

Vitamin D and Calcium Supplementation Accelerates Randall's Plaque Formation in a Murine Model

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1 Vitamin D and calcium supplementation accelerates Randall's plaque formation in a

2 **murine model**

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41 Abstract

42 Most of kidney stones are made of calcium oxalate crystals. Randall's plaque, an apatite
43 deposit at the tip of the renal papilla is considered to be at the origin of these stones.
44 Hypercalciuria may promote Randall's plaque formation and growth.

We analysed whether long-term exposure of Abcc6^{-/-} mice (a murine model of Randall's 45 46 plaque) to vitamin D supplementation, with or without calcium-rich diet, would accelerate the formation of Randall's plaque. Eight groups of mice (including Abcc6^{-/-} and wild-type) 47 48 received vitamin D alone (100,000 UI/Kg every 2 weeks), a calcium-enriched diet alone 49 (calcium gluconate 2g/l in drinking water), both vitamin D supplementation and calcium rich 50 diet, or a standard diet (controls) for 6 months. Kidney calcifications were assessed by 3D-51 micro-computed tomography, µ-Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy, field emission-52 scanning electron microscopy, transmission electron microscopy and Yasue staining.

At 6 months, $Abcc6^{-/-}$ mice exposed to vitamin D and calcium supplementation developed massive Randall's plaque when compared to control $Abcc6^{-/-}$ mice (p<0.01). Wild-type animals did not develop significant calcifications when exposed to vitamin D.

56 Combined administration of vitamin D and calcium accelerates significantly Randall's plaque 57 formation in a murine model. This original model raises concerns about the cumulative risk of 58 vitamin D supplementation and calcium intakes in Randall's plaque formation.

60 Introduction

61 Renal stone incidence is increasing, affecting almost 10% of the population nowadays.^{1,2} More than two thirds of all kidney stones are made of calcium oxalate.^{3,4} Alexander Randall 62 63 hypothesized more than eighty years ago that apatite (calcium phosphate) deposits at the tip of renal papilla would initiate stone formation ⁵ Evan et al. reported that these "Randall's plaque" 64 65 begin in basement membranes of thin loops of Henle.⁶ The same group reported that increased 66 urine calcium excretion could promote Randall's plaque formation.⁷ Stoller et al. and our 67 group evidenced that Randall's plaque could also originate from vasa recta, capillaries surrounding renal tubules, in the deepest part of the papilla.^{8,9} These observations highlight 68 69 that calcium phosphate supersaturation, predicted to be increased around vasa recta in the 70 papilla, would promote Randall's plaque formation.¹⁰

71 Several recent studies and meta-analyses highlighted that vitamin D and calcium 72 supplementation may increase urine calcium excretion and stone formation, especially in 73 individuals with hypercalciuria.^{11,12} A recent randomized controlled trial has shown that the 74 recommended upper serum level of vitamin D, when associated with calcium supplements, 75 results frequently in hypercalciuria.¹³ Vitamin D, with or without calcium supplements, is 76 prescribed to prevent bone mass loss, although randomized and controlled studies failed to 77 evidence a protective role of vitamin D against fractures.^{14,15} A few reports suggested that 78 kidney stone formers with Randall's plaques may have an increased biological response to 79 vitamin D but there is little evidence that vitamin D promotes or aggravates Randall's plaque formation to date.16 80

The combined administration of high calcium intakes and/or vitamin D has been tested in rats, leading to kidney stone formation, defining a model of kidney stone disease.¹⁷ However, rats did not develop tissue calcifications mimicking Randall's plaques.

84 More recently, patients affected by pseudoxanthoma elasticum (PXE) have been described to be frequently affected by kidney stones. PXE is a genetic (autosomal recessive) disease due to 85 86 mutations in ABCC6 gene. PXE patients are affected by vascular (arterial), retinal and skin calcifications.^{18,19} ABCC6 is a transporter expressed in the liver which facilitates the release of 87 88 extracellular ATP, rapidly converted to inorganic pyrophosphate (PPi) by ectonucleotide 89 pyrophosphatase phosphodiesterase-1 (ENPP1) in vessels. ABCC6 and ENPP1 are actually 90 the main source of systemic pyrophosphate, an inhibitor of calcification limiting ectopic hydroxyapatite (Ca/Pi) crystalline deposits.²⁰ Patients with PXE, as well as Abcc6^{-/-} mice, 91 92 have a reduced plasma pyrophosphate level which explains their mineralization disorder.^{21,22} PXE patients develop massive Randall's plaques and are prone to develop kidney stones.²³ 93 Interestingly, kidneys from Abcc6^{-/-} mice develop interstitial calcifications with aging 94 95 (especially after one year), surrounding the loop of Henle and the vasa recta, made of calcium 96 phosphate, and developed in the deepest part of the renal papilla, all features of Randall's plaques.²³ Taken together, these observations suggest pyrophosphate deficiency is a critical 97 98 determinant of Randall's plaque formation, by increasing calcium phosphate supersaturation 99 in renal papilla.²³

As Abcc6^{-/-} mice represent a unique model of Randall's plaque, we hypothesized that calcium
and/or vitamin D supplementation would accelerate Randall's plaque formation in young
Abcc6^{-/-} animals, before the spontaneous development of these papillary calcifications.

103 Material and Methods

104 Animal Studies

Mice knock-out for the *Abcc6* gene are usually named Abcc6^{tm1Aabb}. They were produced on a
 129/Ola background and then backcrossed into a C57Bl/6J more than 10 times in Professor A.

107 Bergen's laboratory. These mice are designated $Abcc6^{-/-}$ in the manuscript.²³

108 Fourty-eight 10-weeks old female mice were housed and bred at INSERM UMR S 1155 109 Mouse Facility, with a twelve-hour dark/light cycle. Mice received standard chow, containing 110 1000 UI vitaminD3/Kg and 1,05 % calcium ad libitum. Six Abcc6^{+/+} (Wild type-WT) and 6 Abcc6^{-/-} mice had a free access to water containing 80 mg/l of calcium (control group). Six 111 WT and 6 Abcc6^{-/-} mice had a free access to water containing 2g of calcium chloride (calcium 112 113 group). Considering that a mouse daily drinking intake is about 5 mL/day (C57Bl/6J, 25g), 114 calcium daily intake was 10 mg/mouse/day or 0.4 mg/g/day in "calcium" groups. Six WT and 6 Abcc6^{-/-} mice received vitamin D (ergocalciferol 2500 UI/mouse, Sterogyl 15H, DB 115 116 Pharma, La Varenne Saint-Hilaire, France) every 2 weeks, e.g 2.5 UI/g/2 weeks, during 6 117 months by s.c. injection, and had a free access to water containing 80 mg/l of calcium 118 (vitamin D group). Six WT and 6 Abcc6^{-/-} mice received similar vitamin D injections and had 119 a free access to water containing 2g/l of calcium (calcium + vitamin D group).

All studies were performed in accordance with the European Union and National Institutes of Health guidelines (Comité d'Ethique en Experimentation Charles Darwin C2EA-05). The project was authorized by the health ministry and local ethics committee (Authorization number #11420 2017092015335292)

124

125 **Biological samples and biochemistry**

126 Urine was collected in metabolic cages. Mice had a free access to water (calcium-enriched or 127 not) before the first administration of vitamin D and at 3 and 6 months. Mice were sacrificed 128 14 days after the last injection of vitamin D and blood was collected at that time.

Several parameters have been measured in urine: diuresis volume, calcium, phosphate,
pyrophosphate, creatinine. The blood samples have been analyzed for calcium (total),
phosphate, urea and vitamin D (at 6 months).

132 Urinary creatinine and serum urea, and phosphate levels have been analyzed on IDS-iSYS 133 automat. Calcium serum and urinary levels were measured with the Perkin-Elmer 3300 134 atomic absorption spectrometer. Vitamin D serum levels have been measured by the IDS-135 iSYS 25-Hydroxy Vitamin D immunoassay (IS-2700S), to assess 25-Hydroxy Vitamin D (D2 136 and D3) levels. Pyrophosphate urine levels were measured by using an ATP sulfurylase (M0394, NEB) to convert Pyrophosphate into ATP in the presence of excess of adenosine 137 138 5'phosphosulfate (A5508; Sigma Aldrich). Generated ATP was then quantified using the ATP 139 Determination kit (ATPlite 6016941; Perkin Elmer).

140

141 X-ray microtomography and 3-dimensional modeling

142 Left kidneys were fixed in formaldehyde and embedded in paraffin. X-ray CT imaging was 143 performed using a Skyscan 1272 (Bruker, Anvers, Belgium) at Lariboisière Hospital imaging 144 platform (Paris, France). A 6 µm resolution scale was obtained. Shadow images were 145 obtained using an X-ray energy of 65 kV and 150 mA without filter exposition. The angular 146 step between image acquisitions was 0.5° and each image was averaged after 2 frames. Data 147 were reconstructed using Nrecon software (Bruker, Anvers, Belgium) and then exported into 148 a 16-bit Tag Image File Format stack of virtual slices. The Mimics Innovation suite 20.0 (Materialise, Leuven, Belgium) was used for the quantification analysis of papilla's 149 150 calcification volume, and 3-dimensional modeling of Randall's plaques and kidneys.

151

152 Histology and Yasue staining

153 Kidney tissues were fixed in formaldehyde and embedded in paraffin. Four-µm tissue sections

154 have been performed and stained by Yasue procedure to reveal tissue calcifications.

155

156 Field emission-scanning electron microscopy

157 A Zeiss SUPRA55-VP Field Emission scanning Electron Microscope (Zeiss France, Marly-

158 le-Roi, France) study tissue sections (4 µm), at low voltage (1.4 KeV).

159

160 Transmission Electron Microscopy

Half right kidney papilla were fixed in 2.5% glutaraldehyde in 0.1 mmol/L cacodylate buffer
(pH 7.4) at 4°C. Fragments were fixed in 1% osmium tetroxide, dehydrated using alcohol
series and then embedded in epoxy resin. Semi-thin sections (0.5 μm) were stained using
toluidine blue. Ultrastructure sections (80nm) were contrast-enhanced using Uranyl-Less
staining. A JEOL 1010 electron microscope (JEOL, Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) with a MegaView III
camera (Olympus Soft Imaging Systems GmbH, Munster, Germany) was used to analyze
tissues.

168

169 **µFTIR spectroscopy**

170 Microcalcifications were characterized by using μ Fourier Transform InfraRed spectrometry 171 (FT-IR) on 4- μ m tissue sections deposited on low emission microscope slides (MirrIR, 172 Keveley Technologies, Tienta Sciences, Indianapolis). FT-IR hyperspectral images were 173 analyzed with a Spectrum spotlight 400 FT-IR imaging system (Perkin Elmer Life Sciences, 174 France), at spatial resolution of 6.25 μ m and spectral resolution of 8 cm⁻¹. The spectra were 175 recorded in the 4000-700 cm⁻¹ mid-InfraRed range. 176

177 Statistical analyses

- 178 Data are expressed as mean (SEM). Data were analyzed with non-parametric tests (Mann-
- 179 Whitney), using Statview and GraphPad Prism 5.0 softwares (GraphPad Software Inc., San
- 180 Diego, California). The level of significance was set at <0.05.

182 **Results**

183 Serum biochemistry

No significant difference in serum calcium, phosphate and urea levels was observed between
the different groups at 6 months (Table 1). An expected but limited rise in vitamin D serum
levels (about 1.5×control serum levels) was observed in the groups receiving vitamin D
(ergocalciferol) supplementation (Table 1)

188

189 Urine biochemistry

190 Urine calcium, phosphate and pyrophosphate excretion was assessed before treatment, and at 191 3 and 6 months. No significant difference in urine calcium excretion was observed between WT and Abcc6^{-/-} mice, although there was a systematic trend toward increased urine calcium 192 193 excretion at 3 and 6 months in animals exposed to vitamin $D \pm$ calcium (Table 2). When taken together (considering all Abcc6^{-/-} and WT mice at each time), Abcc6^{-/-} mice had a 194 195 significantly lower urinary excretion of pyrophosphate in comparison to wild type animals at each time-point (Figure 1, n=24/group, p<0.01). When considering subgroups of Abcc6^{-/-} and 196 197 WT mice, the difference in urine pyrophosphate was inconsistently significant due to the low 198 animal number (n=6/group, Table 2).

199

200 Quantification of renal calcification at 6 months

Micro-CT analyses have been performed to assess global kidney calcifications (Figures 2 and 3). Abcc6^{-/-} mice had an increased calcification volume (1443548±174767 μ m3) in comparison to control mice (198145±42226 μ m3, n=24/group, p<0.01). In subgroup analysis, there was a non-significant trend toward an increased renal calcification volume in Abcc6^{-/-} mice exposed to calcium and vitamin D (1939003±484442 μ m3) when compared to Abcc6^{-/-} control mice (1051010±166189sem μ m3, n=6/group, p=NS, Figure 3).

207 Micro-CT analyses focused on the kidney papilla have been performed next (Figures 2 and 4). WT animals did not develop significant papillary calcifications, even after 6 months exposure 208 to both calcium and vitamin D (figure 4). Abcc6^{-/-} mice had an increased papillary 209 210 calcification volume (434910±77943 µm3) in comparison to control mice (62722±23811 211 μ m3, n=24/group, p<0.01). In subgroup analysis, there was a significantly increased calcification volume in the renal papilla of Abcc6^{-/-} mice exposed to calcium and vitamin D 212 (892410±172006 µm3) when compared to Abcc6^{-/-} control mice (248937±101734 µm3, 213 214 n=6/group, p<0.01, Figure 4).

215

216 Histopathological analyses and transmission electron microscopy

Yasue staining revealed the presence of rare tubular calcifications (tubular plugs) in WT animals and massive tubular and interstitial calcifications in the renal papilla in Abcc6^{-/-} mice, similar to human Randall's plaque (Figure 5). Of notice, vitamin D and calcium supplementation increased dramatically the interstitial papillary calcified surface in Abcc6^{-/-} mice (Figure 5). Electron microscopy evidenced the massive presence of round-shaped electron-dense structure in the interstitial tissue, around the vasa recta and the loop of Henle, especially in Abcc6^{-/-} mice exposed to calcium and vitamin D (Figure 6).

224

Field Emission-Scanning Electron Microscopy (FE-SEM) and μFourier Transform InfraRed (μFTIR) spectroscopy

FE-SEM has shown that tubular plugs observed in Abcc6^{-/-} mice exposed to vitamin D and calcium were made of aggregated spherulites (Figure 7A; black arrow) and revealed to a lesser extent the presence of interstitial spherulites embedded in the renal tissue and corresponding to interstitial calcifications (Figure 7A; white arrows). To go further in the characterization of the crystalline phases, we performed μ FTIR spectroscopy with an imaging

232 system. The analysis of the absorption spectrum and its second derivative revealed some 233 features specific for the presence of different absorption bands of the apatite 234 $[Ca_5(PO_4)_3(OH)]$, including the v₃ P-O stretching vibration mode measured at 1035-1045 cm⁻ 235 ¹ (Figures 7B). Carbonate ions were detected together with apatite by their v_3 C-O stretching vibration mode around 1420 cm⁻¹ and the v_2 C-O bending mode at 875 cm⁻¹. The presence of 236 237 amorphous calcium phosphate (ACP), revealed by the partial disappearance of the shoulder of 238 the v_3 P-O absorption band of apatite, has been observed in both interstitial deposits and 239 intratubular calcifications (Figures 7B).

240

242

243 **Discussion**

244 The long-term administration of vitamin D, especially in addition to calcium supplementation, accelerates dramatically Randall's plaque formation in Abcc6^{-/-} mice. These 8-mo. old 245 246 animals were affected by massive papillary calcifications whereas unexposed control Abcc6^{-/-} 247 mice developed tiny interstitial calcifications and tubular plugs. In parallel, wild-type mice 248 exposed to vitamin D, with or without calcium supplementation, developed very sparse tubular calcifications and no Randall's plaque. Abcc6^{-/-} had significantly decreased urinary 249 250 pyrophosphate levels but calcium and phosphate urine (and serum) levels were similar in wild-type and Abcc6^{-/-} mice. In contrast to our seminal observations, we did not confirm any 251 difference in phosphate metabolism between wild-type and Abcc6^{-/-} mice.²³ Mice exposed to 252 253 both calcium and vitamin D had a non-significant trend toward higher urine calcium 254 excretion, despite high doses of calcium and vitamin D, in comparison with doses used in 255 humans in clinical practice. It seems difficult to compare calcium homeostasis in mice and 256 humans but the modest increase in vitamin D serum levels, the non-significant increase in 257 urine calcium excretion and the absence of hypercalcemia in animals exposed to calcium and 258 vitamin D rules out the hypothesis of an "intoxication". Nevertheless, in mice affected by 259 pyrophosphate deficiency, even a mild increased in urine calcium excretion was sufficient to 260 accelerate the papillary calcification process.

Interestingly, Sprague Dawley rats exposed to high calcium intake did not develop renal calcifications and rats exposed to vitamin D alone developed hypercalciuria but only tiny calcium phosphate kidney stones.¹⁷ By contrast, the synergistic administration of calcium and vitamin D promoted the development of large stones but no Randall's plaque. The genetic hypercalciuric stone-forming rat (GHS) have an increased expression of the vitamin D receptor (VDR) in intestine, bone, and kidney.²⁴ These animals develop calcium phosphate kidney stones but, again, no Randall's plaque. It appears therefore that vitamin D, especially
in combination to calcium is not sufficient to induce papillary calcifications, whose initiation
may be due to calcification inhibitors defect, but accelerates dramatically the development of
the Randall's plaque in Abcc6^{-/-} mice.

271 Predisposed individuals may be at risk to form kidney stones when exposed to vitamin D, 272 especially when vitamin D and calcium intakes are combined. In the Women Health Initiative 273 (WHI) study, a controlled randomized study, 36,282 postmenopausal women received 1 gram 274 calcium and 400IU vitamin D daily or a placebo during 7 years.¹¹ The treatment did not 275 reduce significantly bone fractures but an increased kidney stone risk has been described in 276 women who received calcium and vitamin D. Recent studies confirmed that vitamin D, 277 especially when prescribed in addition to calcium supplementation, increases significantly 278 urine calcium excretion and in some studies the risk to develop kidney stones.^{12,13} By contrast, 279 some studies did not identify an increased risk of kidney stone after exposure to vitamin D 280 alone (without calcium supplementation) during a median follow-up of 3.3 years.²⁵ 281 Interventional studies remain sparse but recent observations show that some kidney stone 282 formers may develop hypercalciuria after vitamin D "repletion".^{26,27} An important point to 283 take into consideration is the time required to develop Randall's plaque, which precede stone 284 formation. Actually, vitamin D increases urine calcium excretion, which may accelerate 285 plaque formation and promote calcium oxalate stone formation several years later.⁷ The 286 situation may have worsened during the past decades because of the increase in vitamin D 287 prescription, although there is no evidence that vitamin D supplementation may protect 288 against fractures or other conditions, including cancers, cardiac and vascular diseases, obesity, 289 diabetes, depression, falls, infectious diseases and maternal/perinatal conditions.²⁸ 290 Interestingly, Ferraro et al. analysed the association of vitamin D intakes and the risk to 291 develop kidney stones and found no association in the Health Professionals Follow-up Study and Nurses' Health Study I but an increased risk in the more recent Nurses' Health Study II,
 including women receiving an increased amount of vitamin D supplements.²⁹

We observed a synergistic effect of combined vitamin D/calcium supplementation in experimental models, consistent with clinical studies. Of note, calcium intake in the absence of vitamin D did not increase the risk Randall's plaque formation in our in murine model but also in humans: on the contrary, higher dietary calcium is associated with a lower risk to develop kidney stones.³⁰ This results from calcium-oxalate complex formation in the intestine, limiting oxalate absorption and eventually calcium oxalate stone formation.

300 Our results raise concerns about the prescription of vitamin D and calcium to patients affected 301 by PXE. We recently described the presence of massive Randall's plaque and frequent kidney 302 stones in these patients and it may be hypothesized that vitamin D prescription could 303 accelerate plaque and stone formation in patients affected by pyrophosphate deficiency.²³ A 304 deficiency in urine pyrophosphate has been reported in kidney stone formers but 305 pyrophosphate level in urine is difficult to assess in routine practice. This explains probably 306 why few studies focused on the importance of pyrophosphate in kidney stone formation, and 307 no study highlighted its role in Randall's plaque formation until recently.³¹⁻³³

Most of kidney stones are made of calcium oxalate and many of them originate from Randall's plaque. Some observations suggested that patients affected by Randall's plaque could be more "sensitive" to vitamin D.¹⁶ The dramatic acceleration of papillary calcifications by the combined administration of vitamin D and calcium in Abcc6^{-/-} mice suggests that in some genetically predisposed individuals, combined calcium and vitamin D intake could in theory accelerate Randall's plaque formation, deserving specific clinical studies to address this concern.

315

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320 Authors contribution

- 321 EL, EB, and MD designed the study
- 322 EB, ET, JP, AC, DB, MCV, CD, IR, JPH, GL, LM, MD, VP, JZ, OLS, MD, and EL carried
- 323 out experiments and clinical research
- 324 EB, ET, JP, AC, DB, CD, IR, MD and EL analyzed the data
- 325 EB, ET, and EL made the figures
- 326 EB, ET, JP, AC, DB, CD, IR, MD, and EL drafted and revised the paper
- 327
- 328 EL is the guarantor of this work and, as such, had full access to all of the data in the study and
- takes responsability for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis
- 330
- 331 All authors approved the final version of the manuscript

332

333 Financial Conflict of Interest: none

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362 363 **Figure Legends**

365	Figure 1. Urinary pyrophosphate excretion at baseline, 3 and 6 months.								
366	Urine pyrophosphate excretion, indexed to urine creatinine (µmol/mmol) was significantly								
367	decreased in Abcc6 ^{-/-} mice in comparison to WT animals (*: $p < 0.05$, $n=24$ animals/group).								
368									
369	Figure 2. Renal calcifications assessment by X-Ray tomography								
370	Micro-CT analyses allowed the identification of kidney calcifications. The global volume of								
371	the calcifications (in red) has been assessed after 3D kidney reconstruction (Figure 2A-H).								
372	WT mice (Figure 2 A-D) did not develop significant calcifications, whereas								
373	Abcc6 -/- mice (Figure 2E-H) developed calcifications, especially at the tip of the papilla								
374	(A) WT Control; (B) WT Calcium; (C) WT Vitamin D; (D) WT Calcium + Vitamin D; (E)								
375	Abcc6 ^{-/-} Control; (F) Abcc6 ^{-/-} Calcium; (G) Abcc6 ^{-/-} Vitamin D; (H) Abcc6 ^{-/-} Calcium +								
376	Vitamin D								
377									
378	Figure 3. Renal calcification global volume								
379	The global volume of the calcifications has been quantified (μm^3) after 3D kidney								
380	reconstruction. Global renal calcification volume was significantly increased in Abcc6 -/- mice								
381	in comparison to WT animals but there was no significant difference among Abcc6-/- mice								
382	subgroups (n=6/group).								

Figure 4. Papillary calcifications

The volume of the calcifications has been quantified (μ m³) in each papilla after 3D kidney reconstruction. Global papillary calcification volume was significantly increased in Abcc6 -/mice exposed to both calcium and vitamin D vs Abcc6 -/- control mice (*: p < 0.05, n= 6 animals/group).

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Figure 5. Characterization of papillary calcifications: Yasue staining

Yasue staining revealed intratubular and interstitial calcifications predominating in the renal papilla. WT mice developed very sparse and rare tubular plugs, even after exposure to calcium and vitamin D (Figure 5A-D magnification x100). By contrast, Abcc6 ^{-/-} mice developed papillary calcifications (tubular plugs and interstitial calcifications, mimicking the human Randall's plaque, Figure 5E-H). The exposure to vitamin D, especially in addition to calcium increased interstitial calcifications (Figure 5G-H).

397 (A) WT Control; (B) WT Calcium; (C) WT Vitamin D; (D) WT Calcium + Vitamin D; (E)

- 398 Abcc6^{-/-} Control; (F) Abcc6^{-/-} Calcium; (G) Abcc6^{-/-} Vitamin D; (H) Abcc6^{-/-} Calcium +
- 399 Vitamin D

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402 **Figure 6**. Characterization of papillary calcifications: transmission electron microscopy.

Transmission electron microscopy evidenced that the interstitial deposits observed in Abcc6⁻
/- mice exposed to vitamin D were round-shaped, concentric and electron-dense structure,
surrounding vasa recta and loop of Henle, features similar to the incipient Randall's plaque
observed in humans.

407

408 Figure 7. Characterization of papillary calcifications: Field emission-scanning electron
 409 microscopy images and Fourier Transform InfraRed spectroscopy.

410 Field emission-scanning electron microscopy images showed tubular plug structure (black 411 arrow), and to a lesser extent interstitial deposits (Figure 7A, white arrows). Calcifications 412 were made of spherulite aggregates, a typical feature of calcium phosphate (apatite) deposits. 413 These deposits were made of apatite and to a lower extent amorphous carbonated calcium 414 phosphate as evidenced by FTIR spectroscopic imaging analyses (Figure 7B: typical spectrum 415 of a mixture of apatite and amorphous calcium phosphate and Fourier transform infraRed 416 microspectroscopy hyperspectral image of a papilla from a Abcc6^{-/-}exposed to calcium and 417 vitamin D).

Table 1 : Serum biological parameters

	WT				Abcc6-/-				
	Control	Calcium	Vitamin D	Calcium + Vitamin D	Control	Calcium	Vitamin D	Calcium + Vitamin D	
Urea mmol/l	9.34 ±±0.55	10.78 ± 0.51	9.40 ± 0.21	10.12 ± 0.43	10.67 ± 1.80	9.59 ± 0.37	8.72 ± 0.59	8.32 ± 0.38	
Calcium mmol/l	2.51 ± 0.1	2.53 ± 0.07	2.23 ± 0.08	2.49 ± 0.11	2.49 ± 0.06	2.65 ± 0.15	2.5 ± 0.06	2.4 ± 0.1	
Phosphate mmol/l	1.83 ± 0.06	2.16 ± 0.39	1.83 ± 0.18	2.38 ± 0.25	2.73 ± 0.41	1.94 ± 0.08	2.29 ± 0.14	2.29 ± 0.08	
Vitamin D ng/ml	82.5 ± 6.6	87.6 ± 6.9	$123.4 \pm 6.9^{*}$	$144.8 \pm 14.5^*$	88.9 ± 6.9	74.9 ± 3.0	124.4 ± 5.8*	$114 \pm 5.9^{*}$	

^r p<0.05 versus control and calcium group

Table 2 : Urine biological parameters

	WT				Abcc6-/-			
	Control	Calcium	Vitamin D	Calcium + Vitamin D	Control	Calcium	Vitamin D	Calcium + Vitamin D
At baseline								
Calcium/creatinine	0.97 ± 0.23	0.66 ± 0.09	0.59 ± 0.06	0.71 ± 0.06	1.06 ± 0.15	1.02 ± 0.11	0.99 ± 0.2	1.23 ± 0.31
Phosphate/creatinine	15.5 ± 3.3	16.5 ± 1.5	19.6 ± 2.2	24 ± 2.5	23.2 ± 4.6	14.7 ± 1.3	17.4 ± 1.1	20.3 ± 3.2
$Pyrophosphate/creatinine_{\mu mol/mmol}$	1.89 ± 0.32	3.84 ± 0.79	2.71 ± 0.46	2.96 ± 0.57	1.82 ± 0.3	1.85 ± 0.4	1.86 ± 0.15	1.42 ± 0.42
At 3 months								
Calcium/creatinine	0.87 ± 0.08	0.70 ± 0.11	0.94 ± 0.11	0.85 ± 0.09	0.84 ± 0.09	0.89 ± 0.19	1.08 ± 0.13	1.06 ± 0.15
Phosphate/creatinine	14.6 ± 1.6	15.2 ± 1.5	16.9 ± 1.8	12.6 ± 0.5	16.1 ± 0.8	9.3 ± 1.5	13.7 ± 2.1	17.1 ± 1.8
$Pyrophosphate/creatinine_{\mu mol/mmol}$	2.8 ± 0.36	3.25 ± 0.19	2.62 ± 0.3	2.76 ± 0.26	1.83 ± 0.36	1.9 ± 0.41	1.8 ± 0.29	2.68 ± 0.66
At 6 months								
Calcium/creatinine	0.77 ± 0.17	0.71 ± 0.13	1.03 ± 0.24	0.91 ± 0.12	0.76 ± 0.11	0.63 ± 0.03	1.06 ± 0.1	0.93 ± 0.06
Phosphate/creatinine	14.3 ± 0.2	13.1 ± 1	17.8 ± 1.9	18.8 ± 2.1	16 ± 0.9	13.3 ± 1.1	13.2 ± 0.9	14.8 ± 0.7
Pyrophosphate/creatinine µmol/mmol	3.92 ± 0.43	3.26 ± 0.47	3.3 ± 0.28	3.17 ± 0.58	2.68 ± 0.43	3.01 ± 0.41	1.83 ± 0.18	2.32 ± 0.5













