

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The ETS-transcription factor Pointed is sufficient to regulate the posterior fate of the follicular epithelium

Fig. 1A,B.

Cody A. Stevens¹, Nicole T. Revaitis¹, Rumkan Caur² and Nir Yakoby^{1,2,*}

ABSTRACT

The Janus-kinase/signal transducer and activator of transcription (JAK/ STAT) pathway regulates the anterior posterior axis of the *Drosophila* follicle cells. In the anterior, it activates the bone morphogenetic protein (BMP) signaling pathway through expression of the BMP ligand decapentaplegic (dpp). In the posterior, JAK/STAT works with the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) pathway to express the T-box transcription factor midline (mid). Although MID is necessary for establishing the posterior fate of the egg chamber, we show that it is not sufficient to determine a posterior fate. The ETS-transcription factor pointed (pnt) is expressed in an overlapping domain to mid in the follicle cells. This study shows that pnt is upstream of mid and that it is sufficient to induce a posterior fate in the anterior end, which is characterized by the induction of mid, the prevention of the stretched cells formation and the abrogation of border cell migration. We demonstrate that the anterior BMP signaling is abolished by PNT through dpp repression. However, ectopic DPP cannot rescue the anterior fate formation, suggesting additional targets of PNT participate in the posterior fate determination.

KEY WORDS: EGFR signaling, Anterior-posterior axis coordination, ETS-transcription factor, Cell morphogenesis

INTRODUCTION

Animal development is an intricate process that is spatiotemporally coordinated by several cell signaling pathways that control cellular proliferation, migration and differentiation (Davidson and Erwin, 2006; Housden and Perrimon, 2014; Levine, 2010; Levine and Tjian, 2003). During development, body axes formation evolved in animals through different strategies (Genikhovich and Technau, 2017). In Drosophila melanogaster, formation of axes occurs during oogenesis, before egg fertilization (Lynch and Roth, 2011; Moussian and Roth, 2005). Numerous pathways are spatiotemporally coordinated to set the body axes in flies (Deng and Bownes, 1997; Fregoso Lomas et al., 2016; Gonzalez-Reyes and St Johnston, 1998; Moussian and Roth, 2005; Neuman-Silberberg and Schüpbach, 1993; Neuman-Silberberg and Schupbach, 1994; Nilson and Schüpbach, 1998; Twombly et al., 1996; Xi et al., 2003). However, the targets of these pathways that regulate the fates of these axes are still not well understood (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2013).

NJ, Camden, NJ 08102, USA. ²Department of Biology, Rutgers, The State University of NJ, Camden, NJ 08102, USA.

*Author for correspondence (yakoby@camden.rutgers.edu)

D N.Y., 0000-0002-7959-7588

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¹Center for Computational and Integrative Biology, Rutgers, The State University of

The follicle cells, a layer of follicular epithelium surrounding the developing oocyte, are dynamically patterned along the anteriorposterior axis (Bastock and St Johnston, 2008; Berg, 2005; Hinton, 1969; Horne-Badovinac and Bilder, 2005; Ward and Berg, 2005; Yakoby et al., 2008a). Early activation of the Janus-kinase/signal transducer and activator of transcription (JAK/STAT) pathway by the secretion of the ligand Unpaired (UPD) from the polar cells sets a mirror symmetry of two ends and main-body fates of the follicle cells (Fig. 1A) (Gonzalez-Reyes and St Johnston, 1998; Xi et al., 2003). The posterior fate is set by the secretion of the TGF- α -like ligand Gurken (GRK) from around the oocyte nucleus and activation of the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) pathway in the overlaying follicle cells (Gonzalez-Reyes and St Johnston, 1998; Neuman-Silberberg and Schüpbach, 1993; Ray and Schupbach, 1996; Revaitis et al., 2020; Sapir et al., 1998). The anterior end is established by activating the bone morphogenetic protein (BMP) pathway by its ligand Decapentaplegic (DPP), which is induced by the JAK/STAT signaling (Deng and Bownes, 1997; Peri and Roth, 2000; Twombly et al., 1996; Xi et al., 2003; Yakoby et al., 2008b). The anterior and posterior domains are shown in

The sufficiency of EGFR activation to establish the border between the dorsal-anterior and the main-body follicle cells was initially computationally predicted (Zartman et al., 2011). The Nilson lab found that the EGFR target midline (mid), the Drosophila homolog of Tbx20, sets this boundary (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2013). MID acts to inhibit broad (br), a transcription factor gene that marks the primordia of the future respiratory dorsal appendages on the mature eggshell (Cheung et al., 2013; Deng and Bownes, 1997; Fregoso Lomas et al., 2013; Fuchs et al., 2012; Pyrowolakis et al., 2017; Tzolovsky et al., 1999). Further investigation showed that the JAK/STAT pathway, together with EGFR, induce *midline* expression by the inhibition of the main body fate determinant mirror (MIRR) (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2016; Jordan et al., 2000; Xi et al., 2003). The main body follicle cells are shown in Fig. 1A,B.

The ETS-transcription factor pointed-P1 (pnt-P1) is expressed dynamically in the follicle cells; in the posterior end during early oogenesis at stage 6 (S6) (the domain is shown in Fig. 1A,B) and later at S10 in the dorsal midline (the domain is shown in Fig. 1C) (Morimoto et al., 1996; Yakoby et al., 2008a). In the dorsal midline, PNT-P1 sets the distance between the two dorsal appendage primordia (Boisclair-Lachance et al., 2009; Deng and Bownes, 1997; Morimoto et al., 1996; Zartman et al., 2009). However, the role of early posterior expression of PNT-P1 is still unknown. Here, we show a new hierarchy in the regulation of the posterior end during early oogenesis. The expression of midline is regulated by PNT-P1. Ectopic expression of pnt-P1, but not mid, is sufficient to repress the early anterior BMP signaling and all associated morphological changes in the anterior domain, which resembles the behavior of cells in the posterior end. Together, we conclude that

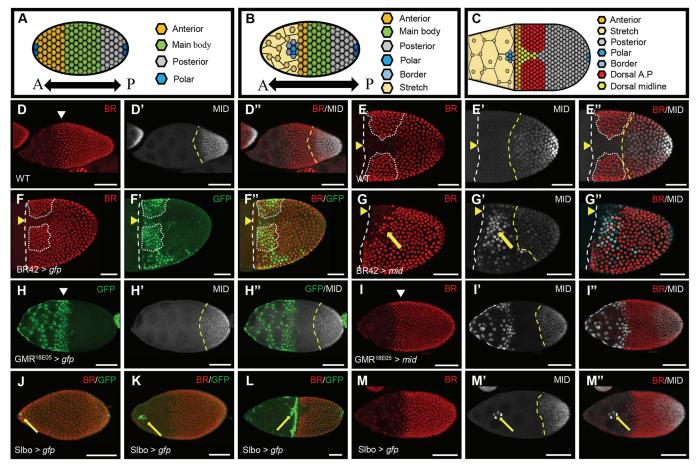


Fig. 1. The *midline* gene is necessary but not sufficient for posterior fate determination. (A-C) Cartoon representation of egg chambers at stage 8 (S8) (A), S9 (B) and S10 (C). The different domains are color coded: anterior domain, main body follicle cells, posterior domain, polar cells, border cells, stretch cells, dorsal A.P (appendage primordia) and dorsal midline. (D-E") Wild-type expression of *midline* (MID, white) in early S9 (D-D") (*n*=7) and later at S10B (E-E") of cogenesis (*n*=10). The pattern of Broad (BR) is used as a spatial reference for the dorsal midline at S10B. (F-F") The pattern of BR42-GAL4 driver expressing GFP (F', green) (*n*=4). We focus on the BR domain, which is outlined with a dotted white line. (G-G") Ectopic expression of MID by the BR42-GAL4 driver (yellow arrow, G') disrupts BR patterning (G and G") (*n*=5). (H-H") The pattern of GMR^{18E05}-GAL4 expressing GFP (H, green) in the anterior domain (*n*=6). (I-I") Ectopic expression of MID by GMR^{18E05}-GAL4 (*n*=8). (J-L) The pattern of Slbo-GAL4 driver expressing GFP (green) during S8 (J, *n*=6), S9 (K, *n*=5) and S10B (L, *n*=10) of cogenesis. Yellow arrows indicate the migrating border cells. (M-M") Ectopic expression of MID by the Slbo-GAL4 (M',M", yellow arrows) (*n*=8). Yellow arrows indicate the migrating border cells. (M-M") Ectopic expression of MID by the Slbo-GAL4 (M',M", yellow arrows) (*n*=8). Yellow arrows indicate the migrating border cells. (M-B") Ectopic expression of MID by the Slbo-GAL4 (M',M", wellow arrows) (*n*=8). Yellow arrows indicate the migrating border cells. (M-B") Ectopic expression of MID by the Slbo-GAL4 (M',M", wellow arrows) (*n*=8). Yellow arrows indicate the migrating border cells white dotted outline). White arrowheads (D,H,I) mark posterior migration of follicular epithelium. (E-G") White dashed lines mark the anterior boundary of follicular epithelium. Yellow arrowheads mark the dorsal midline. In all images, the anterior is to the left. Scale bars: 50 µm. *n*, the number of images with s

PNT-P1 is sufficient to regulate the posterior fate of the follicular epithelium.

RESULTS

MID is not sufficient to repress the anterior fate of the follicular epithelium

The follicle cells are extensively patterned prior to specifying different domains (Berg, 2005; Niepielko et al., 2014; Revaitis et al., 2017; Yakoby et al., 2008a). This section clarifies some of the domains discussed in this paper. Up to S7 of oogenesis, the anterior, posterior and main body domains are set (Fig. 1A). These domains are marked by the posterior expression of *mid*, the anterior expression of *dpp* and the main body expression of *mirr* (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2013; Jordan et al., 2000; Twombly et al., 1996; Xi et al., 2003). At S9, the follicular epithelium progressively engulfs the growing oocyte, and a subsect of anterior cells differentiate to become the stretched follicle cells, which overlie the nurse cells (Fig. 1B). In addition, the anterior polar cells recruit approximately six neighboring cells, collectively known as the

border cells, that together delaminate and migrate through the nurse cells posteriorly towards the oocyte (Fig. 1B). Later, at S10, the oocyte nucleus is at a dorsal anterior position, which designates the dorsal anterior domain (Fig. 1C). This domain comprises the late expression of BR, which marks the primordia of the future dorsal appendages, and PNT, which marks the dorsal midline (Morimoto et al., 1996; Tzolovsky et al., 1999). Here, we focus on three main domains: (1) the anterior domain, which includes the border cells and the stretched follicle cells; (2) the posterior domain; and (3) the dorsal-anterior domain.

As previously reported (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2013), MID patterns the posterior domain of the follicular epithelium (Fig. 1D,E). The pattern extends more anteriorly on the dorsal side to generate the posterior border of the dorsal appendage primordia (Fig. 1E"). In agreement with its role (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2013), using the dorsal anterior driver (BR42-GAL4, Fig. 1F-F") to ectopically express *mid* was sufficient to repress BR patterning (Fig. 1G-G"). As has previously been reported, both ends of the developing egg chamber maintain an anterior fate in the absence of EGFR signaling

(Gonzalez-Reyes and St Johnston, 1998; Neuman-Silberberg and Schupbach, 1994; Peri and Roth, 2000; Twombly et al., 1996). Given that *mid* is a target of EGFR signaling, we aimed to determine whether MID is the primary mechanism of EGFR signaling that coverts an anterior to a posterior cell fate.

As mentioned above, the anterior domain of the egg chamber acquires distinct cellular morphologies at S9, including formation of stretched cells and the migration of the border cells (Duhart et al., 2017; Kolahi et al., 2009; Montell et al., 1992). We asked whether MID is sufficient to repress these anterior fate characteristics. Ectopic expression of *mid* in the anterior domain (using GMR^{18E05}-GAL4, Fig. 1H-H") and in the polar cells (using Slbo-GAL4, Fig. 1J-L) had no impact on the morphogenesis of follicle cells (Fig. 1I-I",M-M"). We conclude that, although MID is necessary to restrict the posterior boundary of the dorsal appendage primordia, it is not sufficient to set a posterior fate.

PNT regulates the pattern of MID

The ETS-transcription factor *pointed* (PNT-P1) is a regulator of tissue development and is a downstream target of EGFR and JAK/STAT signaling pathways (Gabay et al., 1996; Morimoto et al., 1996; O'Neill et al., 1994; Rebay et al., 2000; Rogers et al., 2017; Wassarman et al., 1995; Xi et al., 2003). Interestingly, the posterior pattern of PNT-P1 fully overlaps the pattern of MID (Fig. S1A,B).

As PNT-P1 and MID are targets of EGFR and JAK/STAT signaling pathways (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2016; Xi et al., 2003), we aimed to determine whether PNT regulates MID expression in the follicular epithelium. Looking at 84 independent *pnt* null clones, we observed a cell-autonomous complete loss of MID in 55% of the clones (Fig. 2A-A", Fig. S2A-A"), and a reduced level of MID in 45% of the clones (Fig. S2B-B").

As expected, ectopic expression of *pnt*-P1 in dorsal anterior domain disrupts the BR pattern and expands the MID domain anteriorly (Fig. 2B-B" compared with Fig. 1E-E"). Noticeably, MID did not expand to the entire dorsal anterior domain in this background (Fig. 2B'-B"). The absence of MID can be explained by the expression of MIRR in this domain, which represses *mid* (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2013). Further support for this observation is found in the dorsal midline; although PNT is naturally expressed in this domain at S10 of oogenesis, MID is still absent (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2013; Morimoto et al., 1996) (Fig. 1E', Fig. S1B). To avoid the inhibition, we used anterior GAL4 drivers that are expressed outside of the endogenous MIRR domain (Fig. 1H,J-L). Indeed, ectopic expression of *pnt*-P1 in the anterior domain, as well as in the polar cells, induced MID expression cell-autonomously (Fig. 2C-D"). Hence, PNT is sufficient to induce *mid* expression.

The pnt gene has two isoforms, pnt-P1 and pnt-P2 (Klambt, 1993; Scholz et al., 1993). As mentioned above, PNT-P1 represses

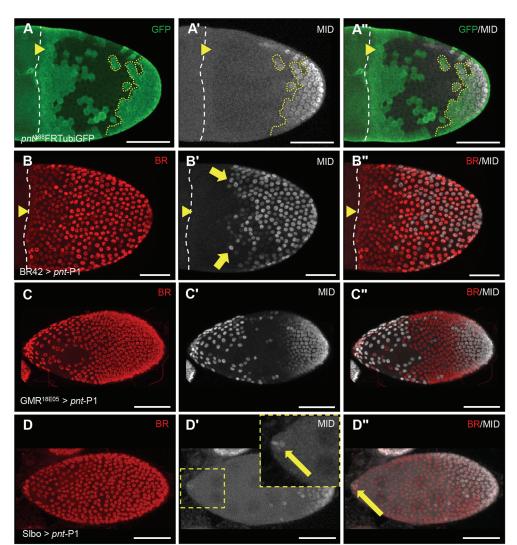


Fig. 2. Pointed is an upstream regulator of midline in the follicular epithelium. (A-A") Null clones of pointed $(pnt^{\Delta 88})$ negatively marked by the loss of GFP (A). The clonal boundary is indicated by a yellow dotted line exhibiting cellautonomous loss of MID (A',A") (n=46). (B-B") Ectopic expression of pnt-P1 by the BR42-GAL4 driver exhibiting ectopic MID (B') and loss of BR (B), and merge (B") (n=4). Yellow arrows in B' mark the ectopic MID. (C-C") Ectopic expression of pnt-P1 in the anterior domain using the GMR^{18E05}-GAL4 exhibiting ectopic MID (C'). BR is used as a spatial marker (C) and merge (C") (n=11). (D-D") Ectopic expression of pnt-P1 in the border cells exhibiting ectopic MID (D'). BR is used as a spatial marker (D) and merge (D") (n=12). Yellow arrow (D', inset) marks ectopic MID (D',D"). Yellow arrowheads (A-B") mark the dorsal midline. White dashed lines mark the anterior boundary of follicular epithelium. In all images, anterior is to the left. Scale bars: 50 µm. n, the number of images with similar results.

the late *br* to set the dorsal midline (Deng and Bownes, 1997). We tested whether ectopic expression of *pnt*-P2 will impact the BR and MID patterning. Ectopic expression of *pnt*-P2 in the dorsal anterior domain did not change the BR patterning (compare Fig. S3A,B with Fig. 1D,E). In addition, ectopic expression of *pnt*-P2 in the anterior domain did not induce MID and the development of egg chambers continued normally (Fig. S3A',B'). This lack of impact on BR patterning is in agreement with the normal expression pattern of *pnt*-P2 in this domain at S10B of oogenesis (Morimoto et al., 1996). We conclude that PNT-P1 is the isoform that activates *mid*.

Ectopic PNT-P1 represses BMP signaling

It was previously reported that the activation of EGFR in the anterior domain represses BMP signaling (Revaitis et al., 2017) (Fig. 3B,B" compared with A,A"). The expression of a constitutively activated EGFR (caEgfr) in the anterior domain not only abrogated BMP signaling, it also induced MID (Fig. 3A' compared with B', and A" compared with B"). Next, we tested whether PNT-P1, as a target of EGFR, is sufficient to mediate this function. Ectopic expression of pnt-P1 in the anterior domain abolished BMP signaling and induced MID (Fig. 3C-C"). To discern between PNT and MID activities, we ectopically expressed MID in the same domain and observed no impact on BMP signaling (Fig. 3D-D"). These results are consistent with the previous observations where the ectopic expression of mid in

the anterior domain had no observable effect on the development of egg chambers (Fig. 1I-I",M-M"), whereas ectopic expression of *pnt*-P1 in all anterior cells resulted in abolishing BMP signaling and terminating the development of egg chambers at S9. We conclude, PNT-P1 is sufficient to repress BMP signaling in the anterior domain.

The anterior domain of the egg chamber is patterned by BMP signaling, as evident by the defects in eggshell morphologies upon perturbations in this pathway (Chen and Schüpbach, 2006; Marmion et al., 2013; Marmion and Yakoby, 2018; Peri and Roth, 2000; Twombly et al., 1996). Additionally, BMP signaling is necessary for anterior follicle cell flattening and stretching (Brigaud et al., 2015). Thus, we aimed to understand the role PNT-P1 has on the regulation of BMP signaling. Ectopic expression of *pnt*-P1 in the anterior domain terminated egg chamber development at S9, which is similar to consequences of ectopic expression of ca*Egfr* in this domain (Revaitis et al., 2017). To circumvent lethality, we used the GMR^{43H01}-GAL4 driver to limit the expression of PNT-P1 to a region of the anterior follicle cells, including the border cells and a subset of posterior follicle cells (Revaitis et al., 2017) (Fig. 4A-A",B-B").

It has previously been reported that *dpp* is ectopically expressed in the posterior end of an EGFR signaling mutant (Peri and Roth, 2000). As ectopic ca*Egfr* represses anterior BMP signaling (Revaitis et al., 2017), we wanted to understand whether PNT-P1

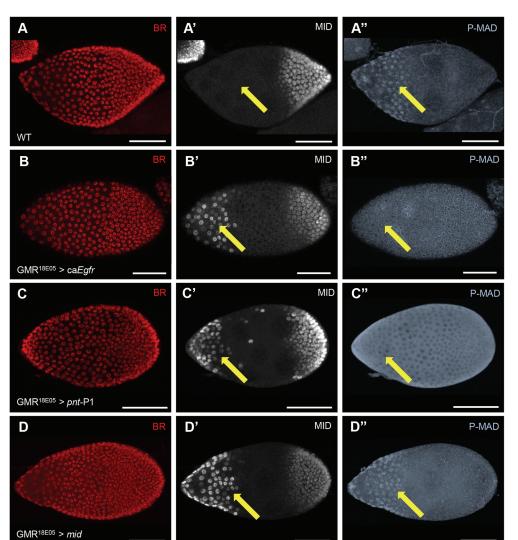


Fig. 3. Ectopic pointed represses BMP signaling. (A-A") Wild-type expression of BR (A), MID (A') and P-MAD pattern (A") at early stage 9 of oogenesis. Yellow arrows in A' and A" indicate the lack of anterior MID and presence of P-MAD, respectively (n=6). (B-B") Using the GMR^{180E5}-GAL4 driver to ectopically express a constitutively active EGFR (caEgfr) in the anterior epithelium at early stage 9 of oogenesis. BR (B), gain of MID (B') and loss of P-MAD (B") are observed, yellow arrows (n=5). (C-C") Using the GMR^{180E5}-GAL4 driver to ectopically express pnt-P1 in the anterior epithelium. BR (C), gain of MID expression (C') and loss of P-MAD (C") are observed, marked by a yellow arrow (n=11). (D-D") Using the GMR^{18E05}-GAL4 driver to ectopically express MID in the anterior epithelium. BR (D), gain of MID expression (D') and intact P-MAD pattern are observed, marked by a yellow arrow (n=13). In all images, BR marks the follicular epithelium. In all images, the anterior of the egg chamber is to the left. Scale bars: 50 µm. n, number of images with similar results.

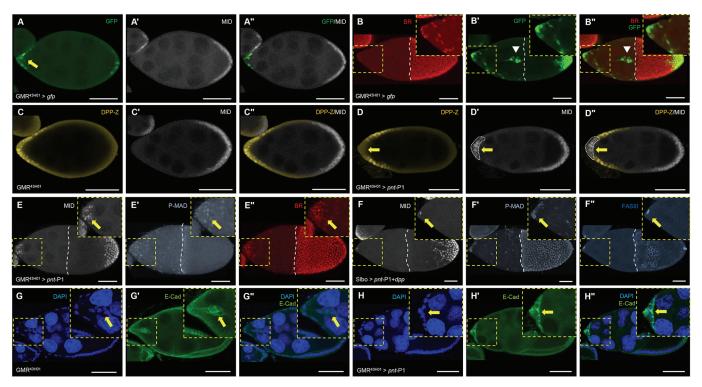


Fig. 4. Pointed represses *dpp* and anterior cell morphogenesis independent of BMP signaling. (A-A") GMR^{43H01}-GAL4 driving expression of GFP at S9 egg chamber, yellow arrow (A) marks anterior GFP (*n*=6). (A') The pattern of MID. (A") Merged image. (B-B") GMR^{43H01}-GAL4 driving expression of GFP at S10 (*n*=10). (B) Broad, (B') GFP, (B") merge. Expression is observed in some of the anterior stretch follicle cells, migrating border cell cluster and posterior cells (B',B", white arrowheads). We focus on the anterior and border cells (insets). (C-C") The pattern of a LacZ-DPP reporter (DPP-Z) in the GMR^{43H01}-GAL4 driver background cross-section of early S9 egg chamber (C), MID pattern (C') and merged image (C") (*n*=6). (D-D") GMR^{43H01}-GAL4 driver expression *pnt*-P1 in the anterior resulting in ectopic expression of MID (D', dotted white lines, yellow arrows) and loss of DPP-Z (D,D" merge, yellow arrows) (*n*=11). (E-E") Ectopic expression of *pnt*-P1 using the GMR^{43H01}-GAL4 driver in anterior stretch cells induced MID (E, yellow arrow, inset) and contained P-MAD (E', yellow arrow, inset). These cells did not stretch and remained clustered in the anterior, marked by BR (E", yellow arrow, inset) (*n*=5). (F-F") Slbo-GAL4 driving expression of both *pnt*-P1 and *dpp*. (F) MID expression observed in anterior polar cells (yellow arrow, inset). (F') P-MAD was present in these cells (yellow arrow, inset). (F") FASIII marks polar cells failing to migrate posteriorly (yellow arrow, inset) (*n*=6). (G-G") GMR^{43H01}-GAL4 exhibiting cell nuclei marked by DAPI (G) and cell boundaries marked by E-cadherin (E-Cad) (G'), insets showcase migrating border cells (G-G", yellow arrows) (*n*=6). (H-H") Ectopic expression of *pnt*-P1 in anterior stretch cells. (H) DAPI marks cell nuclei, (H') E-Cad marks cell boundaries. Insets showcase accumulation of E-Cad and loss of border cell migration (H-H", yellow arrows) (*n*=7). Broad (BR) in B,E" marks follicular epithelium. White dashed lines (E-F") mark the anterior boundary

represses BMP signaling through *dpp* repression. Using the *dpp*-βGal reporter (DPP-Z) to mark the *dpp* expression domain (Fig. 4C-C"), we ectopically expressed *pnt*-P1 in a small region of anterior cells (Fig. 4D-D") and monitored changes in the pattern of DPP-Z. As expected, MID was induced in cells ectopically expressing *pnt*-P1 (Fig. 4D'). Interestingly, we found a cell-autonomous loss of DPP-Z in these cells (Fig. 4D-D"). As DPP is a diffusible ligand, we next asked whether surrounding unaffected cells can provide DPP to activate signaling in the cells that do not express *dpp*. In cells expressing *pnt*-P1, marked by ectopic MID (Fig. 4E), we detected BMP activation (Fig. 4E').

Ectopic PNT represses anterior morphogenesis independently of BMP signaling

As discussed above, while BMP signaling was detected in cells expressing *pnt*-P1 (Fig. 4E'), these cells still remained in the anterior and failed to migrate as border cells (Fig. 4E"). It is possible that the amount of DPP from neighboring cells was not sufficient to activate BMP signaling to a level that induces border cells migration. Therefore, we aimed to determine whether increasing the levels of DPP in these cells would rescue their mobility. Using the Slbo-GAL4 driver, we ectopically expressed both *pnt*-P1 and *dpp*. As expected, MID was detected in the polar cells (Fig. 4F). In addition,

BMP signaling was activated in these cells (Fig. 4F'). At the same time, these cells remained in the anterior domain (compare Fig. 4F" with Fig. 1J-L). Interestingly, BMP signaling is a known repressor of *mid* (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2016); however, the anterior BMP signaling could not overcome the induction of *mid* by the ectopic PNT-P1 (Fig. 4F). We conclude that PNT-P1 induction of *mid* abrogates the repression of *mid* by BMP signaling. Furthermore, ectopic expression of *dpp* cannot rescue migration of border cells in the presence of PNT-P1.

As explained above, border cells migration and stretching of cells over the nurse cells are hallmarks of the anterior follicle cells at S9 of oogenesis (Kolahi et al., 2009; Van Buskirk and Schüpbach, 1999). The expression of *pnt*-P1 stopped the migration of border cells and stretching of the anterior cells, even though BMP signaling was restored. The observed cell clumping in the anterior domain is mirrored in mutant backgrounds of the transcriptional inhibitor *yan*, whereas loss of *yan* resulted in an accumulation of E-cadherin (E-Cad) and revocation of migration of border cells (Schober et al., 2005). Here, we ectopically expressed *pnt*-P1 in the future border cells, and in agreement with *yan* perturbations, observed a loss of border cell migration and the accumulation of E-Cad (compare Fig. 4G' with H'). As PNT-P1 and YAN compete on the same DNA-binding motifs (Wei et al., 2010), we proposed that the

ectopic PNT-P1 could be outcompeting YAN DNA binding, resulting in the accumulation of E-Cad.

The disruption of EGFR signaling allows for the ectopic expression of *dpp* in the posterior end (Peri and Roth, 2000). We tested whether loss of PNT is sufficient to allow *dpp* expression in the posterior domain. We could not detect DPP-Z expression in large posterior clones null for *pnt* (Fig. S4A-A"). In addition, in these clones, we could not detect activation of BMP signaling (Fig. S4B-B"). We suggest that, in this background, EGFR is still activated; therefore, factors other than PNT-P1 are likely being induced by EGFR signaling to repress posterior *dpp* expression. We conclude that PNT-P1 is sufficient to repress the anterior *dpp* but it is not necessary to repress posterior *dpp*. Future studies will focus on finding other targets of EGFR that also control posterior *dpp* expression.

DISCUSSION

The anterior-posterior patterning of the follicular epithelium is an intricate process that sets the initial boundaries of the egg chamber. Here, we investigated the role of PNT-P1 as a regulator of the posterior end, and demonstrate that this ETS-transcription factor is an upstream regulator of MID. Interestingly, MID is either completely or partially lost in posterior clones null for pnt. These results are consistent with the reported regulation of MID and PNT. Specifically, in a clonal analysis of cells expressing an amorphic version of either Stat92E (STAT) or Hopscotch (HOP), both of which are essential for JAK/STAT signaling, MID was completely lost or only reduced (Fregoso Lomas et al., 2016). In addition, similar perturbations in JAK/STAT signaling led to the complete loss of PNT (Xi et al., 2003). Taken together, the complete loss of PNT and the loss/reduction of MID in JAK/STAT perturbations further support that PNT is an upstream regulator of MID, as shown is our experiments. We reason that *mid* is expressed very early in oogenesis, hence the complete or partial loss of MID in our experiments could reflect a degradation process of MID that was induced earlier to the formation of the clone. Of note, our results are in agreement with the regulation of mid by PNT in the developing Drosophila cardiac cells (Schwarz et al., 2018).

The BMP signaling pathway has multiple components necessary for signaling, including ligands, receptors and intracellular components (Chen and Schüpbach, 2006; Dobens and Raftery, 1998, 2000; Marmion et al., 2013; Marmion and Yakoby, 2018; Yakoby et al., 2008a,b). It has previously been reported that *dpp* is ectopically expressed in the posterior end of an EGFR signaling mutant (Peri and Roth, 2000). Our results demonstrate that ectopic expression of *pnt* in the anterior domain is sufficient to repress *dpp* expression cell-autonomously. In addition, restricting the number of anterior cells expressing *pnt* can rescue the activation of BMP signaling by the emanating DPP from surrounding unaffected cells. These results indicated that all other BMP pathway components remain intact in the presence of PNT-P1. Our findings further support our previous prediction that the repression of anterior BMP signaling upon ectopic EGFR activation is due to *dpp* repression (Revaitis et al., 2017).

In the anterior domain, the stretched cells grow to engulf the nurse cells for them to go through apoptosis after releasing their contents into the developing oocyte (Timmons et al., 2016). This process is terminated by the ectopic expression of *pnt*-P1 in the anterior cells. This suggests that PNT-P1 can block the communication between the anterior follicle cells (stretched cells) and the germ-line nurse cells. As the nurse cells may participate in the anterior fate determination, such as stretch cell formation, the absence of nurse cells in the posterior end may prevent a 'true' anterior from forming in a *pnt* null background (Fig. S4). Further support for the suggested role of PNT-

P1 in cell movement is found by the natural expression of *pnt*-P1 in the dorsal midline (Morimoto et al., 1996). These cells do not migrate, whereas their neighboring cells, the dorsolateral appendage primordia, migrate anteriorly to form the tube-like dorsal appendages (Ward and Berg, 2005). Interestingly in a background of cells expressing MAE, an inhibitor of PNT, the dorsal midline cells move and become part of a single wide dorsal appendage (Yamada et al., 2003). Taken together, we suggest that the expression of PNT anchors groups of cells in tissues.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Flies and reagents

All flies were raised on standard cornmeal agar and kept at room temperature, unless specified in heat shock treatment. The fly strains used in this study were obtained from the following sources: wild-type *D. melanogaster* (25211), UAS-pnt-P1 (869), GMR^{43H01}-GAL4 (47931), PNT-GFP (42680) and UAS-pnt-P2 (399) were obtained from the Bloomington Drosophila Stock Center. BR-42;tubGal80ts, FRT82BpntΔ88 and e22cflp;FRT82BubiGFP were a gift from S. Shvartsman (Princeton University, NJ, USA). UAS-mid was a gift from L. Nilson (McGill University, Montreal, Canada). Slbo-Gal4 was a gift from D. Harrison (University of Kentucky, KY, USA). UAS-caEgfr was a gift from T. Schüpbach (Princeton University, NJ, USA). UAS-GFPnls was a gift from J. Posakony (University of California San Diego, CA, USA) and UAS-dpp a gift from S. Newfeld (Arizona State University, AZ, USA). The ptubGal80ts;GMR^{18E05}-GAL4 and the DPP-Z reporter were used here (Revaitis et al., 2017).

Immunostaining

Immunohistochemistry analysis was carried out on 2-7 days old flies raised on active yeast for 24 h at room temperature (23°C) prior to dissection. Ovaries were dissected in 1 ml Schneider's media and fixed in a 4% paraformaldehyde/heptane/0.2% Triton X-100 in PBS (PBST) solution for 20 min. Samples were rinsed three times, 5 min each time, in 0.2% PBST solution, then permeabilized in 1% PBST solution for 1 h. Samples were rinsed once in 0.2% PBST then blocked in 0.2% PBST with 1% bovine serum albumin (BSA) solution for 1 h. Samples were incubated overnight at 4°C in primary antibody cocktail with 0.2% PBST and 1% BSA. After incubation, samples were washed three times for 20 min each in 0.2% PBST, then secondary antibody cocktail was added with 0.2% PBST and 1% BSA, and incubated for 1 h protected from light at room temperature. Samples were then washed three times for 20 min each time in 0.2% PBST and mounted in Fluoromount-G mounting media. Primary antibody concentrations used were mouse anti-Broad (1:250; DSHB), sheep anti-GFP (1:1000, BioRad), rabbit anti-phosphorylated-Smad (1:3600; a gift from E. Laufer, Columbia University, NY, USA; Yakoby et al., 2008b), rabbit anti-β-galactosidase (1:1000; Invitrogen), guinea pig anti-MID (1:1000; a gift from L. Nilson), mouse anti-Fasciclin III (1:250; DSHB), rabbit anti-YAN (1:250, a gift from S. Shvartsman) and rat anti-DCAD2 (1:50; DSHB). Secondary antibodies used were Alexa Fluor 488 donkey anti-mouse, Alexa Fluor 488 donkey anti-sheep, Alexa Fluor 568 donkey anti-rabbit, Alexa Fluor 568 donkey anti-mouse, Alexa Fluor 633 goat antiguinea pig and Alexa Flour 568 goat anti-rat (1:1250; Invitrogen). DAPI was used for nuclear staining (84 ng/ml; Thermo Fisher). Samples were imaged on Leica SP8 confocal microscope with 20× objective. Images were processed using FIJI (Fiji is Just ImageJ) software (Schindelin et al., 2012).

Heat-shock induction of transgenic lines

Fly lines containing a temperature-sensitive GAL80 repressive element were raised on active yeast for 3 days at 28°C prior to dissection to alleviate GAL80 and drive ectopic gene expression.

Generation of negatively marked clones

The FLP/FRT recombinant technique (Xu and Rubin, 1993) was used to generate loss-of-function null clones marked by the absence of GFP (ubi-GFP). The e22cflp;FRT82B-ubiGFP line was crossed to the FRT82B $pnt^{\Delta 88}$ line (e22c>flp; FRT82B $pnt^{\Delta 88}$ /FRT82B ubi-GFP) to generate mutant clones null for both pnt-P1 and pnt-P2 isoforms marked with the absence of GFP.

Quantification and statistical analysis

All images were obtained with equal confocal microscopy wavelength settings among images using the same channel. In *pnt* null clonal experiments, boundaries of loss of PNT were drawn according to loss of observable expression of GFP. FIJI software was used for all images for correct orientation and leveling of brightness and contrast. In all images, *n*-value represents number of egg chambers observed with a similar phenotypic profile.

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Competing interests

The authors declare no competing or financial interests.

Author contributions

Conceptualization: C.A.S., N.Y.; Validation: C.A.S.; Formal analysis: C.A.S.; Investigation: C.A.S., R.C.; Resources: N.T.R.; Writing - original draft: C.A.S., N.Y.; Writing - review & editing: C.A.S., N.T.R., N.Y.; Supervision: N.Y.; Project administration: N.Y.; Funding acquisition: N.Y.

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Supplementary information

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