1999 International Worm Meeting abstract 275

Isolation and characterization of new class A synthetic multivulva genes

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The study of vulval induction in *C. elegans* provides a useful model for the analysis of the genetic and molecular mechanisms involved in cell-fate determination. Previous work has defined two classes of genes (A and B) that act redundantly to negatively regulate the adoption of vulval cell fates by vulval precursor cells. The elimination of a member of each gene class results in a synthetic multivulva (synMuv) phenotype. The B class of synMuv genes includes genes homologous to members of the mammalian Rb signaling pathway. By contrast, the class A genes remain relatively poorly understood.

Previous screens to isolate class A genes have revealed, but have been unable to recover, sterile or maternal-effect lethal synMuv mutants. Therefore, beginning with a strong *lin-15B* background (*n744*), we are now undertaking a clonal screen to identify previously unknown class A synMuv genes as well as new alleles of those genes already recovered.