

Thermal^{Q1} Killing of Human Colon Cancer Cells Is Associated With the Loss of Eukaryotic Initiation Factor 5a

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Heat-induced cell death appears to be a cell-specific event. Chronic heat stress was lethal to human colon cancer cells (Caco-2, HT29, and HCT116), but not to normal diploid fibroblasts and other cancer cells (BJ-T, WI38, HeLa, ovarian 2008, WI38VA). Acute heat stress (45–51°C, 30 min) caused cell death of colon cancer cells during recovery at physiological temperature. Thermal killing of Caco-2 cells was not mediated via oxidative stress since Caco-2 cells were much more resistant than HeLa and other cancer cells to H₂O₂-induced cell death. Acute heat stress caused a striking loss of eukaryotic initiation factor 5A (eIF5A) in colon cancer cells, but not in HeLa and other normal or transformed human fibroblasts. The heat-induced loss of eIF5A is likely to be due to changes in the protein stability. The half-life of eIF5A was changed from >20 h to less than 30 min during the acute heat stress. Sequence analysis of the eIF5A gene from Caco-2 and HeLa cells did not reveal any difference, suggesting that the change in stability in Caco-2 cells was not due to any eIF5A mutation. Pretreatment of cells with protease inhibitors such as phenylmethyl sulfonyl fluoride (PMSF) partially blocked the heat-induced loss of eIF5A and prevented heat-induced cell death. In light of the essential role of eIF5A in cell survival and proliferation, our results suggest that the stability of eIF5A may have an important role in determining the fate of the particular cell type after severe heat stress.

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Heat stress causes dramatic change in translation including transient halt of protein synthesis linking with a breakdown of polysomes, and the reformation of polysomes devoted to the synthesis of heat shock proteins (Li et al., 1995; Beere and Green, 2001). The repression of protein translation and the synthesis of heat shock proteins serve as a frontline protection of cells against the accumulation of unfolded or mis-folded protein molecules. Heat stress can also affect membrane, cytoskeleton, cell cycle and signal transduction pathways (Dikomey and Franzke, 1992; Roti et al., 1998; Sakaguchi et al., 1995; Stein et al., 1999). It has been shown that high temperatures can damage and kill cancer cells, usually with minimal injury to normal tissues (van der Zee, 2002). These specific temperature-dependent effects provide the rationale for the application of hyperthermia in combined therapeutic modalities. Several phase III trials have shown a beneficial effect of hyperthermia (Hildebrandt et al., 2002; Wust et al., 2002; Bergs et al., 2007).

Eukaryotic initiation factor 5A (eIF5A) contains hypusine, an unusual amino acid derived from the modification of a specific lysine residue by two enzymes, deoxyhypusine synthase and deoxyhypusine hydroxylase (Chen and Liu, 1997; Park et al., 1997; Park, 2006). Inhibition of deoxyhypusine synthase leads to growth arrest and cell death (Jakus et al., 1993; Park et al., 1994^{Q2}; Chen et al., 1996). Disruption of the genes encoding either eIF5A or deoxyhypusine synthase leads to lethal phenotype in yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (Schnier et al., 1991; Sasaki et al., 1996). These studies indicate that eIF5A is essential for cell survival and proliferation. We have shown that eIF5A can serve as an RNA-binding protein (Xu and Chen, 2001; Xu et al., 2004). Moreover, we and others have recently shown that eIF5A interacts specifically with the translation active 80S ribosomes *in vivo*, suggesting that eIF5A may be involved in some aspects of translation (Jao and Chen, 2006; Zanelli et al., 2006). In light of the dramatic effect of heat stress

on translation and the essential nature of eIF5A for cell survival and proliferation, it is tempting to speculate that eIF5A may have a role in the heat-induced cell death.

In the present study, we have investigated the effect of severe heat stress, on the eIF5A level and the survival of different cell lines. We found that heat-induced cell death correlated well with the loss of eIF5A protein during heat-stress. Thus, Caco-2 colon cancer cells exhibited almost complete loss of eIF5A after heat treatment and were most sensitive to thermal killing. In contrast, HeLa cells did not show any appreciable decrease in eIF5A after heat treatment and were resistant to thermal killing. The heat-induced loss of eIF5A in Caco-2 cells could be partially blocked by PMSF, an irreversible serine protease inhibitor. Importantly, PMSF and other protease inhibitors also partially protected Caco-2 cells from thermal killing. In summary, our study demonstrated that severe heat stress can lead to eIF5A loss in certain cancer cells and suggested that the fate of cancer cells in response to severe heat stress may be coupled to the level of eIF5A.

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Materials and Methods

Materials and chemicals

Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM) and fetal bovine serum (FBS) were obtained from Gibco BRL (Gaithersburg, MD). Oligo-dT, poly-dA, dNTPs, SuperscriptTM II reverse transcriptase were purchased from Invitrogen Life Technologies (Baltimore, MD). Chicken anti-human eIF5A antibody was generated as previously described (Jao and Chen, 2002^{Q3}). Rabbit against chicken antibody conjugated to horseradish peroxidase (HRP-RAC) was from Amersham Pharmacia (Piscataway, NJ). Other biological chemicals were purchased from Sigma (St. Louis, MO). CompleteTM Protease Inhibitor Cocktail Tablet was purchased from Roche Molecular Biochemicals (Indianapolis, IN).

Cell culture and stress treatment

Different normal, transformed, and cancer human cell lines such as WI38 (normal lung fibroblasts), BJ-T (normal foreskin fibroblasts transfected with telomerase), WI38VA (SV40 virally transformed lung fibroblasts), IMR-90SV (SV40 virally transformed fibroblast), Caco-2 (colon cancer), HT-29 (colon cancer), 2008 (ovarian cancer), HeLa (cervix cancer) were used for experiments. All cell lines were cultured at 37°C in a humidified, 10% CO₂ atmosphere in DMEM supplemented with 10% FBS. Cells were subcultured in culture flasks and passaged every 3 days. Viability of cells was routinely tested by the trypan blue exclusion assay. For heat treatment, cells were seeded in 60 and 35 mm culture dishes to achieve a confluent monolayer. Then, a heat shock at either 44 or 51°C was applied using a CO₂ incubator (for 44°C) or by transferring cell culture dishes into a water bath for 30 min (for 51°C) followed by different recovery in CO₂ incubator at 37°C. Oxidative stress was administered by incubating the cells with different concentrations of hydrogen peroxide.

Cellular proliferation assays and morphological analysis

For viability analysis, cells were treated in 35 mm cell culture dishes. Morphological analysis was performed by phase contrast light microscopy. For quantification, cell viability was measured by the MTT-method, which is based on the conversion of the tetrazolium salt (MTT, 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyl-tetrazolium-bromide) to blue formazan by mitochondrial dehydrogenase activity (Berg et al., 1990). After treatment, 150 µl of MTT solution (5 mg/ml PBS) was added to the cells. The cultures were then incubated for 3 h at 37°C and the supernatant discarded. Solubilization of cells and formazan was achieved by adding 3 ml of lysis buffer (10% SDS in 50% dimethylformamide, pH 4.7). After shaking for 2 h, color development was documented by a scanner and quantified.

DNA fragmentation analysis

Confluent cultures were treated with either acute heat stress followed by recovery or oxidative stress. Cells were harvested and suspended in a lysis buffer (10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 100 mM NaCl, 25 mM EDTA, 0.5% SDS and 100 µg/ml Proteinase K) for 20 h at 37°C. DNA was extracted with a phenol-chloroform mixture, precipitated by ethanol, dried, and dissolved in a TE buffer (10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 25 mM EDTA). RNA was digested with 2 µg/ml of RNase Cocktail (Ambion^{Q4}). The DNA samples were analyzed by electrophoresis on a 1% agarose gel containing ethidium bromide (0.5 µg/ml).

Western blot analysis

Cells were washed and scraped into 300 µl of lysis buffer (20 mM HEPES-KOH, pH 7.5, 1 mM EGTA, 5 mM MgCl₂, 10 mM KCl, 10% glycerol, 300 mM sorbitol, 2 mM DTT, and 1× CompleteTM protease inhibitors (Roche). After a brief

sonication, the homogenate was clarified by centrifugation at 14,000g for 5 min. The supernatant was recovered and protein concentration was determined by Bradford method (Bio-Rad^{Q5}). Total proteins (5 µg) were subjected to 15% SDS-PAGE and Western blotting analysis using polyclonal antibodies against eIF5A (Jao et al., 2006^{Q6}). The proteins were detected by enhanced chemical luminescence method (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech^{Q7}).

Reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR)

Cells were harvested and the total RNA was prepared using RNeasyTM Total RNA Kit (Qiagen^{Q8}). Total RNA (1 µg) was reverse transcribed into cDNA by incubating with SuperScriptTM RNase H reverse transcriptase (Invitrogen Life Technologies) using oligo(dT)₁₂₋₁₈ as primer. For PCR amplification, gene specific primers, both sense and antisense, were used. The sequences of these primers were:

(eIF5A-1 sense) = 5'-CTg ACA TgT TTT CTg ACg gC-3';
 (eIF5A-1 antisense) = 5'-TCA gCC CAT CTT CTT CCA gA-3';
 (eIF5A-2 sense) = 5'-ACT TgT ggC CCA gAT Agg CAC CCA g-3';
 (eIF5A-2 antisense) = 5'-gCg ACT TCg CCg AgA TgT CCA gC-3';
 (HSPA1A sense) = 5'-ACT TgT ggC CCA gAT Agg CAC CCA g-3';
 (HSPA1A antisense) = 5'-gCg ACT TCg CCg AgA TgT CCA gC-3';
 (GAPDH sense) = 5'-TgA AgC TCg gAg TCA Acg gAT TTg-3';
 (GAPDH antisense) = 5'-CAT gTg ggC CAT gAg gTC CAC CAC-3'.

PCR conditions were chosen to ensure that the yield of the amplified product was linear with respect to the amount of input RNA. The expression of glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH), a housekeeping gene, was used as an internal control. The PCR products were analyzed by electrophoresis on a 1% agarose gel and visualized by ethidium bromide staining.

Half-life of eIF5A

Cultures of Caco-2 cells (80% confluent) were radiolabeled with [³H]leucine at 5 µCi/ml for 48 h at 37°C. At that time the radioactive medium was removed and the monolayer cells were rinsed three times to remove free [³H]leucine. The cultures were then replenished with fresh growth medium containing cycloheximide (50 µg/ml) and incubated at 37 or 51°C to initiate the chase with leucine at 4 mM for various time. At indicated time points following the leucine chase, cells were harvested and cell extracts prepared for acid-insoluble radioactive counting and for SDS-polyacrylamide gel. The radioactivity associated with the eIF5A was measured by scintillation counting of the band excised from the membrane. Half-life of eIF5A was estimated from the time course of the disappearance of radioactive eIF5A during leucine chase. The value of radioactive eIF5A was normalized against the total radioactivity associated with acid-insoluble protein in cell extracts used for gel electrophoresis with the value at time zero set as 1.0.

Cloning of eIF5A cDNA

Total RNA was isolated from HeLa and Caco-2 cells using RNeasy kit (Qiagen). Thereafter, cDNAs were synthesized from 1 µg of isolated total RNA by reverse transcriptase (RT) using oligo(dT) primers. To amplify eIF5A cDNA from each cell line, primers were designed to cover the entire open reading frame. The amplified eIF5A cDNA from each cell line was directly subjected to DNA sequencing using ABI PRISM[®] 3100 Genetic Analyzer (DNA Core Facility, UMDNJ).

Results

Chronic heat stress on cell survival

To determine whether there is cell-specific difference in response to chronic heat stress, we compared four different human cell lines, BJ-T, HeLa, WI38VA, and Caco-2 to direct thermal killing at 44°C over a time period up to 24 h. Figure 1 shows that among cells tested, Caco-2 was the most sensitive one. No viable attached cells were detected in the culture after 6 h under heat stress. In contrast, other cell types survived the heat treatment at 44°C and remained viable for over 24 h.

Acute heat shock and recovery

Since both HeLa and Caco-2 are of epithelial origin, we further compared their ability of recovering at physiological temperature (37°C) from acute heat stress. Both Caco-2 and HeLa cells were incubated at 51°C for 30 min. The treated cultures were then incubated at 37°C and the recovery was monitored by cell morphology and metabolic activity. As shown in Figure 2, HeLa cells remained attached and viable during the recovery period for up to 24 h. In contrast, Caco-2 cells failed to recover from the acute heat stress, with massive cell death ensued within 12 h. We also tested two other colon cancer cell lines HCT116 and HT29 in order to determine whether the sensitivity to thermal killing is a general feature for colon cancer cells. Figure 2 shows that all three colon cancer cell lines were sensitive to thermal killing, suggesting that human colon cancer cells are in general more vulnerable to heat-stress as compared to HeLa or other cell types.

The thermal killing effect is not due to oxidative stress

Although mild and transient heat stress can endow cells with thermotolerance due to the induction of heat shock proteins, acute heat-stress or chronic exposure of cells to a sub-lethal temperature can lead to cell death via apoptotic pathways or necrosis (Li and Werb, 1982; Parsell and Lindquist, 1993; Samali et al., 1999). Oxidative stress, resulting from an impairment of mitochondrial electron transfer, has been proposed to be involved in heat-induced cell death (Davidson and Schiestl, 2001; Larkindale and Knight, 2002; Vacca et al., 2004). To determine whether thermal killing of colon cancer cells is related to oxidative stress, we compared the effect of hydrogen peroxide on the growth of Caco-2 with HeLa and other

transformed cell lines. Figure 3 shows that Caco-2 was quite resistant to the treatment of H₂O₂ as compared to HeLa and other transformed fibroblasts, suggesting that thermal killing of Caco-2 cells was not related to oxidative stress. To further determine whether apoptosis is involved in the heat-induced cell death, we compared the effects of acute heat stress and oxidative stress on chromosomal DNA integrity. Figure 4 shows that DNA fragmentation occurred during the recovery period after acute heat stress. In contrast, oxidative stress did not cause any appreciable DNA fragmentation up to 72 h, consistent with the finding that Caco-2 cells are sensitive to thermal killing but resistant to oxidative stress.

Acute heat stress induced the loss of eIF5A

Since one of the earliest response of cells to heat stress is the translation repression and loss of active polysomal ribosomes (Panniers and Henshaw, 1984; Mariano and Siekierka, 1986; Duncan and Hershey, 1989), we wonder whether eIF5A, an essential protein that recently reported to bind translational active ribosomes (Jao and Chen, 2006), may be involved in heat induced cell death. In this regard, it can be noted that acute heat stress of pancreatic cancer cells at high temperature (51°C) has been reported to cause a decrease of eIF5A (Takeuchi et al., 2002). We therefore examined the effect of severe heat stress on the level of eIF5A in HeLa and Caco-2 cells. Figure 5A shows that although both Caco-2 and HeLa cells remained viable, there was a striking difference in eIF5A protein level in these two cell lines at the end of 30 min of heat stress. Thus, the eIF5A level was reduced by more than 90% in Caco-2 cells, but remained unchanged in HeLa cells. Since nearly all eIF5A molecules in mammalian cells exist in hypusine modified form that is functional (Duncan and Hershey, 1986; Taylor et al., 2007), we concluded that acute heat stress caused the loss of functional eIF5A in Caco-2 cells. In light of the essential nature of eIF5A for cell survival (Chen and Liu, 1997; Park et al., 1997), the loss of eIF5A may contribute to the heat-induced cell death and thus may explain why Caco-2 cells failed to recover from acute heat stress. We then determine whether the loss of eIF5A in Caco-2 cells is due to a decrease in gene expression at mRNA level. There are two genes encoding eIF5A in mammalian cells and other eukaryotes (Jenkins et al., 2001). Both eIF5A1 and eIF5A2 genes were expressed in Caco-2 cells, but only eIF5A1 was expressed in HeLa cells (Fig. 5B). The eIF5A1 transcript level was not significantly affected by heat treatment in HeLa cells, but was attenuated by about 20% in Caco-2 cells. This decrease, however, was not sufficient to account for the loss of more than 90% of eIF5A protein in Caco-2 cells after heat stress. With the consideration of the abundant literature evidence on the inhibitory effect of heat stress on general protein synthesis (Panniers and Henshaw, 1984; Mariano and Siekierka, 1986; Duncan and Hershey, 1989), our data suggested that the cause of heat-induced loss of eIF5A was most likely due to changes that occur at the posttranslational stage.

We also included a comparison of the expression of HSPA1A, the gene that encodes for heat shock 70 kDa protein 1A, to determine whether acute heat stress produces differential effect of on heat shock gene expression between Caco-2 and HeLa cells. Figure 5B shows that HSPA1A in both HeLa and Caco-2 cells was barely detectable at normal temperature and was not induced during the short duration of acute heat stress (Fig. 5B, lanes 7 and 8).

Dose-response and time course of the effect of heat stress

We further examined the dose-response and time course of the effect of heat stress on the level of eIF5A protein. Figure 6A shows that the eIF5A protein level in HeLa, WI38VA, WI38, and the 2008 ovarian cancer cells was about the same

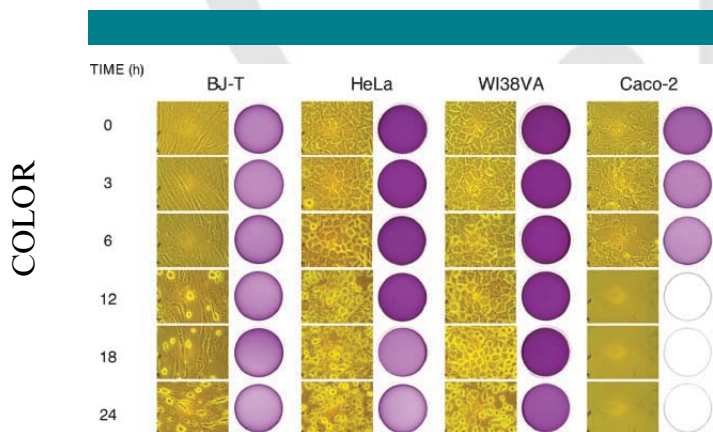


Fig. 1. Chronic heat stress and cell survival. Human BJ-T (normal foreskin fibroblasts transfected with telomerase), HeLa (cervix cancer), WI38VA (SV40 virally transformed lung fibroblasts), and Caco-2 (colon cancer) were exposed to heat stress at 44°C for various times as indicated. Phase contrast microscopic analysis and MTT assay were performed.

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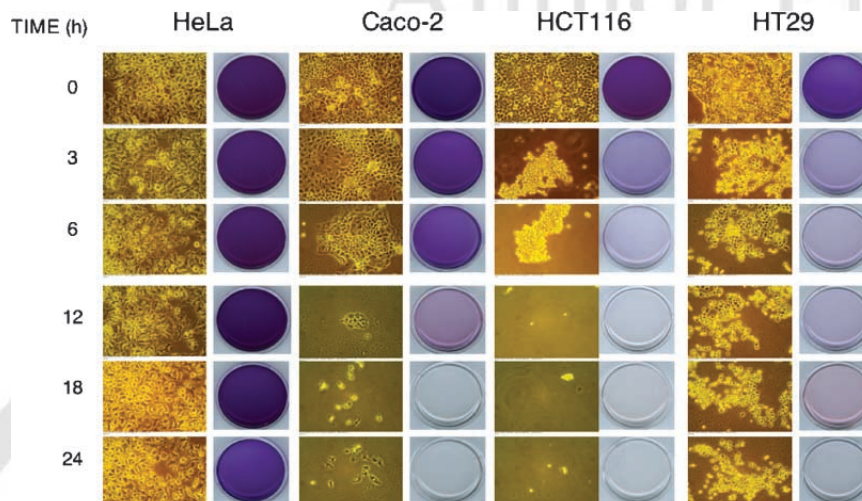


Fig. 2. Recovery from acute heat stress. HeLa, HCT116, HT29, and Caco-2 cells at confluence were exposed to heat stress at 51°C for 30 min and then transferred back to 37°C in the CO₂ incubator for recovery. MTT assay and morphological analysis of cell cultures was performed at various times during the recovery period.

over the temperature range from 37 to 51°C. However, the level of eIF5A in Caco-2 showed progressive decrease as the incubation temperature increased. The heat-induced loss of eIF5A occurred rapidly; more than 80% of eIF5A disappeared within 30 min of acute heat stress (Fig. 6B). To further determine whether there was significant global degradation of cellular proteins during acute heat stress, we compared the SDS-polyacrylamide gel pattern of equal volumes of cell extracts derived from cultures before and during heat stress (51°C). As shown in Figure 6C, the protein pattern and staining intensity at the end of heat stress were nearly identical to that before heat treatment (Fig. 6C, lane 4 vs. lane 1), suggesting that there was no global loss of cellular proteins. We then estimated

the effect of heat stress on the half-life of eIF5A. As shown in Figure 7, the half-life of eIF5A in Caco-2 at 37°C was estimated to be longer than 20 h, similar to that reported in the literature for other mammalian cells (Torrelio et al., 1987; Bergeron et al., 1998; Nishimura et al., 2005)^{Q10}. Acute heat stress (51°C) shortened the half-life of eIF5A to less than 30 min (Fig. 6C), suggesting that the heat-induced loss of eIF5A was most likely

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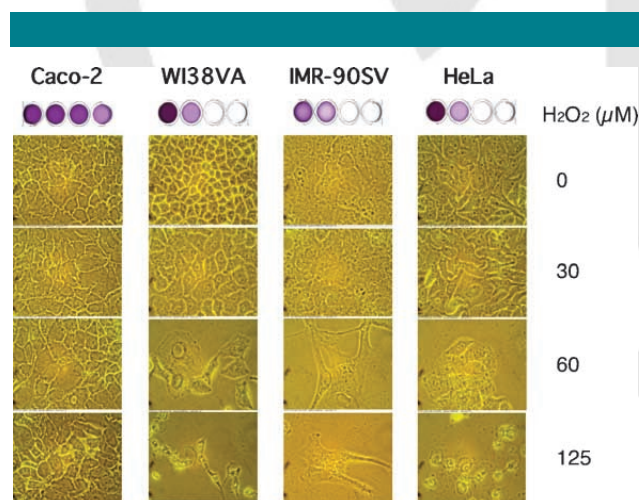


Fig. 3. Effect of oxidative stress on different human cell lines. Confluent^{Q9} cultures of human Caco-2, WI38VA, IMR-90SV (SV40 virally transformed fibroblast), and HeLa cells were exposed to different concentrations of hydrogen peroxide as indicated. After 24 h of incubation, cell viability was determined by the MTT assay (upper row) and by morphological analysis with phase contrast light microscopy.

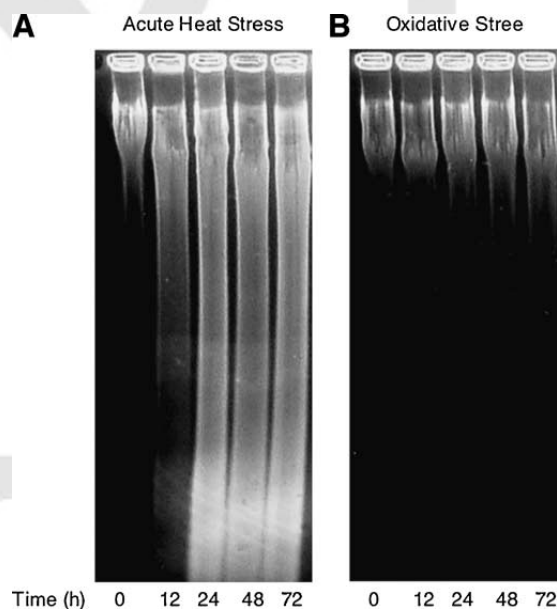


Fig. 4. DNA fragmentation analysis of the effects of acute heat stress and oxidative stress on Caco-2 cells. A: Caco-2 cells at confluence were subjected to acute heat stress for 30 min and then incubated at 37°C for various times as indicated. B: Caco-2 cells at confluence were treated with H₂O₂ (250 μM) for various time. Cells were harvested at the indicated times for DNA fragmentation analysis.

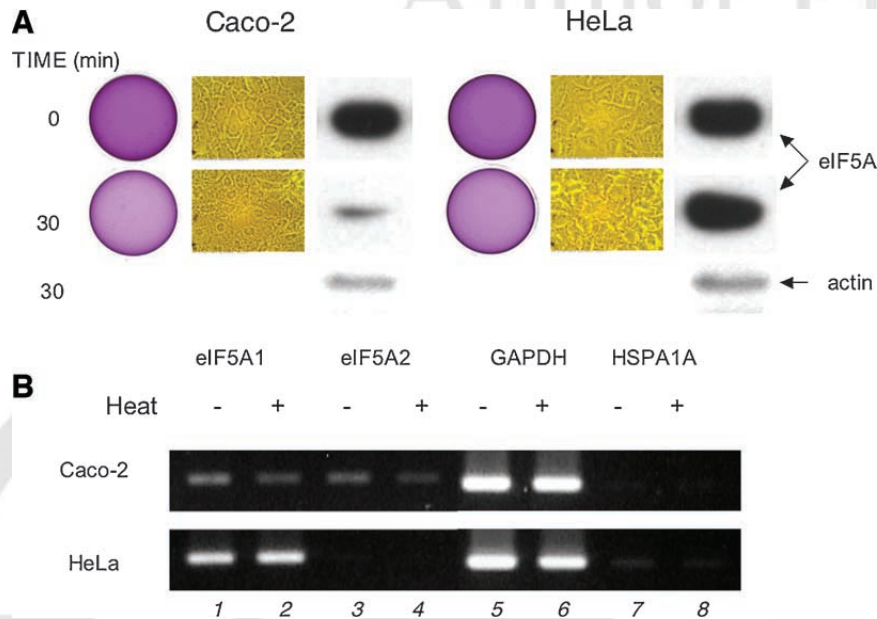


Fig. 5. Effect of acute heat stress on the level of eIF5A protein (A) and mRNA (B) in Caco-2 and HeLa. **A:** Cells were exposed to acute heat stress at 51°C for 30 min or left untreated as controls (Time 0). Cell viability was monitored by MTT assay (left column) and morphological analysis (middle column). Cells were then harvested and equal amount of cellular protein (5 µg) was analyzed by 15% SDS-page, followed by Western blot analysis (right column) using a specific chicken antibody against human eIF5A as described in Materials and Methods Section. **B:** Cells were exposed to acute heat stress at 51°C for 30 min or left untreated as controls as indicated. After RNA isolation and reverse transcription, gene expression of eIF5A1, eIF5A2, and HSPA1A was analyzed by RT-PCR using specific primers and conditions, Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH) was used as internal standard.

due to either changes in eIF5A stability or an enhanced protein degradation. These results also indicate that in colon cancer cells, the heat-induced loss of eIF5A appeared to be one of the very earlier biological events in response to acute heat stress. It is certainly of interest to further investigate why heat-induced loss of eIF5A occurs in certain cell types such as colon cancer cells but not in other cell types.

Is the eIF5A in Caco-2 mutated?

We have previously shown that a single amino acid mutation in yeast eIF5A resulted in a temperature-sensitive phenotype, due to a significant change of eIF5A stability (Chatterjee et al., 2006). Thus, one possible cause for the heat-induced change in eIF5A stability may be due to a mutation of eIF5A gene in human colon cancer cells. To test this possibility, we have cloned and compared the sequences the eIF5A cDNA from Caco-2 and HeLa cells (Fig. 8). Both sequences were found to be identical to the wild type sequence (BC001832) in GenBank, indicating that gene mutation was not the cause for the heat-induced loss of eIF5A in Caco-2 cells. We concluded that the heat-induced loss of eIF5A could not be attributed to any conformational change that is unique to colon cancer cells.

Protease inhibitors block heat-induced loss of eIF5A and cell death

We reasoned that if enhanced protein degradation due to certain proteolytic system may account for the heat-induced loss of eIF5A, protease inhibitor may block such a degradation. We therefore examined the effect of PMSF, a serine protease inhibitor, on the heat-induced loss of eIF5A in Caco-2 cells. Figure 9A shows that PMSF could partially block the heat-induced loss of eIF5A, suggesting that protein degradation was the cause for the heat-induced loss of eIF5A in Caco-2 cells. This finding allows us to further test whether the heat-induced

loss of eIF5A could account for the heat-induced cell death of Caco-2 cells. Figure 9B shows that indeed the heat-induced cell death of Caco-2 or HCT116 colon cancer cells could be blocked not only partially by PMSF but also more prominently by pan protease inhibitor cocktail (CPIP, Complete Protease Inhibitor Cocktail) that inhibits broad spectrum of serine, cysteine and metalloproteases as well as calpains (Fig. 9B). Together, these results support the contention that heat stress induced a rapid degradation of eIF5A and that this loss of eIF5A then contributed to the thermal killing of colon cancer cells.

Discussion

Environmental stress elicits diverse biological responses in living cells, including heat shock response and mitogen-activated protein kinase cascade. The ubiquitous and highly conserved heat shock proteins play a key role in protecting cells against the stress insult. On the other hand, MAPK pathways, particularly JNK and p38, are related to the apoptotic signaling (Beere and Green, 2001; Nollen and Morimoto, 2002). In addition to these general stress responses, different stress may modulate different genes within a given cell type (Kaltschmidt et al., 2002) and, for different cell types, different genes may be specifically regulated by a particular stress depending on the composition of the intracellular milieu (Wvoessmann et al., 1999; DeMeester et al., 2001). Thus, the ultimate fate of cells in response to a stress can be cell-specific.

In this study we have compared the effect of temperature on thermal killing of human cells under two conditions: (i) chronic heat stress at 44°C, and (ii) acute heat stress at the temperature range of 45–51°C. We found that Caco-2, but not HeLa, is highly susceptible to thermal killing under both conditions (Figs. 1 and 2). These findings indicate that the two cell types, Caco-2 and HeLa, respond differently to heat stress. Mitochondrial injury due to heat stress can lead to an

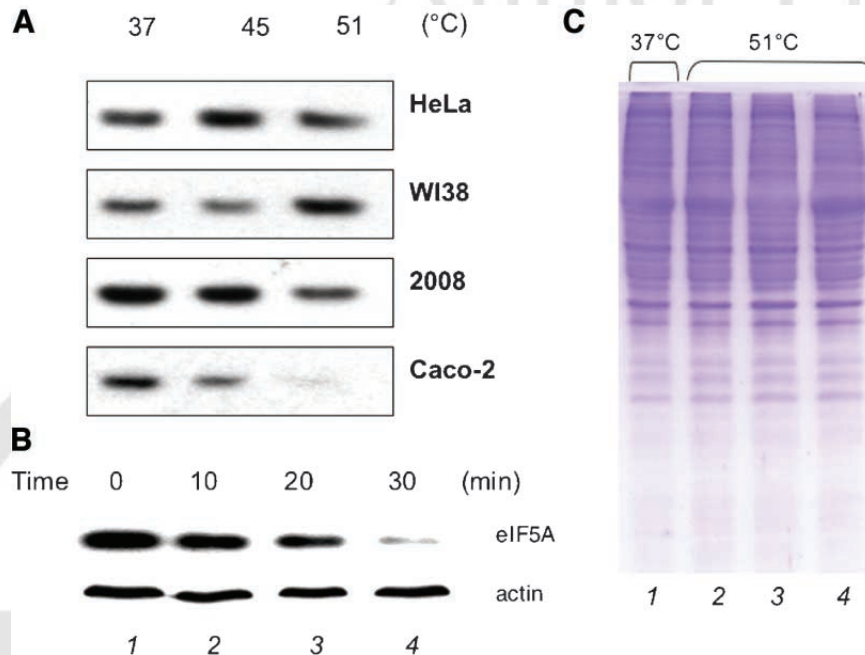


Fig. 6. Western blot analysis of eIF5A in four human cell lines at different temperatures. **A:** Human HeLa, WI38 (normal lung fibroblasts), 2008 (ovarian cancer), and Caco-2 cells were incubated at 37, 45, or 51°C for 30 min. Cells were then harvested and equal amount of cellular protein (5 μ g) was analyzed by 15% SDS–PAGE, followed Western blot analysis using anti-eIF5A antibody. **B:** Time course of the loss of eIF5A in Caco-2 cells at 51°C. Caco-2 cells were incubated at 51°C for 10, 20, and 30 min, or left untreated at 37°C as control (Time 0). Thereafter, protein levels of eIF5A were determined by Western blot analysis. Actin was used as a loading control. **C:** Heat stress on global protein profile. Caco-2 cells were either maintained at 37°C (lane 1) or stressed at 51°C for 10, 20, and 30 min (lanes 2, 3, and 4, respectively). Cells were rinsed and harvested in an equal volume of extraction buffer and processed for SDS–polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis. Equal volume of extract samples (5 μ l) was loaded onto each lane.

accumulation of reactive oxygen species that generate oxidative stress (Davidson and Schiestl, 2001). It has also been reported that oxidative stress and antioxidant enzymes play a major role in heat-induced cell death in yeast (Davidson et al., 1996). However, oxidative stress does not appear to be the cause for the thermal killing of Caco-2 cells, as they are quite resistant to the cytotoxic effect of hydrogen peroxide up to 125 μ M (Fig. 3).

Together, our results demonstrate that for a given cell type (Caco-2 or HeLa), different stress may produce different physiological effects, and that for a given stress (heat or oxidative), different cell type may respond differently.

The thermal killing of colon cancer cells appears to be the result of apoptosis as suggested by DNA fragmentation analysis (Fig. 4). However, Takeuchi et al. (2002) reported that they did

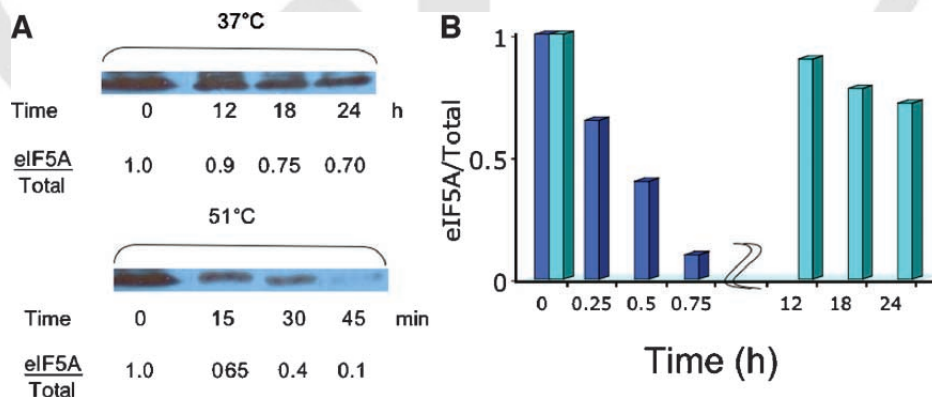


Fig. 7. Half-life of eIF5A. **A:** Western blot analysis of eIF5A protein. Caco-2 cells were radiolabeled for 48 h with [3 H]leucine (5 μ Ci/ml) and then chased with cold leucine (4 mM) in the presence of cycloheximide (50 μ g/ml) at 37 or 51°C for various time as indicated. Cells were then analyzed by SDS–PAGE, the eIF5A band position was located by Western blotting. The ratio of radioactivity associated with eIF5A relative to the total radioactivity was determined at each time point with the value at time zero set at 1.0 as described in Materials and Methods Section. **B:** Loss of radiolabeled eIF5A as a function of time of leucine chase. The plot of the ratio eIF5A/Total versus the time of chase was used to estimate of the half-life of eIF5A in Caco-2 cells at 37°C (dark blue) and at 51°C (light blue).

HeLa	1	ATGGCAGATG	ACTTGGACTT	CGAGACAGGA	GATGCAGGGG	CCTCAGCCAC
Caco-2	1	ATGGCAGATG	ACTTGGACTT	CGAGACAGGA	GATGCAGGGG	CCTCAGCCAC
BC001832		ATGGCAGATG	ACTTGGACTT	CGAGACAGGA	GATGCAGGGG	CCTCAGCCAC
HeLa	51	CTTCCCAATG	CAGTGTCTCAG	CATTACGTAA	GAATGGCTTT	GTGGTGCTCA
Caco-2	51	CTTCCCAATG	CAGTGTCTCAG	CATTACGTAA	GAATGGCTTT	GTGGTGCTCA
BC001832		CTTCCCAATG	CAGTGTCTCAG	CATTACGTAA	GAATGGCTTT	GTGGTGCTCA
HeLa	101	AAGGCCGGCC	ATGTAAGATC	GTCGAGATGT	CTACTTCGAA	GACTGGCAAG
Caco-2	101	AAGGCCGGCC	ATGTAAGATC	GTCGAGATGT	CTACTTCGAA	GACTGGCAAG
BC001832		AAGGCCGGCC	ATGTAAGATC	GTCGAGATGT	CTACTTCGAA	GACTGGCAAG
HeLa	151	CACGGCCACG	CCAAGGTCCA	TCTGGTTGGT	ATTGACATCT	TTACTGGGAA
Caco-2	151	CACGGCCACG	CCAAGGTCCA	TCTGGTTGGT	ATTGACATCT	TTACTGGGAA
BC001832		CACGGCCACG	CCAAGGTCCA	TCTGGTTGGT	ATTGACATCT	TTACTGGGAA
HeLa	201	GAAATATGAA	GATATCTGCC	CGTCAACTCA	TAATATGGAT	GTCCCCAACA
Caco-2	201	GAAATATGAA	GATATCTGCC	CGTCAACTCA	TAATATGGAT	GTCCCCAACA
BC001832		GAAATATGAA	GATATCTGCC	CGTCAACTCA	TAATATGGAT	GTCCCCAACA
HeLa	251	TCAAAAGGAA	TGACTTCCAG	CTGATTGGCA	TCCAGGATGG	GTACCTATCA
Caco-2	251	TCAAAAGGAA	TGACTTCCAG	CTGATTGGCA	TCCAGGATGG	GTACCTATCA
BC001832		TCAAAAGGAA	TGACTTCCAG	CTGATTGGCA	TCCAGGATGG	GTACCTATCA
HeLa	301	CTGCTCCAGG	ACAGCGGGGA	GGTACGAGAG	GACCTTCGTC	TCCCTGAGGG
Caco-2	301	CTGCTCCAGG	ACAGCGGGGA	GGTACGAGAG	GACCTTCGTC	TCCCTGAGGG
BC001832		CTGCTCCAGG	ACAGCGGGGA	GGTACGAGAG	GACCTTCGTC	TCCCTGAGGG
HeLa	351	AGACCTTGGC	AAGGAGATTG	AGCAGAAGTA	CGACTGTGGA	GAAGAGATCC
Caco-2	351	AGACCTTGGC	AAGGAGATTG	AGCAGAAGTA	CGACTGTGGA	GAAGAGATCC
BC001832		AGACCTTGGC	AAGGAGATTG	AGCAGAAGTA	CGACTGTGGA	GAAGAGATCC
HeLa	401	TGATCACGGT	GCTGTCTGCC	ATGACAGAGG	AGGCAGCTGT	TGCAATCAAG
Caco-2	401	TGATCACGGT	GCTGTCTGCC	ATGACAGAGG	AGGCAGCTGT	TGCAATCAAG
BC001832		TGATCACGGT	GCTGTCTGCC	ATGACAGAGG	AGGCAGCTGT	TGCAATCAAG
HeLa	451	GCCATGGCAA	AATAA			
Caco-2	451	GCCATGGCAA	AATAA			
BC001832		GCCATGGCAA	AATAA			

Fig. 8. Comparison of the eIF5A cDNA sequences of HeLa and Caco-2 cells. Specific primers designed to amplify the eIF5A gene were used in PCR using cDNAs reverse-transcribed from HeLa and Caco-2 cells as the template. The cloned eIF5A PCR products from each cell line were directly subjected to DNA sequencing. The sequences were then aligned, along with the wild-type human sequence (accession number BC001832).

not detect any DNA fragmentation after heat stress at 45 or 51 °C. This apparent discrepancy is likely due to the difference in the time course chosen for chromosome integrity analysis. We note that they have limited their detection window to less than 12 h following the stress, which appears to be too short for any significant DNA fragmentation to occur.

Since acute heat stress (51 °C) has been reported to cause eIF5A loss (Takeuchi et al., 2002), it is certainly plausible to speculate that the differential response of HeLa and Caco-2 cells to thermal killing (Fig. 2) may be related to differences in eIF5A content after heat stress. Indeed, the correlation of heat-induced loss of eIF5A and thermal killing is striking (Fig. 5A). It is surprising that, even though both cell types are of epithelial origin, heat stress induced a rapid loss of eIF5A only in Caco-2, not in HeLa cells (Fig. 5A). The fact that such a loss does not occur in tumor cells such as HeLa and ovarian 2008 or in normal cells suggests that this phenomenon is unique to some but not

all transformed cells (Fig. 6A). The heat-induced loss of eIF5A represents an early response of colon cancer cells to heat stress (Fig. 6B), suggesting that it may impact some downstream events that are related to heat stress response. Although the precise function of eIF5A has not been clearly defined, abundant literature evidence indicates that eIF5A correlates with proliferation and is essential for cell survival (Chen and Liu, 1997; Park, 2006). Thus, the loss of eIF5A could be a major contributing factor for the inability of Caco-2 cells to recover from the acute heat stress at lethal temperature. Similarly, the reason why HeLa and other cells are resistant to thermal killing can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that eIF5A level remains unchanged during heat stress (Figs. 5A and 6A).

There are three possible explanations for the selective loss of eIF5A in colon cancer cells in response to acute heat stress: (i) eIF5A gene in Caco-2 is mutated and thus the gene product becomes susceptible to protease digestion at higher

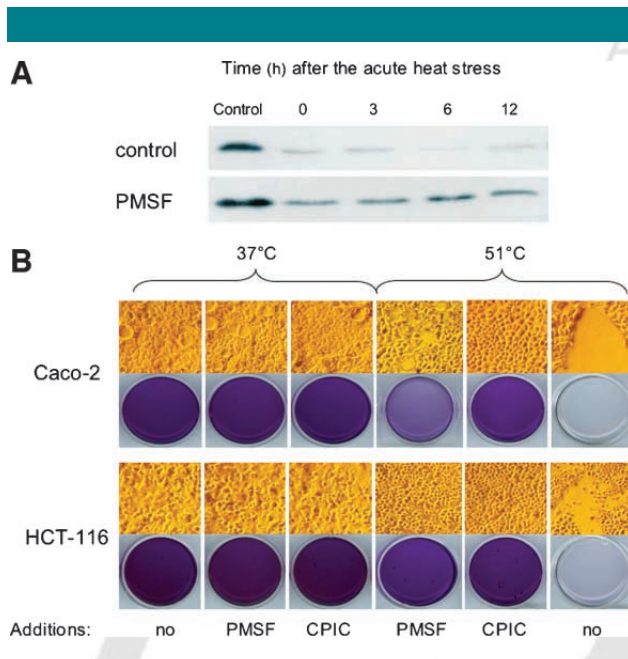


Fig. 9. Effect of protease inhibitors on eIF5A level and cell survival. **A:** Caco-2 cells were treated with PMSF (250 μ M) prior to acute heat stress (51°C, 30 min). Cell cultures were then shifted back to 37°C for various time as indicated. The protein levels of eIF5A were determined by Western blot analysis using chick anti-helf5A antibody at 1:1,000 and HRP-RAC antibody (1:1,000). **B:** Caco-2 and HCT116 colon cancer cells were maintained at 37°C or treated by acute heat stress (51°C, 30 min) either without or with pretreatment of PMSF (250 μ M) or Complete Protease Inhibitor Cocktail (CPIC, final concentrations: pronase 2 μ g/ml, thermolysin 0.2 μ g/ml, chymotrypsin 1.2 μ g/ml, papain 132 μ g/ml, pancreas extract 8 μ g/ml, EDTA 0.4 mM). Cell cultures were then incubated at 37°C for 12 h and the cell viability was monitored by morphological analysis using phase contrast light microscopy and by metabolic MTT assay. The study has been repeated three times and representative data were presented.

temperatures; (ii) heat induces a selective secretion of eIF5A to the medium; and (iii) heat stress activates a particular proteolytic system which selectively targets eIF5A. Since the eIF5A sequence of Caco-2 cells is identical to that of HeLa cells and other normal human cells (Fig. 8), protein mutation could not be the cause for heat-induced loss of eIF5A in Caco-2. Selective secretion of eIF5A cannot be the cause either, because we did not observe any secretion of eIF5A before or after heat treatment of Caco-2 cells (data not shown). Our finding that PMSF partially blocks the heat-induced loss of eIF5A in Caco-2 cells suggests that a certain heat-activated protease may be involved (Fig. 9A). The finding that PMSF and other protease inhibitors also block the thermal killing of colon cancer cells Caco-2 and HCT116 (Fig. 9B) is consistent with the notion that eIF5A is essential for cell survival and proliferation. The nature of this heat-sensitive proteolytic system remains to be investigated. Nonetheless, it is of interest to note a parallel observation that we have made with a temperature sensitive yeast mutant, whose eIF5A, with a single amino acid substitution, is stable at permissive temperature, but rapidly decays at restrictive temperature. Here, we also found that PMSF inhibits the degradation of eIF5A and partially suppresses the temperature-sensitive growth arrest phenotype in this yeast strain (Chatterjee et al., 2006).

Hyperthermia is a type of cancer treatment in which body tissue is exposed to high temperatures. Research has shown that high temperatures can damage and kill cancer cells, usually with minimal injury to normal tissues (Hildebrandt et al., 2002; van der Zee, 2002). The finding that heat induces a rapid loss

eIF5A in colon cancer cells may provide a mechanistic basis for the effectiveness of using hyperthermic regimen. In this context, it is noteworthy that DFMO has been reported to increase the sensitivity of CHO cells to the cytotoxic effect of elevated temperature (Gerner et al., 1980; Fuller and Gerner, 1982). DFMO inhibits ornithine decarboxylase, the key enzyme for the biosynthesis of putrescine, the precursor of spermidine which is required for hypusine formation on eIF5A (Chen and Liu, 1997; Park et al., 1997). Thus, the effect of DFMO in enhancing the cytotoxic effect of hyperthermia could be mediated via the inhibition of hypusine formation and hence inactivation of eIF5A. It will be of interest to determine whether the synergistic interaction of hyperthermia in bimodality or trimodality treatment may also involve eIF5A. In view of our study here, we propose that manipulation of eIF5A stability or hypusine formation can be used to enhance the efficacy of hyperthermia in treating cancer.

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