

Role of MicroRNA in Early Life Placental Programming of Insulin Resistance and Metabolic Health

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'I love fools' experiment, I am always making them' – Charles Darwin

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY AND AUTHENTICITY	xii
TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS AND BIOCHEMICAL NAMES	xiii
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS ARISING FROM THIS THESIS.....	xvi
ABSTRACT.....	xviii
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Overview of the thesis	3
1.2 IUGR and subsequent metabolic disease	6
1.2.1 Consequences of IUGR	6
1.2.2 Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM): association with IUGR	7
1.2.3 IUGR alters insulin sensitivity.....	8
1.2.3.1 Skeletal muscle.....	8
1.2.3.2 Liver	11
1.2.3.3 Adipose.....	12
1.2.4 IUGR alters insulin secretion.....	13
1.3 Experimental placental restriction of fetal growth: IUGR	15
1.3.1 Sheep model of placental restriction	15
1.3.2 Rat model of placental restriction	18
1.3.3 Consequences of experimental IUGR.....	20
1.4 Programming and epigenetic mechanisms.....	22
1.4.1 Definition of programming and epigenetics	22
1.4.2 The developmental origins of health and disease hypothesis	23
1.5 MicroRNA.....	25
1.5.1 Definition and role of microRNA	25
1.5.2 Role of programming and epigenetics in microRNA gene expression ...	27
1.5.3 miRNA regulation in insulin signalling	28
1.5.4 miRNA regulation in insulin secretion.....	29
1.6 Summary.....	33
1.7 General hypothesis.....	34
1.7.1 Specific hypothesis	34

1.8	Significance of the project	35
1.9	Proposed studies.....	36
1.9.1	Overall aim.....	36
1.9.1.1	Aim 1	36
1.9.1.2	Aim 2	36
1.9.1.3	Aim 3	36
1.10	Experimental flow diagram	37
1.10.1	Surgical treatment for animal models.....	37
1.10.2	Schematic experimental flow diagram	38
Chapter 2	Placental restriction alters microRNA expression in insulin sensitive tissues of the adult sheep: relationship to insulin signalling and metabolism.....	41
2.1	Introduction	43
2.2	Materials and Methods	47
2.2.1	Restriction of placental and fetal growth	47
2.2.2	Measurement of insulin sensitivity of glucose, amino acid and lipid metabolism.....	48
2.2.3	Measurement of glucose tolerance and insulin secretion in vivo	49
2.2.4	Plasma metabolites and insulin.....	50
2.2.5	Post-mortem of sheep offspring	51
2.2.6	RNA extraction.....	51
2.2.7	Microarray hybridization	52
2.2.8	Computational microarray analysis	54
2.2.9	qRT-PCR analysis of miRNA expression	55
2.2.10	Identification of predicted targets of differentially expressed miRNAs ...	56
2.2.11	Ingenuity Pathway Analysis	56
2.2.12	qPCR analysis of expression of insulin signalling molecules, related molecules and predicted microRNA targets	57
2.2.13	Statistical Analyses	59
2.3	Results	61
2.3.1	Effect of placental restriction on size at birth, postnatal growth and body composition in offspring	61
2.3.2	Effect of placental restriction on metabolic state, glycaemia, lipidaemia and insulin abundance and sensitivity.....	61

2.3.3	Effect of placental restriction on expression of insulin signalling and glucose transporters in tissues of offspring	62
2.3.4	MicroRNA expression in ovine tissues	63
2.3.5	Placental restriction alters expression of miRNAs in liver of offspring....	64
2.3.6	Predicted targets of differentially expressed hepatic miRNAs following placental restriction in adult sheep	66
2.3.7	Placental restriction alters the expression of miRNAs in vastus lateralis of offspring	69
2.3.8	Predicted targets of differentially expressed vastus lateralis miRNAs following placental restriction in adult female sheep	70
2.3.9	Placental restriction altered expression of miRNAs in the perirenal fat of offspring and its predicted targets	71
2.4	Discussion	72
2.5	Conclusion.....	84
2.6	Tables and Figures.....	85
2.7	Supplementary Tables and Figures.....	103
Chapter 3	Placental restriction alters insulin action and expression of microRNAs and their targets in insulin sensitive tissues of adult rat offspring.....	141
3.1	Introduction.....	143
3.2	Materials and Methods	149
3.2.1	Animal treatment	149
3.2.2	Intra-peritoneal glucose tolerance test (IPGTT)	150
3.2.3	Intra-peritoneal insulin tolerance test (IPITT)	151
3.2.4	Insulin action	152
3.2.5	Post-mortem.....	153
3.2.6	Total RNA extraction	153
3.2.7	MicroRNA Microarray	154
3.2.8	qPCR analysis of miRNA expression	155
3.2.9	Bioinformatic Analyses.....	156
3.2.10	qPCR analysis of insulin signalling and related molecules and predicted miRNA target gene expression	157
3.2.11	Statistical Analyses	158
3.3	Results	161
3.3.1	Effects of surgery and BUVL on size at birth and postnatal growth in offspring	161

3.3.2	Effects of BUVL on body composition in offspring	163
3.3.2.1	Combined ages.....	163
3.3.4.2	Young adult.....	164
3.3.4.3	Older adult	165
3.3.3	Effect of surgery and BUVL on glucose control and insulin action with aging	167
3.3.4	Effect of surgical and BUVL on glucose tolerance, insulin secretion, sensitivity and action in young adult offspring.....	170
3.3.5	Effect of surgical and BUVL on glucose tolerance, insulin secretion, sensitivity and action in older adult offspring.....	173
3.3.6	Effects of BUVL on expression of insulin signalling and related molecules in insulin sensitive tissues of offspring	176
3.3.6.1	Liver	176
3.3.6.2	Skeletal muscle.....	176
3.3.6.3	Omental fat	176
3.3.7	Effects of BUVL on expression of microRNAs and their predicted targets in insulin sensitive tissues of offspring	177
3.3.7.1	Liver miRNAs and predicted targets	177
3.3.7.2	Skeletal muscle microRNAs and predicted targets	178
3.3.7.3	Omental fat microRNAs and predicted targets.....	178
3.4	Discussion	182
3.5	Conclusion	197
3.6	Tables and Figures.....	199
3.7	Supplement Tables and Figures.....	228
Chapter 4	Effect of placental restriction on pancreatic microRNA expression in adult sheep offspring	253
4.1	Introduction	255
4.2	Materials and Methods	261
4.2.1	Restriction of placental and fetal growth	261
4.2.2	Measurement of insulin secretion in vivo	261
4.2.3	Post-mortem of sheep offspring	262
4.2.4	Total RNA extraction	262
4.2.5	Microarray hybridisation	262
4.2.6	qRT-PCR analysis of microRNA expression	263
4.2.7	Identification of predicted targets of differentially expressed miRNAs..	264

4.2.8	Ingenuity Pathway Analysis.....	264
4.2.9	Statistical analyses.....	265
4.3	Results	266
4.3.1	Effect of placental restriction on birth weight, adult body weight and insulin secretion and β -cell.....	266
4.3.2	Highly expressed miRNA in the sheep pancreas	266
4.3.3	Effect of placental restriction on pancreatic miRNAs expression	267
4.3.4	Predicted target networks of differentially expressed miRNAs	267
4.3.5	Associations between insulin secretion, β -cell measures and miRNA expression.....	270
4.4	Discussion	271
4.5	Conclusion.....	279
4.6	Tables and Figures.....	280
4.7	Supplement Table	292
Chapter 5	General Discussion.....	297
References.....		311

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1.1. Summary of insulin signalling molecules altered in skeletal muscle, liver and adipose tissues in intrauterine growth restricted offspring.....	13
Table 1.2. Validated and hypothetical predicted miRNA targets involved in insulin signalling and type 2 diabetes.....	29
Table 1.3. Known microRNAs involved in regulation of the pancreas mass and function.....	31
Table 1.4. Highly expressed pancreatic microRNAs in humans and rats.....	32
Table 1.5. A summary of the experiments and number of sheep used in Chapter 2 and 4.....	39
Table 1.6. A summary of the experiments and numbers of rats used in Chapter 3...	40
Table 2.1. Effect of placental restriction and sex on size at birth and adult weight and body composition.....	85
Table 2.2. Effect of placental restriction on glucose tolerance, insulin secretion, insulin sensitivity and plasma lipid in adult sheep offspring.....	86
Table 2.3. Placental restriction alters expression of microRNAs in liver, vastus lateralis and perirenal fat tissue in adult sheep offspring.....	87
Table 2.4. Quantitative analysis on expression of microRNAs in insulin sensitive tissue in adult sheep offspring following placental restriction.....	88
Table 2.5. Predicted targets in insulin signalling and related pathways of miRNAs that are differentially expressed following placental restriction.....	89
Table 2.6. IPA networks predicted to be targeted by differentially expressed miRNAs in liver of placentally restricted adult offspring.....	90
Table 2.7. IPA network predicted to be targeted by differentially expressed miRNAs in adipose of placentally restricted adult offspring.....	92
Table 3.1. The effect of surgical treatments on body weight and dimensions of offspring.....	199
Table 3.2. The effect of surgical treatments on organs and tissues weight on combined age offspring.....	201
Table 3.3. Effect of surgical treatments on organ and tissue weights in young adult offspring.....	203
Table 3.4. Effect of surgical treatments on organ and tissue weights in rat in older adult offspring.....	205
Table 3.5. Effect of surgical treatments on glucose tolerance, insulin secretion, sensitivity and action in offspring.....	207

Table 3.6. Effect of surgical treatments on glucose tolerance, insulin secretion, sensitivity and action in young adult offspring	209
Table 3.7. Effect of surgical treatments on glucose tolerance, insulin secretion, sensitivity and action in older adult offspring	211
Table 3.8. Effect of bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation on miRNAs expression in liver, skeletal muscle and omental fat tissue in older adult offspring	212
Table 3.9. Quantitative analysis on effect of bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation on microRNAs expression in insulin sensitive tissues in older adult offspring.....	213
Table 3.10. Predicted targets involved in insulin action and metabolic control of miRNAs differentially expressed following bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation ...	214
Table 3.11. Networks and predicted direct and indirect molecular targets of differentially expressed miRNAs following bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation ...	215
Table 4.1. Effects of placental restriction on growth and <i>in vivo</i> insulin and β -cell morphometry in adult sheep offspring	280
Table 4.2. Microarray analysis on the effect of placental restriction on pancreatic miRNA expression in adult sheep offspring	281
Table 4.3. qPCR analysis on the effect of placental restriction on pancreatic miRNA expression in adult sheep offspring.....	282
Table 4.4. Networks and predicted molecules for pancreatic miRNAs differentially expressed in adult sheep offspring following placental restriction	283
Table 4.5. Network and predicted molecules based on common predicted targets of seven pancreatic miRNAs differentially expressed in adult sheep offspring following placental restriction	284
Figure 1.1. Simplified outline of insulin signalling pathway in skeletal muscle, liver and adipose tissues.	9
Figure 1.2. Schematic diagram of sheep placentation.	17
Figure 1.3. Schematic diagram of BUVL surgery in rats at day 18 following mating.	19
Figure 1.4. MicroRNA biogenesis.....	26
Figure 1.5. Schematic flow diagram of treatment for the sheep IUGR model used in the present thesis.....	37
Figure 1.6. Schematic flow diagram of treatment for the rat IUGR model used in the present thesis.....	37
Figure 1.7. Experimental flow diagram for analysing miRNA and predicting targets gene expression.....	38
Figure 2.1. The effect of placental restriction on blood glucose and insulin during intravenous glucose tolerance test in adult sheep offspring	93

Figure 2.2. Effect of placental restriction on hepatic expression of selected insulin signalling and related genes	94
Figure 2.3. Effect of placental restriction on expression of selected insulin signalling and related genes in vastus lateralis	95
.....	97
Figure 2.4. Molecular networks predicted to be regulated by differentially expressed miRNAs in the liver of placentally restricted offspring	97
Figure 2.5. Associations between hepatic expression of molecules in the network that is predicted to be targeted by four up-regulated microRNAs in liver of placentally restricted adult offspring	98
Figure 2.6. Hepatic expression of hsa-miR-144, hsa-miR-1 and hsa-miR-142-3p and that of <i>Ppara</i> and <i>Acox1</i> genes are inversely correlated in adult male offspring	100
Figure 2.7. Vastus lateralis expression of miR-376b and miR-17-5p and that of PPAR α in adult male offspring	101
Figure 2.8. Molecular networks predicted to be regulated by hsa-miR-451 in the perirenal fat of placentally restricted adult offspring	102
Table 3.6. Effect of surgical treatments on glucose tolerance, insulin secretion, sensitivity and action in young adult offspring	209
Figure 3.1. Effect of surgical treatments on postnatal growth of offspring	216
Figure 3.2. The effect of surgical treatments on plasma glucose and insulin secretion during intra-peritoneal glucose and insulin tolerance test in combined age offspring	217
Figure 3.3. The effect of surgical treatments on plasma glucose and insulin secretion during intra-peritoneal glucose and insulin tolerance test in young adult offspring ..	218
Figure 3.4. The effect of surgical treatments on plasma glucose and insulin secretion during intra-peritoneal glucose and insulin tolerance test in older adult offspring ...	219
Figure 3.5. Effect of bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation on hepatic expression of insulin signalling and other predicted targets in older adult offspring	220
Figure 3.6. Effect of bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation on skeletal muscle expression of insulin signalling and other predicted targets in older adult offspring	221
Figure 3.7. Effect of bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation on omental fat expression of insulin signalling and other predicted targets in older adult offspring	222
Figure 3.8. Molecular networks predicted to be targeted by the differentially expressed rno-miR-126 in liver following bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation	223
Figure 3.9. Molecular networks predicted to be targeted by the differentially expressed rno-miR-451 in skeletal muscle following bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation.....	224

Figure 3.10. Molecular networks predicted to be targeted by the differentially expressed miRNAs in omental fat following bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation .	226
Figure 3.11. Effect of bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation on associations between differentially expressed miRNAs and tissue weight in omental fat in older adult female offspring	227
Figure 4.1. The top ten most highly expressed microRNAs in the adult sheep pancreas	285
Figure 4.2. Network A was predicted to be targeted by rno-miR-331*	286
Figure 4.3. Network A and B were predicted to be targeted by hsa-miR-513a-3p ..	287
Figure 4.4. Network based on common targets of seven of the top twenty of differentially expressed miRNAs in pancreas of adult sheep offspring following placental restriction	288
Figure 4.5. Associations between β -cell volume density and number and pancreatic expression of differentially expressed miRNAs in adult sheep offspring	289
Figure 4.6. Associations between <i>in vivo</i> insulin secretion and pancreatic expression of differentially expressed miRNAs in adult male sheep offspring.....	290
Figure 4.7. Associations between <i>in vivo</i> insulin secretion and pancreatic expression of differentially expressed miRNAs in adult female sheep offspring.....	291

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY AND AUTHENTICITY

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Signed,

Himawan Harryanto

Date: _____

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS AND BIOCHEMICAL NAMES

Acox1	Acyl-CoA oxidase 1, palmitoyl
AdipoR2	Adiponectin Receptor 2
AMC	Adelaide Microarray Centre
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BMI	Body Mass Index
BUVL	Bilateral uterine artery vessel ligation
cDNA	complementary DNA
Cbl	E3 ubiquitin-protein ligase
Ccdc88a	Coiled-coil domain containing 88A
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DMR	Differentially Methylated Region
DMSO	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DNMT	DNA methyltransferase
dNTP	Deoxyribonucleotide triphosphate
FFA	Free Fatty Acid
Foxo1	Forkhead box protein O1
Foxo3	Forkhead box protein O3
HEC	Hyperinsulinaemic euglycaemic clamp
Hk2	Hexokinase 2
IGF-1	Insulin-like Growth Factor 1

IPA	Ingenuity Pathway Analysis
IPGTT	Intraperitoneal glucose tolerance test
IR	Insulin Receptor
Irs1	Insulin receptor substrate 1
Irs2	Insulin receptor substrate 2
IVGTT	In Vitro Glucose Tolerance Test
IUGR	Intrauterine Growth Restriction/Retardation
LNA	Locked Nucleic Acid
µg	microgram
microRNA/miRNA/miR	Micro ribonucleic acid
Mon2	MON2 homolog
mRNA	Messenger ribose nucleic acid
p110β	PI-3-kinase, catalytic, beta polypeptide
p85α	PI-3-kinase, regulatory subunit 1
PASW	Predictive Analytics SoftWare
PI	Ponderal Index or Placental Insufficiency
Pparaα	Peroxisome proliferative activated receptor, alpha
PR	Placental Restriction or placentally restricted
RNA	Ribonucleic acid
RT	reverse transcribed
RT-PCR	Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction
SA	South Australia
SEM	Standard error of mean

Slc2a4	Solute carrier family 2, member 4
T2DM	Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WEHI	Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research
WHO	World Health Organization

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS ARISING FROM THIS THESIS

'Placental Restriction Alters Insulin Actions and microRNAs Expression in Insulin Sensitive Tissues of Adult Offspring in the Rat'

H. Harryanto, E. M. Jamil, B. L. Summers-Pearce, P. A. Grant, M. J. De Blasio, S. Moretta, W-C. Kong, K. L. Gatford, M. Dziadek, M. E. Wlodek, J. A. Owens

August 2012

ESA-SRB Annual Scientific Meeting 2012

Oral presentation on ESA Orals: Diabetes

'Role of Hepatic miR-142-3p and miR-144 in Development of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease in Placentally Restricted Adult Sheep Offspring'

Himawan Harryanto, Miles J. De Blasio, Patricia A. Grant, Kathryn L. Gatford, Julie A. Owens

July 2011

2nd RNAi Australia Meeting

Oral presentation

'Placental Restriction Alters MicroRNAs Expression in Skeletal Muscle, Liver and Adipose Tissue Young and Adult Offspring in the Sheep'

H. Harryanto, M. J. De Blasio, P. A. Grant, K. L. Gatford, J. S. Robinson, J. A. Owens

August 2010

ESA-SRB Annual Scientific Meeting 2010

Oral presentation on ESA Orals: Early life programming & IUGR

'IUGR Alters rno-miR-16, -18a and -142-3p in Day 260 Omental Fat BUVL Rat Offspring Tissue'

H. Harryanto, B. L. Summers-Pearce, M. J. De Blasio, S. Moretta, T. A. How, P. A. Grant, J. A. Owens

August 2010

ESA-SRB Annual Scientific Meeting 2010

Poster presentation

'Role of microRNAs in Placental Programming of Skeletal Muscle Insulin Resistance'

H. Harryanto, M. L. Harland, P. A. Grant, M. J. De Blasio, K. L. Gatford, J. S. Robinson, J. A. Owens

Presented on:

October 2009

IFPA Conference 2009, Adelaide

Poster Presentation

September 2009

Faculty of Health Sciences Research Expo 2009

Poster Presentation

August 2009

ESA-SRB Annual Scientific Meeting 2009

Oral presentation on ESA Orals: Metabolism & Obesity

June 2009

ASMR Medical Research Week®

SA Scientific Meeting 2009

Poster Presentation

ABSTRACT

Intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR) is associated with insulin resistance and diabetes, particularly later in adult life. Placental restriction is a common cause of IUGR, this condition induces insulin resistance and/ or insulin deficiency and consequently, impaired glucose tolerance in offspring, in the sheep and rat. Reduced expression of insulin signalling genes and that of their key metabolic targets in insulin sensitive tissues and of some molecular determinants of pancreatic β -cell insulin secretion and mass, contributes to impaired insulin action in offspring, in experimental and human IUGR. However, the underlying molecular mechanisms whereby IUGR alters the molecular profile of insulin sensitive and secreting tissues in later life are largely unknown. The studies described in this thesis examine the potential role of microRNAs (miRNAs) in the developmental programming of impaired insulin action in IUGR offspring. MiRNAs are short single-stranded RNAs (22 nucleotide in length), which are able to reduce the translation and/or abundance of mRNA and protein of targets. Each miRNA is predicted to regulate the abundance of many targets in co-ordinated networks to modify function, providing a potentially powerful pathway for developmental programming to influence later phenotype.

Here, IUGR was induced by restricting placental growth and development surgically in sheep (pre-conception removal of most implantation sites) or in the rat (ligation of uterine blood vessels in late gestation). In each species, the effect of placental restriction and IUGR on miRNA expression and expression of key predicted targets, including that of insulin signalling and key metabolic genes in the insulin sensitive tissues: liver, skeletal muscle and adipose (perirenal in sheep and omental in rat), in

adult offspring were characterised. The effect of placental restriction on pancreatic miRNA expression in adult offspring was also determined in the sheep.

Placental restriction and IUGR mostly increased miRNA expression in insulin sensitive tissues of the adult sheep and in a sex specific manner, suggesting the potential for increased repression of the translation or abundance of their molecular targets and related functions. The liver, followed by skeletal muscle and adipose tissue, showed the greatest susceptibility in terms of numbers of miRNAs with altered expression following placental restriction. In males, placental restriction increased hepatic expression of eight miRNAs by ~1.5-3.5-fold, with differential expression of four independently confirmed by qPCR (hsa-miR-1, hsa-miR-21, hsa-miR-142-3p and hsa-miR-144). Each of these four miRNAs was predicted to target molecules involved in insulin signalling, metabolism and hepatic disease. The latter included *p85 α* , *Ppara*, *Igf1*, *Foxo3* and *Acox1*, all exhibiting reduced hepatic expression (~2.3-4.0 fold) following placental restriction in males, with the abundance of hsa-miR-1, hsa-miR-142-3p and hsa-miR-144 correlating negatively with *Acox1* expression. Thus, placental restriction co-ordinately alters hepatic expression of miRNAs and predicted targets related to non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) in adult male offspring in sheep. Reduced hepatic expression of *Ppara* (regulates lipid catabolism), and *Acox1* (peroxisomal fatty acid β -oxidation) is characterised to promote the development of NAFLD, increasingly common following fetal growth restriction in humans, and miRNAs may partly mediate this prenatal programming of NAFLD.

In the sheep, placental restriction increased vastus lateralis expression of seven miRNAs by ~1.23-2.04 fold, with differential expression of two independently

confirmed by qPCR (hsa-miR-17-5p and hsa-miR-376b). Both of these two miRNAs were predicted to regulate *Ppara* expression, which tended to negative correlate with that of hsa-miR-376b ($r = -0.617$, P -value: 0.052) and hsa-miR-17-5p ($r = -0.533$, P -value: 0.087), in placentally restricted female offspring. Placental restriction also increased perirenal fat hsa-miR-451 expression in female offspring. This miRNA is predicted to regulate a network that is involved in lipid metabolism, molecular transport and small molecule biochemistry in adipose tissue. Furthermore, perirenal fat expression of hsa-miR-451 was correlated positively with *in vivo* insulin sensitivity of free fatty acids in control offspring ($r = 0.687$, $P = 0.020$, $n = 11$), but not in placentally restricted offspring.

In the rat, placental restriction impaired insulin secretion in adult offspring, while insulin sensitivity was enhanced in young adult offspring, which then disappeared with aging, particularly in females. Placental restriction and IUGR also mostly increased miRNA expression in the insulin sensitive tissues of older adult offspring and usually in a sex specific manner, with omental fat the most affected, followed by skeletal muscle and liver. Placental restriction and IUGR reduced hepatic expression of the insulin signalling molecule, *p110 β* in female offspring and that of related molecules, *Slc2a2* and *Igf1*, in male offspring. Placental restriction also increased hepatic rno-miR-126 expression, in female offspring and is predicted to target molecules involved in lipid metabolism, molecular transport and small molecule biochemistry. Placental restriction and IUGR reduced omental fat expression of *Irs1*, *Irs2* and *Slc2a4* in male offspring and increased that of rno-miR-18a, rno-miR-142-3p, rno-miR-19b, rno-miR-21, rno-miR-20b and mmu-miR-106a. The latter are predicted to target insulin signalling but also small molecule biochemistry, lipid

metabolism and its regulation, including similar pathways to those targeted by IUGR altered miRNAs in liver of adult offspring in sheep. Expression of omental fat rno-miR-18a was found to be negatively correlated with *Slc2a4* in placentally restricted offspring overall ($r = -0.451$, $P = 0.040$).

Placental restriction also alters the pancreatic expression of three miRNAs in adult sheep offspring, hsa-miR-339-5p in males, rno-miR-331* in females and hsa-miR-513a-3p in both sexes. Furthermore, the predicted molecular and functional targets of these differentially expressed miRNAs and predicted functional outcomes following placental restriction mirror the previously reported sex differences in β -cell insulin secretory function and mass in the placentally restricted adult sheep. We found that hsa-miR-339-5p was predicted to regulate PLEKHH1 and PAK6, proteins which are essential to maintain the development of the pancreas and/or differentiation of islets. Down-regulation of both rno-miR-331* and hsa-miR-513a-3p in the pancreas of placentally restricted female offspring would be expected to indirectly up-regulate *Pdx1* expression, and potentially contribute to the increased number of β -cells per islet they exhibit.

Overall, placental restriction and IUGR mostly increase abundance of miRNAs in key insulin sensitive tissues of adult offspring in both sheep and the rat, with sex-specific and tissue-specific differences. Nevertheless, the networks targeted by miRNAs differentially expressed following IUGR in such tissues, share common functions and pathways, both across tissues and species, including small molecule biochemistry, lipid metabolism, carbohydrate metabolism and molecular transport. Of interest, regardless of the tissues and species, placental restriction generally increased

expression of miR-142-3p, miR-1, miR-21 and miR-17-5p. Of note, expression of hsa-miR-1 and hsa-miR-21 were each up-regulated in both liver and vastus lateralis in sheep offspring. These up-regulations of common miRNAs expression could be due to alteration of epigenetic mechanism affected by placental restriction, such as DNA methylation, or common systemic regulations of their expression that has been 'programmed' due to placental restriction.

Therefore, placental restriction of fetal growth does alter expression of miRNAs and their networks involving insulin signalling and metabolism in key insulin sensitive tissues in the adult. The mechanism underlying this and the extent to which they contribute to overall developmental programming of metabolic dysfunction warrant for future investigation.