

1 **A primer genetic toolkit for exploring mitochondrial biology and disease using**
2 **zebrafish**

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14 **Abstract**

15 Mitochondria are a dynamic eukaryotic innovation that play diverse roles in biology and disease.
16 The mitochondrial genome is remarkably conserved in all vertebrates, encoding the same 37
17 gene set and overall genomic structure ranging from 16,596 base pairs (bp) in the teleost
18 zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) to 16,569 bp in humans. Mitochondrial disorders are amongst the most
19 prevalent inherited diseases affecting roughly 1 in every 5000 individuals. Currently, few
20 effective treatments exist for those with mitochondrial ailments, representing a major unmet
21 patient need. Mitochondrial dysfunction is also implicated to be a common component of a wide
22 variety of other human illnesses ranging from neurodegenerative disorders like Huntington's
23 disease and Parkinson's disease to autoimmune illnesses such as multiple sclerosis and
24 rheumatoid arthritis. The electron transport chain (ETC) component of mitochondria is critical
25 for mitochondrial biology and defects can lead to many mitochondrial disease symptoms. Here
26 we present a publicly available collection of genetic mutants created in highly conserved,
27 nuclear-encoded mitochondrial genes in *Danio rerio*. The zebrafish system represents a
28 potentially powerful new opportunity for the study of mitochondrial biology and disease due to
29 the large number of orthologous genes shared with humans and the many advanced features of
30 this model system from genetics to imaging. This collection includes 24 mutant lines in 18
31 different genes created by locus-specific gene editing to induce frameshift or splice acceptor
32 mutations leading to predicted protein truncation during translation. Also included are 7 lines
33 created by the random insertion of the gene-breaking transposon (GBT) protein trap cassette. All
34 of these targeted mutant alleles truncate conserved domains of genes critical to the proper
35 function of the ETC or genes that have been implicated in human mitochondrial disease. This
36 collection is designed to accelerate the use of zebrafish to study of many different aspects of

- 37 mitochondrial function with the goal of widening our understanding of their role in biology and
- 38 human disease.

39 **Introduction**

40 Mitochondria are semi-autonomous organelles critical for eukaryotic cell function. The
41 mitochondrial endosymbiotic genesis origin hypothesis proposes its evolution from an alpha
42 proteobacterial ancestor, *Rickettsia prowazekii* [1,2] that were harnessed by a eukaryotic cell as
43 the host billions of years ago [3]. The proteobacterium became a symbiote of the host cell,
44 bringing with it a system for more efficient generation of cellular energy in the form of ATP.

45 During the course of evolution, the genetic material of the mitochondria underwent reductive
46 expansion and was transferred in a retrograde fashion to the nuclear genome. The retrograde
47 movement of genes from the mitochondria to its eukaryotic host paved the way for the
48 mitochondria to specialize as energy production organelles rather than consuming energy
49 repetitively replicating its own multi-copy genome. The mitochondrial-encoded genetic material
50 at present is a vestige of the original proteobacterial genome [4–6] meaning despite having DNA
51 of their own, mitochondria rely heavily on the nuclear genes for most of their functions.

52 Mitochondria have critical functions in metabolism, organ homeostasis, apoptosis and aging.
53 They also play important but still largely mysterious roles in human pathology, as demonstrated
54 by the enormous biological variation and diverse disorders in patients with mitochondrial disease
55 [7–10]. Nearly every organ system can be compromised, but with highly variable and complex
56 physiological and biochemical outcomes. Imaging and basic science of mitochondria showcase
57 how this highly dynamic organelle responds differentially to extrinsic and intrinsic biological
58 signals. However, understanding how mitochondria function in normal biology, and how human
59 mitochondrial DNA variations contribute to health and disease, has been hampered by a lack of
60 effective approaches to manipulate the powerhouse of the cell.

61 The vertebrate mitochondrial chromosome is circular and includes 37 genes, 13 encoding for
62 protein subunits of the electron transport chain, 22 coding for transfer RNAs, and 2 encoding
63 ribosomal RNAs (**Figure 1**) [11,12]. The mitochondrial gene order, strand specific nucleotide
64 bias and codon usage is highly conserved [13]. However, mtDNA encoded genes lack introns
65 and utilize a divergent genetic code than their nuclear counterparts [14,15]. For instance, AUA
66 codon codes for methionine as per mitochondrial genetic code, whereas the same sequence codes
67 for isoleucine in the nuclear genetic code. Similarly, nuclear stop codon UGA is read as the
68 tryptophan amino acid by the mitochondrial codon cypher.

69 Mitochondria are unique cellular compartments with different DNA and RNA repair and editing
70 rules, hampering attempts at directly manipulating these nucleic acid components. For example,
71 DNA nucleases that introduce double stranded breaks and subsequent repair in nuclear DNA
72 induce the degradation of mtDNA [16–18]. Indeed, none of the canonical DNA repair pathways
73 found in the nucleus have been shown to be active in mitochondria [18–20]. Finally, no system
74 has demonstrated the ability to deliver exogenous DNA or RNA to mitochondria, restricting the
75 tools available for mtDNA editing [21,22]. All of these factors are distinct from the nuclear
76 genome, making mtDNA a far less accessible genome for traditional gene editing methods and
77 reagents.

78 The diverse functions that mitochondria are capable of, including oxidative phosphorylation,
79 would not be possible with the small subset of 13 proteins encoded in mtDNA. Discoveries led
80 by high throughput proteomic approaches have enhanced our knowledge of the mitochondrial
81 proteome [23–27]. There are approximately 1158 nuclear-encoded proteins that localize to the
82 mammalian mitochondria, exerting a dual genetic control via its nuclear counterpart. Nuclear-
83 encoded mitochondrial proteins on the basis of their mitochondrial function can be broadly

84 classified into different categories including oxidative phosphorylation, energy production,
85 membrane dynamics, genome maintenance, and ion/metabolite homeostasis.

86 Unlike the nuclear genome, where most cells have only two copies, each cell can harbor
87 thousands of copies of mtDNA, depending on environmental needs, making mitochondrial
88 genome engineering a population genetics challenge. When every mtDNA molecule is identical
89 with non-mutagenic variants, the cell is in a genetic state, called homoplasmy, and the
90 mitochondria functions normally. In people with mtDNA-based mitochondrial disease, mtDNA
91 genomes harboring pathogenic mutations typically co-exist with the healthy genomes in a state
92 called heteroplasmy. Homoplasmy may also arise when the cell harbors only mutant mtDNA
93 molecules, resulting in severe clinical manifestations. [28]. The ratio of pathogenic-harboring to
94 nonpathogenic-harboring mtDNA is critical to mitochondrial disease onset. A threshold exists
95 for most mitochondrial disease, at which, the healthy mtDNA genomes can no longer
96 compensate for the pathogenic genomes, resulting in disease onset leading to breakdown of
97 oxidative phosphorylation and other mitochondrial function(s) [29].

98 Mitochondrial disorders are a heterogeneous group of clinical manifestations resulting from
99 either inherited or spontaneous mutations in mtDNA or nDNA leading to altered structure or
100 function of the proteins or RNA that reside in mitochondria [6,10,30,31]. The pathophysiology
101 of mitochondrial disorders involves functions of both the nuclear and mitochondrial genomes,
102 conferring additional complexity to the manifestation of the syndromes. The prevalence of
103 mitochondrial disorders is about 1 in 5000 live births; however, the prevalence is often
104 influenced by the presence of founder mutations and consanguinity in populations [31–33].
105 These conditions range in severity dependent on the specific mutation and its prevalence and

106 localization within the patient. In addition to diseases specifically progenerated by mitochondrial
107 defects, mitochondrial dysfunction has also been implicated as a cofactor or by-product of many
108 other conditions; including cancer, immune diseases, developmental delays and
109 neurodegenerative condition such as Alzheimer's [34–38].

110 Mitochondrial dysfunction tends to affect primarily high energy systems and can therefore have
111 devastating effects on a wide range of body systems including brain function, liver function,
112 vision, hearing, immune function, and all muscle types [31,39]. The identification and
113 characterization of novel mitochondrial genes in human genetic disorders have also enhanced our
114 knowledge of mitochondrial function [40–44]. However, despite their known prevalence and
115 severity, mitochondrial diseases remain understudied as compared to other genetic conditions,
116 and the options for treatment are limited.

117 The conserved roles of mitochondria have been traditionally uncovered using accessible model
118 systems such as the yeast *S.cerevisiae* [45–48] and invertebrates including *C.elegans* [49–52]
119 and *D. melanogaster* [53–56]. Vertebrate mitochondria, however, are known to have additional
120 innovations and encode unique subunits not present in invertebrate models [5,45,57–67]. Most
121 exploration to date of vertebrate mitochondrial biology has been conducted either in cell culture
122 or in mouse models. However, cells in a dish are missing important environmental cellular and
123 organismal context, whereas mouse mitochondrial experimental work can be hindered by limited
124 population size and invasive imaging techniques.

125 We provide here an initial genetic toolkit for modeling mitochondrial biology and disease in
126 *Danio rerio* (zebrafish) in an effort to help catalyze the use of this invaluable model organism in
127 mitochondrial research. The zebrafish is a tropical freshwater teleost that has proven to be an
128 invaluable resource for the study of human disease and genetics [68–70]. Principal among the

129 many research amenable characteristics of zebrafish are their high genetic orthology to humans,
130 high fecundity, their optical transparency (in the embryonic stage) that lends itself to facile
131 imaging, and the ease of reagent delivery through microinjection into the single celled embryo,
132 which is a full millimeter across before the first mitotic division. Zebrafish also serve as a
133 potentially powerful vertebrate model organism to study human mitochondrial disorders because
134 of conserved mitochondrial genome and mitochondrial genetic machinery. Zebrafish and human
135 mitochondrial chromosomes display ~65% sequence identity at the nucleotide level, and share
136 the same codon usage, strand specific nucleotide bias and gene order [12] (**Figure 1**).

137 Over the recent years, zebrafish research has helped shed light on mitochondrial biology and
138 further developed our understanding of the mechanisms of mitochondrial-associated pathology
139 [71–76]. Zebrafish have also been successfully used as a model system to study mitochondrial
140 targeting drugs with implications in development and cardiovascular function [71,77,78]. These
141 drugs can simply be dissolved in the water housing the larvae and offer an advantage of large
142 sample size with minimal volumes of drug administered. Drug-screening studies have aided in
143 understanding the pathogenesis of various diseases and helped to identify targets for treatment
144 [77].

145 To help engender an expansion of zebrafish deployment in mitochondrial research, we present a
146 panel or “starter-pack” toolkit of genetic mutants made in nuclear-encoded mitochondrial genes
147 in zebrafish. This mutant panel, which we have named the Marriot Mitochondrial Collection
148 (MMC), consists of 30 zebrafish lines with mutations in 24 different mitochondrial genes. The
149 mutant collection focusses primarily on genes that encode for components of the energy
150 generating electron transport chain with at least one mutant in each complex of the ETC. Other
151 mutants consist of assembly factors, protein chaperones that manage mitochondrial membrane

152 traffic, and genes related to mitochondrial replication. These mutants were made either by the
153 use of targeted endonuclease [79], or curated from our research group's library of randomly
154 generated insertional mutants [80]. We hope that this collection, in addition to being intrinsically
155 useful, will also help serve as a primer to the modeling of mitochondrial biology and disease in
156 zebrafish.

157 **Methods**

158 **Zebrafish Handling**

159 All animal work was conducted under Mayo Clinic's institutional animal welfare approvals
160 (IACUC number: A34513-13-R16).

161 **Identification of zebrafish orthologs having putative mitochondrial function**

162 A previous study combining discovery and subtractive proteomics with computational,
163 microscopy identified 1098 mouse genes that could encode for proteins residing in mitochondria
164 [24]. They further identified 1013 human orthologs for these genes, providing an initial
165 inventory of the genes coding for proteins resident in mitochondria. Using literature assessment
166 and HUGO database curation approaches, we identified 97 proteins that are involved in the
167 biogenesis and assembly of electron transport chain in mitochondria. Using zebrafish orthologs
168 of human genes from ZFIN (Zebrafish Information Network), 93 zebrafish mitochondrial
169 orthologs were identified. These orthologs were systemically annotated with respect to clinical
170 phenotype by extensive mining from PubMed based published case reports and OMIM database
171 **(Supplementary Table 1).**

172

173 **Mutant Generation**

174 Mutant lines were created by one of two methods, either through the targeted use of
175 Transcription Activator Like Effector Nucleases (TALENs) [79] or by screening Gene Breaking
176 Transposon (GBT) lines for integrations into mitochondrial genes [80]. Reagents were delivered
177 in both methods by the microinjection of either TALEN pairs or GBT transposon and Tol2
178 transposase into single cell zebrafish embryos.

179 **TALEN Design/Assembly/Delivery**

180 The TALEN mutants in this collection were originally generated as part of a previously
181 published study [79]. In brief, TALEN pairs were designed using the Mojohand software
182 platform [81] (www.talendesign.org) to target highly conserved, and therefore likely functionally
183 important, areas of nuclear-encoded mitochondrial genes. TALEN RVDs were then cloned into
184 pT3Ts-GoldyTALEN (TALEN vector with a T3 transcriptional promoter for in vitro
185 transcription) using the FusX rapid TALEN assembly system [79], which uses the RVD
186 definitions: HD=C, NN=G, NI=A, NG=T. Following assembly, mRNA was synthesized in vitro
187 using the mMessage Machine T3 kit (Ambion) and extracted by a phenol-chloroform extraction
188 as prescribed in the mMessage Machine manual. The extracted mRNA was then delivered into
189 single cell zebrafish embryos at 100pg doses (50pg per TALEN arm) by microinjection.

190 **TALEN Mutant Screening**

191 Following microinjection, genomic DNA was extracted from F0 larvae three days post
192 fertilization (dpf) by sodium hydroxide extraction. DNA for eight individual larvae was analyzed
193 for NHEJ activity at the TALEN target site by Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism
194 (RFLP) analysis. Groups with high reported NHEJ activity by RFLP were raised to adulthood

195 and outcrossed to create an F1 generation. Suspected NHEJ mutants were further verified by
196 Sanger sequencing. F1 larvae demonstrating NHEJ mutations confirmed by both RFLP and
197 Sanger sequencing were raised to adulthood. Fin biopsies were performed on these adults and
198 DNA was extracted by sodium hydroxide extraction.

199 **Gene Breaking Transposon System**

200 The Gene Breaking Transposon System of protein trap system and a complete repository of
201 protocols for the creation and screening of GBT mutant lines has been described [80]. In short,
202 protein trap transposons were delivered in combination with mRNA for Tol2 transposase (25pg
203 each) into single cell zebrafish embryos by microinjection. Embryos were screened for GFP
204 fluorescence at 3-4dpf and classified broadly into three classes [80]. Class three embryos, those
205 with whole body GFP expression, were raised to adulthood and outcrossed to non-transgenic
206 lines to create an F1 generation. mRFP-expressing F1 embryos were sorted by expression
207 pattern, assigned a GBT number, and raised to adulthood. These adult fish were then outcrossed
208 to non-transgenic lines to create an F2 generation upon which all subsequent propagation, testing
209 and imaging was conducted.

210 To determine genes tagged by the protein trap system, rapid amplification of cDNA ends
211 (RACE) was performed as described [82] with minor updates to primer sequences. cDNA was
212 generated using a transposon-specific primer (5R-mRFP-P0) against 250ng of total mRNA in the
213 reverse transcription reaction. PCR was then performed using the following gene-specific
214 primers: 5R-mRFP-P1 and 5R-mRFP-P2. The resulting products were TA cloned for further
215 amplification and then sequence verified for in-frame mRFP fusions by Sanger sequencing.

216 In some cases, inverse PCR was also conducted to RACE PCR as described [80]. Whole
217 genomic DNA was extracted from individual F2 embryos using a sodium hydroxide extraction
218 and 800ng was digested in a combination reaction using AvrII, NheI, SpeI, and XbaI restriction
219 enzymes. Approximately 200ng of the product of this digestion was self-ligated and used as a
220 template for PCR using the following nested and primary primers. 5' side: 5R-mRFP-P1 and 5R-
221 mRFP-P2 paired with INV-OPT-P1 and INV-OPT-P2, respectively. 3' side: 5R-GFP-P1 and 5R-
222 GFP-P2 with Tol2-ITR(L)-O1 and Tol2-ITR(L)-O3, respectively. The products of the final
223 nested reaction were gel-extracted, cloned, and sequenced. Prospective in frame mRFP fusions
224 were further verified by comparing suspected protein trap allele to GBT expression pattern and
225 by PCR against DNA or cDNA from mRFP carrier siblings versus non-carrier siblings.

226 Protein trap lines as verified by these methods were catalogued for specific genomic fusions
227 using the National Center for Biotechnology Information's (NCBI) Homologene Database.
228 Human orthologs for tagged genes were further identified using blastX searches against the
229 human genome. GBT lines with protein trap fusions to nuclear encoded mitochondrial genes
230 with human orthologues have been included in this collection.

231 ***In silico* analysis to determine protein homology and alteration of DNA sequence by**
232 **TALENs and GBT in zebrafish mutants**

233 Human amino acid sequences were compared to both the zebrafish wild type sequence and each
234 specific zebrafish mutant sequence associated with each allele. Amino acid sequence information
235 for a particular gene was gathered for humans from <https://www.uniprot.org/> along with the wild
236 type amino acid sequence for the zebrafish. The first/most common isoform for each entry was
237 used for this analysis. Any added information regarding functional domains or regions was also
238 gathered. A protein-protein BLAST was conducted using <https://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi>

239 to compare the sequences of the human and wild type zebrafish amino acid sequences. BLAST
240 search settings used included the blastp algorithm. Regions of low and high homology were then
241 mapped out for the sequences.

242 For zebrafish mutant to human comparisons, the cDNA or DNA sequences were gathered via
243 sequencing and put through the translate tool at <https://web.expasy.org/translate/>. The standard
244 genetic code was used for conversion. Stop codons arising from the frameshifted DNA sequence
245 were found in all mutants. The BLAST analysis conducted on the mutants was taken from the
246 starting methionine to the first encountered stop codon. Regions of low and high homology were
247 then mapped for each sequence.

248 **Access to all reported reagents – zebrafish and sequences**

249 All listed tools are immediately available through the Mayo Clinic Zebrafish Facility, and all fish
250 lines will be available via ZIRC. Sequences needed for genotyping and related metadata are
251 currently on zfishbook [83].

252 **RESULTS**

253 **Generation of zebrafish mutant collection**

254 We generated zebrafish mutants for a wide selection of nuclear-encoded mitochondrial genes by
255 employing two genetic engineering approaches, gene breaking transposons and TALENs. The
256 collection of zebrafish mutants is referred as the Marriot Mitochondrial Collection (MMC) and
257 comprises of mutants for 24 nuclear-encoded mitochondrial proteins (**Figure 2**). Out of these, 18
258 were created by TALEN indel mutagenesis and 6 were created by gene breaking trap
259 mutagenesis. The mutants include proteins from all known functional pathways involved in
260 mitochondrial homeostasis and ATP generation (**Figure 2**).

261 Broadly, the pathways can be classified as subunits of oxidative phosphorylation complexes,
 262 chaperones for assembly of oxidative phosphorylation proteins, maintenance proteins for the
 263 mitochondrial genome (replication, mtRNA folding and translation), calcium homeostasis and
 264 mitochondrial protein import. All of these genes have human orthologs, nearly all with known
 265 mutations in which lead to severe clinical manifestations such as Leigh syndrome,
 266 cardiomyopathy, progressive external ophthalmoplegia, and oxidative phosphorylation
 267 deficiency (**Table 1**).

268 **Table 1: List of nuclear-encoded genes for which zebrafish mutants were generated as part**
 269 **of MMC collection:** The current MMC resource list summarizes information on human gene,
 270 zebrafish ortholog, mouse ortholog, relevant clinical phenotypes and diseases, protein function,
 271 and OMIM ID. Green = Created by TALEN Indel Mutagenesis, Orange = Curated from GBT
 272 protein trap lines (Keywords: Chr- Chromosome; OMIM ID: Online Mendelian Inheritance in
 273 Man ID; NA-not available).

Approved symbol	Approved name	Human chr	Zebrafish orthologs	Zebrafish chr	Allele designator	Mouse orthologs	Mouse chr	Clinical phenotype observed in humans	Disease	Biological function	OMIM ID
<i>NDUFAB1</i>	NADH:ubiquinone oxidoreductase subunit AB1	16	<i>ndufab1a</i> <i>ndufab1b</i>	1 3	mn0135	Ndufab1b	7	-na-	-na-	Oxidative phosphorylation enzymes - Complex I	603836
<i>NDUFA6</i>	NADH:ubiquinone oxidoreductase complex assembly factor 6	8	<i>ndufaf6</i>	16	mn0117	Ndufaf6	4	Focal right-hand seizures, ataxia, lactic acidosis, exercise intolerance, weakness and muscle tension	Leigh syndrome, mitochondrial complex I deficiency	Oxidative phosphorylation complex assembly - Complex I	612392
<i>NDUFS4</i>	NADH:ubiquinone oxidoreductase subunit S4	5	<i>ndufs4</i>	5	mn0118	Ndufs4	13	Mitochondrial complex I deficiency	Mitochondrial complex-I deficiency	Oxidative phosphorylation enzymes - Complex I	602694
<i>SDHA</i>	Succinate dehydrogenase complex flavoprotein subunit A	5	<i>sdha</i>	19	mn0121	Sdha	13	Dyspnea, cardiomegaly, cardiomyopathy, nystagmus, hypotonia, gastrointestinal stromal tumors, paragangliomas, pheochromocytoma, psychomotor regression, severe hyperandrogenism	Mitochondrial complex-II deficiency; Cardiomyopathy; Leigh syndrome; Paraganglioma	Oxidative phosphorylation enzymes - Complex II	600857

Approved symbol	Approved name	Human chr	Zebrafish orthologs	Zebrafish chr	Allele designator	Mouse orthologs	Mouse chr	Clinical phenotype observed in humans	Disease	Biological function	OMIM ID
<i>BCS1L</i>	BCS1 homolog, ubiquinol-cytochrome C reductase complex chaperone	2	<i>bcs1l</i>	9	mn0102	Bcs1l	1	Growth retardation, aminoaciduria, cholestasis, iron overload, lactic acidosis, early death, hypotonia, encephalopathy, microcephaly, psychomotor regression, hypoglycemia and hepatic failure	Björnstad syndrome; GRACILE syndrome; Leigh syndrome; Mitochondrial complex III deficiency, nuclear type 1	Oxidative phosphorylation complex assembly - Complex III	603647
<i>UQCRCQ</i>	ubiquinol-cytochrome c reductase complex III subunit VII	5	<i>uqcrq</i>	14	mn0128 mn0129	Uqcrq	11	Severe psychomotor retardation and extrapyramidal signs, dystonia, athetosis and ataxia, mild axial hypotonia and marked global dementia	Mitochondrial complex III deficiency	Mitochondrial complex III: ubiquinol-cytochrome c reductase complex subunits	612080
<i>COX10</i>	Cytochrome c oxidase assembly factor heme A: farnesyltransferase COX10	17	<i>cox10</i>	12	mn0107 mn0108	Cox10	11	Muscle weakness, hypotonia, ataxia, ptosis, pyramidal syndrome, status epilepticus, lactic acidosis, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, hypoglycemia and metabolic acidosis	Leigh syndrome due to mitochondrial COX IV deficiency; Mitochondrial complex IV deficiency	Oxidative phosphorylation complex assembly - Complex IV	602125
<i>COX4I2</i>	Cytochrome C Oxidase Subunit 4I2	20	<i>cox4i2b</i>	23	mn0104	Cox4i2	2	Exocrine pancreatic insufficiency, dyserythropoietic anemia, and calvarial hyperostosis	Exocrine pancreatic insufficiency, dyserythropoietic anemia, and calvarial hyperostosis	Oxidative phosphorylation complex enzymes - Complex IV	607976
<i>SURF1</i>	SURF1, Cytochrome C Oxidase Assembly Factor	9	<i>surf1</i>	5	mn0123	Surf1	2	Childhood onset neuropathy, lactic acidosis, mild intellectual disability ataxia, facial dysmorphism, encephalopathy, hypotonia, cerebellar ataxia, deafness, ophthalmoplegia, growth retardation and nystagmus	Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, type 4K; Leigh syndrome, due to COX IV deficiency	Involved in biogenesis of cytochrome c oxidase complex	185620
<i>ATP5F1E</i>	ATP synthase F1 subunit epsilon	20	<i>atp5f1e</i>	6	mn0101	Atp5f1e	2	Neonatal-onset lactic acidosis, 3-methylglutaconic aciduria, mild mental retardation, and peripheral neuropathy	Mitochondrial complex (ATP synthase) deficiency	Oxidative phosphorylation complex assembly - ATP synthase	606153
<i>TMEM70</i>	Transmembrane protein 70	8	<i>tmem70</i>	2	mn0126 mn0127	Tmem70	1	Lactic acidosis, encephalopathy, histiocytoid cardiomyopathy, microcephaly, hypotonia, facial dysmorphism and 3-methylglutaconic aciduria psychomotor delay, hyperammonemia	Mitochondrial complex V (ATP synthase) deficiency	Biogenesis of mitochondrial ATP synthase	612418

Approved symbol	Approved name	Human chr	Zebrafish orthologs	Zebrafish chr	Allele designator	Mouse orthologs	Mouse chr	Clinical phenotype observed in humans	Disease	Biological function	OMIM ID
<i>COQ2</i>	Coenzyme Q2, Polyprenyltransferase	4	<i>coq2</i>	5	mn0106	Coq2	5	Multiple system atrophy, unsteadiness of gait, nystagmus, gait ataxia, dysarthria, speech difficulty, dysmetria, lactic acidosis, urinary dysfunction and nystagmus	Coenzyme Q10 deficiency, primary; Multiple system atrophy	Biosynthesis of CoQ, coenzyme in mitochondrial respiratory chain	609825
<i>PDSS2</i>	Decaprenyl diphosphate synthase subunit 2	6	<i>pdss2</i>	13	mn0120	Pdss2	10	Hypotonia, seizures, cortical blindness, lactic acidosis, encephalopathy and nephrotic syndrome	Coenzyme Q10 deficiency	Involved in biosynthesis of coenzyme Q	610564
<i>MICU1</i>	Mitochondrial calcium uptake 1	10	<i>micu1</i>	13	mn0132	Micu1	10	Proximal muscle weakness and learning disabilities	Myopathy with extrapyramidal signs	Regulator of mitochondrial calcium uptake	605084
<i>SMDT1</i>	Single-pass membrane protein with aspartate rich tail	22	<i>smdt1a</i> <i>smdt1b</i>	3 1	mn0122	Smdt1	15	-na-	-na-	Core regulatory subunit of calcium channel in mitochondrial inner membrane	615588
<i>MCU</i>	Mitochondrial calcium uniporter	10	<i>mcu</i>	13	mn0111	Mcu	10	-na-	-na-	Calcium transporter and mediates calcium uptake in mitochondria	614197
<i>TK2</i>	Thymidine kinase 2, mitochondrial	16	<i>tk2</i>	7	mn0125	Tk2	8	Infantile onset fetal encephalomyopathy, failure to thrive, muscle weakness, mild facial weakness, myopathy, axonal neuropathy, brain atrophy, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, regression of motor development, psychomotor arrest, dysphonia, dysphagia, ptosis, impaired gait, bilateral ptosis, hypotonia, lactic acidosis and epilepsy	Progressive external ophthalmoplegia; Mitochondrial DNA depletion syndrome 2 (myopathic type)	Required for mitochondrial DNA synthesis	188250
<i>LRPPRC</i>	Leucine rich pentatricopeptide repeat containing	2	<i>lrpprc</i>	13	mn0235gt	Lrpprc	17	Delayed psychomotor development, mental retardation, mild dysmorphic facial features, hypotonia, ataxia, and the development of lesions in the brainstem and basal ganglia, seizures, dysphagia and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy	Leigh syndrome, French-Canadian type	Involved in translation of mitochondrial encoded cox subunits and mediation of folding of mitochondrial transcriptome	607544
<i>MTFMT</i>	Mitochondrial methionyl-tRNA formyltransferase	15	<i>mtfmt</i>	7	mn0114 mn0115	Mtfmt	9	Psychomotor developmental delay, renal dysplasia, mild facial dysarthria and ataxia	Combined oxidative phosphorylation deficiency	Catalyzes the formylation of methionyl-tRNA	611766
<i>MRPS18B</i>	Mitochondrial ribosomal protein S18B	6	<i>mrps18b</i>	19	mn0425gt	Mrps18b	17	-na-	-na-	Part of small 28S subunit of mitoribosome	611982

Approved symbol	Approved name	Human chr	Zebrafish orthologs	Zebrafish chr	Allele designator	Mouse orthologs	Mouse chr	Clinical phenotype observed in humans	Disease	Biological function	OMIM ID
<i>TIMM50</i>	Translocase of inner mitochondrial membrane 50	19	<i>timm50</i>	15	mn0906gt	Timm50	7	Severe intellectual disability, seizure and 3-methylglutaconic aciduria	3-methylglutaconic aciduria, type IX; Mitochondrial complex V deficiency	Subunit of TIM23 inner mitochondrial membrane complex and recognizes mitochondrial targeting signal or pre-sequence	607381
<i>OGDH</i>	Oxoglutarate dehydrogenase	7	<i>ogdha</i> <i>ogdhb</i>	8 10	mn0281gt	Ogdh	11	Colorectal cancer	Alpha-ketoglutarate dehydrogenase deficiency	Catalyzes the conversion of 2-oxoglutarate to succinyl-CoA and CO ₂	613022
<i>IDH2</i>	Isocitrate dehydrogenase (NADP (+)) 2, mitochondrial	15	<i>idh2</i>	18	mn0268gt	Idh2	7	Acute myeloid leukemia and abnormal production of D-2-hydroxyglutaric acid	D-2-hydroxyglutaric aciduria 2	Catalyzes the conversion of isocitrate to 2-oxoglutarate	147650

274

275 TALEN- and GBT-mediated targeting of nuclear-encoded mitochondrial genes

276 Amino acid analysis using protein-protein BLAST functions between the wild type human, wild
277 type zebrafish, and mutant zebrafish sequences showed consistent results between the three
278 conditions. The comparison of wild type human and wild type zebrafish sequences showed high
279 areas of homology following the mitochondrial targeting domain in almost every gene, with 80-
280 100% similarity in catalytic or active domains of the transcripts. Analysis of the mutant zebrafish
281 and human wild type comparison showed a range of difference with predicted frameshift
282 mutations leading to truncation of the protein very early in the transcript (**Figure 3A-X**). Of the
283 alleles created by TALEN mutagenesis in the MMC collection, all but one (*micu1*) showed a
284 predicted frameshift mutation leading to a truncation event immediately following the NHEJ-
285 mediated insertion or deletion. The GBT mutants showed high levels of homology prior to the
286 transposon integration site followed by a nearly complete loss of normal transcript levels
287 following splicing into the GBT cassette.

288

289 **Discussion**

290 In a multicellular organism, each cell is able to carry out its functions due to well-orchestrated
291 cross-talk between the nuclear and mitochondrial genomes. Many mitochondrial functions like
292 energy production, genome maintenance, ion/metabolite homeostasis, membrane dynamics and
293 transport of biomolecules can be attributed to approximately 1158 known nuclear proteins
294 residing in the mitochondria [24,27]. Due to advancements in proteomic technologies in recent
295 years, there has been a surge in documentation of many characterized and uncharacterized
296 mitochondrial proteins. However, correlation between mitochondrial localization of these
297 proteins and their physiological significance in disease progression remains largely unexplored.
298 Out of the 1158 nuclear encoded proteins, only 245 have functional evidence in mitochondrial
299 clinical manifestations [39]. For the remaining 913 proteins, mitochondrial involvement in
300 disease progression has yet to be demonstrated. The obstacles in mitochondrial genetic research,
301 and thus delays in finding effective treatments, are primarily due to the limited tools available to
302 mitochondrial researchers, specifically the small number of available model systems and
303 animals.

304 Most mitochondrial research thus far has made use of model systems that each present their own
305 unique challenge to accurate study of human disease. Yeast, one of the most common laboratory
306 eukaryotes, have been incredibly useful in mitochondrial research, but unlike humans and other
307 animals they lack complex I [45]. Complex 1 deficiency is the most frequent among
308 mitochondrial disorders caused by mutations in 28 out of 48 genes contributing to its assembly
309 and biogenesis [84]. Also, complex 1 is responsible for the most ROS generation, which acts as a
310 cue in various signaling pathways [85].

311 Human cell culture has been valuable in exploring mitochondrial disease models, principally
312 through cytoplasmic hybrids that are made by replacing the mitochondria of an immortalized cell
313 line with mutated patient mitochondria [86–89]. However, while these cells are a more faithful
314 representation of human mitochondrial activity than yeast, they have different barriers to
315 accuracy. First, immortalized cells, and cultured cells in general, often have modified metabolic
316 pathways compared to cells *in vivo*. Second, as is common to all cell culture research, cells in a
317 dish cannot accurately represent the complex interactions and systems biology inherent to a
318 complete organism.

319 In this study, we aim to support the establishment of the zebrafish as a complementary animal
320 model for understanding the role of nuclear-encoded mitochondrial proteins in biology and the
321 pathophysiology of mitochondrial disorders. We propose that zebrafish can be an excellent
322 model organism to study mitochondrial biology primarily because of their conserved genome,
323 codon bias and synteny. Other advantages include their amenability to genetic manipulation and
324 optical clarity, which facilitates direct observation. New gene editing techniques such as
325 TALENs and CRISPRs have aided in the development of humanized disease models in
326 organisms such as zebrafish, mice, and even pigs [90–97].

327 The MMC collection described here encompasses mutations in 24 different nuclear-encoded
328 genes related to mitochondrial function enabling a diverse study of the important roles the
329 mitochondria play in cellular biology. The collection includes mutants in all five complexes of
330 the electron transport chain as well as many other crucial pathways related to protein transport,
331 metabolite synthesis, mtDNA replication and expression, and calcium homeostasis. The first set
332 of mutants were created using custom gene editing to exons coding for critical functional
333 domains of the protein product. These domains were targeted because they shared high levels of

334 homology to their human ortholog. The second group of mutants consisted of fish that had been
335 injected with a protein trap transposon system that truncates the expected protein products as
336 well as sorting and imaging through fluorescent expression patterns *in vivo*. Included here, we
337 have curated small group of mutants where the GBT integrated into a mitochondrial gene of
338 interest.

339 In recent years zebrafish have been used to understand the pathophysiology of human
340 mitochondrial disorders such as cardiovascular, multisystemic, neurological, and erythropoiesis,
341 to name a few. Studies for loss of function have been carried out to model left ventricular non-
342 compaction, a genetically heterogeneous cardiomyopathy caused by mutations in nicotinamide
343 nucleotide transhydrogenase (*NNT*) gene [98,99]. Transiently suppressing the levels of *nnt* gene
344 did mirror the symptoms, such as early ventricular malformation and contractility defects,
345 observed in human patients [99]. Transient suppression of *ndufb11* protein in zebrafish results in
346 cardiac anomalies, confirming the role of *NDUFB11* in histiocytoid cardiomyopathy
347 pathogenesis [41].

348 Parkinson disease (PD) is another example where *parkin* and *pink* knockdown larvae display
349 mitochondrial fragmentation accompanied by accumulation of oxidative species, mimicking the
350 phenotype observed in PD patients. Loss of dendritic arborization and peripheral neurons were
351 also observed in the knockdown animals [72,100–103]. The zebrafish model of Dravet syndrome
352 shows altered metabolism associated with the pathophysiology [104]. Downregulation of the
353 sodium channel, voltage-gated, type I like, alpha b (*scn1lab*) in zebrafish leads to mitochondrial
354 structural abnormalities accompanied by accumulation of oxidative species [104–106].

355 Sideroblastic anemia, caused by mutations in mitoferrin (*mfrn1*) gene, has been successfully
356 modelled in zebrafish [107]. The elucidation of its role in zebrafish as iron importer does shed

357 some light on iron related defects in progression of anemia, accompanied by mitochondrial
358 dysfunction. Zebrafish erythrocytes are nucleated and possess organelles such as mitochondria
359 [108] in their cytoplasm, making them an ideal model organism to study ribosomopathies and
360 hematological malignancies [109–114]. Mitochondria in erythrocytes may offer valuable insight
361 into novel biological pathways resident in mitochondria.

362 Transient infantile liver failure and mitochondrial deafness, caused by mutations in tRNA 5-
363 methylaminomethyl-2-thiouridylate methyltransferase (*TRMU*) gene [115] have been
364 phenocopied in zebrafish [116]. Zebrafish *trmu* mutants exhibit abnormal mitochondrial
365 morphology, deficient oxidative phosphorylation, defects in hair cells and decreases in the steady
366 state levels of mt-tRNAs, resembling the observations made in patients suffering from this
367 syndrome [116].

368 Taking cues from these studies, many of the genes selected here were prioritized on the basis of
369 the mutations and clinical phenotype reported in patients. Detailed phenotypic analyses will be
370 described in subsequent studies. The zebrafish mutants encode for genes that have been involved
371 in myriad of clinical phenotypes such as encephalopathy, nephrotic syndrome, intellectual
372 disability, psychomotor developmental delay, respiratory chain deficiency, lactic acidosis, iron
373 overload, microcephaly, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, etc. The superficial investigations of the
374 tissue-specific phenotypes associated with, for example, housekeeping nuclear encoded proteins,
375 have to be refined with organelle level investigations. The repository of mutants encoding for
376 proteins involved in respiratory chain biogenesis and assembly offers the potential to understand
377 the moonlighting role of these proteins. Mutations in these proteins are associated with organ-
378 specific phenotypes such as neurological, paraganglioma, cardiovascular etc. [41,117]. Extensive
379 energy demand by these tissues is one possible explanation for the progression of these

380 manifestations; however, the role of these proteins in organ-specific cellular niches or
381 homeostasis is also a possibility. These models can help to decipher the role of these proteins in
382 the mitochondrial interactome, when studied *in vivo*. This underpins the utility of this MMC
383 collection in deciphering the role of mitochondrial proteins in tissue-specific biological
384 pathways.

385 Zebrafish are also amenable to small molecule mediated pharmacological modelling of
386 mitochondrial phenotypes. To test hypoxia as a potential protective therapy in mitochondrial
387 disorders, Von Hippel-Lindau (*vhl*) null mutant zebrafish, when treated with antimycin mediated
388 mitochondrial insult, exhibited improved survival. In addition, FG-4592 was found to improve
389 survival in response to respiratory chain inhibition, possibly due to increase in hypoxia response
390 [118]. A series of ETC complex specific pharmacological inhibitors such as rotenone (complex
391 I), azide (complex IV), oligomycin (complex V) and chloramphenicol (mitochondrial protein
392 translation) have been used to model respiratory chain dysfunction in zebrafish [78,119,120].
393 Zebrafish larvae display a series of phenotypes, such as developmental arrest, when treated with
394 rotenone. Treatment with azide induced decreased heart rate, loss of motor function, inability to
395 respond to tactical stimulation, neurological damage and mortality. Organ specific manifestations
396 such as neurological and behavioral dysfunction have been reported in 6-7 days post fertilization
397 (dpf) zebrafish larvae upon administration of a titred drug concentration [120]. These
398 observations tilt the scales in favor of zebrafish for modeling mitochondrial clinical
399 manifestations. Gaining insights from these studies, our compendium of mutants provides an
400 excellent resource to test a large number of biological and chemical modulators as potential
401 therapies for mitochondrial disorders for which treatment remains elusive.

402 Zebrafish offer many unique advantages for *in vivo* imaging experiments, as compared to their
403 mammalian counterparts. A classical study corroborating this advantage is *in vivo* imaging of
404 mitochondrial transport in a single axon, as demonstrated by Yang and his colleagues [121].
405 Seok and his colleagues generated a transgenic zebrafish line, expressing green fluorescent
406 protein fused to mitochondrial localization sequence from cytochrome c oxidase [71].
407 Mitochondrial function is often measured by various parameters such as estimation of membrane
408 potential, mitochondrial superoxide species and energy production. Superoxide activity and
409 membrane potential in zebrafish has been measured by employing the use of cell permeable
410 chemical probes such as MitoSox [122] and Dihydrorhodamine 123 (DH123) [73], respectively.
411 Zebrafish transgenic lines expressing genetically encoded calcium and oxidation indicators, have
412 also served as an excellent model to measure calcium homeostasis and oxidative status *in vivo* in
413 models of mechanosensory hair cell damage and death [123]. Constructs such as Mitotimer allow
414 the measurement of mitochondrial turnover, transport, and changes in the redox history of
415 mitochondria during organogenesis events in zebrafish embryos [124]. This transgenic model
416 enables a sweeping picture of the mitochondrial network, helping in studying cellular processes
417 such as mitophagy and apoptosis.

418 Zebrafish have also provided novel mechanistic insights to interrogate the mitochondrial
419 dynamics, to be called as “*in-vivo* life cycle of mitochondria” in healthy and diseased conditions
420 [124]. One such example is that of Mitofish [74], that recapitulates mitochondrial network
421 biogenesis, unraveling the role of the organelle in cell-type specific niches of different organ
422 systems. Mitofish is a transgenic zebrafish line that fluorescently labels the mitochondria in the
423 neurons, enabling non-invasive *in vivo* observation. Advancement in adaptive optics and lattice
424 light sheet microscopy have empowered researchers to look at vibrant and colorful images of

425 organelles in zebrafish. These technologies have been applied in investigating the organellar
426 dynamics in brain during early development and in the eye of an adult zebrafish [125]. These
427 MMMC mutants provide an excellent platform to study mitochondrial remodeling and
428 homeostasis in the progression of various clinical disorders by mapping the mitochondrial wiring
429 of the cell.

430 These zebrafish mutants have been cryopreserved for the purpose of sharing the lines as a
431 resource with the field for expanding the study of mitochondrial genetics and biology. In
432 addition, our template for the creation of mitochondrial mutants in zebrafish should enable the
433 creation of higher animal models of specific variants of interest. For the purpose of accelerating
434 this research, all lines in this project have had their information deposited with ZIRC, and all of
435 the lines have been made available via zfishbook (www.zfishbook.com) [83].

436 The goal of this study is to disseminate the use of zebrafish as a *noblesse oblige* in the field of
437 mitochondrial biology and medicine, paving way for the development of novel insight for
438 diagnostic and therapeutic strategies. Ultimately, using this collection of mutants we hope to
439 unravel a small part of the mystery that shrouds one of the most crucial organelles in the
440 cell. We hope that this MMMC mutant collection and the primer we provide for adding to it,
441 will help to usher in a new mitochondrial research using the zebrafish.

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450 The paper was written by AS, MW, ZWJ and SCE. Experiments were executed by JMC, MW,
451 HA, NI, MDU, JDB, RMH, WL, YD and TLP with experimental guidance from XX, KJC and
452 SCE. Data analysis was completed by JMC, NI, JDB, MDU, RMH, MW, WL, YD and AS.

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828 **Figures Legends:**

829 **Figure 1: Circular representation of the zebrafish (NC_002333.2) and human**
830 **mitochondrial genomes (NC_012920.1):** Both genomes share the same synteny, number of
831 genes and are nearly identical in size.

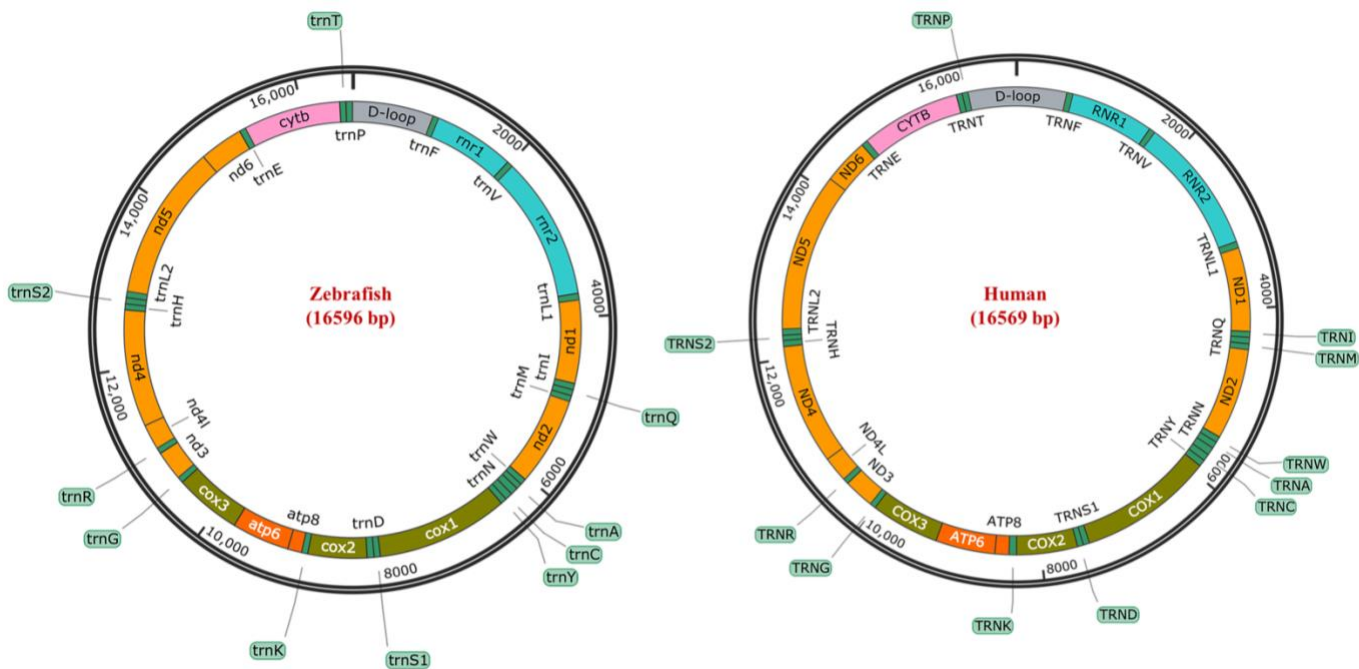
832 **Figure 2: Zebrafish Marriot mitochondrial mutant collection:** Schematic representation of
833 various mitochondrial resident pathways for which zebrafish mutants were generated. The
834 nuclear-encoded mitochondrial proteins have been illustrated according to the function they are
835 involved in mitochondrial maintenance and homeostasis. Mutants generated by gene editing are
836 depicted as grey, whereas those generated by the GBT system are depicted in pink.

837 **Figure 3: A depiction of homology of the mutants created for proteins involved in different**
838 **mitochondrial resident pathways: A-C: Complex 1 of mitochondrial respiratory chain; A:**
839 **NADH: ubiquinone oxidoreductase subunit AB1 (Ndufab1b); B: NADH dehydrogenase**
840 **association factor 6 (Ndufaf6); C: NADH dehydrogenase iron sulfur protein 4 (Ndufs4); D:**
841 **Complex 2 of mitochondrial respiratory chain, Succinate dehydrogenase subunit A (Sdha),**
842 **subunit; E-F: Complex 3 of mitochondrial respiratory chain; E: Mitochondrial chaperone**
843 **protein BCS1 (Bcs1l); F: Ubiquinol-cytochrome c reductase subunit VIII (Uqcrcq); G-I:**
844 **Complex 4 of mitochondrial respiratory chain; G: Protoheme IX farnesyltransferase (Cox10);**
845 **H: Cytochrome c oxidase IV subunit 1 (Cox4i2b); I: Surfeit locus protein 1 (Surf1); J-K:**
846 **Complex 5 of mitochondrial respiratory chain; J: ATP synthase subunit epsilon (Atp5e); K:**
847 **Transmembrane protein 70 (Tmem70); L-M: Biosynthesis of coenzyme Q; L: 4-**
848 **hydroxybenzoate polyprenyltransferase (Coq2) M: Decaprenyl-disphosphate synthase subunit 2**
849 **(Pdss2); N-Q: Mitochondrial calcium homeostasis; N: Mitochondrial calcium uptake protein 1**

850 (Mcu1); O: Calcium uniporter protein (Mcu) generated by TALEN and P; GBT; Q: Essential
851 MCU regulator (Smdt1); **R-U: Mitochondrial genome maintenance**; R: Thymidine kinase 2
852 (Tk2); S: Leucine-rich pentatricopeptide repeat-containing (Lrprrc); T: Mitochondrial
853 methionyl-tRNA formyltransferase (Mtfmt); U: 28s Ribosomal protein s18b, mitochondrial
854 (Mrps18b); **V: Mitochondrial protein import**; Mitochondrial import inner membrane
855 translocase subunit TIM50 (Timm50); **W-X: Mitochondrial metabolite synthesis**; W: 2-
856 Oxoglutarate dehydrogenase (Ogdh); X: Isocitrate dehydrogenase (Idh2).

857 **Figures:**

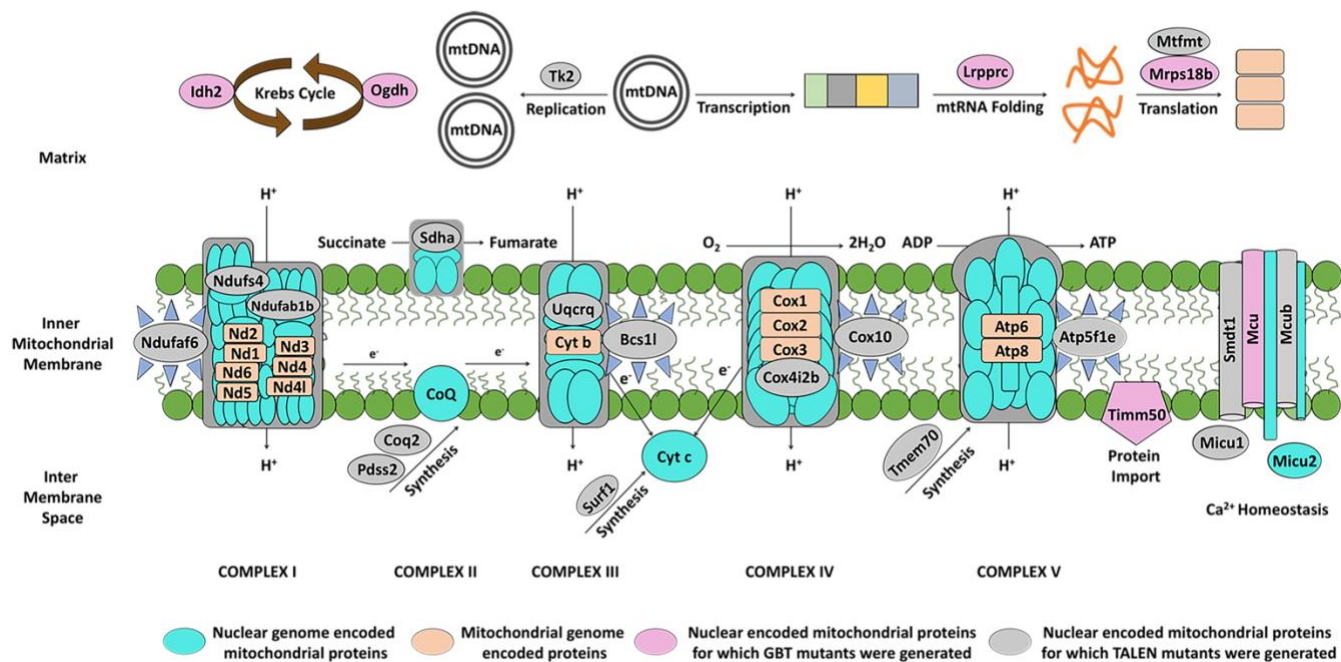
858 **Figure 1:**



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861 **Figure 2:**



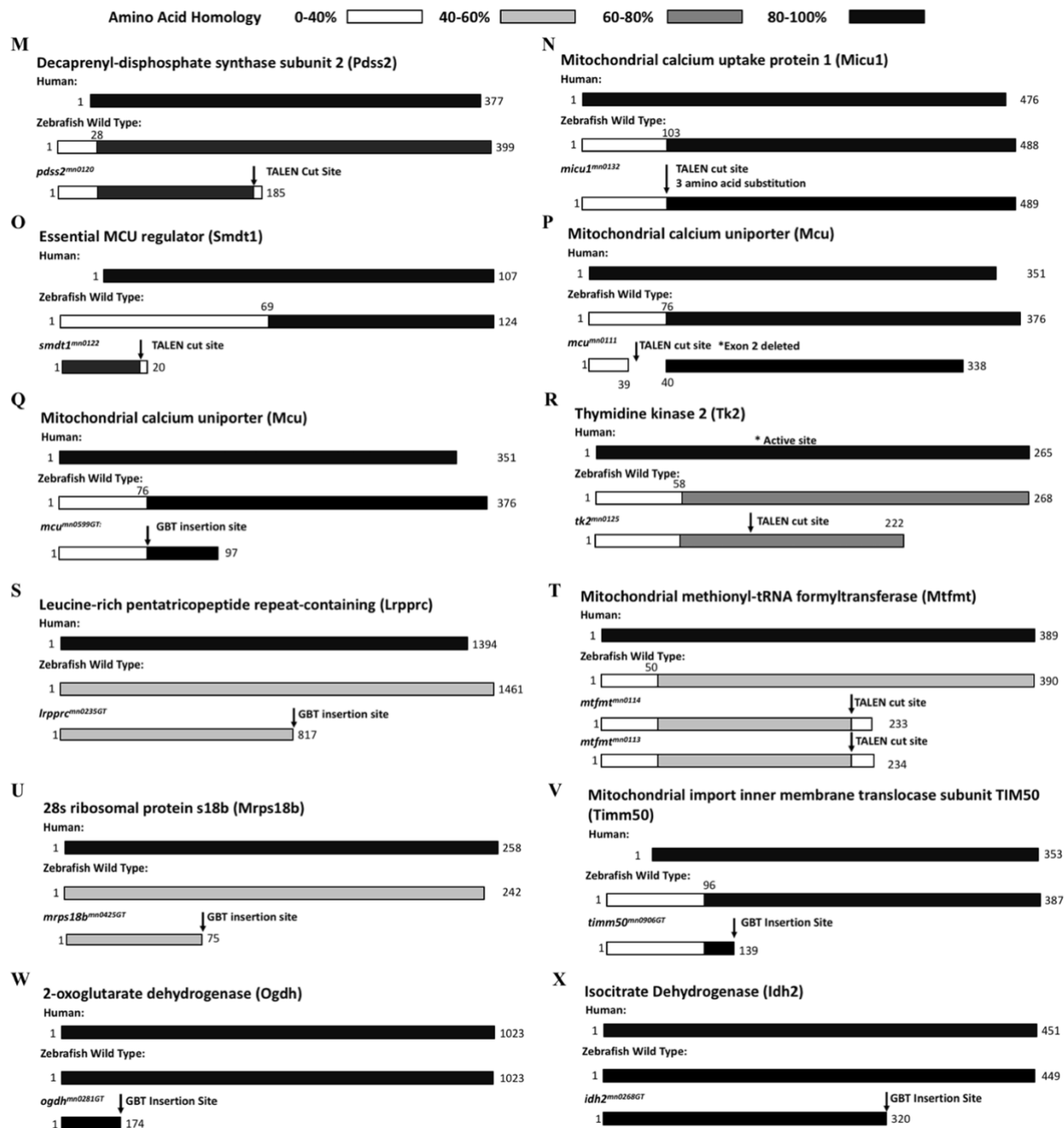
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864 **Figure 3:**



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