Sex-Specific DNA-Replication In The Early Mammalian Embryo

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Abstract

The timing of mammalian DNA replication is crucial for minimizing errors and is influenced locally by

genome usage and chromatin states. However, our understanding of replication timing in the unique

environment that exists in newly formed mammalian embryos is limited. Here, we performed

genome-wide investigations of replication timing in mouse zygotes and 2-cell embryos. We discovered

that zygotes lack a conventional replication timing, but a program emerged in 2-cell embryos. Notably,

this program differs from embryonic stem cells and shows asynchrony between the parental genomes.

We observed late replication of maternal pericentromeric regions and DNA associated with the

nuclear lamina in each parental genome, whereas unexpected early replication occurred in regions

with histone marks deposited by Polycomb Repressive Complexes on the maternal chromatin. This

atypical and asynchronous replication of the two parental genomes may advance our understanding

of replication stress in early human embryos and trigger strategies to reduce errors and aneuploidies.

Main

DNA replication is a fundamental process ensuring accurate transfer of genetic information when cells

divide. Its precise orchestration follows a well-defined temporal order, known as the replication timing

program[1,2]. Replication timing has emerged as a key cellular fingerprint that is associated with various

genomic features, such as gene density, gene transcription, histone modifications, DNA methylation,

and 3D genome organization[3-8]. Furthermore, it exhibits a remarkable level of synchrony across single

cells and their homologous chromosomes[9,10].

Significant advancements in our comprehension of replication timing have been facilitated by a range

of sequencing technologies collectively referred to as Repli-seq[9-11]. Repli-seq examines copy number

variations of S phase cells and normalizes them against G1 reference cells. More recently, the advent

of single-cell sequencing approaches has revolutionized the investigation of Replication timing in

individual cells[9,10,12].

Despite significant progress, our comprehension of replication timing heavily relies on established

replication programs derived from *in vitro* cell lines. However, little is known about how *de novo*

replication programs are established after fertilization in the developing embryo.

Human and mouse oocytes and embryos are characterized by several transformative changes in their

epigenetic landscapes[13-17], and a permissive transcriptional environment that allows for unusually high

retrotransposon activity and the emergence of alternative retrotransposon-initiated transcripts[18-21].

As the paternal genome is unpacked from the fertilizing sperm, its protamines are replaced by

histones, and both the maternal and paternal genomes must exit the transcriptionally silenced states

that existed in the gametes to initiate embryonic genome activation[22], while undergoing major

morphological changes[23]. Collectively, these factors could place the preimplantation genome under

considerable exertion, and might contribute to the reported instances of replication stress during the

first cellular divisions in mouse and human embryos[24,25]. Consequently, exceptional factors might

influence and govern the replication and its timing at the early stages of mammalian embryo

development.

Results

Single-embryo Repli-seq reveals atypical replication timing in zygotes and 2-cell embryos

To better understand the mechanisms underlying the establishment of replication timing during early

mammalian embryogenesis, we developed a single embryo Repli-seq technique to study replication

timing in the zygote and 2-cell stages of mouse embryos (**Fig. 1a**). The reliability of Repli-Seq relies on

the precise selection of cells in S phase, therefore, we first employed EdU labeling at specific time

points following fertilization. This allowed us to determine the exact timing of the zygotes entry into

and exit from the first S phase (**Fig. 1a-c**). For the 2-cell embryos, we additionally used Nocodazole to

arrest *in vitro* fertilized mouse zygotes in metaphase for 4 hours, aligning their cell cycles and

facilitating precise selection of G1 or S phase cells based on EdU incorporation (**Fig. 1a-c**).

With accurate definition of the cell cycle times, we obtained a cohort of 26 zygotes and 44 *in vitro*

fertilized 2-cell stage embryos from C57BL/6N oocytes fertilized with CAST/EiJ sperm. These embryos

were processed using a modified version of previously published sc-Repliseq pipelines (methods)[9,10].

To validate the reliability of our approach, we also generated replication timing profiles from individual

mouse embryonic stem cells (ESCs). These replication timing profiles demonstrated a strong

agreement with the previously published sc-Repli-seq profiles obtained from ESCs (**Extended Data Fig.**

1a-e, Supplementary Table 1)[9]. Based on our previous EdU determination, six, four, seven, and nine

zygotes were assigned as G1, early S, mid S, and late S phase, respectively. For 2-cell embryos, seven,

eleven, thirteen, and thirteen embryos were assigned to the G1, early S, mid S, and late S phase,

respectively.

Our analysis of replication timing in individual 2-cell embryos revealed consistent replication timing

profiles across individual samples (**Fig. 1d**). However, we observed marked changes in the overall level

of differences between S phase cells and G1 cells during embryonic growth. Specifically, the zygote

data exhibited a notably smaller overall deviation (**Fig. 1e,f**), while Repli-Seq profiles, generated from

ESCs showed a strong and localized deviation between their S and G1 cells, which was not attributed to read depth (**Fig. 1e-g and Extended Data Fig. 1f-g, Supplementary Table 2**). 2-cell embryos displayed intermediate levels of G1/S deviation, suggesting that the changes might coincide with the embryo genome activation. While asynchronous replication between the two parental genomes is a potential cause, this could also indicate a uniform replication program that initiates from a high abundance of replication origins that are randomly distributed throughout the genome.

Notably, when we assessed the replication status of each embryo by methodology previously validated in ESCs[9] (**Fig. 1h,i**), we found a close alignment between the assessment made by EdU incorporation (**Fig. 1b,c**) and the calculated Replication Score for each 2-cell embryos, but not for zygotes (**Fig. 1j, Supplementary Table 3**). Given the limited and insignificant differences between G1 and S phase zygotes, (**Fig. 1f,g and Extended Data Fig. 1f**), we decided to focus on the significant deviations seen in the 2-cell stage in our subsequent analyses of genome-wide localization of replication timing.

Consistent differences in local replication timing between 2-cell embryos and ESCs

Although replication timing between our 2-cell embryos and ESCs ordered by the fraction of the genome scored as replicated [9] showed many similarities throughout the genome, we also observed notable local differences between the two cell types (**Fig. 2a**). These distinct differences were consistent across individual samples of the two cell types, with some displaying markedly earlier or later replication in the 2-cell embryos compared to ESCs (**Fig. 2a**).

To assess these differences in an unbiased manner and on a global scale, we performed k-means clustering of the genome-wide Repli-seq enrichment of S-phase 2-cell stage embryos and ESCs. This revealed globally organized replication timing patterns recurring within individual cells, with systematic and persistent differences between 2-cell embryos and ESCs (**Fig. 2b-c Supplementary Table 4**). In ESCs, both clusters 2 and 3 replicated late, but in 2-cell embryos their replication timing differed (**Fig. 2c-d**). Cluster 3 replicated comparably early in 2-cell embryos and exhibited high transcriptional induction at the 2-cell stage, while the comparably early replicating ESC cluster 9 was associated with high transcription induction at 4 and 8-cell stage[20] (**Fig. 2e-f and Extended Data Fig. 2a**). Indeed, previous studies have consistently demonstrated that replication timing is associated with local transcriptional potential and chromatin organization[4,26-28].

In light of these observations, we sought to investigate the potential influence of maternally inherited epigenetic landscape on the observed differences in replication timing, in addition to transcriptional induction. To accomplish this, we examined the enrichment of epigenetic features using published

ChIP-seq, Cut&Run, and ATAC-seq data from Meiosis II (MII) and fully grown oocytes (FGO)[13,14,17,20,29-

32] (**Fig. 2g and Extended Data Fig. 2b-c, Supplementary Table 5**). Interestingly, we identified a

pronounced global association between replication timing differences and the H2AUb and H3K27me3

histone marks deposited by Polycomb Repressive Complexes (PRCs)[14,17,29], which were associated with

relatively early replicating regions in the 2-cell embryos compared to ESCs (**Fig. 2g-i and Extended**

Data Fig. 2b,c, 3a,b). Together, these analyses revealed that inherited maternal histone marks

deposited by PRCs are associated with the temporal organization of DNA replication in 2-cell stage

embryos.

Abundant local parental differences in the replication timing of 2-cell embryos

To explore whether asynchronous DNA replication timing of the parental haplotypes could explain the

smaller G1/S deviation in log2 fold signal between 2-cell embryos and ESC (**Fig. 1h-j, Extended Data**

Fig. 1f,g), we separated the genomes originating from each of the gametes based on nucleotide

variations between the two parental strains. This allowed us to independently visualize and compare

the replication timing profiles of the maternal and paternal genome (**Fig. 3a**). Measures of the relative

Euclidian distances between Repli-seq values of individual 2-cell and ESC haplotypes as well as

hierarchical clustering of these revealed a strikingly distinct DNA replication program in each of the 2-

cell haplotypes that was unlike that of ESCs (**Fig. 3b, Extended Data fig. 3c**). Next, we performed k-

means clustering of the genome-wide Repli-seq enrichment within the maternal and paternal 2-cell

and ESC haplotypes. Based on this, we observed that a large fraction of the genome exhibited

consistent earlier replication in the maternal haplotype compared to the paternal haplotype, while

the opposite was the case for another large fraction (**Fig. 3c, d, Supplementary Table 6**). These findings

in the 2-cell embryo are in contrast to our observations in ESC, where we observed a strong correlation

between the replication timing profiles of the two haplotypes, consistent with previous reports (**Fig.**

3e)[9,10]. Notably, separation of paternal haplotypes did not lead to an increase in the low G1/S deviation

in log2 fold signal we observed in the zygotes and only partially increased the G1/S deviation of 2-cell

embryos, which was still considerably smaller than that of ESCs (**Fig. 1e-f and Extended Data Fig. 3d,**

e). This data supports that the lower G1/S deviation observed in zygotes and 2-cell embryos compared

to ESCs is not primarily caused by asynchrony between the maternal and paternal genomes. The more

uniform progression of replication during early embryogenesis, deviating from the classical temporal

pattern, could be the result of actual uniformity or that structures are below our effective resolution.

We next investigated whether genomic regions that harbor high transcriptional induction at the 2-cell

stage are replicated early across both parental haplotypes. Indeed, regions of high transcriptional

induction are replicated early in both parental haplotypes from 4-cell stage onwards, indicating

influence from the major embryonic genome activation[20] (**Fig. 3f, g and Extended Data fig. 3f**). Given

the importance of maternal oocyte derived factors in the development of the embryo, we examined

the enrichment of histone marks in relation to replication status differences between the parental

haplotypes. Notably, the marks H2AUb and in particularly H3K27me3 deposited by PRCs were

enriched in early-replicating maternal regions (**Fig. 3h and i, Extended Data Fig. 4a-d**). Indeed, we

observed that the groups of genomic regions with comparably early maternal replication (Defined in

Fig. 3d and marked by green squares), were characterized by transcriptional induction in the embryo

and high maternally inherited H3K27me3 and H2AUb levels (**Fig. 3j and k**). Conversely, regions with

comparably late maternal replication (**Fig. 3d**, purple triangles), were characterized by transcriptional

downregulation in the embryo and low maternally inherited H3K27me3 and H2AUb levels (**Fig. 3j and

k**). Interestingly, the PRC-regulated genomic regions undergoing early replication in the maternal 2-

cell genome did not replicate early in ESCs (**Extended Data Fig. 3a, b).** Altogether, this indicates that

genome-wide epigenetic diversity across parental genomes is associated with an asynchronous

haplotype-specific DNA replication program in the early embryo that is replaced at later stages of

embryo development.

Maternal replication timing is associated with nuclear compartmentalization and epigenetic marks

Remarkably, our mapping of replication timing across whole chromosomes uncovered a compelling

pattern. Within a 30-megabase (Mb) segment corresponding to the pericentromeric region in the

acrocentric mouse autosomes, there was a distinct overabundance of maternally late replicating

regions (**Fig. 4a**). In contrast, no such effect was observed within the paternal chromosomes (**Extended

Data Fig. 5a**). This intriguing observation was consistently observed across individual embryos (**Fig.

4b**) and was not a characteristic feature in ESCs (**Extended Data Fig. 5b**). The centromeric regions of

the chromosomes in 2-cell embryos congregate at one pole of the nucleus near to the nuclear

lamina[33]. Therefore, we hypothesized that Lamin-Associated Domains (LADs) might influence the

organization of replication timing at the chromosome level. To test this, we utilized recently published

genome-wide LAD data from the maternal and paternal haplotypes of 2-cell embryos[34]. Our analysis

revealed a strong association between LADs and replication timing in the 2-cell embryos (**Fig. 4c**), and

a particularly pronounced enrichment of LADs in the pericentromeric regions (**Fig. 4d**). Interestingly,

both parental haplotypes exhibited a pronounced enrichment of LADs in the late replicating regions

(**Fig. 4c and e**). However, the distinct partitioning of late replication in the pericentromeric region was

exclusively observed in the maternal genome, while no relationship between the paternal

pericentromere and late replication was apparent, despite the accumulation of paternal 2-cell LADs

in this region (**Fig. 4d and Extended Data Fig. 5a**). Thus, the pericentromeric DNA is organized within

LADs of the 2-cell nucleus and asynchronous parental haplotype replication timing is occurring within
this domain.

To gain a deeper understanding of the coexistence between maternal late replication of LAD-
associated regions and our previous observations of histone marks deposited by PRCs enriched in
early-replicating maternal regions, we assessed the combined relationship among PRCs-deposited
marks, LADs, and replication timing. Interestingly, our findings revealed that among the histone marks
deposited by PRCs, H2AUb but more prominently H3K27me3 were most enriched in the part of the
genome that do not overlap with LADs (**Fig. 4f**). In contrast, maternal early replication was
predominantly partitioned into non-overlapping LAD regions, which also exhibited high enrichment
for marks deposited by PRCs, especially H3K27me3 (**Extended Data Fig. 5c-h**). When we analyzed
individual loci we found clear late to early replication timing transitions, which overlapped with
boundaries between LADs and H3K27me3 (**Fig. 4g**). These results provide the first demonstration of
a large-scale asynchronous haplotype-specific replication program that is influenced by higher-order
genome organization, such as LADs, transcription, as well as the inheritance of maternal marks
deposited by PRCs (**Fig. 4h**).

Discussion

The spatiotemporal pattern of DNA replication has been widely recognized as associated with
epigenetic marks, transcriptional activity, and the organization of the 3D genome. Across eukaryotes,
a DNA replication program exists, which features constant timing of multi-megabase regions ensuring
their replication at specific times during the S phase. These regions are flanked by timing transition
regions where DNA replication is progressing[35].

In a departure from the norm, our investigation using single Embryo Repli-seq revealed low G1/S
deviation in zygotes, which was only partially restored in the 2-Cell embryo compared to mouse
embryonic stem cells (ESCs). We propose that this observation suggests an unconventional DNA
replication program in the zygote, characterized by the initiation of a high number of replication
origins throughout the genome. The partial recovery of the G1/S signal in 2-cell embryos, compared
to ESCs, may indicate a gradual establishment of the replication program as embryonic development
unfolds. This would be consistent with the embryonic genome activation and the formation of A/B
compartments, which are also established gradually during embryogenesis[36,37].

Equally fascinating, was the lack of synchrony observed in the 2-cell embryo. Post-translational
modifications of histones undergo dynamic changes specific to each parental haplotype following
fertilization[38]. We observed a pronounced enrichment of maternally inherited marks deposited by

PRCs in the regions that replicate early on the maternal allele. This suggests that the persistence of

PRCs-deposited histones from oocytes may play a role in organizing the replication program or be

influenced by it.

Furthermore, we made intriguing observations regarding the spatial arrangement of DNA replication

in the pericentromeric regions of parental chromosomes, which served to further distinguish the

events occurring within the parental haplotypes (**Fig. 4g**). We identified consistent late replication in

maternal pericentromeric regions in a large fraction of the studied 2-cell embryos and at most

chromosomes (**Fig 4a,b, Extended Data Fig. 5a**), which was also characterized by the absence of

histone marks deposited by PRCs. One potential explanation for this observation is the spatial

separation of parental genomes within the nucleus, which persists until the 8-cell stage[33]. This

separation is achieved by congregation of centromeric regions at one pole of the nucleus, while the

long chromosome arms and telomeric regions extend towards the opposite pole[33]. This spatial

organization plays a pivotal role in establishing the parental-specific nuclear architecture observed

during early development. However, the question of why parental haplotypes display such contrasting

replication timing in seemingly similar structural domains, such as LADs should be a question for future

investigations.

Given recent reports of heightened replication stress during the cleavage stages of embryogenesis,

the exploration of paternal-specific DNA replication stress and stress-induced DNA breaks across the

parental haplotypes becomes a matter of great interest. Moreover, the fragile nature of the

pericentromere[39-44] raises intriguing questions about the potential impact of these replication

dynamics on the occurrence of gross chromosomal rearrangements, which are relatively common

during early embryogenesis[45-47]. Investigations of the role of parental haplotypes in the formation of

such rearrangements holds promise for advancing our understanding of embryonic failure and

infertility.

In summary, our study unveils a notable link between replication timing and genome organization in

the early embryo. Specifically, we have discovered a remarkable excess of late replicating regions in

the maternal pericentromeric region when compared to paternal chromosomes. The identification of

distinct replication timing patterns between maternal and paternal chromosomes emphasizes the

intricate nature of replication regulation and its connection to genome organization. The observed

association between replication timing, LADs, and maternal histone marks deposited by PRCs reveals

an intriguing interplay between epigenetic modifications, nuclear architecture, and replication

dynamics.

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Online methods

mESC Cell Culture

F121-9 mESC line (RRID: CVCL_VC42, a gift from Joost Gribnau) was cultured on 6-well plates previously coated with 0.01% poly-l-ornithine (Sigma P3655) for 1 hour. Subsequently, the plates were further coated with 300pg/ml of laminin (Fisher Scientific 10152421) for a minimum of 1 hour.

The mESCs were maintained in 2i and LIF media as previously described[48], which was refreshed every 24 hours to ensure optimal growth and viability.

Sample preparation for single cell RT profiling of mESC cells

Sample preparation of mouse ESCs for single-cell Repliseq was performed following previously established protocols[49,50]. In brief, detached single cells were resuspended in 1 ml of 1% fetal bovine serum (FBS) in phosphate-buffered saline (PBS). Subsequently, the cells were fixed by slowly adding 3 ml of ice-cold 100% ethanol and incubating the mixture at -20°C for 30 minutes.

To ensure accurate cell cycle phase identification, 1×10^6 cells were washed and resuspended in 700 μl of propidium iodide (PI) staining solution. The PI staining solution comprised of 350 μl of 1 mg/ml PI, 70 μl of 10 mg/ml RNase A, and 7 ml of 1% FBS-PBS.

Flow cytometric sorting was performed using a Sony SH800 sorter to isolate single cells in the G1 or S phase, based on their PI staining profile. The sorted single cells were collected directly into individual wells of a 96-well plate. Each well contained 6 μl of single-cell lysis and fragmentation buffer, comprising of 3 μl of proteinase K, 50 μl of 10x Single Cell Lysis and Fragmentation Buffer (Sigma; L1043), and 447 μl of autoclaved double-distilled water (ddH2O).

Following collection, the plate was briefly centrifuged and subsequently stored at -80°C until further processing for single-cell sequencing.

Spermatozoa cryopreservation

For cryopreservation of mouse sperm, a modified version of a previously established protocol was utilized[51].

In brief, ten 0.25 mL clear plastic straws (Minitube GmbH; 13407/0010) were labeled for each individual mouse. A proven fertile male mouse, aged between 3 to 8 months, was sacrificed following one week of solitary housing. The cauda epididymis and vas deferens were dissected and placed in 1 mL of Dulbecco's phosphate-buffered saline (DPBS). Under a dissection microscope, adipose and vascular tissues were carefully removed. Both cauda epididymides were then transferred to a 35mm

dish containing a 120 µl droplet of gCPA sperm cryopreservation media (in-house) covered with NidOil (Nidacon; NO-100).

Using a pair of watchmaker scissors, the epididymides were cut several times to release the sperm and facilitate its separation from the tissue. The dish was placed in a CO_2 incubator at 37°C with 5% CO2. To aid sperm dispersion and release, the dish was gently swirled once every minute for a total of 3 minutes.

Ten 10 µl aliquots of the sperm suspension were taken from the dish and deposited onto the lid of a 35mm culture dish. Clear plastic straws were prepared for freezing by drawing up HTF medium (developed in-house) into the straw using a syringe, followed by a small amount of air, and then the 10 µl aliquot of sperm. Additional air was introduced into the straw before sealing it with a metal ball (Minitube GmbH; 13400/9970).

All ten straws were then placed in the gaseous phase of liquid nitrogen for a duration of 10 minutes. Subsequently, the straws were slowly and carefully immersed into the liquid phase of nitrogen before being transferred to a -150°C freezer or long-term liquid nitrogen storage for preservation.

In Vitro fertilization of mouse oocytes

In vitro fertilization of mouse oocytes was performed as previously described but with some modifications[51]. Briefly, a single straw of cryopreserved sperm from CAST/EiJ mice was thawed for 10 minutes in a water bath set to 37°C. After thawing, the sperm was dispersed into 90 µl of TYH+MBCD (in house) sperm pre-incubation medium in a 35mm dish coated with NidOil (Nidacon; NO-100). The dish was equilibrated at 37°C for 20 minutes in a 5% CO_2 in air environment.

Simultaneously, a 30mm fertilization dish was prepared by adding 90 µl droplet of 2 mM reduced glutathione (Sigma, G4251) in HTF (in house) and covering it with NidOil. The dish was equilibrated for at least 30 minutes at 37°C in a 5% CO2 in air environment.

Female C57/BL6N mice were superovulated by intraperitoneal injection of 7.5 IU of hCG (Sigma; CG5) and 7.5 IU of PMSG (Prospec; HOR-272) 48 hours later. After 15 hours from the second injection, the mice were euthanized, and the oviducts were dissected and placed into the warm NidOil of the fertilization dish. Cumulus-enclosed oocytes were transferred from the ampoule into the fertilization droplet.

Following a 30-minute pre-incubation, 10 µl of the most motile sperm was extracted from the pre-incubation droplet and added to the fertilization dish containing the cumulus-enclosed oocytes. The dish was then incubated for three hours.

Meanwhile, a wash dish was prepared by creating four droplets of 90 µl of Advanced KSOM embryo

media (Sigma; MR-101) in a 60mm dish. The dish was covered with NidOil and equilibrated for 30

minutes at 37°C in a 5% CO2 environment.

Subsequently, the fertilized oocytes were washed through the four wash droplets to remove the

cumulus cells and sperm. The oocytes were then incubated until they were ready for Single-Embryo

Repli-Seq.

EdU labelling of single mouse embryos

To determine the duration of the first and second S phase, we conducted pulse labeling of single 2-

cell stage embryos using the Click-iT EdU Cell Proliferation Kit for Imaging (ThermoFisher Scientific;

C10340). The incorporation of EdU was assessed through microscopy. The experimental procedure

was as follows:

Embryos were obtained at the zygote (no prior treatment) or the 2-cell stage following release from

Nocodazole synchronization. At hourly intervals, individual zygotes or 2-cell embryos were transferred

to pre-equilibrated droplets of Advanced KSOM embryo media (Sigma; MR-101) containing 500 µM

EdU. The droplets were maintained at 37°C in a 5% CO2 environment. After a 30-minute incubation

period, the embryos were washed with Advanced KSOM media and fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde

(PFA) for 15 minutes at room temperature. Subsequently, the embryos were transferred to a wash

buffer consisting of 5% BSA in PBS and incubated on a rocking stage at 4°C for 48 hours. To

permeabilize the embryos, they were treated with 0.5% Triton X-100 in PBS for 20 minutes at room

temperature, followed by rinsing in PBST (0.1% Tween 20 in PBS) for 20 minutes at room temperature.

The embryos were then subjected to the Click-iT EdU cell proliferation reaction cocktail, according to

the manufacturer's instructions. They were incubated in the reaction cocktail for 1 hour. After the

incubation, the embryos were rinsed in a wash buffer containing 20 µg/ml DAPI (ThermoFisher

Scientific; D1306) for 30 minutes.

For imaging, embryos from the same time point were mounted using SlowFade Diamond Antifade

Mountant (ThermoFisher Scientific; S36967) between two No.1 coverslip. Confocal microscopy

imaging was performed using an LSM900 confocal laser scanning microscope (Zeiss) equipped with a

40x Plan-Apochromat objective. The Alexa 647 fluorophore was excited using a 639-nm laser, and

DAPI was excited using a 405-nm laser. Image processing was performed using Zen software and

ImageJ[52] software for quantification of corrected total fluorescence.

Sample preparation for RT profiling of single mouse embryos (Single-Embryo Repli-Seq)

Zygotes collected after IVF were categorized into G1 or S phase. G1 phase was determined by two
pronuclei detection, while S phase was determined by timing established using prior EdU
incorporation experiments. Zona pellucida and polar bodies were removed using a dissection
microscope, and naked zygotes were transferred to a low-adhesion 96-well PCR plate. Each well
contained 6 µl of single-cell lysis and fragmentation buffer (3 µl proteinase K, 50 µl 10x Single Cell Lysis
and Fragmentation Buffer (Sigma; L1043), and 447 µl ddH2O). The plate was centrifuged and stored
at -80°C for single-cell sequencing.

For 2-cell embryos, fifteen hours after combining sperm with cumulus-enclosed oocytes, the resulting
zygotes were transferred using a mouth pipette into a 90 µl droplet of Advanced KSOM embryo media
(Sigma; MR-101) containing 40 nM Nocodazole. The droplet was placed in a 30mm dish covered with
NidOil (Nidacon; NO-100). This step synchronized the zygotes in the G2/M phase from which they
were released after 4 hours.

Following the synchronization period, the zygotes were washed through seven droplets of Advanced
KSOM embryo media, each covered with NidOil. These droplets were pre-equilibrated for 30 minutes
at 37°C in a 5% CO2 environment.

Under normal circumstances, the zygotes divide within 1 hour after release from the block. At this
point, G1 phase 2-cell stage embryos were promptly processed by removing the zona pellucida and
polar bodies (if present) using a dissection microscope. The resulting naked embryos were then
transferred to a low-adhesion 96-well PCR plate. Each well contained 6 µl of single-cell lysis and
fragmentation buffer. The plate was briefly centrifuged and subsequently stored at -80°C until
preparation for single-cell sequencing.

For the processing of single S-phase embryos, the same procedure was followed. However, accurate
selection of S-phase embryos was based on prior EdU labeling experiments, which determined the
time of entry and exit from the S phase after release from Nocodazole synchronization. Specifically,
early S-phase cells were selected 3 hours after release, mid-S-phase cells were selected 5 hours after
release, and late-S-phase cells were selected 6 hours after release.

Sample preparation and sequencing for single embryo RT profiling

After sample preparation, single embryos or single mouse embryonic stem cells (mESCs) were
processed for single-cell sequencing following a previously published single-cell Reli-Seq protocol[49,50].
After whole-genome amplification, the samples were quantified using the Qubit dsDNA HS assay kit
(ThermoFisher; Q32851). The quantification of the samples was further confirmed by checking the
product size using the Agilent Tapestation 2200 High Sensitivity system (Agilent; 5067). For library

preparation, we utilized the KAPA Hyper Prep Library Preparation Kit (Roche; KK8502) in combination

with IDT for Illumina TruSeq DNA UD Indexes (Illumina; 20023784). The end repair and A-tailing steps

were performed using 40 ng of whole-genome amplified DNA. The reaction volume was scaled down

to 1/5th of the recommended reaction volume and vortexed and briefly spun down before incubating

on a thermocycler at 20°C for 30 minutes, followed by 65°C for 30 minutes, and then held at 4°C.

Adaptor ligation was performed in the same plate as the end repair and A-tailing reaction. The reaction

mixture consisted of 12 µl end repair and A-tailing reaction product, 0.5 µl IDT for Illumina TruSeq DNA

UD Indexes, 1.5 µl PCR-grade water, 6 µl ligation buffer, and 2 µl DNA ligase. The reaction mixture was

vortexed, spun down, and incubated at 20°C for 15 minutes. Post-adaptor ligation cleanup was

performed using 0.8X Agencourt AMPure XP beads (Beckman Coulter; A63881), following the

instructions provided with the KAPA Hyper Prep Kit. Library amplification was carried out by scaling

down the recommended manufacturer's protocol to 1/5th and using 11 µl of the bead-cleaned post-

ligation product. Amplification was performed using a thermocycler with an initial denaturation step

of 98°C for 45 seconds, followed by 5 PCR cycles at 98°C for 15 seconds, 60°C for 30 seconds, and 72°C

for 30 seconds. After the final cycle, an extension step was included, and the samples were incubated

at 72°C for 1 minute, followed by holding at 4°C. The samples were then cleaned according to the

KAPA Hyper Prep Kit post-amplification cleanup instructions using 0.9X Agencourt AMPure XP beads.

The final libraries were quantified using the Qubit dsDNA HS kit and assessed for library size using the

Agilent Tapestation 2200 High Sensitivity system. The libraries were sequenced on a NextSeq550

platform using a 150-bp single-end read format.

Single-Embryo and single mESC Repli-Seq data analysis

Our single embryo Repli-Seq data analysis, which was used to analyse all embryos and single mESCs,

was based on two previously published protocols[49,50,53]. We followed the analysis pipeline described

by Miura et al. (2019) and Miura et al. (2020) up to the generation of log2 fold replication timing (RT)

scores, with some modifications. The binarization of Replication Status followed the piecewise copy

fit and mixture modelling approach outlined by Dileep and Gilbert (2018) with adaptations for our

analysis. This relied on the R-packages Zoo, Fbasics, Mixtools, and Copynumber[54].

Fastq files for G1 and S phase were checked for quality using FastQC[55,56] and trimmed for Illumina

index and Seqplex adaptor sequences using Cutadapt[57], as described in previous studies[49,50]. For

haplotype analysis, sequencing reads were mapped to a modified mm10 reference genome that

included N-masked positions for single hybrid strains. The N masked genome was created using the

genome preparation command of the SNPsplit package[58], which incorporates N-masking into the

mm10 reference for the CAST/EiJ genome from the Mouse genome project V7 vcf file[59-61].

Subsequently, this new mm10 N-masked genome was then used to map the trimmed sequencing
reads using bowtie2[62] for parsed haplotype analysis, alternatively unparsed haplotype analysis was
performed using the original mm10 reference genome and duplicate reads were marked with Picard
(http://broadinstitute.github.io/picard).

To divide the reads into maternal and paternal haplotypes, we used the allele-specific alignment sorter
SNPsplit[58], which utilized a list of known SNP positions between C57BL/6 and CAST/EiJ mice. Quality
control of parsed BAM files was confirmed using SAMStat[63,64], and typically, we obtained >50% reads
with >30 MAPQ. To calculate log2 fold replication timing scores, a G1 reference file was generated
from more than three G1 control cells with a normal karyotype. The karyotype was confirmed using
the hidden Markov model of the findCNVs command in the Aneufinder package[65], as previously
described[49,50]. In our analysis of mESC, we made the decision to exclude chromosome 3 and
chromosome 8 due to aneuploidy.

Computing of RT scores were performed by counting reads in sliding windows of 200 kb at 40 kb
intervals normalized to the G1 control according to the standard scRepliseq analysis or haplotype
resolved scRepliseq analysis previously published protocol for unphased and phased haplotype
analysis, respectively[50]. Log2 fold RT scores were converted to binary RT scores using a previously
outlined protocol, with binary values determined using the skew approach when the component
means from the mixture modelling were <0.25[53].

The Replication Score for each sample was obtained by calculating the fraction of the genome that
had been replicated based on the binary scores for each sample, ignoring bins from masked parts of
the genome. A matrix assembly was generated containing Normalized Repli-seq enrichment and
binarized Replication Status for each cell. Data aggregation for this was done using the merge
command in R (v. 4.1.2)[66] and IDs for each bin consisting of chromosome name and start coordinate
for all datasets. This was performed separately for three pairwise comparisons, published vs. our ESC
data, ESC vs. 2-cell data, and maternal vs. paternal 2-cell data, resulting in output that only included
the relevant datasets and covered parts of the genome where data were present in all input samples
(**Supplementary Tables 1,4,6**). Subsequent analysis was performed in EaSeq (see below)[67] after
importing bedgraphs-files of log2-fold enrichment comparisons between S-phase and G1-phase
samples as well as bedgraphs of Binarized Replication Status as 'datasets'.

Genomic data sources and quality control

533 Previously published Repli-seq data from single ESCs[53] were downloaded from the NCBI GEO
534 database[68], accession GSE102077. Lamin-associated domains in maternal and paternal 2-cell embryos

were identified in[69] and bed-files with allele-specific coordinates were downloaded from the NCBI GEO database[68], accession GSE112551. Refseq genome annotations[70] for mm10 were downloaded from the UCSC table browser[71]. Read qualities were analyzed using FastQC[56], fastqScreen (v. 0.11.4)[72], and MultiQC (v. 1.7)[73].

ChIP-seq, Cut&Run, RNA-seq, and ATAC-seq data sourcing and processing

ChIP-seq of histone marks and corresponding input from MII oocytes were published in[74-78], Cut&Run of the histone variant H3.3 in MII oocytes published in[79], and ATAC-seq from fully grown oocytes published[80]. A complete list can be found in **Supplementary Table 3**. Single oocyte / embryo RNA-seq was previously published[78] and was processed as described in[81]. ChIP-seq, Cut&Run, and ATAC-seq reads were analyzed using FastQC and trimmed using Trimgalore[82]. Reads were mapped using bowtie2[62], and handled using Samtools[83]. Blacklisted regions[84] were obtained from https://github.com/Boyle-Lab/Blacklist/archive/v2.0.zip and removed using bedtools intersect -v[85]. Subsequent analysis was performed in EaSeq (see below)[67] after importing mapped reads from Bam-files as 'datasets'. For ChIP-seq, Cut&Run and ATAC-seq this was done using default settings, including deduplication. For RNA-seq removal of duplicates was disabled.

Repli-seq analysis and visualization

Analysis and visualization was done using EaSeq (v. 1.12)[67], Microsoft Excel 2016 for simple bar diagrams and line charts, and R (v. 4.1.2)[66] for Boxplots and interquartile range plots as well as the beeswarm package (v.0.4.0, https://github.com/aroneklund/beeswarm) for Bee-swarm plots. In EaSeq, Genome browser tracks and annotations were made using the EaSeq plot tools 'FillTrack', 'Annot.' and 'RegionMap' for LADs (available in the beta-testing panel). Scatter plots and heatmaps of ChIP-seq, Cut&Run, ATAC-seq, and RNA-seq values were made using the EaSeq tools 'Scatter' and 'ParMap'. Assembled matrices (**Supplementary Tables 4-6**) and LAD coordinates we imported as 'Regionsets' in EaSeq. Heatmaps of single-embryo log2-fold enrichment comparisons between S-phase and G1-phase samples as well as heatmaps of Binarized Replication Status at individual loci (as well as averages from multiple loci) were generated using the 'Multi Track' tool available in the 'Beta-testing' panel of EaSeq. ChIP-seq, Cut&Run, and ATAC-seq Signal intensities at the bins in the matrix assemblies were quantified using the EaSeq tool 'Quantify', using default normalization (Fragments Per Kilobase per Million reads – FPKM) for scatter plots and clustered heatmaps. Similarly, RNA-seq read densities were quantified using the EaSeq tool 'Quantify' but with normalization disabled to obtain matrices of raw read counts. Following this, a pseudoread was added to RNA-seq read counts, and all quantified RNA-seq counts in a matrix assembly were quantile normalized using the tool 'Normalize'. These normalized values were used to calculate means for each condition as well as log2

fold difference from the mean using the EaSeq tool 'Calculate'. Heatmaps of feature density e.g. ChIP-

seq, RNA-seq signal, or LAD-overlap were generated using the tool 'Z-scatter'. Similarly, plots of

features at autosomes were generated using this tool and the autosome number for the Y-axis and

start coordinate of each bin for the X-axis. Overlap with LADs for each matrix assembly was

determined using the EaSeq tool 'Coloc'. Subpopulations were obtained using the 'Gate' tool.

Repliseq clustering

Hierarchical clustering was performed in R (v. 4.1.2)[66] on scaled and transformed (R-commands: scale()

and t(), default settings) log2-fold Repli-seq enrichment using the command dist(method = 'euclidean')

to calculate a distance matrix, and a dendrogram was plotted after hierarchically clustering the

distance matrix using the command hclust(method = 'ward.D2'). k-means-clustering was performed

in EaSeq, using the tool 'ClusterP with all additional normalization disabled. Clustering was performed

individually for comparisons between 2-cell and ESC data and 2-cell maternal and paternal data.

Statistics

All statistics was performed as described in legends using R (v. 4.1.2)[66].

Code availability

Scripts for diploid and haplotype-resolved Repli-seq processing were acquired from

https://github.com/kuzobuta/scRepliseq-Pipeline   and   https://github.com/kuzobuta/scRepliseq-

Pipeline/tree/master/scripts/haplotype-resolved-analysis. EaSeq and source code is available at

http://easeq.net

Data availability

------ FOR REVIEWERS (will be deleted from the manuscript upon acceptance): ------

To review GEO accession GSE237400 (First submission data):

Reviewer access to the unpublished Repli-seq data for the first submission of this study can be
obtained using the link https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/query/acc.cgi?acc=GSE237400 and by
entering the token abyfqaiwjrwnrob into the box.

The Repli-seq data generated for this publication have been deposited in NCBI's Gene Expression

Omnibus[68] and are accessible through GEO Series accession number GSE237400

(https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/query/acc.cgi?acc=GSE237400).

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Author contributions

J.A.H., E.R.H. and M.L. conceived the study and designed experiments. J.A.H. and J.M.G. planned and

handled mouse work, IVF, and embryo collection. Embryo culture, labeling, imaging, and experiments

was carried out by J.A.H. Library preparation was conducted by J.A.H. Data analysis and processing

was conducted by J.A.H., A.H., and M.L. J.A.H., J.A.D, E.R.H. and M.L. discussed data and provided

critical input. J.A.D., E.R.H. and M.L. prepared the manuscript. All authors read and commented on the

manuscript.

Ethics declaration

702   Competing interests

703   All authors declare no competing interests.

Halliwell et al., Figure 1

Single-embryo Repli-seq reveals atypical replication timing in zygotes and 2-cell embryos

a) The schematic illustrates the procedure and timing for obtaining mouse zygotes and 2-cell embryos undergoing DNA replication. In the upper panel, zygotes were selected at different times during the S phase after fertilization. In the lower panel, Nocodazole was utilized to synchronize the release of 2-cell embryos into the second cell cycle.

b) Microscopy of EdU pulse labelling of mouse 2-cell embryos at indicated time points after release from Nocodazole-induced inhibition of mitosis. Scale bar = 5µM.

c) Quantitation of EdU-incorporation in mouse zygotes and 2-cell embryos at indicated time points after fertilization. Coloring illustrates the time points defined as Early, Mid, and Late parts of the S-phase.

d) Graphs showing normalized Repli-seq read densities of three S-phase 2-cell embryos at chromosome 6. Values are log2-fold differences relative to the G1-phase signal.

e, f) The heatmap (**e**) and graph (**f**) display normalized Repli-seq read densities in S- and G1-phase mouse zygotes, 2-cell embryos, and ESCs on chromosome 6. The heatmap shows individual embryos, while the graph represents mean values. The values are presented as log2-fold differences relative to the G1-phase signal for each cell type.

g) Beeswarm plots of the mean absolute genome-wide deviation in each Repli-seq sample. The background deviation from G1 controls for each sample is indicated with grey boxes and wide bars showing the interquartile range and median, respectively. Black bars indicate the 25, 50, and 75 percentiles of the S-phase populations. P-values obtained by two-sided Mann-Whitney U-tests Benjamini-Hochberg corrected for multiple testing.

h, i) Heatmaps of individual binarized replication status values (**h**) and mean binarized Replication status of S-Phase mouse zygotes, 2-cell embryos and ESCs at chromosome 6 (**i**). Binarized values were derived from Repli-seq data normalized to the G1-phase signal for each cell type. The vertical order and left side bar diagram (**h**) reflect the Replication Score for each sample.

j) Tile plot showing relationships between S-phase progression and ranked Replication Score from Repli-seq data in mouse zygotes and 2-cell embryos. r- and p-values were obtained using Spearman's rank correlation tests Benjamini-Hochberg corrected for multiple testing.

Halliwell et al., Figure 2

Consistent differences in local replication timing between 2-cell embryos and ESCs

a) Heatmaps showing normalized Repli-seq read densities (upper) and binarized Replication Status (middle) as well as graphs showing mean binarized Replication Status (bottom) of S-phase 2-cell mouse embryos and ESCs at five selected genomic loci. Orange and green highlighted regions indicate loci with marked differences between these cell types.

b) Heatmaps showing the genome-wide signal enrichment and variation in individual Repli-seq samples from S- and G1-phase 2-cell embryos and ESCs. 40 kbp bins that contained signal from both conditions (n = 29,805) were k-means clustered according to the indicated S-phase signal from all individual 2-cell mouse embryos and ESCs. Clusters were ordered according to S-phase ESC signal.

c) Heatmaps showing the genome-wide binarized Replication Status in individual Repli-seq samples from S-phase 2-cell embryos and ESCs ordered as in (**b**). Rightmost heatmap shows differences in the mean binarized Replication Status between 2-cell mouse embryos and ESCs.

(*Continues on next page*)

d) Scatter plots showing the relationship between mean normalized S-phase Repli-seq read densities in mouse ESCs (X-axis) and 2-cell embryos (Y-axis) for all 40 kbp bins (top) or three selected clusters (bottom). R-value indicates the Pearson correlation coefficient.

e) Composite panel showing mean genome-wide transcript density (graph, left) or log2-fold differences relative to the mean (heatmap, right) from single mouse oocyte or embryo RNA-seq[19]. Signal was quantified in 40 kbp bins ordered as in (**b**).

f) Bar diagrams showing the correlation between mean Replication Status from S-phase mouse 2-cell embryos or ES-cells and transcript density from the indicated oocyte and embryo stages. The signal was analyzed in 40 kbp bins and correlation was measured using Spearman rank correlation tests.

g) Heatmaps showing genome-wide histone marks, histone variant, and chromatin accessibility signal from mouse oocytes. Signal was quantified in 40kbp bins ordered as in (**b**) and FPKM-normalized. Leftmost heatmap shows mean Replication status differences as in (**c**).

h) Tile plot showing the genome-wide correlation of histone marks, histone variant, and chromatin accessibility data in mouse oocytes (indicated by lowermost blue rhombs) relative to mean Replication Status from S-phase mouse 2-cell embryos, ES-cells, and the difference between these two. The signal was analyzed in 40 kbp bins and correlation measured using Spearman rank correlation tests.

i) Genome-browser tracks of mean binarized Replication Status (top, black), RNA-seq (middle, green), histone mark and chromatin accessibility (bottom, blue) at example loci with relatively early 2-cell replication (highlighted in green).

Abundant local parental differences in the replication timing of 2-cell embryos

a) Heatmaps showing normalized Repli-seq read densities (upper) and binarized Replication Status (middle) as well as graphs showing mean binarized Replication Status (bottom) of S-phase of the maternal and paternal genome in 2-cell mouse embryos at selected genomic loci.

b) Distance matrix of showing the relative Euclidian distances between Repli-seq enrichment profiles of maternal and paternal genomes in individual mouse 2-cell (n=37) and ESC samples (n=20).

c) Heatmaps showing the genome-wide signal enrichment and variation in individual Repli-seq samples from the maternal and paternal genome of S- (n=37) and G1-phase (n=7 Maternal, n=6 Paternal) 2-cell mouse embryos. 40 kbp bins that contained signal from both haplotypes (n = 46,468) were k-means clustered according to the indicated S-phase signal from all individual maternal and paternal samples. Clusters were ordered according to the mean difference between the maternal and paternal signal.

d) Heatmaps showing the genome-wide binarized Replication Status in individual Repli-seq samples from the maternal and paternal genome of S-phase 2-cell mouse embryos ordered as in (**c**). Rightmost heatmap shows differences in the mean binarized Replication Status between the maternal and paternal genomes. Green squares and purple triangles indicate selected clusters constituting subpopulations of regions with a notably early or late replication of the maternal genome, respectively.

e) Scatter plots showing the genome-wide relationship between mean normalized S-phase Repli-seq read between the paternal (X-axis) and maternal (Y-axis) genomes for mouse 2-cell embryos (top) or ESCs (bottom) analyzed in 200 kbp bins. R-values indicate Pearson correlation coefficients.

f) Bar diagrams showing the correlation between mean Replication Status from the maternal and paternal genome of S-phase 2-cell mouse embryos and transcript density from the indicated oocyte and embryo stages. The signal was analyzed in 40 kbp bins and correlation measured using Spearman rank correlation tests.

g) Heatmaps showing transcript density difference from single mouse oocyte or embryo RNA-seq[19] Signal was quantified in 40kbp bins ordered as in (**c**) and FPKM-normalized. Green squares: maternal early replicating, purple triangles: maternal late replicating, defined in (**d**).

h) Tile plot showing the genome-wide correlation of histone mark and chromatin accessibility in mouse oocytes (indicated by lowermost blue rhombs) relative to mean Replication Status from the maternal and paternal genome of S-phase 2-cell mouse embryos as well as the difference between these two. The signal was analyzed in 40 kbp bins and correlation measured using Spearman rank correlation tests.

i) Genome-wide histone mark and chromatin accessibility signal from mouse oocytes with mean Replication status of the 2-cell embryos and ESC. Signal was quantified in 40kbp bins ordered as in (**c**) and FPKM-normalized. Green squares: maternal early replicating, purple triangles: maternal late replicating, defined in (**d**).

j) Box plots showing transcript densities at 40 bins within the maternal early and late replicating subpopulations. Whiskers represent the 1.5x interquartile range and the bar is the median value.

k) Plot of upper and lower quartiles as well as medians (black vertical bars) of histone marks, histone variants, and chromatin accessibility signal from mouse oocytes quantified at 40 kbps within the maternal early and late replicating subpopulations defined in (**d**). P-values obtained by two-sided Mann-Whitney U-tests Benjamini-Hochberg corrected for multiple testing

Maternal replication timing is associated with nuclear compartmentalization and epigenetic marks

a) Heatmaps showing the density of maternal early (upper) and late (lower) replicating regions, defined by the genome-wide binarized replication status (figure **3d**). X-axis position correspond to chromosome coordinates, and Y-axes correspond to autosome number. Centromere is positioned at 0 Mbp.

b) Heatmaps showing the average enrichment at all chromosomes from individual Repli-seq samples from the diploid (top), maternal (middle) and paternal (bottom) genome of S- and G1-phase 2-cell mouse embryos. X-axis position correspond to chromosome coordinates, and Y-axes depict to individual samples.

c) Heatmaps of genome-wide mean binarized Replication Status and difference (middle) and lamin-associated domains (LAD) density in the maternal and paternal genomes of S-phase 2-cell mouse embryos (bottom) at clusters defined in Figure **3c**.

d) Heatmaps showing the density of maternal (upper) and paternal (lower) LADs in 2-cell mouse embryos. X-axis position correspond to chromosome coordinates, and Y-axes correspond to autosome number.

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e) Heatmaps showing the density of maternal late (upper left) and early (upper right) replicating regions, defined in figure **3d**, as well as the density of maternal (lower left) and paternal (lower right) LADs in 2-cell embryos relative to mean maternal (X-axis) and paternal (Y-axis) binarized Replication Status.

f) Heatmaps showing the density of maternal late (left) and early (right) replicating regions, defined in figure **3d**, within (top) or outside (bottom) LADs in the maternal genome of 2-cell mouse embryos relative to mean enrichment of the H2AUb (X-axis) and H3K27me3 (Y-axis) histone marks in mouse MII oocytes.

g) Heatmaps and genome-browser tracks Repli-seq of the maternal and paternal genome in 2-cell S-phase mouse embryos in relation to various features at selected loci. From top: heatmaps of normalized Repli-seq read densities, heatmaps of binarized Replication Status, graphs of mean binarized Replication Status, histone mark, histone variant, and chromatin accessibility in mouse oocytes, maternal and paternal LADs in 2-cell mouse embryos. Regions highlighted in green and orange indicate maternal early and late replication, respectively.

h) Schematic illustration of identified relationships between maternal and paternal replication timing in 2-cell embryos and key genomic features.