

Abstract

Chk1 is a key modulator of the cell division cycle and DNA damage response (DDR) signaling. Inhibition of Chk1, in conjunction with additional genetic alterations and/or addition of a DNA damaging agent, results in mitotic catastrophe and apoptosis of cancer cells, offering an attractive approach to treat cancer³.

Acute myeloid leukemia (AML) is characterized by a deranged DDR pathway and high Chk1 expression that is associated with poor patient outcomes⁴. Mantle cell lymphoma (MCL) is a rare and aggressive form of Non-Hodgkin lymphoma with the genetic hallmark of a chromosomal translocation leading to the over expression of cyclin D1. Since Chk1 regulates cdk1/cyclin activity, Chk1 inhibitors have been proposed as a novel therapeutic approach in this cancer⁵.

Here, we present PEP07, an orally available brain penetrant selective Chk1 inhibitor that is entering first in human clinical studies in AML and MCL.

In vitro properties of PEP07

PEP07 is a potent and selective Chk1 inhibitor with over 1000-fold selectivity vs Chk2. PEP07 treatment causes inhibition of Chk1 autophosphorylation and activation of the DDR and apoptotic pathways leading to cancer cell death.

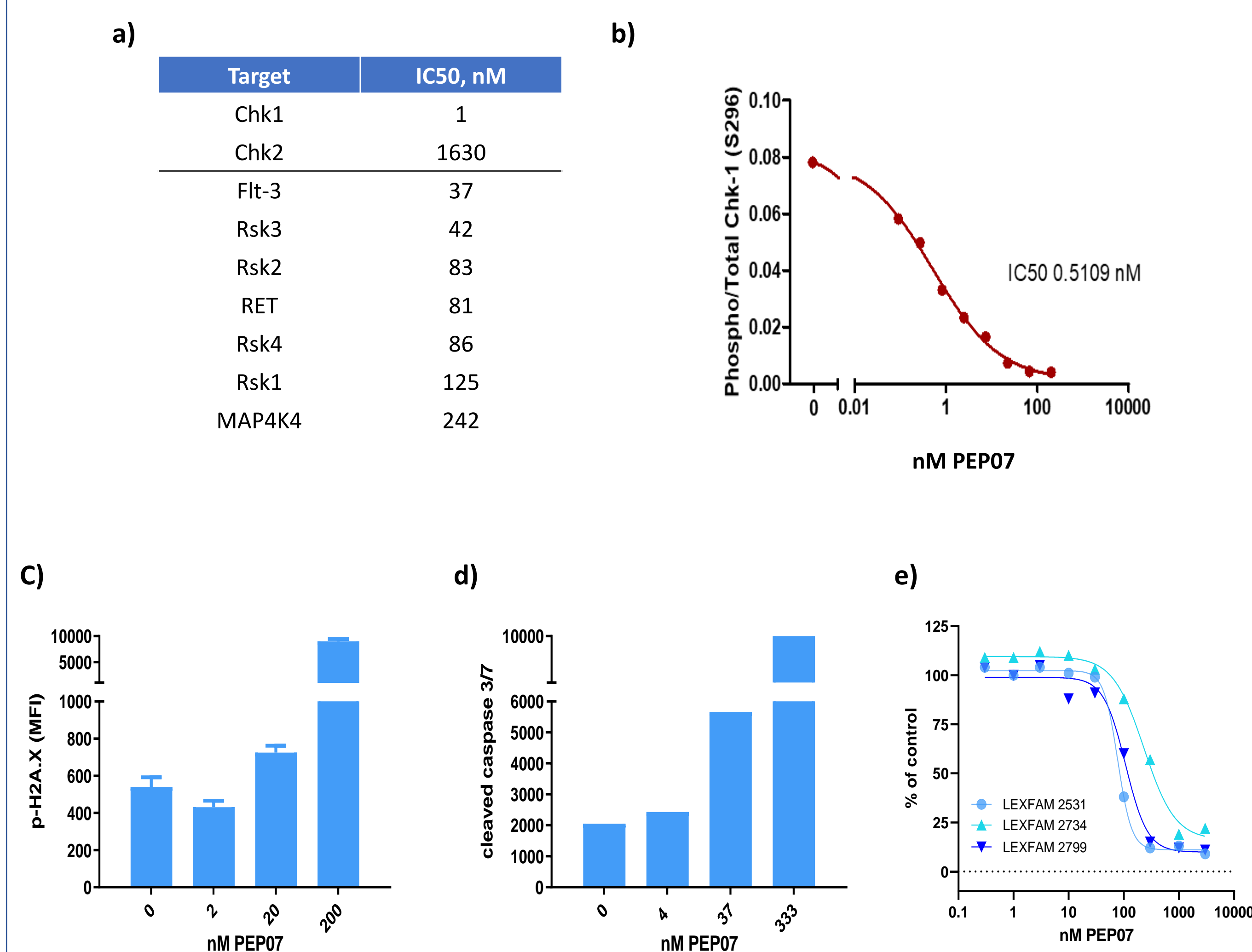


Figure 1. a) IC50s from ZLYTE FRET-based kinase assay b) Cellular IC50 as measured by autophosphorylation of pChk1 S296/total Chk1 in HT29 cells following 18h drug treatment c) phospho-H2A.X S139 in THP1 AML cell line following 18h drug treatment d) caspase 3/7 induction in Jeko-1 cell line following 18h drug treatment e) antiproliferative effects in AML patient derived cell models following 72h drug treatment.

PEP07 causes regressions in AML and MCL xenografts

PEP07 has been dosed orally as a single agent using a variety of dosing schedules, where it induces anti tumor activity and tumor regressions and is well tolerated.

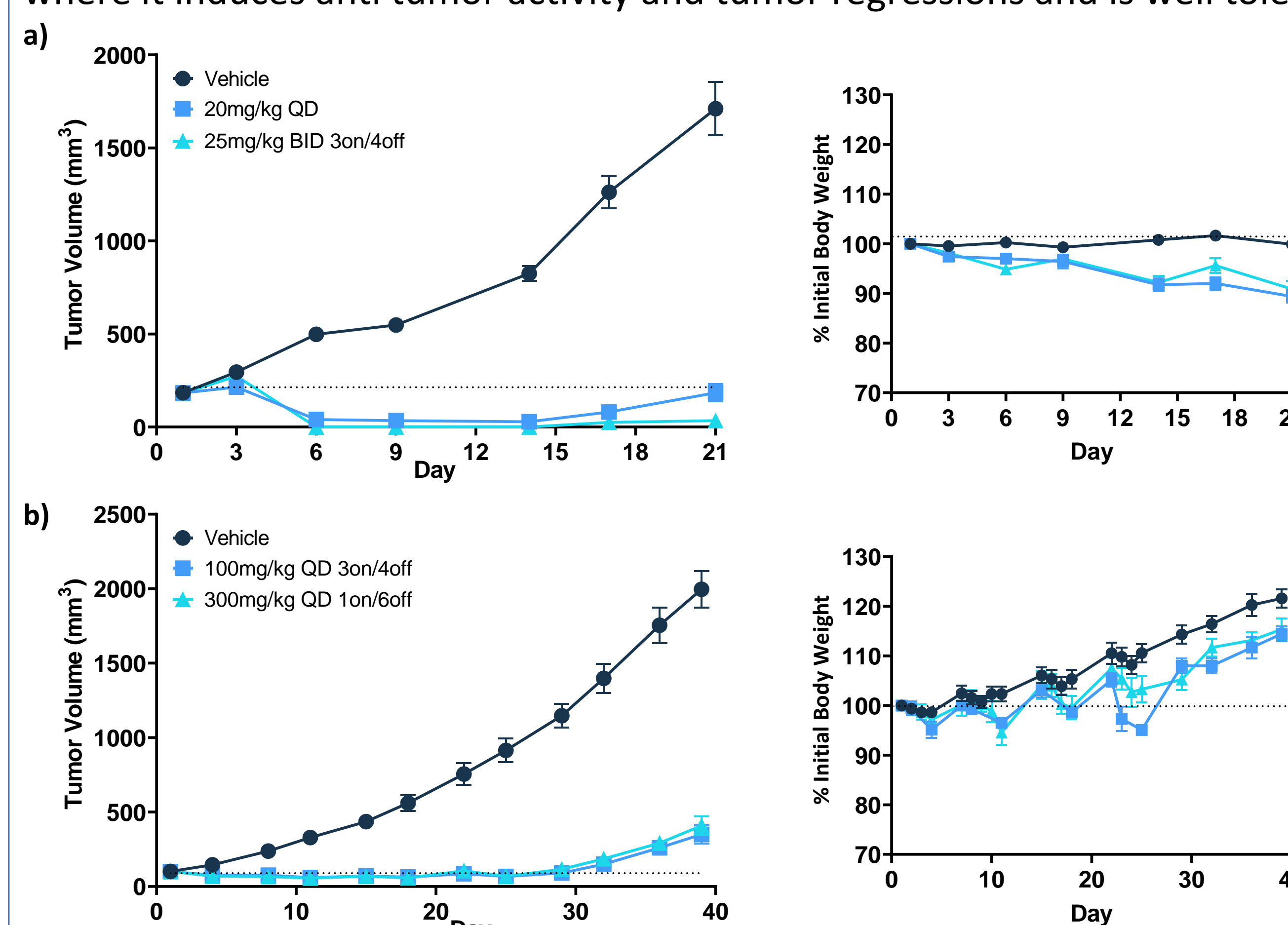


Figure 2. a) Jeko-1 MCL xenograft model. Mice were dosed with PEP07 daily for 21 days at 20mg/kg or BID 25mg/kg 3 days on followed by 4 days off. b) MV411 AML xenograft model. Mice were dosed with PEP07 once a week at 300mg/kg, or 100mg/kg for 3 days followed by 4 days off. Dosing was for 4 cycles.

PEP07 combines with cytarabine in AML xenografts

PEP07 combines with cytarabine in the cytarabine-sensitive MV411 model, and the cytarabine-insensitive THP1 model.

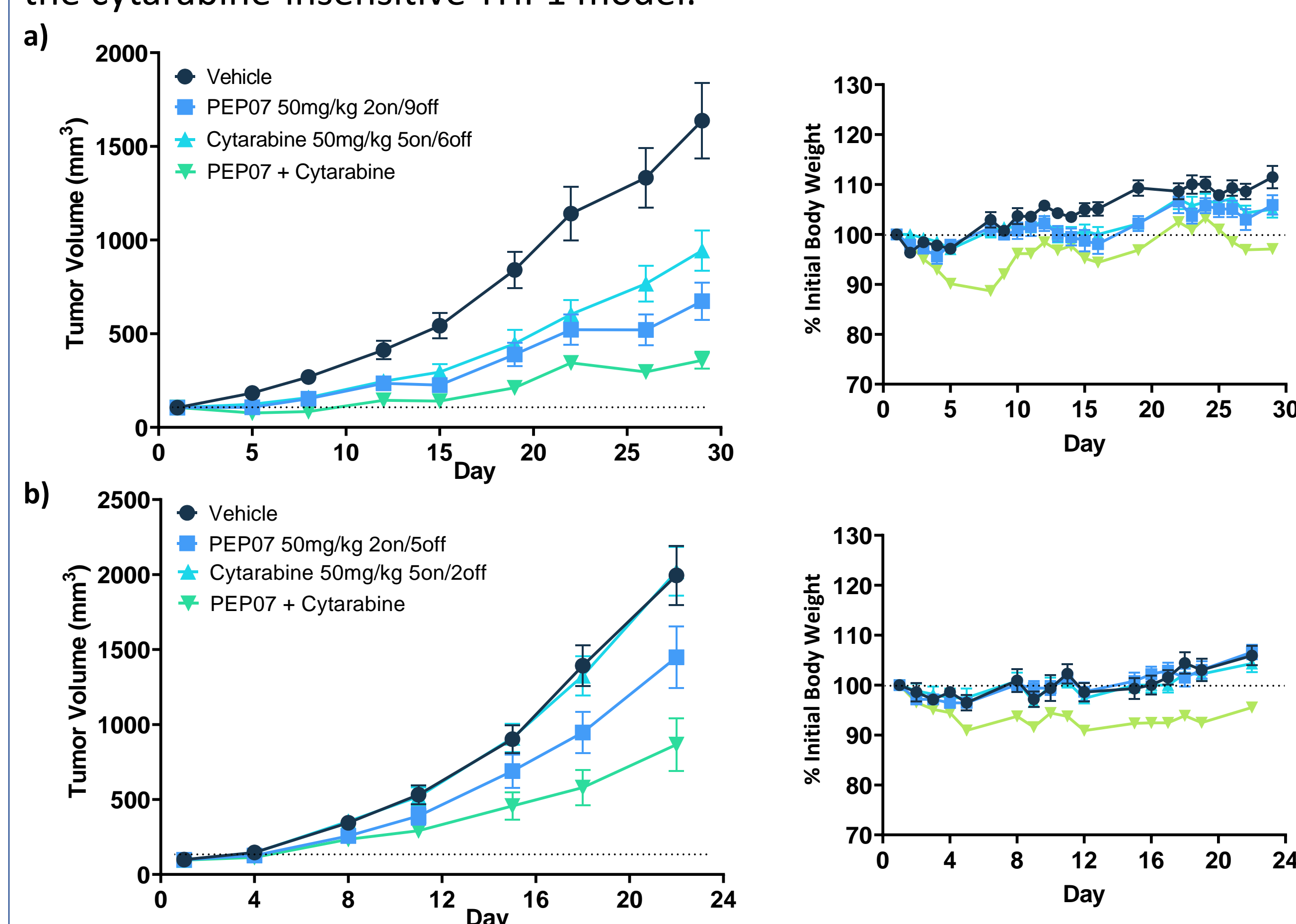


Figure 3. a) MV411 AML xenograft model and b) THP1 AML xenograft model, dosed as per the figure legends. PEP07 dosed PO and cytarabine dosed IP. Dosing was for 3 cycles.

PEP07 Tumor/Brain Penetration

Comparable exposures of PEP07 in the brain and plasma were observed in MV411 AML model, which suggests that PEP07 can penetrate the BBB in vivo. PEP07 significantly accumulates in the tumor.

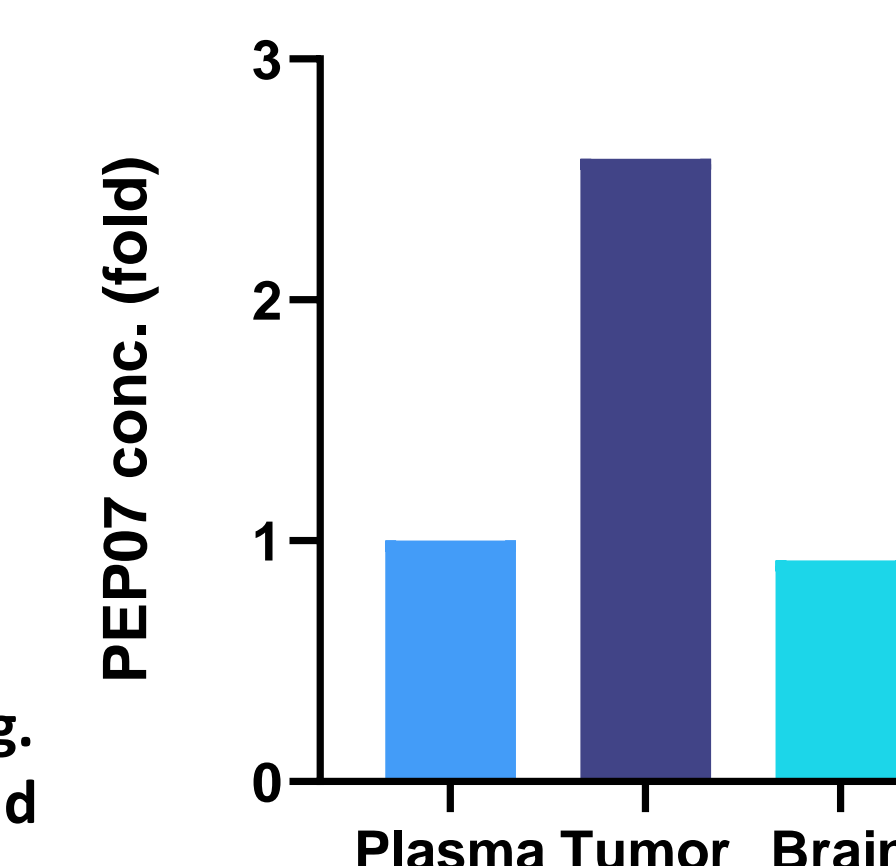
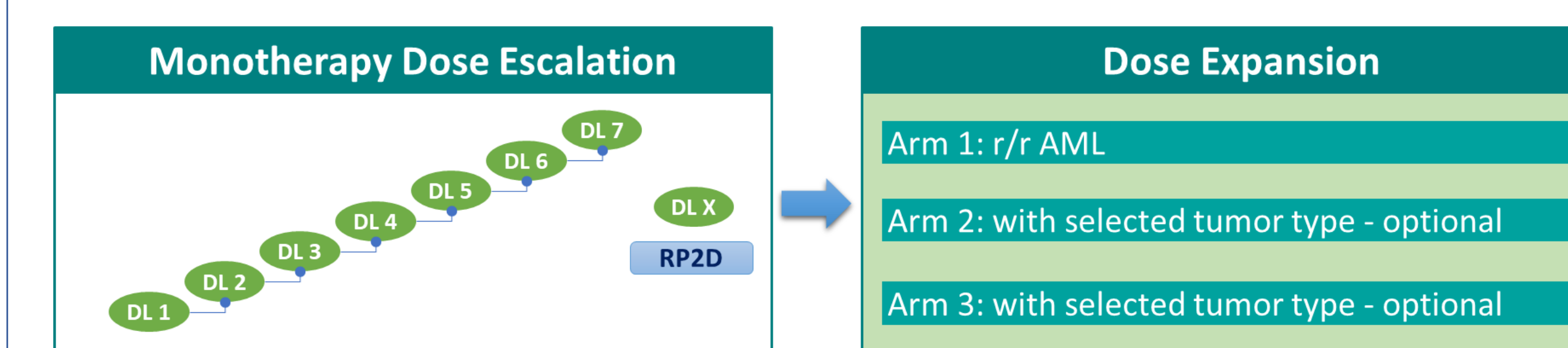


Figure 4. Following a 6-week efficacy experiment, 4 mice were treated with PEP07 and samples collected 1h after dosing. LC-MS/MS analysis of PEP07 concentration in blood, tumor, and brain samples was conducted.

PEP07 Clinical Trial Design

The phase 1 clinical study for PEP07 comprises a dose escalation phase in relapsed/refractory (r/r) AML and MCL followed by a dose expansion phase in patients with r/r AML and/or selected tumor types. Patients will receive oral PEP07 treatment until disease progression or un-tolerable adverse event and DLTs will be evaluated during the first treatment cycle. Combination arms will follow to investigate PEP07 combination treatment in patients with r/r AML. The trial will be run in Australia and Taiwan which is aiming to begin patient recruitment in Q1 2023.

a) Study Design



b) Study Schedule

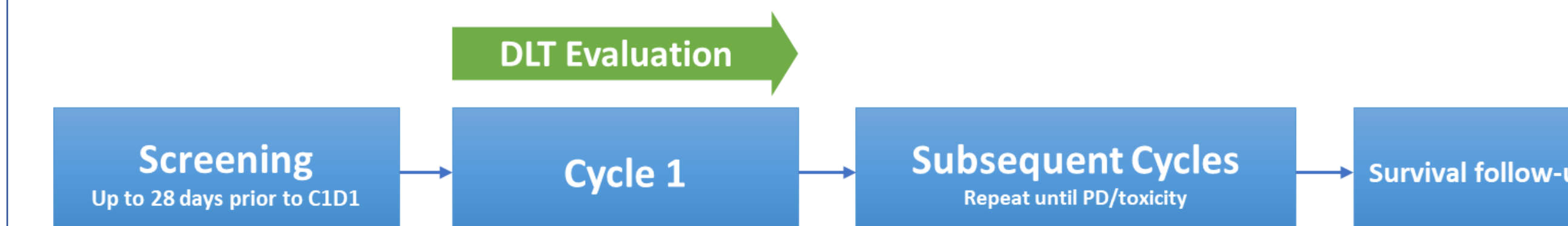


Figure 5. A schematic of the study design and schedule. a) Dose escalation and expansion with r/r AML and selected tumor, b) Study schedule contains screening, treatment and survival follow up period. The DLT is evaluated at cycle 1.

Conclusions

- PEP07 is a highly selective and potent Chk1 inhibitor that inhibits Chk1 autophosphorylation and induce apoptosis in cancer cell models
- PEP07 induces significant anti tumor efficacy as a single agent in models of AML and MCL
- PEP07 effectively combines with cytarabine in AML models
- PEP07 is advancing into Phase 1 clinical studies to treat patients with AML or MCL

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