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FENÓTIPO SENESCENTE EM CÉLULAS MESENQUIMAIAS NO CONTEXTO DA OBESIDADE

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Pontifícia Universidade Católica
do Rio Grande do Sul

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Coorientador: Dr. Lucas Kich Grun

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*“The light that burns twice as bright, burn half
as long.”*

(Blade Runner)

RESUMO

A obesidade representa uma doença metabólica crônica de alta prevalência sendo associada ao desenvolvimento de comorbidades que limitam a expectativa de vida. A perda da homeostase fisiológica e o declínio funcional do organismo configuram características centrais do envelhecimento refletidas na obesidade, permeadas pelo quadro de inflamação crônica e sistêmica de baixo grau. A similaridade entre esses processos sugere a sobreposição de mecanismos que modulam sua progressão, destacando-se o papel central da senescência celular, com alterações metabólicas e morfológicas. Conjuntamente, observa-se o desenvolvimento do fenótipo secretor associado a senescência (SASP), composto por fatores pro-inflamatórios, de crescimento e de remodelamento tecidual, implicado na propagação da senescência e na sustentação da inflamação crônica. A disfunção do tecido adiposo caracteriza um elemento central na obesidade, vinculada ao declínio funcional das células tronco adipo-derivadas (ADSC) em decorrência da senescência. Apesar do papel chave das ADSC na regulação da homeostase do tecido adiposo, pouco elucidados são os mecanismos que modulam a senescência prematura dessas no contexto da obesidade. Nesse sentido, o objetivo do presente trabalho foi avaliar características celulares e moleculares associadas ao fenótipo senescente em hADSC frente ao ambiente plasmático de indivíduos portadores de obesidade. Para tanto, culturas de hADSC foram tratadas durante 10 e 18 dias com meio suplementado com plasma de indivíduos portadores de obesidade (grupo PO) ou plasma de indivíduos eutróficos (grupo PE) ou sem suplementação (grupo controle). O grupo PO apresentou uma taxa proliferativa reduzida em relação aos demais, sendo associada a parada de ciclo em G2 e ao aumento da expressão de CDKN1A (p21) após 10 dias de tratamento, seguido pelo aumento da expressão de CDKN2A (p16) após 18 dias de tratamento, denotando a parada permanente do ciclo. Observou-se ainda o aumento da atividade da enzima β -galactosidase associada à senescência (SA- β -gal) ao fim de ambos os tempos, sendo demonstrada uma correlação positiva entre a atividade dessa e a expressão de TRF1 após 10 dias de tratamento. Tendo em vista a ausência de diferença na fosforilação de H2AX, marcador de dano ao DNA, nós avaliamos a ativação de p38-MAPK, aumentada no grupo PO em relação aos demais. Em conformidade a esse resultado, nós demonstramos o aumento da ativação do fator nuclear κ B (NF- κ B) no grupo PO, alvo da modulação da via do p38-MAPK, por sua

vez associado a maior secreção de IL-6 e IL-8, fatores do SASP, em ambos os tempos. Os dados do presente trabalho reforçam a hipótese de que o ambiente inflamatório observado na obesidade é capaz de suscitar alterações celulares vinculadas ao estabelecimento do fenótipo senescente. Nós especulamos que o estabelecimento e perpetuação da senescência celular em hADSC esteja associado a ativação do eixo p38-MAPK/NF-κB, por sua vez vinculado a regulação positiva do SASP.

Palavras-chave: Obesidade; inflamação crônica; envelhecimento; senescência celular; ADSC; p38-MAPK; TRF1.

ABSTRACT

Obesity represents a highly prevalent chronic metabolic disease associated with the development of comorbidities that shorten lifespan. Loss of physiological homeostasis and organismal functional decline are central features of aging reflected on obesity, permeated by a low-grade chronic and systemic inflammatory state. Similarities between both processes suggest overlapped mechanisms driving their progression, being the central role of cellular senescence highlighted, alongside metabolic and morphological alterations. At the same time, it is observed the development of the senescence associated secretory phenotype (SASP), composed of pro-inflammatory, growth, and tissue remodeling factors, thus implicated on senescence spread and sustained chronic inflammation. Adipose tissue dysfunction is a hallmark of obesity related to functional decline of adipose-derived stem cells (ADSC) due to senescence. While ADSC play a key role in regulating tissue homeostasis, little is known regarding the mechanisms that modulate their premature senescence in the obesity context. In this sense, the present study aimed to evaluate cellular and molecular senescence-related characteristics on hADSC exposed to the plasma environment of individuals with obesity. To do so, hADSC cultures were treated for 10 to 18 days with medium supplemented with plasma from individuals with obesity (PO group), or with plasma from eutrophic individuals (PE group), or without plasma (control group). PO group presented a reduced proliferative index compared to the other groups, which was associated with cell cycle arrest in G2 and augmented expression of CDKN1A (p21) at 10 days of treatment, followed by augmented expression of CDKN2A (p16) at 18 days of treatment, denoting permanent cell cycle arrest. Furthermore, it was observed increased activity of the senescence-associated β -galactosidase (SA- β -gal) enzyme at the end of both timepoints, being demonstrated a positive correlation between its activity and TRF1 protein expression at 10 days of treatment. Considering the absence of differences in H2AX phosphorylation levels, a marker of DNA damage, we evaluated the activation of p38-MAPK, improved on PO group compared to the others. In line with this result, we demonstrated augmented activation of nuclear factor κ B (NF- κ B) on PO group, a target of p38-MAPK modulatory pathway, which in turn was associated with increased secretion of IL-6 and IL-8, SASP factors, at both time points. The data here presented reinforce the hypothesis that the inflammatory environment observed in obesity can evoke cellular alterations related to senescence phenotype.

establishment. We speculate that the establishment and perpetuation of cellular senescence in hADSC might be related to the activation of the p38-MAPK/NF- κ B axis, thus related to the upregulation of SASP.

Keywords: Obesity; chronic inflammation; aging; cellular senescence; ADSC; p38-MAPK; TRF1.

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LISTA DE SIGLAS

53BP1 – Proteína 1 ligante de p53

ADSC – Células tronco adipó-derivadas | *Adipose-derived stem cell*

ATM – *Ataxia telangiectasia mutated*

ATR – *Ataxia telangiectasia and Rad3-related protein*

BMI – *Body mass index*

C₁₂FDG – *5-dodecanoylaminofluorescein di-β-D-galactopyranoside*

CDK – Cinase dependente de ciclina | *Cyclin-dependent kinase*

cDNA – Complementary DNA

COM – Centro de Obesidade e Síndrome Metabólica

CPD – *Cumulative population doubling*

DDR – Resposta de dano ao DNA | *DNA Damage Response*

DMEM - *Dulbecco's modified Eagle culture medium*

EDTA – Ácido etilenodiaminotetracético

ESCV – Escola de Ciências da Saúde e da Vida

FBS – *Fetal bovine serum*

H₂O₂ – *Hydrogen peroxide*

HSL – Hospital São Lucas

IL – Interleucina | *Interleukin*

IMC – Índice de massa corporal

MFI – *Median fluorescence intensity*

MMP – Metaloproteinase de matriz

NF- κB – Fator nuclear κB | *Nuclear factor κB*

NMA – *Nuclear Morphometric Analysis*

PBMC – Célula mononuclear do sangue periférico | *Peripheral blood mononuclear cell*

PBS – *Phosphate buffered saline*

PE – *Pool* de plasma de indivíduos eutróficos | *Plasma pool from eutrophic individuals*

PO – *Pool* de plasma de indivíduos portadores de obesidade | *Plasma pool from obese individuals*

PUCRS – Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul

qPCR – *Quantitative Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction*

RB – Retinoblastoma

RPLP0 – *Ribosomal protein lateral stalk subunit P0*

SAHF – *Foci* de heterocromatina associado a senescência

SASP – Fenótipo secretor associado a senescência | *Senescence associated secretory phenotype*

SA- β -gal – β -galactosidase associada à senescência | *Senescence-associated β -galactosidase*

SFV – Fração vascular estromal

SPSS – *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*

T2DM – *Type 2 diabetes mellitus*

TLR – *Toll-like receptor*

TNF- α – Fator de necrose tumoral α | *Tumor necrosis factor α*

UFRGS – Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul

WMA – *World Medical Association*

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1. INTRODUÇÃO

1.1. Obesidade

A obesidade é definida como uma doença metabólica multifatorial crônica caracterizada pelo aumento desproporcional de peso em relação à altura (Índice de Massa Corporal – IMC $\geq 30,0 \text{ kg/m}^2$) em decorrência do acúmulo de tecido adiposo, sendo acompanhada por um quadro de inflamação crônica e sistêmica de baixo grau.¹ Essa condição está associada a redução da expectativa de vida e ao aumento da mortalidade^{2,3} em razão do desenvolvimento de comorbidades como diabetes tipo 2, dislipidemias, doenças cardiovasculares e neurodegenerativas, e alguns tipos de câncer.^{4,5}

A prevalência de indivíduos com sobrepeso e portadores de obesidade têm crescido rapidamente nas últimas décadas. Em 2016, mais de 39% da população mundial adulta (≥ 18 anos) encontrava-se acima da faixa de sobrepeso (IMC $\geq 25,0 \text{ kg/m}^2$), sendo um terço desses enquadrados como obesos.⁶ Apenas nos Estados Unidos, 42,4% da população eram portadores de obesidade em 2018,⁷ sendo estimado um aumento na prevalência para metade da população até 2030.⁸ Já no Brasil, conforme levantamento do Ministério da Saúde de 2020, 58,9% e 56,2% dos homens e das mulheres adultos, respectivamente, encontravam-se com excesso de peso, enquanto a prevalência de adultos obesos foi de 21,5%.⁹

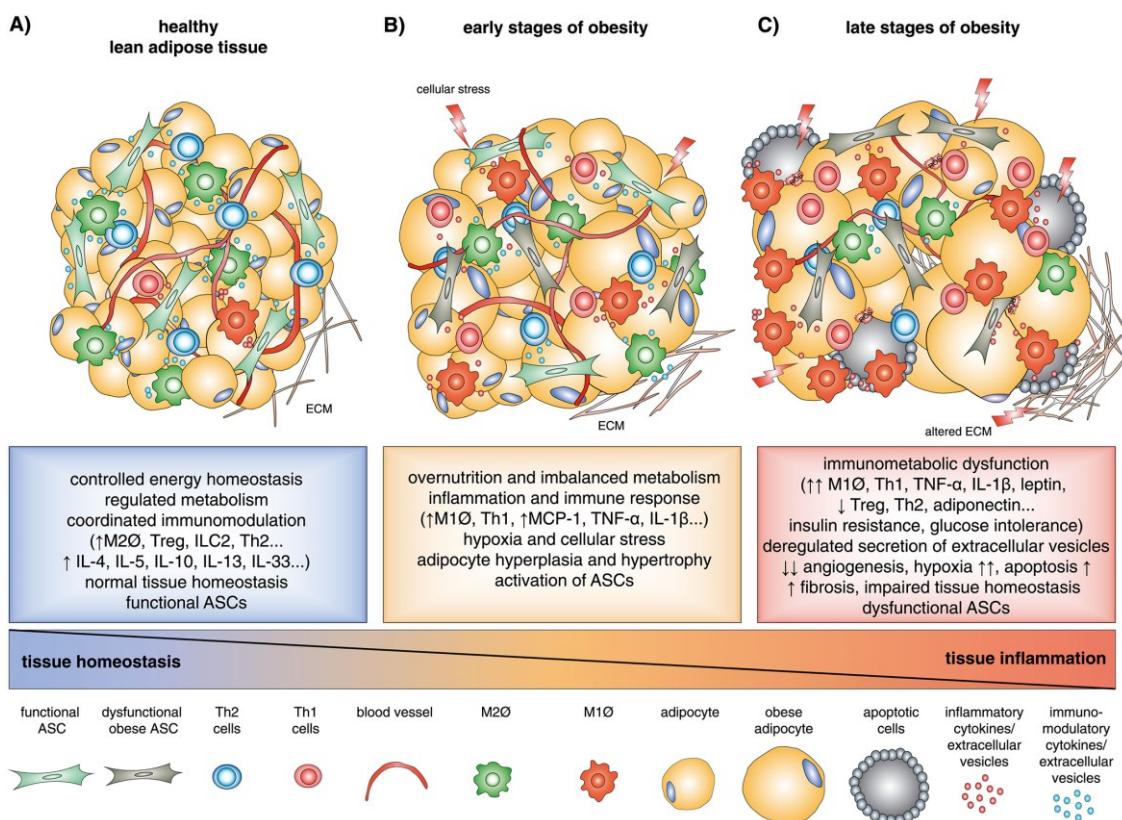
O acúmulo excessivo de tecido adiposo deriva primariamente de um balanço energético positivo a longo prazo, decorrente do elevado consumo de calorias e/ou um estilo de vida sedentário.¹ A etiologia da obesidade, entretanto, resulta de uma rede complexa de fatores genéticos, comportamentais, ambientais, socioeconômicos e culturais, os quais contribuem para diferentes progressões da doença.¹⁰ Dessa forma, indivíduos portadores de obesidade podem apresentar diferentes combinações de comorbidades dificultando a prevenção e o tratamento.^{4,10}

O tecido adiposo atua de forma central na regulação da homeostase metabólica do organismo mediante o armazenamento de lipídeos, a sinalização do estado energético e a modulação do sistema imune, sendo um elemento chave na fisiopatologia da obesidade.^{11,12} Esse tecido é composto principalmente por adipócitos e uma população heterogênea presente na fração vascular estromal (SFV) constituída por pré-adipócitos, células endoteliais, fibroblastos, células do sistema imune (e.g.

macrófagos, linfócitos) e células tronco mesenquimais.¹³ Dentre essas últimas, importante destaque se dá às células tronco adipo-derivadas (ADSC), responsáveis pela manutenção da homeostase tecidual.^{11,14}

Durante a progressão da obesidade, o tecido adiposo sofre um remodelamento que resulta no seu comprometimento funcional. O acúmulo excessivo de lipídeos promove a expansão do tecido adiposo majoritariamente pela hipertrofia dos adipócitos (*i.e.*, aumento do tamanho celular),¹⁵ proporcionando a secreção de citocinas pró-inflamatórias (*e.g.* interleucina 6 | IL-6, IL-8, IL-1 β , fator de necrose tumoral α | TNF- α). Essas, por sua vez, induzem o recrutamento de células do sistema imune e consequente ativação das mesmas a um perfil pró-inflamatório, exacerbando a inflamação local. Conjuntamente, observa-se a extravasamento de ácidos graxos retidos pelos adipócitos e o estabelecimento de um ambiente hipóxico em decorrência da baixa adipogênese, contribuindo para o aumento do estresse tecidual e reforçando o comprometimento funcional do tecido (Fig. 1).^{16,17}

Figura 1 – Alterações do tecido adiposo no contexto da obesidade



Fonte: Louwen *et al*¹⁸

A exacerbção da inflamação do tecido adiposo é considerada a principal causa das disfunções metabólicas associadas a obesidade e suas comorbidades.¹⁹ O

estado inflamatório crônico e sistêmico de baixo grau derivado dessa condição, conhecido como *metaflammation*,²⁰ está associado a resistência periférica a insulina, ativação crônica do sistema imune, sarcopenia, dentre outras alterações metabólicas.¹⁷ Nesse contexto, dentre os diferentes tipos celulares que compõem o tecido adiposo, a interação entre os macrófagos teciduais e adipócitos é chave e está implicada na estimulação mútua através da produção de citocinas pró-inflamatórias.^{12,17}

1.2. Envelhecimento e Senescênci a Celular

O envelhecimento representa o maior fator de risco de mortalidade e desenvolvimento de comorbidades que limitam a expectativa de vida.^{21,22} Esse processo biológico é caracterizado pela progressiva perda da homeostase e integridade fisiológica e pelo declínio funcional do organismo a nível molecular e sistêmico.²³ O envelhecimento deriva da interação de um conjunto complexo de fatores fisiológicos integrados e sobrepostos, sendo propostos nove marcadores chave para o estudo desse fenômeno (Fig. 2).^{24,25}

A senescênci a celular *per se* integra a maior parte desses marcadores e representa um elemento central na progressão do envelhecimento.^{25,26} Esse fenótipo decorre da parada fisiologicamente irreversível do ciclo celular acoplada ao remodelamento da cromatina, dano a macromoléculas e alteração do metabolismo e secretoma.²⁷ A indução da senescênci a celular se dá em resposta a múltiplos estímulos estressores distintos (e.g. atrito telomérico, dano genotóxico, disfunção mitocondrial, citocinas), sendo caracterizada como um mecanismo de supressão tumoral e remodelamento tecidual mediante a contenção do dano e ao recrutamento de células do sistema imune.²⁸ Entretanto, esse papel fisiológico torna-se deletério uma vez que as células senescentes passem a se acumular no tecido em razão do declínio da capacidade de remoção dessas pelo sistema imune.^{28,29}

Como mencionado, múltiplos estímulos podem desencadear a parada do ciclo celular, marcador chave da senescênci a.^{27,30} O estresse genotóxico, caracterizado pelo acúmulo de dano ao DNA, é frequentemente elencado na indução do fenótipo senescente, sendo promovido por dano oxidativo, atrito telomérico, radiação ionizante ou drogas quimioterápias. Esses fatores ativam a resposta de dano ao DNA (DDR) caracterizada pelo acúmulo da fosforilação da histona H2AX (γ -H2AX) e da proteína

Figura 2 – Marcadores do envelhecimento



Fonte: López-Otín *et al*²⁵

1 ligante de p53 (53BP1) nos sítios de dano, as quais ativam a cascata de sinalização que leva à ativação da via p53/p21^{WAF1/Cip1} e eventual parada de ciclo.²⁹ A disfunção mitocondrial representa outro importante estressor, podendo ser independente de DDR e promovendo um fenótipo secretor distinto do usualmente observado nas demais formas de indução de senescência.³¹

Apesar da variedade de fenótipos associados a senescência, diversos fatores chave são elencados. Do ponto de vista metabólico, as células senescentes possuem um acúmulo do conteúdo e aumento atividade lisossomal, denotado pela maior atividade da enzima β -galactosidase associada a senescência (SA- β -gal) e deposição

de lipofuscinas (*i.e.*, corpos residuais), além de um progressivo declínio da atividade mitocondrial e consequente aumento da produção de espécies reativas.³⁰ Morfológicamente observa-se o aumento do conteúdo citoplasmático assim como do núcleo em razão da desestabilização da membrana nuclear associada a perda da proteína estrutural Lamin B1.^{30,32} Ademais, denota-se o remodelamento da cromatina com a presença de *foci* de heterocromatina associados a senescência (SAHF) derivados da ativação de proteínas da família RB, H2AX e chaperonas.²⁷

O fenótipo secretor associado a senescência (SASP) configura a mais notória alteração metabólica das células senescentes, sendo implicado como fator central progressão do envelhecimento e doenças relacionadas.^{30,33} O SASP contempla a secreção de uma ampla variedade de citocinas e quimiocinas pró-inflamatórias (*e.g.* IL-1 β , IL-6, IL-8), fatores de crescimento e angiogênicos, e metaloproteinases de matriz (MMP), sendo sua composição e intensidade dependentes do tipo celular e do mecanismo de indução de senescência. Esse conjunto de fatores promove o reforço e a propagação da senescência de forma autócrina e parácrina, além do recrutamento e ativação do sistema imune para a eliminação das células senescentes.^{28,33} A maior parte das vias de regulação do SASP convergem para a ativação do fator de transcrição nuclear κ B (NF- κ B), associado a indução da expressão de citocinas pró-inflamatórias.³³

Conforme anteriormente citado, o papel fisiológico da senescência degenera à medida que as células que contribuem para esse fenótipo se acumulam e se mantêm no tecido. Nesse sentido, o estímulo crônico derivado do SASP passa a contribuir para a propagação acelerada da senescência celular, a qual leva a disfunção do tecido, sendo eventualmente acentuado na circulação.^{28,33} Consequentemente, desenvolve-se um estado inflamatório crônico e sistêmico de baixo-grau observado no envelhecimento, denominado *inflammaging*.^{34,35}

O envolvimento do *inflammaging* na progressão do envelhecimento levanta a questão se ele estaria envolvido em outras doenças crônicas inflamatórias como resultado e modulador da senescência. De fato, o acúmulo de células senescentes é observado em doenças cardiovasculares,³⁶ asma,³⁷ diabetes,³⁸ doenças mentais,^{39,40} doenças neurodegenerativas,⁴¹ câncer,⁴² dentre outras, sendo implicado de forma causal e como consequência. Especial destaque se dá à constatação desse fenômeno

na obesidade, a qual tem sido explorada como modelo de envelhecimento precoce sobretudo em razão de seu caráter inflamatório crônico e sistêmico de baixo grau.^{43–45}

1.3. Obesidade como Modelo de Envelhecimento Precoce

A etiologia e fisiopatologia da obesidade apresentam similaridades com a progressão do envelhecimento cronológico, sugerindo uma sobreposição entre os mecanismos que modulam ambas as condições.^{46,47} A inflamação crônica promove a perda da integridade fisiológica e o desenvolvimento de comorbidades em ambos os processos mediante a modulação da senescência celular a nível sistêmico, configurando o principal conector dos mesmos.⁴⁵ Essa relação é evidenciada tanto em compartimentos periféricos como em células do sistema imune no sangue, quanto em tecidos metabólicos, sobretudo no tecido adiposo.^{46,47}

Nesse sentido, nosso grupo recentemente demonstrou os efeitos deletérios do ambiente periférico tóxico decorrente do *metaflammation* sobre o compartimento imunológico.⁴⁴ Foi observado que o *status* pró-oxidativo do plasma de portadores de obesidade induz o dano a biomoléculas e modula uma resposta antioxidante insuficientes para prevenir o encurtamento telomérico acelerado,⁴⁴ característica correlacionada ao aumento do IMC e da adiposidade.^{48,49} Conjuntamente, o aumento de dano ao DNA⁵⁰ e o acúmulo de marcadores de imunossenescência associados a disfunção mitocondrial em células mononucleares de sangue periférico (PBMC)⁴³ são igualmente observados. Esses dados corroboram com o envelhecimento acelerado associado a obesidade, e destacam o *metaflammation* como um importante modulador da propagação de dano e senescência celular *per se*.²⁰

Referente ao tecido adiposo, o acúmulo de células senescentes, de forma similar ao envelhecimento, é elencado como um fator causal e resultante da inflamação crônica do tecido na progressão da obesidade.^{16,51} A atividade da SA-β-gal e a expressão de p53 são positivamente correlacionados ao IMC e ao grau de hipertrofia dos adipócitos,^{52,53} sendo igualmente relacionadas a resistência à insulina do tecido.^{54,55} Essas correlações estão diretamente vinculados ao grau de inflamação observado no tecido adiposo, sendo o SASP derivado de adipócitos senescentes implicado como um importante contribuinte.¹⁶ Ao mesmo tempo, a inflamação *per se* proveniente do infiltrado de macrófagos e linfócitos também é capaz de desencadear

a senescência dos adipócitos, configurando mais um ciclo retroativo que sustenta o *metaflammation* e a disfunção metabólica do tecido.^{52,54}

A eliminação farmacológica de células senescentes do tecido adiposo corrobora com o papel central dessas na progressão da obesidade.^{56,57} Uma vez removidas, observa-se o aumento da adipogênese e a redução do grau de hipertrofia dos adipócitos, associado a melhora da sensibilidade a insulina e da inflamação sistêmica.⁵⁷ Ao mesmo tempo que esses dados implicam a senescência celular como fator agravante da obesidade, eles levantam a questão da eliminação prévia das células senescentes como possível prevenção do desenvolvimento da obesidade e outras desordens metabólicas.

1.4. Células Tronco Adipo-Derivadas

As ADSC compõem uma população de células-tronco altamente proliferativa, característica que perdura por múltiplas passagens *in vitro*, sendo visadas como alvos terapêuticos.¹¹ Conforme supracitado, essa população é responsável pela regulação da homeostase do tecido adiposo controlando a regeneração e reparo tecidual mediante a secreção de fatores de crescimento e angiogênese além de citocinas.^{11,14} A relativa elevada abundância e capacidade de diferenciação a diferentes tipos celulares *in vitro* (e.g. células endoteliais, adipócitos, osteoblastos, condrócitos) representam os principais interesses de uso terapêutico dessas células.^{11,58} Recentemente, o potencial parácrino das ADSC tem sido igualmente explorado, demonstrando-se que o meio condicionado dessas células é capaz de induzir angiogênese e reparo tecidual, além de modular processos inflamatórios.^{59,60}

A alteração do microambiente do tecido adiposo decorrente da obesidade impacta negativamente o perfil metabólico e imunorregulatório das ADSC.¹⁸ O estado inflamatório crônico está associado ao comprometimento do potencial de célula tronco (e.g. pluripotência e auto renovação), denotado pela menor capacidade proliferativa e maior propensão a diferenciação adipogênica.^{61–64} Conjuntamente, observam-se alterações no secretoma a favor de um perfil pró-inflamatório com reduzido potencial de adipogênese, promovendo a polarização do infiltrado imune e o agravamento da hipoxia tecidual.^{62,63–66} De forma geral, o potencial de reparo e manutenção da homeostase tecidual das ADSC encontra-se desregulado, favorecendo a progressão da disfunção do tecido adiposo.¹⁴

As alterações fenotípicas das ADSC são, por sua vez, relacionadas ao acúmulo de marcadores de senescência celular e ao envelhecimento do tecido adiposo.^{14,67} De fato, o aumento da expressão de p53, p21^{WAF1/Clip1}, p16^{INK4A} e da atividade da SA-β-gal são associados a perda da capacidade proliferativa das ADSC.^{68–70} Ademais, observa-se a disfunção mitocondrial e o acúmulo de γ-H2AX, indicativos de estresse oxidativo,^{63,71} acompanhados pelo aumento da expressão de citocinas pró-inflamatórios.^{64,70} Esse fenótipo resulta no comprometimento da capacidade regenerativa e adipogênica das ADSC, modulando positivamente o estado pró-inflamatório do tecido.^{64,69–72} A exaustão do nicho das ADSC e a senescência prematura dessas no contexto da obesidade não apenas reforçam essa patologia como modelo de envelhecimento acelerado, mas também implicam o comprometimento dessa população como importante conector entre ambos os processos.

1.5. Justificativa

A obesidade é uma doença metabólica crônica acompanhada por um quadro de inflamação crônico e sistêmico que contribui para a aceleração de processos celulares relacionados ao envelhecimento. Diversos trabalhos têm focado em elucidar de que forma o ambiente obesogênico contribui com o acúmulo de características próprias do fenótipo senescente, bem como de que forma essas retroalimentam esse ambiente disfuncional. Estudos anteriores do nosso grupo já demonstraram que o ambiente obesogênico, representado pelo tratamento com plasma, induz o encurtamento telomérico e estresse oxidativo em PBMC associado a desregulação do complexo *shelterin* e promoção de uma resposta antioxidante ineficaz,⁴⁴ paralelo a uma disfunção imunometabólica e ao aumento de marcadores relacionados a senescência do sistema imune.⁴³ Nesse trabalho exploramos as ADSC do tecido, tendo em vista que seu declínio funcional em decorrência da senescência contribuiativamente para a desregulação do tecido e progressão da obesidade. Embora alguns trabalhos tenham descrito o importante papel imunoregulatório dessas células, a literatura referente a sua conexão com à disfunção metabólica e/ou senescência permanece pouco explorada. Nesse sentido estudos que buscam avaliar parâmetros celulares e moleculares que possam contribuir para o surgimento de características associadas ao envelhecimento precoce no contexto da obesidade, tornam-se atuais e pertinentes.

1.6. Hipótese

Nossa hipótese é que células dos compartimentos troncos no tecido adiposo são moduladas após a exposição à um ambiente pró-inflamatório e pró-oxidativo apresentando características celulares e moleculares relacionadas à senescência e antecipação da disfunção celular.

1.7. Objetivos

1.7.1. Objetivo Geral

Investigar características celulares e moleculares relacionadas à indução do fenótipo senescente em células tronco adipo-derivadas humanas (hADSC) expostas ao plasma de indivíduos portadores de obesidade de forma crônica.

1.7.2. Objetivos Específicos

- Definir curva de resposta ao tratamento persistente com plasma de indivíduos portadores de obesidade e indivíduos eutróficos em hADSC mantidas em cultura;
- Avaliar características morfológicas e de expressão gênica associadas ao fenótipo senescente em hADSC após exposição crônica ao tratamento com plasma;
- Avaliar a expressão da proteína TRF1 em hADSC após o tratamento com plasma.

2. ARTIGO CIENTÍFICO

1 Title: Senescence in adipose-derived stem cells by chronic exposure to an obesogenic
2 environment

3 Running title: Obesity-induced hADSC senescence

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26 **Abstract**

27 Obesity represents a chronic inflammatory disease interconnected to multiple age-related
28 mechanisms, such as cellular senescence. Adipose-derived stem cells (ADSC) comprise
29 a multipotent population critically implicated on tissue homeostasis, a property
30 compromised during obesity and related to accumulation of senescence markers. In this
31 study, we chronically exposed for 18 days hADSC to a pro-inflammatory environment of
32 plasma from obese patients. We compared phenotypic and functional alterations between
33 hADSC treated with plasma from eutrophic (PE) or obese individuals (PO) or FBS.
34 hADSC treated with PO exhibited diminished proliferative capacity and early cell cycle
35 arrest at G2 together with p21 up-regulation followed by p16 up-regulation. PO treatment
36 enhanced senescence-associated β -galactosidase (SA- β -gal) activity, positively
37 correlated to TRF1 protein expression. While no differences were observed regarding
38 H2AX phosphorylation, a marker for signaling for the DNA damage response, an
39 increased activation of p38-MAPK was detected in PO and PE groups. Furthermore,
40 activation of senescence associated secretory phenotype (SASP) components through the
41 nuclear factor κ B (NF- κ B) and IL-6 and IL-8 secretion was observed. Taken together, we
42 demonstrated that the inflammatory environment present in obesity was responsible for
43 the induction of a senescent phenotype on hADSC, maybe related to the p38-MAPK/NF-
44 κ B axis in a DNA damage response-independent manner.

45

46 **Keywords**

47 chronic inflammation, aging, mesenchymal stem cell, SASP, obesity

48 **Introduction**

49 Obesity represents one of the major health challenges faced nowadays (Blüher,
50 2019). Its increasingly alarming prevalence is associated with reduced life expectancy
51 and high mortality due to the augmented risk of comorbidities such as type 2 diabetes
52 mellitus (T2DM), dyslipidemia, hypertension, atherosclerosis, and some cancers
53 (Abdelaal et al., 2017; Bentham et al., 2017; Ward et al., 2019). Considered a
54 multifactorial condition, obesity arises a complex network between elements that can
55 contribute to the disease progression and favors the establishment of pro-inflammatory
56 and pro-oxidative imbalance. These factors are strongly associated with the induction of
57 senescent cells, augmented in aging (Conley et al., 2020; Rouault et al., 2021).

58 Cellular senescence is a physiological response to external and internal stressors.
59 It is related to the pathogenesis of several diseases, including obesity, which may con-
60 tribute to the anticipation of characteristics observed in the elderly (Palmer et al., 2019).
61 In general, cellular senescence is defined as a permanent cell cycle arrest triggered by
62 stressful stimuli via activation of p53/p21^{WAF1/Cip1} and p16^{INK4A}/Rb tumor suppressor
63 pathways (Kumari & Jat, 2021). This process is coupled to metabolic and morphological
64 changes such as increased activity of the lysosomal enzyme senescence-associated β-
65 galactosidase (SA-β-gal), cellular and nuclear enlargement, and mitochondrial
66 accumulation (Hernandez-Segura et al., 2018).

67 The most notorious feature, however, is the up-regulation of a plethora of pro-
68 inflammatory cytokines and chemokines (e.g., interleukin [IL-] 1α, IL-6, IL-8, and tumor
69 necrosis factor α [TNF-α]), growth and angiogenic factors, and matrix
70 metalloproteinases, that collectively define the senescent associated secretory phenotype
71 (SASP) (Özcan et al., 2016). While the SASP exerts tumor suppression and tissue

72 regeneration (Faget et al., 2019; Loo et al., 2020), it also reinforces and spreads
73 senescence in an autocrine and paracrine way and contributes to chronic inflammation in
74 pathological contexts (Franceschi & Campisi, 2014; Lopes-Paciencia et al., 2019).
75 Despite SASP regulatory cascades ultimately converge on the activation of nuclear factor
76 κB (NF-κB), its composition and strength vary substantially depending on cell type and
77 senescence inducer (Kumari & Jat, 2021).

78 Multiple stressful stimuli can trigger cellular senescence (Gorgoulis et al., 2019).
79 Among them, those eliciting persistent DNA damage response (DDR) such as telomere
80 attrition, double-strand breaks, and chemotherapeutic drugs, are the most common (Gaur
81 et al., 2017). Aside from that, senescence can also occur in a DDR-independent manner
82 as observed on oncogene- and SASP-induced senescence (Acosta et al., 2013; Freund et
83 al., 2011; Gorgoulis et al., 2019). Both stressful stimuli can be mediated by activation of
84 the stress-inducible kinase p38-MAPK, which positively regulates NF-κB activity and
85 SASP (Freund et al., 2011; Harada et al., 2014; Mavrogonatou et al., 2018). This
86 mechanism is particularly relevant for inflammation since chronic exposure to cytokines
87 such as IL-1 α and TNF- α is sufficient to induce senescence in multiple cell types (Harada
88 et al., 2014; Mavrogonatou et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2006).

89 Obesity progression is associated with adipose tissue metabolic impairment and
90 pro-inflammatory and senescent profile, ultimately leading to a chronic and systemic low-
91 grade inflammatory state, termed metaflammation (Hotamisligil, 2017). This condition
92 spreads inflammation and premature senescence to multiple organs, which contributes to
93 systemic physiological decline (Franceschi, 2017; Hotamisligil, 2017). The negative
94 effects of this toxic peripheral environment are directly observed on the immunological
95 compartment, as exemplified by the accelerated telomere shortening (Grun et al., 2018;

96 Mundstock et al., 2015), increased DNA damage (Aasland et al., 2019), and cumulative
97 immunosenescence markers on peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC) (Parisi et
98 al., 2017). Therefore, metaflammation seems to represent an important senescence driver
99 in the context of obesity (Hotamisligil, 2017).

100 Adipose-derived stem cells (ADSC) comprise a multipotent population isolated
101 from the stromal vascular fraction of adipose tissue, contributing to tissue homeostasis,
102 cell renewal, damage repair, and immunomodulation through secretion of a broad range
103 of chemokines and growth factors (Badimon & Cubedo, 2017). These properties are
104 compromised during obesity. It is observed impaired proliferation and differentiation
105 capacity, as well as up-regulation of pro-inflammatory genes, related to accumulation of
106 senescence markers (Alessio et al., 2020; Conley et al., 2020; Gustafson et al., 2019; Zhu
107 et al., 2016). While the adipose tissue inflammatory milieu seems to play a crucial role in
108 modulating ADSC senescence (Sun et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2006; Zhu et al., 2016), little
109 is known regarding the mechanisms driving this phenotype.

110 Based on that, we aimed to explore how the inflammatory milieu present in
111 patients with obesity modulates the phenotype of ADSC into senescent cells. We tested
112 the hypothesis that chronic exposure of ADSC in vitro with the conjunction of plasma
113 components from individuals with obesity is sufficient to trigger senescence. In the
114 present study, we showed hampered ADSC proliferation, with NF-κB, IL-6, IL-8 and
115 p38-MAPK activation. Based on these results, we speculate that plasma induces
116 senescence through p38-MAPK activation in a DNA damage-independent manner.

117

118 **Results**

119 *Demographic Characteristics*

120 Clinical and demographic data are described in Table 1. Individuals were
121 clinically classified with grade III obesity or healthy eutrophic, based on BMI ($p<0.0001$)
122 and absence of metabolic syndrome. There was no difference regarding the frequency of
123 sex ($p=0.1761$) and age ($p=0.7100$) between the groups.

124

125 *Population Doubling is Reduced After Chronic Exposure to Low-grade Obesogenic*
126 *Environment*

127 To assess the toxicity of plasma supplementation, we tested different
128 concentrations from eutrophic and obese individuals. Results showed that the higher
129 concentrations (1%, 1.5% and 2%) of plasma (from both treatments) were toxic and
130 decreased the coverage area of hADSC in culture (day 8, $p<0.0001$) (Figure S1A). In this
131 sense, to induce a low-grade inflammatory environment, so that the cells were able to
132 respond to the stimulus without cell death, we chose low plasma concentration (0.5%) for
133 the subsequent experiments.

134 We measure the kinetics of proliferation activity after 6, 12, and 18 days of
135 treatment. We compiled 239 images and 6,000 nuclei count. We observed that hADSC
136 treated with PO had increased proliferation compared to control ($p=0.0086$) after 6 days
137 of treatment. Interestingly, although population doubling was similar between groups at
138 12 days, PE and PO showed a prominent reduction in CPD compared with control
139 ($p=0.0006$ and $p=0.0001$, respectively) after 18 days (Figure 2A and Figure S1B). To
140 evaluate the effect of the entire treatment, we additionally performed an integrated
141 analysis of CPD. We observed a global reduction in CPD in PE and PO groups, com-
142 pared to control cells ($p<0.0001$) (Figure 2B). This data suggests that chronic exposure

143 to a pro-inflammatory environment observed in the context of obesity may interfere with
144 cell cycle of hADSC.

145

146 *Plasma of Obese Patients Induces G2 Cell Cycle Arrest*

147 Because PO treatment was shown to reduce hADSC proliferation, we explored
148 the dynamics of cell cycle progression. Our data showed an accumulation of cells in G2
149 phase in PO compared to control ($p=0.0260$) and PE ($p=0.0093$), suggesting that the
150 reduced proliferation of hADSC could be a consequence of a cell cycle arrest observed
151 after 10 days of treatment (Figure 2C and D). We further evaluated gene expression of
152 the CDKN1A and CDKN2A. Our data showed CDKN1A overexpression in PO com-
153 pared to PE ($p=0.0037$) and control ($p=0.0267$) at 10 days of treatment and similar be-
154 tween groups at 18 days (Figure 2E). On the other hand, we observed increased CDKN2A
155 gene expression in PO compared to control ($p=0.0355$) at 18 days but no difference at 10
156 days of treatment (Figure 2F).

157

158 *Plasma of Obese Patients Induces Features of Senescence*

159 Depending on the stimulus, cells can activate different pathways after cycle arrest.
160 In this sense, we evaluated whether treatment with plasma could be involved in
161 senescence-inducing pathways. We observed that the treatment with PO showed
162 augmented SA- β -gal activity compared to the control ($p=0.0066$) and PE groups
163 ($p=0.0090$), as well as an increase in C₁₂FDG-positive cells compared to control
164 ($p=0.0054$) and PE groups ($p=0.0063$) after 10 days of treatment (Figure 3A and B). To
165 evaluate whether this response remained after long exposure, we observed that PO
166 showed an increase in both SA- β -gal activity as well as C₁₂FDG-positive cells compared

167 to control ($p<0.0001$) and PE ($p=0.0123$ and $p=0.0489$, respectively). Curiously, at 18
168 days of plasma exposure, PE showed increased enzyme activity ($p=0.0001$) and
169 percentage of positive cells ($p=0.0003$) compared to control group (Figure 3A and B).

170 Another feature of senescence is TRF1 up-regulation. We observed that PO
171 treatment induced an increase in TRF1 protein expression ($p=0.0163$), and percentage of
172 TRF1-positive cells compared to the control group ($p=0.0202$) after 10 days (Figure 3C
173 and D). Furthermore, we observed a positive correlation between SA- β -gal activity and
174 TRF1 expression ($r=0.8408$, $p=0.0045$) (Figure 3E).

175

176 *Increased Nuclear Area Is Kinetically Related to Obesogenic Exposure*

177 Nuclear morphology and architecture might be affected during aging (Pathak et
178 al., 2021), and studies demonstrate that increased nuclear area can be recognized as a
179 senescence progression (Costa et al., 2021; Menegotto et al., 2017; Yoon et al., 2016). To
180 evaluate whether nuclear enlargement was associated with treatment, we performed a
181 nuclear morphometric kinetic analysis in 8,693 nuclei acquired from 410 images (Figure
182 S2). We observed that the percentage of normal nuclei was decreased at 6, 9, and 18 days
183 of treatment in both PE ($p=0.0001$, $p=0.0022$, and $p=0.0079$ respectively) and PO
184 ($p=0.0002$, $p=0.0015$, and $p=0.0004$ respectively) (Figure 4A and E), and these alterations
185 were accompanied by an increase in the percentage of large and regular nuclei in PE
186 ($p=0.0003$, $p=0.0019$, and $p=0.0101$ respectively) and PO ($p=0.0003$, $p=0.0029$, and
187 $p=0.0007$ respectively) (Figure 4B and E). We then further analyzed the magnitude of
188 nuclear enlargement along with treatments. The kinetic of our results showed that nuclear
189 area increased in PO at all time points compared to PE and control (Figure 4C and E).
190 Finally, when integrated all the analyses, we observed an increase of cumulative nuclear

191 enlargement in PO compared to PE ($p=0.0018$) and control ($p=0.0008$) groups (Figure
192 4D).

193

194 *Treatment with Plasma of Obese Subjects Is Associated with p38-MAPK Phosphorylation*
195 Senescence can be induced by genotoxic stress, a trigger of DNA damage
196 response (DDR) pathways to halt proliferation (Gaur et al., 2017). For this reason, we
197 evaluated acute and persistent DDR signals by H2AX phosphorylation (γ -H2AX). We
198 did not observe differences in H2AX phosphorylation after 2 days in both expression
199 (MFI) and percentage of positive cells. Curiously, regardless of no difference observed
200 in percentage of positive cells after 5 days in culture we detected a decrease in MFI in PE
201 ($p=0.0043$) and PO ($p=0.0026$) compared to control (Figure 5A and B). Several studies
202 have demonstrated that senescence can be related to the p38-MAPK activation,
203 independent of DNA damage proteins activation (Freund et al., 2011; Harada et al., 2014;
204 Mavrogonatou et al., 2018). We examined phospho-p38 after 10 days of plasma exposure.
205 As expected, we detected an increase in MFI and percentage of p-p38 expression in cells
206 treated with PO compared to PE ($p<0.0001$) and control ($p<0.0001$). Besides that, PE was
207 also increased in MFI ($p=0.0008$) and percentage ($p=0.0027$) compared to control (Figure
208 5C and D). These results suggest that treatment with plasma activates the p38-MAPK
209 pathway, in a mechanism independent of DNA damage signaling.

210

211 *Augmented p65 Phosphorylation in Cells and Increased Inflammatory Cytokines*
212 *Secretion in Cells Treated with Plasma*

213 Senescence is strongly related to the secretion of cytokines and chemokines that
214 comprises SASP (Kumari & Jat, 2021). In this regard, we evaluated the NF- κ B signaling

215 through phospho-p65 and the secretory phenotype modulation in cells exposed to
216 treatments. We observed that PO showed increased phosphorylation of p65 ($p=0.0440$),
217 as well as in the percentage of positive cells ($p=0.0222$) when compared to control cells
218 after 10 days of treatment (Figure 5E and F). We also evaluated cytokine secretion at 10
219 and 18 days of plasma exposure. We found that cells treated with PE and PO increased
220 IL-6 secretion after 10 ($p=0.0001$ and $p<0.0001$, respectively) and 18 days ($p=0.0009$ and
221 $p=0.0010$, respectively) of treatment, compared to control (Figure 5G). Similarly, boosted
222 IL-8 secretion was observed in both PE and PO after 10 ($p=0.0330$ and $p<0.0001$,
223 respectively) and 18 days ($p=0.0229$ and $p=0.0309$, respectively) of treatment, compared
224 to control (Figure 5H). Interestingly, at 10 days of plasma exposure, both IL-6 ($p=0.0157$)
225 and IL-8 ($p=0.0001$) secretion were increased in PO, compared to PE, but no difference
226 was observed after 18 days of treatments (Figure 5G and H). The levels of IL-1 β , IL-10,
227 TNF- α , and IL-12p70 secretion were below the lower limit of sensitivity (1.0 pg/mL) and
228 were considered undetectable (Figure S3A–D).

229

230 Discussion

231 Obesity is a condition that shares characteristics with age-related diseases. It is
232 connected to a chronic low-grade inflammatory state (inflammaging), that contributes to
233 the development of metabolic syndrome and insulin resistance (Franceschi et al., 2018).
234 In fact, obesity and aging share multiple mechanisms related to the progression of
235 metabolic dysregulation (Ambrosi et al. 2017; Frasca et al., 2017), suggesting that obesity
236 might accelerate the rate of aging (Santos & Sinha, 2021). For instance, adipose tissue
237 dysfunction is a crucial feature of obesity physiopathology and is markedly characterized
238 by sustained inflammation leading to a chronic and systemic pro-inflammatory state and

239 senescent cell accumulation on metabolic tissues, similar to aging (Franceschi, 2017; Liu
240 et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2021; Tam et al., 2020). In the present study, we demonstrate
241 that chronic exposure to the obesogenic pro-inflammatory environment, induced the
242 cellular and molecular characteristics of senescence in hADSC.

243 Our group recently demonstrated the deleterious effects of this toxic peripheralical
244 environment on the immunological compartment (Grun et al., 2018), regarding its pro-
245 oxidant status able to induce biomolecular damage and an adaptive antioxidant rescue
246 response insufficient to prevent accelerated telomere shortening. Beyond that, increased
247 DNA damage (Azzarà et al., 2016) and cumulative immunosenescence markers
248 associated with mitochondrial dysfunction and reduced ATP-linked oxygen consumption
249 rate on PBMC (Parisi et al., 2017) were also observed. Therefore, these results not only
250 corroborate with the obesity accelerated aging rate, but also highlight metaflammation as
251 an important senescence driver *per se* (Hotamisligil, 2017).

252 ADSC comprise a highly proliferative population of stem cells, a characteristic
253 that persists during cell maintenance in vitro. Loss of proliferative capacity is usually
254 associated with impaired tissue regeneration capacity and loss of stemness characteristics,
255 factors observed during adipose tissue aging (Badimon & Cubedo, 2017; Smith et al.,
256 2021). In this sense, we initially sought to assess the population doubling of plasma-
257 treated hADSC as a baseline parameter of early senescence. We observed an initial
258 increase in proliferation in the group treated with plasma of obese individuals compared
259 to the control and in the group treated with the pooled plasma of eutrophic individuals.
260 This kinetics possibly refers to the modulatory effect exerted by SASP, which initially
261 triggers the proliferation of stem cells as an attempt to promote tissue repair. However, in
262 long term, might induce the exhaustion of stem cell compartments and cell senescence

263 (Ritschka et al., 2017). In this context, we speculate that the plasma of obese individuals
264 similarly stimulates hADSC, based on the overlap between the SASP factors and the
265 plasma of these individuals (Franceschi, 2017; Hotamisligil, 2017). We could also
266 observe an intrinsic effect of plasma, as proliferative attenuation also occurred in
267 treatment with plasma of eutrophic subjects. However, the pro-inflammatory
268 environment of obesity was able to induce a more pronounced response in the PO group.

269 Cell cycle arrest occurs mainly through activation of the p53/p21^{WAF1/Clip1} and
270 p16^{INK4A}/Rb pathways. Our findings revealed a slight accumulation of cells in the G2
271 phase in the PO group after 10 days of treatment exposure, suggesting cycle arrest in G2,
272 confirmed by increased expression of CDKN1A. These findings are in agreement with
273 studies that suggest cycle arrest mediated by p21^{WAF1/Clip1} through G2 arrest (Aasland et
274 al., 2019; Koyano et al., 2019) leading to the onset of senescence (Aasland et al., 2019;
275 Freund et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2019). As expected, we did not observe differences in
276 CDKN2A expression at 10 days of treatment, an inverse relationship was observed
277 regarding the expression of these cycle arrest markers after 18 of treatment. While there
278 was no difference regarding CDKN1A expression, an up-regulation of CDKN2A was
279 denoted in the PO group, consistent with the perpetuation of the senescent phenotype. On
280 the other hand, the absence of difference concerning the PE and PO group seems to
281 suggest that plasma per se was sufficient to promote cycle arrest by another mechanism.

282 Consistent with our results, previous studies have demonstrated the presence of
283 senescence markers in ADSC isolated from adipose tissue during obesity, such as p53,
284 p21^{WAF1/Clip1}, p16^{INK4A}, and RB (Alessio et al., 2020; Gustafson et al., 2019; Polonis et
285 al., 2020), as well as stress-induced senescence mediated by inflammatory factors related
286 to obesity (Rawal et al., 2021; Xiang et al., 2020). The incidence of these markers is

287 directly associated with a lower proliferative capacity and adipogenic and angiogenic
288 potential of ADSC, compromising their metabolism as well as reducing cell stemness and
289 its regenerative potential (Alessio et al., 2020; Conley et al., 2020; Palmer et al., 2019;
290 Pérez et al., 2016). Although this phenotype seems to be derived in part from hypoxia
291 conditions (Polonis et al., 2020), the high pro-inflammatory milieu promoted by cytokines
292 secretion might act as the main feature of tissue immunomodulation (Conley et al., 2020;
293 Zhu et al., 2016).

294 The senescent phenotype is classically characterized by increased SA- β -gal
295 activity in non-phagocytic cells. It is related to obesity and aged cells in vitro ADSC
296 (Fafián-Labora et al., 2019; Kumari & Jat, 2021; Rouault et al., 2021). Our results
297 revealed that treatment with plasma from obese patients promoted a prominent increase
298 of SA- β -gal activity after 10 and 18 days of treatment, characterizing an accelerated and
299 persistent modulation of cellular senescence. Curiously, the plasma of eutrophic subjects
300 also showed an increase in SA- β -gal activity at day 18, although lower than the PO group,
301 suggesting that some components of plasma could induce an intermediate state of
302 senescence-like response. We cannot rule out the possibility that in vitro culture
303 conditions might modulate the observed phenotype. In addition, we also detected an
304 increase in TRF1 protein in the PO group after 10 days of treatment and positively
305 correlated with SA- β -gal activity. This result agrees with our previous work done in
306 PBMC. We have demonstrated a negative association between the expression of this
307 shelterin component and telomeric length in PBMC in the context of obesity, thus being
308 TRF1 suggested as a marker of premature aging (Grun et al., 2018). Although there is no
309 support regarding the expression of cycle arrest markers at long exposure to treatments,
310 our data reinforces the long-term stressor effect of plasma, which is negatively intensified

311 by obesogenic condition. Together, these findings suggest that the sustained senescent
312 phenotype observed at 18 days, might be initiated through cell cycle arrest early at 10
313 days and accompanied by a distinct modulatory phenotype associated with premature
314 cellular senescence in hADSC.

315 Morphological alterations in nuclear architecture and morphology represent
316 central and conserved elements in the progression of cellular aging (Pathak et al., 2021).
317 Nuclear envelope protein Lamin B1 loss, chromatin remodeling due to the accumulation
318 of damage foci, and genomic instability are mechanisms involved in the nuclear size
319 enlargement, which might be connected to stress pathways stimulating SASP response
320 (Isermann et al., 2020; Martins et al., 2020; Matias et al., 2022). When evaluating the
321 kinetics of nuclei morphometric changes throughout the treatments, we observed a
322 prominent increase in percentage of large and regular nuclei (classified as senescent)
323 (Filippi-Chiela et al., 2012) in the PO group concomitant with increased cumulative
324 nuclear area, consistent with the progression of the senescent phenotype evaluated by
325 aforementioned markers. While plasma *per se* promotes an increase in the proportion of
326 senescent cells, denoted by the kinetics of the PE group, the reduced cumulative rate
327 suggests a mild effect when compared to the obesogenic environment.

328 The DDR is activated after signaling through the phosphorylation and deposition
329 of the histone H2AX in the chromatin, promoting recruitment of DNA repair complexes
330 – such as ataxia telangiectasia mutated (ATM) and ataxia telangiectasia and Rad3-related
331 protein (ATR) – that ultimately activate the p53/p21^{WAF1/Cip1} pathway (Galanos et al.,
332 2016; Huang & Zhou, 2020). To further evaluate whether the acute and persistent DDR
333 was promoted by plasma treatment, we assessed the levels of γ-H2AX, the
334 phosphorylated and active H2AX histone isoform. Notably, we did not observe any

335 differences after 48 h of treatment. Likewise, no difference was observed in the
336 percentage of staining 120 h after treatment, however, a decrease was denoted in both PO
337 and PE groups in comparison to the control. Based on previous studies with ADSC
338 isolated from adipose tissue in the context of obesity, an increase in damage would be
339 expected, especially considering the pro-oxidative environment (Pérez et al., 2015;
340 Polonis et al., 2020). On the other hand, we have previously demonstrated that acute
341 exposure to plasma the same plasma was also characterized by reduced levels of γ -H2AX
342 in healthy PBMC (Parisi et al., 2017). Supporting our observations, studies have shown
343 that senescence could be induced and perpetuate independent of DDR mechanisms, such
344 as oncogenic activation, mitochondrial dysfunction, SASP, and mTOR pathway (Bielak-
345 Zmijewska et al., 2018; Freund et al., 2011; Herranz et al., 2015; Laberge et al., 2015;
346 Wiley et al., 2016). Although we only evaluated γ -H2AX expression as a marker of DNA
347 damage, we speculate that plasma modulates the senescence of hADSC by a DDR-
348 independent mechanism.

349 The stress-activated p38-MAPK pathway mediates important intracellular
350 mechanisms related to age-related pathophysiology, such as inflammaging and the SASP
351 through up-regulation of both p53 and p16^{INK4A}/RB cell cycle arrest pathways (Callender
352 et al., 2018; Campisi, 2013; Jin et al., 2018). In the present work, we detected an increase
353 in the activation of p38-MAPK in both plasma treatments after 10 days, with a
354 pronounced effect in cells exposed to the plasma of obese subjects. Considering that the
355 obesogenic environment comprises several pro-oxidative and pro-inflammatory factors
356 (Hotamisligil, 2017), we speculate that these stimuli may contribute to the chronic
357 activation of p38-MAPK resulting in the senescent phenotype observed in hADSC. Our
358 assumption is partially supported by studies demonstrating the induction of p38-MAPK-

359 associated senescence as a result of chronic exposure to pro-inflammatory cytokines
360 (Freund et al., 2011; Harada et al., 2014; Mavrogonatou et al., 2018) comprised by the
361 SASP and the inflammatory environment of the plasma of obese individuals
362 (Hotamisligil, 2017). Additionally, a recent study showed multifaceted functions of p38-
363 MAPK in aging process in hematopoietic stem cells, including immune response and
364 stemness modulation (Sorimachi et al., 2021). Furthermore, an increase in the expression
365 of microRNAs linked to positive modulation of the MAPK and NF-κB pathways is
366 observed in extracellular vesicles derived from ADSC from obese individuals (Eirin et
367 al., 2021).

368 In general, after irreversible cell cycle arrest by p21^{WAF1/Cip1} and p16^{INK4A}, the
369 consolidation of the senescent phenotype is mediated by SASP through secretion of
370 cytokines and chemokines that perpetuate through a paracrine and autocrine manner
371 (Franceschi & Campisi, 2014; Lopes-Paciencia et al., 2019). SASP is a central aspect in
372 the physiological onset and progression of senescence, being master regulated by the
373 transcription factor NF-κB (Biavasco et al., 2021; Gnani et al., 2019). Although its
374 secretome is heterogeneous, mostly cell type-dependent and stress-inducing, key
375 cytokines such as IL-6 and IL-8 are robustly conserved across different types of
376 senescence (Kim et al., 2018; Lopes-Paciencia et al., 2019; Ortiz-Montero et al., 2017;
377 Prattichizzo et al., 2018). We evaluated NF-κB activity by p65 phosphorylation and
378 observed its increase in both plasma-treated groups, with a remarkably amplified effect
379 in the PO group. This effect directly reflects the results associated with the activation of
380 p38-MAPK, which in turn was identified as a positive modulator of the NF-κB pathway
381 (Freund et al., 2011; Huo et al., 2018). However, other pathways stimulated by toll-like
382 receptors (TLR) ligands and cytosolic free DNA can also activate NF-κB (Guo et al.,

383 2021; Hari et al., 2019), and there is evidence that these elements are indeed present in
384 the context of obesity (Hotamisligil, 2017). We subsequently evaluated the secretion of
385 cytokines in the culture media. We observed an increase in IL-6 and IL-8 in the PO and
386 PE groups compared to the control both on 10 and 18 days of treatment. We also denote
387 a greater secretion of both cytokines in the PO group on day 10. Curiously the secretion
388 of these cytokines was similar after 18 days of plasma exposure. Our data suggest that the
389 senescence phenotype observed early at 10 days was accompanied by SASP upregulation
390 possibly due to p38-MAPK/NF- κ B axis. Taken together, our results corroborate the
391 intrinsic stimulatory effect of plasma.

392 Our work has limitations. The presence of multimorbidity is characteristic of the
393 obese population, and due to its heterogeneity in the prevalence among patients, it can
394 contribute to the emergence of confounding effects in reduced samples. Furthermore, our
395 study was conducted with a commercially and previously isolated and characterized
396 hADSC, so results are based on a single healthy donor. Finally, we evaluated the
397 deleterious effects of plasma as a complex environment. However, we did not explore
398 data regarding its constituent elements.

399 Taken together, these findings reinforce the hypothesis that the pro-inflammatory
400 environment observed in obesity is associated with processes that can induce the
401 activation of cellular and molecular responses and trigger, in early stages, mechanisms
402 related to the senescent phenotype, similar to that observed in physiological aging.
403 Furthermore, our data allow us to speculate that the establishment and perpetuation of the
404 senescent phenotype seem to be related to the p38-MAPK/NF- κ B axis that promotes the
405 upregulation of the SASP.

406

407 **Experimental Procedures**

408 *Subjects and Biological Samples*

409 Individuals aged between 18 and 65 years were included and classified based on
410 body mass index (BMI) and the presence of comorbidities. This study included 14
411 individuals with grade III obesity ($BMI \geq 40.0 \text{ kg/m}^2$) without metabolic syndrome that
412 were recruited in the intraoperative period of bariatric surgery at the Centro de Obesidade
413 e Síndrome Metabólica (COM) of Hospital São Lucas, Pontifícia Universidade Católica
414 do Rio Grande do Sul (HSL-PUCRS). We also recruited 15 healthy eutrophic subjects
415 ($24.9 \text{ kg/m}^2 \geq BMI \geq 18.5 \text{ kg/m}^2$) who underwent routine exams and agreed to participate
416 (Table 1). All participants signed an Informed Consent Form. The collection of biological
417 material was approved by the Research Ethics Committees of PUCRS (640.817) and
418 UFRGS (760.537) and conducted in accordance with Resolution 466/2012 of the National
419 Health Council and The Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association (WMA) –
420 Declaration of Helsinki.

421 A total of 10 mL of peripheral blood was drawn from the subjects by venipuncture.
422 The blood was placed in tubes containing 5% EDTA and centrifuged at 400 x g for 15
423 min at room temperature. The upper fraction, corresponding to plasma, was collected,
424 and stored at -80°C.

425

426 *Cell Culture*

427 Human adipose-derived stem cells (hADSC) were acquired cryopreserved after
428 first passage from the company LONZA (PT-5006, USA) and cultured as specified by
429 the distributor. Cells were maintained in Dulbecco's modified Eagle culture medium
430 (DMEM) complete with low glucose concentration (1.0 g/L) supplemented with 10%

431 fetal bovine serum (FBS), 1% penicillin/streptomycin, and 0.25 µg/L of amphotericin B.
432 Cultured cells were maintained at 37°C with 5% CO₂ in a humidified chamber.
433 For the experiments, the plasma of the participants was mixed to form the plasma
434 pool of eutrophic individuals (n = 15) and the plasma pool of individuals with obesity (n
435 = 14). hADSC were cultured and divided into 3 groups: (1) DMEM 10% FBS (control
436 group), (2) DMEM 10% supplemented with 0.5% of the plasma pool of eutrophic
437 individuals (PE group), and (3) DMEM 10% FBS supplemented with 0.5% of the plasma
438 pool of obese individuals (PO group). A positive control of senescence was performed
439 one day before experiments assessed by culture with of hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) 300
440 µM for 3 h. Plasma from eutrophic and obese individuals were matched by sex and age
441 (Table 1). The experiments were performed when cell cultures were in the exponential
442 growth phase, between passages 6 and 7. Media (50%) was replaced every 3 days. By the
443 end of the treatment, hADSC were collected by trypsinization (0.05% Trypsin 1:250 in
444 0.02% EDTA, Gibco, USA) for further analysis (Figure 1). All treatments were per-
445 formed as triplicates.

446

447 *Cumulative Population Doubling*

448 Cell proliferation was assessed by cumulative population doubling (CPD) along
449 18 days of treatments and evaluated by image analysis using 300 nM DAPI (Thermo
450 Fisher Scientific, USA) staining. The images were acquired using an Olympus IX71
451 fluorescent microscope (Olympus Corporation, Japan) and the nuclei count was
452 performed using Image Pro Plus 6.0 software (Media Cybernetics, USA). Cell number
453 and the PD was calculated through the equation PD = (LogN_f – LogN_i) / Log(2), where
454 N_f is the final number of cells and N_i is the initial number of cells in a given interval of

455 time (every 3 days in our experiments). The sum of PDs was then plotted versus time of
456 culture.

457

458 *Cell Cycle*

459 At the end of the 10th day of treatment, 1×10^5 hADSC were fixed with 1%
460 paraformaldehyde (v/v in phosphate-buffered saline, PBS) for 15 min, permeabilized with
461 0,25% Triton X-100 (Sigma, USA) supplemented with 1% FBS for 15 min and then
462 stained with 300 nM DAPI (Thermo Fisher Scientific, USA) for 10 min at room
463 temperature, protected from light. Immediately cells were washed once with PBS and
464 20,000 events were acquired at a low flow rate using FACSCantoTM II (BD Biosciences,
465 USA). The data was analyzed using FlowJo software v10.6 (LLC, USA) and expressed
466 as percentage (%) of the population in each phase of the cell cycle.

467

468 *Senescence-associated β-galactosidase Assay*

469 Senescence was evaluated by senescence-associated β-galactosidase (SA-β-gal)
470 activity through fluorogenic substrate C₁₂FDG (5-dodecanoylaminofluorescein di-β-D-
471 galactopyranoside, Sigma, USA), as previously described (Debacq-Chainiaux et al.,
472 2009). hADSC were treated for 10 days with plasma or treated with 300 μM hydrogen
473 peroxide (H₂O₂) for 3 h one day before the experiment, as a positive control. Briefly,
474 1×10^5 cells were washed once with PBS, incubated with 100 μM chloroquine (Sigma,
475 USA) for 1 h to induce lysosomal alkalinization, and subsequently incubated with
476 C₁₂FDG (33 μM) for 2 h at 37°C (5% CO₂). Cells were then collected, washed with PBS,
477 and 10,000 events were acquired using FACSCanto™ II (BD Biosciences, USA). The

478 data was analyzed using FlowJo software v10.6 (LLC, USA) and expressed as median
479 fluorescence intensity (MFI) or percentage (%) of the population.

480

481 *Nuclear Morphometric Analysis (NMA)*

482 The nuclear morphometric analysis was evaluated along 18 days of treatment with
483 300 nM DAPI (Thermo Fisher Scientific, USA) staining. Data analyses were performed
484 using an Olympus IX71 fluorescent microscope (Olympus Corporation, Japan). Nuclear
485 parameters were analyzed using Image Pro Plus 6.0 software (Media Cybernetics, USA).
486 Cell viability and cell viability-related parameters (aspect, area/box, radius ratio, and
487 roundness) were combined to generate the Nuclear Irregularity Index (NII) and classified
488 based on quadrant division (Filippi-Chiela et al., 2012).

489

490 *Detection of Intracellular Proteins by Flow Cytometry*

491 Intracellular proteins were detected by staining with anti-TRF1 conjugated with
492 Alexa Fluor-647 (G-7 clone, Santa Cruz Biotechnology, USA), an-anti-phospho-p38-
493 MAPK conjugated to Alexa Fluor-647 (pT180/pY182, 36/p38 clone, BD Biosciences,
494 USA), anti-phospho-H2AX conjugated to PE (pS139, N1-431 clone, BD Biosciences,
495 USA), and anti-phospho-p65 conjugated to BV421 (pS529, K10-895.12.50 clone, BD
496 Biosciences, USA).

497 In brief, 1×10^5 cells were fixed with CytoFix Fixation Buffer (BD Biosciences,
498 USA) for 20 minutes at 4°C, permeabilized for 30 min with Perm Buffer III for TRF1,
499 H2AX, and p38-MAPK or 20 min with Perm/Wash 1X for p-p65 and maintained at 4°C.
500 Cells were washed twice in staining buffer and incubated with the corresponding
501 fluorochrome-labeled antibodies for 30 minutes at 4°C in the dark. Finally, cells were

502 washed, and 10,000 events were acquired using FACSCantoTM II (BD Biosciences,
503 USA). The data was analyzed using FlowJo software v10.6 (LLC, USA) and expressed
504 as MFI or % of the population.

505

506 *RNA Extraction and cDNA Synthesis*

507 Total RNA was extracted from 1×10^4 hADSC after 10 and 18 days of treatment
508 using the TRIzol reagent (Invitrogen, USA), according to the manufacturer's instructions.
509 The purity of the total RNA was evaluated in a spectrophotometer by analyzing the
510 absorbance ratio at 260/280 nm using NanoDrop Lite (Thermo Fisher, USA).
511 Complementary DNA (cDNA) (20 μ L) was synthesized from 1 μ g of total RNA using
512 High-Capacity cDNA Reverse Transcription Kit (Applied Biosystems, USA) and stored
513 at -20°C until use.

514

515 *Quantitative Real-Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (qPCR)*

516 Gene expression of CDKN1A (p21) and CDKN2A (p16) was performed using
517 MasterMix Taqman/Probe (Quatro G, Brazil) and normalized by the constitutive
518 Ribosomal Protein Lateral Stalk Subunit P0 (RPLP0). All reactions were performed in a
519 96-well StepOnePlus™ instrument (Applied Biosystems, USA) using 5 μ L of cDNA
520 (1:10) as a template for qPCR reactions. All plates included positive control and negative
521 control (cDNA replaced by H₂O). Samples were run in triplicates. Replicates with
522 standard deviation ≥ 0.3 cT were excluded and repeated. Data was analyzed by the $2^{-\Delta\Delta\text{cT}}$
523 comparative method (Livak & Schmittgen, 2001).

524

525 *Cytokine Quantification*

526 Cytokine levels were measured from culture medium of hADSC after 10 and 18
527 days of treatment using BD™ Cytometric Bead Array with the Human Inflammatory Kit
528 (BD Biosciences, USA) according to the manufacturer's instructions. The samples were
529 acquired in the FACSCantoTM II (BD Biosciences, USA) and analyzed with the FCAP
530 Array v3.0.1 software (Soft Flow Inc., Hungary). The results were expressed as
531 picograms per milliliter (pg/mL).

532

533 *Statistical Analysis*

534 Continuous variables from demographic data are reported using median and
535 interquartile range (IQR). Categorical data are reported as absolute and relative
536 frequency. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test the Gaussian distribution for each data,
537 and the difference between groups was subsequently analyzed using one-way ANOVA,
538 followed by Tukey post-test for multiple comparisons. The Pearson test was performed
539 to evaluate correlation between TRF1 and C₁₂FDG expression. Additional analyses were
540 performed using area under curve followed by ANOVA, to evaluate the cumulative
541 measurement of treatment effects in CPD and NMA. GraphPad Prism version 9.0 (LCC,
542 USA) and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 (IBM Corp., USA)
543 were used in all analyses. All tests were two-tailed, and the differences were considered
544 significant when p<0.05 (*), p<0.01 (**), p<0.001 (***), and p<0.0001 (****).

545

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550 **Conflict of Interest Statement**

551 The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

552

553 **Author's Contributions**

554 RMM, LKG, and MEFR conducted most of the experiments. ECFC performed the NMA
555 analysis. AVP and CCM recruited the participants. RMM and LKG designed and
556 supervised experiments and wrote the manuscript. FBT secured funding, supervised
557 studies, and reviewed the manuscript.

558

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874 **Tables**

875 **Table 1.** Baseline and demographic characteristics.

	Groups	p value	
Eutrophic (n =15) Obesity (n = 14)			
Sex (male), n/total (%)	8/15 (53.3)	4/14 (28.6)	0.1761
Age (years), median (IQR)	29.0 (27.0 - 37.0)	34.5 (25.0 – 38.7)	0.7100
BMI, median (IQR)	22.1 (20.7 – 23.9)	49.3 (43.5 – 50.6)	<0.0001
Physical activity, n/total (%)	0/15 (0)	0/14 (0)	–
Comorbidities, n/total (%)			
Type 2 Diabetes mellitus	0/15 (0)	1/14 (7.14)	–
Dyslipidemia	0/15 (0)	7/14 (50.0)	–
Hepatic Steatosis	0/15 (0)	6/14 (42.8)	–
Hypertension	0/15 (0)	4/14 (28.6)	–
Metabolic Syndrome	0/15 (0)	0/14 (0)	–

876 Abbreviations: BMI: Body mass index; IQR: Interquartile range.

877

878 **Figure Legends**

879 **Figure 1.** Schematic representation of the experimental design. Cells were cultured with
 880 FBS, PE or PO and used for experiments after 2, 5, 10 and 18 days. In parallel, hADSC
 881 were assessed every 3 (for NMA) or 6 days (for CPD) throughout the treatments.

882 Abbreviations: β -gal: β -galactosidase; CDKN1A: Cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor 1A;
 883 CDKN2A: Cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor 2A; CPD: cumulative population doubling;
 884 DMEM: Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium; NMA: nuclear morphometric analysis;
 885 p-p38-MAPK: phosphorylated p38 mitogen-activated protein kinase; p-p65:
 886 phosphorylated Nuclear factor NF- κ B p65 subunit; PE: pool plasma of eutrophic
 887 individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium; PO: pool plasma of obese

888 individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium; TRF1: Telomeric repeat factor
889 1.

890

891 **Figure 2.** Reduced population doubling after chronic exposure to a low-grade obesogenic
892 environment is associated with G2 cell cycle arrest. The kinetics of proliferation activity
893 were evaluated through treatments. A) Although our results showed augmented CPD in
894 PO group, we noted a decrease in CPD after 18 days of plasma exposure. B) Integrated
895 analysis of CPD showed a decrease in PE and PO groups, compared to control. C-D) Cell
896 cycle analysis with accumulation of hADSC in G2 phase in PO after 10 days of treatment.
897 E) CDKN1A gene was overexpressed in PO at 10 days of treatment. F) CDKN2A gene
898 expression was increased in PO at 18 days of treatment. Data presented as mean and
899 standard deviation (SD). Differences were considered when $p < 0.05$ (*), $p < 0.01$ (**),
900 $p < 0.001$ (***) or $p < 0.0001$ (****), evaluated by one-way ANOVA test followed by
901 Tukey post-test or area under the curve, with a confidence interval of 95%. Abbreviations:
902 AUC: area under the curve; CDKN1A: Cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor 1A; CDKN2A:
903 Cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor 2A; PE: pool plasma of eutrophic individuals
904 supplemented in the complete culture medium; PO: pool plasma of obese individuals
905 supplemented in the complete culture medium.

906

907 **Figure 3.** Senescence is induced by treatment with plasma of obese patients and is
908 correlated with TRF1 overexpression. A) We observed increased C₁₂FDG staining after
909 10 and 18 days in MFI and B) percentage of cells in PO group compared to control and
910 PE. We also observed an increase after 18 days in PE compared to control. C) TRF1
911 expression was augmented in MFI and D) percentage of cells in PO group after 10 days.

912 E) C₁₂FDG and TRF1 MFI were positively correlated after 10 days of treatment. Dashed
913 lines represent positive control of senescence assessed by culture with of hydrogen
914 peroxide (H₂O₂) 300 μM, treated for 3 h one day before experiments. Data presented as
915 mean and standard deviation (SD). Differences were considered when p<0.05 (*), p<0.01
916 (**), p<0.001 (***) or p<0.0001 (****), evaluated by one-way ANOVA test followed by
917 Tukey post-test, with a confidence interval of 95%. Abbreviations: PE: pool plasma of
918 eutrophic individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium; PO: pool plasma of
919 obese individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium.

920

921 **Figure 4.** Increased nuclear area is kinetically related to obesogenic treatment exposure.
922 Distribution of hADSC nuclei in a plot of area versus NII demonstrating the percentage
923 of A) normal (N) nuclei B) and large and regular (LR) nuclei. C) Fold-change analysis
924 showing that nuclear area was increased in PO at all time points compared to PE and
925 control. D) Integrated analysis demonstrating a cumulative nuclear enlargement in PO
926 compared do PE and control. E) Nuclei distribution of plasma-treated hADSC in an area
927 versus NII plot. Data presented as mean and standard deviation (SD). Differences were
928 considered when p<0.05 (*), p<0.01 (**), or p<0.001 (***), evaluated by one-way
929 ANOVA test followed by Tukey post-test or area under the curve, with a confidence
930 interval of 95%. Abbreviations: AUC: area under the curve; NII: nuclear irregularity
931 index; PE: pool plasma of eutrophic individuals supplemented in the complete culture
932 medium; PO: pool plasma of obese individuals supplemented in the complete culture
933 medium.

934

935 **Figure 5.** Treatment with plasma of obese subjects is associated to upregulated SASP
936 components possibly through p38-MAPK/NF- κ B axis in a DDR-independent
937 mechanism. A) Although we did not observe difference in p-H2AX after 2 days and 5
938 days in MFI, B) we found a decrease in percentage of cells in PE and PO after 5 days of
939 plasma treatment. C) hADSC treated with plasma of obese subjects showed augmented
940 levels of phosphorylated p38-MAPK in MFI D) and percentage of cells. E) After 10 days
941 of treatment with plasma of obese subjects, the levels of phosphorylated p65 were
942 increased in MFI F) and percentage of cells. G) hADSC treated with PE and PO increased
943 IL-6 and secretion after 10 and 18 days of treatment. H) Similarly, IL-8 secretion was
944 increased in both PE and PO after 10 and 18 days. Dashed lines represent positive control
945 of senescence assessed by 300 μ M of hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) treated for 3 h one day
946 before experiments. Data presented as mean and standard deviation (SD). Differences
947 were considered when $p < 0.05$ (*), $p < 0.01$ (**), $p < 0.001$ (***), or $p < 0.0001$ (****),
948 evaluated by one-way ANOVA test followed by Tukey post-test, with a confidence
949 interval of 95%. Abbreviations: p-p38-MAPK: phosphorylated p38 mitogen-activated
950 protein kinase; p-p65: phosphorylated nuclear factor NF- κ B p65 subunit; PE: pool plasma
951 of eutrophic individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium; PO: pool plasma
952 of obese individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium; SASP: senescence-
953 associated secretory phenotype.

Figure 1.

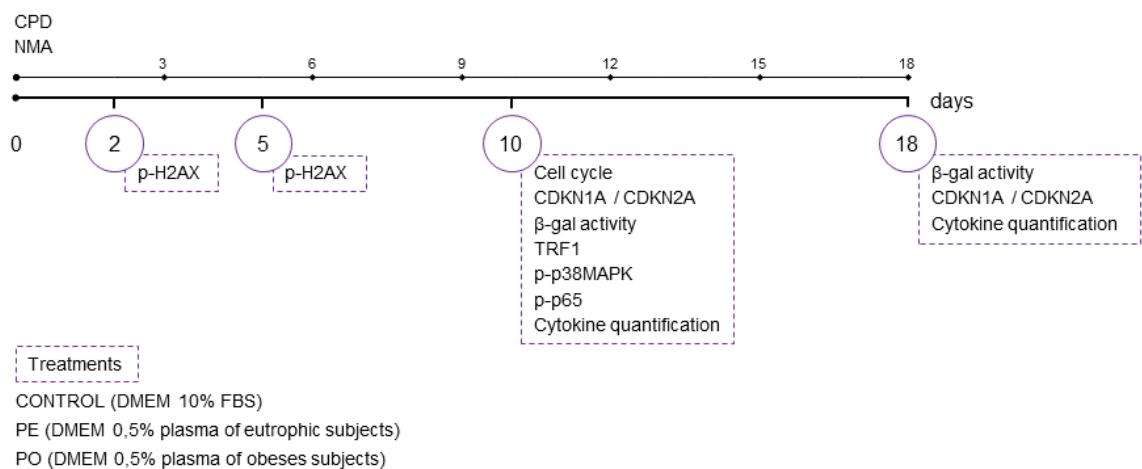


Figure 2.

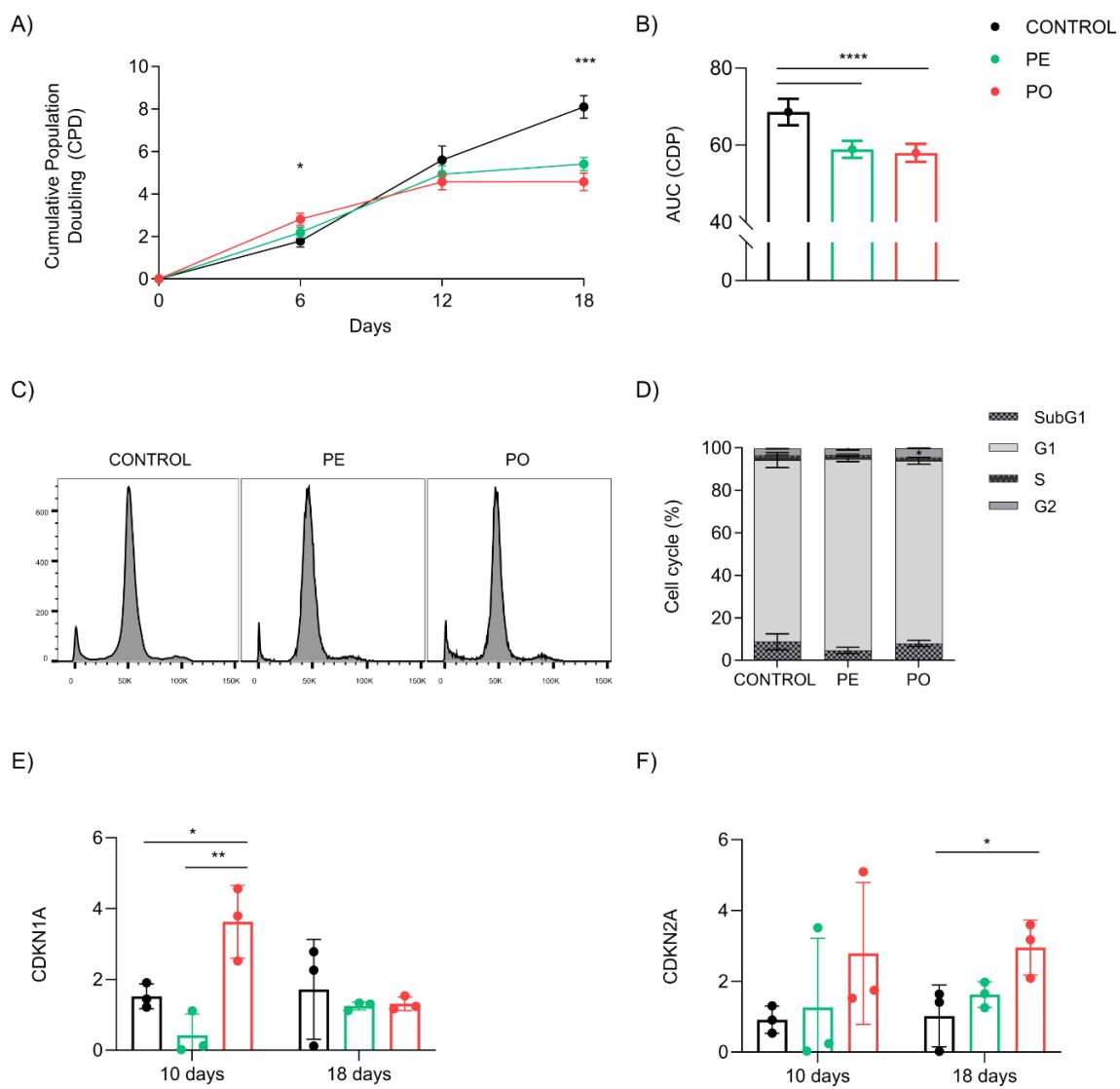


Figure 3.

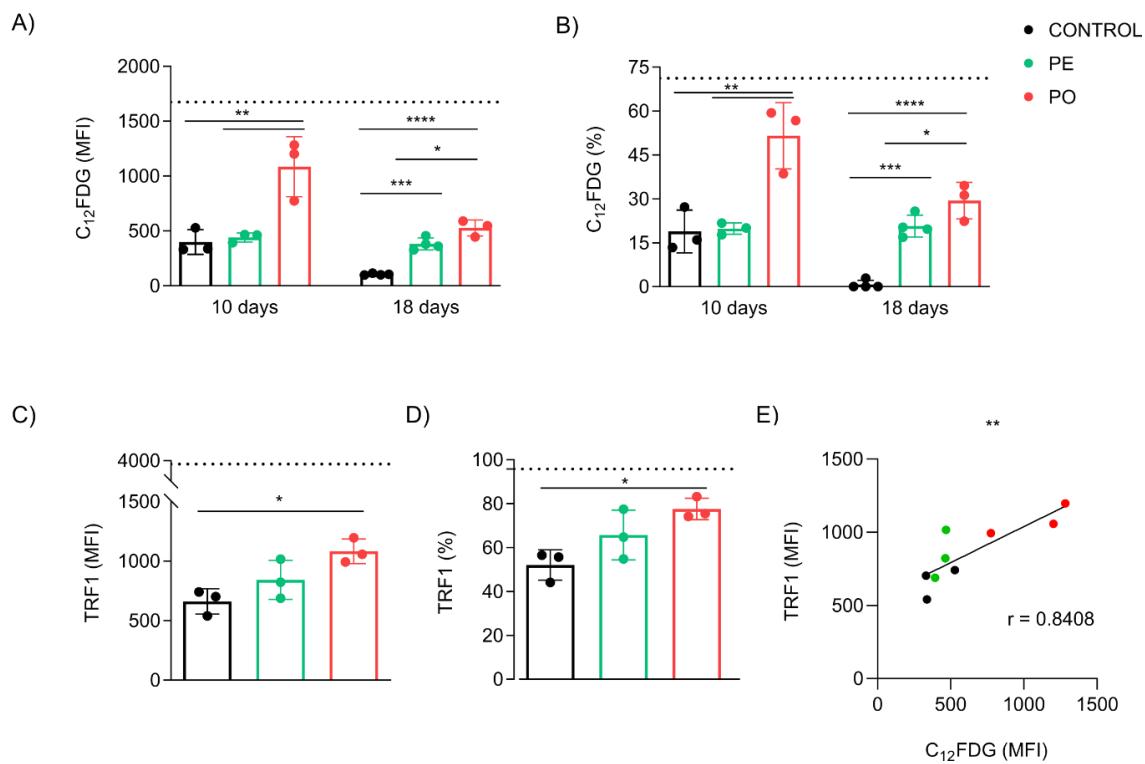


Figure 4.

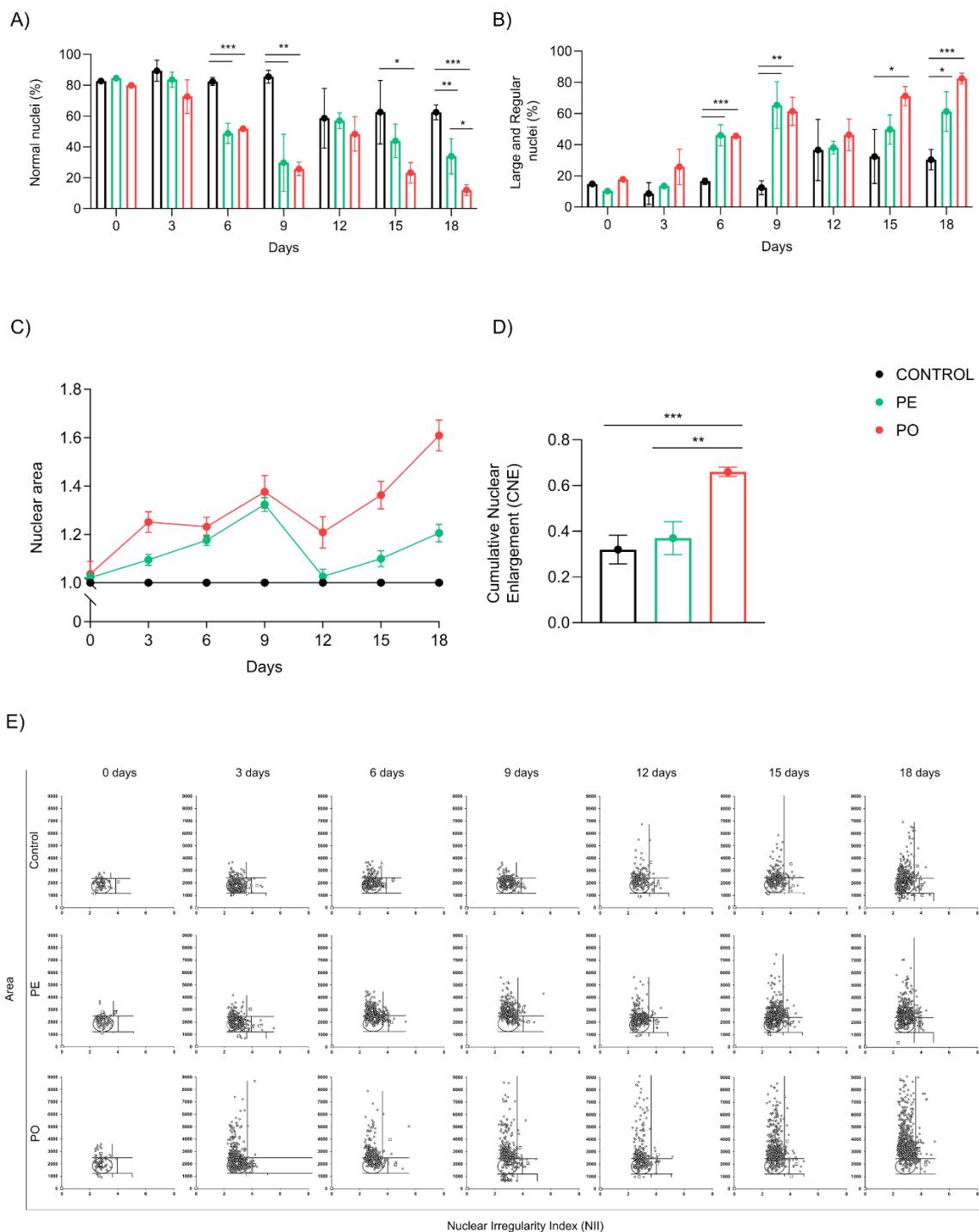
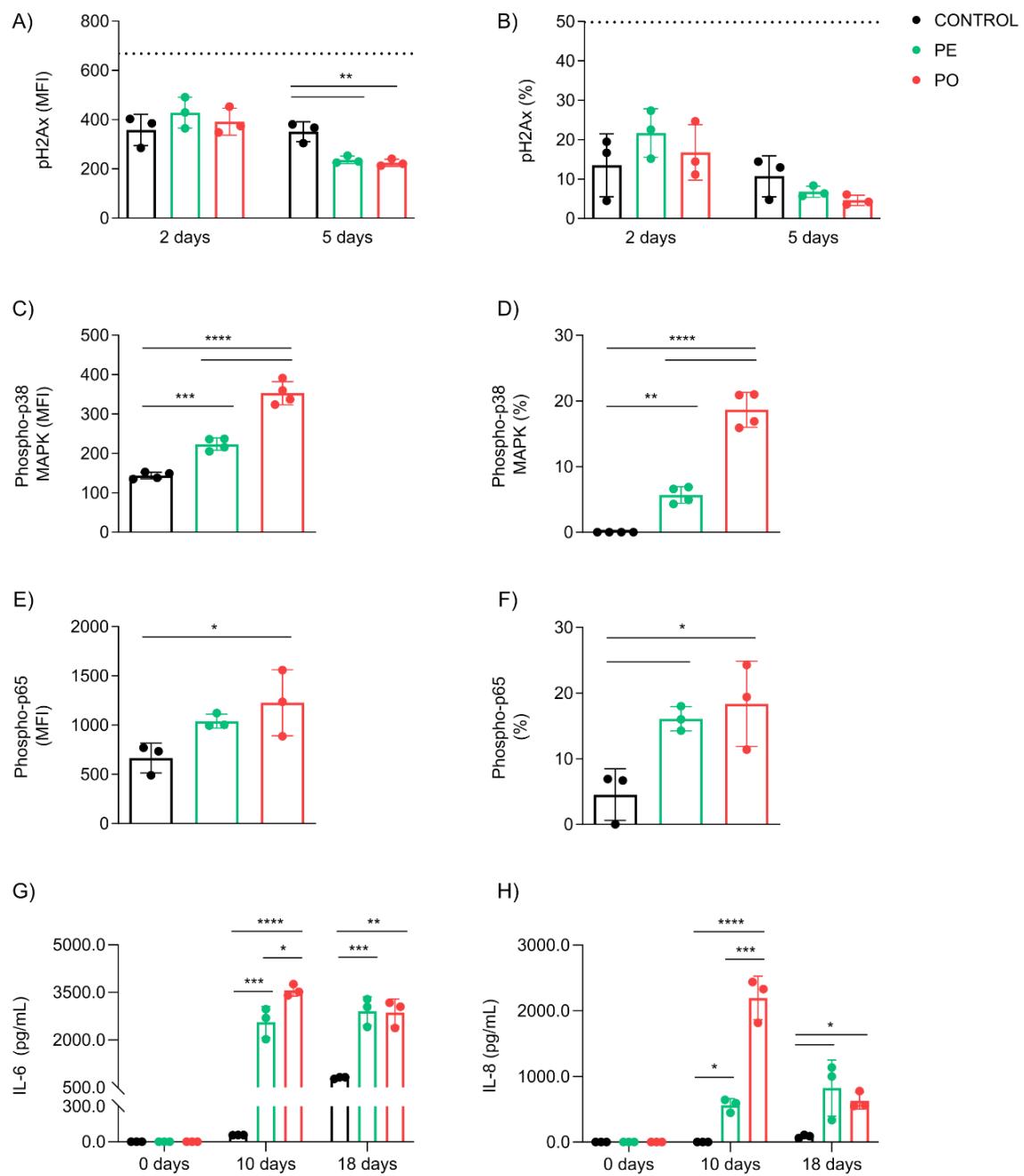


Figure 5.



Senescence in adipose-derived stem cells by chronic exposure to an obesogenic environment

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Supporting Information:

Supplementary Figure 1. High plasma concentrations induce hADSC death due to toxicity. A) hADSC were exposed to different plasma concentrations of eutrophic and obese individuals. Treatments with low plasma concentrations (0.5%) did not demonstrate a decrease in the percentage of confluence and were selected to study plasma-dependent signaling in hADSC. B) Individual time-point analysis of cumulative population doubling after chronic exposure to 0.5% plasma. Data presented as mean and standard deviation (SD).

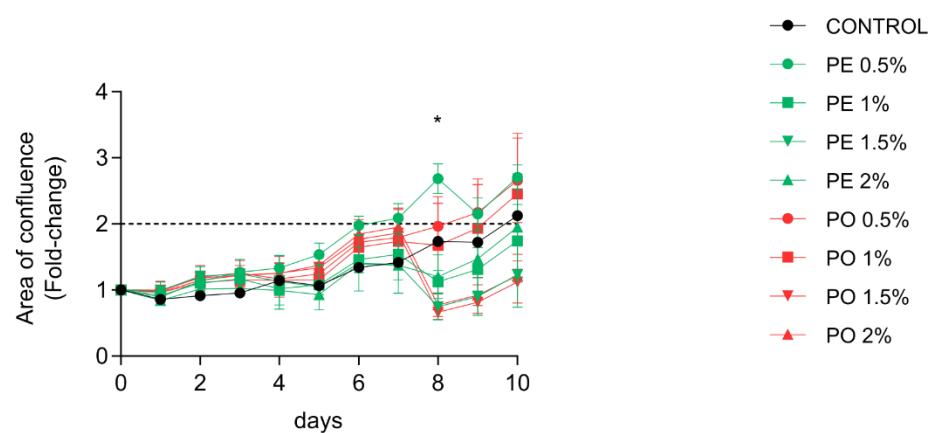
Differences were considered when $p<0.05$ (*), $p<0.01$ (**), or $p<0.0001$ (****), evaluated by one-way ANOVA test followed by Tukey post-test, with a confidence interval of 95%. Abbreviations: CPD: cumulative population doubling; PE: pool plasma of eutrophic individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium; PO: pool plasma of obese individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium.

Supplementary Figure 2. Increased large nuclei proportion is kinetically related to obesogenic treatment exposure. Representative images acquired by fluorescence microscopy with DAPI staining along 18 days of treatment. PE: pool plasma of eutrophic individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium; PO: pool plasma of obese individuals supplemented in the complete culture medium.

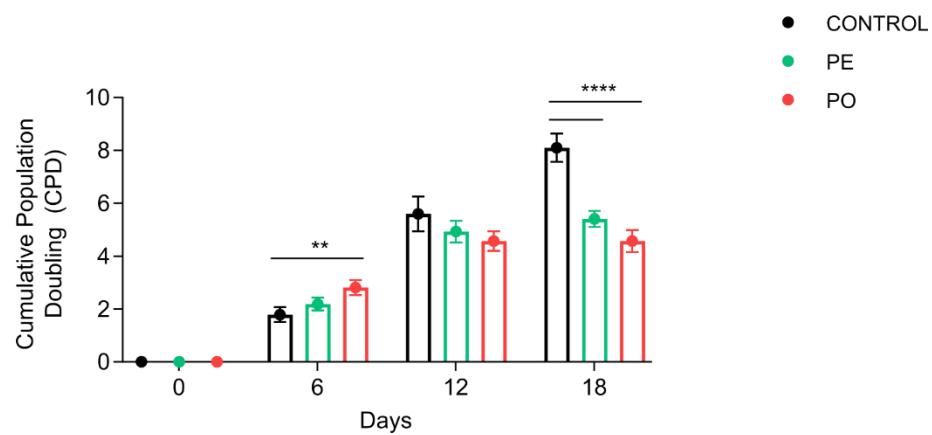
Supplementary Figure 3. Individual cytokine secretion levels. The levels of A) IL-1 β , B) IL-10, C) TNF- α , and D) IL-12 secretion were below the lower limit of sensitivity (1.0 pg/mL) and were considered undetectable. Data presented as mean and standard deviation (SD). Differences were considered when $p<0.05$ (*), evaluated by one-way ANOVA test followed by Tukey post-test, with a confidence interval of 95%.

Supplementary Figure 1.

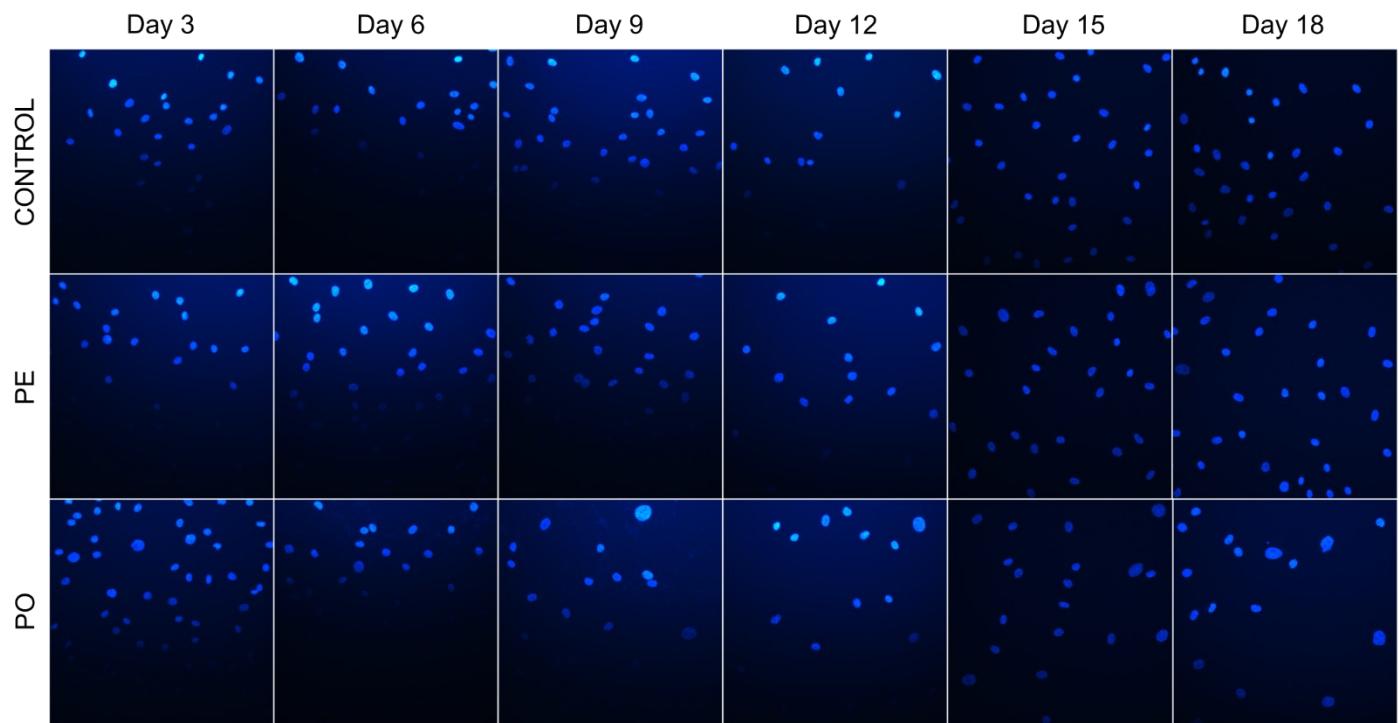
A)



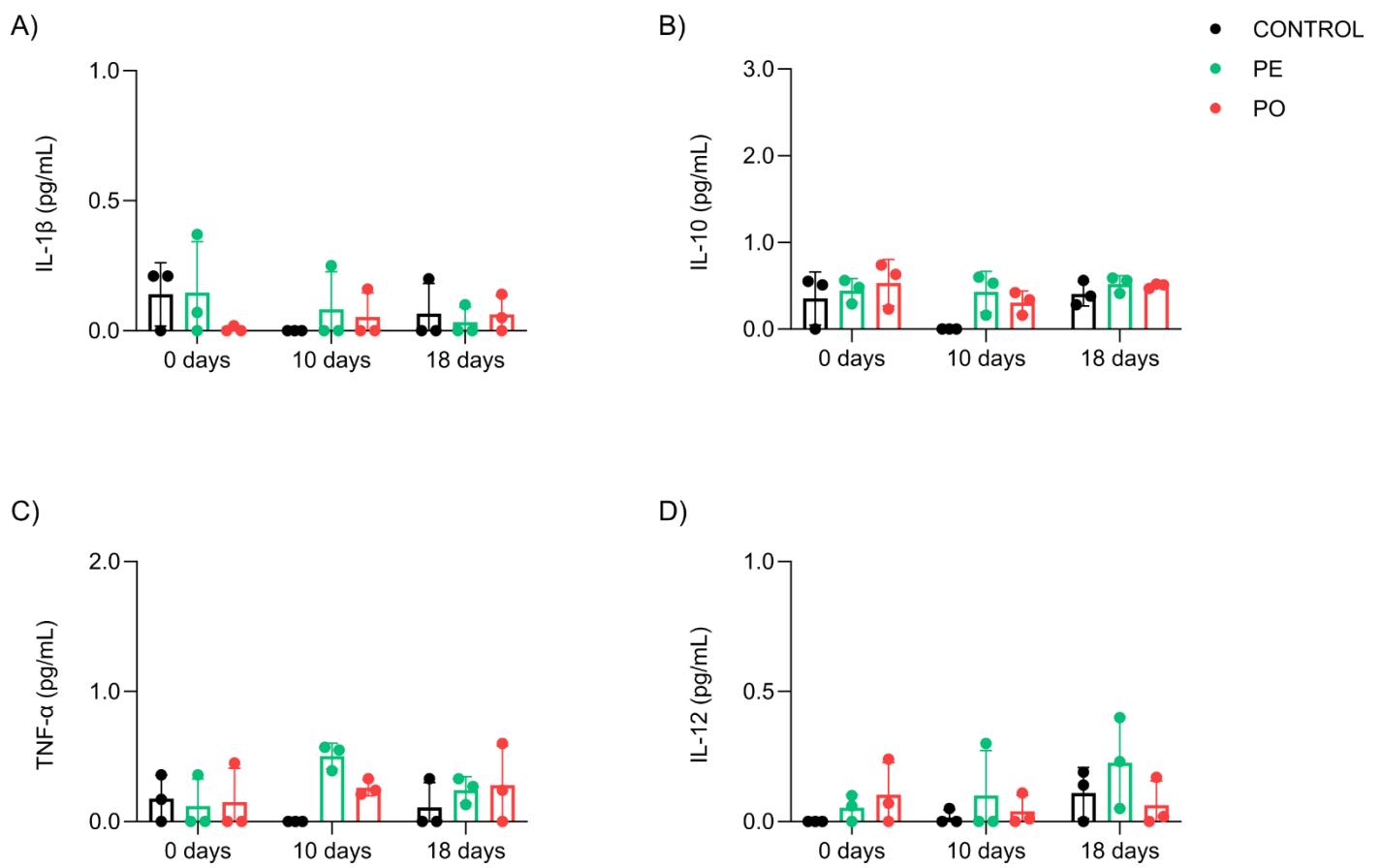
B)



Supplementary Figure 2.



Supplementary Figure 3.



3. DISCUSSÃO GERAL

A senescência celular configura uma resposta a eventos de estresse, sendo chave na progressão do envelhecimento e na patogênese de diversas doenças crônico inflamatórias, como a obesidade.^{25,45} Estudos anteriores já evidenciaram o fenótipo senescente em ADSC isoladas do tecido adiposo em indivíduos com obesidade,^{61,63,66,71} assim como o desenvolvimento do mesmo frente a exposição a fatores inflamatórios como os presentes na obesidade.^{73,74} No presente estudo, nós demonstramos que a exposição crônica *in vitro* ao ambiente obesogênico é capaz, *per se*, de induzir características moleculares e celulares associadas ao fenótipo senescente.

Anteriormente publicamos um trabalho com um efeito similar em PBMC, com indução da disfunção imunometabólica e alterações voltadas ao fenótipo de imunossenescência frente a exposição ao plasma.⁴³ Ao mesmo tempo que esse trabalho serve de base ao presente estudo, ele corrobora com o potencial intrínseco do ambiente inflamatório obesogênico na modulação sistêmica da senescência.⁴⁵ Tendo em vista que essas condições são refletidas na progressão do envelhecimento cronológico,³⁴ a atenuação do ambiente inflamatório no contexto da obesidade torna-se um alvo terapêutico relevante.

O comprometimento da capacidade proliferativa das células-tronco é vinculado diretamente ao declínio da regeneração e homeostase tecidual, sendo associado à exaustão desse compartimento celular.^{25,75} Esse cenário pode resultar tanto da taxa de proliferação acelerada das células-tronco quanto da alteração do nicho de células-tronco em decorrência do aumento de fatores inflamatórios, resultando no acúmulo de dano como observado ao longo do envelhecimento.⁷⁵ No presente estudo nós demonstramos que o tratamento com plasma de portadores de obesidade antecipa a exaustão proliferativa das hADSC associado a parada de ciclo em G2 e ao aumento da expressão dos marcadores de parada de ciclo p21^{WAF1/Cip1} e p16^{INK4A}. Esses dados se relacionam ao declínio da homeostase do tecido adiposo no contexto da obesidade, caracterizado pela reduzida adipogênese e renovação tecidual.¹³

Curiosamente, a parada proliferativa observada no tratamento com plasma de portadores de obesidade é antecipada pelo aumento da proliferação em relação aos demais grupos. Fatores inflamatórios derivados sobretudo do SASP estão associados

a indução da proliferação de células-tronco como mecanismo de reparo tecidual. Entretanto, a exposição a longo prazo promove a exaustão do nicho celular mediante exaustão replicativa e acúmulo de marcadores de senescência celular.^{28,76} Dada a sobreposição entre os fatores presentes no SASP e no plasma de portadores de obesidade,^{20,45} nós especulamos que o efeito observado reflita condições similares, corroborado por marcadores de senescência.

Apesar de não podermos replicar o efeito protetor do nicho, estudos prévios com ADSC isoladas de portadores de obesidade demonstram reduzida capacidade proliferativa associada à ativação das vias p53/p21^{WAF1/Cip1} e p16^{INK4A}/Rb.^{61,68–71} Concomitantemente, observa-se reduzido potencial adipogênico e angiogênico, por sua vez associados ao comprometimento da renovação tecidual e agravamento do quadro de hipóxia.^{68–70} Esse fenótipo parece ser majoritariamente resultante do elevado nível de citocinas pró-inflamatórias presentes no tecido.^{61,70,71} Em suma, a antecipação de características associadas ao envelhecimento no compartimento de células-tronco demonstrada pelo nosso estudo e por outros trabalhos na literatura reforça os efeitos deletérios do ambiente inflamatório da obesidade.

Em um estudo anterior, nós demonstramos uma associação negativa entre o comprimento telomérico e a expressão de TRF1 (*i.e.*, componente do *shelterin*) em PBMC de portadores de obesidade, sendo essa proteína sugerida como um marcador de envelhecimento precoce nesse contexto.⁴⁴ Corroborando com essa hipótese, no presente estudo nós observamos uma correlação positiva entre a expressão de TRF1 e a atividade de enzima da SA-β-gal, marcador clássico de senescência. Ademais, a segregação entre o tratamento com plasma de portadores de obesidade e os demais denotada nessa correlação reforça a associação do aumento de TRF1 como marcador de senescência, tendo em vista o aumento concomitante da expressão dos marcadores de parada de ciclo no grupo PO.

O TRF1 é responsável pelo controle do comprimento telomérico, atuando como inibidor da telomerase e, portanto, do alongamento dos telômeros.^{77,78} Tendo em vista que a depleção dessa proteína está associada ao aumento de dano ao DNA,⁷⁹ poderíamos especular que o aumento da sua expressão no contexto da obesidade deriva de uma resposta hormética de proteção da região telomérica ao ambiente inflamatório e oxidativo.⁴⁴ Com base nos dados conjuntos de nossos estudos, nós

sugerimos que o ambiente obesogênico seja capaz de modular um fenótipo distinto e associado a senescência celular prematura em hADSCs, sendo o TRF1 enquadrado como marcador desse fenótipo no contexto da obesidade.

Diversos estímulos estressores podem desencadear senescência celular, levando a diferentes manifestações fenotípicas, por sua vez, dependentes do tipo celular.^{27,80} Essa ampla variedade de fenótipos torna quase impossível determinar marcadores universais, implicando na elucidação pontual da senescência referente as condições que a desencadeiam e as populações celulares envolvidas.⁸⁰ Eventos genotóxicos como atrito telomérico e quebra de fita dupla são comumente elencados na caracterização do fenótipo senescente mediante DDR.^{27,81} Entretanto, outros estressores independentes de DDR como a ativação de genes oncogênicos e parada de ciclo dependente de SASP são igualmente comuns.^{27,82,83} Recentemente tem-se demonstrado que fatores relacionados a doenças metabólicas e crônico-inflamatórias como disfunção mitocondrial, fatores pró-inflamatórios e estresse oxidativo podem desencadear a senescência celular sem necessariamente induzir DDR, sendo a ativação da cinase p38-MAPK induzida por estresse comumente implicada.⁸³⁻⁸⁵

No presente estudo, nós elucidamos o estabelecimento do fenótipo senescente em hADSC cronicamente expostas ao *milieu* inflamatório e oxidativo do plasma de portadores de obesidade, o qual parece ocorrer independente de dano ao DNA e estar associado a ativação de p38-MAPK. No estudo previamente citado do grupo,⁴³ nós igualmente observamos marcadores de imunossenescência em PBMC expostas de forma aguda a esse plasma independente de dano ao DNA, indicando um possível mecanismo de indução de senescência intrínseco ao ambiente plasmático. A ativação de p38-MAPK parece refletir o efeito observado frente a exposição prolongada a citocinas pró-inflamatórias (e.g. IL-1 α e TNF- α), cuja expressão encontra-se elevada na circulação de portadores de obesidade²⁰ e cuja exposição *per se* desencadeia a senescência celular pela ativação crônica de p38-MAPK.^{59,84,85}

Concomitantemente, nós denotamos o aumento da ativação do NF- κ B e da secreção de IL-6 e IL-8, fatores conservados entre os diferentes tipos de SASP. Tendo em vista que o NF- κ B é positivamente regulado pela ativação de p38-MAPK,⁸³ nossos dados reforçam o possível enquadramento da via p38-MAPK/NF- κ B na modulação do fenótipo observado em hADSC. Contudo, outras vias estimuladas por ligantes de

receptores do tipo toll (TLR) e DNA livre circulante, por exemplo, também podem ativar o NF-κB,³³ estando esses elementos presentes na circulação de portadores de obesidade.²⁰ Ademais, não fomos capazes de isolar o efeito da ativação de p38-MAPK em nosso modelo, o que nos impede de afirmar categoricamente seu papel na modulação da senescência observada.

Em síntese, os dados aqui apresentados nos provêm diferentes indícios dos possíveis mecanismos que regulam a senescência das hADSC no contexto da obesidade, apesar de não serem conclusivos quanto aos mecanismos exatos. A ativação da via de p38-MAPK independente de dano ao DNA nos faz especular tanto o provável papel das citocinas pró-inflamatórias presentes no plasma quanto o de outros estressores vinculados a senescência e a própria obesidade, como a disfunção mitocondrial.^{86,87} Alterações dos processos de fusão, fissão e mitofagia, ou seja, da dinâmica mitocondrial,⁸⁸ são elencadas na progressão da senescência e na regulação da função de células tronco, promovendo a ativação de vias de parada do ciclo celular independente de DDR.^{31,89,90} O concomitante desbalanço bioenergético, por exemplo, é associado a supressão da AMPK, levando, em última instância, a ativação da via de p38-MAPK e aumento da atividade de NF-κB.⁸⁷ Ademais, a maior vazão de espécies reativas de oxigênio (ROS) também é associada ao estresse oxidativo e ativação de p38-MAPK sem necessariamente atingir o DNA genômico.³³ Nesse sentido, ADSC isoladas de indivíduos portadores de obesidade apresentam alterada dinâmica mitocondrial e maior produção de espécies reativas,⁹¹ sugerindo a aproximação com os dados acima elencados pertinentes a senescência. Com isso em vista, a avaliação da dinâmica e função mitocondriais são perspectivas interessantes a serem exploradas no nosso modelo.

4. CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS

Levando em consideração os dados aqui levantados, nosso trabalho reforça hipótese de que o ambiente inflamatório observado na obesidade é capaz de suscitar alterações celulares vinculadas ao estabelecimento do fenótipo senescente, similar ao envelhecimento fisiológico. Nós especulamos que o estabelecimento e sustentação da senescência em hADSCs, possa ser mediada por um mecanismo independente de dano ao DNA e associado a ativação do eixo p38-MAPK/NF- κ B, por sua vez vinculado a regulação positiva dos elementos de SASP. Conquanto nossos dados sejam insuficientes para concluir em definitivo o papel central dessa via e/ou as vias que levam a ativação desse eixo, levantam novos caminhos a serem explorados, como o envolvimento da dinâmica e função mitocondriais e a elementos chave presentes no plasma. Finalmente, nosso trabalho corrobora com dados anteriores pertinentes a modulação do TRF1 no contexto da obesidade, reforçando seu enquadramento como marcador do fenótipo senescente nesse contexto.

5. PERSPECTIVAS

- Avaliar o comprimento telomérico em hADSC expostas ao tratamento com plasma;
- Avaliar a cinética de expressão proteica de Lamin B1 em hADSC após exposição crônica ao tratamento;
- Avaliar a função mitocondrial e a expressão de genes associados dinâmica mitocondrial em hADSC expostas ao tratamento com plasma;
- Avaliar parâmetros de estresse oxidativo em hADSC tratadas com plasma;
- Avaliar a composição do plasma de indivíduos portadores de obesidade e eutróficos.

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ANEXO A

Comprovante de submissão do artigo científico

Aging Cell - Manuscript ID ACE-22-0305

Stephanie Waller <onbehalfof@manuscriptcentral.com>

Qui, 05/05/2022 16:40

Para: Rafael Moura Maurmann <Rafael.Maurmann@edu.pucrs.br>

ATENÇÃO: Esta mensagem foi enviada por um remetente que não pertence à PUCRS. Não clique em links ou abra anexos, a menos que reconheça a fonte deste e-mail e saiba que o conteúdo é seguro.

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05-May-2022

Dear Dr Maurmann

Your manuscript entitled "Senescence in adipose-derived stem cells by chronic exposure to an obesogenic environment" has been successfully submitted online and is presently being given full consideration for publication in Aging Cell.

Your manuscript ID is ACE-22-0305.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have ticked 'I believe a third-party will pay the publication charge for this article', the third party will need to confirm to the payment administrator that they will pay, BEFORE the paper proceeds to review. If your paper status shows as 'Pending payment agreement' for some time and does not progress to 'With Editor in Chief' please contact Stephanie Waller, Managing Editor on agingcell@kcl.ac.uk.

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Thank you for submitting your manuscript to Aging Cell.

Sincerely,
Aging Cell Editorial Office

ANEXO B
Carta de aprovação do SIPESq-PUCRS



S I P E S Q

Sistema de Pesquisas da PUCRS

Código SIPESQ: 10725

Porto Alegre, 17 de dezembro de 2021.

Prezado(a) Pesquisador(a),

A Comissão Científica da ESCOLA DE CIÊNCIAS DA SAÚDE E DA VIDA da PUCRS apreciou e aprovou o Projeto de Pesquisa "INDUÇÃO DO FENÓTIPO SENESCENTE EM CÉLULAS MESENQUIMAIAS NO CONTEXTO DA OBESIDADE".

Atenciosamente,

Comissão Científica da ESCOLA DE CIÊNCIAS DA SAÚDE E DA VIDA

ANEXO C

Parecer consubstanciado do CEP-PUCRS

PARECER CONSUBSTANCIADO DO CEP

DADOS DO PROJETO DE PESQUISA

Título da Pesquisa: Avaliação do comprimento dos telômeros em pacientes obesos com indicação de tratamento cirúrgico e sua evolução após a cirurgia bariátrica

Pesquisador: Alexandre Vontobel Padoin

Área Temática:

Versão: 3

CAAE: 29576014.4.1001.5336

Instituição Proponente: UNIAO BRASILEIRA DE EDUCACAO E ASSISTENCIA

Patrocinador Principal: Fundação de Amparo a Pesquisa do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul

DADOS DO PARECER

Número do Parecer: 760.537

Data da Relatoria: 31/08/2014

Apresentação do Projeto:

Sem ressalvas.

Objetivo da Pesquisa:

Sem ressalvas.

Avaliação dos Riscos e Benefícios:

Sem ressalvas.

Comentários e Considerações sobre a Pesquisa:

Sem ressalvas.

Considerações sobre os Termos de apresentação obrigatória:

Sem ressalvas.

Recomendações:

Recomenda-se que o endereço do Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa da PUCRS seja atualizado no Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido:

Av. Ipiranga 6681, Prédio 40 - Sala 505

Porto Alegre /RS - Brasil - CEP: 90619-900

Fone/Fax: (51) 3320.3345

Endereço: Av.Ipiranga, 6681, prédio 40, sala 505

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CEP: 90.619-900

UF: RS

Município: PORTO ALEGRE

Telefone: (51)3320-3345

Fax: (51)3320-3345

E-mail: cep@pucrs.br

Continuação do Parecer: 760.537

E-mail: cep@pucrs.br

Conclusões ou Pendências e Lista de Inadequações:

As pendências foram atendidas.

Situação do Parecer:

Aprovado

Necessita Apreciação da CONEP:

Não

Considerações Finais a critério do CEP:

PORTO ALEGRE, 21 de Agosto de 2014

Assinado por:
Rodolfo Herberto Schneider
(Coordenador)

Endereço: Av.Ipiranga, 6681, prédio 40, sala 505

Bairro: Partenon

CEP: 90.619-900

UF: RS

Município: PORTO ALEGRE

Telefone: (51)3320-3345

Fax: (51)3320-3345

E-mail: cep@pucrs.br

ANEXO D
Parecer consubstanciado do CEP-UFRGS

PARECER CONSUBSTANCIADO DO CEP

DADOS DO PROJETO DE PESQUISA

Título da Pesquisa: Determinação do comprimento de telômeros em diferentes populações celulares de obesos mórbidos

Pesquisador: Fatima Theresinha Costa Rodrigues Guma

Área Temática:

Versão: 2

CAAE: 26793114.0.0000.5347

Instituição Proponente: Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul Instituto de Ciências Básicas da

Patrocinador Principal: Financiamento Próprio

DADOS DO PARECER

Número do Parecer: 640.817

Data da Relatoria: 20/03/2014

Apresentação do Projeto:

A obesidade é uma desordem definida pelo índice de massa corporal (IMC), relacionada diretamente com a porcentagem de gordura corporal total. Além de contribuir para o surgimento de desequilíbrios metabólicos, a obesidade acelera os processos celulares do envelhecimento, reduzindo a expectativa de vida. Este estudo, no contexto de uma dissertação de mestrado, avaliará o tamanho de telômeros em indivíduos obesos.

Objetivo da Pesquisa:

O presente projeto visa agregar aos estudos com indivíduos obesos dados sobre o encurtamento dos telômeros.

Avaliação dos Riscos e Benefícios:

Riscos e benefícios adequadamente apresentados.

Comentários e Considerações sobre a Pesquisa:

Possui mérito.

Considerações sobre os Termos de apresentação obrigatória:

TCLE apresentado adequadamente

Concordância do ambulatório de Cirurgia Bariátrica do Hospital São Lucas da PUCRS presente.

Continuação do Parecer: 640.817

Recomendações:

Conclusões ou Pendências e Lista de Inadequações:

Projeto adequado e não apresentando pendências

Situação do Parecer:

Aprovado

Necessita Apreciação da CONEP:

Não

Considerações Finais a critério do CEP:

Aprovado

PORTO ALEGRE, 08 de Maio de 2014

Assinador por:
MARIA DA GRAÇA CORSO DA MOTTA
(Coordenador)

Endereço: Av. Paulo Gama, 110 - Sala 317 do Prédio Anexo 1 da Reitoria - Campus Centro

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ANEXO E

LISTA DE MATERIAIS

Anti-phospho-H2AX-PE	BD Biosciences, EUA, #562377 (clone N1-431)
Anti-phospho-p38-MAPK-Alexa Fluor 647	BD Biosciences, EUA, #562066 (clone 36/p38)
Anti-phospho-p65-BV421	BD Biosciences, EUA, #565446 (clone K10-895.12.50)
Anti-TRF1-Alexa Fluor 647	Santa Cruz Biotechnology, EUA, #SC271485 (clone G-7)
C₁₂FDG	Sigma Aldrich, EUA, #F2756
CBA Human Inflammatory Kit	BD Biosciences, EUA, #551811
Cloroquina	Sigma Aldrich, EUA, #C6628
CytoFix™ Fixation Buffer	BD Biosciences, EUA, #554655
DAPI	Thermo Fisher, EUA, #D1306
DMEM low glucose	Sigma Aldrich, EUA, # D5523
hADSC	Lonza, EUA, #PT-5006
High-Capacity cDNA RT kit	Applied Biosystems, EUA #4368814
MasterMix 2X Taqman/Rox	Quatro G, Brasil, #100030
MitoSOX™ Red	Molecular Probes, EUA, #M36008
Penicilina/streptomicina	Gibco, EUA, #15070
Perm/Wash™ Buffer	BD Biosciences, EUA, #554723
Phosflow™ Perm Buffer III	BD Biosciences, EUA, #558050
Soro Fetal Bovino	Cripon Biotecnologia, Brasil, #FB 0010S
Triton™ X-100	Sigma Aldrich, EUA, #11332481001
TRIzol LS®	Invitrogen, EUA, #10296010
Trypsin-EDTA (10X)	Gibco, EUA, #15400



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