

Université de Montréal

**Régulation dépendante du cycle cellulaire de la
réparation par excision de nucléotides**

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Thèse présentée à :

La Faculté de médecine en vue de l'obtention du grade de
Ph.D. en Biologie Moléculaire

Novembre 2009

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Université de Montréal
Faculté de médecine

Cette thèse intitulée :

Régulation dépendante du cycle cellulaire de la
réparation par excision de nucléotides

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RÉSUMÉ

La réparation par excision de nucléotides (NER) est une voie critique chez l'homme pour enlever des lésions qui déforment l'hélice d'ADN et qui bloquent à la fois la réPLICATION et la transcription. Parmi ces lésions, il y a les dimères cyclobutyliques de pyrimidines (CPDs) et les adduits pyrimidine (6-4) pyrimidone (6-4PPs) induits par les rayons ultraviolets. L'importance physiologique de la NER est mise en évidence par l'existence de la maladie *Xeroderma pigmentosum* (XP), causée par des mutations affectant des gènes impliqués dans cette voie de réparation. Les personnes atteintes sont caractérisées par une photosensibilité extrême et une forte prédisposition à développer des tumeurs cutanées (plus de 1000 fois). Les patients atteints du type variant de la maladie *Xeroderma pigmentosum* (XPV), apparemment compétents en réparation, portent plutôt des mutations dans le gène codant pour l'ADN polymérase η (pol η). Pol η est une ADN polymérase translésionnelle capable de contourner avec une grande fidélité certaines lésions telles que les CPDs, qui autrement bloquent les polymérases réplicatives. Ainsi, la pol η prévient la formation de mutations et permet la reprise de la synthèse d'ADN. L'objectif principal de cette thèse est d'évaluer le rôle potentiel de voies de signalisation majeures dans la régulation de la NER, dont celles régulées par la kinase ATR (Ataxia Télangiectasia and Rad3-related kinase). Suite à l'irradiation UV, ATR est rapidement activée et phosphoryle des centaines de protéines qui régulent les points de contrôle du cycle cellulaire et joue un rôle notoire dans le maintien de la stabilité génomique. Nous avons postulé qu'ATR puisse réguler la NER de manière dépendante du cycle cellulaire. Cependant, tester cette hypothèse représente un grand défi car, pour des raisons techniques, les méthodes

conventionnelles n'ont pas à ce jour été adaptées pour l'évaluation de la cinétique de réparation au cours des différentes phases du cycle cellulaire. Nous avons donc développé une méthode novatrice basée sur la cytométrie en flux permettant de quantifier avec grande précision la cinétique de réparation des 6-4PPs et CPDs dans chacune des phases G0/G1, S et G2/M. Avec cette nouvelle méthode, nous avons pu démontrer que l'inhibition d'ATR ou pol η résulte en une très forte inhibition de la NER exclusivement durant la phase S du cycle cellulaire. Ces études ont révélé, pour la première fois, une fonction critique pour ces protéines dans le retrait des lésions qui bloquent la réPLICATION. En outre, nous avons démontré que la synthèse d'ADN est indispensable pour l'inhibition de la réparation en phase-S, reflétant un lien potentiel entre la NER et la réPLICATION. Curieusement, nous avons également montré que parmi six lignées cellulaires tumorales choisies aléatoirement, trois présentent une abrogation totale de la NER uniquement pendant la phase S, ce qui indique que de nombreux cancers humains pourraient être caractérisés par un tel défaut. Nos observations pourraient avoir d'importantes implications pour le traitement du cancer. En effet, le statut de la NER semble constituer un déterminant majeur dans la réponse clinique aux médicaments chimiothérapeutiques tels que le cisplatine, qui inhibent la croissance des cellules cancéreuses via l'induction de lésions à l'ADN.

Mots clés

La réparation par excision de nucléotides; dommages à l'ADN; ultraviolet; ATR; ADN polymerase η ; cycle cellulaire.

ABSTRACT

Nucleotide excision repair (NER) is a critical pathway in humans for repairing highly genotoxic helix-distorting DNA lesions that strongly block both replication and transcription. Among these lesions are ultraviolet-induced 6-4 photoproducts (6-4PPs) and cyclobutane pyrimidine dimers (CPDs). The physiological importance of NER is highlighted by individuals afflicted with *Xeroderma pigmentosum* (XP), who carry mutations in NER pathway genes and as such exhibit extreme photosensitivity and remarkable predisposition to cutaneous tumorigenesis (1000-fold increase). On the other hand patients with the variant form of *Xeroderma pigmentosum* (XPV) are considered proficient in NER, and rather carry germline mutations in the gene encoding DNA polymerase η (polη). Polη is a specialized translesion DNA polymerase able to accurately bypass certain lesions including CPDs which otherwise completely inhibit the progression of normal replicative polymerases, thereby preventing mutations and allowing the resumption of DNA synthesis. The main goal of this thesis was to elucidate the potential role in NER of major DNA damage signalling cascades, including that regulated by the ataxia telangiectasia and rad 3-related kinase (ATR). Following UV irradiation, ATR is rapidly activated and phosphorylates hundreds of proteins that regulate cell cycle checkpoints and maintain genomic stability. We postulated that ATR might regulate NER in a cell cycle-specific manner. However testing this presented a great challenge, as (for technical reasons) traditional NER assays have to date not been adapted for evaluation of repair kinetics during individual phases of the cell cycle. We therefore developed a novel flow cytometry-based assay for sensitive quantification of 6-4PPs and CPDs repair

efficiency during each of G0/G1, S, and G2/M. With this new assay, we were able to show that inhibition of either ATR or pol η results in strong inhibition of NER capacity exclusively during S phase of the cell cycle. This revealed, for the first time, a critical function for these proteins in removal of replication-blocking DNA adducts. In addition, we demonstrated that active DNA synthesis is required for S phase-specific repair inhibition, reflecting a potential relationship between NER and replication. Intriguingly, we also showed that among six tumor cell lines, three exhibit total abrogation of NER uniquely during S phase, indicating that many human cancers may be characterized by such a defect. Our findings therefore could harbour important implications for cancer treatment. Indeed, NER status of tumors clearly appears to constitute a major determinant in the clinical response to chemotherapeutic drugs such as cisplatin, which inhibit the growth of rapidly proliferating cancer cells through induction of replication-blocking DNA lesions.

Keywords

Nucleotide excision repair; DNA damage; ultraviolet; ATR; DNA polymerase η ; cell cycle

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LISTE DES ABRÉVIATIONS ET DES SYMBOLES

6-4PP: pyrimidine (6-4) pyrimidone

A: Adénine

ADN: Acide DésoxyriboNucléique

ARN: Acide RiboNucléique

ATM: Ataxia telangiectasia mutated

ATR: Ataxia Télangiectasia and Rad3-related kinase

ATRIP: ATR-interacting protein

BLM: Bloom's Syndrome helicase

BRCA1: breast cancer 1

C: Cytosine

CDK: Cyclin-Dependant Kinase

CS: Syndrome de Cockayne

CSA: Syndrome de Cockayne du groupe de complémentation A

CSB: Syndrome de Cockayne du groupe de complémentation B

CPD: Dimère cyclobutylique de pyrimidines

ELISA: Enzyme-liked immunosorbant assay

G: Guanine

GG-NER: global-genomic NER

HMG: high-mobility group

J: Joule

J/m²: Joule par mètre caré

LMPCR: Ligation-Mediated Polymerase Chain Reaction »

MAPK: mitogen-activated protein kinases

NER: Réparation par excision de nucléotides

nm: nanomètre

Pol δ : ADN polymérase delta

Pole: ADN polymérase epsilon

Pol ι : ADN polymérase iota
Pol κ : ADN polymérase kappa
Pol η : ADN polymérase eta
Pol ζ : ADN polymérase zeta
RPA: Replication protein A
RFC: Facteur de réPLICATION C
RIA: Radioimmunoassay
ROS: Espèces réactives d'oxygène ou « reactive oxygen species »
RPA: Protéine de réPLICATION A
T: Thymidine
T4 endo V: T4 endonucléase V
TC-NER: transcription-coupled NER
TFIIC: Facteur de transcription basale
TLS: translesional synthesis
TTD: Trichothiodystrophie
UDS: Unscheduled DNA synthesis
UV: Ultraviolets
UV-A: Ultraviolets de type A
UV-B: Ultraviolets de type B
UV-C: Ultraviolets de type C
XP: *Xeroderma pigmentosum*
XPA: *Xeroderma pigmentosum* de groupe de complémentation A
XPB: *Xeroderma pigmentosum* de groupe de complémentation B
XPC: *Xeroderma pigmentosum* de groupe de complémentation C
XPD: *Xeroderma pigmentosum* de groupe de complémentation D
XPF: *Xeroderma pigmentosum* de groupe de complémentation F
XPG: *Xeroderma pigmentosum* de groupe de complémentation G
WRN: Werner's syndrome helicase

REMERCIEMENTS

D'abord, j'aimerais remercier mon directeur de recherche, Dr Elliot Drobetsky, qui a su me fournir tous les outils (matériels et scientifiques) nécessaires à la réalisation de cette thèse. De plus, il a fortement contribué à aiguiser chez moi des qualités telles que l'autonomie et le sens critique qui me permettront, je l'espère, d'atteindre mes objectifs de carrière.

Je remercie également les autres membres (passés et présents) du laboratoire que j'ai côtoyé durant toutes ces années. Parmi eux, une pensée spéciale revient à Raphaël Rouget avec qui j'ai étroitement collaboré dans mes recherches et avec qui j'ai développé une grande complicité.

Finalement, j'aimerais par-dessus tout remercier ma conjointe Isabelle qui malgré tous les sacrifices (et ils sont nombreux) m'a appuyé dans mes projets. Merci Isabelle pour ton soutien et ton amour, je t'aime. Je réserve également un merci tout spécial à mes deux petites puces Coralie et Maélie pour leur joie de vivre qui m'a permis dans les moments plus difficiles de rapidement tout remettre en perspective. Je vous adore mes petits trésors.

CONTRIBUTIONS AUX TRAVAUX PUBLIÉS

Article 1- Publié dans Proc Natl Acad Sci USA. **Auclair Y, Rouget R, Affar el B, Drobetsky EA.**

ATR kinase is required for global genomic nucleotide excision repair exclusively during S phase in human cells.

Ma contribution concerne la conception, la préparation des protocoles, l'exécution des manipulations, l'interprétation, la préparation des figures et l'écriture de l'article. Dans l'ensemble, ma contribution relative est de 85%.

Article 2- Prêt à être soumis pour publication. **Auclair Y*, Rouget R*, Jonathan M. Belisle, Santiago Constantino, Drobetsky EA.** *co-premier auteurs

Requirement for functional DNA polymerase η in genome-wide repair of UV-induced DNA damage during S phase

Ma contribution concerne la conception, la préparation des protocoles, l'exécution des manipulations, l'interprétation, la préparation des figures et l'écriture de l'article. Dans l'ensemble, ma contribution relative est de 45%.

Annexe 1- Publié dans Journal of Biological Chemistry. **Rouget R*, Auclair Y*, Loignon M, Affar el B, Drobetsky EA.** *co-premier auteurs

A sensitive flow cytometry-based nucleotide excision repair assay unexpectedly reveals that mitogen-activated protein kinase signaling does not regulate the removal of UV-induced DNA damage in human cells.

Ma contribution implique une contribution essentielle dans la conception et le développement de la technique de réparation.

Annexe 2- Publié dans Cell Cycle
Auclair Y, Rouget R, Drobetsky EA

ATR kinase as master regulator of nucleotide excision repair during S phase of the cell cycle.

Ma contribution a été très majeure dans l'écriture de cette revue.

Annexe 3- Publié dans Médecine Science
Auclair Y, Rouget R, Drobetsky EA

New insight into the regulation of DNA nucleotide excision repair: implications for cancer development and treatment.

Ma contribution a été très majeure dans l'écriture de cette revue.

CHAPITRE 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Les ultraviolets (UV)

1.1.1 Le cancer de la peau

Au cours des dernières décennies, le taux d'incidence du cancer de la peau a augmenté à un taux stupéfiant et plus rapidement quaucun autre type de cancer. Aux États-Unis seulement, les nouveaux cas de cancer de la peau de type non-mélanome (carcinome basocellulaire et spinocellulaire) sont estimés à plus d'un million chaque année et environ 60000 sont atteint du mélanome malin. De plus, près d'un américain sur cinq développera un cancer de la peau au cours de sa vie ^[1, 2]. La relation de cause à effet entre la lumière solaire et le développement de cancers de la peau est connue depuis fort longtemps et a été mise en évidence par Paul Gerson Unna en 1894. Ayant la capacité d'initier et promouvoir la croissance des tumeurs, les ultraviolets (UV) de la lumière solaire sont des carcinogènes complets ^[3-5].

1.1.2 Le spectre électromagnétique solaire

Par définition, les radiations UV comprennent les longueurs d'ondes entre 200 et 400 nm du spectre électromagnétique solaire (Figure 1.1) et sont subdivisées en 3 catégories: les UV-C (200-280 nm), les UV-B (280-320 nm) et les UV-A (320-400 nm). Les plus courtes

longueurs d'ondes telles que les UV-C sont majoritairement absorbées par la couche d'ozone stratosphérique. Toutefois, l'exposition accidentelle provenant de sources artificielles, telles que les lampes germicides, peut parfois subvenir. Les radiations qui atteignent la surface de la terre sont principalement constituées d'UV-A et d'une minorité d'UV-B, soit environ 5 %. De plus, l'exposition aux ultraviolets varie considérablement en fonction de l'altitude et de la localisation géographique. [6, 7].

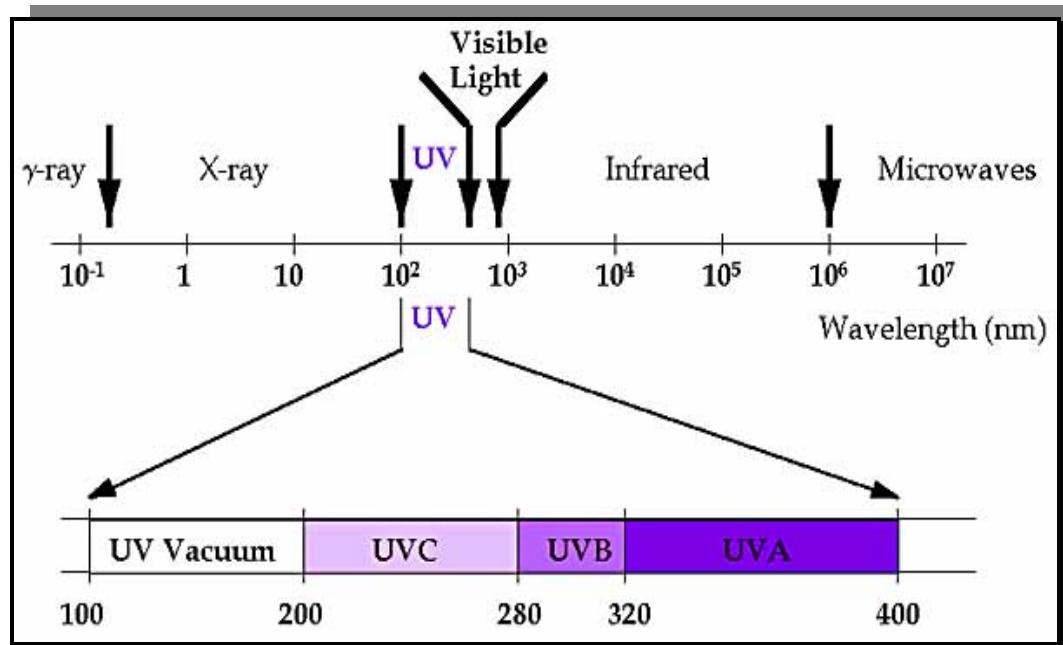


Figure 1.1: Le spectre électromagnétique solaire.
(Tiré de Soehnge *et al.* 1996, *Front. Biosci.*)

1.1.3 Les lésions de l'ADN induites par les UV

L'irradiation UV peut être absorbée par une foule de biomolécules cellulaires telles que les protéines, l'ARN et l'ADN, provoquant ainsi une réponse cellulaire très complexe. L'induction de lésions à l'ADN constitue sans aucun doute la conséquence biologique la

plus critique lors d'une exposition aux ultraviolets. L'absorption maximale des UV par l'ADN se situe entre 245 et 290 nm avec un sommet à 260 nm [8, 9]. Ainsi, par unité de dose (J/m²) les UV-B sont de 3 à 4 ordres de grandeur plus cytotoxique et mutagène que les UV-A. Par conséquent, les UV-B constituent le principal facteur étiologique à l'origine du cancer de la peau [10]. À de courtes longueurs d'ondes (UV-C et UV-B), les photons hautement énergétiques peuvent être directement absorbés par l'ADN et ainsi conduire à l'excitation des bases pyrimidiques thymine et cytosine. Cette absorption provoque des réactions de dimérisation aux sites comprenant deux pyrimidines adjacentes. Les deux principaux types de photoproducts alors formés sont les dimères cyclobutyliques de pyrimidines (CPDs) et les adduits pyrimidine (6-4) pyrimidone (6-4PPs). Les CPDs sont générés lorsque les carbones 5 et 6 de chaque pyrimidine se lient de façon covalente pour former une structure cyclique. Quant aux 6-4PPs, ils résultent de la formation d'un lien entre le carbone 6 de la pyrimidine en 5' avec le carbone 4 de la pyrimidine en 3' (Figure 1.2). L'induction des CPDs est environ 3 à 5 fois supérieure à celle des 6-4PPs. La nature des deux pyrimidines influe de façon importante sur la formation des photoproducts. Ainsi, on observe que les réactions de dimérisations aux sites TT et TC sont environ dix fois supérieures à celles observées aux sites CC et CT, les CPDs se formant préférentiellement en TT et les 6-4PPs en TC [11, 12].

Quant aux UV-A, ils sont très faiblement absorbés par l'ADN mais peuvent tout de même l'endommager. Leur génotoxicité a été essentiellement attribuée à la formation d'espèces réactives de l'oxygène (ROS) produites par l'excitation de chromophores endogènes incluant les NAD(P)H, les flavines, les cytochromes, les hèmes et bien d'autres. Ces ROS

peuvent ultimement endommager une multitude de constituants cellulaires dont l'ADN. Les lésions ainsi produites comprennent une grande variété de bases oxydées (e.g., 8-oxo-7,8-dihydro-2-deoxyguanosine), et des cassures simple-brin [13-15]. Occasionnellement, l'absorption de photons UV-A par un 6-4PP, peut le transformer en son isomère de valence Dewar (Figure 1.2). Il fut également rapporté que l'exposition des cellules aux UV-A pouvait conduire à l'induction d'une faible quantité de CPDs et non de 6-4PPs [16].

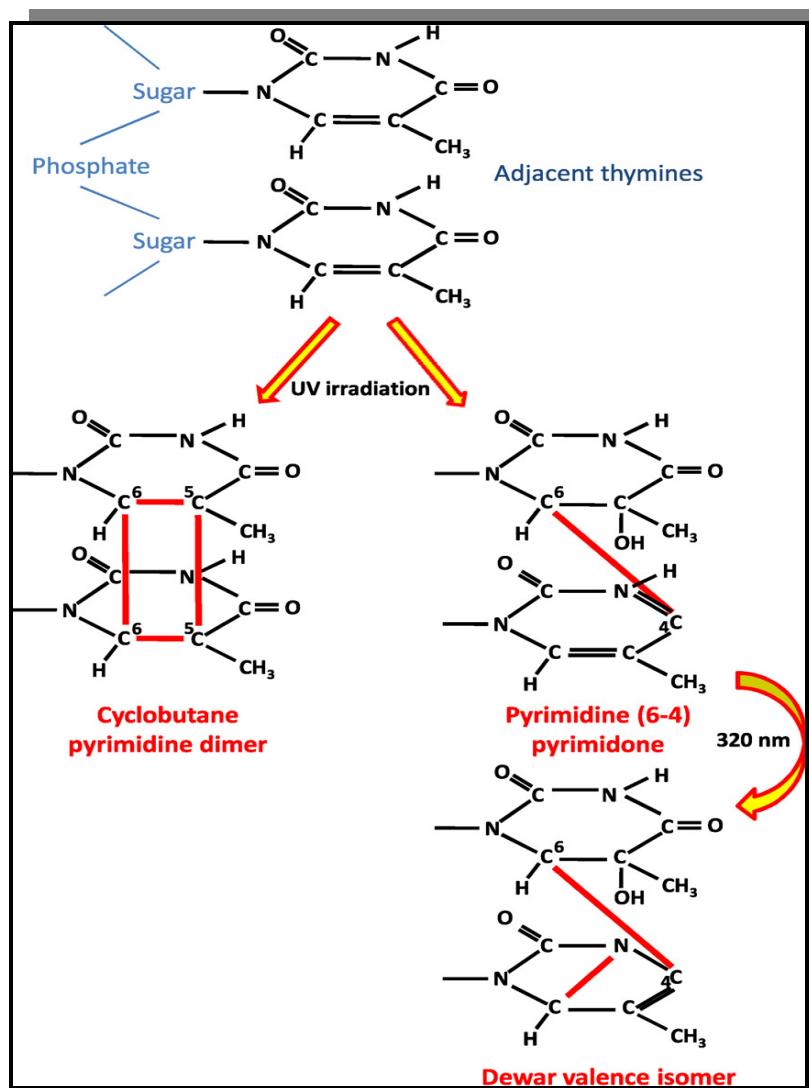


Figure 1.2 : Les principaux photoproduits induits par les ultraviolets.
(Tiré de Batista *et al.*, 2009, Mutat Res.)

1.1.4 Les mutations causées par les UV

Les dimères de pyrimidine (CPDs et 6-4PPs) sont les lésions dominantes induites par les ultraviolets et sont reconnus pour leur implication dans le développement du cancer de la peau. Lors de la réPLICATION, la présence d'une lésion non réparée peut conduire à l'incorporation du mauvais nucléotide résultant en la formation d'une mutation^[17, 18]. Les mutations causées par les UV sont caractérisées par une fréquence très élevée de transitions dans les séquences di-pyrimidiques contenant des cytosines. Les plus fréquentes sont des transitions C→T et CC→TT, et semblent principalement attribuables (à plus de 80%) aux CPDs^[19-21]. Bien que *in vitro* les 6-4PPs apparaissent plus mutagènes que les CPDs, leur contribution à la carcinogenèse semble limitée^[8, 22]. En effet, les 6-4PPs occasionnent une déformation à la structure de l'ADN supérieure aux CPDs, ce qui facilite leur détection et la réparation par la NER^[23]. Au contraire, les CPDs sont réparés moins efficacement et sont mieux tolérés par la cellule lors de la réPLICATION^[23-25]. Les polymérasées réPLICATIVES (polδ et ε) sont incapables de répliquer les CPDs et les 6-4PPs ainsi qu'une multitude d'autres lésions. Par conséquent, afin de protéger contre l'instabilité génétique pouvant résulter d'un arrêt prolongé du réplisome, des polymérasées spécialisées ayant la capacité d'accorder les lésions permettent le redémarrage rapide de la réPLICATION. La nature exacte de ces polymérasées et leur contribution dans la mutagenèse sera détaillée à la section 1.3.

1.2 La réparation par excision de nucléotides

1.2.1 Les lésions réparées par la NER

La réparation par excision de nucléotides (NER, « Nucleotide Excision Repair ») est un important mécanisme chez l'homme pour réparer des lésions de l'ADN hautement génotoxiques et mutagènes qui déforment la double hélice et qui bloquent à la fois la réPLICATION et la transcription. Les CPDs et les 6-4PPs sont sans aucun doute les substrats de la NER les mieux caractérisés et constituent les principaux types de lésions modèles dans l'étude de ce mécanisme de réparation. Toutefois, la NER est un mécanisme très versatile qui possède la capacité de reconnaître une grande diversité de lésions. Cette caractéristique est due à sa capacité intrinsèque à détecter la distorsion subie par la double hélice d'ADN plutôt que la lésion^[26].

Entre autres, le cisplatine et ces dérivés sont parmi les agents chimiothérapeutiques les plus utilisés dans le traitement de plusieurs cancers. La formation d'adduits platine-ADN est responsable de la cytotoxicité de ces agents^[27]. La majorité des lésions ainsi produites, principalement des liaisons intra-brin en position N7 de nucléotides adjacents, sont d'excellents substrats de la NER. Parmi ces lésions, les 1,2-d(GpG) et les 1,2-d(ApG) représentent respectivement 65% et 25% des lésions totales produites par le cisplatine^[28-30]. De fortes évidences suggèrent que le statut de la NER est un déterminant majeur dans la résistance au cisplatine et ces dérivés^[31, 32].

Les hydrocarbures aromatiques polycycliques génèrent également beaucoup de lésions qui sont des substrats de la NER. Certains d'entre eux, comme le benzo[a]pyrène (B[a]P), retrouvés dans les produits de combustion dont la fumée de cigarette sont très cancérogènes pour l'homme [33, 34]. Entre autres lésions notables, il y a également celles produites par l'aflatoxine B1. Cette toxine, produite par plusieurs espèces de champignons, contamine les réserves de nourriture et est particulièrement problématique dans les pays en voie de développement. Des études épidémiologiques ont corrélé l'exposition à l'aflatoxine B1 avec l'incidence de carcinomes hépatocellulaires [35, 36].

1.2.2 Historique

C'est à l'aube des années soixante que deux laboratoires indépendants ont initié l'identification et la caractérisation de cet important mécanisme antinéoplasique [37, 38]. Suite à l'irradiation de bactéries aux ultraviolets, Setlow et Carrier observèrent l'excision de dimères de thymine alors que Pettijohn et Hanawalt observèrent l'incorporation de courtes séquences d'ADN néosynthétisées (UDS, « unscheduled DNA synthesis »). La NER étant un mécanisme évolutivement conservé, elle a été rapidement observée dans des cellules de mammifères [39]. Suite à ces découvertes, des études de complémentation ont permis l'identification des gènes responsables de la NER chez la bactérie [40]. Plus tard, l'importance physiologique de ce mécanisme chez l'humain fut démontrée à partir de cellules dérivées de patients atteints du *Xeroderma pigmentosum* (XP), lesquels manifestent une hypersensibilité aux UV et une très forte prédisposition au cancer de la peau (plus de 1000 fois). L'évaluation de l'UDS dans ces

cellules a mené à l'identification de huit groupes XP dont sept sont déficients en réparation par excision de nucléotides^[41-43]. L'identification des gènes impliqués a initié la caractérisation de ce mécanisme chez l'homme. Au début des années quatre-vingt, une autre importante observation révélait que des lésions induites par les UV étaient réparées plus rapidement sur le brin transcrit des gènes actifs comparativement à l'ensemble du génome^[44]. Cette découverte a mis en évidence l'existence de deux sous-voies chevauchantes qui se distinguent à l'étape de reconnaissance de la lésion, soit: (i) la GG-NER (« global-genomic NER ») qui répare dans l'ensemble du génome,^[45] et (ii) la TC-NER (« transcription-coupled NER ») qui agit uniquement sur le brin transcrit de gènes actifs^[46].

1.2.3 Reconnaissance de la lésion lors de la GG-NER

La NER est un mécanisme complexe qui se compose de plusieurs étapes séquentielles. Lors de la GG-NER, la reconnaissance de la lésion est initiée lorsque le complexe hétérotrimérique XPC/HR23B/CENTRIN2 reconnaît et lie la distorsion produite dans la structure de l'ADN (Figure 1.3)^[47-49]. XPC est la protéine clé dans cette étape de reconnaissance. Ayant la capacité de lier l'ADN double-brin, elle reconnaît préférentiellement l'ADN endommagé par différents substrats de la NER tels que les 6-4PPs. Toutefois, XPC lie davantage l'ADN simple-brin avec un fort biais défavorable engendré par la présence de lésions. Cette récente observation pointe vers un nouveau modèle selon lequel XPC détecterait et lierait la courte séquence d'ADN simple-brin opposée à la lésion et causée par la distorsion de l'hélice^[50]. XPC se retrouve en

complexe avec HR23B et centrin 2. Toutefois, la fonction exacte de ces protéines dans la NER demeure inconnue mais, elles semblent améliorer la stabilité du complexe et l'efficacité de la NER [51-53]. Un facteur important dans la détection des dommages par XPC est l'ampleur de la distorsion de l'hélice. En effet, différentes études biochimiques suggèrent que XPC ne serait pas en mesure de reconnaître à lui seul les CPDs puisque ces derniers déforment l'ADN que très faiblement [54, 55].

C'est ici qu'interviennent les protéines DDB1 et DDB2 (DDB2 est codé par le gène *XPE*) qui ont la capacité de lier les dommages induits par les UV et d'accélérer la réparation des CPDs [56-58]. Ces protéines ont une très forte affinité pour les CPDs et les 6-4PPs. Il a été suggéré que, lorsque liées aux CPDs, DDB1 et DDB2 modifient l'angle de l'hélice et facilitent le recrutement de XPC [59, 60]. Il est important de mentionner que DDB1 et DDB2 sont apparemment dispensables pour la réparation des 6-4PPs, [57, 61] et vraisemblablement pour d'autres types de lésions qui engendrent une distorsion sévère de l'hélice d'ADN. Il a été rapporté que DDB1 et DDB2 forment un complexe ubiquitine ligase en s'associant avec les protéines CUL4A ou son paralogue CUL4B et ROC1 [62, 63]. Il a été démontré que ce complexe régule la reconnaissance de la lésion lors de la GG-NER d'au moins deux façons. Premièrement, le complexe monoubiquitine rapidement l'histone 2A au site de la lésion, ce qui localement entraînerait la relaxation de la chromatine permettant une accessibilité accrue pour les protéines de la NER [63, 64]. Deuxièmement, suite à la reconnaissance initiale de la lésion, le complexe autopolyubiquitine DDB2 et CUL4A, en plus de polyubiquitinier XPC [65, 66]. Cependant, les conséquences de ces modifications sont différentes. En effet, DDB2 et CUL4A sont dégradées par le protéasome, retirant ainsi le

complexe du site endommagé. À l'inverse, XPC est stabilisée et son affinité pour l'ADN endommagé est grandement augmentée. Ultérieurement, XPC est dégradée apparemment de manière indépendante de l'ubiquitination, permettant ainsi le recrutement séquentiel des protéines de la voie commune de la NER^[67].

1.2.4 Reconnaissance de la lésion lors de la TC-NER

La progression des ARN polymérasées le long du brin transcrit peut être bloquée par une multitude de lésions à l'ADN, dont celles induites par les UV^[68, 69]. Pendant que la GG-NER est clairement requise pour prévenir la carcinogenèse en réduisant l'apparition de mutations, la principale fonction de la TC-NER semble être la promotion de la survie cellulaire en restaurant rapidement la transcription^[46, 70].

Contrairement à la GG-NER, la TC-NER est déclenchée par l'arrêt de l'ARN polymerase II au site endommagé rencontré sur le brin transcrit des gènes actifs.^[46] Cet événement est rapidement suivi par l'arrivée des protéines CSA et CSB (Cockayne syndrome A et B), lesquelles coopèrent au recrutement de différents facteurs impliqués dans la TC-NER tels XAB2 (XPA binding protein 2), le facteur de transcription TFIIS, la protéine HMGN1 (high mobility group nucleosome-binding protein 1), et l'histone acetyltransferase p300^[71]. À noter, CSA fait également partie intégrante d'un complexe E3 ubiquitine ligase, lequel diffère du complexe DDB1-DDB2 seulement par la présence de CSA plutôt que de DDB2^[62]. Quelques heures après irradiation, CSB est polyubiquitinée et dégradée par le complexe CSA, lequel est potentiellement requis pour restaurer la transcription suite à la

TC-NER^[72]. Bien que tout autres substrats du complexe CSA impliqués dans la TC-NER demeurent à être identifiés, il est à noter que l'ARN polymerase II est rapidement polyubiquitinée et dégradée suite à l'irradiation UV par une autre E3 ubiquitine ligase, *i.e.*, NEDD4^[73]. Cet évènement est peut-être requis pour enlever l'ARN polymerase II bloquée et le transcrit naissant du site endommagé, de façon à faciliter le recrutement des facteurs de la voie commune de la NER et/ou le redémarrage de la transcription. Pour les CPDs, la TC-NER procède beaucoup plus rapidement que la GG-NER. En contraste, les 6-4PPs sont éliminés par la GG-NER ou la TC-NER suivant une cinétique très rapide^[74]. Ceci reflète le fait que les 6-4PPs sont reconnus et réparés plus rapidement par la GG-NER.

1.2.5 La voie commune de la NER

Suite à l'étape de reconnaissance de la lésion par la GG-NER ou la TC-NER, la voie commune de la NER procède à la réparation du dommage *via* le recrutement séquentiel de multiples facteurs. Le premier implique le recrutement du facteur de transcription TFIIH, lequel fonctionne indépendamment au cours de la transcription et de la réparation de l'ADN^[75]. TFIIH est composé de dix sous-unités dont les hélicases XPB et XPD^[76]. Au cours de la transcription, il sert entre autres à l'ouverture du promoteur^[77]. Une fois recruté au dommage, TFIIH sépare les deux brins d'ADN pour former une ouverture d'environ 30 nucléotides, et ce, probablement *via* une interaction directe impliquant XPC avec XPB et p65^[78-82]. Subséquemment, les protéines XPA, RPA et XPG viennent former le complexe de pré-incision^[83, 84]. RPA est un trimère constitué de trois sous-

unités (RPA1, RPA2 et RPA3) qui lie spécifiquement l'ADN simple-brin. Cette protéine joue également un rôle important dans plusieurs mécanismes de réparation de l'ADN et est essentielle à la réPLICATION^[85, 86]. La protéine XPA a la capacité de lier l'ADN avec un biais positif lorsque endommagé^[87, 88]. Initialement, il fut pensé que XPA était un facteur de reconnaissance de la lésion^[89]. Toutefois, il est maintenant clair qu'il est recruté après TFIIH^[90, 91]. Bien que nécessaire à la NER, le rôle exact de XPA demeure à éclaircir. Il est suggéré que XPA, de concert avec RPA, permettrait la stabilisation du complexe et l'identification du brin endommagé^[47]. L'endonuclease XPG, qui coupe en 3' de la lésion, est recrutée dans le complexe de pré-incision. XPG jouerait également un rôle important dans la stabilisation de TFIIH, et ce, indépendamment de son activité nucléase^[92]. L'endonucléase ERCC1-XPF, qui coupe en 5', est le dernier facteur recruté avant l'incision^[91], ce qui permet l'excision d'un fragment de 20-30 nucléotides^[93].

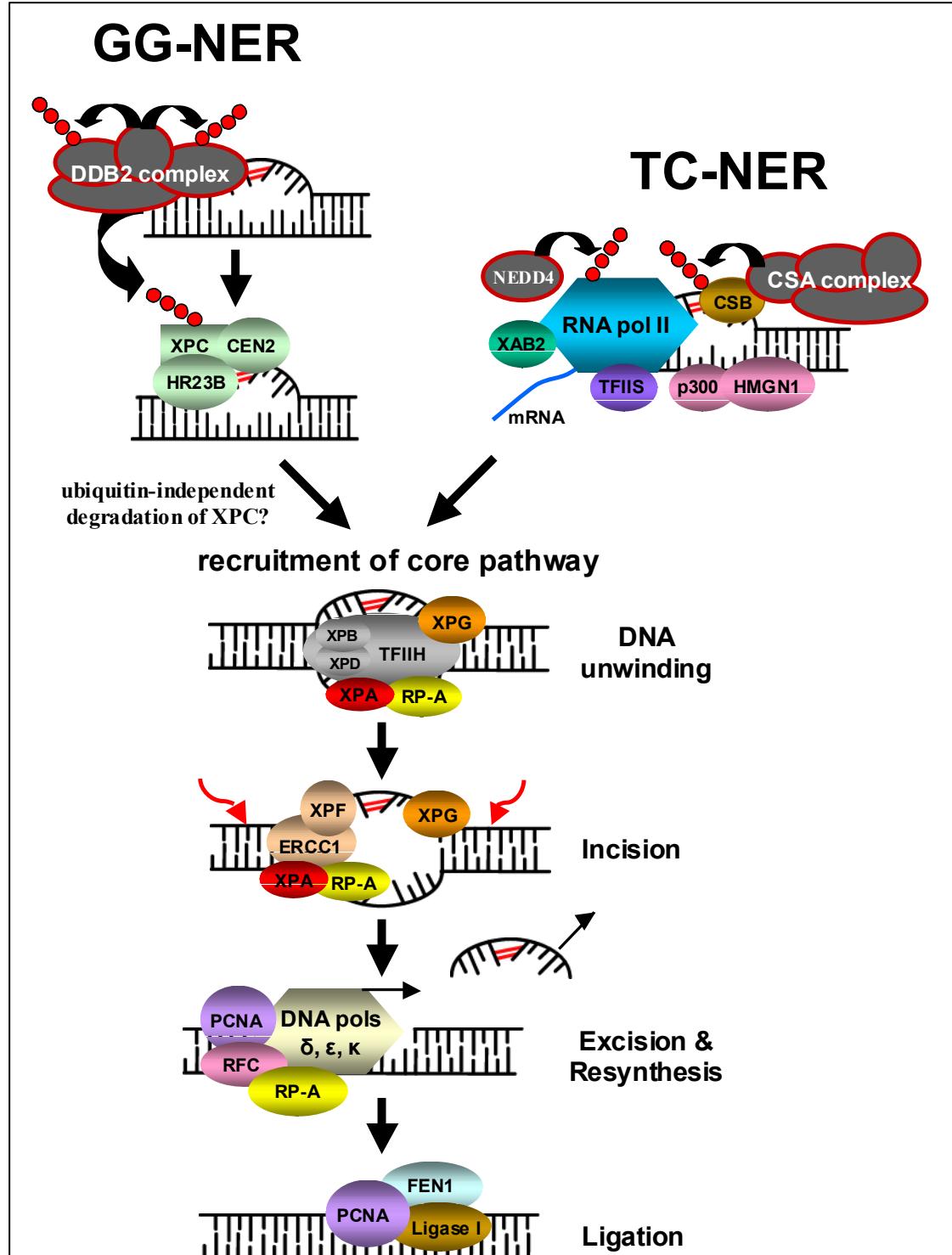


Figure 1.3 : La réparation par excision de nucléotides.
 (Tiré de Auclair *et al.*, Cell Cycle, 2009)

Finalement, l'ADN est resynthétisé en utilisant les ADN polymerases semi-conservatrices δ , ϵ et possiblement la polymérase translésionnelle κ [94]. Ce processus est fait en conjonction avec les facteurs de réPLICATION en employant le brin complémentaire non endommagé comme matrice. Pour terminer, la ligation de la cassure restante est effectuée par l'hétérodimère ADN ligase III α /XRCC1 [95] ou ADN ligase I/FEN1 [96].

1.2.6 La régulation de la NER

La réparation par excision de nucléotide a été largement étudiée au cours des dernières années et entièrement reconstituée *in vitro*. La NER est un mécanisme universel de réparation et il fut démontré dans différents systèmes biologiques que ce dernier pouvait être inductible [97, 98]. Toutefois, dans les cellules de mammifère, la régulation de la NER est encore mal comprise.

Le suppresseur de tumeur p53, un régulateur transcriptionnel très conservé chez les organismes multicellulaires, est sans aucun doute le facteur le mieux caractérisé dans la régulation de la NER chez les mammifères. Cette protéine est, entre autres, impliquée dans la régulation du cycle cellulaire et de l'apoptose en réponse à diverses sources de stress cellulaires. Son importance physiologique est soulignée par le fait qu'il est muté ou inactivé dans la plupart des cancers humains [99, 100]. Notamment, des mutations UV-spécifiques dans p53 sont retrouvées dans près de 90% des carcinomes spinocellulaires et 50% des carcinomes basocellulaires [101]. L'induction excessive de lésions par les UV peut induire une apoptose p53-dépendante [102-104]. L'exposition aux UV provoque la

phosphorylation de p53 à de multiples résidus. Les kinases ATR, ATM ainsi que les MAP kinases p38, ERK et JNK ont été impliquées dans la phosphorylation des ces résidus [105-108]. Toutefois, le rôle exact de ces modifications demeure à consolider. Le rôle du suppresseur de tumeur p53 dans la NER repose principalement sur la régulation de la réparation des CPDs par la GG-NER [109], quoique potentiellement requis pour la TC-NER sous certaines conditions [110]. Toutefois, p53 exerce peu ou pas d'influence sur la réparation des 6-4PPs [111, 112]. En raison d'une très grande déformation à la structure de l'ADN, les 6-4PPs, contrairement aux CPDs, ne sont pas formés à l'intérieur des nucléosomes et sont conséquemment plus accessibles. Ceci suggère donc un rôle pour p53 dans le remodelage de la chromatine. La participation de p53 dans la NER implique une régulation au niveau transcriptionnelle ainsi que des interactions directes avec des protéines de la NER. Notamment, p53 régule transcriptionnellement l'expression du gène *DDB2* [113]. L'expression ectopique de DDB2 dans des cellules p53 déficientes améliore l'efficacité de la GG-NER [114, 115]. *XPC*, un autre gène GG-NER spécifique, serait régulé transcriptionnellement par p53 [116]. De plus, il fut montré qu'une troisième cible de p53, le gène *GADD45A*, puisse réguler la GG-NER *in vitro*. La déplétion de Gadd45a réduit l'efficacité de la GG-NER et sensibilise les cellules aux UV [117, 118]. Gadd45a agirait au niveau du remodelage de la chromatine et de l'accessibilité à la lésion [119]. La protéine p53 semble également réguler la GG-NER indépendamment de son activité transcriptionnelle. Elle agirait directement comme facteur d'accessibilité à la chromatine en recrutant l'histone acetyltransferase p300 au site de la lésion [120, 121]. Il fut également rapporté que p53 pouvait interagir fonctionnellement avec les hélicase XPD et XPD [122]. Toutefois, le rôle exact de cette interaction n'est pas connu.

Un autre suppresseur de tumeur, la protéine BRCA1 (breast cancer 1), semble également impliquée dans la régulation de la NER. BRCA1, un facteur de susceptibilité au cancer du sein, est connu pour jouer un rôle notoire dans le maintien de l'intégrité du génome. Un premier groupe a démontré qu'elle régule l'expression de DDB2 de manière p53-dépendante et module la GG-NER des CPDs^[123]. Un autre groupe a démontré que la surexpression de BRCA1 induit l'expression des protéines DDB2, XPC ainsi que Gadd45a et améliore l'efficacité de la GG-NER^[124].

Parmi les autres protéines qui seraient impliquées dans la modulation de l'efficacité de la NER, il y aurait entre autres des membres de la famille HMG (High mobility group) qui reconnaissent des structures spécifiques à l'ADN et introduisent une altération structurelle à l'ADN et à la chromatine lorsque liées^[125]. Les HMG sont communément appelées facteur de transcription architectural et sont impliquées dans une multitude de processus cellulaires. Cette famille de protéine est subdivisée en trois sous-groupes : HMGA, HMGB et HMGN^[126]. Il fut démontré que les protéines HMGB1 et HMDN1, en remodelant la chromatine, facilitent l'accessibilité aux dommages^[127, 128]. En contraste, la surexpression de HMGA1 inhiberait la NER en diminuant l'expression de XPA^[129]. Deux autres protéines appartenant à la famille ING (inhibitor of growth), p33ING1 et p33ING2, semblent également moduler la NER de manière p53-dépendante^[130-132].

L'implication de différentes voies de signalisation dans la régulation de la NER n'a été que très peu abordée. La contribution de kinases majeures dans la réponse aux dommages à l'ADN telles qu'ATR ou ATM n'a pas été rapportée. Néanmoins, il fut observé que

l'inhibition chimique de JNK1/2 ou l'ablation de *c-fos* réduisait l'efficacité de la NER dans les cellules murines, en régulant l'expression de la protéine XPF^[133, 134]. Il fut également observé de manière indirecte que l'inhibition chimique de ERK1/2 diminuait sensiblement l'efficacité de la NER via la modulation de ERCC1^[135].

1.2.7 Maladies causées par des défauts dans les gènes du NER

1.2.7.1 *Xeroderma pigmentosum*

La maladie *Xeroderma pigmentosum* a été décrite pour la première fois par Kaposi en 1874. Cette rare maladie génétique autosomique récessive est caractérisée par une peau sèche anormalement pigmentée dans les régions exposées au soleil, une extrême photosensibilité de même qu'une importante prédisposition au cancer de la peau (1000-2000 fois supérieure) (Figure 1.4a). L'âge moyen de la première apparition de cancer est de 8 ans^[136-138]. Certains d'entre eux ont également de sévères problèmes neurologiques. Le taux d'incidence en Europe et en Amérique du nord est de 1:250000 et de 1:40000 au Japon^[139].

Le premier lien entre le *Xeroderma pigmentosum* et la NER a été obtenu lorsqu'il fut observé que l'UDS (« unscheduled DNA synthesis ») de cellules provenant de patient XP était grandement diminuée après une irradiation aux ultraviolets^[140]. Des mutations dans au moins huit gènes différents sont responsables du phénotype XP. Sept gènes, nommés *XP-A* à *XP-G*, cause une déficience de la NER lorsque mutés^[45]. Environ 80% des

patients XP appartiennent à ces sept groupes. Les derniers 20% restant font partie de la famille XP variant (XP-V). Bien que certaines études ultérieures aient rapporté un défaut significatif de la NER dans des cellules XP-V^[141, 142], le consensus général reflète que le syndrome XP-V n'est pas associé à une altération de la capacité de la NER mais plutôt à une incapacité de répliquer par dessus les dommages induits par les UV. Il est maintenant bien connu que ce phénotype est attribuable à des mutations dans le gène *POLH*, codant pour une polymérase spécialisée (pol η)^[24] qui sera discutée en détail ultérieurement à la section 1.3.



Figure 1.4 : Patients atteint du XP (a), TTD (b) et CS (c).
(Tiré de Lehmann, Genes & Development, 2009)

1.2.7.2 Le syndrome de Cockayne

Les personnes atteintes du syndrome de cockayne (CS), tel que pour les patients XP, souffrent d'une forte sensibilité aux UV. Toutefois, contrairement aux XP, ils ne présentent pas d'augmentation du risque de cancer. Le syndrome de Cockayne qui est également une maladie autosomale récessive est en fait caractérisé par un nanisme cachectique, des anomalies rétiniennes, une microcéphalie, une surdité, des anomalies neurologiques diverses et un retard de développement (Figure 1.4c) [143]. Cinq groupes de complémentation sont associés au CS. Les deux principaux sont causés par des mutations aux gènes *CSA* et *CSB*. Ces mutations occasionnent un défaut en TC-NER et non en GG-NER. Les trois autres sont causées par des mutations dans les gènes *XPB*, *XPD* et *XPG*. Dans ces derniers cas, les patients peuvent également présenter des symptômes XP [144, 145]. Toutefois, le phénotype CS peut difficilement être attribué uniquement à un défaut de la TC-NER. En effet, la majorité des XP, à l'exception des groupes XPC et XPE, sont déficients dans les deux sous-voies de la NER et ne présentent pas les symptômes CS. Plusieurs évidences suggèrent en fait que le CS serait causé par un défaut de transcription. Notamment, les protéines *XPB* et *XPD* font partie du facteur de transcription TFIIH [75, 146] et *XPG* est impliquée dans la stabilisation de ce complexe [84]. De plus, *CSB* est associé avec le complexe d'elongation de l'ARN pol II et son défaut causerait une réduction de l'activité transcriptionnelle [147-149].

1.2.7.3. *Trichothiodystrophy (TTD)*

Les individus affectés par ce syndrome sont caractérisés par des cheveux secs et cassants occasionnés par une déficience de protéines riches en soufre. Ils présentent également une petite stature, un retard mental et une peau ichthyotique (Figure 1.4b) [150, 151]. La photosensibilité est également associé à 50% des cas TTD sans toutefois prédisposer au cancer [152]. Ce syndrome est provoqué par des mutations dans des gènes codant pour des sous-unités du facteur TFIIH soit : TTD-A, XPB et XPD [153]. Ce syndrome semble, à l'instar de CS, être davantage causé par des problèmes transcriptionnels que de réparation de l'ADN [150, 151, 154].

1.3 Les polymérases translésionnelles

1.3.1 La RéPLICATION en présence de lésions

L'ADN est constamment endommagé et de nombreux mécanismes protègent les cellules des effets délétères de ces lésions via différents systèmes de réparation. Toutefois, il arrive que certaines lésions non réparées soient présentes sur l'ADN au moment de la réPLICATION, bloquant ainsi la progression des ADN polymérases. Ce blocage peut provoquer l'effondrement du complexe de réPLICATION et l'accumulation de structures d'ADN pouvant être converties en cassures double-brin et ultimement mener à l'instabilité génomique. Afin de contourner ce problème, différents mécanismes de tolérance aux dommages ont évolué afin d'assurer le redémarrage rapide de la synthèse d'ADN.

Notamment chez *Escherichia coli* (et autres organismes inférieurs), un mécanisme de recombinaison permet l'utilisation du brin d'ADN homologue non endommagé comme matrice afin de permettre le redémarrage de la réPLICATION. Toutefois, chez les mammifères le mécanisme majeur semble impliquer la synthèse translésionnelle (TLS, translesional synthesis) qui permet l'incorporation de nucléotides face à la lésion^[155, 156].

1.3.2 La synthèse translésionnelle

La TLS, (translesional synthesis) requière la présence de polymérases spécialisées permettant d'accorder des bases endommagées. Contrairement aux ADN polymérases

réplicatives classiques ($\text{pol}\delta$ et ε), les TLS polymérases sont peu processives et ne possèdent pas d'activité exonucléase. Par conséquent, elles sont caractérisées par une faible fidélité sur l'ADN non endommagé. Les TLS polymérases sont des enzymes qui sont très conservées au cours de l'évolution et la majorité d'entre elles appartiennent à la famille Y de polymérases (Figure 1.5). Chez les mammifères, il y a les ADN polymérases η , ι , κ et Rev1 qui appartiennent à la famille Y, de même que la polymérase ζ qui appartient à la famille B [157-159].

Chacune d'entre elles possèdent une affinité pour différents substrats. Mais parfois, pour passer certaines lésions, la coopération de plus d'une TLS polymérase est essentielle. Une première insère quelques nucléotides face à la lésion et la seconde poursuit l'extension. En effet, les déformations ou le misappariement parfois provoqué par la lésion, au niveau de l'amorce, empêche les polymérases réplicatives de poursuivre l'extension. Vraisemblablement, leur activité exonucléase dégraderait cette séquence d'ADN. Ne possédant pas d'activité exonucléase, les TLS polymérases sont plus tolérantes aux amorces anormales [160, 161].

1.3.2.1 La polymérase η (pol η)

Pol η est sans conteste, la TLS polymérase la mieux caractérisée. En effet, tel que mentionné précédemment (section 1.2.7.1), des mutations dans le gène *POLH* codant pour la pol η sont associées à la maladie *Xeroderma pigmentosum* de type variant (XP-V). Cette polymérase est retrouvée uniquement chez les eucaryotes et est relativement bien

conservée au cours de l'évolution [24, 162]. Pol η exhibe une processivité relativement faible et ne possède pas d'activité exonucléase. Ainsi, sur l'ADN non endommagé, pol η est une enzyme peu fidèle qui peut insérer le mauvais nucléotide avec une fréquence de 10^{-2} à 10^{-3} [163, 164]. Sur l'ADN endommagé ou non, pol η incorpore rarement plus de trois nucléotides [165].

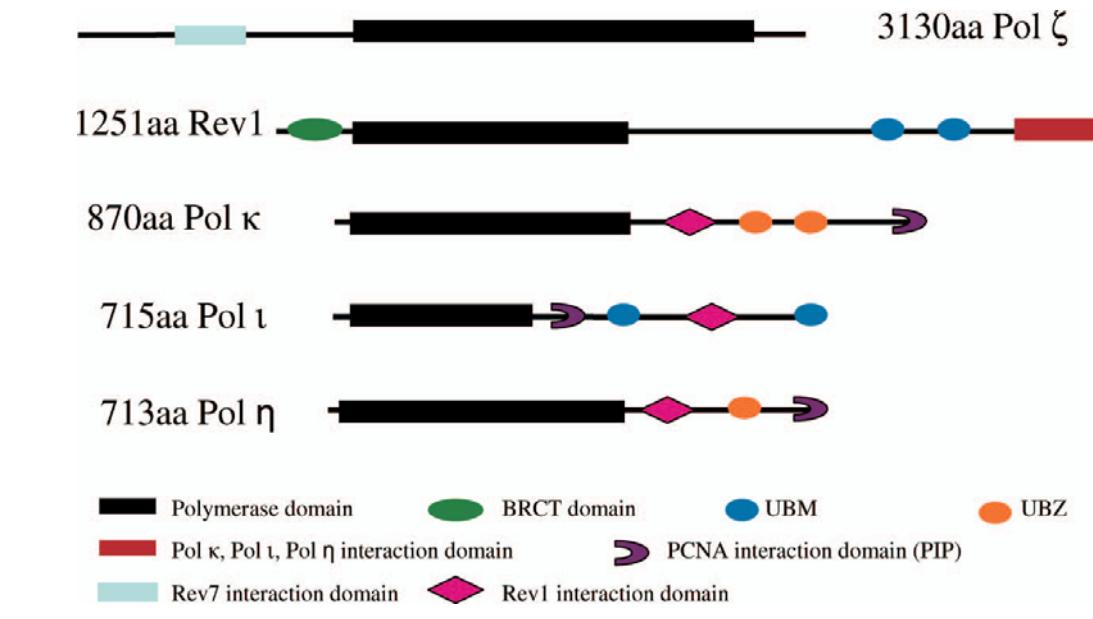


Figure 1.5 : Illustration graphique des TLS polymérases et leurs domaines protéiques. (Tiré de Waters *et al.*, Microbiol Mol Biol Rev., 2009)

La principale contribution de pol η semble être de permettre la réPLICATION de la matrice d'ADN endommagé par les rayons ultraviolets. Sa déficience cause un arrêt prolongé de la phase S dans les cellules irradiées aux UV qui peut mener à la formation de cassures double-brin, des réarrangements chromosomiques et ultimement à la mort cellulaire [166, 167]. En fait, ce qui caractérise cette polymérase, c'est sa capacité unique de synthétiser

l'ADN contenant des CPDs avec une très grande efficacité et fidélité [168-171]. La déficience en pol η augmente considérablement la fréquence de mutations induites par les UV et altère de façon importante le spectre de mutations [172, 173]. Ce phénotype semble être en partie causé par la synthèse translésionnelle des CPDs impliquant d'autres TLS polymérasées telles que pol ι , κ et ζ [174, 175]. Des analyses structurelles ont clairement démontré que son site actif était davantage ouvert que celui de la plupart des polymérases répliquatives, permettant ainsi d'accommoder certaines altérations retrouvées sur la structure de l'ADN [176]. Lorsque la pol η synthétise à travers un dimère *cis-syn* TT (CPD) deux adénines sont systématiquement incorporées à l'opposé du dimère avec la même efficacité que pour une matrice non endommagée [164, 165, 177]. Ainsi, lorsque pol η est mutée la fréquence d'incorporation d'adénine est réduite significativement [172, 173] au site contenant un dimère *cis-syn* TT. L'importante augmentation de transition C→T dans les cellules pol η déficientes suggère fortement que cette polymérase synthétise avec une très grande précision à travers un dimère *cis-syn* TC et CC [178, 179]. L'analyse structurelle chez la levure a démontré que le site actif pouvait accommoder les deux nucléotides du dimère et permettait l'incorporation via une liaison hydrogène de type Watson-Crick [176].

Les UV induisent également en grande quantité les 6-4PPs. Toutefois, contrairement aux CPDs, les 6-4PPs provoquent une très forte distorsion de la structure de l'ADN qui oriente le nucléotide en 3' du dimère perpendiculairement à celui localisé en 5' [55, 180]. Conséquemment, la capacité de former une liaison de type Watson-Crick est conservée en 5' et non en 3'[181]. Chez la levure comme chez l'humain, il fut montré que pol η ne peut répliquer les 6-4PPs. Toutefois, elle a la capacité d'incorporer un G en 3' mais, requière la

présence de pol ζ pour poursuivre l'extension [182, 183]. *In vitro*, les 6-4PPs (5'-TT-3') sont hautement mutagènes, occasionnant une forte augmentation de substitutions 3'T \rightarrow C [184]. *In vivo*, les mutations provoquées par les UV sont principalement attribuables aux CPDs. La principale raison réside probablement dans la très rapide cinétique de réparation des 6-4PPs. De plus, les 6-4PPs sont principalement formés à des sites 5'-TC-3' et 5'-CC-3', [185, 186]. Par conséquent, l'incorporation systématique d'un G en 3' par pol η suivi de l'extension par pol ζ réduit considérablement le taux de mutation lors de la synthèse translésionnelle des 6-4PPs [183].

Outre les adduits formés par les UV, pol η a la capacité de synthétiser à travers une multitude d'autres lésions dont des produits du stress oxydatif tels que le 7,8-dihydro-8-oxoguanine et thymine glycol [187, 188], des adduits dérivés du cisplatine tels que le 1,2-d(GpG)^[189] et; le *O*6-methylguanine^[188] produit par des agents alkylants comme le N-méthyl-N'-nitro-N-nitrosoguanidine (MNNG) [190]

1.3.2.2 *Les autres TLS polymérases*

Pol κ possède la capacité de synthétiser à travers divers adduits en position N2 de la guanine dont le *N*2-benzo[*a*]pyrene dG qui est le type de lésions majeures à l'ADN produites par la fumée de cigarette [191, 192]. Sa déficience augmente la sensibilité et le taux de mutations générées par l'exposition au benzo[*a*]pyrene [193]. Pol κ est incapable de synthétiser seul à travers les CPDs et 6-4PPs [165]. Toutefois, les cellules déficientes en pol κ sont sensibles aux UV et ce phénotype serait occasionné par une déficience en NER [94].

En fait, pol κ serait impliquée à l'étape finale de resynthèse de la NER. Ce résultat intrigant suggère un nouveau rôle potentiel des TLS polymérases dans la NER et il demeure à déterminer si d'autres pourraient être impliquées.

À l'heure actuelle, la fonction exacte de pol ι *in vivo* est relativement obscure et aucun phénotype apparent n'est associé à sa déficience^[194]. Des études récentes suggèrent que la pol ι en compagnie de pol κ et ζ serait impliquée dans la mutagenèse induite par les UV et ce, de manière plus frappante dans les lignés cellulaires déficientes en pol η ^[174, 175, 195].

Le dernier membre de la famille Y de polymérases, Rev1, fonctionne de pair avec pol ζ au cours de la synthèse translésionnelle. Pol ζ est un hétérodimère composé de Rev3 la sous-unité catalytique appartenant à la famille B de polymérase et de la sous-unité accessoire Rev7^[196, 197]. Ces deux polymérases, Rev1 et pol ζ , semblent être la principale source de mutations induites par une vaste quantité d'agents génotoxiques dont les ultraviolets^[198-200]. La TLS de plusieurs types de lésions peut être accomplie par une seule polymérase. Cependant, pour beaucoup de lésions, deux polymérases sont requises, une pour l'insertion de nucléotides face à la lésion et l'autre pour l'extension. Bien que pol ζ puisse synthétiser à travers certaines lésions, sa principale vocation semble impliquer l'étape d'extension^[198, 201]. Rev1 possède une activité polymérase limitée et est en fait une déoxycytidyl transférase^[196]. Il fut démontré que Rev1 pouvait synthétiser à travers certains adduits sur une guanine en N2 et des sites n'ayant pas de base^[198, 202]. Étonnamment, son activité polymérase ne semble pas avoir de rôle dans la mutagenèse induite par les UV^[203, 204]. Cependant, une mutation au niveau du domaine BRCT réduit sa fonction et la mutagenèse

^[205, 206]. Le domaine BRCT de Rev1 est essentiel pour sa localisation aux foyers de réPLICATION ^[205]. De plus, la région C-terminal de Rev1 peut lier les polymérases η , ι , κ , et ζ ^[207-210]. Ainsi, il est suggéré que Rev1 pourrait servir de plateforme pour coordonner la synthèse translésionnelle.

1.3.2.3 Régulation de la synthèse translésionnelle

Lors de la phase S, les TLS polymérases sont toutes localisées au niveau des foyers de réPLICATION ^[211]. Il fut démontré que les TLS polymérases de la famille Y peuvent toutes lier physiquement le trimère PCNA qui joue un rôle clé dans leur recrutement au site de la lésion. Le modèle suggéré pour le recrutement des TLS polymérases est exemplifié à la figure 1.6. PCNA est un facteur de glissement sur l'ADN. Formant un anneau, il permet d'encercler le brin d'ADN et de coulisser le long de ce brin. Le trimère PCNA est absolument requis pour la réPLICATION de l'ADN et améliore la processivité des polymérases ^[212]. Les polymérases η , ι et κ peuvent le lier via leur domaine PIP, qui est un motif de liaison pour PCNA (figure 1.6.1) ^[213-216]. Pour Rev1, l'interaction semble être jouée via son domaine BRCT ^[205]. Chez les mammifères, en réponse à divers agents bloquant la réPLICATION dont les ultaviolets, PCNA est monoubiquitiné en Lys164 par le complexe Rad6-Rad18 (figure 1.6.2) ^[217-219]. Ce dernier évènement semble jouer un rôle clé dans le changement de polymérases lorsque la fourche de réPLICATION est bloquée (figure 1.6.3) ^[220, 221]. Rad6 est une enzyme de conjugaison de l'ubiquitine (E2) et Rad18 lie l'ADN simple-brin ^[222, 223]. Il est suggéré que Rad18 recrute Rad6 aux sites contenant des séquences d'ADN simple-brin générées lorsque la fourche de réPLICATION est bloquée par la lésion ^[224]. Chacune des polymérases de la famille Y ont également la capacité

d'interagir avec la forme monoubiquitiné de PCNA via leur domaine de liaison à l'ubiquitine respectif UBM ou UBZ.

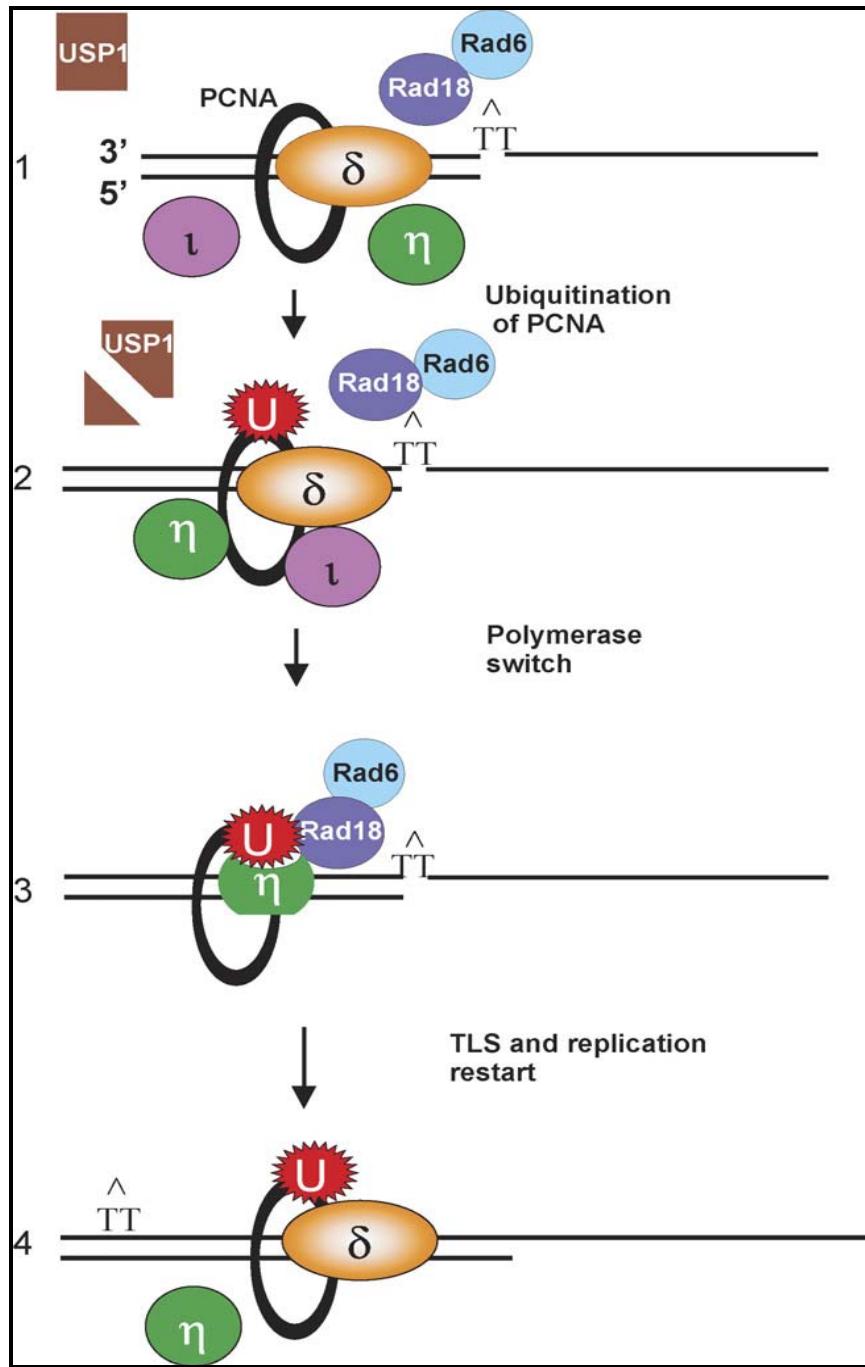


Figure 1.6: Modèle suggéré pour le recrutement des TLS polymérases.
(Tiré de Lemann *et al.*, DNA Repair ,2007)

La monoubiquitination de PCNA semble augmenter son affinité pour les TLS polymérases et favoriser leur recrutement à la fourche de réPLICATION bloquée [225, 226]. Il semble vraisemblable que la modification de PCNA constitue le principal événement dans l'activation du TLS [227, 228]. Une fois la lésion contournée, les polymérases réPLICATIVES reprennent la synthèse d'ADN (figure 1.6.4).

Toutefois, le mécanisme exact du recrutement des TLS polymérases et du remplacement des polymérases réPLICATIVES demeure inconnu. La monoubiquitination de PCNA est également régulée par la déubiquitinase USP1. Il fut démontré que l'irradiation UV mène à l'auto-clivage de USP1 et conséquemment provoque l'accumulation de PCNA modifié [229, 230].

Puisque, les TLS polymérases ont une très faible fidélité sur l'ADN non-endommagé, elles se doivent d'être régulées de manière très rigoureuse pour prévenir la mutagenèse. Peu est connu en ce qui a trait à l'implication de voies de signalisation dans la régulation du TLS. Il a été rapporté que les protéines PTIP, Chk1, Claspin et Timeless étaient requises pour la monoubiquitination de PCNA [231, 232]. La kinase ATR est un déterminant majeur dans la réponse aux stress réPLICATIFS et ces dernières protéines sont toutes des cibles ou partenaires d'ATR. Étrangement, de fortes évidences suggèrent qu'ATR n'est pas impliqué dans la modification de PCNA [229]. Cependant, ATR de même que PKC ont été impliqués dans la regulation de la localisation nucléaire de pol η après exposition aux ultraviolets [233].

1.4 Les principales voies de signalisation induites par les UV

1.4.1 Les voies dépendantes et indépendantes des lésions à l'ADN

La réponse cellulaire aux UV est très complexe et active de multiples voies de signalisation. D'une manière simplifiée lors de la réponse aux UV, les principales voies activées peuvent être subdivisées en deux branches majeures (Figure 1.7). La première est déclenchée indépendamment des dommages à l'ADN et semble impliquer l'oxydation (inactivation) de phosphatases liée à la membrane qui contribuent à l'autophosphorylation (ligand-indépendante) de récepteurs à tyrosine kinase. Ceci active donc une multitude de cascades de signalisation dont notamment celles conduites par les MAPKs (mitogen-activated protein kinases) ERK1/2, JNK1/2 et p38 α/β ^[234]. Ces trois MAPKs procèdent ensuite à la phosphorylation d'une multitude de facteurs de transcription et autres protéines impliquées dans la régulation de mécanismes critiques de réponse aux stress tels que l'apoptose, l'arrêt du cycle cellulaire et la réparation de l'ADN. Par conséquent, cette réponse variera considérablement en fonction de la longueur d'ondes UV (voir section 1.1.3) et du type cellulaire, en fonction de la capacité des couples redox intracellulaires^[235, 236].

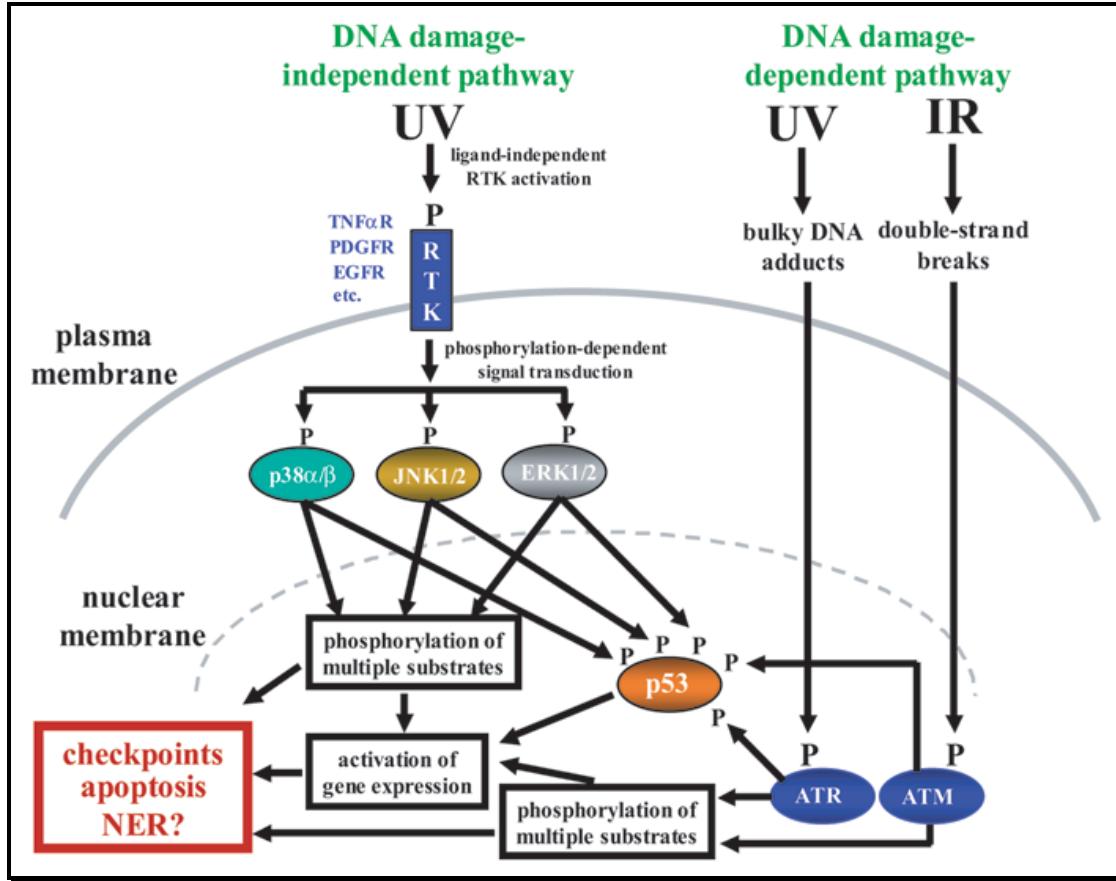


Figure 1.7 : Les principales voies de signalisation en réponse aux UV.
(Tiré de Auclair *et al.*, Cell Cycle, 2009)

L'initiation de la seconde branche est dépendante de la présence de lésions à l'ADN. La réponse aux dommages à l'ADN est très complexe et implique diverses protéines qui détectent les lésions, transmettent le signal à l'intérieur de la cellule et active des protéines dites effectrices qui exécutent la réponse cellulaire. Ces protéines effectrices influencent la régulation du cycle cellulaire, la réparation de l'ADN et ultimement lorsque les dommages sont trop importants, induisent l'apoptose. Les kinases ATM (Ataxia Telangiectasia-Mutated) et ATR (Ataxia Telangiectasia-Mutated and Rad3 related) sont des déterminants majeurs dans la réponse aux dommages à l'ADN.

1.4.2 Les protéines kinases ATR et ATM

ATR et ATM sont de grosses protéines, respectivement 350 et 303 kDa et possèdent une très forte homologie avec les PIKK (phosphoinositide3-kinase-related protein kinase) sans toutefois disposer d'activité lipide kinase^[237, 238]. Ce sont des sérine/thréonine kinases jouant un rôle crucial dans la réponse cellulaire aux dommages en phosphorylant une multitude de substrats (tels que le suppresseur de tumeur p53) aux sites consensus S-T/Q. L'activation de ces kinases module des mécanismes critiques tels que le cycle cellulaire et la réparation de l'ADN^[239].

De façon générale, ATM est activée suite à une cassure double-brin dans l'ADN. La mutation de ces deux allèles entraîne l'*ataxie télangiectasie*, une maladie autosomique récessive très rare qui se manifeste par une atteinte neurologique (*i.e.*, ataxie cérébelleuse progressive), une stérilité complète, une radio-sensibilité clinique, un déficit immunitaire et une susceptibilité accrue aux cancers^[240]. Quant à la kinase ATR, elle semble avoir un spectre d'action plus large et peut être activée par une grande variété de lésions, telles que celles induites par les UV et lors de perturbations de la réPLICATION qui compromettent l'intégrité du génome^[239, 241-243]. Contrairement à ATM, une déficience complète en ATR n'est pas compatible avec la vie^[244, 245]. Chez l'humain, dans l'homозygotie, une mutation hypomorphique dans le gène *ATR* cause le *syndrome de Seckel*^[246]. Cette mutation provoque un défaut dans la maturation de l'ARNm qui réduit à un très faible niveau l'expression d'ATR. Les caractéristiques dominantes de ce syndrome sont la microcéphalie, le nanisme sévère et des anomalies faciales^[247].

1.4.3 L'activation d'ATR par les UV

ATR est vraisemblablement une kinase notable activé en réponse aux lésions à l'ADN induites par les ultraviolets. Indépendamment du type de lésion, selon la majorité des modèles, la structure d'ADN responsable du recrutement et de l'activation d'ATR implique la présence d'ADN simple-brin (Figure 1.8) [248, 249]. Dans la cellule, les séquences d'ADN simple-brin sont liées et protégées par la protéine RPA. RPA est une protéine trimérique, constituée des sous-unités RPA1, RPA2 et RPA3, indispensable pour de nombreux processus métaboliques de l'ADN dont la réPLICATION [86]. De fortes évidences suggèrent que la présence de RPA est requise pour le recrutement d'ATR aux sites endommagés [249, 250]. La reconnaissance de l'ADN simple-brin est conduite par la protéine ATRIP (ATR-interacting protein) qui se lie directement à RPA [250-252]. ATRIP est essentielle au recrutement d'ATR mais n'est pas suffisante pour son activation. Bien que leurs rôles ne soient pas encore bien définis, la présence du complexe 9-1-1 (RAD9-RAD1-HUS1) et la protéine TOPBP1 semblent nécessaires pour l'activation d'ATR [253, 254]. Le trimère 9-1-1 requiert la présence du complexe RAD17-RCF2-5, qui reconnaîtrait les terminaisons d'ADN adjacentes aux séquences RPA liées à l'ADN simple-brin, pour le charger sur l'ADN [255-257]. La phosphorylation de RAD17 par ATR pourrait être requise pour le recrutement du complexe 9-1-1 [255]. Subséquemment, le complexe 9-1-1 permettrait la venue de TOPBP1 qui semble être le facteur clé dans l'activation d'ATR via une interaction directe avec RAD9 [254, 258-260].

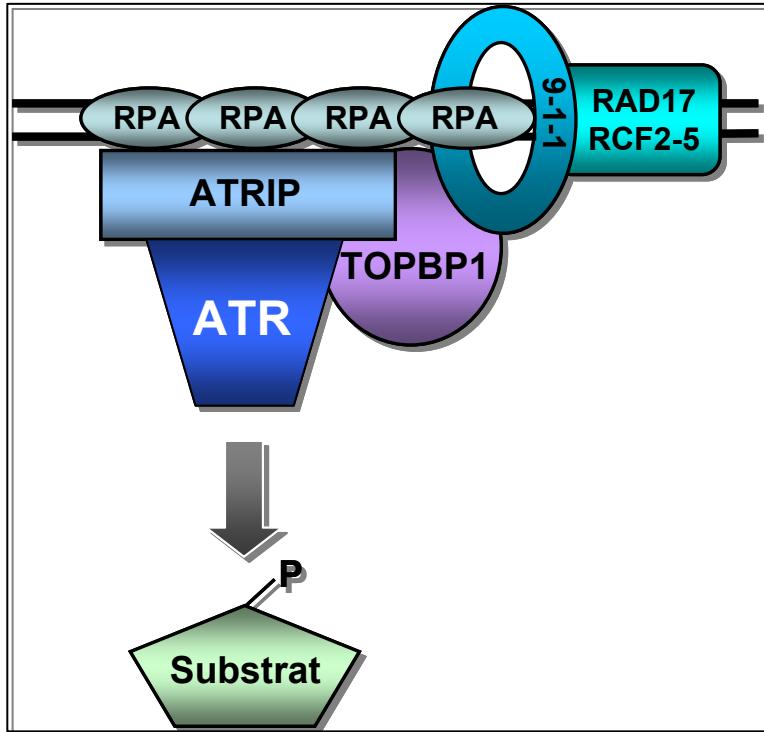


Figure 1.8: Recrutement et activation d'ATR.

Le recrutement et l'activation d'ATR par les dommages à l'ADN induits par les UV sont encore aujourd'hui matière à débat. Quels évènements en sont responsables? L'activation d'ATR suite à l'irradiation ultraviolets est prédominante au cours de la phase S, soit lors de la réplication de l'ADN. Le blocage d'un réplisome à un site contenant un dimère de pyrimidine provoque le découplage des appareils répliquatifs se trouvant sur les brins directs et indirects. Ce découplage provoque la formation de longues séquences d'ADN simple-brin sur plusieurs centaines de pairs de bases à l'origine de l'activation d'ATR. Au cours du stress répliquatif, ATR est essentielle à la stabilisation de la fourche de réplication et l'arrêt du cycle cellulaire, permettant ainsi la sauvegarde de l'intégrité du génome [241, 261]. Cependant, lors des autres phases du cycle cellulaire, il existe deux modèles contradictoires pour l'activation d'ATR. Certaines études ont démontré que

l'activation d'ATR dans les phases G0-G1 se produisait uniquement lorsque les lésions sont excisées par la NER produisant ainsi de courtes séquences d'ADN simple-brin ~20 nucléotides [262-264]. Un autre modèle suggère que l'arrêt de l'ARN polymérase au site contenant des dimères de pyrimidine est à l'origine de l'activation d'ATR [265]. Ce dernier modèle propose que RPA lie l'ADN simple-brin dans la bulle transcriptionnelle lorsque la transcription est bloquée.

1.4.4 Régulation du cycle cellulaire par ATR

Suite à l'induction de lésions à l'ADN par les ultraviolets, les signaux émis par les senseurs de dommages activent rapidement la protéine kinase ATR, qui par la suite phosphoryle plusieurs centaines de substrats impliqués dans la réponse au stress [239]. L'une des principales contributions d'ATR vise le contrôle du cycle cellulaire.

La réplication de l'ADN et la distribution des chromosomes lors de la mitose sont des événements critiques qui doivent être réalisées avec grande précision. Lorsque les cellules présentes des dommages à l'ADN, elles activent des points de contrôle qui arrêtent le cycle cellulaire pour permettre la réparation. En fonction de la phase du cycle, ces points de contrôle sont classés en trois catégories : G1/S, intra-S et G2/M. Des défauts dans ces mécanismes de contrôle peuvent provoquer des mutations et du réarrangement génomique qui résultent en instabilité génétique [266]. Suite à son activation, parfois, ATR requiert la présence d'autres protéines dites médiatrices pour phosphoryler ces multiples substrats. Parmi ces protéines on retrouve entre autres le suppresseur de tumeur BRCA1 ainsi que les

protéines Claspin et MDC1, qui sont tous également des cibles d'ATR [267-271]. Le contrôle du cycle cellulaire en réponse aux UV est très complexe et implique de multiples facteurs.

La protéine kinase Chk1, en est un déterminant majeur [271, 272]. Cette dernière est sans aucun doute le substrat d'ATR le plus étudié et son activation dépendante de la phosphorylation d'ATR, nécessite la présence de la protéine Claspin (Figure 1.9) [273, 274]. Son activation est menée par la phosphorylation aux Ser317 et Ser345 [275-277]. En réponse au UV, en autre cibles, Chk1 inactive les membres de la famille de phosphatase Cdc25, lesquelles joue un rôle important dans la conduite des cellules à travers le cycle cellulaire. Notamment, ces phosphatases contrecurrent l'inhibition phospho-dépendante des complexes CDK-Cyclin [278-280]. Tel que mentionné précédemment, le cycle cellulaire a besoin d'être contrôlé très précisément et nécessite l'influence de facteurs à certains moments précis lors de chaque transite à travers le cycle cellulaire. La famille des kinases CDK (Cyclin-Dependant Kinase) est au cœur de cette régulation contrôlée dans le temps. Des complexes CDK-Cyclin distincts opèrent à différents points au cours du cycle et leurs inhibitions respectives en arrêtent la progression [281, 282]. La kinase Wee1 est responsable de l'inhibition de Cdk1 en la phosphorylant en position Tyr-15 [283]. Il fut également démontré que Chk1 pouvait activer la kinase Wee1 en la phosphorylant sur la position Ser-642. Cette modification favorise son association avec les protéines 14-3-3 et augmente son activité catalytique et conséquemment l'inhibition de Cdk1 [284]. La kinase Cdc7 est essentielle à l'initiation de la réplication [285]. Il a été démontré que l'activation d'ATR en réponse aux UV (stress réplicatif) inhibait l'activité kinase de Cdc7-Dbf4 et ce, *via* une phosphorylation par Chk1 de Dbf4 [248, 286]. En réponse aux UV, ATR phosphoryle

également le suppresseur de tumeurs p53 qui est un acteur notoire dans la régulation du cycle cellulaire suite à différents stress. Cependant, bien que p53 soit stabilisé et activé, son rôle dans la régulation du cycle cellulaire suite à l'irradiation UV semble limité [287, 288].

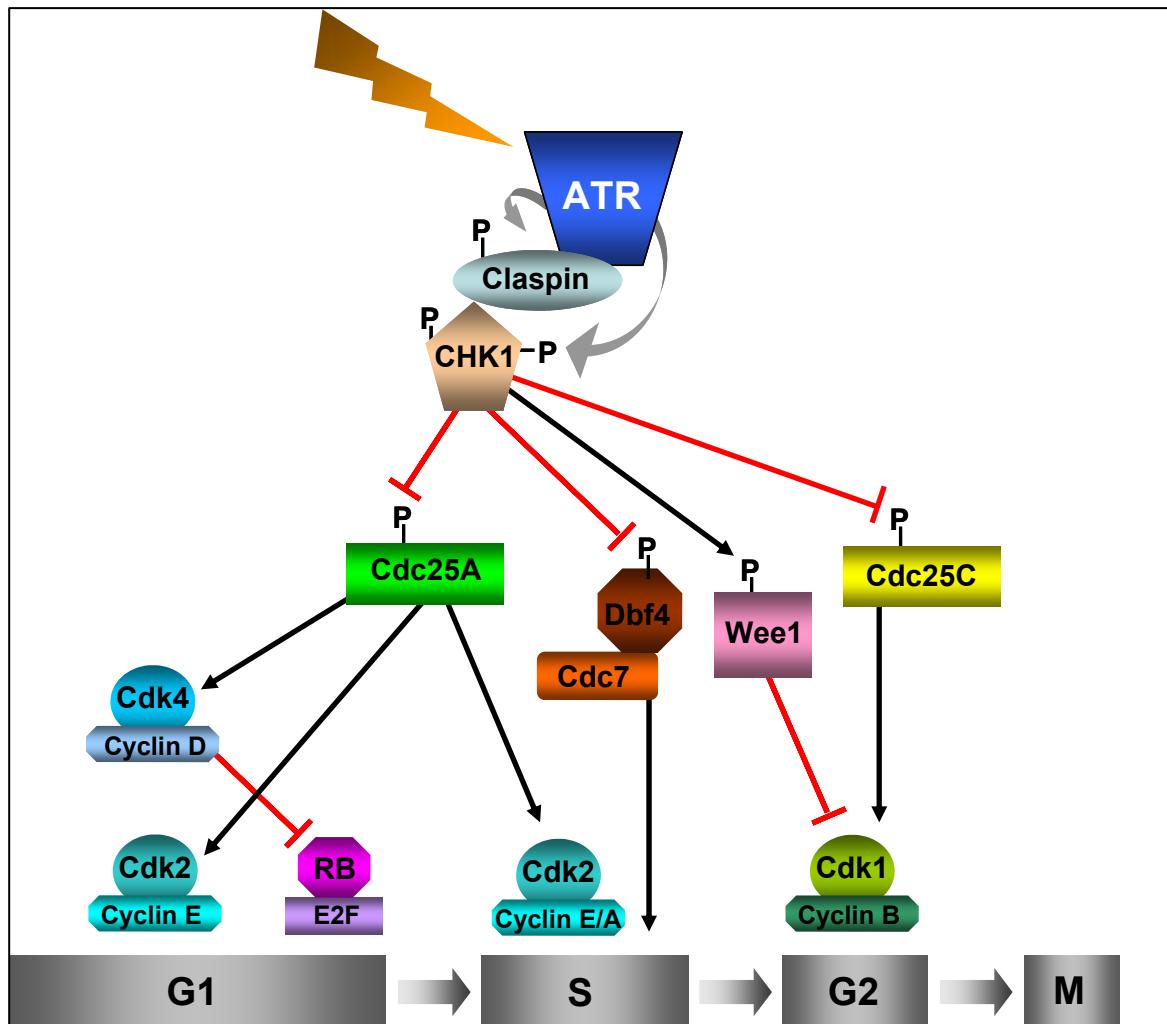


Figure 1.9 : La régulation du cycle cellulaire par ATR.

1.4.5 Stabilisation de la fourche de réPLICATION par ATR

Outre la régulation de l'arrêt du cycle cellulaire, ATR joue un rôle majeur dans la stabilisation de la fourche de réPLICATION lorsque cette dernière est bloquée. Suite à un stress réPLICATIF, l'absence d'ATR va conduire à la formation de cassures double-brin et l'accumulation de réarrangements chromosomiques [261]. Entre autres substrats à la fourche, ATR phosphoryle MCM2 un membre du complexe hexamérique MCM2-7 [289]. Les évidences suggèrent que ce complexe constitue le cœur de l'activité hélicase réPLICATIVE [290]. La phosphorylation de MCM2 inhibe l'activité du complexe et limite le découplage entre les hélicases et la polymérase lorsque cette dernière est bloquée. Ce découplage provoque l'accumulation d'ADN simple-brin qui peut mener à l'effondrement du complexe de réPLICATION et résulter en cassure double-brin. Il fut également démontré que les hélicases BLM (Bloom's Syndrome helicase) et WRN (Werner's syndrome helicase) étaient des cibles d'ATR et seraient requises afin de stabiliser la fourche et permettre le redémarrer la réPLICATION. Toutefois, le mécanisme moléculaire impliqué demeure inconnu [291, 292].

1.4.4 Rôle potentiel d'ATR dans la NER

Suite à son activation, ATR peut phosphoryler plusieurs centaines de substrats dont des protéines directement impliquées dans la NER (Figure 1.10). Ainsi, bien qu'il ne fût jamais démontré directement, il fut suggéré qu'ATR puisse être un régulateur de la NER.

Outre p53 mentionné précédemment, d'autres candidats pourraient être impliqués dans une régulation dépendante d'ATR de la NER.

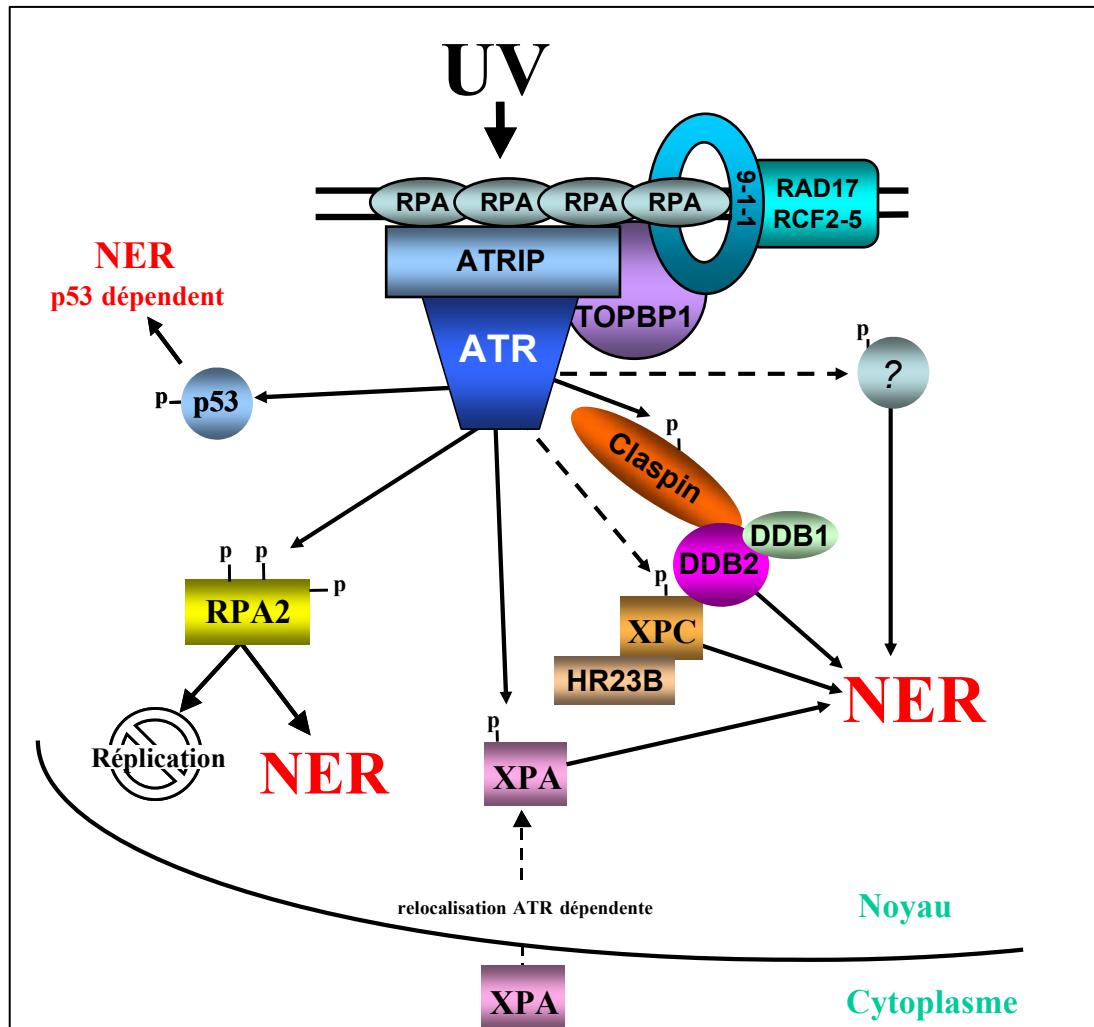


Figure 1.10 : Cibles d'ATR impliquées dans la NER.

On retrouve entre autres :

XPA : Il fut démontré que la protéine XPA, absolument requise pour la NER était phosphorylée sur la sérine 196 suite à l'irradiation UV de manière ATR

dépendante. La mutation de ce site sensibilise les cellules aux UV [293]. Subséquemment, il fut démontré que l'activation ATR modulait la translocation de XPA au noyau. Cette redistribution semble se produire indépendamment de la phosphorylation par ATR puisque les deux évènements ne sont pas corrélés dans le temps [294].

RPA: La protéine trimérique RPA est impliquée dans plusieurs processus métaboliques tels que la réplication et la réparation de l'ADN. Exclusivement en phase S, suite à l'irradiation UV, la kinase ATR conduit à l'hyperphosphorylation de RPA sur la sous-unité p32 (RPA2) [295]. Cette hyperphosphorylation de RPA a été associée à l'arrêt du cycle cellulaire [296]. Des évidences suggèrent que cette hyperphosphorylation réduit son affinité pour le centre répliquatif sans toutefois altérer son rôle dans la réparation de l'ADN, notamment lors de la NER [297-302].

Claspin: En réponse aux ultraviolets, la protéine claspin est phosphorylée par CHK1 et vraisemblablement par ATR, contribuant ainsi à la régulation de l'arrêt du cycle cellulaire [239, 271, 303-305]. Il fut montré que la protéine claspin interagissait physiquement et fonctionnellement avec les protéines DDB2 et faiblement avec DDB1 et XPC. La protéine Claspin serait impliquée dans la dégradation et la localisation aux dommages de la protéine DDB2 [306].

XPC: Récemment, il fut observé que la protéine XPC était phosphorylée sur des sites S/T-Q (sérines 350 et 892) suite à l'exposition aux radiations gamma [239].

Cependant, l'étude ne permet pas de différencier s'il s'agit d'un substrat d'ATM ou d'ATR.

hHR23B/hHR23A: hHR23B se retrouve en complexe avec XPC et est impliqué dans la reconnaissance des dommages. En absence de hHR23B, la protéine hHR23A peut se substituer lors de la GG-NER^[307]. Il fut également observé que hHR23A pouvait être une cible soit d'ATR ou d'ATM^[239].

1.5 Les techniques permettant d'étudier la NER

La NER est un mécanisme de réparation complexe qui procède via plusieurs étapes séquentielles afin de retirer la lésion. Depuis sa découverte, la NER a été grandement étudiée et pour ce faire, une grande variété de méthodes ont été utilisées. La présente section décrit les principales approches qui ont été mises à contribution afin d'évaluer *in vivo* de manière directe la cinétique de réparation et ainsi aider à disséquer ce mécanisme.

1.5.1 Détection de la synthèse d'ADN non programmée (UDS)

Tel que mentionné précédemment à la section 1.2.1, la synthèse d'ADN non programmée dans les cellules irradiées aux UV est le phénomène qui a initialement permis la découverte de la NER^[39]. Cette technique (l'UDS) permet d'évaluer l'étape de resynthèse de l'ADN faisant suite à l'excision de la lésion. D'un point de vu purement technique cette méthode est fort simple. Elle consiste à incuber les cellules dans un milieu contenant de la

thymidine tritiée immédiatement après irradiation. L'incorporation est par la suite visualisée par autoradiographie. L'exposition dure une dizaine de jours. La quantification s'effectue en comptant le nombre de foyer de radioactivité dans le noyau^[308]. De façon générale, afin d'éviter qu'elle n'interfère avec les résultats, la réPLICATION est inhibée. Pour ce faire, les cellules sont maintenues à confluence dans un milieu sans arginine et traitées avec l'hydroxyurée, un inhibiteur de réPLICATION semi-conservatrice. L'hydroxyurée en inhibant la ribonucléotide réductase réduit le pool de nucléotides, ce qui inhibe la réPLICATION sans toutefois affecter l'UDS^[309].

Le marquage par densité est une alternative pour évaluer la réparation à l'étape de resynthèse. Elle consiste à incuber les cellules irradiées dans un milieu contenant de la thymidine tritiée et le 5-bromouracil. Une fois l'ADN extrait, il est ensuite séparé par centrifugation en gradient de chlorure de césium. L'incorporation du 5-bromouracil permet d'éliminer par densité l'ADN nouvellement répliqué. En effet, l'incorporation de 5-bromouracil durant la réparation est trop infime pour influer sur la densité. Le taux de radioactivité dans l'ADN léger donne une mesure quantitative de la synthèse de réparation^[38].

1.5.2 Détection des lesions par clivage enzymatique ou chimique

Plusieurs enzymes isolées de divers organismes possèdent la capacité de cliver spécifiquement l'ADN endommagé. Pour l'étude de la NER chez les mammifères, la T4 endonucléase V, un produit du gène *denV* du bactériophage T4 est sans conteste la plus

utilisée. Elle possède la capacité de reconnaître et cliver les CPDs. Cette enzyme clive le lien *N*-glycosyl en 5' du dimère^[310-312]. Cette activité enzymatique a été mise à profit via différentes approches. Quant aux 6-4PPs, bien que certaines enzymes puissent également les cliver, c'est l'hydrolyse alcaline, en chauffant l'ADN dans une solution de pipéridine 1M qui a surtout été utilisée^[313].

Pour l'étude de la GG-NER, à différents temps post-irradiation, l'ADN des cellules est isolé et digéré enzymatiquement aux sites endommagés générant ainsi une cassure simple-brin. La taille moyenne des fragments ainsi obtenus est évaluée par gradient de sucrose alcalin ou gel d'agarose alcalin. La condition alcaline permet la dénaturation de la double hélice^[314]. Par conséquent, la diminution de sites sensibles à l'enzyme donne une estimation de la réparation.

Au début des années quatre-vingt, cette approche a été optimisée, en la couplant à l'immunobuvardage de type southern, permettant ainsi d'étudier la NER dans des séquences d'ADN ou gènes spécifiques. En observant une réparation préférentielle sur le brin transcrit des gènes actifs, cette nouvelle technique a permis la découverte de la TC-NER^[44, 68]. Cette technique implique que l'ADN récupéré à différents temps post-irradiation soit purifié et digéré par des enzymes de restriction à des sites flanquant la séquence d'intérêt. Une fois les lésions clivées, l'ADN est migré sur gel d'agarose alcalin. Par la suite l'ADN est transféré sur membrane et hybridé avec une sonde radioactive ciblant la séquence d'intérêt (brin transcrit ou non). L'intensité du fragment pleine longueur (non digéré) détermine le taux de réparation.

Une variante de cette méthode séquence spécifique, la LM-PCR (Ligation-mediated-PCR) [110, 315, 316], permet une résolution nucléotidique. De manière simplifiée, une fois les cellules irradiées aux UV, l'ADN est récupéré puis les lésions sont clivées formant ainsi des coupures simple-brin. Par la suite, l'ADN est dénaturé et une PCR asymétrique est effectuée avec une amorce spécifique à la séquence d'intérêt. Le fragment double-brin qui en résulte peut donc être lié à un adaptateur en 3' du fragment d'ADN, permettant l'amplification par PCR symétrique. L'absence de lésion ne permet pas la liaison de l'adaptateur et donc l'amplification subséquente. L'ADN amplifié est séparé par une électrophorèse sur gel de polyacrylamide dénaturant et transféré sur une membrane de nylon. La séquence d'intérêt est hybridée avec une sonde radioactive et visualisée par autoradiographie. La disparition du produit de PCR obtenu à différents temps post-irradiation à un nucléotide particulier détermine le taux de réparation. Ainsi, il a pu être déterminé que le long d'un gène donné, notamment p53, les lésions ne sont pas toutes réparées à la même vitesse. Les lésions ayant le plus faible taux de réparation ont pu être corrélées avec des points chauds de mutations^[317].

L'ADN nouvellement répliqué ne contient pas de lésions. Ainsi, pour ces dernières techniques la réPLICATION doit être contrôlée pour éviter une dilution du signal qui fausserait l'interprétation. Les approches utilisées consistent soit en l'étude dans des cellules qui ne prolifèrent pas ou en l'exclusion de la nouvelle ADN *via* le marquage par densité telle que mentionné précédemment.

1.5.3 Détection immunologique des lésions

Des anticorps hautement spécifiques (monoclonaux et polyclonaux) ont été développés contre une multitude de lésions à l'ADN, dont les photoproducts CPDs et 6-4PPs [318-321]. Ces anticorps, couplés à divers méthodes immunologiques quantitatives telles que la RIA (Radioimmunoassay) et l'ELISA (Enzyme-liked immunosorbant assay) ont été largement utilisés pour étudier les cinétiques de réparation des photoproducts [322-324]. Aujourd'hui, par sa simplicité, l'immuno-slot-blot est la technique la plus largement utilisée dans l'étude du NER [325, 326]. Cette méthode, consiste à transférer l'ADN purifié et récupéré à différents temps post-irradiation sur une membrane. L'ADN est préalablement dénaturé ou non en fonction des propriétés de l'anticorps. Par la suite, la membrane est incubée avec les anticorps primaires spécifiques aux dommages d'intérêt. Les lésions sont ensuite révélées par un anticorps secondaire couplé à la peroxydase. Le signal peut être normalisé en marquant préalablement l'ADN (avant irradiation) avec de la thymidine tritiée. Pour les mêmes raisons mentionnées ci-haut, la réPLICATION de l'ADN doit également être contrôlée lors de la détection immunologique des dommages à l'ADN.

1.6 Objectifs de la thèse

Depuis sa découverte au début des années 60, la NER a suscité beaucoup d'intérêt et a grandement été étudiée, et ce, sous plusieurs angles. La NER a été entièrement reconstituée *in vitro* et les principaux acteurs ont été identifiés. Toutefois, la régulation de la NER n'est toujours pas très bien définie et de nombreuses questions subsistent. 1) Est-

ce que des voies de signalisation régulent son activité? 2) Est-ce que la cinétique et la régulation de la NER varient en fonction du cycle cellulaire? 3) Sachant que la NER a une relation étroite avec la transcription, pourrait-elle également en avoir une avec la réPLICATION? 4) Dans cette éventualité, quelle serait l'interrelation avec les polymérases translésionnelles?

Objectif global:

L'objectif global de cette thèse visait à mieux comprendre la régulation de la NER, et ce, dans l'ensemble des phases du cycle cellulaire. Toutefois, les principales méthodes d'études de la NER qui ont été énoncées précédemment (chapitre 1.5), possèdent toutes une lacune commune. En effet, elles ne permettent pas l'étude de la NER dans les cellules en phase S et par conséquent, la majorité des études précédentes reflètent essentiellement le taux de réparation de cellules en phases G0/G1 du cycle cellulaire. Pourtant, la réparation des lésions dans les phases S, G2 et M est d'une importance capitale pour le maintien de l'intégrité du génome. De plus, ces méthodes sont dans l'ensemble très laborieuses et consomment beaucoup de temps. Certaine d'entre elles peuvent durer plus d'un mois.

Sous-objectif :

- 1) Le premier sous-objectif de cette thèse était de développer une nouvelle méthode très rapide, sensible et qui surtout, permettrait une évaluation précise de la réparation dans chacune des phases du cycle cellulaire. Les bases de cette nouvelle méthode ont été publiées pour la première fois dans l'article attaché en annexe 1.

- 2) Deuxièmement, il fut mentionné à la section 1.4 que certaines protéines essentielles à la NER étaient des substrats directs de la protéine kinase ATR. Ainsi, il fut suggéré qu'ATR puisse être un important régulateur de la NER. Toutefois, à l'heure actuelle aucune étude n'a démontré clairement ce rôle. Par conséquent, le second sous-objectif était d'évaluer si ATR pouvait réguler la NER et plus spécifiquement en phase S compte tenu de son rôle prépondérant dans cette phase (Chapitre 2).

- 3) Troisièmement, environ 20% des patients XP sont du type variant, caractérisé par une prédisposition très élevé au cancer de la peau sans toutefois, à l'encontre des autres groupes XP, présenter de défaut en réparation. Ce phénotype a été essentiellement attribué à des mutations dans le gène codant pour la polymérase translésionnelle η . Ainsi, le troisième sous-objectif était de revisité la réparation dans ces cellules dans un contexte phase spécifique et de déterminer si la NER pouvait être intimement lié avec l'activité translésionnelle de la polymérase η lors de la phase S (Chapitre 3).

CHAPITRE 2

2. ARTICLE 1

Publié dans: Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2008 Nov 18; 105(46):17896-901.

“ATR kinase is required for global genomic nucleotide excision repair exclusively during S phase in human cells”

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Edited by Richard B. Setlow, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, NY, and approved September 25, 2008

Author contributions: Y.A., R.R., and E.B.A. performed research; Y.A., R.R., and E.B.A. contributed new reagents/analytic tools; Y.A. and E.D. analyzed data; Y.A. and E.D. designed research; and Y.A. and E.D. wrote the paper.

2.1 Abstract

Global-genomic nucleotide excision repair (GG-NER) is the only pathway available to humans for removal, from the genome overall, of highly genotoxic helix-distorting DNA adducts generated by many environmental mutagens and certain chemotherapeutic agents, e.g., UV-induced 6–4 photoproducts (6–4PPs) and cyclobutane pyrimidine dimers (CPDs). The ataxia telangiectasia and rad-3-related kinase (ATR) is rapidly activated in response to UV-induced replication stress and proceeds to phosphorylate a plethora of downstream effectors that modulate primarily cell cycle checkpoints but also apoptosis and DNA repair. To investigate whether this critical kinase might participate in the regulation of GG-NER, we developed a novel flow cytometry-based DNA repair assay that allows precise evaluation of GG-NER kinetics as a function of cell cycle. Remarkably, inhibition of ATR signaling in primary human lung fibroblasts by treatment with caffeine, or with siRNA specifically targeting ATR, resulted in total inhibition of 6–4PP removal during S phase, whereas cells repaired normally during either G₀/G₁ or G₂/M. Similarly striking S-phase-specific defects in GG-NER of both 6–4PPs and CPDs were documented in ATR-deficient Seckel syndrome skin fibroblasts. Finally, among six diverse model human tumor strains investigated, three manifested complete abrogation of 6–4PP repair exclusively in S-phase populations. Our data reveal a highly novel role for ATR in the regulation of GG-NER uniquely during S phase of the cell cycle, and indicate that many human cancers may be characterized by a defect in this regulation.

2.2 Introduction

Nucleotide excision repair (NER) forestalls neoplastic transformation by removing an array of helix-distorting, replication-blocking DNA adducts generated by a multitude of environmental carcinogens, as well as by certain widely used chemotherapeutic drugs. These so-called “bulky DNA lesions” include ultraviolet (UV)-induced cyclobutane pyrimidine dimers (CPDs) and 6–4 photoproducts (6–4PPs), which play key roles in the pathogenesis of sunlight-induced skin cancer (1) and constitute ideal model DNA lesions for dissecting the mechanism of NER. The clinical relevance of NER is highlighted by patients afflicted with *Xeroderma pigmentosum* who carry inactivating mutations in specific NER pathway genes, are defective in the removal of bulky DNA adducts, and display striking predisposition to cutaneous tumor development (2).

NER is comprised of two overlapping subpathways. Global genomic NER (GG-NER) removes DNA damage from anywhere within the nuclear genome, and is initiated when the UV-DDB1/UV-DDB2 and then XPC/HR23B heterodimers recognize the helical distortion introduced into DNA by bulky adducts and bind to the damaged site (3). The “core NER pathway” is then recruited and removes the lesion through sequential steps of strand unwinding, incision in a number of bases on either side of the lesion, excision of the lesion as part of a short single-stranded oligonucleotide, and filling in of the resultant gap using semiconservative DNA replication factors and the nondamaged complementary strand as template. The other NER subpathway, transcription-coupled NER, removes bulky DNA adducts exclusively from the transcribed strand of active genes (4). This subpathway differs from GG-NER only in the manner of lesion recognition, i.e., it is

triggered by blockage of RNA polymerase II at adducted sites along the transcribed strand. This is followed by binding of the CS-A and CS-B proteins and recruitment of the core NER pathway, which then, in the identical manner as GG-NER, completely restores the integrity of the DNA.

After treatment with the model mutagen 254-nm UV (hereafter designated UV) or other replication stress-inducing agents, the ataxia-telangiectasia and rad3-related kinase (ATR) is rapidly activated (5), and in turn phosphorylates the p53 tumor suppressor thereby contributing to the latter's stabilization and function (6). In addition, previous reports have demonstrated that for most UV-exposed cell types, p53 is required for efficient repair of CPDs via GG-NER (7, 8). However the situation for 6–4PPs remains less clear with various studies showing that loss of p53 reduces (9–11) or has no influence (12, 13) on removal of this photoproduct. In any case it is conceivable a priori that ATR regulates p53-dependent GG-NER; moreover this kinase may also be expected to participate in GG-NER independently of p53. Indeed, during replication stress, ATR phosphorylates a multitude of substrates aside from p53 that modulate primarily cell cycle checkpoints but also apoptosis and DNA repair, including various proteins implicated in GG-NER (see Discussion). Despite this, no previous studies to our knowledge have thoroughly directly evaluated GG-NER kinetics in cultured human cells after abrogation of ATR signaling.

Here we explore the possibility that ATR regulates GG-NER, possibly in an S-phase-specific manner given the preeminent role of this kinase in safeguarding semiconservative DNA replication during genotoxic stress. In a novel approach, a flow cytometry-based

assay recently developed (14) was optimized to precisely evaluate the kinetics of UV DNA photoproduct repair as a function of cell cycle. We were able to conclusively demonstrate that during S, but not G₀/G₁ or G₂/M, removal of UV-induced DNA damage via GG-NER in human cells is strictly dependent upon ATR, revealing a highly novel function for this kinase in the maintenance of genomic stability. Moreover we show that among six model human tumor strains investigated, three exhibit complete deficiency in GG-NER exclusively during S phase, implying that a similar cell-cycle-specific repair defect may be present in many human cancers.

2.3 Results

Optimization of a Flow-Cytometry-Based Assay to Quantify DNA Photoproduct Removal in Individual Phases of the Cell Cycle.

We recently reported on the development of a flow cytometry-based fluorescence assay permitting evaluation of GG-NER kinetics in UV-exposed cells stained with anti-CPD or anti-6–4PP antibodies (14). During the course of this investigation, before UV exposure, cellular proliferation was abolished by growth to confluence or serum starvation (synchronization in G₀/G₁). Such an approach has traditionally been taken to ensure accurate determination of GG-NER kinetics, which requires that newly replicated (nondamaged) DNA generated during post-UV incubations be either rigorously controlled for or excluded from consideration. In fact, a considerable majority of previous studies using various direct assays for monitoring UV DNA photoproduct removal was performed under conditions in which S-phase DNA had been eliminated from the analysis.

In the present case, we were interested in evaluating whether GG-NER might be regulated by ATR as a function of cell cycle, and thus proceeded to optimize our assay such that DNA photoproduct removal could be precisely monitored in each of G₀/G₁, S, and G₂/M. For this initial purpose we chose as experimental model isogenic primary human lung fibroblast (HDLF) strains stably expressing either an shRNA targeting p53 (HDLF-shp53) or a scrambled shRNA sequence (HDLF-shCTRL). As expected, p53 was strongly expressed in HDLF-shCTRL at 6 h post-UV, but only barely detectable in the shp53-expressing counterpart (Fig. 2.S1A).

As a critical control, HDLF-shCTRL cells were first irradiated with 25 J/m² or mock irradiated, followed immediately by incubation with the mitotic inhibitor nocodazole to block re-entry of cells from G₂/M to G₀/G₁. Flow-cytometric analysis of propidium iodide (PI)-stained cells (15) then revealed, as fully expected, that most of the nocodazole-treated, mock-irradiated HDLF-shCTRL cells had accumulated in G₂/M at 24 h (Fig. 2.S1B). However, consistent with the well-characterized ability of UV to induce transient growth arrest throughout the cell cycle, no significant progression was observed within 24 h post-UV. Very similar results were obtained for HDLF-shp53 treated with nocodazole with or without UV (data not shown). We thus concluded that for HDLFs irradiated with 25 J/m² UV, GG-NER kinetics could be accurately measured in individual phases of the cell cycle within the first 24 h without any need to control for cellular proliferation. This permitted us to use our flow cytometry-based repair assay precisely as described (14), except that in the present circumstance exponentially growing, asynchronous (rather than G₀/G₁-

synchronized) cells were UV irradiated followed by determination of repair kinetics for populations gated in each of G₀/G₁, S, and G2/M.

Here we have focused primarily on 6–4PPs, which are repaired via GG-NER much more rapidly than CPDs, i.e., generally 80–100% removal within 6–8 h post-UV for 6–4PPs, and 30–60% removal at 24 h post-UV for CPDs (16). A representative histogram overlay, depicting the kinetics of 6–4PP repair in each of G₀/G₁, S, or G₂/M for UV-exposed HDLF-shCTRL cells, is shown (Fig. 2.1A). In each phase, most markedly S, the increased width of peaks with time indicates heterogeneity for repair within the population, a phenomenon that is visually apparent in the representative dot plot (Fig. 2.1B). As shown in Fig. 2.1C, on average 80–95% of 6–4PPs are removed in HDLF-shCTRL by 3–5 h post-UV during G₀/G₁ or G₂/M, whereas repair efficiency is moderately but significantly diminished during S (60–75% removal). Of note, HDLF-shp53 exhibited very similar kinetics of 6–4PP removal relative to HDLF-shCTRL, strongly supporting the notion that p53 generally is not required for GG-NER of this photoproduct in human cells. As negative control, NER-deficient primary skin fibroblasts, derived from an XPA patient, were confirmed to be completely defective in 6–4PP repair during all phases of the cell cycle (Fig. 21D).

Abrogation of Signaling Through ATR, but Not Through ATM, Completely Abolishes 6–4PP Repair Exclusively During S Phase.

To initially evaluate whether ATR might regulate GG-NER, HDLFs were pretreated with 10 mmol/l caffeine, which strongly inhibits ATR signaling (17). We demonstrated by immunofluorescence microscopy that, in the manner expected (18), caffeine treatment

abrogated ATR-mediated phosphorylation of H2AX after UV (Fig. 2.S2A). As depicted in the representative profiles and accompanying histogram (Fig. 2.2 A and B), strikingly, 10 mmol/l caffeine completely abolished 6–4PP repair during S, whereas repair was efficient during G₀/G₁ or G₂/M. Because the efficiency of UV DNA photoproduct repair can vary significantly as a function of dose (19), we also investigated 6–4PP repair in HDLFs with or without caffeine after irradiation with 10 J/m². At this dose, repair efficiency was consistently lower during S relative to the other phases (Fig. 2.S3A) although unlike for 25 J/m² this reduction was not statistically significant. Importantly however, in accordance with the findings for 25 J/m², caffeine treatment profoundly abrogated GG-NER of 6–4PPs exclusively during S phase in HDLFs irradiated with 10 J/m² (Fig. 2.S3B).

Although the above data suggest that ATR might regulate GG-NER uniquely during S phase, the participation of other PI3 kinases known to be caffeine sensitive cannot be ruled out. In particular, the ataxia telangiectasia-mutated kinase (ATM) is strongly inhibited by 10 mmol/l caffeine; moreover ATM was recently shown to be phosphorylated after UV and has previously been implicated in NER (see Discussion). HDLFs were thus cultured in the presence of 30 µmol/l wortmannin, which inhibits signaling through ATM but not ATR (20). Moreover this treatment, as expected (21), abrogated phosphorylation of H2AX after exposure to IR but not UV (Fig. 2.S2A,B). We found that these wortmannin-treated HDLFs, as well as primary skin fibroblasts derived from an ATM-deficient patient, carried out relatively efficient repair of 6–4PPs in all phases of the cell cycle (Fig. 2.2C).

To unequivocally confirm a role for ATR in S-phase-specific GG-NER, HDLFs were transiently transfected with an siRNA pool targeting this kinase, which resulted in $\approx 90\%$ reduction of ATR protein levels as measured by densitometry (Fig. 2.3A, top panel). Moreover immunofluorescence microscopy demonstrated that ATR-dependent phosphorylation of H2AX was abrogated after UV in siATR-treated HDLFs relative to controls expressing scrambled siRNAs (Fig. 2.3A, bottom panel). Remarkably, in accord with our results in caffeine-treated cells, Fig. 2.3B clearly depicts complete abolition of 6–4PP removal in siATR-HDLFs during S phase, whereas repair during G₀/G₁ or G₂/M is not affected. On the other hand, repair rates appeared normal in all phases in control HDLFs. The above data, taken together, conclusively demonstrate the existence of a highly novel ATR-dependent regulation of GG-NER operating exclusively during S phase in human cells.

ATR-Deficient Seckel Syndrome Skin Fibroblasts Are Profoundly Defective in S-Phase-Specific GG-NER of 6–4PPs and CPDs.

We next analyzed the kinetics of 6–4PP removal in the ATR-deficient Seckel syndrome skin fibroblast strain F02–98 following UV. Relative to the closely related wild-type counterpart 1BR, F02–98 exhibited profoundly reduced levels of ATR protein expression, and of H2AX phosphorylation after UV (Fig. 2.4A). Furthermore, as for HDLFs, cell cycle progression in 1BR and F02–98 was abolished for at least 24 h post UV (data not shown). Consistent with the striking results in Figs. 2.2 and 2.3, F02–98 exhibited complete abrogation of 6–4PP removal uniquely during S whereas 1BR repaired normally (Fig. 2.4B). GG-NER of CPDs was also evaluated in the above paired strains. At 12 and 24 h

post-UV \approx 15% and 25% of CPDs, respectively, were removed with similar efficiency in all phases of the cell cycle in 1BR. (In contrast with the situation for 6–4PPs in HDLFs, no apparent slowdown of CPD repair during S phase was noted in 1BR.) On the other hand, although F02–98 manifested similar CPD removal rates during G₀/G₁ and G₂/M, repair was totally abolished during S at all time points (Fig. 2.4C). These data indicate that removal of CPDs, as well as of 6–4PPs, is strictly regulated in an ATR-dependent manner uniquely during S phase.

GG-NER of 6–4PPs Is Abolished During S Phase in Diverse Model Tumor Cell Lines.

Having evaluated cell cycle specificity for GG-NER of 6–4PPs in various human fibroblast strains differing in p53, ATR, or ATM status, we turned our attention to cancer cells. Repair of 6–4PP was investigated in six model tumorigenic strains, i.e., U2OS osteosarcoma, 293 embryonic kidney, DLD-1 colorectal carcinoma, SAOS-2 osteosarcoma, A549 lung carcinoma, and MCF-7 breast carcinoma. Primary human skin fibroblasts (HDSFs) were also investigated as control. For each of the tumor strains, flow-cytometric analysis of PI-stained cells showed that cell cycle progression was abolished within the first 6 h post-UV after exposure to 25 J/m² (data not shown). For HDSFs, in accord with the situation for HDLFs, up to 75% and 95% of 6–4PP were removed by 3 h and 6 h post-UV, respectively, in G₀/G₁ or G₂/M, whereas during S these values were significantly reduced, i.e., were only 40% and 75% (Fig. 2.5). The combined data in primary HDSFs and HDLFs suggest that nonimmortalized strains can exhibit modest but significant reductions in the efficiency of 6–4PP removal during S relative to G₀/G₁ or G₂/M under normal culture conditions. Strikingly, however, three tumor strains, i.e., A549,

MCF-7, and U2OS, exhibited complete abrogation of 6–4PP repair exclusively during S (Fig. 2.5). On the other hand, in the case of DLD-1, SAOS-2, and 293, 6–4PP removal was rapid and equivalent during all phases. Of note, the three tumor strains deficient in 6–4PP removal during S express ATR protein and are proficient in phosphorylation of H2AX after UV (Fig. 2.S4). Moreover these latter three strains are all known to be p53-proficient, whereas those exhibiting no differences in repair among the cell cycle phases have been characterized as p53 deficient.

2.4 Discussion

Here we report on the development and use of a novel flow-cytometry-based assay that allows precise determination of GG-NER kinetics as a function of cell cycle. In initially investigating UV-irradiated cells under normal culture conditions, we showed that removal of 6–4PPs in HDLFs or HDSFs irradiated with 25 J/m² UV was moderately but significantly slower during S relative to G₀/G₁ or G₂/M. This S-phase-specific reduction in GG-NER efficiency in primary fibroblasts may not be actively regulated, but rather could reflect, for example, differences among the cell cycle phases with respect to chromatin structure or other determinants affecting access of repair proteins to sites of DNA damage. In any case, unlike the situation for primary lung or skin fibroblasts, we observed equivalent repair kinetics during all phases of the cycle for (i) 6–4PPs in three model tumor cell lines, (ii) 6–4PPs in HDLFs treated with 10J/m² UV, and (iii) for CPDs in hTERT-immortalized 1BR skin fibroblasts. It should also be emphasized that a few prior studies have evaluated GG-NER rates as a function of cell cycle under normal culture

conditions. Of particular relevance here, in contrast with our results, using a well-established RIA it was shown in primary skin fibroblasts (22) or primary lymphoblasts (23) that removal of 6-4PP is not influenced by cell cycle. Other studies also performed in primary fibroblasts or lymphoblasts indicated that GG-NER rates may actually be relatively faster during S or G₀/G₁, respectively (24, 25). It must be emphasized that the above investigations each used different GG-NER assays and different methods for isolating cell populations in specific phases. The overall data thus indicate that cell-cycle-specific variations in GG-NER efficiency under normal culture conditions might reflect the repair assay, dose, and/or particular DNA adduct studied. We suggest that future investigations using diverse primary and cancer cell types in conjunction with the powerful flow-cytometry-based repair assay described herein could eventually establish a firm consensus regarding this issue.

Having established a method for evaluating GG-NER kinetics as a function of cell cycle, we proceeded to conclusively demonstrate that ATR is strictly required for GG-NER exclusively during S, thereby revealing a highly novel role for this kinase in the maintenance of genomic stability. In addition, our data strongly indicate that ATM is not involved in S-phase-specific regulation of repair. We believe it important to address the potential role of ATM, as this kinase, once widely considered not to be capable of being activated by UV, can in fact become phosphorylated following UV in an ATR-dependent manner (26). Moreover ATM had been shown (i) to physically interact with components of the NER machinery after treatment with the UV-mimetic agent cisplatin (27), and (ii) to phosphorylate the NER pathway factor RP-A (replication protein-A) in response to UV

(28). The precise ATR substrate(s) that regulate S-phase-specific GG-NER remain(s) to be identified. Our data on 6–4PP repair in HDLFs expressing shRNA targeting p53 (Fig. 2.1), and in p53-deficient vs. p53-proficient tumor cell strains (Fig. 2.5), taken together strongly indicate that p53 does not participate in this regulation. However, in response to UV, ATR rapidly phosphorylates a plethora of proteins aside from p53 that regulate primarily cell cycle checkpoints but also apoptosis and DNA repair. Regarding potential ATR substrates that may regulate S-phase-specific repair independently of p53, it is noteworthy that RP-A is phosphorylated on multiple serine/threonine residues by ATR post-UV (29) and plays a central role not only in semiconservative DNA replication but also in both the lesion recognition- and gap filling-steps of GG-NER (30). We also highlight an extensive proteomics analysis recently identifying XPC and XPA as potential ATR substrates during genotoxic stress (31). Furthermore firm experimental evidence was presented showing that XPA is indeed phosphorylated by ATR on serine 196 after UV, and that this event is required for maintaining UV resistance (32). A follow-up investigation demonstrated that redistribution of XPA to the nucleus is also dependent on ATR but, interestingly, not on serine 196 phosphorylation (33).

In addition to the above ATR substrates participating directly in GG-NER, others have been firmly implicated in this pathway. The BRCA1 tumor suppressor is phosphorylated by ATR on multiple serine residues in response to UV (34), and moreover has previously been implicated in p53-independent regulation of GG-NER (35). In addition, the recently identified replication-checkpoint protein claspin is phosphorylated in an ATR-dependent manner after UV (36) and was shown to interact directly with UV-DDB1, UV-DDB2, and

XP-C (37). Although this latter study demonstrated that RNAi-mediated knockdown of claspin does not affect GG-NER, repair was not monitored specifically in S-phase cells. In conclusion, it remains to be evaluated whether loss of ATR-dependent phosphorylation of any among RPA, XPA, XPC, BRCA1, or claspin might abrogate GG-NER in UV-exposed cells during S phase, but not during G₀/G₁ or G₂/M.

The intriguing observation here that three among six randomly chosen model human tumor cell lines are totally deficient in GG-NER exclusively during S implies that many human cancers may be characterized by such a defect. However any potential link between ATR signaling and the striking repair defect in these model tumor strains remains to be determined. Because all three strains express ATR protein and are proficient in H2AX phosphorylation, we offer reasonable speculation that they are nonetheless defective in ATR-mediated phosphorylation of particular downstream effectors which regulate S-phase-specific GG-NER. Thus our data in tumor cell lines may relate to a heretofore unidentified, critical underlying factor in the development of multistage carcinogenesis, where exposure to bulky adduct-inducing environmental genotoxins and subsequent mutation fixation in critical growth control genes plays an important role. Moreover our findings potentially harbor important implications for cancer treatment. Indeed burgeoning evidence supports the notion that NER status of tumors is a major determinant in the clinical response to cisplatin (38), which, like UV, exerts powerful cytotoxic effects via the induction of bulky DNA adducts (39). As such, human cancers that might be identified as totally deficient in S-phase-specific GG-NER would be expected to respond much more

effectively, and possibly more selectively, to treatment protocols that include UV-mimetic chemotherapeutic drugs.

2.5 Materials and Methods

Cell Culture.

Primary lung fibroblasts (HDLFs) were kindly provided by Dr. J. Sedivy (Brown University). The hTERT-immortalized Seckel syndrome skin fibroblast strain F02–98 (carrying a hypomorphic ATR splice-site mutation that profoundly reduces ATR protein expression) (40) and the closely related wild-type hTERT-immortalized control strain 1BR, were a gift of Dr. P. Jeggo (University of Sussex). Normal primary skin fibroblasts (HDSFs; GM01652B), XPA-deficient HDSFs (GM01630), and ATM-deficient HDSFs (AG04405A) were purchased from the Coriell Institute. The above strains were cultured in Eagle's MEM supplemented with 15% fetal bovine serum, L-glutamine, and antibiotics (Wisent, Montreal, Canada). Model tumor strains (U2OS, SAOS-2, 293, DLD-1, A549, and MCF7) were grown in Dulbecco's MEM supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum, L-glutamine, and antibiotics.

Attenuation of p53 and ATR Expression in HDLFs.

For pharmacological inhibition of ATR and ATM, or ATM but not ATR, 10 mmol/l caffeine (Sigma) or 30 µmol/l wortmannin (Calbiochem), respectively, were added to cultures 30 minutes before UV treatment. Knockdown of p53 expression in HDLFs by stable expression of shRNA targeting p53, driven by the pSUPER retroviral vector, was

performed as described (14). For siRNA-mediated knockdown of ATR, 2×10^5 cells were plated in 35-mm dishes 1 day before siRNA transfection in complete growth media without antibiotics. siRNAs targeting human ATR (sc-29763), or nontargeting siRNAs (sc-37007), were purchased from Santa Cruz. siRNAs were transfected into cells using Lipofectamine 2000 according to the manufacturer's (Invitrogen) directions, and cells were used at 2 days posttransfection.

Irradiation Conditions.

Cell monolayers growing in 60-mm dishes were washed thoroughly with phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) and covered with 2 ml of PBS, followed by UV irradiation with a Philips G25T8 germicidal lamp at a fluence of 0.2 J/m²/s.

Protein Detection.

Western blotting using antibodies (Santa Cruz) for p53 (DO-1 antibody; 1:5000 dilution), ATR (N-19 antibody, 1:500 dilution), and TFIIHp89 (S-19 antibody, 1:500 dilution) was performed as previously described (15). For immunofluorescence detection of γ -H2AX or ATR, cells were grown on coverslips in 35-mm dishes, treated with UV, and fixed for 15 minutes in PBS/3% paraformaldehyde. Cells were then washed with PBS and permeabilized for 10 minutes in PBS/0.5% Triton X-100, blocked for 1 h in PBS/10% FBS/0.1% Triton X-100, and incubated with a primary mouse monoclonal anti-human γ -H2AX antibody (1:500; Upstate) or goat polyclonal anti-human ATR antibody (N-19 antibody, 1:50, Santa Cruz Biotechnology) for 2 hours. Cells were washed with PBS and incubated for 1 h with an Alexa 488 goat anti-mouse IgG secondary antibody or an Alexa

488 donkey anti-goat IgG secondary antibody (Molecular Probes). Cells were washed with PBS and nuclei stained with 0.2 µg/ml DAPI (Sigma). Fluorescence was visualized with a Leica DMRE microscope, and data acquired using a RETIGA EX digital camera (QIMAGING) coupled with OpenLab 3.1.1 software (OpenLab).

Determination of GG-NER Kinetics as a Function of Cell Cycle.

Exponentially growing, asynchronous monolayers were UV-irradiated and immediately re-fed with normal culture medium. At various times posttreatment, cultures were washed with PBS, trypsinized, resuspended in 1 ml of PBS, and fixed by addition of 3 ml ice-cold 100% ethanol. Next, 2.5×10^5 fixed cells were resuspended in either 0.5% Triton-X-100/2 N HCl (for CPD detection) or 0.5% Triton-X-100/0.2 N HCl (for 6–4PP detection), and incubated for 10 minutes at 22 °C. Cells were washed with 0.1 mol/l Na₂B₄O₇ (pH 9.0) and then with PBS, and resuspended in 300 µl of RNase (100 µg/ml in PBS) for 1 h at 37 °C. Cells were centrifuged and resuspended in 300 µl PBS-TB (1% BSA/0.25% Tween-20/PBS) containing a primary monoclonal antibody (1:1000; Kamiya Biomedical) against either CPDs or 6–4 PPs for 1.5 h at 22 °C, followed by washing with PBS-TB and resuspension in 300 µl of PBS-TB containing FITC-conjugated rabbit anti-mouse secondary antibody (1:200) for 1 h at 22 °C. Pellets were then washed twice with PBS-TB and resuspended in 300 µl PBS containing 5 µg/ml PI (Molecular Probes). Cells were gated in each phase of the cell cycle and repair kinetics monitored using a flow cytometer (fitted with an argon laser and CellQuestPro software; Becton Dickinson) to quantify the change in geometric mean fluorescence over time, with correction for background autofluorescence.

2.6. Acknowledgments

This work was supported by a grant from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (to E.A.D.)

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2.8 Figures

Figure 2.1

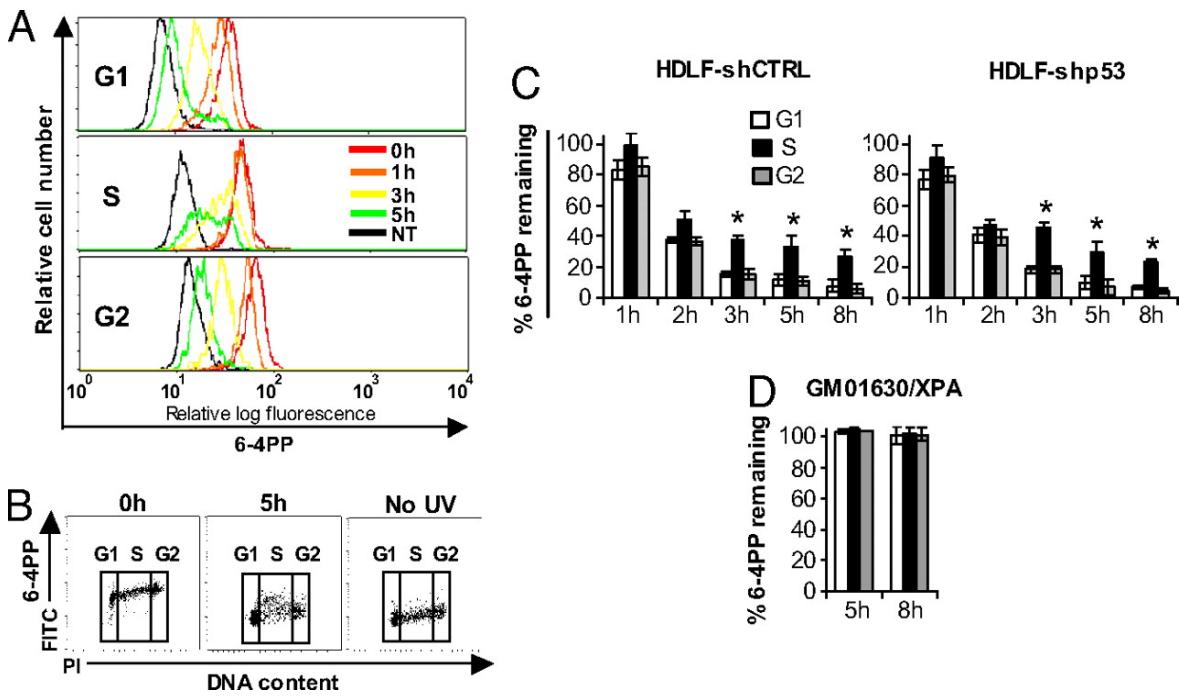


Figure 2.1 : GG-NER of 6-4PPs in individual phases of the cell cycle in HDLFs.

(A) Representative histogram overlay illustrating repair of 6-4PPs in each phase of the cell cycle in HDLF-shCTRL. (B) Bivariate distributions of 6-4PP (FITC; log scale) versus DNA content (PI; linear scale) in HDLF-shCTRL. (C) Graphical depictions of 6-4PP removal in HDLFs differing in p53 status and (D), in XPA-deficient HDSFs. Mean \pm SEM from three independent experiments is shown. *, $P \leq 0.05$; two-tailed paired t test (S phase relative to G1).

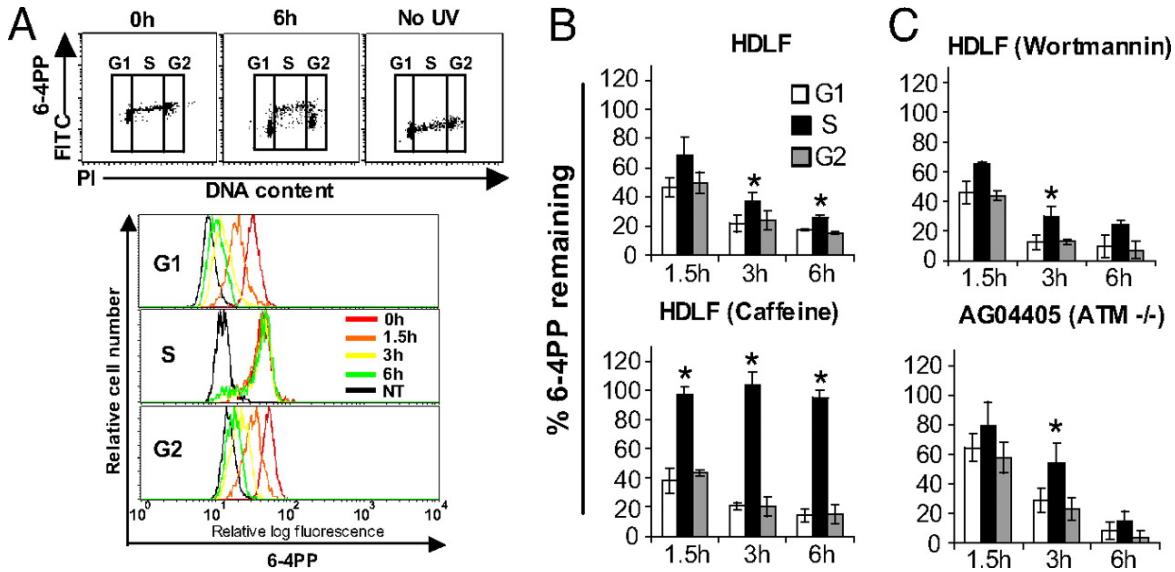
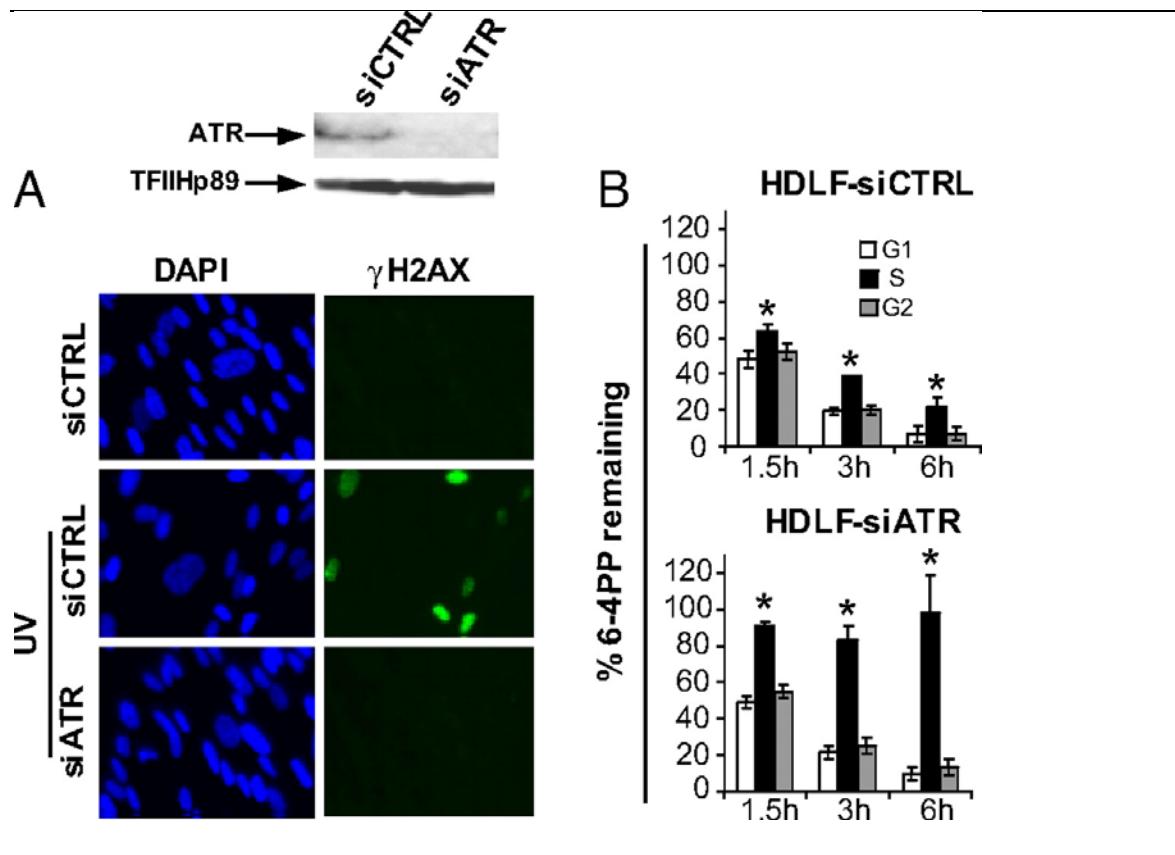
Figure 2.2

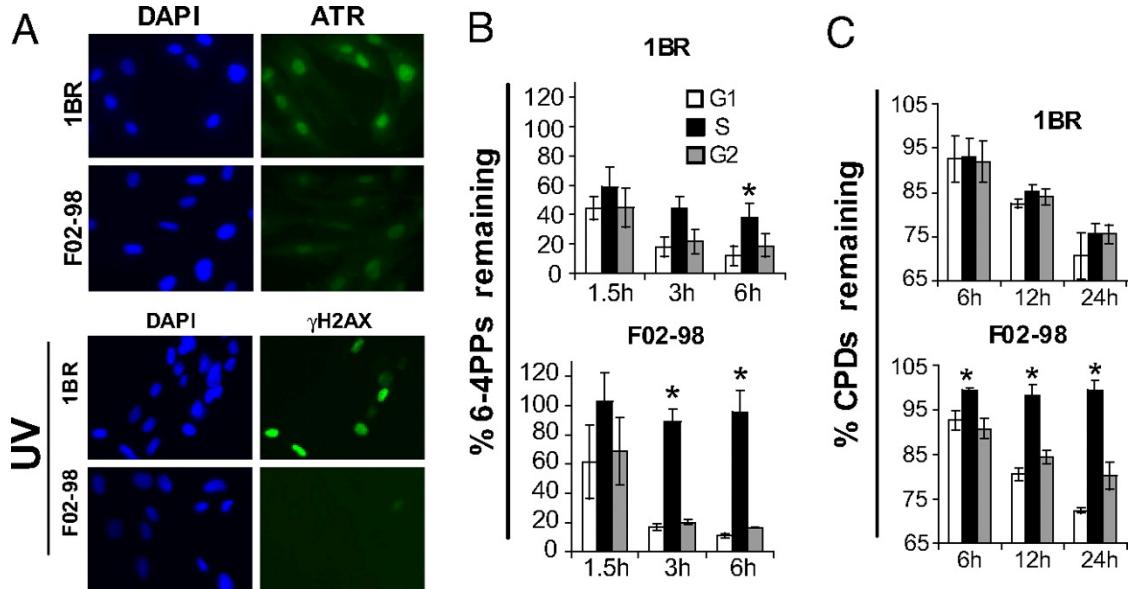
Figure 2.2.: Pharmacological abrogation of signaling through ATR but not through ATM completely abolishes GG-NER of 6-4PPs in HDLFs during S but not during G0/G1 or G2/M.

(A) Representative results depicting cell cycle-specific 6-4PP repair in HDLFs treated with 10 mmol/l of caffeine; (top panel) Bivariate distributions of 6-4PP (FITC) versus DNA content (PI); (bottom panel) representative histogram overlay illustrating repair of 6-4PP.

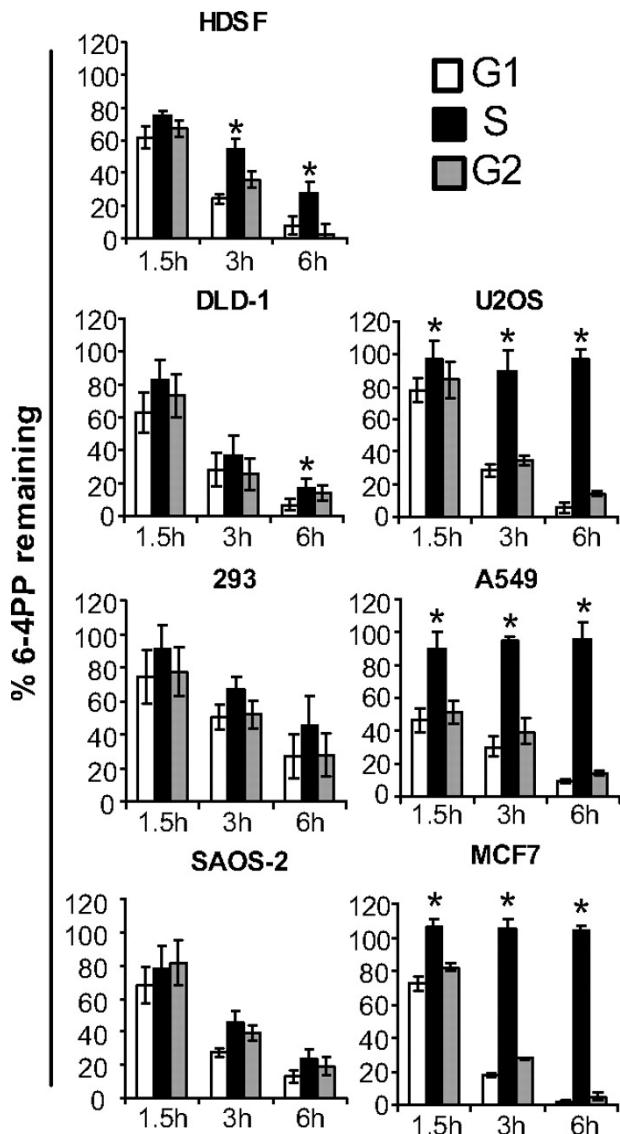
(B) Graphical depiction of 6-4PP repair in wild-type HDLFs treated or not with 10 mmol/l caffeine followed by irradiation with UV. (C) Graphical depictions of 6-4PP repair in wild-type HDLFs treated with 30 μ mol/l wortmannin, and in the ATM-deficient cell line AG04405A, following irradiation with UV. Mean \pm SEM from three independent experiments is shown. *, $P \leq 0.05$; two-tailed paired t test (S phase relative to G1).

Figure 2.3**Figure 2.3: ATR is strictly required for GG-NER of 6-4PPs exclusively during S phase of the cell cycle in HDLFs.**

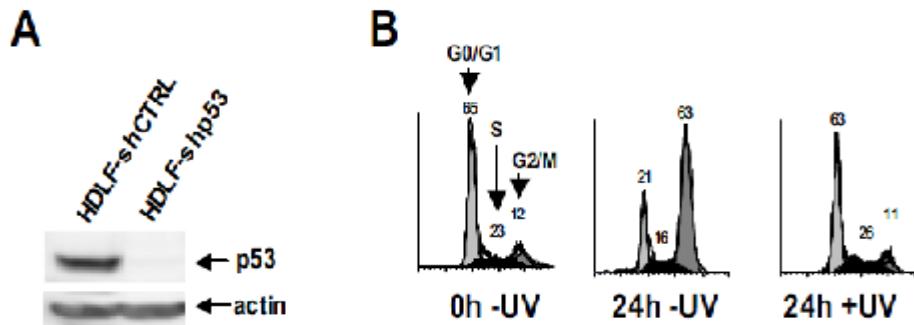
(A) Western blot showing expression of ATR (top panel), and immunostaining of γ -H2AX (bottom panel), 2 hours after irradiation with UV in HDLFs transfected with control siRNAs versus siRNAs targeting ATR. (B) Graphical depictions of 6-4PP repair in HDLFs transfected with control siRNAs or with siRNAs targeting ATR and irradiated with UV. Mean \pm SEM from three independent experiments is shown. *, $P \leq 0.05$; two-tailed paired t test (S phase relative to G1).

Figure 2.4**Figure 2.4: Removal of UV-induced DNA photoproducts is abrogated uniquely during S phase in ATR-deficient Seckel syndrome skin fibroblasts.**

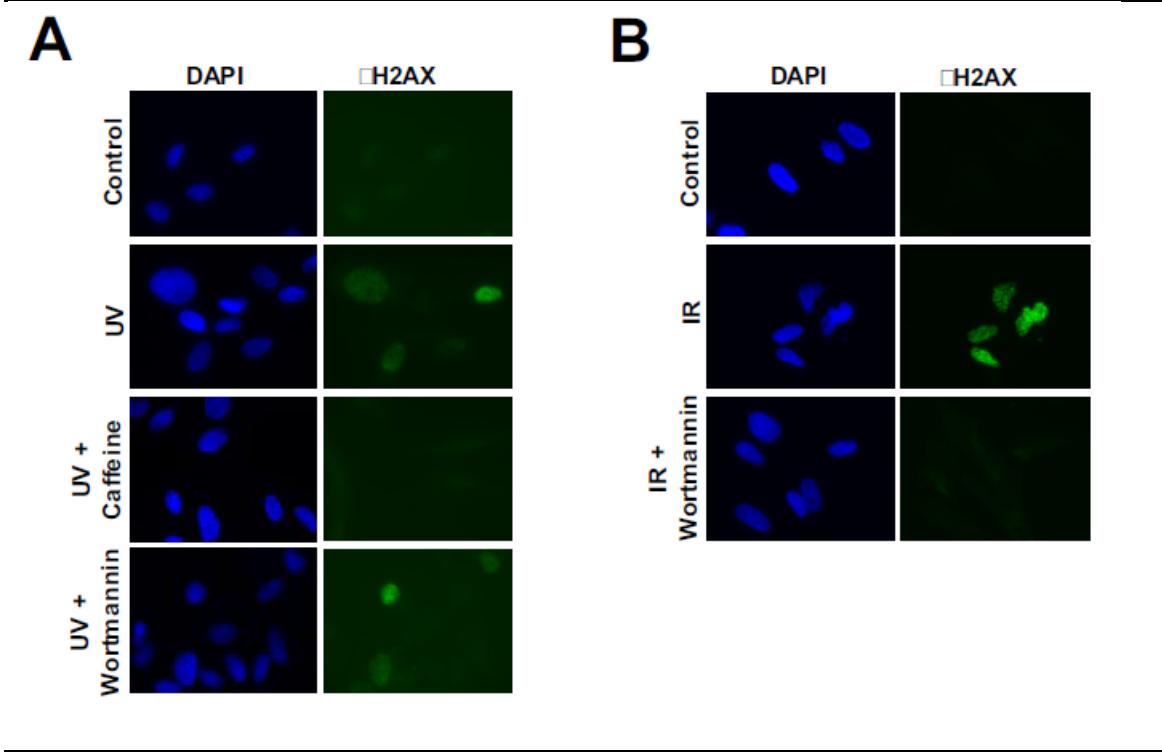
(A) Immunostaining of ATR protein (top panel) and of γH2AX (bottom panel) 2 hours post-UV in Seckel syndrome F02-98 skin fibroblasts versus the closely related normal counterpart 1BR. (B) Graphical depiction of 6-4PP repair and (C) of CPD repair, in F02-98 versus 1BR. Mean ± SEM from three independent experiments is shown. *, P □ 0.05; two-tailed paired *t* test (S phase relative to G1).

Figure 2.5**Figure 2.5: Cell cycle-specific repair of UV DNA photoproducts in human tumor cell lines.**

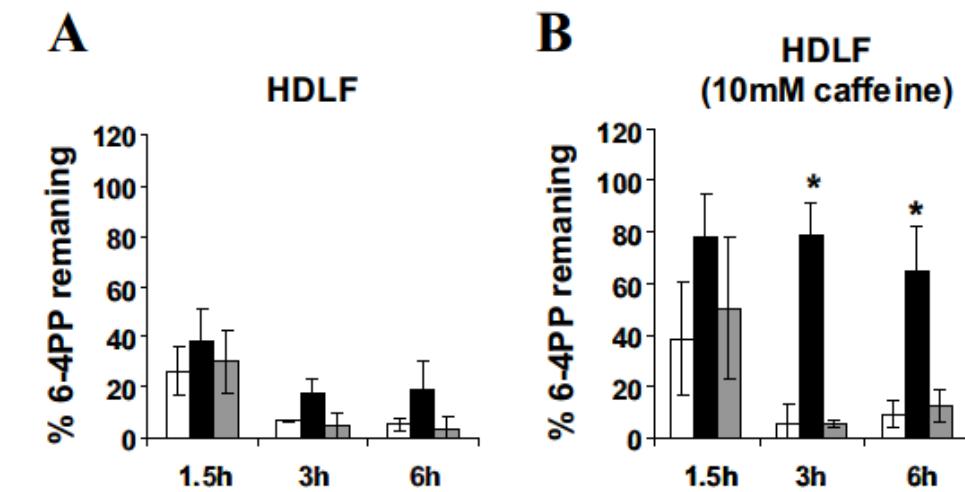
Graphical depictions of 6–4PP repair in HDSFs and in various tumor strains irradiated with 25 J/m² of UV. Mean \pm SEM of three independent experiments is shown. *, P \square 0.05; two-tailed paired t test (S relative to G1).

Figure 2.S1**Figure 2.S1.**

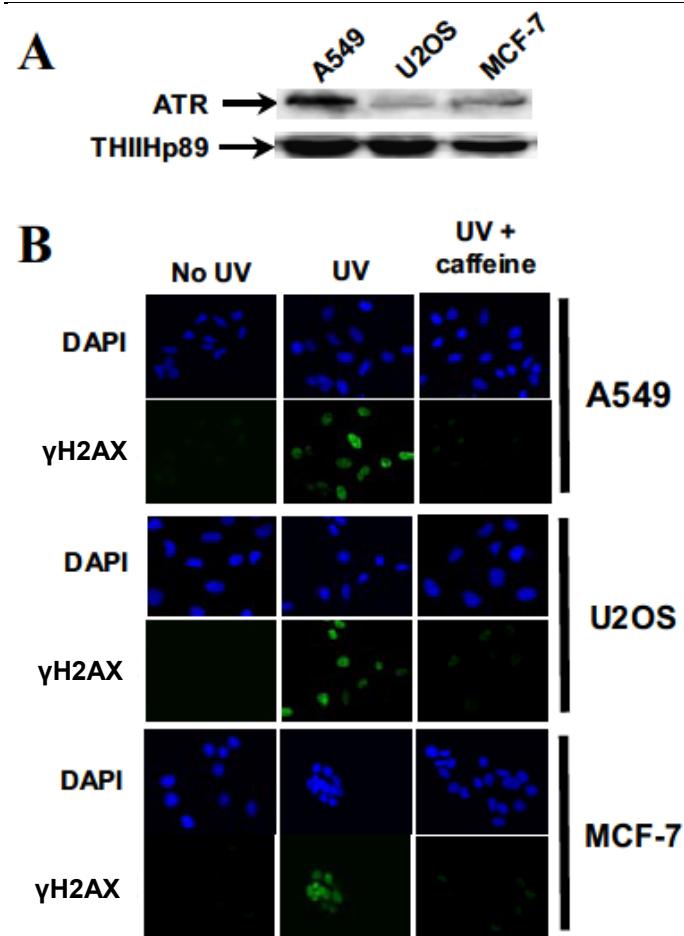
(A) Knockdown of p53 in HDLFs as shown by Western analysis of p53 protein expression at 6 hours postirradiation with 25J/m² UV. (B) (Left panel) Cell cycle profile of normally cycling HDLF-shCTRL cells stained with PI; (middle and right panels) HDLF-shCTRL were either mock irradiated or irradiated with 25 J/m² UV as indicated, and immediately re-fed with medium containing the mitotic inhibitor nocodazole (200 ng/ml) to block reentry of cells from G2/M into G0/G1. PI-stained cells were processed for cell cycle analysis and analyzed at 24 hours posttreatment. The numerals above each peak represent the percentage of the population in each phase at the time of analysis.

Figure 2.S2**Figure 2.S2.**

(A) Phosphorylation of H2AX in wild-type HDLFs exposed to 25J/m² UV. As indicated cells were mock-irradiated, irradiated with UV, or irradiated with UV in the presence of either 10 mmol/l caffeine or 30 μmol/l wortmannin. γH2AX was detected at 2 hours post-UV, as described in Materials and Methods. (B) Phosphorylation of H2AX in wild-type HDLFs exposed to 20 Gy of ionizing radiation (IR) in the presence or absence of 30 μmol/l wortmannin. Cells were treated with IR using a cesium-137 source (Gamma Cell; Atomic Energy Canada) at a dose rate of 6.3 rad/s. γH2AX was detected at 30 min post-IR as described in Materials and Methods.

Figure 2.S3**Figure 2.S3.**

Caffeine treatment abolishes GG-NER of 6–4PPs during S, but not during G0/G1 or G2/M, in HDLFs irradiated with 10J/m² UV. (A,B) Graphical depiction of 6–4PP repair in wild-type HDLFs treated or not treated with 10 mmol/l caffeine followed by irradiation with 10 J/m² UV. Mean \pm SEM from four independent experiments is shown. *, P $<$ 0.05; two-tailed paired *t* test (S phase relative to G1).

Figure 2.S4**Figure 2.S4**

(A) Expression of ATR protein in three model human tumor cell lines deficient in GG-NER during S phase, as determined by Western blotting. (B) Phosphorylation of H2AX in these model human tumor cell lines. As indicated, cells were mock irradiated, irradiated with 25 J/m² UV, or irradiated with 25 J/m² UV in the presence of 10 mmol/l caffeine. γH2AX was detected at 2 hours post-UV, as described in Materials and Methods.

CHAPITRE 3

3. ARTICLE 2

Prêt à être soumis pour publication.

“Requirement for functional DNA polymerase η in genome-wide repair of UV-induced DNA damage during S phase”

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3.1 Abstract

The disorder *Xeroderma pigmentosum-variant* (XPV) is clinically characterized by extreme sunlight sensitivity and remarkable predisposition to skin cancer. This has been entirely attributed to germline mutations in *POLH*, encoding DNA polymerase η (pol η) normally required for accurate translesion DNA synthesis (TLS) past highly-promutagenic UV-induced cyclobutane pyrimidine dimers. Nonetheless we now reveal that primary XPV fibroblasts, in addition to defective TLS, exhibit an incapacity to remove UV-induced DNA photoproducts *via* nucleotide excision repair (NER) exclusively during S phase. This repair deficiency is due specifically to loss of functional pol η , and moreover appears to require proper nuclear localization and DNA synthetic activity of this TLS polymerase. In addition we highlight a previous study from our laboratory showing that ATR-deficient Seckel syndrome fibroblasts also exhibit a profound S phase-specific NER defect. It is further revealed here, for either XPV- or Seckel syndrome-cells, that this defect is (i) completely rescued if DNA synthesis is abrogated prior to UV treatment, and (ii) not observed following exposure to relatively non-cytotoxic UV doses. Our findings implicate defective DNA repair as a novel determinant in XPV disease progression. Furthermore the overall data on pol η - and ATR-deficient cells suggest that NER may be “switched off” in cells undergoing severe replication stress.

3.2 Introduction

Within the repertoire of human DNA repair pathways, nucleotide excision repair (NER) alone retains the capacity to remove “bulky DNA adducts” induced by a multitude of environmental mutagens and certain chemotherapeutic drugs. These adducts exhibit great structural diversity, but share in common the capacity to distort the DNA helix and to strongly block both DNA replication and transcription. UV-induced cyclobutane pyrimidine dimers (CPDs) and 6-4 pyrimidine-pyrimidone photoproducts (6-4PPs) have been extensively employed as model bulky DNA adducts to probe the function and regulation of NER (10). This repair pathway faithfully restores the integrity of UV-damaged DNA through sequential steps of lesion recognition, unwinding of the duplex around the damaged site, endonucleolytic incision within a number of bases on either side of the lesion, excision of the damaged DNA segment creating a ~30bp single-stranded gap, and finally filling in and sealing of this gap (DNA repair synthesis) using the undamaged complementary strand as template in conjunction with various DNA polymerases/ligases, and. Two distinct NER subpathways have been characterized which differ only in the manner of lesion recognition: global genomic NER (GG-NER) and transcription-coupled NER, operating at damaged sites anywhere within the genome and exclusively along the transcribed strand of active genes, respectively (14, 16).

Individuals afflicted with “classical” *Xeroderma pigmentosum* (XP) harbour germline mutations in any among seven NER pathway genes, and as a result exhibit defective removal of solar UV-induced DNA photoproducts (8) leading to extreme photosensitivity and remarkably high rates of skin cancer (24). Patients designated *Xeroderma*

pigmentosum-variant (XPV) are clinically indistinguishable from classical XP counterparts; however it was clearly demonstrated early on that cells derived from the former carry out normal levels of DNA repair synthesis post-UV (9, 23, 46). With only two exceptions to our knowledge (19, 35), this was supported by subsequent reports (eg. (18, 37, 53)), and indeed to the present day XPV cells are thought to be completely NER proficient. The XPV response is also characterized, relative to normal cells, by (i) moderately increased levels of UV-induced cytotoxicity but dramatically enhanced mutagenicity (31), and (ii) a highly-significant delay in the time required to resume DNA synthesis post-UV (28). Consistent with the above it was eventually revealed that XPV patients actually harbour mutations in *POLH*, encoding DNA polymerase η (pol η) (32). Pol η belongs to the group of specialized Y-family TLS polymerases, also including pol ι , pol κ , and REV1, which collectively are able to replicate past a variety of helix-distorting DNA lesions that otherwise block the progression of normal replicative polymerases (33). Following UV treatment pol η normally becomes activated specifically to bypass highly-promutagenic CPDs, which is fortunate given its status as the only Y-family member capable of accomplishing this task with high fidelity (55, 56).

The primary aim of the current study was to re-evaluate the widely-held belief regarding NER proficiency in XPV cells using a flow-cytometry-based, cell-cycle-specific DNA repair assay recently developed and validated in our laboratory (4). We report here for the first time that patient-derived primary XPV skin fibroblasts irradiated with UV exhibit profound deficiency in GG-NER during S phase, whereas repair during either G0/G1 or G2/M remains unaffected. (GG-NER occurring in S phase is hereafter denoted S phase

repair; SPR.) This defective repair phenotype is (i) specifically attributable to loss of functional pol η , and (ii) strongly reminiscent of the situation for Seckel syndrome fibroblasts which we previously showed exhibit a similar SPR defect due to impaired ATR kinase signaling (4). We now also provide evidence that normal SPR can be restored in both XPV- and Seckel syndrome-cells by preventing, or substantially reducing, the formation of blocked replication forks at UV-adducted sites in DNA. Our overall data (i) provide novel insight into the molecular underpinnings of XPV-associated UV hypermutability leading to skin cancer development, and (ii) indicate that GG-NER may be abrogated in general in cells undergoing severe replication stress, possibly as a prosurvival mechanism.

3.3 Materials and Methods

Cell culture

Wild-type primary skin fibroblasts (GM01652B) and three patient-derived XPV primary skin fibroblast strains (XP115LO, XP30RO, and XP5MA) were obtained from the Coriell Institute. The SV40-transformed XPV skin fibroblast strain XP30ROsv, and its isogenic counterpart ectopically expressing wild-type pol η (XP30ROsv/cl6), were kindly provided by Dr. A.R. Lehmann (University of Sussex). Primary LL lung fibroblasts were a gift of Dr. J. Sedivy (Brown University). The hTERT-immortalized Seckel syndrome skin fibroblast strain F02-98 and the closely-related wild-type counterpart 1BR were obtained from Dr. P. Jeggo (University of Sussex). All primary strains were cultured in Eagle's MEM supplemented with 15% foetal bovine serum, L-glutamine, and antibiotics (Wisent,

Montreal, Canada). SV40-transformed and hTERT-immortalized cells were grown in Dulbecco's MEM supplemented as above.

Construction and ectopic expression of EGFP-tagged pol η variants

Trizol™-extracted total RNA from primary GM01652B skin fibroblasts was employed to synthesize a cDNA encoding full-length wild-type (wt) pol η by RT-PCR using primer pairs XPV1 (ATGGCTACTGGACAGGATCGAGT) and XPV2 (GGCAGCACTAATGTGTTAATG GCTT). The wt cDNA was subcloned into the pGemT-Easy vector (Promega), which in turn was used as substrate to amplify the pol η -wt and - Δ Ct cDNAs via PCR with *pfu*-DNA polymerase (Stratagene). These latter cDNAs were then subjected to PCR using primer pairs containing *Xho*I and *Eco*RI restriction sites (Table 1), and cloned in phase, with EGFP at the C-terminal end of pol η , into the expression vector pEGFP-N1 (Clonetech). The EGFP-tagged pol η mutant PIP1/2mut was obtained by site-directed mutagenesis as described (47) using pol η -wt-pEGFP-N1 in conjunction with appropriate mutagenic primer pairs (Table 1). The DNA sequences of all EGFP-pol η fusion vectors were verified by automated-dideoxy sequencing (Core Sequencing Facility, University of Montreal).

XP30ROsv cell populations stably expressing each of the EGFP-pol η fusion vectors were derived by transfection in the presence of 18 μ L Lipofectamine2000™ (Invitrogen) followed by selection using 200 μ g/ml of G418 (Wisent, Montreal, Canada). Enrichment for EGFP-expressing cells was then performed by fluorescence-activated cell sorting (FACSVantage SE DiVa option equipped with a 70 μ m nozzle at 25PSI; Becton-Dickinson). Briefly cells were sorted based on EGFP autofluorescence level, cultured for

seven days, re-sorted, and then cultured again for an additional week. Prior to experimentation (i) EGFP autofluorescence was verified by flow cytometry and (ii) expression of each EGFP-pol η fusion protein evaluated by immunoprecipitation and Western blotting using the primary polyclonal- and monoclonal- anti-POLH antibodies H-300 and B7, respectively (Santa-Cruz).

UV Irradiation

Cell monolayers were washed thoroughly with phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) and covered with 2 ml of PBS, followed by exposure to UV using a Philips G25T8 germicidal lamp. The UV fluence was 0.2 J/m²/s as measured with a DRC100X digital radiometer equipped with DIX254 sensor (Spectroline Corporation).

Protein detection by Western blotting

Pol η was detected by immunoprecipitation and Western blotting as described (25, 52). The supernatant was stored at -80°C and used in conjunction with anti-actin antibody to verify that equal total protein had been employed for the immunoprecipitation (loading 5% of total input).

To evaluate siRNA knockdown of pol η in primary LL lung fibroblasts, chromatin-bound protein was detected using a protocol that initially removes soluble polypeptides by extraction in cytoskeleton buffer (CSK; 10 mM Pipes (pH 6.8), 300 mM sucrose, 100 mM NaCl, 3 mM MgCl₂, 1 mM EGTA, 20 mM vanadyl riboside complex, 1 mM 4-(2-minoethyl)benzenesulfonyl fluoride). Specifically, 1x10⁶ cells were lysed with 0.5% Triton

X-100/CSK for 15 minutes on ice and centrifuged. The pellets were incubated with 0.5% Triton X-100/CSK buffer for an additional 15 minutes, centrifuged, and resuspended in 30 μ L 1X Laemmli buffer for Western blotting. Pol η was detected using anti-POLH polyclonal antibody (H-300; Santa-Cruz, 1:1000 dilution). As loading control, the membrane was stripped and re-hybridized with anti-PCNA antibody (PC-10, Santa Cruz).

Localization of pol η -EGFP fusion proteins upon ectopic expression in XP30ROsv cells

Cells were grown for 24h on glass coverslips in 35-mm culture dishes, fixed with 3.7% paraformaldehyde for 20 min at room temperature, followed by thorough washing with PBS. Cells were mounted with ProLongTMGold antifade reagent containing DAPI counterstain (Molecular Probes-Invitrogen). Stained-cells were then photographed and analyzed using an inverted fluorescence Zeiss Axio Observer A1 microscope equipped with QICAM FAST 1394 camera (QImaging, Canada) and Northern Eclipse software (Empix Imaging Canada).

Live cell imaging of pol η nuclear foci

XP30ROsv cells (6×10^4) expressing either EGFP-pol η -wt or EGFP- pol η -PIP1/2 were seeded onto 35-mm glass-bottom dishes and cultured for 24 hours in Opti-MEM (Invitrogen) supplemented with 10% FBS and antibiotics. Live cells were irradiated or mock-irradiated with 15 J/m² of UV and analyzed using a fluorescence microscope (IX71 Olympus, Japan) with a 100x 1.45NA oil immersion objective. The images were acquired with a Retiga 2000R CCD (QImaging, Canada). The microscope was equipped with a

MAX201 motorized stage (Thorlabs, NJ), and both the stage and camera were controlled by a custom program written in Labview (National Instrument, TX) to acquire 100 (10x10) contiguous images covering a 1.18mm by 0.88mm region with submicron resolution. The same region was imaged before, and 1.5 hr after, UV irradiation. Nuclear foci were detected and quantified using an automatic custom image analysis program written in MatLab (Mathworks, MA). To perform this quantification, an intensity threshold was first established using the method of Otsu (41). Foreground pixels were used as masks to specifically select nuclei. A 2-dimensional filter using Gaussian kernel was applied to detect only elements of a certain size (about 0.5 μ m) and foci were identified as local maxima. At least 50 cell pairs were analyzed in the case of each EGFP-pol η XP30ROsv strain.

Immunofluorescence detection of γ -H2AX

Immunofluorescence detection of γ -H2AX in UV-irradiated cells was performed exactly as described previously (4).

siRNA-mediated depletion of pol η

Cells (2×10^5) were seeded on 35 mm dishes in complete growth medium without antibiotics. After 24 hr, each culture was transfected with siRNAs targeting human pol η (sc-36289), or nontargeting control siRNAs (sc-37007) (Santa Cruz), employing Lipofectamine 2000 according to the manufacturer's directions (Invitrogen), and used for experiments at 2 days post-transfection after verifying pol η knockdown by Western blotting.

Treatment with DNA synthesis inhibitors

Cells were cultured for 2h in fresh complete medium containing either 15 ug/ml aphidicolin (Sigma) or 10mM hydroxyurea (Sigma). The medium was removed, and cells were thoroughly washed with PBS followed by UV-irradiation. Fresh complete medium without inhibitor was added for post-UV incubations.

Clonogenic survival

Exponentially-growing cultures on 100-mm dishes were irradiated with 0, 7.5, or 15 J/m² of UV, and immediately trypsinized for plating of appropriate cell numbers on 100-mm dishes in fresh complete medium. Following 15 days incubation, colonies were stained with 0.5% methylene blue (w/v) in 50% methanol (v/v). Survival is expressed as a percentage relative to mock-irradiated cells.

Determination of GG-NER kinetics as a function of cell cycle

The removal of 6-4PPs in each phase of the cell cycle was monitored over a 6 hr period as previously described (4) with the following exception. In the case of XP30ROsv cells stably expressing EGFP-pol η fusion proteins, since EGFP autofluorescence interferes with the FITC signal, Alexa-Fluor700-conjugated goat anti-mouse antibody (Molecular Probes, Invitrogen, 1/400) was used as secondary antibody in place of FITC-conjugated rabbit anti-mouse antibody. The acquisition was done using an LSRII flow-cytometer (Becton-Dickinson) equipped with argon (blue, 488 nm)- and helium-neon (red, 633 nm)- lasers.

For cell cycle-specific evaluation of CPD repair kinetics up to 24 hr, to control for cellular proliferation during post-UV incubations, a triple-labeling approach employing BrdU in conjunction with PI and anti-CPD antibody was optimized. Monolayers at 50% confluence were irradiated with either 5 or 15 J/m² of UV. For time zero (0 h) cells were pulsed for 30 min with 30 uM of BrdU, irradiated, and then immediately harvested. For later time points, to avoid potential artefacts associated with BrdU photolysis, cells were pulsed for 30 min immediately following irradiation, rinsed with PBS, and re-fed with fresh medium for the remaining incubation period. At the appropriate time point, monolayers were washed with PBS, trypsinized, resuspended in 1 ml of PBS, and fixed by addition of 3 ml of ice-cold 100% ethanol. Fixed cells (5×10^5) were pelleted, washed with PBS, and incubated for 20 min at 22°C with 0.5% triton-X-100 in 2N HCl followed by centrifugation and resuspension in 0.1 M Na₂B₄O₇ pH 9 for 20 min. Cells were washed with PBS, resuspended in 300 ul of RNase solution (100 ug/ml in PBS), incubated for 1 hr, and washed with 1 ml of PBS-TB (1% BSA/0.25% Tween-20/PBS). Cells were then centrifuged and resuspended in 300 ul of PBS-TB containing anti-CPD antibody (Kamiya Biomedical Company; 1:1000 dilution), incubated for 1.5h at 22°C, washed twice with PBS-TB, and then incubated with FITC-conjugated rabbit anti-mouse secondary antibody (Sigma; 1:200) in 300ul PBS-TB at 22°C for 1h in the dark. Cells were rinsed once with PBS-TB and incubated for 15min with IgG isotype control (1:100; Invitrogen). After washing with PBS-TB, cells were incubated with an Alexa-Fluor647-conjugated anti-BrdU antibody (Molecular Probes-Invitrogen; 1:200) in PBS-TB for 1h, rinsed with PBS-TB, resuspended in PBS containing 5 ug/ml of PI, and finally analysed using a FACSCaliber flow cytometer equipped with an argon laser (blue; 488 nm) (Becton-Dickinson, USA).

Fluorescence intensity of UV photoproducts was obtained by gating the appropriate phase of the cell cycle on a bivariate dot plot. Quantification of the change in geometric mean fluorescence of the population over time indicates repair.

3.4 Results

DNA repair status of XPV skin fibroblasts revisited

In order to re-evaluate the DNA repair status of XPV cells, we used a flow cytometry-based immunoassay, recently developed and validated in our laboratory, which permits quantification of GG-NER kinetics as a function of cell cycle (4). The efficiency of 6-4PPs removal was initially determined in four primary skin fibroblast strains: wild-type GM01652B vs. the XPV strains XP115LO, XP5MA, and XP30RO. The latter strains are reported to carry severe poln truncations and no detectable full length protein, which was substantiated by Western blotting (Fig. 3.1A). Moreover, in line with previous observations (3), XPV fibroblasts displayed moderately decreased clonogenic survival post-UV relative to wild-type counterparts (Fig. 3.1B).

For determination of 6-4PPs repair rates, briefly, replicate cultures were irradiated with 15 J/m² of UV and incubated for 0, 1.5, 3, or 6 hr. Following harvesting, fixation, and permeabilization, cells were fluorescently labeled with anti-6-4PP antibody and co-stained with propidium iodide (PI). Flow cytometry was then used to analyze the extent of 6-4PP removal for populations gated in each phase, as graphically depicted for all primary skin fibroblast strains (Fig. 3.1C). A representative bivariate dot plot (Fig. 3.1D; upper panel)

and histogram overlay (Fig. 3.1D; lower panel) show the raw data specifically for XP115LO. It is well established that 6-4PP repair in human fibroblasts is virtually complete (80-100% removal) by 6-8 h post-UV (36). In line with this (and as previously observed (4)), wild-type GM01652B fibroblasts exhibit >90% repair of 6-4PP in either G0/G1 or G2/M at 6 h following UV treatment, and a very moderate but significant slowdown during S (80% removal) (Fig.3.1C). Unexpectedly, however, each of XP115LO, XP5MA, and XP30RO is shown to be completely defective in 6-4PP removal during S, while displaying characteristically rapid repair kinetics during other phases.

The initial induction level of CPDs post-UV is 3-5 times higher than 6-4PPs; moreover the former adduct is excised with much slower kinetics, i.e., only 30-40% CPD removal by 24 hr post-UV, compared with the relatively very rapid 6-4PP repair rate as mentioned immediately above. For these and other reasons, CPDs are considered the preeminent cause of sunlight-induced mutation and cancer (34); thus any defect in CPD repair would ostensibly represent a critical factor in XPV pathogenesis. Moreover efficient removal of either CPDs or 6-4PPs may vary according to genetic background, eg., reduced GG-NER of CPDs but not of 6-4PPs in cells lacking a functional p53 tumour suppressor (2), or in XPE fibroblasts characterized by deficiency in the GG-NER lesion recognition protein DDB2 (51). The above considerations highlighted the importance of confirming whether SPR of CPDs, in addition to 6-4PPs, is defective in XPV cells.

However the precise quantification of CPDs as a function of cell cycle, relative to the situation for 6-4PPs, posed a technical challenge. Indeed the precision of our cell cycle-

specific GG-NER assay depends upon the ability to tightly control for movement of cells between various growth phases during post-UV incubations. It is well established that UV-exposed cultured cells exhibit a transient period of general growth arrest and inhibition of DNA synthesis, the length of which depends upon dose as well as cellular capacity to process replication-blocking UV DNA photoproducts (27, 42). Consistent with this we have observed that all strains used herein exhibit complete arrest of cell cycle progression for at least 6 hr post irradiation with 15 J/m² of UV but, to varying extents, resume proliferating thereafter. In the case of studies on 6-4PP removal this timeline can be favourably exploited. Indeed as mentioned above, repair of this photoproduct is normally complete by 6-8 hr post UV and can therefore be conveniently evaluated in each of G0/G1, S, and G2/M by simple gating of PI-stained populations. However in order to monitor GG-NER of CPDs as a function of cell cycle over a 24 hr period, it is necessary to carefully control for cellular proliferation during post-UV incubations. We therefore adapted our flow cytometry-based assay by including a third label, i.e. BrdU in addition to PI and anti-CPD antibody, thereby allowing positive tracking of cells that are in S phase at the time of irradiation. Figure 3.2A displays a representative dot plot of BrdU staining as function of DNA content at 0 h and 24 h for wild-type GM01652B fibroblasts vs. the XPV strain XP30RO. The vertical dashed red line separating early- from late-S phase highlights the degree of cell cycling within this phase over a 24 hr period. Repair analysis of the appropriate populations (i.e., gated as shown in Fig. 3.2A) shows that CPD removal is abolished uniquely during S phase in either poln-deficient XP30RO, or as previously shown in ATR-deficient F02-98 (4), whereas normal repair during all phases is observed in wild-type GM01652B (Fig. 3.2B). The above data conclusively demonstrate that cultured

primary XPV skin fibroblasts are profoundly defective in genome-wide removal of both 6-4PPs and CPDs exclusively during S phase, and that this defect persists for as long as 24 hr post-UV.

Defective SPR is attributable to loss of functional pol η

In order to directly test the possibility that loss of functional pol η specifically underlies the observed SPR defect in XPV cells, we determined the cell cycle-specific kinetics of 6-4PP removal in SV40-transformed XP30R0sv cells vs. the same strain wherein wild-type pol η had been ectopically re-expressed (XP30R0sv/cl6) (22, 49) (Fig. 3.3A). As expected based on the above results in primary XPV cells, pol η -deficient XP30R0sv exhibits a marked deficiency in 6-4PP repair uniquely during S phase. Remarkably, however, this defect is significantly rescued in XP30R0sv/cl6 (Fig. 3.3B, C). Furthermore primary LL lung fibroblasts were transfected with siRNA targeting pol η , resulting in strong knockdown of the protein (Fig. 3.3D). In accord with the results for XP30ROsv vs. XP30R0sv/cl6, pol η -depleted LL cells manifest dramatic loss of SPR and normal repair during G0/G1 or G2/M, whereas DNA photoproduct removal is unaffected during all phases in counterparts expressing control scrambled siRNAs (Fig 3.3E).

Proper nuclear relocalization, and PCNA-binding-capacity, of pol η appear necessary for efficient SPR in UV-exposed human fibroblasts

Towards elucidating the functional basis of the requirement for pol η in SPR, two previously-characterized EGFP-tagged pol η domain variants were constructed: (i) EGFP-pol η -ΔCt (initially designated pol η -642n;(22)), carrying a 70 amino acid C-terminal

truncation which eliminates the canonical nuclear localization signal NLS2 at position 682-698, and (ii) EGFP-pol η -PIP1/2, mutated in the two PCNA-interacting (PIP1 and PIP2) domains of pol η , normally required for accumulation at DNA replication foci, and DNA synthetic activity, of the protein (1). Each of the above mutants, in addition to wild-type pol η (EGFP-pol η -wt), were stably expressed in XP30ROsv cells (Fig 3.4A). In line with previously published data (22), EGFP-pol η - Δ Ct exhibits both nuclear and cytoplasmic localization, as contrasted with the primarily nuclear localization of EGFP-pol η -wt (Fig. 3.4B). In addition EGFP-pol η -PIP1/2, although proficient in nuclear relocalization (Fig. 3.4B) as previously observed (1), is clearly defective relative to EGFP-pol η -wt in either spontaneous- or UV-induced- pol η nuclear focus formation (Fig. 3.4C). Further analysis revealed that EGFP-pol η -wt, when ectopically expressed in XP30ROsv, restores SPR of 6-4PPs to a normal level (Fig. 3.4D, compare with Fig. 3.3C). In contrast, expression of either EGFP-pol η - Δ Ct or EGFP-pol η -PIP1/2 in XP30ROsv cells failed to accomplish any improvement in repair capacity. These data indicate that proper nuclear localization, and DNA synthetic activity, of pol η are required to ensure the efficient removal of UV-induced DNA damage in replicating cells.

Abrogation of semiconservative DNA synthesis prior to UV exposure rescues defective SPR in either XPV- or Seckel syndrome-fibroblasts

ATR and pol η are well known to play central roles in maintaining genomic stability in replicating cells (see Discussion), and our overall data show that both proteins are strictly required for repair of UV-induced DNA damage during S phase. As such it was tempting to speculate upon the existence of a link between DNA replication and GG-NER of

replication-blocking DNA adducts. To approach this, we evaluated 6-4PP removal as a function of cell cycle in XP30ROsv vs. XP30ROsv/cl6 each of which had been treated or not prior to UV irradiation with either (i) 15 ug/ml of aphidicolin, a powerful inhibitor of replicative DNA polymerases (44), or (ii) 10 mM hydroxyurea (HU), which precludes semiconservative DNA synthesis *via* ribonucleotide reductase inhibition and subsequent depletion of dNTP pools (54). DNA replication was profoundly reduced following treatment with either inhibitor as determined by BrdU incorporation (Fig. 3.5A). In accord with results in Figure 3.3B, XP30ROsv exhibits complete abrogation of 6-4PP removal uniquely during S phase as determined at 6 hr post-UV; however, remarkably, under conditions where DNA synthesis is inhibited by either aphidicolin or HU treatment, normal SPR capacity is completely restored (Fig.3.5B). As expected, XP30ROsv/cl6 cells manifest a much more moderate SPR defect relative to XP30ROsv (compare with Fig.3.2B) which, interestingly, also appeared to be rescued by pretreatment with aphidicolin. We next evaluated the effects of DNA synthesis inhibition on SPR of 6-4PP in ATR-deficient F02-98 Seckel syndrome fibroblasts, compared with the closely-related wild-type strain 1BR. Incubation with aphidicolin prior to UV irradiation markedly reduced DNA synthesis in both strains (Fig.3.5C). As fully anticipated based on our previous findings (4), F02-98 displayed profound deficiency in SPR as determined at 6 hr post-UV; moreover, mirroring the results for XP30RO, aphidicolin treatment completely resolved this defect (Fig.3.5D). The above data indicate that, under conditions where the formation of blocked replication forks at UV-damaged sites in DNA is prevented, defective SPR in both XPV- and Seckel syndrome-cells can be fully rescued.

Of note, as observed at 4 hr post-UV, pretreatment of XP30ROsv fibroblasts with aphidicolin also greatly reduces levels of phosphorylated histone H2AX (γ H2AX) (Fig.3.5E), a well-established marker for DNA double strand break (DSB) induction (5, 12, 50). This result supports previous studies (see Discussion) indicating that XPV cells may be plagued by a high frequency of DSBs, forming specifically at stalled replication forks, within a number of hours following exposure to 254-nm UV (which, unlike ionizing radiation, does not induce a biologically-significant yield of DSBs).

Defective SPR is not observed in XPV or Seckel syndrome fibroblasts irradiated with a relatively non-cytotoxic UV dose

It should be emphasized that in general CPD repair rates can vary significantly with dose, although the underlying reasons are not entirely clear (15). In light of this, the above triple-labeling approach was used to investigate the extent to which defective SPR, as observed in XPV- and Seckel syndrome-cells irradiated with 15 J/m^2 of UV, might occur at a relatively non-cytotoxic dose, i.e., 5 J/m^2 (see Fig.3.1B). A representative dot plot of BrdU staining as function of DNA content at 0 h and 24 h for wild-type GM01652B fibroblasts vs. the XPV strain XP30RO irradiated with 5 J/m^2 of UV is shown (Fig.3.6A). It is apparent that GM01652B resumes proliferating very rapidly at this lower dose such that it is not possible under our assay conditions to accurately measure CPD repair at any point after 12 h post UV, or even to differentiate between G0/G1 and G2/M cells. Indeed the gated populations in Figure 3.6A, designated “G1/G2”, actually represent a mixture of cells which were in either G0/G1 or G2/M at the time of irradiation. On the other hand in the case of both XPV- and Seckel syndrome-fibroblasts recovery of DNA synthesis post-

UV is expectably considerably slower, rendering it possible to evaluate repair kinetics up to 24hr during S vs. “G1/G2”. As depicted in Figure 3.6B, in contrast with the situation shown in Figure 3.2 for cells irradiated 15 J/m^2 of UV, both XP30RO and F02-98 exhibit normal rates of CPD repair during all cell cycle phases in response to 5 J/m^2 . This indicates the existence of a dose threshold for SPR inhibition in the case of either pol η - or ATR-deficient cells. Furthermore it is possible that this threshold may be determined by levels of replication stress since, based on our clonogenic survival data, such levels are expected to be considerably lower in cells irradiated with 5 J/m^2 vs. 15 J/m^2 of UV.

3.5 Discussion

We demonstrate here for the first time that patient-derived XPV skin fibroblasts are characterized by profoundly defective GG-NER of both 6-4PPs and CPDs uniquely during S phase of the cell cycle, and moreover that this defect stems from loss of functional pol η . These findings harbour potentially critical implications for our perception of XPV pathogenesis. The extreme UV-hypermutability leading to skin cancer development characterizing this disease has historically been attributed to defective TLS across CPDs. Recently this notion received strong experimental support through the demonstration that UV-exposed XPV cells, in the absence of functional pol η , are able to invoke the TLS activities of both pol κ and pol ι in cooperation with the B-family DNA polymerase ζ (56). Specifically it was shown that these “backup” DNA polymerases can efficiently bypass CPDs thereby promoting cell survival; however in doing so each polymerase, being orders of magnitude more error-prone than pol η when replicating UV-damaged templates,

generates excessive errors of nucleotide incorporation. Our findings substantially extend this paradigm by indicating that the dramatic UV hypermutability in XPV cells might reflect two profound and highly-synergistic defects, i.e. pol κ /t-mediated highly-error-prone TLS past, coupled with defective SPR of, highly-promutagenic CPDs. In addition, it remains a definite possibility that the characteristic DNA synthesis defect in XPV cells may be at least partially due to incapacity in removing replication-blocking CPDs and 6-4PPs during S phase, with an additional contribution of deficient pol η -mediated TLS past CPDs.

It should be noted that two previous studies (cited in the Introduction) used a sensitive radioimmunassay to probe the possibility that GG-NER of 6-4PPs might be influenced as a function of cell cycle in XPV strains. Firstly EBV-transformed XPV B-lymphocytes (strain XPPHBE), synchronized by centrifugal elutriation and then treated with 12 J/m² of UV, displayed no differences in repair efficiency during S phase relative to G0/G1 or G2/M (35). The divergence here with our results may partially reflect the purity of the S-phase populations analyzed, i.e. 60% in the aforementioned study compared with 100% in our case. In addition XPPHBE is heterozygous for *POLH* (21), and thus may express some wild-type pol η which could significantly enhance SPR. A second investigation on XPV skin fibroblasts irradiated with 6 J/m² of UV also failed to observe any cell cycle-specific differences in GG-NER efficiency (53). This discrepancy may be readily reconciled by our finding that defective SPR in XPV cells is observed at 15 J/m² of UV, but not at lower doses in the range of 5 J/m².

It is becoming increasingly apparent that Y-family polymerases, including pol η , can mediate various cellular processes other than TLS (26, 45). Of particular interest here it was unexpectedly shown that polk-null murine embryonic fibroblasts are defective in the DNA repair synthesis step of NER (although this does not occur in an S phase specific manner) (40). While such a role for pol η cannot be categorically ruled out, we are nonetheless confident that loss of SPR capacity in XPV fibroblasts is attributable to a defect in some step of NER which precedes gapfilling (i.e. in lesion-recognition or -incision/excision). Indeed our flow cytometry-based repair assay specifically measures the complete removal of UV DNA photoproducts, and does not competently reveal defects in DNA repair synthesis *per se*, i.e., assuming that this step is carried out largely or entirely post-excision as has been proposed (38, 39, 48).

How then might loss of functional pol η engender virtually complete loss of SPR, while exerting no effect on repair during G0/G1 or G2/M? We recently reported that ATR-deficient Seckel syndrome fibroblasts, like XPV fibroblasts, exhibit a profound S phase-specific GG-NER defect (4). Following UV exposure, ATR rapidly phosphorylates a multitude of substrates that stabilize stalled replication forks and facilitate DNA synthesis restart (7). As such deficiency in ATR signaling leads to abnormal persistence and eventual collapse of blocked replication forks, i.e. to increased formation of highly-genotoxic DSBs at sites of UV-damage (11). Moreover enhanced H2AX phosphorylation has been noted in XPV vs. normal cells post-UV, suggesting that the former also suffer a relative increase in DSB formation at collapsed replication forks (29, 30). Our finding here that aphidicolin pretreatment of XPV fibroblasts greatly reduces γ H2AX levels post-UV

strongly supports this notion. Finally our results in either XPV- or Seckel syndrome cells treated with DNA synthesis inhibitors or low dose UV indicate that defective SPR can be rescued by precluding, or substantially reducing below some threshold, the formation of blocked replication forks at UV-adducted sites in DNA.

Considering the above commonalities between Seckel syndrome- and XPV-cells we postulate that, in general, GG-NER may be “switched off” during S phase as a major survival response in cells undergoing excessive replication stress. Such a mechanism would not presuppose any direct enzymatic role in repair for either ATR or pol η . For example higher levels of replication stress, due to eg. aberrant ATR signaling or loss of functional pol η , are known to engender corresponding increases in large tracts of single-strand DNA due to functional uncoupling of DNA synthetic enzymes at stalled replication forks. Furthermore replication protein-A (RP-A) avidly binds to such tracts, an event that is required for activation of ATR signaling (43). It is therefore conceivable, and consistent with our data, that once levels of replication stress reach a particular threshold RP-A becomes effectively sequestered. This may abrogate removal of UV-induced DNA damage in the genome overall (exclusively in S-phase populations), as sufficient levels of free RP-A are required to carry out the pre-incision and gapfilling steps of GG-NER (17). Such a passive model has received experimental support *via* the demonstration in yeast that excess single-stranded DNA appears to reduce double-strand break repair during meiosis through RPA sequestration (20). Yet another possible scenario, considering the status of stalled replication forks as powerful signals initiating various mechanisms of self-stabilization, is

that genome-wide inhibition of GG-NER during S phase may somehow be actively regulated.

Whatever the precise mechanistic underpinnings, the ablation of “unwanted” NER-mediated DNA incisions under conditions of excessive levels of replication stress may be expected to greatly promote cellular survival by forestalling the “conversion” of numerous CPDs and 6-4PPPs located at stalled forks into considerably more lethal DSBs (13). Inhibition of DSB formation in XPV cells may also be needed to increase the efficiency of alternative pathways eg., error-free template switching (6), and/or error-prone bypass using backup TLS polymerases (56), designed to resolve blocked replication forks and stimulate the resumption of DNA synthesis as rapidly as possible. However while ablation of SPR in XPV patients may be considered “beneficial” by increasing survival at the cellular level, the accompanying effect at the organismal level, i.e., a remarkably elevated incidence of deadly sunlight-induced skin cancers, is of course disastrous.

3.6 Acknowledgements

This work was supported by an operating grant awarded to E.A.D. from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

The authors are grateful to Drs. El Bachir Affar, Dindial Ramotar, and James Daley for valuable discussions and critical reading of the manuscript.

3.7 References

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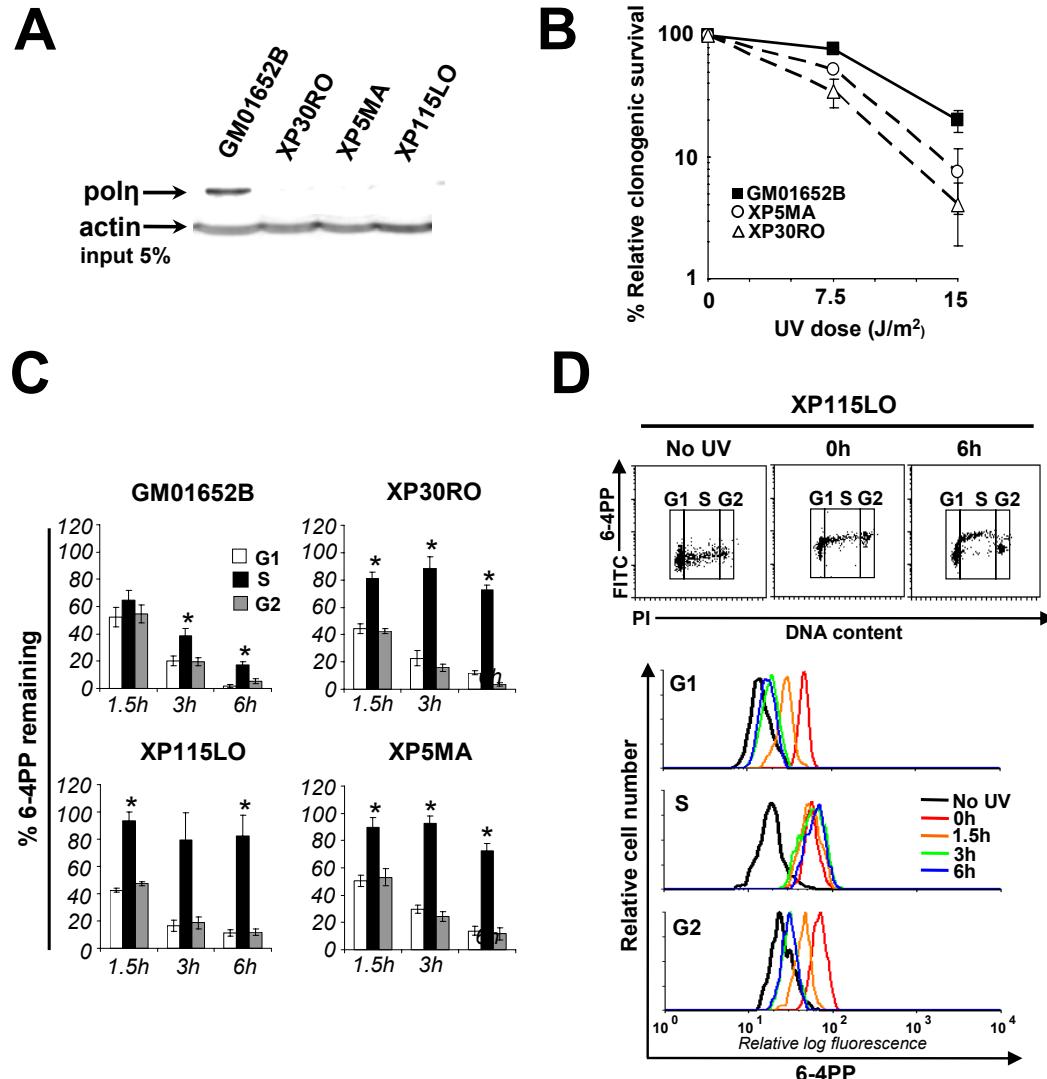
3.8 Tableau et figures

Tableau 3.1

cDNA	Primers	Restriction sites	Sequence (5'→3')
Pol η-wt	Forward	XhoI	GGACCGCTCGAGATGGCTACTGGACAGGAT
	Reverse	EcoRI	CTTTTCCTTGAATTGATGTGTTAATGG
Pol η- Δ-Ct	Forward	XhoI	GGACCGCTCGAGATGGCTACTGGACAGGAT
	Reverse	EcoRI	CTTTTCCTTGAATTGATGTGTTAATGG
Mutant	Point mutations	Mutagenic Primers	Sequence (5'→3') *
Pol η-PIP1/2 mut	F443A;L444A (PIP1 mut)	Forward	TCTACAGACATACCAGC GCCGC GAGCAGTGACC
		Reverse	AAGTTC GAACCTGGGTCACTGCTC GCGCG GCTGGTGATGT TGTAGA
	F707A;F708A (PIP2 mut)	Forward	CAAACATTGGAATCAG GCTG CTAACGCCATTAAACAC
		Reverse	TTAG CTAATGTGTTAATGGCTTAG CAGCTG ATTCCAAT TTTG

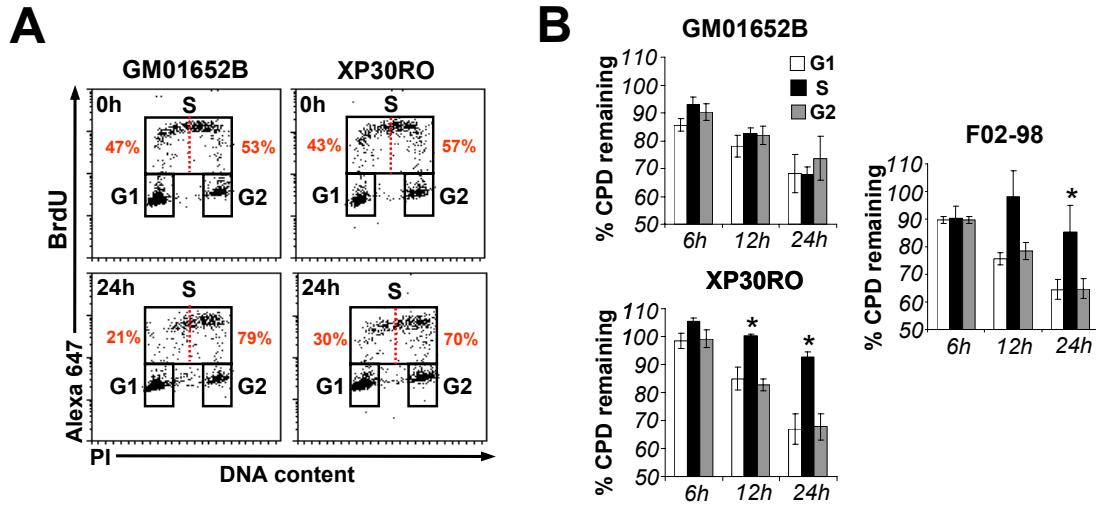
Table 1: Primer pairs used for cloning Pol η-wt and -Δ-Ct cDNA in phase into p-EGFP-N1 and for site-directed mutagenesis.

* mutated sites in bold

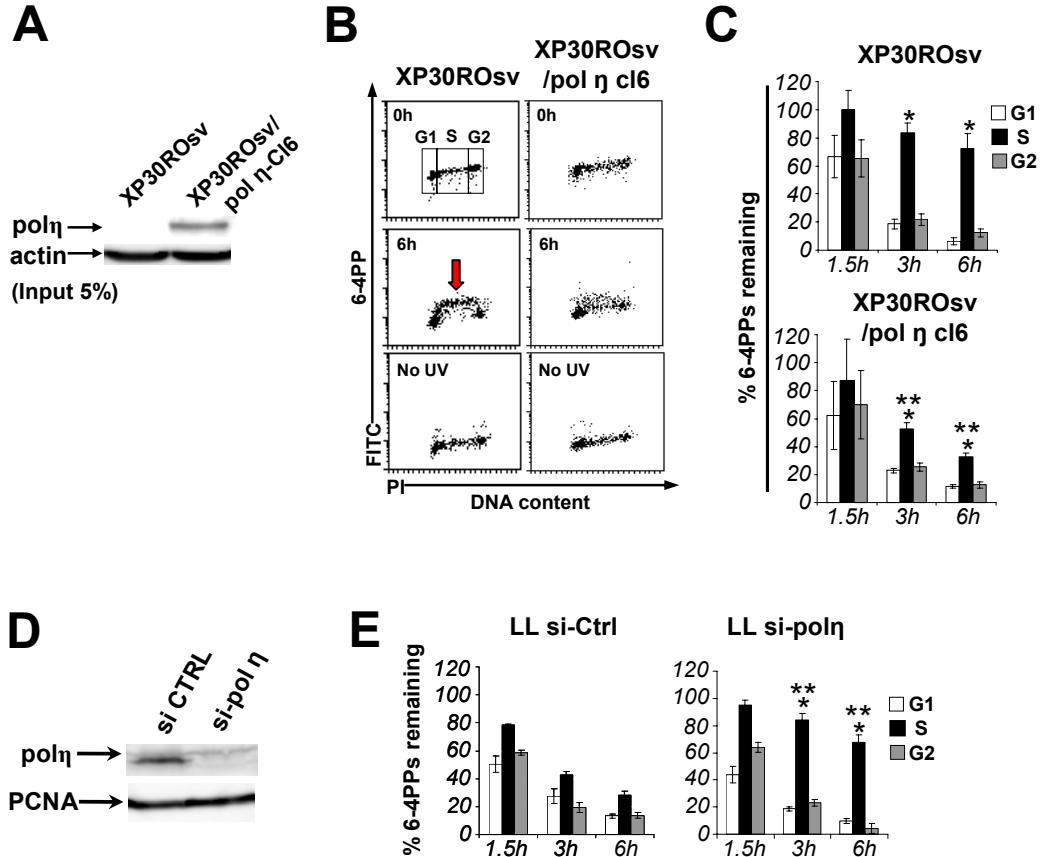
Figure 3.1**Figure 3.1: SPR of 6-4PPs is defective in primary XPV skin fibroblasts.**

(A) Detection of pol η in XPV vs wild-type primary skin fibroblasts by immunoprecipitation and Western blotting. (B) Relative clonogenic survival in UV-irradiated wild-type- vs. XPV-skin fibroblasts. Shown is the mean \pm SEM from three to four independent experiments. (C) Graphical depiction of repair wild-type- vs. XPV-skin

fibroblasts irradiated with 15 J/m² of UV. Shown is the mean ±SEM of four independent experiments. *, p< 0.05; two-tailed paired t-test (S phase relative to G1). **(D)** Representative results illustrating cell cycle-specific 6-4PP repair in the XPV strain XP115LO. Upper panel; bivariate distribution of 6-4PP (FITC) versus DNA content (PI) at 0 and 6hr post- UV, and in unirradiated cells; Lower panel; histogram overlay showing repair of 6-4PPs in each phase of the cell cycle.

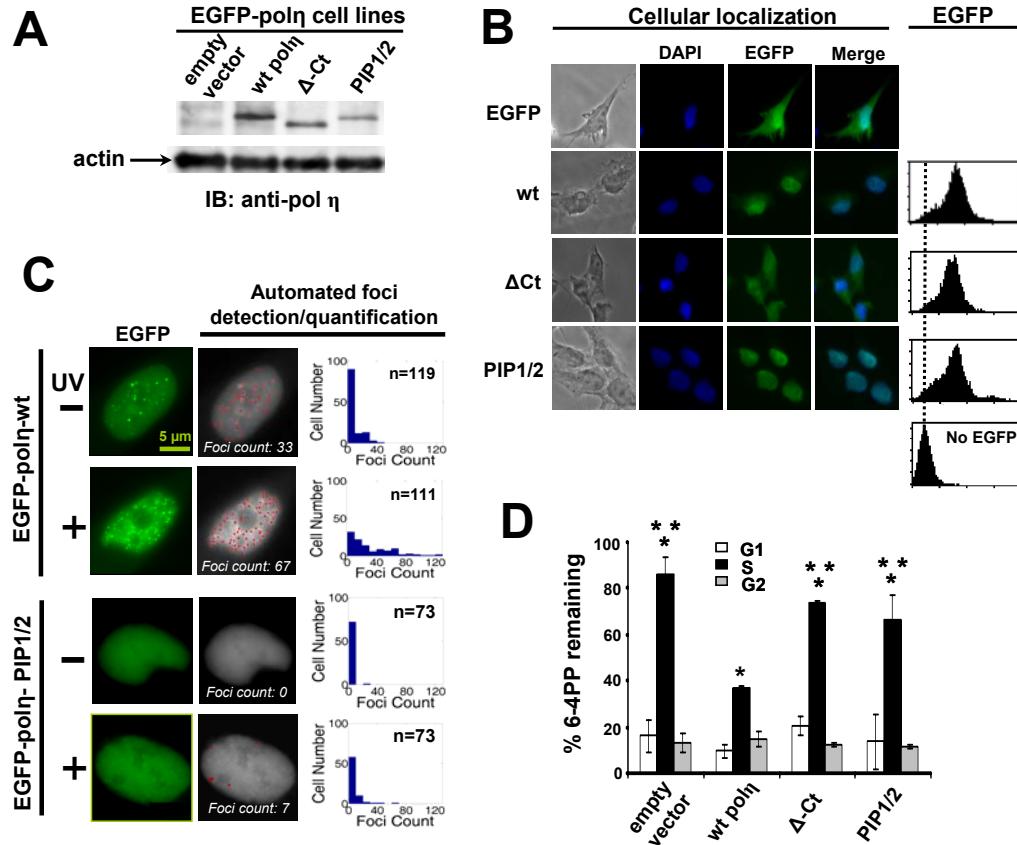
Figure 3.2**Figure 3.2: SPR of CPDs is defective in primary XPV skin fibroblasts.**

(A) Bivariate distribution of BrdU incorporation (Alexa 647) versus DNA content (PI) in GM01652B vs XP30RO at 0h vs 24 hr post-UV. Red numerals indicate the percentage of cells in early vs late S phase. **(B)** Graphical depiction of cell cycle-specific CPD repair in GM01652B, XP30RO, and F02-98 cells irradiated with 15 J/m^2 of UV. Shown is the mean \pm SEM of three independent experiments. *, p< 0.05; two-tailed paired t-test (S phase relative to G1).

Figure 3.3**Figure 3.3: Defective SPR in XPV cells is attributable to loss of functional pol η .**

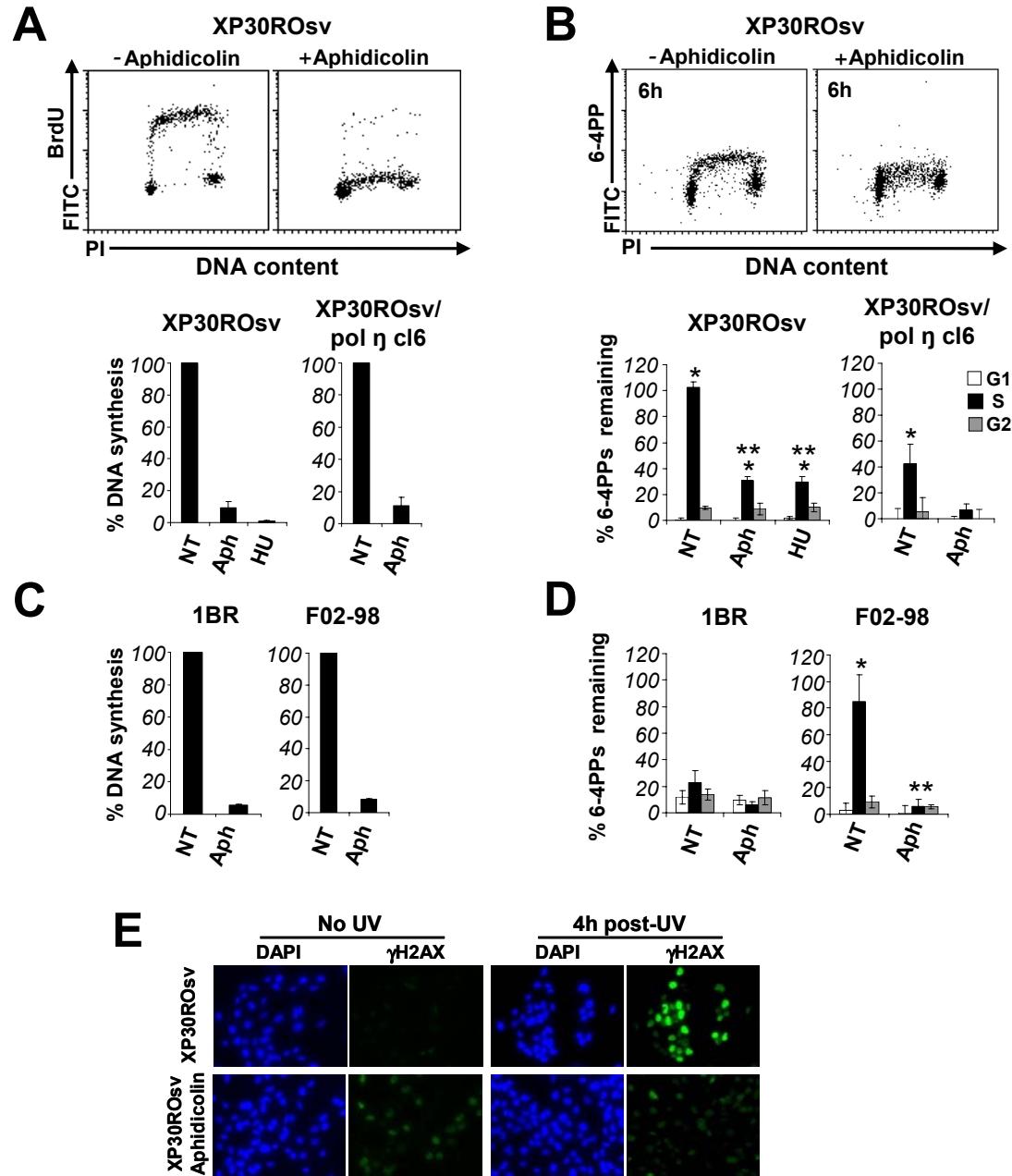
(A) Detection of pol η in XP30ROsv vs XP30ROsv/cl6 by immunoprecipitation and Western blotting. **(B)** Representative bivariate distributions of 6-4PP (FITC) versus DNA content (PI) in XP30ROsv and XP30ROsv/cl6 irradiated with 15 J/m² of UV. **(C)** Graphical depiction of repair in XP30ROsv vs XP30ROsv/cl6 irradiated with 15 J/m² of UV. Shown is the mean \pm SEM of three independent experiments. *, p < 0.05; two-tailed paired t-test (S phase relative to G1). **, p < 0.05; two-tailed unpaired t-test comparing SPR in XP30ROsv/cl6 vs. XP30ROsv. **(D)** Detection of pol η in primary LL lung

fibroblasts expressing siRNA targeting pol η vs. scrambled control siRNA. **(E)** Graphical depiction of repair in LL fibroblasts irradiated with 15 J/m² of UV. Shown is the mean \pm SEM of three independent experiments. *, p< 0.05; two-tailed paired t-test (S phase relative to G1). **, p< 0.05; two-tailed unpaired t-test comparing SPR in LL-siPol η vs. LL-siCTRL.

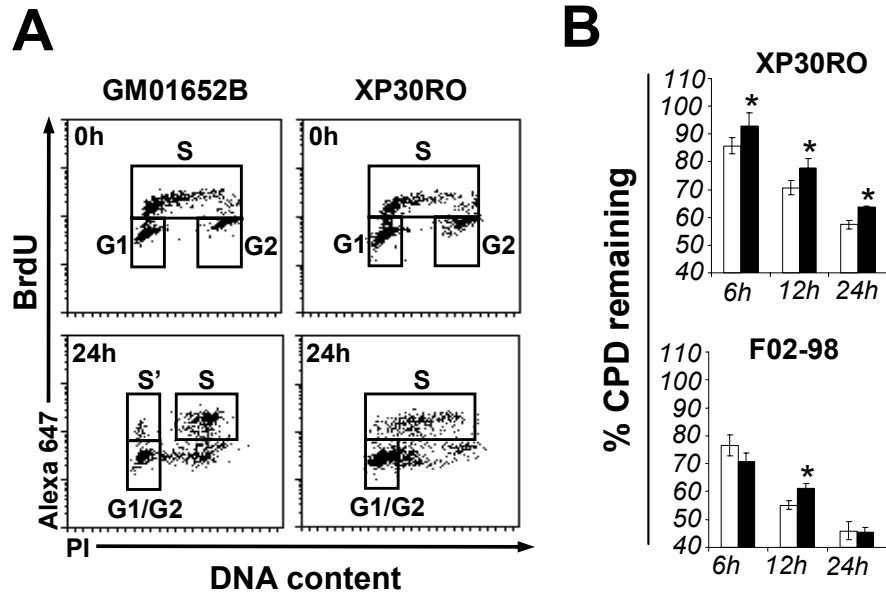
Figure 3.4**Figure 3.4: Analysis of XP30ROsv cells ectopically expressing EGFP-tagged pol η variants**

(A) Stable expression of pol η -EGFP mutants in XP30ROsv detected by immunoprecipitation and Western blotting. **(B)** Left panel, cellular localization of pol η -EGFP variants in XP30ROsv cells by EGFP autofluorescence in fixed unirradiated cells. Cell lines were sorted by FACS according to EGFP expression. Right panel, EGFP autofluorescence peaks in living XP30ROsv cells. **(C)** Quantification of pol η -EGFP foci in living XP30ROsv cells. In each case, the same cells were imaged before (-) and 1.5 h after (+) irradiation with 15 J/m² of UV. Shown on the left are representative nuclei and

automated focus counts for each (See Materials and Methods for details.). Histograms on the right show automated determinations of focus count distribution for the indicated number of cells. **(D)** Graphical depiction of 6-4PP removal at 6h following exposure to 15 J/m² of UV. Shown is the mean ±SEM from three independent experiments. *, p< 0.05; two-tailed paired t-test (S phase relative to G1). **, p<0.05; two-tailed unpaired t-test comparing S-phase repair in XP30ROsv cells expressing EGFP-polη-wt vs. empty vector (EGFP) or polη-EGFP mutants.

Figure 3.5**Figure 3.5: Defective SPR in XPV fibroblasts is rescued by treatment with DNA synthesis inhibitors prior to UV exposure.**

(A) Upper panel; Representative dot plot showing BrdU incorporation in XP30ROsv cells pre-treated or not with aphidicolin. Lower panel; graphical depiction of percent DNA synthesis inhibition in XP30ROsv and XP30ROsv/cl6 pre-treated or not with HU and/or aphidicolin. **(B)** Upper panel; representative dot plot of 6-4PP repair as function of DNA content at 6h post-UV (15 J/m^2) in XP30ROsv vs. XP30ROsv/cl6 cells pretreated or not with aphidicolin. Lower panel; graphical depiction of 6-4PP repair as a function of cell cycle at 6 hr post-UV in XP30ROsv vs. XP30ROsv/cl6 pre-treated or not with aphidicolin or HU. **(C)** Graphical depiction of percent DNA synthesis inhibition in 1BR wild-type and F02-98 Seckel syndrome skin fibroblasts pre-treated or not with aphidicolin, **(D)** Graphical depiction of 6-4PP repair at 6 hr post-UV as a function of cell cycle in 1BR vs F02-98 pre-treated or not with aphidicolin. Shown is the mean \pm SEM of three independent experiments *, p< 0.05; two-tailed paired t-test (S phase relative to G1). **, p< 0.05; two-tailed unpaired t-test comparing S phase repair in aphidicholin or HU treated vs untreated (NT) cells. **(E)** Pre-treatment with aphidicolin reduces histone H2AX phosphorylation in UV-irradiated XP30sv cells.

Figure 3.6**Figure 3.6: Normal SPR of CPDs in XPV and Seckel syndrome cells exposed to low dose UV**

(A) Bivariate distribution of BrdU incorporation (Alexa 647) versus DNA content (PI) in GM01652B vs XP30RO at 0 vs 24 hr following irradiation with 5 J/m^2 of UV. (B) Graphical depictions of cell cycle-specific CPD repair in XP30RO and F02-98 cells irradiated with 5 J/m^2 of UV. G1/G2 denotes a mixture of cells that were in either G0/G1 or G2/M at the time of irradiation (see Results). Indeed, at 5 J/m^2 of UV, G2 cells divide relatively rapidly and mix with cells initially in G1 and therefore cannot be analyzed separately. For GM01652B, at 5 J/m^2 , repair cannot be monitored at 24h post UV since a proportion of cells in S phase at the time of irradiation (S') have undergone division. Shown is the mean \pm SEM from three independent experiments. *, p< 0.05; two-tailed paired t-test (S phase relative to G1/G2).

CHAPITRE 4

4. DISCUSSION

L'ADN chromosomique est constamment endommagé par des agents endogènes et environnementaux. Heureusement, de multiples mécanismes de réparation existent pour corriger une grande variété de lésions et ainsi protéger de l'instabilité génomique pouvant en résulter. La réparation par excision de nucléotides (NER) est la seule voie de disponible pour la réparation d'une très grande variété d'adduits qui occasionnent une altération à la structure de l'ADN et bloquent la progression des polymérases (ARN et ADN) [327]. L'objectif global des travaux présentés dans le cadre de cette thèse visait à mieux caractériser la régulation de cet important mécanisme antinéoplasique, et ce, dans l'ensemble des phases du cycle cellulaire.

Il fut mentionné précédemment que ce mécanisme de réparation est constitué de deux sous-voies distinctes et chevauchantes, soit: la GG-NER qui répare dans l'ensemble du génome et la TC-NER qui agit uniquement sur le brin transcrit des gènes actifs [46]. Plus spécifiquement, les travaux présentés dans cette thèse portent sur l'étude de la GG-NER qui répare dans tout le génome. Pour cause, la capacité de la NER à prévenir la formation de mutations semble exclusivement attribuable à la GG-NER, un phénomène parfaitement exemplifié par l'existence du syndrome génétique rare *Xeroderma pigmentosum*.

Pour caractériser davantage ce mécanisme, les CPDs et 6-4PPs ont été utilisés comme modèles d'étude, et ce, pour plusieurs raisons. Par leur forte abondance et omniprésence, la réparation de ces lésions représente l'une des principales contributions de la NER. En

effet, la principale caractéristique des patients arborant un défaut de la GG-NER est une forte prédisposition au cancer de la peau (plus de 1000X). Ces lésions (6-4PPs et CPDs) hautement mutagènes causées par les ultraviolets de la lumière solaire, constituent les principaux facteurs éthiologiques impliqués dans le développement du cancer de la peau [10]. De plus, ces deux types de lésions sont structurellement très divergents. Contrairement aux CPDs, les 6-4PPs ne peuvent se former dans les nucléosomes puisqu'ils déforment davantage la structure de l'ADN. L'importance de la déformation générée et leur accessibilité accrue font que les 6-4PPs sont réparés plus rapidement (environ 6h). Au contraire, les CPDs sont mieux tolérés par la cellule et leur taux de réparation est nettement inférieur (plus de 72h dans certains cas) [74, 328, 329]. L'utilisation de ces deux types de lésions explicitement différents comme modèle d'étude, permettra d'extrapoler avec plus de confiance sur les autres substrats de la NER.

4.1 Optimisation d'un nouvel essai de réparation

Depuis sa découverte, la NER a été largement étudiée et plusieurs méthodes ont été mises à contribution afin de disséquer ce mécanisme. Les principales méthodes utilisées pour étudier la réparation des CPDs et/ou 6-4PPs, de manière directe *in vivo*, ont été brièvement décrites à la section 1.5 de l'introduction. Bien que la précision et la sensibilité de ces techniques soient relativement bien établies, pour des raisons exclusivement techniques, elles sont toutes plus ou moins limitées à l'étude des cellules en phase G0/G1 du cycle cellulaire et/ou à prendre la moyenne d'une population asynchrone. Par conséquent, elles ne permettent pas de percevoir certaines spécificités dépendantes du cycle cellulaire. Par

exemple, lorsque l'UDS est la méthode choisie, l'incorporation de nucléotides modifiés lors de la réPLICATION semi-conservatrice de l'ADN, masque entièrement la synthèse de réparation. Pour la majorité des autres techniques, la quantité relative de lésions est normalisée avec la quantité d'ADN. Ainsi, lorsqu'il y a synthèse d'ADN, l'ADN nouvellement répliqué ne contenant pas de lésions provoque une dilution du signal et doit être exclu pour ne pas fausser les résultats. Par conséquent, virtuellement toutes les études précédentes traitant de la NER reflètent le taux de réparation de cellules se trouvant dans les phases G0/G1 du cycle cellulaire. Toutefois, l'étendue des dommages et/ou leur taux de réparation peuvent possiblement varier selon la phase du cycle cellulaire. Cette variation peut confondre les résultats provenant de différentes méthodes et être à l'origine de divergence dans la littérature. D'autres mécanismes, tels que la réparation des cassures double-brin, sont connus pour être régulés différentiellement en fonction du cycle cellulaire^[330]. Par surcroît, la réparation des lésions dans les phases S et G2/M du cycle cellulaire est vraisemblablement plus critique pour le maintien de l'intégrité du génome. Notamment, c'est au cours de la réPLICATION (phase S) que les mutations sont causées par la présence des CPDs et des 6-4PPs. L'étude de la régulation de la NER dans l'ensemble des phases du cycle cellulaire, particulièrement en phase S, constitue donc un attrait majeur. De plus, les méthodes traditionnelles d'études de la NER sont relativement complexes et consomment beaucoup de temps, plus d'un mois pour certaines d'entre elles. Ainsi, le premier objectif fixé consistait donc à développer une nouvelle méthode simple et rapide permettant d'étudier de façon directe la NER et ce, dans l'ensemble des phases du cycle cellulaire. Pour ce faire, nous avons conçu un nouveau protocole expérimental permettant

la détection des CPDs et des 6-4PPs par cytométrie en flux à l'aide d'anticorps hautement spécifiques pour ces lésions.

Les cytomètres de flux sont des instruments inégalés pour analyser plusieurs variables^[331, 332]. La cytométrie en flux est une méthode très puissante qui offre plusieurs avantages sur les autres méthodes immunologiques telles que le Slot blot, l'ELISA ou la RIA. Puisque la cytométrie en flux mesure les événements à la cellule, cette technique est spécialement riche en propriété statistique. De plus, la forme des pics peut être suggestive de changements qui ne sont pas perceptibles lorsque l'on compare la valeur moyenne et indique la présence d'une sous-population aux propriétés différentes. Cependant, le principal avantage consiste en l'opportunité d'évaluer plusieurs paramètres fluorescents simultanément sur chaque cellule individuellement dont notamment, la mesure du contenu d'ADN afin d'identifier la phase du cycle cellulaire dans laquelle se trouve la cellule^[333].

Une approche similaire a été utilisée par le passé pour détecter les CPDs^[334-336]. Toutefois, la sensibilité était relativement limitée en comparaison des autres méthodes immunologiques. De plus, il fut démontré ultérieurement que cette approche devenait problématique pour quantifier la réparation^[337]. Le problème étant fort probablement relié à la capacité intrinsèque de l'anticorps de reconnaître les CPDs uniquement sur l'ADN dénaturé. Par conséquent, l'étape de dénaturation devenait extrêmement critique et défavorisait la reproductibilité. De plus, il fut observé qu'au cours du temps, les cassures à

l'ADN générées par l'excision des lésions favorisaient la dénaturation et par conséquent provoquaient une augmentation de la détection des CPDs^[337].

À l'aide d'anticorps ayant la capacité de reconnaître les lésions, aussi bien sur l'ADN simple-brin que double-brin, nous avons optimisé un nouveau protocole permettant non seulement de détecter les lésions, mais également de quantifier leur taux de réparation. La sensibilité a ainsi été grandement améliorée, dépassant même pour les CPDs celle des méthodes les plus sensibles telles que le RIA et l'ELISA. Pour les 6-4PPs, la sensibilité est relativement inférieure, mais se compare tout de même favorablement avec les méthodes traditionnelles. La principale raison réside sans aucun doute dans la plus faible induction des 6-4PPs (de 3 à 5 fois moins) et possiblement d'une moins forte affinité des anticorps.

Afin de détecter les lésions spécifiquement au cours du cycle cellulaire, les cellules sont marquées à l'aide d'un agent intercalant qui émet de la fluorescence lorsque lié à l'ADN. Toutefois, la progression des cellules à travers le cycle cellulaire constitue un enjeu d'importance et doit être contrôlée afin d'éviter une interprétation erronée des résultats. En effet, le nombre de dimères de pyrimidine induits est proportionnel à la quantité d'ADN. Ainsi les cellules initialement en G2 au temps d'irradiation auront deux fois plus de lésions que celles en G1. Par conséquent, le mouvement des cellules au cours du temps de la phase G1 à S et de S à G2 donnera l'illusion d'un meilleur taux de réparation dans ces dernières phases. Heureusement, les dommages à l'ADN induits par les UV provoquent une réponse cellulaire qui bloque transitoirement la prolifération. Cette

réponse variera notamment en fonction du type cellulaire et de la dose d'UV. Ainsi, pour l'étude de 6-4PPs, les cellules ont été traitées dans des conditions telles que la réPLICATION était virtuellement abolie au moins pour les six premières heures. Toutefois, l'étude des CPDs en fonction du cycle cellulaire constitue un défi de taille. En effet, contrairement au 6-4PPs, ils sont mieux tolérés par la cellule et nécessite des temps d'incubation post-UV plus important afin d'en étudier la cinétique de réparation. Il est à noter que les mutations sont produites lorsque les cellules répliquent activement leur ADN. Par conséquent, la capacité d'évaluer la réparation dans de telles conditions constitue un atout majeur. Afin d'y parvenir (voir Chapitre 3) les cellules initialement en phase S ont été marquées pour une très courte période immédiatement après irradiation avec le bromodéoxyuridine (BrdU), un analogue de la thymidine. Ainsi, le marquage avec un anticorps ciblant spécifiquement le BrdU permet de suivre au cours du temps, la population de cellules initialement en phase S. Bien entendu, cette approche phase spécifique est limitée dans le temps, puisque cette spécificité est perdue lorsque les cellules ont transité vers la phase subséquente. Du coup, si des temps post-irradiation plus longs sont désirés, pouvant aller à plusieurs jours, les cellules devront préalablement être synchronisées en G0/G1 (voir, annexe 1).

4.2 Altération de la NER au cours de la phase S

En utilisant cette nouvelle méthode, nous avons observé avec des fibroblastes primaires de poumon et de peau (voir Chapitre 2) que le taux de réparation des 6-4PPs était faiblement, mais significativement altéré au cours de la phase S. La différence observée est d'environ

20 % à partir de 3h. En contre parti, nous n'avons observé aucune différence, dans le taux de réparation des CPDs (Figure 2.4). Afin de s'assurer que ce résultat ne soit pas un artefact occasionné par des changements à la structure de la chromatine et par conséquent causé par une accessibilité différentielle de l'anticorps pour les lésions, nous avons évalué la réparation dans des fibroblastes de peau provenant de patient atteint du *Xeroderma pigmentosum* du groupe A (XPA). Le taux de réparation dans les cellules XPA est virtuellement nul et tel qu'attendu aucun changement du nombre relatif de lésions n'a été observé au cours du temps et ce, dans chacune des phases du cycle cellulaire. La cinétique de réparation des 6-4PPs étant nettement plus rapide que celles des CPDs, il est plausible que ce phénomène ne soit que transitoire et ne se produise seulement que dans les premières heures. Par le passé, quelques études ont tenté de déterminer si la cinétique de réparation des dimères de pyrimidine variait en fonction du cycle cellulaire. [172, 338-340]. Deux d'entre elles ont observé une faible amélioration au cours de la phase S [338, 339] alors que les deux autres n'ont observé aucune différence pour les CPDs ainsi que les 6-4PPs [172, 340]. Ces dernières études entre directement en contradiction avec nos résultats. Toutefois, afin d'y arriver, ces études ont utilisé des approches relativement laborieuses et parfois indirectes qui nécessitaient entre autre de synchroniser les cellules. L'une de ces études arborant une amélioration a utilisé une méthode indirecte soit le HCR (« Host Cell Reactivation ») [339]. Cette méthode est basée sur la transfection de cellules avec un plasmide codant pour un gène rapporteur comportant des dommages [341]. L'expression du gène rapporteur est inactivée par la présence de lésions qui bloquent la transcription. Ainsi, cette dernière méthode constitue davantage un indicateur de la TC-NER. De plus, un changement dans l'activité transcriptionnelle pourrait également fausser les résultats.

La seconde étude présentant une amélioration évalue le taux de réparation des CPDs à l'aide d'une technique très peu sensible soit, la migration sur gel alcalin d'ADN dont les CPDs ont été incisé par l'endonucléase T4 (voir Chapitre1 section5). Les deux dernières études ont utilisé la RIA qui est une méthode très sensible. Toutefois, les cellules ont dû être synchronisées et l'enrichissement des cellules en phase S atteignait à peine les 60 %. Ainsi, la différence observée étant relativement faible, une mauvaise synchronisation peut être suffisante pour la rendre non significative.

4.3 Un rôle pour ATR dans la régulation de la NER en phase S

L'importance de la protéine kinase ATR dans la réponse aux dommages à l'ADN induits par les ultraviolets est bien connue et a été largement soulignée au Chapitre 1. ATR est surtout bien caractérisée pour son rôle manifeste dans la régulation du cycle cellulaire et la stabilisation de la fourche de réPLICATION. Toutefois, il fut démontré qu'ATR en réponse aux UV pouvait phosphoryler plusieurs centaines de substrats, dont le suppresseur de tumeur p53 qui est sans doute le régulateur de la NER le mieux caractérisé. Plus récemment, il fut démontré que la protéine XPA, absolument requise pour la NER était phosphorylé sur la serine 196 suite à l'irradiation ultraviolets de manière ATR dépendante. La mutation de ce site sensibilise les cellules aux ultraviolets^[293]. Subséquemment, il fut démontré que l'activation ATR modulait la translocation de XPA au noyau. Cette redistribution semble se produire indépendamment de la phosphorylation ATR dépendante puisque les deux événements ne sont pas corrélés dans le temps.^[294]. Toutefois, malgré cet important rôle dans la réponse aux UV, aucune étude précédente n'avait documenté un rôle

potentiel d'ATR dans la NER. Comme l'une des fonctions primaires de cette kinase est de maintenir la stabilité génomique dans les cellules répliquant leur ADN, nous avons émis l'hypothèse qu'ATR puisse réguler la GG-NER de façon prédominante en phase S du cycle cellulaire.

Ainsi, avec cette méthode d'analyse par cytométrie en flux, nous avons pu démontrer d'une manière très convaincante que la kinase ATR était absolument requise pour la GG-NER, et ce, uniquement au cours de la phase S. En effet, nous avons démontré au chapitre 2 que soit l'inhibition chimique avec 10 mM de caféine ou la déplétion par interférence ARN d'ATR dans les fibroblastes de poumon primaire inhibait virtuellement toute la réparation des 6-4PPs au cours de la phase S, alors que celles des phases G0/G1 et G2/M n'étaient aucunement altérées^[342]. Ce phénomène a également été démontré, aussi bien pour les 6-4PPs que les CPDs, avec des fibroblastes de peau dérivés d'un patient atteint du syndrome de Seckel portant une mutation hypomorphique dans les deux allèles du gène codant pour ATR. Ces travaux ont démontré pour la première fois un rôle d'ATR dans la régulation de la GG-NER.

Suite à la parution de nos résultats, une nouvelle étude démontrait que cette phosphorylation en sérine 196 était requise pour une GG-NER efficace des CPDs^[343]. Toutefois, la mutation de ce site n'a aucune conséquence sur la réparation des 6-4PPs. Néanmoins, l'évaluation de la GG-NER a été effectuée avec des populations de cellules asynchrones. On pourrait penser que le défaut de réparation observé soit attribuable à la proportion de cellules en phase S. Par conséquent, en accord avec nos résultats, la

réparation des 6-4PPs devrait également être affectée. Ainsi, les auteurs de cette étude suggèrent qu'ATR via XPA régule la réparation des CPDs uniquement. De plus, à la figure 2.4 nous avons observé qu'il n'y avait pas de différence dans la réparation des CPDs en G1 et G2 entre les F02-98, des cellules ATR déficientes provenant d'un patient atteint du syndrome de Seckel (ATR déficientes), et les 1BR vraisemblablement normaux provenant d'un proche parent. Toutefois, ce système n'est pas isogénique et on ne peut exclure tout rôle d'ATR dans les autres phases pour la réparation des CPDs. Il est aussi important de mentionner que dans cette étude, ils n'ont pas évalué le rôle direct d'ATR sur la GG-NER et que la mutation de la sérine 196 peut potentiellement interférer sur la fonction de XPA indépendamment de la phosphorylation.

4.4 Observation d'un défaut de la GG-NER en phase S dans des cellules tumorales

À la figure 2.5, on observe que sur six lignées tumorales sélectionnées aléatoirement (DLD-1, SAOS-2, 293, U2OS, A549 et MCF-7), trois (U2OS, A549 et MCF-7) illustrent une déficience complète de la GG-NER exclusivement au cours de la phase S. Il fut démontré au chapitre 2 que ce défaut de réparation n'était pas lié directement à une déficience d'ATR, mais possiblement d'un substrat. Les deux groupes de cellules, compétentes et déficientes en réparation, affichent des particularités intéressantes qui pourraient nous aider à comprendre le mécanisme sous-jacent. En effet, pour les trois lignées déficientes en GG-NER, le suppresseur de tumeur p53 est fonctionnel, alors qu'il est inactivé ou muté dans les trois autres. Toutefois, les résultats obtenus au chapitre 2

suggèrent que p53 ne joue aucun rôle dans cette inhibition de la réparation. De plus, les suppresseurs de tumeur p16INK4A et p14ARF ne sont pas exprimés dans les cellules déficientes en réparation alors qu'ils le sont dans les trois autres. L'implication potentielle de p14ARF et p16IK4A dans ce phénotype demeure à être investiguée. Chez la souris, deux études ont déjà lié la déficience en p19ARF (homologue de p14ARF) et/ou p16IK4A à une altération de la réparation par excision de nucléotides [344, 345]. Toutefois, cette altération n'était que partielle. Ainsi, il serait particulièrement intéressant d'évaluer leur rôle respectif dans un contexte phase spécifique.

Cette découverte d'un défaut en réparation dans les cellules tumorales pourrait avoir une pertinence physiologique majeure et évoque la possibilité que de nombreuses tumeurs humaines puissent être caractérisées par un tel défaut. Toutefois, pour réellement en mesurer l'importance, un plus grand échantillon doit être investigué et également des cultures primaires provenant de biopsies, afin de s'assurer qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un phénotype acquis après de multiples passages en culture.

De façon générale, un défaut de réparation augmente l'accumulation de mutations et favorise le développement de cancers. Par conséquent, l'acquisition de ce défaut de réparation pourrait être une étape critique dans le processus de sélection des cellules cancéreuses. Toutefois, l'absence de prédisposition au cancer des patients atteints du syndrome de Seckel (ATR-déficients), pourrait suggérer que ce défaut de réparation n'est pas un événement précoce dans le développement de ces tumeurs. Néanmoins, il est également suggéré que le faible niveau d'ATR contrecarre le développement des tumeurs

^[346]. En effet, les cellules tumorales subissent davantage de stress lors de la réPLICATION et un niveau minimal d'activité d'ATR serait requis afin de permettre leur prolifération. Toutefois, le résultat pourrait être tout autre s'il s'agissait d'une mutation impliquant l'une des cibles de la voie ATR.

De toute évidence, ces résultats pourraient avoir une importance manifeste pour notre compréhension du développement des cancers et peut-être également pour leur traitement. En effet, le statut de la GG-NER constitue un facteur de résistance clinique à certains agents chimiothérapeutiques couramment utilisés tels que le cisplatine et ses dérivés ^[31] qui, comme les UV, induisent des lésions à l'ADN réparées par la GG-NER. Ainsi, les tumeurs présentant un défaut en GG-NER pendant la phase S pourraient être plus sensibles à ces agents.

4.5 La NER en phase S est défective dans les cellules ayant une déficience en l'ADN polymérase η (pol η)

La polymerase η est une polymérase spécialisée qui a la capacité de synthétiser par-dessus des nucléotides non usuels ou des lésions à l'ADN telles que les CPDs. Des mutations dans le gène codant pour cette protéine sont à l'origine de la maladie XP de type variant (XP-V) ^[24, 347]. Bien que quelques études aient rapporté un défaut significatif de la NER dans certaines lignées cellulaires XP-V ^[141, 142], le consensus général est que contrairement aux autres types XP, il n'y a pas d'altération de la NER. En fait, le phénotype associé à cette déficience inclut un fort délai dans la progression des cellules en phase S et une

augmentation (plus de 25 fois) de la fréquence de mutation dans les cellules irradiées aux ultraviolets [348, 349].

Nous avons démontré que la déficience d'ATR altère l'efficacité de la GG-NER exclusivement en phase S [342]. Récemment, Chen *et al.* [233] ont rapporté que la relocalisation de pol η à la fourche de réPLICATION bloquée suite aux UV était dépendante de l'activité d'ATR. Comme la majorité des études de réparation traitant du XP-V étaient effectuées sur des populations de cellules en G0/G1, nous avons revisité de manière phase spécifique la possibilité que la GG-NER soit altérée dans les lignées pol η déficientes. Afin de vérifier cette hypothèse, nous avons d'abord utilisé trois lignées de fibroblastes de peau dérivées de patients XP-V (XP115LO, XP5MA et XP30RO) qui portent des mutations homozygotes résultant en une sévère troncation de pol η [24, 350]. Au chapitre 3 (Figure 3.1 et 3.2), nous avons observé que la GG-NER des 6-4PPs et de CPDs (15J/m² 254nm-UV) de ces cellules étaient, à l'instar de celle dont l'activité d'ATR est altérée, fortement déficiente. Via l'expression ectopique de pol η dans des cellules XPV transformées (XP30ROsv) et la déplétion de pol η dans des fibroblastes normaux (Figure 3.3), nous avons clairement démontré que cette déficience est entièrement attribuable à la perte de la pol η. L'expression ectopique de mutants de la pol η, nous indique que sa localisation aux sites endomagés de même que son activité translésionnelle sont requises pour la GG-NER en phase S (Figure 3.4). Toutefois, nous avons également observé (Figure 3.6), à la dose faiblement génotoxique de 5J/m² que le délai de réparation des CPDs en phase S, pour les cellules pol η et ATR déficientes, était relativement faible

(~10%). Ce dernier résultat suggère qu'une dose seuil est requise pour l'inhibition de la réparation dans ces cellules.

Deux études précédentes avaient exploré le rôle potentiel de pol η sur la GG-NER au cours de la phase S du cycle cellulaire. Contrairement à nous, ils n'ont observé aucune différence entre les phases G1 et S. Dans les deux cas, ils ont utilisé la RIA une approche bien établie pour quantifier la réparation. Toutefois, pour évaluer la réparation de manière phase spécifique, ils ont synchronisés les cellules via l'élutriation par centrifugation et au mieux, ils ont enrichi la proportion de cellules en phase S à 60 %. Les 40 % restant dans les phases G1 et G2 peuvent potentiellement être suffisant pour rendre la différence non-significative. Dans l'une de ces études, ils ont utilisé une lignée XP-V lymphoblastoïde (XPPHBE) qu'ils ont irradié à 12J/m^2 [351]. Cette lignée porte sur l'un de ces allèles une mutation résultant en une protéine tronquée. Toutefois, l'ARN messagé du second allèle, apparemment normal, est exprimé à 20 % de celui de la forme mutée [24, 350]. Ainsi, le niveau résiduel de pol η , potentiellement fonctionnelle, pourrait être suffisant pour permettre la réparation. Dans la seconde étude [172], ils ont utilisé une autre lignée de fibroblastes de peau XP-V (XP4BE), irradiés à 6J/m^2 254nm-UV, également caractérisés par une mutation homozygote résultant en une sévère troncation de la protéine et un fort déficit de la GG-NER au cours de la phase S. L'absence de défaut de réparation peut entièrement résulter de la synchronisation et de la dose d'UV utilisée.

4.6 L'inhibition de la GG-NER en phase S est liée à la réPLICATION

Suite à l'exposition aux UV, la kinase ATR est rapidement activée et phosphoryle une multitude de substrats qui régulent l'arrêt du cycle cellulaire, stabilisent la fourche de réPLICATION bloquée et favorisent le redémarage de la réPLICATION^[241]. La déficience en ATR provoque la persistance anormale de la fourche bloquée qui peut provoquer l'effondrement du complexe de réPLICATION et ultimement résulter en la formation de cassures double-brin et la mort cellulaire^[352, 353]. Le défaut en pol η est connu pour fortement augmenter le stress réPLICATIF en réponse aux UV, lequel provoque un arrêt prononcé de la phase S et une très forte augmentation de la phosphorylation de H2AX un marqueur de cassures double-brin^[354-357]. À la vue de ce point commun, nous avons émis l'hypothèse qu'un niveau excessif de stress réPLICATIF puisse être à l'origine de l'inhibition de la GG-NER lors de la phase S. Afin de vérifier cette possibilité, au chapitre 3 (Figure 3.5) nous avons inhibé la réPLICATION avec l'aphidicolin, un inhibiteur compétitif des polymérases réPLICATIVES^[358] de même que l'hydroxyurée (HU), qui agit via l'inhibition de la ribonucléotide réductase et conséquemment la réDUCTION de la réserve de nucléotides^[359]. Ainsi, nous avons démontré que dans ces conditions où la réPLICATION est virtuellement inexistante et par conséquent le nombre de fourches de réPLICATION bloquée aux sites contenant un dimère de pyrimidine considérablement réduit voire nul, la GG-NER en phase S est entièrement restaurée dans les cellules déficientes en ATR et pol η. Ce résultat indique clairement qu'une réPLICATION active est requise pour conduire à l'inhibition de la GG-NER lors de la phase S.

4.7 Modèles pour l'inhibition de la GG-NER en phase S

Quels mécanismes sont à l'origine de cette inhibition de la GG-NER lors de la phase S?

Au chapitre 2 et à l'annexe 2, nous avons émis l'hypothèse que la kinase ATR puisse être activement impliquée dans une régulation positive de la GG-NER, et ce, uniquement au cours de la phase S via la phosphorylation de l'un de ces nombreux substrats. Ainsi, hypothétiquement, afin de ne pas interférer avec la synthèse de l'ADN, la GG-NER pourrait être inhibée spécifiquement en phase S et la présence d'ATR serait requise afin de la réactiver en réponse aux stress. L'observation *in vitro* que la protéine XPA inhibe la réplication abonde dans ce sens^[360]. Toutefois, la démonstration au chapitre 3 (Figure 3.6) que l'inhibition de la GG-NER lors de la phase S n'est pas observée à faible dose d'UV exclue en quelque sorte cette hypothèse.

Le premier modèle (Figure 4.1) implique donc la protéine RPA. Tel que mentionné précédemment, la protéine RPA (Replication protein A) joue un rôle essentiel dans plusieurs aspects du métabolisme des acides nucléiques, incluant la réplication de l'ADN et la réparation de l'ADN (*e.g.*, NER, recombinaison homologue)^[86]. Durant la NER, RPA lie l'ADN simple-brin opposant la lésion. RPA peut se lier de deux manières, occupant soit 8-10 ou 30 nucléotides.^[361, 362] La dernière correspond à l'ouverture de l'ADN lors de la NER^[80, 363]. En réponse aux UV, lorsque l'ADN polymérase sur le brin direct rencontre un dimère de pyrimidine, un découplage des machineries réplicatives se produit et mène à la formation d'ADN simple-brin sur quelques kilobases^[156, 261, 364]. Lors de ce stress réplicatif, RPA lie ces séquences d'ADN simple-brin afin de protéger l'ADN

et activer la réponse aux dommages. Chez les mammifères, le nombre de foyer de réPLICATION est estimé entre 100 et 1000. De plus, pour chaque foyer le nombre estimé de fourches de replication varie de 10 à 200^[365-367]. Ainsi, proportionnellement à la dose d'ultraviolets, on retrouvera une quantité croissante de fourches de réPLICATION bloquées à un site contenant un dimère de pyrimidine. Puisque la quantité de RPA dans la cellule est limitée, estimée de 3×10^4 à 2×10^5 molécules^[368], on peut projeter que la quantité de RPA disponible pour la NER puisse rapidement diminuer de manière dose dépendante.

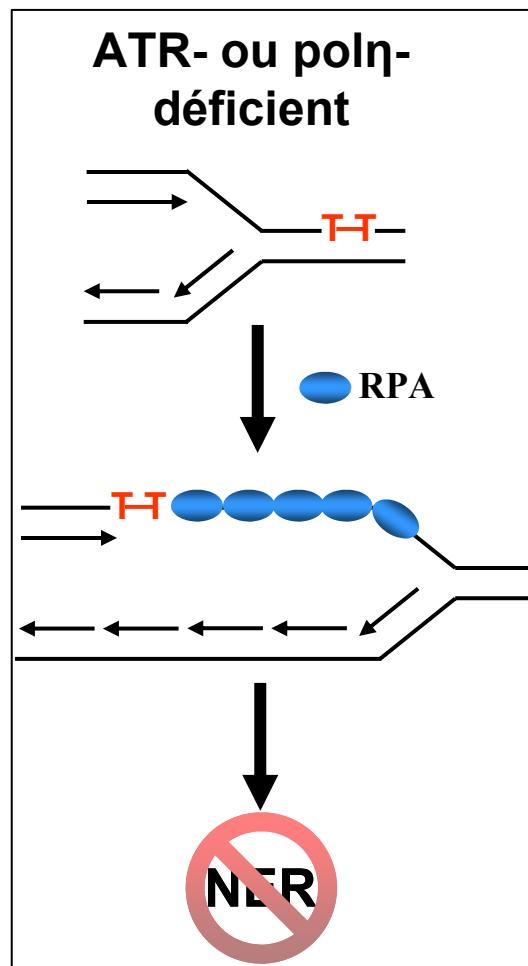


Figure 4.1 : Modèle d'inhibition de la NER en phase S impliquant la séquestration de RPA via l'accumulation d'ADN simple-brin.

ATR de même que pol η contribuent de façons majeures à la diminution de la formation d'ADN simple-brin. Ce modèle (Figure 4.1) est appuyé par la démonstration chez la levure que la présence en quantité excessive d'ADN simple-brin inhibe la réparation des cassures double-brin^[369].

Une autre possibilité implique une inhibition causée par la présence des cassures double-brin. Nous avons mentionné précédemment que l'absence d'ATR et/ou pol η pouvait ultimement mener à la génération de cassures double-brin. La phosphorylation de H2AX est bien connue pour signaler les dommages en réponse aux cassures double-brin de manière ATM et/ou DNA-PK dépendante^[354, 355]. Lorsque la réPLICATION est bloquée la déficience d'ATR mène à la phosphorylation de H2AX de manière ATM et DNA-PK dépendante. Cette phosphorylation de H2AX est également observée dans les cellules pol η -déficientes et impliquerait également la présence de cassures double-brin générées lorsque la fourche de réPLICATION rencontre un dimère de pyrimidine^[357, 370]. Au chapitre 3 (Figure 3.5) nous avons démontré que l'inhibition de la réPLICATION par l'aphidicolin dans le XP30ROsv (pol η -déficiente) élimine la phosphorylation de H2AX. Ce résultat suggère que ce traitement protège contre la formation de cassures double-brin. De la même manière, l'aphidicolin, en inhibant la réPLICATION, protège contre la formation de cassures double-brin et de foyer γ H2AX induits par la camptothecin, un inhibiteur de topoisomérase de type I.^[371, 372] Donc, de quelle manière la GG-NER pourrait-elle être inhibée? Les effecteurs les plus probables sont les kinases ATM et DNA-PK. En réponse aux cassures double-brin, ces kinases, tout comme ATR, peuvent mener à l'hyperphosphorylation de RPA2^[296, 373, 374]. De plus, dans les cellules pol η déficientes, la

phosphorylation de RPA2 est drastiquement augmentée de manière DNA-PK dépendante [375]. Il fut démontré que l'hyperphosphorylation de RPA réduit son affinité pour le centre réplicatif et favorise la liaison avec RAD51 et RAD52 des protéines impliquées dans la recombinaison homologue qui répare les cassures double-brin. La forme phosphorylée de RPA se localise préférentiellement aux cassures double-brin. Toutefois, *in vitro* cette hyperphosphorylation n'affecte pas la NER bien que la situation puisse être nettement différente *in vivo* [299, 376].

Une autre possibilité implique que l'inhibition de la GG-NER puisse être un mécanisme conservé afin de protéger la cellule de lésions plus dommageables et critiques pour la stabilité génomique (Figure 42). En effet, dans les cellules ATR et pol η déficientes, les fourches de réPLICATION bloquées sont persistantes et exposent les dimères de pyrimidine dans l'ADN simple-brin. L'excision de ces lésions par la NER peut générer des cassures double-brin et/ou l'effondrement du complexe de réPLICATION, ayant ainsi des conséquences plus critiques pour la survie et la stabilité génomique que la présence de dimères de pyrimidine [166, 377, 378]. Ainsi, l'inhibition de la NER permettrait à la cellule d'utiliser des voies alternatives telles que la recombinaison ou d'autres polymerases translésionnelles à plus faible fidélité afin de contourner la lésion et permettre le redémarrage de la réPLICATION [174, 367]. La protéine XPC serait un excellent candidat pour ce modèle. En effet, il fut démontré que XPC était phosphorylée à un site consensus des PI3K suite aux radiations ionisantes, un puissant générateur de cassures double-brin [239]. Toutefois, il demeure à déterminer si cette phosphorylation pourrait également se produire suite aux UV et laquelle des kinases ATR, ATM ou DNA-PK phosphoryle XPC. XPC a récemment été impliquée

dans la réponse au stress oxydatif^[379]. Les radiations ionisantes étant un puissant oxydant, cette modification pourrait servir dans cette nouvelle fonction, mais pourrait également être impliquée dans l'inhibition de la NER.

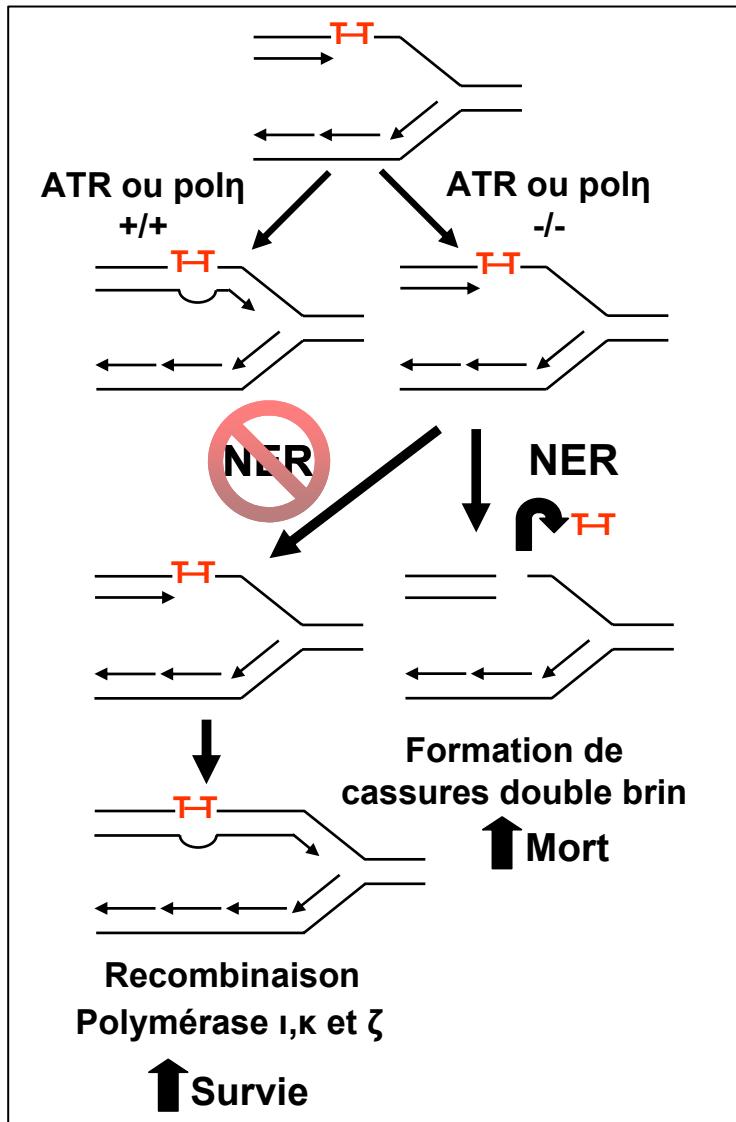


Figure 4.2 : Modèle d'inhibition de la GG-NER comme mécanisme de protection contre la formation de cassure double-brin.

À ce jour, la phosphorylation XPB est l'unique modification impliquant une protéine de la NER ayant la capacité d'inhiber (*in vitro*) la réparation et pourrait fort probablement être en

cause dans cette inhibition de la GG-NER exclusivement en phase S [380]. La kinase impliquée n'a toutefois pas été identifiée bien que XPB puisse être phosphorylée *in vitro* par la casein kinase II. Cette phosphorylation est observée en absence de stress. Toutefois, aucune spécificité reliée au cycle cellulaire n'a été évaluée. Ainsi, il est possible que lors de la phase S spécifiquement, XPB soit modifiée afin de remplir ces fonctions transcriptionnelles et ainsi nécessite d'être déphosphorylée lors de l'exposition aux UV afin d'intervenir dans la NER. La protéine phosphatase PP2A a été proposée comme candidate dans cette fonction. Ainsi, il serait très intéressant d'investiguer le rôle de cette phosphorylation dans la réparation en phase S. Il fut démontré en réponse aux radiations ionisantes que PP2A était impliquée dans la déphosphorylation de H2AX et par conséquent favorisait la réparation des cassures double-brin [381]. En présence d'un fort stress répliquatif, cette dernière fonction pourrait détourner PP2A d'un rôle potentiel dans la GG-NER via la déphosphorylation de XPB. Il a été mentionné précédemment que le complexe transcriptionnel TFIIH dans lequel se retrouve XPB est formé de plusieurs sous-unités. Il comprend entre autres le complexe CAK (CDK-activating kinase) qui phosphoryle l'ARN polymérase II durant l'initiation de la transcription. Il fut démontré *in vitro* que l'activité kinase de ce complexe, composé de CDK7, MAT1 et la cyclinH, pouvait inhiber la GG-NER [382]. CAK est fermement impliqué dans la régulation de la transcription et du cycle cellulaire [383]. Il est donc envisageable que ce complexe soit responsable *in vivo* de la phosphorylation de XPB. L'activité kinase du complexe CAK pourrait également inhiber la NER indépendamment de XPB. Autre fait particulièrement intéressant, les trois lignées tumorales déficientes en GG-NER spécifiquement en phase S n'expriment pas le suppresseur de tumeur p16INK4A. Il fut démontré que p16INK4A était en

mesure d'inhiber l'activité CAK de TFIIH [384, 385]. Par conséquent, p16INK4A pourrait potentiellement être impliqué dans la régulation de la GG-NER via l'inhibition de CAK. Ainsi, plusieurs scénarios demeurent envisageables et restent à explorer afin de mettre en lumière le ou les mécanismes responsables de cette inhibition de la réparation au cours de la phase S.

4.8 Conclusion générale

En conclusion, ces travaux ont permis le développement d'une nouvelle technique basée sur la cytométrie en flux, qui en plus d'être ultra rapide et reproductible, permet d'évaluer la cinétique de réparation de la GG-NER dans chacune des phases du cycle cellulaire. Ainsi, cette technique a permis de démontrer pour la première fois, de façon claire et directe que la cinétique de réparation par la GG-NER pouvait varier en fonction de la phase du cycle cellulaire. Nous avons ainsi pu également démontrer pour la première fois qu'une altération de l'activité de la protéine kinase ATR ou de la polymérase translésionnelle η provoque un défaut de réparation exclusivement au cours de la phase S. Ces observations ont non seulement une importance pour comprendre l'interrelation entre la réplication et la réparation par excision de nucléotide mais également pour comprendre la physiopathologie associée aux maladies qui découlent d'un défaut dans l'expression ou l'activité de ces protéines. Nous avons également fait la démonstration que ce défaut de réparation est présent dans une grande proportion de cellules tumorales, suggérant que de nombreuses tumeurs humaines puissent être caractérisées par un tel défaut. Ces résultats ont une importance manifeste pour notre compréhension du développement des cancers de même que pour leur traitement. En effet, le statut de la GG-NER constitue un facteur de résistance clinique à certains agents chimiothérapeutiques couramment utilisés tel que le cisplatine qui, à l'instar des UV, induit des lésions à l'ADN réparées par la GG-NER. Ainsi, les tumeurs présentant un défaut en GG-NER pendant la phase S pourraient répondre plus sélectivement à certains agents thérapeutiques, permettant ainsi l'élaboration

de stratégies qui pourraient améliorer significativement l'efficacité des traitements pour le cancer.

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ANNEXES

ANNEXE 1 – article

Article publié dans: J Biol Chem. 2008 Feb 29;283(9):5533-41.

“A Sensitive Flow Cytometry-based Nucleotide Excision Repair Assay Unexpectedly Reveals That Mitogen-activated Protein Kinase Signaling Does Not Regulate the Removal of UV-induced DNA Damage in Human Cells”*

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Abstract

In response to diverse genotoxic stimuli (e.g. UV and cisplatin), the mitogen-activated protein kinases ERK1/2, JNK1/2, and p38 α/β become rapidly phosphorylated and in turn activate multiple downstream effectors that modulate apoptosis and/or growth arrest. Furthermore, previous lines of evidence have strongly suggested that ERK1/2 and JNK1/2 participate in global-genomic nucleotide excision repair, a critical antineoplastic pathway that removes helix-distorting DNA adducts induced by a variety of mutagenic agents, including UV. To rigorously evaluate the potential role of mitogen-activated protein kinases in global-genomic nucleotide excision repair, various human cell strains (primary skin fibroblasts, primary lung fibroblasts, and HCT116 colon carcinoma cells) were treated with highly specific chemical inhibitors, which, following UV exposure, (i) abrogated the capacities of ERK1/2, JNK1/2, or p38 α/β to phosphorylate specific downstream effectors and (ii) characteristically modulated cellular proliferation, clonogenic survival, and/or apoptosis. A highly sensitive flow cytometry-based nucleotide excision repair assay recently optimized and validated in our laboratory was then employed to directly demonstrate that the kinetics of UV DNA photoadduct repair are highly similar in mock-treated **versus** mitogen-activated protein kinase inhibitor-treated cells. These data on primary and tumor cells treated with pharmacological inhibitors were fully corroborated by repair studies using (i) short hairpin RNA-mediated knockdown of ERK1/2 or JNK1/2 in human U2OS osteosarcoma cells and (ii) expression of a dominant negative p38 α mutant in human primary lung fibroblasts. Our results provide solid evidence for the first time, in

disaccord with a burgeoning perception, that mitogen-activated protein kinase signaling does not influence the efficiency of human global-genomic nucleotide excision repair.

Introduction

Nucleotide excision repair (NER) is the only pathway available to human cells for the removal of helix-distorting (replication- and transcription-blocking) “bulky” DNA adducts generated by a multitude of environmental carcinogens. Among these adducts is the highly promutagenic UV-induced cyclobutane pyrimidine dimer (CPD), which lies at the origin of sunlight-associated mutagenesis and skin cancer development (1). The physiological importance of NER is highlighted by xeroderma pigmentosum (XP), a rare genetic disorder characterized by defective removal of bulky DNA adducts, UV hypersensitivity, and striking predisposition to skin cancer (2). Furthermore, NER status of tumors in cancer patients has been identified as a major determinant in the clinical response to UV-mimetic chemotherapeutic agents, such as cisplatin, which exert antineoplastic effects via the induction of bulky DNA adducts (3).

NER is composed of two distinct subpathways (**i.e.** global genomic-NER (GG-NER) removes bulky adducts from the genome overall, whereas transcription-coupled NER (TC-NER) removes such adducts exclusively from the transcribed strands of active genes) (see Ref. 4 for an excellent overview). These subpathways differ only in the mechanism of lesion recognition. GG-NER is triggered when the UV-DDB1/UV-DDB2 heterodimer recognizes and binds the helical distortion created by bulky adducts, which is followed by

recruitment of the XPC-hHR23B complex. On the other hand, TC-NER is initiated uniquely by blockage of RNA polymerase II and subsequent recruitment of the CS-A and CS-B gene products. Thereafter, in the case of either GG-NER or TC-NER, the common “core NER pathway” is recruited to faithfully restore the integrity of the DNA through sequential steps of localized strand unwinding, incision of the DNA on either side of the adduct, excision of the adduct leaving a small single-stranded gap, and, finally, gap filling and ligation using normal DNA replication factors and the intact complementary strand as template.

Since its initial discovery over 40 years ago, the GG-NER pathway has been extensively studied and fully reconstituted *in vitro* (5). Nonetheless, relatively little is known about the potential roles in this repair process of various preeminent mutagen-responsive cellular signaling cascades. It has, however, been shown in many human cell lines treated with the model mutagen 254-nm UV (hereafter UV) that the p53 tumor suppressor, a critical stress-induced regulator of apoptosis and cell cycle checkpoints, is strictly required for efficient GG-NER (6, 7). In support of this, up-regulation of the GG-NER-specific proteins UV-DDB2 and XPC were shown to depend upon the presence of functional p53 (8, 9). Furthermore, p53 up-regulates Gadd45 and binds the histone acetyltransferase p300, events required to stimulate chromatin relaxation, which in turn facilitates access of GG-NER recognition proteins to damaged heterochromatin within the genome overall (10, 11).

Following exposure to diverse genotoxic agents, the canonical mitogen-activated protein kinases (MAPKs), including extracellular signal-related kinase (ERK1/2), c-Jun N-

terminal kinase (JNK1/2), and p38 α/β kinase, become rapidly phosphorylated and go on to activate a plethora of transcription factors that regulate apoptosis and/or growth arrest (12). Of particular interest here, it has been demonstrated in UV-irradiated human cells that all three MAPKs phosphorylate p53 on multiple amino acid residues and that this has functional consequences for both p53 stabilization and p53-dependent apoptosis (13–17). This substantial level of cross-talk between the MAPK and p53 pathways strongly suggests **a priori** that the former pathway may also play a role in p53-dependent GG-NER. Although previous investigations have supported such a role in human cells, this important issue has still not been conclusively addressed (see “Discussion”). We thus employed human primary and tumor cell strains wherein MAPK signaling was abrogated using highly specific small molecule inhibitors, shRNA targeting, and/or expression of dominant negative mutant protein. A sensitive flow cytometry-based NER assay recently optimized and validated in our laboratory was then used to directly determine, in each UV-irradiated human strain, whether or not individual MAPKs modulate the efficiency of DNA photoproduct removal via GG-NER.

Materials and methods

Cell Culture

Primary human diploid skin fibroblasts (HDSFs), including the wild type strain (GM01652B) and XPA-deficient counterpart (GM01630), were purchased from the Coriell Institute. Primary human diploid lung fibroblasts (HDLFs) were provided by Dr. J. Sedivy (Brown University). HDLF-E6 (**i.e.** a p53-deficient isogenic derivative stably expressing

the HPV-E6 oncoprotein) was described previously (18). Low passage HDSFs and HDLFs were cultured in Eagle's minimal essential medium supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum, l-glutamine, and antibiotics (Wisent, Montreal, Canada). HCT116/p53^{+/+} human colon carcinoma cells and the isogenic p53-deficient counterpart (HCT116/p53^{-/-}) (a gift of Dr. B. Vogelstein, The Johns Hopkins University) were cultured in McCoy's 5A supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum, l-glutamine, and antibiotics. Human U2OS osteosarcoma cells were grown in Dulbecco's minimal essential medium containing 10% fetal bovine serum, l-glutamine, and antibiotics.

UV Irradiation

Cell monolayers were washed twice with PBS, covered with 2 ml of PBS, and irradiated with UV using a Philips G25T8 germicidal lamp at a fluence of 0.2 J/m²/s.

Pharmacological Inhibition of MAPK Activity in Human Primary and Tumor Cell Strains

HDSFs, HDLFs, or HCT116 colon carcinoma cells were pretreated for 2 h with Me₂SO (carrier) or with one among the highly specific chemical MAPK inhibitors 10 µm U0126, 30 µm SP600125, or 20 µm SB202190 (Cell Signaling Technology, Inc.) to abrogate signaling through ERK1/2, JNK1/2, and p38α/β, respectively. Following UV or mock irradiation, fresh medium containing either Me₂SO or inhibitor was added during subsequent incubations.

shRNA-mediated Knockdown of ERK1/2, JNK1/2, or p53 in U2OS Osteosarcoma Cells

shRNA constructs, cloned into the pLKO.1-puro vector and targeting ERK1 (clone TRCN0000006150), ERK2 (clone TRCN0000010050), JNK1 (clone TRCN0000010580), or JNK2 (clone TRCN0000001012), were purchased from Sigma. ERK1 and ERK2 or JNK1 and JNK2 shRNA constructs were pooled (4 µg of each) and transiently transfected into U2OS osteosarcoma cells using Lipofectamine 2000 according to the manufacturer's directions (Invitrogen). Immediately following antibiotic selection (**i.e.** for 3 days in 2 µg/ml puromycin), transfected cells were incubated for 3–5 h in complete medium without antibiotic prior to treatment with UV. Cells transfected with pLKO.1 expressing a scrambled shRNA were used as control.

For stable knockdown of p53 protein in U2OS cells, an shRNA targeting nucleotides 1095–1115 of this tumor suppressor was chosen (GenBank™ accession number AF307851). This shRNA was cloned into the pSuper-retroviral vector (Oligo-Engine), and infectious retroviral particles were produced following transfection of PT67 packaging cells. Retroviral transductions were carried out as previously described (19). A polyclonal U2OS population stably expressing p53-targeting shRNA was obtained following selection in 2 µg/ml puromycin (Sigma). The efficiencies of ERK1/2, JNK1/2, and p53 knockdowns were monitored by Western blotting (see below).

Abrogation of p38 α/β Signaling in HDLFs via Stable Expression of the Dominant Negative Mutant p38 α (AGF)

Total RNA from HDLFs was reverse transcribed using oligo(dT) primers (Invitrogen). Four μ l of the reaction was used for PCR amplification of full-length human p38 α wild type cDNA (GenBank™ accession number NM_001315.1) using cloned **pfu** polymerase (Stratagene) in conjunction with the forward and reverse primers (5'-GCTGGAAAATGTCTCAGGAGA-3' and 5'-CTCAGGACTCCATCTCTTCTT-3'), respectively. The wild type p38 α cDNA was cloned into the retroviral vector pMSCVretro (Clontech). The dominant negative p38 α (AGF) mutant (20) was then produced using site-directed mutagenesis according to the manufacturer's protocol (QuikChange site-directed mutagenesis kit; Stratagene). Point mutations were introduced at each of the p38 α kinase activation sites ((Thr¹⁸⁰ (ACA) \rightarrow Ala¹⁸⁰ (GCA) and Tyr¹⁸² (TAC) \rightarrow Phe¹⁸² (TTC)) using the following forward/reverse primer sets (mutations underlined): 5'-C ACA GAT GAT GAA ATG GCA GGC TAC GTG GCC-3' and 5'-GGC CAC GTA GCC TGC CAT TTC ATC ATC TGT G-3'; 5'-GAT GAA ATG GCA GGC TTC GTG GCC ACT AGG TGG-3' and 5'-CCA CCT AGT GGC CAC GAA GCC TGC CAT TTC ATC-3'). A polyclonal HDLF population stably expressing p38 α (AGF) was isolated by retroviral transduction as mentioned above. Inhibition of p38 α/β signaling was monitored by Western blotting (see below).

Activation and Inhibition of MAPK Signaling Determined by Western Blotting

Western blotting was performed in human primary and tumor cell strains as previously described (19). Activation or pharmacological inhibition of MAPK signaling was evaluated (i) by measuring levels of phosphorylated MAPKs using anti-phospho-ERK1/2, -JNK1/2, or -p38 α/β antibodies (BIOSOURCE International) and/or (ii) by measuring

levels of phosphorylated downstream MAPK effectors, where solid-phase kinase assay kits (Cell Signaling Technology, Inc.) were first used to pull down phospho-ERK1/2, total JNK1/2, or phospho-p38 α/β . This was followed by phosphorylation reactions *in vitro* and detection of activated substrates (*i.e.* phospho-Elk-1, -c-Jun, or -ATF-2) using specific anti-phosphoantibodies. In order to assess p38 α/β activity *in vivo*, as described and validated previously (21, 22), levels of phosphorylated forms of the specific p38 α/β substrate MAPKAPK2 (hereafter MK2) were distinguished from and compared with unphosphorylated forms by band shift using an anti-MK2 antibody (Cell Signaling Technology Inc.). In order to verify shRNA knockdowns, levels of total ERK1/2, total JNK1/2, or p53 were probed using anti-ERK1 (Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc.), anti-SAPK/JNK (Cell Signaling Technology, Inc.), or anti-p53 (Santa Cruz) antibodies, respectively. To evaluate inhibition of p38 α/β signaling by expression of dominant negative p38 α (AGF), MK2 phosphorylation was quantified as described above. Actin, or in some cases total JNK, was used as loading control. Bands were quantified by densitometry using Multigauge software (Fuji Corp.).

Flow Cytometry-based Determination of GG-NER Kinetics

Normal or XPA-deficient HDSFs were maintained at confluence for 4 days prior to irradiation (yielding > 95% synchronization in G₀) and maintained at confluence during post-UV incubation. In the case of HDLFs or colon carcinoma cells, exponentially growing monolayers were synchronized in G₀/G₁ by serum starvation (0.5%) for 3 days, and 3 h before treatment fresh complete medium was added to restimulate proliferation. U2OS cells transiently expressing shRNAs could not be synchronized by either confluence

or serum starvation. As such, immediately following UV exposure, 200 ng/ml nocodazole was added to the medium to block cell division.

At various times post-UV, cells were washed with PBS plus 50 mm EDTA, trypsinized, resuspended in 1 ml of PBS plus 50 mm EDTA, and fixed by the addition of 3 ml of ice-cold 100% ethanol. 1×10^6 fixed cells were then washed with PBS plus 50 mm EDTA, resuspended in either 0.5% Triton X-100 plus 2 n HCl (for CPD detection) or 0.5% Triton X-100 plus 0.1 n HCl (for 6-4 photoproduct (6-4PP) detection), and incubated for 20 min at 22 °C. Cells were washed with 0.1 m Na₂B₄O₇ (pH 9.0) and then with PBS and resuspended in 300 µl of RNase (100 µg/ml in PBS) for 1 h at 37 °C followed by washing with PBS-TB (1% bovine serum albumin plus 0.25% Tween 20 in PBS). Cells were resuspended in PBS-TB containing a primary monoclonal antibody against either CPDs or 6-4PPs (Kamiya Biomedical Company) for 1 h at room temperature, washed with PBS-TB, and then resuspended in 300 µl of fluorescein isothiocyanate-conjugated rabbit anti-mouse secondary antibody for 45 min at room temperature. Pellets were washed twice with PBS-TB and resuspended in 300 µl of PBS containing 5 µg/ml propidium iodide (Molecular Probes, Inc.), and repair kinetics were monitored for populations gated in G₁ using a flow cytometer fitted with an argon laser and CellQuestPro software (BD Biosciences).

Evaluation of Apoptosis, Clonogenic Survival, and Cellular Proliferation in HDLFs

At various times post-UV, in HDLFs treated or not treated with MAPK inhibitors, apoptosis was investigated by both (i) annexin-V labeling using a kit according to the

manufacturer's directions (Sigma) and (ii) sub-G₁ peak analysis following staining of cells with propidium iodide. Annexin-V-positive early apoptotic cells or propidium iodide-positive sub-G₁ cells were quantified using a FACScan flow cytometer fitted with CellQuestPro software (BD Biosciences). For determination of clonogenic survival, appropriate cell numbers were seeded on 100-mm dishes 6 h prior to treatments with or without MAPK inhibitors. Cells were incubated for 15–21 days, and colonies were scored after staining with 0.5% methylene blue in 50% methanol. Cellular proliferation was evaluated by a 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide (MTT) assay using a kit as described by the manufacturer (American Type Culture Collection).

Results

UV-induced Activation and Pharmacological Abrogation of MAPK Activity in Human Cells

Replicate cultures representing three human strains (*i.e.* to stringently control for cell type-specific effects that are highly characteristic of MAPK function) were irradiated with 10 J/m² UV (yielding ~5–10% relative clonogenic survival in each strain; data not shown) in the presence of either carrier (Me₂SO) or well characterized, highly specific chemical MAPK inhibitors (*i.e.* U0126, SP600125, and SB202190 to abrogate signaling through ERK1/2, JNK1/2, and p38α/β, respectively) (21, 23, 24). At various times post-UV, cultures were evaluated for levels of MAPK phosphorylation. In the case of HDSFs, phospho-JNK1/2 and phospho-p38α/β peaked at early times (0.5–1 h) and diminished rapidly thereafter, whereas phospho-ERK1/2 peaked at 0.5 h and remained elevated for at

least 24 h (Fig. 1A). This correlated temporally with **in vitro** phosphorylation by phospho-ERK1/2, -JNK1/2, and -p38 α/β of the specific downstream effectors Elk-1, c-Jun, and ATF2, respectively (Fig. 1B). Furthermore, incubation of HDSFs with chemical inhibitors resulted in strong diminishment (>85%) of ERK1/2, JNK1/2, or p38 α/β activity at 1 h post-UV (Fig. 1, C–E). Results similar to those described immediately above for MAPK activation/abrogation in HDSFs were obtained for UV-irradiated HDLFs (Fig. 2, A and B). However in the case of HCT116/p53^{+/+}, although phospho-JNK1/2 peaked at 1 h post-UV as anticipated, ERK1/2 appeared to be constitutively phosphorylated (Fig. 2, C and D), and no phospho-p38 α/β could be detected within 48 h despite the presence of nonphosphorylated forms (not shown).

Optimization and Validation of a Flow Cytometry-based DNA Repair Assay and Its Application to Examine the Potential Role of MAPK Signaling in Human GG-NER

In parallel with the above MAPK activation/abrogation studies, cultures were set aside at various times post-UV to evaluate the role of individual MAPKs in GG-NER using a flow cytometry-based DNA repair assay recently developed in our laboratory. This assay directly detects CPDs in partially denatured double-stranded DNA in intact permeabilized cells using highly specific fluorescently labeled anti-CPD antibodies. Although a similar method was previously reported over a decade ago (25), it was subsequently only very rarely used to address biological mechanisms. We have now optimized this type of assay (i) to be rapid, reproducible, and extremely sensitive, detecting CPDs induced by UV doses as low as 1 J/m² and (ii) to exhibit a linear dose response for CPD induction up to 40 J/m² (Fig. 3A). Our optimized NER assay was initially applied to confluent UV-exposed

HDSFs treated or not with MAPK inhibitors. (For all repair analyses described in this study, cells were synchronized by various approaches (see “Materials and Methods”) to prevent cell division, which would otherwise dilute the CPD-specific immunofluorescence signal, thereby interfering with accurate determination of repair kinetics.) Representative raw data are shown for normal HDSFs and NER-deficient XPA HDSFs (Fig. 3, B and C), and the complete experiment in HDSFs is graphically illustrated in Fig. 4C. Relative to Me₂SO-treated controls, incubation with any of U0126, SP600125, or SB202190 had virtually no effect on CPD removal over a 48-h period in normal HDSFs, whereas GG-NER-deficient XPA HDSFs (negative control), in line with expectations, exhibited almost complete abrogation of CPD repair. For HDLFs, precisely the same trends with respect to CPD repair kinetics were observed (Fig. 4B). Also, repair of another UV-induced bulky adduct, *i. e.* the 6-4PP (induced 5-fold less frequently than CPDs), was evaluated in HDLFs after irradiation with 25 J/m² UV using a specific anti-6-4PP antibody. 6-4PPs are characteristically removed much more rapidly relative to CPDs via GG-NER in human and murine cells (26). In accord with this, we observed nearly 100% 6-4PP removal by 8 h post-UV in HDLFs; moreover, incubation of HDLFs with MAPK inhibitors engendered virtually no effect on repair of 6-4PP (Fig. 4C). In addition, as fully expected, HPV-E6-expressing HDLFs and XPA-deficient HDSFs (negative controls) manifested significant reductions in the removal of CPD and 6-4PP, respectively (Fig. 4 B and C). Finally, toward characterizing the potential influence of MAPKs on GG-NER in human tumor cells, pharmacological inhibition of signaling via ERK1/2 or JNK1/2 in HCT116p53^{+/+} had no significant impact on CPD repair kinetics (Fig. 4D). On the other hand, isogenic control

p53-null HCT116/p53^{-/-} cells characteristically exhibited significantly reduced GG-NER efficiency relative to its isogenic p53-proficient counterpart.

To reinforce the above data obtained in human primary or tumor cells treated with highly specific chemical MAPK inhibitors, human U2OS osteosarcoma cells were transiently transfected with shRNAs targeting either total ERK1/2 or total JNK1/2, followed by evaluation of GG-NER kinetics. As negative control for these studies, U2OS cells stably transduced with a retroviral vector expressing shRNA directed against p53 were employed. U2OS cells, like other cell lines evaluated in this study, exhibited maximal phosphorylation of JNK1/2 and of ERK1/2 by 0.5–1 h following irradiation with 10 J/m² UV (Fig. 5A). Transient transfection of U2OS with shRNAs targeting total ERK1/2 or total JNK1/2 or stable expression of an shRNA targeting p53 reduced protein expression by at least 70% (Fig. 5B). Nonetheless, consistent with our repair data using chemical MAPK inhibitors, no significant effect of ERK1/2 or JNK1/2 knockdown on GG-NER efficiency was observed (Fig. 5C). As fully expected, however, shRNA-mediated knockdown of p53 in U2OS cells significantly inhibited CPD removal.

In addition to the shRNA experiments in U2OS cells described above, HDLFs were stably transduced with a retroviral vector expressing the dominant negative p38 α (AGF) mutant. Expression of this mutant, compared with HDLFs expressing an empty vector, resulted in a 5-fold reduction in the ratio of phosphorylated to unphosphorylated forms of the unique p38 α/β substrate MK2, (Fig. 5D, *top*). Despite this indication that p38 α/β signaling had been substantially reduced, no significant effect on the kinetics of GG-NER was observed

(Fig. 5D, *bottom*), although HDLF-E6 cells, as expected, manifested a significant reduction in GG-NER capacity.

Effects of MAPK Inactivation on Cell Death and Proliferation in Primary Human Lung Fibroblasts

Having observed no effects on GG-NER as above, it became necessary to provide assurance that in our hands abrogation of MAPK signaling nonetheless generates some anticipated phenotypic outcomes. We therefore undertook to characterize the effects of MAPK inhibitors on cell death and proliferation in HDLFs, either unstressed or exposed to UV. No reports to our knowledge have previously addressed such MAPK-dependent phenomena in primary human cells from the lung. In this sense, it should be emphasized that in general DNA damage responses elicited by MAPKs are subject to high variability (*e.g.* although JNK1/2 activation is most often associated with induction of apoptosis, it is now becoming increasingly clear that this kinase can mediate either proapoptotic or antiapoptotic effects, or no apoptotic effects, depending upon stimulus, dose, and/or cell type) (27, 28). Specifically in the case of HDLFs irradiated with 10 J/m² UV, SP600125 treatment significantly stimulated apoptosis at 48 and 72 h post-UV as evaluated by either sub-G₁ peak analysis or annexin V staining ($p < 0.05$; two-tailed unpaired *t* test) (Fig. 6, *A* and *B*). These data support an antiapoptotic role for JNK1/2 in UV-exposed HDLFs, in line with prior investigations in some other cultured cell strains (29, 30). On the other hand, perhaps not surprisingly based on a dearth of previous studies to the contrary, no effect on UV-induced apoptosis was noted here upon ERK1/2 inactivation in HDLFs (Fig. 6, *A* and *B*). Finally, we observed a moderate but significant decrease in annexin V-positive staining

at 72 h post-UV in SB202190-treated HDLFs (Fig. 6B), supporting a proapoptotic role for p38 α/β in UV-irradiated HDLFs, as previously observed in various cell lines (31). In addition, sub-G₁ peak analysis consistently revealed a slight reduction in UV-induced apoptosis in SB202190-treated cells, although this was not statistically significant (Fig. 6A).

Clonogenic survival and cellular proliferation by MTT assay were also evaluated in HDLFs treated or not with MAPK inhibitors. In line with previously reported tendencies in tumor cell lines (28, 32–35), abrogation of MAPK signaling in either mock- or UV-irradiated primary lung fibroblasts (i) significantly reduced long term colony-forming ability (Fig. 6C) and (ii) negatively impacted cellular proliferation by 96 h post-UV (Fig. 6D).

Discussion

The current study provides solid evidence that abrogation of ERK1/2, JNK1/2, or p38 α/β activity in UV-exposed human primary and tumor cells via treatment with highly specific chemical inhibitors, although significantly influencing cell death and proliferation, has no effect whatsoever on the efficiency of GG-NER. This conclusion is strongly reinforced by experiments showing that repair is similarly unaffected following (i) transient shRNA-mediated knockdown of ERK1/2 or JNK1/2 in U2OS osteosarcoma cells or (ii) stable expression of a dominant negative p38 α mutant in HDLFs. We strongly emphasize that the observed lack of participation of MAPK signaling in human GG-NER is unexpected in

light of previous reports. For example, UV-irradiated transformed mouse embryonic fibroblasts, either genetically null for the JNK1/2 effector c-fos or treated with SP600125, were shown to be deficient in GG-NER as determined by Southwestern blotting analysis using a specific anti-CPD antibody (29); furthermore, interference with c-Fos-mediated up-regulation of XPF (*i.e.* a structure-specific endonuclease required to incise DNA at damaged sites during NER) may underlie the observed effect (36). The apparent discrepancy between these data in a murine system and ours in humans may be attributable to species-specific effects. In fact, rodent cells, relative to human, generally exhibit profoundly reduced expression of the GG-NER-specific protein UV-DDB2 and are consequently much less proficient in GG-NER (37), a significant caveat that may complicate interspecies comparisons.

Regarding previous reports in human cells, interference with JNK1/2 signaling was shown to engender cellular sensitivity to the UV-mimetic agent cisplatin as well as decreased post-treatment recovery of PCR amplification efficiency (DNA polymerase stop assay) (35, 38, 39). Although it was legitimately concluded that this might be attributable to deficient removal of cisplatin-induced DNA adducts, the affected repair pathway(s) could not be identified via the indirect polymerase stop assay employed. Indeed although cisplatin induces replication-blocking DNA intrastrand cross-links that are repaired by NER, this agent also generates a highly significant yield of replication-blocking DNA interstrand cross-links. The latter type of cross-link represents a distinct class of adduct that requires (in addition to NER) the concerted action of multiple DNA repair pathways for efficient removal (*i.e.* homologous recombination, DNA mismatch repair, and DNA

translesion synthesis) (40), any of which may be influenced by MAPK signaling. On the other hand, herein we have monitored DNA adduct repair in intact cells by direct quantification of CPDs or 6-4PPs, both of which are clearly removed exclusively by NER.

It is important to highlight another recent report that contributes to the burgeoning perception that MAPKs participate in the NER process. Specifically, ERK1/2 signaling was firmly linked to regulation of the essential NER core pathway protein ERCC1 in UV-exposed human hepatoma cells, and additionally, abrogation of ERK1/2 activation with U0126 was shown to possibly reduce the efficiency of UV DNA photoproduct removal as evaluated by a host cell reactivation assay (41). However, again (*i.e.* analogous to the situation for the aforementioned DNA polymerase stop assay) such an experimental approach, which measures post-UV recovery of plasmid-borne reporter gene expression, only indirectly reflects repair of RNA polymerase II-blocking lesions. Other caveats associated with the above study include the following: (i) DNA repair kinetics were not evaluated (*i.e.* recovery of transcription was examined only at 24 h post-UV), and curiously (ii) the putative effect of ERK1/2 on NER was observed following irradiation with 80 J/m² UV but not with 40, 60, or 120 J/m².

It should be noted that although MAPKs apparently do not influence repair of CPDs within the genome overall via GG-NER in human cells, such an influence on repair along the transcribed strands of active genes via TC-NER (which is not measured by our GG-NER assay) cannot be entirely ruled out. Indeed, it is possible that MAPKs participate in TC-NER but not GG-NER by regulating the unique lesion recognition step of the former NER

subpathway, involving, for example, activation of the TC-NER-specific proteins CS-A or CS-B and/or removal of stalled RNA polymerase II at damaged sites and subsequent recruitment of the core NER pathway.

The MAPKs comprise a preeminent mutagen-inducible cascade, which, by all previous indications, appeared to play a significant role in GG-NER. Nonetheless, here we have employed a highly sensitive DNA repair assay to directly demonstrate that MAPKs play no such role in cultured human cells. These data thus reorient our mechanistic perception of a critical antineoplastic DNA repair pathway. We also emphasize that aberrant MAPK signaling has been firmly implicated in diverse pathologies, including cancer, inflammation, and cardiovascular disorders; furthermore, MAPK inhibitors are currently being evaluated in therapy for such diseases (42, 43). The revelations provided by our study would ostensibly constitute an important consideration when designing treatment protocols that target the MAPK pathway.

Acnowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge Drs. Dindial Ramotar and Eric Milot for critically reading the manuscript.

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Figures

Figure 1

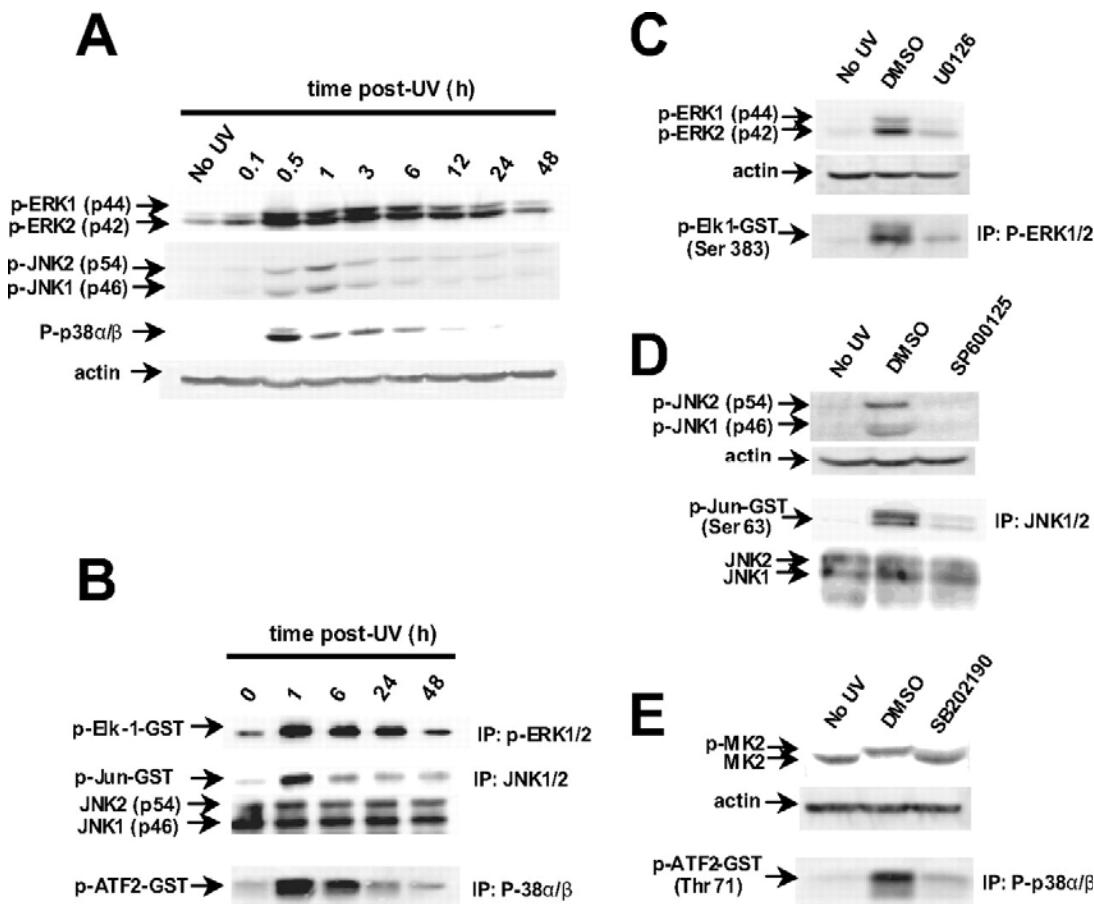
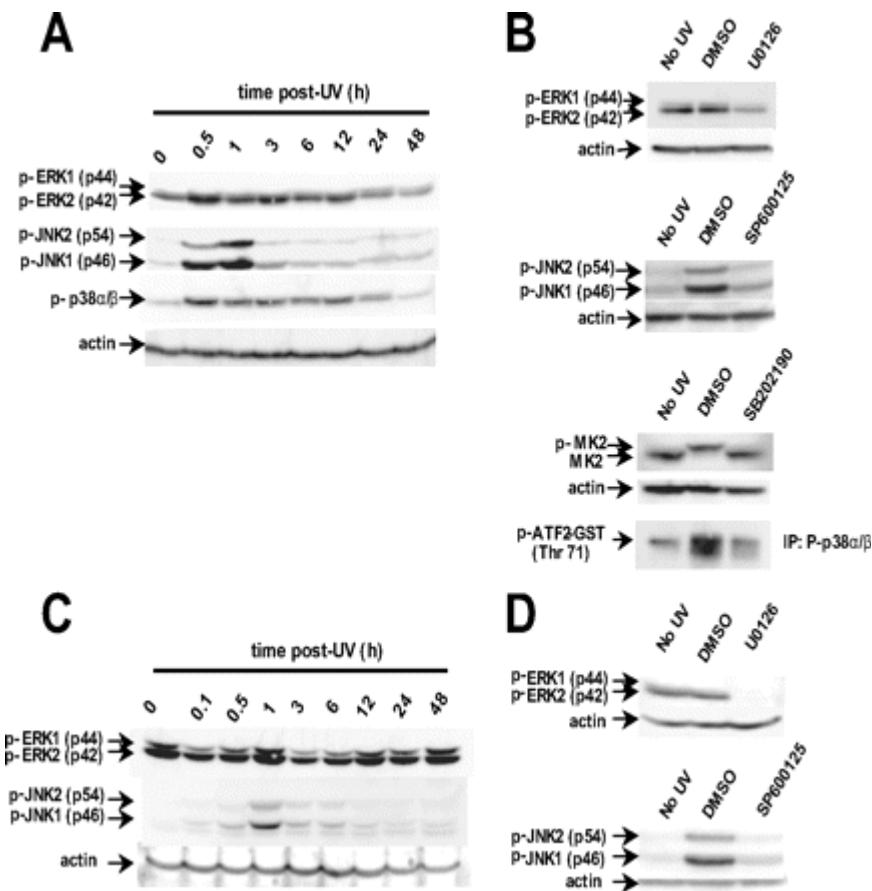


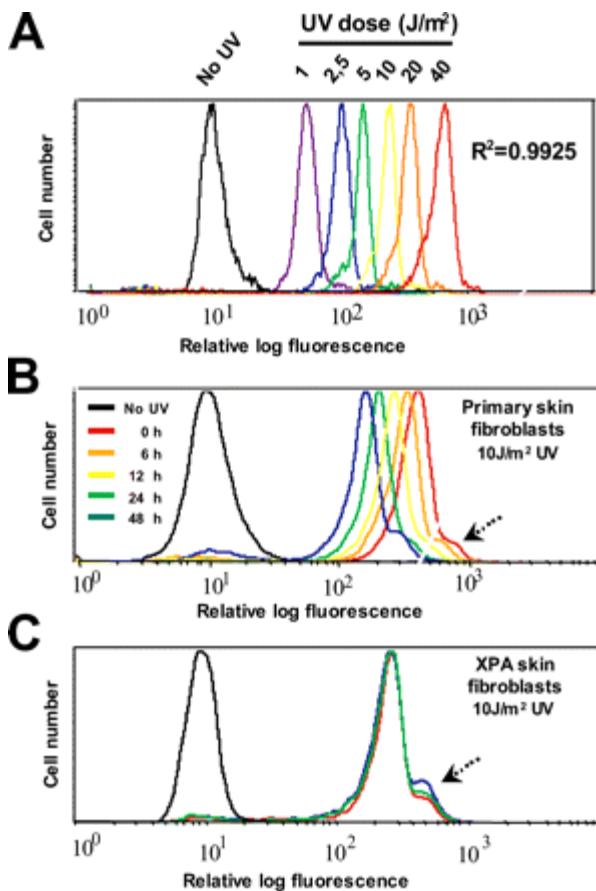
Figure 1. Activation and pharmacological abrogation of MAPK signaling in UV-exposed primary human skin fibroblasts.

A, normal HDSFs were harvested at the indicated times post-UV and analyzed by Western blotting for specific phosphorylated MAPKs using primary antibodies directed against the threonine/tyrosine activation sites of ERK1/2, JNK1/2, and p38 α/β . *B*, the ability of phosphorylated ERK1/2, JNK1/2, and p38 α/β to activate the specific downstream effectors GST-Elk-1, GST-Jun, or GST-ATF2, respectively, was assessed at the indicated times

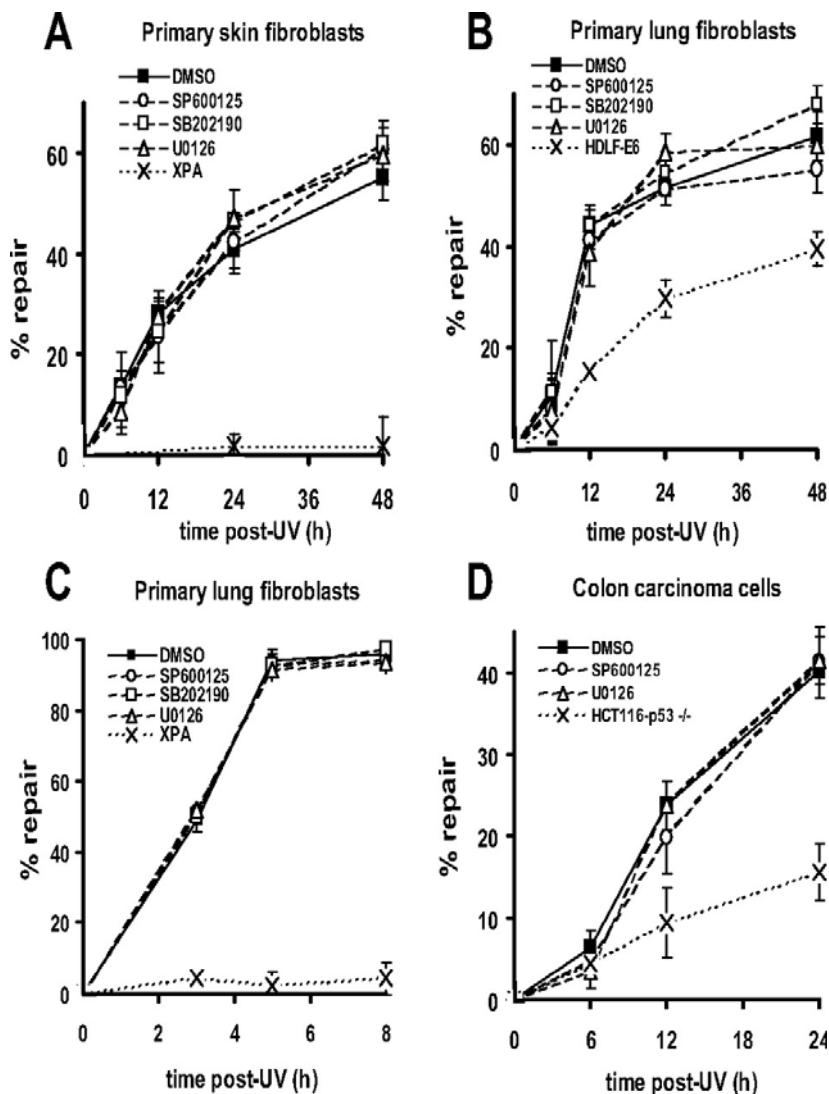
post-UV using solid-phase kinase assays (see "Materials and Methods") in conjunction with Western analysis. *C–E*, to evaluate pharmacological inhibition of MAPK activity, HDSFs were isolated (i) with no treatment (*No UV*) or (ii) at 1 h post-UV in the presence of either carrier (Me₂SO; *DMSO*) or of a specific MAPK inhibitor, as indicated. Detection of phospho-ERK1/2 and -Elk-1 (*C*), phospho-JNK1/2 and -c-Jun (*D*), and phospho-MK2 and -ATF-2 (*E*) were accomplished as described under "Materials and Methods." For *A–E*, actin was used as protein loading control with the following exceptions. (i) For detection of GST-phospho-c-Jun, total JNK1/2 was first immunoprecipitated (*IP*) and then probed with anti-phospho-c-Jun antibody. In this case, total JNK1/2 can be, and was, used as loading control. (ii) For detection of phospho-Elk-1 or phospho-ATF2, no loading control was possible, since these effectors were directly immunoprecipitated in the phosphorylated forms.

Figure 2**Figure 2. Activation and pharmacological abrogation of MAPK signaling in UV-exposed primary human lung fibroblasts and HCT116p53^{+/+} colon carcinoma cells.**

Phosphorylation and pharmacological inhibition of specific MAPKs in exponentially growing HDLFs (*A* and *B*) or in human HCT116p53^{+/+} (*C* and *D*) were evaluated essentially as described in the legend to Fig. 1 for HDSFs. DMSO, Me₂SO; *IP*, immunoprecipitation.

Figure 3**Figure 3. Validation of a novel flow cytometry-based NER assay.**

A, CPD induction in normal HDSFs as a function of dose. *B* and *C*, representative raw profiles depicting CPD repair kinetics for normal HDSFs and for NER-deficient XPA HDSFs, following UV exposure. The arrows indicate small artifactual shoulders in the flow cytometry curves, ostensibly generated by minor populations of doublet cells, which were routinely excluded from repair analysis.

Figure 4**Figure 4. Flow cytometry-based evaluation of NER kinetics in UV-exposed human primary and tumor cell lines treated with chemical MAPK inhibitors.**

A, kinetics of CPD removal in UV-exposed normal HDSFs and in UV-exposed XPA-deficient HDSFs (negative control), treated or not with MAPK inhibitors. *B*, kinetics of CPD removal in UV-exposed HDLFs and in isogenic UV-exposed HDLF-E6 cells

(negative control), treated or not with MAPK inhibitors. *C*, kinetics of 6-4PP removal in UV-exposed HDLFs and in UV-exposed XPA-deficient HDSFs (negative control), treated or not with MAPK inhibitors. *D*, kinetics of CPD removal in UV-exposed human HCT116 p53^{+/+} colon carcinoma cells and in UV-exposed p53-deficient isogenic counterparts (HCT116 p53^{-/-}; negative control), treated or not with MAPK inhibitors. Each time point represents the mean ± S.E. of at least three independent experiments. *DMSO*, Me₂SO.

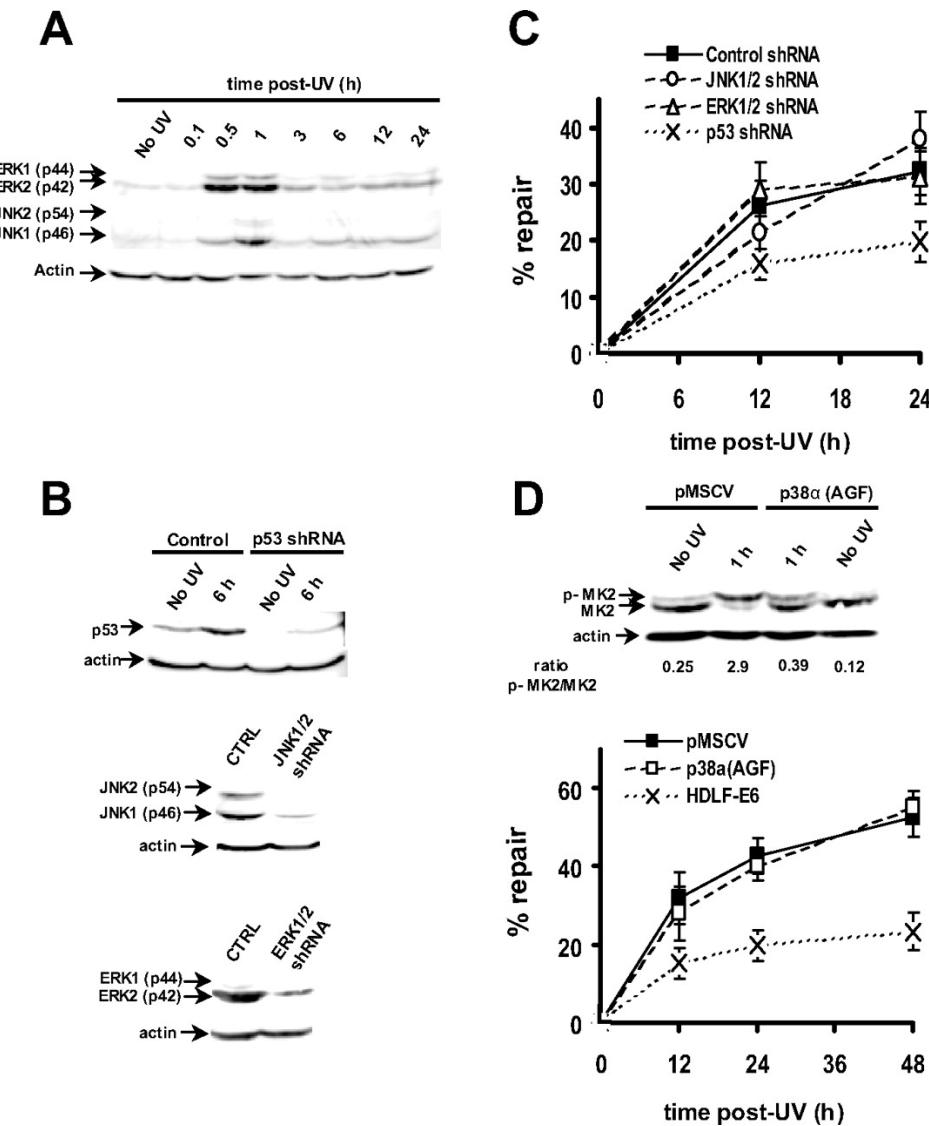
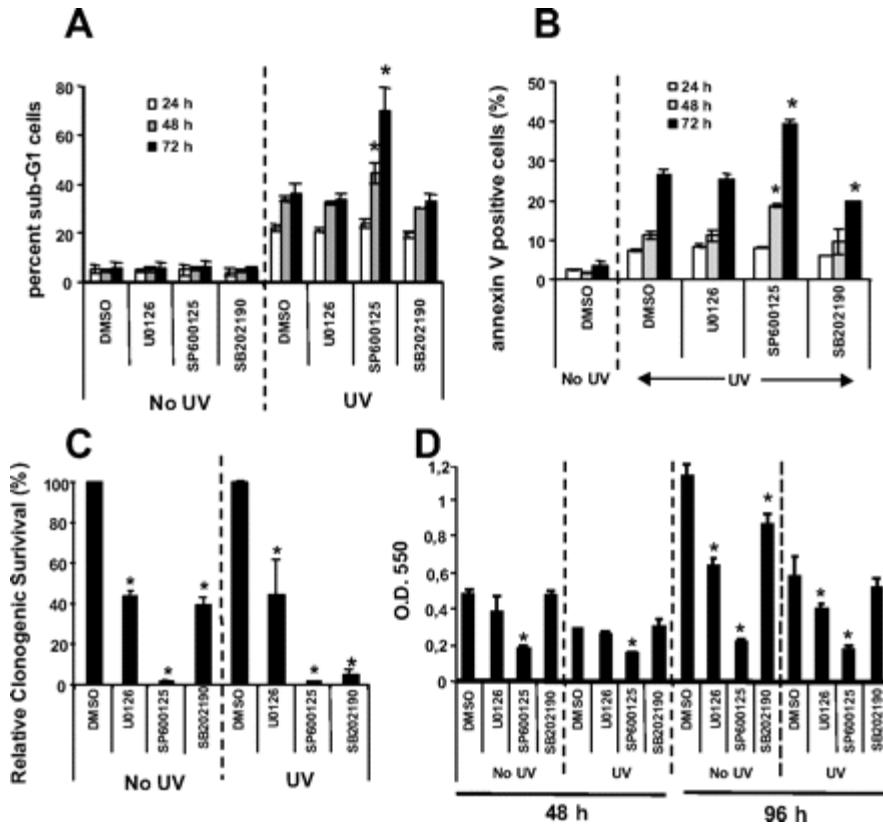
Figure 5

Figure 5. Flow cytometry-based evaluation of NER kinetics in UV-exposed U2OS osteosarcoma cells following shRNA-mediated knockdown of ERK1/2 or JNK1/2 protein or in UV-exposed HDLFs following knockdown of p38α/β signaling via expression of dominant negative p38α (AGF).

A, activation profiles of ERK1/2 and JNK1/2 in UV-exposed U2OS cells. *B*, shRNA-mediated knockdown of p53, ERK1/2, and JNK1/2 in U2OS cells. *C*, kinetics of CPD

removal in UV-exposed U2OS cells transiently transfected with shRNAs targeting ERK1/2 or JNK1/2. U2OS stably expressing shRNA targeting p53 is used as negative control. *D*, *top*, Western blot of phospho-MK2 induction in HDLFs irradiated with UV and expressing or not the p38 α (AGF) dominant negative mutant; *bottom*, kinetics of CPD removal in HDLFs expressing or not the p38 α (AGF) dominant negative mutant. HDLF-E6 cells are used as negative control. Each time point represents the mean \pm S.E. of at least three independent experiments.

Figure 6**Figure 6. Modulation of cell death and proliferation by MAPK inhibitor treatment in mock- versus UV-irradiated (10 J/m^2) primary lung fibroblasts.**

A, HDLFs were stained with propidium iodide at various times post-UV, and the percentage of the population in sub-G₁ was then evaluated by flow cytometry. *B*, quantification of annexin-V-positive cells (early apoptotic fraction) post-UV. *C*, effect of MAPK inhibition on clonogenic survival in HDLFs, either mock-irradiated or irradiated with 10 J/m^2 UV. *D*, HDLFs were processed for determination of cellular proliferation by MTT assay at 48 h and 96 h post-UV as described under "Materials and Methods." For *A*–

D, results represent an average of at least three independent experiments \pm S.E. *, $p < 0.05$;
two-tailed unpaired *t* test. *DMSO*, *Me₂SO*.

ANNEXE 2 - article

Article publié dans: Cell Cycle. 2009 Jun 15;8(12):1865-71.

“A Novel Role For ATR Kinase as Master Regulator of Nucleotide Excision Repair During S Phase of the Cell Cycle”

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Key words:

ATR kinase; ultraviolet light; nucleotide excision repair; cell cycle-specific regulation

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Abstract

Nucleotide excision repair (NER) is a major determinant in cancer development and treatment by virtue of its essential role in eliminating highly-genotoxic, helix-distorting DNA adducts that block replication and transcription. Over the years, many elegant studies employing UV as model mutagen have led to a detailed understanding of how the NER pathway itself is coordinated. Nonetheless relatively little is known regarding the precise functions of various preeminent mutagen-responsive signalling cascades lying upstream of NER, notably those mediated by the canonical MAPKs or the PIKK family members ATR and ATM. Here we present a brief overview of NER, mostly in the context of studies on human cells treated with UV, and describe recent results from our laboratory which have significantly elucidated the role of UV-induced signal transduction in this repair pathway.

Nucleotide excision repair (NER): General considerations

NER is the only mechanism in the human repertoire for eliminating a wide variety of DNA lesions collectively referred to as “bulky adducts”. These adducts (i) can be generated *via* exposure to a multitude of environmental carcinogens, eg., 254-nm UV- (hereafter UV-) induced cyclobutane pyrimidine dimers (CPDs) and (6-4) pyrimidine-pyrimidone photoproducts (6-4PPs) which represent major determinants in solar mutagenesis and skin cancer development^[317, 386] and, moreover, (ii) underly the cytotoxic effect of various widely-used anticancer drugs, as exemplified by cisplatin-induced 1,2- and 1,3- intrastrand purine crosslinks.^[27] In general bulky adducts exhibit a remarkable degree of structural

diversity, but nonetheless retain in common the capacity to distort the DNA helix and, consequently, to strongly block the progression of transcribing RNA polymerase II and of the replicative DNA polymerases α , δ , ϵ . As discussed below, these shared properties harbour critical implications for NER initiation and regulation.

NER was discovered independently by different laboratories in the early 1960's [37, 38], and its physiological importance demonstrated shortly thereafter as cells derived from *Xeroderma pigmentosum* (XP) patients, who manifest UV sensitivity coupled with extreme susceptibility to cutaneous tumour development, are in fact defective in NER of UV-induced DNA photoproducts.^[41] Years later, another landmark discovery revealed that CPDs are removed from the transcribed strands of active genes much more rapidly compared with the genome overall.^[44] This heralded the existence of distinct NER subpathways which differ in the manner of lesion recognition, but otherwise exhibit complete mechanistic overlap: (i) global-genomic NER (GG-NER) which removes bulky adducts from anywhere within the nuclear genome,^[45] and (ii) transcription-coupled NER (TC-NER) which removes such adducts exclusively from the transcribed strand of active genes.^[46]

Lesion recognition during GG-NER

GG-NER is initiated when the DDB1/DDB2 heterodimer, followed by the heterotrimeric XPC/HR23B/CENTRIN2 complex, recognize and bind the helical distortion engendered by bulky adducts (Figure 1).^[47-49, 387] It has been shown that DDB2 actually forms an E3 ubiquitin ligase complex (hereafter DDB2 complex) in association with the core subunits

DDB1, CUL4A or its paralog CUL4B, and ROC1.^[62, 63] The DDB2 complex appears to regulate GG-NER lesion recognition in at least two ways. Firstly this complex rapidly monoubiquitinates histone 2A at sites of DNA lesions, which in turn apparently mediates chromatin relaxation required to provide adequate access of NER proteins to these sites.^[63, 64] Secondly following initial damage recognition, the DDB2 complex autopolyubiquitinates both DDB2 and CUL4A in addition to polyubiquitinating XPC;^[65, 66] however the consequences of these modifications are different. Indeed DDB2 and CUL4A are degraded by the proteosome effectively removing the DDB2 complex from the adducted site, whereas XPC is stabilized and its affinity for damaged DNA increased thereby stimulating its sequential recruitment. There is evidence that afterwards XPC is degraded in a ubiquitin-independent manner,^[67] allowing recruitment of the core NER pathway (common to both GG-NER and TC-NER) which accomplishes error-free restoration of the DNA duplex (see below). It is noteworthy that DDB2 appears largely dispensible for repair of 6-4PPs,^[57, 61] and probably also of other bulky adducts that engender especially severe helical distortions. Indeed both DDB2 and XPC are needed for efficient recognition and elimination of CPDs, which deform the DNA structure to a considerably lesser extent than 6-4PPs.

Lesion recognition during TC-NER

Our research findings discussed later in this review focus on the GG-NER pathway, but a description of TC-NER is included here for completeness. While GG-NER is clearly required to forestall carcinogenesis in the face of genotoxic insult by reducing the mutational burden, the most critical function of TC-NER appears to be promotion of

cellular survival through rapid restoration of transcription (i.e., removal of transcription-blocking lesions). As such, in contrast to GG-NER, TC-NER is triggered by the arrest of elongating RNA polymerase II at adducted positions along the transcribed strand of active genes.^[46] This is rapidly followed by convergence of the Cockayne syndrome-A and -B proteins (CSA and CSB), which cooperate to recruit various TC-NER factors including XPA binding protein 2 (XAB2), TFIIS basal transcription factor, high-mobility group nucleosome-binding protein 1 (HMGN1), and the histone acetyltransferase p300.^[71] Interestingly CSA exists as part of an E3 ubiquitin ligase complex (hereafter CSA complex), which notably differs from the DDB2 complex only by the presence of CSA rather than DDB2.^[62] Within a few hours post-UV, CSB is polyubiquitinated and degraded by the CSA complex, which may be required for post-TC-NER recovery of transcription.^[72] Although any other substrates of the CSA complex involved in TC-NER remain to be identified, it should be mentioned that RNA polymerase II is rapidly polyubiquitinated and degraded post-UV by another E3 ubiquitin ligase, i.e., NEDD4.^[73] This may be essential for removing stalled RNA polymerase II and its associated nascent transcript from damaged sites, in order to facilitate recruitment of the core NER pathway and/or the timely reinitiation of transcription. In the case of CPDs, TC-NER proceeds much more rapidly than GG-NER (a phenomenon termed “preferential repair”). In contrast, 6-4PPs are eliminated by either GG-NER or TC-NER with extremely rapid kinetics.^[74] This presumably reflects the fact that 6-4PPs generate much greater structural distortion than CPDs, and as such are much more quickly recognized and processed by the GG-NER machinery.

The core NER pathway

Following lesion recognition during either GG-NER or TC-NER, the common core NER pathway consummates the repair process *via* sequential recruitment/removal of distinct factors at damaged sites. It remains to be determined whether such exquisite coordination would involve ubiquitination, as described above for the lesion recognition steps; nonetheless significant insight has been provided regarding the precise sequence of events which comprise the core NER pathway (Figure 1). The earliest involves recruitment of the TFIIH basal transcription factor, which functions independently in transcription initiation and DNA repair.^[75] Once bound to UV-damaged DNA, the TFIIH subunits XPD, XPD (both possessing DNA helicase activity), and p8 mediate strand denaturation in the vicinity of the lesion^[79-82]. Replication protein A (RPA), XPA, and the endonuclease XPG subsequently arrive and together serve to verify the lesion and stabilize the unwound DNA structure.^[83, 84] The ERCC1/XPF endonuclease is then recruited *via* interaction with XPA^[388] and incises the DNA backbone 5' to the damaged site, which is followed by XPG-mediated incision on the 3' side.^[93] The lesion is excised as part of a single-stranded oligonucleotide approximately 30 base pairs in length, and the resulting gap filled in using the semiconservative DNA polymerases δ or ϵ (and possibly the translesion DNA polymerase κ)^[94], in conjunction with normal replication factors and the undamaged complementary strand as template. Finally, ligation of the remaining nick is carried out by either of the heterodimers DNA ligase III α /XRCC1^[95] or DNA ligase I/FEN1.^[96]

UV-induced activation of cellular signaling pathways

As summarized above, the orchestration of NER continues to be characterized with ever increasing precision. However one important issue receiving relatively little attention concerns the potential roles of major upstream mutagen-responsive signaling cascades in regulation of this repair pathway. UV-induced signal transduction is enormously complex, but for purposes herein can be viewed as comprising two major branches (Figure 2). The first is triggered independently of DNA damage, and appears to involve UV-induced oxidation (inactivation) of redox-sensitive membrane-bound phosphatases leading to ligand-independent autophosphorylation of a number of receptor tyrosine kinases. This in turn rapidly activates multiple signaling cascades, notably those mediated by the canonical mitogen-activated protein kinases (MAPKs) ERK1/2, JNK1/2, and p38 α/β .^[234] All three MAPKs then proceed to phosphorylate a plethora of transcription factors and other proteins implicated in the regulation of protective responses including apoptosis, cell cycle checkpoints, and DNA repair.^[235]

Initiation of the second branch of the UV-induced signaling response, unlike the above-described membrane receptor-mediated axis, depends upon the presence of DNA damage or manifestations thereof. Of particular note here, the phosphoinositide 3-kinase-related protein kinase (PIKK) family members Ataxia Telangiectasia-Mutated (ATM) and Ataxia Telangiectasia-Mutated and Rad 3-related (ATR) are rapidly activated during periods of genotoxic stress. Each of these kinases goes on to phosphorylate a multitude of protein substrates on S/T-Q consensus sites (many in common) that modulate cell cycle checkpoints and DNA repair.^[239, 241, 242] It has been traditionally thought that ATM

signaling is stimulated primarily by DNA double-strand breaks engendered by clastogens such as ionizing radiation (IR). On the other hand the ATR pathway was considered activeable uniquely by stretches of RPA-coated single-stranded DNA generated in response to replicative stress (eg. during processing of UV-induced DNA photoproducts), as a means of facilitating the resolution of collapsed replication forks and ultimately replication restart. However it is becoming increasingly clear that ATM and ATR can be concomitantly activated, and ostensibly collaborate, as part of the cellular response elicited by either double-strand breaks or replication-blocking lesions.^[389-391]

Does UV-induced signal transduction regulate NER?

My colleagues and I initially considered this to be very likely. Each of the MAPKs, as well as both ATM and ATR, had been shown to modulate the stability and function of p53 by phosphorylating this critical tumour suppressor during genotoxic stress.^[392-398] Moreover it was well established that functional p53 is required for efficient GG-NER in many (but not all^[399]) human cell types following UV exposure.^[110, 400] Thus it was reasonable to postulate that one or more of the MAPKs and/or PIKKs might influence p53-dependent GG-NER. However p53-mutated cells characteristically exhibit only a partial GG-NER defect, retaining as much as 50% repair capacity relative to isogenic wild-type counterparts. Therefore, and in view of the abundance of substrates aside from p53 that are collectively phosphorylated by the canonical MAPKs and ATM/ATR in response to UV, it seemed entirely plausible that signaling through any among these latter kinases might also participate in regulation of a p53-independent GG-NER component.

A number of previous investigations employing diverse approaches to quantify repair had provided evidence that signaling through each of ERK1/2, JNK1/2, or p38 α/β regulates human GG-NER.^[135, 401, 402] We decided to revisit this important issue using a sensitive and highly-reproducible flow cytometry-based GG-NER assay recently developed in our laboratory. Replicate cultures corresponding to multiple human primary and tumour strains (to control for cell type-specific effects) were synchronized in G0, as routinely performed prior to quantification of NER kinetics (see next section), followed by strong knockdown of ERK1/2, JNK1/2, or p38 α/β signaling using pharmacological inhibitors or RNA interference. After irradiation with UV and appropriate post-treatment incubation times, cells were permeabilized, fixed, incubated with highly-specific anti-6-4PP or anti-CPD monoclonal antibodies, and analyzed by flow cytometry. In contrast with the studies cited immediately above, our results clearly demonstrated somewhat unexpectedly that knockdown of canonical MAPK signaling has no effect whatsoever on the kinetics of UV-induced photoproduct removal *via* GG-NER in cultured human cells.^[403]

Investigation of a potential role for ATR in human GG-NER

Having ruled out to our own satisfaction any role for MAPKs in GG-NER, we turned our attention to the PIKK family member ATR. Since the primary function of this kinase is to maintain genomic stability in replicating cells, we hypothesized that it might regulate GG-NER predominantly or exclusively during S phase. However measurement of DNA repair efficiency in cells which are cycling at the time of irradiation poses a distinct technical challenge. Indeed any newly-replicated DNA generated following post-UV recovery of replication would be undamaged thereby interfering with accurate quantification of repair

kinetics. To control for this many earlier studies added BrdU to the culture medium following UV treatment, which allowed newly-replicated undamaged (BrdU-labelled, heavy) DNA to be physically separated from the initially damaged (unlabelled, light) DNA *via* CsCl density gradient centrifugation.^[404] In recent years the more facile approach of cell cycle synchronization in G0 (by either growth to confluence or serum starvation) prior to UV irradiation has been widely employed, which prevents the formation of newly-replicated DNA by simple exclusion of any proliferating cells from the analysis.

In order to test our hypothesis that ATR might regulate GG-NER differentially during the cell cycle, an entirely novel approach was obviously necessary. We therefore adapted our flow cytometry-based repair assay to precisely evaluate GG-NER efficiency during each of G0/G1, S, and G2/M.^[342] Initial control studies showed, under our UV irradiation conditions, that cell cycle progression was transiently completely halted (by both active checkpoints and blocked replication forks, as expected) for at least six hours in various human primary and tumour strains. This provided a convenient window to accurately quantify the kinetics 6-4PP removal (normally 80-100% removal within six hours) as a function of cell cycle without any reservations about newly-replicated DNA. Cells were simply harvested at appropriate times post-UV, stained with propidium iodide in addition to anti-6-4PP antibodies, and populations gated in each phase of the cell cycle were analyzed by flow cytometry to determine the relative percentage of unrepaired 6-4PPs.

This optimized repair assay enabled us to conclusively demonstrate that strong knockdown of ATR signaling by treatment with caffeine or short-interfering RNA completely

abolishes the capacity of primary human lung fibroblasts (HDLFs) to remove 6-4PPs during S phase, while exerting no effect whatsoever on repair during G0/G1 or G2/M [342]. On the other hand HDLFs treated with a specific ATM inhibitor, or ATM-deficient primary skin fibroblasts derived from a patient afflicted with *Ataxia telangiectasia*, repaired normally during the entire cycle. The importance of this striking ATR-mediated on-off GG-NER switch to human health was underscored by demonstrations that (i) cells from Seckel syndrome patients carrying hypomorphic ATR mutations, and (ii) three among six randomly-chosen model human tumour strains, manifested total abrogation of 6-4PP repair exclusively during S phase. Of note the three S phase-specific repair-deficient tumour strains expressed ATR and were proficient in phosphorylation of the early substrate histone H2AX, which is not surprising since ATR is strictly required for cell viability. Presumably, therefore, defective repair during S-phase in these tumour strains can be traced to alteration of some specific downstream component of the ATR pathway (see below).

Remaining Questions

Which among the multitude of ATR substrates mediate(s) S phase-specific GG-NER? Of note, p53 appears not to be involved since (i) HDLFs stably expressing a short hairpin RNA targeting this tumour suppressor were shown to be relatively proficient in GG-NER during the entire growth cycle [342] and (ii) the three tumour cell lines mentioned immediately above which exhibited normal GG-NER kinetics during S phase are known to be p53-deficient. However of immediate interest are a number of other prime candidate ATR substrates, as detailed below:

The essential core NER pathway protein **XPA** was shown to be phosphorylated on serine 196 in an ATR-dependent manner in UV-exposed human cells, and this is evidently important for maintaining normal UV resistance.^[293] A follow-up investigation showed that redistribution of XPA to the nucleus upon UV treatment also requires ATR, but not phosphorylation of serine 196 *per se*.^[294] It will be very interesting to evaluate whether interference with ATR-mediated phosphorylation, or nuclear relocalization, of XPA would reduce the efficiency of NER, possibly in an S phase-specific manner.

The GG-NER lesion recognition protein **XPC** was shown to be phosphorylated on two S/T-Q sites (serines 350 and 892) upon exposure to the powerful pro-oxidant IR^[239] (although the involvement of either ATM or ATR was not ascertained). This is consistent with recent evidence indicating a novel role for XPC in the cellular response oxidative DNA damage.^[379] However the very important issue remains as to whether XPC is phosphorylated specifically by ATR after UV and, if so, whether this harbours any functional implications for NER.

The heterotrimeric single-stranded DNA binding protein **RPA**, composed of p70, p32, and p14 subunits, plays essential independent roles in DNA replication and NER.^[86] ATR is required for effecting the hyperphosphorylation of RPA primarily on the p32 subunit specifically during S-phase in response to UV.^[295] It has been suggested that this modification may be required to switch RPA from its role in DNA replication to that in DNA repair.^[297, 298] Upon rendering nonphosphorylatable all known ATR modification sites on the p32 subunit (i.e., serines 4,8,11,12,13 and threonines 21,33), the UV-induced S

phase checkpoint was shown to be significantly attenuated [296]; however any effect on NER remains to be determined.

Following exposure to UV the human replication checkpoint protein **claspin** appears to be phosphorylated directly by ATR, as well as by Chk1 on non-S/T-Q sites in an ATR-dependent manner, and the three proteins then evidently cooperate with one another to regulate cell cycle checkpoints.^[239, 271, 303-305] Claspin may function as a sensor of anomalous structures generated by stalled replication forks at sites of DNA damage, and cells knocked down for this protein are sensitive to the cytotoxic effects of both UV and IR.^[305] Of particular interesthere, claspin was shown to interact physically and functionally with the GG-NER lesion recognition proteins DDB2 and XPC.^[306] Although this latter study demonstrated that siRNA-mediated depletion of claspin had no effect on GG-NER efficiency, this was presumably evaluated only in non-replicating cells. It therefore remains possible that knockdown of claspin, or prevention of its ATR- and/or Chk1-dependent phosphorylation, might totally abolish GG-NER of UV-induced DNA damage exclusively during S-phase.

What is the physiological relevance of S phase-specific GG-NER? In responding to this, the first order of business would be to ascertain, as already strongly suggested by our results in model human tumour strains, that defects in S phase-specific GG-NER actually exist in human cancers. If so, there could be major implications on at least two levels.

Firstly NER is the only pathway in humans for eliminating highly-genotoxic bulky DNA adducts induced by many environmental mutagens; therefore it seems rather likely that a complete defect in this GG-NER subpathway during S phase (especially if this were to constitute an early event) would greatly enhance the accumulation of genetic mutations and, in doing so, stimulate the development of multistage carcinogenesis. In this respect it will be highly worthwhile to investigate S phase repair status in cells derived from different stages of melanoma and nonmelanoma skin cancers, since it is established beyond any doubt that solar UV-induced DNA damage constitutes a preeminent etiological factor in these diseases.

Secondly our findings could have ramifications for better design of individualized cancer therapy protocols. As prime example, the UV-mimetic agent cisplatin remains an important front-line tool in the treatment of eg., lung, ovarian, testicular, and bladder cancers. Any patient tumours with preexisting deficiencies in GG-NER of cisplatin-induced intrastrand crosslinks during S-phase might be expected to manifest much stronger sensitivity the drug, relative to tumours that repair efficiently throughout the growth cycle. However many patients that initially respond extremely well to cisplatin therapy eventually suffer relapse due to the development of clinical resistance; moreover there is evidence that the evolution of increased NER efficiency in tumours may somehow at least partially underly this phenomenon.^[405] It would therefore be extremely interesting to evaluate eg., whether relatively rare variants within a predominantly NER-proficient tumour cell population might harbour defects in S-phase specific GG-NER and, if so,

whether this minor population might undergo major expansion through positive selection *in vivo* in response to protracted cisplatin therapy.

In summary, we developed a rapid and highly-reproducible flow cytometry-based assay to precisely analyze GG-NER kinetics in intact cycling cells. This permitted the identification of a brand new role for ATR kinase as a master regulator of bulky DNA adduct removal exclusively during S phase, revealing a novel relationship between DNA replication and nucleotide excision repair. We believe that our powerful DNA repair assay will constitute a useful and sometimes necessary resource for future investigations on the regulation of GG-NER in human systems.

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Figures

Figure 1

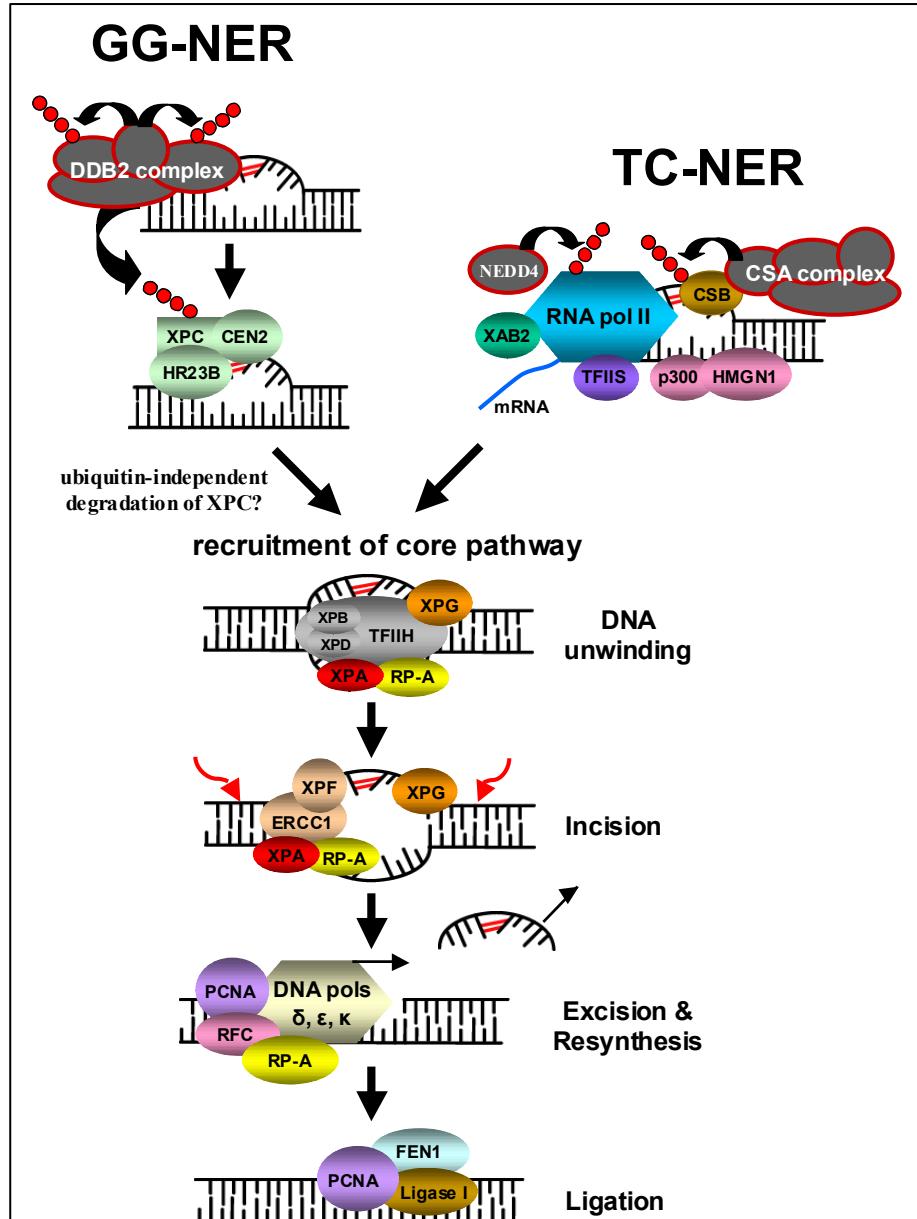
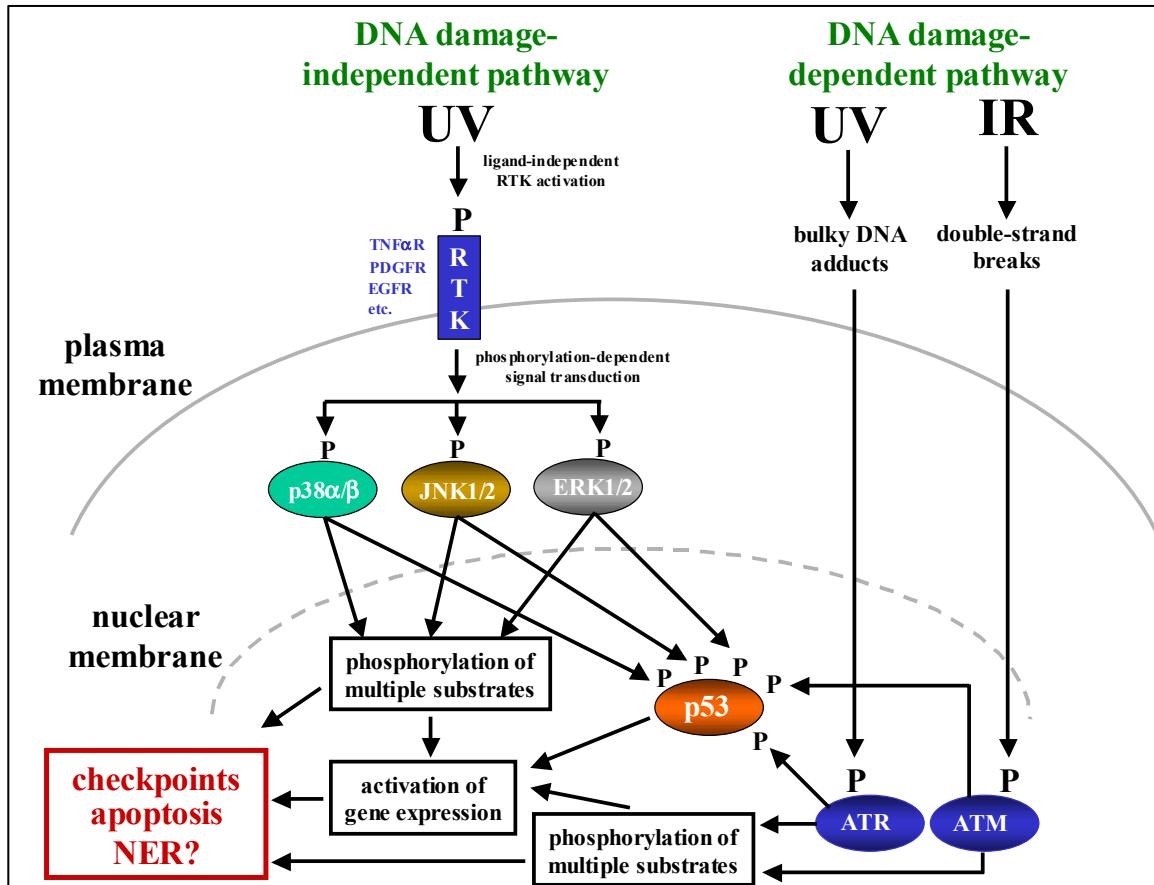


Figure 1

Figure 2**Figure 2**

ANNEXE 3 - article

Article publié dans: Med Sci (Paris). 2009 Jun-Jul; 25(6-7):555-7.)

« Du nouveau sur la régulation de la réparation de l'ADN par excision de nucléotides »

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La réparation par excision de nucléotides (*nucleotide excision repair, NER*) corrige une grande variété de lésions de l'ADN qui provoquent une distorsion de la double hélice et qui, par conséquent, bloquent la transcription et la réPLICATION [1] (voir *Figure 1* pour une description détaillée). Ces lésions peuvent être causées par une multitude d'agents environnementaux. Entre autres, les CPD (dimères de cyclobutane-pyrimidine) et les 6-4PP (pyrimidine (6-4) pyrimidone), provoqués par les rayons ultraviolets solaires (UV), sont les principaux facteurs étiologiques du cancer de la peau [2]. La maladie récessive autosomique *Xeroderma pigmentosum* (XP) illustre de façon exemplaire l'importance de la NER. Cette perturbation génétique est caractérisée par un défaut de la NER engendré par des mutations affectant des gènes (*XP-A* à *XP-G*) directement impliqués dans cette voie de réparation. Les personnes atteintes manifestent une hypersensibilité aux UV (coups de soleil sévères, pigmentation anormale, troubles oculaires) ainsi qu'une très forte prédisposition au développement de tumeurs cutanées. L'âge médian de survenue du premier cancer est d'environ 8 ans. De plus, près du tiers des patients présentent des affections neurologiques sévères comme une microcéphalie et des troubles du développement [3].

Depuis sa découverte, la NER fut très étudiée et le processus reconstitué *in vitro*. Néanmoins, sa régulation demeure mal comprise. En réponse aux UV (et aux autres agents provoquant un stress répliquatif), la kinase ATR (*Ataxia telangiectasia and rad 3-related*) est activée et joue un rôle protecteur considérable [4]. Entre autres, ATR phosphoryle le suppresseur de tumeur p53 [5], un important régulateur du cycle cellulaire et de l'apoptose, également requis pour une NER efficace [6]. Mis à part p53, ATR phosphoryle une

pléthore de protéines intervenant de façon critique dans la réponse aux stress génotoxiques dont certaines sont directement associées à la NER (XP-A, RP-A) [7]. Toutefois, aucune étude n'avait jusqu'à maintenant documenté l'efficacité de la NER dans des cellules humaines dont l'activité d'ATR est inhibée. Par conséquent, nous avons émis l'hypothèse qu'ATR puisse participer à la NER, et ce spécifiquement au cours de la phase S du cycle cellulaire conformément à son rôle prééminent durant la réPLICATION de l'ADN.

Cependant, en raison de diverses considérations techniques, d'une façon générale, les méthodes traditionnelles d'étude de la NER excluent les cellules en phase S de l'analyse. Pour pallier ce problème, nous avons utilisé des anticorps hautement spécifiques des CPD et des 6-4PP, en conjonction avec la cytométrie en flux, afin de mettre au point une nouvelle technique permettant de quantifier précisément la cinétique de réparation de ces photoproducts en fonction du cycle cellulaire. Grâce à cette méthode, nous avons pu démontrer que dans les cellules humaines dont l'activité d'ATR est abrogée, la correction des dommages à l'ADN par la NER est complètement abolie durant la phase S. D'autre part, ATR ne joue aucun rôle dans la réparation de l'ADN pendant les phases G0/G1 ou G2/M [8]. Cette observation révèle une nouvelle fonction cruciale pour ATR dans le maintien de la stabilité génomique au cours de la réPLICATION de l'ADN.

Nous avons en outre montré que sur six lignées tumorales sélectionnées aléatoirement, trois se caractérisent par une absence complète de la NER exclusivement au cours de la phase S. Il n'est donc pas exclu que de nombreuses tumeurs humaines puissent être caractérisées par un tel défaut. Ainsi, nos résultats revêtent une importance manifeste pour

notre compréhension du développement des cancers de même que pour leur traitement. En effet, le statut de la NER constitue un facteur de résistance clinique à certains agents chimiothérapeutiques couramment utilisés tel que le cisplatine [9] qui, à l'instar des UV, induit des lésions dans l'ADN réparées par la NER. Ainsi, les tumeurs présentant un défaut de la NER pendant la phase S pourraient répondre plus sélectivement à ces agents thérapeutiques, permettant ainsi l'élaboration de stratégies qui pourraient améliorer significativement l'efficacité des traitements du cancer.

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Figure

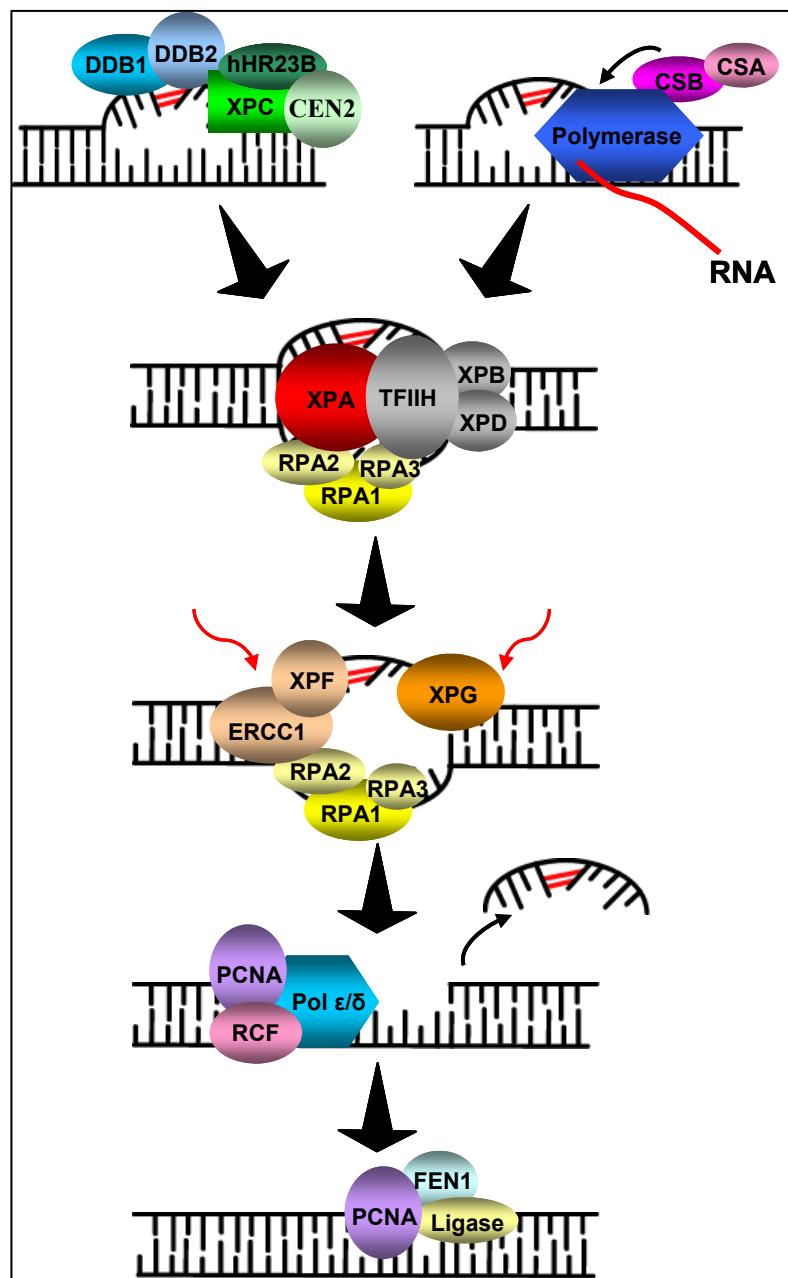


Figure 1