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Methylated but noisy

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Interfering with DNA methylation in the plant *Arabidopsis*, as in animals, disrupts transcriptional gene silencing. But the reverse is not necessarily true. In the 11 May *Nature* Amedeo *et al.* describe the first plant or animal gene that, when inhibited, results in disrupted silencing but intact methylation (*Nature* 2000, **405**:203-206). They find the gene, *MOM1*, by looking for expression from a silenced drug-resistance locus after a random-insertion mutagenesis. The most noticeable homology in *MOM1* protein is to the ATPase/helicase region of the SWI2 silencing protein. *MOM1* may aid in silencing by acting either downstream or independent of methylation.

References

1. Demethylation-induced developmental pleiotropy in *Arabidopsis*.
2. *Nature Genetics*, [<http://www.nature.com/nature/>]