

1 **Identification of the critical replication targets of CDK**
2 **reveals direct regulation of replication initiation**
3 **factors by the embryo polarity machinery in *C.***
4 ***elegans***

5

6 Short title: Embryo polarity directly regulates replication initiation factors

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21

21 **Abstract**

22 During metazoan development, the cell cycle is remodelled to coordinate proliferation
23 with differentiation. Developmental cues cause dramatic changes in the number and
24 timing of replication initiation events, but the mechanisms and physiological
25 importance of such changes are poorly understood. Cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK)
26 is important for regulating S-phase length in many metazoa, and here we show in the
27 nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans* that an essential function of CDK during early
28 embryogenesis is to regulate the interactions between three replication initiation
29 factors SLD-3, SLD-2 and MUS-101 (Dpb11/TopBP1). Mutations that bypass the
30 requirement for CDK to generate interactions between these factors is sufficient for
31 viability in the absence of CyclinE/Cdk2, demonstrating that this is a critical
32 embryonic function of this cyclin/CDK complex. Both SLD-2 and SLD-3 are
33 asymmetrically localised in the early embryo and the levels of these proteins
34 inversely correlate with S-phase length. We also show that SLD-2 asymmetry is
35 determined by direct interaction with the polarity protein PKC-3. This study explains
36 the essential function of CDK for replication initiation in a metazoan and provides the
37 first direct molecular mechanism through which polarization of the embryo is
38 coordinated with DNA replication initiation.

39

39 **Author Summary**

40 How and when a cell divides changes as the cell assumes different fates. How these
41 changes in cell division are brought about are poorly understood, but are critical to
42 ensure that cells do not over-proliferate leading to cancer. The nematode *C. elegans*
43 is an excellent system to study the role of cell cycle changes during animal
44 development. Here we show that two factors SLD-2 and SLD-3 are critical to control
45 the decision to begin genome duplication. We show that these factors are differently
46 distributed to different cell lineages in the early embryo, which may be a key event in
47 determining the cell cycle rate in these cells. For the first time we show that, PKC-3,
48 a key component of the machinery that determines the front (anterior) from the back
49 (posterior) of the embryo directly controls SLD-2 distribution, which might explain
50 how the polarisation of the embryo causes changes in the proliferation of different
51 cell lineages. As PKC-3 is frequently mutated in human cancers, how this factor
52 controls cell proliferation may be important to understand tumour progression.

53 **Introduction**

54 Eukaryotes replicate their genomes from multiple origins that fire throughout S-phase
55 of the cell cycle. Programmed changes in the number, timing and position of origin
56 firing occur during differentiation and development across many metazoa [1]. As a
57 result, different cell types exhibit dramatic changes in the rate of S-phase and the
58 timing with which different parts of the genome are replicated. The mechanisms and
59 physiological importance of such changes in genome duplication during the lifetime
60 of an organism are very poorly understood. With its highly stereotypical cell divisions,
61 the early *C. elegans* embryo provides an ideal system to study the role of cell cycle
62 control during development. As early as the second embryonic division, polarity cues
63 generate cells with different S-phase lengths [2,3]. Activators of cyclin-dependent
64 kinase (CDK) are asymmetrically distributed in the early embryo [2,4-6] and CDK
65 activity has been shown to be important for determining the synchrony of division [6].
66 Despite this, how CDK controls embryonic cell cycle length is not known.

67 CDK plays a critical role in the initiation of DNA replication across eukaryotes [7]. In
68 budding yeast CDK phosphorylates two essential initiation factors Sld2 and Sld3,
69 which results in their phospho-dependent interaction with the BRCT repeats of
70 Dpb11 [8,9]. This CDK-dependent complex results in the recruitment of additional
71 proteins, such as the leading strand polymerase (Pol ϵ) and helicase activatory
72 factors, which together allow replisome assembly by a poorly understood mechanism
73 [10]. Phosphorylation of Sld2 and Sld3 and interaction with Dpb11 is sufficient for the
74 function of CDK in replication initiation in yeast, as mutations that drive the
75 interactions between these proteins can bypass the requirement for CDK to initiate
76 replication [8,9].

77 Importantly, Sld3, Sld2 and Dpb11, together with another replication initiation factor
78 Dbf4 are low abundance and rate limiting for replication initiation in yeast [11,12]. The

79 orthologues of these same factors are also limiting for S-phase length during the
80 early embryonic divisions in *Xenopus* [13]. In *Drosophila*, increasing CDK activity is
81 sufficient to reduce S-phase length in the early embryo [14], although the same is not
82 true in *Xenopus* or zebrafish [15,16]. It would therefore seem that limiting CDK
83 activity and/or low levels of the key CDK substrates, Sld3 and Sld2 and their binding
84 partners might provide a simple mechanistic explanation for how diverse organisms
85 regulate the rate of replication initiation and thus total S-phase length. Unfortunately
86 the testing of this hypothesis has been hampered by the difficulties in identifying the
87 true targets of CDK in replication initiation in developmental model systems [17].

88 We have previously provided the first example of an essential CDK substrate
89 required for replication initiation in a metazoan through the characterisation of *C.*
90 *elegans sld-2* [18]. Mutation of the CDK sites in *sld-2* to alanine prevented the
91 interaction with the Dpb11 orthologue MUS-101 (also known as Cut5/TopBP1) and
92 resulted in lethality, while phospho-mimicking mutations in these CDK sites restored
93 the interaction with MUS-101 and restored viability [18]. Having characterised *sld-2*
94 as an essential CDK target in *C. elegans* we set out to identify and characterise the
95 Sld3 orthologue in this organism to determine the importance of regulation of both of
96 these substrates during development. In this study we show that CDK-dependent
97 regulation of *sld-2* and *sld-3* is sufficient to fulfil at least in part the essential functions
98 of cyclin E/Cdk2 in *C. elegans*. Both SLD-2 and SLD-3 are asymmetrically localised
99 in the early embryo and the asymmetry of SLD-2 is directly regulated by an
100 interaction with the polarity factor PKC-3. This study provides the first direct link
101 between the cell polarity machinery and DNA replication control and pinpoints *sld-2*
102 and *sld-3* as potentially key factors for determining S-phase length in the early
103 embryo in *C. elegans*.

104 **Results**

105 **ZK484.4 is *C. elegans* SLD-3**

106 To identify the CDK target Sld3/Treslin in *C. elegans*, we performed homology
107 searches using the conserved Cdc45 interaction domain (also known as the
108 Sld3/Treslin domain, orange, Fig 1A) [19,20]. From this, we identified ZK484.4 as the
109 best-hit for a potential orthologue of Sld3/Treslin in *C. elegans* (Fig 1A). To determine
110 whether ZK484.4 is a functional orthologue of Sld3, we first analysed the interactions
111 of this protein with the replication initiation factors CDC-45 and MUS-101, the *C.*
112 *elegans* orthologue of Dpb11/TopBP1. Yeast two-hybrid analysis revealed that the
113 Sld3/Treslin domain of ZK484.4 (151-388) interacted with *C. elegans* CDC-45, while
114 the C-terminus of SLD-3 (388-873) interacted with MUS-101 (Fig 1B). Interestingly
115 ZK484.4 interacted with the region of MUS-101 (1-448) encompassing the N-terminal
116 BRCT repeats (Fig 1B), which is the same region of interaction between Sld3-Dpb11
117 in yeast and Treslin-TopBP1 in *Xenopus*/humans [8,9,21,22]. These conserved
118 interactions strongly suggested that ZK484.4 is indeed the *C. elegans* orthologue of
119 Sld3/Treslin and we hereby refer to ZK484.4 as *sld-3*. Notably we did not identify an
120 orthologue of the Sld3/Treslin interacting protein Sld7/MTBP [23].

121 As Sld3/Treslin is essential for replication initiation across eukaryotes we set out to
122 test whether *sld-3* is also essential in *C. elegans*. RNAi of *sld-3* by injection indeed
123 showed that this is an essential gene (Fig 1C). Consistently with a role for *sld-3* in
124 DNA replication, partial knock down of *sld-3* through RNAi by feeding resulted in
125 synthetic lethality with the *div-1* mutant in the B subunit of polymerase alpha [24] at
126 the semi-permissive temperature (Fig 1D). Together these data confirm that ZK484.4
127 is likely to be the functional orthologue of *sld-3*.

128 ***C. elegans* SLD-3 has two essential CDK sites**

129 Sld3/Treslin is a critical CDK substrate in yeast, *Xenopus* extracts and human cells

130 and CDK phosphorylation of Sld3/Treslin at two sites mediates the interaction with
131 the N-terminal BRCT repeats of Dpb11/TopBP1 [8,9,21,25]. As *C. elegans* SLD-3
132 also interacts with the N-terminal region of MUS-101 (Fig 1B), we set out to
133 determine whether CDK sites were crucial for this interaction. *C. elegans sld-3* has
134 two CDK sites at positions 438 and 487, which show homology to the two essential
135 sites in Sld3/Treslin (Fig 2A). Mutation of threonine 438 and 487 to alanine (hereafter
136 called the 2A mutant) prevented the interaction between SLD-3 and MUS-101 (Fig
137 2B). To test whether this interaction is important *in vivo*, we inserted in the genome at
138 a MosSCI site an additional RNAi insensitive copy of either wild type or *sld-3(2A)*
139 fused to mCherry [26]. The expression of these MosSCI alleles was similar, as
140 determined by mCherry fluorescence levels (see for example Fig S3B). Importantly,
141 while the *sld-3* wild type allele fully rescued the *sld-3* RNAi lethality, the 2A mutant
142 that cannot interact with MUS-101 could not rescue this lethality (Fig 2C). This
143 suggests that the interaction between SLD-3 and MUS-101 is critical *in vivo* in *C.*
144 *elegans*.

145 As phosphorylation of Sld3/Treslin is required for the interaction with Dpb11/TopBP1
146 [8,9,21,25] we wondered whether this was also the case in *C. elegans*. Significantly,
147 mutation of the two essential CDK sites to aspartic acid (2D) or glutamic acid (2E),
148 which potentially mimics phosphorylation of these sites, restored the interactions with
149 MUS-101 (Fig 2B). Critically, while *sld-3* RNAi resulted in high levels of lethality as
150 previously shown, an RNAi insensitive copy of *sld-3(2D)* partially rescued this
151 lethality, while the *sld-3(2E)* allele almost fully rescued the loss of wild type *sld-3* (Fig
152 2D), unlike the situation for human Treslin [27]. Together this shows that mutations
153 that mimic phosphorylation of *sld-3* at these two essential sites allow MUS-101
154 interaction and restore viability *in vivo*.

155 Since expression of the *sld-3(2D)* or *(2E)* mutants as a second copy restored viability
156 after *sld-3* RNAi, we set out to generate these alleles at the endogenous locus by

157 CRISPR. While heterozygotes of the CRISPR-generated *sld-3(2D)* and *(2E)* mutants
158 were viable, the homozygotes were sterile (Fig 2E). We wondered whether instead of
159 mutating both CDK sites, mutation of just one site might be sufficient to generate
160 viable alleles. Strains that were homozygous for either T438 or T487 mutated to
161 alanine resulted in intermediate levels of embryonic death and infertility (Fig S1).
162 While mutation of these individual sites to aspartic acid did not rescue the
163 lethality/sterility, mutation of these sites to glutamic acid significantly reduced the
164 lethality exhibited by the alanine mutants (Fig S1). Together with the analysis of the
165 *sld-3* alleles as a second copy (Fig 2D), these data show that while alanine mutants
166 of either of the two, or both CDK sites show lethality, phospho-mimicking mutants
167 can bypass and rescue to some extent this lethality *in vivo*.

168 We are not sure why the *sld-3(2E)* allele shows high levels of viability after *sld-3*
169 RNAi (Fig 2D), but not as a homozygous allele at the endogenous locus (Fig 2E).
170 One possibility is that constitutive phospho-mimicking of these sites generates
171 phenotypic issues by itself, indeed the CDK bypass mutants of Sld3 alone are sick in
172 yeast [8]. We consider it more likely however that these alleles are simply not fully
173 penetrant in mimicking the essential functions of *sld-3* and therefore behave as
174 hypomorphs, which are viable in the presence of some background level of wild type
175 protein (e.g after RNAi). Despite this, the phospho-mimicking mutants of the CDK
176 sites in *sld-3*, which allow MUS-101 interaction, show dramatic rescue of *sld-3* RNAi
177 lethality (Fig 2D) *in vivo*.

178 **Bypass of CDK site phosphorylation in SLD-3 and SLD-2 is partially sufficient** 179 **for cyclin E/CDK2 function**

180 In yeast, phospho-mimicking mutants of Sld2 and Sld3 fulfil the essential functions of
181 CDK in DNA replication initiation [8,9]. In a previous study we characterised the Sld2
182 orthologue in *C. elegans* and identified the *sld-2(8D)* mutant as capable of bypassing

183 the requirement for the CDK sites in *sld-2* to allow interaction with the C-terminus of
184 MUS-101 [18]. Here we have identified the *sld-3(2D)* and *(2E)* mutants that can
185 bypass the requirement for the CDK sites to generate the crucial interaction between
186 SLD-3 and the N-terminus of MUS-101 (Fig 2). Therefore we wondered to what
187 extent the combination of these bypass mutants of *sld-3* and *sld-2* might be able to
188 fulfil essential functions of CDK in *C. elegans* (Fig 3A). As in yeast, we might expect
189 such CDK bypass mutants to be dominant, which is indeed the case for *sld-2(8D)*
190 [18]. Combination of the CDK bypass mutant *sld-2(8D)* with *sld-3(2D)* or *(2E)*,
191 expressed as extra copies at MosSCI sites, resulted in wild type levels of fertility and
192 viability (Fig 3B and S2A).

193 Cyclin E/CDK2 is required for the G1-S transition and is responsible for DNA
194 replication initiation, particularly in early embryonic divisions such as in *Drosophila*
195 and *Xenopus* [28,29]. RNAi of either Cyclin E (*cye-1*) or *cdk-2* resulted in embryonic
196 lethality, as expected [30] (Fig 3C-D and S2B). Expression of the *sld-2* or *sld-3*
197 bypass alleles alone did not restore viability after *cye-1* or *cdk-2* RNAi (Fig S2B-C).
198 Importantly combination of both *sld-2(8D)* and *sld-3(2D)* or *(2E)* resulted in significant
199 rescue of viability of both *cye-1* and *cdk-2* RNAi (Fig 3C-D). These phenotypic
200 rescues by the *sld-2/sld-3* bypass mutants were specific to cyclinE/Cdk2 RNAi, as we
201 did not observe any rescue with Cyclin B1 (*cyb-1*) or Cyclin B3 (*cyb-3*) RNAi (Fig
202 S2D-E). Unfortunately RNAi of *cya-1* (Cyclin A) had no phenotype in our hands (data
203 not shown). Together these data show that *sld-2* and *sld-3* mutants that can bypass
204 the requirement for the critical CDK sites for generating interactions with MUS-101
205 can fulfil some of the essential functions of Cyclin E/Cdk2 *in vivo* in *C. elegans*.

206 **SLD-2 and SLD-3 are asymmetrically localised in the early embryo**

207 During the second embryonic division in *C. elegans*, the anterior AB cell has a faster
208 cell cycle than the posterior P1 cell, which is in part due to a shorter S-phase in the

209 AB cell [2]. CDK activity is potentially differentially activated in these two cells due to
210 the asymmetric distribution of CDK regulators, such as *cdc-25* and the cyclin *cyb-3*
211 [4,6]. We wondered to what extent SLD-2 and SLD-3 regulation by CDK might
212 contribute to this asynchrony of cell division, so we analysed the AB/P1 cell cycle
213 duration using the *sl-d-2/sl-d-3* CDK bypass alleles. Fig 4A shows that the duration of
214 the AB and P1 divisions remained very similar in the *sl-d-2(8D)/sl-d-2(2E)* mutant
215 relative to wild type, suggesting that CDK phosphorylation of these targets alone is
216 not limiting for S-phase duration in either of these cell divisions.

217 During this analysis of AB/P1 cycle length using the MosSCI *sl-d-3* and *sl-d-2* alleles,
218 which are tagged with mCherry and GFP respectively, we observed that both SLD-3
219 and SLD-2 showed asymmetric localisation, with more protein in the AB cell nucleus,
220 than P1 (Fig 4B/4C). This asymmetry was not limited to the MosSCI alleles, as we
221 obtained a similar result using immuno-fluorescence of endogenous SLD-2 (Fig 4D).
222 Interestingly the presence or absence of the essential CDK sites did not affect the
223 asymmetric localisation of SLD-3 (Fig S3A-B). The asymmetry we observed was not
224 an artefact of embryo staging, as the difference in abundance of SLD-2 was detected
225 throughout interphase (Fig S3C).

226 Asymmetric and asynchronous divisions continue beyond the 2-cell stage, with the
227 descendants of the AB cell (ABa and Abp) having shorter cell cycles than the
228 descendants of the P1 cell (EMS and P2) with P2 having the longest S-phase of
229 these cells [3,31]. We analysed the abundance of SLD-2 and SLD-3 in 4-cell stage
230 embryos and these two proteins remained asymmetric at this stage with EMS and P2
231 having significantly less protein than the AB cell lineage (Fig 4E-F). SLD-2
232 abundance was also significantly lower in the P2 cell than the EMS cell (Fig 4F).
233 Together these data show that SLD-2 and SLD-3 are present at levels that inversely
234 correlate with S-phase length in the 2- and 4-cell *C. elegans* embryo.

235 **PAR proteins control SLD-2 asymmetry**

236 The PAR polarity proteins (PAR-1 to -6) and PKC-3, which specify the anterior-
237 posterior (A–P) axis in the early embryo, also regulate the asynchrony of cell division
238 between the AB and P1 blastomeres [2]. *par-3* and *pkc-3* mutants divide
239 synchronously and symmetrically at the 2-cell stage [2,32] and significantly loss of
240 function of either of these polarity genes resulted in subsequent symmetrical
241 localisation of SLD-2 in the AB and P1 cell (Fig 5A-5B).

242 We have previously shown in *Xenopus* that nuclear-to-cytoplasmic ratios can affect
243 S-phase length due to the amount of limiting replication initiation factors inherited
244 after cell division [13]. As *par-3* and *pkc-3* mutants divide symmetrically (Fig 5A), we
245 wondered whether the subsequent symmetry of SLD-2 was simply a consequence of
246 equal distribution of cellular content after division. To test this we analysed the
247 distribution of SLD-2 in *par-4* mutant embryos, which divide synchronously but still
248 asymmetrically at the 2-cell stage, resulting in AB/P1 cells of similar size to wild type
249 [33]. Significantly, SLD-2 was symmetrically localised in *par-4* mutant embryos, even
250 though the P1 cell is smaller than the AB cell in these mutants (Fig 5C-D). Together
251 this suggests that SLD-2 localisation is actively regulated by the PAR protein network
252 not simply by the cellular volume at division.

253

254 **PKC-3 interacts with SLD-2 and causes SLD-2 asymmetry in the embryo**

255 To understand the molecular mechanism of SLD-2 asymmetry, we performed a yeast
256 two-hybrid screen between SLD-2 and a cDNA library from *C. elegans* embryos (data
257 not shown). One of the hits from this screen was the polarity factor *pkc-3*, which is
258 essential for defining the anterior domain in the 1-cell embryo [34]. SLD-2 interacts
259 with the PKC-3 region 94-184, which encompasses the pseudosubstrate (PS) and
260 C1 domains (Fig 6A). To assess the function of this interaction *in vivo*, we set out to

261 identify a separation of function mutant in *sld-2*, which lacked the PKC-3 interaction.
262 Using yeast two-hybrid analysis we narrowed down the interaction to the very C-
263 terminus of SLD-2, region 232-249 (Fig 6B). This is a highly basic region of SLD-2
264 (Fig S4A), which lacks any CDK sites. Indeed the SLD-2 mutant lacking all 8 CDK
265 sites (either mutated to alanine or aspartic acid, 8A/8D) still interacted with PKC-3
266 (Fig 6B). To identify a mutant that no longer interacted with PKC-3 we made
267 scanning mutations in the region 232-249 (Fig S4B-C). A mutation that converted the
268 very C-terminal 4 amino acids from KKKY to the acidic residues EDDD indeed
269 resulted in loss of the interaction with PKC-3 (Fig 6B and S4B-C) and we hereafter
270 refer to this mutant as *sld-2(EDDD)*. To check whether these mutations affect the
271 essential functions of *sld-2*, we tested whether *sld-2(EDDD)* expression rescued the
272 lethality of *sld-2* RNAi. Insertion of either *sld-2* wild type or the *EDDD* mutant at a
273 MosSCI site fully rescued the lethality of *sld-2* RNAi (Fig 6C) strongly suggesting that
274 the *sld-2(EDDD)* mutant is not defective in any of the essential functions of *sld-2*.

275 To investigate the significance of the SLD-2 interaction with PKC-3 for SLD-2
276 localisation we generated *sld-2(WT)* and *sld-2(EDDD)* alleles by CRISPR.
277 Homozygous *sld-2(EDDD)* strains were viable and showed no sterility phenotypes as
278 expected from the MosSCI strains (Fig 6C and data not shown). Importantly while the
279 wild type SLD-2 showed asymmetric localisation in the AB cell versus the P1 cell in
280 2-cell embryos as expected, the *sld-2(EDDD)* mutant which can no longer interact
281 with PKC-3 exhibited equal localisation in AB and P1 cells (Fig 6D and 6E). This
282 suggested that the interaction of SLD-2 with PKC-3 is important for the asymmetric
283 localisation of SLD-2 in the early *C. elegans* embryo. Although PKC-3 is largely
284 cytoplasmic and SLD-2 is mostly nuclear, SLD-2 becomes entirely cytoplasmic upon
285 nuclear envelope breakdown and we do observe an enrichment of both nuclear and
286 cytoplasmic SLD-2, in the AB versus the P1 cell (Fig S4D).

287 Having identified a mutant of *sld-2* that is no longer asymmetrically localised in 2-cell

288 embryos, we wondered if this had an effect on the cell cycle duration of this stage.
289 The *slid-2(EDDD)* mutant alone had no effect on the duration of the AB or P1 cycle
290 length (Fig 6F). Previous studies have shown the importance of the inhibitory
291 phosphorylation of CDK for elongating the P1 cell division cycle [6] and we also
292 observed a significant reduction in P1 cell cycle length after RNAi of the CDK
293 inhibitory kinase *wee-1* (Fig 6F). Combined inhibition of *wee-1* with the *slid-2(EDDD)*
294 mutant did not further reduce the P1 or AB cell cycle lengths (Fig 6F). Together these
295 data show that the PAR protein network controls SLD-2 asymmetry through PKC-3
296 interaction, but on it's own symmetrical localisation of SLD-2 is not sufficient to
297 advance the cell cycle at the 2-cell stage.

298

298 Discussion

299 It is vital for all organisms to make a perfect copy of the genome in every cell division.
300 For eukaryotes this is achieved in large part by linking DNA replication control to
301 CDK activation at the G1-S transition [7]. CDK plays a vital dual role in DNA
302 replication, both as an inhibitor of the helicase loading step in the initiation reaction (a
303 process called licensing) and as an activator of these loaded helicases during
304 replisome assembly. In budding yeast, CDK activates replisome assembly by
305 phosphorylation of Sld2 and Sld3, but the relative contribution of phosphorylation of
306 these two proteins to replication initiation differs in other species [17]. CDK
307 phosphorylation of the metazoan orthologue of Sld3 (Treslin/Ticrr/C15orf42) has
308 been shown to be important for S-phase progression in human cells in culture
309 [21,25,27], but evidence for an essential role for Sld2 (RecQ4/RecQL4)
310 phosphorylation in vertebrate cells is lacking. Conversely, CDK phosphorylation of
311 Sld3 is not essential in the fission yeast *S. pombe* and Sld3 orthologues are so far
312 absent in *D. melanogaster* [17].

313 By characterising *sld-2* and *sld-3* in the nematode *C. elegans*, we show for the first
314 time outside of budding yeast that both of these proteins mediate essential
315 interactions with MUS-101 (Dpb11/Cut5/TopBP1) through critical CDK sites (Fig 1-2
316 and [18]). Importantly phospho-mimicking mutants in both *sld-2* and *sld-3* that drive
317 interactions with MUS-101 are partially sufficient for cyclin E/Cdk2 function in *C.*
318 *elegans* (Fig 3). As the rescue of the *cye-1/cdk-2* RNAi with *sld-2(8D)/sld-3(8E)* is
319 only partial we cannot rule out that there may be other CDK targets required for
320 replication initiation in *C. elegans*, although it is also the case that the D and E
321 mutants of *sld-2/sld-3* are not perfect phospho-mimics (Fig 2D). In addition, Cyclin
322 E/Cdk2 has multiple functions in *C. elegans* such as contributing to embryo polarity
323 [35] and cell cycle re-entry of differentiated cells [30,36]. While it is possible that
324 some functions of cyclin E/Cdk2 may be compensated by other CDK complexes after

325 *cye-1/cdk-2* RNAi, it is important to note that, apart from a small number of blast
326 cells, all cells differentiate and become post-mitotic before the completion of
327 embryonic development in *C. elegans* [31]. Therefore our viability assays only assess
328 the contribution of CyclinE/Cdk2 to cell proliferation during early embryogenesis.

329 A surprising feature of the *sld-2(8D)/sld-3(8E)* double mutant strain is that it is
330 perfectly viable and fertile (Fig 2B and S2). Switch like activation of CDK at the G1-S
331 transition is required to completely separate the period of replication licensing from
332 initiation and bypass of phosphorylation of Sld2 and Sld3 results in genome instability
333 and death in yeast [8,37]. Additional layers of regulation may contribute to viability in
334 the *sld-2(8D)/sld-3(8E)* strain and one possibility is the activity of the Dbf4-dependent
335 kinase DDK. Like CDK, DDK is important for replication initiation and Dbf4 is
336 degraded by the APC/C in G1 phase in yeast, helping to prevent precocious
337 replication initiation [7]. We have previously shown that APC/C-dependent control of
338 Dbf4 is important in strains that mimic phosphorylation of Sld2/3 in yeast [8]. How the
339 *sld-2(8D)/sld-3(8E)* strain maintains a separation of licensing from initiation in *C.*
340 *elegans* remains to be determined.

341 The early embryonic divisions in many metazoa, such as in *Drosophila*, zebrafish and
342 *Xenopus*, are extremely rapid, lack gap phases and are characterised by high rates
343 of replication initiation. Cell cycle lengthening in these embryonic divisions coincides
344 with activation of DNA damage checkpoint kinases and the down regulation of cyclin-
345 dependent kinase (CDK) activity, through the inhibitory phosphorylation of CDK by
346 Wee1 and down-regulation of the counteracting phosphatase Cdc25 (String/Twine in
347 *Drosophila*) [38,39]. Inhibitory phosphorylation of CDK is likely critical for the
348 introduction of G2 phase and for delaying entry into mitosis. In *Drosophila* however
349 increasing CDK activity can also reduce S-phase length at the mid-blastula transition
350 (MBT) [14], although expression of CDK mutants that cannot be inhibited by Wee1
351 does not affect S-phase length at the MBT in *Xenopus* or zebrafish [15,16].

352 In *C. elegans*, CDC-25 and the Polo-like kinase PLK-1 (which increases the nuclear
353 accumulation of CDC-25) preferentially localise to the faster dividing AB cell in the
354 early embryo [2,4-6], while checkpoint activation has been proposed to preferentially
355 occur in the P1 cell [40]. RNAi of *wee-1* in *C. elegans* indeed results in faster division
356 of the P1 cell [6]. Therefore in both *Drosophila* and *C. elegans*, inhibitory
357 phosphorylation of CDK plays an important role in cell cycle lengthening in the
358 embryo. Despite this, in both of these organisms cell cycle elongation begins with
359 changes in replication initiation [41,42], but how this is achieved is not clear. In
360 *Drosophila* embryos, CDK activity prevents the chromatin binding of Rif1, and loss of
361 Rif1 to a large extent prevents normal cell cycle elongation in cycle 14 [43]. Rif1 is
362 known to inhibit replication initiation through counteraction of DDK, but also causes
363 changes in chromatin structure [44]. Despite this, RNAi of Rif1 is not sufficient to
364 accelerate the early embryonic divisions in *C. elegans* (MK and PZ data not shown).

365 Here we show that bypass of SLD-2 and SLD-3 activation by CDK is not sufficient to
366 change the cell cycle length in the early embryo (Fig 4A). This suggests that CDK
367 phosphorylation of these two replication substrates is not limiting for S-phase length
368 at least at the two-cell stage. Instead we show that the SLD-2 and SLD-3 proteins
369 themselves are asymmetrically distributed (Fig 4-6). It is striking that both the
370 regulators and the substrates of CDK are asymmetrically localised in the AB versus
371 P1 cell in *C. elegans* (Fig 6G and [2,4-6]). Although symmetric localisation of SLD-2
372 alone was not sufficient for alter the early embryonic divisions (Fig 6F), we do not
373 currently know how SLD-3 asymmetry is controlled to test the effect of equal
374 distribution of both proteins towards cell cycle length.

375 SLD-2 asymmetry in the *C. elegans* embryo is controlled by direct interaction with the
376 polarity factor PKC-3 (Fig 6), which is preferentially localised at the anterior of the
377 embryo [32,45]. A simple mechanistic explanation for SLD-2 accumulation in the
378 anterior AB nucleus over the posterior P1 nucleus is therefore that SLD-2 becomes

379 enriched in the AB cytoplasm (Fig S4D) by virtue of the established asymmetry of
380 PKC-3. In line with this hypothesis, the localisation of both SLD-2 and the anterior
381 polarity proteins, including PKC-3 are dependent on *par-3* and *par-4* (Fig 4 and
382 [46,47]). Although cell polarity has been shown to be required for S-phase length
383 control in the early *C. elegans* embryo [41], to our knowledge we have provided the
384 first direct link between the polarity network proteins and factors that are essential for
385 DNA replication initiation. This study may provide a platform to understand the
386 mechanism by which programmed developmental cues directly influence S-phase
387 length. As the human *pkc-3* orthologues are frequently mutated in cancers [48], this
388 new link between atypical PKC and factors required for genome duplication may
389 provide a novel mechanism by which this tumour suppressor affects cell proliferation.

390

391 **Figure legends**

392 **Fig 1. ZK484.4 is *C. elegans* *sld-3***

393 **A.** Scale diagram of Sld3, Treslin and ZK484.4 from budding yeast, humans and *C.*
394 *elegans* respectively. The Cdc45 interaction (Sld3/Treslin) domain is in orange. The
395 essential CDK sites in Sld3/Treslin and their potential orthologues in *C. elegans* are
396 numbered. The regions of interaction between *C. elegans* ZK484.4 and CDC-
397 45/MUS-101 are indicated below, together with a scale diagram of MUS-101 showing
398 the 6 BRCT repeats as grey boxes.

399 **B.** Yeast two-hybrid analysis between MUS-101 and CDC-45 bait constructs and
400 SLD-3 prey on non-selective (-Leu-Trp) and selective medium (-Leu-Trp-His+3-AT).

401 **C.** Box and whisker plot of embryonic lethality with and without *sld-3* RNAi by
402 injection.

403 **D.** As C except RNAi was performed by feeding at 21°C.

404

405 **Fig 2. Two CDK sites in SLD-3 are essential for the interaction with MUS-101**

406 **A.** Alignment of the CDK sites in Sld3/Treslin required for the interactions with
407 Dpb11/TopBP1. The amino acid numbers of the two orthologous CDK sites in *C.*
408 *elegans* SLD-3 are indicated below.

409 **B.** Yeast two-hybrid analysis between MUS-101 (1-448) and SLD-3 (389-557) wild
410 type (WT) or with the two CDK sites threonine 438 and 487 mutated to alanine (2A),
411 aspartic acid (2D) or glutamic acid (2E).

412 **C and D.** Box and whisker plot of embryonic lethality after *sld-3* RNAi by injection as

413 in Fig 1C. The extra, RNAi insensitive copies of *sld-3* are inserted at a MosSCI site
414 and expressed from the *mex-5* promoter.

415 **E.** Ratio of progeny from heterozygous *+sld-3(2D)* (top) or *+sld-3(2E)* (bottom)
416 parents. These 2D/2E mutations were generated by CRISPR at the endogenous *sld-*
417 *3* locus.

418

419 **Fig 3. Bypass of CDK site phosphorylation in SLD-3 and SLD-2 is partially**
420 **sufficient for cyclinE/CDK-2 function**

421 **A.** CDK drives the interactions between SLD-2, SLD-3 and MUS-101 (top). The
422 requirement for CDK can be bypassed using phospho-mimicking mutants in the
423 essential CDK sites of SLD-2 (8D) or SLD-3 (2D or 2E).

424 **B.** Box plot of progeny size for the indicated strains containing *sld-2* and/or *sld-3*
425 mutants as extra copies as MosSCI insertions.

426 **C** and **D.** Box plot of embryo lethality as in Fig 1C after *cye-1* (C) or *cdk-2* (D) RNAi
427 by feeding in the indicated strains. *** P-value <0.005, **0.006, *0.0453.

428

429 **Fig 4. SLD-3 and SLD-2 are asymmetrically localised in the early embryo**

430 **A.** Cell cycle length in the AB and P1 cell of the two-cell embryo in the indicated
431 strains. Error bars are SD.

432 **B.** Images of two-cell embryos of wild type (N2) or containing *mex-5p::sld-3-*
433 *mCherry::tbb-2 3-UTR* construct integrated at a MosSCI site. mCherry was visualised
434 by IF, DNA was stained with Hoechst. Scale bar is 10µm

435 **C.** As B. Images of two-cell embryo containing *mex-5p::sld-2-gfp::tbb-2 3UTR*

436 integrated at a MosSCI site. GFP signal was detected with Confocal Laser Scanning
437 Microscopy. Lower Image shows DIC channel. Scale bar is 10 μm . (Right) Graph
438 indicates the ratio of GFP signal intensity from the P1 cell over the signal from the AB
439 cell. Error bars are 95% CI.

440 **D.** As C, except endogenous SLD-2 was detected by immunofluorescence.

441 **E and F.** Quantitation of SLD-3-mCherry signal by IF (E) and SLD-2-GFP signal by
442 fluorescence imaging (F) in the four-cell embryo. The signal in the ABa cell was set
443 to 1. $n=7$ for each measurement for E and $n=5$ for F. Below the p-values were
444 obtained by paired t-tests, ns is not significant.

445

446 **Fig 5. SLD-2 asymmetry is polarity-dependent**

447 **A.** Images of two-cell embryos from the indicated strains after SLD-2 IF. Scale bar is
448 10 μm . N2, *par-3(it71)* and *pkc-3 RNAi* animals were grown at 20°C. The
449 temperature-sensitive strain *pkc-3(ne4246)* was grown at 25°C

450 **B.** Box plot of the data from A. p-values were obtained using the Wilcoxon rank sum
451 test.

452 **C.** Images of two-cell embryo of wild type (N2) and the temperature-sensitive
453 *par-4(it57)* mutant containing *mex-5p::sld-2-gfp::tbb-2 3UTR* grown at 25°C. The
454 fluorescent GFP signal was detected with Laser Confocal Scanning Microscopy.
455 Scale bar is 10 μm .

456 **D.** Box plot of the data from C. p-values were obtained using the Wilcoxon rank sum
457 test.

458

459 **Fig 6. SLD-2 asymmetry is PKC-3 interaction-dependent**

460 **A.** (Top) Scale diagram of *C. elegans* PKC-3. (Bottom) Diagram of PKC-3 fragments
461 that were tested for yeast two-hybrid interaction with full length SLD-2. +/- represents
462 whether the interaction was positive or negative.

463 **B.** Scale diagram of fragments of SLD-2 that were tested for yeast two-hybrid
464 interaction with PKC-3 (1-219). +/- represents whether the interaction was positive or
465 negative. SLD-2 8A or 8D refers to all 8 CDK sites mutated either alanine or aspartic
466 acid. SLD-2 EDDD refers to residues 246-249 (KKKY) mutated to EDDD.

467 **C.** Embryonic lethality 16-40hrs post-injection from the wild type strain (N2) or
468 MosSCI generated *mex-5p::sld-2(WT)::gfp::tbb-2 3UTR* or *mex-5p::sld-*
469 *2(EDDD)::gfp::tbb-2 3UTR* strains. SLD-2 RNAi was done by injection. Error bars are
470 95% CI.

471 **D.** Live imaging of PKC-3 GFP and SLD-2 mCherry or SLD-2 EDDD mCherry
472 generated by CRISPR. Scale bar is 10 μ m.

473 **E.** Detection of the nuclear SLD-2 signal by IF. Box plot graph shows the ratio of the
474 fluorescent signal intensity from the P1 cell over the signal from the AB cell from the
475 wild type strain (N2) and the mutant *sld-2 EDDD* generated by CRISPR.

476 **F.** Box plot of the AB and P1 cell cycle length from the indicated strains with and
477 without *wee1.3* RNAi by feeding. Cell cycle length was calculated as the time from
478 the P0 cell nuclear envelope breakdown (NEB) to the AB or P1 NEB from 8s time-
479 lapse movies. p-values were calculated using the Wilcoxon test.

480 **G.** Both CDK substrates (SLD-2 and SLD-3) and CDK activators (PLK-1, CDC-25
481 and CYB-3) are asymmetrically localised at the 2-cell stage in *C. elegans*. The
482 relative contribution of these localisations to asynchronous embryonic cell cycle
483 lengths remains to be determined.

484

484 **Materials and Methods:**

485

486 **Strains:**

487 Standard conditions were used to maintain *C. elegans* cultures (Brenner, 1974). The
 488 *C. elegans* Bristol strain N2 was used as wild type strain. Strains created by MosSCI
 489 contain wobbled versions of *sld-2* or *sld-3*. The following strains were used in this
 490 study: JA1564 (*weSi35 [Pmex-5::sld-2(wt)::egfp/tbb-2 3'UTR; cb-unc-119(+)] II; cb-*
 491 *unc-119 (ed9) III*), JA1563(*weSi34 [Pmex-5::sld-2(8D)::egfp/tbb-2 3'UTR; cb-unc-*
 492 *119(+)] II; cb-unc-119(ed9) III*) [18], KK300 (*par-4(it57ts)V*) [33], KK571 (*lon-1(e185)*
 493 *par-3(it71)/qC1 [dpy-19(e1259) glp-1(q339)] III*) [49], KK1228 (*pkc-3(it309 [gfp::pkc-*
 494 *3]) II*), WM150 (*pkc-3(ne4246)II*) [32] and EU548 (*div-1(or148ts) III*) [24].

495 Strains introduced in this study.

name	PAZ and zap name
<i>sld-3 WT</i>	PAZ1 (<i>zapSi1 (unc-119(ed9) III; [Pmex-5::sld-3(wt):: mcherry/tbb-2 3'UTR; cb-unc-119(+)] IV</i>)
<i>sld-3 2A</i>	PAZ2 (<i>zapSi2 (unc-119(ed9) III; [Pmex-5::sld-3(2A):: mcherry/tbb-2 3'UTR; cb-unc-119(+)] IV</i>)
<i>sld-3 2D</i>	PAZ3 (<i>zapSi3 (unc-119(ed9) III; [Pmex-5::sld-3(2D):: mcherry/tbb-2 3'UTR; cb-unc-119(+)] IV</i>)
<i>sld-3 2E</i>	PAZ4 (<i>zapSi4 (unc-119(ed9) III; [Pmex-5::sld-3(2E):: mcherry/tbb-2 3'UTR; cb-unc-119(+)] IV</i>)
<i>sld-3 T487A</i>	PAZ5 (<i>sld-3 (zap5[sld-3 (T487A)])</i>)
<i>sld-3 T487D</i>	PAZ6 (<i>sld-3 (zap6[sld-3 (T487D)])</i>)
<i>sld-3 T487E</i>	PAZ7 (<i>sld-3 (zap7[sld-3 (T487E)])</i>)
<i>sld-3 T438A</i>	PAZ8 (<i>sld-3 (zap8[sld-3 (T438A)])</i>)
<i>sld-3 T438D</i>	PAZ9 (<i>sld-3 (zap9[sld-3 (T438D)])</i>)
<i>sld-3 T438E</i>	PAZ10 (<i>sld-3 (zap10[sld-3 (T438E)])</i>)

<i>+sld-3 2E</i>	PAZ11 (<i>tmC18 [dpy-5(tmIs1200)] I; +/- sld-3(zap11[sld-3(2E)])</i>)
<i>+sld-3 2D</i>	PAZ12 (<i>tmC18 [dpy-5(tmIs1200)] I; +/- sld-3 (zap12[sld-3 (2D)])</i>)
<i>sld-2 EDDD</i>	PAZ13 (<i>sld-2(zap13[sld-2^(EDDD)])</i>)
<i>sld-2 EDDD-GFP</i>	PAZ14 (<i>zapSi14 (unc-119(ed9)) III; [Pmex-5::sld-2^(EDDD):: gfp/tbb-2 3'UTR; cb-unc-119(+)] IV</i>)
<i>sld-2 EDDD 3xFLAG mCHERRY</i>	PAZ15 (<i>sld-2(zap15[sld-2(EDDD)::3xFLAG::mcherry])</i>)
<i>sld-2 wt 3xFLAG mCHERRY</i>	PAZ16 (<i>sld-2 (zap16[sld-2(+)::3xFLAG::mcherry])</i>)
<i>sld-2 8D; sld-3 2E</i>	PAZ17 (<i>weSi34; zapSi4</i>)
<i>sld-2 8D; sld-3 2D</i>	PAZ18 (<i>weSi34; zapSi3</i>)
<i>sld-2 8D; sld-3 2E</i>	PAZ19 (<i>weSi34; +/-zap11</i>)
<i>sld-2 wt; sld-3 wt</i>	PAZ20 (<i>weSi35; zapSi1</i>)
<i>sld-2 wt; sld-3 2D</i>	PAZ21 (<i>weSi35; zapSi3</i>)
<i>sld-2 8D; sld-3 wt</i>	PAZ22 (<i>weSi34; zapSi1</i>)

496

497 **Yeast-Two-Hybrid assays:**

498 Performed as previously described [18].

499 **Immunostaining:**

500 SLD-2 Immunofluorescence: Young adults were cut on a slide in a drop of M9 to
501 release the young embryos. Embryos were freeze cracked and fixation with
502 additional antibody incubation and washing steps were performed as described in
503 [18]. The primary antibody was rabbit anti-SLD-2 (Ab 5058; [18]). SLD-2 antibody
504 was used in a dilution of 1:100. Secondary antibody labelled with AlexaFluor488 anti-
505 rabbit were obtained from Molecular Probes and used in a dilution of 1:500. Hoechst

506 stain was added 1:1000 into the secondary antibody dilution. Vectashield®
507 Antifading Mounting Media was used for mounting. The temperature-sensitive mutant
508 *pkc-3(ne4246)* was kept at 25°C overnight before the immunofluorescence
509 experiment.

510 SLD-3 mCHERRY Immunofluorescence: Immunofluorescence was performed using
511 a protocol adapted from [18]. Young adult hermaphrodites were cut to release
512 embryos onto 0.1% poly-lysine (Sigma, P8920)-coated slides. Slides were covered
513 with a 22x50mm coverslip and frozen on dry ice for 20 minutes. The coverslip was
514 quickly removed while the slide where still frozen to permeabilise the embryos.
515 Embryos were fixed in ice cold methanol for 30 seconds. Slides were additionally
516 fixed in a fixing solution containing 4% Paraformaldehyde, 80mM Hepes, 1.6mM
517 MgSO₄ and 0.8mM EGTA in PBS for 20 minutes at room temperature (RT). Samples
518 were then washed in PBS and 0.2% Tween 20 (PBST) five times over 30 minutes,
519 followed by blocking in 1% BSA in PBST (PBSTB) for one hour at RT. Slides were
520 incubated in the primary antibody rabbit anti-RFP (600-401-379; Rockland antibodies
521 and assays) (1:200) PBSTB solution overnight at 4°C. Slides were washed in PBST
522 five times over 30 minutes, followed by incubation with the secondary antibody Alexa
523 Fluor 594-conjugated donkey anti-rabbit antibody (A-21207; Molecular Probes)
524 (1:500) and Hoechst 33342 stain (1:1000 final concentration 1 µg/mL) in PBSTB at
525 RT for one hour. Samples were washed in PBST five times over 30 minutes and PBS
526 five times over 20 minutes. Vectashield® Antifading Mounting Media was used for
527 mounting.

528 **RNAi by feeding:**

529 The temperature-sensitive mutant strain EU548 (*div-1(or148)*) was synchronized by
530 bleaching and grown at 15°C together with N2 wild type control. RNAi inducing plates
531 were spotted with *sl-d-3* RNAi (this study, ZK484.4 ORF was cloned into L4440

532 plasmid) bacteria grown at 37°C for 7hrs. RNAi bacteria grown at 37°C for 7hrs. L1
533 worms were seeded on RNAi inducing plates and kept at 21°C until adulthood.
534 Young adults were singled on separate NGM plates and the embryonic lethality of
535 their progeny was determined.

536 For the embryonic lethality of *cdk-2*, *cyb-1* and *cye-1* RNAi bacteria were grown at
537 37°C for 7hrs in LB containing Ampicillin. Worm strains were synchronized by
538 bleaching. L4 worms were seeded on RNAi inducing plates with the respective RNAi
539 bacteria until they reached adulthood and were allowed to lay eggs for 24hrs. Plates
540 were kept at 25°C. The percentage of embryonic lethality of the F1 generation was
541 calculated by counting the number of hatched and unhatched progeny.

542 The wildtype strain N2 was used for *pkc-3* RNAi. Worms were synchronized by
543 bleaching. Plates were kept at 20°C. Mid L3 animals were seeded on RNAi inducing
544 plates. Young adults were used for SLD-2 immunofluorescence staining. A subset of
545 worms was singled to confirm PKC-3 knockdown by assessing embryonic lethality
546 (data not shown).

547 *wee1.3* RNAi by feeding was performed with the wildtype strain N2 and the Crispr
548 mutant *sld-2(zap13[sld-2(EDDD)])*. Worm strains were synchronized by bleaching.
549 Bacteria were grown at 37°C for 7hrs in LB containing Ampicillin. A dilution of 10%
550 (v/v) *wee-1.3* bacteria in L4440 control bacteria was used for seeding RNAi plates.
551 Because *wee-1.3* bacteria induced sterility, young adults were used for RNAi
552 induction overnight in 20°C. The next day the cell division timing was assessed by
553 time-lapse movies. A subset of worms was transferred to new plates to confirm *wee-*
554 *1.3* knockdown through embryonic lethality (data not shown).

555 *cyb-3* RNAi bacteria were grown in 37°C for 7hrs in LB containing Ampicillin. 2.5%
556 (v/v) *cyb-3* bacteria diluted in L4440 control bacteria was used for seeding RNAi
557 inducing plates. Worms were synchronized by bleaching. Plates were kept at 20°C.

558 L3 larva were seeded on RNAi plates. Young adult worms were singled out and
559 allowed to lay eggs for 24hrs. After additional 36hrs the embryonic lethality was
560 determined by counting the hatched and the unhatched progeny.

561 All RNAi experiments included the feeding of L4440 bacteria as a control.

562 **RNAi by injections:**

563 *sld-3* RNAi injections: N2, PAZ1, PAZ2, PAZ3 and PAZ4 young adult hermaphrodites
564 were injected with *sld-3* double stranded RNA, containing the entire coding region of
565 ZK484.4 with a concentration of 100ng/μl. Injected worms were kept at 20°C and
566 singled to separate NGM plates to assess the embryonic lethality in the F1
567 generation.

568 *sld-2* RNAi injections: N2, JA1564 and PAZ14 were synchronized by bleaching and
569 grown at 20°C to the young adult stage. Young hermaphrodites were injected with
570 *sld-2* double stranded RNA prepared from T12F5.1 with a concentration of 150ng/μl.
571 Injected worms were incubated at 20°C. The injected worms were singled out after
572 16hrs post-injection and transferred on new plates every 24hrs for 3 days. The plates
573 were assessed for total egg production and lethality in the embryos.

574 **Microscopy and image analysis:**

575 Immunofluorescence of SLD-3 mCHERRY was visualized on a DeltaVision
576 Deconvolution microscope. Z-stack images were taken and deconvoluted using the
577 associated software.

578 The fluorescent signal of the nuclei was analysed with ImageJ. Z-stack images were
579 combined using the Z-stack tool for maximum projection. The signals of the AB and
580 p1 nuclei were normalized against background and the signal ratio of P1/AB
581 visualized using R.

582 The immunofluorescent signal of SLD-2 staining and in-vivo imaging of the SLD-2
583 GFP signal in JA1563 and *weSi35; par-4(it57)* were visualized using Leica S8 Laser
584 Confocal microscope. Z-stack images through the whole embryo were taken. Images
585 were analysed with ImageJ. Using the maximum projection z-stack tool the
586 fluorescent signal of the nuclei was measured and normalized for background signal.
587 Relative Fluorescence analysis of SLD-3 and SLD-2 signal in the four-cell embryo:
588 Z-stack images of SLD-3 and SLD-2 IF was analysed using ImageJ. The fluorescent
589 intensity signal of the different nuclei was obtained using the maximum projection
590 tool. The signal in Aba was set to 1. The signal was normalized for background using
591 the signal of the AB cytoplasm.

592 **SLD-2 GFP localization kinetics:**

593 Time lapse z-stack movies of 1 min intervals were taken from early embryos of
594 JA1564 with a Deltavision microscope using a 60x oil objective. The embryonic
595 development of the pronuclei meeting to the nuclear envelope breakdown of the AB
596 cell was recorded. The fluorescent signal intensity in the AB cell and the P1 cell was
597 analysed using automated image analysis script run in ImageJ. The newly developed
598 programme recognises the AB and the P1 cells in the Nomarski channel. Within the
599 cells it measures an expanded area in the fluorescent GFP channel. The nuclear
600 signal is normalised to the background intensity for both cells in each image per
601 timepoint. The signal intensity is shown as Z-intensity.

602 **Cell cycle length analysis:**

603 Cell cycle length was analysed for N2 and *weSi34; zapSi4*. Cell cycle length analysis
604 was also done for N2 and *sld-2(zap13[sld-2EDDD])* for *wee1.3* RNAi. Time lapse z-
605 stack movies were taken starting from pronuclei migration until the four-cell stage of
606 the early embryo development in *C. elegans*. The time lapse interval was 8s. Cell

607 cycle time of the AB cell was calculated as the time starting from pronuclei fusion
608 until nuclear envelope breakdown of the AB cell. Movie was taken using a Deltavision
609 microscope with Nomarski optics and a 60X oil objective. Cell cycle timing of the P1
610 cell was calculated as the time from pronuclei fusion until the nuclear envelope
611 breakdown of the P1 cell.

612

613

614 **Progeny assays:**

615 N2, JA1563, PAZ3, *weSi34*; *zapSi3* and *weSi34*; *zapSi4* were synchronized by
616 bleaching. Plates were kept at 25°C. L4 (P0) were singled on NGM plates seeded
617 with OP50. After 24hrs P0 worm was transferred on new plate. This was done for five
618 days until egg production stopped. The total production of fertilized eggs from each
619 animal was calculated.

620 CRISPR *sld-3(2D)* and *sld-3(2E)* progeny analysis:

621 Heterozygous hermaphrodites of *sld-3(2D)* and *sld-3(2E)* and homozygotes single
622 site mutants were allowed to lay eggs at 20°C. Their larvae were singled on new
623 plates and checked for sterility. After two days after reaching adulthood they were
624 lysed and genotyped by PCR for the *sld-3* locus.

625

626 **Embryonic lethality assays:**

627 The *sld-3* Crispr mutants (*sld-3(paz5)*, *sld-3(paz6)*, *sld-3(paz7)*, *sld-3(paz8)*, *sld-*
628 *3(paz9)*, *sld-3(paz10)*) were tested for embryonic lethality. N2 was used as a control.
629 Plates were kept at 20°C. Young adults were singled on new plates and allowed to

630 lay eggs for 24hrs. The hermaphrodite was then removed and the embryonic lethality
631 was determined after additional 36 hours.

632 The *sld-2(8D); sld-3(2E)* MosSCI strain was tested for embryonic lethality. N2 and
633 weSi34; zapSi4 were synchronized by bleaching. The plates were grown in 25°C
634 until mid-J4 stage. Worms were singled on new plates and transferred again to new
635 plates every 24hrs for five days until egg production stopped. Living larva and
636 unhatched eggs were counted after additional 24hrs. Experiment was performed in
637 25°C.

638

639

640

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648

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784

785

785 **Supplementary Fig Legends**

786 **Fig S1.** Analysis of single CDK site mutants in *sld-3*

787 **A.** Alignment of the CDK sites in Sld3/Treslin required for the interactions with
788 Dpb11/TopBP1. The amino acid numbers of the two orthologous CDK sites in *C.*
789 *elegans* SLD-3 are indicated below.

790 **B and C.** Box plots of progeny size (B) and embryonic lethality (C) of a wild type
791 strain (N2) or strains with the CDK site T487 mutated to alanine, aspartic acid or
792 glutamic acid by CRISPR.

793 **D and E.** As B/C except for the T438 CDK site.

794

795 **Fig S2.** Bypass of Sld3 and Sld2 phosphorylation is partially sufficient for cyclin E
796 function.

797 **A.** Box plots of embryonic lethality from strains containing extra copies of *sld-2* / *sld-*
798 *3*, both of which are inserted at a MosSCI sites and expressed from the *mex-5*
799 promoter.

800 **B-E.** As A, but with RNAi of *cye-1* (B and C), *cyb-1* (D) or *cyb-3* (E).

801

802 **Fig S3.** SLD-3 and SLD-2 are asymmetrically localised in the early embryo

803 **A.** Box plot of SLD-3 mCherry signal ratio between the P1 and the AB cell.

804 **B.** Images from A. Images show brightfield, Hoescht and mCherry signal of the wild
805 type (N2) or the respective MosSCI lines. mCherry signal corresponds to SLD-3
806 expression in the two-cell embryo. Scale bar is 10µm.

807 **C.** Quantitation of SLD-2-GFP fluorescence from live imaging. Graph shows
808 fluorescent intensity signal of the AB and P1 cell. The graph represents one-minute
809 time-lapse movies of two cell embryos. The time point 0 is the nuclear envelope
810 breakdown (NEB) in the AB cell. Error bars are 95% CI; n = 8

811

812 **Fig S4.** Generation of PKC-3 interaction mutant in SLD-2.

813 **A.** Alignment of the C-termini of SLD-2 proteins from the indicated nematode
814 species. The region of interaction between *C. elegans* SLD-2 and PKC-3 is indicated
815 in red.

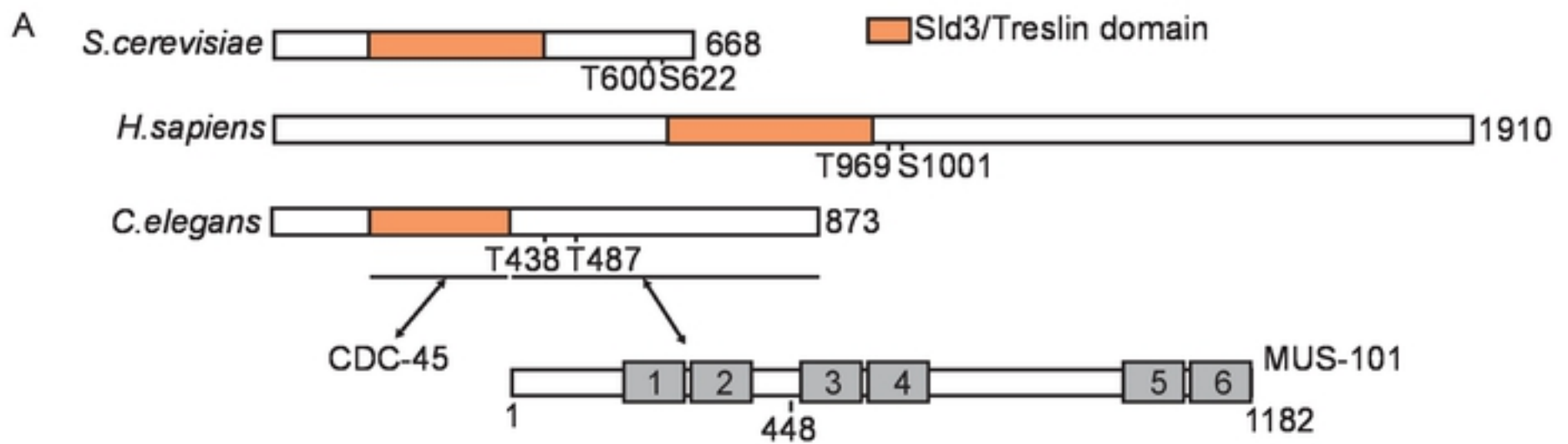
816 **B.** Summary of the yeast two-hybrid interactions between SLD-2 mutants and PKC-3
817 1-219.

818 **C.** Yeast two-hybrid growth assays of some of the mutants described in B.

819 **D.** Images of PKC-3 GFP and SLD-2 mCherry. This is the same image as Fig 6D, but
820 with increased brightness of the mcherry signal to visualise SLD-2 in the cytoplasm.
821 Scale bar is 10 μ m.

822

Figure 1



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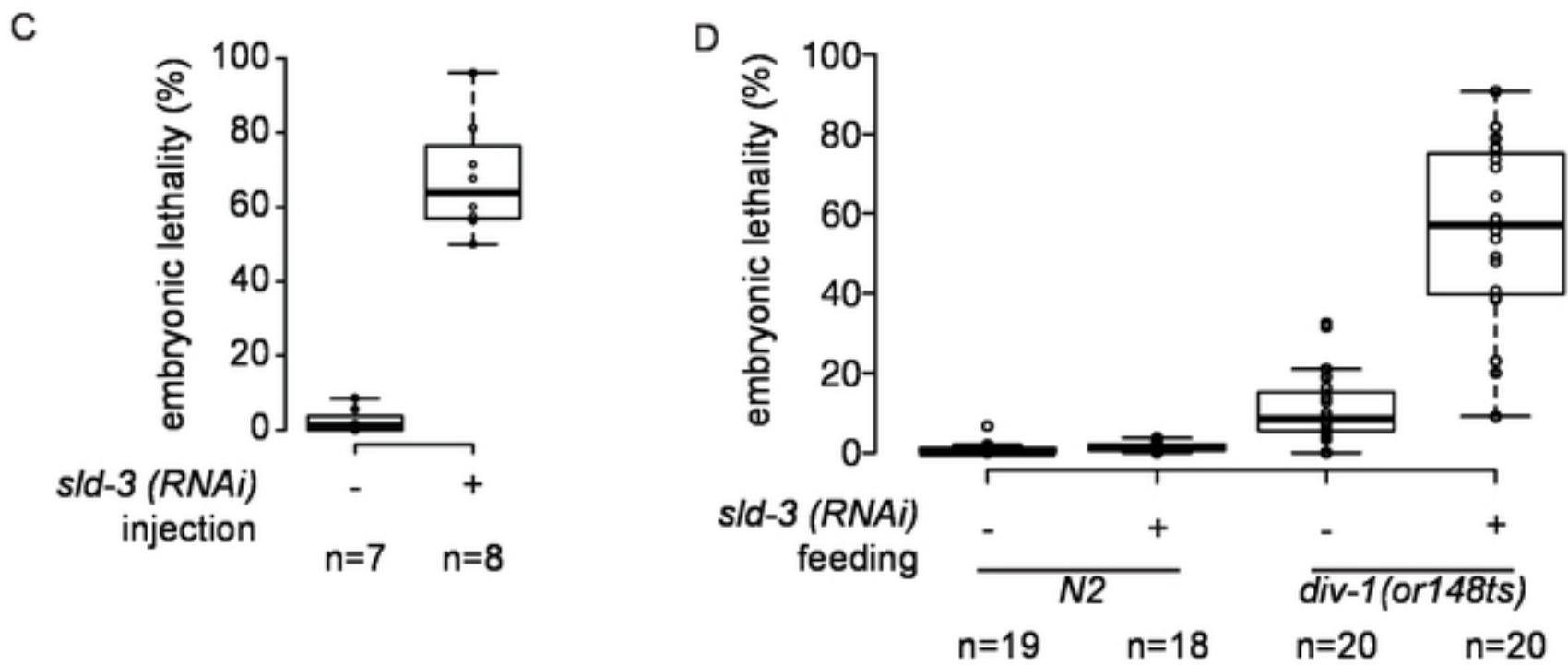
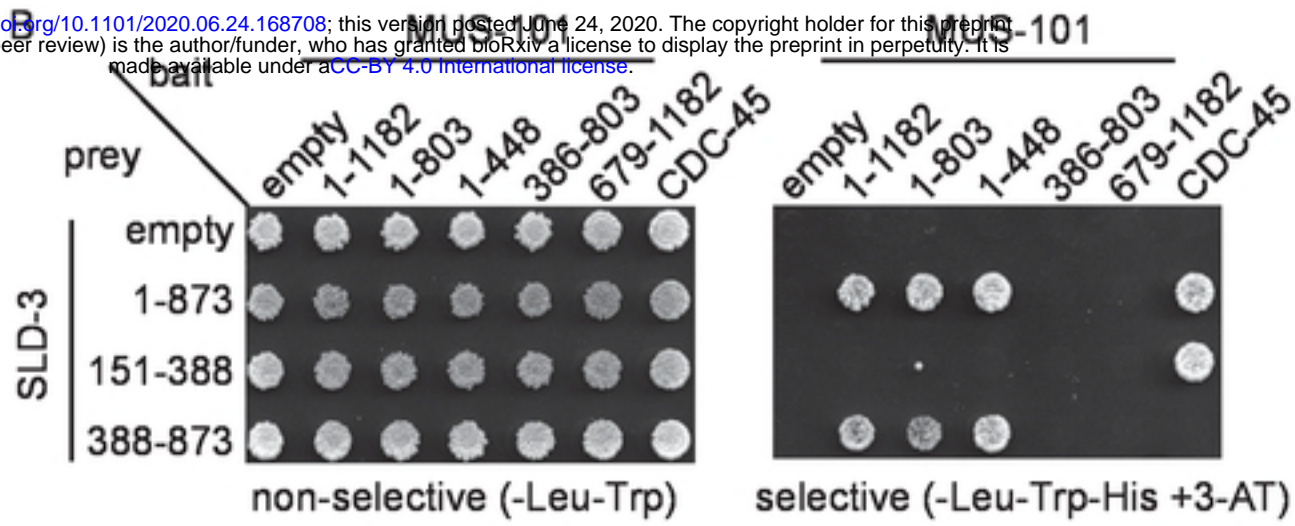


Figure 2

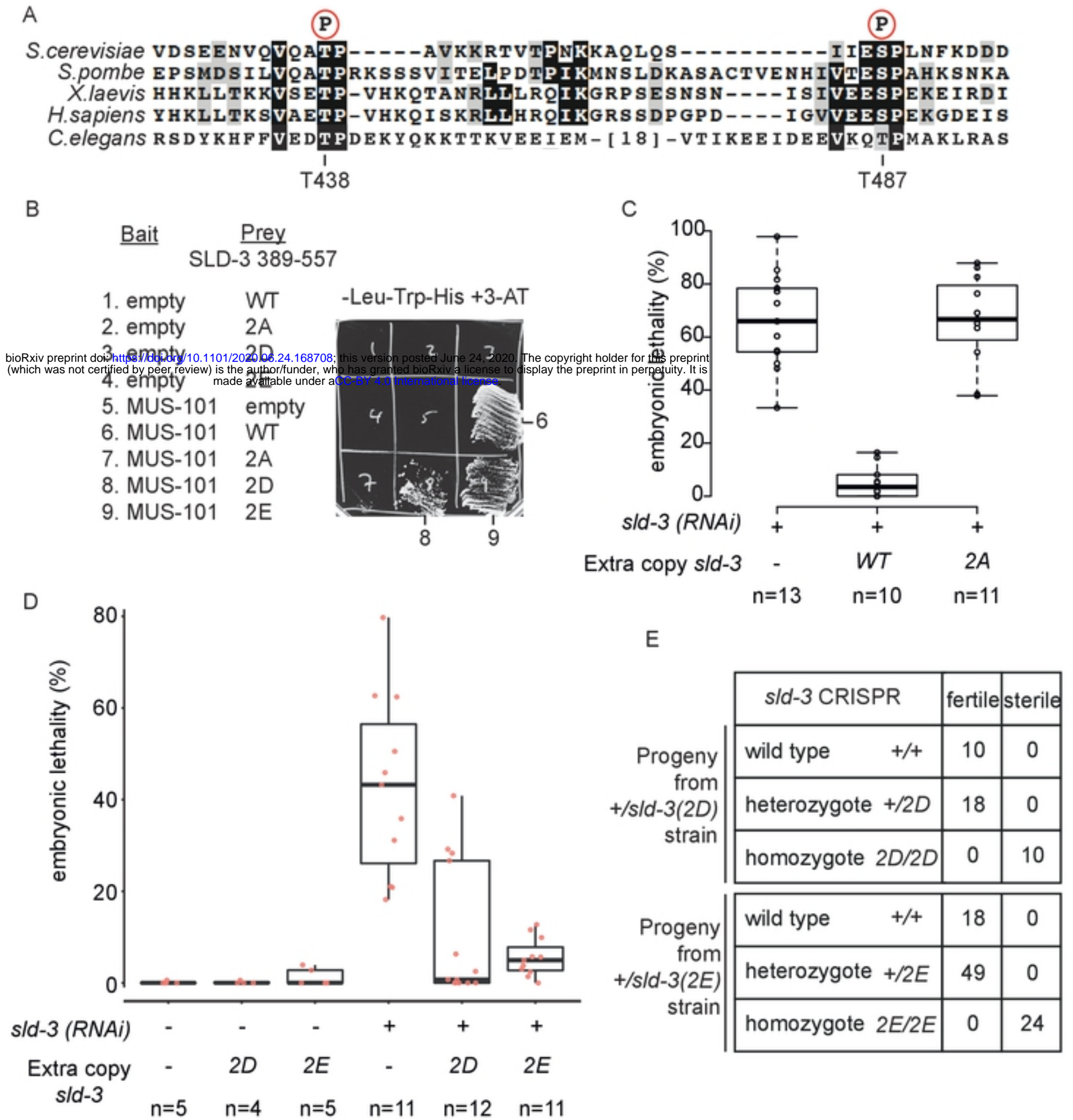
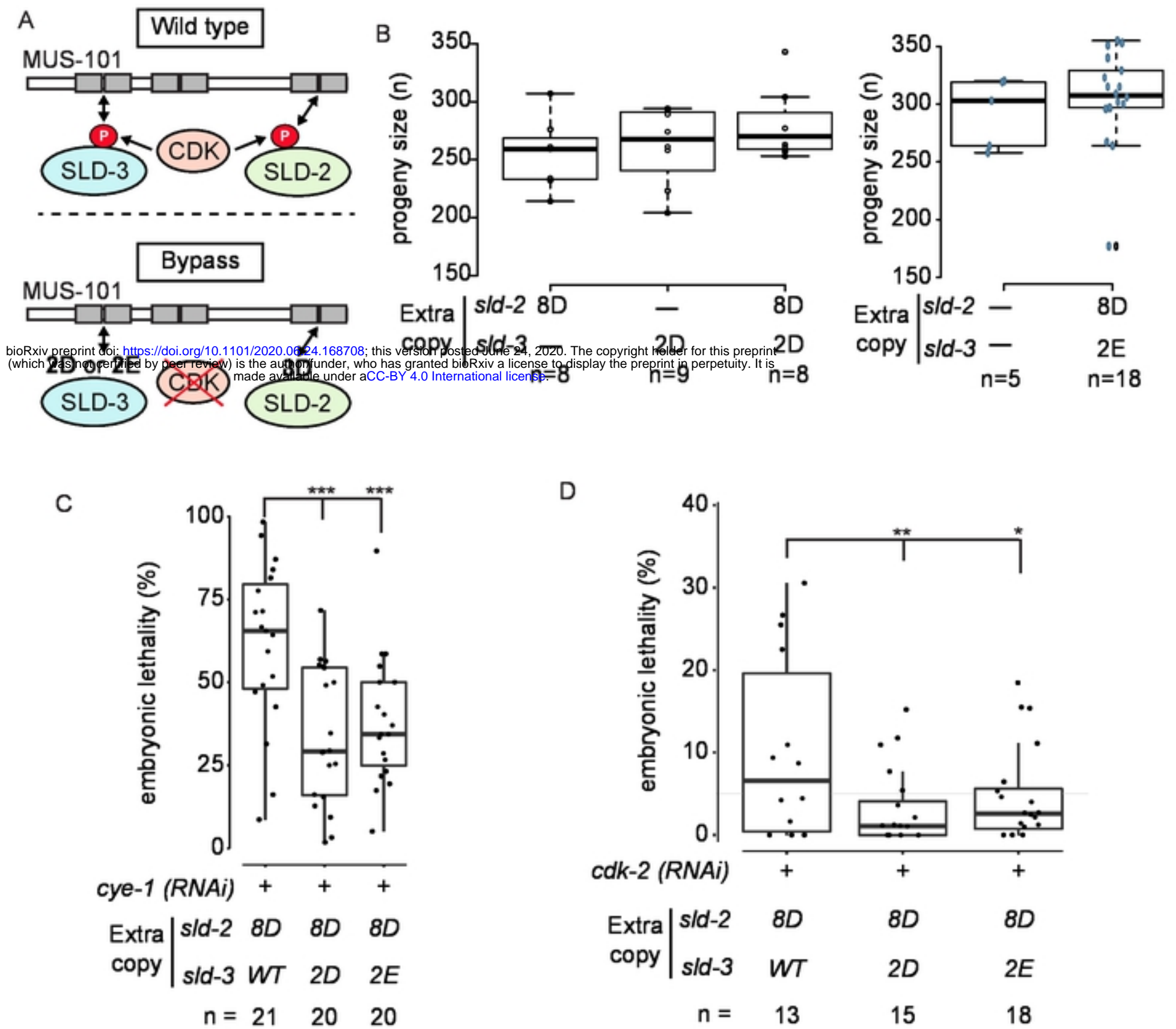
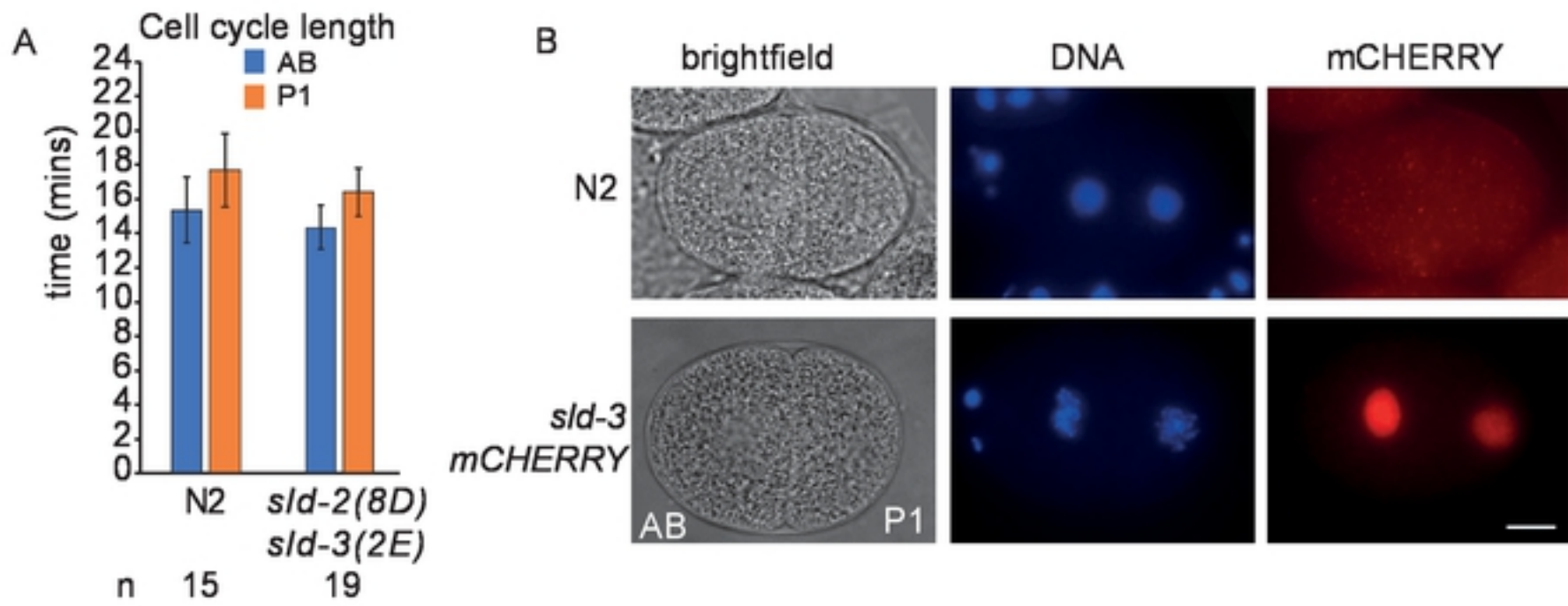


Figure 3

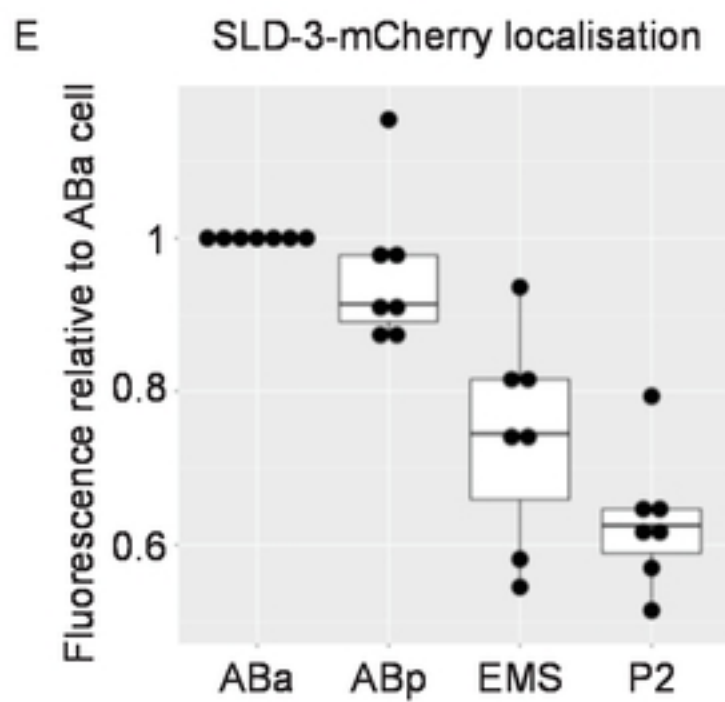
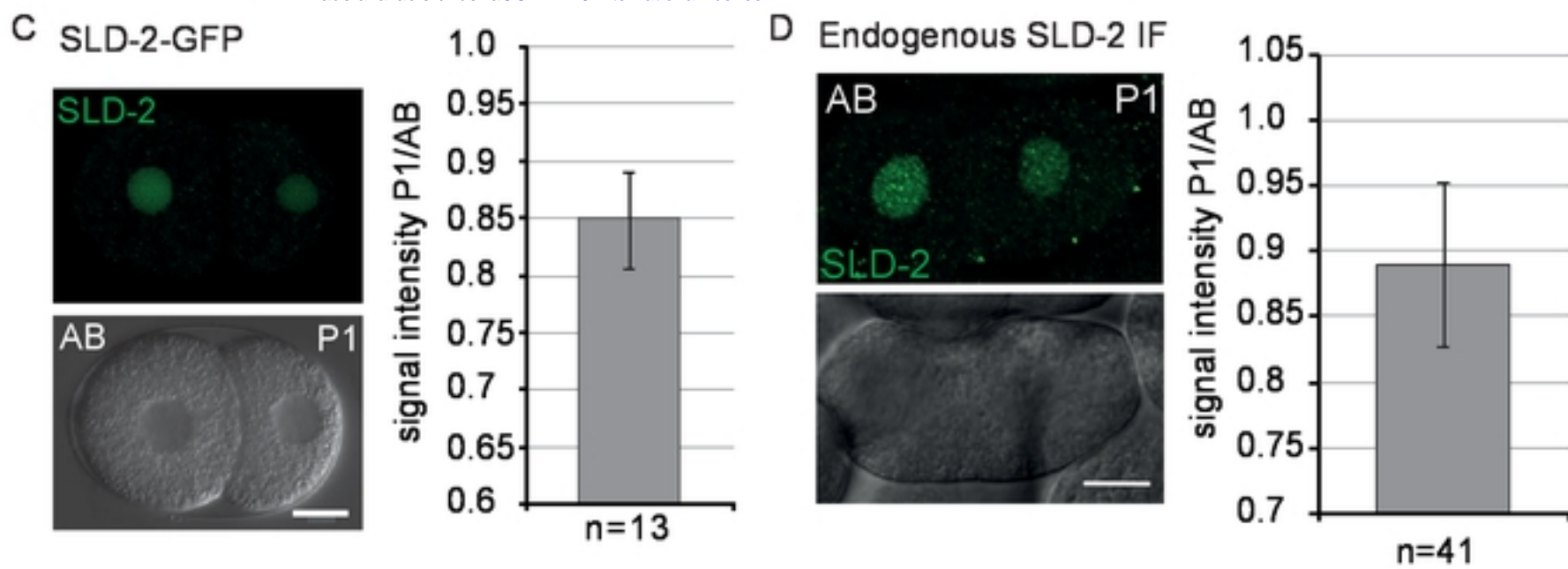


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Figure 4

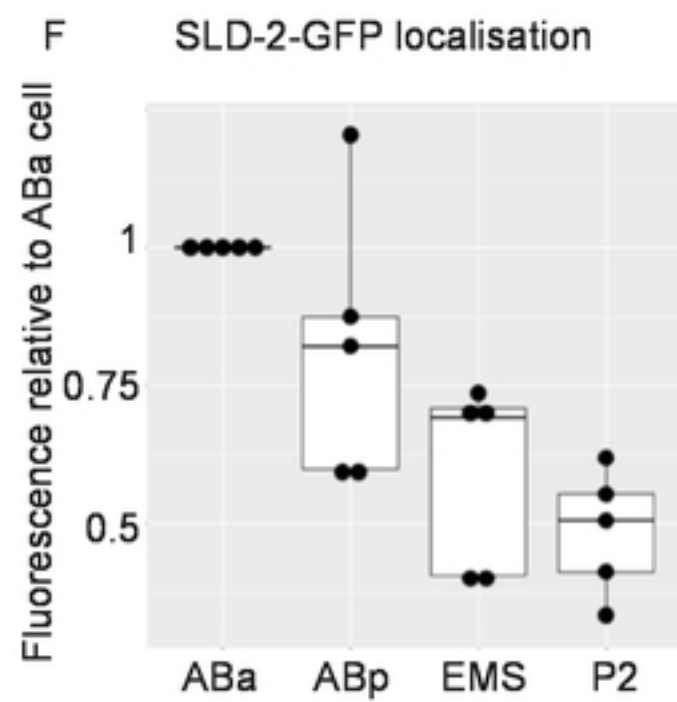


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P-values

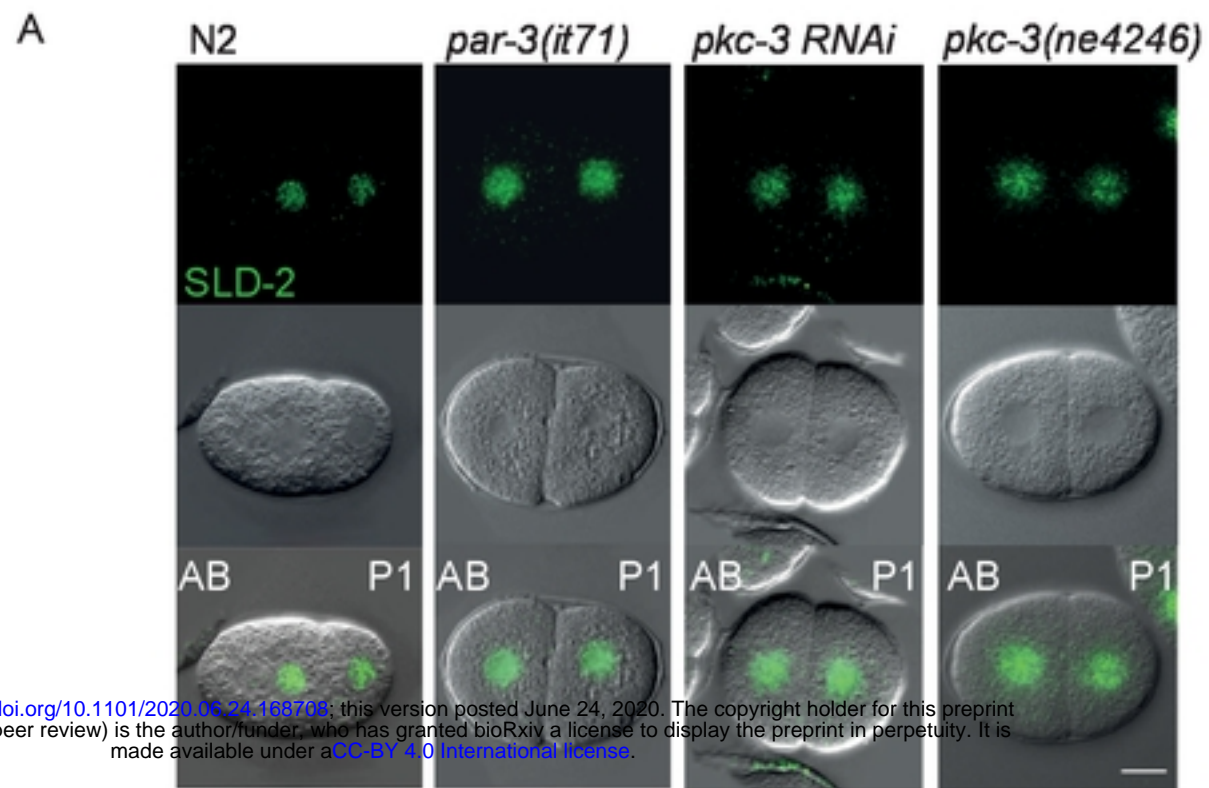
	ABp	EMS	P2
ABa	ns	<0.005	<0.00005
ABp		<0.05	<0.00005
EMS			ns



P-values

	ABp	EMS	P2
ABa	ns	<0.05	<0.005
ABp		<0.05	<0.05
EMS			<0.05

Figure 5



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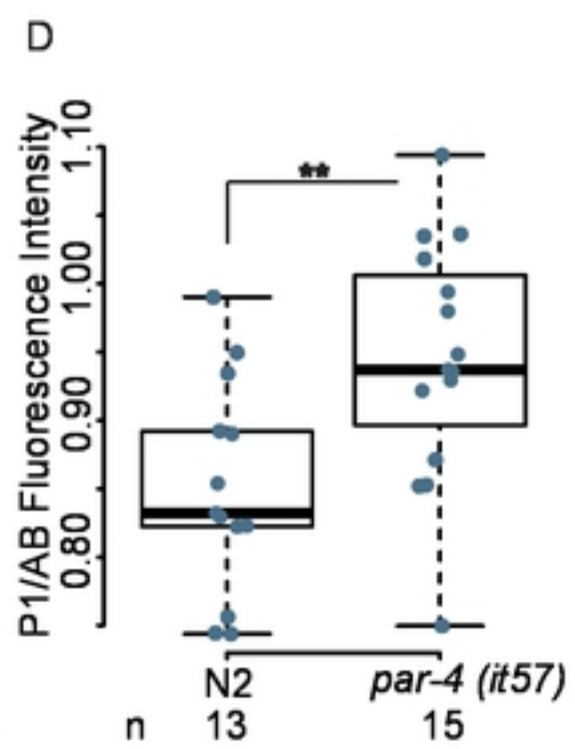
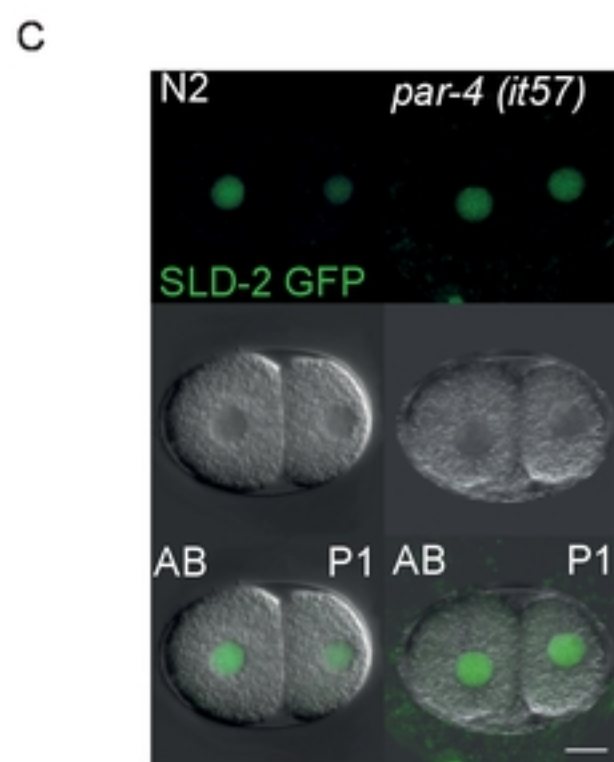
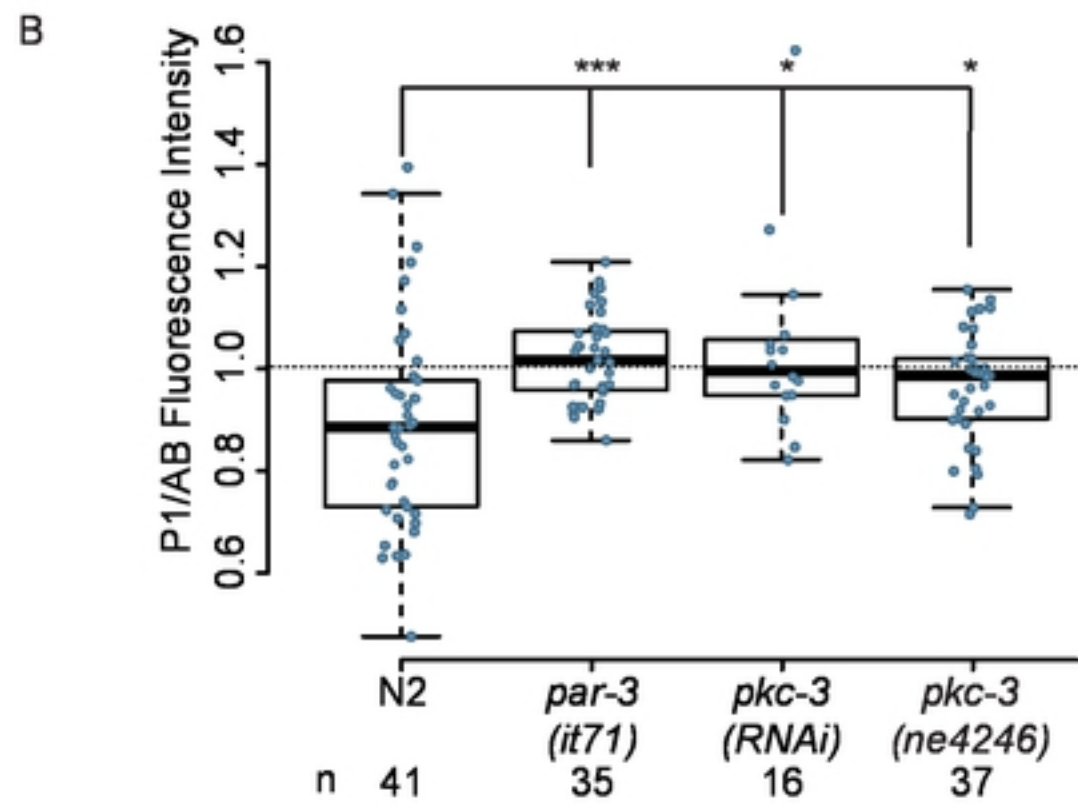


Figure 6

