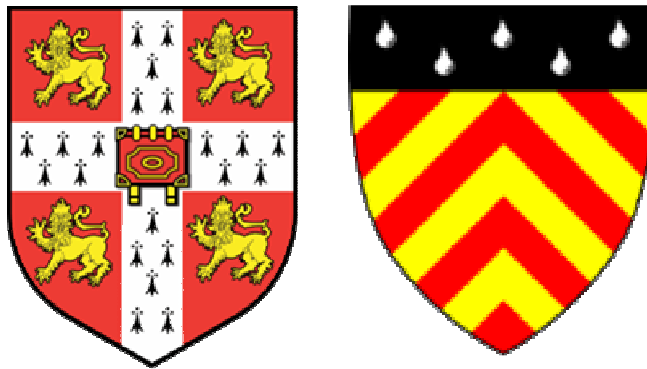


# **CHARACTERISATION OF BCL11 FUNCTIONS IN DEVELOPMENT USING GENETICALLY MODIFIED MICE**

A Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration, except where specially indicated in the text. None of the material presented herein has been submitted previously for the purpose of obtaining another degree. I confirm that this thesis does not exceed 300 single sided pages of double spaced text, or 80,000 words.

Song Choon Lee

*For always being there,  
Dad, Mum, Angel and Shia*

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# ABSTRACT

Bcl11a and Bcl11b are two transcription factors that are essential for lymphocyte development and cell-fate decisions. To study the spatial expression patterns of these genes, I generated the *Bcl11-lacZ* tagged reporter mice. Using X-gal and FDG staining, the expression patterns of *Bcl11* genes in hematopoietic and mammary lineages were fully characterized. I found that *Bcl11a* and *Bcl11b* exhibited dynamic and contrasting expression patterns throughout mammary gland development. Both genes were among the earliest genes that were expressed specifically in the embryonic mammary placodes in the mouse. In the adult gland, *Bcl11a* was expressed in luminal progenitors and their differentiated derivatives while *Bcl11b* expression was predominantly restricted to basal cells and a small number of luminal progenitors.

Absence of *Bcl11a* and *Bcl11b* caused embryonic mammary placode defects. Deletion of *Bcl11a* in the virgin gland disrupted the mammary epithelial architecture and led to a decrease in Gata-3<sup>+</sup> cells and an increase in the number of ERα<sup>+</sup> cells. Loss of *Bcl11a* in the lactation gland led to the loss of secretory cells in the lobulo-alveoli, lactation failure, and premature onset of involution. This suggests that *Bcl11a* is essential for maintenance of terminally differentiated luminal secretory cell fate. In contrast, deletion of *Bcl11b* in the virgin gland led to precocious alveologenesis and a basal to luminal lineage switch in the basal cells. Transient over-expression of *Bcl11b* was sufficient to induce expression of basal cell specific genes. These results demonstrate that *Bcl11b* promotes and maintains basal identity, and also suppresses the luminal lineage.

At the molecular level, deletion of *Bcl11a* in the lactation glands resulted in dysregulation of JAK-Stat and Notch signalling pathways. In the *Bcl11a*-deficient lactation gland, there was an absence of phosphorylated Stat5-positive cells and a dramatic increase in phosphorylated Stat3-positive cells. Interestingly, loss of *Bcl11a* in lactation gland resulted in over-expression of *Notch1* but down-regulation of *Notch3* expression. These results demonstrate that different Notch receptors/ligands play different roles in maintaining mammary cell fate and that *Bcl11a* might potentially regulate JAK-Stat signalling via the Notch signalling pathway. This study thus identified *Bcl11a* and *Bcl11b* as critical regulators of the mammary epithelium.

# LIST OF FIGURES

## CHAPTER 1

<b>Figure 1.1.</b> General procedure for generation of genetically modified mice by gene targeting strategies -----	9
<b>Figure 1.2.</b> Replacement and insertion type vectors -----	10
<b>Figure 1.3.</b> Properties of Cre recombinase -----	15
<b>Figure 1.4.</b> Strategy for generation of a conditional knockout allele -----	16
<b>Figure 1.5.</b> Overview of recombineering using Rac-encoded RecET system -----	21
<b>Figure 1.6.</b> Generation of conditional targeting vectors using the Red system -----	22
<b>Figure 1.7.</b> Generation of conditional targeting vectors using mobile reagents -----	23-24
<b>Figure 1.8.</b> Properties of <i>Bcl11</i> genes -----	30-31
<b>Figure 1.9.</b> Schematic diagram showing hematopoietic development -----	37
<b>Figure 1.10.</b> Overview of murine embryonic mammary gland development -----	46-47
<b>Figure 1.11.</b> Overview of murine adult mammary development -----	49
<b>Figure 1.12.</b> Stat signalling pathway -----	55-56
<b>Figure 1.13.</b> Overview of Lif/Stat3-mediated apoptosis -----	62
<b>Figure 1.14.</b> Characterization of murine epithelial cells using cell surface markers -----	66
<b>Figure 1.15.</b> FACS profile of murine luminal epithelial cells -----	68
<b>Figure 1.16.</b> Hierarchy of murine epithelial cells -----	70

## CHAPTER 3

<b>Figure 3.1.</b> Construction of conditional knockout targeting vectors using the new recombineering reagents -----	112-113
<b>Figure 3.2.</b> Construction of recombineering substrates by PCR -----	116-119
<b>Figure 3.3.</b> Validation of targeting constructs- -----	122-125
<b>Figure 3.4.</b> Verification of <i>loxP/FRT/F3</i> functionality -----	128-129
<b>Figure 3.5.</b> ES cell targeting -----	131-132
<b>Figure 3.6.</b> Confirmation of germline transmission of targeted alleles in F1 mice -----	134

## CHAPTER 4

<b>Figure 4.1.</b> Validation of X-gal staining patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> 10.5-11 dpc embryos	139
<b>Figure 4.2.</b> X-gal staining patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> 10.5-11 dpc embryos	-----141-142
<b>Figure 4.3.</b> X-gal staining patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> 12.5-13 dpc embryos	-----144-145
<b>Figure 4.4.</b> X-gal staining patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> 13.5-14.5 dpc embryos	-----146-147
<b>Figure 4.5.</b> X-gal staining patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> 18.5 dpc embryos	-----148
<b>Figure 4.6.</b> X-gal staining patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> adult brain	-----149
<b>Figure 4.7.</b> X-gal staining patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> 13.5-14.5 dpc tissue	-----152
<b>Figure 4.8.</b> X-gal staining patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> 18.5 dpc tissues	-----153
<b>Figure 4.9.</b> X-gal staining patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> adult tissues	-----154
<b>Figure 4.10.</b> Expression of <i>Bcl11b</i> in milk line at 10.5 dpc	-----156
<b>Figure 4.11.</b> Expression of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in mammary lineages at 12.5 dpc	-----157
<b>Figure 4.12.</b> Expression of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in mammary lineages at 13.5-14.5 dpc	-----158
<b>Figure 4.13.</b> X-gal staining patterns of mammary tissues from <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> virgin glands	-----161
<b>Figure 4.14.</b> X-gal staining patterns of mammary tissues from <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> gestation glands	-----165
<b>Figure 4.15.</b> X-gal staining patterns of mammary tissues from <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> lactation glands	-----166
<b>Figure 4.16.</b> X-gal staining patterns of mammary tissues from <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> involution glands	-----167
<b>Figure 4.17.</b> Expression patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> genes over Mammary Gland Development time course	-----167
<b>Figure 4.18.</b> Expression of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in mammary epithelial cells	-----171
<b>Figure 4.19.</b> FACS-gal analysis of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> epithelial cells	-----172-173
<b>Figure 4.20.</b> FACS-gal analysis of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> bone marrow cells	-----178-179
<b>Figure 4.21.</b> FACS-gal analysis of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> thymocytes	-----180-182

## CHAPTER 5

<b>Figure 5.1.</b> <i>In situ</i> hybridization of wild-type and <i>Bcl11a</i> <sup>lacZ/lacZ</sup> homozygous mutant embryos	-----193-194
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<b>Figure 5.2.</b> Analysis of <i>Bcl11b</i> <sup>lacZ/lacZ</sup> homozygous mutant embryos using X-gal staining and <i>in situ</i> hybridization-----	197-200
<b>Figure 5.3.</b> Generation of the <i>Bcl11</i> conditional knockout mice -----	203
<b>Figure 5.4.</b> Detection of deletion of <i>Bcl11a</i> after Cre expression -----	204
<b>Figure 5.5.</b> Morphological analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11a</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands-----	205
<b>Figure 5.6.</b> Immunohistochemical analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11a</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands sections using luminal/basal markers -----	206
<b>Figure 5.7.</b> Immunohistochemical analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11a</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands -----	207
<b>Figure 5.8.</b> Immunohistochemical analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11a</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands -----	210
<b>Figure 5.9.</b> Immunohistochemical analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11a</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands sections using additional markers -----	210
<b>Figure 5.10.</b> Mammary FACS profile of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11a</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands -----	212
<b>Figure 5.11.</b> Analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11a</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> whole mammary glands using semi-quantitative RT-PCR -----	212
<b>Figure 5.12.</b> Detection of deletion of <i>Bcl11b</i> after Cre expression -----	215
<b>Figure 5.13.</b> Morphological analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11b</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands -----	216
<b>Figure 5.14.</b> Immunohistochemical analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11b</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands sections using luminal/basal markers -----	217
<b>Figure 5.15.</b> Immunohistochemical analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11b</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands -----	218
<b>Figure 5.16.</b> Immunohistochemical analysis of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11b</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands sections using additional markers -----	219
<b>Figure 5.17.</b> Mammary FACS profile of tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11b</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands -----	221
<b>Figure 5.18.</b> Analysis of sorted basal cells from tamoxifen treated control and <i>Cre-ERT2</i> ; <i>Bcl11b</i> <sup>flx/flx</sup> mammary glands using semi-quantitative RT-PCR -----	221

<b>Figure 5.19.</b> Over-expression of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in mammary epithelial cell line, KIM2	223
<b>Figure 5.20.</b> Analysis of mammary glands from <i>Stat6</i> <sup>-/-</sup> virgin and day 5 gestation female mice	224
<b>Figure 5.21.</b> Model of possible regulatory factor interactions in the mammary gland	229
<b>Figure 5.22.</b> Proposed working model of the roles of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in mammary lineages	234

## CHAPTER 6

<b>Figure 6.1.</b> Histological analysis of mammary glands from <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> and control females	239
<b>Figure 6.2.</b> Graph showing average weights of pups from <i>BLG-cre; Bcl11a</i> <sup>flox/+</sup> and <i>BLG-cre; Bcl11a</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> females	240
<b>Figure 6.3.</b> Graphs showing average weights of pups fostered from <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11a</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> to <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11a</i> <sup>flox/+</sup> females	241
<b>Figure 6.4.</b> Analysis of <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11b</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> and control females	242-243
<b>Figure 6.5.</b> Histological analysis of <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11a</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> and control females	246-247
<b>Figure 6.6.</b> Detection of deletion of <i>Bcl11a</i> and <i>Bcl11b</i> after <i>BLG-Cre</i> expression	248
<b>Figure 6.7.</b> Analysis of milk transcripts and protein levels in <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> females	249
<b>Figure 6.8.</b> Immunostaining of day 2 lactation mammary glands of <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11a</i> <sup>flox/+</sup> and <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11a</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> females	250
<b>Figure 6.9.</b> Loss of <i>Bcl11a</i> results in activation of Stat3-mediated apoptosis	253
<b>Figure 6.10.</b> Analysis of Stat transcripts and protein levels in <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> and control females	254
<b>Figure 6.11.</b> Analysis of transcription factors transcripts and protein levels in <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> and control females	256
<b>Figure 6.12.</b> Analysis of Notch signaling pathway transcripts and protein levels in <i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11</i> <sup>flox/flox</sup> and control females	259
<b>Figure 6.13.</b> Proposed working model of the roles of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in mammary lineages	263

## CHAPTER 7

<b>Figure 7.1.</b> <i>Bcl11a</i> and <i>Bcl11b</i> are critical regulators for the development of mammary epithelial hierarchy .....	271
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## APPENDIX

<b>Figure A.1.</b> Plasmid map of PL611 retrieval vector .....	295
<b>Figure A.2.</b> Plasmid map of <i>Bsd</i> cassette .....	296
<b>Figure A.3.</b> Plasmid map of <i>Neo</i> cassette .....	297
<b>Figure A.4.</b> Plasmid map of PL613 <i>lacZ</i> reporter cassette .....	298
<b>Figure A.5.</b> Plasmid map of <i>Cm-TK</i> cassette .....	299
<b>Figure A.6.</b> Plasmid map of pSim18 .....	300
<b>Figure A.7.</b> Cloning of <i>Bcl11b</i> cDNA and construction of <i>Bcl11b</i> over-expression vector .....	301
<b>Figure A.8.</b> <i>In vitro</i> mammary colony-forming cells (Ma-CFCs) .....	302

# LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 2.1.</b> List of targeting primers used -----	80
<b>Table 2.2.</b> Composition of cell culture medium used -----	84
<b>Table 2.3.</b> List of genotyping primers used -----	91
<b>Table 2.4.</b> List of RT-PCR primers used -----	94-95
<b>Table 2.5.</b> List of qRT-PCR primers used -----	96
<b>Table 2.6.</b> List of primers used for cloning <i>in situ</i> probes -----	97
<b>Table 2.7.</b> List of antibodies used for Western blot analysis -----	100
<b>Table 2.8.</b> List of antibodies used for immunohistochemistry -----	104
<b>Table 2.9.</b> List of antibodies used for FACS analysis -----	106
<b>Table 3.1.</b> Chimeras obtained from microinjections -----	133

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

4-OHT	4-hydroxytamoxifen
AGM	Aorta-gonad-mesonephros
Amp	Ampicillin
BAC	Bacterial artificial chromosome
Bcl	B-cell lymphoma/leukaemia
BLG	$\beta$ -lactoglobulin
BM	Bone marrow
Bmp	Bone morphogenic protein
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
Bsd	Blasticidin
C/EBP	CCAAT/enhancer-binding protein
cDNA	Complementary deoxyribose nucleic acid
ChIP	Chromatin immunoprecipitation
Cko	Conditional knockout
CLP	Common lymphoid progenitor
CMP	Common myeloid progenitor
CNS	Central nervous system
COUP-TF	Chicken ovalbumin upstream promoter transcription factor
Cre-ERT	Cre-estrogen receptor (Tamoxifen-inducible Cre)
CTIP	COUP-TF interacting protein
ddH <sub>2</sub> O	Double-distilled H <sub>2</sub> O
DMEM	Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium
DMSO	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DN	Double negative (CD4 <sup>-</sup> CD8 <sup>-</sup> )
dNTP	Deoxyribonucleotide triphosphate
Dox	Doxycycline
DP	Double positive (CD4 <sup>+</sup> CD8 <sup>+</sup> )
Dpc	Days post-coitum
DTT	Dithiothreitol

EDTA	Ethylene-diamine-tetra-acetic acid
ER	Estrogen receptor
ERK	Extracellular signal-regulated kinase
Evi	Ecotopic virus integration site
FACS	Fluorescent-activated cell sorting
FAM	6-carboxyfluorescein
FCS	Fetal calf serum
FDG	Fluorescein di- $\beta$ -D-galactopyranoside
Fgf	Fibroblast growth factor
FIAU	1-2-deoxy-2-fluoro- $\beta$ -D-arabinofuranosyl)-5-iodouracil
GAS	$\gamma$ -interferon activation sites
GH	Growth hormone
Hes	Hairy enhancer of split
Hh	Hedgehog
HSC	Hematopoietic stem cell
HSVtk	Herpes Simplex Virus thymidine kinase
Hygro	Hygromycin
ICN	Notch intracellular domain
IGF	Insulin-like growth factor
IGFBP	Insulin-like growth factor binding protein
IL	Interleukin
IRES	Internal ribosome entry site
JAK	Janus kinase
Kan	Kanamycin
KLS	Lineage-negative c-kit <sup>+</sup> Sca1 <sup>+</sup> cells
Lef	Lymphoid enhancing factor
LIF	Leukemia inhibitory factor
LMPP	Lymphoid-primed multi-potent progenitor
Ma-CFC	Mammary colony-forming-cell
MAML	Mastermind-like protein
MAP	Mitogen-activated protein

MaSC	Mammary stem cell
MEF	Mammary epithelial cell
MEP	Megakaryocyte/erythroid progenitor
MMTV	Mouse mammary tumour virus
MPP	Multi-potent progenitor
MSCV	Murine stem cell virus
MTA	Metastasis-associated protein
NBT/BCIP	Nitro blue tetrazolium chloride/5-Bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl phosphate, toluidine salt
NCoR	Nuclear receptor co-repressor
Neo	Neomycin
NP-40	Nonidet P-40
Nrg	Neuregulin
NuRD	Nucleosome remodelling and deacetylase
PAC	P1 artificial chromosome
PAGE	Polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
PBS	Phosphate buffered saline
PBST	Phosphate buffered saline with 0.1% Tween-20
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PDK1	Phosphoinositide-dependent kinase 1
PFA	Paraformaldehyde
PH	Pleckstrin homology
PI3K	Phosphatidylinositol-3-OH-kinase
PIAS	Protein inhibitor of activated Stat
PKB	Protein kinase B
PR	Progesterone receptor
Prl	Prolactin
PtdIns-3,4,5-P <sub>3</sub>	Phosphatidylinositol-3,4,5-triphosphate
PtdIns-4,5-P <sub>2</sub>	Phosphatidylinositol-4,5-biphosphate
PTHrP	Parathyroid hormone related peptide
Puro	Puromycin

QPCR	Quantitative real-time PCR
qRT-PCR	Quantitative real-time Reverse Transcription PCR
QTL	Quantitative trait locus
RBP-J $\kappa$	Recombination-binding protein-J $\kappa$
Rit	Radiation induced tumour suppressor
RT-PCR	Semi-quantitative Reverse Transcription PCR
rtTA	Reverse tetracycline-controlled transactivator
SA	Splice acceptor
Sca1	Stem cell antigen 1
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulphate
SH2	Src-homology 2
SHP	SH2 containing phosphatase
Ska	Scaramanga
SMA	Smooth muscle actin
SMRT	Silencing mediator for retinoid and thyroid hormone receptor
SOCS	Suppressor of cytokine signalling
Stat	Signal transducer and activator of transcription
TAM	Tamoxifen
TAMRA	Tetramethyl-6-carboxyrhodamine
Tbx	T-box
TE	Tris-EDTA
TEB	Terminal end bud
Tet	Tetracycline
TetR	Tetracycline repressor protein
TGF	Transforming growth factor
TNF	Tumour necrosis factor
TRE	Tetracycline response element
tTA	Tetracycline-controlled transactivator
WAP	Whey acidic protein
Wnt	Wingless and Int
X-gal	5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl- $\beta$ -D-galactopyranoside

# TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>COVER PAGE .....</b>	<b><i>I</i></b>
<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b><i>II</i></b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b><i>V</i></b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b><i>VI</i></b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b><i>XI</i></b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b><i>XII</i></b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT .....</b>	<b><i>XVI</i></b>
<b>CHAPTER 1:.....</b>	<b><i>1</i></b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b><i>1</i></b>
<b>1.1 Mouse as a genetic tool .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1.1 A brief history .....	1
1.1.2 Using the mouse to model human disease.....	1
<b>1.2 Methodologies to genetically manipulate the mouse genome.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.2.1 Pronuclear injections and transgenic mice .....	2
1.2.2 Development of mouse embryonic stem (ES) cells .....	3
1.2.3 Homologous recombination and gene targeting.....	4
1.2.4 Conventional gene knockout technology .....	5
1.2.5 Conditional knockout and Cre- <i>loxP</i> recombination system .....	11
1.2.6 Recombineering technology .....	17
<b>1.3 B-cell lymphoma/leukaemia 11(<i>Bcl11</i>) gene family .....</b>	<b>25</b>
1.3.1 Discovery of the <i>Bcl11</i> genes .....	25
1.3.2 Properties of <i>Bcl11</i> genes .....	26
1.3.3 <i>Bcl11</i> and tumorigenesis.....	32
1.3.4 Hematopoiesis and the roles of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in hematopoietic development.....	33
1.3.5 Transcription factors in hematopoiesis.....	38
<b>1.4 Mammary gland biology .....</b>	<b>40</b>
1.4.1 Embryonic development .....	40
1.4.1.1 Overview of development .....	40
1.4.1.2 Specification of the milk line .....	41
1.4.1.3 Formation of placodes.....	42
1.4.1.4 Bud formation .....	43
1.4.1.5 Sprout formation and early ductal morphogenesis.....	44
1.4.2 Postnatal morphogenesis.....	48
1.4.2.1 Hormonal regulation.....	50
1.4.3 Lobulo-alveolar development .....	51
1.4.3.1 Progesterone signalling.....	51
1.4.3.2 Prolactin signalling.....	52
1.4.3.3 JAK/Stat signalling .....	52
1.4.3.4 Stat5 as a key mediator of lobulo-alveolar development .....	57
1.4.4 Lactation.....	57
1.4.5 Involution .....	58
1.4.5.1 Lif/Stat3-mediated apoptosis during involution .....	59
<b>1.5 Genetic control of mammary cell fate .....</b>	<b>63</b>

1.5.1	Historical perspectives.....	63
1.5.2	Mammary epithelial hierarchy.....	64
1.5.2.1	Characteristics of the mammary stem cell.....	64
1.5.2.2	Mammary luminal progenitors.....	67
1.5.2.3	Myoepithelial/basal cells.....	69
1.5.2.4	Current model of mammary epithelial hierarchy.....	69
1.5.3	Lineage commitment during puberty and pregnancy.....	71
1.5.3.1	Transcription factors.....	71
1.5.3.2	Notch signalling.....	74
1.6	Thesis project.....	75
<b>CHAPTER 2:.....</b>		<b>77</b>
<b>MATERIALS AND METHODS.....</b>		<b>77</b>
2.1	Vectors.....	77
2.1.1	Gene targeting vectors.....	77
2.1.2	Over-expression vectors.....	78
2.1.3	<i>Bcl11-lacZ</i> reporter conditional null vectors.....	79
2.1.3.1	Construction of targeting and retrieval vectors.....	79
2.1.3.2	Construction of final targeting vectors.....	80
2.2	Recombineering.....	81
2.2.1	Using $\lambda$ -phage.....	81
2.2.2	Using pSim plasmids.....	82
2.2.3	Expression of Cre/Flpe recombinase.....	83
2.2.4	Antibiotics.....	83
2.3	ES cell culture.....	83
2.3.1	Culture condition.....	83
2.3.2	Chemicals used for selection of ES cells.....	84
2.3.3	Transfection of DNA into ES cells by electroporation.....	85
2.3.4	Picking ES cell colonies.....	86
2.3.5	Passaging ES cells.....	86
2.3.6	Freezing ES cells.....	86
2.3.7	Thawing ES cells.....	87
2.3.8	Generation of targeted ES cell lines.....	87
2.4	Mouse techniques.....	87
2.4.1	Animal husbandry.....	87
2.4.2	Tamoxifen preparation and injection.....	88
2.5	DNA methods.....	88
2.5.1	Extraction of DNA from BAC clones.....	88
2.5.2	Extraction of DNA from ES cells.....	89
2.5.3	Extraction of DNA from tissues.....	89
2.5.4	Polymerase chain reaction (PCR).....	89
2.5.4.1	Long range PCR.....	89
2.5.4.2	Genotyping PCR.....	90
2.5.5	Transfection.....	92
2.6	RNA methods.....	92
2.6.1	Extraction of total RNA from cells.....	92
2.6.2	Extraction of total RNA from tissues.....	93
2.6.3	First strand cDNA synthesis.....	93
2.6.4	Semi-quantitative Real Time PCR.....	93
2.6.5	Quantitative Real Time PCR.....	95
2.6.5.1	TaqMan.....	95

2.6.5.2	SYBR Green .....	96
2.6.6	<i>In situ</i> hybridization .....	96
2.6.6.1	Cloning and synthesis of probes.....	96
2.6.6.2	Whole mount hybridization.....	97
2.7	Protein methods.....	98
2.7.1	Protein extraction .....	98
2.7.2	BioCinchomonic Acid (BCA) protein concentration assay (Pierce).....	99
2.7.3	SDS-PAGE .....	99
2.7.4	Immunoblotting .....	99
2.7.5	Primary antibody incubation.....	100
2.7.6	Secondary antibody incubation and detection .....	100
2.7.7	Stripping PVDF membranes .....	101
2.8	Whole mount X-gal staining.....	101
2.8.1	Embryo .....	101
2.8.2	Adult tissues .....	101
2.8.3	Mammary gland .....	102
2.9	Histology and immunohistochemistry.....	102
2.9.1	Tissue carnoys fixative and whole mount carmine alum staining .....	102
2.9.2	Paraffin sections and Hematoxylin and Eosin (H&E) staining .....	103
2.9.3	Fluorescence immunohistochemistry .....	103
2.10	FACS staining and analysis.....	104
2.10.1	Hematopoietic cells .....	104
2.10.2	Mammary cells.....	105
2.10.3	FDG staining .....	106
2.11	Mammary colony-forming-cell (Ma-CFC) assay .....	107
<b>CHAPTER 3:.....</b>		<b>108</b>
<b>GENERATION OF THE <i>BCL11</i>-LACZ CONDITIONAL NULL REPORTER MICE</b>		
.....		<b>108</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	108
3.1.1	Current <i>Bcl11</i> knockout mice.....	108
3.1.2	New recombineering reagents.....	109
3.1.3	Targeting strategy for generating <i>Bcl11-lacZ</i> reporter alleles.....	110
3.2	Results .....	114
3.2.1	Construction of targeting and retrieval vectors.....	114
3.2.2	Verification of functionality of targeting constructs.....	126
3.2.3	Targeting to ES cells and verification of targeted clones .....	130
3.2.4	Confirmation of germline transmission of targeted alleles .....	133
3.3	Discussion.....	135
<b>CHAPTER 4:.....</b>		<b>136</b>
<b>EXPRESSION PATTERNS OF <i>BCL11</i> GENES IN MICE.....</b>		<b>136</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	136
4.1.1	Current knowledge of <i>Bcl11</i> genes expression patterns .....	136
4.1.2	Using <i>E. coli lacZ</i> as a reporter in mice .....	137
4.2	Results .....	139
4.2.1	X-gal staining patterns faithfully recapitulate endogenous <i>Bcl11</i> expression .....	139
4.2.2	<i>Bcl11</i> genes are expressed in early embryonic development.....	140
4.2.3	<i>Bcl11</i> genes are highly expressed in the brain and craniofacial regions.....	143

4.2.4	<i>Bcl11</i> genes exhibit differential expression patterns in other tissues .....	150
4.2.5	<i>Bcl11</i> genes are expressed specifically in embryonic mammary gland .....	155
4.2.6	<i>Bcl11</i> genes exhibit unique and dynamic expression patterns in the mammary gland .....	159
4.2.6.1	<i>Bcl11a</i> is expressed in terminal end buds of mammary glands.....	159
4.2.6.2	Differential expression of <i>Bcl11</i> genes during pregnancy, lactation and involution .....	162
4.2.7	Expression of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in specific cell types .....	168
4.2.7.1	Characterization of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> mammary epithelial cells .....	168
4.2.7.2	Characterization of <i>Bcl11</i> <sup>lacZ/+</sup> hematopoietic cells .....	174
4.3	Discussion.....	183
4.3.1	Summary of embryonic expression patterns .....	183
4.3.2	Differential <i>Bcl11</i> expression patterns in hematopoietic lineages .....	185
4.3.3	Dynamic differential expression patterns in mammary lineages.....	186
<b>CHAPTER 5:.....</b>		<b>188</b>
<b><i>BCL11</i> GENES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR NORMAL MAMMARY DEVELOPMENT</b>		
.....		188
5.1	Introduction.....	188
5.1.1	Genetic control of lymphocyte and mammary development .....	188
5.1.2	Clues from expression patterns .....	190
5.2	Results .....	191
5.2.1	Loss of <i>Bcl11a</i> leads to abnormal mammary bud formation .....	191
5.2.2	<i>Bcl11b</i> is essential for formation of third pair of mammary buds.....	195
5.2.3	Loss of <i>Bcl11a</i> in virgin glands causes disruption of mammary architecture .....	201
5.2.4	Loss of <i>Bcl11a</i> in the mammary epithelium results in a loss of Gata-3 <sup>+</sup> and an increase in ER $\alpha$ <sup>+</sup> epithelial cells.....	208
5.2.5	<i>Bcl11a</i> -deficient virgin glands exhibit a shift towards luminal profile .....	211
5.2.6	Loss of <i>Bcl11b</i> in virgin glands results in precocious alveolar development .....	213
5.2.7	Basal fractions of <i>Bcl11b</i> -deficient virgin glands express luminal markers .....	220
5.2.8	<i>Bcl11b</i> promotes basal identity in mammary epithelial cells .....	222
5.3	Discussion.....	225
5.3.1	<i>Bcl11</i> genes are important for embryonic mammary development .....	225
5.3.2	<i>Bcl11</i> genes play essential roles in the virgin mammary gland.....	230
5.3.3	Putative roles of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in mammary cell fate determination and lineage commitment .....	233
<b>CHAPTER 6:.....</b>		<b>235</b>
<b><i>BCL11A</i> IS ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTENANCE OF LUMINAL SECRETORY CELL FATE</b>		
.....		235
6.1	Introduction.....	235
6.1.1	Mammary gland development during pregnancy.....	235
6.1.2	Differentiation of luminal epithelial cells.....	236
6.2	Results .....	237
6.2.1	<i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11a</i> <sup>flax/flax</sup> females have severe lactational defects .....	237
6.2.2	<i>BLG-Cre; Bcl11b</i> <sup>flax/flax</sup> females are able to nurse their pups.....	242
6.2.3	<i>Bcl11a</i> is essential in the lactation gland.....	244
6.2.4	Loss of <i>Bcl11a</i> in lactation glands results in premature onset of involution.....	251
6.2.5	Lactational defects in <i>Bcl11a</i> -deficient glands are not compensated by physiological levels of Gata-3 .....	255
6.2.6	Loss of <i>Bcl11a</i> in lactation glands also results in dysregulation of Notch signalling pathways .....	257

6.3	Discussion.....	260
6.3.1	<i>Bcl11a</i> maintains terminally differentiated luminal secretory cells .....	260
6.3.2	Implications of different Notch signalling pathways .....	261
6.3.3	Proposed working model of <i>Bcl11</i> genes during lactation .....	262
<b>CHAPTER 7:.....</b>		<b>264</b>
<b>GENERAL DISCUSSION.....</b>		<b>264</b>
7.1	Summary.....	264
7.1.1	Expression patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in embryonic and adult tissues.....	264
7.1.2	Reciprocal expression of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in hematopoietic lineages .....	265
7.1.3	Dynamic expression patterns of <i>Bcl11</i> genes during mammary development .....	266
7.1.4	<i>Bcl11</i> genes are critical regulators of lineage commitment in the mammary epithelium 267	
7.1.5	<i>Bcl11</i> genes are connected to networks of mammary regulators.....	268
7.1.6	<i>Bcl11</i> genes in mammary progenitors and lineage commitment .....	270
7.2	Significance.....	272
7.2.1	Novel roles of <i>Bcl11</i> genes in lineage commitment.....	272
7.2.2	Implications for tumour development .....	272
7.3	Future experiments.....	273
7.3.1	<i>Bcl11</i> genes and mammary stem/progenitor cells.....	274
7.3.2	Mammary fat pad transplantation of <i>Bcl11</i> -deficient mammary cells .....	275
7.3.3	Mammary tumour formation in <i>Bcl11</i> -deficient glands.....	276
7.3.4	Microarray analysis of <i>Bcl11</i> -deficient mammary glands .....	276
7.3.5	Direct targets of Bcl11 transcription factors .....	277
7.3.6	Human breast cancer cell lines and tissues.....	277
7.3.7	Quantification and statistical analysis .....	278
7.4	Conclusions.....	278
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>		<b>279</b>
<b>APPENDIX .....</b>		<b>295</b>