



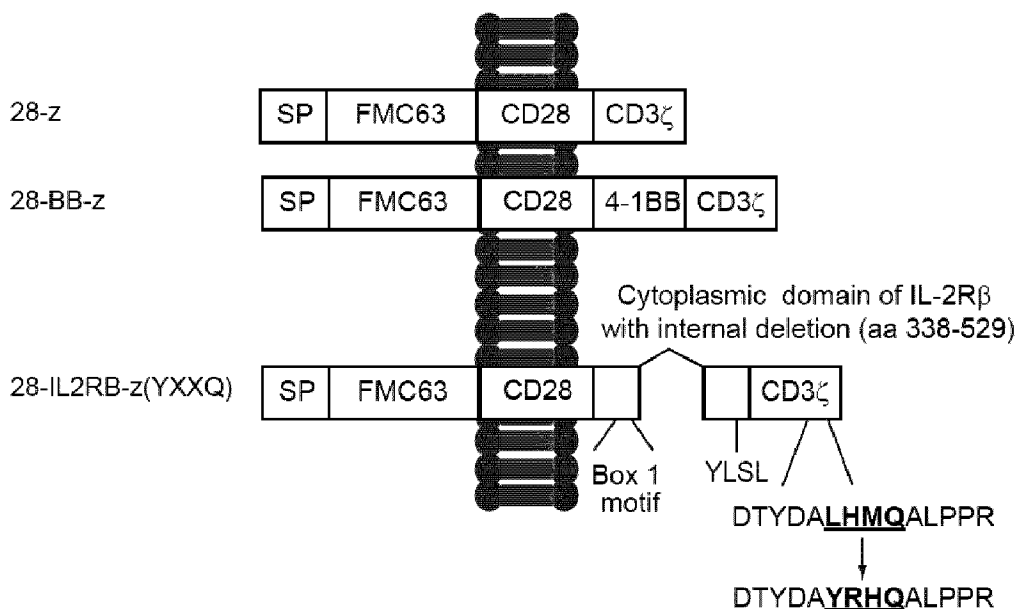
(86) Date de dépôt PCT/PCT Filing Date: 2016/02/11
(87) Date publication PCT/PCT Publication Date: 2016/08/18
(45) Date de délivrance/Issue Date: 2022/04/26
(85) Entrée phase nationale/National Entry: 2017/07/26
(86) N° demande PCT/PCT Application No.: CA 2016/050126
(87) N° publication PCT/PCT Publication No.: 2016/127257
(30) Priorité/Priority: 2015/02/12 (US62/115,527)

(51) Cl.Int./Int.Cl. *C07K 19/00* (2006.01),
A61K 35/12 (2015.01), *A61K 38/16* (2006.01),
A61K 39/00 (2006.01), *A61P 35/00* (2006.01),
A61P 37/04 (2006.01), *C07K 14/47* (2006.01),
C07K 14/705 (2006.01), *C07K 14/715* (2006.01),
C07K 5/107 (2006.01), *C12N 15/62* (2006.01),
C12N 5/10 (2006.01)

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(54) Titre : RECEPTEURS ANTIGENIQUES CHIMERIQUES
(54) Title: CHIMERIC ANTIGEN RECEPTORS



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

Disclosed herein are chimeric antigen receptors (CARs) comprising an intracellular segment comprising an interleukin receptor chain, a JAK-binding motif, a Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (STAT) 5 association motif and/or a CD3 ζ

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(57) Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):

intracellular signaling domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif, as well as cells and compositions comprising said CARs and uses thereof.

ABSTRACT

Disclosed herein are chimeric antigen receptors (CARs) comprising an intracellular segment comprising an interleukin receptor chain, a JAK-binding motif, a Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (STAT) 5 association motif and/or a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif, as well as cells and compositions comprising said CARs and uses thereof.

TITLE: CHIMERIC ANTIGEN RECEPTORS

[0001]

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Incorporation of Sequence Listing

[0002] A computer readable form of the Sequence Listing "P47312PC00_ST25.txt" (45,782 bytes) created on February 11, 2016 .

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Technical Field

[0003] The present disclosure relates to improved chimeric antigen receptors (CARs) and particularly to CARs comprising an intracellular segment comprising a cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor chain, and/or a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain, the intracellular segment comprising a JAK-binding motif and a Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (STAT) 5 association motif, and/or a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif. Also provided are nucleic acids encoding said CARs, a cell expressing said CARs, as well as methods of making and use thereof.

20

Introduction

[0004] A therapeutic strategy for treating tumors, can involve introducing a T cell receptor (TCR) capable of binding to a specific antigen into a T cell to prepare a T cell targeting the antigen of interest. Based on this strategy, adoptive immunity gene therapies using TCR genes targeting many tumor antigens, for example, WT1, MART1, gp100, CEA,

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CD19 and mHAG HA-2 antigens have been attempted.

[0005] Another gene-modified T cell therapy involves using a chimeric antigen receptor (CAR). CARs combine antigen specificity and T cell activating properties in a single fusion molecule. The CAR has specificity for a surface antigen of a tumor cell and the ability to activate T cell growth ex vivo. This therapy may have a stronger and longer-lasting anti-tumor effect than a therapeutic antibody targeting the tumour surface antigen and therefore the clinical effect thereof may also be greater.

[0006] A representative structure of CAR comprises a single chain variable fragment (scFv) recognizing a surface antigen of a tumor cell, a transmembrane domain, and an intracellular signaling domain of a TCR complex – such as CD3 ζ - that activates a T cell. A CAR having such a constitution is called a first generation CAR. A nucleic acid sequence encoding a single chain variable fragment portion can be isolated from, for example, a hybridoma producing a monoclonal antibody that recognizes a target antigen, such as a target tumour antigen. A CAR is produced and expressed in a cell such as a T cell. A T cell expressing a CAR directly recognizes a surface antigen of a tumor cell independently of the expression of major histocompatibility antigen class I on the tumor cell, and at the same time, activates the T cell, and thereby the CAR-expressing T cell can efficiently kill the tumor cell.

[0007] In order to attempt to enhance the ability of first generation CARs to activate T cells, a second generation CAR has been developed, wherein an intracellular signaling domain of CD28 which is a co-stimulatory molecule of a T cell, is linked to a first generation CAR. As a further improved version, a third generation CAR has also been developed, wherein an intracellular signaling domain derived from CD137 (4-1BB) or CD134 (OX40), both which are tumor necrosis factor (TNF) receptor superfamily members, is tandemly linked to a second generation CAR. Thus, many CAR molecules targeting a variety of tumor antigens have been reported (see for example Sadelain et al, 2009). However, signal transducing proteins used as the co-stimulatory intracellular signaling domain for the second

generation and third generation CARs which are currently reported are limited. It is known that when linked to a CAR, not all intracellular signaling domains derived from every T cell signal transducing protein will sufficiently stimulate a T cell to damage and/or kill a target tumor cell. Therefore, finding intracellular signaling domains of signal transducing proteins that are effective when linked to a CAR is desirable.

Summary

[0008] An aspect of the present disclosure is a CAR which specifically binds to a target antigen and imparts a cytotoxic activity against a target cell expressing the target antigen.

[0009] A further aspect is a cell expressing the CAR that can be used to target a cell expressing the target antigen of interest.

[00010] An aspect provides a CAR comprising i) an extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen, ii) a transmembrane domain and iii) an intracellular segment comprising a) one or more intracellular signaling domains selected from a cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor chain and/or a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain and b) a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif, wherein the intracellular segment comprises an endogenous or exogenous JAK-binding motif and STAT5 association motif.

[00011] In an embodiment, the exogenous STAT3 association motif is YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13).

[00012] In an embodiment, the exogenous STAT3 association motif is YRHQ (SEQ ID NO: 22).

[00013] In an embodiment, the exogenous STAT3 association motif is less than 100 amino acid residues from the C terminus of the CAR.

[00014] In one embodiment, the exogenous STAT3 association motif replaces amino

acids 156-158 of CD3 ζ .

[00015] In an embodiment, the one or more intracellular signaling domains is or comprises a cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor chain.

[00016] In another embodiment, the cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor chain is a truncated fragment minimally comprising a JAK-binding motif and STAT5 association motif.

[00017] In an embodiment, the one or more intracellular signaling domains is or comprises a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain.

[00018] In another embodiment, the cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain is a cytoplasmic domain of CD28, CD2, CD4, CD5, CD8 α , CD8 β , CD134 or CD137.

[00019] Another aspect is a CAR comprising i) an extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen, ii) a transmembrane domain and iii) an intracellular segment comprising one or more intracellular signaling domains including a cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor chain and optionally at least one supplementary cytoplasmic domain.

[00020] In an embodiment, the cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor chain is a truncated fragment comprising a tyrosine kinase association motif and a STAT association motif.

[00021] In an embodiment, the at least one supplementary cytoplasmic domain is i) an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ , optionally wherein the CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain comprises an exogenous STAT3 association motif ii) and/or a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain of CD28.

[00022] In an embodiment, the interleukin receptor chain is selected from the group consisting of interleukin 2 receptor (IL-2R) β chain and interleukin 21 receptor (IL-21R) α chain.

[00023] In yet another embodiment, the extracellular domain is and/or comprises an

antigen binding region of an antibody capable of binding to the predetermined antigen.

[00024] In another embodiment, the antigen binding region of the antibody is or comprises a single chain variable fragment of said antibody.

[00025] In another embodiment, the transmembrane domain is selected from the
5 group consisting of CD28 transmembrane domain and CD8 transmembrane domain.

[00026] In another embodiment, the CAR further comprises a signal peptide, optionally at the N terminus.

[00027] Another aspect includes a nucleic acid encoding a CAR described herein.

[00028] In an embodiment, the nucleic acid encodes a CAR conjugated to a signal
10 peptide optionally wherein the signal peptide is at the N terminus of the CAR.

[00029] A further aspect includes a vector comprising a nucleic acid described herein.

[00030] Yet a further aspect includes a cell which expresses the CAR herein described, and/or is transfected or transduced with the nucleic acid or the vector described herein.

[00031] Yet a further aspect includes a composition comprising a CAR nucleic acid or
15 vector described herein, optionally a microsomal preparation comprising a CAR described herein.

[00032] In an embodiment, the composition comprises a diluent or pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

[00033] According to the present disclosure, there are provided chimeric antigen
20 receptors, nucleic acids encoding said chimeric antigen receptors, cells expressing said chimeric antigen receptors and compositions comprising any of the foregoing. In an embodiment, one or more of the foregoing may be used in the field of adoptive immunity gene therapy targeting an antigen such as a tumor antigen and/or in screening or other *in vitro* assays. The chimeric antigen receptor of the present disclosure can be introduced into
25 a cell, resulting for example in an increased or elevated expression amount of the chimeric

antigen receptor in the cell. Such cell may exhibit cytotoxic activity against cells expressing the target antigen.

[00034] In one aspect, there is provided a method of making the cell expressing a CAR herein disclosed, the method comprising:

- 5 a) isolating immune cells from a mammal, optionally wherein the immune cells are T cells;
- b) transfecting or transducing the isolated immune cells, optionally T cells, with a nucleic acid encoding a CAR disclosed herein; and
- c) optionally isolating and/or expanding the CAR-expressing cells, optionally
10 CAR-expressing T cells following transfection or transduction.

[00035] Another aspect is a use of a CAR, a nucleic acid, a vector, a cell or a composition described herein for example for reducing the number of cells expressing a predetermined antigen, treating a disease, preventing a disease and/or providing anti-tumor immunity.

15 [00036] Another aspect includes a method of decreasing in a subject the number of cells expressing a predetermined antigen, the method comprising administering to the subject in need thereof an effective amount of cells expressing a CAR described herein, wherein the CAR specifically binds to the predetermined antigen.

[00037] Another aspect is a method of treating or preventing a disease in a mammal,
20 the method comprising administering to the mammal in need thereof an effective amount of cells expressing a CAR described herein or a composition described herein.

[00038] A further aspect is a method of providing an anti-tumor immunity in a mammal, the method comprising administering to the mammal in need thereof an effective amount of cells expressing a CAR described herein or a composition described herein.

25 [00039] Other features and advantages of the present disclosure will become apparent from the following detailed description. It should be understood, however, that the

detailed description and the specific examples while indicating preferred embodiments of the disclosure are given by way of illustration only, since various changes and modifications within the spirit and scope of the disclosure will become apparent to those skilled in the art from this detailed description.

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Brief Description of Drawings

[00040] An embodiment of the present disclosure will now be described in relation to the drawings in which:

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[00041] Fig. 1 is a schematic diagram of anti-CD19 chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) constructs.

[00042] Fig. 2 is a series of plots of a flow cytometry analysis showing transduction efficiency of primary T cells with anti-CD19 CAR constructs.

[00043] Fig. 3 is a series of graphs showing anti-CD19-CAR surface expression of various constructs.

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[00044] Fig. 4 is a series of graphs showing phosphorylation of STAT3 and STAT5 in the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) anti-CD19 CAR-transduced T cells.

[00045] Fig. 5 is a graphical comparison of JAK-STAT pathway activity in CAR-transduced T cells.

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[00046] Fig. 6 is a schematic illustrating a protocol for anti-CD19 CAR construct T cell transduction and expansion.

[00047] Fig. 7 is a series of graphs showing expansion of CAR-transduced T cells following transduction.

[00048] Fig. 8 is a series of graphs showing expansion of CAR-transduced T cells following CD19-specific stimulation with K562-CD19 cells.

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[00049] Fig. 9 is a series of graphs showing expansion of CAR-transduced T cells following co-culture with K562 cells (control).

[00050] Fig. 10 is a series of graphs showing expansion of the CAR-transduced T cells after antigen-specific restimulation with K562-CD19 cells.

[00051] Fig. 11 is a series of graphs showing cell division rate in CAR-transduced T cells.

5 [00052] Fig. 12 is a graph showing viability of the CAR-transduced T cells.

[00053] Fig. 13 is a series of plots of flow cytometry analysis showing surface phenotype and CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ expression levels of CAR-transduced T cells.

[00054] Fig. 14 is a series of graphs showing the frequency of CAR-transduced T cells with a stem cell-like memory T cell marker phenotype (CD45RA⁺ CD62L⁺ CD95⁺).

10 [00055] Fig. 15 is a series of graphs comparing CD62L expression in CAR-transduced T cells.

[00056] Fig. 16 is a series of graphs showing IL-2 and IFN- γ secretion by CAR-transduced T cells.

[00057] Fig. 17 is a graph showing *in vitro* target cell lysis by CAR-transduced T cells.

15 [00058] Fig. 18 is a schematic illustrating a protocol for injection of immunodeficient mice with CD19-positive acute lymphoblastic leukemia cell line NALM-6 which expresses EGFP-luciferase, followed by injection with CAR-transduced T cells.

[00059] Fig. 19 is a series of bioluminescent imaging of luciferase activity at the indicated time points following infusion of the anti-CD19 CAR-transduced T cells.

20 [00060] Fig. 20 is a graph showing Kaplan–Meier curve for overall survival of the mice treated with anti-CD19 CAR-transduced T cells (n=5 each).

[0001] Fig. 21 shows the structure of CARs NFM63-28Z, NFM63-28-d2RbZ, NFM63-28-21RaZ or NFM63-28Z-21Ra used in the Examples.

[0002] Fig. 22 shows STAT phosphorylation cells transduced with CARs of Fig. 21.

Detailed Description

[0003] As used herein, a “chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)” means a fused protein comprising an extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen, an intracellular segment comprising one or more cytoplasmic domains derived from signal transducing proteins different from the polypeptide from which the extracellular domain is derived, and a transmembrane domain. The “chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)” is sometimes called a “chimeric receptor”, a “T-body”, or a “chimeric immune receptor (CIR).” The phrase “extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen” means any proteinaceous molecule or part thereof that can specifically bind to the predetermined antigen. The “intracellular signaling domain” means any oligopeptide or polypeptide domain known to function to transmit a signal causing activation or inhibition of a biological process in a cell, for example, activation of an immune cell such as a T cell or a NK cell. Examples include ILR chain, CD28 and/or CD3ζ.

[0004] As used herein, “STAT3” or “Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription 3” refers to a transcription factor belonging to the STAT protein family. STAT3 is also referred to as “acute-phase response factor”, “APRF”, “APRF Transcription Factor”, DNA-binding protein APRF”, FLJ20882”, hypothetical protein MGC16063”, “IL-6-Response Factor”, “LIF(leukemia inhibitory factor)-Response Factor” or “STAT3_HUMAN”. The STAT3 protein is involved in regulating genes that are involved in cell growth and division, cell movement and cell apoptosis. In the immune system, STAT3 is a signal transducer for the maturation of immune system cells such as T cells and B cells. Siegel et al. have shown that STAT3 plays a role for the development and maintenance of human T cell memory (Siegel et al. 2011).

[0005] As used herein a “Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription 3 association motif” or a “STAT3 association motif” refers to amino acid sequence (or a polynucleotide encoding said amino acid sequence according to the context) YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) and which binds STAT3 (for example in the context of a longer polypeptide/protein).

The STAT3 association motif is present in signaling proteins, for example IL-6 and IL-10. The STAT3 association motif can also be introduced into signaling domains which do not endogenously comprise the STAT3 association motif (i.e. exogenous STAT3 association motif). The term "exogenous STAT3 association motif" means a STAT3 association motif that is recombinantly introduced into a domain, for example a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain, but that does not exist natively in said domain or at the introduced location in the domain. For example, a YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) exogenous STAT3 association motif can be introduced into CD3 ζ . The exogenous STAT3 association motif can, for example, be YRHQ (SEQ ID NO: 22). A person skilled in the art will appreciate that the exogenous STAT3 association motif can be introduced into CD3 ζ using various techniques understood in the art.

[0006] As used herein a "Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription 5 association motif" or a "STAT5 association motif" refers to an amino acid sequence (or a polynucleotide encoding said amino acid sequence according to the context) that comprises a tyrosine residue and which binds STAT5. For example, the STAT5 association motif of the IL-2R β chain comprises tyrosine residue-510 (tyrosine residue 510 which is amino acid number 536 of NCBI RefSeq:NP_000869.1, e.g. 271 of SEQ ID NO: 11). For example, the STAT5 association motif comprises amino acid residues YXXL (SEQ ID NO: 41). For example, the STAT5 association motif comprises amino acid residues YLSL (SEQ ID NO: 43).

[0007] The term "exogenous association motif" means any association motif that is recombinantly introduced into a domain, for example an intracellular signaling domain such as a cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor chain, a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain or a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain, but that does not exist natively in said domain or at the introduced location in the domain. For example, an exogenous JAK-binding motif can be inserted into an intracellular signaling domain, for example a cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor chain.

[0008] The “JAK-binding motif” used herein refers to a BOX-1 motif which allows for tyrosine kinase JAK association, for example JAK1. The JAK-binding motif can be for example amino acid numbers 278 to 286 of NCBI RefSeq:NP_000869.1 (amino acids 13 to 21 SEQ ID NO: 11).

5 [0009] As used herein, a “domain” means one region in a polypeptide, for example which is folded into a particular structure independently of other regions and/or has a particular function. The domain can for example be the cytoplasmic portion of a molecule or a part thereof. As used herein, the “cytoplasmic domain” of a molecule can refer to the full cytoplasmic domain or a part thereof that induces an intracellular signal when activated.

10 [0010] The term “variant” means a molecule comprising substitution, deletion or addition of one or a few to a plurality of amino acids, and includes particularly conservatively substituted molecules, provided that the variant substantially retains the same function as the original sequence. For example, IL receptor variants may comprise substitutions, deletions or additions outside the JAK-binding motif and the STAT association motif. For
15 example, a IL receptor chain variant can comprise up to 50, up to 40, up to 30, up to 20 or up to 10 amino acid deletion and/or conservative substitutions, in a region outside of the JAK-binding and STAT association motifs. Similarly variants of other molecules can comprise up to 50, up to 40, up to 30, up to 20 or up to 10 amino acid deletion and/or conservative substitutions, in a region outside of a region identified specifically herein.

20 [0011] As used herein, the phrase “wherein the intracellular segment comprises an endogenous or exogenous JAK-binding motif and a STAT5 association motif” means in the case wherein the intracellular segment comprises more than one cytoplasmic domain, that the JAK binding motif and the STAT5 association motif may be in the same cytoplasmic domain or may be in separate cytoplasmic domains.

25 [0012] The term “supplementary cytoplasmic domain” as used herein in the context of a CAR comprising a cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor (ILR) chain is a

cytoplasmic domain of a signal transducing protein that is not comprised in the ILR chain.

[00013] As used herein, a "tumor antigen" means a biological molecule having antigenicity, the expression of which comes to be recognized in association with malignant alteration of a cell. The tumor antigen in the present disclosure includes a tumor specific antigen (an antigen which is present only in tumor cells and is not found in other normal cells), and a tumor-associated antigen (an antigen which is also present in other organs and tissues or heterogeneous and allogeneic normal cells, or an antigen which is expressed during development and/or differentiation).

[00014] As used herein, an "interleukin (IL) receptor" means a cytokine receptor for an interleukin. There are two main families of IL receptors, type 1 and type 2 cytokine receptors. Type 1 interleukin receptors include IL-2 receptor, IL-3 receptor, IL-4 receptor, IL-5 receptor, IL-6 receptor, IL-7 receptor, IL-9 receptor, IL-11 receptor, IL-12 receptor, IL-13 receptor, IL-15 receptor, IL-21 receptor, IL-23 receptor and IL-27 receptor. Type 2 IL receptors include IL-10 receptor, IL-20 receptor, IL-22 receptor and IL-28 receptor. The IL receptor is composed of multiple polypeptide chains. In the present specification, for example, the IL-2 receptor β chain is sometimes abbreviated as IL2R β or IL-2R β .

[00015] The term "antibody" as used herein is intended to include monoclonal antibodies, polyclonal antibodies, and mouse-human chimeric antibodies, humanized antibodies as well as murine, bovine, rabbit, rat, goat, human antibodies and other organism-derived antibodies. The antibody may be from recombinant sources and/or produced in transgenic animals. The antibody may also be synthetic. The term "antibody fragment" as used herein is intended to include without limitations Fab, Fab', F(ab')₂, scFv, dsFv, ds-scFv, dimers, heterodimers, minibodies, diabodies, and multimers thereof, multispecific antibody fragments and Domain Antibodies. Antibodies can be fragmented using conventional techniques. For example, F(ab')₂ fragments can be generated by treating the antibody with pepsin. The resulting F(ab')₂ fragment can be treated to reduce disulfide bridges to produce

Fab' fragments. Papain digestion can lead to the formation of Fab fragments. Fab, Fab' and F(ab')₂, scFv, dsFv, ds-scFv, dimers, minibodies, diabodies, bispecific antibody fragments and other fragments can also be synthesized by recombinant techniques.

[00016] Methods for making antibodies are known in the art. To produce human
5 monoclonal antibodies and/or binding fragments thereof, antibody producing cells (lymphocytes) can be harvested from a human having cancer and fused with myeloma cells by standard somatic cell fusion procedures thus immortalizing these cells and yielding hybridoma cells. Such techniques are well known in the art, (e.g. the hybridoma technique originally developed by Kohler and Milstein (*Nature* 256:495-497 (1975)) as well as other
10 techniques such as the human B-cell hybridoma technique (Kozbor et al., *Immunol. Today* 4:72 (1983)), the EBV-hybridoma technique to produce human monoclonal antibodies (Cole et al., *Methods Enzymol*, 121:140-67 (1986)), and screening of combinatorial antibody libraries (Huse et al., *Science* 246:1275 (1989)). Hybridoma cells can be screened
15 immunochemically for production of antibodies specifically reactive with cancer cells and the monoclonal antibodies can be isolated.

[00017] As used herein, a "single chain variable fragment (scFv)" means a single chain polypeptide derived from an antibody which retains the ability to bind to an antigen. An example of the scFv includes an antibody polypeptide which is formed by a recombinant DNA technique and in which Fv regions of immunoglobulin heavy chain (H chain) and light
20 chain (L chain) fragments are linked via a spacer sequence. Various methods for preparing an scFv are known, and include methods described in US Patent No. 4694778, *Science*, vol. 242, pp. 423-442 (1988), *Nature*, vol. 334, p. 54454 (1989), and *Science*, vol. 242, pp. 1038-1041 (1988).

[00018] The term "CD3 ζ " as used herein refers to all mammalian species, preferably
25 human, of the cluster of differentiation 3 (CD3) T-cell co-receptor. In mammals, CD3 comprises a CD3 ζ chain, a CD3 delta chain and two CD3 epsilon chains. The CD3 ζ chain

(e.g. NCBI RefSeq: NP_932170.1) comprises an intracellular signaling domain (e.g. SEQ ID NO: 7) which can be used to engineer the CAR of the present disclosure.

[00019] The term "28-z" as used herein refers to a CAR construct generated by linking a FMC63-derived single-chain variable fragment (scFv) to a CD28 transmembrane domain and a CD3 ζ intracellular domain.

[00020] The term "28-BB-z" as used herein refers to a CAR construct generated by linking a FMC63-derived single-chain variable fragment (scFv) to a CD28 transmembrane domain and further to a 4-1BB intracellular signaling domain and a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain.

[00021] The term "28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ)" as used herein refers to a CAR construct generated by linking a FMC63-derived single-chain variable fragment (scFv) to a CD28 transmembrane domain, to an IL-2R β cytoplasmic domain comprising a BOX 1 motif involved in JAK signaling (e.g. comprises a JAK-binding motif) and a tyrosine residue at position 510 for STAT5 association, and further to a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain comprising an exogenous YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) motif involved in STAT3 association.

[00022] The term "nucleic acid sequence" as used herein refers to a sequence of nucleoside or nucleotide monomers consisting of naturally occurring bases, sugars and intersugar (backbone) linkages. The term also includes modified or substituted sequences comprising non-naturally occurring monomers or portions thereof. The nucleic acid sequences of the present application may be deoxyribonucleic acid sequences (DNA) or ribonucleic acid sequences (RNA) and may include naturally occurring bases including adenine, guanine, cytosine, thymidine and uracil. The sequences may also contain modified bases. Examples of such modified bases include aza and deaza adenine, guanine, cytosine, thymidine and uracil; and xanthine and hypoxanthine.

[00023] The term "isolated nucleic acid" as used herein refers to a nucleic acid substantially free of cellular material or culture medium when produced by recombinant DNA

techniques, or chemical precursors, or other chemicals when chemically synthesized. An isolated nucleic acid is also substantially free of sequences which naturally flank the nucleic acid (i.e. sequences located at the 5' and 3' ends of the nucleic acid) from which the nucleic acid is derived. The term "nucleic acid" is intended to include DNA and RNA and can be either double stranded or single stranded, and represents the sense or antisense strand. Further, the term "nucleic acid" includes the complementary nucleic acid sequences, for example cDNA.

[00024] The term "isolated polypeptide", also referred to as "isolated protein" refers to a polypeptide substantially free of cellular material or culture medium when produced by recombinant DNA techniques, or chemical precursors or other chemicals when chemically synthesized.

[00025] The term "amino acid" includes all of the naturally occurring amino acids as well as modified amino acids.

[00026] A "conservative amino acid variation" as used herein, is one in which one amino acid residue is replaced with another amino acid residue without abolishing the protein's desired properties.

[00027] The term "subject" as used herein includes all members of the animal kingdom including a human.

[00028] As used herein, and as well understood in the art, "treatment" or "treating" is an approach for obtaining beneficial or desired results, including clinical results. Beneficial or desired clinical results can include, but are not limited to, alleviation or amelioration of one or more symptoms or conditions, diminishment of extent of disease, stabilized (i.e. not worsening) state of disease, preventing spread of disease, delay or slowing of disease progression, amelioration or palliation of the disease state, and remission (whether partial or total), whether detectable or undetectable. "Treatment" or "treating" can also mean prolonging survival as compared to expected survival if not receiving treatment. "Palliating" a

disease or disorder, means that the extent and/or undesirable clinical manifestations of a disorder or a disease state are lessened and/or time course of the progression is slowed or lengthened, as compared to not treating the disorder.

[00029] As used herein, the phrase “treating or preventing cancer” refers to inhibiting
5 of cancer cell replication, providing anti-tumor immunity, inhibiting cancer spread (metastasis), inhibiting tumor growth, reducing cancer cell number or tumor growth, or improving cancer-related symptoms.

[00030] The term “administered” as used herein means administration of a therapeutically effective amount for example of cells expressing a CAR to reduce and/or
10 inhibit spread of cells expressing the predetermined antigen or a composition of the application to a patient.

[00031] In understanding the scope of the present disclosure, the term “comprising” and its derivatives, as used herein, are intended to be open ended terms that specify the presence of the stated features, elements, components, groups, integers, and/or steps, but
15 do not exclude the presence of other unstated features, elements, components, groups, integers and/or steps. The foregoing also applies to words having similar meanings such as the terms, “including”, “having” and their derivatives. Finally, terms of degree such as “substantially”, “about” and “approximately” as used herein mean a reasonable amount of deviation of the modified term such that the end result is not significantly changed. These
20 terms of degree should be construed as including a deviation of at least $\pm 5\%$ of the modified term if this deviation would not negate the meaning of the word it modifies.

[00032] As used in this specification and the appended claims, the singular forms “a”, “an” and “the” include plural references unless the content clearly dictates otherwise. It should also be noted that the term “or” is generally employed in its sense including “and/or”
25 unless the content clearly dictates otherwise.

[00033] The definitions and embodiments described in particular sections are

intended to be applicable to other embodiments herein described for which they are suitable as would be understood by a person skilled in the art.

[00034] The recitation of numerical ranges by endpoints herein includes all numbers and fractions subsumed within that range (e.g. 1 to 5 includes 1, 1.5, 2, 2.75, 3, 3.90, 4, and 5). It is also to be understood that all numbers and fractions thereof are presumed to be modified by the term "about."

[00035] Further, the definitions and embodiments described in particular sections are intended to be applicable to other embodiments herein described for which they are suitable as would be understood by a person skilled in the art. For example, in the following passages, different aspects of the invention are defined in more detail. Each aspect so defined may be combined with any other aspect or aspects unless clearly indicated to the contrary. In particular, any feature indicated as being preferred or advantageous may be combined with any other feature or features indicated as being preferred or advantageous.

(1) CARs of the present disclosure

[00036] Disclosed herein is a CAR comprising i) an extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen, ii) a transmembrane domain and iii) an intracellular segment comprising one or more intracellular signaling domains selected from a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain and/or a cytoplasmic domain of interleukin receptor chain, and a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif, wherein the intracellular segment comprises an endogenous or exogenous JAK-binding motif and STAT5 association motif. In an embodiment, the domains are fused directly or indirectly optionally in the foregoing order starting from the N-terminus. In an embodiment, the domains in the intracellular segment are fused in a reversed order.

[00037] Also disclosed herein is a CAR comprising i) a extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen, ii) a transmembrane domain and iii) an intracellular

segment comprising one or more intracellular signaling domains including a cytoplasmic domain of an IL receptor chain and optionally at least one supplementary cytoplasmic domain. In an embodiment, the domains are fused directly or indirectly optionally in the foregoing order starting from the N-terminus. In one embodiment, the domains in the intracellular segment are fused in a reversed order.

[00038] In some embodiments, the IL receptor chain is proximal to the transmembrane domain and/or is towards or forms the N-terminus of the CAR intracellular segment. In other embodiments, the IL receptor chain is towards or forms the C-terminus of the intracellular segment in the CAR. In some embodiments, the IL receptor chain is upstream or N-terminal to the CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) in the CAR.

[00039] In embodiments where the CAR intracellular segment comprises only signaling domains of the IL receptor chain, cells expressing the CAR can be activated by predetermined antigen presented in a MHC complex via endogenous TCRs and/or by CD80/86 molecules via endogenous CD28, for example by B cells.

[00040] Also provided is a cell expressing a CAR of the present disclosure. Such a cell may for example have an increased proliferation rate and/or increased survivability, may produce increased amounts of cytokines, and/or can have increased cytotoxic activity against a cell having, on the surface, the predetermined/preselected antigen to which the CAR binds relative to a parent cell not expressing the CAR. For example, as shown in the Examples, the 28-IL2RBz(YXXQ) CAR-transduced T cells have increased cell division, proliferation and viability, provide anti-tumor effects and improve overall survival in mice receiving said cells as treatment.

(a) Extracellular domain

[00041] The "extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen"

used for the CAR of the present disclosure is a domain comprising a proteinaceous molecule or part thereof that can bind to a target antigen, and includes, for example, an antigen-binding domain of an antibody and a ligand-binding domain of a receptor. This domain binds to and interacts with an antigen present on a cell surface, and thereby imparts specificity to a cell expressing a CAR. For example, the extracellular domain used for the CAR of the present disclosure comprises and/or is derived from variable regions of an antibody (e.g. H chain and L chain), single chains and binding fragments thereof or a TCR (TCR α , TCR β , TCR γ , TCR δ), or is derived from CD4 ectodomain, CD8 α , CD8 β , CD11A, CD11B, CD11C, CD18, CD29, CD49A, CD49B, CD49D, CD49E, CD49F, CD61, CD41, and/or CD51. The entire region of these proteins may be used. On the other hand, a domain capable of binding to an antigen or a ligand, for example, an antibody Fab fragment, an antibody variable region [V region of H chain (VH) and V region of L chain (VL)] or an extracellular ligand binding domain of a receptor can be used. Particularly, in an embodiment, a single chain variable fragment (scFv) can be used. For example, the CD4 ectodomain can recognize HIV-infected cells.

[00042] The extracellular domain for the CAR of the present disclosure may bind to only one antigen or ligand, or bind to two or more antigens or ligands. In addition, the present disclosure includes both a CAR comprising one extracellular domain and a CAR comprising two or more extracellular domains.

[00043] The extracellular domain for the CAR of the present disclosure can be selected from antibodies recognizing a target antigen, optionally a cell surface antigen or soluble antigen, or molecules interacting with the antigen. Examples of the antigen include a viral antigen, a bacterial (particularly, infectious bacteria) antigen, a parasite antigen, a cell surface marker on a target cell related to a certain condition (e.g. a tumor antigen), and a surface molecule of an immunocyte.

[00044] The present disclosure in one aspect provides a CAR capable of binding to

an antigen derived from Retroviridae (e.g. human immunodeficiency viruses such as HIV-1 and HIV-LP), Picornaviridae (e.g. poliovirus, hepatitis A virus, enterovirus, human coxsackievirus, rhinovirus, and echovirus), rubella virus, coronavirus, vesicular stomatitis virus, rabies virus, ebola virus, parainfluenza virus, mumps virus, measles virus, respiratory syncytial virus, influenza virus, hepatitis B virus, parvovirus, Adenoviridae, Herpesviridae [e.g. type 1 and type 2 herpes simplex virus (HSV), varicella-zoster virus, cytomegalovirus (CMV), and herpes virus], Poxviridae (e.g. smallpox virus, vaccinia virus, and pox virus), or hepatitis C virus.

[00045] The present disclosure in another aspect provides a CAR capable of binding to an antigen derived from a bacterial strain of Staphylococci, Streptococcus, Escherichia coli, Pseudomonas, or Salmonella. Particularly, the present disclosure provides a CAR capable of binding to an antigen derived from an infectious bacterium, for example, Helicobacter pylori, Legionella pneumophila, a bacterial strain of Mycobacteria sps. (e.g. M. tuberculosis, M. avium, M. intracellulare, M. kansaii, or M. goodii), Staphylococcus aureus, Neisseria gonorrhoeae, Neisseria meningitidis, Listeria monocytogenes, Streptococcus pyogenes, Group A Streptococcus, Group B Streptococcus (Streptococcus agalactiae), Streptococcus pneumoniae, or Clostridium tetani.

[00046] The present disclosure in another aspect provides a CAR capable of binding to a tumor antigen such as 5T4, α 5 β 1-integrin, 707-AP, AFP, ART-4, B7H4, BAGE, β -catenin/m, Bcr-abl, MN/C IX antibody, CA125, CAMEL, CAP-1, CASP-8, CD4, CD19, CD20, CD22, CD25, CDC27/m, CD30, CD33, CD52, CD56, CD80, CDK4/m, CEA, CT, Cyp-B, DAM, EGFR, ErbB3, ELF2M, EMMPRIN, EpCam, ETV6-AML1, G250, GAGE, GnT-V, Gp100, HAGE, HER-2/new, HLA-A*0201-R170I, HPV-E7, HSP70-2M, HST-2, hTERT (or hTRT), iCE, IGF-1R, IL-2R, IL-5, KIAA0205, LAGE, LDLR/FUT, MAGE, MART-1/melan-A, MART-2/Ski, MC1R, myosin/m, MUC1, MUM-1, MUM-2, MUM-3, NA88-A, PAP, proteinase-3, p190 minor bcr-abl, Pml/RAR α , PRAME, PSA, PSM, PSMA, RAGE, RU1 or RU2, SAGE,

SART-1 or SART-3, survivin, TEL/AML1, TGF β , TPI/m, TRP-1, TRP-2, TRP-2/INT2, VEGF, WT1, NY-Eso-1 or NY-Eso-B. The present disclosure also provides a CAR capable of binding to a cell surface adhesion molecule, a surface molecule of an inflammatory cell that appears in an autoimmune disease, or a TCR causing autoimmunity.

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(b) Intracellular segment

[00047] The intracellular segment of the CAR according to the present disclosure is a proteinaceous molecule that can comprise one or more intracellular signaling domains and that can transduce a signal into a cell when the extracellular domain present within the same molecule binds to (interacts with) its cognate antigen/ligand.

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[00048] In an aspect, the CAR intracellular segment comprises a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif. In addition, the CAR intracellular segment comprises one or more intracellular signaling domains selected from a cytoplasmic domain of an IL receptor chain and/or a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain, wherein the intracellular segment comprises an endogenous or exogenous JAK-binding motif and STAT5 association motif.

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[00049] A primary cytoplasmic signaling sequence can regulate primary activation of a TCR complex. For example, the CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain provides a primary cytoplasmic signal. The primary cytoplasmic signaling sequence may comprise a signal transduction motif known as an immunoreceptor tyrosine-based activation motif (ITAM) [Nature, vol. 338, pp. 383-384 (1989)]. On the other hand, a primary cytoplasmic signaling sequence that acts in an inhibitory way comprises a signal transduction motif known as an immunoreceptor tyrosine-based inhibition motif (ITIM) [J Immunol., vol. 162, No. 2, pp. 897-902 (1999)]. In the present disclosure, an intracellular signaling domain having an ITAM and/or an ITIM can be used.

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[00050] Examples of intracellular signaling domains having an ITAM that can be used, for example instead of or to replace CD3 ζ , include intracellular signaling domains having ITAM derived from CD3 ζ , FcR γ , FcR β , CD3 γ , CD3 δ , CD3 ϵ , CD5, CD22, CD79a, CD79b, and CD66d. Specifically, examples of intracellular domains comprising one or more ITAM

5 include peptides having sequences of amino acid numbers 52 to 164 (SEQ ID No.: 7) of CD3 ζ (NCBI RefSeq: NP_932170.1), amino acid numbers 45 to 86 of Fc ϵ R1 γ (NCBI RefSeq: NP_004097.1), amino acid numbers 201 to 244 of Fc ϵ R1 β (NCBI RefSeq: NP_000130.1), amino acid numbers 139 to 182 of CD3 γ (NCBI RefSeq: NP_000064.1), amino acid numbers 128 to 171 of CD3 δ (NCBI RefSeq: NP_000723.1), amino acid numbers 153 to 207

10 of CD3 ϵ (NCBI RefSeq: NP_000724.1), amino acid numbers 402 to 495 of CD5 (NCBI RefSeq: NP_055022.2), amino acid numbers 707 to 847 of CD22 (NCBI RefSeq: NP_001762.2), amino acid numbers 166 to 226 of CD79a (NCBI RefSeq: NP_001774.1), amino acid numbers 182 to 229 of CD79b (NCBI RefSeq: NP_000617.1), and amino acid numbers 177 to 252 of CD66d (NCBI RefSeq: NP_001806.2), and their variants having the

15 same function as these peptides. The amino acid numbering based on amino acid sequence information of NCBI RefSeq ID or GenBank described herein is numbered based on the full length of the precursor (comprising a signal peptide sequence etc.) of each protein.

[00051] In embodiments where CD3 ζ is replaced with one of the foregoing, the exogenous STAT3 association motif is introduced in the CD3 ζ replacement.

20 [00052] STAT3 transcription factor signaling plays an important role in the development and maintenance of human T cell memory (Siegel et al. 2011). STAT3 signaling may also in T cells enhance in vivo anti-tumor effects (Blood. 2010 and J Exp Med. 2005).

[00053] In an embodiment, the exogenous STAT3 association motif is YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13). As demonstrated, the exogenous STAT3 association motif YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) comprised in the intracellular signaling domain of a CD3 ζ signal transducing peptide is

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capable of STAT3 binding. In an embodiment, the intracellular domain of CD3 ζ is the sequence in SEQ ID NO: 7.

[00054] In an embodiment, the amino acid residues represented by "X" in the STAT3 association motif YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) can be any naturally occurring amino acid, including any modified naturally occurring amino acid that retains STAT3 binding. In one embodiment, the amino acid X is independently chosen from leucine, arginine, histidine, phenylalanine, lysine, proline, methionine, valine, glutamine, threonine and aspartate. For example, the amino acid X is arginine. For example, the amino acid X is histidine.

[00055] In an embodiment, the two amino acid residues flanking the tyrosine residue are arginine-histidine. In yet another embodiment, the exogenous STAT3 association motif is YRHQ (SEQ ID NO: 22).

[00056] Although the exogenous STAT3 association motif YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) may be introduced in any portion of the intracellular domain of CD3 ζ , in an embodiment the YXXQ association motif is inserted near the C-terminus region. Without wishing to be bound by theory, many endogenous YXXQ motifs are located near or within 100 aa from the C-terminus. Also a YXXQ motif located near the C-terminus region has been shown to be more functional than that in a more proximal site in GP130 and LIFR studies (Schmitz J et al. J Immunol. 2000;164:848-54; Tomida M et al. Blood. 1999;93:1934-41).

[00057] In an embodiment, the exogenous STAT3 association motif YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) is introduced in any portion of the intracellular domain of CD3 ζ that is located within 200 amino acid residues from the C terminus of the CAR. For example, the STAT3 association motif is introduced less than 200, less than 150, less than 100, less than 90, less than 80, less than 70, less than 60, less than 50, less than 40, less than 30, less than 20 or less than 10 amino acid residues from the C terminus of the CAR.

[00058] As discussed herein, the intracellular domain of CD3 ζ comprises immunoreceptor tyrosine-based activation motifs (ITAM). In one embodiment, the

exogenous STAT3 association motif is introduced elsewhere than in an ITAM.

[00059] ITAMs are functionally redundant; however they have additive effects with respect to the strength of signaling responses. For example, the intracellular domain of CD3 ζ comprises three ITAMs for intracellular signaling. Therefore in one embodiment the ITAM motifs in the CD3 ζ intracellular domain of the CAR herein disclosed are maintained.

[00060] In an embodiment, the CD3 ζ intracellular domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif comprises at least one ITAM motif. In one embodiment, the CD3 ζ intracellular domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif comprises two ITAM motifs. In a further embodiment, the CD3 ζ intracellular domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif comprises three ITAM motifs.

[00061] The person of skill in the art will appreciate that several methods may be used to introduce a STAT3 association motif into the intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ . For example, as shown in Fig. 1, an exogenous STAT3 association motif can be introduced by substituting amino acid residues Leu-His-Met at position 104-106 with a tyrosine at residue 104 and any other two amino acid residues flanking the tyrosine residue at positions 105 and 106, thereby forming the YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) association motif. Amino acid residues 104-105-106 of the intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ correspond to amino acid residues 156-157-158 of the full length CD3 ζ (e.g. NCBI RefSeq: NP_932170.1). The sequence of 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) comprising a YXXQ motif at residues 104-107 of the CD3 ζ intracellular domain is provided in SEQ ID NO: 24. The sequence of 28-IL2RB-z(YRHQ) comprising a YRHQ (SEQ ID NO: 22) motif at residues 104-107 of the CD3 ζ intracellular domain (a CD3 ζ intracellular domain is shown at residues 475-586 of SEQ ID NO: 25).

[00062] For example, the STAT3 motif can be introduced by site-directed mutagenesis using for example the Gibson Assembly Method. The following primers can be used for the Gibson Assembly: forward, ACGCCTATCGCCATCAGGCCCTGC (SEQ ID NO: 26); and reverse, CTGATGGCGATAGGCGTCGTAGGTGT (SEQ ID NO: 27). Other

methods that can be used include for example, PCR-based technologies, for example polymerase incomplete primer extension (PIPE) cloning, sequence and ligation-independent cloning (SLIC) and overlap extension cloning (OEC) (Klock et al., 2008; Li et al., 2007; Bryskin et al., 2010; Unger et al., 2010).

5 [00063] As mentioned, the CAR in an embodiment comprises an intracellular segment comprising one or more intracellular signaling domains selected from a cytoplasmic domain of an ILR chain and a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain.

[00064] The cytoplasmic domain of an IL receptor chain used for the present disclosure may be selected from any chain of the IL receptor, for example, the cytoplasmic
10 domain comprising amino acid numbers 266 to 551 of IL-2 receptor β chain (NCBI REFSEQ: NP_000869.1)(SEQ ID NO: 11, amino acid numbers 256 to 538 of IL-21 receptor α chain (NCBI REFSEQ: NP_068570.1; SEQ ID NO: 6) amino acid numbers 284 to 369 of common IL-2 receptor γ chain (NCBI REFSEQ: NP_000197.1), amino acid numbers 265 to 459 of IL-7R α (NCBI REFSEQ: NP_002176.2), amino acid numbers 292 to 521 of IL-9R α (NCBI
15 REFSEQ: NP_002177.2) or amino acid numbers 257 to 825 of IL-4R α (NCBI REFSEQ: NP_000409.1) may be used. The entire region of the cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor chain may be used (e.g. sequences provided herein).

[00065] Alternatively, a truncated fragment of said cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor chain also may be used. For example, the truncated fragment comprises up to 250 amino
20 acids, or is 50 to 200 amino acids or 80 to 150 amino acids of the ILR cytoplasmic domain.

[00066] In an embodiment, the cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor chain, optionally a truncated fragment of said cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor chain comprises at least a STAT association motif, optionally a STAT5 association motif, and a JAK-binding motif (also known as a box-1 motif). In an embodiment, the cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor chain or
25 truncated fragment thereof comprises a STAT5 association motif and a JAK-binding motif.

[00067] In an embodiment, the cytoplasmic domain and/or truncated fragments of IL

receptor chain includes variants having the same function, e.g. variants that induce STAT signaling, optionally STAT5 signaling and/or JAK signaling.

[00068] In one aspect of the present disclosure, the cytoplasmic domain of IL-2 receptor (IL-2R) β chain may be used. An example of a cytoplasmic domain of IL-2R β chain that can be used in the present disclosure includes amino acid numbers 266 to 551 of IL-2R β chain (NCBI RefSeq: NP_000869.1, SEQ ID NO: 11). In one aspect of the present disclosure, a truncated fragment of the cytoplasmic domain of IL-2R β chain may be used. The truncated fragment may comprise i) a JAK-binding motif (e.g. amino acid numbers 278 to 286 of NCBI RefSeq:NP_000869.1), also referred to as the BOX-1 motif, which allows for association with the tyrosine kinase JAK1, and ii) a STAT association motif, optionally a STAT5 or STAT3 association motif. Other portions of the IL receptor chain can be varied, for example with conservative amino acid variations.

[00069] In an embodiment, the intracellular segment can comprise an exogenous JAK binding motif, or a signaling molecule comprising a JAK binding motif. For example, the JAK-binding motif is from IL2Rgamma (IL2RG), Erythropoietin receptor (EpoR), thrombopoietin receptor (TpoR), granulocyte macrophage colony stimulating factor receptor (GM-CSFR), and growth hormone receptor (GHR).

[00070] The IL-2R β chain comprises three functional STAT5 binding motifs, YFFF (SEQ ID NO: 28), YCTF (SEQ ID NO: 29) and YLSL (SEQ ID NO: 43), used for STAT5 association. Mutations of these tyrosine residues can abolish IL-2 responsiveness of IL-2R β chain (Friedmann et al., 1996). It has been described that the erythropoietin receptor (EpoR) comprises two tyrosine residues that mediate STAT5 activation, namely Y343 and Y401 and both have YXXL motifs (SEQ ID NO: 41) (Klingmüller et al., 1996). Therefore YXXL (SEQ ID NO: 41) may be a preferred motif for STAT5 recruitment. Other amino acid residues are also functional, as shown for example with the IL-2R β chain STAT5 binding motifs. In one embodiment, the STAT5 association motif is the IL-2R β chain STAT5 association motif and

comprises tyrosine residue-510 (tyrosine residue 510 is amino acid number 536 of NCBI RefSeq:NP_000869.1).

[00071] In an embodiment, a STAT5 association motif can be derived from IL2Rgamma, EpoR, TpoR, GM-CSFR and GHR.

5 [00072] In an embodiment, the STAT5 association motif of the IL-2R β chain comprises amino acid residues YXXL (SEQ ID NO: 41). In an embodiment, the amino acid residues represented by "X" in the STAT5 association motif can be any naturally occurring amino acid, including any modified naturally occurring amino acid that retains STAT5 binding.

[00073] In an embodiment, the STAT5 association motif comprises tyrosine residue
10 510 and the flanking 4 residues on at the C-terminal side of tyrosine residue 510, i.e. YLSLQ (SEQ ID NO:12).

[00074] The STAT5 association motif can exist endogenously in a cytoplasmic domain. For example, the cytoplasmic domain of the IL-2R beta chain comprises a STAT5 association motif. The STAT5 association motif can also be introduced in a cytoplasmic
15 domain that does not naturally express this motif. For example, the STAT5 association can be introduced for example by amino acid residue replacement or insertion, using known methods including those described herein.

[00075] Other STAT3 association motifs are also known and include for example YLRQ (SEQ ID NO: 30) for IL21R; YRHQ (SEQ ID NO: 22), YFKQ (SEQ ID NO: 31), YLPQ
20 (SEQ ID NO: 32) and YMPQ (SEQ ID NO: 33) for IL6ST; YVLQ (SEQ ID NO: 34) for GCSFR, YQPQ (SEQ ID NO: 35), YKPQ (SEQ ID NO: 36) and YRPQ (SEQ ID NO: 37) for LIFR; YTHQ (SEQ ID NO: 38) for FGFR1; YLRQ (SEQ ID NO: 30) and YLKQ (SEQ ID NO: 39) for IL10RA and YHNQ (SEQ ID NO: 40) for EGFR (Shao et al., 2004).

[00076] In an embodiment, the intracellular segment comprises STAT3 and STAT5
25 association motifs, including multiple STAT3 and/or multiple STAT5 association motifs.

[00077] The STAT3 and STAT5 association motifs can for example be located or

introduced into any of the intracellular signaling domains.

[00078] Similarly, the intracellular segment comprises one or more JAK-binding motifs, which can be located or introduced into any of the intracellular signaling domains.

[00079] A BOX-1 MOTIF is also shown in amino acids 13-21 of SEQ ID NO: 5 and the tyrosine residue-510 is also shown as amino acid number 79 of SEQ ID NO: 5 (and the motif flanking the tyrosine residue is amino acids 80-83). In an embodiment, the interleukin receptor cytoplasmic domain fragment comprises amino acids 22-78 of SEQ ID NO: 5. Examples of the truncated fragment of the cytoplasmic domain of IL-2R β chain (SEQ ID No.: 5) include peptides having sequences of amino acid numbers 266 to 337 and 530 to 551 of NCBI RefSeq: NP_000869.1.

[00080] In one aspect of the present disclosure, the cytoplasmic domain of IL-21 receptor (IL-21R) α chain may be used. An example of the cytoplasmic domain of IL-21R α chain used in the present disclosure includes an intracellular signaling domain comprising amino acid numbers 256 to 538 of IL-21R α chain (NCBI RefSeq: NP_068570.1, SEQ ID No.: 6). In one aspect of the present disclosure, a truncated fragment of the cytoplasmic domain of IL-21R α chain may be used. The truncated fragment includes a box-1 motif (amino acid numbers 266 to 274 of NCBI RefSeq: NP_068570.1) required for association with the tyrosine kinase JAK1, and includes a STAT association motif. In an embodiment, the STAT association motif comprises tyrosine residue-500 (amino acid number 519 of NCBI RefSeq: NP_000869.1) and flanking 3 residues at the C-terminal side of tyrosine residue 500, i.e. YLRQ (SEQ ID NO: 30), required for STAT1/3 association.

[00081] Other examples of intracellular signaling domains include cytoplasmic regions from a TCR complex and/or a costimulatory molecule, and any variant having the same function as those sequences. Other examples include cytoplasmic signaling domains listed in Table 2 of Sadelain et al 2009.

[00082] Natural T cell-activation is transduced by two different kinds of intracellular

signaling domains, that is, a domain for initiating antigen-dependent primary activation via a TCR complex (primary cytoplasmic signal e.g. provided for example by CD3 ζ) and a domain for acting antigen-independently to provide a secondary or costimulating signal (secondary cytoplasmic signal).

5 [00083] In an aspect, the CAR intracellular segment of the present disclosure comprises a CD3 ζ intracellular cytoplasmic signaling domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif and optionally a secondary cytoplasmic signaling sequence.

[00084] As used herein, the terms “secondary cytoplasmic signaling” and “co-stimulatory” are used interchangeably.

10 [00085] Examples of intracellular domains comprising a secondary or co-stimulatory cytoplasmic signaling domain that can be used in the present disclosure include sequences from CD2, CD4, CD5, CD8 α , CD8 β , CD28, CD134, CD137 (4-1BB), ICOS, and CD154 such as truncated fragments thereof comprising signaling motifs. Specific examples thereof include peptides having sequences of amino acid numbers 236 to 351 of CD2 (NCBI
15 RefSeq: NP_001758.2), amino acid numbers 421 to 458 of CD4 (NCBI RefSeq: NP_000607.1), amino acid numbers 402 to 495 of CD5 (NCBI RefSeq: NP_055022.2), amino acid numbers 207 to 235 of CD8 α (NCBI RefSeq: NP_001759.3), amino acid numbers 196 to 210 of CD8 β (GenBank: AAA35664.1), amino acid numbers 180 to 220 (SEQ ID No.: 8) of CD28 (NCBI RefSeq: NP_006130.1), amino acid numbers 214 to 255 of
20 CD137 (4-1BB, NCBI RefSeq: NP_001552.2), amino acid numbers 241 to 277 of CD134 (OX40, NCBI RefSeq: NP_003318.1), and amino acid numbers 166 to 199 of ICOS (NCBI RefSeq: NP_036224.1), and their variants having the same function as these peptides have.

[00086] In one embodiment, the CAR intracellular segment herein disclosed further
25 comprises cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain selected from CD28, CD2, CD4, CD5, CD8 α , CD8 β , CD134 and CD137.

[00087] The present disclosure includes in an aspect a CAR comprising an intracellular segment with one or more, for example, 2 or 3 intracellular signaling domains in addition to the intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif.

5 [00088] The present disclosure also includes a CAR comprising an intracellular segment with two or more same intracellular signaling domains which are linked tandemly. In one aspect, the present disclosure provides a CAR in which a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor is on a N-terminal side relative to an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ , that is, a CAR comprising a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor and an intracellular signaling domain
10 of CD3 ζ which are linked in this order from the N-terminal side. The present disclosure also includes CARs obtained by further adding an intracellular domain of CD28 (e.g. cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain of CD28) to the aforementioned CAR, that is, a CAR comprising an intracellular signaling domain of CD28, a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor, and an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ comprising an exogenous STAT3 motif which are
15 linked in this order from the N-terminal side.

[00089] In an embodiment, the CAR comprises an intracellular segment comprising a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif and intracellular signaling domains selected from a cytoplasmic domain of interleukin receptor chain and a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain, wherein at least one of the intracellular
20 signaling domains comprises an endogenous or exogenous JAK-binding motif and a STAT5 association motif.

[00090] In one embodiment, the CAR comprises a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain with an exogenous STAT3 association motif, a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor chain fragment comprising an endogenous or exogenous JAK-binding motif and STAT5
25 association motif, and a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain of CD28.

[00091] In a CAR of the present disclosure, an oligopeptide linker or a polypeptide

linker can be inserted between the domains of the intracellular segment to link the domains therein and/or to link them to other domains. For example, a linker having a length of 2 to 10 amino acids can be used. Particularly, a linker having a glycine-serine continuous sequence can be used. For example, the linker IDGGGGSGGGGSGGGGS (SEQ ID NO: 42) can be introduced between the CD28 cytoplasmic domain and the partial cytoplasmic IL-2 receptor beta domain. For example, the linker KLGGSGP (SEQ ID NO: 19) can be introduced between the partial cytoplasmic IL-2 receptor beta domain and the intracellular domain of the CD3 ζ chain.

[00092] In a specific embodiment, the CAR comprises an signal peptide, an FMC63 single chain variable fragment extracellular domain, a CD28 transmembrane, a CD28 cytoplasmic domain, a partial cytoplasmic IL-2 receptor beta domain comprising a JAK-binding motif and an endogenous STAT5 association motif and an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ comprising an exogenous STAT3 association motif, which are linked in this order from the N-terminal side, as shown for example in SEQ ID NO: 24.

[00093] In another aspect there is provided CAR comprising i) an extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen, ii) a transmembrane domain and iii) an intracellular segment comprising one or more intracellular signaling domains including a cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin receptor chain and optionally a supplementary cytoplasmic domain.

[00094] The cytoplasmic domain of an IL receptor chain may be selected from any chain of the IL receptor herein described. The entire region of the cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor chain may be used. Alternatively, a truncated fragment of said cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor chain also may be used. Examples of full length and truncated fragments thereof are provided herein.

[00095] In an embodiment, the truncated fragment may comprise at least one tyrosine kinase association motif (also known as a box-1 motif) and a STAT (Signal

Transducer and Activator of Transcription) association motif herein described. For example, the truncated fragment comprises up to 250 amino acids, or is 50 to 200 amino acids or 80 to 150 amino acids of the ILR cytoplasmic domain.

[00096] As described herein, the STAT association motif of the IL-2R β chain comprises tyrosine residue-510 (tyrosine residue 510 is amino acid number 536 of NCBI RefSeq:NP_000869.1). In an embodiment, the STAT association motif comprises tyrosine residue 510 and the flanking 4 residues on at the C-terminal side of tyrosine residue 510, i.e. YLSLQ (SEQ ID NO:12).

[00097] Other STAT association motifs are also known and include YXXQ (SEQ ID NO:13), optionally YXPQ, for IL-6, YXXQ (SEQ ID NO:13) for IL-10, YLPSNID (SEQ ID NO:14) for IL-12, YLSLQ (SEQ ID NO:12), YCTFP (SEQ ID NO:15), YFFFH (SEQ ID NO:16) for IL-2, YVTMS (SEQ ID NO:17) for IL-7, YLPQE (SEQ ID NO:18) for IL-9 and YKAFS (SEQ ID NO:20) and YKPFQ (SEQ ID NO:21) for IL-4 as indicated for example in Table 2 of Kisseleva et al 2002. Any STAT signaling domain can be used and/or introduced into the ILR chain.

[00098] In an embodiment, in addition to the cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor, the CAR intracellular segment comprises at least one supplementary signaling domain that is other than present in IL receptor. Examples of intracellular signaling domains include cytoplasmic regions from a TCR complex and/or a co-stimulatory molecule, and any variant having the same function as those sequences. Other examples include cytoplasmic signaling domains listed in Table 2 of Sadelain et al 2009.

[00099] In an embodiment, the CAR intracellular segment comprises a primary cytoplasmic signaling sequence and/or a secondary (e.g. co-stimulatory) cytoplasmic signaling sequence herein described as the intracellular signaling domains.

[000100] In an embodiment, the intracellular segment comprises an intracellular signaling domain having an ITAM and/or an ITIM described herein.

[000101] The present disclosure includes a CAR comprising an intracellular segment comprising one or more, for example, 2 or 3 intracellular signaling domains in addition to the cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor. For example, the CAR comprises a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor and an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ . For example, the CAR
5 comprises a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor, an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ and a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain of CD28.

[000102] The present disclosure also includes a CAR comprising an intracellular segment comprising two or more intracellular signaling domains which are linked tandemly.
10 For example, the CAR comprises a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor on a N-terminal side relative to an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ , that is, it comprises a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor and an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ which are linked in this order from the N-terminal side.

[000103] The present disclosure also includes CARs further comprising an intracellular
15 domain of CD28 introduced into to the aforementioned CAR, that is, a CAR comprising a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain of CD28, a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor, and an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ which are optionally linked in this order from the N-terminal side. For example, the CAR intracellular segment can comprise a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor on a C-terminal side relative to an intracellular signaling domain of
20 CD3 ζ , that is, it comprises an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ and a cytoplasmic domain of IL receptor which are linked in this order from the N-terminal side.

[000104] Accordingly, in an embodiment, the CAR comprises an intracellular segment comprising a CD3 ζ intracellular signaling domain, one or more cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domains, wherein the intracellular segment comprises a JAK-binding motif, a STAT5 and/or
25 STAT3 association motifs.

(c) Transmembrane domain and spacer domain

[000105] The CAR of the present disclosure comprises a transmembrane domain. The transmembrane domain may be derived from a natural polypeptide, or may be artificially designed. The transmembrane domain derived from a natural polypeptide can be obtained from any membrane-binding or transmembrane protein. For example, a transmembrane domain of a T cell receptor α or β chain, a CD3 ζ chain, CD28, CD3 ϵ , CD45, CD4, CD5, CD8, CD9, CD16, CD22, CD33, CD37, CD64, CD80, CD86, CD134, CD137, ICOS, CD154, or a GITR can be used. The artificially designed transmembrane domain is a polypeptide mainly comprising hydrophobic residues such as leucine and valine. For example, a triplet of phenylalanine, tryptophan and valine can be found at each end of the synthetic transmembrane domain. Optionally, a short oligopeptide linker or a polypeptide linker, for example, a linker having a length of 2 to 10 amino acids can be arranged between the transmembrane domain and the intracellular segment as described herein. Particularly, a linker sequence having a glycine-serine continuous sequence can be used.

[000106] For example, a transmembrane domain having a sequence of amino acid numbers 153 to 179 (SEQ ID No.: 9) of CD28 (NCBI RefSeq: NP_006130.1) can be used as the transmembrane domain.

[000107] In the CAR of the present disclosure, a spacer domain can be arranged between the extracellular domain and the transmembrane domain, or between the intracellular segment and the transmembrane domain. The spacer domain means any oligopeptide or polypeptide that serves to link the transmembrane domain with the extracellular domain and/or the transmembrane domain with the intracellular segment. The spacer domain comprises up to 300 amino acids, for example about 10 to 100 amino acids, or about 25 to 50 amino acids.

[000108] The spacer domain preferably has a sequence that promotes binding of a CAR with an antigen and enhances signaling into a cell. Examples of an amino acid that is

expected to promote the binding include cysteine, a charged amino acid, and serine and threonine in a potential glycosylation site, and these amino acids can be used as an amino acid constituting the spacer domain.

[000109] In an embodiment, the spacer domain is a polypeptide comprising or
5 consisting of amino acid numbers 118 to 178 of CD8 α (NCBI RefSeq: NP_001759.3) which is a hinge region of CD8 α , amino acid numbers 135 to 195 of CD8 β (GenBank: AAA35664.1), amino acid numbers 315 to 396 of CD4 (NCBI RefSeq: NP_000607.1), amino acid numbers 114 to 152 (SEQ ID No.: 10) of CD28 (NCBI RefSeq: NP_006130.1), or a part thereof. Further, the spacer domain may be an artificially synthesized sequence.

10 [000110] The CAR of the present disclosure can be designed so as to form a polymer, particularly, a dimer. For example, cysteine is inserted into the spacer domain and/or the transmembrane domain to polymerize (dimerize) the CAR, for example through a disulphide bridge.

[000111] Further, in the CAR of the present disclosure, a signal peptide sequence can
15 be linked to the N-terminus. A signal peptide sequence exists at the N-terminus of many secretory proteins and membrane proteins, and has a length of 15 to 30 amino acids. Many of the protein molecules having an intracellular domain mentioned herein are membrane proteins, and have signal peptide sequences. The signal peptides derived from such secretory proteins and membrane proteins can be used as a signal peptide for the CAR of
20 the present disclosure. Any signal peptide can be used. For example the signal peptide can be an Oncostatin M. signal peptide. Signal peptides can be from humans and can also be derived from non-humans, for example from insect cells or from viruses. In an embodiment, the signal peptide is a human signal peptide.

25 **(2) Nucleic acid encoding CARs**

[000112] The present disclosure provides a nucleic acid encoding the CAR described

herein. The nucleic acid encoding the CAR can be easily prepared from an amino acid sequence of the specified CAR by a conventional method. A nucleotide sequence encoding an amino acid sequence can be obtained from the aforementioned NCBI RefSeq IDs or accession numbers of GenBank for an amino acid sequence of each domain, and the
5 nucleic acid of the present disclosure can be prepared using a standard molecular biological and/or chemical procedure. For example, based on the nucleotide sequence, a nucleic acid can be synthesized, and the nucleic acid of the present disclosure can be prepared by combining DNA fragments which are obtained from a cDNA library using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

10 [000113] The nucleic acid of the present disclosure can be linked to another nucleic acid so as to be expressed under control of a suitable promoter. Examples of the promoter include a promoter that constitutively promotes the expression of a gene or operatively linked construct, a promoter that induces the expression of a gene or operatively linked construct by the action of a drug or the like (e.g. tetracycline or doxorubicin). The nucleic
15 acid of the present disclosure can be also linked to, in order to attain efficient transcription of the nucleic acid, other regulatory elements that cooperate with a promoter or a transcription initiation site, for example, a nucleic acid comprising an enhancer sequence or a terminator sequence. In addition to the nucleic acid of the present disclosure, a gene that can be a marker for confirming expression of the nucleic acid (e.g. a drug resistance gene, a gene
20 encoding a reporter enzyme, or a gene encoding a fluorescent protein) may be incorporated.

[000114] In an embodiment, the nucleic acid is codon optimized nucleic acid for expression in a particular host.

[000115] The present disclosure provides a composition comprising the nucleic acid of the present disclosure as an active ingredient, together with a pharmaceutically acceptable
25 excipient. Suitable pharmaceutically acceptable excipients are well known to a person skilled in the art. Examples of the pharmaceutically acceptable excipients include phosphate

buffered saline (e.g. 0.01 M phosphate, 0.138 M NaCl, 0.0027 M KCl, pH 7.4), an aqueous solution containing a mineral acid salt such as a hydrochloride, a hydrobromide, a phosphate, or a sulfate, saline, a solution of glycol or ethanol, and a salt of an organic acid such as an acetate, a propionate, a malonate or a benzoate. An adjuvant such as a wetting agent or an emulsifier, and a pH buffering agent can also be used. As the pharmaceutically acceptable excipients, excipients described in Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences (Mack Pub. Co., N.J. 1991) can be appropriately used. The composition of the present disclosure can be formulated into a known form suitable for parenteral administration, for example, injection or infusion. Further, the composition of the present disclosure may comprise formulation additives such as a suspending agent, a preservative, a stabilizer and/or a dispersant, and a preservation agent for extending a validity term during storage. The composition may be in a dry form for reconstitution with an appropriate sterile liquid prior to use. For fine particle-mediated administration, a particle such as a gold particle of a microscopic size can be coated with a DNA.

[000116] When the nucleic acid of the present disclosure is introduced into a cell ex vivo, the nucleic acid of the present disclosure may be combined with a substance that promotes transference of a nucleic acid into a cell, for example, a reagent for introducing a nucleic acid such as a liposome or a cationic lipid, in addition to the aforementioned excipients. Alternatively, a vector carrying the nucleic acid of the present disclosure is also useful as described later. Particularly, a composition in a form suitable for administration to a living body which contains the nucleic acid of present disclosure carried by a suitable vector is suitable for in vivo gene therapy.

[000117] A composition comprising the nucleic acid of the present disclosure as an active ingredient can be administered for treatment of, for example, a cancer [blood cancer (leukemia), solid tumor etc.], an inflammatory disease/autoimmune disease (asthma, eczema), hepatitis, and an infectious disease the cause of which is a virus such as influenza

and HIV, a bacterium, or a fungus, for example, a disease such as tuberculosis, MRSA, VRE, or deep mycosis, depending on an antigen to which a CAR encoded by the nucleic acid binds. A composition comprising the nucleic acid of the present disclosure as an active ingredient can be administered or suitably formulated for administration intradermally, intramuscularly, subcutaneously, intraperitoneally, intranasally, intraarterially, intravenously, 5 intratumorally, or into an afferent lymph vessel, by parenteral administration, for example, by injection or infusion, although the administration route is not particularly limited.

(3) Process for producing cell expressing CAR

10 [000118] A process for producing a cell expressing the CAR of the present disclosure includes a step of introducing the nucleic acid encoding a CAR described herein into a cell. The step is carried out ex vivo. For example, a cell can be transformed ex vivo with a virus vector or a non-virus vector carrying the nucleic acid of the present disclosure to produce a cell expressing the CAR of the present disclosure.

15 [000119] In the process of the present disclosure, a cell derived from a mammal, for example, a human cell, or a cell derived from a non-human mammal such as a monkey, a mouse, a rat, a pig, a horse, or a dog can be used.

[000120] In one embodiment, the mammal is a human.

[000121] The cell used in the process of the present disclosure is not particularly 20 limited, and any cell can be used. For example, a cell collected, isolated, or purified from a body fluid, a tissue or an organ such as blood (peripheral blood, umbilical cord blood etc.) or bone marrow or a cell obtained by differentiating or reprogramming the aforementioned cell to produce an induce pluripotent stem cell(iPSC) can be used (see for example Themeli et al 2013). A peripheral blood mononuclear cell (PBMC), an immune cell [including for example a 25 T cell, a dendritic cell, a B cell, a hematopoietic stem cell, a macrophage, a monocyte, a NK cell or a hematopoietic cell (a neutrophil, a basophil)], an umbilical cord blood mononuclear

cell, a fibroblast, a precursor adipocyte, a hepatocyte, a skin keratinocyte, a mesenchymal stem cell, an adipose stem cell, various cancer cell strains, or a neural stem cell can be used. For example, a NK cell or a T cell, a precursor cell of a T cell (a hematopoietic stem cell, a lymphocyte precursor cell etc.) or a cell population containing them can be used. Examples
5 of the T cell include a CD8-positive T cell, a CD4-positive T cell, a regulatory T cell, a cytotoxic T cell, and a tumor infiltrating lymphocyte. The cell population containing a T cell and a precursor cell of a T cell includes a PBMC. The aforementioned cells may be collected from a living body, obtained by expansion culture of a cell collected from a living body, or established as a cell strain. When transplantation of the produced CAR-expressing cell or a
10 cell differentiated from the produced CAR-expressing cell into a living body is desired, the nucleic acid can be introduced into a cell collected from the living body itself or a conspecific living body thereof.

[000122] The nucleic acid encoding the CAR of the present disclosure can be inserted into a vector, and the vector can be introduced into a cell. For example, a virus vector such
15 as a retrovirus vector (including an oncoretrovirus vector, a lentivirus vector, and a pseudotyped vector), an adenovirus vector, an adeno-associated virus (AAV) vector, a simian virus vector, a vaccinia virus vector or a sendai virus vector, an Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) vector, and a HSV vector can be used. For example, a virus vector lacking the replicating ability so as not to self-replicate in an infected cell can be used.

[000123] In addition, a non-virus vector can also be used in the present disclosure in combination with a liposome or a condensing agent such as a cationic lipid as described in WO 96/10038, WO 97/18185, WO 97/25329, WO 97/30170 and WO 97/31934. The nucleic
20 acid of the present disclosure can be also introduced into a cell by calcium phosphate transduction, DEAE-dextran, electroporation, or particle bombardment.

[000124] For example, when a retrovirus vector is used, the process of the present
25

disclosure can be carried out by selecting a suitable packaging cell based on a LTR sequence and a packaging signal sequence possessed by the vector and preparing a retrovirus particle using the packaging cell. Examples of the packaging cell include PG13 (ATCC CRL-10686), PA317 (ATCC CRL-9078), GP+E-86 and GP+envAm-12 (US Patent No. 5,278,056), and Psi-Crip [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, vol. 85, pp. 6460-6464 (1988)]. A retrovirus particle can also be prepared using a 293 cell or a 293T cell having high transfection efficiency. Many kinds of retrovirus vectors produced based on retroviruses and packaging cells that can be used for packaging of the retrovirus vectors are widely commercially available from many companies.

10 [000125] One aspect is a method of making a cell herein disclosed, comprising transfecting or transducing a cell with a nucleic acid or a vector described herein.

[000126] Another aspect is a method of making a cell herein disclosed, comprising:

a) isolating immune cells from a mammal;

15 b) transfecting or transducing the isolated immune cells, optionally isolated T cells, with a nucleic acid encoding a CAR herein disclosed or a vector comprising said nucleic acid; and

c) optionally isolating and/or expanding CAR-expressing cells, optionally CAR-expressing T cells.

[000127] In one embodiment, the isolated immune cells are isolated T cells.

20 [000128] In an embodiment, the isolated cells are CD3+, and optionally stimulated with an anti-CD3 antibody, optionally in a soluble or membrane-bound form, e.g. OKT3 or mOKT3, and/or APC prior to transduction or transfection. In one embodiment, the APC are artificial APC (aAPC). In another embodiment, the aAPC express a membranous form of anti-CD3 monoclonal antibody.

25 [000129] In one embodiment, the transfecting or transducing step is repeated. For example, the transfecting or transducing step can be carried out twice, or three times, or four

times or until for example adequate level of expression is achieved. For example, the transfecting or transducing step is can be carried out five times.

[000130] In one embodiment, the cells are transfected or transduced on more than one consecutive day. For example, the cells are transfected or transduced for two consecutive
5 days, three consecutive days or four consecutive days.

[000131] In one embodiment, the CAR-transduced cells are stimulated with irradiated cells expressing a predetermined antigen. For example, the CAR-transduced T cells are stimulated with irradiated cells at an effector to target ratio of 100:1, 75:1, 50:1, 25:1, 20:1, 15:1, 10:1, 9:1, 8:1, 7:1, 6:1, 5:1, 4:1, 3:1, 2:1, 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 1:4, 1:5, 1:6, 1:7, 1:8, 1:9, 1:10,
10 1:15, 1:20, 1:25, 1:50 or 1:100.

(4) Cell expressing CAR and uses thereof

[000132] The cell expressing the CAR of the present disclosure is a cell in which the nucleic acid encoding a CAR described herein is introduced and expressed by the
15 production process described herein.

[000133] The cell of the present disclosure binds to a specific antigen via the CAR, thereby a signal is transmitted into the cell, and as a result, the cell is activated. The activation of the cell expressing the CAR is varied depending on the type of host cell and the intracellular domains of the CAR, and can be confirmed based on, for example, release of a
20 cytokine, improvement of a cell proliferation rate, change in a cell surface molecule, or the like as an index. For example, release of a cytotoxic cytokine (a tumor necrosis factor, lymphotoxin, etc.) from the activated cell causes destruction of a target cell expressing an antigen. In addition, release of a cytokine or change in a cell surface molecule stimulates other immune cells, for example, a B cell, a dendritic cell, a NK cell, and a macrophage.

[000134] It is demonstrated herein that the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR-engineered T cells
25 have superior proliferation through higher cell division rate and reduced apoptosis compared

to T cells comprising first (28-z) and second (28-BB-z) generation CARS (see Fig. 12). In addition, the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR-engineered T cells also maintain stem cell-like memory phenotypes after repeated antigen stimulation (Fig. 14).

[000135] Accordingly, the cell expressing the CAR may be used as a therapeutic agent
5 for a disease. As shown in Example 4 as well as in Fig. 18-20, mice injected with leukemic cells and treated with 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) anti-CD19 CAR showed decreased tumor activity as well as increased overall survival compared to untreated mice and mice treated with previous generation CARs.

[000136] In one aspect, there is provided a use of a CAR, a nucleic acid, a vector, a
10 cell or a composition described herein for treating a disease.

[000137] Another aspect is a method of treating or preventing a disease in a mammal, the method comprising administering to the mammal in need thereof an effective amount of cells or a composition herein disclosed.

[000138] A further aspect is a method of providing an anti-tumor immunity in a mammal,
15 the method comprising administering to the mammal in need thereof an effective amount of a cell or a composition herein disclosed.

[000139] The therapeutic agent comprises the cell expressing the CAR as an active ingredient, and may further comprise a suitable excipient. Examples of the excipient include the aforementioned pharmaceutically acceptable excipients for the composition comprising
20 the nucleic acid of the present disclosure as an active ingredient, various cell culture media, and isotonic sodium chloride.

[000140] The disease against which the cell expressing the CAR is administered is not particularly limited as long as the disease shows sensitivity to the cell. In one embodiment, the disease is a cancer.

[000141] For example, the cancer is a blood cancer or a solid tumor. For example, the
25 blood cancer is a leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma. For example, the solid tumor is breast

cancer, ovarian cancer, glioblastoma, osteosarcoma, or medulloblastoma.

[000142] In an embodiment, the disease is an inflammatory disease/autoimmune disease (asthma, eczema), hepatitis, and an infectious disease, the cause of which is a virus such as influenza and HIV, a bacterium, or a fungus, for example, tuberculosis, MRSA, VRE, and deep mycosis.

[000143] The cell expressing the CAR of the present disclosure that binds to an antigen possessed by a cell that is desired to be decreased or eliminated for treatment of the aforementioned diseases, that is, a tumor antigen, a viral antigen, a bacterial antigen or the like is administered for treatment of these diseases.

[000144] Accordingly, an aspect includes a method of decreasing in a subject the number of cells expressing a predetermined antigen, the method comprising administering to the subject in need thereof an effective amount of cells expressing a CAR as described herein, wherein the CAR specifically binds to the predetermined antigen.

[000145] The cell of the present disclosure can also be utilized for prevention of an infectious disease after bone marrow transplantation or exposure to radiation, donor lymphocyte transfusion for the purpose of remission of recurrent leukemia, and the like.

[000146] The therapeutic agent comprising the cell expressing the CAR as an active ingredient can be administered intradermally, intramuscularly, subcutaneously, intraperitoneally, intranasally, intraarterially, intravenously, intratumorally, or into an afferent lymph vessel, by parenteral administration, for example, by injection or infusion, although the administration route is not limited.

[000147] In one embodiment, the subject is suspected of having or has cancer. In one embodiment, the subject is suspected of having or has an inflammatory disease.

[000148] Further, the definitions and embodiments described in particular sections are intended to be applicable to other embodiments herein described for which they are suitable as would be understood by a person skilled in the art. For example, in the following

passages, different aspects of the invention are defined in more detail. Each aspect so defined may be combined with any other aspect or aspects unless clearly indicated to the contrary. In particular, any feature indicated as being preferred or advantageous may be combined with any other feature or features indicated as being preferred or advantageous.

5 [000149] The above disclosure generally describes the present application. A more complete understanding can be obtained by reference to the following specific examples. These examples are described solely for the purpose of illustration and are not intended to limit the scope of the application. Changes in form and substitution of equivalents are contemplated as circumstances might suggest or render expedient. Although specific terms
10 have been employed herein, such terms are intended in a descriptive sense and not for purposes of limitation.

[000150] The following non-limiting examples are illustrative of the present disclosure:

EXAMPLES

15 [000151] The present disclosure will be further explained in more detail by way of Examples, which the present disclosure is not limited to.

EXAMPLE 1

Anti-CD19 chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) constructs

[000152] A FMC63-derived single-chain variable fragment (scFv) (Nicholson et al.,
20 1997) has been linked to CD28 and CD3 ζ chain (28-z, 2nd generation), CD28, 4-1BB and CD3 ζ chain (28-BB-z, 3rd generation), or CD28, cytoplasmic domain of IL-2 receptor β chain with internal deletion, and CD3 ζ chain with an exogenous YXXQ motif (SEQ ID NO: 13) has been introduced for STAT3 binding (28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ)), as shown in Fig. 1. The YXXQ (SEQ ID NO: 13) motif was generated by substituting Leu-His-Met residue at position 156-
25 158 encoded by CD3 ζ chain for Tyr-Arg-His. FMC63 is an IgG2a mouse monoclonal antibody belonging to the CD19 cluster. Oncostatin M was used as a signal peptide. Gibson

Assembly Method was used for site-directed mutagenesis. The following primers were used:

ACGCCTATCGCCATCAGGCCCTGC (SEQ ID NO: 26), and
CTGATGGCGATAGGCGTCGTAGGTGT (SEQ ID NO: 27).

Transduction efficiency of primary T cells with anti-CD19 CAR constructs

5 [000153] To determine the transduction efficiency of primary T cells with anti-CD19
CAR constructs, peripheral blood CD3⁺ T cells were stimulated with artificial antigen
presenting cells expressing a membranous form of anti-CD3 mAb (clone OKT3), CD80, and
CD83 (mOKT3/aAPC) (Butler et al., 2012), and subsequently transduced with individual
CAR constructs using retrovirus. The transduction was repeated for three consecutive days.
10 Seven days following initial stimulation with mOKT3/aAPC, the CAR transduced T cells were
stained with biotin-labeled protein L followed by streptavidin-APC. The stained T cells were
analyzed by flow cytometry, as shown in Fig. 2. Transduction efficiency was comparable in
the T cells transduced with various CAR constructs. Representative data of four independent
experiments are shown.

Anti-CD19-CAR surface expression

15 [000154] Anti-CD19-CAR surface expression was compared by measuring mean
fluorescence intensity (MFI) of CAR constructs expressed in primary T cells (n=4) (Fig. 3).
The CAR surface expression was slightly lower in the 28-BB-z and the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ)
CAR T cells compared with the 28-z CAR T cells. Statistical significance was evaluated with
20 the paired *t* test. Error bars indicate S.D.

Phosphorylation of STAT3 and STAT5 in the 28-IL2RB-z (YXXQ) CAR-transduced T cells

[000155] The 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR-transduced T cells were rested in cytokine-free
media for one day, and stimulated with K562-CD19 cells at an effector to target (E:T) ratio of
25 2:1. Phosphorylated STAT3 and STAT5 CD8⁺ T cells were fixed/permeabilized, stained with
specific mAbs, and analyzed by intracellular flow cytometry analysis, as shown in Fig. 4. The

28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR-engineered T cells showed gradual increase in phosphorylation of both STAT3 and STAT5. Representative data of three experiments are shown.

Comparison of JAK-STAT pathway activity in CAR-transduced T cells

[000156] CAR-transduced T cells were stimulated with K562 cells or K562 cells stably
 5 expressing CD19 (K562-CD19) under the same conditions as in Fig. 4, and phosphorylated
 STAT3 and STAT5 expression was measured 18 hours following stimulation. Relative mean
 fluorescence intensity (MFI) was calculated by dividing each MFI by the average MFI value
 of the 28-z CAR-transduced T cells cocultured with K562 cells (n=4). As shown in Fig. 5, the
 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR⁺ T cells showed significantly higher phosphorylation of STAT3
 10 (P<0.01) and STAT5 (P<0.05; paired *t* test) when they were cocultured with K562-CD19
 cells, indicating that the CAR induced CD19-specific JAK-STAT pathway activation.

EXAMPLE 2

Protocol for anti-CD19 CAR construct T cell transduction and expansion

[000157] Peripheral CD3⁺ T cells were stimulated with mOKT3/aAPC, and retrovirally
 15 transduced with individual CD19 CARs for three consecutive days. The CAR-transduced T
 cells were stimulated with irradiated K562-CD19 cells or K562 cells in the presence of IL-2
 100 IU/mL and IL-15 10 ng/mL at an E:T ratio of 2:1 in a weekly manner where indicated
 (see Fig. 6). Variations of E:T ratio and duration of transduction can be envisaged. For
 example, the CD3⁺ T cells stimulated with mOKT3/aAPC can be transduced for three
 20 consecutive days at an E:T ratio of 10:1.

Expansion of CAR-transduced T cells following transduction

[000158] Fold expansion of CAR-transduced T cells is shown (n=4) in Fig. 7. Greater
 than 100-fold expansion of CD8⁺ T cells was obtained in 2 weeks in all the CAR-transduced
 T cells. The 28-BB-z CAR-transduced T cells showed significantly superior proliferation
 25 compared to the 28-z CAR-transduced T cells following transduction (P<0.05 by the paired *t*
 test), while there was no difference between the 28-z and 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR-

transduced T cells.

Expansion of CAR-transduced T cells following CD19-specific stimulation with K562-CD19 cells

5 [000159] The CAR-transduced T cells were stimulated in a CD19-specific manner using irradiated K562-CD19 cells. The T cells transduced with the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR showed superior proliferation in both CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T cells regardless of cytokine supplementation. Fold expansion of CAR⁺ T cells is shown in Fig. 8 (n=4; statistical significance was evaluated with the paired *t* test).

Expansion of CAR⁺ T cells following co-culture with K562 cells

10 [000160] The CAR-transduced T cells were stimulated with irradiated K562 cells (control). Fold expansion of CAR-transduced T cells is shown (n=4) in Fig. 9. As previously shown, the T cells transduced with the 28-BB-z promoted antigen-independent proliferation compared with the 28-z CAR-transduced T cells (Milone et al., 2009) (P<0.05 for CD8⁺ T cells by the paired *t* test). In contrast, the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR⁺ T cells did not confer
15 proliferative advantage over the 28-z CAR T cells in the absence of antigen-specific CD19 stimulation.

Expansion of the CAR⁺ T cells after antigen-specific restimulation with K562-CD19 cells

20 [000161] The CAR-transduced T cells were weekly stimulated twice with irradiated K562-CD19 cells, as shown in Fig. 10. Fold expansion of the CAR⁺ T cells is shown (n=4). The 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR-engineered T cells showed improved proliferation compared to the other CAR-transduced T cells (P<0.05 for CD8⁺ T cells; paired *t* test).

Cell division rate in CAR-transduced T cells

25 [000162] CAR-engineered T cells were labeled with carboxyfluorescein succinimidyl ester (CFSE), and stimulated with K562-CD19 cells at a ratio of 2:1. The average MFI of CFSE in the CAR-transduced CD4⁺ or CD8⁺ T cells 3 days following stimulation relative to

that of the 28-z CAR-transduced T cells is shown in Fig. 11 (n=4). The intensity of CFSE in the 28-z CAR-transduced T cells were set to one in each donor. Error bars indicate S.D. Statistical significance was evaluated with the paired *t* test. The T cells transduced with the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR showed significantly enhanced cell division.

5 **EXAMPLE 3**

Viability the CAR-transduced T cells

[000163] CAR-transduced T cells were stimulated with K562-CD19 cells at a ratio of 2:1. The frequency of dead cells was evaluated by flow cytometry 3 days following stimulation (n=4) (Fig. 12). Error bars depict S.D. The T cells transduced with the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR construct showed decreased apoptosis upon antigen stimulation. Significance of difference was evaluated by the paired *t* test. The data presented in Fig. 11 and 12 demonstrate that the proliferative advantage of the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR⁺ T cells upon CD19 stimulation resulted from both enhanced cell division and decreased apoptosis.

Surface phenotype of CAR-transduced T cells

15 [000164] CAR-transduced T cells were stimulated with K562-CD19 at a ratio of 2:1. Surface CD45RA and CD62L on CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T cells were stained by specific mAbs and subjected to flow cytometry analysis 7 days following stimulation (Fig. 13). Representative data of 4 independent experiments is shown. The T cells transduced with the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR maintained the CD45RA⁺ CD62L⁺ T-cell subset compared to the 28-z or 28-BB-z CAR⁺ T cells.

The frequency of CAR T cells with a stem cell-like memory T cell marker phenotype (CD45RA⁺ CD62L⁺ CD95⁺)

[000165] CAR-transduced T cells were stimulated with K562-CD19 at a ratio of 2:1. CD45RA, CD62L, and CD95 surface expression was analyzed 7 days following stimulation (n=4) (Fig. 14). The 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR-transduced T cells possessed significantly higher frequency of a CD45RA⁺ CD62L⁺ CD95⁺ stem cell-like memory T cell subset.

Statistical significance was evaluated with the paired *t* test.

Comparison of CD62L expression in CAR-transduced T cells

[000166] CD62L expression in CAR-transduced T cells was analyzed as described for Fig. 13 and 14. Relative MFI of CD62L expression in the CAR-transduced CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T cells was calculated by dividing each MFI by the average MFI value of the 28-z CAR-transduced T cells (n=4). The 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR-transduced T cells displayed significantly higher expression level of CD62L compared to the other CAR⁺ T cells (P<0.05 by the paired *t* test).

IL-2 secretion by CAR-transduced T cells

[000167] CAR-transduced T cells were stimulated with K562-CD19 at a ratio of 1:1. One week following stimulation, the T cells were restimulated with mOKT3/aAPC, and cytokine secretion was measured with intracellular flow cytometry following staining with specific mAbs. The 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR⁺ T cells secreted more IL-2 compared to 28-z and 28-BB-z CAR-transduced T cells. The significance was evaluated by the paired *t* test. These results are consistent with the data shown in Figure 15; the 28-IL2RB-z (YXXQ) CAR⁺ T cells preferentially maintained a CD45RA⁺ CD62L⁺ CD95⁺ stem cell-like memory T cell subset compared to the other CAR T cells.

In vitro target cell lysis by CAR-transduced T cells

[000168] CAR-transduced T cells were cocultured with irradiated target cells (K562-CD19 and CD19⁺ Nalm-6 cells) labeled with carboxyfluorescein succinimidyl ester (CFSE) at an E:T ratio of 3:1 for 6 hours. Percentage of residual CFSE-positive live cells in the culture was determined by flow cytometry analysis (n=3). Parental K562 cells were used as a control. Error bars depict S.D. Statistical significance was evaluated with repeated measures ANOVA. The 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) CAR-transduced T cells demonstrated lytic activity against CD19⁺ cells comparable to the other CAR-transduced T cells.

EXAMPLE 4

Vector construction

[000169] NFM63-28Z CAR, also referred to as 28-z CAR, is anti-CD19 chimeric antigen receptor created by replacing the signal sequence of FMC63-28Z CAR, which is originally constructed by Kochenderfer et al. (J Immunother. 2009 Sep;32(7):689-702), with the Oncostatin M signal sequence (NCBI RefSeq:NP_065391.1, amino acid numbers 1 to 25 of SEQ ID No.: 1). Codon-optimized NFM63-28Z CAR construct was synthesized by Geneart® and cloned into pMX retroviral vector (Int J Hematol. 1998, 67:351-9). An amino acid sequence of NFM63-28Z CAR is shown in SEQ ID NO: 1. NFM63-28-d2RbZ CAR is a chimeric antigen receptor having a truncated fragment of the cytoplasmic domain of human IL-2 receptor β chain including box-1 motif and flanking tyrosine residue-510 (e.g. amino acid numbers 266 to 337 and 530 to 551 of NCBI RefSeq: NP_000869.1, SEQ ID No.: 5), between the CD28 domain and the CD3 ζ domain of NFM63-28Z CAR. An amino acid sequence of NFM63-28-d2RbZ CAR is shown in SEQ ID NO: 2. NFM63-28-21RaZ CAR is a chimeric antigen receptor having full-length cytoplasmic domain of human IL-21 receptor α chain (amino acid numbers 256 to 538 of NCBI RefSeq:NP_068570.1, SEQ ID No.: 6) between the CD28 domain and CD3 ζ domain of NFM63-28Z CAR. An amino acid sequence of NFM63-28-21RaZ CAR is shown in SEQ ID NO: 3. NFM63-28Z-21Ra CAR is a chimeric antigen receptor having full-length cytoplasmic domain of human IL-21 receptor α chain with N-terminus to NFM63-28Z CAR. An amino acid sequence of NFM63-28Z-21Ra CAR is shown in SEQ ID NO: 4. The structures of CARs are shown in Fig. 21. The nucleic acids encoding NFM63-28-d2RbZ CAR, NFM63-28-21RaZ CAR and NFM63-28Z-21Ra CAR were constructed by inserting DNAs encoding respective cytoplasmic domains into NFM63-28Z CAR construct in pMX retroviral vector.

[000170] Ecotropic retroviral vectors were obtained by transient transfection of CAR construct retroviral plasmids with TransIT293 (Mirus Bio) to phoenix-eco cell line; subsequently, PG13 cell lines were transduced with the ecotropic retroviral vectors obtained

from transduced phoenix-eco cell line. GaLV-pseudotyped retroviral vectors were obtained from bulk of transduced PG13 cell lines and used for gene transduction into Jurkat cells.

Cells

[000171] PG13 cell line and phoenix-eco cell line were cultured in DMEM medium
5 supplemented with 10% fetal calf serum (FCS) and 50 µg/mL gentamicin (Gibco).

[000172] K562 cells or K562 cells transduced with human CD80 and CD83 expression constructs were additionally transduced with a human CD19 expression construct and used as artificial antigen-presenting cells (aAPC cells, Clin Cancer Res., 2007, 13:1857-67, Immunol Rev., 2014, 257:191-209). K562 and K562-derived cells and Jurkat and Jurkat-
10 derived cells were cultured in RPMI 1640 medium supplemented with 10% FCS and 50 µg/mL gentamicin.

CAR construct transfer and cell sorting

[000173] The cells were transduced using the RetroNectin-bound virus infection method (J Biochem. 2001 Sep;130(3):331-4), in which retroviral solutions were preloaded
15 onto RetroNectin (registered trademark, Takara Bio) coated plates, centrifuged at 2,000g for 2 hours at 32 °C, and then rinsed with phosphate-buffered saline including bovine serum albumin. Jurkat cells were applied to the virus-preloaded plate. This gene transfer was performed twice.

[000174] Following gene transfer of CAR constructs, cells were sorted with Biotin-Protein L (GenScript) and Anti-Biotin MicroBeads (Miltenyi Biotec). After sorting more than
20 95% positivity and equal level of mean fluorescent intensity of transferred CAR constructs were confirmed.

STAT phosphorylation

[000175] CAR transduced Jurkat cells and aAPCs were counted and mixed on ice.
25 Following spinning down at 4°C, cells were incubated in 37°C waterbath. After incubation, cells were fixed in 1.5% paraformaldehyde and permeabilized with 100% methanol.

Subsequently cells were stained with the following antibodies; Phospho-p44/42 MAP kinase (Cell signaling technology, clone E10), Phospho-STAT3 (pY705) (BD Phosflow, clone 4/P-STAT3), and Phospho-STAT5 (pY694) (BD Phosflow, clone 47/P-STAT5). Flow cytometry acquisition was performed with a BD FACS Canto II (BD Biosciences), and analysis was performed with FlowJo (Treestar).

[000176] Results are shown in Fig. 22. As shown in upper figures of Fig. 2, NFM63-28Z only shows MAP kinase phosphorylation which is a marker of CD3 ζ signaling, whereas NFM63-28-d2R5 shows STAT5 phosphorylation in a phospho-MAP kinase positive fraction. Also, as shown in lower figures of Fig. 2, both NFM63-28-21RaZ and NFM63-28Z-21Ra show STAT3 phosphorylation in a phospho-MAP kinase positive fraction. These results indicate that these CARs can activate STAT5 or STAT3 signaling which are the main targets of IL-2 and IL-21 signaling respectively in addition to MAP kinase signaling upon antigen stimulation.

EXAMPLE 5

In vivo antileukemic effects in mice

[000177] Immunodeficient NSG mice harboring human CD19⁺ NALME B leukemic cells were treated with the 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) anti-CD19 CAR or with previous generation CAR T cells.

[000178] CD3⁺ T cells were retrovirally transduced with either 28-z, 28-BB-z, or 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) anti-CD19 CAR, and stimulated with CD19-transduced K562 cells, as shown in Fig. 18. Immunodeficient NSG mice were intravenously injected with the CD19-positive acute lymphoblastic leukemia cell line NALM-6, which expresses EGFP-luciferase (NALM6-GL), and then they were injected with CAR-transduced T cells 14 days following tumor injection.

[000179] In vivo bioluminescent imaging of luciferase activity is shown in Fig. 19 at day 0, 7, 28 for the no treatment and 28-z anti-CD19 CAR groups as well as day 0, 7, 28, 42 and

63 for the 28-BB-z and 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) anti-CD19 CARs groups following infusion of the anti-CD19 CAR-transduced T cells. Mice treated with 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) anti-CD19 CARs show a greater tumor activity decrease compared to the other groups.

[000180] Kaplan–Meier curve for overall survival of the mice treated with anti-CD19 CAR-transduced T cells (n=5 each) indicates that 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ) anti-CD19 CAR treated mice had a better overall survival rate compared to the non-treated group as well as the previous generation 28-z and 28-BB-z anti-CD19 CARs.

[000181] While the present application has been described with reference to what are presently considered to be the preferred examples, it is to be understood that the application is not limited to the disclosed examples. To the contrary, the application is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

Table of Sequences:

SEQ ID NO: 1: NFM63-28Z

MGVLLTQRTLLSLVLALLFPSMASMDIQMTQTSSLSASLGDRVTISCRASQDISKYLNWYQ
 QKPDGTVKLLIYHTSRLHSGVPSRFSGSGSGTDYSLTISNLEQEDIATYFCQQGNTLPYTFG
 5 GGTKLEITGSTSGSGKPGSGEGSTKGEVKLQESGPGLVAPSQSLSVTCTVSGVSLPDYGV
SWIRQPPRKGLEWLGVWGETTYNSALKSRLTIKDNSKSQVFLKMNSLQTDDTAIYYCA
KHYYYGGSYAMDYWGQGSTVTVSSAAAIEVMYPPPYLDNEKSNGTIIHVKGKHLCPSPFLP
 GPSKPFWVLVWGGVLACYSLLVTVAFIIFWVRSKRSRLLHSDYMNMTPRRPGPTRKHYP
 YAPPRDFAAYRSRVKFSRSADAPAYQQGQNQLYNELNLGRREEYDVLDRRGRDPEMGG
 10 KPRRKNPQEGLYNELQKDKMAEAYSEIGMKGERRRGKGHDGLYQGLSTATKDTYDALHM
QALPPR

1-25: SIGNAL PEPTIDE

26-270: FMC63 SCFV

274-312: CD28 PARTIAL EXTRACELLULAR DOMAIN

15 313-339: CD28 TRANSMEMBRANE DOMAIN

340-380: CD28 CYTOPLASMIC DOMAIN

381-492: INTRACELLULAR DOMAIN OF CD3Z

SEQ ID NO: 2: NFM63-28-d2RbZ

MGVLLTQRTLLSLVLALLFPSMASMDIQMTQTSSLSASLGDRVTISCRASQDISKYLNWYQ
 20 QKPDGTVKLLIYHTSRLHSGVPSRFSGSGSGTDYSLTISNLEQEDIATYFCQQGNTLPYTFG
 GGTKLEITGSTSGSGKPGSGEGSTKGEVKLQESGPGLVAPSQSLSVTCTVSGVSLPDYGV
 SWIRQPPRKGLEWLGVWGETTYNSALKSRLTIKDNSKSQVFLKMNSLQTDDTAIYYCA
 KHYYYGGSYAMDYWGQGSTVTVSSAAAIEVMYPPPYLDNEKSNGTIIHVKGKHLCPSPFLP
 GPSKPFWVLVWGGVLACYSLLVTVAFIIFWVRSKRSRLLHSDYMNMTPRRPGPTRKHYP
 25 YAPPRDFAAYRSIDGGGGSGGGSGGGGSNCRNTGPWLKKVLKCNTPDPSKFFS~~QLSSE~~
HGGDVQKWLSSFPSSSFSPGGLAPEISPLEVLERDKVTQLLPLNTDAYLSLQELQGQDPT

55

HLVKLGSGPRVKFSRSADAPAYQQGQNQLYNELNLGRREEYDVLDKRRGRDPEMGGKP
RRKNPQEGLYNELQKDKMAEAYSEIGMKGERRRGKGHDGLYQGLSTATKDTYDALHMQA
LPPR

1-25: SIGNAL PEPTIDE

5 26-270: FMC63 SCFV

274-312: CD28 PARTIAL EXTRACELLULAR DOMAIN

313-339: CD28 TRANSMEMBRANE DOMAIN

340-380: CD28 CYTOPLASMIC DOMAIN

398-491: PARTIAL CYTOPLASMIC IL-2 RECEPTOR BETA DOMAIN

10 499-610: INTRACELLULAR DOMAIN OF CD3ζ

SEQ ID NO: 3: NFM63-28-21RaZ

MGVLLTQRTLLSLVLALLFSPMASMDIQMTQTTSSLSASLGDRVTISCRASQDISKYLNWYQ

QKPDGTVKLLIYHTSRLHSGVPSRFSGSGSGTDYSLTISNLEQEDIATYFCQQGNTLPYTFG

GGTKLEITGSTSGSGKPGSGEGSTKGEVKLQESGGLVAPSQSLSVTCTVSGVSLPDYGV

15 SWIRQPPRKGLEWLGVWGSSETTYNSALKSRLTIKDNSKSQVFLKMNSLQTDDTAIYYCA

KHYYYGGSYAMDYWGQGTSTVTVSSAAAIEVMYPPPYLDNEKSNGTIIHVKGKHLCPSPFLP

GPSKPFWVLVWVGVLACYSLLVTVAFIIFWVRSKRSLHSDYMNMTPRRPGPTRKHYP

YAPPRDFAAYRSKTHPLWRLWKKIWAVSPERFFMPLYKGCSGDFKKWVGAPFTGSSLEL

GPWSPEVPSTLEVYSCHPPRSPAKRLQLTELQEPALVESDGVPKPSFWPTAQNSGGSAY

20 SEERDRPYGLVSIDTVTVLDAEGPCTWPCSCEDDGYPALDLDAGLEPSPGLEDPLLDAGTT

VLSCGCVSAGSPGLGGPLGSLLDRLKPPLADGEDWAGGLPWGGRSPGGVSESEAGSPLA

GLDMDTFDSGFVGSDCSSPVECDFTSPGDEGPPRSYLQWWVIPPLSSPGPQASKLGGS

GPRVKFSRSADAPAYQQGQNQLYNELNLGRREEYDVLDKRRGRDPEMGGKPRRKNPQE

GLYNELQKDKMAEAYSEIGMKGERRRGKGHDGLYQGLSTATKDTYDALHMQALPPR

25 1-25: SIGNAL PEPTIDE

26-270: FMC63 SCFV

56

274-312: CD28 PARTIAL EXTRACELLULAR DOMAIN

313-339: CD28 TRANSMEMBRANE DOMAIN

340-380: CD28 CYTOPLASMIC DOMAIN

381-663: FULL-LENGTH CYTOPLASMIC IL-21 RECEPTOR ALPHA DOMAIN

5 671-782: INTRACELLULAR DOMAIN OF CD3ζ

SEQ ID NO: 4: NFM63-28Z-21Ra

MGVLLTQRTLLSLVLALLFPSMASMDIQMTQTTSSLSASLGDRVTISCRASQDISKYLNWYQ

QKPDGTVKLLIYHTSRLHSGVPSRFSGSGSGTDYSLTISNLEQEDIATYFCQQGNTLPYTFG

GGTKLEITGSTSGSGKPGSGEGSTKGEVKLQESGPGLVAPSQSLSVTCTVSGVSLPDYGV

10 SWIRQPPRKGLEWLGVWGETTYNSALKSRLTIKDNSKSQVFLKMNSLQTDDTAIYYCA

KHYYYGGSYAMDYWGQGTSVTVSSAAAEVMPYPYLDNEKSNGTIIHVKGKHLCPSPLPF

GPSKPFWVLVWGGVLACYSLLVTVAFIIFWVRSKRSLHSDYMNMTPRRPGPTRKHYP

YAPPRDFAAYRSRVKFSRSADAPAYQQGQNQLYNELNLGRREEYDVLDKRRGRDPEMGG

KPRRKNPQEGLYNELQKDKMAEAYSEIGMKGERRRGKGHDGLYQGLSTATKDTYDALHM15 QALPPRGGGGSGGGSGGGGSKTHPLWRLWKKIWAVPSPERFFMPLYKGC SGDFKKWW

GAPFTGSSLELGPWSPEVPSTLEVYSCHPPRSPAKRLQLTELQEPALVESDGVKPSFW

PTAQNSGGSAYSEERDRPYGLVSIDTVTVLDAEGPCTWPCSCEDDGYPALDLDAGLEPSP

GLEDPLLDAGTTVLSCGCVSAGSPGLGGPLGSLDRLKPPLADGEDWAGGLPWGGRSPG

GVSESEAGSPLAGLMDTFD SGFVGSDCSSPVECDFTSPGDEGP PRSYLRQWWIPPLS

20 SPGPQAS

1-25: SIGNAL PEPTIDE

26-270: FMC63 SCFV

274-312: CD28 PARTIAL EXTRACELLULAR DOMAIN

313-339: CD28 TRANSMEMBRANE DOMAIN

25 340-380: CD28 CYTOPLASMIC DOMAIN

381-492: INTRACELLULAR DOMAIN OF CD3ζ

57

508-790: FULL-LENGTH CYTOPLASMIC IL-21 RECEPTOR ALPHA DOMAIN

SEQ ID NO: 5: Truncated fragment of the cytoplasmic domain of IL-2R β chain

NCRNTGPWLKKVLKCNTPDPSKFFSQLSSEHGGDVQKWLSSPFPSSSFSPGGLAPEISPL
 EVLERDKVTQLLPLNTDAYLSLQELQGQDPHTLV

5 SEQ ID NO: 6: cytoplasmic domain of human IL-21 receptor α chain

KTHPLWRLWKKIWAVSPERFFMPPLYKGCSGDFKKWWGAPFTGSSLELGPWSPEVPSTLE
 VYSCHPPRSPAKRLQLTELQEPALVESDGVKPSFWPTAQNSGGSAYSEERDRPYGLVS
 IDTVTVLDAEGPCTWPCSCEDDGYPALDLDAGLEPSPGLEDPLLDAGTTVLSCGCVSAGSP
 GLGGPLGSLLDRLKPPLADGEDWAGGLPWGGRSPGGVSESEAGSPLAGLMDTFDSGFV

10 GSDCSSPVECDFTSPGDEGPPRSYLRQWVIPPPLSSPGPQAS

11-19: BOX 1 MOTIF

264: PHOSPHORYLABLE TYROSINE RESIDUE

265-267 – tyrosine flanking residues

SEQ ID NO: 7: intracellular domain of CD3 ζ

15 RVKFSRSADAPAYQQGQNQLYNELNLGRREEYDVLDKRRGRDPEMGGKPRRKNPQEGL
 YNELQKDKMAEAYSEIGMKGERRRGKGHDGLYQGLSTATKDTYDALHMQALPPR

SEQ ID NO: 8: intracellular domain of CD28

RSKRSRLLHSDYMNMTPRRPGPTRKHYPYAPPRDFAAYRS

SEQ ID NO: 9: transmembrane domain of CD28

20 FWVLVVGGVLACYSLLVTVAFIIFWV

SEQ ID NO: 10: partial extracellular domain of CD28

IEVMYPPPYLDNEKSNGTIIHVKGKHLCPSPLPFGPSKP

SEQ ID NO: 11

NP_000869.1, 266-551:

25 NCRNTGPWLKKVLKCNTPDPSKFFSQLSSEHGGDVQKWLSSPFPSSSFSPGGLAPEISPL
 EVLERDKVTQLLLQQDKVPEPASLSSNHSLSCTFTNQGYFFFHLPDALEIEACQVYFTYDPY

58

SEEDPDEGVAGAPTGSSPQPLQPLSGEDDAYCTFPSRDDLLLFSPSLLGGPSPPSTAPGG
 SGAGEERMPPSLQERVPRDWDQPGLGPPTPGVPDLVDFQPPPELVREAGEEVPDAGPR
 EGVSFPSRPPGQGEFRALNARLPLNTDAYLSLQELQGQDPTHLV

SEQ ID NO: 12 – YLSLQ

5 SEQ ID NO: 13 – YXXQ

SEQ ID NO: 14 - YLPSNID

SEQ ID NO: 15 - YCTFP

SEQ ID NO: 16 - YFFFH

SEQ ID NO: 17 - YVTMS

10 SEQ ID NO: 18 – YLPQE

SEQ ID NO: 19 - KLGGSGP

SEQ ID NO: 20 - YKAFS

SEQ ID NO: 21 – YKPFQ

SEQ ID NO: 22 - YRHQ

15 SEQ ID NO: 23 - YXPQ

SEQ ID NO: 24: 28-IL2RB-z(YXXQ)WITH STAT3 ASSOCIATION MOTIF AT POSITIONS
 104-107 OF THE INTRACELLULAR DOMAIN OF CD3ζ

MGVLLTQRTLLSLVLALLFPSMASMDIQMTQTSSLSASLGDRVTISCRASQDISKYLNWYQ

QKPDGTVKLLIYHTSRLHSGVPSRFSGSGSGTDYSLTISNLEQEDIATYFCQQGNTLPYTFG

20 GGTKLEITGSTSGSGKPGSGEGSTKGEVKLQESGPGLVAPSQSLSVTCTVSGVSLPDYGV

SWIRQPPRKGLEWLGVWGSSETTYNSALKSRLTIKDNSKSQVFLKMNSLQTDDTAIYYCA

KHYYYGGSYAMDYWGQGTSTVSSAAAIEVMYPPPYLDNEKSNGTIIHVKGKHLCPSPFLP

GPSKPFWVLVWGGVLACYSLLVTVAFIIFWVRSKRSRLLHSDYMNMTPRRPGPTRKHYP

YAPPRDFAAYRSNCRNTGPWLKKVLKCNTPDPSKFFSQLSSEHGGDVQKWLSSPFPSSSF

25 SPGGLAPEISPLEVLERDKVTQLLPLNTDAYLSLQELQGQDPTHLVRVKFSRSADAPAYQQ

GQNQLYNELNLGRREEYDVLDKRRGRDPEMGGKPRRKNPQEGLYNELQKDKMAEAYSEI

59

GMKGERRRGKGHDGLYQGLSTATKDTYDAYXXQALPPR

1-25: SIGNAL PEPTIDE

26-270: FMC63 SCFV

274-312: CD28 PARTIAL EXTRACELLULAR DOMAIN

5 313-339: CD28 TRANSMEMBRANE DOMAIN

340-380: CD28 CYTOPLASMIC DOMAIN

381-474: PARTIAL CYTOPLASMIC IL-2 RECEPTOR BETA DOMAIN475-586: INTRACELLULAR DOMAIN OF CD3 ζ COMPRISING EXOGENOUS STAT3
ASSOCIATION MOTIF YXXQ10 SEQ ID NO: 25: 28-IL2RB-z(YRHQ) WITH STAT3 ASSOCIATION MOTIF YRHQ (SEQ ID
NO: 22) AT POSITIONS 104-107 OF THE INTRACELLULAR DOMAIN OF CD3 ζ

MGVLLTQRTLLSLVLALLFSPMASMDIQMTQTTSSLSASLGDRVTISCRASQDISKYLNWYQ

QKPDGTVKLLIYHTSRLHSGVPSRFSGSGSGTDYSLTISNLEQEDIATYFCQQGNTLPYTFG

GGTKLEITGSTSGSGKPGSGEGSTKGEVKLQESGGLVAPSQSLSVTCTVSGVSLPDYGV

15 SWIRQPPRKGLEWLGVWGSSETTYNSALKSRLTIKDNSKSQVFLKMNSLQTDDTAIYYCA

KHYYYGGSYAMDYWGQGTSTVSSAAAIEVMYPPPYLDNEKSNGTIIHVKGKHLCPSPFLP

GPSKPFWVLVWVGVLACYSLLVTVAFIIFWVRSKRSLHSDYMNMTPRRPGPTRKHYP

YAPPRDFAAYRSNCRNTGPWLKKVLKCNTPDSKFFSQLSSEHGGDVQKWLSSPFPSSSFSPGGLAPEISPLEVLERDKVTQLLPLNTDAYLSLQELQGQDPTHLVRVKFSRSADAPAYQQ

20 GQNQLYNELNLGRREEYDVLDKRRGRDPEMGGKPRRKNPQEGLYNELQKDKMAEAYSEI

GMKGERRRGKGHDGLYQGLSTATKDTYDAYRHQALPPR

1-25: SIGNAL PEPTIDE

26-270: FMC63 SCFV

274-312: CD28 PARTIAL EXTRACELLULAR DOMAIN

25 313-339: CD28 TRANSMEMBRANE DOMAIN

340-380: CD28 CYTOPLASMIC DOMAIN

381-474: PARTIAL CYTOPLASMIC IL-2 RECEPTOR BETA DOMAIN

475-586: INTRACELLULAR DOMAIN OF CD3 ζ COMPRISING EXOGENOUS STAT3
ASSOCIATION MOTIF YRHQ

SEQ ID NO: 26 - ACGCCTATCGCCATCAGGCCCTGC

5 SEQ ID NO: 27 - CTGATGGCGATAGGCGTCGTAGGTGT

SEQ ID NO: 28 - YFFF

SEQ ID NO: 29 - YCTF

SEQ ID NO: 30 - YLRQ

SEQ ID NO: 31 - YFKQ

10 SEQ ID NO: 32 - YLPQ

SEQ ID NO: 33 - YMPQ

SEQ ID NO: 34 - YVLQ

SEQ ID NO: 35 - YQPQ

SEQ ID NO: 36 - YKPQ

15 SEQ ID NO: 37 - YRPQ

SEQ ID NO: 38 - YTHQ

SEQ ID NO: 39 - YLKQ

SEQ ID NO: 40 - YHNQ

SEQ ID NO: 41 - YXXL

20 SEQ ID NO: 42 - IDGGGGSGGGSGGGGS

SEQ ID NO: 43 - YLSL

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Claims:

The invention claimed is:

1. A chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) comprising i) an extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen, ii) a transmembrane domain and iii) an intracellular segment comprising a) a truncated cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin-2 receptor beta chain defined by SEQ ID NO: 5 and b) an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ defined by SEQ ID NO: 7 comprising an exogenous Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (STAT) 3 association motif corresponding to YRHQ (SEQ ID NO: 22) at positions 104-107 of SEQ ID NO: 7.
2. The CAR according to claim 1, wherein the intracellular segment further comprises a STAT5 association motif selected from the group consisting of YXXL (SEQ ID NO: 41), YFFF (SEQ ID NO: 28), YCTF (SEQ ID NO: 29) and YLSL (SEQ ID NO: 43).
3. The CAR according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the exogenous STAT3 association motif is located less than 100 amino acid residues from the C terminus of the CAR.
4. The CAR according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the intracellular segment further comprises a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain.
5. The CAR according to claim 4, wherein the cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain is a cytoplasmic domain of CD28, CD2, CD4, CD5, CD8 α , CD8 β , CD134 or CD137.
6. The CAR according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the extracellular domain is an antigen binding region of an antibody.
7. The CAR according to claim 6, wherein the antigen binding region is a single chain variable fragment.
8. A nucleic acid comprising a polynucleotide encoding the CAR of any one of claims 1 to 7.
9. The nucleic acid of claim 8, wherein the nucleic acid encodes a signal peptide at the N terminus of the CAR.
10. A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 8 or 9.

11. An immune cell which expresses the CAR of any one of claims 1 to 7.
12. A composition comprising the CAR of any one of claims 1 to 7, the nucleic acid of claim 8 or 9, the vector of claim 10 or the immune cell of claim 11, and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.
13. A method of making a cell expressing a CAR, the method comprising: a) transfecting or transducing isolated immune cells with a nucleic acid comprising a polynucleotide encoding said CAR of any one of claims 1 to 7 and b) isolating and/or expanding the CAR-expressing cells following the transfection or transduction.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein the immune cells are T cells and the CAR-expressing cells expanded are CAR-expressing T cells.
15. The method of claim 13 or 14, wherein the immune cells are isolated from a mammal.
16. A nucleic acid comprising a polynucleotide encoding a chimeric antigen receptor (CAR), the CAR comprising:
- i) an extracellular domain capable of binding to a predetermined antigen;
 - ii) a transmembrane domain; and
 - iii) an intracellular segment comprising:
 - a) a truncated cytoplasmic domain of an interleukin-2 receptor beta chain defined by SEQ ID NO: 5; and
 - b) an intracellular signaling domain of CD3 ζ defined by SEQ ID NO: 7 comprising an exogenous Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription (STAT) 3 association motif corresponding to YRHQ (SEQ ID NO: 22) at positions 104-107 of SEQ ID NO: 7.
17. The nucleic acid of claim 16, wherein the nucleic acid encodes a signal peptide at the N terminus of the CAR.
18. A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 16 or 17.
19. An immune cell comprising the nucleic acid of claim 16 or 17 and expressing the CAR.

20. A method of making an immune cell expressing a CAR, the method comprising:
- a) transfecting or transducing isolated immune cells with the nucleic acid of claim 16; and
 - b) isolating and/or expanding the CAR-expressing cells following the transfection or transduction.
21. The method of claim 20, wherein the CAR-expressing cells are CAR-expressing T cells.
22. The nucleic acid according to claim 16 or 17, wherein the intracellular segment of the CAR further comprises a STAT5-association motif selected from the group consisting of YXXL (SEQ ID NO: 41), YFFF (SEQ ID NO: 28), YCTF (SEQ ID NO: 29) and YLSL (SEQ ID NO: 43).
23. The nucleic acid according to any one of claims 16, 17 and 22, wherein the exogenous STAT3 association motif is located less than 100 amino acid residues from the C terminus of the CAR.
24. The nucleic acid according to any one of claims 16, 17, 22 and 23, wherein the intracellular segment further comprises a cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain.
25. The nucleic acid according to claim 24, wherein the cytoplasmic co-stimulatory domain is a cytoplasmic domain of CD28, CD2, CD4, CD5, CD8 α , CD8 β , CD134 or CD137.
26. The nucleic acid according to any one of claims 16, 17, and 22-25, wherein the extracellular domain in the CAR is an antigen binding region of an antibody.
27. The nucleic acid according to claim 26, wherein the antigen binding region is a single chain variable fragment.

Fig. 1

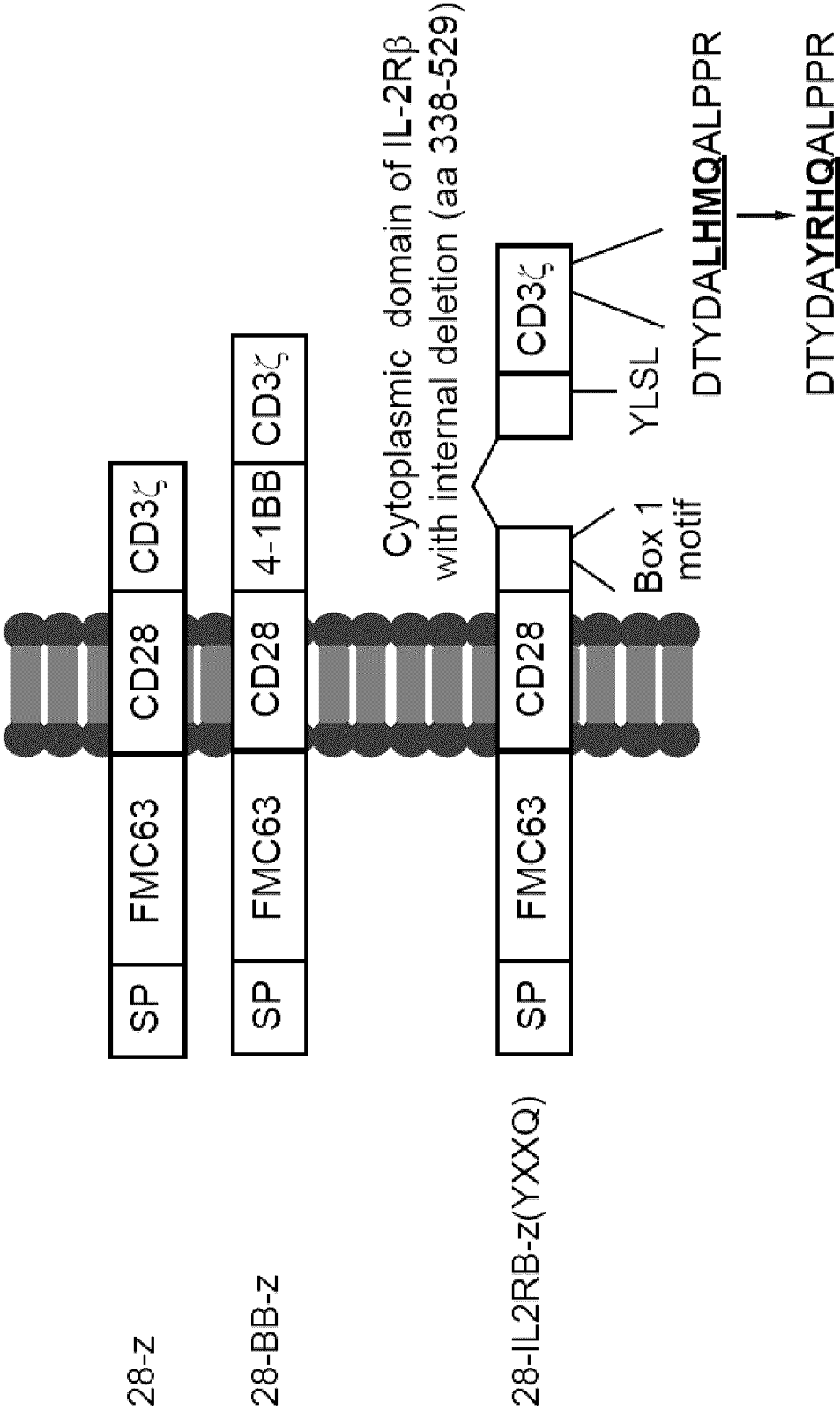
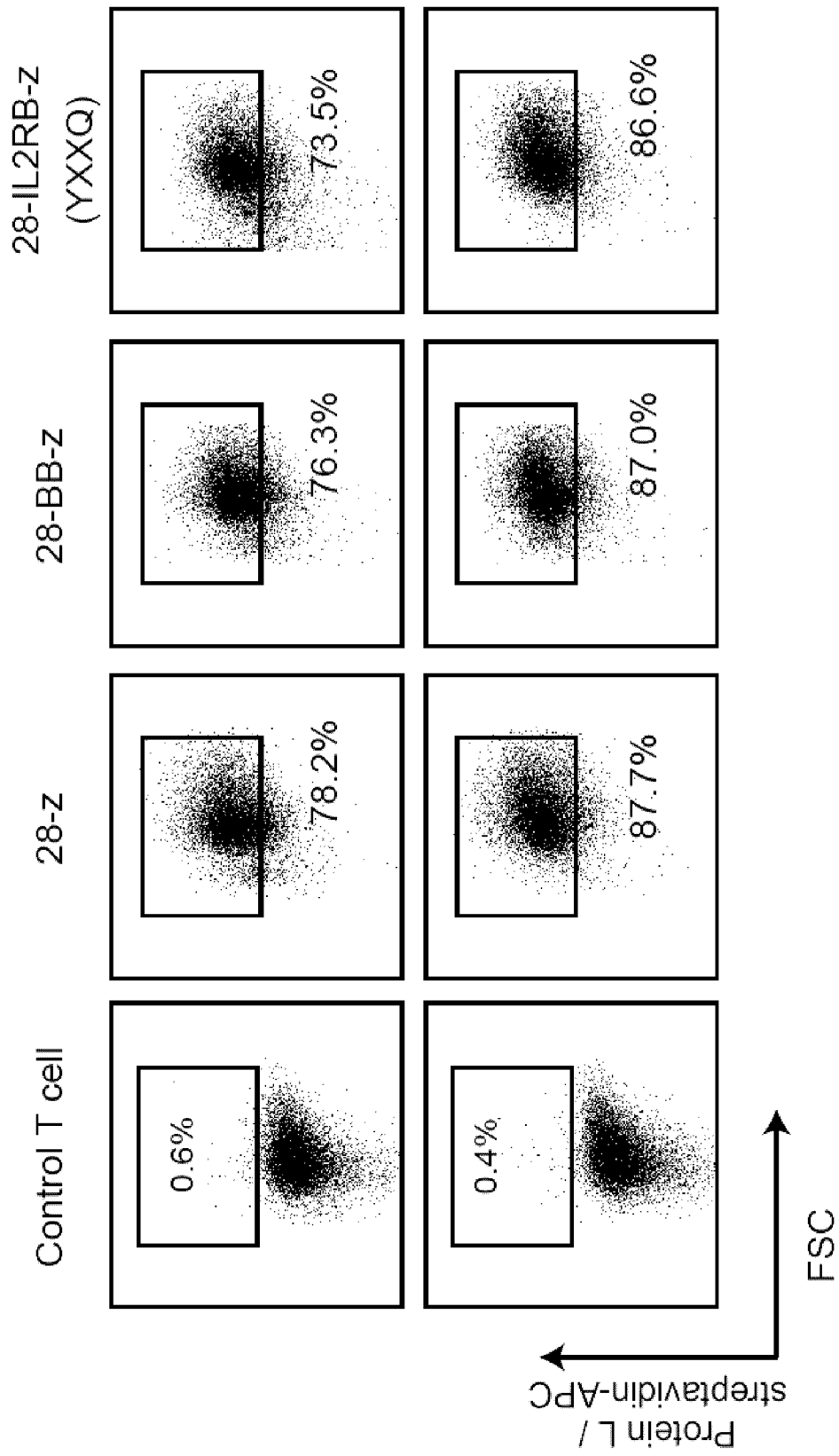


Fig. 2



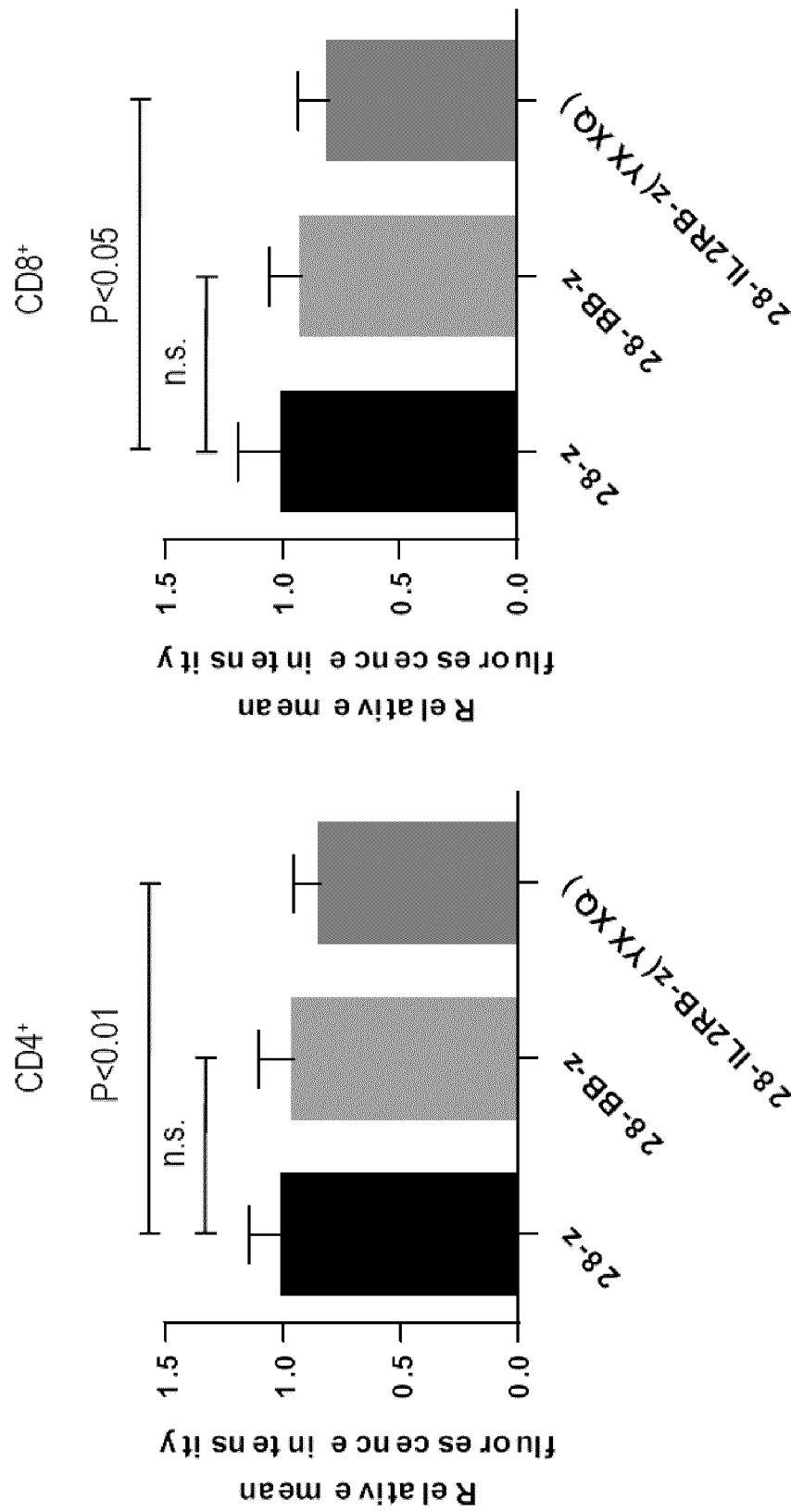
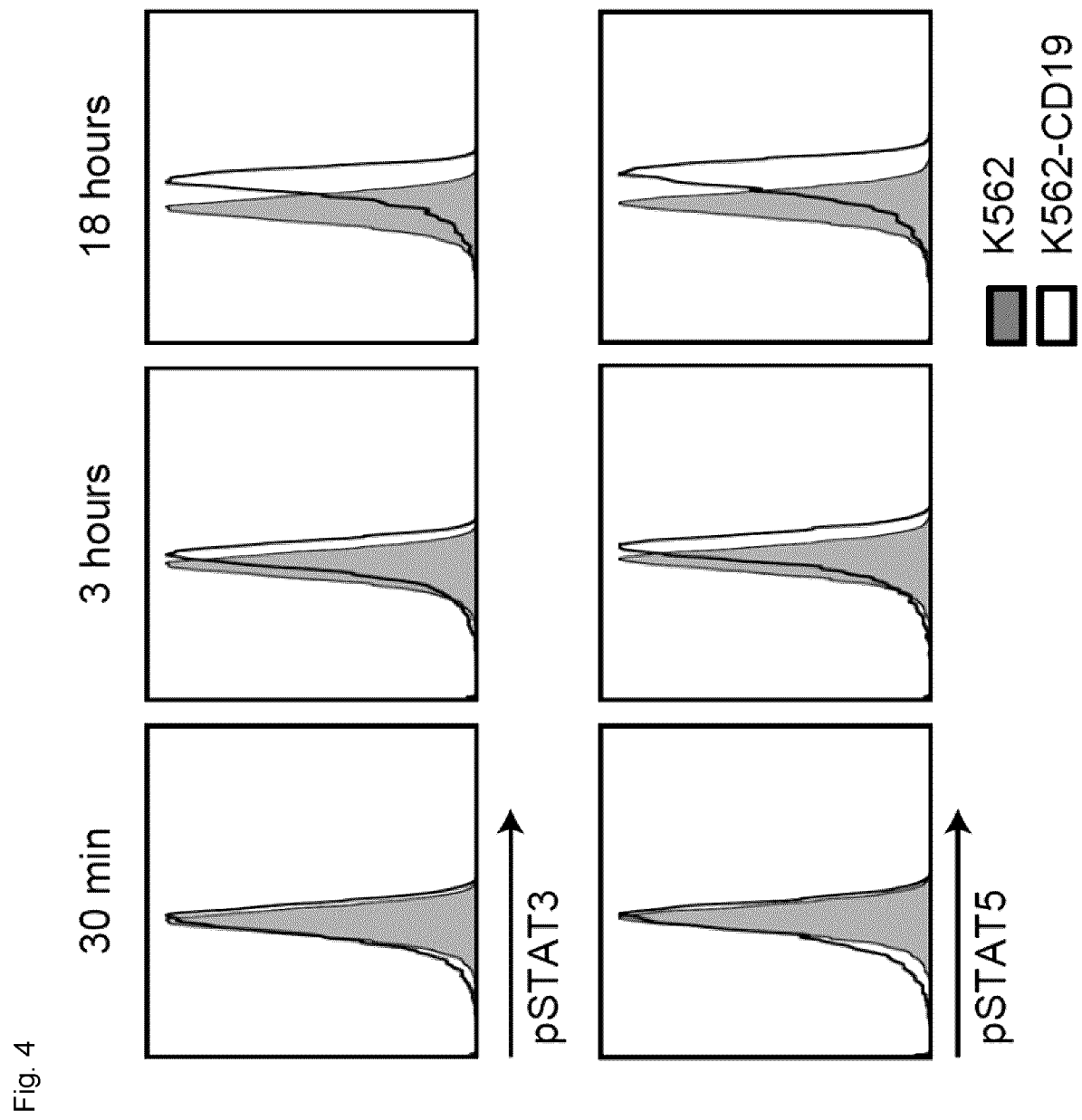


Fig. 3



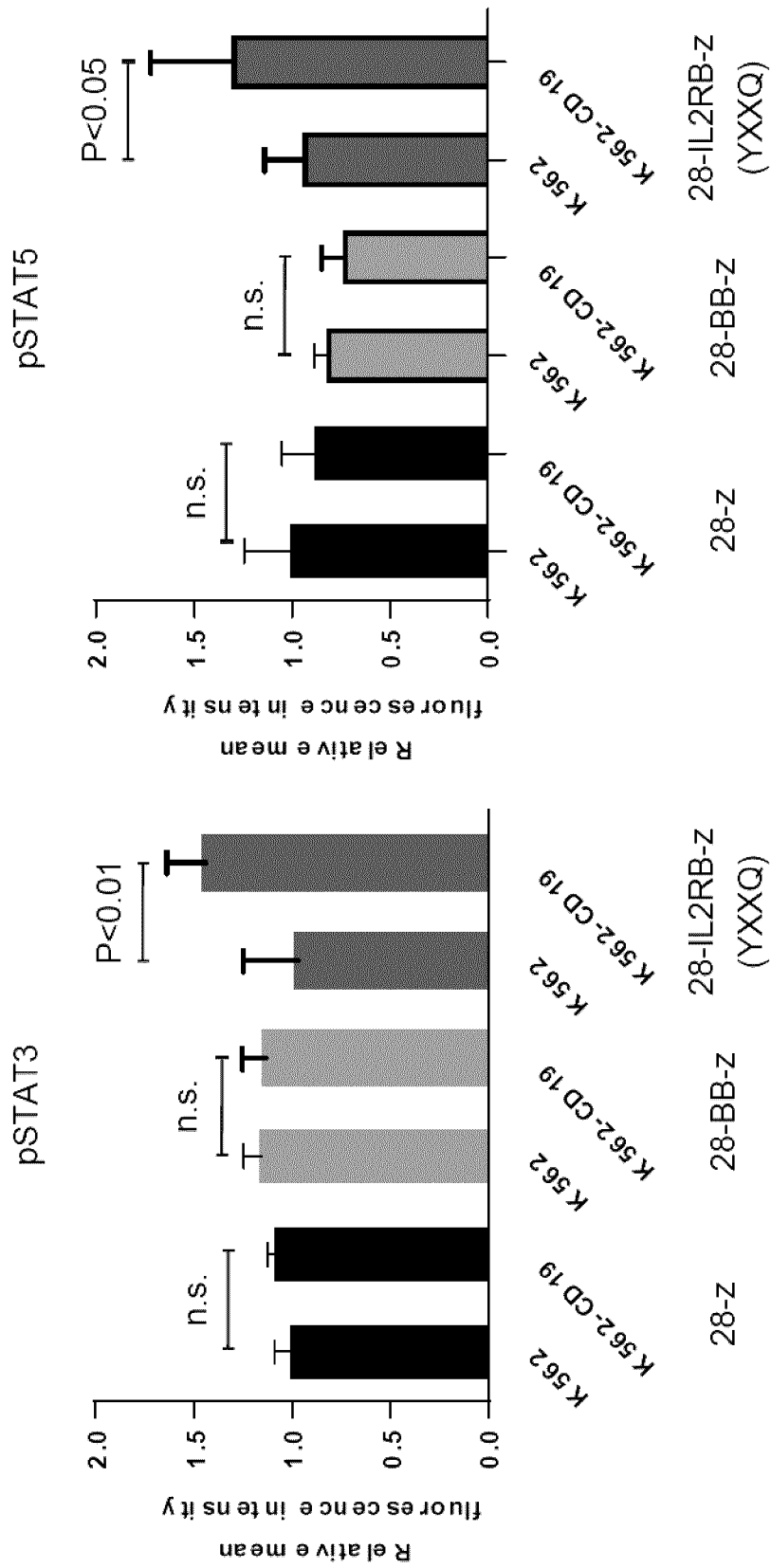
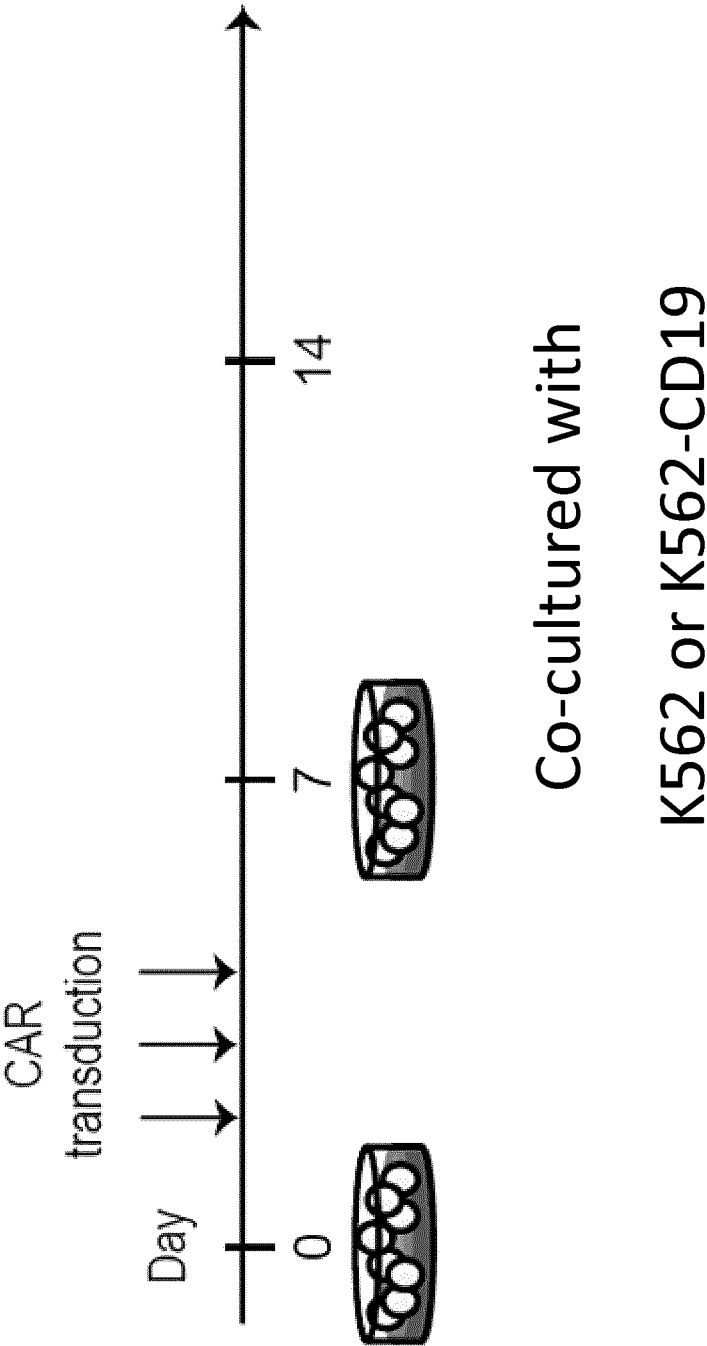


Fig. 5

Fig. 6



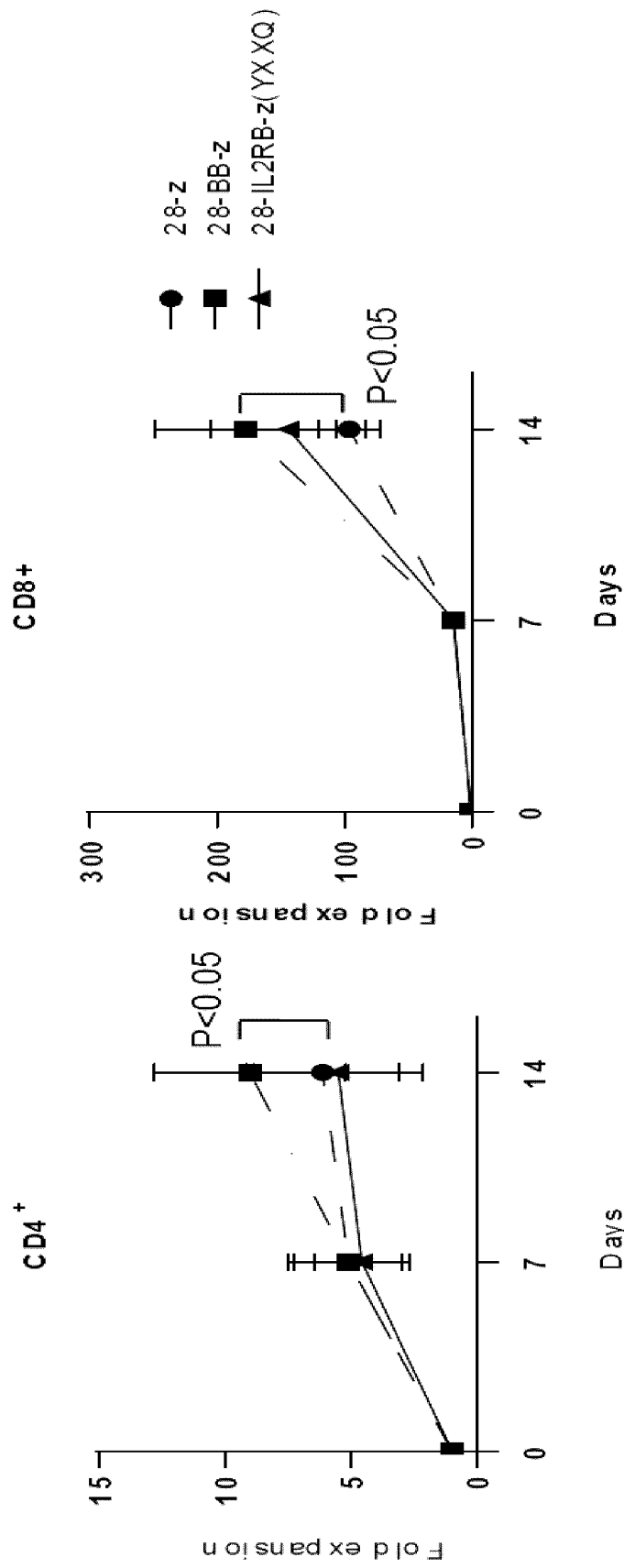


Fig. 7

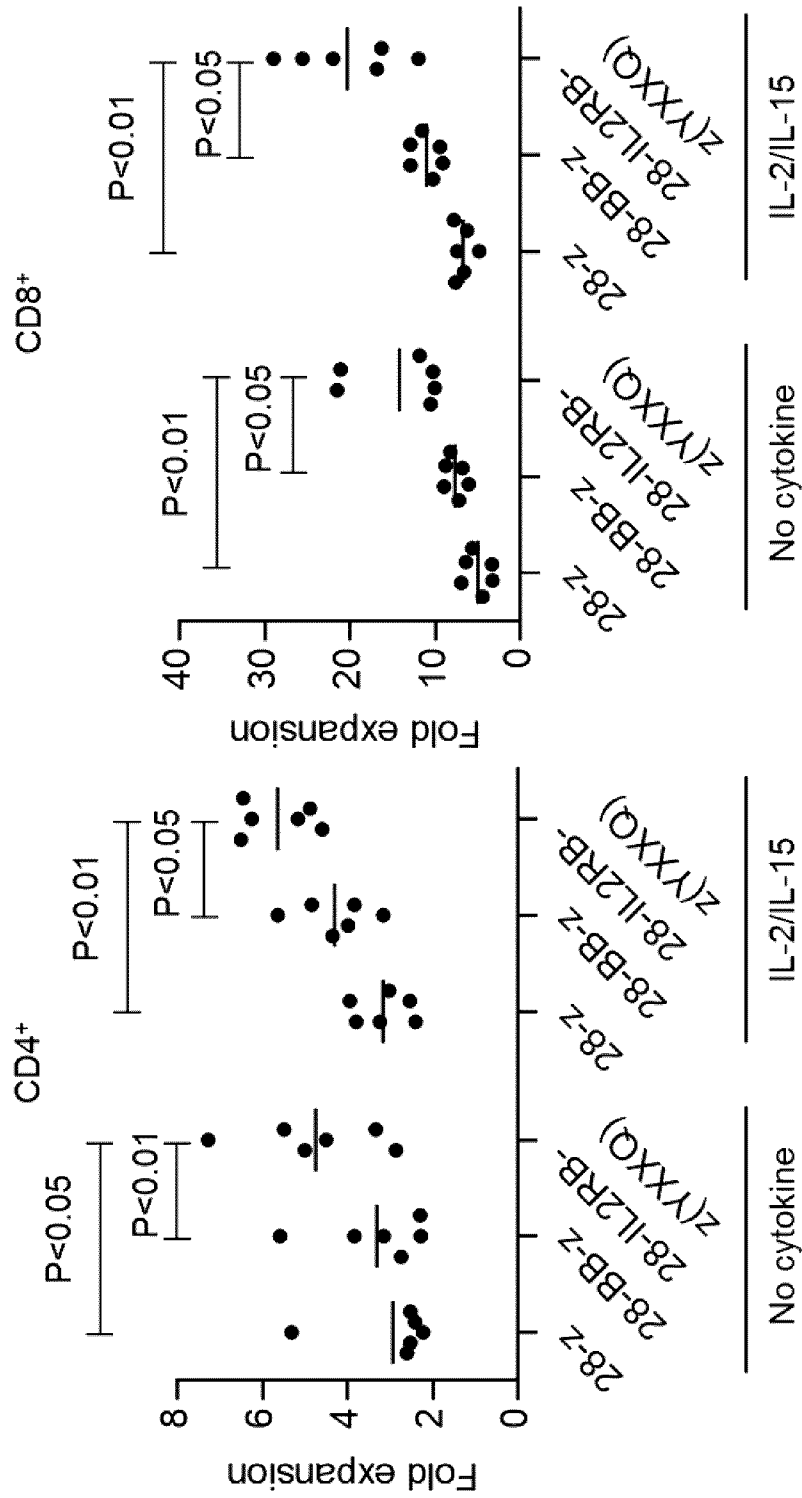


Fig. 8

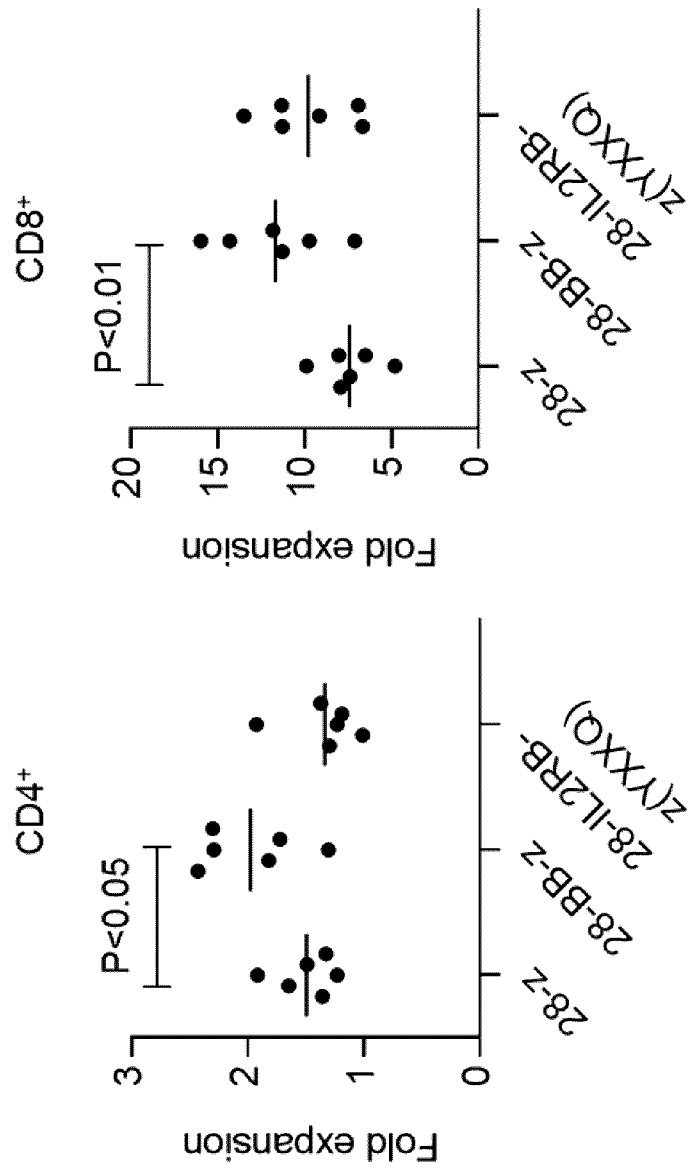


Fig. 9

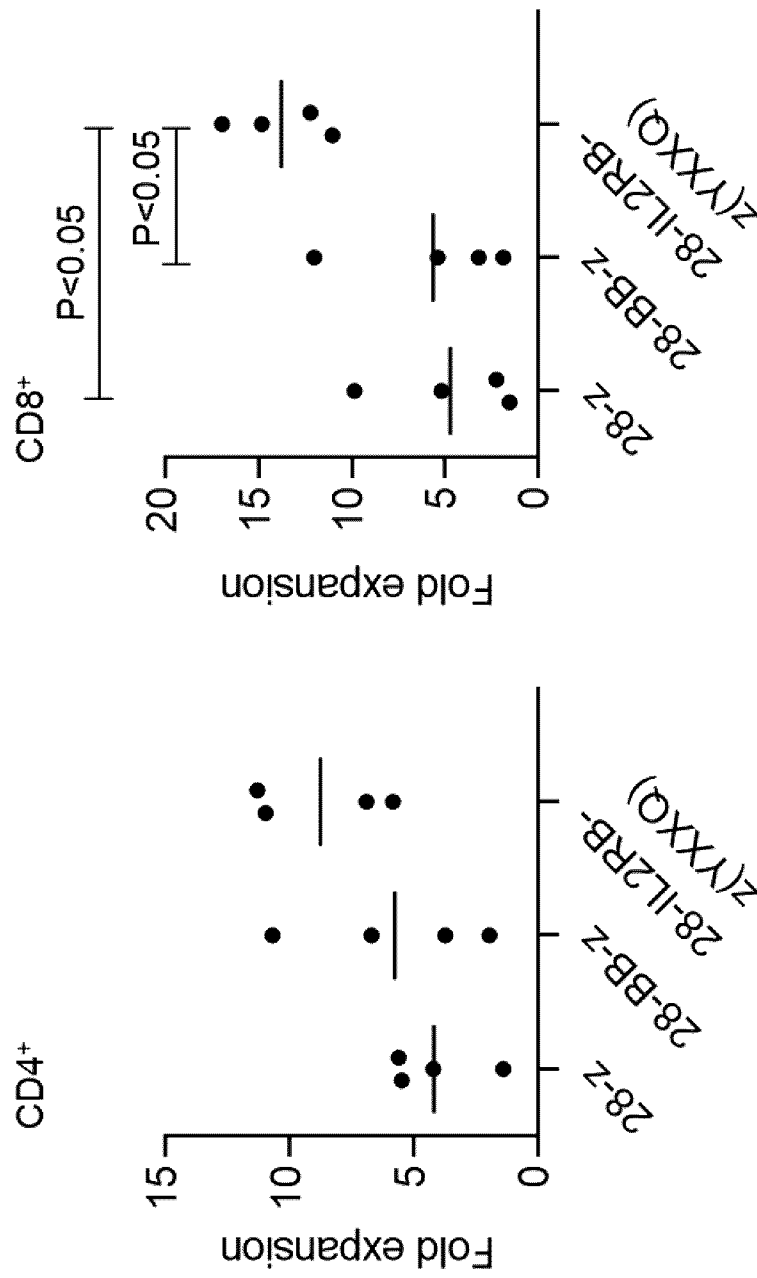


Fig. 10

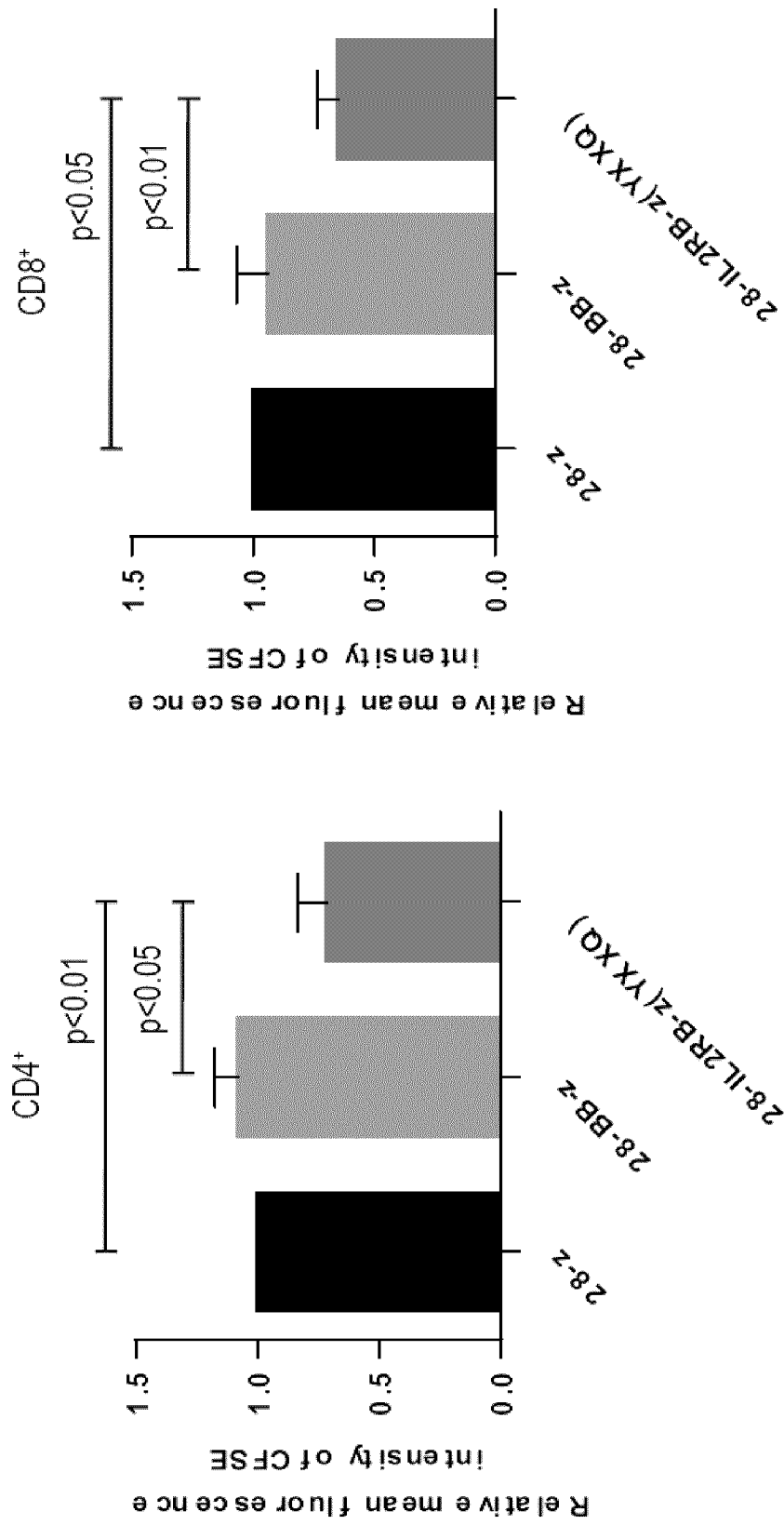


Fig. 11

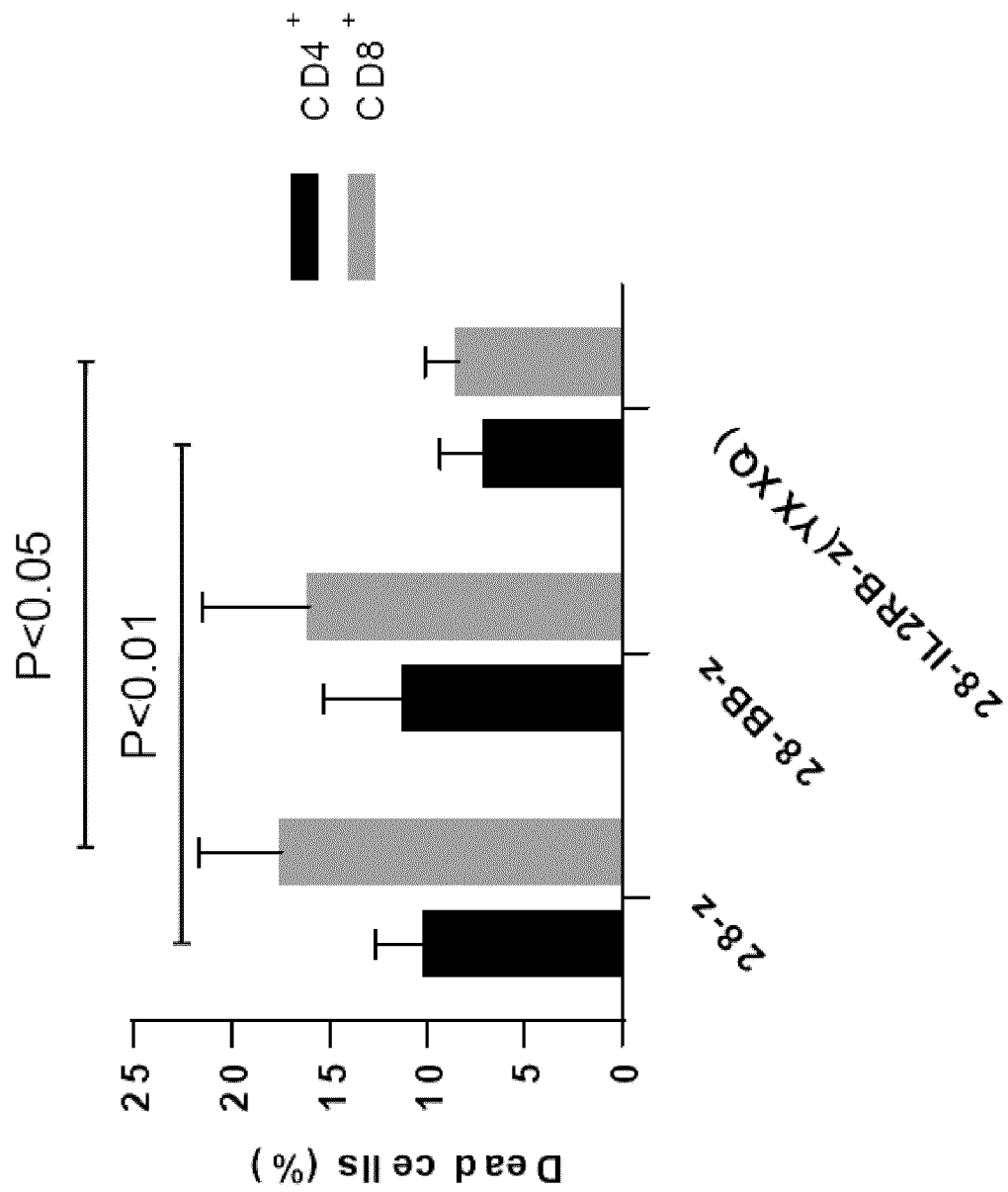
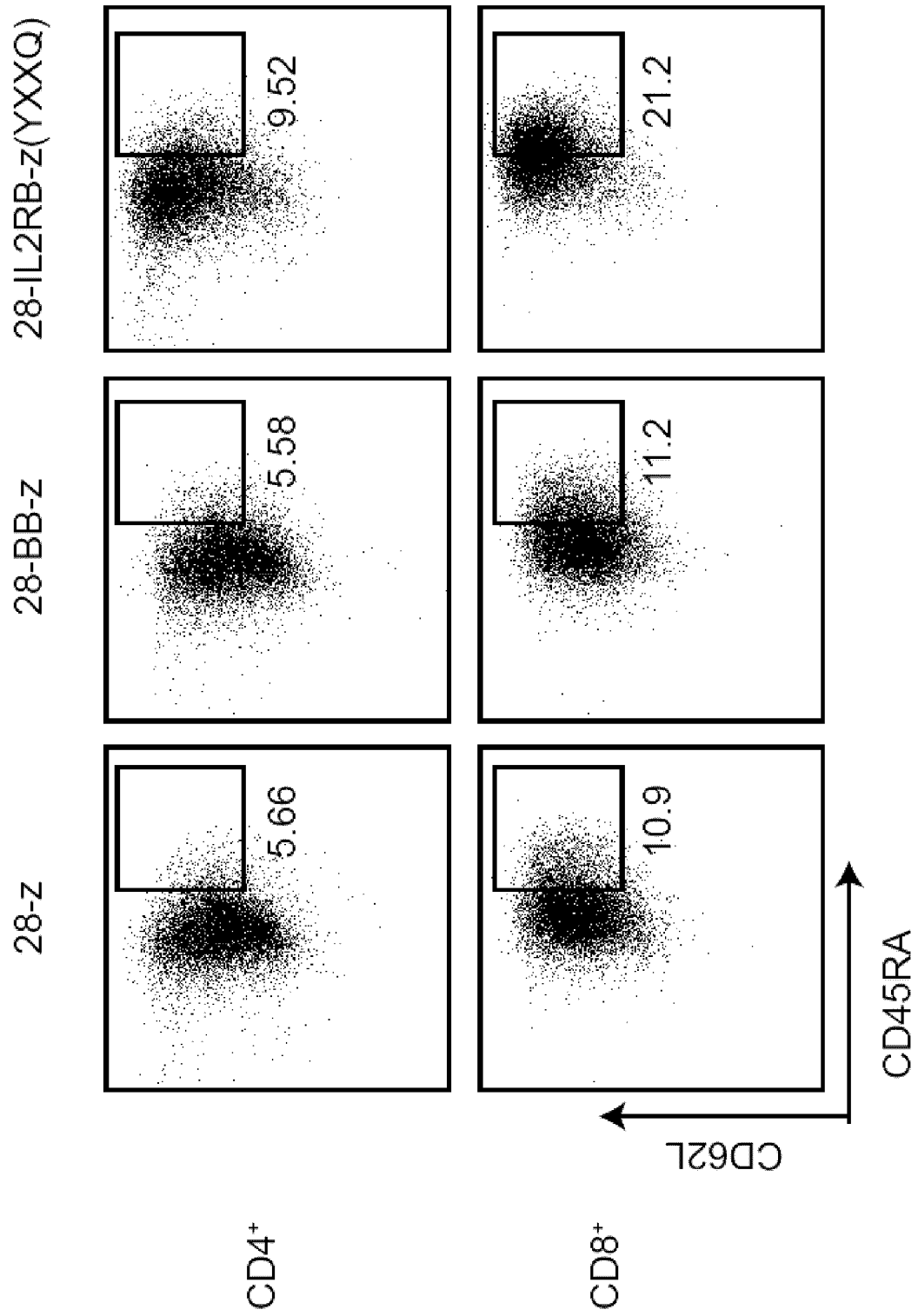


Fig. 12

Fig. 13



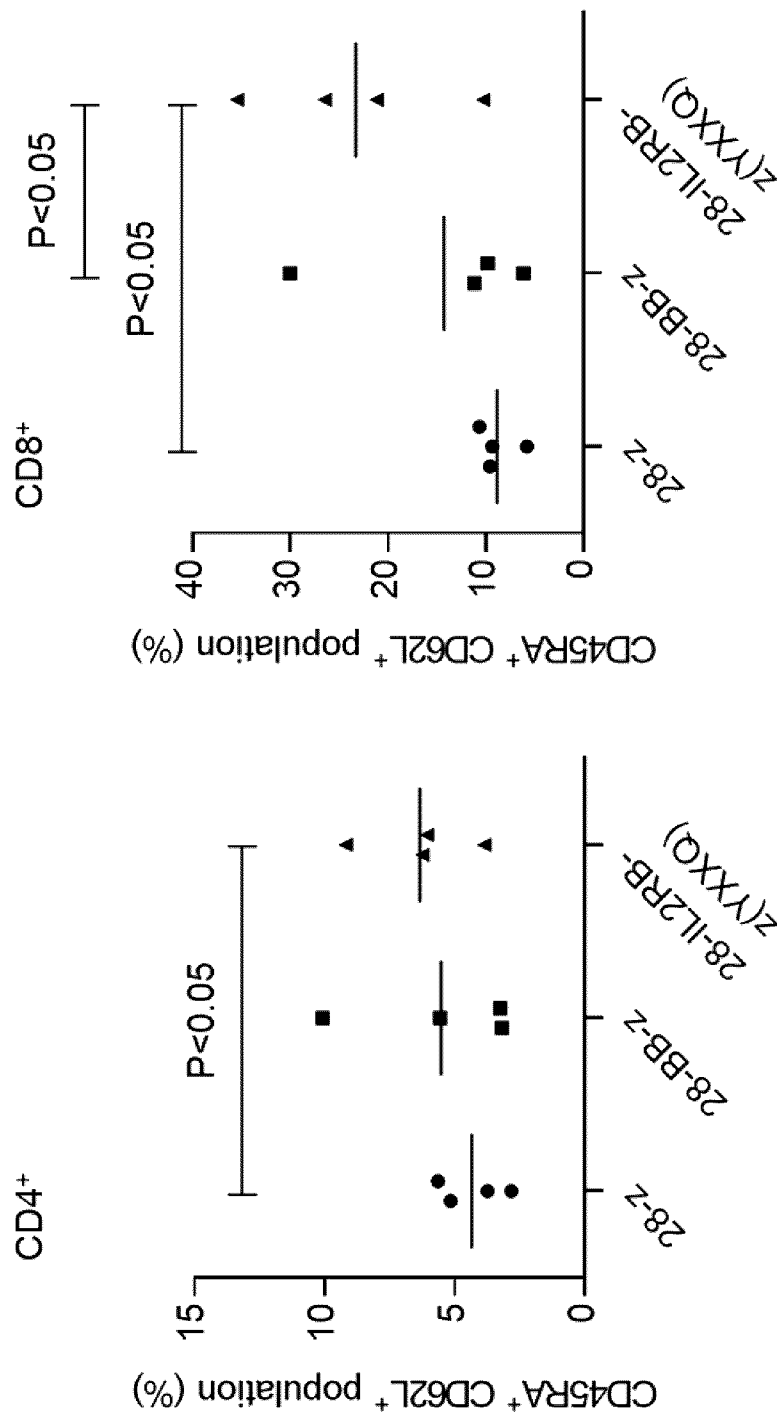


Fig. 14

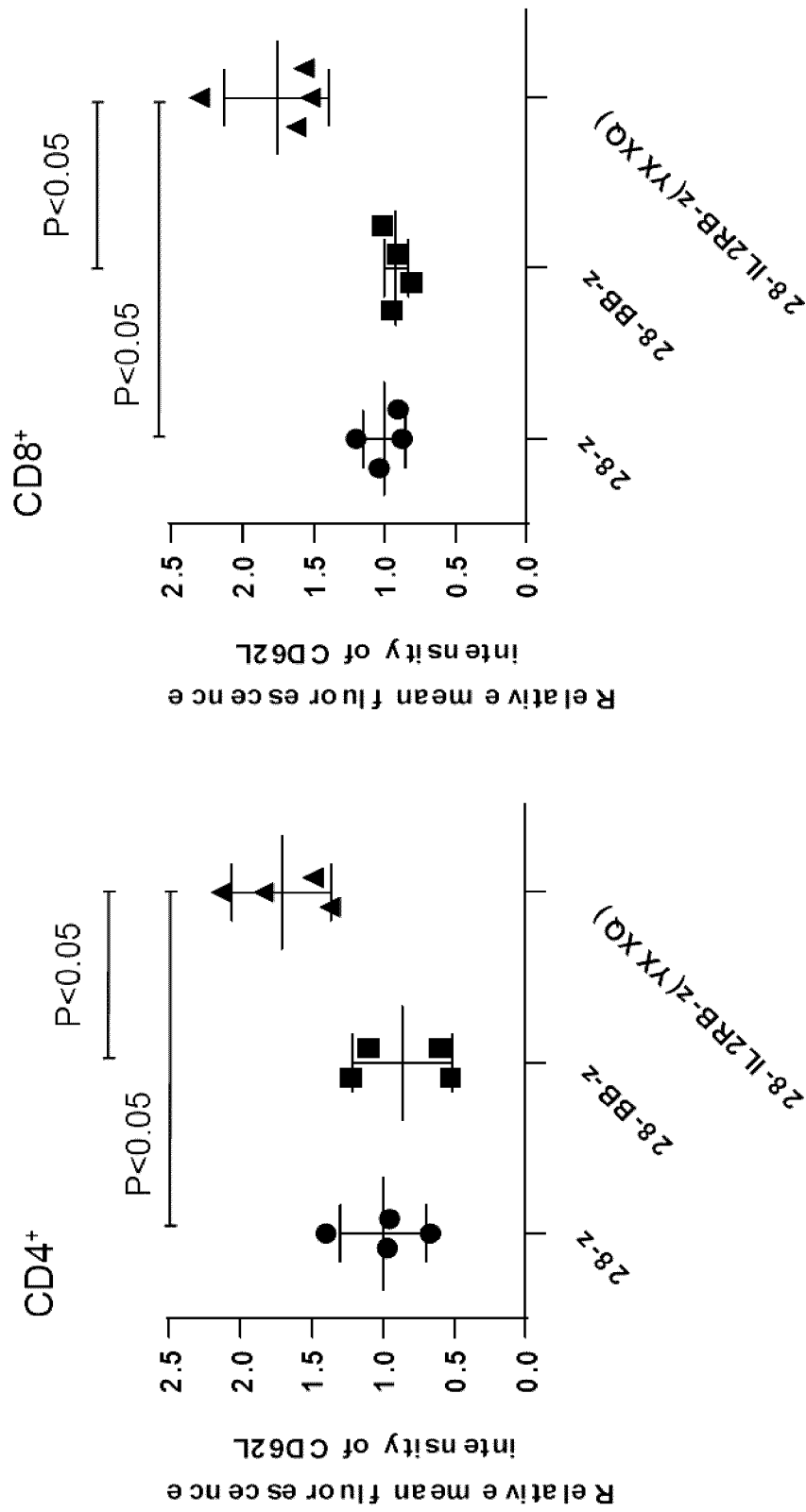


Fig. 15

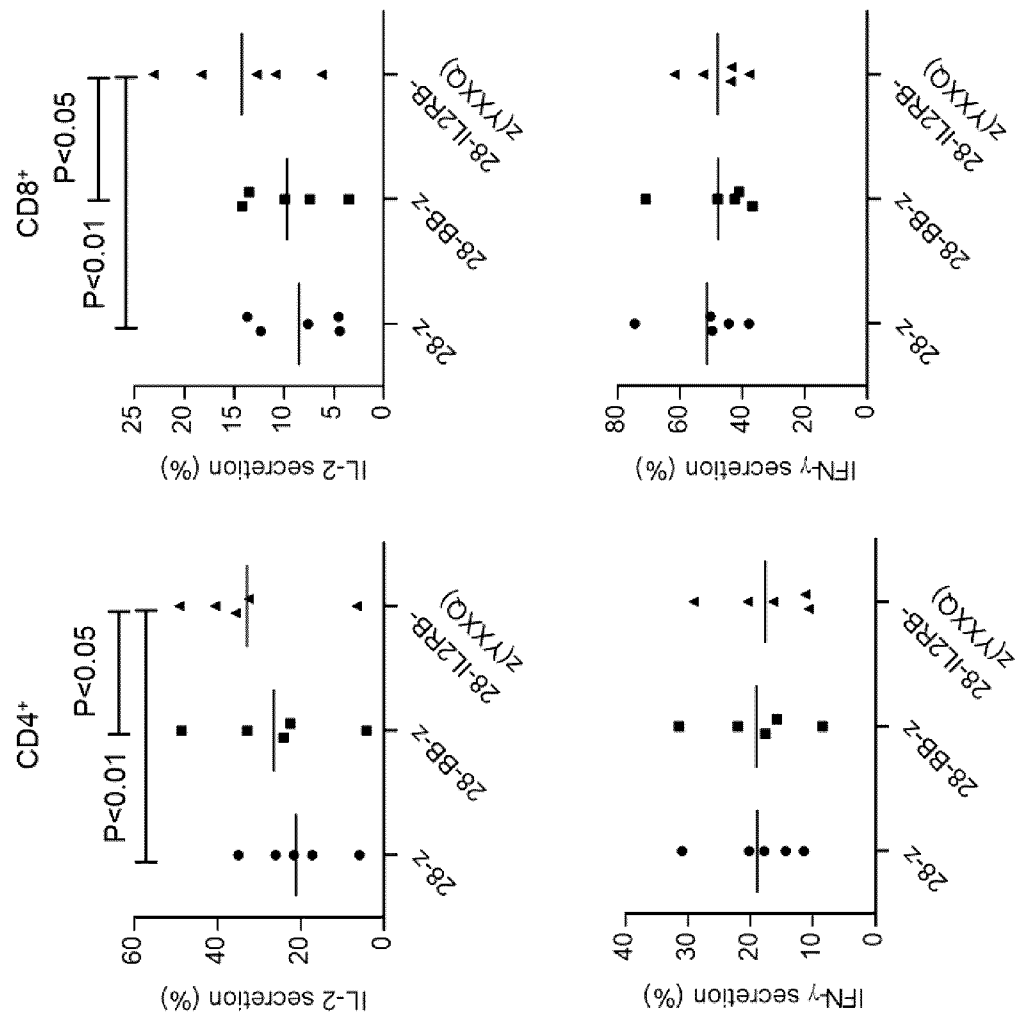


Fig. 16

Fig. 17

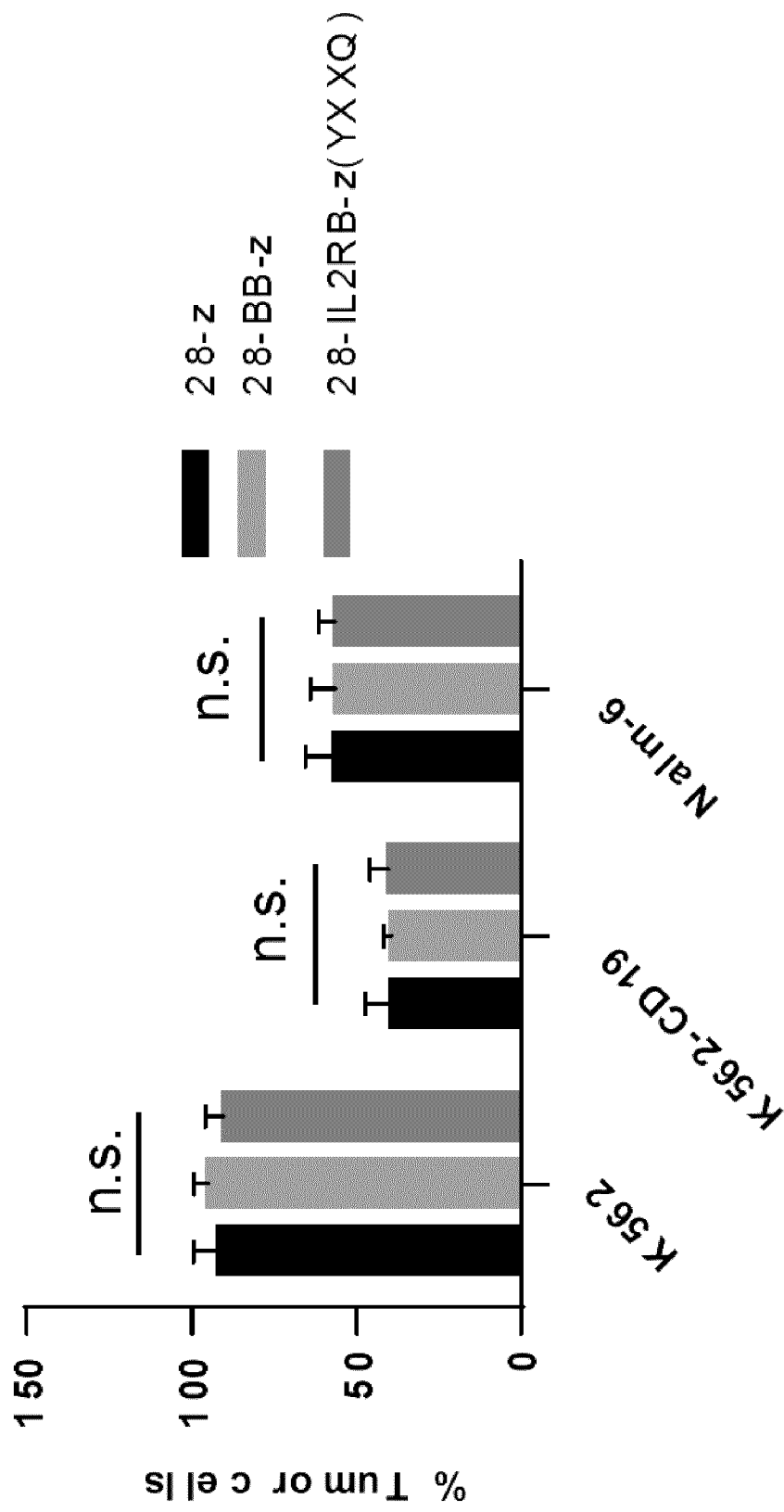


Fig. 18

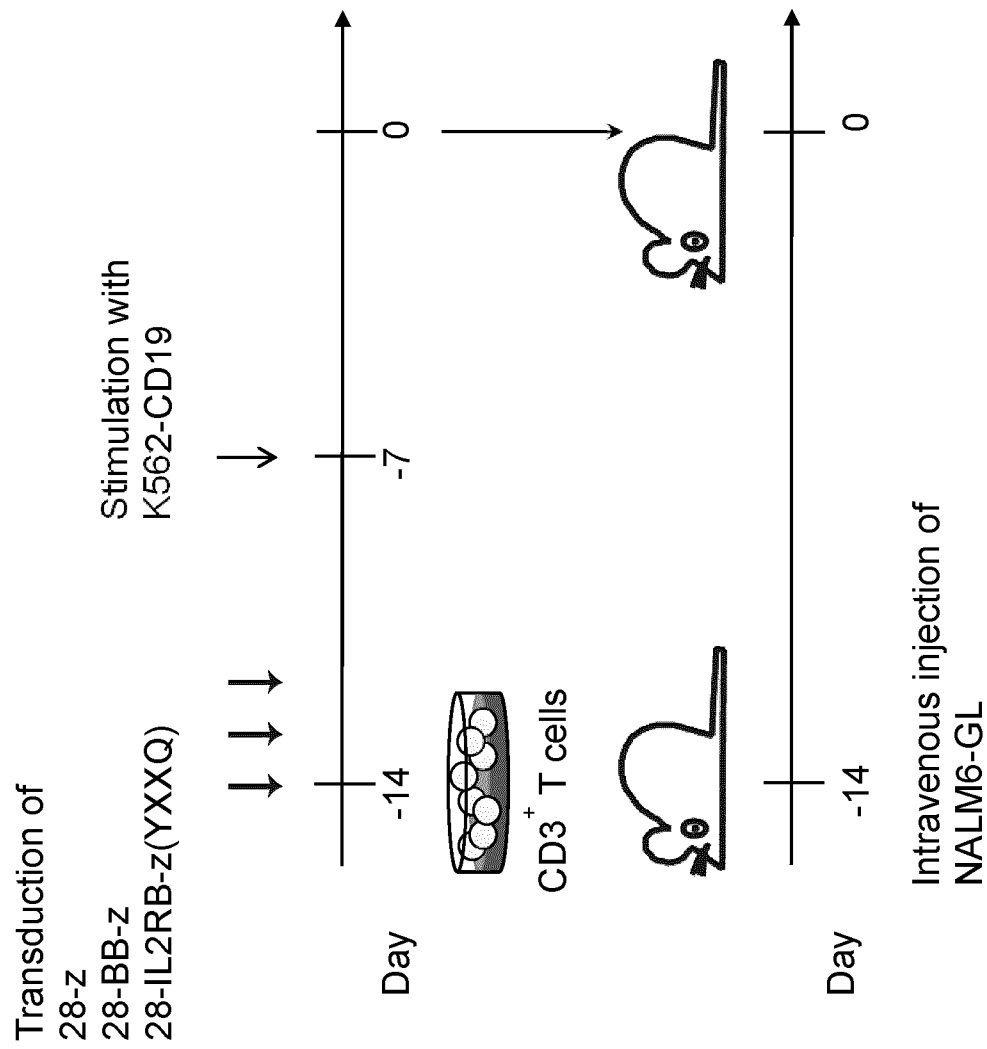
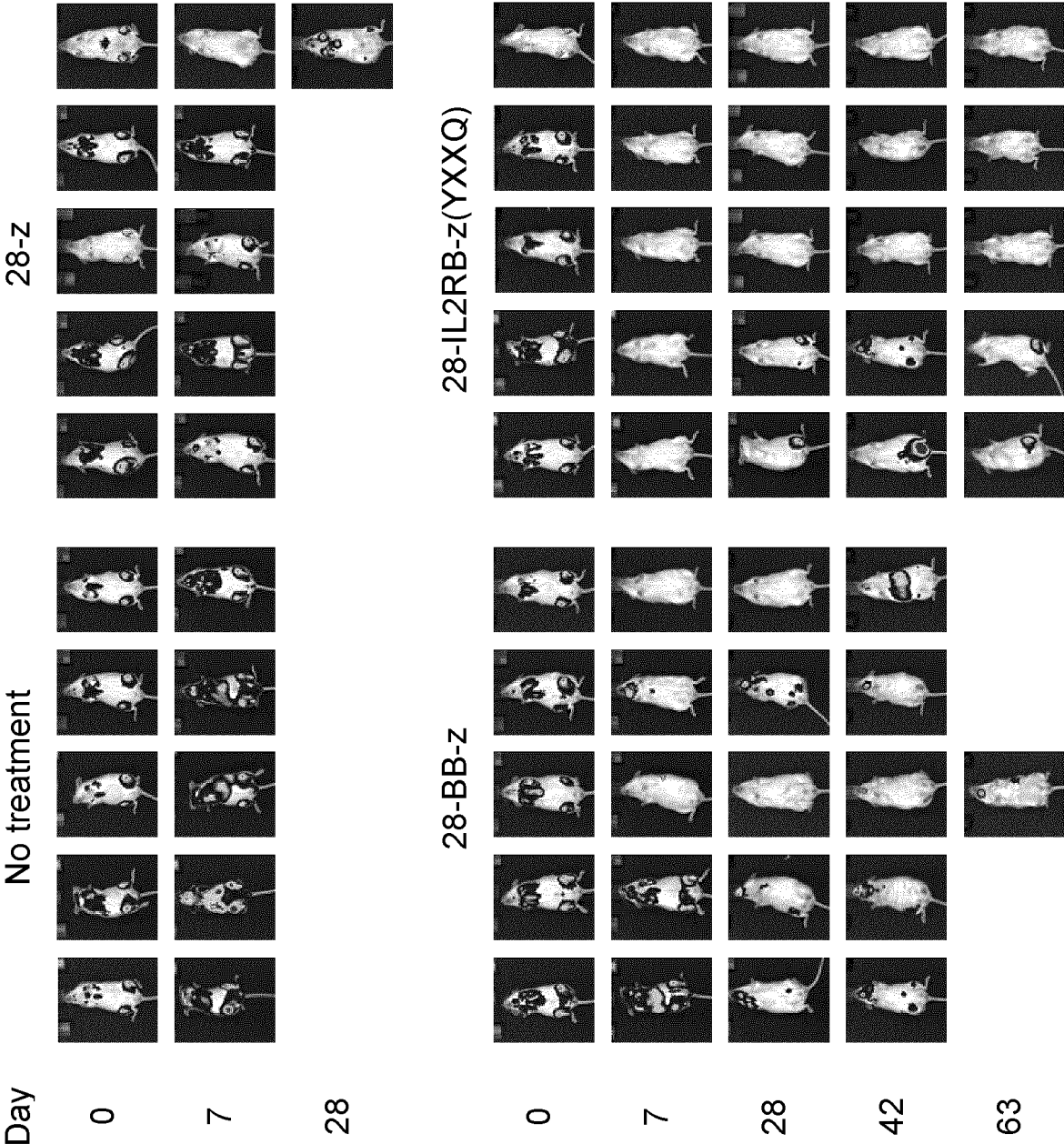


Fig. 19



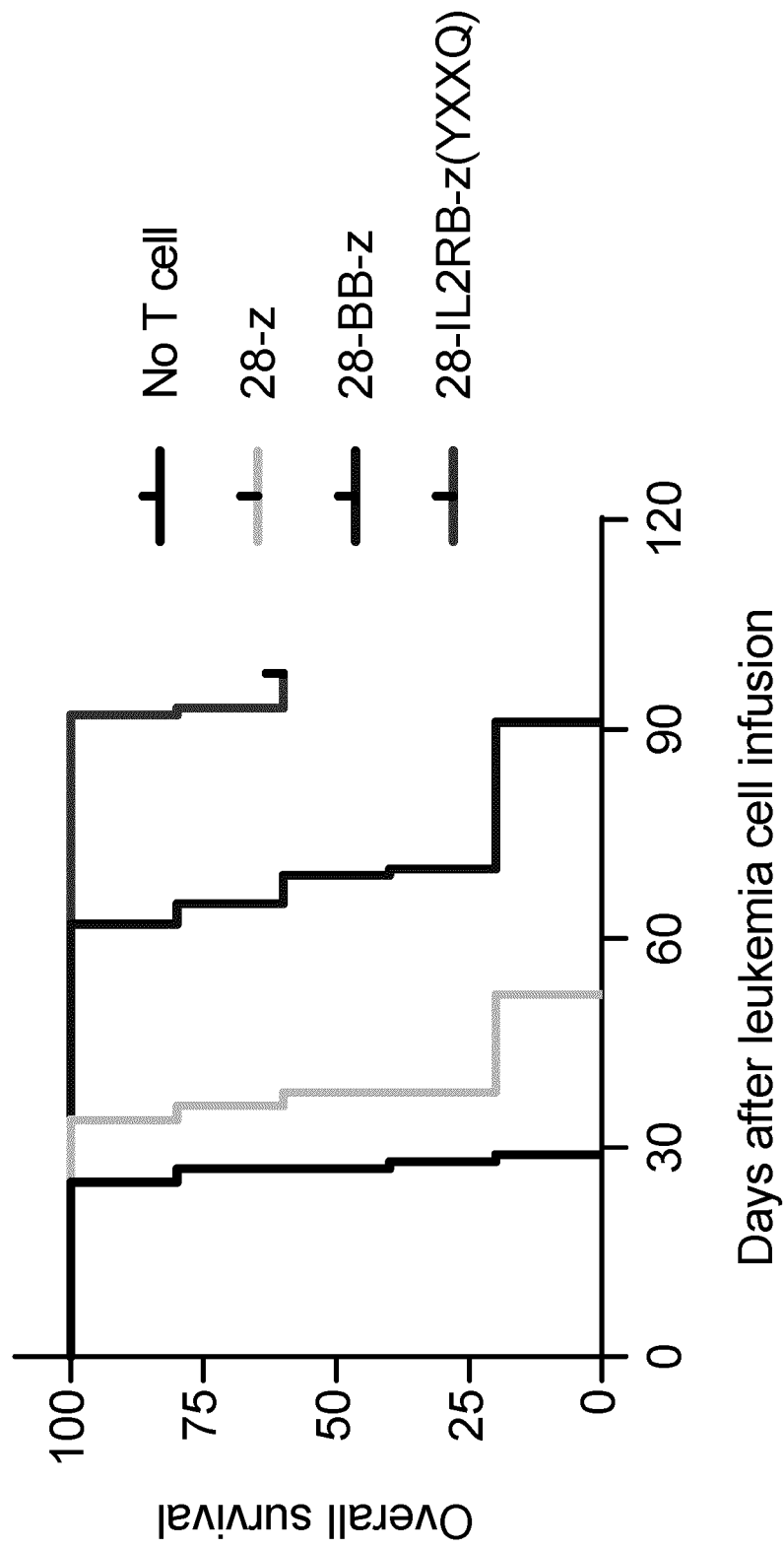


Fig. 20

Fig. 21

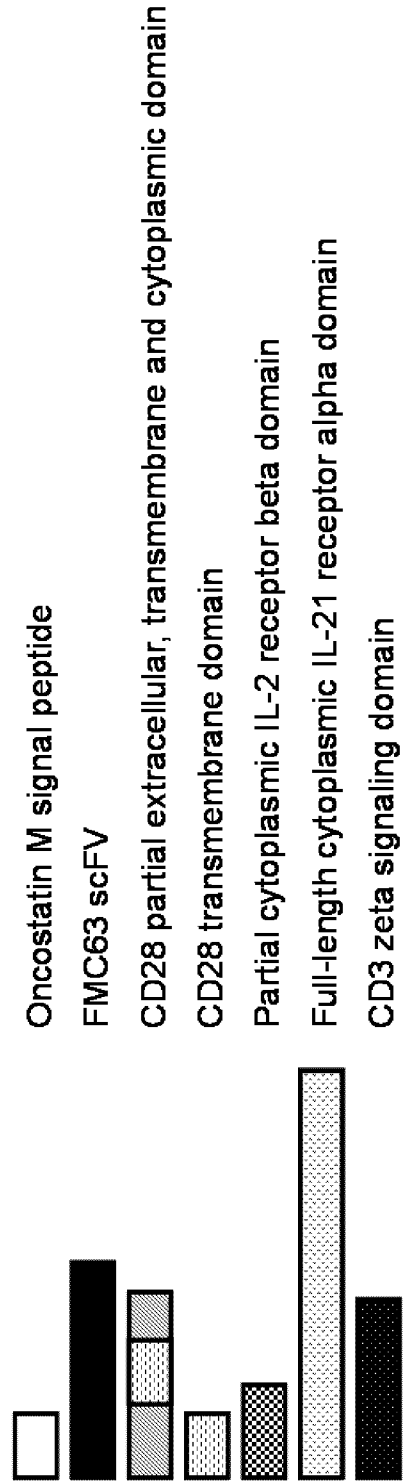
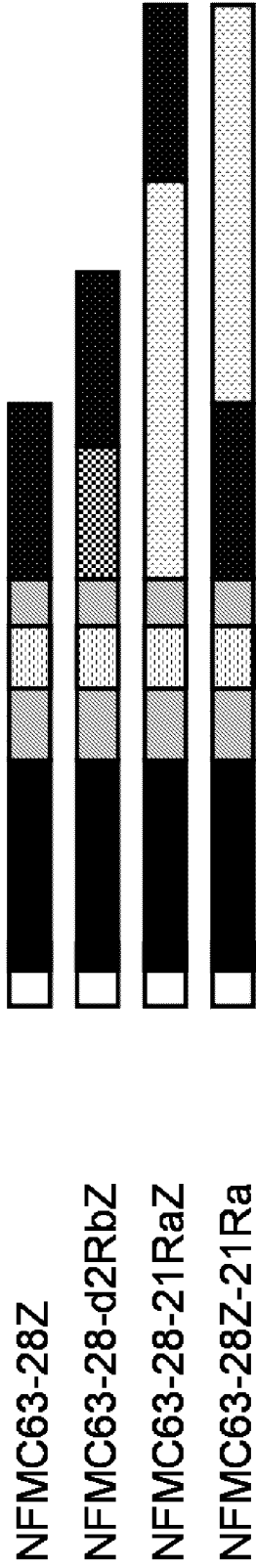


Fig. 22

