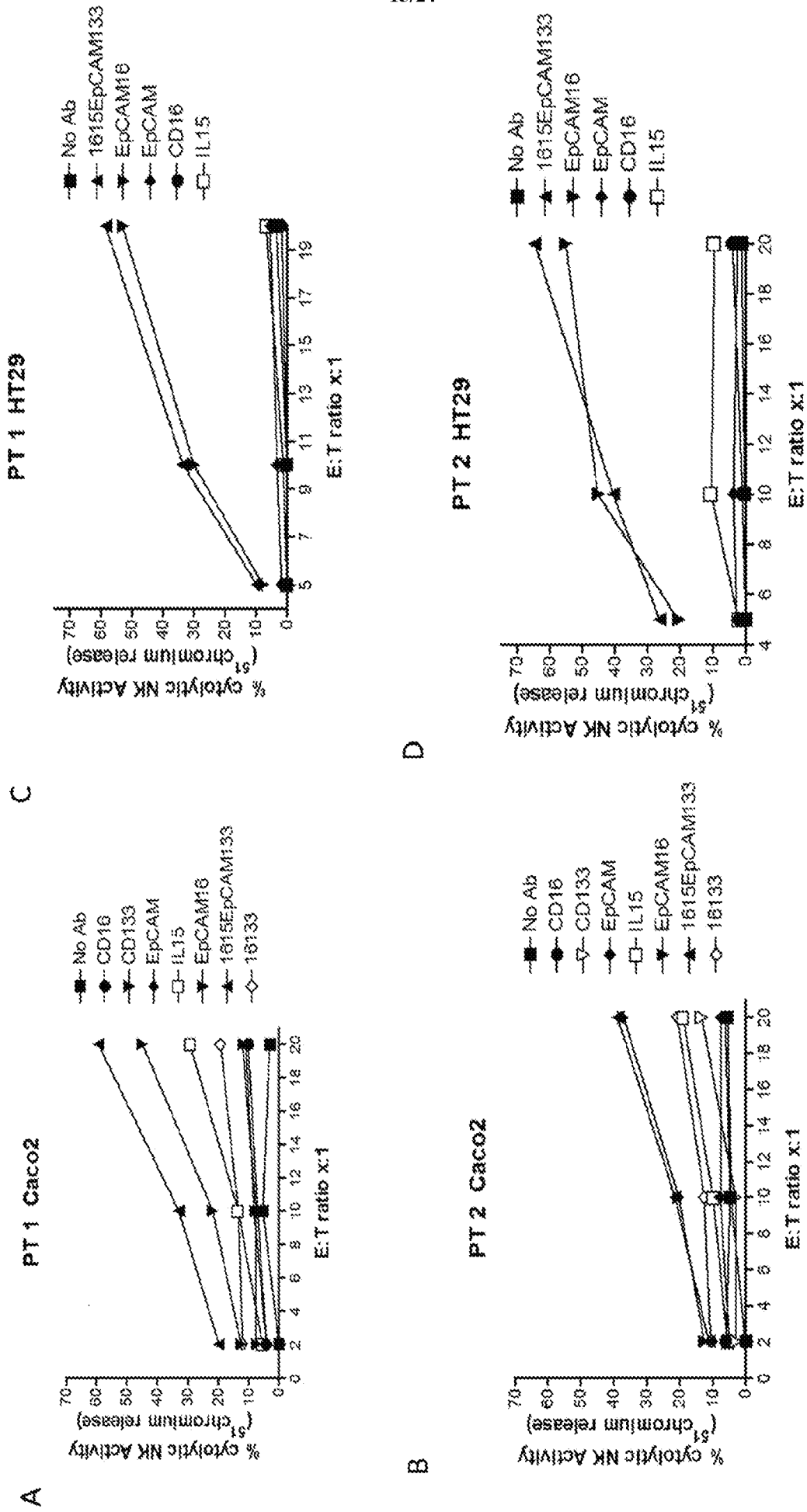
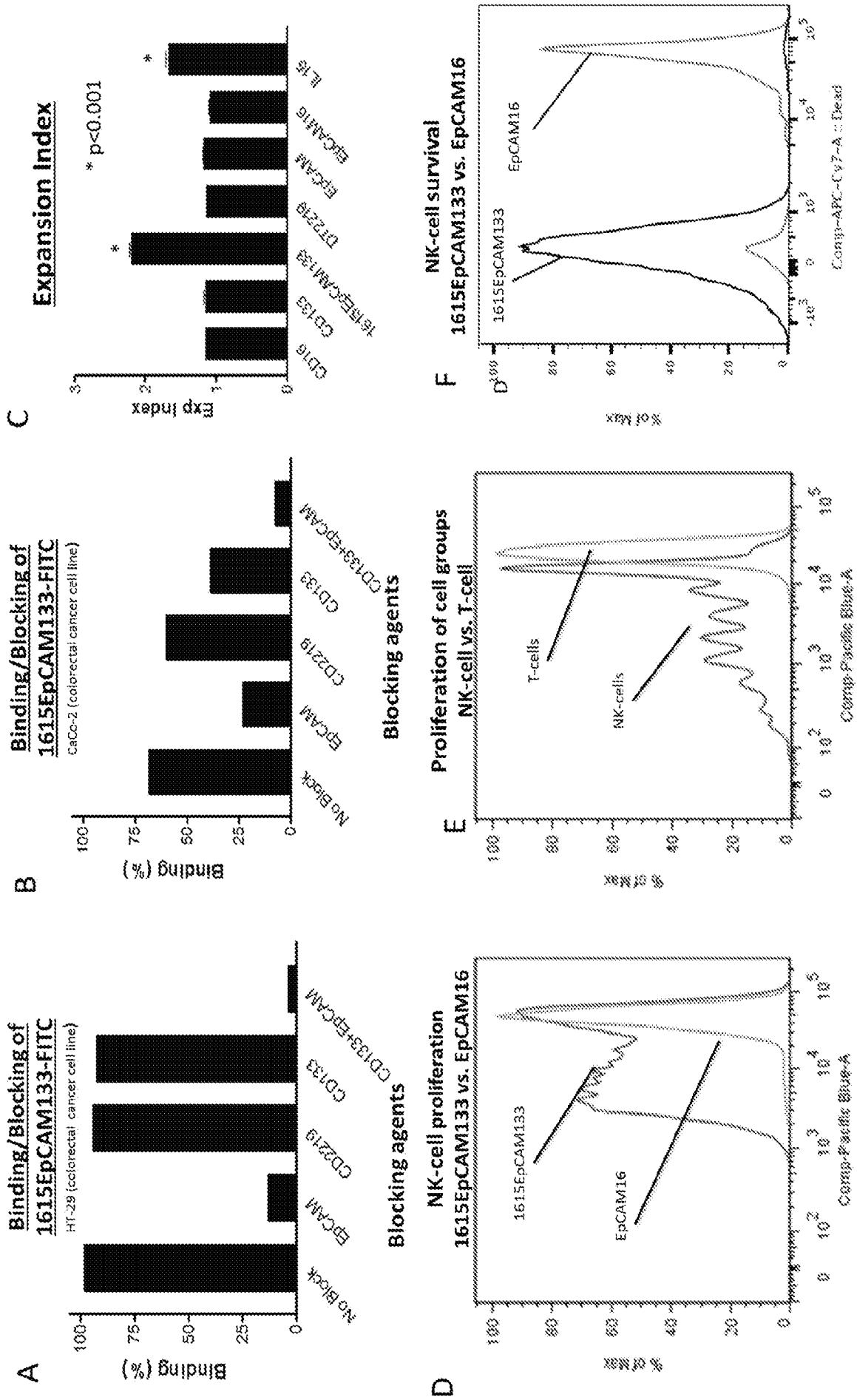


Fig. 15



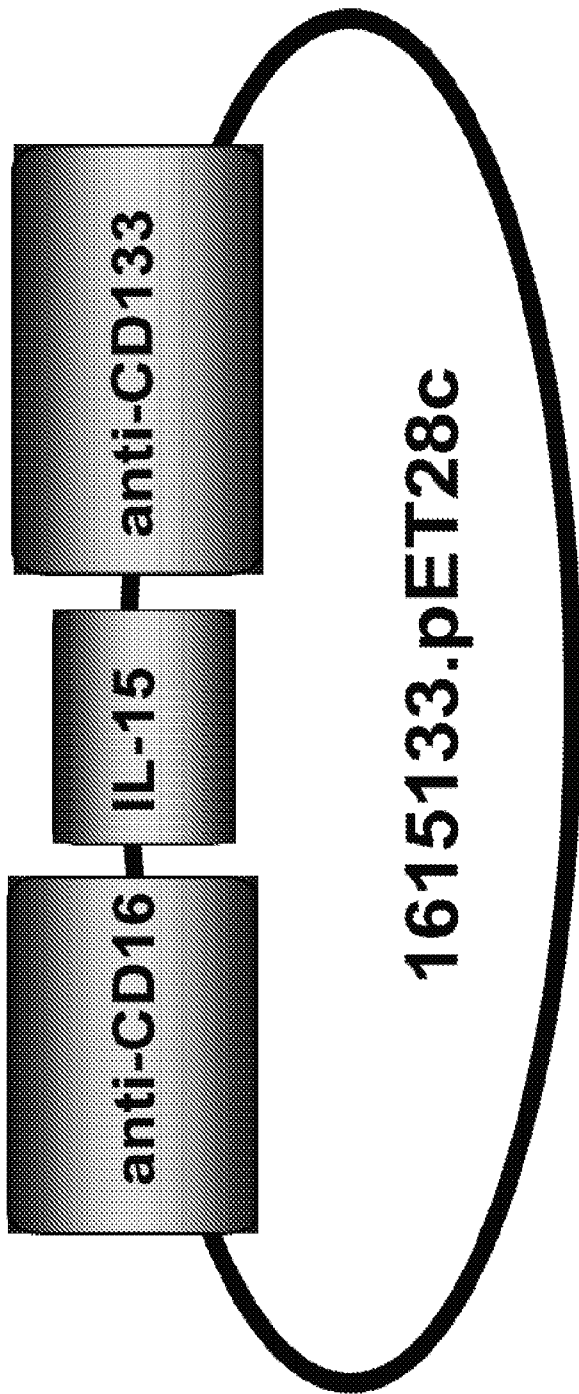


Fig. 16

Fig. 17

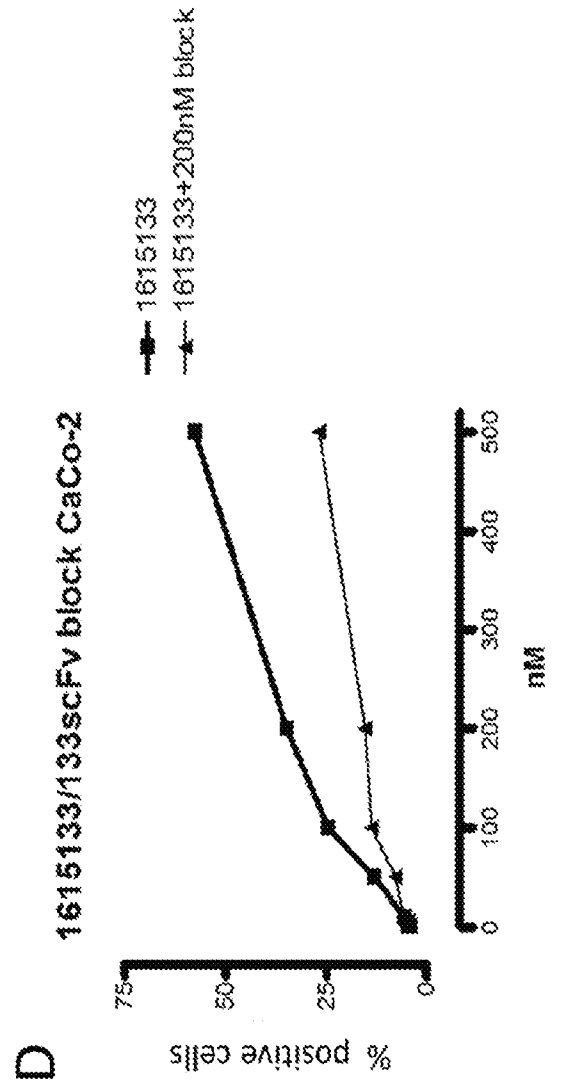
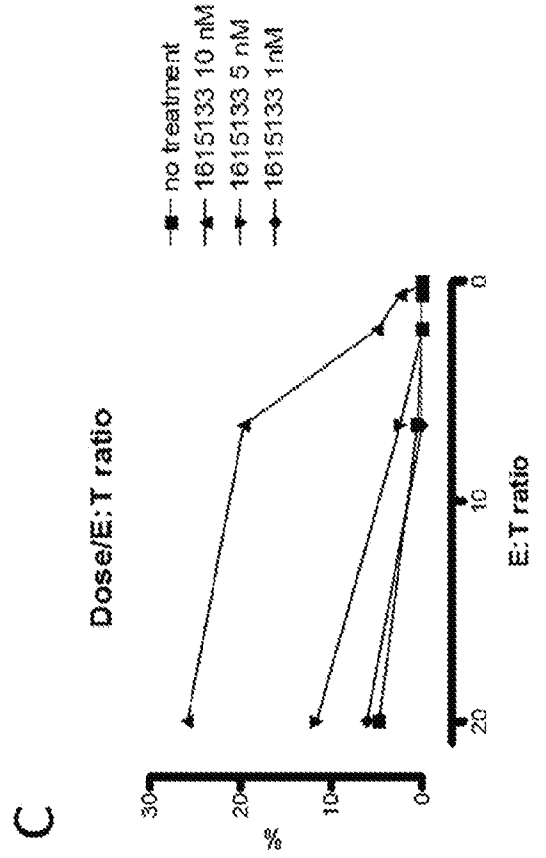
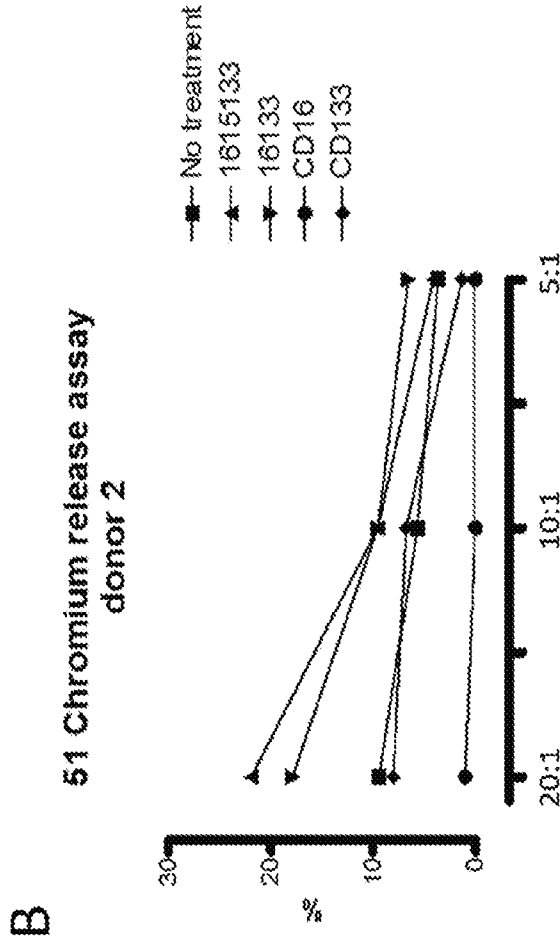
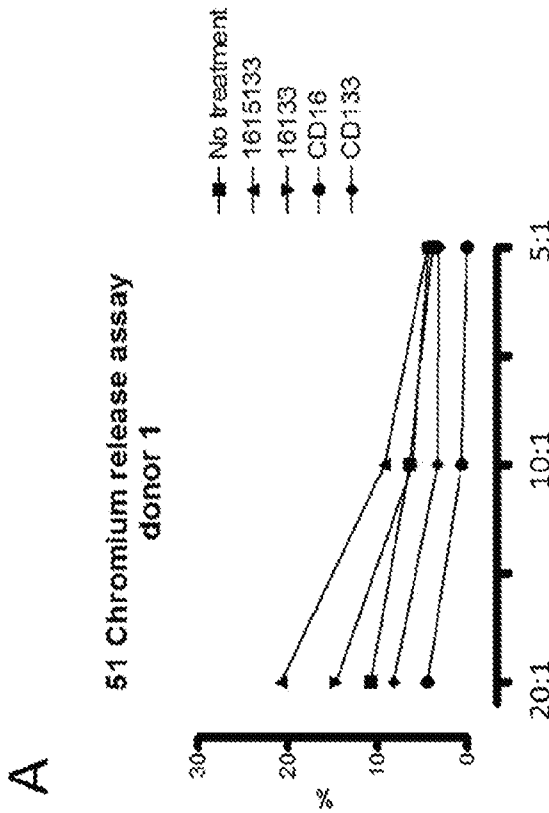


Fig. 18

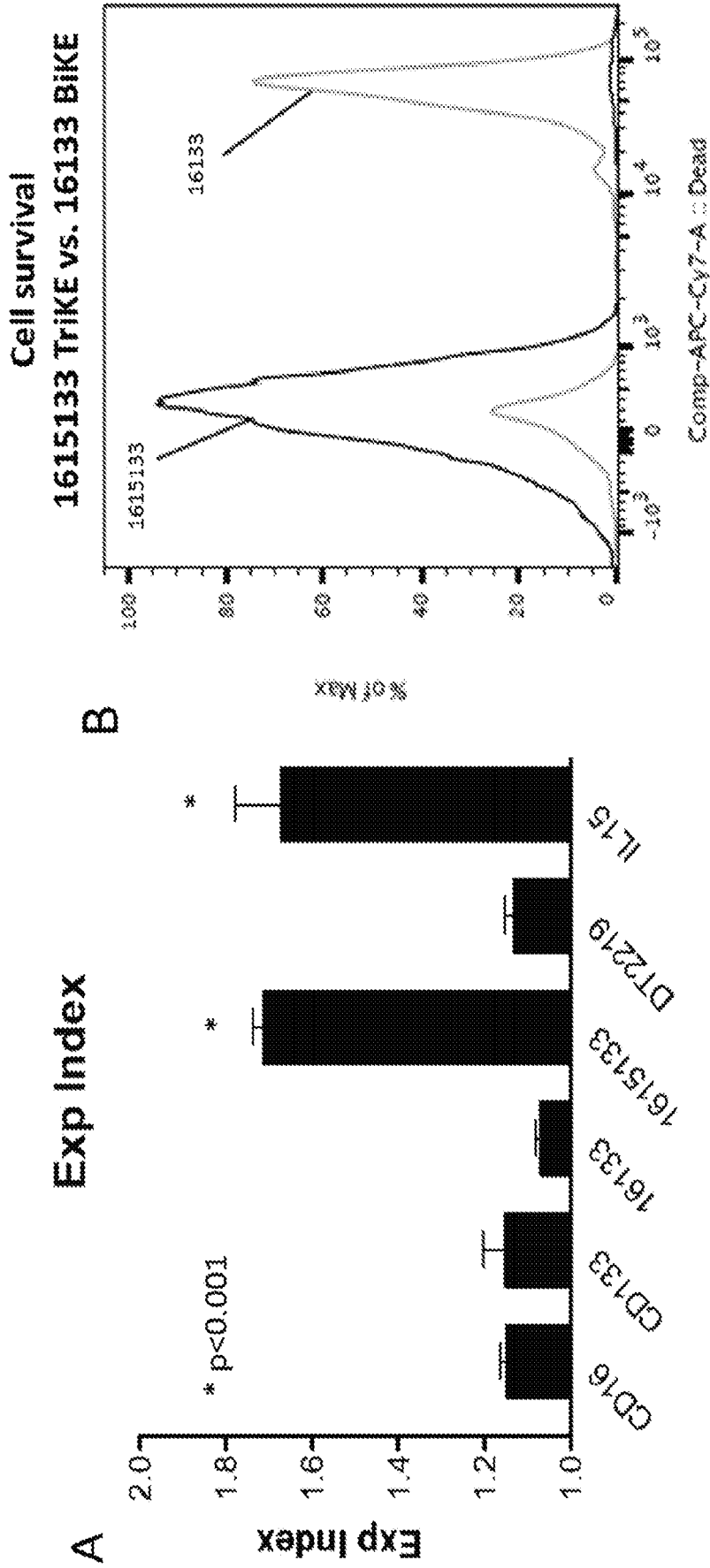


Fig. 19

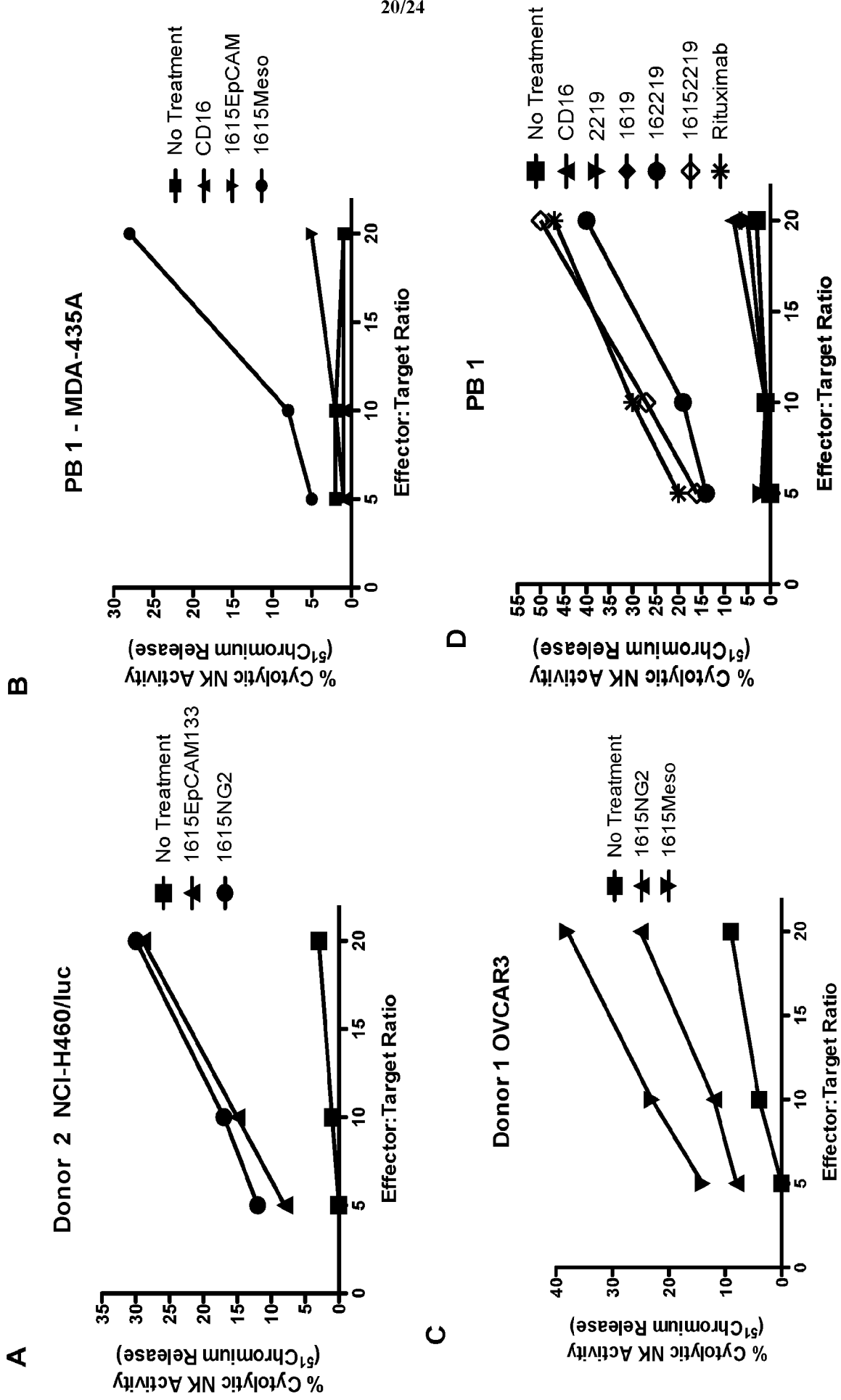


Fig. 20

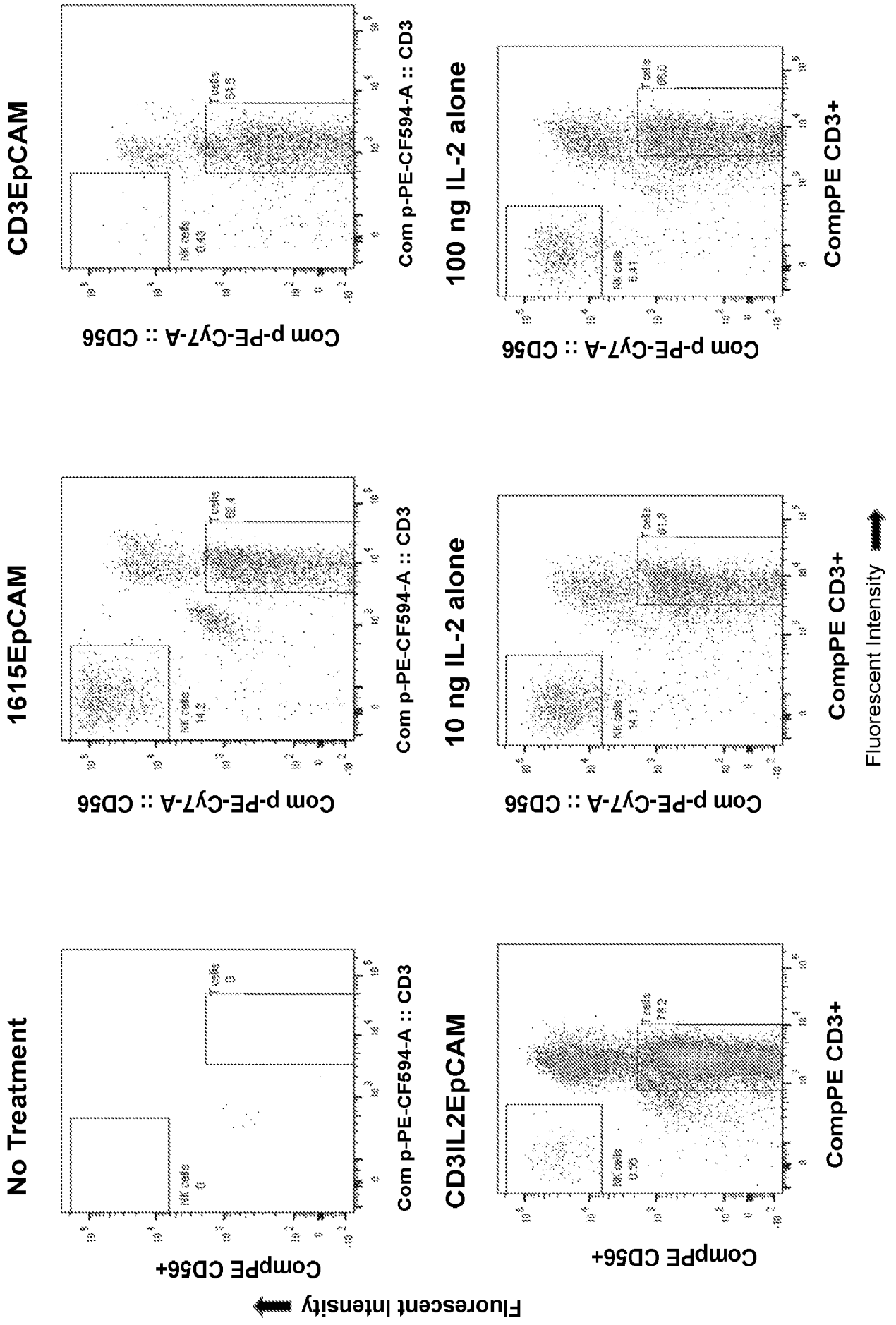


Fig. 21

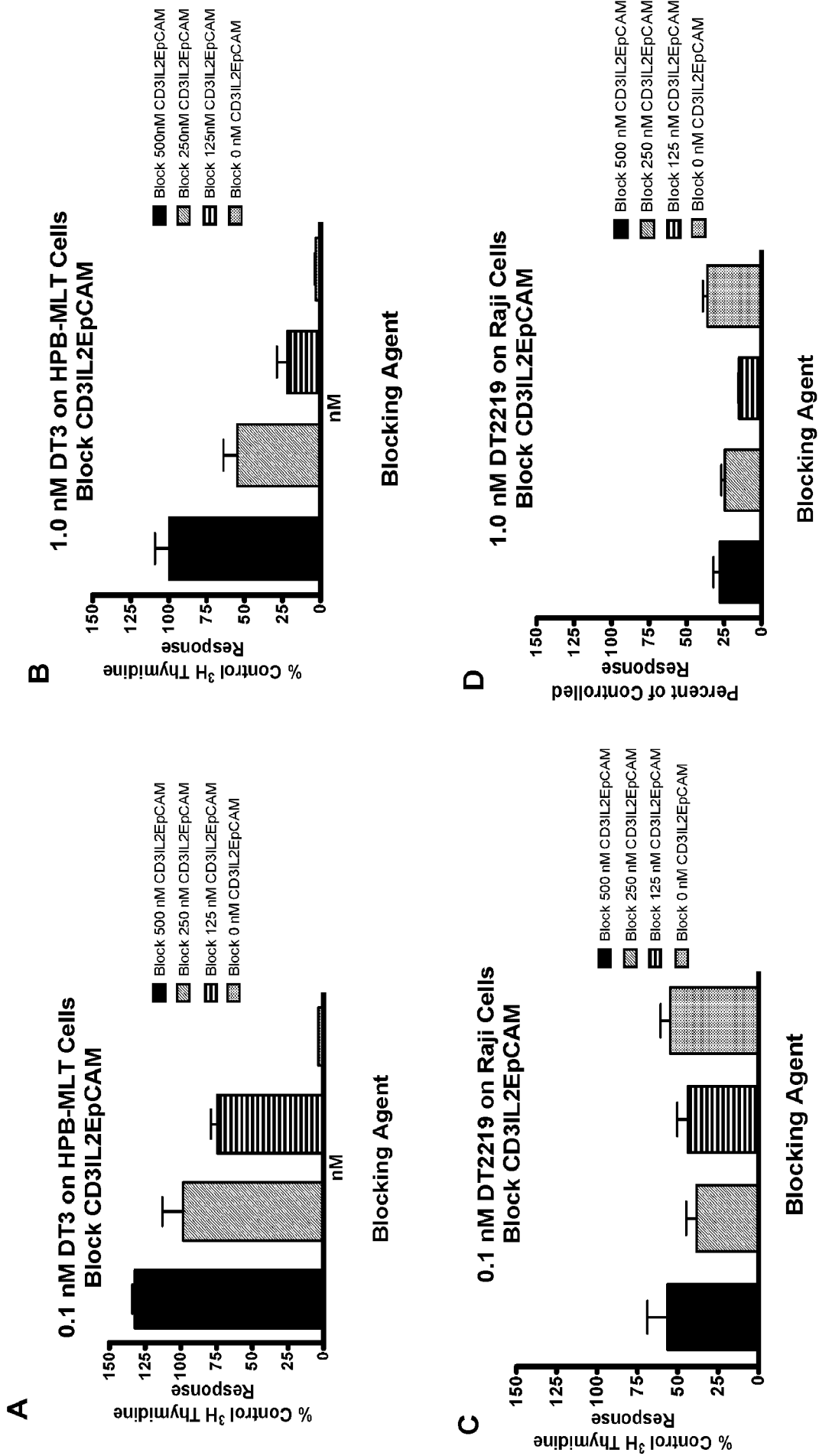


Fig. 22

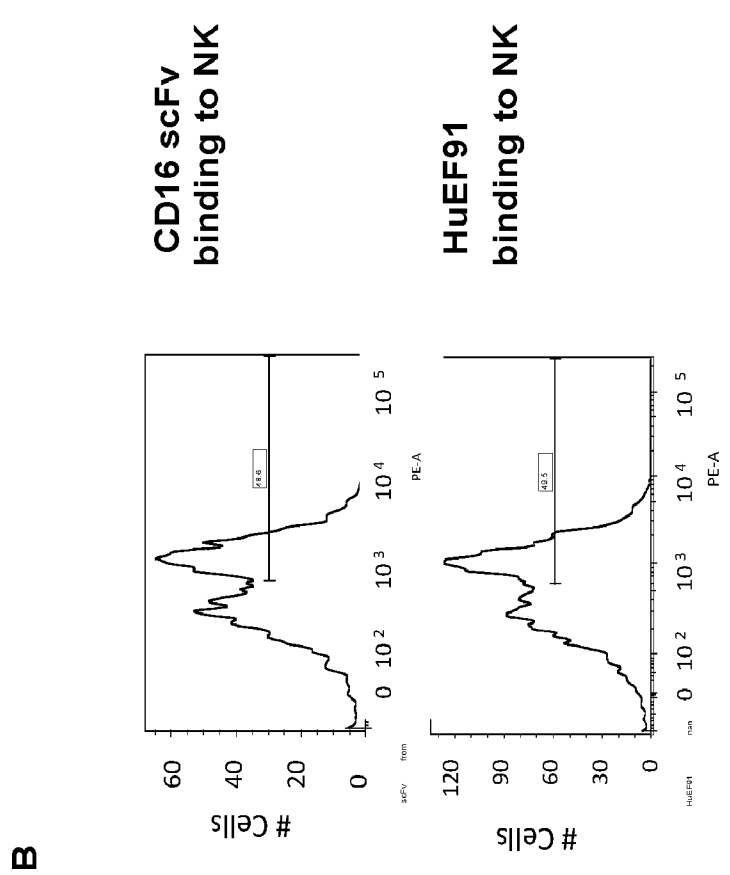
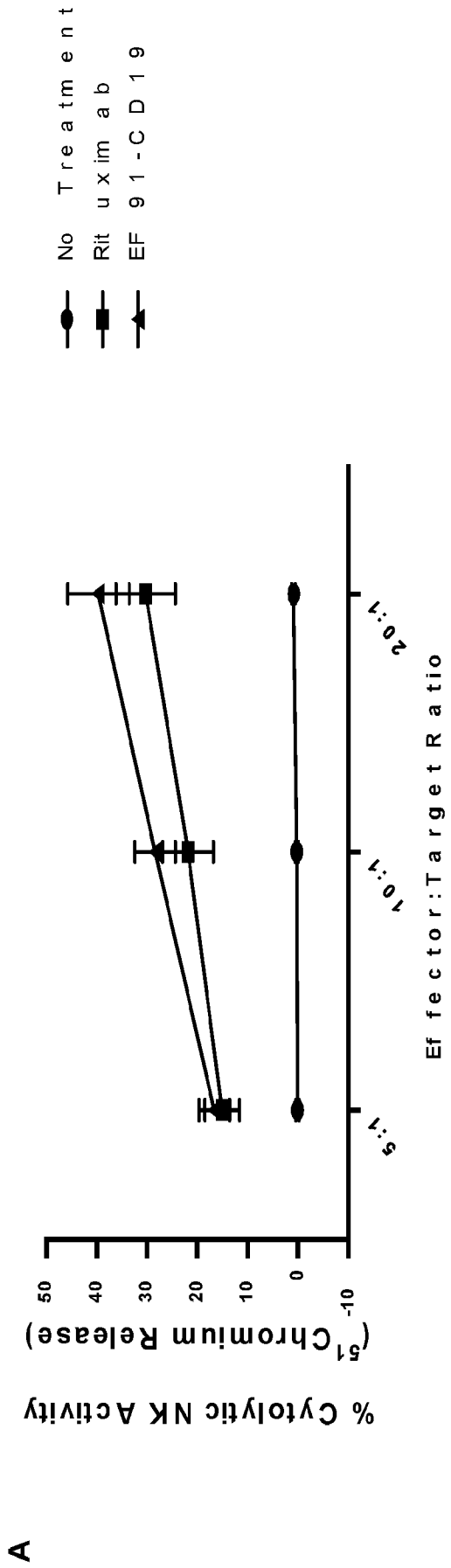
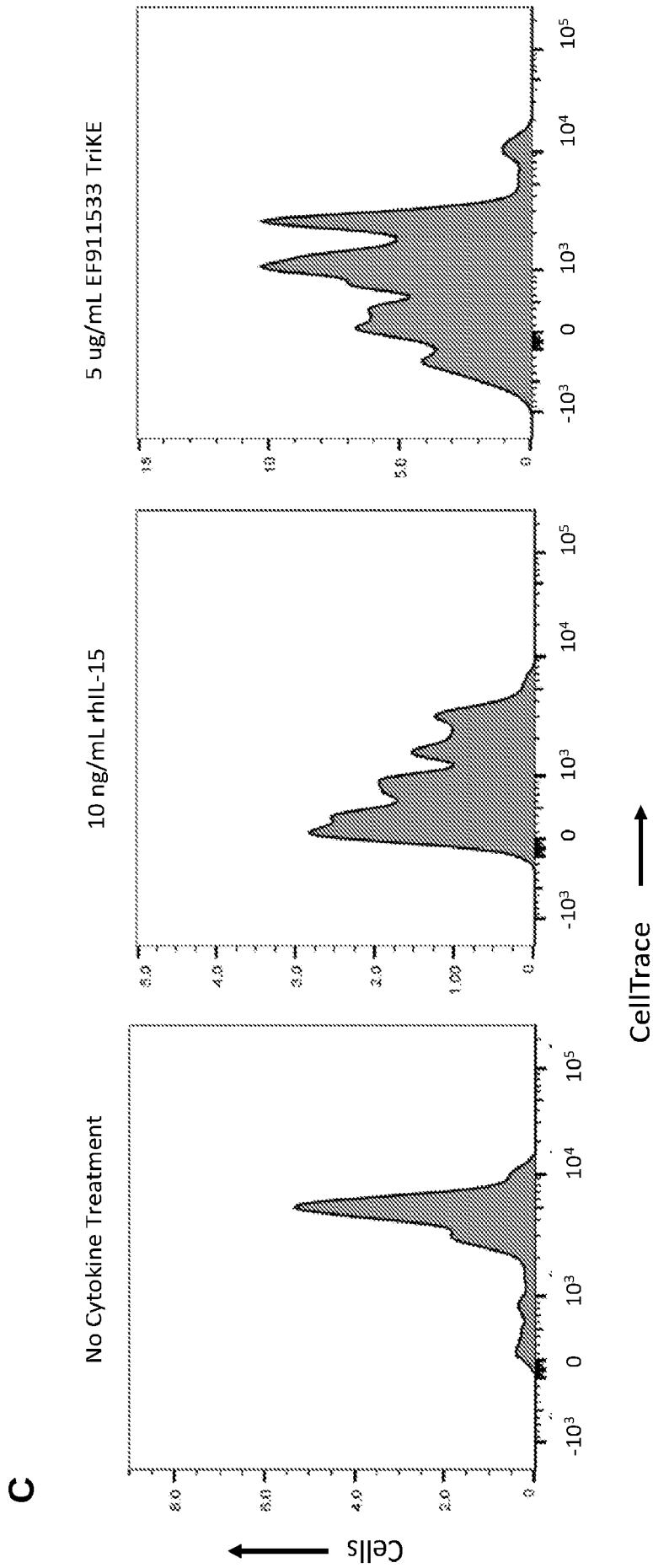


Fig. 22 - A



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US16/55722

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claims Nos.: 10-26, 35-45, 48-68
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

Please See Supplemental Page.

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

1-4, 5/1-4, 6/5/1-4, 7/6/5/1-4, 8/7/6/5/1-4, 9/5/1-4, 46, and 69

Remark on Protest

- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US16/55722

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC(8) - A61K 35/17; C07K 16/28, 16/46; C12N 5/00, 5/0783 (2017.01) CPC - A61K 35/17, 39/39558; C07K 16/28, 16/46, 16/283, 16/2809, 16/2866 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC(8): A61K 35/17; C07K 16/00, 16/28, 16/46; C12N 5/00, 5/0783 (2017.01) CPC: A61K 35/17, 39/39558; C07K 16/28, 16/46, 16/283, 16/2809, 16/2866 Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) PatSeer (US, EP, WO, JP, DE, GB, CN, FR, KR, ES, AU, IN, CA, INPADOC Data); EBSCO Discovery; PubMed; Google Scholar; The Lens; ENA; NCBI Blast; KEYWORDS: cytokine activating domain, link, NK engaging domain, targeting domain, bind		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X ----- Y	WO 2014/138306 A1 (BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, et al.) September 12, 2014; abstract; paragraphs [0005], [0007], [0009]-[0012], [0022], [0025], [0028]	1-3, 5/1-3, 6/5/1-3, 7/6/5/1-3, 9/5/1-3 --- 4, 5/4, 6/5/4, 7/6/5/4, 8/7/6/5/1-4, 9/5/4, 69
Y	US 2014/0242025 A1 (ALTOR BIOSCIENCE CORPORATION) August 28, 2014; paragraph [0006]; claim 3	4, 5/4, 6/5/4, 7/6/5/4, 9/5/4, 69
Y	WO 2013/039883 A1 (ABBVIE BIOTHERAPEUTICS INC.) March 21, 2013; paragraph [0054]	8/7/6/5/1-4
A	US 2006/0104971 A1 (GARBER, E et al.) May 18, 2006; paragraphs [0040], [0061]	46
A	US 2006/0134102 A1 (LEPAGE, D et al.) June 22, 2006; paragraphs [0017], [0094]	46
A	US 2014/0378664 A1 (SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS CO., LTD.) December 25, 2014; abstract; paragraph [0113]	46
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 24 January 2017 (24.01.2017)		Date of mailing of the international search report 17 FEB 2017
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US, Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. 571-273-8300		Authorized officer Shane Thomas PCT Helpdesk: 571-272-4300 PCT OSP: 571-272-7774

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/US16/55722

-----Continued from Box III Observations where unity of invention is lacking-----

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. In order for all inventions to be examined, the appropriate additional examination fees must be paid.

Group I, Claims 1-9, 46 and 69 are directed toward compound comprising: an NK engaging domain; an NK activating domain operably linked to the NK engaging domain; and a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell and is operably linked to the NK activating domain and the NK engaging domain.

Group II, Claims 27-34 and 47 are directed toward a compound comprising: a T cell engaging domain; a T cell activating domain operably linked to the T cell engaging domain; and a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell and is operably linked to the T cell activating domain and the T cell engaging domain.

The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: the special technical features of Group I include SEQ ID NO: 15, not present in Group II; the special technical features of Group II include SEQ ID NO: 18, not present in Group I.

Groups I and II share the technical features including: a compound comprising: a lymphocyte engaging domain; a lymphocyte activating domain operably linked to the lymphocyte engaging domain; and a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell and is operably linked to the lymphocyte activating domain and the lymphocyte engaging domain.

However, these shared technical features are previously disclosed by the Article 'CD16xCD33 bispecific killer cell engager (BiKE) activates NK cells against primary MDS and MDSC CD33+ targets' by Gleason et al. (hereinafter 'Gleason').

Gleason discloses a compound comprising: a lymphocyte engaging domain (a BiKE comprising a CD16 antibody (a compound comprising: a lymphocyte engaging domain); abstract); a lymphocyte activating domain operably linked to the lymphocyte engaging domain (wherein the antibody is an agonist antibody (a lymphocyte activating domain operably linked to the lymphocyte engaging domain); abstract (see also page 1, lines 31-32 of the instant specification)); and a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell (and a CD-33 binding domain of the bispecific scFv (a targeting domain that selectively binds to a target cell); abstract, page 3017, second column, third paragraph) and is operably linked to the lymphocyte activating domain and the lymphocyte engaging domain (and is part of a bispecific scFv (operably linked to the lymphocyte activating domain and the lymphocyte engaging domain); abstract, page 3017, second column, third paragraph).

Since none of the special technical features of the Groups I and II inventions is found in more than one of the inventions, and since all of the shared technical features are previously disclosed by a the Gleason reference, unity of invention is lacking.