

FULL-TIME PHYSIOXIC CULTURE CONDITIONS PROMOTE MSC PROLIFERATION AT PHYSIOXIC CONDITIONS BETTER THAN HYPOXIC PRE-CONDITIONING

Alicia D. Henn, Yan He, Shannon Darou, Randy Yerden
BioSpherix, Ltd.

ABSTRACT

Cells that are cultured and handled in traditional hyperoxic room air experience a dramatic shift in O₂ levels when injected in vivo. It has been reported that hypoxic pre-conditioning of mesenchymal stromal cells (MSC) in culture can increase cell survival in vivo after administration. Hypoxic pre-treatments subject the cells to lower O₂ atmospheric conditions for lengths of time that range from 15 minutes to 36 hours, with another period of high oxygenation in room air conditions before administration. We previously showed that Human bone marrow MSC yields are improved by enclosing cell-handling processes as well as incubation for a full-time controlled physioxenic atmosphere. Here, we used the Xvivo System (BioSpherix), with fully-enclosed and environmentally-controlled cell incubation and handling chambers, to compare different hypoxic pre-conditioning regimens to full-time physioxenic conditions. Our null hypothesis was that the different culture conditions make no difference to MSC proliferation rates. MSC were incubated for 12-36 hours at 1% O₂ before return to traditional supraphysioxenic room air incubator oxygen levels for 24 hours. The cells were then incubated at 5% O₂ (venous levels) as if injected in vivo. These conditions were compared with unbroken 5% O₂ for both cell handling and culture. Using an immersion O₂ probe, we recorded vessel headspace and pericellular medium O₂ levels during each regimen. We looked for changes in cell division rates. MSC pericellular O₂ levels lagged far behind atmospheric O₂ level changes, so MSC experienced low O₂ conditions for far less time than the pre-conditioning period. Unbroken O₂ conditions were more favorable for keeping MSC in the cell cycle than any pre-conditioning regiment, disproving the null hypothesis. We concluded that hypoxic pre-conditioning is not as favorable for MSC yields as full-time physioxenic conditions for cell handling and incubation.

BACKGROUND

- Exposing MSC cultures grown in room air to low O₂ has been shown to benefit MSC function¹
- Low O₂ induces HIF-1a stabilization and activation of downstream genes involved in cell proliferation²
- We previously showed that human bone marrow MSC proliferate for more passages at full-time physioxenic conditions than in room air culture³

OBJECTIVES

- Assay MSC proliferation rates after different times at 1% O₂ for hypoxic preconditioning and compare with full-time physioxenia (5% O₂)
- Assay final cell numbers after treatment
- Assess pericellular oxygen levels at each condition

REFERENCES

- Bader AM, Klose K, Bieback K, Korinth D, Schneider M, Seifert M, Choi Y-H, Kurtz A, Falk V, Stamm C: Hypoxic preconditioning increases survival and pro-angiogenic capacity of human cord blood mesenchymal stromal cells in vitro. PLoS one 2015, 10(9):e0138477.
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- Henn A, Farrell G, Darou S, Yerden R: Shock from Exposure to Room Air Conditions Alters Individual Mesenchymal Stem Cell Fate, Population Dynamics, and Batch Yields. International Society of Cell Therapy North America 2017.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

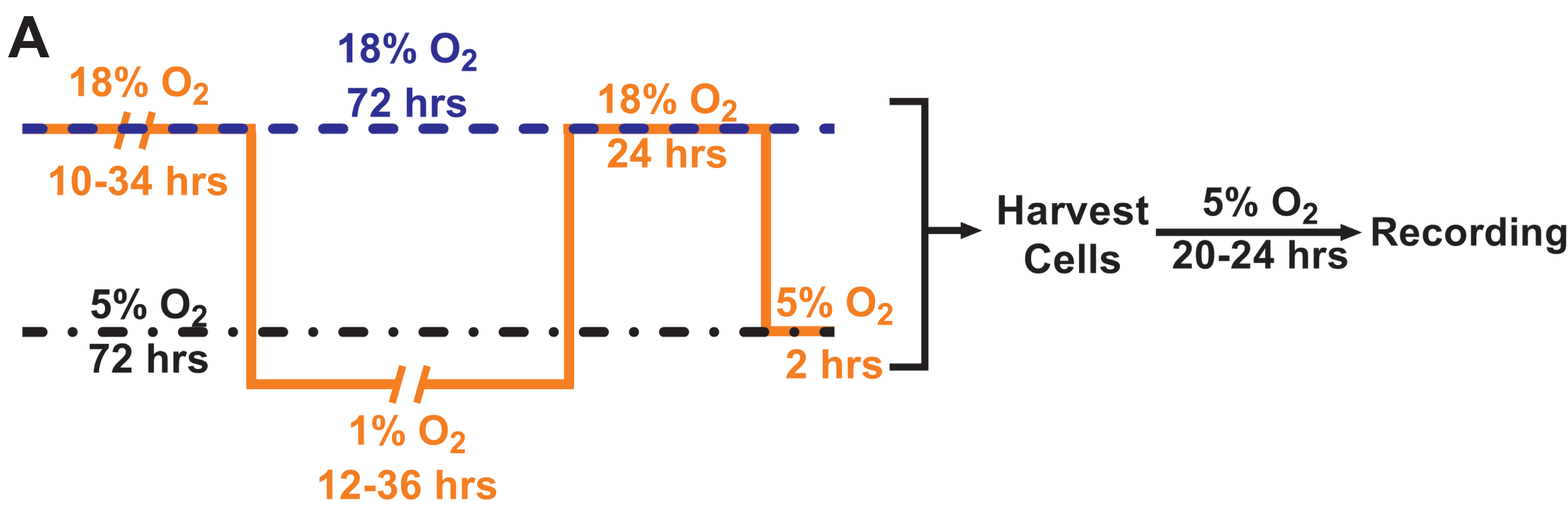
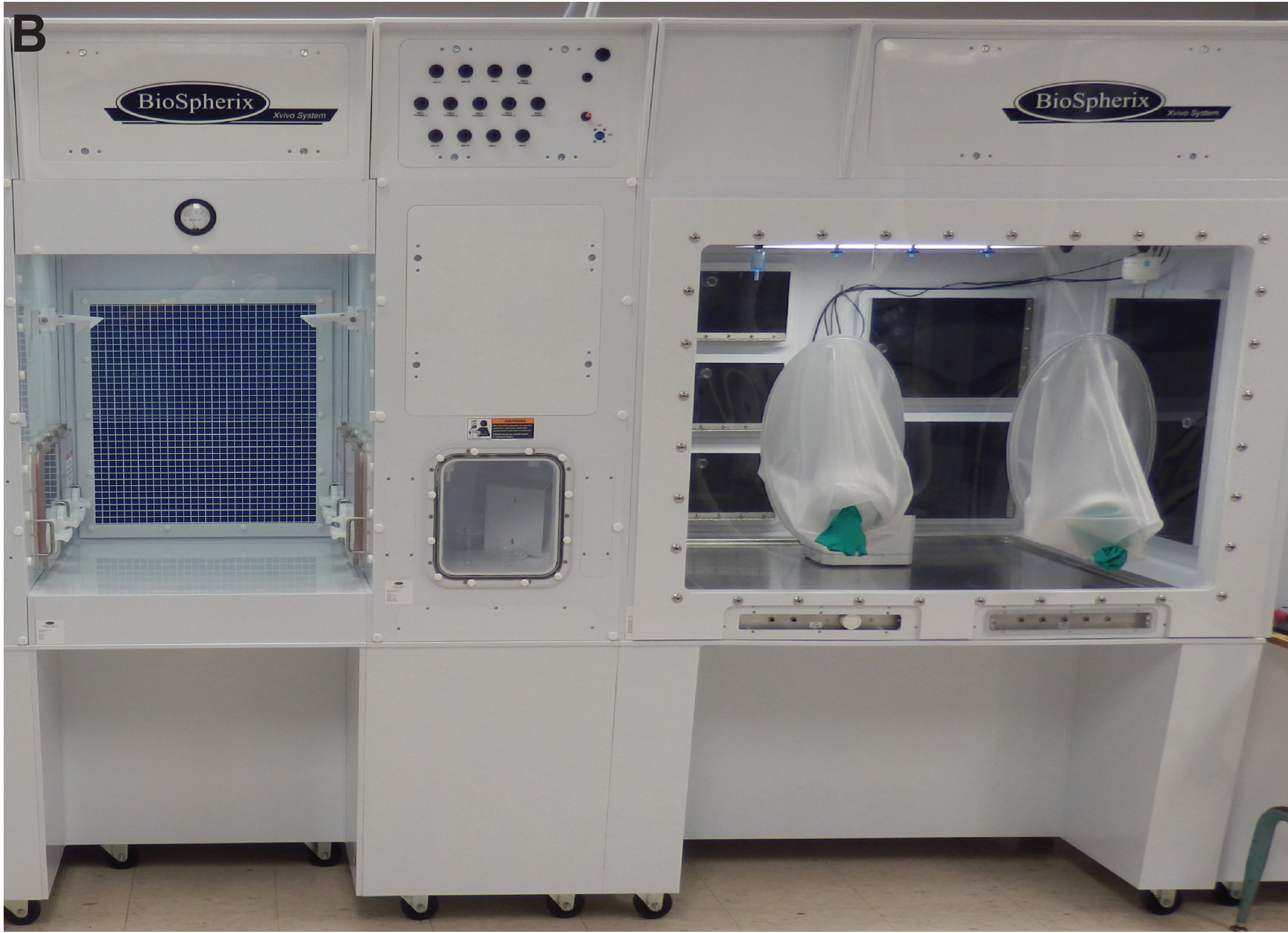


Figure 1. Experimental Set-Up. (A) Schematic, dynamic O₂ control for cell culturing and handling. Human bone marrow MSC in T-25 flasks were cultured under 5% constant O₂ (physioxenia; black line), 18% constant O₂ (blue line), or 12, 24 or 36 hr of 1% O₂ (hypoxic preconditioning; orange solid line). The cells were harvested and plated into a 96-well plate and cultured at 5% constant O₂ as if injected *in vivo*. (B) MSC were cultured, handled and observed in fully controlled conditions at all times using the Xvivo System. Each process chamber or incubator (black doors) had individually controlled temperature, O₂, CO₂ and relative humidity (RH).



RESULTS

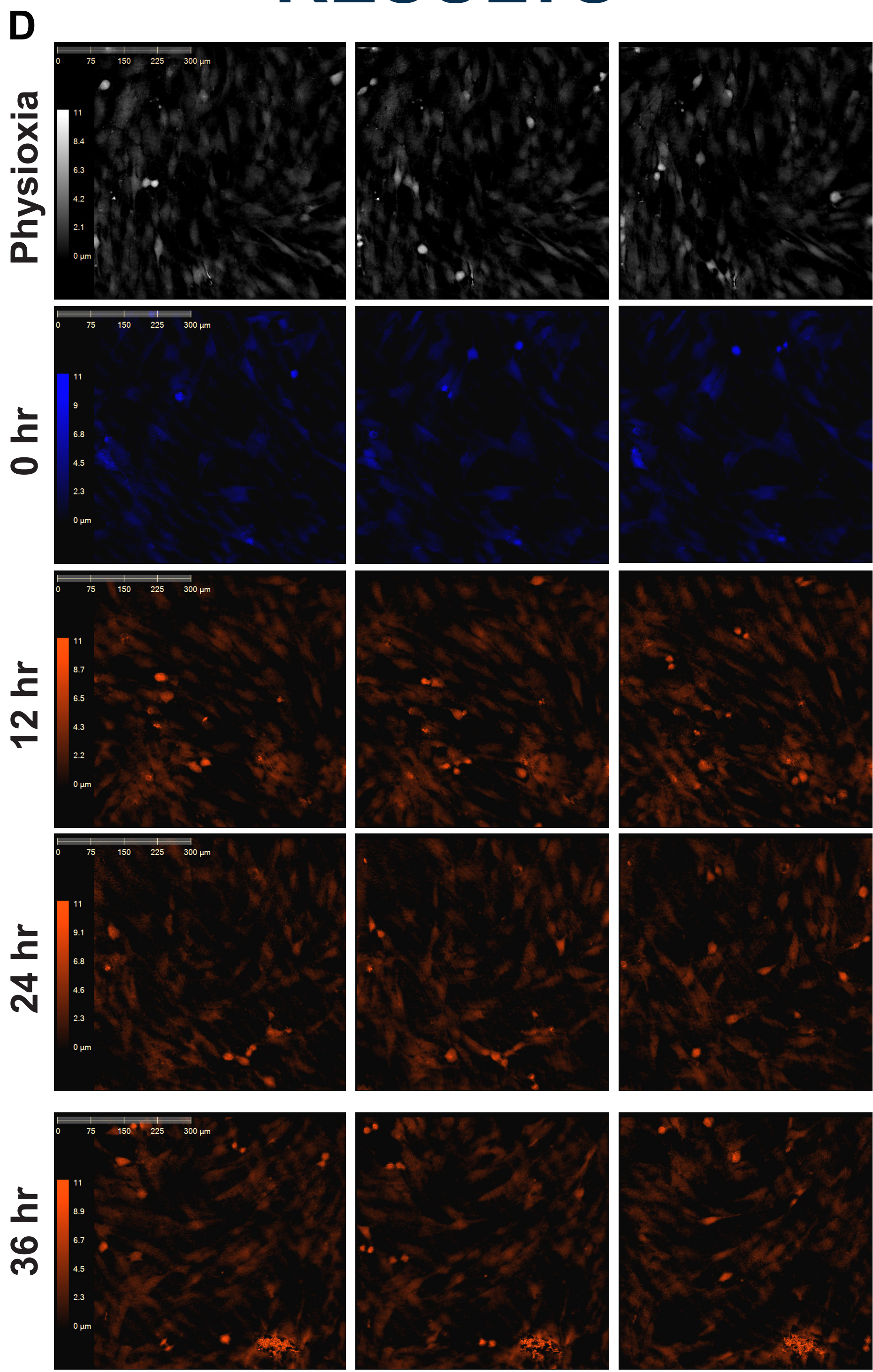
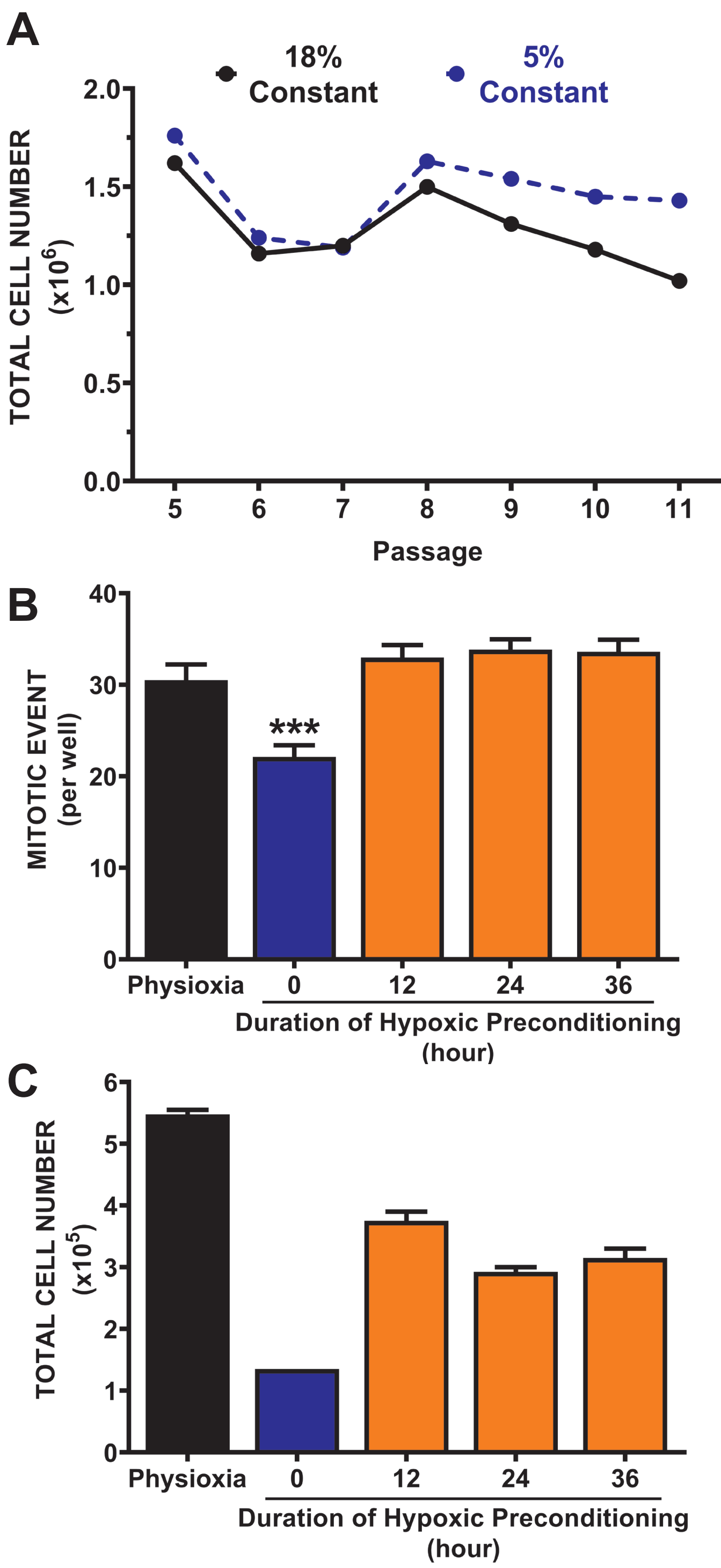


Figure 2. Hypoxic Pre-Conditioning Improves Proliferation over Room Air Conditions, but Not Over Physioxenia. MSC in T-25 flasks were cultured in 5% CO₂ plus different O₂ conditions as shown in fig. 1a. Mitotic events were recorded using HoloMonitor M4 Holographic microscope. Three positions in each well were observed for 3 hrs at 6.5 min intervals. Images were analyzed for proliferation events as evidenced by cell rounding. (A) Previous data of cell counts at each passage showed faster senescence of MCS exposed to room air O₂. (B) Cells cultured as in fig. 1 and plated at 6 x 10⁵/ml in 96-well plates showed that hypoxic pre-conditioning can recover cell proliferation rates of room air exposed cells, but not more than constant physiologic O₂. Data was expressed as the mean mitotic events per well + SEM (n=42-46 from 4 independent experiments). Asterisks (***) indicate values significantly different from physioxenia group as determined by one-way ANOVA followed by Tukey's multiple comparisons test (*p*<0.01). (C) Total cell numbers after culture at different O₂ conditions (duplicate counts). Data expressed as the mean + SEM. (D) Representative images.

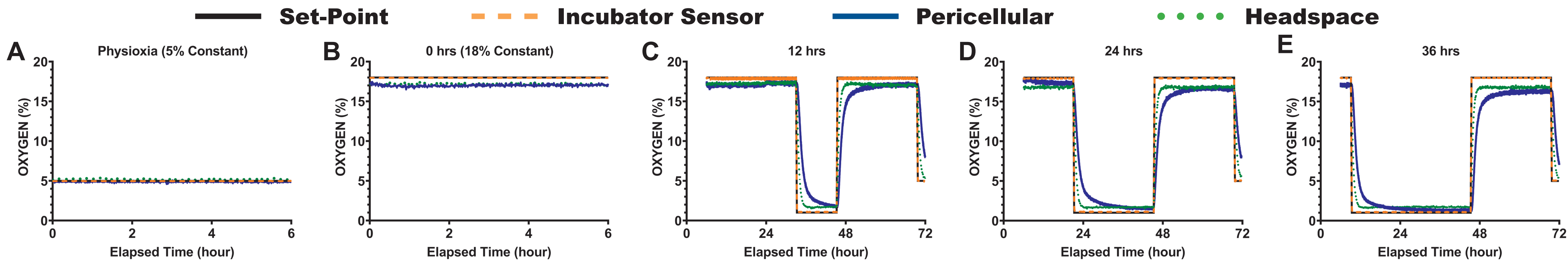


Figure 3. Pericellular and Head-Space Oxygen Levels Lag Behind Incubator Oxygen Changes. Cells were cultured in T-150 flasks. Pericellular and head-space oxygen levels in MSC cultures, and oxygen levels in each incubator were monitored and recorded using an immersion oxygen probe. Cells under physioxenic (5% constant oxygen; A) and 0 h preconditioning (18% constant oxygen; B) were recorded and graphed for 6 hrs. Cells under 12-36 hr preconditioning (C-E) were monitored for up to 72 hrs. Data were graphed from hour 6 to 72. Each figure showed set-point (solid black line) of each incubator, readings from related incubator sensor (orange dashed lines), detected pericellular oxygen levels (solid dark blue lines) and head-space oxygen levels (green dots).

CONCLUSIONS

Pericellular Oxygen Conditions Lag Behind Incubator Atmospheric Oxygen Changes
Hypoxic Preconditioning Increased Cell Proliferation as Compared with Room Air Conditions, but Not as Compared to Full-Time Physioxenic Conditions
Overall Cell Growth is Negatively Affected by Room Air Conditions, so Physioxenic Conditions are Better