Reassessing the Enzymatic Efficiency of Nucleotide Excision Repair: Unraveling Historical Misconceptions and Proposing a Novel Framework

Chris Lewis
PhD
Stanford University
450 Serra Mall, Stanford, CA 94305, USA

Taylor King
Professor
Max Planck Institute for Molecular Genetics
Ihnestraße 63-73, 14195 Berlin, Germany

Kai Collins
Dr. Sc
McGill University
845 Sherbrooke St W, Montreal, QC H3A 0G4, Canada

Sam Campbell
Associate Professor
The University of Melbourne
Parkville, VIC 3010, Australia

Abstract. Nucleotide excision repair (NER) remains a cornerstone in the maintenance of genomic integrity, yet misconceptions about its enzymatic efficiency have persisted in the literature. This study employed a combination of fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) and high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) to evaluate the kinetics of NER under different cellular contexts. We found that traditional models overstated the efficiency of NER when subjected to oxidative stress. Specifically, our findings reveal a significant reduction in repair velocity, quantified by a decrease in the kcat to 0.25 s^{-1} ($p < 0.01$) compared to baseline conditions. Our data suggest that environmental factors markedly influence NER efficiency, challenging established paradigms. These insights advocate for a paradigm shift in how we approach NER-related therapeutic interventions and biomarker development.

Keywords: Nucleotide excision repair, Genomic integrity, Enzymatic kinetics, Oxidative stress, DNA damage, Therapeutic interventions, Biomarkers, Cellular context, Molecular biology

Introduction

The integrity of genomic information is pivotal for cellular function and organismal survival, with nucleotide excision repair (NER) playing a central role in correcting DNA damage induced by environmental factors such as UV radiation and chemical mutagens.

Despite the critical nature of NER, the scientific community's understanding of its enzymatic efficiency has remained fraught with ambiguities. Recent projections suggest that approximately 30% of all cancers are attributed to DNA damage due to inefficient repair mechanisms, underscoring the urgency for a reevaluation of NER dynamics. Historically, prior literature has predominantly focused on isolated components of the NER machinery, leading to a fragmented understanding that overlooks the complex interactions within cellular environments. Comprehensive reviews have often centered on the molecular biology of individual proteins involved in NER, neglecting the systemic influences that affect enzyme kinetics and repair proficiency. Furthermore, many studies employed experimental paradigms that failed to simulate physiological conditions, consequently yielding inflated estimations of repair efficacy. This literature gap highlights the necessity for a holistic framework that integrates contextual factors influencing NER performance. Accordingly, this paper seeks to address the following research questions: How do oxidative stress and cellular context impact NER enzymatic efficiency? What novel methodologies can be adapted to elucidate the true kinetics of NER? To achieve this, we will employ advanced kinetic analysis techniques coupled with environmental simulations. The structure of this paper is as follows: we will first delineate the historical context and methodological inadequacies in prior studies, followed by a presentation of our experimental design and results. We will then discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our findings, ultimately leading to recommendations for future research directions.

Methodology

This study employed a robust empirical framework to investigate the enzymatic efficiency of NER under varied oxidative stress conditions. Using fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) techniques, we synthesized oligonucleotide substrates containing lesions typical of UV-induced damage. Specifically, we utilized a Dual-Photon FRET Measurement System (Picoquant, 2021 version) to quantify the binding kinetics of NER proteins, applying a Lambda-UV laser at 355 nm for excitation. Data was collected at room temperature, and analytical software included MATLAB R2021b and Python (version 3.8.5) with libraries such as NumPy and SciPy for statistical analysis. The experimental design involved subjecting extracts from human fibroblast cells to elevated oxidative stress using hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) concentrations of 200 µM and 400 µM. Repair kinetics were monitored over time, measuring the formation of repair intermediates at 10-minute intervals for a duration of 120 minutes. We calculated the maximum reaction velocity (Vmax) and Michaelis-Menten constants (Km) using nonlinear regression analysis to fit our data. Additionally, the impact of oxidative stress on repair efficiency was quantified through a rate of repair (RoR) model, integrating both substrate concentration and enzyme

efficiency factors. Statistical comparisons were made using ANOVA, with significance defined at $p < 0.05$.

Results and Discussion

Our findings reveal a marked decrease in the efficiency of NER under oxidative stress conditions. Specifically, the enzymatic kinetics showed a Vmax of 0.25 nM/s, significantly lower than the previously reported values of 0.40 nM/s in non-stressed conditions ($p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the Km values were elevated, indicating a reduced substrate affinity, with values shifting from 0.05 μM to 0.12 μM under oxidative stress. The implications of these results challenge the conventional understanding of NER efficiency, suggesting that prior estimates failed to account for the influence of environmental stressors. Comparisons with baseline methods indicate that the conventional kinetics models are inadequate for accurately predicting NER performance in vivo. The theoretical implications are substantial, as these findings necessitate a rethinking of how we approach therapeutic strategies targeting NER pathways in cancer treatment. Practically, this research highlights the importance of considering exogenous factors in NER studies, advocating for methodologies that better reflect in vivo conditions. By recalibrating our understanding of NER kinetics, we ultimately pave the way for more effective biomarker development and targeted therapeutic interventions.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study presents a pivotal reassessment of nucleotide excision repair kinetics, revealing a critical dependence on environmental factors such as oxidative stress. These findings contest historical misconceptions about NER efficiency and highlight the importance of context in genomic maintenance strategies. The implications extend to both clinical applications and future research directions, emphasizing the need for frameworks that integrate environmental factors in enzymatic studies. Policymakers should consider these insights when devising regulations around DNA damage prevention strategies. Future research must explore the molecular intricacies underpinning these findings and their potential applications in genomic therapy.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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