Journal of Molecular Science

Journal of Molecular Science
Volume 32 Issue 4, Year of Publication 2022, Page 102-104
DoI-17.4687/1000-9035.2022.033

Journal of Molecular Science

www.jmolecularsci.com ISSN:1000-9035

Catalytic Mechanisms and Allosteric Regulation of DNA Repair Enzymes in Maintaining Genomic Integrity

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Article Information
Received: 27-10-2022
Revised: 22-11-2022
Accepted: 04-12-2022
Published: 20-12-2022

Keywords
Environmental
Endogenous sources

ABSTRACT
The maintenance of genomic integrity is essential for cellular survival and proper function. DNA repair enzymes play a crucial role in correcting damage induced by environmental and endogenous sources. These enzymes operate through complex catalytic mechanisms and are subject to allosteric regulation to ensure fidelity in DNA repair. This study explores the catalytic mechanisms and allosteric regulation of key DNA repair enzymes, such as DNA polymerases, ligases, and nucleases, and their implications for genome stability. Understanding these mechanisms may offer new therapeutic approaches for treating genetic disorders and cancer.

INTRODUCTION:

DNA integrity is constantly threatened by replication errors, oxidative stress, and chemical insults. The ability of cells to repair DNA damage is vital for preventing mutations that could lead to diseases, including cancer. DNA repair enzymes utilize precise catalytic mechanisms and allosteric modulation to recognize and correct DNA lesions efficiently. This review focuses on the molecular mechanisms that govern DNA repair and the impact of their regulation on genomic stability.

2. Catalytic Mechanisms of DNA Repair Enzymes

2.1 Base Excision Repair (BER)

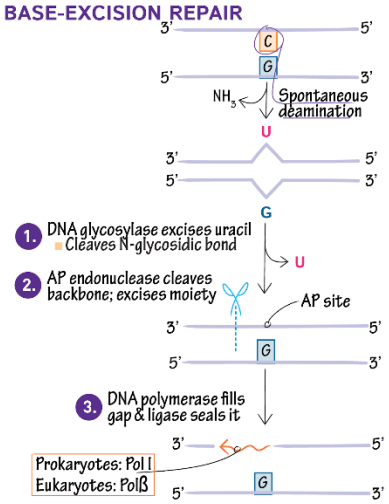

Fig.Base Excision Repair

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Base Excision Repair (BER) is a highly conserved mechanism that repairs oxidative, alkylation, deamination, and abasic site damage in DNA. The process involves four key enzymatic steps:

1. DNA Glycosylases: These enzymes recognize and excise damaged or incorrect bases by cleaving the N-glycosidic bond, creating an apurinic/apyrimidinic (AP) site. Each glycosylase has specificity for different lesions (e.g., OGG1 repairs 8-oxoguanine, UNG removes uracil).
2. AP Endonuclease (APE1): Cleaves the phosphodiester backbone at the AP site, generating a single-strand break (SSB).
3. DNA Polymerase (Pol β in humans): Inserts the correct nucleotide at the gap using the complementary strand as a template.
4. DNA Ligase (Ligase III/XRCC1 complex): Seals the repaired strand, restoring DNA integrity.

2.2 Nucleotide Excision Repair (NER)

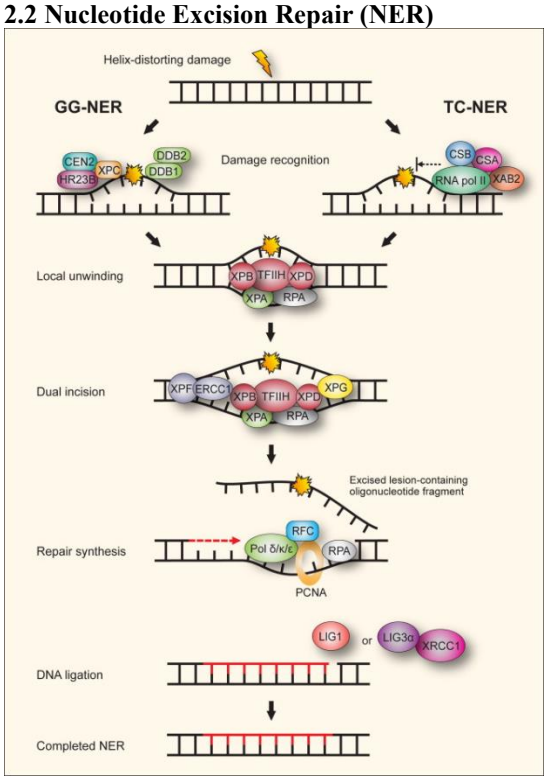


Fig.Nucleotide Excision Repair (NER)

NER is essential for removing bulky DNA lesions caused by UV radiation and chemical mutagens, such as pyrimidine dimers and DNA adducts. This pathway is divided into global genome repair (GG-NER) and transcription-coupled repair (TC-NER):

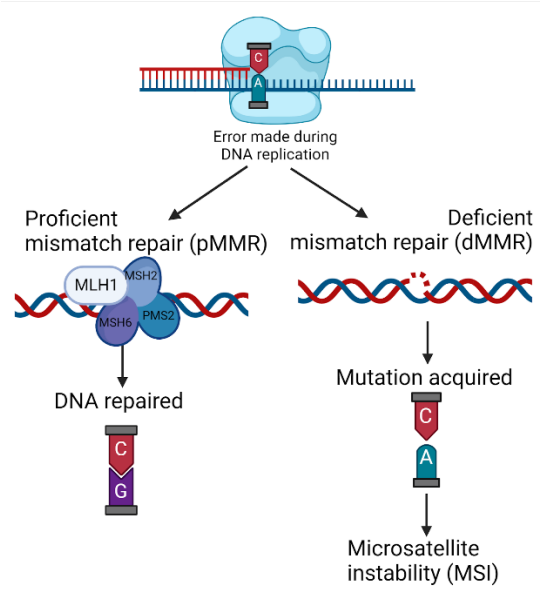
1. Damage Recognition:
- GG-NER: The XPC-RAD23B complex scans the genome for helix distortions.
- TC-NER: RNA polymerase II stalling at lesions triggers recruitment of CSA and CSB proteins.

2. Helicase Activity: XPB and XPD helicases (TFIIH complex) unwind the DNA around the lesion.

3. Dual Incision: XPF-ERCC1 and XPG nucleases excise a ~24–32 nucleotide DNA fragment containing the damage.

4. DNA Resynthesis and Ligation: DNA polymerase δ/ε, aided by RFC and PCNA, fills the gap, and DNA ligase I completes the repair.

2.3 Mismatch Repair (MMR)



Mismatch Repair (MMR)

The MMR pathway ensures genome stability by correcting replication errors, including base mismatches and small insertions/deletions (indels):

1. Mismatch Recognition:
- MutSα (MSH2–MSH6 complex) binds to single-base mismatches and small indels.
- MutSβ (MSH2–MSH3 complex) detects larger insertion/deletion loops.

2. Recruitment of Repair Machinery:
- MutLα (MLH1–PMS2 complex) is recruited and interacts with exonuclease EXO1, which removes the incorrect strand.

3. DNA Resynthesis: DNA polymerase δ fills the gap, and ligase I seals the strand.

4. Strand Discrimination: Newly synthesized DNA is identified by PCNA interactions and transient nicks, ensuring specificity.

3. Allosteric Regulation of DNA Repair Enzymes

3.1 Structural Changes in Enzymes

Allosteric interactions modify enzyme conformation, enhancing or inhibiting their activity in response to cellular signals.

3.2 Regulation by Post-Translational Modifications

Phosphorylation, ubiquitination, and acetylation influence the activity and stability of repair enzymes.

3.3 Protein-Protein Interactions

Enzyme activity is fine-tuned by interactions with

co-factors and regulatory proteins that determine repair pathway selection.

4. Implications for Genomic Stability and Disease Prevention

4.1 Role in Cancer Suppression

DNA repair enzymes prevent oncogenic mutations by maintaining genome integrity.

4.2 DNA Repair Deficiencies and Genetic Disorders

Mutations in repair enzymes are linked to diseases such as Xeroderma Pigmentosum and Lynch Syndrome.

4.3 Therapeutic Strategies Targeting DNA Repair Enzymes

Modulation of repair enzymes through small molecules and gene therapy offers potential treatments for cancer and hereditary diseases.

5. CONCLUSION:

DNA repair enzymes play a crucial role in preserving genomic stability by detecting and correcting DNA damage. These enzymes operate through diverse catalytic mechanisms, including base excision repair (BER), nucleotide excision repair (NER), and double-strand break repair pathways such as homologous recombination (HR) and non-homologous end joining (NHEJ). The precise coordination of these repair processes is essential to prevent mutations that contribute to genetic disorders and cancer.Allosteric regulation is a key factor in modulating enzyme activity, ensuring timely and efficient DNA repair. Structural studies have revealed that DNA repair enzymes undergo conformational changes upon binding to cofactors or interacting proteins, enhancing or inhibiting their activity. For instance, post-translational modifications such as phosphorylation and ubiquitination fine-tune enzyme function in response to cellular stress.Advancements in understanding these catalytic and regulatory mechanisms open new avenues for targeted therapies. Small-molecule inhibitors or activators of DNA repair enzymes hold promise for cancer treatment, where selectively modulating repair pathways can enhance the efficacy of chemotherapy and radiation. Future research should focus on developing precision medicine strategies that exploit DNA repair vulnerabilities while minimizing adverse effects on normal cells.

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