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Mice carrying nonsense mutant p53 develop spontaneous tumors with frequent metastases

Running title: High tumor and metastases rate in *Trp53*[R210X] mice

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Conflict of interest

KGW is co-founder and shareholder of Aprea Therapeutics, a company that develops novel cancer therapy by targeting the DNA damage response pathway. KGW has previously received salary and research funding from Aprea Therapeutics. The other authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Abstract

The *TP53* tumor suppressor gene is mutated in a large fraction of human tumors. Close to 11% of *TP53* mutations are nonsense mutations, causing premature termination of protein synthesis and expression of truncated inactive p53 protein. The most common *TP53* nonsense mutation in human cancer is R213X. To study the impact of *TP53* nonsense mutations *in vivo*, we generated mice harboring the *Trp53* nonsense mutation R210X that corresponds to human *TP53* R213X. Initially, *Trp53*[R210X] mice appear phenotypically normal, although the proportion of female *Trp53*[R210X/R210X] mice is dramatically reduced. Female homozygous mice are poor breeders and remain smaller and lighter than female heterozygous and wildtype littermates. *Trp53*[R210X/R210X] mice start to show tumors at 2.5 months of age, and their maximal lifespan is 8.5 months. *Trp53*[R210X/+] mice present tumors from 9 months of age, and by 16.5 months of age 50% of all heterozygous mice have developed overt tumors. 70% of tumors from *Trp53*[R210X/+] mice show loss of heterozygosity (LOH). The most common tumor type in homozygous mice is T-cell lymphoma, while soft-tissue sarcoma and osteosarcoma are the predominant tumor types in heterozygous mice. Although the *Trp53*[R210X] tumor phenotype is comparable to those of *Trp53*-null and *Trp53*-missense knock-in mice, *Trp53*[R210X/R210X] mice develop frequent metastases and *Trp53*[R210X/+] mice have a longer overall survival than *Trp53*[R172H/+] missense mutant knock-in mice. Treatment of T-cell lymphoma cells from *Trp53*[R210X/R210X] mice with aminoglycoside G418 induces translational readthrough and expression of full-length functional p53. Our new unique mouse model will allow further studies of the effects of *Trp53* nonsense mutation in a multi-organ system and serve as a model for the Li-Fraumeni syndrome (LFS). It will also be valuable for preclinical evaluation of novel therapeutic strategies for targeting *TP53* nonsense mutations in cancer.

Introduction

The transcription factor p53 is activated by cellular stress (1). Activated p53 binds to

specific DNA motifs as a tetramer, transactivates multiple target genes (2, 3), and

controls e.g. cell cycle progression, DNA repair, metabolism, senescence, and

apoptosis (1, 4). The *TP53* gene is often inactivated in human tumors, most frequently

by missense mutations that disrupt p53 DNA binding and transactivation of target

genes (5, 6). Missense mutant p53 can inhibit co-expressed wildtype (WT) p53 through

a dominant-negative effect (DNE) that can increase resistance to genotoxic stress and

drive clonal selection (7). Some forms of missense mutant p53 may exert oncogenic

gain-of-function (GOF) activity, associated with a wider tumor spectrum and enhanced

invasion and metastasis (8-10). However, other studies have not found evidence for

mutant p53 GOF activity (7, 11, 12) and the concept of mutant p53 GOF remains

controversial. Around 11% of *TP53* mutations are nonsense mutations that result in a

premature stop codon (6) and expression of truncated p53 that lacks critical functional

domains and therefore fails to transactivate p53 target genes. Nevertheless, certain

truncated p53 proteins generated by *TP53* nonsense mutations may have oncogenic

properties (13).

Mouse models that either completely lack p53 or carry missense mutant p53 ($Trp53^{Mis}$)

support a key role of p53 as tumor suppressor. Homozygous *Trp53*-null or $Trp53^{Mis}$

mice show a striking cancer phenotype with a high rate of spontaneous tumors and

reduced survival compared to WT mice (9, 14-19). Both $Trp53^{-/-}$ and $Trp53^{Mis/Mis}$ mice

exhibit tumors from 3-6 months of age, whereas $Trp53^{+/-}$ and $Trp53^{Mis/+}$ mice display

tumors at 9-10 months of age, often associated with loss of the WT allele (loss of

heterozygosity, LOH). *Trp53*[-/-] and *Trp53*[Mis/Mis] mice mainly develop lymphomas and

sarcomas, whereas heterozygotes, especially the *Trp53*[Mis/+] models, also develop

carcinomas. *Trp53*[R172H/+] and *Trp53*[R270H/+] mice develop more invasive and metastasis

prone tumors compared to *Trp53*[+/-] mice, consistent with GOF activity for these

mutants (9, 16).

Mouse models designed to investigate the functional implications of *TP53* nonsense

mutations *in vivo* have previously not been established. Such models are crucial for a

better understanding of the impact of nonsense mutant p53 in a living organism, and

can also serve as platforms for preclinical development of pharmacological strategies

for therapeutic targeting of nonsense mutant *TP53* in cancer. Several compounds can

induce translational readthrough of nonsense mutant *TP53* and thus expression of full-

length and functional p53 protein in cultured cells, including G418 (20), Clitocine (21),

ELX-02 (22), 2,6-Diaminopurine (23), cc-90009 (24), and 5-Fluorouridine (25). Here

we present a novel mouse model carrying the *Trp53*-R210X nonsense mutation that

corresponds to *TP53*-R213X, the most common *TP53* nonsense mutation in human

tumors.

Results

Generation of a *Trp53*[R210X] mouse model

To generate a mouse model harboring the *Trp53*-R210X nonsense mutation, we used

CRISPR/Cas9 genome editing to introduce two single point mutations resulting in an

Arg (CGC) to STOP (TGA) substitution at codon 210 in exon 6 (Fig. 1A). The

CRISPR/Cas9 strategy was validated in NIH/3T3 mouse fibroblasts. Single-cell clones

of edited NIH/3T3 cells were genotyped as heterozygous using the introduced XbaI

cleavage site. PCR amplicons of *Trp53* exons 5-7 from the NIH/3T3 cell clones were

subcloned and sequencing of individual plasmid clones identified those carrying the

R210X mutation and the two downstream silent mutations. However, the XbaI site was

not present in all clones (Fig. 1B). ssODN template-triggered repair can generate short

conversion tracts of about 30 nucleotides with Gaussian-like distributions surrounding

the Cas9 cut site (26). The mutation producing the intended XbaI site was too far from

the Cas9 cut site and therefore outside of the effective conversion zone, explaining its

inconsistent introduction.

Genotyping the F0 offspring with PCR revealed that 6/17 pups were positive for the

R210X mutation. Sanger sequencing confirmed that two of the six pups also had the

XbaI site, whereas the remaining four lacked it (not shown). The pups were also

genotyped with restriction enzyme digestion, which confirmed the two pups carrying

the XbaI site, and also identified one pup carrying the XbaI site but not the correctly

mutated R210X sequence. The six F0 offspring carrying the correct R210X mutation

were set up for backcross breeding to WT C57BL/6J mice to eliminate possible off-

target events. Two founder animals, both lacking the XbaI site, generated F1 offspring,

and PCR genotyping verified germline transmission of the R210X allele (Fig. 1C).

Sequencing of 1049 bp surrounding the edited *Trp53* exon 6 locus confirmed clean

WT and R210X alleles in all F1 mice identified as heterozygous (Fig. 1D).

Intercrosses of *Trp53*^{R210X} mice yield fewer and smaller female homozygous

offspring

The *Trp53*^{R210X} strain was maintained by backcrossing *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ mice to WT

C57BL/6J mice. Backcross litter sizes at 2 weeks of age were normal compared to the

reference litter size of 7.0 pups for C57BL/6J mice (*informatics.jax.org*) (Supplementary Table S1), and genotype and gender distribution (309 offspring) were consistent with expected Mendelian inheritance but with significantly more WT males (Supplementary Table S2). Different combinations of intercrosses were set up to assess the viability and reproductive capacity of $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice (Supplementary Table S1). Intercrossing only $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice resulted in litters with significantly fewer pups at 2 weeks of age compared to backcrosses, whilst intercrosses with at least one $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mouse yielded similar litter sizes as the backcrosses (Supplementary Table S1). Among all intercrosses between $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ and $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice, only one litter was derived using a $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ female, yielding a single male $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ pup. All other litters were spawned from $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ females. Thus, $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ female mice are fertile but have a reduced breeding capacity.

Intercrosses between $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ and/or $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice gave fewer female $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ offspring (Supplementary Table S2), whereas male offspring distribution followed expected Mendelian inheritance regardless of genotype. Females remained fewer when all $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ offspring were analyzed. Aside from the poor breeding capacity of female $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice, heterozygous and homozygous mice of both genders appeared phenotypically normal at young age and were fertile.

$Trp53^{R210X}$ mouse bodyweights were recorded weekly from postnatal week 2 and until euthanasia for all offspring from homozygous-generating intercrosses. Female $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice had smaller body size (not shown) and were lighter than both WT and $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ littermates at 2 weeks of age and remained lighter throughout life (Fig.

2A). In contrast, male mice had almost identical weight development regardless of

genotype until 34 weeks of age, when the remaining $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ males were

markedly lighter than their $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ and WT littermates, most likely due to

emaciation secondary to tumor growth (Fig. 2B).

$Trp53^{R210X}$ mice have a reduced lifespan

The $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice had significantly shorter survival than $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ and WT

mice (adj. P-values: ***$p < 0.001$), as did $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice compared to WT (adj. P-

value: ***$p < 0.001$) (Fig. 2C-E). Female and male $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice had similar

survival, whilst female $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice had reduced survival compared to male (Fig.

2F). The apparent difference in survival between female and male WT mice was not

statistically significant ($p = 0.0573$). 11 male WT mice <1.5 years old were found dead

or were euthanized due to wounds or abdominal masses. Only one of these had

abdominal neoplasia; all others either showed no gross abnormalities or had enlarged

seminal vesicles, a normal phenomenon in aging male mice (27).

We also compared $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ survival to that of $Trp53^{R172H/R172H}$ missense knock-

in mice maintained in the same animal facility. The two mouse strains had strikingly

similar survival with a rapid decline from 3-8.5 months of age and similar mean survival:

145.5 days for $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice, 155 days for $Trp53^{R172H/R172H}$ mice (Fig. 2C-E). In

contrast, $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice survived longer than $Trp53^{R172H/+}$ mice, with mean survival

492 days and 460.5 days, respectively (Fig. 2E). There were no differences in survival

between female and male $Trp53^{R172H}$ mice (Fig. 2G).

Tumor development in $Trp53^{R210X}$–carrying mice is highly penetrant

All animals, both euthanized and found dead, were necropsied, and histopathological

analysis was performed on available tissues from all $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice and a subset

of $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ and WT mice. Grossly visible tumors were found in 59 of 62 (95%)

$Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice, 148 of 205 (72%) $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice, and 26 of 64 (41%) WT

mice. This confirms a highly penetrant tumor phenotype in $Trp53^{R210X}$ mice.

Histopathological examination was performed on tissues from 49 $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice

(those with formalin-fixed tissues available) and 79 of the $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice with

suspected tumors that were also selected for LOH analysis (see below). To identify a

baseline for common tumors in the WT parents and siblings of the $Trp53^{R210X}$ mutant

mice, we also examined tumors and tissues from the oldest of the available necropsied

WT mice (12 males, 12 females). Among the analyzed mice, 48 (98%) of the

$Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice, 79 (100%) of the $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice, and 22 (92%) of the selected

WT mice had tumors (Supplementary Table S3).

Different tumor spectra in $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ and $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice

$Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice only developed lymphomas and soft-tissue sarcomas (Fig. 3),

whereas $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice showed a broader tumor spectrum with osteosarcomas,

soft-tissue sarcomas, lymphomas, and carcinomas (Fig. 4A-D), as well as benign

tumors and a few tumors not further characterized (Supplementary Table S3). To

assess loss of the WT $Trp53$ allele (LOH) in tumors from $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice, we

performed semi-quantitative PCR with the primers for genotyping (Fig. 4E). Out of 111

tumors from $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice analyzed, 78 (70%) showed LOH, consistent with a

selection pressure to eliminate the remaining WT allele.

Trp53$^{R210X/+}$ and WT mice showed similar tumor spectrum, apart from a unique

incidence of osteosarcomas observed only in *Trp53*$^{R210/+}$ mice (Fig. 5A). Lymphomas

were much more frequent in *Trp53*$^{R210/R210X}$ mice than in *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ and WT mice;

83% of the homozygous mice had lymphoma compared to only 37% of the

heterozygous mice ($p < 0.0001$) and 45% of WT mice ($p = 0.0041$). Primary lymphomas

occurred mainly in the thymus, spleen and lymph nodes (Fig. 5B). Since it was not

possible to differentiate between primary and metastatic splenic lymphomas, or

between primary and metastatic lymph node lymphomas, both spleen and lymph

nodes are referred to as primary sites. *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ mice developed predominantly

thymic lymphomas, and was the only genotype with metastasizing solitary thymic

lymphoma (Fig. 5B-C). Thymic lymphoma was less common in *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ mice ($p =$

0.0051), and absent in WT mice ($p = 0.0016$) (Fig. 5B).

Trp53$^{R210X/R210X}$ mice developed soft-tissue sarcomas in the skin, subcutis, and striated

muscle, whereas *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ mice developed this type of sarcoma in subcutis, liver,

spleen, seminal vesicles, lymph nodes, abdominal and mediastinal fat, lung, stomach,

pancreas and preputial gland (Figs. 3-4, and not shown). WT mice had soft-tissue

sarcomas in liver and lymph nodes (not shown). *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ male mice had a higher

incidence of soft-tissue sarcomas than females ($p = 0.0161$), while female *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$

had more frequent osteosarcomas than males ($p < 0.0001$) (Fig. 5D).

To visualize the *in situ* distribution of lymphoma in a *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ mouse, we

performed post-mortem MRI on a 234-days old male that was euthanized due to a

large tumor on the ventral neck and respiratory distress. The MRI showed extensive

neoplasias originating and extending from the thymus and several lymph nodes (Fig.

5E-G).

We also characterized 22 thymic lymphomas, 16 splenic lymphomas and 17 soft-tissue

sarcomas from $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice by immunohistochemistry (IHC) (Supplementary

Table S4). CD3-staining confirmed T-cell origin of 4/4 female and 15/18 male thymic

tumors and all examined splenic tumors (3 female, 13 male). Vimentin-staining

confirmed mesenchymal origin of all soft-tissue sarcomas (2 female, 15 male). Desmin

staining demonstrated myocyte origin of 2/2 female and 13/15 male soft-tissue

sarcomas, and weak or no myogenin staining confirmed their classification as

rhabdomyosarcomas or myosarcomas. Two male soft-tissue sarcomas were negative

for desmin and myogenin, and were thus classified as soft-tissue sarcomas not further

specified. CD68 staining was used to identify histiocytic origin, and all positive cells

were non-neoplastic, infiltrating histiocytes or macrophages.

Frequent lymphoma metastases in $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice

Overall, 26 (54%) of the $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice, 22 (28%) of the $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice, and

3 (14%) of the WT mice had tumor metastases (Fig. 5A). $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice only

developed lymphoma metastases, and with higher frequency than $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ and WT

mice; 26 of 40 (65%) $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice with lymphoma in at least one primary site

developed metastases in at least one organ, as compared to 12 of 29 (41%) of the

$Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice and 1 of 10 (10%) WT mice (Fig. 5C and Supplementary Table S3).

The most common lymphoma metastasis sites were lung and liver, followed by kidney,

heart, and submandibular salivary gland (not shown). Both number of metastases and

number of target organs are probably underestimated, since not all tissues were

sampled from all animals. $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice also had metastasizing soft-tissue

sarcoma, osteosarcoma, and carcinoma (Supplementary Table S3). Intriguingly, there

was no effect of metastatic disease on survival of $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice, and

$Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice with metastatic disease had in fact longer survival than mice with no

metastasis (Fig. 6A). However, it should be noted that $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice with

osteosarcoma had significantly shorter survival than those with other types of tumors

(not shown); this may skew the survival data for mice without metastases since only

2/22 mice with osteosarcoma had metastasis. Furthermore, $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice with

thymic lymphoma had decreased survival compared to those with splenic and/or lymph

node lymphoma (Fig. 6B). Since thymic lymphoma can interfere with heart and lung

function, we investigated thymic tumor size. $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice with only thymic

lymphoma had the largest thymus tumors compared to mice with thymic lymphoma

and other primary tumors (Fig. 6C), and had the shortest survival (Fig. 6D). Thus,

solitary thymic lymphomas appear to have a higher growth rate than thymic

lymphomas that are concurrent with other lymphoma sites or soft-tissue sarcomas,

supporting the idea that solitary thymic lymphoma is a unique and *de novo* tumor

caused by the R210X mutation.

Translational readthrough in T-cell lymphoma cells derived from $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$

mice

To investigate if translational readthrough of R210X nonsense mutant $Trp53$ can

generate full-length active p53, we established T-cell lymphoma lines from thymic

lymphomas of $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice. Fig. 7A shows representative HE and CD3

immunohistochemistry staining of the thymus from one mouse, X405. Flow cytometry

with CD3, CD4 and CD8 antibodies verified T-cell origin, with 97.5% CD3$^+$ cells and

99% among those CD4$^+$CD8$^+$ (Fig. 7B). To examine translational readthrough, we

treated X405 T-cell lymphoma cells with aminoglycoside G418 for 72 h. We used

immunofluorescence staining with anti-p53 C-terminal antibody (280aa C-term) that

detects full-length p53 but not C-terminally truncated p53, and anti-p53 N-terminal

antibody N1 that detects both full-length and C-terminally truncated p53, to show that

100µM G418 induced full-length p53 (Fig. 7C). Western blotting with anti-p53 antibody

1C12, that recognizes an N-terminal epitope, confirmed a dose-dependent induction

of translational readthrough and expression of full-length p53 (Fig. 7D). We also found

a slight increase in truncated p53, most likely due to inhibition of nonsense-mediated

decay following translational readthrough. Moreover, qRT-PCR demonstrated that

induction of full-length p53 by G418 leads to upregulation of p53 target genes *Cdkn1a*

(p21), *Puma*, and *Zmat3* (Fig. 7E), as well as induction of apoptotic cell death as shown

by Annexin V staining (Fig. 7F), indicating that full-length p53 generated by

translational readthrough in these cells is fully functional as transcription factor.

Discussion

We present here the first mouse model carrying a *Trp53* nonsense mutation. *Trp53*-

R210X corresponds to human *TP53*-R213X, one of the 10 most common *TP53*

mutations in human tumors. The *Trp53*^{R210X} allele was transferred at Mendelian

frequency in all crosses except intercrosses with female *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ mice that

resulted in smaller litters than the reference number for the C57BL/6J WT background

strain. These results are consistent with data from *Trp53*-null mice, where significant

decreases in embryonic implantation, pregnancy rate and litter size were observed in

matings with female *Trp53*$^{-/-}$ mice (28). This effect in *Trp53*-null mice is most likely

caused by reduced levels of leukemia inhibitory factor (LIF), which may also be

pertinent to our new $Trp53^{R210X}$ strain.

We observed a substantial reduction in the frequency of female $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ pups

regardless of breeding setup, consistent with previous data for $Trp53$-null mice (29-

32). Exencephaly and craniofacial malformations in $Trp53^{-/-}$ female embryos (29, 30,

32) may also explain the skewed gender distribution observed in the $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$

mice. Apart from the poor breeding capacity of female $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice,

heterozygous and homozygous mice of both genders appeared phenotypically normal

initially and were fertile, as reported for $Trp53$-null mice (14, 15).

The reduced bodyweights of female $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice compared to $Trp53^{R210X/+}$

and WT mice was unexpected. To our knowledge, similar findings have not been

reported for any genetically manipulated $Trp53$-model; in one study, female and male

$Trp53^{+/-}$ and $Trp53^{-/-}$ mice showed no difference in bodyweight (31), and two novel

$Trp53$ missense knock-in mouse models displayed normal male and female

bodyweights (18). In our study, male mice of all three genotypes had almost identical

weight curves up until 34 weeks of age, very similar to those reported for male $Trp53$-

null mice (31). At that point, the weight curve for male $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice began to

deviate downward from those of $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ and WT mice, presumably a direct

consequence of tumor development.

$Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice had similar survival curves as the control $Trp53^{R172H/R172H}$ mice,

as well as several other published $Trp53$-null and $Trp53^{Mis}$ mouse models (9, 14-19,

31). Interestingly, $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice showed significantly longer survival than the

$Trp53^{R172H/+}$ mice in our colony. One plausible explanation for this difference is that the

truncated p53 protein encoded by the $Trp53^{R210X}$ allele exerts a less pronounced

dominant-negative effect by oligomerization with co-expressed WT p53 as compared

to R172H missense mutant p53, or completely lacks such effect, allowing more potent

WT p53-dependent tumor suppression in $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice.

Whereas all homozygous $Trp53^{R210X}$ mice had died or been euthanized by 8.5 months

of age, heterozygosity for the $Trp53^{R210X}$ mutation did not affect survival until

approximately 9 months of age. As reported for homozygous $Trp53$-null and $Trp53$

missense knock-in mice (9, 14-19), homozygous $Trp53^{R210X}$ mice showed a

remarkable susceptibility to tumor development at an early age, with lymphoma as the

predominant tumor type followed by soft-tissue sarcoma. This confirms that $Trp53$

nonsense mutation at codon 210 leads to a dramatically increased tumor incidence,

just like complete loss or missense mutation of $Trp53$. The heterozygous $Trp53^{R210X}$

mice also showed a striking tumor phenotype, with larger variation in tumor type, later

onset of clinical signs, and frequent LOH, again in agreement with previous studies of

$Trp53$-null and $Trp53$ missense knock-in mice (9, 14-16, 19, 33). Thus, the $Trp53^{R210X/+}$

mice represent a new model for the Li-Fraumeni syndrome (LFS) in which $TP53$

nonsense mutations occur with a similar frequency as in somatic tumors (The $TP53$

Database (R20, July 2019): https://tp53.cancer.gov)(34).

We observed different tumor spectra in homozygous and heterozygous $Trp53^{R210X}$

mice, with early onset lymphomas and soft-tissue sarcomas in the $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$

mice and a broader range of later onset tumors in the $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice, including

lymphomas, soft-tissue sarcomas, osteosarcomas and carcinomas, similar to the

range of tumors found in WT mice. The delayed tumor onset in $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ compared

to $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice reflects the need to eliminate the remaining WT allele. This

provides time for acquisition of additional genetic alterations that might predispose to

other tumor types. Moreover, the observed frequent thymic lymphomas in the

$Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice but not in WT mice, along with the rapid growth of solitary thymic

lymphomas which resulted in earlier death or euthanasia of $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice,

suggest that thymic T-cell lymphoma is a *de novo* tumor in our model, as opposed to

early onset of a tumor that occurs naturally in the background strain. Similarly,

osteosarcomas were only found in the $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice and not in WT mice, indicating

that it too is a *de novo* tumor. Both thymic lymphoma and osteosarcoma are rare in

C57BL/6J mice (35, 36).

$Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice frequently developed lymphoma metastases, most commonly to

liver and lung, but no soft-tissue sarcoma metastasis, whereas the $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice

showed a comparatively lower lymphoma and higher soft-tissue sarcoma metastasis

rate. Unexpectedly, metastatic disease did not have a negative effect on survival of

$Trp53^{R210X}$ mice. This highlights the fact that even tumors that do not metastasize may

be life-threatening through various mechanisms, such as rapid growth that

compromises organ function, e.g. compression and restriction of heart and lungs by

thymic lymphomas, or production of substances that affect vital organs or have

detrimental systemic effects.

As far as we are aware, this is the first report of frequent and metastasizing lymphoma

in genetically engineered *Trp53* mutant mice. The high rate of metastasis in $Trp53^{R210X}$

mice, which is in contrast to data for $Trp53^{R246S/R246S}$, $Trp53^{R245W/R245W}$ and

Trp53^{R270H/R270H} mice that only infrequently or never develop metastasis (17, 19),

suggests that truncated p53 derived from the R210X nonsense mutant allele can exert

some kind of GOF activity. Indeed, GOF features of C-terminally truncated p53

proteins have been demonstrated in cell culture and *in vivo* assays (13). However, we

did not observe any significant differences in overall survival, tumor incidence, tumor

spectrum or LOH frequency between our *Trp53*^{R210X} mice and data reported for *Trp53*-

null mice (14, 15, 33), arguing against a prominent GOF activity of the R210X allele in

this setting. A caveat is that data on metastasis frequency in homozygous *Trp53*-null

or missense knock-in mice are scarce in previous studies (9, 14-19). Thus, we do not

exclude that further investigation will reveal GOF properties of nonsense mutant *TP53*.

In conclusion, our *Trp53*^{R210X} mouse model should facilitate the development of novel

strategies for therapeutic targeting of nonsense mutant *TP53* in cancer. Importantly,

we have confirmed that induction of translational readthrough of the *Trp53*-R210X

allele in mouse thymic lymphoma cells results in the expression of full-length and

functional p53 protein and cell death by apoptosis. Further studies of downstream

effects of p53 activation in these cells are required, and it will also be interesting to

examine translational readthrough and p53 activation in cell lines derived from other

types of tumors in *Trp53*^{R210X} mice. Induction of translational readthrough is a potential

therapeutic strategy for nonsense mutant *TP53*-carrying tumors upon diagnosis, or for

prevention of tumors in cancer-prone individuals such as LFS family members carrying

an inherited *TP53* nonsense mutation. Given that around 11% of all *TP53* mutations in

cancer are nonsense mutations (6), successful clinical implementation of efficient

readthrough-inducing therapy would have a significant impact on public health

worldwide.

Materials and methods

Generation of *Trp53*[R210X] mutant mice

To generate the *Trp53*[R210X] mouse model, a chemically modified synthetic single-guide

RNA (sgRNA) (5'-gcagactttttCGCcacagcg-3') with an 80-mer SpCas9 scaffold targeting

the region encoding the R210 codon in *Trp53* exon 6 was used (CRISPRevolution

sgRNA EZ Kit, Synthego, USA). Single strand oligodeoxynucleotides (ssODNs) of 200

nucleotides were used as repair template (Ultramer[TM], Integrated DNA Technologies,

USA; 5'-

ctgacttattcttgctcttaggcctggctcctccccagcatcttatccgggtggaaggaaatttgtatcccgagtatctAga

agacaggcagacttttTgAcaTagTgtggtggtaccttatgagccacccgaggtctgtaatttttgttttggtttgtgcgtct

tagagacagttgactccagcctagactgatgttgac-3') for homology-directed repair (HDR). The

sequence included silent mutations to exclude recutting of the guide RNA and an XbaI

site (tctAga) close to the R210X codon TgA to facilitate genotyping. The CRISPR/Cas9

strategy was verified by editing NIH/3T3 mouse fibroblasts (CRL-1658, ATCC, USA),

see below for genotyping strategy using the XbaI site. The edited NIH/3T3 cells were

plated as single cells and cultured in Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium High

Glucose (DMEM) supplemented with 5% FBS.

The edited mice were produced at the Karolinska Center for Transgene Technologies,

Karolinska Institutet. Zygotes harvested from superovulated and mated C57BL/6J

female mice (Charles River Laboratories, Germany) were microinjected into the

pronuclei with injection buffer [10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 0.1 mM EDTA] containing a

pre-formed Cas9-sgRNA ribonucleoprotein complex at a concentration of 20 ng/µl

eSpCas9 (Sigma-Aldrich/Merck, Germany), 20 ng/µl of the *Trp53* sgRNA (Synthego),

and 20 ng/µl of the 200 nucleotide ssODN Ultramer (Integrated DNA Technologies).

Microinjected zygotes were implanted into oviducts of pseudopregnant SOPF

RjOrl:SWISS (Janvier Labs, France) surrogate female mice via microsurgery. Ear

punch biopsies from the F0 offspring were lysed (37) and subjected to PCR with

primers encompassing the edited region, giving a 1049 bp amplicon (*Trp53* exon 5-7;

Forward primer: 5'-ATCGTTACTCGGCTTGTCCC-3'; Reverse primer: 5'-

GGGTAGGAACCAAAGAGCGT-3'). PCR products were purified using the QIAquick

PCR Purification Kit (Qiagen, Germany) and digested with restriction enzyme XbaI

(New England Biolabs, USA) to reveal recombination of the ssODN template. The PCR

amplicons from selected candidate F0 mice were subcloned into pMiniT 2.0 (New

England Biolabs) and individual plasmid clones were subjected to Sanger sequencing

(KIGene, Karolinska Institutet). All F1 mice identified as heterozygous were further

confirmed by Sanger sequencing individual plasmid clones using primers described

above for *Trp53* exon 5-7. Sequences were analyzed using the SnapGene (version

7.0.1) and Jalview (version 2.11.2.6) softwares.

Animal studies

Animal care was in accordance with Swedish regulation and Karolinska Institutet

guidelines. Experimental mice were housed in enriched individually ventilated cages

in 1 hour dawn/dusk and 10h light/dark cycle, at 22°C ± 2°C and 50% ± 20% air

humidity at a pathogen-free animal facility at Karolinska Institutet. Mice were supplied

with irradiated CRM(P) mouse pellets (SAFE Diets, France) and drinking water *ad*

libitum. All animal studies were approved by the Stockholm Regional Animal Ethical

Committee, Sweden (Dnr 14188-2019).

$Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice were maintained on a C57BL/6J background by backcrossing to

C57BL/6J mice purchased from Charles River Laboratories. Homozygous mice were

generated by intercrossing $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ and/or $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice. $Trp53^{R172H}$ (9)

(C57BL/6J background), a kind gift from Dr Guillermina Lozano, MD Anderson Cancer

Center, Houston, were used as a reference strain. DNA for genotyping was extracted

from ear biopsies using the Gentra Puregene Tissue Kit (Qiagen). Genotyping

$Trp53^{R210X}$ mice was performed by two separate touchdown PCR reactions (10 cycles

of touchdown from 65°C to 61°C, followed by 25 cycles at 60°C – total 35 cycles) with

specific primers to detect mutant and WT alleles, respectively ($Trp53$-R210X allele,

252 bp amplicon, forward primer: 5'-CATCTACAAGAAGTCACAGCAC-3', reverse

primer: 5'-GGTACCACCACACTATGTCA-3'; $Trp53$-R210 WT allele, 95 bp amplicon,

forward primer: 5'-GCAGACTTTTCGCCACAGC-3', reverse primer: 5'-

CTGGAGTCAACTGTCTCTAAGAC-3'). PCR products were analyzed on 2% agarose

gels. Genotyping of $Trp53^{R172H}$ mice was performed as described(9). Mice presenting

a mutant allele band together with a WT allele band in the genotyping PCR were

considered heterozygous, and mice showing only a mutant allele band and no WT

band were considered homozygous. Mice from $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ intercrosses that were

negative for the R210X mutation are referred to as WT mice and were used as controls.

$Trp53^{R210X}$ mouse bodyweights were recorded weekly from postnatal week 2 and until

moribund and euthanized. Homozygous mice were palpated weekly for tumor

occurrence starting at 10 weeks of age, and heterozygous as well as WT littermate

mice were palpated from 12 months of age.

Tissue collection and processing

Moribund mice were euthanized by cervical dislocation and tissues were directly

collected for further analysis. Tissue samples were also collected from mice found

dead, unless there was too much autolysis. Tissues for molecular analysis were

collected either by immediate snap freezing in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80°C, or

in RNAlater™ Stabilizing Solution (Thermo Fisher Scientific, USA). Tissues collected

for histological analysis were carefully dissected and fixed in 4% formaldehyde

(buffered, pH 6.9, Sigma-Aldrich/Merck) at room temperature on a slow set rocking

table for 24-48h, and subsequently transferred to 70% ethanol for storage at 4°C until

further use. Skeletal tissues and calcified tumors were decalcified using MolDecal10

Ready to use Solution (pH 7.2-7.4, HistoLab Products, Sweden) for 3-4 weeks in 4°C

on a slow set rocking table. Decalcification solution was changed every 3-5 days. For

establishment of thymic lymphoma cell lines, enlarged thymuses from homozygous

mice were fine dissected and collected in ice-cold PBS (see below).

Histopathology and immunohistochemistry (IHC)

Formaldehyde-fixed tissues were processed in an automated tissue processing

machine (LOGOS, Milestone Medical, Italy) for dehydration, followed by paraffin-

embedding and microtome sectioning (4μm). Sections were collected on Superfrost™

Plus Adhesion Microscope Slides (Thermo Scientific, USA). For histological analysis,

slides were stained with hematoxylin and eosin (HE) using a standard protocol.

Determination of tumor type was performed by IHC following standard methods.

Staining was performed with antibodies against CD3 (1:900, A0452,

DAKO/Technologies, USA), desmin (1:2000, ab32362, Abcam, UK), myogenin (1:100,

ab124800, Abcam) (all with EDTA pH 8.5 for antigen retrieval), CD68 (1:800, #97778,

Cell Signaling Technology, USA), and vimentin (1:1000, ab92547, Abcam) (both with

citrate buffer pH 6.0 for antigen retrieval), and incubation at 4°C overnight.

Visualization was performed using ImmPress HRP and ImmPACT DAB kits (MP-7401

and SK-4205, Vector Laboratories, USA), followed by counterstaining in Mayer's

hematoxylin. HE and IHC slides were examined by light microscopy.

Ex vivo **MRI data acquisition**

MRI data were acquired using a 9.4T MRI scanner (Varian, UK) with a horizontal bore.

The scanner was controlled with software VnmrJ v4.0 Revision A. A gradient insert

with an inner diameter of 12 cm (Varian, UK) and a millipede RF-coil with an inner

diameter of 40 mm (Varian) were used. The scan program contained an overview scan,

scanner alignment, diffusion weighted, T1-weighted (fat suppressed and Two-point

Dixon) and T2-weighted (fat suppressed and FLAIR) scans. Overview and Two-point

Dixon sequences were acquired in sagittal plane, the others in dorsal plane. Images

were reviewed in collaboration with a European specialist in veterinary diagnostic

imaging on a computer workstation using digital imaging and communications in

medicine image viewing software (Horos software vers. 3.3.6, Horos project).

Assessment of loss of heterozygosity (LOH)

Trp53$^{R210X/+}$ tumors were analyzed for LOH by a semi-quantitative method, using the

aforementioned genotyping PCR but with only 29 cycles and 100ng DNA per sample.

DNA was extracted as described above under Animal studies. For each tumor, tail

tissue from the corresponding mouse was used as a control. To quantify the fraction

of WT allele left in the tumor, agarose gel band intensities of WT and mutant PCR

products were measured for tail and tumor tissue, respectively. Tumor intensity ratio

was normalized to the respective tail using the following formula:

$$\frac{tumorWT/tumorMUT}{tailWT/tailMUT}$$

LOH was defined as a value < 0.5, indicating <50% WT allele fraction in tumor compared to tail.

Establishment of T-cell lymphoma cell lines

Thymic (T-cell) lymphoma cell lines were established and cultured as described (38).

Flow cytometry

T-cell origin of established cell lines was verified by flow cytometry. 5×10^5 cells were incubated in staining buffer (3% FBS in PBS) containing the following antibodies: Anti-CD3-FITC (1:100, #11-0031-85), Anti-CD4-APC (1:100, #17-0041-83), and Anti-CD8-PE (1:100, #12-0081-85) (all eBioScience, USA). Alive cells were assessed by FxCycle™ Violet Stain DAPI (Thermo Fisher Scientific) diluted 1:500 in staining buffer. Cells were incubated 20 min at 4°C with 100μl of the antibody/DAPI cocktail, followed by adding 1ml staining buffer and centrifugation at 400g for 5 min. Cells were resuspended in 500μl staining buffer, filtered through a 35μm cell strainer and analyzed using a NovoCyte flow cytometer (ACEA Biosciences, USA).

Cell death was assessed by Annexin V staining. 5×10^4 cells/ml were seeded in 6-well-plates using 4ml/well. Cells were treated with G418 (0-200μM) for 72 hours. Treated cells were harvested, washed with DPBS (Sigma-Aldrich/Merck), resuspended in Annexin V binding buffer, counted using Countess 3 Automated Cell Counter (Thermo Fisher Scientific) and diluted to 1×10^6 cells/ml. 100μl cell dilution was incubated with 5μl BD Horizon™ V450 Annexin V antibody (BD Biosciences, USA) for 15 minutes in

544   the dark at room temperature (RT). 400μl Annexin V binding buffer was added and

545   cells were analyzed using a NovoCyte flow cytometer (ACEA Biosciences).

Western blotting

T-lymphoma cells were seeded in 6-well-plates at $1-3\times10^5$ cells/ml and treated with

G418 (0-200μM) for 72 hours. Western blotting was performed as previously described

using 80μg protein (39). Detection of p53 was performed using primary antibody 1C12

anti-p53 (1:1000, #2524, Cell Signaling Technology) and an HRP-conjugated Rabbit-

anti-Mouse IgG secondary antibody (1:5000, #61-6520, Invitrogen, USA). Following

visualization of p53, HRP-conjugated G-9 anti-GAPDH antibody (1:10 000, sc-365062,

Santa Cruz Biotechnology, USA) was used as a loading control. Proteins were

visualized by SuperSignal™ West Femto Maximum Sensitivity Substrate and iBright

FL1000 imaging system (both Thermo Fisher Scientific). All original Western blots are

provided in Supplementary Information.

Immunofluorescence staining

1×10^5 T-lymphoma cells in 100μl PBS were used for Cytospin (Shandon CYTOSPIN

4, Thermo Electron Corporation) at 1500 rpm for 1 min. Cells were fixed in 4%

formaldehyde for 10 min at RT, permeabilized using 0.1% Triton in PBS for 5 min at

RT, followed by washing in PBS. Primary antibodies rabbit polyclonal p53 N-terminal

antibody [N1] (GTX100629, Genetex, USA) and goat polyclonal Anti-TP53 (280aa C-

Term) (ASJ-VN4O74-150, Nordic Biosite, Sweden) were diluted together at 1:100 in

PBS, incubation 4°C ON. Following PBS wash, secondary antibodies Donkey anti-

Rabbit IgG (H+L) Alexa Fluor™ Plus 488 (A32790) and Donkey anti-Goat IgG (H+L)

Alexa Fluor™ Plus 555 (A32816) (both Thermo Fisher Scientific) were diluted together

at 1:1000 in PBS, incubation 1h in RT. Slides were washed with PBS and mounted

with Fluoroshield™ containing DAPI (F6057, Sigma-Aldrich/Merck). An AxioObserver

Z1 (Zeiss) microscope was used for imaging.

Quantitative real-time PCR (qRT-PCR)

T-lymphoma cells were seeded in 6-well-plates at $5x10^4$ cells/ml and treated with G418

(0-200μM) for 72 hours. Cells were harvested and RNA extraction, cDNA synthesis

and qRT-PCR were performed as described except that cDNA synthesis was carried

out using SuperScript IV (Thermo Fisher Scientific) (25). TaqMan probes used were

p53 (*Trp53*; Mm01731290_g1), *p21* (*Cdkn1a*; Mm00432448_m1), *Puma* (*Bbc3*;

Mm00519268_m1), *Zmat3* (Mm00494181_m1), and *Gapdh* (Mm99999915_g1).

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis of numerical data was performed using GraphPad Prism 10

(version 10.4.0). Multiple groups were compared using One-way ANOVA, followed by

Tukey's multiple comparisons test when all groups were compared to each other, or

by Dunnett's multiple comparisons test when all groups were compared to only the

control group. Chi-square goodness-of-fit test was used to assess Mendelian

inheritance patterns of gender and genotypes. Mouse bodyweight growth curves were

analyzed by Mixed-effects analysis with Tukey's multiple comparisons test. Kaplan-

Meier mouse survival curves were analyzed by log-rank (Mantel-Cox) test followed by

correction for multiple comparisons using the Holm-Šídák method. Statistical

significance was defined as $p < 0.05$. Values are presented as mean ± SEM.

Statistical analysis of non-numerical data was performed using R (version 4.2.2) via

BioRender Graph. Mann-Whitney U test was used for gender comparisons within

genotypes. Kruskal-Wallis test with Dunn's multiple comparisons test was used for

genotype comparisons. Statistical significance was defined as $p < 0.05$.

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Author contribution

609   CS, VR, SÖ, AH and KGW designed the experiments. CR, VR, AH, SÖ and ASO

610   performed the experiments. All authors took part in analysis and interpretation of data.

611   CS, VR, AH and KGW wrote the manuscript. KGW acquired funding for the project.

Ethics

614   All animal studies were approved by the Stockholm Regional Animal Ethical

615   Committee, Sweden (Dnr 14188-2019).

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622   0042), and Karolinska Institutet.

624   Data availability

625   All original data are available upon request. This work does not include any datasets,

626   such as DNA sequences or protein structure data, that have been uploaded in publicly

627   available repositories.

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 Figure legends

Figure 1. Generation of the *Trp53*^R210X knock-in mouse strain. (A) Schematic

representation of the CRISPR/Cas9 strategy for generation of *Trp53*^R210X mutant mice.

A single-guide RNA (sgRNA) was designed to target the region encoding the R210

codon in *Trp53* exon 6. The expected cleavage site is 3 nucleotides upstream of the

Protospacer Adjacent Motif (PAM) sequence. The donor single-stranded

oligodeoxynucleotide (ssODN) template was designed to introduce nucleotide

replacements resulting in an Arg (CGC) to STOP (TGA) substitution (indicated in red)

at codon 210 (R210X), and an XbaI cut site to facilitate genotyping by restriction

enzyme digestion (introduced nucleotide shown in green). Silent mutations introduced

to prevent recutting of the sgRNA are shown in orange. The figure is not to scale. **(B)**

Representative results from sequence analysis of plasmid clones from edited NIH/3T3

cell clones, showing a correct R210X sequence but inconsistent introduction of the

XbaI site. **(C)** Genotyping strategy using wildtype (WT) and mutation specific primers

for PCR amplification. PCR products were run on a 2% agarose gel. WT allele is

identified by a 95 bp PCR fragment (top panel), and mutant allele by a 252 bp PCR

fragment (bottom panel). **(D)** Representative chromatograms showing clean WT

(upper panel) and mutated (lower panel) *Trp53* sequences from heterozygous F1 mice,

indicating successful knock-in of desired mutations and germline transmission of the

R210X allele. Altered nucleotides producing the STOP codon (TGA) at amino acid

position 210 are shown in red, silent mutations are shown in orange.

**Figure 2. Female *Trp53*^R210X/R210X mice are significantly lighter, and *Trp53*^R210X

mice have a reduced lifespan.** Bodyweight development of female **(A)** and male **(B)**

Trp53$^{R210X/+}$ and *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ mice as compared to wildtype (WT) littermates. **(A)**

Female *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ mice were significantly lighter during their whole lifespan as

compared to *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ and WT littermates (****$p < 0.0001$). **(B)** Male mice of the

different genotypes showed no bodyweight differences until 34 weeks of age. From

this point, at the end of their maximum lifespan, male *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ mice were

significantly lighter than *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ and WT littermates (****$p < 0.0001$). Indicated *n*-

values are the total number of mice monitored from 2 weeks of age. Only weights from

mice scored as healthy according to general health assessment are shown in **A-B**, as

a mouse with tumor burden tends to either dramatically lose weight or gain weight. **(C-**

E) Kaplan-Meier curves illustrating the effects of the *Trp53*^{R210X} mutation on survival.

WT littermates and *Trp53*^{R172H} missense mutant *Trp53* knock-in mice are shown for

comparison. All inter-strain comparisons between different genotypes of both

Trp53^{R210X} and *Trp53*^{R172H} strains were highly significant (adj. P-values: ***$p < 0.001$)

(WT vs heterozygous; WT vs homozygous; heterozygous vs homozygous); only P-

values for comparison of *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ and *Trp53*$^{R172H/+}$ mice are indicated in the figure.

(C) Male *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ mice showed significantly longer survival compared to

Trp53$^{R172H/+}$ mice (adj. P-value: *$p < 0.05$), but the difference between the female

heterozygous mice of the two strains was not statistically significant **(D)**. **(E)** When

male and female mouse survival data were combined, *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ mice lived

significantly longer than *Trp53*$^{R172H/+}$ mice (adj. P-value: **$p < 0.01$). There was no

difference in the survival between *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ and *Trp53*$^{R172H/R172H}$ mice of either

gender, or when data for male and female mice were combined. **(F-G)** Comparison of

male and female survival of the different genotypes showed only a significant

difference for *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ mice (**$p < 0.01$). Black ticks in panels **C-G** indicate mice

that have been censored (i.e. euthanized due to non-cancer related reasons such as

wounds from scratching/over-grooming or malocclusion). Bodyweight growth curves in

A and **B** were analyzed by Mixed-effects analysis with Tukey's multiple comparisons

test. Values represent the mean ± SEM. Survival curves in **C-G** were analyzed by log-

rank (Mantel-Cox) test followed by correction for multiple comparisons using the Holm-

Šídák method when applicable (**C-E**). P-values: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$,

****$p < 0.0001$.

Figure 3. *Trp53*^{R210X/R210X} mice develop spontaneous tumors with frequent

metastases. Examples of tumors observed at necropsy and their histopathological

diagnosis. All necropsy photographs are oriented with the head at the top. All

histomicrographs are stained with hematoxylin-eosin (HE). Scale bars = 20µm. Red

stars indicate mitotic figures. **(A1)** A male *Trp53*^{R210X/R210X} mouse with a severely

enlarged thymus (T). **(A2)** Histomicrograph of the thymus neoplasia in A1. The normal

thymus architecture is completely effaced by mats of neoplastic round cells with

dispersed tangible body macrophages phagocytosing dead neoplastic cells (arrows).

The neoplastic lymphocytes were confirmed as CD3-positive, i.e. T-cells

(Supplementary table S4). **(A3)** Histomicrograph of lung shown in A1 with moderate

perivascular neoplastic lymphocyte infiltrate (metastases, M) in the hilus, L indicates

unaffected lung tissue. **(B1)** A male *Trp53*^{R210X/R210X} mouse with a severely enlarged

spleen (S) and liver (Li). **(B2)** Histomicrograph of spleen shown in B1. The normal

splenic architecture is completely effaced by mats of neoplastic round cells, confirmed

as T-cells (CD3-positive) (Supplementary table S4). **(B3)** Histomicrograph of liver

shown in B1, with severe perivascular and intrasinusoidal neoplastic lymphocyte

infiltrates (metastases), Li indicates remnants of liver parenchyma with hepatocytes,

and V indicates vessel lumen. **(C1)** A male *Trp53*^{R210X/R210X} mouse with a

wounds from scratching/over-grooming or malocclusion). Bodyweight growth curves in

A and **B** were analyzed by Mixed-effects analysis with Tukey's multiple comparisons

test. Values represent the mean ± SEM. Survival curves in **C-G** were analyzed by log-

rank (Mantel-Cox) test followed by correction for multiple comparisons using the Holm-

Šídák method when applicable (**C-E**). P-values: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$,

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shown in B1, with severe perivascular and intrasinusoidal neoplastic lymphocyte

infiltrates (metastases), Li indicates remnants of liver parenchyma with hepatocytes,

and V indicates vessel lumen. **(C1)** A male *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ mouse with a

subcutaneous tumor on the left side of thorax and abdomen. **(C2)** Histomicrograph of

the subcutaneous tumor in C1, with a dense proliferation of pleomorphic neoplastic

mesenchymal cells forming streams and bundles. Arrow indicates a giant cell with a

bizarre, giant nucleus. Immunohistochemistry confirmed that the neoplastic cells

originated from skeletal muscle (Supplementary table S4). **(D)** Distribution of tumors

and metastasizing tumors in *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ mice. The total number of mice includes

all mice with at least one tumor.

Figure 4. *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ mice develop a wide spectrum of tumors with frequent LOH

and high rate of metastases. Examples of tumors observed at necropsy and their

histopathological diagnosis. All necropsy photographs are oriented with the head at

the top. All histomicrographs are stained with hematoxylin-eosin (HE). Scale bars =

20µm. Red stars indicate mitotic figures. **(A1)** A female *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ mouse with a hard

tumor (O = osteosarcoma) on the thorax wall, involving several ribs. **(A2)**

Histomicrograph of the hard tumor in A1, with dense proliferation of very pleomorphic,

neoplastic round to spindle-shaped mesenchymal cells that produce variable amounts

of neoplastic osteoid (arrows), confirming osteosarcoma diagnosis. **(A3)**

Histomicrograph of lung from the animal shown in A1, with a large intravascular

osteosarcoma metastasis (IvO) adhering to the vessel wall (arrows = neoplastic

osteoid, L = lung parenchyma, Alv = alveolus). **(B1)** A male *Trp53*$^{R210X/+}$ mouse with a

pale, multinodulated and severely enlarged liver (Li). Insets show an enlarged, pale

thymus (T) *in situ*, and the normal-sized spleen (S) after removal from the abdomen,

with a pale neoplasia at one pole. **(B2)** Histomicrograph of liver from the animal shown

in B1, with dense proliferations of pleomorphic, round neoplastic mesenchymal cells

i.e. a soft-tissue sarcoma. (Li = liver parenchyma). **(B3)** Histomicrograph of thymus

shown in B1, with infiltrates of neoplastic mesenchymal cells (soft-tissue sarcoma metastases) (Hc = Hassals corpuscle in the thymic parenchyma). **(B4)** Histomicrograph of spleen shown in B1, with a soft-tissue sarcoma metastasis (Srp = splenic red pulp). **(C1)** A male $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mouse with numerous severely enlarged peripheral lymph nodes (Submand L = submandibular, Ax L = axillar, and Ing L = inguinal lymph nodes). Inset shows lungs *in situ.* **(C2 and C3)** Histomicrographs of a lymph node and the spleen from the animal shown in C1, with dense proliferation of neoplastic round cells variably effacing the normal tissue architecture i.e. lymphoma. **(C4-C6)** Histomicrographs of lung, liver and kidney from the animal shown in C1, with perivascular and interstitial neoplastic infiltrates, i.e. metastatic lymphoma (**C4**: Alv = alveolus, V = blood vessel lumen, L = lung parenchyma; **C5**: Li = liver parenchyma; **C6**: Ki = kidney parenchyma). **(D)** Distribution and combinations of tumors and metastasizing tumors found in $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice. The total number of mice includes all mice with at least one tumor. Benign tumors and tumors not further defined were all in animals with at least one other tumor and are thus not shown separately in the pie chart (L = lymphoma; STS = soft-tissue sarcoma; OS = osteosarcoma; C = carcinoma; Met = metastasized). **(E)** Representative agarose gel for evaluation of LOH in tumors from four different mice. Each animal's tail was used as a control tissue. WT (upper panel) and R210X (lower panel) gel band intensities were measured to quantify the percentage of WT allele retained in each tumor compared to the tail; percentage of retained WT allele in each sample is indicated at the bottom of the panel. LOH was defined as <50% WT allele retained. N = no LOH; Y = LOH.

Figure 5. $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice show a higher rate of thymic lymphomas and lymphoma metastases than $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ and WT mice, and only $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice

develop osteosarcomas which are more frequent in female mice. (A)

Trp53[R210X/R210X] mice developed more lymphomas and lymphoma metastases than

Trp53[R210X/+] and WT mice, and *Trp53*[R210X/+] was the only genotype that had

osteosarcomas. All three genotypes developed soft-tissue sarcomas to a similar

extent, and with the exception of benign tumors, which were more often found in WT

mice, *Trp53*[R210X/+] and WT mice had similar occurrence of the remaining tumor types.

(B) *Trp53*[R210X/R210X] had thymic lymphoma more often than *Trp53*[R210X/+] and WT mice,

but less frequent lymph node lymphomas. All three genotypes showed similar

occurrence of splenic lymphomas. **(C)** Comparison of the different combinations of

lymphoma sites, without and with metastases, showed that only *Trp53*[R210X/R210X] mice

had metastatic thymic lymphoma. *Trp53*[R210X/R210X] mice also had significantly fewer

lymphomas in spleen and/or lymph nodes without metastases, whereas metastases in

these sites occurred in all three genotypes at a similar rate (differences not statistically

significant). **(D)** A gender effect on tumor type presentation was only found in

Trp53[R210X/+] mice, where osteosarcoma was more common in female mice and soft-

tissue sarcoma more common in male mice. *Trp53*[R210X/R210X] and WT mice showed no

significant differences between genders (Supplementary Fig. S2). **(E-G)** A male

Trp53[R210X/R210X] mouse was sacrificed at 234 days of age due to weight loss, strained

breath and a neoplasia on the throat, and subjected to an *ex vivo* MRI analysis without

prior necropsy. **(E and F)** The throat neoplasia was part of a large neoplastic thymus

(outlined by yellow arrows, size approx. 2.7x1.3x0.9 cm) that intrathoracally extended

caudally to the diaphragm (indicated by a white arrow in **E**), cranially through the

thoracic inlet along the ventral neck to the level of the ramus mandibularis, and

extending into the right-side musculature medial to the shoulder, probably involving the

prescapular lymph node. In the right cranial mediastinum there was a neoplastically

transformed cranial mediastinal lymph node, about 0.8 cm long and 0.4 cm in diameter.

The submandibular lymph nodes were not identifiable and appeared to be continuous

with the thymus tumor. The lungs had a clear appearance with no signs of neoplastic

proliferations or infiltrates. **(G)** In the dorsal abdomen there were multiple enlarged

lymph nodes, up to 3 mm in diameter, elongated and convoluted (outlined by white

arrows). The spleen was mildly enlarged and rounded (not shown), and in the normal-

sized liver there were two nodules with an appearance best consistent with areas of

vacuolar degeneration and extramedullary hyperplasia. Differences between

genotypes in **A-C** were analyzed with Kruskal-Wallis test, followed by Dunn's multiple

comparisons test. Differences between genders in **D** were analyzed with Mann

Whitney U test. P-values: $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.001$; $****p < 0.0001$.

Figure 6. Metastasis has no effect on overall survival of $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ and

$Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice whereas tumor site (thymus) and size affect survival of

$Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice. (A) Kaplan-Meier curves illustrating the impact of metastasis on

survival of $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ and $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice. Metastatic disease did not change

survival in $Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice. $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice with metastases showed a

significantly delayed time until declared moribund but not altered overall survival. Data

for $Trp53^{R210X/+}$ mice may be skewed by the reduced survival of mice with

osteosarcoma, as this group only included two cases with metastases (not shown). **(B)**

$Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice with thymic lymphomas had reduced survival compared to mice

with splenic and/or lymph node lymphomas regardless of metastatic status. **(C)** The

solitary thymic lymphomas were larger than thymic lymphomas that were concurrent

with other lymphomas or soft-tissue sarcomas; adjusted P-values are shown. **(D)**

$Trp53^{R210X/R210X}$ mice with solitary thymic lymphomas showed the shortest overall

survival. Survival curves in **A, B** and **D** were analyzed by log-rank (Mantel-Cox) test;

in **D** all survival curves were compared to the group with solitary thymic lymphoma. **C**:

all groups were compared to the solitary thymic lymphoma group using One-way

ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparisons tests. P-values: *$p < 0.05$, **$p <$

0.001; ***$p < 0.001$.

Figure 7. G418 induces translational readthrough and full-length functional p53

in *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ T-lymphoma cells. (A) Representative histomicrographs of the

thymus from the *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ mouse X405 stained with HE (left) and CD3 antibody

(IHC, right). Mats of CD3-positive, i.e. T-cell origin, pleomorphic neoplastic

lymphocytes and dispersed, moderate numbers of tangible body macrophages (left

panel, arrows) efface the normal thymic architecture. Scale bars = 50µm. **(B)**

Representative flow cytometry to verify T-cell origin of the X405 *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ T-

lymphoma cell line established from a thymic lymphoma by staining with antibodies for

CD3 (left panel), and CD4 and CD8 (right panel). **(C)** Immunofluorescence staining of

X405 *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ T-lymphoma cells, either untreated (NT, upper panels) or treated

with 100µM G418 (lower panels) for 72 hours. p53 was detected using N1 (N-terminal

epitope) and 280aa C-term (C-terminal epitope) antibodies. Rightmost panels show

merged DAPI and 280aa C-term p53 staining, highlighting translational readthrough of

the *Trp53*-R210X nonsense mutation and production of full-length p53 protein upon

treatment with G418. Scale bars = 100µm. **(D)** Western blot analysis showing dose-

dependent induction of full-length p53 in X405 *Trp53*$^{R210X/R210X}$ T-lymphoma cells

following 72h treatment with G418. p53 was visualized using the anti-p53 antibody

1C12 that recognizes an N-terminal epitope and therefore detects both full-length and

C-terminally truncated p53. Gapdh was used as a loading control. **(E)** qRT-PCR

analysis showing dose-dependent induction of *p53* mRNA levels in X405

Trp53^R210X/R210X T-lymphoma cells after 72h treatment with G418. mRNA levels of p53

target genes *p21*, *Puma* and *Zmat3* were significantly upregulated upon treatment with

200µM G418. Gene expression values were normalized to *Gapdh* expression and

compared to the untreated (NT) negative control. **(F)** Representative flow cytometry

for assessment of cell death by Annexin V staining of X405 *Trp53*^R210X/R210X T-

lymphoma cells (left) and quantification of 3 flow cytometry replicates (right), showing

significant increase in cell death following treatment with 200µM G418 for 72h. In **E-F**:

statistical analysis was performed using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's **(E)** or

Tukey's **(F)** multiple comparisons tests. Values represent the mean ± SEM. Adjusted

P-values: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$, ****$p < 0.0001$.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

	Necropsy picture	Primary tumor	Metastasis
A	A1 — Thymus (T) and lungs (L)	A2 — Thymus	A3 — Lung
B	B1 — Spleen (S) and liver (Li)	B2 — Spleen	B3 — Liver
C	C1 — Subcutaneous tumor	C2 — Subcutis	D — Total number of mice = 48

D — Total number of mice = 48

- Lymphoma (n = 7)
- Metastatic lymphoma (n = 23)
- Metastatic lymphoma and Soft-tissue sarcoma (n = 3)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (n = 8)
- Lymphoma and Soft-tissue sarcoma (n = 7)

Figure 4

A1 Necropsy picture — Osteosarcoma (O) in ribcage

A2 Primary tumor — Rib — 20 µm

A3 Metastasis — Lung — IvO — Alv — L — Alv — 20 µm

B1 Liver (Li), spleen (S) and thymus (T) — T — Li — S

B2 Liver — Li — 20 µm

B3 Thymus — Hc — 20 µm

B4 Spleen — Srp — 20 µm

C1 Multiple lymph nodes (Ing L, Ax L, Submand L) and lungs (L) — L — Submand L — Ax L — Ax L — Ing L — Ing L

C2 Lymph node — 20 µm

C3 Spleen — 20 µm

C4 Lung — V — Alv — Alv — L — 20 µm

C5 Liver — V — Li — Li — 20 µm

C6 Kidney — Ki — 20 µm

D Total number of mice = 79

n = 1, n = 7, n = 4, n = 3, n = 1, n = 1, n = 5, n = 1, n = 1, n = 3, n = 2, n = 5, n = 2, n = 11, n = 4, n = 2, n = 2, n = 1, n = 1, n = 21, n = 1

Legend:
- L
- Met L
- L and STS
- Met L and STS
- L and Met STS
- Met L and Met STS
- L and OS
- Met L and OS
- L and Met OS
- OS
- Met OS
- OS and STS
- OS and Met STS
- OS and C
- OS, STS and C
- STS
- Met STS
- STS and C
- C
- L and C
- L and Met C

E

	DNA ladder	Tail control	Liver tumor	Lymph node	Genital tumor	Tail control	Hind leg tumor	Skin tumor	Tail control	Lymph node	Thymus tumor	Tail control	Pelvic tumor	Pelvic tumor	DNA ladder	bp
WT allele			N	Y	Y		N	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y		300 / 200 / 100
R210X allele																300 / 200 / 100

% WT allel: 73.49 14.64 19.80   57.51 46.14   30.25 2.41   31.88 28.34

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7