

Ribozymes are RNA molecules that act as chemical catalysts. The hairpin ribozyme most probably uses a closely similar mechanism. The nucleolytic ribozymes comprise a class of five structurally-distinct species that bring about site-specific cleavage by nucleophilic attack of the 2'-O on the adjacent 3'-P to form a cyclic 2',3'-phosphate. In the Varkud satellite ribozyme, we have shown that the cleavage reaction is catalysed by guanine and adenine nucleobases acting as general base and acid, respectively.