

characterization and homology were analyzed using bioinformatic methods. The protein encoded by the *twist2* gene of *S. chuatsi* consists of 162 amino acids with a conserved functional bHLH structural domain and the results of multiple sequence comparison based on the amino acid sequences showed that the Twist2 protein has a high similarity in vertebrates. The spatiotemporal expression pattern of the *twist2* gene of *S. chuatsi* was analyzed by RT-qPCR and the expression pattern of the *twist2* gene was found to be differentially expressed at different developmental stages. The expression level was low before the mid-gastrula stage, increased significantly from the neurula stage, reached its highest level in the tail-bud stage, and was widely expressed in *S. chuatsi* tissues; its expression was highest in the spleen, followed by the brain and red muscle. Whole embryo *in situ* hybridization was used to detect the localization of *twist2* at different developmental stages in early embryos and it was found to be specifically expressed mainly in the neuroectoderm and somites. Targetscan and RNAhybrid tools were used to predict miRNAs that might target the mandarin *twist2* gene. *miR-30a*, *miR-30b*, *miR-30e-5p*, and *miR-204* were found to potentially act on the *twist2* 3' UTR, suggesting that *twist2* is a potential target gene for *miR-30a*, *miR-30b*, *miR-30e-5p*, and *miR-204*. The short-term starvation stress experiment in *S. chuatsi* showed that the expression of *twist2* after three days of starvation was significantly negatively correlated with the expression of the above miRNAs, suggesting that there is a potential regulatory relationship between *twist2* and the above four miRNAs. Therefore, the results of this study will contribute to understanding the sequence characteristics and spatiotemporal expression patterns of the *twist2* gene and the functions of potential upstream miRNAs in regulating muscle growth and development at the molecular level, which will provide a theoretical basis for the developmental biology of fish, as well as for healthy aquaculture.

Key words: *Siniperca chuatsi*; *twist2*; spatiotemporal expression patterns; miRNA; short-term starvation

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