iFlpMosaics: A method for the ratiometric induction and high-throughput comparative analysis of mutant and wildtype cells

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In order to understand gene function, cells mutated for a gene need to be analysed and compared with normal cells. In most biomedical studies this comparative analysis is carried out with cells present in independent animals and therefore not experiencing the same microenvironment or epigenetic changes. Here we present a large set of new genetic tools and mouse lines that enable the Flp recombinase-dependent mosaic induction and single cell clonal tracking of multiple fluorescently labelled normal and Cre-mutant cells from distinct or the same progenitor cells. The induced cells can be profiled *in situ* by direct multispectral imaging, or by FACS and scRNA-seq. Since with these new tools normal and mutant cells are ratiometrically induced and multispectrally barcoded in the same temporal window and tissue microenvironment, they enable us to understand with higher accuracy and reliability how induced genetic mutations affect the biology of single cells, during tissue development, homeostasis or in disease.

Introduction

When a gene is deleted or mutated in a cell, it generates a cascade of events that may result in a significant change in a cell´s and surrounding tissue phenotype over time. Often scientists analyse mutant cells or tissues that carry genetic mutations for several days, weeks, months or even years and compare their phenotype with independent control cells or tissues of distinct non-mutant (control) animals. During the process of gene mutation to phenotypic manifestation or analysis, often the targeted and surrounding tissue biology changes significantly, which may interact with and change the final phenotype of the mutant cells. An example of this, is the conditional deletion or activation of genes important for vascular, neuronal or cancer development. Mutations that impact tissue function or development, frequently result in a change of the surrounding tissues. Since the non-targeted tissues that surround mutant cells are themselves the source of many biochemical factors, their abnormal

development or function results in the change of a key feedback mechanism that impacts the phenotype

of the mutant cells, in a non-cell-autonomous manner, and independently of the initially induced genetic

mutation itself (Hansen and Hippenmeyer, 2020; Hansen et al., 2022). This often generates secondary

mutant tissue phenotypes over time, that may confound the interpretation of the real or primary gene

function on a mutant cell phenotype.

Genetic mosaics are a particularly powerful research tool to overcome these problems because they

allow the study of genetic cell-autonomous effects when distinct mutant and control (wildtype) cells

arise from the same progenitor cells, and confront the same microenvironment, in the same tissue or

organism. In this case, the only difference between the cells used for comparative analysis is the induced

mutation in an otherwise identical organism, genetic background and tissue microenvironment.

Mouse models that allow the timed-induction of somatic genetic mosaics are therefore essential to

perform the accurate comparative analysis of how control and mutant cell phenotypes develop over

time in the same microenvironment. They also represent the only way to accurately study and model

biological processes involving sporadic somatic mutations and their effect on cell proliferation,

differentiation or competition.

In Drosophila, interchromosomal mitotic recombination associated with distinct tissue markers has been

widely used to induce and track genetic mosaics. A similar approach, named as MADM (mosaic

analysis with double markers), has been developed in mice allowing the labeling of control and mutant

(gene knockout) cells with different fluorescent markers (Contreras et al., 2021; Zong, 2014; Zong et

al., 2005). This method has the advantage of allowing the full correlation between the expression of a

given fluorescent marker and the genetic status (wildtype, heterozygous or knockout) of the locus

carrying the mutation significantly decreasing the rate of false positives or false negatives. However,

the method relies on difficult to achieve interchromosomal Cre-dependent recombination events, which

overall leads to the generation of very few clones of labelled control and mutant cells in a tissue

expressing the recombinase Cre. Due to the rare nature of the interchromosomal recombination events,

these genetic mosaics cannot be efficiently induced with tamoxifen-inducible CreERT2 lines, which

are weaker and only transiently active. In addition, this technology cannot be used in quiescent cells

and requires the chromosomal genetic linkage between the engineered MADM elements and another

gene mutation, which significantly complicates the required mouse breedings and genetics and limits

its general applicability. MADM is also not compatible with epistasis analysis requiring the

simultaneous loss-of-function of multiple genes present in distinct chromosomes, or with the immense

variety of existing floxed gain-of-function and loss-of-function alleles.

Given the higher complexity and limitations of MADM, the most widely used method to generate

conditional somatic genetic-mosaics in the mouse still involves the much simpler CreERT2-dependent

mosaic induction of floxed genes deletion. With this method, the location, timing and frequency of the

recombination events can be regulated by restricting the expression of CreERT2 to a given tissue, and

by varying the timing and dosage of the CreERT2 ligand tamoxifen. This much simpler and alternative

method needs the use of independent fluorescent reporters of Cre-recombination, in order to detect cells

having CreERT2 activity. However, several studies have shown that Cre-activity reporter alleles, only

accurately report recombination of themselves, and cannot be used to reliably report recombination of

existing floxed alleles (Fernandez-Chacon et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2013; Schmidt-Supprian and

Rajewsky, 2007). Though easier to implement than MADM, CreERT2-dependent genetic mosaic

approaches generate a high frequency of false positives and false negatives and should not be used to

perform mosaic genetics.

To overcome the limitations of current methods to generate genetic mosaics in mice, we have developed

iFlpMosaics. These consist in a large set of new genetic tools and mouse lines that enable FlpO or Dre-

recombinase-dependent-induction of multispectral and ratiometric mosaics of wildtype and mutant cells

in the same tissue of an animal. *iFlpMosaics* are compatible with the use of all existent floxed alleles

and can be induced in any tissue quiescent or progenitor cells. They also allow a much tighter control

over time of the frequency of genetic mosaicism. The multiple fluorescent labels match with high

certainty the genetic status of the cells, that can be either control/wildtype or mutant for one or several

genes. Since the multispectral and genetic barcoding of the cells is ratiometric, single-cell derived

mutant and wildtype clonal expansion and differentiation can be profiled with high accuracy directly *in*

situ through imaging or by FACS or scRNAseq. *iFlpMosaics* will greatly facilitate the induction and

analysis of somatic genetic mosaics and turn possible the understanding how an individual or

combinatorial set of genetic mutations affect the biology of single cells during tissue development,

regeneration or disease.

False positives and false negatives with Cre-dependent mosaic genetics

Given its simplicity, CreERT2 genetics is still the most frequently used technique to induce and

study single cell or tissue-specific genetic mosaics in mice. However, it is prone to induce a high

frequency of false positives and false negatives. False positives are defined as cells

recombining/expressing a reporter, and not having another independent floxed reporter or gene deleted.

Conversely, false negatives are defined as cells not having a specific reporter allele recombined, but

having another floxed reporter or gene deleted (Fig. 1a). The high frequency of false positive and false

negative cells has been previously reported (Fernandez-Chacon *et al.*, 2019; Liu *et al.*, 2013) but so far

no study has systematically quantified their occurrence for multiple reporter alleles and at different

CreERT2 induction rates or tamoxifen doses, that are frequently used in mosaic genetics. In order to do

this, we decided to analyse several independent mice containing multiple Rosa26 reporters that could

allow us to detect false positives or negatives among different reporters by FACS or by histological analysis. This analysis showed that different Cre-reporters, even when localized in the same accessible Rosa26 locus, and having similar genetic distances between LoxP sites, recombine at significant different relative frequencies (Fig. 1b). As expected, the chance of finding cells having dual recombination of two reporters (true positives) decreased with the decrease in the dose of induction or tamoxifen (Fig. 1c, 1d). It is important to note that for single cell functional genetic/clonal analysis, usually it is necessary to decrease the dose of tamoxifen in order to obtain sparse labelling of mutant or wildtype cells in the tissue. This means achieving between 0.01-10% recombination rate, so that single cells and their clones can be unequivocally distinguished. We found that even at around 10-60% average recombination rate for two independent reporters, with similar sensitivities to CreERT2/4OHT, the rate of true positives was very low (Fig. 1c, 1d).

This data shows that when using standard CreERT2 mosaic genetics, not a single existing Cre-reporter will accurately report the recombination of any other reporter, and certainly also not any other floxed gene. Therefore, the large majority of CreERT2-based functional genetic studies *in vivo* using mosaic genetics or sparse cell labelling, will not achieve the desired targeted gene deletion in labelled cells, and therefore will not be able to uncover the real effect of the gene on single cell biology, with high accuracy and statistical power.

Design and validation of *iFlp-Mosaic* mice

To overcome the caveats of the CreERT2-dependent and MADM mosaic genetics technologies mentioned above, we developed *iFlpMosaics*. This consist in several mouse lines that allow the FlpO/FlpOERT2-recombinase-dependent induction of ratiometric mosaics of fluorescent mutant (gene KO) and normal (gene wildtype) cells (Fig. 1e, 1f and Sup. Fig. 1a, b). We term these new mouse alleles as *iFlp-Mosaics* (R26-*iFlp*$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$ and Tg-*iFlp*$^{MTomato-H2B-GFP-Cre/MYFP-H2B-Cherry-FlpO}$). They contain the ubiquitously expressed CAG promoter and several distinct and mutually exclusive FRT sites (Cai et al., 2013), that enable multispectral labeling and fate-mapping of different mutant (Tomato+ and Cre+) and wildtype (YFP+ and Cre-) cells in any tissue expressing FlpO or FlpOERT2. The two lines differ either in the genomic location (ROSA26 versus random transgene), or the expression of additional chromatin-bound (H2B-tag) fluorescent proteins for increased cellular resolution and quantitative power (Fig. 1e, 1f and Sup. Fig. 1a, b).

Transfection of *iFlp-Mosaic* ES cells with FlpO expressing plasmids or induction of these mosaics in mice carrying FlpO/FlpOERT2 alleles, induced the expected ratiometric mosaic of cells (Fig. 1e, 1f, and Supplementary Fig. 1c-g). The observed ratios of recombination are in agreement with the shorter genetic distance between the FRTF3 sites, in comparison with FRT5T2 sites (Fig. 1e and Sup. Fig. 1e). In both ES cells and mice, the initially induced cellular ratios did not change significantly

after prolonged culture or during tissue development *in vivo* (Fig. 1g and Sup. Fig. 1h), showing that expression of MbTomato-2A-Cre (or MbYFP) is not deleterious to cells. Of note, we found on average 10 times less expression of the cassette MbTomato-2A-Cre in *iFlp-Mosaic* mice than with the previously generated *iSuRe-Cre* mice (Fig. 1h), which further reduces the occurrence of any potential Cre-toxicity (Fernandez-Chacon *et al.*, 2019). This difference in expression is likely due to the different DNA elements contained in these alleles or their different genomic location and epigenetic regulation.

Given the reported transcriptional stop leakiness and germline recombination of previous inducible Cre-expressing alleles located in the Rosa26 locus (Fernandez-Chacon *et al.*, 2019; Lao et al., 2012), even in the absence of FlpO/CreERT2 activity, we checked if *iFlp-Mosaic* mice were also leaky, given that the *iFlp-Mosaic* alleles contained a Cre and also FlpO expressing cassette, that can be expressed if the upstream transcriptional stop signals are bypassed, as in previous mouse lines. Importantly, none of the *iFlpMosaic* mice had leaky expression of the fluorescent proteins contained in their constructs, in the absence of an extra allele expressing FlpO (Sup. Fig. 1i). The combination of *iFlp-Mosaic* mice with *Rosa26^{-LSL-YFP}* reporter mice, revealed a very low % of non-self Cre-leakiness in some organs of the *Tg-iFlp^{Tomato-H2B-GFP-Cre/YFP-H2B-Cherry-FlpO}* mouse line only. This recombination occurs sporadically throughout embryonic development until adult stages, in the absence of any Flp activity, or any detectable *iFlp-Mosaic* fluorescent protein expression (Sup. Fig. 1i). This residual Cre non-self-leakiness is likely due to residual and sporadic skipping or splicing of the 2 polyA transcription STOP cassette that precede the ORF containing Cre, as shown before (Fernandez-Chacon *et al.*, 2019; Lao *et al.*, 2012). Importantly, these very few false negative cells detected with the *Rosa26^{-LSL-YFP}* Cre-reporter will never be detected or analysed with *iFlpMosaics*, since they are non-fluorescent in the absence of other Cre-reporter alleles. Significantly more relevant than false negatives, is the ocurrence of false positives. We found that in i*FlpMosaic* mice, MbTomato-2A-Cre+ cells efficiently recombine other Cre-reporter alleles, but also all floxed genes tested (Fig. 1i. 1j), which ensures high genetic reliability at single cell resolution. As an example, induction of *iFlpMosaics* in the *Rbpj* floxed background, a gene known to be essential for arterial development, results in only 3.5% Tomato-2A-Cre+ cells in arteries and 96% in veins and capillaries, indicating how efficient was the deletion of this gene. Altogether, this data shows that with *iFlpMosaics* the rate of properly labelled and assigned mutant and wildtype cells is very high. This is in stark contrast to standard CreERT2 mosaic genetics (Fig. 1c, 1d), and similar to the MADM system (Contreras *et al.*, 2021; Zong, 2014; Zong *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, *iFlpMosaic* alleles enable for the first time the tightly-controlled induction of reliable and ratiometric mosaics of mutant and wildtype cells in any tissue expressing FlpO or FlpOERT2, and provide both membrane and nuclei fluorescent markers to track mutant and wildtype cells proliferation, differentiation or migration with very high cellular and quantitative resolution (Sup. Figure 2).

Generation of ubiquitous and tissue-specific FlpOERT2 mouse lines

Multispectral genetic mosaics are a particularly relevant research tool when is possible to induce them at a specific time point and in a significant number of cells, which is not possible to achieve with the MADM system (Contreras *et al.*, 2021; Zong, 2014; Zong *et al.*, 2005). To have temporal control over Flp activity or induction, different mouse lines were generated in the past that enable the constitutive (Rosa26) or tissue-specific expression of FlpeERT or the mammalian codon optimized FlpOERT (Hunter et al., 2005; Kranz et al., 2010). These studies have shown that FlpOERT2 activity is significantly lower than CreERT2, and very few cells in each organ were shown to recombine (Lao *et al.*, 2012). The published $R26^{CAG\text{-}FlpOERT2}$ line recombined the $R26\text{-}iFlp^{MTomato\text{-}Cre/MYFP}$ allele in only around 0.2% of most embryo cells, and was also weak in postnatal and adult organ cells (Fig. 2a).

We therefore thought to develop new constructs containing optimized DNA elements (Cai *et al.*, 2013; Pontes-Quero et al., 2017) in order to enhance FlpOERT2 expression (Fig. 2b). We generated and screened in total 5 transgenic ubiquitous-FlpOERT2 mouse lines with variable copy number (Fig. 2c). Importantly, when comparing with the existing $R26^{CAG\text{-}FlpOERT2}$ line, the best of these new *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)* lines (named here as, *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)$^{\#F2}$*) induced several folder higher recombination of the *iFlpMosaic allele* in embryos and different organs and cell types (Fig. 2d-g and Sup. Fig. 3a-d). With this higher frequency of recombination, we could frequently see mutant (MTomato+) and wildtype (MYFP+) cells close to each other, which enables direct comparative analysis of cells experiencing the same tissue microenvironment (Fig. 2f, 2g). Interestingly, recombination was not equal among different cell types and organs. We also confirmed that despite the ubiquitous and strong expression of FlpOERT2 by this new line, it is not leaky (Sup. Fig. 3e). Unlike the published $R26^{CAG\text{-}FlpOERT2}$ allele, this new transgenic allele can also be combined with two other Rosa26 targeted alleles, which is of high utility as it will be shown further below.

Besides generating ubiquitous FlpOERT2 lines of general relevance, we also developed a method to easily target and modify pre-existing and pre-validated CreERT2 expressing transgenic alleles, for tissue-specific expression of FlpOERT2. We designed unique guide RNAs and donor DNAs containing FlpO that allow the efficient conversion of CreERT2 alleles into a FlpOERT2 expressing allele (Fig. 2h). Using this method, we converted an existing PAC Cdh5-CreERT2 mouse line (Wang et al., 2010) containing 4 copies of the CreERT2 sequence, to PAC Cdh5-FlpOERT2 mouse lines containing 3 or 4 copies of the FlpOERT2 sequence (Fig. 2i). From the obtained two founder lines, only the line *Cdh5-FlpOERT2^{F1}* did not have any residual Cre sequence or activity. As expected, this line was expressed and induced recombination specifically in endothelial cells (Fig.2j).

Ratiometric functional genetics with *iFlp-Mosaic* mice

In contrast to previous classical Cre-reporters or the *iSuRe-Cre* allele, *iFlpMosaics* are ratiometric by design. This allows the quantification by histology or FACS of the relative frequencies (ratio) of mutant (MbTomato-2A-Cre+) and wildtype (MbYFP+) cell populations induced exactly in the same tissue, and experiencing the same microenvironment throughout the pulse-and-chase period. We envisioned this property could be used to study in a high-throughput and accurate manner the cell-autonomous function of genes in virtually all cell types, and for long time periods, something not possible to be done with classical gene knockouts, because of their early lethality or major abnormalities, or with classical Cre/CreERT2 mosaic genetics, because of the high frequency of false positives/negatives (Fig. 1c, 1d), and the lack of an internal induction control of wildtype cells.

To demonstrate the power of *iFlpMosaic* mice to understand the effect of induced mutations in multiple cell lineages we intercrossed them with either the *Tg(ACTFLPe)9205Dym* (Rodriguez et al., 2000) allele (abreviated as *ACTB:FlpE - recombines early embryo progenitor cells)*; the *Apln-FlpO* (Luo et al., 2021) allele (recombines endothelial and derived hematopoietic cells) or the new *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)* allele (induces recombination at any stage and in all cell type). These alleles were further combined with floxed alleles for the genes *Myc and Foxos*. These genes are known to be important for the proliferation and differentiation of many different cell types (Claveria et al., 2013; Eijkelenboom and Burgering, 2013).

When the allele $R26\text{-}iFlp^{MTomato\text{-}Cre/MYFP}$ was combined with the *ACTB:FlpE* or *Apln-FlpO* alleles and the *Myc and Foxos* floxed alleles, mosaic mutant animals survived until adult stages, unlike embryos carrying mutations of these genes in all cells or in all endothelial cells (Dharaneeswaran et al., 2014; He et al., 2008). To understand how these genes affected the biology of different organ cell types, we first used FACS analysis to score in a high throughput manner the relative ratios of mutant (MTomato-Cre+) and wildtype cells (MYFP+) in several major organs of postnatal day 7 animals. The assumption was that if a gene is really important for a given cell type/organ biology or lineage, it would either change the proliferation or differentiation rate of the mutant cells, and that would be noticed in the final MTomato+/MYFP+ log ratio detectable by FACS. This analysis revealed that the impact of Myc loss varies in different cell types and organs. It was previously proposed that Myc loss leads to a general competitive disadvantage (Claveria *et al.*, 2013) and lack of proliferation by ECs (Wilhelm et al., 2016), however, when deleted mosaicly, it has a relatively minor effect on the clonal expansion of ECs (Fig. 3a). In contrast, we observed blood to be the most sensitive cell type to the mosaic loss of Myc (Fig. 3b and Sup. fig. 4a, b). Most CD31-CD45- lung and heart cells were not significantly affected

by Myc deletion (Fig. 3c), likely due to compensation by the homologous *Mycn* gene (Munoz-Martin et al., 2019).

We also confirmed the power of the system to perform mosaic epistasis analysis of mutant cells with deletion of multiple genes, in this case 3 *Foxo* genes (6 floxed alleles). Foxos partially compensate the function of each other in several cell types, and together they are considered to be important negative regulators of cell proliferation and metabolism downstream of AKT signalling, preventing uncontrolled cell growth (Eijkelenboom and Burgering, 2013; Wilhelm *et al.*, 2016). Surprisingly, the results show that mosaic deletion of three *Foxo* genes (*Foxo1/3/4^{KO}*) had relatively minor consequences for cell expansion in the liver and lung, and affected especially heart cells (Fig. 3d). This suggests cell-type and organ-specific functions for *Foxos*. The data also showed that postnatal retina ECs are especially responsive to the loss of *Foxo1/3/4*, as they were much more proliferative, formed dense EC clusters, and outcompeted wildtype cells over time (Fig. 3e-g), similarly to what has been shown before using standard CreERT2 genetics (Wilhelm *et al.*, 2016).

Overall, these results show the power of this technology to accurately model and analyse in a high-throughput manner by FACS, or tissue imaging, the impact of somatic mutations in cellular expansion and competition. In this particular case, it revealed that MYC and FOXOS are dispensable for the proliferation of many types of cells in diverse organs.

Combining iFlp-Mosaic with iFlp^{Chromatin} for higher single-cell clonal resolution

Direct live imaging of Cre-mutant and adjacent normal fluorescent cells can be one of the main applications of the *iFlp-Mosaic* technology. However, even though live microscopic imaging is routine in many species and developmental model systems, it is still not possible, or practical, for most mouse tissues and laboratories, due to the deep tissue location of most cells in the mouse, lack of appropriate microscopes, or the relatively slow pace of the biological processes under study. To analyse how single cells proliferate, differentiate and migrate in a mouse tissue advanced pulse-and-chase genetic and imaging/analysis tools are required. Genetic tools such as the *Brainbow*, *Confetti* or the *Dual ifgMosaic* were generated for this purpose (Livet et al., 2007; Pontes-Quero *et al.*, 2017; Snippert et al., 2010). When compared with standard unicolor or single-molecule reporters of Cre activity, multispectral mosaics allow a more precise and quantitative single-cell retrospective and clonal lineage tracing, due to the lower probability of a cell having a given stochastic recombination event. To increase the quantitative single cell resolution of the *iFlp-Mosaic* technology, we combined the *Rosa26-iFlp$^{MbTomato-Cre/MbYFP}$* allele with the published *Rosa26-iChr2-Mosaic* allele (Pontes-Quero *et al.*, 2017). These enables the stochastic and mutually exclusive expression of both chromatin/nuclei (for cell unit count) and membrane (for cell shape) localized fluorescent proteins in mutant (MbTomato-2A-Cre+) cells, expanding the diversity of barcoding from 1 to 3 different possible mutant cells (Fig. 4a).

Despite higher clonal resolution in single MbTomato+/mutant cells, this method does not allow us to quantify in the same microenvironment, and with the same level of resolution, how the MbYFP+/wildtype cells clonally expand. In order to have higher clonal resolution also in wildtype cells, we developed the $iFlp^{Chromatin}$-*Mosaic* (or $iFlp^{H2B-Cherry/GFP/Cerulean}$) mouse line, in which three distinct and incompatible FRT sites enable the generation of a Flp-recombinase-dependent mosaic of cells expressing three distinct chromatin (Chr) localized fluorescent proteins (Fig. 4b, 4c). When interbred with the *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)* and $iFlp^{MbTomato-Cre/MbYFP}$-*Mosaic* lines, this new $iFlp^{Chromatin}$-*Mosaic* allele allow us to generate up to 8 different dual-labelled cells (4 mutant and 4 wildtype), significantly increasing the single-cell clonal lineage tracing resolution of both mutant and wildtype cells in the same tissue microenvironment (Fig. 4d). The alleles above can also be combined with the published Cre-dependent Tg*iMb2-Mosaic* allele or $iCre^{MYFP/Tomato/MTFP1}$ (Pontes-Quero *et al.*, 2017), to have even higher single-cell or clonal resolution on mutant (Tomato+/Cre+, 12 different) and wildtype (YFP+, 4 different) cells (Fig. 4e). This technology also allows us to identify and label binucleated or polyploid cells, such as adult liver hepatocytes (Fig. 4f).

As an example, we show here how these new mouse alleles and technology enabled us to achieve very high cellular resolution, and the accurate quantification how single mutant and wildtype cells clonally expand, or survive, when induced at the same time, in the same tissue microenvironment.

In the liver, a high % of neonatal hepatocytes are in S-phase (EdU+) or in cycle (Ki67+) at P1 and P7 and most stop dividing before P20 (Fig. 5a), however their single cell clonal expansion dynamics is still unknown. *iFlp-Mosaic x iFlp^{Chromatin}* mice were induced at P1 and livers collected at P20 for multispectral imaging and single-cell clonal analysis. The clone maps revealed that hepatocyte proliferation (clones with 2 cells or more) were dispersed across the liver (Fig. 5b and Sup. Fig. 5a,b). The recombination frequency varied among animals, but the relative distribution and average clone size of wildtype cells was still similar (Fig. 5c), confirming that there is enough multispectral clonal and quantitative resolution at both low and high *iFlp-Mosaic* recombination frequencies. This data revealed that 17,2% of postnatal hepatocytes did not expand clonally, with the majority of hepatocytes (69%) dividing only once or twice in 20 days. Only 2.4% of single hepatocytes gave clones with 8 or more cells. The average clone size of wildtype cells was around 2.9 (Fig. 5b, c). These clonal dynamics is in absolute agreement with the observed 2.9-fold liver weight increase from P1 to 20 (Fig. 5d). We than compared the clonal expansion of wildtype (MYFP+) and mutant Myc^{KO} (Mtomato-2A-Cre+) hepatocytes. This revealed that MYC is necessary for optimal postnatal hepatocytes clonal expansion. On average, Myc^{KO} hepatocytes clone size was 2.25 and these generated only 125% (125 new hepatocytes for each 100) more hepatocytes over 20 days, whereas wildtype cells clone size was 2.87 and these generated 187% more hepatocytes, over the same period (Fig. 5e,f).

We next performed a similar single cell clonal expansion analysis of postnatal pancreatic cells. These cells had similar Ki67+ and EdU+ frequencies as liver cells (compare Fig.5a with Sup. Fig. 5c, d). However, *iFlpMosaics* analysis revealed that wildtype pancreatic cells expand significantly more than hepatocytes until

P20 (average clone size 3.60 instead of 2.87, compare Wt values in Fig. 5g-i with Fig.5e,f). In the pancreas, Myc^{KO} cells also expanded significantly less (Fig. 5h, 5i) and at the end were 3.7 fold less frequent than neighbouring wildtype cells (Fig. 5j).

Recent work proposed the existence of a highly proliferative hepatocyte population in adult livers, based on a new Dre-inducible Ki67-Cre (ProTracer) allele (He et al., 2021). Ki67 immunostaining showed that only 1.87% of adult liver hepatocytes are in cycle at a given moment (Sup. Fig.5d). Of note, Ki67 may be expressed in metabolically activated (primed and in cycle) or DNA replicating (S-phase), or polyploid cells, but many Ki67+ cells may not undergo productive cell division, or die after being in cycle. Our *iFlpMosaics* can measure both productive cell expansion or cell survival. Using the *iFlpMosaic* mice with the highest number of multispectral combinations, and therefore clonal resolution, we observed very limited proliferation or clonal expansion of single mononucleated or binucleated hepatocytes during the 2 weeks after induction. Average clone size of wildtype adult hepatocytes was only 1.10 (Fig. 5k, l). In 2 weeks, only 9.5% of single mononucleated or binucleated diploid hepatocytes underwent productive division or cytokinesis from binucleated cells to form a 2-cell clone (Fig. 5m, n). Frequency of proliferation was also low among polyploid hepatocytes (4.9%). This data significantly extends on the recent analysis of hepatocytes proliferation dynamics using the ProTracer technology (He *et al.*, 2021).

Despite the absence of significant hepatocytes proliferation in homeostasis, when we induced the *iFlp* ratiometric mosaics in adult Myc^{flox} livers, we still observed a very significant loss (4.2 fold decrease) of mutant Myc^{KO} (Mtomato-2A-Cre+) cells in only 2 weeks after induction (Fig. 5o). Given the absence of significant clonal expansion of wildtype cells in adult livers (Fig. 5l - average clone size 1.10, meaning only 10 more hepatocytes for each 100 hepatocytes in 2 weeks), this data suggests that Myc loss induces a significant decrease in adult hepatocytes survival. Interestingly, wildtype hepatocytes when surrounded by *MycKO* hepatocytes expanded more than when surrounded by wildtype hepatocytes (compare Fig. 5m/n with 5p/q and Sup. Fig.5e), probably to compensate for the loss of Myc^{KO} hepatocytes. This data agrees with the existence of a Myc-dependent cell competition among adult hepatocytes, in which cells with lower Myc are less fit and gradually excluded, as shown before to occur during early embryonic development (Claveria *et al.*, 2013). Among the surviving Myc^{KO} mutant cells, we also observed a significant increase in the % of binucleated cells, and a decrease in the % of 2-cell mononucleated clones, suggesting that Myc^{KO} binucleated hepatocytes undergo cytokinesis less frequently (Sup. Fig. 5e).

iFlp/Dre^Progenitor enables induction of genetic mosaics from single progenitor cells

The results above show also that there is significant intercellular clonal variability, when different progenitor cells, occupying different tissue locations, are induced. This decreases the statistical robustness of the analysis of a gene function in single cells and requires the comparative analysis of a large number of single-cell derived clones, and averaging of clone size differences. With the method

above, averaging and population comparisons can be made among all Tomato+ and all YFP+ clones found in a region. However, since they derive from different progenitor cells, is not possible to know exactly how a gene loss, changes the cellular and clonal expansion phenotype of a specific single-cell progeny, located in a particular niche. The existent MADM approach allows the generation of labelled wildtype and mutant cells from the same progenitor cell, and in this way estimate very precisely how a gene mutation impacts on the progeny single cell mobilization and proliferation phenotypes. However, as mentioned above, MADM is very difficult to implement and induce at a specific time point, nor it is compatible with the numerous existent floxed genes.

To overcome the limitations of current approaches to understand the role of genes in single progenitor cell biology, we designed the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* DNA construct. This was injected in mouse eggs to produce transgenic animals, of which only one of four founders was good and named as *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor F1* (Fig. 6a). We also knocked-in this construct by CRISPR-Cas9 in the *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)^#F4* locus creating the dual *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2 + iFlp/Dre^ProgenitorF2)* allele (Fig. 6b). These *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* alleles can be induced by both FlpOERT2, or the stronger DreERT2. Therefore, we also generated a new *Tg(Ins-CAG-DreERT2)^#F4* allele by using CRISPR/Cas9 assisted targeting (Fig. 6c). When these alleles are combined with the *iFlpMosaic* alleles, is possible to induce with tamoxifen a genetic cascade that culminates with the generation of genetic mosaics of mutant and wildtype cells derived from the same single progenitor cell. After tamoxifen induction of FlpOERT2 or DreERT2, the iFlp/Dre-Progenitor allele is recombined, and this triggers the constitutive expression of FlpO, H2B-V5 and the cell-surface marker hCD2. FlpO will than effectively recombine in H2B-V5+/hCD2+ cells the *R26-iFlp^MTomato-Cre/MYFP* allele (Fig. 6d). We hypothesized that since FlpO is a relatively weak recombinase and the transgene takes some time to be fully expressed, it could also take time to recombine the *R26-iFlp^MTomato-Cre/MYFP* allele. During this period, a dividing cell will often generate two or more daughter cells, and in these, the *iFlpMosaic* allele can be recombined in one of two possible ways, generating either Tomato-2A-Cre+ or YFP+ cells within the progeny of a single cell.

To test this hypothesis, we induced growing animals with low dose of tamoxifen at P4, and collected tissues for analysis 3 days later at P7. In animals without the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele, Tomato+ and YFP+ cells arised from independent progenitors that were genetically pulsed in independent locations and rarely YFP+ wildtype cells were intermixed with mutant Tomato+ cells (Fig. 6e). In animals having the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele, anti-V5 immunostaining enabled the detection of the nuclei of the progenitor cell and its progeny. V5+Tomato+ and V5+YFP+ cells were frequently located close to each other confirming that they arised from a single progenitor cell (Fig. 6f and Sup. Fig. 6a), which allows for direct comparisons of a gene function in the progeny of single progenitor cells.

Importantly, the use of the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele also allowed us to significantly increase the sensitivity (14 fold) to FlpOERT2 recombination. Using the Cdh5-FlpOERT2 line we increased EC-recombination efficiency from an average of 3.6% to 51% (Fig. 6g).

The use of *Tg(Ins-CAG-DreERT2)*[#F4], instead of *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)*[#F4], allowed a
significant increase in the efficiency of recombination as well (Fig. 6h).

Another advantage of the *iFlp/Dre*[Progenitor] allele is the possibility of using anti-hCD2 magnetic
beads or antibodies to quickly isolate the recombined cells, even when their frequency is very low.
hCD2+ cells had a 25-fold higher % of Tomato+ and YFP+ cells (Fig. 6i), resulting in a much faster
isolation of these cells, which is important when when many tissues or infrequent populations have to
be isolated on the same day for scRNAseq analysis.

Combining single cell RNA-seq with ratiometric *iFlp*[Mosaics] to uncover gene function in all cell
types

Recent advances in single cell RNA sequencing (scRNA-seq) methods have allowed the
understanding of single-cell biology in an unprecedented way. There are however three main limitations on the
use of scRNAseq technologies to assess the transcriptome of single mutant and wildtype cells resulting from
conditional genetic experiments. The first is the introduction of microenvironment changes bias by the profiling
of cells obtained from distinct mutant and wildtype animals, that experienced distinct epigenetic and
microenvironmental changes during their lifetime or in disease. The second, the reliance on standard Cre-
reporters to define and isolate the mutant cells of interest, since, as we showed above (Fig. 1), they do not
correlate with desired genetic deletions, particularly in CreERT2 inducible experiments. And the third, and
most important, the difficulty in validating a priori that the desired floxed gene has been deleted among the
pool of analysed mutant single cells. This is important because scRNAseq technologies only detect the mRNA
of some genes in most single cells, and also because many floxed genes conserve their 3′ mRNA
sequences after genetic deletion, leading to the transcriptional profile of pseudomutant cells whose true
genetic status cannot be accurately determined.

We have provided evidence that in contrast to other genetic technologies, the *iFlp-Mosaic*
alleles here developed allow the reliable isolation of *bona fide* mutant cells and wildtype cells from the
same tissue (Fig. 1 and 2). We also provided evidence how ratiometric *iFlp-Mosaic* cell population
genetics based on FACS or histology can be used to easily score the role of genes in single cell biology.
Therefore, we decided to test if we could also use scRNA-seq with *iFlpMosaics* to score in a high
throughput manner the role of genes (i.e. *Rbpj*) in the proliferation and differentiation of all early
embryo cell types. *Rbpj* codes for a transcription factor essential for all Notch signalling, and this is one
of the most important pathways for cell proliferation and differentiation during embryonic development
(Siebel and Lendahl, 2017). We pulsed embryos with 4-OHT at embryonic day 9.5 (E9.5) and collected
Tomato+ (mutant) and YFP+ cells by FACS at E13.5 (Fig. 7a). 16 major cell types were identified
based on their transcriptome and previously known marker genes (Fig. 7b). In Tomato-2A-Cre+ cells,
Rbpj deletion of the exons 6 and 7 generates a more unstable, but still detectable 3′mRNA (Fernandez-
Chacon et al., 2023), and a decrease in the expression of *Rbpj* and the main downstream target *Hes1*

(Fig. 7c). Deletion of *Rbpj* led to changes in the frequency of cells in S-phase (Ki67+ mRNA) in some

clusters (Fig. 7c). *Rbpj* deletion at E9.5, compromised the differentiation or expansion of peripheric

nervous system, endothelial cells (ECs), cardiomyocytes, erythrocytes, hepatocytes and myocytes cells,

whereas epithelial and mesenchymal cells became more frequent (Fig. 7d-e). *Rbpj* deletion led to a 5

fold decrease in the frequency of ECs (Fig.7d, e), loss of expression of the arterial marker genes Gja5

and Gja4, and upregulation of the tip cell genes *Esm1, Kcne3, Apln* and *Cdkn1a* (Fig.7g,h). This

correlates with its essential role in the specification of arterial ECs and inhibition of tip ECs (Luo *et al.*,

2021; Pontes-Quero et al., 2019). *Rbpj^{KO}* ECs also upregulated genes related with epithelia-to-

mesenchymal transition, glycolysis and angiogenesis and were less in cycle (Fig.7i). Analysis of other

cell types scRNAseq data revealed that *Rbpj* loss changes the relative frequency of specific cell types

clusters, suggesting an impact of this gene in their proliferation or differentiation. Indeed, different

genes and genetic pathways were deregulated after *Rbpj* deletion in the many cell types and clusters

identified (Fig. 7j-r and Sup. Fig. 7). This data provides an example how the combination of ratiometric

iFlpMosaics with scRNA-seq analysis can be very powerful to determine, in a high-throughput manner,

a gene cell-autonomous function in all cell types during development or in disease.

Discussion

Genetic mosaics are essential to understand a gene cell-autonomous function, and prevent confounding

effects frequently associated to classical whole animal or tissue-specific conditional genetics. With

inducible mosaic genetics, the mutant and wildtype cells share the same microenvironment and

developmental or physiological history, being the only difference between them the deleted gene. This

provides a much more accurate way to study and understand a gene cell-autonomous function during

tissue development, homeostasis or in disease.

We and others have observed that the transcriptional programs and phenotype of single mutant cells in

genetic mosaics, are often very different from the programs and phenotypes of single cells extracted

from a tissue in which that gene was deleted in most of the tissue cells (Hansen *et al.*, 2022). Performing

comparative omics of mutant and wildtype cells in genetic mosaics will more accurately reveal the true

gene molecular and cellular function. With classical genetics, the changes in the mutant tissue function

and its microenvironment can always impact the transcriptional program of the mutant cells in ways

that are unrelated with the original gene function or genetic program. As an example, if a gene impairs

vascular development or permeability, the entire surrounding tissue growth, function and paracrine

signals will be affected, and these in turn will influence the mutant cells phenotype. With genetic

mosaics, these effects are controlled for, because the wildtype and mutant cells used for comparison

share the same history and microenvironment.

The most frequently used methods to perform mosaic conditional genetics in mice, the most widely used model in biomedical research, have several caveats. Genetic mosaics induced by CreERT2 are easy to achieve, but are unreliable (Fernandez-Chacon *et al.*, 2019; Liu *et al.*, 2013; Schmidt-Supprian and Rajewsky, 2007). These lack the co-induction of wildtype cells labelling for direct phenotypic comparisons with the mutant cells. MADM is genetically very reliable, and has an internal control, but is a cumbersome and inefficient method, providing no temporal resolution in the induction and genetic analysis (Contreras *et al.*, 2021; Zong, 2014; Zong *et al.*, 2005).

The set of new genetic tools decribed here significantly improve on these two technologies. In contrast to Cre-ERT2 genetics, *iFlpMosaics* provide clearly distinguishable and reliable fluorescent labels for both mutant (Tomato) and wildtype (YFP) cells. The simultaneous and ratiometric induction of both mutant and wildtype cells fluorescent labels at the same time, and in the same tissue, is very important, since it provides a way to accurately measure and compare how these cells differ in their proliferation, differentiation, migration or survival. We have shown that this can be done over short or long periods of time. The fluorescent markers are easily detectable and quantifiable by both microscopic imaging or FACS. In contrast to MADM, *iFlpMosaics* provide a high degree of inducibility, at any specific time point and in any cell type, including quiescent cells present in adult mice, which will be very important to model the etiology of diseases caused by sporadic somatic mutations. In addition, it is compatible with all existent floxed alleles, being possible to mosaicly delete multiple floxed genes in cis, which will be essential for genetic functional epistasis analysis, with single-cell resolution. With *iFlpMosaics,* instead of only 1*,* up to 12 different multispectral barcodes for mutant cells and 4 for wildtype cells are possible. This significantly higher spectral barcode diversity, and dual labelling (membrane and nuclei) also significantly increases single cell and clonal resolution during a pulse-and-chase genetic experiment.

In *iFlpMosaics* cells expressing MbTomato also express Cre, a recombinase shown before to be toxic when expressed at high levels (Loonstra et al., 2001; Naiche and Papaioannou, 2007; Rashbrook et al., 2022). However, we found that the expression of the *iFlpMosaic* alleles is relatively low, when compared with previously published Cre-expressing lines (Fernandez-Chacon *et al.*, 2019). This can be due to the different DNA elements used, and the presence of only one upstream insulator during Rosa26 targeting. It has been shown that the PGK-Neo cassette and the 2A peptide elements used in i*FlpMosaic* alleles reduce the expression or translation efficiency (Ema et al., 2006; Pontes-Quero *et al.*, 2017; Sharma et al., 2012). The absence of Cre toxicity was confirmed by the analysis of the relative ratio of Tomato/YFP cells over long periods of time during development of many cell lineages *in vivo*. This ratio was kept constant over time when in a wildtype genetic background.

Single cell biology during tissue development is highly heterogenous, and therefore is also important to be able to reliably induce and analyse genetic mosaics of mutant and wildtype cells derived

from single progenitor cells and with a minimal ammount of false positives and false negatives. The previously established MADM technology is ideal for this (Contreras *et al.*, 2021; Zong, 2014; Zong *et al.*, 2005), but it lacks temporal inducibility and efficiency. With the new *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele, we were able to significantly increase the inducibility and precision of *iFlpMosaics*. The *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele FRT/Rox cassette, or genomic locus, is very sensitive to FlpOERT2/DreERT2 recombinases, and results in a genetic expression cascade and delay in the expression of FlpO, that is very convenient to generate different mutant and wildtype cells within the progeny of a single progenitor cell, something only possible to achieve so far with MADM. The progeny cells will also permanently express the nuclei marker H2B-V5 and the surface marker hCD2, ideal for FACS or quick magnetic isolation of the cells.

Integration of information arising from *in situ* single-cell lineage-tracing microscopy methods, with information derived from new scOMICs and bioinformatic analysis methods, will be essential to establish the biology of single-cell lineages with high detail and in a realiable and high-throughput manner. We showed how the combination of *iFlpMosaics* with FACS or scRNA-seq analysis provide an easy way to analyse in a high-througput manner the cell-autonomous function of any gene in all cell types, during development, homeostasis or disease. Since the mosaics of mutant and wildtype cells can be induced in less than 10% of the animal cells, they will not severely affect tissue or organ development/homeostasis, allowing analysis of the transcriptional, epigenetic, proliferative or differentiation state of all mutant cells in a mostly wildtype environment. This means that crossing a floxed gene with multiple independent CreERT2 lines (one for each cell type), is no longer needed to understand its cell-autonomous function. The ubiquituous and strongly expressed FlpOERT2 and DreERT2 lines generated here allow induction of *iFlpMosaics* in all cell types, at both low or high frequencies. This enables direct comparisons of the molecular and cellular phenotypes of mutant and wildtype cells extracted from all tissues of an embryo or animal.

iFlpMosaics will greatly facilitate the induction and high-throughput analysis of somatic genetic mosaics and turn possible the understanding how an individual or combinatorial set of genetic mutations affect the biology of single cells during tissue development, regeneration or disease.

Methods

Mice

We generated and used Mus musculus with C57BL6 or C57BL6×129SV or B6CBAF1 genetic backgrounds. All mice were backcrossed to C57Bl6 for a few generations. To generate mice for

analysis, we intercrossed mice with an age range between 7 and 30 weeks. We do not expect our data to be influenced by mouse sex. The following mouse lines and alleles were used and interbred: *Tg(Cdh5-CreERT2)* (Wang *et al.*, 2010)*, Tg(iSuRe-Cre)* (Fernandez-Chacon *et al.*, 2019)*, Notch1$^{flox/flox}$* (Radtke et al., 1999), *Rbpj$^{flox/flox}$* (Han et al., 2002), *Myc$^{flox/flox}$* (de Alboran et al., 2001), *Mycn$^{flox/flox}$*(Knoepfler et al., 2002), *Foxo1/3/4$^{flox/flox}$*(Paik et al., 2007), *Rosa26-EYFP (Srinivas et al., 2001), Rosa26-iChr2-Mosaic* (Pontes-Quero *et al.*, 2017)*,* Tg-*iMb2-Mosaic or iCre$^{MYFP/Tomato/MTFP1}$* (Pontes-Quero *et al.*, 2017), *Gt(Rosa)26$^{tm3(CAG-FlpOERT2)Ali}$*(Lao *et al.*, 2012), *Gt(Rosa)26Sor$^{tm14(CAG-LSL-tdTomato)Hze}$*(Madisen et al., 2010) and *Apln-FlpO* (Luo et al., 2021). The following mouse lines were produced in this study: *R26-iFlp$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$, Tg-iFlp$^{MTomato-H2B-GFP-Cre/MYFP-H2B-Cherry-FlpO}$, Tg(INS-CAG-FlpOERT2), Tg(INS-CAG-DreERT2), Tg(Cdh5-FlpOERT2), Tg(Cdh5-DreERT2), iFlp^{Chromatin}-Mosaic* and *Tg-iFlp/Dre^{Progenitor}* .

       Tg-iFlp$^{MTomato-H2B-GFP-Cre/MYFP-H2B-Cherry-FlpO}$, Tg(INS-CAG-FlpOERT2), TgiFlp^{Chromatin}-Mosaic and *Tg-iFlp/Dre-Progenitor* mouse alleles were generated by standard DNA injection in mouse eggs and screening of several transgenic founders as indicated in the main text or figures. The *R26-iFlp$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$* allele was generated by CRISPR-assisted gene targeting in G4 ES cells of the Rosa26 locus using the guide GACTGGAGTTGCAGATCACGA_GGG (IdT DNA) and a Donor DNA with the elements indicated in Figure 1. Targeted ES cells were used for mice production. The *Tg(Cdh5-FlpOERT2) and Tg(Cdh5-DreERT2)* lines were generated by CRISPR-Cas9-assisted gene targeting using mouse eggs of the existing *Tg(Cdh5-CreERT2)* line (Wang et al., 2010) with the guide AAGCTTATCGATACCGTCGA_CGG and a donor DNA containing either the Cdh5-FlpOERT2 or Cdh5-DreERT2 sequences. *Tg(INS-CAG-DreERT2)* mice were generated by CRISPR-Cas9 using guide RNAs (GATGTCGAACTGGCTCATGG_TGG and AACAGGCGGATCTGCGTACG_CGG) targeting the existing FlpO sequence contained in the pre-screened *Tg(INS-CAG-FlpOERT2)* transgene, and a donor DNA containing the CAG-DreERT2 sequence. Injections mixtures were composed by the described crRNAs (IDT) and tracrRNA (IDT, catalog 1072533) at 0.305 microM and Cas9 nuclease (Alt-R® S.p. HiFi Cas9 Nuclease V3, 100 µg, Catalog 1081060) at 20 ng/microL. Founders were initially screened by PCR with the primers in Supplementary Table 1.

       To induce CreERT2, FlpOERT2 or DreERT2 activity in adult mice, 1g tamoxifen (Sigma-Aldrich, P5648_1G) were dissolved in 50ml corn oil (20 mg/ml tamoxifen) and aliquots stored at -20C. From this stock solution, animals were given intraperitoneal injection of 50ul to 100ul (total dose of 1 to 2 mg tamoxifen per animal at 40 to 80mg/kg) as indicated in figures. To activate recombination in pups, 4-hydroxytamoxifen (4-OHT) tamoxifen was injected at the indicated stages at a dose of 40 mg/kg body weight. All mouse lines and primer sequences required to genotype these mice are provided in Supplementary Table 1.

All mouse husbandry and experimentation was conducted using protocols approved by local
animal ethics committees and authorities (Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid and Universidad
Autónoma de Madrid CAM-PROEX 177/14, CAM-PROEX 167/17, CAM-PROEX 164.8/20 and
PROEX 293.1/22). The mouse colonies (Mus musculus) were maintained in racks with individual
ventilation cages according to current national legislation. Mice have dust/pathogen-free bedding, and
sufficient nesting and environmental enrichment material for the development of species-specific
behavior. All mice have 'ad libitum' access to food and water in environmental conditions of 45–65%
relative humidity, temperatures of 21–24 °C, and a 12 h/12 h light/dark cycle. In addition, and to
preserve animal welfare, mouse health is monitored with an animal health surveillance program, which
follows FELASA recommendations for specific pathogen-free facilities.

Immunofluorescence on cryosections

Tissues were fixed for 2 h in 4% PFA in PBS. After three washes in PBS for 10 min each,
organs were stored overnight in 30% sucrose (Sigma) in PBS. Organs were then embedded in OCT^{TM}
(Sakura) and frozen at -80°C. Cryosections (35 μm) were cut on a cryostat (Leica), washed three
times for 10 min each in PBS, and blocked and permeabilized in PBS containing 10% donkey serum
(Milipore), 10% fetal bovine serum (FBS), and 1% Triton X-100. Primary antibodies were diluted in
blocking/permeabilization buffer and incubated overnight at 4°C. This step was followed by three 10
min washes in PBS and incubation for 2 h with conjugated secondary antibodies (1:200, Jackson
Laboratories) and DAPI in PBS at room temperature. After three washes in PBS, sections were mounted
with Fluoromount-G (SouthernBiotech). All antibodies used are listed in Supplementary Table 2.

Wholemount Immunofluorescence of retinas

For postnatal mouse retina immunostaining, eyes were collected and fixed in cold 4% PFA in PBS for 10 minutes. After fixed for 15 minutes more at room temperature. After washed once in PBS and kept on ice. After microdissection with spring scissors (FST), retinas were fixed in 4% PFA for an additional 45 min at room temperature, followed by two PBS washes of 10 min each. Retinas were blocked and permeabilized with PBTS buffer (0.3% Triton X-100, 3% fetal bovine serum (FBS) and 3% donkey serum) for 1 h. Samples were then incubated overnight at 4 °C in Biotinylated isolectinB4 (Vector Labs, B-1205, diluted 1:50) and primary antibodies (Supplementary Table 2) diluted in PBTS buffer. After five washes (20 min each) in PBTS buffer diluted 1:2, samples were incubated for 2 h at room temperature with Alexa conjugated secondary antibodies (Supplementary Table 2). After three washes of 30 min each in PBTS buffer (diluted 1:2), and two washes of 15 min each in PBS, retinas were mounted with Fluoromount-G (SouthernBiotech).

In vivo EdU labelling and EC proliferation detection

To detect EC proliferation in postnatal livers and pancreas, 20 μg g^{-1} body weight EdU (Invitrogen, A10044) was injected intraperitoneally into P1, P7 or P20 mice 4h before dissection. Livers and pancreas were fixed in PFA4% and processed for OCT cryoblocks and sections as mentioned above. EdU signals were detected with the Click-it EdU Alexa Fluor 647 or 488 Imaging Kit (Invitrogen, C10340 or C10337). In brief, after all other primary and secondary antibody incubations, samples were washed according to the immunofluorescence staining procedure and then incubated with Click-iT EdU reaction cocktail for 40 min, followed by DAPI counterstaining.

Image acquisition and analysis

Immunostained organ sections or whole mount retinas were imaged at high resolution with a SP8 Navigator confocal microscopes fitted with 10x, 20x, or 40x objectives for confocal scanning. Individual fields or tiles of large areas were acquired. All images shown are representative of the results obtained for each group and experiment. Animals were dissected and processed under exactly the same conditions. Comparisons of phenotypes or signal intensity were made with pictures obtained using the same laser excitation and confocal scanner detection settings. Fiji/ImageJ was used to threshold, select, and quantify objects in confocal micrographs. Both manual and automatic ImageJ public plugins and customed Fiji macros were used for quantification.

Fluorescence activated flow cytometry and sorting

Embryonic, postnatal or adult tissues were first dissociated before fluorescence activated flow cytometry or sorting (FC or FACS). Embryonic tissues were dissociated using Miltenyi Biotec Tissue Dissociation Kit 2 following the instructions (130-110-203). Postnatal and adult mouse tissues were first digested for 20min at 37ºC with 2.5 mg/ml collagenase type I (Thermofisher), 2.5 mg/ml dispase II (Thermofisher) and 50 **u**g/ml DNAseI (Roche).

Dissociated samples were filtered through a 70-μm cell strainer, and cells were centrifuged (400g, 4°C for 5 min). Cell pellets were gently resuspended in blood lysis buffer (0.15 M NH_4Cl, 0.01M $KHCO_3$ and 0.01 M EDTA in distilled water) and incubated for 10 minutes on ice to remove erythroid cells. Cells were centrifuged (400g at, 4°C for 5 min), and cell pellets were gently resuspended in blocking solution (DPBS without Ca^{2+} or Mg^{2+} and containing 3% dialyzed FBS (Termofisher)) and incubated at 4ºC with shaking for 20min. Cells were centrifuged (300g at 4°C for 5 min), resuspended and incubated for 30min at 4C with APC rat-anti-mouse CD31 (BD Pharmigen, 551262, 1:200) and APC-CY7 anti-CD45 (BD Pharmigen, 1:200). Cells were then centrifuged (400g, 4°C for 5 min), resuspended and washed in DPBS without Ca^{2+} or Mg^{2+} and centrifuged again, and cell pellets were resuspended in blocking solution. Cells were kept on ice until used for FC or FACS. DAPI (5 mg/ml) was added to the cells immediately before analysis. Cells were routinely analysed in Fortressa or sorted in a FACS Aria Cell Sorter (BD Biosciences). BD FACS Diva V8.0.1 and Flow JO v10 was utilized for FACS data collection and analysis.

Cells isolation for transcriptomic analysis

For qRT-PCR analysis, approximately 20.000 DAPI negative Tomato+ or YFP+ cells from dissociated tissues were sorted directly to buffer RLT (RNAeasy Micro kit - Qiagen) and RNA extracted according to the manufacturer instructions and stored at -80°C. This RNA was later used for qRT-PCR or RNAseq analysis. For quantitative real time PCR (qRT-PCR), total RNA was retrotranscribed with the High Capacity cDNA Reverse Transcription Kit with RNase Inhibitor (Thermo fisher, 4368814). cDNA was preamplified with Taqman PreAmp Master Mix containing a Taqman Assay-based pre-amplification pool containing a mix of the Taqman assays indicated in Supplementary Table 3. Preamplified cDNA was used for qRT-PCR with the same gene specific Taqman Assays and Taqman Universal Master Mix in a AB7900 thermocycler (Applied Biosystems). AB7900 software was used to retrieve and analyse data.

For RNA-seq analysis, embryos were dissociated using Miltenyi Biotec Multi Tissue Dissociation Kit 2 following the instructions. A volume of 1,2ml of dissociation solution was used per embryo inside a 2ml round bottom tube. Following a 5 minutes incubation in a 37C water bath, tubes were put inside a pre-warmed 50ml falcon and incubated for 25 minutes in the MACSmix Tube Rotor. After cells were resuspended with a Gilson P1000 pipet for 30 times. Starting slow and increasing speed gradually. To the 1.2ml of cells, 3ml of sorting buffer (10% FBS in DPBS -Ca2-Mg2-) was added and this solution transferred to a 5ml syringe. This volume was pressed slowly through a small 70 microns strainer to remove clumps. Each embryo gave around 30 million cells at this stage. Cells suspensions were spinned at 400g for 6 minutes. Pellet was detached and ressuspended in 300ul sorting buffer containing DAPI. DAPI negative, single, and live Tomato+ and YFP+ cells were sorted to eppendorf tubes containing 300ul of Sorting buffer. 66k Tomato+ and 30k YFP+ cells were sorted using a 100um Nozzle, 20 PSI and high purity scale and low flow rate (1) to preserve cell viability and decrease contamination. At the end sorted cells were spinned at 500g for 5min, and ressuspended in 30-40ul Cell Capture Buffer (DPBS (-)Ca2+ (-)Mg2+ with 0.04%BSA). After counting cells in Countess III, two independent 10x genomics ports were loaded with either 16k Tomato+ cells (90% vaibility) or 16k YFP+ cells (88% viability).

Next Generation Sequencing sample and library preparation

Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) experiments were performed in the Genomics Unit at CNIC. For scRNA-seq experiments, single cells were encapsulated into emulsion droplets using the Chromium Controller (10x Genomics). scRNA-seq libraries were prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions. The aimed target cell recovery for each port was 10000 cells. Generated libraries were sequenced on a HiSeq4000 or NextSeq2000 (Illumina).

Transcriptomic data analysis

Transcriptomic data were analyzed by the CNIC Bioinformatics Unit, Alvaro Regano and Irene Garcia.

The following pipeline was followed for scRNA-seq data processing and *in silico* cell type selection. For alignment and quantification of gene expression, the reference transcriptome was built using mouse genome GRCm39 and Ensembl gene build v109 (https://ftp.ensembl.org/pub/release-109/fasta/mus_musculus). The WPRE-sv40pa sequences expressed in the Tomato+ and YFP+ samples were added to the reference. Gene metadata were obtained from the corresponding Ensembl BioMart archive. Reads from transcripts were processed, aligned and quantified using the Cell Ranger v6.1.2

pipeline. Single-cell analysis was based on Seurat (Hao et al., 2021) and DoubletFinder R packages.

Low-quality cells were filtered out using the following criteria: total counts, >1,000 and <55,000; genes

detected, >500 and <7,500; mitochondrial transcripts content, <15%; hemoglobin transcripts, <1%;

ribosomal transcripts, <35. Counts were log-normalized and scaled, followed by principal component

analysis (PCA) and clustering using the shared nearest-neighbors algorithm and Louvain clustering

(settings as defaults except for the 2,000 most variable genes, 24 principal components, and a resolution

of 0.35). Clusters and cells were classified based on the SingleR method (Aran et al., 2019) using

Blueprint ENCODE, the Human Primary Cell Atlas cell-type profile collection and a scRNASeq mouse

dataset from the celldex package. This identification was used to predefine the different cell types

present in the dataset for the analysis. Doublets were removed using DoubletFinder, using a first

annotation with 24 PCs, 0.25 pN and a pK of 0.05, and the second one with 10 PCs, pN0.25 and pK

0.05. Cells classified as Singlets were preserved. Singlets were then reclustered using 19 PCAs and a

clustering resolution of 0.35. Manual curation of the identified clusters was applied to confirm and

finetune the identity of the clusters based on scRNAseq bibliography.

Copy number assay and qRT-PCR

To identify the number of copies for *FlpO or Cre* expressing cassettes after transgenesis, the genomic

DNA was extracted from mouse tails biopsies using the phenol chloroform protocol as follows:

overnight digestion in 500 μL of proteinase K buffer (10 mM Tris-HCl [pH 8.0], 100 mM NaCl, 10

mM EDTA [pH 8.0], 0.5% sodium dodecyl sulfate, 0.25 mg/mL proteinase K) with occasional

vortexing. Following digestion, 250 μL of phenol and 250 μL of chloroform was added followed by

vigorous vortexing to ensure thorough mixing of phenol:chloroform with the sample. Samples were

immediately subjected to microcentrifugation at maximum speed for 5 minutes to allow separation of

the aqueous and organic layers. 300 μl of the aqueous top layer was removed with a 200 μl pipet, paying

careful attention to avoid the interface. To the 300μl of solution we added 1:10 (30μl) of sodium acetate

(NaAc) 3M and 2.5x (825 μl) of EtOH 100%. Then the tubes were shaken up and down 10 times to

precipitate the DNA. Samples were spin down at maximum speed for at least 45 minutes at 4ºC. Then

supernatant was removed and immediately after we added 500 μl of 70% ethanol and samples were

pelleted by centrifuging at max speed for 5 minutes. Pellets were re-suspended in 100μl of TE solution

(Tris 10mM pH=8 and EDTA 0.1mM pH=8) overnight. Next day, DNA concentrations were measured

in nanodrop and diluted at a final concentration of 10ng/μl.

For the copy number assays we performed qRT-PCR with TaqMan Universal Master Mix (TaqMan,

4440049) and the following probes: Tert TaqMan Copy Number Reference Assay (TaqMan probe,

4458369). A probe and a set of amplifying primers designed in the lab and synthetized by iDT to detect

the *FlpO* gene (FlpO-qPCR-F: CTGTACCAGTTCCTGTTCCTG, FlpO-qPCR-R:

CTTGTCTTGGTCTCGGTCAC) and qPCR FlpO Probe : TCTTGATGTCGCTGAACCTGCCG,

fluorophore FAM). To detect the *Cre* gene: a pre-designed Cre Assay was used (Mr00635245_cn ,

ThermoFisher).

With the Tert probe as a reference, the relative number of copies of the genes of interest were

inferred. Both Tert and FlpO/Cre probes were combined in the same reaction since they emitted two

different fluorophores, FAM and VIC. The qRT-PCR reactions were run in an AB7900 thermocycler

(Applied Biosystems).

Statistical analysis and Reproducibility

All bar graphs show mean ± s.d. Experiments were repeated with independent animals.

Comparisons between two groups of samples with a Gaussian distribution were carried out by unpaired

two-tailed Student *t*-test. Comparisons among more than two groups were made by one-way ANOVA

followed by multiple comparison tests. All calculations were done in Excel, and final datapoints were

analyzed and represented with GraphPad Prism. No randomization or blinding was used, and animals

or tissues were selected for analysis based on their genotype, the detected Cre/FlpO/Dre-dependent

recombination frequency, and the quality of multiplex immunostaining. Sample sizes were chosen

according to the observed statistical variation and published protocols.

Data availability

RNA-seq data can be viewed at the Gene Expression Omnibus (GEO) under accession numbers

GSEXXXX. Instructions and code to reproduce all scRNA-seq results can be found at

https://github.com/RuiBenedito/Benedito_Lab. Unprocessed original photos of the data are available

upon request. All other data supporting the findings in this study are included in the main article and

associated files.

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Notch1^{floxed}, Cdh5(PAC)-creERT and Foxos1/3/4^{floxed} mice respectively.

Author contributions statement

I.G-G. and R.B. designed most of the experiments, interpreted results, assembled figures and wrote the

manuscript. R.B. designed all DNA vectors. I.G-G. did most of the DNA engineering (cloning),

CRISPR-Cas9 genome targeting and executed the large majority of the animal experiments, confocal

microscopy and FACS analysis. Mice were generated by the CNIC transgenesis unit. S.G. developed

new methods for *iFlpMosaics* induction, tissues immunostaining and microscopy multispectral

imaging. L.G-O, W.L., I.Z. and M.F-C. performed some animals experiments, FACS, histology and

confocal imaging. I.G-G and A.R analysed scRNA-seq data. A.R. cloned and validated the

iFlp/Dre^{Progenitor} allele. S.F.R. did image quantifications in Fiji, graphpad, text and figures editing and

figures assembly. M.L, M.S.S-M, A.G.-C, F.L. and V.C-G gave general technical assistance with

experiments and genotyped the mouse colonies. All authors approved the final version of the

manuscript.

Competing interests statement

786 The authors declare no competing interests.

Figure legends:

Figure 1: *iFlpMosaics* **allow efficient and ratiometric labelling of mutant and wildtype cells. a,** Schematic showing a standard Cre-reporter and how it may recombine and label cells without any floxed gene (G) deleted (false positives). Non-recombined cells can also have the gene deleted (false negatives). **b,** Different recombination efficiencies of several Cre-reporters, despite all localizing to the *Rosa26* locus and having a similar genetic distance between LoxP sites. **c,d,** Cre-reporters only accurately report recombination of themselves, not of other floxed alleles (reporters), particularly at low doses of tamoxifen. **e,** Schematic of the novel R26-*iFlp*$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$ allele, where Flpo/FlpOERT2-induced recombination of the mutually exclusive FRTF3 and FT5T2 sites leads to one of two possible outcomes (see also Sup. Fig. 1x). Cells expressing MTomato and Cre (mutant) or MYFP (wildtype). The induction leads to the ratiometric proportion of around 65%MTom+:35%MYFP+. **f,** Tg-*iFlp*$^{MTomato-H2B-GFP-Cre/MYFP-H2B-Cherry-FlpO}$ allele and confocal micrographs showing the full spectral separation of the 4 fluorescent labels expressed in mutant and wildtype cells. **g,** In a wildtype background, the initial ratiometric proportions between MTomato+ cells and MYFP+ cells are maintained through embryogenesis to postnatal stages, indicating lack of toxicity of Cre in MTomato+ cells. **h,** Comparison of MTomato intensity and Cre expression in cells of R26-*iFlp*$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$ and Tg(*iSure-Cre*) mice. **i,** Efficient recombination of the Cre-reporter *Rosa26*$^{-LSL-YFP}$ in MTomato+ cells (white arrowheads) after induction of the R26-*iFlp*$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$ allele by *Apln-FlpO*. Few cells are false positives (red arrows). FACS data of the same animals livers and related chart. **j,** Combination of the *iFlp*$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$ allele with other floxed genes leads to very significant deletion of these in MTomato+ cells. **k,** Induction of *iFlp*$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$ in the *Rbpj* floxed background, a gene known to be essential for arterial development, results in only 3.5% Tomato-2A-Cre+ cells in arteries (A), versus 96% in veins (v) and capillaries. Data are presented as mean values +/- SD. For statistics see Source Data File 1. Scale bars are 50μm.

Figure2: Generation of ubiquitous and tissue-specific FlpoERT2 mouse lines. a, Recombination of the *iFlp*$^{MTomato-Cre/MYP}$ mosaic mouse lines induced by the published *R26*$^{CAG-FlpoERT2}$, led to reduced recombination efficiency at embryonic and postnatal stages and in adult organs. **b,** Schematic of novel *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpoERT2)* alleles containing optimized DNA elements in order to enhance FlpOERT2 expression. **c,** Comparison of FlpO copy number by genomic DNA qRT-PCR. **d-g** Comparison by FACS and histology of the recombination efficiency among the different FlpOERT2-expressing mouse lines/founders at embryonic, postnatal and adult stages. Fold change is indicated for the most significant. **h,** Schematic of the generation of novel endothelial-specific *Cdh5-FlpoERT2*-expressing mouse lines from the published Cdh5-CreERT2 mouse line by Crispr/Cas9 targeting. **i,** Comparison of FlpO and Cre copy number by genomic DNA qRT-PCR. **j,** Recombination efficiency of Founder #1 of the newly generated *Tg(Cdh5-FlpoERT2)* mouse line in embryonic, postnatal and adult tissues. Data are presented as mean values +/- SD. For statistics see Source Data File 1. Scale bars are 100μm.

Figure3: Ratiometric iFlpMosaics allow the high-throughput assessment of a gene cell-autonomous function. a,b, $iFlp^{MTomato-Cre/MYP}$ mosaics were induced with $Apln-FlpO$ (recombines endothelial and derived hematopoietic cells at E9.5) in a control/wildtype and Myc floxed background, and tissues analysed at P7. FACS data of CD31+ (ECs) and CD45+ (Blood) cells shows that Myc deletion (in MTomato+ cells) leads to a competitive disadvantage, especially in blood cells. Absolute fold change indicated in red. **c,** When $iFlp^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$ mosaics are induced in most embryonic cells with $ACTB:FlpE$, analysis of other organs cell types (CD31-CD45-) reveals that Myc is necessary for liver, but not lung or heart cells development. **d,** $iFlp^{MTomato-Cre/MYP}$ mosaics were combined with $Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)$ on a control/wildtype and $Foxo1/3/4$ floxed background and tamoxifen injected at P1 to induce recombination in all cell types. Liver, lung and heart cells were analysed at P15 by FACS. $Foxo1/3/4$ deletion (in MTomato+ cells) increased the proliferation of heart cells, but not liver or lung cells. **e,** Representative confocal micrographs of control and $Foxo1/3/4$ mosaic P6 and P15 retinas of animals induced at P1. Chart with ratiometric analysis of retina immunostainings for Tomato, YFP and ERG (labels ECs nuclei) showing that $Foxo1/3/4^{KO}$ ECs have a competitive advantage. Data are presented as mean values +/- SD. For statistics see Source Data File 1. Scale bars are 100μm.

Figure 4: Combining $iFlp-Mosaic$ with $iFlp^{Chromatin}$ for higher single-cell clonal resolution. a, Representative confocal micrograph of P20 liver sections of mice carrying the $Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpoERT2)$, $iFlp^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$ and $Rosa26-iChr2-Mosaic (iCre^{H2B-Cherry/GFP/Cerulean})$ alleles. Combination of these membrane and nuclear reporter alleles allow up to 3 different mutant and 1 wildtype cell barcodes (labelling). Note that binucleated (2x2n) or polyploid (4n) hepatocytes can have more multispectral barcodes. **b,** Representative confocal micrograph of a P7 retina from an animal containing the $Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)$ and the new $iFlp^{Chromatin}$ nuclear reporter allele induced at P1 with 4-OHT. Bar shows ratiometric frequency of each nuclear/H2B+ fluorescent marker. **c,** Representative confocal micrograph of the indicated adult organ sections of animals carrying the $iFlp^{Chromatin}$ and $Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpoERT2)$ alleles. Mononucleated diploid cells (kidney and lung) express only 1 of 3 possible nuclei/chromatin markers, while multinucleated or polyploid cells (hepatocytes and cardiomyocytes) can express a combination of 2 or 3 possible markers (6 possible chromatin barcodes in total). **d,** Recombination and cell barcoding possibilities in animals carrying the indicated alleles. A representative P6 retina confocal micrograph showing that both wildtype and mutant cells can be labelled in 4 different ways, which significantly increases single cell clonal resolution. On the right is shown an example of how a Fiji image analysis script automatically detects, segments, and pseudocolor the nuclei of dual-labelled (nuclei and membrane) cells. **e,** Recombination and diploid cell barcoding possibilities in animals carrying the indicated alleles. A representative confocal micrograph of an adult liver showing that mutant hepatocytes can be labelled with up to 16 different fluorescent barcodes, depending on whether these are mononucleated/diploid or multinucleated/polyploid. Also wildtype hepatocytes can have up to 8 different fluorescent barcodes (only 6 shown). Scale bars are 100μm.

Figure 5: High-resolution *iFlpMosaics* reveals the impact of genetic mutations in single cell clonal dynamics. a, Quantification of Ki67+ (in cycle) or EdU+ (S-phase) cells in P1, P7 and P20 livers. **b,** Schematic of the indicated alleles combined in a single animal and how they can be used to fluorescently barcode and track single mutant and wildtype cells clonal expansion from P1 to P20. Representative confocal micrographs of P20 livers (from animals induced with 4-OHT at P1) with different recombination frequencies are shown (see also Sup. Fig. 5). **c,** Recombination and fluorescent barcoding density did not affect the clonal quantification. **d,** Liver weight increases 2.9 fold from P1 and P20. **e,** Quantification of MYFP+ (Myc^{WT}) and MTomato+ (Myc^{KO}) clone size frequency showing that Myc^{KO} hepatocytes divide less. **f,** Chart depicting the normalized expansion of Myc^{WT} and Myc^{KO} hepatocytes over the same period of 20 days. **g,** Representative confocal micrographs of P20 pancreas from control and *Myc floxed* mice having the indicated *iFlpMosaic* alleles. Right panels correspond to inverted LUT images depicting the clones mapping (by Fiji image analysis scripts) according to their dual color code. **h,** Quantification of MYFP+ (Myc^{WT}) and MTomato+ (Myc^{KO}) clone size frequency showing that Myc^{KO} pancreatic cells divide less. **i,** Chart depicting the normalized expansion of Myc^{WT} and Myc^{KO} pancreatic cells over the same period of 20 days. **j,** Log2 ratio between Tom+ and YFP+ cells in control and *Myc floxed* pancreas showing a 3.7 fold loss of MTomato+ (Myc^{KO}) cells over 20 days. **k,** Representative confocal micrographs of adult livers from control and *Myc floxed* mice having the indicated *iFlpMosaic and iCre$^{Mb2-Mosaic}$* alleles induced 14 days before tissue collection. Right panels correspond to automatic mapping of clones, using Fiji image analysis scripts, according to their fluorescent barcode. Note the loss of MTomato+ cells in the Myc floxed background. **l,** Clone size showing that wildtype hepatocytes rarely divide or expand over a period of 2 weeks. **m,** Quantification of wildtype MYFP+ and MTomato+ hepatocyte clone frequency reveals no impact of Cre expression in MTomato+ cells. Note the difference between diploid, mononucleated, polynucleated and polyploid cells. **n,** Quantification of the percentage of YFP+ and Tomato+ clones that are proliferative (composed by more than 1 cell) and non-proliferative. No major difference observed between both wildtype populations. **o,** Log2 ratio of the Tom+ and YFP+ cells frequency in control and adult *Myc floxed* livers, showing that a big fraction of Myc^{KO} cells are lost over 2 weeks. **p,** Among the surviving Myc^{KO} cells, the frequency of non-proliferative binucleated cells increases and the frequency of proliferative mononucleated cells decreases. **q,** Quantification of the percentage of YFP+ (Myc^{WT}) and Tomato+ (Myc^{KO}) clones that are proliferative and non-proliferative. Loss of *Myc* reduces the frequency of proliferative clones.

Figure 6: *iFlp/Dre^{Progenitor}* enables the induction of genetic mosaics in the progeny of single cells. a, Schematic of the *iFlp/Dre^{Progenitor}* DNA construct used to generate mice by transgenesis. **b,**

CRISPR-Cas9 assisted targeting of the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* donor DNA on an existing *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)^F4* multicopy allele. **c,** Generation of *Tg(Ins-CAG-DreERT2)* by CRISPR-Cas9 mediated replacement of FlpO by Dre in the existing *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)^F4* allele. **d**, Schematic of the genetic cascade induced in animals containing the indicated alleles. After tamoxifen induction of FlpOERT2 or DreERT2, the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele is recombined driving expression of the nuclei marker H2B-V5, the surface marker truncated human CD2 (hCD2) and FlpO. FlpO is a relatively weak recombinase, that needs to be expressed and accumulate in the cell before it recombines the *iFlp^MTomato-Cre/MYFP* allele. This delay results in recombination in the progeny of a single progenitor cell. **e,f**, In animals lacking the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele, most single cell derived clones are formed by only one type of cell (MTomato+ or MYFP+). With the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele is possible to induce clones formed by mutant (MTomato+) and wildtype (MYFP+) cells derived from single progenitor cells (see also Sup. Fig. 6). **g**, Retinas confocal micrographs showing that the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele increases significantly the frequency of recombination of the *iFlp^MTomato-Cre/MYFP* allele (induced at P3 and collected at P7), enabling high frequency genetic mosaics with the weaker *Cdh5-FlpOERT2* line (expressed only in Cdh5+ ECs). H2B-V5 labels the nuclei of cells recombining/expressing the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele. **h**, FACS plots showing that the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele increases significantly the frequency of recombination of the *iFlp^MTomato-Cre/MYFP* allele when combined with the *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpOERT2)* allele.

i, Retinas confocal micrographs showing that when the new *Tg(Ins-CAG-DreERT2)* line is combined with the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele, recombination of the *iFlp^MTomato-Cre/MYFP* allele is also much more frequent. H2B-V5 labels the nuclei of cells recombining/expressing the *iFlp/Dre^Progenitor* allele.

Figure 7 : Combining single cell RNA-seq with ratiometric *iFlp^Mosaics* to uncover cell-autonomous gene function. a, Schematic of the induction of embryos having the indicated alleles at E9.5 and collection of cells at E13.5 by FACS for scRNA-seq. **b**, Umaps showing the spatial distribution of the *Rbpj^KO* (MTomato+) and *Rbpj^Wt* (MYFP+) cells and the different clusters they form. On the right, dot plot showing the top markers used for the identification of the major cell types. **c**, Dot plot showing the frequency and amplitude of expression for *Rbpj,* the canonical Notch target *Hes1*, and the G2/M phase (proliferation) marker *MKi67* among wildtype (MYFP+) and mutant (MTomato-2A-Cre+) cells. Note that *Rbpj* deletion only removes exons 6 and 7, leaving the 3′mRNA intact. However, this truncated mRNA is less stable and less detectable after deletion. **d,e**, Histobars and Umap showing that mosaic deletion of *Rbpj* (MTomato+ cells) changes the relative proportion of different cell types. **f-r**, Umaps with the cell-type specific subclusters, top deregulated marker genes, and gene set enrichment analysis charts showing how *Rbpj* deletion changes the frequency, differentiation and biology of the indicated cell types.

Supplementary Figure 1: *iFlpMosaics* **are not toxic or leaky.**

a, b, Schematic of the novel Rosa26-*iFlp*^MTomato-Cre/MYFP^ and Tg-*iFlp*^MTomato-H2B-GFP-Cre/MYFP-H2B-Cherry-FlpO^ alleles, the genetic distances between the FRT sites pairs (mutually exclusive), and expected outcomes after FlpO/FlpOERT2 recombination. **c, d** Mouse ES cells used to generate Rosa26-*iFlp*^MTomato-Cre/MYFP^ mice were transfected with FlpO expressing plasmids, and analysed by confocal microscopy or FACS 3 days after. **e-g,** Frequency of recombination/expression detected in ES cells and ECs derived from embryoid bodies (EBs) by microscopy. **h,** Relative frequency of MTomato-2A-Cre+ and MYFP+ cells does not change over time in both ES cells (in vitro) and in blood (in vivo), showing that the permanent expression of Cre is not toxic to the cells. **i,** Combination of the standard *Rosa26-LSL-YFP* allele with *iFlpMosaics* alleles allow determination of FlpO versus Cre-dependent leakiness by FACS analysis of adult organs. FlpO leakiness was not detected (0% Tomato+ cells), and Cre-non-self-leakiness (only detectable with the additional *Rosa26-LSL-YFP* allele) was only observed in a very small fraction of cells from animals carrying the Tg-*iFlp*^MTomato-H2B-GFP-Cre/MYFP-H2B-Cherry-FlpO^ allele. Not in animals having the Rosa26-*iFlp*^MTomato-Cre/MYFP^ allele.

Supplementary Figure 2: Validation of *iFlpMosaics* **for ratiometric quantitative gene function analysis. a,** Representative confocal micrograph of P6 retinas of *Rbpj floxed* mice carrying the *iFlp*^MTomato-Cre/MYFP^ and *Apln-FlpO* alleles. *Apln* is an X-chromosome gene (mosaicly expressed in females), expressed at the angiogenic front of growing vessels, recombining ECs that later form the entire vasculature. It also recombines non-endothelial (ERG negative) cells in the retina. Right panel showing ERG signal segmentation (EC nuclei), with nuclei belonging to Tomato+ (*Rbpj*^KO^) cells or YFP+ (*Rbpj*^WT^) cells outlined in red or green, respectively. Grey nuclei are of ERG+ objects of non-recombined cells. Dashed white lines show limits of leading edge (LE), angiogenic front (AF) and mature area (MA). Chart depicting the log2 of the ratio between Tomato+ and YFP+ ECs in each of the retinal regions, highlighting the enrichment of *Rbpj*^KO^ cells in the LE and AF, suggesting a role for this gene in cell migration. **b,** Representative confocal micrograph of P6 retinas of *Rbpj floxed* mice carrying the *iFlp*^MTomato-H2BGFP-Cre/MYFP-H2BCherry^ and *Apln-FlpO* alleles, which also allows the nuclear labelling of *Rbpj*^KO^ (H2B-GFP+) and *Rbpj*^Wt^ (H2B-Cherry+) cells, which is more convenient for cell object segmentation and quantification of nuclear-specific proteins, such as the proliferation and cell cycle arrest markers Ki67 and p21. Scale bars 150µm.

Supplementary Figure 3: Comparative analysis of recombination efficiency of FlpOERT2 mouse lines. a-d, Representative FACs plots of different adult organs showing YFP+ and Tomato+ cell frequency obtained from mice carrying the *iFlp*^MTomato-Cre/MYFP^ allele combined with either the published *R26*^CAG-FlpoERT2^ or the newly generated *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpoERT2)*^F2^ allele. **e,** Chart showing the lack of

leakiness of the *Tg(Ins-CAG-FlpoERT2)*^{F2} allele. In the absence of tamoxifen the *iFlp*$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$

allele is not recombined.

Supplementary Figure 4: Ratiometric iFlpMosaics show that *Myc*^{KO} cells have a stronger

competitive disadvantage in blood than ECs. a,b, Representative FACS plots showing that in both

the heart and the lung CD45+ blood cells are much more affected by *Myc* deletion than CD31+

endothelial cells.

Supplementary Figure 5: Mapping the clonal expansion of single mutant and wildtype cells with

***iFlpMosaics*. a,b,** Representative confocal images (large tile scans), at low magnification, of entire P20

liver sections of mice carrying the indicated alleles. Recombination of the reporter alleles was induced

at P1 and resulted in different recombination frequencies. Right panels show automatic image

processing results using Fiji scripts, that generate spatial maps of dual-labelled clones of cells (with

membrane and nuclear labelling). The bigger the circle, the bigger the clone. **c,** Quantification and

representative confocal micrographs of proliferative pancreatic cells (Ki67+ in cycle or EdU+ in s-

phase) at different postnatal stages. **d,** Quantification and representative confocal micrograph of

Ki67+/DAPI+ cells in the adult liver. **e,** Representative confocal micrographs of adult liver sections

from control and *Myc floxed* mice combined with the indicated alleles. Left panels show endogenous

fluorescent signals from the reporter alleles and left panels show sections from the same mice

immunostained with antibodies that bind to DsRed (detects MTomato and H2B-Cherry), or GFP

(detects MYFP and H2B-GFP) or the HA epitope (detects MbTFP1 and H2B-Cerulean). Right panels

show automatic image processing results using Fiji scripts, that generate spatial maps of dual-labelled

clones of cells (with membrane and nuclear labelling) reveal hepatocytes ploidy and clone size. Chart

showing that in control mice, MYFP+ (WT) and MTomato+ (WT) diploid cells occur in similar

proportions, while in *Myc* floxed mutants, MTomato+ (*Myc*^{KO}) diploid cells are more frequently

binucleated and give rise to less 2-cell mononucleated clones than MYFP+ (*Myc*^{WT}) cells.

Supplementary Figure 6: *iFlp/Dre*^{Progenitor} enables the induction of genetic mosaics from a single

progenitor cell. a, Representative confocal micrograph of a P7 retina of an animals carrying the

indicated alleles and induced with 4-OHT at P3. After induction of the ***iFlp/Dre*^{Progenitor}** allele, cells will

express the nuclei marker H2B-V5 and FlpO. FlpO will after some time and cell division recombine

the *iFlp*$^{MTomato-Cre/MYFP}$ allele generating MbYFP+ and MbTomato+ progeny cells derived from a single

initial recombination event.

Supplementary Figure 7: Single cell RNA-seq analysis combined with ratiometric *iFlp*^*Mosaics* **uncovers cell-autonomous gene function in diverse cell types. a,** UMAP and barplot showing the identified clusters and their frequencies among YFP+ (*Rbpj*^*WT*^) and Tomato+ (*Rbpj*^*KO*^) smooth muscle cells. Dot plot showing the frequency (size) and expression level (intensity of color) for the top cluster marker genes. **b,** Top differentially expressed genes per cluster between YFP+ (*Rbpj*^*WT*^) and Tomato+ (*Rbpj*^*KO*^) smooth muscle cells. The proliferative cluster becomes more proliferative (MKi67+) and less arrested (Cdkn1a) in the absence of Rbpj/Hes1. **c,** GSEA hallmark analysis for the SMC cluster reveals only one significantly deregulated pathway. **d**, Cell types or clusters in which *Rbpj* mosaic deletion with *iFlp*^*Mosaics*^ did not affect their overall relative ratios (see Figure 7), also do not significantly change their subclusters spatial mapping (UMAPs) or transcriptome (Dot plots) or GSEA pathways.

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Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Supplementary Fig. 1

Supplementary Fig. 2

a *Apln-FlpO x iFlp^(MTomato-Cre / MYFP) x Rbpj ^(flox/flox)*

MTomato/MYFP/ERG/ERG

Leading Edge

Angiogenic Front

Mature Area

b *Apln-FlpO x iFlp^(MTomato-H2B-GFP-Cre / MYFP-H2B-Cherry-FlpO) x Rbpj ^(flox/flox)*

MTomato/MYFP/H2B-Cherry/Ki67/Ki67

MTomato/H2B-GFP/MYFP/H2B-Cherry/Ki67/Ki67

MTomato/MYFP/H2B-Cherry/p21/p21

MTomato/H2B-GFP/MYFP/H2B-Cherry/p21/p21

Supplementary Fig. 3

a Kidney CD31-CD45-

Rosa-CAG-FlpoERT2 (Published Line) iFlp^MTomato-Cre / MYFP — YFP+ 7.43%, Tomato+ 8.59%

Tg(INS-CAG-FlpoERT2) (Founder2) iFlp^MTomato-Cre / MYFP — YFP+ 11.4%, Tomato+ 14.7%

b Heart CD31-CD45-

Rosa-CAG-FlpoERT2 (Published Line) iFlp^MTomato-Cre / MYFP — YFP+ 10.3%, Tomato+ 12.5%

Tg(INS-CAG-FlpoERT2) (Founder2) iFlp^MTomato-Cre / MYFP — YFP+ 6.13%, Tomato+ 9.98%

c Brain CD31+

Rosa-CAG-FlpoERT2 (Published Line) iFlp^MTomato-Cre / MYFP — YFP+ 0.66%, Tomato+ 2.13%

Tg(INS-CAG-FlpoERT2) (Founder2) iFlp^MTomato-Cre / MYFP — YFP+ 3.17%, Tomato+ 3.57%

d Bone marrow Lin-Sca1+cKit+

Rosa-CAG-FlpoERT2 (Published Line) iFlp^MTomato-Cre / MYFP — YFP+ 3.14%, Tomato+ 2.96%

Tg(INS-CAG-FlpoERT2) (Founder2) iFlp^MTomato-Cre / MYFP — YFP+ 18.8%, Tomato+ 20.7%

e *Tg(INS-CAG-FlpoERT2)* (Founder2) iFlp^MTomato-Cre / MYFP

Without Tamoxifen

Blood — YFP+ 0%, Tomato+ 0%

Supplementary Fig. 4

a

b

Supplementary Fig. 5

Supplementary Figure 6

a

Supplementary Figure 7