

1 kSHREC 'Delta' reflects the shape of kinetochore rather than

2 intrakinetochore tension

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14 **Abstract**

15 Distance between fluorescent spots formed by various kinetochore proteins ('Delta') is proposed
16 to reflect the level of intrakinetochore tension (IKT). However, larger-scale changes in the
17 kinetochore architecture may also affect Delta. To test this possibility, we measure Delta in long
18 kinetochores of Indian muntjac (IM) whose shape, size, and orientation are discernable in
19 conventional light microscopy. We find that architecture of IM kinetochores and the value of
20 Delta change minimally when microtubule-mediated forces are suppressed by Taxol. In
21 contrast, large decreases of Delta observed in Taxol-treated human cells coincide with
22 prominent changes in length and shape of the kinetochore. We also find that inner and outer
23 kinetochore proteins intermix within a common spatial compartment instead of forming separate
24 thin layers. These observations, supported by computational modelling, suggest that changes in
25 Delta reflect changes in the kinetochore shape rather than the level of IKT.

26 **Introduction**

27 Segregation of chromosomes during cell division (mitosis) depends upon ‘kinetochores’,
28 macromolecular assemblies located at the centromere of each chromosome. Kinetochores
29 perform two principal functions: they generate the force that propels chromosomes and produce
30 a checkpoint signal that delays progression through mitosis until all chromosomes attach to
31 spindle microtubules. Molecular composition of the kinetochore is complex, comprising over a
32 hundred of various proteins [1]. Further, as the cell progresses through mitosis, molecular
33 composition of the kinetochore and its architecture change in response to various types of
34 interactions with spindle microtubules. These adaptive changes in size and shape of the
35 kinetochores ensure that microtubule attachments form rapidly yet with a low number of errors
36 [2, 3]. Thus, revealing mechanisms that govern kinetochore architecture is of a significant
37 interest.

38 Due to its small size in most mammalian cells (~300 nm), the shape of the kinetochore
39 or the distribution of its components cannot be directly delineated in conventional light
40 microscopy (LM). A popular approach to overcoming this limitation is based on measuring the
41 ‘Delta’, a distance between centroids of fluorescent spots formed by various proteins, visualized
42 in different colors within the same kinetochore. Measurements of Delta lay the foundation of a
43 nanometer-scale map that attributes various proteins to thin layers orthogonal to the inner-outer
44 (from the centromere towards attached microtubules) axis of the kinetochore [4, 5]. Delta
45 between the proteins at the base of the kinetochore (CenpA) and those in the microtubule
46 binding domain (Hec1) has been shown to decrease ~30% when microtubule dynamics are
47 suppressed by Taxol [4, 6]. The decrease was interpreted as a manifestation of changes in the
48 physical separation between the inner and outer layers, which in turn led to the concept of ‘intra-
49 kinetochore tension’ and the notion that stretching the kinetochore is necessary for the
50 satisfaction of the spindle assembly checkpoint (SAC) [7]. This attractive hypothesis; however,
51 remains debatable for two main reasons. First, there exists a high degree of variability in Delta

52 measurements conducted via different techniques and in different laboratories. While some
53 report that Delta (CenpA-Hec1) decreases by ~30 nm when human cells are treated with Taxol
54 [4], others observe a lesser decrease [8] or no statistically significant change in separation of
55 the same kinetochore proteins under similar experimental conditions [9, 10]. These
56 discrepancies likely arise from the alternative measuring techniques, particularly various
57 approaches to compensating chromatic aberration, inevitable in LM [4, 5, 8, 10, 11]. Second,
58 interpretation of Delta as a metric for physical distances between molecules is obfuscated by
59 the malleable shape of the kinetochore. While literal interpretation of Delta is proven for 'single-
60 molecule high-resolution colocalization' (SHREC) analyses of individual molecules [12, 13],
61 applicability of this approach to the kinetochore (SHREC on kinetochores, kSHREC [4]) was
62 originally justified by the layered-disc appearance of kinetochores in Electron Microscopy (EM)
63 [14]. More recent observations of significant alterations in the size and shape of the kinetochore
64 in response to various types of interactions with microtubules [2, 3, 15, 16] challenge this
65 justification [8]. The ongoing debate on the importance of intrakinetochore tension (IKT)
66 prompted us to evaluate relative contributions of distances between kinetochore layers vs.
67 changes in shape and orientation of the kinetochores on the centromere towards the value of
68 Delta. To this end, we applied kSHREC analysis to the compound kinetochores of Indian
69 muntjac (IM) that formed by a lateral fusion of typical mammalian centromeres during evolution
70 of this species. IM kinetochores comprise the conventional thin trilaminar plate (75 nm);
71 however, the length of the plate exceeds 1.5 μm instead of ~0.3 μm observed in most
72 mammalian cells. The increased length makes the shape and orientation of the kinetochore
73 discernable in LM. Comparative kSHREC analyses in IM vs. human cells suggest that the
74 decrease of Delta observed in Taxol-treated human cells primarily reflects changes in the length
75 of curved kinetochore plates rather than the level of IKT. This prompts re-evaluation of the role
76 ascribed to IKT in the control of mitotic progression.

77 **Results**

78 **Advantages of Indian muntjac kinetochores for kSHREC analysis**

79 The low number of chromosomes in Indian muntjac (IM) arose from the tandem fusion of
80 numerous normally-sized chromosomes during evolution of this species [17]. As a result, each
81 IM kinetochore comprises tandem repeats of the conventional mammalian kinetochores [18].
82 While typical mammalian kinetochores appear as small spots in conventional fluorescence LM
83 (Figure 1A,A'), IM kinetochores form thin lines with the length greater than 1 μm (Figure 1B,B').
84 Molecular composition of IM kinetochores is similar to that of conventional kinetochores [19] and
85 major kinetochore components can be visualized in both via expression of fluorescently-labeled
86 proteins or antibody staining with similar efficiency (Figure 1A,B). At the EM level, IM
87 kinetochores display the typical trilaminar plate with the widths of the layers similar to that
88 observed in other mammalian cells [14, 20, 21]. However, IM plates are several fold longer than
89 the 250-300 nm plates observed in human cells (Figure 1C,D).

90 Because orientation of sister kinetochores is discernable in IM, intensity profiles can be
91 generated by scanning a line orthogonal to the plates (Figure 1B'). Fitting these profiles with
92 Gaussian functions determines positions of the fluorescent peaks with nanometer precision
93 (Figure 1E) and the distance between the green and red peaks within a kinetochore (i.e., Δ)
94 is then calculated as shown in Figure 1E. Pairwise calculation of Δ for sister kinetochores
95 negates chromatic aberration [4]. Further, accuracy of this approach is not affected by large
96 standard deviations in the distribution of experimental values [8] that have been shown to
97 erroneously increase mean values obtained by measurements of Δ independently for each
98 kinetochore [5, 8]. A major limitation of the pairwise Δ measurement in human cells, is that
99 this approach underestimates the value of Δ if sister kinetochores swivel around the
100 centromere so that their outer layers do not face in opposite directions [4, 8]. However, because
101 the plates of IM kinetochores are discernable in LM, this limitation is overcome by selecting

102 sister kinetochores with the precisely opposite orientation. Thus, Delta in IM can be measured
103 with the level of precision not achievable in kSHREC analyses of smaller human kinetochores
104 whose orientation cannot be accurately determined.

105 **Delta (CenpA-Hec1) changes minimally in IM cells treated with Taxol**

106 We focus our analyses on the separation between the outer kinetochore protein Hec1 and the
107 centromere-specific histone CenpA that forms the base of the kinetochore. To facilitate direct
108 comparison of the results, the antibodies against Hec1 (9G3, Abcam) and CenpA (3-19, Abcam)
109 are the same as in previous Delta measurements in human cells [4, 5, 8]. We find that
110 $\Delta_{\text{CenpA-Hec1}}$ in untreated IM metaphase (95 ± 14 nm, Figure 2A) is similar to that previously
111 reported in human metaphase (~ 90 nm [5, 8]). Brief exposure to Taxol decreases $\Delta_{\text{CenpA-Hec1}}$
112 to 87 ± 14 nm in IM (Figure 2A). This decrease is statistically significant ($p = 0.0006$ in 2-tailed
113 Student's t-test); however, it is considerably smaller than ~ 20 nm decrease in human cells [5, 8,
114 22].

115 Immunolocalization of endogenous CenpA requires partial denaturation of the sample
116 because this protein is buried inside the DNA and thus is not accessible to the antibodies when
117 ultrastructure of the kinetochore is intact. Consequentially, under conditions required for
118 immunolocalization of CenpA, neither microtubules nor the trilaminar appearance of kinetochore
119 plates are preserved as evidenced in EM [23, 24]. To minimize potential effects of sample
120 denaturation we analyze Delta in IM cells that constitutively express CenpA-GFP. Fluorescence
121 of this protein is preserved when cells are fixed with 3.2% PFA (Figure 1B) or 1% GA (Figure
122 2B, B'), which is important as fluorescent spots containing outer-kinetochore proteins are
123 enlarged in human cells fixed with paraformaldehyde (PFA) vs. glutaraldehyde (GA) [8]. This
124 difference indicates differences in preservation of kinetochore morphology after GA vs. PFA
125 fixation.

126 We find that $\Delta_{\text{CenpA-GFP-Hec1}}$ in IM cells fixed with PFA (113 ± 14 nm, Figure 2C) or GA
127 (109 ± 14 nm, Figure 2D) is greater than $\Delta_{\text{CenpA-Hec1}}$ (95 ± 14 nm, Figure 2A). A similar
128 difference in the distance between Hec1 and CenpA vs. CenpA-GFP positions was observed in
129 human cells [8, 22] and the difference was attributed to the increased fluorescence between the
130 sister kinetochores due to overexpression of CenpA [22]. In contrast to human cells, where
131 Taxol decreases $\Delta_{\text{CenpA-GFP-Hec1}}$ by greater than 20 nm, in IM the value decreases merely 5-7
132 nm despite a prominent decrease in the distance between sister kinetochores, which indicates
133 cessation of forces that stretch the centromere (Figure 2C,D). Indeed, inter-kinetochore
134 distances in cells treated with Taxol are similar to the distances in cells where microtubules are
135 completely depolymerized (Figure 2C,D). However, in contrast to Taxol, $\Delta_{\text{CenpA-GFP-Hec1}}$
136 decreases by ~ 20 -nm after 15-min exposure of IM cells to 3- μ M nocodazole decreases (Figure
137 2C,D).

138 Despite minimal changes of Delta, physiological response of IM to Taxol is similar to that
139 in human cells (Figure 2 – Figure supplement 1). In both cell types, 15-min after addition of 10-
140 μ M Taxol, density of spindle microtubules increases prominently near the spindle poles and
141 decreases near the equator (Figure 2 – Figure supplements 1,2,3). During prolonged exposure
142 to the drug, both human and IM cells continue to enter mitosis but remain arrested for longer
143 than 20 hours (Figure 2 – Figure supplement 1; Videos 1 and 2). This behavior indicates that IM
144 cells possess a stringent SAC that is not satisfied despite the minimal decrease of Delta. Thus,
145 our observations are inconsistent with the proposed role of IKT in the control of mitotic
146 progression and/or with the notion that Delta is a reliable metrics for IKT.

147 **'Inner' and 'outer' proteins spatially overlap within IM kinetochores**

148 Morphologically, kinetochores appear as ~ 75 nm trilaminar plates in GA-fixed plastic-embedded
149 EM preparations (Figure 1C,D). However, immuno-localization analyses are not consistent with
150 the idea that kinetochore proteins form thin layers within the plate. Correlative immuno-

151 LM/immuno-EM analyses suggest that Hec1 molecules are spread in the direction of the
152 attached microtubules for greater than 200 nm in human cells [8]. A unique advantage of IM
153 kinetochore is that the width of the spatial domains occupied by various kinetochore proteins
154 can be directly measured as the Full Width at Half Maximum (FWHM) of the fluorescence peak
155 in line scans orthogonal to the orientation of the plate (Figure 3A,B).

156 We find that FWHM of the Hec1 distribution within IM kinetochores during metaphase is
157 233 ± 20 nm after GA fixation and 225 ± 22 nm after PFA fixation (Figure 3C). These values are
158 significantly larger than FWHM of line scans across individual microtubules (170 ± 7 nm after GA
159 and 189 ± 13 nm after PFA, Figure 3C), visualized with the same fluorophore and under identical
160 optical conditions. EM firmly establishes that the diameter of a microtubule in GA-fixed cells is
161 ~ 25 nm [25], which implies that FWHM of line scans across a microtubule is determined by the
162 diffraction-limited resolution of the optical system. Thus, the width of Hec1 distribution that
163 exceeds FWHM of diffraction-limited profile by 63 nm, reflects the true physical width of the
164 layer occupied by Hec1 within the kinetochore. Importantly, FWHM values are significantly more
165 variable among Hec1 than among microtubule profiles (Figure 3C). This increased variability
166 supports the notion that the width of microtubule profiles is determined by the optics while the
167 Hec1 profiles reflect natural fluctuations in the organization of the kinetochore plate. We also
168 notice that the width of microtubule profiles in PFA-fixed samples is greater than after GA
169 fixation. This increase likely reflects disintegration of microtubule structure that results in spatial
170 redistribution of tubulin. Indeed, microtubules are not structurally detectable in EM on PFA-fixed
171 samples [25, 26].

172 Measurements in metaphase cells treated with Taxol demonstrate that abrogation of
173 centromere tension increases FWHM of Hec1 to 251 ± 27 nm after GA and 241 ± 30 nm after PFA
174 fixation. Complete depolymerization of microtubules with high concentration of nocodazole
175 results in a more prominent increase of Hec1 FWHM to 278 ± 35 nm (GA) and 273 ± 39 nm (PFA)
176 (Figure 3C).

177 CenpA-GFP also localizes within a layer of measurable width. Because resolution is
178 proportional to the wavelength, FWHM is less for a diffraction-limited peak formed by a green
179 vs. red fluorophore. On the microscope used in this study, FWHM of microtubules visualized
180 with a green fluorophore (GFP or Alexa488) is 155 ± 6 nm after GA and 172 ± 11 nm after PFA
181 fixation (Figure 3C). FWHM of CenpA-GFP peaks is significantly wider, measuring 208 ± 18 nm
182 after GA fixation and 202 ± 19 nm after PFA. The width of CenpA-GFP layer increases slightly to
183 216 ± 24 nm (GA) and 210 ± 26 nm (PFA) in Taxol-treated cells, and further increases to 224 ± 24
184 nm (GA) and 222 ± 30 nm (PFA) when microtubules are completely depolymerized with
185 nocodazole (Figure 3C).

186 FWHM measurements demonstrate that both inner (CenpA) and outer (Hec1)
187 kinetochore components reside within layers whose widths are significantly larger than the
188 diffraction limit of resolution and therefore the widths of these layers are measurable in LM.
189 Further, CenpA and Hec1 layers are approximately twofold larger than the distance between the
190 centers of the layers occupied by these proteins (i.e., Delta). These dimensions imply that
191 approximately half of CenpA and Hec1 molecules are spatially intermixed within the same
192 compartment, which in turn means that Delta does not accurately reflect the typical distance
193 between molecules within IM kinetochores.

194 **CenpA and Hec1 spatially overlap within kinetochores in human cells.**

195 Our observation that the width of the layers formed by inner and outer proteins within
196 compound kinetochores of IM exceeds 200 nm raises a question of whether a similar
197 architecture exists in human kinetochores. The underlying assumption in Delta measurements is
198 that kinetochore proteins form negligibly thin layers within an ~300-nm long plate [4]. A corollary
199 of this assumption is that FWHM of the kinetochore spots in LM should reflect the length of the
200 plate in one direction and be diffraction limited in the orthogonal direction.

201 To explore whether fluorescently labeled kinetochores in human cells resemble the
202 shape and dimensions assumed in kSHREC analyses, we constructed a computational
203 simulation in which the inner and outer kinetochore layers are modeled as a specified number of
204 'molecules' (points) randomly distributed within a 3-D volume of specified shape. This
205 distribution of molecules is convolved (blurred) with a 3-D Gaussian filter which mimics the point
206 spread function (PSF) of a light microscope. The blurred image is then scaled down to match
207 dimensions of voxels in a typical LM volume recorded on a CCD camera at specified Z-steps.
208 Fitting a Gaussian function to these simulated 3-D images of kinetochores is then used to
209 determine coordinates and FWHM of the peaks (Figure 4A).

210 To establish PSF parameters, we recorded 3-D volumes of multi-color 100-nm
211 fluorescent beads under the same optical conditions as kinetochores (Figure 4B).
212 Measurements of the beads yield 155 ± 27 nm ($n = 245$) FWHM in the green and 172 ± 31 nm ($n =$
213 125) in the red channels. These FWHM values are indistinguishable from FWHM of individual
214 microtubules determined by orthogonal line-scans in GA-fixed samples (Figure 3C) as expected
215 for measurements of diffraction-limited objects on the same microscope. With the
216 experimentally measured PSF parameters, the model predicts that kinetochores comprising
217 inner and outer layers with diffraction-limited widths and separated by Δ previously observed
218 in RPE1 cells [8] should appear as drastically elongated fluorescent spots with minimal overlap
219 between the layers (Figure 4C). In contrast to this prediction, kinetochores appear as more
220 rounded and FWHM of both red and green spots is significantly larger than the diffraction limit,
221 which indicates a noticeable overlap between the inner and outer domains (Figure 4D – Figure
222 supplement 1, also see [8]). This appearance implies that the width of kinetochore layers is
223 similar to the length of the plate. Indeed, computational modelling predicts that for ~ 300 long
224 kinetochore plates the width of both inner and outer layers need to be ~ 250 nm to match the
225 typical appearance of human kinetochores (Figure 4E). This value is similar to the widths of
226 kinetochore layers measured in the compound IM kinetochores (Figure 3C).

227 Another feature inconsistent with the notion that proteins form relatively thin layers in
228 human kinetochores is the orientation of the longer axis, particularly for the outer kinetochore
229 components (Hec1, Figure 4 – Figure supplement 1). If these proteins are restricted to a
230 relatively thin but long plate, the longer axis of fluorescent spots formed by these proteins is
231 expected to orient perpendicular to the attached microtubule bundle. In contrast, Hec1 spots are
232 elongated in various directions within the same cell (Figure 4 – Figure supplement 1, Video 3).
233 Variability in the orientation of the longer axes becomes even more prominent in cells treated
234 with Taxol (Figure 4 – Figure supplement 2, Video 4). This change suggests that Taxol alters
235 dimensions and/or shape of the kinetochore, which may affect the value of Delta.

236 **Kinetochore plates are curved, and the length of plate increases in Taxol treated human** 237 **cells**

238 Canonical interpretation of Delta as metrics for the distance between layers of molecules
239 assumes that the overall shape and dimensions of the kinetochore plate remain constant.
240 Previous computational analyses suggest that for inflexible layers Delta accurately reflects the
241 distance even if the layers are slanted or jagged [4]. However, for curved layers, the value of
242 Delta is smaller than the physical distance between the layers and the magnitude of this
243 difference is greater for curvatures with smaller radii and/or longer plates (Figure 5A, also see
244 reference [8]). Systematic analysis of the kinetochore plate length and curvature in EM
245 preparations has not been reported, which prompted us to assess these parameters in serial
246 70-nm plastic sections of untreated (Figure 5 – Figure supplement 1) vs. Taxol-treated (Figure 5
247 – Figure supplement 2) RPE1 cells.

248 Tracing kinetochore plates in GA-fixed conventionally embedded cells (Figure 5B)
249 demonstrates that the length measured in sections oriented parallel to the coverslip surface is
250 283 ± 54 nm (N = 87) during metaphase but it increases to 410 ± 84 (N = 38) when metaphase

251 cells are treated with Taxol for 15 min (Figure 5C). Both values are significantly greater than
252 FWHM of Hec1 spots measured in LM (Figure 4 – Figure supplements 1,2).

253 The shape of outer kinetochore plate is highly variable both in untreated and Taxol-
254 treated cells (Figure 5 – Figure supplements 1,2). Undulations, protrusions, and cavitations are
255 prominent in most kinetochores. To estimate a typical curvature of the plate we determined
256 dimensions of the minimal rectangular box that fully encompasses the plate in a single section
257 (Figure 5B'). This approach yields more uniform results than direct fitting of the plate with a
258 circular arc. The latter produces large residual errors due to minute irregularities in the shape of
259 the plate, particularly when the plate is short (our unpublished observation). We find that a
260 typical outer kinetochore plate in untreated cells is encompassed by a 270 ± 47 -nm by 61 ± 18 -nm
261 rectangle while Taxol-treated kinetochores require a 350 ± 57 -nm by 110 ± 39 -nm bounding box
262 (Figure 5D). Assuming a perfectly circular arc, these dimensions suggest that typical
263 kinetochore curvatures are ~ 180 nm for the untreated and ~ 194 nm for Taxol-treated cells
264 (Figure 5D). The difference between these values is not statistically significant.

265 Thus, EM analyses suggest that a typical kinetochore plate is an arc with the curvature
266 radius of ~ 190 nm. Taxol does not significantly change the curvature, but it prominently
267 increases the length of the plate. To more clearly understand how these geometric features of
268 the kinetochore plate influence the results of FWHM analyses, we employed a computational
269 model. The model makes two major predictions. First, to achieve ~ 145 -nm Delta observed in
270 untreated RPE1 cells, kinetochore layers need to be separated by ~ 155 nm (Figure 5E).
271 Second, elongation of the plate with fixed curvature leads to a decrease in Delta from 145 nm to
272 125 nm (Figure 5F). The model also predicts LM appearance of kinetochore spots that
273 resembles appearance of real kinetochores in untreated and Taxol-treated RPE1 cells (Figure
274 5E,F, Figure 4 – Figure supplement 1,2).

275 Discussion

276 Pioneering time-lapse recordings of live cells with kinetochores labeled in two different
277 colors revealed that the distance between fluorescent spots corresponding to the microtubule-
278 binding domain and the base of kinetochore was not constant. Specifically, the spots appeared
279 to be closer together when microtubule dynamics were suppressed with Taxol, a treatment
280 known to reduce the force that stretches centromeres of bioriented chromosomes [6, 27]. These
281 observations gave birth to the concept of IKT [7]. Subsequent pairwise measurements of
282 distances between the spots formed by various kinetochore proteins (i.e., Delta) laid the
283 foundation of a linear map that ascribed various proteins to specific layers within the kinetochore
284 and interpreted Delta as the distance that separates these layers [4]. Essential for this
285 interpretation of Delta was the assumption that kinetochores are flat thin plates whose shape
286 and dimensions remain constant upon Taxol treatment. Here we test this assumption and find
287 that a typical kinetochore plate in human cells is curved, which implies that Delta
288 underestimates the distance between the layers. We also find that the length of curved
289 kinetochore plates increases in Taxol-treated cells. This type of architectural reorganization
290 inevitably decreases the value of Delta even if the distance separating inner and outer
291 kinetochore layers remains constant. Thus, our data demonstrate that Delta is not directly
292 proportional to IKT.

293 Our observation of a significant plate curvature is consistent with early EM descriptions
294 of kinetochores as crescents with the convex side facing away from the centromere [reviewed in
295 28]. Indeed, kinetochore plates in human cells cannot be truly flat because they protrude from
296 the surface of a cylindrical centromere, whose relaxed radius is less than 400 nm. A force
297 pulling kinetochores outwards is expected to increase the plate's curvature and our EM results
298 suggest that the typical radius of kinetochore plates visualized via conventional EM is less than
299 200 nm (Figure 5). At this curvature Delta would underestimate the distance between negligibly
300 thin layers by ~20% (Fig5A). However, our data suggest that kinetochore layers are not

301 negligibly thin, and the widths of the layers are not constant – they increase under conditions
302 that decrease Delta (Figure 3, also see [8]). These complex architectural changes further
303 complicate quantitative interpretation of Delta.

304 FWHM measurements of Hec1 and CenpA spots in human cells also suggest a
305 significant spatial overlap between the inner and outer proteins. Our data demonstrate that
306 human kinetochores are much larger than diffraction-limited spots in all directions, i.e., the width
307 of the kinetochore is as large as its length. This observation is supported by computational
308 simulations with experimentally-determined parameters of PSF. These simulations predict that
309 fluorescent spots produced by protein layers constrained within flat thin discs do not resemble
310 appearance and dimensions of kinetochore spots observed in human cells (Figure 5E, Figure 4
311 – Figure supplement 1, 2). Thus, ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ proteins are not separated by a typical
312 distance represented by Delta but intermixed within a common spatial compartment.

313 Consistent with the notion that large-scale architectural reorganizations contribute
314 significantly towards the value of Delta in human cells, we observe that Delta remains virtually
315 constant in Taxol-treated IM cells. Due to the increased length of the kinetochore as well as a
316 larger diameter of centromere in IM, kinetochore plates in these cells are relatively flat (Figure 2
317 – Figure supplement 2) and their shape is largely preserved in Taxol-treated cells (Figure 2 –
318 Figure supplement 3). These features ensure that Delta values determined in line-scans
319 orthogonal to the plate accurately reflect the distance between the inner and outer kinetochore
320 domains. Thus, minimal changes in Delta values upon suppression of microtubule forces by
321 Taxol in IM cells imply one of the two possibilities. First, mechanic properties of IM kinetochores
322 may fundamentally differ from those in humans. Second, the large decrease in Delta observed
323 in human cells primarily reflects a change in overall shape/size of the kinetochore and not the
324 distance between the layers of molecules. Similar physiological response of IM and human cells
325 to Taxol, similar molecular composition of kinetochores [19], similar morphology of kinetochore
326 plates in both species (Figure 1), and similar values of Delta in untreated cells (cf. Figure 2 and

327 [4]) render the first possibility unlikely. Therefore, Delta in human cells appears to reflect
328 primarily larger scale deformations of malleable outer plate rather than elastic stretching within
329 the plate (i.e., IKT). Our interpretation gains additional support from observations of different
330 Delta values in sister kinetochores [8, 27, 29]. It is impossible for linearly connected elastic
331 elements to simultaneously experience different levels of tension. In contrast, changes in the
332 shape of kinetochore plate are expected to be independent for sister kinetochores and
333 prominent differences in the shape of sister kinetochores is directly observed in EM (Figure 5 –
334 Figure supplements 1,2).

335 In recent years, kSHREC analyses have led to contradictory conclusions regarding the
336 nature of IKT as well as its role in mitotic progression. Some studies attribute 100% of changes
337 in Delta to changes in the distance between various kinetochore proteins or conformational
338 changes within a specific molecule [4]. Others conclude that Delta in part [8] or exclusively [10]
339 reflects swiveling (angular reorientation) of kinetochores on the centromere instead of reporting
340 correct intrakinetochore distances. These discrepancies are exaggerated by large differences in
341 absolute values of Delta for the same pair of proteins that vary as much as 40% in different
342 reports [4, 5, 8, 10]. In part, this lack of consensus may be due to different approaches to Delta
343 measurements employed in different laboratories and there is a thoughtful debate on the
344 conditions necessary for accurate localization of fluorescent spots in cells [5, 11]. However, a
345 larger issue is whether the size of kinetochore is sufficiently small and whether the shape of this
346 organelle is sufficiently invariant to allow unequivocal interpretation of Delta as the distance
347 between various molecules. This issue has not been considered since the introduction of
348 kSHREC approach a decade ago [4]. Our data presented here suggest that human
349 kinetochores are too large, complexly shaped, and too flexible to be amenable to Delta
350 measurements. While center-of-mass positions for various molecules can be determined with
351 sub 10-nm precision, interpretation of Delta as the distance between molecules or the length of
352 a molecule within the kinetochore [5] is valid only if the molecules form a parallel array within a

353 rigid disc of constant dimensions. Thus, currently there is no proof that kinetochores are
354 amenable to SHREC-based analysis. This urges caution in literal interpretation of Delta as
355 metrics for IKT or distance between subdomains within the kinetochore.

356 **Materials and Methods**

357 **Cell culture and drug treatments**

358 Immortalized hTERT-RPE1 constitutively expressing CenpA-GFP and Centrin-1-GFP [30] and
359 hTERT-Indian Muntjac cells ([19], kind gift of Dr. Helder Maiato, Institute of Molecular and
360 Cellular Biology, Porto, Portugal) were cultured in DMEM (Gibco, Life Technologies)
361 supplemented with 10% FBS (Sigma-Aldrich F0926) at 37°C and 5% CO₂. Taxol (Paclitaxel
362 T7402-5MG; Sigma-Aldrich) and nocodazole (Calbiochem, #487928) were added ~ 15 min prior
363 to fixation to final concentrations of 10- μ M and 3- μ M respectively.

364 **Time-lapse recordings**

365 Cells were seeded in 12.5 cm² Tissue Culture Flasks and grown in DMEM (Gibco, Life
366 Technologies) supplemented with 10% FBS (Sigma-Aldrich F0926) and 25 mM HEPES (Gibco
367 by Life Technologies REF 15630-080) at 37°C and 5% CO₂ for 24 h. Taxol was added in
368 conditioned culture media to 5 μ M final concentration, 30 minutes prior to filming. Cells were
369 imaged on Nikon TS100 microscopes equipped with a 10X objective lens (Nikon) at 37°C for
370 48-72 h. Phase-contrast or Differential Interference Contrast images were captured at 2 min
371 intervals on a Monochrome Spot IR camera. The microscope and light source were controlled
372 by Spot 5.3 Advanced software (Diagnostic Instruments, Inc.).

373 **Immunofluorescence**

374 Cells were concurrently permeabilized and fixed in PEM buffer (100 mM Pipes, pH 6.9, 2.5 mM
375 EGTA, and 5 mM MgCl₂, pH 6.9) supplemented with 1% Triton X-100 and 1% glutaraldehyde
376 (G5882; Sigma-Aldrich) or 1% Triton X-100 and 3.2% paraformaldehyde (EM grade; EMS) for
377 10 min. Microtubules were visualized with DM1 α monoclonal anti- α -tubulin antibody at 1:100
378 (T9026; Sigma-Aldrich) followed by a secondary antibody conjugated with Alexa Fluor 594 (A-

379 11032; Thermo Fisher Scientific) or Alexa Fluor 488 (A-11029, Thermo Fisher Scientific). Outer
380 kinetochore was stained with a monoclonal 9G3/Hec1 antibody (Abcam ab3613) at 1:1000
381 followed by a secondary antibody conjugated with Alexa Fluor 594 (A-21135; Thermo Fisher
382 Scientific). In the experiments that involved immunostaining for endogenous CenpA, the cells
383 were fixed in paraformaldehyde and postfixed in 100% methanol at -18°C for 15 min.
384 Endogenous CenpA was visualized with a mouse monoclonal antibody (3-19, Abcam; ab13939)
385 at 1:200. Although both 3-19 (CENP-A) and 9G3 (Ndc80/Hec1) antibodies are mouse
386 monoclonal, their isotypes are distinctly different, which allows highly specific co-staining. 3-19
387 antibody was detected with IgG1 (γ 1)-specific secondary antibody conjugated to Alexa Fluor
388 488 (Thermo Fisher Scientific, A-21121;), and 9G3 was detected with IgG2a (γ 2a) specific
389 secondary antibody conjugated to Alexa Fluor 594 (Thermo Fisher Scientific, A-21135;), both at
390 1:100 dilution.

391 Immunostained cells were embedded in non-solidifying media containing 90% glycerol,
392 10% 1M Tris-Cl, pH 8.5, and 1 mg/ml PPDA. Wide-field fluorescence images were obtained on
393 a Nikon TE2000E2 microscope equipped with 100x 1.49 NA PlanApo TIRF lens and LED
394 illuminator (CoolLED PE 4000). Images were captured with an Andor Zyla 4.2 camera at 43-nm
395 X-Y pixels and 200-nm Z steps. The system was controlled by Nikon NIS-Elements Advanced
396 Research software (Nikon instruments). All images were deconvolved with SoftWorRx 5.0
397 deconvolution software (Applied Precision), and objective lens-specific in-house-recorded point-
398 spread functions. Deconvolution method was set to “Conservative”, noise level to “Medium” for
399 kinetochores and “Low” for 100-nm beads, and the process ran for 10 iterations.

400 **Serial section electron microscopy**

401 IM and RPE1 cells were fixed with 2.5% glutaraldehyde (G5882; Sigma-Aldrich) in PBS, pH7.4
402 for 30 min, rinsed with PBS (3 X 5 min), and post-fixed with 2% OsO₄ in dH₂O for 60 min at 4°C.
403 The coverslips were then rinsed in dH₂O, treated with 0.25% tannic acid for 20 min, and stained

404 with 2% uranyl acetate for 60 min. Dehydration was achieved by a series of ethanol solutions
405 (30-50-70-80%–96%, 10 min in each solution) followed by acetone (10 min). After dehydration,
406 cells were embedded in Epon 812 and cured for 48 hours at 60°C. Serial 70-nm thin sections
407 were cut with a diamond knife (Diatome) on a Leica Ultracut UCT ultramicrotome and stained
408 with lead citrate. Images were obtained on a JEOL 1400 microscope operated at 80 kV using a
409 side-mounted 4.0 Megapixel XR401 sCMOS AMT camera (Advanced Microscopy Techniques
410 Corp). Higher-magnification images (40K) were collected for individual kinetochores. These
411 high-magnification images were subsequently used to trace kinetochores plates. 3-D volumes
412 occupied by the kinetochores were visualized as isosurface models in Amira 5.3.3 (Visage
413 Imaging).

414 **Measurement of interkinetochore distances, Delta, and Full Width at Half Maximum** 415 **(FWHM) in IM cells**

416 Intensity profiles of selected centromeres (CenpA-GFP) with co-planar sister kinetochores
417 (Ndc80/Hec1) were obtained for single-pixel lines ImageJ. Precise position and FWHM of the
418 two Gaussian peaks in each of these profiles were obtained via the Peakfit MATLAB function
419 developed by Dr. O'Haver ([https://www.mathworks.com/matlabcentral/fileexchange/23611-](https://www.mathworks.com/matlabcentral/fileexchange/23611-peakfit-m)
420 [peakfit-m](https://www.mathworks.com/matlabcentral/fileexchange/23611-peakfit-m)). Profiles with fit errors larger than 3% were discarded (less than 3% of all profiles).

421 Interkinetochore distance (IKD) was calculated by subtracting the distance between the
422 centers of CENP-A or Hec1 peaks. Delta values were calculated by subtracting the distance
423 between the centers of CENP-A peaks from the distance between the centers of Ndc80/Hec1
424 peaks and dividing the result by 2. In this approach, potential errors due to chromatic aberration
425 are automatically negated by the opposite orientation of sister kinetochores. However, the same
426 (average) value of Delta is assigned to both sister kinetochores.

427 **Measurement of interkinetochore distances, Delta, and Full Width at Half Maximum**
428 **(FWHM) in RPE1 cells**

429 Precise positions and dimensions of fluorescent spots in RPE1 cells were obtained with the
430 `delta_tool` MATLAB function described in reference [8] and available at
431 <http://www.jcb.org/cgi/content/full/jcb.201412139/DC1>. This function determines x-y coordinate
432 of the kinetochores center of mass via nonlinear fitting (`lsqcurvefit` MATLAB function) in
433 projections of segmented volumes of kinetochores with a 2D Gaussian function. Z coordinates
434 are estimated separately in x-z projections. Chromatic aberration errors are suppressed by
435 shifting one color channel so that the global centers of mass for the red and green channels
436 coincide. Delta is then calculated directly as the distance between the red and green centroids
437 within the same kinetochore.

438 **Measurement of the outer plate length and curvature**

439 Length of the kinetochore outer plate was determined by tracing the contours of the plate with
440 the Freehand line tool in ImageJ (National Institutes of Health). To determine curvature of the
441 outer plate, a minimal rectangular box that encompasses the entire plate was drawn with the
442 Rectangle tool of ImageJ. For a perfectly circular segment, curvature radius of an arc constraint
443 within a rectangular box is calculated as $R = W^2/8H + H/2$ where W is the length of the rectangle
444 that defines the chord, and H is the height of the rectangle that defines the sagitta of the arc.

445 **Computational simulation for evaluation LM appearance of kinetochores with various**
446 **architecture**

447 The simulation is made using a Matlab code, and the following parameters are considered.
448 Kinetochores are modeled as two plates, each consisting of fixed number of molecules
449 uniformly distributed randomly within a 3-D volume of specified dimensions and position relative
450 to the other plate with the possibility of overlap. The volume is rectangular except for curvature

451 in either the XY or XZ planes with assumed rotational symmetry with respect to both the Z and
452 Y axes. Two PSFs for “green” and “red” colors are constructed by convolving a single point with
453 3-D gaussian filter (implemented via `fspecial3` function available in Matlab 2018b or a later
454 version of Matlab). Widths of the PSFs are specified independently in XY plane and along Z
455 direction. Convolved volumes are down-sampled to the XY pixel size and Z steps expected in
456 LM by integrating intensity constrained within the part of convolved volume that corresponds to
457 the specified LM voxel. Relative position of the down-sampled LM array with respect to the full-
458 resolution convolved volume is randomized within 1 LM pixel to mimic random positions of
459 kinetochores with respect to CCD pixels. Pseudo-experimental measurement of Delta and
460 FWHM are conducted as in real experiments but within the simulated volume at LM resolution.
461 Simulation code is available in the supplemental materials.

462 **Preparation of illustrations**

463 Contrast and brightness of the final LM images were linearly adjusted in Photoshop (CS6) and
464 the figures assembled in Illustrator (CS6; Adobe). Graphs were prepared in MATLAB or Excel
465 and imported into Illustrator as PDFs.

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470 **Competing Interests**

471 The authors declare no competing interests.

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555

556

557 **Figure Legends**

558 **Figure 1. Kinetochores architecture in human and Indian muntjac cells and the approach**

559 **to Delta measurements. (A)** Human (RPE1) cell with inner and outer kinetochores domains

560 labeled via expression of CenpA-GFP (green) and immunostaining for Ndc80/Hec1 (red).

561 Paraformaldehyde (PFA) fixation. DNA is counterstained with Hoechst 33342 (blue). Maximum-

562 intensity projection through the entire cell. Centrioles (asterisks) are labeled via expression of

563 Centrin-1-GFP. **(A')** Higher-magnification of sister kinetochores boxed in A. Both inner (CenpA)

564 and outer (Hec1) kinetochores proteins appear as small spots. **(B)** Indian muntjac (IM) cell with

565 inner and outer kinetochores domains labeled as in A. PFA fixation. **(B')** Higher-magnification of

566 sister kinetochores boxed in B. Inner and outer kinetochores proteins form thin layers with

567 discernable orientation. Lines denote positions of scan profiles presented in E. **(C)** A 70-nm EM

568 section through a kinetochores in metaphase RPE1 cell. Arrows denote the trilaminar plate

569 comprising ~25 nm thin electron dense inner and outer layers (arrows) separated by a ~25-nm

570 thin translucent middle layer. The plate is ~300 nm long (curly brackets). **(D)** A 70-nm EM

571 section through a kinetochores in IM metaphase. Arrows and curly brackets as in panel C. The

572 plate is ~1000-nm long and ~75 nm wide. (E) Line profiles across co-planar sister kinetochores

573 in IM scanned orthogonally to the plates (position of the scan line is marked in B'). Markers are

574 pixel intensities, lines are Gaussian fits. Inter-kinetochores distances IKDg and IKDr are the

575 distances between maxima of the two green and two red peaks correspondingly. Delta is

576 determined as half of the difference between IKDr and IKDg.

577 **Figure 2 (with 3 supplements). Delta does not decrease significantly in Taxol-treated IM**

578 **cells. (A)** Scatterplots of CenpA (green) - Hec1 (red) Delta versus interkinetochores (CenpA-

579 CenpA) distance for untreated metaphase and Taxol-treated IM cells. PFA fixation, followed by

580 methanol. Dashed lines denote mean. Mean \pm standard deviation (SD) also shown numerically.

581 **(B)** IM cell with inner and outer kinetochores domains labeled via expression of CenpA-GFP

582 (green) and immunostaining for Ndc80/Hec1 (red). Glutaraldehyde (GA) fixation. Notice that the
583 intensity of staining is similar to Figure 1B although chromosome arms appear slightly more
584 condensed. **(B')** Higher-magnification of sister kinetochores boxed in B. Scale bar = 500 nm. **(C)**
585 Scatterplots of CenpA-GFP (green) - Hec1 (red) Delta versus interkinetochore (CenpA-GFP –
586 CenpA-GFP) distance for untreated, Taxol-, and nocodazole-treated IM cells. PFA fixation.
587 Mean \pm standard deviation (SD) shown. **(D)** As in C but cells are fixed with GA.

588 **Figure 3. Kinetochores layers in IM cells are wide and their width changes upon Taxol and**
589 **nocodazole treatments.** **(A)** Examples of line-scans (white lines) across individual
590 microtubules or kinetochore plates in cells fixed with Paraformaldehyde (PFA) or
591 Glutaraldehyde (GA). **(B)** Fluorescence profiles corresponding to line-scans shown in A.
592 Markers are pixel intensities, lines are Gaussian fits. Values of the Full Width at Half-Maximum
593 (FWHM) are shown for each profile. Notice that fluorescence peaks of inner- and outer-
594 kinetochore layers are significantly wider than the peaks of individual microtubules. **(C)** Box
595 plots presenting measurements of FWHM for microtubules, inner- (CenpA-GFP), and outer-
596 (Hec1) kinetochore layers in untreated, Taxol- and nocodazole- treated metaphases after PFA
597 (left) and GA (right) fixation. Notice that FWHM of Hec1 layer increases in Taxol- and
598 nocodazole-treated cells. Increase in CenpA-GFP layer is apparent after PFA but not after GA
599 fixation. Student's t-test p values are less than 10^{-4} (****), 10^{-5} (*****), or greater than 0.5 (NS).

600 **Figure 4 (with 2 supplements). Inner and outer layers of human kinetochores are wide**
601 **and spatially overlap.** **(A)** Layout of computational model used to predict LM appearance of
602 human kinetochores. Randomized distribution of molecules within a specified 3-D shape is
603 convolved with wavelength-specific Gaussian point-spread function (PSF). Convolved volumes
604 are then downsampled to the voxel size typical in conventional LM. **(B)** LM images and intensity
605 profiles of a 100-nm multicolor bead shown in green (515-nm) and red (580-nm) colors. FWHM
606 is reported for the longer axis in XY plane. **(C)** Predicted LM appearance for kinetochores

607 shaped as 300 x 250 nm rectangular prism with 50-nm wide layers separated by 140 nm. Delta
608 and FWHM values are measured in pseudo-LM volume constructed at 40-nm XY pixels and
609 200-nm Z-steps. **(D)** LM images and intensity profiles of a human kinetochore with typical
610 values of Delta and FWHM (see Figure S2). Notice that both inner (CenpA-GFP) and outer
611 (Hec1) domains are round and significantly larger than a diffraction-limited spot. **(E)** Predicted
612 LM appearance for kinetochores shaped as 300 x 250 nm rectangular prism with widths typical
613 for inner and outer layers observed in IM cells. Centers of the layers are separated by 140 nm.
614 Delta and FWHM values are measured in pseudo-LM volume constructed at 40-nm XY pixels
615 and 200-nm Z-steps.

616 **Figure 5 (with 2 supplements). Kinetochore plates are curved and their length but not**
617 **curvature increases in Taxol-treated human cells. (A)** Effects of the plate curvature and
618 length on the value of Delta. For parallel straight lines of any length value of Delta matches the
619 distance separating the lines. In contrast, for circular arcs, Delta is smaller than the distance
620 separating the lines and the difference depends on the curvature and length of the arc. **(B)** 70-
621 nm EM sections through typical kinetochores in untreated (left) vs. Taxol-treated RPE1 cells
622 (see Figure 5 – Figure supplements 1,2). **(B')** Kinetochore plate in Taxol-treated cell is longer
623 and the outer layer fits within a rectangular box of greater length and width than in untreated
624 cell. **(B'')** Surface-rendered reconstructions from serial sections demonstrate complexity of the
625 outer plate shape in 3-D space. **(C)** Frequency of plates with various lengths in untreated (N =
626 87 kinetochores) and Taxol-treated (N = 38 kinetochores) cells. Mean values of plate length are
627 283 ± 54 in control and 410 ± 84 in Taxol-treated cells. **(D)** Dimensions of the bounding box
628 required to encompass the outer plate in untreated (270 ± 47 by 61 ± 18 nm) vs. Taxol-treated
629 cells (350 ± 57 by 110 ± 39 nm) suggest that the outer plate resembles a circular arc with ~190-nm
630 radius. **(E)** Predicted LM appearance for kinetochores that comprise 250-nm wide layers with
631 length and curvature observed in untreated RPE1 cells. Notice that centers of the green and red

632 layers need to be separated by ~155 nm to achieve the expected 145-nm Delta. **(F)** Predicted
633 change in the LM appearance and Delta due to increased length of the plate. All other
634 simulation parameters are identical to (E).

635 **Video legends**

636 **Video 1. Effects of Taxol on RPE1 cells.** Cells that enter mitosis (manifested by the
637 characteristic round morphology) in the presence of 5- μ M Taxol remain arrested and eventually
638 die. Phase-contrast microscopy. Time stamp in hours: minutes. Selected time points from this
639 recording are shown in Figure 2 - figure supplement 1C.

640 **Video 2. Effects of Taxol on IM cells.** Taxol treatment and filming conditions identical to Video
641 1. Selected time points from this recording are shown in Figure 2 - figure supplement 1C.

642 **Video 3. Distribution and appearance of kinetochores during metaphase in RPE1 cell.**
643 Numbers denote centromeres with sister kinetochores indexed as 'a' and 'b'. Each kinetochore
644 is labeled in green (CenpA-GFP) and red (Hec1 visualized with Alexa594). Centrosomes (Ca
645 and Cb) are labeled with Centrin1-GFP. Chromosomes are stained with Hoechst 33342 (blue).
646 Scale bar in the bottom-right corner applies to X–Y planes; depth of each plane is denoted in
647 the top-left corner. All 92 kinetochores from this volume are shown at high magnification in
648 Figure 4 - figure supplement 1. Notice that spatial proximity of kinetochore 7a to 8a as well as
649 17a to 18a preclude accurate Delta and FWHM measurements for centromeres 7, 8, 17, and
650 18. Glutaraldehyde fixation.

651 **Video 4. Distribution and appearance of kinetochores in Taxol-treated RPE1 cell.** Taxol
652 added ~15 min prior to fixation when the cell had assembled a bipolar spindle with congressed
653 chromosomes. Fixation, staining, and imaging conditions identical to Video 3. All 92
654 kinetochores from this volume are shown at high magnification in Figure 4 - figure supplement
655 2. Notice that Delta and FWHM measurements were not obtained for centromeres 7-9, 11, 27,
656 30, 33, and 38-42 due to spatial overlap among their kinetochores. Glutaraldehyde fixation.

657 **Source-data files**

658 **Figure 2 – source data 1.** Numeric values for data presented in panels A, C, and D. Data for
659 each plot are compiled in a tab within MS Excel file.

660 **Figure 3 – source data 1.** Numeric values for data presented in panel C. Data for each
661 experimental condition are compiled in a tab within MS Excel file.

662 **Figure 4 – source data 1.** Computer code used to generate panels A, C, and E. Requires
663 MATLAB 2018b to run.

664 **Figure 5 – source data 1.** Numeric values for panels C and D. MS Excel format.

665 **Figure 5 – source data 2.** Computer code used to generate panels E and F. The same code is
666 also used in Figure 4. Requires MATLAB 2018b to run.

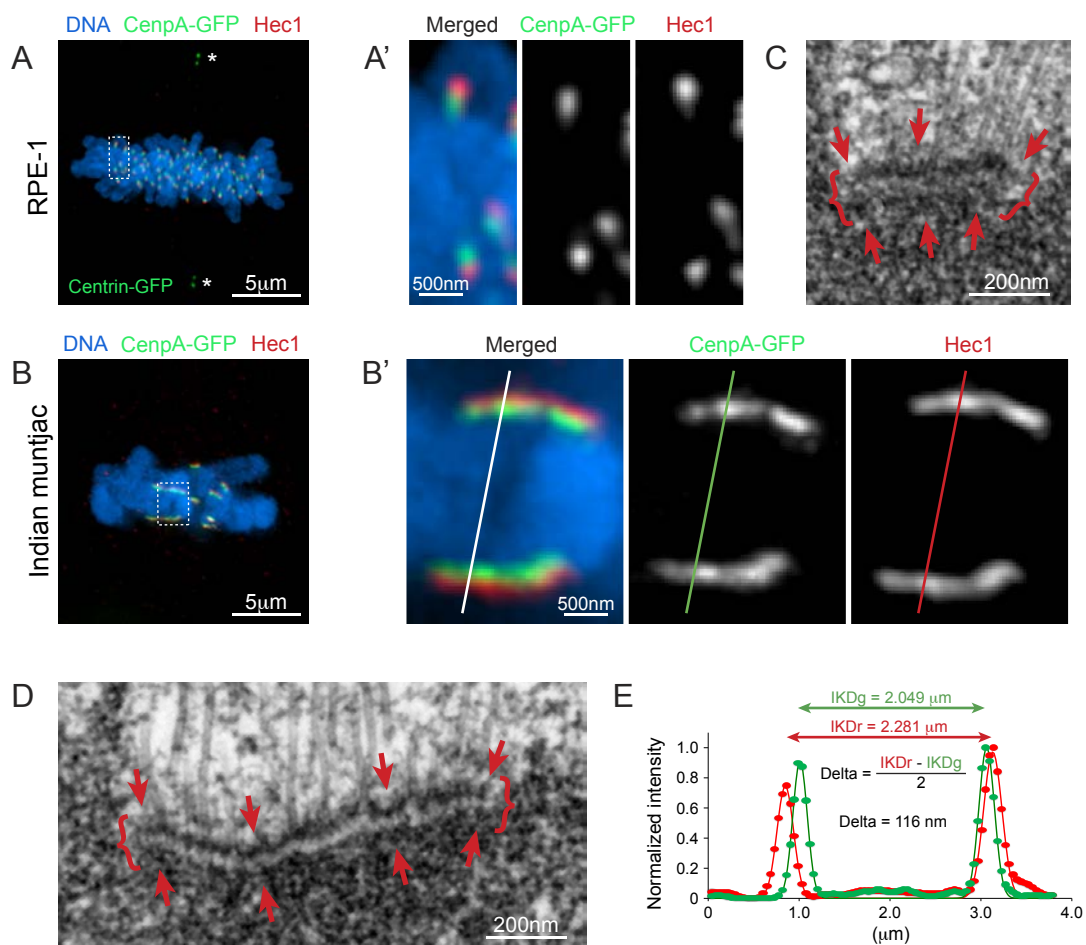


Figure 1

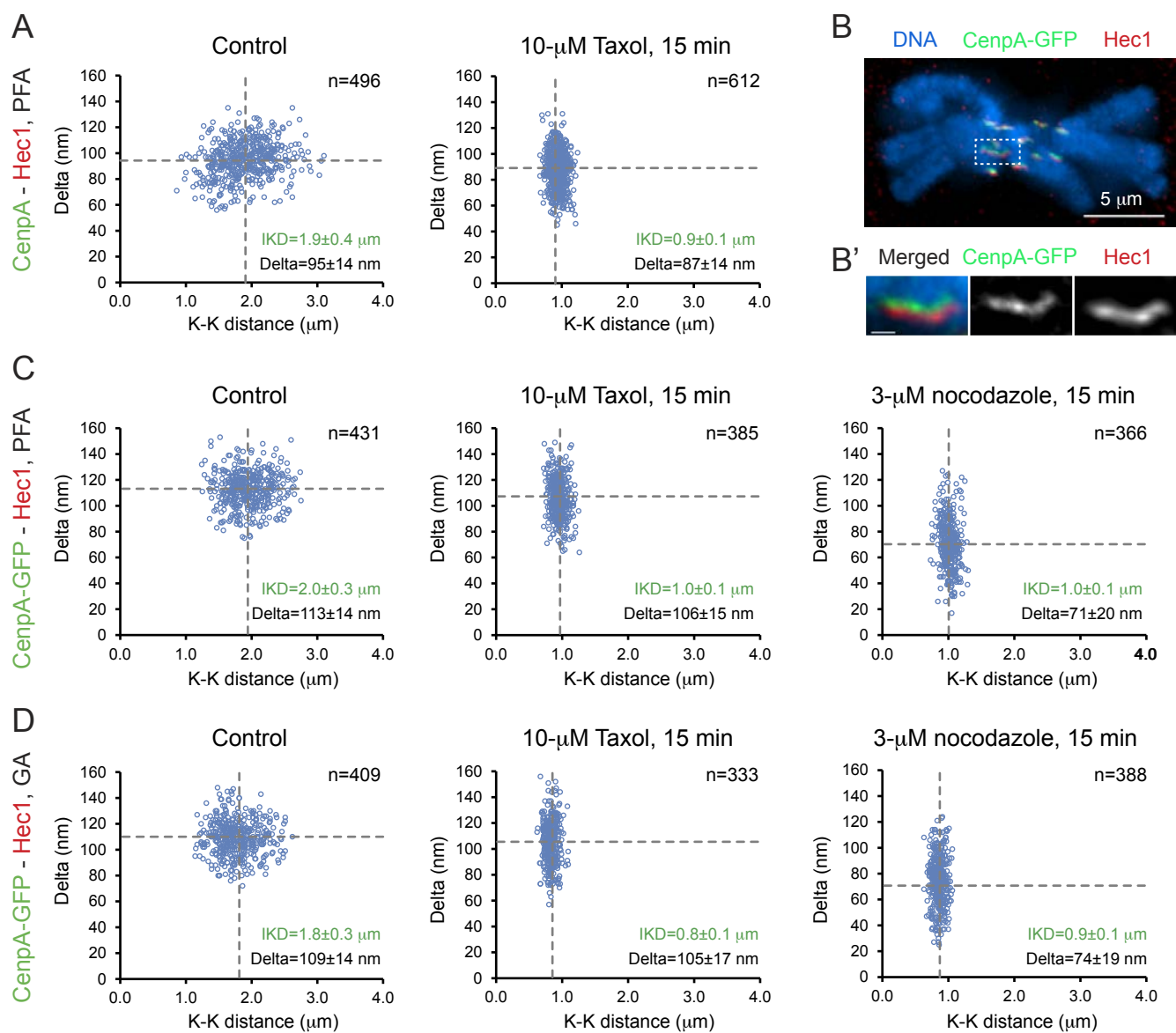


Figure 2

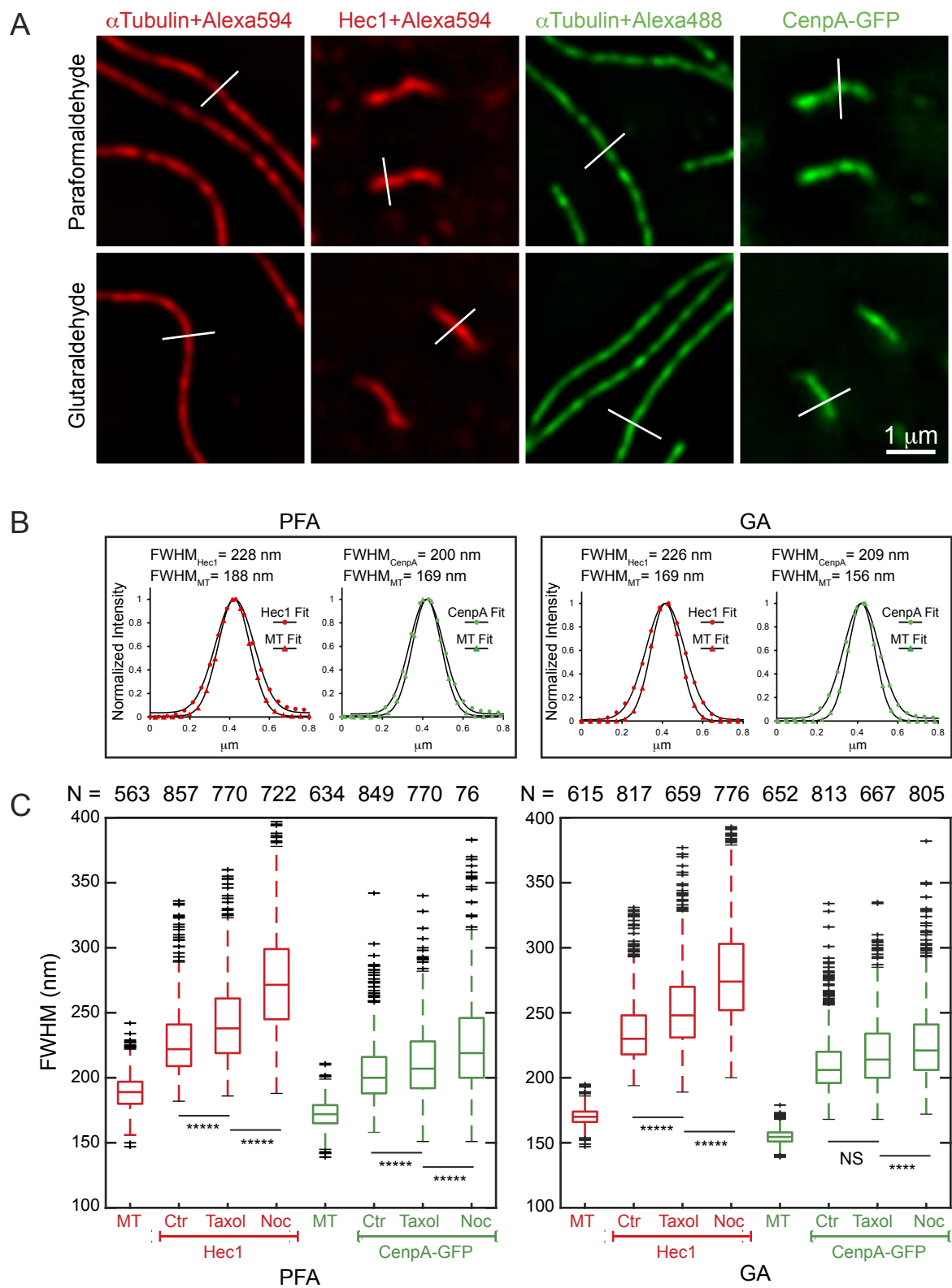


Figure 3

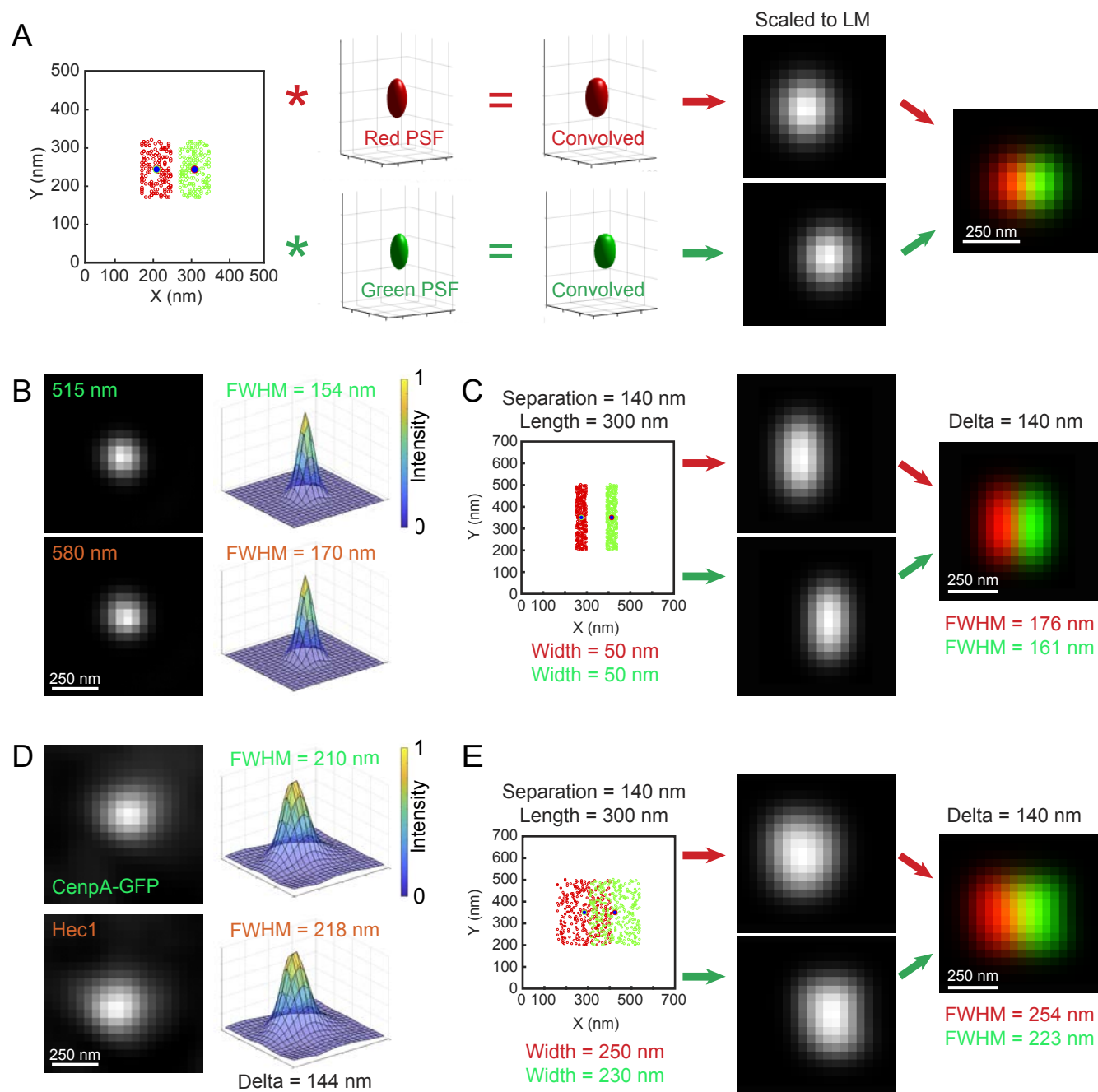


Figure 4

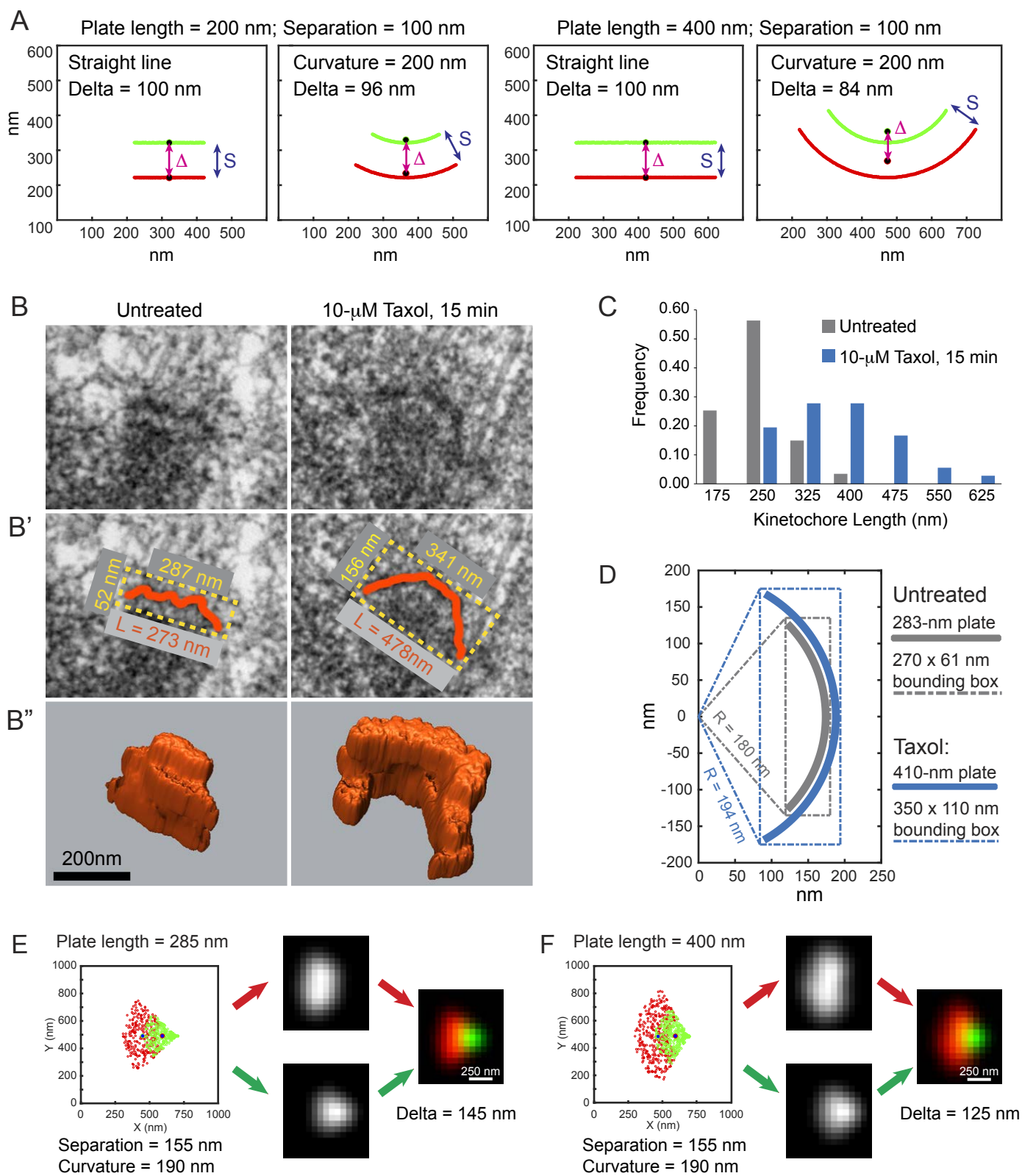


Figure 5

Supplemental Figures

Figure 2 – figure supplement 1. Effects of Taxol in IM and human cells. (A - B) Similar changes in mitotic spindle architecture in human Rpe1 (A) and IM (B) cells. Approximately 15 min after addition of Taxol (10 μ M final concentration), already assembled mitotic spindles remain bipolar with congressed chromosomes in both human and IM cells. Microtubules density decreases near chromosomes and increases near spindle poles (A) Maximum-intensity projection (MIP) of an untreated (top) and Taxol-treated (bottom) Rpe1 metaphases. (B) MIP of an untreated (top) and Taxol-treated (bottom) IM metaphases. Kinetochores are labeled via expression of CenpA-GFP (green); microtubules are immunostained with a monoclonal antibody (DM1A, Sigma) against α -tubulin (red); chromosomes are stained with DNA dye Hoechst 33342 (blue). Rpe1 cells additionally express Centrin1-GFP that marks positions of centrioles/spindle poles (arrowheads in A). **(C)** Stringent mitotic arrest in Rpe1 (top) and IM (bottom) in the presence of 5- μ M Taxol. In both cell types mitosis is arrested for >20 hrs and most cells subsequently die. Selected video frames from a 48-hr long time-lapse recording at 2-min intervals (see Videos 1 and 2 for full recordings).

Figure 2 – figure supplement 2. Large Kinetochores morphology in Indian muntjac metaphase. 70-nm serial EM sections from a full series through the centromere region of the chromosome. Notice the length of plate (orange arrows) and the prominent number of microtubules attached to the kinetochores. 3D reconstruction (bottom, right) of the outer layers corresponds to the kinetochores shown in EM sections.

Figure 2 – figure supplement 3. Shape and dimensions of the kinetochores remain constant in Taxol-treated IM metaphase Serial EM sections spanning large kinetochores in Taxol-treated metaphase and 3D reconstruction (bottom, right) of the outer layers corresponds to the kinetochores shown in EM sections. No difference in shape kinetochores although the number of microtubules attached to the kinetochores plate (orange arrows) decreases after ~15 min

incubation with 10 μ m-Taxol. Depth occupied by each section within the volume is shown in nanometers.

Figure 4 – figure supplement 1. Size and shape variability of inner and outer layers of human kinetochores. 46 pairs of kinetochores in a typical Rpe1 cell during metaphase. Glutaraldehyde fixation. Numbers denote arbitrary indexes assign to chromosomes. Sister kinetochores oriented towards opposite spindle poles are marked as ‘a’ and ‘b’. Inner and outer kinetochore layers are labeled via CenpA-GFP expression (green) and immunostaining for Hec1 (red). Double arrows denote orientation of the longer axis (in XY) for Hec1 spots. Notice that kinetochore spots are larger than spots formed by 100-nm beads (shown in the bottom row). The shape of kinetochore spots and orientation of the longer axis are variable. Kinetochores on chromosomes 7, 8, 17, and 18 could not be segmented due to spatial overlap. These kinetochores were not considered in calculation of Delta, FWHM, and orientation of the larger axis. 3-D volume of the entire cell that depicts orientation of the spindle and positions of individual chromosomes/kinetochores is shown in Video 2. Kinetochore 27b is shown in Fig.4E.

Figure 4 – figure supplement 2. Size and shape variability of inner and outer layers of human kinetochores treated with Taxol. 46 pairs of kinetochores in a typical Rpe1 cell after 15-min exposure to 10 μ M Taxol. Glutaraldehyde fixation. Numbers denote arbitrary indexes assign to chromosomes. Sister kinetochores oriented towards opposite spindle poles are marked as ‘a’ and ‘b’. Inner and outer kinetochore layers are labeled via CenpA-GFP expression (green) and immunostaining for Hec1 (red). Double arrows denote orientation of the longer axis (in XY) for Hec1 spots. Notice that kinetochore spots are larger than spots formed by 100-nm beads (shown in the bottom row). The shape of kinetochore spots and orientation of the longer axis are variable. Kinetochores on chromosomes 4, 7-9, 11, 27, 30, 33, and 38-42 could not be segmented due to spatial overlap. These kinetochores were not considered in calculation of Delta, FWHM,

and orientation of the larger axis. 3-D volume of the entire cell that depicts orientation of the spindle and positions of individual chromosomes/kinetochores is shown in Video 3.

Figure 5 – figure supplement 1. 3-D reconstruction of kinetochores from a metaphase Rpe1 cell. (A) Selected serial 70-nm EM sections through the centromere. Numbers indicate relative depth of each section within the volume. Arrows denote the outer electron dense layers of the plates that were traced and segmented to construct a 3-D surface-rendered model shown in **(B)**. Section ‘281-350 nm’ and a different view of surface-rendered upper kinetochore are shown in Fig.5b.

Figure 5 – figure supplement 2. 3-D reconstruction of kinetochores in Taxol-treated Rpe1 cell. (A) Selected serial 70-nm EM sections through the centromere. Numbers indicate relative depth of each section within the volume. Arrows denote the outer electron dense layers of the plates that were traced and segmented to construct a 3-D surface-rendered model shown in **(B)**. Section ‘211-280 nm’ and a different view of surface-rendered upper kinetochore are shown in Fig.5b.

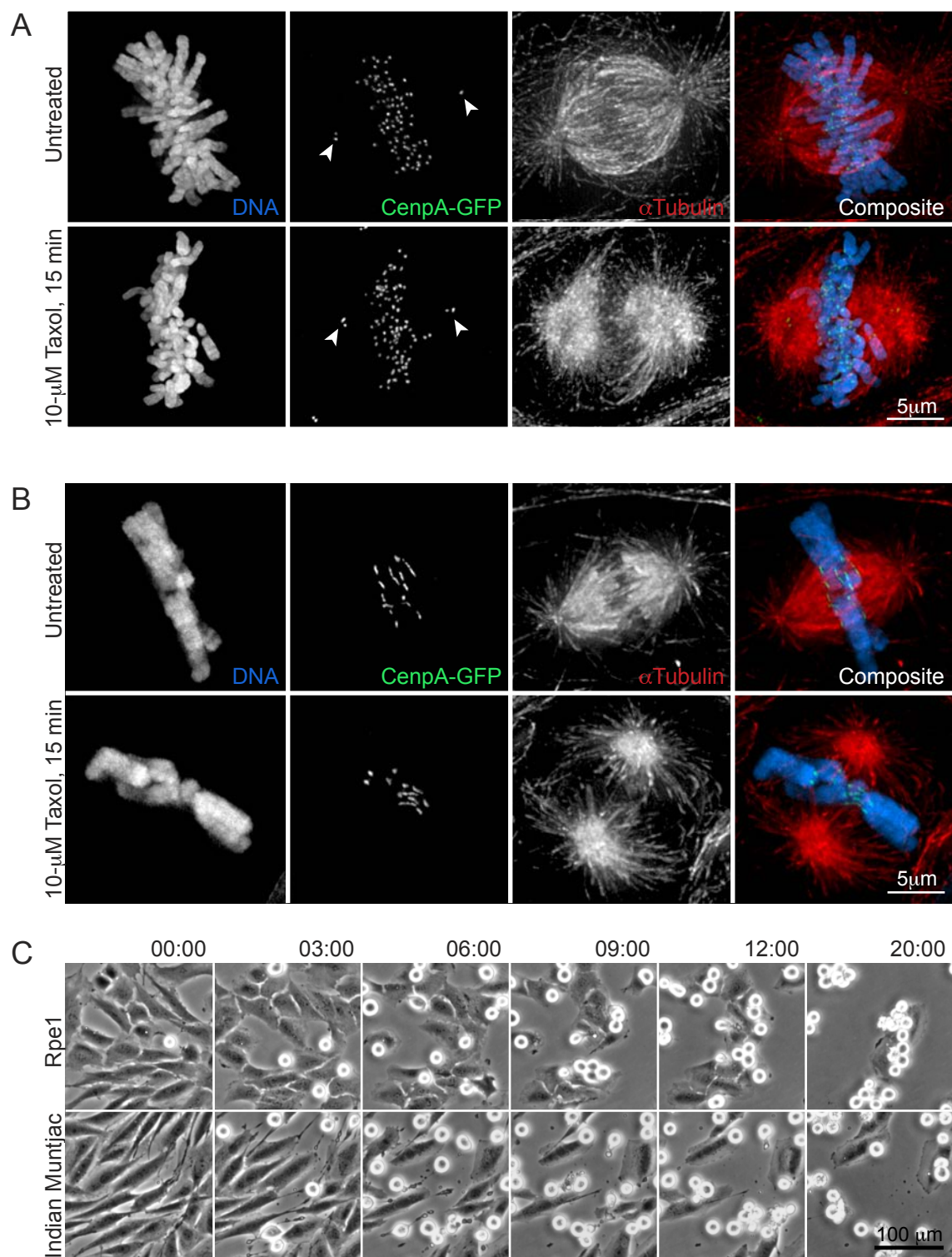


Figure 2 - figure supplement 1

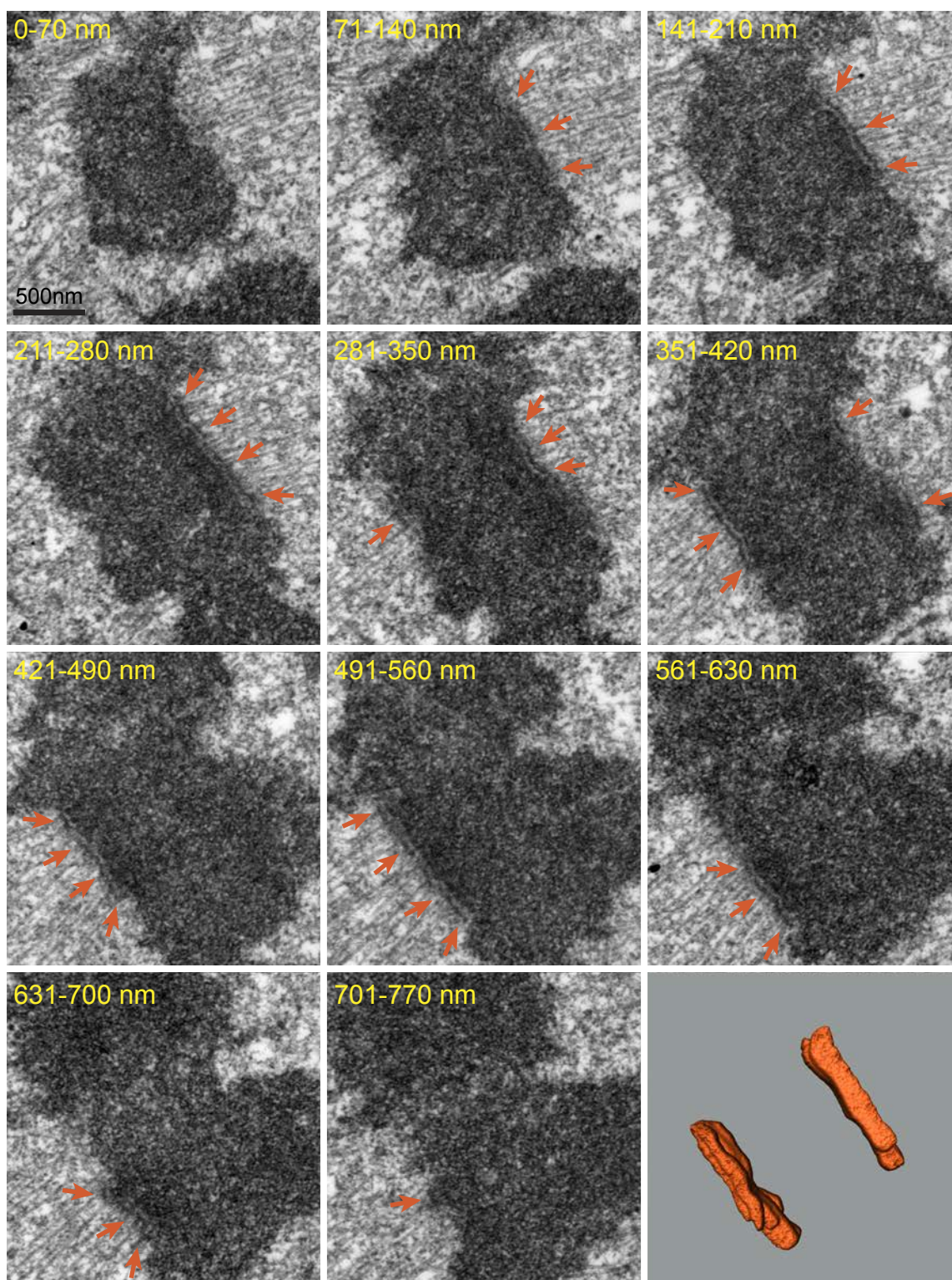


Figure 2 - figure supplement 2

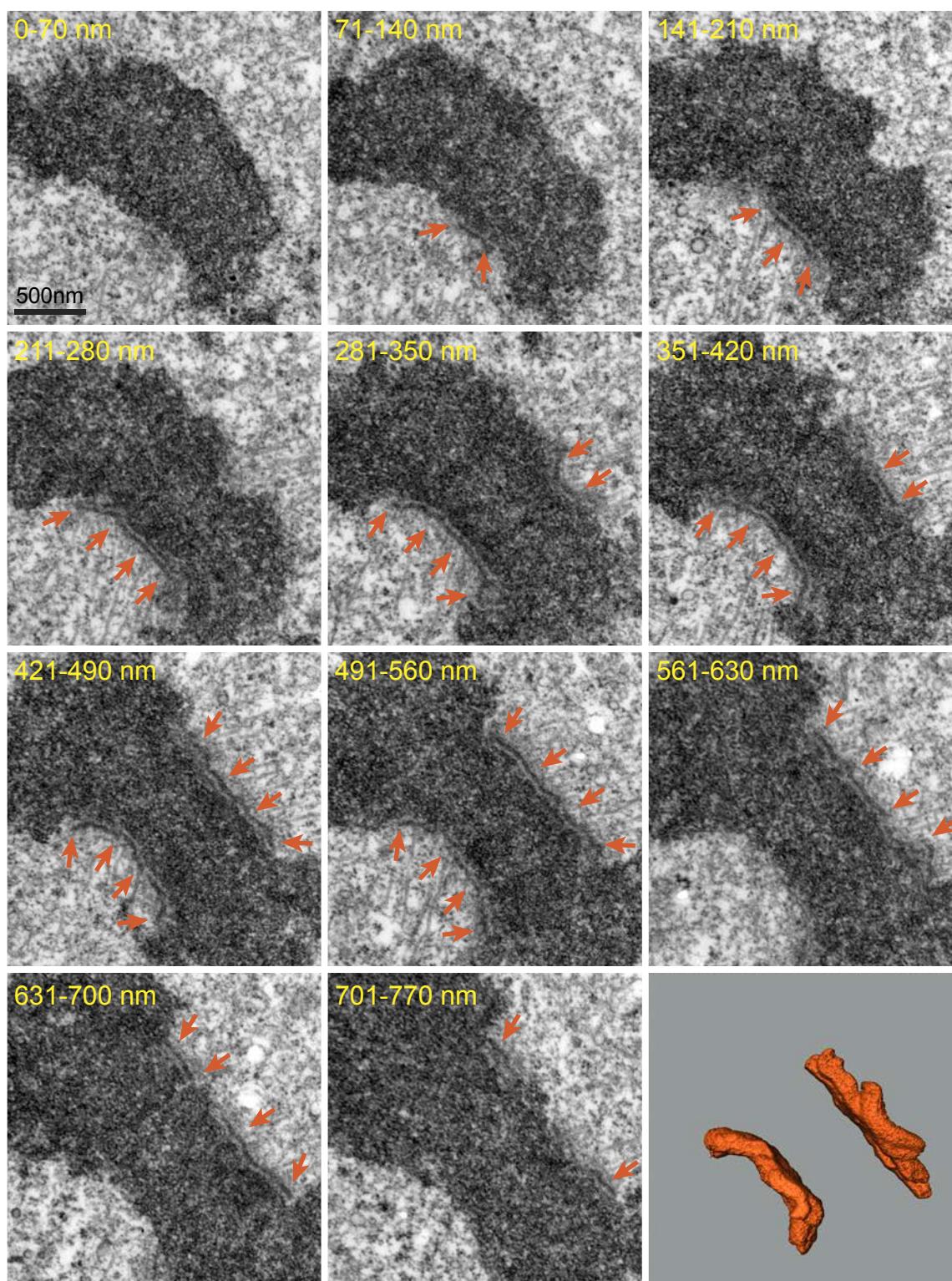


Figure 2 - figure supplement 3

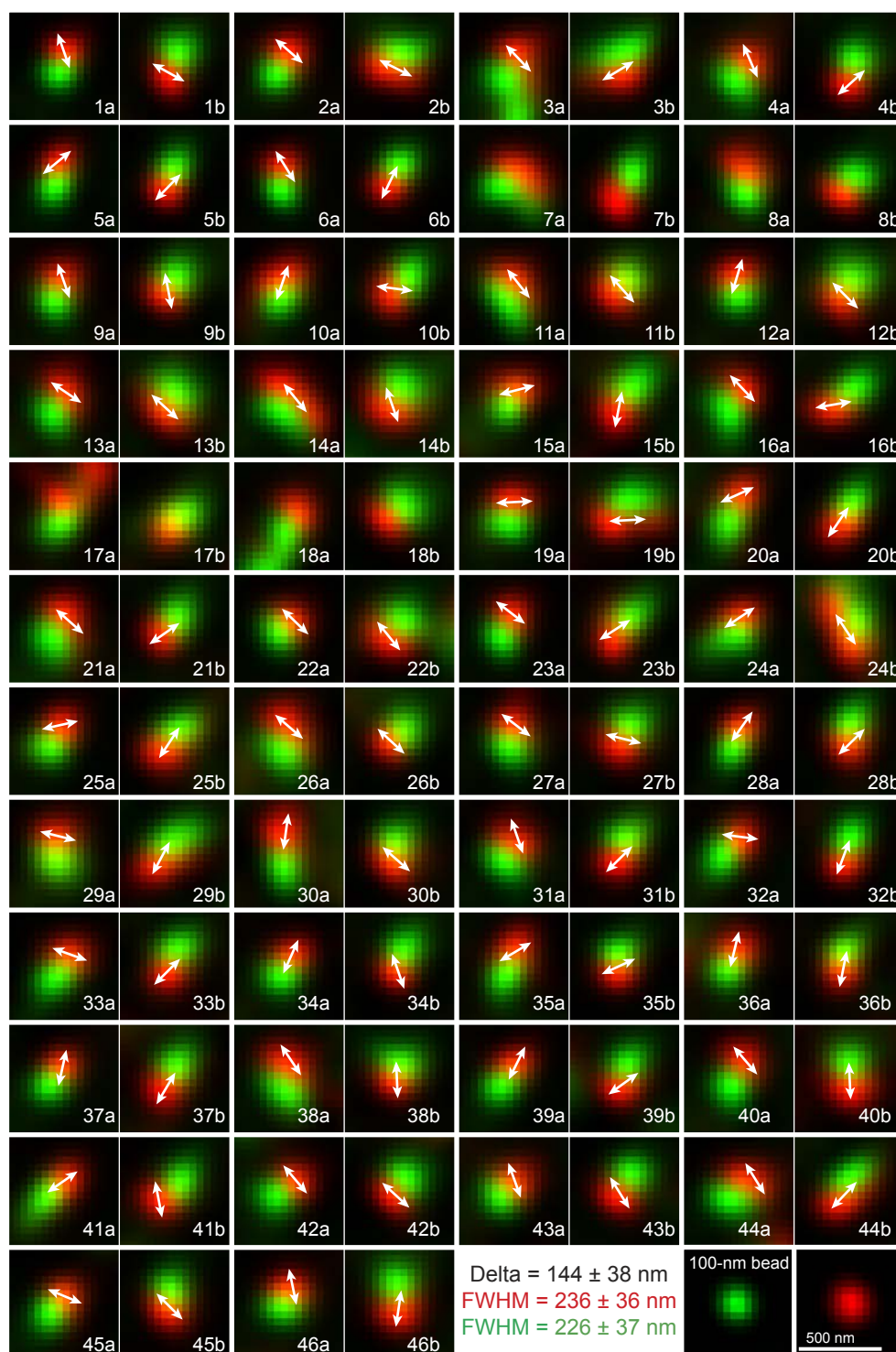


Figure 4 - figure supplement 1

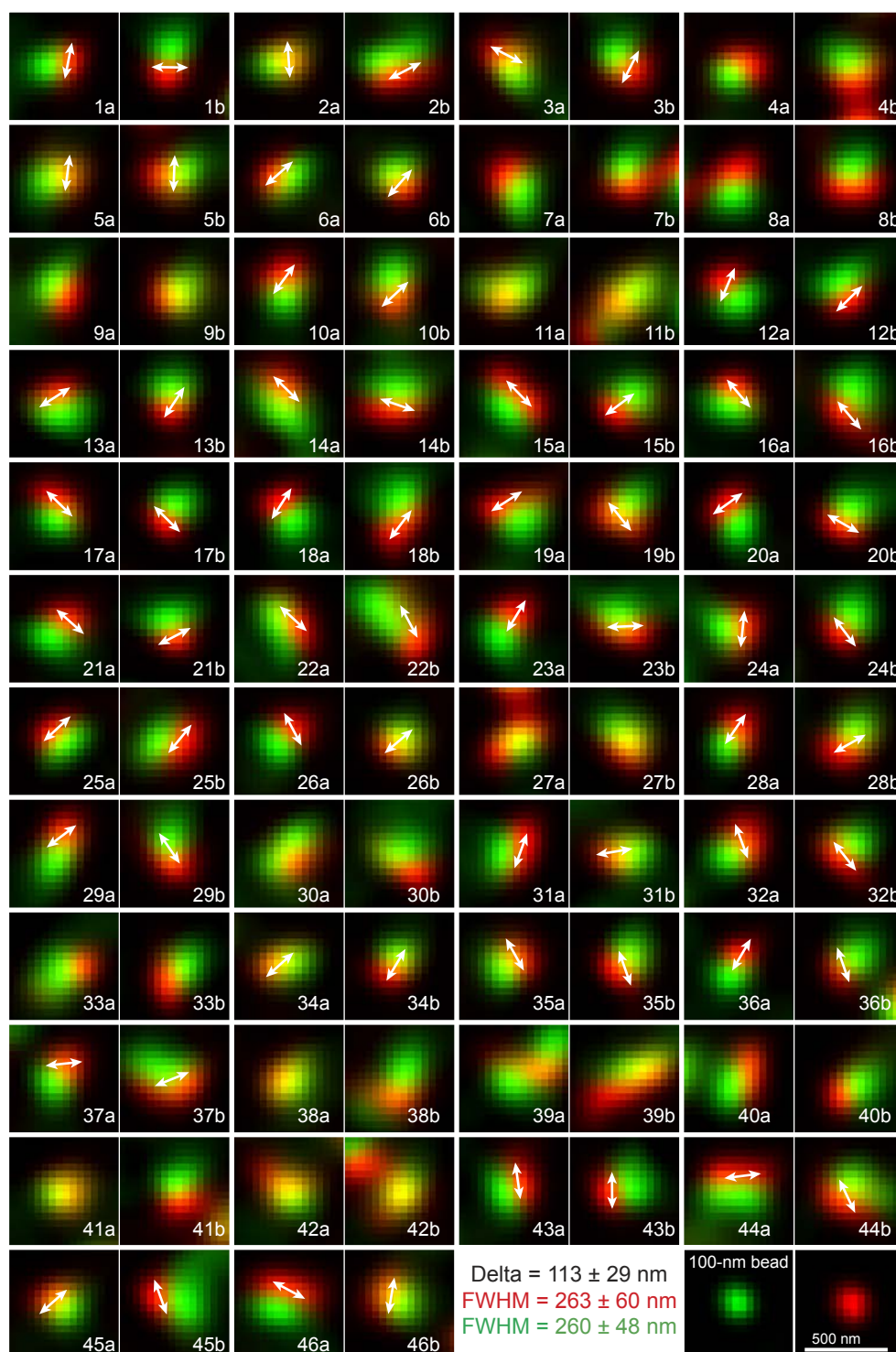


Figure 4 - figure supplement 2

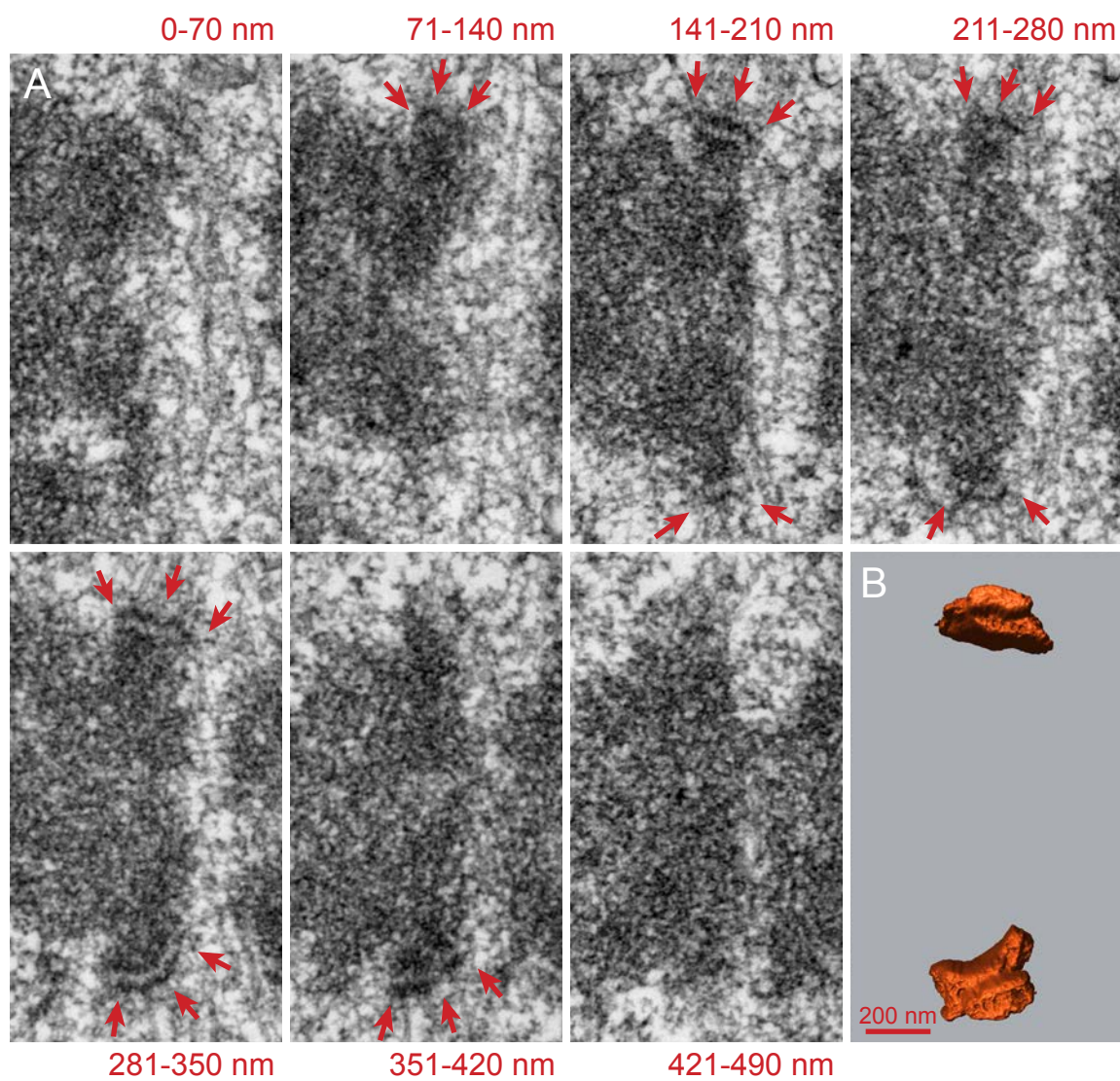


Figure 5 - figure supplement 1

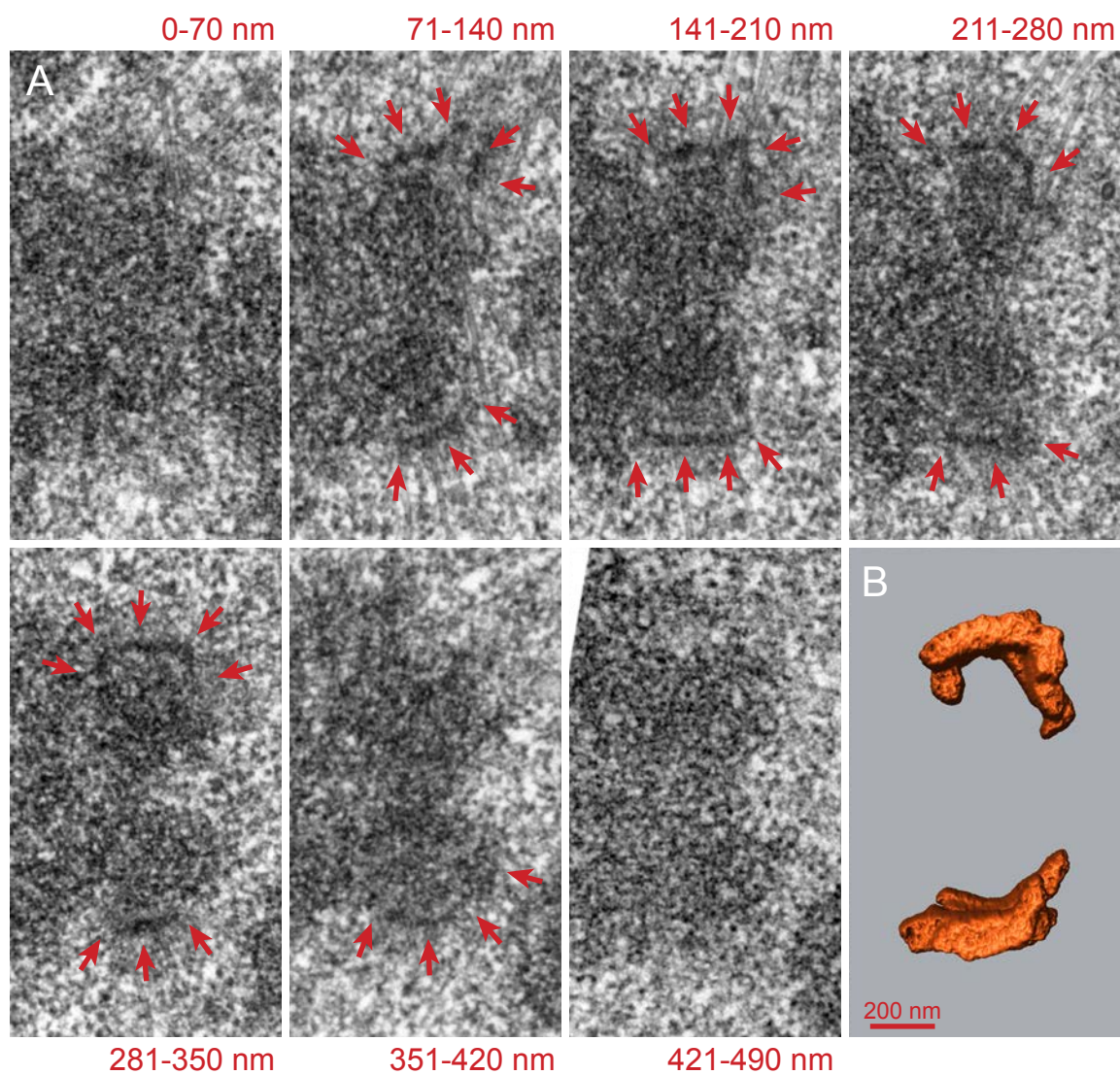


Figure 5 - figure supplement 2