

1 **Title:** Cas9-mediated gene-editing in the malaria mosquito *Anopheles stephensi* by ReMOT
2 Control

3

4 Vanessa M. Macias*^a, Sage McKeand*^a, Duverney Chaverra-Rodriguez*^{a,e}, Grant L. Hughes^{a,f},
5 Aniko Fazekas^b, Sujit Pujhari^a, Nijole Jasinskiene^b, Anthony A. James^{b,c}, Jason L. Rasgon^{a,d},

6

7 **Author Affiliations**

8 a. Department of Entomology, The Pennsylvania State University, 501 ASI Building, University
9 Park, PA 16802

10 b. Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, 3205 McGaugh Hall, University of
11 California Irvine, CA 92697-3900

12 c. Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics B240 Med Sci Bldg. School of Medicine,
13 University of California Irvine, CA 92697-4025

14 d. Center for Infection Disease Dynamics, Huck Institutes for the Life Sciences, The Pennsylvania
15 State University, 201 Huck Life Sciences Building, University Park, PA 16802

16 e. Current Address: Division of Biological Sciences, University of California, San Diego, CA 9500
17 Gilman Dr. La Jolla, CA 92093

18 f. Current address: Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Pembroke Place Liverpool, L3 5QA UK

19 *These authors contributed equally to this manuscript

20

21

22

23 **Short Running Title:** ReMOT Control in *Anopheles stephensi*

24 **Keywords:** CRISPR/Cas9, ovary translocation, reverse genetics

25 **Corresponding Author:** Jason L. Rasgon, W127 Millennium Science Complex, University Park, PA
26 16802 ; Email: jlr54@psu.edu; Phone: 814-863-3668

27

28 **Abstract:**

29 Innovative tools are essential for advancing malaria control and depend on an understanding of
30 molecular mechanisms governing transmission of malaria parasites by *Anopheles* mosquitoes.

31 CRISPR/Cas9-based gene disruption is a powerful method to uncover underlying biology of
32 vector-pathogen interactions and can itself form the basis of mosquito control strategies.

33 However, embryo injection methods used to genetically manipulate mosquitoes (especially
34 *Anopheles*) are difficult and inefficient, particularly for non-specialist laboratories. Here, we

35 adapted the ReMOT Control (Receptor-mediated Ovary Transduction of Cargo) technique to
36 deliver Cas9 ribonucleoprotein complex to adult mosquito ovaries, generating targeted and
37 heritable mutations in the malaria vector *Anopheles stephensi* without injecting embryos. In

38 *Anopheles*, ReMOT Control gene editing was as efficient as standard embryo injections. The

39 application of ReMOT Control to *Anopheles* opens the power of CRISPR/Cas9 methods to

40 malaria laboratories that lack the equipment or expertise to perform embryo injections and
41 establishes the flexibility of ReMOT Control for diverse mosquito species.

42

43

44

45

46 **Introduction:**

47 To solve the growing problem of mosquito-borne disease, we need improved and more
48 efficient gene editing methods. Targeted disruption of genes in mosquito vectors of human
49 pathogens is a powerful method to uncover the underlying biology of mosquito pathogen
50 transmission that can inform the development and application of new approaches to mosquito
51 and disease control (Dong *et al.* 2018; Ling and Raikhel 2018; Duvall *et al.* 2019; Raji *et al.* 2019;
52 Matthews *et al.* 2019). Genome manipulation technologies can themselves form the basis of
53 mosquito and pathogen control strategies (Kyrou *et al.* 2018; Binh Pham *et al.* 2019). While
54 many techniques based on CRISPR/Cas9 have improved studies in mosquito genetics, these
55 techniques rely on embryo injection of the Cas9 ribonucleo-protein complex (RNP), which
56 requires specialized and expensive equipment and training. To get around this bottleneck, a
57 strategy termed ReMOT Control (Receptor-Mediated Ovary Transduction of Cargo) was
58 developed for delivery of gene-editing moieties to the arthropod germline from the hemocoel,
59 allowing targeted and heritable mutations to be made by adult injection instead of embryo
60 microinjection (Chaverra-Rodriguez *et al.* 2018). Proof-of-principle experiments validating
61 ReMOT Control were conducted in *Aedes aegypti*, but extension of the method to species more
62 recalcitrant to editing (such as *Anopheles* mosquitoes) was not established.

63 In this study, we have adapted the ReMOT Control technique for efficient gene editing in
64 *Anopheles stephensi* a major vector of Plasmodium parasites in India and Southeast Asia and so
65 a major object for malaria research. A transgenic line of *An. stephensi* containing two
66 fluorescent markers was already being used to establish protocols Cas9-mediated gene editing
67 and so this line provided a straight-forward first target for ReMOT Control in *Anopheles*. We
68 found that once optimized, gene editing by ReMOT Control in *Anopheles* mosquitoes was
69 comparable to the technique in *Ae. aegypti* and as efficient in editing as standard embryo
70 injections. As Anophelines are substantially more difficult to manipulate at the embryo stage
71 than *Aedes* mosquitoes, ReMOT Control represents a much-needed improvement in gene
72 editing for malaria vectors. We expect that with ReMOT Control gene editing will become as
73 commonly used for reverse genetics in *Anopheles* mosquitoes as it has become in Aedine
74 vectors of human arboviruses.

75 **Materials and Methods:**

76 **Mosquitoes:** *Anopheles stephensi* wild type (Liston strain) and the *Anopheles stephensi*
77 transgenic line VgCp26.10 were reared at 27 °C, 75 ± 10% relative humidity, 12 h light: 12 h dark
78 in a walk-in environmental chamber. Larvae were fed with a slurry of 1:2 by volume
79 Tetramin:baker's yeast. Adults were provided *ad libitum* with 10% sterilized sugar on a cotton
80 ball. For injection experiments female mosquitoes were fed on anonymous human blood
81 (Biospecialty Corp.) using a water-jacketed membrane feeding system.

82 **Embryo Microinjections:** *Anopheles stephensi* females from a homozygous transgenic line
83 VgCp26.10 (Binh Pham *et al.* 2019) were used to generate heterozygous embryos for injection.
84 Blood-fed *An. stephensi* mosquitoes were induced to lay eggs 3-5 days after a blood meal by
85 combining 6-10 females in a narrow *Drosophila* vial with cotton and Whatman filter paper wet
86 with isotonic buffer (150mM NaCl, 5mM KCl; 10mM HEPES; 2.5mM CaCl₂; pH 7.2). At
87 approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes after laying, a paintbrush was used to transfer embryos
88 that were sufficiently melanized to a small piece of filter paper wet with isotonic buffer. Under
89 a dissecting scope, the outer membrane was removed with jeweler's forceps from the embryos
90 and embryos were aligned with posterior poles to the left while maintaining moisture on the
91 paper. After alignment of 30-70 embryos, the paper was dried briefly, embryos were
92 transferred to toupee tape on a plastic cover slip and an oil mixture (1:1 Halocarbon 700 oil:
93 Halocarbon 27 oil) was used to cover the embryos to prevent further desiccation. Quartz
94 needles were pulled using a Sutter P2000 needle puller and were used with a Femtojet injector
95 (Eppendorf) and InjectMan micromanipulator. Following injection, oil was removed from
96 embryos with a Kim Wipe and embryos were submerged on the tape into a petri dish with
97 isotonic buffer and transferred back to an insectary to hatch. Hatching was monitored daily for
98 14 days and hatched larvae were immediately transferred to a pan with food. The injection mix
99 from successful experiments comprised 200ng/μL *Streptococcus pyogenes* Cas9 (PacBio) and
100 100ng/μL each of three single guide RNAs initially described for use to target green fluorescent
101 protein (EGFP) in human cell (12, Table S4). Injected embryos (generation 0, G₀) that survived to
102 adulthood were outcrossed: families comprised five G₀ males allowed to mate individually to 10
103 wild-type females each for 2 days, then combined and pools comprised age-matched G₀

104 females batch mated to wild-type males. G₁ progeny resulting from families and pools were
105 screened for both red and cyan fluorescence in the eyes.

106 **Adult Injections:** Adult females with ages ranging from 5 to 22 days old were blood-fed using a
107 glass water jacketed membrane feeder. The next day, females were immobilized by incubation
108 at 4°C until motionless, then placed on ice and sorted. Females with visible blood-meals were
109 injected intrathoracically using a glass needle drawn from a glass capillary (World Precision
110 Instruments) using a needle puller (Sutter P2000) and aspirator assembly (A5177, Sigma) until
111 we could observe visible distention of the abdomen, diuresis or liquid emerging from the
112 injection site (approximately 200 nl).

113 **Adult Injection Mix Preparation:** P2C-Cas9 and P2C-EGFP proteins were expressed from
114 pET28a-P2C-Cas9 and pRSET-P2C-EGFP respectively by recombinant BL21 E.coli (NEB) as
115 described previously in detail (Chaverra-Rodriguez *et al.* 2018). Single guide RNAs (sgRNAs)
116 were prepared using a PCR template amplified by CRISPR_F primers designed for each ECFP
117 target and CRISPR_R primers (Table S4). *In vitro* transcription was used to produce sgRNAs from
118 PCR template using either MegaScript T7 or MegaScript RNAi kits with at least 1000ng of PCR
119 template. Two to four volumes of the *in vitro* transcription reaction were required to achieve
120 the high quantities of guide RNA required for adult injections. In addition to P2C-Cas9 and
121 sgRNAs, saponin was included in some injection mixes. Saponin dilutions were prepared fresh
122 prior to each injection from dry crude extract of *Quillaja* bark containing >20% saponin (Sigma-
123 Aldrich). All concentrations of saponin reported here represent concentration of crude extract.

124 The final step in P2C-Cas9 expression and purification from transformed *Escherichia coli* is
125 dialysis of the protein in a pH 8.0 buffer consisting 50 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 200 mM KCl, 0.1 mM
126 EDTA, 0.5 mM phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride (PMSF) and 1mM dithiothrietol (DTT). Injections
127 using this buffer produced a high mortality in *An. stephensi* females, but we found that
128 concentrated stocks of P2C-Cas9 protein often precipitated when water, 1X PBS or guide RNA
129 solutions were added to the protein solution. However, if the P2C-Cas9 protein was diluted in a
130 large volume (300-500 µL) of 50 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 200 mM KCl and small volumes (~<20 µL)
131 of highly concentrated (~3-10 µg/µL) sgRNA were added and allowed to complex, the buffer of

132 the RNP could then be exchanged with 1X PBS using an Amicon 10K filter column, which retains
133 the large protein and both bound and unbound guide RNA. Following buffer exchange, saponin,
134 water and additional sgRNA were added to produce solutions of 0.5-0.75 $\mu\text{g}/\mu\text{L}$ P2C-Cas9, 0.75-
135 1.2 $\mu\text{g}/\mu\text{L}$ of total guide RNA (from a premixed solution of the three sgECFPs), 50 mg/L saponin
136 extract from *Quillaja* bark and less than 5 μM residual KCl.

137 **Larval Screening:** G_0 and G_1 larvae were screened at larval instar stage 3 or 4. Larvae were
138 immobilized by applying larvae to a wet filter paper in a Büchner funnel attached to vacuum
139 filtering flask. Larvae were kept slightly wet during screening under UV fluorescence microscopy
140 with a Leica dissecting scope or Zeiss Axiozoom.

141 **Imaging:** To determine the optimal time for P2C-mediated delivery, adult females were injected
142 with P2C-EGFP (Chaverra-Rodriguez *et al.* 2018) 24 hours before and 4, 24, and 48 hours after a
143 bloodmeal. Adult female ovaries were dissected 72 hours post-blood meal, mounted on a slide
144 in SlowFade™ Gold Antifade Mountant (Invitrogen) between two double layers of scotch tape
145 to prevent the ovaries from being squashed by the plastic coverslip. The coverslip was sealed in
146 place using nail polish on the edges of the slip and ovaries were visualized on Olympus BX41. All
147 images were captured using 311ms exposure for 200X and 1030ms exposure for 40X images.

148 **Molecular analysis of mutant individuals:** Mutant G_0 and G_1 mosquitoes identified by visual
149 screening were collected individually and G_1 progeny from mutant G_0 were collected in groups
150 of five individuals, frozen and stored at -20°C . Genomic DNA was extracted using Wizard®
151 Genomic DNA Purification Kit or Qiagen DNeasy® Blood & Tissue kits following the protocol for
152 extraction of DNA from animal tissues. Genomic DNA was used as a template for PCR using the
153 NEB Phusion enzyme and using primers against the transgenes and surrounding DNA (Figures
154 3A, S4). Diagnostic gel bands were extracted using Zymoclean Gel DNA Recovery kit (Zymo,
155 Irvine) cloned into pJet1.2/blunt using the CloneJET PCR Cloning Kit (ThermoFisher) and
156 sequenced. Sequence analyses were performed using the DNASTAR Lasergene suite.

157 **Data Availability:**

158 All data are described in the text and/or included in tables and figures within the manuscript
159 and in the supplement uploaded into figshare as follows:

160 Figure S1: Alignment of amplicon sequences from PCR B validate the presence of the
161 transgene in 17 ECFP knockout individuals.

162 Table S1: Results from screening Single G₀ male families (1,2,3 etc.) and Pools (PX) of G₀
163 females injected as embryos with 200 ng/μL Cas9 and three sgRNAs targeting ECFP
164 (300ng/μL total)

165 Table S2: Results from screening Single G₀ male families (1,2,3 etc.) and Pools (PX) of G₀
166 females injected as embryos with 200 ng/μL Cas9 and three sgRNAs targeting ECFP (total
167 75ng/μL)

168 Table S3: Summary of injection components used for G₀ embryo injections and resulting
169 gene-editing detected in G₁

170 Table S4: Primers used for current study

171 **Results and Discussion:**

172 ***ECFP* targeting, mutation detection scheme, and validation by embryo microinjection.**

173 To establish a method for site-specific editing in *An. stephensi*, we used ReMOT Control to
174 target one of the two fluorescent marker genes in the transgenic *An. stephensi* line VgCp26.10
175 (Binh Pham *et al.* 2019), which offered several advantages for establishment of mutagenesis
176 methods over the endogenous eye color genes previously used. The gene encoding *kynurenine*
177 *5-monoxygenase* (*kmo* or *kynurenine hydroxylase*, *kh*) was used as a visible marker to develop
178 both embryo injection and adult injection methods in *Ae. aegypti* (Basu *et al.* 2015; Chaverra-
179 Rodriguez *et al.* 2018). However, the *kmo* knockout is associated with substantially decreased
180 fitness in *An. stephensi*, while the VgCp26.10 transgenic line is robust and is not likely to suffer
181 from the phenotypic loss of a fluorescent marker (Gantz *et al.* 2015; Binh Pham *et al.* 2019). A
182 mutation in the one dominant visible fluorescent marker gene (*enhanced cyan fluorescence*
183 *protein*, *ECFP*) is easy to detect in hemizygous live mosquitoes by fluorescence imaging while
184 simultaneous expression of the intact linked marker gene (*Discosoma species Red*, *DsRed*)
185 confirms presence of the transgene rather than the wild-type empty locus (Li and Handler
186 2019).

187 Initial validation of targeted knockdown of *ECFP* in the VgCp26.10 transgenic line by embryo
188 microinjection provided a benchmark to assess ReMOT Control knockout efficiency.
189 Homozygous transgenic embryos (generation 0, G_0) were injected with Cas9 plasmid expression
190 cassette, mRNA, or protein, and three single guide RNAs originally designed to target EGFP in
191 human cells (Zhang *et al.* 2014) but which also cut *ECFP* due to a high degree of sequence
192 conservation between the two genes. Surviving G_0 embryos injected with 200 ng/ μ L Cas9
193 protein and 300 ng/ μ L sgRNAs produced G_1 offspring lacking cyan fluorescence in the eyes but
194 expressing DsRed in four out of 32 single male G_1 families and one female pool, resulting in
195 frequencies of 12.5% families producing edited offspring and 1.5-24% of G_1 offspring edited
196 within those families (Table 1 and Table S1). *ECFP* knockout individuals comprised 1.5% of total
197 G_1 screened across all families. Two male families produced individuals with loss of both cyan
198 and red fluorescence, indicating that a modification occurred that not only interrupted *ECFP*
199 expression, but also interrupted expression of the *DsRed* marker that was over 7 kilobases away
200 (Figure 1B). Such large deletions are not unprecedented, but are likely under-reported in
201 studies where PCR amplicons of limited size are used to detect deletions (Kosicki *et al.* 2018).
202 Injection of embryos with a reduced concentration of total gRNA (75ng/ μ L) produced fewer
203 visually detectable mutations; G_1 individuals with *ECFP* disruption were only identified from one
204 pool of females out of 11 total female pools and single male families and constituted 0.13% of
205 G_1 individuals screened (Tables S1 and S2). No knock-outs were detectable in G_1 larvae when G_0
206 embryos were injected with 500 ng/ μ L of Cas9 transcript or 500 ng/ μ L of plasmid with Cas9
207 expressed from the Hsp70 promoter (pDCC6, Gokcezade *et al.* 2014) (Table S3).

208 **Optimization of injection components for adult injection:**

209 In order to accomplish heritable mutagenesis in *An. stephensi* by ReMOT Control, we utilized
210 the ovary targeting P2C peptide derived from *Drosophila melanogaster* yolk protein 1 (DmYP1),
211 which we recently reported in *Ae. aegypti* to mediate delivery of Cas9 RNP into vitellogenic
212 oocytes (Chaverra-Rodriguez *et al.* 2018). However, we found that the *Aedes* injection
213 parameters were not directly translatable to *An. stephensi*. Timing of injection of the P2C-Cas9
214 RNP relative to a blood-meal was reported to impact the developmental stage at which genome
215 modifications are made in *Ae. aegypti*. Additionally, *An. stephensi* have lower tolerance in

216 general to injected components. We identified the injection conditions and timing that would
217 maximize RNP uptake into the ovaries in a way that balanced survival and egg laying with
218 concentrations of RNP effective for editing. We first injected females with P2C-EGFP fusion
219 protein and visualized uptake into the ovary by fluorescence microscopy (Figure 2A). Green
220 fluorescence was more intense and present in all oocytes dissected from injected females when
221 P2C-EGFP was injected within two days of blood feeding compared to decreased fluorescence
222 when the protein was injected prior to a blood meal. Only 50% of ovary pairs had visible
223 fluorescence in females injected 48 hours after a blood meal, perhaps because injected females
224 were past the peak of vitellogenesis (Nirmala *et al.* 2006; Isaacs *et al.* 2011) but those with
225 visible fluorescence were comparable in intensity to earlier injections. Thus, experimental
226 injections were performed within the first two days of a blood meal.

227 In previous work, we used chloroquine to facilitate exit of the Cas9 RNP from the endosome
228 after uptake, but previous work in the field of drug delivery has demonstrated that saponins
229 (*Quallaja* bark extract) act as potent endosomal escape reagents and ongoing work in our lab
230 optimizing ReMOT Control for *Aedes* suggested that it might be as or more effective (Fuchs *et*
231 *al.* 2009; Gilabert-Oriol 2014). For *Anopheles* ReMOT editing, we therefore investigated the use
232 of saponin for endosome escape. In order to identify the highest concentration of saponin that
233 would result in survival and viable offspring of injected adults, we performed a set of
234 preliminary injections using different concentrations of the extract in 1X phosphate-buffered
235 saline (PBS, Figure 2B and C). Injection itself caused substantial decrease in survival and egg
236 laying, but a concentration of 50 mg/L saponin could be injected and still have a high enough
237 oviposition and hatch rate to have enough G₀ progeny to screen. Importantly, we also
238 determined that *An. stephensi* adults could not tolerate the dialysis buffer, which is used in the
239 last step of purification of P2C-Cas9 from *E. coli* (and which was the buffer used for injections in
240 *Ae. aegypti*). P2C-Cas9 precipitated out of solution when diluted in water or 1X PBS. We found
241 that the buffer of P2C-Cas9 in complex with sgRNA did not precipitate and so could be column
242 exchanged with water resulting in a final neutral injection solution with less than 5uM KCl
243 remaining from the dialysis buffer, and that was tolerated by injected adults.

244 **ECFP marker knockout by ReMOT Control:**

245 P2C-Cas9 RNP with EGFP guide RNAs sgEGFP1, 2 and 3 were injected along with saponin (50
246 mg/L) into VgCp26.10 adult females (G_{-1}) crossed to wild-type males, such that G_0 and G_1
247 progeny with parental phenotypes are either positive for both ECFP and DsRed, or wild-type.
248 Expected mutant phenotypes from successful editing would be ECFP-, DsRed+. We recovered
249 ECFP-, DsRed+ G_0 individuals from three out of the four injection groups in which saponin was
250 included, with a total of twelve ECFP-, DsRed + individuals out of 851 total G_0 screened (1.4%).
251 No mutant individuals were recovered from the G_0 progeny in injections without saponin. The
252 VgCp26.10 colony was not completely homozygous at the generation of adult injection,
253 resulting in wild wild-type G_0 , so the efficiency of editing is more accurately understood in
254 terms of number of alleles edited rather than the number of individuals. In this case a total of
255 377 transgenic alleles were available for editing in the G_0 progeny of saponin/P2C-Cas9 RNP
256 injected G_{-1} females as visually detected by DsRed fluorescence in heterozygous G_1 individuals
257 and 14 (3.7%) were edited, whereas 0% of the 534 alleles were edited in the G_0 progeny of G_{-1}
258 females injected without saponin. This adjustment is relevant to the extension of this technique
259 to the mutation of endogenous mosquito genes that will be present in two copies. In these
260 applications, especially for genes that lack a visible phenotype, editing is sufficiently efficient to
261 be able to screen for these mutants by PCR-based methods.

262 ECFP-, DsRed+ individuals that survived to adulthood were individually outcrossed to wild-type
263 mosquitoes resulting in G_1 progeny, of which approximately half were ECFP-,DsRed+ and half
264 were wild-type, consistent with Mendelian segregation of two alleles ($\chi^2=0.0397$, $P=0.84$) along
265 with one transgenic mutant and one wild-type. We conclude from this that *ECFP* knockouts
266 detected at G_0 are complete knockouts and likely occurred as Cas9 cleavage of the DNA in the
267 oocyte prior to embryogenesis (Table 2). Four G_0 progeny were designated mosaics. One of
268 these was ECFP positive in only one eye and the three others had markedly decreased ECFP
269 fluorescence, which is unexpected in individuals with a transgene at a fixed location (Table 1).
270 Individuals mosaic for mutation in a targeted gene is expected in G_0 , as the P2C-Cas9 editing
271 complex can be active at different stages of development. In studies targeting the *KMO* gene
272 for mutation, this manifests in patchy or pink color in the eyes instead of black eyes (Gantz *et*
273 *al.* 2015). In our case, from the presence of fluorescence in only one eye, we infer that editing

274 at an early enough stage of development that a distinct pattern of fluorescence loss is seen.
275 Conversely, in individuals with markedly decreased fluorescence, we speculate that ECFP was
276 knocked out in some cells of the eye and not in others. We were not initially screening for
277 mosaicism in ECFP expression, so it is likely that mosaic presence of ECFP mutations in G_0 is
278 more prevalent. The presence of mosaicism in G_0 progeny from adults injected with RNP
279 demonstrates that, as in analogous experiments in *Ae. aegypti*, the complex is delivered to the
280 G_{-1} ovaries, but in some cases is not immediately active, but becomes active following initiation
281 of embryo development. G_0 Individuals identified as mosaics were outcrossed but produced no
282 progeny.

283 ECFP+, DsRed+ individuals, which are parental in phenotype, were retained from each injection
284 group, separated by sex and then out-crossed *en masse* to wild-type mosquitoes to test for the
285 presence of germline mutations in the germline ECFP coding sequence. Wild-type G_0 were
286 excluded from further crosses. ECFP-, DsRed+ G_1 offspring were recovered from one male
287 outcross from a saponin injection group and one female outcross from a saponin negative
288 injection group, 0.82% and 0.53% of total G_1 from each group respectively. The presence of
289 ECFP-, DsRed+ progeny from ECFP+, DsRed+ G_0 mosquitoes likely represent editing of the G_0
290 germline without visible editing of the somatic tissues.

291 A panel of four primer pairs was used to characterize ECFP-, DsRed+ modifications (Figure 3A).
292 Two primer sets amplify across the genomic DNA and the left and right piggyBac arms of the
293 transgene and so validate the presence of the transgene at the 26.10 locus. Similarly, a PCR
294 amplicon using a primer set across the transgene insertion site indicates the presence of a wild-
295 type chromosome at that locus. A primer set designed to amplify 984 bp across the ECFP open
296 reading frame and all three sgRNA target sites diagnosed the mutation character at this site:
297 out of the 19 ECFP- knockout individuals that were molecularly characterized, only two
298 produced diagnostic bands with ECFP primers and sequencing of the amplicons revealed small
299 indels (Figure 3B second panel, Figure 3C and Figure S1). In 17 cases, PCR and sequencing
300 further confirmed the presence of the transgene at the original locus, but no diagnostic band
301 was seen from the ECFP open reading frame (Figure 3B third panel, Figure S1). In one of these,
302 no diagnostic band was seen for amplification of either the ECFP open reading frame or the left

303 arm, but the right arm was validated as intact, indicating a disruption of at least 1600
304 nucleotides of sequence (Figure 3B fourth panel). These results suggest that large deletions
305 commonly occurred using ReMOT Control, similar to results observed from embryo injection of
306 the same components.

307 Altogether, we demonstrate with these experiments that heritable targeted knockouts can be
308 achieved by ReMOT Control in *An. stephensi*, and that targeted editing occurs both before and
309 after embryogenesis as evidenced both by the presence of mosaics in the G₀ progeny and the
310 recovery of ECFP-,DsRed+ G₁ individuals from ECFP+,DsRed+ G₀ outcrosses. Compared to
311 embryo injection, ReMOT Control will allow non-specialist laboratories to conduct gene editing
312 experiments in *Anopheles* mosquitoes and increase the number of reverse genetic studies in
313 this malaria vector. The translation of ReMOT Control from *Ae. aegypti* to *An. stephensi*
314 mosquitoes required modifications of the injection parameters, including timing,
315 concentrations, and endosome escape strategies. The use of saponin dramatically increased the
316 efficiency of knockout, consistent with results of analogous injections of the endosomal escape
317 reagent chloroquine in the application of ReMOT Control to *Ae. aegypti*. It is possible that
318 many reagents that mediate endosomal escape are usable for ReMOT control, which will
319 further the adaptability of this technique. The ligand P2C is broadly effective in mosquitoes
320 (Chaverra-Rodriguez *et al.* 2018), and may be useful in other insect species as well. In organisms
321 where P2C is not effective in delivery, other ligands may be identified from proteins intrinsic to
322 that species that are specifically targeted to the germline. We anticipate that such
323 developments along with the straight-forward set of modifications for the adaptation to *An.*
324 *stephensi* demonstrated here, will lead to the application of P2C-Cas9 to genetic studies not
325 only to other important malaria vectors, but also to other species currently recalcitrant to gene
326 editing techniques.

327

328

329

330 **Acknowledgments:** This work was funded by NSF/BIO grant 1645331, NIH/NIAID grants
331 R21AI111175 and R01AI128201, USDA/NIFA grant 2014-10320, USDA Hatch funds (Accession
332 #1010032; Project #PEN04608), and a grant with the Pennsylvania Department of Health using
333 Tobacco Settlement Funds to JLR, USDA/NIFA grant 2017-67012-26101 to VMM, Wolfson
334 Foundation and Royal Society fellowship RSWF\R1\180013, and NIH/NIAID grants R21AI138074
335 and R21AI129507 and the John S. Dunn Foundation Collaborative Research Award to GLH, and
336 NIH/NIAID grant R01AI29746 to AAJ. D.C.R. was partially supported by a Fulbright Fellowship
337 and by Colciencias.

338

339 **References**

- 340 Basu, S., A. Aryan, J. M. Overcash, G. H. Samuel, M. A. E. Anderson *et al.*, 2015 Silencing of end-
341 joining repair for efficient site-specific gene insertion after TALEN/CRISPR mutagenesis in
342 *Aedes aegypti*. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 112: 4038–4043.
- 343 Binh Pham, T., C. Hien Phong, J. B. Bennett, K. Hwang, N. Jasinskiene *et al.*, 2019 Experimental
344 population modification of the malaria vector mosquito, *Anopheles stephensi* (C. Desplan,
345 Ed.). *PLOS Genet.* 15: e1008440.
- 346 Chaverra-Rodriguez, D., V. M. Macias, G. L. Hughes, S. Pujhari, Y. Suzuki *et al.*, 2018 Targeted
347 delivery of CRISPR-Cas9 ribonucleoprotein into arthropod ovaries for heritable germline
348 gene editing. *Nat. Commun.* 9: 3008.
- 349 Dong, Y., M. L. Simões, E. Marois, and G. Dimopoulos, 2018 CRISPR/Cas9 -mediated gene
350 knockout of *Anopheles gambiae* FREP1 suppresses malaria parasite infection (K. D.
351 Vernick, Ed.). *PLOS Pathog.* 14: e1006898.
- 352 Duvall, L. B., L. Ramos-Espiritu, K. E. Barsoum, J. F. Glickman, and L. B. Vosshall, 2019 Small-
353 Molecule Agonists of *Ae. aegypti* Neuropeptide Y Receptor Block Mosquito Biting. *Cell* 176:
354 687-701.e5.
- 355 Fuchs, H., D. Bachran, H. Panjideh, N. Schellmann, A. Weng *et al.*, 2009 Saponins as Tool for
356 Improved Targeted Tumor Therapies. *Curr. Drug Targets* 10: 140–151.
- 357 Gantz, V. M., N. Jasinskiene, O. Tatarenkova, A. Fazekas, V. M. Macias *et al.*, 2015 Highly
358 efficient Cas9-mediated gene drive for population modification of the malaria vector
359 mosquito *Anopheles stephensi*. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 112: E6736-43.
- 360 Gilibert-Oriol, R., 2014 Development of a platform technology for enhanced endo/lysosomal
361 escape of targeted toxins by structurally specific oleanane saponins: Department of
362 Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy Freie Universität Berlin.
- 363 Gokcezade, J., G. Sienski, and P. Duchek, 2014 Efficient CRISPR/Cas9 Plasmids for Rapid and
364 Versatile Genome Editing in *Drosophila*. *G3* 4: 2279–2282.

365 Isaacs, A. T., F. Li, N. Jasinskiene, X. Chen, X. Nirmala *et al.*, 2011 Engineered resistance to
366 Plasmodium falciparum development in transgenic Anopheles stephensi. PLoS Pathog. 7:
367 e1002017.

368 Kistler, K. E., L. B. Vosshall, and B. J. Matthews, 2015 Genome Engineering with CRISPR-Cas9 in
369 the Mosquito Aedes aegypti. Cell Rep. 11: 51–60.

370 Kosicki, M., K. Tomberg, and A. Bradley, 2018 Repair of double-strand breaks induced by
371 CRISPR–Cas9 leads to large deletions and complex rearrangements. Nat. Biotechnol. 36:
372 765–771.

373 Kyrou, K., A. M. Hammond, R. Galizi, N. Kranjc, A. Burt *et al.*, 2018 A CRISPR–Cas9 gene drive
374 targeting doublesex causes complete population suppression in caged Anopheles gambiae
375 mosquitoes. Nat. Biotechnol. 36: 1062–1066.

376 Li, J., and A. M. Handler, 2019 CRISPR/Cas9-mediated gene editing in an exogenous transgene
377 and an endogenous sex determination gene in the Caribbean fruit fly, Anastrepha
378 suspensa. Gene 691: 160–166.

379 Ling, L., and A. S. Raikhel, 2018 Serotonin signaling regulates insulin-like peptides for growth,
380 reproduction, and metabolism in the disease vector Aedes aegypti. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.
381 115: E9822–E9831.

382 Matthews, B. J., M. A. Younger, and L. B. Vosshall, 2019 The ion channel ppk301 controls
383 freshwater egg-laying in the mosquito Aedes aegypti. Elife 8:.

384 Nirmala, X., O. Marinotti, J. M. Sandoval, S. Phin, S. Gakhar *et al.*, 2006 Functional
385 characterization of the promoter of the vitellogenin gene, AsVg1, of the malaria vector,
386 Anopheles stephensi. Insect Biochem. Mol. Biol. 36: 694–700.

387 Raji, J. I., N. Melo, J. S. Castillo, S. Gonzalez, V. Saldana *et al.*, 2019 Aedes aegypti Mosquitoes
388 Detect Acidic Volatiles Found in Human Odor Using the IR8a Pathway. Curr. Biol. 29: 1253-
389 1262.e7.

390 Zhang, Y., X. Ge, F. Yang, L. Zhang, J. Zheng *et al.*, 2014 Comparison of non-canonical PAMs for
391 CRISPR/Cas9-mediated DNA cleavage in human cells. Sci. Rep. 4: 5405.

392

393

394 **Figure Legends:**

395 **Figure 1: Schematic of knock-down approach.** A) Schematic representation of transgene
396 present in transgenic line VgCp26.10. The transgene has an ECFP and DsRed marker genes.
397 Three guide RNAs (sgECFP) target Cas9 to the ECFP gene. B) Representative fluorescence image
398 of larvae showing parental wild-type, parental transgenic and exceptional Cyan-, DsRed+
399 phenotypes. C) Schematic comparison of embryo and adult injection approaches for ECFP
400 knock-out and detection of mutants. The shaded box represents not done. Abbreviations are

401 bp: base pair(s), pBac L/R: piggyBac left/right arm, SV40: simian virus 40 3' untranslated region,
402 DsRed: Discosoma species Red, ECFP: enhanced cyan fluorescent protein, sgECFP: single guide
403 RNAs against ECFP, KO: knock-out, G_x: generation X.

404

405 **Figure 2: Optimization of injection components.** A) Fluorescent and bright-field imaging of 72
406 hours (h) post-blood meal (PBM) ovaries following injection of P2C-EGFP at 1 day (d) before and
407 4 hours, 1 day and 2 days post-blood meal. Scale Bar represents 1mm in 40X images and 100uM
408 in 200X images. B) Survival measurement following adult injections with different
409 concentrations of Quillaja bark extract. C) Eggs and hatching counts from eggs laid by females
410 injected with different concentrations of Saponin from Quillaja bark for endosome disruption.
411 Percentages above bars represent the percentage hatching from eggs laid. Abbreviations are
412 the same as Figure 1 and h: hour, N: number ovary pairs, pre-BM: before blood meal, PBS:
413 phosphate buffered saline

414

415 **Figure 3: Molecular characterization of ECFP negative G₀ and G₁ reveals both small and large**
416 **deletions.** A) Schematic of PCR strategy for mutant genotype characterization. Left and Right
417 Primer sets produce amplicons of 422 and 299 base pairs, respectively, that confirm the
418 presence of the transgene at the 26.10 genomic location. ECFP amplicon, 984 bp, spans all
419 three target sites. Primers against genomic DNA (orange and green arrows) produce a 471bp
420 diagnostic band from a non-transgenic chromosome. B) Representative gel images from
421 individuals with intact transgene on both chromosomes (first panel), diagnostic amplicons for
422 both transgenic and wild-type chromosome (second panel), amplicons diagnostic for a deletion
423 that interrupts the primer binding site for ECFP amplification (third panel) and amplicons
424 diagnostic for a deletion that interrupts primer sites for the ECFP amplicon and the Left
425 amplicon (fourth panel). C) Alignments of small deletion mutants from both embryo and adult
426 injections to ECFP. Abbreviations are the same as Figure 1 and WT: wild-type, C: cyan, R: Red,
427 PAM: protospacer motif.

428

429

430

431

432

433

434

435

436

437

Table 1: Injection data and comparison of ECFP mutation by adult and embryo injections

Injection Mix			G ₁				G ₀ Fluorescence Phenotype				G ₁ Fluorescence Phenotype					
Protein	sgCFP	Saponin	G ₁ Cross	No. Injected	Injection time PBM (hours)	No. on EC day	No.	Cyan+	Cyan-	Cyan-	Cyan Mosaic	G ₀ C+R+ Outcross	No.	Cyan+	Cyan-	Cyan-
								DsRed+	DsRed-	DsRed+	DsRed+			DsRed+	DsRed+	DsRed+
Adult injections: P2C-Cas9/gRNA mix injections into VgCp26.10 colony females (G₁) crossed with wild type males																
0.5 µg/µL	0.75 µg/µL	+	VgCp26.10 Females X WT	300	24	212	425	106	317	2 (0.47%)	0	Female	295	103	192	0
			Males									622	324	298	0	
0.75 µg/µL	1.2 µg/µL	+	VgCp26.10 Females X WT	83	48	60	194	160	24	10 (5.2%)	1* (1.2%)	Female	52	26	26	0
			Males									102	38	53	11 (10.8%)	
0.75 µg/µL	1.2 µg/µL	+	VgCp26.10 Females X WT	63	47	33	161	52	107	2 (1.2%)	1** (0.62%)	Female	61	29	32	0
			Males									84	35	49	0	
0.75 µg/µL	1.2 µg/µL	+	VgCp26.10 Females X WT	78	46	46	71	41	30	0	2** (2.8%)	Female	113	30	83	0
			Males									ND				
Sap+ Totals:				524		351	851	359	478	14 (1.7%)	4 (0.47%)		1329	585	733	11 (0.82%)
0.75 µg/µL	1.1 µg/µL	-	VgCp26.10 Females X WT	97	28	78	184	114	70	0	0	Female	217	96	118	3 (1.4%)
			Males									97	49	48	0	
0.75 µg/µL	1.1 µg/µL	-	VgCp26.10 Females X WT	71	25	43	173	61	112	0	0	Female	41	15	26	0
			Males									207	109	98	0	
Sap - Totals:				168		121	357	175	182	0	0		562	269	290	3 (0.53%)
Totals:				692		472	1208	534	660	0	0		1891	854	1023	14 (0.74%)
Embryo injections: Cas9/gRNA mix injections into homozygous VgCp26.10 transgenic embryos (G₀)																
0.2 µg/µL	0.075 µg/µL	-	VgCp26.10 Intercross				309	Not Screened				2320	2317	3 (0.13%)	0	
			VgCp26.10 Intercross					382	Not Screened							5646
Totals:							691					7966	7823	55 (0.69%)	88 (1.1%)	

*individual had one cyan+ eye and one cyan- eye

**these individuals had markedly reduced cyan fluorescence

Table 2: G₁ progeny from Cyan negative G₀ demonstrate knockouts are heritable

G ₀ Cross	G ₁ Fluorescence Phenotype			
	No.	Cyan+	Cyan-	Cyan-
		DsRed+	DsRed-	DsRed+
C-R+ G0 Male #1 X WT Females	246	0	123	123
C-R+ G0 Male #2 X WT Females	163	0	86	77
C-R+ G0 Male #3 X WT Females	275	0	141	134
C-R+ G0 Male #5 X WT Females	119	0	58	61
C-R+ G0 Male #6 X WT Females	339	0	170	169
C-R+ G0 Male #9 X WT Females	116	0	56	60

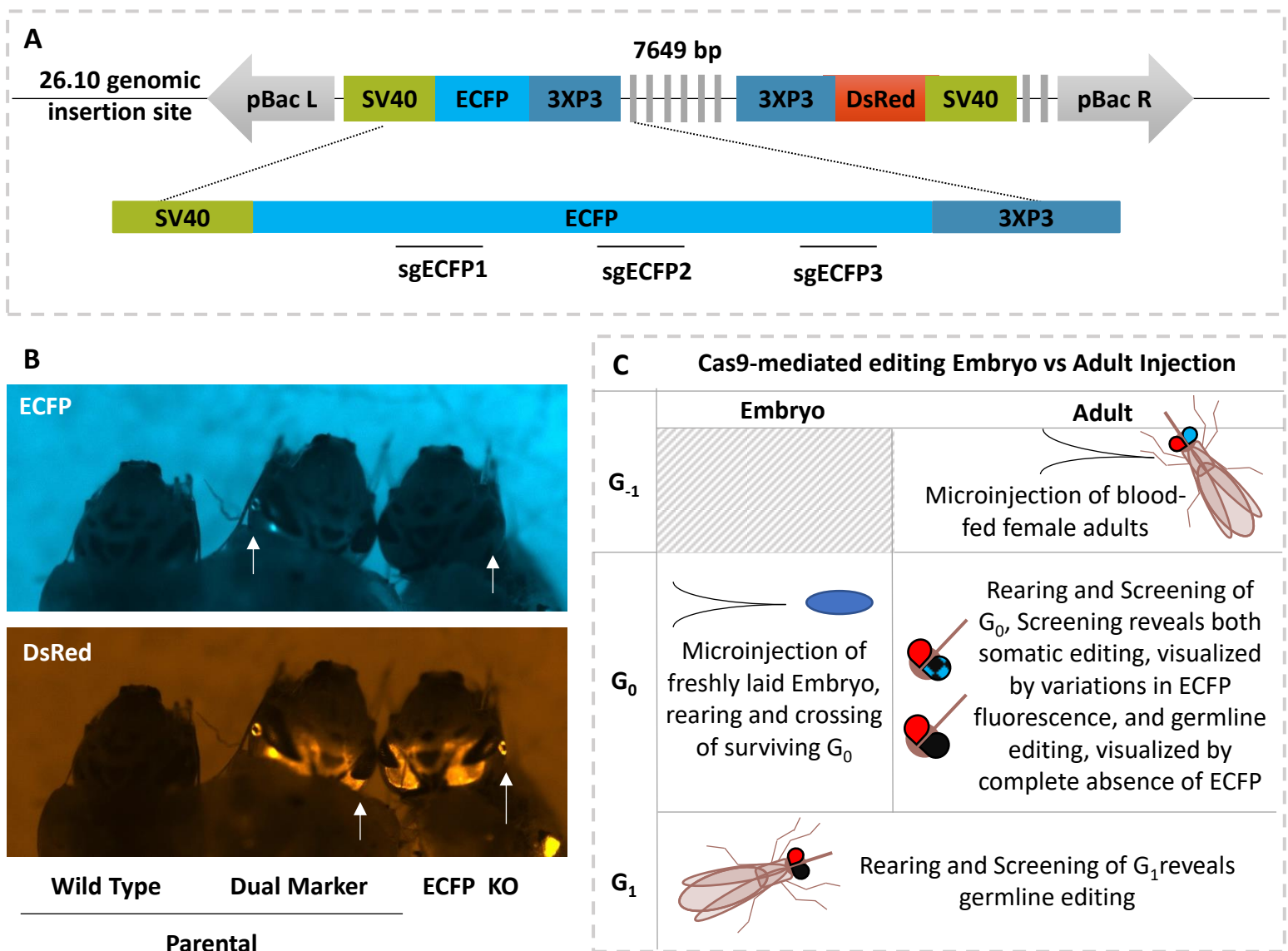


Figure 1: Schematic of knock-down approach. A) Schematic representation of transgene present in transgenic line VgCp26.10. The transgene has an ECFP and DsRed marker genes. Three guide RNAs (sgECFP) target Cas9 to the ECFP gene. B) Representative fluorescence image of larvae showing parental wild-type, parental transgenic and exceptional Cyan-, DsRed+ phenotypes. C) Schematic comparison of embryo and adult injection approaches for ECFP knock-out and detection of mutants. The shaded box represents not done. Abbreviations are bp: base pair(s), pBac L/R: piggyBac left/right arm, SV40: simian virus 40 3' untranslated region, DsRed: Discosoma species Red, ECFP: enhanced cyan fluorescent protein, sgECFP: single guide RNAs against ECFP, KO: knock-out, G_x : generation X.

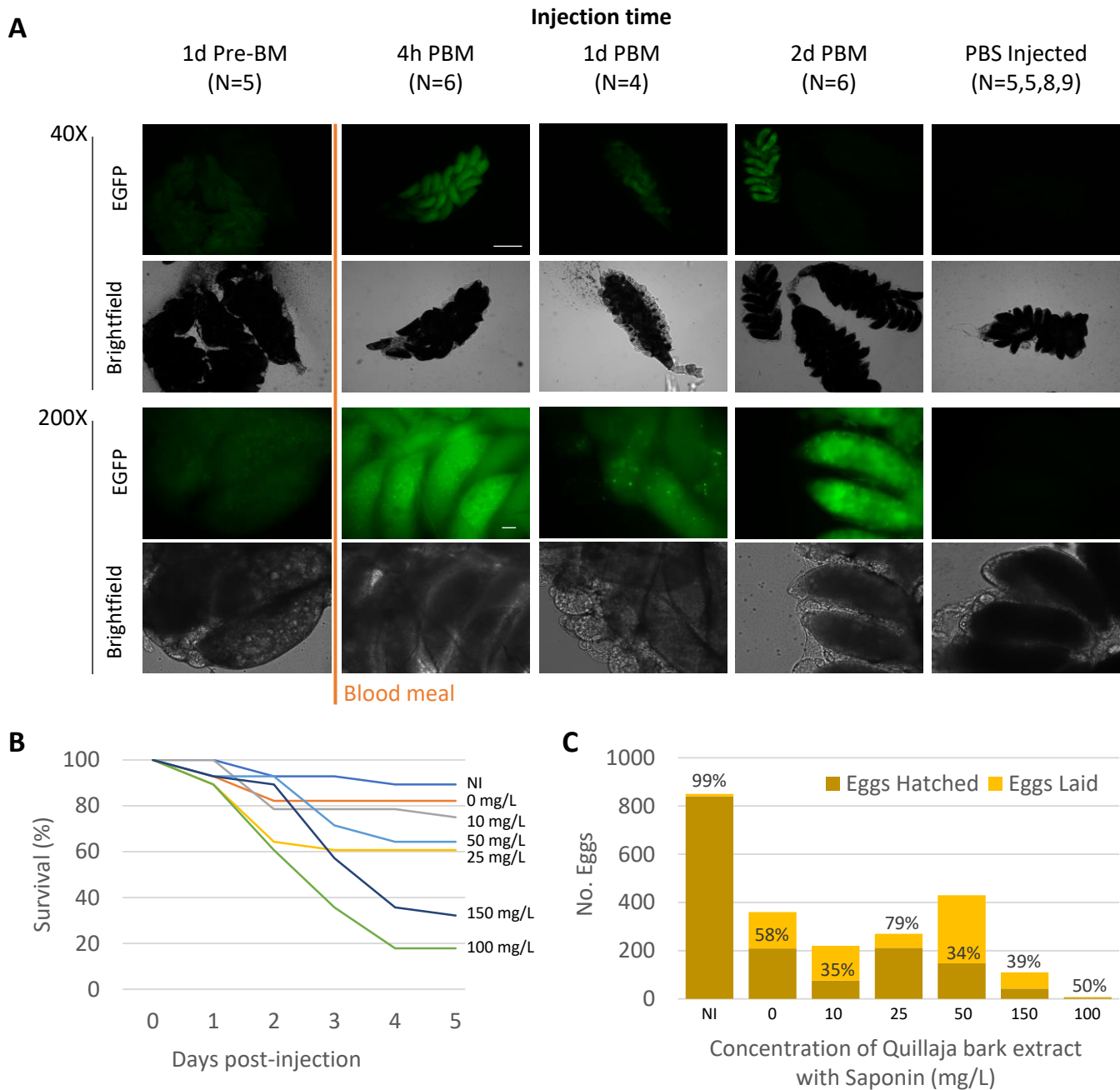


Figure 2: Optimization of injection components. A) Fluorescent and bright-field imaging of 72 hours (h) post-blood meal (PBM) ovaries following injection of P2C-EGFP at 1 day (d) before and 4 hours, 1 day and 2 days post-blood meal. Scale Bar represents 1mm in 40X images and 100uM in 200X images. B) Survival measurement following adult injections with different concentrations of Quillaja bark extract. C) Eggs and hatching counts from eggs laid by females injected with different concentrations of Saponin from Quillaja bark for endosome disruption. Percentages above bars represent the percentage hatching from eggs laid. Abbreviations are the same as Figure 1 and h: hour, N: number ovary pairs, pre-BM: before blood meal, PBS: phosphate buffered saline

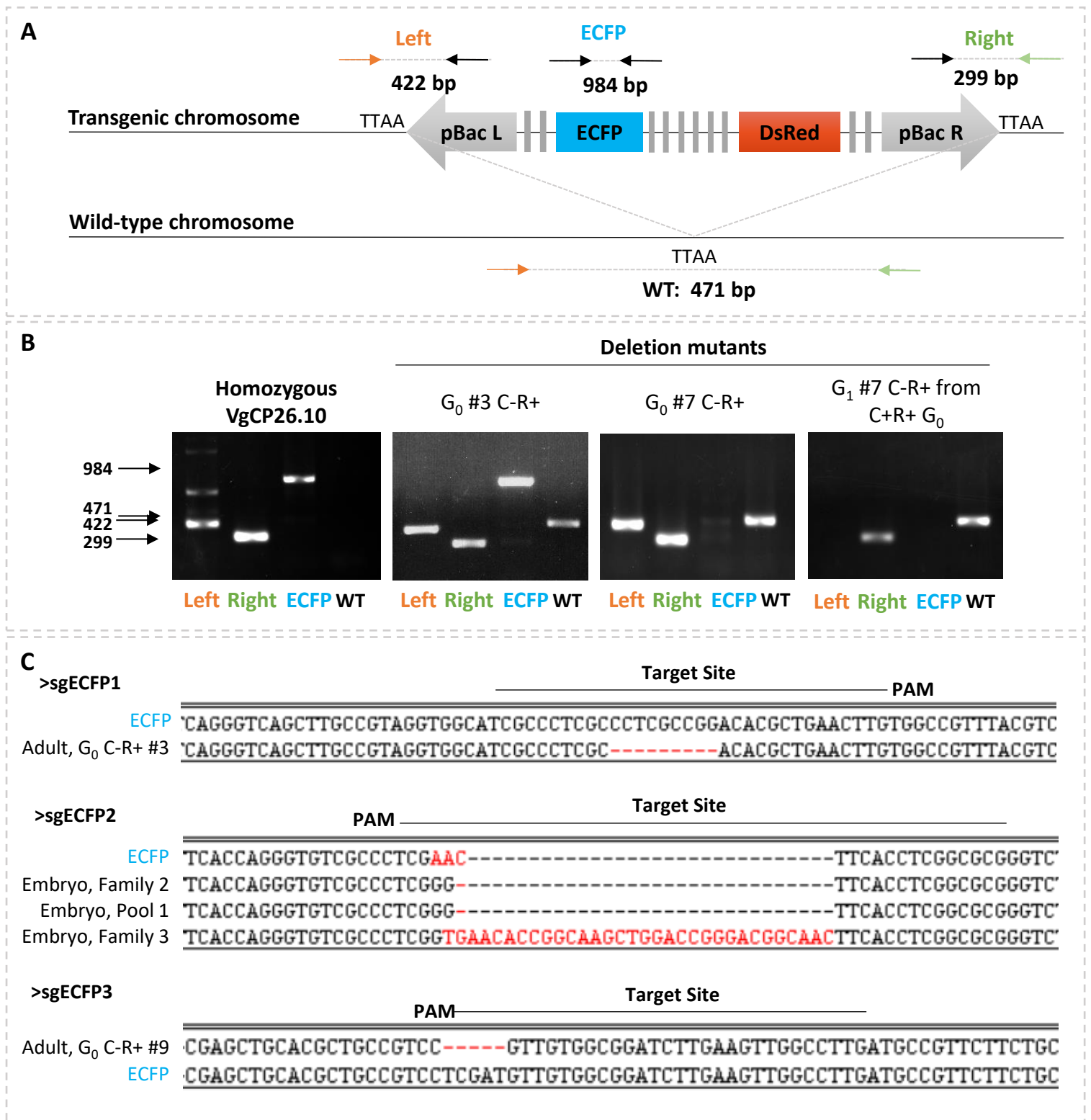


Figure 3: Molecular characterization of ECFP negative G₀ and G₁ reveals both small and large deletions. A) Schematic of PCR strategy for mutant genotype characterization. Left and Right Primer sets produce amplicons of 422 and 299 base pairs, respectively, that confirm the presence of the transgene at the 26.10 genomic location. ECFP amplicon, 984 bp, spans all three target sites. Primers against genomic DNA (orange and green arrows) produce a 471bp diagnostic band from a non-transgenic chromosome. B) Representative gel images from individuals with intact transgene on both chromosomes (first panel), diagnostic amplicons for both transgenic and wild-type chromosome (second panel), amplicons diagnostic for a deletion that interrupts the primer binding site for ECFP amplification (third panel) and amplicons diagnostic for a deletion that interrupts primer sites for the ECFP amplicon and the Left amplicon (fourth panel). C) Alignments of small deletion mutants from both embryo and adult injections to ECFP. Abbreviations are the same as Figure 1 and WT: wild-type, C: cyan, R: Red, PAM: protospacer motif.