

Dynamic changes of histone H3 marks during *Caenorhabditis elegans* lifecycle revealed by middle-down proteomics - DTU Orbit (08/11/2017)

Dynamic changes of histone H3 marks during *Caenorhabditis elegans* lifecycle revealed by middle-down proteomics

We applied a middle-down proteomics strategy for large scale protein analysis during in vivo development of *Caenorhabditis elegans*. We characterized post-translational modifications (PTMs) on histone H3 N-terminal tails at eight time points during the *C. elegans* lifecycle, including embryo, larval stages (L1 to L4), dauer and L1/L4 post dauer. Histones were analyzed by our optimized middle-down protein sequencing platform using high mass accuracy tandem mass spectrometry. This allows quantification of intact histone tails and detailed characterization of distinct histone tails carrying co-occurring PTMs. We measured temporally distinct combinatorial PTM profiles during *C. elegans* development. We show that the doubly modified form H3K23me3K27me3, which is rare or non-existent in mammals, is the most abundant PTM in all stages of *C. elegans* lifecycle. The abundance of H3K23me3 increased during development and it was mutually exclusive of the active marks H3K18ac, R26me1 and R40me1, suggesting a role for H3K23me3 in silent chromatin. We observed distinct PTM profiles for normal L1 larvae and for L1-post dauer larvae, or L4 and L4 post-dauer, suggesting that histone PTMs mediate an epigenetic memory that is transmitted during dauer formation. Collectively, our data describe the dynamics of histone H3 combinatorial code during *C. elegans* lifecycle and demonstrate the feasibility of using middle-down proteomics to study in vivo development of multicellular organisms. This article is protected by copyright. All rights reserved.

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