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Recombinant NAGLU-IGF2 prevents physical and neurological disease and improves survival in Sanfilippo B syndrome

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Abstract

Recombinant human alpha-*N*-acetylglucosaminidase-insulin-like growth factor-2 (rhNAGLU-IGF2) is an investigational enzyme replacement therapy for Sanfilippo B, a lysosomal storage disease. Because recombinant human NAGLU (rhNAGLU) is poorly mannose 6-phosphorylated, we generated a fusion protein of NAGLU with IGF2 to permit its binding to the cation-independent mannose 6-phosphate receptor. We previously administered rhNAGLU-IGF2 intracerebroventricularly to Sanfilippo B mice, and demonstrated therapeutic restoration of NAGLU, normalization of lysosomal storage, and improvement in markers of neurodegeneration and inflammation. Here, we studied repeated intracerebroventricular rhNAGLU-IGF2 delivery in both murine and canine Sanfilippo B to determine potential effects on their behavioral phenotypes and survival. Treated mice showed improvement in disease markers such as heparan sulfate glycosaminoglycans, beta-hexosaminidase, microglial activation, and lysosomal-associated membrane protein-1. Sanfilippo B mice treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 displayed partial normalization of their stretch attend postures, a defined fear pose in mice ($p<0.001$). We found an improved rotarod performance in Sanfilippo B mice treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 compared to vehicle-treated Sanfilippo B mice ($p=0.002$). We also found a 61% increase in survival in Sanfilippo B mice treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 (mean 53w, median 48w) compared to vehicle-treated Sanfilippo B mice (mean 33w, median 37w; $p<0.001$). In canine Sanfilippo B, we found that rhNAGLU-IGF2 administered into cerebrospinal fluid normalized HS and beta-hexosaminidase activity in gray and white matter brain regions. Proteomic analysis of cerebral cortex showed restoration of protein expression levels in pathways relevant to cognitive, synaptic, and lysosomal functions. These data suggest that treatment with rhNAGLU-IGF2 may improve the phenotype of Sanfilippo B disease.

Keywords: mucopolysaccharidosis, enzyme replacement therapy, glycosaminoglycan, proteomics, lysosomal storage disease

Introduction

Lysosomal storage diseases are a heterogenous group of inherited disorders characterized by accumulation of undegraded substrates within lysosomes. Typically, these disorders are caused by an inability to perform an enzymatic reaction, often due to deficiency in the production or function of a lysosomal hydrolase. Sanfilippo (types A-D) is collectively one of the most common lysosomal storage diseases, with incidence estimates ranging from 1 in 25,000 to 100,000.[1,2] Approximately fifteen percent of Sanfilippo disease is type B (*1*). The lysosomal storage material in Sanfilippo syndromes is the glycosaminoglycan heparan sulfate. The disease is associated with progressive neurodegeneration, typically with onset in early childhood (*2*). In the clinic, soluble lysosomal hydrolases are available in recombinant form for some types of lysosomal storage disease, and may be delivered by repeated infusion into the bloodstream or into the cerebrospinal fluid (*3-9*). However, no therapeutic options are currently approved for Sanfilippo syndrome.

To function as a therapeutic enzyme, a recombinant lysosomal hydrolase requires appropriate post-translational modification including glycosylation with mannose 6-phosphate (M6P) (*10*). Mannose 6-phosphate residues bind to mannose 6-phosphate receptors (M6PRs) expressed on the endosomal-lysosomal membrane, and results in transport of the enzyme from the Golgi apparatus to the lysosome, where it is active and catabolizes substrate in the acidic environment of this organelle. M6PRs are also present on the plasma membrane and mediate the endocytosis and subsequent trafficking of properly modified lysosomal enzymes from the extracellular milieu to the lysosome. One of the lysosomal hydrolases, the enzyme alpha-*N*-acetyl-glucosaminidase (NAGLU) that is responsible for Sanfilippo B syndrome (or mucopolysaccharidosis type IIIB, MPS IIIB), is not properly processed when produced recombinantly (*11, 12*). A fusion protein that contains the therapeutic enzyme (recombinant human NAGLU; rhNAGLU) plus a peptide fragment of IGF2, which can bind the cation-independent M6PR, forming rhNAGLU-IGF2 demonstrated improved intracellular uptake and reduction of lysosomal storage in Sanfilippo B fibroblasts (*13*). Using a mouse model, intracerebroventricular (ICV) delivery of rhNAGLU-IGF2 demonstrated therapeutic restoration of NAGLU, normalization of lysosomal storage, and dramatic improvement in markers of neurodegeneration and glial activation (*14*). Neonatal administration of rhNAGLU-IGF2 showed a treatment effect that lasted more than four weeks after a single ICV dose (*15*). A commercial form of rhNAGLU-IGF2 has reached clinical trials (*16-18*).

Recombinant enzymes delivered into cerebrospinal fluid can penetrate into deep brain structures and improve neuropathology in preclinical studies (*19-22*), and there is one recombinant therapeutic enzyme approved for intracerebroventricular administration in patients for the late-infantile form of neuronal ceroid lipofuscinosis (CLN2 disease) (*8*). Here, we studied the effect of intracerebroventricular rhNAGLU-IGF2 on behavior and survival in Sanfilippo B mice and studied effects upon biochemistry and proteomic profile of the brain of neonatal Sanfilippo B dogs.

Methods

Mouse model: *Naglu*-/- mice (B6.129S6-*Naglu^{tm1Efn/J}*, backbred onto the C57BL6/J strain for at least 10 generations) were produced by crossing -/- male mice with +/- female mice, thus generating approximately 50% affected progeny. Mice received research grade rhNAGLU-IGF2 (100 µg), rhNAGLU (100 µg), or an equivalent volume (~5 µl) of vehicle (artificial cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)) in the left lateral ventricle beginning at PND 2 by manual injection. At four weeks of age, mice were cannulated into the left ventricle, and the infusion of enzyme/vehicle was given via cannulae at 28-day intervals until 16 weeks of age. To prevent hypersensitivity reactions, mice received premedication with diphenhydramine 5 mg/kg intraperitoneally 15 min prior to infusions. Research grade rhNAGLU-IGF2, rhNAGLU, and vehicle were provided by BioMarin Pharmaceutical, Inc. (Novato, CA). Experimental personnel were blinded as to treatment of either therapeutic enzymes or vehicle (coded "1, 2 or 3"). All animal experiments were approved by the institutional animal use committees at the Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center (now the Lundquist Institute) in Torrance, CA, and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, MO.

Auditory-evoked brainstem response (ABR) and electroretinography (ERG): ABR were performed as described (*23*) using Tucker-Davis Technologies System 3 Complete ABR/OAE Workstation equipped with a flashlamp system and Medusa RA16 preamplifier and headstage, and a Hewlett-Packard PC computer running SigGen and BioSig software (Tucker-Davis Technologies, Alachua FL). Stimuli at each frequency and level were presented 1,000 times at 20/sec. The minimum sound pressure level required for detection of a response was determined using a 5 dB minimum step size. Flash ERG was performed as described previously (*23-25*). Flash ERG measurements were recorded on a Tucker-Davis System 3 Complete ABR/OAE Workstation (Tucker-Davis Technologies, Alachua, FL, USA) and analyzed using BioSig software. Mice were dark-adapted for 2h to obtain a mixed rod/cone ERG, determined from the average response to 5–10 presentations of light at 0.1 Hz. Mice were light-adapted for 20 min to obtain a pure cone ERG, obtained by measuring the average response following 50 light flashes at a frequency of 1 Hz. Comparisons were made of the b-wave amplitudes in nanovolts from the best of three measurements of each of the light-adapted and dark-adapted responses.

Behavior: Male Sanfilippo B "mutant" mice and male carrier" mice were used for behavioral assessment at the UCLA Behavior Core. Elevated plus maze, novel object recognition, and social interaction tests were performed at the UCLA Behavioral Testing Core as previously described (*26*). The final infusion dose was given at 16 weeks of age, then infusion cannulae were removed before behavioral testing at 16-20 weeks of age was performed. Mice in these experiments were male and the implantation of cannulae prevented them from being caged with other males. To prevent confounding of behavioral experiments due to social isolation, these males were cohoused with a female companion and permitted to breed. This cohort of mice was euthanized at 20 weeks old following behavioral assessments.

Cohorts of mice of both sexes were studied at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. Activity in an open field was assessed at 22 weeks of age over 24 h in a rectangular polystyrene enclosure surrounded by photobeams monitored by computer software (MotorMonitor, Kinder Scientific, Poway, CA) (*27*). Testing consisted first of a 12 h block with the room lights off ("dark") and ended with a 12 h block with the room lights on ("light"). Mice had access to food and water *ad libitum* during testing. Outcome measures included number of

rearing events, distance traveled, and time spent resting. To test motor coordination (vestibular and cerebellar function), animals were tested on a rotarod (UGO Basile, Verese, Italy) at 32 and 40 weeks as described (*23*). Briefly, a rocking paradigm with reversal of direction of rotation after each full turn at 10 rpm for 3 minutes was executed for 3 consecutive days at 32 and 40 weeks of age. For each time point, training was provided for 2 consecutive days with 3 trials each day and 20 minutes of rest between each trial. Testing occurred on the third consecutive day and the length of time each mouse remained on the rod was recorded for all three trials and averaged. The mice were euthanized at 40 weeks old following behavioral assessments.

Survival: In the survival experiment mutant mice were given monthly infusion starting at PND2 with vehicle (8 males, 8 females) or rhNAGLU-IGF2 (8 males, 8 females) as well as carrier mice given vehicle (3 males, 13 females) or rhNAGLU-IGF2 (8 males, 8 females). The survival experiment was carried to humane endpoints and terminated with the death of the last treated mutant mice.

Biochemical assays: A subset of mice were used for biochemical analysis. Brains, liver, and heart were removed. Spinal cords were removed by ejection. Tissues were frozen on dry ice and stored at -80 °C until assay. NAGLU activity and total hexosaminidase activity were quantified using 4-methylumbelliferyl assays as previously described (*15*). Briefly the enzymatic activity of NAGLU and NAGLU–IGF2 was determined by hydrolysis of the fluorogenic substrate, 4-methylumbelliferyl-*N*-acetyl-α-glucosaminide, obtained from CalBiochem (now EMD Millipore Chemicals) or Toronto Research Chemicals, with minor modifications of a published protocol, using 1.0 mM substrate in the incubation mixture (*28*). Enzymatic activity of beta-hexosaminidase (combined A and B isoforms) was determined by hydrolysis of 4-methylumbelliferyl-*N*-acetyl-β-glucosaminide (EMD Millipore Chemicals, Darmstadt, Germany) using 1.25 mM substrate in the incubation mixture. For both enzymes, a unit of activity is defined as release of 1 nmol of 4-methylumbelliferone (4MU) per hour. Protein concentration was estimated by the Bradford method, using bovine serum albumin as a standard.

Analysis of heparan sulfate was performed by BioMarin Pharmaceutical (mouse tissues) or the UC San Diego GlycoAnalytics Core (canine tissues) as described previously (*29*). Tissues were homogenized and digested overnight with Pronase (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO) in phosphate-buffered at 37 °C and centrifuged at 14,000 rpm for 20 min. The supernatant was passed through a DEAE column, and the bound GAG was eluted with 2 M NaCl. The GAG was then desalted on PD10-size exclusion column, and purified GAG was lyophilized. Dried GAG disaccharides were dissolved in aniline and reacted with freshly prepared sodium cyanoborohydride solution in a dimethyl sulfoxide/acetic acid mixture (7:3, v/v). Reactions were carried out at 65 °C for 1 h followed by 37 °C for 16 h. The samples were then dried using a speed vacuum at room temperature. Aniline-tagged disaccharides were separated on a C18 column using an ion pairing solvent mixture and analyzed by mass spectrometry in negative ion mode.

Immunostaining: Mice were anesthetized with isoflurane and perfused transcardially with heparinized PBS followed by 4% paraformaldehyde in neutral PBS. After post-fixation in this solution for an additional 48 hours, the brains were removed and cryoprotected in 30% sucrose in 50 mM tris buffered saline, pH=7.6. Spinal cords were divided into cervical, thoracic and lumbosacral blocks, and 40µm coronal sections were cut throughout the cervical block on a Thermofisher HM430 freezing microtome (Thermofisher). A one in six series of 40 µm coronal brain sections from each mouse and a one in forty-eight series of spinal cord sections from each

mouse were stained on Superfrost Plus slides using a modified immunofluorescence protocol for
the following antibodies: rat anti-mouse CD68, 1:400 (Bio-Rad, Hercules, CA, cat # MCA1957),
rabbit anti-LAMP1, 1:400 (Abcam, Cambridge, MA, cat# Ab24170). The intensity of
immunostaining was assessed using a semi-automated thresholding image analysis method, as
described previously, using Image Pro-Premier software (MediaCybernetics, Chicago, IL) (*30*).
Unbiased optical fractionator counts of the number of Nissl-stained ventral horn neurons from
the cervical spine were obtained as described previously (*30, 31*), using StereoInvestigator
software (Microbrightfield, MBF Bioscience, Williston, VT) and a design-based optical
fractionator method. A one in forty-eight series of 40µm coronal spinal cord sections from each
mouse were stained with cresyl fast violet (Brand, City). Cells were sampled with counting
frames (70 × 40 µm) distributed over a sampling grid of 150 × 150 µm superimposed over the
region of interest at 100 × magnification. Some vehicle-treated mutant and carrier control
samples had undergone ex vivo imaging and were therefore not suitable for Nissl staining, so
age-matched, untreated, mutant and carrier control mice were used.

Retinal histology: Eyes were obtained mice and immersion fixed in 2% glutaraldehyde/4%
formaldehyde in PBS. Samples were embedded in Epon-Araldite resin and sectioned into 1-
micron-thick sections and stained with toluidine blue as described (*23*). After careful alignment
of orientation, the retinal thickness and the thickness of each layer were measured using ImageJ
(*32*). Each measurement (e.g., length of outer nuclear layer, length of rods and cones layer, etc.)
was performed in triplicate in ten locations along the axis of the eye for each mouse and the
results averaged for each mouse.

Canine model: This work was performed in accordance with the *Guide for the Care and Use of*
Laboratory Animals and approved by the Iowa State University institutional Animal Care and
Use Committee (IACUC). Affected dogs were anesthetized and a 22-gauge needle inserted into
the cisterna magna. CSF (0.2 to 0.5 ml) was collected free-flowing. A syringe was attached to the
needle hub to deliver rhNAGLU-IGF2 at 1 week of age and again at 4 weeks of age (in sterile
saline, total volume 300 µl at 1 week and 700 µl at 4 weeks). Dogs were euthanized at 8 weeks
of age (4 weeks after the second dose). Dose was calculated per estimated brain weight. At one
week of age, canine brains are roughly 1/38 of body weight, and the administered dose was 400
mg rhNAGLU-IGF2/kg brain, or approximately 7 mg. For a 2.5 kg four week-old pup, in which
brain weight is 1/60 of body weight, the dose was approximately 17 mg. Control group animals
were not treated. At necropsy, terminal CSF and blood were collected, and dogs were perfused
with chilled PBS and brains removed. Brains were sliced coronally into 4 mm slabs using a pre-
chilled, stainless steel canine brain matrix (ASI Instruments) as described elsewhere (*33*). A 3
mm biopsy punch was used to collect samples from cerebral gray matter, cerebral white matter,
caudate, and cerebellar vermis. Samples were snap-frozen in an isopentane bath on dry ice.

Proteomics Snap-frozen canine samples (approximately 1x1x0.4 cm) from a parasagittal gyrus,
including gray matter and subcortical white matter were analyzed by LC/MS/MS at Caltech.
Protein lysates from canine brain cortex samples were prepared using Thermo EasyPrep Mini
MS Sample Prep Kit (cat# A4006). Protein concentrations were determined using Bradford (Bio-
Rad) and 100 µg total protein from each sample were prepared for mass spectrometry acquisition
using Thermo EasyPep Mini MS Sample Prep Kit. After determining peptide concentrations by
Pierce Quantitative Fluorometric Peptide Assay (cat# 23290), 20 µg peptide from each sample
was labeled with TMT10plex Isobaric Label Reagent Set (ThermoFisher Scientific, cat#
A37725) following to the manufacture's instruction. Labeled samples were combined and dried

using vacuum centrifugation. Samples were then separated into 8 fractions using the High pH
reversed-phase peptide Fractionation Kit (ThermoFisher Scientific, cat# 84868). The fractions
were dissolved with 0.1% formic acid and peptide concentration was determined with
Quantitative Colorimetric Peptide Assay (ThermoFisher Scientific, cat# 23275).

TMT labeling LC-MS/MS experiments were performed using an EASY-nLC 1000 connected to
an Orbitrap Eclipse Tribrid mass spectrometer (Thermo Scientific). 0.5 μg of each fraction was
loaded onto an Aurora AUR2-25075C18A UHPLC Column (IonOpticks, Fitzroy, Australia) and
separated over 131 min at a flow rate of 0.4 μL/min with the following gradient: 2-6% Solvent B
(2 min), 6-22% B (78 min), 22-50% B (40 min), 50-95% B (1 min), and 95% B (10 min).
Solvent A consisted of 97.8% H_2O, 2% ACN, and 0.2% formic acid, and solvent B consisted of
19.8% H_2O, 80% ACN, and 0.2% formic acid. An MS1 scan was acquired in the Orbitrap at
120k resolution with a scan range of 400-1600 m/z. The AGC target was 1×10^6, and the
maximum injection time was 50 ms. Dynamic exclusion was set to exclude features after 1 time
for 60 s with a 10-ppm mass tolerance. MS2 scans were acquired with CID activation type with
the IonTrap. The isolation window was 0.7 m/z, the collision energy was 35%, the maximum
injection time was 35 ms and the AGC target was 1×10^4. MS3 scans were acquired with HCD
activation type in the Orbitrap at 60k resolution with a scan range of 100-500 m/z. The isolation
window was 0.7 m/z, the collision energy was 65%, the maximum injection time was 118 ms
and the AGC target was 2.5×10^5. Ion source settings were as follows: ion source type, NSI;
spray voltage, 2300 V; ion transfer tube temperature, 300°C. System control and data collection
were performed by Xcalibur software (ThermoFisher Scientific).

Data analysis: Graphs were produced on GraphPad Prism (version 9 or 9.1; GraphPad Software,
San Diego, CA) or SigmaPlot version 14.0 (Systat Software Inc., San Jose, CA). Linear
regression was performed using SigmaPlot. Statistical analysis of continuous variables was
performed on Stata (version 16 or 17) or GraphPad Prism using ANOVA (if normal
distribution), or if non-normal using Mann-Whitney. The proteomic data processing was
performed through Proteome Discoverer 2.4 (ThermoFisher Scientific) using Uniprot canine
database and the SequestHT with Percolator validation (*34, 35*). Normalization was performed
relative to the total peptide amount. Further analyses were performed as below: limma analyses
were performed using R studio following the user guide (*36*); volcano plot was generated with
Origin 2019b; DE proteins were tested for enrichment analysis using g:Profiler (*37*) and plotted
with Prism 7 (GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA); heatmaps were generated with Prism 7.

Results

Lysosomal storage: Male and female mice received ICV injections of rhNAGLU-IGF2, rhNAGLU, or vehicle at PND2. They were cannulated at 4 weeks of age and received therapeutic enzyme or vehicle via cannulae at monthly intervals until 16 weeks of age and euthanized 4 weeks later. Brain and heart showed a reduction in HS that reached statistical significance for each treatment group compared to vehicle-treated Sanfilippo B mice (p<0.001, **Fig. 1**). All intergroup differences were statistically significant by ANOVA. There was some residual NAGLU enzymatic activity detected in mouse brains in both treatment groups despite the 28-day interval from the final dose and tissue collection (**Supplemental Table S1**). Similar to previous studies, we found a reduction in the disease-associated marker beta-hexosaminidase in brain, liver, heart, and spinal cord of mice treated with rhNAGLU (p=0.0016) or rhNAGLU-IGF2 (p<0.001) compared to vehicle-treated Sanfilippo B mice (**Table 1**).

We also found decreased immunoreactivity for CD68, a marker of activated microglia, and LAMP1, a marker of lysosomes, in the primary somatosensory cortex (S1BF) and striatum (caudate and putamen) of mice treated with rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2 (**Figs. 2 and 3**). Carrier mice treated with rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2 did not differ from vehicle-treated carrier mice in LAMP1 or CD68 immunostaining in either brain region (not shown).

Spinal cord. Neuron counts of cervical spinal ventral horn were performed in a subset of mice. Sanfilippo B mice showed 18% lower mean estimated neuron counts compared to carrier controls (p=0.021, **Fig. 4**). Mice treated with rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2 showed mean neuron counts that were not significantly different from carrier mice. The treated mice in both groups showed higher spinal neuron counts compared to untreated Sanfilippo B mice, and this reached statistical significance for mice treated with rhNAGLU (p=0.014) but not rhNAGLU-IGF2 (p=0.088).

Sanfilippo B mice showed increased CD68 staining compared to normal controls suggestive of activated microglia in cervical, thoracic, and lumbar gray matter of the spinal cord (**Supplemental Figure S1**). CD68 staining for activated macrophages in cervical spinal gray matter of Sanfilippo B mice showed consistent increases in the spinal cord dorsal and ventral horns compared to heterozygous normal mice or mice treated with rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2 (**Fig. 5**). Similarly, LAMP1 immunostaining of the cervical spinal gray matter of Sanfilippo B mice showed increased staining qualitatively and quantitatively by threshold analysis of immunofluorescence signal in dorsal and ventral horns of the spinal cord compared to unaffected carrier mice (**Fig. 5**). Quantification of both markers in mice treated with rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2 showed levels of immunostaining that were similar to those of unaffected carrier mice, with no significant differences in immunoreactivity between groups of mice treated with rhNAGLU and rhNAGLU-IGF2. Carrier mice treated with rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2 did not differ from vehicle-treated carrier mice in LAMP1 or CD68 immunostaining (not shown).

Behavior: Male Sanfilippo B and control mice were treated with rhNAGLU, rhNAGLU-IGF2, or vehicle from PND2 to 16 weeks as described in the methods. We previously found that Sanfilippo B mice show reduced measures associated with fear in mice, as evidenced by decreased stretch attend postures on the elevated plus maze (*26*). This difference between normal

and Sanfilippo B mice was again seen here (**Fig. 4**), with a more normal number of stretch attend postures in Sanfilippo B mice treated with either rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2.

We did not find significant intergroup differences between vehicle-treated Sanfilippo B mice and controls in radial arm maze performance, social interaction testing, dark/light activity, or novel object recognition testing, such that these measures were not informative in assessing a therapeutic response (**Supplemental Figures S2-S6**).

Survival: Sanfilippo B and control mice were treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 or vehicle (four groups; **Fig. 6**). The experiment was terminated after the last vehicle-treated mutant mouse died. Results indicate a 58% increase in survival in Sanfilippo B mice treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 (mean 52w, median 48w) compared to vehicle-treated Sanfilippo B mice (mean 33w, median 37w; $p<0.001$). Causes of death and other adverse events (mainly loss of cannulae and reimplantation) are described in **Supplemental Table S3**.

Motor Coordination: Rotarod testing was performed in these mice at age 32 and 40 weeks, and results are shown in **Fig. 7**. Sanfilippo B mice treated with vehicle showed slightly reduced rotarod performance at 32 weeks ($p=0.0026$), with further worsening at 40 weeks ($p=0.004$). Sanfilippo B mice treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 showed improved rotarod performance compared to vehicle-treated Sanfilippo B mice. Performance of the enzyme-treated mice was similar to normal mice at age 32 weeks. At 40 weeks, treated mice performed significantly better than vehicle-treated Sanfilippo B mice ($p=0.002$), but were also significantly different from unaffected carrier controls ($p=0.006$). One Sanfilippo B mouse treated with vehicle and one carrier mouse treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 died between weeks 32 and 40.

Hearing and vision. Acoustic brainstem responses did not show intergroup differences between Sanfilippo B mice and unaffected carrier mice (**Supplemental Figure S7**). Electroretinographs showed retinopathy in Sanfilippo B mice that persisted despite treatment with rhNAGLU-IGF2 (**Fig. 8**). Cross-sectional analysis of the thickness of different layers of the retina post-mortem showed reduced thickness in Sanfilippo B mice compared to carrier controls, which reached statistical significance for the inner plexiform layer, outer nuclear layer, and rods and cones (uncorrected p-values 0.040, 0.008, and 0.038, respectively). Mice treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 showed increased thickness of the individual retinal layers, reaching statistical significance for the outer nuclear layer (uncorrected p value 0.035).

Canine studies: This is naturally-occurring canine model of MPS IIIB, first identified in Schipperke dogs, which provides advantages of a larger, more complex brain in which to test therapeutic enzymes (*38, 39*). In this experiment, three Sanfilippo B dogs received two doses of rhNAGLU-IGF2 (~7 mg at 1 week and ~17 mg at 4 weeks of age) into the cerebrospinal fluid at the cisterna magna and were euthanized at 8 weeks of age, four weeks following the second and final dose. Three untreated Sanfilippo B dogs and three untreated carrier dogs were used as controls. Sanfilippo B dogs showed increased HS and beta-hexosaminidase levels in most brain regions compared to controls (**Fig. 9**). These disease-associated changes were reduced essentially to normal levels in treated animals, even in deeper regions of brain such as white matter and caudate nucleus. Some NAGLU activity was detected in brain tissue despite a four-week interval from the date of the final rhNAGLU-IGF2 dose and tissue collection (**Supplemental Table S3**).

Proteomic analysis was performed on cerebral cortical samples of each animal at the Chou lab as described in the Methods (**Fig. 10**). Tandem mass tag (TMT) 10-plexed labelling was employed

to evaluate the proteomic changes in Sanfilippo B mutant animals. Specifically, we prepared
three independent biological wild type (CAR), Sanfilippo B (MUT) and rhNAGLU-IGF2-treated
Sanfilippo B (ERT) canine brain cortex samples. The TMT labeled samples were pooled and
further fractionated into 8 fractions and analyzed with the RTS-SPS-MS3 method(*40*). A total of
5806 proteins were identified, and 4442 of these proteins were quantified across all 9 samples
(**Supplemental Table S4**). We identified 309 proteins that demonstrated significantly different
quantities ($p < 0.05$) between the untreated Sanfilippo B (MUT) and wild type (CAR) samples
(**Supplemental Table S5**) by limma analysis. Among them, a set of 41 proteins with $\log_2$ (fold
change) >0.5 (up-regulated) or <-0.5 (down-regulated) was classified as the final differentially
expressed proteins (DEPs) (**Fig. 10A, Supplemental Table S6**). Subsequently, functional
enrichment analysis was performed on these 41 DEPs. The top four relevant changed cellular
components in the significantly enriched GO terms and top four changed KEGG or REAC
functional pathways are presented in **Fig. 10B**. The GO: CC analysis showed these DEPs were
mainly located at lysosome, secretory granule, extracellular matrix, and in vesicles. Pathway
analysis indicated the DEPs primarily related to Glycosaminoglycan degradation, Keratan sulfate
degradation, Neutrophil degranulation, and Innate Immune System. As shown in **Fig. 10C**, ERT
therapy reversed several proteins that were down-regulated in mutant animals compared to
carrier controls, such as DPP7 and CALB2. Notably, most of the elevated protein expression
seen in Sanfilippo B canines were reversed by ERT, including GNS, LAMP1, HEXB, and CD63,
among others. These results provide valuable insights for identifying novel hallmarks of
lysosomal diseases and therapeutic targets for Sanfilippo B.

Discussion

Early treatment of lysosomal disease is necessary for maximum therapeutic effect. Here, we demonstrated that early treatment of Sanfililppo B mice and dogs with ICV enzyme replacement therapy corrects biochemical abnormalities, neuropathology, behavior, and survival. Our behavioral assessments were designed to separately evaluate the behaviors that might be impacted by physical disease, such as motor activity and balance, from behaviors that are primarily representative of altered central nervous system function, such as fear behavior. We found evidence that rhNAGLU-IGF2 administration improved survival, physical disease, and fear behavior in Sanfilippo B mice.

The IGF2 peptide was included to provide uptake of NAGLU via the IGF2-MPR, because rhNAGLU (unlike naturally-occurring NAGLU) lacks mannose 6-phosphate. Uptake and targeting via the MPR is an essential property of lysosomal enzymes. Neuronal cell lines cultured *in vitro* rely on M6PRs for intracellular uptake, suggesting that treating these disease-critical cells requires the use of this system (*15, 41, 42*). However, in this case we did not find a therapeutic advantage to ICV rhNAGLU-IGF2 compared to rhNAGLU, although direct comparison was limited in our study. A possible explanation for our findings is that the chosen dose and/or frequency did not reveal differences between the efficacy of rhNAGLU and rhNAGLU-IGF2 that might otherwise have been apparent. If the dose and frequency were higher than necessary, nonspecific enzyme uptake would be expected to occur and possibly eliminate the predicted differences between the native and fusion protein forms of enzyme. Alternatively, if the dose were too low, microglial and perivascular cell uptake could have been predominant in both the rhNAGLU and rhNAGLU-IGF2-treated groups. We previously demonstrated *in vivo* in a murine model of Sly syndrome (mucopolysaccharidosis type VII) that glycosaminoglycan levels and secondary enzyme elevations can be significantly reduced in the absence of any demonstrable cellular enzyme uptake ((*43*). *In vitro* and *in vivo* studies of Sanfilippo B and other lysosomal disorders have demonstrated that macrophage-lineage cells do not depend entirely on M6PRs to engulf material from the extracellular milieu (*44, 45*), and this has also been observed for mouse microglial cells incubated with rhNAGLU (*41*). In this scenario, both rhNAGLU and rhNAGLU-IGF2 would have treated mainly these glial cells and not sufficiently treated the neurons directly, resulting in a phenotypic improvement corresponding to correction in glial and other supportive cells only. Even with enzymes that are well mannose 6-phosphorylated, such as recombinant human alpha-L-iduronidase (for Hurler syndrome also known as MPS I) for example, distribution studies of intravenously administered enzyme showed preferential localization in sinusoidal cells with lesser staining appearing in hepatocytes. There could be a "threshold effect" at work, in which saturating macrophage-lineage cells is necessary prior to sufficient uptake into the target cells. It is not clear whether rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2 were taken up into neurons *in vivo* in the brain during the experiments described here, because we were not able to assess biodistribution in our studies for the reasons described above. Previously published studies of rhNAGLU-IGF2 did show staining for NAGLU in neurons (*14*), but the dosing interval for that study was higher – four doses in two weeks – compared to the monthly dosing used here. If monthly dose and frequency of administration of rhNAGLU-IGF2 was inadequate to treat neurons yet sufficient to induce behavioral improvements, this implies that our phenotypic read-outs in Sanfilippo B mice are not sufficient to measure the neurological disease process and the impact of treatment upon this.

Besides enzyme replacement therapy, another approach in development is gene therapy
to deliver the coding sequence for *NAGLU* as a theoretically permanent means of correction.
Studies of adeno-associated viral vectors used to deliver NAGLU to Sanfilippo B mice show
improvements in HS, neuropathology, behavior, and survival that are similar to those reported
here for recombinant enzyme administration (*46, 47*). However, it is not known whether cells
that are transduced by viral vectors bearing the *NAGLU* transgene produce NAGLU that is
properly mannose 6-phosphorylated. Nevertheless, *in vitro* studies of NAGLU secreted by cells
transduced using adeno-associated viral vector-2 demonstrated that the secreted NAGLU was
able to correct intracellular HS accumulation as evidenced by an ^{35}SO$_4$ assay (*48*). These authors
did not study competitive inhibition of this effect by mannose 6-phosphate (*49*), so it is not clear
whether the enzyme used that receptor system for uptake. It is likely that the concentration of
enzyme that is required for correction of glycosaminoglycan accumulation is far lower than that
required to demonstrate intracellular uptake of active enzyme (*50*). Both rhNAGLU-IGF2 and
rhNAGLU were capable of reducing intracellular HS in human Sanfilippo B fibroblasts *in vitro*,
although 10-fold higher concentrations of rhNAGLU compared to rhNAGLU-IGF2 were
required to achieve this effect (*41*). To study mannose 6-phosphorylation of NAGLU in the
context of gene therapy, induced pluripotent stem cells derived from Sanfilippo B mouse
embryonic fibroblasts were transduced with lentivirus bearing the human *NAGLU* transgene
under a cytomegalovirus promoter (*51*). The supernatant from these cells was added to
Sanfilippo B patient fibroblasts in the presence or absence of mannose 6-phosphate. The study
demonstrated uptake of NAGLU from the supernatant of these lentiviral-modified cells into
Sanfilippo B fibroblasts that was nearly completely abolished with the addition of mannose 6-
phosphate to the media, suggesting that NAGLU produced by gene therapy may not suffer the
same post-translational processing issues as recombinant NAGLU enzyme produced by cells *in*
vitro, as was used in this study.

In this study, as well as in our previous studies, enzyme replacement therapy
administered into the cerebral ventricle improved heparan sulfate and beta-hexosaminidase
activity levels in the liver and heart. The importance of treating disease outside of the brain in
Sanfilippo B syndrome is not known. Cardiac involvement is described in patients, including
valvular heart disease, myocardial thickening, and arrhythmia (*52, 53*). The disease course is
progressive, and while currently cardiac involvement is not a driver of mortality or even major
symptoms due to Sanfilippo B syndrome, it seems probable that if neurological disease is
successfully treated any morbidity from heart disease would become more evident.
Cerebrospinal fluid bulk turnover occurs multiple times per day (approximately three times per
day in humans), and so it is expected that recombinant enzymes administered into the
cerebrospinal fluid would reach the blood circulatory system, albeit at a lower concentration,
from which they would be taken up by organs and tissues outside the central nervous system. It
is not known whether this approach of delivering enzymes to the cerebrospinal fluid in order to
treat both the central nervous system and the rest of the body would be sufficient, holistic
therapy for lysosomal diseases that affect body as well as brain.

Canine proteomic analysis revealed altered expression of lysosomal proteins, such as
elevation of alpha-*N*-acetylglucosamine-6-sulfatase (GNS), cathepsin D (CTSD), and beta-
hexosaminidase (HEXB). These results are not surprising, as lysosomal enzymes and other
proteins may show elevated activity levels in tissues of Sanfilippo B mice compared to controls.
Marked deficiency in the protein dipeptidyl peptidase 7 (DPP7), has not to our knowledge been

previously associated with Sanfilippo B syndrome. Dipeptidyl peptidase 7 is a serine protease that localizes to non-lysosomal vesicles and shows substrate specificity similar to that of the cell-surface protein dipeptidyl peptidase 4 (*54*). Interestingly, HS and heparin oligosaccharides may inhibit the activity of dipeptidyl peptidase 4 (*55*). Low expression of collagen type I alpha1 (COL1A1), collagen type I alpha2 (COL1A2), and fibulin 5 (FBLN5), proteins implicated in connective tissue disorders, was found in Sanfilippo B dogs compared to controls, with more normal expression in treated animals. Deficiency in collagen and fibulin is not known to be associated with Sanfilippo B syndrome, but COL1A1 and COL1A2 have been described in the glycosaminoglycan interactome (*56*).

Our study had a number of important limitations. First, the rhNAGLU-IGF2 that was available for our studies was not materially the same as the candidate that is currently in clinical trials. We do not know the differences in composition between the clinical candidate material and the research grade enzyme that we used here. Second, our studies were not designed to evaluate the biodistribution of either rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2 in the central nervous system. This is because our chosen study termination occurred four weeks after the final dose, following behavioral studies. The half-life of rhNAGLU-IGF2 in the brain was previously estimated at approximately seven days (*14*), although mice treated at postnatal day 1 or 2 showed elevated NAGLU activity at four weeks following a single ICV injection of rhNAGLU-IGF2 (*15*). However, the dose of enzyme (100 μg) was not increased as the mice grew (*15*), so that in this study little to no enzyme could be detected in the brain of these mice at four weeks after the final infusion. This limitation also meant that we were unable to determine the cellular distribution of the enzymes within tissues. Third, some behavioral assessments such as radial arm maze and social interaction test did not show intergroup differences between carriers and affected mice during this experiment, so that we could not use these tests to determine whether there was a therapeutic effect in treated cohorts. All the mice were cannulated, which may have affected their behavior and clearly limited the types of experiments we could conduct; for example, we were not able to perform Morris water maze testing in cannulated mice. Both control and treatment group experimental mice also underwent repeated sedation in order to dose vehicle or enzyme, and it was important to keep treatment as consistent as possible among groups. However, the repeated sedation events may have affected behavioral experiments and impacted overall survival, even in the otherwise healthy carrier mice.

Conclusions:

Long-term treatment with monthly intracerebroventricular rhNAGLU-IGF2 (research grade) showed a beneficial effect in Sanfilippo B mice. Significant intergroup differences were noted in survival, motor activity, stretch attend postures (fear behavior), and histological markers of microglial activation, and lysosomal substrate accumulation (HS, beta-hexosaminidase, LAMP1) between enzyme-treated and vehicle-treated Sanfilippo B mice. Whole tissue brain and heart HS levels were lower in Sanfilippo B mice treated with rhNAGLU compared to rhNAGLU-IGF2. We did not detect other intergroup differences between rhNAGLU and rhNAGLU-IGF2-treated mice in the outcome measures that we assessed in these experiments. Notably, our studies were not designed to assess NAGLU distribution, and only one experiment included treatment groups with both enzymes. Sanfilippo B dogs treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 showed less HS in brain and CSF compared to untreated affected controls, with beta-hexosaminidase activity normalized to

carrier levels in most cerebral areas including gray and white matter regions. Proteomics studies in cerebral cortex showed dysregulated pathways in Sanfilippo B dogs compared to carrier controls, with restoration of a more normal pattern in Sanfilippo B dogs treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2. These findings suggest that rhNAGLU-IGF2 administered into cerebrospinal fluid shows a beneficial effect on the Sanfilippo B phenotype in multiple species.

Acknowledgements:

P.I.D., J.T.D., M.S.S., and J.D.C. designed experiments and prepared the manuscript. S.Q.L., S.-h.K., M.S.R., and J.T.D. performed mouse experiments. S.Q.L, A.S., H.R.N., K.C., C.V. and J.D.C. performed histology including immunofluorescence and quantitative measurements. E.M.S., B.N.V., N.M.E., J.J., and J.D.S. performed canine experiments. F.W., S.L, S.Q.L., and T.F.C. performed enzyme assays and/or proteomics on canine tissues. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and support of Soila Sukipolvi, Irina Zhuravka, George Lopez, Ling Wang, Valentina Sanguez, and Catalina Guerra. BioMarin Pharmaceutical and Allievex provided vehicle, rhNAGLU, and rhNAGLU-IGF2. BioMarin provided HS measurement of mouse brain and heart tissues. We gratefully acknowledge Roger Lawrence and Brett Crawford for their specific assistance with these assays.

Conflicts of Interest:

BioMarin Pharmaceutical Inc and Allievex provided research materials for this study. Dr. Dickson receives research support from Genzyme and research materials from M6P Therapeutics.

Funding:

Research was supported by R01 NS088766 to P.I.D and Lundquist Institute for Research Innovation at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. The Washington University Animal Behavioral services are supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute Of Child Health & Human Development of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number P50 HD103525 to the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center at Washington University. A traineeship from 5T32 GM8243-28 (to S.-h.K.) The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health. The UCLA Behavioral Testing Core is supported by the UCLA Bioscience Core Funding Initiative. Immunofluorescence imaging was performed in part through the use of Washington University Center for Cellular Imaging (WUCCI) supported by Washington University School of Medicine, The Children's Discovery Institute of Washington University and St. Louis Children's Hospital (CDI-CORE-2015-505 and CDI-CORE-2019-813) and the Foundation for Barnes-Jewish Hospital (3770 and 4642).

Table 1. Beta-Hexosaminidase Activity in Mice (28 days post-dose)

	Brain 1+2	Brain 3	Brain 4	Brain 5+6	Spinal Cord	Liver	Heart
Mutant + Vehicle	3687 ± 244	3944 ± 280	3305 ± 112	2258 ± 276	2058 ± 273	3377 ± 907	1847 ± 296
Carrier + Vehicle	1318 ± 136	1420 ± 144	1307 ± 180	874 ± 220	746 ± 59.8	435 ± 35.6	190 ± 64.7
Mutant + NAGLU	1681 ± 173	1681 ± 67.6	1708 ± 106	955 ± 244	701 ± 74.3	755 ± 133	721 ± 335
Mutant + NAG-IGF2	2052 ± 265	1884 ± 321	1820 ± 320	1076 ± 258	706 ± 80.3	980 ± 307	858 ± 208

Values are means ± standard deviations and are expressed as units of activity per milligram protein in homogenized tissue. Brains were divided coronally and numbered rostral to caudal 1-6, with the 1st and 2nd combined and the 5th and 6th combined for the assay. NAG-IGF2: rhNAGLU-IGF2, NAGLU: rhNAGLU. All values in the rhNAGLU or rhNAGLU-IGF2-treated mutant mice were statistically significant compared with vehicle-treated mutant mice by Mann-Whitney.

 Figure Legends

Fig. 1. Heparan sulfate (HS) concentrations in the **(A)** brain and **(B)** heart of experimental mice
and controls. Mut: Sanfilippo B (*Naglu-/-*) mice. Car: heterozygous carrier (*Naglu +/-*) mice that
are expected to be phenotypically unaffected. NAG-IGF2: rhNAGLU-IGF2, NAGLU:
rhNAGLU. Mutant and Carrier control mice were treated with vehicle, and treatments and
vehicle were administered intracerebroventricularly as described in the methods. Units are
expressed in mg of wet weight, with means and standard deviation shown. N=8 per group.
Uncorrected p-value 0.0002 for Mut vs. Mut NAGLU or Mut NAG-IGF2 in both brain and heart
by Mann-Whitney.

Fig. 2. CD68 immunoreactivity in mouse brain. **(A-L)** Immunofluorescence staining with anti-
CD68 (green) in the primary somatosensory cortex (S1BF) and striatum (caudate and putamen)
in mice. Red boxes indicate insets for the panels below. Scalebar 100 μm in panels A-D and I-L.
Scalebar 500 μm in panels E-H. **(M-N)** Bar graphs depict means and standard deviations of
thresholding image analysis. N=4-9 per group. Uncorrected p-values show between-group
comparisons by Mann-Whitney**.** Mut (mutant): Sanfilippo B (*Naglu-/-*) mice. Car (carrier):
heterozygous (*Naglu +/-*) mice. NAGLU: rhNAGLU. NAG-IGF2: rhNAGLU-IGF2. Mutant
and Carrier control mice were treated with vehicle as described in the methods.

Fig. 3. LAMP1 immunoreactivity in mouse brain. **(A-H)** Immunofluorescence staining with anti-
LAMP1 (red) in the primary somatosensory cortex (S1BF) and striatum (caudate and putamen)
in mice. Scalebar 100 μm. **(I-J)** Bar graphs depict means and standard deviations of thresholding
image analysis. N=4-9 per group. Uncorrected p-values show between-group comparisons by
Mann-Whitney**.** Mut (mutant): Sanfilippo B (*Naglu-/-*) mice. Car (carrier): heterozygous (*Naglu*
+/-) mice. NAGLU: rhNAGLU. NAG-IGF2: rhNAGLU-IGF2. Mutant and Carrier control
mice were treated with vehicle as described in the methods.

Fig. 4. Neuron counts in mouse cervical spinal cord. Circles represent individual mice. Mut
(mutant): Sanfilippo B (*Naglu-/-*) mice. Car (carrier): heterozygous (*Naglu +/-*) mice. NAGLU:
rhNAGLU. NAG-IGF2: rhNAGLU-IGF2. Mutant and Carrier control mice were not treated
("No Tx"). Unadjusted p-values show pairwise comparisons by ANOVA.

Fig. 5. CD68 and LAMP1 immunostaining in mouse cervical spinal cord. **A**) Representative
immunofluorescence images of axial sections of spinal cord stained for LAMP1 and CD68 (10x
magnification). **B**) Box plots showing median, first and third quartiles, and range of
immunoreactivity (IR) in dorsal (upper panels) and ventral (lower panels) cervical cord. Dots
represent individual mice. Mut (mutant): Sanfilippo B (*Naglu-/-*) mice. Car (carrier):
heterozygous (*Naglu +/-*) mice. NAGLU: rhNAGLU. NAG-IGF2: rhNAGLU-IGF2. Mutant
and Carrier control mice were treated with vehicle as described in the methods. *p=0.0022 and
**p=0.0095 vs. Mut by Mann-Whitney (uncorrected).

Fig. 6. Fear and Survival. A) Count of stretch attend postures during testing on the elevated plus
maze. Mut (mutant): Sanfilippo B (*Naglu-/-*) mice. Car (carrier): heterozygous (*Naglu +/-*) mice.
NAGLU: rhNAGLU. NAG-IGF2: rhNAGLU-IGF2. Mutant and Carrier control mice were
treated with vehicle as described in the methods. Carrier mice treated with rhNAGLU or
rhNAGLU-IGF2 did not differ from carrier mice treated with vehicle (not shown). Each symbol
= one mouse, with means and s.e.m. shown; N=7-14 per group. Numbers above brackets indicate
uncorrected p-values by Mann-Whitney. B) Survival curves for Sanfilippo B mice (Mut) and

carrier controls (Car) treated with ICV vehicle (Veh) or rhNAGLU-IGF2 (NAG-IGF2) monthly
from PND 2. N=16 per group, males and females. p<0.001 Mut-Veh versus Mut-NAG-IGF2.

Fig. 7. Time to fall off rotarod in Carrier ("Car," *Naglu+/-*) and Mutant ("Mut," *Naglu-/-*) mice
treated with vehicle or rhNAGLU-IGF2 (NAG-IGF2) ICV monthly from PND 2. Mice were
studied at (**A**) 32 and (**B**) 40 weeks. Mut – Vehicle, n=12 at 32 weeks and n=11 at 40 weeks;
Mut – NAG-IGF2, n=13; Car – vehicle, n=20; Carrier – NAG-IGF2, n=10 at 32 weeks and n=9
at 40 weeks. Dots show individual mice, boxes outline the median, 25th and 75th centile, and
whiskers depict range. Numbers above brackets indicate p-values by Mann-Whitney.

Fig. 8. Retinal disease in Sanfilippo B mice. **A)** Electroretinogram (ERG) in Sanfilippo B mice
treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2 (filled symbols) or carrier mice treated with vehicle (open
symbols). **B**) Retinal thickness by layer in Sanfilippo B mice treated with rhNAGLU-IGF2
(NAG-IGF2). IPL: inner plexiform layer; INL: inner nuclear layer; OPL: outer plexiform layer;
ONL: outer nuclear layer; R&C: rods and cones. Mutant: Sanfilippo B (*Naglu-/-*) mice. Carrier:
heterozygous (*Naglu +/-*) mice. NAG-IGF2: rhNAGLU-IGF2. Mutant and Carrier control mice
were treated with vehicle as described in the methods.

Fig. 9. Canine Sanfilippo B. Sanfilippo B dogs (MUT) and carrier controls (CAR) were treated
with intra-cisternal rhNAGLU-IGF2 (ERT) or untreated at 1 and 4 weeks of age and euthanized
at 8 weeks (n=3 per group, both sexes). **(A)** Box plot of heparan sulfate (HS) in left cerebral gray
matter (CGM). **(B)** Box plot of heparan sulfate (HS) in CSF. **(C)** Regression curve showing HS
in cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) versus HS in CGM. Open circles represent individual animals. (D)
Beta-hexosaminidase in brain regions (means and standard deviation). CSO: centrum semiovale.
CN: caudate nucleus. CGM: cerebral gray matter. CWM: cerebral white matter.

Fig. 10. Proteomic analysis in canine Sanfilippo B. Experimental animals were the same as in
Fig. 9 and included heterozygous carriers (CAR), Sanfilippo B (MUT), and rhNAGLU-IGF2-
treated Sanfilippo B (ERT) groups. Proteins were analyzed from canine brain cortex. **(A)**
Volcano plot displaying the proteomic changes in Sanfilippo B mutant, n=3. **(B)** Functional
enrichment analysis of the differently expressed proteins affected by Sanfilippo B mutant. **(C)**
Heatmap displaying the scaled abundance of the differently expressed proteins affected by
Sanfilippo B mutant and rhNAGLU-IGF2 treatment.

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Figure 1

Figure 2

 Figure 3

778   Figure 4

780　　Figure 5

782   Figure 6

784   Figure 7

786   Figure 8