

Chromothripsis is the phenomenon by which up to thousands of clustered chromosomal rearrangements occur in a single event in localised and confined genomic regions in one or a few chromosomes, and is known to be involved in both cancer and congenital diseases. It occurs through one massive genomic rearrangement during a single catastrophic event in the cell's history. It is believed that for the cell to be able to withstand such a destructive event, the occurrence of such an event must be the upper limit of what a cell can tolerate and survive.

The chromothripsis phenomenon opposes the conventional theory that cancer is the gradual acquisition of genomic rearrangements and somatic mutations over time.

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