



Contents

Abstract.....	11
Abbreviations	12
I. Introduction	17
1. Cells and their natural environment.....	17
2. Microfabrication for engineering of synthetic cellular environments.....	19
3. The 3D cell cultures and instructive cellular microenvironments	20
4. Trends, perspectives and challenges.....	22
5. Microthermoforming and SMART technology.....	27
II. Aims of the thesis	30
III. Results and Discussion	32
1. Development of SMART modules for fabrication of multi-shaped microarrays	32
1.1. Fabrication of SU-8 moulds	35
1.2. Fabrication of microthermoforming polypropylene moulds by soft embossing	37
1.3. SEM and LSM analysis of the SU-8 moulds, polypropylene moulds and bulky S-184 stamps.....	39
1.4. Fabrication of multishaped microarrays with PLA scaffolds	41
1.5. Fabrication of multishaped microarrays with porous scaffolds	44
1.6. Formation of stem cell aggregates in thermoformed porous PC microarrays.....	45
1.7. Promotion of specific F-actin patterns in PLA microarrays.....	47
Discussion.....	49
2. Development of biological assays for culturing of bmMSCs in KIT 0.5 chips	53
2.1. Epiphyseal arc topographic anatomy and biomimetic models.....	57
2.2. Development of fabrication module for production of KIT 0.5 chips	59
2.2.1. Basic modelling of KIT 0.5 dimensions	61
2.3. KIT 0.5 chips provide more favourable microenvironment for long term expansion and maintenance of bmMSCs	62
2.4. Development of protocols for live-cell viability analysis.....	65



2.4.1.	Development of protocols for analysis of proliferation and metabolic activity of bmMSCs, cultured in KIT 0.5 chips	68
2.4.2.	Establishment of Ki-67 detection protocols to reconfirm the proliferative capacity of bmMSCs, cultured in KIT 0.5 chips	71
2.4.3.	Effects of hypoxia over proliferation of bmMSCs, cultured in KIT 0.5 chips	72
2.5.	The bmMSCs cultured in KIT 0.5 chips retain their MSC phenotypes upon retrieval at days 8 and 21	74
2.5.1.	The bmMSCs retain their proliferative capacity upon recovery at days 8 and 21....	77
2.5.2.	The bmMSCs retain their colony-forming potential for at least 21 days of cultivation in KIT 0.5 chips	78
2.5.3.	Establishment of protocols for detection of 53BP1	78
2.5.4.	Recovered bmMSCs retain their adipogenic potential.....	79
2.5.5.	Recovered bmMSCs preserve their osteogenic differentiation potential.....	81
	Discussion	82
3.	Development of biological assays for investigating regenerative properties of bmMSCs in KIT 0.5 chips. Microbioreactor concepts.....	87
3.1.	Establishment of protocols for adipogenic differentiation of bmMSCs in KIT 0.5 chips.....	91
3.1.1.	Expansion of differentiating pre-adipocytes in KIT 0.5 chips	92
3.1.2.	Expression of FABP4 in monolayers and static KIT 0.5 chips	94
3.1.3.	Establishment of protocols for lipid droplet quantification in KIT 0.5 chips	96
3.1.4.	Flow-stimulation supresses adipogenic differentiation of bmMSCs in 2D flow chambers and KIT 0.5 chips	97
3.2.	Establishment of protocols for osteogenic differentiation of bmMSCs in KIT 0.5 chips.....	100
3.2.1.	Establishment of protocols for profiling of intermediate osteo-progenitor markers in KIT 0.5 chips	100
3.2.2.	Osteocalcin and Osteopontin staining of osteogenic aggregates in KIT 0.5 chips for 30 days.....	101
3.2.3.	KIT 0.5 chips promote formation of stable protein matrix with advanced differentiation	105



3.2.4.	KIT 0.5 chips promote formation of stable inorganic matrix at endpoint differentiation	106
3.2.5.	Effects of flow-stimulation on osteogenic differentiation in monolayers without osteogenic compounds.....	108
3.2.6.	Effects of flow-stimulation on osteogenic commitment in microbioreactors without osteogenic compounds	109
3.2.6.1.	Effects of flow-stimulation on osteogenic differentiation in microbioreactors with osteogenic compounds	111
3.3.	Establishment of protocols for chondrogenic differentiation of bmMSCs in KIT 0.5 chips.....	115
3.3.1.	Establishment of protocols for monitoring of chondrogenesis in static KIT 0.5 chips.....	116
3.3.2.	Hypoxic microenvironments enhances sGAGs production in bmMSCs cultures in static KIT 0.5 chips.....	121
3.3.3.	Establishment of protocols for flow-stimulated chondrogenic differentiation of bmMSCs in microbioreactors	122
	Discussion	125
4.	Development of 3D in vitro co-culturing models to restate interactions between the endothelial and bmMSCs cells	130
4.1.	KIT 0.5 chips as 3D in vitro platform for restating the interactions between the bmMSCs and endothelial cells in vitro	134
4.2.	Flow-stimulated co-cultures of bmMSCs and HMVECs promote formation of densely-packed aggregates	137
4.2.1.	Expression of osteogenic markers in co-cultures of bmMSCs and HMVECs ...	139
4.2.2.	Osteogenic differentiation of co-cultures of bmMSCs and HMVECs under flow stimulation	140
5.	Development of in vitro models of transformation of bmMSCs into tumour-associated fibroblasts	141
5.1.	Influence of tumour exosomes on bmMSCs activity	143
	Discussion	144
6.	Development of novel SMART process for fabrication of 3D microdevices with press-fit assembly	149
	Discussion	153



7. Development and biological validation of biofunctional surface modifications within microthermoformed microdevices	155
7.1. MPL-PAP and CVD polymerization for creating biofunctional patterns on planar surfaces and 3D microthermoformed structures.....	157
7.2. Biocompatibility of planar COP films, functionalized by MPL-PAP and CVD.....	161
7.3. Biocompatibility of thermoformed COP channels, functionalized by MPL-PAP and CVD	163
Discussion	165
IV. Conclusions and resume.....	169
V. Materials and Methods.....	171
1. Microthermoforming and SMART technology.....	171
1.1. In-house developed thermoforming machine.....	171
1.2. Thermoforming and etching of single KIT 0.5 Chips	172
1.3. Thermoforming and etching of KIT 0.5 chips with 6-component moulds	172
1.4. Thermoforming of patterned COP films	172
1.5. Thermoforming and etching of press-fit click-channels	172
1.6. Thermoforming of multi-shaped microarrays	173
2. Microscopy	173
2.1. Confocal microscopy platform, Leica TCS SP5 (DMI 6000).....	173
2.2. Axiovert 200M, Carl Zeiss	174
2.3. Colour 3D Laser Microscope, Keyence	175
2.4. Scanning electron microscopy, Carl Zeiss	175
2.4.1. Laboratory Fluorescent Microscope EVOS FL, AMG	175
3. Devices, other machines and reagents	176
3.1. Thermoplastic polymer films.....	176
3.2. Machines and devices for down-stream analysis.....	176
3.3. Staining reagents for immunofluorescence, buffers and solutions	177
3.3.1. Basic fluorescent and histochemical staining	177
3.3.2. Buffers and washing solutions	177
3.3.3. Immunofluorescence – primary antibodies	178



4.3.3.4. Immunofluorescence - secondary antibodies	179
4. Protein and RNA Isolation.....	180
5. Culturing systems	181
5.1. Aseptic preparation and sterilization of thermoformed microdevices	181
5.2. Methods for cell culturing.....	181
5.2.1. Petri dishes and multiwell-plates.....	181
5.2.2. Culturing flasks	182
6. Bioreactors	182
6.1. Microbioreactors, connected to peristaltic pumps	182
6.2. Microbioreactors, connected to the ibidi fluidic stations	184
7. Cell lines and primary cell cultures.....	185
7.1. Cell lines	185
7.1.1. L929 mouse fibroblasts.....	185
7.2. Primary human cells.....	186
7.2.1. Bone marrow-derived mesenchymal stem cells (bmMSCs)	186
7.2.2. Primary human osteoblasts (HOBs).....	186
7.2.3. Human Umbilical Vein Endothelial Cells (HUVECs).....	186
7.2.4. Human Microvascular Endothelial Cells (HMVECs)	187
8. Analysis and assessment of bmMSCs phenotypes	187
8.1. Flow cytometric analysis of bmMSCs with Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer Cell Chip® ..	187
8.2. Live-dead staining assays	188
8.3. Assessment of proliferation by colorimetric measurement of mitochondrial dehydrogenases activity	188
8.4. XTT viability and proliferation assay	188
8.5. Click-iT® EdU proliferation assay	189
8.6. Population doubling times estimation in monolayer cultures.....	189
8.7. Clonogenic assay for recovered bmMSCs in vitro	189
8.8. Bioanalyzer-based flow cytometry analysis	189
8.9. Assays for detection of hypoxia in 3D cell cultures	190
9. Biofunctionalization of microfabricated polymer structures	190



9.1. Surface patterning by maskless projection lithography	190
9.2. Surface patterning by chemical vapour deposition polymerization (CVD)	191
9.3. Immobilization of biomolecules on patterned CVD coatings and PEGMA grafting	191
10. Statistical analysis.....	192
VI. References.....	193
VII. Supplementary Materials.....	219
1. Establishment of protocols for adipogenic differentiation of bmMSCs in KIT 0.5 chips.....	219
2. KIT 0.5 chips as 3D in vitro platform for restating the interactions between the bmMSCs and endothelial cells in vitro	220
3. Development of novel bioreactor concepts and fabrication of 3D biofunctionalized microstructures	223
VIII. Curriculum vitae	225
IX. Acknowledgements	229