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1 **Bacterial Infection Remodels the DNA Methylation Landscape of Human Dendritic Cells**

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26 **ABSTRACT**

27 DNA methylation is an epigenetic mark thought to be robust to environmental perturbations on a short
28 time scale. Here, we challenge that view by demonstrating that the infection of human dendritic cells
29 (DCs) with a live pathogenic bacteria is associated with rapid and active demethylation at thousands of
30 loci, independent of cell division. We performed an integrated analysis of data on genome-wide DNA
31 methylation, histone mark patterns, chromatin accessibility, and gene expression, before and after
32 infection. We found that infection-induced demethylation rarely occurs at promoter regions and instead
33 localizes to distal enhancer elements, including those that regulate the activation of key immune
34 transcription factors. Active demethylation is associated with extensive epigenetic remodeling, including
35 the gain of histone activation marks and increased chromatin accessibility, and is strongly predictive of
36 changes in the expression levels of nearby genes. Collectively, our observations show that active, rapid
37 changes in DNA methylation in enhancers play a previously unappreciated role in regulating the
38 transcriptional response to infection, even in non-proliferating cells.

39

40 INTRODUCTION

41 The first immune mechanisms recruited to defend against invading pathogens are those associated with
42 innate immune cells, such as dendritic cells (DCs) or macrophages. Once they sense an intruder, these
43 cells induce sophisticated transcriptional programs involving the regulation of thousands of genes, which
44 are coordinated with the help of signal-dependent transcription factors, including NF- κ B/Rel, AP-1, and
45 interferon regulatory factors (IRFs) (Medzhitov 2001; Smale 2010). The regulation of this program is
46 achieved through a series of epigenetic changes, which are thought to modulate the access of transcription
47 factors to specific DNA regulatory elements (Bierne et al. 2012).

48
49 The most well-studied epigenetic responses to immune stimuli involve the post-translational modification
50 of histone tails at promoter and enhancer regions (Bierne et al. 2012; Monticelli and Natoli 2013). Histone
51 acetylation has been shown to be essential for the activation of many pro-inflammatory genes (Ghisletti et
52 al. 2010; Qiao et al. 2013), whereas increased activity of histone deacetylases is often associated with
53 gene repression in the context of inflammation (Villagra et al. 2009). Moreover, recent studies suggest
54 that the response of innate cells to different immune challenges can result in the appearance of histone
55 marks associated with *de novo* enhancer elements (or latent enhancers) (Kaikkonen et al. 2013; Ostuni et
56 al. 2013). These *de novo* enhancers have been postulated to contribute to a faster and stronger
57 transcriptional response to a secondary stimulus (Ostuni et al. 2013).

58
59 In contrast, we still know remarkably little about the role of other epigenetic changes in controlling
60 responses to infection. DNA methylation has been particularly understudied, as a consequence of the
61 belief that methylation marks are highly stable, and unlikely to respond to environmental perturbations on
62 a short time scale (Bierne et al. 2012; Monticelli and Natoli 2013). Recent work, however, suggests that
63 DNA methylation patterns can rapidly change in response to certain environmental cues (Klug et al. 2010;
64 Guo et al. 2011; Downen et al. 2012; Marr et al. 2014), raising the possibility that rapid changes in DNA

65 methylation might play a role in innate immune responses. To date, no studies have comprehensively
66 investigated the contribution of rapid, active changes in methylation (in contrast to passive changes
67 during cell replication) to the regulatory programs induced by innate immune cells in response to an
68 infectious agent. More broadly, the few studies in mammalian cells that demonstrate cell division-
69 independent changes in DNA methylation have only focused on a small number of CpG sites and,
70 surprisingly, have suggested that such changes are poorly predictive of changes in gene expression levels
71 (Bruniquel and Schwartz 2003; Klug et al. 2010; Guo et al. 2011; Marr et al. 2014). Here, we report the
72 first comprehensive epigenome and transcriptome analysis of monocyte-derived DCs – professional
73 antigen presenting cells that play a central role in bridging innate and adaptive immunity – before and
74 after *in vitro* infection with live pathogenic bacteria. All the data generated in this study are freely
75 accessible via a custom web-based browser that enables easy querying and visualization of epigenetic
76 profiles at any genomic region of interest (<http://luis-barreiolab.org/EpigenomeBrowser>).

77

78 **RESULTS**

79 **MTB infection induces active changes in DNA methylation in human DCs**

80 We infected monocyte-derived DCs from six healthy donors with a live virulent strain of *Mycobacterium*
81 *tuberculosis* (MTB), the causative agent of tuberculosis (TB) in humans. Monocyte-derived DCs are
82 ideally suited to study active changes in methylation because they are post-mitotic and not expected to
83 proliferate in response to infection (Pickl et al. 1996; Ardeshtna et al. 2000). To experimentally confirm
84 this assumption, we performed a Carboxyfluorescein Diacetate Succinimidyl Ester (CFSE) proliferation
85 assay. This method relies on the ability of the highly fluorescent dye carboxyfluorescein to incorporate
86 within cells. Following each cell division, the equal distribution of these fluorescent molecules to progeny
87 cells results in a halving of per-cell fluorescence levels. We did not detect any decrease in per-cell
88 fluorescence at 18 hours post-infection, which confirms that DCs do not proliferate after MTB infection

89 (Fig. 1A). In contrast, we observed high rates of proliferation in our positive control, human monocytic
90 THP-1 cells (Fig. 1A).

91

92 At 18 hours after infection, we obtained paired data on single base-pair resolution DNA methylation
93 levels (using whole genome shotgun bisulfite sequencing: i.e., MethylC-seq) and genome-wide gene
94 expression data (using mRNA sequencing: i.e., mRNA-seq) in non-infected and MTB-infected DCs. For
95 MethylC-seq data, we generated 8.6 billion single-end reads (mean of 648 ± 110 SD million reads per
96 sample; Supplemental Table 1) resulting in an average coverage per CpG site of $\sim 9X$ for each sample. We
97 detected an average of 24 million CpG sites in each sample, corresponding to over 80% of CpG sites in
98 the human genome. Genome-wide methylation data between biological replicates were strongly
99 correlated, attesting to the high quality of the data (Supplemental Fig. 1; mean r across all samples =
100 0.86).

101
102 As expected for mammalian cells, most CpG sites were highly methylated throughout the genome except
103 near transcription start sites (TSSs), CpG islands, and putative enhancer elements (Supplemental Fig.
104 2A,B). We found a significant negative correlation between gene expression levels and methylation levels
105 around TSSs ($r = -0.39$; $P < 1 \times 10^{-16}$; Supplemental Fig. 2C,D), highlighting the well-established role of
106 proximal methylation in the stable silencing of gene expression. Principal component analysis of our data
107 along with MethylC-seq data from 21 other purified cell types and tissues revealed that the DC
108 methylome is closely related to that of other blood-derived cells, particularly cells that share a common
109 myeloid progenitor with DCs, such as neutrophils (Supplemental Fig. 2E).

110
111 We next assessed the occurrence and the extent to which the response of DCs to a bacterial infection is
112 accompanied by active changes in DNA methylation, using the BSmooth algorithm (Hansen et al. 2012).
113 We defined MTB-induced differentially methylated regions (MTB-DMRs) as regions of 3 or more

114 consecutive CpG sites exhibiting a significant difference in methylation between the two groups ($P <$
115 0.01) and an absolute mean methylation difference above 0.1 (Hansen et al. 2014). Using these criteria,
116 we identified 3,271 MTB-DMRs, corresponding to both hypermethylated regions (48%) and
117 hypomethylated regions (52%) (Fig. 1B; Supplemental Table 2). To independently validate these
118 changes, we generated methylation-sensitive pyrosequencing data on control versus MTB-infected DCs
119 from 5 completely new individuals. We targeted 21 CpG sites that were differentially methylated in the
120 MethylC-seq analysis, distributed across 4 hypermethylated (11 CpG sites) and 6 hypomethylated MTB-
121 DMRs (10 CpG sites; Supplemental Table 3). We were able to validate 100% of the hypomethylated CpG
122 sites, with effect sizes similar to or greater than those identified in the original bisulfite sequencing
123 analysis (Fig. 1B,C; Supplemental Fig. 3A). In contrast, we were not able to validate any of the
124 hypermethylated CpG sites (Supplemental Fig. 3B), which indicates that most (if not all) active changes
125 in methylation observed in response to infection are losses rather than gains in methylation, in accordance
126 with previous findings (Klug et al. 2010).

127

128 We found that only 6% of hypomethylated regions overlapped with a promoter (Fig. 1D) and that the vast
129 majority of hypomethylated regions were located distal to TSSs (median distance of ~ 35 kb from the
130 nearest TSS; Fig. 1E, Supplemental Table 2). Hypomethylated regions occurred in genomic regions that
131 show increased levels of evolutionary conservation (Supplemental Fig. 4), a finding that supports their
132 functional importance. Moreover, gene ontology analysis revealed that these regions are significantly
133 enriched (false discovery rate (FDR) < 0.05) near genes known to play a key role in the regulation of
134 immune processes, including the regulation of transcription, signal transduction, and cell apoptosis (Fig.
135 1F; Supplemental Table 4). The set of genes near hypo-DMRs included virtually all of the “master-
136 regulators” of innate immune responses, including *CREB5*, *REL*, *NFKB1*, *IRF2*, and *IRF4*. It also
137 included key genes involved in DC-mediated activation of B and T cells (e.g., *CD83*) and the regulation
138 of cell death (e.g., *BCL2*).

139

140 Active Changes in Methylation Occur in Regions Enriched for 5-hydroxymethylcytosine

141 The TET family proteins catalyze the conversion of methylated cytosine (5mC) to 5-hydroxy-
142 methylcytosine (5hmC), and are thus key players in the process of active demethylation. To evaluate if
143 5hmC levels dynamically change in response to MTB infection (as expected if 5mC sites must pass
144 through the 5hmC state before demethylation), we generated single base-pair resolution maps of 5hmC
145 across the genome using Tet-assisted bisulfite sequencing (TAB-seq) (Yu et al. 2012) in one of the 5
146 original donor. As previously described for other cell populations (Song et al. 2011; Lister et al. 2013),
147 we found markedly higher levels of 5hmC in gene bodies of highly expressed genes, consistent with a
148 role for 5hmC in maintaining and/or promoting gene expression (Fig. 2A) (Hahn et al. 2013; Hon et al.
149 2014).

150

151 Next, we evaluated if 5hmC marks were enriched within hypomethylated MTB-DMRs. We found that
152 regions that became hypomethylated post-infection were already associated with significantly higher
153 levels of 5hmC prior to infection (3.6-fold enrichment; Wilcoxon test; $P < 1 \times 10^{-16}$). Upon infection,
154 5hmC levels increased even further (Wilcoxon test; $P = 1.57 \times 10^{-11}$; Fig. 2B,C), suggesting that 5hmC
155 plays an important role in the cascade of events leading to active demethylation. The increase in 5hmC
156 appears to be specific to hypomethylated regions since no enrichment was observed genome-wide, a
157 result supported by quantitative immunocytochemistry data (Fig. 2D,E). The striking enrichment of 5hmC
158 within MTB-DMRs prior to infection strongly suggests that, in addition to its role as a transitory
159 demethylation intermediate, 5hmC might also contribute to coordinating the gene expression program
160 induced in response to a microbial stimulus.

161

162 MTB-DMRs overlap with enhancer elements that gain activation marks upon infection

163 Given that MTB-DMRs are primarily found distal to TSSs, we predicted that MTB-DMRs would overlap
164 with enhancer regions. To test this hypothesis and evaluate how the chromatin states associated with
165 MTB-DMRs dynamically change in response to infection, we collected ChIP-seq data for six histone
166 marks (H3K4me1, H3K4me3, H3K27ac, H3K27me3, H3K36me3 and H3K9me3) in non-infected and
167 infected DCs (Supplemental Table 1) from two additional donors. Using these data, we generated
168 genome-wide, gene regulatory annotation maps for non-infected and MTB-infected DCs using the
169 ChromHMM chromatin segmentation program (Fig. 3A; Supplemental Fig. 5) (Ernst and Kellis 2012).
170 We found that 41% of hypomethylated regions overlapped with a ChromHMM-annotated enhancer
171 region (defined by the presence of H3K4me1) already present in non-infected DCs, a 7.4-fold enrichment
172 compared to genome-wide expectations (χ^2 -test; $P < 1 \times 10^{-16}$; Fig. 3B,C; Supplemental Table 2). Slightly
173 higher enrichments (8.1-fold; $P < 1 \times 10^{-16}$) were observed when defining chromatin states in MTB-
174 infected DCs. Given the high-resolution of our histone maps, we could further distinguish between active
175 and inactive/poised enhancer elements based on the presence or absence of the H3K27ac mark,
176 respectively, in addition to H3K4me1 (Heintzman et al. 2007; Creighton et al. 2010; Rada-Iglesias et al.
177 2011). Overall, we found that MTB infection leads to a significant increase of active enhancer elements
178 (and decrease of inactive/poised enhancers) colocalizing with MTB-DMRs (Fig. 3B,C).

179
180 We next extended our analysis by examining chromatin transition states at hypomethylated regions in
181 response to MTB-infection. We found that 42% of hypomethylated regions occurred in regions that
182 exhibited infection-dependent changes in chromatin state, a significantly higher proportion than expected
183 compared to the rest of the genome ($P_{\text{resampling}} < 0.001$; Fig. 3E). The chromatin state transitions observed
184 within hypomethylated regions were primarily explained by the acquisition of histone activating marks
185 (e.g., H3K27ac) in MTB-infected cells. For example, among hypomethylated regions that overlapped
186 with predefined enhancers (i.e., enhancers observable in non-infected cells), 85% of those that exhibit a
187 change in chromatin state gained an activation mark (H3K27ac or H3K27ac+H3K4me3; Fig. 3F,G;

188 Supplemental Fig. 6A). This proportion was markedly larger than that observed genome-wide (37%) (χ^2 -
189 test; $P = 1.1 \times 10^{-59}$; Fig. 3F). Notably, we also found a large number of hypomethylated regions ($n =$
190 218; 12.7% of all hypomethylated regions) that overlapped with heterochromatin/repressed regions before
191 infection but gained *de novo* enhancer marks upon MTB infection (H3K4me1 (+ H3K27ac + H3K4me3)).
192 The number of *de novo* enhancers we observed among hypomethylated regions was significantly higher
193 than expected by chance ($P_{\text{resampling}} < 0.001$; Fig. 3D,E,G; Supplemental Fig. 6A). The identification of
194 enhancers only present in infected DCs resembles recent findings showing that, in response to different
195 immune stimuli, mouse macrophages can gain *de novo* putative enhancer regions that were absent in
196 naive cells (Kaikkonen et al. 2013; Ostuni et al. 2013). Interestingly, we observed that 5hmC was
197 significantly enriched among *de novo* hypo-DMRs prior to infection (Wilcoxon test; $P = 5.27 \times 10^{-149}$),
198 suggesting that 5hmC might be an early “pre-marking” mechanism of enhancer activation, even before
199 the deposition of H3K4me1 marks (Supplemental Fig. 6A,B).

200
201 Finally, we found that MTB-induced activation or *de novo* gain of enhancer elements at hypomethylated
202 regions was associated with the induction of putative enhancer RNAs (eRNAs) (Wang et al. 2011) in
203 these intergenic regions (as measured by whole-transcriptome RNA-seq) as well as with increased levels
204 of histone marks associated with transcriptional activity (Supplemental Fig. 7). Moreover, changes in
205 eRNA levels in response to MTB infection show a striking positive correlation with changes in gene
206 expression levels of nearby genes ($r = 0.49$, $P = 7.6 \times 10^{-13}$; Supplemental Fig. 7), in support of a
207 mechanistic link between demethylation, eRNA production and the regulation of proximal protein-coding
208 genes (Lam et al. 2014).

209
210 **MTB-DMRs are bound by signal-dependent transcription factors**

211 We next asked if MTB-infection was associated with changes in the levels of chromatin accessibility in
212 MTB-DMRs. We mapped regions of open chromatin in non-infected and infected DCs based on genome-

213 wide sequencing of regions showing high transposase (Tn5) sensitivity (using ATAC-seq in one
214 additional donor) (Buenrostro et al. 2013). Overall, we observed that MTB-DMRs colocalize with regions
215 of open chromatin, which further reinforces the regulatory potential of these regions (Fig. 4A).
216 Interestingly, we found that the response to MTB-infection was accompanied by a striking increase in
217 Tn5 sensitivity levels in hypomethylated regions, which indicates that the chromatin in these regions
218 became more accessible after infection (Fig. 4A). This observation is commensurate with our data
219 showing the acquisition of active histone marks in these regions, and further supports the idea that
220 hypomethylated regions frequently reflect the presence of regulatory elements that become more active in
221 response to infection.

222
223 An attractive feature of ATAC-seq data is the ability to identify motif instances occupied by transcription
224 factors (TF) within regions of open chromatin (Neph et al. 2012; Buenrostro et al. 2013). We did so by
225 using a modified version of the Centipede algorithm (Pique-Regi et al. 2011) specifically devised to test
226 for aggregate differential binding of TFs between two experimental conditions. This method, which we
227 call CentiDual, compares the intensity of the Tn5 sensitivity-based footprint across all matches to a given
228 motif in the genome, between non-infected and infected samples (see Methods for details on the statistical
229 model). We found compelling evidence for measurable, genome-wide transcription factor activity (i.e.,
230 binding to the genome; Bonferroni-corrected $P < 0.05$) in either non-infected or infected DCs for 264 TF
231 binding motifs, representing over 200 unique transcription factors (some TFs can bind different motifs;
232 Supplemental Table 5). Of these TF binding motifs, we found 55 that were differentially bound between
233 non-infected and infected DCs (Bonferroni-corrected $P < 0.05$; 27 show increased binding and 28 show
234 decreased binding; Fig. 4B). Among TF binding motifs showing increased genome-wide binding after
235 infection, we found several that are associated with NF- κ B/Rel (e.g., NFKB1, REL) and IRFs (e.g., IRF1,
236 IRF2) family members (Fig. 4B; Supplemental Table 5), both of which play a primary role in the
237 regulation of inflammatory signals in response to infection (Smale 2010). Interestingly, several CTCF

238 motifs showed significantly decreased binding in infected DCs (Bonferroni-corrected $P < 1.85 \times 10^{-14}$,
239 Supplemental Table 5). CTCF is a well-established transcriptional insulator (Ong and Corces 2014),
240 raising the possibility that the release of CTCF in response to infection might be an important mechanism
241 for the regulation of efficient immune responses.

242

243 We next used CentiDual to test for differential binding within MTB-DMRs. Within hypomethylated
244 regions we found increased binding (FDR < 0.1) at 8 TF binding motifs after infection. Strikingly, all of
245 these motifs were associated with immune-induced TFs from the NF- κ B/Rel (e.g., REL; FDR = $1.57 \times$
246 10^{-6}), AP-1 (FDR = 4.9×10^{-3}), or IRF (FDR = 3.97×10^{-3}) families (Fig. 4C; Supplemental Table 5).
247 This result demonstrates that hypomethylated regions correspond to places where immune-activated TFs
248 are recruited after infection. In accordance with this argument, we found that, in infected DCs, TF binding
249 motifs associated with NF- κ B/Rel, AP-1, and IRF families were all significantly enriched within
250 hypomethylated regions (up to 16-fold; Supplemental Fig. 8A). Indeed, in MTB infected DCs, over 50%
251 of the hypomethylated regions were bound by at least one of these signal-dependent TFs, which
252 corresponds to an 3.8-fold increase relative to chance expectations (based on sampling random regions of
253 the genome matched for length and GC content; χ^2 -test; $P = 3.94 \times 10^{-63}$; Supplemental Fig. 8B).

254

255 **MTB-DMRs are associated with genes differentially expressed in response to MTB infection**

256 Finally, we asked if genes associated with hypomethylated regions were more likely to change expression
257 levels in response to infection. We classified 2,051 and 1,947 genes as significantly up- or down-
258 regulated post-infection, respectively (FDR $< 1 \times 10^{-4}$ & $|\log_2$ fold change > 1 ; Supplemental Table 6).
259 We next tested whether genes located near hypomethylated regions were more likely to be differentially
260 expressed upon MTB infection relative to all genes in the genome. To do so, we first associated each
261 hypomethylated region with a unique gene using the following criteria: if a hypomethylated region was
262 located within a gene body, the region was assigned to that gene; otherwise, we assigned each

263 hypomethylated region to the gene with the TSS closest to the midpoint of the MTB-DMR. Then, we
264 tested for an enrichment of differentially expressed (DE) genes among three classes of genes: (i) “hypo-
265 DMR-genes” corresponding to the set of genes associated with hypomethylated regions ($n = 1,291$); (ii)
266 “predefined-DMR-genes” corresponding to the set of genes in hypomethylated regions that overlapped
267 with predefined enhancer elements ($n = 508$, a subset of class *i*), and (iii) “*de novo*-DMR-genes”
268 corresponding to the set of genes in hypomethylated regions that overlapped with *de novo* enhancer
269 elements ($n = 180$, also a subset of class *i*).

270
271 We found that hypo-DMR-genes (class *i*) were significantly enriched among DE genes (1.6-fold, χ^2 -
272 test; $P = 1.07 \times 10^{-17}$; Fig. 5A,B) compared to all genes in the genome, consistent with the observation
273 that changes in DNA methylation were globally correlated to changes in expression after infection
274 (Supplemental Fig. 9). This enrichment was noticeably stronger for predefined-DMR-genes (class *ii*; 1.9-
275 fold, $P = 3.37 \times 10^{-14}$) and even more so for *de novo*-DMR-genes (class *iii*; 2.5-fold, $P = 6.52 \times 10^{-14}$).
276 Indeed, among *de novo*-DMR-genes, 54% were DE, even at the very stringent cutoffs we used to define
277 DE genes (Fig. 5A,B). Among DE genes associated with hypomethylated regions, 74% were up-regulated
278 after MTB infection – substantially more than the 51% of up-regulated genes observed genome-wide (χ^2 -
279 test; $P = 4.4 \times 10^{-79}$, Fig. 5C,D). This observation was even more pronounced when focusing specifically
280 on predefined-DMR-genes (class *ii*) and *de novo*-DMR-genes (class *iii*), for which 78% ($P = 8.68 \times 10^{-36}$)
281 and 94% ($P = 6.9 \times 10^{-23}$), respectively, were associated with increased expression levels in response to
282 infection (Fig. 5C).

283
284 Finally, we performed a paired time course analysis of gene expression and DNA methylation levels for 6
285 hypo-DMRs (associated with 6 immune-related genes: *IRF4*, *REL*, *TRAFD1*, *CD83*, *BCL2*, *NFKB1*)
286 aimed at defining the relative order of changes in DNA methylation versus changes in gene expression.
287 We found that differential methylation was undetectable at 2 hours post-infection, even though half of the

288 genes associated with these sites (3 out of the 6 genes tested) were already significantly up-regulated (Fig.
289 5E). Thus, we speculate that demethylation is not required for TF binding at enhancer elements or for the
290 subsequent up-regulation of the associated gene. However, for all CpG sites tested, the magnitude of
291 DNA hypomethylation (relative to non-infected cells) increased at later time points until methyl marks
292 were almost completely erased in infected cells, even if for most genes the largest fold changes in gene
293 expression were observed at earlier time-points (Fig. 5E).

294

295 **DISCUSSION**

296 The possibility that active changes in methylation, particularly demethylation, can occur in mammals has
297 been a matter of debate for decades (Ooi and Bestor 2008; Pastor et al. 2013). Here, we provide
298 compelling evidence that the response of human DCs to MTB infection is accompanied by widespread,
299 rapid loss in DNA methylation. Although many possible mechanisms can account for these losses (Kohli
300 and Zhang 2013), the observation that hypomethylated regions show increased levels of 5hmC in
301 response to MTB infection strongly suggests that the family of TET proteins (TET1, TET 2, and TET3)
302 are involved in this process. This possibility is further supported by recent studies showing that TET2 is
303 required for active DNA demethylation in human monocytes (Klug et al. 2013) and during brain
304 development (Lister et al. 2013). TET2 is also highly expressed in DCs at both the mRNA and protein
305 levels (Supplemental Fig. 10).

306

307 By integrating our methylation maps with ChIP-seq data on six histone marks we show that active
308 demethylation occurs almost exclusively at distal regulatory elements, particularly enhancers. This
309 observation, which is robust to the cutoffs used to call MTB-DMRs (Supplemental Fig. 11), parallels
310 what has been previously described in differentiating cells and during developmental processes (Ji et al.
311 2010; Stadler et al. 2011; Ziller et al. 2013) despite the fact that the mechanisms controlling active and
312 passive changes in methylation are markedly different (Kohli and Zhang 2013). In contrast to previous

313 studies that also reported active changes in methylation (e.g., in response to neuronal activation (Guo et
314 al. 2011); or during monocyte differentiation into macrophages or dendritic cells (Klug et al. 2010)), we
315 found a strong association between DMRs and changes in gene expression of nearby genes. The apparent
316 discrepancy between our results and those previously reported is probably explained by the fact that past
317 studies have only investigated active methylation changes in promoter regions, which our data suggest are
318 infrequent, or only on a small subset of all CpG sites in the (mouse) genome (~1%). Moreover, we
319 decided to focus on differentially methylated regions (3 or more consecutive differentially methylated
320 CpGs) instead of methylation changes at individual CpG sites (Klug et al. 2010; Guo et al. 2011), a
321 decision that likely enriched our analysis for DMRs involved in changes in gene expression. In support of
322 this hypothesis, we found that the enrichment for DE genes become stronger as we focus on MTB-DMRs
323 with a larger number of differently methylated CpG sites (Supplemental Fig. 11). More broadly, our
324 results highlight the key importance of using single base-pair resolution maps of the DNA methylome in
325 order to fully capture the relationship between changes in methylation and changes in gene expression.

326

327 We show that demethylation is often associated with the gain of histone activation marks and the
328 recruitment of immune-activated TFs in response to infection. The recruitment of NF- κ B and other master
329 regulators to hypomethylated regions is likely associated with the opening of the chromatin in these
330 regions, although it remains unclear whether the chromatin opens to allow the binding of these TFs (i.e.,
331 prior to binding) or if the observed increase in chromatin accessibility is a consequence of the binding
332 itself. Our results shed some light on this problem. Specifically, we observed that changes in gene
333 expression sometimes tend to occur *prior* to detectable changes in DNA methylation, at least in the hypo-
334 DMRs we investigated in our time-course experiment. These results support a model in which TF binding
335 to enhancers leads to gene up-regulation followed by active demethylation, rather than vice-versa,
336 consistent with the sequence of events proposed for other cellular contexts (Stadler et al. 2011; Schubeler
337 2015). We note, however, that our pyrosequencing data does not allow us to distinguish between 5-mC

338 and 5hmC. Thus, it is possible that 5hmC levels were increased 2 hours post-infection and that these
339 changes preceded the activation of certain enhancers, as recently suggested in T cells (Ichiyama et al.
340 2015). More generally, we cannot completely exclude the possibility that demethylation occurred prior to
341 changes in gene regulation, but only in a small proportion of the cells (1 – 2%, based on the sensitivity
342 threshold of pyrosequencing assays: (Tost and Gut 2007), making it difficult to detect at the 2 hour time
343 point. Under this scenario, demethylation in only a few cells could account for the observed changes in
344 gene expression. However, we have previously shown that >30% of DCs uptake MTB bacteria after only
345 1 hour post-infection using the same protocol (Barreiro et al. 2012), and in single-cell RNA-seq data from
346 dendritic cells, >50% are transcriptionally responsive to immune challenge (Shalek et al. 2014). Thus, it
347 seems unlikely that our results reflect a response driven by only a small minority of cells. Importantly,
348 even if TF binding instigates changes in methylation, binding alone is not sufficient: the vast majority
349 (>99%) of binding events induced by infection occur at regions that do not change methylation
350 (Supplemental Fig. 12).

351
352 Finally, there is increasing evidence that, after a first encounter with a pathogen or other immune
353 stimulus, innate immune cells keep such attacks “in memory.” As a result, they are able to mount faster
354 and stronger gene transcriptional responses upon restimulation and exhibit increased resistance to
355 secondary infection. This process, termed trained immunity (Monticelli and Natoli 2013; Quintin et al.
356 2014; Saeed et al. 2014), has been attributed to epigenetic reprogramming at the level of histone H3
357 methylation based on the observation that distal regulatory elements that gain *de novo* H3K4me1 (i.e., *de*
358 *novo* enhancer marks) in response to immune activation generally do not lose this mark after the
359 stimulation has ceased (Ostuni et al. 2013). Although epigenetic programming through histone
360 modifications might be an important factor in trained immunity, our results raise the possibility that
361 changes in DNA methylation might also contribute to short-term memory in innate immune cells. Indeed,
362 changes in DNA methylation might be ideally suited as a mechanism of epigenetic memory since these

363 changes are expected to be thermodynamically more stable and longer lasting than changes in histone
364 marks. In support of this idea, we observed that the magnitude of DNA hypomethylation gradually
365 increased with time since infection, and never reverted back to higher levels during our 72 hour time-
366 course experiment. Moreover, we show that the gain of *de novo* enhancers – assumed to account for
367 trained immunity – often occurs concomitantly with the loss of DNA methylation in the same regions.
368 Our results thus raise the possibility that trained immunity might not only be due to post-transcriptional
369 changes in histone marks but also, and possibly primarily, due to changes in DNA methylation.

370

371 **METHODS**

372 **Biological material and sequencing libraries.** Details of the experimental and statistical procedures can
373 be found in the Supplemental Methods section. Blood samples from healthy donors were obtained from
374 Indiana Blood Center. A signed written consent was obtained from all of the participants and the project
375 was approved by the ethics committee at the CHU Sainte-Justine (protocol #4023). Blood mononuclear
376 cells from each donor were isolated by Ficoll-Paque centrifugation and blood monocytes were purified
377 from peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) by positive selection with magnetic CD14
378 MicroBeads (Miltenyi Biotec). Monocytes were then derived into DCs as previously described (Barreiro
379 et al. 2012) and subsequently infected with MTB for 18 h at a multiplicity of infection of 1-to-1. For the
380 ChIP-seq and ATAC-seq experiments, we used heat-killed bacteria (5-to-1 ratio), which we show to lead
381 to virtually the same transcriptional response at 18 hours to that observed with live MTB ($r = 0.91$;
382 Supplemental Fig. 13). RNA-seq libraries were prepared using the TruSeq RNA Sample Prep Kit v2 or
383 the Illumina Total Stranded RNA Library kit, as per the manufacturer's instructions. MethylC-seq
384 libraries were generated by ligation of methylated sequencing adapters to fragmented genomic DNA
385 followed by gel purification, sodium bisulfite conversion and six cycles of PCR amplification. TAB-seq
386 libraries were generated as previously described (Yu et al. 2012) and ChIP-seq libraries for the six histone
387 marks were prepared following the Illumina protocols, with minor modifications (see Supplemental

388 Methods). ChIP-seq signals from the two biological replicates were highly concordant (mean $r = 0.94$ and
389 range = 0.87-0.99; Supplemental Fig. 14) and were combined for all analysis. Finally, ATAC-seq libraries
390 were generated from 100,000 cells, as previously described (Buenrostro et al. 2013). Sequencing was
391 performed using the Illumina HiSeq 2000 or 2500, as per the manufacturer's instructions

392

393 **CFSE proliferation assay.** DCs and THP-1 cells were covalently labeled with Carboxyfluorescein
394 Diacetate Succinimidyl Ester (CFSE) (Life Technologies) as described in detail elsewhere (Quah and
395 Parish 2010). Briefly cells were washed with PBS and resuspended with 5 mM CFSE. After a 5 min
396 incubation at room temperature, cells were thoroughly washed with PBS containing 5% FCS before
397 plating in complete culture medium.

398

399 **5hmC staining.** The protocol was adapted from Santos et al. (Santos et al. 2003). DCs were cultured on
400 poly-L-lysine-coated coverslips and fixed for 30 min in 4% paraformaldehyde in PBS and permeabilized
401 with 0.2% Triton X-100 in PBS for 30 min at room temperature (RT). Cells were then washed with
402 0.05% Tween 20 in PBS and were treated with 1 M HCl plus 0.1% Triton X-100. After 30 min at 37°C,
403 cells were incubated with 100 mM Tris/HCl (pH 8.5) for 30 min and blocked for 2 h in PBS with 1%
404 BSA, 0.05% Tween-20 and 2% goat serum. Cells were incubated with 5-Hydroxymethylcytosine
405 antibody (ActiveMotif), followed by Alexa 488 goat anti-rabbit antibody (Life Technologies) for 1 h at
406 RT. The slides were mounted with Fluoromount G (SouthernBiotech), and cells counterstained with
407 DAPI to localize the nucleus. A laser-scanning microscope (Zeiss LSM 700) in the tile scan mode was
408 used to capture a mosaic of images. Fluorescence was quantified using the Fiji software. Average
409 fluorescence estimates were calculated from 1,769 non-infected cells and 1,532 MTB-infected cells.

410

411 **Read processing and alignment**

412 Sequencing data was processed using the Illumina analysis pipeline and FASTQ format reads were
 413 aligned to the human reference genome (GRCh37/hg19) using Bowtie 2 (Langmead and Salzberg 2012).
 414 Methylation levels for each CpG site were estimated by counting the number of sequenced C
 415 ('methylated' reads) divided by the total number of reported C and T ('unmethylated' reads) at the same
 416 position of the reference genome using the bismark package (Krueger and Andrews 2011). The
 417 summarized methylation estimates of strand-merged CpG sites were used to identify differences in
 418 methylation between non-infected and infected samples using the R package BSmooth (Hansen et al.
 419 2012). RNA-seq based gene expression levels were estimated using HTSeq and differently expressed
 420 genes following MTB infection of DCs using the R package DESeq2 (Anders et al. 2013). ChromHMM
 421 (Ernst and Kellis 2012) was used to segment the genome into different chromatin states based on six
 422 histone modifications and the CHIP input. The ChromHMM model was learned separately for both
 423 infected and non-infected DCs (main text) or using a unified model that learns and defines chromatin
 424 states in both infected and non-infected DCs at the same time (Supplemental Fig. 15).

425
 426 **ATAC-seq data processing and footprinting analysis.** Footprinting analyses were performed using a
 427 modified version of the Centipede algorithm (Pique-Regi et al. 2011) specifically devised to test for
 428 differential binding between two experimental conditions. To determine which TFs were active in the
 429 first step, we calculate a Z-score corresponding to the PWM effect in the prior probability in Centipede's
 430 logistic model and we determined as active those that had a Bonferroni-corrected $P < 0.05$. The Z-score
 431 corresponds to the β parameter in:

$$\log\left(\frac{\pi_l}{1-\pi_l}\right) = \alpha + \beta \text{ PWMscore}_l$$

432
 433 where π_l represent the prior probability of binding in Centipede's model in motif location l . In the
 434 second step, we first trained Centipede assuming that the footprint was bound in the two conditions. Then,
 435 we fixed the model parameters and generated a likelihood ratio and posterior probability π_{l_t} for each

436 condition t separately and for each site l . To detect if the footprint was more active in one of the two
 437 conditions, we fit a logistic model that included an intercept for each condition (α and δ), the PWM
 438 effect β , and PWM times the treatment effect γ :

$$\log\left(\frac{\pi_{lt}}{1-\pi_{lt}}\right) = \alpha \times (1 - I_t) + \beta \times \text{PWMscore}_l + \delta \times I_t + \gamma \times (I_t \times \text{PWMscore}_l)$$

439
 440 where I_t is an indicator variable that takes the value 1 if $t = \text{“treatment”}$ and 0 if $t = \text{“control”}$. We then
 441 calculated a Z-score for the interaction effect γ , corresponding to the evidence for condition specific
 442 binding.

443
 444 **Data visualization in the Immune Epigenome Browser.** The browser, implemented using the WashU
 445 Epigenome Browser web interface (Zhou and Wang 2012), can be accessed at [http://luis-](http://luis-barreirrolab.org/EpigenomeBrowser)
 446 [barreirrolab.org/EpigenomeBrowser](http://luis-barreirrolab.org/EpigenomeBrowser). Along with RefSeq gene annotations, it includes 25 data tracks
 447 showing (i) the genomic location of MTB-DMRs; (ii) smoothed site-specific 5mC values; (iii) 5hmC
 448 values; (iv) all histone mark ChIP-seq read signals (H3K4me3, H3K4me1, H3K27ac, H3K27me3,
 449 H3K36me3, and H3K9me3); (v) Tn5-transposase (i.e., chromatin accessibility) read signals; (vi) mRNA
 450 read signals; and (vii) predicted binding sites for the 55 transcription factors that significantly change
 451 genome-wide binding levels in response to MTB infection. All data sets are shown for both non-infected
 452 (NI) and MTB-infected (MTB) conditions with respect to the GRCh37/hg19 reference sequence. Note
 453 that for ease of visualization, several tracks are not shown under default parameters. These can be added
 454 by going to: *Tracks* \rightarrow *Custom tracks* \rightarrow *List of all*.

455
 456 **DATA ACCESS**
 457 Data generated in this study have been submitted to the NCBI Gene Expression Omnibus (GEO;
 458 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/>) under accession numbers GSE64173 (ATAC-seq), GSE64175 (ChIP-
 459 seq), GSE64181 (TAB-seq), GSE64182 (wtRNA-seq), GSE64179 (mRNA-seq), and GSE64177

460 (MethylC-seq). PyroMark and real-time PCR data are reported in Supplemental Tables 7 and 8,
461 respectively.

462

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476

477 **COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT**

478 The authors declare no competing financial interests.

479

480 **FIGURE LEGENDS**

481 **Figure 1.** MTB-induced changes in methylation in post-mitotic human DCs. (A) CFSE-labeled THP-1
482 (left) and CFSE-labeled DCs (right). Proliferation was assayed in either non-infected cells or cells
483 infected for 18 hours with MTB. Similar results were observed 48 hours post-infection (Supplemental
484 Fig. 16). (B) Example of a region showing active loss of DNA methylation in response to MTB infection

485 (gray shading). The plot shows smoothed methylation values (y-axis) for six non-infected (blue) and six
486 MTB-infected samples (red). Thick blue and red lines show average methylation levels for non-infected
487 and infected cells, respectively. The inset on the right shows methylation levels at two individual CpG
488 sites within the hypomethylated region using bisulfite pyrosequencing as a validation method. (C) Scatter
489 plot showing the correlation between MethylC-seq (x-axis; smoothed data) and pyrosequencing data (y-
490 axis) for mean differences in methylation between infected and non-infected cells, at 10 CpG sites within
491 hypomethylated DMRs. Data are represented as mean \pm s.e.m., $n = 6$ for MethylC-seq and $n = 5$ for Pyro-
492 seq. (D) Pie charts showing the distribution of hypomethylated regions in different genomic regions. Each
493 MTB-DMR is counted only once: the overlap of a genomic region excludes all previously overlapped
494 MTB-DMRs, starting clockwise from promoters (TSS \pm 500 bp; red). (E) Distribution of distances of
495 MTB-DMRs to the nearest TSS. (F) Representative gene ontology (GO) terms enriched among genes
496 associated with hypomethylated regions. To demonstrate that the enriched biological processes are largely
497 robust to the cutoff used to define MTB-DMRs, we show how these results differ depending on the
498 number of differentially methylated CpG sites ($P < 0.01$) required to call an MTB-DMR (from at least
499 three to at least 5 consecutive sites).

500

501 **Figure 2.** 5hmC is enriched in MTB-DMRs prior to infection. (A) Metagene profiles of 5hmC levels
502 relative to Ensembl transcripts expressed at different levels in human DCs. We grouped genes in four
503 quantiles based on their expression levels on non-infected DCs. (B) Barplots showing mean 5hmC/C
504 ratios within hypomethylated regions, before (blue) and after infection (red). (C) Composite plots of
505 patterns of 5hmC before and after MTB infection ± 3 kb around the midpoint of hypomethylated regions.
506 (D) 5hmC staining in non-infected (top panel) and MTB-infected DCs (bottom panel). 5hmC levels are
507 given by the levels of Alexa 488 (green; middle panel). Cells counterstained with DAPI to localize the
508 nucleus are shown in the first panel. (E) Boxplots showing the distribution of 5hmC staining intensity.
509 No significant differences were observed between the two groups.

510

511 **Figure 3.** MTB-DMRs overlap with enhancer elements that become active upon infection in
512 hypomethylated regions. (A) Combination of histone patterns used to define the 7 chromatin states. The
513 precise relative contribution of each chromatin mark to each of the chromHMM-defined states can be
514 found in Supplemental Figure 3. Note that state 7 was defined by either no signal *or* the presence of either
515 H3K27me3/H3K9me3. (B) Pie charts showing the distribution of chromatin state annotations genome-
516 wide (on non-infected cells) and within all MTB-DMRs in either non-infected (blue) or MTB-infected
517 cells. The chromatin state codes are as defined in (A). (C) Fold enrichments of the different chromatin
518 states within hypomethylated regions as compared to genome-wide expectations in non-infected (blue)
519 and MTB-infected cells (red). (D) Heatmap of the proportion of hypomethylated regions by chromatin
520 transition state. The x-axis represents the chromatin states defined in non-infected DCs and the y-axis the
521 chromatin state of the same region in MTB-infected DCs. The two inner boxes indicate two subgroups of
522 hypomethylated regions, predefined enhancer (detectable enhancer in non-infected DCs) and *de novo*
523 enhancers (detectable enhancer only in MTB-infected DCs). The numbers inside the cells refer to the
524 proportion of hypomethylated regions that undergo each of the highlighted transitions. (E) Top panel:
525 Histogram showing the observed proportion of regions that change chromatin state after infection (any
526 transition) when sampling 1000 random sets of regions matched to the chromatin states found in non-
527 infected samples within hypomethylated regions. Each random set contains the same number of
528 hypomethylated regions as those identified in the true data ($n = 1,714$). The blue triangle represents the
529 observed proportion of hypomethylated regions that changed chromatin state in response to MTB
530 infection. Bottom panel: Same as above but focusing on regions of the genome labeled as
531 heterochromatin/repressed before infection (state 7; $n = 790$) that gain *de novo* enhancer marks upon MTB
532 infection (states 3, 4, or 5). The blue triangle represents the proportion observed within the true set of
533 hypomethylated regions. (F) Barplots showing the proportion of hypomethylated regions that overlap
534 with enhancers and show dynamic changes in chromatin state, as defined by the gain or loss of H3K27ac

535 mark. (G) Composite plots of patterns of H3K4me1 and H3K27ac ChIP-seq signals ± 3 kb around the
536 midpoints of hypomethylated regions (x-axis) overlapping with predefined (right) and *de novo* (left)
537 enhancers.

538

539 **Figure 4.** MTB-DMRs are bound by signal-dependent transcription factors. (A) Tn5-accessibility profiles
540 before and after MTB infection, ± 3 kb around the midpoints of hypomethylated regions. (B) Scatterplot
541 comparing transcription factor occupancy score predictions between non-infected (y-axis) and MTB
542 infected DCs (y-axis). The size of the dots is proportional to the level of statistical significance supporting
543 differential binding in response to MTB infection. Red dots represent TFs that show evidence for
544 increased binding after MTB infection and blue dots represent TFs that show evidence for decreased
545 binding after infection. The inset on the top right corner shows the genome-wide footprint on NF-kappaB
546 (p50) motif (motif ID: M00051) in non-infected (blue) and MTB-infected DCs (red). In this example, the
547 footprint in MTB-infected DCs is clearly stronger, which supports increased TF binding of at NF-kappaB
548 (p50) motif genome-wide upon MTB infection. (C) TF motifs (motif IDs in parenthesis) that show
549 significantly increased binding in hypomethylated regions after MTB infection.

550

551 **Figure 5.** Differential methylation is coupled to differential gene expression. (A) Proportion of
552 differentially expressed genes (y-axis) observed among all tested genes and among genes associated with
553 different subgroups of hypo-DMRs. (B) QQ-plot showing that genes in the vicinity of hypo-DMRs show
554 stronger statistical evidence for being differentially expressed in response to MTB infection (*P*-values on
555 y-axis) compared to all genes tested (*P*-values on x-axis). (C) Proportion of up- and down-regulated genes
556 among DE genes associated with the different subgroups of hypo-DMRs. (D) Examples of genes
557 encoding for two key transcription factors, *NFKB1* (left panel) and *IRF4* (right panel) that are strongly
558 upregulated in response to MTB infection and for which we identified one or more hypomethylated
559 regions (gray shading) that overlap with putative enhancer elements. Normalized read signals for the

560 indicated features are shown for non-infected (blue tracks) and infected conditions (red tracks). (K4me1)
561 H3K4me1; (K27ac) H3K27ac; (Tn5) transposase-accessible chromatin; (mRNA) mRNA expression
562 levels; (E) Changes in DNA methylation levels (y-axis) measured by pyrosequencing across four time
563 points after MTB-infection (2, 18, 48, and 72 hours (h)) along with the corresponding fold changes in
564 log₂ scale (log₂FC) in normalized gene expression of the associated gene. Blue and red lines represent
565 average methylation levels in non-infected and MTB-infected DCs, respectively. All data are represented
566 as mean ± s.e.m., with a minimum of three biological replicates per group. PyroMark and real-time PCR
567 data are reported in Supplemental Tables 7 and 8, respectively.
568

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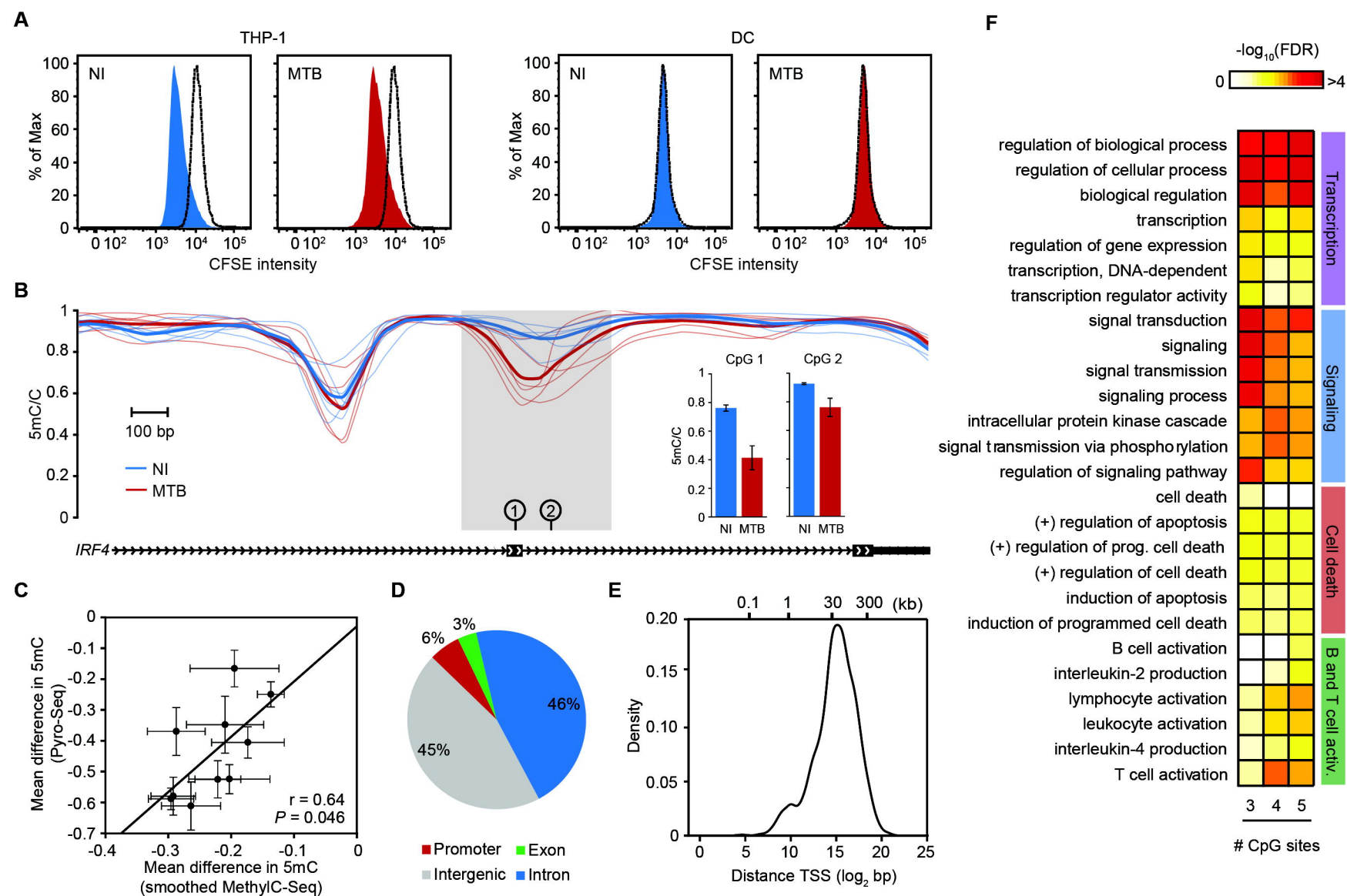


Figure 1

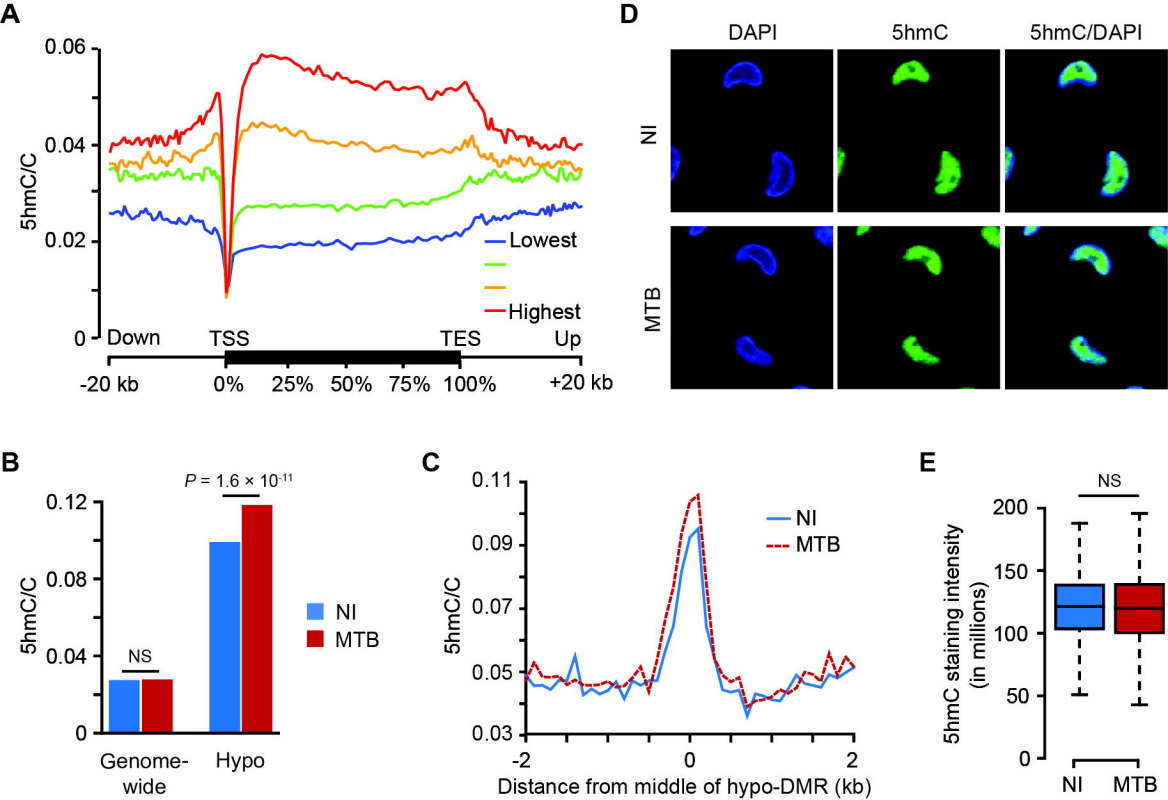


Figure 2

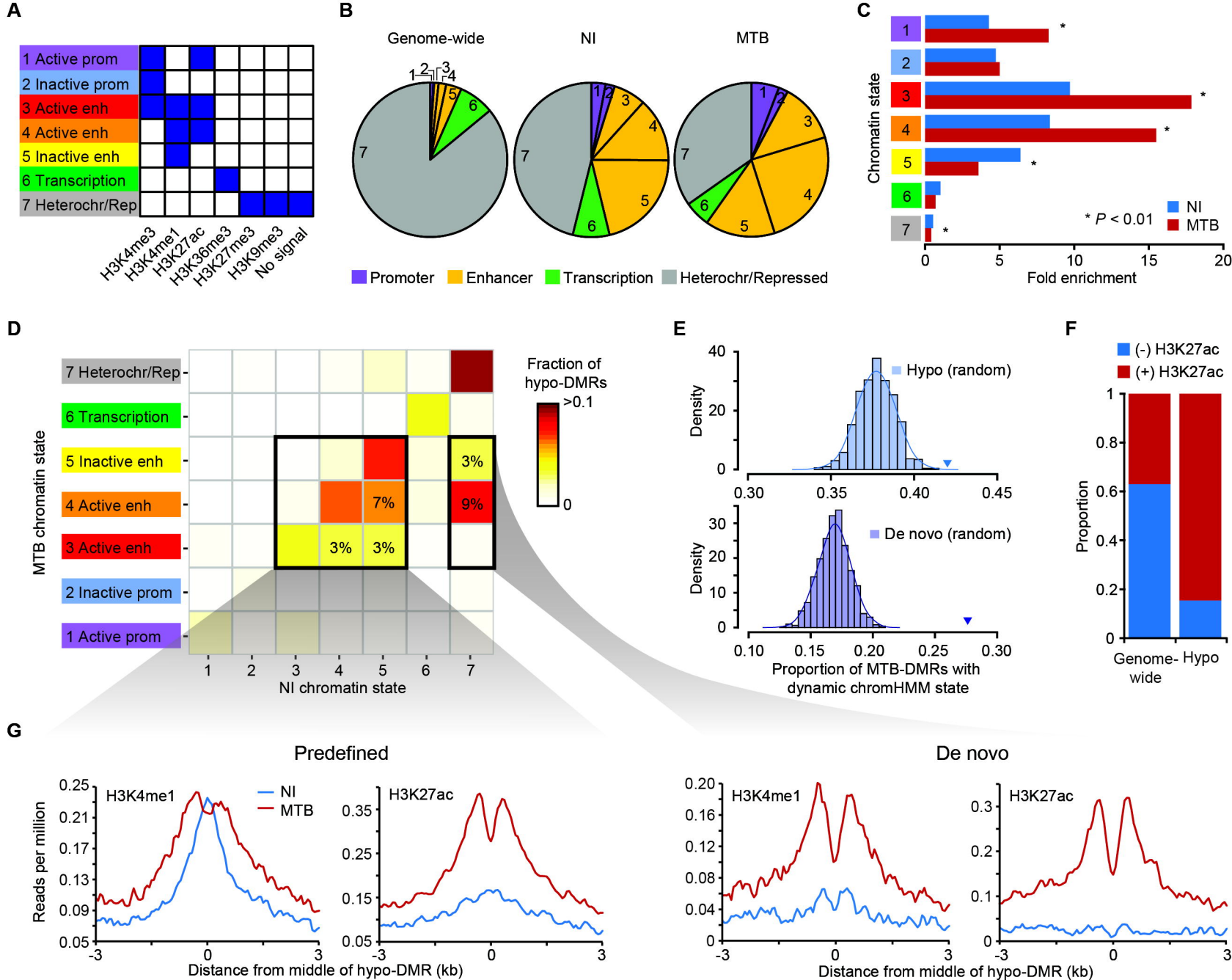


Figure 3

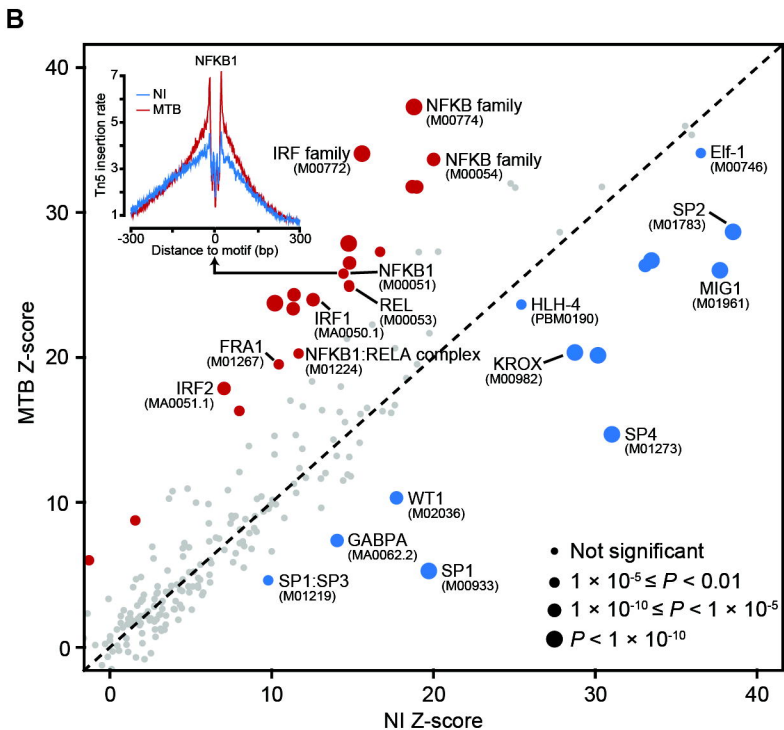
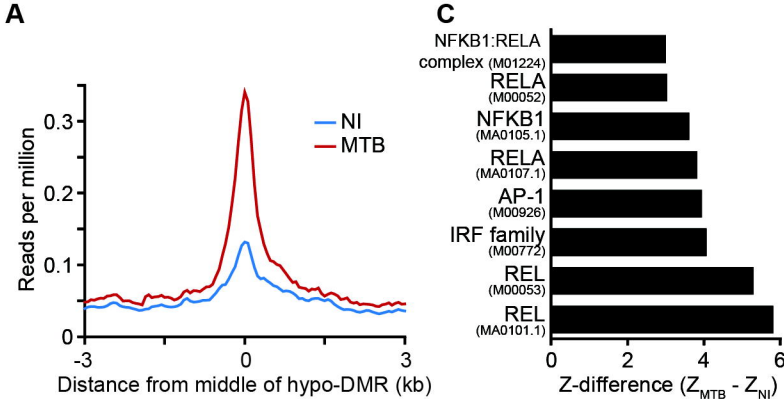


Figure 4

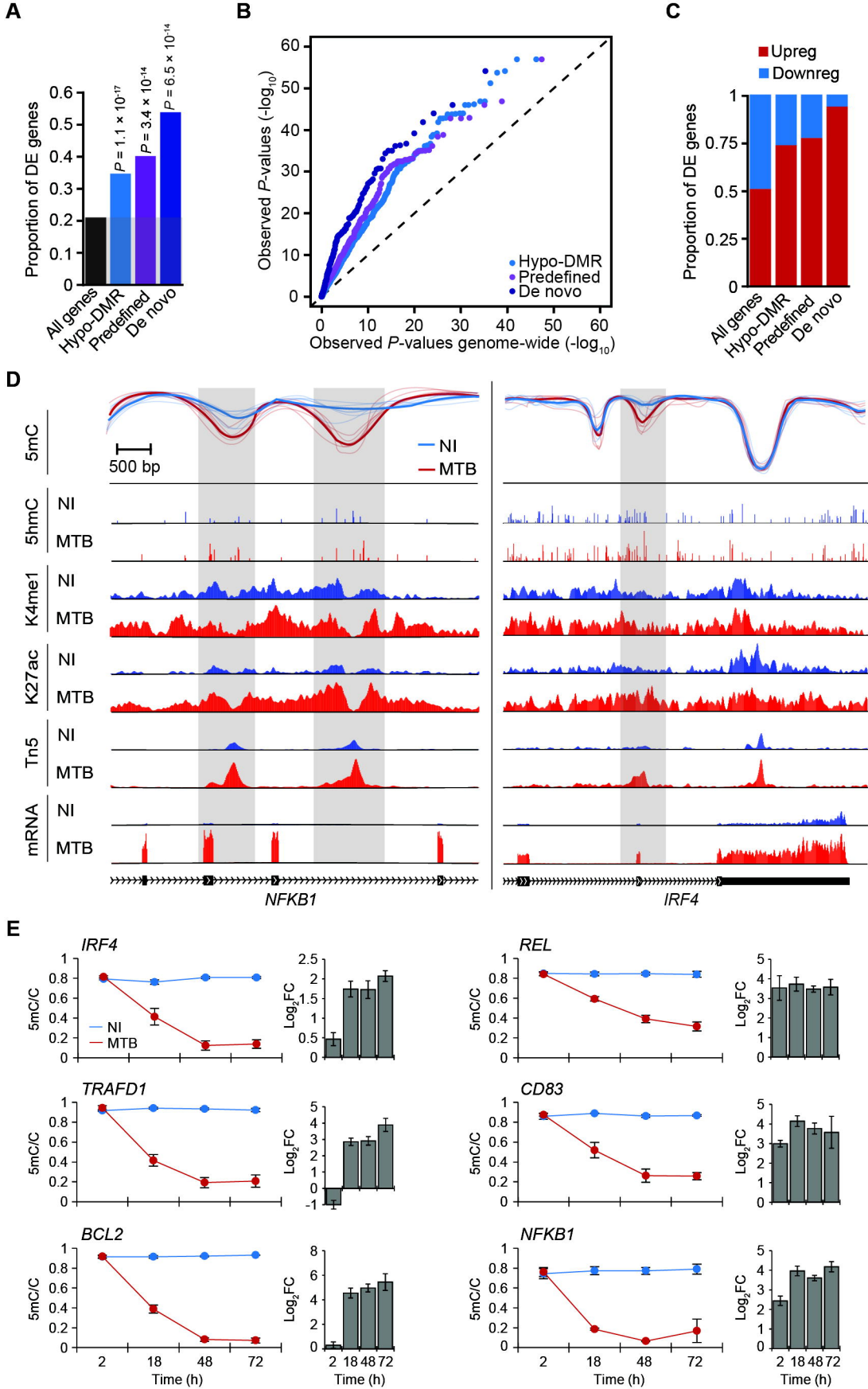


Figure 5