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INTRODUCTION

- Myotonic dystrophy type 1 (DM1) is a multi-systemic disease that affects over 40,000 individuals in the US and 50,000 in Europe.
 - Pathology manifests as myotonia, muscle weakness and atrophy, cardiac conduction abnormalities, pulmonary complications, cataracts, and endocrine dysfunction.¹
 - Currently there are no approved therapies for DM1.
- DM1 is caused by a CUG trinucleotide repeat expansion in the *DMPK* (dystrophia myotonica protein kinase) mRNA that sequesters splicing regulatory proteins such as MBNL (muscleblind-like).²
 - Mutant *DMPK* mRNA and MBNL proteins aggregate to form nuclear foci.³ MBNL splicing activity is decreased as a result of nuclear sequestration, thereby inhibiting splicing and expression of many downstream transcripts.^{4,5}
- One therapeutic approach for treatment of DM1 is the use of oligonucleotide therapeutics to sterically block CUG repeat expansions.
 - There are significant barriers to the development of oligonucleotide-based therapies such as limited exposure and poor endosomal escape in target tissue after systemic administration.
- We developed an Endosomal Escape Vehicle (EEV™) delivery platform based on cyclic cell-penetrating peptides (cCPPs) to improve cellular uptake and enhance endosomal escape of oligonucleotides and other biologics.^{6,7}
 - ENTR-701 is our lead clinical candidate for the treatment of DM1.

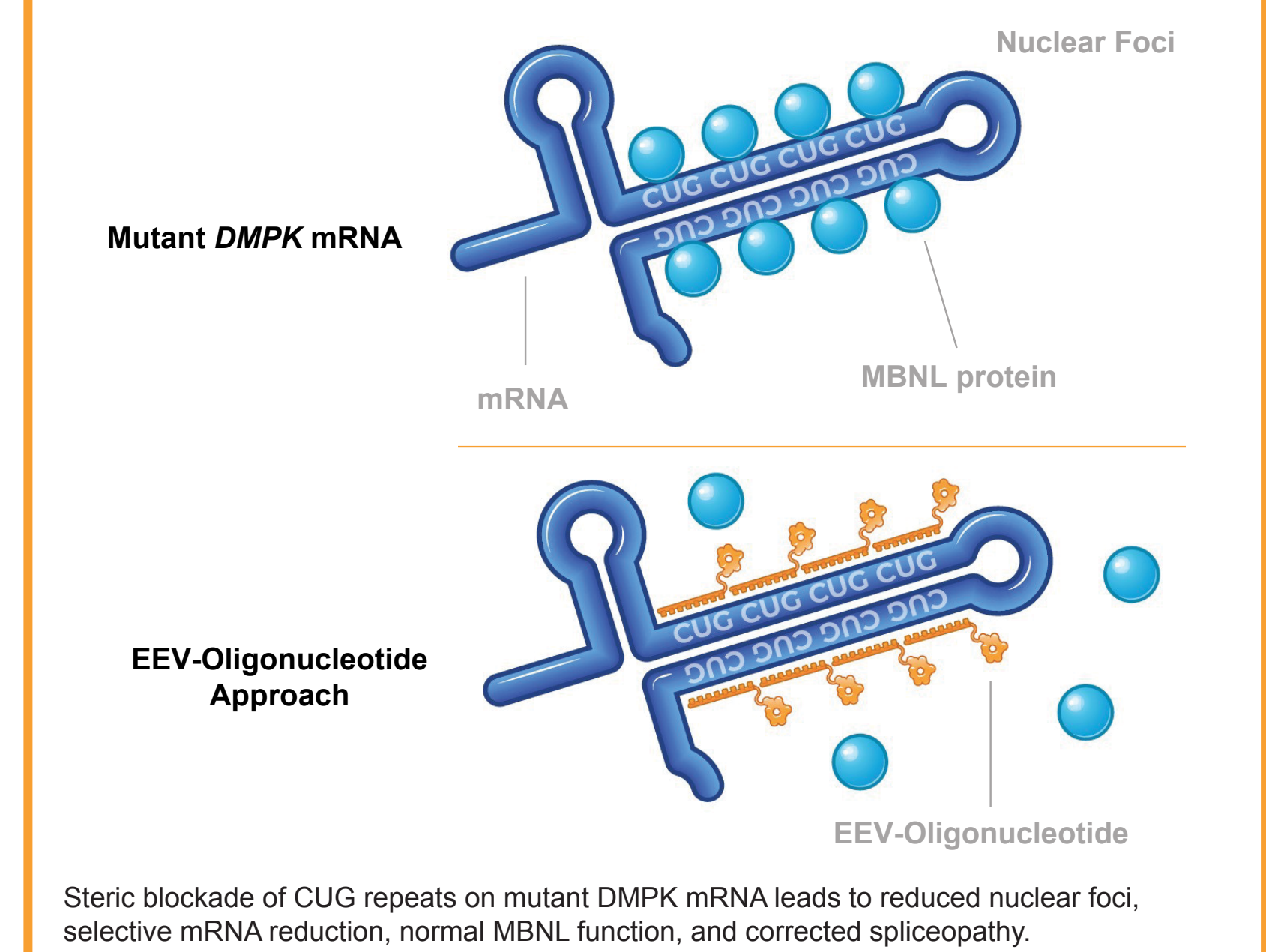
OBJECTIVES

- To examine the therapeutic potential of ENTR-701 in preclinical models of DM1.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- ENTR-701 consists of a phosphorodiamidate morpholino oligomer (PMO) that blocks CUG repeats in an allele-specific manner, conjugated to our EEV platform (Figure 1).
- Nuclear foci reduction, mutant transcript levels, and correction of aberrant splicing were assessed in cellular models and HSA-LR mice.
 - HeLa480 cells stably expressing either (CTG)480 or (CTG)0 *DMPK* transgenes showed MBNL1-dependent aberrant splicing.⁸
 - Immortalized myoblasts were derived from DM1 patient primary skeletal muscle cells and contain 2,600 CUG repeats within the 3'UTR of *DMPK*.⁹
 - HSA-LR¹⁰ mice carry a transgene with a (CTG)220 repeat expansion in the 3'-UTR of the human skeletal actin gene (*ACTA1*) which recapitulates molecular pathology and results in a myotonia phenotype.

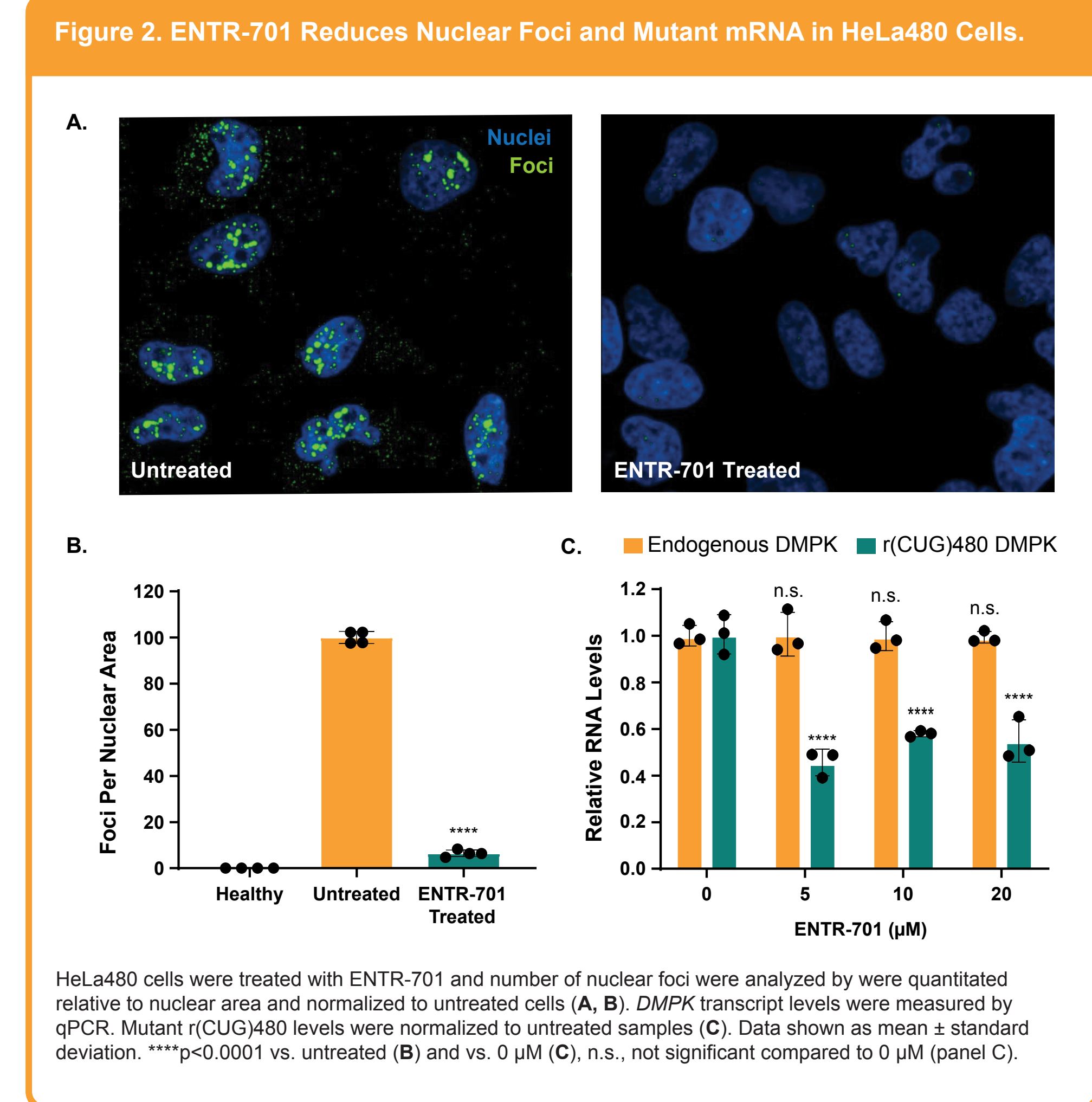
Figure 1. Mechanism of EEV-PMO Conjugate in DM1.



RESULTS

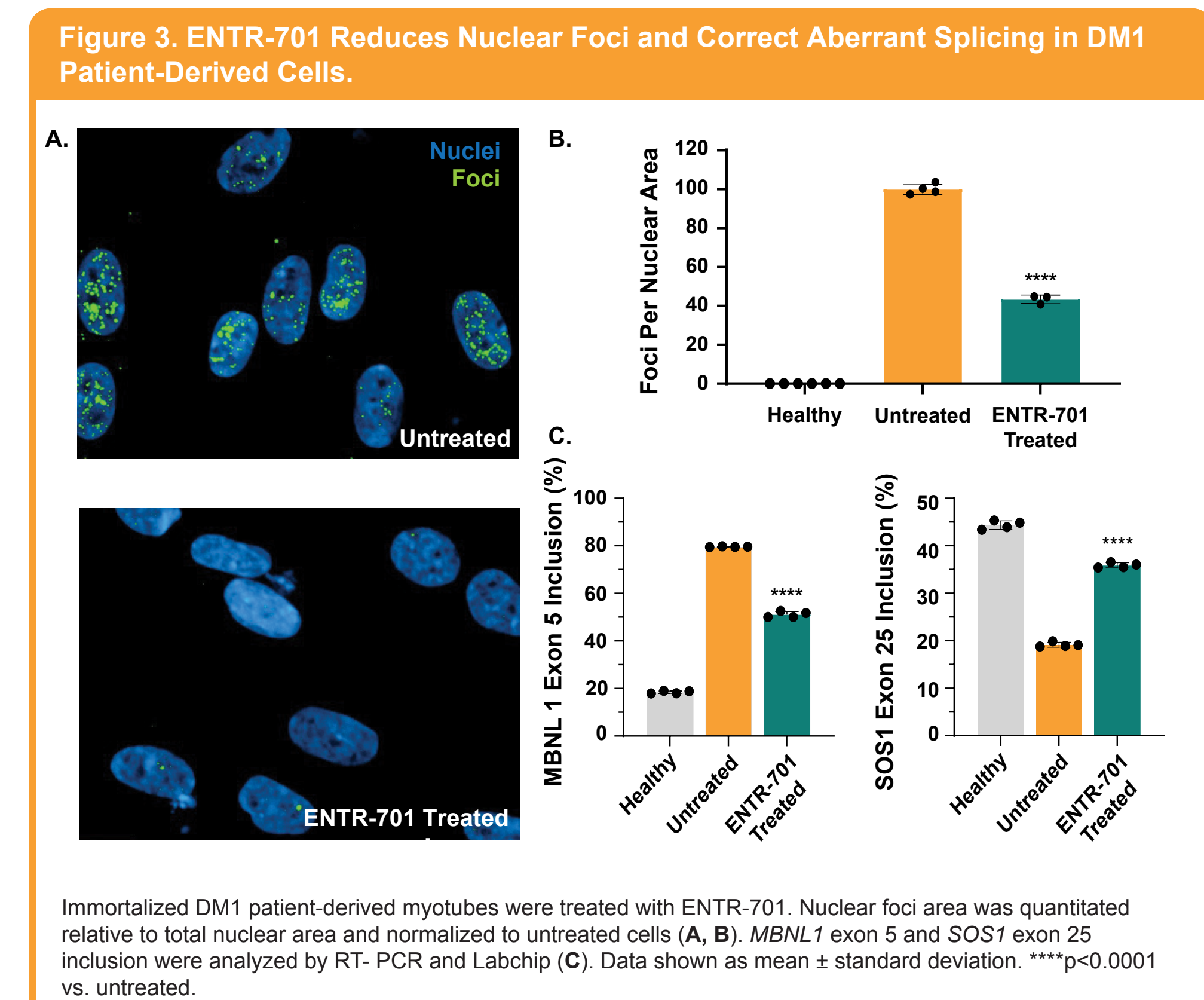
ENTR-701 in HeLa480 Mutant *DMPK* Cell Line

ENTR-701 reduced nuclear foci in HeLa480 cells (Figures 2A, 2B). In addition, free uptake of ENTR-701 selectively reduced (CUG)480 containing *DMPK* mRNA (Figure 2C).



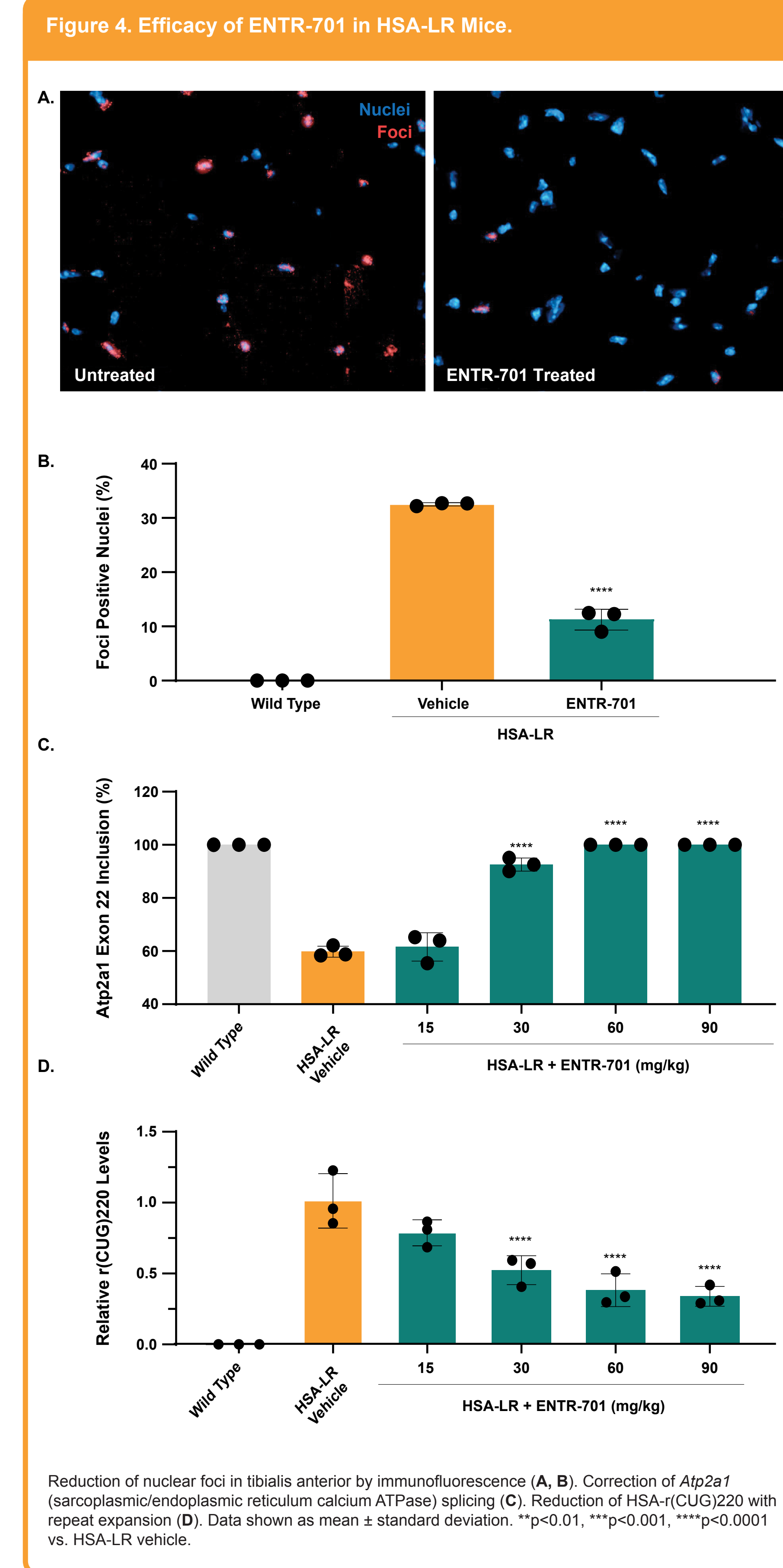
Treatment of DM1 Patient-Derived Myotubes with ENTR-701

ENTR-701 treatment in DM1 patient-derived muscle cells resulted in significant nuclear foci reduction (Figures 3A, 3B) and correction of aberrant splicing (Figure 3C).



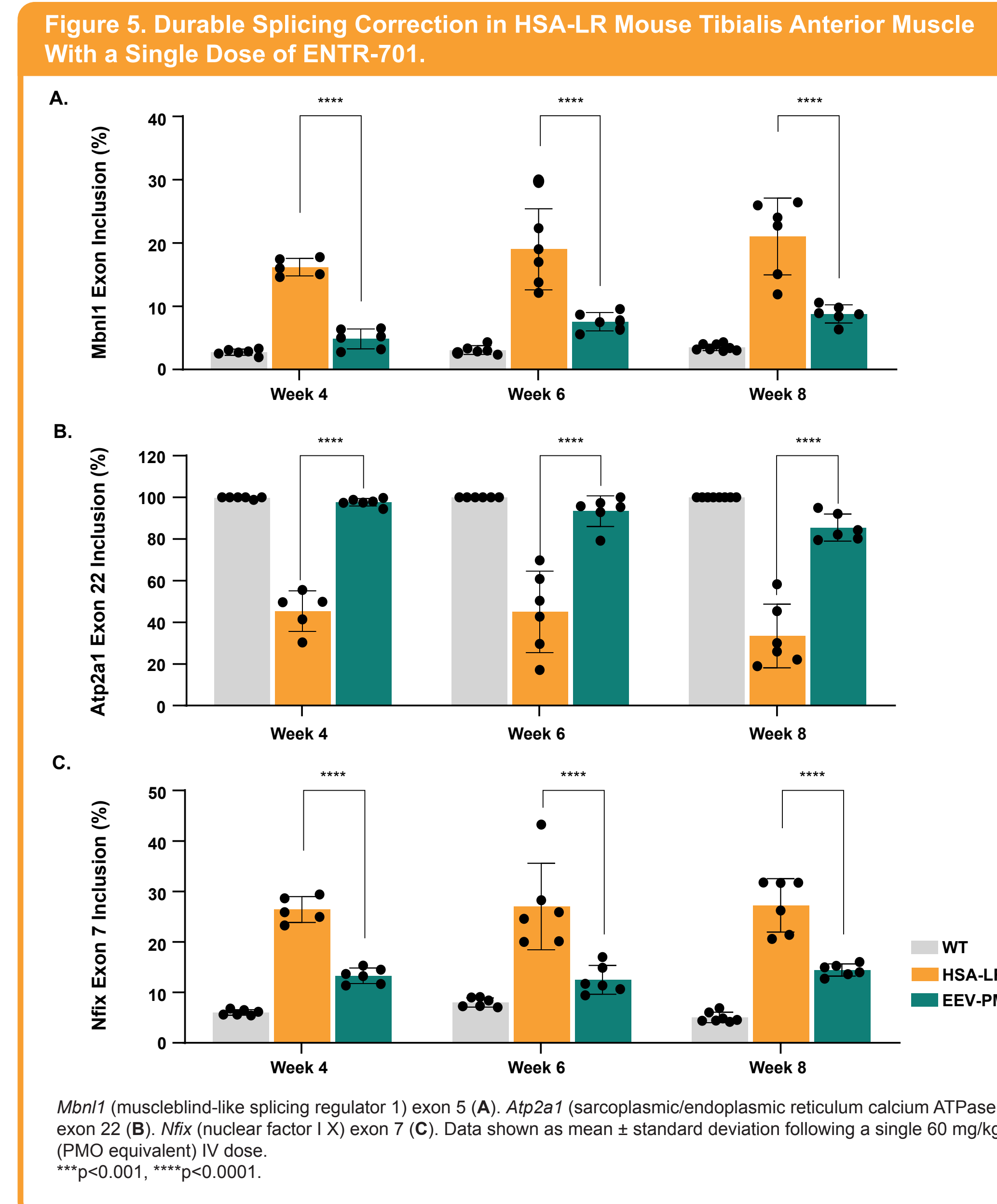
Efficacy of ENTR-701 in HSA-LR Mouse Model of DM1

ENTR-701 treatment reduced the number of nuclear foci (Figure 4A, 4B), corrected aberrant splicing of *Atp2a1* (Figure 4C) and reduced HSA-LR(CUG)220 mRNA in HSA-LR mice (Figure 4D).



Durable Efficacy of ENTR-701 in HSA-LR Mice

A single dose of ENTR-701 corrected aberrant splicing of *Mbnl1* (Figure 5A), *Atp2a1* (Figure 5B), and *Nfix* (Figure 5C) for at least 8 weeks post-dose.

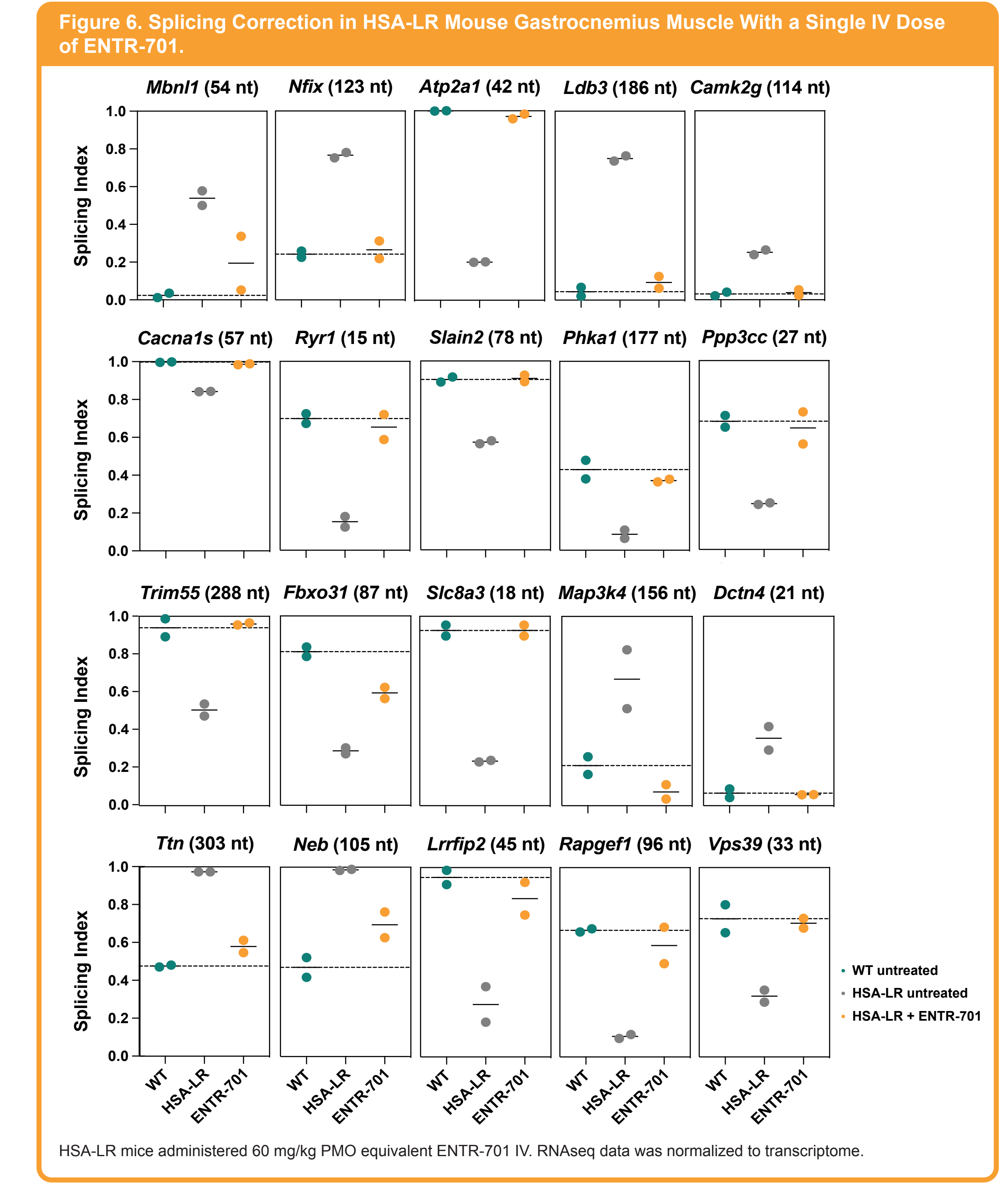


ENTR-701 Rescues the Myotonia Phenotype in HSA-LR mice

A single 60 mpk (PMO equivalent) dose of ENTR-701 ameliorated observable pinch-induced myotonia symptoms for at least 8 weeks post-dose.

Spliceopathy in HSA-LR mice corrected with ENTR-701

RNAseq data illustrates that HSA-LR splicing defects are corrected after treatment with ENTR-701 (Figure 6).



CONCLUSIONS

- Our DM1 clinical candidate, ENTR-701, reduces nuclear foci and CUG-repeat expansion containing transcript levels in the HeLa480 cell model and the HSA-LR mouse model of DM1.
- DM1 patient-derived muscle cells with 2600 CUG repeats also showed a reduction in nuclear foci when treated with ENTR-701.
- ENTR-701 corrected aberrant downstream splicing in all three models.
- A single dose of ENTR-701 demonstrates durable splicing correction and ameliorates myotonia for at least 8 weeks post-dose.
- These results illustrate the therapeutic potential of the EEV-oligonucleotide approach for DM1 and support further study of ENTR-701 in patients with DM1.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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