**13C/31P Tissue Metabolic Biomarkers in a Mouse Model of Pompe Disease**

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**Introduction -** Pompe disease is a progressive degenerative neuromuscular disease characterized by a deficiency in alpha-glucosidase (GAA), the enzyme responsible for lysosomal glycogen breakdown. Although enzyme replacement therapy has been successful in improving survival rate, there is still no cure available. As an alternative, gene therapy has the potential to correct gene expression with a single administration of recombinant adeno-associated virus (rAAV). However, preclinical and clinical non-invasive biomarkers are currently lacking. In this study, we used a combination of high field (11.1T) 13C/31P MR spectroscopy (MRS) *in vivo* with tissue 1H high-resolution magic-angle spinning NMR (1H-HR-MAS) in the mouse model of the disease (*Gaa-/-*) to 1) identify new metabolic biomarkers of the disease; 2) assess the effect of rAAV2/9-desmin-GAA treatment in skeletal muscle.



**Experimental -** *Gaa-/-* and wild-type mice were examined at 2 (n=6), 6 (n=4), 12 (n=7), and 18 months of age (n=5). Two-month-old *Gaa-/-* mice received unilateral rAAV injections in the leg (*Gaa-/-+*AAV, n=8) and were scanned after 28 days, as well as untreated (n=8) and controls (n=4). ***In vivo* 31P and 13C-MRS data were acquired on the 11.1T Agilent system available at the AMRIS facility at the University of Florida** (Fig. 1). 31P and 13C–MRS were acquired at the Ernst angle with TR=1s, and accumulated for 5 min and 1h, respectively, to obtain sufficient SNR. 1H-WALTZ-16 decoupling was added for 13C acquisitions. 13C1-glycogen signal-to-noise, and 31P metabolites peak integrals (including Phosphomonoesters (PME)) were calculated in MestReNova 10.0. Tissue samples were scanned with **1H-HR-MAS on the 600MHz Bruker system at the AMRIS facility** for glycogen, creatine and glucose-6-phosphate (G6P) detection using 1D-NOESY with presaturation. Metabolites were quantified using MestReNova Simple Mixture Analysis plugin. GAA activity and glycogen concentration were assessed biochemically.

**Results - 1)** High C1-Glycogen signal could be detected in vivo in *Gaa-/-*, while signal was within the noise level in control with physiological concentration (Fig.1A,B). **2)** 31PME/ATPtotal was elevated in *Gaa-/-* mice at 2, 6, 12 and 18 mo compared to controls (Fig.1C,D). **3)** 1H-HR-MAS revealed significantly higher G6P and glycogen-to-creatine levels in the gastrocnemius of *Gaa-/-* compared to controls (Fig.2). **4)** rAAV2/9-desmin-GAA injection in *Gaa-/-*+AAV successfully restored high levels of GAA activity. MRS showed that C1-glycogen level, *in vivo* PME levels, and intact tissue glycogen and G6P levels as measured by 1H-HR-MAS were all corrected after treatment (Fig.2). GAA activity between 10-15 nmol/hr/mg was sufficient to significantly decrease all glycogen measures in *Gaa-/-*+AAV, and higher activity did not induce further glycogen clearance.

**Conclusions -** We identified PME as a new and sensitive 31P-MRS biomarker of disease progression and response to gene therapy in *Gaa-/-* mice. rAAV treatment not only restored normal levels of GAA activity and induced glycogen clearance but also significantly decreased the PME signal. Elevated PME levels have previously been observed in patients with glycogen storage disorder type III.1 Our HR-MAS results suggest that accumulation of G6P may greatly contributes in the higher *in vivo* PME signal. This is consistent with recent work in *Gaa-/-* mice reporting high G6P concentration and increased glycogen synthase activity.2 Since 31P-MRS has a higher sensitivity than 13C, this approach has potential for clinical translation as a companion biomarker, in particular in the study of adjuvant therapy targeting glycogen metabolism. These results have been recently published in ref #3.

**Acknowledgements -**  A portion of this work was performed at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, which is supported by National Science Foundation Cooperative Agreement No. DMR-1157490 and the State of Florida. The study was funded in part by the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA218585), Southeast Center for Integrative Metabolomics (U24DK097209), NIAMS (K01AR066077) and NHBLI (P01HL59412).

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