# Title page

Title:

Gonadotropin and Oxygen Regulation of Leukemia Inhibitory Factor Secretion from Rhesus Macaque Granulosa Cells

Title: State the key point of the manuscript. Indicate the species studied and avoid uncommon abbreviations. Maximum 120 characters including spaces.

**Authors:**

Heather A. Talbott 1, \*, Adam Krieg1,2, Sweta Ravisankar1, John S. Davis3,4 and Jon Hennebold1, 2

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Affiliations:

1 Division of Reproductive & Developmental Sciences, Oregon National Primate Research Center, Oregon Health & Science University, Beaverton OR

2 Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland OR

3 Olson Center for Women’s Health, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha NE

4 Veterans Affairs Nebraska Western Iowa Health Care System, Omaha NE

\* Current Address: Wyoming Public Health Laboratories, Cheyenne, WY

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*Correspondence*. In a footnote, provide complete contact information including street address for the corresponding author.

Corresponding Author: Jon D. Hennebold, 505 NW 185th Ave, Beaverton OR, 97006 email: henneboj@ohsu.edu

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Regulation of granulosa cell LIF synthesis

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# **Abstract (250 words)**

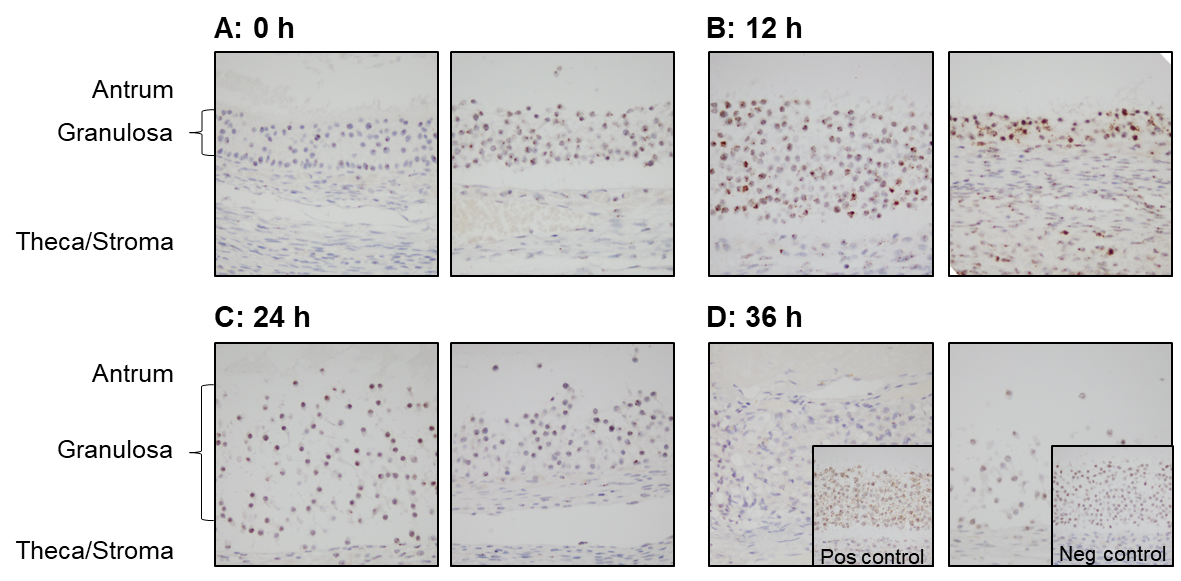
Leukemia inhibitory factor (LIF) is required for rhesus macaque ovulation. However, it is unclear which cells within the ovarian follicle produce LIF and what factors control its synthesis. Rhesus ovaries collected prior to (0 h) or 12, 24, and 36 h after receiving an ovulatory bolus of human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) were assessed by RNAScope to determine LIF mRNA cellular localization. Media was assessed for LIF, vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), and progesterone (P4) after treating rhesus macaque non-luteinized and luteinized granulosa cells and KGN cells, a steroidogenic human granulosa-like tumor cell. Culture treatments included hCG (0, 40 IU/mL) alone or with varying concentrations of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH; 8.2, or 40 mIU/mL). The different treatments were incubated in the presence of low and high oxygen concentrations (1%, or 20%, respectively). LIF (0, or 1 ng/mL for luteinized granulosa cells), and forskolin (0, 1 µM for KGN cells). Granulosa cells of the dominate follicle express peak LIF mRNA levels 24h post ovulatory stimulus, visualized by RNAscope. Rhesus non-luteinized granulosa cells increase LIF secretion in response to hCG (3.4-fold) and FSH (XX-fold). However, luteinized granulosa cells did not secrete LIF either basally or in response to hCG or FSH. Non-luteinized and luteinized granulosa cells both secrete VEGF in response to hCG and FSH. Rhesus non-luteinized granulosa cells increase secretion of LIF when cultured in 1% O2, furthermore LIF secretion increased synergistically (XX-fold) when treated with both hCG and 1% O2.

Rhesus non-luteinized granulosa cells respond to in vitro hCG treatment by: 1) increasing LIF secretion 3.4-fold relative to cells cultured in the absence of hCG, 1%, 2) When non-luteinized granulosa cells were cultured in 1% O2, both basal and hCG-stimulated LIF secretion were increased 1.3-fold compared to 20% O2. The combination of hCG and 1% O2 interacted synergistically to increase LIF secretion. Incubating NLGCs in the presence of both FSH and hCG did not increase LIF or progesterone levels above what was observed when the cells were treated with hCG alone. Thus, in vivo it is likely the granulosa cells are a significant source of the LIF that is found in follicular fluid after an ovulatory stimulus.

# Graphical Abstract

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# Figures and Figure Legends



### Figure 1 – Determination of Ovarian Cell Type Responsible for LIF Secretion

RNAscope analysis of rhesus macaque follicles collected at indicated times after hCG treatment, the ovarian sections were probed for LIF. Panel A: Ovaries collected prior to hCG administration, Panel B: ovaries collected 12 h after hCG treatment, Panel C: ovaries collected 24 h after hCG. Panel D: ovaries collected 24 h after hCG, insets show positive control probe (PPIB, cyclophilin B), and negative control probe (DapB, only found in bacteria).



### Figure 2 – Gonadotropin regulation of rhesus macaque granulosa cells

Nonluteinized granulosa cells (left panels) and 36 h luteinized granulosa cells (right panels) cultured for 24 h at 20% O2 with 0 IU/mL hCG or 40 IU/mL and 0, 0.5, or 2.5 ng/mL FSH. Panel A: LIF concentrations in culture media (pg/mL). Panel B: VEGF concentrations (pg/mL). Panel C: Progesterone concentrations. Panel D: Normalized mRNA expression of hCG treatment marker HSD3B2, note the different scales for non-luteinized and luteinized granulosa cells. Scatterplots of values are superimposed on bar graphs indicating condition mean, 0 IU/mL hCG (●), 40 IU/mL hCG (○), n = 4. Significance was determined using three-way ANOVA with matching, α = 0.05

P-values determined for main effects and interactions of nonluteinized granulosa cells: LIF (FSH = 0.006, hCG = 0.03, FSH x hCG = 0.11), VEGF (FSH = 0.002, hCG = 0.004, FSH x hCG = 0.005), progesterone (FSH = 0.007, hCG = 0.02, FSH x hCG = 0.01), and HSD3B2 mRNA (FSH = ?, hCG = ?, FSH x hCG = ?). P-values determined for main effects and interactions of luteinized granulosa cells: LIF (FSH = 0.9, hCG = 0.3, FSH x hCG = .2), VEGF (FSH = <0.0001, hCG = 0.02, FSH x hCG = 0.007), progesterone (FSH = 0.1, hCG = <0.0001, FSH x hCG = 0.02), and HSD3B2 mRNA (FSH = ?, hCG = ?, FSH x hCG = ?).

Conditions that differ significantly are labeled with no letters in common, significance determined by Tukey’s multiple comparisons test, α = 0.05.

### Figure 3 – Oxygen regulation of rhesus macaque granulosa cells



Nonluteinized granulosa cells (NLGC, left panels) and 36 h luteinized granulosa cells (LGC, right panels) cultured for 24 h at 20% O2 or 1% O2 with 0 or 40 hCG (IU/mL). Panel A: Culture media concentration of LIF (pg/mL). Panel B: Culture media concentration of VEGF (pg/mL). Panel C: Progesterone concentration in culture media. Panel D: Normalized mRNA expression of hypoxia marker KDM3A. n = 4

### Figure 4 – Gonadotropin and oxygen regulation of KGN human granulosa tumor cell line



KGN cells cultured for 24 h at 20% O2 or 1% O2 with 0 or 40 hCG (IU/mL). Panel A: Culture media concentration of LIF (pg/mL). Panel B: Progesterone concentration in culture media. Panel D: Normalized mRNA expression of hypoxia marker KDM3A and hCG treatment marker HSD3B2.

### Figure 5 – LIF regulation of rhesus macaque granulosa cells



Nonluteinized granulosa cells (NLGC, left panels) and 36 h luteinized granulosa cells (LGC, right panels) cultured for 24 h with 0 or 1 ng/mL LIF at 20% O2 or 1% O2 with 0 or 40 hCG (IU/mL). Panel A: VEGF concentration (pg/mL) in culture media. Panel B: Progesterone concentration in culture media. Panel C: Normalized mRNA expression of LIF treatment marker SOCS3. Panel D: Normalized mRNA expression of hypoxia marker KDM3A and hCG treatment marker HSD3B. n = 4

# Introduction

Luteinizing hormone (LH) stimulates ovulation and induces an inflammatory-type reaction in the follicle, which is necessary for fertility. During ovulation, LH induces secretion of critical intrafollicular factors, which notably include inflammatory cytokines. However, the functional roles for most ovulation-associated cytokines are unknown in non-human primates and humans. There is a critical need to determine the function of LH-stimulated follicular cytokines in order to determine essential pathways for ovulation that could serve as targets for regulation of female fertility.

Follicular LIF levels increase 15-fold in rhesus macaques [1] and humans [2] after an ovulatory stimulus. We determined that the complete canonical LIF-signaling pathway is present in the rhesus macaque follicle during ovulation [3]. Members include the LIF receptor, co-receptor (gp130), and the LIF-activated transcription factor STAT3 (signal transducer and activator of transcription 3). Most notably, LIF signaling is required for rhesus macaque ovulation, which our laboratory recently published [1]. Although LIF follicular concentrations are positively correlated with embryo quality, the downstream functional LIF effects are unknown in the follicle.

Thus, the objective of this study was to determine factors that promote LIF signaling in rhesus macaque granulosa cells. The hypothesis was that secretion of the cytokine leukemia inhibitory factor (LIF) was regulated by processes known to be important for ovulation, specifically LHCGR activation and low oxygen tension. Additionally, LIF activates canonical inflammatory transcription factors and modulates progesterone biosynthesis in the rhesus macaque follicular granulosa cells.

# Materials and Methods

## Animal Protocols

All animal protocols have been previously described in detail including the housing and general care of rhesus macaques(*Macaca mulatta*) [4], monitoring of serum hormone levels [1], controlled ovulation [5], controlled ovarian stimulation [6], rhesus granulosa cell isolation [7], and rhesus granulosa cell culture [7,8]. Definitions and key parameters are briefly described below.

Controlled ovulation allows for the natural selection and gonadotropin-supported development of a single follicle and allows for precision treatment of ovulatory stimuli and subsequent collection of the follicle. Adult female monkeys menstrual cycles were monitored by menses and serum P4 and E2. When E2 levels reached 95-120 pg/mL a GnRH antagonist is administered to prevent a spontaneous LH surge, and FSH and hLH (30 IU each; Repronex, Ferring Pharmaceuticals, Parsippany, NJ) were administered over the next 36 h to support follicle development. On the third day of the protocol, the animals received an ovulatory bolus of hCG (1000 IU hCG; Novarel; Ferring Pharmaceuticals). The ovary containing the dominate follicle was collected at 12 h, 24 h, or 36 h after hCG administration; as well, ovaries were collected from animals that did not receive hCG (0 h). Ovaries were fixed by paraformaldehyde/sucrose, paraffin embedded, sectioned, and imaged as previously described [1].

Controlled ovarian stimulation is a technique used to induce ovulation by multiple ovarian follicles for collection of multiple oocytes, and large quantities of granulosa cells. Within 3 days of menstruation onset, animals received twice daily injections of hFSH (30 IU, 0800 and 1600 h) for six days. On the seventh day the GnRH antagonist acyline was administered (75 µg/kg, 0800 h) along with FSH and hLH (30 IU each, 0800 and 1600 h; Repronex, Ferring Pharmaceuticals, Parsippany, NJ). On the eighth day, the animals received an ovulatory bolus of hCG (1000 IU hCG; Novarel; Ferring Pharmaceuticals). Cumulus oocyte complexes and granulosa cells were aspirated by laproscopic techniques 36 h after hCG administration for luteinized granulosa cells.

Granulosa cells were isolated from follicular aspirates by first removing oocytes, the remaining cells were pelleted and resuspended in Ham F10 medium. Granulosa cells were cleared of red blood cells by layering the cell suspension over 30% Percol in Hanks Balanced Salt Solution and centrifuging for 30 min at 500 xg. Cells at the interface were collected, diluted 1:5 in Ham F-10 and pelleted by centrifugation at 170 xg.

Rhesus granulosa cells were assessed for viability and cultured in fibronectin-coated 48-well plates (5E04 live cells/well; live cells/mL, live cells/cm2), or fibronectin-coated 96-well plates ( live cells/well, live cells/mL, live cells/cm2) in DMEM/F12 [15 mM HEPES, 100 U penicillin/100 lg/ml streptomycin, ITS liquid media supplement, 0.028 mg/ml LDL, 0.002 mg/ml aprotinin] in a humidified incubator at 37 °C/5% CO2. Treatments were added within 2 h of plating. Twenty-four hours after treatments were added, culture media was collected and TRIzol was added directly to wells (100 µL/well for 48-well plates or 50 uL/well for 96-well plates). Media was immediately frozen at -20 until analysis. Plates were immediately frozen at -80 °C until analysis.

IUCAC Approvals:

## RNAScope

## Culture Media Analysis

The Endocrine Technologies Support Core Laboratory (ETSL) at the ONPRC performed the ELISAs for

## qPCR

## Statistics

# Results

## Visualization and quantification of luteal tissue LDs

# Discussion

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Individuals who have provided important contributions, such as reagents, services, editorial assistance or conceptual advice, to the research described in the manuscript but are not co-authors should be acknowledged here. List funding support on the title page.

# Conflict of interest

Provide a statement indicating any potential or actual conflicts of interest with respect to the work reported in the article.

# Author contributions

Indicate the contributions to the manuscript made by each author, identified by initials corresponding to first and last names.

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# Tables

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