

Interrogating RNA modifications to gain new insights into metabolic disorders

Rohit N. Kulkarni MD PhD

Session I: Precision Medicine for Chronic Metabolic Diseases

Precision Workshop I: US and Kuwait

Feb 2-4, 2025



Disclosures

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Joslin Flow Cytometry Core

Angela Wood, BSc



National Institute of
Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases



10³ INSULIN 100

No Cure yet

Diabetes:

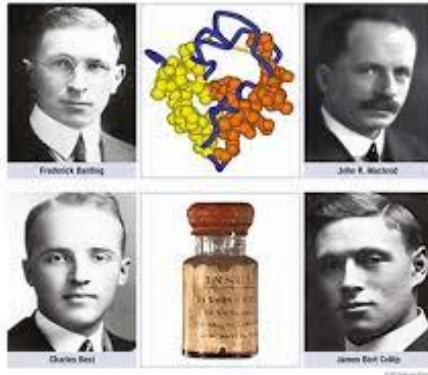
Total: 38.4 M (11.6% of U.S. pop); **8.7 % in MA**

Diagnosed: 29.7 M

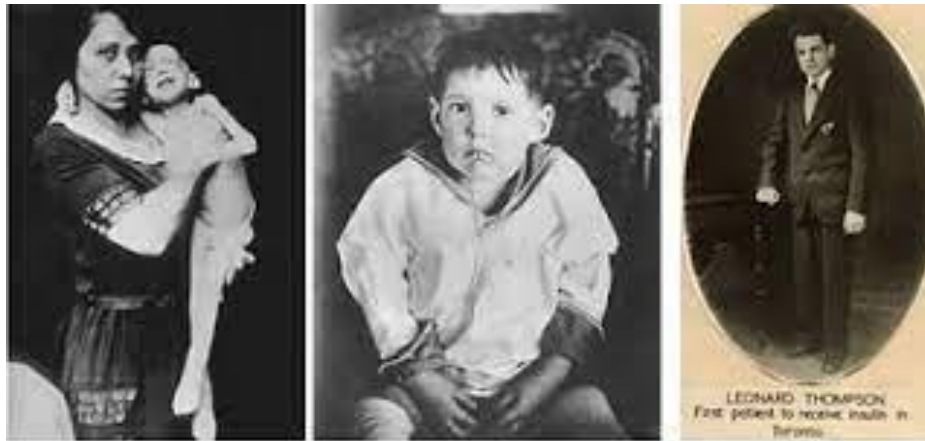
Undiagnosed: 8.7 M (22.8% of adult U.S. pop)

Pre-Diabetes:

Total: 97.6M 18 y/older (38.0% adult U.S. pop)



First patient to receive insulin

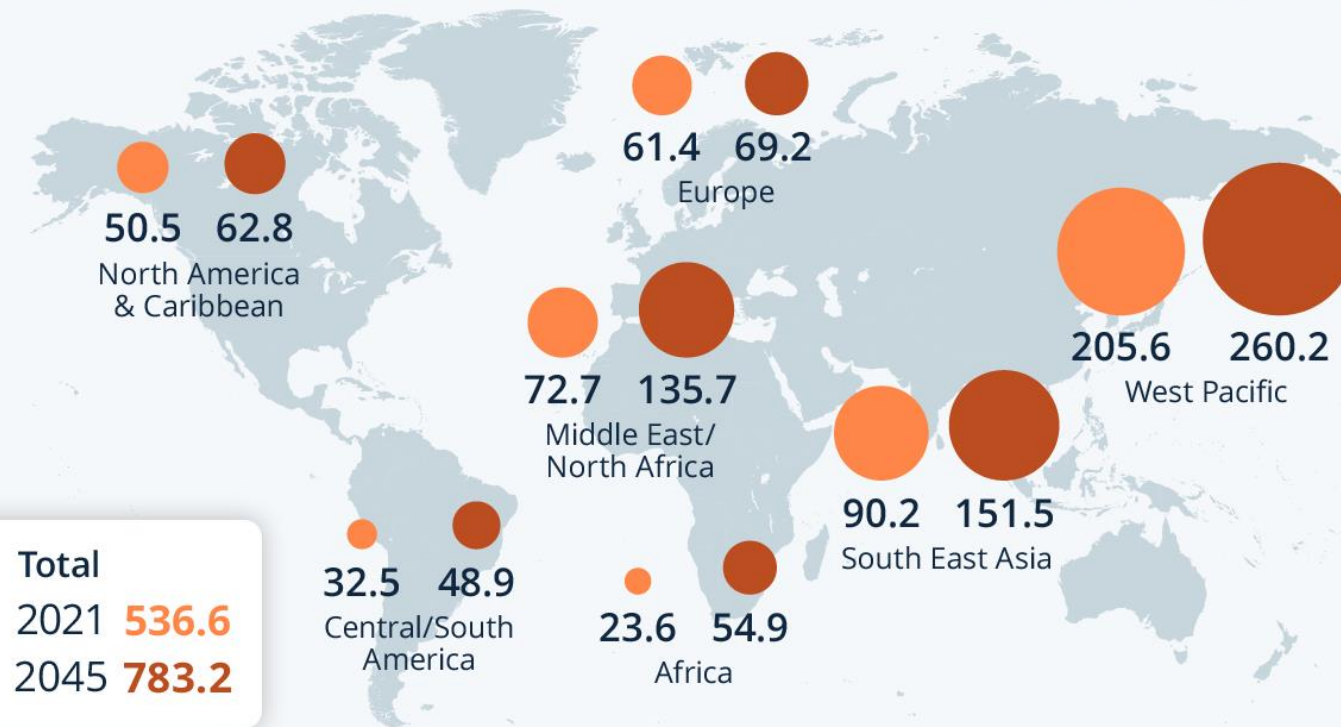


Diabetes Cases Are Climbing

Estimated number of adults* with diabetes worldwide in 2021 and 2045, in millions



● 2021 ● 2045

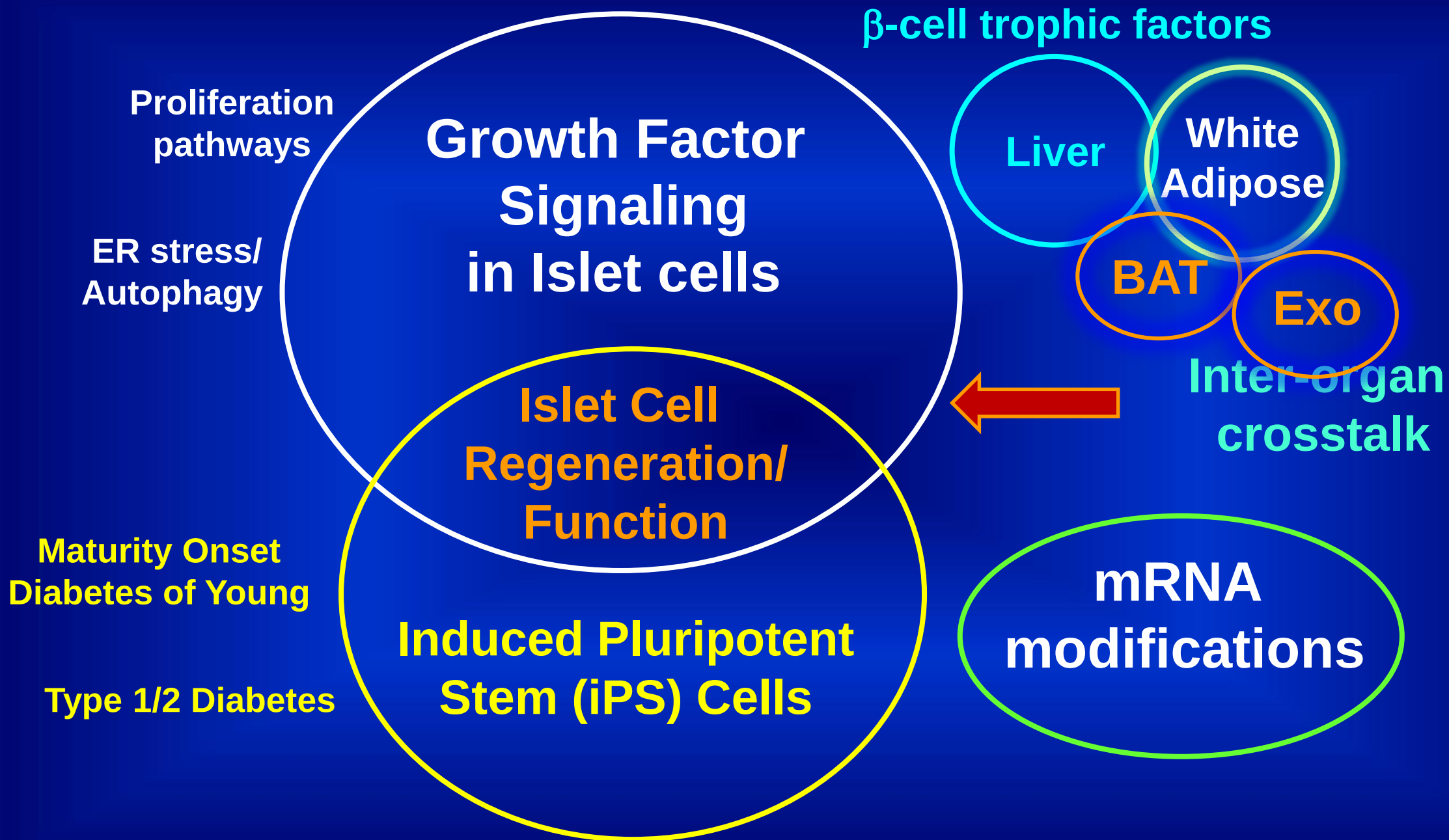


Total
2021 **536.6**
2045 **783.2**

* aged 20 to 79

Source: International Diabetes Federation





RNA Family Portrait

Double
Stranded

Circular

Ribosomal

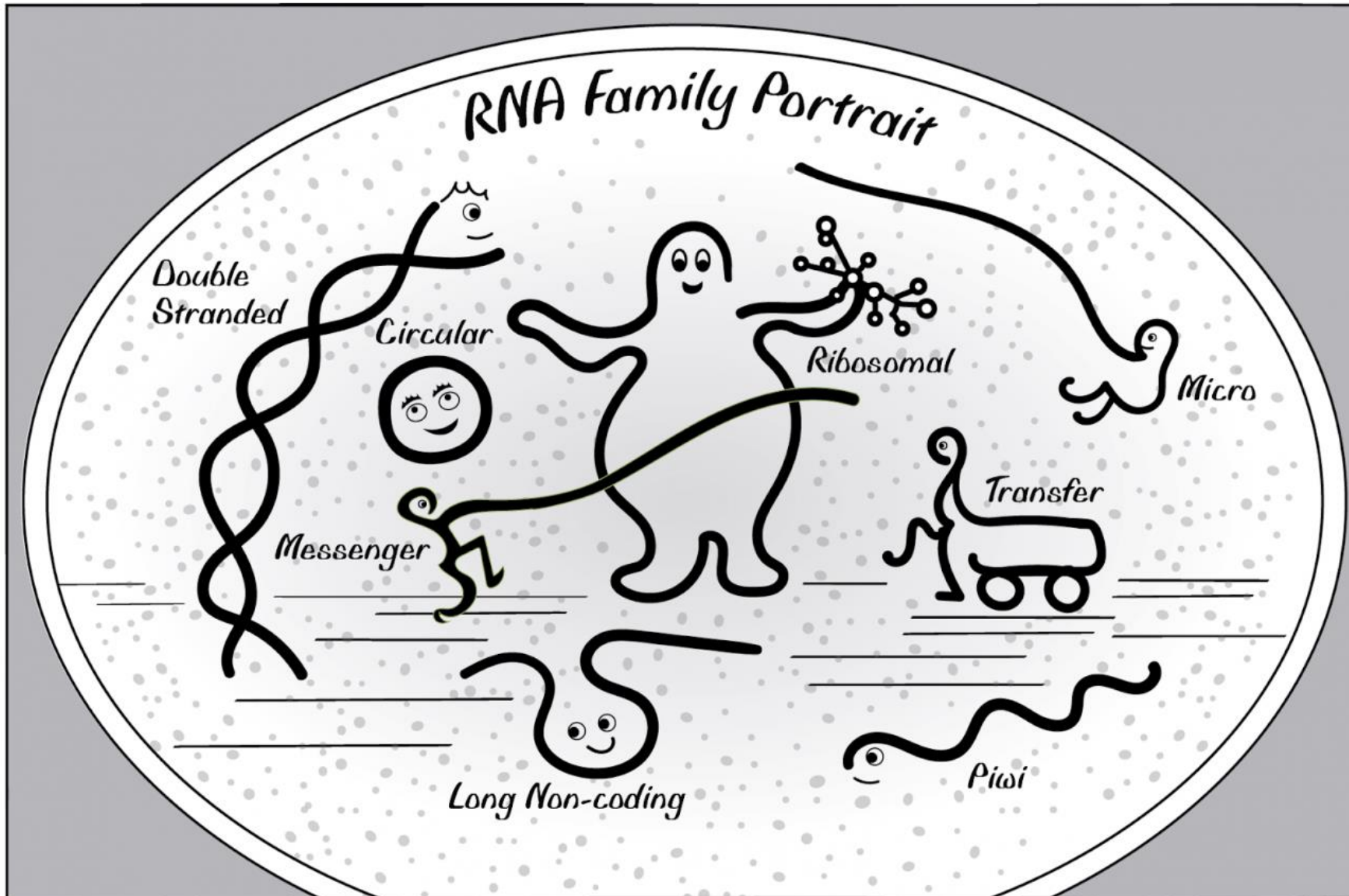
Micro

Transfer

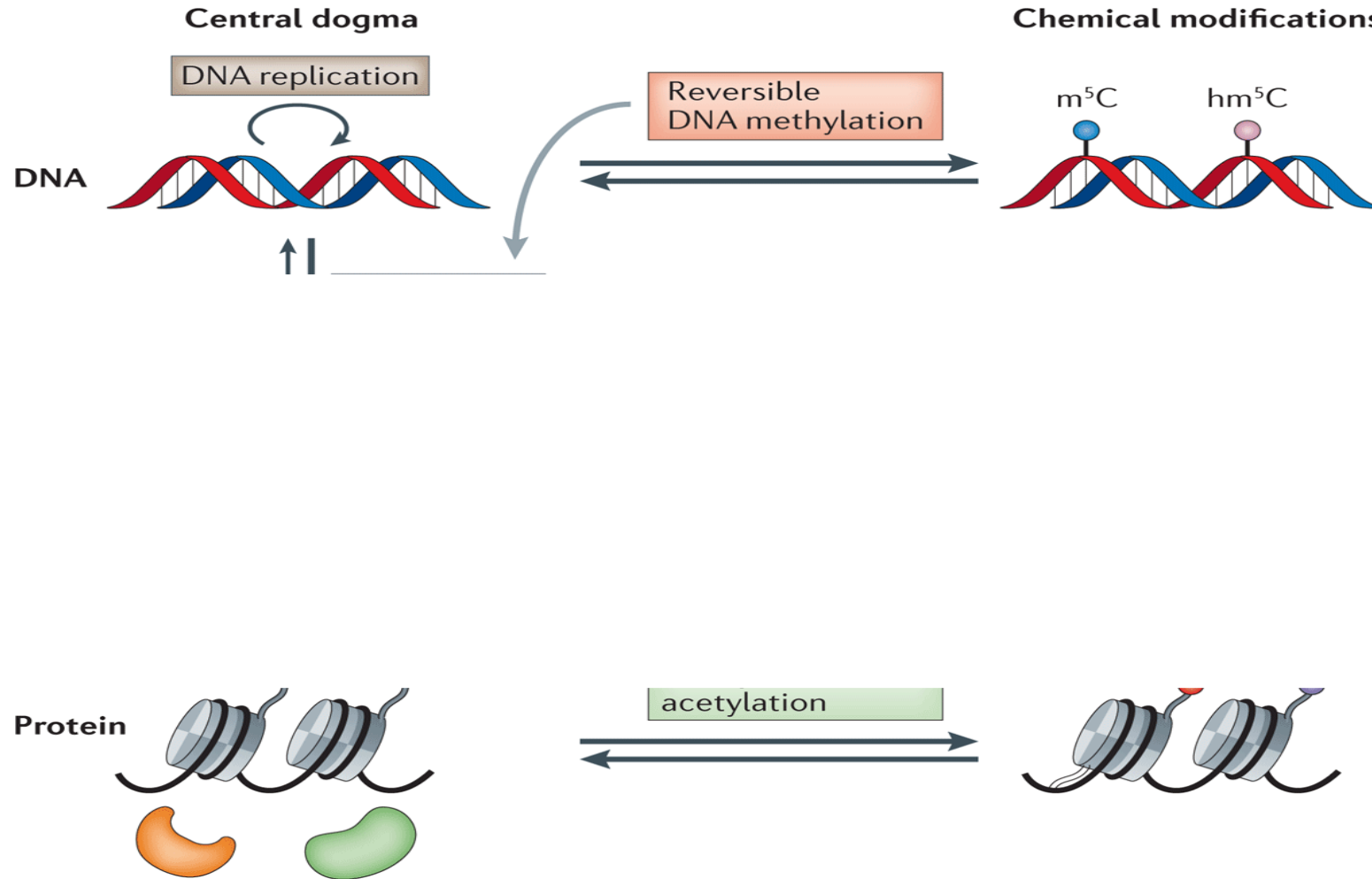
Messenger

Long Non-coding

Piwi

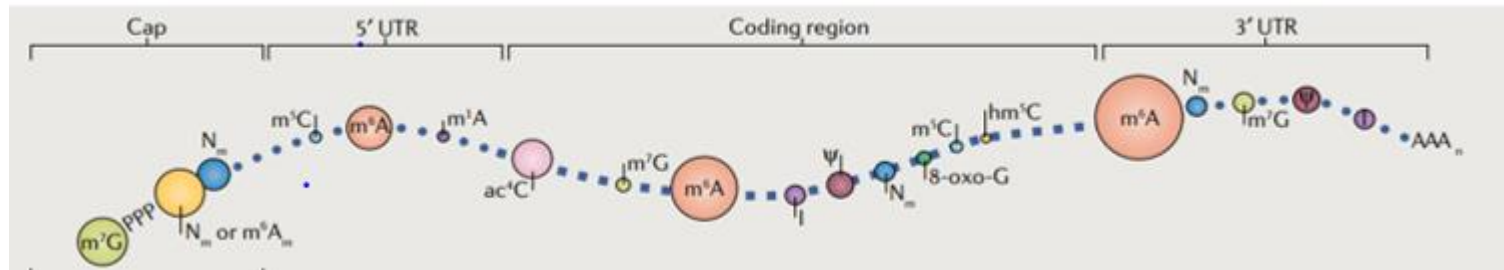


Rationale for Interrogating Dynamic RNA Modifications

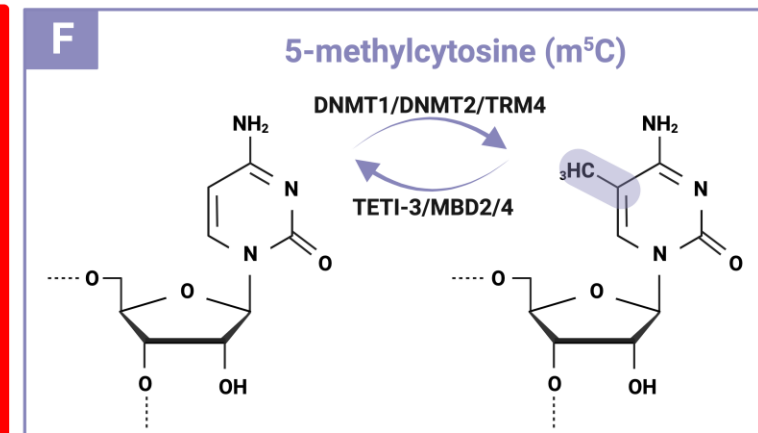
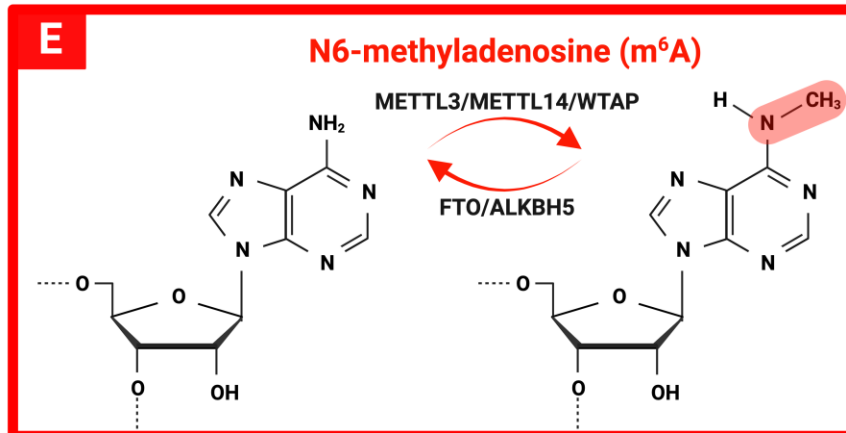
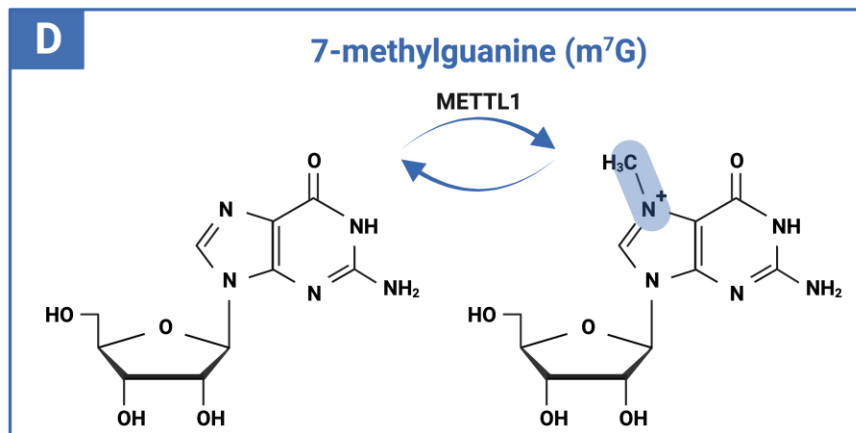
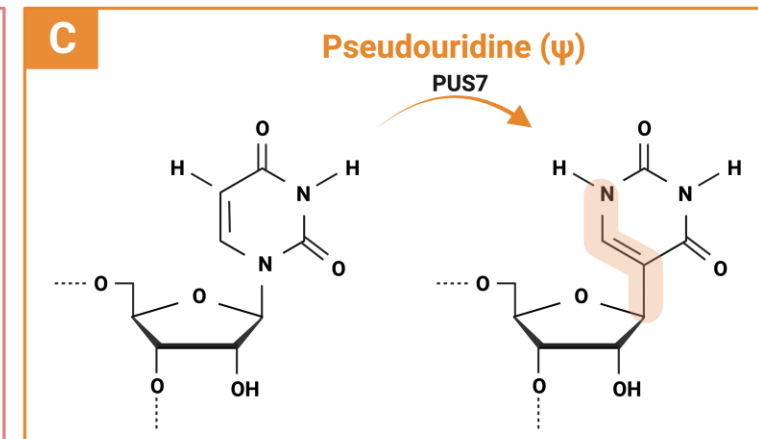
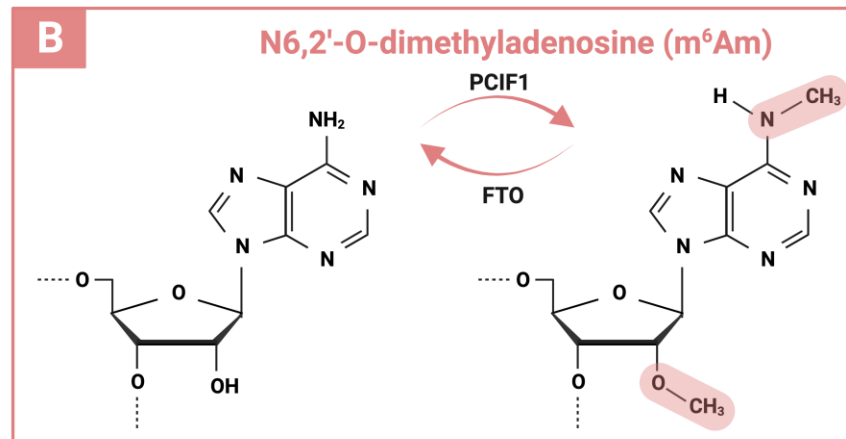
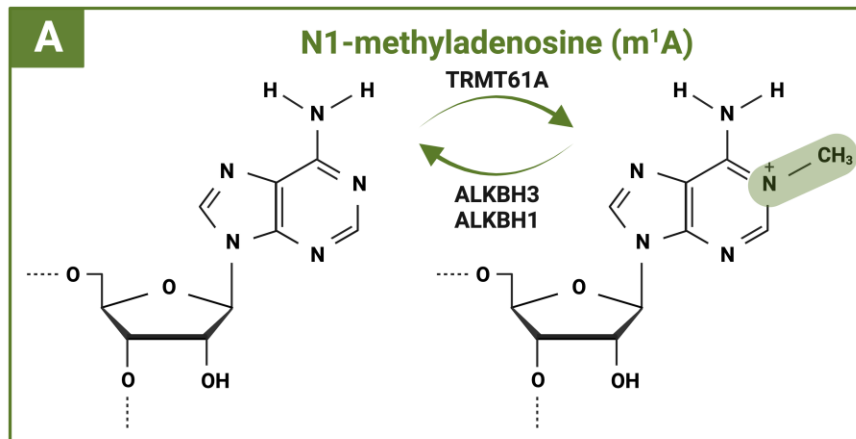


mRNA $\neq$ Protein
mRNA regulation
of protein – 40%

Most common chemical modifications in mRNAs



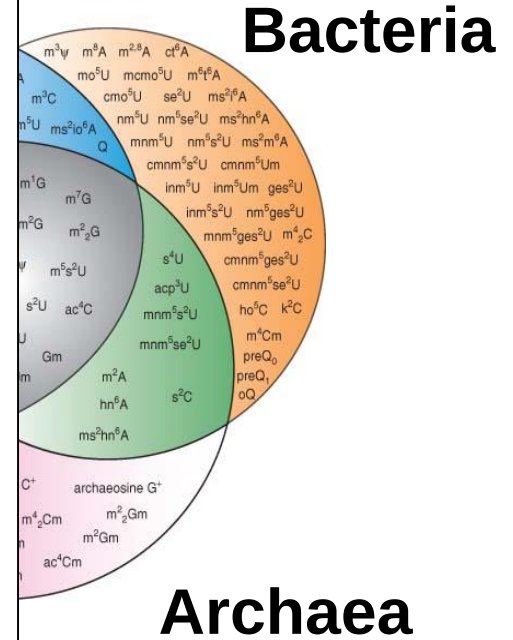
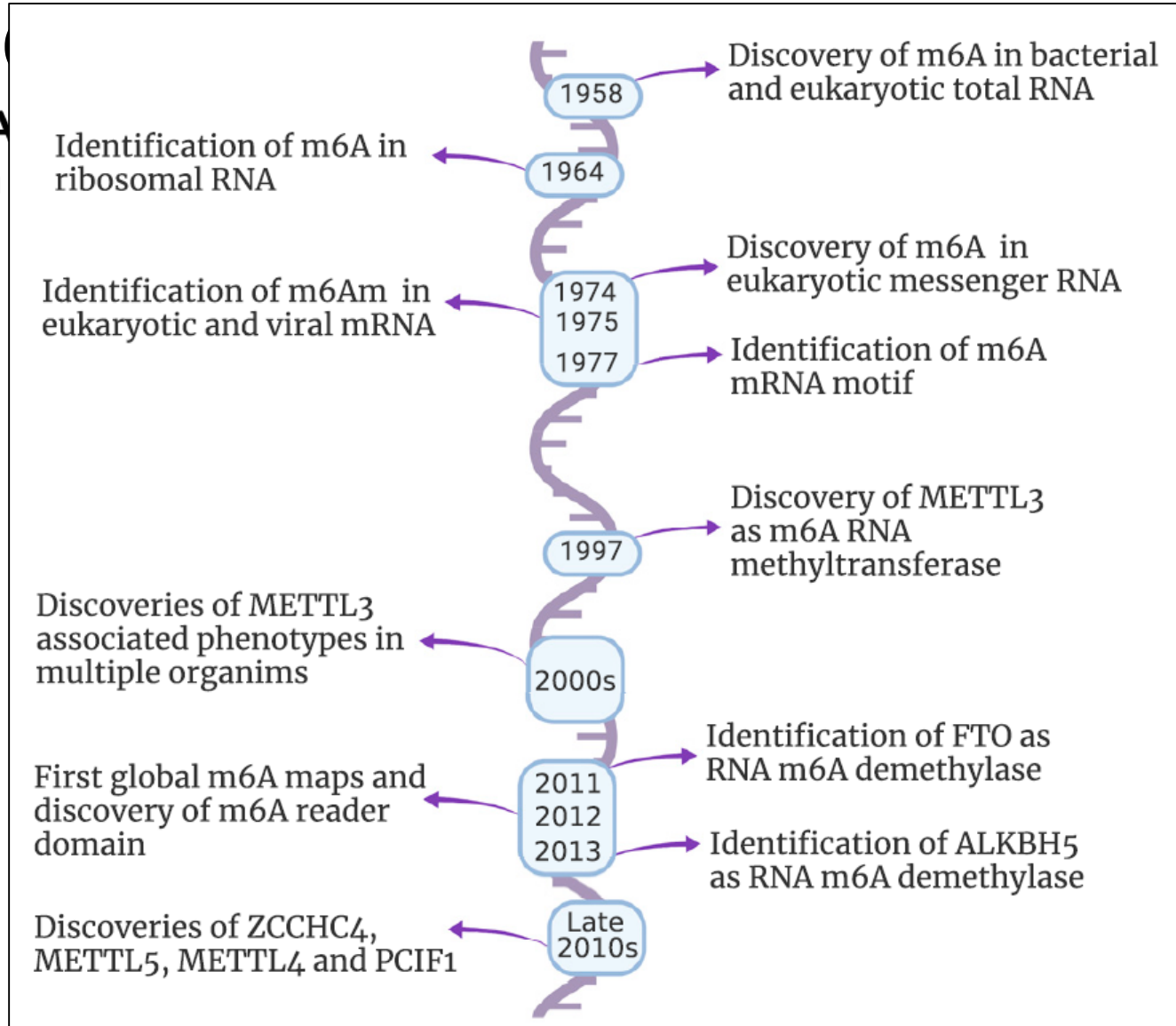
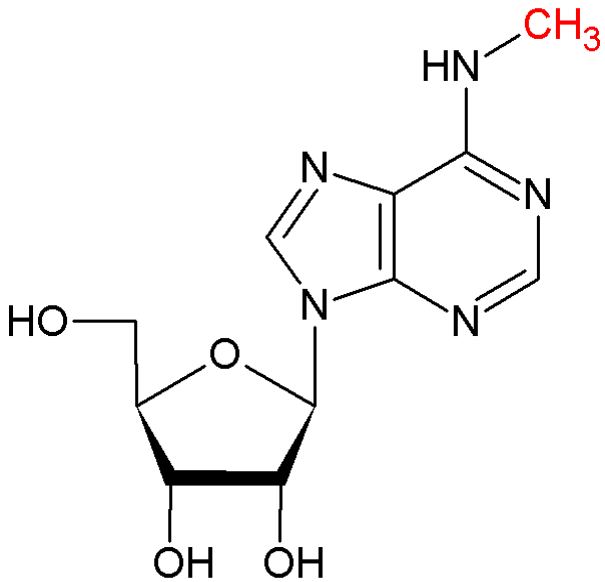
mRNA
tRNA
Long non-coding RNA
Ribosomal RNA



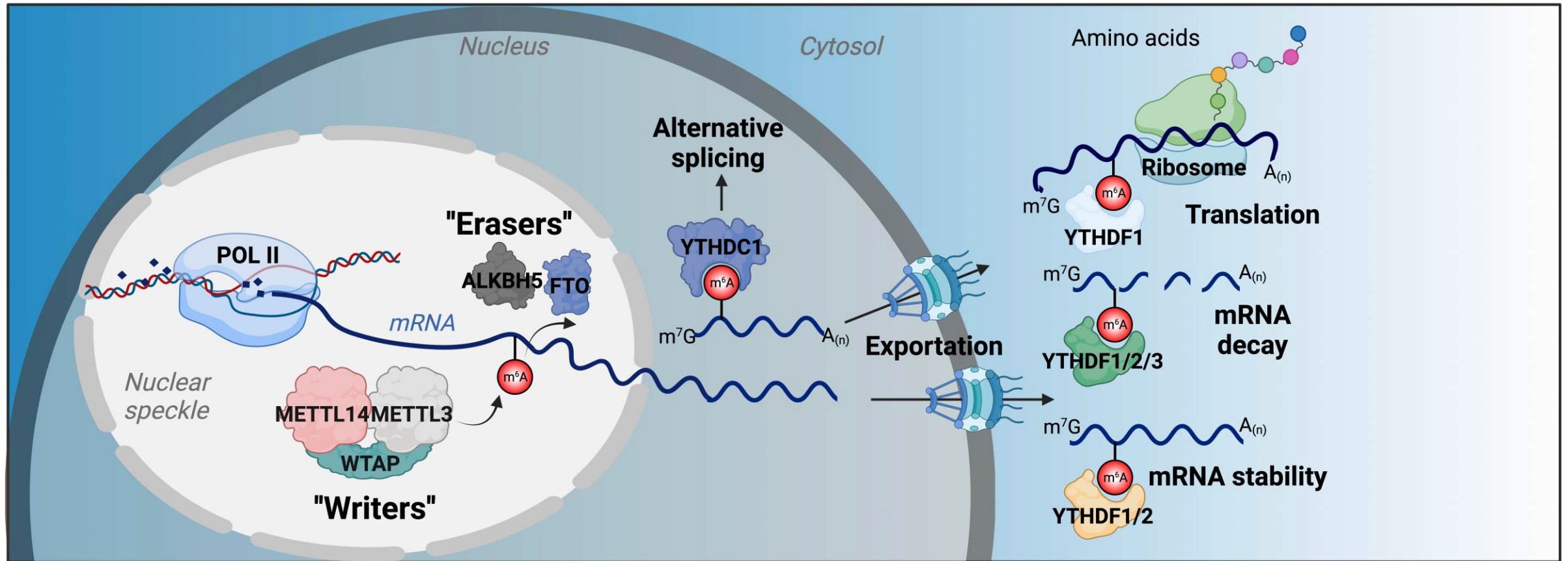
N⁶-methyladenosine - highly conserved

Discovery: Fritz Rottman

Mammals: Amount of m⁶A is 0.1-0.4% of adenines in ~ 3-5 m⁶A sites/mRNA



Methylation, demethylation and recognition of m⁶A on mRNA



Mettl3, 14: Methyl transferase like proteins; **WTAP:** Wilm's tumor-1 associating protein

Alkbh5: alkB homolog 5 demethylase; **FTO:** fat mass and obesity associated protein

YTHDC1: YTH domain containing N6-methyladenosine RNA binding protein C1

YTHDF1/2/3: YTH domain containing N6-methyladenosine RNA binding protein F1; **m⁷G:** 7-methylguanosine



Dario DeJesus PhD

K99/R00 Awardee



Sevim Kahraman PhD



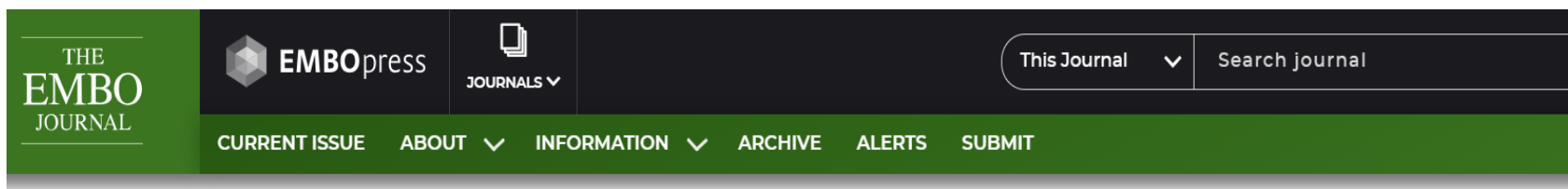
nature
metabolism

LETTERS

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s42255-019-0089-9>

m⁶A mRNA methylation regulates human β -cell biology in physiological states and in type 2 diabetes

Dario F. De Jesus^{1,5}, Zijie Zhang^{2,3,5}, Sevim Kahraman^{1,5}, Natalie K. Brown¹, Mengjie Chen⁴, Jiang Hu¹, Manoj K. Gupta¹, Chuan He^{2,3*} and Rohit N. Kulkarni^{1*}



Article | 25 September 2024 |

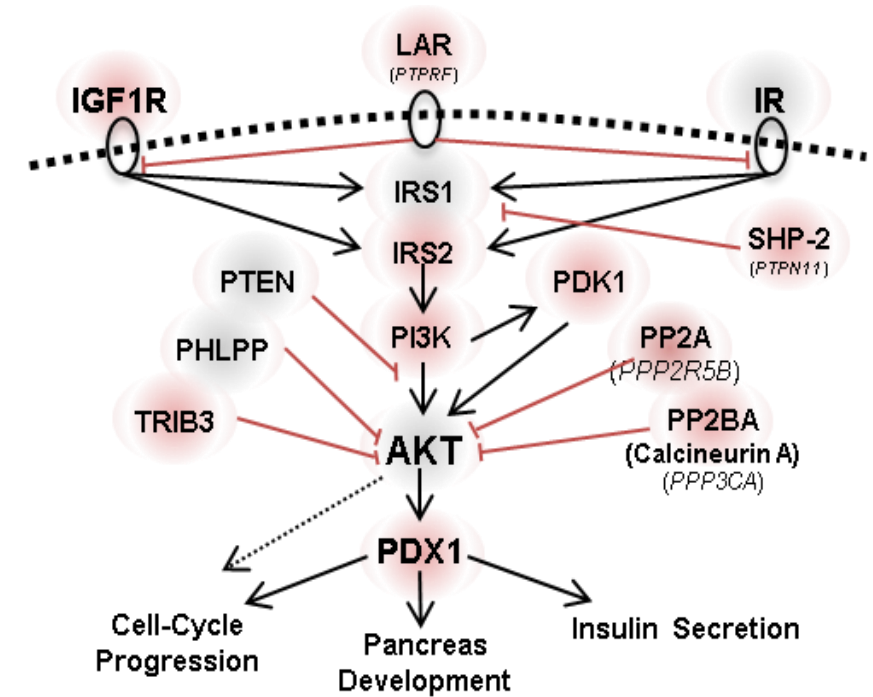
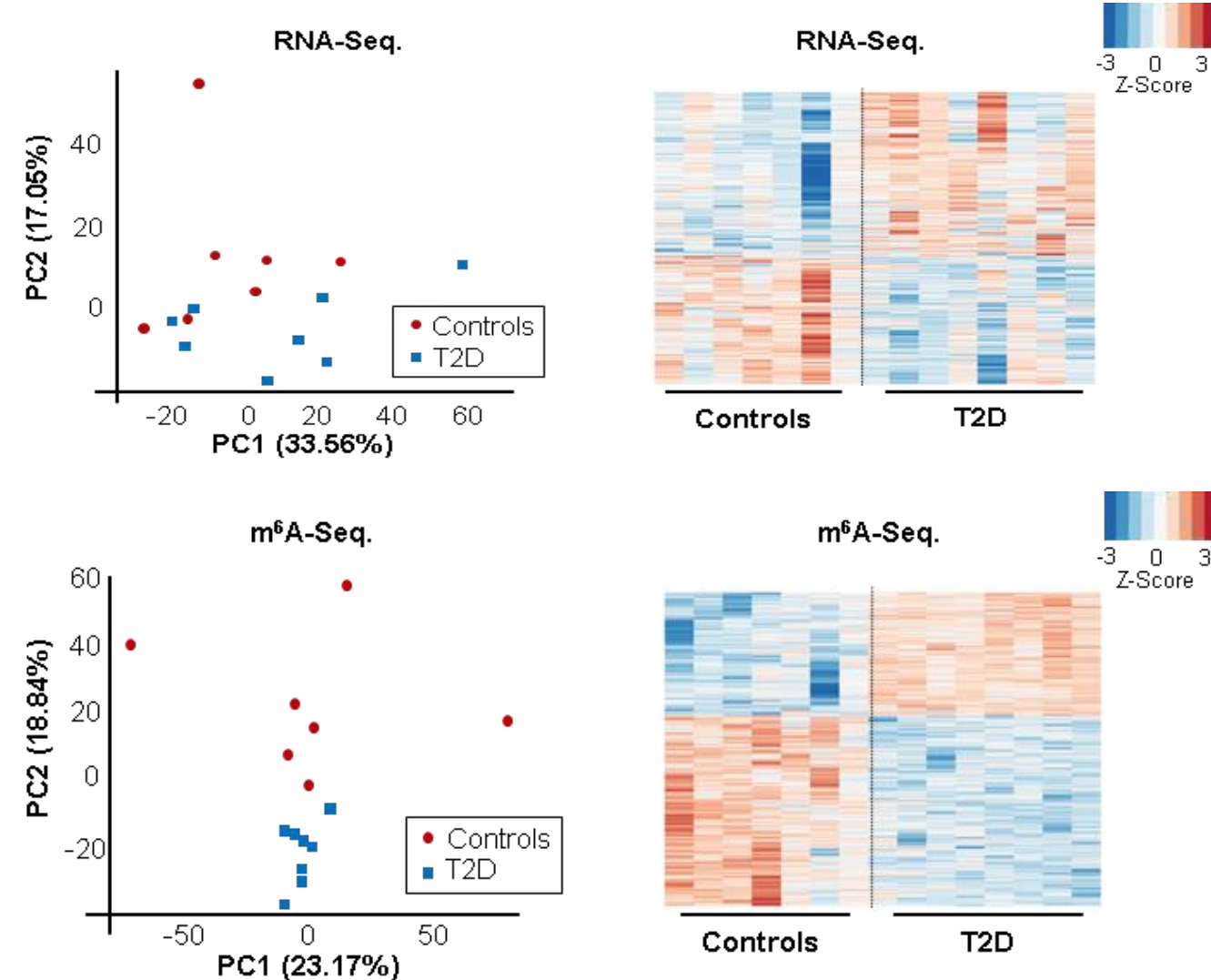
TRANSPARENT PROCESS

m⁶A mRNA methylation by METTL14 regulates early pancreatic cell differentiation

Sevim Kahraman, Dario F De Jesus^{1,5}, Jiangbo Wei, Natalie K Brown^{1,5}, Zhongyu Zou, Jiang Hu, Mehdi Pirouz^{1,5}, Richard I Gregory, Chuan He^{1,5}, and Rohit N Kulkarni^{1,5} | [AUTHOR INFORMATION](#)

EMBO J (2024) | <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44318-024-00213-2>

m⁶A Methylome Segregates Disease Status Better than Transcriptome



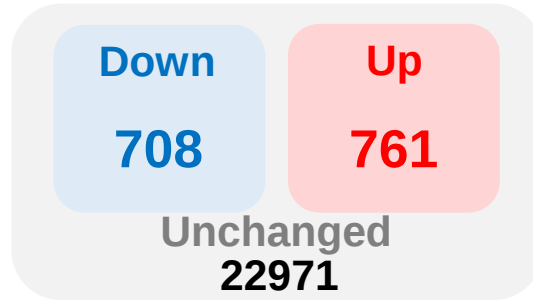
nature metabolism **LETTERS**
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s42255-019-0089-9>

m⁶A mRNA methylation regulates human β -cell biology in physiological states and in type 2 diabetes

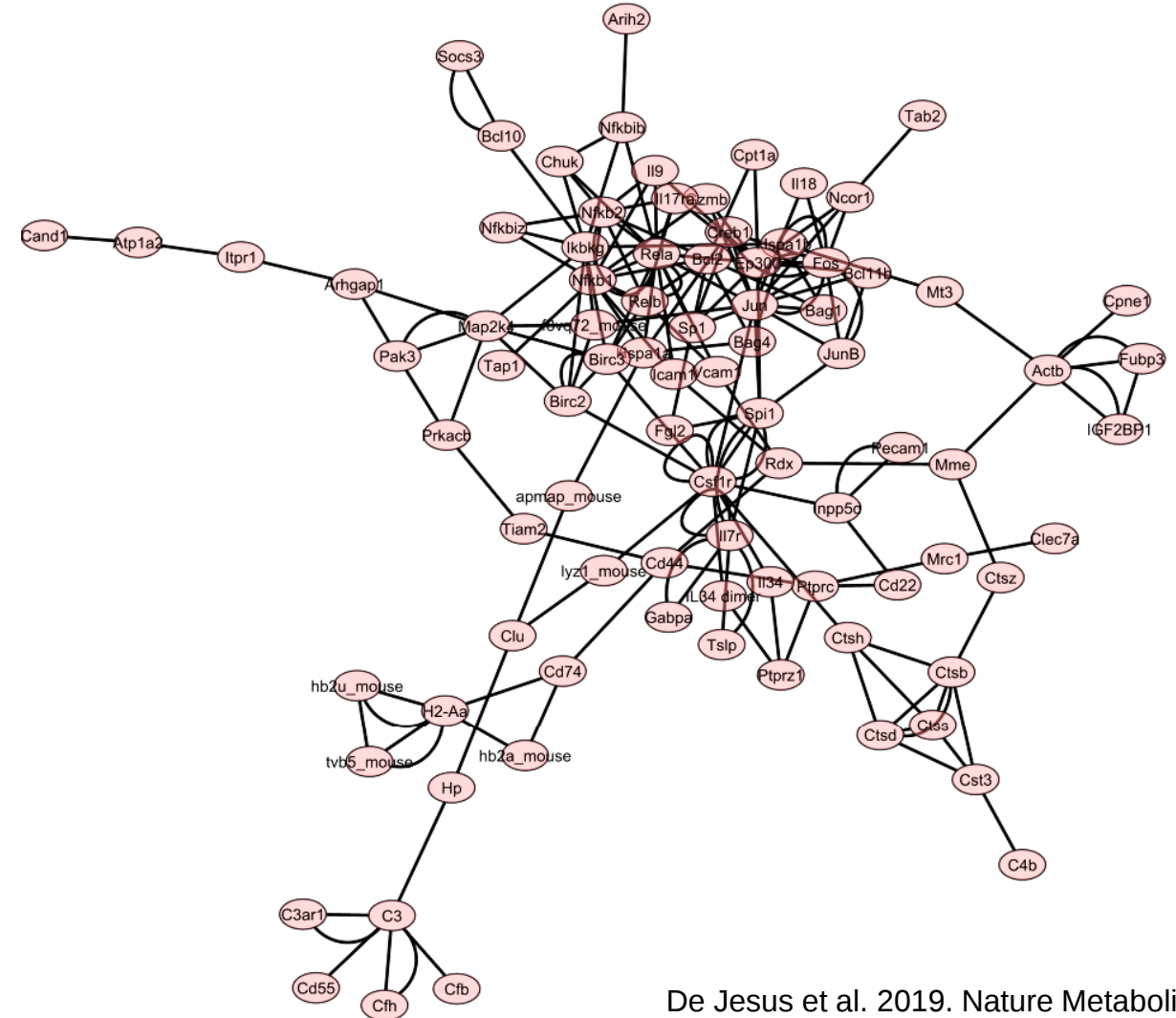
Dario F. De Jesus^{1,5}, Zijie Zhang^{2,3,5}, Sevim Kahraman^{1,5}, Natalie K. Brown¹, Mengjie Chen¹, Jiang Hu¹, Manoj K. Gupta¹, Chuan He^{2,3*} and Rohit N. Kulkarni^{1*}

Immune and Antigen-presenting Pathways are Upregulated in Mettl14 Deficient C57BL/6N Mouse β -cells

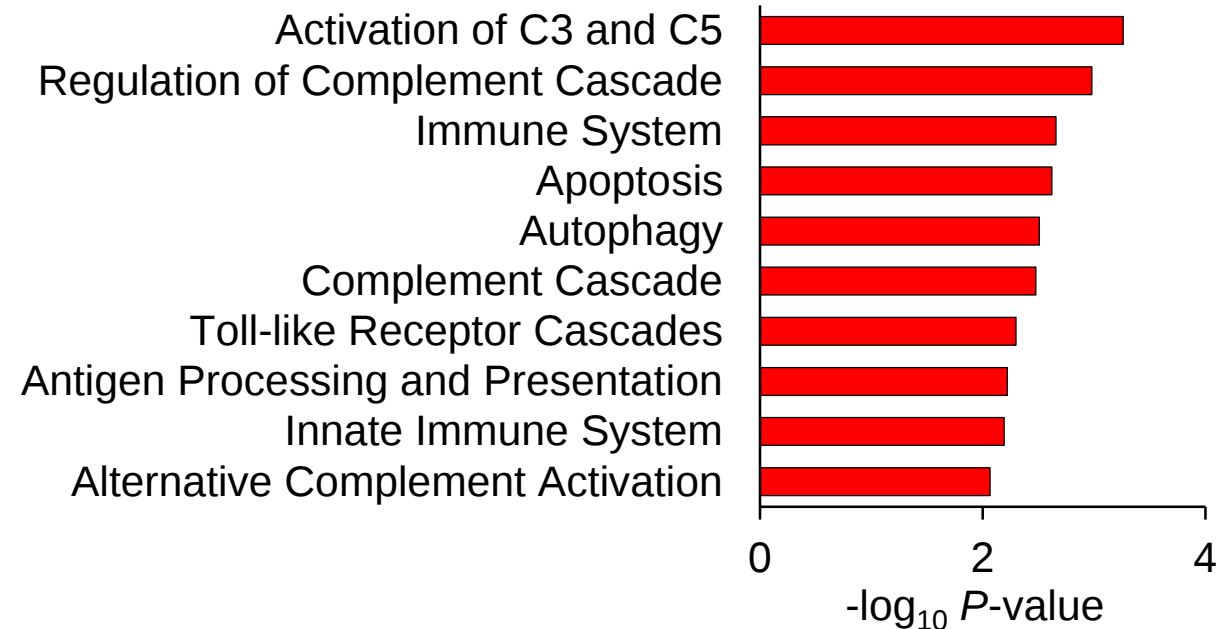
Differentially Expressed Genes
Mettl14 KO Vs Control
(FDR<0.10)



Induced Gene Network
Genes Associated with Immune System and Antigen Presentation



Enriched Pathways – **Upregulated** Genes
Mettl14 KO Vs Control



Redox regulation of m⁶A methyltransferase METTL3 in β -cells controls the innate immune response in type 1 diabetes

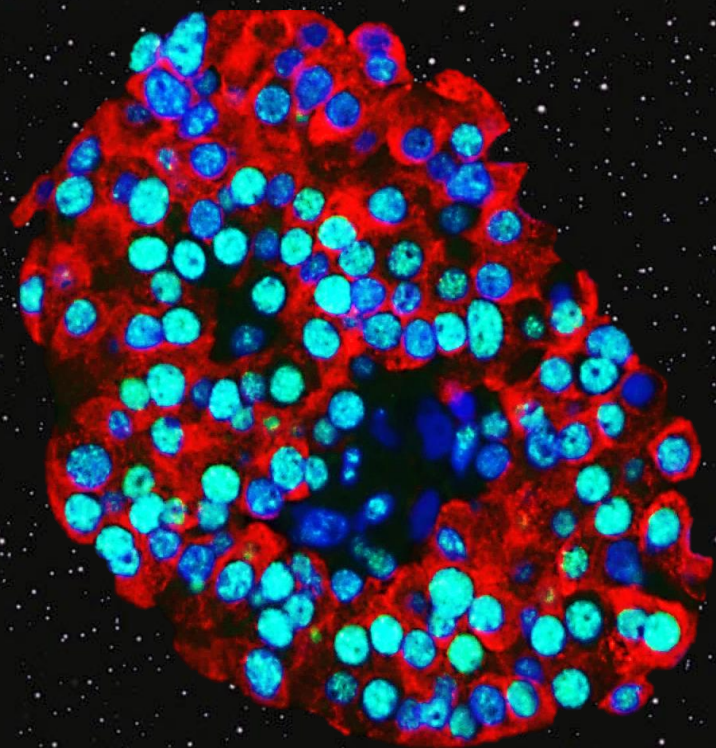
News & Views | Published: 26 February 2024

Metabolism

METTL3 restrains autoimmunity in β -cells

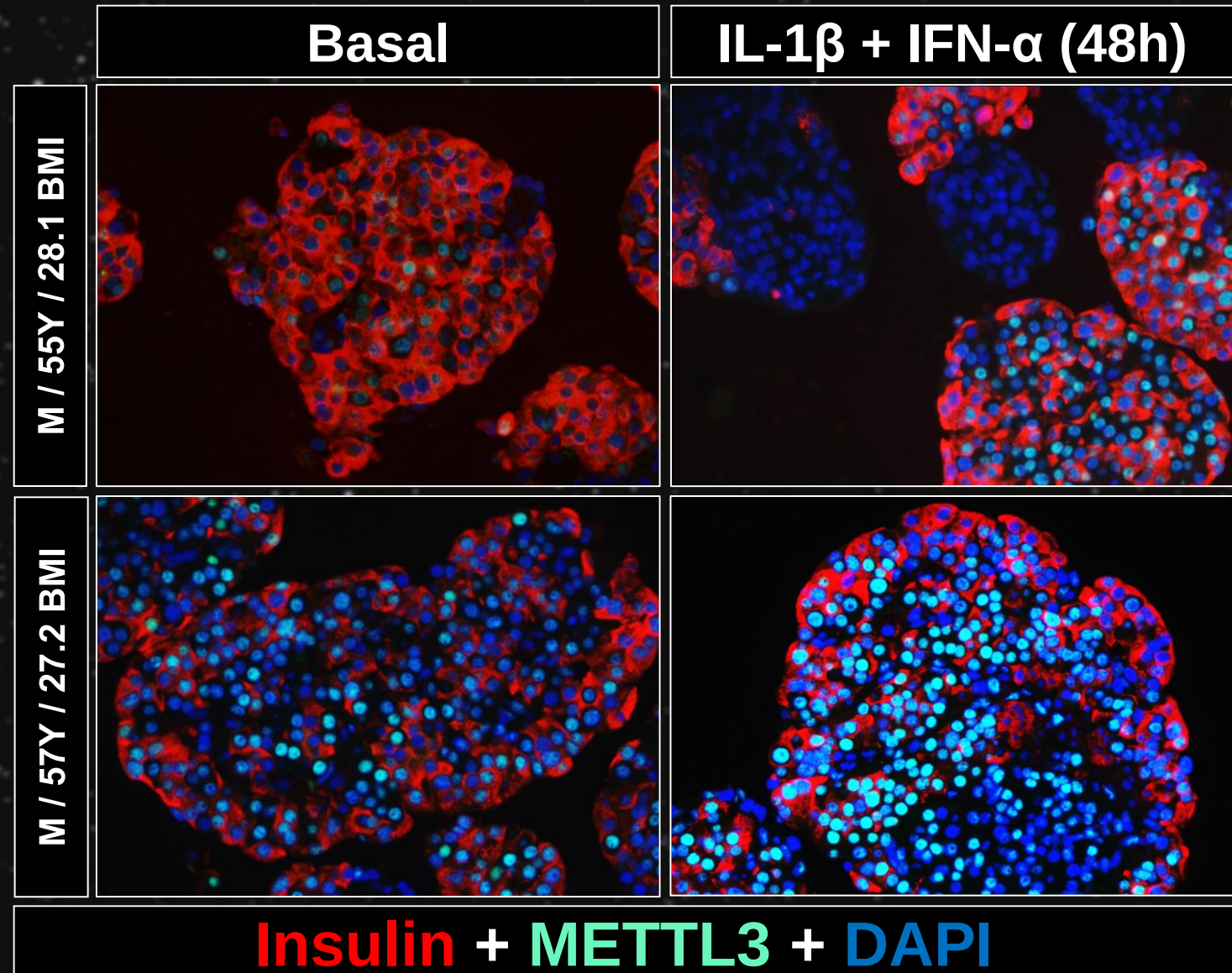
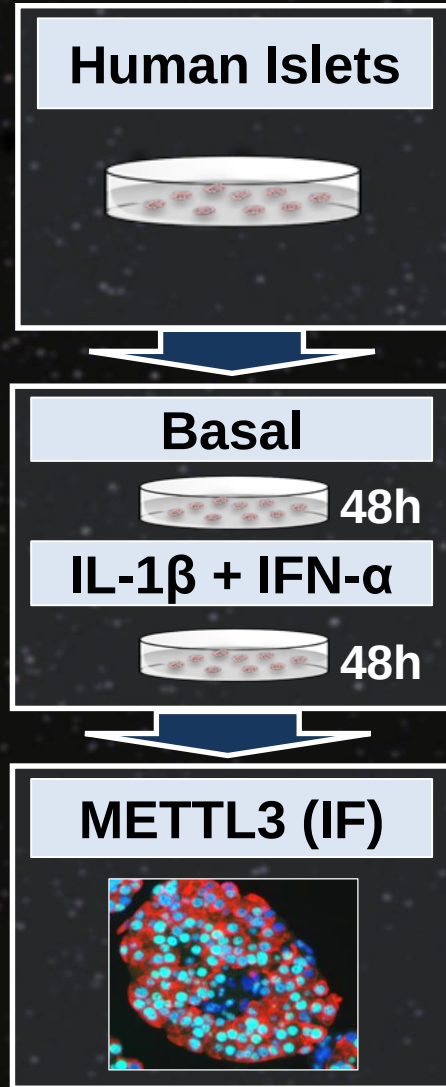
[Balasubramanian Krishnamurthy](#) & [Helen E. Thomas](#) 

[Nature Cell Biology](#) **26**, 321–322 (2024) | [Cite this article](#)

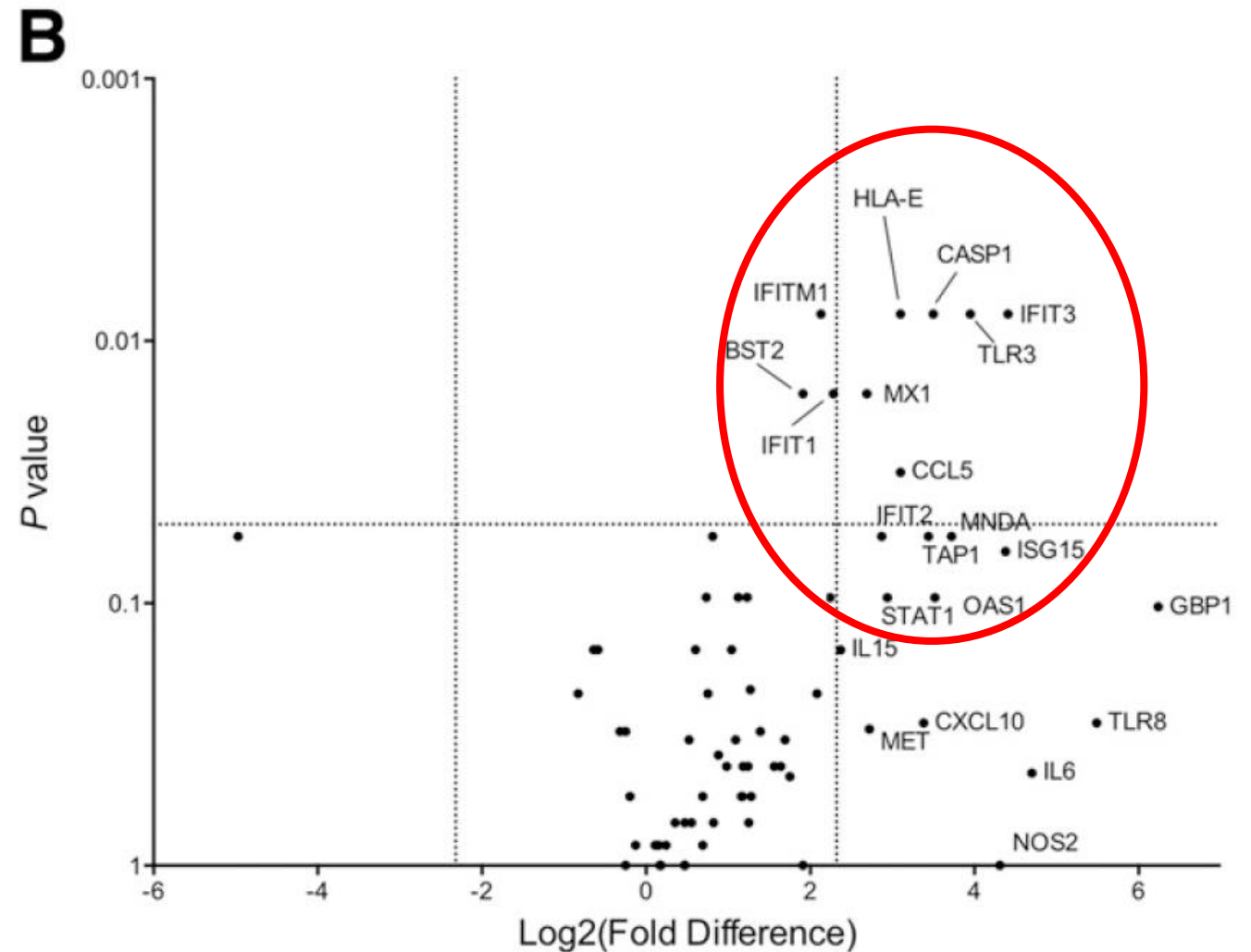
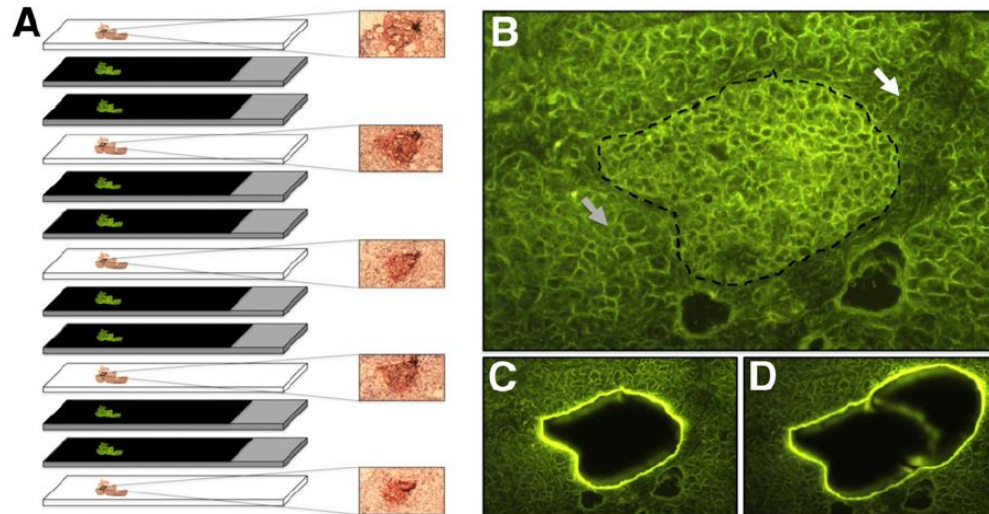


METTL3 Dynamics in T1D Progression

Proinflammatory Cytokines (IL-1 β , IFN- α) Increase METTL3 Protein Levels in Human β -Cells

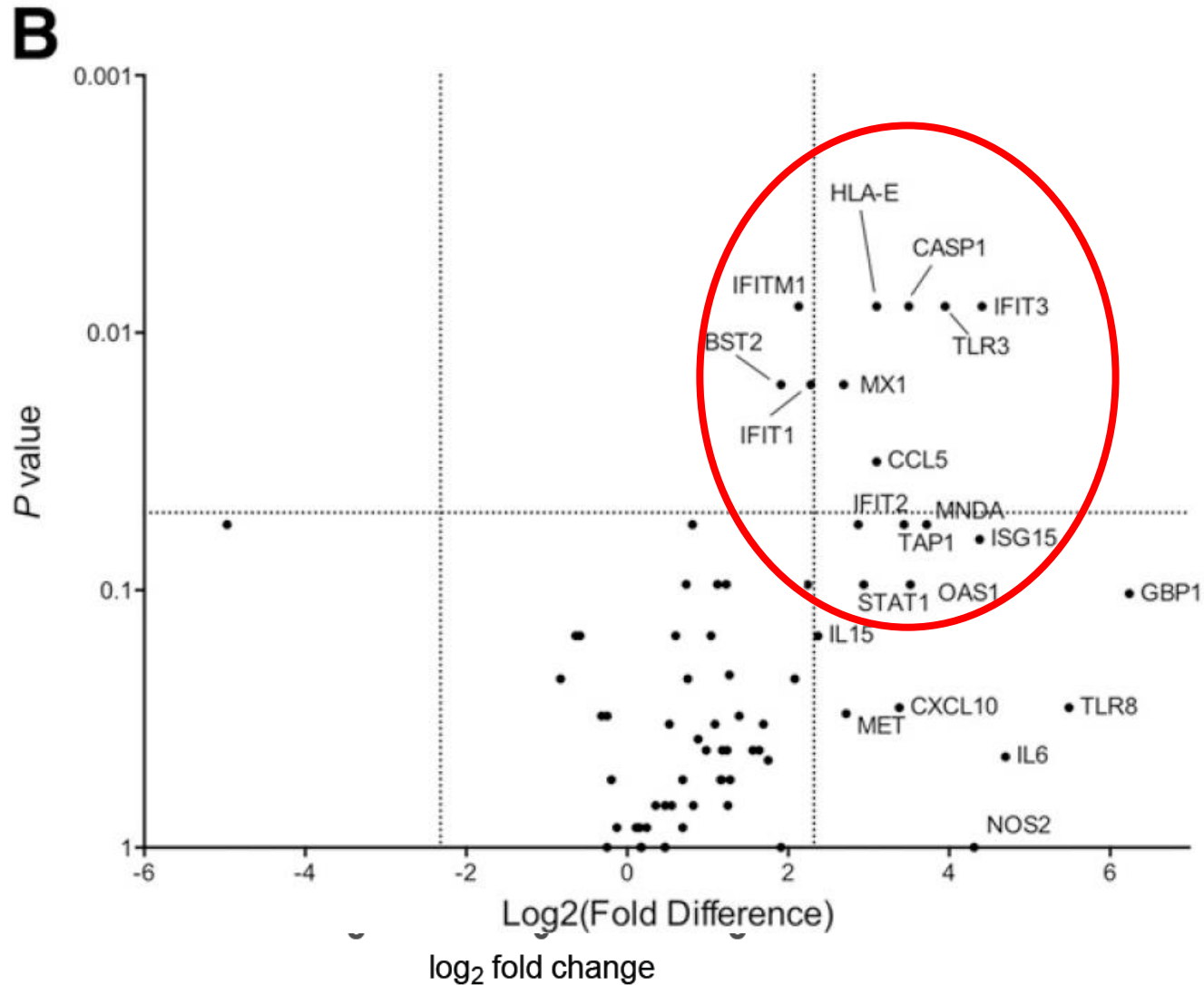


Innate Immune Genes Are Upregulated in Insulitic Islets During T1D Onset

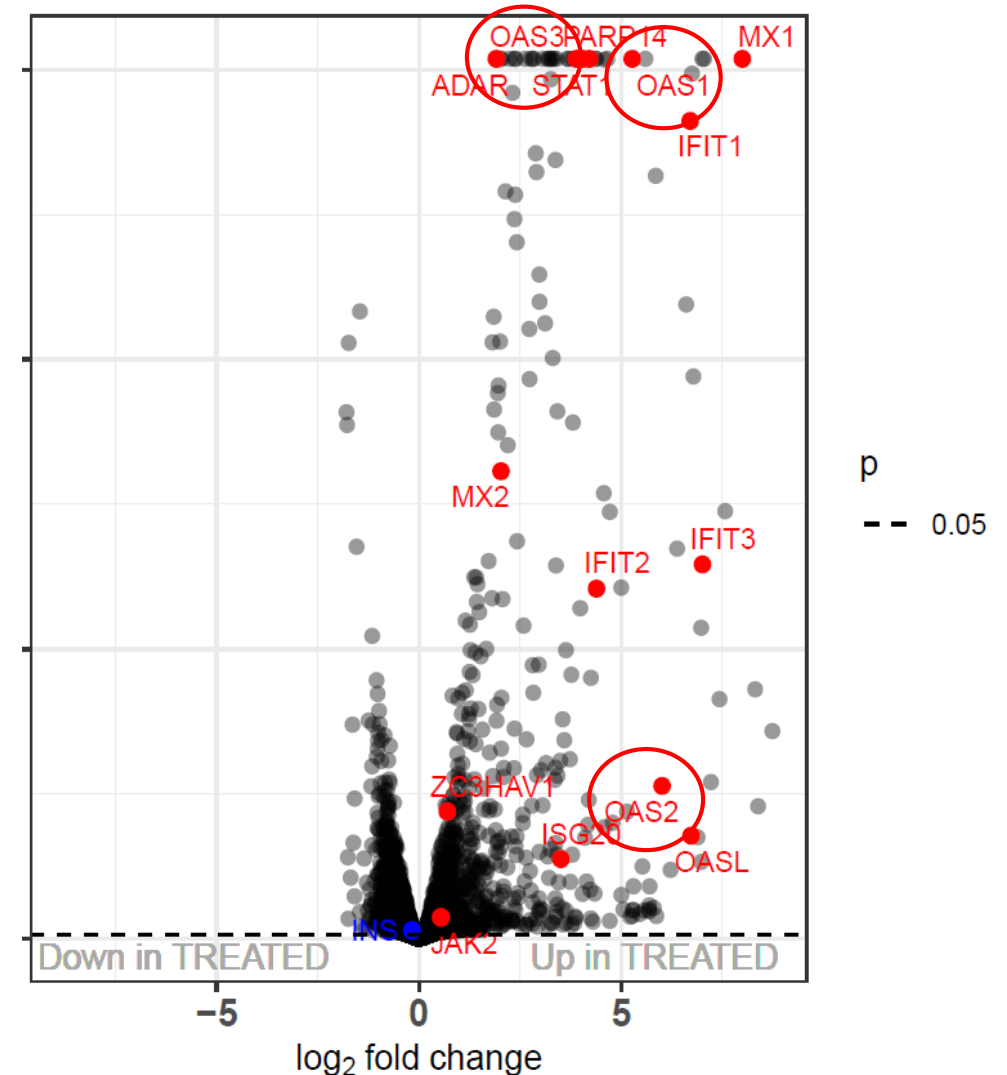


Freshly frozen and cultured pancreatic tissue **from living** patients with recent-onset T1D collected within the Diabetes Virus Detection (DiViD) study.

Proinflammatory Cytokines (IL-1 β , IFN- α) Treatment Recapitulate the Transcriptomic Make-Up of T1D Onset in Human β -Cells



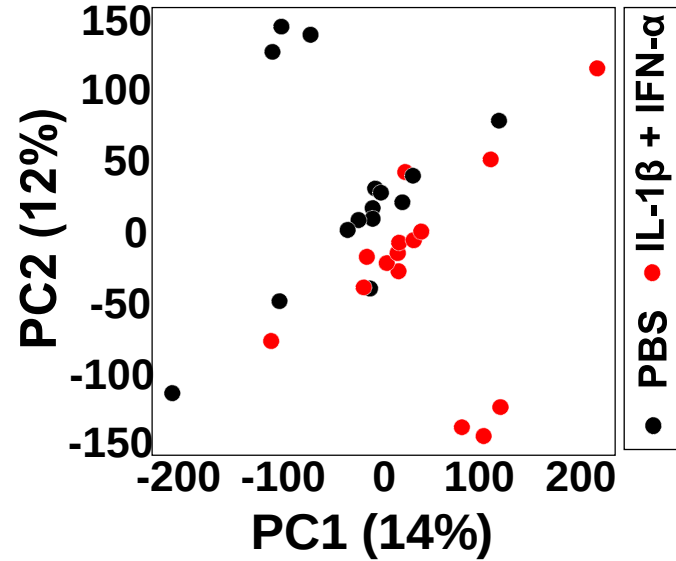
Human Islets
RNA-Seq. (IL-1 β + IFN- α)



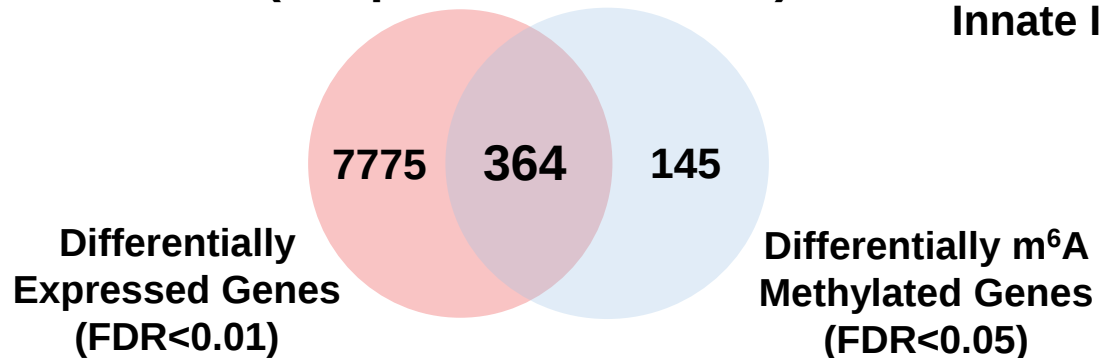
EndoC- β H1 Cells
RNA-Seq. (IL-1 β + IFN- α)

m⁶A-Decorated Genes in Cytokine-Treated Human Islets Reveal Enrichment in OAS Antiviral Innate Immune Response

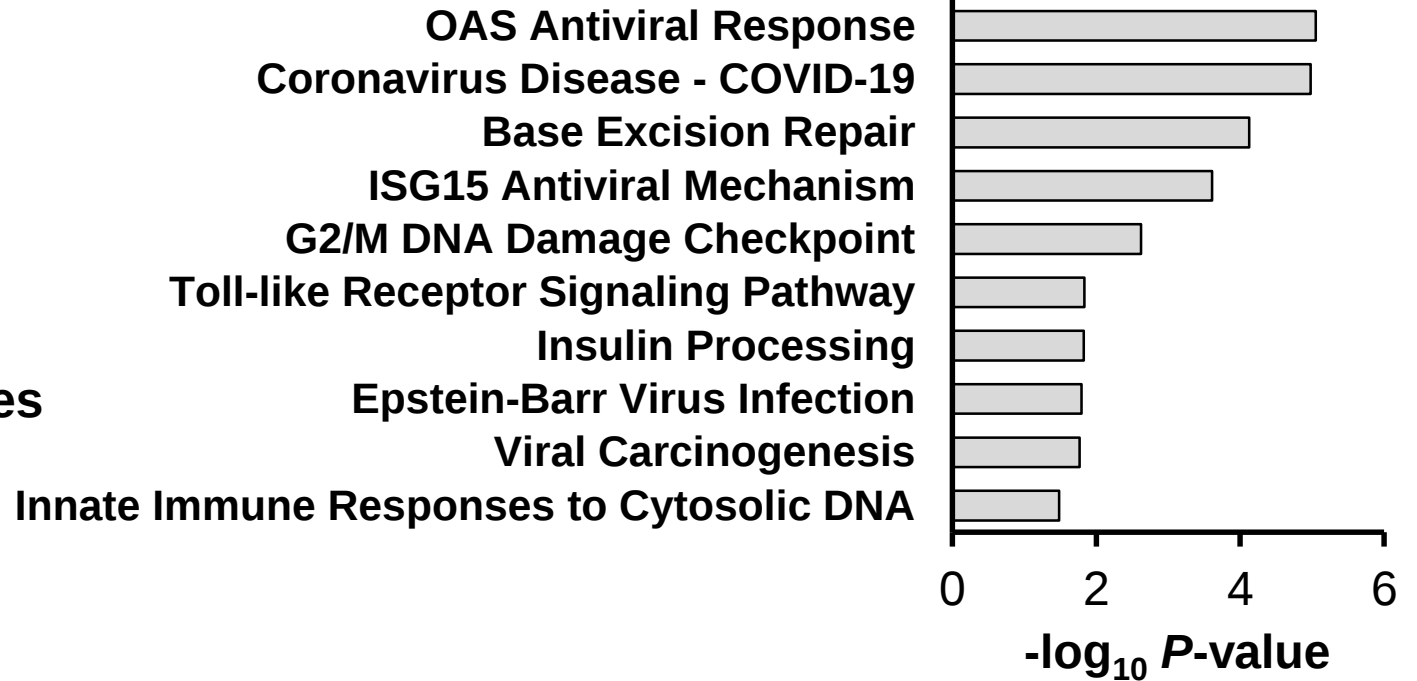
PCA - m⁶A-Seq. – Human Islets



Intersect Differentially
Expressed and **m⁶A Methylated** Genes
(IL-1β + IFN-α Vs PBS)



Enriched Pathways – Commonly Differentially
Expressed and m⁶A Methylated Genes
(IL-1β + IFN-α Vs PBS)



OAS gene: 2'-5'-oligoadenylate synthetase (dsRNA sensors)

DeJesus DF, et al. *Nature Cell Biology*, 2024

OAS Genes Are Genetically Linked to T1D and Its Upregulation Results in Increased β -Cell Apoptosis

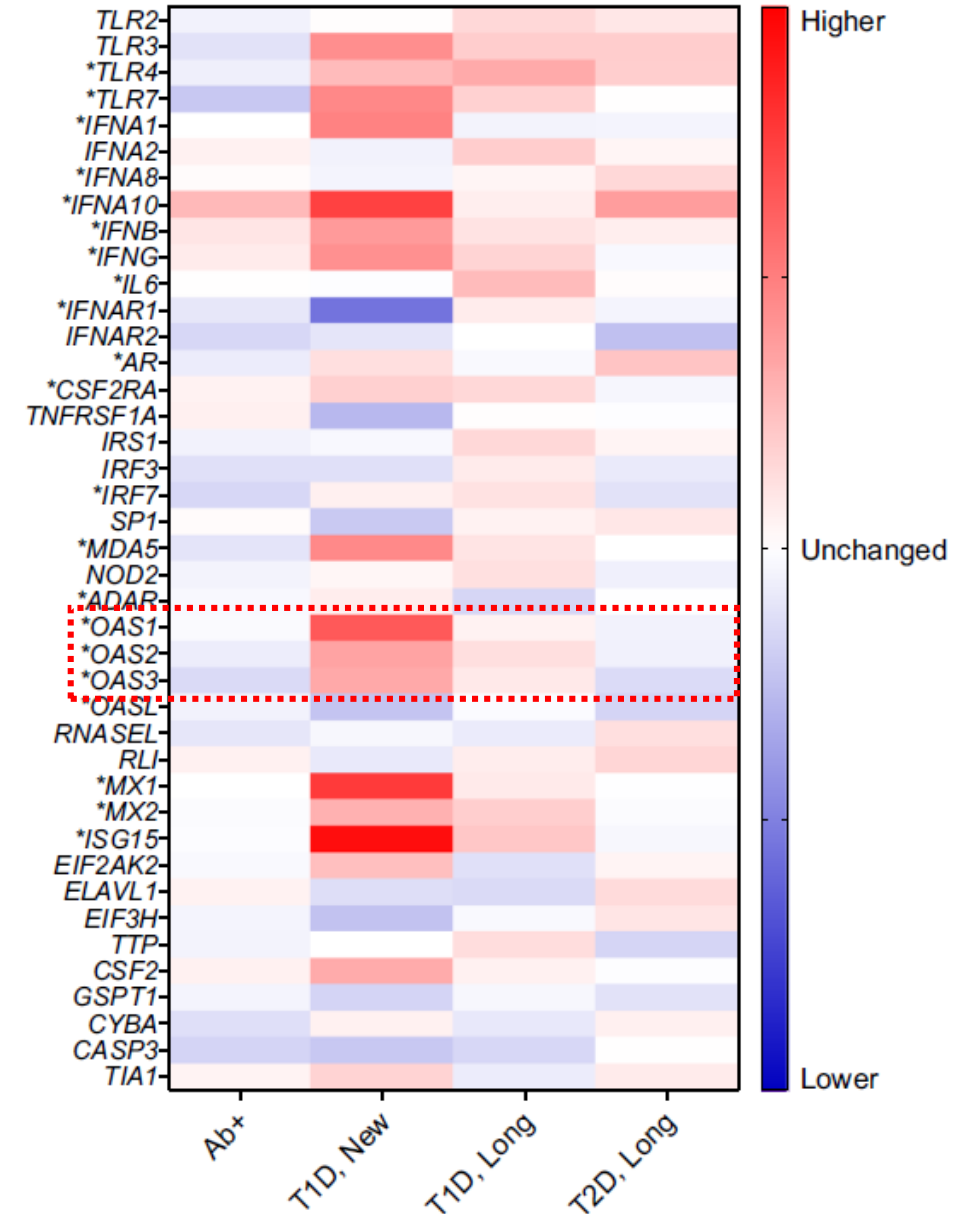
Diabetologia (2021) 64:1805–1815
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00125-021-05469-5>

ARTICLE

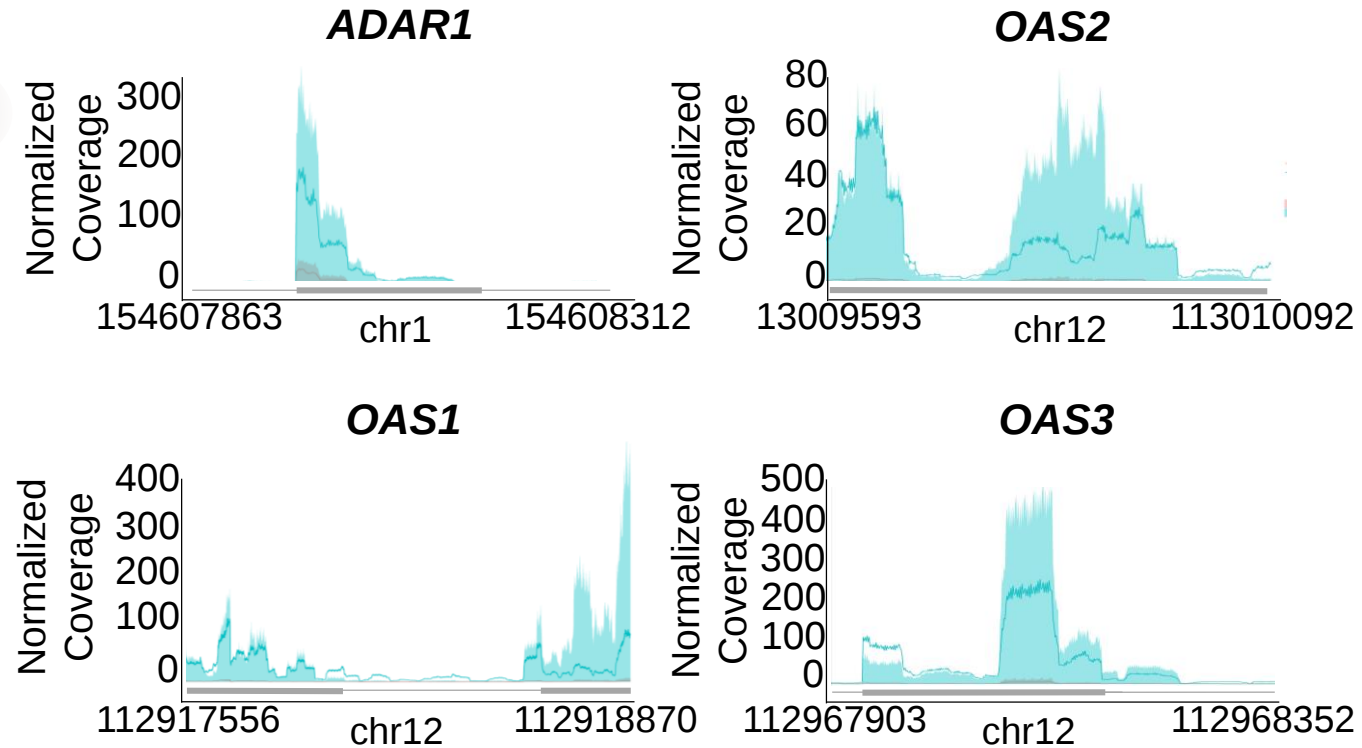
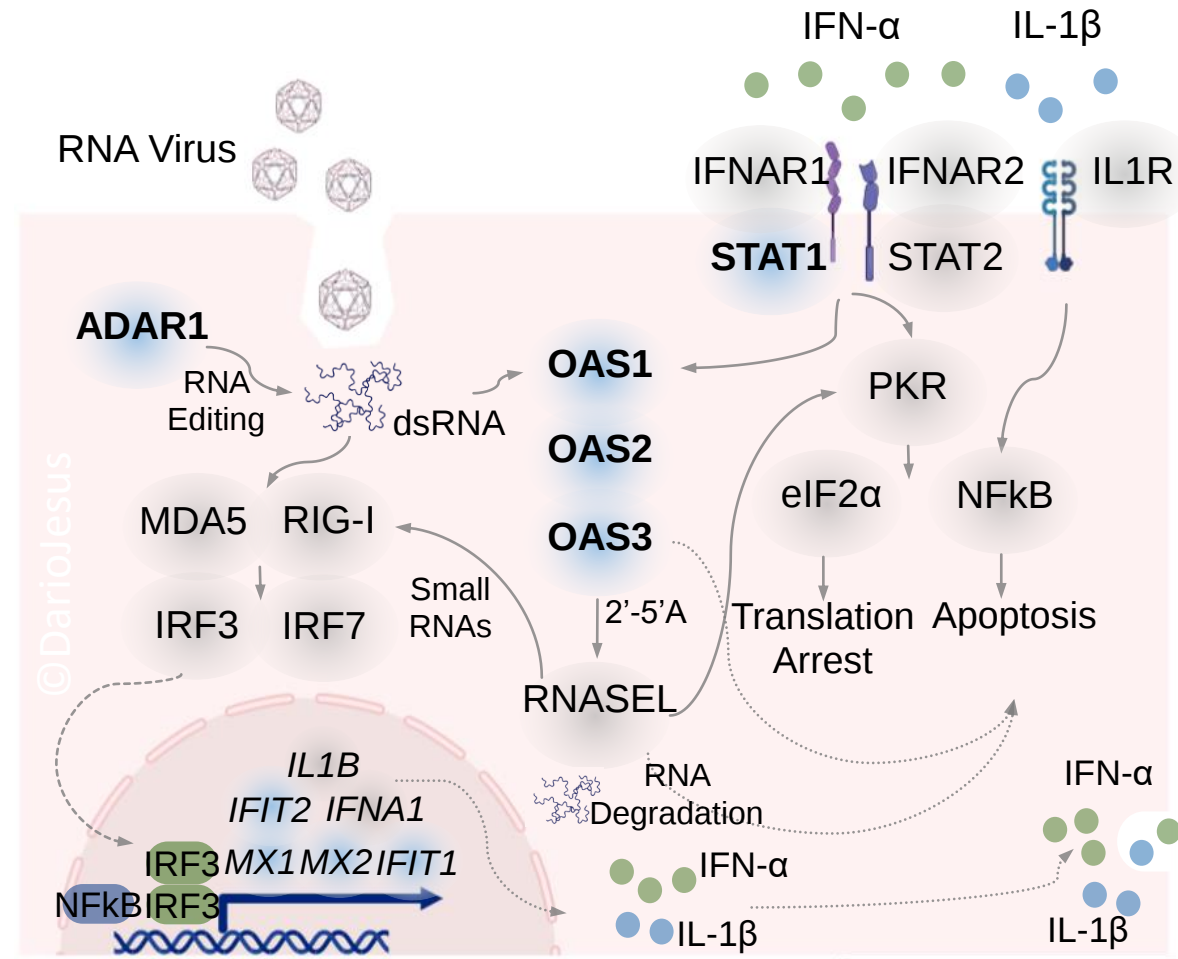
Genetic predisposition in the 2'-5'A pathway in the development of type 1 diabetes: potential contribution to dysregulation of innate antiviral immunity

Kristina Pedersen¹  • Martin Haupt-Jorgensen¹  • Lars Krogvold^{2,3} • Simranjeet Kaur⁴  • Ivan C. Gerling⁵ • Flemming Pociot^{4,6}  • Knut Dahl-Jørgensen^{2,7}  • Karsten Buschard¹ 

Received: 9 October 2020 / Accepted: 4 March 2021 / Published online: 11 May 2021
© The Author(s) 2021



Human Islets Treated with Cytokines Present Hypermethylation of 2'-5'-Oligoadenylate Synthetase (OAS) Genes

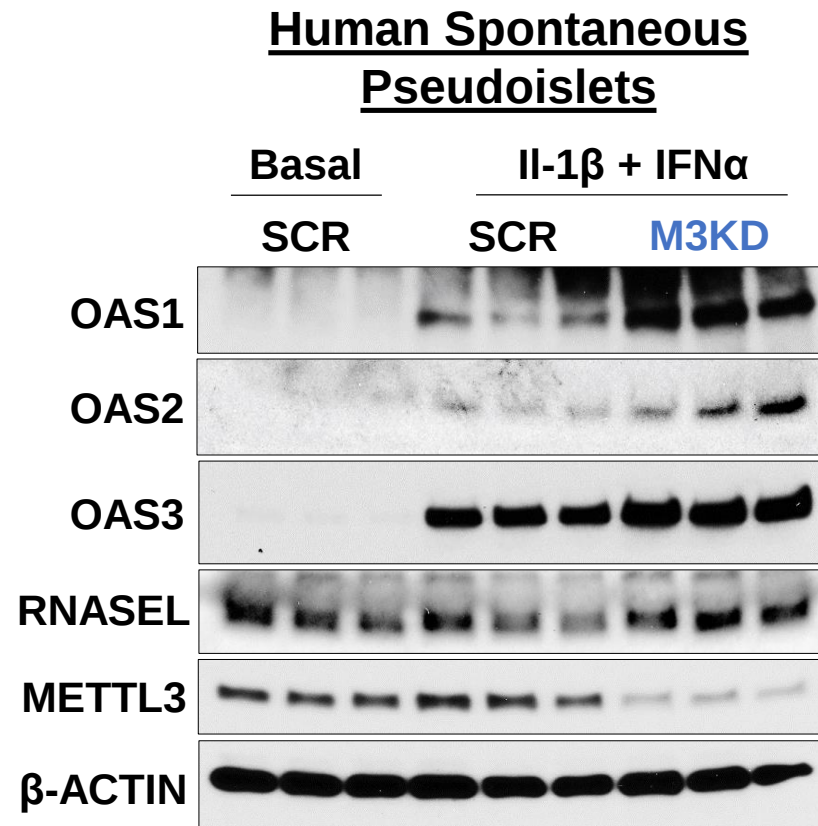


Input | — PBS — IL-1β + IFN-α IP | ■ PBS ■ IL-1β + IFN-α

OAS gene: 2'-5'-oligoadenylate synthetase (dsRNA sensors)

ADAR1: adenosine deaminase acting on RNA

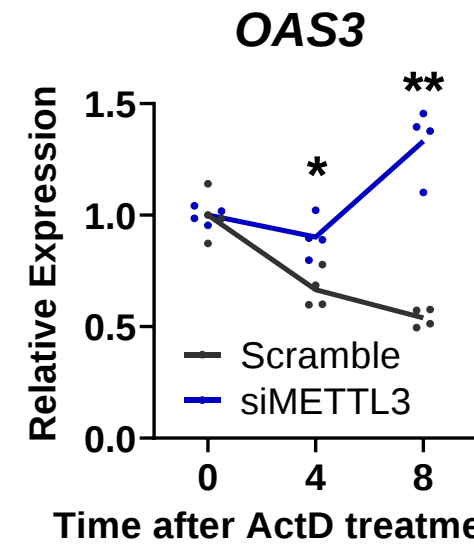
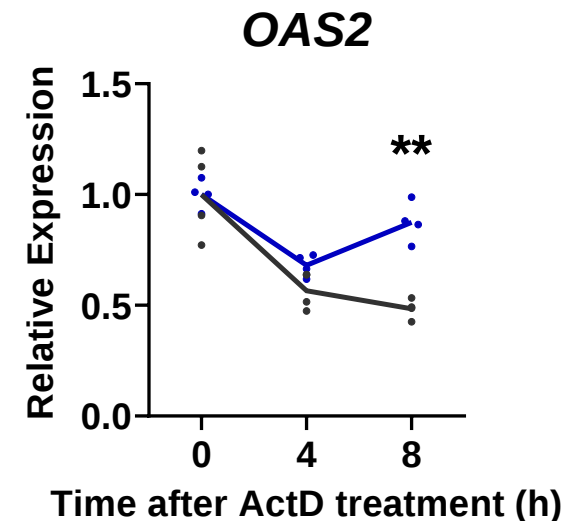
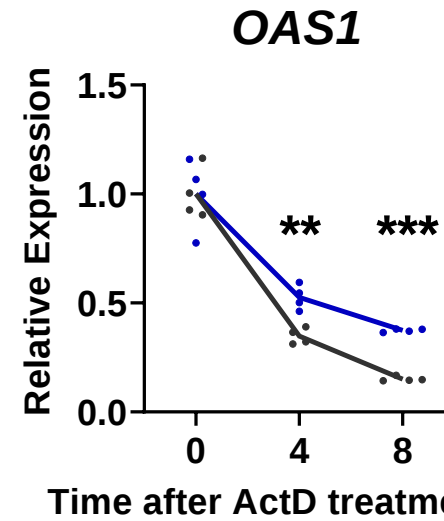
METTL3 Downregulation Leads to Enhanced Expression of OAS Proteins due to Decreased mRNA Decay in Human β -Cells



SCR: Scramble

M3KD: METTL3 Knock-Down

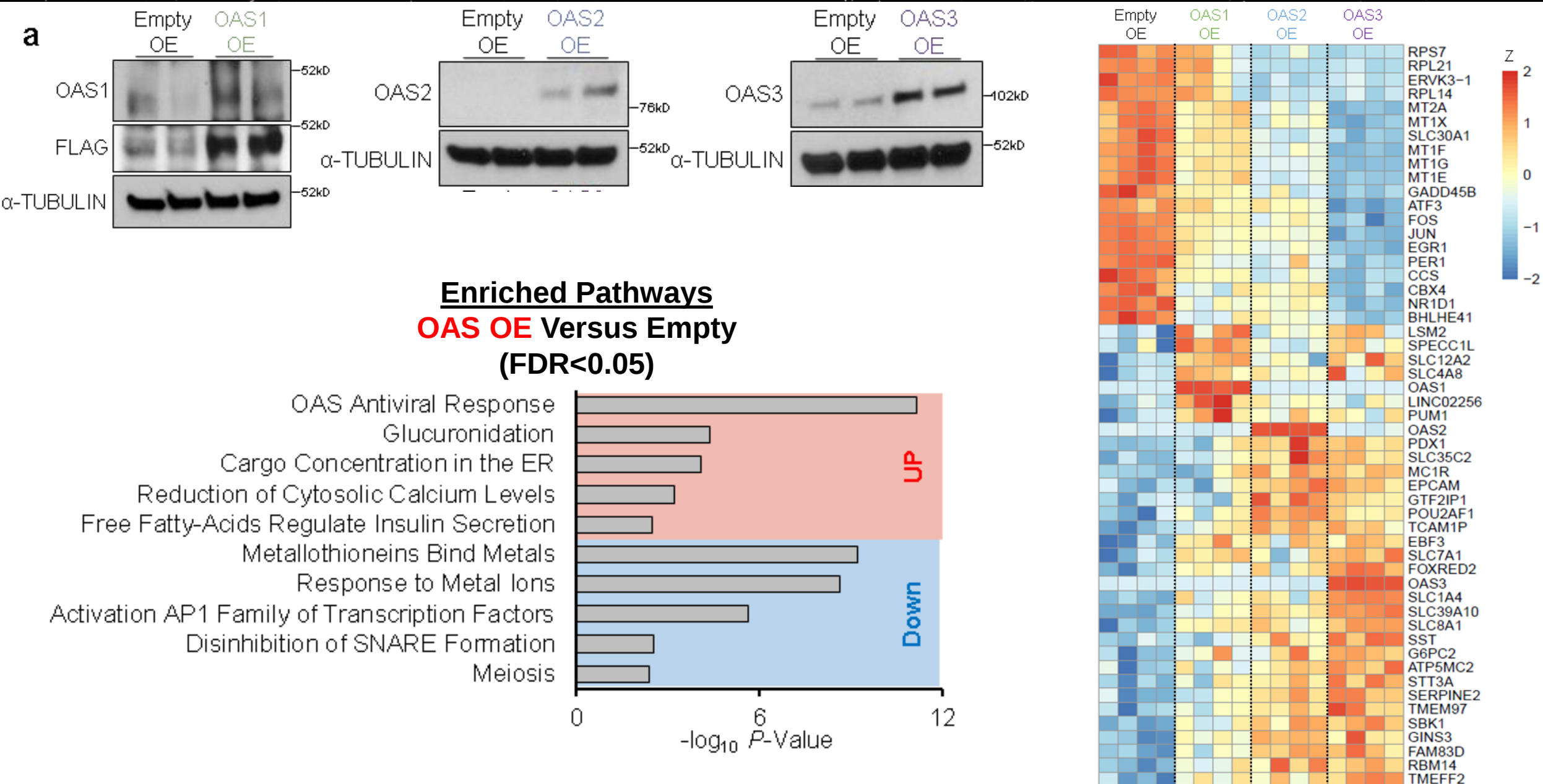
Conversely, Mettl3OE enhances decay of OAS genes
m⁶A regulation of OAS genes is via readers YTHDF1/3



ActD: Actinomycin (*Inhibits Transcription*)

How is METTL3 Regulated ?

OAS Upregulation Impacts β -Cell Antioxidant Response



ER Stress and ROS - Triggers For β -Cell Dysfunction and Autoimmunity

COMMENTARY

ER Stress as a Trigger for β -Cell Dysfunction and Autoimmunity in Type 1 Diabetes

Bryan O'Sullivan-Murphy and Fumihiko Urano

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Islet β -Cell Endoplasmic Reticulum Stress Precedes the Onset of Type 1 Diabetes in the Nonobese Diabetic Mouse Model

Sarah A. Tersey,^{1,2} Yurika Nishiki,^{1,2} Andrew T. Templin,³ Susanne M. Cabrera,^{1,2} Natalie D. Stull,^{1,2} Stephanie C. Colvin,^{1,2} Carmella Evans-Molina,^{2,3,4} Jenna L. Rickus,^{5,6,7} Bernhard Maier,^{1,2} and Raghavendra G. Mirmira^{1,2,3,4}

Balzano-Nogueira et al. *Genome Biology* (2021) 22:39
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13059-021-02262-w>

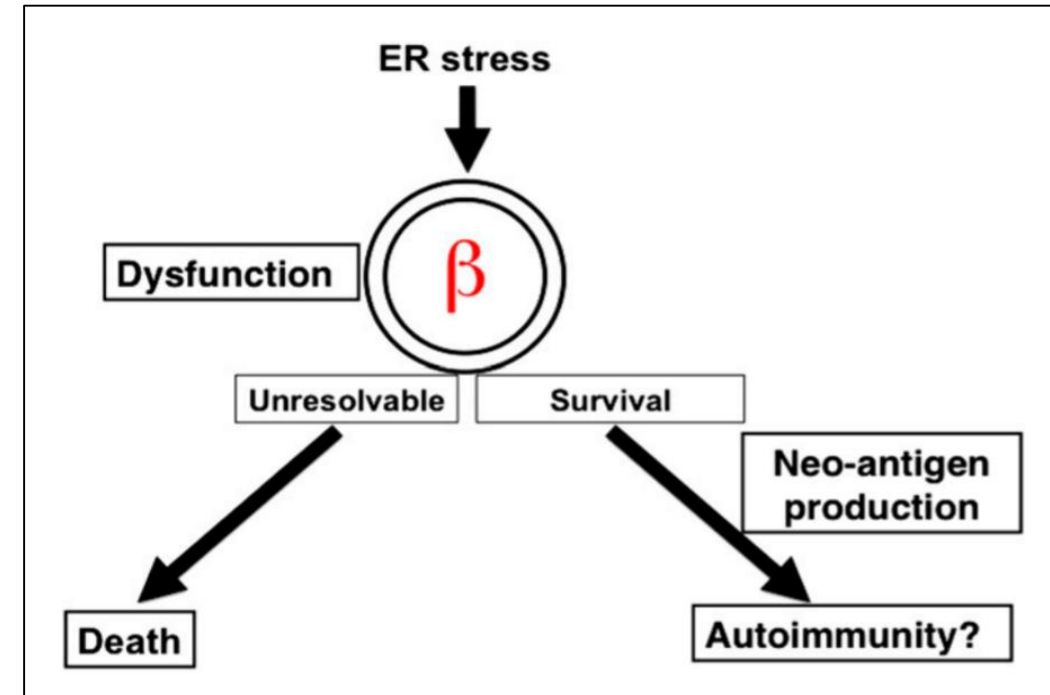
Genome Biology

RESEARCH

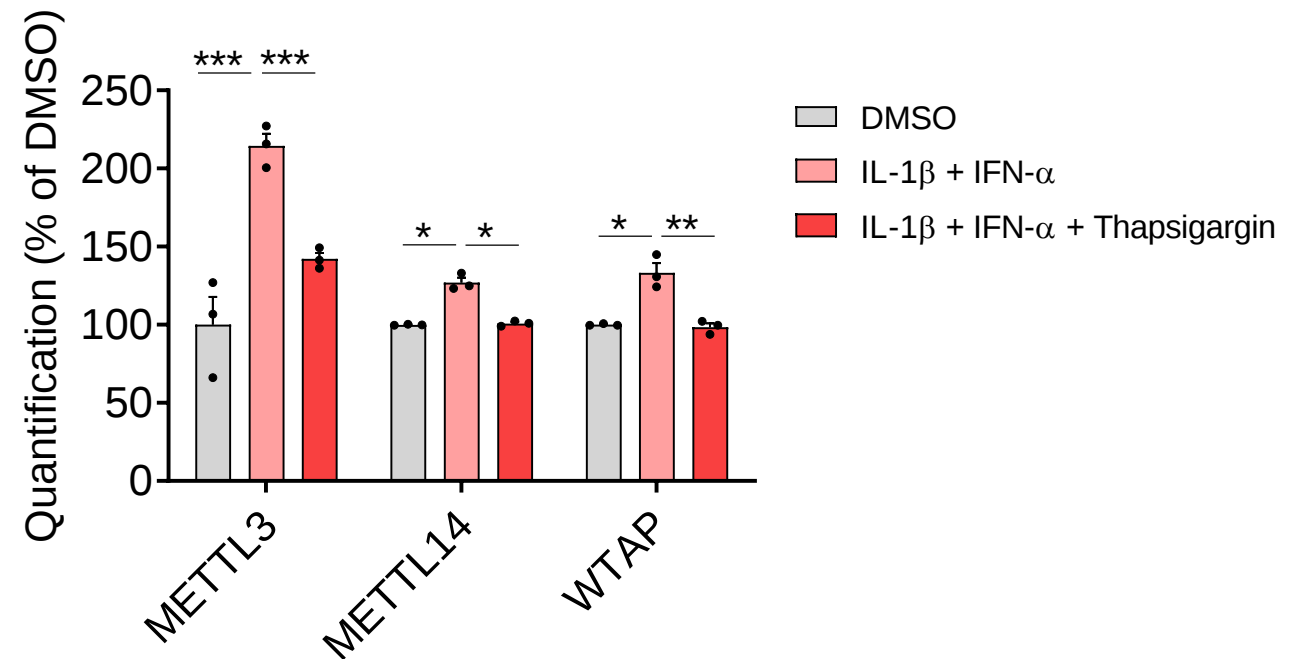
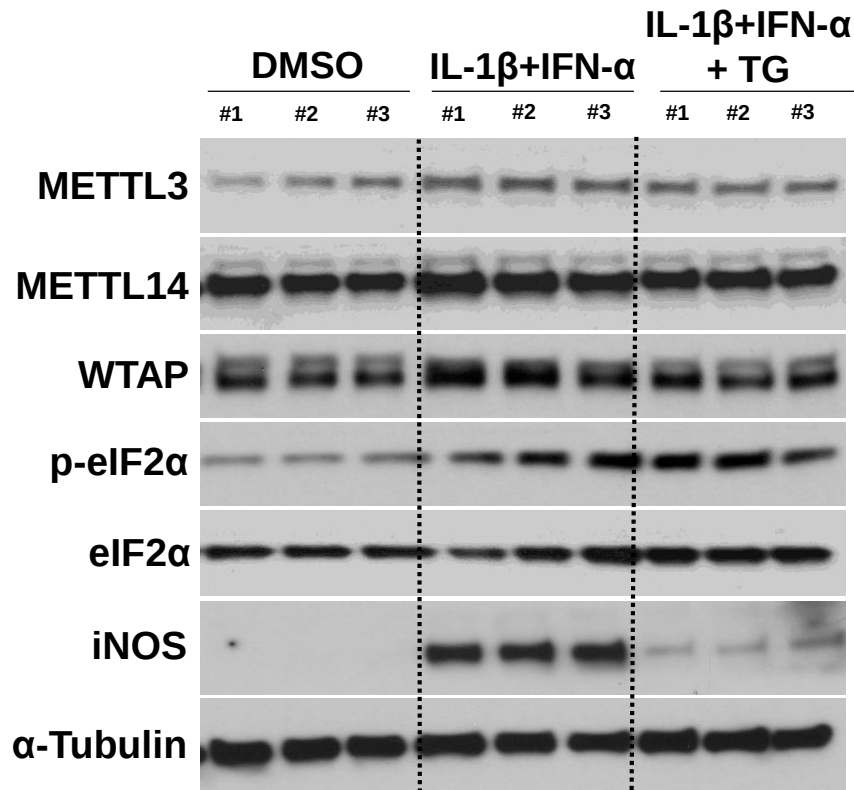
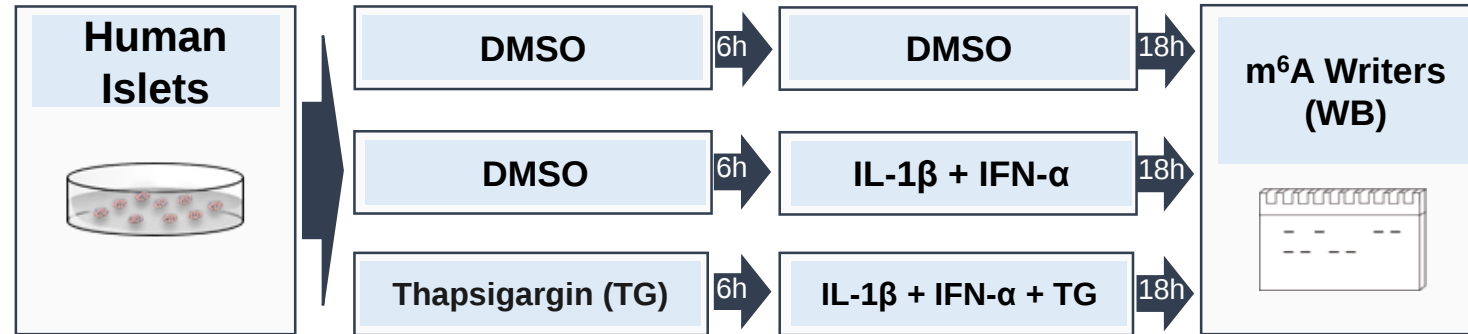
Open Access

Integrative analyses of TEDDY Omics data reveal lipid metabolism abnormalities, increased intracellular ROS and heightened inflammation prior to autoimmunity for type 1 diabetes

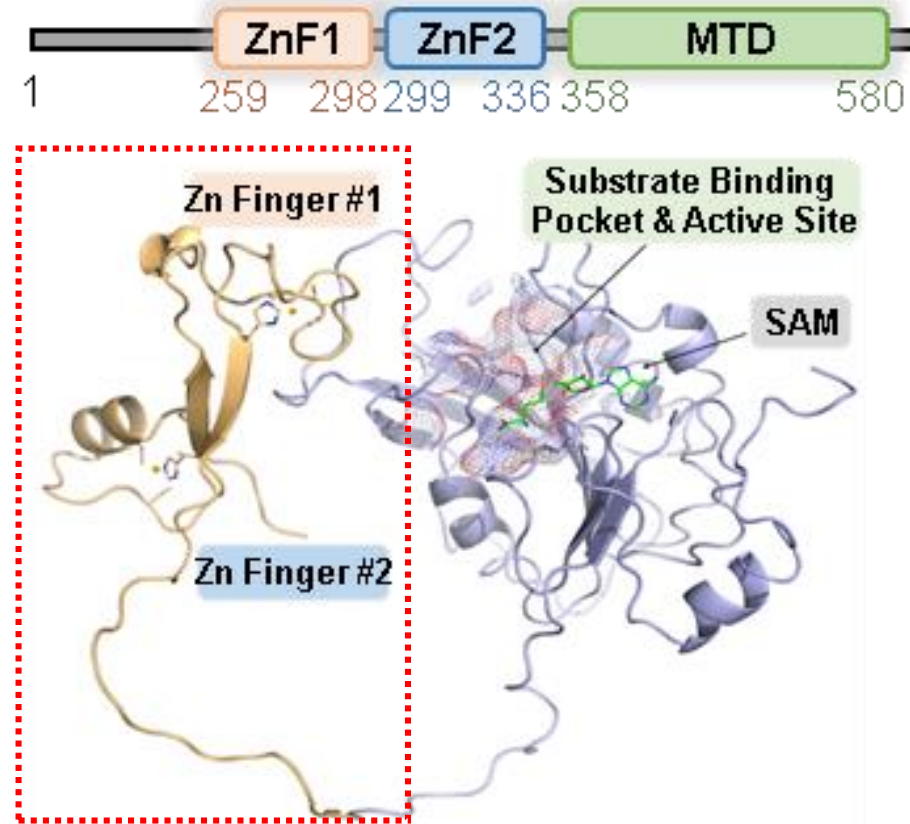
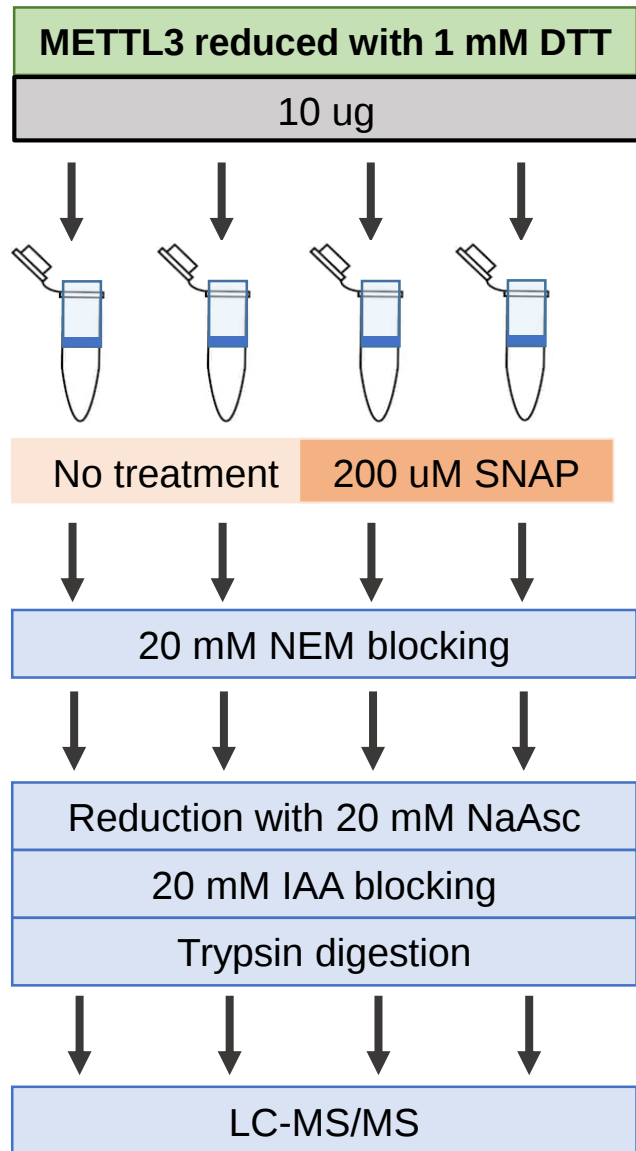
Leandro Balzano-Nogueira¹, Ricardo Ramirez¹, Tatyana Zamkovaya¹, Jordan Dailey¹, Alexandria N. Ardisson¹, Srikar Chamala², Joan Serrano-Quilez², Teresa Rubio⁴, Michael J. Haller⁵, Patrick Concannon^{2,6}, Mark A. Atkinson⁵, Desmond A. Schatz⁵, Eric W. Triplett¹ and Ana Conesa^{1,6*}



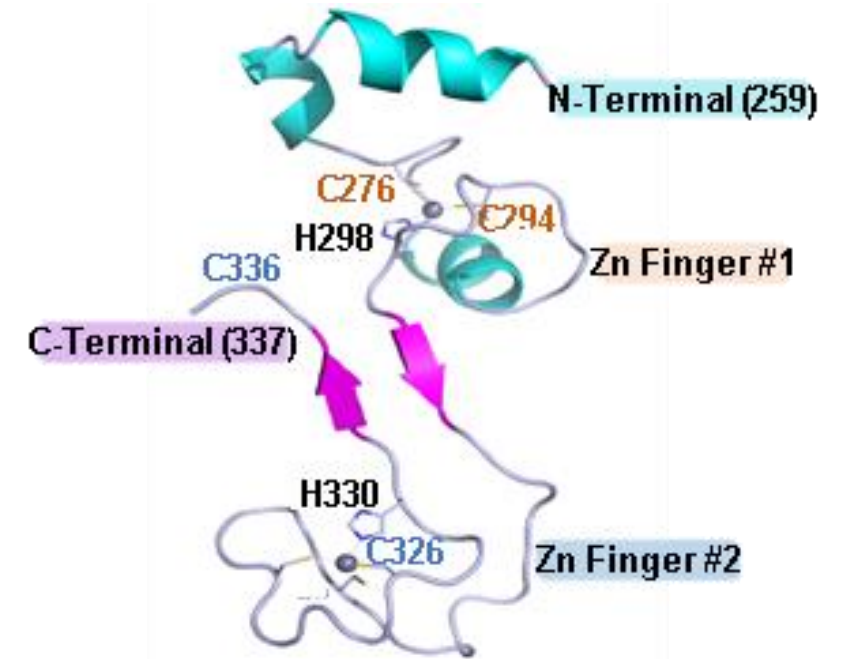
ER Stress Blocks Upregulation of m⁶A Writers Upon Cytokine Stimulation



Identification of Redox-Sensitive METTL3 Cysteines



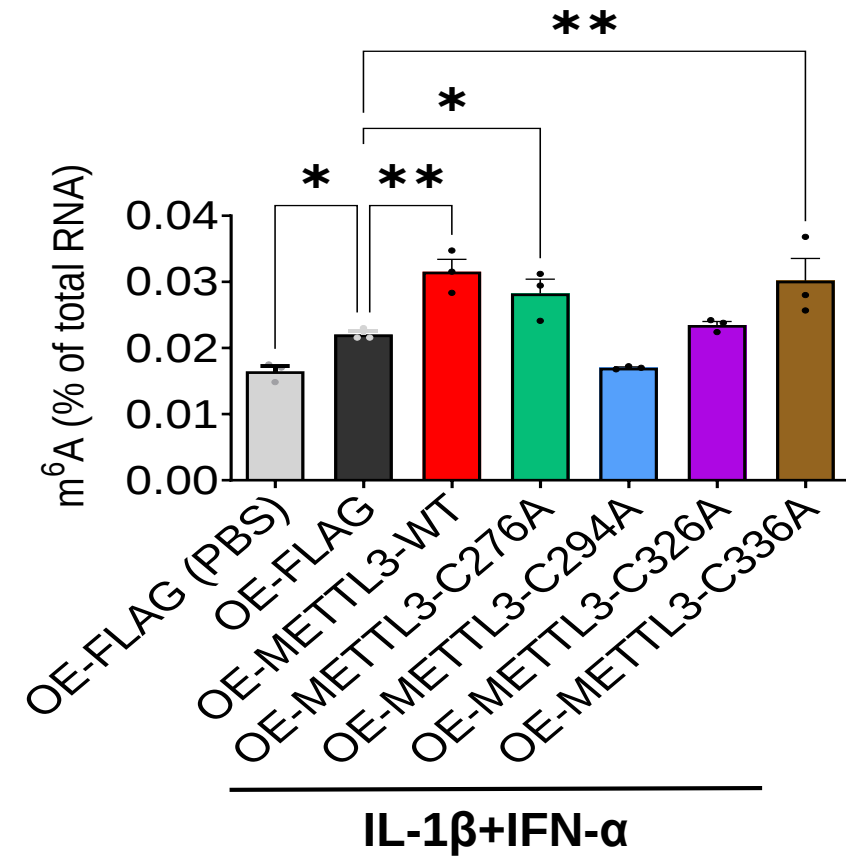
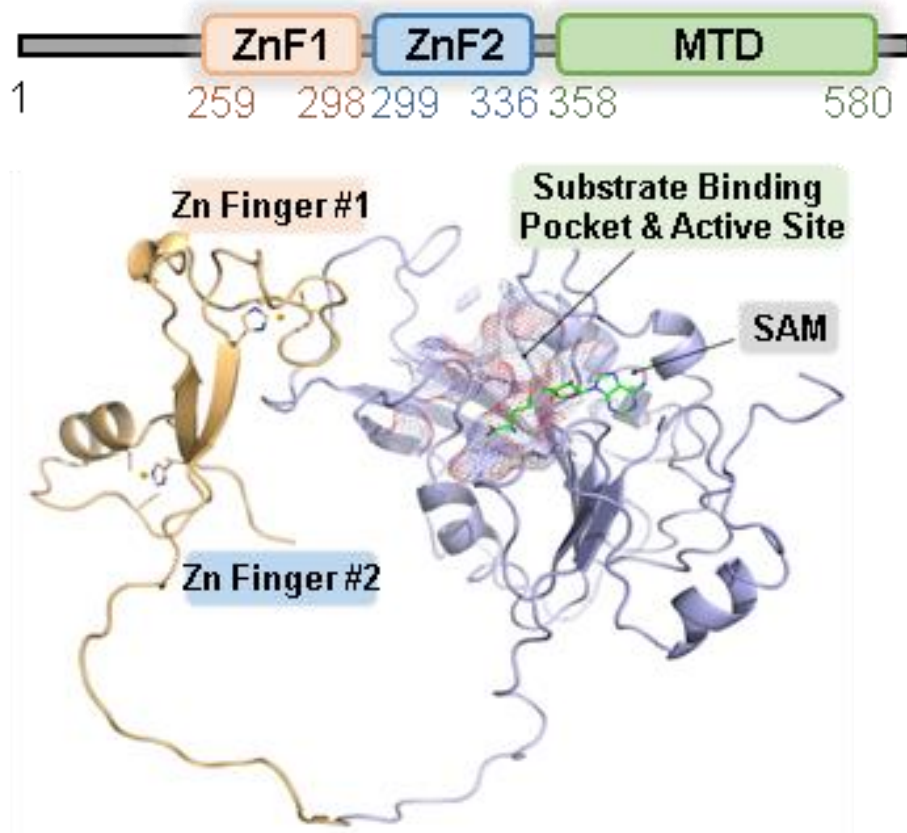
(Collaboration:
Sirano Dhe-Phagnanon PhD; DFCI)



Recombinant METTL3
|Q86U44|MTA70_HUMAN

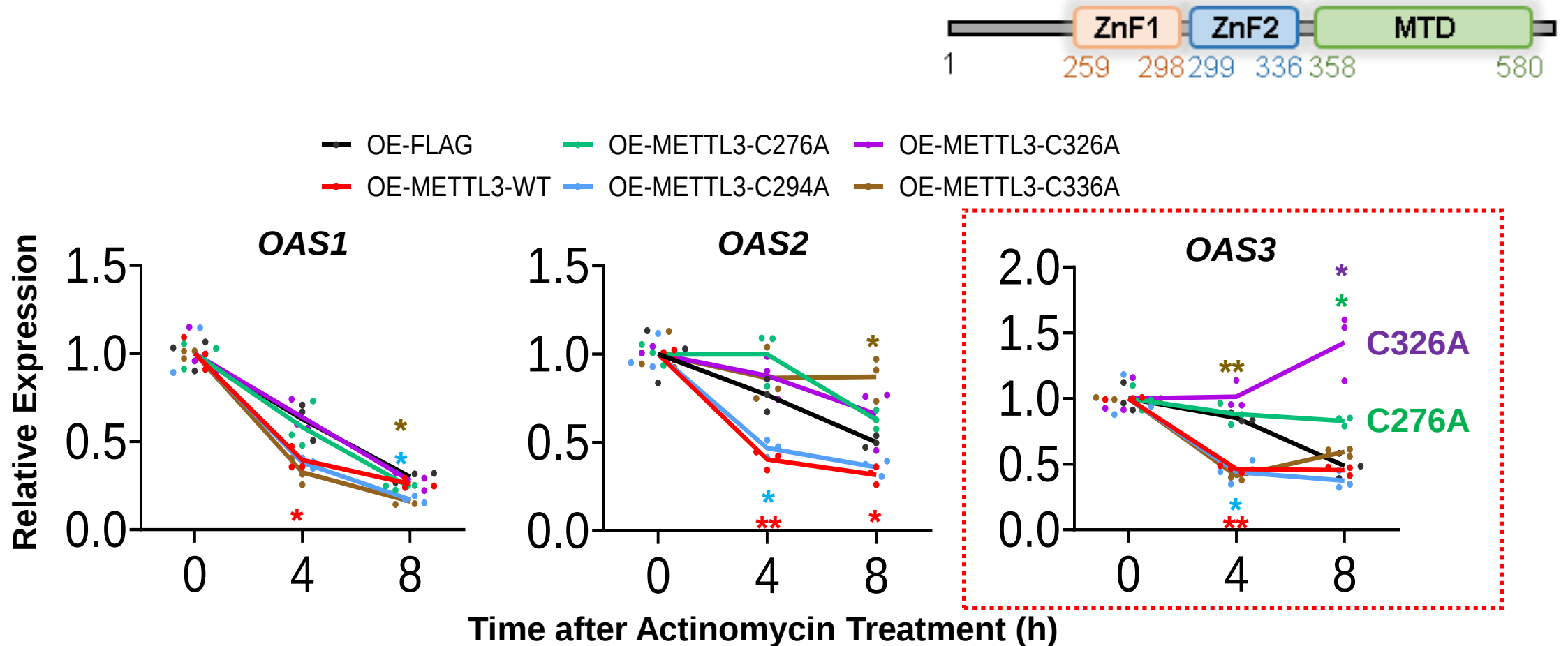
Point Mutations in Cysteines (294 and 326) Render METTL3 Methyltransferase Inactive

METTL3



EndoC-βH1 Cells

Point Mutations in Cysteines (276 and 326) Impact METTL3 Regulation of OAS mRNA Decay

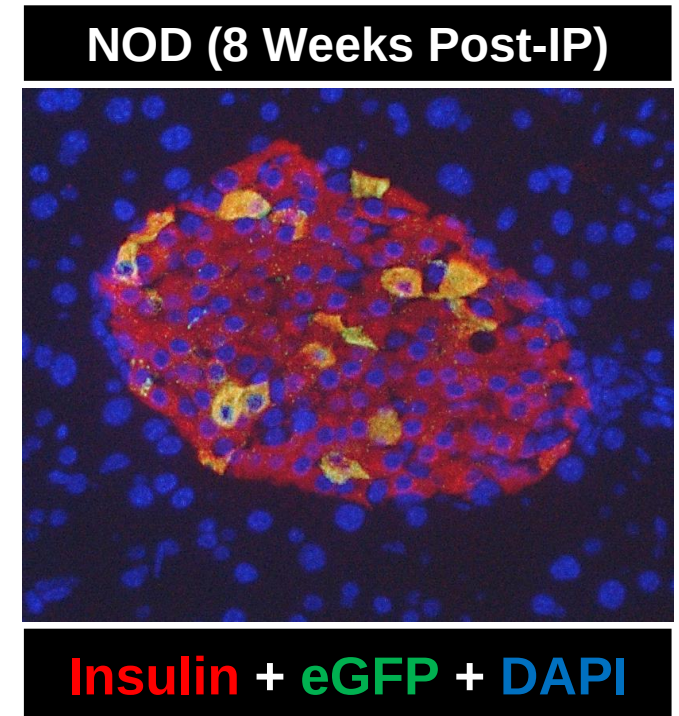
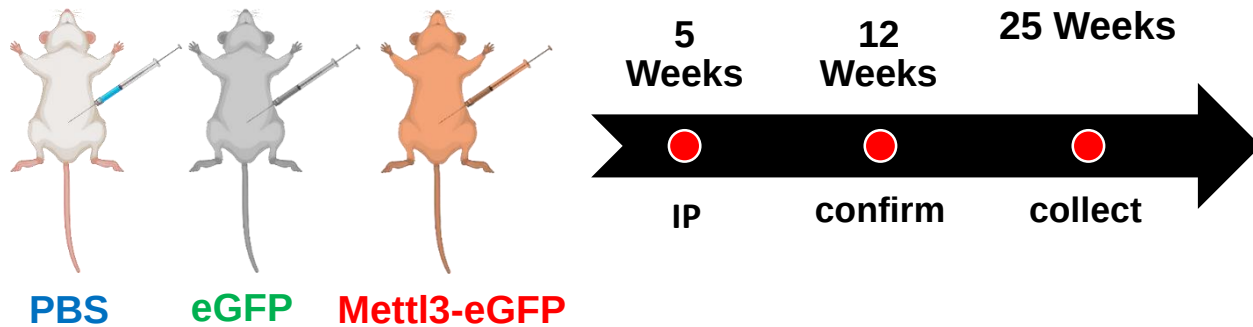
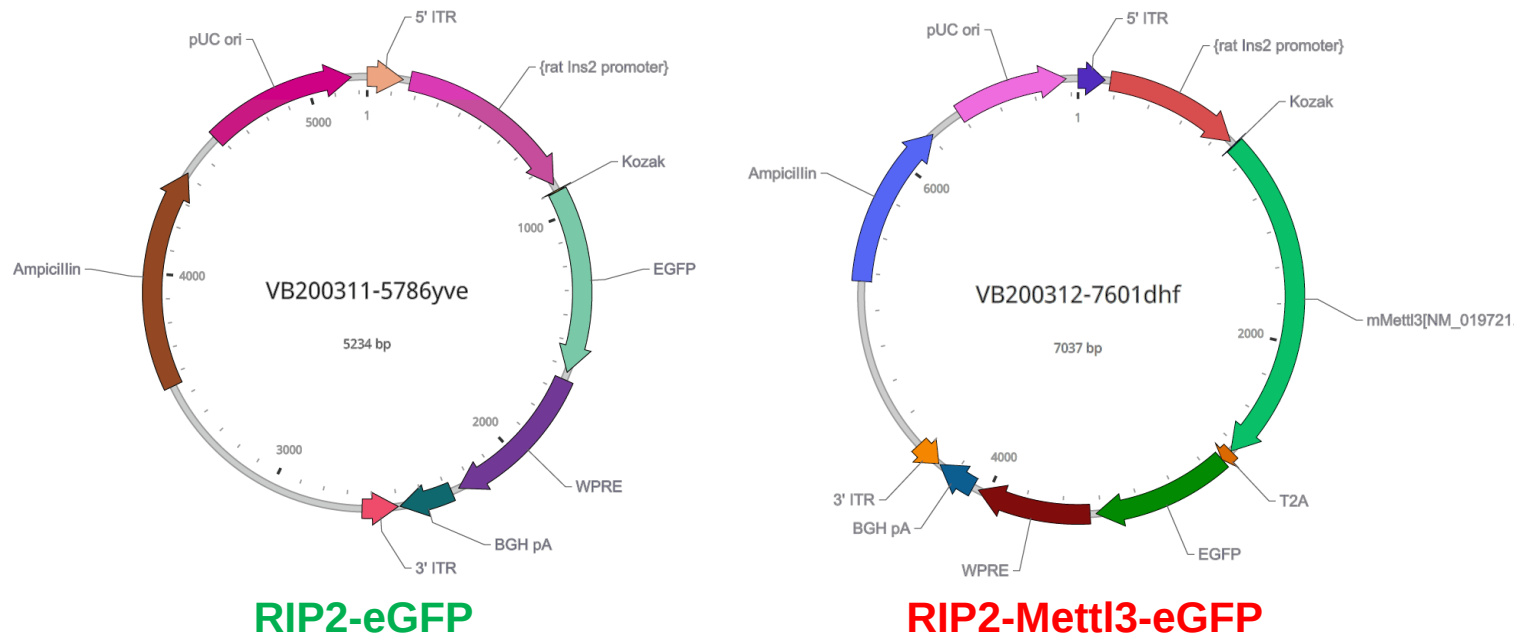


DeJesus DF, et al. *Nature Cell Biology* 2024

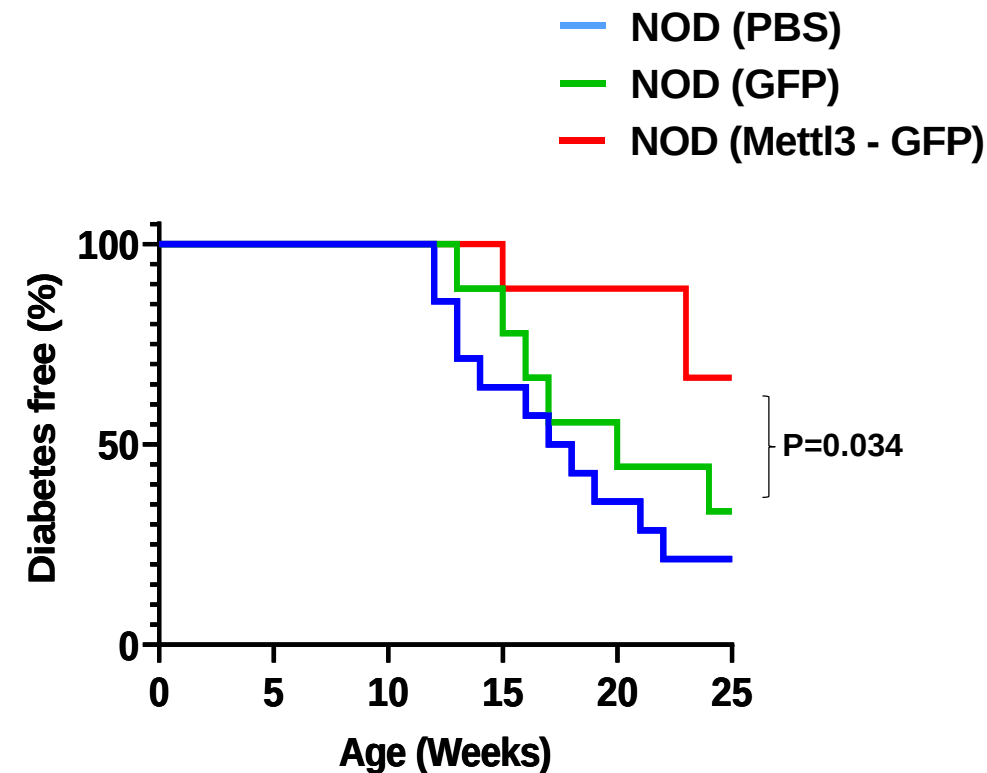
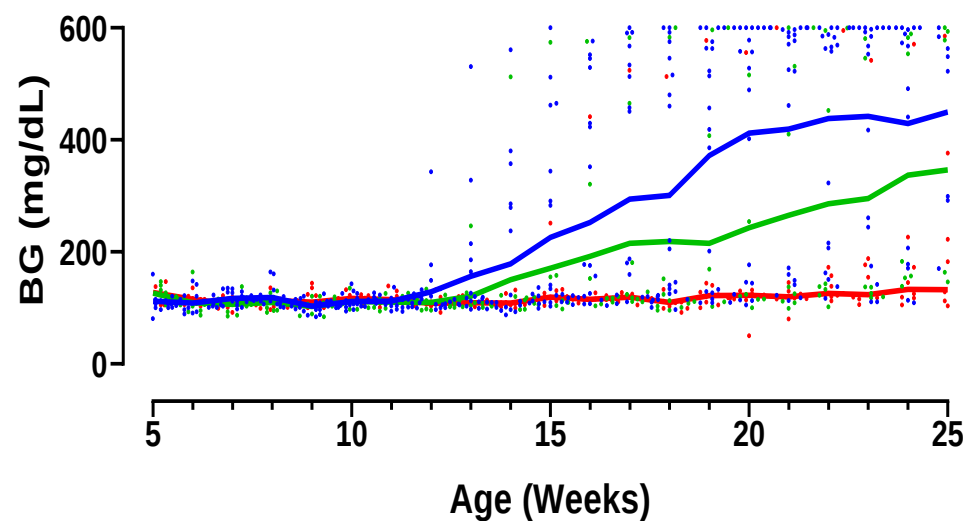
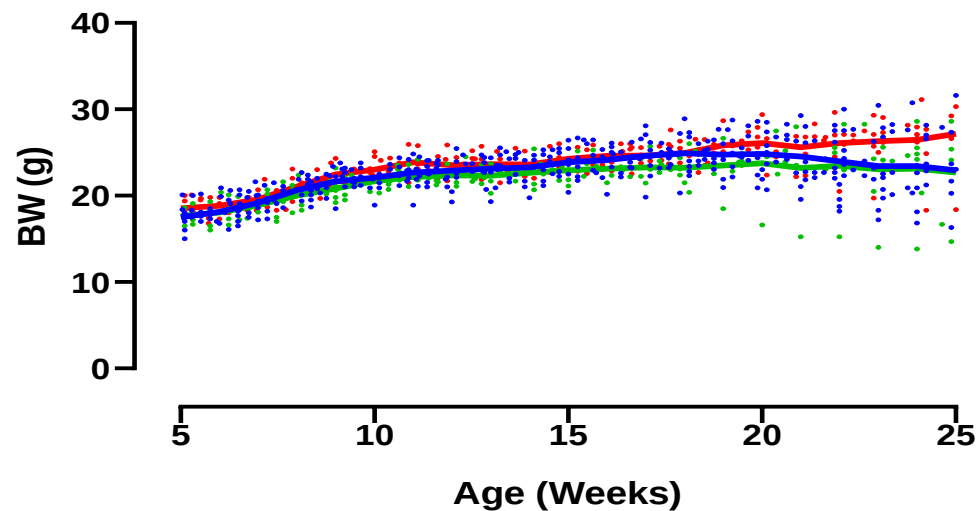
EndoC-βH1 Cells

Can METTL3 be Targeted ?

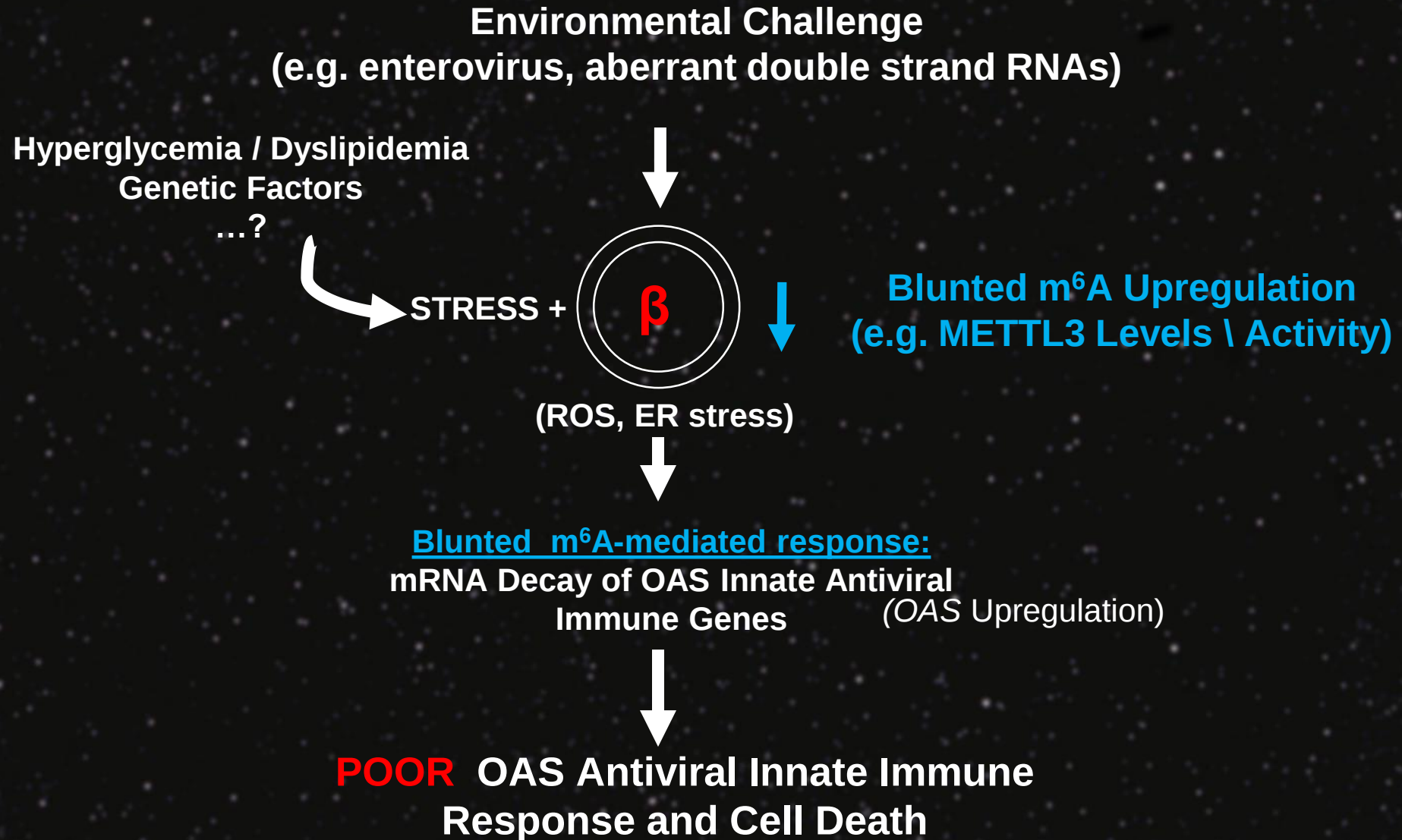
In Vivo AAV8-RIP2 Mediated Overexpression of Mettl3 in NOD β -Cells



In Vivo AAV8-Mediated Overexpression of Mettl3 in NOD β -Cells Delays T1D Progression



m^6A is a Novel Safeguard Mechanism in β -cells: Regulating Magnitude and Duration of Innate Antiviral Immune Response



Thank You