

1 Focused Ultrasound Blood-Brain Barrier Opening Arrests the Growth and

2 Formation of Cerebral Cavernous Malformations

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REFERENCES AND NOTES

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26 **BACKGROUND:** Cerebral cavernous malformations (CCM) are vascular lesions within the central nervous
27 system, consisting of dilated and hemorrhage-prone capillaries. CCMs can cause debilitating neurological
28 symptoms, and surgical excision or stereotactic radiosurgery are the only current treatment options.
29 Meanwhile, transient blood-brain barrier opening (BBBO) with focused ultrasound (FUS) and microbubbles
30 is now understood to exert potentially beneficial bioeffects, such as stimulation of neurogenesis and
31 clearance of amyloid- β . Here, we tested whether FUS BBBO could be deployed therapeutically to control
32 CCM formation and progression in a clinically-representative murine model.

33 **METHODS:** CCMs were induced in mice by postnatal, endothelial-specific *Krit1* ablation. FUS was applied
34 for BBBO with fixed peak-negative pressures (PNPs; 0.2-0.6 MPa) or passive cavitation detection-
35 modulated PNPs. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) was used to target FUS treatments, evaluate safety,
36 and measure longitudinal changes in CCM growth after BBBO.

37 **RESULTS:** FUS BBBO elicited gadolinium accumulation primarily at the perilesional boundaries of CCMs,
38 rather than lesion cores. Passive cavitation detection and gadolinium contrast enhancement were
39 comparable in CCM and wild-type mice, indicating that *Krit1* ablation does not confer differential sensitivity
40 to FUS BBBO. Acutely, CCMs exposed to FUS BBBO remained structurally stable, with no signs of
41 hemorrhage. Longitudinal MRI revealed that FUS BBBO halted the growth of 94% of CCMs treated in the
42 study. At 1 month, FUS BBBO-treated lesions lost, on average, 9% of their pre-sonication volume. In
43 contrast, non-sonicated control lesions grew to 670% of their initial volume. Lesion control with FUS BBBO
44 was accompanied by a marked reduction in the area and mesenchymal appearance of *Krit* mutant
45 endothelium. Strikingly, in mice receiving multiple BBBO treatments with fixed PNPs, *de novo* CCM
46 formation was significantly reduced by 81%. Mock treatment plans on MRIs of patients with surgically
47 inaccessible lesions revealed their lesions are amenable to FUS BBBO with current clinical technology.

48 **CONCLUSIONS:** Our results establish FUS BBBO as a novel, non-invasive modality that can safely arrest
49 murine CCM growth and prevent their *de novo* formation. As an incisionless, MR image-guided therapy
50 with the ability to target eloquent brain locations, FUS BBBO offers an unparalleled potential to
51 revolutionize the therapeutic experience and enhance the accessibility of treatments for CCM patients.

52 **Introduction**

53 Cerebral cavernous malformations (CCM) are vascular lesions originating in the capillary-venous vessels
54 of the central nervous system¹. These slow flow vascular malformations are hemorrhage prone, grossly
55 enlarged, and lack many of the supporting cells of the neurovascular unit^{2,3}. CCMs generally arise due to
56 biallelic mutation in one of the three CCM-related genes: *Krit1/CCM1*, *MGC4607/CCM2*, and
57 *PDCD10/CCM3*^{1,4}. CCM patients can experience debilitating and life-altering symptoms such as motor and
58 visual deficits, seizures, and stroke⁵. These symptoms generally arise from the rapid growth and
59 hemorrhage of a CCM⁶. The current standard of care for CCM is invasive surgical resection. However,
60 resection is associated with a high risk of post-operative morbidities and limited to surgically accessible
61 CCMs⁶. Due to their eloquent location, CCMs in the brainstem are associated with even greater risks of
62 early morbidity and recurrent growth following incomplete resection^{6,7}. Stereotactic radiosurgery is also a
63 treatment option but conveys risks associated with ionizing radiation that can lead to adverse radiation
64 effects⁸. The pathological trajectory of CCMs remains largely uncertain to clinicians⁹⁻¹¹. Thus, CCM
65 patients, and parents of children with CCM, are put in the position of choosing between the risks of
66 neurosurgery or inaction.

67 As an incisionless therapy with the ability to target eloquent brain locations, focused ultrasound
68 (FUS) may represent an ideal alternative for CCM treatment. With targeting provided by magnetic
69 resonance imaging (MRI), FUS delivers acoustic energy deep within the body to non-invasively produce
70 mechanical or thermal therapeutic effects¹². When FUS is combined with an intravenous (i.v.) injection of
71 gas-filled microbubbles, the oscillating pressure waves induce an alternating expansion and contraction of
72 the gas within microbubbles, which in turn causes the microbubbles to push and pull on the walls of blood
73 vessels. If performed in the brain, this procedure can induce a temporary opening of the blood-brain barrier
74 (BBB).

75 FUS-mediated BBB opening (BBBO) has been deployed primarily to enable enhanced delivery of
76 drugs and other therapeutic agents into the brain for various neurological conditions¹³⁻¹⁵. However, FUS
77 BBBO has also been shown to be beneficial in the absence of drug delivery for the treatment of Alzheimer's
78 disease¹⁶⁻²². While the exact mechanism(s) behind the beneficial effect of FUS BBBO in Alzheimer's

79 disease are not completely understood, ample preclinical evidence of this effect has led to several clinical
80 trials that are testing this approach in patients with Alzheimer's disease (NCT04118764, NCT04526262,
81 NCT02986932, NCT03739905, NCT04250376). In this study, we examined the effectiveness and safety
82 profile of FUS BBBO applied to CCMs and its potential to, in the absence of drug delivery, therapeutically
83 control the growth and *de novo* formation of CCMs.

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85 **Results**

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87 **FUS effectively opens the BBB within the CCM microenvironment**

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89 Given the altered biomechanical properties^{23–25} and increased caliber of the vasculature of CCMs and the
90 surrounding perilesional vasculature (**Figure 1A**), we first questioned whether FUS in combination with i.v.
91 microbubble injection could effectively elicit BBBO in CCM mice. We acquired baseline, high resolution
92 T2-weighted spin echo MR images of CCM mice to select CCMs for sonication. On the day of FUS
93 treatment, gadolinium contrast agent (gadobenate dimeglumine; 1.058 kDa) was injected intravenously,
94 and a pre-sonication T1-weighted spin echo MR image was obtained. We next performed FUS BBBO on
95 selected CCMs using peak-negative pressures (PNP), i.e. ultrasound wave amplitudes, of 0.2 MPa - 0.6
96 MPa and standard BBBO parameters. Analysis of the T1 contrast enhancement revealed that FUS BBBO
97 enhanced gadolinium accumulation to the CCM (**Figure 1B-C**). Gadolinium accumulation around CCMs
98 was significantly increased by FUS BBBO over the baseline leakiness of gadolinium for PNPs of 0.3 MPa
99 to 0.6 MPa (**Figure 1C**) and primarily localized to the perilesional boundaries of the sonicated CCM, rather
100 than the lesion core (**Figure 1B**). Thus, FUS can effectively open the BBB within the CCM
101 microenvironment, despite the enlarged and irregular microvasculature associated with the lesion.

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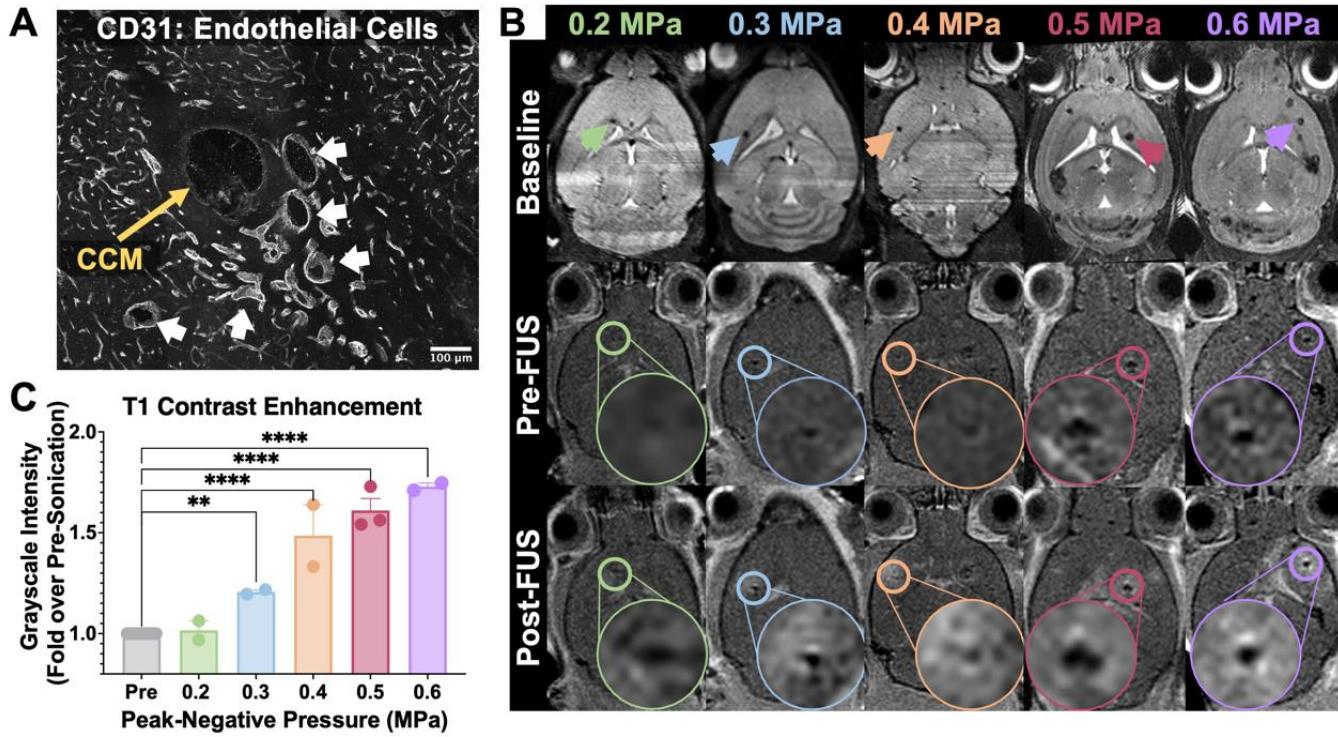


Figure 1. FUS effectively opens the BBB within the CCM microenvironment. (A) Confocal image of a CCM (in the absence of FUS) stained with CD31 for endothelial cells. Image depicts the grossly enlarged CCM core (yellow arrow), and moderately dilated perilesional vasculature (white arrows). Scale bar = 100 μ m. (B) Top row: Baseline, high-resolution T2-weighted spin echo images used for selecting CCMs for FUS targeting. Arrowheads indicate selected CCMs. Middle row: T1-weighted spin echo images acquired following gadolinium contrast agent injection but immediately prior to FUS application. Circles indicate targeted CCMs, and insets display magnified views of the targeted CCMs. Bottom row: T1-weighted spin echo images acquired following gadolinium contrast agent injection and FUS application. Columns indicate PNPs used for sonication. T1 contrast enhancement is visible following FUS BBBO and localized to perilesional boundaries of the sonicated CCM. (C) Bar graph of T1 contrast enhancement quantified as the fold change in grayscale intensity of sonicated CCMs in the post-image over the pre-image (as seen in A). Gadolinium accumulation following FUS BBBO over the baseline CCM leakiness for PNPs of 0.3 MPa to 0.6 MPa. $p=0.0054$ for 0.3 MPa and $p<0.0001$ for 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa, one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett's multiple comparisons test.

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107 **FUS BBBO does not increase volume or bleeding of hemorrhage-prone CCMs acutely**

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109 Due to the propensity of CCMs to hemorrhage and, more broadly, the dysregulated state of the
110 microvasculature in CCMs¹, we next sought to evaluate the safety of FUS BBBO in this disease model. To
111 determine if growth or bleeding was acutely induced by FUS BBBO at PNPs of 0.2 MPa – 0.6 MPa, MR
112 images of the brains of CCM mice were taken before and 24 h after FUS BBBO. A 3-dimensional, T2-
113 weighted spin echo sequence was employed to accurately capture changes in CCM volume (**Figure 2A**),
114 while 3-dimensional, susceptibility-weighted images (SWI) were acquired to capture changes in iron

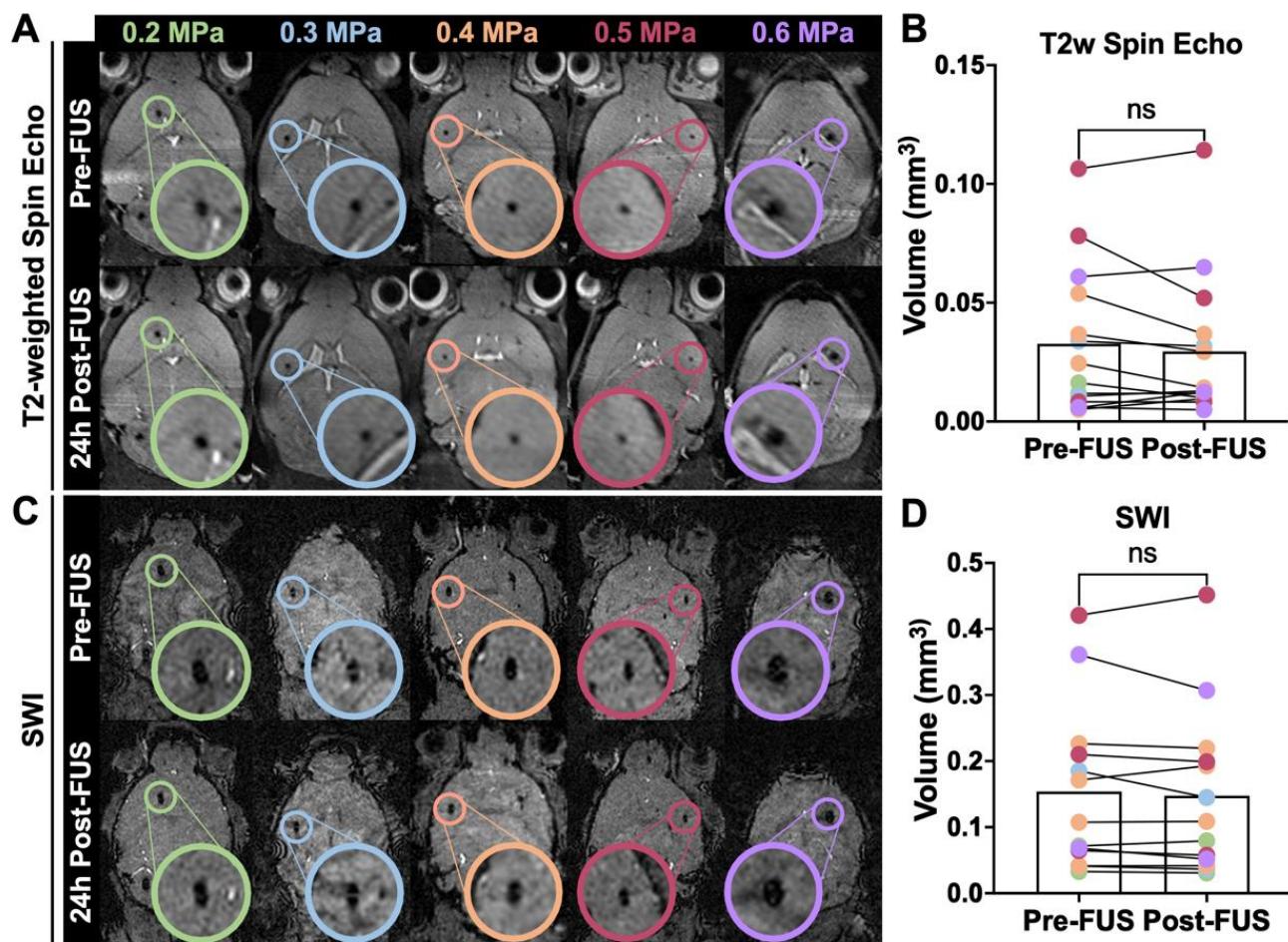


Figure 2. Acute stability of CCMs exposed to FUS BBBO. (A) High-resolution T2-weighted spin echo images displaying either CCMs prior to sonication (top row) or 24 h following sonication (bottom row). Circles denote targeted CCMs, and insets display magnified views of the targeted CCMs. (B) Targeted CCM volumes prior to sonication and 24 h following sonication on T2-weighted spin echo images with color indicating applied PNP. CCM volume does not significantly demonstrate changes in volume following sonication. $p=0.41$, Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test. (C) High-resolution susceptibility-weighted images of the same mice in A, displaying either CCMs prior to sonication (top row) or 24 h following sonication (bottom row). (D) Targeted CCM volumes prior to sonication and 24 h following sonication on susceptibility-weighted images with color indicating applied PNP. CCM volume does not significantly demonstrate changes in bleeding following sonication. $p=0.34$, Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test.

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116 content and fluid flow (i.e. bleeding or hemorrhage; **Figure 2C**) with high sensitivity. Measurement of the
117 hypointense lesion margins between pre- and post-sonication images revealed no evidence of acute
118 growth or hemorrhage induced by FUS BBBO (**Figure 2B, D**), indicating that FUS BBBO causes neither
119 growth nor bleeding of CCMs at acute time points. Immunofluorescent staining of erythrocytes with Ter119
120 (**Figure S1**) confirmed that FUS BBBO did not exacerbate lesion hemorrhage.

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123 **Comparison of FUS BBBO contrast enhancement and acoustic emission signatures between wild-**
124 **type and CCM mice**

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126 To test whether CCM mice differentially respond to FUS BBBO at PNPs of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa, we
127 compared T1 contrast enhancement, which is indicative of the degree of BBBO and contrast delivery, and
128 passive cavitation detection (PCD) measurements, which is indicative of the microbubble activity during
129 sonication, between wild-type mice and CCM mice. Our analysis revealed no significant differences in T1
130 contrast enhancement between wild-type and CCM mice at any of the tested PNPs (**Figure 3A-B**),
131 suggesting that the extent of BBBO is comparable. To compare the microbubble activity, spectrograms of
132 the frequency response for each burst during the FUS application were generated (**Figure 3C**), and
133 cavitation levels were quantified for spectra signifying unstable and stable microbubble activity (**Figure 3D-**
134 **E**). Spectral domains associated with a transition towards or an increase in unstable, inertial cavitation of
135 microbubbles (i.e. subharmonic, ultraharmonics, and broadband)^{26,27} increased with PNP and were
136 comparable between wild-type and CCM mice (**Figure 3D**). Spectral domains associated with stable
137 cavitation (i.e. harmonics)^{27,28} were comparable for PNPs of 0.4 MPa and 0.5 MPa (**Figure 3E**). However,
138 at a PNP of 0.6 MPa, CCM mice displayed an increase in harmonic emissions, while the harmonic
139 emissions of wild-type mice remained similar to that observed at lower PNPs (**Figure 3E**). Altogether,
140 these results suggest that FUS BBBO affects wild-type and CCM mice similarly with regards to the degree
141 of BBBO and microbubble activity induced, particularly unstable microbubble activity. Meanwhile, at high
142 PNPs, stable microbubble activity is enhanced in CCM mice, albeit without comparable increases in
143 unstable, inertial cavitation.

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145 **CCM mice are not differentially sensitive to adverse effects generated by FUS BBBO at high PNPs**

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147 To assess the longitudinal safety of FUS BBBO in CCM mice, we collected T2-weighted spin echo
148 sequences over a one-month period following FUS BBBO in wild-type and CCM mice (**Figure 4A**).
149 Different FUS BBBO regimens were tested: a single FUS BBBO application or repeat applications

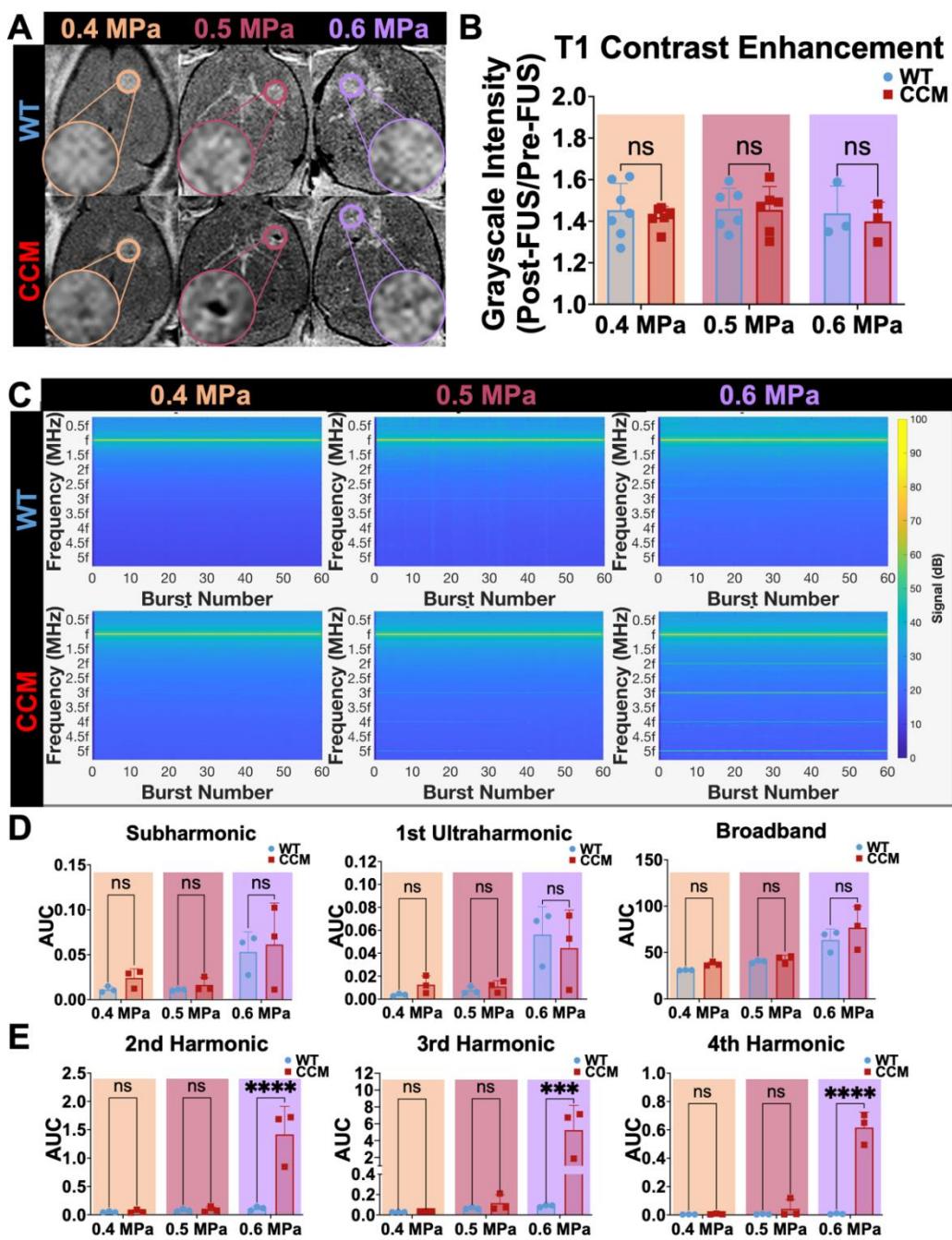


Figure 3. Comparison of FUS BBB contrast enhancement and acoustic emission signatures between wild-type and CCM mice. (A) Representative T1-weighted spin echo images acquired following gadolinium contrast agent injection and FUS application in wild-type mice or CCM mice for PNPs of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa. (B) Bar graph of T1 contrast enhancement. Enhancement is comparable in wild-type and CCM mice for PNPs of 0.4 MPa- 0.6 MPa. p=0.92 for 0.4 MPa, p=0.9998 for 0.5 MPa, and p=0.96 for 0.6 MPa; two-way ANOVA with Šidák's multiple comparison test. (C) Spectrograms of the frequency response for each burst during the FUS application averaged over cohorts of wild-type and CCM mice at PNPs of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa (n=3 mice per group and 2-3 sonication replicates per mouse). (D) Subharmonic, first ultraharmonic, and broadband emissions for wild-type and CCM mice at PNPs of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa. p>0.4 for all PNPs, two-way ANOVA with Šidák's multiple comparisons test. (E) Second, third, and fourth harmonic emissions for wild-type and CCM mice at PNPs of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa, indicating that stable cavitation-associated signatures between wild-type and CCM mice are comparable at 0.4 MPa and 0.5 MPa, but not significantly increased in CCM mice at 0.6 MPa. P > 0.7 for 0.4 – 0.5 MPa and 2nd – 4th harmonics; p < 0.0001, p = 0.0006, p<0.0001 for 0.6 MPa and 2nd, 3rd, and 4th harmonics, respectively; two-way ANOVA with Šidák's multiple comparisons test.

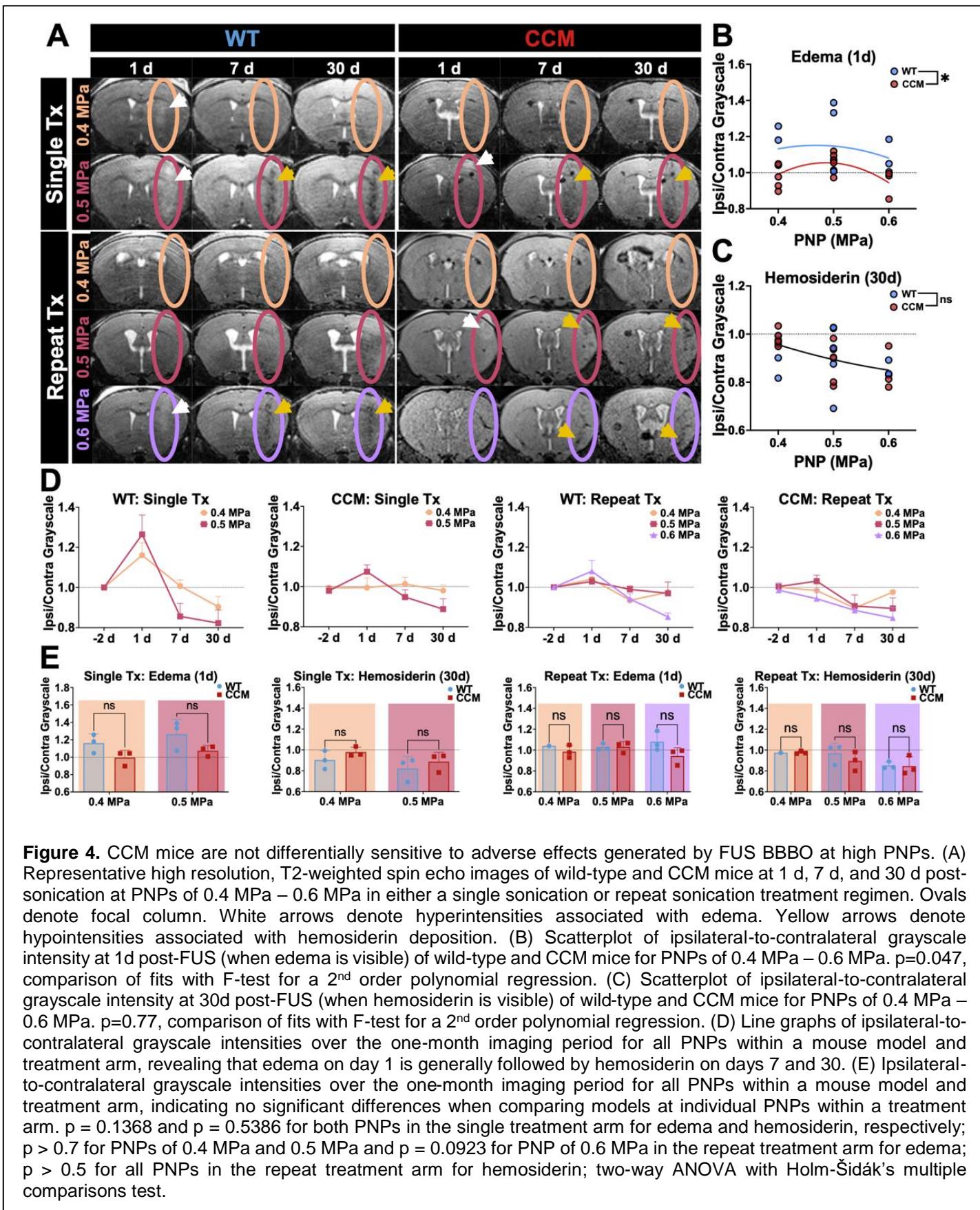


Figure 4. CCM mice are not differentially sensitive to adverse effects generated by FUS BBBO at high PNP. (A) Representative high resolution, T2-weighted spin echo images of wild-type and CCM mice at 1 d, 7 d, and 30 d post-sonication at PNP of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa in either a single sonication or repeat sonication treatment regimen. Ovals denote focal column. White arrows denote hyperintensities associated with edema. Yellow arrows denote hypointensities associated with hemosiderin deposition. (B) Scatterplot of ipsilateral-to-contralateral grayscale intensity at 1d post-FUS (when edema is visible) of wild-type and CCM mice for PNP of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa. $p=0.047$, comparison of fits with F-test for a 2nd order polynomial regression. (C) Scatterplot of ipsilateral-to-contralateral grayscale intensity at 30d post-FUS (when hemosiderin is visible) of wild-type and CCM mice for PNP of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa. $p=0.77$, comparison of fits with F-test for a 2nd order polynomial regression. (D) Line graphs of ipsilateral-to-contralateral grayscale intensities over the one-month imaging period for all PNP within a mouse model and treatment arm, revealing that edema on day 1 is generally followed by hemosiderin on days 7 and 30. (E) Ipsi/Contra grayscale intensities over the one-month imaging period for all PNP within a mouse model and treatment arm, indicating no significant differences when comparing models at individual PNP within a treatment arm. $p = 0.1368$ and $p = 0.5386$ for both PNP in the single treatment arm for edema and hemosiderin, respectively; $p > 0.7$ for PNP of 0.4 MPa and 0.5 MPa and $p = 0.0923$ for PNP of 0.6 MPa in the repeat treatment arm for edema; $p > 0.5$ for all PNP in the repeat treatment arm for hemosiderin; two-way ANOVA with Holm-Šídák's multiple comparisons test.

152 day spacing between sonifications. Edema, visible as hyperintensity on T2-weighted MRI, was apparent in
153 lesion-free brain tissue in a fraction of both wild-type and CCM mice one day post-FUS BBBO for PNP^s of
154 0.5 MPa and 0.6 MPa (**Figure 4A-B**). Hemosiderin deposits, visible as hypointensity on T2-weighted MRI,
155 were also apparent in lesion-free brain tissue in wild-type and CCM mice at time points beyond one day
156 post-FUS BBBO and persisted for at least one month following FUS BBBO for PNP^s of 0.5 MPa and 0.6
157 MPa (**Figure 4A, C**). Edema, quantified by an increase in the ipsilateral-to-contralateral grayscale ratio,
158 primarily occurred after BBBO with PNP^s of 0.5 MPa (**Figure 4B**), and hemosiderin deposition, quantified
159 by a decrease in the ipsilateral-to-contralateral grayscale ratio, increased as a function on PNP (**Figure**
160 **4C**). Generally, acute edema was associated with chronic hemosiderin deposition for both models and
161 both treatment arms (**Figure 4D**). When comparing the prevalence of edema and hemosiderin deposition
162 between wild-type and CCM mice for each treatment regimen and PNP, no significant differences were
163 seen (**Figure 4E**). However, when treatment regimens were aggregated, wild-type mice actually exhibited
164 a greater propensity for edema than CCM mice (**Figure 4B**), yet wild-type and CCM mice shared an
165 equivalent correlation for hemosiderin deposition (**Figure 4C**). These results suggest that, while BBBO
166 with PNP^s greater than 0.4 MPa are safe for CCMs, FUS BBBO at increased PNP^s can induce edema
167 and hemosiderin deposition, consistent with that seen in wild-type mice.

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169 **Real-time PCD-modulation of PNP ensures the safety of sonicated brain tissue without**
170 **compromising gadolinium delivery**

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172 To ensure safety of our FUS BBBO application and examine the effect of more clinically-representative
173 FUS BBBO regimens in CCM mice, we performed FUS BBBO using a real-time PCD feedback control
174 system to modulate the applied PNP during sonication²⁹⁻³¹. Using this PCD-modulated PNP approach, the
175 maximum PNP occurred within the first 15 seconds of treatment, and the PNP generally decreased
176 gradually over the sonication period (**Figure 5A**). This approach resulted in a time-averaged PNP ranging
177 from 0.23 MPa – 0.30 MPa and a maximum PNP ranging from 0.25 MPa – 0.38 MP. PCD-modulated
178 PNP^s successfully increased T1 contrast enhancement in the CCM microenvironment (**Figure 5B-C**).

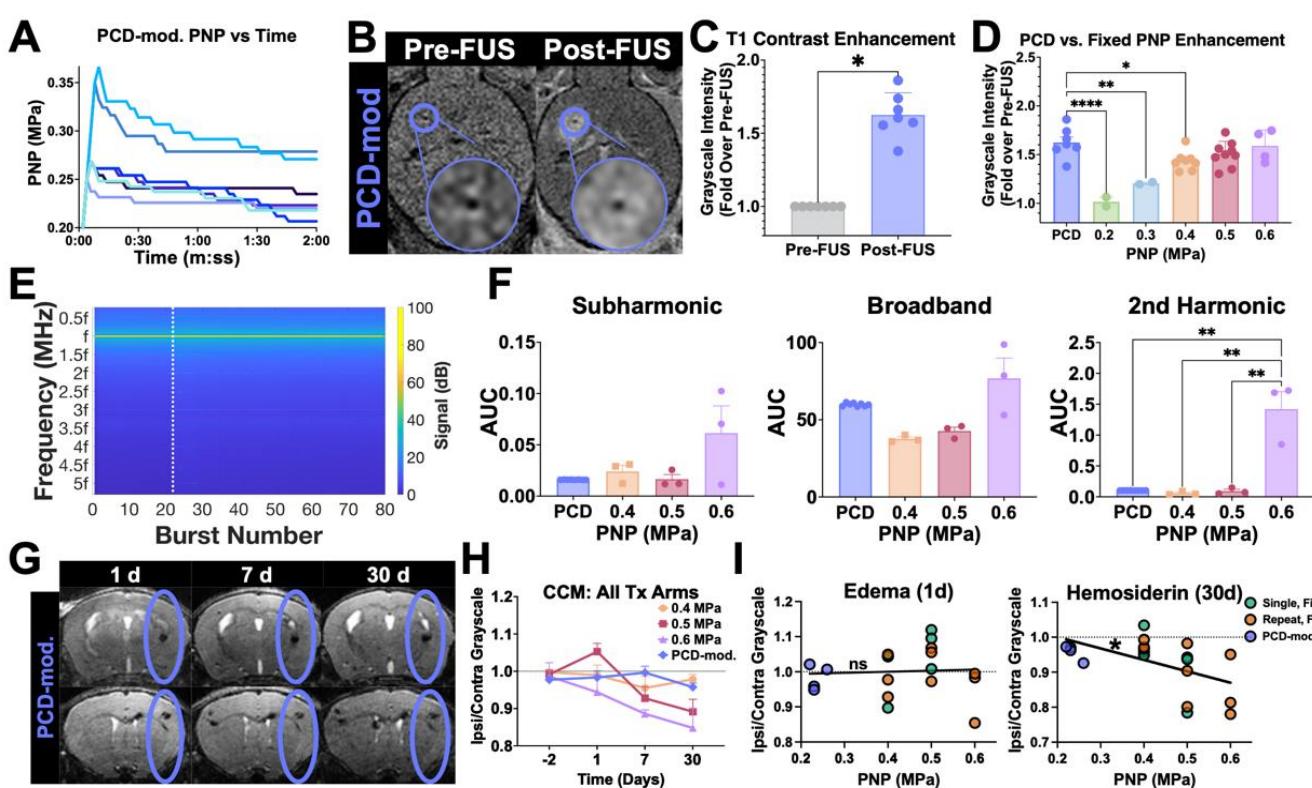


Figure 5. Real-time PCD-modulation of PNP ensures the safety of sonicated brain tissue without compromising gadolinium delivery. (A) Applied PNP versus time during PCD feedback-controlled approach. Each line indicates the average applied PNP across two sonication targets for the same mouse during a single FUS sonication period. (B) Representative T1-weighted contrast images before and after FUS BBBO with PCD-modulated PNPs. (C) Bar graph of T1 contrast enhancement quantified as the fold change in grayscale intensity of sonicated CCMs in the post-image over the pre-image (as seen in B), indicating successful BBBO. $p=0.016$, Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test. (D) Bar graph of T1 contrast enhancement quantified as the fold change in grayscale intensity of sonicated CCMs in the post-image over the pre-image for CCM mice with fixed PNP and PCD-modulated PNP cohorts. Graphs reveal that T1 contrast enhancement is greater with PCD-modulated PNP compared to fixed PNP in the same range of applied PNP of 0.2 – 0.4 MPa. $p < 0.0001$ for PCD vs. 0.2 MPa, $p = 0.0018$ for PCD vs. 0.3 MPa, $p = 0.0368$ for PCD vs. 0.4 MPa, $p = 0.2864$ for PCD vs. 0.5 MPa, and $p = 0.9918$ for PCD vs. 0.6 MPa, one-way ANOVA with Dunnett's multiple comparison's test. (E) Spectrogram of the frequency response for each burst during the FUS application averaged over CCM mice with PCD-modulated PNP ($n=4$ mice and 2 sonication replicates per mouse). Dotted line denotes separation of baseline sonication without microbubbles and sonication with microbubbles. (F) Subharmonic, broadband, and second harmonic emissions for CCM mice at PCD-modulated PNP and fixed PNPs of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa, indicating comparable acoustic signatures for PNPs less than 0.6 MPa. $p > 0.8$ for the subharmonic, ultraharmonic, and 2nd-3rd harmonic emissions for PCD vs. 0.4 or 0.5 MPa; $p > 0.3$ for the broadband emissions; $p = 0.003$ for 2nd harmonic emissions and 0.6 MPa vs. PCD, 0.4 MPa, and 0.5 MPa; two-way ANOVA with Šidák's multiple comparisons test. (G) Representative high resolution, T2-weighted spin echo images of wild-type and CCM mice at 1 d, 7 d, and 30 d post-sonication at PNPs of 0.4 MPa – 0.6 MPa in either a single sonication or repeat sonication treatment regimen. Ovals denote focal column. (H) Line graphs of ipsilateral-to-contralateral grayscale intensities over the one-month imaging period for CCM mice and all PNP regimens. (I) Scatterplot of ipsilateral-to-contralateral grayscale intensity versus time-averaged PNP for CCM with single treatments and fixed PNP, repeat treatments and fixed PNP, or repeat treatments and PCD-modulated PNP mice on day 1 (left) or day 30 post-FUS (right). For edema, ipsilateral-to-contralateral grayscale intensity is not significantly correlated with PNP; however, for hemosiderin, ipsilateral-to-contralateral grayscale intensity is significantly correlated with PNP. $p = 0.8382$ for edema and $p = 0.0163$ for hemosiderin, linear regression with F test.

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Comparing PCD-modulation of PNP to the fixed PNP approach revealed that PCD-modulated PNP

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resulted in higher T1 contrast enhancement than fixed PNPs of similar amplitudes (Figure 5D). Acoustic

181 emissions measurements revealed that PCD-modulated PNP elicits comparable subharmonic, broadband,
182 and harmonic spectra when compared to fixed PNPs of 0.4 MPa and 0.5 MPa (**Figure 5E-F**). Longitudinal
183 T2-weighted MRI also demonstrated that PCD-modulated PNP obviates edema and hemosiderin
184 deposition following FUS BBBO (**Figure 5G-H**). For BBBO in CCM mice, edema was comparable across
185 PNPs and a reduction of hemosiderin deposition was seen with PNPs averaging less than or equal to 0.4
186 MPa (**Figure 5I**). Altogether, these data indicate that PCD-modulation of PNP ensures the safety of FUS
187 BBBO in CCM brain tissue and elicits enhanced gadolinium delivery compared to fixed PNPs.

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189 **FUS BBBO arrests CCM growth**

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191 We then asked if FUS BBBO stimulates therapeutically beneficial responses for CCMs. First, we tested
192 several FUS BBBO regimens for their ability to control the growth of CCMs. CCM mice were placed in (i)
193 a single FUS BBBO regimen with fixed PNP (i.e. one FUS BBBO treatment at either 0.4 MPa or 0.5 MPa),
194 (ii) a repeat FUS BBBO regimen with fixed PNP (i.e. three FUS BBBO treatments at 0.4 MPa or two FUS
195 BBBO treatments at 0.5 MPa or 0.6 MPa, all staged three days apart), or (iii) a repeat FUS BBBO regimen
196 with PCD-modulated PNP (i.e. two FUS BBBO treatments staged three days apart). Mice were treated
197 between 2 and 3 months of age, a period of rapidly escalating lesion burden³². Male and female mice
198 across 9 litters were used (**Table S1**), and MR images were acquired following each sonication and up to
199 one month thereafter (**Figure 6A, C, E**). Sonicated CCM volumes were compared to non-sonicated CCMs
200 of similar baseline size and anatomical location within the same cohort of mice. The average sonicated
201 and non-sonicated CCM volume prior to FUS application was 0.039 mm³ for both conditions. Remarkably,
202 CCMs exposed to FUS BBBO in all treatment regimens exhibited nearly complete cessation of growth
203 (**Figure 6B, D, F**). Only 3 of 47 CCMs exposed to FUS BBBO grew more than 0.02 mm³ in 1 month, while
204 26 of 41 CCMs not exposed to FUS BBBO grew this amount in the same period. Significant differences in
205 lesion volume between the sonicated and non-sonicated CCMs were seen after 30 days for all treatment
206 arms (**Figure 6B, D, F**). At 7 days, sonicated CCMs were significantly smaller than non-sonicated CCMs
207 in the repeat FUS and fixed PNP arm (**Figure 6D**). At 30 days post-FUS BBBO, sonicated CCMs in all

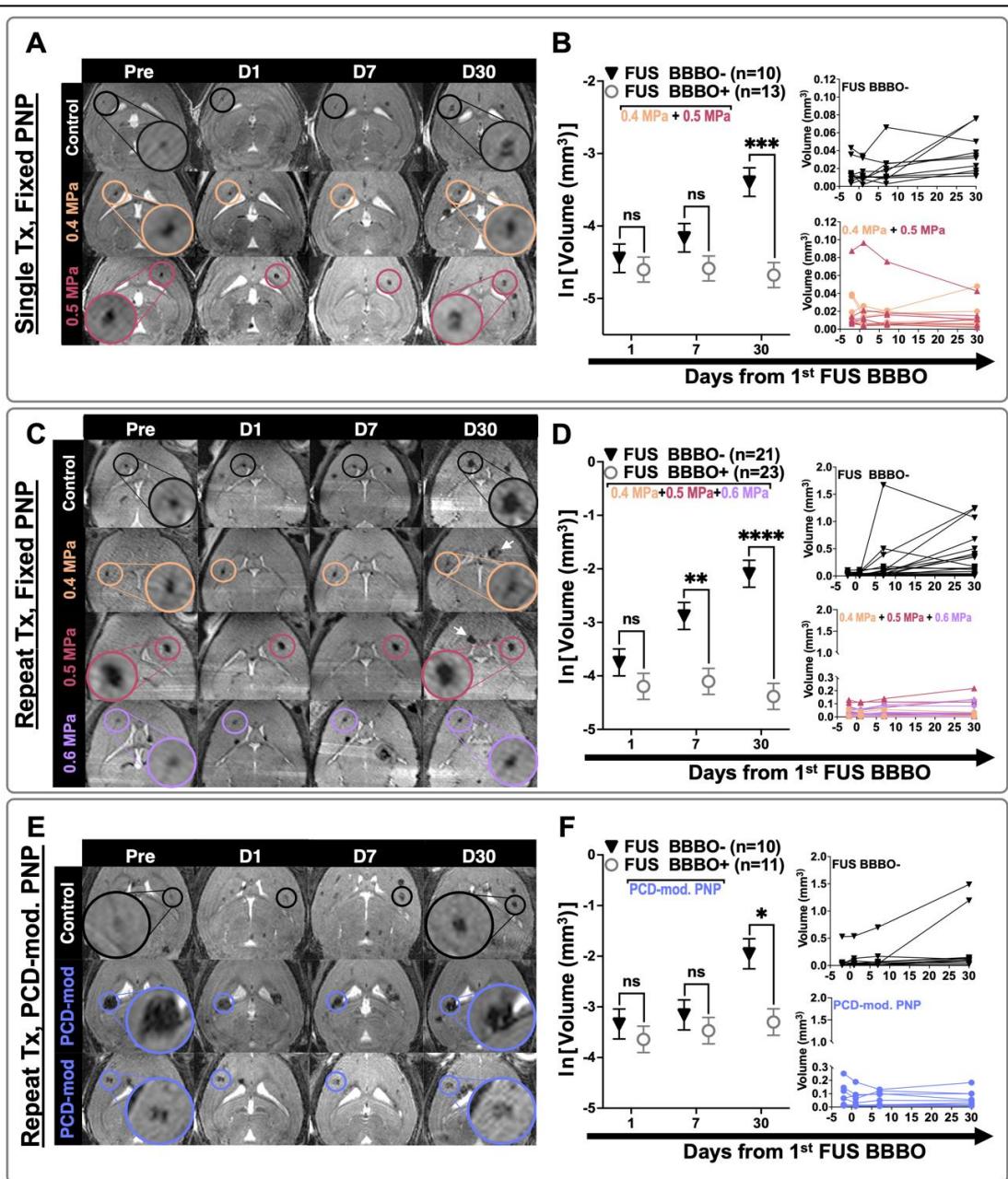


Figure 6. FUS BBBO arrests the growth of CCMs. (A, C, E) Longitudinal T2-weighted spin echo images for representative mice in the (A) single sonication with fixed PNP arm, (C) repeat sonication with fixed PNP arm, or (E) repeat sonication with PCD-modulated PNP arm. Black circles indicate non-sonicated, control lesions, and colored circles indicate sonicated lesions corresponding to PNP applied. White arrows denote new lesions formed in non-sonicated hemisphere. (B, D, F) Left: Summary plots comparing the natural log transform of CCM volume between sonicated CCMs and non-sonicated CCMs for mice in the (B) single sonication with fixed PNP arm, (D) repeat sonication with fixed PNP arm, or (F) repeat sonication with PCD-modulated PNP arm. Right: Line graphs of CCM volume for individual CCMs for each treatment group. At 30 days, sonicated CCMs are significantly smaller than non-sonicated control CCMs for all treatment arms. $p = 0.0002$, $p < 0.0001$, and $p = 0.0131$ for the single, fixed PNP; repeat, fixed PNP; and repeat, PCD-mod. PNP arms, respectively; linear mixed effect model and pairwise comparison with Tukey's adjustment. At 7 days, sonicated CCMs are significantly smaller than non-sonicated CCMs in the repeat FUS and fixed PNP arm. $p = 0.0021$, linear mixed effect model and pairwise comparison with Tukey's adjustment.

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treatment arms demonstrated a markedly reduced mean lesion volume, reaching just 28%, 10%, and 26%

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of the mean volume of the non-sonicated CCM volume in the single, fixed PNP; repeat, fixed PNP; and

210 repeat, PCD-modulated PNP arms, respectively. Increases in PNP and number of FUS BBBO treatments
211 were both inversely correlated with increased lesion volume (**Figure S2A-B**). The effect of sex on CCM
212 volume and FUS BBBO was also evaluated (**Figure S3A-B**). After 30 days, CCMs in male mice were
213 larger than those in female mice, regardless of FUS BBBO treatment (**Figure S3A, Table S2**). However,
214 sex did not affect the ability of FUS BBBO to control CCM growth (**Figure S3A, Table S2**).

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216 **FUS BBBO with fixed PNP and repeat sonications can prevent *de novo* lesion formation**

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218 To then ascertain if FUS BBBO impacts the formation of new lesions, we counted the number of lesions
219 contained within the focal zone (i.e. T1-contrast-enhanced brain region) in MR images taken prior to FUS
220 BBBO, as well as one month following FUS BBBO. The same analysis was performed in the contralateral
221 hemisphere of each mouse using the same volume and mirrored anatomical location (**Figure 7A, C, E**).
222 The change in the number of lesions from the pre-image to the 30-days post-FUS BBBO image was
223 compared for the sonicated and contralateral brain areas within each mouse. This analysis revealed that
224 the repeat FUS regimen with fixed PNP significantly reduced the formation of new CCMs by 81% compared
225 to the contralateral brain region (**Figure 7D**). Meanwhile, the single FUS with fixed PNP regimen and
226 repeat FUS with PCD-modulated PNP regimen displayed trends toward reduced *de novo* CCM formation
227 (**Figure 7B, F**). Importantly, in all treatment arms, FUS BBBO did *not* induce an increase in lesion
228 formation. In fact, both the single and repeat FUS with fixed PNP cohorts contained one mouse that
229 displayed fewer lesions in the sonicated brain region one month following FUS BBBO compared to the
230 pre-image, suggesting that some CCMs may be cleared with FUS BBBO. Increases in PNP were found to
231 be significantly, inversely correlated with *de novo* lesion formation, while the number of sonication
232 treatments followed this trend, albeit not significantly (**Figure S2C-D**). The effect of sex on *de novo* CCMs
233 and FUS BBBO was also evaluated (**Figure S3C-D**). Sex did not significantly alter the ability of FUS BBBO
234 to control CCM formation (**Figure S3C, Table S2**).

235

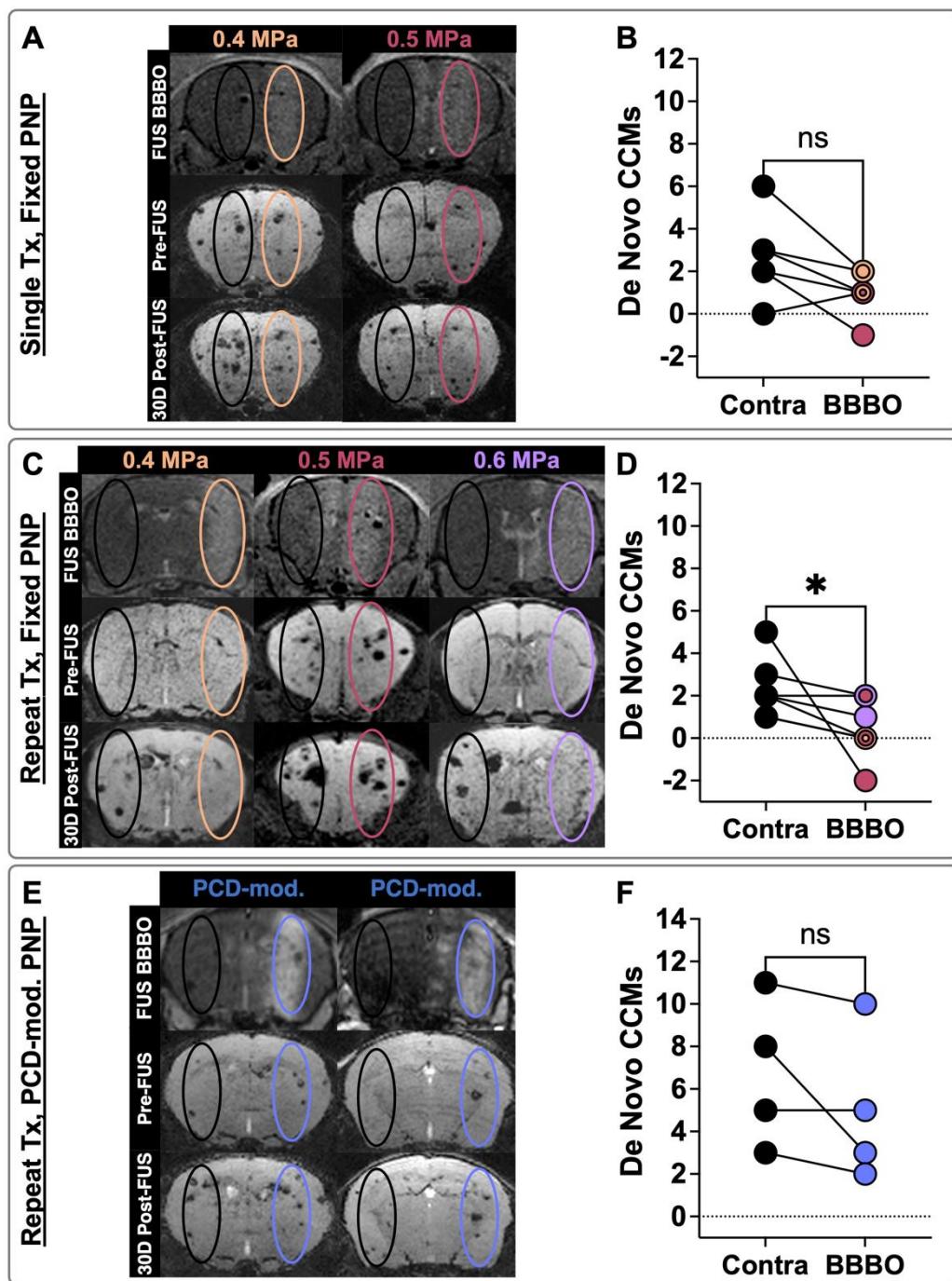


Figure 7. FUS BBBO with fixed PNP and repeat sonications can prevent *de novo* lesion formation. (A, C, E) Top row: T1-weighted spin echo images taken immediately following FUS BBBO with hyperintense signal denoting the focal column. Middle and bottom rows: minimum intensity projection images of longitudinal T2-weighted spin echo images to visualize through 1 mm of the focal column for representative mice in the (A) single sonication with fixed PNP arm, (C) repeat sonication with fixed PNP arm, or (E) repeat sonication with PCD-modulated PNP arm. Black ovals denote contralateral, non-sonicated ROIs for *de novo* quantification, while colored ovals represent sonicated ROIs. (B, D, F) Paired line graphs comparing the change in CCM number one month following FUS BBBO between the sonicated brain region and the contralateral non-sonicated brain region for mice in the (B) single sonication with fixed PNP arm, (D) repeat sonication with fixed PNP arm, or (F) repeat sonication with PCD-modulated PNP arm. Concentric circles indicate multiple mice with the same number of *de novo* CCMs. Colors indicate applied PNP. For mice receiving the repeat FUS regimen with fixed PNP, the number of new lesions formed in the sonicated brain region is significantly reduced compared to the contralateral brain region. $p = 0.0312$, Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test.

237 **FUS BBBO restores endothelial morphology to the mutated CCM vasculature and remodels CCM**
238 **immune landscape**

239

240 To elucidate how FUS BBBO may halt CCM growth and prevent new lesion formation, we
241 performed an extensive immunohistological analysis of brain sections at 1 day, 7 days, or 30 days post-
242 FUS BBBO. We first questioned whether FUS BBBO affects the *Krit1* mutant endothelium. After the
243 induction of endothelial *Krit1* knock out (*Krit1KO*) in our CCM mouse model, tdTomato is expressed,
244 allowing visualization of the mutated CCM vasculature (**Figure 8A**). As expected, in non-sonicated lesions,
245 the *Krit1KO* vasculature was mesenchymal in appearance and aggressively growing (**Figure 8B**). *Krit1KO*
246 mutant vessel size was comparable between sonicated and non-sonicated lesions at 1 day and 7 days
247 post-FUS BBBO. However, at 30 days post-FUS BBBO, the mesenchymal appearance of *Krit1KO*
248 vasculature underwent a striking reversal to a more endothelial-like morphology (**Figure 8A**). Further, the
249 average area of *Krit1KO* vasculature was significantly reduced (**Figure 8B**), despite no change in the
250 proliferation of *Krit1KO* cells (**Figure S4A-B**).

251 Because FUS BBBO is thought to augment microglial phagocytosis^{33,34}, we also looked for
252 evidence of enhanced microglia/macrophage phagocytic activity in sonicated lesions, with particular
253 emphasis on the potential for clearance of erythrocytes. At 1 day post-FUS, the number of Iba1+ cells
254 (microglia/macrophages) was significantly decreased in sonicated lesions (**Figure 8C-D**); however, their
255 average area was significantly increased (**Figure 8C, E-F**). Closer examination revealed these enlarged
256 Iba1+ cells as foamy macrophages (**Figure 8F**). Unexpectedly, the number of cells expressing the
257 phagolysosomal marker CD68 was actually decreased at 1 day and 7 days in sonicated lesions (**Figure**
258 **8G**). Further, the percent of red blood cells (Ter119+) colocalized with Iba1+ cells, which would be
259 suggestive of phagocytosis of erythrocytes, was not increased by FUS BBBO. In fact, this metric was
260 actually decreased at 7 days after FUS BBBO (**Figure 8H**). Interestingly, the CD68+ cell population steadily
261 recovers after the acute reduction by FUS BBBO (**Figure 8G**). The proliferation of Iba1+ cells and the
262 proliferation, number, and size of GFAP+ astrocytes were not significantly different between sonicated and
263 non-sonicated lesions at any time point following FUS BBBO (**Figure S4A, C-F**). Finally, we found that

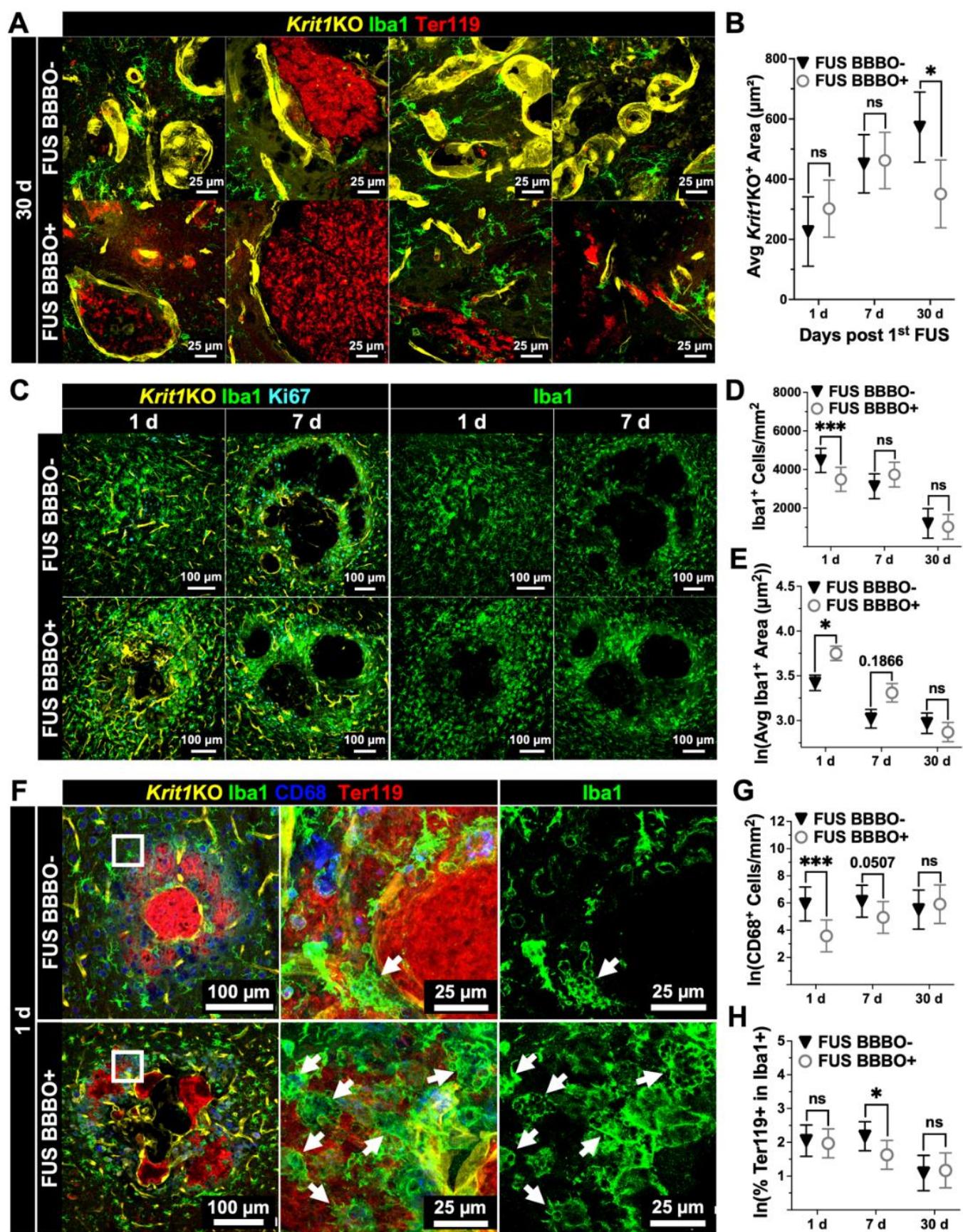


Figure 8. FUS BBBO restores endothelial morphology to the mutated CCM vasculature and remodels CCM immune landscape. (A) Immunofluorescent images of non-sonicated and sonicated CCMs at 30 d post-FUS BBBO with staining for mutated vasculature (*Krit1KO*), microglia/macrophages (Iba1), and erythrocytes (Ter119). The mutated vasculature in sonicated CCMs had reduced mesenchymal appearance compared to non-sonicated CCMs. (B) Graph of average mutated CCM vasculature area at 1 d, 7 d, and 30 d post-FUS BBBO for non-sonicated and sonicated CCMs, indicating reduced area in sonicated CCMs at 30 d. $p = 0.0199$, linear mixed effect model and pairwise comparison with Tukey's adjustment. (C) Immunofluorescent images of non-sonicated and sonicated CCMs at 1 d and 7 d post-FUS BBBO with staining for mutated vasculature (*Krit1KO*), microglia/macrophages (Iba1), and proliferation (Ki67). (D) Graph of density of microglia/macrophages at 1 d, 7 d, and 30 d post-FUS BBBO for non-sonicated and sonicated CCMs, revealing a reduced number in sonicated lesions at 1 d. $p = 0.0003$, linear mixed effects model and pairwise comparison with Tukey's adjustment. (E) Graph of the natural log of the average microglia/macrophage area at 1 d, 7 d, and 30 d post-FUS BBBO for non-sonicated and sonicated CCMs, demonstrating an increase in microglia/macrophage size in sonicated lesions at 1 d. $p = 0.0106$, linear mixed effect model and pairwise comparison with Tukey's adjustment. (F) Immunofluorescent images of non-sonicated and sonicated CCMs at 1 d post-FUS BBBO with staining for mutated vasculature (*Krit1KO*), microglia/macrophages (Iba1), lysosomes (CD68), and erythrocytes (Ter119). Insets display 63x maximum intensity projections of the corresponding 20x image. Arrows denote foamy macrophages. (G) Graph of the natural log of phagocyte density at 1 d, 7 d, and 30 d post-FUS BBBO for non-sonicated and sonicated CCMs, revealing a reduced number in sonicated lesions at 1 d. $p = 0.0009$, linear mixed effects model and pairwise comparison with Tukey's adjustment. (H) Graph of the natural log of the percent of erythrocytes colocalized in microglia/macrophages at 1 d, 7 d, and 30 d post-FUS BBBO for non-sonicated and sonicated CCMs, indicating a smaller amount in sonicated lesions at 7 d. $p = 0.0303$, linear mixed effects model and pairwise comparison with Tukey's adjustment.

265 CD45+ immune cell infiltration was significantly elevated 7 days post-FUS BBBO in sonicated lesions

266 (**Figure S5A-B**). Inspecting the morphology and location of CD45+, Iba1+, and *Krit1KO* signal revealed
267 monocytes in the lumens of lesions, Iba1+ microglia/macrophage processes extending to CD45+ immune
268 cells, and CD45+Iba1+ cells lining mutated vessels (**Figure S5A**).

269

270 **Current clinical FUS systems are equipped to treat CCMs in patients**

271

272 Finally, to assess the feasibility of clinical CCM treatments with FUS BBBO, we designed FUS BBBO
273 treatment plans for 3 CCM patients with surgically inaccessible CCMs who had instead received
274 stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS)⁸ (**Figure 9**). SRS treatment plans are shown in **Figure 9A**, with 12.5 Gy
275 and 6.3 Gy isodose lines circumscribing the target CCM and its margin. We reimaged these treatment
276 plans for FUS BBBO using the NaviFUS clinical MRI-guided FUS system (**Figure 9B**). These CCMs in
277 eloquent brain locations were accessible for FUS BBBO treatment. A total of 43 sonication points spanning
278 2 cm in diameter and 8.65 cm³ in volume provided adequate coverage of the target CCM in all 3 patients.
279 Thus, we demonstrate that current clinical FUS systems are equipped to treat CCMs in patients, especially
280 those that are not candidates for traditional surgical excision.

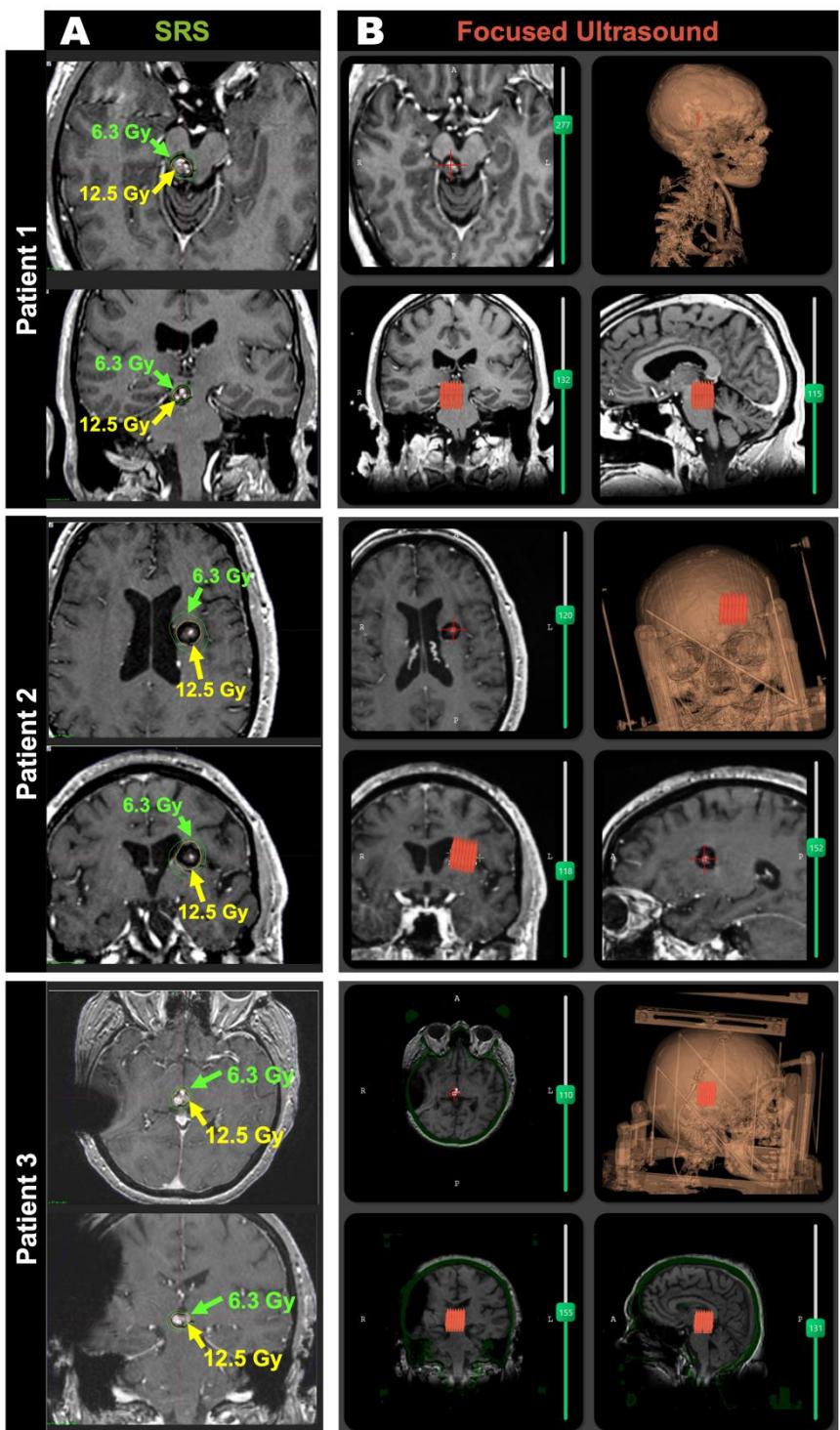


Figure 9. Current clinical FUS systems are equipped to treat CCMs in patients. (A) Stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) treatment plans for 3 CCM patients with surgically inaccessible lesions. Yellow and green lines are 12.5 Gy and 6.3 Gy isodoses, respectively. (B) Mock FUS BBBO treatment plans using the NaviFUS clinical system software, demonstrating the feasibility of CCM treatment with current clinical FUS systems. Red, grouped focal points denote treatment of CCM with 43 sonication points spanning 2 cm in diameter and 8.65 cm³ in volume.

283 **Discussion**

284 Patients with CCM can sustain incapacitating and even life-threatening neurological symptoms. The only
285 curative treatment option for these patients currently is resection of symptomatic CCMs via invasive
286 neurosurgery, which is associated with a high risk of postoperative morbidities. Further, some CCMs are
287 not surgically accessible^{6,35,36}. While SRS may be deployed for patients with inaccessible lesions, SRS can
288 present adverse radiation side effects, induce new CCMs in certain patient populations, and may have
289 limited therapeutic efficacy³⁷⁻⁴⁸. Concurrently, FUS BBBO is now well-known to exert potentially favorable
290 bioeffects^{13,22}. Indeed, we demonstrate here that FUS BBBO can elicit powerful therapeutic effects in a
291 clinically-representative murine model of CCM. Notably, FUS BBBO arrested the growth of 94% of CCMs
292 treated in the study over a 1 month period. Meanwhile, untreated CCMs grew to almost 7 times their initial
293 volume on average across the 3 treatment arms in this same timeframe. Further, mice that received
294 multiple FUS BBBO treatments with fixed PNPs had a significant reduction in the formation of *de-novo*
295 CCMs by 81%. At the cellular level, FUS BBBO reversed the mesenchymal morphology of the CCM
296 vasculature to a more endothelial-like appearance and remodeled the immune landscape of the lesions.
297 As an incisionless therapy with the ability to target eloquent brain locations, FUS BBBO is a disruptive
298 technology that could radically transform how CCMs are treated.

299

300 **Characteristics of FUS BBBO in CCM mice**

301 One key consideration in these studies was whether FUS BBBO signatures in *Krit1* mutant mice differ from
302 those in wild-type mice. Since the vasculature associated with CCMs is known to be irregular and
303 dilated^{3,49}, the effectiveness of FUS BBBO had the potential to be reduced or otherwise altered. Increased
304 vessel diameters could reduce the interaction between the oscillating microbubbles and vessel walls^{50,51}.
305 Moreover, the slow flow rate in the lesion core could reduce the number of microbubbles accumulating
306 within the CCM⁴⁹. Our studies indicate that the pattern of T1 contrast enhancement is localized to the
307 perilesional boundaries of the CCM (**Figure 1B**), which may indicate that the lesion core is not substantially
308 interacting with microbubbles, perhaps due to its grossly enlarged diameter or its slow flow rate.
309 Meanwhile, the perilesional microvasculature displayed marked gadolinium accumulation regardless of

310 moderate vessel diameter dilation compared to normal brain capillaries (**Figure 1D**). Further, our findings
311 suggest that T1 contrast enhancement as well as subharmonic, ultraharmonic, and broadband acoustic
312 signatures of microbubble activity are not significantly different between CCM mice and wild-type mice
313 (**Figure 3**). While the harmonic signatures for PNPs of 0.4 MPa and 0.5 MPa were not significantly different
314 between CCM and wild-type mice, increases in harmonic signatures were seen in CCM mice at 0.6 MPa
315 (**Figure 3E**). This is the only indication that the altered properties of the CCM vasculature, such as vessel
316 diameter, stiffness, and contractility^{23–25}, can impact microbubble activity when high enough PNPs are
317 applied. Additionally, since CCMs have a baseline leakiness, it was possible that FUS BBBO would not
318 increase the accumulation of small molecules within the lesion microenvironment. Nevertheless, T1
319 contrast enhancement from the post-FUS image over the pre-FUS image is indeed apparent for PNPs
320 ranging from 0.3 MPa – 0.6 MPa (**Figure 1D**), indicating that gadolinium accumulation is increased over
321 baseline levels via FUS BBBO. Ultimately, while the pattern of T1 contrast enhancement may be altered
322 in CCM mice, FUS still effectively opens the BBB in the perilesional vasculature of the lesion, and the MRI
323 and acoustic signatures are largely comparable to wild-type mice.

324

325 **Acute stability of CCMs exposed to FUS BBBO**

326 The capricious state of these hemorrhage-prone CCMs raised an important concern: would FUS BBBO
327 increase the propensity of CCMs to bleed? The addition of mechanical stress and disruption of already
328 loose endothelial cell tight junctions from oscillating microbubbles had the potential to weaken the stability
329 of CCMs. However, our findings corroborate the safety of FUS BBBO for CCMs. Even susceptibility-
330 weighted images, which have an increased sensitivity to blood products, demonstrated no acute changes
331 in bleeding between the pre- and post-sonication images (**Figure 2D, E**). T2-weighted spin echo
332 sequences, which can accurately represent lesion volume and internal architecture³², displayed no acute
333 changes in lesion volume between the pre- and post-sonication images (**Figure 2B, C**). These results also
334 continued for post-sonication images at later timepoints of up to one month, indicating that FUS BBBO is
335 safe for CCMs both acutely and chronically. Meanwhile, our results did indicate that edema and
336 hemosiderin deposits can be seen in lesion-free brain tissue in *both* wild-type and CCM mice when using

337 PNPs greater than 0.4 MPa (**Figure 4**). This finding further supports the use of PCD-modulated PNP
338 feedback systems that have been widely adopted in clinical trials to ensure the safety of FUS BBBO
339 treatments (**Figure 5**)^{26,28-31,52}.

340

341 **FUS BBBO provides a therapeutic effect for CCMs and familial forms of the disease**

342 After establishing that FUS BBBO was safe, we questioned whether it could be therapeutic for CCMs.
343 From analysis of longitudinal MR images, we show that FUS BBBO is capable of both fully arresting the
344 growth of pre-existing CCMs (**Figure 6**) and preventing *de novo* CCM formation (**Figure 7**). The ability to
345 slow and even reverse the growth of CCMs could have far-reaching implications for CCM therapy. The
346 pathological trajectory of many CCMs remains uncertain to clinicians⁹⁻¹¹, so patients must choose between
347 neurosurgery, with its associated risks^{6,7}, or inaction. FUS BBBO could provide a non-invasive alternative
348 to enable the stabilization of the lesion without the risks associated with surgery or the lack of intervention.

349 Further, this approach could be revolutionary for patients with the familial form of the disease.
350 Familial CCM patients have multiple lesions, of which several can often arise in locations that are
351 inoperable or are associated with a very high risk for post-operative morbidities^{6,9}. FUS BBBO could be
352 used to stabilize multiple CCMs within a single treatment session, including those in eloquent locations,
353 while simultaneously protecting those sonicated areas from future CCMs. FUS BBBO could help make an
354 impossible choice for CCM patients and parents of CCM patients more manageable.

355

356 **Potential mechanisms for the protective effect of FUS BBBO in CCM**

357 The ability of FUS BBBO to exert powerful therapeutic effects for CCMs was surprising; however, this is
358 not the first disease indication wherein FUS BBBO has been shown to be protective. FUS BBBO—in the
359 absence of drug delivery—has also exhibited a therapeutic effect for Alzheimer’s disease¹⁶⁻²². The exact
360 mechanism of action in Alzheimer’s disease remains unclear, though many studies have investigated the
361 potential mechanisms behind its benefit^{18-21,53}.

362 In this study, our extensive histological analysis lends some insight into how FUS BBBO may
363 benefit CCMs. At 1 month post-FUS BBBO, when growth control is evident for all FUS BBBO regimens,

364 the mesenchymal morphology of the mutated CCM vasculature was restored to an endothelial morphology
365 in sonicated lesions (**Figure 8A-B**). Thus, FUS BBBO appears to reverse the endothelial-to-mesenchymal
366 transition that is common in CCMs.

367 Because FUS BBBO increases phagocytosis in other disease contexts^{33,34}, another hypothesis for
368 CCM stabilization was that FUS BBBO-exposed microglia and macrophages would become activated and
369 phagocytose erythrocytes. However, our data are not consistent with this putative mechanism of lesion
370 control. Instead, we found that the co-localization of Iba1+ microglia/macrophages with erythrocytes was
371 actually decreased at 7 days post-FUS BBBO (**Figure 8F, H**). Beyond microglia and macrophages,
372 numerous studies indicate that FUS BBBO increases immune cell infiltration in a variety of disease
373 states^{13,34,54-57}. Consistent with these studies, we confirmed that FUS BBBO increases overall immune
374 cell (CD45+) infiltration in CCMs (**Figure S5**), signifying an altered immune landscape as a potential
375 mechanism for CCM stabilization. Ultimately, several mechanisms may underlie the protective role of FUS
376 BBBO for CCM.

377

378 **The potential of FUS BBBO to synergize with pharmacological treatments**

379 To date, no pharmacological agent has been approved for the treatment of CCM, yet a few drugs have
380 entered clinical trials (propranolol: NCT03589014, REC-994: NCT05085561, simvastatin: NCT01764451,
381 and atorvastatin: NCT02603328). Additionally, many drugs for CCM are being examined in the preclinical
382 stage¹. These drug candidates have the potential to seamlessly integrate with the FUS BBBO approach
383 used in this study, especially since surgically inaccessible CCMs in eloquent regions are accessible for
384 FUS BBBO using current clinical FUS systems (**Figure 9**). Therapeutic agents can be injected alongside
385 FUS BBBO and benefit from the enhanced permeability as a way to shift the systemic dose to be more
386 localized to the CCM. This would be reflected as an increase in the therapeutic index, which could be
387 leveraged to reduce the amount of drug needed and help mitigate potential drug side effects. Moreover,
388 FUS BBBO could also have the potential to unlock whole new classes of drug candidates. Larger molecular
389 weight biologics, like antibodies and gene therapies, would have a greater potential to accumulate in the
390 CCM microenvironment with the aid of increased permeability via FUS BBBO^{13,14,58}. Indeed, the vast

391 majority of the drug candidates being studied for CCM currently are small molecules¹. Ultimately, the innate
392 protective effect of FUS BBBO for CCM and the countless drug candidates that could integrate with the
393 enhanced delivery of this approach provides an immeasurable potential to vastly expand the therapeutic
394 options and to transform the treatment paradigm for CCM.

395

396 **Methods**

397

398 **Animals**

399 All animal experiments were approved by the University of Virginia Animal Care and Use Committee. Mice
400 were housed under standard laboratory conditions (22°C and 12h/12h light/dark cycle). The generation of
401 the CCM murine models (*Pdgfb-CreERT2;Krit1^{fl/fl}* or *Cdh5-CreERT2;Krit1^{fl/fl}*) that were used in these
402 studies has been described previously³². Briefly, *Pdgfb-CreERT2* or *Cdh5-CreERT2* mice were crossed
403 with *Krit1^{fl/fl}* male or females. On postnatal day 5, *Krit1* gene ablation was induced with an injection of
404 tamoxifen (subcutaneous; 50uL at 2mg/mL in corn oil). Genotypes were confirmed using Transnetyx
405 (Cordova, TN). Wild-type mice in this study were on the same background strain as the CCM model
406 (C57BL/6; Charles River). All mice were treated between 9 weeks and 13 weeks of age. Mouse sex, litter,
407 age, and treatment assignment are listed in detail in **Table S1**.

408

409 **MR Imaging**

410 MR imaging was performed using either a 7T Bruker/Siemens ClinScan or a 9.4T Bruker BioSpec small
411 animal MRI scanner. T2-weighted spin echo images were acquired at 7T with the Siemens 3D T2-SPACE
412 sequence (repetition time of 3000 ms, echo time of 80 ms, pixel size of 125 µm x 125 µm x 100 µm, 2
413 averages, and 20 min acquisition time) or at 9.4T with the Bruker 3D T2-TurboRARE sequence (repetition
414 time of 2000 ms, echo time of 55 ms, turbo factor of 18, pixel size of 125 µm x 125 µm x 125 µm, 1 average,
415 and 30 min acquisition time). Susceptibility-weighted images were acquired only at 7T (repetition time of
416 18 ms, echo time of 10 ms, pixel size of 130 µm x 130 µm x 130 µm, 2 averages, and 15 min acquisition
417 time). T1-weighted spin echo images were acquired at 9.4T with the Bruker 2D T1-RARE sequence

418 (repetition time of 1500 ms, echo time of 6 ms, pixel size of 156 μ m x 156 μ m x 350 μ m, 1 average, and 3
419 min acquisition time). All imaging was performed under isoflurane anesthesia, and body temperature was
420 maintained with a heated, circulating water bed.

421

422 **Selection of CCMs for Sonication**

423 Following baseline MR image acquisition, images were reviewed to assess appropriate CCMs for
424 sonication. CCMs located within the left or right caudoputamen, corpus callosum, or cerebral cortex were
425 eligible for targeting. The average sonicated and non-sonicated (contralateral control) CCM volume prior
426 to FUS application was 0.039 mm³ for both conditions in the longitudinal studies. Prior to safety evaluation
427 measurements and analysis, sonifications were confined to single CCMs without neighboring CCMs located
428 dorsally or ventrally that would be within the focal zone. Following the initial safety evaluation, multiple
429 CCMs were eligible for sonication if they were within the same focal volume.

430

431 **FUS BBBO**

432 FUS BBBO was performed with the RK-300 small bore FUS device (FUS Instruments, Toronto, CA).
433 Heads of mice were shaved and depilated prior to supine placement and coupling to the transducer with
434 degassed ultrasound gel. BBBO was performed with a 1.13 MHz single-element transducer using a 10 ms
435 burst length over a 2000 ms period for 60 total sonifications during a 2-min sonication duration. Fixed PNP
436 application was performed using the “Burst” mode on the FUS Instruments software. PCD-modulated PNP
437 was performed using the “Blood-brain Barrier” mode of the FUS Instruments software. Parameters used
438 for this feedback control system included a starting pressure of 0.2 MPa, pressure increment of 0.05 MPa,
439 maximum pressure of 0.4 MPa, 20 sonication baselines without microbubbles, AUC bandwidth of 500 Hz,
440 AUC threshold of 10 standard deviations, pressure drop of 0.95, and frequency selection of the
441 subharmonic, first ultraharmonic, and second ultraharmonic. Gadolinium contrast agent (Multihance) was
442 injected as a bolus intravenously with a dose of 0.01 mmol diluted in saline at a molarity of 0.2 mmol/mL
443 prior to T1-RARE image acquisition. Albumin-shelled microbubbles were made in-house as previously
444 described⁵⁹ and intravenously injected as a bolus dose of 10⁵ microbubbles per gram body weight.

445 Distribution of microbubble diameter and concentration was acquired with a Coulter counter (Multisizer 3;
446 Beckman Coulter, Fullerton, California) prior to sonication. High resolution T2-weighted images and T1-
447 RARE images were used to guide FUS targeting to the pre-selected CCM. A single sonication target was
448 used in all experiments, except in the case of PCD-modulated PNPs, in which two sonication targets were
449 used. Mice receiving the repeat FUS BBBO regimens had all sonifications staged 3 days apart with the
450 same anatomical location targeted each time.

451
452 **Acoustic Signatures from Passive Cavitation Detection**

453 Acoustic emissions were detected with a fiber-optic hydrophone (Precision Acoustics, Dorset, UK) of 10
454 mm diameter and 15 mm aperture center-mounted within the ultrasound transducer. Emissions data was
455 processed and spectrograms were generated with a custom MATLAB script. The area under the curve of
456 the acoustic emissions at the subharmonic (0.5f) and ultra-harmonics (1.5f, 2.5f) were calculated after
457 applying a 300 Hz bandwidth filter. Broadband emissions were evaluated by summing acoustic emissions
458 following the removal of all emissions at the fundamental frequency (f), harmonics (2f, 3f, 4f), subharmonic
459 (0.5f), and ultra-harmonics (1.5f, 2.5f, 3.5f).

460
461 **T1 Contrast Enhancement Analysis**

462 Gadolinium accumulation following FUS BBBO was evaluated using the enhancement of T1 contrast in
463 T1-RARE images. In a DICOM viewer (Horos Project, Geneva, Switzerland), an ROI was drawn around
464 the boundaries of the enhanced (hyperintense) region on the image slice containing the targeted lesion.
465 The ROI was then copied onto the pre-sonication T1-RARE image on the same slice. For wild-type mice,
466 ROIs were drawn around the boundaries of the enhanced (hyperintense) region in similar ventral/dorsal
467 slice depths as CCM mice. Mean grayscale intensity for each ROI was recorded, and fold change in
468 grayscale intensity from the post-image to the pre-image was calculated. This process was repeated for
469 all sonicated mice across each PNP.

470
471 **Brain Tissue Edema and Hemosiderin Deposition Analysis**

472 Edema and hemosiderin deposition in lesion-free brain tissue following FUS BBBO were evaluated in 3D
473 Slicer using the high resolution T2-weighted spin echo MR images. MR images were initially segmented
474 by the brain tissue boundaries to generate a mask of the brain. Bias field correction was then applied with
475 the N4ITK MRI Bias Field Correction tool in 3D Slicer to correct for inhomogeneities in signal intensity
476 across the brain due to mouse rotation relative to the MR surface coil. Mean grayscale intensity was then
477 recorded within ROIs of equal volume in lesion-free brain tissue for both non-sonicated (contralateral) and
478 sonicated (ipsilateral) hemispheres on the same dorsal slice. Healthy brain tissue would have an ipsilateral-
479 to-contralateral grayscale ratio near 1. Edema would produce a ratio greater than 1, while hemosiderin
480 would produce a ratio less than 1.

481

482 **CCM Growth Analysis**

483 CCM volume prior to, and longitudinally following, FUS BBBO was evaluated in Horos using the high
484 resolution T2-weighted spin echo MR images. For each timepoint, an ROI was manually drawn around the
485 sonicated CCM in each slice it was present. The Horos “Compute Volume” tool was then used to calculate
486 the three-dimensional volume of the CCM across imaging timepoints. In the same mice, ROIs were also
487 drawn around non-sonicated CCMs (i.e. control CCMs) that had similar volumes and anatomical locations
488 as sonicated lesions. CCM mice with enlarged ventricles, a rare but potential co-morbidity of this model,
489 at the one-month timepoint were removed from this analysis.

490

491 **New Lesion Formation Analysis**

492 Formation of new CCMs was assessed by calculating the change in lesion number from the baseline pre-
493 FUS to the one-month post-FUS high resolution T2-weighted spin echo MR images. For both timepoints,
494 an ROI was first drawn around the T1 contrast enhanced boundaries within the T1-RARE images taken
495 following FUS BBBO, extending from the most dorsal to most ventral slices of the brain and focal column.
496 These ROIs were then copied onto the T2-weighted spin echo images and adjusted to match the same
497 anatomical positioning. These ROIs were then copied to the contralateral brain region and adjusted to
498 mirror the same anatomical positioning. CCMs within the ROIs were then manually counted and recorded

499 for both timepoints and for both the ipsilateral ROI and the contralateral ROI. The baseline CCM number
500 was subtracted from the one-month CCM number for both the ipsilateral ROI volume and the contralateral
501 ROI volume in each mouse to produce the number of new CCMs formed in each ROI volume during the
502 one-month time period. CCM mice with enlarged ventricles at the one-month timepoint were removed from
503 this analysis.

504

505 **Immunohistochemistry**

506 Mice were perfused with phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) and 4% paraformaldehyde, and after harvesting,
507 brains were fixed overnight in 4% paraformaldehyde and dehydrated in 30% sucrose solution for 24 h.
508 Brains were then embedded in Optimal Cutting Temperature Compound (TissueTek) for cryosectioning at
509 30- μ m thickness. Sections were incubated in blocking solution (1% bovine serum albumin, 2% normal
510 donkey serum, and 0.1% Triton X-100, and 0.05% Tween-20 in PBS) for 2 h at RT. Brain sections were
511 then incubated with goat anti-CD31 (1:20, R&D Systems, AF3628), rat anti-GFAP-Alexa Fluor 488 (1:50,
512 eBioscience, 53-9792-82), rat anti-Ki67-Alexa Fluor 660 (1:100, ThermoFisher, 50-5698-82), rabbit anti-
513 Iba1 (1:400, FujiFilm Wako, 019-19741), rat anti-CD68-Alexa Fluor 700 (1:50, BioRad, MCA1957A700),
514 rat anti-Ter119-Super Bright 436 (1:100, ThermoFisher, 62-5921-82), and goat anti-CD45 (1:200, R&D
515 Systems, AF114) diluted in the blocking solution overnight at 4°C. After three 5-min washes in PBS with
516 0.5% Tween-20, the sections were incubated with donkey anti-goat-Alexa Fluor 647 (1:500, Invitrogen
517 A21447), donkey anti-rabbit-Alexa Fluor 405 (1:1000, ThermoFisher, A48258), donkey anti-rabbit-Alexa
518 Fluor 488 (1:1000, Abcam, ab150073), and donkey anti-goat-Alexa Fluor 405 (1:1000, Abcam, ab175664)
519 and diluted in the blocking solution for 2 h at RT. Sections were imaged with a Leica Stellaris 5 confocal
520 microscope (Leica Microsystems). Images were processed with Fiji/ImageJ.

521

522 **Analysis of Immunofluorescent Images**

523 Images were collected as a z-stack of 1- μ m step size at either 20x or 63x magnification. For 20x images,
524 tiled images were collected to cover the perilesional and intralesional space of sonicated and non-
525 sonicated CCMs. For 63x images, non-tiled images were acquired along the perilesional and intralesional

526 boundary of sonicated and non-sonicated lesions. Maximum intensity projections were produced in
527 Fiji/ImageJ. Quantification of cell markers, morphology, and colocalization was conducted in HALO using
528 the Object Colocalization and Highplex modules.

529

530 **Statistical Analysis**

531 All results are reported as mean \pm standard error of the mean (SEM). The “n” values per group are made
532 evident either by individual data points shown or statement of “n” value in figure, figure legend, and/or
533 manuscript text. Statistical significance was assessed at $p < 0.05$ for all experiments. Linear mixed effect
534 models were conducted and analyzed with the lme4 package (version 1.1.34) and the emmeans package
535 (version 1.8.9) in R Studio. All other statistical tests were performed using GraphPad Prism 9 (San Diego,
536 USA). Statistical tests, models, and p-values are listed in detail for all manuscript figures in **Table S2**.

537

538 **Author Contributions**

539 DGF and RJP conceptualized the study. DGF conducted the FUS BBBO experiments with the aid of CMG,
540 VRB, ACD, MRH, and TC in animal preparation and MRI acquisition. MRI sequences were optimized by
541 GWM. Longitudinal MRI data was acquired by DGF and analyzed by DGF and IMS. KAS, PT, TC, and
542 DGF generated experimental animals. DGF and KAS performed immunostaining and confocal imaging
543 with technical guidance from JDS and JRL. JPS and DS provided SRS clinical treatment plans, and DM
544 provided FUS BBBO clinical treatment plans. DGF designed the figures and wrote the manuscript. JDS,
545 ACD, JSP, JRL, PT, GWM, and RJP edited the manuscript. All authors approved the manuscript.

546

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