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Coiled-coil mediated tethering of CRISPR/Cas and exonucleases for enhanced genome editing

Roman Jerala

Department of Synthetic Biology and Immunology, Natl Inst Chem, Ljubljana, Slovenia

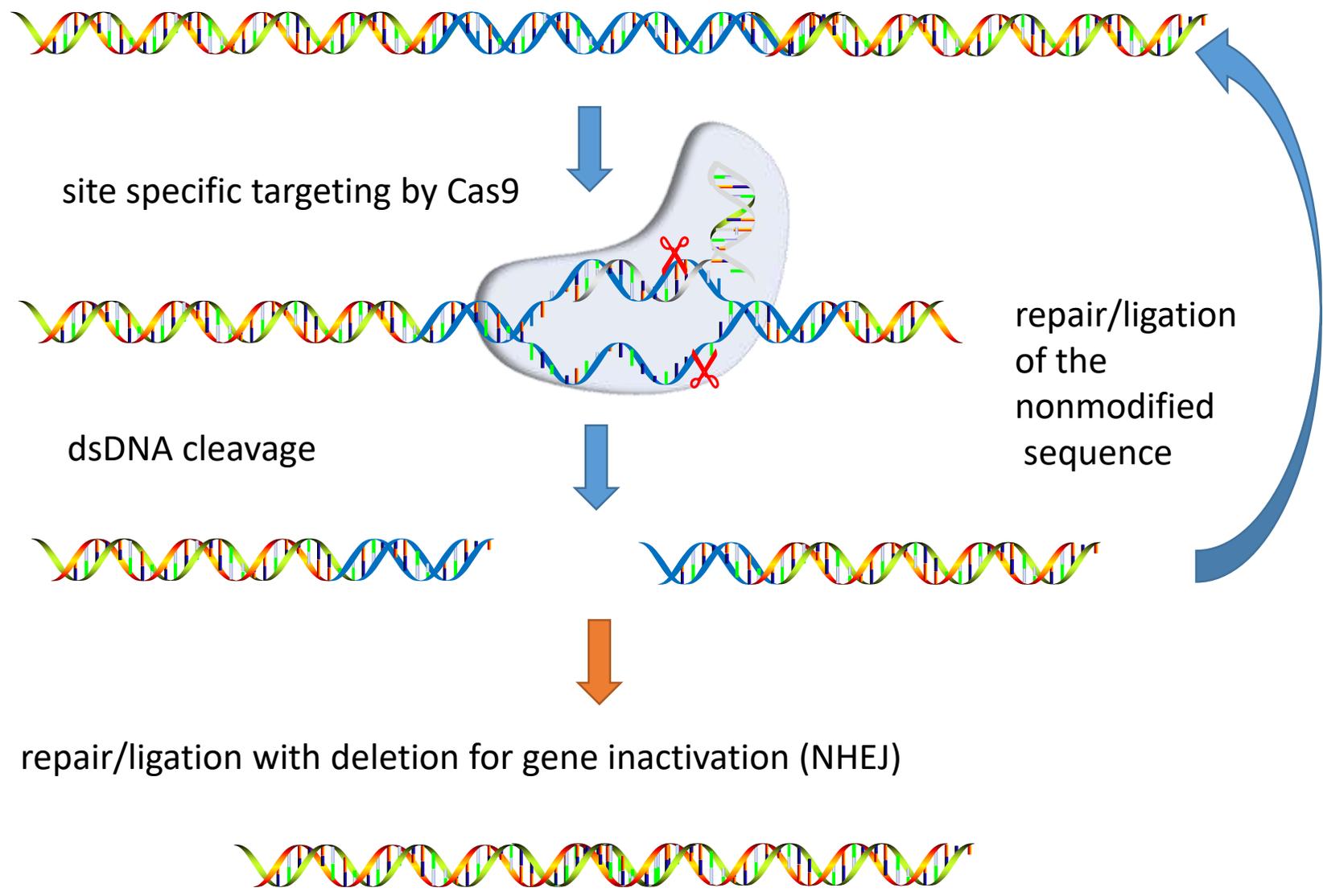
EIC-ERC Workshop on Cell and Gene Therapy, June 29th 2021

CRISPR revolution

- Fast and widely applicable genome editing
- Diverse biotechnological and therapeutic applications
- Most current applications are based on target gene inactivation
- Therapy:
 - 47 registered clinical trials (16 in China)
 - Diagnostics
 - Cancer, viral infections, gene therapy: sickle cell disease, transthyretin amyloidosis
- Any improvement in the efficiency could have large impact



Conventional CRISPR-mediated gene inactivation

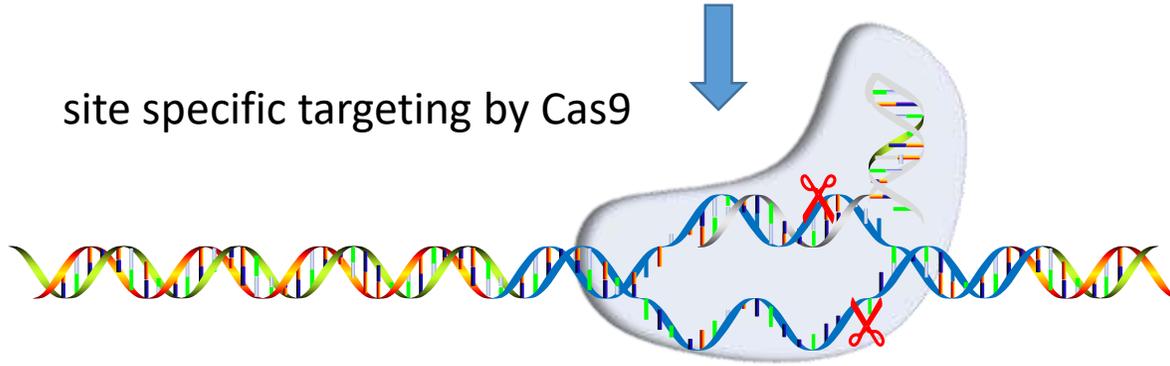




Exonuclease augmented gene inactivation



site specific targeting by Cas9



dsDNA cleavage



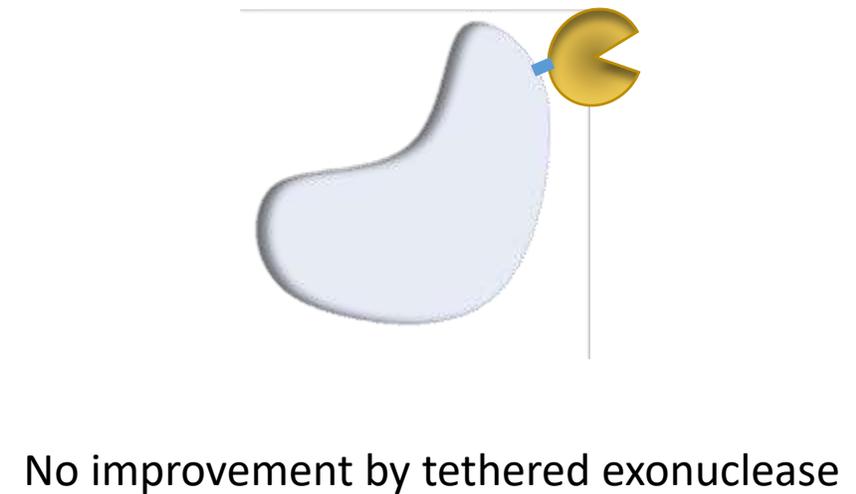
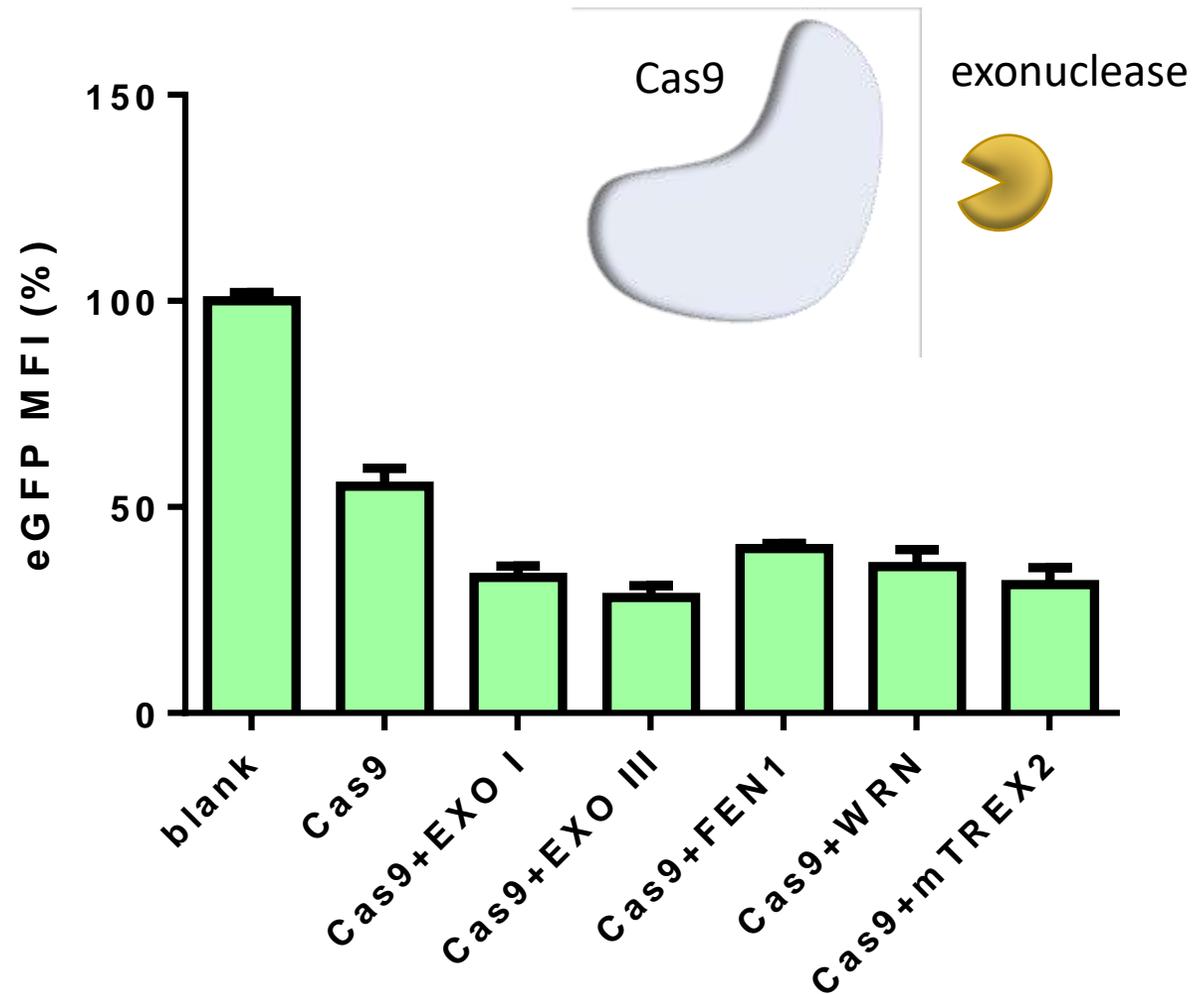
exonuclease truncation



repair/ligation with deletion

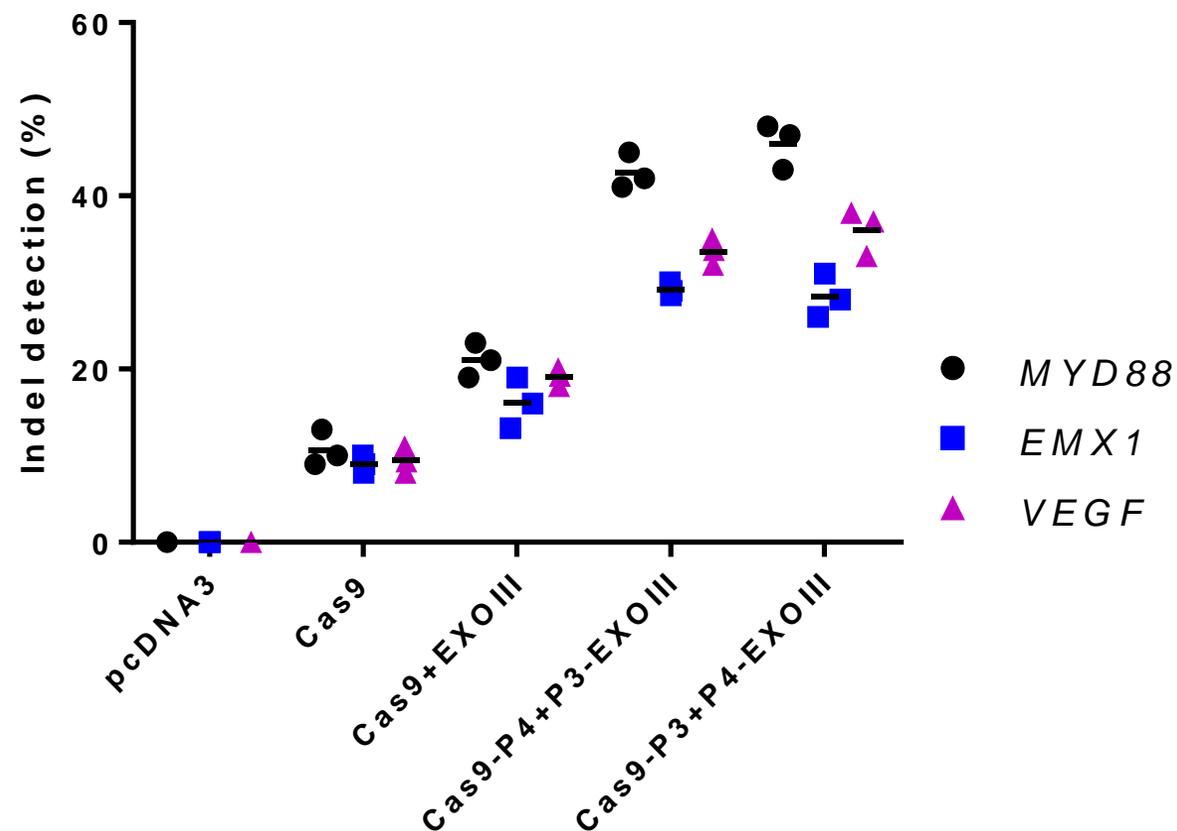
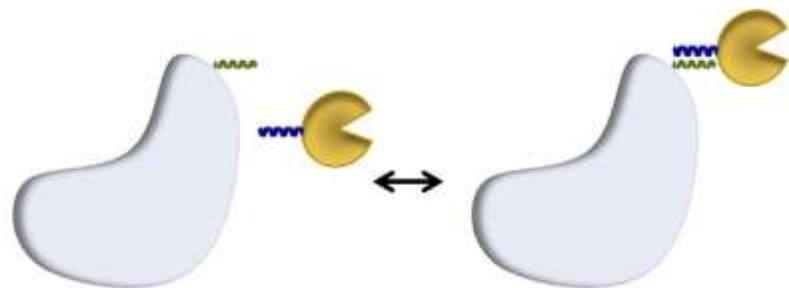
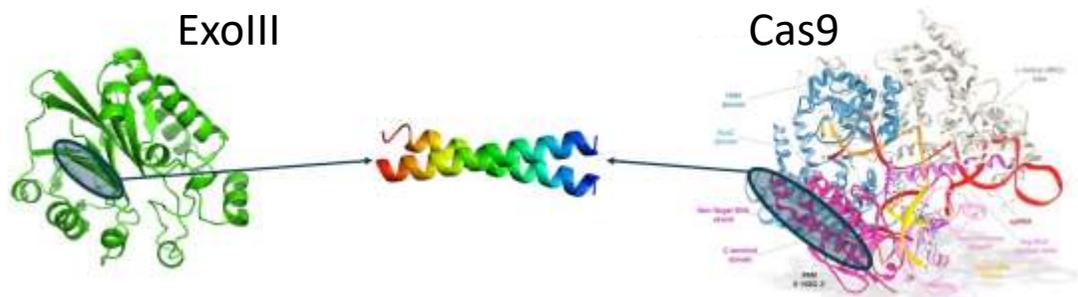


Coexpression with exonucleases increases the gene KO efficiency



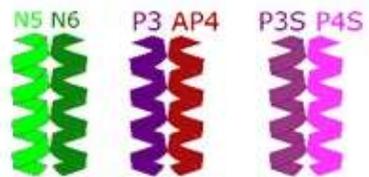


Coiled-coil-linker peptide-mediated targeting improves the efficiency of genome editing



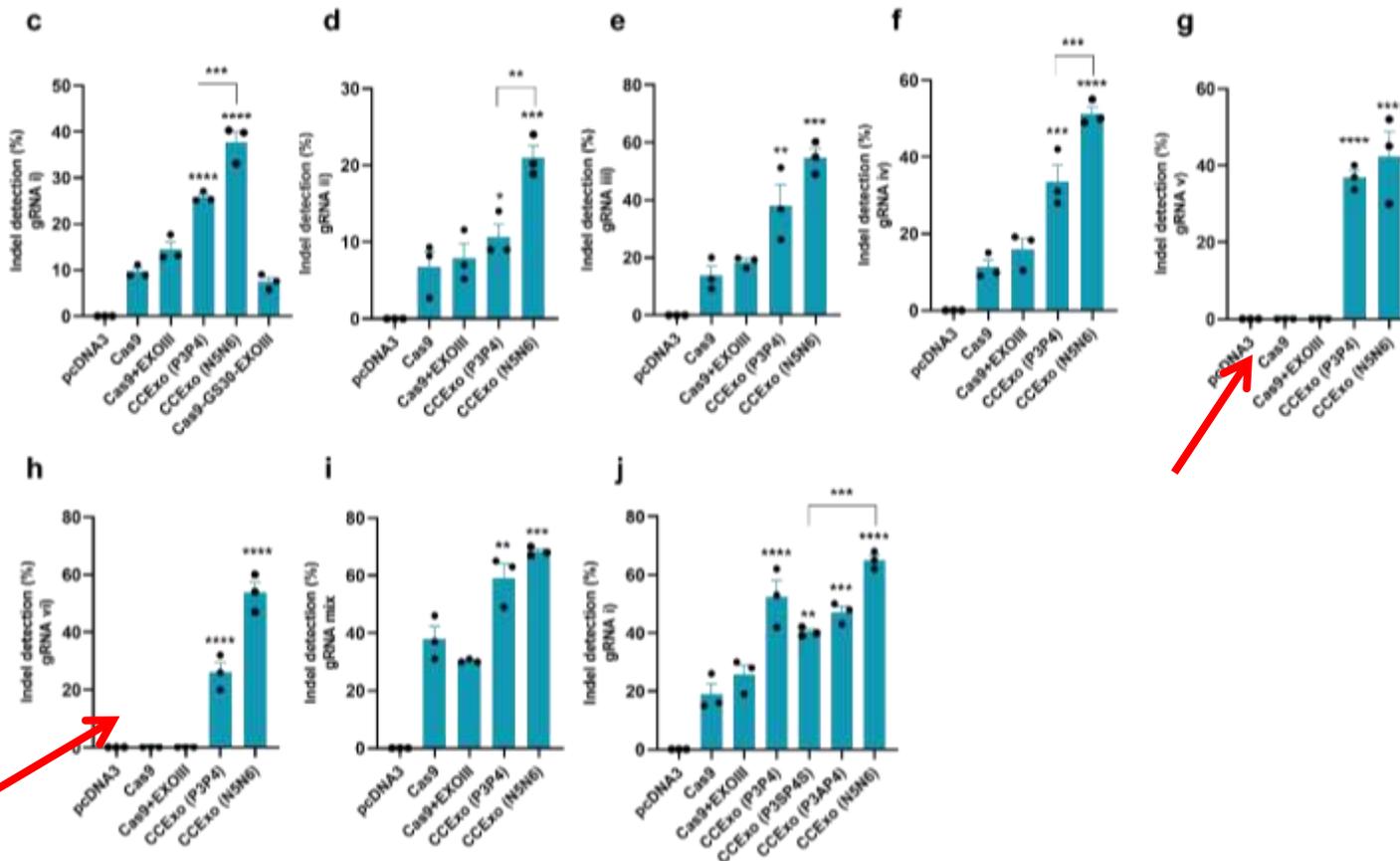


Effect of coiled-coil peptide tether selection



Binding affinity

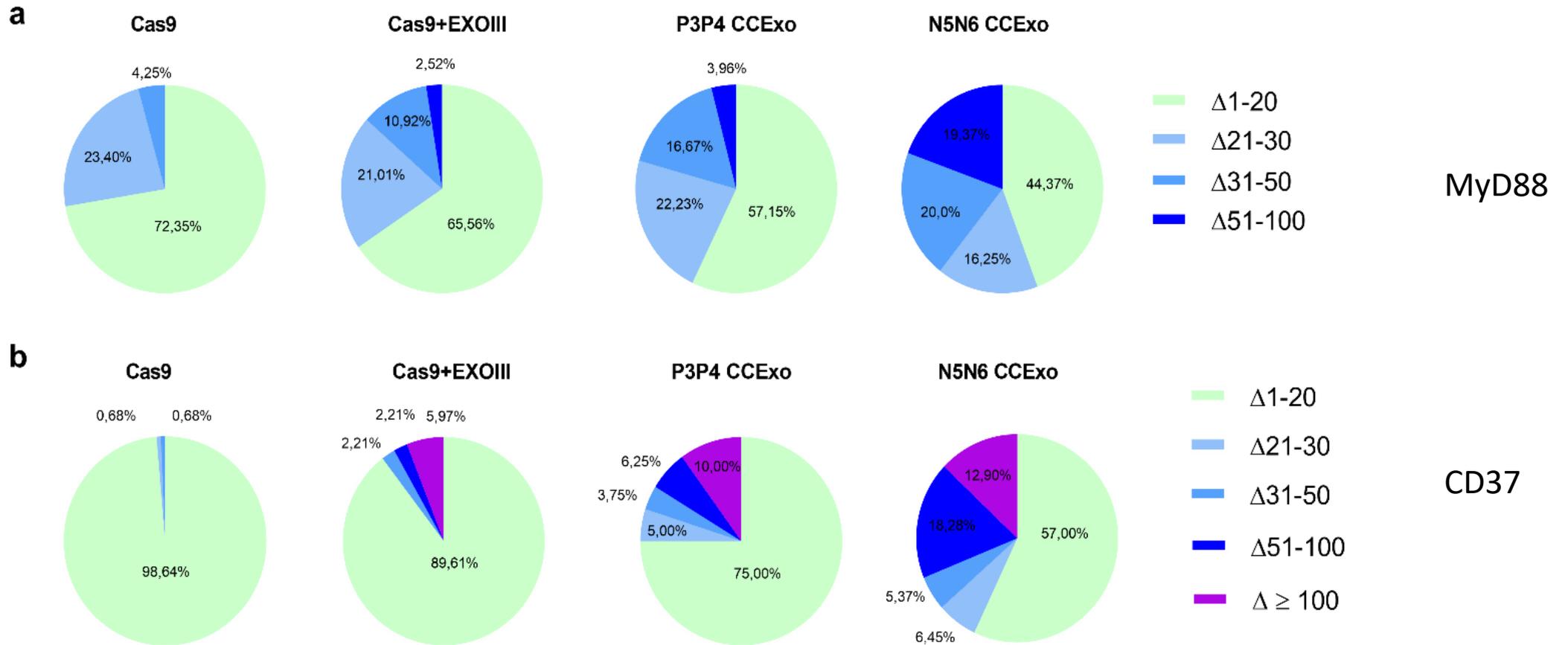
Designed coiled coil set with different orientations and tunable affinity



Increased indel efficiency

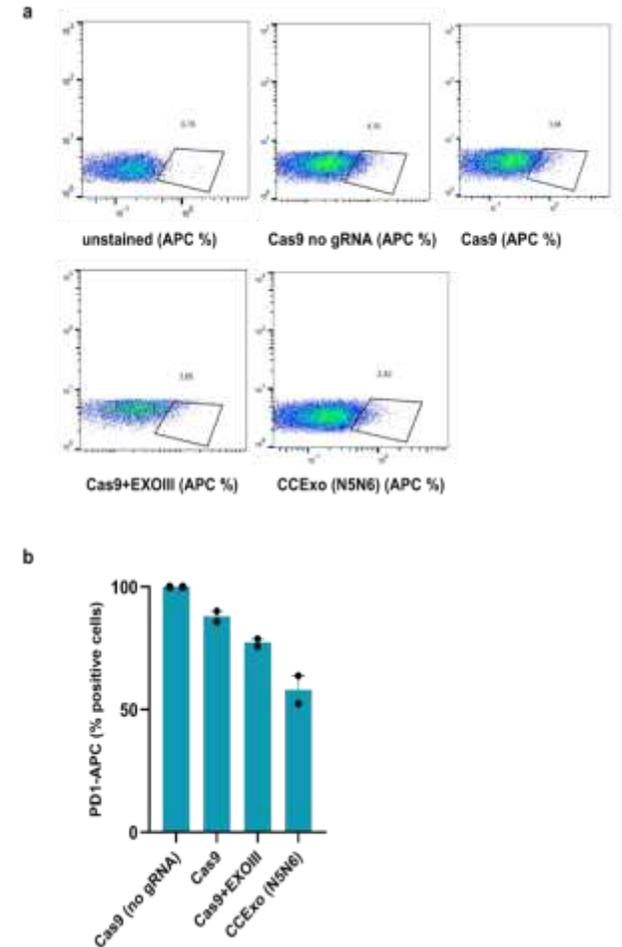
Indel formation in cases where Cas9/gRNA alone were not effective

CCexo increases deletion length



Applications of CCExo

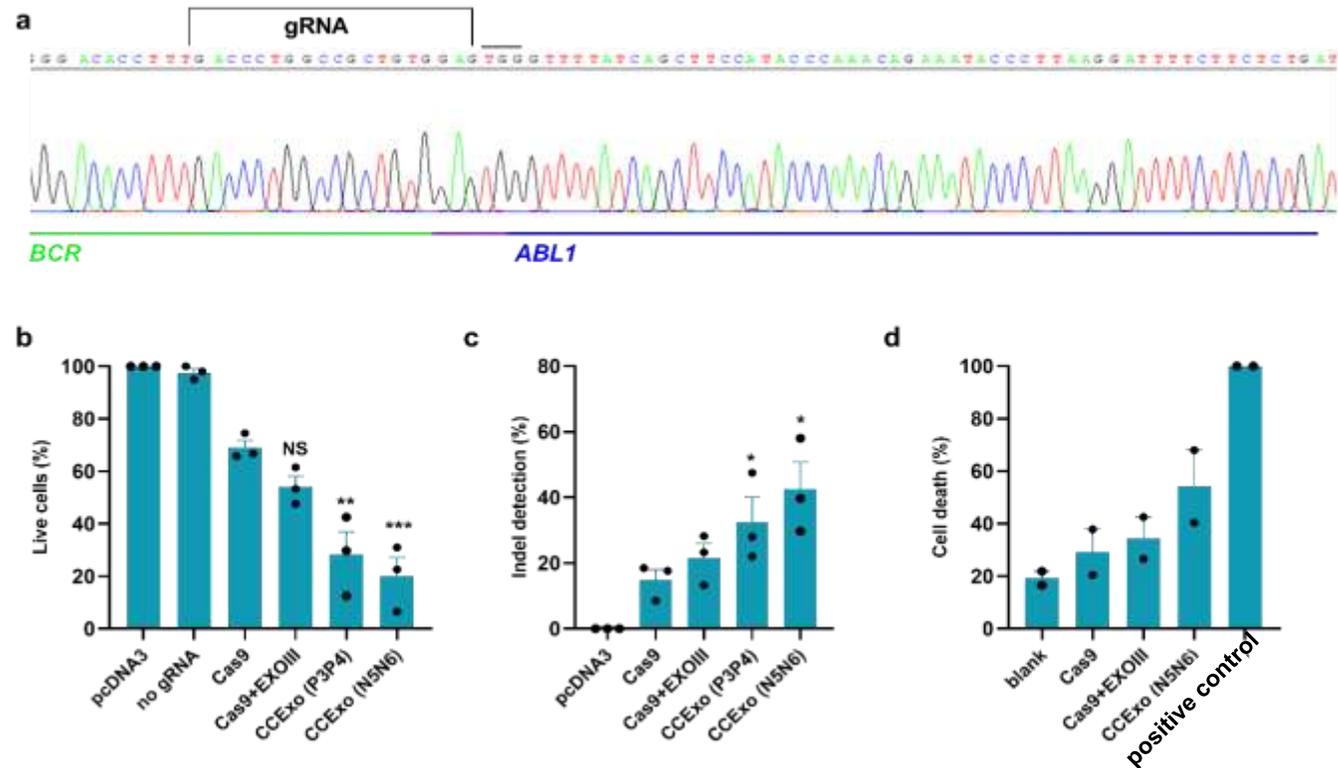
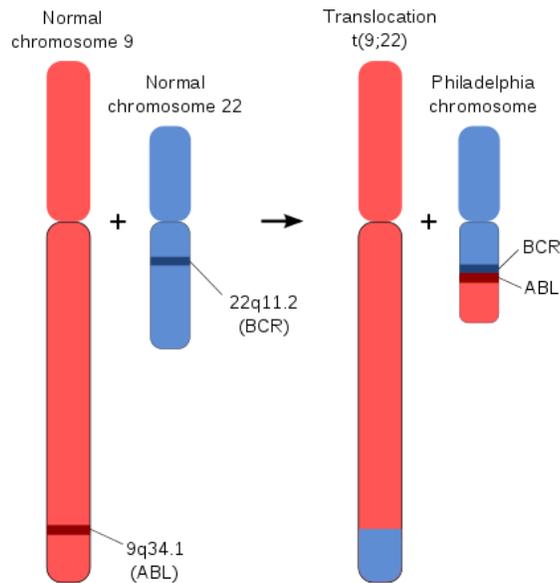
- Already tested in several primary human cells and cell lines
- More efficient generation of KO cell lines
- Generation of KO in plants
- Therapeutic inactivation of selected genes (e.g. PD-1, TRACA in CAR T cell therapy)
- Therapeutic killing of cancer cells with characteristic genomic translocations



Potential of Cas-CC-EXO for anticancer therapy

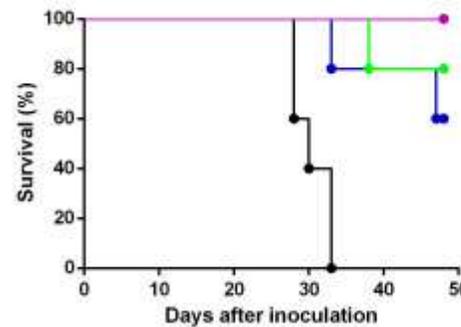
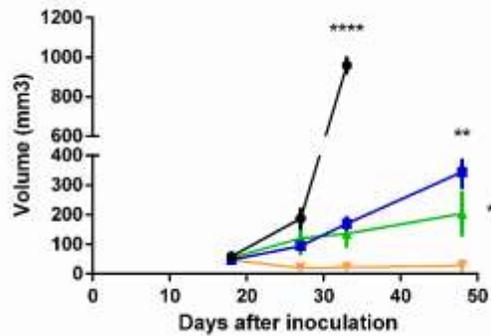
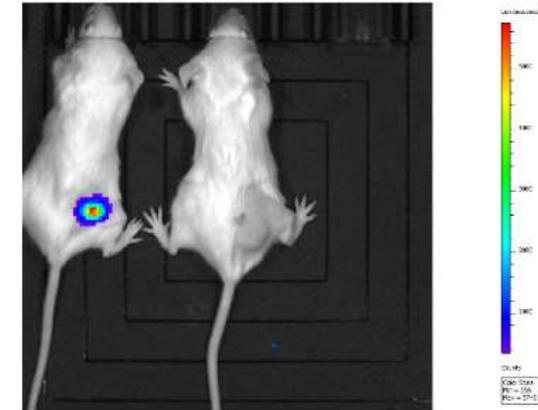
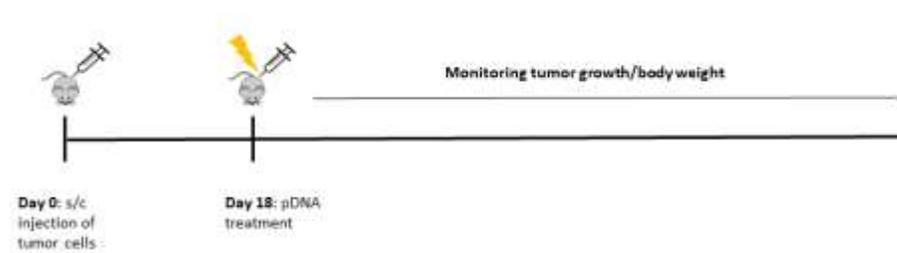
Chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) is characterized by the genetic translocation between the t(9;22)(q34;q11.2), resulting in the formation of Philadelphia fusion chromosome, coding for BCR-ABL1 oncoprotein.

BCR-ABL1 editing in human CML cells via CCExo



In vivo demonstration of Cas-CC-EXO for anticancer therapy

Targeting BCR-ABL translocation, animals with tumors showed improved survival and drastic reduction in tumor size.



pcDNA3



Cas9



Cas9+EXOIII



N5-CC-EXO





- CCexo technology increases the efficiency of genomic deletions
- The mechanism is most likely due to the dynamic recruitment and release of the exonuclease to the cleavage site
- Potential therapeutic applications for elimination of proviral insertions inactivation of cells with characteristic (cancer) translocations (adapted to each patient based on the sequence)

Current status

- Testing different delivery methods
- Demonstration on plants
- Implementation for gene KO as cancer immunotherapy supporting technology
- Formation of a startup, discussions with potential industrial partners

<https://ccedit.si/>



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