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3 **Bridging the translational gap: Implementation of multimodal small**  
4 **animal imaging strategies for tumor burden assessment in a co-**  
5 **clinical trial.**  
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## 18 Abstract

19 In designing co-clinical cancer studies, preclinical imaging brings unique challenges that  
20 emphasize the gap between man and mouse. Our group is developing quantitative  
21 imaging methods for the preclinical arm of a co-clinical trial studying immunotherapy  
22 and radiotherapy in a soft tissue sarcoma model. In line with treatment for patients  
23 enrolled in the clinical trial SU2C-SARC032, primary mouse sarcomas are imaged with  
24 multi-contrast micro-MRI (T1 weighted, T2 weighted, and T1 with contrast) before and  
25 after immune checkpoint inhibition and pre-operative radiation therapy. Similar to the  
26 patients, after surgery the mice will be screened for lung metastases with micro-CT  
27 using respiratory gating. A systems evaluation was undertaken to establish a  
28 quantitative baseline for both the MR and micro-CT systems against which others  
29 systems might be compared. We have constructed imaging protocols which provide  
30 clinically-relevant resolution and contrast in a genetically engineered mouse model of  
31 sarcoma. We have employed tools in 3D Slicer for semi-automated segmentation of  
32 both MR and micro-CT images to measure tumor volumes efficiently and reliably in a  
33 large number of animals. Assessment of tumor burden in the resulting images was  
34 precise, repeatable, and reproducible. Furthermore, we have implemented a publicly  
35 accessible platform for sharing imaging data collected during the study, as well as  
36 protocols, supporting information, and data analyses. In doing so, we aim to improve  
37 the clinical relevance of small animal imaging and begin establishing standards for  
38 preclinical imaging of tumors from the perspective of a co-clinical trial.

## 39 **Introduction**

40 The successful design and implementation of a cancer clinical trial faces many  
41 challenges, not the least of which is the translational relevance of related preclinical  
42 findings (1). While invaluable to cancer research, animal studies are typically  
43 completed before patient trials, effectively separating them from clinical observations  
44 and preventing bidirectional flow of information between the preclinical and clinical  
45 studies (2, 3). Further, preclinical protocols often fall short of mimicking clinical criteria,  
46 including schedule constraints and procedure time. To address such shortcomings, the  
47 implementation of co-clinical trials is of growing interest in cancer research (4, 5).  
48 Referring to the concerted execution of analogous animal and patient studies, co-clinical  
49 trials provide a setting in which clinical observations can influence the methodology  
50 used in animal experiments (6-8). In turn, novel findings from the preclinical arm can  
51 inform the patient study. In this way, co-clinical trials represent a strategy for dynamic  
52 integration of animal and patient studies to streamline cancer research efforts.  
53 However, the opportunity to lessen the translational divide offered by the co-clinical  
54 approach can be stifled by the complexities of designing a robust animal study. This is  
55 particularly true when considering the incorporation of small animal imaging into co-  
56 clinical studies of cancer.

57 Small animal imaging for co-clinical cancer trials represents an opportunity to simulate  
58 better clinical practice in animals (as imaging is often standard of care and essential for  
59 assessing disease response in clinical oncology), as well as to expand the information  
60 gathered during study. Technologies such as magnetic resonance (MR) can deliver

61 high-resolution images that describe tumor morphology and composition, as well as  
62 how tumors change over time or with treatment (9-11). Computed tomography (CT)  
63 provides an efficient, non-invasive method to detect new or metastatic lesions prior to  
64 development of symptoms (12, 13). The ability to non-invasively image animals at  
65 multiple time points greatly enhances the interpretation of tumor progression and/or  
66 therapeutic response, providing an avenue for comparison with longitudinal data from  
67 patients on study.

68 As with all translational research, care must be taken to reduce and acknowledge the  
69 differences between animal models and human cancer. Investigators must weigh  
70 factors such as tumor model selection, disease progression and intervention timelines,  
71 the immune condition of the animal, and the metabolic consequences of therapeutic  
72 interventions (2, 14, 15). Basing decisions on clinical standards and observations can  
73 promote the translation of findings between the arms of a co-clinical trial. However, the  
74 challenges that face translational imaging include both the biological and physical  
75 differences of the subjects and scanners, respectively.

76 While protocols for preclinical imaging are often designed with the intention of  
77 discovery, they routinely sacrifice efficiency and throughput for innovation (16). These  
78 scan programs are commonly project- and machine-specific, limiting their dissemination  
79 and broad employment. For example, a brief review of the literature discussing MR  
80 imaging in mice to measure tumor volume reveals a great deal of diversity among  
81 sequences, and acquisition parameters (Table I). By contrast, clinical scan protocols for  
82 tumor imaging are more standardized, achievable on a variety of systems, and typically  
83 limit scan durations for patient comfort and to accommodate scanner schedules.

84 Preclinical scanners must image at much higher resolution than clinical scanners,  
85 requiring different hardware solutions. Preclinical MR scanners employ smaller radio  
86 frequency coils and often operate at higher field strengths than clinical MR machines  
87 (3.0-11.0 T versus 1.5-3.0 T, respectively). The differences in image signal, resolution,  
88 artifacts, etc. must all be considered when designing animal imaging protocols to serve  
89 a co-clinical trial (17, 18). Thus, the disparity between preclinical and clinical cancer  
90 imaging makes correlation of results challenging, potentially reducing the impact and  
91 utility of preclinical imaging.

92 With these challenges in mind we sought to identify clinically-applicable scan protocols  
93 to measure tumor burden in a genetically engineered mouse model (GEMM) of soft  
94 tissue sarcoma. Specifically, the co-clinical trial requires reproducible detection of  
95 changes in primary tumor volume with MR after therapeutic intervention, with follow up  
96 detection and measurement of lung metastases with CT. Our goal was to produce  
97 images that were comparable to scans performed in an ongoing clinical trial of sarcoma  
98 (NCT03092323), while establishing protocols for acquisition, data processing, and  
99 image analysis that are reproducible and broadly relevant. These protocols are  
100 currently being employed in an ongoing co-clinical trial to assess the effects of  
101 neoadjuvant and adjuvant programmed cell death protein 1 (PD-1) inhibition in  
102 sarcomas treated with neoadjuvant radiation therapy and surgical resection (19) (see  
103 Fig 1). Finally, we have established a resource for public dissemination of preclinical  
104 imaging data, protocols, and results. In doing so, we have developed a robust blueprint  
105 for incorporating clinically-driven mouse imaging into a co-clinical trial, and a pipeline to  
106 promote rigorous reporting and sharing of preclinical imaging practices.

**Table I. Samples found in the literature on preclinical MR sequences for solid tumor volume measurements in mice**

	Sequence	Field Strength (T)	TE (ms)	TR (ms)	Slice Thickness (mm)	NEX	In-plane resolution (mm <sup>2</sup> )	Acquisition time	Ref(s)
T1-Weighted Images	Spin Echo (SE)	7	12.5 to 17	750 to 500	1.0-2.0	NR	0.125 to 0.130	NR	(20, 21)
	Fast Spin Echo (FSE)	9.4	7	1800 to 2500	1.00	10.0 to 12.0	0.195 to 0.234	5m 53s to 6m 45s	(22)
	Gradient Recalled Echo (GRE)	11.7	3	436.5	0.60	2	0.117	6m to 9m	(23)
	Multi-echo GRE (MGE)	9.4	2.5 to 11.5	225	0.70	3	0.1	NR	(24)
T2-Weighted Images	Spin Echo (SE)	4.7 to 9.4	10.8 to 60.0	1000 to 4000	0.42 to 2	1 to 4	0.117 to 0.313	9 m (or NR)	(25-28)
	Fast Spin Echo (FSE, MSFSE)	1.0 to 9.4	19.0 to 48.0	1000 to 5500	0.75 to 2	2	0.156 to 0.220	9m to 25 m	(21, 29-32)
	Fast Recovery Fast Spin Echo (FRFSE)	1.5	85	2200	1.20	3	0.243	NR	(32)
	Turbo Spin Echo (TSE)	1.5 to 7	13.0 to 80.0	480 to 4400	0.562 to 2	1 to 4	0.111 to 0.2	3m 35s to 5m 54s (or NR)	(33-37)
	Gradient Recalled Echo (GRE)	1.5 to 9.4	1.0 to 9.0	3.6 to 50	0.71 to 0.128	2 to 10	0.128 to 0.156	3m 48s (or NR)	(38-40)
	Rapid Acquisition with Relaxation Enhancement (RARE)	1.5 to 14	4.5 to 36.0	890 to 5000	0.5 to 1	2 to 4	0.098 to 0.234	57s (or NR)	(24, 41-44)

TE: Echo time

TR: Repetition time

MS: Multi-slice

NEX: Averages

m: minutes, s: seconds

NR: "not reported," indicating that one or more reference did not report the specified parameter.

## 107 **Materials and methods**

### 108 **GEMM of inducible sarcoma**

109 To mimic the clinical presentation and progression of human sarcomas with gradual  
110 tumor development and metastasis in the setting of an intact immune system, a  
111 carcinogen-induced GEMM of sarcoma (Lee CL, Mowery YM, Daniel AR, et all,  
112 submitted) was chosen for the animal studies of the co-clinical trial. Primary sarcomas  
113 (*p53*/MCA model) are generated by intramuscular delivery into the gastrocnemius of  
114 adenovirus expressing Cre recombinase (Adeno-Cre; Gene Transfer Vector Core,  
115 University of Iowa) into *p53*<sup>f/f</sup> mice followed by intramuscular injection of 0.3 mg 3-  
116 methylcholanthrene (MCA; Sigma-Aldrich, Saint Louis, MO) at the same site. Tumors  
117 develop approximately 8-12 weeks after induction. Imaging studies were initiated when  
118 tumors were palpable (>100 mm<sup>3</sup>), as well as at various stages of disease progression.

### 119 **Small animal MR imaging at 7T**

120 All MR experiments were performed on a 7.0 T Bruker Biospec small animal MRI  
121 scanner (Bruker Inc., Billerica, MA). In preliminary experiments three commercial  
122 Bruker radiofrequency (RF) coils were explored: i) a 72 mm diameter actively decoupled  
123 linear volume coil for transmission and reception (Bruker #: T10720V3); ii) a 35 mm  
124 diameter quadrature volume coil for transmission and reception (Bruker #: T9988V3); iii)  
125 a mouse brain receive-only four coil array (Bruker #: T11765V3), combined with the 72  
126 mm volume coil for transmission. Scan acquisition was performed using ParaVision®

127 6.0.1 platform (Bruker Inc.), and the reconstructed images were stored in DICOM  
128 format.

## 129 **MR System Baseline Performance**

130 A systems evaluation was undertaken to establish a quantitative baseline for our MR  
131 system against which others systems might be compared. First, a cylindrical phantom  
132 (62 mm diameter, 120 mm length) containing a 3D-printed grid of 1.0 mm squares was  
133 scanned with the 72 mm volume coil to measure linearity and geometric distortions  
134 across the active volume of the scanner. A second scan was performed of an 18mm x  
135 18 mm cylindrical water bottle filled with 10 M CuSO<sub>4</sub> to measure B0 homogeneity  
136 across the field of view. These data were stored for periodic Quality Assurance (QA)  
137 checks during the protocol.

138 To provide guidance on design of a T1/T2 phantom, a mouse bearing a primary soft  
139 tissue sarcoma of the hind limb was scanned in the 72 mm volume coil to obtain T1 and  
140 T2 maps across the tumor. The volume coil was used to provide uniform B1 excitation  
141 to facilitate accurate T1/T2 mapping. The lower sensitivity of this coil was offset by  
142 increasing the number of averages and slice thickness (NEX = 2; Slice Thickness = 1.0  
143 mm). T1 maps were acquired using Multi-Slice Multi-Echo (MSME) sequences with  
144 variable TR (TR = 3200 ms, 1600 ms, 800 ms, 400 ms, 200 ms, 100 ms, 50 ms, and 25  
145 ms). T2 maps were acquired using multi-gradient echo (MGE) sequences with variable  
146 TE (TE = 10 ms, 20 ms, 30 ms...200 ms). T1 and T2 fitting was performed on the  
147 series using ImageJ open-source software (<https://imagej.nih.gov/ij/>), and a range of T1  
148 and T2 values measured in the tumor were defined. Tumor-applicable T1 values were

149 used to generate a contrast dilution series of gadopentetate dimeglumine (Gd-DTPA;  
150 Magnevist®, Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals, Wayne, NJ) in distilled water. T2  
151 values in the tumor were mimicked with a series of agarose concentrations.

152 Based on observed T1 and T2 values in the tumor, tubes containing a range of Gd-  
153 DTPA and agarose concentrations were assembled into a 3D-printed, custom phantom  
154 (subsequently referred to as the “study phantom”). A resolution insert was designed for  
155 integration into the study phantom which contained laser-cut holes in a 0.5 x 6.0 mm  
156 diameter Cirlex disk with holes ranging from 200-75  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter. The study  
157 phantom was loaded with the contrast series and resolution insert, and enclosed in a 20  
158 ml syringe, through which water was pulled and air removed. The phantom was  
159 scanned with the surface coil using the described scan protocol (Table II) to assess  
160 contrast delineation and spatial resolution. Finally, the bias field of the surface coil array  
161 was evaluated by scanning a tube of distilled water and the study phantom. Post-  
162 acquisition bias corrections were assessed with the study phantom by placing it in a  
163 coil-affixed tube where it was laterally constrained but free to rotate. The coil was  
164 positioned and the study phantom was scanned with a series of 2D T1-weighted  
165 sequences using the protocol developed for the animal studies. After each scan the  
166 phantom was rotated 10-15 degrees. These scans were used to quantitatively measure  
167 the efficacy of the bias corrections used in the post-processing pipeline to remove the  
168 radiofrequency (rf) sensitivity bias in the 4-element surface coil used for the study.

169 **Mouse MR image acquisition**

170 All animal handling and imaging procedures were performed according to protocols  
171 approved by the Duke Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Tumor  
172 images were acquired using the 4-element surface coil array (receive) coupled with the  
173 72 mm linear volume (transmit) coil. Anesthesia was induced with an isoflurane  
174 suspension administered on cotton gauze in a contained chamber, followed by  
175 maintenance via inhaled isoflurane in concentrations of 1-2% in air. Mice were placed  
176 in a left lateral recumbent position on a custom 3D-printed bed equipped with warm  
177 water circulation (between 35-40°C) and respiratory rate monitoring. The tumor bearing  
178 limb was positioned beneath the surface coil, which was fastened to the coil platform of  
179 the bed to reduce displacement. The entire bed platform was positioned within the  
180 magnet and mice were monitored for the duration of scanning, with isoflurane  
181 concentration adjusted as needed to maintain steady breathing. T1 contrast  
182 enhancement was performed by injection of 0.5 mmol/kg Gd-DTPA via tail vein catheter  
183 which was placed under anesthesia prior to scanning. Injection speed was 2.5 ml/min,  
184 and contrast was allowed to circulate for 3 minutes to achieve peak enhancement.  
185 Upon completion, catheters were removed, and mice were returned to warmed cages  
186 for anesthesia recovery (<5 minutes).

187 A systematic comparison of sequences and parameters was undertaken to yield a  
188 protocol with T1 and T2 contrast analogous to the clinical trial. Spatial resolution was  
189 scaled appropriately for the mouse and tradeoffs between scan parameters balanced to  
190 provide signal to noise comparable to the clinical scan in a realistic scan time. The final  
191 sequence selections are outlined in Table III. Briefly, the scan protocol was developed  
192 which contained a T1-weighted and T2-weighted sequence, followed by repeat of the

193 T1 sequence after Gd-DTPA injection. Upon positioning a mouse in the magnet, routine  
194 adjustments were performed, including wobble and shims. Including a 3-minute wait  
195 period for circulation of contrast agent post-injection, the entire scan program lasted 40  
196 minutes and 27 seconds for each mouse, plus approximately 5 minutes for initial  
197 placement, alignment and adjustments.

198 ***In vivo tumor volume assessment with MR***

199 Volume measurement of tumors imaged with MR was performed with multiple methods  
200 to assess accuracy, precision, reproducibility, and inter-user variance. T2-weighted  
201 images (as described in Table III) were used in refining and testing volume calculation  
202 methods. Slice-by-slice, hand-drawn segmentation was used as the “gold standard” for  
203 volume determination, with initial segmentations performed in triplicate to determine  
204 user precision. Hand-drawn segmentations were executed in the 2D Viewer platform of  
205 OsiriX DICOM viewing software version 9.0.2 (Pixmeo Sarl, Bernex, Switzerland).

206 Semi-automated tumor segmentation was also explored and refined in 3D Slicer  
207 (<https://www.slicer.org>), an open-source software developed as part of the National  
208 Alliance for Medical Image Computing (NA-MIC) under the NIH. Tumors were  
209 segmented with a modified protocol for image adjustment and automatic volume  
210 propagation. Briefly, DICOM images obtained with the surface coil array were  
211 subjected to a bias correction to compensate for signal fall-off which occurs at  
212 increasing distances from the coil surface. Bias correction was performed under the  
213 N4ITK MRI Bias Correction module in 3D Slicer (45) using the T1-weighted image  
214 without contrast as a mask, and the resulting bias-corrected T2 images were used for

215 segmentation. Volume propagation was performed by defining regions of tumor, as well  
216 as surrounding non-tumor tissues, on one slice of each orthogonal view near the center  
217 of the lesion with the paintbrush editor. Following planar region of interest (ROI)  
218 definition, the “GrowCut” tool was used to grow the 3D volume of interest (VOI)  
219 considered to be a tumor (46), and the resulting volumes were refined with the “Remove  
220 Islands” tool. Semi-automated segmentation was performed in triplicate and results  
221 were compared to hand-drawn volumes.

## 222 **Micro-CT imaging**

223 All micro-CT imaging was performed using a micro-CT system developed in house (47).  
224 Free breathing animals were scanned under anesthesia using 2–3% isoflurane  
225 delivered by nose-cone. A pneumatic pillow positioned on the thorax was connected to  
226 a pressure transducer to monitor breathing and for respiratory gating. Body  
227 temperature was maintained with heat lamps and a feedback controller. Scan  
228 parameters were 80 kVp, 40 mA, 10 ms/exposure. A total of 360 views were acquired  
229 over a 360° rotation. The reconstruction was performed with a 63 um isotropic voxel  
230 size using Feldkamp algorithm (48) followed by bilateral filtration (49) to reduce noise.  
231 The micro-CT images were converted to Hounsfield units (HU) and saved as DICOM  
232 files. The radiation dose associated with a micro-CT scan was ~0.017 Gy per mouse.  
233 This is ~294 to 411 times less than LD50/30 lethal dose (5–7 Gy) in mice (50).

## 234 **Phantom examinations for CT**

235 To assess image quality, a commercially available performance evaluation micro-CT  
236 phantom ([www.simutec.com](http://www.simutec.com)) was imaged. The phantom (model vmCT 610)  
237 incorporates six plates, each of which is designed to evaluate different aspects of micro-  
238 CT image quality with a single scan. These include CT number calibration, CT number  
239 linearity, image noise, image uniformity, spatial resolution, geometric accuracy.

## 240 **Micro-CT acquisition using prospective respiratory gating**

241 Unlike in clinical chest CT, which is performed in a single breath hold, preclinical  
242 projection data in micro-CT must be acquired over many breaths, requiring respiratory  
243 gating. Respiratory gating can be performed prospectively or retrospectively (51). In  
244 prospective respiratory gating, a single respiratory phase (e.g. end-expiration) can serve  
245 well to assess lung nodules. We were first to develop and implement combined cardiac  
246 and respiratory gating for micro-CT (52), which provides the highest possible cardio-  
247 pulmonary imaging quality. But for this preclinical study focused on assessing lung  
248 metastases longitudinally in a large number of mice, adding cardiac gating substantially  
249 increases acquisition times and was considered not essential. Consequently, we have  
250 used prospective gating to synchronize acquisition with respiration only using a  
251 respiratory signal provided by a pneumatic pillow positioned on the chest of the animal.  
252 In prospective gating, the acquisition of each projection is triggered when the respiratory  
253 signal crosses above a user-defined threshold. Thus, all projections are acquired in the  
254 same part of the respiratory cycle e.g. in end-inspiration, minimizing motion artifacts and  
255 blurring in the reconstructions.

256 To assess the performance of our gated lung tumor imaging, we used mice with primary  
257 lung cancer. Lung tumors were generated by intranasal injection of Adeno-Cre into LSL-  
258 *Kras*<sup>G12D</sup>; *p53*<sup>f/f</sup> mice (53, 54). Mice were imaged at 12 weeks post Adeno-Cre infection,  
259 at which point multiple primary lung tumors (~0.5–1.5 mm in diameter) were detectable  
260 within each mouse. Each mouse was scanned three times *in vivo* with and without  
261 gating. A post-mortem scan was also performed for each mouse and deemed the gold  
262 standard for lesion sizes. The lung tumors were semi-automatically segmented using  
263 3D Slicer with the GrowCut tool as previously described for MR images. Volumes were  
264 calculated three times per condition, which included a non-gated *in vivo* image, a gated  
265 *in vivo* image, and a post-mortem image acquired (standard).

266 **Development of web-accessible archives for protocol and**  
267 **data dissemination**

268 The Center for In Vivo Microscopy (CIVM) at Duke has initiated a novel approach to  
269 sharing data in all of our publications through the use of VoxPort/VoxStation. This  
270 integrated package was developed under National Cancer Institute (NCI) support  
271 (CA088658) specifically for project management of this nature. VoxPort is a MySQL  
272 database that provides the user with tools for capture and upload of a wide range of  
273 data types: IACUC protocols, imaging and set up protocols, 2, 3 and 4D images (more  
274 than 30 different formats) from multiple sources (MRI, CT, conventional histology) and  
275 data analysis (Excel, graphics, etc). Voxport annotates and organizes these data for  
276 efficient search and review by an external user. VoxStation, the companion software,

277 provides external users interactive access to data without requiring download of large,  
278 unnecessary files.

279 **Statistical analysis**

280 Reliability and repeatability of volume measurements were assessed using one-way  
281 ANOVA as well as by calculating coefficients of variance, where  $p<0.05$  was considered  
282 statistically significant. Differences in output measurements were compared with the  
283 student's t-test, where  $p<0.05$  was considered statistically significant. Precision of  
284 repeated measures were interpreted via Brown-Forsythe testing. Statistical analyses  
285 were performed and visualized using GraphPad Prism version 7.00 for Mac (GraphPad  
286 Software, La Jolla California, US).

## 287 **Results**

### 288 **Establishment of a preclinical protocol for volume** 289 **measurement of primary sarcomas**

290 Our primary objective was to define a preclinical MR protocol that provided spatial  
291 resolution and contrast differential comparable to that of the clinical arm of the trial. To  
292 make the protocol practical it must replicate the three acquisitions used in the clinical  
293 arm i.e. T1 weighted, T2 weighted, and T1 with contrasts (Fig 1). The final constraint  
294 placed on the protocol was that it had to be executed in < 1 hr. Since the mouse is ~  
295 3000 times smaller than the human, the spatial resolution should be scaled comparably.  
296 The spatial resolution in the human protocol (Supporting Table 1) is 1.0 x 2.0 x 5.0 mm  
297 i.e. voxels of 10 mm<sup>3</sup>. Thus, our target resolution (voxel volume) is 0.003 mm<sup>3</sup>. The  
298 exceptional contrast of MR becomes important in sarcoma lesions receiving RT, as the  
299 volume of responding tumors may temporarily increase due to tissue damage and  
300 edema, possibly resulting in false assumptions of progression (55, 56). Both T1 and T2  
301 contrast in MR are dependent of the magnetic field as T1 increases and T2 decreases  
302 with field (57). Clinical studies are performed at 1.5-3.0 T. This preclinical arm is  
303 performed at 7.0 T, so TR and TE have been adjusted iteratively within the rest of the  
304 constraints of the protocol to achieve contrast differences between tumor and muscle  
305 that are comparable to the clinical arm.

306

307 **Fig 1. Schematic representation of a co-clinical trial which utilizes translational**  
308 **imaging.** Flow charts describing the clinical (A) and preclinical (B) sections of a co-  
309 clinical trial of RT with or without the addition of PD-1 inhibition in soft tissue sarcoma.  
310 Treatment dosing and imaging procedures in the preclinical arm have been designed to  
311 mimic the clinical trial as closely as possible.

312 Table II shows the sensitivity and homogeneity for a uniform 18 mm diameter water  
313 bottle scanned using the three different rf coil configurations: 72 mm volume coil,  
314 transmit receive; 35 mm volume coil, transmit receive; 72 mm volume coil transmit, 4-  
315 element surface coil receive. The relative sensitivity of the two volume coils is well  
316 defined, with demonstrated homogeneity superior to the surface coil. However, the  
317 approximately 3-fold higher sensitivity of the surface coil provides a compelling  
318 argument for its use, as desirable SNR is achievable with relatively short scan times.  
319 The 5-fold increase in variance of image intensity when using the surface coil is  
320 attributable to location-dependent bias. Placement of the surface coil directly onto the  
321 tumor-bearing limb reduces the distance between the coil and tumor tissues, somewhat  
322 reducing the effect of inhomogeneity in identifying lesions. However, the remaining bias  
323 is able to be addressed with the employment of a bias correction (see Fig 4).

**Table II. Sensitivity and homogeneity of a uniform sample scanned with three rf coil configurations for small animal MR at 7.0T**

	72mm Volume Coil		35mm Volume Coil		Quadrature Surface Coil + 72mm Volume Coil		
	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	
324	<b>SNR</b>	4.83	4.78	6.76	6.86	17.16	17.32
	<b>Coefficient of Variance</b>	18.1%	16.8%	12.4%	12.1%	75.6%	72.2%

325 3D isotropic imaging is frequently employed in preclinical imaging to provide signal  
326 averaging required for the smaller voxels. Clinical MR protocols use 2D (anisotropic)  
327 multi-slice sequences to maintain practical scan times. We compared both 2D  
328 anisotropic and 3D isotropic sequences in sarcoma-bearing limbs. The contrast to  
329 noise ratio and scan times are shown for several variations in (Supporting Fig 1). 2D  
330 sequences for T1-weighted and T2-weighted images with 100  $\mu$ m in-plane (axial)  
331 resolution and slice thickness of 300  $\mu$ m were achievable with 3 NEX with short  
332 acquisition times (~10 minutes and ~15 minutes, respectively). Further, these images  
333 were acquired over a field of view (FOV) sufficient to cover any tumor imaged on study.  
  
334 In following the direction of the clinical MR program, a T1-weighted and T2-weighted  
335 sequence was selected, with T1-acquisition performed without and with injection of  
336 contrast. A time course of short T1-weighted acquisitions was performed to identify  
337 peak contrast time in tumor tissues (Supporting Fig. 2). The resulting sequences were  
338 incorporated into an MR scan protocol suitable for clinically-relevant imaging of primary  
339 soft tissue sarcoma lesions of the hind leg for purposes of longitudinal tumor volume  
340 assessment (Table III). A comparison of clinical MR images of a patient with a sarcoma

341 in the leg and a tumor-bearing mouse hind limb is shown in Fig 2. Importantly, the  
342 clinically-driven preclinical protocol is achievable in less than one hour providing the  
343 efficiency necessary for a large study.

**Table III. Clinically-driven scan program for preclinical MR imaging of soft tissue sarcomas of the extremity**

Sequence	Protocol	Acquisition Parameters	Image Geometry	Time
T1-Weighted	T1_FLASH	TE 4.5 ms TR 925.486 ms Averages 3 Flip angle 30°	FOV 28 mm X 28 mm Matrix 280 X 280 Resolution 100 µm Slice thickness 300 µm Slice number 60	09m : 44s
T2-Weighted	T2_TurboRARE	TE 45 ms TR 8563.193 ms Averages 3 RARE 8	FOV 28 mm X 28 mm Matrix 280 X 280 Resolution 100 µm Slice thickness 300 µm Slice number 60	14m : 59s
T1-Weighted + Contrast	T1_FLASH	TE 4.5 ms TR 925.486 ms Averages 3 Flip angle 30° Start delay 3 min. post-inj.	FOV 28 mm X 28 mm Matrix 280 X 280 Resolution 100 µm Slice thickness 300 µm Slice number 60	03m : 00s + 09m : 44s
				Total 37m : 27s

TE: Echo time  
TR: Repetition time

344

345

346 **Fig 2. Comparison of human and mouse MR images acquired for the co-clinical**  
347 **trial.** Micro-MR images of a sarcoma-bearing mouse leg (bottom row) were obtained  
348 with a scan program designed to mimic images acquired in patients enrolled in the  
349 clinical arm (top row) bearing soft tissue sarcomas of the extremity. T1-weighted (left),  
350 T2-weighted (middle), and T1-weighted + contrast agent injection (right) were acquired

351 in both the human and the mouse arms of the co-clinical trial. White scale bars indicate  
352 distances of 5 mm.

353 **Phantom scans for qualification of preclinical MR systems in**  
354 **achieving a clinically-relevant scan program**

355 Baseline studies were performed as part of a standard quality assurance protocol and  
356 validation of scanner performance which served as the preclinical equivalent of  
357 standard clinical QA. These protocols were performed regularly throughout study to  
358 ensure scanner performance. Scanner linearity, rf coil homogeneity, and magnetic field  
359 homogeneity are demonstrated in Supporting Figs 3 and 4, respectively.

360 Since high-resolution and tissue contrast were the driving motivations for sarcoma  
361 imaging with MR, a project-focused “study phantom” was designed to ensure that  
362 selected protocols were adequate for tumor volume measurements. To address tissue  
363 contrast, T1 and T2 mapping of an established sarcoma were calculated to identify a  
364 range of T1 and T2 values which will likely be encountered in tumors on study  
365 (Supporting Fig. 5). To mimic contrasts that span the range of tumor-associated T1  
366 values, a series dilution of magnevist was generated. Syringes containing multiple  
367 dilutions of magnevist in water were placed in a holder, and T1 mapping was performed  
368 to determine the concentration-dependent T1 values. Solutions which produced T1  
369 values within the range present in tumor tissues were selected for incorporation into the  
370 study phantom (Fig 3, top). Similarly, a series of agarose concentrations were scanned  
371 to determine T2 values, and solutions mimicking T2 values seen in the tumor were

372 selected for phantom construction (Fig 3, bottom). The constructed study phantom was  
373 used to confirm the utility of the selected rf coils and scan protocols for successful tumor  
374 detection and volume measurement (Fig 4).

375

376 **Fig 3. T1 and T2 fitting across a preclinical soft tissue sarcoma demonstrate the**  
377 **anticipated T1 signal range of tumors on study.** Histograms of T1 (A), and T2 (D)  
378 values measured in sarcoma tissues are shown, including the mean (blue line) and 2  
379 standard deviations (shaded light blue). Bottles containing a dilution series of  
380 magnevist (B) and agarose (E) were measured in the 72 mm volume coil and used to  
381 mimic the ranges of T1 and T2 values in tumor during construction of a custom study  
382 phantom. Linear regressions of T1 or T2 measurements (C and F, respectively) were  
383 plotted along a log scale of solution concentration and shown with 95% CI (dotted lines).

384

385 **Fig 4. A custom study phantom demonstrates T1 + T2 range and resolution for**  
386 **mouse sarcoma imaging.** A 3D-printed phantom was designed to hold tubes  
387 containing a range of magnevist (T1) and agarose (T2) concentrations, as well as a  
388 resolution insert, and was loaded into a syringe filled with water (A). The T1 sequence  
389 used in the preclinical trial demonstrates the range of T1 signal within predetermined  
390 magnevist concentrations (B), where dilution factor refers to the dilution of a 1% solution  
391 in deionized water. The T2 sequence used in the preclinical trial demonstrates the  
392 range of T2 signal within predetermined agarose gel concentrations (C). The resolution

393 insert confirms sufficient resolution of the sequences down to 100um (D). Images  
394 shown have not been altered or corrected for bias.

395 **Evaluation and correction of image biases present during**  
396 **high-field MR imaging**

397 When operating at higher fields, artifacts may appear that are not seen or are negligible  
398 in clinical scans. One of the most notable of these inconsistencies is the introduction or  
399 amplification of biases in the resulting images. At 7.0 T, the rf wavelength approaches  
400 dimensions of the area of interest being imaged, often leading to an area of unexpected  
401 brightness in the image center (58-60). This effect, attributed to dielectric resonance,  
402 was measured using two uniform phantoms: a 30 ml syringe filled with 10 mM CuSO<sub>4</sub>  
403 and one filled with silicon oil (Supporting Fig. 5). T1-weighted and T2-weighted  
404 sequences (defined in Table I) both demonstrated measurable central brightening  
405 across the CuSO<sub>4</sub> phantom, an effect not appearing in the silicon oil (58). Thus, we  
406 identified dielectric resonance as a source of bias in the resulting mouse images.

407 An independent and more obvious bias exists in image intensity as a function of  
408 distance from the surface coil itself. The spatial (B1) sensitivity of the multi-coil is a  
409 widely recognized bias that is exacerbated at high field strengths. The resulting shifts in  
410 signal intensity can confound tumor detection and measurement, particularly in deep-  
411 seated tissues. To overcome this issue, we identified the best parameters with which to  
412 implement N4ITK bias correction in the study images using 3D Slicer (45, 61). Further  
413 improvement of the bias correction was achieved by using a contrast-reduced T1 image

414 (TE = 4.5 ms; TR = 3000 ms), which reflected only the spatial bias, as a weighted filter  
415 during correction. Original T1-weighted images of the study phantom demonstrate the  
416 overwhelming effect of the surface coil spatial bias, where magnevist concentration  
417 dependence is degraded based on distance from the coil surface (Fig 5 A, left).  
418 However, application of filtered bias correction (Fig 5 A, right) resulted in restoration of  
419 magnevist concentration-dependence in the T1 image signal (Fig 5 B). This served as  
420 rationale for application of a bias correction to T2-weighted images on which tumor  
421 volumes would be calculated due to better contrast. The scan program includes a T1-  
422 weighted image without contrast injection which provides little contrast of use in defining  
423 tumor at 7.0 T. However, this can be employed for weighted filtering of the refined  
424 N4ITK bias correction, which was subsequently applied to images to improve tumor  
425 volume analysis.

426

427 **Fig 5. Correction of position-dependent bias resulting from use of the surface**  
428 **coil.** A custom phantom containing concentrations of magnevist with T1 values that  
429 span those anticipated in tumors were scanned using the surface coil. T1-weighted  
430 imaging of the phantom demonstrated a significant bias (A, left), which distorted the  
431 intensity of the magnevist tubes due to distance from the coil. Resulting measurements  
432 were unable to reflect the concentration-dependent signal appropriately (B). Application  
433 of an N4ITK bias correction, masked with a proton density weighted image (TR = 3000)  
434 reduced the effects of the coil bias (A, right), restoring linearity in the signal vs  
435 concentration curve (B).

436 **MR scans with the quadrature surface coil deliver reliable**  
437 **and repeatable volume estimates despite repositioning of**  
438 **tumor-bearing limbs**

439 With the goal of reliable tumor volume measurement, images acquired with the  
440 clinically-driven MR scan protocol were used to determine its practical utility. First,  
441 reliability of scans for volume measurements was tested by scanning tumor-bearing  
442 limbs three times in succession with repositioning using the same scan program (Fig 6  
443 A). In each of three scanned mice with morphologically distinct tumors, calculated  
444 volumes did not differ based on leg position (Fig 6 C-D). Further, no significant  
445 difference in measurement precision was observed in any scan position (Fig 6 E).  
446 These data suggest that employment of the clinically-driven MR scan protocol was  
447 repeatable and reproducible, regardless of tumor position or orientation beneath the  
448 surface coil.

449

450 **Fig 6. Reliability and consistency of tumor volume measurements in repeated**  
451 **scans with limb repositioning.** T2-weighted images were analyzed to determine  
452 reproducibility of tumor volume measurements resulting from three consecutive scans of  
453 sarcoma-bearing limbs in three positions. Each mouse was scanned three times in  
454 succession, with the tumor-bearing limb positioned under the surface coil in a flexed,  
455 relaxed, or extended position to shift the location and shape of the tumor (represented  
456 as blue in the diagram shown in (A)). ROIs were hand-drawn slice-by-slice in triplicate

457 in each resulting image (9 total measurements per mouse) (B), and calculated volumes  
458 were compared for repeatability (user precision) and reproducibility (consistency with  
459 shifting position) (C). ANOVA analysis of volume reproducibility suggested no  
460 dependence of volume measurements on leg position (D), and precision of hand-drawn  
461 measurements was confirmed using Brown-Forsythe (E).

462 **Semi-automated tumor segmentation demonstrates similar  
463 accuracy and precision to hand-drawn measurements of  
464 tumor volume, with reasonable inter-user variance**

465 With the inclusion of an advanced bias correction, we have employed tools in 3D Slicer  
466 for semi-automated segmentation of T2-weighted MR images to measure tumor  
467 volumes efficiently and reliably in a large number of animals. Semi-automated  
468 segmentation was compared to volumes calculated with hand-drawn ROIs (“gold-  
469 standard”) in T2-weighted tumor images corrected for bias (Fig 7 A and B). ANOVA of  
470 the resulting tumor volumes revealed no significant difference in calculated volumes or  
471 precision between methods (Fig 7 C). Further, when both techniques were applied to 6  
472 independent tumor image samples, Bland-Altman analysis confirmed reasonable  
473 agreement between segmentation methods (Fig 7 D). Taken together these data  
474 suggest that volumes calculated by applying a bias correction and subsequent semi-  
475 automated tumor segmentation in 3D Slicer are comparable to results from hand-drawn  
476 analyses. For studies with large animal numbers, this is very advantageous, as the  
477 semi-automated segmentation protocol usually requires <5 minutes to complete.

478

479 **Fig 7. Semi-automated tumor segmentation with 3D Slicer is an acceptable**  
480 **alternative to hand-drawn ROIs for sarcoma volume measurement.** T2-weighted  
481 images of three tumors of varying size and morphology were analyzed with hand-drawn  
482 ROIs and semi-automated segmentation to calculate tumor volume. Examples of hand-  
483 drawn (A) and semi-automated (B) segmentation of the same tumor are shown,  
484 including an axial slice of the segmented tumor (a.) and the rendered 3D representation  
485 of the tumor according to each segmentation (b.). Resulting volume calculations were  
486 compared between triplicate measures with each method for each tumor (C),  
487 demonstrating similar measurements and comparable precision. Bland-Altman analysis  
488 of both methods, when employed in 6 separate tumors, indicated that semi-automated  
489 segmentation is a viable alternative to hand-drawn segmentation.

490 **Employment of respiratory gating during micro-CT**  
491 **acquisition improved tumor burden assessment in lung**  
492 **tissues**

493 Baseline studies were performed as part of a standard quality assurance protocol and  
494 validation of scanner performance which served as the preclinical equivalent of  
495 standard clinical QA. These protocols were performed regularly throughout study to  
496 ensure scanner performance. Spatial resolution, geometric accuracy, iodine  
497 concentration measurement, and uniformity were all assessed (Supporting Fig 6).

498 During a non-gated micro-CT (Fig 8 A), lung motion often causes blurred tissue  
499 boundaries, particularly along the lung wall or near the diaphragm (Fig 8C). Respiratory  
500 gating (Fig 8 B) improves the ability to identify small tumors and discern borders  
501 between tissues in contact (Fig 8 D).

502

503 **Fig 8. Prospective gating allows for synchronization of image acquisition with**  
504 **breathing patterns.** Micro-CT acquisition monitoring without (A) and with respiratory  
505 gating (B). Coronal images of a lung tumor are shown without gating (C), with  
506 respiratory gating (D), and post-mortem (E). Tumor is indicated by white arrows, and  
507 diaphragm is noted with yellow arrows. Representative images from triplicates are  
508 shown.

509 A collection of tumors was selected for identification and volume measurement in each  
510 of the 9 acquired images (3 non-gated, 3 respiratory-gated, and 3 post-mortem scans).  
511 Selected tumors varied in size and location with diverse surrounding structures (Fig 9A).  
512 Mean volume measurements of tumors in respiratory-gated images more closely  
513 reflected values measured in post-mortem images than did non-gated tumor  
514 measurements. One-way ANOVA of measurements collected for each tumor showed  
515 that half of the samples demonstrated significant differences in output values in non-  
516 gated images when compared to post-mortem samples (Fig 9B and C). Further, better  
517 precision was observed in gated analyses than non-gated analyses (Fig 9D). Taken  
518 together, these data support that respiratory gating reduces effects of breathing motion  
519 in both the accuracy and precision of lung tumor volume measurements.

520

521 **Fig 9. Respiratory gating improves precision and accuracy of lung tumor volume**  
522 **assessment in a free-breathing mouse.** Multiple tumors of varying size and location  
523 in the lungs of a free-breathing mouse scanned with micro-CT were identified (A, a-d).  
524 Hand-drawn ROIs were used to calculate the volume of each lesion in each scan (a  
525 total of 9 measurements per tumor). ANOVA showed that in half of the lesions,  
526 respiratory gating had a significant impact on the accuracy of volume measurement (B  
527 and C). Variance within repeated measures from gated images was approximately  
528 double that of post-mortem images, while non-gated image results demonstrated more  
529 than five-fold variance compared to post-mortem measurements (D).

530 **Databases constructed via VoxPort allow users web-access**  
531 **to co-clinical animal imaging data, acquisition and analysis**  
532 **protocols, and supporting materials**

533 This integrated package was developed under NCI support (CA088658) specifically for  
534 project management of this nature. VoxPort is a MYSQL database that provides the  
535 user tools for capture and upload of a wide range of data types: IACUC, imaging and  
536 set up protocols, 2,3 and 4D images (more than 30 different formats), from multiple  
537 sources (MRI, CT, conventional histology) and data analysis (Excel, graphics, etc).  
538 Voxport annotates and organizes these data so an external user can efficiently search  
539 and review. VoxStation, the companion software, provides external users interactive  
540 access to all these data without need to download vast troves of what might be useless.

541 Fig 10 illustrates Voxport/Voxstation in action displaying both images and protocols.  
542 Access to our Voxport Image Management System is available at:  
543 <https://civmvoxport.vm.duke.edu/voxbase/index.php> . The visitor will be prompted to  
544 login to CIVMVoxPort using the provided credentials (User Name: DukeU24, Password:  
545 DukeU24Review)".

546

547 **Fig 10. Demonstration of the VoxPort interface for image data sharing.** Images of  
548 VoxPort demonstrating archives of multiple forms of imaging data, including images  
549 from multiple modalities, protocol documentation and standard operating procedures,  
550 scan acquisition information, and segmentation stacks which correspond to archived  
551 images. The image gallery provides a thumbnail and metadata about the images. The  
552 user can choose to download a given image or stack or examine the data within the  
553 interface.

## 554 Discussion

555 In order to bridge the gap between preclinical and clinical research, care must be taken  
556 to develop animal models and imaging protocols that appropriately reflect the clinical  
557 question. To serve a co-clinical study of PD-1 inhibition for sarcoma, we have  
558 described the establishment, qualification, and application of preclinical MRI and CT  
559 imaging protocols for longitudinal assessment of therapeutic efficacy in a GEMM of soft  
560 tissue sarcoma. The imaging protocols are clinically-driven, reproducible, suitable for  
561 high-throughput studies, and readily extended to experiments using different tumor  
562 models or interventions.

563 In selecting micro-MRI protocols, we gained higher spatial resolution (100  $\mu\text{m}$  in-plane)  
564 by using a quadrature surface coil placed over the tumor-bearing limbs of animals. We  
565 assembled a scan program to generate images similar to those acquired in the clinic  
566 (T1-weighted, T2-weighted, and T1-weighted plus contrast) with spatial resolution scaled  
567 for the size of the mouse, contrast comparable to the clinical arm of the study, and total  
568 acquisition time lasting less than 1 hour. With this program, tumor volume  
569 measurements were reliable regardless of tumor size or depth, and independent of  
570 shifts in the tumor orientation/position beneath the coil.

571 Similar to the clinic, periodic imaging of mouse lung tissues following treatment and  
572 resection of primary sarcomas is being used to monitor metastatic development. The  
573 principal challenge in assessing tumor burden in the lungs with micro-CT is the effect of  
574 respiratory motion on resulting images. We have employed respiratory gating  
575 techniques to mitigate the effects of motion by limiting acquisition to defined periods in

576 the breathing cycle. Tissue barriers, such as diaphragm, lung wall, and tumors  
577 boundaries, were visibly more clear in gated images compared to images acquired  
578 throughout the full breathing cycle. As a result, tumor volume measurements from  
579 gated images more accurately matched post-mortem standards and demonstrated  
580 improved precision compared to measurements from non-gated images, improving  
581 tumor burden assessment.

582 Finally, we have created a web accessible repository to store and share these  
583 protocols, representative data, supporting studies (e.g. pathology, blood chemistry). In  
584 sharing our findings over the course of the study, we hope to assist others in generating  
585 and evaluating their preclinical and co-clinical imaging studies. Overall, we have  
586 devised a strategy for incorporation of preclinical imaging into a co-clinical trial for the  
587 evaluation of tumor burden, as well as established a means by which to efficiently  
588 organize and share the resulting data.

## 589 **Conclusions**

590 We have established a routine pipeline by which high-volume preclinical imaging data  
591 can support and inform in real time a co-clinical trial of combined RT and  
592 immunotherapy in sarcoma. Additionally, we have outlined a blueprint for navigating  
593 and overcoming some of the technical challenges that translational tumor imaging  
594 studies face. The resulting methods are both clinically-relevant and widely adaptable.  
595 Although the field of animal imaging lacks standards of practice and reporting, we have  
596 generated a means by which our data, protocols, and processing methods can be  
597 accessed and used as a template by others. By establishing clinically-driven preclinical  
598 imaging methods to serve in a co-clinical trial, we have created a pipeline which  
599 reduces the gap between preclinical and clinical studies of sarcoma therapy.

600

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605  
606

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786

787

788 **Supporting information**

789

790 **S1 Table. Comparison of imaging parameters between the clinical and preclinical**  
791 **arms of the co-clinical trial.**

792

793 **S1 Figure. 2D tumor imaging achieves adequate signal with reduced acquisition**  
794 **time compared to 3D acquisition.** T2-weighted images of a primary sarcoma lesion of  
795 the hind limb were acquired with both 2D (A) and 3D (B) TurboRARE sequences. TE  
796 was fixed at 45 ms, and both resulting images had an in-plane resolution of 100um (C).  
797 Signal in both images was adequate for deciphering tumor location and boundaries at 1  
798 NEX, but the acquisition time to generate the 3D image was more than 7X that of the  
799 2D acquisition. Reduced scan time of the 2D sequence allows time for incorporation of  
800 multiple NEX while maintaining a clinically-relevant scan program length.

801

802 **S2 Figure. Magnevist contrast enhancement peaks at approximately 6 minutes**  
803 **post-injection.** A series of short (~ 1 min) T1 FLASH sequences in the hind limb of a  
804 tumor-bearing mouse were performed before, during, and after injection of magnevist.  
805 Time course images (A) were obtained to determine wash-in, peak, and wash out of  
806 contrast in tumor compared to baseline (B). The highest intensity of contrast in tumor  
807 was observed approximately 6 minutes following injection. Subsequent scan programs

808 included a delay between injection and scan initiation to align peak contrast within the  
809 acquisition window of the T1 protocol.

810

811 **S3 Figure. Scanner linearity and rf coil homogeneity.** A large, custom-printed 3D  
812 grid phantom comprised of 1 mm rods in 10mM CuSO<sub>4</sub> was used to demonstrate  
813 scanner linearity over the area in which the surface coil is employed (A). Surface coil  
814 operation occurs within the defined yellow box. To measure homogeneity, a uniform  
815 bottle containing distilled water was scanned with the 72 mm volume coil (B) and the  
816 surface coil operating in the 72 mm coil (C), and signal was plotted as a function of  
817 distance over the volume of the bottle.

818

819 **S4 Figure. Identification of image bias due to dielectric effects measured in**  
820 **images acquired with the 72 mm volume coil.** To measure the influence of the  
821 dielectric effect in images acquired using the 72 mm volume coil, images of 30 ml  
822 bottles containing 10mM CuSO<sub>4</sub> in deionized water (A.a.) and Silicone Oil (A.b.) were  
823 acquired with the volume coil (transceiver; independent of the surface coil). A linear  
824 region of interest with a width of 20 pixels (yellow box) was used to measure signal  
825 intensity across the diameter of the bottle. Signal intensity shifts due to the dielectric  
826 effect are measurable across the diameter of the CuSO<sub>4</sub> water bottle (B.a.), and are not  
827 present in images of Silicone Oil (B.b.).

828

829 **S5 Figure. T1 and T2 maps of sarcoma tumors provide anticipated T1 and T2**  
830 **values of tumor tissues.** T1 and T2 maps were acquired over multiple slices of an  
831 established sarcoma of the hind limb. A T2-weighted TurboRARE sequence was used  
832 to delineate tumor ROIs (A). Tumor tissue and anatomical landmarks are indicated (T =  
833 tumor; Bl = bladder; S = spine). The tumor ROI used to measure contrast is shown on  
834 the T1 map (B) and T2 map (C).

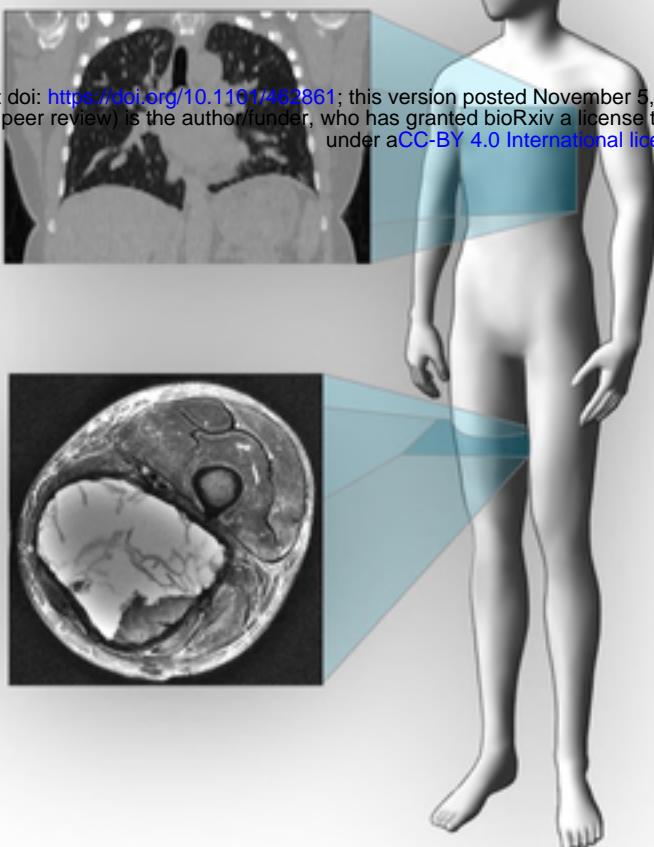
835

836 **S6 Figure. Optimization and calibration of the microCT.** Demonstration of the  
837 selected phantom (A) as well as image quality evaluation results of micro-CT scans are  
838 shown. An axial micro-CT slice thorough the spatial resolution plate with the 4 coils of  
839 alternating aluminum and Mylar sheets demonstrate measured layer thicknesses of 50,  
840 100, 150, and 200  $\mu\text{m}$  corresponding to 10, 5, 3.3, and 2.5 line pairs per mm (lp/mm),  
841 respectively (B). Only the first 2 coils show spatial frequencies that can be separated,  
842 indicating image resolution around 3.3 lp/mm. The phantom contains a geometric  
843 accuracy plate which includes two peripheral beads and a central bead. The two  
844 measured distances are reasonably similar to the ones indicated by the manufacturer,  
845 with an error around 50  $\mu\text{m}$ . This error is under one pixel size value of 63  $\mu\text{m}$  (C). A plot  
846 of the measured CT number versus known iodine concentration (D.a.; yellow rings)  
847 demonstrates a significant linear correlation between signal intensity and increasing  
848 iodine concentration (D.b.). A line profile (D.a.; red line) confirms uniformity with relative

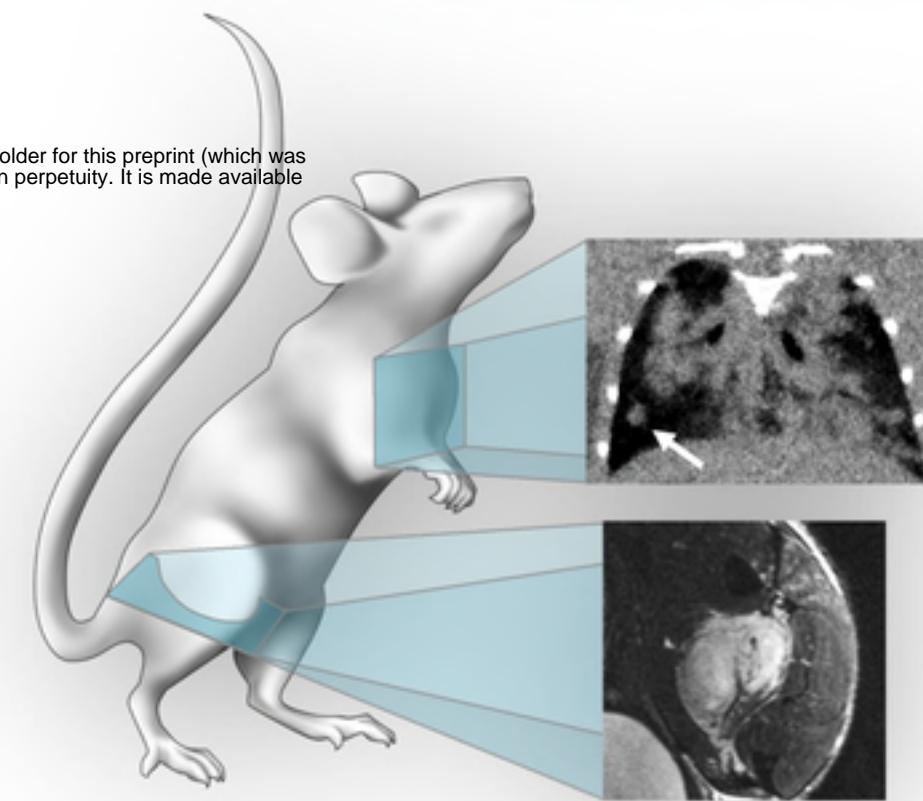
849 variations less than 11 % across the field of view without significant cupping artifacts  
850 due to beam hardening (D.c.).

## PATIENT ARM

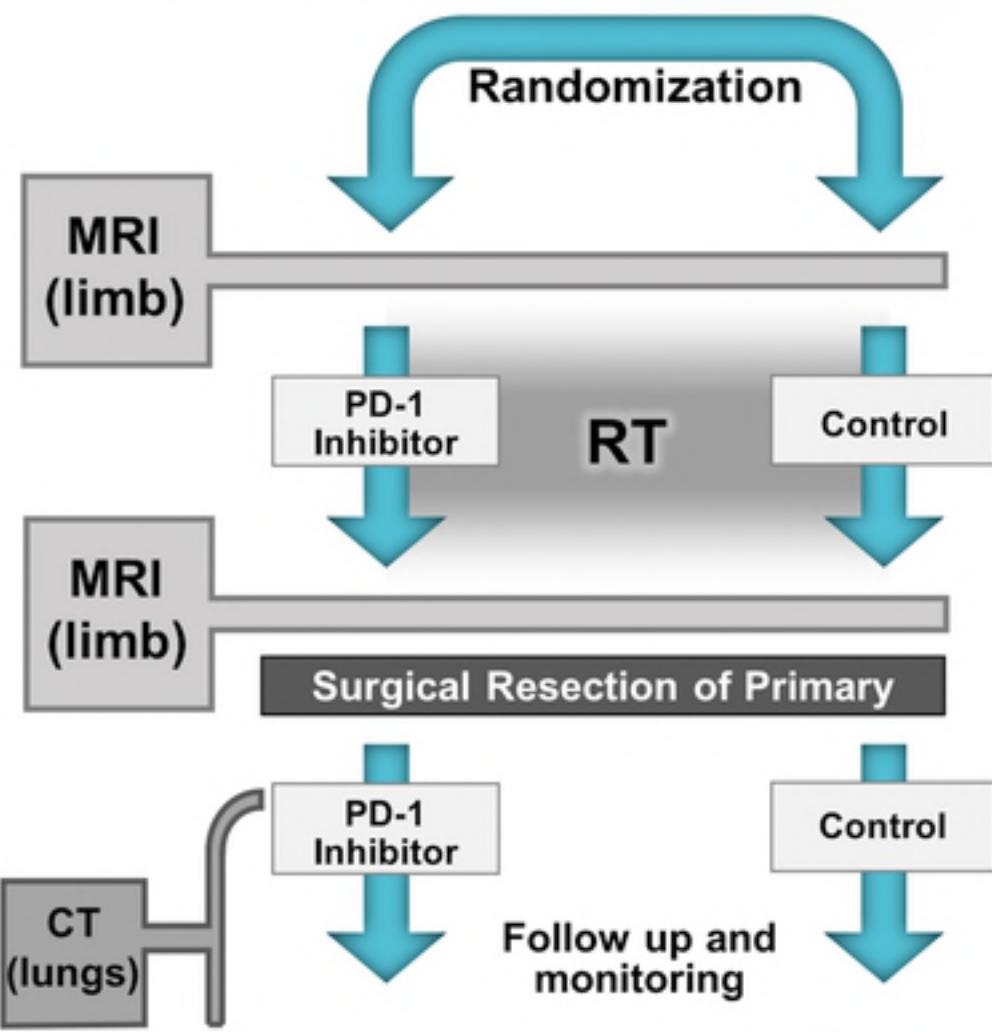
bioRxiv preprint doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/462861>; this version posted November 5, 2018. The copyright holder for this preprint (which was not certified by peer review) is the author/funder, who has granted bioRxiv a license to display the preprint in perpetuity. It is made available under aCC-BY 4.0 International license.



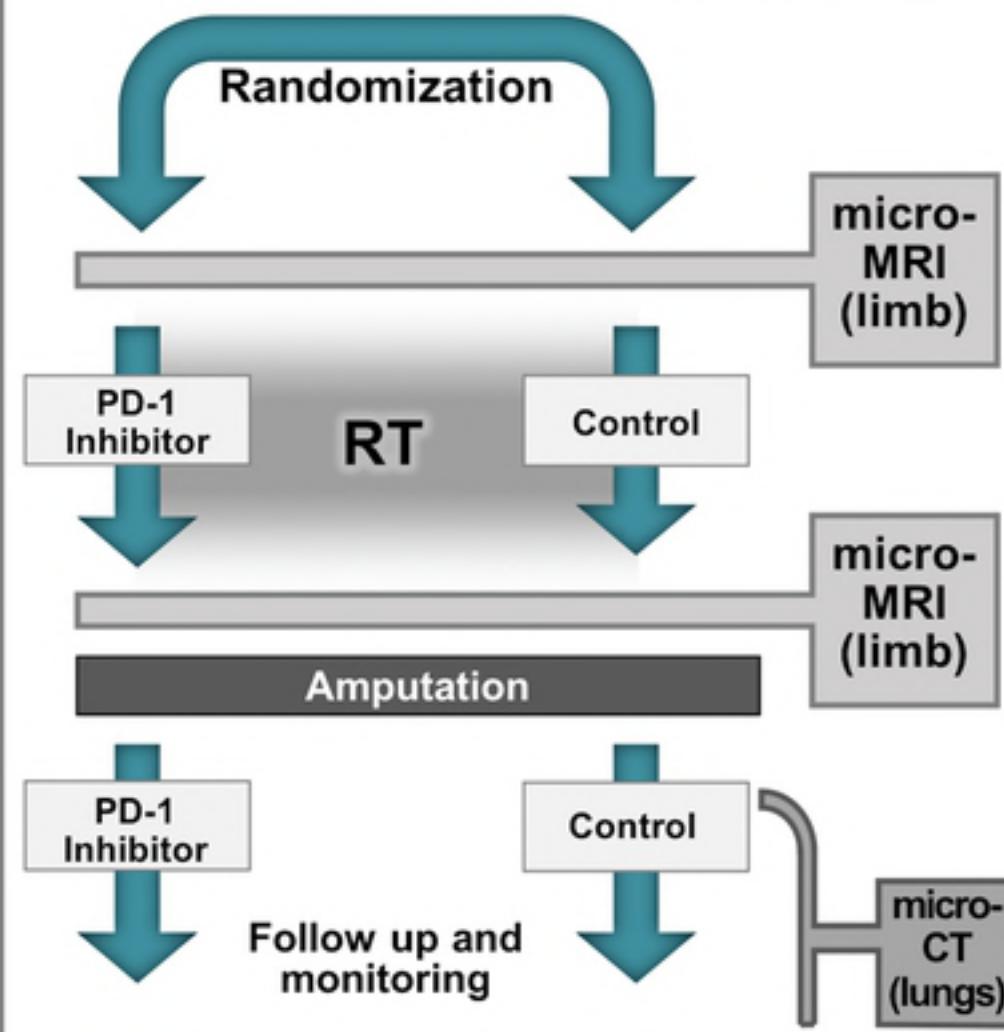
## ANIMAL ARM



### STUDY DESIGN

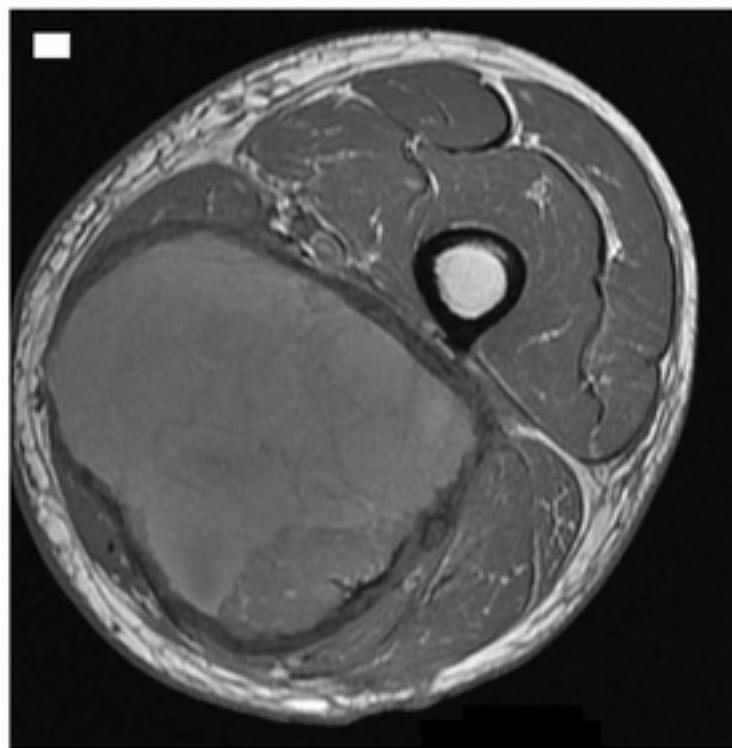


### STUDY DESIGN

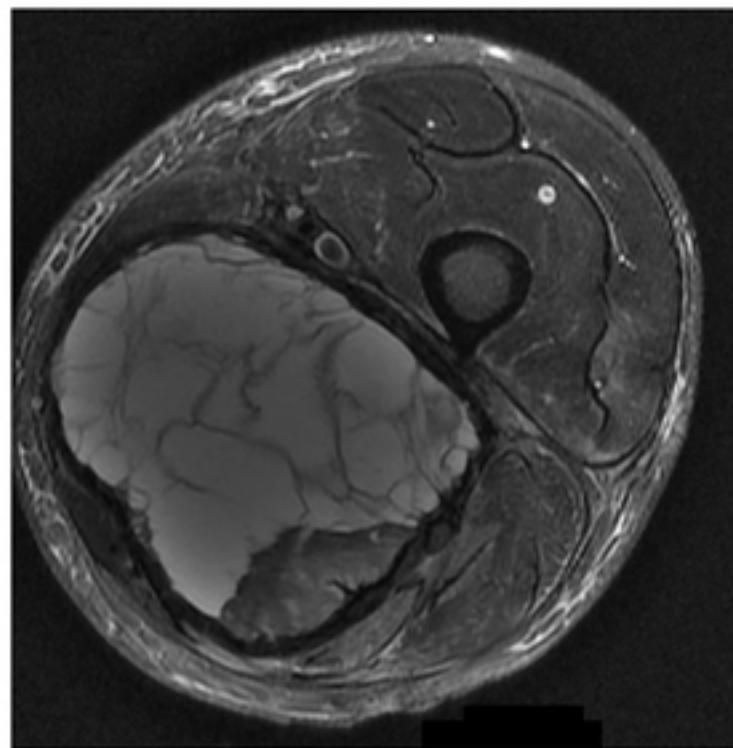


Human Subject

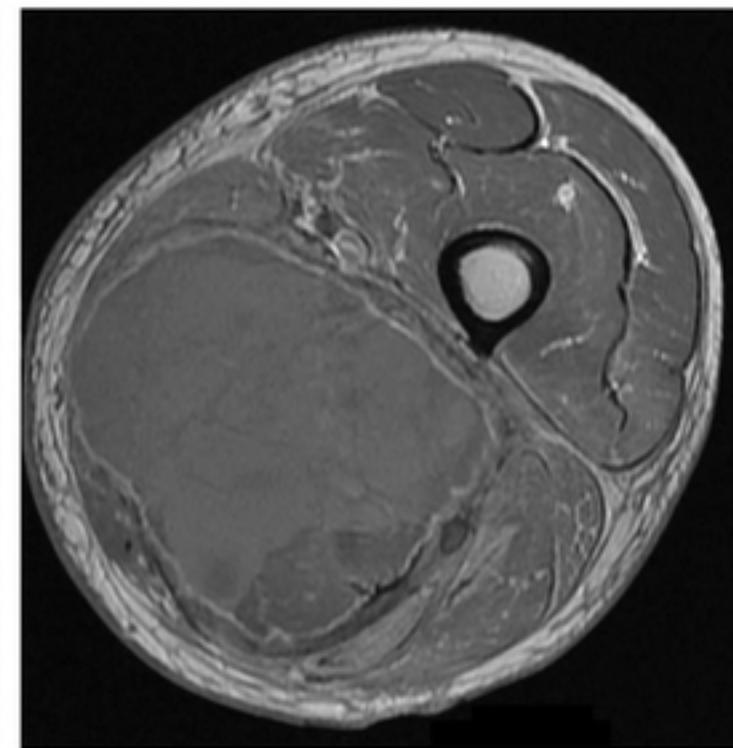
T1-Weighted Image



T2-Weighted Image



T1-Weighted Image  
+ Contrast



Animal Model

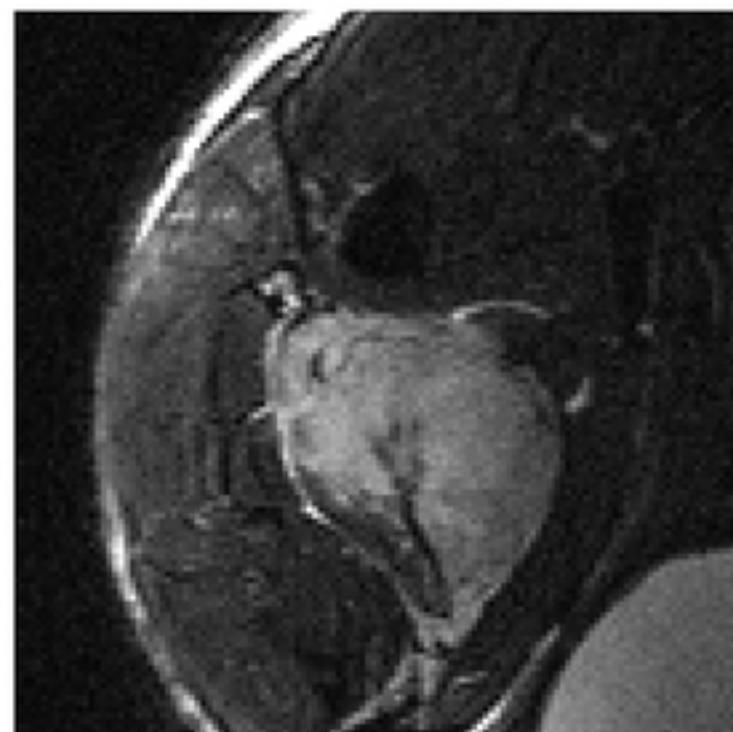
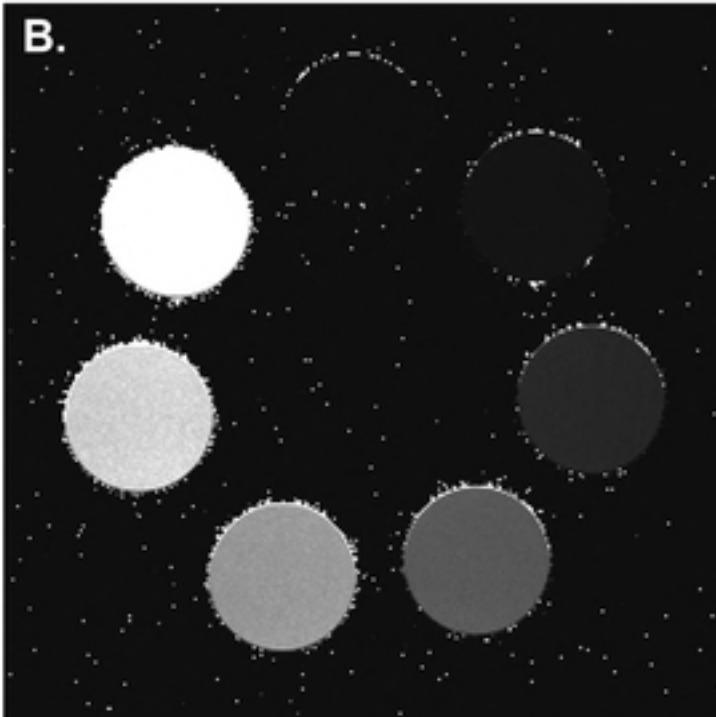
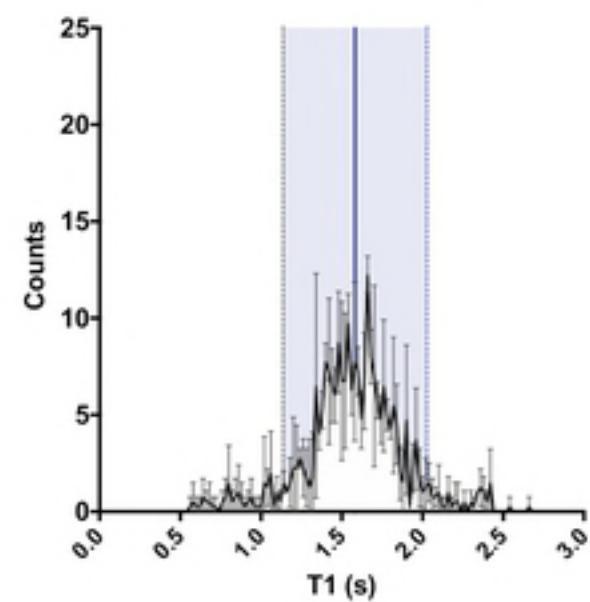
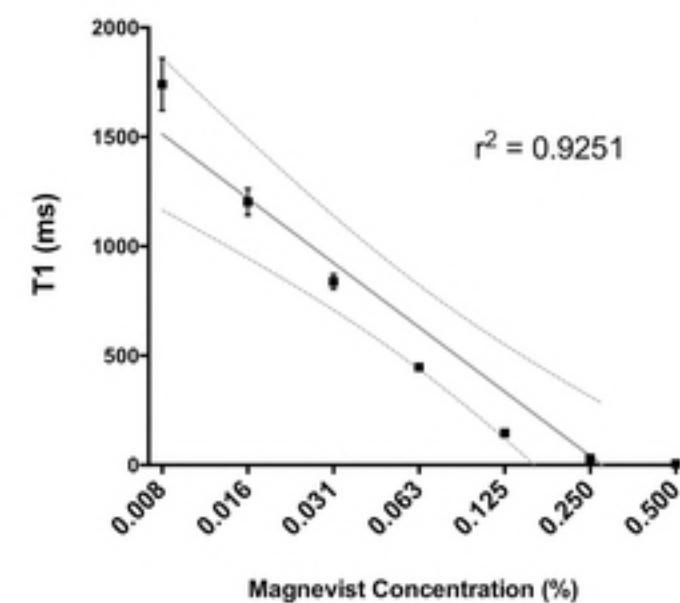


Fig 2

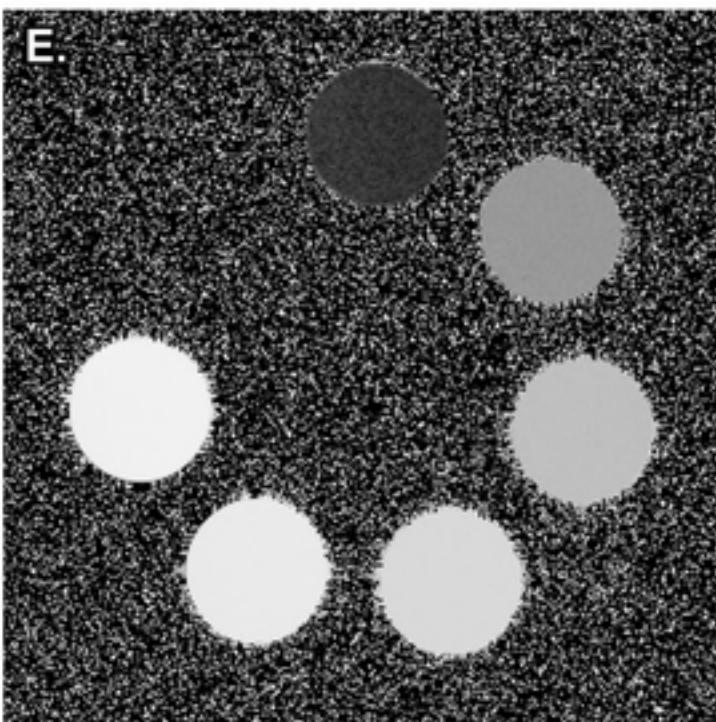
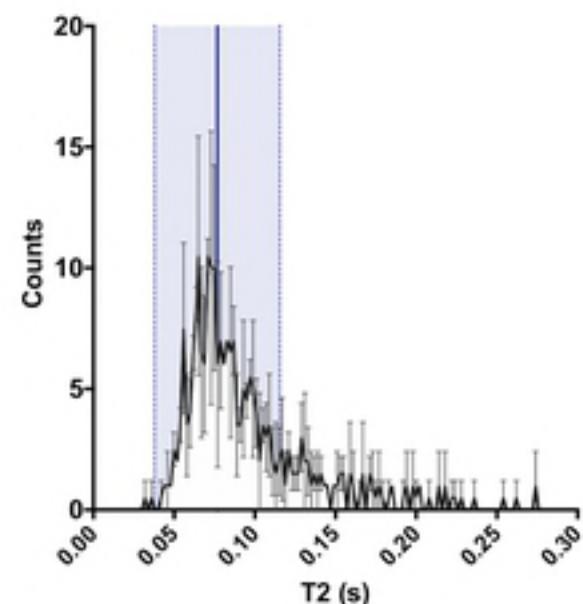
**A. T1 values measured in tumor tissues**



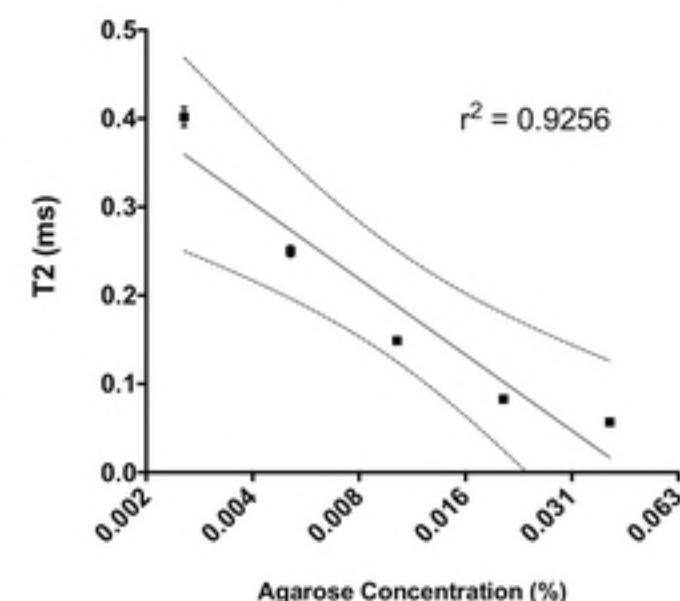
**C. T1 measurement as a function of Magnevist concentration in water**



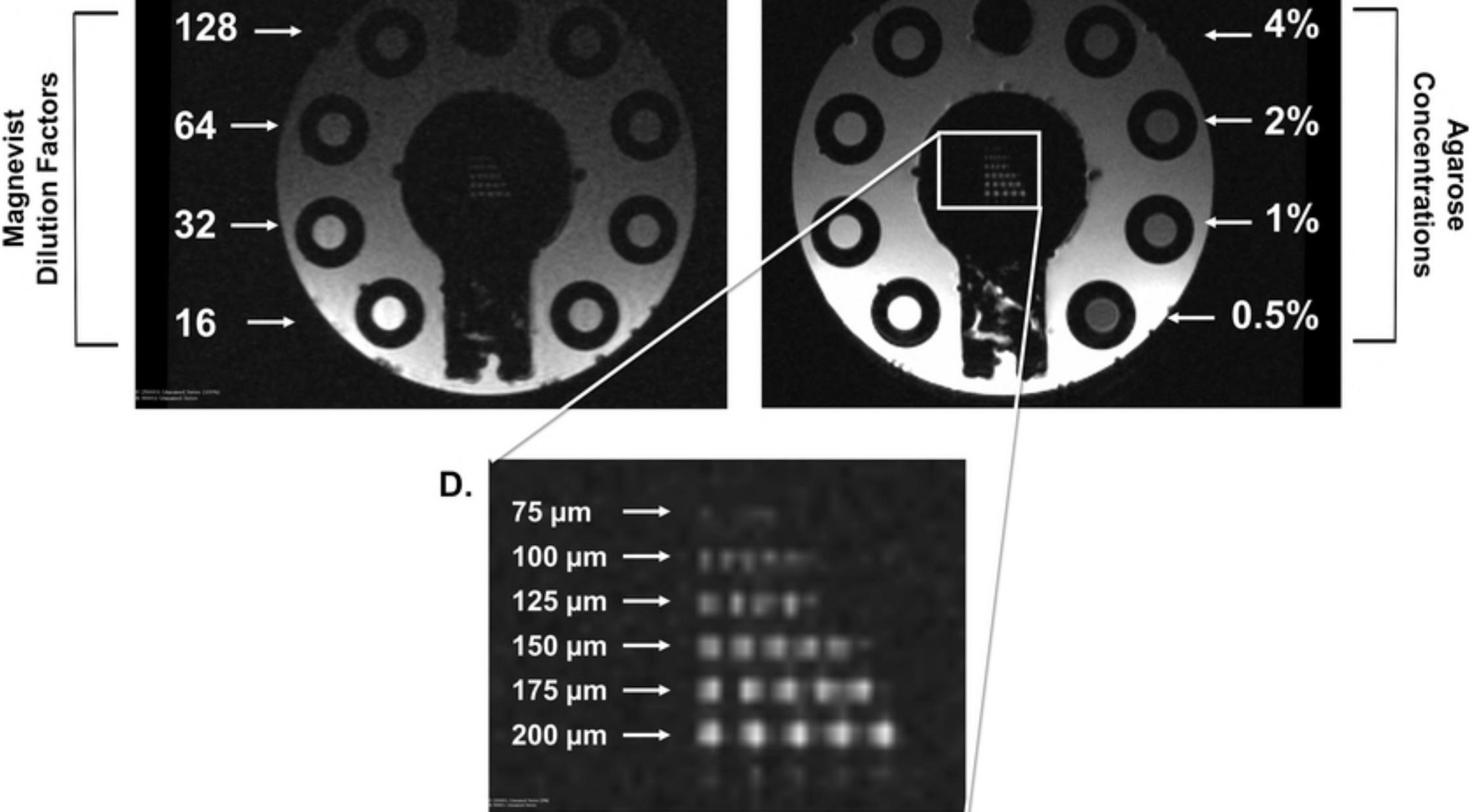
**D. T2 values measured in tumor tissues**

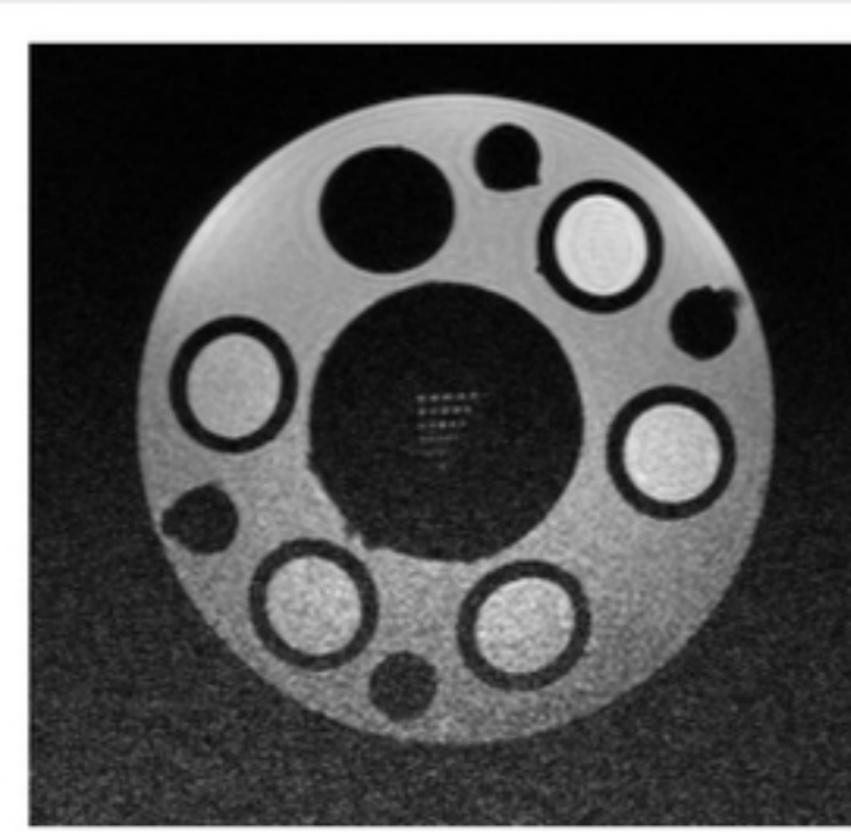
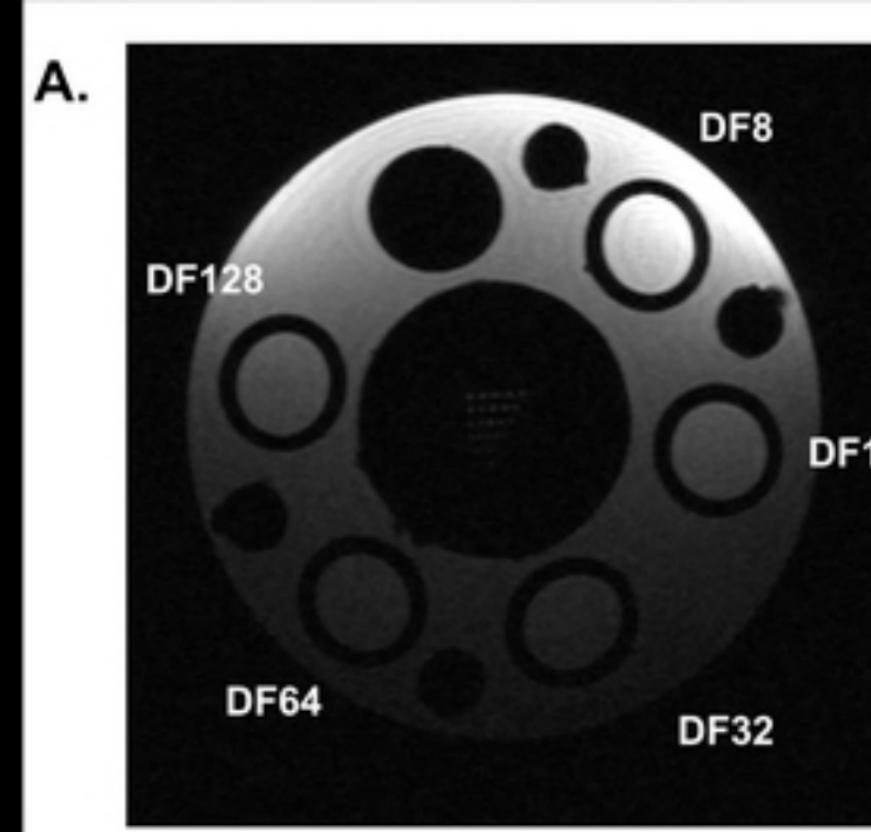


**F. T2 measurement as a function of agarose concentration in water**



**Fig 3**

**A.****B.****Fig 4**



Measured signal of a magnevist series dilution in the original T1-weighted image as well as the bias corrected image

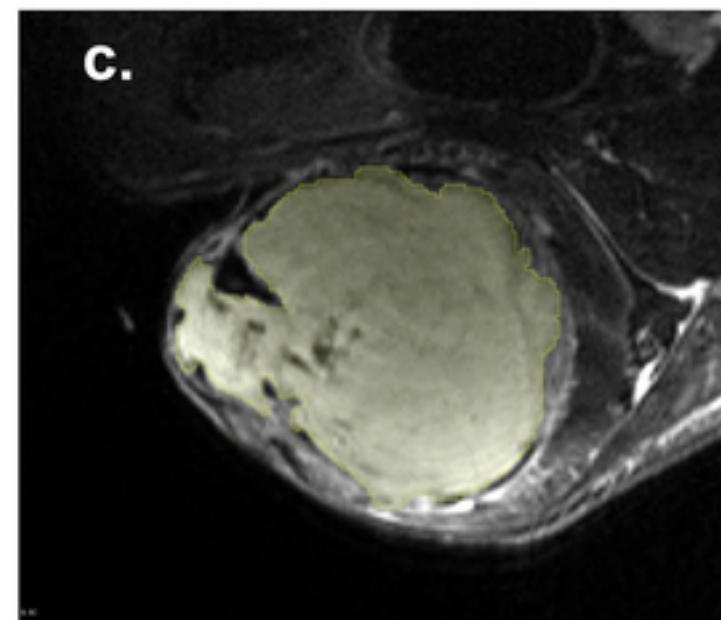
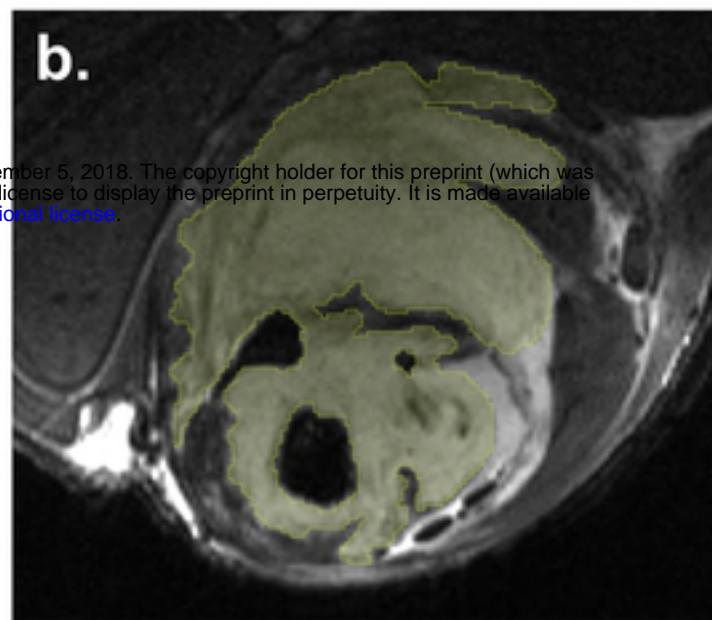
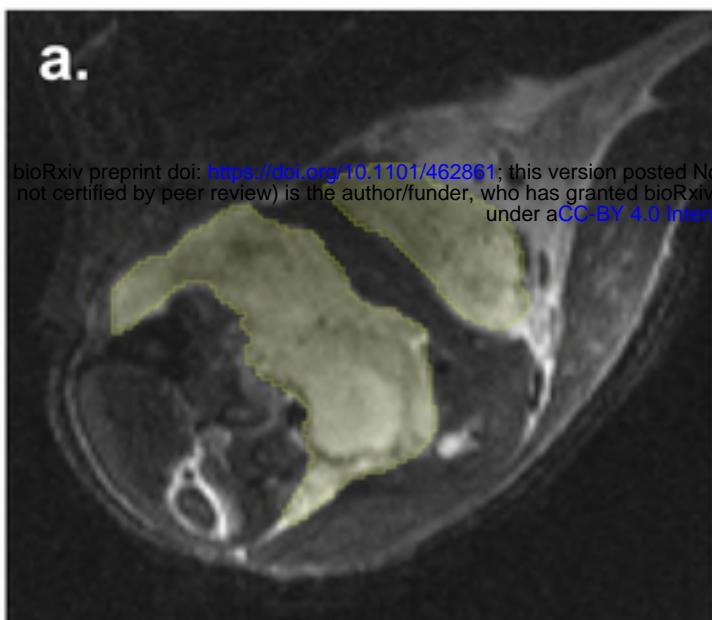
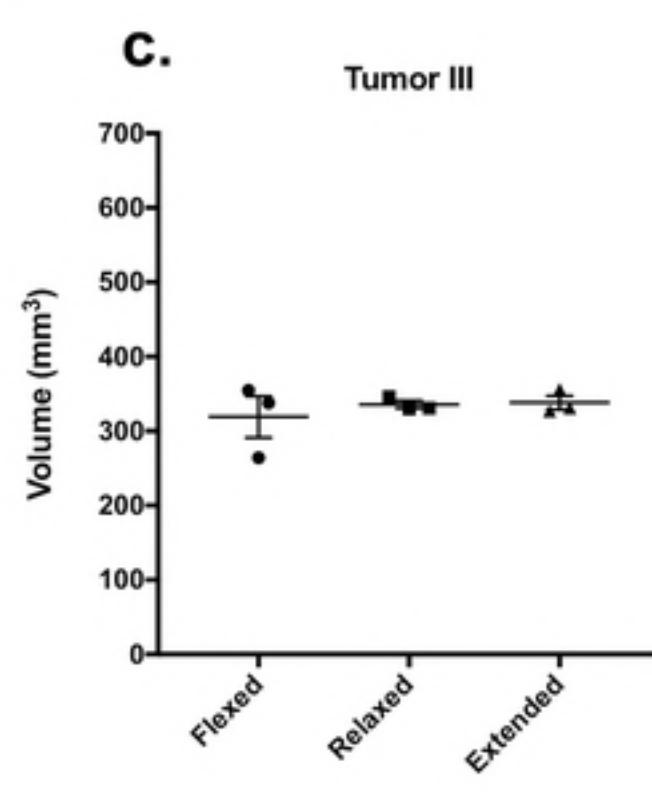
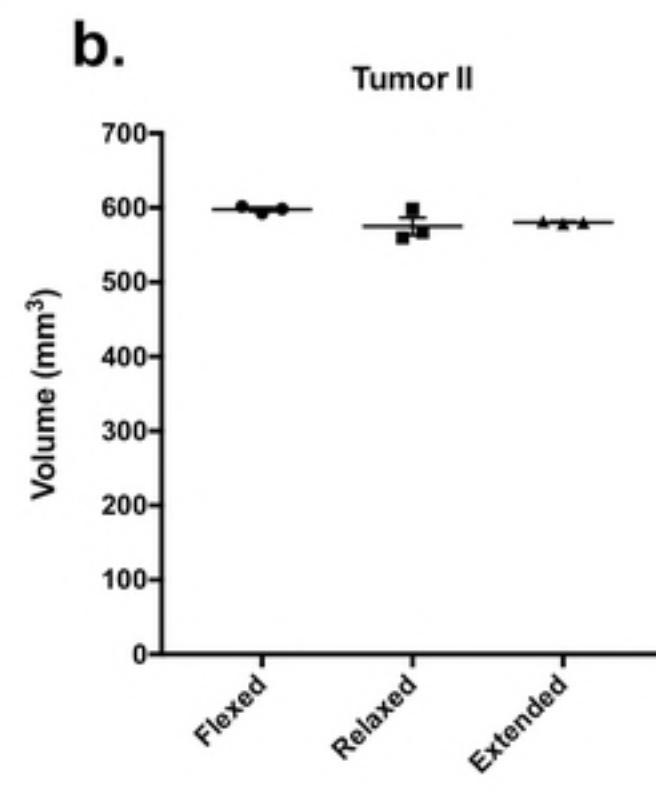
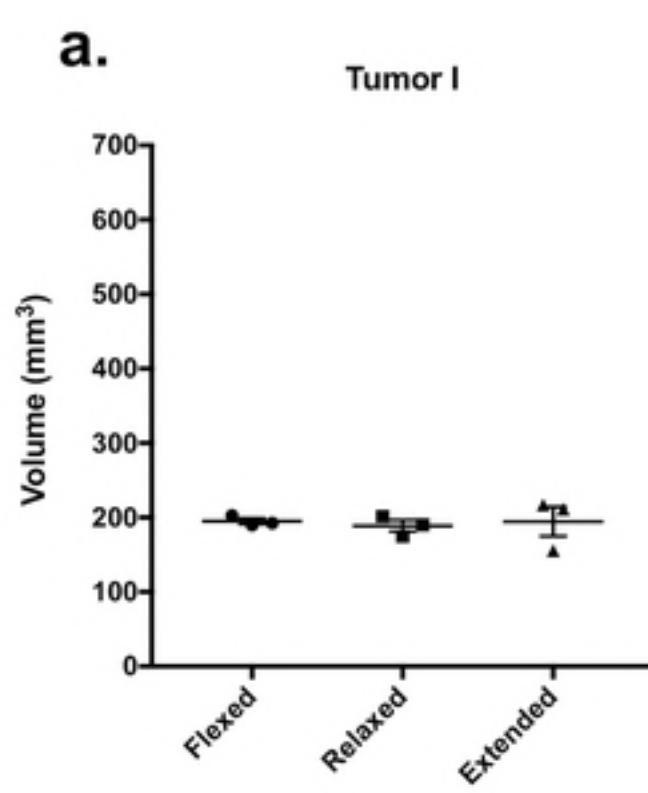
Fig 5

**A.**

Flexed

Relaxed

Extended

**B.****C.****D.**

#### Reproducibility of repeated scans

(One-way ANOVA analysis)

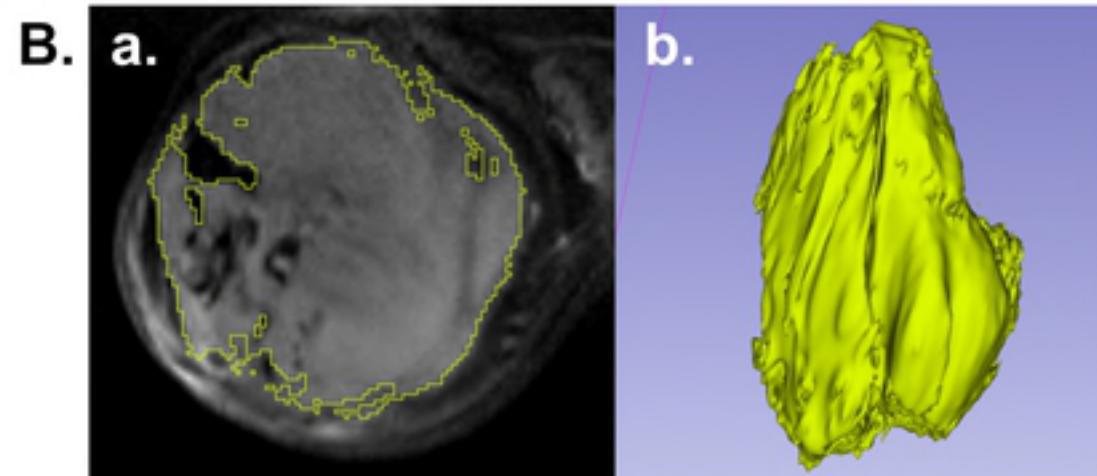
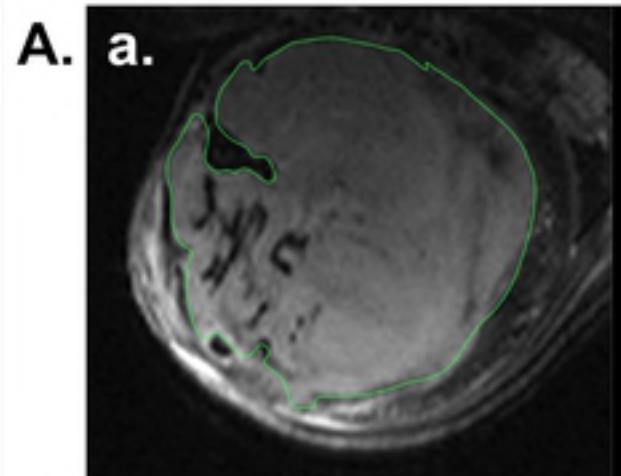
	F	p	$r^2$	Significant difference between means
<b>Tumor I</b>	0.752	0.9284	0.02445	ns
<b>Tumor II</b>	2.838	0.1357	0.4861	ns
<b>Tumor III</b>	0.366	0.708	0.1087	ns

**E.**

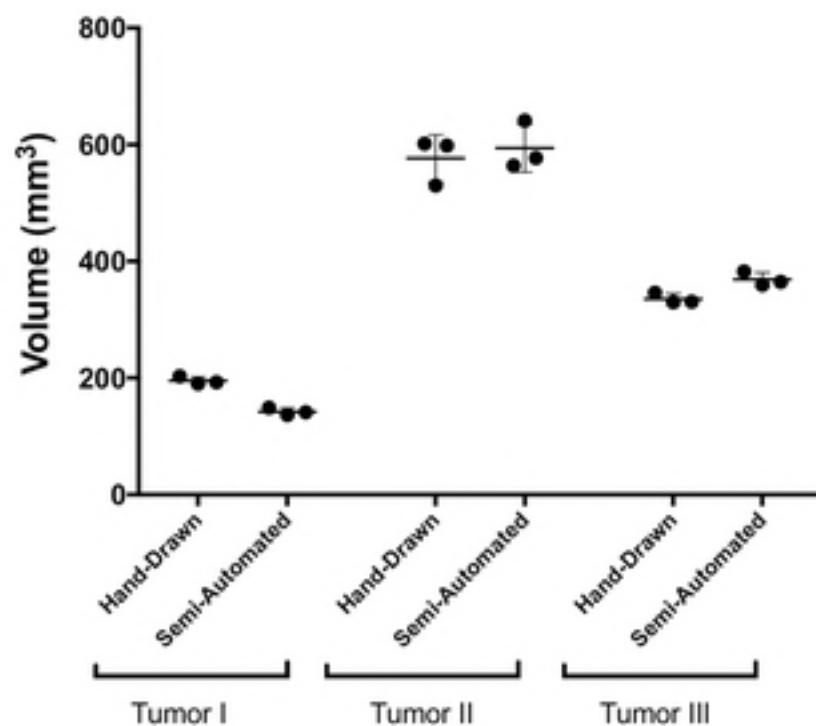
#### Precision of repeated measures

(Brown-Forsythe test)

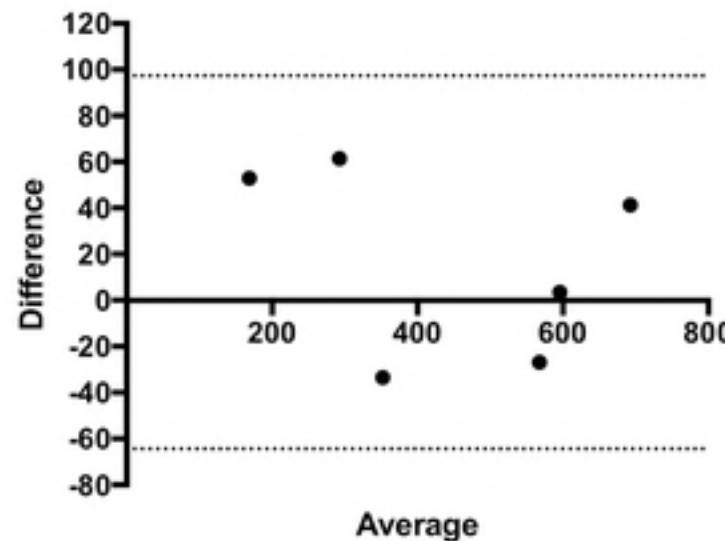
	F	p	Significant difference in SD
	0.6131	0.5724	ns
	1.327	0.3334	ns
	0.9043	0.4537	ns

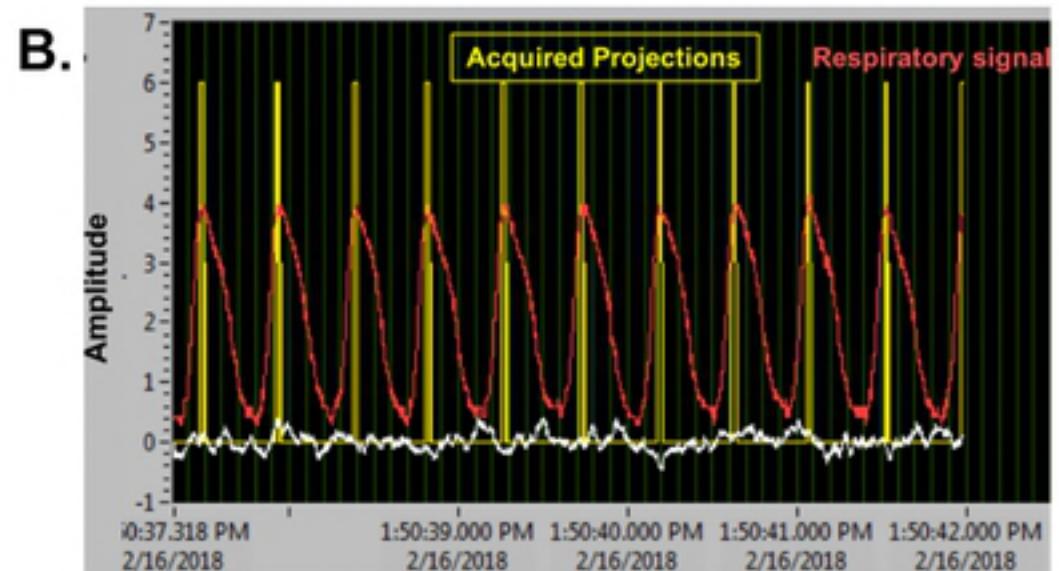
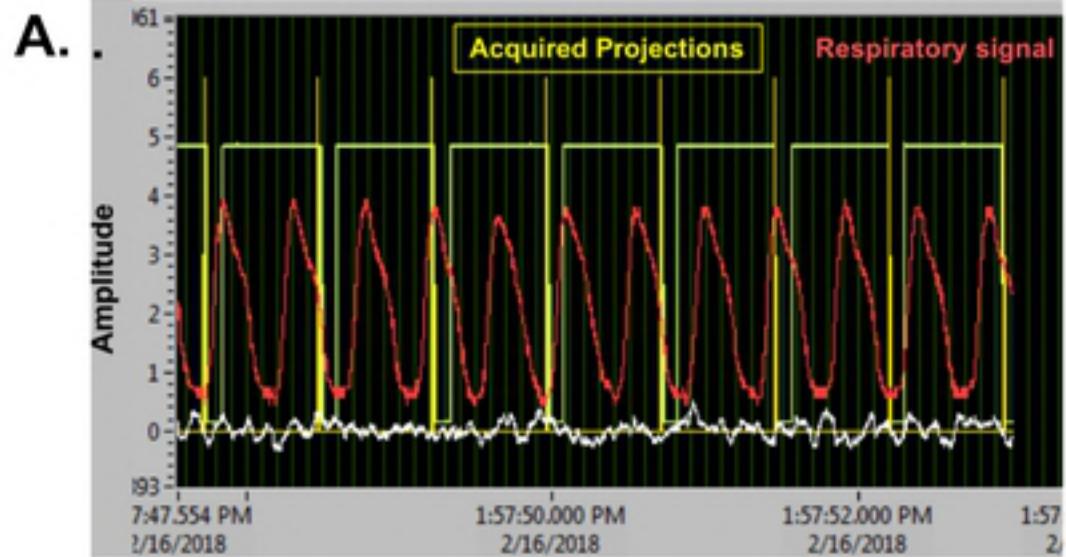


**C.** Repeatability of tumor volume measurement in relaxed sarcoma-bearing limbs with hand-drawn and semi-automated segmentation

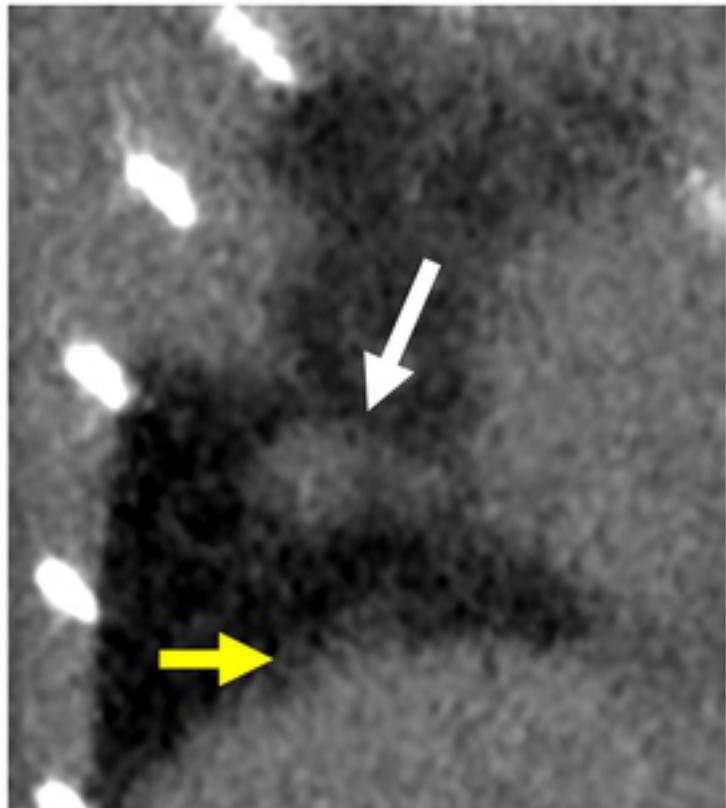


**D.** Bland-Altman analysis of tumor segmentation: agreement between hand-drawn and semi-automated methods

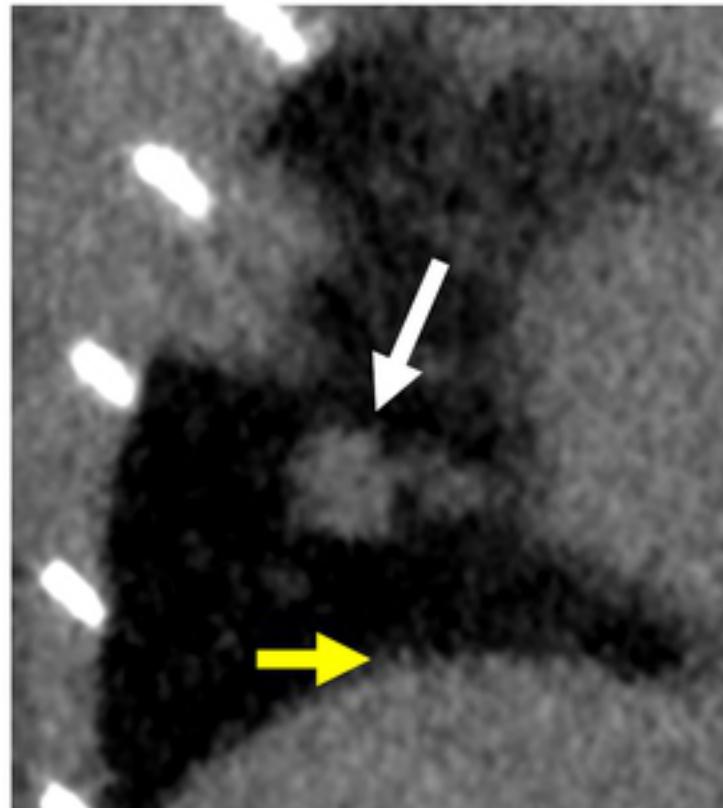




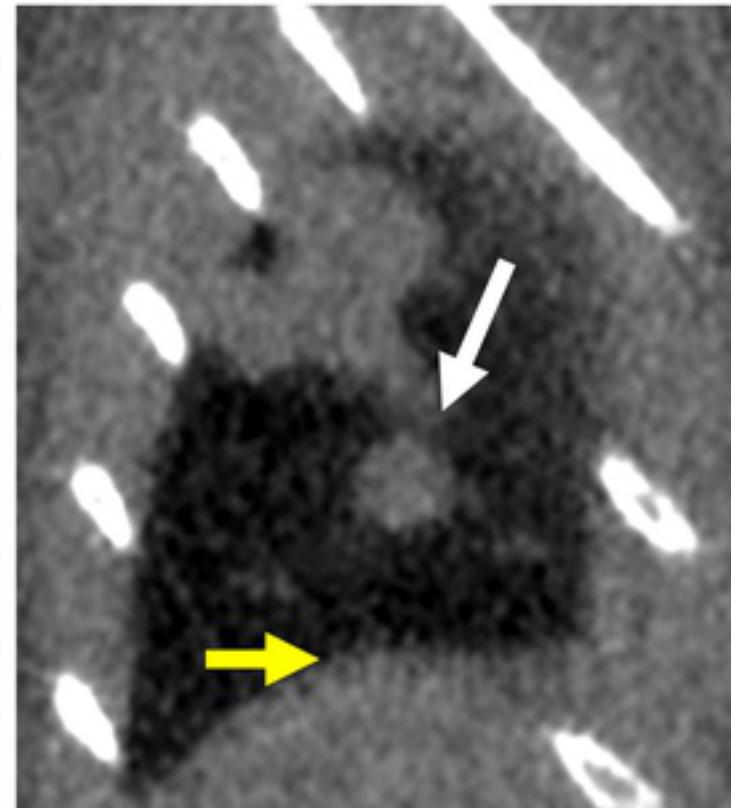
**C. No Gating**



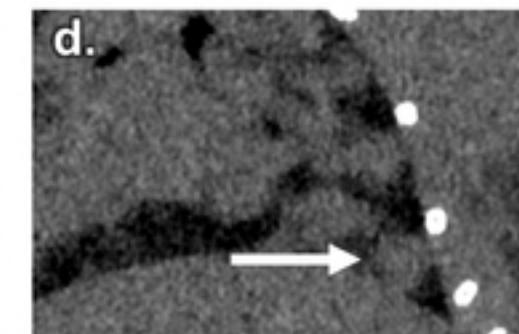
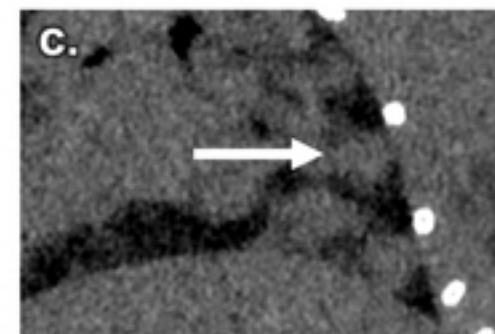
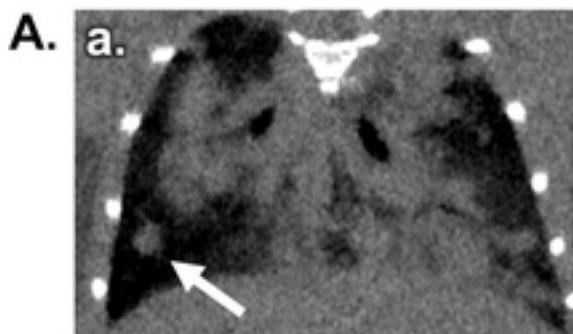
**D. Respiratory Gating**



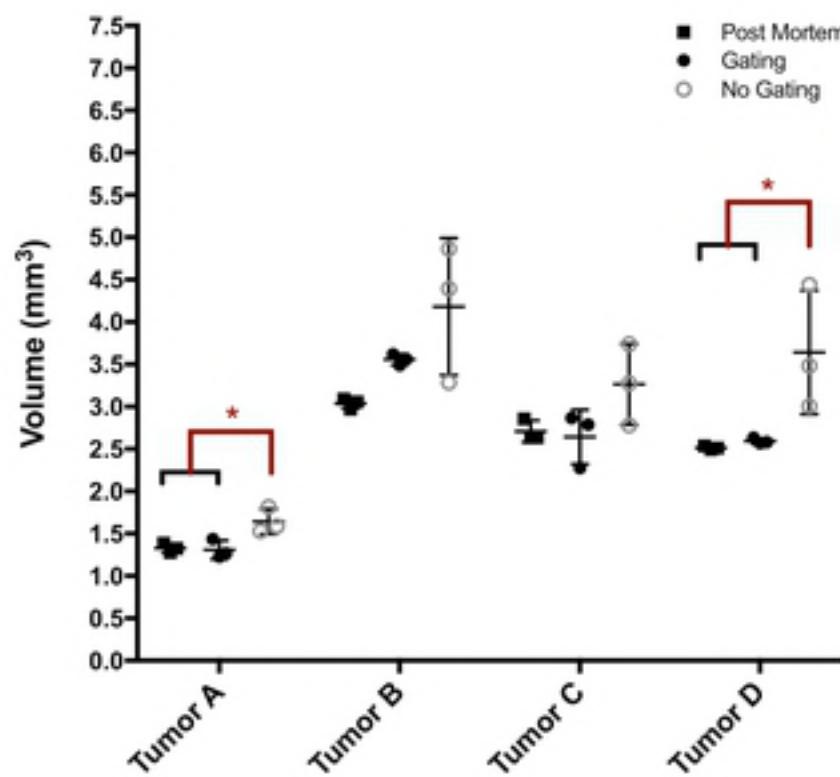
**E. Post-Mortem**



**Fig 8**



**B. Tumor volumes measured in uCT with or without respiratory gating compared to post-mortem images**



**C.**

**Analysis of variance in lung tumor analysis with uCT**  
(One-way ANOVA analysis)

	F	p	$r^2$	Significant
Tumor A	8.362	0.0184	0.736	*
Tumor B	4.433	0.0658	0.5964	ns
Tumor C	2.992	0.1255	0.4994	ns
Tumor D	6.686	0.0297	0.6903	*

**D.**

**Deviation and variance of repeated tumor volume measures in uCT**

	Standard Deviation				Average Variance	Average coefficient of variance (%)
	Tumor A	Tumor B	Tumor C	Tumor D		
Post-Mortem	0.054	0.062	0.129	0.022	0.0060	2.94
Respiratory Gating	0.111	0.066	0.321	0.034	0.0302	5.94
No Gating	0.150	0.810	0.480	0.730	0.3603	15.81

**Fig 9**

**Documents/Attachments**

File Name: S2P - ParaVision 6.0.1 Operation and Simple Scan Setup.docx  
SOP-Semi-automated tumor segmentation with 3D GrowthCut in 3D Slicer.docx

**GENERAL PROTOCOL**

- Importation of DICOM data into 3D Slicer
  - Importation of the DICOM data. The user finds the typical viewing platform, along with options in the Module Panel (left side) for accessing data.
  - To import DICOM files, select "Load DICOM data" from the Module panel. Alternatively, select the DICOM button at the top left of the viewer.
  - The user can access previously loaded DICOMs from the resulting DICOM browser. Once a desired study is selected, click "Load" to open. Once a DICOM file has been imported into the browser, it will be available to open via the DICOM browser.

**CIVM Image Management: Tumor Growth Rate**

**Datasets**

Thumbnail	Name	Description	Stacks	ID	Scan Date
	180420-1_B20027_T2W	Scan Day 2 (one week after initial scans) of control mice b...	3	14717	2018-04-27
	180420-1_B20027_T2W+Contax	Scan Day 2 (one week after initial scans) of control mice b...	3	14716	2018-04-27

**CIVM Image Management: U24 CT Lung**

**Datasets**

Thumbnail	Name	Description	Stacks	ID	Scan Date
	IM-0001-0250.dcm	mouse / sarcoma	3	14725	2018-04-24
	IM-0001-0250.dcm	mouse / Lung Tumors Gating	3	14724	2018-04-24

**unknown sequence**

14717: 180420-1\_B20027\_T2W > Return to Previous Results  
Download as DICOM Stack (original format) [9 MB]

**unknown sequence**

71%

30/60

**Generic Acquisition Report**

**Tumor Segmentation**

Fig 10