Initial spindle positioning at the oocyte center protects against incorrect

kinetochore-microtubule attachment and aneuploidy in mice

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ABSTRACT

Spindle positioning within the oocyte must be regulated tightly. Following nuclear envelope breakdown (NEBD), the spindle is predominantly assembled at the oocyte center prior to its migration towards the cortex to achieve the highly asymmetric division, a characteristic of female meiosis. The significance of the initial central positioning of the spindle is largely unknown. Here we show that the centered spindle in mouse oocytes is an insurance mechanism to avoid the premature exposure to cortical CDC42 signaling, which perturbs proper kinetochore-microtubule attachments, leading to the formation of aneuploid gametes. Because the spindle forms where NEBD occurs, nucleus position significantly influences the location of the initial spindle assembly. We also find that this nucleus positioning is a dynamic process that depends on maternal age. These findings will help in understanding why female gametes are notoriously associated with high rates of aneuploidy, the leading genetic cause of miscarriage and congenital abnormalities.

INTRODUCTION

Infertility is a globally prevalent issue affecting approximately 122 million women worldwide (*1*). Errors in chromosome segregation during meiosis result in aneuploidy, the leading genetic cause of miscarriage and congenital birth defects such as Down syndrome (*2, 3*). Aneuploidy occurs in females of all ages, but females of young age (9-20 years) and women of advanced age experience elevated risk of aneuploidy (*4, 5*). Given that chromosome segregation errors occur mostly in female meiosis, particularly during the first meiotic division (Meiosis I, MI) (*6, 7*), it is crucial to understand the molecular mechanisms regulating female MI and how it can go wrong.

Oogenesis is a complex process that begins during fetal development in female mammalian species, shortly after conception. During late pregnancy, oocytes enter MI and duplicate their genome DNA (*8*). Shortly after birth, all germ cells undergo a prolonged arrest at the prophase I stage, which lasts until puberty. In adult ovaries, hormonal cues prior to ovulation stimulate the oocyte to resume meiosis (*8*). The nucleus (germinal vesicle, GV) typically localizes at the oocyte center in fully grown prophase I-arrested oocytes (*9*). Even if the nucleus is off-centered, these cortical nuclei can migrate towards the oocyte center by F-actin-mediated pressure gradient (*10-13*). A recent study suggested that oocytes lacking F-actin with off-centered nucleus positioning have altered transcriptional dynamics (*13*). However, the significance of central nucleus positioning remains largely unknown.

Upon meiotic resumption, prophase I-arrested oocytes undergo nuclear envelope breakdown (NEBD). During NEBD, the microtubule organizing centers (MTOCs) undergo a three-step fragmentation process before their clustering and sorting into two dominant spindle poles (*14-*

17). Since the spindle position dictates the cell division plane (*18*), the spindle must migrate to

the oocyte cortex to ensure the highly asymmetric meiotic division (*18-22*). Extruding a small

polar body (PB) through a highly asymmetric division is critical as it allows the egg to retain the

majority of the cytoplasmic storage of maternal RNAs and proteins, which are essential for the

early embryonic development (*23, 24*). However, it is still mysterious why the spindle initially

forms at the oocyte center, especially since it can increase the risk of symmetric division, leading

to infertility.

Here we show that the premature peripheral spindle positioning causes abnormal kinetochore-

microtubule (K-MT) attachments, chromosome misalignment and aneuploidy. Importantly, we

find that the initial central spindle positioning is critical to avoid the premature exposure to

cortical CDC42 signaling, which affects the fidelity of K-MT attachments through microtubule

tyrosination. Interestingly, we find that nucleus positioning, a major contributor for spindle

location, is a dynamic process that depends on maternal age. The majority of oocytes collected

from sexually mature mice had a centrally positioned nucleus, whereas prepubertal and

peripubertal mice had more oocytes with a peripherally positioned nucleus, potentially increasing

the risk of aneuploidy.

RESULTS

Peripheral GV oocytes have higher rates of misaligning chromosomes and forming aneuploid

eggs

In mouse oocytes, the meiotic spindle can initially form at the oocyte center (Supplementary Fig.

1A) or near the cortex (Supplementary Fig. 1B) depending on where NEBD occurs. To

investigate the impact of the initial spindle position on female meiosis, we sorted fully grown

prophase I-arrested oocytes into three groups based on the shortest distance between the nucleus

and the cortex: central (larger than 15 µm), intermediate (5 – 15 µm), and peripheral (less than 5

µm) GV oocytes (Fig. 1A,B). Careful rolling of the oocyte, as previously described (*9*), ensured

the correct classification. All oocytes selected for the following experiments were comparable in

size with a diameter larger than 80 µm (Supplementary Fig. 1C,D), indicating the full-grown

status (*25-27*). Any oocyte with a diameter less than 80 µm was removed from further

experiments to exclude the possibility of oocyte growth-associated nucleus centration (*9*). DNA

staining revealed that all selected oocytes, including peripheral GV oocytes, had a surrounded

nucleolus (Supplementary Fig. 1E), a criterion positively associated with developmental

competence (*28*). Finally, central GV oocytes were more common in 6-week-old mice compared

to intermediate GV oocytes and peripheral GV oocytes (Supplementary Fig. 1F).

Using the sorted oocytes, we examined the impact of the nucleus position on female meiosis. To

examine meiotic progression, oocytes were collected from mice aged 6-8 weeks and matured for

16 h (metaphase II). The majority (~92%) of central GV oocytes were able to undergo NEBD. In

contrast, peripheral GV oocytes showed a significant decrease in NEBD rate (~61%, Fig. 1C).

However, using time-lapse microscopy, we found no significant difference in the timing of

NEBD between central GV oocytes and peripheral GV oocytes (Fig. 1D). Similarly, a majority

(~81%) of central GV oocytes were able to extrude the first polar body (PBE), while peripheral

GV oocytes were less successful in extruding the first PB (~60%, Fig. 1E). Once again, there

was no significant difference in the timing of PBE between central GV oocytes and peripheral

GV oocytes (Fig. 1F). To examine the chromosome alignment and spindle morphology among

groups, oocytes were matured *in vitro* for either 7 h (metaphase I) or 16 h (metaphase II).

Chromosome alignment was examined based on to parameters previously described (*29*). We

found a significant increase in chromosome misalignment at both metaphase I and metaphase II

in peripheral GV oocytes, compared to central GV oocytes. Intermediate GV oocytes also

showed significantly higher rates of chromosome misalignment when compared to central GV

oocytes at metaphase I, but not at metaphase II (Fig. 1G,H and Supplementary Fig. 2A,B).

Spindle morphology did not vary significantly among groups either at metaphase I or metaphase

II (Fig. 1G,I and Supplementary Fig. 2A,C). Because chromosome misalignment is highly

associated with aneuploidy, we then assessed aneuploidy in metaphase II eggs using *in situ*

chromosome counting (*30, 31*). Strikingly, segregation errors occurred in peripheral GV oocytes

(~50.15%) approximately five times more frequently than in central GV oocytes (<8 %, Fig.

1J,K). Although we cannot exclude the effect of additional manipulating time (~ 30 minutes for

oocyte sorting/measurements) on oocyte quality, <8% aneuploidy in central GV oocytes remains

within the range of aneuploidy in control groups in several previous publications (*32, 33*).

Incorrect kinetochore-microtubule attachments are increased in oocytes with a peripherally

located nucleus

One important cause of aneuploidy is the weakened spindle assembly checkpoint (SAC).

Typically, the SAC monitors the status of K-MT attachments and will become inactivated when

MTs are correctly attached to all kinetochores. However, a weakened SAC may allow the

progression of the cell to anaphase without proper K-MT attachments, leading to aneuploidy. To

assess the SAC function in central, intermediate, and peripheral GV oocytes, oocytes were

treated with nocodazole, a MT depolymerizing drug that maintains the SAC active and thereby

prevents PBE by inducing metaphase I arrest (*31, 34*). We find that central, intermediate, and

peripheral GV oocytes all failed to extrude the PB in the presence of nocodazole. In contrast,

positive control oocytes treated with ZM447439, an Aurora Kinase B/C inhibitor that is known

to disrupt the SAC function at a high dose (10µM), extruded the PB even in the presence of

nocodazole (*35*) (Supplementary Fig. 2D). These results suggest that the SAC is intact in

peripheral GV oocytes, and therefore, not explaining their observed high aneuploidy rate.

Following spindle migration to the cortex, centromeres facing the cortex have less stable K-MT

attachments (*36*). These observations suggest that the cortex can influence MT dynamics and

their ability to establish stable attachments with kinetochores (*36*), a critical step to ensure

faithful chromosome segregation. In oocytes, even if the SAC is satisfied by present K-MT

attachments, it is not necessary that all attachments are correct and homologous chromosomes

are bioriented (*29, 37*). To assess K-MT attachments, metaphase I oocytes (~7 h) were exposed

to a brief cold shock (6 minutes) to depolymerize labile non-K-MTs and preferentially maintain

stable MT fibers that are attached to kinetochores (*31, 38*). Nucleus positioning had no effect on

the percentage of unattached kinetochores (Fig. 2A, Supplementary Fig. 2E). However,

peripheral GV oocytes displayed ~ four-fold increase in the percentage of incorrect K-MT

attachments, compared to central GV oocytes (Fig. 2A,B). Moreover, the percentages of

peripheral (37.93 ± 9.17%) and intermediate (39.13 ± 10.41%) GV oocytes having two or more

abnormally attached kinetochores were significantly higher than those in central GV oocytes

(7.14 ± 4.02%, Fig. 2C). These results suggest that improper K-MT attachments are the likely

cause, at least in part, of the increased aneuploidy rate in peripheral GV oocytes.

Prophase I oocytes favor central nucleus positioning

When meiotic resumption was prevented (by milrinone treatment) in peripheral GV oocytes, the

nucleus relocated to the oocyte center within 3 h of incubation in the majority of oocytes

(Supplementary Fig. 3A,B and Movie 1), confirming that the nucleus favors the central position,

as previously reported (*10, 39, 40*). Central positioning of the nucleus is actin dependent.

However, there were no differences observed between oocytes with a centrally or a peripherally

located nucleus in terms of cytoplasmic F-actin, cortical F-actin, or perinuclear F-actin

(Supplementary Fig. 3C-F). When the oocytes were allowed to resume meiosis, in milrinone-free

medium, nuclei initially located at the periphery of the oocyte underwent significant central

movement (10 ± 1.256 µm) before undergoing NEBD. Intermediately located nucleus and

centrally located nucleus underwent central movement and traveled a distance of 6 ± 0.6024 µm

and 4 ± 0.6783 µm, respectively, before NEBD (Supplementary Fig. 4A). However,

chromosome alignment in oocytes with a peripherally located nucleus occured relatively closer

to the oocyte cortex in comparison to chromosome alignment in oocytes with a central nucleus

(Supplementary Fig. 4B,C). It is of note that the timing of chromosome alignment did not vary

significantly among groups (Supplementary Fig. 4D), suggesting that peripheral GV oocytes do

not exhibit a cell cycle delay. These results suggest that mouse oocytes favor central nucleus

positioning, likely to avoid the increased incidence of aneuploidy in peripheral GV oocytes.

Incidence of aneuploidy directly associates with the proximity of early spindle positioning to

the cortex

Because the spindle forms where NEBD occurs, whether at the center (Supplementary Fig. 1A)

or at the cortex (Supplementary Fig. 1B), it is likely that increased aneuploidy in peripheral GV

oocytes is, at least in part, due to peripheral spindle formation. Using live time-lapse microscopy,

we found that oocytes with a peripherally located nucleus demonstrate one of three types of

movement: oocytes that were able to achieve complete relocation of the nucleus to the center

prior to NEBD (the spindle is formed centrally) were termed 'corrected', oocytes that

demonstrated central movement prior to NEBD but did not achieve full relocation were termed

'migratory', and oocytes that failed to make a relocation attempt before NEBD and remained at

the cortex were termed 'peripheral' (the spindle is formed peripherally; Fig. 2D). Strikingly,

although all oocytes selected in this experiment were peripheral GV oocytes, oocytes that were

able to successfully relocate their nucleus to the center and experienced central spindle formation

showed relatively lower rates of aneuploidy when compared to oocytes that failed nucleus

relocation and underwent NEBD at the periphery of the oocyte (Fig. 2E,F). These results suggest

that peripheral GV oocytes are not inherently erroneous, but instead peripheral spindle formation

is detrimental to the fidelity of chromosome segregation.

After meiotic resumption, mouse oocyte spindles are typically formed and remained at the

oocyte center until late metaphase I (~7h) followed by their timely migration towards the cortex.

It is technically feasible to shift the position of the spindle within the oocyte without noticeable

adverse effects (*22, 41*). To further confirm the relationship between the aneuploidy rate and the

proximity of early spindle positioning to the cortex, we experimentally relocated the spindle

prematurely to the cortex through mild centrifugation (Fig. 2G), a technique proven successful in

murine oocytes (*42*). This centrifugation technique has been used extensively for several

purposes (*e.g.,* lipid droplet removal and prior to parthenogenetic activation) without noticeable

detrimental effects on oocyte developmental competence (*43-45*). Central GV oocytes were

selected and matured *in vitro* for 4 h, until prometaphase I (the time prior to establishing correct

K-MT attachments) (*46*). These prometaphase I oocytes were centrifuged, examined live under

the microscope and resorted into two groups according to their spindle positioning: those

maintaining central positioning (control central) and those with induced peripheral positioning

(induced peripheral), which was followed by *in vitro* maturation for an additional 13 h to reach

metaphase II. Importantly, although all oocytes were originally central GV oocytes, oocytes with

induced peripheral positioning showed significantly higher rates of aneuploidy when compared

to oocytes maintaining central spindle positioning after centrifugation (Fig. 2H,I), indicating that

the premature cortical proximity of the spindle (prior to establishing correct K-MT attachments)

causes erroneous chromosome segregation.

Premature exposure to the cortical CDC42 signal perturbs K-MT attachments in oocytes

A conserved Rho-family GTPase, CDC42, is the master regulator of cell polarity in multiple

systems. To investigate whether the premature exposure of the spindle to the cortical cues

perturbs the establishment of correct K-MT attachments, we inhibited the cortical CDC42

signaling in prometaphase I oocytes with a peripherally located spindle. Peripheral GV oocytes

were matured *in vitro* for 5 h, and oocytes with a peripherally positioned spindle (confirmed

using Z-series live imaging) were selected and treated with ML141 (a previously proven

selective CDC42 inhibitor in mammalian oocytes) (*47-49*) for an additional 2 h (Fig. 3A).

Examining K-MT attachments in metaphase I oocytes showed that the number of unattached

kinetochores did not differ significantly among groups (Supplementary Fig. 5A). Inhibition of

CDC42 by using ML141 has no significant effect on cytoplasmic or cortical F-actin in oocytes

with a peripherally located spindle (Supplementary Fig. 6A-C) nor on K-MT attachments in

oocytes with a centrally located spindle (Fig. 3B,C). Importantly, inhibition of cortical CDC42

signals using ML141 partially rescued abnormal K-MT attachments in oocytes with a

peripherally positioned spindle (Fig. 3B,C). To further confirm this finding, we perturbed the

CDC42 signaling by overexpressing CDC42 dominant-negative mutant (CDC42 T17N,

previously demonstrated to inhibit CDC42 in mouse oocytes) (*50*). Consistent with the ML141

results, perturbing CDC42 signaling by overexpressing a CDC42 dominant-negative mutant

significantly rescued abnormal K-MT attachments in oocytes with a peripherally located spindle

(Fig. 3D,E). Taken together, these results suggest that the increased incidence of abnormal K-

MT attachments in oocytes with a peripherally located spindle is, at least in part, due to the

premature exposure to cortical CDC42 signaling.

Induced peripheral oocytes (*i.e.* oocytes with a peripherally located spindle after centrifugation)

exhibited higher rates of abnormal K-MT attachments, compared to those that maintained a

centrally positioned spindle (control central) after centrifugation (Supplementary Fig. 5B,D). To

confirm that K-MT attachments in induced peripheral oocytes were affected primarily by the

proximity to the cortex and to exclude the possibility that the difference in the response to

centrifugation between induced peripheral and control central oocytes was due to a pre-existing

difference, we asked whether inhibiting CDC42 cortical signals could rescue the increased

incidence of abnormal K-MT attachments in induced peripheral oocytes. Control central and

induced peripheral prometaphase I (5 h) oocytes were treated with or without ML141 for an

additional 2 h prior to assessing K-MT attachments (Supplementary Fig. 5B). There were no

differences in the percentage of unattached kinetochores among groups (Supplementary Fig. 5C).

Importantly, CDC42 inhibition largely rescued the increased incidence of abnormal K-MT

attachments in induced peripheral oocytes (Supplementary Fig. 5D), further supporting the idea

that increased abnormal K-MT attachments in induced peripheral oocytes is due to the premature

exposure of the spindle to the cortical CDC42 signal. Collectively, these results strongly suggest

that avoiding the cortical CDC42 signal during prometaphase I (*i.e.* by being at the oocyte center

prior to timely spindle migration) is critical in protecting the oocyte's ability to establish correct

K-MT attachments, leading to faithful chromosome segregation.

Excessive MT tyrosination interferes with establishing correct K-MT attachments

We next asked how CDC42 affects K-MT attachments. Because the cortical CDC42 plays an

essential role in actin cap formation by activating ARP2/3 complex (*51*), we tested whether

CDC42 signaling perturbs K-MT attachments in peripheral GV oocytes via the premature

activation of ARP2/3. To address this question, peripherally GV oocytes were matured *in vitro*

for 5 h and oocytes with a peripherally positioned spindle (confirmed using Z-series live

imaging) were treated with CK-666 (a selective and potent ARP2/3 inhibitor) (*51, 52*) for an

additional 2 h. Analyzing K-MT attachments in metaphase I oocytes showed that ARP2/3

inhibition did not rescue abnormal K-MT attachments in oocytes with a peripherally located

spindle (Supplementary Fig. 6D,E), indicating that CDC42 signaling does not perturb the

establishment of K-MT attachments via actin cap formation.

Recent study using mouse oocytes suggested that CDC42 signaling can promote α-tubulin

tyrosination within the cortical spindle, increasing MT dynamics (*36*). Therefore, we

hypothesized that the premature exposure of the spindle to cortical CDC42 (*i.e.* before

establishing correct K-MT attachments) results in excessive MT tyrosination, which interferes

with the correction mechanism of K-MT attachments. The genetically encoded C-terminal

tyrosine on α-tubulin undergoes cycles of detyrosination and (re) tyrosination (*53*). In mitotic

cells, initial incorrect attachments are established during early mitosis and primarily formed by

tyrosinated MTs. Tyrosinated MTs are relatively labile to depolymerization, leading to their

detachment from chromosomes. When correct attachments are established, MTs are

detyrosinated and stabilized (*54*). In mouse oocytes, reducing α-tubulin tyrosination (by

depleting tubulin-tyrosine ligase) increased the rate of MT stabilization (*36*). Thus, the level of

MT tyrosination must be spatiotemporally regulated to establish correct K-MT attachments. To

test whether α-tubulin tyrosination levels depend on the spindle position, we compared

tyrosinated α-tubulin levels in metaphase I oocytes between central and peripheral spindles. In

contrast to β-tubulin levels, which were not affected by the spindle position, tyrosinated α-

tubulin levels were significantly higher in oocytes with a peripherally positioned spindle when

compared to oocytes with a centrally positioned spindle (Fig. 4A,B). We also confirmed the

impact of CDC42 signaling on α-tubulin tyrosination in the spindle. Our results showed that

tyrosinated α-tubulin levels were significantly lower in CDC42-inhibited oocytes (oocytes

expressing CDC42 dominant negative mutant, CDC42 T17N), compared to control oocytes (Fig.

4C,D). Thus, CDC42 cortical signaling promotes MT tyrosination in mouse oocytes. We then

asked whether decreasing tyrosination levels could rescue increased abnormal K-MT

attachments in peripheral GV oocytes. Removing the tyrosine residue from α-tubulin (*i.e.*

detyrosination) is regulated by tubulin carboxypeptidase enzymes encoded by Vasohibins

(VASHs) (*55, 56*). Ectopic expression of VASH2 did not completely abolish tyrosinated α-

tubulin in mouse oocytes (Fig. 4E), whereas co-expression of VASH2 and small VASH binding

protein (SVBP, a chaperone protein required for VASH stability) (*55, 56*) eliminated tyrosinated

α-tubulin without affecting the bipolar spindle formation (Fig. 4E-G, Supplementary Fig. 7).

Importantly, decreasing α-tubulin tyrosination significantly decreased abnormal K-MT

attachments in oocytes with a peripherally located spindle (Fig. 4H,I). Taken together, our data

indicate that the premature exposure of the spindle to cortical CDC42 signaling interferes with

the establishment of correct stable K-MT attachments, via promoting MT tyrosination.

Too young female mice tend to have peripheral GV oocytes increasing the risk of aneuploidy

It is established that the egg aneuploidy rate increases with advanced maternal age mainly due to

chromosome cohesion loss. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that too young females

also have higher chances of producing aneuploidy eggs(*5*), though the underlying mechanisms

are largely unknown. We wondered if the nucleus position may explain the higher aneuploidy

rate in younger females. To test this idea, we quantified the nucleus position *in vivo* by analyzing

ovary sections from mice with different ages (2-, 3-, 5-, and 8-week-old) (Fig. 5A-C). We found

that the majority of oocytes were categorized as central GV oocytes for the 8-week-old mice, but

the younger mice (2-, 3-, and 5-week-old) had fewer central GV oocytes, and the peripheral GV

oocytes were the majority in the 2- and 3-week-old mice (Fig. 5A-C). *In vitro*-cultured oocytes

from 2-, 3-, 5-, and 8-week-old mice showed similar trends with the *in vivo* experiment (Fig.

5D). These results suggest that oocytes from very young mice tend to have a peripheral nucleus,

possibly increasing their aneuploidy risk through the premature exposure of the spindle to

cortical cues.

DISCUSSION

Aneuploidy occurs frequently in female oocytes, typically as a result of mis-segregation during

MI (*6, 7, 33, 57*). We developed different complementary and confirmatory oocyte models in

which: 1) the spindle is assembled peripherally or centrally (based on the nucleus position or the

location of the spindle at NEBD), 2) the centrally positioned spindle is prematurely relocated

towards the cortex (using centrifugation), or 3) cortical CDC42 signaling is perturbed in oocytes

with a peripherally located spindle. We found that initial spindle positioning at the oocyte center

(until proper K-MT attachments are established and prior to timely spindle migration) is an

insurance mechanism to avoid the premature exposure to cortical CDC42 signaling, which

hinders proper K-MT attachments, leading to aneuploidy. These findings may explain why, in

mouse oocytes, correct K-MT attachments are primarily established when the spindle is still at

the oocyte center (~ 2 h before anaphase I), *i.e.* before migrating to the cortex (*36, 46*).

Nucleus positioning in meiotic oocytes is often studied only *in vitro* or at a single time point *in*

vivo and, thus, the comprehensive understanding across different timepoints is missing. Also,

there has been a long-standing debate regarding the position of the nucleus in mouse oocytes. For

example, a previous study found that the majority of prophase I-arrested oocytes have a

peripherally located nucleus, and this cortical positioning of the nucleus is likely influenced by

gap junctions and increased cumulus cell contact (*58*). On the other hand, other studies

demonstrated that the majority of prophase I-arrested oocytes have a centrally positioned nucleus

(*9, 13, 59*). Interestingly, in the first study (*58*), the oocytes were collected from mice aged 21

days, whereas in the other studies (*9, 13, 59*), the oocytes were collected from mice aged more

than 6-8-weeks old. Our results clearly link these previous findings, providing an explanation to

the long-standing debate on the nucleus position in mouse oocytes and advancing our

understanding of an important phenomenon.

Although the nucleus shifts from a peripheral position in prepubertal oocytes towards a central

position in sexually mature mouse oocytes, this is likely not the only shift during the

reproductive life. Indeed, it has been shown that oocytes from aged mice (~1 year) also exhibit a

majority of peripherally positioned nuclei (*9*). These observations indicate that oocyte nucleus

migrates to the oocyte center during sexual maturation and migrates back to the cortex with the

advancement of maternal age. Investigating the molecular basis underlying the age-dependent

nucleus migration would be an interesting future direction. For example, analyzing cytoskeleton

dynamics at different developmental stages may reveal why the nucleus migrates towards certain

directions at certain stages.

Nucleus relocation within eukaryotic cells is critical for organism development. In *Drosophila*

oocytes, the nucleus migrates from a central posterior to an asymmetrical anterior position to

dictate the dorsal-ventral axis, necessary for organogenesis and *Drosophila* development (*60-62*).

In *C. elegans* zygotes, the two pronuclei meet at the posterior cortex and then migrate towards

the zygote center to allow proper spindle pole orientation along the anterior-posterior axis prior

to spindle migration towards the posterior cortex (*63-66*). Although many mammalian oocytes at

prophase I are not polarized and the nucleus position has no consequence on the developmental

axis, they still employ a similar nucleus relocation. The peripheral nucleus undergoes centration

which correlates with maturation success. Following NEBD, the centrally formed spindle must

migrate towards the cortex in a timely manner to ensure the asymmetric division. Our

understanding of the biological significance of central nucleus positioning in mammalian oocytes

is still rudimentary. It has been proposed in Almonacid *et al*. (2018) that nucleus centration plays

a role in keeping prophase I oocytes in a non-polarized state, ensuring random cytoplasmic

distribution and avoiding unphysiological cytoplasmic compartmentalization (*11*). Our findings

suggest that central nucleus positioning is an insurance mechanism to allow the avoidance of the

spindle to the premature exposure to cortical cues, providing a complementary explanation of

why mouse oocytes experience nucleus centration.

Current *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) technologies have much room for improvement, as only

12.7% of naturally ovulated IVF cycles in humans lead to pregnancy and only 8.8% of those

pregnancies result in live births (*67*). Although technologies and protocols have advanced since

the first IVF birth in 1978, the IVF success rate remains less than 50% for women under the age

of 35 (*68*). To date, there are no definitive morphological markers of predictive oocyte

aneuploidy. Gametes from human females are notoriously associated with high rates of

aneuploidy (*4, 6*). In addition, human oocytes with a peripherally located nucleus are associated

with poor maturation rates compared to those with a centrally located nucleus (*59*). Therefore, it

is tempting to speculate that central nucleus positioning is a strategy to ensure initial spindle

positioning at the oocyte center, thereby avoiding the development of aneuploid gametes.

Understanding the association between peripherally located spindle and the incidence of

aneuploidy may allow us to better screen for the oocytes predisposed to proper chromosome

segregation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ethics

All laboratory animals were managed, and experiments conducted, in compliance with the

University of Missouri (Animal Care Quality Assurance Reference Number, 9695).

Mouse strains

Unless otherwise specified, female CF-1 WT mice were used. *Cep192-eGfp* reporter mice were

generated (*69*) by integrating a construct harboring the EGFP reporter gene into CF-1 mouse

genome via CRISPR/Cas9-mediated homology-directed repair. The EGFP reporter was fused at

the C-terminus of the endogenous mouse Cep192. Homozygous breeding pairs of *Cep192-eGfp*

reporter mice were used to maintain the colony.

Oocyte collection, microinjection and in vitro maturation (IVM)

Full-grown GV oocytes were collected from CF-1 female mice aged 6-8 weeks. Oocyte

collection and culture were carried out as previously described (*31, 70*). Cumulus oocyte

complexes (COCs) were collected and cultured in bicarbonate-free minimal essential medium

(MEM) supplemented with 3mg/ml polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP) and 25 mM HEPES (pH 7.3)

under mineral oil (MilliporeSigma, St. Louis, MO, USA # P2307, # H3784, # M8410). Oocytes

were manually denuded and sorted into 3 groups: Central GV, Intermediate GV, Peripheral GV

oocytes. Careful rolling of the oocyte, as previously described, ensured correct classification (*9*).

Denuded GV oocytes were microinjected with ∼5 pl of the indicated cRNA using Eppendorf

Femtojet 4i. The injection medium for oocytes was MEM supplemented with 3mg/ml

polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP), 25 mM HEPES (pH 7.3) under mineral oil. Oocytes were then

transferred to Chatot, Ziomek, and Bavister (CZB) maturation medium (*71*) supplemented with

1μM glutamine (MilliporeSigma, # G8549) under mineral oil and matured at 37˚C with

humidified 5% CO_2 in an incubator for either 7, 14, or 16 h.

Nocodazole (Sigma #M1404), monastrol (Sigma #M8515), ML141 (Sigma #SML0407),

ZM447439 (Tocris #2458) and CK-666 (Sigma #182515) were dissolved in DMSO and added to

CZB culture medium at a final concentration of 5 μm, 100 μM, 500 nM, 10 μm and 50 μM,

respectively. SiR-tubulin and SiR-DNA were added to the maturation medium (at a final

concentration of 100 nM) during live imaging to label MTs and DNA, respectively.

In vitro cRNA synthesis

Synthesis of cRNAs was performed using T7 polymerase (mMessage mMachine kit, Ambion)

according to the manufacturer's instructions. The cRNA was purified using an RNAEasy kit

(Qiagen). cRNAs used for microinjection were 3xFLAG-Vash2 (mouse VASH2 with three

tandem FLAG tag at the N terminus) at 500 ng/µl, SVBP-HA (mouse SVBP with a HA tag at the

C terminus) at 300 ng/µl and *Cdc42 T17N* (dominant-negative CDC42 mutant) at 800 ng/µl.

Immunocytochemistry

After maturation, oocytes were fixed in a freshly prepared solution of 3.7% paraformaldehyde

(MilliporeSigma, # P6148) dissolved in phosphate buffer saline (PBS). Oocytes were incubated

in permeabilization solution (0.1% Triton X-100 in PBS) for 20 minutes and blocking solution

(0.3% BSA and 0.01% Tween-20 in PBS) for 20 minutes before staining. Oocytes were

incubated at room temperature for one h with the primary antibody before undergoing 3

consecutive washes in blocking solution for 9 minutes each. Oocytes were then incubated at

room temperature for one h in the secondary antibody solution. Phalloidin (ThermoFisher

Scientific #T7471; 1:50) was added to the secondary antibody solution to label F-actin.

Following another 3 consecutive washes in blocking solution at 9 minutes each, oocytes were

mounted on glass slides using Vectashield containing 4',6-Diamidino-2-Phenylindole,

Dihydrochloride (DAPI; Vector Laboratories, Burlingame, CA, USA) in order to stain the DNA.

Fluorescence was observed using a 40X oil objective using Leica TCS SP8 confocal microscope

or Leica DMI8 fluorescence microscope and oocytes were imaged using 3 μm Z-intervals.

Oocytes were analyzed using NIH ImageJ software (National Institute of Health, Bethesda, MD

USA).

The following primary antibodies were used in immunofluorescence: conjugated α-tubulin-

AlexaFluor 488 (Life Technologies # 322 588; 1:75), CREST autoimmune serum (Antibodies

Incorporated # 15-234; 1:25), tyrosinated α-tubulin (BIO-RAD# MCA77G; 1:500), and anti β-

tubulin (9F3) monoclonal conjugated to Alexa Fluor 488 (Cell Signaling Technology, #3623;

1:50).

In situ chromosome counting

Oocytes matured *in vitro* for 14 h in CZB medium supplemented with L-glutamine under mineral

oil were transferred to CZB containing 100 μm monastrol (MilliporeSigma, # M8515) and

incubated an extra 2 h; monastrol is an Eg5-kinesin inhibitor which induces monopolar spindle

formation and thus results in a rosette of chromosome distribution (*30, 31*). After treatment with

monastrol, oocytes at metaphase II stage were fixed in a freshly prepared solution of 2.5%

paraformaldehyde (MilliporeSigma, # P6148) and stained with CREST autoimmune serum

(Antibodies Incorporated # 15-234; 1:25) to label the kinetochores. DAPI was used to label the

DNA. Fluorescence was observed using a 40X oil objective using a Leica DMI8 microscope and

oocytes were imaged using 0.5 μm Z-intervals in order to observe all kinetochores. Oocytes were

analyzed individually and were scored either as euploid (containing 40 kinetochores) or as

aneuploid (containing ± 40 kinetochores).

Assessment of kinetochore-microtubule attachment

Cells were matured *in vitro* for 7 h in CZB medium supplemented with L-glutamine under

mineral oil. The oocytes were placed on ice for 6 minutes in a 96 well dish containing chilled

MEM. Exposing the oocytes to cold shock depolymerizes unattached MTs; however, when MTs

have established end-on attachment to a kinetochore, it becomes cold stable (*38*). Oocytes were

fixed using a freshly prepared 2.5% paraformaldehyde solution and immunostained with anti-

human CREST (to label kinetochores) and α-tubulin (to label MTs) antibodies. DAPI was used

to label DNA. Cells were imaged using a Leica TCS SP8 confocal microscope and a x63 oil

objective, taking images at 0.5 µm Z-intervals. Kinetochores were scored as normal (attached to

bioriented chromosomes), unattached, or abnormally attached (syntelic - kinetochores of both

homologous chromosomes attached to one side of the spindle or merotelic - a kinetochore

maintaining attachment to both sides of the spindle), as previously described (*31*). Oocytes were

analyzed using NIH ImageJ Software.

Time-lapse microscopy

Full-grown oocytes were imaged using a 40X oil objective on Leica TCS SP8 confocal

microscope or Leica DMI8 microscope within a microenvironmental chamber maintaining an

atmosphere of 5% CO_2 and temperature of 37˚C in humidified air. Imaging acquisition began

before NEBD. Images were captured at 5 µm Z-intervals. Image sequences were analyzed using

NIH ImageJ Software.

Ovary collection and histological evaluation

Ovaries from CF-1 mice of varying ages (2 weeks, 3 weeks, 5 weeks, and 8 weeks) were

collected, submerged, and stored in buffered zinc formalin overnight. Tissues were then moved

to 70% ethanol for storage until undergoing a 10-h protocol using a Leica ASP300S enclosed

tissue processor. After processing, tissues were embedded in paraffin wax and cooled fully using

the Leica EG1150 C/H pair. Embedded tissues were sectioned at 8 μm thickness using a Leica

Histocore AutoCut microtome. Representative samples were taken for each age by taking 3

consecutive sections periodically (every 4, 6, 8, or 10 sections respectively). Tissues were

stained with Hematoxylin and Eosin (Abcam, # 245880) before being mounted with permount

resin (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Inc. # SP15). Oocytes and their corresponding nucleus

positioning were examined using 10X or 40X objective on a Leica DMI8 microscope.

Statistical analysis

Tests used to evaluate the statistical significance of the findings reported include One-way

ANOVA and Student t-test using GraphPad Prism. The Tukey post hoc test was utilized to

determine statistical significance between groups. Student's t-test was performed for normally

distributed numerical data following D'Agnostino-Pearson omnibus normality test. P values of $<$

0.05 were considered significant. All data are displayed as means $\pm$ SEM.

Declaration of interest

All authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest that may prejudice or bias the research

reported.

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Author Contributions

507   AZB conceived the project. AZB, JK and TA designed and analyzed experiments. JK, AH, TA

508   and AZB performed experiments. AZB and JK wrote the manuscript. All authors read/edited the

509   manuscript.

Figure Legends

Figure 1: Oocytes with a peripherally located nucleus have higher rates of chromosome misalignment and aneuploidy.

(A) Full-grown GV oocytes were collected, imaged, and classified into one of three groups: central GV, intermediate GV, or peripheral GV according to the distance measured from the nucleus to the nearest cortex. The scale bar represents 50 μm. Oocyte diameter is included in the top left of each image in white text; distance from the germinal vesicle to the cortex is included above the scale bar in red text. (B) Quantification of the average distance from the nucleus to the nearest cortex within groups (right graph). (C-F) Full-grown prophase I-arrested oocytes were collected and sorted into central, intermediate and peripheral groups based on nucleus positioning and imaged live using time-lapse microscopy during *in vitro* maturation. (C) Quantification of the percentage of oocytes that underwent NEBD. (D) Quantification of the average time of NEBD. (E) Quantification of the percentage of first polar body extrusion (1st PBE). (F) Quantification of the average time of PBE calculated from oocytes successfully extruded the PB. (G-I) Full-grown prophase I oocytes were collected and sorted into central, intermediate and peripheral groups based on nucleus positioning and *in vitro* matured for 7 h (metaphase I). Oocytes were fixed and immunostained with α-tubulin to label the microtubules (the spindle). DNA was labeled by DAPI. (G) Representative confocal images of metaphase I oocytes. (H) Quantification of the percentage of chromosome misalignment in metaphase I oocytes. (I) Quantification of the percentage of abnormal spindle morphology in metaphase I oocytes. Spindle morphology was assessed using the criterion that a normal meiotic spindle is barrel shaped with two clearly defined spindle poles. (J) Full-grown prophase I oocytes were collected and sorted into central, intermediate and peripheral groups based on nucleus

positioning and *in vitro* matured for 14 h (metaphase II). Oocytes were treated with monastrol for

2 h, fixed and immunostained with CREST antibody to label kinetochores. DNA was labeled by

DAPI. Oocytes were analyzed individually and scored either as euploid (containing 40

kinetochores) or as aneuploid (containing ± 40 kinetochores). Shown are representative images.

(K) Quantification of the percentage of aneuploid eggs. The scale bar represents 10 μm. One-

way ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc tests were performed to determine statistical significance

among groups. Data are displayed as mean ± SEM. Values with asterisks vary significantly, * P

<0.05, *** P <0.001, **** P <0.0001. The total number of analyzed oocytes (from at least 3

independent replicates) is specified above each graph.

Figure 2: Incidence of incorrect K-MT attachments and aneuploidy associate with spindle

proximity to the cortex.

(A) Representative images of kinetochore-microtubule (K-MT) attachments in oocytes with a

central, intermediate, or peripherally located nucleus matured to metaphase I and immunostained

with α-tubulin (to label MTs), CREST (to label kinetochores), stained with DAPI (to label

DNA), and imaged using confocal microscopy. Panels on the right (from top to bottom) display

normal K-MT attachment, unattached kinetochores and abnormal K-MT attachment. The scale

bar represents 10 μm. (B) Quantification of abnormal K-MT attachments. (C) Quantification of

the oocytes with 2 or more incorrect K-MT attachments. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post

hoc test were performed to analyze the data. (D) Representative images of the nucleus movement

prior to NEBD. Images were taken every 30 minutes (Z-interval of 5 μm). The black circle

denotes the primary nucleus positioning, while the green circle denotes the final nucleus position

prior to NEBD. The scale bar represents 50 μm. (E) Representative images of aneuploidy in

oocytes experiencing full migration of the nucleus (corrected/central), attempted migration of

their nucleus (migratory), or not attempting central migration of the nucleus (peripheral). The

scale bar represents 10 μm. (F) Quantification of the incidence of aneuploidy in metaphase II

oocytes from the oocytes categorized in D. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc test were

performed to analyze the data. (G) Schematic depicting the induction of peripheral spindle

positioning by mild centrifugation in oocytes collected with a centrally positioned nucleus. (H)

Representative images of aneuploidy in oocytes either maintaining central spindle positioning

after centrifugation or induced peripheral spindle positioning after centrifugation. The scale bar

represents 10 μm. (I) Quantification of the incidence of aneuploidy in oocytes with induced

peripherally positioned nucleus and centrally positioned nucleus after centrifugation. Student t-

test was performed to determine statistical significance. Data are displayed as mean ± SEM.

Values with asterisks vary significantly, * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, **** $P < 0.0001$. The total

number of analyzed oocytes (from 3 independent replicates) is specified above each graph.

Figure 3: Cortical CDC42 signaling impairs proper K-MT attachments in oocytes with

peripherally located spindles.

(A) Schematic depicting the treatment of collected oocytes with ML141, a CDC42 inhibitor, in

order to inhibit the cortical influence upon kinetochore-microtubule (K-MT) attachment

formation. (B) Representative images of DMSO and ML141-treated oocytes matured to

metaphase I and immunostained with α-tubulin (to label MTs), CREST (to label kinetochores),

stained with DAPI (to label DNA), and imaged using confocal microscopy to assess K-MT

attachments. (C) Quantification of the average incidence of abnormal K-MT attachment in B.

(D) Representative images of K-MT attachment in oocytes expressing CDC42 dominant

negative mutant (CDC42 T17N). The scale bar represents 10 µm. (E) Quantification of the

average incidence of abnormal K-MT attachment in D. The scale bar represents 10 µm. One-way

ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc test were performed to determine statistical significance. Data are

displayed as mean ± SEM. Values with asterisks vary significantly, * P <0.05, ** P <0.01. The

total number of analyzed oocytes (from 3 independent replicates) is specified above each graph.

Figure 4: Reducing tubulin tyrosination in peripheral GV oocytes rescued the abnormal K-

MT attachments.

(A) Representative images of oocytes with centrally and peripherally located spindles stained for

tyrosinated α-tubulin and β-tubulin. (B) Quantification of tubulin intensities within the spindle.

(C) Representative images of oocytes expressing CDC42 dominant negative mutant (CDC42

T17N) stained for tyrosinated α-tubulin. (D) Quantification of tyrosinated α-tubulin levels

within the spindle. (E,F) Representative images of oocytes expressing VASH2 and

VASH2/SVBP stained for tyrosinated α-tubulin (E) and β-tubulin (F). (G) Quantification of

tubulin intensities within the spindle. (H) Representative images of K-MT attachment in

peripheral GV oocytes expressing VASH2 and VASH2/SVBP. (I) Quantification of abnormal K-

MT attachments in H. The scale bar represents 10 µm. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc

test were performed to determine statistical significance. Data are displayed as mean ± SEM.

Values with asterisks vary significantly, * P <0.05, ** P <0.01, *** P <0.001. The total number

of analyzed oocytes is specified above each graph.

Figure 5: Nucleus positioning is a dynamic process throughout the development

(A) Histological analysis of nucleus positioning *in vivo* at different ages. Ovaries from 2, 3, 5,

and 8 weeks old mice were collected, fixed, and stained with Hematoxylin and Eosin. Sections

were observed through 10X and 40X objective magnification and classified into one of the three

positioning groups: central, intermediate, peripheral. The scale bar represents 100 μm. (B)

Representative images of nucleus positioning in 3 and 8 weeks old mice. The white box

emphasizes the location of the magnified image within the ovary. The scale bar represents 100

μm. (C) Quantification of the *in vivo* proportion of oocytes sorted according to their nucleus

positioning (central, intermediate, peripheral) in 2, 3, 5, and 8 week old mice. (D) Quantification

of the in vitro proportion of oocytes sorted according to their nucleus positioning (central,

intermediate, peripheral) in 2, 3, 5, and 8 week old mice. Two-way ANOVA and Sidak's

multiple comparison test were performed to determine if the groups differed significantly. Data

are displayed as mean ± SEM. Values with asterisks vary significantly, * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$,

*** $P < 0.001$, **** $P < 0.0001$. The total number of analyzed oocytes (from 3 independent

replicates) is specified above each graph.

Supplementary Figures

Supplementary Figure 1: Full-grown prophase I-arrested oocytes were collected from *Cep192-eGfp* reporter mice, sorted into central (A) and peripheral (B) groups based on the positioning of their nucleus and *in vitro* matured in CZB medium containing SiR-tubulin (to label microtubules, magenta). Spindle poles were labeled by CEP192-EGFP (MT organizing centers, green). Oocytes were imaged live using time-lapse confocal microscopy. Shown are representative fluorescence and bright-field (lower panels) image sequence depicting the location of NEBD and consequent spindle formation. Images were taken every 1 h (Z-projection of 13 sections every 5 μm). The scale bar represents 50 μm. (C) Oocytes were sorted based on location of their nucleus into central or peripheral groups, imaged and quantified according to their diameter to ensure similarity between groups. Please note that the large oocyte (105.97 μm, peripheral group) was undergoing cell death and excluded from further experiments. (D) Quantification of the average diameter of oocytes collected for experimentation. (E) Representative fluorescent image of Hoechst staining (to label DNA) in group of selected, but not sorted, oocytes. Representative images of oocytes with a peripherally located nucleus and a surrounded nucleolus are featured in the right panel. The scale bar represents 50 μm. (F) Quantification of nucleus position in oocytes. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc test were performed to analyze the data. Data are displayed as mean ± SEM. Values with asterisks vary significantly, **** $P < 0.0001$. The total number of analyzed oocytes is specified above each graph.

Supplementary Figure 2: Full-grown prophase I oocytes were collected and sorted into central, intermediate and peripheral groups based on nucleus positioning and in vitro matured for 16 h (metaphase II). Oocytes were fixed and immunostained with a-tubulin to label the microtubules

(the spindle). DNA was labeled by DAPI. (A) Representative confocal images of metaphase II

oocytes. (B) Quantification of the percentage of chromosome misalignment in metaphase II

oocytes. (C) Quantification of the percentage of abnormal spindle morphology in metaphase II

oocytes. Spindle morphology was assessed using the criterion that a normal meiotic spindle is

barrel shaped with two clearly defined spindle poles. The scale bar represents 10 µm. (D)

Quantification of successful polar body extrusion (1st) in oocytes treated with nocodazole.

ZM447439 oocytes served as a control. (E) Quantification of the percentage of unattached

kinetochores in central, intermediate, peripheral oocytes from Fig. 2A. One-way ANOVA and

Tukey's post hoc tests were performed to determine statistical significance among groups. Data

are displayed as mean ± SEM. Values with asterisks vary significantly, * $P < 0.05$, **** P

< 0.0001. The total number of analyzed oocytes (from at least 3 independent replicates) is

specified above each graph.

Supplementary Figure 3: (A) Representative bright-field images of time-lapse microscopy of

the movement of a peripherally positioned nucleus during prophase I arrest in oocytes incubated

with milrinone. Images were taken every 10 minutes using a Z-interval of 5 µm. The black circle

identifies the initial positioning of the nucleus, while the green circle denotes the final

positioning of the nucleus. The scale bar represents 50 µm. (B) Quantification of the percentage

of peripheral and intermediate GV oocytes achieving full relocation of the nucleus to a central

position within 3 h of incubation with milrinone. (C) Representative fluorescent image of F-actin

populations within oocytes. Enlarged panels featured to the right show, from top to bottom, areas

containing cytoplasmic, cortical, and perinuclear F-actin. The scale bar represents 50 µm. (D-F)

Quantification of the relative intensity of cytoplasmic, cortical, and perinuclear F-actin in

oocytes with either a centrally or peripherally positioned nucleus. Student t-test was performed to

determine statistical significance. Data are displayed as mean ± SEM.

Supplementary Figure 4: Full-grown prophase I-arrested oocytes were collected and sorted into

central, intermediate, and peripheral groups based on the positioning of their nucleus and imaged

live using time-lapse microscopy during *in vitro* maturation. (A) Quantification of the change in

the distance of the nucleus to the nearest cortex from the initial position of the nucleus at the

prophase I-arrested stage to the final destination of the nucleus immediately prior to NEBD. (B)

Representative fluorescence and bright-filed image sequence depicting chromosome alignment

(labeled by SiR-DNA, red) in oocytes with a peripheral (upper) and central (lower) nucleus.

Images were taken every 45 minutes using a Z-interval of 7 μm. Scale bars represent 50 μm. (C)

Quantification of the distance of chromosomes at the time of alignment to the nearest cortex. (D)

Quantification of the time of chromosome alignment. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc

test were performed to determine statistical significance. Data are displayed as mean ± SEM.

Values with asterisks vary significantly, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$. The total number of analyzed

oocytes (from 3 independent replicates) is specified above each graph.

Supplementary Figure 5: (A) Quantification of the percentage of unattached kinetochores in

oocytes treated with ML141 from Fig. 3B. (B) Schematic depicting the induction of peripheral

spindle positioning and treatment with ML141 in oocytes with a centrally positioned nucleus. (C)

Quantification of the percentage of unattached kinetochores. (D) Quantification of the average

incidence of abnormal K-MT attachment. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc test were

performed to determine statistical significance. Data are displayed as mean ± SEM. Values with

asterisks vary significantly, ** P <0.01, *** P <0.001. The total number of analyzed oocytes

(from 3 independent replicates) is specified above each graph.

Supplementary Figure 6: (A) Representative images of central and peripheral oocytes treated

with or without ML141. The scale bar represents 50 μm. (B,C) Quantification of the relative

intensity of F-actin in the cytoplasm and cortex of oocytes, respectively. (D) Representative

images of K-MT attachment in prometaphase I oocytes treated with or without ARP2/3 inhibitor,

CK-666 at 5 h post *in vitro* maturation. The scale bar represents 10 μm. (E) Quantification of the

average incidence of abnormal K-MT attachment in D. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc

test were performed to determine statistical significance. Data are displayed as mean ± SEM.

Values with asterisks vary significantly, * P<0.05, ** P<0.01. The total number of analyzed

oocytes (from 4 independent replicates) is specified above the graph.

Supplementary Figure 7: Quantification of tyrosinated α-tubulin and α-tubulin intensities in

oocytes expressing VASH2/SVBP. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc test were performed

to determine statistical significance. Data are displayed as mean ± SEM. Values with asterisks

vary significantly, *** P <0.001. The total number of analyzed oocytes (from 2 independent

replicates) is specified above the graph.

Supplementary Movie 1: Time-lapse microscopy of germinal vesicle (GV) oocytes cultured in

milrinone-containing medium to maintain prophase I arrest. DIC images were captured every 10

minutes at Z-intervals of 5 μm. The scale bar represents 50 μm.

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Figure 1

Figure 2

α-tubulin/CREST/DNA

α-tubulin/CREST/DNA

Figure 3

Figure 4

Supplementary Figure 3

A

(61)

Change in distance to cortex (μm)
from GV to NEBD

B

DNA

-00:45   00:00   01:30   03:00   04:30   06:00   07:3   09:00

Merge

DNA

-00:45   00:00   01:30   03:00   04:30   06:00   07:30   09:00

Merge

C

(47)

Distance of chromosomes to nearest
cortex at chromosome alignment (μm)

D

(47)

% oocytes with aligned chromosomes

Time of chromosome alignment (min)

Central
Intermediate
Peripheral

Supplementary Figure 4

A

(68)

% Unattached kinetochores Per oocyte

15
10
5
0

Central   C+ML141   Peripheral   P+ML141

B

Prophase I

Nucleus (Germinal Vesicle)

→ IVM 4 h →

ProMet I

Spindle

→ Centrifugation 1 h →

Induced Peripheral

Control Central

→ IVM+ML141 2 h → **Peripheral** (Met I)

→ IVM 2 h → **Peripheral +ML141**

→ IVM 2 h → **Central**

→ IVM+ML141 2 h → **Central +ML141**

→ **K-MT Attachment Assessment**

C

(83)

% Unattached kinetochores Per oocyte

Control central   C+ML141   Induced Peripheral   P+ML141

D

(83)

***
***
**

% Abnormal K-MT attachments Per oocyte

Control central   C+ML141   Induced Peripheral   P+ML141

Supplementary Figure 5

Supplementary Figure 6