



Supplementary

Materials for

27-Hydroxycholesterol Links Hypercholesterolemia and Breast Cancer  
Pathophysiology

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Materials and Methods  
Supplemental Text  
Figs. S1 to S14

## Materials and Methods

All studies involving the use of animals were conducted after prior approval by the Duke institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC).

### In vitro Assays:

MCF7, T47D, BT483 and BT474 cells were maintained in DMEM/F12, DMEM, RPMI 1640 or RPMI 1640, respectively, supplemented with 8% fetal bovine serum, nonessential amino acids and sodium pyruvate. For experiments, cells were plated in the same media lacking phenol red and supplemented with 8% charcoal-stripped fetal bovine serum. Expression profiling of 27HC in MCF7 cells, uploaded to GEO as GSE46924, was part of a larger study (GSE35428) that has been previously published (28). All cells were treated with 27HC at 1 $\mu$ M for 24h. Microarray analysis was performed in R/Bioconductor using the Affy package. Raw data was background corrected with RMA, Log2 transformed, and summarized by medianpolish. Differentially expressed genes were called using the LIMMA package and p-values were corrected for multiple testing with the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure. The expression heatmap was generated in R and ontology enrichment was performed in HOMER. RNA isolation quantitative real time PCR (QPCR) and proliferation assays were performed as previously described (15).

### MCF7 Xenografts:

Athymic nude mice were ovariectomized and either implanted with a timed-release E2 pellet (0.72 mg E2/60d), placebo (no hormone) pellet, or treated with 27HC (40mg/kg/day). Seven days post-surgery, MCF7 tumors were orthotopically grafted into the axial mammary fat pad. When E2 tumors reached a size of 0.2cm<sup>3</sup>, this group was randomized into vehicle treated or ICI 182,780 treated (weekly injection of 5mg/mouse). After 40d, the 27HC treated mice were randomized into either continued 27HC, no hormone withdrawal or 27HC + ICI 182,780.

### Tamoxifen resistant MCF7 Xenograft:

Tamoxifen resistant tumors were previously established by serial transfer in mice treated with tamoxifen (18). Experimental mice were ovariectomized and either implanted with a timed-release E2 pellet (0.72 mg E2/60d), timed-release tamoxifen pellet (5 mg/60d) or treated with either 27HC (40mg/kg/day) or vehicle (no hormone). Two days post-surgery, tumors (~0.8-1cm<sup>3</sup>) grown in tamoxifen treated donor mice were removed, cut into 2mm<sup>3</sup> cubes and inserted orthotopically into the axial mammary fat pad of experimental mice.

### PyMT Tumor Studies:

Genetic Elevation of 27HC: CYP7B1<sup>+/+</sup> and CYP7B1<sup>-/-</sup> mice are maintained on a mixed 129/C57BL/6 background. CYP7B1<sup>-/-</sup> were bred with MMTV-PyMT<sup>+</sup> mice on an FVB background. Resulting heterozygous (CYP7B1<sup>+/-</sup>;PyMT<sup>+</sup>) progeny were crossed with either CYP7B1<sup>+/+</sup> or CYP7B1<sup>-/-</sup> mice to create homozygous wildtype or knockout mice expressing PyMT. These mice were again crossed with their respective CYP7B1 line to create breeding PyMT<sup>+</sup> males of the appropriate genotype. The males of this generation were bred with their respective CYP7B1 line to generate the PyMT<sup>+</sup> females used in experiments. Thus, we established CYP7B1<sup>+/+</sup>; PyMT<sup>+</sup> and CYP7B1<sup>-/-</sup>;PyMT<sup>+</sup> females.

At ~5 weeks of age, mice were ovariectomized. Mice were monitored for first palpable tumors, the growth of which was then recorded through time.

Pharmacologic Elevation of 27HC: MMTV-PyMT+ mice on an FVB background were obtained from Jackson Labs and bred in house. At ~5 weeks of age mice were ovariectomized. Mice were monitored for first palpable tumors. At detection, daily treatment with placebo, 27HC (40mg/kg), GW3965 (30mg/kg) or E2 (10µg/kg). The effectiveness of this strategy as a means to elevate circulating 27HC was demonstrated previously by our laboratory (13). After 28 days of treatment, serum 27HC concentrations were increased by approximately 40 fold in 27HC treated mice. Resulting plasma concentrations after 28 days of treatment were approximately 4.5µM. This is similar to concentrations found in patients with mutations in the CYP7B1 gene, although higher levels are apparent in atherosclerotic lesions, (in the millimolar range). In this study, plasma levels of 27HC were 40-50 fold higher in PyMT mice treated with 27HC compared to placebo. Mice were euthanized when their collective tumor burden reached 2cm<sup>3</sup>.

High Cholesterol Diet Studies: MMTV-PyMT+ mice were bred with either wildtype or CYP27A1<sup>-/-</sup> mice on a C57BL/6 background using a similar strategy to the CYP7B1 mice described above. Thus we established CYP27A1<sup>+/+</sup>; PyMT+ and CYP27A1<sup>-/-</sup>; PyMT+ females. At wean (21 days) mice were placed on either a control diet (TestDiet 5001) or a high cholesterol diet (2% cholesterol, 0.5% sodium cholate), *ad libitum*. The addition of cholate abrogates the bile acid synthesis deficit and thus poor cholesterol absorption in CYP27A1<sup>-/-</sup> mice. At ~5 weeks of age mice were ovariectomized. Mice were monitored for first palpable tumors, the growth of which was then recorded through time.

#### E0771 Tumor Studies:

C57BL/6 mice were purchased from Charles River Laboratories Inc. and ovariectomized. E0771 cells were cultured in RPMI plus non-essential amino acids, sodium pyruvate and 8% FBS. 10-days post-ovariectomy, E0771 were orthotopically grafted into the axial mammary fat pad. Treatments were administered daily by subcutaneous injection. Doses of indicated ligand were the same as for the PyMT tumor growth studies.

#### High fat diet studies in human apoE3 mice:

Human *apoE3* transgenic replacement mice were generated previously (27). The control (CD) and high fat diets (HFD) were purchased from TestDiet (5TJS and 5TJN respectively). To evaluate the effect of a high fat diet male *apoE3* mice were placed on a CD or HFD for 8 weeks prior to blood draw and/or tumor graft. For tumor studies, females were ovariectomized between 6-8 weeks of age and placed on their respective diets for 8 weeks. At this point treatment with indicated ligands was initiated and E0771 cells orthotopically grafted into the mammary fat pad. The CYP27A1 inhibitor GW27329TX was administered daily (100mg/kg) subcutaneously. Atorvastatin was administered by daily oral gavage (40mg/kg).

#### Relapse Free Survival analysis for CYP27A1 and CYP7B1 mRNA:

An integrative database comprising 4022 patients from 22 publicly available datasets was assembled for querying. The raw data was downloaded from GEO, normalized with RMA and batch corrected using the COMBAT algorithm within R. Clinical data was also aggregated from GEO and duplicate patient samples were filtered out. Each tumor was then classified into tumor subtypes using the PAM50, MOD1, and MOD2 gene modules in Genefu (29, 30). Gene expression was split by the median into Low and High classifications. Reported p-values were calculated using the log-rank method. Datasets used: GSE11121, GSE12093, GSE12276, GSE1456, GSE16391, GSE16446, GSE19615, GSE22035, GSE22093, GSE23720, GSE26639, GSE3494, GSE5327, GSE6532, GSE7390, GSE9195, GSE17705, GSE2034, GSE20685, GSE21653, GSE4922, GSE6532.

#### Human Tissues:

We used tissue microarrays that included duplicate 1 mm cores of formalin fixed, paraffin embedded primary human breast carcinomas from a group of 59 interpretable tumors from Vienna, Austria (31). For all tumors, grade and ER/PR/HER2 biomarker data were available.

#### CYP27A1 IHC Analysis:

TMA sections were deparaffinized, treated with sub-boiling antigen retrieval buffer (citrate, pH 6) for 20 minutes, and then reacted with an anti-CYP27A1 rabbit monoclonal antibody (ab126785 from Abcam) at 1:500 for 2 hours. The detection reaction utilized the rabbit Envision kit from Dako. Diaminobenzidine (DAB) was used as chromogen, with hematoxylin as counterstain. The IHC experiments were performed on an automated immunostainer (Intellipath from Biocare). Paraffin-embedded cell blocks of HEPG2 cells and normal human liver tissue served as external positive controls. Positive cells showed granular cytoplasmic reactivity. Positive cells showed granular cytoplasmic reactivity. A blocking peptide (ab139504) was able to ablate the signal. All analysis including cell type identification and staining intensity was performed by a board certified pathologist. Macrophages were identified by morphology. Staining intensity in tumor cells was scored as 0 (absent), 0.5 (borderline), 1 (weak), 2 (moderate) or 3 (strong). For statistical analysis, the tumors were categorized as weak (0, 0.5, 1), and overexpressed (2,3). Ordinal logistic regression was used for binary outcomes and proportional odds regression was used for Grade. Score was modeled as a binary predictor with levels weak and overexpressed. For outcomes with low cell counts a Fisher's exact test of association was used. Analyses were conducted in SAS version 9.3 (SAS Institute, Cary, NC) and the R environment for statistical computing (32).

#### MMTV-PyMT Lung Metastasis:

For the MMTV-PyMT models, mice were euthanized when their collective tumor size reached 2cm<sup>3</sup>. Mice were randomized into their lungs being extracted and frozen, or inflated with 10% formalin. RNA was extracted from frozen lungs and probed for PyMT transcript by QPCR. Formalin inflated lungs were fixed overnight and then preserved in 70% ethanol. They were then dehydrated, paraffin embedded, sectioned and stained with H&E.

#### Lung Colonization:

IRFP expressing plasmid (Addgene 31857) was subcloned into pENTR2B (Invitrogen) to generate the Gateway®-compatible entry vector, pENTR2B-iRFP construct. To generate a lentivirus expressing IRFP, pENTR2B-IRFP was recombined with the destination vector, pLenti-CMV/TO Neo DEST (Addgene 17292) using LR reaction. Stable IRFP expressing Met1 cells were established by flow cytometry. Met1 cells were stably expressing IRFP were pretreated in culture with either vehicle, 27HC or GW3965 for 72hrs. They were then injected (iv) into syngeneic recipient mice. 28 days later, mice were sacrificed, lungs were cannulated, re-inflated with PBS and imaged with an IVIS-Kenetic machine (Caliper Life Sciences).

#### Statistics:

Values were assessed for normality and where appropriate either ln-transformed or a non-parametric test was selected. Figure 1B,F, Figure 2C,D: 2-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni's post-hoc t-test. Figure 1C,D,E, Figure 2A,B, Figure S6, S13C,D: Kaplan-Meier curves compared to each other using log rank test. Figure 3B,D, Figures S10B, S11A,B, S12A and S13A,B: unpaired two tailed student's t-test compared between two groups. Figures S2, S3, S5, S8, S10A, S11C, S12B and S14: 1-way ANOVA followed by Student Newman-Keuls multiple comparison post-hoc test, or Kruskal-Wallis followed by Dunn's multiple comparison test. Figure S12: linear regression was performed and slope compared to null hypothesis of 0. Graphpad Prism was used for analysis unless otherwise stated. Statistical approaches for Table 1, Table S1 and Figure S9E have been described under *CYP27A1 IHC Analysis*.

## Supplemental Text

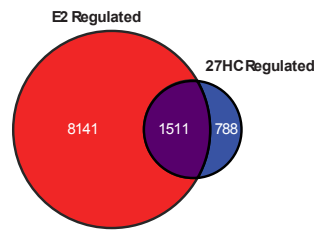
### Evaluation of the *in vitro* pharmacology of 27-hydroxycholesterol in cellular models of breast cancer.

A microarray analysis of mRNA expression was performed to compare the activities of 27-hydroxycholesterol (27HC) and 17- $\beta$ -estradiol (E2) in MCF7 human breast cancer cells (fig. S1A) (17). The data from the E2 arm of this study have been published (GSE35428) but are included here for comparative purposes (28). Gene ontology analysis of the most robustly regulated genes (cutoff:  $p < 0.01$ ) revealed a role for 27HC in the regulation of cholesterol homeostasis, tamoxifen resistance and inflammatory IFN responses (fig. S1B). There was significant overlap between the genes identified and those previously shown to be regulated by the LXR agonist GW3965 in dendritic cells (GSE23073) (fig. S1C) (33). Follow-up studies revealed that 27HC regulated both ER $\alpha$  and LXR transcriptional activity in multiple ER $\alpha$ + breast cancer cell lines (fig. S2A). Induction of the expression of the LXR responsive gene ABCA1 by 27HC, or synthetic LXR agonists, was increased upon inhibition of ER $\alpha$  by the antagonist ICI 182,780, or by ER $\alpha$  knockdown. Inhibition of LXR $\alpha/\beta$  enhanced 27HC mediated induction of ER target gene expression (fig. S2B, C). Increased proliferation was also observed in both 27HC or E2 treated MCF7 cells; an activity that was ablated upon ER $\alpha$  knockdown or co-treatment with the ER antagonist ICI 182,780 (fig. S2D). Interestingly, the mitogenic activity of E2 was inhibited by cotreatment with a pure LXR agonist and conversely the ER-dependent effects of 27HC on proliferation were accentuated following siRNA mediated knockdown or antagonist mediated inhibition of LXR $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  activity (fig. S2D). The same treatments had no effect in the ER $\alpha$  negative SKBR3 and MDA-MB-231 cell lines. Similarly the proliferation of these ER $\alpha$ -negative cell lines was unaffected by inhibitors of 27HC synthesis (CYP27A1 inhibitors), LXR antagonists or by LXR knockdown (fig. S3). Together these data highlight the complex interactions between ER and LXR and implicate these receptors as mediators of 27HC action in cellular models of breast cancer.

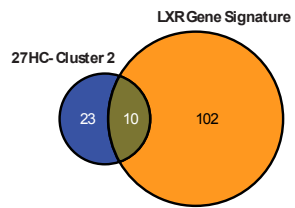
**Fig. S1**

**27-hydroxycholesterol is a SERM and an LXR agonist.** (A) Analysis of mRNA expression in MCF7 breast cancer cells indicates that 27HC induces the expression of genes generally associated with the activation of ER and LXR. (B) Heat map of genes with largest difference in regulation between 27HC and E2, with associated pathway analysis. (C) Cluster 2 genes from (B) have significant overlap with LXR target genes as identified in dendritic cells.

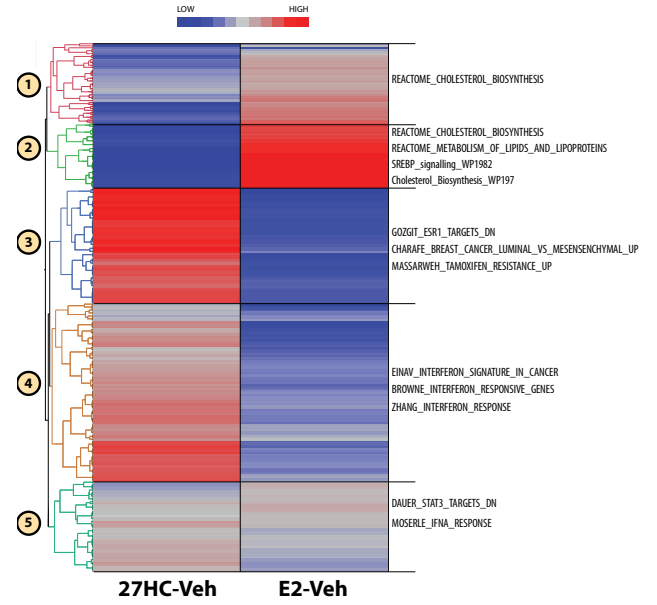
A



C



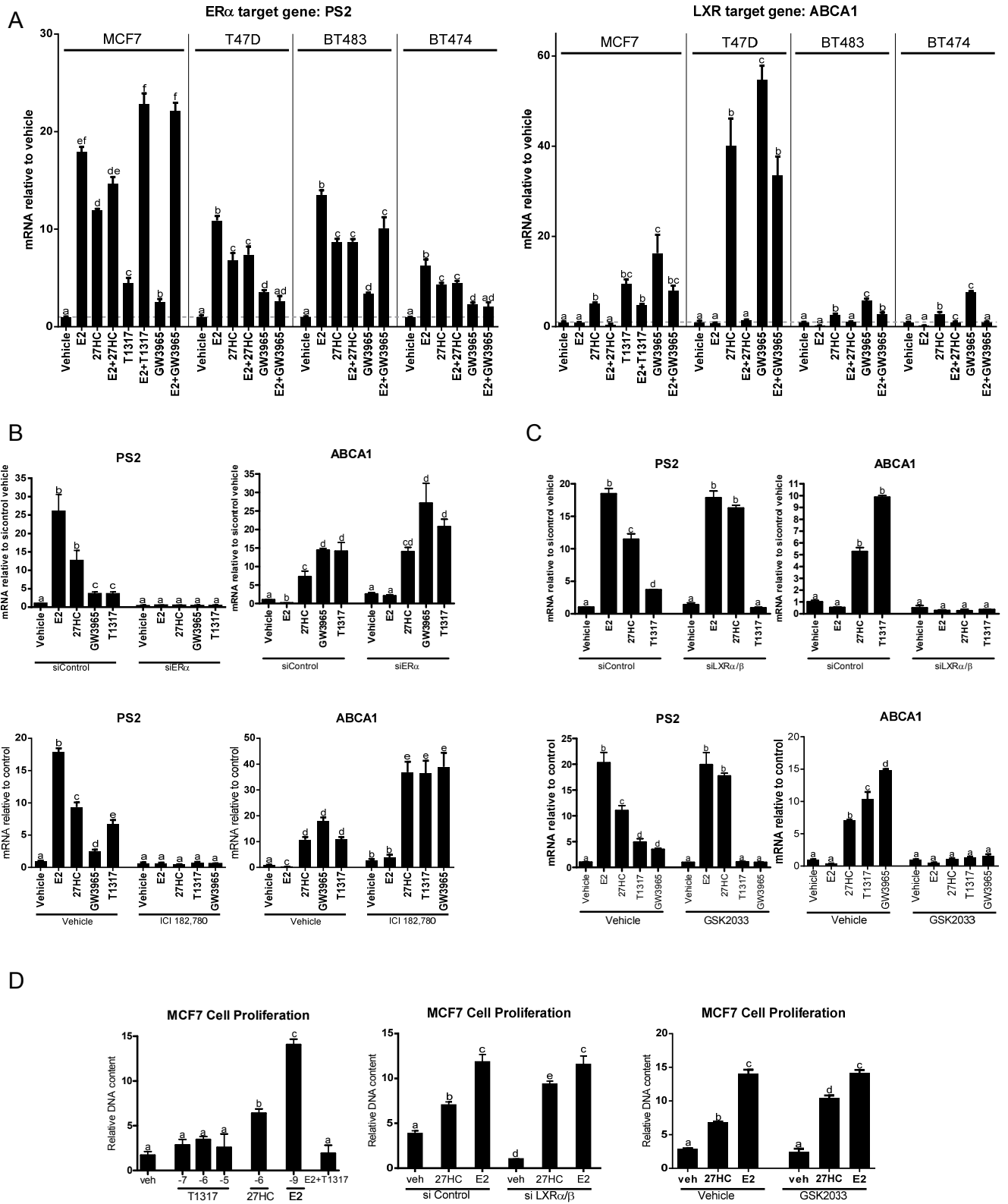
B





**Fig. S2**

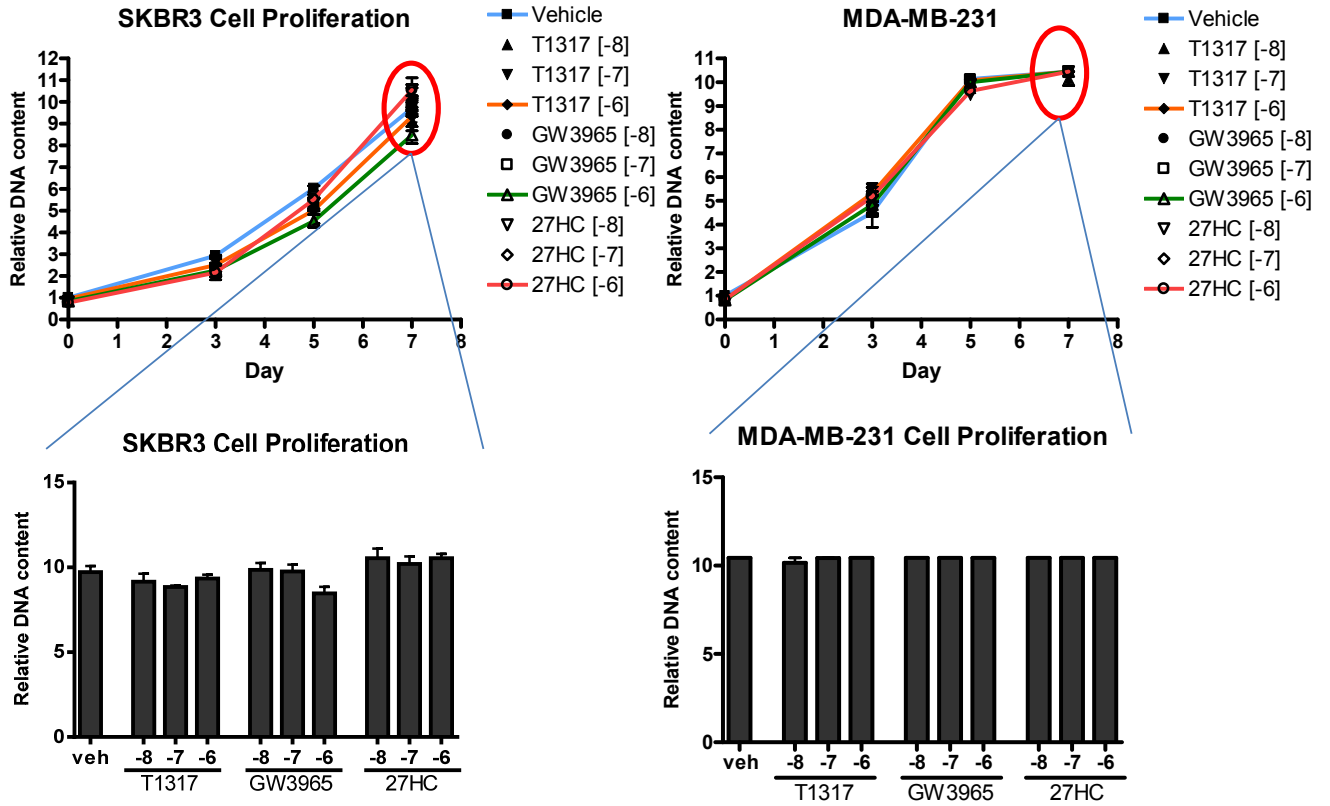
**27-hydroxycholesterol is a modulator of both ER and LXR target gene expression in cellular models of ER $\alpha$ + breast cancer.** (A) 27HC and synthetic LXR ligands T1317 and GW3965 induce the expression of ER target genes (i.e. PS2) and LXR target genes (i.e. ABCA) in MCF7, T47D, BT483 and BT474 cells. (B) Induction of ER target genes is ablated upon ER $\alpha$  knockdown (siER $\alpha$ ) or when ER activity is inhibited using the antagonist ICI 182,780. The induction of LXR target genes is enhanced upon knockdown of ER $\alpha$  expression or upon the addition of the ER antagonist ICI 182,780. (C) The effect of 27HC on LXR target genes is attenuated while its effect on ER target genes is enhanced in the absence of the LXRs (siLXR $\alpha/\beta$ ) or when LXR activity is blocked with the antagonist GSK2033A. (D) 27HC induces MCF7 proliferation via the ER while its activation of LXRs decreases this effect. Different letters denote statistical significance (mean  $\pm$  SEM,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $n \geq 3$ ).



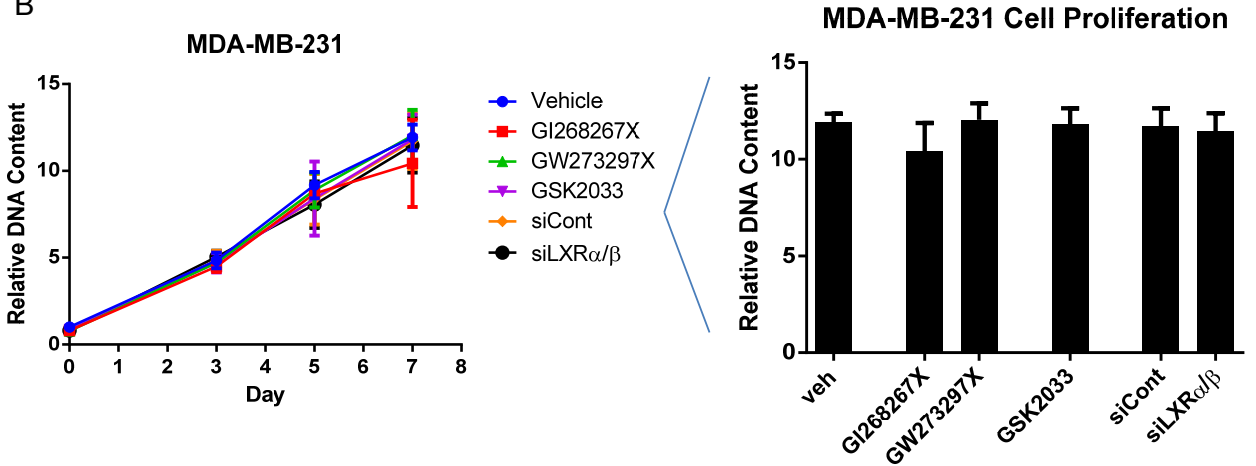
**Fig. S3**

**27-hydroxycholesterol does not impact cell proliferation in the ER-negative cell lines, SKBR3 and MDA-MB-231.** (A) Activation of LXRs by 27HC or synthetic LXR ligands does not alter cell proliferation. Time course and bar-graph representation of day 7 is indicated. The doses of 27HC, and the synthetic LXR ligands GW3965 and T0901317 (T1317) that were used for this study, are indicated (Log(M)). (B) Inhibition of CYP27A1 by the chemical inhibitors GW273297X (G297X) or GI268267X (G267X), or inhibition of LXRs by the antagonist GSK2033 or RNA interference does not alter proliferation. Bar-graph representation of day 7 is depicted. All data is presented as mean  $\pm$  SEM (n=3).

A



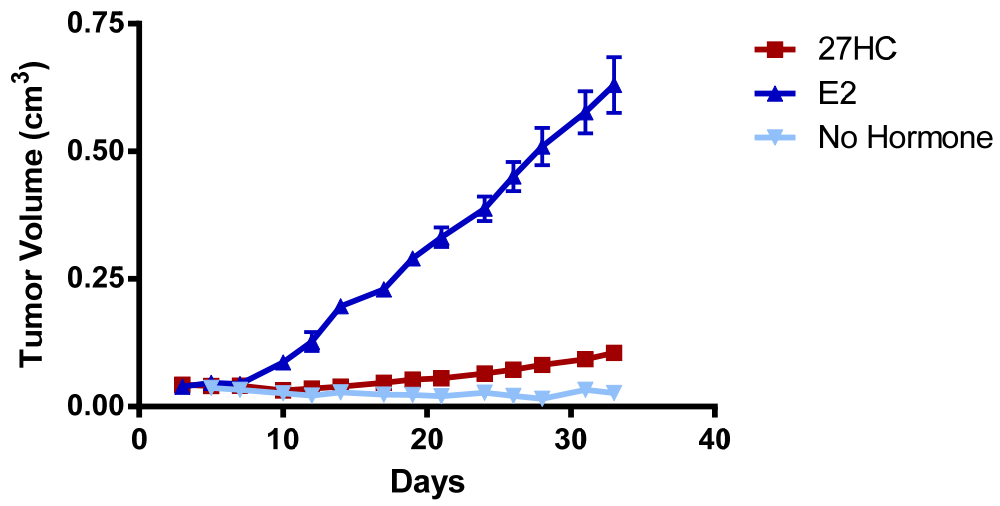
B



**Fig. S4**

**MCF7 cell derived xenografts require supplementation with either 17- $\beta$ -estradiol or 27-hydroxycholesterol for growth.** Supplemental data to **Figure 1** indicating that when MCF7 cells are grafted into ovariectomized mice they do not grow unless mice are treated with either 17 $\beta$ -estradiol or 27HC. (mean  $\pm$  SEM, n = 5 for the no hormone group).

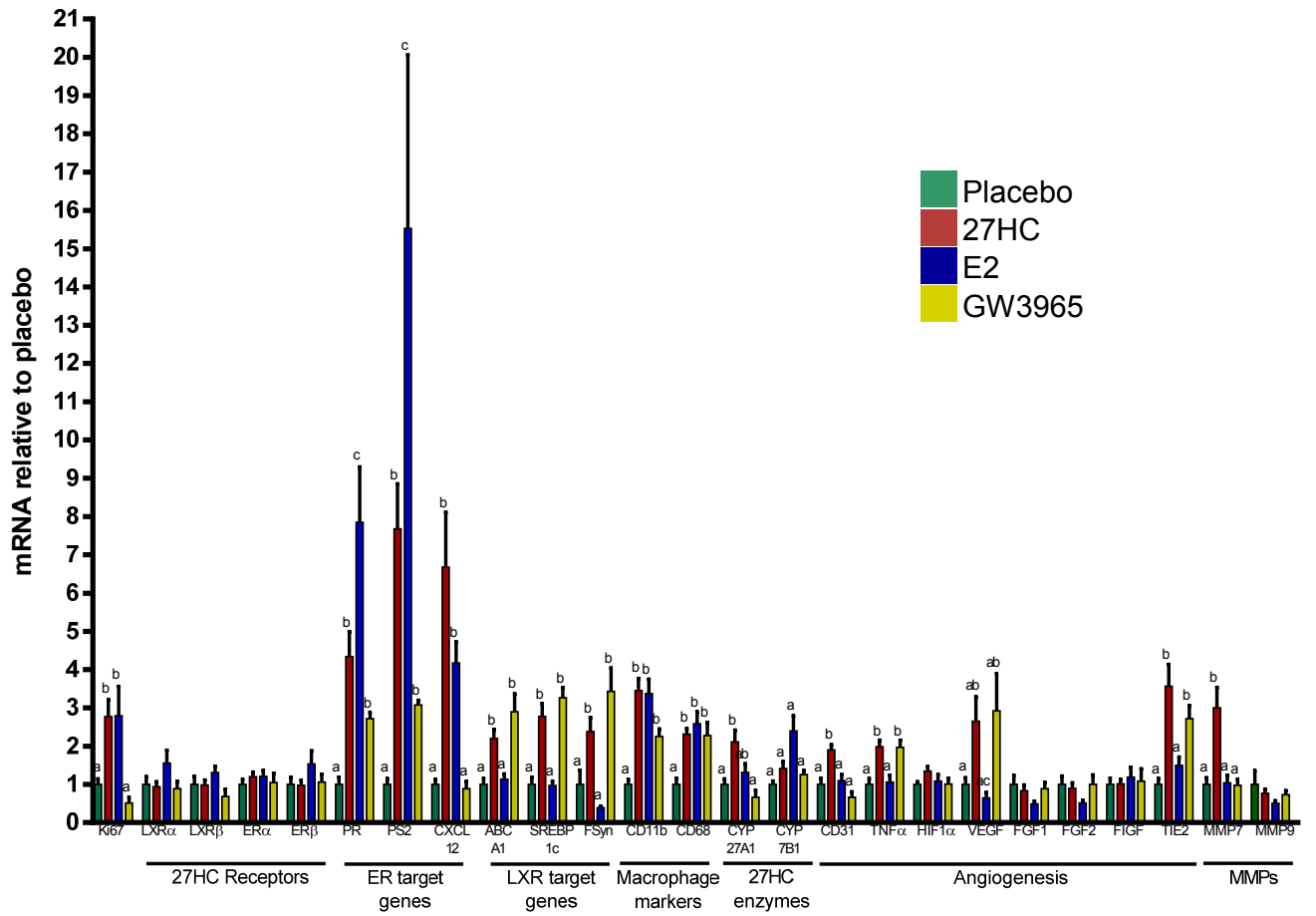
# MCF7 Xenograft



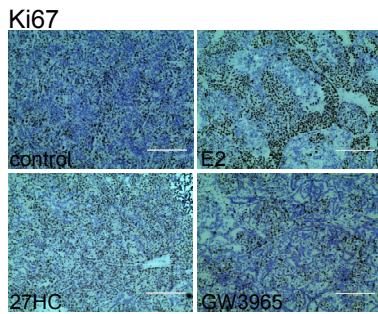
**Fig. S5**

**Analysis of mRNA and protein expression in tumors from MMTV-PyMT mice treated with indicated ligands.** (A) mRNA analysis of indicated genes by QPCR. Different letters denote statistical significance (mean  $\pm$  SEM,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $n = 6-18$ ). (B) Micrographs depicting the proliferation marker Ki67. Scale bar = 200 $\mu$ m (C) Micrographs depicting the endothelial (angiogenesis) marker CD31. Scale bar = 200 $\mu$ m (D) Percentage of cells within tumor expressing the macrophage marker CD11b as determined by flow cytometry. Different letters denote statistical significance (mean  $\pm$  SEM,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $n = 4$ ).

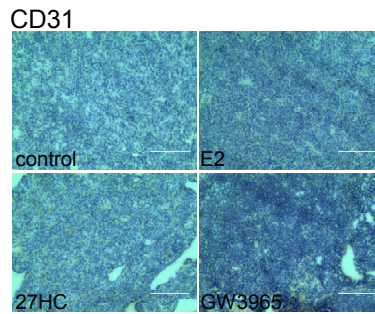
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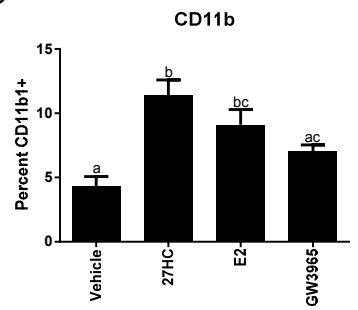
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C



D



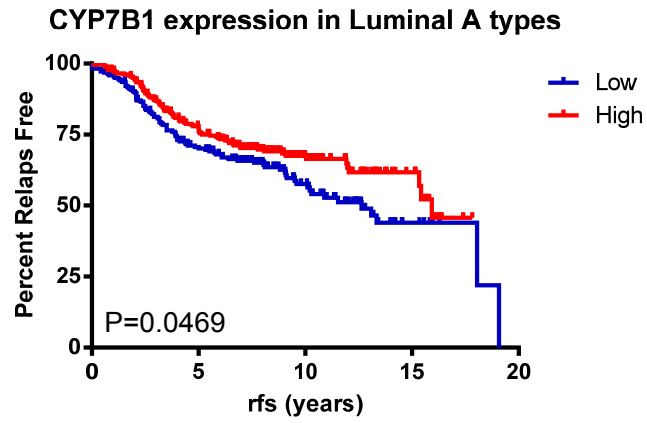


**Fig. S6**

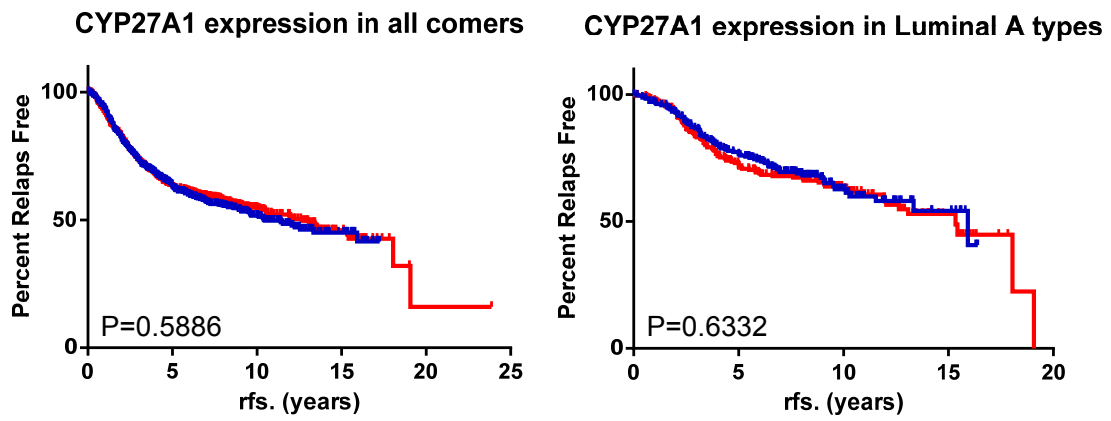
**CYP7B1 mRNA expression tracks with a better prognosis in patients with luminal A type breast cancer while CYP27A1 mRNA expression is not associated with relapse free survival in patients classified with any subtype of breast cancer.** (A)

Relapse free survival curve based on CYP7B1 expression in patients classified with Luminal A type breast cancer (n = 1170). (B) Relapse free survival curves based on CYP27A1 expression in patients classified with any type of breast cancer or only those diagnosed with Luminal A type (n = 1372 or 482 respectively).

A

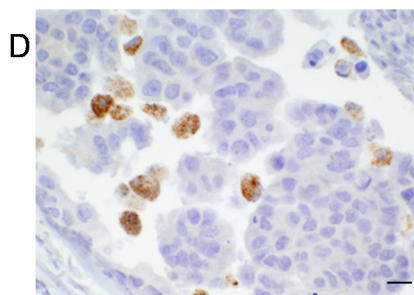
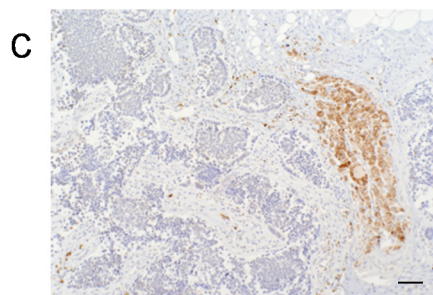
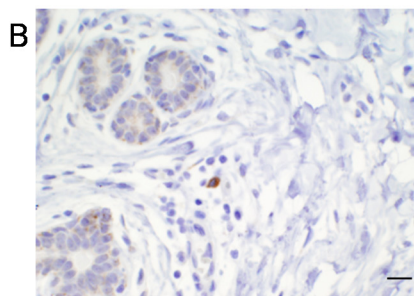
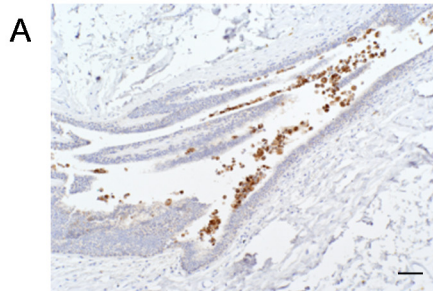


B



**Fig. S7**

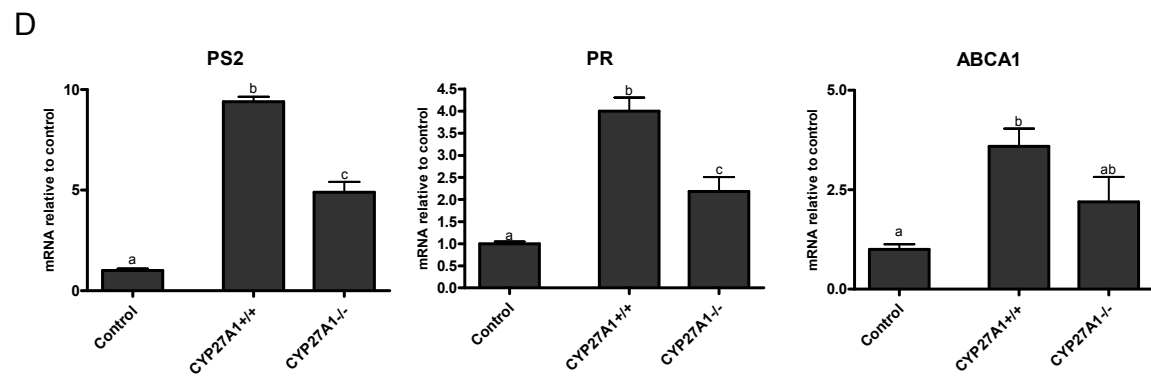
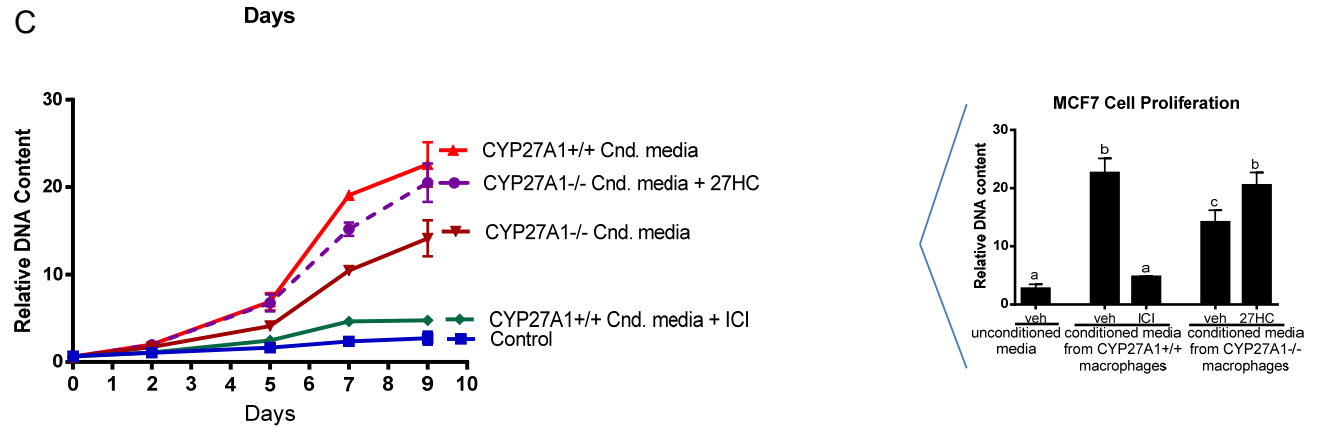
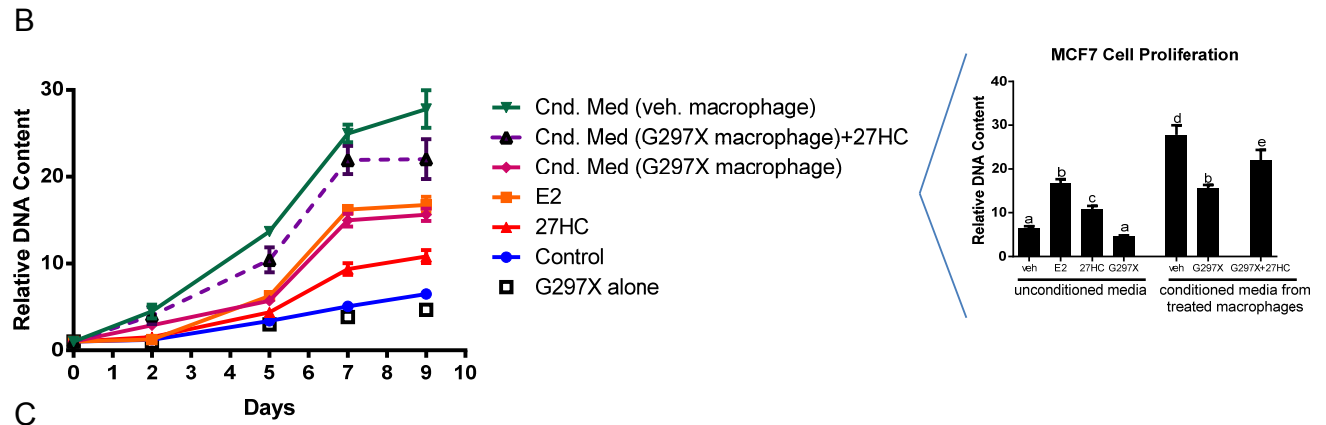
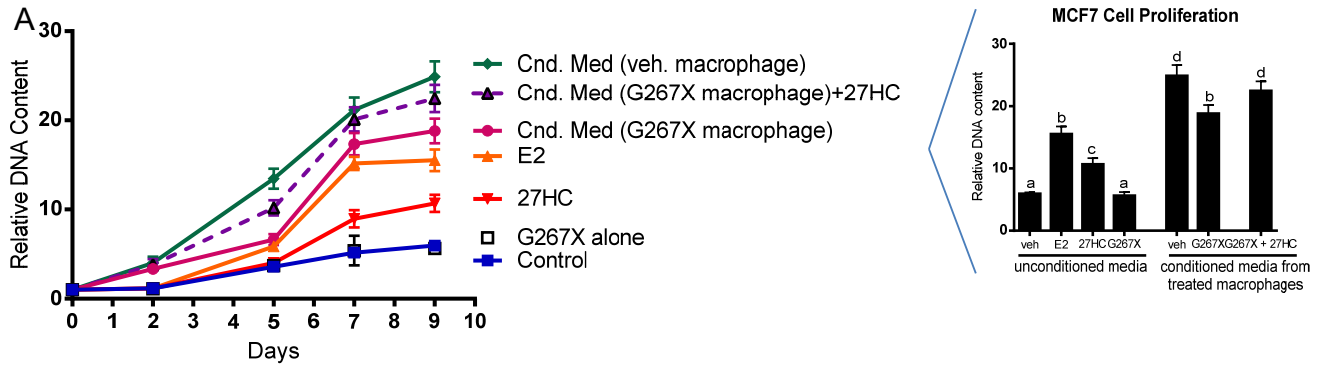
**The p450 oxidase CYP27A1 is highly expressed in macrophages within human benign and malignant mammary tissue.** (A) Benign tissue depicting large duct with negatively staining epithelial lining and macrophages in lumen. (B) Benign tissue depicting weakly staining epithelium and strongly staining single stromal macrophage in center. (C) Negatively staining tumor nests with aggregate of strongly positive macrophages in stroma. (D) Negatively staining intraductal carcinoma with strongly positive macrophages in the lumen. A and C taken at 100x, scale bar = 40 $\mu$ m B and D taken at 400x, scale bar = 10 $\mu$ m.



**Fig. S8**

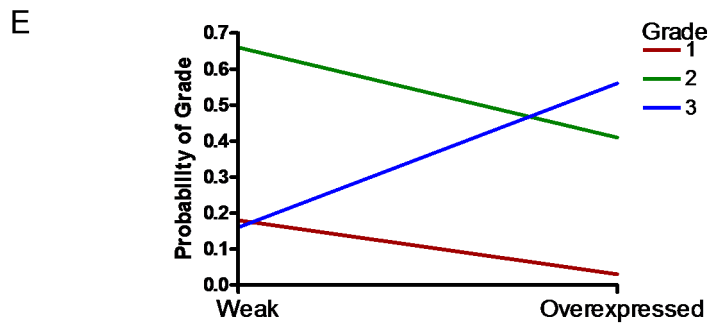
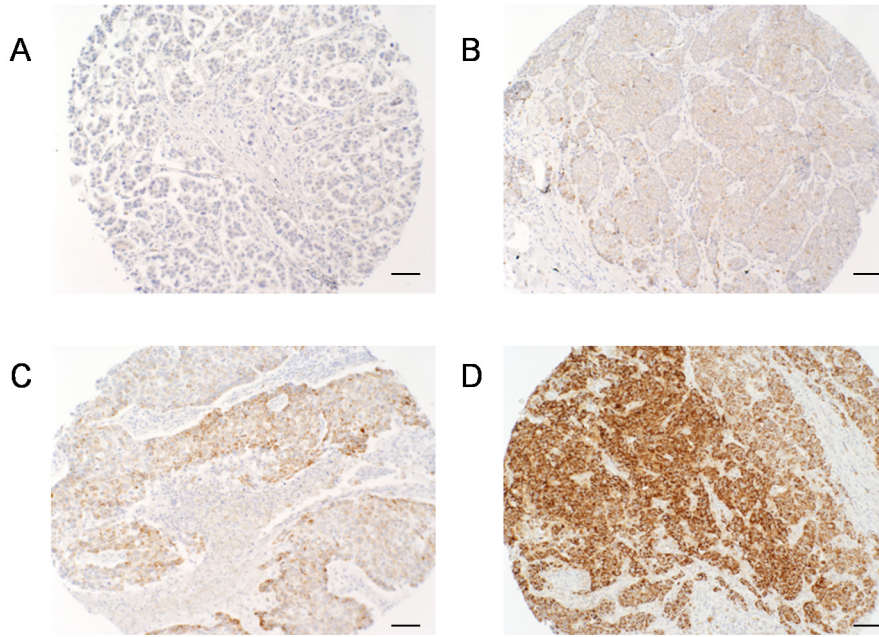
**Conditioned media from macrophages stimulates MCF7 cell proliferation.**

Conditioned media was harvested from primary bone marrow derived macrophages that had been treated with the CYP27A1 inhibitors (A) GI268267X (G267X) or (B) GW273297X (G297X), or from (C) CYP27A1 null macrophages. Values at day 9 are indicated in bar graph format. (D) Conditioned media from macrophages induced the expression of ER target genes such as PS2 when added to MCF-7 cells. Different letters denote statistical significance (mean +/- SEM,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $n = 3-4$ ). ICI = ICI 182,780



**Fig. S9**

**Breast cancer cell intrinsic expression of CYP27A1 protein is associated with tumor grade.** Supplemental data for Table 1. Representative breast cancer TMA cores demonstrate a wide range of CYP27A1 expression within cancer cells. (A) negative staining, score = 0. (B) weak staining, score = 1. (C) moderate staining, score = 2. (D) strong staining, score = 3. Scale bars = 80 $\mu$ m. (E) Plot of probabilities indicating that an increase in CYP27A1 score from weak to overexpressed is associated with an increased probability of being grade 3 and a decreased probability of being a lower grade (1 or 2) (estimated odds ratio of 6.7 with interval of 1.7-26.6, p=0.007).

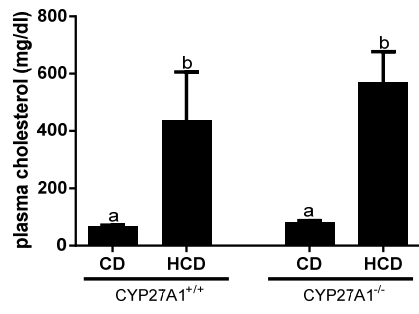




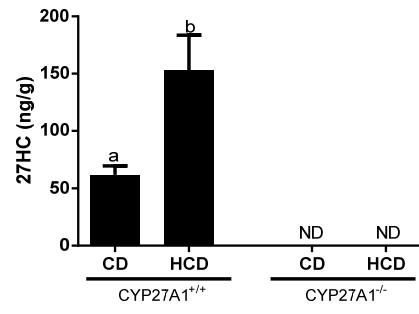
**Fig. S10**

**Cholesterol and 27hydroxycholesterol levels in in MMTV-PyMT mice fed a high cholesterol diet (HCD).** Supplemental data to Figure 2A and B in text. (A) Plasma cholesterol levels (n = 7-9). (B) Intratumoral concentrations of 27HC. Values are ng of 27HC per g of wet tissue. (n = 3-6). ND = not detected. Statistics for (B) did not include CYP27A1<sup>-/-</sup> groups as no 27HC was detected. Values are mean +/- SEM and different letters denote statistical significance.

A



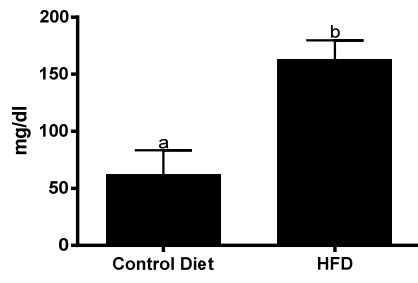
B



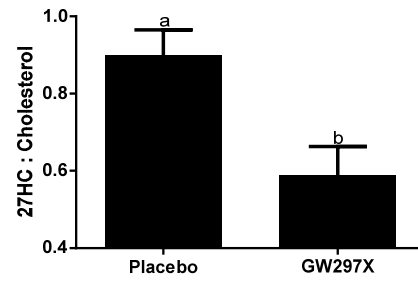
**Fig. S11**

**The CYP27A1 inhibitor GW273297X decreases plasma and intratumoral 27hydroxycholesterol concentrations.** Supporting data for Figure 2C. (A) A high fat diet (HFD) significantly increases total plasma cholesterol in *APOE3* mice compared to a control diet (CD) (n = 3-9). (B) Daily treatment of *APOE3* mice on a HFD with the CYP27A1 inhibitor GW273297X (GW297X) decreases plasma 27HC concentrations (mean +/- SEM, n = 3-4). (C) Intratumoral concentration of 27HC is decreased upon treatment with GW273297X in E0771 tumor bearing *APOE3* mice. Values are ng of 27HC per g of wet tissue (mean +/- SEM, n = 4). Different letters denote statistical significance (p<0.05).

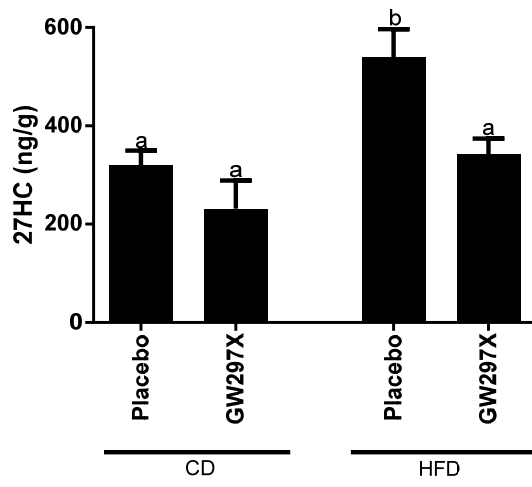
A



B



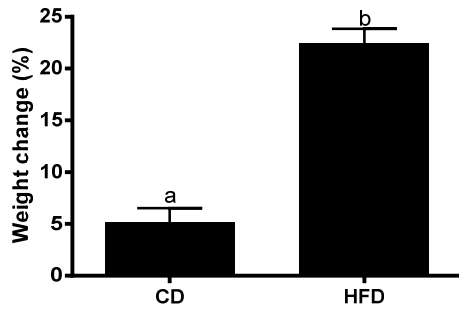
C



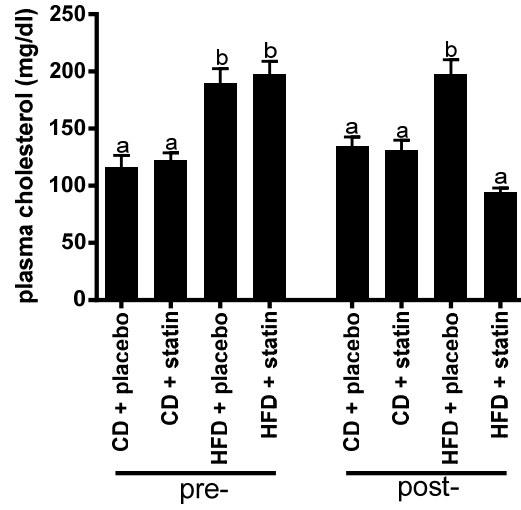
**Fig. S12**

**Statin treatment decreases total cholesterol and inhibits obesity driven tumor growth in the E0771 model of breast cancer.** Supporting data for Figure 2D. (A) *apoE3* mice gain significant weight when fed a high fat diet (HFD) compared to a control diet (CD) for eight weeks (mean +/- SEM, n = 15/group). (B) Oral administration of atorvastatin (statin) from time of tumor graft (E0771 cells) decreases total plasma cholesterol to levels observed in CD fed mice. Different letters denote statistical significance (mean +/- SEM, n = 3-9). (C) There are linear relationships between obesity (% weight change) and final tumor volume, obesity and total plasma cholesterol, and total plasma cholesterol and final tumor volume. p-values indicate difference probability that the slope  $\neq 0$ .

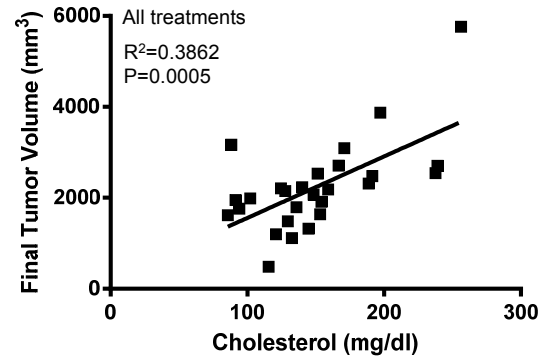
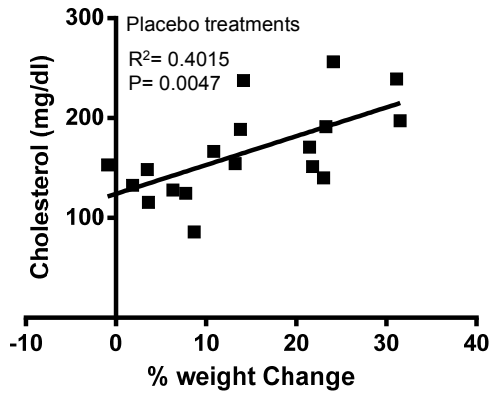
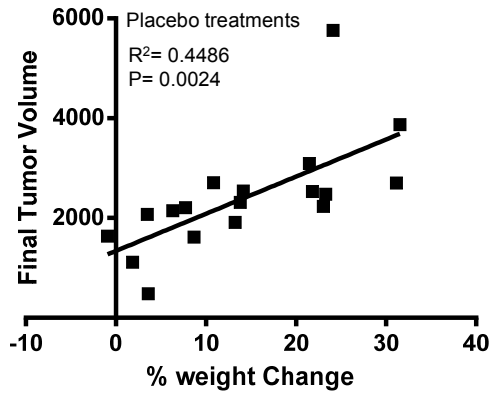
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B



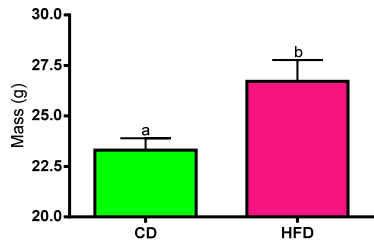
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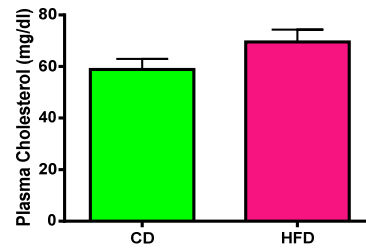
**Fig. S13**

**A high fat diet fails to impact tumor growth in the MMTV-PyMT mouse model of mammary cancer.** High fat diet does not result in increased circulating cholesterol in the FVB strain of mice used for these studies and has no impact on tumor growth or latency. (A) PyMT Mice fed a high fat diet (HFD) fed from weaning are heavier compared to a control diet (CD) fed mice. Different letters denote statistical significance (mouse age 65-75d, mean +/- SEM, n=7-8, p<0.05). (B) HFD fails to significantly alter total plasma cholesterol in this mouse strain (mean +/- SEM, n=4-8). (C) Tumor latency was determined by age at which a palpable tumor was detected. (D) Once a palpable tumor formed, its size was measured and plotted as time to reaching a size of 1000mm<sup>3</sup>. (n = 14-15).

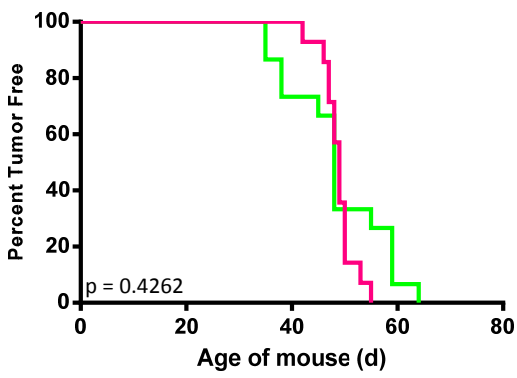
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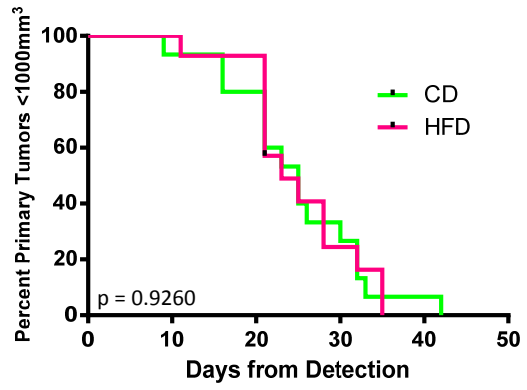
B



C



D





**Fig. S14**

**27-hydroxysterol and the LXR agonist GW3965 modulate the expression of genes associated with EMT.** (A) 27HC and GW3965 modulate mRNA expression of genes associated with EMT. c: control, 2: 27HC, G:GW3965. (B) 27HC and GW3965 induce Snail1 expression. Overlaid images of green (Snail1) and blue (dapi nuclear stain). (C) 27HC and GW3965 induce FAP $\alpha$  (separase) expression. Overlaid images of green (FAP $\alpha$ ) and blue (dapi nuclear stain). All images were adjusted to 90% brightness and 100% contrast. Scale bar = 200 $\mu$ m.

