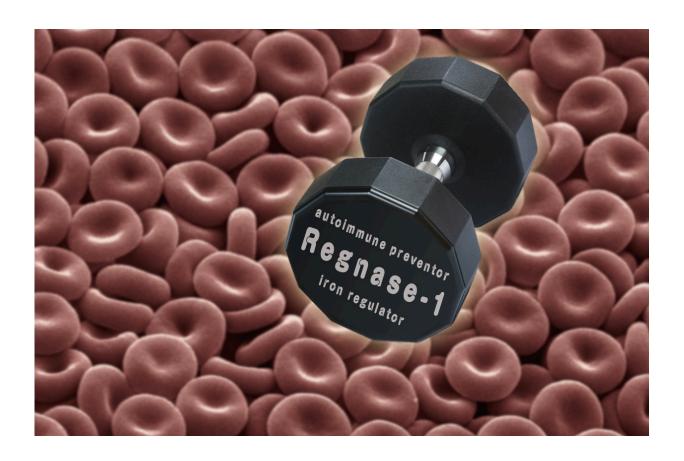


Cells pumping iron to prevent anemia

May 30 2017



Kyoto University researchers identify Regnase-1, a gene previously thought to prevent autoimmune disease, as a key regulator in iron metabolism. Credit: Kyoto University

Maintaining a good balance of iron in the body is necessary for health: too little can lead to anemia, but too much can cause debilitating disorders such as *hemochromatosis*.



The uptake and metabolism of <u>iron</u> in the body is one of the most tightly-controlled systems in mammals. Iron 'regulation' occurs at multiple levels, from controlling gene expression to degrees of <u>protein synthesis</u>, but some key factors have yet to be uncovered.

As described recently in *Cell Reports*, Kyoto University researchers have now identified a specific gene—initially known to prevent autoimmune diseases—as a key regulator in iron uptake.

"We found previously that when mice lack the gene *Regnase-1* they suffer from severe autoimmune diseases and anemia," explains first author Masanori Yoshinaga.

"At first, we assumed that anemia was a secondary effect, but after detailed analysis we found that the two symptoms develop independently."

Continued study of mice with a Regnase-1 mutation revealed a functional defect in the principle site for iron absorption in the body, the *duodenum*, which is the first section of the small intestine, coming directly after the stomach.

"The next step was to find the role of Regnase-1 in iron-uptake maintenance. We started by looking at the most important iron-uptake gene, Transferrin Receptor 1, or *TfR1*," continues Yoshinaga.

"Our results showed that Regnase-1 degrades the mRNA of TfR1, thereby inhibiting the synthesis of the TfR1 protein, and additionally that it likely regulates other important iron-controlling genes."

"Further analysis of Regnase-1 in iron-related homeostasis," concludes team leader Osamu Takeuchi, "may provide insight into the mechanisms causing <u>anemia</u> and other iron-related disorders, perhaps eventually



leading to new methods of treatment."

More information: Masanori Yoshinaga et al, Regnase-1 Maintains Iron Homeostasis via the Degradation of Transferrin Receptor 1 and Prolyl-Hydroxylase-Domain-Containing Protein 3 mRNAs, *Cell Reports* (2017). DOI: 10.1016/j.celrep.2017.05.009

Provided by Kyoto University

Citation: Cells pumping iron to prevent anemia (2017, May 30) retrieved 24 May 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-cells-iron-anemia.html

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