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p53 in worms

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Early analysis of the [Caenorhabditis elegans genome](#) failed to detect a gene resembling the important mammalian tumour suppressor gene *p53*. In the September 13 [ScienceXpress](#), Brent Derry and colleagues at the [University of California, Santa Barbara](#) report that there is a nematode *p53* orthologue that is involved in apoptosis and the stress response (zdoi;10.1126/science.1065486). They named the gene *cep-1* (*C. elegans* p53-like 1). Disrupting *cep-1* expression (by mutation or RNAi experiments) had no affect on developmental cell death, but rendered germline cells resistant to apoptosis induced by ionizing radiation. Like the [Drosophila homologue](#), *C. elegans p53* seems not to be involved in cell-cycle arrest. Overexpression of CEP-1 caused caspase (*ced3*)-independent cell death and lethality. These results offer a system to screen for genetic modifiers of the *p53* pathway.

References

1. Comparative genomics of the eukaryotes
2. *ScienceXpress* , [<http://www.sciencexpress.org>]
3. University of California, Santa Barbara , [<http://www.ucsb.edu>]
4. Drosophila p53 is a structural and functional homolog of the tumor suppressor p53.