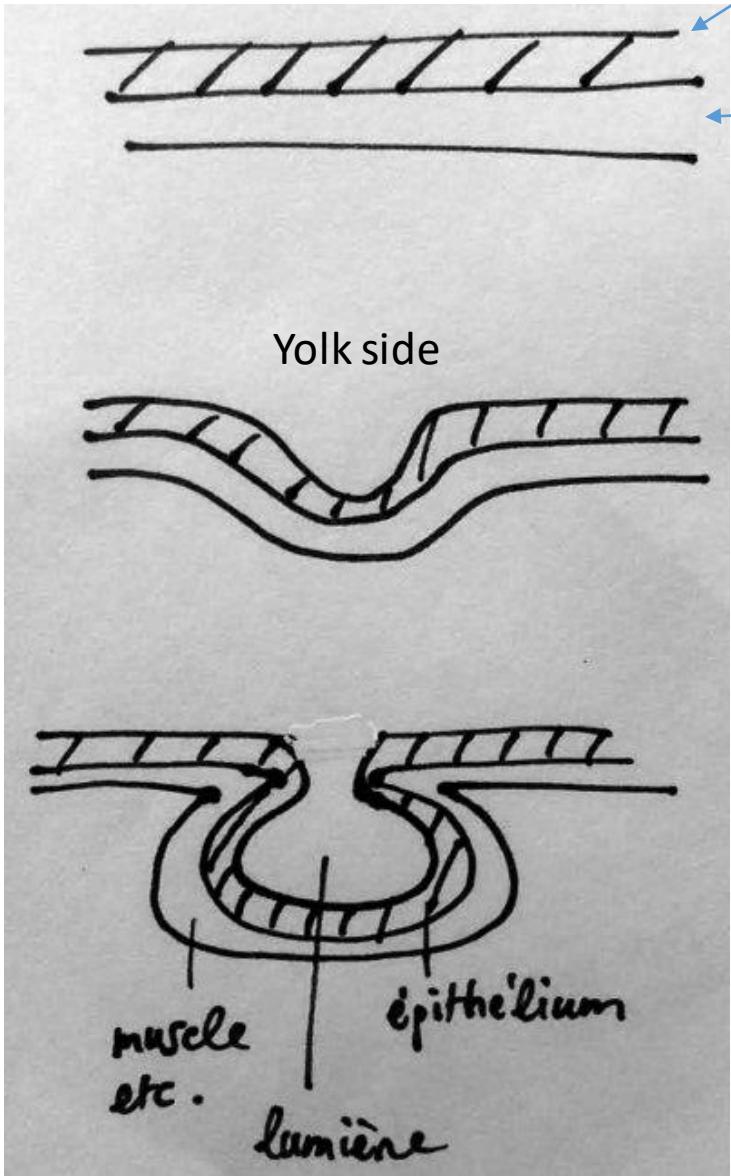




# La formation de notre intestin: beaucoup de génétique ... et de mécanique (et d'électricité)

**Nicolas Chevalier**  
CNRS Researcher  
Laboratoire Matière & Systèmes Complexes  
Université de Paris

# From a sheet to a tube



Epithelium (endoderm)

Mesenchyme (mesoderm)

Not completely closed midgut

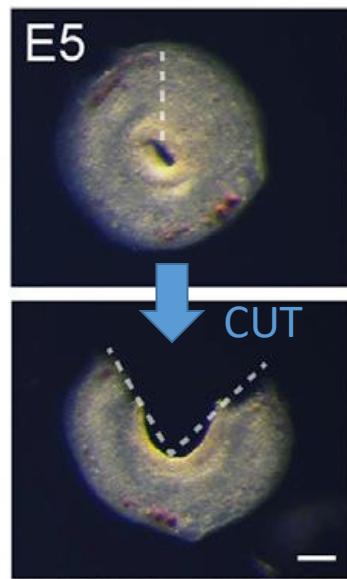
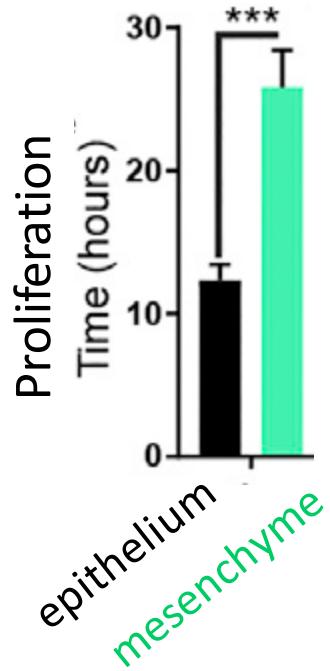
*Chicken E4.5*



Colon

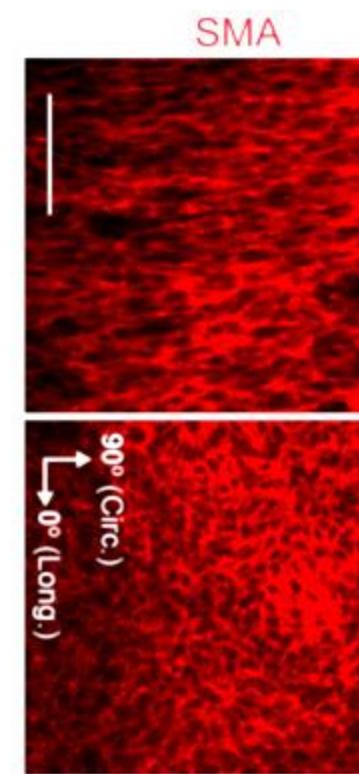
# A fundamental mechanical orientation phenomenon:

Huycke et al., Cell, 2019



Huycke et al., Cell, 2019

Culture  
2 days



Huycke et al., Cell, 2019

More proliferation of epithelium

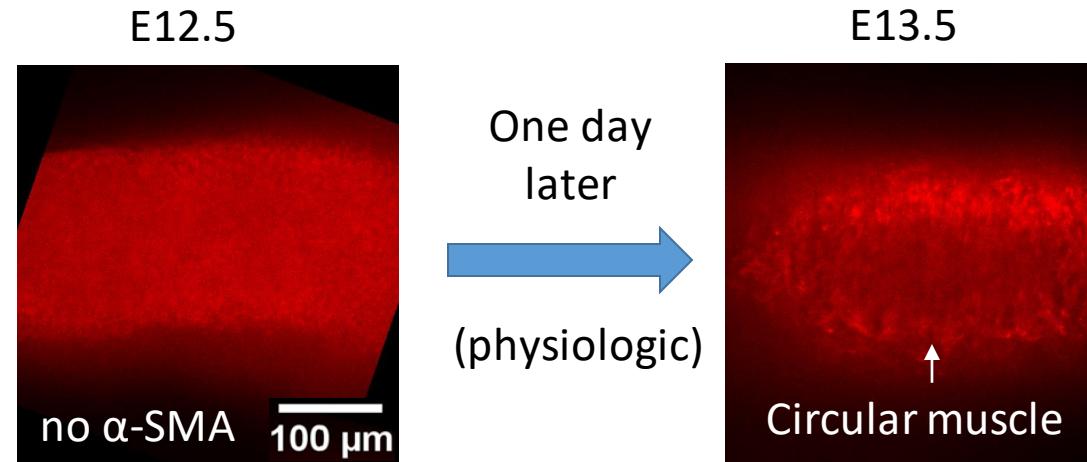


Creates internal circumferential stress

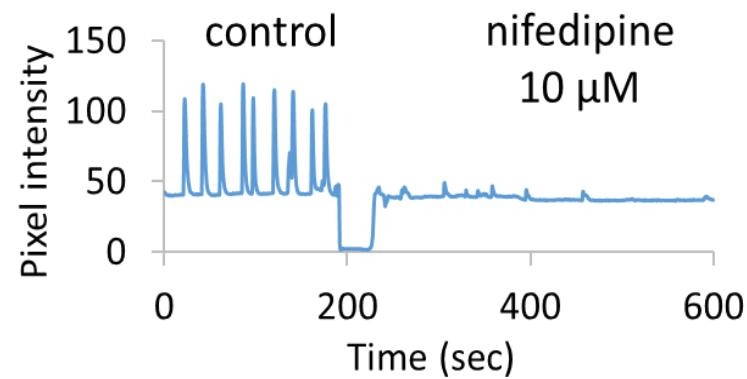
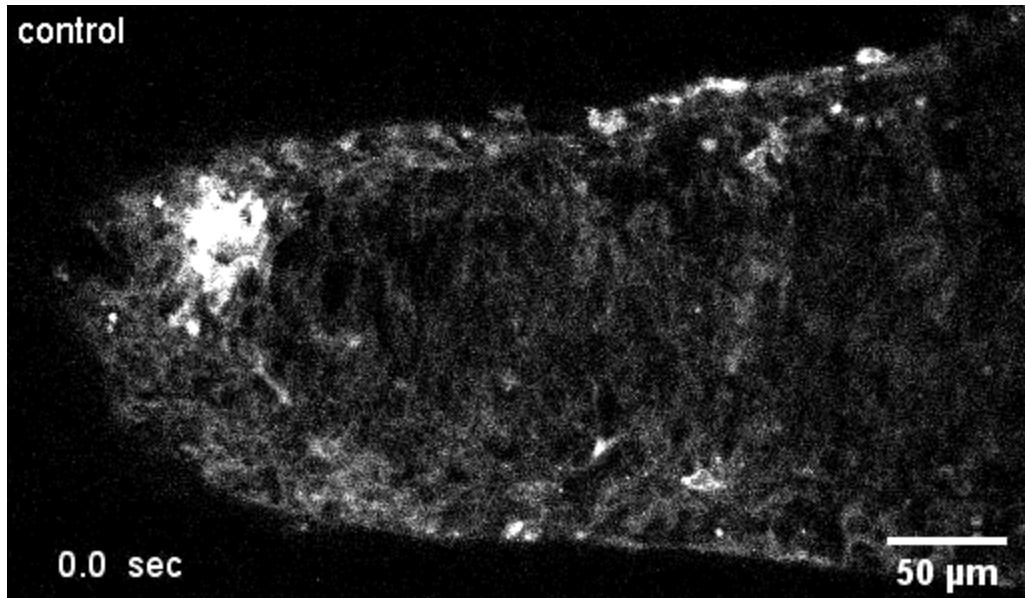


Makes the first muscle layer orient circularly

# A fundamental bioelectric differentiation phenomenon



**But calcium waves present at E12.5 ! (GCamp mouse)**

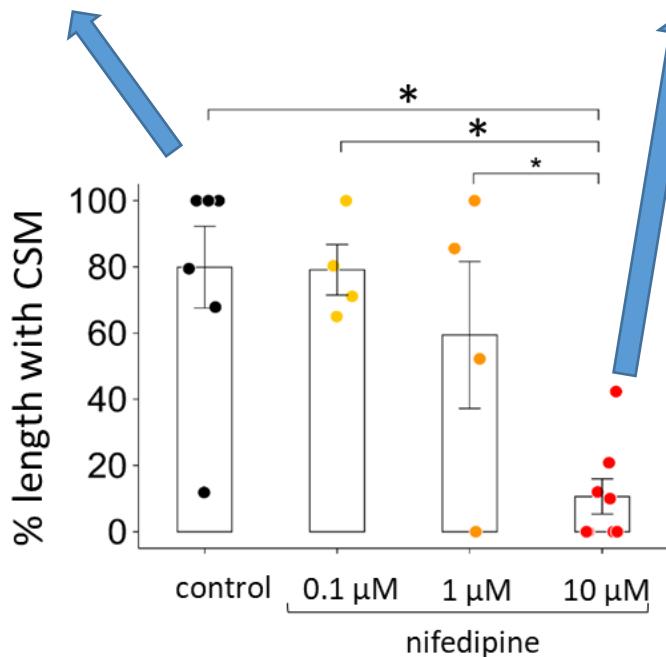
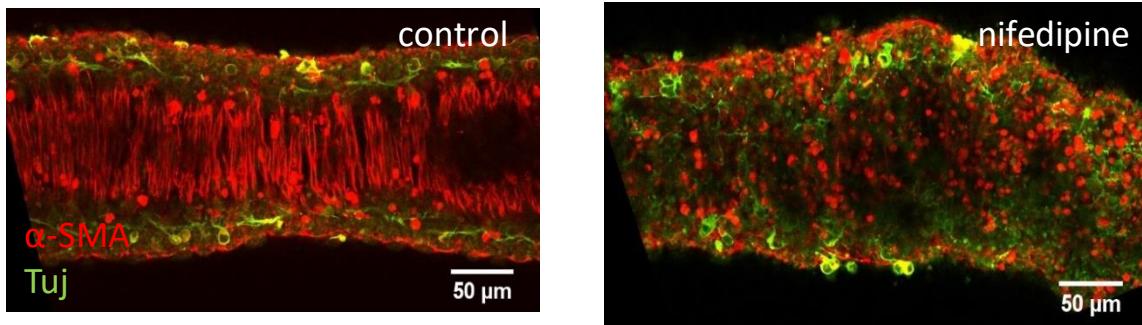


N. Chevalier, L. Zig, A. Gomis et al.,  
under review 2023

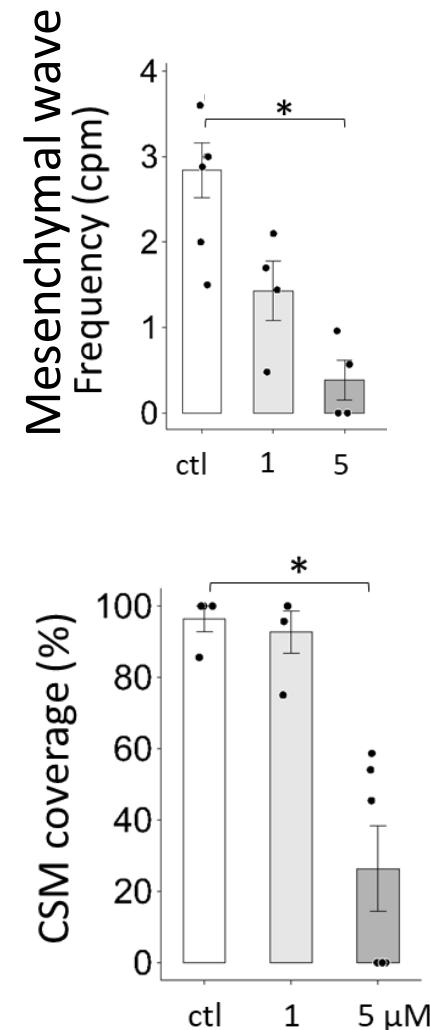
# Mesenchymal waves trigger smooth muscle differentiation

**Nifedipine**: L-type  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel antagonist

E12.5 cultured for 2 days



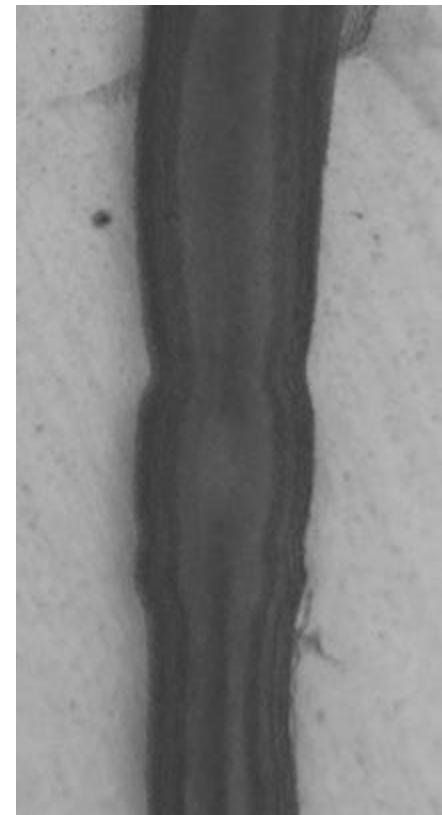
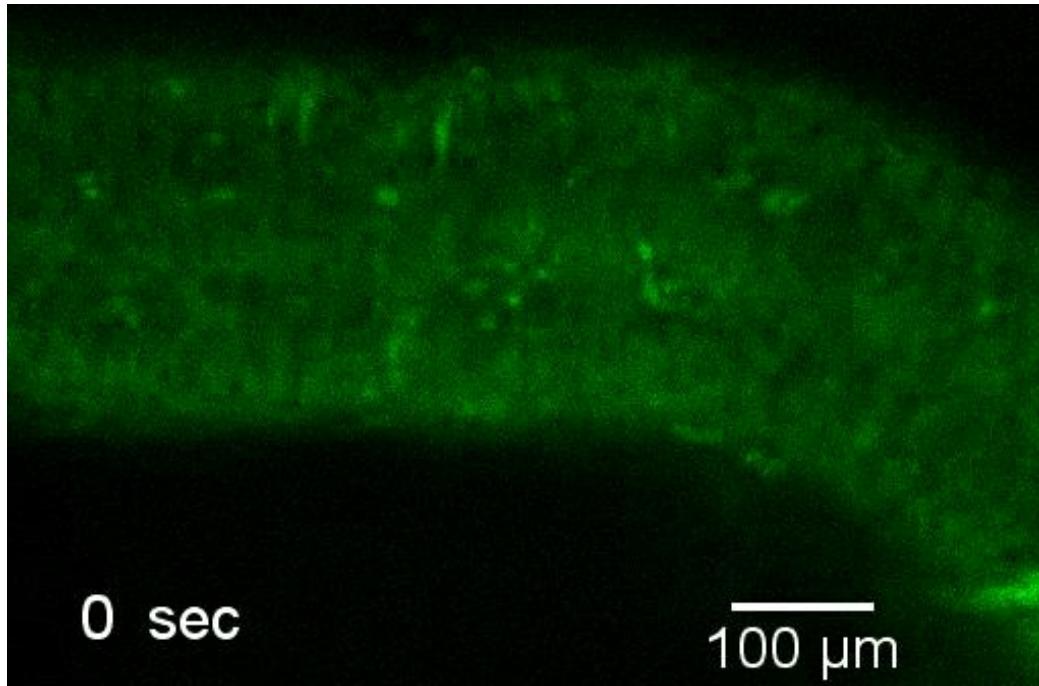
Similar result with **ML-7** :  
MLCK inhibitor



# The calcium waves induce peristalsis after muscle differentiation

Intracellular **calcium imaging** at E15.5

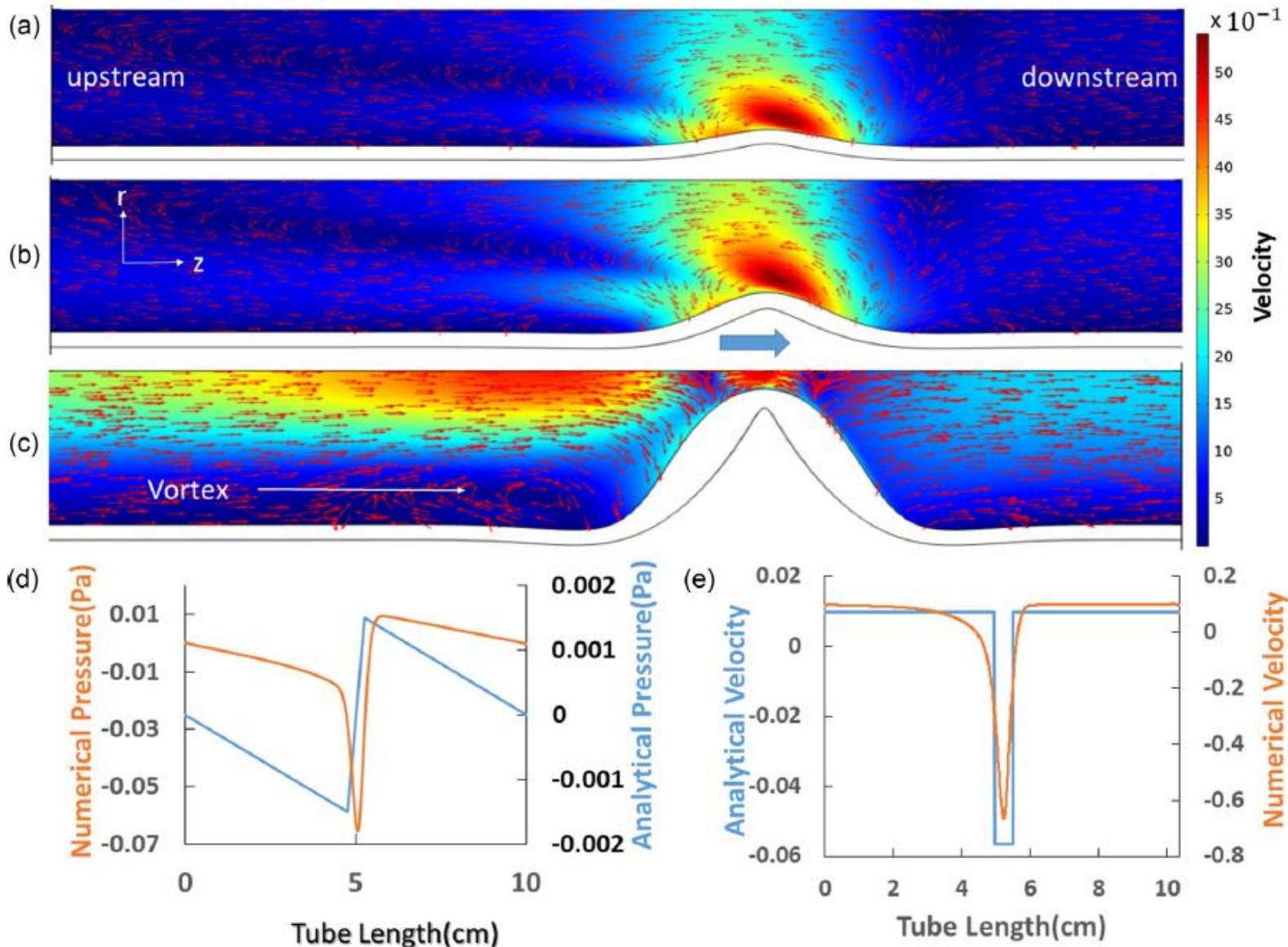
**Mechanosensitive**



Pinch → two counterpropagating waves

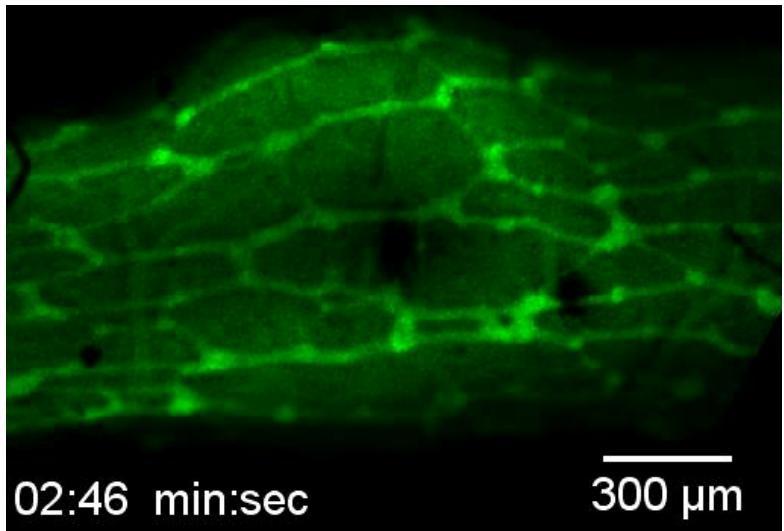
# Hydrodynamics of peristalsis

R. Amedzrovi & N.Chevalier,  
Phys. Rev. Fluids, 2022

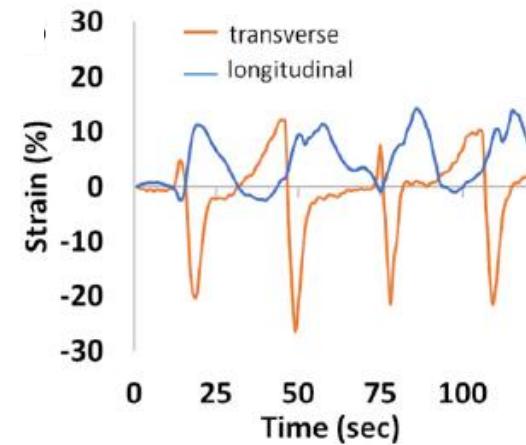


# Circular contractions induce longitudinal stretch

FITC tagged enteric nervous system (4-di-2-asp)

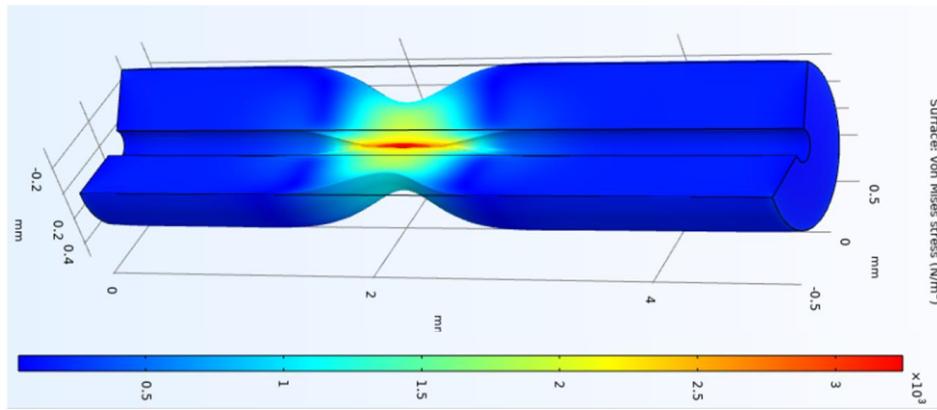


PIV

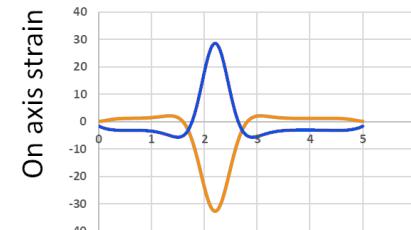
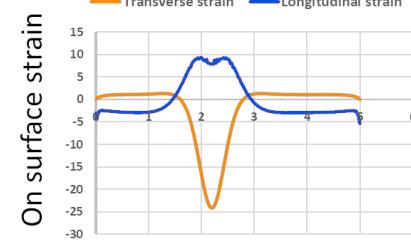


matches

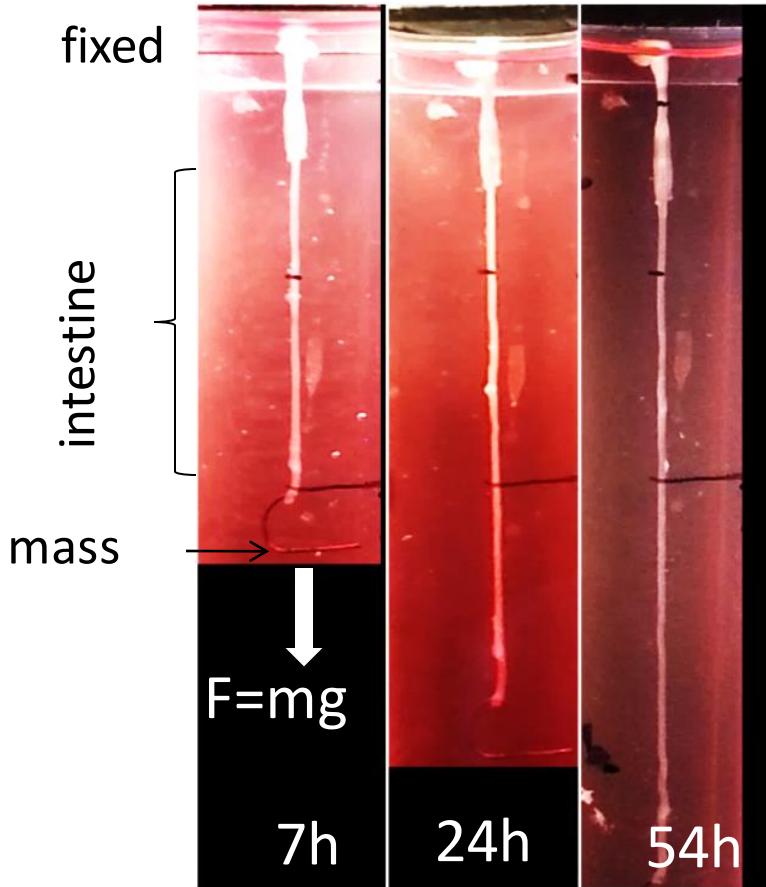
Finite element simulation (PhD Richard Amedzrovi)



On surface strain



# Longitudinal stretch makes the gut grow

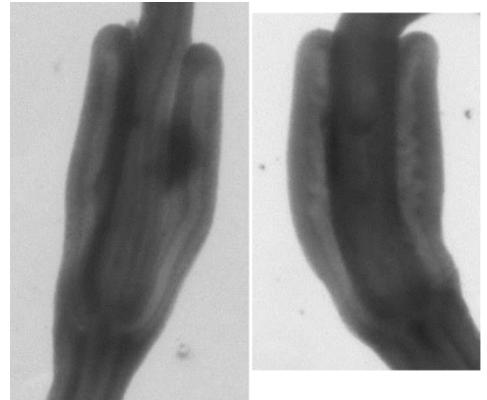


tension (mg)  
0    1    1.5

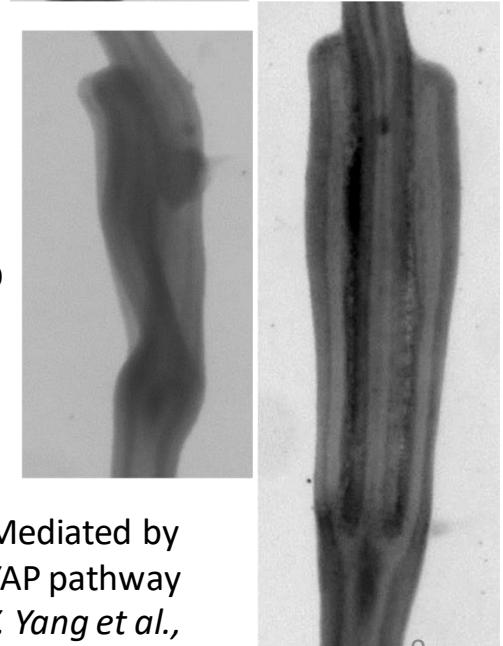


initial      after 48 H culture

no tension



1.5 mg tension

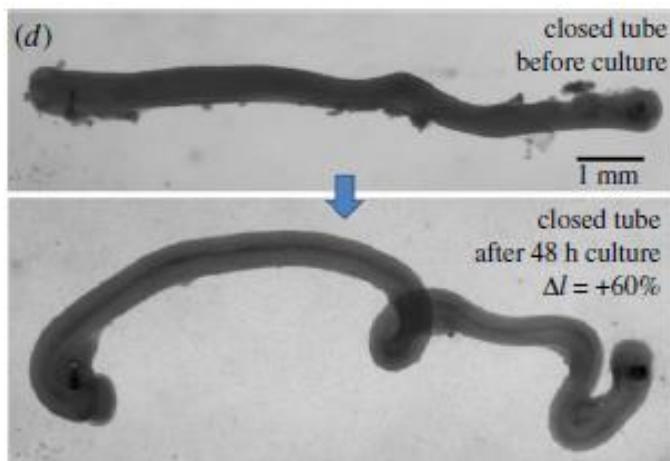


N. Chevalier et al. Sc. Rep., 2018

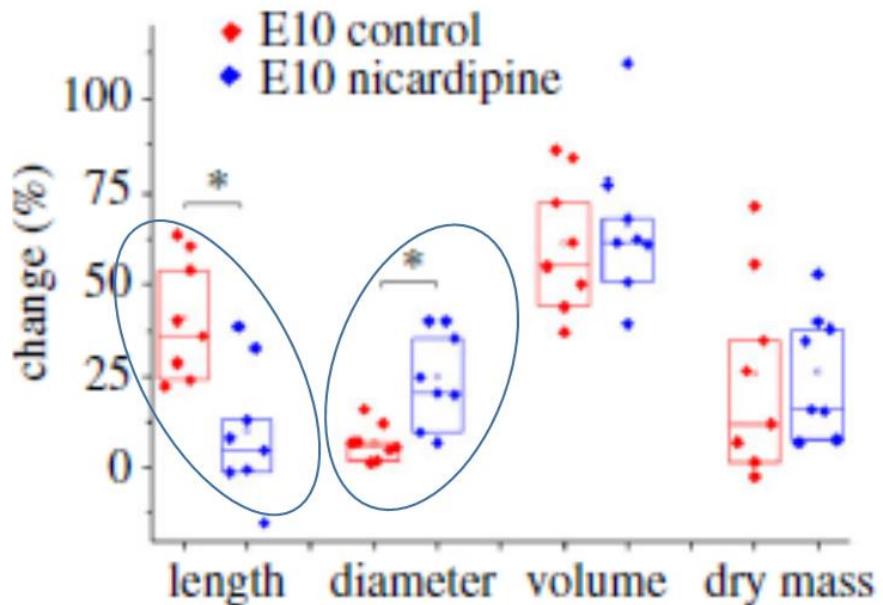
Mediated by  
YAP pathway  
Y. Yang et al.,  
Nat. Com., 2022

# Inhibiting contractions stops anisotropic growth

Normal gut growth (2 days in culture)



With nifedipine (no contractions):



→ Growth becomes **isotropic** when contractions are inhibited

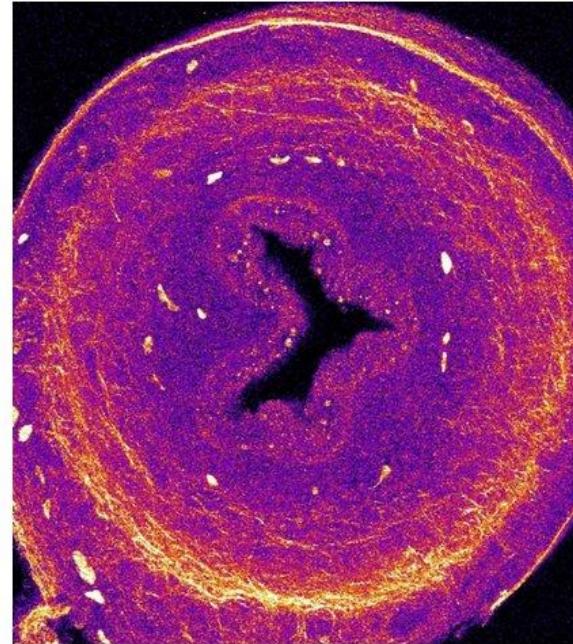
D. Khalipina, N. Chevalier et al.,  
J. R. Soc. Interface, 2019

# Notre soif de reconnaissance enfin assouvie

The New York Times

## The Twitch That Helps Your Intestines Grow

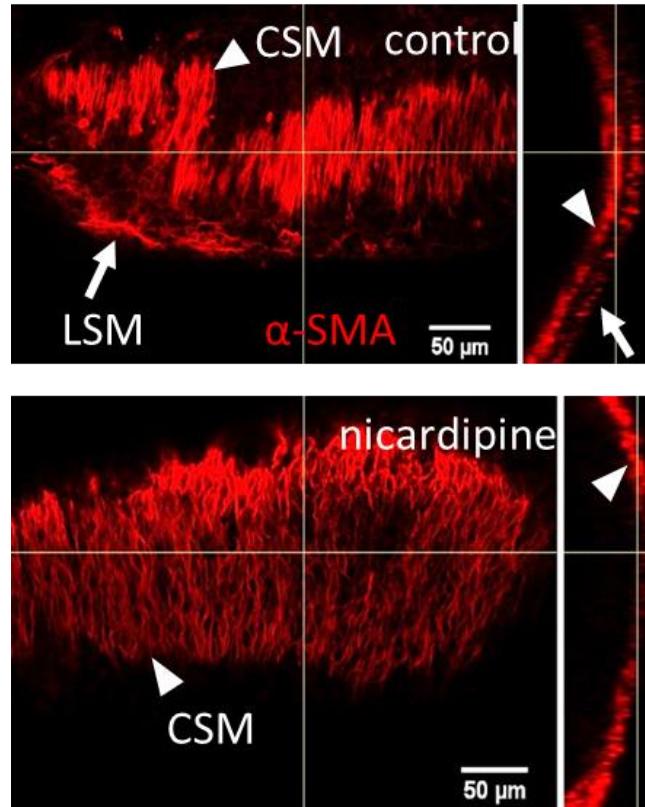
Pulsing movements in an embryo are crucial to helping intestines grow into the wonder tube that it is, a study finds.



A side view of a 9-day-old embryonic chicken gut. Nicolas Chevalier/CNRS/Université de Paris & Thomas Guilbert/IMAG'IC Facility Institut Cochin

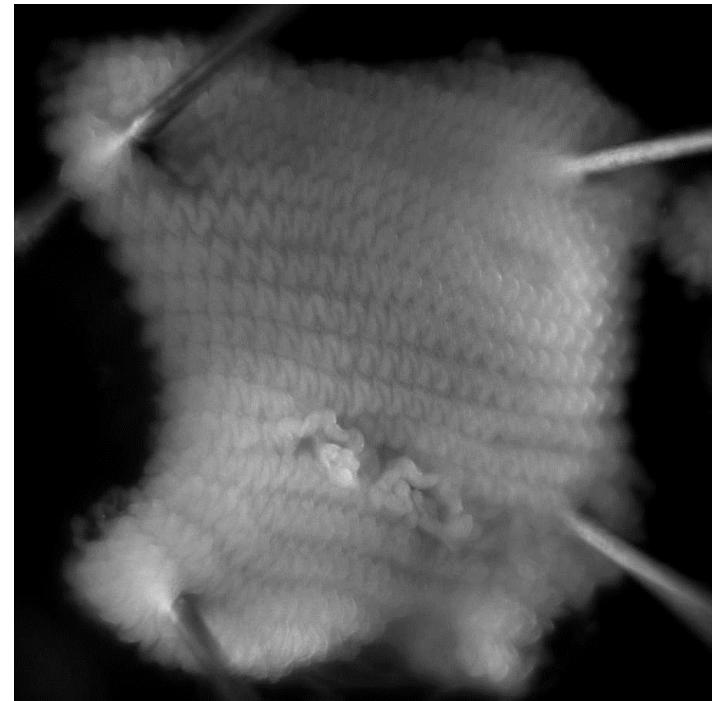
By [Veronique Greenwood](#)

# Longitudinal stretch orients the next muscle layer longitudinally



2 independent oscillators:

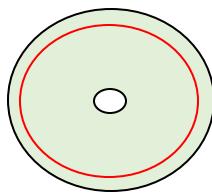
Circular (50 mHz)



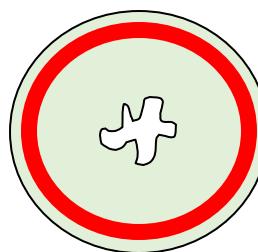
Longitudinal (5 mHz)

# Muscle contractions direct epithelial villi formation

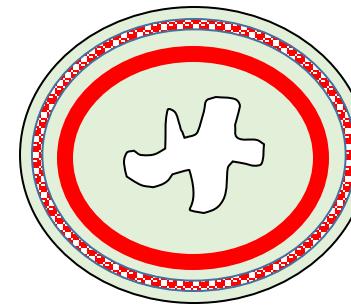
No muscle



Circular muscle



Circular & longitudinal muscle

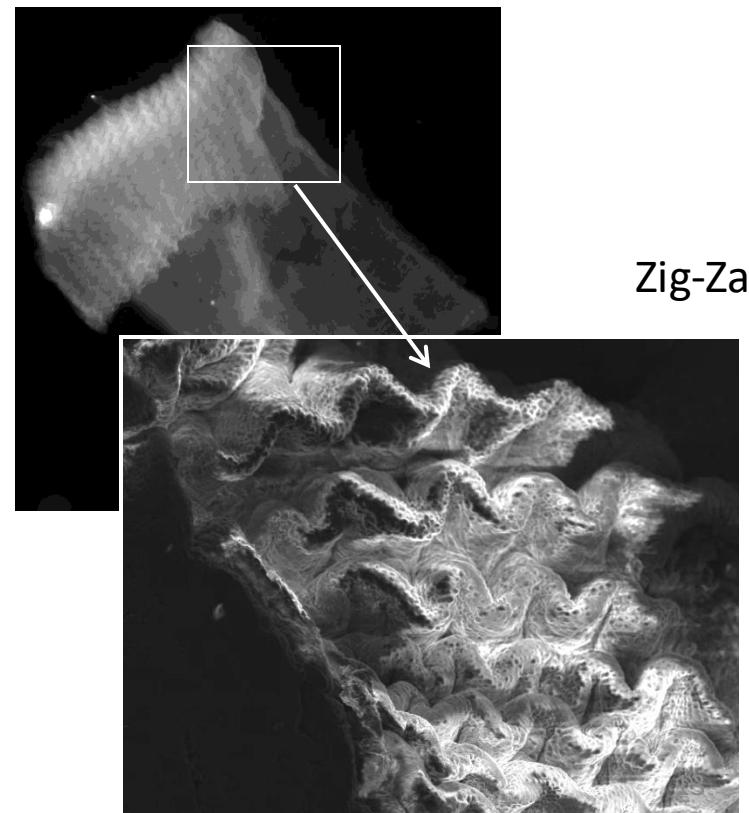


E6: flat epithelium

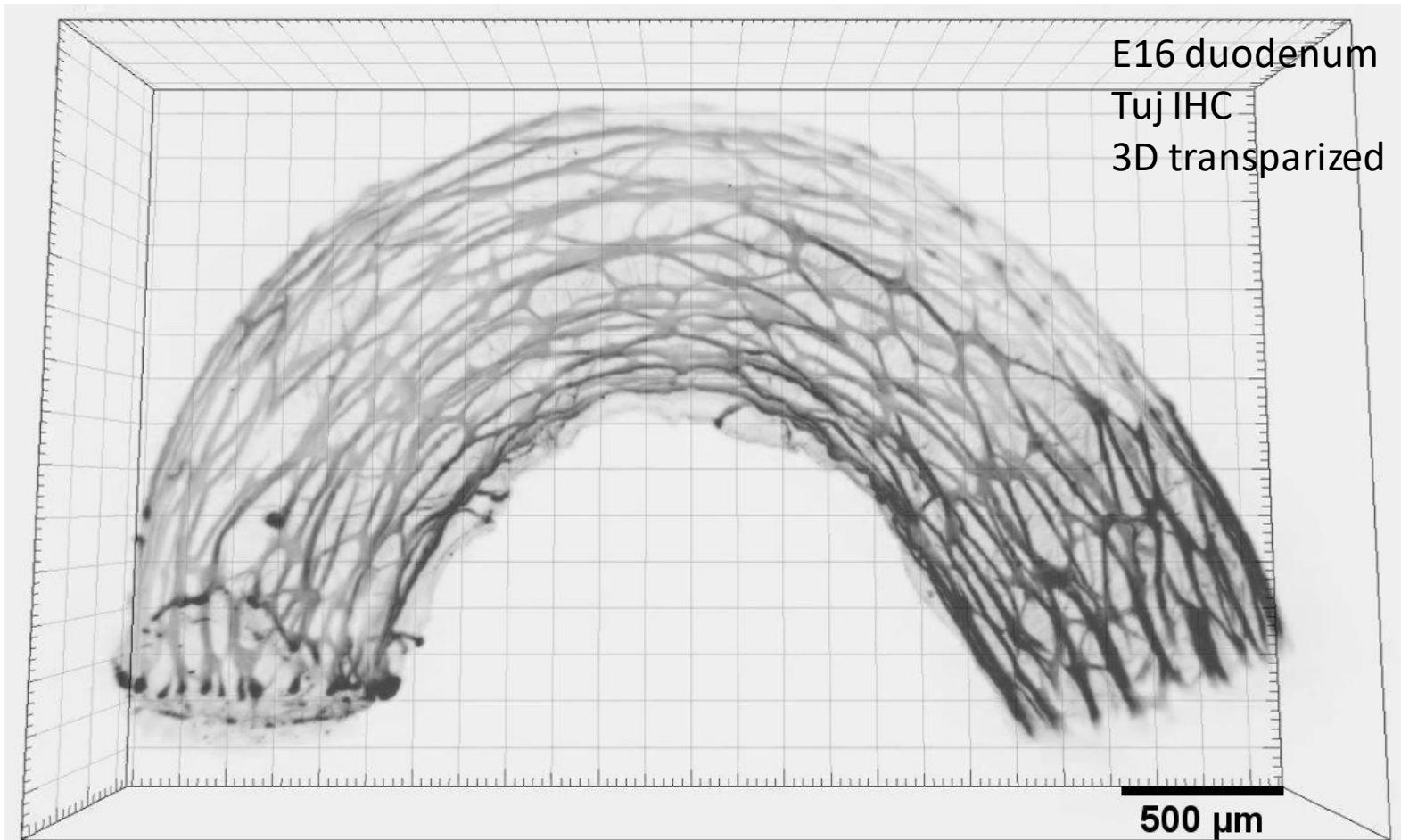


Shyer et al., *Science*, 2013

Hilton W. "The morphology and development of intestinal folds and villi in vertebrates." 1902

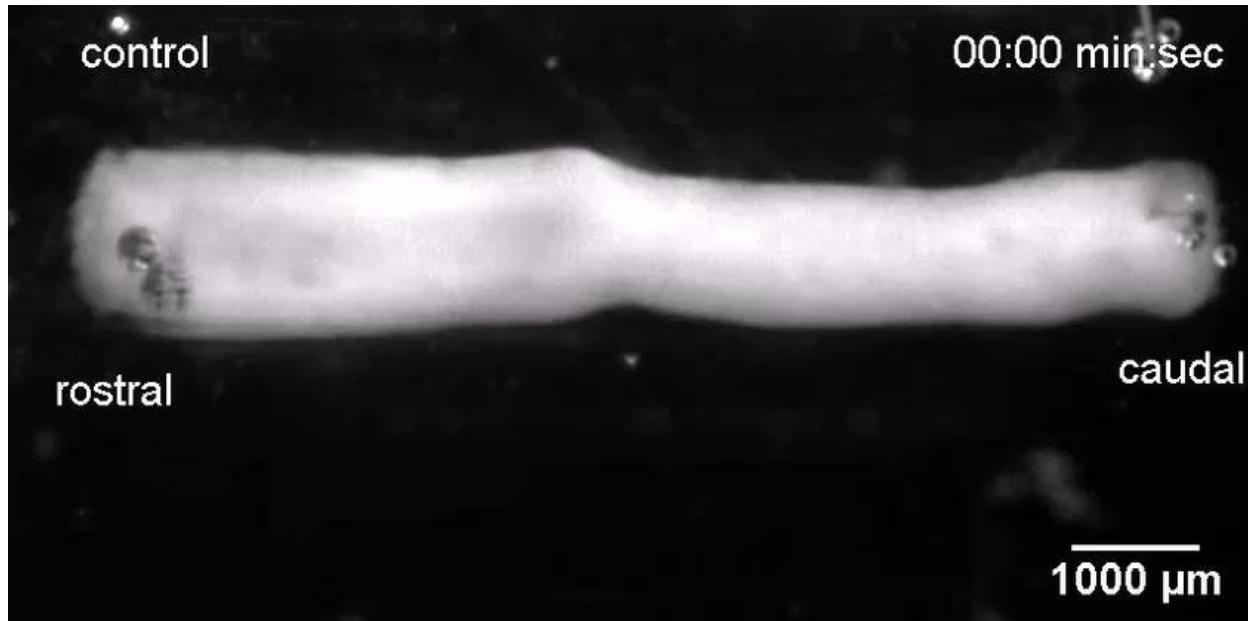


# Finally the « second brain » becomes active: the enteric nervous system



N.R. Chevalier et al., « Embryogenesis of the Peristaltic Reflex », J. Physiol 2019

# Neural action on motility in one video



## Inhibitory neural action

Neurons « calm down » spontaneous contractions by secretion of NO

## Longitudinal-circular contraction coupling

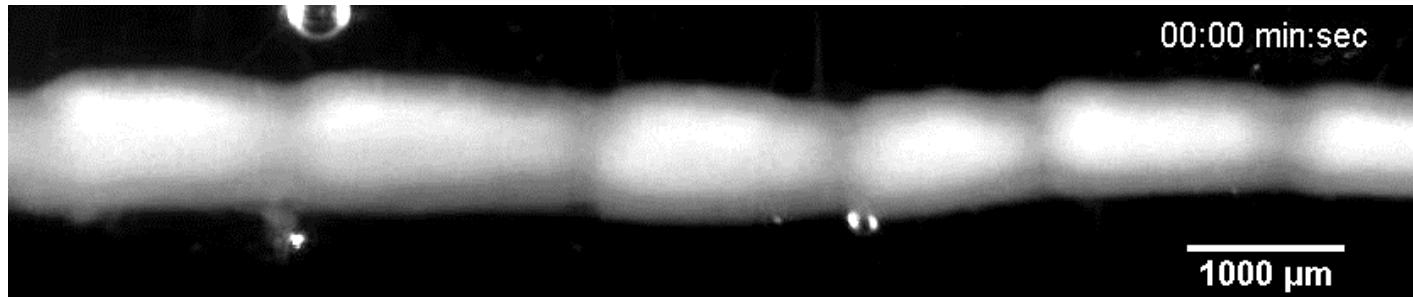
So the two muscles work antagonistically (like biceps-triceps)

## New polarized motor pattern

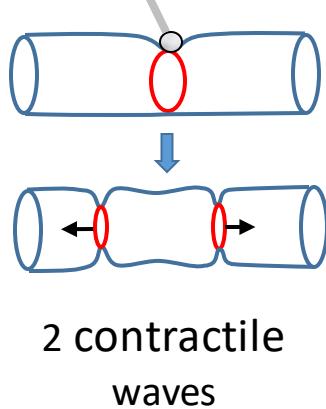
Neurons give the gut a mouth-to-anus direction

# Nerves **polarize** the response to mechanical stimulation

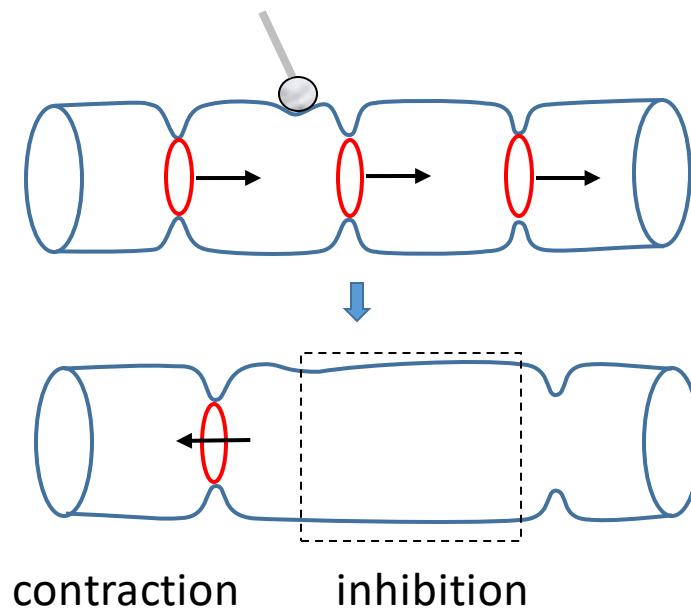
E16 -  
active  
nervous  
system



Embryonic myogenic



Fetal neurogenic



« **Law of the intestine** »  
(Starling, 1899)



→ directed bolus  
transport

# Now the chicken may hatch and eat ... and you may have questions

Contributors to the work presented:

- Richard J. Amedzrovi (PhD)
- Anthony Gomis (BTS intern)
- Lucas Langlois (BTS intern)
- Nicolas Dacher (BTS intern)
- Yusuke Kaga (M2 intern)
- Diana Khalipina (M2 intern)
- Léna Zig (IR CNRS)
- Vincent Fleury (DR CNRS)
- The animal husbandry staff (IJM)
- Orestis Faklaris (Imagoseine)
- Thomas Guilbert (Imagic)
- Sylvie Dufour (INSERM)
- Sandrine Faure (INSERM)
- Pascal de Santa Barbara (INSERM)

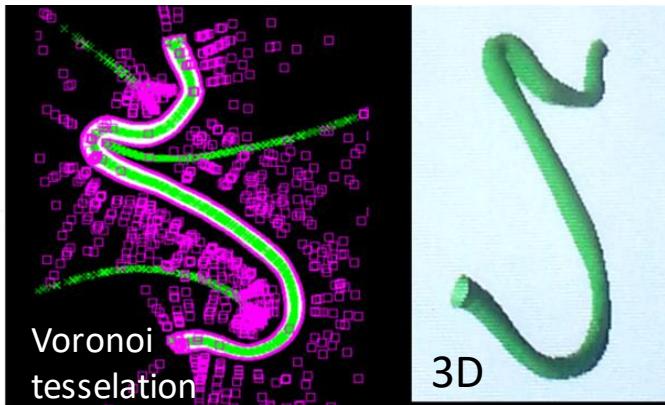
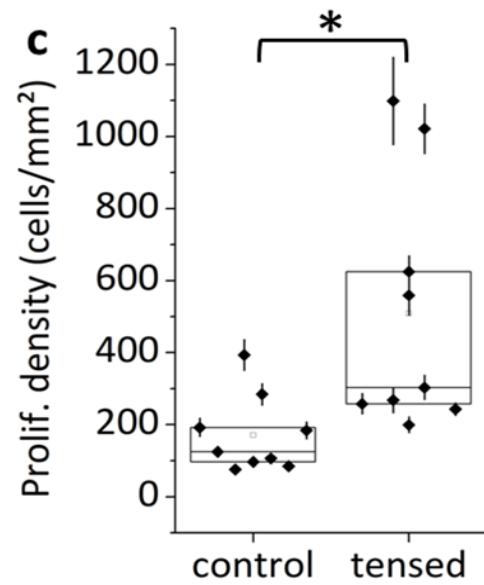
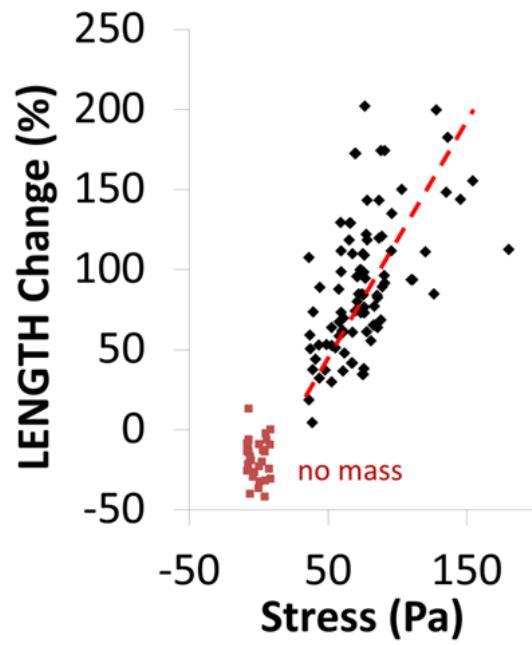
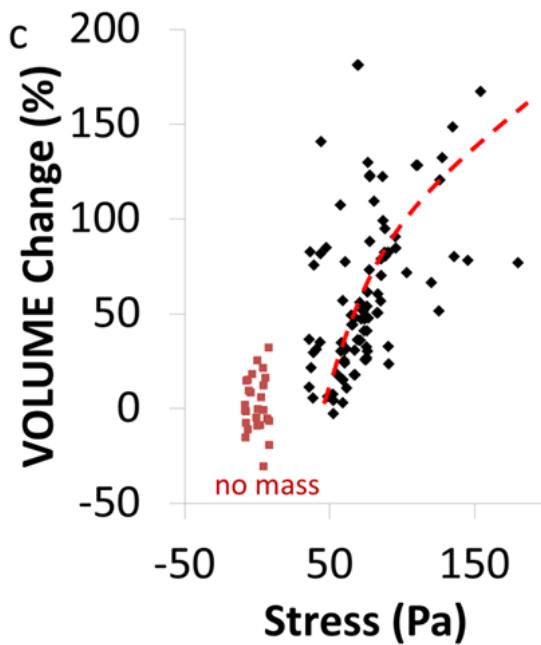


nicolas.chevalier@u-paris.fr

<http://nicochevalier.net>



# Growth is proportional to mechanical stress



Mediated by  
YAP pathway

Y. Yang *et al.*, Nat. Com., 2022