Status Report: The Cancer Genome Atlas Pilot Project

National Cancer Advisory Board Meeting
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Anna D. Barker, Ph.D.
Deputy Director, National Cancer Institute
Pilot Project Mission and Goal

Mission
The Cancer Genome Atlas Pilot Project is designed to test the feasibility of a full-scale effort to systematically explore the entire spectrum of genomic changes involved in human cancer to have meaningful clinical impact in a few rationally-selected cancer types.

Goal
The overarching goal of the Pilot Project is to systematically further develop and apply current genomic analysis technologies for the expressed purpose of identifying genes and regions of potential importance to cancer – and tie this capability to the NHGRI’s existing genome sequencing infrastructure for the re-sequencing of these candidates.
### Enabling Factors

#### Approaches/Factors
1. Human Genome Project
2. Gene families and pathways
3. Robust genomic analysis technologies
4. Sanger experience - sequenced known genes (e.g., kinases are druggable)
5. Number of early indications that somatic mutations are important potential targets

#### Overall Impact
1. Known human reference
2. Kinases, phosphatases, transcription factors, hormone responsiveness
3. Copy number changes, expression profiling, epigenomic technologies
4. Survey of known genes that are abnormal prior to sequencing - BRAF
5. BCR-ABL, EGFR1, ERBB2
TCGA Work Flow

NHGRI High-throughput Sequencing Centers
- Sequence genes on 1-3 tumor types
- New sequencing technologies

Biospecimens
- Source of qualified biospecimens
- Central processing of biomolecules

Bioinformatics
- Database for clinical, pathological, sequence and molecular data
- Tools for data mining

Cancer Genome Characterization Centers
- “Pipeline” of candidate DNA targets
- Genome and epigenome analysis at a rate of 10 - 50 samples/week
Project Development History

- **September 2003:** NCAB Ad hoc Committee formed
- **April 2004:** NCI-NHGRI Workshop
- **September 2004:** Presentation to EC
- **February 2005:**
  - Ad hoc Committee Report to NCAB
  - NCI-NHGRI Working Group formed
- **September 2005:**
  - Meeting Review with NCAB
  - EC Review
- **November 2004:**
  - Presentation to BSA
- **February 2005:**
  - Meeting for community input
- **July 2005:**
  - Project RFI issued
- **November 2005:**
  - Approval
Criteria for tumor selection to meet TCGA Pilot Project needs and goals:

- Technical requirements
- Ethical, legal, policy requirements
- Practical requirements
- Temporal requirements
1. Tumor samples consist of at least 500 mg of tissue from previously untreated tumor
2. Tumor samples are frozen in OCT (glycerol-based medium)
3. At least 500 individual samples from unique cancer cases are available
4. Samples are properly consented for use in this project
   - Current consent is sufficient or
   - Patients may (and can) be re-consented in a timely fashion
   - Consent is “all or none”; not tiered
5. All tumors have matched normal samples (e.g. this should be white blood cells from 5-10 ml of normal blood and normal tissue from the same organ as the primary tumor)
6. Samples represent a single histopathologic type of tumor and/or (if a solid tumor) derived from a single cancer site (e.g., brain, breast, lung, etc)
7. Individual tumor samples contain at least 80% tumor cells
8. The tumor samples are derived from patients entered in a clinical trial with:
   - Uniform entry criteria
   - Consistent treatment (The patients may be treated on different arms of a randomized study)
   - Clinical Data that has undergone regular audits within the parameters of the ongoing trial
9. Tumors are from a primary tumor site (i.e. not regional or distant metastases)
- Verify authenticity and perform the pathologic QC of qualified tumors from existing collections
- Perform central processing of specimens
- Develop and monitor the SOPs for prospective specimen collection
- Track all specimen-related operations (consent, acquisition, transport, processing, QC, distribution) through caBIG
- Provide “standard” samples for technology platform comparisons
- Distribute materials
Cancer Genome Characterization Centers (CGCCs)

- Genome characterization
  - Expression profiling
  - Copy number changes
  - Epigenomics

- Improve existing technologies
  - Epigenomics to meet required throughput rate
  - Copy number detection and expression profiling for characterizing small amount of biological samples

- Real-time data release into public database

- CGCCs RFA:
  - Mechanism: U54 (cooperative agreement)
  - $11.7 million – year 1
High-throughput Genome Sequencing Centers (NHGRI)
- Sequence large number of targets from at least 2 tumor types
- Develop and integrate sequencing technologies

Genome Sequencing Centers RFA:
- Mechanism: U54 (cooperative agreement)
- $50 million in sequencing for TCGA
Bioinformatics Core

- caBIG platform and standards
- Data management
- Database(s) development
- Specific Analytic tools
- caBIG standards participation
- Inter-program communication
Technology Development

- **Opportunities For Technology Development**
  - Genomic rearrangement, epigenetic assays
  - Highly parallel single molecule assays
  - Method for selecting / enriching defined regions of genome
  - Magnitude improvement in cost, throughput, accuracy, and precision

- **Technology Development RFA:**
  - Mechanisms: SBIR/STTR; R21 (exploratory/development)
  - Investment $2 million SBIR/STTR year 1
The Cancer Genome Atlas Pilot Project

- Public Launch: December 13, 2005 at news conference and advocates meeting
- Partnership between NCI and NHGRI
- Three-year, $100 million pilot project

http://cancergenome.nih.gov
Result: Positive scientific, business, and national consumer coverage

NIH launches project to map cancer genome

TCGA – The Cancer Genome Atlas Pilot Launched

Unlocking cancer genes
Factors to Assess the Pilot

- Robust genomic analysis of two tumors – identification of significant number of candidate genes for re-sequencing
- Genome characterization and analysis performed with sufficient power (>500 samples/tumor) to provide a “pipeline” for re-sequencing important (occur at >5-10% frequency) cancer genes/regions
- Ability to find genomic changes (e.g. loss of heterozygosity, deletions, amplifications, translocation, and epigenetic modifications) and re-sequence selected of these aberrations
- Ability to differentiate tumor subtypes based on genomic alterations
- Establishment of a public database of sequences, characterization results, and clinical data
- A stretch – but many believe that new cancer genes could be discovered from the tumors studied – beyond the “street lamps”
Upcoming Milestones

Fiscal Year 2006

**FY06 Q1:**
NHGRI issuance of RFAs

**FY06 Q2:**
- NCI Issuance of RFA and RFPs
- Selection of Tumor Sets

**FY06 Q4:**
- NHGRI Funding of High-throughput Sequencing Centers
- Issuance of NCI awards