

**I**

Mouse **GGCCCTTTATTTGTCAGTTTATCGAGAAGCTCTTTCGAGAAACCATAGAGC**  
Human **GGCC**T**TTC**ATT**TG**C**CAA**TTT**AT**A**G**A**GA**AG**TTG**TTT**TC**G**A**GA**AA**AC**T**AT**AG**A**AC**  
**CAGCTGTGCGTGGAGCAAATGCTCACCTCAGCACCTTCAGCTTCACAAAAG**  
**CAGC**C**GTG**CG**GG**G**AG**CAA**AC**C**AC**C**AC**CT**T**A**G**C**AC**CT**T**A**G**T**TT**C**AC**G**AA**G**G**  
**TGGATGTGGGTGTCAGCAGCCCTGAGAGTCAATGGTGTAAAGGTTTATACT**  
**T**CG**A**C**GT**GG**G**C**C**AG**C**AG**CC**CT**C**A**G**G**A**T**CA**AT**GG**T**GT**AA**GG**T**AT**A**C**A**CT**  
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Score	Expect	Gaps	Identities
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Figure S1

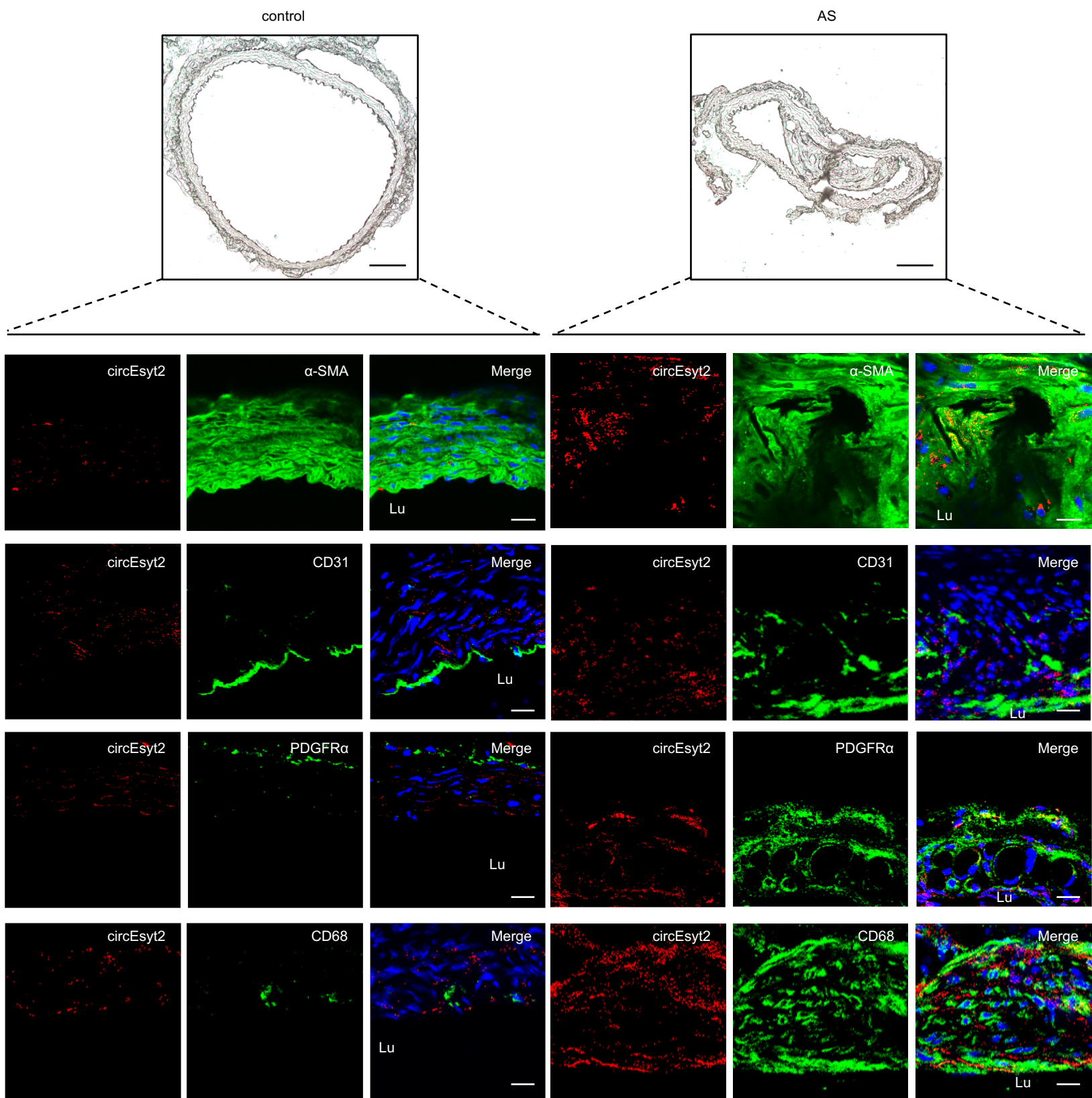
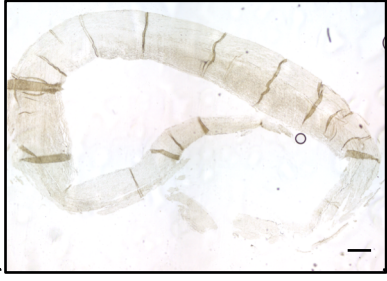


Figure S2

mild CAD



severe CAD

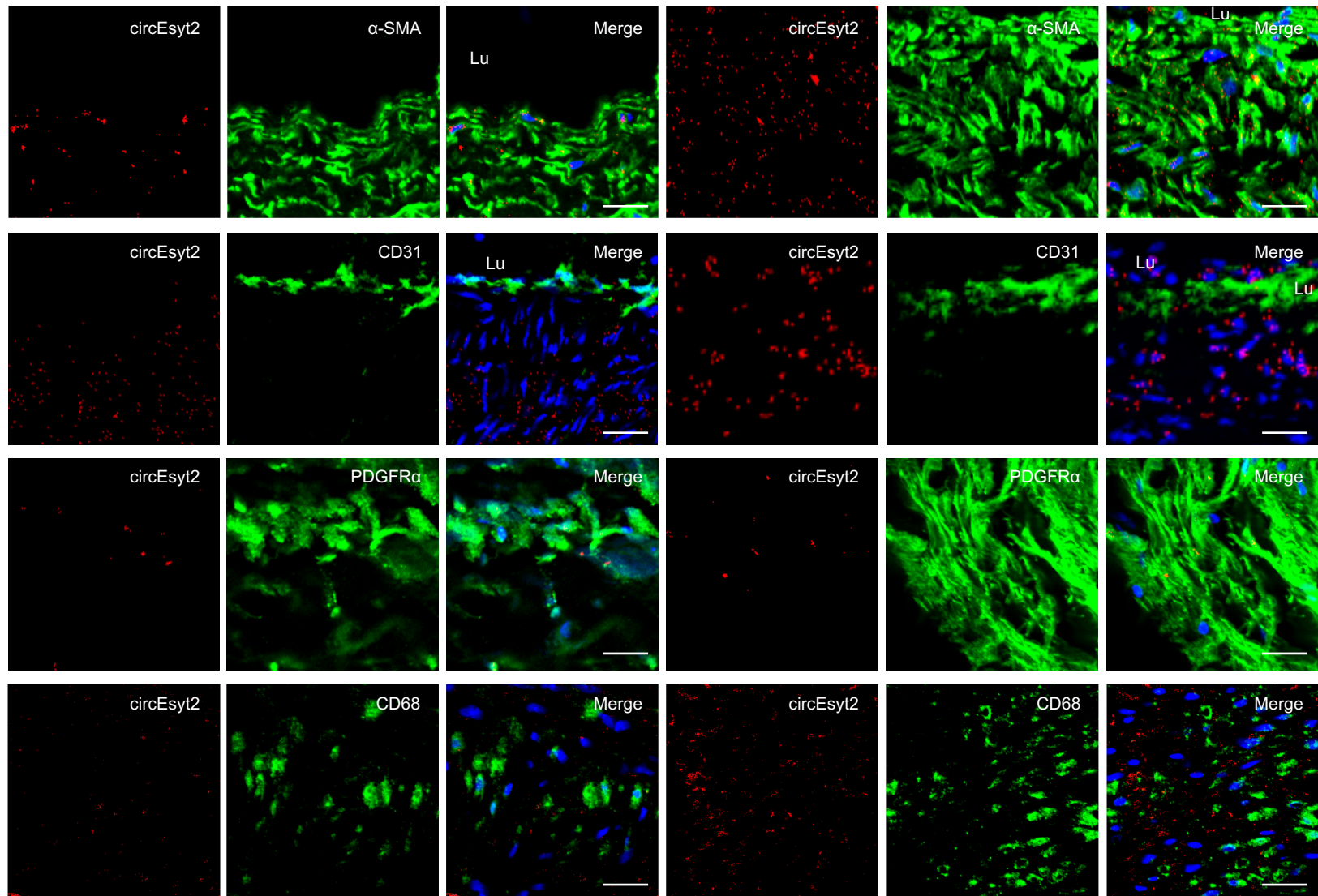
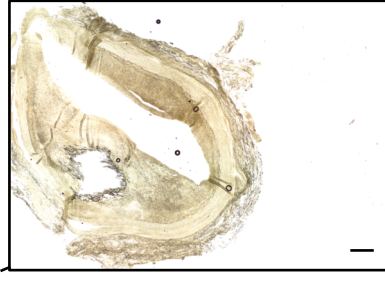
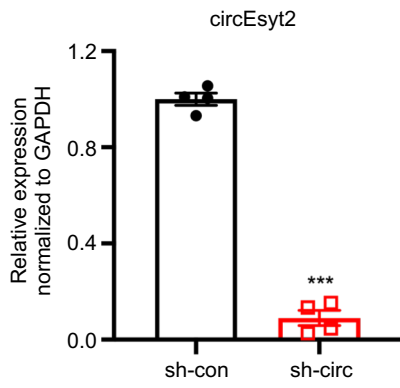
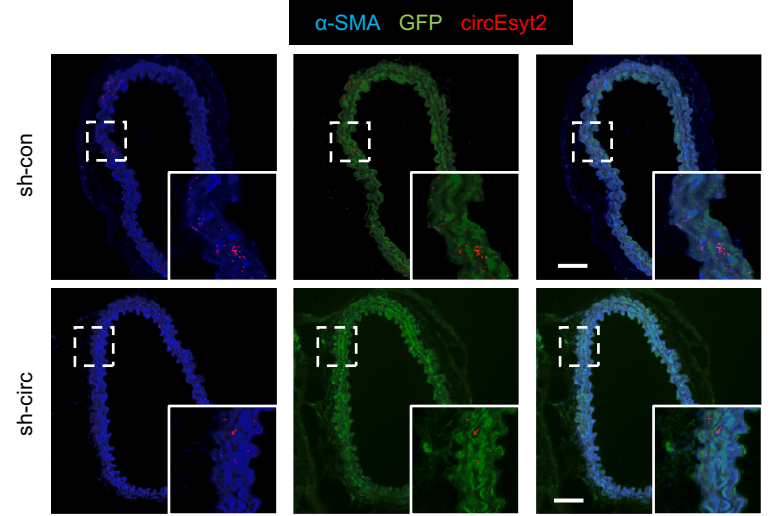
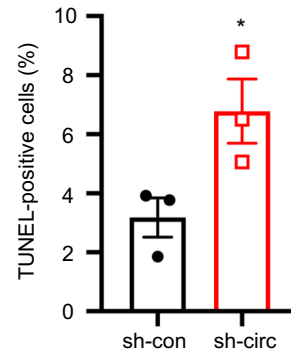
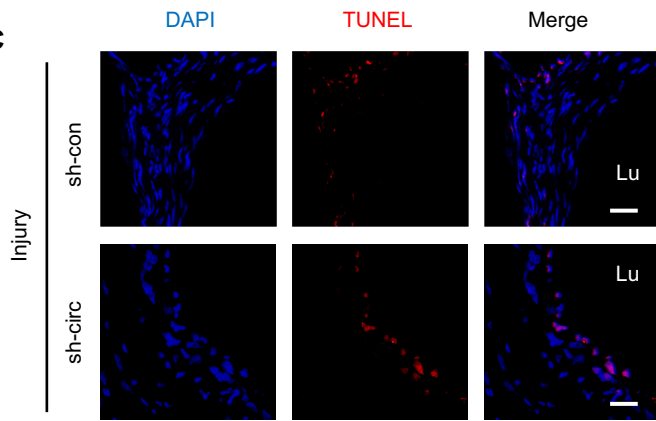
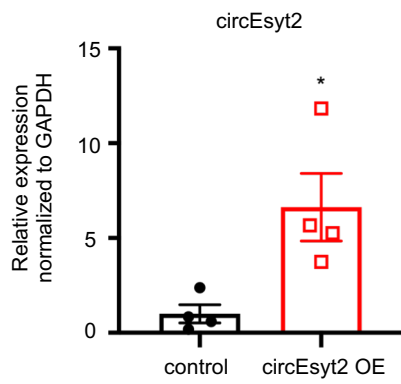
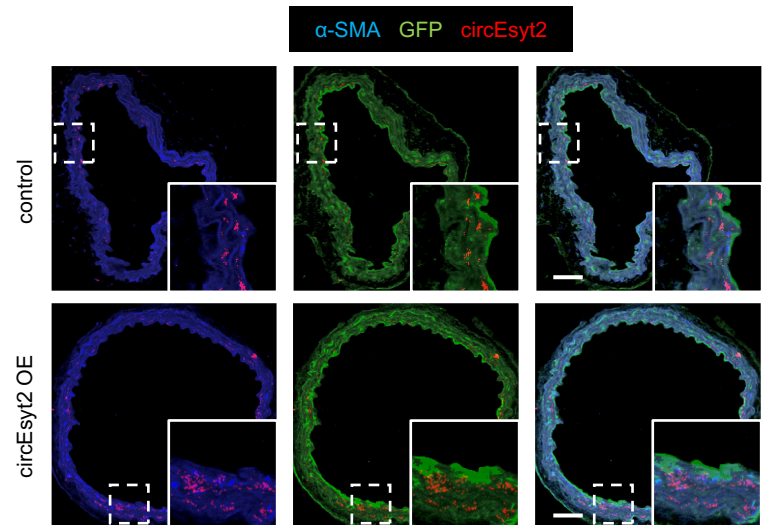
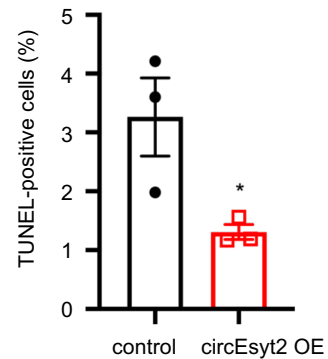
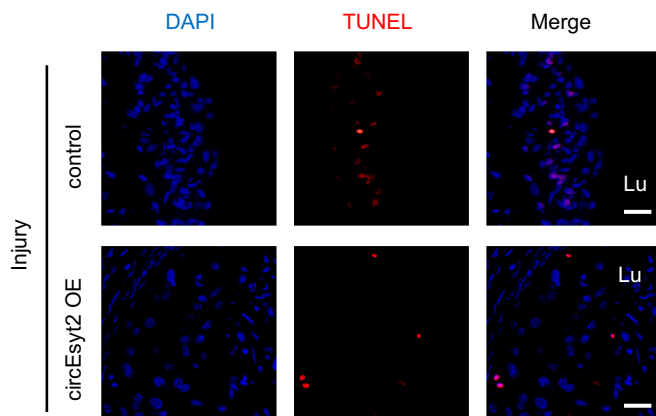


Figure S3

**A****B****C****D****E****F**

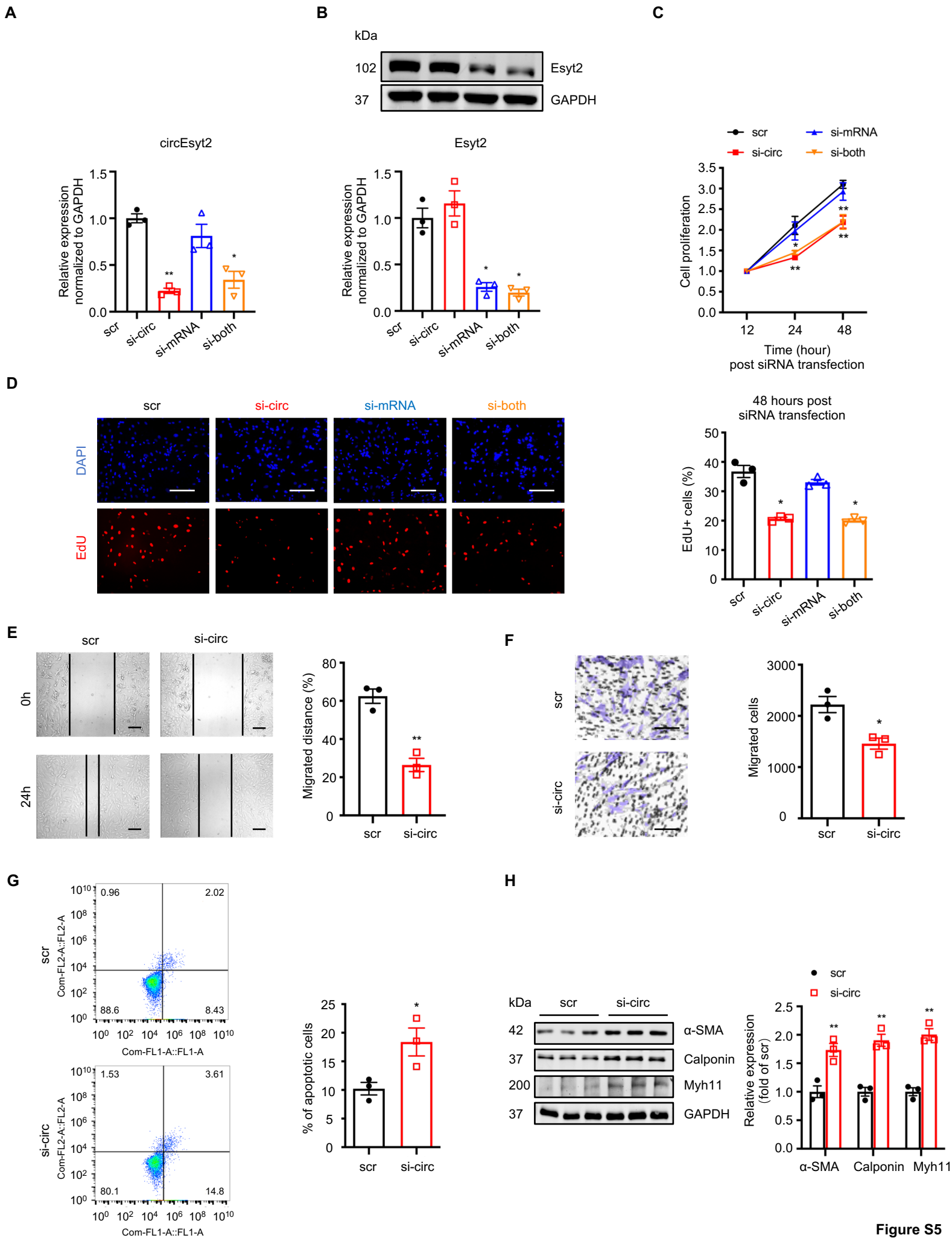
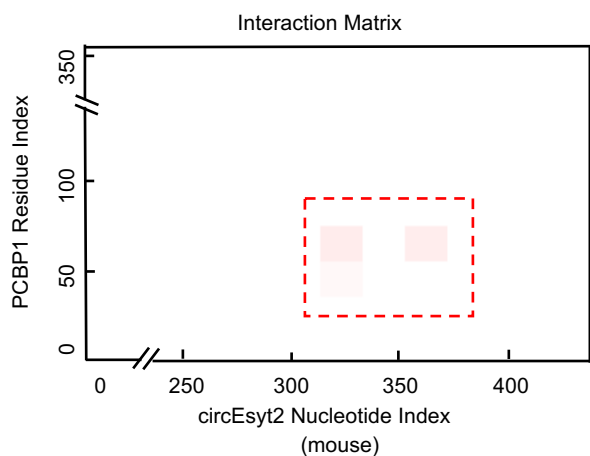
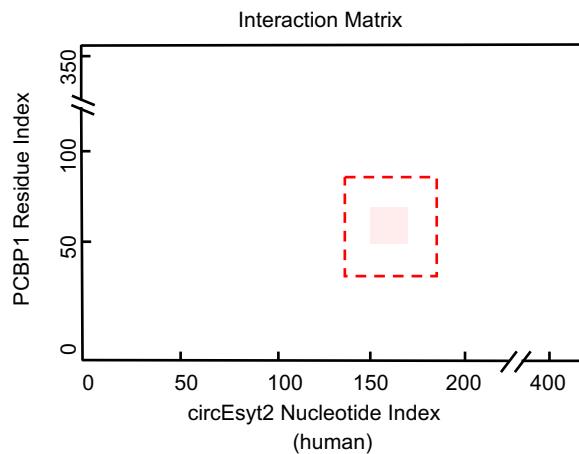


Figure S5

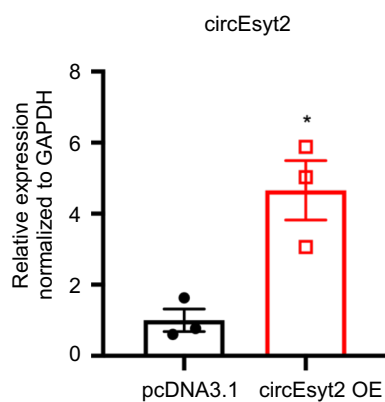
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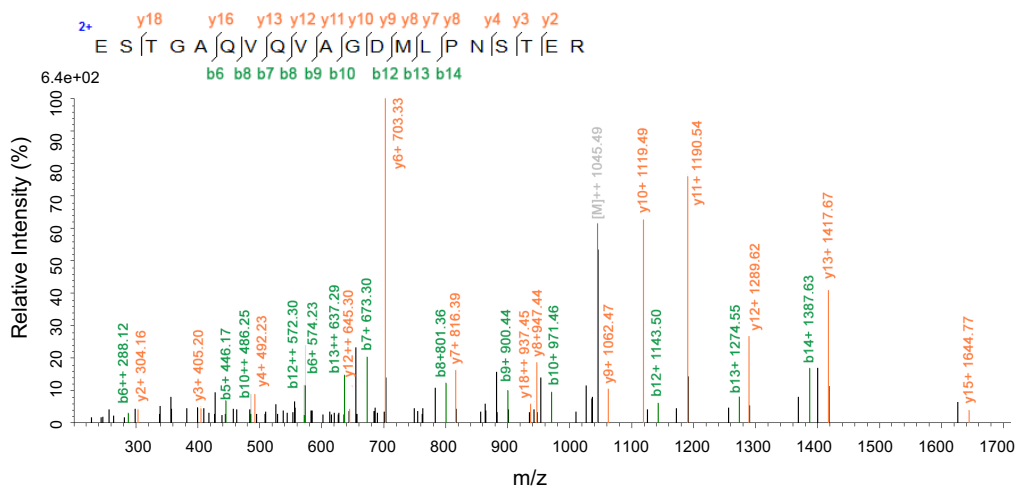
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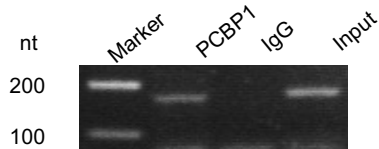
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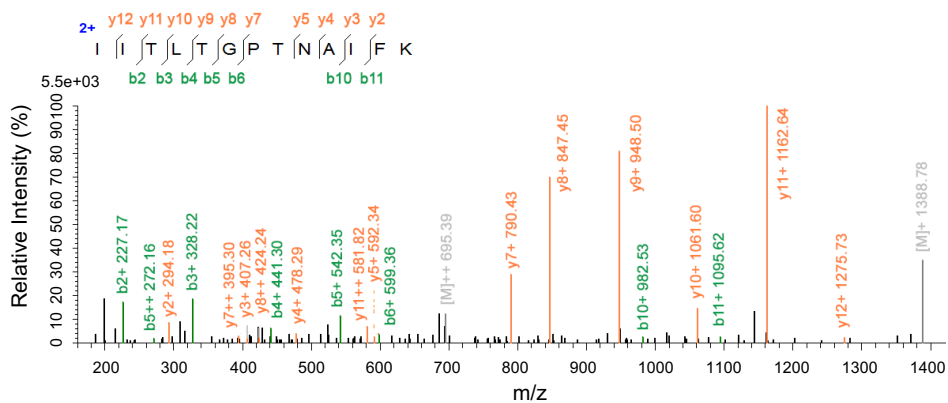
D1



E



D2



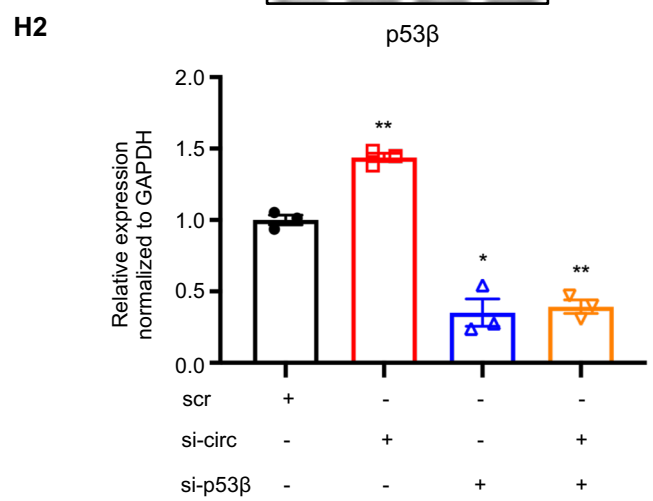
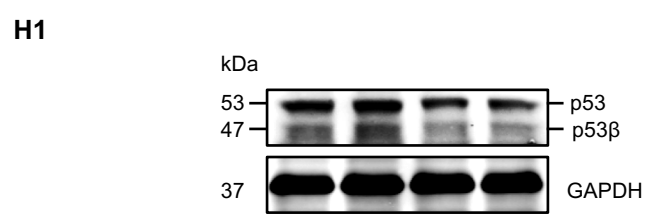
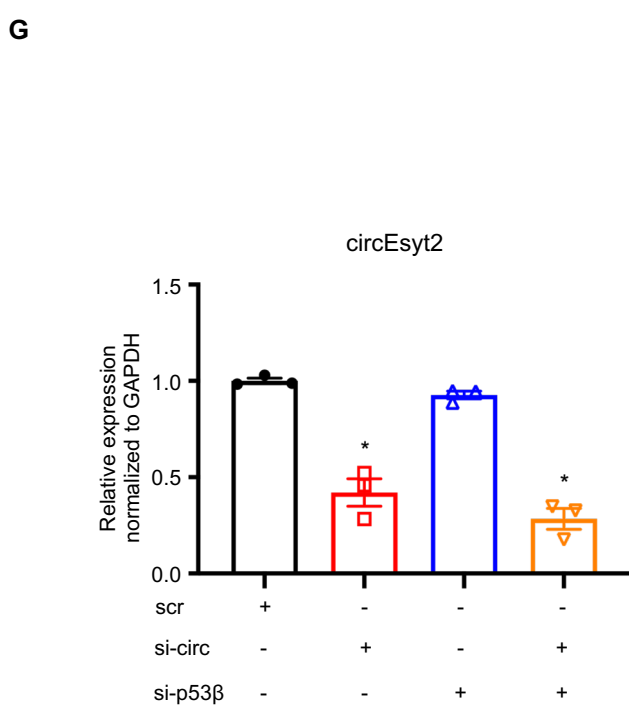
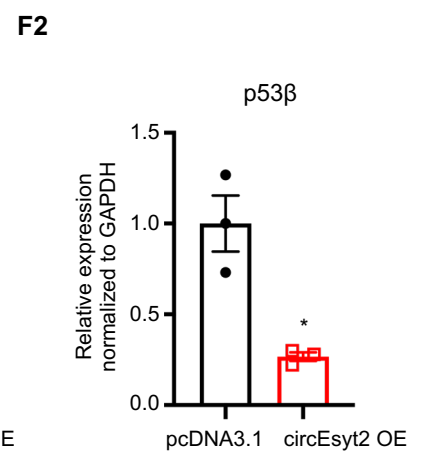
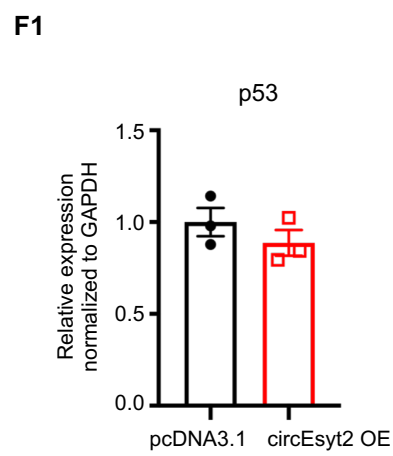
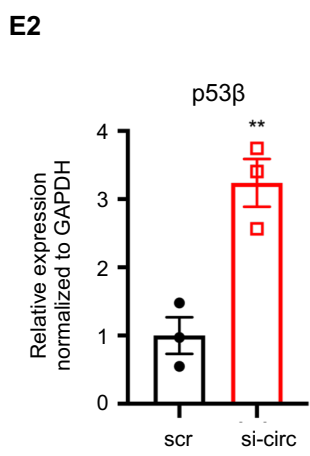
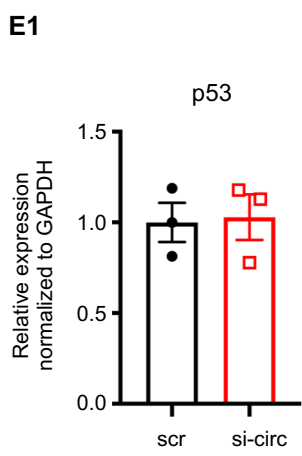
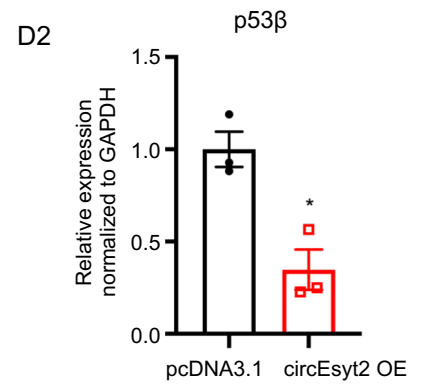
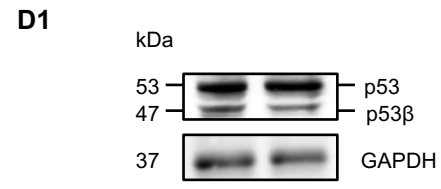
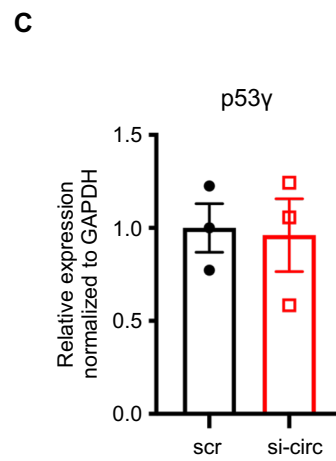
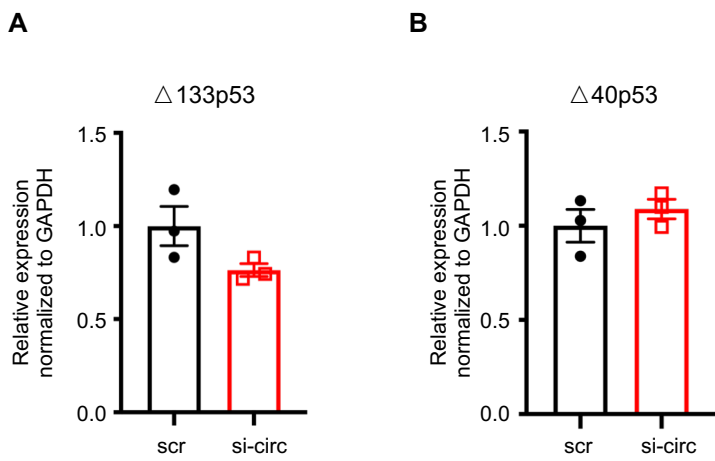
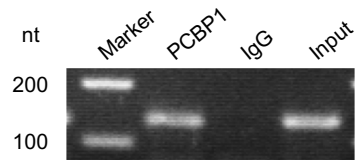
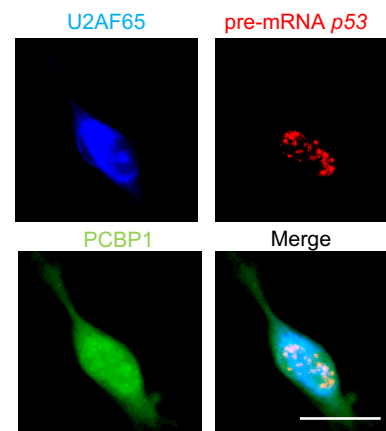
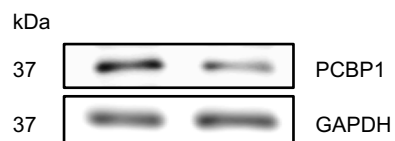
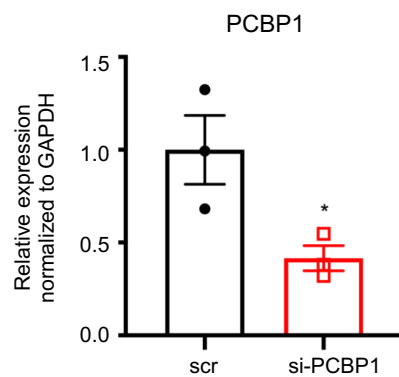
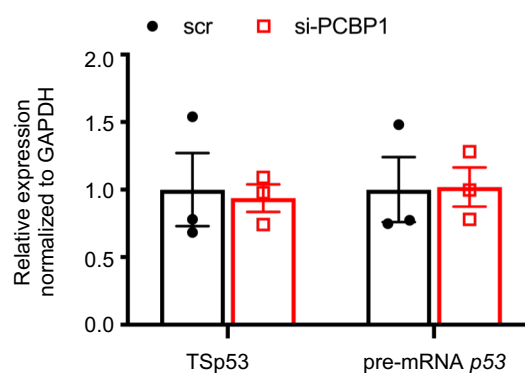
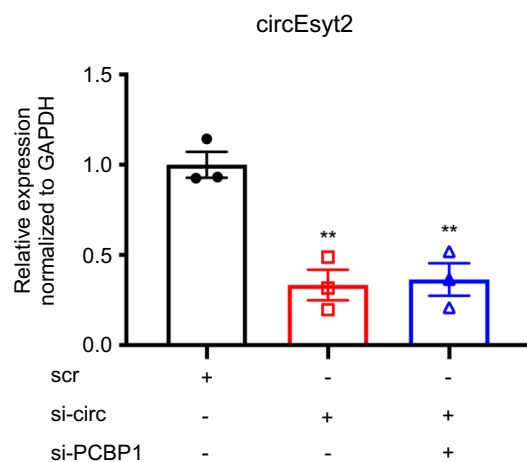
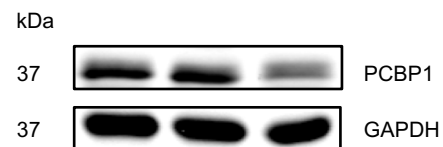
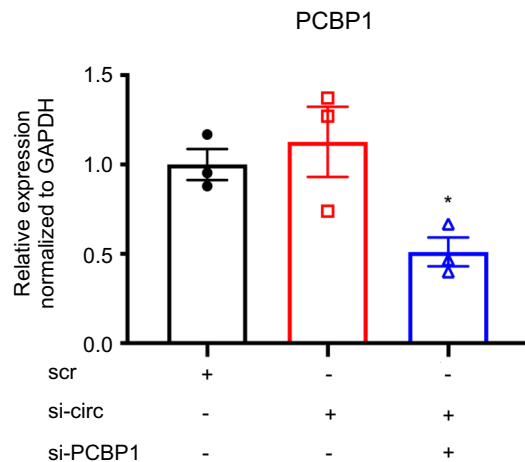


Figure S7

**A****B****C1****C2****D****E****F1****F2**



## Supplemental figure legends

**Figure S1. CircRNA profiling of murine aortae.** **A)** Oil red O staining of atherosclerotic plaques on aortae from atherosclerotic (HFD + *ApoE*<sup>-/-</sup>) and control groups (CD + *ApoE*<sup>-/-</sup> or CD + C57BL/6J). Negative control: CD + C57BL/6J. CD: chow diet. HFD: high fat diet. *ApoE*<sup>-/-</sup>: *ApoE* knockout mice. **B)** Schema of workflow detailing candidate circRNA selection from sequencing data. RPM, Reads Per Million-mapped reads. **C-F)** Distribution of read abundance (C), genomic origin (D), length (E), and circRNAs in chromosomes (F). CDS, coding sequence; UTR, untranslated region. M, mitochondria. **G)** Landscape of circRNA expression. CircRNAs significantly upregulated and downregulated (Fold-change>2.0, *P*<0.05 and FDR value<0.05) are depicted as red and green dots, respectively. **H)** Venn diagram showing the number of circRNAs detected by different algorithms. **I)** Alignment of mouse and human circEsys2 nucleotide sequences showing high homology (90%).

**Figure S2. Characterization of circEsys2 in mouse atherosclerotic aortae.** Upper panel: bright field of frozen transverse sections from C57BL/6J (control) and cholesterol-loaded *ApoE*<sup>-/-</sup> (AS) mouse aortae. Bar, 100 μm. Lower panel: immunofluorescence staining for α-SMA, CD31, PDGFRα, or CD68, and fluorescence *in situ* hybridization (FISH) for circEsys2 (red). Lu, lumen. Scale bar, 20 μm.

**Figure S3. Characterization of circEsys2 in coronary arteries of CAD patients.**

Upper panel: bright field of paraffin-embedded transverse sections of coronary arteries from CAD patients with mild stenosis ( $\leq 20\%$ , mild CAD) and severe stenosis ( $\geq 70\%$ , severe CAD). Bar, 200  $\mu\text{m}$ . Lower panel: immunofluorescence staining for  $\alpha$ -SMA, CD31, PDGFR $\alpha$  or CD68, and FISH for circEsys2 (red). Scale bar, 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .

**Figure S4. Modulation of circEsys2 expression in vivo and its effects on apoptosis.**

**A)** Efficacy of enhanced green fluorescent protein (EGFP)-tagged AAV2/8 silencing circEsys2 determined by qRT-PCR in C57BL/6J aortic arteries 28 days post viral delivery.  $***P < 0.001$  vs. sh-con. n=4. **B)** Immunofluorescence staining of circEsys2-silenced (sh-circ) and non-silenced (sh-con) carotid arteries for  $\alpha$ -SMA (blue) and GFP (green), and FISH for circEsys2 (red). Scale bar, 50  $\mu\text{m}$ . **C)** Cell apoptosis detected by TUNEL assay of carotid arteries, treated as in (A). Lu, lumen. Scale bar 20  $\mu\text{m}$ .  $*P < 0.05$  vs. sh-con. n=3. **D)** Efficacy of ZsGreen-tagged AAV2/8 overexpressing circEsys2 determined by qRT-PCR in C57BL/6J aortic arteries, 28 days post viral delivery.  $*P < 0.05$  vs. control. n=4. **E)** Immunofluorescence staining of circEsys2-overexpressed (circEsys2 OE) and non-overexpressed (control) carotid arteries for  $\alpha$ -SMA (blue) and GFP (green), and FISH for circEsys2 (red). Scale bar, 50  $\mu\text{m}$ . **F)** Cell apoptosis detected by TUNEL assay of carotid arteries, treated as in (D). Lu, lumen. Scale bar 20  $\mu\text{m}$ .  $*P < 0.05$  vs. control. n=3. Data are presented as mean $\pm$ SEM. Two-sided unpaired *t*-test for (A), (C), (D), and (F).

**Figure S5. Effect of circEsys2 silencing in mouse VSMCs.** **A-B)** Efficacy of circEsys2 (si-circ), *Esys2* (si-mRNA) siRNA, or both (si-both), detected by qRT-PCR and western blotting in VSMCs. GAPDH, protein control. \* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$  vs. scr.  $n = 3$ . **C)** CCK-8 assay of VSMCs, treated as in **(A)** and **(B)** for the indicated hours. \* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$  vs. scr.  $n = 4$ . **D)** EdU incorporation assay of VSMCs, treated as in **(A)-(C)** for 48 h. Left panel: representative immunofluorescence of EdU (red) and DAPI (blue); Scale bar, 100  $\mu\text{m}$ . Right panel: percentages of EdU-incorporated VSMCs. \* $P < 0.05$  vs. scr.  $n = 3$ . **E-F)** Migratory ability assessed by wound healing **(E)** and Transwell assay **(F)** of circEsys2-silenced VSMCs. Scale bar, 100  $\mu\text{m}$ . \* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$  vs. scr.  $n = 3$ . **G)** Annexin-V-conjugated flow cytometry of circEsys2-silenced VSMCs. \* $P < 0.05$  vs. scr.  $n = 3$ . **H)** Western blotting to check for the expression of  $\alpha$ -SMA, Calponin, and Myh11 in circEsys2-silenced VSMCs. \*\* $P < 0.01$  vs. scr.  $n = 3$ . Data are presented as mean  $\pm$  SEM. Two-sided unpaired *t*-test for **(E)-(H)**. Two-way repeated measures ANOVA with LSD's post-hoc test for **(C)**. One-way ANOVA test with Dunnett's T3 post-hoc test for **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(D)**.

**Figure S6. CircEsys2 physically binds to PCBP1.** **A-B)** Predicted interaction between mouse **(A)** and human **(B)** circEsys2 and PCBP1 sequences determined using catRAPID. The binding sites are in red and highlighted with dashed boxes. **C)** Efficacy of circEsys2 overexpression quantified by qRT-PCR in HEK293T cells. \* $P < 0.05$  vs. pcDNA3.1.  $n = 3$ . **D)** Identification of the circEsys2-binding protein PCBP1 by mass spectrometry of the proteins pulled down by the circEsys2 probe. The

representative peptides of PCBP1 are displayed as the MS/MS spectra: ESTGAQVQVAGDMLPNSTER (**D1**) and IITLTGPTNAIFK (**D2**). *m/z* indicates the ratio of mass to charge. E) RT-PCR of circEsys2 pulled-down by PCBP1 antibody in HASMCs confirms the direct binding of circEsys2 to PCBP1. Data are presented as mean±SEM. Two-sided unpaired *t* test for (**C**).

**Figure S7. CircEsys2 functions through regulation of p53β splicing. A-C)** qRT-PCR of other major p53 isoforms,  $\Delta 133p53$  (**A**),  $\Delta 40p53$  (**B**) and *p53γ* (**C**) in circEsys2-silenced HASMCs. *n*=3. **D)** Western blotting (**D1**) and qRT-PCR (**D2**) to detect the expression of p53β in circEsys2-overexpressed (OE) HASMCs. \**P*<0.05 vs. pcDNA3.1. *n*=3. **E)** Strand-specific reverse transcription-quantitative PCR (RT-qPCR) of *p53* (**E1**) and *p53β* (**E2**) in circEsys2-silenced (si-circ) HASMCs. \*\**P*<0.01 vs. pcDNA3.1. *n*=3. **F)** Strand-specific RT-qPCR of *p53* (**F1**) and *p53β* (**F2**) in circEsys2-overexpressed (OE) HASMCs. \**P*<0.05 vs. pcDNA3.1. *n*=3. **G-H)** Efficacy of siRNA-mediated knockdown of circEsys2 (si-circ), p53β (si-p53β), or both (si-circ+si-p53β) as measured by qRT-PCR (**G**) and western blotting (**H**) in HASMCs. \**P*<0.05, \*\**P*<0.01 vs. scr. *n*=3. Data are presented as mean±SEM. Two-sided unpaired *t*-test for (**A**)-(F1). Two-sided unpaired *t*-test with Welch's correction for (**F2**). One-way ANOVA test with Dunnett's T3 post-hoc test for (**G**)-(H).

**Figure S8. CircEsys2 inhibits p53β splicing via inhibition of PCBP1. A)** RT-PCR

for pre-mRNA *p53* pulled down by PCBP1 antibody in HASMCs confirms the direct binding of pre-mRNA *p53* to PCBP1 protein. **B**) FISH for U2AF65 (blue), pre-mRNA *p53* (red), and PCBP1 (green) in HASMCs. Scale bar, 25  $\mu$ m. **C**) Efficacy of silencing of PCBP1 in HASMCs, as quantified by western blotting (**C1**) and qRT-PCR (**C2**). \* $P$ <0.05 vs. scr. n=3. **D**) qRT-PCR to check for the expression of total spliced *p53* (TSp53) and precursor RNA *p53* (pre-mRNA *p53*) in PCBP1-silenced HASMCs. n=3. **E-F**) Efficacy of siRNA-mediated knockdown of circEsys2 (si-circ), PCBP1 (si-PCBP1), or both (si-circ+si-PCBP1), as quantified by qRT-PCR or western blotting. \* $P$ <0.05, \*\* $P$ <0.01 vs. scr. n=3. Data are presented as mean $\pm$ SEM. Two-sided unpaired *t*-test for (**C**) and (**G**). One-way ANOVA test with Dunnett's T3 post-hoc test for (**E**)-(F).

**Table S1. Analysis of candidate circRNAs by other algorithms.****(CIRCexplorer)**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Host gene</b>	<b>control (RPM*)</b>	<b>AS (RPM*)</b>	<b>Fold-Change</b>	<b>p value</b>	<b>FDR</b>
chr3:51308050-51326035	Elf2	7115.99	11793.93	1.66	1.10E-04	1.06E-02
chr5:3747021-3772787	Ankib1	410.23	642.395	1.57	2.18E-01	5.62E-01
chr12:116317830-116324210	Esyt2	0	2932.25	-	1.04E-12	8.00E-10
chr17:81647809-81649638	Slc8a1	134.92	612.46	4.54	1.15E-01	3.86E-01
chr18:6111685-6115850	Arhgap12	814.98	623.88	0.77	7.59E-01	9.17E-01

\*: Reads Per Million mapped reads;

**(CIRI2)**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Host gene</b>	<b>control (RPM*)</b>	<b>AS (RPM*)</b>	<b>Fold-Change</b>	<b>p value</b>	<b>FDR</b>
chr3:51308050-51326035	Elf2	6295.69	9826.26	1.56	3.07E-05	2.46E-03
chr5:3747021-3772787	Ankib1	258.02	755.925	2.93	1.08E-02	1.59E-01
chr12:116317830-116324210	Esyt2	3489.58	4068.47	1.17	4.14E-02	2.91E-01
chr17:81647809-81649638	Slc8a1	0	405.24	-	1.81E-02	1.98E-01
chr18:6111685-6115850	Arhgap12	697.23	911.47	1.31	2.73E-01	6.03E-01

**(CIRIquant)**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Host gene</b>	<b>control (RPM*)</b>	<b>AS (RPM*)</b>	<b>Fold-Change</b>	<b>p value</b>	<b>FDR</b>
chr3:51308050-51326035	Elf2	4312.36	8522.03	1.98	7.57E-08	1.06E-05
chr5:3747021-3772787	Ankib1	131.92	677.03	5.13	2.30E-03	5.58E-02
chr12:116317830-116324210	Esyt2	1257.58	2116.70	1.68	5.35E-02	3.28E-01
chr17:81647809-81649638	Slc8a1	70.32	370.57	5.27	6.30E-02	3.35E-01
chr18:6111685-6115850	Arhgap12	545.11	800.815	1.47	2.18E-01	5.69E-01

**Table S2. Top 5 upregulated circRNAs enriched in atherosclerotic plaques.**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Host gene</b>	<b>control (RPM*)</b>	<b>AS (RPM*)</b>	<b>Fold-Change</b>	<b>p value</b>	<b>FDR</b>
chr3:51308050-51326035	Elf2	1.10	3.30	3.0	1.29E-14	3.88E-12
chr5:3747021-3772787	Ankib1	0.90	2.55	2.83	1.80E-10	2.71E-08
chr12:116317830-116324210	Esyt2	1.18	3.24	2.74	1.42E-12	3.22E-10
chr17:81647809-81649638	Slc8a1	1.40	3.23	2.30	1.18E-08	1.21E-06
chr18:6111685-6115850	Arhgap12	1.24	2.76	2.23	2.87E-07	2.25E-05

\*Reads Per Million mapped reads

**Table S3. Top 10 predicted circEsys2-binding proteins.**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Protein</b>	<b>Z-score</b>	<b>Discriminative Power (%)</b>	<b>Interaction Strength (%)</b>	<b>Domain</b>	<b>Motif</b>
1	PCBP family	-0.02	72	98	+	+
2	TRM1L	0.84	96	88	+	-
3	TDRD3	0.75	95	90	+	-
4	DDX1	0.71	95	89	+	-
5	RAVR1	0.63	93	88	+	-
6	MTER2	0.57	91	96	+	-
7	OAS2	0.52	90	83	+	-
8	RED2	0.5	90	83	+	-
9	PAPOA	0.48	89	80	+	-
10	QKI	0.44	87	93	+	-



**Table S4. Oligonucleotides used in this study.**

<b>siRNAs used for gene silencing(5'-3')</b>	
mouse and human: circEsys2 (si-circ)	CCTTAGGAAACCAGTTCAT
mouse: Esys2 (si-mRNA)	CAAGCATTGCCTCAGACAT
mouse: circEsys2 and Esys2 (si-both)	TCAATGGTGTTAAGGTTTA
human: Esys2 (si-mRNA)	GGACAGGACTGACGAATCT
human: circEsys2 and Esys2 (si-both)	CTTCTTCCTTAGGAAACCA
human: PCBP1	GGAGGAAGATATCAACAGC
human: p53 $\beta$	TCCTGATAAACTCGTCGTA
<b>shRNA used for circEsys2 knockdown in vivo</b>	
	<b>Top strand:</b>
	AATTCGTCCTTAGGAAACCAGTTCATTTTCC
	tcaagaga
sh-circEsys2 (sh-circ)	GGAAAATGAACTGGTTTCCTAAGGAAtttttg
	<b>Bottom strand:</b>
	GATCCAAAAAATCCTTAGGAAACCAGTTCA
	TTTTCCtcttgaaGGAAAATGAACTGGTTTCC
	TAAGGACg
<b>biotinylated RNA probes used for RNA pulldown (5'-3')</b>	
control probe	CAAGGCATTATGGTAGCTAG
circEsys2 probe	TCTGGAAAATGAACTGGTTT
<b>RNA-FISH probes (5'-3')</b>	
pre-mRNA p53 probe (Cy3 labelled)	5'CCCACUUA AUGUGUGAUCUCUGACUCCUGUCCC AAAGUUG-3'
circEsys2 probe (5'-biotin labelled)	5'-TTTCAGTGTCTGGAAAATGAACTGG-3'; 5'-AGTGTCTGGAAAATGAACTGGTTTC-3'; 5'-AAATGAACTGGTTTCCTAAGGAAGA-3'

**Table S5. Primers used in this study.**

<b>Primers for PCR and real-time PCR</b>		
<b>Genes</b>	<b>Forward primer (5'-3')</b>	<b>Reverse primer (5'-3')</b>
circEsys2-divergent (circEsys2, for mouse and human)	TTTTGTAGAGCTGGTGTG AAAAGTATT	GTGCTTTACAGTCTTATTTA GCCATTC
circEsys2-convergent (Esys2, for mouse)	CCCCTGAGAGTCAATGGT GT	TCCAGTATCACCCGCATTGT
circAnkib1-divergent (for mouse)	GGATCTTCGTAGGTAAAA AGATATGCT	CCATGTTTTGTTATTTTCTGA TAGGCA
circAnkib1-convergent (for mouse)	CCTATCAGCACAAACACAC CG	AATCATCTTCCACAGGCCGT
circFxr2-divergent (for mouse)	GCAATCCTTACAGCCTCT TGG	CCCTCACCACACCAGACTTA T
circFxr2-convergent (for mouse)	TCCACAGCTTCAGAGACA GAG	CCAAGAGGCTGTAAGGATT GC
circArhgap12-divergent (for mouse)	CCAGAGTTCTTGGACATA GAGAAAA	ATAACACTTGGAAGGCTGTA AACAT
circArhgap12-convergent (for mouse)	TCAGGCCAGACTCTCAAC CT	GCCTTCTCCAGCTGAGTCAC
circSlc8a1-divergent (for mouse)	GAGGGGAAGACTTTGAG GACA	TTTCCTCCTGTTTCTGCCTC T
circSlc8a1-convergent (for mouse)	TGTGATCTTCAAACCAGG GGA	GGTGACCCAAGACAAGCAA TT
circDlc1-divergent (for mouse)	CCTTCTTCAGCCTCCTTC CT	TTGTCCACTTTCTCTTGCGC
circDlc1-convergent (for mouse)	CCAGCAGAAGGAAGTGG AGA	GCAGTTGTGTCTCAGGTGT G
circRreb1-divergent (for mouse)	GTATCTGTGGGAAGTCGC TGAG	CTCCTTTATGCTGTTTTCTTC GT
circRreb1-convergent (for mouse)	GAAAAGCCCCTGTCTCCT CT	CGGGGAAGTCACTGTACAC T
circInsr-divergent (for mouse)	AACGAGGAATGTGGGGA TGT	TTCGGGTCTGGTCTTGAACA
circInsr-convergent (for mouse)	TTCCGAGACCTCAGTTTC CC	TTCTTCTCGATGCGGACAGA
circAncy5-divergent (for mouse)	TGCTGAGTTTCTACCTGT CGT	CGTAAACAGTGATTCTCCGC A
circAncy5-convergent (for mouse)	CCAACCTCCATCGGACACA ATC	TCCACTTCATCCTCTGGGTT C
circElf2-divergent (for mouse)	ACAGGAAGTTGAGACGG AGA	GCAACGGAACTAAGGCTCA C
circElf2-convergent (for mouse)	GTGAGCCTTAGTTCCGTT GC	CTCTAACCTCGCACTGGGA A

snoR41 (for mouse)	TGGTCTACAGCTGTCTTAT GGT	TCACACATAATCCTCCTCCT GT
Ccnd1 (for mouse)	AGAAGTGCGAAGAGGAG GTC	TTCTCGGCAGTCAAGGGAA T
p21 (for mouse)	TCCCGACTCTTGACATTG CT	TGCAGAAGGGGAAGTATGG G
Noxa (for mouse)	TCGCAAAAGAGCAGGAT GAG	CACTTTGTCTCCAATCCTCC G
PUMA (for mouse)	GTACGAGCGGCGGAGAC AAG	GCACCTAGTTGGGCTCCATT TCTG
Esy2 (for human)	GGGCAAAGACACCTACC TTAA	TCTTGTCCAGGGTGTTTCATA CA
p53 (full length) (for human)	CAGCCAAGTCTGTGACTT GCA	GTGTGGAATCAACCCACAG CT
p53 $\beta$ (for human)	GAGCACTAAGCGAGCAC TGCC	TTGAAAGCTGGTCTGGTCCT GA
$\Delta$ 133p53 (for human)	ACTCTGTCTCCTTCCTCTT CCTACAG	GTGTGGAATCAACCCACAG CT
$\Delta$ 40p53 (for human)	TGAGTGGATCCATTGGAA GG	GTCTGAAAGACAAGAGCAG AAAG
p53 $\gamma$ (for human)	AACCACTGGATGGAGAAT ATTTAC	TCAACTTACGACGAGTTTAT CAGGAA
TSp53 (for human)	TCACCATCATCACACTGG AAGAC	CACGCACCTCAAAGCTGTT C
pre-mRNA p53 (for human)	CACCTTTCCTTGCCCTTTT CC	CCACTTGATAAGAGGTCCC AAGAC
PCBP1 (for human)	CCTACTCGATTCAAGGAC AACAC	GAGTTCATGGGTGGTTTGA GTAG
GAPDH (for mouse and human)	AACGACCCCTTCATTGAC CT	TGGAAGATGGTGTGGGCT T

#### Primers for shRNA plasmid construction

Genes	Forward primer (5'-3')	Reverse primer (5'-3')
circEsy2	CTCACCTCAGCACCTTCA	AGTATCACCCGCATTGTC
GAPDH	TCAAGGCTGAGAACGGGAAG	TCGCCCCACTTGATTTTGGGA

#### Primers for strand-specific reverse transcription-quantitative PCR

(for RT)		
p53		TTTTTGAAAGCTGGTCTGGT
p53 $\beta$		AGCTCTCGGAACATCTCGAA
GAPDH		GCTAAGCAGTTGGTGGTGCAG
(for qPCR)		
Genes	Forward primer (5'-3')	Reverse primer (5'-3')
p53/ p53 $\beta$	GTCCAGATGAAGCTCCCAGA	GGGACAGAAGATGACAGGGG
GAPDH	GGAGCGAGATCCCTCCAAAT	GGCTGTTGTCATACTTCTCATGG

**Table S6. Clinical characteristics of coronary artery donors.**

<b>Patient Number</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Maximum stenosis</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Smoking history</b>	<b>Hypertension</b>	<b>Diabetes mellitus</b>
1	Male	68	22%	Mild CAD*	Yes	None	None
2	Male	63	13%	Mild CAD	Yes	None	None
3	Female	65	10%	Mild CAD	None	None	None
4	Female	75	77%	Severe CAD	None	None	None
5	Male	66	82%	Severe CAD	Yes	None	None
6	Male	70	85%	Severe CAD	Yes	None	None

\*CAD: coronary artery disease