

## Review Article

# Beyond the matrix: structural and physiological advancements in mitochondrial calcium signaling

 **Melissa J.S. MacEwen** and  **Yasemin Sancak**

Department of Pharmacology, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195, U.S.A.

**Correspondence:** Yasemin Sancak ([sancak@uw.edu](mailto:sancak@uw.edu))



Mitochondrial calcium ( $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ) signaling has long been known to regulate diverse cellular functions, ranging from ATP production via oxidative phosphorylation, to cytoplasmic  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling to apoptosis. Central to mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling is the mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uniporter complex (MCUC) which enables  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  flux from the cytosol into the mitochondrial matrix. Several pivotal discoveries over the past 15 years have clarified the identity of the proteins comprising MCUC. Here, we provide an overview of the literature on mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  biology and highlight recent findings on the high-resolution structure, dynamic regulation, and new functions of MCUC, with an emphasis on publications from the last five years. We discuss the importance of these findings for human health and the therapeutic potential of targeting mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling.

## Introduction

Mitochondrial calcium ( $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ) uptake was first observed as an *in vitro* phenomenon in the early 1960s [1,2]. It was quickly recognized as an important regulator of mitochondrial bioenergetics through  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -mediated activation of the TCA cycle. This foundational work paved the way for decades of research on the functions of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake in physiology and diseases. Yet, the molecular identity of the uniporter remained a mystery for decades. The proteins responsible for mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  influx into the mitochondrial matrix — the mitochondrial calcium uniporter (MCU) and its regulatory proteins — were identified over the last 13 years. These discoveries dramatically accelerated efforts to understand the regulation and function of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  influx across the inner mitochondrial membrane (IMM) is now recognized to govern numerous aspects of biology, ranging from ATP production via oxidative phosphorylation, to cytoplasmic  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling in a variety of tissues [3–6], to regulation of immunological synapses [7]. High mitochondrial matrix [ $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ] can also lead to opening of the mitochondrial permeability transition pore (mPTP), a structure that is responsible for rapid release of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and other small molecules from the mitochondrial matrix to the cytosol, which can cause cell death [8]. Mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling has also been found to play a significant role in human diseases including neurological disorders such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Friedreich's ataxia, Charcot–Marie–Tooth disease [9], Alzheimer's disease [10], as well as heart failure [11] and lysosomal storage disorders [12].

The field of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  biology continues to advance rapidly. Here, we review recent publications centered on the MCU, with an emphasis on its structure, novel regulatory mechanisms, and its emerging roles in development, mitochondrial diseases and immunity. We contextualize these findings in the broader field, while emphasizing publications from the past five years. Many excellent reviews concerning the biology of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling were published within this same time frame. Of note are those concerning the mechanisms of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling in health and disease, as well as those exploring the role of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling in cardiac disease, diabetes, cellular senescence, cancer, and neurodegeneration. We encourage the reader to pursue these reviews to gain an even deeper understanding of this rich field [13–19].

Received: 31 January 2023

Revised: 8 March 2023

Accepted: 10 March 2023

Version of Record published:  
24 March 2023

## Mechanisms of mitochondrial $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ influx, efflux, and sequestration

To maintain homeostasis, mitochondria must precisely balance the influx, sequestration, and release of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  into and from the mitochondrial matrix. Characterizing the machinery and chemistry central to these processes has clarified the regulation and biological implications of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  cycling and signaling. The main players of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  homeostasis are shown in Figure 1 and described in more detail below.

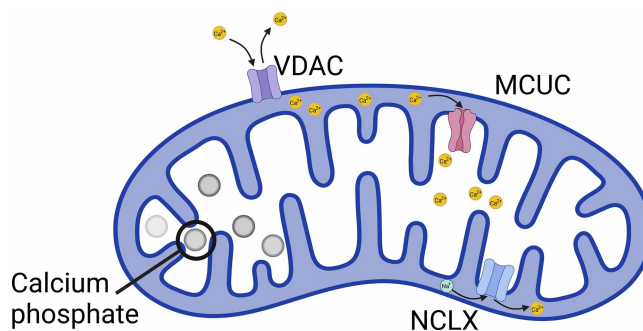
### Mechanisms of influx

Mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake from the cytosol to the mitochondrial matrix faces two primary physical barriers: the outer mitochondrial membrane (OMM) and the IMM.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transport across the OMM remains poorly understood as the OMM is not believed to have a specific  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transporter [20]. Rather, the voltage-dependent anion channel (VDAC) is believed to passively permit the diffusion of metabolites and solutes such as  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ . VDAC was recently demonstrated to form multi-protein complexes with the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channels of other organelles, thus facilitating highly efficient  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transfer through the OMM [21].

Once past the OMM, the vast majority of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  travels from the intermembrane space (IMS) to the mitochondrial matrix via rapid bulk entry through the MCU. MCU is a pore-forming protein that resides in the IMM and is the eponymous protein of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter complex (MCUC). MCU-facilitated  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  flux is dependent on mitochondrial membrane potential. The uniporter is a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  selective channel, and patch-clamp experiments of the IMM reveal that it has a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  affinity of 2 nM or less [22].

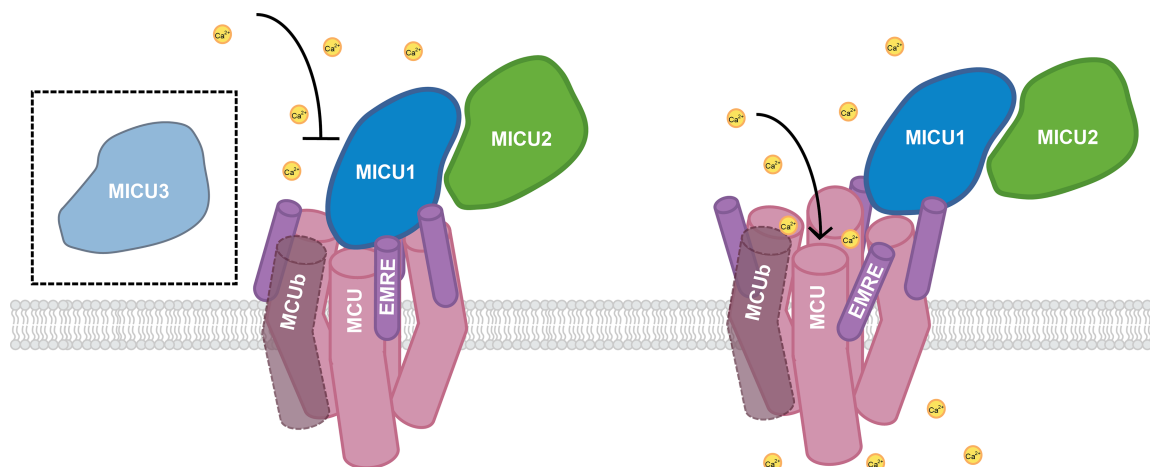
Additional core MCUC proteins include Mitochondrial Calcium Uptake (MICU) homologs MICU1–3, Essential MCU Regulator (EMRE), and MCUB. The MICU proteins play distinct, crucial roles in setting the threshold for uniporter  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake and its potentiation. They also contribute to specific  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  regulation of the channel through their EF-hand  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -binding domains [23–30]. The consensus of the field is that, when the cytosolic  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  is low, MICU1 blocks the MCU pore to prevent mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  overload [23,27,28,31]. When IMS  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  increases,  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  binds to the EF-hands of the MICU proteins. MICU1 — which forms a disulfide-bonded heterodimer with either MICU2 or MICU3 — then dissociates from MCU, enabling  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  conductance. Recent structural work supports this consensus, as discussed in detail below. EMRE, a small transmembrane protein, is required for both MCU–MICU1 interaction and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  conductance through MCU [32–34]. MCUB is a paralog of MCU, but it does not form a functional  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel and seems to have a negative regulatory role in the MCUC. MICU3, a MICU1 paralog, is mostly found in brain tissue and enhances  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake in neuronal mitochondria [35] (Figure 2).

Structural and biochemical studies have shown that MCU and its associated proteins form the MCUC, a large holocomplex whose structure and interactions are discussed in detail below. Two other IMM proteins, Mitochondrial Calcium Uniporter Regulator 1 (MCUR1) and Solute Carrier 25A23, also regulate the activity of



**Figure 1. Mechanisms of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  influx, efflux, and sequestration.**

Mitochondria are organelles with an outer mitochondrial membrane (OMM) and inner mitochondrial membrane (IMM).  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  ions likely diffuse through the OMM via VDAC proteins. Bulk transport of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  across the IMM and into the mitochondrial matrix requires the mitochondrial calcium uniporter complex (MCUC), a highly selective ion channel. NCLX, a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$  exchanger, enables the majority of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  efflux from the mitochondria. Calcium phosphate deposits within the mitochondria sequester  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and may serve as  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  reservoirs that can be mobilized if needed.



**Figure 2. The mitochondrial calcium uniporter complex.**

The mitochondrial calcium uniporter complex (MCUC) is composed of membrane proteins MCU, MCUb, EMRE and IMS-localized proteins MICU1 and MICU2. MCU is the pore-forming protein and requires EMRE to form a functional channel in multicellular and some unicellular organisms. The incorporation of MCUb into the MCUC modulates mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  flux and prevents mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  overload. The MICU proteins — MICU1, MICU2, and MICU3 — block the entrance of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  into the pore, except during  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling events. During signaling events, the MICU proteins dissociate from the MCUC pore, remaining tethered via MICU1–EMRE binding. MICU1 forms a disulfide-bonded heterodimer with either MICU2 or MICU3, though MICU3 has only been identified in brain tissue. Arrows indicate the presence or absence of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transport, with MCUC illustrated in a closed, non-conductive conformation (left) or an open,  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -conducting conformation (right).

the uniporter despite not being a part of the core complex [36,37]. MCUR1 is a scaffold protein that binds to MCU and EMRE and is required for MCUC assembly. SLC25A23 augments mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake, however the exact mechanism of this regulation remains elusive.

## Mechanisms of $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ efflux and sequestration

Matrix  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  is maintained at a far lower resting concentration than the concentration reached after a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling event [38]. This regulation is crucial; excessive mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  accumulation can be hazardous, as it can lead to mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  overload or opening of the permeability transition pore [39]. To restore resting  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  levels, exchangers and antiporters facilitate the exit of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  from mitochondria. The  $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$  exchanger NCLX is the dominant  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  efflux pathway [40]. NCLX is expressed on the IMM of many tissues, in an expression pattern similar to that of MCU [41,42].  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  ions are also stored as calcium phosphate deposits in the mitochondrial matrix. Fast sequestration of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  in the form of calcium phosphate after mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry is thought to play an important role in reducing the concentration of free matrix  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$ . These deposits are also thought to serve as  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  reservoirs that can be mobilized if needed. Although the function of mitochondrial calcium phosphate deposits is still under debate, their visualization using cryo-scanning transmission electron tomography shows that these deposits form independently of MCU, disappear if mitochondrial membrane potential is lost, and do not preferentially form in mitochondria in a particular cellular location [43].

## High-resolution uniporter structures unveil new regulators and mechanisms

A remarkable series of studies have recently shed light on the structures of the individual proteins of the MCUC, as well as the uniporter holocomplex in its  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -bound and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -free states [30,44–50]. By defining specific interactions of the uniporter proteins and identifying a lipid molecule that interacts with the uniporter channel, these publications have helped to develop a more refined model of uniporter regulation and the functions of its individual subunits.

In the wake of these publications and their predecessors, the following is clear: MCU is a transmembrane protein that spans the IMM and contains two transmembrane-spanning helices, TM1 and TM2. TM2 of MCU forms the protein's  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -conducting pore. Although MCU was known to oligomerize prior to 2018 [32,51], cryo-EM structures established the presence of a 'dimer of dimer' structure composed of four MCU protomers [44–47], with different symmetric arrangements of the soluble and transmembrane domains [47]. There are four EMRE subunits per functional channel. Structurally, EMRE participates in the formation of functional channels by interacting with MCU at the matrix channel opening. This interaction stabilizes a region at the inner leaflet of the IMM, which is otherwise flexible. This region is proposed to occlude the matrix side of the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pore, preventing escape of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  ions into the matrix and regulating channel gating through binding-induced structural changes in the channel [50,52]. Related work from our laboratory independently validated several of these structural findings biochemically, by using a suite of protein chimeras composed of domains from *H. sapiens* MCU (HsMCU) and *D. discoideum* MCU (DdMCU) [53]. *D. discoideum* MCU is functional in the absence of EMRE, which enabled us to characterize the aspects of HsMCU that make it dependent on EMRE for  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  conductance. This work led to the identification of a 10-amino acid region in HsMCU that renders it EMRE-dependent; we termed this region EMRE dependence domain (EDD). This biochemically identified EDD region overlaps with a 6-amino acid stretch first identified by Wang *et al.* [50] in a mammalian EMRE–MCU structure that they show is important for EMRE function.

A second function of EMRE is facilitating the interaction of MICU1 with MCU through EMRE's positively charged DDD domain that faces the IMS. Using structural data from the MICU1–MICU2 heterodimer and *in vitro* binding experiments, Wu *et al.* [49] showed that the DDD domain interacts with a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced alkaline stretch in MICU1. This  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -enhanced interaction between EMRE and MICU1 is thought to prevent complete dissociation of MICU1 from the complex in the presence of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ . Two publications also suggested another important function of the EMRE–MICU1 interaction: potentiation of uniporter activity [30,54]. The authors propose that, by binding to EMRE when  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  is present, MICU1 alters MCU–EMRE interaction, which results in increased uniporter conductance.

## Controlling MCUC composition and stability to tune mitochondrial $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ uptake

The activity of the uniporter varies across physiological conditions and cell types [55]. Recent work highlighted the importance of two primary modes of fine-tuning uniporter activity: steady state differences in the expression of MCUC proteins across tissues; and regulation of MCUC proteins in response to stress, disease, or other alterations to cellular or organismal physiology.

MCU and MICU1 are posttranslationally modified in response to various stimuli, which lead to changes in uniporter activity and have been reviewed before [56]. Here, we focus on new research indicating that changes to uniporter subunit composition or altered stability of the complex is a novel mode of uniporter regulation. Such changes often happen at the level of individual complex proteins, and can have dramatic, long-lasting effects on cellular and tissue wide  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling and metabolism. For example, during chronic stress, increased MCUB incorporation into the complex limits mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  overload and counteracts mitochondrial damage, as seen in mice in response to cardiac injury [57]. Consistent with this observation, Huo *et al.* [58] demonstrated that cardiomyocyte-specific MCUB knockout mice exhibited increased pathological cardiac remodeling and infarct expansion following ischemic injury. This same group found the inverse in cardiomyocyte specific MCUB overexpressing mice, highlighting the importance of proper uniporter composition for homeostasis.

A similar mechanism of altered uniporter composition is observed in failing human heart tissue. The relative mRNA abundance of MICU1 to MCU is tissue-specific and is particularly low in cardiac muscle. During heart failure, MICU1/2 expression increases, while MCU expression stays the same. This altered composition likely changes the gating and activity of the uniporter in failing human hearts and may contribute to decreased cardiac contractile function in heart failure [59]. MICU3 is another uniporter regulatory protein whose presence in the complex substantially alters the physiological performance of specific tissues. MICU3 is a paralog of MICU1 and MICU2. It is mostly found in the brain and binds specifically to MICU1 to enhance  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake [35]. If MICU3 is silenced in primary cortical neurons, the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signals spurred by synaptic activity are impaired. Finally, increased MICU1 expression and ensuing changes in  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling and metabolism are important for fibroblast to myofibroblast differentiation [60].

The precise regulation of EMRE has important consequences for human health. Under normal physiological conditions, EMRE that does not complex with MCU is rapidly degraded by the m-AAA protease [61]. This process is essential to maintaining the balance of MCU–EMRE that are assembled with an adequate ratio of MICU1/MICU2 ‘gatekeeper’ subunits [62]. Mutations in mitochondrial m-AAA proteases, which are linked to neurodegeneration in spinocerebellar ataxia (SCA28) and hereditary spastic paraplegia (HSP7), lead to accumulation of EMRE and formation of excess MCU–EMRE complexes that are not gated by MICUs. This eventually leads to unregulated mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry and overload. This has been proposed to contribute to neurodegeneration in these debilitating diseases.

The stability of MCU is also carefully regulated, as recently shown by two elegant studies. In 2020, using functional experiments in a yeast heterologous uniporter expression system, Ghosh *et al.* [63] showed that cardiolipin plays an essential role in stabilizing MCU. This finding may clarify the pathologically low cardiolipin and uniporter levels observed in patients with Barth syndrome, a disease characterized by partial loss of cardiolipin. Furthermore, Dr. Chaudhuri and coworkers discovered a novel link between OXPHOS function and MCU. In healthy cells, reactive oxygen species that leak from Complex I of the electron transport chain damage MCU and lead to its degradation. In Complex I deficiency, MCU is stabilized, and the number of functional uniporter channels increases, leading to an increase in overall MCUC activity. Most importantly, the authors showed that uniporter function prolongs survival of OXPHOS-deficient mice and *Drosophila*, thereby identifying a previously unknown function for the uniporter [64].

## Expanding the functions of mitochondrial $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ flux

Targeted perturbation of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  flux in animal models and phenotypes of patients with uniporter gene mutations highlight the importance of this pathway in development, immunity, neuromuscular system and metabolic health. Likely due to highly tissue-specific nature of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling and mitochondrial functions, uniporter activity has been shown to regulate distinct pathways across different tissue types. Despite this functional diversity, altered uniporter regulation fundamentally produces a phenotype through either altered metabolic regulation, and/or altered cellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling. Here, we non-exhaustively highlight recent findings on the physiological roles of MCU.

## Emerging roles of the uniporter in early development and differentiation

The first report of MCU knockout (KO) mice was somewhat of a surprise for mitochondrial community: loss of MCU was compatible with life, but only on a mixed background [65]. Since then, the same phenotype of viability on a mixed background has been shown for EMRE KO mice [66]. MCU loss is also tolerated in the fly and the worm [55,67]. Despite being viable, loss of MCU causes reduced viability in the mouse. The KO mice are observed at much lower ratios than expected from a heterozygous mating [68]. This suggests the presence of modifiers (genetic or environmental) that allow survival of animals past a certain developmental stage in the absence of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake. Important roles for mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake in early development were recently shown in different model organisms and systems. In *Xenopus* eggs, early cell divisions after fertilization require ROS generated by the mitochondria, which is fueled by MCU-mediated mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake [69]. Modulation of MCU activity is also observed in human embryonic stem cells (hESCs): repression of MICU1 by Foxd1 is essential for proper differentiation of hESCs into induced pluripotent stem cells [70] (hiPSCs). The authors in this study conclude that the presence of MICU1 modulates periodic cytosolic  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  oscillations necessary for differentiation. These new roles of the uniporter in early development help explain the viability (albeit low) of MCU KO animals on a mixed background. Nevertheless, how MCU KO animals survive, and what type of compensatory changes take place in these survivors, are still unknown.

Although no MCU mutation has ever been identified in humans, a recent preprint by Bulthuis *et al.* [71] reported two patients with EMRE mutations that lead to a loss of EMRE protein. Muscle breakdown was a common phenotype observed in both patients, who otherwise showed diverse symptoms. In addition, several patients with MICU1 mutations have been reported to date (OMIM #615673), most of which present with neuromuscular problems. A neuron-specific MICU1 KO mouse model recapitulates the phenotypes observed in patients and whole body MICU1 KO mice, suggesting that neuronal abnormalities are the main cause of the observed phenotypes in patients [72]. Nevertheless, phenotypic diversity observed in humans again underlines the importance of other modifiers and compensatory mechanisms in mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  regulation. For example, the appearance and bodyweight of MICU1 KO mice become more similar to wildtype mice over time due to down-regulation of EMRE expression [27].

## Emerging tissue-specific roles of the uniporter

Several recent studies highlight the diverse, tissue-specific functions of the uniporter. They also point to a need for further research on uniporter regulation and function, as several contradictory phenotypes associated with the uniporter have been reported. For example, in a 2020 publication, Flicker *et al.* [73] generated a brown adipose tissue (BAT)-specific MCU KO mouse and reported that MCU is not required for brown fat energetics. In contrast, Xue *et al.* [74] found that in the BAT, the uniporter function is important for thermogenesis in response to cold. The authors suggested that these disparities are due to the differences in the genetic background of the mice used in these two papers, but they could also stem from experimental differences such as fasting before cold exposure in the second study. In addition, several papers reported contradicting phenotypes associated with loss of uniporter function in the heart. As proposed by Garbincius *et al.* [75], some of these differences can be attributed to cellular adaptations in response to chronic loss of uniporter function but are absent from its acute inhibition.

The importance of metabolism, mitochondria and cellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling for proper functioning of the innate immunity is well appreciated [76]. The uniporter sits at the intersection of these regulators, and several papers showed important roles of the uniporter in different aspects of cellular responses to pathogens. In neutrophils, activation of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake stimulates cell polarization and chemotaxis, which are required for effective removal of pathogenic species [77]. In addition, increased uniporter function is associated with phagocytosis-induced activation of NLRP3 inflammasome in macrophages [78]. Conversely, reduced uniporter activity due to MCUb expression decreases inflammation in macrophages [79]. Moreover, in epithelial cells that express pathogenic cystic fibrosis receptor, bacterial infection activates NLRP3 in an MCU-dependent manner [80]. Even though MCU activation is associated with worse cellular outcomes and more pathogen survival in the literature so far, whether modulating its activity pharmacologically would be beneficial or damaging to the cells is likely to depend on many factors at play, such as the duration of infection and detrimental effects of prolonged inflammation.

## Concluding remarks

Identification of the MCUC protein components accelerated research on numerous aspects of uniporter biology and led to exciting discoveries on the structure, regulation, and function of the uniporter, as well as its roles in diseases. Nevertheless, several fundamental questions about mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling and MCUC regulation at the level of transcription, post-transcription, translation, and posttranslation remain unanswered. For example, the presence of yet-uncharacterized, uniporter-independent mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -entry pathways have been reported [81,82]. Identification of these pathways could alter our understanding of how mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling reflects and responds to mitochondrial and cellular needs. Furthermore, upstream signals that change MCUC protein transcription or the generation of alternative splice variants remain to be characterized and may help explain tissue-specific differences in uniporter function [83].

Finally, while mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling is generally considered necessary for proper mitochondrial and cellular health, the viability of MCU KO cells in mixed background mice suggests that the loss of uniporter function may be tolerated in normal tissues and may even have protective effects in the context of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced mitochondrial damage, as observed in hereditary ataxias. Though the therapeutic potential of MCUC inhibition is made uncertain by the diverse roles of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  flux in different tissues, and the cellular adaptations to altered uniporter function, the MCUC remains a promising therapeutic target. The field of mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  signaling continues to develop rapidly and deepen our understanding of the mitochondria's role in health and disease. We look forward to what is to come.

## Competing Interests

The authors declare that there are no competing interests associated with the manuscript.

## Funding

M.J.S.M. was supported by NIH grant 1F31AG072716-01A1. Y.S. is supported by NIH grant DP2ES032761 and is a Pew Biomedical Scholar.

## Acknowledgements

We thank Timothy Locke and David Shechner for critical reading of the manuscript and suggestions.

## Abbreviations

BAT, brown adipose tissue; EDD, EMRE dependence domain; EMRE, essential MCU regulator; HsMCU, *H. sapiens* MCU; IMM, inner mitochondrial membrane; IMS, intermembrane space; KO, knockout; MCU, mitochondrial calcium uniporter; MCUC, mitochondrial calcium uniporter complex; MCUR1, mitochondrial calcium uniporter regulator 1; MICU, mitochondrial calcium uptake; OMM, outer mitochondrial membrane; VDAC, voltage-dependent anion channel.

## References

- 1 Deluca, H.F. and Engstrom, G.W. (1961) Calcium uptake by rat kidney mitochondria. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **47**, 1744–1750 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.47.11.1744>
- 2 Vasington, F.D. and Murphy, J.V. (1962) Ca ion uptake by rat kidney mitochondria and its dependence on respiration and phosphorylation. *J. Biol. Chem.* **237**, 2670–2677 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0021-9258\(19\)73805-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0021-9258(19)73805-8)
- 3 Dedkova, E.N. and Blatter, L.A. (2013) Calcium signaling in cardiac mitochondria. *J. Mol. Cell. Cardiol.* **58**, 125–133 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yjmcc.2012.12.021>
- 4 Kamer, K.J. and Mootha, V.K. (2015) The molecular era of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter. *Nat. Rev. Mol. Cell Biol.* **16**, 545–553 <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrm4039>
- 5 Nicholls, D.G. (2009) Mitochondrial calcium function and dysfunction in the central nervous system. *Biochim. Biophys. Acta* **1787**, 1416–1424 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbabi.2009.03.010>
- 6 Rizzuto, R., De Stefani, D., Raffaello, A. and Mammucari, C. (2012) Mitochondria as sensors and regulators of calcium signalling. *Nat. Rev. Mol. Cell Biol.* **13**, 566–578 <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrm3412>
- 7 Quintana, A. and Hoth, M. (2012) Mitochondrial dynamics and their impact on t cell function. *Cell Calcium* **52**, 57–63 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ceca.2012.02.005>
- 8 Giorgi, C., Baldassari, F., Bononi, A., Bonora, M., De Marchi, E., Marchi, S. et al. (2012) Mitochondrial Ca<sup>2+</sup> and apoptosis. *Cell Calcium* **52**, 36–43 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ceca.2012.02.008>
- 9 Rodriguez, L.R., Lapena-Luzon, T., Beneto, N., Beltran-Beltran, V., Pallardo, F.V., Gonzalez-Cabo, P. et al. (2022) Therapeutic strategies targeting mitochondrial calcium signaling: a new hope for neurological diseases? *Antioxidants (Basel)* **11**, 165 <https://doi.org/10.3390/antiox11010165>
- 10 Calvo-Rodriguez, M., Hou, S.S., Snyder, A.C., Kharitonova, E.K., Russ, A.N., Das, S. et al. (2020) Increased mitochondrial calcium levels associated with neuronal death in a mouse model of Alzheimer's disease. *Nat. Commun.* **11**, 2146 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-16074-2>
- 11 Boyman, L., Williams, G.S. and Lederer, W.J. (2015) The growing importance of mitochondrial calcium in health and disease. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **112**, 11150–11151 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1514284112>
- 12 Peng, W., Wong, Y.C. and Krainc, D. (2020) Mitochondria-lysosome contacts regulate mitochondrial Ca<sup>2+</sup> dynamics via lysosomal Trpm1. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **117**, 19266–19275 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2003236117>
- 13 Ahumada-Castro, U., Puebla-Huerta, A., Cuevas-Espinoza, V., Loy, A. and Cardenas, J.C. (2021) Keeping zombies alive: the Er-mitochondria Ca<sup>2+</sup> transfer in cellular senescence. *Biochim. Biophys. Acta Mol. Cell Res.* **1868**, 119099 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbamcr.2021.119099>
- 14 Alevriadou, B.R., Patel, A., Noble, M., Ghosh, S., Gohil, V.M., Stathopoulos, P.B. et al. (2021) Molecular nature and physiological role of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter channel. *Am. J. Physiol. Cell Physiol.* **320**, C465–C482 <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpcell.00502.2020>
- 15 Arnt, N., Redolfi, N., Lia, A., Bedetta, M., Greotti, E. and Pizzo, P. (2022) Mitochondrial Ca<sup>2+</sup> signaling and bioenergetics in Alzheimer's disease. *Biomedicines* **10**, 3025 <https://doi.org/10.3390/biomedicines10123025>
- 16 Boyman, L., Greiser, M. and Lederer, W.J. (2021) Calcium influx through the mitochondrial calcium uniporter holocomplex, Mcu(Cx). *J. Mol. Cell. Cardiol.* **151**, 145–154 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yjmcc.2020.10.015>
- 17 Calvo-Rodriguez, M. and Bacskai, B.J. (2021) Mitochondria and calcium in Alzheimer's disease: from cell signaling to neuronal cell death. *Trends Neurosci.* **44**, 136–151 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tins.2020.10.004>
- 18 Modesti, L., Danese, A., Angela Maria Vitto, V., Ramaccini, D., Aguiari, G., Gafa, R. et al. (2021) Mitochondrial Ca<sup>2+</sup> signaling in health, disease and therapy. *Cells* **10**, 1317 <https://doi.org/10.3390/cells10061317>
- 19 Murphy, E. and Steenbergen, C. (2021) Regulation of mitochondrial Ca<sup>2+</sup> uptake. *Annu. Rev. Physiol.* **83**, 107–126 <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-physiol-031920-092419>
- 20 Hajnoczky, G., Csordas, G. and Yi, M. (2002) Old players in a new role: mitochondria-associated membranes, Vdac, and ryanodine receptors as contributors to calcium signal propagation from endoplasmic reticulum to the mitochondria. *Cell Calcium* **32**, 363–377 <https://doi.org/10.1016/S0143416002001872>
- 21 Rosencrans, W.M., Rajendran, M., Bezrukov, S.M. and Rostovtseva, T.K. (2021) Vdac regulation of mitochondrial calcium flux: from channel biophysics to disease. *Cell Calcium* **94**, 102356 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ceca.2021.102356>
- 22 Kirichok, Y., Krapivinsky, G. and Clapham, D.E. (2004) The mitochondrial calcium uniporter is a highly selective ion channel. *Nature* **427**, 360–364 <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature02246>
- 23 Csordas, G., Golenar, T., Seifert, E.L., Kamer, K.J., Sancak, Y., Perocchi, F., et al. (2013) Micu1 controls both the threshold and cooperative activation of the mitochondrial Ca<sup>2+</sup> uniporter. *Cell Metab.* **17**, 976–987 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmet.2013.04.020>
- 24 De La Fuente, S., Matesanz-Isabel, J., Fonteriz, R.I., Montero, M. and Alvarez, J. (2014) Dynamics of mitochondrial Ca<sup>2+</sup> uptake in micu1-knockdown cells. *Biochem. J.* **458**, 33–40 <https://doi.org/10.1042/BJ20131025>
- 25 Foscett, J.K. and Madesh, M. (2014) Regulation of the mitochondrial Ca<sup>2+</sup> uniporter by Micu1 and Micu2. *Biochem. Biophys. Res. Commun.* **449**, 377–383 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbrc.2014.04.146>
- 26 Kamer, K.J., Sancak, Y., Fomina, Y., Meisel, J.D., Chaudhuri, D., Grabarek, Z. et al. (2018) Micu1 imparts the mitochondrial uniporter with the ability to discriminate between Ca<sup>2+</sup> and Mn<sup>2+</sup>. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **115**, E7960–E7969 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1807811115>
- 27 Liu, J.C., Liu, J., Holmstrom, K.M., Menazza, S., Parks, R.J., Fergusson, M.M., et al. (2016) Micu1 serves as a molecular gatekeeper to prevent *in vivo* mitochondrial calcium overload. *Cell Rep.* **16**, 1561–1573 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.celrep.2016.07.011>

- 28 Perocchi, F., Gohil, V.M., Girgis, H.S., Bao, X.R., McCombs, J.E., Palmer, A.E. et al. (2010) Micu1 encodes a mitochondrial EF hand protein required for  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake. *Nature* **467**, 291–296 <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature09358>
- 29 Plovanich, M., Bogorad, R.L., Sancak, Y., Kamer, K.J., Strittmatter, L., Li, A.A., et al. (2013) Micu2, a paralog of Micu1, resides within the mitochondrial uniporter complex to regulate calcium handling. *PLoS ONE* **8**, e55785 <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0055785>
- 30 Zhuo, W., Zhou, H., Guo, R., Yi, J., Zhang, L., Yu, L. et al. (2021) Structure of intact human Mcu supercomplex with the auxiliary Micu subunits. *Protein Cell* **12**, 220–229 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13238-020-00776-w>
- 31 Pinton, P., Giorgi, C., Siviero, R., Zecchini, E. and Rizzuto, R. (2008) Calcium and apoptosis: Er-mitochondria  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transfer in the control of apoptosis. *Oncogene* **27**, 6407–6418 <https://doi.org/10.1038/nc.2008.308>
- 32 Kovacs-Bogdan, E., Sancak, Y., Kamer, K.J., Plovanich, M., Jambhekar, A., Huber, R.J. et al. (2014) Reconstitution of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter in yeast. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **111**, 8985–8990 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1400514111>
- 33 Sancak, Y., Markhard, A.L., Kitami, T., Kovacs-Bogdan, E., Kamer, K.J., Udeshi, N.D., et al. (2013) Emre is an essential component of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter complex. *Science* **342**, 1379–1382 <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1242993>
- 34 Tsai, M.F., Phillips, C.B., Ranaghan, M., Tsai, C.W., Wu, Y., Williams, C. et al. (2016) Dual functions of a small regulatory subunit in the mitochondrial calcium uniporter complex. *eLife* **5**, e15545 <https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.15545>
- 35 Patron, M., Granatiero, V., Espino, J., Rizzuto, R. and De Stefani, D. (2019) Micu3 is a tissue-specific enhancer of mitochondrial calcium uptake. *Cell Death Differ.* **26**, 179–195 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41418-018-0113-8>
- 36 Hoffman, N.E., Chandramoorthy, H.C., Shanmughapriya, S., Zhang, X.Q., Vallem, S., Doonan, P.J., et al. (2014) Slc25a23 augments mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake, interacts with Mcu, and induces oxidative stress-mediated cell death. *Mol. Biol. Cell* **25**, 936–947 <https://doi.org/10.1091/mbc.e13-08-0502>
- 37 Tomar, D., Dong, Z., Shanmughapriya, S., Koch, D.A., Thomas, T., Hoffman, N.E., et al. (2016) Mcur1 is a scaffold factor for the Mcu complex function and promotes mitochondrial bioenergetics. *Cell Rep.* **15**, 1673–1685 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.celrep.2016.04.050>
- 38 Finkel, T., Menazza, S., Holmstrom, K.M., Parks, R.J., Liu, J., Sun, J. et al. (2015) The ins and outs of mitochondrial calcium. *Circ. Res.* **116**, 1810–1819 <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCRESAHA.116.305484>
- 39 Parks, R.J., Murphy, E. and Liu, J.C. (2018) Mitochondrial permeability transition pore and calcium handling. *Methods Mol. Biol.* **1782**, 187–196 [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-7831-1\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-7831-1_11)
- 40 Assali, E.A., Jones, A.E., Veliova, M., Acin-Perez, R., Taha, M., Miller, N., et al. (2020) Nclx prevents cell death during adrenergic activation of the brown adipose tissue. *Nat. Commun.* **11**, 3347 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-16572-3>
- 41 Boyman, L., Williams, G.S., Khananshvilii, D., Sekler, I. and Lederer, W.J. (2013) Nclx: the mitochondrial sodium calcium exchanger. *J. Mol. Cell. Cardiol.* **59**, 205–213 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yjmcc.2013.03.012>
- 42 Palty, R., Silverman, W.F., Hershinkel, M., Caporale, T., Sensi, S.L., Parnis, J., et al. (2010) Nclx is an essential component of mitochondrial  $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$  exchange. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **107**, 436–441 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0908099107>
- 43 Wolf, S.G., Mutsaers, Y., Dadosh, T., Ilani, T., Lansky, Z., Horowitz, B. et al. (2017) 3D visualization of mitochondrial solid-phase calcium stores in whole cells. *Elife* **6**, e29929 <https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.29929>
- 44 Baradaran, R., Wang, C., Siliciano, A.F. and Long, S.B. (2018) Cryo-EM structures of fungal and metazoan mitochondrial calcium uniporters. *Nature* **559**, 580–584 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-018-0331-8>
- 45 Fan, C., Fan, M., Orlando, B.J., Fastman, N.M., Zhang, J., Xu, Y. et al. (2018) X-ray and cryo-EM structures of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter. *Nature* **559**, 575–579 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-018-0330-9>
- 46 Nguyen, N.X., Armache, J.P., Lee, C., Yang, Y., Zeng, W., Mootha, V.K. et al. (2018) Cryo-EM structure of a fungal mitochondrial calcium uniporter. *Nature* **559**, 570–574 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-018-0333-6>
- 47 Yoo, J., Wu, M., Yin, Y., Herzik, Jr, M.A., Lander, G.C. and Lee, S.Y. (2018) Cryo-EM structure of a mitochondrial calcium uniporter. *Science* **361**, 506–511 <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aar4056>
- 48 Kamer, K.J., Jiang, W., Kaushik, V.K., Mootha, V.K. and Grabarek, Z. (2019) Crystal structure of Micu2 and comparison with Micu1 reveal insights into the uniporter gating mechanism. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **116**, 3546–3555 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1817759116>
- 49 Wu, W., Shen, Q., Zhang, R., Qiu, Z., Wang, Y., Zheng, J. et al. (2020) The structure of the Micu1–Micu2 complex unveils the regulation of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter. *EMBO J.* **39**, e104285 <https://doi.org/10.15252/emj.2019104285>
- 50 Wang, Y., Nguyen, N.X., She, J., Zeng, W., Yang, Y., Bai, X.C. et al. (2019) Structural mechanism of EMRE-dependent gating of the human mitochondrial calcium uniporter. *Cell* **177**, 1252–1261.e1213 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2019.03.050>
- 51 Lee, Y., Min, C.K., Kim, T.G., Song, H.K., Lim, Y., Kim, D., et al. (2015) Structure and function of the N-terminal domain of the human mitochondrial calcium uniporter. *EMBO Rep.* **16**, 1318–1333 <https://doi.org/10.15252/embr.201540436>
- 52 Van Keuren, A.M., Tsai, C.W., Balderas, E., Rodriguez, M.X., Chaudhuri, D. and Tsai, M.F. (2020) Mechanisms of EMRE-dependent MCU opening in the mitochondrial calcium uniporter complex. *Cell Rep.* **33**, 108486 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.celrep.2020.108486>
- 53 Macewen, M.J., Markhard, A.L., Bozbeoglu, M., Bradford, F., Goldberger, O., Mootha, V.K. et al. (2020) Evolutionary divergence reveals the molecular basis of EMRE dependence of the human MCU. *Life Sci. Alliance* **3**, e202000718 <https://doi.org/10.26508/lsa.202000718>
- 54 Garg, V., Suzuki, J., Paranjpe, I., Unsulangi, T., Boyman, L., Milesco, L.S. et al. (2021) The mechanism of Micu-dependent gating of the mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uniporter. *Elife* **10**, e69312 <https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.69312>
- 55 Fieni, F., Lee, S.B., Jan, Y.N. and Kirichok, Y. (2012) Activity of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter varies greatly between tissues. *Nat. Commun.* **3**, 1317 <https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms2325>
- 56 Nemani, N., Shanmughapriya, S. and Madesh, M. (2018) Molecular regulation of MCU: implications in physiology and disease. *Cell Calcium* **74**, 86–93 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ceca.2018.06.006>
- 57 Lambert, J.P., Luongo, T.S., Tomar, D., Jadiya, P., Gao, E., Zhang, X. et al. (2019) Mcur1 regulates the molecular composition of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter channel to limit mitochondrial calcium overload during stress. *Circulation* **140**, 1720–1733 <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.118.037968>
- 58 Huo, J., Lu, S., Kwong, J.Q., Brund, M.J., Grimes, K.M., Sargent, M.A. et al. (2020) Mcur1 induction protects the heart from posts ischemic remodeling. *Circ. Res.* **127**, 379–390 <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCRESAHA.119.316369>



- 59 Paillard, M., Huang, K.T., Weaver, D., Lambert, J.P., Elrod, J.W. and Hajnoczky, G. (2022) Altered composition of the mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uniporter in the failing human heart. *Cell Calcium* **105**, 102618 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ceca.2022.102618>
- 60 Lombardi, A.A., Gibb, A.A., Arif, E., Kolmetzky, D.W., Tomar, D., Luongo, T.S., et al. (2019) Mitochondrial calcium exchange links metabolism with the epigenome to control cellular differentiation. *Nat. Commun.* **10**, 4509 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-12103-x>
- 61 Tsai, C.W., Wu, Y., Pao, P.C., Phillips, C.B., Williams, C., Miller, C. et al. (2017) Proteolytic control of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter complex. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **114**, 4388–4393 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1702938114>
- 62 Konig, T., Troder, S.E., Bakka, K., Korwitz, A., Richter-Dennerlein, R., Lampe, P.A., et al. (2016) The M-Aaa protease associated with neurodegeneration limits MCU activity in mitochondria. *Mol. Cell* **64**, 148–162 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.molcel.2016.08.020>
- 63 Ghosh, S., Basu Ball, W., Madaris, T.R., Srikantan, S., Madesh, M., Mootha, V.K. et al. (2020) An essential role for cardiolipin in the stability and function of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **117**, 16383–16390 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2000640117>
- 64 Balderas, E., Eberhardt, D.R., Lee, S., Pleinis, J.M., Sommakia, S., Balynas, A.M., et al. (2022) Mitochondrial calcium uniporter stabilization preserves energetic homeostasis during complex I impairment. *Nat. Commun.* **13**, 2769 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-022-30236-4>
- 65 Pan, X., Liu, J., Nguyen, T., Liu, C., Sun, J., Teng, Y., et al. (2013) The physiological role of mitochondrial calcium revealed by mice lacking the mitochondrial calcium uniporter. *Nat. Cell Biol.* **15**, 1464–1472 <https://doi.org/10.1038/ncb2868>
- 66 Liu, J.C., Syder, N.C., Ghorashi, N.S., Willingham, T.B., Parks, R.J., Sun, J., et al. (2020) EMRE is essential for mitochondrial calcium uniporter activity in a mouse model. *JCI Insight* **5**, e134063 <https://doi.org/10.1172/jci.insight.134063>
- 67 Alvarez-Illera, P., Garcia-Casas, P., Fonteriz, R.I., Montero, M. and Alvarez, J. (2020) Mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  dynamics in MCU knockout *C. elegans* worms. *Int. J. Mol. Sci.* **21**, 8622 <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms21228622>
- 68 Murphy, E., Pan, X., Nguyen, T., Liu, J., Holmstrom, K.M. and Finkel, T. (2014) Unresolved questions from the analysis of mice lacking MCU expression. *Biochem. Biophys. Res. Commun.* **449**, 384–385 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbrc.2014.04.144>
- 69 Han, Y., Ishibashi, S., Iglesias-Gonzalez, J., Chen, Y., Love, N.R. and Amaya, E. (2018)  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced mitochondrial ROS regulate the early embryonic cell cycle. *Cell Rep.* **22**, 218–231 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.celrep.2017.12.042>
- 70 Shanmughapriya, S., Tomar, D., Dong, Z., Slovik, K.J., Nemani, N., Natarajaseenivasan, K., et al. (2018) Foxd1-dependent *Micu1* expression regulates mitochondrial activity and cell differentiation. *Nat. Commun.* **9**, 3449 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-05856-4>
- 71 Bulthuis, E.P., Adjobo-Hermans, M.J.W., De Potter, B., Hoogstraten, S., Wezendonk, L.H.T., Tutakhel, O.A.Z., et al. (2022) *Smdt1* variants impair EMRE-mediated mitochondrial calcium uptake in patients with muscle involvement. *Biorxiv* <https://doi.org/10.1101/2022.10.31.514480>
- 72 Singh, R., Bartok, A., Paillard, M., Tyburski, A., Elliott, M. and Hajnoczky, G. (2022) Uncontrolled mitochondrial calcium uptake underlies the pathogenesis of neurodegeneration in *micu1*-deficient mice and patients. *Sci. Adv.* **8**, eabj4716 <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abj4716>
- 73 Flicker, D., Sancak, Y., Mick, E., Goldberger, O. and Mootha, V.K. (2019) Exploring the in vivo role of the mitochondrial calcium uniporter in brown fat bioenergetics. *Cell Rep.* **27**, 1364–1375 e1365 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.celrep.2019.04.013>
- 74 Xue, K., Wu, D., Wang, Y., Zhao, Y., Shen, H., Yao, J. et al. (2022) The mitochondrial calcium uniporter engages *Ucp1* to form a thermopore that promotes thermogenesis. *Cell Metab.* **34**, 1325–1341.e1326 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmet.2022.07.011>
- 75 Garbincius, J.F., Luongo, T.S. and Elrod, J.W. (2020) The debate continues: what is the role of MCU and mitochondrial calcium uptake in the heart? *J. Mol. Cell. Cardiol.* **143**, 163–174 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yjmcc.2020.04.029>
- 76 Weinberg, S.E., Sena, L.A. and Chandel, N.S. (2015) Mitochondria in the regulation of innate and adaptive immunity. *Immunity* **42**, 406–417 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.immuni.2015.02.002>
- 77 Zheng, X., Chen, M., Meng, X., Chu, X., Cai, C. and Zou, F. (2017) Phosphorylation of dynamin-related protein 1 at Ser616 regulates mitochondrial fission and is involved in mitochondrial calcium uniporter-mediated neutrophil polarization and chemotaxis. *Mol. Immunol.* **87**, 23–32 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.molimm.2017.03.019>
- 78 Dong, H., Zhao, B., Chen, J., Liu, Z., Li, X., Li, L. et al. (2022) Mitochondrial calcium uniporter promotes phagocytosis-dependent activation of the *Nlrp3* inflammasome. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **119**, E2123247119 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2123247119>
- 79 Feno, S., Munari, F., Reane, D.V., Gissi, R., Hoang, D.H., Castegna, A. et al. (2021) The dominant-negative mitochondrial calcium uniporter subunit *McuB* drives macrophage polarization during skeletal muscle regeneration. *Sci. Signal.* **14**, eabf3838 <https://doi.org/10.1126/scisignal.abf3838>
- 80 Rimessi, A., Bezzerri, V., Patergnani, S., Marchi, S., Cabrini, G. and Pinton, P. (2015) Mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -dependent *Nlrp3* activation exacerbates the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*-driven inflammatory response in cystic fibrosis. *Nat. Commun.* **6**, 6201 <https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms7201>
- 81 Bisbach, C.M., Hutto, R.A., Poria, D., Cleghorn, W.M., Abbas, F., Vinberg, F. et al. (2020) Mitochondrial calcium uniporter (*Mcu*) deficiency reveals an alternate path for  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake in photoreceptor mitochondria. *Sci. Rep.* **10**, 16041 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-72708-x>
- 82 Hamilton, J., Brustovetsky, T., Rysted, J.E., Lin, Z., Usachev, Y.M. and Brustovetsky, N. (2018) Deletion of mitochondrial calcium uniporter incompletely inhibits calcium uptake and induction of the permeability transition pore in brain mitochondria. *J. Biol. Chem.* **293**, 15652–15663 <https://doi.org/10.1074/jbc.RA118.002926>
- 83 Vecellio Reane, D., Vallese, F., Checchetto, V., Acquasaliente, L., Butera, G., De Filippis, V. et al. (2016) A *Micu1* splice variant confers high sensitivity to the mitochondrial  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake machinery of skeletal muscle. *Mol. Cell* **64**, 760–773 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.molcel.2016.10.001>