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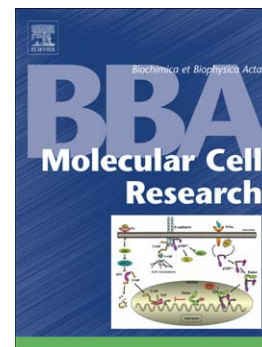
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How does α -actinin-3 deficiency alter muscle function? Mechanistic insights into *ACTN3*, the ‘gene for speed’.

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Abstract

An estimated 1.5 billion people worldwide are deficient in the skeletal muscle protein α -actinin-3 due to homozygosity for the common *ACTN3* R577X polymorphism. α -Actinin-3 deficiency influences muscle performance in elite athletes and the general population. The sarcomeric α -actinins were originally characterised as scaffold proteins at the muscle Z-line. Through studying the *Actn3* knockout mouse and α -actinin-3 deficient humans, significant progress has been made in understanding how *ACTN3* genotype alters muscle function, leading to an appreciation of the diverse roles that α -actinins play in muscle. The α -actinins interact with a number of partner proteins, which broadly fall into three biological pathways – structural, metabolic and signalling. Differences in functioning of these pathways have been identified in α -actinin-3 deficient muscle that together contributes to altered muscle

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