

# Identification of Motile Sperm Domain Containing 1 (MOSPD1) As a Novel Target of the Wnt/ $\beta$ -Catenin Signaling Pathway in Colorectal Cancer

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## Research Article

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1 **Identification of motile sperm domain containing 1 (*MOSPD1*) as a novel**  
2 **target of the Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling pathway in colorectal cancer**

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28

1 **Abstract**

2 Aberrant activation of the Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling pathway plays a crucial role in  
3 the development and progression of colorectal cancer. Previously, we identified  
4 a set of candidate genes that were regulated by this signaling pathway, and we  
5 focused on *MOSPD1*, motile sperm domain containing 1, in this study.  
6 Immunohistochemical staining revealed that the expression of MOSPD1 was  
7 elevated in tumorous cells of colorectal cancer tissues compared with non-  
8 tumorous cells. Using ChIP-seq data and JASPAR database, we searched for  
9 the regulatory region(s) in the *MOSPD1* gene as a target of the Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin  
10 signaling, and identified a region containing three putative TCF-binding motifs in  
11 the 3'-flanking region. Additional analyses using reporter assay and ChIP-qPCR  
12 suggested that this region harbors an enhancer activity through an interaction  
13 with TCF7L2 and  $\beta$ -catenin. These data have clarified that *MOSPD1* is a novel  
14 direct target of the Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling. In addition, the identification of its  
15 enhancer region may be helpful for the future studies of precise regulatory  
16 mechanisms of MOSPD1.  
17

## 1 Introduction

2 The Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling pathway (also known as the canonical Wnt pathway)  
3 is responsible for embryonic development and tissue homeostasis<sup>1</sup>. Aberrant  
4 activation of this pathway by genetic and epigenetic alteration is involved in  
5 human diseases such as cancer<sup>2,3,4</sup>. In colorectal cancer (CRC), frequent  
6 activation of Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling pathway by somatic mutations in APC  
7 regulator of WNT signaling pathway (*APC*) or the  $\beta$ -catenin gene (*CTNNB1*) has  
8 been reported. In the cBioPortal for Cancer Genomics  
9 (<https://www.cbioportal.org/>), a public database of cancer genomes, mutations of  
10 *APC* and *CTNNB1* were found in 64% and 6%, respectively, of 3,051 CRC tissues.  
11 Loss of function mutations in *APC* or activating mutations in *CTNNB1* results in  
12 the stabilization and accumulation of  $\beta$ -catenin protein in the cells. The  
13 accumulated  $\beta$ -catenin interacts with T cell factor (TCF) / lymphoid enhancer-  
14 binding factor (LEF) transcription factors in the nucleus, and induces the  
15 expression of their target genes (Wnt target genes)<sup>5</sup>. To date, more than one  
16 hundred Wnt target genes have been identified, and a list of the genes is shown  
17 on the Wnt homepage at [https://web.stanford.edu/group/nusselab/cgi-](https://web.stanford.edu/group/nusselab/cgi-bin/wnt/target_genes)  
18 [bin/wnt/target\\_genes](https://web.stanford.edu/group/nusselab/cgi-bin/wnt/target_genes). Studies of their function have helped to further understand

1 the molecular mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and the complex regulatory  
2 mechanisms underlying this signaling pathway. Representative examples of the  
3 aberrant activation of this pathway contributing to carcinogenesis include MYC  
4 proto-oncogene (*MYC*) and cyclin D1 (*CCND1*). *MYC* was identified by serial  
5 analysis of gene expression using HT29 cells containing a zinc-inducible APC,  
6 and affects a wide variety of functions such as cell proliferation, angiogenesis,  
7 and promotion of anaerobic metabolism<sup>6</sup>. *Cyclin D1* is known to regulate G1-S  
8 cell cycle progression, and it was identified through the analysis of human genes  
9 involved in controlling cell growth, the promoter regions of which contain the core  
10 TCF/LEF-binding sites<sup>7</sup>.

11 It is of note that chromatin immunoprecipitation coupled with high-  
12 throughput sequencing (ChIP-seq) analysis using six different cell lines and anti-  
13 TCF7L2 antibody identified 116,000 non-redundant TCF7L2-binding sites, with  
14 1,864 sites common to the cell lines tested, suggesting the existence of as yet  
15 unidentified Wnt target genes in human cells<sup>8</sup>. To understand the precise  
16 molecular mechanism underlying the development of Wnt-driven cancer, we  
17 previously searched for new target genes by microarray using  $\beta$ -catenin-depleted  
18 CRC cells and ChIP-seq of TCF7L2. Integrated analysis of these data identified

1 11 candidate genes that are directly regulated by the  $\beta$ -catenin/TCF7L2 complex<sup>9</sup>.  
2 Among these candidates, we focused in this study on motile sperm domain  
3 containing 1 (*MOSPD1*), and revealed that *MOSPD1* is a novel direct target of  
4 the Wnt signaling pathway. Furthermore, we identified three Wnt responsive  
5 elements in the 3'-flanking region of *MOSPD1*, and showed that the elements are  
6 involved in the transcriptional activation. These data will help deepen our  
7 understanding of colorectal carcinogenesis, as well as the regulatory mechanism  
8 of *MOSPD1*.

9  
10

## 11 **Results**

### 12 **The expression of *MOSPD1* is regulated by Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling in** 13 **colorectal cancer cells**

14 In the previous study, we identified a total of 11 target genes whose expression  
15 was commonly down-regulated by the introduction of  $\beta$ -catenin siRNAs and a  
16 dominant-negative form of TCF7L2 (dnTCF7L2) in HCT116, SW480, and LS174T  
17 cells<sup>9</sup>. Subsequent qPCR analysis revealed that the expression of *PDE4D*,  
18 *PHLDB2*, *OXR1*, *FRMD5*, and *MOSPD1* was significantly decreased by the

1 knockdown of  $\beta$ -catenin. To verify the association of MOSPD1 with the Wnt/ $\beta$ -  
2 catenin signaling, we performed western blot analysis using lysates from SW480  
3 and HCT116 cells treated with  $\beta$ -catenin or control siRNA. In agreement with the  
4 qPCR data, treatment with two independent  $\beta$ -catenin siRNAs decreased  
5 MOSPD1 expression in both cells (Fig. 1a). In addition, treatment of HeLa cells  
6 with lithium chloride (LiCl), a glycogen synthase kinase 3 (GSK3) inhibitor that  
7 activates the Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling, increased  $\beta$ -catenin and MOSPD1  
8 expression (Fig. 1b). These data corroborated that MOSPD1 is a downstream  
9 target of the Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling.

10           Since aberrant activation of the Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling is involved in the  
11 majority of CRC<sup>2,10</sup>, we searched for gene expression data of colorectal tumors  
12 in NCBI Gene Expression Omnibus. In a dataset (GSE21510) containing 104  
13 CRC tissues and 25 non-tumorous colonic tissues<sup>11</sup>, the average *MOSPD1*  
14 expression was found to be 2.18-fold higher (q-value:  $3.05E^{-13}$ ) in the tumor  
15 tissues than in the non-tumorous tissues (Fig. 1c). In addition, the expression  
16 levels showed a positive correlation with *RNF43* ( $r^2=0.40$ ), *AXIN2* ( $r^2=0.30$ ), and  
17 *MYC* ( $r^2=0.29$ ), three well-known Wnt targets (Fig. 1d). These data supported that  
18 *MOSPD1* expression is induced by the activation of Wnt signaling.



1           We further carried out immunohistochemical staining of  $\beta$ -catenin and  
2   MOSPD1 using 11 CRC tissues. As shown in Fig. 1e,  $\beta$ -catenin was stained in  
3   the cytoplasm and/or nucleus of tumorous cells in all tumor tissues tested (upper  
4   panel). In addition, MOSPD1 was also positively stained in the cytoplasm and/or  
5   nucleus of the tumorous cells (Fig. 1e, lower panel).

6

### 7   **Identification of an enhancer in the 3'-flanking region of *MOSPD1***

8   In our previous study, ChIP-seq analysis showed a region for the binding with  
9   TCF7L2 in the 3'-flanking region of *MOSPD1* (3'-putative enhancer, GRCh38-  
10   chrX:134,885,306-134,886,672)<sup>9</sup>. This region was overlapped with a peak in  
11   ENCODE ChIP-seq data of TCF7L2 (ENCSR000EUV, Fig. 2a, upper panel). In  
12   addition to the 3'-region, the ENCODE data showed another peak in the 5'-  
13   flanking region of *MOSPD1* (GRCh38-chrX: 134,932,561-134,932,930). These  
14   peaks were overlapped with peaks of histone modifications (H3K4me1:  
15   ENCSR161MXP and H3K27Ac: ENCSR000EUT, Fig. 2a, middle and lower  
16   panels), suggesting that these regions may have enhancer activity through the  
17   interaction with TCF7L2. To investigate their enhancer activity, these regions  
18   were cloned into reporter plasmids, and reporter assays were performed using

1 HCT116 cells. As a result, both reporter plasmids, pGL4.23-MOSPD1-5'E and  
2 pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E, showed increased reporter activity compared to the  
3 mock reporter (empty) by 1.29- and 5.62-fold, respectively (Fig. 2b). Importantly,  
4 co-transfection of the reporter plasmids with plasmids expressing a dominant-  
5 negative form of TCF7L2 (dnTCF7L2) significantly decreased the reporter activity  
6 of pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E, but not the activity of pGL4.23-MOSPD1-5'E,  
7 suggesting the enhancer activity of the 3'-flanking region through the interaction  
8 with TCF7L2. In addition, knockdown of  $\beta$ -catenin by two independent siRNAs  
9 markedly reduced the reporter activity of pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E (Fig. 2c).

10 To confirm the interaction between the 3'-flanking region of *MOSPD1* and  
11 TCF7L2, we performed an additional CHIP-qPCR assay using anti-TCF7L2  
12 antibody and region-specific primer sets for the 3'-enhancer region of *MOSPD1*.  
13 An enhancer region in intron 2 of *RNF43* was recruited as a positive control<sup>12</sup>.  
14 This assay detected an enrichment of the enhancer region in *RNF43* by 4.53-fold  
15 in the precipitants with the anti-TCF7L2 antibody compared to those with normal  
16 IgG. DNA fragments containing the 3'-enhancer region of *MOSPD1* were  
17 enriched by 10.3-fold in the precipitants (Fig. 2d). These data suggested that both  
18 TCF7L2 and  $\beta$ -catenin are involved in the enhancer activity and that TCF7L2

1 associates with the 3'-enhancer region.

2

### 3 **Involvement of three TCF-binding motifs in the enhancer activity**

4 We further searched for TCF-binding elements (TBE) in the 3'-enhancer region  
5 using JASPAR, a database for transcription factor binding profiles<sup>13</sup>, and  
6 identified eight candidate TBEs (Supplementary Table S1). Among the eight, we  
7 focused on three TBEs with a similarity score greater than 10; TBE1 (GRCh38-  
8 chrX: 134,885,716-134,885,729), TBE2 (GRCh38-chrX: 134,885,543-  
9 134,885,556), and TBE3 (GRCh38-chrX: 134,885,482-134,885,495). To  
10 investigate the involvement of these motifs in the enhancer activity, we prepared  
11 mutant reporter plasmids containing two-nucleotide substitutions in each TCF-  
12 binding motif (TBE1-mut, TBE2-mut, and TBE3-mut) of pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E  
13 and reporter plasmids containing these substitutions in the three motifs (TBEall-  
14 mut) (Fig. 3a). A reporter assay determined that the reporter activity of mutant  
15 plasmids (TBE1-mut, TBE2-mut, and TBE3-mut) was significantly reduced  
16 compared to the wild type plasmids (pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E) by 9.87%, 35.3%,  
17 and 35.0%, respectively. In addition, the activity of TBEall-mut plasmids was  
18 markedly decreased compared to the wild type by 85.6% (Fig. 3b). Treatment of

1 the cells expressing TBE1-mut, TBE2-mut, or TBE3-mut with  $\beta$ -catenin siRNA  
2 suppressed the activity by 50.2%, 52.2%, and 42.3%, respectively, compared to  
3 the cells with control siRNA. These data indicated that the three motifs are, at  
4 least in part, associated with the enhancer activity of TCF7L2.

5

6

## 7 **Discussion**

8 In this study, we revealed for the first time that *MOSPD1* is transcriptionally  
9 regulated by Wnt signaling through the three TBEs located in its 3'-flanking region.

10 *MOSPD1* is a member of major sperm protein (MSP) domain-containing  
11 family that is highly conserved in many species. There are three MSP domain-  
12 containing proteins (*MOSPD1*, 2, and 3) in humans, and four (*Mospd1*, 2, 3, and  
13 4) in mice and rats<sup>14</sup>. The similarities between human *MOSPD1* and human  
14 *MOSPD2*, and that between human *MOSPD1* and human *MOSPD3* are 8% and  
15 32%, respectively, at protein levels (CLUSTALW, [https://www.genome.jp/tools-](https://www.genome.jp/tools-bin/clustalw)  
16 [bin/clustalw](https://www.genome.jp/tools-bin/clustalw)). In our previous expression profile analysis, knockdown of  $\beta$ -catenin  
17 decreased *MOSPD1* expression by 38% in SW480 cells, but it increased the  
18 expression of *MOSPD2* and *MOSPD3* by 20% and 40%, respectively. These data

1 may imply that MOSPD1 has a specific function that is linked with the canonical  
2 Wnt signaling pathway in development.

3           The function of MOSPD1 is still largely unclarified. In the early 1980s,  
4 MSP was isolated as a protein 15K from sperm cells of *Caenorhabditis elegans*<sup>15</sup>,  
5 implying its role in spermatogenesis. Later, MSP was shown to function as a  
6 motility apparatus in sperm locomotion<sup>16,17</sup>. In GTEx Portal, a public database of  
7 gene expression in normal tissues (<https://gtexportal.org/home/>), *MOSPD1* is  
8 expressed in a variety of tissues including esophageal mucosa, adrenal gland,  
9 testis, skin, and uterus, suggesting that MOSPD1 should play physiological  
10 role(s) in various tissues. In mice, *Mospd1* is abundantly expressed in  
11 mesenchymal tissues, and its expression is elevated during differentiation in  
12 osteoblastic, myoblastic, and adipocytic cell lines<sup>14</sup>. Another study revealed that  
13 *Mospd1*-null embryonic stem cells were able to proliferate and that they were  
14 unable to differentiate to osteoblasts, adipocytes, and hematopoietic  
15 progenitors<sup>18</sup>. These data indicated that *Mospd1* should be involved in the  
16 differentiation and proliferation of mesenchymal cells. In addition, knockdown of  
17 *Mospd1* induced the expression of epithelial cadherin *Cdh1*, and decreased the  
18 expression of *Snail1*, *Snai2*, and mesenchymal cadherin *Cdh11* in MC3T3-E1

1 cells established from mouse osteoblasts<sup>14</sup>. These results suggested that  
2 *Mospd1* may be associated with epithelial-mesenchymal transition (EMT).  
3 Interestingly, expression of *Runx2* and *Osteocalcin* was also down-regulated by  
4 the knockdown of *Mospd1* in MC3T3-E1 cells<sup>14</sup>. RUNX2, one of the transcription  
5 factors required for osteoblastic differentiation is abundantly expressed in the  
6 nucleus of osteoid osteoma cells<sup>19</sup>. In addition, a study reported that surgical  
7 resection of osteoid osteoma in two patients decreased total and  
8 undercarboxylated osteocalcin in their sera, suggesting that osteocalcin is  
9 secreted by the osteoid osteoma cells<sup>20</sup>. It is noteworthy that osteomas frequently  
10 develop in the mandible bone of patients with germline variants in the *APC* gene<sup>21</sup>.  
11 The induction of RUNX2 and/or osteocalcin by the increased expression of  
12 MOSPD1 in osteoblasts may be involved in the development of osteomas in FAP  
13 patients.

14 We have shown here that the expression of MOSPD1 is elevated in all  
15 CRC tissues examined, and that its expression is associated with the  
16 accumulation of  $\beta$ -catenin. The expression of MOSPD1 was shown to be  
17 elevated in the circulating tumor cells of metastatic castration-resistant prostate  
18 cancer<sup>22</sup>. It was also reported that abnormal  $\beta$ -catenin expression was observed

1 in approximately 38% of hormone-refractory prostate cancer, which is much  
2 higher than that detected in prostate cancer tissues obtained from radical  
3 prostatectomy<sup>23</sup>. Since MOSPD1 expression is associated with EMT, up-  
4 regulation of MOSPD1 in cancer cells may be related to their invasion and  
5 metastasis. In line with this view, ovarian cancer cells with high invasion-  
6 phenotype expressed significantly increased levels of MOSPD1 compared to the  
7 cells with low invasion-phenotype<sup>24</sup>. Although further studies are necessary,  
8 augmented expression of MOSPD1 may play a crucial role in the EMT of CRC.

9         We identified a distant enhancer region for the Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling in  
10 the 3'-flanking region of *MOSPD1*. Enhancer regions that associate with  $\beta$ -  
11 catenin-TCF/LEF1 complexes have been identified in various regions of the  
12 target genes. For instance, the enhancer regions of *MYC*<sup>6</sup>, *CCND1*<sup>7</sup>, claudin-1  
13 (*CLDN1*)<sup>25</sup>, membrane-type matrix metalloproteinase (*MT1-MMP*)<sup>26</sup>, and *SP5*<sup>27</sup>  
14 are localized in their 5'-flanking regions, and those of *RNF43*<sup>12</sup> and *FRMD5*<sup>9</sup> in  
15 intron 2 and intron 1, respectively. Regarding *AXIN2*, several enhancer regions  
16 have been discovered in its 5'-flanking region and in intron 1<sup>28</sup>. It is of note that,  
17 in addition to the 5'-flanking enhancer region, *MYC* has another enhancer  
18 element in its 3'-flanking region<sup>29</sup>. Therefore, *MOSPD1* may have additional

1 enhancer region(s) in addition to the one identified here.

2 In conclusion, we have discovered that *MOSPD1* is a novel target gene  
3 of the Wnt signaling pathway in CRC. Further analysis of MOSPD1 function will  
4 elucidate the precise molecular mechanism underlying the development and  
5 progression of CRC, and may contribute to the development of therapeutic  
6 strategies against their invasion and metastasis.

7

8

## 9 **Materials and methods**

### 10 **Cell culture**

11 Human CRC cell lines, HCT116 and SW480, and a human cervix cell line, HeLa  
12 were purchased from the American Type Culture Collection (Manassas, VA). All  
13 cell lines were grown in appropriate media (McCoy's 5a Modified Medium for  
14 HCT116, Leibovitz's L-15 Medium for SW480, and Eagle's Minimum Essential  
15 Medium for HeLa) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (BioSera,  
16 Bousens, France), and antibiotic/antimycotic solution (Fujifilm Wako Pure  
17 Chemical, Osaka, Japan). HCT116 and HeLa cells were maintained in 5% CO<sub>2</sub>  
18 at 37°C, and SW480 cells were maintained without CO<sub>2</sub> supplementation at 37°C.



1

## 2 **Reporter plasmids and luciferase assay**

3 Two genomic regions of 5'-putative (GRCh38-chrX: 134,932,384-134,933,013)  
4 and 3'-putative enhancers (GRCh38-chrX: 134,885,255-134,886,704) were  
5 amplified by PCR using region-specific primer sets and genomic DNA extracted  
6 from the peripheral blood of healthy volunteers as a template. After digestion with  
7 *XhoI* and *BglII* restriction enzymes, the PCR products were cloned into pGL4.23  
8 vector (Promega, Madison, WI) to generate pGL4.23-MOSPD1-5'E and  
9 pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E. The primer sequences are shown in Supplementary  
10 Table S2. HCT116 cells were transfected with these reporter plasmids together  
11 with control or  $\beta$ -catenin siRNAs using Lipofectamine 2000 (Thermo Fisher  
12 Scientific, Waltham, MA). pRL-null plasmids were co-transfected with the reporter  
13 plasmids for normalization. 48 hours after the transfection, the cells were lysed  
14 and reporter activities were measured using dual luciferase kit (TOYO B-Net,  
15 Tokyo, Japan) and Lumat LB9507 Luminometer (Berthold Technologies, Bad  
16 Wildbad, Germany). Firefly luciferase activities were normalized to *Renilla*  
17 luciferase activity (pRL-null).

18

## 1 **Site-directed mutagenesis**

2 Mutant reporter plasmids containing substitutions in the consensus sequence of  
3 the TCF7L2-binding motifs were prepared by site-directed mutagenesis. Wild  
4 type-plasmid DNA of pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E was amplified using KOD-Plus-Neo  
5 (Toyobo, Osaka, Japan) and a set of mutagenic primers (Supplementary Table  
6 S3). The PCR products were digested with *DpnI* restriction enzyme (Takara Bio,  
7 Shiga, Japan) to cleave the methylated template DNA, followed by transformation  
8 into *Escherichia coli*. Insertion of mutations in the plasmids was confirmed by  
9 Sanger sequencing (3500xl DNA Analyzer, Thermo Fisher Scientific).

10

## 11 **Gene silencing**

12 For the knockdown of  $\beta$ -catenin, two  $\beta$ -catenin siRNAs (si $\beta$ -catenin#9: 5'-  
13 GAUCCUAGCUAUCGUUCUU-3' and si $\beta$ -catenin#10: 5'-  
14 UAAUGAGGACCUAUACUUA-3', Merck, Darmstadt, Germany) were used.  
15 Control siRNA (siControl, ON-TARGET plus Non-targeting Pool, #D-001810-10-  
16 20) was purchased from Horizon Discovery (Lafayette, CO). Cells were  
17 transfected with 10 nM of the indicated siRNA using Lipofectamine RNAiMAX or  
18 Lipofectamine 2000 (Thermo Fisher Scientific) for 48 hours.

1

## 2 **Western blotting**

3 Total protein was extracted from cultured cells using SDS sample buffer (25 mM  
4 Tris-HCl, pH6.8, 0.8% sodium dodecyl sulfate, 4% glycerol). After boiling the  
5 samples for 10 min, the protein was separated by SDS-PAGE, and transferred  
6 onto a nitrocellulose membrane (GE Healthcare, Buckinghamshire, UK). The  
7 membranes were blocked with 5% milk in TBS-T (Tris-buffered saline - Tween20),  
8 and then incubated with primary antibody; anti-MOSPD1 (GTX32111, GeneTex,  
9 Irvine, CA), anti- $\beta$ -catenin (9582, Cell Signaling Technology, Danvers, MA), or  
10 anti- $\beta$ -actin antibodies (A5441, Merck). Horseradish peroxidase-conjugated goat  
11 anti-mouse or anti-rabbit IgG (GE Healthcare) served as the secondary antibody  
12 for the ECL Detection System (GE Healthcare).

13

## 14 **Chromatin immunoprecipitation assay**

15 Chromatin immunoprecipitation followed by qPCR (ChIP-qPCR) was performed  
16 as described previously<sup>30</sup>. Briefly, HCT116 cells were cross-linked with 1%  
17 formaldehyde for 10 min at room temperature, and 0.1 M glycine was added to  
18 quench the formaldehyde. Chromatin was extracted and sheared by micrococcal

1 nuclease digestion (New England Biolabs, Ipswich, MA). Subsequently, protein-  
2 DNA complexes were immunoprecipitated with 10 µg of anti-TCF7L2 antibody  
3 (05-511, Merck) bound to Dynabeads Protein G (Thermo Fisher Scientific).  
4 Normal mouse IgG (Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Santa Cruz, CA) was used as a  
5 negative control. The precipitated protein-DNA complexes were purified by  
6 conventional DNA extraction methods, and the purified DNA was subjected to  
7 qPCR analysis using KAPA SYBR FAST ABI prism Kit (Kapa Biosystems,  
8 Wilmington, MA) and a set of primers encompassing the TCF-binding motifs  
9 located in the 3'-flanking region of *MOSPD1*. Amplification of a region upstream  
10 of the *GAPDH* gene was used as a negative control. Sequences of the primers  
11 are shown in Supplementary Table S4.

12

### 13 **Immunohistochemical staining**

14 Tissue sections were deparaffinized with xylene and rehydrated in a graded  
15 series of ethanol. Antigen retrieval was performed using 0.01 M citrate buffer  
16 (pH6.0) and autoclave heating at 110°C for 10 min. After blocking endogenous  
17 peroxidase activity in 0.3% H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (Fujifilm Wako Pure Chemical) for 5 min, slides  
18 were incubated with 5% goat serum (ab7481, Abcam, Cambridge, UK) for 8 min,

1 followed by the incubation with anti-MOSPD1 (GeneTex, 1:200) or anti- $\beta$ -catenin  
2 antibody (RB-1491, NeoMarkers, Union City, CA, 1:300) at 4°C overnight.  
3 Secondary antibody, Dako EnVision™+ Dual Link System-HRP (Dako,  
4 Carpinteria, CA), and ImmPACT DAB Substrate Kit (Vecter laboratories,  
5 Burlingame, CA) were then used to visualize the immunoreactivity. Tissue  
6 sections were counterstained with hematoxylin (Merck).

7 This study was approved by the ethical committee of the Institute of Medical  
8 Science, The University of Tokyo (IMSUT-IRB, 2020-78-0318). All colorectal  
9 tumor tissues and corresponding non-cancerous tissues were obtained with  
10 informed consent from the resected specimens of patients who underwent  
11 surgery or endoscopy. All methods were carried out in accordance with relevant  
12 guidelines and regulations.

13

14

#### 15 **Data Availability**

16 All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published  
17 article.

18

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10



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5

6 **Author information**

7 Author contributions

8 The experiments were designed by K.Y., and Y.F. The experiments were  
9 performed by C.H., C.Z., S.N., and Y.T. Data analysis was performed by C.H.,  
10 C.Z., K.T., T.I., Y.O., S.A., G.T., Y.A., and D.S. The manuscript was written by C.H.,  
11 K.Y., and Y.F. All authors critically read and approved the final paper.

12

13 **Additional information**

14 Conflict of interest

15 The authors declare no competing interests.

16

1 **Figure Legends**

2 **Figure 1. MOSPD1 is regulated by the Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin signaling in colorectal**

3 **cancer.** (a) Suppressed expression of MOSPD1 by  $\beta$ -catenin siRNAs in SW480

4 and HCT116 cells. (b) Induction of  $\beta$ -catenin in HeLa cells treated with LiCl (30

5 mM and 100 mM) increased MOSPD1 expression. The expression of  $\beta$ -actin

6 served as a loading control. (c) Expression of *MOSPD1* in 104 CRC tissues and

7 25 non-tumorous colonic tissues. The data were obtained from a dataset of

8 GSE21510 in GEO. Statistical significance was determined by unpaired t-test

9 with Benjamini–Hochberg correction. (d) Scatter plots show the positive

10 correlation between the expression levels of three Wnt target genes (*Y*-axis) and

11 *MOSPD1* (*X*-axis). The data were obtained from GSE21510. (e)

12 Immunohistochemical staining of  $\beta$ -catenin (upper) and MOSPD1 (lower) in CRC

13 tissues. Scale bars 100  $\mu$ m. Full-length, uncropped images are included within

14 Supplementary Figure.

15

16 **Figure 2. TCF7L2-interacting region in the 3'-flanking region may play a role**

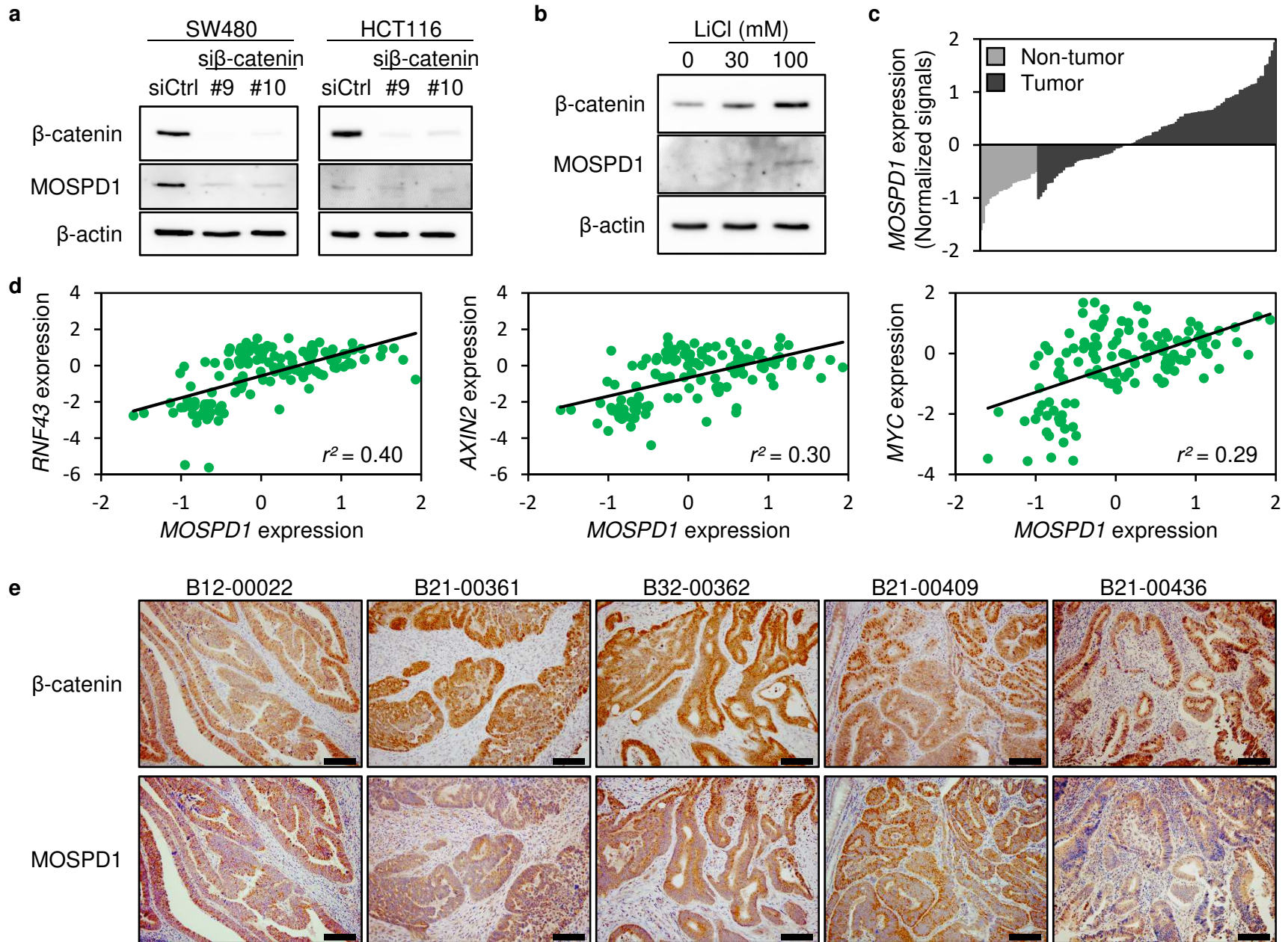
17 **as an enhancer.** (a) Schematic representation of the ENCODE ChIP-seq data of

18 TCF7L2, H3K4me1, and H3K27ac in HCT116 cells. (b) Reporter activity of

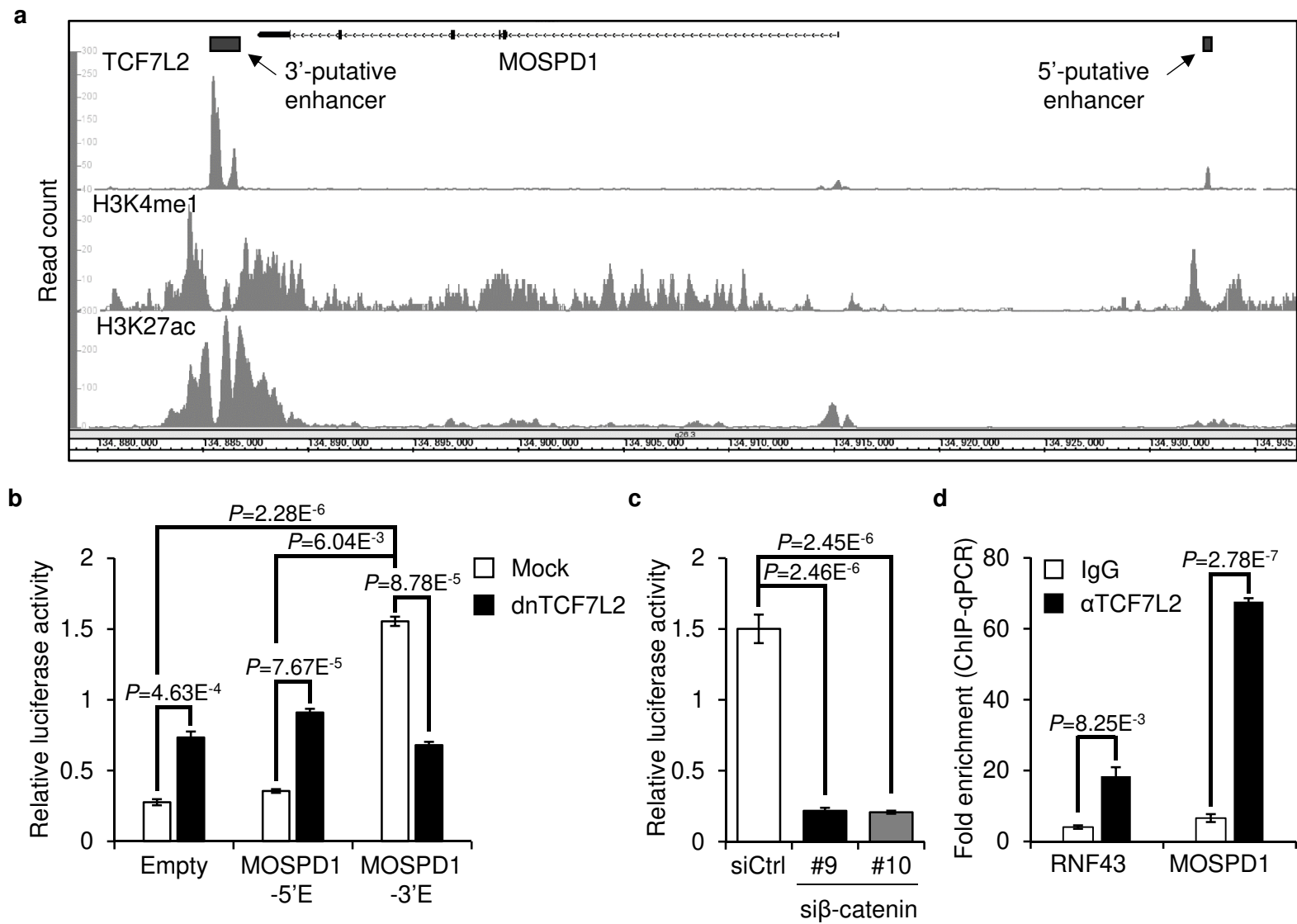
1 putative enhancer regions in the 5'- and 3'-flanking regions. HCT116 cells were  
2 transfected with pGL4.23 (Empty), pGL4.23-MOSPD1-5'E (MOSPD1-5'E), or  
3 pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E (MOSPD1-3'E) plasmids, in combination with pRL-null  
4 reporter plasmids for the normalization of transfection. The cells were co-  
5 transfected with pCAGGS-dnTCF7L2 plasmids expressing a dominant-negative  
6 form of TCF7L2 or the empty plasmids (Mock). Relative luciferase activities  
7 represent mean  $\pm$  SD from three independent cultures. Statistical significance  
8 was determined by Student's t-test or Dunnett's test. (c) Effect of  $\beta$ -catenin siRNA  
9 on the reporter activity of pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E (MOSPD1-3'E) in HCT116 cells.  
10 Relative luciferase activities represent mean  $\pm$  SD from three independent  
11 cultures. Statistical significance was determined by Dunnett's test. (d) ChIP-  
12 qPCR was performed using region-specific primer sets and the precipitants with  
13 an anti-TCF7L2 antibody or those with normal IgG. The amplification of a region  
14 upstream of *GAPDH* was used for normalization. The enhancer region in intron  
15 2 of *RNF43* was used as a positive control. Data represents mean  $\pm$  SD from  
16 three independent experiments. A significant difference was determined by  
17 Student's t-test.  
18

1 **Figure 3. Involvement of the three TBEs in the reporter activity.** (a)  
2 Schematic representation of wild type (open circle: WWCAAAAG, W: A/T) and  
3 mutant (closed circle: WWCAGCG) TCF-binding motifs in pGL4.23-MOSPD1-3'E  
4 reporter plasmids. (b) Relative reporter activity of empty, wild type and mutant  
5 reporter plasmids in HCT116 cells (WT, TBE1-mut, TBE2-mut, TBE3-mut, or  
6 TBEall-mut). The data represent mean  $\pm$  SD from three independent cultures.  
7 Statistical significance was determined by Student's t-test or Dunnett's test.

**Figure 1**

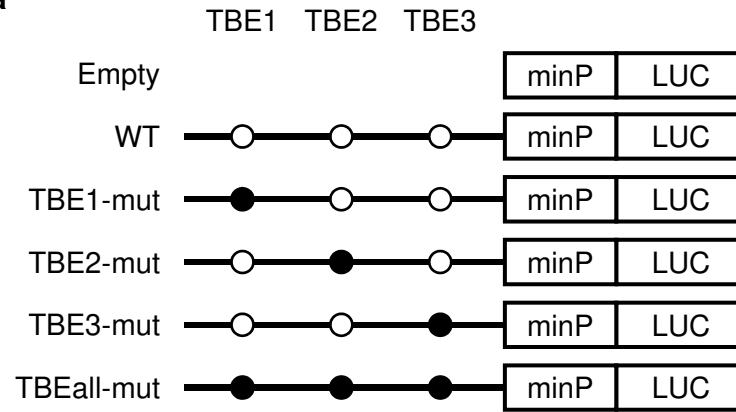


**Figure 2**

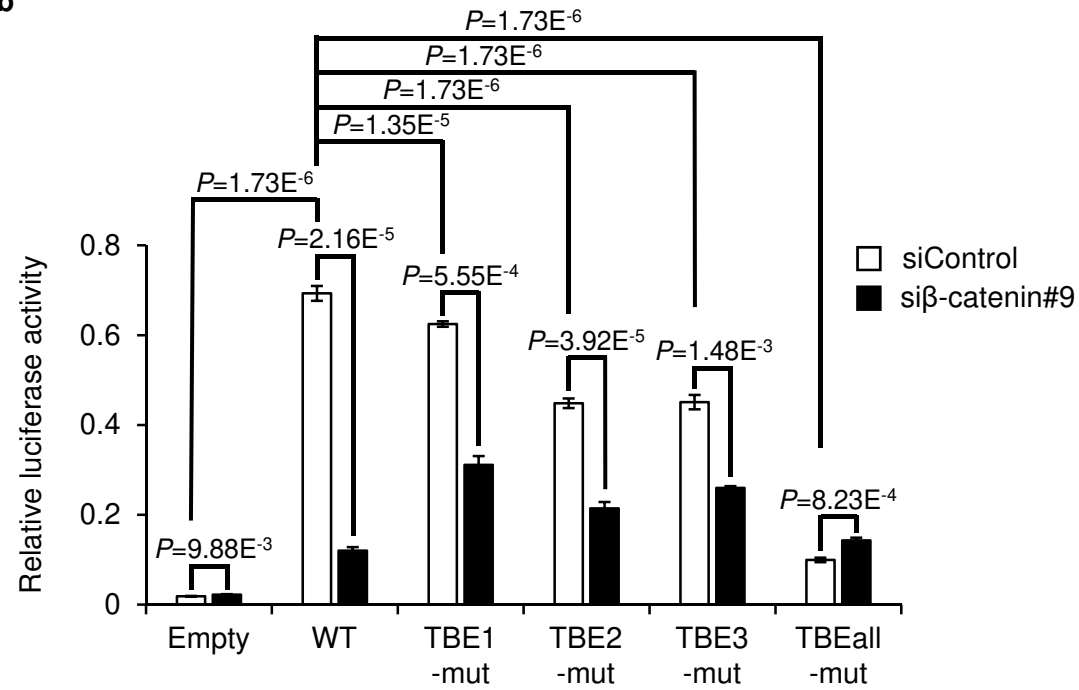


**Figure 3**

**a**



**b**



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