

## Supporting Information

### Robust red FRET sensors using self-associating fluorescent domains

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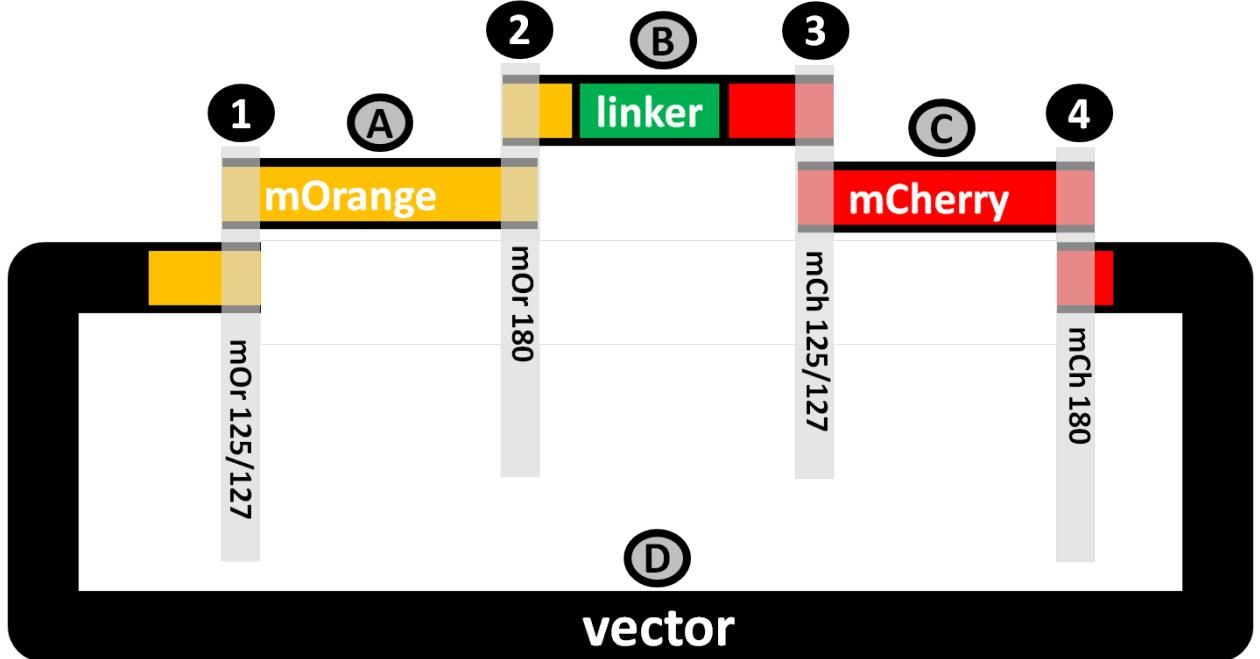
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## Supporting Methods

**Cloning and mutagenesis.** A synthetic construct encoding for mOrange-linker-mCherry inserted in a pUC57 cloning vector was ordered (Genscript, USA). Circular polymerase extension cloning (CPEC)<sup>1</sup> was used to clone the DNA encoding for this construct from pUC57 to the bacterial expression vector pET28a (Novagen), creating pET28a-mOrange-L9-mCherry. Briefly, primers mOrange\_F and Streptag\_R (Supporting Table 2) were used to amplify mOrange-linker-mCherry, while primers Strptg\_dwnsvec and mOrange\_throm were used to amplify and linearize pET28a (Novagen), using high-fidelity DNA polymerase (Phusion, NEB). Primers were designed to incorporate overlapping ends in the PCR fragment, allowing the subsequent CPEC reaction. A CPEC-based mutational strategy was also used to introduce the various combinations of reversions R125I, V127T and T180I (numbering relative to DsRed) in one or both of the fluorescent domains. PCR fragments were generated using primers (Supporting Table 1) that introduced one or more of the desired reversions at the ends of fragments. Fragments were then combined and circularized using CPEC (Supporting Figure 1). To produce single mCherry domains for the intermolecular dimerization studies, site-directed deletion mutagenesis was carried out using a modification of a previously published mutagenesis technique, allowing a one-step 913 bp deletion of DNA encoding mOrange and linker<sup>2</sup>. To generate pET28a-mCherry, a primer pair (del\_mOrange\_R and del\_mOrange\_F) was designed with complementary 5'- and 3'-ends, ensuring amplification of the entire expression plasmid except the part encoding mOrange and linker. To produce the pET28a-LSSmOrange-L9-mCherry constructs, we introduced LSSmOrange-specific mutations<sup>3</sup> using a mutational CPEC strategy with primer pairs A44V\_R & G196D\_F, A44V\_F & F83L\_R, F83L\_F & W143M\_R, W143M\_F & I161D\_M163L\_R and I161D\_M163L\_F & G196D. To produce the bacterial expression vectors pET28a-redCALWY-1 and pET28a-redCALWY-4, the ATOX-L9-WD4 insert was amplified from pET28a-eCALWY-1 or pET28a-eCALWY-4 using primers Ins\_redeCalwy\_F and Ins\_redeCalwy\_R. In parallel, pET28a-mOrange-L9-mCherry was PCR-linearized using primers Vec\_redeCalwy\_F and Vec\_redeCalwy\_R and insert and vector were combined using CPEC. To produce the pGen2.1-redCALWY-4 mammalian expression construct, we took as starting template pGen2.1-mOrange2(R125I)-linker-mCherry (R125I), a vector bearing a synthetic mammalian expression construct (Genscript), restricted it with *Kpn*I and *Bsp*EI and ligated it to an insert cut from peCALWY-4<sup>4</sup> with the same restriction enzymes. pGen2.1-redCALWY-

1 was generated by reverting the cysteine-to-serine mutation of the third cysteine of the WD4 domain in pGen2.1-redCALWY-4 back to a cysteine using primers WD4\_S\_to\_C3\_F and WD4\_S\_to\_C3\_R. Primers RCS\_mOr2\_I125R\_F and RCS\_mCh\_I125R\_F were used to introduce the I125R mutations in pGen2.1-redCALWY-4. All plasmids were confirmed by sequencing prior to use.

**Protein expression and purification.** *E. coli* BL21(DE3) transformed with expression plasmid was grown to OD<sub>600</sub> in 500 mL (for the red protease constructs) or 2 L (for the redCALWY constructs) Lysogeny Broth (LB) medium containing 50 µg/mL kanamycin in a shaking incubator at 37 °C. Following induction with 0.1 mM IPTG, the bacterial cultures were grown overnight at 25 °C. Cells were harvested by centrifugation and lysed using 10 mL BugBuster Protein Extraction reagent (Novagen) with 10 µL Benzonase. Proteins were purified by Ni-NTA affinity chromatography and were subsequently loaded onto a size exclusion column (Sephacryl S200, GE Healthcare). The SEC fractions were analyzed by SDS PAGE for correct size and purity, pooled and concentrated using 10 kDa MWCO centrifugation filters. The single domain mCherry constructs used for anisotropy studies were purified by Ni-NTA chromatography only, as SDS-PAGE revealed this single purification step to result in sufficient purity of these constructs. Since His-tags are known to readily bind zinc<sup>5</sup>, they were removed from all Zn<sup>2+</sup>-sensor constructs using thrombin cleavage. After elution from the Ni-NTA column, the buffer was exchanged to thrombin cleavage buffer (20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.4), 150 mM NaCl, 2.5 mM CaCl<sub>2</sub>) using PD10 desalting columns (GE, Healthcare). Cleavage of the thrombin recognition site between the His-tag and the mOrange N-terminus was initiated by the addition of 0.3 U thrombin protease (Novagen) per mg target protein at a 0.2 mg/mL target protein concentration. Cleavage was carried out at 4 °C for 20 hours, after which 1 mM phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride (PMSF, Sigma) was added to inactivate the thrombin enzyme. Proteins were then loaded onto Ni-NTA once again. Elution of protein without a His-tag from the Ni-NTA required a buffer containing 30 mM imidazole, presumably due to a weak affinity of the WD4 and/or ATOX1 domain for Ni-NTA, as previously noted for Wilson disease proteins<sup>6</sup>. Uncleaved protein remained behind on the Ni-column at this imidazole concentration. The red Zn<sup>2+</sup> sensor proteins were subsequently further purified by SEC chromatography. The SEC fractions were analyzed by SDS PAGE for correct size and purity, pooled and concentrated using 10 kDa MWCO centrifugation filters.



**Supporting Figure 1.** Schematic overview of mutational CPEC strategy. In order to introduce mutations at four different positions in the mOrange-linker-mCherry protease sensor simultaneously, a mutational CPEC strategy was followed. At each of the positions, mOrange 125/127, mOrange 180, mCherry 125/127 and mOrange 180 (labeled 1 to 4 respectively), primers were designed to allow amplification of four different fragments (labeled A, B, C and D). Primers were designed to incorporate different mutations into the ends of PCR fragments in such a way that both ends of each fragment overlapped with the ends of adjacent fragments, with a melting temperature of about 72 °C (calculated using Thermo Scientific's online Tm tool (<http://www.thermoscientificbio.com/webtools/tmc/>)). These fragments were subsequently recombined in a CPEC reaction, at equimolar concentration and 200 ng of vector fragment D. The primers used at positions 1 to 4, as well as the mutations they were designed to introduce, are listed in Table S1.

**Supporting Table 1.** Overview of primers used in mutational CPEC to generate small library of mOrange-linker-mCherry variants.

Each primer is designed to introduce a mutation at a location indicated schematically in Supporting Figure 1.

Mutation	Position/Fragment	Primer orientation	Sequence (5'-->3')	primer number
mOrange R125I	1/D	anti-sense	CGGAAAGTTAGTGCCAATCAGCTTCAC	1
mOrange R125I/T127V	1/D	anti-sense	CGGAAAGTTAACGCCAATCAGCTTCAC	2
mOrange T127V	1/D	anti-sense	GGAAAGTTAACGCCGCAGC	3
none	1/D	anti-sense	GGAAAGTTAGTCCCGCAGC	4
mOrange R125I	1/A	sense	GTGAAGCTGATTGGCACTAACTTCCG	5
mOrange R125I/T127V	1/A	sense	GTGAAGCTGATTGGCGTTAACCTTCCG	6
mOrange T127V	1/A	sense	GCTGCGCGGCAGTAACTTCC	7
none	1/A	sense	GCTGCGCGGCAGTAACTTCC	8
mOrange T180 (WT)	2/A	anti-sense	GGCTTGAGGTGGTTAACCTCAGAGG	9
mOrange T180I	2/A	anti-sense	GGCTTGAGATGGTTAACCTCAGAGGTG	10
none	2/B	sense	CCTCTGAAGTAAAACCACCTACAAAGCC	11
mOrange T180I	2/B	sense	CACCTCTGAAGTAAAACCACCTACAAAGCC	12
mCherry R125I	3/B	anti-sense	CAGACGGGAAGTTAGTACCAATCAGTTTACTTATAG	13
mCherry R125I/T127V	3/B	anti-sense	CAGACGGGAAGTTAACCCAATCAGTTTACTTATAG	14
mCherry T127V	3/B	anti-sense	CGGGAAAGTTAACACCACGCAGTTTACTTATAG	15
mCherry T127V	3/B	anti-sense	CGGGAAAGTTAGTACCAACGCAGTTTACTTATAG	16
mCherry R125I	3/C	sense	CTATAAAGTAAAAGTAGTTGGTACTAACCTCCGTCTG	17
mCherry R125I/T127V	3/C	sense	CTATAAAGTAAAAGTAGTTGGTGTAACTTCCGTCTG	18
mCherry T127V	3/C	sense	CTATAAAGTAAAAGTAGCGTGGTGTAACTTCCCG	19
none	3/C	sense	CTATAAAGTAAAAGTAGCGTGGTACTAACCTCCG	20
none	4/C	anti-sense	CGCTTGATGGTTTCACTCCGC	21
mCherry T180I	4/C	anti-sense	GCTTGATGGTTTCACTCCGC	22
none	4/D	sense	GGAAGTGAACACGTACAAAGCG	23
mCherry T180I	4/D	sense	GCAGGAAAGTGAACACGTACAAAGCG	24

**Supporting Table 2.** Overview of other primers used for cloning and site-directed mutagenesis.

Name	Sequence (5'-->3')
Srtptg_dwnsvec	GTC CCC ATCCG CAG TCG AGA AA ATA AGC TGAG CAATA ACT AGC ATA ACC CTT G
mOrange_F	ATGGT GAG CAAA GG TGAG GAAA AC
Streptag_R	TTATTTCTCGAACTGCGGATGGGAC
mOrange_throm	GT TT C CT CAC TT GCT CACCA TATGGCTGCCGCG
del_mCherry_F	CGAA CT GTATA AATA AGC TGAG CAATA ACT AGC ATA ACC CTT GGGG C
del_mOrange_R	GTC CCT CTCGCCCT TAGAA ACC ATATGGCTGCCGCG
del_mOrange_F	GT TT CTAAGGGCGAAGAGGACAATATGGCTATCATCAAAGAGTTCATGCG
del_mCherry_R	GTT ATT GCT CAG CTT ATT TATA CAG TGT CCAT ACCGCCAGT AGA ATGACG
A44V_F	TTTCCAGACTGTTAAACTGAAGGTGACCAAAAGGCG
A44V_R	ACCTTCAGTTAACAGTCTGGAAGCCCTCATACGG
F83L_F	TCCCCGATTATTTAAACTGTCATTCCCGAAGGCTCAAATG
F83L_R	GACAGTTTAAATAATCGGGATATCTGCAGGGTGTAAACATACGCC
W143M_F	ACTATGGGCATGGAAGCTTCTCTGAACGTATGTATCCG
W143M_R	GAAGCTCCATGCCATAGTCTTTCTGCATAACCG
I161D&M160L_mOrF	GGTGAGGACAAACTGCGTCTGAAGCTGAAAGATGGC
I163D&M160L_mOrR	GACGCAGTTGCTCACCTTCAGCGCG
G196D_F	TGCTTACATTGTAGATATTAAACTGGATATCAGCAGCCATAACGAG
G196D_R	CCAGTTAATATCTACAATGTAAGCACCAGGAGTTG
Vec_redeCalwy_F	TTCAGTCTCGGTACCGATGGTTCTAAGGGCGAAGAGGACA
Vec_redeCalwy_R	GCATTCCGGATTATACAGTTCGTCCATACCGCC
Ins_redeCalwy_F	GGACGA ACT GTATAAATCCGGATGCCGAAGCAC
Ins_redeCalwy_R	TTAGAAACCATCGGTACCGAGACTGAAGCCTCAAATC
WD4_S_to_C3_F	ATGACCTGTGCATCCTGTGTCCATTCCATTG
WD4_S_to_C3_R	CACAGGATGCACAGGT CATGCCGGCAATGG
RCS_mOr2_I125R_F	CTATAAAAGTAAA ACT GCGTGGTACGAATTTCCCTCAGATGGACC
RCS_mOr2_I125R_R	CGTACCA CGCAGTTACTTATAGATGAAC TCCC ATCCTG
RCS_mCh_I125R_F	CAAGGTGAAGCTTAGAGGCACAAACTTCCAAGCGACG
RCS_mCh_I125R_R	GTGCCTCTAAGCTCACTTGTATATAAAACTCGCCG

**Supporting Figure 2.** Nucleotide and amino acid sequence of the mOrange-L9-mCherry ORF in bacterial expression vector pET28a. The DNA sequence is shown in lowercase, with the single letter amino acid code shown beneath each codon in uppercase. The His-tag is highlighted in dark yellow, the two thrombin cleavage sites (found in both the N- and the C-terminal regions) in green, mOrange in yellow, the linker (interrupted by a TEV cleavage site highlighted in turquoise) in bright green, mCherry in red, and the Strep-II tag in black. Positions that were subjected to mutagenesis to test for enhanced FP self-association, R125, T127 and T180, are highlighted in grey in both the mOrange and mCherry sequences. Positions that were mutated to convert mOrange to LSSmOrange, A44, F83, W143, I161, M163 and G196 are highlighted in dark blue.



**Supporting Figure 3.** Nucleotide and amino acid sequence of the redCALWY-1 ORF in bacterial expression vector pET28a. The DNA sequence is shown in lowercase, with the single letter amino acid code shown beneath each codon in uppercase. The His-tag

is highlighted in dark yellow, the two thrombin cleavage sites (at the N- and at the C-terminus) in green, mOrange in yellow, the ATOX1 domain in turquoise, the linker in bright green, the WD4 domain in dark blue, mCherry in red, and the Strep-II tag in black. Reversion R125I is highlighted in grey in both the mOrange and mCherry sequences. Finally, the third cysteine residue located in WD4, mutated to serine in redCALWY-4, is highlighted in dark red.

1	atggattacaaggatgacgacgataag	gcggccgcgtggttctaaaggcgaggagaat	60
	M D Y K D D D K A A A	M V S K G E E N	
61	aatatggcaatcattaaagagtttatgagattcaagggtcagaatggaaaggaagcgtgaat		120
	N M A I I K E F M R F K V R M E G S V N		

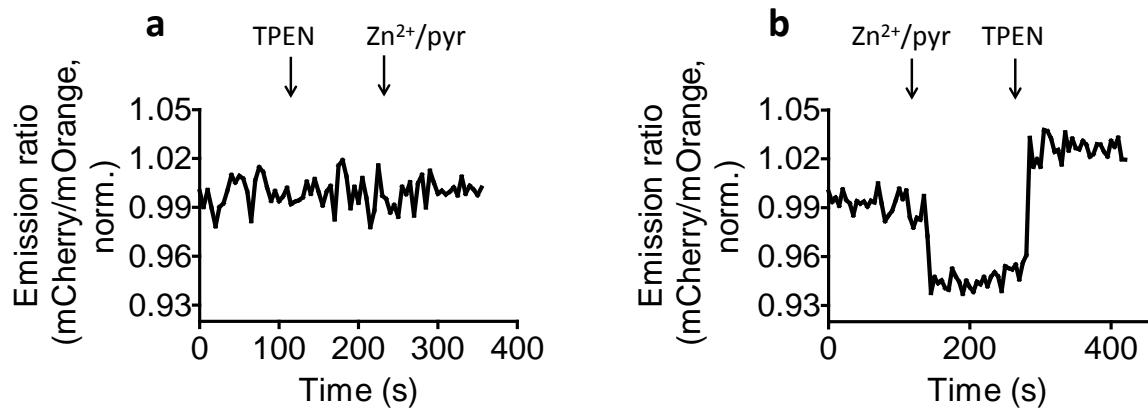
121	ggtcatgagttcgaaaattgaaggcgaggggcgagggaaggcccttatgaggggttcaaca G H E F E I E G E G R P Y E G F Q T	180
181	gcaaaaactcaagggttactaaaggcgggggccccttccatgtgcggatatactgtctccg A K L K V T K G G P L P F A W D I L S P	240
241	cacticacccatgtctaaaggcttacgtgaaacaccctgcggatattccagattttt H F T Y G S K A Y V K H P A D I P D Y F	300
301	aaactgtccctccccgaagggttcaagtggagagagaatgaactatgaggacggccgc K L S F P E G F K W E R V M N Y E D G G	360
361	gttgtgacgatcttacagggttacatcggtttacagggggatcatctataaaataaa V V T V T Q D S S L Q D G E F I Y K V K	420
421	ctgattggtagcaattttccctcagatggacgttgcatacgagaagaccatgggttgg L I G T N F P S D G P P V M Q K K T M G W	480
481	gaggcaatgttcagggagaatgttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttt E A S S E R M Y P E D G A L K G K I K M	540
541	aggcttaagctcaaggacggccggcattacacttctgaagtaaaaaacaacttataaggct R L K L K D G G H Y T S E V K T T Y K A	600
601	aaaaaacactgtcaatttaccaggggcttacatgtggacatcaactgtcgacatcacaagg K K P V Q L P G A Y I V D I K L D I T S	660
661	cataatgaggactacactatt H N E D Y T I V E Q Y E R A E G R H S T	720
721	ggaggtagtggaccaactgtacaaggccggatgcgcgaagcacgatgttctgtggacatg G G M D E L Y K T S G M P K H E F S V D M	780
781	accttggggggctgtctgttt T C G G C A E A V S R V L N K L G G V K	840
841	tatgacatt Y D I D L P K N K V C I E S E H S M D T	900
901	ctgttt L L A T L K K T G K T V S Y L G L E T I	960
961	cgtggcgatccggcggaaggccggatccggcggttttttttttttttttttttttttt R I G G S G G S G G S G G S G G S G G S G	1020
1021	ggatccggcgccggatccggcgatccggcggttttttttttttttttttttttttttt G S G G S G G S G G S G G S G G S G G S G	1080
1081	gggttt G G S G G S G G S G G S G G P R M Q G T	1140
1141	tgcgttt C S T T L I A I A G M T C A S S V H S I	1200
1201	gaaggcatgttt E G M I S Q L E G V Q Q I S V S L A E G	1260
1261	actgcaacatgttt T A T V L Y N P A V I S P E E L R A A I	1320
1321	gaagcatgttt E D M G F E A S V S V P M V S K G E E D	1380
1381	aacatgttt N M A I I K E F M R F K V H M E G S V N	1440
1441	ggggcggatccggatccggatccggatccggatccggatccggatccggatccggatcc G H E F E I E G E G R P Y E G T Q T	1500
1501	gcaaaatgttt A K L K V T K G G P L P F A W D I L S P	1560
1561	caggatgttt Q F M Y G S K A Y V K H P A D I P D Y L	1620
1621	aaactgttt K L S F P E G F K W E R V M N F E D G G	1680
1681	gttgttt V V T V T Q D S S L Q D G E F I Y K V K	1740
1741	cttt L I G T N F P S D G P V M O K K T M G W	1800
1801	gaagcaaggatgttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttt E A S S E R M Y P E D G A L K G E I K Q	1860
1861	agactaaatgttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttt R L K L K D G G H Y D A E V K T T Y K A	1920
1921	aaaaggccctccggatccggatccggatccggatccggatccggatcc K K P V Q L P G A Y N V N I K L D I T S	1980
1981	cacaacggggactacataatgttttttttttttttttttttttttt H N E D Y T I V E Q Y E R A E G R H S T	2040
2041	ggggcatgttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttttt G G M D E L Y K -	

**Supporting Figure 4.** Nucleotide and amino acid sequence of the redCALWY-4 ORF in mammalian expression vector pGen2.1.

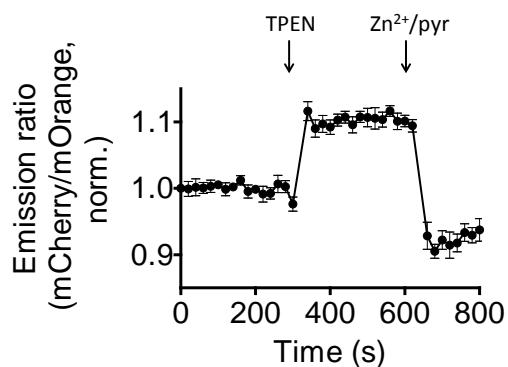
The DNA sequence is shown in lowercase, with the single letter amino acid code shown beneath each codon in uppercase. The FLAG-tag is highlighted in dark yellow, mOrange2 in yellow, the ATOX1 domain in turquoise, the linker in bright green, the WD4

domain in dark blue and mCherry in red. Reversion R125I is highlighted in grey in both the mOrange and mCherry sequences.

Finally, redCALWY-4's cysteine to serine mutation in WD4 is highlighted in dark red.



**Supporting Figure 5.** Additional redCALWY measurements in HeLa cells. (a) HeLa cell transfected with redCALWY-4 with wild-type mOrange and mCherry domains (lacking the R125I mutations) were exposed first to 50  $\mu\text{M}$  TPEN followed by 100  $\mu\text{M}$   $\text{ZnCl}_2$  and 10  $\mu\text{M}$  pyrithione. (b) HeLa cell transfected with redCALWY-4 were exposed first to 10  $\mu\text{M}$   $\text{ZnCl}_2$  and 1  $\mu\text{M}$  pyrithione, followed by 50  $\mu\text{M}$  TPEN.



**Supporting Figure 6.** Response of redCALWY-4 in HEK293 cells. Cells transfected with redCALWY-4 were exposed first to 50  $\mu\text{M}$  TPEN, followed by 100  $\mu\text{M}$   $\text{ZnCl}_2$  and 5  $\mu\text{M}$  pyrithione. The trace represents the average of four cells after normalization of the emission ratio at  $t=0$ . Error bars represent SEM.

## **Supporting references**

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