

of CHA to include all people younger than 21 diagnosed with CF using International Classification of Diseases (ICD) diagnostic codes. We defined CFLD as a concomitant diagnosis of at least one of cirrhosis, liver fibrosis, chronic liver disease, esophageal or gastric varices, ascites, portal hypertension, liver transplant, and hypersplenism. People with CFLD were then compared with people with CF without any of these concomitant diagnoses for demographic characteristics and other comorbid conditions. The primary outcome variable was mortality.

**Results:** We analyzed 21,827 individuals between 2004 and 2021. The prevalence of CFLD (6.4%,  $n = 1,399$ ) (Table 1) increased with age, with a peak rate of 16.7% at age 21 ( $p < 0.01$ ). Children with CFLD were older (median 14.7 vs 10.6), and CFLD was more prevalent in boys ( $p < 0.001$ ). Children with CFLD had a greater prevalence of significant comorbidities such as respiratory failure, admission to intensive care unit, mechanical ventilation, pulmonary hypertension, lung transplantation, diabetes mellitus, malnutrition, greater need for parenteral nutrition, and malignancy ( $p < 0.001$ ). After adjusting for various factors, the multivariate regression model showed that CFLD was associated with a 1.7 times greater risk of mortality (95% CI, 1.3–2.2,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusions:** CFLD is associated with greater risk of mortality and with multiple comorbidities indicating greater disease severity. Prospective longitudinal studies are required to further delineate the impact of CFLD on children with CF.

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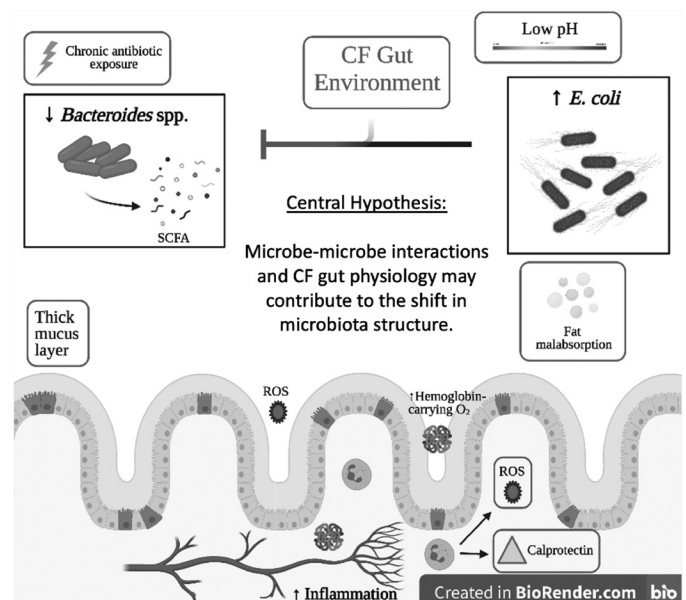
### Building an in vitro model to investigate microbial dynamics in the cystic fibrosis gut

K. Barrack<sup>1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>Microbiology and Immunology, Geisel School of Medicine, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH

**Background:** Stability and diversity of the infant gut microbiome are essential for healthy digestion, immune development, metabolism, and protection from infection. Dysbiosis of the intestinal microbiota at a young age has been correlated with poor health outcomes, including metabolic disorders, allergy, and inflammatory diseases. In the context of cystic fibrosis (CF), infants as young as 6 weeks old exhibit gut microbial dysbiosis according to analysis of stool. One signature of this dysbiosis is a significant depletion of a key gut microbe, *Bacteroides*, as well as enrichment of *Escherichia coli*. The goal of this study is to understand the potential mechanism(s) of *Bacteroides* depletion in the infant CF gut. Our central hypothesis was that the environment of the CF intestine and microbial competition with *E. coli*, both of which contribute to significant shifts in metabolic function of the microbiome and, ultimately, overall negative health outcomes, drive the observed paucity of *Bacteroides* in the CF gut at least in part.

**Methods:** To test the hypothesis that the CF intestinal environment contributes to microbial dysbiosis, we are developing a novel in vitro CF gut medium that uses an established gut microbiome medium, MiPro, supplemented with a variety of factors reported to be differentially abundant in the CF gut: fat, oxidative stress, inflammatory markers, nitrate, sulfate, pH, bile salts, antibiotics, and mucin (Figure 1). We culture clinical isolates of *Bacteroides* and *E. coli* in each component of this medium to examine which physiological features may be modulating microbial viability. To test the hypothesis that the *Bacteroides*–*E. coli* interaction contributes to *Bacteroides* depletion, we use a co-culture model system consisting of CF clinical isolates of both microbes inoculated at equal densities. After competition (48–72 hours) in both media, we compare the growth and survival of each microbe in competition with that of its monoculture control.

**Results:** Preliminary results reveal that *E. coli* isolates can kill *Bacteroides* in co-culture and that specific features of the CF gut environment modulate growth and survival of *Bacteroides* in a dose-dependent manner. Under CF and healthy conditions, *E. coli* growth is unaffected. When in co-culture with *E. coli*, *Bacteroides* depletion is exacerbated in the presence of glycerol, probably because of shifts in metabolism by both microbes. In addition, because of *E. coli*'s catalase activity, growth of *Bacteroides* is rescued when hydrogen peroxide is present.



**Figure 1.** Schematic model of the intraluminal gastrointestinal tract of individuals with cystic fibrosis (CF). In CF, a variety of environmental and physiological factors (red, round-cornered boxes) contribute to loss of *Bacteroides* and an increase in *Escherichia coli*, which is negatively associated with health. We test the central hypothesis that microbe-microbe interactions and CF gut physiology contribute to the observed shift in microbiota structure.

**Conclusions:** We have been able to identify physiological factors of the CF gut that may drive microbial dysbiosis, with a focus on the immune-training microbe *Bacteroides*. We are concomitantly developing a new in vitro CF gut medium that will allow us, for the first time, to investigate the microbial dynamics of this system. Elucidation of putative causes of microbial dysbiosis will provide insight into effective interventions that may be used to ameliorate or prevent adverse health outcomes in children with CF.

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### Impact of elxacaftor/tezacaftor/ivacaftor on serum markers of fat-soluble vitamin levels in people with cystic fibrosis

G. Hergenroeder<sup>1,2</sup>, A. Faino<sup>3</sup>, G. Bridges<sup>1</sup>, L. Bartlett<sup>4</sup>, S. McNamara<sup>1</sup>, B. Strub<sup>5</sup>, D. Nichols<sup>1,6</sup>, K. Ramos<sup>4</sup>. <sup>1</sup>Division of Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, Seattle Children's Hospital, Seattle, WA; <sup>2</sup>Department of Pediatrics, University of Washington, Seattle, WA; <sup>3</sup>Children's Core for Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Analytics in Research, Seattle Children's Research Institute, Seattle, WA; <sup>4</sup>Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine, Department of Medicine, University of Washington, Seattle, WA; <sup>5</sup>Biostatistics Epidemiology and Analytics in Research, Seattle Children's Hospital, Seattle, WA; <sup>6</sup>Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Therapeutics Development Network Coordinating Center, Seattle Children's Research Institute, Seattle, WA

**Background:** The advent of highly effective modulator therapy (HEMT), including ivacaftor and elxacaftor/tezacaftor/ivacaftor (ELX/TEZ/IVA), has revolutionized the care of most people with cystic fibrosis (PwCF). Less is known about the effectiveness of HEMT in treating extra-pulmonary manifestations, including vitamin malabsorption. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of ELX/TEZ/IVA on serum markers of fat-soluble vitamin levels, specifically vitamins A, D, and E, and prothrombin time (PT, a marker for vitamin K), in PwCF aged 12 and older followed at two large CF centers (one pediatric, one adult) in Seattle, Washington. This abstract describes the results for the pediatric participants.

**Methods:** In this retrospective cohort study, participants aged 12 and older on ELX/TEZ/IVA were identified through chart review, and information on demographic characteristics, medications, comorbidities, and vitamin levels was collected. ELX/TEZ/IVA start date was obtained from clinic progress notes. The 2 years before ELX/TEZ/IVA initiation and up to 2 years

**Table 1 (abstract 195):**

Median vitamin levels and percentage of participants with subtherapeutic or suprathreshold levels before and after elxacaftor/tezacaftor/ivacaftor (ELX/TEZ/IVA) initiation. IQR: interquartile range, PT: prothrombin time \* $p < 0.05$ .

Serum marker	Median [IQR] pre-ELX/TEZ/IVA	Median [IQR] post-ELX/TEZ/IVA	Percent subtherapeutic pre-ELX/TEZ/IVA	Percent subtherapeutic post-ELX/TEZ/IVA	Percent suprathreshold or elevated pre-ELX/TEZ/IVA	Percent suprathreshold or elevated post-ELX/TEZ/IVA
Vitamin A (mcg/L)	440.00 [332.25 - 494.12]	433.30 [314.2 - 502.5]	9%	13%	1%	0
Vitamin D (ng/mL)	26.50 [21.50 - 32.00]	27.67 [22.50 - 34.00]	80% *	63% *	1%	0
Vitamin E (mg/L)	8.80 [6.05 - 10.20] *	6.70 [5.133 - 8.033] *	17%	19%	1%	0
PT (sec)	14.00 [13.60 - 14.65]	14.00 [13.60 - 14.40]	0	0	20% *	7% *

after initiation were used to determine the proportion of participants with one or more vitamin levels in the suprathreshold or subtherapeutic range. Proportions were compared using the McNemar's chi-square test. A two-sided  $p < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant, and all analyses were completed in R version 4.1.2.

**Results:** Seventy-two participants met inclusion criteria for enrollment, and 54 (75%) had follow-up vitamin levels after ELX/TEZ/IVA was started. Median age at ELX/TEZ/IVA initiation was 15.9 (95% CI, 13.5–17.8), 61% were homozygous for F508del, 54% were male, and 88% were Caucasian. Median baseline body mass index was 20.8 kg/m<sup>2</sup> (95% CI, 18.8–22.6), and median baseline percentage predicted forced expiratory volume in 1 second was 101% (95% CI, 93–110%). There were no significant differences in median vitamin A or D level or PT before and after ELX/TEZ/IVA initiation (Table 1). Median vitamin E level decreased from 8.8 mg/L to 6.7 mg/L ( $p < 0.005$ ). The percentage of participants with subtherapeutic vitamin D levels decreased from 80% to 63% after ELX/TEZ/IVA initiation ( $p = 0.007$ ), and the percentage with high PT levels decreased from 20% to 7% ( $p = 0.046$ ). There was no significant difference in the proportion of participants with subtherapeutic vitamin A or E levels. There were no measured vitamin A, D, or E levels in the suprathreshold range after ELX/TEZ/IVA initiation.

**Conclusions:** Our results demonstrate a greater proportion of participants with vitamin D and PT within the normal range after ELX/TEZ/IVA initiation. By contrast, median vitamin E level decreased significantly, and there was no significant change in vitamin A level. No vitamin A, D, or E levels were in the suprathreshold range after ELX/TEZ/IVA initiation. There are several possible explanations for our results. First, although it was assumed that participants continued vitamin supplementation after ELX/TEZ/IVA initiation, we were unable to verify this. It is possible that, as participants' health improved on ELX/TEZ/IVA, they stopped taking vitamin supplements. We continue to investigate how vitamin intake has changed after ELX/TEZ/IVA initiation. Alternatively, greater exposure to sunlight or dietary changes could have contributed to our findings. Data collection and analysis at the second study site are ongoing and may help clarify these relationships.

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### Liver function test abnormalities in people with cystic fibrosis treated with elxacaftor/tezacaftor/ivacaftor

C. Colombo<sup>1,2</sup>, L. Zazzeron<sup>2</sup>, L. Claut<sup>2</sup>, C. Rizza<sup>1</sup>, A. Malfitano<sup>1</sup>, G. Alicandro<sup>1,2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Department of Pathophysiology and Transplantation, University of Milan, Milan, Italy; <sup>2</sup>Cystic Fibrosis Center, Fondazione Istituto di Ricovero e Cura a Carattere Scientifico Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico, Milan, Italy

**Background:** A high prevalence of abnormalities and fluctuation in liver function tests (LFTs) have been reported in people with cystic fibrosis

(PwCF) that may be a confounder when monitoring CF transmembrane conductance regulator (CFTR) modulator safety. Triple combination of elxacaftor/tezacaftor/ivacaftor (ELX/TEZ/IVA) can induce mild, transient increases in LFT results and, much more rarely, clinically relevant drug-induced liver injury with jaundice and even irreversible decompensation, especially in patients with advanced liver disease. Thus, close monitoring and specific thresholds to decrease dosing or to discontinue medication have been recommended. The aim of this study was to characterize the emergence of abnormalities on LFTs in PwCF after initiation of ELX/TEZ/IVA and to evaluate those considered clinically relevant.

**Methods:** After approval in Italy in July 2021, ELX/TEZ/IVA was started in 56 PwCF at the reference CF center of the Lombardia region. LFTs were prospectively conducted before and 1, 3, and 6 months after starting ELX/TEZ/IVA. Alanine transaminase (ALT), gamma-glutamyl transferase (GGT), and total bilirubin were measured and expressed as multiples of the upper limit of normality (ULN). Incidence rates (per 100 patient-months) of LFT elevation (>ULN) were computed in patients with normal pretreatment LFT results, and rates of further increments in LFT were computed in those with abnormal pretreatment LFT.

**Results:** Fifty-six patients were included (27 male; 25 F508del homozygous; median age 20, range 13–36); 18 patients had pretreatment values of ALT, GGT, or bilirubin greater than the ULN, four had cirrhosis, which was associated with portal hypertension in two. Thirty-eight patients were followed for 6 months, 17 for at least 3 months, and one for 1 month. Table 1 reports the number, rates, and corresponding 95% confidence intervals of high LFT results in patients with normal pretreatment LFT and increments above pretreatment values in patients with abnormal pretreatment LFT. During follow-up, ALT values more than three times as high as the ULN were observed in three patients, GGT values more than three times as high as the ULN in one patient, and bilirubin values more than twice as high as the ULN in four patients, all except one with concomitant Gilbert syndrome. None discontinued treatment, although three reduced ELX/TEZ/IVA dose. Most LFT elevations occurred within the first month of treatment and remained above the ULN thereafter.

**Conclusions:** LFT elevations after ELX/TEZ/IVA introduction is a relatively frequent adverse event but does not appear to be clinically relevant in most cases, even in patients with advanced liver disease. Longer follow-up is needed to have a clear picture of the safety of ELX/TEZ/IVA.