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## Developmental Biology

Volume 243, Issue 2, 15 March 2002, Pages 312-325

Regular Article

### Direct Flight Muscles in *Drosophila* Develop from Cells with Characteristics of Founders and Depend on *DWnt-2* for Their Correct Patterning

Karen M. Kozopas<sup>a, b, 1</sup> ... Roel Nusse<sup>b</sup>

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### Abstract

The direct flight muscles (DFMs) of *Drosophila* allow for the fine control of wing position necessary for flight. In *DWnt-2* mutant flies, certain DFM are either missing or fail to attach to the correct epithelial sites. Using a temperature-sensitive allele, we show that *DWnt-2* activity is required only during pupation for correct DFM patterning. *DWnt-2* is expressed in the epithelium of the wing hinge primordium during pupation. This expression is in the vicinity of the developing DFM, as revealed by expression of the muscle founder cell-specific gene *dumbfounded* in DFM precursors. The observation that a gene necessary for embryonic founder cell function is expressed in the DFM precursors suggests that these cells may have a similar founder cell role. Although the expression pattern of *DWnt-2* suggests that it could influence epithelial cells to differentiate into attachment sites for muscle, the expression of *stripe*, a transcription factor necessary for epithelial cells to adopt an attachment cell fate, is unaltered in the mutant. Ectopic expression of *DWnt-2* in the wing hinge during pupation can also create defects in muscle patterning without alterations in *stripe* expression. We conclude that *DWnt-2* promotes the correct patterning of DFM through a mechanism that is independent of the attachment site differentiation initiated by *stripe*.

### Keywords

muscle development; Wnt signaling; epithelial attachments; direct flight muscles

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1 To whom correspondence should be addressed. E-mail: kozopas@hotmail.com.

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