

# IMPROVED SURVIVAL IS BY AIRWAY LENTIVIRAL CFTR GENE TRANSFER IN A CYSTIC FIBROSIS MOUSE MODEL

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## Introduction Methods

We have shown long term (12 month) partial correction can be achieved in timed-group studies in CF mice treated with a lentiviral (LV) vector. In this gene transfer study a repeated-measures study design was used to extend our ability to examine the effect of gene transfer in individual CF mice.

Male and female CF mice (CFTR<sup>-/-</sup>) were tested under 3 experimental conditions: animals were pre-treated with the airway surfactant lysophosphatidylcholine (LPC, 0.3%, 4 µl) prior to a lentiviral (20 µl) vector that contained CFTR, n=8, or with a saline (PBS, 4 µl) pre-treatment prior to the therapy, n=8. The primary treatment group received LPC prior to the lentiviral. Viral titre was 0.6-2.5 x 10<sup>10</sup> TU/ml. CFTR function was assessed by nasal potential difference (NPD) measurement at 1 week. Mouse group survival was expressed as Kaplan-Meier plots, with survival data similar to survival data in Luciferase (Luc) reporter gene studies in 3 groups of normal C57 mice similarly but with the Luc gene instead of the CFTR gene.

## Results

- Significant and persistent functional CFTR gene transfer (p<0.05, ANOVA) was present in the nasal airway for up to 12 months ( $\Delta$ PD of 32-54% towards normal) in CF mice treated with LV-CFTR (Fig. 1).
- LPC/LV-CFTR significantly extended median survival (20.1 mo), compared to either PBS/LV-CFTR (14.4 mo) and LPC/LV-MT (8.8 mo) control groups (Fig. 3).
- Survival in normal C57B16 mice receiving reporter gene Luc was not significantly different to untreated C57 mice (Fig. 4).
- The functional nasal CFTR gene expression (measured by NPD) in this treated cohort (Fig. 2, p<0.01, r<sup>2</sup>= -0.92).

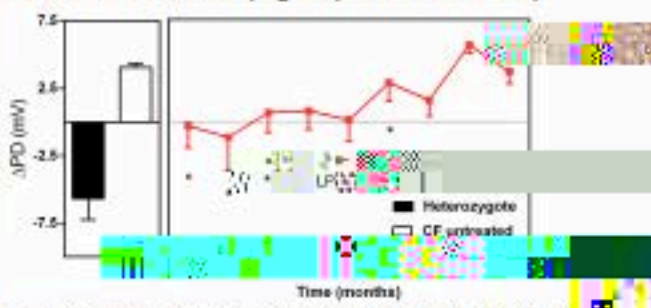


Fig. 1. Partial CFTR correction over time (\*p<0.05, RM ANOVA, n=5).

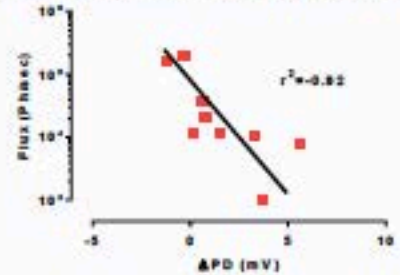


Fig. 2 Correlation of functional correction ( $\Delta$ PD) response and reporter gene expression (Flux). (p<0.01, Spearman Correlation r<sup>2</sup>= -0.92).

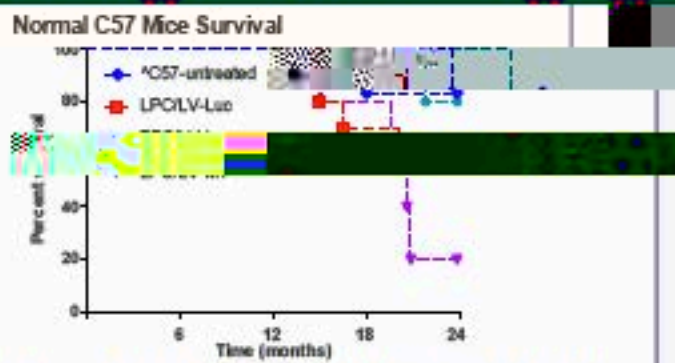
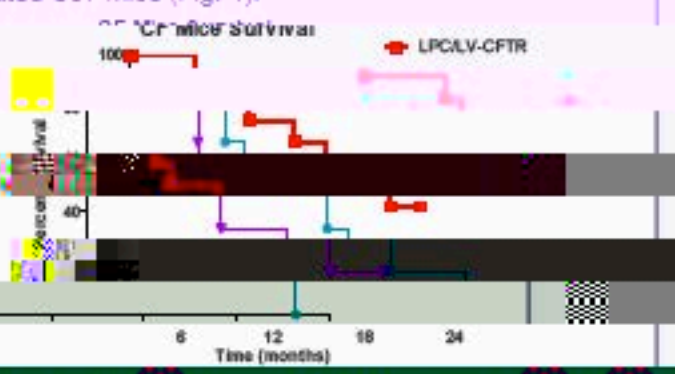


Fig. 4. Survival Curves C57 Mice, n=5-10. (\*C57 Historical data).

## Conclusion

These results suggest that gene transfer significantly improve lifetimes of treated animals. Some nasal dose could reach lung airways and put in via "spillover" of gene vector to potentially improve CFTR function in the airway affected or unaffected airways. Further studies are essential to determine the reasons for the substantial improvement in animal survival following such limited airway gene transfer.

## Acknowledgements

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