IMPROVING THE TRANSDUCTION EFFICIENCY OF AN AEROSOL-DELIVERED LENTIVIRAL VECTOR FOR CYSTIC FIBROSIS LUNG GENE THERAPY

Harshavardini Padmanabhan[1,2], Patricia Cmielewski[1,2,3], ...

[1]Department of Respiratory and Sleep Medicine, ... Scott CF Research Laboratory, Women's ...
[2]School of Paediatrics and Reproductive Health and Robinson Research Institute, The University of Adelaide, South Australia

Women's & Children's Hospital
Government of South Australia SA Health
Robinson Research Institute

BACKGROUND:

Gene therapy is a potential treatment for cystic fibrosis (CF) lung disease, whereby the therapeutic gene is delivered to the lung to produce functional correction. Aerosol delivery of a gene vector to the lung is an ideal treatment approach because it is non-invasive, easy to administer and less cumbersome compared to liquid delivery.

It is thought that the virus particles are subjected to destructive surface tension and shear stress effects during aerosolization [1]. We have utilised a vibrating mesh nebuliser (Aeroneb®Pro) (Figure 1) for in-vitro studies as it it thought to produce minimal shear stress on our lentiviral (LV) gene transfer vector carrying the reporter gene.

The aim of this study was:

1)To test a range of protective agents in which the LV-LacZ is suspended to improve the viability of the LV and in turn gene transduction.
2)To study the distribution pattern of gene expression using liquid delivery vs aerosol delivery of LV-LacZ in *in-vitro* and *ex-vivo* experiments.

Figure1: Aeroneb®Pro used to aerosolize LV-LacZ

METHODS:

Experiment 1

CHO-K1 cells plated (0.25x10⁶ cells/well) on a 12 well plate

Transduced with different dilutions of a VSV-G pseudotyped LV-LacZ as liquid/aerosol (10µl)

Cells fixed and stained with standard X-gal technique

Images taken & gene ...

Experiment 2

CHO-K1 cells plated (0.25x10⁶ cells/well) on a 12 well plate

Transfected with LV-LacZ as liquid/ aerosol (10µl) suspended in

Diluent 1: Saline
Diluent 2: Mouse serum in Saline
...
Bovine serum albumin (MS+BSA)
Diluent 5:Mouse serum in Saline , Mouse serum albumin (MS+MSA)
Diluent 6: FreeStyle™ medium

Experiment 3

Ex-vivo Mouse trachea extracted and pinned

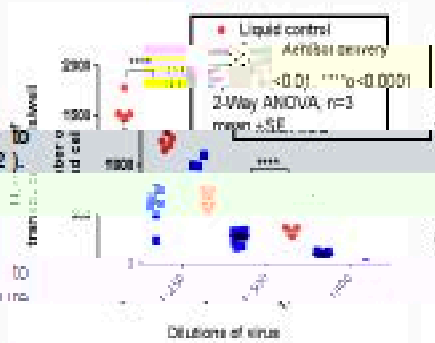
Transduced with different dilutions of a VSV-G pseudotyped LV-LacZ as liquid/aerosol (10µl)

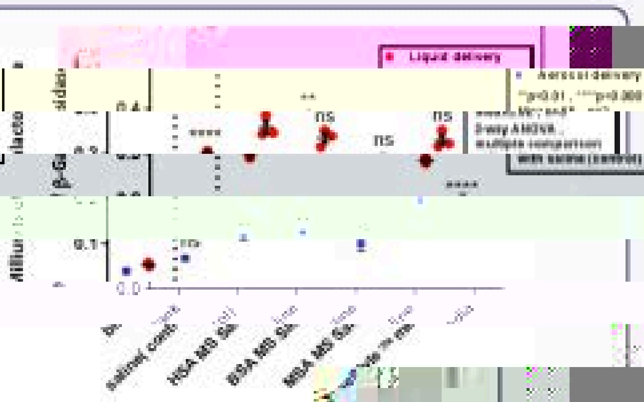
... stained with standard X-gal technique

Images taken, gene ...

RESULTS:

- The transduction obtained via aerosol was 33% to 51% of the number of cells compared to liquid control, for 1:250 to 1:1000 dilutions of the LV-LacZ (Figure 2).
- Virus suspended in FreeStyle™ medium showed significantly higher levels of transduction (58%) when compared to virus suspended in other diluents (Figure 3).
- Delivery of LV-LacZ aerosol of different VMD (3.0 ...) showed no statistically significant difference in gene expression ...





... aerosols of virus suspended in FreeStyle™ medium showed ... level of gene transduction (58%) compared to liquid delivery

- *In-vitro* tests showed that a homogenous distribution of the gene expression was produced by lentiviral vector aerosol (Figure 4a) compared to the more discreet clusters (arrows, Figure 4b) observed after liquid bolus vector delivery.
- *Ex-vivo* mouse trachea was transduced by LV-LacZ aerosols, with a more uniform distribution of gene expression along the trachea observed (arrows on Figure 4c) compared to the patchy distribution normally observed *in-vivo* (not shown).
- In liquid bolus delivery ... region of the trachea (arrows on Figure 4d).

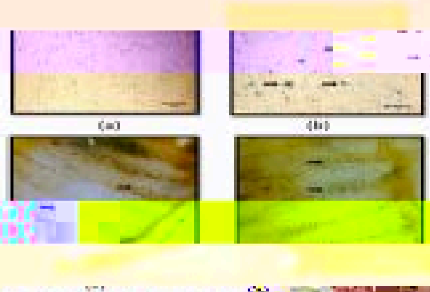


Figure 4: First data (n=1) of planned LV-LacZ ... in CHO-K1 cells by (a) aerosol (b) liquid bolus delivery ... *ex-vivo* mouse trachea by (c) aerosol (d) liquid bolus delivery

CONCLUSION:

- ... data showed that LV-LacZ aerosol was able to transduce about 33% to 51% of CHO-K1 ...
- We speculate that the presence of FreeStyle™ media aids in protecting the LV from shear stress compared to other diluents.
- *Ex-vivo* transduction of mouse trachea via LV-aerosol showed a well distributed ~~uniform~~ distribution of gene expression along the length of the trachea.
- To improve the levels of gene transduction we plan to test different nebulization platforms.
- These findings assist in our understanding of LV aerosolization characteristics and provide practical information for future testing into the lungs of animal models and ultimately for CF airway disease.

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