Tissue nonspecific alkaline phosphatase improves bone quality but does not alleviate craniosynostosis in the FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mouse model of Crouzon syndrome

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Abstract

Crouzon syndrome is a congenital disorder characterized by craniosynostosis, the premature fusion of cranial bones. Craniosynostosis leads to high intracranial pressure and abnormal skull and facial shapes that are relieved by surgery. Crouzon syndrome is caused by activating mutations in fibroblast growth factor receptor 2 (FGFR2). The goal of this study was to determine if delivery of recombinant tissue nonspecific alkaline phosphatase (TNAP) could prevent or diminish the severity of craniosynostosis in post-natal craniosynostosis onset BALB/c and/or peri-natal craniosynostosis onset C57BL/6 FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mouse models of Crouzon syndrome. Mice were injected with a lentivirus encoding a mineral targeted form of TNAP immediately after birth. Cranial bone fusion as well as cranial bone volume, mineral content and density were assessed by micro computed tomography. Craniofacial shape was measured with calipers using previously established landmarks and measurements. Alkaline phosphatase activity levels were measured in serum. Results show that postnatal delivery of TNAP increases serum levels of alkaline phosphatase activity and improves bone volume, density and mineral content, but does not alleviate craniosynostosis, craniofacial shape or cranial base abnormalities in FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ Crouzon mice. These results indicate that post-natal recombinant TNAP enzyme therapy is therapeutic for bone mineralization but not efficacious for relief of FGFR-associated craniosynostosis and associated craniofacial shape defects.

Introduction

Craniosynostosis is the pediatric condition of premature cranial bone fusion. This condition can lead to high intracranial pressure, abnormal skull and facial shapes, blindness, seizures and brain abnormalities [1-6]. Because the sole treatment is surgery, even with appropriately early diagnosis patients can suffer high morbidity [7-9]. Surgical approaches also do not fully correct abnormal skull and facial shapes, which contribute to social challenges. Previous studies showed that the pathogenesis of craniosynostosis can include abnormal boundary formation/maintenance, lineage commitment, proliferation and/or apoptosis of cranial progenitor cells [10-23]. Despite these important advancements, a pharmaceutical treatment for craniosynostosis is not yet realized.

Craniosynostosis occurs in association with activating mutations in *Fgfr2* [10, 12, 24, 25]. Craniosynostosis also occurs at high incidence in infants with hypophosphatasia, a metabolic disorder that occurs due to inactivating mutations in *Alpl*, the gene for tissue nonspecific alkaline phosphatase (TNAP) [26-29]. We previously demonstrated that FGF signaling decreases TNAP expression [14, 30, 31]. TNAP expression is also reduced in primary cells isolated from FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mice that have been induced to differentiate into osteoblasts when cultured *in vitro* or in a 3D collagenous matrix *in vivo* [14, 15]. These results indicate that one of the mechanisms by which FGF signaling influences craniofacial skeletal development may involve reduced TNAP. Notably, postnatal delivery of a recombinant mineral-targeted form of TNAP did prevent craniosynostosis in the TNAP$^{-/-}$ mouse model of hypophosphatasia [32]. The objective of this study was to determine if postnatal delivery of recombinant TNAP could prevent or diminish the severity of craniosynostosis and associated craniofacial shape defects in the FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mouse model of Crouzon syndrome.

Materials and methods

TNAP Lentivirus

Recombinant mineral-targeted TNAP lentivirus was generously provided by Dr. Jose Luis Millán (Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute, La Jolla, CA). This virus expresses a mineral-targeted protein that is composed of soluble human TNAP enzyme fused to the constant region of human IgG1 and a C-terminal deca-aspartate motif to confer targeting to hydroxyapatite. The aspartate tag confers 30x higher affinity for hydroxyapatite than untagged enzyme [33]. Production and titer of the lentivirus was performed by the University of Michigan Vector Core. Treatment with this recombinant form of TNAP was previously shown to increase serum alkaline phosphatase levels and rescue long bone and craniofacial defects seen in hypophosphatasia [26, 32, 34, 35].

Animal Procedures

Because severity of craniosynostosis and associated craniofacial shape defects are variable on the mixed genetic background, $FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$mice were backcrossed with BALB/c and C57BL/6 mice (obtained from Charles River Laboratories) for at least fifteen generations prior to experiments. BALB/c $FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$mice have a moderate form of Crouzon syndrome with craniosynostosis apparent between three and four weeks after birth [15]. C57BL/6 mice have a severe form of Crouzon syndrome with craniosynostosis first apparent in neonatal mice (data not shown). Genotyping was performed as previously described [12, 15]. Briefly, DNA from tail

digests was amplified by polymerase chain reaction using 5'-gagtaccatgctgactgcatgc-3'and 5'-ggagaggcatctctgtttcaagacc-3' primers to yield a 200 base pair band for wild type FGFR2 and a 300 base pair band for mutant FGFR2^{C342Y}. Mice were fed ad libitum and housed under standard 12 hour dark/light cycles. Litters were randomly assigned to treatment/no treatment groups. Treated mice were injected with 1.0 x 10^7 transforming units lentivirus or an equivalent volume of phosphate buffered saline via the jugular vein two days after birth. BALB/c mice (n=12 FGFR2$^{+/+}$ control mice, n=14 FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ control mice, n=16 FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ TNAP lentivirus treated mice) were euthanized by CO_2 overdose at four weeks post-natal and C57BL/6 mice (n=7 FGFR2$^{+/+}$ control mice, n=7 FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ control mice, n=14 FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ TNAP lentivirus treated mice) were euthanized by CO_2 overdose at three weeks post-natal for analyses. BALB/c mice were sacrificed at a later age than C57BL/6 mice because craniosynostosis onset occurs later in BALB/C than in C57BL/6 FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mice. Blood was collected by aortic puncture under surgical anesthesia. Mice were weighed, and body length was measured for each animal. All animal procedures were prospectively approved of by the University of Michigan's University Committee on Use and Care of Animals (UCUCA, protocol PRO00006815). All samples were de-identified as to genotype and treatment group, and each analysis was performed on all BALB/c mice or on all C67BL/6 mice at one time. The primary outcome assessment was craniosynostosis incidence. Secondary outcome assessments included cranial bone density measurements, craniofacial shape measurements, cranial base synchondrosis fusions and cranial base bone lengths.

Serum Analyses

Mice were fasted for six hours prior to blood collection. Alkaline phosphatase activity (AP) in serum was quantified using the colorimetric reagent 4-nitrophenyl-phosphate disodium hexahydrate (Sigma), as compared to a standard curve using commercially available alkaline phosphatase enzyme (Sigma). Inorganic phosphate quantifications were performed using commercially available kits (Pointe Scientific), also as compared to standard curves.

Micro Computed Tomography

Whole skulls were scanned at an 18 µm isotropic voxel resolution using the eXplore Locus SP micro-computed tomography imaging system (GE Healthcare Pre-Clinical Imaging, London, ON, Canada). Regions of interest (ROI's) for parietal and frontal bones were established as 1 mm in length, 1 mm in width and depth equivalent to thickness of bone, as previously described [15, 29]. Density, volume and mineral content of cranial bones from mice were measured using previously established methods using Microview version 2.2 software (GE Healthcare Pre-Clinical Imaging, London, ON) and established algorithms [36, 37].

Cranial Suture Assessment

Fusion between cranial bones (fusion of coronal suture, lambdoid suture and sagittal suture) plus fusion of the inter-sphenoidal (ISS) and spheno-occipital (SOS) synchondroses were identified on micro CT scans of skulls dissected mice. Cranial sutures were viewed using the two-dimensional micro CT slices in an orthogonal view across the entire length of the suture or synchondrosis, as previously described [15, 29].

Reliability of suture fusion assessment was verified by both intra-operator and inter-operator reliability statistics by calculating intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC). Intra-operator reliability statistics was carried out by assessing suture fusion status of the coronal, sagittal and lambdoid sutures as well as the inter-sphenoidal (ISS) and spheno-occipital (SOS) synchondroses on fifteen micro CT scans by one investigator two times separated by a two-month period. Inter-operator reliability was carried out by analyzing fifteen micro CT scans by a second investigator. The ICC for intraoperator reliability for suture fusion assessment is .970 ($p \leq .0001$) and the ICC for interoperator reliability is .972 ($p \leq .0001$). Thus, there is high intraoperator and interoperator reliability for suture fusion assessment.

Linear Measurements

Craniofacial linear skeletal measurements were taken using digital calipers on dissected skulls. Linear measurements were calculated using previously reported craniofacial skeletal landmarks [15, 38, 39], including standard measurements currently in use by the Craniofacial Mutant Mouse Resource of Jackson Laboratory (Bar Harbor, ME). Linear measurements were normalized to total skull length (measured from nasale to opisthion) to account for size differences between $FGFR2^{+/+}$ and $FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$ mice. Measurements were performed twice and an average of the two measurements was utilized for statistical comparison by genotype and treatment. Cranial base anterior-posterior bone lengths were measured on micro CT scans using *Dolphin Imaging 11.0* software (Dolphin Imaging and Management Solutions, Chatsworth, CA), as previously described [40].

Statistics

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to compare groups by gender, genotype and treatment group. Because serum AP levels varied in mice injected with the lentivirus, linear regressions were also performed to determine if, and to what extent serum AP levels associated with changes in measured phenotypes. The incidence of cranial suture fusion, and cranial base synchondrosis fusion was analyzed by the Fishers exact test.

Results

Injection with the TNAP expression lentivirus significantly increased serum alkaline phosphatase (AP) levels in all of the treated mice (Table 1). BALB/c Crouzon mice injected with the lentivirus increased serum AP levels by 1.2 U/mL when compared to control Crouzon mice ($p<.0001$) when measured at four weeks old. C57BL/6 Crouzon mice injected with the TNAP expression lentivirus increased serum AP levels by 1.8 U/mL when compared to control Crouzon mice ($p<.0001$) when measured at three weeks old. No significant difference in serum AP levels were seen between untreated Crouzon and wild type mice on the BALB/c or C57BL/6 backgrounds. As expected, injection with the lentivirus did not alter serum inorganic phosphate (P_i) levels.

Initial statistical comparison of groups by ANOVA showed that Crouzon mice weigh less and are shorter in body length than their wild type littermates, regardless of genetic background (Table 1). Linear regression performed to account for serum AP level variability in the lentivirus injected mice showed that, on the BALB/c background, serum AP levels did not alter weight in

wild type mice but did decrease weight in Crouzon mice by 0.9 g per U/ml which accounted for 37% of the weight variability in in these mice ($p<.03$). On the C57BL/6 background, linear regression showed no impact of serum AP level on weight, regardless of genotype. Serum AP levels did not alter body length, regardless of genetic background or genotype.

Table 1. Serum and Body Measurements in TNAP vs. untreated Balb/C and C57Bl/6mice.

Strain	Genotype	Treatment	Body Weight (g)	Body Length (mm)	Serum AP Level (units/ml)	Serum Pi Level (mg/dl)
Balb/C	$FGFR2^{+/+}$	no	13.5 +/- 2.2*	7.4 +/- 0.3*	0.03 +/- 0.01	10.9 +/- 0.8
Balb/C	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	no	9.2 +/- 1.7	6.5 +/- 0.3	0.03 +/- 0.78	9.9 +/- 1.4
Balb/C	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	yes	8.9 +/- 2.6	6.5 +/- 0.7	1.30 +/- 0.54#	9.8 +/- 1.1
C57Bl/6	$FGFR2^{+/+}$	no	8.7 +/- 0.1*	6.9 +/- 0.3*	0.01 +/- 0.01	9.5 +/- 1.0
C57Bl/6	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	no	5.8 +/- 1.1	5.8 +/- 0.6	0.02 +/- 0.01	8.7 +/- 1.1
C57Bl/6	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	yes	6.6 +/- 1.0	5.9 +/- 0.4	1.93 +/- 0.77#	9.0 +/- 0.6

* p value < 0.01 between genotypes

p value < 0.01 between treatment groups

Qualitative analysis of craniofacial skeletal shape suggested that Crouzon mice differ in morphology from their wild type counterparts, and that post-natal delivery of mineral-targeted TNAP via lentivirus did not impact morphology (Figs 1,2). Craniofacial skeletal linear measurements normalized to total skull length revealed many differences between $FGFR2^{342Y/+}$ Crouzon and $FGFR2^{+/+}$ wild type mice on both congenic backgrounds (Table 2). BALB/c Crouzon mice had increased cranial height, cranial width, inner canthal distance, parietal bone length and cranial height to width ratios, with decreased nasal bone length. C57BL/6 Crouzon mice had increased cranial height, cranial width, inner canthal distance, frontal bone length, parietal bone length and cranial height to width ratios, with decreased nose and nasal bone lengths.

Treatment with the TNAP lentivirus did not alter craniofacial skeletal measurements in Crouzon mice on either genetic background.

Table 2. Linear Craniofacial Skeletal Measurements in TNAP vs. untreated BALB/c and C57Bl/6 mice.

Strain	Measurement	$FGFR2^{+/+}$ vehicle	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$ vehicle	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$ TNAP
BALB/c	Cranial Height	.36 +/- .01*	.45 +/- .01	.45 +/- .01
BALB/c	Cranial Width	.55 +/- .01*	.63 +/- .01	.62 +/- .01
BALB/c	Inner Canthal Distance	.20 +/- .01*	.25 +/- .01	.26 +/- .01
BALB/c	Nose Length	.65+/- .01	.65 +/- .01	.65 +/- .01
BALB/c	Nasal Bone Length	.33 +/- .02*	.32 +/- .01	.32 +/- .03
BALB/c	Frontal Bone length	.33 +/- .02	.33 +/- .01	.34 +/- .03
BALB/c	Parietal Bone Length	.20 +/- .01*	.25 +/- .02	.26 +/- .01
BALB/c	Ratio Height to Width	.66 +/- .02*	.72 +/- .02	.72 +/- .02
C57Bl/6	Cranial Height	.38 +/- .01*	.52 +/- .01	.52 +/- .03
C57Bl/6	Cranial Width	.55 +/- .01*	.64 +/- .01	.64 +/- .02
C57Bl/6	Inner Canthal Distance	.23 +/- .01*	.29 +/- .01	.29 +/- .01
C57Bl/6	Nose Length	.65 +/- .01*	.62 +/- .01	.63 +/- .03
C57Bl/6	Nasal Bone Length	.32 +/- .01*	.23 +/- .02	.23 +/- .01
C57Bl/6	Frontal Bone length	.35 +/- .01*	.40 +/- .02	.41 +/- .03
C57Bl/6	Parietal Bone Length	.22 +/- .01*	.26 +/- .02	.27 +/- .02
C57Bl/6	Ratio Height to Width	.38 +/- .01*	.52 +/- .01	.52 +/- .03

Measures are reported as normalized to total skull length.
* p value < 0.01 between genotypes
# p value < 0.01 between treatment groups

Analysis of cranial bone fusions revealed high incidences of premature fusion of the coronal and lambdoid sutures in both BALB/c and C57BL/6 Crouzon mice, with no fusions evident in wild type mice (Fig. 3). Although 100% of BALB/c and C57BL/6 Crouzon mice exhibited coronal suture fusion, fusions in BALB/c mice tended to be point fusions as opposed to fusion of approximately 1/3 of the coronal suture in the C57BL/6 C mice. Analysis of cranial base synchondrosis fusions also revealed high incidences of fusion of the inter-sphenoidal

198 synchondrosis (ISS) in both strains of Crouzon mice, with no fusions evident in wild type mice.
199 The incidence of fusion of the spheno-occipital synchondrosis (SOS) was higher in C57BL/6
200 Crouzon mice than BALB/c Crouzon mice, despite the younger age of the C57BL/6 mice. No
201 cranial base fusions were evident in the wild type littermate mice. While some trends, including
202 diminished incidence of lambdoid suture fusion and increased incidence of spheno-occipital
203 synchondrosis (SOS) fusion are seen upon treatment, these differences were not statistically
204 significant. Measurement of cranial base bones demonstrated decreased length of the basis-
205 sphenoid and pre-sphenoid bones in BALB/c and C57BL/6 Crouzon as compared to wild type
206 mice (Table 3). Treatment with TNAP did not increase length of the basis-sphenoid bone in
207 Crouzon mice. Treatment with TNAP did increase length of the pre-sphenoid bone in BALB/c
208 Crouzon mice, but not to the equivalent of sphenoid bone length seen in wild type mice.
209 Together, the data indicates that delivery of mineral-targeted TNAP via lentivirus shortly after
210 birth does not impact cranial bone or cranial base bone fusions in these mice. Treatment with
211 the mineral-targeted TNAP may enhance growth of anterior cranial base bones in the model of
212 more moderate Crouzon syndrome (BALB/c strain), but not to the extent seen in control wild
213 type mice.
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Table 3. Cranial base measurments in TNAP vs. untreated Balb/C and C57Bl/6 mice.

Strain	Genotype	Treatment	Basis Occipitus (mm)	Basis Sphenoid (mm)	Pre-Sphenoid (mm)
Balb/C	$FGFR2^{+/+}$	vehicle	3.1 +/- 0.1	2.9 +/- 0.1*	2.5 +/- 0.1*
Balb/C	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	vehicle	2.9 +/- 0.3	2.4 +/- 0.3	1.8 +/- 0.1
Balb/C	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	TNAP	2.9 +/- 0.2	2.5 +/- 0.3	1.9 +/- 0.1#
C57Bl/6	$FGFR2^{+/+}$	vehicle	2.8 +/- 0.2	2.9 +/- 0.2*	2.2 +/- 0.1*
C57Bl/6	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	vehicle	2.8 +/- 0.1	2.7 +/- 0.1	1.7 +/- 0.1
C57Bl/6	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	TNAP	3.0 +/- 0.2	2.6 +/-0.1	1.7 +/- 0.1

* p value < 0.01 between genotypes

p value < 0.01 between treatment groups

Micro CT based analyses of cranial bones demonstrated significantly diminished bone mineral density, tissue mineral content, tissue mineral density and bone volume fraction in frontal bones, plus significantly diminished tissue mineral density and bone volume fraction in parietal bones of Crouzon mice when compared to wild type littermates on both BALB/c and C57BL/6 backgrounds (Table 4). Injection with the TNAP lentivirus significantly increased frontal bone mineral density, tissue mineral content and bone volume fraction, plus parietal bone volume fraction in Crouzon mice on the BALB/c background. Injection with the TNAP lentivirus did not significantly impact any of the cranial bone parameters in Crouzon mice on the C57BL/6 background.

Table 4. Cranial bone volume, density and mineral content in TNAP vs. untreated congenic BALB/c and C57BL/6 mice.

Strain	Genotype	Treatment	Cranial Bone	Bone Mineral Content (mg)	Bone Mineral Density (mg/cc)	Tissue Mineral Content (mg)	Tissue Mineral Density (mg/cc)	Bone Volume Fraction
BALB/c	$FGFR2^{+/+}$	PBS	Frontal	.035 +/- .004	405 +/- 14*	.028 +/- .007*	692 +/- 14*	0.41 +/- .03*
BALB/c	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	PBS	Frontal	.031 +/- .008	361 +/- 63	.020 +/- .006#\	671 +/- 18	0.36 +/- .0
BALB/c	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	TNAP	Frontal	.035 +/- .005	401 +/- 26#	.026 +/- .015#	683 +/- 29	0.42 +/- .06#
BALB/c	$FGFR2^{+/+}$	PBS	Parietal	.034 +/- .004	405 +/- 12	.023 +/- .005	693 +/- 15*	0.43 +/- .03*
BALB/c	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	PBS	Parietal	.031 +/- .007	396 +/- 39	.020 +/- .005	669 +/- 24	0.36 +/- .06
BALB/c	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	TNAP	Parietal	.034 +/- .006	403 +/- 27	.025 +/- .012	691 +/- 36	0.42 +/- .07#
C57BL/6	$FGFR2^{+/+}$	PBS	Frontal	.017 +/- .003	245 +/- 25*	.006 +/- .001*	570 +/- 18*	0.12 +/- .01*
C57BL/6	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	PBS	Frontal	.013 +/- .002	209 +/- 25	.004 +/- .001	519 +/- 26	0.10 +/- .01
C57BL/6	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	TNAP	Frontal	.016 +/- .004	225 +/- 30	.004 +/- .001	553 +/- 40	0.11 +/- .01
C57BL/6	$FGFR2^{+/+}$	PBS	Parietal	.015 +/- .001	237 +/- 19	.005 +/- .001	590 +/- 13*	.121 +/- .023*
C57BL/6	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	PBS	Parietal	.012 +/- .003	217 +/- 18	.004 +/- .001	558 +/- 36	.098 +/- .006
C57BL/6	$FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$	TNAP	Parietal	.013 +/- .004	232 +/- 42	.004 +/- .001	575 +/- 32	.105 +/- .009

* p value < 0.01 between genotypes

p value < 0.01 between treatment groups

Discussion

In this study we sought to determine if treatment with recombinant mineral targeted TNAP could rescue the craniofacial skeletal phenotype of $FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$ Crouzon mice when delivered post-natal with lentivirus. The $FGFR2^{C342Y/+}$ mutation was previously demonstrated to cause ligand independent signaling and is therefore widely considered to be an activating mutation leading to increased FGF signaling [41-44]. We pursued this investigation because we previously demonstrated that FGF signaling diminishes TNAP expression [14, 30, 31], and showed that

TNAP deficiency in mice leads to a similar craniofacial phenotype to that seen in FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ Crouzon mice including coronal and lambdoid but not sagittal craniosynostosis, fusion of cranial base synchondroses and abnormal brachycephalic/acrocephalic head shapes [12, 15, 29, 40]. Additionally, in a previous study using archival aliquots of lentivirus expressing the mineral targeted recombinant form of TNAP that resulted in increases in serum AP activity in only a small number of the treated mice, we found statistical differences in the morphology of the inferior skull surface and skull height in treated vs. untreated FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mice [45].

Here we found that post-natal lentiviral delivery of recombinant TNAP rescued cranial bone density, mineral content and volume fraction but not craniosynostosis or craniofacial shape in FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ Crouzon mice. Improvement of cranial bone density, mineral content and volume fraction by TNAP treatment in the Crouzon mice is consistent with results showing that recombinant mineral targeted TNAP treatment rescues mineralization of craniofacial and long bones in in the *Alpl*$^{-/-}$ mouse model of infantile HPP and humans with infantile and childhood HPP [32, 34, 46, 47]. Treatment with mineral targeted TNAP via lentivirus did not rescue craniosynostosis or craniofacial shape defects in the Crouzon mice. This result is inconsistent with the rescue of craniosynostosis seen in *Alpl*$^{-/-}$ mice treated with mineral targeted recombinant TNAP protein [32] but is consistent with results in human studies which indicate that post-natal treatment with recombinant TNAP protein does not rescue craniosynostosis [26, 47]. While lentiviral TNAP treatment did not rescue cranial base synchondrosis fusion in the Crouzon mice, length of the pre-sphenoid bone was increased in treated mice on the BALB/c genetic background. This result is consistent with our previous study using archival lots of the lentivirus [45] which suggested changes in inferior skull morphology and may indicate that

286 TNAP can promote cranial base growth in more moderate presentations of Crouzon syndrome
287 to some extent.

288 Lack of rescue of craniosynostosis, cranial base synchondrosis fusions and craniofacial shape
289 abnormalities by lentiviral delivery of mineral targeted TNAP indicates that TNAP is not
290 essential for these characteristics of Crouzon syndrome. This could be due to the fact that TNAP
291 levels are not decreased at all stages in FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mice [44] and is consistent with our finding
292 in this study that serum AP levels are similar in untreated Crouzon and wild type mice. It is also
293 possible that TNAP is simply not efficacious for preventing FGFR-associated cranial bone and
294 cranial base bone fusions, despite being decreased in cranial bone progenitor cells [14, 15].
295 More recently we showed that TNAP regulates expression of FGFR2 and Erk1,2 activity [48].
296 This latter data suggests the alternative hypothesis that FGF and Erk1,2 signaling changes cause
297 craniosynostosis in TNAP deficiency as opposed to TNAP deficiency causing craniosynostosis in
298 Crouzon syndrome.

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488 **Figure Legends:**

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490 **Figure 1. Micro CT images of BALB/c congenic untreated and treated FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mice.** Micro
491 CT isosurface images of P28 FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ Crouzon (CZ) and wild type (WT) mice on the BALB/c
492 congenic background are shown in axial view from above (A,B,C) and lateral view (B,D,F).
493 Darker bone is bone of diminished density.

494

495 **Figure 2. Micro CT images of C57BL/6 congenic untreated and treated FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mice.** Micro
496 CT isosurface images of P21 FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ Crouzon (CZ) and wild type (WT) mice on the C57BL/6
497 congenic background are shown in axial view from above (A,B,C) and lateral view (B,D,F).
498 Darker bone is bone of diminished density. Cranial bone density is diminished in C57BL/6
499 FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mice to the extent that cranial base bones show through the translucent cranial
500 bones.

501

Figure 3. Incidence of craniosynostosis and cranial base synchondrosis fusions in untreated and treated FGFR2$^{C342Y/+}$ mice. No fusions are evident in wild type mice on either the BALB/c or C57BL/6 backgrounds. A high incidence of coronal and lamboid suture fusion but no fusion of the sagittal suture is evident in Crouzon mice on both the BALB/c and C57BL/6 backgrounds. A high incidence of intersphenoidal synchondrosis (ISS) is seen in Crouzon mice on both backgrounds. Spheno-occipital synchondronsis (SOS) is seen approximately half of C57BL/6 Crouzon mice but rarely in BALB/c Crouzon mice. Treatment with TNAP does not significantly influence fusion of any cranial suture or cranial base synchondroses on either genetic background.

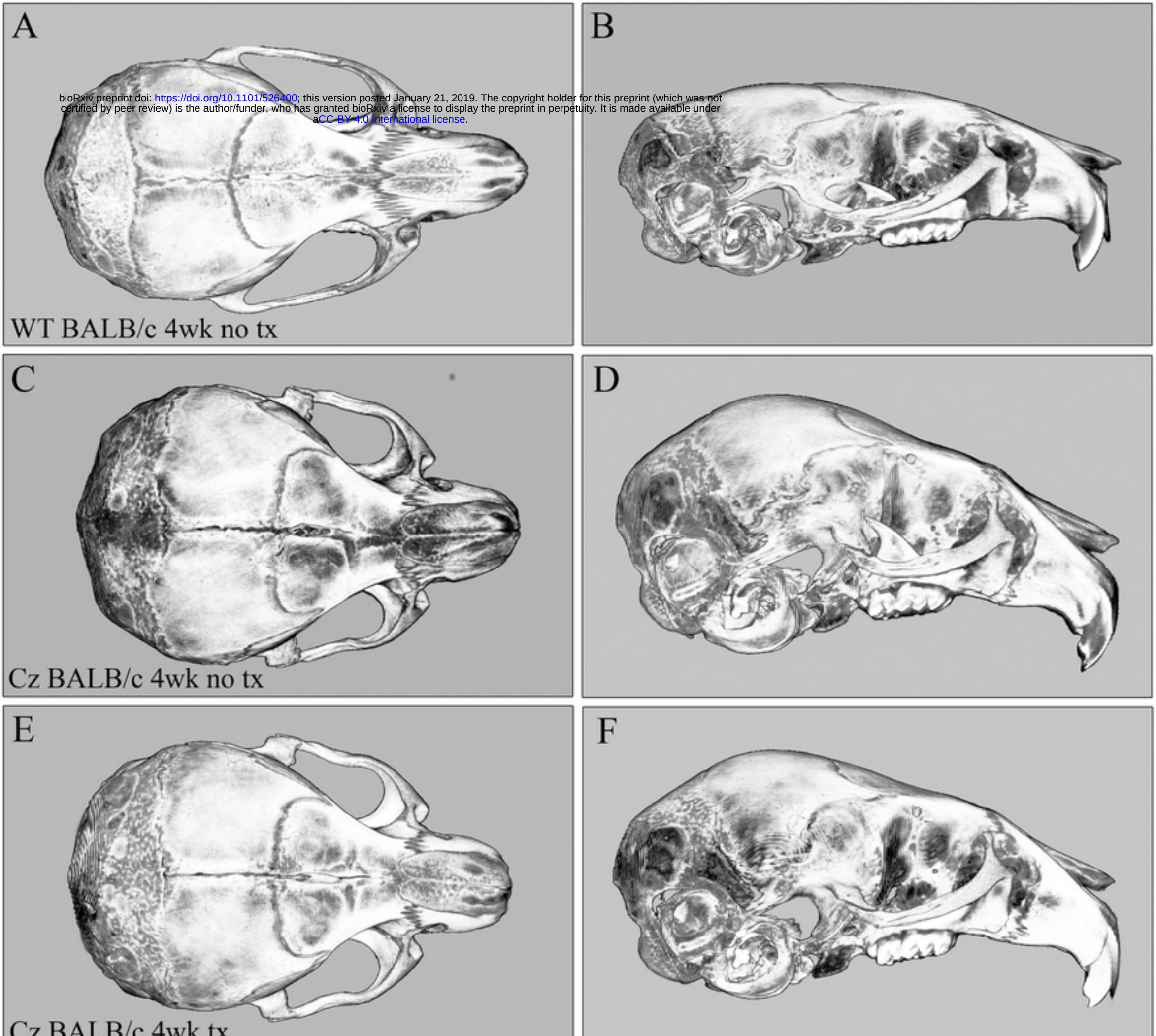

Figure 1. Micro CT images of BALB/c congenic untreated and trea

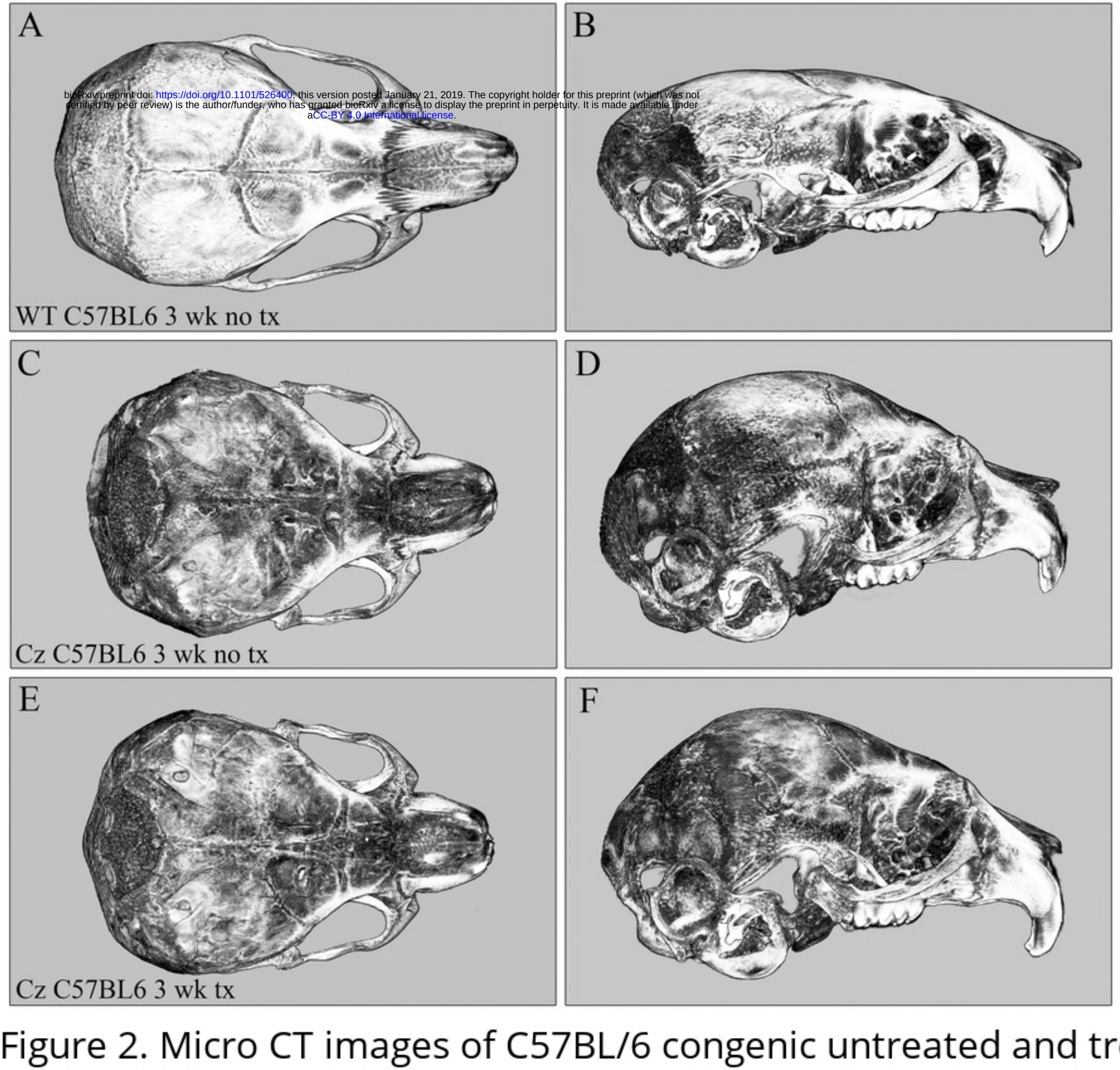

Figure 2. Micro CT images of C57BL/6 congenic untreated and tr

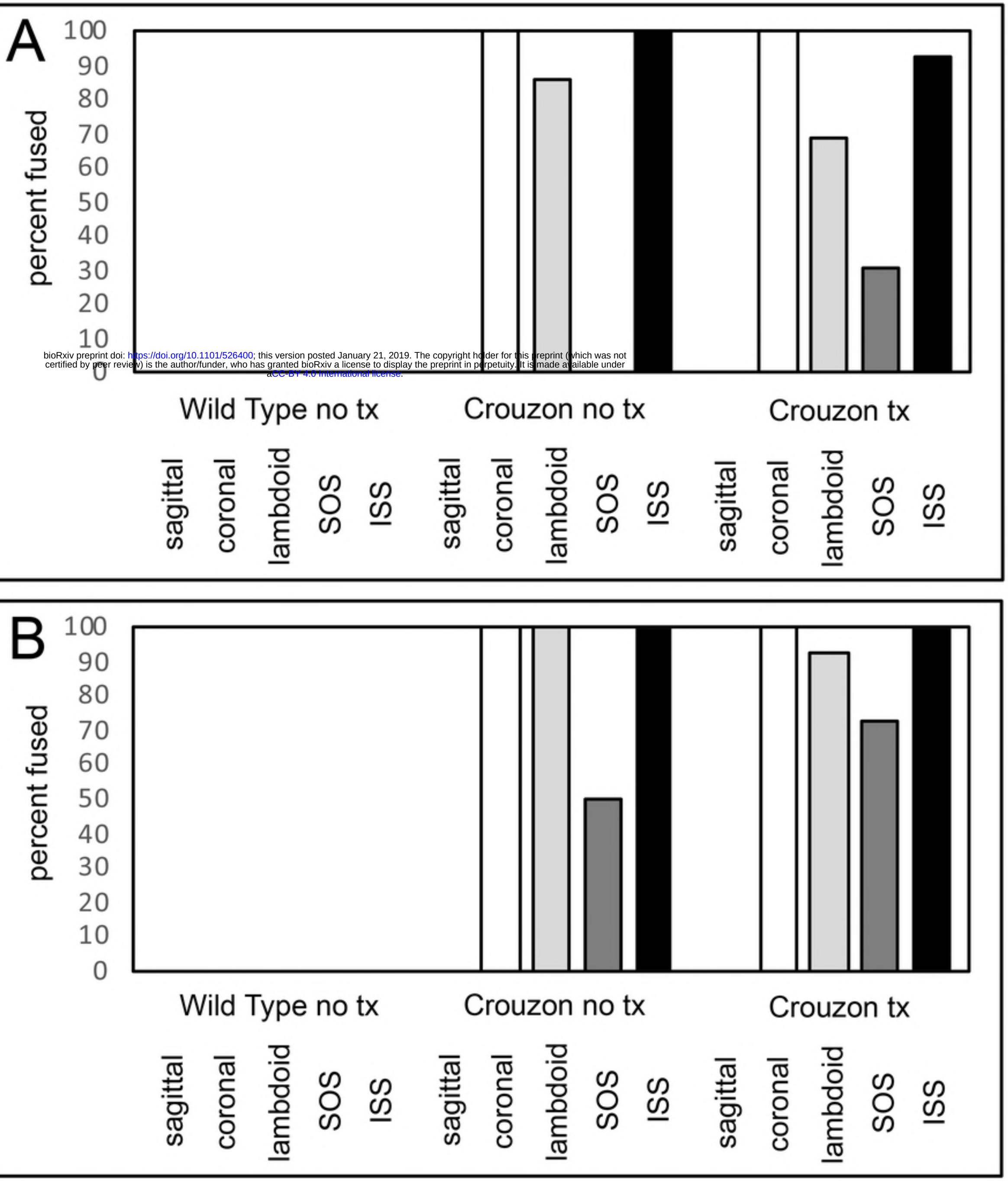

Figure 3. Incidence of craniosynostosis and cranial base synchon