HIF1A contributes to the survival of aneuploid and mosaic pre-implantation embryos

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Running title

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SUMMARY

Human embryos are often mosaics of diploid and aneuploid cells. We previously modeled elimination of aneuploid cells in pre-implantation mouse embryos using the Mps1 inhibitor reversine. Here, we develop an alternative model using AZ3146, a highly specific Mps1 inhibitor, to determine how aneuploid cells manage to survive within the mosaic embryos. We find that AZ3146 treated embryos overexpress Hypoxia-Inducible-Factor-1A (HIF1A), inhibition of which results in a decreased cell number of extra-embryonic trophectoderm but not embryonic epiblast cells. Hypoxia reduces the levels of DNA damage after either AZ3146 or reversine treatment, inferring a role of HIF1A in DNA repair. To analyze cell competition, we generated aggregation chimeras of DMSO-AZ3146-treated cells (low mosaics) and reversine-AZ3146-treated cells (medium mosaics). Both low and medium chimeras have similar number of cells at the blastocyst stage. However, diploid cells contribute preferentially to epiblast in low mosaics whereas AZ3146-treated cells outcompete reversine-treated cells in all the lineages of medium mosaics. Consistent with its proposed role in aneuploid survival, HIF1A downregulation in mosaic embryos reduces the number of aneuploid cells and favors development of diploid cells. Together these data indicate that diploid cells contribute preferentially to the epiblast and that the survival of aneuploid extra-embryonic cells is promoted by HIF1A.

INTRODUCTION

During fertilization, the sperm and egg combine to form a zygote, which subsequently undergoes a series of cleavage divisions as it travels through the fallopian tube to the uterus, where implantation occurs[1]. The zygote loses totipotency around the 2-4 cell stage, cells become polarized at the 8-cell stage and at the 8-32 cell stages, apolar cells are internalized to form the inner cell mass (ICM). The outer cells will differentiate into the trophectoderm (TE), which will give rise to the placenta, while the ICM will give rise to the primitive endoderm (PE) and epiblast (EPI) that sort into distinct layers in the blastocyst[1]. Intriguingly, the first zygotic

cleavage-stage divisions in human embryos are error prone, generally resulting in aneuploidy, in which

cells gain or lose chromosomes[2-6].

Pre-implantation Genetic Testing for Aneuploidies (PGT-A) is a routine genetic screen of human embryos

derived by *in vitro* fertilization to identify euploid embryos and select these for intrauterine transfer[7]. This

procedure is important for detecting uniform aneuploidy (that can arise as a result of segregation errors in

meiosis) and for detecting mosaic aneuploidy, common in cleavage-stage human embryos[8-10]. However,

human mosaic embryos can develop to term[8-10]. Specifically, implantation of low-grade and medium-grade

mosaic embryos (determined by biopsy of the TE) was as likely to result in the birth of healthy babies as

implantation of fully euploid embryos[9].

Investigating chromosome mosaicism in human embryos faces ethical and technical barriers, but mouse

models are amenable to such analyses. Recently, our group developed the first mouse model of

chromosome mosaicism based on the generation of aneuploidies induced by a drug reversine[12,13], a pan-

Aurora kinase inhibitor that also antagonizes the A3 adenosine receptor and inhibits mitotic kinase

monopolar spindle 1 (MPS1)[14,15]. To generate a novel aneuploid model, here we use a more specific Mps1

inhibitor, AZ3146 that like reversine, interferes with the spindle assembly checkpoint[18] but binds to Mps1 in

a different manner from reversine[20] and, as consequence, appears to generate a lower degree of

aneuploidies[19,21]. AZ3146 is widely used for its effectiveness in generating specific trisomies in cancer lines

to study metastasis[19,21]. Moreover, AZ3146 has been shown to double the occurrence of micronuclei

(indicative of DNA damage and chromosome segregation defects) in mouse embryos but without negatively

affecting cellular fitness[22]. In the present study, we use AZ3146 to generate a new model of aneuploid

embryos and, combine this with our previous aneuploid reversine-based method, to help uncover the

mechanisms underlying aneuploid cell elimination and survival.

RESULTS

AZ3146-treated embryos as a novel model of aneuploid embryo development

Depending on the degree of chromosome abnormalities, aneuploidies can cause a broad range of stress

responses[23,24]. Because of reversine's affects on p53 and possible negative impact on cellular fitness[14,15],

we sought to generate a complementary aneuploid model using a more specific Mps1 inhibitor AZ3146[18].

To this end, we treated mouse embryos at the 4-to-8 cell stage transition with either AZ3146 (20uM),

reversine (0.5uM), or DMSO carrier as a control (Fig. 1A), and then cultured the treated embryos to the late

blastocyst stage (E4.5) to assess lineage specification (Fig. 1B). Immunofluorescence analysis with

antibodies against CDX2 (TE), NANOG (EPI) and SOX17 (PE) showed that all three lineages segregated

normally, and that embryo morphology was not affected (Fig. 1B).

When we quantified the number of cells in the embryos, we found that both reversine- and AZ3146-treated
embryos had significantly fewer cells than controls, with an average of 79 cells and 82 cells compared to
93, respectively (***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test, n=28 per treatment). We attribute
this difference to a reduction in cell numbers in the ICM using both drug treatments: on average, the EPI in
control embryos had 15 cells, whereas the EPI in reversine- and AZ3146-treated embryos had only 10 and
11 cells, respectively. Similarly, cell numbers in the PE were also reduced from an average of 11 cells in
control embryos to 9 (reversine) and 6 (AZ3146). Cell numbers of the TE lineages in the blastocyst were
also reduced in reversine-treated embryos (average of 60 TE cells). However, in AZ3146-treated embryos,
this was not the case as we found that on average there were 67 TE cells compared to a normal average
of 68 cells in controls (Fig. 1C).
85
Micronuclei, which reflect DNA encapsulated outside of the nucleus, are a useful marker of chromosome
segregation errors and aneuploidy[25]. To examine the possible presence of micronuclei in our treated
embryos, we performed *in situ* chromosome counting[6] and found that the presence of micronuclei increased
in the reversine- and AZ3146-treated embryos by an average of 75% and 62.5%, respectively - compared
with only 12.5% in DMSO-treated embryos (Fig. 1D,E). We also noted a marked increase of micronuclei
without centromeres (9.7%) and non-dividing cells (19.4%) in reversine-treated embryos, both indicative of
chromosome instability, a phenomenon associated with DNA damage and cancer[26].
93
We have previously shown that whole reversine-treated embryos are not able to develop to term[12]. To
determine the developmental potential of AZ3146-treated embryos versus reversine-treated embryos, we
transferred them into opposite uterine horns of the same mouse. As an indicator of successful implantation,
we counted deciduas, and development to day E9.5. We found that a fraction (8%) of reversine-treated
embryos was able to develop decidua, but none were able to give rise to viable E9.5 embryos (Fig. S1A).
In contrast, 30% of AZ3146-treated blastocysts developed deciduas and 21% developed to E9.5 stage (Fig.
S1B). These results suggest that AZ3146-treated embryos have higher developmental potential than
reversine-treated embryos.
102
HIF1A promotes the survival of aneuploid trophectoderm cells
In somatic cells, p53 activation is a hallmark of high dosage aneuploidy[27,28]. Accordingly, Regin *et al*[17]
confirmed by bulk RNA-seq of aneuploid human embryos that the p53 pathway is upregulated in high
dosage aneuploidies, whereas in low dosage human aneuploid embryos, the hypoxic pathway is
overexpressed. To investigate potential relationships between hypoxia and aneuploidy in our models, we
focused on Hypoxia-inducible factor 1A (HIF1A), a transcription factor activated during hypoxia[29], as a
marker for activation of the hypoxic pathway.
110

First, we performed qPCR against *p53* and *Hif1a* at the morula and blastocyst stages, normalizing against

Ppia (Peptidylprolyl Isomerase A) mRNA to control against changes in metabolism in aneuploid embryos[30].

In agreement with our previous results[13], we found that *p53* expression at the morula stage was significantly

increased (7-fold) in reversine-treated embryos and persisted until the blastocyst stage (1.3-fold increase).

In contrast, *p53* expression in AZ3146-treated embryos was not elevated at these two stages (Fig. 2A)

(**P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test). Interestingly, we found that *Hif1a* was overexpressed (3-fold)

in AZ3146-treated morula. To validate these observations, we assessed HIF1A protein levels by

immunofluorescence (Fig. 2B). Our data confirmed that nuclear HIF1A expression was increased at the

morula stage, and there was an increase in both cytoplasmic and nuclear HIF1A at the blastocyst stage

(***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test).

HIF1A is activated in aneuploid cancer cells and is crucial for their survival[31]. In addition, aneuploidy survival

is hypothesized to be related to adaptation to hypoxia[31]. To examine these relationships in the mouse

embryos, we used a chemical approach to down-regulate HIF1A at different stages of aneuploid

development. To deplete maternal HIF1A, we used PX-478[32], an FDA-approved drug which functions as

a dominant-negative agent. We also down-regulated zygotic HIF1A indirectly using IDF-11774[33], which is

widely used to inhibit assembly of freshly translated HIF1A protein. Zygotes treated with PX-478 (2uM) and

IDF-11774 (20uM) were cultured to blastocyst stage and then stained with DAPI (DNA) to reveal total cell

number and CDX2 to indicate the number of trophectoderm cells (Fig. S2A). We found that PX-478 resulted

in a reduction in the overall cell number in the blastocyst (Fig. S2B), an average of 53 and 49 cells in

embryos treated with DMSO and IDF-11774, respectively, but an average of 13 cells in embryos treated

with PX-478 (***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test).

Given that IDF-11774 has less effect on pre-implantation development (Fig. S2), we selected this drug to

investigate the consequences of downregulating HIF1A during aneuploid development. Lineage

specification was assayed by immunofluorescence using antibodies against CDX2, NANOG and SOX17 to

mark the TE, EPI and PE, respectively (Fig. 2C). We found that IDF-1174 treatment affected development

of AZ3146-treated embryos: it led to a reduction in the TE cell number by approximately 50% and in the PE

cell number by approximately 80% in comparison to control embryos (Fig. 2D). In contrast, EPI cell number

was less affected by IDF-11774 treatment, whereas reversine-treated embryos maintained their regular

phenotype of an overall reduction in cell number (***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test).

Taken together, our data suggest that TE and PE cells depend on HIF1A to tolerate aneuploidy, whereas

EPI cells may be using other mechanisms to survive.

Inhibition of PARP1 rescues AZ3146-treated embryos

Survival of aneuploid cells is correlated with DNA repair[34]. Importantly, HIF1A binds directly to the main

activator of DNA repair mechanisms, Poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase 1 (PARP1)[35], a chromatin-associated

enzyme that senses DNA damage and promotes DNA repair mechanisms upon binding to both single and
double stranded DNA breaks[36] and that is maternally deposited in embryos[36-38]. However, the role of the
complex HIF1A/PARP1 in pre-implantation embryos is unknown. Using immunofluorescence, we found that
PARP1 protein was specifically enriched in the EPI lineage in comparison to the PE and TE (Fig. S3A). We
validated our observations of the *Parp1* mRNA enrichment in the EPI by re-analyzing published scRNA-
seq data of mouse blastocysts[39]. Next, we sought to investigate the effect of PARP1 on development of
aneuploid embryos.

Earlier studies demonstrated that pharmacological inhibition of the PARP1 pathway prior to the morula
stage is lethal for mouse [40,41] and porcine embryos[42]. To circumvent this issue and reveal lineage-specific
effects, we first treated embryos with both Mps1 inhibitors to generate aneuploidy and then, at the late
morula stage, with 10uM of the FDA approved PARP inhibitor, Olaparib[43,44] (Fig. S3C). Assessment of
lineage allocation was performed by immunofluorescence of CDX2 (TE), NANOG (EPI) and SOX17 (PE)
(Fig. S3B). Interestingly, we found that chemical downregulation of PARP1 appeared to rescue the
development of AZ3146-treated embryos, as reflected by close to normalized cell numbers relative to
control (Fig. S3D). In contrast, PARP1 inhibition only reduced survival of EPI and PE cells in reversine-
treated embryos (reduction to 0.63 and 0.68 compared to DMSO treatment, respectively) (*P<0.05, Mann–
Whitney U-test). These data suggest that PARP1 might have a dual function during embryo development -
it can promote survival or death, depending on the context and level of DNA damage. This dual function is
similar to its activity in cancer cells[36].

Hypoxia reduces DNA damage and enhances DNA repair pathways in aneuploid embryos
It is known that hypoxic conditions improve survival of bovine and human embryos, especially with respect
to the quality of the blastocyst[45,46]. It has been suggested that the capacity to repair DNA damage is
enhanced under hypoxic conditions[47,48]. Given that many human embryos have some level of aneuploidy
and most clinics culture human embryos under hypoxic conditions[49], we sought to assess relationships
between development of aneuploid mouse embryos, hypoxic conditions and DNA damage and repair
capacity. To this end, we performed treatment with the Mps1 inhibitors reversine and AZ3146 as described
(Fig. 1A) and cultured embryos under normoxic (air, 20% O_2/5% CO_2) and hypoxic (5% O_2/5% CO_2)
conditions. We then analyzed the levels of the DNA repair marker: PARP1 and the levels of the DNA
damage marker: the phosphorylated form of H2A.X (γH2A.X) by immunofluorescence (Fig. 3A-B) at the 8-
cell stage and in the morula in diploid (DMSO treated) and aneuploid embryos (reversine and AZ3146
treated embryos).

Under normoxic and hypoxic conditions, at the 8-cell stage, aneuploid-generating treatments resulted in an
increase in γH2A.X levels (Fig. 3C-D). In normoxic conditions, the increase in γH2A.X levels was
maintained at morula stages, but was reduced in AZ3146-treated blastocyst and increased in reversine-

treated blastocyst γH2A.X (Fig. S4A-B). Interestingly, γH2A.X levels were markedly reduced at the morula
stage under hypoxic conditions (***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, t-test). These results suggest that
enhancement in repair mechanisms occurs between the 8-cell and morula stages, consistent with previous
hypotheses[50]. Importantly, we found that PARP1 levels were affected by reversine-treatment in normoxic
and hypoxic conditions at the 8-cell stage (Fig. 3C-D). Yet, PARP1 levels were rescued at the morula stage
under hypoxic conditions (Fig. 3D). Surprisingly, hypoxia appeared to promote the cytoplasmic localization
of PARP1 (Fig. S4C). Although cytoplasmic PARP1 has been reported upon viral infection[51], this has not
been previously observed during pre-implantation development. Overall, our results indicate that both
reversine and AZ3146 result in DNA damage and that hypoxia facilitates DNA damage repair.
194
To understand how early enhancement of DNA repair under hypoxic conditions influences lineage
specification, we quantified cell number in all three lineages at the blastocyst stage. We found that both
reversine- and AZ3146-treated embryos were similar to controls, with an average of 65 cells and 69 cells
compared to 70, respectively (***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test, n>26 per treatment).
Similarly, cell numbers in the TE and EPI were maintained: from an average of 53 cells in control embryos
to 49 (reversine) and 55 (AZ3146) in the TE, to an average of 12 cells in control embryos to 11 (reversine)
and 11 (AZ3146) in the EPI. Interestingly, cell numbers in the PE lineage were still reduced in aneuploid
embryos, to an average of 5 cells in control embryos to 4 (reversine) and 3 (AZ3146). These results are in
concordance with previous results on human embryos[17], in which the PE was found to be more sensitive
to aneuploid stress such that hypoxia may not rescue its development.
205

Lineage allocation and cell competition in mosaic aneuploid embryos
Low-to-medium mosaicism is characterized by the presence of aneuploidy in fewer that 50% of the cells in
TE biopsies[9,52]. Particularly, low mosaic embryos have aneuploid cells with a low degree of aneuploidy
(diploid-aneuploid mosaicism) whereas medium mosaic embryos have some cells with a high degree of
aneuploidy (ploidy mosaicism)[53]. To model low- and medium-grade mosaic embryos, we generated 8-cell
stage aggregation chimeras consisting of aneuploid cells (generated by AZ3146 or reversine treatments)
and euploid cells. Reversine-treated cells previously have been shown to be eliminated in the ICM via
apoptosis at the mature blastocyst stage[12,54]. Thus, we hypothesized that chimeras consisting of four
AZ3146-treated cells and four DMSO-treated cells (50% of total of cells) would mimic low mosaicism
(DMSO/AZ3146 chimeras), whereas chimeras consisting of four AZ3146-treated cells and four reversine-
treated cells (50% of total of cells) would mimic medium levels of mosaicism (Reversine/AZ3146 chimeras)
(Fig. 4A).
218

To follow the fate of individual blastomeres, we used transgenic mouse lines with membrane markers:
mTmG[55] and E-cadherin[56]. Based on lineage allocation and number of cells, we found that low and medium-
degree mosaicism did not affect embryo morphology or cavitation (Fig. 4B). In addition, low-and medium-

mosaic embryos have comparable total cell number (Fig. 4D). Intriguingly, medium-high mosaics grown
under normoxia present significantly more EPI lineage than low mosaic (Fig. 4D). Quantification of the
proportion of AZ3146 cells in the chimeras in each lineage showed that, in low mosaic chimeras, DMSO
and AZ3146-treated blastomeres contributed similarly to the TE; 46.75% originated from AZ3146-treated
blastomeres. Whereas diploid (DMSO-treated blastomeres) cells were preferentially allocated to the ICM
lineages, AZ3146-treated cell lineage contributed only 28.57% of total of PE cells and 42.86% of total of
EPI cells (Fig. 4F). In contrast, we observed in medium-high mosaic chimeras an enrichment of AZ3146-
treated cells in the TE (63.5%) and EPI (78.4%), although they accounted for a lower proportion of the PE
(40%) (Fig. 4F), as if AZ3146-treated blastomeres outcompeted reversine-treated blastomeres in their
contribution to TE an epiblast lineages under normoxia.
232
Since hypoxia has a clear effect on aneuploid survival, next we sought to understand how low levels of
oxygen affect the above cell competition in our chimeras. Importantly, culture of our chimeras in hypoxia
did not affect embryo morphology, cavitation (Fig. 4C), or cell number (Fig. 4E). In low mosaics, cell
contribution between DMSO and AZ3146-treated blastomeres was overall not affected by hypoxia (Fig.
4G). Although DMSO and AZ3146-treated blastomeres contributed similarly to the TE, we noticed that
diploid cells were preferentially allocated to the EPI. Specifically, AZ3146-treated blastomeres comprised
49.06% of the TE, 33.3% of the EPI and 50% of the PE. In contrast, in medium mosaic chimeras cultured
under hypoxia, the contribution of reversine-treated cells increased compared to medium chimeras cultured
under normoxia (Fig. 4G). Specifically, AZ3146-treated blastomeres contributed similarly to the TE
(55.94%), EPI (50%) and PE (46.43%). These results confirmed that hypoxia changes the contribution of
aneuploid cells in a lineage-specific manner. Hypoxia favors the survival of aneuploid PE in low mosaics
and favors the survival of reversine-treated cells in the medium-high mosaic embryos.
245
Next, we tested the correlation between the proportion of aneuploidy in the TE and the EPI in low and
medium-degree chimeras (Fig. S5A). We found an inverse correlation between the proportion of
aneuploidies cultured under normoxic conditions; DMSO/AZ have a coefficient of -0.39, and Rv/AZ have a
coefficient of -0.1366; these results were maintained in low mosaic embryos cultured in hypoxia (DMSO/AZ,
coefficient of -0.5955). These data are consistent with a preferential allocation of diploid cells to the EPI.
However, there is a direct correlation between aneuploid cells in medium mosaic embryos cultured in
hypoxia (Rv/AZ, coefficient of 1.2098). These data are consistent with an increased survival of reversine-
treated cells when medium mosaic chimeras are cultured under hypoxia.
254
Given that we did not observe preferential allocation of aneuploid cells to the TE when aneuploidy was
generated at the 4-to-8-cell stage, we next asked if lineage allocation was affected if aneuploidy was
generated earlier in development. Transcriptionally, lineage specification is initiated around the 2- to 4-cell
stage[57], such that generation of aneuploidy before lineage specification might influence lineage allocation.

To test this possibility, we assessed if treatment with reversine or AZ3146 during the first cell division

(zygote-2 cell) would affect lineage allocation (Fig. S6A). Although survival was reduced and blastocyst

development was impaired in reversine-treated embryos, neither survival nor lineage specification was

impacted by AZ3146 treatment (Fig. S6B) (n>27 per treatment, ***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–

Whitney U-test).

Next, we generated aggregation chimeras at the 2-cell stage using transgenic lines with membrane

markers: mTmG and E-cadherin (Fig. S6C) and tested lineage allocation by immunofluorescence (Fig. S

6D). Considering that hypoxia influences the survival of aneuploid cells, we generated these chimeras

under normoxia. We found that 2-cell stage derived aggregation chimeras showed normal morphology and

cavitation (Fig. S7D). Interestingly, we observed an extrusion of the reversine-treated cells in the reversine-

DMSO chimeras (54% of the embryos) and reversine-AZ3146 (33% of the embryos), whereas no cell

extrusion was observed in the DMSO-AZ3146 chimeras. Quantification of the proportion of aneuploid cells

(AZ3146 or reversine) in 2-cell stage derived chimeras showed similar results as 8-cell stage derived

chimeras (Fig. S6E). In DMSO/AZ3146 chimeras, AZ3146-treated blastomeres were able to contribute

similarly to the TE, 49.28% but contributed only 33.33% of total of PE cells and 39% of total of EPI. In

contrast, reversine-treated blastomeres were again outcompeted by AZ3146 and DMSO-treated

blastomeres. In R/AZ3146 and DMSO/R chimeras, reversine-treated blastomeres contributed to the TE:

31.76%, 22.27%; to the PE: 33.33%, 26.98%; and to the EPI: 31.17%, 31.75%, respectively. These results

suggest that developmental timing does not affect allocation of aneuploid cells in the blastocysts

Manipulating the development of mosaic aneuploid embryos

Our data suggests that upregulation of HIF1A may confer tolerance to aneuploidy. To test this further, we

inhibited HIF1A in our AZ3146-DMSO (AZ-D) chimera and AZ3146-Reversine chimera (AZ-R) chimeras

with 20uM of IDF-11774 (Fig. 5A- S7A-B) and then assessed lineage allocation. In AZ-D chimeras,

treatment with IDF11774 impaired embryo cavitation (Fig. 5B,C). In AZ-R chimeras, not only cavitation but

overall embryo morphology was affected (Fig. 5E,F). In AZ-D chimeras, IDF-11774 caused a reduction of

the total number of cells (Fig. 5D), from 86 to 75 cells. This reduction arose from the reduction of the TE

from 65 to 55 cells on average. Importantly, IDF-11774 seemed to impair the contribution of AZ3146-treated

cells to all the lineages (Fig. S7 C). In the TE: 52.83% to 47.55%; in the PE: 44.12% to 32.3%; and in the

EPI: 41.6% to 33.25%. Intriguingly, in AZ-D chimeras, IDF-11774 treatments did not affect the number of

cells in the blastocysts (Fig. 5G). Yet, IDF-11774 increased the number of PE cells, from 6 to 8 on average.

Thus, IDF-11774 treatment appeared to affect the development of medium mosaic chimeras (Fig. S7B),

albeit the increase of the contribution of AZ3146-treated blastomeres was not statistically significant (Fig.

S7D, TE: from 56.08% to 59.69%; PE: from 57.2% to 59.25%; EPI: from 46.3% to 52.64%). Taken together,

our data support the possibility that down-regulation of HIF1A affects the survival of aneuploid cells in

chimeric embryos.

DISCUSSION

Aneuploidy is a common event during pre-implantation development due to a permissive SAC and replication stress[2-4]. Here, we describe different strategies to study how the embryo responds to aneuploidy, activates DNA repair mechanisms, tolerates chromosomal instability, and behaves in a mosaic context. Our results indicate that: 1) the high specificity Mps1 inhibitor, AZ3146, can be used to generate aneuploid embryos. 2) Lineage specific responses to aneuploidy are present during blastocyst development, as we showed previously[12,13]. 3) HIF1A contributes to the survival of low degree aneuploid TE cells and PARP1 is responsible for survival of aneuploid EPI cells. 4) Hypoxia enhances DNA repair and favors the survival of aneuploid cells in chimeric embryos. 5) Hypoxia affects aneuploid-diploid cell competition in mosaic embryos, as results, cavitation is compromise.

Aneuploidy could arises during early cleavage stages [58] and has both immediate effects on cellular fitness and long-term effects on subsequent cell cycles[23,24]. Once generated, and depending on the degree of aneuploidy, an aneuploid blastomere is destined for either death, repair, or survival[59]. Reversine is known to cause a high-dose of aneuploidy that activates apoptosis, which might not always represent what occurs in the human embryos[17]. In mouse, reversine-treated embryos upregulate the senescent markers p53 and p21[13] and thus fail to give rise to viable embryos[12]. Our results indicate that reversine also downregulates PARP1, as previously observed in glioma[60]. Thus, the effect of reversine on embryo development can be due to a combination of increase in DNA damage and downregulation of DNA repair. As an alternative strategy to study aneuploidy, we introduced AZ3146-treatment[18] as a new model of aneuploidy in mouse embryos. This has enabled us to discover that some aneuploid blastomeres overexpress HIF1A, have increased survival of TE cells, and can survive to early post-implantation stages.

Considering that aneuploid human embryos upregulate hypoxic pathways[17], we sought to understand if chemical inhibitors of HIF1A have an impact on aneuploid development. Our results demonstrate that down-regulation of maternal HIF1A at the 8-cell stage is incompatible with blastocyst development. In contrast, loss of zygotic HIF1A activity at the 8-cell stage interferes with TE survival in AZ3146-treated embryos. It is known that p21/p53 pathways are incompatible with HIF1A by molecular competition for p300[61,62] and may explain why reversine-treated embryos are not affected by downregulation of HIF1A. It is known that DNA damage responses occur between the 8-cell and morula stages[38,59,63]. Accordingly, we find that PARP1 down-regulation at the 8-cell stage is incompatible with embryo survival[38,40]. However, chemical downregulation of PARP1 during late morula stages affects the survival of EPI cells only when there is a high dosage of aneuploidy. Due to an intrinsic role of maternally deposited HIF1A and PARP1, we are unable to address the role of these proteins in aneuploid embryos at early stages. However, considering the enrichment of PARP1 in the EPI, our results are consistent with previous reports suggesting that the EPI lineage is more sensitive to aneuploidy and has a more regulated DNA damage response pathways

than the TE[17,52]. These findings further support the idea of lineage-specific responses to aneuploidy in the

blastocyst, as we previously discovered[12,13].

DNA repair pathways are enhanced under hypoxic environments in somatic cells[29,35,64]. Similarly, our data

show that aneuploid embryos cultured in hypoxia had lower levels of DNA damage at the morula stage, in

agreement with previous studies reporting that mouse blastocysts recovered from the uterus and

blastocysts cultured in hypoxia have lower levels of γH2A.X compared to cultures in normoxia[49,65]. Here,

we propose that hypoxia increases DNA repair mechanisms that will allow the aneuploid cells to survive

aneuploid stress. Interestingly, in cancer, recent studies suggest that hypoxia favors HIF1A's association

with PARP1[29,35,64] to increase DNA repair. We show that cytoplasmic PARP1 is present at morula stages

under hypoxia, a novel observation as the role of cytoplasmic PARP1 has only been described during DNA

damage caused by viral infections[51].

Confined placental mosaicism, commonly observed in human pregnancies, refers to instances where the

karyotype of the placenta is aneuploid and the karyotype of the fetus is euploid[53]. This phenomenon suggest

that unknown biological mechanisms preferentially allocate aneuploid cells to the placenta or aneuploid

cells can survive in the TE lineage contributing to the placenta. Our results show that highly aneuploid cells

upregulate p53[17,27] and, in mouse chimeric embryos, these cells are consequently eliminated from the

blastocyst stage onwards[12,13]. Unexpectedly, however, we found that in chimeras with a low degree of

aneuploidy, aneuploid cells are not only capable of surviving, but also make equal contributions towards

the TE lineage compared to control cells. In agreement with our previous work[12], none of our models

showed preferential allocation of aneuploid cells to the TE. Importantly, by generating aneuploidy with the

two different Mps1 inhibitors reversine and AZ3146, we modelled different degrees of mosaic aneuploidy

in embryos that represent low-to-medium- degrees of mosaicism. Overall, we modeled three populations

of blastomeres with different fitness: diploid blastomeres (DMSO-treated), blastomeres able to survive

(AZ3146-treated) and senescent blastomeres (reversine-treated). Placing these cells side-by-side in the

embryos allowed us to understand how hypoxia enhances the survival of aneuploid cells, likely due to an

enhancement of DNA repair. In our AZ3146-reversine chimeras, AZ3146-treated blastomeres can

outcompete reversine-treated blastomeres. These results agree with the well-known relationships between

different degrees of aneuploidy/chromosomal instability and cellular fitness[24].

Finally, our results confirm a lack of correlation between the proportion of aneuploid cells in the EPI

compared to the TE. We explain these results due to lineage specific response to aneuploid stress: survival

in the TE but elimination from the ICM. These results are not surprising considering that in human mosaic

aneuploid embryos, the aneuploidy concordance rates between TE and ICM is very low (30–40%)[72]. Since

mosaics with low-to-medium degrees of aneuploidy have similar survival potency as fully euploid

embryos[8,9], understanding the molecular pathways involved in their survival may have translational

implications. Given that the extent and proportion of aneuploid cells in mosaic embryos are the factors that
impact survival, we propose that a reduction in aneuploid cells in the blastocyst will favor a successful
pregnancy. Here, we downregulated HIF1A as a strategy for reducing aneuploid cells number and found
that treatment with IDF-11774 increases the proportion of diploid cells in chimeras having a low-degree of
aneuploid cells but impairs the development of chimeras with a medium degree of aneuploid. Discovering
the mechanisms that lead to these different responses could generate strategies to improve embryo
survival. In sum, our study contributes to understanding the survival mechanism of aneuploid cells within
mosaic embryos.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Pre-implantation embryo culture

Mice were maintained according to national and international guidelines. Four- to six-week-old B6SJLF1/J
female mice were injected with 7.5IU PMSG followed by 7.5IU hCG 48h later, to induce superovulation.
The females were then mated with B6CBAF1/J males or were indicated, with E-cadherin GFP or mTmG
transgenic males. Pre-implantation mouse embryos were recovered 24h and 48h after the hCG injection to
obtain zygotes and 4-cell stage embryos, respectively in M2 medium (Sigma, M7167). When recovery
zygotes, cumulus cells were removed with 0.3% hyaluronidase (Sigma, H4272) in M2. Embryos then were
culture in regular KSOM (Sigma. MR-106) at 37°C under 5% CO_2/air (Normoxia) or 5% CO_2/ 5% O_2 balance
with nitrogen (Hypoxia). B6SJLF1/J females and B6CBAF1/J males were obtained from JAX laboratories.
Females were received at 3-4 weeks of age and were maintained in the CALTECH animal facility, where
they were housed with 5 same-sex littermates on a 12 h light/12 h dark cycle with food and water *ad libitum*.
The temperature in the facility was controlled and maintained at 21 °C. All experimental procedures
involving the use of live animals, or their tissues were performed in accordance with the NIH guidelines and
approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Institutional Biosafety
Committee at the California Institute of Technology (CALTECH). Reversine (Sigma, R3904), AZ3146
(Sigma, SML1427), PX-478 (Selleckchem, S7612), IDF-11774 (Selleckchem, S8771) and olaparib
(Selleckchem, S1060) were dissolved in DMSO (Sigma, D2650) before use to specific concentration. They
were respectively used at following final concentrations: 0.5uM, 20uM, 2uM, 20uM and 10uM. Control
embryos were incubated in the equivalent DMSO concentration. Drugs were dissolved in regular KSOM to
the concentration of use. DMSO concentration in media should never pass 0.4%.

Immunofluorescence

Embryos were fixed in 4% PFA (Thermo Scientific, AA47340) for 20 min at room temperature (RT).
Following by three washes with 0.1% Tween-20 (Sigma, P1379) dissolved in PBS (PBST). The embryos
were then permeabilized with 0.3%, Triton X-100 (Sigma, X100) in PBS. Washes were then performed
three times in PBST before embryos were transferred to blocking solution (3% BSA in PBS) for at least 3h
at RT. Incubation with primary antibodies was performed in blocking solution overnight at 4°C. Next day,

washes were performed three times in PBST before incubation with Alexa Fluor secondary antibodies
(Thermo Fisher Scientific, 1:500) in blocking solution for 2h. Washes were performed three times before
incubation with DAPI (Thermo Fisher Scientific) for 5 min. Washes after DAPI were perform two times in
PBST before the final incubation in M2. Embryos were then mounted in M2 micro-drops on 35 mm glass
bottom dish (MATTEK, P35G-1.5-14-C). Confocal imaging was carried out using Leica SP8, 40x objective,
1um Z-step. Image files were viewed and analyzed using ImageJ and IMARIS 9.9 software.
Primary antibodies used: mouse anti-CDX2 (Biogenex, 1:500), rabbit anti-NANOG (1:500; Abcam), goat
anti-SOX17 (1:300; R&D Systems), rabbit anti-HIF1A (1:300, Novusbio), mouse anti-PARP1 (1:500,
Proteintech) and rabbit anti- Phospho- Histone H2AX (1:500, R&D Systems).
416

***In situ* chromosome counting**
For determination of aneuploidy, treated 8-cell stage embryos were synchronized in metaphase by 10h
treatment with 0.03ug/mL colcemid (Cayman, 15364) diluted in KSOM. Following by 1h treatment with
10uM Mg132 (Selleckchem, S2619) in KSOM. Finally, 1h treatment with 5uM dimethylenastron
(MedChemExpress, HY-19944) and 10uM Mg132 in KSOM. Synchronized embryos were then fix in 2%
PFA for 20 min, permeabilized with PBST for 15 min and blocked 3h at RT before incubation with human
anti-centromere protein antibody (1:300, Antibodiesinc 15-234) overnight at 4°C. Next day, three washes
with PBST were performed before 2h incubation with goat anti-Human secondary antibody, Alexa Fluor
647 (1:400, Invitrogen A-21445) in blocking solution. Washes were performed three times before 20 min
incubation with DAPI (1:500) and Alexa Fluor 488 Phalloidin (1:300, Invitrogen A12379). Washes then were
performed three times before clearing overnight with AF1 plus (Citifluor, AF1/DAPI-15). Embryos were then
mounted in AF1 plus micro-drops on 35 mm glass bottom. Confocal imaging was carried out using Leica
SP8, 60x objective, 0.5um Z-step. Image files were viewed and analyzed using ImageJ and IMARIS 9.9
software.
431

Embryo transfers and post implantation recovery and biopsy
Embryo transfer were performed as described previously[73]. CD1 females and vasectomizes CD1 males
were obtained from Charles River. Reversine and AZ3146-treated blastocyst were transfer into 2.5-days
pseudopregnant CD1 females. Around 16 AZ3146-treated embryos were transfer in the right uterine horn,
whereas around 16 reversine-treated embryos were transfer in the left uterine horn of the same female as
control. To evaluate implantation and embryo survival potency, uterine horns were recovered 5 days after
surgery. Deciduas were dissected and post implantation embryos at stage E9.5 were recovered into PBST
on ice. Embryos were fixed in 4% PFA at RT for 1 h, followed by washes through PBST before imaging.
Images were taken using an Olympus LS stereo microscope with a 10x objective. Uterine transfers were
performed in accordance with the NIH guidelines and approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use
Committee (IACUC) and the Institutional Biosafety Committee at the California Institute of Technology
(CALTECH).

qRT-PCR

Around 14 to 17 morulas and blastocysts were collected for quantitative reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (qRT-PCR). Total RNA from morulas was obtained using the NucleoSpin RNA Plus XS kit (Takara, 740990.10). Whereas total RNA from blastocyst was extracted using the Arcturus PicoPure RNA Isolation Kit (Thermo Fisher, KIT0204). qRT-PCR was performed using the *Power* SYBR Green RNA-to-CT 1-Step Kit (Applied Biosystems, 4389986) in a StepOne Plus Real-time PCR machine (Applied Biosystems). The following program was used: 30 min 48 °C (reverse-transcription) followed by 10 min 95 °C followed by 45 cycles of 15 s 95 °C (denaturing) and 1 min 60 °C (annealing and extension). The ddCT method was used to determine relative levels of mRNA expression, with Ppia as an endogenous control[30]. Primers were obtained from IDT.

Name	Sequence
p53_Fw	GTCACAGCACATGACGGAGG
p53_Rv	TCTTCCAGATGCTCGGGATAC
Hif1a_Fw	CCTGCACTGAATCAAGAGGTTGC
Hif1a_Rv	CCATCAGAAGGACTTGCTGGCT
Ppia_Fw	GAGCTCTGAGCACTGGAGAGA
Ppia_Rv	CCACCCTGGCACATGAAT

Generation of chimeric embryos

Chimeric embryos were generated following a previous publish protocol[74]. Briefly, wild-type, E-cadherin GFP or mTmG 8-cell stage embryos were transfer to micro-drops of M2 after aneuploid treatment. Zona pellucida was removed by treatment with acidic Tyrode's solution (Sigma, T1788). The embryos were then incubated in Ca2+/Mg2+-free M2 (made in house) for 5min and then disaggregated into individual blastomeres by gentle mouth pipetting. Low mosaic chimeras were form by aggregation of four and four (1:1) of DMSO/reversine-treated blastomeres with AZ3146-treated blastomeres, respectively in KSOM. Medium mosaic chimeras were form by aggregation of three DMSO-treated blastomeres, three AZ3146-treated blastomeres and two reversine-treaded blastomeres in KSOM. Culture of the chimeras were performed under normoxic and hypoxia condition in KSOM for 48 to reach blastocyst stage.

Statistical analysis

The statistical tests used are indicated in the corresponding figure legends. Calculations were carried out in Microsoft Excel and data analysis and visualization in Prism 9 software. All graphs show mean values, error bars: s.e.m.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

E.S.V designed and conducted the experiments; analyzed the data and wrote the manuscript. E.S.V and M.Z.G conceived the project and interpreted the data. M.E.B and M.Z.G supervised the study.

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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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713

Figure 1| **Comparative analysis of lineage specification in aneuploid embryos generated by selective Mps1 inhibitors AZ3146 and reversine.** (A) Graphic representation of 4-cell embryos treated with DMSO (control) or Mps1 inhibitors reversine (0.5um) and AZ3146 (20um) to inactivate the spindle assembly checkpoint (SAC) and induce chromosome segregation errors. After washing, embryos were cultured to the mature blastocyst stage (E4.5) and analyzed for lineage specification. (B) Immunofluorescence imaging of well-known lineage markers CDX2 (TE), NANOG (EPI) and SOX17 (PE) reveals that overall embryonic morphology and cavitation is not affected by Mps1 inhibition. (C) Cell ratios for each lineage were normalized to DMSO treated control. Importantly, both reversine and AZ3146-treatments reduce the number of cells in the ICM, marked by NANOG and SOX17. Whereas the trophectoderm, marked by CDX2, is reduced only in the reversine-treated embryos. (n=28 per treatment) (***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test, error bars represent s.e.m). (D) *In situ* chromosome counting of 8 cell stage embryos after drug treatments. Representative images of individual embryos in the different treatments. DNA (white) is visualized by DAPI staining and kinetochores (red) by CREST antibody. PB (polar body), MN (micronuclei). Each chromosome presents 2 CREST dots. The large number is the cell ID and the smaller number indicates the number of chromosomes, "n". Diploid blastomeres present 40 pairs of CREST dots. Phalloidin (cyan) was used for cell segmentation. (E) Quantification of the incidence of aneuploid events, designated as those with more than 2 chromosomes (MN>2chr), less than 2 chromosomes (MN<2chr), without kinetochores (MN-CREST) and non-dividing nucleus (ND cell). We observed an increase in MN following reversine and AZ3146 treatment. Importantly, reversine-treated cells have a higher number of ND cells and MN-CREST staining. (n=128 cell DMSO treatment, n=152 cells AZ3146 treatment, n=72 cells reversine treatment, ****P<0.00001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test, error bars represent s.e.m).

Figure 2 | **HIF1A inhibition affects the survival of trophectoderm cells in low-degree aneuploid embryos.** A) qPCR analysis of *p53* and *Hif1a* mRNA expression at morula and blastocyst stages reveals that *p53* is upregulated in Reversine-treated embryos and that *Hif1a* is upregulated in AZ3146-treated embryos at morula stages; 3 biological replicates and 2 technical replicates per experiment with each replicate having a minimum of 16 embryos (**P<0.01, *P<0.05, Welch's t-test). B) Immunofluorescence against HIF1A (black) shows an increase in nuclear intensity in AZ3146-treated embryos at morula stages. At blastocyst stage, nuclear and cytoplasmic HIF1A are increased in AZ3146-treated embryos; normalization was based on DAPI staining (magenta). (C) Immunofluorescence analysis of lineage specification in blastocyst cultured with the HIF1A inhibitor IDF-11774 using antibodies against CDX2 (TE), NANOG (EPI) and SOX17 (PE). Importantly, IDF-11774 appears to affect cavitation of some AZ3146-treated embryos. (D) Lineage analysis at the blastocyst stage shows that TE and PE specification are affected by IDF-11774 treatment. Ratio of cells in each lineage in the blastocyst is normalized to DMSO treatment. (***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test, error bars represent s.e.m).

Figure 3 | **Hypoxia affects the levels of DNA damage during pre-implantation development.** Analysis of DNA damage and repair based on immunofluorescence against γH2A.X (phosphorylated form of H2A.X, white) and PARP1 (red), respectively. 8 cell stage (cultured 64 hours post hCG) and morula stage (cultured 74 hours post hCG) embryos under (A) normoxic or (B) hypoxic conditions after drug treatments. Intensity analysis shows that reversine and AZ3146 increase DNA damage at 8 cell stage through morula stage under (C) normoxic conditions. Importantly, reversine appears to downregulate PARP1 expression at 8 cell stage, which extends to morula stage embryos. Under (D) hypoxic conditions, DNA damage appears to be downregulated after the 8-cell stage. Interestingly, PARP1 expression is altered only at the 8-cell stage in reversine-treated embryos (***P<0.0001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, t-test).

Figure 4 | **Modeling low- and medium-degree mosaicism during pre-implantation development.** (A) Eight-cell stage aggregation chimeras containing a 1:1 ratio of reversine/DMSO-treated and AZ314-treated blastomeres were created using transgenics lines with membrane markers: mTmG (green) and E-cadherin (white). We designate DMSO/AZ3146 chimeras as low-degree mosaicism, whereas Reversine/AZ3146 chimeras represent medium-degree mosaicism. Immunofluorescence for CDX2, NANOG, and SOX17 was performed to test lineage specification and allocation during (B) normoxia and (C) hypoxia. Lineage allocation quantification was based on the above markers. Importantly, D) in normoxia, low and medium chimeras have the same number of cells in all the lineages except the EPI. In addition, AZ3146-treated blastomeres outcompete reversine-treated blastomeres in medium mosaics in the TE and the EPI. E) Under hypoxia, both low and medium chimeras have similar number of cells in all the lineages. Yet, AZ3146-blastomeres do not outcompete reversine-treated blastomeres. Quantification of the contribution of AZ3146-treated blastomeres to the chimeras showed that, (F) under normoxia, low mosaic chimeras do not present preferential allocation of aneuploid cells in the TE. In contrast, AZ3146-treated blastomeres increased their contribution in medium chimeras, but only significantly on the EPI and the PE. (G) During hypoxia, low mosaic chimeras did not change their behavior. Confirming that, in low-degree mosaicism, there is a preferential allocation of diploid cells to the EPI. In medium mosaic chimeras, AZ3146-treated blastomeres contribute similarly to reversine-blastomeres to the TE and EPI but significantly increase contribution to the EPI. These results indicate that hypoxia favors the survival of high dosage aneuploid cells (Experiments were repeated in triplicate, ****P<0.00001, **P<0.01, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test, error bars represent s.e.m).

Figure 5 | **Manipulating cell competition in low- and medium-degree mosaic embryos.** (A) Since hypoxia improves the survival of aneuploid cells, we inhibited HIF1A by IDF-11774 in 8-cell stage aggregation chimeras. Immunofluorescence for CDX2, NANOG, and SOX17 was performed to test lineage specification and allocation. (B) HIF1A downregulation in low-degree mosaicism does not affect overall morphology but affects (C) cavitation. In contrast, (E) HIF1A downregulation in medium-degree mosaicism affects morphology, and (F) cavitation of the embryos. Lineage allocation quantification after IDF-1174 reveals a significant reduction of total cell number (D) in low-degree mosaicism as well as a reduction in cell number in the TE but not in the EPI and PE. In contrast, total cell number is not affected (G) in medium-degree mosaicism. However, IDF11-774 treatment appears to increase the cell number of the PE. These results show that HIF1A downregulation in hypoxic conditions differentially affects each type of mosaic embryos. Experiments were repeated in triplicate, **P<0.005, *P<0.05, Mann–Whitney U-test, error bars represent s.e.m.

Figure 1

Figure 2

A

Morula *p53*

Morula *Hif1a*

Blastocyst *p53*

Blastocyst *Hif1a*

B

DAPI + DIC   HIF1A   DAPI + DIC   HIF1A

DMSO

Reversine

AZ3146

C

Aneuploid treatment   IDF-11774 treatment

4 cell stage   8 cell stage   Blastocyst

DAPI + DIC   NANOG + SOX17   CDX2

DMSO

Reversine

AZ3146

D

Figure 3

Figure 4

A Aggregation chimera modeling low-medium level mosaic embryo → ~48h culture

B Normoxia
DMSO/AZ3146 chimeras (Low mosaicism) | Reversine/AZ3146 chimeras (Medium mosaicism)
Half embryo
2 stacks
50 μm

C Hypoxia
DMSO/AZ3146 chimeras (Low mosaicism) | Reversine/AZ3146 chimeras (Medium mosaicism)
Half embryo
2 stacks
50 μm

CDX2 SOX17 NANOG

D (Normoxia) Number of cells in blastocyst — DMSO-treated cells, AZ3146-treated cells, Reversine-treated cells
Total (ns, ns), CDX2, NANOG (*), SOX17 (ns)
Low mosaic / Medium mosaic

E (Hypoxia) Number of cells in blastocyst — DMSO-treated cells, AZ3146-treated cells, Reversine-treated cells
Total (ns), CDX2 (ns), NANOG (ns), SOX17 (ns)
Low mosaic / Medium mosaic

F % of AZ3146 cells
Total (**), CDX2 (ns), NANOG (****), SOX17 (*)
Low mosaic / Medium mosaic

G % of AZ3146 cells
Total (*), CDX2 (ns), NANOG (**), SOX17 (ns)
Low mosaic / Medium mosaic

Figure 5

A

Aggregation chimera modeling low-medium level mosaic embryo

~2h recovery

IDF-11774 treatment

~46h culture

B DMSO/AZ3146 chimeras (Low mosaicism)

DMSO cultured   IDF-11774 cultured

CDX2 SOX17 NANOG

Half embryo

2 stacks

50 μm

E Reversine/AZ3146 chimeras (Medium mosaicism)

DMSO cultured   IDF-11774 cultured

CDX2 SOX17 NANOG

Half embryo

2 stacks

50 μm

C Cavity diameter (um)
DMSO-treated, IDF-11774 treated **

D Number of cells in blastocyst
DMSO-treated cells / AZ3146-treated cells
Total * | CDX2 * | NANOG ns | SOX17 ns

F Cavity diameter (um)
DMSO-treated, IDF-11774 treated **

G Number of cells in blastocyst
Reversine-treated cells / AZ3146-treated cells
Total ns | CDX2 ns | NANOG ns | SOX17 *