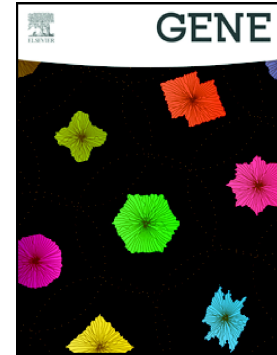


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Molecular characterization of a novel ovodefensin gene in chickens

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Abstract

Host defense peptides (HDPs) represent a large group of diverse small peptides that play important roles in host defense and disease resistance. In vertebrates, one of the main types of HDPs belong to defensins, which are less than 100 amino acid residues and characterized by a highly conserved motif of cysteine residues. Recently, a subfamily of defensins, namely ovodefensins (OvoDs), have been identified in birds and reptiles. However, both their family members and evolutionary relationships remain unclear. In the present study, we cloned and characterized a novel gene namely *OvoDB β* in chickens. Our results showed that the full length of chicken *OvoDB β* mRNA contains 344 bp nucleotides and encodes a 61-amino acid protein. We further revealed that the mRNA of *OvoDB β* is abundant in the oviduct of laying hens but

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