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## Interfering nonsense

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In **RNA interference** (RNAi), introduced double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) triggers gene-specific silencing by inducing mRNA degradation. Domeier *et al.* report in the 15 September **Science** that some of the worm SMG proteins, which are required for **nonsense-mediated mRNA decay**, are also required for maintenance of RNAi (*Science* 2000, **289**:1928-1930). RNAi is initiated in the *smg* mutants as normal, but the animals subsequently recover. SMG proteins may be involved in an **amplification** step of RNAi. The proteins' possible cleavage or dsRNA-unwinding activities could provide templates for an RNA-directed RNA polymerase.

## References

1. RNA-triggered gene silencing.
2. Science magazine, [<http://www.sciencemag.org/>]
3. *smg-7* is required for mRNA surveillance in *Caenorhabditis elegans*.
4. Potent and specific genetic interference by double-stranded RNA in *Caenorhabditis elegans*.