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Citation	Arora, P., C. Wu, D. B. Bloch, B. N. Davis-Dusenbury, E. Spagnolli, A. Hata, S. Vandewijngaert, et al. 2013. "MicroRNA miR-425 is a negative regulator of atrial natriuretic peptide." BMC Pharmacology & Toxicology 14 (Suppl 1): 010. doi:10.1186/2050-6511-14-S1-010. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/2050-6511-14-S1-010">http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/2050-6511-14-S1-010</a> .
Published Version	<a href="https://doi.org/10.1186/2050-6511-14-S1-010">doi:10.1186/2050-6511-14-S1-010</a>
Citable link	<a href="http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:11877047">http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:11877047</a>
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ORAL PRESENTATION

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# MicroRNA miR-425 is a negative regulator of atrial natriuretic peptide

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From 6th International Conference on cGMP: Generators, Effectors and Therapeutic Implications Erfurt, Germany. 28-30 June 2013

## Background

Numerous common genetic variants have been linked to blood pressure, but no underlying mechanism has been elucidated. Population studies have revealed that a genetic variant, rs5068 (A/G), is associated with blood pressure and the risk of hypertension. rs5068 lies in the 3' untranslated region (3'UTR) of *NPPA*, the gene encoding atrial natriuretic peptide (ANP), and presence of the minor G allele is associated with increased circulating ANP levels and reduced blood pressure.

## Results

We hypothesized the existence of a microRNA (miR) that targets the *NPPA* 3'UTR and that the binding of the miR to the *NPPA* 3'UTR would be disrupted in transcripts from the rs5068 minor allele. We identified a microRNA, miR-425, that is predicted to bind the sequence spanning rs5068 for the A, but not the G, allele. miR-425 is expressed in human atria and ventricles. Using luciferase-3'UTR reporter constructs, we observed that miR-425 could silence reporter mRNAs carrying the *NPPA* major allele 3'UTR, but not those carrying the minor allele 3'UTR. Similarly, an anti-miR directed against miR-425 augmented expression of the luciferase-*NPPA* 3'UTR construct containing the major allele but not the minor allele. miR-425 reduced *NPPA* mRNA levels and ANP synthesis in human cardiomyocytes derived from induced pluripotent stem cells.

## Conclusion

Our studies provide mechanistic insights into how a common genetic variant identified in population genetic studies can regulate ANP levels and blood pressure. miR-425 is a novel regulator of ANP production, raising the possibility that miR-425 antagonists could be used to treat disorders of salt overload, including hypertension and heart failure.

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Published: 29 August 2013

doi:10.1186/2050-6511-14-S1-O10

Cite this article as: Arora et al.: MicroRNA miR-425 is a negative regulator of atrial natriuretic peptide. *BMC Pharmacology and Toxicology* 2013 **14**(Suppl 1):O10.

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