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Single Cell Biology

Commentary

Single-Cell Mechanisms of *Escherichia coli's* Dynamic Reaction

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Escherichia coli cells that have had their DNA damaged by alkylating substances respond adaptively, which raises the cells' tolerance for additional harm. The Ada protein, which serves as a DNA damage sensor and repair protein, is irreversibly methylated to signal the reaction. By a positive feedback loop, methylated Ada stimulates its own gene expression. The dependability of the induction signal is jeopardized by random variations in the amount of Ada. They created a mathematical model to investigate how feedback amplification and gene expression noise impact the reliability of the physiological adaptations. Single-cell measurements of the kinetics of gene expression in a microfluidic device were precisely recreated by an extremely basic model. The extremely low number of Ada compounds present to indicate DNA damage, according to stochastic models, directly causes delays in the adaptive response. Response activation turns into a memoryless procedure in cells with no copies of Ada and is controlled by such an escalating wait period distributed among basal Ada transcription events. The model's prediction that the strength of the adaptive response decreases with cell growth rate was also supported by experiments.

For the stability of the genome and cellular viability, precise DNA damage detection and repair are essential. Cells deploy DNA mechanisms that activate Telomere factors in the presence of DNA damage in contrast to genes encoding repair pathways. Detecting the occurrence of Cell injury or DNA damaging agents, activating a DNA damage response, and appropriately repairing lesions are some of the mechanisms that contribute to the fidelity of the DNA repair system. Cells with genetic flaws that interfere with any of these pathways exhibit increased mutation rates, vulnerability to DNA damage, and instability of the genome. The random character of the different molecules involved, even in strains that are completely capable of DNA repair, fundamentally limits the accuracy of the system. Moreover, the repair procedure itself may be error prone and result in genetic material mutations, losses, or rearrangements. Genetic flaws and other "intrinsic errors" in DNA repair i.e., errors that really are fundamental to the conformational change and hence occur with the same likelihood in all cells in a population have traditionally been the focus of research.

Escherichia coli's dynamic approach to DNA alkene damage is an example of how gene expression noise seems to significantly increase cell-to-cell variability in DNA repair capacity. Alkylating substances can be found naturally in the body and in the environment, including Methyl Methanesulfonate (MMS). Alkylated DNA lesions can cause mutations in cells by preventing DNA replication and transcription. The DNA methyltransferase Ada protein, which directly fixes methylated phosphotriester, controls the adaptive response.

Methylation Ada Protein (meAda) is transformed into transcription factors of the genes that are implicated in the repair or mitigation of DNA alkylation damage as a result of these irreversible processes. Ada expression increases as a consequence of the response, making cells more resistant to additional injury. For meAda, there have been no known demethylation responses. Because of this, it is believed that the deactivation of the adaptive response happens as a result of the dilution of meAda molecules caused by cell expansion, the inhibition of gene transcription by competing with unmethylated Ada, and perhaps proteolytic cleavage. Remarkably, even at saturating levels of DNA damage, the timing of response activation differs significantly among genetically similar cells. This variant appears to be caused by the extremely low quantity of Ada before DNA damage therapy. Single-molecule imaging in particular demonstrated that stochastic Ada expression leads to a minority of cells that lacks even a single Ada protein and, as a result, is unable to detect DNA alkylation damage. Due to these cells' inadequate ability to repair damage, mutagenesis increases to a degree comparable to mutant cells where the ada gene has just been deleted without the triggering of the adaptive response.

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