

DISS. ETH NO.

Understanding the molecular mechanisms of germline-dependent epigenetic inheritance: Computational analysis of multi-omics data

A thesis submitted to attain the degree of
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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	1
Abstract	3
Zusammenfassung	5
Introduction	7
0.1 Epigenetics	7
0.2 Epigenetic Inheritance	7
0.3 Transgenerational Epigenetic Inheritance	7
0.4 Vectors of TEI	7
0.5 Epigenetic modifications in the germ cells	7
0.6 Models of Epigenetic Inheritance	7
0.7 MSUS mouse model	7
0.8 Spermatogonial Stem Cells	7
0.9 Extracellular vesicles	7
0.10 Small RNAs	7
0.11 Aims	7
Methods	9
0.12 FACS	9
0.13 Immunocytochemistry	9
0.14 RNA extraction and library preparation	9
0.15 Library preparation for Omni-ATAC	9
0.16 Version controlled data analysis using git	9
0.17 Data analysis directory organization	9
0.18 Pipelines for data analysis	9
0.18.1 Bulk RNA-seq	9
0.18.2 ATAC-seq	9

0.18.3	ChIP-seq	9
0.18.4	WGBS & RRBS	9

Chapter 1: Dynamic chromatin accessibility in spermatogonial cells for transcriptional programmings from early postnatal to adult stages		11
1.1	Graphical Abstract	12
1.2	Abstract	13
1.3	Introduction	14
1.4	Results	15
1.4.1	Enrichment of spermatogonial cells from postnatal and adult mouse testis	15
1.4.2	Chromatin is remodeled in spermatogonial cells during development	15
1.4.3	Differentially accessible chromatin regions associate with distinct gene expression dynamics	15
1.4.4	Differentially accessible chromatin regions associate with distinct epigenetic profiles	15
1.4.5	Accessibility changes at open chromatin regions are marked by binding sites for distinct families of transcription factors	15
1.4.6	Chromatin accessibility at transposable elements undergoes significant remodeling in the transition from postnatal to adult spermatogonia	15
1.5	Discussion	16
1.6	Methods	17
1.6.1	Mouse husbandry	17
1.6.2	Germ cells isolation	17
1.6.3	Spermatogonial cells enrichment by FACS	17
1.6.4	Immunocytochemistry	17
1.6.5	RNA extraction and RNA-seq library preparation for RNA-seq	17
1.6.6	Omni-ATAC Llibrary preparation for Omni-ATAC and sequencing	17
1.6.7	RNA sequencing (RNA-seq)	17
1.6.8	Assay for Transposase-Accessible Chromatin using sequencing (Omni-ATAC)	17
1.6.9	Chromatin iImmunoprecipitation sequencing (ChIP-seq)	17
1.6.10	Bisulfite sequencing (BS)	17
1.6.11	High-throughput sequencing data analysis	17

1.6.12	Figures	17
1.7	Data and materials availability	18
1.8	Authors Contribution	18
1.9	Competing interest	18
1.10	Acknowledgments	19
1.11	Funding	19
1.12	Supplementary Figures	20
1.12.1	Figure 1	20
1.12.2	Figure 2	20
1.12.3	Figure 3	20
1.12.4	Figure 4	20
1.12.5	Figure 5	20
1.12.6	Figure 6	20
1.13	References	21

Chapter 2: Early life stress affects the miRNA cargo of epididymal

	extracellular vesicles in mouse	23
2.1	Abstract	24
2.2	Summary sentence	24
2.3	Graphical Abstract	25
2.4	Key words	25
2.5	Introduction	26
2.6	Results	27
2.6.1	Isolation of cauda epididymosomes confirmed by several methods	27
2.6.2	The number and size of epididymosomes in adult males are not altered by postnatal stress	27
2.6.3	miRNAs are persistently altered by postnatal stress in cauda epididymosomes	27
2.6.4	mRNA targets of miRNAs from cauda epididymosomes are altered by postnatal stress in sperm and in zygotes	27
2.7	Discussion	28
2.8	Materials and methods	29
2.8.1	Animals	29
2.8.2	MSUS	29
2.8.3	Tissue collection	29
2.8.4	Electron microscopy images	29

2.8.5	Epididymosomes isolation by ultracentrifugation	29
2.8.6	Immunoblotting	29
2.8.7	Nanoparticle tracking analysis	29
2.8.8	RNA isolation and epididymosomes profiling	29
2.8.9	Preparation and sequencing of sRNA-seq libraries from epididy- mosomes	29
2.8.10	RT-qPCR	29
2.8.11	Cholesterol measurements	29
2.8.12	Bioinformatics data analysis	29
2.9	Data availability	29
2.10	Authors' contributions	30
2.11	Grant Support	30
2.12	Acknowledgements	30
2.13	Supplementary Figures	31
2.13.1	Figure 1	31
2.13.2	Figure 2	32
2.13.3	Figure 3	33
2.13.4	Figure 4	34
2.13.5	Figure 5	35
2.13.6	Figure 6	36
2.14	Supplementary Tables	37
2.14.1	Table 1	37
2.14.2	Table 2	38
2.14.3	Table 3	39
2.14.4	Table 4	40
2.15	References	41
Chapter 3:	shortRNA	43
3.1	Abstract	44
3.2	Introduction	44
3.3	Methods	44
3.3.1	Pipeline	44
3.3.2	QC	44
3.3.3	Annotation preparation	44
3.3.4	Alignment	44
3.3.5	Reads assignment	44

3.3.6	Assignment rules	44
3.3.7	TreeSummarizedExperiment object	44
3.3.8	Differential analysis	44
3.4	Results	44
3.4.1	Datasets used for testing the pipeline	44
3.4.2	Databases included for analyzing these data	44
3.4.3	result 1	44
3.4.4	result 2	44
3.4.5	result 3	44
3.4.6	Comparison with other tools	44
3.5	Discussion & Outlook	44
3.6	Data and code availability	44
	Discussion	45
	Conclusion	47
	Appendix A	49
3.7	Datasets analyzed	49
	Appendix B	51
3.8	Other manuscripts during PhD	51
	Appendix C	53
	References	55

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

?? ??

?? ??

Abstract

Zusammenfassung

Introduction

0.1 Epigenetics

0.2 Epigenetic Inheritance

0.3 Transgenerational Epigenetic Inheritance

0.4 Vectors of TEI

0.5 Epigenetic modifications in the germ cells

0.6 Models of Epigenetic Inheritance

0.7 MSUS mouse model

0.8 Spermatogonial Stem Cells

0.9 Extracellular vesicles

0.10 Small RNAs

0.11 Aims

Methods

0.12 FACS

0.13 Immunocytochemistry

0.14 RNA extraction and library preparation

0.15 Library preparation for Omni-ATAC

0.16 Version controlled data analysis using git

0.17 Data analysis directory organization

0.18 Pipelines for data analysis

0.18.1 Bulk RNA-seq

0.18.2 ATAC-seq

0.18.3 ChIP-seq

0.18.4 WGBS & RRBS

Chapter 1

Dynamic chromatin accessibility in
spermatogonial cells for
transcriptional programmings from
early postnatal to adult stages

1.1 Graphical Abstract

1.2 Abstract

1.3 Introduction

1.4 Results

- 1.4.1 Enrichment of spermatogonial cells from postnatal and adult mouse testis
- 1.4.2 Chromatin is remodeled in spermatogonial cells during development
- 1.4.3 Differentially accessible chromatin regions associate with distinct gene expression dynamics
- 1.4.4 Differentially accessible chromatin regions associate with distinct epigenetic profiles
- 1.4.5 Accessibility changes at open chromatin regions are marked/carry by binding sites for distinct families of transcription factors
- 1.4.6 Chromatin accessibility at transposable elements undergoes significant remodeling in the transition from postnatal to adult spermatogonia

1.5 Discussion

1.6 Methods

1.6.1 Mouse husbandry

1.6.2 Germ cells isolation

1.6.3 Spermatogonial cells enrichment by FACS

1.6.4 Immunocytochemistry

1.6.5 RNA extraction and RNA-seq library preparation for RNA-seq

1.6.6 Omni-ATAC Llibrary preparation for Omni-ATAC and sequencing

1.6.7 RNA sequencing (RNA-seq)

1.6.8 Assay for Transposase-Accessible Chromatin using sequencing (Omni-ATAC)

1.6.9 Chromatin iImmunoprecipitation sequencing (ChIP-seq)

1.6.10 Bisulfite sequencing (BS)

1.6.11 High-throughput sequencing data analysis

1.6.12 Figures

1.7 Data and materials availability

1.8 Authors Contribution

1.9 Competing interest

1.10 Acknowledgments

1.11 Funding

1.12 Supplementary Figures

1.12.1 Figure 1

1.12.2 Figure 2

1.12.3 Figure 3

1.12.4 Figure 4

1.12.5 Figure 5

1.12.6 Figure 6

1.13 References

Chapter 2

Early life stress affects the miRNA cargo of epididymal extracellular vesicles in mouse

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Contributions: *I performed data analysis with Anar Alshanbayeva, generated figures with Anar Alshanbayeva, helped Anar Alshanbayeva in writing the manuscript, and revised manuscript with Anar Alshanbayeva.*

2.1 Abstract

Sperm RNA can be modified by environmental factors and has been implicated in communicating signals about changes in a father's environment to the offspring. The small RNA composition of sperm could be changed during its final stage of maturation in the epididymis by extracellular vesicles (EVs) released by epididymal cells. We studied the effect of exposure to stress in early postnatal life on the transcriptome of epididymal EVs using a mouse model of transgenerational transmission. We found that the small RNA signature of epididymal EVs, particularly miRNAs, is altered in adult males exposed to postnatal stress. In some cases, these miRNA changes correlate with differences in the expression of their target genes in sperm and zygotes generated from that sperm. These results suggest that stressful experiences in early life can have persistent biological effects on the male reproductive tract that may in part be responsible for the transmission of the effects of exposure to the offspring.

2.2 Summary sentence

miRNA cargo of extracellular vesicles in cauda epididymis is altered by paternal exposure to early life stress. This correlates with changes in the expression of target genes in sperm and in zygotes generated from that sperm.

2.3 Graphical Abstract

2.4 Key words

epigenetics, epididymis, epididymosomes, early life stress, extracellular vesicles, miRNAs, sperm.

2.5 Introduction

2.6 Results

- 2.6.1 Isolation of cauda epididymosomes confirmed by several methods
- 2.6.2 The number and size of epididymosomes in adult males are not altered by postnatal stress
- 2.6.3 miRNAs are persistently altered by postnatal stress in cauda epididymosomes
- 2.6.4 mRNA targets of miRNAs from cauda epididymosomes are altered by postnatal stress in sperm and in zygotes

2.7 Discussion

2.10 Authors' contributions

AA and IMM conceived and designed the study. FM and MR performed the MSUS breeding and collected tissue samples. AA and DKT performed data analysis and generated figures. AA wrote the manuscript with input from DKT and IMM. AA performed all experiments for RNA sequencing and all molecular analyses. IMM supervised the project and raised funds.

2.11 Grant Support

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2.13 Supplementary Figures

2.13.1 Figure 1

2.13.2 Figure 2

2.13.3 Figure 3

2.13.4 Figure 4

2.13.5 **Figure 5**

2.13.6 Figure 6

2.14 Supplementary Tables

2.14.1 Table 1

2.14.2 Table 2

2.14.3 Table 3

2.14.4 Table 4

2.15 References

Chapter 3

shortRNA

3.1 Abstract

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Pipeline

3.3.2 QC

3.3.3 Annotation preparation

3.3.4 Alignment

3.3.5 Reads assignment

3.3.6 Assignment rules

3.3.7 TreeSummarizedExperiment object

3.3.8 Differential analysis

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Datasets used for testing the pipeline

3.4.2 Databases included for analyzing these data

3.4.3 result 1

3.4.4 result 2

Discussion

Conclusion

Appendix A

3.7 Datasets analyzed

Appendix B

3.8 Other manuscripts during PhD

Appendix C

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