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## Keywords

Intracellular calcium • Vascular development • Angiogenesis • Placenta

The placental circulation is crucial for the development of mammalian embryos [1]. The labyrinth layer in the placenta is created by extensive villous branching of the trophoblast and vascularization arising from the embryonic mesoderm. In the labyrinth, materials are exchanged between the maternal and embryonic circulation. Recently, we have found that inositol 1,4,5-trisphosphate (IP<sub>3</sub>) receptors (IP<sub>3</sub>Rs) may be required for the placental vascularization.

IP<sub>3</sub>Rs are intracellular Ca<sup>2+</sup> release channels that have three subtypes in mammals (IP<sub>3</sub>R1, IP<sub>3</sub>R2 and IP<sub>3</sub>R3) [2]. We previously showed that IP<sub>3</sub>R1 and IP<sub>3</sub>R2 played an essential role in heart development from the analysis of mouse embryo double knockout for IP<sub>3</sub>R1 and IP<sub>3</sub>R2 [3]. A previous report on the

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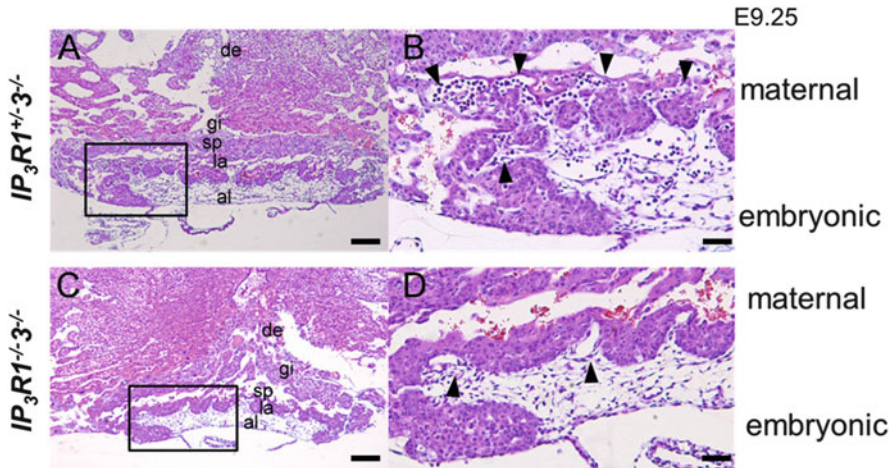
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**Fig. 32.1** Cross sections of E9.25 placentas from the  $IP_3R1^{+/-}3^{-/-}$  (a and b) and  $IP_3R1^{-/-}3^{-/-}$  (c and d) mice. (b) and (d) show higher-power fields of the *rectangular* areas of the labyrinth in (a) and (c), respectively. Embryonic vessels (*arrowheads*) fail to elongate to the maternal sinuses in the placenta of  $IP_3R1^{-/-}3^{-/-}$  compared to that of  $IP_3R1^{+/-}3^{-/-}$  (wild type). *al* allantois, *de* decidua, *gi* trophoblast giant cells, *la* labyrinth layer, *sp* spongiotrophoblast layer. Scale bars, 0.5 mm in (a) and (c) and 0.2 mm in (b) and (d)

requirement for phospholipase (PLC)  $\delta 1$  and  $\delta 3$  [4] that produce  $IP_3$  for placentation led us to investigate the placental defects by deletion of any subtypes of  $IP_3R$ s. Our preliminary result revealed that embryonic vasculature in the labyrinth was impaired in the placenta double knockout for  $IP_3R1$  and  $IP_3R3$  at E9.25 (Fig. 32.1). The detailed phenotype and the underlying mechanism how the intracellular  $Ca^{2+}$  signaling via  $IP_3R$ s may be implicated in the development of extraembryonic vasculature are under investigation.

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