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# **Small extracellular vesicles from young plasma reverse age-related functional declines by improving mitochondrial energy metabolism**

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# **Supplementary Information for**

**Small extracellular vesicles from young plasma reverse age-related functional declines by improving mitochondrial energy metabolism** 

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Supplementary Figure 1 to 22.

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**Supplementary Figure 1. Characterization of the properties of purified sEVs.** sEVs were purified from the plasma of young (2 months) and aged (20 months) male mice and characterized using NTA, TEM and enrichment of sEV markers. **(a)** Determination of the size distribution and concentration of sEVs using NTA. NTA results revealed that the particles purified from the plasma of young and aged mice displayed a typical sEV size (approximately 100 nm in diameter) and were present in the original plasma of young and aged mice at a similar concentration  $(1.7 \times 10^9)$ particles/mL in young plasma *vs.*  $1.04 \times 10^9$  particles/mL in aged plasma). Left panel: representative NTA images. Right panel: quantitative analysis ( $n = 3$ ). In conventional NTA analysis, each sample is automatically subjected to three measurements. The red range curve represents the standard deviation of the three measurements, while the black curve corresponds to the mean of these three measurements. **(b)** Representative TEM images of young sEVs. Scale bars: 200 nm in the upper panel and 100 nm in the lower panel. TEM results showed that the majority of particles purified from young mouse plasma exhibited a characteristic round-shaped vesicular morphology and were heterogeneous in size, similar to previously reported exosomes. **(c)** Western blot

analysis of sEV markers (CD9, CD63, Alix and Tsg101), the major plasma protein (Albumin) and endoplasmic reticulum protein (Calnexin) in whole plasma, purified sEVs and sEV-depleted supernatant. An equal amount of total protein was loaded in each lane. Significant enrichment of sEV markers but devoid of Albumin and Calnexin was detected in the sEV fraction. Each experiment was independently repeated three times with similar results for b and c. Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in a.  $*P < 0.01$ .



**Supplementary Figure 2. Long-term effects of young sEV injection on the wholebody physiology of aged mice. (a)** Flow chart of the experimental design. Aged male mice (20 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or young sEVs (1.80 μg of total protein/μL, from 2-month-old male mice) once a week. Young male mice (2 months) were simultaneously injected with PBS to serve as a control group. At different

time points, changes of physiological activities and functions, including sperm quality and male fertility (22-month-old mice receiving 8 injections), metabolic rate and energy expenditure (23-month-old mice receiving 12 injections), cardiac functions (23.5 month-old mice receiving 14 injections), bone microarchitecture (24-month-old mice receiving 16 injections) and brain volume alterations (24.5-month-old mice receiving 18 injections), were evaluated. **(b-c)** Plasma and intratesticular testosterone levels in each group  $(n = 4)$ . **(d-e)** Assessment of sperm DNA fragmentation with the sperm chromatin dispersion test. Under a bright field microscope, sperm with fragmented DNA fail to produce the characteristic halo of dispersed DNA loops that is observed in sperm with nonfragmented DNA following acid denaturation and removal of nuclear proteins. Therefore, sperm with large halos are considered normal and nonfragmented, whereas sperm with small or no halos are considered to have significant DNA fragmentation. Representative images (green arrows indicate large halos, and red arrows indicate small halos; scale bar, 50  $\mu$ m) and quantitative data (n = 6) are shown. **(f-h)** Echocardiographic measurements of cardiac dimensions and indices of cardiac function in each group. Quantitation of FS, LV Vol;d and LV Vol;s is shown  $(n = 8)$ . **(i-j)** Micro-CT analysis of the trabecular microarchitecture of the proximal femur in each group. Quantitative values of Tb.Th and Tb.Sp are shown (n = 8). **(k-o)** MRIbased morphometric analyses of the hippocampus and cortex in each group. Outlines of the whole brain (red), hippocampus (green) and cortex (blue) used for semiautomatic volumetric analyses are depicted in colors. Representative MRI images of the brain in each group are shown, and the absolute volumes of the hippocampus and cortex were calculated ( $n = 8$ ). Significance was determined using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in b, c, e, f, g, h, i, j, n and o.  ${}^{*}P < 0.05$ ,  ${}^{*}P < 0.01$ and \*\*\*P < 0.005.



**Supplementary Figure 3. Short-term effects of young sEV injection on memory ability and endurance performance of the same batch of aged mice. (a)** Flow chart of the experimental design. A batch of aged male mice (21 months) were randomly divided into 2 groups and were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or young sEVs (from 2-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks. Before (at day -21) and after (at day 14) the 7 injections of PBS or young sEVs, the two groups of aged mice were assessed by a series of behavioral paradigms to determine memory ability and endurance performance. **(b)** The escape latency of each group in the training phase of Morris water maze test ( $n = 8$ ). Purple and blue asterisks (ns) indicate statistically significant differences between Young sEV→Aged (day 14) *vs.* Young sEV→Aged (day -21) and between PBS→Aged (day 14) *vs.* PBS→Aged (day -21), respectively. **(c-d)** Time spent in the target quadrant and the number of platform crossings by each group in the probe trial of Morris water maze test  $(n = 8)$ . **(e)** Freezing levels of each group in the contextual fear conditioning test  $(n = 8)$ . **(f)** Running time to exhaustion for each group in the treadmill running test  $(n = 10)$ . Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in b, c, d, e and f. \*P < 0.05, \*\*P < 0.01 and \*\*\*P < 0.005. ns = not significant.



**Supplementary Figure 4. Effects of aged sEV injection on memory ability and endurance performance of aged and young mice. (a)** Flow chart of the experimental design. Young and aged sEVs were purified from the plasma of young (2 months) and aged male mice (21 months) and resuspended in PBS at a concentration of 1.80 μg of total protein/μL. Aged male mice (21 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL

of PBS, aged sEVs or young sEVs 7 times over 2 weeks, and then the three groups of aged mice were assessed by a series of behavioral paradigms to determine memory ability and endurance performance. Young male mice (2 months) were simultaneously injected with PBS to serve as a control group. **(b)** The escape latency of each group in the training phase of Morris water maze test  $(n = 8)$ . Blue, red, green and black asterisks (ns) indicate statistically significant differences between PBS→Young *vs.* PBS→Aged, between Young sEV→Aged *vs.* PBS→Aged, between Aged sEV→Aged *vs.*  PBS→Aged and between Young sEV→Aged *vs.* Aged sEV→Aged, respectively. **(cd)** Time spent in the target quadrant and the number of platform crossings by each group in the probe trial of Morris water maze test  $(n = 8)$ . **(e)** Freezing levels of each group in the contextual fear conditioning test  $(n = 8)$ . **(f)** Running time to exhaustion for each group in the treadmill running test  $(n = 8)$ . **(g)** Flow chart of the experimental design. Aged sEVs were purified from the plasma of aged male mice (21 months) and resuspended in PBS at a concentration of 1.80 μg of total protein/μL. Young male mice (2 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or aged sEVs 7 times over 2 weeks, and then the two groups of young mice were assessed by a series of behavioral paradigms to determine memory ability and endurance performance. Aged male mice (21 months) were simultaneously injected with PBS to serve as a control group. **(h)** The escape latency of each group in the training phase of Morris water maze test  $(n = 6)$ . Blue and red asterisks indicate statistically significant differences between PBS→Aged *vs.* PBS→Young and between Aged sEV→Young *vs.* PBS→Young, respectively. **(i-j)**  Time spent in the target quadrant and the number of platform crossings by each group in the probe trial of Morris water maze test  $(n = 6)$ . **(k)** Freezing levels of each group in the contextual fear conditioning test  $(n = 6)$ . (I) Running time to exhaustion for each group in the treadmill running test  $(n = 10)$ . Significance was determined using oneway ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in b, c, d, e, f, h, i, j, k and l. \*P < 0.05, \*\*P < 0.01 and \*\*\*P < 0.005. ns = not significant.



**Supplementary Figure 5. Short-term effects of young/aged plasma injection on the cognitive function and muscle endurance of aged/young mice. (a)** Flow chart of the experimental design. Aged male mice (21 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or young plasma (from 2-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks, and then the two groups of aged mice were assessed by a series of behavioral paradigms

to determine memory ability and endurance performance. **(b)** The escape latency of each group in the training phase of Morris water maze test (n = 9 for PBS $\rightarrow$ Aged; n = 8 for Young sEV→Aged). **(c-d)** Time spent in the target quadrant and the number of platform crossings by each group in the probe trial of Morris water maze test  $(n = 8)$ . (e) Freezing levels of each group in the contextual fear conditioning test  $(n = 8)$ . **(f)** Running time to exhaustion for each group in the treadmill running test  $(n = 5)$ . **(g)** Flow chart of the experimental design. Young male mice (2 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or aged plasma (from 21-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks, and then the two groups of young mice were assessed by a series of behavioral paradigms to determine memory ability and endurance performance. **(h)** The escape latency of each group in the training phase of Morris water maze test  $(n = 8)$ . **(ij)** Time spent in the target quadrant and the number of platform crossings by each group in the probe trial of Morris water maze test  $(n = 8)$ . **(k)** Freezing levels of each group in the contextual fear conditioning test  $(n = 8)$ . **(1)** Running time to exhaustion for each group in the treadmill running test ( $n = 5$ ). Significance was determined using twosided Student's t-test in b, c, d, e, f, h, i, j, k and l. \*P < 0.05, \*\*P < 0.01 and \*\*\*P < 0.005.



**Supplementary Figure 6. Short-term effects of young sEV injection on the senescent phenotypes of aged mice.** Aged male mice (21 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or young sEVs (from 2-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks. Young male mice (2 months) were simultaneously injected with PBS to serve as a control group. **(a)** Western blot analysis of p21 and p16 protein levels in the heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney, hippocampus, muscle and testis derived from young and aged mice injected with PBS 7 times over 2 weeks. Left panel: representative Western blots. Right panel: densitometric analysis  $(n = 6)$ . **(b)** Quantitative RT–PCR

analysis of p21 and p16 mRNA levels in the heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney, hippocampus, muscle and testis derived from young and aged mice injected with PBS 7 times over 2 weeks (n = 6). **(c)** Western blot analysis of p21 and p16 protein levels in the heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney, hippocampus, muscle and testis derived from aged mice injected with PBS or young sEVs. Densitometric analysis are shown  $(n = 6)$ . **(d)** Immunohistochemistry staining of Ki67 in the hippocampus sections. Quantification of Ki67 staining intensity in the hippocampus sections are shown  $(n = 4)$ . Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in a, b and c and using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in d.  $*P < 0.05$ ,  $*P < 0.01$ and \*\*\*P < 0.005.



**Supplementary Figure 7. Long-term effects of young sEV injection on the senescent phenotypes of aged mice.** Aged male mice (20 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or young sEVs (1.80 μg of total protein/μL, from 2-monthold male mice) once a week for 15 weeks. Young male mice (2 months) were simultaneously injected with PBS to serve as a control group. **(a)** Representative images of SA-β-Gal staining in the sections of liver, spleen, lung, kidney, hippocampus and testis derived from aged mice injected with PBS or young sEVs. The tissue sections derived from young mice injected with PBS were taken as a control. Scale bar, 100 μm.

**(b)** Western blot analysis of p21 and p16 protein levels in the heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney, hippocampus, muscle and testis derived from aged mice injected with PBS or young sEVs. Left panel: representative Western blots. Right panel: densitometric analysis ( $n = 6$ ). **(c)** Quantitative RT–PCR analysis of  $p21$  and  $p16$  mRNA levels in the heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney, hippocampus, muscle and testis derived from aged mice injected with PBS or young sEVs ( $n = 4$  for p21;  $n = 6$  for p16). Each experiment was independently repeated four times with similar results in a. Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in b and c.  $*P < 0.05$ ,  $*P < 0.01$  and  $**P$  $< 0.005$ .



**Supplementary Figure 8.** UMAP plot of the iTRAQ quantitative proteomic data in eight tissues from PBS- and young sEV-injected aged mice. Each dot represents the overall protein expression in each tissue. The distance between dots indicates their dissimilarity.

■ PBS→Young ■ PBS→Aged ■ Young sEV→Aged



**Supplementary Figure 9. Young sEV treatment mitigates the loss of mtDNA content in various tissues of aged mice.** Aged male mice (21 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or young sEVs (from 2-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks. Young male mice (2 months) were simultaneously injected with PBS to serve as a control group. Mitochondrially encoded NADH dehydrogenase 1 (MT-ND1), cytochrome c oxidase III (MT-CO3) and D-loop region, normalized to β2-microglobulin (β2-MG), were used to measure relative mtDNA content. **(a-h)** Relative mtDNA content in the hippocampus, muscle, heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney and testis of each group ( $n = 5$ ). Significance was determined using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in a-h.  ${}^*P$  < 0.05,  ${}^*P$  < 0.01 and  ${}^*{}^*P$  $< 0.005$ .



**Supplementary Figure 10. Effects of aged sEV injection on metabolic phenotypes of aged and young mice.** Aged male mice (21 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS, aged sEVs (from 21-month-old male mice) or young sEVs (from 2-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks, and then the three groups of aged mice were subjected to assessments of mitochondrial functional parameters and metabolic phenotypes. Young male mice (2 months) were simultaneously injected with PBS to serve as a control group. **(a-b)** ATP synthesis rates in the hippocampus and muscle of each group  $(n = 8)$ . **(c-d)** Mitochondrial complex V activity in the hippocampus and

muscle of each group (n = 8). **(e-f)** Relative mtDNA content (MT-CO1/β2-MG) in the hippocampus and muscle of each group (n = 8). **(g-p)** Young male mice (2 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or aged sEVs (from 21-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks, and then the two groups of young mice were subjected to assessments of mitochondrial functional parameters and metabolic phenotypes. **(g-h)** ATP synthesis rates in the hippocampus and muscle of each group  $(n = 6)$ . **(i-j)** Mitochondrial complex V activity in the hippocampus and muscle of each group ( $n =$ 6). **(k-l)** Relative mtDNA content (MT-CO1/β2-MG) in the hippocampus and muscle of each group (n = 6). **(m-n)** Representative TEM images showing the structure and density of mitochondria in the hippocampus and muscle of each group. Normal mitochondria are round or oval-shaped and contain well-defined cristae, whereas aged mitochondria become swollen, vacuolated and even broken, with cracked mitochondrial cristae. The green arrow indicates morphologically normal mitochondria, and the red arrow indicates morphologically damaged mitochondria. Scale bars: 5  $\mu$ m in the left panel and 1 µm in the right panel. **(o-p)** Quantification of the numbers of mitochondria in the sections (at low magnification) of hippocampus and muscle ( $n =$ 3). Significance was determined using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in a, b, c, d, e, f and using two-sided Student's t-test in g, h, i, j, k, l, o and p.  ${}^*P$  < 0.05,  ${}^*P$  < 0.01 and  ${}^*{}^*P$  < 0.005.



**Supplementary Figure 11. The ultrastructure of mitochondria in various tissues of aged mice after treatment with young sEVs.** Aged male mice (21 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or young sEVs (from 2-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks. Young male mice (2 months) were simultaneously injected with PBS to serve as a control group. TEM was employed to visualize the mitochondria

at the ultrastructural level. **(a-e)** Representative TEM images showing the structure and density of mitochondria in the heart, liver, spleen, lung and kidney of each group. Normal mitochondria are round or oval-shaped and contain well-defined cristae, whereas aged mitochondria become swollen, vacuolated and even broken, with cracked mitochondrial cristae. The green arrow indicates morphologically normal mitochondria, and the red arrow indicates morphologically damaged mitochondria. Scale bars: 5  $\mu$ m in the left panel and 1 µm in the right panel. **(f)** Quantification of the numbers of mitochondria in the sections (at low magnification) of heart, liver, spleen, lung and kidney ( $n = 3$ ). Significance was determined using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in f.  ${}^{*}P$  < 0.05 and  ${}^{*}P$  < 0.01.

**ID PBS No Young sEV** 



**Supplementary Figure 12. Young sEV treatment improves mitochondrial functions and attenuates senescent phenotypes in cultured cells. (a)** Flow chart of the experimental design. NE-4C or C2C12 cells  $(1 \times 10^6 \text{ cells})$  were incubated with 100 μL of PBS or young sEVs (from 2-month-old male mice) for 24 hours, and then the cells were subjected to assessments of mitochondrial functional parameters and senescent phenotypes. **(b-c)** ATP synthesis rates in NE-4C and C2C12 cells  $(n = 6)$ . **(d-**

**e)** Mitochondrial complex V activity in NE-4C and C2C12 cells (n = 6). **(f-g)** Relative mtDNA content (MT-CO1/β2-MG) in NE-4C and C2C12 cells (n = 6). **(h-k)**  Measurement of OCR in NE-4C and C2C12 cells. After measurement of basal OCR, oligomycin, FCCP, and rotenone + antimycin A were sequentially added, and the alterations in OCR were recorded and normalized to cell number. Quantification of the basal OCR, ATP-coupled OCR and maximal OCR is shown (NE-4C,  $n = 16$ ; C2C12,  $n = 8$  for PBS,  $n = 7$  for Young sEV). **(I-m)** Quantitative RT–PCR analysis of P21 mRNA levels in NE-4C and C2C12 cells (n = 4). **(n-q)** EdU incorporation assay showing the proportion of proliferating cells in NE-4C and C2C12 cells. Representative images (scale bar,  $100 \mu m$ ) and quantitative analysis of the percentage of EdU-positive cells  $(n = 6)$  are shown. Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in b, c, d, e, f, g, i, k, l, m, o and q. \*P < 0.05, \*\*P < 0.01 and \*\*\*P < 0.005.



**Supplementary Figure 13. Human sEVs derived from the plasma of young donors improve physiological functions and counteract mitochondrial deficiency in aged mice. (a)** Flow chart of the experimental design. Young human sEVs were purified from the plasma of young male donors (19-24 years) and resuspended in PBS at a concentration of 1.80 μg of total protein/μL. Aged male mice (21 months) were intravenously injected with 200 μL of PBS or young human sEVs 7 times over 2 weeks, and then the two groups of aged mice were monitored to determine behavioral

performance and mitochondrial functional parameters. **(b)** The escape latency of each group in the training phase of Morris water maze test  $(n = 8)$ . **(c-d)** Time spent in the target quadrant and the number of platform crossings by each group in the probe trial of Morris water maze test (n = 8). **(e)** Freezing levels of each group in the contextual fear conditioning test  $(n = 8)$ . **(f)** Running time to exhaustion for each group in the treadmill running test  $(n = 8)$ . **(g)** ATP synthesis rates in the hippocampus and muscle of each group  $(n = 6)$ . **(h)** Mitochondrial complex V activity in the hippocampus and muscle of each group (n = 6). **(i)** Relative mtDNA content (MT-CO1/β2-MG) in the hippocampus and muscle of each group (n = 6). **(j-k)** Representative TEM images showing the structure and density of mitochondria in the hippocampus and muscle of each group. The green arrow indicates morphologically normal mitochondria, and the red arrow indicates morphologically damaged mitochondria. Scale bars: 5 µm in the left panel and 1 µm in the right panel. **(l-m)** Quantification of the amounts of mitochondria in the sections (at low magnification) of hippocampus and muscle ( $n =$ 3). **(n-o)** SDH staining of the muscle fibers in each group. Representative images (scale bars: 100 µm in the left panel and 50 µm in the right panel) and quantification of SDH staining intensity ( $n = 6$ ) are shown. Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, l, m and o. \*P < 0.05, \*\*P < 0.01 and \*\*\*P < 0.005.



**Supplementary Figure 14. Human sEVs derived from the plasma of young donors improve mitochondrial functions and attenuate senescent phenotypes in cultured cells.** (a) Flow chart of the experimental design. NE-4C or C2C12 cells  $(1 \times 10^6 \text{ cells})$ were incubated with 100 μL of PBS or sEVs derived from the plasma of young male donors for 24 hours, and then the cells were subjected to assessments of mitochondrial functional parameters and senescent phenotypes. **(b-c)** ATP synthesis rates in NE-4C

and C2C12 cells (n = 6). **(d-e)** Mitochondrial complex V activity in NE-4C and C2C12 cells  $(n = 6)$ . **(f-g)** Relative mtDNA content (MT-CO1/ $\beta$ 2-MG) in NE-4C and C2C12 cells (n = 6). **(h-k)** Measurement of OCR in NE-4C and C2C12 cells. After measurement of basal OCR, oligomycin, FCCP, and rotenone + antimycin A were sequentially added, and the alterations in OCR were recorded and normalized to cell number. Quantification of the basal OCR, ATP-coupled OCR and maximal OCR is shown (NE-4C,  $n = 15$  for PBS,  $n = 16$  for Young sEV; C2C12,  $n = 8$  for PBS,  $n = 7$ for Young sEV). **(l-m)** Quantitative RT–PCR analysis of p21 mRNA levels in NE-4C and C2C12 cells (n = 4). **(n-q)** EdU incorporation assay showing the proportion of proliferating cells in NE-4C and C2C12 cells. Representative images (scale bar, 100  $\mu$ m) and quantitative analysis of the percentage of EdU-positive cells (n = 6) are shown. Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in b, c, d, e, f, g, i, k, l, m, o and q.  ${}^{*}P$  < 0.05,  ${}^{*}P$  < 0.01 and  ${}^{*}{}^{*}P$  < 0.005.



**Supplementary Figure 15. Tracking of the delivery of fluorescently labeled young sEVs into hippocampus and muscle of aged mice.** Young sEVs were purified from the plasma of young male mice (2 months) and stained with PKH26, and then the fluorescently labeled sEVs were intravenously injected into aged male mice (21 months). After treatment, aged mice were sacrificed, and fluorescence confocal microscopy was applied to detect the red fluorescent signals in frozen sections of hippocampus and muscle. Aged mice were solely injected with PBS or PKH26 dye as controls. **(a-b)** Representative images of microscopic fields showing PKH26-positive

cells in the hippocampus and muscle. PKH26-stained cells and DAPI-stained nuclei are shown in red and blue, respectively. The sections were also stained with specific tissue markers (positive signals are shown in green), including neuron-specific nucleoprotein (NeuN) for hippocampus and Desmin for muscle. Magnification,  $20 \times$  and  $60 \times$ . Scale bar, 100 μm. Each experiment was independently repeated three times with similar results in a and b.



**Supplementary Figure 16. Uptake of sEV miRNAs by aged tissues following the injection of young plasma sEVs into aged mice. (a)** Quantitative RT–PCR analysis of miR-144-3p, miR-149-5p and miR-455-3p levels in the heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney, hippocampus, muscle and testis of aged mice injected with 200 μL of PBS or young sEVs (from 2-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks. Fold changes of miRNAs in young sEV-injected mice relative to PBS-injected mice were determined  $(n = 4)$ . **(b)** Quantitative RT–PCR analysis of pre-miR-144, pre-miR-149 and pre-miR-455 levels in the heart, liver, spleen, lung, kidney, hippocampus, muscle and testis of aged mice injected with 200 μL of PBS or young sEVs (from 2-month-old male mice) 7 times over 2 weeks. Fold changes of pre-miRNAs in young sEV-injected mice relative to PBS-injected mice were determined ( $n = 4$ ). Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in a-b.  ${}^{*}P < 0.05$ ,  ${}^{*}P < 0.01$  and  ${}^{*}{}^{*}P < 0.005$ .



**Supplementary Figure 17. PGC-1α is a direct or indirect downstream target of miR-29a-3p, miR-29c-3p, miR-34a-5p, miR-144-3p, miR-149-5p and miR-455-3p. (a)** Putative working model and potential effects of the miR-29a-3p, miR-29c-3p and miR-34a-5p group and the miR-144-3p, miR-149-5p and miR-455-3p group on PGC-1α expression and mitochondrial functions. miR-29 family (miR-29a-3p and miR-29c-3p) directly downregulates the target gene PGC-1α, which in turn controls mitochondrial biogenesis and homeostasis. Meanwhile, miR-34a-5p directly targets and decreases Sirtuin1 (SIRT1) expression, which increases acetylation of the SIRT1 target transcriptional regulator PGC-1α, eventually resulting in decreased transcriptional activities of PGC-1α. On the other hand, while β-amyloid precursor protein (APP) shows inhibitory effects on the expression of PGC-1α, miR-144-3p

inhibits the expression of APP to increase cellular ATP levels and mtDNA copy numbers. Likewise, poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase-2 (PARP-2) is a direct target gene of miR-149-5p, and miR-149-5p inhibits PARP-2 expression and increases SIRT1 activity that subsequently enhances mitochondrial function and biogenesis via  $PGC-1\alpha$ activation. Meanwhile, while hypoxia-inducible factor 1-alpha inhibitor (HIF1an) hydroxylates AMP-activated kinase  $\alpha$ 1 subunit (AMPK $\alpha$ 1) and inhibit its activity, miR- $455-3p$  suppresses HIF1an to activate AMPK $\alpha$ 1, which in turn induces mitochondria biogenesis via the HIF1an-AMPK $\alpha$ 1-PGC1 $\alpha$  regulatory cascade. Since the downstream target genes of miR-144-3p, miR-149-5p and miR-455-3p, including APP, PARP-2 and HIF1an, exhibit inverse correlation with PGC‐1α, miR-144-3p, miR-149-5p and miR-455-3p can be considered as indirect stimulators of PGC‐1α expression. **(b)** Schematic description of the binding sites for miR-29a-3p and miR-29c-3p in PGC-1α 3' untranslated region (3'-UTR), for miR-34a-5p in SIRT1 3'-UTR, for miR-144-3p in APP 3'-UTR, for miR-149-5p in PARP-2 3'-UTR and for miR-455-3p in HIF1an 3'- UTR. The minimum free energy value of each hybrid is indicated. The seed recognition sites are denoted, and all nucleotides in these regions are highly conserved across species. **(c)** Conservation of the sequences of miR-29a-3p, miR-29c-3p, miR-34a-5p, miR-144-3p, miR-149-5p and miR-455-3p across various species.



**Supplementary Figure 18. Young and aged sEVs regulate PGC-1α expression** *in vitro* **and** *in vivo***. (a)** Western blot analysis of the protein levels of PGC-1α, mt-ATP6, Cyto-c (cytochrome c), NDUFA9 (NADH dehydrogenase (ubiquinone) 1α subcomplex, 9), ATPase-α and CS (citrate synthase) in the hippocampus and muscle of young and aged mice. Left panel: representative Western blots. Right panel: densitometric analysis (n = 8). **(b)** Western blot analysis of PGC-1 $\alpha$  protein levels in the hippocampus and

muscle of aged mice injected with 200 μL of PBS, aged sEVs or young sEVs 7 times over 2 weeks. PBS-treated young mice serve as a control group. Left panel: representative Western blots. Right panel: densitometric analysis (n = 6). **(c)** Western blot analysis of PGC-1 $\alpha$  protein levels in the hippocampus and muscle of aged mice injected with 200 μL of PBS or young human sEVs 7 times over 2 weeks. Left panel: representative Western blots. Right panel: densitometric analysis  $(n = 6)$ . **(d)** Quantitative RT–PCR analysis of PGC-1α mRNA levels in the hippocampus and muscle of aged mice injected with 200 μL of PBS or young human sEVs 7 times over 2 weeks  $(n = 4)$ . **(e)** Western blot analysis of PGC-1 $\alpha$  protein levels in NE-4C cells and C2C12 cells incubated with 100 μL of PBS or young human sEVs for 24 hours. Left panel: representative Western blots. Right panel: densitometric analysis  $(n = 6)$ . **(f)** Western blot analysis of  $PGC-1\alpha$  protein levels in the hippocampus and muscle of young mice injected with 200 μL of PBS or aged mouse sEVs 7 times over 2 weeks. Left panel: representative Western blots. Right panel: densitometric analysis ( $n = 6$ ). Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in a, c, d, e and f and using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in b.  ${}^{*}P$  < 0.05,  ${}^{*}P$  $0.01$  and \*\*\*P  $0.005$ .



**Supplementary Figure 19. PGC-1α siRNA blocks the beneficial effects of young sEVs on mitochondrial respiration.** NE-4C or C2C12 cells  $(1 \times 10^6 \text{ cells})$  were treated with PBS plus scrRNA, young sEVs plus scrRNA, or young sEVs plus PGC-1α siRNA for 24 hours, and then the cells were subjected to assessments of mitochondrial respiration. **(a)** Western blot analysis of PGC-1α protein levels in NE-4C and C2C12 cells after transfecting with scrRNA or PGC-1 $\alpha$  siRNA. Left panel: representative Western blots. Right panel: densitometric analysis (n = 6). **(b-e)** Measurement of OCR in NE-4C and C2C12 cells after treatment with PBS plus scrRNA, young sEVs plus scrRNA, or young sEVs plus PGC-1α siRNA. After measurement of basal OCR, oligomycin, FCCP, and rotenone + antimycin A were sequentially added, and the alterations in OCR were recorded and normalized to cell number. Quantification of the basal OCR, ATP-coupled OCR and maximal OCR is shown ( $n = 6$ ). Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test in a and using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in c and e. \*P < 0.05, \*\*P < 0.01 and \*\*\*P < 0.005.



**Supplementary Figure 20. Pre-treatment of young sEVs with Triton X-100 and RNase blocks the beneficial effects of young sEVs on mitochondrial respiration.**  Young sEVs were pre-treated with Triton X-100 and RNase, and then the resultant sEVs were incubated with NE-4C or C2C12 cells  $(1 \times 10^6 \text{ cells})$  for 24 hours. NE-4C and C2C12 cells  $(1 \times 10^6 \text{ cells})$  were also solely treated with PBS or young sEVs for 24 hours. After treatment, the cells were subjected to assessments of mitochondrial respiration. **(a-d)** Measurement of OCR in NE-4C and C2C12 cells. After measurement of basal OCR, oligomycin, FCCP, and rotenone + antimycin A were sequentially added, and the alterations in OCR were recorded and normalized to cell number. Quantification of the basal OCR, ATP-coupled OCR and maximal OCR is shown (NE-4C,  $n = 6$  for PBS and Young  $sEV + Triton + RNase$ , n= 5 for Young  $sEV$ ; C2C12, n =7 for PBS, n  $= 8$  for Young sEV and Young sEV + Triton + RNase). Significance was determined using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in b and d. \*P  $0.05$ , \*\*P  $0.01$  and \*\*\*P  $0.005$ .



FBS + scrRNA c Aged sEV + scrRNA c Aged sEV + anti-29a/29c/34a

**Supplementary Figure 21. Antisense oligonucleotides of miR-29a-3p, miR-29c-3p and miR-34a-5p rescue the detrimental effects of aged sEVs on mitochondrial metabolism and cell senescence. (a)** Flow chart of the experimental design. NE-4C or C2C12 cells (1  $\times$  10<sup>6</sup> cells) were treated with PBS plus scrRNA, aged sEVs plus scrRNA, or aged sEVs plus antisense oligonucleotides of miR-29a-3p, miR-29c-3p and miR-34a-5p (anti-miR-29a/29c/34a) for 24 hours, and then the cells were subjected to assessments of mitochondrial functional parameters and senescent phenotypes. **(b)**  Western blot analysis of PGC-1α protein levels in NE-4C and C2C12 cells. Left panel: representative Western blots. Right panel: densitometric analysis  $(n = 6)$ . **(c)** ATP synthesis rates in NE-4C and C2C12 cells  $(n = 6)$ . **(d)** Mitochondrial complex V activity in NE-4C and C2C12 cells (n = 5). **(e)** Relative mtDNA content (MT-CO1/β2-MG) in NE-4C and C2C12 cells (n = 6). **(f)** Quantitative RT–PCR analysis of p21 mRNA levels in NE-4C and C2C12 cells  $(n = 4)$ . Significance was determined using one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparison test in b, c, d, e and f.  $*P < 0.05$ , \*\*P < 0.01 and \*\*\*P < 0.005.



**Supplementary Figure 22. The GO term GOBP\_AGING (including GOBP\_CELL AGING) is significantly upregulated and enriched in hippocampus and muscle. (a)**  Enrichment plot of the GO term GOBP\_AGING showing the gene set that is upregulated in the hippocampus of "sEV→Aged" *vs*. "PBS→Aged" group with a Normalized Enrichment Score (NES) of 1.0678. **(b)** Heatmap showing the relative expression pattern of the 38 proteins in hippocampus involved in the GO term GOBP\_AGING. **(c)** Enrichment plot of the GO term GOBP\_AGING showing the gene set that is upregulated in the muscle of "sEV→Aged" *vs.* "PBS→Aged" group with a NES of 1.150. **(d)** Heatmap showing the relative expression pattern of the 18 proteins in muscle involved in the GO term GOBP\_AGING. After young sEV treatment, beclin-1 (BECN1), an autophagy-regulating gene, was increased in aged hippocampus, and NAD(P)H dehydrogenase quinone 1 (NQO1), an antioxidant enzyme, was increased in aged hippocampus and muscle. Since BECN1 is decreased in human brains in an agedependent fashion, leading to a reduction of autophagic activity and loss of cellular homeostasis during aging<sup>66</sup>, modulation of BECN1 expression and restoration of BECN1-dependent autophagy by young sEVs can theoretically perform a neuroprotective effect against aging. Likewise, since the enzyme NQO1 plays a critical role in cellular antioxidant defense by effectively detoxifying quinones and, as a result, preventing the formation of ROS<sup>67</sup>, age-associated decline in antioxidant potential and

accumulation of ROS in hippocampus and muscle can be rescued by young sEVinduced NQO1 upregulation.

#### **Supplementary Tables**

**Supplementary Table 1.** Assessment of frailty index scores in individual mouse (young sEV-treated aged mouse versus PBS-treated aged mouse) based on clinical signs of deterioration.



**Supplementary Table 2.** The significantly differentially altered miRNAs in aged plasma compared with young plasma.





\* Significance was determined using two-sided Student's t-test.

**Supplementary Table 3.** Selection of age-associated circulating miRNAs (in plasma and serum) based on literature mining.









### **Supplementary Table 4. Antibody list.**





## **Supplementary Table 5. Primer list.**











**Supplementary Table 6. Sequences of synthetic miRNA mimics and antisenses.**

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