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Myotonic expansion

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Myotonic dystrophy (DM) is the most common form of adult muscular dystrophy. DM Type 1 caused by expansion of a CTG repeat in the 3' untranslated region of the dystrophia myotonica-protein kinase (*DMPK*) gene. In the August 3 Science, Christina Liquori and colleagues from the University of Minnesota report that DM2 is also caused by microsatellite expansion in non-coding sequences (*Science* 2001, **293:**864-867). While characterizing the *DM2* locus on chromosome 13q21, Liquori *et al.* discovered an expansion ranging from 10 to 48 kilobases in DM2 patients. The expansions consisted of 75-11,000 CCTG repeats. The expansion lies within intron 1 of the zinc finger protein 9 (*ZNF9*) gene. It will be important to understand how both these microsatellite repeat expansions contribute to the pathology of DM diseases.

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