Satellite DNA sequence dictates pericentromere heterochromatin formation and function

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Abstract

Pericentromeres are heterochromatic regions adjacent to centromeres that ensure accurate chromosome segregation. Despite their conserved function, they are composed of rapidly evolving A/T-rich satellite DNA. To test the functional consequences of this rapid sequence evolution, we establish hybrid mouse embryos as a model system to compare divergent satellite arrays from distinct species in a common cytoplasm. We show that variation in satellite sequence impacts heterochromatin formation, recruitment of the Chromosome Passenger Complex (CPC), and interactions with the mitotic spindle. Differences in satellite DNA sequence alter pericentromere packaging by Polycomb Repressive Complex 1 (PRC1), as satellite arrays that recruit PRC1 are enriched for specific A/T-sequences that the PRC1 AT-hook preferentially binds. Furthermore, PRC1 heterochromatin modifies pericentromere function by inhibiting recruitment of the CPC, increasing microtubule forces on kinetochores during mitosis. Our results provide a direct link between satellite DNA composition and mitotic chromosome behavior and highlight early embryogenesis as a critical point in development that is sensitive to satellite DNA evolution.

Teaser
Rapidly evolving satellite DNA impacts heterochromatin formation and recruitment of a key regulator of chromosome segregation.

Introduction

Satellite DNA is composed of tandemly repeated DNA sequences that make up large non-coding regions of eukaryotic genomes, e.g. 7% and 8% of human and mouse genomes, respectively (*1*, *2*). Satellites are among the most rapidly evolving genomic sequences, with their monomer size, nucleotide sequence, genomic distribution and abundance varying widely between species (*3–6*). Recent advances in long-read sequencing technology have made huge progress in precisely characterizing the genetic composition and diversity of repetitive satellite arrays (*1*, *7–11*). However, it is still largely unknown what functional consequences may arise from the natural diversity of these sequences.

Despite their rapid evolution, satellites often underlie pericentromeres, heterochromatic loci adjacent to centromeres with conserved roles in chromosome segregation during cell division (*12*). This paradoxical observation is partially resolved by evidence indicating that pericentric heterochromatin maintenance and function are largely independent of satellite DNA sequence. Instead, factors that package and transcriptionally silence satellites rely on the recognition of H3K9me3 marked nucleosomes that are canonically enriched at pericentromeres (*13*). Once established, H3K9me3 can propagate heterochromatin through successive cell cycles by recruiting histone methyltransferases that add new H3K9me3 (*13*). Additionally, phosphorylation of pericentromeric histones during mitosis by Haspin and Bub1 kinases facilitates the recruitment of the Chromosome Passenger Complex (CPC) (*14*), a key regulator of kinetochore-microtubule attachments required for accurate chromosome segregation (*15*, *16*). Because these epigenetic mechanisms do not directly depend on DNA sequence, potential functional impacts of variation in satellite DNA composition have been difficult to determine (*17*).

Mouse embryos provide an attractive model system to test the significance of satellite DNA evolution for pericentromere heterochromatin formation and function. Because most histones are replaced by protamines in mouse sperm, the paternal genome must undergo a drastic repackaging into nucleosome-based chromatin after fertilization (*18*, *19*). These nucleosomes lack H3K9me3, creating a unique developmental window in which canonical epigenetic pathways of heterochromatin maintenance are absent on paternal satellites (*20*). Instead, Polycomb Repressive Complexes 1 and 2 (PRC1 and PRC2) package paternal satellites in heterochromatin marked with H2AK119ub1 and H3K27me3, respectively, which typically suppress gene expression elsewhere in the genome (*20–22*). Both modifications contribute to the transcriptional silencing of the 240 bp A/T-rich "major satellite" repeats at *M. musculus* pericentromeres (*20*, *23*), with PRC1 also crucial for maintaining the integrity of these arrays (*24*). Furthermore, both complexes can localize to pericentromeres by recognition of satellite DNA (*21*, *22*). The CBX2 subunit of PRC1

recognizes satellites via its AT-hook, a five amino acid motif with nanomolar binding affinity for the relatively narrow minor grooves of double stranded DNA (dsDNA) generated by stretches of tandem A/T nucleotides (A/T runs) (25–29) (Fig 1A). PRC2 localization to paternal pericentromeres likely requires BEND3, a methylation sensitive DNA-binding protein that can bind unmethylated major satellite DNA *in vitro* (21).

We developed a system to test whether variation in satellite DNA sequence alters paternal heterochromatin by fertilizing *M. musculus* eggs with sperm from closely related mouse species with divergent satellite repeats. We inject sperm into egg cells (intracytoplasmic sperm injection, ICSI (30)) to bypass fertilization barriers between species, allowing us to test satellite DNA variation that would otherwise be inaccessible by natural mating. We focus our analysis on the one-cell zygote, before the major transcriptional activation of the mouse embryo (31), so that our results reflect interactions between satellite sequences and maternally inherited *M. musculus* Polycomb complexes rather than a mixture of subunits from both species. Analyzing heterochromatin in the zygote also avoids the complication of potential genetic incompatibilities that typically arise after the transcriptional activation of the hybrid genome (32–34).

We demonstrate that variation in satellite DNA sequence significantly influences PRC1 recruitment and heterochromatin formation at pericentromeres. Satellite arrays that robustly recruit PRC1 are enriched for specific A/T-runs (i.e. AAAAT) that optimally bind the CBX2 AT-hook based on previous reports of AT-hook proteins (29) and our AlphaFold3 modeling. We find that PRC1 heterochromatin modifies pericentromere function by inhibiting the recruitment of the Chromosome Passenger Complex (CPC) to pericentromeres. The CPC ensures accurate chromosome segregation by regulating chromosome attachment to the mitotic spindle by destabilizing kinetochore-microtubule interactions. Pericentromeres that form PRC1 heterochromatin exhibit longer sister-kinetochore distances during metaphase, consistent with a reduction in CPC stabilizing kinetochore-microtubule interactions and increasing the force pulling sister-kinetochores apart. Furthermore, we find that paternal chromosomes with PRC1 heterochromatin are more prone to missegregate during anaphase compared to maternal chromosomes, which lack PRC1. Our results show that diverse pericentric DNA sequences lead to functionally diverse pericentromeres through differential binding of heterochromatin forming complexes.

Results

Variation in PRC1 localization and heterochromatin formation on divergent satellites

Given that major satellite DNA can direct PRC1 and PRC2 heterochromatin formation, we hypothesized that divergent pericentric satellite sequences might alter CBX2 or BEND3 binding and by extension H2AK119ub1 or H3K27me3 formation, respectively. We fertilized *M. musculus* eggs with sperm from mouse species harboring genetically divergent pericentric satellites (Fig 1B). We selected three species (*M. musculus, M. caroli* and *M. pahari*) that differ in their satellite monomer sequence and not only in satellite copy number as seen in *M. musculus* subspecies (*2, 5*). We injected sperm heads into MII eggs, arrested the resulting zygotes at the first mitosis by kinesin-5 inhibition, and measured H2AK119ub1 and H3K27me3 by immunofluorescence. Because only maternal chromosomes have H3K9me3 at this stage, we used this mark to distinguish maternal and paternal chromosomes (*20*).

We found that all three species' pericentromeres robustly acquire H3K27me3 (Fig S1A-B). In contrast, H2AK119ub1 is enriched on paternal *M. musculus* and *M. caroli* pericentromeres relative to chromosome arms, but not on *M. pahari* pericentromeres (Fig 1C and 1E). To test whether these differences result from differences in PRC1 localization, we measured PRC1's core-catalytic subunit, RNF2, by immunofluorescence. Consistent with the H2AK119ub1 enrichment, paternal *M. musculus* pericentromeres are strongly enriched for RNF2 relative to chromosome arms whereas *M. pahari* chromosomes only exhibit a slight enrichment near the very ends of their chromosomes, presumably near centromeres (Fig 1D and 1E).

In certain contexts, PRC1 is recruited to chromatin by the chromodomain of its CBX subunit, which directly binds H3K27me3 (*35–37*), and CBX2 also contains a chromodomain (Fig 1A). However, the presence of H3K27me3 at *M. pahari* paternal pericentromeres (Fig S1A-B), which lack H2AK119ub1 and RNF2 (Fig 1C-E), indicates that H3K27me3 is not sufficient for PRC1 recruitment during the first zygotic mitosis. In contrast to mitosis, both H3K27me3 and RNF2 are enriched at both *M. musculus* and *M. pahari* paternal pericentromeres during G2 (Fig S1C-E), consistent with previous reports that the CBX2 chromodomain contributes to PRC1's pericentric localization during zygotic interphase (*22*). The difference in RNF2 localization between G2 and mitosis indicates that the CBX2 chromodomain does not effectively localize PRC1 during mitosis. We speculate that Aurora B-mediated phosphorylation of H3S28 during mitosis (*38*) prevents the CBX2 chromodomain from binding H3K27me3, similar to how Aurora B-mediated phosphorylation of H3S10 inhibits HP1 chromodomain binding to H3K9me3 (*39, 40*). Therefore, the observed differences between *M. musculus* and *M. pahari* paternal pericentromeres during mitosis, in both PRC1 recruitment and heterochromatin formation, likely reflect variation among the divergent satellite DNA sequences in their ability to bind the CBX2 AT-hook.

Pericentromeres enriched for narrow DNA minor grooves form PRC1 heterochromatin

To explain the differences in pericentric RNF2 and H2AK119ub1, we hypothesized that

M. musculus and *M. caroli* pericentromeric satellites, but not *M. pahari* satellites, are enriched for

narrow DNA minor grooves that bind the AT-hook of CBX2 to recruit the PRC1 complex.

Following a previously described approach (*2*), we used DAPI staining to compare the amount of

narrow minor grooves generated by A/T-runs at each species' pericentromere, as DAPI

specifically binds to these regions on the dsDNA molecule (*41–43*). Consistent with previous

observations (*2, 9, 44*), we find increased DAPI staining at *M. musculus* and *M. caroli*

pericentromeres relative to chromosome arms, but not at *M. pahari* pericentromeres (Fig 2A-B

and Fig S2A). To exclude the possibility that DAPI enrichment at pericentromeres represents a

relatively more compact chromatin state compared to the rest of the chromosome, we stained with

Sytox Green, an intercalating DNA-dye with no considerable DNA sequence preference (*45*).

None of the three species show enrichment of Sytox Green at their pericentromeres (Fig 2C-D

and Fig S2B). Together, these results demonstrate that *M. musculus* and *M. caroli*

pericentromeres are enriched for narrow A/T-rich minor grooves that can robustly bind the AT-

hook of CBX2, whereas *M. pahari* pericentromeres are not.

Satellite sequence determinants of PRC1 binding

We considered two possibilities for the underlying differences in pericentric DNA

sequence between species, leading to differences in DAPI enrichment and PRC1 localization. We

initially focused on comparisons between *M. musculus* and *M. pahari* because of the long-read

sequencing data available for these species. First, *M. musculus* major satellites may have a higher

frequency of A/T runs compared to *M. pahari* pericentric satellites (pi satellites) (*9*). However,

major and pi satellite consensus sequences have similar frequencies of A/T runs of lengths

ranging from four (4W, the minimal number of nucleotides the AT-hook can span) to ten or more

(≥10W) (Fig S2C). To capture nucleotide diversity that may be lost in consensus sequences, we

also calculated the frequencies of A/T runs across genomic scaffolds containing either major or pi

satellite arrays. Consistent with consensus sequences, we find that both species' satellite arrays

have similar frequencies of A/T runs (~825 vs ~750 per 10 kb bin in major satellite or pi satellite,

respectively) (Fig 3A). The frequencies are also similar for each length of A/T runs (Fig 3A and

Fig S2D), with the exceptions of 6W and ≥10W, which are relatively more abundant in major and

pi satellite arrays, respectively. However, it is unclear how differences in these lengths

specifically would lead to higher PRC1 and DAPI at *M. musculus* major satellite arrays.

Therefore, it is unlikely that differences in A/T-run frequency explain the difference in PRC1

heterochromatin formation.

The second possibility is that *M. musculus* major satellite arrays might be enriched for

specific A/T sequences optimal for CBX2 AT-hook binding, compared to *M. pahari* pi satellite

arrays. We analyzed the sequence composition of 4W, 5W and 6W A/T runs, which make up

~75% of the A/T stretches in both species' satellite arrays and therefore most potential AT-hook

binding sites. The vast majority of 4W sequences in *M. musculus* major satellite arrays are AAAT

(114 per 10 kb), AAAA (113 per 10 kb) or TAAA (39 per 10 kb) (Fig 3B and Fig S2E). *M.*

pahari pi satellite arrays have a similar frequency of TAAA sites (37 per 10 kb) but much lower

frequencies of AAAT and AAAA sites (7.2 and 46 per 10 kb, respectively). One of these

sequences, AAAT, generates one of the narrowest minor grooves compared to other

tetranucleotides (*46*), suggesting preferential binding to an AT-hook. In addition, the core motif

of the AT-hook (PRGRP) preferentially binds the minor groove of the sequence 5' AA(A/T)T 3',

reflecting optimal Van der Waals packing when adenine bases are on opposite sides of the A/T

run (*29*). Because of these structural features and their relative abundance in major satellite, we

hypothesized that the CBX2 AT-hook may preferentially bind the narrow minor groove of

AAAT.

To test the binding preferences of the CBX2 AT-hook, we used AlphaFold3 (*47*) to

perform *in silico* pairwise competitive binding assays for AAAT vs all other possible A/T

tetranucleotides (Fig 3C). We first confirmed that AlphaFold3 accurately models AT-hook

binding to dsDNA using the well characterized HMGA1 AT-hook bound to a fragment of the

IFN-ß promoter (*28*) (PDB ID 2EZD) as a reference. The predicted structure closely matched the

known structure (RMSD=0.48 Å), and in both structures, the AT-hook occupied the minor groove

of the A/T run (AAATT) (Fig S2F). Furthermore, the confidence scores of the predicted structure

(iPTM=0.48 and PTM=0.47) are similar to the models generated in our *in silico* competitive

binding assay (Table S1). The AT-hooks of CBX2 and HMGA1 share the same core sequence

(PRGRP) which binds the minor groove, supporting our use of AlphaFold3 to model the AT-hook

binding preference of CBX2.

For each competition assay, we model a single dsDNA molecule encoding two distinct

A/T runs flanked by four G:C base pairs (5' GGGGWWWWGGGGWWWWGGGG 3'). These

two A/T runs "compete" to bind a single peptide consisting of the core CBX2 AT-hook along

with flanking amino acids (RKRGKR**PRGRP**RKHTVTSS). All AlphaFold models predict that

the CBX2 AT-hook prefers to bind AAAT over almost all other A/T tetranucleotides (Fig 3C).

When AAAT and AAAA compete against each other, their relative order on the dsDNA dictates

which sequence binds the AT-hook (Fig S2G, see Materials and Methods), indicating that these two sequences have similar affinity for the AT-hook. We obtain similar results when analyzing 5W and 6W A/T runs. AAAAT and AAAAAT are the most abundant 5W and 6W sequences in the *M. musculus* major satellite array (147 per 10 kb and 70 per 10 kb, respectively) (Fig 3B and Fig S2E). These sequences outcompete all other prevalent 5W and 6W sequences in both major and pi satellite arrays for CBX2 AT-hook binding (Fig 3C and Fig S2G). Furthermore, AAAAT and AAAAAT are 8 and 2.5-fold less frequent, respectively, in *M. pahari* pi satellite compared to *M. musculus* major satellite arrays (Fig 3B and Fig S2E). We also find that AAAAT has one of the narrowest minor grooves of the analyzed A/T-runs (Fig S3), consistent with this feature enhancing AT-hook binding (*29*), indicating that the AlphaFold3 models capture empirical principles governing AT-hook-DNA interactions.

Our AlphaFold3 modeling shows that the CBX2 AT-hook prefers to bind stretches of adenine nucleotides that end with a single thymine (A_nT). To extend this analysis to include A_nT sequences (like AAAT) present in longer A/T runs, we quantified the frequency of A_nT sequences of various lengths (i.e. A_3T, A_4T, A_5T, A_6T and A_7T) in major and pi satellite arrays independent of total A/T run length. We find that major satellite arrays have approximately three times more A_nT sequences than *M. pahari* pi satellite arrays (Fig 3D and Fig S2H). Furthermore, pi satellite arrays exhibit A_nT frequencies similar to chromosome arms. Within major satellite arrays, longer A_nT sequences (i.e., A_4T and A_5T) are more enriched relative to chromosome arms (roughly 5.3-fold and 6.8-fold, respectively) than A_3T (roughly 2.5-fold) (Fig 3D, Fig S2H and Table S2). Our *in silico* analysis shows that A_4T and A_5T outcompete A_3T for CBX2 AT-hook binding (Fig 3C), consistent with previous findings that longer A/T runs are preferred binding sites for AT-hook proteins (*48*). Overall, these analyses indicate that PRC1 and its H2AK119ub1 modification are enriched at *M. musculus* major satellite arrays because they are enriched for longer A_nT sequences that preferentially bind the CBX2 AT-hook. In contrast, *M. pahari* pi satellite arrays have fewer and shorter A_nT sequences, like chromosome arms, and fail to enrich both PRC1 and H2AK119ub1.

To further test our model, we compared PRC1 recruitment between *M. musculus* and *M. spretus* paternal pericentromeres. Both species harbor minor and major satellite arrays, but in roughly inverse proportions. Major and minor satellites make up roughly ~7.9% and ~0.5% of the *M. musculus* genome, respectively, compared to ~0.2% and ~4.4% in *M. spretus* (Fig 3E) (*2*). Although long-read assemblies of *M. spretus* are not currently available, the minor satellite consensus sequence is not enriched for A_nT sequences (Fig 3E). We therefore predicted that the abundant minor satellites at *M. spretus* pericentromeres would not recruit PRC1 as strongly as the

major satellites enriched *M. musculus* pericentromeres. Indeed, we find that paternal *M. musculus*

pericentromeres recruit roughly 2-fold more RNF2 than paternal *M. spretus* pericentromeres (Fig

3F-G). This result demonstrates that the A_nT-enriched major satellite is the primary driver of

PRC1 recruitment to *M. musculus* pericentromeres, based on direct comparison of species whose

pericentromeres primarily differ in the relative abundance of the same two satellite sequences.

AlphaFold modeling predicts a novel A_nT-rich Mus caroli satellite

Because *M. caroli* pericentromeres form PRC1 heterochromatin (Fig 1C), our model

predicts *Mus caroli* satellites should be enriched for A_nT sequences. However, analysis of the

known *M. caroli* satellites (*49*) shows that the 60-bp satellite lacks A_nT sequences, while the 79-

bp satellite contains only A_3T at a low frequency comparable to *M. pahari* pi satellite (~200 per

10 kb) (Fig S4A). Thus, these *M. caroli* satellites are not enriched for the longer A_nT sequences

found in major satellite. We therefore hypothesized that *M. caroli* has additional, previously

uncharacterized satellites containing longer A_nT sequences that are responsible for PRC1

recruitment and heterochromatin formation.

Using an established computational pipeline (TAREAN) (*50*) with published *M. caroli*

short-read sequences (see Materials and Methods), we identified two read clusters with a high

probability of being satellites. The first cluster makes up 5.3% of input reads, with a consensus

sequence identical to the known 79-bp satellite (Fig 4A) (*49*). Reads corresponding to both the

60-bp and 79-bp known satellites are grouped within this cluster, likely reflecting their high

sequence similarity (*49*) (Fig S4A, B, and E and Table S3). The second cluster makes up 6% of

input reads, with a 59-bp consensus sequence (Fig 4A) that includes two A_4T runs and is more

similar to *M. musculus* major satellite sub-repeats than to the *M. caroli* 60-bp and 79-bp satellites

(Fig S4D). Arrays of the 59-bp consensus satellite would have a frequency of $A_{\geq 4}T$ sequences

similar to major satellite arrays (i.e., 338 vs ~280 per 10 kb) (Fig 4A and Table S2). In contrast to

the 60-bp/79-bp cluster, however, the 59-bp cluster includes many variants, suggesting a

relatively diverse satellite family (Fig S4C and Table S4). To capture this sequence diversity in

our analysis, we quantified $A_{\geq 4}T$ in reads mapped to a concatenated set of 59-bp satellite variants

outputted by TAREAN (see Materials and Methods). The observed $A_{\geq 4}T$ frequency (0.030)

closely matches the predicted value from the consensus (0.034) (Fig 4B) and is 4.3-fold higher

than a random sampling of reads (0.007), similar to the enrichment of $A_{\geq 4}T$ sequences in major

satellite compared to chromosome arms (Fig 3D and Table S2). Furthermore, reads mapped to a

concatenated 60-bp/79-bp sequence show a very low $A_{\geq 4}T$ frequency (0.0008), consistent with the

consensus sequence of both satellites not encoding any $A_{\geq 4}Ts$. Together these results reveal a 59-

bp satellite family in *M. caroli* with a frequency of longer A_nT sequences similar to major

satellite.

The 79-bp and 60-bp *M. caroli* satellites possess hallmarks of centromeric satellites, such

as high sequence homogeneity (*1, 51*) based on k-mer analysis (Fig S4B and Table S3) and

CENP-B box motifs in the 79-bp satellite (*49*). We therefore hypothesized that these two satellites

underly centromeres, whereas the relatively diverse 59-bp satellites primarily make up

pericentromeres. To visualize 59-bp satellite arrays on *M. caroli* chromosomes, we injected *M.*

musculus / *M. caroli* hybrid zygotes with mRNA encoding dCas9:mCherry and a cocktail of

gRNAs designed against reads within the 59-bp satellite cluster (Fig S4E) (see Materials and

Methods). To ensure the specificity of our gRNAs, PAM sites are present in 59-bp satellites but

absent in both the 60-bp and 79-bp satellites (Fig S4E). We find that dCas9:mCherry localizes to

paternal *M. caroli* metaphase chromosomes but not to maternal *M. musculus* pericentromeres,

despite the sequence similarity between the 59-bp satellite and *M. musculus* major satellite (Fig

4C), showing the specificity of our gRNAs. Moreover, mCherry signals are located near

centromeric ends of *M. caroli* chromosomes, consistent with our prediction that the 59-bp satellite

is pericentromeric.

As an independent approach to localize 59-bp satellite arrays on *M. caroli* chromosomes,

we generated a *de novo M. caroli* genome assembly from long PacBio HiFi and Hi-C reads. Our

assembly includes 20 chromosome-sized scaffolds, each aligning well to one of the 20

chromosomes of a previously published short-read *M. caroli* assembly (CAROLI_EiJ_v1.1) (Fig

S5A), indicating we have assembled all chromosome arms. Our assembly contains complete

copies of 99.6% of 9226 universal mammalian single copy protein coding genes (Fig S5B),

indicating that it is relatively complete in terms of gene content. Almost all chromosome-sized

scaffolds begin with a short 59-bp satellite array, and all end with a short telomere array (Fig 4D

and Fig S5C). Their positions at the ends of chromosome-sized scaffolds show that 59-bp

satellites are likely pericentromeric. 59-bp satellites can be interrupted by other sequences,

resulting in multiple discrete arrays that range in size from 400-bp to 15-kb (Fig S5D). Because

these small arrays fall within the average length of a PacBio read (~15 kb), it suggests they are

assembled by a few long reads anchoring them to unique sequence in chromosome arms. In

contrast, the majority of 59-bp satellite DNA (predicted by TAREAN to comprise 6% of the *M.*

caroli genome, Fig 4A) is likely largely unassembled. Consistent with this inference, 60-bp and

79-bp satellite arrays are not present in these chromosome-sized scaffolds and likely reside in

unassembled centromeres.

We quantified A_nT frequencies in the assembled 59-bp arrays and found that they are

similar to predictions from the consensus sequence (Fig 4E). We directly compared the average

number of A_nT sequences per 10 kb between the different satellite arrays and find that both major

satellite and 59-bp arrays have a higher enrichment of $A_{\geq 4}T$ sequences compared to chromosome

arms (4.6-fold and 4.3-fold, respectively) than pi satellite arrays (1.6-fold) (Fig 4F). Overall, our

analyses of four species' satellite sequences combined with their differing abilities to recruit

PRC1 indicate that longer A_nT sequences drive formation of PRC1 heterochromatin at paternal

pericentromeres in the first mitosis.

Consequences of PRC1 heterochromatin for pericentromere function

Next, we asked if the difference in PRC1-heterochromatin between paternal *M. musculus*

and *M. pahari* chromosomes has consequences for pericentromere function. Notably,

H2AK119ub1 is positioned close to the site of another post-translational modification:

phosphorylation of H2AT121 by Bub1 kinase. H2AT121phos recruits the Chromosome

Passenger Complex (CPC) to pericentromeres via Sgo1 (Fig 5A) to ensure accurate chromosome

segregation by regulating kinetochore-microtubule interactions during mitosis (*14–16*). ChIP-seq

and *in vitro* assays on reconstituted nucleosomes have shown that H2AK119ub1 and

H2AT121phos are mutually exclusive (*52*), suggesting that one modification physically blocks

the deposition of the other on the same H2A C-terminal tail. We hypothesized that H2AK119ub1

occludes Bub1 kinase from phosphorylating H2AT121 and thereby reduces CPC binding. This

hypothesis predicts low H2AT121phos and low CPC on paternal *M. musculus* pericentromeres

(Fig 5A), which have high H2AK119ub1 compared to maternal *M. musculus* and paternal *M.*

pahari pericentromeres (Fig 1C and 1E).

To test this prediction, we first visualized H2AT121phos, the CPC subunit Survivin, and

the PRC1 subunit RNF2. In *M. musculus*♀/*M. musculus*♂ zygotes arrested at metaphase by

chemical inhibition of the anaphase promoting complex/cyclosome (APC/C), we found that

H2AT121phos is present along the entire chromosome (Fig 5B) as reported in the previous cell

cycle in mouse oocytes (*53, 54*). Moreover, we found an inverse relationship between RNF2 and

H2AT121phos, with the presence of RNF2 at paternal pericentromeres coinciding with a

reduction in H2AT121phos (Fig 5B). In contrast, maternal pericentromeres with undetectable

RNF2 show no reduction in H2AT121phos. Consistently, when we compared regions of maternal

and paternal chromosomes that both lack RNF2, H2AT121phos intensities were similar,

indicating that reduced H2AT121phos depends on RNF2. On average, H2AT121phos is reduced

to ~60% at paternal *M. musculus* pericentromeres compared to maternal pericentromeres (Fig

5B). Consistent with H2AK119ub1 heterochromatin inhibiting H2AT121phos, Survivin intensity on paternal *M. musculus* pericentromeres is reduced to ~65% compared to paternal *M. pahari* and maternal *M. musculus* pericentromeres, both of which form relatively less H2AK119ub1 (Fig 5C). Survivin is also reduced on paternal *M. caroli* pericentromeres, which have H2AK119ub1, compared to maternal *M. musculus* pericentromeres (Fig S6). Together, these results show that PRC1 heterochromatin on paternal pericentromeres inhibits the acquisition of H2AT121phos and thereby reduces CPC recruitment.

The Aurora B kinase subunit of the CPC phosphorylates kinetochore proteins to destabilize kinetochore-microtubule interactions (*55*). In tissue culture cells, expression of a non-phosphorylatable mutant of a key Aurora B substrate, Hec1, results in increased stabilization of kinetochore-microtubule interactions and increased forces pulling the sister kinetochores apart at metaphase (*56*). Increased inter-kinetochore distance therefore provides a functional readout for reduced Aurora B activity (Fig 5A). To test for functional consequences of CPC differences between pericentromeres in the zygote, we measured distances between sister kinetochores at metaphase. We found increased inter-kinetochore distances for paternal *M. musculus* chromosomes compared to either maternal *M. musculus* or paternal *M. pahari* chromosomes (Fig 5D). This result is consistent with our hypothesis that PRC1 heterochromatin inhibits H2AT121 phosphorylation, downregulates the CPC, and stabilizes kinetochore-microtubule interactions on paternal *M. musculus* chromosomes. Increased inter-kinetochore distances might also reflect reduced pericentric cohesion because in addition to recruiting the CPC, Sgo1 also recruits phosphatases that counteract cohesin removal that occurs along chromosome arms during mitotic prophase (*57, 58*) (Fig 5A). However, sister chromatids appear in close proximity along most of their lengths during zygotic mitosis (*59*) (Fig 5D), suggesting that cohesins are not removed during prophase at this stage of development. Therefore, we interpret the increase in inter-kinetochore distance as a consequence of reduced CPC activity.

The known function of the CPC in regulating kinetochore-microtubule interactions suggests that the observed differences between maternal and paternal pericentromeres may lead to differences in the frequency of chromosome segregation errors in anaphase (e.g., due to a kinetochore connected to microtubules emanating from both spindle poles) (*60*). To test this possibility, we performed live imaging of pure-species *M. musculus* zygotes, in which paternal pericentromeres form PRC1 heterochromatin and recruit less CPC than maternal pericentromeres. The paternal pronucleus is larger than the maternal pronucleus in late G2, allowing us to distinguish and automatically track paternal and maternal chromosomes during the first mitosis (Movies S1 and S2). We observed at least one lagging chromosome in ~25% of anaphases

(41/162) (Fig 5E). In most cases (37 out of 41), we were able to determine the parental origin and

found that paternal chromosomes are over-represented (24/37=65%) compared to the null

prediction of 50% ($P=0.049$). This result indicates that paternal chromosomes are more prone to

segregation errors in *M. musculus* zygotes, consistent with PRC1-enriched pericentric

heterochromatin compromising chromosome segregation fidelity.

Discussion

Long-read sequencing technology continues to reveal the extensive diversity of satellite

DNA sequence composition (*8, 9, 11, 61*), but experimental systems that test the functional

impact of this diversity remain limited. In the mouse model species *M. musculus,* centromeric and

pericentromeric satellite variation is limited to copy-number differences of the same satellite

sequences (*2, 5, 53*). Our hybrid embryo system overcomes this limitation by incorporating

sequence variation between satellites that is only found in more divergent non-model mouse

species.

Using this system, we demonstrated that *M. musculus* major satellite sequence is more

effective than *M. pahari* pi satellite sequence at recruiting PRC1 during mitosis. Consistent with

the known sequence preferences of AT-hook proteins (*29*), AlphaFold3 modeling indicates that

this difference results from the AT-hook of CBX2^{musculus} preferentially binding the exceptionally

narrow minor groove of long A_nT sequences, which are enriched in *M. musculus* major satellite

arrays when compared to *M. pahari* pi satellite arrays and chromosome arms. Furthermore, our

satellite DNA based model of PRC1 recruitment accurately predicted a novel A_nT-rich pericentric

satellite (59-bp satellite) in *Mus caroli* as well as reduced PRC1 recruitment to A_nT-depleted

minor satellites in *M. spretus.* Together, these results indicate that the enrichment of narrow minor

grooves generated by long A_nT sequences largely dictates PRC1 recruitment during mitosis,

although other species-specific sperm features (e.g. chromatin packaging, histone variants, RNAs)

could also contribute.

Our finding of divergence between *Mus* species in the ability of pericentric satellites to

recruit PRC1 during mitosis is surprising, given the importance of PRC1 in maintaining *M.*

musculus paternal pericentromere integrity during the first zygotic anaphase (*24*). We propose

that PRC1 localization to *M. pahari* pericentromeres during interphase, rather than its persistence

on mitotic chromosomes, is sufficient for pi satellite array stability during mitosis. Consistent

with this possibility, CBX2 recruits DAXX and promotes H3.3 deposition at paternal

pericentromeres during zygotic interphase (*24*). PRC1 silencing of satellite transcription also

occurs during interphase (*20*). This model is consistent with our observation that all tested species

establish H3K27me3 at paternal pericentromeres, suggesting that PRC1 enrichment during

zygotic interphase through the chromodomain of CBX2 is conserved in *Mus.* Alternatively, *M.*

musculus major satellites and *M. caroli* 59-bp satellites may have specific properties that require

their packaging in PRC1 heterochromatin during mitosis, whereas *M. pahari* pi satellites can rely

on PRC2-mediated H3K27me3.

As another alternative model, the *M. pahari* egg cytoplasm may have specific adaptations

that allow PRC1 to be recruited to mitotic pericentromeres by a different mechanism. Because the

core CBX2 AT-hook sequence is conserved across Muridae (Fig S7), it is unlikely that the AT-

hook of CBX2^{pahari} has adapted to bind A/T sequences enriched at *M. pahari* pi satellites.

Similarly, the CBX2 chromodomain is identical across Muridae (data not shown), indicating that

the chromodomain of CBX2^{pahari} has not adapted to have a higher binding affinity towards

H3K27me3. However, vertebrates encode multiple PRC1 complexes that share the core ubiquitin

ligase subunits (RING1A/1B) but differ in associated proteins that diversify PRC1 function,

including how the complex is recruited to chromatin (*62*). Thus, another chromatin targeting

subunit expressed in *M. pahari* zygotes might recognize paternal *M. pahari* pericentromeres

during mitosis.

PRC1 localization to *M. pahari* paternal pericentromeres during G2 but not mitosis

suggests that binding of the CBX2 chromodomain to H3K27me3 is cell-cycle dependent. We

speculate that Aurora B-mediated phosphorylation of H3S28 during mitosis (*38*) prevents the

CBX2 chromodomain from binding H3K27me3, leading to loss of PRC1 from *M. pahari*

pericentromeres, which lack A_nT-rich satellites. Cytosolic deubiquitinating enzymes would then

remove H2AK119ub1 after nuclear envelope breakdown (*63*). This removal, together with our

finding that H2AK119ub1 inhibits CPC recruitment, provides a mechanism for pericentric

satellites to impact paternal chromosome segregation during the first zygotic mitosis. A_nT-rich

satellites at paternal *M. musculus* and *M. caroli* pericentromeres maintain PRC1 in mitosis

through the CBX2 AT-hook, leading to low CPC. In contrast, low PRC1 at paternal *M. pahari*

pericentromeres leads to high CPC, similar to maternal *M. musculus* pericentromeres, where

H3K9me3-based heterochromatin inhibits PRC1 recruitment (*20*, *22*).

Two lines of evidence support the functional significance of these differences in mitotic

PRC1. First, low CPC is expected to stabilize kinetochore microtubules, leading to increased

sister-kinetochore separation as we observe during the first zygotic metaphase for paternal *M.*

musculus chromosomes (high PRC1) compared to maternal *M. musculus* or paternal *M. pahari*

chromosomes (low PRC1). Looser chromatin packing due to CBX2/PRC1 retention on mitotic

chromosomes could also contribute to the increased sister-kinetochore separation. Second, we

find that paternal *M. musculus* chromosomes lag significantly more than maternal *M. musculus*

chromosomes during zygotic anaphase, indicating more frequent kinetochore-microtubule

attachments errors with high PRC1 and low CPC.

We propose that compromised paternal chromosome segregation fidelity, due to the

PRC1-mediated decrease in CPC recruitment (and/or decrease in chromatin compaction), selects

against large A_nT-rich satellite arrays in natural populations. Consistent with this idea, wild-

caught *M. musculus* have roughly ten times fewer major satellite repeats than inbred laboratory

strains, where natural selection is relatively weak (*5*). However, pericentric PRC1

heterochromatin is required for the transcriptional silencing and stability of paternal major

satellite arrays (*22, 24*), suggesting an evolutionary trade-off between proper packaging of major

satellites and chromosome segregation fidelity.

To avoid this trade-off in most cell cycles, we propose that H3K9me3 heterochromatin

serves to prevent DNA sequence-based pathways of PRC1 recruitment, preserving pericentric

CPC during mitosis and chromosome segregation fidelity. This epigenetic heterochromatin

suppresses functional diversity that might otherwise arise from differences in satellite DNA

sequence composition. In contrast, our findings highlight the first zygotic cell cycle as a unique

environment where heterochromatin formation and function are sensitive to satellite DNA

sequence evolution due to the loss of H3K9me3 from the paternal genome during spermiogenesis.

Materials and Methods

Mouse strains

The mouse strain representing *Mus musculus* in our ICSI experiments is FVB/NJ,

purchased from Jackson Laboratory (strain#001800). FVB/NJ was chosen because its MII eggs

can survive intracytoplasmic sperm injection and because it is an inbred strain. *M. caroli*

(CAROLI/EiJ, strain#000926) and *M. pahari* (PAHARI/EiJ, strain #002655) were also purchased

from Jackson Laboratory. We maintain our own colony of *M. pahari* because Jackson Laboratory

no longer carries this species. *M. spretus* was purchased from RIKEN BioResource Research

Center (SPR2, RBRC00208). The mouse strain representing *Mus musculus* in our live imaging

experiments, CF-1, was purchased from Envigo, Inotiv, Indianapolis, IN, USA (Hsd:NSA). All

animal experiments and protocols were approved by and conducted according to the regulations

of the University of Pennsylvania (Institutional Animal Use and Care Committee, protocol

#804882) or the University of Missouri (Animal Care Quality Assurance Ref. # 9695).

Intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI)

To prepare sperm for ICSI, the epididymis and vas deferens were removed from males and dissected in PBS to release mature sperm. Sperm were allowed to swim-out for 10 mins on a 37°C slide warmer. After swim out, sperm were pelleted by centrifugation at 700xg at 4°C for 5 min. The PBS supernatant was removed, and sperm were then washed twice with ice-cold Nuclear Isolation Media (NIM, 123 mM KCl, 2.6mM NaCl, 7.8 mM Na_2PO_4, 1.4 mM KH_2PO_4, 3 mM EDTA, pH adjusted to 7.2 using 1M KOH) with 1% poly vinyl alcohol (PVA). After the second wash, sperm were resuspended in 100 μL of NIM 1% PVA and then sonicated using a Branson Sonic Bath Model 1210 for 15-20 second intervals until at most 30% of sperm had their heads detached from their tails. Sonicated sperm were washed twice with NIM 1% PVA. After the second wash, the sperm pellet was resuspended in a 1:1 solution of glycerol and NIM 1% PVA and placed at -20°C until the day of injection (the following day or 1 week later).

Females were super-ovulated by injection with 5 U PMSG (Peptides International) followed by injection with 5 U hCG (Sigma) 48 hours later. MII eggs were collected from females 14-15 hours post-hCG injection and placed in M2 media (Sigma) with hyaluronidase (0.15 mg/mL) to remove cumulus cells. MII eggs were then washed through four drops of M2 media supplemented with 4 mg/mL BSA (M2+BSA) and left on a 37°C plate warmer until injection. 10-20 μLs of sonicated sperm was diluted in 200 μL of NIM 1% PVA, gently vortexed, and then washed twice with NIM 1% PVA. After the last wash, the sperm pellet was resuspended in 100 μL of NIM 1% PVA and left on ice until injection.

Batches of 10 MII eggs were injected with sperm heads at a time in room temperature drops of M2+BSA. After injection, each batch was moved to a drop of M2+BSA on a 37°C plate warmer and allowed to recover for 1 hour. After recovery, each batch was washed through four drops of pre-equilibrated AKSOM (Millipore Sigma) and placed in at 37°C humidified incubator with 5% CO_2 until injections were complete. Depending on the experiment, at least three hours after injection, eggs were then moved into a drop of AKSOM with either 10 μM STLC (kinesin-5 inhibitor, Sigma) (to arrest cells in mitosis with monopolar spindles) or 5 μM proTAME (APC/C inhibitor, R&D Systems) (to arrest zygotes in metaphase), then allowed to develop overnight in a 37°C incubator with 5% CO_2. Zygotes arrested in mitosis were fixed in 2% paraformaldehyde 19 hours post-sperm injection. To stain for RNF2 and H3K27me3 in G2 zygotes, injected eggs were moved to AKSOM and then allowed to develop 14 hours post-sperm injection, at which point they were fixed in 2% paraformaldehyde.

Fixing and staining

Zygotes were fixed in 37°C 2% paraformaldehyde in PBS for 20 minutes, washed through three pools of blocking solution (PBS containing 0.5% BSA, 0.01% Tween-20) and then left at 4°C overnight. The next morning cells were permeabilized in PBS containing 0.5% Triton X-100 (Sigma) for 15 minutes at room temperature, quickly washed through two pools of blocking solution and then allowed to block for 20 minutes at room temperature. For H3K9me3 and H3K27me3 staining, the cells were treated with lambda-phosphatase (1600 U, NEB) for 1 hour at 37°C in a humidified chamber. Phosphatase treatment is required to detect H3K9me3 and H3K27me3 staining on mitotic chromosomes, presumably by removing adjacent H3S10 and H3S28 phosphorylation (*64*). Embryos were then quickly washed through two pools of blocking solution and then incubated with primary antibodies for 1 hour in a dark humidified chamber at room temperature (or overnight at 4°C for H2AT121phos staining). Afterwards, embryos underwent three 15-minute washes in blocking solution and then were incubated with secondary antibodies for 1 hour in a dark humidified chamber at room temperature. Cells then underwent three 15-minute washes in blocking solution and were mounted in Vectashield with DAPI (Vector) to stain chromosomes. For cells that were stained with Sytox Green (Invitrogen), the first wash after incubation with secondary antibodies included 1 uM Sytox Green and after the next two washes were mounted in Vectashield without DAPI. Primary antibodies used are rabbit anti-H2AK119ub1 (1:800, Cell Signaling, D27C4), rabbit anti-H3K27me3 (1:700, Cell Signaling, C36B11), mouse anti-H3K9me3 (1:200, Active Motif, 39285), rabbit anti-H3K9me3 (used when co-staining against RNF2, 1:500, Active Motif, 39162), rabbit anti-Survivin (1:500, Cell Signaling, 71G4B7), rabbit anti-H2AT120phos (1:2500, Active Motif, 39392), mouse anti-RNF2/Ring1B (1:500, Active Motif, 39664) and rabbit anti-CENP-C(*65*) (1:500). Secondary antibodies used are donkey anti-rabbit Alexa Fluor 488, donkey anti-mouse Alexa Fluor 594, donkey anti-rabbit Alexa Fluor 594, and donkey anti-mouse Alex Fluor 647. All secondary antibodies are purchased from Invitrogen and used at a dilution of 1:500.

Microscopy

Some confocal images were collected as z-stacks with 0.5 μm intervals, using a microscope (DMI4000 B; Leica) equipped with a 63× 1.3 NA glycerol-immersion objective lens, an xy piezo Z stage (Applied Scientific Instrumentation), a spinning disk confocal scanner (Yokogawa Corporation of America), an electron multiplier charge-coupled device camera (ImageEM C9100–13; Hamamatsu Photonics), and either an LMM5 (Spectral Applied Research) or Versalase (Vortran Laser Technology) laser merge module, controlled by MetaMorph software (Molecular Devices, v7.10.3.294). Confocal images were also collected using a Leica TCS SP8

Four Channel Spectral Confocal System with a 63x objective lens. A z-stack of 0.3 μm intervals

was used to collect images of embryos used to calculate sister-kinetochore distances. All samples

in an experiment were imaged using the same laser settings.

Image quantification and statistical analysis

All image analysis was carried out using ImageJ/Fiji (*66*). To measure signal intensities

along single chromosomes, we selected chromosomes that were mostly in the XY plane and

generated max intensities projections of them. Beginning from the pericentric end, we then used

the segmented line tool to manually draw a linear ROI (roughly the width of the chromosome)

along the chromosome's length and measured the average signal intensity per unit distance along

the ROI. Average background was then subtracted from these values. To more easily compare the

distributions of DAPI and Sytox Green intensity, their values were normalized to the average

intensity within each cell/embryo using custom R scripts.

To measure Survivin intensity at pericentromere ends, we also selected chromosomes that

were mostly in the XY plane and generated maximum intensity projections of them. We then use

the rectangular selection tool to generate square ROIs that encompassed pericentric ends of

chromosomes and measured average intensity within the ROI. Average background was then

subtracted from these values. The resulting values were then normalized to maternal

chromosomes in each cell/embryo using custom R scripts.

To measure the distance between sister-centromeres, we uniquely labelled each

centromere and extracted its 3D coordinates using 3D maxima finder and 3D Roi Manager (based

on CENP-C signal). We then manually assigned sister-centromeres with the help of

BigDataViewer to "rotate" the image stack in cases where the spindle pole axis was not in the XY

plane and then used custom R scripts to calculate the distance between them.

P-values were determined using R. We performed non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests

followed by Dunn's test and used the Bonferroni method to correct *P*-values for multiple testing.

Plots were made in the ggplot2 package in R.

Satellite sequence analysis

M. musculus scaffolds containing major satellite arrays were found by BLASTing the

major satellite consensus sequence (*5*) on NCBI BLAST server. These scaffolds are from a long-

read *M. musculus* genome assembly generated by the Mouse Genome Project and Darwin Tree of

Life Project (GenBank: GCA_947593165.1) and were downloaded from the National Center for

Biotechnology (NCBI). The pi satellite array containing scaffolds are from a published *M. pahari*

long-read assembly (*9*). These scaffolds were chosen because they represent relatively complete

assemblies of functional *M. pahari* centromeres and pericentromeres based on CENP-A and

H3K9me3 ChIP-seq. We chose to study major and pi satellite arrays because they are the most

abundant pericentric satellites and because PRC1 is known to associate with major satellite (*20*).

To quantify the frequency of A/T runs of various lengths along a scaffold, we used the

matchPattern() function in the Biostrings package in R

(https://bioconductor.org/packages/Biostrings). Specifically, we searched for A/T runs that were

at least four nucleotides long (i.e. matched "WWWW"), with overlapping matches eventually

being merged into one longer A/T run by using the reduce() function. To analyze the composition

of 4W and 5W A/T runs, we used the matchPattern() function to find all possible 4W and 5W

sequences and then only kept matches that overlapped with 4W or 5W A/T run lengths,

respectively. To analyze the composition of 6W A/T runs, we used the 6W A/T run coordinates to

extract sequences within the satellite array using the Genomic Ranges package (*67*) in R.

Sequences that are reverse complements of each other are redundant and therefore were merged

into one. The average number of times a particular sequence occurred per 10 kb bin within an

array was calculated by dividing the total number of occurrences of a particular sequence within

the array by the length of the array and then multiplying by 10,000. We defined the range of the

satellite arrays for each scaffold based on coordinates from satellite consensus sequence BLAST

results and chromosome arms were defined as non-satellite regions of the same assembled

scaffolds. Finally A_nT sequences were also found along scaffolds using the matchPattern()

function. To prevent over-counting of smaller AnT sequences (e.g. overlap of AAAT and

AAAAT), only the longest of overlapping A_nT sequences were counted.

AlphaFold3 modeling

All sequences were modeled using the AlphaFold3 webserver

(https://alphafoldserver.com/). To model a single dsDNA molecule encoding two distinct A/T

runs flanked by four G:C base pairs, we entered a single forward and a single reverse strand (e.g.

forward: 5'GGGGAAAAGGGGAAATGGGG 3', reverse: 5'CCCCATTTCCCCTTTTCCCC 3').

We also modeled a single peptide encoding the AT-hook of CBX2 with flanking amino acids

(RKRGKR**PRGRP**RKHTVTSS). Alphafold3 outputs five model structures (0-4), with 0 scored

as the best and the fourth scored as the worst. Each model was visually inspected using Pymol

(The Pymol Molecular Graphics System, Version 3.0 Schrodinger, LLC). All five models for

each competition assay were consistent with one another (Table S1). To rule out the possibility

that the relative position along the dsDNA molecule dictates where the AT-hook binds, we

flipped the relative positions of the two A/T sequences along the dsDNA. For example, we

modeled both 5'GGGGAAAAGGGGGAAATGGGG 3' and

5'GGGGAAATGGGGAAAAGGGG3' sequences (Fig S2G). For each 5W model, the width of

the minor groove was measured as the Angstrom distance from the center of the i phosphate

group on one strand to the $i+3$ phosphate group on the complementary strand (black-dotted lines

in Fig S3) using Pymol. 5.8 Angstroms were subtracted from all raw minor groove width

measurements to account for the sum of the Van der Waals radii of the two phosphate groups

(*68*). An average minor groove width for each dsDNA was calculated from all five AlphaFold3

models.

TAREAN short-read analysis

100-bp paired-end Illumina reads generated by the Wellcome Sanger Institute as part of

the Caroli Genome Project (ENA Run: ERR133993) were downloaded from the European

Nucleotide Archive and processed using the Galaxy RepeatExplorer webserver (*69*). Read quality

was assessed with FastQC. Using the "Preprocessing of FASTQ paired-end reads" tools in

Galaxy, the final base of each read was trimmed due to low average quality (<Q20), reads

containing ambiguous nucleotides (N's) were removed, and the remaining read pairs were

interleaved into a single FASTA file. This processed and interleaved dataset was used as input for

TAREAN (*50*), which analyzed 397,722 reads with cluster merging enabled.

Satellite DNA alignment and tree generation

Consensus sequences of *M. caroli* satellites (59-bp, 60-bp and 79-bp) and the sub-repeats

of *M. musculus* satellites (minor and major) were aligned using MAFFT using standard settings.

The resulting alignment (Fig S4E) had columns with gaps removed and was used to generate a

PHYLIP Neighbor Joining Tree using an F84 distance matrix model.

Calculating $A_{\geq 4}T$ frequency in satellite-positive *M. caroli* short reads

The same Illumina short-read dataset described above was mapped to concatenated

consensus sequences representing either the top 59-bp variants or the 60/79-bp variants using

minimap2 with the -sr preset, which is optimized for short-read alignment. Only the best

alignment for each read was retained. Reads mapping uniquely to the 59-bp consensus (6,738,028

reads), the 60/79-bp consensus (8,952,232 reads), and an equal number of randomly selected

reads (8,952,232 reads) were extracted into separate FASTA files. To quantify $A_{\geq 4}T$ motif

frequency, we counted all occurrences of the $A_{\geq 4}T$ pattern in each FASTA file using

vcountPDict() function in Biostrings package in R and divided this by the total read length in that
file.

59-bp gRNA design, synthesis and microinjection

To design gRNAs that capture the sequence diversity of the 59-bp satellite arrays, we used
the vcountPDict() function in Biostrings to identify the most frequent 20-bp sequences located
upstream of a PAM site (NGG) within reads mapping to the 59-bp TAREAN cluster. From these
candidates, we selected six abundant gRNAs that do not contain PAM sites in the 60/79-bp
satellites: AAATGAGAAAATCACACTGT, AAATGAGAAAATCACACTGC,
AAATGAGAAAATCACACAGT, TCTCATTTTTTGACTTTTTC,
TCTCATTTTCCACCTTTTTC, TCTCATTTTTCGACTTTTTC (see Fig S4E). gRNAs were
synthesized using the GeneArt Precision gRNA Synthesis Kit. A gRNA cocktail (20 ng/μL total)
and mRNA encoding dCas9:mCherry (100 ng/μL) were co-injected into MII eggs together with
M. caroli sperm heads during ICSI. Embryos were arrested in metaphase by treatment with the
APC/C inhibitor proTAME (5 μM) and then fixed and stained as described above.

Long-read *Mus caroli* genome assembly, evaluation and repeat mapping

Flash-frozen tissue was obtained from the Jackson Laboratory from female *Mus caroli*
mice (CAROLI/EiJ, Strain: 000926; RRID:IMSR_JAX:000926). DNA was extracted from tail
tissue using the Qiagen MagAttract HMW DNA kit according to the manufacturer's protocol. The
Pacbio SEQUEL platform was used to generate HiFi reads according to the manufacturer's
protocols. Hi-C sequencing libraries were prepared using the Arima proximity ligation method
following the manufacturer's protocols for tissue preparation. Libraries were sequenced on the
Illumina NovoSeq platform. A total of 94 Gbp of HiFi, and 430 Gbp of Hi-C sequencing data was
generated and used for genome assembly.
HiFi reads were assembled into contigs using hifiasm (v0.25.0-r726) (*70*) with
duplication-purging disabled, a recommended setting for highly inbred genomes. Scaffolding was
performed using YaHS (*71*), which combines contigs into scaffolds by leveraging Hi-C contact
frequency patterns. Hi-C reads were aligned to the primary contig assembly using bwa-mem2
(*72*) with Hi-C specific flags (-5SP), which improve the handling of chimeric Hi-C junction reads.
The resulting alignments were fed into samtools (*73*) for BAM generation and processing. Mate-
pair information was corrected using fixmate with the -m flag, reads were sorted by genomic
coordinates, and PCR and optical duplicates were removed using markdup with the -r flag. The

processed Hi-C BAM and our primary assembly were used as inputs for YaHS, which was run using default parameters.

The continuity of the assembled scaffolds was evaluated using assembly-stats. The final scaffolded assembly totaled 2.84 Gb across 1,194 scaffolds with a N50 of 126 Mb and 0.005% gap content (1,393 gaps). Genome completeness (in terms of gene content) was assessed using BUSCO (v6.0.0) (*74*) with the mammalia_odb10 lineage dataset (Fig S5B). Most of the assembly is composed of 20 chromosome-sized scaffolds, which were mapped against a previously published *M. caroli* reference genome (CAROLI_EiJ_v1.1, Ensembl Release 115, GCA_900094665.2) (*75*) using minimap2 (*76*) with asm5 preset parameters. Alignment between the genomes was visualized using the pafr package in R to evaluate large-scale structural accuracy and identify potential scaffolding errors.

We identified the genomic locations of 59-bp and 60/79-bp satellite arrays using BLASTN with parameters optimized for short, repetitive sequences (wordsize=7, dust=no). Because the 59-bp satellite family exhibits substantial sequence diversity, we used the top eleven consensus sequences generated by TAREAN's 27-mer analysis as query sequences. In contrast, the 60/79-bp satellite family is highly homogenous, so the single 79-bp consensus sequence produced by TAREAN was used as a query for this repeat class, which also captures the closely related 60-bp variant. Telomere arrays were detected using the matchPattern() function from the Biostrings to find occurrences of four tandem telomere repeats (i.e. TTAGGGTTAGGGTTAGGGTTAGGG).

Live imaging of *Mus musculus* zygotes

Superovulation, collection, and in vitro fertilization of mouse eggs

CF-1 female mice aged 8-12 weeks were superovulated by intraperitoneal injection of 7.5 IU pregnant mare serum gonadotropin (PMSG, Medix Biochemica) followed 48 hours later by 7.5 IU human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG, Prospec) injection . Male mice were sacrificed and their epididymides were carefully dissected and transferred to a dish containing 100uL of human tubal fluid medium (HTF, MiliporeSigma, MR-070-D), overlaid with mineral oil (FujiFilm Biosciences, 9305). Sperm were collected and incubated in HTF for one hour at 37°C in a humidified atmosphere containing 5% CO_2 for capacitation. Female mice were sacrificed 15-17 hours after hCG injection, and their oviducts were dissected and transferred into a fertilization dish containing 200uL HTF overlaid with mineral oil. Oviducts were torn using a 27G hypodermic needle and cumulus oocyte complexes (COCs) were collected and placed in HTF. *In vitro* fertilization (IVF) was performed by adding 2–3 μl of capacitated sperm to the fertilization

drop. After three hours of IVF culture, zygotes were washed through six drops of K+ Simplex

Optimised Medium (KSOM, MiliporeSigma, MR-101).

Cloning, in vitro cRNA synthesis, and microinjection

The H2B:mCherry construct was linearized using Nde I (New England BioLabs). After

DNA linearization, the digests were purified (Qiagen, QIAquick PCR Purification) and in vitro

transcription was carried out using the mMessage mMachine T7 kit (Ambion) according to the

manufacturer's instructions. Finally, the cRNA was purified using an RNAEasy kit (Qiagen) and

stored at - 80°C. Zygotes were microinjected 4 hours post-insemination with 5 pl of the cRNA

using Eppendorf FemtoJet 4i. Advanced KSOM was used as the microinjection medium. The

injected zygotes were allowed to recover for 2 hours at 37°C in a humidified atmosphere

containing 5% CO_2 to allow for cRNA expression before live imaging. Microtubules were labeled

in live embryos using SiR-tubulin (Cytoskeleton, CY-SC002), added to the culture medium at a

final concentration of 100 nM. Microtubule images are not shown in Fig 5E.

Confocal microscopy

For live-cell imaging, zygotes were transferred to small drops of KSOM medium under

mineral oil in glass-bottom dishes (MatTek). Dishes were placed in a microenvironmental

chamber (UNO-T-H-CO2, Okolab) and kept at 37°C in a humidified atmosphere containing 5%

CO_2. Images were acquired using a Leica Stellaris 5 confocal microscope using a 40x oil-

immersion objective. Z-stacks were acquired every 8 min covering a 70 µm range (5 µm step

size) for a total duration of 8 hours.

Data Analysis

Zygotes were analyzed using the National Institutes of Health (NIH) ImageJ software

(NIH, Bethesda, MD, USA) and Imaris software (Oxford Instruments, Buckinghamshire, UK).

Paternal and maternal chromosomes were distinguished based on the larger size of the paternal

pronucleus (Odor & Blandua, 1951). 3D reconstruction and manual object classification in Imaris

was used to differentially label paternal and maternal chromosomes at nuclear envelope

breakdown, and chromosomes were then automatically tracked using Imaris. Lagging

chromosomes were identified as chromosomes remaining near the spindle equator after anaphase

onset.

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1024   present in the paper and/or the Supplementary Materials.

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1027   **Supplementary Materials Table of Contents**

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1044   **Figure Captions**

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1046   **Fig 1. Divergence in pericentric H2AK119ub1 heterochromatin and PRC1 recruitment. (A)**

1047   Schematic showing PRC1 recruitment to DNA via the AT-hook of its CBX2 subunit, which binds

1048   into the minor groove of A/T runs present in satellite DNA. Chromodomain labelled as "CD". **(B)**

Mouse zygotes are generated by injecting a *M. musculus* egg arrested in meiosis II with the sperm of mouse species with divergent pericentric satellite DNAs. Previously characterized satellites from each species are listed. **(C-E)** Zygotes generated with sperm from the indicated species were arrested in mitosis with a kinesin-5 inhibitor (STLC, C) or by APC/C inhibition (proTAME, D), then fixed and stained for H2AK119ub1 or RNF2 (green), H3K9me3 (magenta) to mark maternal *M. musculus* chromosomes, and DAPI (gray). Arrowheads (D) highlight the slight enrichment of RNF2 near *M. pahari* centromeres. Graphs (E) show average H2AK119ub1 (n=103-164, *N*=2) and RNF2 (n=152-160, *N*=2) intensities along *M. musculus* (red), *M. caroli* (yellow) and *M. pahari* (blue) paternal chromosomes, starting from pericentric ends. S.E.M. is indicated by light band surrounding the mean line. Both *M. musculus* and *M. caroli* chromosomes have significantly higher H2AK119ub1 intensity than *M. pahari* chromosomes within the first two microns (gray box), (*** P <0.001). Statistical significance was calculated by a Kruskal-Wallis test, followed by Dunn's post hoc test with Bonferroni correction. Images are max intensity z-projections, scale bars 10 μm or 1 μm (insets).

Fig 2. Paternal pericentromeres that form PRC1 heterochromatin are enriched for narrow DNA minor grooves. **(A-D)** Zygotes generated with *M. musculus* or *M. pahari* sperm were arrested in mitosis with a kinesin-5 inhibitor (STLC), then fixed and stained as indicated. Survivin (CPC subunit) marks pericentromeres, H3K9me3 marks maternal chromosomes, H3K27me3 marks paternal pericentromeres, and DAPI or Sytox Green label DNA. Arrowheads in insets point to paternal pericentromeres as indicated by the presence of Survivin and absence of H3K9me3 **(A)** or enrichment of H3K27me3 **(C)**. Images are max intensity z-projections, scale bars 10 μm or 1 μm (insets). Graphs show average DAPI (**B**, n=72-165, *N*=2) or Sytox Green (**D**, n=44-66, *N*=2) intensity along *M. musculus* (red), *M. caroli* (yellow) and *M. pahari* (blue) paternal chromosomes, starting from pericentric ends. Both *M. musculus* and *M. caroli* chromosomes have significantly higher DAPI intensity than *M. pahari* chromosomes within the first two microns (B, gray box), (*** P <0.001). Statistical significance was calculated by a Kruskal-Wallis test, followed by Dunn's post hoc test with Bonferroni correction.

Fig 3. *M. musculus* major satellite arrays are enriched for long A_nT sequences that preferentially bind the CBX2 AT-hook. **(A)** Histograms show the number of various A/T run lengths per 10 kb bin along portions of two genomic scaffolds containing arrays of either *M. musculus* major satellite (left) or *M. pahari* pi satellite (right), indicated by tandem arrows. **(B)** The average number per 10 kb bin of all possible 4W (left) and 5W (right) sequences within the

major and pi satellites arrays shown in A. **(C)** Schematic (left) shows *in silico* competition assays

between different A/T run sequences for the binding of a single peptide encoding the AT-hook of

CBX2, using AlphaFold3. Results (right) show AT-hook binding preferences. **(D)** Histograms

show the number of various A_nT sequences per 10 kb bin along the same genomic scaffolds as in

A. **(E)** Top: schematic showing that *M. musculus* and *M. spretus* centromeres/pericentromeres

have inverse proportions of minor (pink) and major (red) satellites. Bottom: consensus minor

satellite sequence with A_nT-sequences in bold and predicted A_nT frequencies. **(F)** Zygotes

generated with *M. musculus* (top row) or *M. spretus* (bottom row) sperm were arrested in mitosis

by APC/C inhibition (proTAME), then fixed and stained for RNF2 (green), H3K9me3 (magenta)

to mark maternal *M. musculus* chromosomes, and DAPI (gray). Images are max intensity z-

projections, scale bars 10 μm or 1 μm (insets). **(G)** Graphs show average RNF2 intensity along *M.*

musculus (red, n=166) and *M. spretus* (pink, n=119) paternal chromosomes, starting from

pericentric ends. S.E.M. is indicated by light band surrounding the mean line. *M. musculus*

chromosomes have significantly higher RNF2 intensity than *M. spretus* chromosomes within the

first two microns (gray box), (*** $P < 0.001$) ($N=2$). Statistical significance was calculated by a

Kruskal-Wallis test, followed by Dunn's post hoc test with Bonferroni correction.

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Fig 4. Arrays of 59-bp A_nT-rich satellites are present at *M. caroli* pericentromeres. (A)

Consensus sequences and predicted A_nT frequencies of two TAREAN read clusters predicted to

be satellite arrays in *M. caroli*. **(B)** $A_{\geq 4}T$ frequency of *M. caroli* short reads mapped to 59-bp

consensus sequences (6,738,028 reads), 60/79-bp consensus sequences (8,952,232 reads), or

random reads (8,952,232 reads). **(C)** Zygotes generated with *M. caroli* sperm expressing

dCas9:mCherry (green) with gRNAs targeting the 59-bp satellite. Embryos were arrested in

mitosis by APC/C inhibition (proTAME), then fixed and stained for H3K9me3 (magenta) to mark

maternal *M. musculus* chromosomes and DAPI (gray). Representative image is a max intensity z-

projection, scale bars 10 μm or 1 μm (inset) ($N=2$). **(D)** Schematic showing the location of 59-bp

and telomere repeat arrays on the 20 chromosomal scaffolds of our *M. caroli* long-read assembly.

Repeat array sizes are not to scale. **(E)** Histogram showing the number of various A_nT sequences

per 10 kb bin along the first megabase of *M. caroli* chromosome 16. The position of the 59-bp

array is indicated by the horizontal blue bar. **(F)** The average number of various A_nT sequences

per 10 kb bin in major, 59-bp and pi satellite arrays as well as *M. caroli* chromosome arms.

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1115 **Fig 5. PRC1 pericentric heterochromatin inhibits CPC recruitment. (A)** Schematic shows

1116 how H2AK119ub1 can inhibit H2AT121phos and CPC recruitment, resulting in increased

distance between metaphase sister kinetochores at paternal *M. musculus* pericentromeres (right) vs *M. pahari* pericentromeres (left). **(B)** Pure *M. musculus* zygotes were arrested at metaphase by APC/C inhibition (proTAME), then fixed and stained for RNF2 (PRC1 subunit, magenta) and H2AT121phos (green). Top and bottom insets show paternal (RNF2 positive) and maternal (RNF2 negative) chromosomes, respectively; arrowheads point to pericentromeric ends of chromosomes. Graphs show average H2AT121phos and RNF2 intensity along maternal (n=56) and paternal (n=54) chromosomes, starting from pericentric ends. Statistical differences between maternal and paternal chromosomes from 0-1 and 2-3 microns along their length (gray boxes) were calculated (*N*=2). **(C)** Zygotes generated with *M. musculus* or *M. pahari* sperm were arrested in mitosis with a kinesin-5 inhibitor (STLC), then fixed and stained for Survivin (green) and H3K9me3 (magenta). Arrowheads in insets point to pericentric Survivin staining. Graph shows the mean Survivin intensity of maternal and paternal pericentromeres in both types of zygotes. Each point represents a single pericentromere (n=253-374 for each group, *N*=3), and boxes represent interquartile ranges. **(D)** Zygotes generated with *M. musculus* or *M. pahari* sperm were arrested at metaphase by APC/C inhibition (proTAME), then fixed and stained for CENP-C (green) and H3K9me3 (magenta). Arrowhead points to a pair of paternal *M. musculus* sister kinetochores. Graph shows distances between sister kinetochores for maternal and paternal chromosomes in both types of zygotes. Each point represents a single pair (n=230-284 for each group, *N*=3). *P*-values were calculated by a Kruskal-Wallis test followed by Dunn's test using Bonferroni correction for multiple testing (*** $P < 0.001$). Images are max intensity z-projections; scale bars 10 μm or 1 μm (insets). **(E)** Live-imaging snapshots show a *M. musculus♀/M. musculus♂* zygote expressing H2B:mCherry (cyan) progressing through the first mitosis (top panels), with arrowheads indicating lagging chromosomes in anaphase, and a 3D reconstruction of maternal (magenta) and paternal (blue) chromosomes (bottom panels). Plots show the fraction of zygotes with lagging chromosomes in anaphase (top) and the proportion of maternal and paternal chromosomes contributing to these lagging events (bottom). Raw numbers are shown within each bar (*N*=3). *P*-value was calculated using a one-sided binomial test to assess whether paternal chromosomes lagged more often than the null expectation of 50% (* $P < 0.05$).

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

A

Cluster	Satellite Probability	% input reads	TAREAN consensus	Length (bp)	Theoretical A_nT per 10 kb array
1	0.979	5.3	CACAGTGTAGTACATTGTATA TGAGTGAGTTGCACTGAAA AACTTAGA**ATTT**ACTGAAAA ACCCGCATTAGACG**AAAT**G	79	253
2	0.992	6.0	CACACTGTAGGACCCGGAAT ATGGCGAGAAAACCTGAAAA AGGTGG**AAAAT**GAG**AAAAT**	59	338

Figure 5