

A Data-independent Acquisition (DIA) Approach on Q-TOF Mass Spectrometry for In-depth Peptide Mapping of Monoclonal Antibodies

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1. Overview

- A data-independent acquisition (DIA) approach for *de novo* peptide sequencing was developed on LCMS-9030 Q-TOF mass spectrometer
- The proposed method can be used to accurately and precisely characterize peptide sequences of monoclonal antibodies (mAbs)

2. Introduction

Peptide mapping plays a critical role in quality assurance of mAbs and is widely applied for primary structure characterization. However, we have to understand that peptide mapping is usually performed in a comparative manner, in which the peptide map of a proposed mAb product is compared to that of a reference product in a side-by-side experiment, which is extremely time consuming and highly dependent on the reproducible sample preparation. An in-depth peptide mapping method is thus required to characterize peptide sequences of mAbs.

An emerging technique, and the focus of this report, is DIA mode on Q-TOF mass spectrometry. DIA enables a genetic, unbiased approach for the MS/MS data acquisition, in which all the ions in each individual MS/MS event are fragmented without precursor ion isolation and all the fragment ions are measured in a mixed spectrum, ideal for peptide sequencing [1].

In this study, we demonstrated an integrated DIA approach on LCMS-9030 Q-TOF mass spectrometer for *de novo* peptide sequencing of mAbs.

3. Methods

The mAb sample is 1 mg/mL bevacizumab biosimilar solution in 50 mmol/L Tris-HCl buffer (pH 8.0). 100 μ L aliquot of the mAb sample was mixed with 10 μ L proteaseMAX™ (0.5%, w/w) and 10 μ L dithiothreitol (DTT, 0.2 M), incubated at 60°C for 60 min to denature and reduce disulfide bonds. Then, adding 30 μ L iodoacetamide (IAA, 0.2 M) for alkylation by incubation at 37°C for 60 min in the dark. After dilution with 328 μ L of 50 mM ammonium bicarbonate solution, the sample was digested by 20 μ L sequencing grade trypsin at 37°C for overnight. Finally, 2 μ L trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) was added to stop activity of trypsin. The obtained sample was centrifuged, and the supernatant was collected for DIA analysis on the Shimadzu LCMS-9030 Q-TOF mass spectrometer, where DIA data acquisition was performed with a 40 Da fixed mass window from 210-1690 m/z acquiring high-resolution MS/MS in each cycle. The analytical conditions are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Analytical conditions on LCMS-9030

Column	Shim-pack GISS-HP (150 mm x 3.0 mm; 3 μ m)
Flow rate	0.5 mL/min
Mobile phase	A: 0.1% FA + 0.01% TFA in water; B: 0.1% FA + 0.01% TFA in acetonitrile
Gradients	B Conc. 0% (0-2 min) → 15% (10 min) → 35% (23 min) → 45% (30 min) → 75% (35-40 min) → 0% (40.1-45 min).
Oven temp.	40°C
Injection vol.	20 μ L
Interface & temp.	Heated ESI (+), 300°C
Mass range	MS: 100-2000 m/z; MS/MS DIA: from 210 to 1690 by 40 m/z
Interface voltage	4.5 KV
Heat Block temp.	400°C
DL temp.	250°C
Nebulizing gas flow	N ₂ , 3.0 L/min
Drying gas flow	N ₂ , 15.0 L/min
Heating gas flow	Zero air, 10.0 L/min

4. Results

4-1. DIA approach for peptide mapping

The objective of this study is to explore the potential of DIA method for in-depth peptide mapping of mAbs at *de novo* sequencing level, as shown in Figure 1.

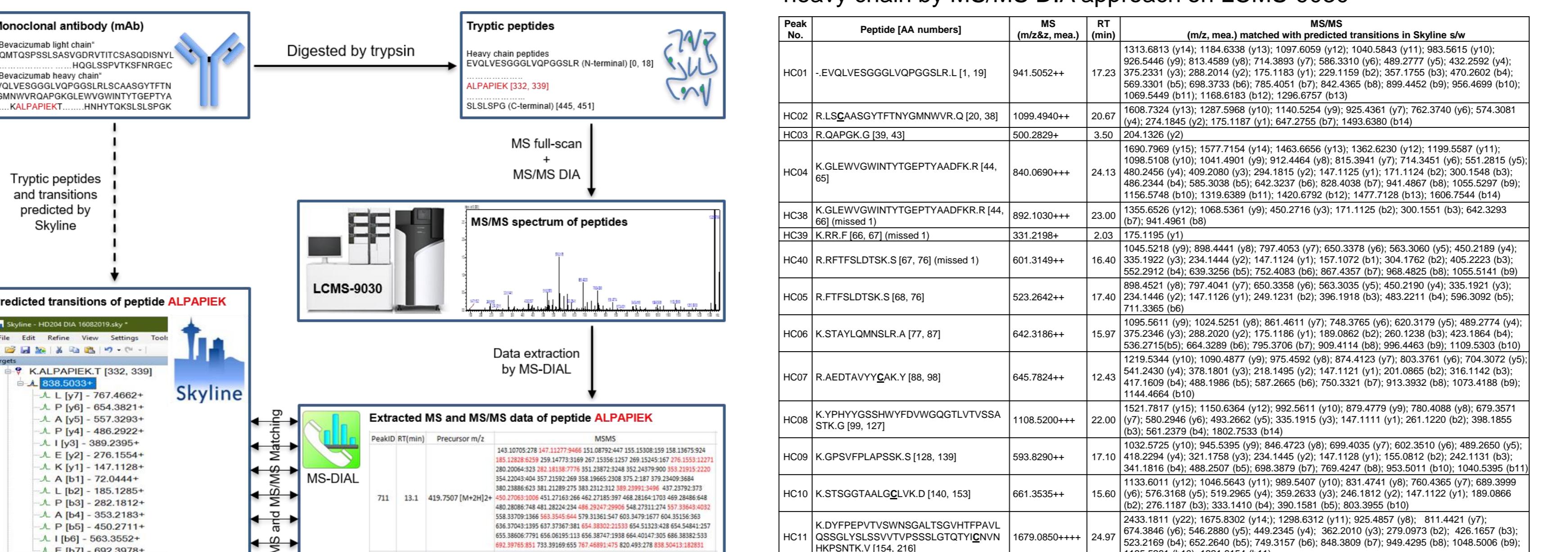


Figure 1. The DIA approach on LCMS-9030 Q-TOF mass spectrometer for *de novo* peptide sequencing of bevacizumab biosimilar (peptide ALPAPIEK was used as an example for illustration).

4-2. Data extraction

The raw MS data file (.lcd) was exported as .mzML data by LabSolutions s/w, and then uploaded into MS-DIAL s/w [2] for data extraction. The default parameters in MS-DIAL were applied for peak detection and extraction with the minimum peak height setting at 1,500 amplitude. Finally, 11,852 mass peaks including the information of precursor *m/z*, retention time, peak height, adduct ions, and MS/MS fragment ions were extracted (data not shown).

4-3. Theoretical MS/MS transitions of peptides

The amino acid sequence of bevacizumab downloaded from DrugBank <https://www.drugbank.ca> was imported into the Skyline s/w [3] for MS/MS transitions prediction. In peptide settings, the tryptic peptides with a fixed modification of carboxymethyl (C) were selected. In transition settings, only singly charged y and b ions (+) were predicted, as they are the most common fragmentations observed in low energy collisions.

4-4. Peptide sequencing

Based on our previous application news of AD-0212B [4], 42 and 19 peptides were measured from the heavy-chain and light-chain respectively, covering 100% amino acid sequence of bevacizumab biosimilar. In the present report,

we focus on the same peptides for *de novo* peptide sequencing. By matching the extracted MS/MS spectra data by MS-DIAL to the theoretical MS/MS transitions of tryptic peptide of bevacizumab in Skyline, all the 61 peptides were well identified and verified for their amino acid sequences (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2. *De novo* peptide sequencing of bevacizumab biosimilar heavy chain by MS/MS DIA approach on LCMS-9030

Peak No.	Peptide [AA numbers]	MS (m/z&z, mea.)	RT (min)	MS/MS (m/z, mea.) matched with predicted transitions in Skyline s/w
HC01	-EVQLVESGGGLVQPGGSLRL [1, 19]	941.5052++	17.23	1313.6813 (y14); 1184.5338 (y13); 1097.6059 (y12); 1040.5943 (y11); 926.5446 (y10); 813.4589 (y9); 714.3863 (y8); 586.3310 (y6); 489.2777 (y5); 432.2520 (y4); 375.2313 (y3); 291.2042 (y2); 175.1185 (y1); 106.1833 (b12); 109.5449 (b11); 116.1930 (b12); 129.6757 (b13)
HC02	R.LSCASASGYFTFTNYGMNWR.Q [20, 38]	1099.4940++	20.67	1608.7304 (y13); 1287.9466 (y12); 1140.5254 (y11); 925.4361 (y10); 762.3740 (y6); 574.3081 (y5); 500.2829+*
HC03	R.QAPGK.G [39, 43]	500.2829+	3.50	1069.7692 (y15); 1577.1514 (y14); 1423.6556 (y13); 1263.6230 (y12); 1109.5597 (y11); 1058.5108 (y10); 1041.4901 (y9); 812.4464 (y8); 715.3451 (y7); 651.2815 (y6); 480.2456 (y5); 409.2080 (y4); 294.1815 (y3); 174.125 (y2); 171.1124 (b2); 300.1548 (b3); 466.2344 (y4); 585.3038 (b5); 423.3237 (b6); 828.4038 (b7); 941.4867 (b8); 1055.5297 (b9); 1156.5748 (b10); 1319.5389 (b11); 1420.6750 (b12); 1477.7128 (b13); 1606.7544 (b14)
HC04	K.GLEWWGVWINTYGEPTYAADFK.R [44, 65]	840.0690++	24.13	1069.7692 (y15); 1577.1514 (y14); 1423.6556 (y13); 1263.6230 (y12); 1109.5597 (y11); 1058.5108 (y10); 1041.4901 (y9); 812.4464 (y8); 715.3451 (y7); 651.2815 (y6); 480.2456 (y5); 409.2080 (y4); 294.1815 (y3); 174.125 (y2); 171.1124 (b2); 300.1548 (b3); 466.2344 (y4); 585.3038 (b5); 423.3237 (b6); 828.4038 (b7); 941.4867 (b8); 1055.5297 (b9); 1156.5748 (b10); 1319.5389 (b11); 1420.6750 (b12); 1477.7128 (b13); 1606.7544 (b14)
HC05	K.GLEWWGVWINTYGEPTYAADFK.R [44, 66] (missed 1)	892.1030++	23.00	1059.6545 (y15); 1577.1514 (y14); 1423.6556 (y13); 1263.6230 (y12); 1109.5597 (y11); 1058.5108 (y10); 1041.4901 (y9); 812.4464 (y8); 715.3451 (y7); 651.2815 (y6); 480.2456 (y5); 409.2080 (y4); 294.1815 (y3); 174.125 (y2); 171.1124 (b2); 300.1551 (b3); 462.3293 (b4); 587.3496 (b5); 423.3237 (b6); 828.4038 (b7); 941.4867 (b8); 1055.5297 (b9); 1156.5748 (b10); 1319.5389 (b11); 1420.6750 (b12); 1477.7128 (b13); 1606.7544 (b14)
HC06	K.RFTFSLDTSK.S [67, 76] (missed 1)	601.3149++	16.40	1045.5218 (y16); 1533.5251 (y15); 1503.4561 (y14); 748.3765 (y13); 650.3179 (y12); 469.2774 (y11); 335.1922 (y3); 234.1444 (y2); 174.125 (y1); 106.1833 (b12); 129.6757 (b13); 147.125 (b14); 160.5208 (b15); 172.5216 (b16); 184.4663 (b17); 204.1762 (b18); 214.6750 (b19); 231.2253 (b20); 243.1953 (b21); 261.1762 (b22); 280.1225 (b23); 300.1548 (b24); 318.1225 (b25); 338.1225 (b26); 358.1225 (b27); 378.1225 (b28); 398.1225 (b29); 418.1225 (b30); 438.1225 (b31); 458.1225 (b32); 478.1225 (b33); 498.1225 (b34); 518.1225 (b35); 538.1225 (b36); 558.1225 (b37); 578.1225 (b38); 598.1225 (b39); 618.1225 (b40); 638.1225 (b41); 658.1225 (b42); 678.1225 (b43); 698.1225 (b44); 718.1225 (b45); 738.1225 (b46); 758.1225 (b47); 778.1225 (b48); 798.1225 (b49); 818.1225 (b50); 838.1225 (b51); 858.1225 (b52); 878.1225 (b53); 898.1225 (b54); 918.1225 (b55); 938.1225 (b56); 958.1225 (b57); 978.1225 (b58); 998.1225 (b59); 1018.1225 (b60); 1038.1225 (b61); 1058.1225 (b62); 1078.1225 (b63); 1098.1225 (b64); 1118.1225 (b65); 1138.1225 (b66); 1158.1225 (b67); 1178.1225 (b68); 1198.1225 (b69); 1218.1225 (b70); 1238.1225 (b71); 1258.1225 (b72); 1278.1225 (b73); 1298.1225 (b74); 1318.1225 (b75); 1338.1225 (b76); 1358.1225 (b77); 1378.1225 (b78); 1398.1225 (b79); 1418.1225 (b80); 1438.1225 (b81); 1458.1225 (b82); 1478.1225 (b83); 1498.1225 (b84); 1518.1225 (b85); 1538.1225 (b86); 1558.1225 (b87); 1578.1225 (b88); 1598.1225 (b89); 1618.1225 (b90); 1638.1225 (b91); 1658.1225 (b92); 1678.1225 (b93); 1698.1225 (b94); 1718.1225 (b95); 1738.1225 (b96); 1758.1225 (b97); 1778.1225 (b98); 1798.1225 (b99); 1818.1225 (b100); 1838.1225 (b101); 1858.1225 (b102); 1878.1225 (b103); 1898.1225 (b104); 1918.1225 (b105); 1938.1225 (b106); 1958.1225 (b107); 1978.1225 (b108); 1998.1225 (b109); 2018.1225 (b110); 2038.1225 (b111); 2058.1225 (b112); 2078.1225 (b113); 2098.1225 (b114); 2118.1225 (b115); 2138.1225 (b116); 2158.1225 (b117); 2178.1225 (b118); 2198.1225 (b119); 2218.1225 (b120); 2238.1225 (b121); 2258.1225 (b122); 2278.1225 (b123); 2298.1225 (b124); 2318.1225 (b125); 2338.1225 (b126); 2358.1225 (b127); 2378.1225 (b128); 2398.1225 (b129); 2418.1225 (b130); 2438.1225 (b131); 2458.1225 (b132); 2478.1225 (b133); 2498.1225 (b134); 2518.1225 (b135); 2538.1225 (b136); 2558.1225 (b137); 2578.1225 (b138); 2598.1225 (b139); 2618.1225 (b140); 2638.1225 (b141); 2658.1225 (b142); 2678.1225 (b143); 2698.1225 (b144); 2718.1225 (b145); 2738.1225 (b146); 2758.1225 (b147); 2778.1225 (b148); 2798.1225 (b149); 2818.1225 (b150); 2838.1225 (b151); 2858.1225 (b152); 2878.1225 (b153); 2898.1225 (b154); 2918.1225 (b155); 2938.1225 (b156); 2958.1225 (b157); 2978.1225 (b158); 2998.1225 (b159); 3018.1225 (b160); 3038.1225 (b161); 3058.1225 (b162); 3078.1225 (b163); 3098.1225 (b164); 3118.1225 (b165); 3138.1225 (b16