Local expression of SOD1G93A mutant protein triggers neuromuscular junction dismantlement

<u>Gabriella Dobrowolny</u>¹ - Martina Martini¹ - Vanina Romanello² - Simona Boncompagni³ -Laura Pietrangelo³ - Marina Bouchè⁴ - Rüdiger Rudolf⁵ - Feliciano Protasi³ - Marco Sandri² - Antonio Musarò¹

¹ Center for Life Nano Science at Sapienza, Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia, DAHFMO-Unit of Histology and Medical Embryology, Sapienza University of Rome, Roma, Italia – ² Venetian Institute of Molecular Medicine, Dulbecco Telethon Institute, Department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Padova, Padova, Italia - ³ Cesi – Center for Research on Aging, Department of Neuroscience, Imaging and Clinical Sciences, "G. D'Annunzio" University of Chieti-Pescara, Chieti, Italia - ⁴ DAHFMO-Unit of Histology and Medical Embryology, Sapienza University of Rome, Roma, Italia – ⁵ Institut fur Angewandte Informatik, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Institut Fu[°] R Toxikologie und Genetik, Univ\ersity of Applied Sciences Mannheim and University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germania

The alteration of Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS) homeostasis plays a causal role in several chronic pathology such as aging and neurodegenerative diseases like Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Although it is recognized that axon and synapses are first cellular sites of degeneration in ALS disease, controversy exists on whether pathological events initially begin at the NMJs and then, in a dying back phenomena, contribute to motor neuron degeneration. Moreover, the precise molecular mechanisms of pathology-associated deterioration in neuromuscular system have remained elusive (1). Here we provide evidences that muscle specific accumulation of SOD1G93A in the transgenic mice model MLC/SOD1G93A (2) induces mitochondria dysfunction and triggers NMJ dismantlement. Further, we demonstrate that treatment of MLC/SOD1G93A mice with Trolox, a potent antioxidant, is sufficient to rescue mitochondria and NMJ defects in the MLC/SOD1G93A mice, stabilizing musclenerve connection. The analysis of potential molecular mechanisms that mediate the toxic activity of SOD1 revealed the activation of specific Protein Kinase as a downstream player of NMJ dismantlement. Overall our data demonstrate that muscle specific expression of SOD1G93A mutation causes mitochondrial impairment and NMJ dismantlement, suggesting that muscle defects and NMJs alteration precede motor neuron degeneration rather than resulting from it.

References

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Keywords

Oxidative stress; NMJ; aging; ALS; muscle.