

Sequence analysis

CDK5 in C. Elegans: Analysis of the Cyclin Dependent Kinase 5 in Caenorhabditis Elegans

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Abstract

Motivation: The UniProt Knowledgebase is a far from complete source of genomic annotation and thus requires algorithmic computation to verify and predict further annotations. This work analyses the CDK5 in C. elegans to further strengthen the UniProt Swiss-Prot annotation and find gaps in the knowledgebase.

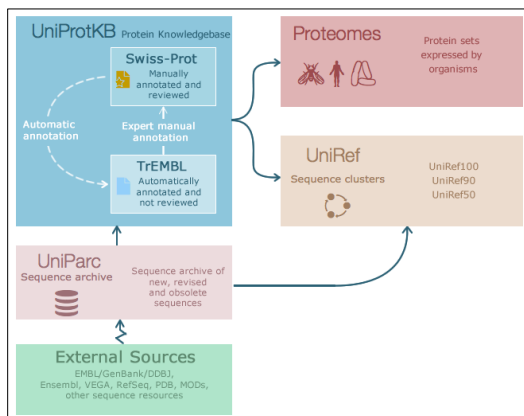
Results: Confirmed the 6-exon sequence structure of the protein that exists. CDK5 is a homogenous to many eukaryotic cells and confirmed that the CDK5 transcript belongs to the kinase-like family. Confirmed the ATP binding site at 33 and binding region between 10-18. Discovered potential ATP binding site at position 31 and modeled the structure of a sequence in Darwinula stevensoni (currently unannotated) that likely contains the CDK5 protein.

Availability: Daily 9am – 5:30pm.

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1 Introduction

1.1 UniProt Knowledgebase and the Relationship Between Swiss-Prot and TrEMBL



UniProt is a comprehensive, high-quality and freely accessible resource of protein information (UniProt, 2021). This includes protein sequences and functions, and protein annotations (Flegel, 2021). The UniProt protein knowledgebase (Ebi, 2021) is split up into two sets - TrEMBL and Swiss-Prot. With the TrEMBL set, the protein sequences are automatically annotated and are not reviewed and are thus not considered as the final and correct protein sequence. TrEMBL entries are made from UniParc, UniProt's archive dataset that contains most of all available protein sequences by providing a unique identifier to that sequence. Furthermore, UniParc, is derived from many external sources such as Ensembl, WormBase and EMBL-Bank. Finally, the other set that makes up UniProt is Swiss-Prot. The entries are manually annotated and are reviewed by biocurators (SCQ, 2021) to achieve protein sequences with low redundancy and as a result of this, Swiss-Prot tends to be a more reliable source of a proteins true sequence.

Due to this discrepancy between Swiss-Prot and TrEMBL databases, one cannot assume that the sequences are accurate or complete, even if they have been annotated by an expert. It is therefore the job of the bioinformatician to check, where necessary, the accuracy of the proteins, to analyze them to find any potential gaps in genomic data in the current knowledge base.

Fig. 1. UniProt Knowledgebase Structure. This shows the breakdown and relations of protein resources. Source: <https://www.uniprot.org/help/about>

1.2 Protein Sequences

Five proteins were assigned for potential analysis. CDK5_CAEEL <https://www.uniprot.org/uniprot/G5ECH7> belongs to Caenorhabditis elegans (C. elegans) and is involved in several motor neurons and promotes the polarized trafficking of synaptic vesicles and dense core vesicles (DCV). The UniProt annotation is reviewed, 5-star with experimental evidence at protein level. It features in 18 publications. Also, there exists a homologue in homo sapiens with 228 publications.

128UP_DROME <https://www.uniprot.org/uniprot/P32234> belongs to Drosophila melanogaster (Fruit fly) and interacts with the gene Deformed (Dfd) to be activated in maxillary segment cells. The UniProt status is reviewed, with a 3-star annotation score with experimental evidence at transcript level. It features in 29 publications.

BACC_BACIU <https://www.uniprot.org/uniprot/Q8KWT4> belongs to the Gram-positive Bacillus subtilis bacterium and is responsible partly for the biosynthesis of bacilysin in the bacABCDEFG operon. The UniProt status is as reviewed, an annotation score of 2-star with experimental evidence at protein level. It features in one publication.

A0A4S5AQX5_ECOLI <https://www.uniprot.org/uniprot/A0A4S5AQX5> for Escherichia coli (E. coli) strain K12 is a left amino acid, and its function is related to N-acetyltransferase activity. The UniProt summary is unreviewed, 1-star annotation score with the protein predicted. This sequence is derived from an EMBL/GenBank/DBJ whole genome shotgun (WGS) entry. It features in one publication.

A0A5S9YCB0_ARATH <https://www.uniprot.org/uniprot/A0A5S9YCB0> is an uncharacterised protein for Arabidopsis thaliana (Mouse-ear cress) and its function is unknown. It has the UniProt annotation status of 1-star with protein predicted. It features in one publication.

Clearly the two of most interest because of more features in publications and being more richly annotated on UniProt were CDK5_CAEEL and 128UP_DROME. Due to the better UniProt annotation of CDK5_CAEEL this was picked. Specifically, being 5-star reviewed with experimental evidence at the protein level compared to 3-star at experimental evidence at transcript level of 128UP_DROME as this offers more chance to compare and verify the results of UniProt.

1.3 CDK5 in C. Elegans UniProt Annotations that Currently Exist



Fig. 1. UniProt feature view of CDK5 C. elegans

It is of length 292 aa. UniProt has annotated binding sites: 33 for ATP, 126 for proton acceptor, 131 for magnesium and 144 also for magnesium. There is also a nucleotide binding region between 10-18 for ATP. The

molecular function is identified as of the kinase type. Mutagenesis sites are identified at position 33 as K → T and 144 as D → N.

2 Methods

The methods were started with the assumption that the UniProt annotation was not known. This way, this work could independently predict gene annotations to enable the comparison with these results and those from the UniProt team.

2.1 Gene Prediction

Used the Ensembl gene summary: https://metazoa.ensembl.org/Caenorhabditis_elegans/Gene/Summary?db=core;g=WB_Gene00000407;r=III:13464687-13466390;t=T27E9.3.1 reference to https://worm-base.org/species/c_elegans/gene/WBGene00000407 to get the gene transcripts. The CDK5 gene has 1 transcript (ID: T27E9.3.1) with 6 exons with 1,105 base pairs and 292 amino acids.

Table 1. Ensembl Export

Gene to export	Output	Strand	5' Flanking sequence	3' Flanking sequence
WBGene00000407 (cdk-5)	FASTA sequence	Feature Strand	1000	1000

Parameters for exporting the gene. Saved as .txt file.

This exported .txt was inputted to FGENESH (<http://linux1.softberry.com/organism>) specific gene-finding parameter set to C. elegans and advanced options left as default: only print mRNA sequences as true.

BLAST on UniProt (<https://www.uniprot.org/blast/>) was used to compare the predicted proteins from FGENESH.

Table 2. BLAST parameters for identifying FGENESH similarity

Data-base	E-Threshold	Matrix	Filtering	Gapped	Hits
Uni-ProtKB	10	Auto	None	Yes	250

Next geneid 1.2 hosted on Web Server 2005 at genome.crg.es (<https://genome.crg.es/geneid.html>) was used for an alternative gene prediction result. The same sequence from Table 1. Was given to the following geneid parameter setup.

Table 3. Geneid parameters

Organism	Prediction mode	DNA strands	Output format
C. elegans	Normal	Forward and Reverse	GFF

Input was FASTA format derived from Table 1.

2.2 Homologues

NCBI-BLASTp (<https://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi>) was used to search protein sequence databases to identify where the sequence appears in other species and with what similarity. The FASTA format was taken of the CDK5 protein from UniProt and entered into the BLASTp algorithm.

Table 4. BLASTp general parameters for identifying homologs

Data-base	Max Target Sequences	Expect Threshold	Word Size	Max Matches
Non-redundant	100	0.05	6	0

BLASTp Tree View was used to visualize the most similar sequences returned by BLASTp within a distance of 0.15 using the fast tree method with Kimura distance.

2.3 Guide Trees and Phylogenetic Trees

EBI Clustal-Omega (<https://www.ebi.ac.uk/Tools/msa/clustalo/>) was used with the sequences with the top 9 most similar sequences from BLASTp. Output format was set as ClustalW with character counts. 9 was chosen to match the tree view results within 0.15 distance.

2.4 Gene Function

BLASTp multiple sequence alignment with same parameters as 2.2 Homologues section. The protein classification graphical summary was used with concise mode.

NsitePred (<http://biomine.cs.vcu.edu/servers/NsitePred/>) was used to search multiple sequences for their nucleotide binding sites to then compare results to the BLASTp graphical representation and UniProt annotation. The top 5 similar sequences (Maximum number NsitePred allowed) from the BLASTp result were given as FASTA format. This is the only parameter the NsitePred takes.

MOTIF Search (<https://www.genome.jp/tools/motif/>) with the 100 most similar sequences identified by BLASTp with the following parameters.

Table 5. MOTIF Search input parameters

Data-base	Cut-off score	Skip entries with SKIP-FLAG	Skip unspecific profiles
Pfam	1.0	True	True

2.5 Protein Structure Prediction

PSIPRED GenTHREADER (<http://bioinf.cs.ucl.ac.uk/psipred/>) with the CDK5_CAEEL sequence data in FASTA format with default parameter settings. Visualized and aligned with PyMOL2 (<https://pymol.org/2/>). ChimeraX (<https://www.rbvi.ucsf.edu/chimerax/>) was used with the seqview tool to inspect the number of helix and strand sections in the predicted structures. ChimeraX atom view to show nucleotide structure.

Modeler v10.1 on Windows 10 was used to align and model the *Darwinula stvensoni* (seed shrimp) homologous sequence. ChainA from the <https://www.rcsb.org/structure/3o0g> entry (PDB ID: 3o0g) for CDK5 *C. elegans* real protein model. Visualized, aligned and chain A selected with PyMOL2.

3 Results

3.1 Gene Prediction

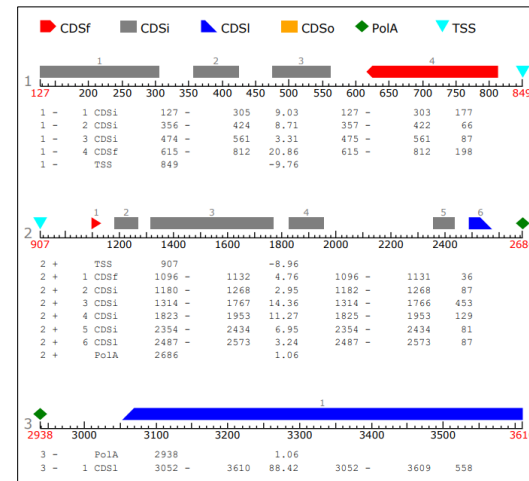


Fig. 2. FGENESH predicted genes.

The results of FGENESH predicted in total 3 genes with 11 exons. The first gene has 3 internal exons: 127-305, 356-424, 474-561. It also has an exon with a start codon at the end: 615-812. The second gene has 4 internal exons: 1180-1268, 1314-1767, 1823-1953, 2354-2434. It also has the starting and ending exons: 1096-1132 and 2487-2573 respectively and in the correct order. The third gene has only a last coding segment: 3052-3610.

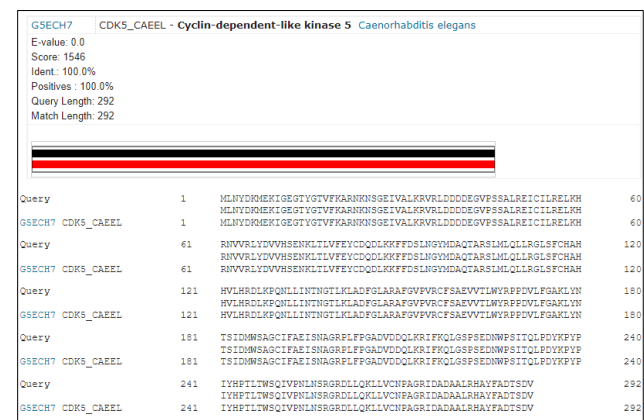


Fig. 3. UniProt BLAST result with predicted protein sequence from FGENESH.

The predicted protein (number two in Fig. 2) by FGENESH aligns with an identicalness score of 100% to the Swiss-Prot annotated CDK5 protein to that in UniProt. The length is also equal in both instances at 292 giving a score of 1546.

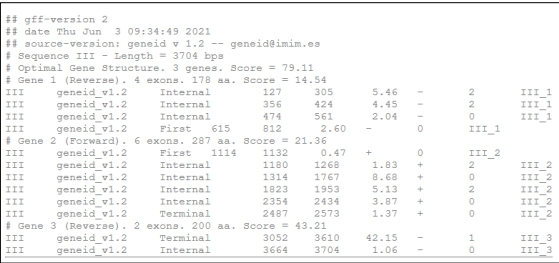


Fig. 4. Geneid GFF output.

Geneid found the similar type of gene structure with 3 genes predicted with this time 12, as opposed to 11, exons predicted. The start and stop positions have some overlap, particularly in gene 1 and gene 3, with gene 2 only have 1 identical exon as seen in exon 5. The length of gene 1 is the same as in FGENESH, however gene 2 is no longer of the correct aa of 292 but instead at 287 aa.

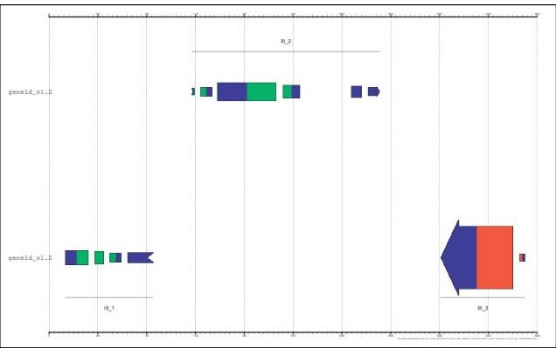


Fig. 5. Visualization output of predicted gene region from Geneid.

As can be seen in Fig. 5 the three genes. The second gene closely corresponds to that of the FGENESH except that it appears the first section has been cut off in geneid. The starting gene on FGENESH ends at 1132 whereas the geneid gene starts at 1132, suggesting that geneid missed the start position (TATA box).

3.2 Homologues

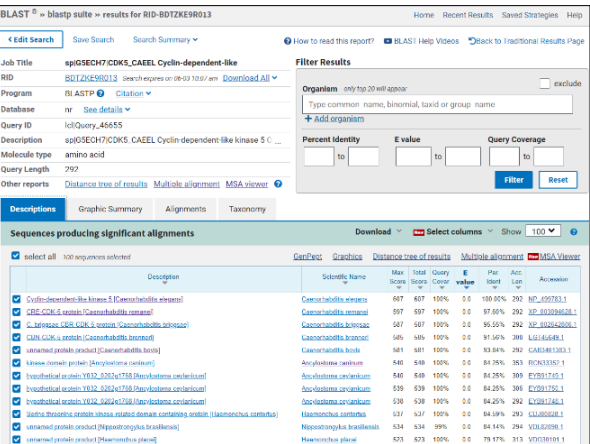


Fig. 6. NCBI-BLASTp results page.

BLASTp successfully found the corresponding entry in UniProt with 100% identity. There were many near hits with the top 100 entries being between 97.5%-75.52% similar. 94/100 top entries belonged to the animal family Ecdysozoa with the closest matches being of the Caenorhabditis genus. Furthermore, it is to point out that a match in Caenorhabditis bovis, also of length 292 is found, which is currently in the knowledge base as an “unnamed protein product” it can be said with confidence that this protein is in fact CDK5.

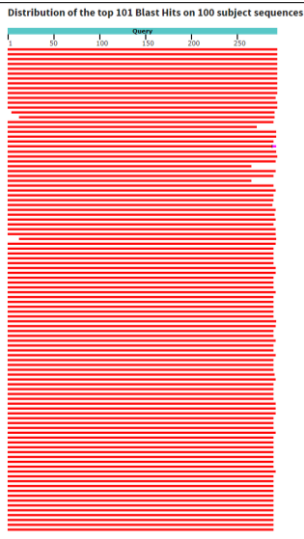


Fig. 7. Visualization of distribution of top 101 BLAST hits.

To analyze Fig. 7, it can be identified that practically every sequence here is very similar. They all share the same length except for a few, very minor inconsistencies but most line up almost perfectly.

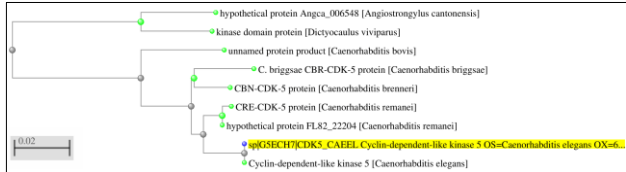
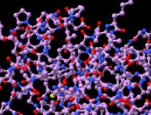


Fig. 8. BLASTp Tree View.

This results in 9 sequences within 0.15 distance of the CDK5_CAEEL highlighted in yellow. The most closely related are from Caenorhabditis genus again with also results from Dictyocaulus viviparus and Angiostrongylus cantonensis. All 9 of which are from nematodes family.



When overlayed you can see that the start and end of the sequences are closely similar, with a lot of overlap on the helices and strands. The differences are in the middle where no strand or helix occurs (coil).

Fig 23. Summary of Modeler results and respective DOPE scores.

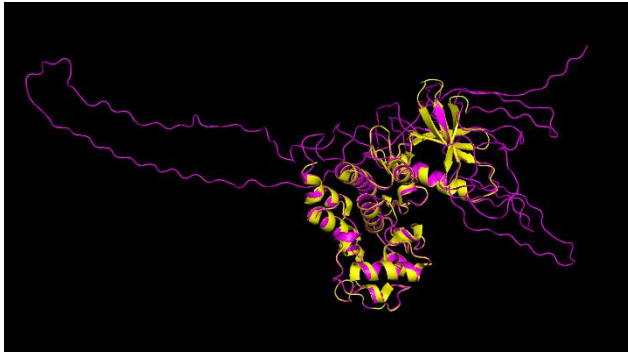


Fig 24. target_1 (pink) aligned and overlayed with real *C. elegans* model (yellow).

When visualized you can see the target_1 is much longer than the CDK5 protein as expected with a wild coil section to the left that is far different from the real. However, some part does align well. It is confident to say this is the protein kinase-like function's structure.

4 Discussion

The CDK5 gene in Wormbase/Ensembl has 1 transcript available with 6 exons. Out of the predicted FGENESH genes, gene two in Fig. 2 resembles the introns/extrons structure on Ensembl also matching with 6 exons. However, only exon 5 was matched identically. Interestingly, even though the exons were predicted different, it was the same protein sequence used in Swiss-Prot so FGENESH isolated the same protein, but predicted the exons different as identified by the UniProt BLAST algorithm. This 6 exon structure is further confirmed by geneid's predictions. Comparing to UniProt this is what we see in the ENSEMBL entry T27E9.3.1 confirming their results.

Homologues were identified by BLASTp with the closest relations been with other types of worms in the *Caenorhabditis* genus. Furthermore, a likely discovery was made that there is a gap in the *Caenorhabditis bovis* DNA, with a currently unnamed protein giving a match. UniProt's family domain relates heavily to Protein kinase domain. All of the 100 most similar sequences were very closely related, suggesting that this gene is homogenous to many eukaryotic organisms.

Gene function gave the same ATP binding site predicted at 33 as UniProt. Further, their exists a binding region between 10-18 on all homologues which is congruent to the UniProt annotation. There is also strong evidence that there is an ATP binding site at position 31 which is not currently annotated on UniProt. The general family the gene belongs to was identified as tyrosine and serine/threonine kinase which also corresponds to the Swiss-Prot annotation.

Protein structure was predicted with a p-value of $9e-10$ which is strongly related to the existing model, although this could be improved with future work. The homologue in *Darwinula stevensoni* was then modeled and compared to the existing model for CDK5 in *C. elegans*. The kinase-like section of the protein aligns well to the CDK5 protein, suggesting that this gene function was identified and modeled correctly, within error, to that of the real structure.

Overall, this work confirmed UniProt's annotation of the 33 ATP binding site. It opened possible closely related homologues that are not annotated (*Caenorhabditis bovis*). It predicted a structure of *Darwinula stevensoni* which does not currently exist in the knowledge base, which aligned with the kinase-like region of the CDK5 in *C. elegans*. The work also confirmed within reason that the structure of the *C. elegans* protein is close to the real.

Acknowledgements

Dr. Jaume Bacardit and Dr. Simon Cockell for their teaching.

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