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viroids and obelisks

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Hi Peter.

You recently published an article about "viroids and obelisks", and cited the new publication from "Science".

Did you notice that the author of the "Science" article referred to genomes "seemingly" composed of loops of RNA, and included this quote about "creative" work by researchers on "viroids"?

"The Stanford search yielded nearly 30,000 **predicted** RNA circles, each consisting of about 1000 bases and **likely** representing a distinct obelisk."

It doesn't sound like they're very certain about any of this. What do you think?

And from the preprint study:

"Obelisks" share several properties: (i) **apparently** circular RNA ~1kb genome assemblies, (ii) **predicted** rod-like secondary structures encompassing the entire genome, and (iii) open reading frames coding for a novel protein superfamily, which we call the "**Oblins**".

... Obelisk RNA reads assemble into ~1000 nt circles, which are predicted to fold into rod-like RNA secondary structures and code for at least one member of a novel "Oblin" protein superfamily

The word "predicted" appears quite a few times in this paper.

"Likely" appears 13 times.

"Apparently circular" appears 8 times.

"Other scientists are delighted by obelisks' debut. "It's insane," says Mark Peifer, a cell and developmental biologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "The more we look, the more crazy things we see.""

-- "Science"

Pretty funny, huh?

Christine