

The onset of phosphatase activity in early mammalian embryos

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The onset of acid and alkaline phosphatase activity is determined by means of Burstone's azo dye coupling methods in oocytes and embryos of the mouse, rat and hamster, and in mouse embryos cultured in vitro. Acid phosphatase activity is detected in all cases while alkaline phosphatase activity begins during the 4-cell stage and is always present thereafter. The method is sensitive regarding detection of activity but does not permit the quantification nor a precise localization of the enzymes.