Rictor/mTORC2 deficiency enhances keratinocyte stress tolerance via mitohormesis.

Rictor/mTORC2 deficiency enhances keratinocyte stress tolerance via mitohormesis.

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Abstract

How metabolic pathways required for epidermal tissue growth and remodeling influence the ability of keratinocytes to survive stressful conditions is still largely unknown. The mechanistic target of rapamycin complex 2 (mTORC2) regulates growth and metabolism of several tissues, but its functions in epidermal cells are poorly defined. Rictor is an adaptor protein essential for mTORC2 activity. To explore the roles of mTORC2 in the epidermis, we have conditionally deleted *rictor* in mice via K14-Cre-mediated homologous recombination and found that its deficiency causes moderate tissue hypoplasia, reduced keratinocyte proliferation and an attenuated hyperplastic response to TPA. Noteworthy, rictor-deficient keratinocytes displayed increased lifespan, protection from senescence, and enhanced tolerance to cellular stressors such as growth factors deprivation, epirubicin and X-ray *in vitro* and radioresistance *in vivo*. Rictor-deficient keratinocytes exhibited changes in global gene expression profiles consistent with metabolic alterations and enhanced stress tolerance, a shift in cell catabolic processes from glycids and lipids to glutamine consumption and increased production of mitochondrial reactive oxygen species (ROS). Mechanistically, the resiliency of rictor-deficient epidermal relies on these ROS increases, indicating stress resistance via mitohormesis. Thus, our findings reveal a new link between metabolic changes and stress adaptation of keratinocytes centered on mTORC2 activity, with potential implications in skin aging and therapeutic resistance of epithelial tumors.

43 **Introduction**

44 Adaptation to stressful conditions is key for organisms evolution and the epidermis
45 contributes to this function providing a barrier against physical and chemical injuries,
46 dehydration and pathogens infection (1).

47 From yeast to mammals, stress tolerance and lifespan extension are favored by low
48 nutrients conditions leading to increased metabolic rates (2, 3). Caloric restriction, low
49 glucose intake and inhibition of the insulin/IGF pathway parallel with extended lifespan and
50 mild increases of reactive oxygen species (ROS) (4, 5). Albeit traditionally considered as
51 purely harmful, ROS are physiological regulators of stress response mechanisms that
52 prevent cellular damage (3, 6 and references therein). Mitohormesis is a process initiated
53 by moderate increases of mitochondrial ROS, which enhance resistance to stressors by
54 engaging programs of cell protection (3 and references therein). Although molecular
55 pathways including Akt, p53, Nrf2, NFκB and AP1 regulate the epidermal responses to
56 oxidative damage, UV and X-ray radiations and chemotherapic drugs (7-9), whether
57 mitohormesis plays a role in keratinocyte stress adaptation is unknown.

58 The mechanistic target of rapamycin (mTOR), an evolutionarily conserved serine/threonine
59 protein kinase, is a signaling hub integrating cell growth, metabolism and energy stress
60 responses (10). mTOR signaling is activated by extracellular cues such as nutrients and
61 growth factors, and favors cellular and organismal growth by stimulating biosynthesis of
62 macromolecules. mTOR inhibition causes lifespan extension via mitohormesis in yeast
63 (11), and prevents energy expenditure by promoting autophagic recycling of cellular
64 components (12). mTOR kinase is the catalytic subunit of two signaling complexes, mTOR
65 Complex1 (mTORC1) and mTOR Complex2 (mTORC2) (13). While most mTOR biological
66 functions have been attributed to mTORC1 (14), mTORC2 regulates AGC family protein
67 kinases such as Akt and PKC isoforms necessarily adjuvated by the evolutionarily
68 conserved adaptor protein Rictor (13). By phosphorylating Akt proteins at a regulatory

69 residue (Ser473 in Akt1) in response to growth factors, mTORC2 promotes maximal Akt
70 kinase activity and cell survival in mammals, and regulates actin cytoskeleton via PKC
71 signaling (15, 16).
72 In mammals, germline ablation of *rictor* is incompatible with development (17). While
73 tissue-specific embryonic ablation of *rictor* interferes with morphogenesis in the vascular
74 endothelium and nervous systems (18, 19), its deletion in skeletal muscle, adipose tissue
75 and liver impairs lipogenesis and glucose metabolism (20-22).
76 Here we show that rictor conditional ablation during epidermal development causes tissue
77 hypoplasia in the newborn mice paralleled with attenuated keratinocyte proliferation rates.
78 Importantly, rictor/mTORC2 deficiency in keratinocytes causes delayed senescence,
79 enhanced resistance to cellular stressors, and a shift of catabolic functions towards
80 glutaminolysis, elevated mitochondrial activity and ROS production. These ROS increases
81 play a mitohormetic role, being crucial for the resiliency of rictor-deficient keratinocytes.
82 Thus, our work implicates rictor/mTORC2 as a novel signaling node integrating epidermal
83 metabolism with stress adaptation.
84

84 **Results**

85 **Rictor/mTORC2 disruption in murine epidermis leads to tissue hypoplasia in**
86 **newborn mice**

87 To conditionally delete *rictor* in the epidermis, mice carrying a *rictor* allele in which exon 3
88 is flanked by two loxP sites (17) were bred with mice expressing Cre recombinase under
89 the control of the *keratin 14* (K14) promoter (23) (Fig.1a). Newborn mice with K14-Cre-
90 mediated homozygous deletion of rictor (E-RiKO mice) displayed undetectable levels of
91 rictor protein in the epidermis while the mTORC1-specific raptor levels were unchanged
92 (Fig.1b) compared to control (CT) mice. E-RiKO mice were born at the expected
93 Mendelian rate and did not show obvious epidermal or hair follicle abnormalities from birth
94 until 1 year of age (not shown). Immunoblotting analysis confirmed ablation of rictor in E-
95 RiKO keratinocytes paralleled by nearly-abrogated phosphorylation of Ser473 Akt in
96 response to growth factors, whereas phosphorylation of Thr308 Akt was preserved.
97 Keratinocytes, like other cell types, exhibited reduced total Akt and PKCα levels following
98 rictor ablation (Fig.1c) (13) without significant alterations of mTORC1 signaling or Akt
99 targets phosphorylation, except for attenuated phosphorylation of FoxO1 and -3 (24)
100 (Fig.S1a), thereby displaying features typical of mTORC2 disruption.

101 Compared to CTs, E-RiKO epidermis was stratified but thinner (Fig.1d) in newborn
102 animals. Such hypoplasia was unlikely the result of cell death since we did not detect
103 TUNEL- or cleaved caspase-3 positivity in the epidermis (not shown). In contrast, positivity
104 for the PCNA proliferative marker was reduced in E-RiKO mice (Fig.1e). p63 and loricrin,
105 used as readouts of progenitor and differentiated keratinocytes, respectively, were
106 expressed with proper spatial tissue distribution albeit at lower levels in mutant mice
107 (Fig.S1b-c), suggesting that hypoplasia reflects impaired cell growth affecting the
108 cellularity of different epidermal compartments. Instead, the thickness of adult murine
109 epidermis, composed by only two-three cellular layers, was comparable between CT and

110 mutant mice (Fig.1f). TPA treatment of adult epidermis induces rapid keratinocyte
111 proliferation resulting in hyperplasia by 48h (25). 7-week old E-RiKO mice displayed
112 attenuated epidermal thickening upon TPA exposure (Fig.1f), paralleled by a decreased
113 BrdU incorporation (Fig.1g). Thus, mTORC2 deficiency restrains growth and hyperplasia
114 of the epidermis in part by attenuating mitogenic responses.
115

116 **Rictor/mTORC2 deficiency impairs keratinocytes proliferation and delays**
117 **senescence *in vitro***

118 We compared primary keratinocytes derived from CT or E-RiKO newborn littermates under
119 proliferating conditions (low calcium medium; LCM) and monitored until CT cells reached
120 senescence. Consistent with the hypoplastic phenotype, the number of keratinocytes
121 isolated from E-RiKO epidermis was reduced relative to CT counterparts (Fig.2a). E-RiKO
122 keratinocytes displayed attenuated growth rates (Fig.2b), decreased percentages of $BrdU^+$
123 cells (Figs.2c; S2a), reduced cell density (Fig.2d), decreased S-phase and a proportional
124 increase in the G0/G1 phase (Fig.S2b). Notably, whereas CT keratinocytes acquired a
125 senescent-like morphology, E-RiKO cells exhibited proliferative appearance until at least
126 20-25 days from plating (Fig.2d) and lower levels of p16, p19 and p53 senescence
127 markers (Fig.2e) and β-galactosidase activity (Fig.2f). Moreover, albeit LCM culture
128 conditions are unfavorable for spontaneous keratinocyte immortalization (26), E-RiKO
129 cultures became immortalized with 100% efficiency as compared to ~18% of CTs
130 (Fig.S2c-e).
131

132 **Rictor-deficient keratinocytes are protected from death induced by multiple cellular**
133 **stressors**

134 Several molecular determinants of cell senescence are also implicated in cell death. Upon
135 growth factors deprivation, E-RiKO cells displayed reduced morphological death signs

136 (Fig.S3a), delayed/attenuated caspase-3 cleavage (Cl-Casp3) (Fig.3a) and decreased cell
137 death by AnnexinV/DAPI analysis (Fig.3b). By comparing the responses to epirubicin, an
138 anticancer drug that induces cell death via DNA damage and oxidative stress (27), the
139 majority of CT cells detached after 15h of treatment, whereas many E-RiKO cells seemed
140 unaffected (Fig.S3a) and displayed lower Cl-casp3 levels (Fig.3c) and reduced death
141 (Fig.3d). Since the S-phase of the cell cycle renders cells vulnerable to epirubicin, we
142 verified if the reduced sensitivity of E-RiKO keratinocytes reflected their reduced division
143 rates by exposing cells to the drug under comparable growth arrested conditions (Fig.3e).
144 Even in this case, E-RiKO cells displayed lower Cl-casp3 levels (Fig.3f), suggesting that
145 their resiliency does not simply depend on attenuated proliferation.
146 We next evaluated the effects of different X-ray doses. E-RiKO cells retained higher
147 clonogenic ability upon X-ray exposure (Fig.3g), confirming enhanced stress tolerance.
148 Keratinocytes are highly refractory to X-ray-induced apoptosis (28); hence, we evaluated
149 cell death by AnnexinV/DAPI analysis after one 60Gy dose, which induces ~30% of cell
150 death in CT keratinocytes. E-RiKO cells had a ~25% reduction in cell death (Fig.3h).
151 Irradiated E-RiKO cells showed attenuated Cl-casp3 (Fig.S3d), and displayed a reduction
152 in both senescence (Fig.S3e, S3f) and growth arrest in response to X-ray (Fig.S3g).
153 Mutant keratinocytes exhibited reduced H2AX phosphorylation (γH2AX) suggestive of
154 lower DNA damage (Fig.S3d), and decreased Chk1 and Chk2 levels (Fig.S3d) similarly to
155 cancer cells subjected to rictor or mTOR ablation (51). Interestingly, in CT cells, Ser473
156 Akt phosphorylation decreased early on after X-ray exposure. In contrast, treatment of E-
157 RiKO and CT keratinocytes with the DNA-damaging agent cisplatin did not reveal
158 significant differences in morphology, sensitivity to apoptosis, levels of Cl-casp3 and
159 γH2AX, and in CT cells Akt Ser473 phosphorylation was not reduced at early times
160 (Fig.S3a-c). Thus, E-RiKO keratinocytes are not resistant to death *per se* and retain
161 functional apoptotic machinery.

162 To verify whether rictor deficiency protects keratinocytes from X-ray-induced cell death *in*
163 *vivo*, we analyzed the skins of irradiated E-RiKO and CT littermates by TUNEL assay.
164 Consistent with previous reports, positivity to the staining was minimal in the interfollicular
165 epidermis (29), and TUNEL$^+$ keratinocytes were confined within the hair follicle matrix (30)
166 (Fig.3i). Notably, E-RiKO mice displayed a significant decrease in TUNEL$^+$ cells compared
167 to CT littermates (Fig.3j).
168
169 **Gene expression profiles of rictor-deficient keratinocytes indicate metabolic**
170 **alterations under basal conditions and upon X-ray exposure**
171 To identify specific genes and pathways involved in the enhanced stress tolerance of E-
172 RiKO keratinocytes, we performed a RNA-seq transcriptome analysis by comparing
173 mutant and CT cells under basal growing conditions, and at different times after X-ray
174 exposure (Table S1). Under basal conditions, 589 genes were differentially regulated
175 between E-RiKO and CT cells, i.e. 336 downregulated and 253 upregulated genes in the
176 former (Fig.4a; Tables S2-3). Gene Ontology (GO) enrichments were considered
177 significant with a nominal P value less than 10^{-3} with Fisher exact test. Rictor deficiency
178 was associated with significant enrichment of genes involved in lipid metabolism,
179 keratinocyte differentiation, oxidation-reduction process, lipid catabolic process and lipid
180 biosynthetic process among downregulated genes, and genes involved in cell motility,
181 signal transduction, inflammatory response, response to stress and defense response
182 among upregulated genes (Fig.4b). The complete GO analysis is provided in Tables S4-5.
183 By evaluating the number of modulated genes after 1h of X-ray exposure versus basal
184 conditions, E-RiKO keratinocytes displayed a dramatically reduced response to the
185 treatment (i.e. 94 versus 794 genes), while after 24h the differences between genotypes
186 were attenuated (Fig.4c).

187 Based both on these results and the greater stress tolerance of mutant cells, we
188 hypothesized that genes modulated in CT cells following treatment might be similarly up-
189 or downregulated in E-RiKO under basal conditions. To this aim, we compared
190 differentially expressed genes (DEGs) in CT cells under X-ray treated (1h) versus basal
191 conditions, with DEGs in E-RiKO versus CT cells under basal conditions (Fig.4d). Notably,
192 we found a highly significant 27.5% genes overlap (P=5.44E-57), corresponding to 161
193 DEGs (62% downregulated and 38% upregulated). The majority of these genes were
194 expressed at similar levels in basal E-RiKO cells and X-ray exposed CT cells (Tables S1,
195 S6-7). GO analysis of this subgroup of genes revealed an enrichment in lipid metabolic
196 process, lipid catabolic process, response to hypoxia and lipid biosynthetic process in the
197 downregulated class whereas few GO survived in the upregulated class at this stringency,
198 among which regulation of epithelial cell proliferation and response to glucose (Fig.4e;
199 Tables S6-7). These data suggest that rictor deficiency alters the metabolic functions of
200 keratinocytes under basal conditions, and because several metabolic genes that were
201 rapidly turned down in CT cells in response to X-ray were basally downregulated in E-
202 RiKO cells, this suggests a link between metabolic changes and stress adaptation.
203
204 **Rictor deficiency in keratinocytes promotes metabolic rewiring and ROS production**
205 ROS contribute to cell death mechanisms triggered by growth factors deprivation,
206 epirubicin and X-ray, while cisplatin, to which E-RiKO cells are sensitive, promotes cell
207 death primarily via direct DNA damage independently of ROS (31). To our surprise, we
208 detected higher basal levels of ROS (~1.7 fold) in E-RiKO keratinocytes relative to CT
209 counterparts (Fig.5a), while 24h after X-ray exposure CT cells displayed a more robust
210 increase (~2.9 fold vs 1.2 fold) (Fig.S3f). Mitochondrial ROS were also higher in E-RiKO
211 cells (Fig.5b-5c). By contrast, the activity of aldose reductase, a source of cytosolic ROS
212 (32), was reduced of 20% in E-RiKO (Fig.5d) while NADPH oxidase activity, which also

213 generates cytosolic ROS, was similar (Fig.5e). The electron transport chain (Fig.5f) and
214 the amounts of mitochondrial ATP (Fig.5g) were instead increased, suggesting that rictor-
215 deficiency promotes increases of mitochondrial ROS and respiration.
216 Consistent with mTORC2 deficiency being coupled with defective lipogenesis (21, 22), E-
217 RiKO cells had reduced triglycerides levels (Fig.5i), as suggested by GO analysis. We
218 then analyzed the activity of catabolic pathways that may impinge on ROS production by
219 fueling mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation. Fatty acid β-oxidation was reduced to
220 ~60% of CT values in E-RiKO cells (Fig.5h), in agreement with RNA-seq data (Fig.4b).
221 Moreover, E-RiKO cells showed decreased glucose uptake and glycolysis (Fig.5j-l). The
222 glutaminolysis energetic pathway provides carbon source alternative to lipids and glycids,
223 nitrogen for nucleotide biosynthesis and NADPH for redox maintenance (33). E-RiKO
224 keratinocytes showed increased activity of both glutaminase (2.3 fold) and glutamic
225 dehydrogenase (1.5 fold), which catalyze the first and the second step of glutaminolysis,
226 respectively, although we did not detect alterations in their mRNA and/or protein levels
227 (Fig.5m-n, Table S1 and data not shown). Moreover, in both L-[^{14}C]-glutamine- or L-[^{14}C]-
228 glutamate-labeled cells the flux through the Tricarboxylic acid (TCA) cycle was higher in
229 rictor-deficient keratinocytes, and was reduced by the glutaminase inhibitor BPTES
230 ((1Z,1'Z)-N',N''-(5,5'-(thiobis(ethane-2,1-diyil))bis(1,3,4-thiadiazole-5,2-diyil))bis(2-
231 phenylacetimidic acid)) (Fig.S4a), in L-[^{14}C]-glutamine-treated cells but not in L-[^{14}C]-
232 glutamate-labeled cells (Fig.5o-p), suggesting that TCA cycle was strongly fueled by the
233 glutaminolytic anaplerotic reaction in E-RiKO cells.
234 Since the production of glutamate represents the first obligatory step in glutamine
235 catabolism, the ratio between intracellular L-glutamate versus L-glutamine – after pulsing
236 cells with L-[^{14}C]-glutamine - was used as readout of glutamine consumption: while
237 glutamine uptake was similar between genotypes, in E-RiKO cells both the production of
238 glutamate and the ratio between L-glutamate and L-glutamine was more elevated (Fig.5q-

239 s). Thus, rictor deficiency promotes keratinocyte metabolic reprogramming, diverting the
240 catabolism from lipids and glycids to glutamine consumption.
241 To verify whether E-RiKO cells possessed higher antioxidant capacity, we measured the
242 activities of the main anti-oxidant enzymes, cytosolic- and mitochondrial superoxide
243 dismutases (SODs) and catalase. Mitochondrial SOD activity was more than doubled in E-
244 RiKO cells compared to CTs (Fig.5t-v), whereas cytoplasmic SOD and catalase activities
245 did not differ significantly. Because the levels of catalase, SOD1 and SOD2 proteins,
246 which account for SOD activities in cytosol and mitochondria, respectively, were
247 unchanged (Fig.S4b, Table S1 and data not shown), the enhanced mitochondrial SOD
248 activity of E-RiKO cells may rely on post-translational modifications of SOD2.
249
250 **Rictor-deficient keratinocytes are sensitized to epirubicin-induced cell death by**
251 **antioxidant treatment and glutaminase inhibition**
252 To define whether the increased ROS of E-RiKO cells are responsible for their stress
253 resistant phenotype, we treated E-RiKO and CT keratinocytes with epirubicin in the
254 presence of ROS scavenger N-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC) at a concentration able to lower
255 total- and mitochondrial ROS in E-RiKO cells to levels close to untreated CT cells (Fig.6a-
256 b). Without NAC, E-RiKO keratinocytes resulted more resistant to apoptosis in response to
257 epirubicin, whereas NAC-treated E-RiKO keratinocytes displayed Cl-casp3 and
258 AnnexinV/DAPI profiles close to those of CT cells unexposed to NAC (Fig.6c-d), indicating
259 that this compound sensitizes E-RiKO cells to epirubicin-induced apoptosis. This was
260 apparently in contrast to findings reporting that cells are protected from epirubicin-induced
261 death by a NAC pretreatment up to 24h (34). Under these conditions we could detect a
262 significant reduction of Cl-casp3 (Fig.S5a) in CT keratinocytes, but we were unable to
263 restore normal ROS levels in E-RiKO cells (Fig.S5b). These data suggest that prolonged
264 versus transient ROS scavenging has different effects on the stress tolerance of normal

265 keratinocytes. Also Trolox (6-hydroxy-2,5,7,8-tetramethylchroman-2-carboxylic acid), a
266 distinct antioxidant compound, restored normal ROS levels in E-RiKO cells and increased
267 Cl-casp3 levels in response to epirubicin (Fig.S5c-d).
268 NAC exposure of CT and E-RiKO cells did not affect other metabolic parameters (Fig.S5e),
269 apart from the decrease of mitochondrial SOD activity in mutant cells to levels similar to
270 untreated CT cells.
271 These data suggest that the activity of NAC is primarily due to its antioxidant capacity, and
272 that the increased ROS are not the inducers of the metabolic changes produced by rictor
273 deficiency but rather their consequence.
274 The increased ROS of E-RiKO cells may depend on increased glutaminolytic activity.
275 Consistent with this hypothesis, BPTES effectively reduced glutaminase activity in both
276 genotypes and restored in E-RiKO treated cells ROS levels similar to CT cells (Fig.6e-f),
277 indicating glutaminase as a major determinant of ROS increases. Importantly, sustained
278 glutaminase inhibition also phenocopied the effects of NAC in E-RiKO cells, as it increased
279 both Cl-casp3 levels and cell death in response to epirubicin (Fig.6g-h). Thus, both the
280 reestablishment of normal ROS levels and the inhibition of their principal metabolic source
281 sensitize E-RiKO cells to stressors to which they are typically resistant. ROS scavenging
282 by NAC also attenuated features of E-RiKO cells beyond stress response such as their
283 decreased BrdU uptake (Fig.S5f) and protection from senescence (Fig.S5g), suggesting
284 the involvement of ROS also in these phenotypes.
285
286 **The epidermal metabolic, molecular and stress-response phenotypes of E-RiKO**
287 **mice indicate a critical role of ROS in stress protection**
288 To determine whether metabolic alterations observed in cultured E-RiKO keratinocytes
289 were present in the epidermis of mutant mice *in vivo*, we compared several metabolic
290 parameters in fresh epidermal extracts obtained from CT and E-RiKO mice (Fig.7a).

291 Relative to CT mice, total- and mitochondrial ROS, electron transport chain activity, ATP
292 content, glutaminase and glutamic dehydrogenase activities were all more elevated in
293 mutant mice, while lipid β-oxidation and hexokinase activities were reduced, reflecting
294 closely the findings on cultured cells.
295 We next analyzed in CT and E-RiKO epidermis the expression of a sample of DEGs
296 between CT and E-RiKO keratinocytes emerged from RNA-seq analysis. As shown in
297 Fig.7b, the levels of Gadd45α, –β and -γ, Glul and Il1-α genes, involved in DNA repair,
298 glutamine metabolism and inflammation, upregulated in E-RiKO cells (Table S1), were
299 also higher in the mutant epidermis whereas the levels of Acsl1, Faah and Fabp4, involved
300 in lipid metabolism, were decreased.
301 To determine whether NAC treatment could sensitize E-RiKO hair follicle keratinocytes to
302 X-ray-induced death *in vivo*, we established a NAC treatment regimen restoring ROS
303 levels in mutant mice to levels close to CTs (Fig.7d). As shown in Fig.7c-e, NAC treated E-
304 RiKO mice exhibited a statistically significant increase in the number of $TUNEL^+$ cells in
305 the hair follicle matrix upon irradiation, suggesting that restoring normal ROS levels in E-
306 RiKO mice sensitizes hair follicle keratinocytes to X-ray induced cell death *in vivo.*
307 Moreover, NAC slightly increased the number of $TUNEL^+$ CT cells (Fig.7e and data not
308 shown). Thus, many aspects of the metabolic, molecular and stress response phenotypes
309 described in primary keratinocytes derived from E-RiKO mice are recapitulated in their
310 intact skin epithelia *in vivo.*
311

311 **Discussion**

312 Our study reveals for the first time that mTORC2 couples metabolic changes with stress
313 adaptation in mammalian cells. The resiliency of rictor-deficient keratinocytes to starvation,
314 epirubicin and X-ray *in vitro* and their radioresistance *in vivo* was somewhat surprising,
315 considering the pro-survival role of mTORC2 in mammals (15). However, mTORC2
316 deficiency does not render keratinocytes resistant to cell death *per se* but likely enhances
317 their ability to cope with oxidative stress since these cellular stressors share ROS
318 production among their death effector mechanisms (27). Because in control keratinocytes
319 Akt Ser473 phosphorylation decreases early on upon X-ray (but not cisplatin) treatment,
320 attenuation of mTORC2 activity may be intrinsic to the keratinocyte response to specific
321 stressors.

322 Our findings in mammalian cells have intriguing analogies in Drosophila, where rictor
323 deficiency promotes resistance and tolerance to pathogens infection under low glucose
324 (35), suggesting a conserved role of mTORC2 in integrating metabolic cues and stress
325 adaptation. Since the mTORC2/Akt axis positively regulates glucose uptake and glycolysis
326 in several tissues (22, 36), the stress-resistant phenotype of E-RiKO cells may result from
327 their adaptation to impaired glucose consumption and rewiring towards glutaminolysis. The
328 increased glutamine consumption of E-RiKO keratinocytes is associated with increased
329 activity of glutaminolytic enzymes without changes in their protein or mRNA levels
330 suggesting that rictor deficiency may affects these enzymes via post-translational
331 modifications or by changing the concentration of allosteric modulations, as it occurs upon
332 mTORC2 disruption (37). Additionally, rictor loss may impinge on Foxo transcription
333 factors in linking metabolic changes with stress resistance. Foxo3 regulates glutamine
334 metabolism via Glul expression (38); Glul is overexpressed in E-RiKO cells that also have
335 reduced Foxos phosphorylation, and among stress protective genes overexpressed in E-
336 RiKO cells are the Foxo targets Gadd45 isoforms (39).

337 Mitochondrial SOD enzymatic activity, playing a pivotal role in radioprotection (40), is
338 elevated in E-RiKO cells, and decreases upon NAC treatment. Active SOD2 is stabilized
339 by oxidative cross-linking, favoring radioresistance of cells exposed to conditioning doses
340 of oxidative stress (41). Enhanced SOD2 expression accounts for radioresistance of
341 rapamycin-treated oral keratinocytes (40), and SOD2 activity can be regulated post-
342 translationally in response to ROS levels (41). Therefore, changes in SOD2 activity likely
343 favor stress adaptation in rictor-deficient keratinocytes, albeit the underlying mechanisms
344 remain undefined.
345 The increased ROS levels of E-RiKO keratinocytes, instead of being harmful, emerged as
346 key determinants of their stress-resistant phenotype. Therefore, the behavior of rictor-
347 deficient keratinocytes fits well with the concept of mitohormesis, implicating mTORC2 in
348 radioresistance, and possibly, skin aging. Hormetic behaviors occur in several cell
349 lineages including keratinocytes, and mild level of X-ray render cells more resistant to a
350 subsequent damage (42).
351 Our findings overall suggest that the switch of keratinocyte catabolism towards
352 glutaminolysis provides fuel for mitochondrial respiration and ROS production, which,
353 directly or indirectly, induces expression of stress resistance genes.
354 Rictor deficiency was associated with decreased cell division (18, 43) and the attenuated
355 proliferation of E-RiKO keratinocytes likely underlies the epidermal hypoplasia of mutant
356 mice, albeit we cannot rule out subtle defects in differentiation or cytoskeleton dynamics.
357 Adult E-RiKO mice epidermis does not display hypoplasia or impaired proliferation unless
358 challenged with a mitogen like TPA; in growth factor-rich conditions E-RiKO keratinocytes
359 also exhibit reduced division rates, suggesting that mTORC2 loss affects proliferation upon
360 robust mitogenic inputs. The attenuated hyperplastic response to one single TPA dose
361 reported here differs from the normal hyperplastic response to multiple TPA doses
362 described in mice subjected to epidermal-specific, inducible rictor ablation during

363 adulthood (44). Metabolic alterations coupled with enhanced stress tolerance likely
364 contribute to the delayed senescence and lifespan extension of rictor-deficient
365 keratinocytes, in keeping with similar reports on fibroblasts (45). Since hyperactive DNA
366 replication forks promote senescence, the spontaneous immortalization of E-RiKO
367 keratinocytes may result from senescence bypass favored by metabolic reprogramming,
368 mitohormesis and reduced proliferation rates. Since sustained exposure of E-RiKO
369 keratinocytes to NAC enhances BrdU uptake and favors senescence in the absence of
370 exogenous stressors, ROS elevations may contribute to the proliferative and senescence
371 phenotypes of mutant cells.
372 Mitohormesis may represent a point of convergence of mTORC1 and mTORC2 activities
373 across species. In fact, mTORC1 inhibition extends yeast chronological lifespan (11); the
374 mTOR inhibitor rapamycin extends lifespan in C.Elegans and mice (46, 47) and prolonged
375 rapamycin exposure also inhibits mTORC2 (47, 48); rictor deficiency in yeast was linked to
376 increased ROS levels (49), and in C.Elegans, *rictor* mutations extend lifespan in a nutrient-
377 dependent manner (50).
378 The choice between cell survival and death upon mTORC2 disruption may be highly
379 context-dependent. Rictor/mTORC2 deficiency sensitizes fibroblasts to UVB-induced
380 apoptosis (51), but the mechanisms regulating DNA repair and apoptosis differ between
381 keratinocytes and fibroblasts (52), possibly accounting for this apparent discrepancy.
382 Additionally, in breast cancer cells, mTORC2 loss favors cell cycle progression and
383 apoptosis by lowering Chk1 activity and increasing vulnerability to DNA damage (51); in E-
384 RiKO cells Chk1 attenuation coincides with lower DNA damage in response to X-ray, but
385 not cisplatin. mTOR inhibition can inhibit or enhance chemotherapy-induced cancer cell
386 death in oncological settings (53); if mTOR inhibition enhances stress tolerance via
387 mitohormesis, this could partly explain the limited efficacy of mTOR inhibitors in this
388 context (54). mTORC2 disruption inhibits tumor formation/progression in many tissues

389 including the epidermis (44), but caution should be taken in therapeutic settings since
390 mTOR inhibition may also promote chemo- or radioresistance. Our work suggests
391 however that combination of mTOR inhibitors with anti-oxidants may help sensitizing
392 tumors that would be otherwise resistant to chemo/radio-therapy.
393

393 **Materials and Methods**

394 **Mice generation and Genotyping**

395 Generation of rictor conditional knock-out mice in the epidermis (E-RiKO) was obtained by
396 crossing Rictor flox/flox mice (CT) described in (17) with K14-Cre transgenic mice (23).
397 Mice were studied on a C57BL/6J background. Genetic screening was performed by PCR
398 using DNA extracted from tail biopsies.

399 The primer used for genotyping were as follows:

400 - Rictor flox Forward, 5' – ACTGAATATGTTCATGGTTGTG
401 - Rictor flox Reverse, 5' – GACACTGGATTACAGTGGCTTG
402 - K14-cre Forward, 5' – AGGGATCTGATCGGGAGTTG
403 - K14-cre Reverse, 5' – CTTGCGAACCTCATCACTCG

404 Mice were maintained under temperature and humidity controlled conditions and were
405 given food and water *ad libitum*. Procedures were conducted in conformity with national
406 and international laws and policies as approved by the University of Turin Ethical
407 Committee.

408

409 **Cell Cultures and Chemicals**

410 MPKs were isolated from pools of 3-day-old (P3) mice and cultured in Low Calcium
411 Medium (LCM, 50μM $CaCl_2$ supplemented with 4% Chelex-treated Bovine Serum and
412 EGF). Cultures were ~95% pure and contained traces of malanocytes and Langerhans'
413 cells. MPKs cultures were obtained from at least 5 mice/genotype and, unless otherwise
414 specified, all experiments were repeated on at least 3 independent cultures.

415 Note that MPKs cultured in LCM keep proliferating even at confluency because they are
416 preserved from contact inhibition, and dividing cells replace the differentiated ones that lift
417 from the adherent cell monolayer.

418 Starvation was performed culturing MPKs in Serum and EGF-free LCM, except for kinetic
419 analysis of BrdU incorporation, in which cells were starved in 0.1% serum.
420 Cells fed with LCM (or starved) were treated with the following chemicals: Epirubicin,
421 Cisplatin and NAC (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA), Trolox (Santa Cruz
422 Biotechnology, Dallas, TX, USA) and BPTES (Selleckchem, Houston, TX, USA).
423 NAC treatments were performed by adding the compound into fresh LCM every 24h. To
424 evaluate proliferation, MPKs were incubated with 5-bromo-2”-deoxy-uridine (BrdU,
425 Invitrogen, Waltham, MA, USA) 3h prior the end of the experiment (10μg/ml) and then
426 fixed in PFA 4%.
427 Colony-forming efficiency (CFE) assays were performed as described (55), with minor
428 modifications. After X-ray exposure (10min) cells were detached, and 10^4 cells were plated
429 on lethally irradiated feeder layer of 3T3/J2 cells. After 8 days, colonies were fixed, stained
430 with Rhodamine-B (Sigma-Aldrich), and scored under a dissecting microscope. Total
431 colonies were calculated as a percentage of total plated cells (number of colonies x
432 100/number of cells plated).
433
434 **Western Blotting and Protein Analysis**
435 MPKs or epidermal tissues (P3), separated from dermis by thermal shock at 65°C for
436 1min, were lysed in boiling 2%SDS, 50mM Tris/HCl (pH7.4) lysis buffer supplemented with
437 1mM PMSF, 1mM Na3VO4, 10mM NaF (40). Epidermial tissues were pulverized in liquid
438 nitrogen prior to lysis. Protein concentration was measured using the Bradford assay (Bio-
439 Rad, Hercules, CA, USA). Samples were fractionated on SDS/PAGE and transferred on to
440 PVDF membrane (Merk Millipore, Billerica, MA, USA). Membranes were blocked in 5%
441 non-fat dry milk (Santa Cruz Biotechnology) in Tris-buffer saline, 0.1% Tween20 and
442 incubated with the indicated antibodies following the manufacturer’s instructions.

443 For immunoblotting the following antibodies were used: rictor, raptor, pSer473Akt,
444 pThr308Akt, panAkt, p-GSK3 α/β (Ser 21/9), p-FOXO 1/3 (Thr32/Thr24), pFoxO1 (Ser256,
445 cross-reactive with Ser193 of FoxO4), pFoxO3 (Ser253),FoxO1, FoxO3, p-TSC2
446 (Thr1462), total TSC2, mTOR, p-p70S6K (Thr389), total p70S6K, p-4EBP1, total 4EBP1,
447 pPRAS40 (Thr246), p-Erk1/2 (Thr37/46), total Erk1/2, Cleaved Caspase 3, pChk1
448 (Ser317), total Chk1, pChk2 (Thr68), total Chk2 (Cell Signaling Technology, Danvers, MA,
449 USA); PKCα, Hsp90, p16, p19, p-Ser19 p53, p53 (Santa Cruz Biotechnology); SOD1,
450 SOD2, catalase (Abcam, Cambridge, UK) GAPDH (Merck-Millipore); Vinculin, Tubulin
451 (Sigma-Aldrich); K5 (Covance, Princeton, NJ, USA) and horseradish peroxidase-
452 conjugated secondary antibodies (Sigma-Aldrich). Immunoblots were developed by
453 chemiluminescence with ECL (GE Healthcare, Dharmacon, Lafayette, CO, USA), acquired
454 with the molecular imager ChemiDoc XRS, and quantified by densitometric analysis using
455 the Image-lab software (Bio-Rad). All comparative images of immunoblots were obtained
456 by exposure of the same membranes. Original immunoblots (Figs. S6, S7).
457
458 **Treatments *in vivo***
459 For the acute response to 12-*O*-tetradecanoylphorbol-13-acetate (TPA), dorsal skin of 7
460 weeks old mice of both genotypes were shaved and treated with a single dose of TPA
461 (0.1mM, Sigma-Aldrich) or acetone vehicle alone (56). Treated mice were sacrificed after
462 48h for histopathological analysis.
463 For BrdU incorporation analysis in response to TPA, mice were i.p. injected with 50mg/kg
464 of BrdU in sterile PBS, 1h before termination of experiments.
465 Mice (P3) were X-ray irradiated (full body) with 4 or 8Gy doses and sacrificed for skin
466 analysis 24h later.

467 For NAC treatment, CT and E-RiKO mice (P2) were i.p. injected with NAC (Sigma) in PBS
468 sterile solution (100mg/kg) or PBS alone daily for 3 days and then irradiated full body
469 (8Gy). Mice were sacrificed and skins were excised 24h after X-ray exposure.
470
471 **Immunofluorescence and Immunohistochemistry**
472 Skins were fixed in 4% buffered formalin for 24h and embedded in paraffin. 7μm thick skin
473 sections were analyzed as follows: Haematoxylin and Eosin (H&E) staining; IHC was
474 performed for BrdU (DAKO, Carpinteria, CA, USA) and PCNA (Santa Cruz Biotechnology);
475 IF was performed for p63 (Santa Cruz Biotechnology), Loricrin (Covance), TUNEL (Roche,
476 Basel, Switzerland) following manufacturer's instructions. IF samples were counterstained
477 with Dapi or LaminA (Santa Cruz Biotechnology) and mounted in Prolongue reagent (Life
478 Technologies, Carlsbad, CA, USA).
479
480 **Flow Cytometry**
481 Dead and viable cells were estimated based on AnnexinV/DAPI staining followed by flow
482 cytometry. For this purpose, both adherent and spontaneously detached keratinocytes in
483 each condition were incubated with AnnV-FITC (BD Biosciences) for 30 min in the dark at
484 room temperature and DAPI (Sigma) was added right before the measurement (1μg/ml).
485 Cells were distinguished in live (double negative) and dead: early apoptotic (AnnV+Dapi-),
486 medium/late apoptotic (AnnV+Dapi+) or necrotic (AnnV-DAPI+). Flow cytometric data were
487 acquired using a FACSVerse (Becton Dickinson) and processed with FACSuite software.
488 At least 20,000 events were analyzed for each sample.
489 Dead cells were calculated by setting to 100% the mean of treated (starvation, epirubicin,
490 X-ray, Cisplatin, Nac/Epirubicin, BPTES/Epirubicin) CT dead cells, obtained by subtracting
491 untreated CT dead cells. The variation of dead cell fraction for each stressor was
492 calculated taking the ratio of treated E-RiKO dead cells (corrected by subtracting untreated

493 E-RiKO dead cells) to treated CT dead cells. Data are representative of at least three
494 independent experiments.
495
496 **Senescence-associated β-galactosidase assay**
497 MPKs were plated in triplicate, cultured for 25 days and stained for β-galactosidase activity
498 using the Senescence Detection Kit (Cell Signaling and Technology) following
499 manufacturer's instructions.
500
501 **X-ray irradiation**
502 Irradiation was done using a Gilardoni RADGIL irradiator (Stationary anode X-ray tube,
503 200kV) at 0.65 Gy/min. MPKs were irradiated at subconfluency in LCM.
504
505 **RNA-Seq**
506 Total RNA was extracted using TRIZOL reagent (Invitrogen) and checked for its integrity
507 by using the DNF-471 Standard Sensitivity RNA Analysis Kit on Fragment Analyzer
508 instrument (Advanced Analytical Technology, Ankeny, IA, USA). RNA-seq libraries were
509 prepared from total RNA using TruSeq RNA Sample Preparation v2 (Illumina, San Diego,
510 CA, USA) according to the manufacturer's protocol and were sequenced on Illumina
511 NextSeq 500 platform (Illumina). Sequencing reads were trimmed out of the low-quality
512 bases with Fastx Toolkit and were mapped on hg19 genome assembly by using TopHat
513 v2.0.6 (Johns-Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA) and mRNAs quantification were
514 performed using Cuffdiff v2.0.2 (University of Maryland, College Park, MD, USA). For
515 further analysis, genes with RPKM<1 in all the samples were filtered out. Gene Ontology
516 was analyzed by using GO web software.
517
518 **Biochemical Analysis of Cell Metabolism:**

519 **Mitochondria extraction** To isolate mitochondrial fractions, cells or pulverized skins were
520 washed twice in ice-cold PBS, lysed in 0.5mL mitochondria lysis buffer (50mmol/L Tris,
521 100mmol/L KCl, 5 mmol/L $MgCl_2$, 1.8 mmol/L ATP, 1 mmol/L EDTA, pH7.2),
522 supplemented with protease inhibitor cocktail III (Calbiochem, La Jolla, CA, USA), 1
523 mmol/L PMSF and 250 mmol/L NaF. Samples were clarified by centrifuging at 650g for
524 3min at +4°C: the supernatant was collected and centrifuged at 13 000g for 5min at +4°C;
525 the pellet – containing mitochondria – was washed once with lysis buffer and resuspended
526 in 0.25mL mitochondria resuspension buffer (250 mmol/L sucrose, 15 mmol/L K_2HPO_4, 2
527 mmol/L $MgCl_2$, 0.5 mmol/L EDTA). A 50 μL aliquot was sonicated and used for the
528 measurement of protein content or Western blotting. To confirm the presence of
529 mitochondrial proteins in the extracts, 10 μg of each sonicated sample were subjected to
530 SDS-PAGE and probed with an anti-porin antibody (Abcam, Cambridge, UK; data not
531 shown).
532 **ROS measurement** ROS amount in whole cells or in mitochondria extracts was measured
533 by labeling samples with the ROS-sensitive fluorescent probe 5-(and-6)-chloromethyl-2',7'-
534 dichlorodihydro-fluorescein diacetate-acetoxymethyl ester (DCFDA-AM). The results were
535 expressed as nmol/mg cell or mitochondrial proteins.
536 **Aldose reductase and NADPH oxidase activity** The activities of aldose reductase and
537 NADPH oxidase were measured by a spectrophotometric assay and by a
538 chemiluminscence-based assay, respectively (57). Results were expressed as nmoles
539 $NADP^+$/min/mg cell proteins for aldose reductase, relative luminescence unit (RLU)/mg cell
540 proteins for NADPH oxidase.
541 **Mitochondrial respiratory chain** To measure the electron flux from complex I to complex
542 III, taken as index of the mitochondrial respiratory activity, 50μg of non-sonicated
543 mitochondrial samples, isolated as previously reported, were re-suspended in 0.2 mL
544 buffer A (5 mmol/L KH_2PO_4, 5 mmol/L $MgCl_2$, 5% w/v bovine serum albumin) and

545 transferred into a quartz spectrophotometer cuvette. Then 0.1 mL buffer B (25% w/v
546 saponin, 50 mmol/L KH_2PO_4, 5 mmol/L $MgCl_2$, 5% w/v bovine serum albumin, 0.12 mmol/L
547 cytochrome c-oxidized form, 0.2 mmol/L NaN_3) was added for 5 min at room temperature.
548 The reaction was started with 0.15 mmol/L NADH and was followed for 5min, reading the
549 absorbance at 550nm by a Packard microplate reader EL340 (Bio-Tek Instruments,
550 Winooski, VT, USA). Results were expressed as nmoles cytochrome c reduced/min/mg
551 mitochondrial protein

552 **ATP levels measurement** The amount of ATP in mitochondrial extracts was measured
553 with the ATP Bioluminescent Assay Kit (Sigma-Aldrich). Results were expressed as
554 nmoles/mg mitochondrial proteins.

555 **Triglycerides levels** The triglyceride amount was measured using the Triglyceride
556 Quantification Kit (Abcam), following the manufacturer's instruction. Results were
557 expressed in nmol/mg cell or tissue proteins, according to the calibration curve previously
558 set.

559 **Fatty acid β-oxidation** The rate of fatty acid β-oxidation was measured by radiolabeling
560 cells or pulverized skins with 2 μ Ci [1-^{14}C]palmitic acid (3.3 mCi/mmol; PerkinElmer,
561 Waltham, MA) and quantifying the amount of ^{14}C-acid soluble metabolites (ASM) by liquid
562 scintillation (57). Results were expressed as pmoles ^{14}C-ASM/h/mg cell proteins.

563 **Glucose uptake and glycolytic metabolism** The uptake of glucose was measured as
564 described earlier (58) and expressed as pmoles 2-deoxy-D-[^{3}H]-glucose/mg cell proteins.
565 HK activity was measured by using the Hexokinase Colorimetric Assay Kit (Sigma-Aldrich).
566 Results were expressed as nmoles NADH/min/mg cell proteins. PFK1 assay was
567 performed according to (59). Results were expressed as nmol NAD^+/min/mg cell proteins.

568 **Glutamine catabolism.** Glutamine catabolism was measured as reported (57). Cells or
569 pulverized skins were washed with PBS, detached by gentle scraping, centrifuged at
570 13,000 x g for 5 min at 4°C, re-suspended in 250 μL of buffer A (150 mmol/L KH_2PO_4, 63

571 mmol/L Tris/HCl, 0.25 mmol/L EDTA; pH 8.6) and sonicated. The intracellular protein
572 content was measured using the BCA kit (Sigma Chemical Co.). A volume of 100 µL of the
573 whole cell lysates was incubated for 30 min at 37°C in a quartz cuvette, in the presence of
574 50 µL of 20 mmol/L L-glutamine and 850 µL of buffer B (80 mmol/L Tris/HCl, 20 mmol/L
575 NAD^+, 20 mmol/L ADP, 3% v/v H_2O_2; pH 9.4). The absorbance of NADH was monitored at
576 340 nm using a Lambda 3 spectrophotometer (PerkinElmer). The kinetics was linear
577 throughout the assay. The results were expressed as µmol NADH/min/mg cell proteins,
578 and were considered as an index of the activity of glutaminase plus L-glutamic
579 dehydrogenase. In a second series of samples, 20 µL of the glutaminase inhibitor bis-2-(5-
580 phenylacetamido-1,3,4-thiadiazol-2-yl)ethyl sulfide BTPES (30 µmol/L) was added after 15
581 min. This concentration was chosen as it produced 100% inhibition of glutaminase activity
582 in our system (not shown). The absorbance of NADH was monitored for 15 min as
583 described previously. The results, considered as an index of the activity of L-glutamic
584 dehydrogenase, were expressed as µmol NADH/min/mg cell proteins. Glutaminase activity
585 was obtained by subtracting the rate of the second assay from the rate of the first one.
586 **Tricarboxylic acid (TCA) cycle** Cells were washed with PBS, detached with
587 trypsin/EDTA (0.05/0.02% v/v) and resuspended in 1 mL Hepes buffer (145 mmol/L NaCl,
588 5 mmol/L KCl, 1 mmol/L $MgSO_4$, 10 mmol/L Hepes, 10 mmol/L glucose, 1 mmol/L $CaCl_2$,
589 pH 7.4) containing 2 µCi of L-[^{14}C]-glutamine (PerkinElmer) or L-[^{14}C]-glutamate
590 (PerkinElmer). Cell suspensions were incubated for 1 h in a closed experimental system to
591 trap the $^{14}CO_2$ developed from L-[^{14}C]-glutamine or L-[^{14}C]-glutamate and the reaction was
592 stopped by injecting 0.5 mL 0.8 N $HClO_4$. The results were expressed as nmol CO_2/h/mg
593 cell proteins. When indicated, 30 µmol/L of the glutaminase inhibitor BPTES were added to
594 the cell suspension, in order to achieve a 100% inhibition of glutaminase activity.
595 **Glutamine consumption**

596 Cells were labelled with 1 µCi [^{14}C]-L-glutamine (PerkinElmer, Waltham, MA) for 30 min,
597 washed five times with ice-cold PBS, detached with trypsin/EDTA, rinsed with 0.5 mL ice-
598 cold PBS and sonicated. A 50 µL aliquot was used to quantify intracellular proteins. [^{14}C]-
599 L-glutamate and [^{14}C]-L-glutamine present within cell lysates were separated by ion
600 exchange chromatography in a 2 mL column. The radioactivity of the eluate containing
601 [^{14}C]-L-glutamate and [^{14}C]-L-glutamine was counted by liquid scintillation and expressed
602 as µmol/mg cellular proteins. The ratio between [^{14}C]-L-glutamate/[^{14}C]-L-glutamine was
603 considered an index of glutamine consumption.
604
605 **Real-time PCR**
606 Total RNA was extracted from epidermis of mice (P3) using Triazol reagent (Invitrogen)
607 according to manufacturer's instructions. Total RNA was reverse-transcribed with a high
608 capacity cDNA reverse transcription kit (Applied BioSystems, Foster city, CA, USA)
609 according to manufacturer's instruction and amplified with specific primers. Taqman PCR
610 reactions were performed using the Universal Probe Library system (Roche Italia, Monza,
611 Italy) on an ABI 7900HT Fast Real Time PCR System (Applied Biosystems). The 18S
612 rRNA pre-developed TaqMan assay (Applied Biosystems) was used as an internal control.
613 Specific primers and UPL probes used are listed in Supplementary informations.
614
615 **Microscopy and Image Analysis**
616 Immunofluorescence analysis was performed on Leica TSCII SP5 confocal microscope
617 (Leica, Wetzlar, Germany) controlled by LAS-AF Software (Leica). Multitrack analysis was
618 used for image acquisition. Histological sections were imaged on Olympus BH-2 RFCA
619 microscope equipped with Leica DFC320 camera (Leica). Camera was controlled by Leica
620 Application Suite version 2.8.1 software (Leica). Phase contrast imaging was performed on
621 Zeiss Axio Observer microscope (Carl Zeiss, Oberkochen, Germany). Quantitative

622 analysis was performed using ImageJ software (National Institute of Health, Bethesda, MD,
623 USA).
624
625 **Statistical analysis**
626 Data obtained from densitometric analysis of immunoblots, FACS, IF, CFE and IHC were
627 plotted as mean ± SD. Results were assessed for statistical significance by a standard
628 two-tailed Student's t test as indicated. p values *p< 0.05, **p< 0.005, ***p< 0.0005. For
629 epidermal thickness, measurements obtained from H&E were analyzed with linear
630 regression using Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE) (60) to take into account the
631 correlation between measurements obtained from the same animal. Data obtained from
632 growth assays were analyzed by using the CompareGrowthCurves function included in the
633 R package "statmod": https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/statmod/index.html
634
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644
645
646 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
647 The authors declare no conflict of interest.

648 **Supplementary information is available at Cell Death and Differentiation's website.**

649

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823

825

826 **Figure Legends**

827

828 Figure 1

829 **Loss of rictor/mTORC2 in the epidermis results in tissue hypoplasia and impaired**

830 **TPA response.**

831 a) Diagram of the breeding strategy used to obtain K-14 cre mediated homozygous

832 deletion of rictor (E-RiKO). WT: wild-type mouse, CT: WT mouse with exon 3 flanked by

833 two LoxP sites. White tile: hexon; Black arrowhead: LoxP site. b-c) Representative

834 Western blotting analysis with the indicated antibodies of: b) Epidermal extracts of CT and

835 E-RiKO newborn (P3) littermates (n=3); c) Cell extracts of CT and E-RiKO MPKs

836 subjected to starvation/stimulation treatment for the indicated times. d-e) Skins of E-RiKO

837 and CT littermates (P3): d) Representative H&E staining (left panels) and histograms of

838 the epidermal thickness. Epi: epidermis. Der: dermis. Bar: 30μm. e) PCNA staining (left

839 panels) and histograms of the percentage of $PCNA^+$ epidermal area. Arrows: brightest

840 $PCNA^+$ cells in epidermal basal layers. Bar: 50μm. f) Representative H&E images of skin

841 section obtained from E-RiKO and CT littermates (7-weeks old) upon 48h of TPA or

842 vehicle treatment, (n=3). Bar: 30μm. Histograms represent epidermal thickness. g)

843 Representative confocal images of IF performed on skin sections, obtained from mice

844 treated as in f) and injected with BrdU for the final hour of the experiment, with anti-BrdU

845 antibody (red) and counterstained with anti-LaminA antibody (green). Arrowheads: $BrdU^+$

846 cells. Bar: 50μm. The percentage of $BrdU^+$ cells/area (μm^2) was quantified (right

847 histograms).

848 Quantification of epidermal thickness (mean ± SEM) for 3 mice/genotype; the standard

849 error and the significance of the differences between groups were determined with linear

850 regression using GEE. ***$p<0.0005$.

851 PCNA and BrdU histograms represent the mean ± SD of 30 fields/genotype (n=3).
852 ***p<0.0005.
853
854 Figure 2
855 **Rictor-deficient keratinocytes display reduced proliferation and delayed senescence**
856 ***in vitro.***
857 a) Quantification of MPKs derived from at least 10 skins of CT and E-RiKO newborn mice
858 (P3). Histograms represent mean ± SD. ***p<0.0005. E-RiKO and CT MPKs were isolated
859 from littermates P3 (n=5) and analyzed as follows: b) Growth curve: MPKs (both adherent
860 and suspended/differentiated cells) were detached and counted at the indicated times
861 upon plating. Data are mean ± SD obtained from triplicate samples/genotype of three
862 independent experiments. CompareGrowthCurve function was used (see Materials and
863 Methods). p=0.029. c) Confluent MPKs, were subjected to a single BrdU pulse (3h) under
864 basal conditions. Histograms represent mean ± SD of the percentage of $BrdU^+$ cells
865 determined from at least 200 cells/genotype of three independent experiments.
866 ***p<0.0005. d) Representative phase contrast images of MPKs cultured in LCM for the
867 indicated times. Note that E-RiKO cells show at 3 days reduced density compared to CT
868 counterparts, at 5-10 days they display a comparable confluency, while at 25 days they
869 maintained an undifferentiated proliferative morphology whereas CT cells show a flattened,
870 senescent appearance. Bar: 100μm. e) Western blotting analysis for the indicated markers
871 of MPKs extracts of 25-day cultures. f) Representative images of 25-day old MPKs stained
872 for SA-βGal (left panel). The percentage of SA-$βGal^+$ cells is quantified in the histograms
873 (right) as mean ± SD of at least 200 cells/genotype of three independent experiments. Bar:
874 50μm. *p<0.05.
875

875 Figure 3

876 **Rictor-deficient keratinocytes display resistance to death-inducing stimuli both *in***
877 ***vitro* and *in vivo.***

878 a-h) E-RiKO and CT MPKs (P3) were analyzed at confluency (5-6 days in culture) as
879 follows:

880 a) Representative Western blotting analysis of extracts obtained from E-RiKO and CT
881 MPKs upon starvation (st) for the apoptosis marker cleaved caspase 3 (Cl-casp3) and
882 Rictor. Loading control: Tubulin. b) Representative Annexin-V/DAPI flow cytometry plots of
883 E-RiKO and CT MPKs kept in complete LCM (-) or starvation (St) for 72h. Histograms are
884 mean ± SD of dead cells expressed as variation of the fraction of dead cells in response to
885 starvation (72h) (see Materials and Methods) *$p<0.05$. c-d) MPKs grown in LCM for 24h
886 were kept untreated (-) or treated with epirubicin (10μM) for 18h: c) Representative
887 Western blotting analysis for the indicated proteins. d) Representative AnnexinV/DAPI flow
888 cytometry plots of E-RiKO and CT MPKs kept untreated (-) or treated with Epirubicin for
889 15h. Histograms are mean ± SD of dead cells determined as in b). *$p<0.05$. e) MPKs
890 maintained in LCM or starved (St) for 18h were treated with a single BrdU pulse. $BrdU^+$
891 cells were determined out of 200 cells ($Dapi^+$)/genotype in three independent experiments.
892 Histograms represent mean ± SD of $BrdU^+$ cells. Note that upon St 18h cells display
893 comparable BrdU uptake. *$p<0.05$; ***$p<0.0005$. f) MPKs were starved as in e) and then
894 treated with the indicated doses of epirubicin for 4h. Cell extracts were analysed by
895 western blotting for Rictor, Cl-casp3 and Tubulin, loading control. Ratio between Cl-casp3
896 and Tubulin is reported. g) Histograms represent mean colony number ± SD from
897 duplicate plates determined in untreated (-) and treated (X-ray) MPKs colony forming
898 efficiency assay, relative to the value obtained with CT (-) cells set as unitary. Data are
899 representative of at least two independent experiments. ***$p<0.0005$, **$p<0.005$. h)
900 Representative AnnexinV/DAPI flow cytometry plots of E-RiKO and CT MPKs kept

901 untreated (-) or X-ray treated (60Gy) analysed after 96h. Histograms are mean ± SD of
902 dead cells determined as in b) *p<0.05. i) Representative confocal images for TUNEL (red)
903 and Dapi (blue) stainings of skin sections obtained from E-RiKO and CT littermates (P3)
904 subjected to a full body single dose of X-ray radiation (8Gy) and sacrificed 24h later. Bar:
905 100μm. n=5mice/genotype. j) Quantification of TUNEL staining of X-ray treated skins with
906 and 4Gy and 8Gy as in j). Histograms represent mean ± SD of $TUNEL^+$ cells/area
907 ($10^3 \mu m^2$) of at least 30 hair follicles of 4 mice/genotype. Note that the $TUNEL^+$ area was
908 limited to the hair follicle matrix, with similar cellular density and sensitive to
909 radiations.***p<0.0005.
910
911 Figure 4
912 **RNA-Seq analysis of rictor-deficient keratinocytes suggests a link between**
913 **metabolic changes and stress adaptation.**
914 E-RiKO and CT MPKs were isolated from newborn littermates (n=6/genotype), grown in
915 LCM and analyzed by RNA–Seq analysis under basal conditions (24h LCM) and upon X-
916 ray exposure (8Gy) for 1h and 24h. a) Upregulated and downregulated genes detected in
917 E-RiKO versus CT cells under basal conditions. b) Selected gene ontology (GO)
918 categories enriched in differentially expressed genes as in a). The number of genes
919 belonging to each GO category is indicated. Rictor deficiency was coupled with
920 downregulation of genes involved in lipid metabolism (P=1.08E-16), keratinocyte
921 differentiation (P=1.68E-9), oxidation-reduction process (P=1.89E-6), lipid catabolic
922 process (P=2.41E-6), lipid biosynthetic process (P=2.7E-6) and upregulation of genes
923 involved in cell motility (P=2.62E-18), signal transduction (P=3.15E-15), inflammatory
924 response (P=1.66E-12), response to stress (P=3.11E-7) and defense response (P=2.28E-
925 6) (Fig.4b). c) Upregulated and downregulated genes of X-ray treated MPKs of the
926 indicated genotype relative to basal conditions. d) Differentially regulated genes overlap

927 between CT MPKs X-ray treated for 1h and E-RiKO MPKs under basal conditions (27.5%
928 gene overlap; P=5.44E-57, Fisher exact test). e) Selected GO categories enriched in
929 overlapping differentially regulated genes (DEGs) subgroup as in d).
930
931 Figure 5
932 **Rictor-deficient keratinocytes display metabolic reprogramming.**
933 E-RiKO and CT MPKs, isolated and cultured in LCM (n=5 littermates P3/genotype), were
934 analyzed at confluency upon LCM 24h as follows: a) Total cellular ROS (nmol/mg prot), b)
935 Mitochondrial ROS (nmol/mg mit prot); c) Mitochondrial/Total ROS (%) determined by
936 compairing mitochondrial and total ROS, each normalized for total protein content; d)
937 Aldose reductase (nmol $NADP^+$/min/mg prot); e) NADPH oxidase (RLU/mg prot); f)
938 Electron transport chain (nmol red cit c/min/mg mit prot); g) ATP (nmol/mg mit prot); h)
939 Lipid β-oxidation (pmol/h/mg prot); i) Triglycerides (nmol/mg prot); j) Glucose uptake (pmol
940 glucose/mg prot); k) Hexokinase (nmol NADH/min/mg prot); l) Phosphofructose kinase 1
941 (nmol NAD^+/min/mg prot); m) Glutaminase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot); n) Glutamic
942 dehydrogenase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot); o) TCA cycle with [14C] glutamine (pmol
943 CO_2/h/mg mit prot); p) TCA cycle with [14C] glutamate (pmol CO_2/h/mg mit prot); q)
944 Intracellular [14C]glutamine (μmol/mg prot); r) Intracellular [14C]glutamate (μmol/mg prot);
945 s) Glutamate/glutamate ratio; t) Total SOD (μmol/min/mg prot); u) Catalase (nmol/min/mg
946 prot); v) Mitochondrial SOD (μmol/min/mg prot).
947 All histograms represent mean ± SD of the indicated metabolic parameters determined in
948 at least three independent experiments. ***p<0.0005; **p<0.005; *p<0.05.
949

949
950

951 Figure 6

952 **ROS scavenging and glutaminase inhibition sensitize rictor-deficient keratinocytes**
953 **to epirubicin-induced cell death.**

954 E-RiKO and CT MPKs were isolated (n=5/genotype), grown in LCM and analyzed at
955 confluency for: a) Total cellular ROS was measured upon LCM (-) or NAC 10mM for 48h.
956 Histograms represent mean ± SD of ROS levels measured in at least three independent
957 experiments. ***p<0.0005; *p<0.05. b) Histograms represent mean ± SD of mitochondrial
958 ROS determined in cells treated as in a). c) Representative Western blotting analysis for
959 the indicated antibodies of cell extracts obtained from MPKs maintained as in a) and
960 subsequently treated with DMSO (-) or epirubicin 10μM for 10h. Ratio between Cl-casp3
961 and keratin5 (K5) is reported. d) Representative AnnexinV/DAPI flow cytometry plots of E-
962 RiKO and CT MPKs maintained untreated (-) or pre-treated with NAC and subsequently
963 treated with epirubicin 10μM for 15h. Histograms are mean ± SD of dead cells determined
964 as described in Materials and Methods. *p<0.05. e) Histograms represent the mean ± SD
965 of the glutaminase activity (μmol NADH/min/mg prot) evaluated in CT and E-RiKO MPKs
966 treated with BPTES (10μM, 2h) in at least three independent experiments.**p<0.005,
967 *p<0.05. f) Histograms represent mean ± SD of total ROS levels (nmol/mg prot) measured
968 in cells treated as in e) in at least three independent experiments. *p<0.05. g)
969 Representative Western blotting analysis with the indicated antibodies of cell extracts
970 derived from E-RiKO and CT cells pre-treated with BPTES at the indicated doses for 48h
971 and exposed to epirubicin in the presence of BPTES for 15h. Ratio between Cl-casp3 and
972 keratin5 (K5) is reported. h) Representative AnnexinV/DAPI flow cytometry plots of E-
973 RiKO and CT MPKs maintained untreated (-) or pre-treated with BPTES and subsequently

974 treated with epirubicin 10μM for 15h. Histograms are mean ± SD of dead cells as in d).
975 **p<0.005, *p<0,05.
976
977 Figure 7
978 **Rictor-deficient epidermis displays a metabolic rewiring and ROS-dependent lower**
979 **sensitivity to stress.**
980 a)Metabolic analysis of CT and E-RiKO skins obtained from at least 3mice/genotype.
981 Histograms represent mean ± SD of the following metabolic parameters: total cellular ROS
982 (nmol/mg prot); Mitochondrial ROS (nmol/mg mit prot); Electron transport chain (nmol red
983 cit c/min/mg mit prot); ATP (nmol/mg mit prot); Lipid β-oxidation (pmol/h/mg prot);
984 Hexokinase (nmol NADH/min/mg prot); Glutaminase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot); Glutamic
985 dehydrogenase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot). **p<0.005, *p<0.05. b) RNA was extracted
986 from CT and E-RiKO skins of at least 6mice/genotype and RT-PCR analysis for the
987 following genes was performed: Gadd45-α; Gadd45-β; Gadd45-γ; Glul; Il1-α; Acsl1; Faah;
988 Fabp4. Data are represented as mean ± SD of the fold change relative to unitary value
989 assigned to CT. **p<0.005, *p<0.05.
990 c) Representative confocal images of IF for TUNEL (red) and Dapi (blue) stainings on E-
991 RiKO and CT skin sections pre-treated with NAC (or vehicle) for 48h (i.p. injection),
992 subjected to a single dose of X-ray radiation (8Gy) and collected 24h later. Bar: 100μm.
993 n=10mice/genotype. d) Histograms represent mean ±SD of ROS levels (nmol/mg prot) in
994 CT and E-RiKO skins treated with NAC (or vehicle) for 48h, of 3mice/genotype. *p<0.05,
995 **p<0.005. e) Histograms represent mean ± SD of $TUNEL^+$ cells/area ($10^3 \mu m^2$) of at least
996 30 hair follicles of 10 mice/genotype treated as in c). ***p<0.0005.
997
998
999 **Supplementary information is available at Cell Death and Differentiation's website.**

1000

1128 **Figure Legends**

1129

1130 Figure 1

1131 **Loss of rictor/mTORC2 in the epidermis results in tissue hypoplasia and impaired**

1132 **TPA response.**

1133 a) Diagram of the breeding strategy used to obtain K-14 cre mediated homozygous

1134 deletion of rictor (E-RiKO). WT: wild-type mouse, CT: WT mouse with exon 3 flanked by

1135 two LoxP sites. White tile: hexon; Black arrowhead: LoxP site. b-c) Representative

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1137 E-RiKO littermates (P3, n=3); c) Cell extracts of CT and E-RiKO MPKs subjected to

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1139 littermates (P3): d) Representative H&E staining (left panels) and histograms of the

1140 epidermal thickness. Epi: epidermis. Der: dermis. Bar: 30μm. e) PCNA staining (left

1141 panels) and histograms of the percentage of $PCNA^+$ epidermal area. Arrows: brightest

1142 $PCNA^+$ cells. Bar: 50μm. f) Representative H&E images of skin section obtained from E-

1143 RiKO and CT littermates (7-weeks old) upon 48h of TPA or vehicle treatment, (n=3). Bar:

1144 30μm. Histograms represent epidermal thickness. g) Representative confocal images of IF

1145 performed on skin sections, obtained from mice treated as in f) and injected with BrdU for

1146 the final hour of the experiment, with anti-BrdU antibody (red) and counterstained with anti-

1147 LaminA antibody (green). Arrowheads: $BrdU^+$ cells. Bar: 50μm. The percentage of $BrdU^+$

1148 cells/area (μm^2) was quantified (right histograms).

1149 Quantification of epidermal thickness (mean ± SEM) for 3 mice/genotype performed with

1150 GEE statistical analysis. ***$p<0.0005$.

1151 PCNA and BrdU histograms represent the mean ± SD of 30 fields/genotype (n=3).

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1155 **Rictor-deficient keratinocytes display reduced proliferation and delayed senescence**
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1157 a) Quantification of MPKs derived from at least 10 skins of CT and E-RiKO mice (P3).
1158 Histograms represent mean ± SD. ***p<0.0005. E-RiKO and CT MPKs were isolated from
1159 littermates P3 (n=5) and analyzed as follows: b) Growth curve: MPKs (both adherent and
1160 suspended/differentiated cells) were detached and counted at the indicated times upon
1161 plating. Data are mean ± SD obtained from triplicate samples/genotype of three
1162 independent experiments. CompareGrowthCurve function was used, see Materials and
1163 Methods. p=0.029. c) Confluent MPKs, were subjected to a single BrdU pulse (3h) under
1164 basal conditions. Histograms represent mean ± SD of the percentage of $BrdU^+$ cells
1165 determined from at least 200 cells/genotype of three independent experiments.
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1167 indicated times. Note that E-RiKO cells show at 3 days reduced density compared to CT
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1172 for SA-βGal (left panel). The percentage of SA-$βGal^+$ cells is quantified in the histograms
1173 (right) as mean ± SD of at least 200 cells/genotype of three independent experiments. Bar:
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1175

1176 Figure 3

1177 **Rictor-deficient keratinocytes display resistance to death-inducing stimuli both *in***
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1179 a-h) E-RiKO and CT MPKs (P3) were analyzed at confluency (5-6 days in culture) as
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1183 Rictor. Loading control: Tubulin. b) Representative Annexin-V/DAPI flow cytometry plots of
1184 E-RiKO and CT MPKs under basal conditions (-) or 72h starvation (St 72h). Histograms
1185 are mean ± SD of dead cells (CT and E-RiKO MPKs) expressed as percentage of variation
1186 of dead cells fraction in response to starvation 72h, in three independent experiments. c-d)
1187 MPKs grown in LCM for 24h were kept untreated (-) or treated with epirubicin (10μM) for
1188 18h: c) Representative Western blotting analysis for the indicated proteins. d)
1189 Representative AnnexinV/DAPI flow cytometry plots of E-RiKO and CT MPKs under basal
1190 conditions (-) or Epirubicin for 15h. Histograms are mean ± SD of dead cells (CT and E-
1191 RiKO MPKs) expressed as percentage of variation of dead cells fraction in response to
1192 Epirubicin, in three independent experiments. e) MPKs maintained in LCM or starved (St)
1193 for 18h were treated with a single BrdU pulse. $BrdU^+$ cells were determined out of 200
1194 cells ($Dapi^+$)/genotype in three independent experiments. Histograms represent mean ±
1195 SD of $BrdU^+$ cells. Note that upon St 18h cells display comparable BrdU uptake. *$p<0.05$;
1196 ***$p<0.0005$. f) MPKs were starved as in e) and then treated with the indicated doses of
1197 epirubicin for 4h. Cell extracts were analysed by western blotting for Rictor, Cl-casp3 and
1198 Tubulin, loading control. Ratio between Cl-casp3 and Tubulin is reported. g) Histograms
1199 represent mean colony number ± SD from duplicate plates determined in untreated (-) and
1200 treated (X-ray) MPKs colony forming efficiency assay, relative to the value obtained with
1201 CT (-) cells set as unitary. Data are representative of at least two independent experiments.
1202 ***$p<0.0005$, **$p<0.005$. h) Representative AnnexinV/DAPI flow cytometry plots of E-RiKO
1203 and CT MPKs under basal conditions (-) or X-ray treatment (60Gy). Histograms are mean
1204 ± SD of dead cells (CT and E-RiKO MPKs) expressed as percentage of variation of dead

1205 cells fraction in response to X-ray, in three independent experiments. i) Representative
1206 confocal images for TUNEL (red) and Dapi (blue) stainings of skin sections obtained from
1207 E-RiKO and CT littermates (P3) subjected to a full body single dose of X-ray radiation
1208 (8Gy) and sacrificed 24h later. Bar: 100μm. n=5mice/genotype. j) Quantification of TUNEL
1209 staining of X-ray treated skins with and 4Gy and 8Gy as in j). Histograms represent mean
1210 ± SD of $TUNEL^+$ cells/area ($10^3 \mu m^2$) of at least 30 hair follicles of 4 mice/genotype. Note
1211 that the $TUNEL^+$ area was limited to the hair follicle matrix, with similar cellular density and
1212 sensitive to radiations (46, 47). ***$p<0.0005$.
1213
1214 Figure 4
1215 **RNA-Seq analysis of rictor-deficient keratinocytes suggests a link between**
1216 **metabolic changes and stress adaptation.**
1217 E-RiKO and CT MPKs were isolated from newborn littermates (n=6/genotype), grown in
1218 LCM and analyzed by RNA–Seq analysis under basal conditions (24h LCM) and upon X-
1219 ray exposure (8Gy) for 1h and 24h. a) Upregulated and downregulated genes detected in
1220 E-RiKO versus CT cells under basal conditions. b) Selected gene ontology (GO)
1221 categories enriched in differentially expressed genes as in a). The number of genes
1222 belonging to each GO category is indicated. c) Upregulated and downregulated genes of
1223 X-ray treated MPKs of the indicated genotype relative to basal conditions. d) Differentially
1224 regulated genes overlap between CT MPKs X-ray treated for 1h and E-RiKO MPKs under
1225 basal conditions. e) Selected GO categories enriched in overlapping differentially
1226 regulated genes (DEGs) subgroup as in d).
1227
1228 Figure 5
1229 **Rictor-deficient keratinocytes display metabolic reprogramming.**

1230 E-RiKO and CT MPKs, isolated and cultured in LCM (n=5 littermates P3/genotype), were
1231 analyzed at confluency upon LCM 24h as follows: a) Total cellular ROS (nmol/mg prot), b)
1232 Mitochondrial ROS (nmol/mg mit prot); c) Mitochondrial/Total ROS (%) determined by
1233 compairing mitochondrial and total ROS, each normalized for total protein content; d)
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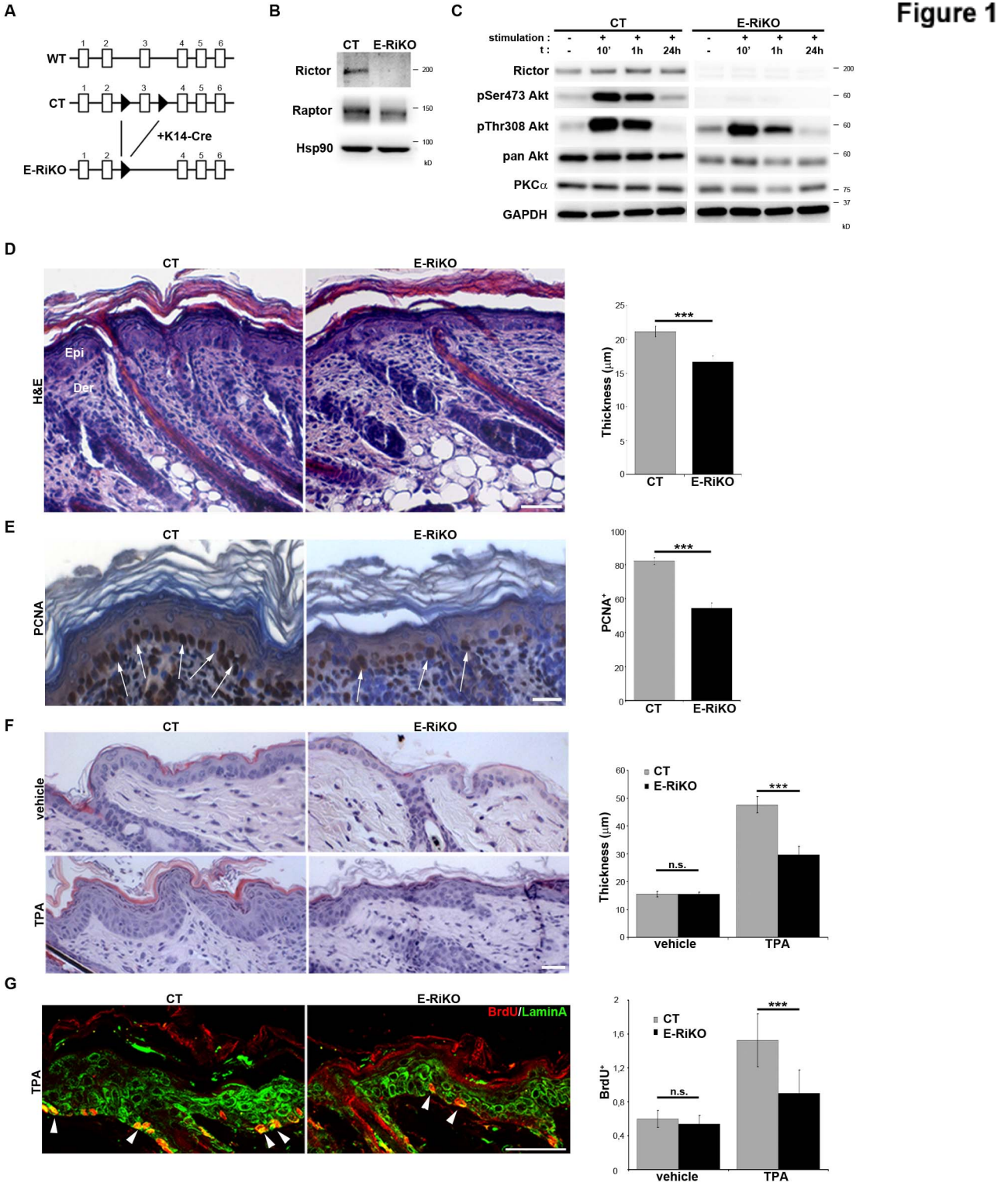
1236 Lipid β-oxidation (pmol/h/mg prot); i) Triglycerides (nmol/mg prot); j) Glucose uptake (pmol
1237 glucose/mg prot); k) Hexokinase (nmol NADH/min/mg prot); l) Phosphofructose kinase 1
1238 (nmol NAD^+/min/mg prot); m) Glutaminase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot); n) Glutamic
1239 dehydrogenase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot); o) TCA cycle with [14C] glutamine (pmol
1240 CO_2/h/mg mit prot); p) TCA cycle with [14C] glutamate (pmol CO_2/h/mg mit prot); q)
1241 Intracellular [14C]glutamine (μmol/mg prot); r) Intracellular [14C]glutamate (μmol/mg prot);
1242 s) Glutamate/glutamate ratio; t) Total SOD (μmol/min/mg prot); u) Catalase (nmol/min/mg
1243 prot); v) Mitochondrial SOD (μmol/min/mg prot).
1244 All histograms represent mean ± SD of the indicated metabolic parameters determined in
1245 at least three independent experiments. ***p<0.0005; **p<0.005; *p<0.05.
1246
1247 Figure 6
1248 **ROS scavenging and glutaminase inhibition sensitize rictor-deficient keratinocytes**
1249 **to Epirubicin-induced cell death.**
1250 E-RiKO and CT MPKs were isolated (n=5/genotype), grown in LCM and analyzed at
1251 confluency for: a) Total cellular ROS was measured upon LCM (-) or NAC 10mM for 48h.
1252 Histograms represent mean ± SD of ROS levels measured in at least three independent
1253 experiments. ***p<0.0005; *p<0.05. b) Histograms represent mean ± SD of mitochondrial
1254 ROS determined in cells treated as in a). c) Representative Western blotting analysis for
1255 the indicated antibodies of cell extracts obtained from MPKs maintained as in a) and

1256 subsequently treated with DMSO (-) or epirubicin 10μM for 10h. Ratio between Cl-casp3
1257 and keratin5 (K5) is reported. d) Representative AnnexinV/DAPI flow cytometry plots of E-
1258 RiKO and CT MPKs maintained untreated (-) or pre-treated with NAC and subsequently
1259 treated with Epirubicin 10μM for 15h. Histograms are mean ± SD of dead cells (CT and E-
1260 RiKO MPKs) expressed as percentage of variation of dead cells fraction in response to
1261 NAC and Epirubicin, in three independent experiments. e) Histograms represent the mean
1262 ± SD of the glutaminase activity (μmol NADH/min/mg prot) evaluated in CT and E-RiKO
1263 MPKs treated with BPTES (10μM, 2h) in at least three independent experiments.**p<0.005,
1264 *p<0.05. f) Histograms represent mean ± SD of total ROS levels (nmol/mg prot) measured
1265 in cells treated as in e) in at least three independent experiments. *p<0.05. g)
1266 Representative Western blotting analysis with the indicated antibodies of cell extracts
1267 derived from E-RiKO and CT cells pre-treated with BPTES at the indicated doses for 48h
1268 and exposed to epirubicin in the presence of BPTES for 15h. Ratio between Cl-casp3 and
1269 keratin5 (K5) is reported. h) Representative AnnexinV/DAPI flow cytometry plots of E-
1270 RiKO and CT MPKs maintained untreated (-) or pre-treated with BPTES and subsequently
1271 treated with Epirubicin 10μM for 15h. Histograms are mean ± SD of dead cells (CT and E-
1272 RiKO MPKs) expressed as percentage of variation of dead cells fraction in response to
1273 BPTES and Epirubicin, in three independent experiments. **p<0.005, *p<0,05.
1274
1275 Figure 7
1276 **Rictor-deficient epidermis displays a metabolic rewiring and ROS-dependent lower**
1277 **sensitivity to stress.**
1278 a)Metabolic analysis of CT and E-RiKO skins obtained from at least 3mice/genotype.
1279 Histograms represent mean ± SD of the following metabolic parameters: total cellular ROS
1280 (nmol/mg prot); Mitochondrial ROS (nmol/mg mit prot); Electron transport chain (nmol red
1281 cit c/min/mg mit prot); ATP (nmol/mg mit prot); Lipid β-oxidation (pmol/h/mg prot);

1282 Hexokinase (nmol NADH/min/mg prot); Glutaminase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot); Glutamic
1283 dehydrogenase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot). **p<0.005, *p<0.05. b) RNA was extracted
1284 from CT and E-RiKO skins of at least 6mice/genotype and RT-PCR analysis for the
1285 following genes was performed: Gadd45-a; Gadd45-b; Gadd45-g; Glul; Il1-a; Acsl1; Faah;
1286 Fabp4. Data are represented as mean ± SD. **p<0.005, *p<0.05.
1287 c) Representative confocal images of IF for TUNEL (red) and Dapi (blue) stainings on E-
1288 RiKO and CT skin sections pre-treated with NAC (or vehicle) for 48h (i.p. injection),
1289 subjected to a single dose of X-ray radiation (8Gy) and collected 24h later. Bar: 100μm.
1290 n=10mice/genotype. d) Histograms represent mean ±SD of ROS levels (nmol/mg prot) in
1291 CT and E-RiKO skins treated with NAC (or vehicle) for 48h, of 3mice/genotype. *p<0.05,
1292 **p<0.005. e) Histograms represent mean ± SD of $TUNEL^+$ cells/area ($10^3 \mu m^2$) of at least
1293 30 hair follicles of 10 mice/genotype treated as in c). ***p<0.0005.
1294
1295
1296 **Supplementary information is available at Cell Death and Differentiation's website.**
1297

Figure 1


A
WT
CT
E-RiKO
+K14-Cre
B
CT
E-RiKO
Rictor
Raptor
Hsp90
200
150
100
kD
C
CT
E-RiKO
stimulation :
t :
10'
1h
24h
Rictor
pSer473 Akt
pThr308 Akt
pan Akt
PKCα
GAPDH
200
60
60
60
75
37
kD
D
CT
E-RiKO
H&E
Epi
Der
Thickness (μm)
***
E
PCNA
PCNA+
F
vehicle
TPA
n.s.
G
BrdU/LaminA
BrdU+

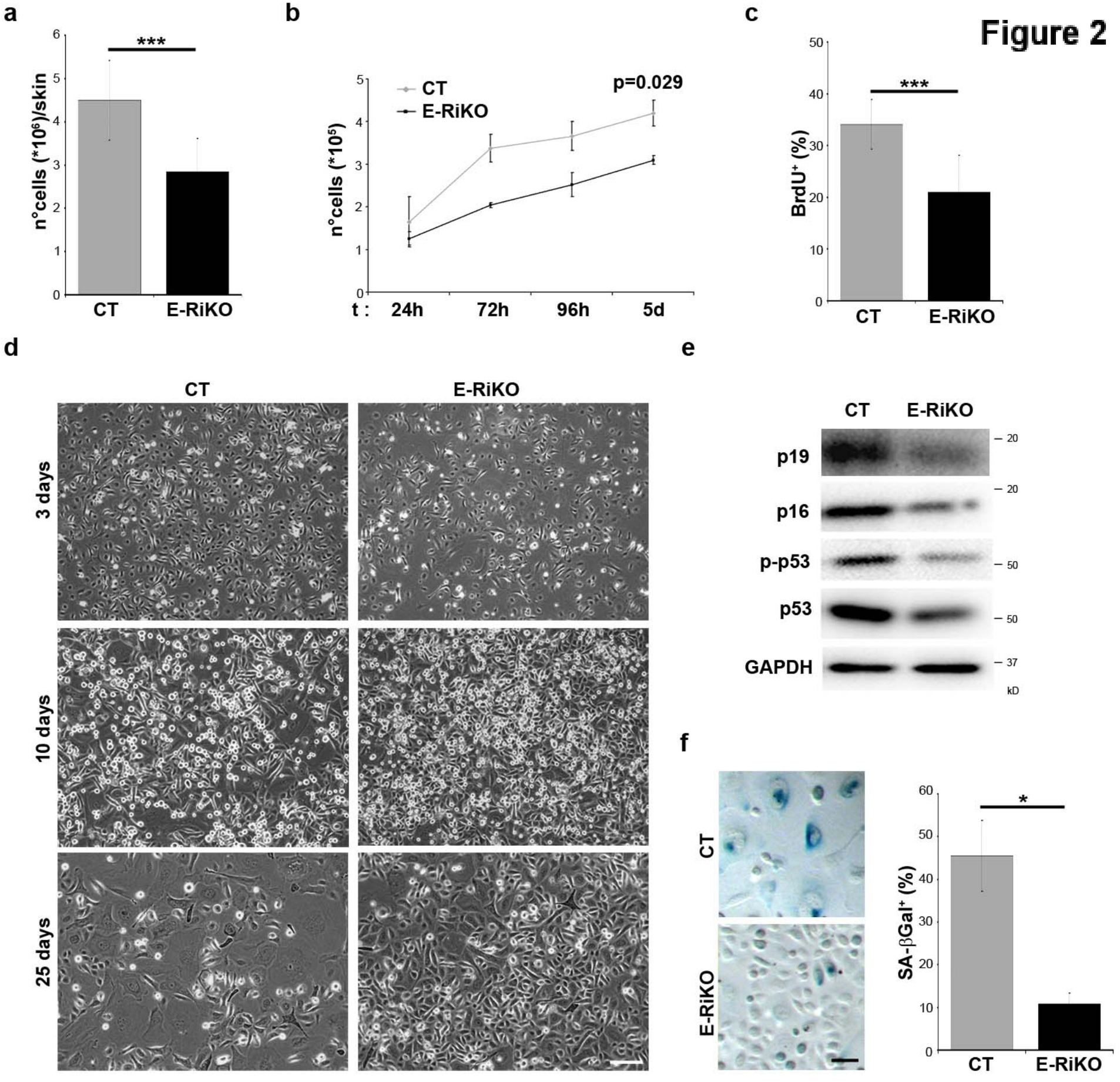
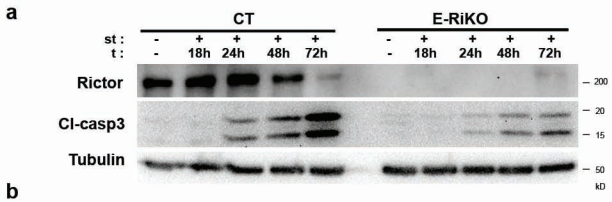


Figure 2
a
***
n°cells (*10^6)/skin
CT
E-RiKO
b
CT
E-RiKO
p=0.029
n°cells (*10^5)
t : 24h 72h 96h 5d
c
***
BrdU+ (%)
CT
E-RiKO
d
CT
E-RiKO
3 days
10 days
25 days
e
CT
E-RiKO
p19
p16
p-p53
p53
GAPDH
20
20
50
50
37
kD
f
CT
E-RiKO
*
SA-βGal+ (%)
CT
E-RiKO

Figure 3

a



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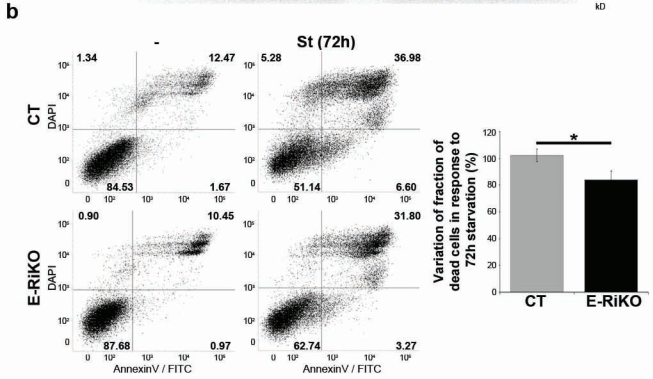

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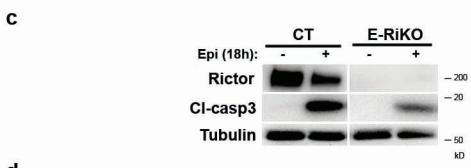

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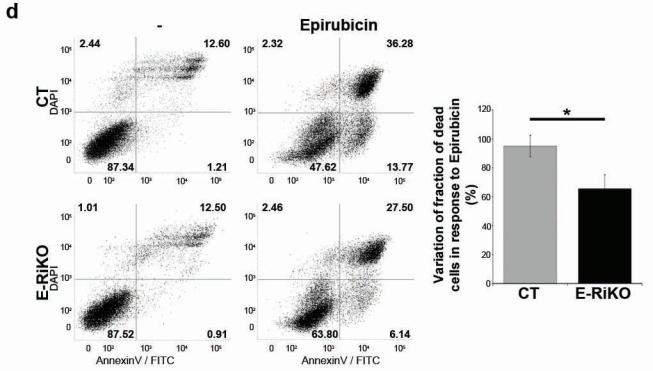

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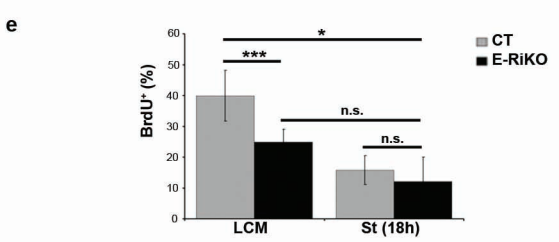

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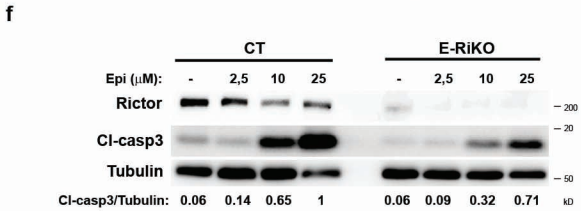

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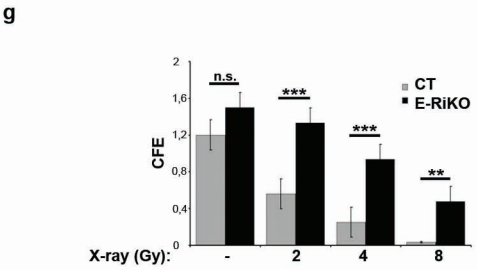

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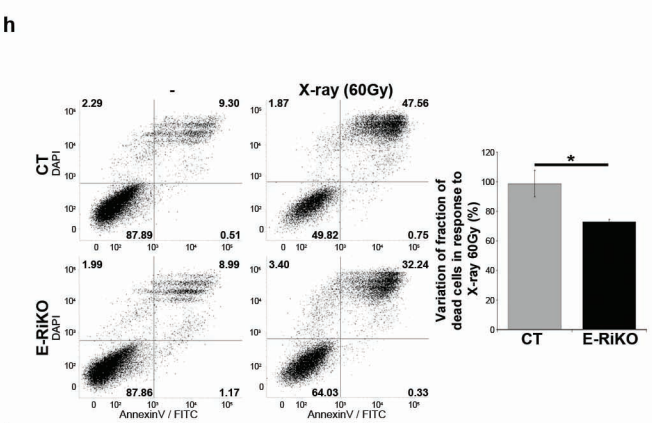

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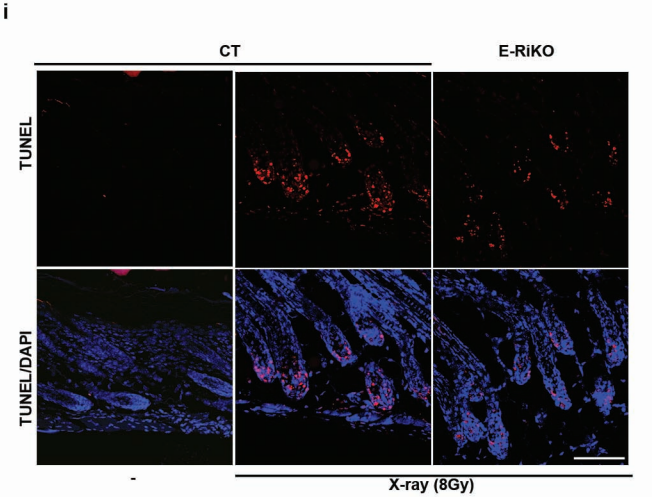

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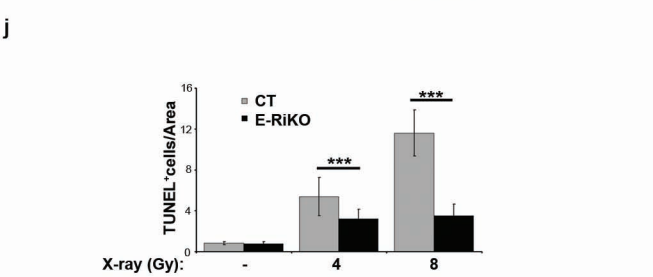


Figure 4

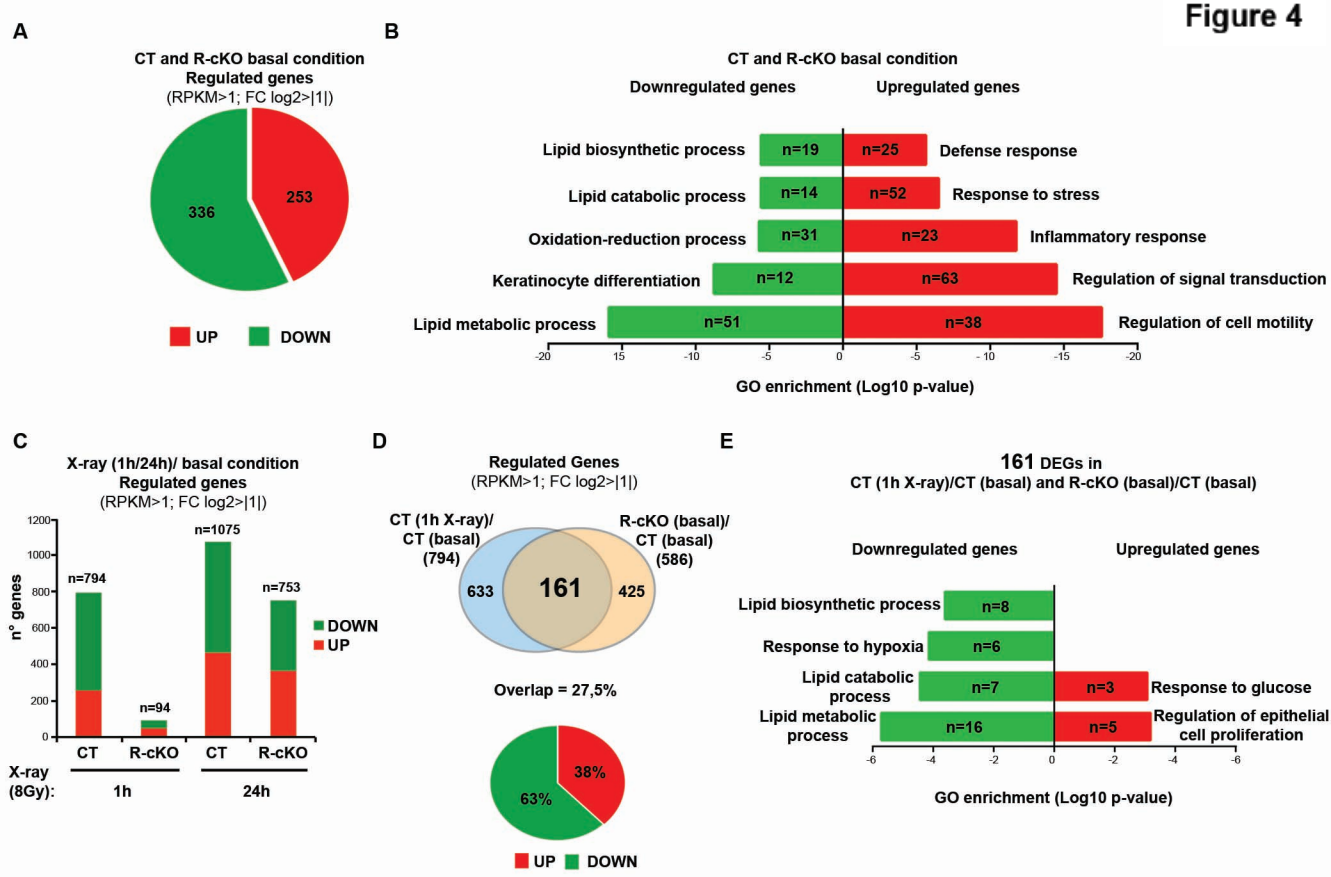
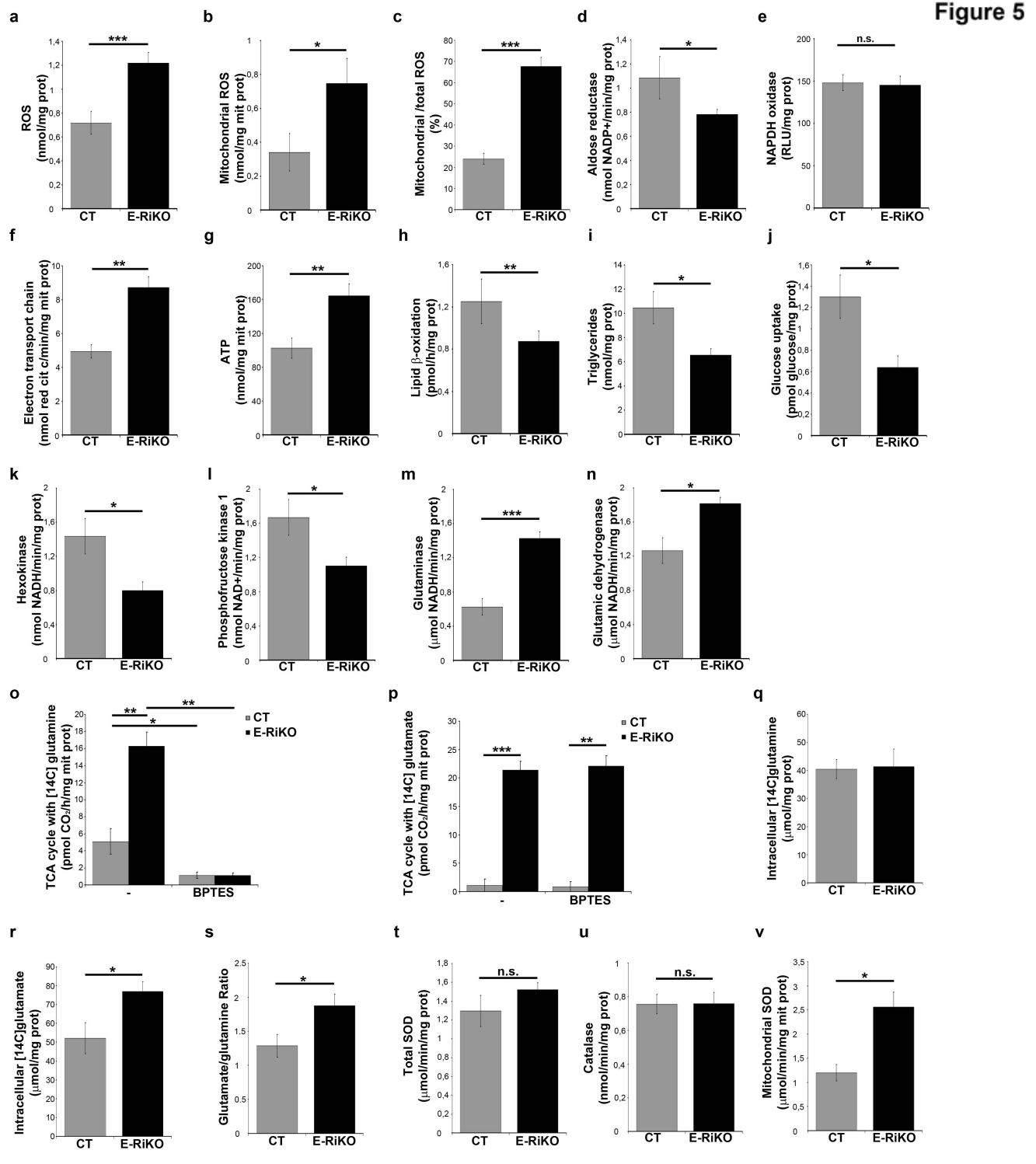

A
CT and R-cKO basal condition
Regulated genes
(RPKM>1; FC log2>|1|)
253
336
UP
DOWN
B
CT and R-cKO basal condition
Downregulated genes
Upregulated genes
Lipid biosynthetic process
n=19
n=25
Defense response
Lipid catabolic process
n=14
n=52
Response to stress
Oxidation-reduction process
n=31
n=23
Inflammatory response
Keratinocyte differentiation
n=12
n=63
Regulation of signal transduction
Lipid metabolic process
n=51
n=38
Regulation of cell motility
-20
15
-10
-5
0
-5
- 10
-15
-20
GO enrichment (Log10 p-value)
C
X-ray (1h/24h)/ basal condition
Regulated genes
(RPKM>1; FC log2>|1|)
n° genes
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
n=794
n=94
n=1075
n=753
DOWN
UP
CT
R-cKO
CT
R-cKO
X-ray
(8Gy):
1h
24h
D
Regulated Genes
(RPKM>1; FC log2>|1|)
CT (1h X-ray)/
CT (basal)
(794)
R-cKO (basal)/
CT (basal)
(586)
633
161
425
Overlap = 27,5%
38%
63%
UP
DOWN
E
161 DEGs in
CT (1h X-ray)/CT (basal) and R-cKO (basal)/CT (basal)
Downregulated genes
Upregulated genes
Lipid biosynthetic process
n=8
Response to hypoxia
n=6
Lipid catabolic
process
n=7
n=3
Response to glucose
Lipid metabolic
process
n=16
n=5
Regulation of epithelial
cell proliferation
-6
-4
-2
0
-2
-4
-6
GO enrichment (Log10 p-value)

Figure 5


a
ROS (nmol/mg prot)
***
CT
E-RiKO
b
Mitochondrial ROS (nmol/mg mit prot)
*
c
Mitochondrial /total ROS (%)
***
d
Aldose reductase (nmol NADP+/min/mg prot)
*
e
NAPDH oxidase (RLU/mg prot)
n.s.
f
Electron transport chain (nmol red cit c/min/mg mit prot)
**
g
ATP (nmol/mg mit prot)
**
h
Lipid β-oxidation (pmol/h/mg prot)
**
i
Triglycerides (nmol/mg prot)
*
j
Glucose uptake (pmol glucose/mg prot)
*
k
Hexokinase (nmol NADH/min/mg prot)
*
l
Phosphofructose kinase 1 (nmol NAD+/min/mg prot)
*
m
Glutaminase (µmol NADH/min/mg prot)
***
n
Glutamic dehydrogenase (µmol NADH/min/mg prot)
*
o
TCA cycle with [14C] glutamine (pmol CO2/h/mg mit prot)
**
*
**
CT
E-RiKO
-
BPTES
p
TCA cycle with [14C] glutamate (pmol CO2/h/mg mit prot)
***
**
CT
E-RiKO
-
BPTES
q
Intracellular [14C]glutamine (µmol/mg prot)
r
Intracellular [14C]glutamate (µmol/mg prot)
*
s
Glutamate/glutamine Ratio
*
t
Total SOD (µmol/min/mg prot)
n.s.
u
Catalase (nmol/min/mg prot)
n.s.
v
Mitochondrial SOD (µmol/min/mg mit prot)
*

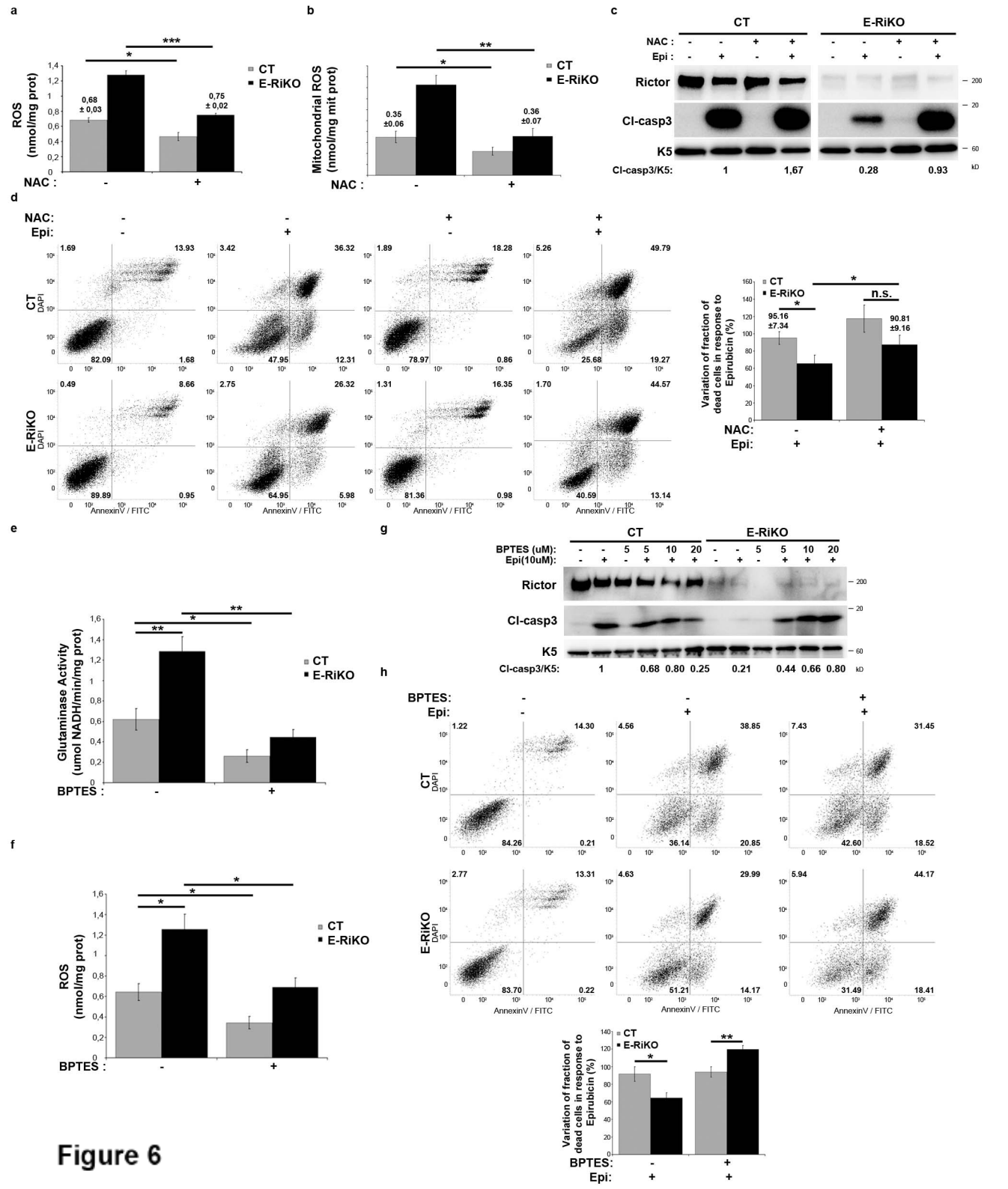
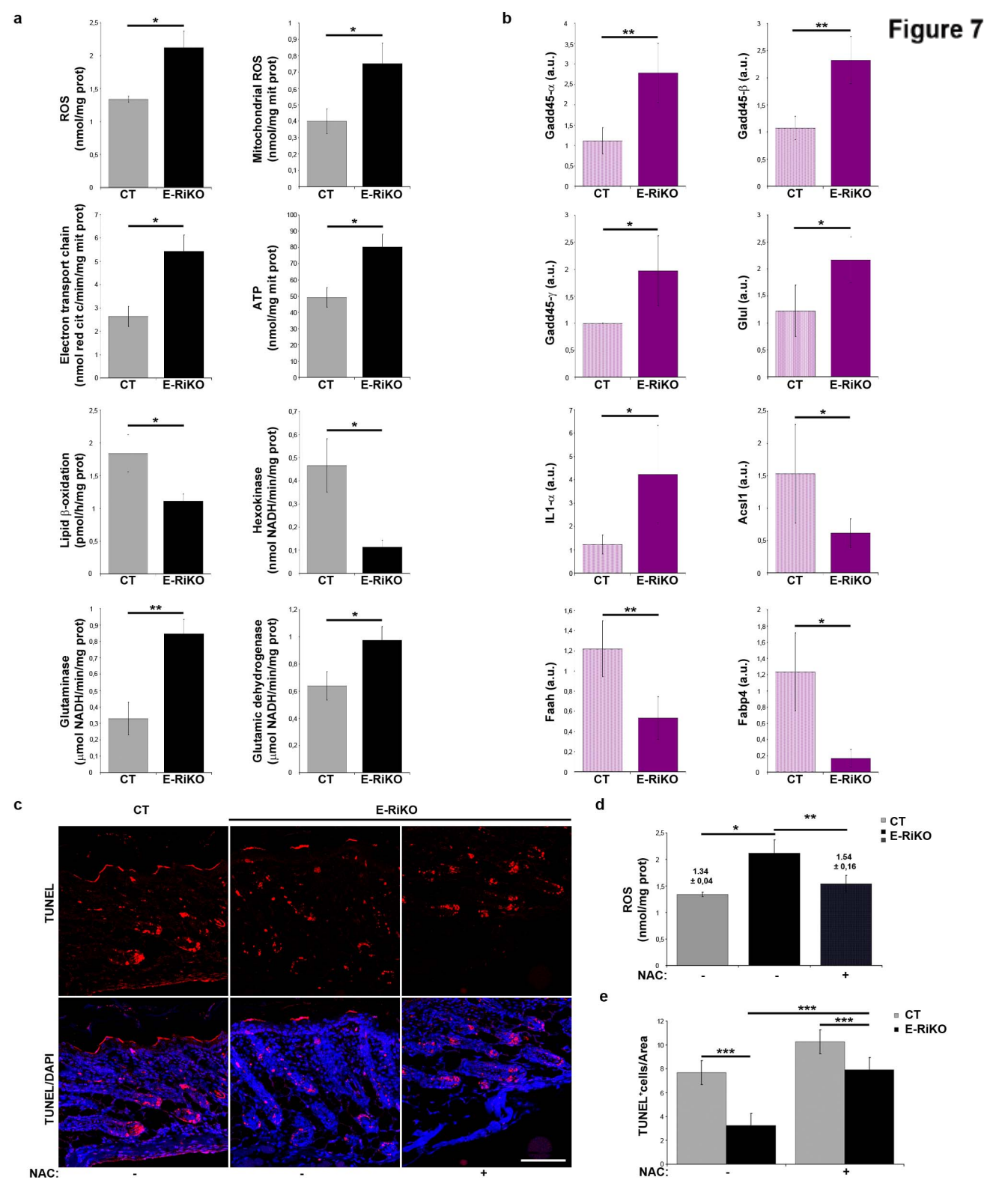

a
ROS (nmol/mg prot)
CT
E-RiKO
0,68 ± 0,03
0,75 ± 0,02
NAC :
b
Mitochondrial ROS (nmol/mg mit prot)
0.35 ±0.06
0.36 ±0.07
c
CT
E-RiKO
NAC :
Epi :
Rictor
Cl-casp3
K5
Cl-casp3/K5:
1
1,67
0.28
0.93
kD
d
NAC:
Epi:
CT
E-RiKO
DAPI
AnnexinV / FITC
Variation of fraction of dead cells in response to Epirubicin (%)
95.16 ±7.34
90.81 ±9.16
n.s.
e
Glutaminase Activity (umol NADH/min/mg prot)
BPTES :
f
ROS (nmol/mg prot)
g
BPTES (uM):
Epi(10uM):
Cl-casp3/K5:
1
0.68
0.80
0.25
0.21
0.44
0.66
0.80
h
BPTES:
Epi:

Figure 6

Figure 7


a
ROS (nmol/mg prot)
Mitochondrial ROS (nmol/mg mit prot)
Electron transport chain (nmol red cit c/mim/mg mit prot)
ATP (nmol/mg mit prot)
Lipid β-oxidation (pmol/h/mg prot)
Hexokinase (nmol NADH/min/mg prot)
Glutaminase (µmol NADH/min/mg prot)
Glutamic dehydrogenase (µmol NADH/min/mg prot)
CT
E-RiKO
b
Gadd45-α (a.u.)
Gadd45-β (a.u.)
Gadd45-γ (a.u.)
Glul (a.u.)
IL1-α (a.u.)
Acsl1 (a.u.)
Faah (a.u.)
Fabp4 (a.u.)
c
CT
E-RiKO
TUNEL
TUNEL/DAPI
NAC: - - +
d
ROS (nmol/mg prot)
1.34 ± 0,04
1.54 ± 0,16
NAC: - - +
e
TUNEL+cells/Area
NAC: - +

CDD-16-0309

Title: "Rictor/mTORC2 deficiency enhances keratinocyte stress tolerance via mitohormesis"

1. Supplementary Figure Legends

Figure S1

a) Representative Western blotting analysis on extracts obtained from E-RiKO and CT MPKs treated as in Fig.1c) for the indicated antibodies. b-c) Representative confocal images of IF performed on E-RiKO and CT skin sections as follows: b) with p63 antibody (red) and Dapi (blue). Dotted line: basal lamina. Bar: 25μm. Histograms represent mean ± SD of the percentage of $p63^+$ cells determined on 10 fields of at least 4 mice/genotype. *p<0.05. c) with Loricrin antibody (red) and Dapi (blue). Dotted line: basal lamina. Bar 50μm. Histograms represent mean ± SD of the thickness of Lor^+ layer determined on 10 fields of at least 4 mice/genotype. *p<0.05.

Figure S2

a) BrdU uptake: confluent MPKs, starved for 72h (-) and stimulated with LCM for the indicated times, were supplemented with BrdU for the final 3h. Data are represented as mean ± SD of the percentage of $BrdU^+$ MPKs determined on 200cells/genotype of at least three independent experiments. ***p<0.0005 b) Representative plots of cell cycle analysis by flow cytometry on CT and E-RiKO MPKs maintained for 3 days under proliferating conditions in three independent experiments. Histograms represent mean ± SD of the percentage of cells in each phase of the cell cycle performed on three independent experiments. *p<0.05. c) Diagram of MPKs spontaneous immortalization. Multiple independent CT and E-RiKO cultures were maintained in proliferating conditions until the outgrowth of immortalized

clones that overcame senescence. Confluent clones were trypsinized and subcultured in order to expand selected immortalized clones that are able to support serial passaging in vitro. The experiment was set to passage the selected clones when their cells maintained high cell density for at least one week. The duration of the experiment was approximately 7 months. d) Table of immortalized clones derived from CT and E-RiKO MPKs. Note that in these culture conditions spontaneous immortalization of CT MPKs is a very rare event: 2 clones out of 11 cultures (18%). e) Western blotting analysis for the indicated antibodies of selected immortalized clones (I.clones) derived from E-RiKO and CT MPKs. Note that rictor deletion is maintained upon immortalization in all E-RiKO I.clones.

Figure S3

E-RiKO and CT MPKs were isolated and cultured as in Fig.3. a) Representative phase contrast images of MPKs upon different stressors: Starvation (St), Epirubicin and Cisplatin 5μM for 48h. Bar: 100μm. b) Representative Western blotting analysis for the indicated antibodies of extracts obtained from MPKs maintained in LCM (-) or treated with Cisplatin (5μM) for the indicated times. c) Representative AnnexinV/DAPI flow cytometry plots of E-RiKO and CT MPKs under basal conditions (-) or Cisplatin treatment as in a). Histograms are mean ± SD of dead cells (CT and E-RiKO MPKs) expressed as percentage of variation of dead cells fraction in response to Cisplatin, in three independent experiments. d) Representative Western blotting analysis for the indicated antibodies of extracts obtained from CT and E-RiKO MPKs maintained in LCM (-) or treated with X-ray (8Gy) for the indicated times. e) Representative images of X-ray treated MPKs with the indicated doses, stained for SA-βGal (upper panel). The percentage of SA-βGal^{+} cells is quantified in the histograms (lower panel) as mean ± SD of at least 200 cells/genotype of three independent experiments. Bar: 100μm. ***$p<0.0005$. f) Total cellular ROS was measured upon LCM (-) or X-ray treatment (8Gy) for

53 24h. Histograms represent mean ± SD of ROS levels measured in at least three independent
54 experiments. ***p<0.0005; **p<0.005; *p<0.05.

55

56 Figure S4

57 a) Glutaminase activity (μmol NADH/min/mg prot) was measured upon LCM (-) or BPTES
58 treatment. Histograms represent mean ± SD of Glutaminase activity levels measured in at least
59 three independent experiments. **p<0.005; *p<0.05. b) Representative Western blotting
60 analysis on extracts obtained from CT and E-RiKO MPKs under proliferative conditions, with the
61 indicated antibodies.

62

63 Figure S5

64 a) Representative Western blotting analysis of extracts obtained from CT MPKs kept in
65 LCM (-) or NAC 10mM for 24h and treated or not (-) with Epirubicin at the indicated
66 doses for 10h, with the indicated antibodies. b) Histograms represent mean ± SD of
67 total cellular ROS in E-RiKO and CT MPKs maintained in LCM (-) or treated with NAC
68 10mM for 24h of at least three independent experiments. **p<0.005; ***p<0.0005. c)
69 Representative Western blotting analysis of extracts obtained from CT MPKs
70 maintained under proliferative conditions and E-RiKO cells treated with Trolox at the
71 indicated doses for 48h and subsequently treated or not (-) with Epirubicin for 10h, with
72 the indicated antibodies. d) Histograms represent mean ± SD of total cellular ROS in E-
73 RiKO and CT MPKs maintained in LCM (-) or treated with Trolox 1mM for 48h of at least
74 three independent experiments. *p<0.05. e) E-RiKO and CT MPKs were maintained in LCM
75 (-) or treated with NAC 10mM for 48h and analysed for the following metabolic parameters:
76 Electron transport chain (nmol red cit c/min/mg mit prot); ATP (nmol/mg mit prot); Hexokinase
77 (nmol NADH/min/mg prot); Lipid β-oxidation (pmol/h/mg prot); Glutaminase (μmol
78 NADH/min/mg prot); Glutamic dehydrogenase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot); Catalase

79 (nmol/min/mg prot); Total SOD (μmol/min/mg prot); Mitochondrial SOD (μmol/min/mg prot).All
80 histograms represent mean ± SD of the indicated metabolic parameters determined in at least
81 three independent experiments. **p<0.005; *p<0.05.

82

83 Figure S6

84 Original Western blotting images are reported.

85 Figure S7

86 Original Western blotting images are reported.

87

88 **2. Supplementary Table Legends**

89

90 Table S1

91 RNA-seq: List of genes expressed in CT and E-RiKO MPKs analyzed as in Fig.4.
92 Number of reads is represented as RPKM.

93

94 Table S2

95 List of upregulated genes in E-RiKO vs CT under basal conditions.

96

97 Table S3

98 List of downregulated genes in E-RiKO vs CT under basal conditions.

99

100 Table S4

101 List of GO enrichments from the list of upregulated genes in E-RiKO vs CT under basal
102 conditions. GO with a nominal p value<10^{-3} were considered.

103

Table S5

List of GO enrichments from the list of downregulated genes in E-RiKO vs CT under basal conditions. GO with a nominal p value<10^{-3} were considered.

Table S6

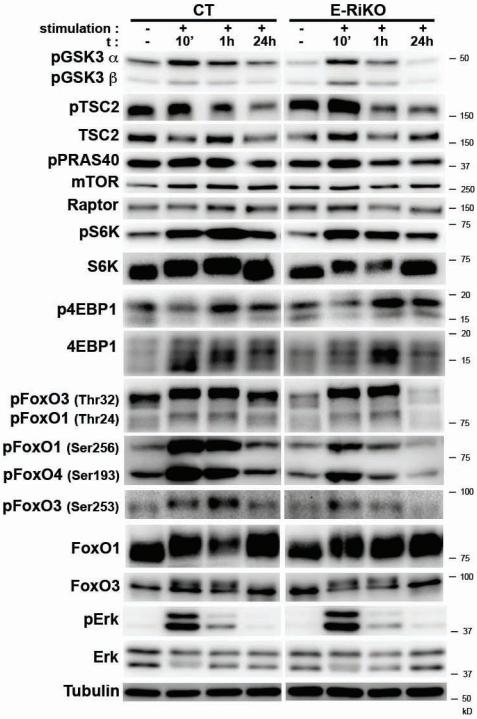
List of GO enrichments relative to the list of upregulated genes in the overlapping 161DEGs as in Fig. 4d). GO with a nominal p value<10^{-3} were considered.

Table S7

List of GO enrichments relative to the list of downregulated genes in the overlapping 161DEGs as in Fig. 4d). GO with a nominal p value<10^{-3} were considered.

Figure S1

a



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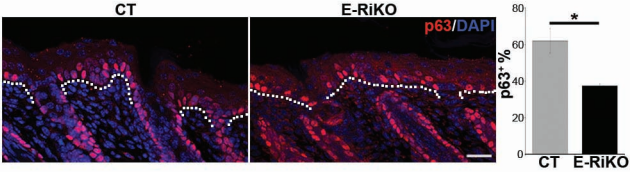

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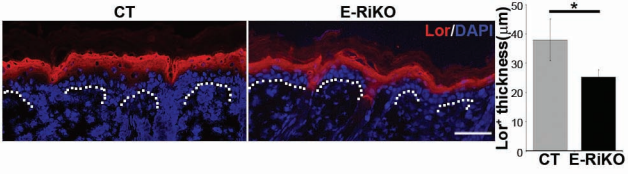
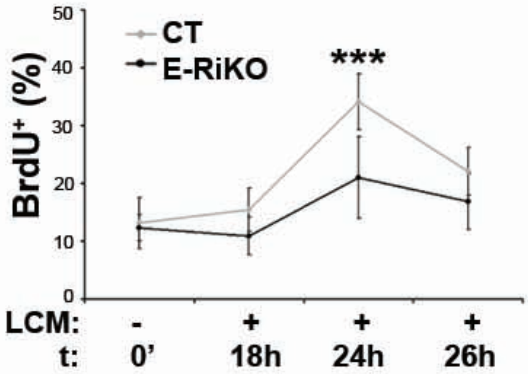
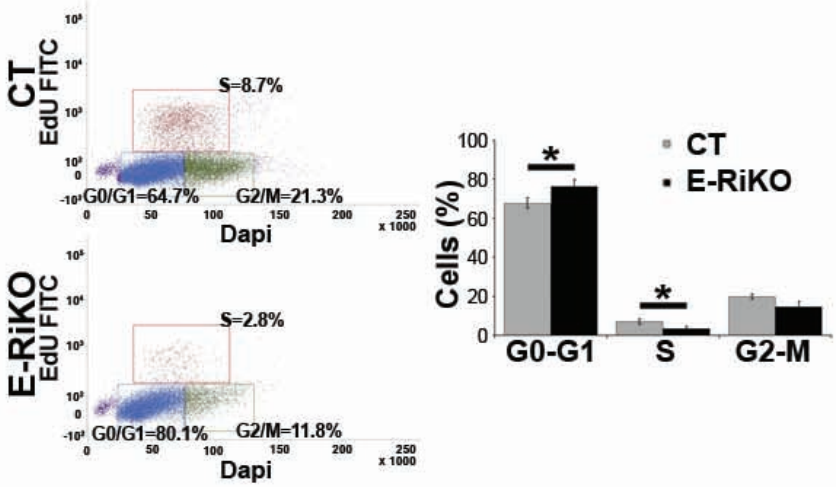


Figure S2

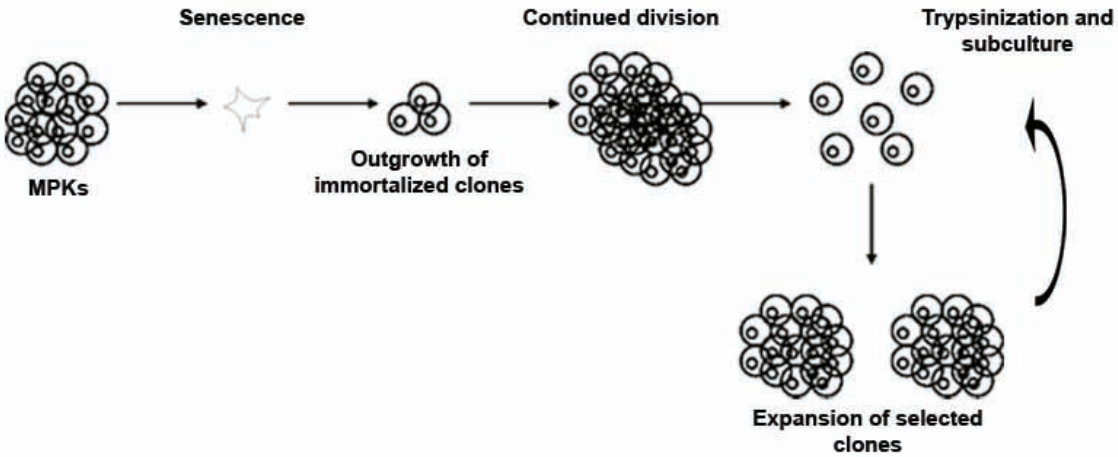
a



b



c



d

MPKs	n° samples	Immortalized clones	%
CT	11	2	18
E-RiKO	7	7	100

e

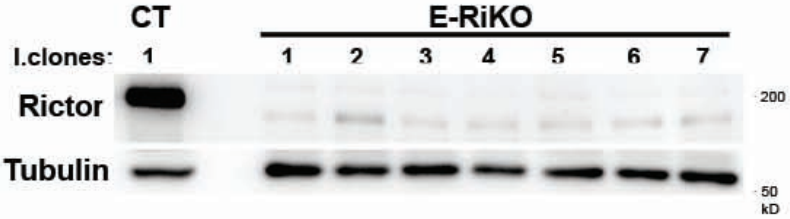


Figure S3

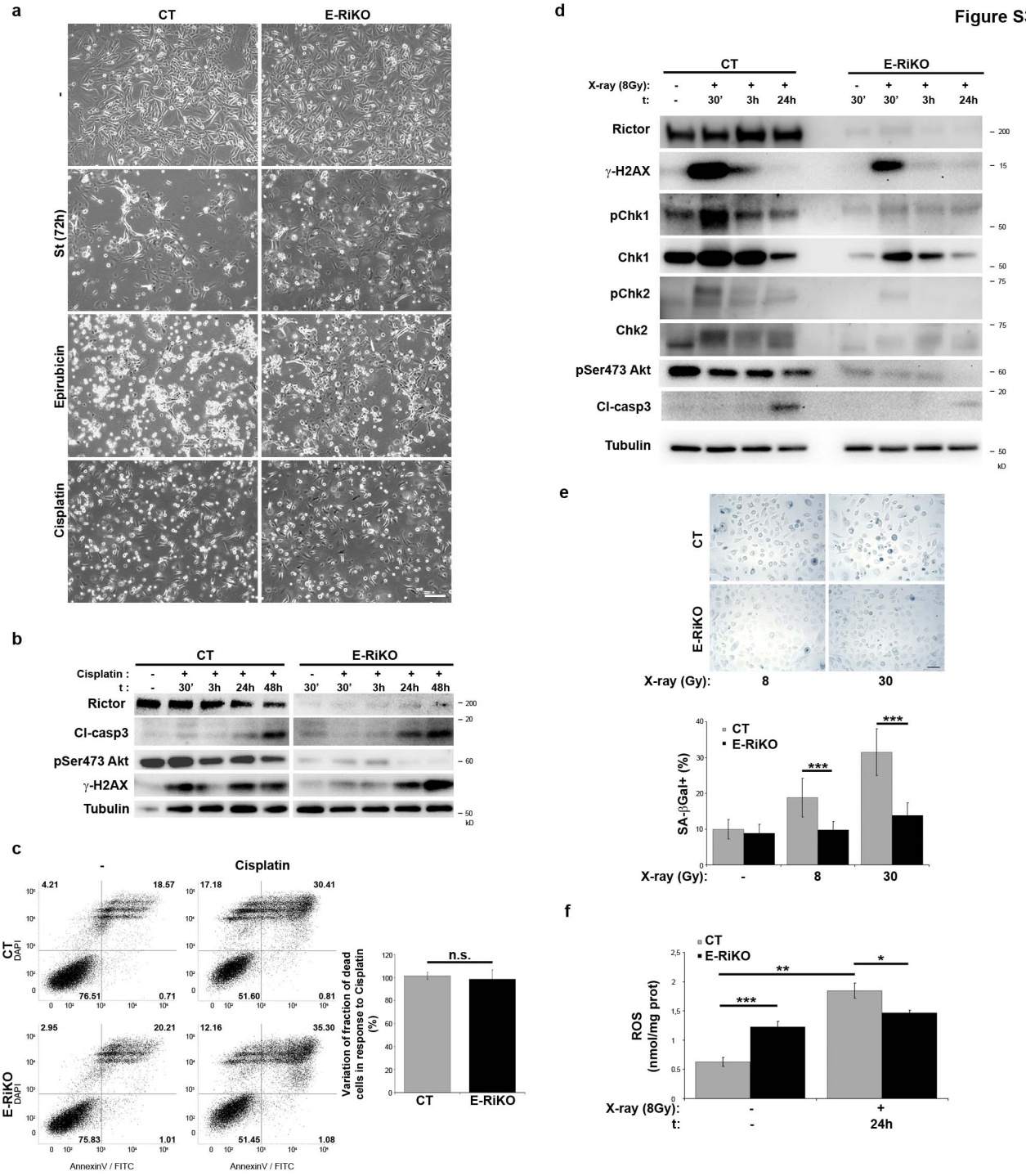
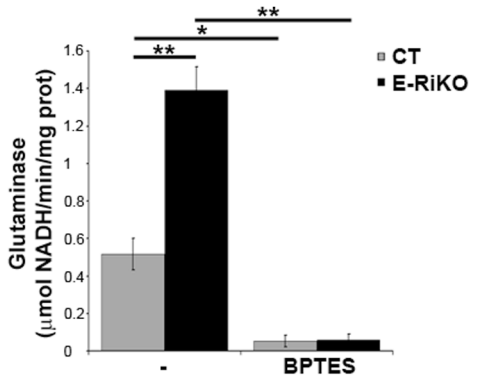

a
CT
E-RiKO
-
St (72h)
Epirubicin
Cisplatin
b
CT
E-RiKO
Cisplatin :
t :
Rictor
Cl-casp3
pSer473 Akt
γ-H2AX
Tubulin
kD
c
-
Cisplatin
CT
E-RiKO
DAPI
AnnexinV / FITC
Variation of fraction of dead cells in response to Cisplatin (%)
n.s.
d
CT
E-RiKO
X-ray (8Gy):
t:
Rictor
γ-H2AX
pChk1
Chk1
pChk2
Chk2
pSer473 Akt
Cl-casp3
Tubulin
kD
e
CT
E-RiKO
X-ray (Gy):
SA-βGal+ (%)
f
CT
E-RiKO
ROS (nmol/mg prot)
X-ray (8Gy):
t:

Figure S4

a


**
*
**
CT
E-RiKO
Glutaminase
(μmol NADH/min/mg prot)
1.6
1.4
1.2
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
-
BPTES

b

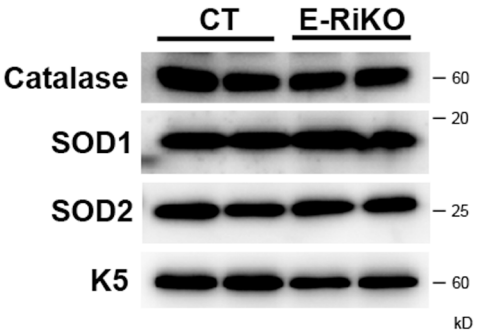

CT
E-RiKO
Catalase
SOD1
SOD2
K5
60
20
25
60
kD

Figure S5

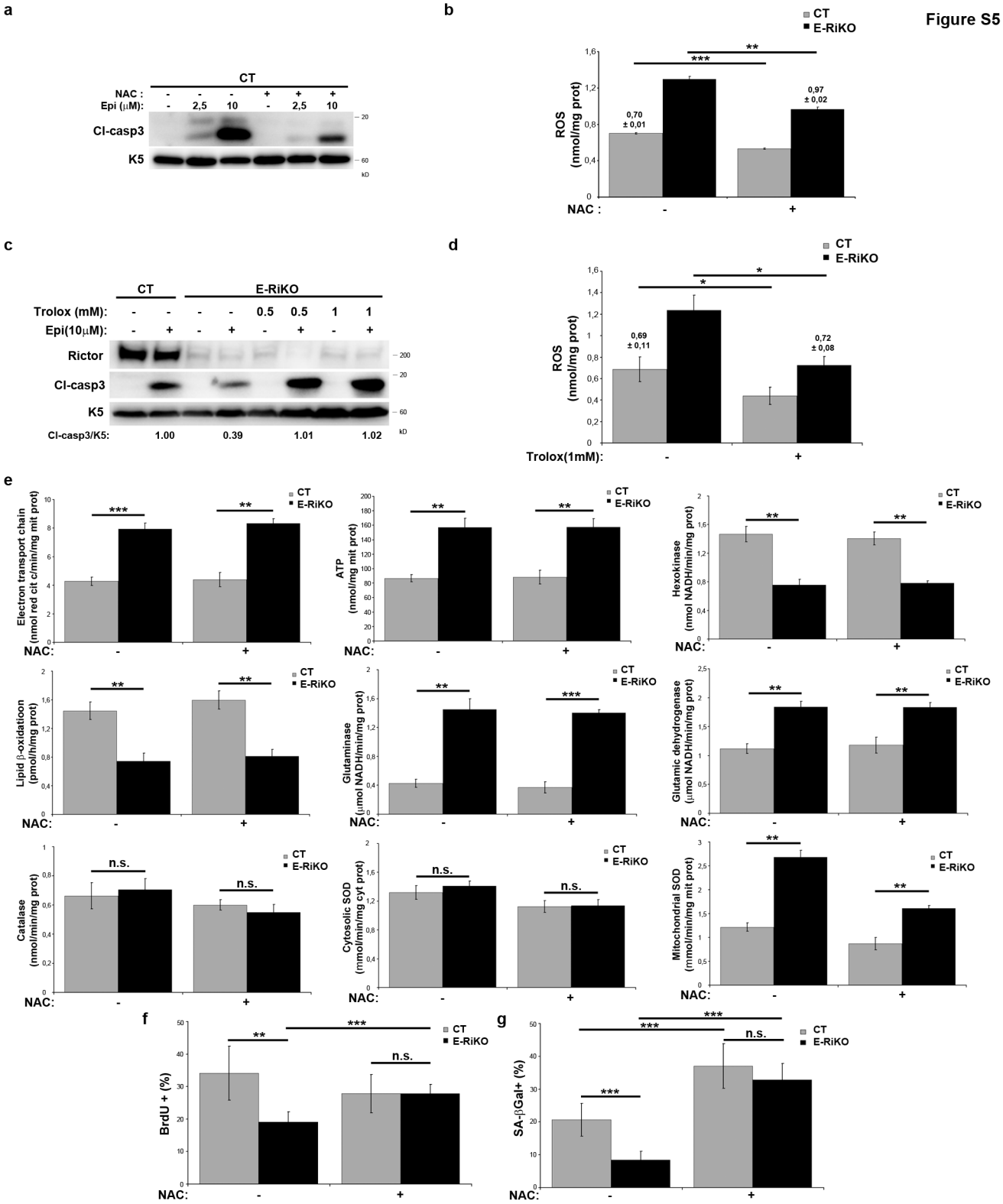

a
CT
NAC : - - - + + +
Epi (μM): - 2,5 10 - 2,5 10
Cl-casp3
K5
kD
b
CT
E-RiKO
ROS (nmol/mg prot)
0,70 ± 0,01
0,97 ± 0,02
NAC : - +
c
CT
E-RiKO
Trolox (mM): - - - - 0.5 0.5 1 1
Epi(10μM): - + - + - + - +
Rictor
Cl-casp3
K5
Cl-casp3/K5: 1.00 0.39 1.01 1.02
d
ROS (nmol/mg prot)
0,69 ± 0,11
0,72 ± 0,08
Trolox(1mM): - +
e
Electron transport chain (nmol red cit c/min/mg mit prot)
ATP (nmol/mg mit prot)
Hexokinase (nmol NADH/min/mg prot)
Lipid β-oxidatioon (pmol/h/mg prot)
Glutaminase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot)
Glutamic dehydrogenase (μmol NADH/min/mg prot)
Catalase (nmol/min/mg prot)
Cytosolic SOD (mmol/min/mg cyt prot)
Mitochondrial SOD (mmol/min/mg mit prot)
NAC: - +
f
BrdU + (%)
g
SA-βGal+ (%)

Figure S6

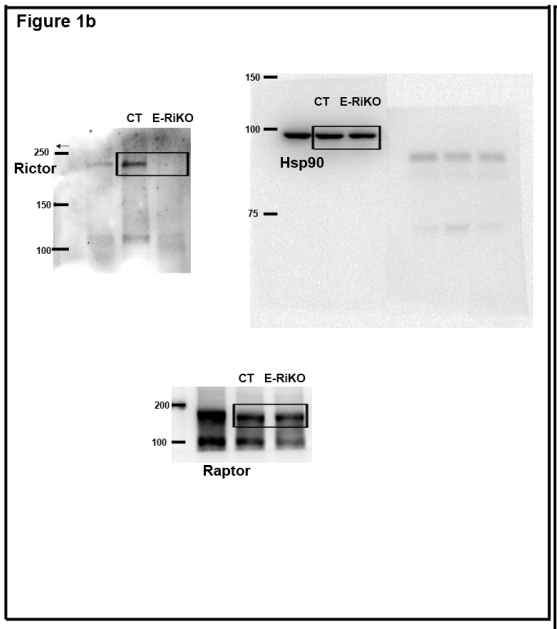


Figure 1b
CT E-RiKO
Rictor
250
150
100
CT E-RiKO
Hsp90
150
100
75
CT E-RiKO
200
100
Raptor

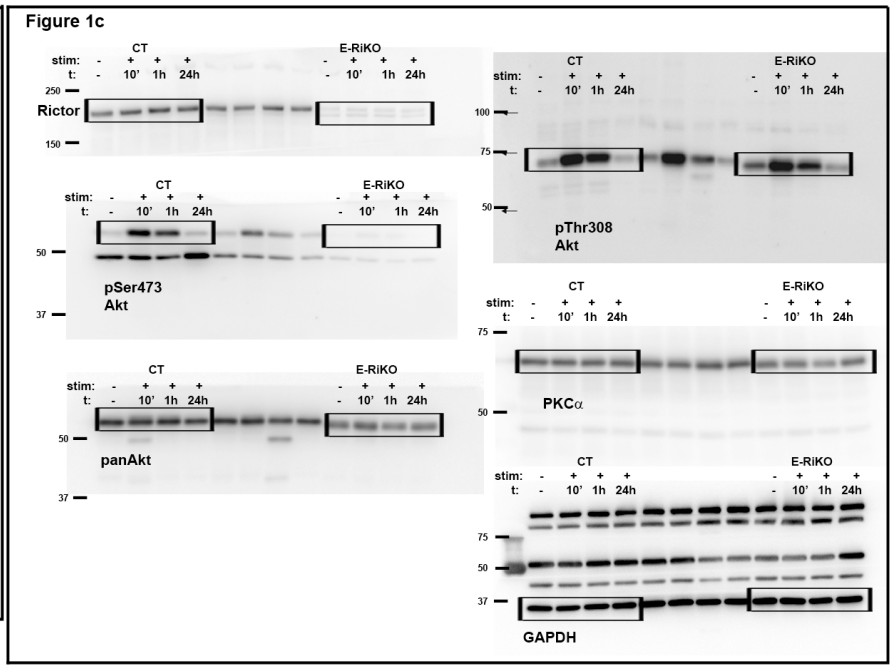


Figure 1c
CT
E-RiKO
stim: - + + + - + + +
t: - 10' 1h 24h - 10' 1h 24h
Rictor
pSer473 Akt
panAkt
pThr308 Akt
PKCα
GAPDH

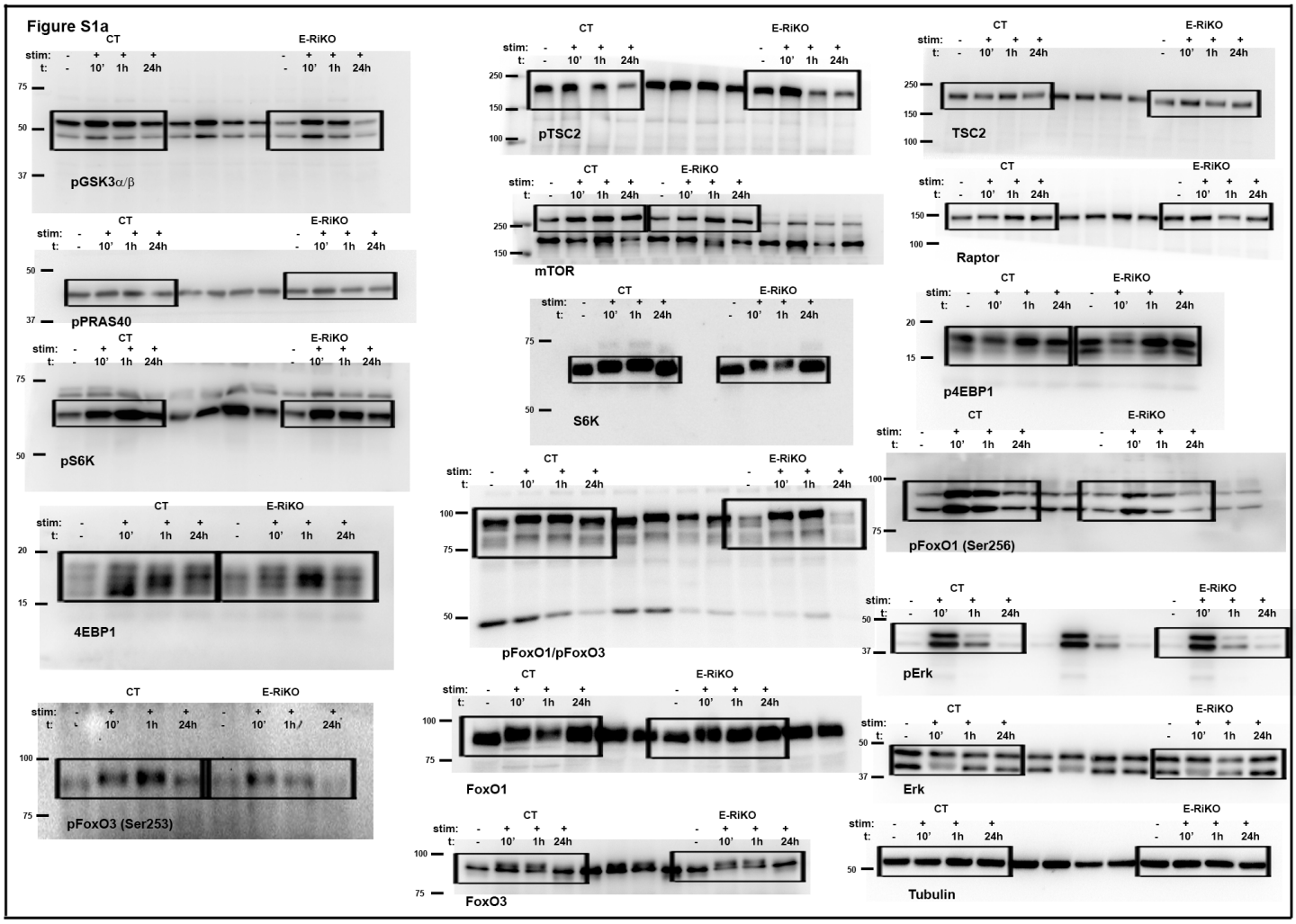


Figure S1a
CT
E-RiKO
stim: - + + + - + + +
t: - 10' 1h 24h - 10' 1h 24h
pGSK3α/β
pPRAS40
pS6K
4EBP1
pFoxO3 (Ser253)
pTSC2
mTOR
S6K
pFoxO1/pFoxO3
FoxO1
FoxO3
TSC2
Raptor
p4EBP1
pFoxO1 (Ser256)
pErk
Erk
Tubulin

Figure S7

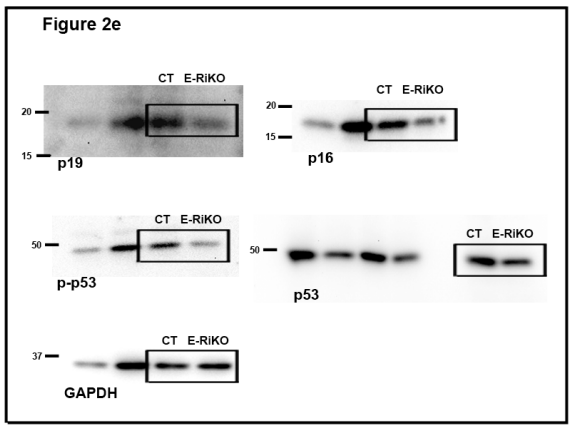


Figure 2e
CT E-RiKO
p19
p16
p-p53
p53
GAPDH

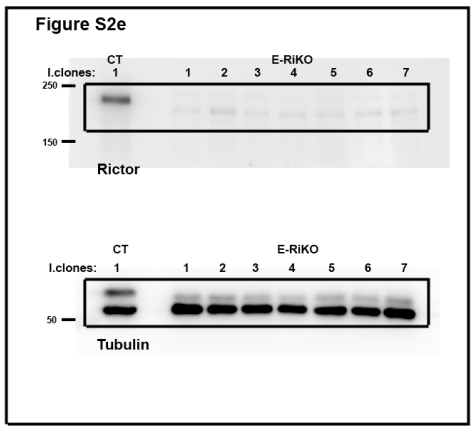


Figure S2e
CT
E-RiKO
I.clones: 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Rictor
Tubulin

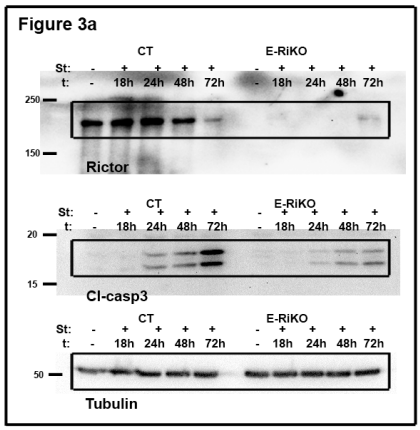


Figure 3a
CT
E-RiKO
St:
t: 18h 24h 48h 72h
Rictor
Cl-casp3
Tubulin

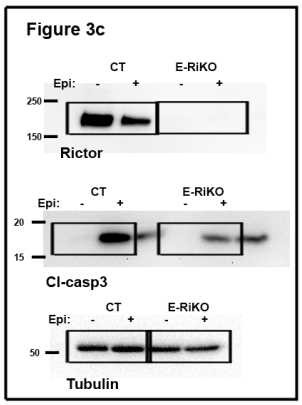


Figure 3c
CT
E-RiKO
Epi:
Rictor
Cl-casp3
Tubulin

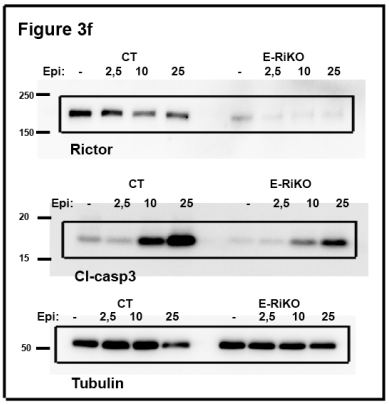


Figure 3f
CT
E-RiKO
Epi: 2,5 10 25 2,5 10 25
Rictor
Cl-casp3
Tubulin

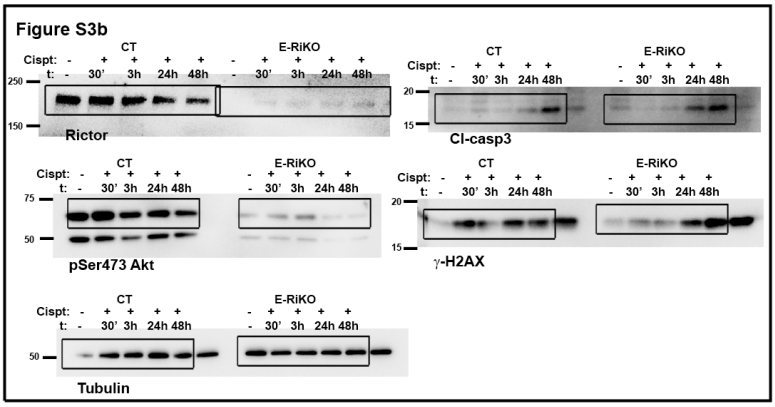


Figure S3b
CT
E-RiKO
Cispt:
t: 30' 3h 24h 48h
Rictor
Cl-casp3
pSer473 Akt
γ-H2AX
Tubulin

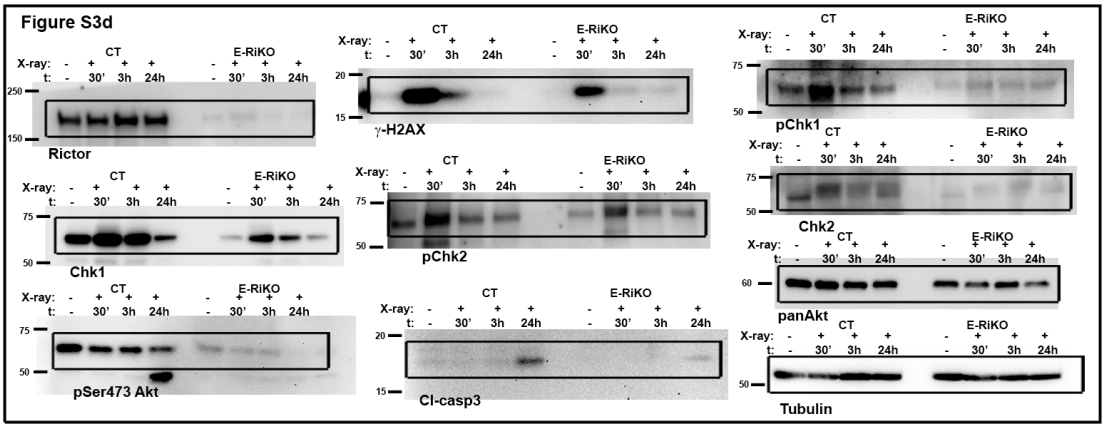


Figure S3d
CT
E-RiKO
X-ray:
t: 30' 3h 24h
Rictor
γ-H2AX
Chk1
pChk2
pSer473 Akt
Cl-casp3
pChk1
Chk2
panAkt
Tubulin

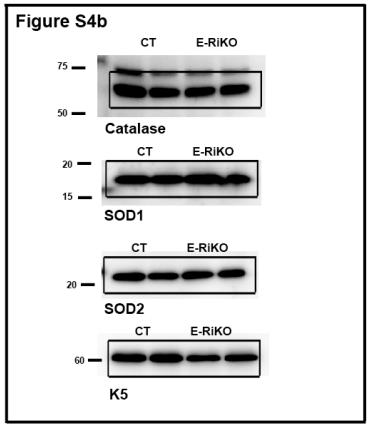


Figure S4b
CT
E-RiKO
Catalase
SOD1
SOD2
K5

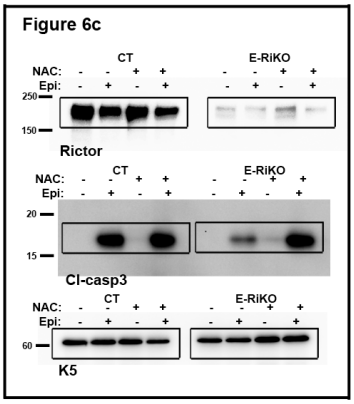


Figure 6c
CT
E-RiKO
NAC:
Epi:
Rictor
Cl-casp3
K5

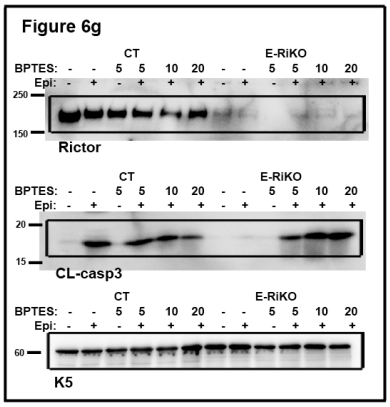


Figure 6g
CT
E-RiKO
BPTES: 5 5 10 20 5 5 10 20
Epi:
Rictor
CL-casp3
K5

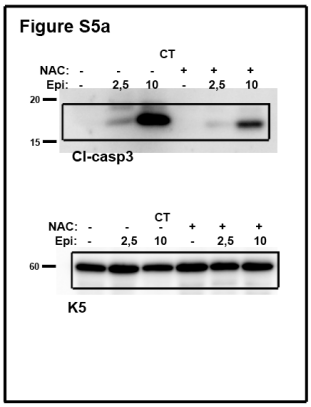


Figure S5a
CT
NAC:
Epi: 2,5 10 2,5 10
Cl-casp3
K5

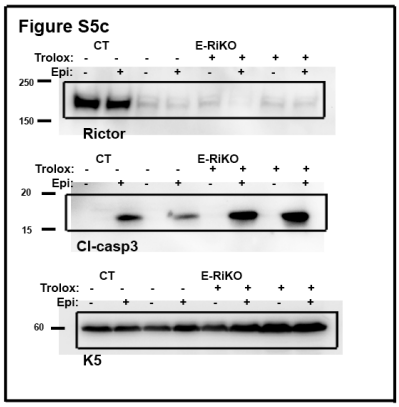


Figure S5c
CT
E-RiKO
Trolox:
Epi:
Rictor
Cl-casp3
K5