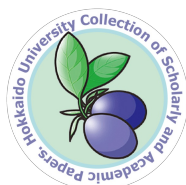




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4.5SH RNA counteracts deleterious exonization of *SINE B1* in mice

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Summary

4.5SH RNA is a highly abundant, small rodent-specific noncoding RNA that localizes to nuclear speckles enriched in pre-mRNA splicing regulators. To investigate physiological functions of *4.5SH* RNA, we have created mutant mice that lack the expression of *4.5SH* RNA. The mutant mice exhibited embryonic lethality, suggesting that *4.5SH* RNA is an essential species-specific noncoding RNA in mice. RNA-sequencing analyses revealed that *4.5SH* RNA protects the transcriptome from abnormal exonizations of the antisense insertions of the retrotransposon *SINE B1* (*asB1*), which would otherwise introduce deleterious premature stop codons or frameshift mutations. Mechanistically, *4.5SH* RNA base-pairs with complementary *asB1*-containing exons via the target recognition region, and recruits effector proteins including Hnrnpm via its 5' stem loop region. The modular organization of *4.5SH* RNA allows us to engineer a programmable splicing regulator to induce the skipping of target exons of interest. Our results also suggest the general existence of splicing regulatory non-coding RNAs.

Key words: *4.5SH* RNA, noncoding RNA, exon skipping, alternative splicing, retrotransposon, *SINE B1*, Hnrnpm

Introduction

Retrotransposons constitute a significant portion of the genomes of higher eukaryotes. Notably, the 7SL-derived retrotransposons, *SINE B1* in rodents and *Alu* in primates, represent the most prevalent mobile elements within these species ¹. When inserted in the antisense direction, *SINE B1* family retrotransposons provide all the critical sequence elements required for exon definition, except for a branch point sequence, including a polypyrimidine tract, a nearly optimal 3' splice site, and suboptimal 5' donor sites (Sorek, 2007). Thus, the antisense insertion of *SINE B1* family retrotransposons in introns serves as a potent source of deleterious exon that introduces premature stop codons or frameshift mutations, when inserted downstream of a branch point consensus sequence followed by mutations that optimize the splice sites ^{2,3}. Human cells have been shown to counteract these toxic exonizations of *Alu* elements, human counterparts of *SINE B1* family retrotransposons, using HNRNPC that competes with U2AF2 for polypyrimidine tract sequences of *Alu* ⁴. It remains unknown whether this mechanism is conserved between species that harbor abundant *SINE B1* family retrotransposons in the genomes, such as rodents.

A huge number of noncoding RNAs are transcribed from the genomes of higher eukaryotes, many of which are species-specific and localized in the nucleus ^{5,6}. *4.5SH* RNA is a classic 90-nucleotide nuclear noncoding RNA that was identified in the 1970s ⁷⁻⁹, and is found specifically in a group of small and short-lived rodents, including mice and rats ¹⁰. The nucleotide sequence of the *4.5SH* RNA is highly homologous to *SINE B1*, but *4.5SH* lacks transposing activity due to the absence of an A-rich tail required for the retrotransposition of *SINEs* ¹. The *4.5SH* gene is a multicopy gene and forms a large cluster of tandem repeats that produces highly abundant transcripts, reaching over 10,000 molecules per cell ¹¹. *4.5SH* RNA is ubiquitously expressed in various tissues and cell types, and the transcripts are localized to nuclear speckles enriched in splicing factors ¹². The depletion of *4.5SH* RNA in murine cell lines suppresses cell proliferation ¹², however, both the molecular mechanism and its physiological relevance have long been unknown.

In this study, we created mutant mice that lack the expression of *4.5SH* RNA, and found that the mutant mice exhibited early embryonic lethality. Notably, hundreds of novel exons were abnormally included in the transcripts of mutant cells, the majority of which contained the antisense insertions of *SINE B1*. Minigene analyses revealed that *4.5SH* RNA base paired with

SINE B1-containing deleterious exons, and blocked their inclusion by inhibiting the use of the 3' splice sites. Base-pairing of *4.5SH* RNA to the target sites was not sufficient for the exon skipping activity, which required a recruitment of effector proteins, including Hnrnpm that bound to the 5' located stem loop structure of *4.5SH* RNA. The modular organization of *4.5SH* RNA allowed us to generate a programmable splicing regulator that can induce skipping of exons of interest, by replacing the target recognition module with sequences complementary to the target exons. Our results also suggest the general existence of noncoding RNAs that associate with Hnrnpm and regulate alternative splicing of target exons that contain complementary sequences.

Results

***4.5SH* RNA is essential for early mouse development and ES cell proliferation**

To explore the physiological function of *4.5SH* RNA, we created mutant mice for this multicopy gene. We first performed pulse-field gel electrophoresis to precisely estimate size and copy number of the *4.5SH* gene cluster, which had remained ambiguous due to a large gap in this genomic region even in the latest mouse genome assembly (Figure 1A). Treatment of genomic DNA with a restriction enzyme that cuts within the repeat unit containing *4.5SH* yielded a band of uniform length (4.2 kb) on the Southern blot, as previously described¹¹ (Figure 1B). In contrast, enzymes that cut outside of the gene cluster yielded a single ~900 kb band (Figure 1B), suggesting that >200 copies of *4.5SH* formed a large tandem cluster at this single locus, which contains a vast majority, if not all, of the *4.5SH* genes. To delete the large megabase-sized *4.5SH* cluster, we utilized CRISPR-Cas9 to cut proximal regions of the arms of the gene-targeting vector to enhance homologous recombination efficiency (Figure 1A, Supplemental figure S1 A-D). We successfully obtained embryonic stem (ES) cell clones lacking the entire *4.5SH* cluster, which were subsequently used to generate *4.5SH* knockout (KO) mice (Supplemental figure S1E-H). KO embryos at pre-implantation stages, such as E2.5–3.5, exhibited no overt abnormality (Figure 1C, D). However, we could not obtain the homozygotes later than E9.5 (Figure 1C), and only abnormal cellular aggregates were recovered at E6.5 (Figure 1E). To further investigate cellular and molecular functions of *4.5SH* RNA, we established embryonic stem (ES) cells, pluripotent cells derived from the inner cell mass of blastocyst-stage embryos, from wild-type (WT) and KO embryos (Figure 1F). While the expression of pluripotent markers, such as alkaline phosphatase and Nanog, was maintained in *4.5SH* KO ES cells (Figure 1G), decreased cellular proliferation was observed compared to WT ES cells (Figure 1H). Exogenous *4.5SH* expression rescued the decrease in cell proliferation (Figure 1F, H), suggesting that transcribed *4.5SH* RNA, but not cis-DNA elements in the cluster, regulates the proliferation of ES cells.

Deleterious cryptic exons containing the antisense insertions of *SINE B1* were abnormally included in *4.5SH* KO ES cells

As previously described¹², *4.5SH* RNA was localized to nuclear speckles identified by the

expression of *Srsf1* in ES cells (Figure 2A). Because nuclear speckles are enriched in splicing factors ¹³, we expected that *4.5SH* RNA regulates the pre-mRNA splicing. To investigate splicing events altered in the *4.5SH* KO ES cells, we performed rMATS analyses, which can detect changes in alternative splicing events from short-read deep sequencing data ¹⁴. Using RNA-sequencing data obtained from WT and *4.5SH* KO ES cells, we detected 160 cassette exons differentially spliced (FDR <0.001) between WT and KO cells, among which 100 (63%) exons were preferentially found in KO cells (Figure 2B, Supplemental Table T1). Notably, 75% of the KO-enriched exons were RefSeq-unannotated cryptic exons (Figure 2B, Supplemental Table T1), which were not found in the normal transcriptome of ES cells.

We then sought to determine whether there are any characteristic sequences common to these KO-enriched exons. Although these exons displayed features reminiscent of typical exons when compared to RefSeq exons (Supplemental figure S2A-E), motif analyses with MEME ¹⁵ revealed three consensus sequences highly homologous to the antisense insertions of retrotransposon *SINE B1* (*asB1*), two of which (motif 1 and 3) were complementary to *4.5SH* (Figure 2C, D, Supplemental figure S2F). The preferential appearance of *asB1* in KO-enriched exons was strand-specific, and other retrotransposons, such as *SINE B2*, were not enriched in these exons (Figure 2E). Indeed, *asB1*s innately contain sequence motifs required for exon definition, including the 5' located polypyrimidine tract, the 3' splice site sequences AG flanked by pyrimidine and G, and the 5' splice site containing GT, although the latter sequences are not optimal (Supplemental figure S2F), as has previously been reported ³. Accordingly, insertions of *asB1* downstream of branch point sequences are potentially recognized as exons, which seemed to be blocked by *4.5SH* RNA. Of the *asB1*-containing cryptic exons, 81% introduced PTC or frameshift mutations in the host gene (Supplemental figure S2G), implicating the inclusion of *asB1*-containing deleterious exons as the primary cause of embryonic lethality in *4.5SH* KO mice.

To further confirm the KO-specific inclusions of *asB1*-containing exons, we performed RT-PCR for the representative host genes, including *Slc25a40*, *Smchd1*, and *Smg6* using RNAs derived from WT and *4.5SH* KO ES cells (Figure 2F-H). Importantly, the *asB1*-containing cryptic exons from these genes were largely skipped and were undetectable in WT cells (Figure 2G, H). In KO cells, however, transcripts containing these abnormal exons became predominant, which were no longer observed in the rescued cells expressing exogenous *4.5SH* RNA (Fig. 2G, H). These exons of the representative genes contained premature stop codons, and the decrease of *Smchd1*

and Smg6 full-length protein products was confirmed on western blots (Figure 2I). The decreased protein expression of representative host genes were rescued upon exogenous introduction of *4.5SH* (Figure 2I). The inclusion of *asB1*-containing exons from the representative genes in *4.5SH* KO ES cells was consistently observed in both nuclear and cytoplasmic RNAs (Supplemental figure S3), suggesting that the elevated *asB1*-inclusion was not due to differential subcellular localization of the transcripts. Additionally, these findings were consistent regardless of the choice of primers—be it oligo-dT or random primed—for the RT reactions (Supplemental figure S3), indicating that the *asB1*-containing exons in *4.5SH* KO ES cells are present in mature mRNAs.

We then performed analyses of differentially expressed genes and found that 1014 of Ensembl-annotated genes exhibited significantly altered expression patterns (absolute log2 fold change > 1, FDR < 0.01) in the *4.5SH* KO ES cells (Supplemental figure S4A). These include genes associated with ribosome biogenesis, fatty acid degradation, spliceosome components, and more (Supplemental figure S4B, C). These findings imply that *asB1* exon inclusion perturbs the functions of numerous host genes, leading to a cascade of effects on various cellular processes and resulting in decreased cellular proliferation in the *4.5SH* KO ES cells. Notably, genes neighboring the *4.5SH* gene cluster, including *Cull1*, *Ezh2*, *Pdia4*, and *Zfp786*, all exhibited a subtle upregulation (log2 fold change = 0.32~0.72) (green dots in Supplemental figure S4D, Figure S4E). This suggests that the deletion of the *4.5SH* cluster might have influenced the higher-order chromatin organization of this locus and affected their gene expression. We also noticed that genes with KO-specific inclusions of *asB1*-containing exons tend to be downregulated (magenta dots in Supplemental figure S4D). This downregulation is likely due to the introduction of premature stop codons and/or frameshift mutations from the *asB1*-containing exon inclusions, leading to the degradation of these aberrant transcripts through the nonsense-mediated decay pathway¹⁶.

***4.5SH* RNA recognizes the target exon via base-pairing and inhibits the use of the 3' splice site**

To further explore the molecular mechanisms of *4.5SH* RNA, we constructed a minigene by inserting the cryptic exon of *Slc25a40* containing *asB1* (*asB1-Slc25a40*) together with the flanking sequences into the intron of a well-characterized splicing reporter derived from adenovirus¹⁷ (Figure 3A). When this minigene was introduced into human-derived HEK293 cells

that do not express *4.5SH* RNA, *asB1-Slc25a40* was almost completely spliced in (Figure 3B), suggesting that the cryptic exon was recognized as a *bona fide* exon in cells lacking the *4.5SH* expression. In contrast, when the minigene was introduced into murine cell line Neuro2A, which endogenously expresses *4.5SH* RNA, 55% of *asB1-Slc25a40* was skipped to produce the shorter product (Figure 3B). The skipped product was also observed when exogenous *4.5SH* RNA was expressed under the control of U6 promoter in HEK293 cells (Figure 3B), indicating that we could successfully recapitulate the *4.5SH* RNA-dependent exon skipping of *asB1* using the minigene system.

We then tested whether *4.5SH* RNA binds to the target exons via base-pairing using complementary mutations (Figure 3C). When mutations that disrupt base pair formation were introduced in either *asB1-Slc25a40* or *4.5SH* RNA, target exon skipping was decreased (Figure 3D). The lower skipping activity was completely recovered when reciprocal mutations to rescue base-pairing were simultaneously introduced (Figure 3D), suggesting that *4.5SH* RNA hybridizes to target exons to inhibit their inclusions. Using split minigenes, we also found that *4.5SH* RNA inhibits the use of the 3' splice site, but not the 5' splice site of *asB1-Slc25a40* (Figure 3E, F).

SL1-4.5SH is required for the exon skipping activity of 4.5SH RNA

We then attempted to identify sequence elements required for the function of *4.5SH* RNA using a series of deletion mutants that harbor non-overlapping 4 nucleotides deletions (Figure 4A, B). Deletions that lead to marked reduction of *asB1-Slc25a40* skipping were mapped to one of the three stem loop regions (SL1, SL2, and SL3) predicted by RNAfold2¹⁸, whereas linker regions were rather resistant to the mutations (Figure 4C, D). Northern blot analyses revealed that the deletions in the latter half of SL2 or SL3 reduced the expression of the mutant *4.5SH* RNAs, while deletions in SL1 specifically affected the exon skipping activity without affecting the amount of the exogenously expressed RNA (Figure 4C, D), suggesting that SL1 of *4.5SH* RNA (SL1-4.5SH) was essential for the exon skipping activity of *4.5SH* RNA. We then noticed that SL1-4.5SH does not base-pair with the target exons of certain host genes including *Ppil4* and *Eya3*, which lack the motif3 that would base-pair with SL1-4.5SH (Figure 4B, E). Furthermore, MEME-identified motif3 was found in only 41% of the KO-enriched, *asB1*-containing exons (Supplemental figure S5A, B). These observations suggest that SL1-4.5SH has a unique function other than

hybridization-based target recognition. To test this possibility, we replaced SL1-4.5SH with a corresponding region of *SINE B1* (SL1-B1) that has homologous sequences yet exhibits a distinct predicted secondary structure (Figure 4F). Unlike wild-type 4.5SH RNA, the chimeric molecule with SL1-B1 could not induce efficient exon skipping of *asB1-Slc25a40* (Figure 4G, H) even though it is predicted to form a more stable secondary structure with target sequences (Figure 4I). These observations suggest that base-pairing to target exons is not sufficient to induce exon skipping by itself. Instead, 4.5SH RNA was predicted to consist of two modules, a target-recognition module complementary to *asB1* and a potential effector-binding module, SL1-4.5SH (Figure 4B). This idea was consistent with the aforementioned result where reciprocal mutations in the target recognition module restored the exon skipping of mutated *asB1-Slc25a40* (Figure 3C, 4B). We were then interested in whether we could improve the exon skipping efficiency by increasing the complementarity between 4.5SH RNA and the target exon. We thus modified the target recognition module of 4.5SH RNA to the sequences that perfectly base-pair with *asB1-Slc25a40*. Unexpectedly, the exon skipping activity of the perfect-match 4.5SH RNA was rather decreased compared to the wild type 4.5SH RNA (Figure 4J), further supporting the idea that simple hybridization is not sufficient for 4.5SH RNA-dependent exon skipping.

SL1 of 4.5SH RNA associates with effector proteins to induce exon skipping

Given that, we reasoned that SL1-4.5SH recruits protein(s) that induce exon skipping to the target *asB1*-containing cryptic exons. To identify the SL1-4.5SH-associating effector proteins, we performed RNA-pull down experiments using biotinylated SL1-4.5SH and nuclear lysates prepared from murine cell line Neuro2A (Figure 5A). Multiple proteins preferentially associated with SL1-4.5SH over SL1-B1, and a 75-kDa protein remained bound even after a stringent high-salt washing with 1M NaCl (Figure 5B, C). Mass spectrometry and subsequent western blot analysis revealed that at least three RNA binding proteins, Hnrnp, Sfpq, and Nono, were preferentially associated with SL1-4.5SH (Figure 5D, E). Among these RNA binding proteins, Hnrnp remained bound to SL1-4.5SH in the presence of 1M NaCl, which was consistent with the presence of the most representative binding motif GUGGUGG identified in a previous study¹⁹, located in the distal region of SL1-4.5SH (Figure 5F). To further confirm the binding of these RNA binding proteins to 4.5SH RNA in the cells, we performed CLIP analyses using HEK293

cells expressing *4.5SH* RNA and control cells expressing nonfunctional SL1-B1-*4.5SH* RNA. Detection of the immunoprecipitated RNAs by northern blot revealed that all three proteins bound to *4.5SH* RNA, but not to the non-functional chimeric molecule (Figure 5G).

We then examined the subnuclear distribution of these RNA binding proteins and compared their signals with that of *4.5SH* RNA using ES cells (Figure 5H). Hnrnpm formed one or two large foci in this cell type (Figure 5H, white arrowhead), which did not overlap with the signals of *4.5SH* RNA. However, many of the peak signals of *4.5SH* RNA overlapped with local peak signals of Hnrnpm in the other regions in the nucleoplasm (Figure 5H, black arrowheads). The signals of Sfpq and Nono were largely overlapped with that of *4.5SH* RNA (Figure 5H, black arrowheads). Sfpq and Nono are essential components of nuclear body paraspeckle, and are enriched in the nuclear bodies in cells expressing the architectural noncoding RNA *Neat1_2*²⁰. Because ES cells do not express *Neat1_2* and thus lack the formation of paraspeckles²¹, we also examined the expression of *4.5SH* RNA and other associating proteins in NIH3T3 cells that have prominent paraspeckles. As in ES cells, the signals of *4.5SH* RNA mostly overlapped with those of Srsf1 (Figure 5H, arrowheads), indicating that the RNA is also mainly localized to nuclear speckles in NIH3T3 cells. The signals of Hnrnpm were also detected in close proximity to those of *4.5SH* RNA, but the frequency of the overlap was reduced compared to Srsf1 (Figure 5H, arrowheads). Sfpq and Nono were mainly localized to the paraspeckles, and only weak signals were detected in the nucleoplasm under the experimental conditions we used for the simultaneous detection with RNA (Figure 5H). However, some of the peak signals of *4.5SH* RNA overlapped with local peak signals of Sfpq and Nono in the nucleoplasm (Figure 5H, arrowheads). These observations suggest that the association of *4.5SH* RNA with these effector proteins is not strictly stable, but is dynamically regulated within the nucleus.

To investigate the functional involvement of the effector proteins, we performed knockdown experiments. Introduction of the minigene into HNRNPM- and SFPQ-depleted HEK293 cells resulted in decreased skipping of *asB1-Slc25a40* (Figure 6A, Supplemental figure S6A), suggesting that these two proteins form a functional complex with *4.5SH* RNA to induce skipping of target exons. We also observed slight decrease in skipping activity in the cells depleted with NONO, although the effect was not statistically significant (Figure 6A). This may be due to the inefficient knockdown of NONO (Supplemental figure S6A), or due to a redundant function of Nono that are highly homologous to Sfpq²². We then examined a dominant effect of the effector

proteins by recruiting them to the target exon using the MS2 system²³ (Figure 6B, Supplemental figure S6B). As expected, forced recruitment of HNRNPM, SFPQ, and NONO induced skipping of the *asB1*-containing exon in the absence of *4.5SH* RNA, whereas recruitment of MS2 coat protein had little effect (Figure 6B). The dominant effects of the effector proteins were not observed when the proteins were recruited to the downstream intron (Figure 6C). These observations suggest that *4.5SH* RNA base-pairs with the target *asB1*-containing exons via the target-recognition module, recruits effector protein complex containing Hnrnmpm and other associating proteins, and induces skipping of the target exon.

HNRNPC has previously been shown to prevent aberrant exonizations of antisense insertions of *Alu* elements, *SINE B1* family retrotransposons in humans, by competing with U2AF2⁴. To investigate whether HNRNPC is also required for the exon skipping activity of *4.5SH* RNA, we introduced the splicing reporter minigene and the *4.5SH*-expression vector into HNRNPC-depleted HEK293 cells. As previously reported⁴, *asAlu*-containing cryptic exons of *HELLS* and *KIAA1432* were abnormally spliced-in upon HNRNPC knockdown (Figure 6D). However, *4.5SH* RNA-dependent exon skipping of *asB1-Slc25a40* was unaffected even in the absence of HNRNPC (Figure 6D). The skipping of *asB1*-containing exons, such as *asB1-Slc25a40* and *asB1-Smg6*, was also unaffected in Neuro2A cells depleted with Hnrnpc (Figure 6E), whereas the Hnrnpc-mediated skipping of *asAlu*-containing exon from *CD55* minigene was evident in the murine cells (Figure 6E). These findings indicate that small rodents and primates have independently developed strategies to mitigate the adverse effect of exonizations from the antisense insertions of *SINE B1* family retrotransposon, utilizing noncoding RNA and RNA-binding proteins, respectively.

Programmable splicing regulator can be generated by utilizing the modular structure of *4.5SH* RNA

Given the modular organization of *4.5SH* RNA, we tested whether we could engineer a programmable splicing regulator consisting of SL1-4.5SH and designed complementary sequences to target exons. We prepared a minigene containing the well-characterized alternative exon (ex) 6 of *FAS* (*FAS*-ex6)²⁴ and flanking exons, and tested the activity of a chimeric molecule consisting of SL1-4.5SH fused to the sequences complementary to *FAS*-ex6 (SL1-4.5SH-*asFAS*) (Figure 7A, B). As expected, SL1-4.5SH-*asFAS* induced the skipping of *FAS*-ex6, whereas *4.5SH* RNA alone

had no effect on the splicing of this minigene (Figure 7A, B). To further confirm the broad applicability of the chimeric molecule, we also generated minigenes containing exon 10 of *MAPT*²⁵, or exon 53 of human *DMD* (Figure 7A), which are the target exons for antisense oligonucleotide-mediated exon skipping therapies^{26,27}. While efficient exon skipping was also induced with the *MAPT* chimera (SL1-4.5SH-*asMAPT*) (Figure 7C), none of the *DMD* chimera could induce skipping of the target exon when used alone, presumably due to the larger size of the exon or the strength of the 3' splice site. We thus tried different combinations of *DMD* chimeras and the skipped product was detected when we simultaneously co-introduced SL1-4.5SH-*asDMD2* and SL1-4.5SH-*asDMD4*, although the PCR cycles used were too high to quantitatively detect abundant non-skipped products (Figure 7E). We noticed that the region targeted by SL1-4.5SH-*asDMD2* was partially overlapped with the target of Viltolarsen (*vltr*), an antisense morpholinos oligonucleotide therapeutic used to treat *DMD* patients²⁸. Therefore, we prepared another chimera, SL1-4.5SH-*asDMDvltr*, which covered the entire region targeted by Viltolarsen. The replacement of *asDMD2* with *asDMDvltr* further improved the exon skipping activity of the combinational transfection, and the highest efficiency was obtained when we used a chimera with a hybrid target recognition module consisting of *asDMDvltr* and *asDMD4* (SL1-4.5SH-*asDMDvltr4*, Figure 7F). The same strategy was successfully used to generate a chimera RNA (SL1-4.5SH-*asDmd*) that efficiently induces the skipping of exon 23 of mouse *Dmd* (Figure 7A, F).

To explore whether the recruitment of the effector complex through SL1-4.5SH is critical for exon skipping in these chimera molecules, we substituted SL1-4.5SH with SL1-B1 (SL1-B1-*asFAS*, SL1-B1-*asMAPT*, SL1-B1-*asDmd*, and SL1-B1-*asDMDvltr4*). A pronounced reduction in exon skipping activity was observed for *FAS*, *Dmd*, and *DMD* by the replacement (Figure 7B, D, F), while a more modest decline was noted for *MAPT* (Figure 7C). These results indicate that the exon skipping of these synthetic chimera RNAs operates through diverse mechanisms, depending on the target exon. For certain exons, simple base-pairing with the chimera RNAs doesn't suffice, necessitating the engagement of splicing inhibitors recruited through SL1 4.5SH. Conversely, some exons are effectively skipped solely by base-pairing, possibly due to the masking of exonic splicing enhancers that work in tandem with weaker 5' and 3' splice sites.

Finally, we compared the exon skipping activity of SL1-4.5SH-*asDMDvltr4* with Viltolarsen using the reporter system. For this experiment, we used HeLa cells, which show

efficient transfection efficiency for both plasmid and morpholinos oligonucleotides. The exon skipping activity of this hybrid chimera molecule was similar to 10 μ M Viltolarsen, a concentration used for the gene therapy (Figure 7G).

Discussion

In this study, we have demonstrated that *4.5SH* RNA acts as a "molecular antidote" to toxic exonizations of *asB1*, protecting the integrity of the transcriptome from invasion of *SINE B1* during the evolution of small rodents. HNRNPC has previously been shown to inhibit the exonizations of the *Alu* elements, a human homolog of *SINE B1*, by competing with U2AF2 for polypyrimidine (poly-U) tract sequences⁴. Since the depletion of HNRNPC did not affect the exon-skipping activity of *4.5SH* RNA exogenously expressed in human cells, rodent and primate species seem to have evolved unique systems to protect their transcriptome from toxic antisense insertions of *SINE B1* family retrotransposons, mediated by RNA and protein, respectively. It should be noted that, in primate genomes, the *Alu*-derived *BC200* gene is abundantly expressed in the brain²⁹. Yet, *BC200* transcripts predominantly reside in the cytoplasm, inherently precluding their role in exon-skipping. While many *SINE*-derived noncoding RNAs are abundantly expressed, the acquisition of nuclear localization may have been a crucial step for the emergence of *4.5SH* RNA as a splicing regulator within the lineage of small rodents.

HNRNPC recognizes bipartite poly-U sequences of the antisense *Alu* elements, which may not work efficiently in mice because *asB1*s only have a single poly-U stretch. We propose a model that the introduction of point mutations in the SL1 region of the 3' truncated *SINE B1* lacking the A-stretch led to the emergence of non-transposable, Hnrnp-m-binding nuclear *4.5SH* RNA, which counteracted toxic exonizations of *asB1*s. Subsequently, genomic fragments containing this advantageous noncoding RNA were amplified to form a large tandem gene cluster, and abundant *4.5SH* RNA transcribed from this cluster efficiently blocked inclusion of toxic *asB1*-containing exons, which became indispensable in small rodents such as mice and rats. It should be noted that point mutations in the poly-U stretch of *Alu*-containing cryptic exons result in the inclusions of normally skipped exons⁴. Considering that the target recognition module of *4.5SH* RNA can tolerate mismatch mutations, *4.5SH* RNA-dependent skipping of *asB1*-containing exons seems to be more robust than HNRNPC-dependent skipping of *Alu*-containing exons. In other words, the antisense insertions of *Alu* are more likely to be exonized if they carry mutations in the poly-U stretch to escape the recognition by HNRNPC. Consistently, *Alu*-containing exons in humans are more abundant in RefSeq annotated genes than *SINE B1* containing exons in mice, even when normalized by the number of insertions³. We speculate that, during their evolution, primates have

increased the diversity of protein products by utilizing *Alu*-containing exons, a system that did not work in small rodents due to the presence of *4.5SH* RNA that tolerates mutations in target *asB1*-containing exons.

The target recognition module of *4.5SH* RNA is programmable, and chimeric molecules consisting of SL1-4.5SH and designed target recognition sequences can induce skipping of exons of interest. Modified Antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs) are emerging as promising therapeutics to treat diseases with mutations that can be functionally rescued by inducing exon skipping³⁰⁻³². The exon skipping activity of the *4.5SH* chimeric RNA was comparable to that of ASO, at least when assayed using our reporter system. A limitation of ASO-mediated therapies is the repeated administration of high doses of oligonucleotides, which can be a significant burden for patients. To overcome this, Adeno-Associated Virus vector-based expression of antisense sequences fused to modified U7 has been successfully used in cellular and animal models to restore DMD protein expression³³. However, it has been reported that overexpression of the U7 chimeric molecule results in aberrant processing of U7 snRNA by interfering with endogenous processes³⁴. Considering that *4.5SH* RNA is a small rodent-specific noncoding RNA, and thus the expression of *4.5SH* chimeric RNA does not directly interfere with endogenous pathways, our method may provide an alternative approach for vector-based gene therapy.

While therapeutic ASOs base-pair with regulatory sequences to induce exon skipping, two observations suggest that *4.5SH* RNA inhibits exon inclusion via different molecular mechanisms. First, replacement of SL1-4.5SH by SL1-B1 markedly reduced exon skipping activity, despite increased complementarity to the target sequences. Second, the introduction of perfect-match mutations in the target recognition modules reduced the exon skipping activity of *4.5SH* RNA. Thus, simple base-pairing is not sufficient for *4.5SH* RNA-mediated exon skipping, and additional effector proteins are required for its full activity; this mechanism is reminiscent of the artificial bifunctional antisense oligonucleotides containing cis-elements that recruit trans-acting splicing regulators^{35,36}. We found that at least three effector RNA binding proteins, Hnrnp, Sfpq, and Nono, associate specifically with SL1-4.5SH but not with non-functional SL1-B1. Hnrnp has previously been shown to associate with Sfpq/Nono and induce skipping of certain exons³⁷. In addition, genome-wide analyses have revealed that Hnrnp-associated exons are preferentially included upon depletion of this protein, functioning as a negative regulator of splicing^{19,38}. Considering that the most representative Hnrnp-binding motif GUGGUGG¹⁹ is located in the

distal region of SL1-4.5SH, Hnrnmpm may be a primary effector protein that binds to 4.5SH RNA, which subsequently recruits additional effector complexes including Sfpq and Nono to induce exon skipping. Given that both Sfpq and Nono bind intronic regions of pre-mRNAs^{39,40}, formation of the 4.5SH RNA-protein complex may recruit cryptic *asBI*-containing exons to intron-enriched nuclear compartments⁴¹, which are enriched in Sfpq and Nono. Alternatively, the formation of a large ribonucleoprotein complex on target exons physically interferes with 3' splice site recognition by steric obstruction. To clarify the precise molecular mechanisms, it would be intriguing to perform cryo-EM observation of *in vitro* pre-mRNA processing in the presence or absence of 4.5SH RNA, an approach that has been successfully used to reveal the stepwise formations and reactions of spliceosome⁴².

Hnrnmpm is a highly conserved RNA binding protein⁴³ and associates with various types of cellular RNA including long noncoding RNAs (lncRNAs)³⁸. A huge number of lncRNAs are transcribed from the genomes of higher eukaryotes, and a previous bioinformatic approach has identified a number of potential lncRNA-mRNA interactions⁴⁴. As such, it is possible that there exist more endogenous lncRNAs that recruit Hnrnmpm to target exons and inhibit their inclusion. Consistent with this hypothesis, a lncRNA called *PLANE* was recently shown to associate with HNRNPM and regulate alternative splicing of *NCOR*⁴⁵. Since *PLANE* binds to the downstream intronic region of the target exon, it may use a different molecular mechanism distinct from 4.5SH RNA that recognizes the exon sequence and inhibits the use of upstream 3' splice site. Whichever the case is, control of the alternative splicing could be one of the major functions of lncRNAs, providing another layer of regulation to increase the complexity of the transcriptome.

Limitation of the study

While our study provides novel insights into the physiological functions of 4.5SH RNA and its role as an molecular antidote for toxic exonization of *SINE BI*, there are several limitations. Our study predominantly focuses on small rodents, specifically mice, and the results may not be directly applicable to other species, as demonstrated for human *Alu*. In addition, the mechanistic understanding of 4.5SH RNA's role in exon skipping remains incomplete. While we propose a model for 4.5SH RNA's activity based on its interactions with Hnrnmpm, Sfpq, and Nono, the precise molecular mechanisms are yet to be elucidated fully. Future studies, such as

cryo-EM observation, might provide more comprehensive insights. While the target recognition module of 4.5SH RNA has been shown to be programmable, the broader applications, especially in therapeutic contexts, need rigorous validation in more diverse biological systems and under various physiological conditions. Lastly, while our study hints at the potential existence of other lncRNAs that might regulate splicing similarly to 4.5SH RNA, direct evidence is lacking. Comprehensive screening and functional assays would be necessary to uncover other lncRNAs with similar regulatory roles.

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Author contributions

SN and RY designed and performed experiments, MK contributed quantification of *4.5SH* and ES cultures, YN and IY performed experiments using the ES cells and mice, IN performed experiments using deletion mutants and Viltolarsen KA created *4.5SH* mutant animals and established the ES cells, YN optimized Dmd chimera RNA, ST contributed to western and northern blot analyses, YS and TK contributed to pulse-field gel electrophoresis experiments, HKH and MO contributed to mass-spectrometry analyses, MM and SI contributed preparation of RNA sequencing library, TY and TH contributed preparation of MS2CP-tagged RBPs, SN wrote the manuscript, all the authors edited the manuscript. Correspondence should be addressed to SN for *4.5SH* KO mice and other materials except for splicing minigenes and chimeric molecules, which should be requested to RY.

Declaration of interests

Patent applications (JP21663/2022-076674 and PCT/JP2023/015828) have been submitted by RY and SN based on these results.

Inclusion and Diversity

We support inclusive, diverse, and equitable conduct of research.

Figure legends

Figure 1. *4.5SH* KO mice exhibit embryonic lethality

(A) Genomic organization of the *4.5SH* cluster on chromosome 6 and a schematic of the targeting strategy for the generation of *4.5SH* KO mice. (B) Southern blot analysis of *4.5SH* using conventional (left) and pulse-field gel electrophoresis (right). (C) Genotypes of offspring obtained by crossing heterozygous (+/-) mice. We could not explicitly distinguish heterozygotes from wild type embryos at E2.5-3.5 because genotyping was judged by the expression of *4.5SH* RNA detected with *in situ* hybridization. (D) Nomarski DIC image of WT and *4.5SH* KO at the 8-cell stage embryos overlaid with *4.5SH* RNA signals detected with the LNA probe (green). (E) Transverse sections of E6.5 embryos of WT and *4.5SH* KO mice visualized with *4.5SH* probe (green) and DAPI (magenta) at lower (top panels) and higher (bottom panels) magnifications. The dotted lines in the upper panels show the contours of the embryonic tissues. The dotted lines in the lower panels indicate the cell nuclei in the embryonic tissues. Asterisks indicate non-specific autofluorescence signals in the cytoplasm, as judged by the signals detected by multiple non-excitation channels. (F) RT-qPCR analyses of *4.5SH* expression in WT, KO, and rescued (res) ES cells. (G) Alkaline phosphatase activity (AP) and expression of Nanog in WT, *4.5SH* KO, and rescued (res) ES cells. (H) Proliferation of WT, *4.5SH* KO, and rescued (res) ES cells. Error bars represent standard deviations from biological duplicates. Scale Bar, 100 μ m and 20 μ m in upper and lower panels in (E), and 200 μ m and 10 μ m in upper and lower panels in (G), respectively.

Figure 2. Deleterious exons are abnormally included in *4.5SH* KO ES cells

(A) Simultaneous detection of *4.5SH* RNA (green) and nuclear speckle marker Srsf1 (magenta) in ES cells. (B) Volcano plot of differentially spliced RefSeq-annotated (blue) and unannotated novel (magenta) exons, and schematic overview of the KO-enriched exons. Exons with FDR=0 are shown as outliers on the same infinite (∞) Y-value in the volcano plot. (C) Motifs enriched in KO-specific cryptic exons revealed via MEME analysis. (D) Relative positions of consensus motifs to *asB1* and *4.5SH* RNA. (E) Volcano plots illustrating the inclusion differences for specific exons. Magenta dots indicate exons with retrotransposon insertions: *sB1* and *asB1* for

sense and antisense insertions of *SINE B1*, respectively; *sB2* and *asB2* for sense and antisense insertions of *SINE B2*, respectively. Exons with FDR=0 are shown as outliers on the same infinite (∞) Y-value in the volcano plot. (F) Genome browser view of mapped sequence reads and gene annotations. Magenta boxes indicate KO-specific RefSeq-unannotated cryptic exons, and blue bars indicate the positions of *asB1*. (G) Gel-like view of capillary electrophoresis of RT-PCR products using two independent WT, KO, and rescued (res) ES cells. (H) Quantification of data shown in (G). Each dot represents the percentage of exon-skipped transcripts in each ES cell line. (I) Western blot analyses of Smg6 and Smchd1 in WT, KO, and rescued (res) ES cells. The numbers indicate quantification of the relative intensity of the bands. The same loading control images of Gapdh was used for Smg6 and Smchd1. Scale Bar, 5 μ m.

Figure 3. 4.5SH RNA base-pairs with target *asB1*-containing exons and inhibits the use of the 3' splice site

(A) Schematic overview of the minigene including the cryptic exon of *Slc25a40* (*asB1-Slc25a40*) and a *4.5SH* expression vector driven by U6 promoter (U6 pro). (B) Gel-like view of capillary electrophoresis of *asB1-Slc25a40* alternative splicing, northern blot analysis of *4.5SH* RNA expression, and quantification of the percentage of skipped products. Asterisk represents the position of the heteroduplex bands that appear on the Bioanalyzer. (C) Reciprocal mutations used in D. (D) The alternative splicing of *asB1-Slc25a40* in minigene-transfected HEK293 cells expressing wild-type or mutated *4.5SH/asB1-Slc25a40* and quantification of skipped products. Asterisk represents the position of the heteroduplex bands that appear on the Bioanalyzer. (E) Schematic overview of split minigenes containing either the 3' or 5' splice sites (SS) of *asB1-Slc25a40*. (F) The splicing of *asB1-Slc25a40* in HEK293 cells transfected with the split minigenes upon expression of *4.5SH* RNA. Error bars in B, D, and F represent standard deviations from biological triplicates.

Figure 4. Modular organization of 4.5SH RNA consisting of the effector binding and the

target recognition modules

(A) Predicted secondary structure of 4.5SH RNA. (B) Schematic of the modular structure of 4.5SH RNA and regions of the deletion mutants. Magenta bars indicate the regions complementary to MEME-identified motif1 and motif3 of the target *asB1*-containing exons. Green bars indicate the regions of the stem loop structures. The cyan bar indicates the region where nucleotides are substituted in the reciprocal mutants shown in Figure 3C. (C) Northern blot analyses of the expression of 4.5SH deletion mutants and the effects of the deletion mutation on the exon skipping activity of 4.5SH RNA, examined by minigene transfected cells. (D) Summary of the results shown in C. Yellow circles represent the residues of 4.5SH RNA, of which deletion resulted in reduced (<50%) exon skipping activity. Magenta characters represents the residues, of which deletion resulted in downregulation of the expression. (E) Predicted secondary structures formed between 4.5SH RNA and the motif3-lacking cryptic exons of *Ppil4* and *Eya2*. (F) Sequences and predicted secondary structures of the 5' stem-loop of 4.5SH (SL1-4.5SH) and *SINE B1* (SL1-B1). (G) Schematic of the minigene, including the cryptic exon of *Slc25a40* (*asB1-Slc25a40*) and U6-driven 4.5SH RNA and chimeric RNA containing SL1-B1. (H) The alternative splicing of *asB1-Slc25a40* in minigene-transfected HEK293 cells expressing 4.5SH RNA or SL1-B1-4.5SH. Asterisk represents the position of the heteroduplex bands that appear on the Bioanalyzer. (I) Predicted secondary structures formed between the *asB1-Slc25a40* and 4.5SH RNA/SL1-B1-4.5SH. Note that SL1-B1-4.5SH exhibits higher complementarity compared to the wildtype 4.5SH RNA, in spite of the reduced exon skipping activity. (J) The alternative splicing of *asB1-Slc25a40* in minigene-transfected HEK293 cells expressing the wildtype or perfect-match (pm) 4.5SH RNA. Asterisk represents the position of the heteroduplex bands that appear on the Bioanalyzer. Error bars represent standard deviations from biological duplicates in C, and from biological triplicates in H and J.

Figure 5. The 5' stem loop of 4.5SH RNA recruits effector proteins to inhibit the inclusion of target exons

(A) Schematic of the experimental design to identify effector proteins. (B, C) Silver staining of SDS-PAGE-separated proteins pulled down with the biotinylated 5' stem-loop 1 of *SINE B1* (SL1-B1) and the 5' stem-loop 1 of 4.5SH (SL1-4.5SH) under normal salt concentration (150 mM NaCl)

(B) and after the high-salt washing with 1M NaCl (C). (D) Scatter plot of the results obtained by LC-MS analyses of proteins purified with SL1-B1 and SL1-4.5SH (n =1 for each). Each dot represents identified protein. PSM: peptide-spectrum match score. (E) Preferential association of Hnrnp_m, Sfpq, and Nono with SL1-4.5SH detected via western blot. Note that 75-kDa Hnrnp_m remains bound to SL1-4.5SH after stringent washing with 1M NaCl. (F) The presence of previously identified consensus Hnrnp_m-binding sequences in SL1-4.5SH. Coral color represents the putative Hnrnp_m-binding site identified in a previous study ¹⁹. (G) CLIP analyses of *4.5SH* RNA. FLAG-tagged Hnrnp_m, Nono, and Sfpq were co-expressed with wild-type *4.5SH* RNA or chimeric SL1-B1-*4.5SH* in HEK293 cells and immunoprecipitated using anti-FLAG antibody. Immunoprecipitated *4.5SH* was detected via northern blot analysis. Note that these RNA-binding proteins are associated with *4.5SH* RNA, but not with SL1-B1-*4.5SH*, in a UV-irradiation dependent manner. (H) Simultaneous detection of *4.5SH* RNA (green) and effector proteins (magenta) Hnrnp_m, Sfpq, and Nono in NIH3T3 cells and the color profile plots. Yellow lines represent the regions shown in the color profile plots. Arrowheads represent the positions of overlapping peaks. Scale Bars, 5 μ m.

Figure 6. Functional involvement of SL1-4.5SH-associated effector proteins in *4.5SH* RNA-dependent exon skipping

(A) Alternative splicing of *asB1-Slc25a40* in minigene-transfected HEK293 cells depleted for HNRNPM, SFPQ, and NONO. Knockdown of HNRNPM and SFPQ resulted in reduced exon skipping. Large asterisks indicate statistically significant changes compared to the control ($p < 0.016$, Welch's t-test after Bonferroni correction), and small asterisk represents the position of the heteroduplex bands that appear on the Bioanalyzer. (B, C) Schematic of RNA-binding protein recruitment to the exon (B) and the downstream intron (C) of the minigene using the MS2 system, and the alternative splicing of *asB1-Slc25a40* in HEK293 cells expressing RNA-binding proteins fused to the MS2 coat protein (MS2CP). Asterisks indicate statistically significant changes compared to the control ($p < 0.0125$, Welch's t-test after Bonferroni correction). (D) Alternative splicing of *asB1-Slc25a40* in HNRNPC-depleted HEK293 cells transfected with the minigene and Western blot analyses confirming the reduction of HNRNPC upon knockdown (KD). Notably, *4.5SH* RNA-mediated exon-skipping of *asB1-Slc25a40* persisted even in the reduction of

HNRNPC, whereas the HNRNPC depletion led to the inclusions of *asAlu*-containing endogenous cryptic exons from *HELLS* and *KIAA1432*, as delineated in previous studies ⁴. The asterisks pinpoint heteroduplex band locations evident on the Bioanalyzer. (E) The alternative splicing of endogenous *asB1*-containing exons in murine Neuro2A cells depleted with Hnrnpc and Western blot analyses confirming the reduction of Hnrnpc upon knockdown (KD). Note that the splicing of *asB1*-containing exons were not affected, whereas skipping of *asAlu*-containing exon from *CD55* minigene was reduced upon depletion of Hnrnpc. The error bars in A-E depict the standard deviation from biological triplicates.

Figure 7. Chimeric 4.5SH RNAs function as designable splicing regulators

(A) Schematic showing the regions used to make chimeric molecules and the strategy used to evaluate the exon skipping activity. Cyan bars indicate the region targeted by the chimeric 4.5SH RNAs consisting of SL1-4.5SH and complementary target recognition sequences. Minigenes containing the target exons and flanking intron/exon sequences were co-introduced into HEK293 cells together with vectors expressing the chimeric molecules under the control of U6 promoter. (B, C, F) Alternative splicing of *FAS-ex6* (B), *MAPT-ex10* (C), and *Dmd-ex23* (F) in HEK293 cells transfected with splicing minigenes and vectors expressing 4.5SH-chimera RNAs. The expression of the chimera RNAs were verified via Northern blot. Note that the exon skipping efficiencies substantially decreased when SL1-4.5SH was replaced with SL1-B1 for *FAS* and *Dmd*. In contrast, only a modest reduction was observed for *MAPT*. Asterisk represents the position of the heteroduplex bands that appear on the Bioanalyzer. (D) Alternative splicing of *DMD-ex53* in HEK293 cells transfected with the splicing minigene and vectors expressing different combinations of 4.5SH-DMD chimeras. The PCR condition used in this experiment was too large to quantitatively detect the amount of non-skipped product. (E) Quantification of the alternative splicing of *DMD-ex53* in HEK293 cells transfected with the splicing minigene and vectors expressing various 4.5SH-DMD chimeras. Note that the hybrid chimera SL1-4.5SH-DMD ν ltr-4 induced efficient exon skipping. The expression of the chimera RNAs were verified via Northern blot. (G) Quantification of the alternative splicing of *DMD-ex53* in HeLa cells transfected with the splicing minigene and vectors expressing SL1-4.5SH-DMD ν ltr-4 and different concentrations of Viltolarsen. Note that the skipping efficiency of the chimeric RNA is comparable to that of the

highest concentration of Viltolarsen. The expression of SL1-4.5SH-*DMDvltr-4* was confirmed via Northern blot. Error bars represent standard deviations from biological triplicates in B-D, and F, and from biological duplicates in G.

STAR Methods

RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

Lead contact

Requests for resources and reagents should be directed to and will be fulfilled by the lead contact, Shinichi Nakagawa (nakagawas@pharm.hokudai.ac.jp).

Materials availability

All the materials generated in this study are accessible upon request.

Data and Code Availability

- RNA-seq raw data is available at PRJDB13752. Raw image data is available at DOI: 10.17632/265cd268pz.1
- This paper does not report original code.
- Any additional information required to reanalyze the data reported in this paper is available from the lead contact upon request.

EXPERIMENTAL MODEL AND STUDY PARTICIPANT DETAILS

We utilized the 4.5SH KO mouse model developed in this study. C57BL/6N mice served as the background strain for extensive backcrossing. All procedures were conducted in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Safety Division of Hokkaido University (Approval No. 2015-079). For anesthesia, medetomidine-midazolam-butorphanol ⁴⁶ was intraperitoneally injected at a volume of 10 μ l/g of body weight. Mice are extensively backcrossed with C57BL6/N. For Mendelian ratio assessments, we included both male and female adult mice aged over 8 weeks. Embryos were collected for analysis; however, their sex was not determined.

METHOD DETAILS

Gel electrophoresis and southern blot analysis

Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis was performed as previously described ⁴⁷. Mouse embryonic fibroblasts (MEFs) were harvested via trypsinization, washed twice with PBS, and 2×10^6 cells were suspended in 100 μ l of PBS and pre-warmed at 48°C. The cell suspensions were mixed with equal volumes of prewarmed 1.2% low melting agarose in PBS, and 100 μ l of the mixture was loaded on a well to make a plug. Each plug was incubated in NDSK buffer (0.5M EDTA, 1% N-

laurylsarcosine, and 1 mg/ml Proteinase K (Thermo, #25530-015), pH 9.5) overnight at 50°C and further incubated in fresh NDSK buffer for 10 h. After washing in TE containing 0.1 mM phenylmethanesulfonyl fluoride, one-third of each plug was equilibrated in 1× Cutsmart buffer (NEB) and treated with restriction enzymes overnight at 37°C. The digested DNAs were run on a 1% agarose gel in TAE using CHEF-Mapper XA system (Bio-Rad) at 2V/cm with a pulse time of 5 min to 40 min for 92 h at 14°C (Angle: 106°)⁴⁸. For conventional gel electrophoresis, 5 µg of DNAs were digested with restriction enzymes and separated on 0.7% agarose gel in TAE. After electrophoresis, gels were treated with 0.25M HCl for 30 min, denatured in 0.5M NaOH with 1.5M NaCl, neutralized in 0.5M Tris (pH 7.2) with 1.5M NaCl, and equilibrated in 20× SSC. DNAs were capillary blotted on Hybond-N+ (Sigma, #RPN203B) using a standard protocol and hybridized with LNA probes in DIG easy Hyb (Merck, #11603558001) at 60°C following the manufacturer's instructions. After washing in 2× SSC followed by stringent washing in 0.2× SSC, hybridized probes were detected with an alkaline phosphatase-conjugated anti-DIG antibody (Merck, #11093274910) and CDP-Star (Merck, #11685627001) following the manufacturer's instructions. The chemiluminescent signals were detected using the Chemi Doc Touch imaging system (Biorad).

Construction of targeting vectors and gRNA-expressing vector

To generate the targeting vector, homologous arm sequences (left arm: chr6:47,648,963-47,650,909, right arm: chr6:47,778,356-47,780,356) together with loxP and restriction sites were synthesized and cloned into a plasmid by a company (GenScript), and the DNA fragments were subsequently cloned into the PGK-Neo-pA plasmid (Supplemental figure S1A, B). To enhance homologous recombination efficiency, gRNA sequences were designed against the terminal regions of the homologous arms (Supplemental figure S1A, B). To generate the gRNA-expressing plasmid, two sets of oligonucleotides shown in Supplemental Table T2 were annealed and subcloned into the BbsI and BsaI sites of pX330-B/B, as previously described⁴⁹.

Generation of 4.5SH KO mice

6NK7⁵⁰ is a feeder-dependent ES cell line established from C57BL/6N (Nippon Clea) and was grown as described previously⁵¹. 6NK7 ES cells (6×10^6 cells) were suspended in 0.8 ml of phosphate-buffered saline (PBS), co-electroporated with circular forms of 30 µg of the targeting

vector, 13 µg each of pX330 vectors, as well as 1.5 µg of pPGK-puro plasmid using Gene Pulser Xcell™ (Bio-Rad) and then plated into three 10 cm plates. After 24 to 48 h, the cells were selected with 1.7 µg/ml puromycin and thereafter with 130 µg/ml of G418 for 1 week. On day 8, colonies were picked and stocked. G418-resistant ES clones were screened for homologous recombination with the *4.5SH* cluster and the absence of random integrations via PCR using primers indicated in Supplemental Table T2. Chimeric mice were produced through the aggregation of ES cells with eight-cell embryos of ICR mice (Nippon Clea), which were then mated with C57BL/6N females (Nippon Clea) to obtain F1 heterozygous mice. Germ line transmission was validated via PCR, and homologous recombination was further validated via Southern blot analyses using genomic DNA prepared from the tails of F1 animals. The PGK-NeO cassette was removed by electroporating Cre-recombinase to *in vitro*-fertilized eggs, which were transferred to recipient mice to obtain floxed animals. The primers used for genotyping *4.5SH* KO mice are indicated in Supplemental Table T2. The following PCR conditions were used for genotyping: one cycle at 94°C for 2 min; 35 cycles at 94°C for 30 sec, 57°C for 30 sec, and 68°C for 1 min; followed by 68°C for 5 min.

***In situ* hybridization**

To prepare tissue sections from E6.5 embryos, pregnant mice were perfused with 4% paraformaldehyde in HCMF (10 mM HEPES [pH 7.4], 137 mM NaCl, 5.4 mM KCl, 0.34 mM Na₂HPO₄, 5.6 mM glucose), and dissected decidua were further fixed overnight at 4°C. After washing in PBS two times, the samples were cryo-protected in 30% sucrose in PBS and embedded in Tissue-Tek OCT compound (Sakura). For *in situ* hybridization of cultured cells, cells were cultured on a washed coverslip coated with PLL and then fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde in HCMF overnight at 4°C. Probe preparation and *in situ* hybridization were performed as previously described⁵². Briefly, fixed tissue sections or cells were treated with HCl and Proteinase K, fixed in 4% PFA, and acetylated with acetic anhydride in triethanolamine-HCl buffer. The fixation by perfusion and the proteinase K treatment was essential for the detection of *4.5SH* RNA signals.

Establishment of *4.5SH* KO ES cells and cell culture

The establishment of ES cells was performed as previously described⁵³. Fertilized eggs were obtained via *in vitro* fertilization using heterozygous females and a male. The embryos were

cultured for 4 days until expanded blastocysts in KSOM⁵⁴ medium. Blastocysts were plated individually on a 48-well plate coated with 0.1% gelatin in KSR-GMEM medium and allowed to hatch and grow. After 10 days in culture, the inner cell mass (ICM) outgrowth was plated onto a 24-well plate with a feeder layer, then expanded and stocked. Neuro2A, HEK293, and HEK293T cells were cultured in a 1:1 mixture of DMEM/HamF12 supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum and penicillin/streptomycin.

Immunohistochemistry

Cells were cultured on PLL-coated coverslips, fixed in 4% PFA in HCMF for 10 min at room temperature, and permeabilized in 100% methanol for 5 min at -20°C. Non-specific binding was blocked with 4% skim milk in TBST (TBS containing 0.05% Tween-20), followed by incubation with primary and secondary antibodies. The antibodies used were indicated in Supplemental Table T2. The fluorescent and DIC images were obtained using an epifluorescent microscope (Olympus, BX51) equipped with a CCD camera (DP74).

Construction of 4.5SH-expressing lentiviruses

To generate 10× tandem 4.5SH expression lentivirus, a gene fragment containing the 4.5SH gene and flanking sequences required for the expression of this gene⁵⁵ were synthesized, harboring restriction sites required for subcloning (Supplemental Table T2). The gene fragment was digested with XhoI and BglII, then subcloned into the XhoI/BamHI sites of pGEX-4T. The resultant plasmid vector was digested with XhoI and BamHI, into which the second fragments were subcloned. This procedure was repeated until 10 tandem repeats were subcloned into the plasmid, resulting in the generation of pGEX4T-10×4.5SH. The DNA fragments containing 10× 4.5SH were prepared by digesting pGEX-4T-10×4.5SH with SwaI and XhoI, which was subcloned into a CS-CDF-CG-PRE-derived vector⁵⁶ digested with MluI (blunted) and XhoI, resulting in the generation of pLenti-10×-4.5SH. Lentiviruses were prepared as per a previously described protocol⁵⁶. Briefly, pLenti-10×4.5SH or pLenti-CA-EGFP were mixed with packaging plasmids and introduced into HEK293T cells using FuGENE HD Transfection Reagents (Promega) following the manufacturer's instructions. After 24 h, 10 μM of forskolin was added to the culture medium and further incubated for 48 h. Culture supernatants were collected, filtered through a 0.45 μm filter, and centrifuged at 20,000 g for 4 h. The pellets were re-suspended in 1/100 the volume of DMEM

containing 10% FBS, and aliquots were frozen at -80°C. For infections, viruses were diluted in culture medium at 1× concentration and incubated with ES cells at 37°C overnight.

RT-PCR for the quantitation of *4.5SH* expression

cDNA of *4.5SH* was synthesized from 0.5 µg of total RNA and 0.1 µg of nuclear RNA using ReverTra Ace (100U/µL) (TOYOBO, #TRT-101) according to the manufacturer's instructions and using primers indicated in Supplemental Table T2. Synthesized cDNAs were diluted with 4 volumes of distilled water and used as templates for subsequent qPCR. The qPCR reaction was performed on Bio-Rad CFX Connect using a THUNDERBIRD Next SYBR qPCR Mix (TOYOBO, #QPX-201) as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Cellular fractionation and RNA purification

The nuclear and cytoplasmic fractionation was performed as previously described¹². Briefly, cells were washed twice with ice-cold HEPES-buffered saline (HBSS: 10 mM HEPES [pH 7.4], 137 mM NaCl, 5.4 mM KCl, 0.34 mM Na₂HPO₄, 1 mM MgCl₂, 1 mM CaCl₂, 5.6 mM glucose) and suspended in CSKT (10 mM PIPES [pH 6.8], 100 mM NaCl, 300 mM Sucrose, 1 mM EGTA, 1mM MgCl₂, 1 mM DTT, 0.1% Triton-X100, 1× protease inhibitor (#03969-21, Nacalai)) for 5 min. The cell suspensions were centrifuged at 700 g for 5 min, followed by further centrifugation at 12,000 g for 5 min to collect supernatants, which were lysed in 2 volumes of Trizol-LS (Thermo Fisher Scientific, #10296010). The nuclear pellets were washed once with CSKT, centrifuged at 700 g for 1 min, and lysed in Trizol (Thermo Fisher Scientific, #15596026). To collect total RNAs, cells were washed once with HBSS and lysed in Trizol. The Trizol-lysed samples were heated at 50°C for 5 min before the addition of chloroform to solubilize semi-extractive RNAs as previously described⁵⁷.

RNA-sequencing and data analysis

RNA-seq data is available from PRJDB13752. RNA-seq libraries were prepared with TruSeq Stranded Total RNA Library Prep Gold (Illumina, #20020598), according to the manufacturer's instructions and sequenced using HiSeq4000 (Illumina), generating single-end reads of 50 bp. Obtained fastq files were mapped on the mm10 genome using HISAT2 (v.2.2.1)⁵⁸. Transcript assembly based on mapped sequence reads was performed using Stringtie (v2.1.7)⁵⁹. Using the

obtained Stringtie GTF files as a reference, the BAM files were analyzed using rMATS (v4.4.1) ¹⁴ to examine the changes in alternative splicing isoforms. Significant changes in splicing events were defined as when the false discovery rate (FDR) was calculated at less than 0.001. Strengths of the 5' and 3' splice sites were calculated using MaxEntScan ⁶⁰. Branch point strength and PPT length were calculated by svm-bpfinder ⁶¹. To identify enriched motifs, a fasta file containing the sequence information of exons preferentially included in KO cells was analyzed via MEME ¹⁵, with the following parameters: site distribution = any number of repetitions (anr), number of motifs = 6. Exons longer than 4 kb were removed from this analysis to avoid false discovery of repeat sequences. RNA secondary structures were predicted using RNAfold2 RNA-Fold ¹⁸.

Alternative splicing analysis via RT-PCR

Total RNA (100~500 ng) was reverse-transcribed using ReverTra Ace® qPCR RT Master Mix with gDNA Remover (Toyobo, #FSQ-301) according to the manufacturers' instructions. Obtained cDNAs were amplified using GoTaq Green Master Mix (Promega, #M712B) for 20~23 cycles and were analyzed using Bioanalyzer (DNA1000, Agilent). "Skip %" was calculated by dividing the concentration (nmol/l) of the skipped isoform by the overall (skipped and included) isoforms. All the primers used for RT-PCR were listed in Supplemental Table T2.

Western blot analysis

Cells or purified proteins were lysed in 1× Laemmli's SDS sample buffer and separated on 5–20% gradient gel (Funakoshi, #270M) using a standard SDS-PAGE protocol. Proteins were transferred to a PVDF membrane using Trans-Blot Turbo System (BioRad) and detected with ECL-prime (GE Healthcare, #RPN2232) following the manufacturers' instructions. The primary and secondary antibodies used to detect the proteins are indicated in Supplemental Table T2. The chemiluminescence signals were detected using Chemi-Doc touch (Biorad). The polyclonal antibody against SMCHD1 was a kind gift from Takashi Sado ⁶².

Construction of splicing minigene

DNA fragments derived either from *Slc25a40*, *CD55*, mouse *Dmd*, or human *DMD* were inserted into the Sac II site of the Adenovirus Major-late(AdV) minigene ⁶³ using an Infusion HD cloning kit (Takara, #639648). Split minigenes derived from AdV-*Slc25a40* were constructed by inserting

PCR fragments into BamHI and XhoI sites of FLAG-pcDNA3⁶³. FAS minigene was constructed by inserting PCR fragment containing exon 5-7 into BamHI and XhoI sites of pcDNA3 using an Infusion HD cloning kit. *MAPT* minigene was constructed by inserting synthetic DNA fragment containing exon 9-11²⁵ into BamHI and XhoI sites of pcDNA3 using an Infusion HD cloning kit. The sequences were listed in Supplemental Table T2. 293, 293T, or HeLa cells were co-transfected with the splicing minigene and expression vectors using FuGENE HD Transfection Reagents (Promega) following the manufacturer's instructions.

Northern blot analysis

Total RNAs (~0.5 µg) were separated with denaturing PAGE containing 8M Urea. RNAs were then transferred to Hybond-N+ (Sigma, #RPN203B) using semi-dry transfer platform with 300 mA constant current for 40 min. The membrane was cross-linked and hybridized with DIG-labelled DNA or RNA probes in PerfectHyb Plus (Merck, #H7033) at 60°C (RNA probe) or 42°C (DNA probe), following the manufacturer's instructions. After washing in 2× SSC followed by stringent washing in 0.2× SSC, hybridized probes were detected with an alkaline phosphatase-conjugated anti-DIG antibody (Merck, #11093274910) and CDP-Star (Merck, #11685627001) following the manufacturer's instructions. The chemiluminescent signals were detected using ImageQuant 800 (Cytiva).

siRNA knockdown

HEK293 cells were cultured in a 12-well plate and transfected with 50 pmol of each siRNA using Lipofectamine RNAiMAX (Thermo, #13778) according to the manufacturer's instructions. At 72 h post-transfection, total RNA was extracted and subjected to RT-PCR analysis.

RNA pull-down

Biotinylated RNA probes used for the RNA pull-down experiments are indicated in Supplemental Table T2. RNA probes were synthesized by IDT and resuspended in duplex buffer (IDT) at a concentration of 1 mM. Probes of 3 µl were mixed with 7 µl of the duplex buffer, denatured at 94°C for 90 s, and refolded for 2 s at 85°C for 60 cycles. Thirty µl of Dynabeads MyOne Streptavidin T1 (Invitrogen, #65601) were washed twice with PBST (PBS, 0.1% Triton X100), resuspended in 20 µl of PBST, and incubated with the refolded probe for 2 h at 4°C. The probe-

conjugated beads were washed twice with PBST and incubated with nuclear lysates for 3 h at 4°C. To prepare the nuclear lysates, Neuro2A cells ($\sim 1 \times 10^8$) cultured in a 10 cm culture dish were washed twice with HBSS at 4°C and treated with 1 ml of ice-cold CSKT for 5 min. Cell nuclei were collected with a scraper, transferred to 1.5 ml of low-protein bound tube (Sigma-Aldrich, #Z666548-250EA), centrifuged at 700 g for 1 min, and washed once with CSKT. The nuclei pellets were re-suspended in 1 ml of binding buffer (PBST, 1 mM DTT, 1× protease inhibitor), and sonicated 5 times for 5 s, with 10-s intervals at 4°C using Handy Sonic (TOMY, #UR-21P). The lysates were centrifuged at 12,000 g for 10 min, and supernatants were transferred to a new tube. The lysates were pre-cleared with 30 µl of Dynabeads MyOne Streptavidin T1 and 100 µl of Streptavidin-conjugated Sepharose (Merck, #17-5113-01) for 2 h at 4°C. Cleared lysates were mixed with the probe-conjugated beads after the addition of 5 µl RNase inhibitor (Takara, #2313A). Purified proteins on beads were then washed once with PBST with a protease inhibitor and 1 mM DTT as well as twice with PBST and 1 mM DTT prior to western blotting. For some experiments, beads were washed with PBST containing 1M NaCl. To prepare samples for LC-MS analyses, beads were further washed twice with PBS with 1 mM DTT.

CLIP analysis

HEK293 cells were washed twice with ice-cold PBS and immediately irradiated with 254 nm UV-light (Funakoshi, #FS-1500) at 120 mJ/cm² and a distance of ~5 cm. The cells were suspended with 200 µl of SDS buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl [pH 8.0], 1 mM EDTA, 150 mM NaCl, 1 mM DTT, 1% SDS, 1% Triton X-100) and sonicated (QSONICA, #Q125) at 20% amplitude for 5 s three times, with a 30-s incubation on ice between bursts, followed by the addition of 800 µl of dilution buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl [pH 8.0], 1 mM EDTA, 150 mM NaCl, 1 mM DTT, 1% Triton X-100, supplemented with 1× protease inhibitor cocktail (Merck, #P8340) and RNase inhibitor (Takara, #2313). Cells were then centrifuged at 13,500 rpm for 20 min at 4°C. For immunoprecipitation, 15 µl of anti-FLAG M2-Agarose beads (Merck, #A2220) were added to the extract and incubated for 2 h at 4°C with continuous rotation. The beads were washed six times with wash buffer (20 mM Tris-HCl [pH 8.0] 1 mM EDTA, 150 mM NaCl, 1 mM DTT, 0.1% SDS, 1% Triton X-100). The beads were suspended in Homomix (50 mM Tris-HCl [pH 7.4], 5 mM EDTA, 1.5% SDS, 300 mM NaCl, 1.5 mg/ml proteinase K) at 50°C for 60 min and subjected to subsequent northern blot analyses.

LC-MS analysis

The affinity-purified proteins were reduced with 1 mM dithiothreitol for 90 min, alkylated with 5.5 mM iodoacetamide for 30 min, and digested with trypsin overnight at 37°C. The fragmented peptides were then desalted using ZipTip C18 (Millipore) and centrifuged in a vacuum concentrator. Shotgun proteomic analyses were performed on an Orbitrap Eclipse Tribrid mass spectrometer with FAIMS Pro interface (Thermo Fisher Scientific), which was connected to Ultimate 3000 RSLCnano pump (Thermo Fisher Scientific). The peptide samples were separated using a linear gradient of 2–24% mobile phase (0.1% formic acid in acetonitrile) at 300 nl/min. Full-scan MS spectra were acquired at an automatic gain control (AGC) target value of 4×10^5 with a resolution of 120,000. Subsequent MS/MS scans were performed in the ion trap mode using higher energy collision-induced dissociation (HCD) fragmentation with a normalized collision energy of 35% at an AGC target value of 1×10^4 with 10 ms maximum injection time. Protein identification was conducted by searching against the UniProt mouse reference proteome database (UP000000589) using Sequest HT algorithm in Proteome Discoverer Software (version 2.5) (Thermo Fisher Scientific). Cysteine carbamidomethylation was set as a fixed modification, whereas methionine oxidation and protein N-terminal acetylation were set as variable modifications. A maximum of two missed cleavages was allowed in our database search, while the mass tolerance was set to 10 ppm for peptide masses and 0.6 Da for MS/MS peaks, respectively. In the process of peptide identification, we applied a filter to satisfy a false positive rate <1%.

Constructions of MS2CP-tagged RBP expression vectors

To construct the MS2CP fusion protein expression vector (pLVSIN-CMV_Pur_FLAG-MS2CP), the 3xFLAG-MS2CP-(GGGGS)₃ linker fragment from pcDNA5/FRT/TO/i/FLAG/MCP⁴⁹ was inserted into the EcoRI site of pLVSIN-CMV_Pur vector (Takara). To generate FLAG-MS2CP-NONO, FLAG-MS2CP-SFPQ, and FLAG-MS2CP-HNRNPM expression vectors, the human NONO and SFPQ open reading frames were inserted using the XhoI site of pLVSIN-CMV_Pur_FLAG-MS2CP, and the human HNRNPM open reading frame was inserted using the XbaI site of pLVSIN-CMV_Pur_FLAG-MS2CP.

Transfection of Viltolarsen and splicing reporter minigene

Because the splicing reporter minigene and morpholinos oligonucleotides cannot be co-introduced at the same time, they were sequentially transfected. First, HeLa cells were transfected with a mixture of the splicing reporter minigene using FuGENE HD Transfection Reagents (Promega) following the manufacturer's instructions. After 24 hours, the cells were harvested and electroporated with Viltolarsen using Nucleofector. 5.0×10^5 HeLa cells were suspended in 100 μ l Opti-MEM containing 1 μ M, 2 μ M, or 10 μ M of Viltolarsen, and electroporation was performed using Nucleofector $\square$ device with program I-013.

QUANTIFICATION AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Error bars presented in the figures represent standard deviations derived from biological replicates. The specific number of replicates (duplicates or triplicates) for each experiment is detailed in the corresponding figure legends. For statistical evaluations, we performed Welch's t-tests and applied Bonferroni correction to adjust for multiple comparisons where applicable.

Key resources table

REAGENT or RESOURCE	SOURCE	IDENTIFIER
Antibodies		
Mouse monoclonal antibody to Nono	A kind gift from A. Fox	PMID: 20881053
Mouse monoclonal antibody to Sfpq	Abcam	#ab11825
Mouse monoclonal antibody to Hnrnp	Santa Cruz	#sc-134360
Mouse monoclonal antibody to Srsf1	Invitrogen	#32-4600
Mouse monoclonal antibody to FLAG	FUJI FILM	#014-22383
Mouse monoclonal antibody to Nanog	Reprocell	#14-5761-80
Rabbit polyclonal antibody to Smchd1	A kind gift from T. Sado	PMID: 30126901
Rabbit polyclonal antibody to Smg6	Abcam	#ab87539
Mouse monoclonal antibody to hnRNP-C1/C2	Merck	#R5028
Mouse monoclonal antibody to Anti-alpha Tubulin	Abcam	#ab11304
Bacterial and virus strains		
Lentivirus expressing 4.5SH RNA	This study	NA
Biological samples		
Mouse embryos from 4.5SH KO mouse	This study	maintained under C57BL6/N background
Chemicals, peptides, and recombinant proteins		
medetomidine	ZENOAQ	NA
midazolam	SANDOZ	NA
butorphanol	MEIJI	NA
Proteinase K	Thermo Scientific Fisher	#25530-015
Hybond®-N+ hybridization membranes	MERCK	GERPN203B
PerfectHyb Plus	MERCK	#H7033
DIG easy Hyb	MERCK	#11603558001
alkaline phosphatase-conjugated anti-DIG antibody	MERCK	#11093274910
CDP-Star	MERCK	#11685627001
CARD KSOM	KYUDO	NA
KnockOut™ Serum Replacement	Thermo Scientific Fisher	#10828010
GMEM	MERCK	#G5154
D-MEM / Ham's F-12	FUJI FILM	048-29785
ReverTra Ace	TOYOBO	#TRT-101
Protease Inhibitor Cocktail	NACALAI	#03969-21
Triton-X100	NACALAI	#9002-93-1
Tween-20	NACALAI	#9005-64-5

Trozol	Thermo Scientific	Fisher	#15596026
Trizol-LS	Thermo Scientific	Fisher	#10296010
Dynabeads MyOne Streptoavidin T1	Thermo Scientific	Fisher	#65601
RNase inhibitor	TAKARA		#2313A
DTT	NACALAI		#14128-91
anti-FLAG M2-Agarose beads	MERCK		#A2220
Critical commercial assays			
THUNDERBIRD Next SYBR qPCR Mix	TOYOBO		#QPX-201
TruSeq Stranded Total RNA Library Prep Gold	ILLUMINA		#20020598
ReverTra Ace® qPCR RT Master Mix with gDNA Remover	TOYOBO		#FSQ-301
GoTaq Green Master Mix	PROMEGA		#M712B
DNA1000 Kit	Agilent		NA
ECL-prime	GE Healthcare		#RPN2232
Deposited data			
RNA-Seq data for ES cells derived from WT and 4.5SH KO mice	This study		PRJDB13752
Original images	This study, Mendeley Data		10.17632/265cd268pz.1
Experimental models: Cell lines			
HEK293	ATCC		CRL-1573
NIH3T3	ATCC		CRL-1658
ES cells derived from WT embryos	This study		ES cells derived from WT embryos
ES cells derived from 4.5SH KO mice	This study		ES cells derived from 4.5SH KO mice
Neuro2A	ATCC		CCL-131
Experimental models: Organisms/strains			
Mouse embryos from 4.5SH KO mouse	This study		maintained under C57BL6/N background
Oligonucleotides			
Primers for qRT-PCR and vector constructions, as well as probes for RNA-FISH, see Supplemental Table T2	This study		NA
Recombinant DNA			

Software and algorithms		
HISAT2	http://daehwankimlab.github.io/hisat2/	v.2.2.1
Stringtie	https://ccb.jhu.edu/software/stringtie/	v2.1.7
rMATS	https://rnaseq-mats.sourceforge.net	v4.4.1
svm-bpfinder	https://github.com/ComputationalRNABiology/svm-bpfinder	NA
MaxEntScan	http://hollywood.mit.edu/burgelab/maxent/download/	NA
MEME	https://meme-suite.org/meme/	V5.4.1
RNAfold2	https://anaconda.org/bioconda/viennarna	V2.5.1
Other		

Supplemental table S1 rMATS output and annotation of the exons enriched in *4.5SH* KO ES cells (related to Figure 2)

Supplemental table S2 Primers and antibodies used in this study (related to STAR methods)

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Figure 1

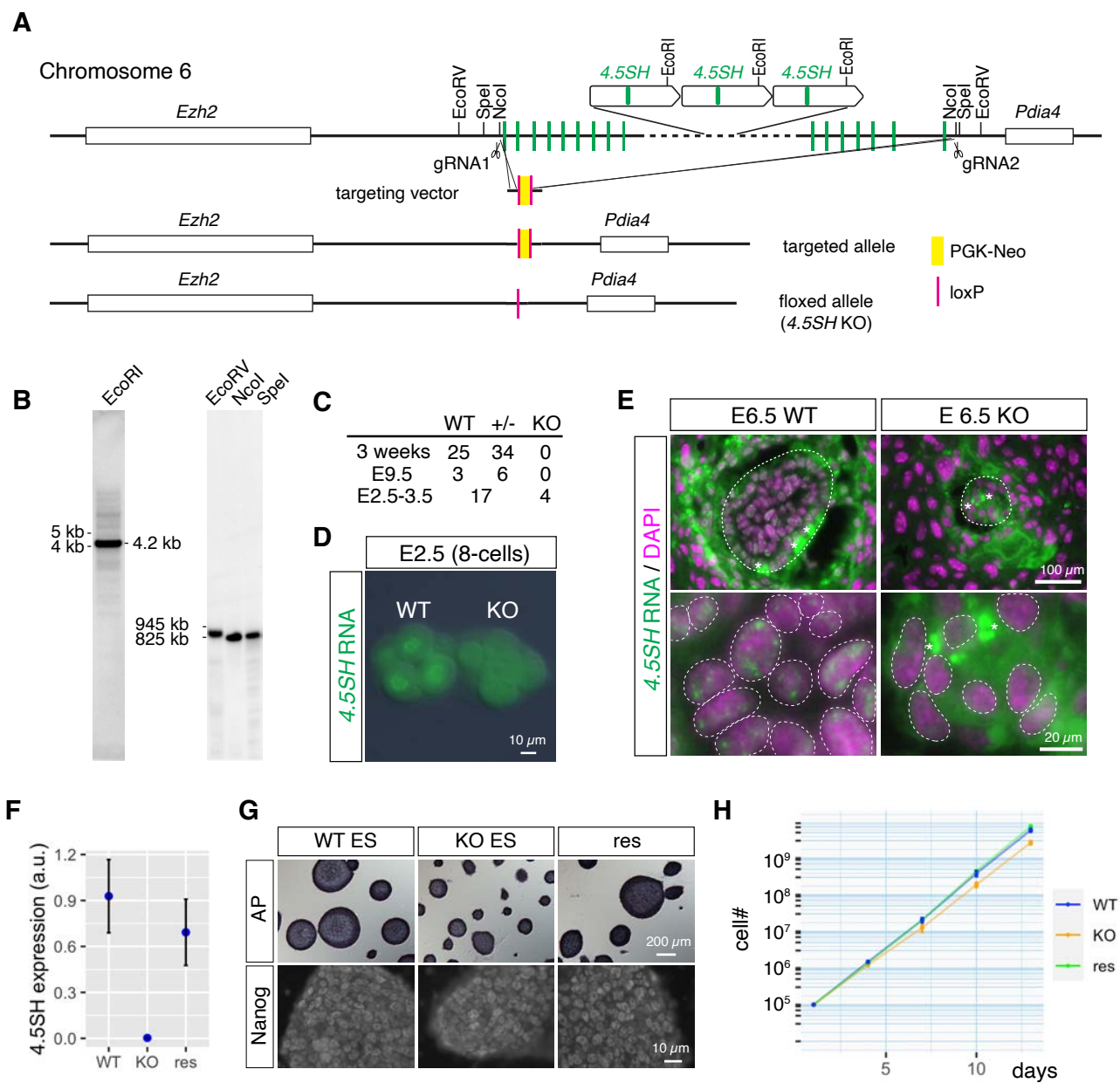


Figure 2

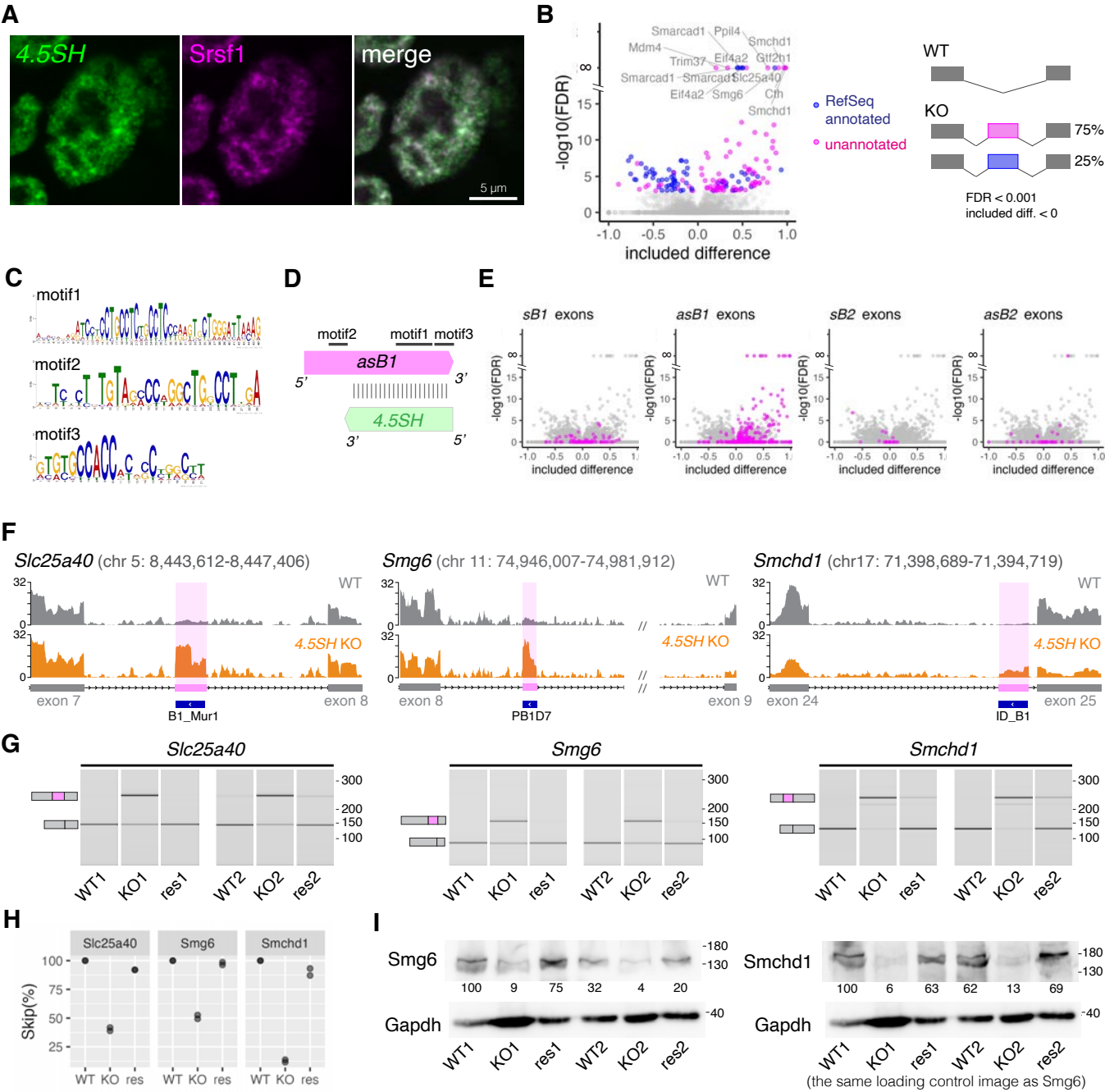


Figure 3

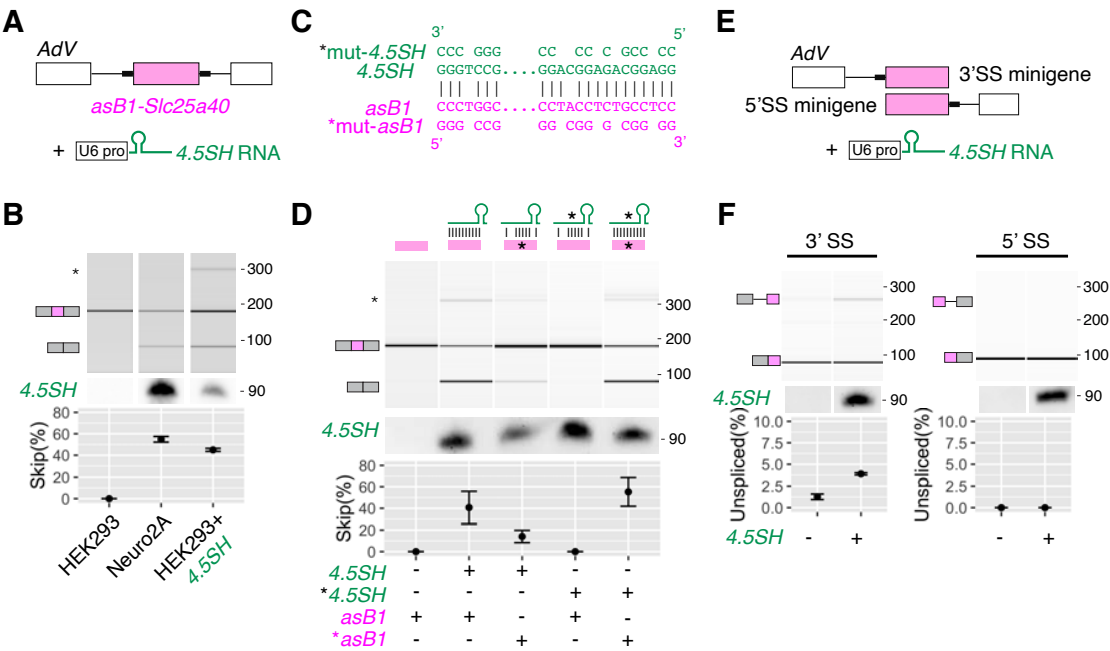


Figure 4

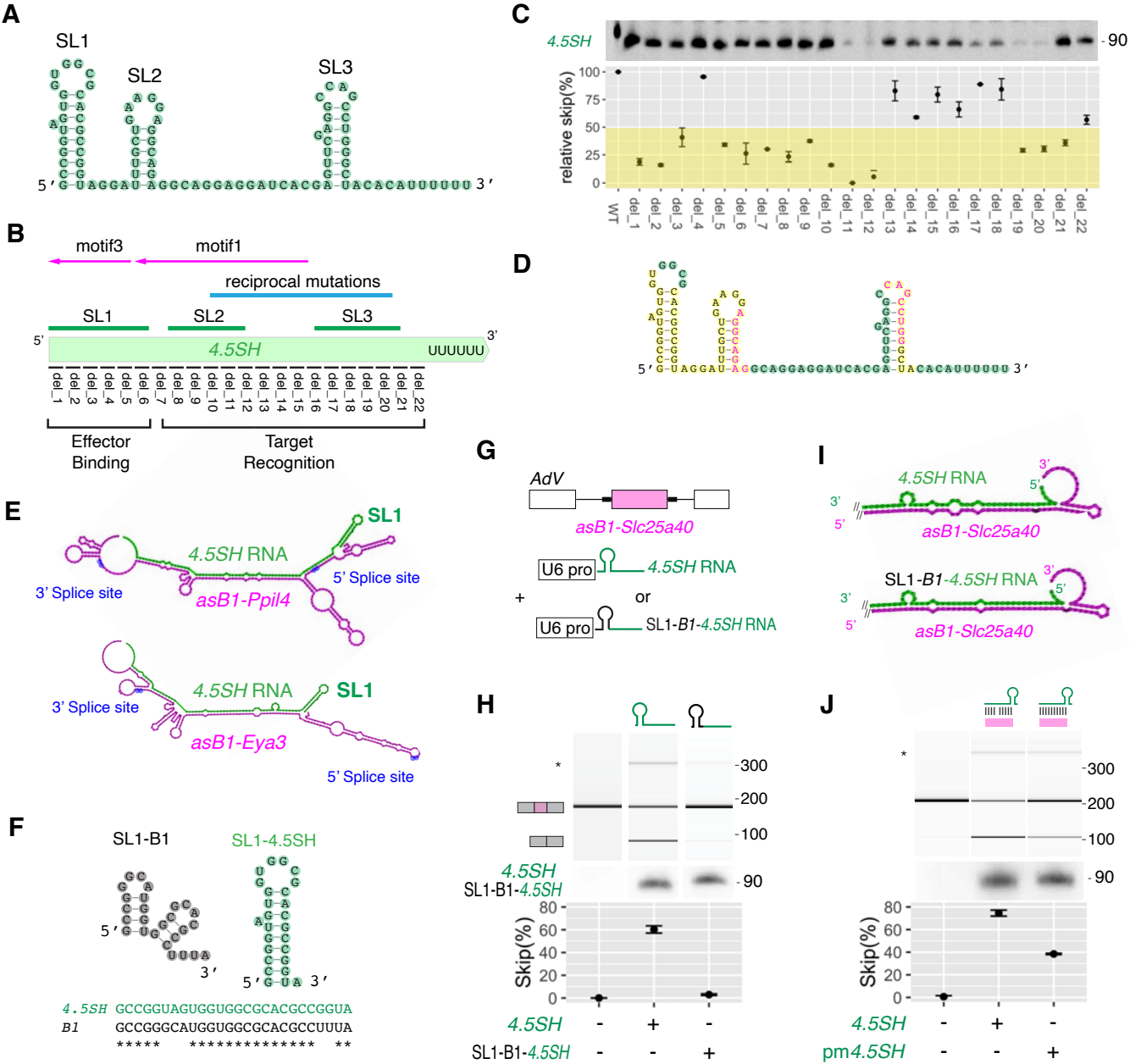


Figure 5

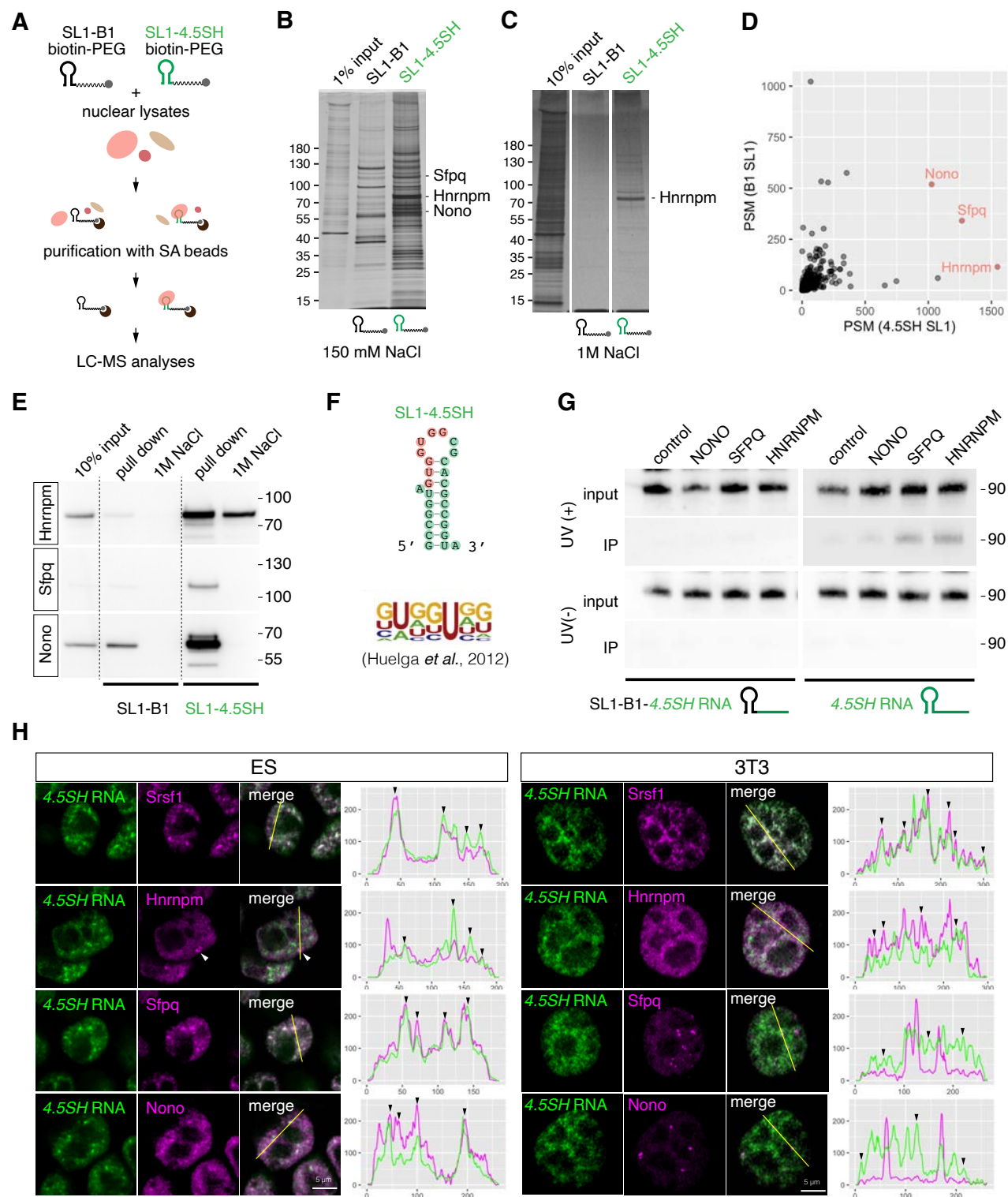


Figure 6
Yoshimoto et al. Figure 6

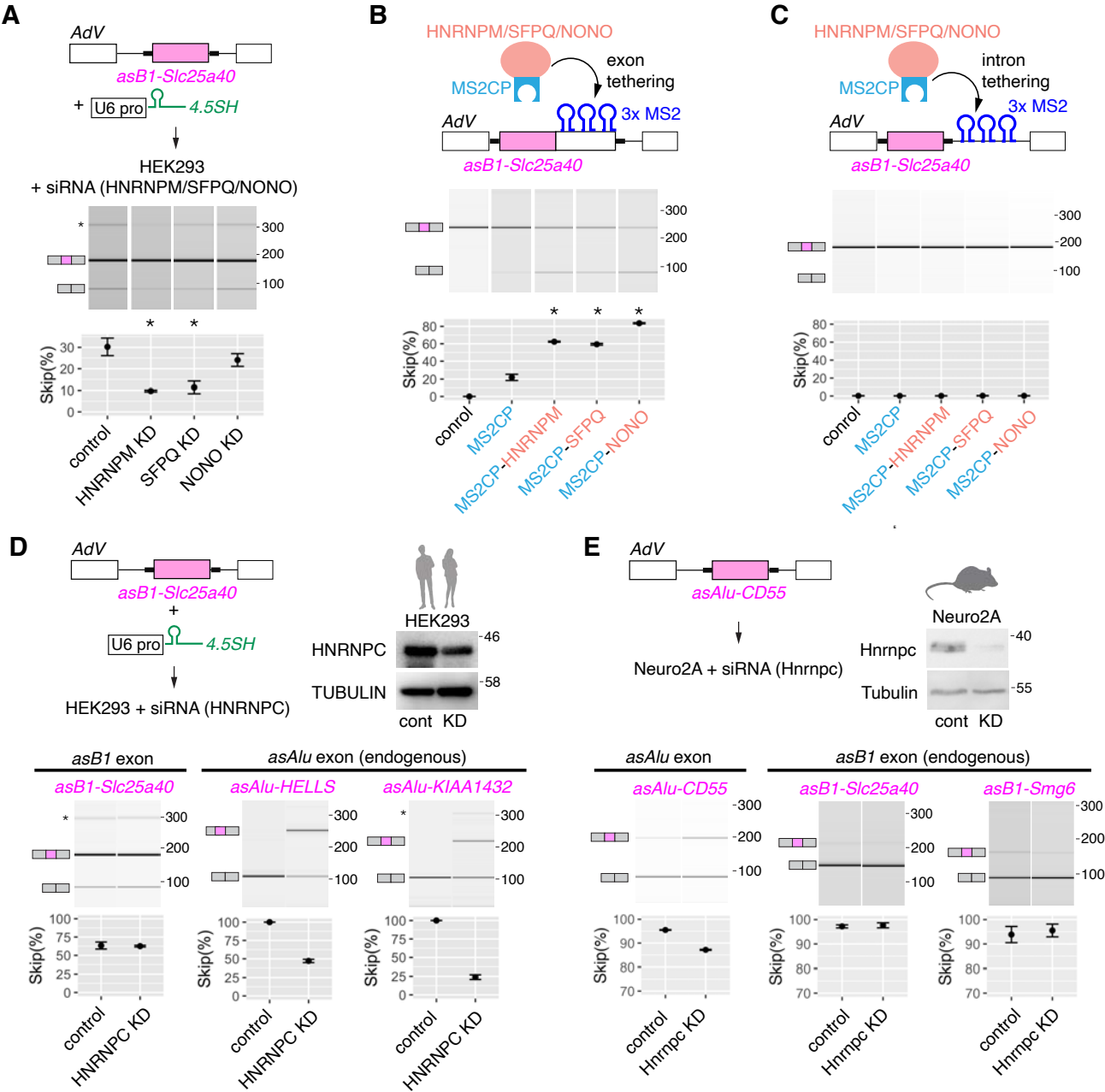
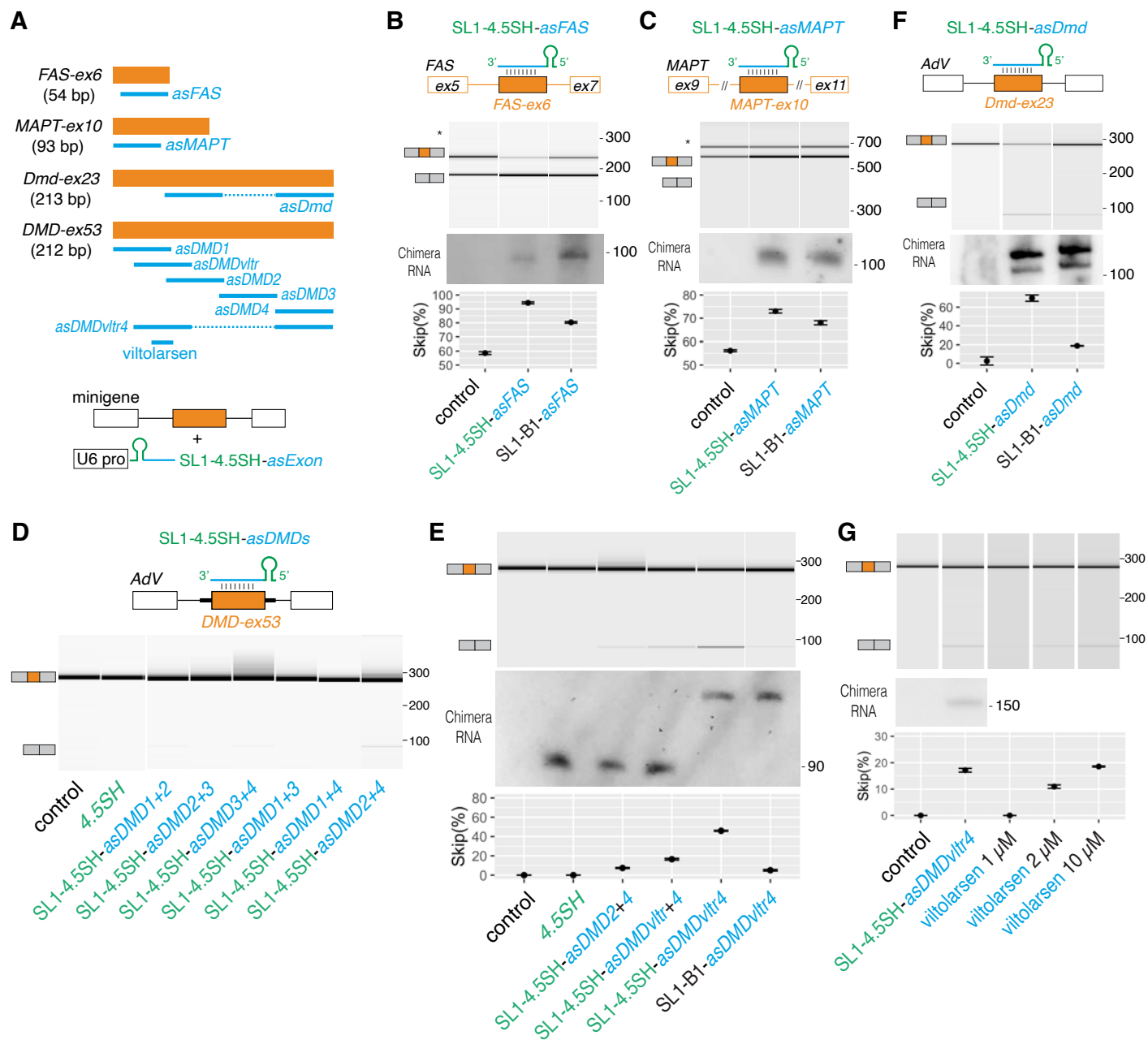
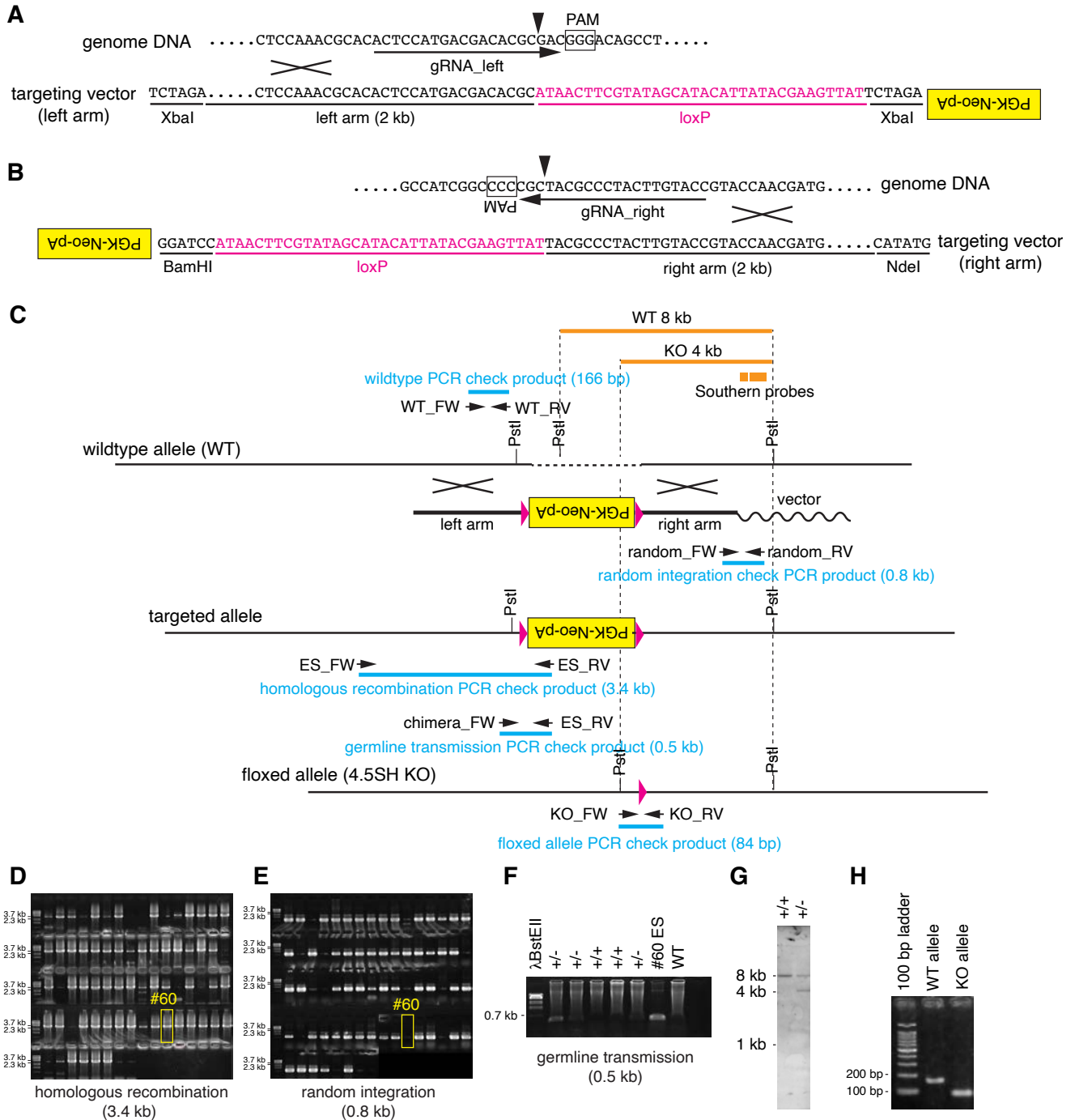


Figure 7
Yoshimoto et al. Figure 7

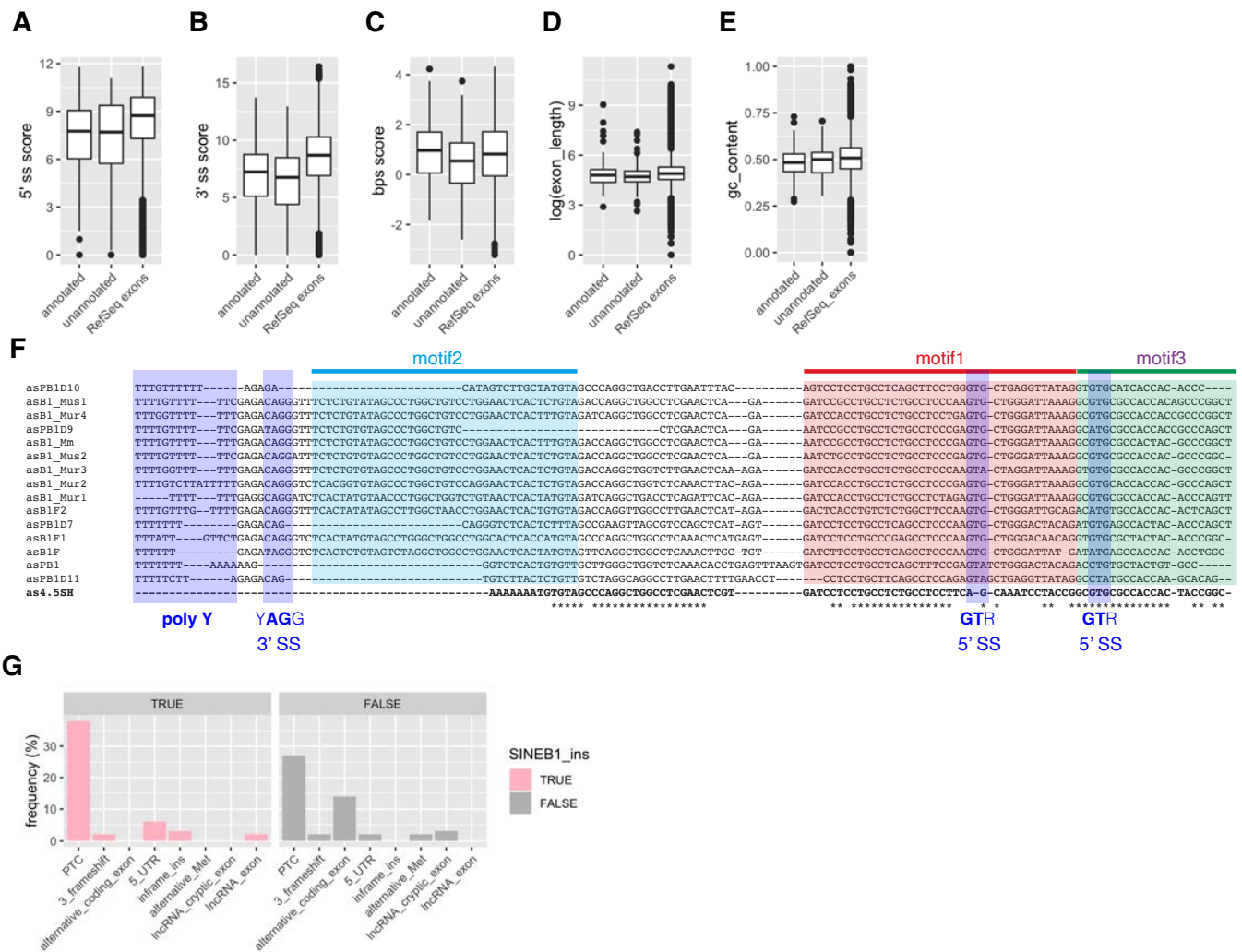


Supplemental Text and Figures



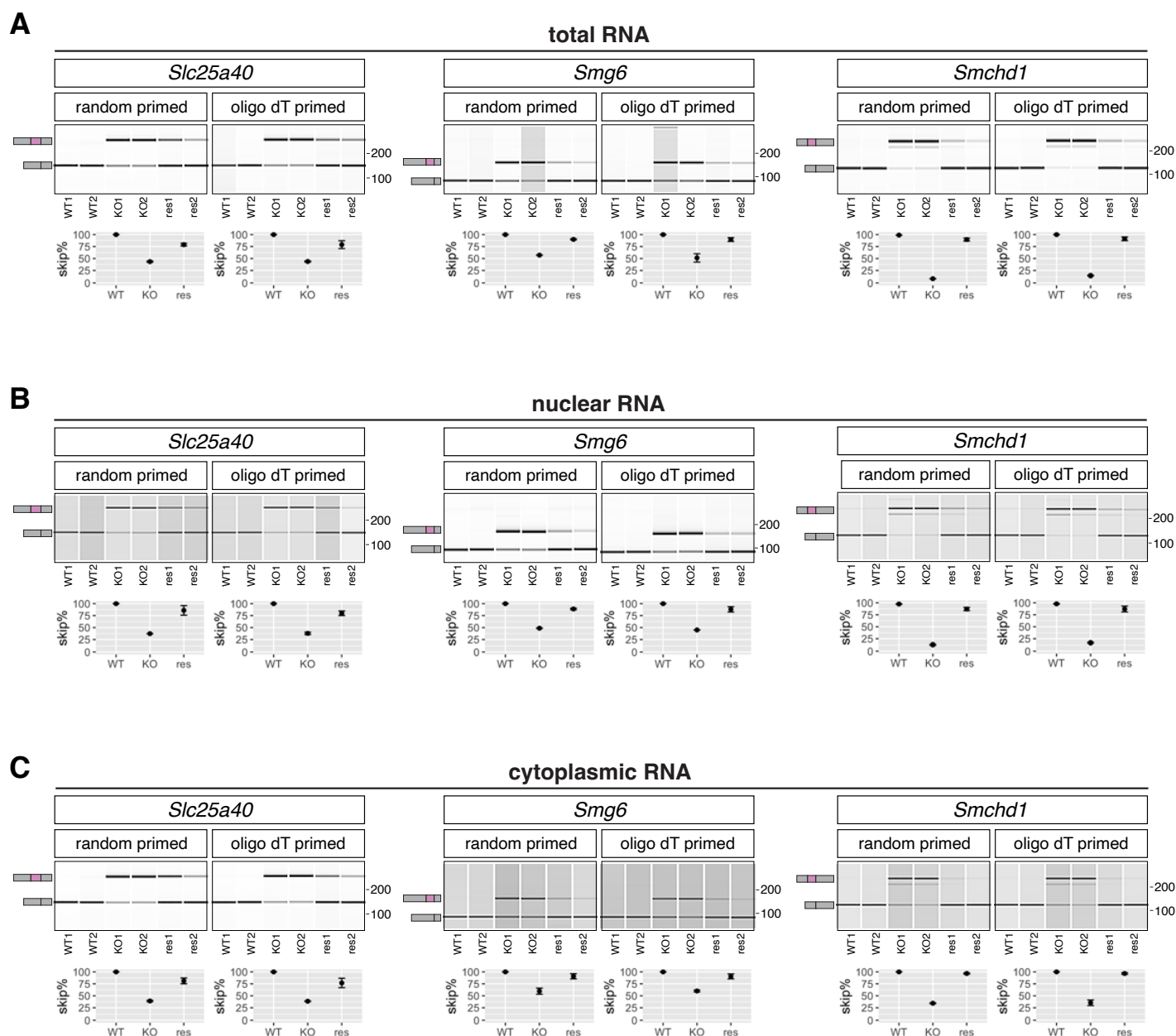
Supplemental figure S1. Generation of 4.5SH knockout mice (related to Figure 1)

(A, B) Sequences of the targeting vector at the vicinity of the junction between the left (A) and right (B) homologous arm and the loxP/PGK-Neo-pA cassette. The arrow and box indicate the sequence of the gRNA and the PAM sequences, respectively. The arrowhead indicates the putative cleavage site of Cas9. (C) A schematic of the targeting strategies and positions of the primers and probes used to validate the homologous recombination of targeted ES cells. (D) Validation of the homologous recombination using primers shown in D (ES_FW and ES_RV). 3.4 kb bands were observed in 87.5% of the ES clones. (E) Validation of random integration using primers shown in D (random_FW and random_RV). (F) Validation of germ line transmission using primers shown in C (chimera_FW and chimera_RV). (G) Southern blot analyses of genomic DNA obtained from wild-type (+/+) and heterozygous (-/-) animals. The bands were observed at the expected size. (H) A gel image of PCR products amplified by the genotyping primers shown in C (WT_FW and WT_RV, KO_FW and KO_RV).



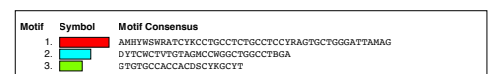
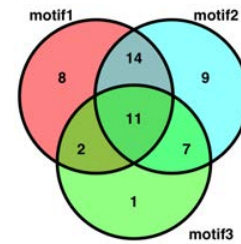
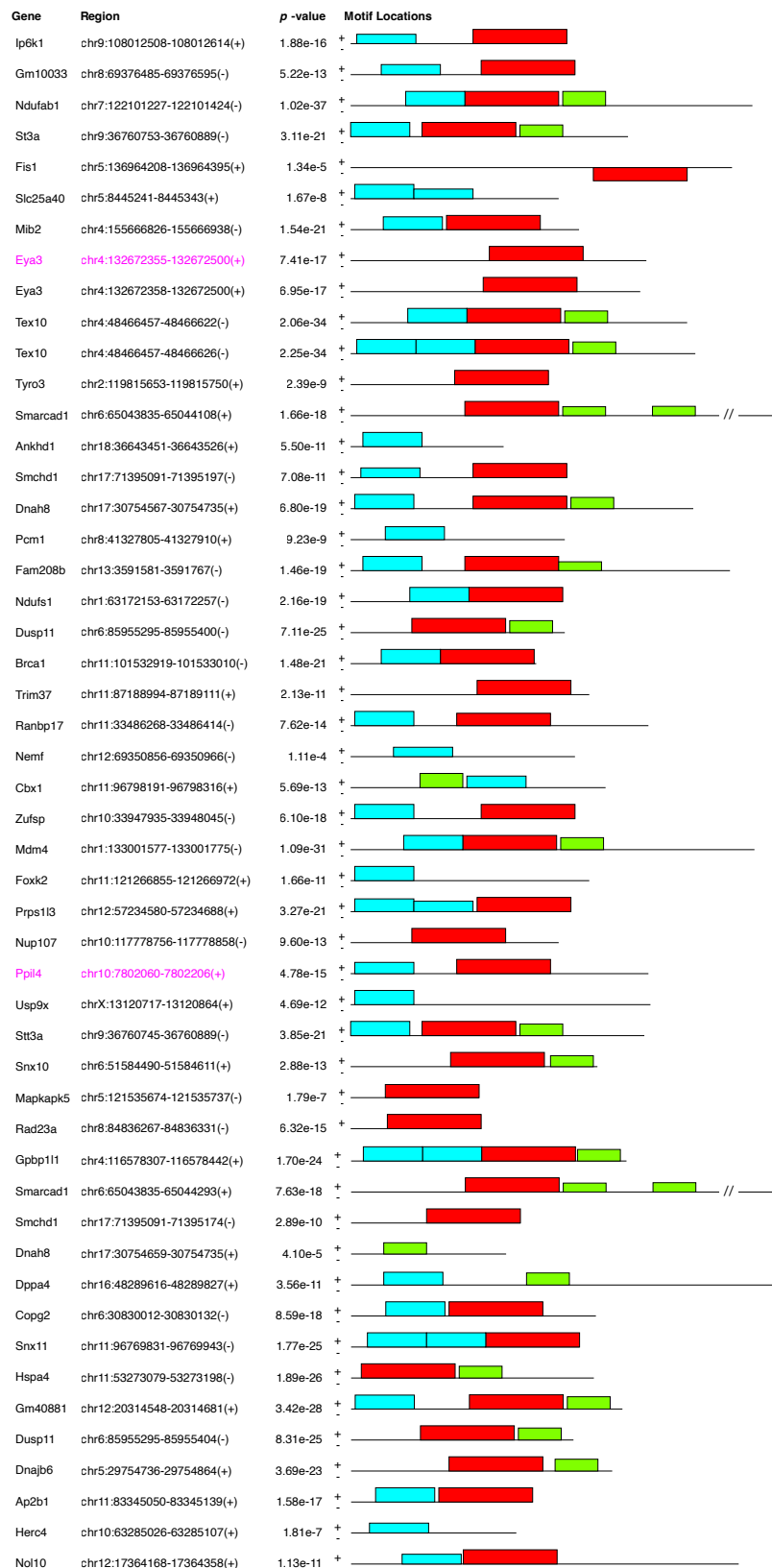
Supplemental figure S2. Characteristics of exons preferentially included in 4.5SH KO ES cell (related to Figure 2)

(A-E) 5' (A) and 3' (B) splice site strength calculated with Maxentscan, branch point strength (bps) calculated with svm-bpfinder (C), lengths (D), and GC content (E) of RefSeq annotated KO-enriched exons (annotated), RefSeq-unannotated KO-enriched exons (unannotated), and RefSeq exons. (F) Multiple sequence alignment of *SINE B1* antisense sequences and that of 4.5SH (*as4.5SH*). Motifs shown in Figure 2F are indicated in red (motif1), cyan (motif2), and purple (motif4) lines and boxes. Asterisks indicate residues conserved between *as4.5SH* and *asB1*. Regions of splicing consensus sequences are shown in blue boxes. Optimal consensus sequences for the 5' and the 3' splice sites (SS) are shown in blue characters, and nucleotides in bold represent sequences conserved in the antisense sequences of the representative *SINE B1*, *asB1_Mm*. (G) Frequencies of exons enriched in 4.5SH KO cells, by the presence (TRUE: pink) or absence (FALSE: gray) of *SINE B1* insertions: premature stop codon (PTC)-containing exons, frameshift mutation-causing exons (3_frameshift), RefSeq-annotated alternatively spliced coding exons (alternative_coding_exon), 5' untranslated region-inserted exons (5_UTR), in-frame insertion-encoding exons (inframe_ins), alternative methionine-encoding exons (alternative_Met), cryptic lncRNA exons (lncRNA_cryptic_exon), and RefSeq-annotated lncRNA exons (lncRNA_exon). Note that most *SINE B1*-containing exons contained premature stop codons.

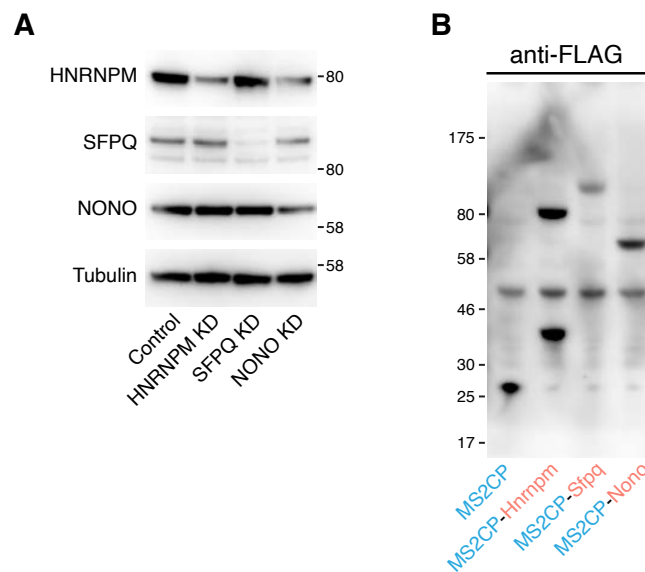


Supplemental figure S3. Confirmation of the inclusions of *asB1*-containing exons of representative genes in the 4.5SH-KO ES cells by RT-PCR (related to Figure 2)

(A-C) The inclusion of *asB1*-containing exons from *Slc25a40*, *Smg6*, and *Smchd1* was examined using RT-PCR on RNAs derived from total (A), nuclear (B), and cytoplasmic (C) fractions. These RNAs were reverse-transcribed using either oligo-dT or random primers. The appearance of *asB1*-containing products was specifically observed in 4.5SH KO ES cells as seen in the gel-like visualization of capillary electrophoresis of RT-PCR products from two independent set of WT, KO, and rescued (res) ES cells. The gel-like images, sourced from exported TIFF files ranging between 50 bp and 300 bp, were resized to uniformity in Photoshop, with constant image contrast maintained.



(A) MEME output showing the positions of motif1 (red), motif2 (cyan), and motif3 (purple) in *asB1*-containing exons preferentially included in 4.5SH KO ES cells. (B) Venn diagram showing the number of exons shared between the MEME-identified motifs.



Supplemental figure S6. Verification of the protein expression during knockdown and tethering experiments (related to Figure 6)

(A) Western blot analyses of the expression of HNRNPM, SFPQ, and NONO upon knockdown in the HEK293 cells used in Figure 6A. (B) Western blot analyses of the expression of proteins fused to the FLAG-tagged MS2 coat protein (MS2CP) in cells from Figure 6B and C. The asterisk shows non-specific bands detected by the anti-FLAG antibody, and the arrowhead indicates a short uncharacterized product of Hnmpm.

Extended Data Table 1: rMATS output and annotation of the exons enriched in 4.5SH KO ES cells

[illegible]

