

# PAPP-A2 DEFICIENCY RESULTS IN SEX-DEPENDENT MODIFICATIONS IN HYPOTHALAMIC REGULATION OF ENERGY HOMEOSTASIS

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Pregnancy associated plasma protein (PAPP)-A2 is an insulin-like growth factor (IGF) binding protein (BP) protease that regulates IGF-1 availability affecting postnatal growth. A new syndrome characterized by short stature, skeletal abnormalities and reduced bone density caused by the absence of PAPP-A2 proteolytic activity resulted from loss-of-function mutations in the human PAPP-A2 gene was discovered by Argente and Dauber in 2016. As a consequence, PAPP-A2-deficient patients exhibit high circulating levels of IGF-1 bound to its ternary complex (IGFBP-3 or IGFBP-5 and IGF-ALS) resulting in decreased concentrations of free IGF-1. Because these patients do not exhibit GH deficiency and PAPP-A2 is unavailable for human use, they were treated with recombinant human IGF-1 (rhIGF-1). Short-term therapy with rhIGF-1 in children with PAPP-A2 deficiency increased growth velocity and height. Although IGF-1 was first discovered due to the observation that it was able to stimulate longitudinal growth, the list of physiological and pathophysiological processes involving this growth factor is now extensive and includes metabolism, development of specific neurosensory systems, neuroprotection, longevity, cancer, obesity, eating disorders, and neurodegenerative diseases. The present study aimed to characterize the effects of constitutive *Pappa2* gene deletion on hypothalamic regulation of energy homeostasis in adult male and female mice.

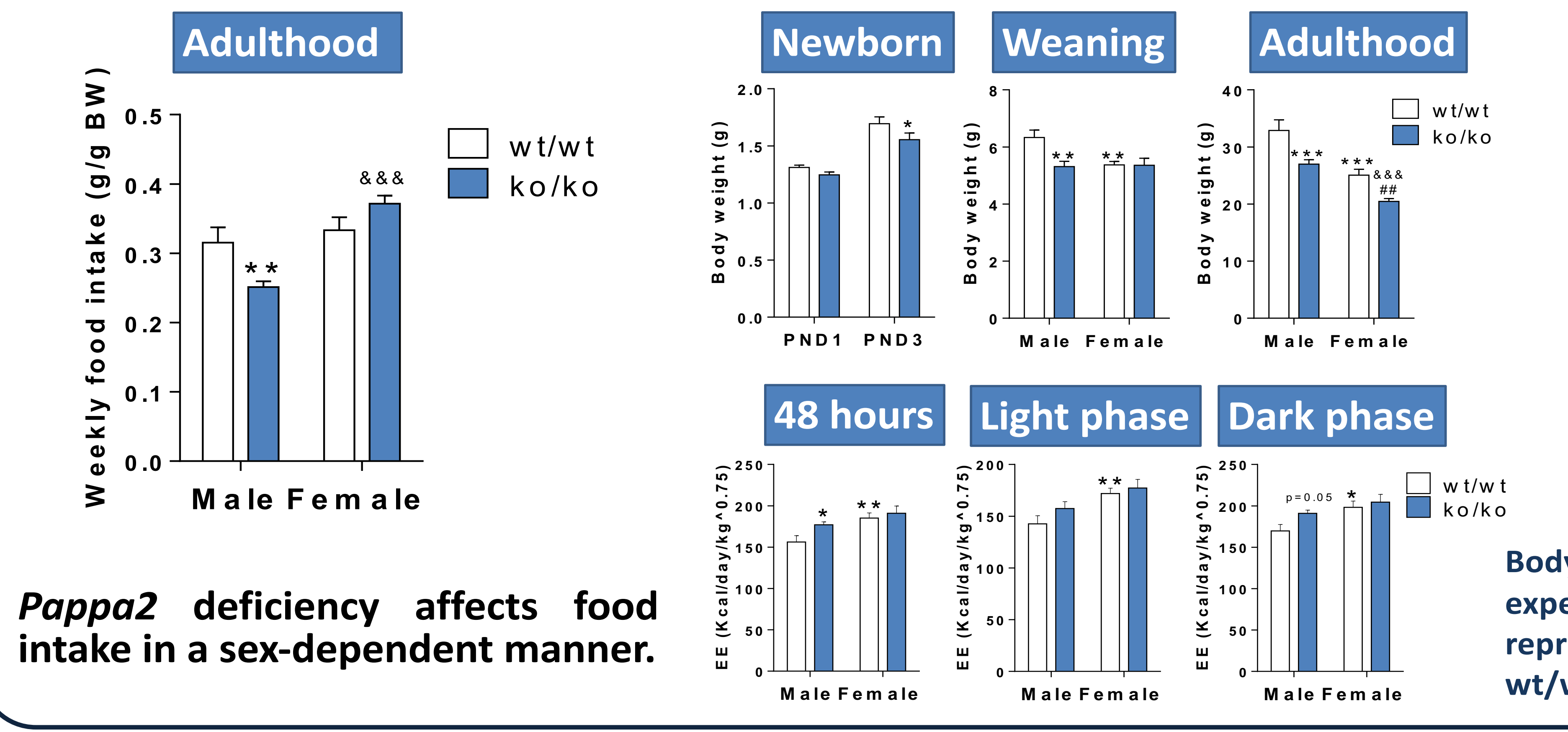
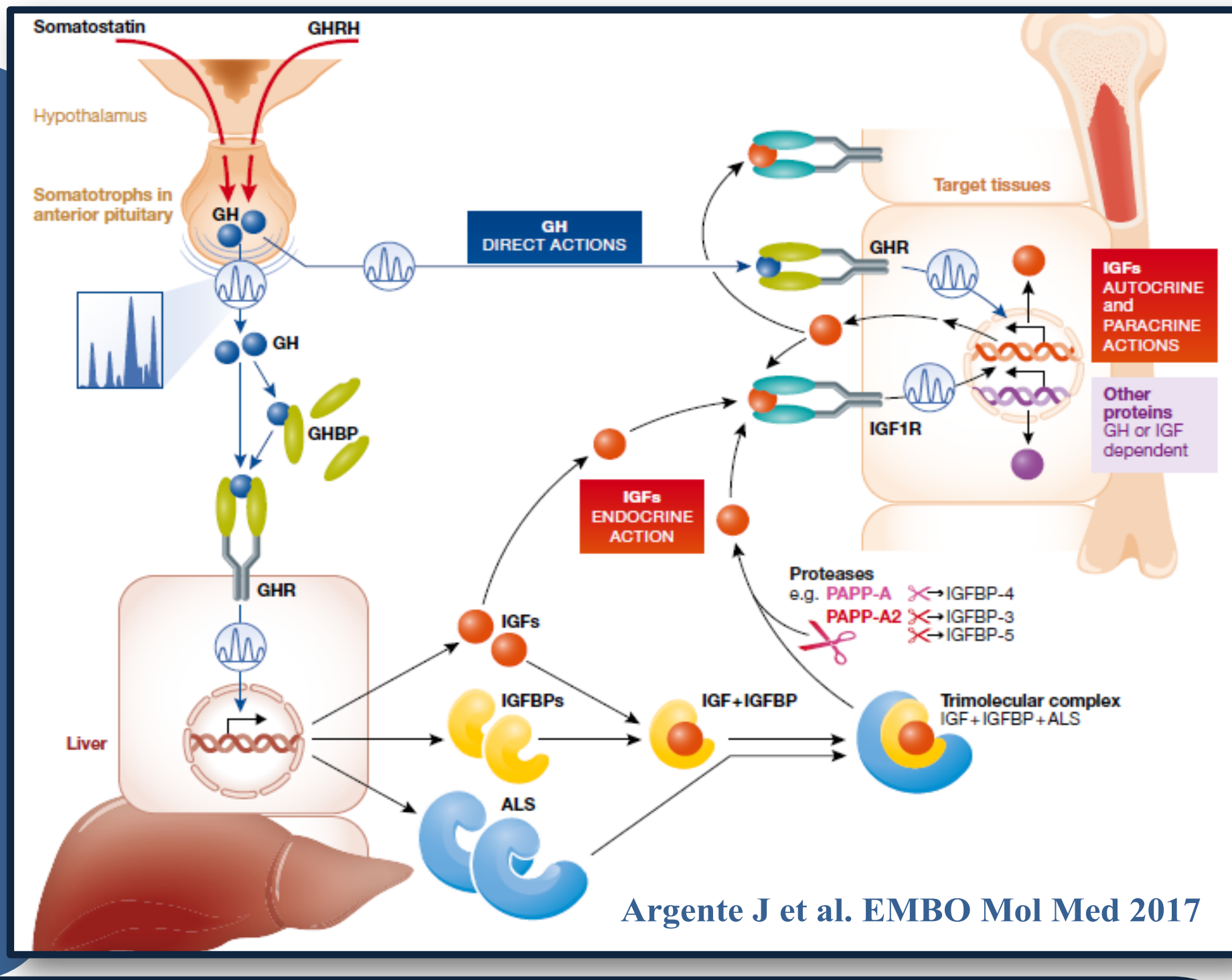
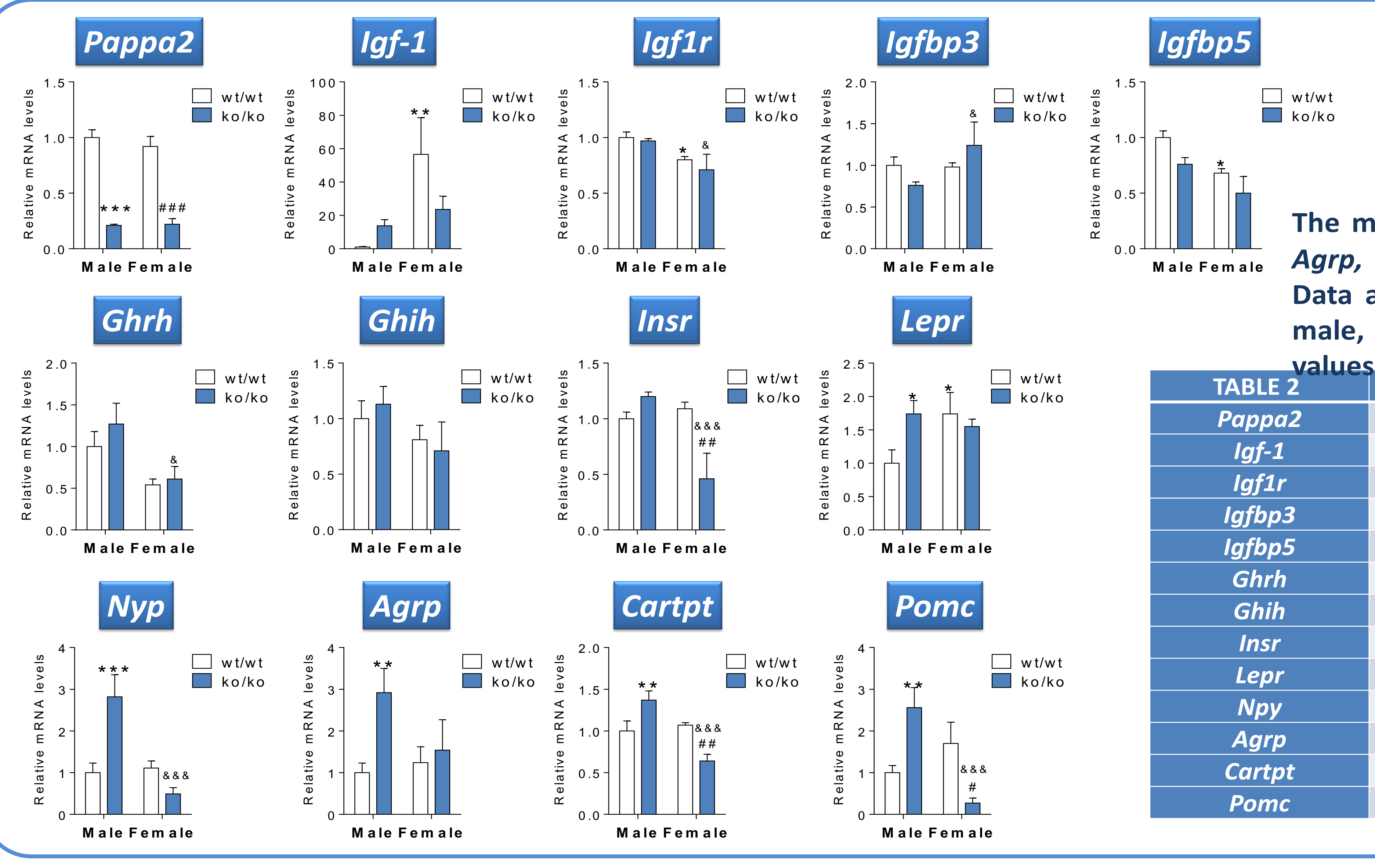


TABLE 1	Interaction	Genotype	Sex
BW (g) at weaning (PND20)	F <sub>1,34</sub> = 6.613 P = 0.0147	F <sub>1,34</sub> = 6.998 P = 0.0123	F <sub>1,34</sub> = 5.496 P = 0.0250
BW (g) at adulthood (8 months of age)	ns	F <sub>1,40</sub> = 20.39 P < 0.0001	F <sub>1,40</sub> = 38.27 P < 0.0001
EE (48 hours)	ns	ns	F <sub>1,28</sub> = 9.891 P = 0.0039
EE (Light phase)	ns	ns	F <sub>1,28</sub> = 12.01 P = 0.0017
EE (Dark phase)	ns	ns	F <sub>1,28</sub> = 8.032 P = 0.0084
Food intake (g/g BW) at adulthood (8 months of age)	F <sub>1,24</sub> = 10.24 P = 0.0038	ns	F <sub>1,24</sub> = 18.55 P = 0.0002

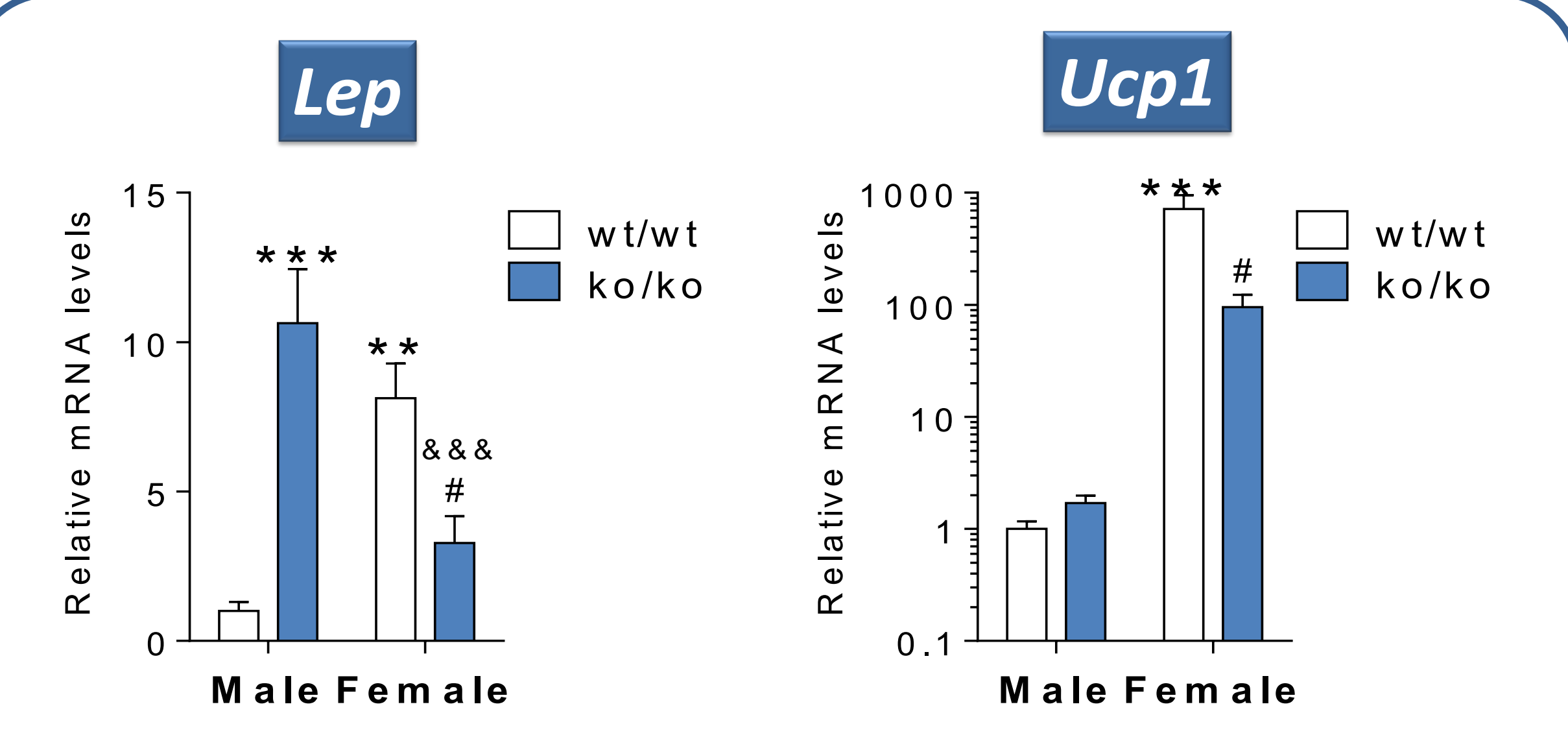
Body weight (BW) in newborn, weaning and adulthood and food intake and energy expenditure (EE) in adulthood of *Pappa2*<sup>wt/wt</sup> and *Pappa2*<sup>ko/ko</sup> mice. Data are represented as mean ± S.E.M. Tukey-corrected tests: \*vs wt/wt or wt/wt male, #vs wt/wt female; &vs ko/ko male. Table 1 shows two-way ANOVA statistical values.



*Pappa2* deficiency affects the hypothalamic gene expression of appetite (*Npy*) and satiety (*Cartpt*, *Pomc*) regulation-related hypothalamic neuropeptides, as well as insulin receptor (*Insr*), in a sex-dependent manner.

The mRNA levels of *Pappa2*, *Igf-1*, *Igf1r*, *Igfbp3*, *Igfbp5*, *Ghrh*, *Ghih*, *Insr*, *Lepr*, *Npy*, *Agrp*, *Cartpt* and *Pomc* in the hypothalamus of *Pappa2*<sup>wt/wt</sup> and *Pappa2*<sup>ko/ko</sup> mice. Data are represented as mean ± S.E.M. Tukey-corrected tests: \*vs wt/wt or wt/wt male, #vs wt/wt female; &vs ko/ko male. Table 2 shows two-way ANOVA statistical values.

TABLE 2	Interaction	Genotype	Sex
<i>Pappa2</i>	ns	F <sub>1,22</sub> = 113.9, P < 0.0001	ns
<i>Igf-1</i>	ns	ns	F <sub>1,24</sub> = 7.640, P = 0.0108
<i>Igf1r</i>	ns	ns	F <sub>1,25</sub> = 12.00, P = 0.0019
<i>Igfbp3</i>	ns	ns	ns
<i>Igfbp5</i>	ns	F <sub>1,22</sub> = 5.636, P = 0.0277	F <sub>1,22</sub> = 10.75, P = 0.0038
<i>Ghrh</i>	ns	ns	F <sub>1,26</sub> = 10.31, P = 0.0035
<i>Ghih</i>	ns	ns	ns
<i>Insr</i>	F <sub>1,26</sub> = 9.885, P = 0.0041	ns	F <sub>1,26</sub> = 6.062, P = 0.0208
<i>Lepr</i>	ns	ns	ns
<i>Npy</i>	F <sub>1,26</sub> = 13.62, P = 0.0010	ns	F <sub>1,26</sub> = 11.27, P = 0.0024
<i>Agrp</i>	ns	F <sub>1,25</sub> = 5.021, P = 0.0342	ns
<i>Cartpt</i>	F <sub>1,25</sub> = 16.74, P = 0.0004	ns	F <sub>1,25</sub> = 11.39, P = 0.0024
<i>Pomc</i>	F <sub>1,24</sub> = 16.41, P = 0.0005	ns	F <sub>1,24</sub> = 4.639, P = 0.0415



mRNA levels of *Lepr* and *Ucp1* in epididymal white adipose tissue (eWAT) of *Pappa2*<sup>wt/wt</sup> and *Pappa2*<sup>ko/ko</sup> mice. Data are represented as mean ± S.E.M. Tukey-corrected tests: \*vs wt/wt or wt/wt male, #vs wt/wt female; &vs ko/ko male

1. Among the effects of *Pappa2* deficiency on energy metabolism, we highlight that male mice with *Pappa2* deletion eat less, weigh less and exhibit higher energy expenditure than WT males in adulthood. This effect was not found in adult females.
2. The higher mRNA levels of leptin receptor (*Lepr*), *Cartpt* and *Pomc* (satiety), as well as *Npy* and *Agrp* (appetite), in the hypothalamus of male mice with *Pappa2* deletion differs from those of the same-genotype females compared with the respective same-sex controls.
3. The higher mRNA levels of leptin (satiety) in eWAT of *Pappa2* KO males contrast with the lower mRNA levels of leptin and the thermogenic factor *Ucp1* (Uncoupling protein 1) in the eWAT of *Pappa2* deletion females compared with the respective same-sex controls.

In conclusion, central and peripheral mechanisms regulating energy homeostasis are affected in *Pappa2*<sup>ko/ko</sup> mice in a sex-specific manner. However, how a reduction in IGF availability due to *PAPP-A2* deficiency modulates the development and functioning of hypothalamic metabolic circuits remains to be determined.