

**Docket #:** S94-013

# **In Vitro Assay for Wnt growth factor (L Wnt-3A)**

Wnt genes provide important signals during development and tumorigenesis, but their mechanism of action is poorly understood. We have developed a novel cell culture assay for the *Drosophila* Wnt gene *wingless*, using a *Drosophila* imaginal disc cell line. Transfection of a temperature sensitive *wingless* cDNA lead to a temperature-dependent accumulation of the adherens junction protein *armadillo*, a known genetic target of *wingless*. Two other *Drosophila* Wnt genes do not affect *armadillo*. The increase in *armadillo* is due to protein stabilization and is also caused by extracellular matrix or soluble medium from *wingless*-producing cells. The activity in the medium has a rapid, dosage dependent effect and can be depleted by an antibody to *wingless*, providing the first quantitative and early response to an extracellular Wnt protein.

## **Innovators**

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