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Epigenetics Research: Open Access

Opinion Article

The Intriguing Action of Noncoding RNA Molecules

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DESCRIPTION

In the past, the role of RNA was thought to be only that of a messenger between DNA and proteins. However, recent studies have shown that RNA molecules can also perform other vital functions in the cell, including regulating gene expression. Among these RNA molecules are noncoding RNAs (ncRNAs) that do not code for proteins, but instead carry out a variety of essential cellular processes.

Noncoding RNAs are a diverse group of RNA molecules that can be classified based on their size, structure, and function. Some of the well-known types of ncRNAs include microRNAs (miRNAs), long noncoding RNAs (lncRNAs), and small nucleolar RNAs (snoRNAs). These RNA molecules have been shown to play important roles in processes such as transcriptional regulation, RNA processing, and translation.

One of the well-studied types of noncoding RNA is miRNA. These small RNA molecules, typically around 22 nucleotides in length, are involved in the regulation of gene expression by binding to the messenger RNA (mRNA) molecules that code for specific proteins. Once bound, the miRNA can either inhibit the translation of the mRNA into protein or cause its degradation. Through this mechanism, miRNAs can regulate the expression of multiple genes at once, making them key players in many cellular processes.

LncRNAs, on the other hand, are larger RNA molecules, typically more than 200 nucleotides in length that have been shown to play diverse roles in the regulation of gene expression. Some lncRNAs act as scaffolds that bring together different proteins involved in gene regulation, while others can act as decoys, binding to regulatory proteins and preventing them from binding to their target genes. Additionally, some lncRNAs can directly bind to chromatin and affect the accessibility of specific genes to the transcriptional machinery. SnoRNAs, yet another type of noncoding RNA, are involved in the processing of other RNA molecules.

These small RNA molecules guide the modification of ribosomal RNA (rRNA) and transfer RNA (tRNA), which are essential components of the cellular machinery that synthesizes proteins. By modifying these RNA molecules, snoRNAs ensure that they are correctly processed and functional.

In addition to these well-studied types of noncoding RNAs, there are also many others less well-characterized ncRNAs that are thought to play important roles in the regulation of gene expression. For example, circular RNAs (circRNAs) are a recently discovered class of ncRNAs that have been shown to act as sponges, binding to miRNAs and preventing them from binding to their target mRNAs. Additionally, some pseudogenes, which are non-functional copies of genes that have been duplicated and mutated over time, have been shown to produce lncRNAs that regulate the expression of other genes. Overall, the diverse roles of noncoding RNAs in the regulation of gene expression are still being uncovered. For example, dysregulation of miRNAs has been implicated in many diseases, including cancer, while lncRNAs have been shown to play a role in processes such as aging and neurodegeneration

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, noncoding RNAs are an intriguing class of RNA molecules that are involved in a diverse array of cellular processes. These RNA molecules play important roles in the regulation of gene expression and have important implications for disease. As research into these molecules continues, it is likely that we will uncover even more functions and potential therapeutic targets for this fascinating class of RNA. However, it is clear that these RNA molecules play a vital role in many cellular processes and have important implications for disease.

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Received: 01-Mar-2022, Manuscript No. EROA-22-23555; **Editor assigned:** 03-Mar-2022, PreQC No. EROA-22-23555 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 17-Mar-2022, QC No. EROA-22-23555; **Revised:** 24-Mar-2022, Manuscript No. EROA-22-23555 (R); **Published:** 31-Mar-2022, DOI: 10.35248/EROA. 22.4.107.

Citation: Lima LG (2022) The Intriguing Action of Noncoding RNA Molecules. J Epigenetics Res. 4:107.