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Portal hyperperfusion after major liver resection and associated sinusoidal damage is a therapeutic target to protect the remnant liver

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Running title: Hepatic circulatory alterations after major liver resection

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32 **Abstract**

33 Extended liver resection results in the loss of a large fraction of the hepatic vascular bed and thereby
34 abrupt alterations in the perfusion of the remnant liver. Mechanisms of hemodynamic adaptation and
35 associated changes in oxygen metabolism after liver resection and the effect of mechanical portal
36 blood flow reduction were assessed.

37 A pig model (n=16) of extended partial hepatectomy that included continuous observation for 24 hours
38 under general anesthesia was established. Pigs were randomly separated into 2 groups, one group
39 with a portal flow reduction of 70% compared to the preoperative values, and the other group as a
40 control (n=8, each).

41 In controls, portal flow [mean (SD)] increased from 74 (8) (ml/min)/100g preoperatively to 240 (48)
42 (ml/min)/100g at 6 hours after resection ($p<0.001$). Hepatic arterial buffer response was abolished
43 after resection. Oxygen uptake per unit liver mass increased from 4.0 (1.1) (ml/min)/100g
44 preoperatively to 7.7 (1.7) (ml/min)/100g 8 hours after resection ($p=0.004$). Despite this increase in
45 relative oxygen uptake, total hepatic oxygen consumption was not maintained and markers of hypoxia
46 and anaerobic metabolism were significantly increased in hepatocytes after resection. Reduced
47 postoperative portal flow was associated with significantly decreased levels of aspartate
48 aminotransferase and bilirubin and increased hepatic clearance of indocyanine green.

49 In conclusion, major liver resection was associated with persistent portal hyperperfusion, loss of the
50 hepatic arterial buffer response, decreased total hepatic vO_2 and with increased anaerobic
51 metabolism. Portal flow modulation by partial portal vein occlusion attenuated liver injury after
52 extended liver resection.

53

54 **Keywords**

55 Liver resection, liver injury, hepatic hemodynamics, portal flow modulation, hepatic arterial buffer
56 response

57

58 **New & Noteworthy**

59 Because of the continuous monitoring, the experiments allow to precisely observe the influence of liver
60 resection on systemic and local abdominal hemodynamic alterations and oxygen metabolism. Major
61 liver resection is associated with significant and persistent portal hyperperfusion and loss of hepatic
62 arterial buffer response. The correlation of portal hyperperfusion and parameters of liver injury and
63 dysfunction offers a novel therapeutic option to attenuate liver injury after extended liver resection.

64

65 **Introduction**

66 Liver resection is currently the only curative treatment for primary and secondary liver tumors. The
67 regenerative capacity of the liver allows full restoration of liver weight and function after resection of a
68 majority of the liver mass. Nevertheless, hepatocellular regeneration may fail after extended liver
69 resection, resulting in small for size syndrome (SFSS) (11). This state is defined as a reduced liver
70 mass without appropriate regeneration leading to persistent liver insufficiency, which is associated
71 with high mortality (30).

72

73 A possible cause for the development of SFSS may be alterations in the perfusion of the remnant liver
74 after resection (8, 9, 27). Removal of a large fraction of the liver results in a reduction in the total
75 hepatic sinusoidal cross-sectional area and thereby to portal hyperperfusion and an increase in portal
76 pressure (22, 25). These circulatory alterations depend on the degree of resection and have been
77 described as critical for the initiation of liver mass restoration, as shown by the lack of liver mass
78 restoration in models of porto-systemic shunting (22, 25, 31). However, despite being a potential
79 trigger for the initiation of regeneration, associated perfusion alterations may be detrimental to the
80 hepatic tissue if they become too extreme as in the case of extended resection (1, 27) and may disturb
81 regeneration and metabolic function of the liver at later stages of regeneration (17, 23). Recent
82 research highlighted that in particular the degree of arterial perfusion is important for liver remnant
83 integrity (7) and that sinusoidal damage is associated with elevated portal perfusion pressure (20).

84

85 Several surgical and interventional techniques are currently employed to protect the remnant liver from
86 SFSS and to increase resectability of advanced hepatic tumors. Such techniques include portal
87 ligation or embolization or more recently in situ split procedures (12, 26). The observation that portal
88 vein occlusion increases the volume of the remaining liver lobe reveals that modulation of flow and
89 pressure of the blood entering the liver may critically influence hepatic regeneration (21). We
90 hypothesized that extensive portal hyperperfusion after liver resection is harmful to the remnant liver
91 and reduction of portal blood flow could attenuate tissue injury and improve liver function.

92

93 The current study was designed to address the following specific issues in a novel model of extended
94 liver resection with continuous invasive monitoring for 24 hours: First, to describe the kinetics of
95 absolute and relative liver blood flow (per unit liver mass) and pressure patterns in the first 24 hours

96 after resection, including the relative contribution of portal vein and hepatic artery flow. Second, to
97 understand the dynamic interaction between portal and arterial blood flow and pressure by exploring
98 the hepatic arterial buffer response, which is defined as the compensatory increase in hepatic artery
99 flow when portal flow is acutely reduced (15). Third, to investigate hepatic oxygen metabolism in
100 response to changing portal and arterial flow patterns after resection. Fourth, to evaluate the effect of
101 controlled reduction of postoperative portal vein blood flow on damage to the remnant liver after
102 extended liver resection.

103 **Material and Methods**

104 Initial experiments were performed in a mouse model, revealing structural changes after partial
105 hepatectomy. Since precise control of portal flow and monitoring of local and systemic hemodynamic
106 parameters was not feasible in this model, further experiments were performed in a pig model.

107 The studies complied with the guide for the care and use of laboratory animals and Swiss national
108 guidelines and were approved by the commission of animal experimentation of the canton of Bern,
109 Switzerland, approval number BE 43/12 (mouse experiments) and BE 134/14 (pig experiments).

110

111 Liver resection experiments in mice

112 For partial hepatectomy experiments, 10 week old female C57/BL6 mice were anaesthetized using
113 isoflurane followed by ligation and resection of the respective lobes as described previously (10).

114 Briefly, animals were immobilized in a supine position and the abdomen entered through a midline
115 laparotomy. After exposure of the liver, partial hepatectomy was performed by central ligation of the
116 median and left lobe in order to achieve a standard 68% hepatectomy. The ligated liver lobes were
117 surgically removed. The laparotomy was then closed with a two-layer running suture.

118

119 Electron microscopy of liver tissue

120 For analysis by electron microscopy, mice were euthanized 12 hours after partial hepatectomy. Tissue
121 was immediately fixed by gently flushing of the remnant liver via the portal vein and thereafter
122 immersed in a solution of 2.5% of glutaraldehyde and 2% of polymeric formaldehyde in 0.1M NA-
123 cacodylate. Tissue blocks from the right superior lobe were cut, re-fixated and the tissue was then
124 dehydrated in increasing concentrations of ethanol. Tissue was embedded in epoxy resin and
125 subsequently imaged by transmission electron microscopy.

126 Liver resection experiments in pigs

127 *Study design:* Sixteen male domestic pigs (*Sus scrofa domestica*) ranging from 56 to 63 kg were used
128 for the experiments. Animals were randomly allocated to the control (N=8) or the intervention group
129 (N=8) during surgery, just prior to liver resection. In order to study the normal post-resection
130 physiology, values from the animals in the control group were studied. Animals in the intervention
131 group were compared to animals in the control group to test the effect of portal flow modulation.

132

133 *Anesthesia:* After premedication with ketamine 20 mg/kg and xylazine 2 mg/kg (i.m.), anesthesia was
134 induced with 10 mg of midazolam and 1mg of atropine (i.v.). After endotracheal intubation, general
135 anesthesia was maintained with continuous infusion of propofol (200-500 mg/h) and fentanyl (200-300
136 µg/h). The animals were mechanically ventilated in a volume-controlled mode (F_IO₂ 0.3, positive end-
137 expiratory pressure 5 cm H₂O, tidal volume 8 ml/kg and respiratory rate adjusted to keep end-
138 expiratory CO₂ between 35 and 45 mmHg). Adequate depth of anesthesia was controlled by repeated
139 nose pinch maneuvers and additionally documented by bispectral index monitoring. 10 ml/kg/h of
140 Ringer's Lactate solution was administered during surgery and thereafter decreased to 2 ml/kg/h and
141 adjusted according to urinary output. Before and after liver resection, lung recruitment maneuvers
142 were performed in supine and Trendelenburg position in random order.

143 After performing the last set of measurements, the animals were euthanized in deep anesthesia by
144 intravenous injection of 40 mmol of potassium chloride.

145

146 *Installation of hemodynamic measurement equipment:* Arterial blood pressure was measured through
147 a sheath in the right carotid artery and central venous pressure through a catheter inserted through
148 the right internal jugular vein. A flow probe (Transonic Systems Inc., Ithaca, NY) was positioned
149 around the left common carotid artery. A pulmonary artery catheter was inserted through a jugular vein
150 on the left side and its position confirmed using blood pressure tracing. A catheter was inserted into
151 the bladder to measure urinary output via a midline laparotomy . The hepato-duodenal ligament was
152 dissected, flow probes were positioned around the hepatic artery, the portal vein, the superior
153 mesenteric artery and the inferior vena cava. A tourniquet was placed around the portal vein 1 cm
154 proximal to the position of the flow probe. Two catheters for pressure measurement were inserted
155 through a mesenteric vein and advanced into the portal vein to position one catheter tip proximal and
156 the other distal to the tourniquet. Finally, a distally bent catheter (Infinitt Diagnostic Catheter 5F, Cordis,
157 Baar, Switzerland) was inserted through the right external jugular vein and positioned in the right
158 hepatic vein under fluoroscopic guidance and its position was controlled by contrast injection.
159 Pressures and flows were recorded using LabVIEW (National Instruments, Austin, TX) and processed
160 offline using dedicated software (Soleasy, Alea Solutions, Zürich, Switzerland).

161 Vital parameters including ECG, arterial blood pressure and oxygen saturation were monitored
162 continuously. Target for mean arterial blood pressure was 60 to 70 mmHg, target for heart rate 60 to
163 90 beats per minute. Further, S_vO₂ target was above 50%, blood lactate target was lower than 2

164 mmol/l and urine output was kept above 0.5 ml/kg/h. If these parameters were not met, an additional
165 bolus of 100 ml of Ringer's lactate was given. If the animal did not respond to fluids, norepinephrine
166 was administered continuously at a rate between 100 and 600 µg/h.

167

168 *Liver surgery:* Anatomical resection was performed by removing the whole left and the right medial
169 lobe, leaving behind segment I, VI and VII as previously described (5). After selective ligation of the
170 arterial and portal branches supplying the tissue defined for resection, liver tissue including the hepatic
171 veins were transected using a stapling device (Endo GIA, Johnson&Johnson, New Brunswick, NJ).
172 The mass of the resected tissue was measured.

173 In the intervention group, a tourniquet consisting of a Teflon band and a plastic tube was positioned
174 around the portal vein. In a series of pilot experiments, we found that after 70% hepatic resection,
175 portal flow could maximally be reduced to 70% of baseline flow before hemodynamic instability
176 occurred. Therefore, portal flow was reduced just prior to resection to 70% of the baseline portal flow.
177 Portal flow was re-adjusted to the target value at hourly intervals, if it had varied by more than 10%.

178

179 *Main measurement periods:* A complete set of measurements was taken before resection (baseline
180 measurement), directly after resection (post resection measurement) and 24 hours after resection
181 (24h measurement). These measurements followed a standardized sequence:

- 182 i. Stabilization phase: no manipulation on the animal for 30 minutes.
- 183 ii. Establishment of euvoemia: stroke volume was measured (cold bolus thermodilution method,
184 valid if 3 measurements with less than 10% deviation) before and after a volume challenge of
185 150 ml of Ringer's lactate. If stroke volume increased >10%, additional boluses were given
186 until the animal was no longer volume responsive.
- 187 iii. Blood sampling: arterial, portal venous, hepatic venous and mixed venous blood gas sample
188 were taken and analyzed immediately (ABL 90 FLEX Analyzer). Further, blood for analysis of
189 liver parameters including prothrombin time was drawn, centrifuged and analyzed in a routine
190 laboratory.
- 191 iv. Measurement of indocyanine green (ICG) disappearance rate: a bolus of 0.25mg/kg of ICG
192 was injected and blood samples were taken after 1, 15 and 30 minutes. Plasma ICG
193 concentration was measured by spectrophotometry at a wavelength of 805 nm. The resulting
194 concentrations were used to generate an elimination curve.

195 v. Hepatic arterial buffer response measurements: hepatic arterial flow was measured before
196 and after (partial) occlusion of the portal vein with a tourniquet to reduce the portal flow to
197 50%, 25% and 0% of the pre-resection flow. The occlusion was maintained for a period of 60
198 seconds. Then the portal vein was left open for 60 seconds, before the next occlusion was
199 applied.

200 vi. Transit time measurements: we developed a new method for estimating blood flow velocity in
201 the liver. A bolus of ICG was injected through a catheter into the portal vein, and time between
202 injection and detection by the spectrophotometer at the tip of the pulmonary artery catheter
203 was measured by a stop watch.

204

205 *Periodic measurements:* In addition to the main measurement cycles, all hemodynamic parameters
206 were recorded every hour for a period of 5 minutes. Transhepatic venous resistance was calculated by
207 division of transhepatic pressure by the corresponding portal flow. Every 8 hours, a complete set of
208 blood gas analysis was performed as mentioned above.

209

210 *Oxygen delivery/consumption:* hepatic oxygen delivery was calculated by multiplication of flow values
211 measured by probes on the hepatic artery and portal vein with the oxygen content measured in the
212 blood samples of the respective vessels. Oxygen content (ml/l) was calculated by addition of bound
213 oxygen [calculated by 1.34 (Hüfner's constant) \times hemoglobin level (g/l) \times oxygen saturation (%) \times
214 0.01] and dissolved oxygen [oxygen partial pressure (mmHg) \times 0.03 (solubility coefficient of oxygen at
215 body temperature)]. Oxygen consumption was calculated by subtraction of oxygen transported by the
216 liver vein from the sum of oxygen transported in the hepatic artery and portal vein.

217

218 *Western blot analysis of HIF-1 α protein levels, determination of lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) and*
219 *pyruvate dehydrogenase (PDH) activities, measurement of hepatic ATP content:* A small biopsy of
220 liver tissue (2g) was taken at the beginning of liver resection as well as immediately before euthanasia
221 and processed immediately. Western blot analysis of HIF-1 α protein from tissue extracts was
222 performed as described previously (24). Pyruvate Dehydrogenase Activity Assay Kit (Catalog Number
223 MAK183) and Lactate Dehydrogenase Activity Assay Kit (Catalog Number MAK066) were obtained
224 from Sigma-Aldrich (Buchs, Switzerland) and activities were measured according to manufacturer's
225 instructions. To determine hepatic tissue ATP content tissue lysates were deproteinized using the

226 Deproteinizing Sample Preparation Kit (BioVision, Milpitas, CA, USA) and ATP content was measured
227 using the Molecular Probes' ATP Determination Kit (Invitrogen, Life Technologies, Zug, Switzerland)
228 according to the manufacturer's instructions. The assay kit is based on firefly luciferase and the
229 production of light caused by the reaction of ATP with luciferase and D-luciferin. The assays were
230 performed as described previously (4).

231

232 *Statistical Analysis:* Unless stated otherwise, data is presented as mean (standard deviation).
233 Differences between groups were compared using a two-tailed student's t-test. For repeated
234 measurements, ANOVA or two-way ANOVA was used. Linear regression was performed to analyze
235 correlation between portal flow and parameters for hepatic function, Pearson's r and respective p-
236 values were calculated. For comparison of flow values between control and intervention group, four-
237 hour means were calculated. Statistical significance was defined at the .05 level. Statistical analysis
238 was performed using Prism 7 (Graph Pad, La Jolla, CA, USA) software.

239 **Results**

240 1. PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES AFTER EXTENDED LIVER RESECTION

241 *Disruption of sinusoidal endothelium after extended liver resection in mice*

242 Major liver resection was associated with a pronounced destruction of the liver sinusoids
243 (representative EM picture before and after surgery: Fig 1 A, B). Endothelial cells were disrupted,
244 large parts of the hepatic microvilli were no longer covered by an endothelium and underlying microvilli
245 were partially diminished 12 hours after major hepatectomy (Fig 1 C, D). The percentage of non-
246 covered endothelial surface (fenestrations) was 9.4 (5.1)% in control animals and 27.8 (5.7)% 24
247 hours after liver resection in the intervention group ($p < 0.0001$).

248

249 *Hemodynamic studies in pigs*

250 Postoperative hemodynamic changes after extended liver resection were studied in eight animals of
251 the control group.

252 Mean systemic arterial pressure dropped by 15 (8) mmHg during surgery ($p = 0.09$) and continued to
253 decrease during the rest of the observation period, while cardiac output and flow in the inferior vena
254 cava increased over the postoperative course of 24 hours (Tab 1). Superior mesenteric artery flow
255 dropped from 0.93 (0.20) l/min preoperatively to 0.63 (0.18) l/min after resection ($p = 0.005$) and
256 thereafter gradually returned to the initial flow rate 16 hours after surgery.

257 Absolute portal blood flow decreased from 1.14 (0.15) l/min preoperatively to 0.72 (0.06) l/min after
258 resection ($p = 0.004$) and recovered to baseline values after 6 hours (Fig 2A). Relative portal flow (flow
259 per unit liver mass) significantly increased from 74 (8) ml/min/100g to 240 (48) ml/min/100g at 6 hours
260 after resection ($p < 0.001$). This portal hyperperfusion persisted for the entire length of the experiment
261 (Fig 2A).

262 Absolute hepatic arterial flow decreased from 0.19 (0.9) l/min preoperatively to 0.03 (0.02) l/min
263 postoperatively and recovered to 0.05 (0.03) l/min after 24 hours (Fig 2B). Relative hepatic arterial
264 flow per unit liver mass was reduced initially after resection, returning close to the preoperative values
265 within 24 hours after surgery (Fig 2B).

266 As a consequence of the described changes in hepatic arterial and portal venous flow, the fraction of
267 arterial perfusion on total liver perfusion decreased from 13.6% (4.9) to 4.4% (2.9) directly after
268 resection and transit time of portal blood passing the liver decreased considerably by 66.6%
269 immediately after surgery (Fig 2C).

270 Transhepatic venous blood pressure increased from 1.5 mmHg (0.8) preoperatively to 3.9 mmHg (0.9)
271 after resection (Fig 2E), while liver venous pressure remained unchanged.
272 Transhepatic venous resistance increased from 1.3 (0.8) mmHg*min/l preoperatively to 4.6 (1.9)
273 mmHg*min/l after resection. During the following hours, transhepatic resistance gradually decreased
274 to 3.0 (1.5) mmHg*min/l at 16 hours (Fig 2D).

275

276 2. HEPATIC ARTERY BUFFER RESPONSE IN THE CONTEXT OF LIVER RESECTION

277 An immediate increase of hepatic arterial blood flow was seen in response to the restriction of portal
278 blood flow with a tourniquet prior to resection (Fig 3A). In response to a reduction of portal flow of
279 50%, hepatic arterial flow increased from 0.14 (0.053) l/min at baseline to 0.20 (0.067) l/min (mean
280 difference 0.059 l/min, $p=0.015$), with no further increase when portal flow was further reduced.
281 Immediately after, as well as 24 hours after resection, the hepatic artery did not show a reaction to
282 portal flow restriction, independent of the degree of flow reduction (Fig 3B).

283

284 3. OXYGEN CONSUMPTION AND CELLULAR ENERGY PRODUCTION AFTER LIVER 285 RESECTION

286 Liver dO_2 decreased proportionally to resected tissue, but gradually recovered to preoperative values,
287 although with a higher contribution of portal and a lower contribution of arterial to total oxygen delivery
288 as compared to the preoperative values (Fig 4A).

289 Liver oxygen extraction decreased postoperatively and remained on this lower level during the whole
290 perioperative phase. Consequently, liver vO_2 decreased more than dO_2 post-resection (Fig 4B, C).

291 However, vO_2 relative to unit liver mass increased gradually to higher values than before resection
292 (Fig 4D).

293 Despite increased oxygen uptake per gram of liver tissue, expression of HIF1alpha as a marker of
294 hypoxia was significantly increased in biopsies from the remaining liver tissue 24 hours after liver
295 resection (Fig 4E). According to the described function of HIF1 alpha, LDH activity was increased in
296 biopsies, in parallel a decreased activity of PDH was observed (Fig 4 F, G). Hepatic ATP
297 concentration increased significantly 24 hours after hepatectomy (Fig 4H).

298

299 4. EFFECT OF PORTAL FLOW MODULATION AFTER EXTENDED LIVER RESECTION

300 With portal flow modulation (reduced just prior to resection to 70% baseline), postoperative portal flow
301 per unit liver mass could be reduced to twofold the preoperative value in the intervention group
302 compared to fourfold in the control group. This was not associated with an increase in hepatic arterial
303 flow ($p=0.43$, no time-group interaction). In both groups, the hepatic artery showed a flow depression
304 early after resection with subsequent recovery close to the preoperative value (Fig 5 A). Short-term
305 reduction of portal flow that triggered the hepatic arterial buffer response preoperatively, did not show
306 increased hepatic arterial flow postoperatively in the intervention group or in the control group (Fig 5
307 B).

308

309 In the intervention group, the reduced portal venous blood-flow was compensated by an increased
310 extraction of oxygen in the liver, with a maximum effect at 16 hours after surgery ($p=0.005$, Fig 5C).
311 Portal flow reduction did not lead to a decrease in oxygen uptake of the remnant liver (36.2 (11.9) vs.
312 34.3 (8.9) mlO_2/min , $p=0.76$).

313

314 Comparison between intervention and control group did not show significant differences (all p -values
315 >0.05) in parameters reflecting liver damage (aspartate aminotransferase, alanine aminotransferase)
316 and function (Bilirubin, Prothrombin, ICG Clearance). However, since some animals in the control
317 group showed a lower than expected portal flow, probably as a consequence of portal vein narrowing
318 during hepatic resection, there was a considerable overlap in mean portal flow post resection (Fig 5 D-
319 H). Therefore, a post hoc analysis was performed where mean postoperative portal flow of animals
320 from both groups was correlated with parameters reflecting liver damage and function.

321 Bilirubin levels at 24 hours showed a significant positive correlation with mean portal venous flow
322 ($p=0.02$, Fig 5D). Similarly, AST and ALT as parameters of liver injury showed a positive correlation
323 with portal venous flow ($p=0.005$ and 0.1 respectively, Figure 5E, F). ICG clearance, a measure of
324 liver function, showed a significant negative correlation with portal venous flow, indicating a worsening
325 function with increasing post-operative hyperperfusion ($p=0.01$, Fig 5G), a similar trend was seen for
326 prothrombin time as a measure of the synthetic function of the liver ($p=0.17$, Fig 5H).

327 **Discussion**

328 Our data reveal a sustained relative portal venous hyperperfusion after major liver resection during the
329 whole observation period of 24 hours that is accompanied by an arterial hypoperfusion. Portal
330 hyperperfusion was associated with extensive destruction of the sinusoidal structure in our mouse
331 model of major liver resection. An elevated oxygen demand has been observed in the postoperative
332 phase, given increased oxygen consumption per unit liver mass after resection and upregulation of
333 HIF-1 alpha and LDH in hepatocytes, indicating increased anaerobic glycolysis. The hepatic arterial
334 buffer response was absent at all observed time points after hepatic resection. A relative decrease in
335 portal blood flow was associated with reduced liver injury 24 hours after resection. However, portal
336 flow modulation did not increase postoperative hepatic arterial flow and could not prevent the loss of
337 the hepatic arterial buffer response postoperatively. Hepatic oxygen consumption was maintained
338 during portal flow modulation via a higher hepatic oxygen extraction.

339

340 The reason for the observed flow behavior is the dual blood supply of the liver. The arterial branch has
341 an overall layout as in most other organs, with blood inflow from the aorta and drainage into the caval
342 vein. The portal branch however, is connected in series with the vasculature of the intestine and
343 spleen. The resistance of the entire intestinal-liver vasculature system is dominated by the intestinal
344 resistance while the portal vasculature of the liver has a relatively low resistance. Therefore, pressure
345 drop over the liver is relatively low. As a consequence, resection of a considerable part of the liver
346 leads only to a small change in the total intestinal-liver resistance and thereby to a small change in
347 absolute portal flow.

348 Sinusoidal pressure, and as a consequence portal venous pressure rise because of the increased
349 resistance after resection. This may lead to a widening of the hepatic sinusoids and portal venous
350 branches. The measured decrease in transhepatic resistance in the first 16 hours after resection may
351 be the consequence of the sinusoidal widening over time, such that their hemodynamic resistance is
352 reduced.

353 We interpret the decrease in systemic mean arterial pressure and gradual increase in cardiac output
354 during the experiment to reflect a temporary vasoplegia most likely caused by extensive surgical
355 trauma, prolonged anesthesia and probably also intestinal bacterial translocation due to elevated
356 portal pressure after hepatectomy.

357 The early postoperative arterial hypo-perfusion represents a disproportionate hepatic artery flow
358 reduction compared to the amount of resection. Considering the simultaneous relative portal
359 hyperperfusion, this could be interpreted as a reversal of the hepatic arterial buffer response
360 mechanism with increased portal flow leading to decreased arterial flow. However, several
361 observations refute this theory: First, animals in the intervention group show a similar decrease in
362 hepatic arterial flow, even though portal flow was considerably reduced in these animals. Second,
363 relative hepatic arterial flow recovered to values similar to preoperative ones at 24 hours after
364 resection, whereas the portal hyperperfusion persisted, meaning there was no temporal connection.
365 Third, an acute and strong reduction of portal flow post resection did not lead to an increase in hepatic
366 arterial flow, indicating that the hepatic arterial buffer response was absent. Therefore, it is likely that
367 the observed initial relative arterial hypoperfusion was rather the result of hepatic arterial vasospasms
368 associated with surgical trauma or intrahepatic injury, than a response to an abrupt increase in portal
369 perfusion.

370

371 Using defined short portal vein occlusion steps with simultaneous measurement of hepatic arterial flow
372 we could show that arterial perfusion was fully decoupled from portal perfusion after resection and
373 consequently the hepatic arterial buffer response is absent in the postoperative period. This disagrees
374 with the proposed mechanism that portal hyperperfusion triggers small for size syndrome by the
375 mechanism of a reversed hepatic arterial buffer response (1, 19). The “adenosine-washout-
376 hypothesis” introduced by Lautt (16) attributes the increased arterial blood flow to the vasodilator
377 effect of adenosine in the space of Mall, because adenosine is removed at a lower rate if portal flow is
378 low. Given the fact that the levels of both ATP and its hydrolyzed form adenosine are highly elevated
379 in the regenerating liver (2, 14), it is likely that adenosine washout does not impact on vasodilatation in
380 this situation.

381

382 More likely, portal hyperperfusion may be the cause for hepatic dysfunction after extended liver
383 resection leading to extensive sinusoidal damage after resection. This goes in line with recent
384 research on perfused human liver monosegments that showed progressive loss of sinusoidal integrity
385 with increasing portal pressure and flow (20). This sinusoidal destruction does not only involve the
386 endothelial cells but also shows a loss of hepatocyte microvilli lining the liver sinusoids. Whereas slight
387 portal hyperperfusion may stimulate liver regeneration, excessive hyperperfusion could create

388 endothelial and hepatocyte damage by flow-induced viscous shear stress and by extensive pressure-
389 induced widening of the sinusoids, leading to a liver dysfunction proportionally to the degree of
390 resection (22, 25). This is confirmed by recently published human data that show that portal vein
391 pressure above 20mmHg or hepatic to portal vein gradient above 15 mmHg after in situ split
392 procedures are associated with decreased liver regeneration and function (29).

393

394 AST and ALT levels were lower in animals with reduced portal flow after hepatic resection. Since
395 those parameters are a direct measure for hepatocyte damage, this finding supports the thesis of
396 portal hyperperfusion mediated sinusoidal and hepatocyte damage that can be decreased by portal
397 flow modulation. The same animals showed better metabolism of bilirubin and ICG clearance. These
398 findings agree with the current literature (3) and our in-depth measurements of perioperative
399 hemodynamics allowed novel mechanistic insight into the development of small for size syndrome
400 after liver resection.

401

402 Alterations of hepatic oxygen metabolism reveal Warburg-like changes in the post-resection period
403 that results in elevated hepatic ATP-generation during regeneration (6, 13). This strong increase in
404 ATP generation is achieved by an increase in glycolytic ATP production similar to tumor cells (18, 28).
405 The reason for increased glycolytic ATP production is not explained by a hyperperfusion-related lack
406 of oxygen, since relative oxygen consumption even increased after resection, but rather by the
407 increased need of energy for liver regeneration and increased metabolic demand per liver cell as
408 compared to baseline. We suggest that decreased hepatic oxygen extraction compared to baseline
409 was an effect of endothelial damage. Alternatively – or in combination – increased portal blood flow
410 velocity coupled with an increased fraction of oxygen delivered by the portal vein, where oxygen
411 content per ml of blood is lower compared to hepatic artery, may have led to a decreased maximal
412 oxygen extraction. The measurements in the intervention group assure that portal flow modulation
413 does not limit hepatic oxygen uptake and accordingly does not jeopardize oxygen delivery to the
414 regenerating liver tissue. This behavior adds evidence to the concept that oxygen-extraction from
415 portal venous blood may be flow dependent after liver resection.

416

417 Reduction of portal flow is associated with reduced liver injury and increased hepatic synthetic
418 capacity. The translation of these experiments is limited because only pigs with healthy livers were

419 used. It is possible that portal blood flow modulation would be even more effective in preexisting
420 conditions such as hepatic steatosis or cirrhosis. Furthermore, because of technical aspects,
421 continuous observation was only possible for 24 hours. It is not unlikely that the differences between
422 intervention and control would be more pronounced in experiments with a longer duration.

423

424 In conclusion, our novel model of continuous assessment of outcomes after major liver resection
425 reveals significant and persistent portal hyperperfusion and the loss of the hepatic arterial buffer
426 response. Despite a major increase in oxygen consumption per unit liver mass in the regenerating
427 liver, there is a simultaneous increase in anaerobic metabolism. Portal flow modulation by partial
428 portal vein occlusion offers the potential to attenuate liver injury after extended liver resection.

429

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541
542

Table 1 Systemic hemodynamic parameters

	Baseline	After surgery	8 hours after surgery	16 hours after surgery	24 hours after surgery
Mean arterial pressure (mmHg)	85 (16)	70 (11)	67 (7)	61 (6)	57 (8)
Central venous pressure (mmHg)	7.7 (2.8)	7.7 (1.9)	7.7 (3.1)	7.6 (3.2)	7.5 (2.4)
Cardiac output (l/min)	6.1 (1.0)	5.6 (1.0)	5.6 (1.1)	5.9 (0.7)	6.8 (1.1)
Superior mesentery artery flow (l/min)	0.93 (0.20)	0.63 (0.18)	0.85 (0.21)	0.91 (0.30)	0.86 (0.25)
Vena cava inferior flow (l/min)	1.70 (0.27)	1.55 (0.57)	1.91 (0.41)	2.12 (0.59)	1.94 (0.64)
Carotid artery flow (l/min)	0.26 (0.08)	0.19 (0.03)	0.26 (0.06)	0.26 (0.05)	0.23 (0.08)

Data is displayed as mean (standard deviation).

546 **Figure Legends**

547

548 **Figure 1. Major liver resection is associated with structural changes of the sinusoids. (A, B)**

549 Electron microscopy images of murine liver sinusoids. Twelve hours after partial hepatectomy,
 550 sinusoidal endothelial cells are disrupted from the parenchymal cells, thereby leaving large
 551 fenestrations in the sinusoidal wall (white arrows). Microvilli of the hepatocytes are reduced after
 552 partial hepatectomy (black arrows). **(C)** Size of fenestration of 5 randomly chosen electron microscopy
 553 pictures per animal (2 animals in each group), showing a significant increase in fenestration size in the
 554 sinusoidal wall after partial hepatectomy. **(D)** Percentage of fenestrated lining in relation to total
 555 endothelial surface in 5 randomly chosen electron microscopy pictures per animal (two animals in
 556 each group) showing a clear increase in uncovered sinusoidal wall. Horizontal lines represent means,
 557 comparisons by student's t-test.

558

559

560 **Figure 2. Major liver resection results in persistent portal hyperperfusion and elevated portal**

561 **pressure.** Displayed values represent mean with standard deviation from 8 animals in the control
 562 group. **(A)** Absolute and relative portal flow after major liver resection. After a short-term decrease,
 563 absolute portal flow returns to preoperative values after 6 hours. The nearly unchanged absolute flow
 564 in the portal vein leads to a hyperperfusion of the remaining liver tissue. **(B)** Absolute hepatic arterial
 565 flow decreases strongly after resection and recovers only minimally. Relative arterial perfusion (flow
 566 per tissue mass) returns close to preoperative values 24 hours after surgery. **(C)** Portal blood flow
 567 velocity in the liver strongly increases as shown by the decreased liver transit time of ICG. **(D)** Portal
 568 venous resistance increases inversely proportional to the remaining liver tissue directly after resection
 569 and then decreases during the following hours. **(E)** Portal pressure is the sum of liver vein pressure
 570 and transhepatic venous pressure. Liver vein pressure was stable after resection, while transhepatic
 571 venous pressure increased inversely proportionally to the amount of resection with a maximum at 8
 572 hours postoperatively.

573

574

575 **Figure 3. Hepatic artery buffer response is absent after major liver resection. (A)**

576 example of the hepatic artery buffer response before and after liver resection. Reduction of portal flow
 577 (blue curve) is associated with an immediate and strong increase in hepatic arterial flow (red curve)
 578 before resection. Corresponding pressure changes are shown below, pre-occluder portal pressure
 579 (purple) rises strongly upon occlusion, post occluder portal pressure (magenta) and hepatic venous
 580 pressure (green) decrease slightly. **(B)** Summarized data showing hepatic arterial flow after reduction
 581 of portal flow to 50%, 25% and 0% respectively. The hepatic artery buffer response can be triggered
 582 preoperatively but not postoperatively directly or 24 hours after resection, N=8.

583

584

585 **Figure 4. Hepatic oxygen consumption per liver mass unit increases after liver resection,**

586 **enzymes for anaerobic energy production are activated simultaneously. (A)** Arterial oxygen
 587 delivery to the liver by the hepatic artery decreases after resection due to distinct reduction in hepatic
 588 arterial flow. Oxygen delivery by the portal vein drops initially but returns to preoperative values shortly
 589 after resection. **(B)** Absolute oxygen consumption of the liver decreases proportionally to the amount
 590 of resection directly postoperatively and rises gradually thereafter. **(C)** Oxygen extraction is lower after
 591 resection, consistent with the increase in portal blood flow velocity after resection. **(D)** Oxygen
 592 consumption per liver mass unit increases stepwise during the postoperative phase. **(E-G)** HIF1alpha
 593 concentration in the liver increases significantly 24 hours after resection. Consistent with this
 594 observation, LDH activity is increased and PDH activity is decreased in order to stimulate anaerobic
 595 energy production. N=8, comparison by student's t-test. **(H)** Hepatic ATP content in the regenerating
 596 liver is strongly increased compared to preoperative ATP levels. N=8, comparison by student's t-test.
 597 **(I)** Schematic representation of the analyzed regulation of anaerobic energy production on the cellular
 598 level.

599

600

601 **Figure 5. Portal flow modulation after major liver resection does not increase hepatic arterial**

602 **perfusion nor preserve the hepatic artery buffer response. However, reduced portal flow**
 603 **correlates with decreased markers of hepatic dysfunction and cell damage.** Displayed values
 604 represent mean, standard deviation where appropriate. **(A)** Decreased postoperative portal flow by

605 artificial flow modulation does not change blood flow in the hepatic artery. **(B)** The hepatic artery buffer
606 response is not observed immediately and 24 hours after resection in both groups. Portal flow
607 modulation does not preserve postoperative function of the hepatic artery buffer response. **(C)** Oxygen
608 extraction is significantly increased in the intervention group compared to the control group (two-way
609 ANOVA, $p=0.005$ for group comparison, no interaction). This may be the consequence of a decreased
610 portal blood flow velocity compared to the control group. **(D)** Bilirubin levels 24 hours after resection
611 showed a significant positive correlation with mean postoperative portal flow. **(E-F)** AST and ALT
612 levels showed a positive correlation with postoperative portal flow ($p=0.006$ for AST, $p=0.112$ for ALT).
613 **(G-H)** ICG clearance, as a marker of liver function showed a significant negative correlation with portal
614 flow ($p= 0.014$). Similarly, measurement of prothrombin time showed a trend to lower values if mean
615 postoperative flow was high ($p=0.170$).
616

617 **Acknowledgements**

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619 concentration; Olgica Beslac, Kay Nettelbeck and Daniel Mettler for their assistance during the animal
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622

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626 Switzerland, grant number 17/2014.

627

628 **Previous Communication**

629 Part of this work was orally presented at the Annual Meeting of the German Society of Surgery 2017,
630 Munich (Germany) and the 12th Biennial European-African Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association
631 Congress 2017 in Mainz (Germany).

632

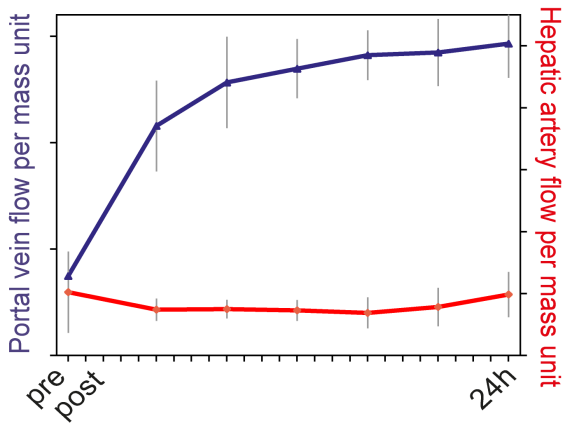
633 **Glossary**

634 ALT alanine aminotransferase
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636 AST aspartate aminotransferase
637
638 ICG Indocyanine green

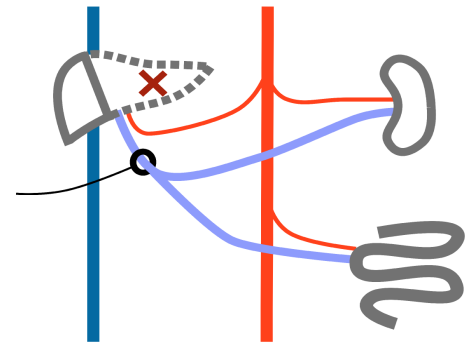
639 LDH lactate dehydrogenase

640 PDH pyruvate dehydrogenase
641
642 SFSS Small for size syndrome

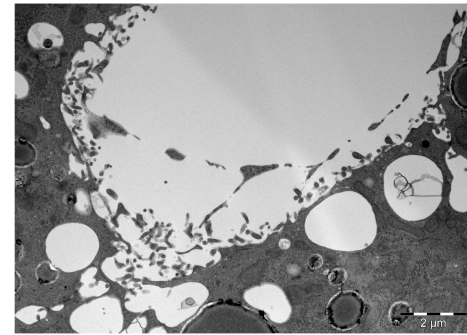
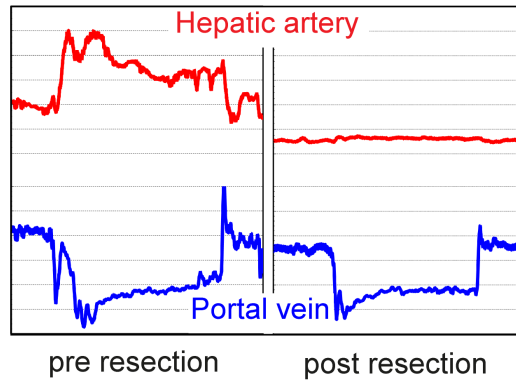
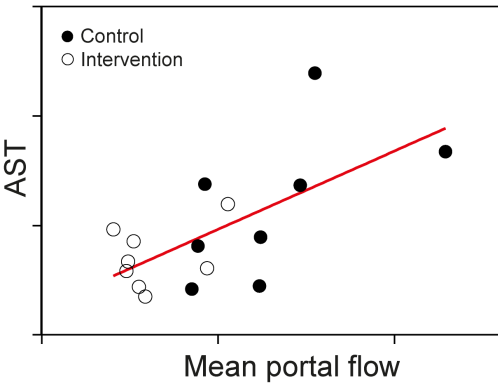
Extended liver resection leads to pronounced **portal hyperperfusion**



A model of perioperative mechanical **portal flow restriction** was tested



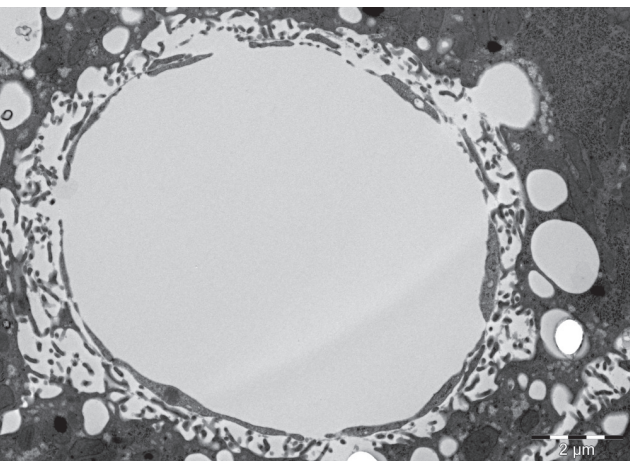
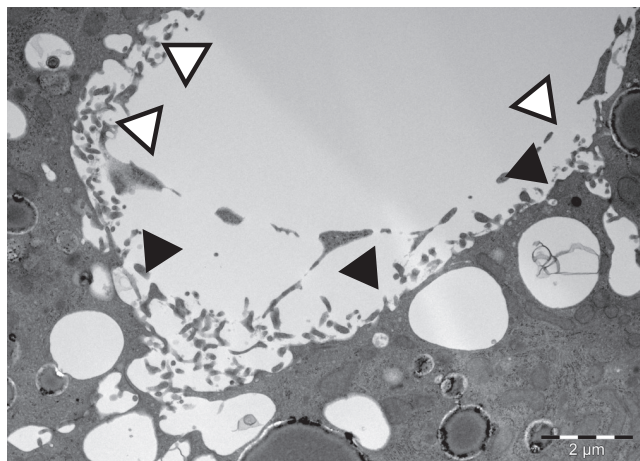
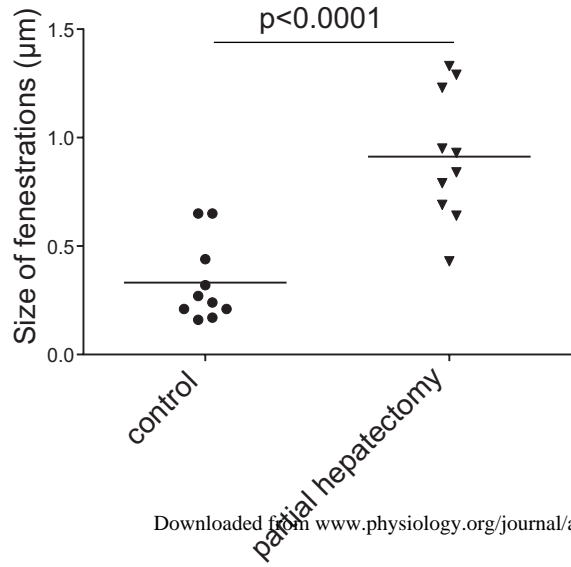
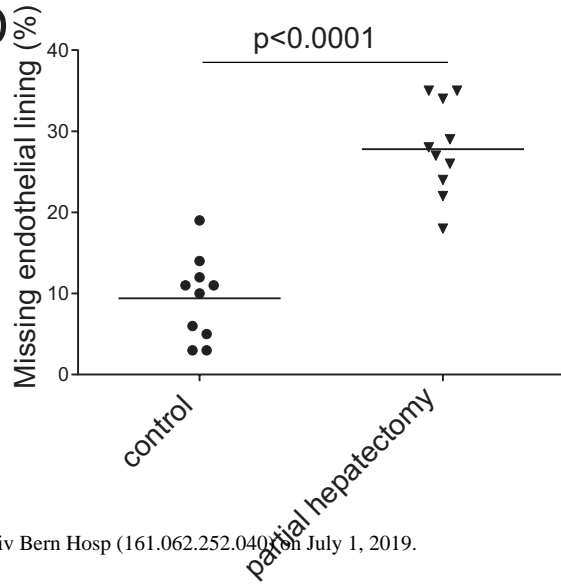
We found following flow related behaviour:

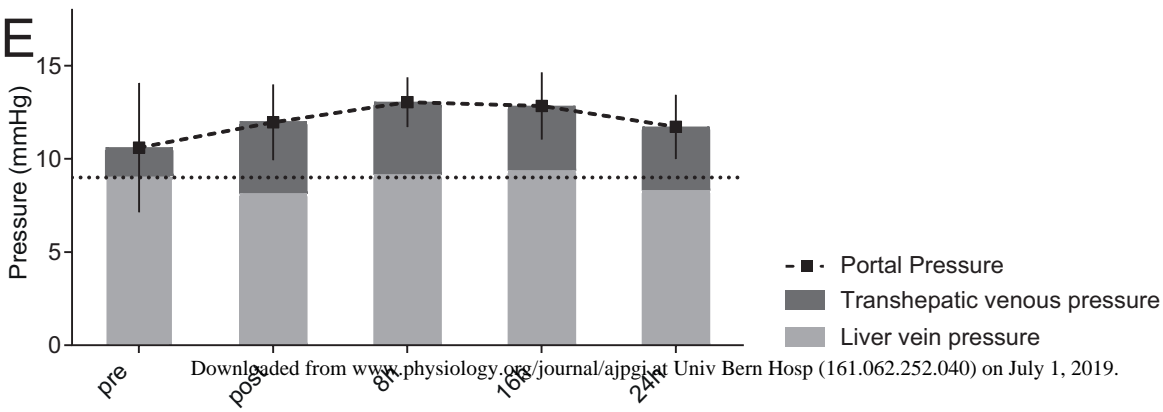
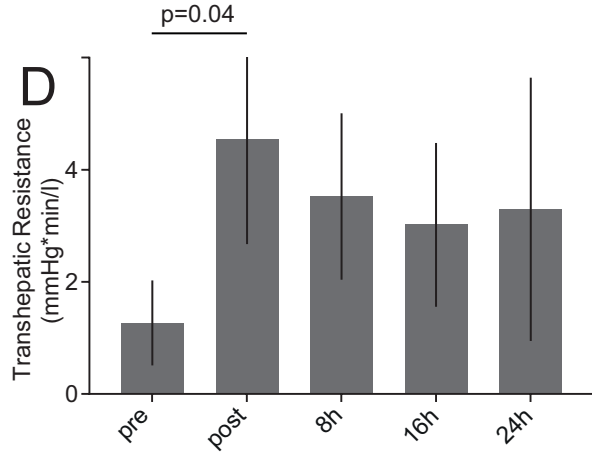
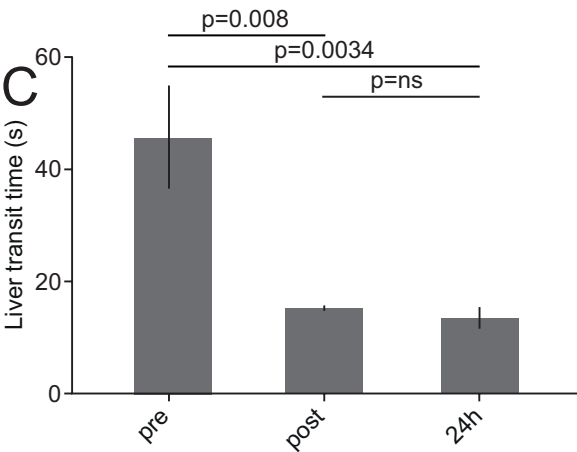
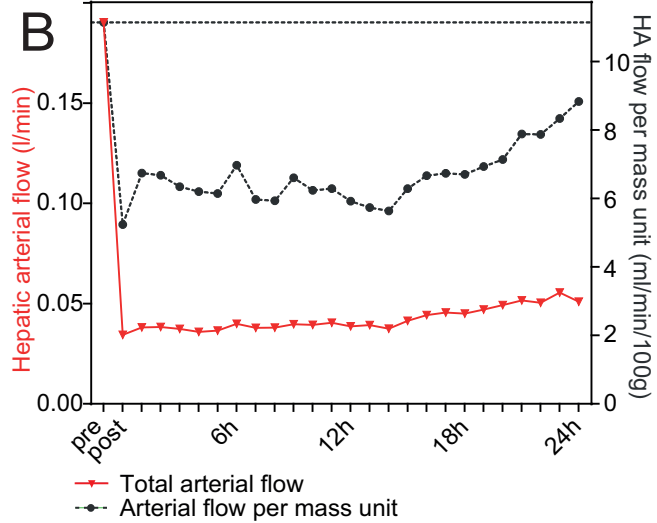
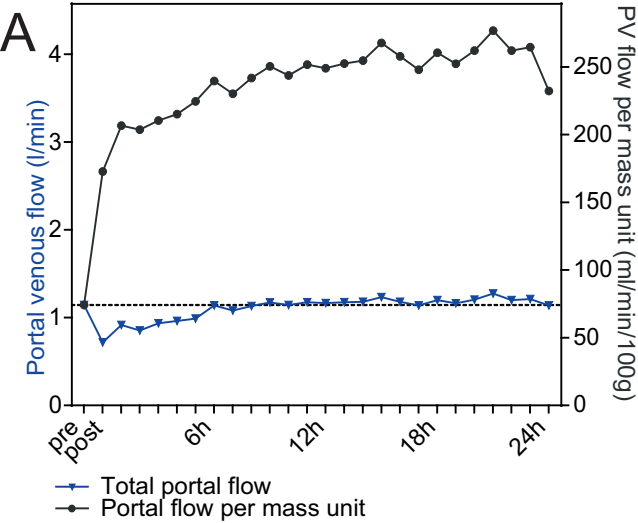


High postoperative portal flow is associated with **liver injury**

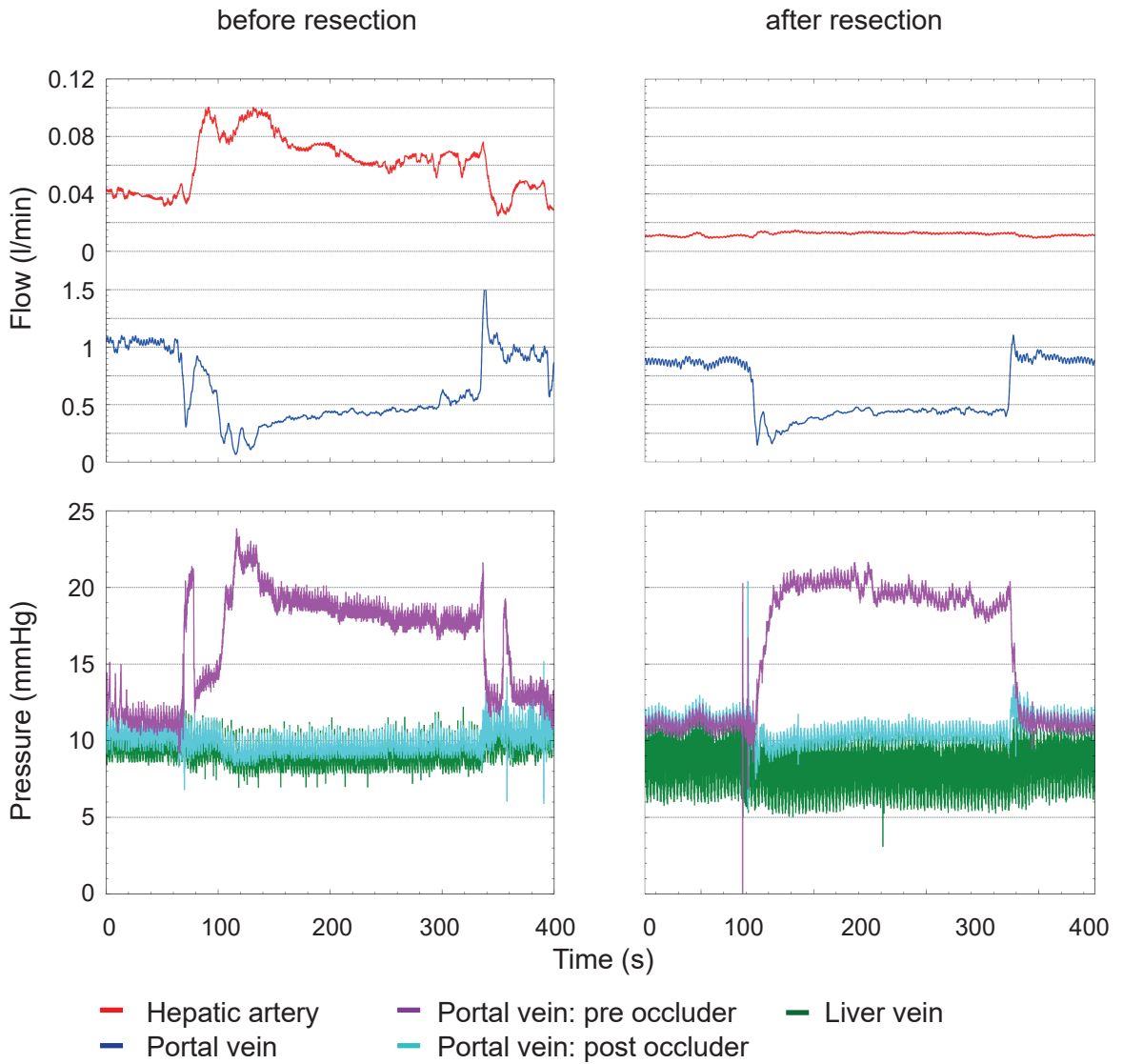
The **hepatic arterial buffer response** is inactivated after resection

Sinusoids show extensive damage after resection

A control**B** partial hepatectomy**C****D**



A



B

