

HHS Public Access

Author manuscript *J Immunol*. Author manuscript; available in PMC 2015 October 27.

Published in final edited form as: J Immunol. 2006 May 1; 176(9): 5426–5437.

A Role for the MutL Mismatch Repair MIh3 Protein in Immunoglobulin Class Switch DNA Recombination and Somatic Hypermutation1

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Abstract

Class switch DNA recombination (CSR) and somatic hypermutation (SHM) are central to the maturation of the Ab response. Both processes involve DNA mismatch repair (MMR). MMR proteins are recruited to dU:dG mispairs generated by activation-induced cytidine deaminasemediated deamination of dC residues, thereby promoting S-S region synapses and introduction of mismatches (mutations). The MutL homolog Mlh3 is the last complement of the mammalian set of MMR proteins. It is highly conserved in evolution and is essential to meiosis and microsatellite stability. We used the recently generated knockout $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice to address the role of Mlh3 in CSR and SHM. We found that Mlh3 deficiency alters both CSR and SHM. mlh3^{-/-} B cells switched in vitro to IgG and IgA but displayed preferential targeting of the RGYW/WRCY (R = Aor G, Y = C or T, W = A or T) motif by Sy1 and Sy3 breakpoints and introduced more insertions and fewer donor/acceptor microhomologies in Su-Sy1 and Su-Sy3 DNA junctions, as compared with $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells. $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice showed only a slight decrease in the frequency of mutations in the intronic DNA downstream of the rearranged $J_H 4$ gene. However, the residual mutations were altered in spectrum. They comprised a decreased proportion of mutations at dA/dT and showed preferential RGYW/WRCY targeting by mutations at dC/dG. Thus, the MMR Mlh3 protein plays a role in both CSR and SHM.

The maturation of Abs is underpinned by two genetic processes: class switch DNA recombination (CSR); and somatic hypermutation (SHM). By replacing the C region of the H chain with a downstream C_H region, CSR endows Abs with new biologic effector functions. By diversifying the binding strength of the surface receptor for Ag, SHM provides the structural substrate for selection by Ag of higher affinity mutants. CSR involves

Disclosures The authors have no financial conflict of interest.

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¹This work was supported by National Institutes of Health Grants AR 40908, AI 45011, and AI 60537 (to P.C.).

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intrachromosomal deletional rearrangement between switch (S) regions. These lie upstream of each C_H region with the exception of C\delta and consist of highly repetitive G/C-rich sequences. Such repetitive sequences vary in different S regions. In the Sµ region, they consist of ((GAGCT)_n(GGGGT)) repetitive units, where AGCT is the most common iteration of RGYW/ WRCY. During CSR, a composite junction between Sµ and a downstream S region is generated, and the intervening DNA is looped out as a circle. SHM preferentially targets the RGYW/ WRCY mutational hotspot and introduces point mutations with rare deletions or insertions into rearranged Ig V(D)J gene sequence, the human *Bcl-6* protooncogene in germline configuration, and the c-*Myc* protooncogene when translocated into the *Ig* locus, while sparing Ig C regions.

CSR entails the generation of double-strand DNA breaks (DSBs), which are obligatory intermediates in the process (1, 2) and may contribute to SHM as well (3–7). Both CSR and SHM require the intervention of activation-induced cytidine deaminase (AID) (8, 9), which preferentially deaminates dC within WRC, as shown in single-stranded DNA in vitro, to yield dU:dG mispairs in S and V regions (10, 11). In Ig V genes and S regions, WRC/GYW occur in most cases as part of the RGYW/WRCY consensus motif. Such dU:dG mispairs can be replicated over or processed by base excision repair, involving deglycosylation of dU by uracil DNA glycosylase (UNG) and abasic site excision by apurinic/apyrimidinic endonuclease (12, 13). dU:dG mispairs are also dealt with by the mismatch repair (MMR) machinery (12, 13). AID-independent generation of DSBs can also occur in S and V regions (6, 14–17). These DSBs may be processed by AID and MMR that would initiate repair processes leading to CSR and SHM (5, 6, 18, 19). Thus, MMR proteins are involved in resolving DNA lesions that underlie CSR and SHM.

MMR is one of the DNA repair pathways conserved from bacteria to humans. It contributes to maintain the integrity of the genome by correcting mismatched bases that arise through DNA replication errors and DNA damage. The genes of the MMR components were initially identified in Escherichia coli and designated Mut genes. Four Mut gene families are involved in MMR: MutS, MutL, MutH, and MutU. MutS first recognizes the mismatched DNA site, and recruits MutL, which in turn binds and activates the MutH endonuclease. The mismatched DNA oligonucleotide is then excised, and DNA is resynthesized correctly by DNA polymerase III (20). Five MutS (Msh2, Msh3, Msh4, Msh5, and Msh6) and four MutL (Mlh1, Mlh3, Pms1 (in which Pms is post-meiotic segregation), Pms2) homologs exist in mammals (21). The three MutS homologs, Msh2, Msh3, and Msh6, initiate MMR by forming Msh2-Msh6 and Msh2-Msh3 complexes at the site of nucleotide mispair. In a subsequent step, Mlh1-Pms2, Mlh1-Mlh3 heterodimers of MutL homologs, as well as exonuclease ExoI, are recruited and ultimately the mismatch-containing DNA is excised. A new stretch of the DNA strand is then resynthesized by the high fidelity polymerase δ (patch repair) (22-24) or error-prone translesion DNA polymerases when new DNA synthesis occurs as part of SHM and perhaps CSR (5, 25). The remaining two MutS homologs, Msh4 and Msh5, are specifically involved in meiosis and do not appear to play a role in somatic DNA repair process (26–29). The fourth mammalian MutL homolog, Pms1, plays a marginal role in MMR (30).

MMR proteins have been linked directly to CSR and SHM (Table I). Lack of Msh2 decreased the frequency of CSR (31, 32, 47) and SHM with a reduction in dA/dT mutations (35). Msh6 but not Msh3 deficiency reduced CSR and SHM (38, 39). Like their Msh2-deficient counterparts, Msh6-deficient mice showed fewer somatic mutations at dA/dT in both Ig V and S regions. The Msh2/ Msh6 complex would bind to transcribed S regions, promote S-S synapsis (48), and stimulate the activity of DNA polymerase η, thereby suggesting a role of Msh2 and/or Msh6 in SHM at dA/dT residues (49). Deficiencies in the two MutL homologs Mlh1 and Pms2 also reduced CSR and SHM (32, 41–44) and altered the sequence of S-S junctions (33, 34, 43), but their effect on the pattern of SHM appear to be controversial (39–44). In Msh2/Mlh1-deficient B cells, CSR frequency was reduced in a manner reminiscent of single Msh2- or Mlh1-deficient B cells. However, the junctional Sμ-

Mlh3 is the last characterized mammalian MMR protein and the last element to complete the set of mammalian MMR homologs (50, 51). Mlh3 is highly conserved in evolution and is essential for meiosis, but its role in mammalian MMR is not fully understood. Here, we have addressed the role of Mlh3 in CSR and SHM by using the recently generated knockout $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice (52). The contribution of Mlh3 to S-S DNA recombination was investigated by analyzing the surface Ig expression of splenic B cells stimulated by LPS and cytokines and the composition of the Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 DNA junctions and the locations of S region breakpoints with respect to RGYW/WRCY in the switched B cells. The contribution of Mlh3 to SHM was addressed by analyzing the frequency and pattern of the unselected mutations in the intronic DNA region downstream of the rearranged $V_HJ558DJ_H4$ gene segment.

 $S\gamma3$ sequences resembled those found in Mlh1- but not Msh2-deficient B cells (28, 33, 34).

Materials and Methods

MIh3-deficient mice

The $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice used in these studies were created by gene targeting to delete exon 1 and exon 2 of the mlh3 gene. This was accomplished by subcloning a genomic 3.6-kb fragment containing exon 1, exon 2, and the 5'-flanking sequence of the Mlh3 gene derived from a 129 Sv/Ev phage library into the *NotI* site of pNT loxP vector and a genomic 6.3-kb fragment of the Mlh3 intron into the *Eco*RI site (50). The targeting vector was linearized and electroporated into 129 Sv/Ev embryonic stem cells which were selected in neomycin to yield resistant colonies used for the generation of $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice. All mice used in this study were exposed only to environment Ags. $mlh3^{-/-}$ and $mlh3^{+/+}$ 129 Sv/Ev mice were bred in the vivarium of the University of California (Irvine, CA). All experiment protocols were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of the University of California.

Class switch DNA recombination

B cells are isolated from RBC-depleted splenocytes of mice with the B cell enrichment kit (StemCell Technologies) and were cultured at 10^6 cell/ml in 10% FCS-RPMI with 0.05 mM 2-ME. Cells were stimulated with LPS (10 µg/ml) from *E. coli* (serotype 055:B5; Sigma-Aldrich) and with or without 1) recombinant murine (rm) IL-4 (2 ng/ml; R&D Systems) for

CSR to IgG or 2) human TGF- β (2 ng/ml), rmIL-4 (2 ng/ml), and rmIL-5 (5 ng/ml; R&D Systems) and anti- δ mAb-dextran (3 ng/ml; provided by C. M. Snapper, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, MD) for CSR to IgA. Cells were collected on day 5 for FACS analysis of surface Ig expression.

FACS analysis

In vitro-stimulated B cells were harvested after culture for 5 days and stained with antimouse IgG1 (clone A85-1)-, anti-mouse IgG3 (clone R40–82)-, or anti-mouse IgG2b (clone R12-3)-FITC rat mAb and PE-conjugated anti-mouse CD45R (B220) (RA3–6B2) rat mAb (BD Biosciences). Cells were fixed with 1% paraformaldehyde in PBS and analyzed with a FACSCalibur flow cytometer (BD Biosciences).

S-S junctions

Genomic DNA was prepared from B cells cultured for 5 days after stimulation with LPS without or with rmIL-4. Junctional S μ -S γ 3 and S μ -S γ 1 DNA were amplified using two sequential rounds of specific PCR involving the following nested primers (43): aactetecagecacagtaatgace (Sm1– 4942); etactgagtteetgtgettg (Sg3); etgtaacetacecaggagace (Sg1); acgete gagaaggecageceteataaaget (Sm2–4972); eeggaattettgacetggtaceetage (Sg3-NS); and gtegaatteecetetecate (Sg1-NS). The first and second rounds of PCR were performed at 94°C for 40 s, 55°C for 40 s, 72°C for 2 min, 30 cycles. PCR DNA products were purified using Qiaquick PCR purification kit (Qiagen) and cloned into Zero Blunt TOPO vector (Invitrogen) for sequencing. Sequence alignment was done by comparing the sequences of PCR products with S μ , S γ 1, and S γ 3 genomic sequences with the use of National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) blast (www.ncbi.nih.gov/BLAST).

Somatic hypermutation

Peyer's patches were prepared from 8- to 12-wk-old $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice. Cells from the Peyer's patches were stained with PE-conjugated anti-mouse B220 rat mAb (BD Biosciences) and FITC-conjugated peanut agglutinin (PNA; E-Y Laboratories). Germinal center B220⁺ NA^{high} cells were sorted in a high output Moflo cell sorter (Cytomation). The intronic region downstream of rearranged Ig *VHDJ_H4* gene segments was amplified from genomic DNA with the use of primers specific for FR3 of the *V_HJ558* gene and downstream of the *J_H4* gene segment. The primer sequences were gcctgacatctgaggactctgc and tgagaccgaggctagatgcc. The PCR-amplified DNA were cloned into the Zero Blunt TOPO cloning kit and sequenced.

DNA polymerase ι genotyping

To verify that the gene sequence of polymerase ι , which is a null mutant in all 129 mice examined (53), is identical in $mlh3^{-/-}$ and $mlh3^{+/+}$ mice, we analyzed the 410-bp DNA sequence encompassing exon 2 and containing the (Ser 27) TCG \rightarrow TAG (amber) stop codon mutation characteristic of this polymerase gene in 129 mice. This genomic DNA was amplified from $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ spleen B cells with the 5'-ttaaagcaggactgaagacc-3' and 5'-cggttgaagctaattgctaa-3' primers. PCR was performed at 94°C for 30 s, 55°C for 30 s, 72°C for 30 min, 40 cycles. The amplified DNA was cloned into the Zero Blunt TOPO

cloning kit and sequenced. The exon 2 Ser 27 stop codon TAG mutation was identified in both $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ 129 Sv/Ev mice.

Somatic point mutations in mouse mlh3^{-/-} fibroblasts

Mouse embryonic fibroblasts (MEF) were cultured in 15-cm petri dishes in DMEM containing 15% FCS and 1 mM ouabain until mutant colonies developed after 8–10 days. After fixation with ethanol and staining with 10% methylene blue, the ouabain-resistant colonies were counted. The mutation rate was determined as the number of mutant colonies per total plated cells per cell generations (30). Three MEF cell lines from three different embryos were tested for either *mlh3*^{-/-} or *mlh3*^{+/+} genotype.

Cell proliferation and cell cycle analysis

B cells were isolated from RBC-depleted splenocytes of mice with a B cell enrichment kit (StemCell Technologies). Cells were stimulated with LPS (10 µg/ml; Sigma-Aldrich) and collected on day 3. After fixation in 70% ethanol overnight, cells were stained with 50 µg/ml propidium iodide (PI) and analyzed by FACSCalibur. For CFSE staining, fresh isolated B cells were stained with 5 µg/ml CFSE at 37°C for 10 min. After washing, cells were cultured and stimulated with LPS and collected on day 3 for FACS analysis. For in vivo BrdU incorporation, mice were immunized with 1×10^8 SRBC 1 wk before BrdU i.p. injection. Two 1-mg doses of BrdU were given to mice at 12-h intervals; 3 h after the second BrdU injection, mice were sacrificed to prepare spleen cells. The spleen cells were stained with PE-conjugated anti-B220, FITC-conjugated PNA, and APC-conjugated anti-BrdU (BD Biosciences) for FACS analysis.

Statistical analysis

Differences in numbers of microhomologies in Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 junctions between in vitro-stimulated $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells was analyzed with the paired *t* test. The χ^2 test was used to analyze the differences in the distributions of S-region breakpoints at GAGCT, GGGGT, RGYW/ WRCY, WRC/GYW; and AGCT, the distribution of mutations at RGYW/ WRCY and WRC/GYW; or percentages of mutations at dA, dC, dG, and dT between $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells or mice groups. *p* values <0.05 were considered to be statistically significant. Statistically difference in the mutation frequencies between genomic DNA of $mlh3^{-/-}$ and $mlh3^{+/+}$ cell lines were tested by the method of Equality of Two Binomial Proportions.

Results

Altered junctional S μ -S γ DNA microhomologies and insertions in Mlh3-deficient B cells

To investigate the role of Mlh3 in CSR, we induced CSR to IgG1 by LPS and IL-4, to IgG3 and IgG2b by LPS, and to IgA by LPS plus TGF- β , IL-4, IL-5, and anti- δ mAb-dextran in B cells from *mlh3^{-/-}* mice and their *mlh3^{+/+}* counterparts. *mlh3^{-/-}* B cells were competent in switching to all secondary isotypes examined, as shown by the comparable levels of surface B cell secondary isotypes (Fig. 1). To further address the role of Mlh3 in CSR, we sequenced the recombined Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 DNA junctions of in vitro-stimulated B cells and compared them with the respective Sµ and Sγ genomic templates to determine: 1) the

degree of putative overlap (microhomology) of the upstream Sµ and downstream Sγ1 or Sγ3 regions; and 2) the frequency of inserted un-templated nucleotides between the upstream Su and downstream $S\gamma1$ or $S\gamma3$ regions (insertions). Microhomologies and insertions accompany CSR. The Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 junctional DNAs were amplified with a specific PCR involving a forward primer encompassing a region 500 bp 5' of the highly repetitive ((GAGCT)_n(GGGGT)) Sµ region and a reverse primer encompassing a region 1000 bp 3' of the tandem repeats of $S_{\gamma 1}$ or 700 bp 3' of the tandem repeats of $S_{\gamma 3}$. Analysis of 44 unique Sµ-Sγ1 and 44 unique Sµ-Sγ3 sequences in B cells from 5 $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice and 5 $mlh3^{+/+}$ littermates showed that the $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells displayed reduced numbers of Su-Sy1 (15 or 34% vs 27 or 61%; p < 0.033) and Sµ-Sy3 (16 or 36% vs 33 or 75%; p < 0.034) junctional sequences entailing 1 nucleotide(s) microhomologies (Figs. 2 and 3). The average length of the microhomologies in Sµ-Sγ1 DNA of $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells was 2.0 nucleotides as compared with 2.4 in *mlh3*^{+/+} B cells; in Sµ-Sy3 DNA of *mlh3*^{-/-} B cells, it was 1.9 nucleotides, as compared with 2.9 in $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells. The fewer number of junctions displaying S-S region overlaps and the reduced average length of the overlaps in S-S DNA in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells as compared with $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells were complemented by more sequences entailing blunt junctions or insertions in the S μ -S γ 1 and S μ -S γ 3 junctions (Table II). S μ -S γ 1 DNA from $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells included 20 (45%) and 9 (21%) sequences entailing blunt junctions and insertions, respectively, as compared with 15 (34%) and 2 (5%) in $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells ($p < 10^{-10}$ 0.048). Sµ-S γ 3 DNA from *mlh3^{-/-}* B cells included 16 (36%) and 12 (27%) sequences entailing blunt junctions and insertions, respectively, as compared with 8 (18%) and 3 (7%) in *mlh3*^{+/+} B cells (p < 0.016). Thus, Mlh3 deficiency gave rise to altered Sµ-S γ DNA sequences involving significantly decreased microhomologies and significantly increased blunt junctions and insertions.

Altered Sy region breakpoints in Mlh3-deficient B cells

The altered pattern of S-S junctions in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells prompted us to ask whether the distribution of S DNA breakpoints in these B cells was different from those of $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells. Because of the preferential targeting of the RGYW/WRCY hotspot by SHM and DSBs in the Ig V(D)J DNA (6), we examined RGYW/WRCY for the presence of S region breakpoints. We also analyzed the distribution of S region breakpoints in the 16 iterations of RGYW/ WRCY, among which the AGCT represents the most frequent iteration in mouse and human S regions (H. Zan, manuscript in preparation). In the S region sequences considered here, AGCT accounts for 28, 37, and 19% of the 16 RGYW/WRCY iterations in Sµ, Sγ1, and Sγ3, respectively. When an S-S junctions is blunt or contains insertions, the location of the breakpoints is readily determined. When donor-acceptor microhomologies are present, the exact location of breakpoints can be ambiguous, namely, the breakpoint of either Sµ or Sγ could have occurred 5' of, 3' of, or within the microhomology.

Analysis of all putative breakpoints in the Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 DNA junctions showed that RGYW/WRCY, including the preponderant AGCT iteration, was preferentially targeted by Sγ1 and Sγ3 region breakpoints in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells (Fig. 4). In $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells, 57% of the Sγ1 breakpoints fell within RGYW/WRCY, which accounts for only 36% of all the nucleotides of this S region, as compared with 34% in $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells (p < 0.05). Preferential RGYW/WRCY targeting by breakpoints also occurred in the Sγ3 region. In

mlh3^{-/-} B cells, 55% of the Sy3 breakpoints fell within RGYW/WRCY, which accounts for 42% of all the nucleotides in this region, as compared with 30% in *mlh3*^{+/+} B cells (p < 0.05; Table III). The increased targeting of RGYW/WRCY by Sy1 and Sy3 breakpoints in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells was the result of the increased targeting of AGCT as well as other RGYW/WRCY iterations by Sy1 and Sy3 breakpoints. However, in both $mlh3^{-/-}$ and $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells, AGCT was predominantly targeted by Sy1 and Sy3 breakpoints, as compared with other RGYW/WRCY iterations; 83 and 67% RGYW/WRCY breakpoints targeted AGCT in $mlh3^{-/-}$ or $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells, respectively. Preferential RGYW/WRCY targeting could not be detected in Sµ, in either Sµ-S γ 1 or Sµ-S γ 3 DNA junctions. In *mlh*3^{-/-} B cells, RGYW/ WRCY, which accounts for 44% of all the Sµ region nucleotides, was targeted by 55% of all Sµ reakpoints in Sµ-S γ 1 junctions and 43% of all Sµ breakpoints in Sµ-S γ 3 junctions, as compared with 59 and 50%, respectively, in $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells (Table III). Thus, Mlh3 deficiency resulted in preferential breakpoint targeting of RGYW/WRCY, particularly AGCT, in Sy1 and Sy3 regions. Analysis of the distribution of S region breakpoints with respect to WRC/GYW yielded a pattern comparable with that of RGYW/WRCY; i.e., Sy1 and Sy3 region breakpoints preferentially targeted the WRC/GYW AID hotspot in $mlh3^{-/-}$ but not $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells (data not shown).

Altered S μ -S γ microhomologies associate with altered S region breakpoints in Mlh3-deficient B cells

Because of the decreased number of microhomologies in S μ -S γ 1 and S μ -S γ 3 junctions and the preferential targeting of RGYW/ WRCY by Sy1 and Sy3 breakpoints, we asked whether S-S junctions within and outside RGYW/WRCY in mlh3^{-/-} B cells were different from those in $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells; in other words, whether the S-S junctions entailing microhomologies, blunt junctions, and insertions differed with respect to RGYW/WRCY targeting. To this end, we examined the locations of breakpoints entailing microhomologies of 1 nucleotide, blunt junctions, and insertions in $S\gamma1$, $S\gamma3$, and $S\mu$ regions and found it to be significantly altered in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells. In the Sy1 region of these cells, the breakpoints outside RGYW/WRCY entailing microhomologies and nonmicrohomologies were 21 and 79%, as compared with 55 and 45%, respectively, in $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells (p < 0.05; Table IV); in the Sy3 region, the breakpoints outside RGYW/WRCY entailing microhomologies and nonmicrohomologies were 25 and 75% in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells, as compared with 71 and 29%, respectively, in *mlh3*^{+/+} B cells (p < 0.05). Thus, the decreased junctional Sµ-Sγ1, and Sµ-Sy3 microhomologies in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells were associated with decreased Sy1 and Sy3 breakpoints outside RGYW/ WRCY. Similar features were also displayed by Su breakpoints in both Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 junctional DNA of $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells (p < 0.05). Thus, the significantly decreased frequency of Sµ-Sy1 recombinations involving microhomologies in mlh3^{-/-} B cells associated with a decreased targeting of residues outside RGYW/ WRCY by breakpoints in Sµ, S γ 1, and S γ 3 regions.

Altered SHM in MIh3-deficient mice

Msh2 (35, 36) or Msh6 deficiency (38–40) increases mutations at dC/dG with a preponderance of transitions and preferential targeting of RGYW/WRCY. Mlh1 or Pms2 deficiency decreases mutations, but its effect on the nature of SHM is discordant (42, 43). To determine whether Mlh3 is involved in SHM, B220⁺PNA^{high} cells were sorted from

Peyer's patches of $mlh3^{-/-}$ and $mlh3^{+/+}$ litter-mates to amplify and sequence the intronic DNA lying 400 bp downstream of rearranged $V_H DJ_H 4$ genes (J_H4 intronic DNA) (54). $mlh3^{-/-}$ and $mlh3^{+/+}$ mice displayed comparable frequencies of V_HDJ_H rearrangements involving J_H4. This intronic DNA is targeted by SHM but does not undergo selection by Ag during affinity maturation. Clonal uniqueness was determined by the sequences of different $V_H DJ_H 4$ rearrangements upstream the J_H4 intronic region. This showed a slightly decreased frequency of mutations in 3 $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice as compared with their $mlh3^{+/+}$ littermates (Fig. 5, A and B). However, $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice displayed a significantly increased proportion of mutations at dC/dG (60.2% vs 41.5%, p < 0.05) (Fig. 5, C and D). In addition, in *mlh3^{-/-}* mice, dG was the most frequently mutated residue, with 42.4% of the overall mutations targeting dG, as compared with 29.6% in *mlh3*^{+/+} mice (p < 0.05). dA was the most frequently mutated residue in $mlh3^{+/+}$ mice, with 41.5% of the overall mutations targeting dA, as compared with 23.8% in *mlh3^{-/-}* mice (p < 0.05). In *mlh3^{-/-}* mice, transitions in mutations at both dC/dG and dA/dT were decreased, with those at dA/dT significantly decreased (p < 0.01), as compared with $mlh3^{+/+}$ mice. In addition, the mutations at dC/dG targeted the RGYW/WRCY hotspot at a significantly higher frequency than in $mlh3^{+/+}$ mice. There are a total of 21 RGYW/WRCY motifs in the $J_H 4$ intronic region, accounting for 21% of this sequence. In $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice, 46% of the mutations at dC/dG targeted RGYW/ WRCY, as compared with 28% in *mlh3*^{+/+} mice (p < 0.05), while mutations at dA/dT residues were not significantly different with respect to RGYW/WRCY targeting (Table V). Thus, overall, Mlh3 deficiency resulted in a significant alteration of SHM entailing a preferential targeting of dC/dG, particularly dC/dG at RGYW/WRCY, and an increased transversion mutations at dA/dT.

MIh3 deficiency correlates with an increased mutation rate at non-lg loci

The altered pattern of somatic mutations in $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice suggested a role of Mlh3 in the patch repair process underlying SHM. To investigate whether the altered SHM found in those $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice reflected a more general function of this MMR MutL protein, we examined the genomic DNA mutation rate in Mlh3-deficient MEF using a colony formation assay that measures the acquisition of ouabain resistance (30). In this assay, increased DNA mutations result in increased resistance to ouabain, i.e., outgrowth of colony-forming cells. After 9 days of culture in ouabain-containing medium, the DNA mutation rate giving rise to ouabain resistance in $mlh3^{-/-}$ fibroblasts was significantly higher than in $mlh3^{+/+}$ fibroblasts (5.8×10^{-7} vs 1.5×10^{-7} mutation/cell/division, p < 0.01). Thus, Mlh3 plays a role in repairing spontaneously arising mutations in genomic DNA of mouse cells.

MIh3-deficient B cells show no defect in cell cycle and proliferation

CSR frequency may be associated with cell division (55). To rule out the possibility that the altered modalities of CSR and SHM in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells were not a reflection of altered rates of cell division and cell death or an alteration of the proportion of germinal center B cells, we analyzed $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells for cell cycle, proliferation and ratio of germinal center B cells. $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells stimulated in vitro exhibited comparable cell cycle, as measured by PI incorporation, and comparable cell division, as measured by CFSE content, to the $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells (Fig. 6). In $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice, in vivo B cell proliferation, as measured by BrdU incorporation, was also comparable with that in $mlh3^{+/+}$ mice. Thus, the alterations in CSR

and SHM found in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells do not merely reflect an altered pattern of B cell cycle and/or proliferation.

Discussion

We have shown here that in the absence of Mlh3, CSR exhibits an altered pattern of $S\mu$ - $S\gamma$ 1 and $S\mu$ - $S\gamma3$ junctions with a decrease in microhomologies, increased insertions and blunt junctions, and altered distribution of breakpoints in $S\gamma$ 1 and $S\gamma3$ regions. Further, in the absence of Mlh3, SHM preferentially targets dC/dG. These findings point at Mlh3 as an important element in the MMR events that underlie CSR and SHM and unveil a new role for Mlh3 in DNA repair, in addition to the contribution of this MutL protein to DNA microsatellite stability (50).

The human genome project has shown that there are nine homologs of *E. coli MutS* and *MutL* genes encoded in mammals (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). Mouse models for all nine have been created (26, 27, 29, 30, 52, 57–61). Mammalian Mlh3, the last characterized MutL homolog and complement of the MMR set of proteins, is essential for meiosis. Mlh3 deficiency causes increased frame shift mutations, defects in DNA damage-induced apoptosis, and gastrointestinal cancer susceptibility (62). Mlh3 and Pms2 bind competitively to the same Mlh1 domain to form two different functional MutL heterodimers (51), implying that the molecular ratio of Mlh3 to Pms2 determines the formation of different MutL heterodimers and, possibly, the efficacy of CSR. The different impact of Pms2 deficiency, which significantly reduces the frequency of CSR, and Mlh3 deficiency, which does not change the frequency of CSR, suggests that these two MutL proteins confer different functions to the respective Pms2-Mlh1 and Mlh3-Mlh1 het-erodimers. Likewise, in male meiosis, whereas Pms2 plays a critical role in the pachynema stage, Mlh3 performs an essential function in the diplonema stage (52).

The reduced degree of microhomology and increased number of insertions in the S μ -S γ 1 and S μ -S γ 3 junctions in Mlh3-deficient B cells are evocative of those in Msh2-deficient B cells (33, 34) but contrast with the high degree of microhomology in S-S junctions of Pms2- or Mlh1-deficient B cells (33, 43). Microhomologies would result from the synapsis of complementary S region DSB staggered ends, whereas blunt junctions and insertions would result mainly from the synapsis of S region DSB blunt ends (18). Insertions could result from imprecise joining of either DSB end. Both the decreased S-S junction microhomology, as in Msh2 deficiency (33, 34), and increased S-S junction microhomology, as in Mlh1 or Pms2 deficiency (33, 34), have been associated with decreased CSR frequency in vitro (31, 32, 43). The seemingly unchanged CSR frequency in Mlh3-deficient B cells suggests that both microhomology-involving and non-microhomology-involving S-S synapsis are "valid" events for CSR.

How Mlh3 contributes to microhomology-mediated CSR remains to be determined. Mlh3 can play a direct role in microhomology-mediated S-S recombination or can dampen Pms2 function, which plays a role in non-microhomology-mediated S-S recombination. These two possibilities are not mutually exclusive. Interestingly, yeast Mlh3 associates with Msh3 to suppress insertions/deletions (63), and Msh3-deficient B cells showed a significant increase

in insertions at S-S junctions (38, 39), a feature partially observed in our Mlh3-deficient B cells, suggesting that Mlh3 can associate with Msh3 in the rejoining of S-region DNA. These results also parallel the phenotype of Mlh3 deficiency in repetitive sequence (microsatellite) repair, which shows a bias toward repair of deletions but not insertions (61). Deficiencies in other DNA repair proteins also alter the patterns of S-S junctions. Patients with ataxia-telangiectasia (Atm deficiency) (64), at axia-telangiectasia-like disorder (Mre11 deficiency) (65), and Nijmegen breakage syndrome (Nbs-1 deficiency) (65) show increased microhomology at S-S junctions, as do Atm-deficient mice (66, 67), suggesting that these proteins, together with Mlh1 and Pms2, play an important role in mediating S-S recombination not involving microhomologies. Thus, Mlh3 may, in association with Msh2-Msh3, suppress the introductions of insertions into S-S junctions, while promoting S-S resolution events that entails introduction of microhomologies.

Like in Msh6-deficiency, in which $S\gamma3$ but not Sµ breakpoints preferentially target RGYW/ WRCY (38), Mlh3 deficiency resulted in preferential targeting of breakpoints to RGYW/ WRCY in both Sy1 and Sy3 regions (Table III). This could reflect the role of Mlh3 in facilitating S-S recombination occurring outside RGYW/ WRCY. The normal frequency of CSR in the absence of Mlh3 suggests that Mlh3 is not essential in the initial steps of CSR. Sµ tandem repeats that are rich in RGYW/WRCY undergo breakage and mediate CSR independently of Msh2. In contrast, DNA breakage in sequences flanking the Sµ tandem repeats requires Msh2 to allow recombinational joining and CSR to unfold (68, 69), implicating a more significant role of MMR proteins in S-S DNA recombination events involving sequences with scarcity of RGYW/ WRCY (68). Thus, Mlh3 deficiency shifts the Sy breakpoints of Sµ-Sy to RGYW/WRCY, implicating a significantly role of Mlh3 in facilitating S-S recombination events outside RGYW/WRCY. Dissection of the distribution of Sµ, Sγ1, and Sγ3 region breakpoints in different RGYW/WRCY iterations showed that AGCT, an evolutionarily conserved motif for CSR (70), is the most frequently occurring iteration and is most frequently targeted by S-region breakpoints in both $mlh3^{-/-}$ and $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells.

Our findings show that Mlh3 contributes to both CSR and SHM. Deficiency in either Pms2 (28, 32, 33, 41, 44–46) or Mlh1 (32, 41–43) resulted in impairment of CSR but affected SHM inconsistently. As shown by analysis of the J_H4 intronic region of B220⁺PNA^{high} germinal center B cells, the absence of Mlh3 significantly altered SHM. Mutations at dA/dT residues were markedly diminished (p < 0.05), and mutations at dC/dG preferentially targeted the RGYW/WRCY mutational hotspot (p < 0.05) in *mlh3^{-/-}* as compared with *mlh3^{+/+}* mice (Table V). These features are reminiscent of those of Msh2 (35)-, Msh6 (38–40)-, and ExoI-deficient mice (71), which are consistent with a two-phase process in CSR and SHM. Phase 1 entails dC deamination by AID to yield a dU:dG mismatch. This can be replicated over leading to a dG→dA transition or can be removed by UNG. DNA synthesis opposite the resultant abasic site by translesion polymerases will lead to introduction of a dC→dT transition or dC→dA and dG transversions (phase 1B). It can also be resolved by mutagenic patch repair, which is central to phase 2, in which dU:dG mismatches are dealt with by the MMR machinery. Indeed, absence of Msh2 results in ablation of phase 2 and diminished mutations at dA/dT without transversion bias (12, 35). The contribution of Mlh3

to SHM likely reflects the role of Mlh3 in genomic DNA repair. Indeed, as we have shown, lack of Mlh3 gives rise to a higher genomic DNA mutation rate in non-B cells, further strengthening a role of the this MutL protein in the DNA repair process specifically underpinning SHM, as $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells proliferate and undergo normal cell cycle in vitro and in vivo (Fig. 6). Thus, the altered S-S junctional sequences and the pattern of SHM in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells reflected the intrinsic participation of Mlh3 in the molecular process of CSR and SHM.

The mutagenic Phase 2 patch repair contributes to mutations at dA/dT residues and has been suggested to involve DNA polymerase η (37, 72–74), which would be recruited by the Msh2-Msh6 complex (49). The significant decrease in dA/dT mutations in *mlh3*^{-/-} mice suggests that Mlh3, through complexing with Msh2-Msh6, is also involved in recruiting polymerase 17 to introduce mutations at dA/dT. In addition to polymerase 17, other error-prone translesion DNA polymerases may be recruited by and work in concert with Mlh3 and other MMR proteins in SHM, including polymerases ι (75) and θ (76). These can insert mismatches, which are then extended by polymerases θ itself or polymerase ζ (76, 77). Like polymerase η - or Msh6-deficient mice (28, 37, 38, 72, 74), Mlh3-deficient mice show preferential transversion mutations at dA/dT residues. The altered pattern of mutations in Mlh3-deficient mice as compared with Mlh1- and Pms2-deficient mice suggests that Mlh3 can function independently of Mlh1 in SHM. Likewise, in male meiosis, Mlh3 binds to germ cell chromosomal chiasmata sites in the diplonema stage independently of Mlh1 (52).

In conclusion, the significant alteration of S-S junctions in the absence of Mlh3 suggests that Mlh3 contributes to the creation and/or stabilization of microhomologies between the upstream Sµ ends of and downstream DNA ends of Sγ1 or Sγ3. This function contrasts with that of Pms2, which contributes to non-microhomol-ogy-mediated S-S recombination (43). The profound alteration of the pattern of SHM in *mlh3^{-/-}* mice indicates a role of Mlh3 in the patch repair events leading to SHM and suggests that Mlh3 plays a significant role in targeting mutations at dA/dT, at which the transitional mutations are most affected. Further studies will address the association of Mlh3 with the error-prone DNA polymerases that introduce mutations at dA/dT, particularly transition mutations, and other MMR proteins that associate with Mlh3 in the process of CSR and SHM.

Acknowledgments

We thank Dr. Clifford M. Snapper for mouse anti- δ mAb-dextran and Mr. Junli Feng for excellent technical assistance.

Abbreviations used in this paper

AID	activation-induced cytidine deaminase
CSR	class switch DNA recombination
DSB	double-strand DNA breaks
Mlh3	MutL homolog 3
MMR	mismatch repair

PI	propidium iodide
Pms2	postmeiotic segregation 2
SHM	somatic hypermutation
UNG	uracil DNA glycosylase
rm	recom-binant murine
PNA	peanut agglutinin
MEF	mouse embryonic fibroblasts
Atm	ataxia-telangiectasia

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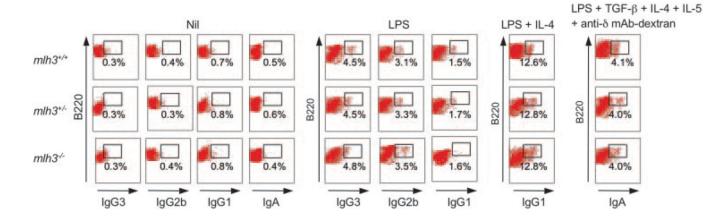


FIGURE 1.

CSR in B cells from 129 Sv/Ev mice, as assessed by detection of surface IgG3, IgG2b, IgG1, and IgA on in vitro-stimulated B cells. B cells were isolated from 8- to 12-wk-old $mlh3^{+/+}$, $mlh3^{+/-}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ littermates and cultured in the absence (nil) or presence of LPS, LPS plus IL-4, or LPS plus TGF- β plus IL-5 plus IL-4 plus anti- δ mAb-dextran to induce CSR to IgG3 and IgG2b, IgG1 and IgA, respectively. Cells were collected 5 days after stimulation and stained with FITC-conjugated anti-mouse IgG3, IgG1, IgG2b, and IgA mAbs and PE-conjugated anti-mouse B220 mAb. Small boxed areas outline B220⁺IgG⁺ or B220⁺IgA⁺ cells.

Sg1

Sm WTS Sgl Sm

WTSG1-23

Sg1 Sm1 WTSG1

Sg1 Sn WTS Sg1

Sm WTSG1-92

Sg1

WTSG1

WTSG1

5g1

Sn

WTS

Sgl Sn

WTSG

Sg1 Sm

WTSG

Sgl

Sn WTSG1-110 Sg1

Sm WTSG

Sgl Sm WTSGl-43 Sgl Sm WTSGl-73 Sgl Sm WTSGl-10

Sgl

Sn

Sg1 Sm WTSG1 Sg1

Sm

Sn WTSG Sg1 Sn WTSG Sg1 Sn

WTSG1-1 Sgl

WTSG1-135 Sg1

Sq1 Sn TGAGAGTAC

CTACATA

AAGTTTAG

ATCANGETCAGETA

CAGAGATCCAAG

AGTCAAAAA

AGACCAGECTGAG

CACCTO

AAACTGAGGCAAGT

ANGCAGTCANGCTCAG

AAGCTGA

GAGATCI

11111111

ICAA

TCTTTAGAGAAACTGA

Sµ-Sy1, mlh3+/+

Sμ-Sγ1, mlh3-/-

				-1-		
MTGAAC-TGGAATGAGCTGGGCCGCTAAG AATGAACCCTGAGCAAATACTACATAGCTG AACACAG-CTGAGCAAATACTACATAGCTG	Sm WTSG1-1 Sg1	AGCTACTCTGGAGTAGCTGAGATGGGGTGAGCTG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm. MLH3G1-73 Sq1	GCTGAGATGGGTGGGCTTCTCTGAGCGCTTCTAA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1=39 Sgl	GTAAGCGAGGCTCTAAAAAGCACGGCTGAGCTGAGATGGGTGGG
GTTCTGA-GCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGTGAG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm WTSG1-57 Sq1	СТАРАСТСТАСТССТАСАСТОВССТОТТСТВАВСТВАВАТСАВ СТАРАСТСТАСТОСТАСАСТОВОВОТАССАВОСТВАВСАВСТВ ТАССТОВАВСТВАТОВОТТАТА ТАССТОВАВСТВАТОВОТТАТА	5m MLH3G1-57 Sq1	TGAOCTCAGCTATOCTACOCGTGTTOGOGTGAGCTGATCT TGAOCTCAGCTATOCTACGC TG27ATCCAGATTAGCTGGTATAGG AGAGATCCAAGCTGAGCAGCTCCAGCTTAGCTG-TATAGG	Sm MLH3G1=65 Sq1	GACTCATAAAGCTTGCTGAGCAAAATTAAGGGAACAAGGTTGAG CCTCATAAAGCTTGCTGAGCATCAGCTACTACCATCAGAGCTGG ATAGACATGTAAGCAGTCAAGCTACTACTACTACATGGAGCTGG
IGAATAGAGCTAAACTCTACTGCCTACACT	Sm WTSG1-111 Sg1	АБСССТАЯТААВСВАВСТСТАААДАВСАТОВСТВАВСТВАВСТ АСССТАВТААВСВАВСТСТВААДАВСАТОВСТВАВСТВАВСТ ВОЛОТОВТААВСВАВСТСТВААДАВСТССАВСТВАВСТВАЕТ СОЛОТОВСТВАВСТВАВСТВАВСТВАВСТВАВСТВАВСТВАВС	Sm MLH3G1=1 Sg1	GGADTAGCTGAGATGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGG	Sm MLH3G1-30 Sgl	TGGGTGAGCTGATCTGAAATGAGCTACTCTGGAGTAGCTGAGA TGAGTGAACTGATCTGTTAGCTGTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGGG AGCTGAGCAGCTCCAGCTTAGCTGTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGGG
NGAGCTGGGCTGAGCTGGACTGAGC IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm WTSG1-2 Sg1	ANANTRASOGAACAAGGTTORGAGCCCTAGTAACCGAGGCTCT IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII ANANTTAACGAAACAAGTTA AGAAAGTAACCAAGTGAGG GGGTCCAATTGAGTGCTTTRAGGAACTGAGGCAAGTGGGAG	Sm. MLH3G1-66 Sg1	ACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCAAACTGGAATGAACT ACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGAGGTGGTAAGGTGACAGGATGGG AGCTGAGCTG	Sm MLH3G1-11 Sgl	TGAGTGATTACTCTGAGGTAAGCAAAGCTGGGCTTGAGCCAAA TGAGGTGATTACTCTGATTAGCTGTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGGG AGCTGAGCAGCTCCCAGCTTAGCTGTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGGG
RAGCTAAACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGAT TAGGTAATGTATAAGGTACCAGGCTGAGC TGATGGGTGTATAAGGTACCAGGCTGAGC	Sm WTSG1-77 Sgl	TTCATTAATCTAGGTTGATAAGAGCTAAACTCTACTCGACGCACAC IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm. MLH3G1=101 Sg1	GAGCTGAGCTGGAGCTGAGCTGA-GGTGAGCTGAGCTGAG	Sm MLH3G1=120 Sg1	ОССАВАСТСАТАРАВСТТОСТОЛОСАРАЛТТАЛОБОЛАСАЛОВ GECCAGCTCATAPAGCTTOCTGCARGCTGAGCGCCCCCAGGTT AGOCAGTGGGAGTGCAGAGCCCAACCTOACCAGCCCCAGCTT
AAAAGCATGGCTGAGCTGAGATGGGTGGG 	Sm WTSG1-52 Sg1	таасталасталалтааатаадттететалассеттетжилт 1111111111111111111 Таасталасталалсаастаадтааслаятаодаатаслалал 11111111111111111111111111111111	5m MLH301-70 Sg1	CCGCTAAGCTAAACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCAAA CCGCTAAGCTAACTAGGTGTGOTTAAGTGACAGATGAGC GCTGAGCAGCTCCAGCTTAGCT-GTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGG GCTGAGCAGCTCCAGCTTAGCTGTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGG	Sm MLH3G1-23 Sgl	TCTARABARCATGGCTGAGCTGAGATGGGTGGGCTTCTCTGAGC TCTARABAGCATGTCTGAGCTGAGATGAGTGGAGGTCCA AGCTACTACATGAGAGCTGGACCTAGTATGAAGGTGGAGGTCCA
TATGCTACGCGTGTTGGGGTGAGCTGATCT	Sml WTSG1-29 Sgl	GGAAACAAGGTTGAAGACCCTAGTAACAAGGCTCTAAAAAGCA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1-17 Sg1	CTGAGATGAGCTGGGG7GAGCT-CAGCTATGCTACGCGTGT7GG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1-32 Sg1	AGGCTCTAAAAAGCATGGCTGAGCTGAGATGGGTGGGCTCTCT IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
TAGGTTGAATAGAGCTAAACTCTACTGCCT IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sml WTSG1-20 Sgl	ССТЕСТСТСКАВССЕТТСТАААТССССТАААСТСКАВСТАТАС ПІПІПІЛІТІТ ОСТГСТСТАВОССТТСТАААТОТОБЛАСССАОВСКАВСА ОСТГСТСТАВОССТСТАААТОТОБЛАСССАОВСКАВСА АСТАСТСТАВОСАСТСТАААТСКАВСА	Sm MLH3G1-2 Sg1	AAAATTAAGGGAACAAGGTGA-GAGCCCTAGTAAGCGAGGCCC IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1=111 Sg1	AGCAAAATTAAGGGAACAAGGTGGAGGCCCTAGTAAGCGAGGC AGCAAATTAAGGGACAAGGTGGGATAAGCAGTAGTTGGGGAT GCTGGGTACTCATAGGGAACAGCTGGGAATAAGCAGGGGAT
STGAGCTGATCTGAAATGAGATACTCTGG IIIIIII STGAGCTTCCAGCTAGCTGGTATASGTG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm WTSG1-94 Sgl	CTOGMCTGFTCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTCAGCTAT IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1-82 Sg1	ТТААТСТАССТИСААТАСЛАСТ - АЛАСТСТАСТССССКАСТСС ТТААТСТАССТИАТИЛИСТ - АЛАСТСТАСТСССКАСТСС ТТААТСТАСТИАТИЛИСТ - СЛАГССКСТСССТСССТСАСТСА АСПАЛСАССССА	Sm MLH3G1-9 Sgl	ACTGGGCTGASCTGASCTGACTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAG
ACAAGGTTGAGAGCCCTAGTAAGOGAGGCT CCAAGGTTAGGAGCTAATTGGCACGGGGG HIJIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm WTSG1-40 Sg1	CANGGTTGARAGCCCTAGTARGCAGGCTCTANANGCATGGCT IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII		TEADCOCTTCTAAAATGCOCTAAACTGAGGTGATTACTCTGAGG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1-118 Sg1	TGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAG
TCTAAAAAGCATGGCTGAGCTGAGATGGG TCTAAAAAGGAGGATCAGGGATAGACATGT CAGCTACCAAGGATCAGGGATAGACATGT	Sm WTSG1-27 Sg1	AAACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCAAACTGGAATGAACT AAACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGCTACATGAGAGCTGGAGCT AAACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGCTGGACTGGACTGGCTGG	Sm MLH3G1-20 Sg1	CTGCCTACACTGGACTGTTCTGAGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGTGAG	Sm MLH3G1-104 Sg1	TGTTCTGAGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGTGAGCTCAGCTATGCTACG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
TOCTACOCGTOTTGOGGTGAOCTGATCTGA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm WTSG1-17 Sg1	AGACTOTARSOACTGGARTGAGCTGGGCCGCTARACTA AGACTGTARTGAACTGGATGACTGAGCCAGTCGTCTTAGA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1-14 Sg1	CTGAGATGAGCTGGGGTGAGCTCAGCTATGCTACGCGTGTTGG 	Sm MLH3G1-107 Sg1	AGGTTGAGAGCCTAGTAAGCGAGGCTCTAAAAAGCATGGCTGA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
AGCGAGGCTCTAAAAAGCATGGCTGAGCTG JULIA JULIA AGCGAGGCTAAGCTGAGGCAGGTAAGAGTG JATACAGGGAAGCTGAGGCAGGTAAGAGTG	Sm WTSG1=72 Sg1	ACTGGACTGTTCTGAGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGTAAGTCAGCTA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1-27 Sg1	TCTGGAGTAGCTGAGATGGGGTGAGATGGGGTGAGCTGAGCTGG 	Sm MLH3G1-129 Sg1	GCCCTAGTAAGCGAGGCTCTAAAAAGCTCAGGCTGAGCTGAGATG
ICTGAGCTAGGTGAGCTGAGCTGGGTGAG 	Sm WTSG1-93 Sgl	GGGCGGCTAAACTAAGCTAGCCGGCTTAACCGGGATGAGCCAA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII GGGCGGCTAAGCAGGTAGCGGGGCGCGGGGGGGGGGGGG	Sm MLH3G1=6 Sg1	GCTAAGCTAAACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCAAACTGG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII GCTAAGCTAAACTAGGCTGGCTTGCTACCAAGGATCAGGGATAG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1=81 Sgl	TCAGAACAGTCCAGTGTAGGCAGTAGAGTTAGCTCTATTCAAC IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
GCTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCAAACTGG GCTGGCTTGCTACCAAGGATCAGGGATAG 	Sm WTSG1-142 Sgl	CTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCAAACTGGAATGAACTTCA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII CTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAAAACTGGGGGGGGGGG	Sm. MLH3G1-8 Sg1	CAGAACAGTCCAGTGTAGGCAGTAGAGTTTAGCTCTATTCAACC IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII CGGAACAGTCCAGGTGTGGCAGACGGGGGGGGGGGGGGG	Sm MLH3G1-6 Sg1	CACTGGACTGTTCTGAGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGTGAGCTCAGCT
ATTAAGGGAACAAGGTTGAGAGCCCTAGTA	5m WTSG1-162 Sg1	TGTGGTGACCCAGGCAGAG	Sm MLH3G1-5 Sg1	TAGTAAGCGAGGCTCTAAAAAGCATGGCTGAGCTGGGTG THITITITITITITITITITITITITITITITITITITI	Sm MLH3G1-116 Sgl	GTTGAATAGAGCTAAACTCTACTGCCTACACTGGACTGTTCTGA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
GGTGAGCTCAGCTATGCTACGCGTGTTGG JULI JGGTGAAGCTGTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGG JGCTTAGCTGTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGG	Sm WTSG1-11 Sgl	ACTGURATERACTGORCOCTARGETARACTRACCTORCTARC IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1=7 Sg1	CTAGTAAGCGAGGCTCTAAAAGCATGGCTGAGCTGAGATGGGGG LTHJTHIHIHIHI LTHJTHIHIHIHI TIJ TIJ TIJ TGAGCAGCTCCAGCTJAGCTGTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGGGGATA	Sm MLH3G1=72 Sgl	GACTTCATTAATCTAGGTGAATAGAGCTAAACTCTACTGCCT IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
BTGATTACTCTGAGGTAAGCAAAGCTGGGC 	Sm WTSG1-26 Sg1	TGCTAGGE-GTGTTGGGG TGAG CTAATCTGAATCGAAATGGAGCTACTCT 1111111111111111111111111111111111	Sm MLH3G1-108 Sgl	AACAAGGTTGAGAGCCCTAGTAAGCGAGGCTCTAAAAAGCATGG AACAAGGTTGAGAGCCCTAATACAGGCTAAGCAGCTGAGGGGAA ACGAGTGGGGGCTATAAAGGTACCAGGCTGAAGCCGAGCGGAGAGCGAGC	Sm MLH3G1-41 Sgl	AAGCTGGGCTTGAGCCAAAATGAACTACACTGGA IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
AGCTGGCTTGAGCCAAAATGAAGTAGAC IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm WTSG1-131 Sg1	TACTACATGAGAGCTGGAGCTA GTATGAAGGTGGAGGTCCAGTT	Sm MLH3G1-4 Sg1	TOCITACACTOGACTOTICTACCIONAGTAGACTOSOGTAGAC IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1-124 Sg1	ATTAGACATGTAAGCAGTCAAGCACGCTACTACATGAGAGAGCTG
NGCTGAGCTGGCTGAGCTGGACTGAGCTG IIIIIIIII NGCTTAGGTGGTATAGGTGACAGGATGGGG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm WTSG1-49 Sg1	GCTACOC-GTGTTGGGGTGACTGATCTGAAATGACCAACTCG 11111111111111111111111111111111111	Sg1	TCATTAATCTAGGTUGAATAGAGCTAAACTCTACTGCCTACACT IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm MLH3G1-139 Sgl	AATGAAGTAGACTGTAATGACTGGATGGCTGGGCCGCTAAG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
АЛЕСТААДСТАВОСТВОСТТАЛССВАВАТС ИПППППППППППППППППППППППППППППППППППП		CAGAGCAGCTATAAGG GAGCCA GAACAGGTDGGAGTGTGGDGAT		GAACTTCATTAATCTAGGTGAATAGAGCTAAACTCTACTGCCT 111111111111111111111111111111111	Sn MLH3G1-19 Sgl	AGGTGATTACTCTGAGGTAACCAAAGCTGGGCTTGAGCCAAAAT IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII AGGTAATTACTCTGACCTI MCCTACTACATGAGAGCTGGACCAG GCTACTACATGAGAGCTGGACCAG
CCTAGTAGCAGGCTCTAAAAAGCATGG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	Sm WTSG1-25 Sq1	GCTGAGCTANGGTCANCTCANTRAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGC	Sm. MLH3G1-38 Sg1	TGTGTTGGGGTGACCTARTCGAATAGC 111111111111111111 TGTGTTGGGGTGACGTGAATCTACCTAGCT 111111111111111111111111111111111111	Sm MLH3G1-3 Sg1	AGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGTG <mark>AGCT</mark> AAGCTATGCTACGCGTGTTG

FIGURE 2.

Altered Sµ-Sγ1 DNA junctions in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells. B cells from $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice were stimulated by LPS and IL-4 in vitro for 5 days. Junctional Sµ-Sγ1 DNAs from stimulated cells were amplified, cloned, and sequenced. Each sequence is compared with the corresponding germline Sµ (MUSIGCD07) or Sγ1 sequence (MUSIGHANB). Microhomologies and insertions are in bold and underlined. Sequences were derived from stimulated B cells of 5 $mlh3^{+/+}$ and 5 $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice.

Sn	TTACTCTGAGGTAAGCAAGCTGGGCTTGAGCCAAAATG Sn TTACTCTGAGGTAAGCACTGAGCTGAGCCTGAGTGCTAG		à
WTSG3-18 Sg3	TTACTCTGAGGTAAGCACTGAGCTGAGGCAGGCTGGAGTGCTAG TGAGTGACCACAGTGTACTGAGGCAGGCTGGAGTGCTAG Sg3	G3-153	A C
Sm	GACTGAGCTGAGCTAGGGTGAGCTGAGCTGGGGTGAGCTGAGC		c
WTSG3-7	GACTGAGCTGAGCTAGGGTGATCAGGCAGGCTGGAGTGCTAGGG WTS	G3-200	è
Sg3	GTGAGTGACCACAGTGTACTGAGGCAGGCTGGAGTGCTAGGG 5g3		G
Sm	GCCTACACTGGACTGTTCTG-AGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGGTGAGC Sn		Ą
WTSG3-25	GCCTACACTGGACTGTTCTGgGTGTGAGTGACCACAGTGTACTG WTS	G3-9	Å
Sg3	GETOSTTGTGGGGGAAGCCA-GTGTGAGTGACCACAGTGTACTG Sg3		7
SM	TTCTGAGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGGTGAGCTCAGCTATGCTACGCG Sn		0
WTSG3-1		63-144	ġ
563			7
SM	ATAAAGCTTGCTGAGCAAAATTAAGGGAACAAGGTTGAGAGCCC Sn ATAAAGCTTGCTGACAAAATTCACAGGGGAGCTGGGGCTATCA WTS		ALA
WTSG3-2 SG3		63-173	
SGS	GTGAATAACCTGCCTGAAGGGCCACAGGGGGGCGGGGCG		1 0
WTSG3=3		G3-188	IG
563	CTOMENTGAGCTGGGGTGAGCTTGAGGCAGGCTGGAGTGCTAGG WT3 AGTGTGAGTGACCACAGTGTACTGAGGCAGGCTGGAGTGCTAGG 5q3		10
Sn	AAGGGAACAAGGTTGAGAGCCCTAGTAAGCGAGGCTCTAAAAAG Sn		6
WTSG3-10		03-50	G
Sal	GCTAGGGTGGGGTGAGGTGTGGGGGAACAGGCTGGGCAGCTCTGGG 5q3		IG
Sm	GCATGGCTGAGCTGAGATGGGTGGGCTTCTCTGAGCGCTTCTAA		G
WT803-52	GCATGOCTGAGCTGAGATGOGTGAAGGTTTGTAGAAGCTTGAAT WTS	03-51	0
Sg3	GCATGGCTGAGCTGMAATGGGTGAAGGTTTGTAGAAGCTTGAAT WTS CAGATGGAGCAGTTACAGAGGAAAAAGGTTTGTAGAAAGCTTGAAT Sq3		G
Sm	AAACTACCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCC		A
WT5G3-23	ARACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGRGAAGGTGAGCTGGGGTAGGAGGG WTS	G3-191	Å
Sg3	AGGATATTAAGCTGAGCAGCTACAGGTGAGCTGGGGGTAGGAGGG Sg3		G
Sm	GTAAGCGAGGCTCTAAAAAGCATGGCTGAGCTGAGATGGGTGGG		7
WT5G3-103	GTAAGCGAGGCTCTAAAAAGCACAGGCTGAGTATCTACATGGTG WTS	63-8	÷
5g3	GGTTTGTAGAAGCTTGAATGTCCAGGCTGAGTATCTACATGGTG 5g3		G
Sm	GAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGC		7
WT5G3-101		G3-4	1
5g3			7
Sn	TEAGCTOGOGTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAG SM		G
WTSG3-100 5g3	TSAGATGGGCTGAGCTGAGCTGGGGGGCCTTGGGGAGGGGA	63-201	G
sgs Sn			7
umsg3-13		G3-5	1
w1363-15 5α3	CATGGTGACTGGAAAAGTGGGCGGTTGGGGAGGGGACCAGAT 5g3		G
Sn	CTURGCARARTTRAGGGRACARGETEGNGAGCOCTAGTARCOGA Sv		
WT503-15	CTENCENNATTRAGGENGENGENGENGET	03-117	ĩ
593	TGGOSGAAGCCAGTGTGAGTGACCACAGTGTACTGAGGCAGGCT 593		Å
Sm	ATTANGGGABCABGGTTGAGAGCCCTAGTABGCGAGGCTCTABA SM		7
WTSG3-131		63-17	ł
Sg3	AGATAGGAGTGTGGAAAAGTGGACTGGGTTATCACAAGGGAACT SG3		c
Sm	GAGCCAAAATGAAGTAGACTGTAATGAACTGGAATGAGCTGGGC Sn		Ņ
WTSG3-24	GAOCCAMAATGAAGTAGACTOTTAAGGCAGGCTOSAGTOCTAGGG WTS	03-112	à
Sg3	GTGTGAGTGACCACAGTGTACTSAGGCAGGCTGGAGTGCTAGGG Sq3		G
.Sm	ATGGGTGGGCTTCTCTGAGCGCCTTCTAAAATGCGCTAAACTGAG Sn		G
WTSG3=133	ATGGGTGGGCTTCTCTGAGCTCTTGTGAATAACCTGCCTG	63-21	ģ
5g3	AGGTGAGCTGGGTTGGATGGAAA <u>t</u> GTGAATAACCTGCCTGAAGG 5g3		C
Sm WTSG3-14	GCCAAACTGGAATGAACTTCATAATCTAGGTTGAATAGAGCTA Sn IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII	63-11	0-0
Sg3 Sn			-
sm WTSG3-143		G3-53	71.7
W1303-143 Sg3	ARTRACTOCCTGAAGGSCCACAGGGGGASCTGGGGCTATCAGAT Sg3		1
Sn	TCTACTGCCTACACTGGACTGTTCTGAGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGG Sn		7
WT5G3-177	TCTACTGCCTACACTGGACTGTCCCAGGTTATGCAGCTCCTGGG WTS	G3-41	17
5g3	TGGGGGCTATCAGAGTCACAGGGTCCCAGGTTATGCAGCTCCTGGG 593		G
Sm	R0000000000000000000000000000000000000		7
WTSG3-121	TGEGCCGCTAAGCTAAACTAGECTGAGTGACCACAGTGTACTGA WTS	63-31	7-7
593	GGTGGTTGTGGGGGAAGCCAGTGTGAGTGACCACAGTGTACTGA 5q3		G
Sn	TGEGGTGAGCTGAGCTGGGGTGAG Sn		ç,
WTSG3-122	TODOSTOROCTOROCTOGOGTA AGGATOTOGOGACCARCTOGO WTS	03-19	ć

μ-Sγ1	,	mlh	3+/
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SCTCTAAAA AGAGCOCTAGTAAGCGAG MAAGECCTAGTAAGEGAOGCTCAGGGTAGGAOGTAATTCCTCAG CAGGTTATGCAGCTCCTGGGTCMGGGTAGGAGGTAATTCCTGAG TACACTEGACTETTCEAGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGETGAGCTCA CTACALTEGACTETTCTGAGC**TE**TGAATAACCTGCCTGAAGGGC GTGAGCTGGGTTGGATGGAAGAC**TE**TGAATAACCTGCCTGAAGGGC AGCTTGCTGAGCAAAATTAAGGGAACAAGGTTGAGAGCCCTAG AAGCTTOCTGAGCAAAATTAAGTTGGGGCTATAAGATCACAGGG TGCCTGAAGGGCCACAGGGGGCTGGGGCTATCAGATCACAGGG ANCCGAGATGAGCCAAACTGAATGAACTTCATTAATCTAGGT AACCGAGATGAGCCAAACTG<mark>GA</mark>GCTGGGGTAGGAGGGAGTATGA TAAGCTGAGCAGCTATAGGT OCTGAGATGOGGGGGCTTCTGAGCGCTTCTAAAATGCGCTAA GCTGAGATGOGGGGGGCTCTCTGTACCCTAGAGCGCTCCTAAAATGCGCTGGGCGGGGCTGGGCTCCCAGAGCT GCTGGTCCCCATACCCTCAGTTACCCTAGCTCCCCCCAGAGCT INGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGGTGAGCTCAGCTATGCTACGCGTGT GAD GTGGGCGTTTGGGAGGGGGACCAGATCAAGCTAAGGGTTCTG AGCTANACTCTACTGCCTA**CAC**TGGACTGTTCTGAGCTGABATG MGCTANACTCTACTGCCTA**CAC**TAGGACTGGTTCTGAGCTGAGTGT GAAAGTOGACTOGGTTATCACAAGGGAACTAGGACAGGTGGTT MCTGBOBTGAGCTGABCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGGTGAG LASTGGGGTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAG SACABGTGGTTGTGGGGGGA<u>AGC</u>AGTGTGAGTGACCACAGT GAATGAGCTGGGCCGCTAA<mark>GCT</mark>AAACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAG GAATGAGCTGGGCCGCTAA<mark>GCT</mark>GGAATGCTAGGGTACCAGGTCA CACAGTGTACTGAGGCAGGCCCGGGGCCAGGTCA TCATANAGCTTGCTGACGAAAATTAAGGGAACAAGGTTGAGAG TCAGAAAGCTTGCTGAGCAAAAGGTGGGGCGTTTGGGAGGGG GTATCTACATGGTGACTGGAAAGGTGGGCGTTTGGGGAGGGGG GTATCTACATGGTGACTGG CAAAATTA**AGO**GAACAAGGTTGAGAGCCCTAGT NGCTTGGCTGRGCRAMATTAGG HILLINGTTGCTGRGCRACATAGGGTATTAGG HILLINGTTGCTGRGCRACAT-GGGTATTAGG HILLINGTGGGGAACAT-GGGTATTAAGC AGCTGAGCTGAGCTG AGCTGA AGCTGGGGTGAGCTGGGGGCAGATAGGAGTGTGGGAAAA TCTO GGALTGAGETGGGGTGAA<mark>CTGG</mark>GCTGAGETGAGETGGGGT GGALTGAGETGGGGTGAA**CTGG**AGTGCTAGGGTACCAGGT ACMGTGTACTGAGGCAGG<mark>CTGG</mark>AGTGCTAGGGTACCAGGT raatgaactggaatgage<mark>tggg</mark>ccgctaagctaaactaggctg ТААТФААСТОБЛАТФАСТВОСТВОВСКАВАСТАВССТС ТОЗПОЛАСТОБЛАТФАСТВОВСКАВАСТВОВСКАВАСТАВСТВОВСКАВА ТОЗПОЛАСТОБЛАТФАСТВОВСКАВАСТВОВСКАВАСТВОВСК AGCTGAGCTGGGG**GTGAG**CTGAGCTGAGCTGGGGT TGGGGTGAGCTGAGCTGG GTANG CTGGAGGGAGCTAGGATAAGTGAG AAAATGAAGTA**GACTG**TAATGAACTGGAATGAGCTGG TGAGCCAAAATGAAGTAGACTAGGTTATCACAAGGGAACTAGG AGGAGTGTGGGAAAGTG<mark>GACTA</mark>GGTTATCACAAGGGAACTAGG AATGAGCTG CCGCTAAGCTAAACTAGGCT | |||| | || CAGCTATAGGTGAGCTGGGG IGTAATGAACTGGAATG**AGCTG**AGCAGCTATAGGTGAGCTGGGG IGGAACATAGGGTATTA<mark>AGCTG</mark>AGCAGCTATAGGTGAGCTGGGG IGAGCTGAGATGAGCTG TACACTGGACTGTTCTGAGCTGAGCAGCAGCTATAGGTGAGGTGGGG GGGAACATAGGGTATTAAGCTGAGCAGCAGCTATAGGTGAGCTGGGG CTTGCTGAGCAAAATT**AAGGCAACAAGG**TGAGAGCCCTAGTAA ITTGCTGAGCGAAATT**AAGGCAACAAG**ACAAGGCGCTGTGGGG TGGACTGGGCTATCAC**AAGGCAACTAG**ACAGGTGGTTGTGGGG

AGCTCAGETATGCTACGCTGTGTGTGAGAGAGTGTACTGA MLH3G3-10 GCCAGTGTGAGTGACCAC-----AGTGTACTGAGGCAGG TGAOCTAGOGTGAGCTO MLH3G3-38 CTAGGTTGGGCASCTACA-----GGTGAGCTGGGTTGGATG TGAACTGGAATGAACTGGG TGAACTGGAATGAACTGGGG<u>TGGA</u>CTGGAGTGCTAGGGTACCAG CACAGTGGAATGAACGAGCGCC-----CTGGAGTGCTAGGGTACCAG NLH3G3-1 GATTACTCTGAGGTAAGCAA----AGCTGGGCTTGAGCCAAAAT GATTACTCTGAAGGTAAGCAA<u>TCCT</u>GTGGACTGGGTTATCACAAG GCAGATAGGAGTGTGGAAAA----GTGGACTGGGTTATCACAAG MLH3G3-2 MLH3G3-33 сатороторостистстваяс---остистваатососталас Паподаторостистстваяс<u>тте</u>гоголаталсствостала агоносторостистваяс<u>тте</u>гоголаталсствостала агоносторостиствая MLH303-41 MLH303-15 CCTGAAGGGCCACAGGGGAGC--TGGGGCTATCAGATCACAGG GGGCTTCTCTGAGCGCTTCT--AAAATGCGCTAAACTGAGGTGA GGGCTTCTCTGAGCGCTTCT<u>CT</u>CTATAGGTGAGCTGGGGTAGA MLH303-4 TAGGGTATTAAGCTGAGCAG--CTATAGGTGAGCTGGGGTAGGA MLH3G3=10 CTGGACAGCTCTGGAGGGAGC-TAGGA7AAJTGAGGATGTGGG GATTACTCTGAGGTAAGCAAA-GCTGGGCTTGAGCCAAAATGAA GATTACTCTGAGGTAAGCAAAAGGAGAAAAGGTTTGTAGAAGC TAGGACAGATGAACAGTTAC-AGAAGAAAAGGTTTGTAGAAGC MLH303=27 ААСТОЛОБТСЯЛТАСТСТВАСС-ТАЛОСАЛАССТОВОСТТСЯЛОВИИ ААСТОЛОБТСЯЛТАСТСТВАСС-ТАЛОСАЛАССТВОССТТСЯЛС ССТОЛОБТСАСТОВОСТТСЯЛСЯ СТСЛОТАСТАСАТОРТАСТ-СБАЛАЛОСТОВОССТТСООС MLH3G3-106 MLH3G3-14 GAAGCTTGAATGTCCAGGCTG-AGTATCTACATGGTGACTGGAA GGOCTTCTTGAGCGCTTC7AAAATGCGCTAAACTGAGGTGAT GGCCTTCTTGAGCGCTTGTACTGTGAGTGACCACAGTGTAC CAGSTGGTGGTGGGGGAAGCCACAGTGTGACTGACCACAGTGTAC MLH3G3-MLH303-10 CTAGGTTGAATAGAGCTAAACTCTACTGCCTACACTGGACTGG CTAGGTGGATAGAGCTAAACGAAAGTGGACTGGGTTATCAC TCTGGGGCGGATAGGAGTGGGAAAAGTGGACTGGGTTATCAC MLH3G3-25 MLH303-23 ТААБОБААСААОБТТОАБАОССТАБТААБСААОСТТААЛА ТААБОБААСААОБТТОАБАОССТАБТААБСААОСТТААЛАА ТААБОБААСААОБТТОАБАОССАОТОТОБААЛАОТОБАСТООТ ТААБОБТТСТОБОСАВАТАБСАОТОБСААЛАОТОБАСТООТ MLH3G3=3 MLH3G3-10 AGCTAAGGGTTCTOGGOCAGATAGGAGTGTGGAAAAGTGGACTG TGASCCANAATGAAGTAGACTGTAATGAACTGGAATGAGCCGGG TGASCCANAATGAAGTAGACTGTAGTGTGGGGGGAGCCAGTGT ATCACAAGGGAACTAGGCCAGTGGTTTGTGGGGGAAGCCAGTGT MLH3G3-52 TGGCTTAACCGMGRTGAGCCANACTGGAATGAACTTCATTAATC TGGCTTAACCGMGRTGAGCCATAGGACAGGTGGTGGTGGGGGGAA ACTGGGTTATCACAAGGACAGGTGGTGGTGGTGGGGGGAA MLH3G3-53 GGCCGCTANGCTAAACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCAA MLH3G3-113 GACAGCTCTGGAGGGAGCTAGGATAAGTGAGGATGTGGGGGACCA

Sg3

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Sm

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Sm

Page 19

Sμ-Sγ1, mlh3-/-

M

s

m LH3G3=22	GACTGTTCTGAGCTGAGATGAGCTGGGGTGAGCTCAGCTATGCT GACTGTTCTGAGCTGAG
g3	GCAGCTACAGGTGAGCCGGGGTAAGTGGGAATATGGAGACCTGG
п LH3G3-40 g3	GCTGAGCTAGOGTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGA
n LH3G3-88 g3	TGGAATGAACTTCATTAATCTAGGTTGAATAGAGCTAAACTCTA TGGAATGAACTTCATTAATCTATTTGGGAAGGGGACCAGATCA TGGTGACTGGAAAAGGTGGGCOTTTGGGGAGGGGGACCAGATCA
n LH3G3-43 g3	CTAGGTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAG
n LH3G3-95 g3	CTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCAAACTGGAATGAACTTCATTAAT CTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCATAAGGGTTCTGGGGCAGATAGG GGGAGGGGGGCCAGATCAAGCCAAAGGGTTCTGGGGCAGATAGG
n LH3G3-12	GEORGANISAGARCANGETGAGETGAGETGAGAGAGAGAGAGAGAGAGAGAGAGAG
g3 n LH3G3-11	ACCACKGTGTACTGAGGCAGGCTGGAGTGCTAGGGTACCAGGT GAGCTGGGGTAGACTAGCAGCGTGTGGGGTGAGCT IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
g3 m LH303-39	GAGGTAGGTGGAACATAGGTATTAASCTGAGCASCTATAGGT ATTAATCTAGGTTGAATAGAG ATTAATCTAGGTTGAATAGAG ATTAATCTAGGTTGAATAGAA ACAGGTGGTTGTGGGGAAGC ACAGGTGGTTGTGGGGAAGC
g3 n	
LH3G3-9 g3 m	GTAGGTAGGTAGGACAGAAGTAGAACAGATGGAGCAGTTA
LH3G3-31 g3 n	GCTAAGCTAAACTAGGCTGGCTTAACCGAGATGAGCCAAACTGG GCTAAGCTAA
м LH3G3-5 g3	ССТТЕСТВАССАЛАЛТТАЛОВАЛАСЛАВСТТВАВАВСССТАВТА ПОЛИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТИТ
n LH3G3-155 g3	TTOROCCAMANGARGTRORCTUNICAACTOGANTOROCTOG IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
n LH3G3-71 73	GEMCARGETTGNERGCCCTAGTANGCGAGGCTCTANAAGCAT GGACANGETTGAGAGCCCTAGCTTGAATGTCCAGGCTGGGTT CAGAGGAAAGGTTGTGAGAGCCCTAGCTTGACTGTCCAGGCTGGGTA
n LH3G3-32 g3	GCTGAGCAAAATTAAGGGAACAAGGTTGAGAGCCCTAGTAAGCG GCTGAGCAAAATTAAGGGAACAAGGATCACAGGGCCCCAGGTAATG GCTGAGCAAAATTAAGGGAACAACAGGATCACAGGGCCCCAGGTAATG CACAGGGGGCCTGGGGCCTATG
n LH3G3-13 g3	GAOCTCAGCTATGCTACGCGTGTTGGGGTGAGCTGATCTGAAAT GAOCTCAGCTATGCTACGCGGGTGGGTAACATAGGGT ATGGAGACCTGGCGGGGAOCTGAGCTAGGTAGGTGGGAACATAGGGT
n LH3G3-29 73	GAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGCTGAGC
n LH3G3-94 g3	АСТОЗАСТОТТСТВАСТВАЛТОВ СТОВОВТАВСТСАВСТА АСТОЗАСТИТЕТВАСТВАЛТОВ СТОВОВТАТСАСАВОВА САДАТАБСАВТСТВАЛТОВ СТОВОВТАТСАСАВОВДА САДАТАБСАВТСТВАЛТОВ СТОВОВТАТСАСАВОВДА
n LH3G3=73 G3	TGGAATGAGCTGGGCCGCTAAGCTAACTAGGCTGGCT7AACGG TGGAATGAGCTGGCCGCTAAGGACAGGTGGTTGTGGGGGAAGC TGGTTATCACAAGGAACTAGGTGGTTGTGGGGGAAGC
n LH3G3-24 g3	Теместеместеместеместеместеместеместемес
n LH3G3-51 g3	СТОАСАТОВОВТОАСАТОВОСТВАЮСТВОВСТВАЮСТВО СТОАСАТОВОВТОАСАТОВОСТВОВСТВАЮСТВОВСТВАЮСТВО СТОАСАТОВОВСТВАЯ СТОАСТВАЕСТВОВСТВОВСТВОВСТВОВСТВОВСТВАЯ СТОАСТВОЕТСТВОВОВСТВАЯ ССАСТВОВСТВОВСТВОВСТВОВСТВОВСТВОВСТВОВСТ
m LH3G3-121	GAGGGTTTTTTANATGCCTAAGTAGTAGTAGTAGTAGTAGTAGAG TGAGGCTTTTANATGCCTAAGTAGTAGTAGTAGTAGAGAG AGGTATTAAGTCAAGTAGTAGTAGTAGGTAGGAGGG
g3 n LH3G3-77	AGGETATTAAGCTGAGCT <u>AGCTA</u> TAGGTGAGCTGGGGTAGGAGG GCTGAGCTAGGTGAGCTGAGC
g3	GCTGGGCAGCTACAGGTGAGCCG <mark>GGGT</mark> AAGTGGGAATATGGAGA

FIGURE 3.

5g3

CTEGAGOGAGCTAEGATAAGTGAGGATGTGGGGGACCAA

Altered Sµ-S γ 3 DNA junctions in *mlh*3^{-/-} B cells. B cells from *mlh*3^{+/+} and *mlh*3^{-/-} mice were stimulated by LPS in vitro for 5 days. Junctional Sµ-Sγ3 DNA was amplified, cloned, sequenced, and compared with the corresponding germline S μ (MUSIGCD07) and S γ 3 region sequence (MUSIGCD18 or MUSIGHANA). Microhomologies and insertions are in bold and underlined. Sequences were derived from stimulated B cells of 5 $mlh3^{+/+}$ and 5 $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice.

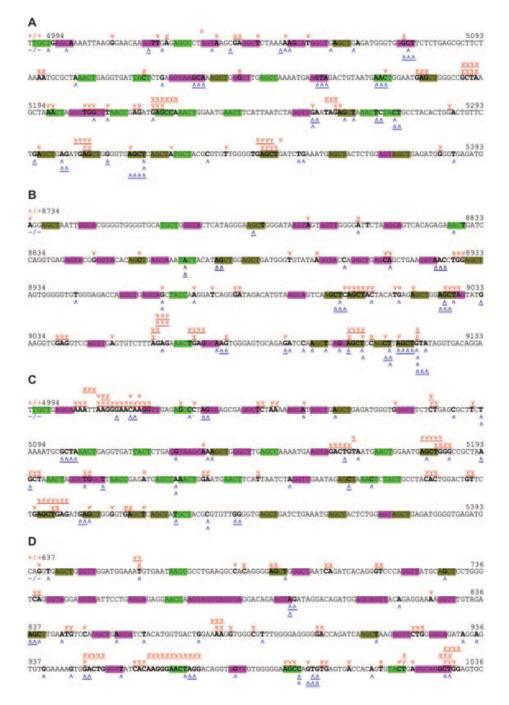


FIGURE 4.

DNA breakpoints in Sµ, Sγ1, and Sγ3 regions of junctional Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 DNA in $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells. Sequences analyzed are identical to those analyzed in Figs. 2 and 3. Breakpoints are indicated by carets. The Sµ or Sy breakpoints in $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells are in red and above the sequence, and those in $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells are in blue and below the sequence. Donor-acceptor microhomologies are indicated by underscored carets. More than 90% of Sµ breakpoints are located within 400 bp of Sµ DNA (MUSIGCD07 4994–5393), >92% Sγ1 breakpoints are within 400 bp of Sγ1 region (MUSIGHANB 8734–9133), and

>75% Sy3 breakpoints are within 400 bp of Sy3 region (MUSIGCD18 637–1036) as shown here. RGYW, WRCY, and AGCT are in purple, green, and brown, respectively. Nucleotides at which breakpoints occurred are in bold. *A*, Breakpoints in Sµ of Sµ-Sy1 junctions; *B*, breakpoints in Sy1 of Sµ-Sy1 junctions; *C*, breakpoints in Sµ of Sµ-Sy3 junctions; *D*, breakpoints in Sy3 of Sµ-Sy3 junctions.

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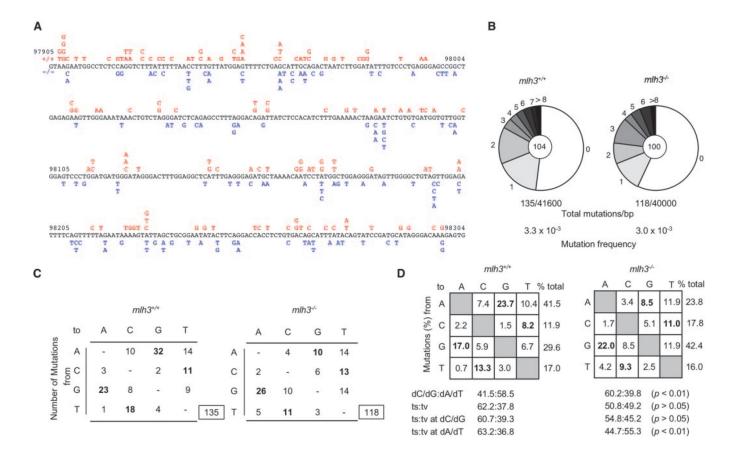


FIGURE 5.

Somatic mutations in the intronic DNA downstream of the rearranged $V_H J558DJ_H 4$ gene (J_H4 intronic DNA) in Peyer's patches B cells. *A*, J_H4 intronic DNA was amplified from germinal center B220⁺PNA^{high} B cells sorted from Peyer's patches of *mlh3*^{+/+} and *mlh3*^{-/-} mice. The sequence depicted spans 400 bp of intronic DNA downstream of J_H4 (AJ851868.1 97905–98304). Mutations in *mlh3*^{+/+} are depicted above the sequence and those in*mlh3*^{-/-} below. *B*, Pie charts of the proportions of sequences that carry 1, 2, 3, etc. mutations over the 400 bp of J_H4 intronic DNA analyzed. The numbers of the sequences analyzed are at the center of the pies. *C*, Numbers and nature of independent mutational events scored. *D*, Compilations with the numbers indicating percentages of all mutations scored in the pool of the target sequences of *A* and *B*. Below the compilations, the ratio of mutations at dC/dG to those at dA/dT is indicated, as is the ratio of transition-transversion substitutions at both dC/dG and dA/dT. Data are from 3 *mlh3*^{+/+} and 3 *mlh3*^{-/-} mice.

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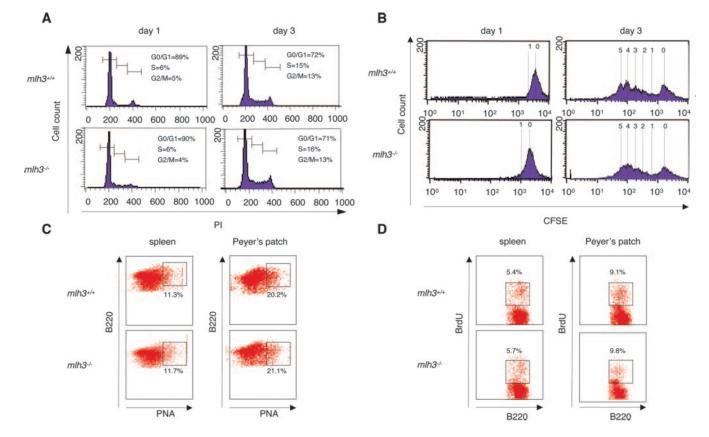


FIGURE 6.

Cell cycle and proliferation analysis. *A*, Cell cycle of $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells in response to LPS stimulation as assessed by PI staining; *B*, cell proliferation of $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells in response to LPS stimulation as assessed by CFSE staining; *C*, proportions of germinal center B220⁺PNA^{high} B cells in $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice; *D*, in vivo proliferation of $mlh3^{+/+}$ and $mlh3^{-/-}$ B cells as assessed by BrdU incorporation.

Table I

Impact of deficiencies of MMR proteins on CSR and SHM

					SHIM		
			Frequency		Patte	Pattern of substitutions	s
MMR Protein Deficiency	Efficacy	S-S microhomologies	In J _H 4 intron	RGYW/WRCY targeting	dC/dG:dA/dT	ts:tv @ dC/dG	ts:tv @ dA/dT
MutS homologs							
Msh2	$\downarrow a$ (31, 32) b	\downarrow (33, 34)	\downarrow (35)	\uparrow (35)	$\uparrow(13,35,36)$	\uparrow (13, 37)	= (13, 37)
Msh3	= (38, 39)	= (38)	= (40)	= (40)	= (39, 40)	= (40)	= (40)
Msh4	Functions s meiosis	Functions specifically during meiosis (26, 27, 29)					
Msh5	Functions s meiosis	Functions specifically during meiosis (26, 27, 29)					
Msh6	\downarrow (38, 39)	= (38)	↓ (40)	\uparrow (39, 40)	\uparrow (38–40)	\uparrow (39, 40)	↓ (38)
MutL homologs							
Mihi	↓ (32)	\uparrow (33, 34)	↓ (41, 42) in VDJ	Undetermined	\uparrow (41) or = (42)	= (42)	= (42)
Pms1	Functions of M	Functions only marginally in MMR30					
Pms2	↓ (32, 43)	\uparrow (32, 43)	↓ (41, 44, 46) in VDJ, = (43)	Undetermined	\uparrow (41) = (42, 43, 46)	= (42, 43, 46)	= (42, 43, 46)
MutS or MutL double							
knockout							
Msh3/Msh6	Undetermined	Undetermined	↓ (40)	\uparrow (40)	\uparrow (40)	\uparrow (40)	= (40)
Msh2/Mlh1	↓ (34)	\uparrow (34)	Undetermined	Undetermined	Undetermined	Undetermined	Undetermined

J Immunol. Author manuscript; available in PMC 2015 October 27.

 b Numbers in parentheses are reference citations.

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Table II

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Sµ-S

	No. of	(micr	Overla _] ohomo	pping J logies,	Overlapping Junctions (microhomologies, no insertions)	s tions)	Blunt Junctions (no microhomology, no insertions)	Nonovei (no m	Nonoverlapping Junctions (no microhomologies, insertions)	unctions ogies,
Mice	Sequences Analyzed	1 nt	2 nt	3 nt	1 nt 2 nt 3 nt 4 nt 5 nt	5 nt	0 nt	1 nt	1 nt 2 nt	3 nt
S μ -S γ 1 junctions										
$mlh3^{+/+}$	44	11	5	5	4	7	15	2	0	0
mlh3-/-	44	9	4	4	1	0	20	33	4	2
Sµ-Sy3 junctions										
$mlh3^{+/+}$	44	8	11	7	7	5	8	1	1	1
mlh3 ^{-/-}	44	9	L	-	7	0	16	4	3	5

sely, blunt junctions and insertions are more in $mlh3^{-/-}$ than in $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells (p < 0.048 and p < 0.016 in Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 junctions, respectively).

Table III

Locations of Sµ, S γ 1, and S γ 3 breakpoints in junctional Sµ-S γ 1 and Sµ-S γ 3 DNA sequences^{*a*}

	Sµ Breakpoi	nts in Sμ-Sγ1	Sγ1 breakpo	ints in Sμ-Sγ3
Mice	Within RGYW/ WRCY ^b (220 nt)	Outside RGYW/ WRCY (280 nt)	Within RGYW/ WRCY (180 nt)	Outside RGYW/ WRCY (320 nt)
mlh3+/+	26 (59)	18 (41)	15 (34)	29 (66)
mlh3-/-	24 (55)	20 (45)	25 (57)	19 (43)
	Sµ breakpoir	nts in Sμ-Sγ1	Sy3 breakpo	ints in Sµ-Sγ3
Mice	Within RGYW/ WRCY (220 nt)	Outside RGYW/ WRCY (280 nt)	Within RGYW/ WRCY (210 nt)	Outside RGYW/ WRCY (290 nt)
mlh3+/+	22 (50)	22 (50)	13 (30)	31 (70)
mlh3 ^{-/-}	19 (43)	25 (57)	24 (55)	20 (45)

^{*a*}Numbers in parentheses following RGYW/WRCY are nt residues comprising (within) or noncomprising (outside) the indicated motifs of a total of 500 nt (length of the S region segment). Numbers in parentheses following each datum are percentages of the targeting of breakpoints within or outside RGYW/WRCY. Sy1 and Sy3 breakpoints preferentially target RGYW/WRCY in *mlh3^{-/-}* B cells (p < 0.05). Targeting of RGYW/WRCY by Sµ breakpoints in either Sµ-Sy1 or Sµ-Sy3 junctions is not different in *mlh3^{-/-}* and *mlh3^{+/+}* B cells (p > 0.05).

 b RGYW/WRCY contains the AID hotspot WRC/GYW, which was also preferentially targeted by S γ 1 and S γ 3 region breakpoints in *mlh*3^{-/-} B cells.

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Table IV

Distributions of Sµ, Sγ1, and Sγ3 breakpoints entailing microhomologies (overlapping, 1 nt) and no-microhomologies (nonoverlapping, blunt junctions and insertions) in junctional Sµ-S γ 1 and Sµ-S γ 3 sequences^{*a*}

		Sµ Breakpoints in Sµ-Sy1	nts in Sμ-Sγ1			Syl Breakpoi	Syl Breakpoints in Sµ-Syl	
	Within RC	Within RGYW/WRCY ^b	Outside R	Outside RGYW/WRCY	Within R(Within RGYW/WRCY	Outside R	Outside RGYW/WRCY
Mice	Overlapping	Nonoverlapping	Overlapping	Nonoverlapping	Overlapping	Overlapping Nonoverlapping Overlapping Nonoverlapping Overlapping Nonoverlapping Nonoverlapping Nonoverlapping	Overlapping	Nonoverlapping
$mlh3^{+/+}$	15 (58)	11 (42)	12 (67)	6 (33)	11 (73)	4 (27)	16 (55)	13 (45)
mlh3-/-	10 (42)	14 (58)	5 (25)	15 (75)	11 (44)	14 (56)	4 (21)	15 (79)
		Sµ Breakpoi	Sµ Breakpoints in $S\mu$ - $S\gamma$ 3			Sγ3 Breakpoi	$S\gamma3$ Breakpoints in $S\mu$ - $S\gamma3$	
	Within R(Within RGYW/WRCY	Outside R	Outside RGYW/WRCY	Within R0	Within RGYW/WRCY	Outside R	Outside RGYW/WRCY
Mice	Overlapping	Overlapping Nonoverlapping	Overlapping	Overlapping Nonoverlapping	Overlapping	Overlapping Nonoverlapping	Overlapping	Overlapping Nonoverlapping
$mlh3^{+/+}$	17 (77)	5 (23)	16 (73)	6 (27)	11 (85)	2 (15)	22 (71)	9 (29)
mlh3-/-	7 (37)	12 (63)	9 (36)	16 (64)	11 (46)	13 (54)	5 (25)	15 (75)

or outside RGYW/WRCY, respectively. cells. Conversely, in Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 junctions involving microhomologies, targeting of Sγ1 and Sγ3 breakpoints to nucleotide residues outside RGYW/WRCY or WRC/GYW decreased in *mlh3^{-/-}B* Distributions of Sµ, Sγ1, and Sγ3 breakpoints entailing microhomologies and nonmicrohomologies in Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sγ3 junctional sequences are altered in m/h3^{-/-} B cells (p < 0.01). In Sµ-Sγ1 and Sµ-Sy3 junctions not involving microhomologies, targeting of Sy1 and Sy3 breakpoints to nucleotide residues within RGYW/WRCY or WRC/GYW increased in mlh3^{-/-}B cells compared with mlh3^{+/+}B cells compared with $mlh3^{+/+}$ B cells.

 $b_{\rm RGYW/WRCY}$ contains the AID hotspot WRC/GYW.

Table V

Distributions of somatic mutations within and outside RGYW/WRCY^a

Mice	Mutations at dC/dG		Mutations at dA/dT	
	Within RGYW/ WRCY ^b (84 nt)	Outside RGYW/ WRCY (316 nt)	Within RGYW/ WRCY (84 nt)	Outside RGYW/ WRCY (316 nt)
mlh3 ^{+/+}	15 (28)	39 (72)	12 (15)	69 (85)
mlh3 ^{-/-}	33 (46)	39 (54)	9 (20)	37 (80)

^{*a*}Mutations at dC/dG preferentially targeted RGYW/WRCY in $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice as compared with $mlh3^{+/+}$ mice (p < 0.05). Numbers in parenthesis following RGYW/WRCY are nucleotide (nt) residues comprising (within) or uncomprising (outside) RGYW/WRCY motif of a total of 400 nt (length of the JH4 intronic DNA segment). Numbers in parentheses following each datum are the percentages of mutations targeting RGYW/ WRCY or other nucleotides.

 b RGYW/WRCY contains the AID hotspot WRC/GYW, which was also preferentially targeted by mutations at dC/dG in $mlh3^{-/-}$ mice.