### **Clinical impact of tumor DNA repair expression and T cell infiltration in breast cancers**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Impaired DNA repair drives mutagenicity, which increases neoantigen load and immunogenicity. We investigated the expression of proteins involved in the DNA damage response (ATM, Chk2), double-strand break repair (BRCA1, BLM, WRN, RECQL4, RECQL5, TOPO2A, DNA-PKcs, Ku70/Ku80), nucleotide excision repair (ERCC1), base excision repair (XRCC1, pol β, FEN1, PARP1), and immune responses (CD8, PD-1, PD-L1, FOXP3) in 1269 breast cancers and validated our findings in an independent estrogen receptor  $(ER)^{-}$  cohort ( $n = 279$ ). Patients with tumors that expressed low XRCC1, low ATM, and low BRCA1 were not only associated with high numbers of  $CD8<sup>+</sup>$  tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte (TILs), but were also linked to higher grades, high proliferation indexes, presence of dedifferentiated cells, ER<sup>-</sup> cells and poor survival (all  $P \le 0.01$ ). PD-1<sup>+</sup> or PD-L1<sup>+</sup> breast cancers with low XRCC1 were also linked to an aggressive phenotype that was high grade, had high proliferation indexes, contained dedifferentiated cells and ER<sup>–</sup> (all with *P* values  $\leq$  0.01) and poor survival (*P* = 0.00021 and *P* = 0.00022, for PD-1<sup>+</sup> and PD-L1<sup>+</sup> cancers, respectively) including in an independent  $ER^-$  validation cohort ( $P = 0.007$  and  $P = 0.047$ , respectively). We conclude that the interplay between DNA repair, CD8, PD-L1, and PD-1 can promote aggressive tumor phenotypes. XRCC1-directed personalization of immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy may be feasible and warrants further investigation in breast cancer.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The breast cancer tumor microenvironment includes infiltrating inflammatory cells such as lymphocytes and macrophages.  $CD8^+$  T-lymphocytes are critical for tumor-specific adaptive immunity (1). We have previously investigated the clinicopathological and prognostic significance of tumor-infiltrating  $CD8^+$  T lymphocytes (TILs) in a large cohort of breast cancers (2). CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs were correlated to high tumor grade, hormone receptor negative, and basal-like phenotype. High total  $CD8<sup>+</sup>$  counts were independently associated with favorable clinical outcome (2). A recent large study in 12,439 breast cancers has provided confirmatory evidence that CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs are associated with significant reduction in the relative risk of death in estrogen receptor  $(ER)^{-}$  as well as in  $ER^{+}/HER-2^{+}$  breast cancers (3).

Breast cancers with enhanced immunogenicity will be prone to attack by  $CDS<sup>+</sup> T$  lymphocytes. Impaired DNA repair and the associated genomic instability not only leads to increased mutagenicity/carcinogenicity but can also increase neoantigen load on tumor cell surface resulting in increased immunogenicity. This concept of DNA repair deficiency and enhanced immunogenicity was shown in mismatch repair (MMR) deficient colorectal cancers that had a good response to PD-1 blockade (pembrolizumab) therapy compared to tumors that are MMR proficient (4, 5). Whether a similar mechanism can also operate in breast cancers is currently unknown. In the current study we profiled proteins involved in the DNA damage response (ATM, Chk2), double strand break repair (BRCA1, BLM, WRN, RECQL4, RECQL5, TOPO2A, DNA-PKcs, Ku70/Ku80), nucleotide excision repair (ERCC1), base excision repair (XRCC1, pol β, FEN1, PARP1) and immune response (CD8, PD-1, PD-L1, FOXP3]) in 1269 breast cancers and validated in an independent ERcohort ( $n = 279$ ).

#### **PATIENTS AND METHODS**

The study was performed in a consecutive series of 1650 patients with primary invasive breast carcinomas who were diagnosed between 1986 and 1998 and enrolled into the Nottingham Tenovus Primary Breast Carcinoma series. Patient demographics are summarized in **Supplementary Table S1**. This is a wellcharacterized series of patients with long-term follow-up that have been investigated in a wide range of biomarker studies (6-14). All patients were treated in a uniform way in a single institution with standard surgery (mastectomy or wide local excision), followed by radiotherapy. Prior to 1989, patients did not receive systemic adjuvant treatment (AT). After 1989, AT was scheduled based on prognostic and predictive factor status, including Nottingham prognostic index (NPI), estrogen receptor-α (ER-α) status, and menopausal status. Patients with NPI scores of  $\leq$  3.4 (low risk) did not receive AT. In premenopausal patients with NPI scores of  $\geq$  3.4 (high risk), classical cyclophosphamide, methotrexate, and 5-flurouracil (CMF) chemotherapy was given; patients with ER-α positive tumors were also offered endocrine therapy. Postmenopausal patients with NPI scores of  $\geq$  3.4 and ER positivity were offered endocrine therapy, whereas ER negative patients received classical CMF chemotherapy. Median follow up time was 111 months (range 1 to 233 months). Breast cancer–specific survival (BCSS) data was maintained on a prospective basis and was defined as the number of months from diagnosis to the occurrence of BC-related death. Survival was censored if the patient was still alive at the time of analysis, lost to follow-up, or died from other causes.

We also evaluated an independent series of 279 ER- $\alpha$  negative invasive BCs diagnosed and managed at the Nottingham University Hospitals between 1999 and 2007. All patients were primarily treated with surgery, followed by radiotherapy and anthracycline/CMF chemotherapy. The characteristics of this cohort are summarized in **Supplementary Table S2**.

**Tissue Microarrays (TMAs) and immunohistochemistry (IHC):** Tumors were arrayed in tissue microarrays (TMAs) constructed with 0.6mm cores. The TMAs were immunohistochemically profiled for ATM, Chk2, BRCA1, BLM, WRN, RECQL4, RECQL5, TOPO2A, DNA-PKcs, Ku70/Ku80, ERCC XRCC1, pol β, FEN1, PARP1, CD8, and FOXP3 expression as previously described  $(2, 6-15)$ .

**Supplementary Table S3** summarizes antigens, primary antibodies, clone, source, optimal dilution, scoring system and cut-offs used for each DNA repair marker, ER, PR and HER-2 expression. The specificity of the antibodies used is described in our recent publications (2, 6-15).

**IHC protocol:** Detailed IHC protocol and evaluation of immune staining is summarized in **supplementary Table S3**. Immunohistochemical staining was performed using the Thermo Scientific Shandon Sequenza chamber system (REF: 72110017), in combination with the Novolink Max Polymer Detection System (RE7280-K: 1250 tests), and the Leica Bond Primary Antibody Diluent (AR9352), each used according to the manufacturer's instructions (Leica Microsystems). Leica Autostainer XL machine was used to dewax and rehydrate the slides. Pre-treatment antigen retrieval was performed on the TMA sections using sodium citrate buffer (pH 6.0) and heated for 20 minutes at  $95^{\circ}$ C in a microwave (Whirlpool JT359 Jet Chef 1000W). Negative and positive (by omission of the primary antibody and IgG-matched serum) controls were included for each marker in each run. The negative control ensured that all the staining was produced from the specific interaction between antibody and antigen. HER2 expression was assessed according to the new ASCO/CAP guidelines using IHC and fluorescence *in situ* hybridization (FISH) (16).

**Evaluation of immune staining:** Whole field inspection of the core was scored and intensities of nuclear staining for DNA repair markers were grouped as follows:  $0 =$  no staining,  $1 =$  weak staining,  $2 =$  moderate staining,  $3 =$  strong staining. The percentage of each category was estimated (0-100%). H-score (range 0-300) was calculated by multiplying intensity of staining and percentage staining. The number of  $CD8^+$  T lymphocytes was counted in each tumor core by using a Nikon Eclipse 80i microscope (Nikon, Tokyo, Japan) and an eyepiece graticule.  $CD8^+$  and  $FOXP3^+$  T cells were counted in three locations in each tumor: intratumoral compartment (within the tumor cell nests), within the distant stroma (defined as more than one tumor cell diameter away from the tumor), and within the adjacent stroma (defined as  $CD8^+$  cells within one tumor cell diameter of the tumor). The total number of  $CD8<sup>+</sup>$  T cells was determined by combining the counts for these three compartments.

Not all cores within the TMA were suitable for IHC assessments as some cores were missing or containing inadequate invasive tumor (< 15% of whole core surface area). Tumor marker prognostic studies (REMARK) criteria, recommended by McShane et al., (17), were followed throughout this study. Ethical approval was obtained from the Nottingham Research Ethics Committee (C202313).

**Statistical analysis:** Data analysis was performed using SPSS (SPSS, version 21 Chicago, IL). Where appropriate, Pearson's  $\chi^2$ , Fisher's exact, the student *t* and one-way ANOVA tests were used. Cumulative survival probabilities were estimated using the Kaplan–Meier method, and differences between survival rates were tested for significance using the log-rank test. Multivariate analysis for survival was performed using the Cox proportional hazard model. The proportional hazards assumption was tested using standard log-log plots. Hazard ratios (HR) and 95% confidence intervals (95% CI) were estimated for each variable. All tests were two-sided with a 95% CI and *P* < 0.05 considered significant. For multiple comparisons, *P* values were adjusted according to the Benjamini-Hochberg method (18).

### **RESULTS**

## **Significance of ATM, BRCA1, and XRCC1 in CD8+ TIL-positive breast cancers**

CD8+ T-lymphocytes are critical for tumor-specific adaptive immunity (1). A total of 1269 invasive breast carcinomas [ER<sup>+</sup> (*n* = 928), ER<sup>-</sup> (*n* = 341), triple negative (*n* = 219), HER2<sup>+</sup>/ER<sup>-</sup> (*n* = 92), and HER2<sup>+</sup>/ER<sup>+</sup>  $(n = 89)$ ] were suitable for CD8<sup>+</sup> TIL assessments; 1032 were positive for CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs and 237 cases were negative for CD8+ TILs (**Fig. 1A1–1A4**).

Low ATM, BRCA1, and XRCC1 expression was associated with poor BCSS in tumors with CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs (P  $= 0.006$ , 0.001, and 0.000011, respectively; **Fig. 1A9-A12, B, C, and D**), but not in tumors negative for CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs ( $P = 0.217, 0.723$ , and 0.249, respectively; **Supplementary Fig. S1A, B, and C**). Expression of pol β, ERCC1, RECQL4, RECQL5, BLM, PARP1, FEN1, TOPO2A, Ku70/Ku80, and Chk2 was not significantly associated with survival in CD8+ TIL–positive or –negative breast cancers (**Supplementary**  Fig. S2A–2T). In tumors positive for  $CD8^+$  TILs, WRN did not influence survival ( $P = 0.332$ , **Supplementary Fig. S2U)** but in tumors negative for  $CD8^+$  TILs, low WRN influenced survival ( $P = 0.026$ , **Supplementary Fig. S2V**). Similarly, in tumors positive for CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs, DNA-PKcs did not influence survival ( $P = 0.996$ , **Supplementary Fig. S2W)** but in tumors negative for  $CD8^+$  TILs, low DNA-PKcs influenced poor survival  $(P = 0.044$ , **Supplementary Fig. S2X**).

To investigate whether low tumor ATM, BRCA1 or XRCC1 expression increased CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs counts and resulted in an aggressive phenotype, we proceeded to investigate clinicopathological associations. The mean CD8<sup>+</sup> TIL counts were significantly higher in tumors with low ATM ( $P = 0.004$ ), low BRCA1 ( $P =$ 2.4 x 10<sup>-9</sup>) and low XRCC1 ( $P = 0.007$ ; **Supplementary Fig. S3**). Tumors with low ATM, low BRCA1, or low XRCC1 and that contained  $CD8<sup>+</sup>$  TILs were significantly more likely to manifest aggressive features, including high grade, high mitotic index, de-differentiation, ER negativity, and PR negativity (all adjusted *P* values  $\leq 0.05$ ; **Supplementary Tables S4, S5 and S6**).

## Significance of ATM, BRCA1 and XRCC1 in FOXP3<sup>+</sup> breast cancers

T regulatory cells (Tregs) can inhibit antitumor responses. FOXP3, a member of the forkhead family of transcription factors, is restricted to specific population of Tregs (19). In FOXP3<sup>+</sup> breast cancers (Fig. 1A5), low BRCA1 ( $P = 0.016$ ) and low XRCC1 ( $P = 0.000002$ ) expression influenced survival but ATM did not (*P* = 0.536) (**Supplementary Fig. S4A-C)**. On the other hand, in FOXP3 negative breast cancers, low ATM influenced poor BCSS (*P* = 0.001) (**Supplementary Fig. S4D)** but BRCA1 and XRCC1 amounts did not (*P*  = 0.556 and 0.084, respectively) (**Supplementary Fig. S4E and F)**. Low ATM, low BRCA1 or low XRCC1 and FOXP3+ breast cancers were highly significantly associated with high grade, high risk NPI, high mitotic index, pleomorphism, HER-2<sup>+</sup>, ER<sup>-</sup> and PR<sup>-</sup> phenotypes (all adjusted p values <0.0001) (**Supplementary Tables S7, S8, and S9**). The data provides compelling evidence that Tregs infiltration along with tumor DNA repair expression can influence breast cancer pathology and outcomes.

## Significance of ATM, BRCA1, and XRCC1 in PD-L1<sup>+</sup>/PD-1<sup>+</sup> breast cancers

Programmed death ligand-1 (PD-L1) and programmed death-1 (PD-1) are key members of the PD pathway involved in immune regulation. The interaction of PD-L1 with PD-1 induces T cell suppression. Accordingly the PD-L1/PD-1 pathway has emerged as a key target for immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy (20). We investigated ATM, BRCA1, and XRCC1 expression in  $PD-L1<sup>+/PD-1<sup>+</sup></sup>$  or  $PD-L1<sup>-</sup>/PD-1<sup>-</sup>$  breast cancers (**Figures 1A6-A8**).

Low XRCC1 expression was associated with poor BCSS in PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (tumor cells), PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (TILs), and PD- $1^+$  (TILs) breast cancers ( $P = 0.00021$ , 0.007, and 0.00022, respectively; Fig. 1E, F, and G). ATM and BRCA1 amounts did not influence survival in PD-L1<sup>+</sup>/ or PD-1<sup>+</sup> breast cancers (**Supplementary Fig. S5A**– **F)**. In PD-L1– breast cancers, ATM, BRCA1 and XRCC1 did not influence survival (**Supplementary Fig.**  S6A–F). In PD-1<sup>-</sup> breast cancers, low ATM, low BRCA1, and low XRCC1 were associated with poor BCSS (**Supplementary Fig. S6G–I**).

In PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (tumor cells) (**Table 1**), PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (TILs) (**Table 2**), or PD-1<sup>+</sup> (TILs) (**Table 3**) breast cancers, low XRCC1 amounts were significantly associated with aggressive features including high grade, high risk NPI, high mitotic index, pleomorphism, ER negativity and PR negativity (all adjusted *P* values < 0.001). Taken

together, the data provides evidence that low XRCC1 expression was associated with aggressive phenotype and poor outcomes in PD-L1<sup>+</sup> and PD-1<sup>+</sup> breast cancers. We then proceeded to investigate in breast cancers subgroups.

## Prognostic significance of ATM, BRCA1, and XRCC1 in ER<sup>+</sup> or HER-2<sup>+</sup> breast cancers

In ER<sup>+</sup> tumors, although CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs alone did not influence survival (**Supplementary Fig. S7A–C**), low BRCA1 (*P* = 0.002) and low XRCC1 (*P* <0.0001) **were** linked to poor BCSS (**Supplementary Fig. S8A and B**). Low ATM expression was not significant  $(P = 0.080;$  **Supplementary Fig. S8C**).

In PD-1<sup>+</sup>/PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (TILs) or PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (tumor cells)  $ER^+$  breast cancers that received endocrine therapy, ATM, BRCA1, or XRCC1 did not influence survival (unpublished observations). However, XRCC1 expression influenced survival in  $CD8^+$ , PD-1<sup>+</sup>, or FOXP3<sup>+</sup> ER<sup>+</sup> breast cancers that received no endocrine therapy ( $P =$ 0.02, 0.038, and 0.026 respectively; **Supplementary Fig. S9A–C**) but was not significant to PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (tumor cells) breast cancers (**Supplementary Fig. S9D**,  $P = 0.078$ ).

XRCC1 amounts influenced survival in PD-1<sup>+</sup> HER-2<sup>+</sup> breast cancers ( $P = 0.011$ ; **Supplementary Fig. S10A**). ATM and BRCA1 did not associate with survival in  $CD8^+$ ,  $FOXP3^+$ , or  $PD-1^+$  HER- $2^+$  breast cancers (unpublished observations). BRCA1 expression was borderline associated with survival in  $FOXP3^+$ HER-2<sup>+</sup> breast cancers ( $P = 0.05$ ; **Supplementary Fig. S10B**). ATM and XRCC1 did not associate with survival in FOXP3<sup>+</sup> HER-2<sup>+</sup> breast cancers (unpublished observations). ATM, BRCA1, or XRCC1 did not influence survival in PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (TILs) or PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (tumor cells)  $HER2<sup>+</sup>$  breast cancers (unpublished observations).

## Prognostic significance of ATM, BRCA1, and XRCC1 in ER<sup>-</sup> breast cancers

As expected,  $CD8^+$  TILs alone was associated with longer survival in ER<sup>-</sup> tumors ( $P = 0.013$ ) **(Supplementary Fig. S11A)** including in patients who received no chemotherapy ( $P = 0.029$ ) (**Supplementary Fig. S11B**), but was not significant to patients who received CMF based chemotherapy (*P*   $= 0.081$ ) (**Supplementary Fig. S11C**). In ER<sup>-</sup> tumors with CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs that received CMF chemotherapy, low ATM, low BRCA1, or low XRCC1 did not influence survival (unpublished observations).

In PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (TILs) ER<sup>-</sup> breast cancers that received no chemotherapy, BRCA1 amounts influenced survival (**Supplementary Fig. S12**), but ATM and XRCC1 did not (unpublished observations). ATM, BRCA1, or XRCC1 did not influence survival in  $FOXP3^+$ , PD-1<sup>+</sup>, or PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (tumor cells) ER<sup>-</sup> breast cancers that received no chemotherapy (unpublished observations). Similarly, ATM, BRCA1, or XRCC1 did not influence survival in  $\text{FOXP3}^+$ , PD-1<sup>+</sup>, PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (TILs) or PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (tumor cells) ER<sup>-</sup> breast cancers that received CMF chemotherapy (unpublished observations).

We then proceeded to investigate an independent ER<sup>-</sup> cohort that received modern anthracycline based chemotherapy. Low XRCC1 expression was associated with poor survival in PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (TILs) and PD-1<sup>+</sup> (TILs)  $ER^-$  breast cancers ( $P = 0.047$  and  $P = 0.007$  respectively; **Fig. 11, 1J**). Low XRCC1 expression was not significant ( $P = 0.089$ ) to PD-L1<sup>+</sup> (tumor cells) ER<sup>-</sup> breast cancers (**Fig. 1H**). ATM or BRCA1 did not influence survival in this cohort (unpublished observations).

#### **DISCUSSION**

The presence of TILs is a marker for a good prognosis (1-3, 21, 22) and predicts a favorable response to neoadjuvant chemotherapy in breast cancer (23). Although the biological mechanisms are poorly understood, immune effector cells, their cytokine secretions, or cancer cell immunogenicity may influence biology and antitumor response in breast cancer. In addition, chemotherapy-induced Treg depletion, could also allow pre-existing immune-effector cells to operate effectively and induce antitumor responses (1). CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs can be a good marker of response to neoadjuvant chemotherapy, providing evidence that specific immune-effector cells could be essential (23). Another possibility is that the immunogenicity of tumor cells themselves could influence immune-effector cell anticancer activity. Tumor cells with abundant surface neoantigens will be prone to immune-attack compared to tumor cells with low neoantigen load. Emerging data provide evidence that tumors with many somatic mutations accumulate neoantigens and are highly immunogenic (5). A key determinant of mutation load is the DNA repair capacity in cancer cells. DNA repair–deficient cancers have increased genomic instability, leading to a 'mutator phenotype' characterized by the accumulation of mutations. For example, MMR-deficient colorectal cancers not only have 10 to 100 times more somatic mutations compared MMR-proficient colorectal tumors, but also have prominent lymphocytic infiltration (5). A pivotal phase II study of PD-1 blockade by pembrolizumab provided the first compelling evidence that MMR-deficient colorectal cancer are more responsive to immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy compared to MMR-proficient tumors (5). In breast cancers, however, MMR deficiency is rare (24), suggesting that impairment of other DNA repair factors may influence prognosis in tumors with immune cell infiltration.

In the current study, a key initial observation was that low amounts of ATM, BRCA1, and XRCC1 increased CD8+ TIL infiltration, and was associated with aggressive pathology, leading to poor patient survival. Germline mutations in ATM or BRCA1 predispose to hereditary breast cancers. In sporadic breast cancers, epigenetic silencing of the BRCA1 promoter has been reported in up to 11%–14% of tumors. About 25% of breast cancers may have a dysfunctional BRCA pathway in which they do not harbor germ-line BRCA mutations, but display similar phenotypes, including HR deficiency. XRCC1 deficiency delays SSB

rejoining, induces mutations, and results in elevated numbers of sister chromatid exchanges, a hallmark of genomic instability. Polymorphism in XRCC1 gene may increase the risk of cancer. We have previously shown that having little ATM or XRCC1 protein in somatic tumors is associated with aggressive breast cancers and poor survival (6, 14). We therefore speculate that reduced protein expression of ATM, BRCA1, or XRCC1 could lead to a 'mutator phenotype', increase immunogenicity, promote CD8<sup>+</sup> TILs, and influence tumor biology and outcome. However, a limitation to the current study is that we have not directly shown an increased mutational load in ATM/BRCA1/XRCC1-deficient tumors compared to ATM/BRCA1/XRCC1-proficient tumors. This will be an important area for future investigation. Given the essential role of Tregs in attenuating immune response in the tumor microenvironment (19), we also investigated the expression of ATM, BRCA1, and XRCC1 in FOXP3<sup>+</sup> breast cancers. We observed highly significant associations with aggressive phenotypes and outcome implying that ATM-, BRCA1-, and XRCC1-deficient breast cancers elicit complex immune responses including cytotoxic T cell, as well as Treg, infiltration.

The PD-1 pathway is critical for immune regulation. PD-L1/PD-1 interaction induces T-cell repression. PD-L1/PD-1–targeted immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy is an exciting approach in cancers (20). Although durable responses have been seen in PD-L1<sup>+</sup> non-small cell lung cancer (25), not all patients respond to pembrolizumab (a humanized monoclonal antibody to PD-1). Therefore, evaluation of potential biomarkers that could allow personalization of PD-L1<sup>+</sup> solid tumors is a high priority. We provide clinical evidence that XRCC1 expression can stratify patients into distinct prognostic groups in PD-L1<sup>+</sup> and PD-1<sup>+</sup> breast cancers, including in ER negative breast cancers. In addition, low XRCC1 expression also promoted aggressive PD- $L1^+$  and PD-1<sup>+</sup> breast cancer phenotypes, implying potential roles in breast cancer biology. Although none of the patients investigated in the current study received anti PD-1 therapy, our data taken together, would suggest that XRCC1 could aid in the personalization of anti PD-1 therapy that are currently under investigation in PD-L1<sup>+</sup> breast cancers. Prospective evaluation of this possibility is warranted in the context of clinical trials.

In conclusion, we provide clinical evidence that the interplay between DNA repair, CD8, PD-L1, and PD-1 can promote aggressive tumor phenotypes. XRCC1-directed personalization of immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy may be feasible in breast cancer.

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### **FIGURE LEGENDS**

**Figure 1: A**. Immunohistochemical expression of CD8, FOXP3, PD-1, PD-L1, ATM, BRCA1, and XRCC1 in breast cancers (all images are at 20x magnification). A1) Invasive carcinoma, infiltrate with minimal lymphocytic infiltrate. A2) Invasive carcinoma with extensive CD8 negative lymphocytic infiltrate. A3) Invasive carcinoma showing CD8 positive intra-tumoral lymphocytic infiltrate. A4) Invasive carcinoma with extensive CD8 positive peri-tumoral lymphocytic infiltrate. A5) FOXP3 positive (TILs staining) invasive carcinoma. A6) PD-1 positive (TILs staining) invasive carcinoma. A7) PD-L1 positive (Tumor cell staining) invasive carcinoma. A8) PD-L1 positive (TILs staining) invasive carcinoma. A9) ATM negative invasive carcinoma. A10) ATM positive invasive carcinoma. A11) BRCA1 positive invasive carcinoma. A12) XRCC1 positive invasive carcinoma. **B**. Prognostic significance of ATM expression in CD8+ TILs positive breast cancers (Kaplan-Meier survival curves is shown here). **C**. Prognostic significance of BRCA1 expression in CD8+ TILs positive breast cancers. **D**. Prognostic significance of XRCC1 expression in CD8+ TILs positive breast cancers. **E**. Prognostic significance of XRCC1 expression in PD-L1 positive (tumor cells) breast cancers. **F**. Prognostic significance of XRCC1 expression in PD-L1 positive (TILs) breast cancers. **G**. Prognostic significance of XRCC1 expression in PD-1 positive (TILs) breast cancers. **H**. Prognostic significance of XRCC1 expression in PD-L1 positive (tumor cells) ER negative breast cancers. **I**. Prognostic significance of XRCC1 expression in PD-L1 positive (TILs) ER negative breast cancers. **J**. Prognostic significance of XRCC1 expression in PD-1 positive (TILs) ER negative breast cancers.

**Table 1**: Clinicopathological significance of XRCC1 expression in PD-L1 positive (tumor cells) and PDLI negative breast cancers.













**Supplementary Table S1:** Clinicopathological characteristics of Nottingham Tenovus series



\* Number of cases for which data were available.

NPI; Nottingham prognostic index, PG; prognostic group

**Supplemental Table S2:** Clinicopathological characteristics of ER- cohort





NPI; Nottingham prognostic index, PG; prognostic group

**Supplementary Table S3:** Antigens, primary antibodies, clone, source, optimal dilution and scoring system used for each immunohistochemical marker





All sections were pre-treated with microwave antigen retrieval using 0.1% citrate buffer (pH 6) except for HER2 (no pre-treatment).

**Supplementary Table S4:** Clinicopathological significance of ATM expression in CD8+ TILs positive and CD8+ TILs negative breast cancer



cancer



**Supplementary Table S6**: Clinicopathological significance of XRCC1 expression in CD8 positive and CD8 negative breast cancers



**Supplementary Table S7:** Clinicopathological significance of ATM expression in FOXP3 positive and FOXP3negative breast cancer



**Supplementary Table S8:** Clinicopathological significance of BRCA1 expression in FOXP3 positive and FOXP3negative breast cancer



**Supplementary Table S9:** Clinicopathological significance of XRCC1 expression in FOXP3 positive and FOXP3negative breast cancer.



### **SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURE LEGENDS**

**Supplementary Figure S1:** Prognostic significance of ATM, BRCA1 and XRCC1 in breast cancers negative for CD8+ TILs. Kaplan-Meier survival curves are shown here.

**Supplementary Figure S2:** Prognostic significance of polβ (A &B), ERCC1 (C&D), RECQL4 (E&F), RECQL5 (G &H), BLM (I & J), PARP1 (K & L), FEN1 (M & N), TOPO2A (O & P), Ku70/Ku80 (Q & R), Chk2 (S & T), WRN (U & V) and DNA-PKcs (W & X) in CD8+ TILs positive and CD8+ TILs negative breast cancers respectively. Kaplan-Meier survival curves are shown here.

**Supplementary Figure S3:** Correlation between CD8 counts and ATM (A), BRCA1 (B) and XRCC1 (C).

**Supplementary Figure S4:** Prognostic significance of ATM, BRCA1 and XRCC1 in FOXP3+ or FOXP3 negative breast cancers. Kaplan-Meier survival curves are shown here.

**Supplementary Figure S5:** Prognostic significance of ATM, BRCA1 in PD-L1+ (tumour cells), PD-L1+ (TILs) or PD-1+ (TILs) is shown here. Kaplan-Meier survival curves are shown here.

**Supplementary Figure S6:** Prognostic significance of ATM, BRCA1 and XRCC1 in PD-L1 negative (tumour cells), PD-L1 negative (TILs) and PD-1 negative (TILs) breast cancers. Kaplan-Meier survival curves are shown here.

**Supplementary Figure S7:** Prognostic significance of CD8+ TILs in ER+ breast cancer [whole cohort (A), received no endocrine therapy  $(B)$  and received endocrine therapy  $(C)$ ] is shown here.

**Supplementary Figure S8:** Prognostic significance of BRCA1 (A), XRCC1 (B) or ATM (C) in CD8+ TILs positive ER+ breast cancer. Kaplan-Meier survival curves are shown here.

**Supplementary Figure S9:** Prognostic significance of XRCC1 in CD8+/CD8- (A), PD-1+/PD-1- (B), FOXP3+/FOXP3- (C) and PD-L1+/PD-L1- (D) ER+ breast cancer that received no endocrine therapy.

**Supplementary Figure S10: A.** Prognostic significance of XRCC1 in PD-1+/PD-1- HER2 + breast cancers. **B.** Prognostic significance of BRCA1 in FOXP3+/FOXP3- HER2 + breast cancers. Kaplan-Meier survival curves are shown here.

**Supplementary Figure S11:** Prognostic significance of CD8+ TILs in ER- breast cancer [whole cohort (A), received no chemotherapy (B) and received chemotherapy (C)] is shown here. Kaplan-Meier survival curves are shown here.

**Supplementary Figure S12:**.Prognostic significance of BRCA1 in PD-L1+/PD-L1- ER- breast cancers that received no chemotherapy. Kaplan-Meier survival curves are shown here.



**Supplementary Figure S1** 























**Supplementary Figure S8** 











**A B** 





**Supplementary Figure S12**