

Efficient and Erroneous Incorporation of Oxidized DNA Precursors by Human DNA Polymerase η [†]

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ABSTRACT: Altered oxidative metabolism is a property of many tumor cells. Oxidation of DNA precursors, i.e., dNTP pool, as well as DNA is a major source of mutagenesis and carcinogenesis. Here, we report the remarkable nature of human DNA polymerase η that incorporates oxidized dNTPs into a nascent DNA strand in an efficient and erroneous manner. The polymerase almost exclusively incorporated 8-hydroxy-dGTP (8-OH-dGTP) opposite template adenine (A) at 60% efficiency of normal dTTP incorporation, and incorporated 2-hydroxy-dATP (2-OH-dATP) opposite template thymine (T), guanine (G), or cytosine (C) at substantial rates. The synthetic primers having 8-hydroxy-G paired with template A or 2-hydroxy-A paired with template T, G, or C at the termini were efficiently extended. In contrast, human DNA polymerase ι incorporated 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A with much lower efficiency and did not incorporate 2-OH-dATP opposite any of the template bases. It did not extend the primers having the oxidized bases at the termini either. We propose that human DNA polymerase η may participate in oxidative mutagenesis through the efficient and erroneous incorporation of oxidized dNTPs during DNA synthesis.

Reactive oxygen species (ROS¹), such as superoxide, hydrogen peroxide, hydroxyl radicals, and singlet oxygen, are produced through normal cellular metabolism, and formation of such radicals is further enhanced by irradiation or chemical exposure (1, 2). ROS generates a variety of altered purines and pyrimidines in DNA (3, 4), and oxidation of DNA plays important roles in mutagenesis, carcinogenesis, and aging (5, 6). Several lines of evidence indicate, however, that oxidation of DNA precursors in the nucleotide pool, i.e., dNTPs, is another important cause of genome instability (7–9). Indeed, the frequency of A:T-to-C:G transversion muta-

tions increases more than 1000-fold over the wild-type level in *Escherichia coli mutT* mutants, which are deficient in the ability to hydrolyze oxidized dGTP, i.e., 7,8-dihydro-8-oxo-dGTP (8-hydroxy-dGTP, 8-OH-dGTP, Figure 1A) (10, 11). 8-OH-dGTP leads to A:T-to-C:G mutations when it is incorporated opposite adenine (A) in the template DNA because the incorporated 8-OH-G in DNA can pair with incoming dCMP in the next round of DNA replication (8, 12). The high spontaneous A:T-to-C:G mutations in the *mutT* strain are almost completely suppressed when the *mutT* cells are cultured in anaerobic conditions, indicating the essential role of oxygen in the mutagenesis (13). Another oxidized nucleotide, i.e., 1,2-dihydro-2-oxo-dATP (2-hydroxy-dATP, 2-OH-dATP, Figure 1B), can induce G:C-to-T:A transversions when it is incorporated opposite guanine (G) in the template (14, 15). The sanitizing enzyme, i.e., Orf135, in *E. coli* degrades 2-OH-dATP, and G:C-to-T:A mutations occur in the *orf135*-deficient strain more frequently than in the wild-type strain (16, 17).

Oxidized dNTPs also cause genome instability in mammalian cells. Spontaneous tumorigenesis in mice deficient in *Mth1*, a mammalian counterpart of *mutT*, is much enhanced in lung, liver, and stomach, and the MTH1 protein hydrolyzes both 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP (18, 19). Recent studies with mismatch repair defective cells suggest that the majority of mutations in human cells that are deficient in mismatch repair functions do not arise from spontaneous replication errors, but from the incorporation of oxidized dNTPs (20, 21). Thus, it is of great interest in

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¹ Abbreviations: ROS, reactive oxygen species; 8-OH-dGTP, 7,8-dihydro-8-oxo-dGTP; A, adenine; 2-OH-dATP, 1,2-dihydro-2-oxo-dATP; G, guanine; Pol ς , DNA polymerases; C, cytosine; TLS, translesion DNA synthesis; T, thymine; Pol η , DNA polymerase η ; Pol ι , DNA polymerase ι ; HPLC, high performance liquid chromatography.

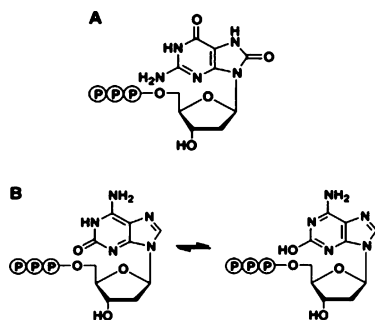


FIGURE 1: Structures of 8-OH-dGTP (A) and 2-OH-dATP (B). P represents a phosphate group.

the mechanisms as to how these oxidized dNTPs induce genome instability and oxidative carcinogenesis.

When the oxidized dNTPs escape from the sanitation by the enzymes, they will be incorporated into nascent DNA by DNA polymerases (Pols). However, oxidized dNTPs are in general poor substrates for Pols (22). For example, the efficiency of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP by Pol δ is more than 10^4 -fold lower than that of incorporation of normal dGTP, and the enzyme prefers to incorporate 8-OH-dGTP opposite template cytosine (C) (23). 8-OH-dGTP is poorly incorporated into DNA by T7 Pol exo⁻, HIV reverse transcriptase, *E. coli* Pol II, and Klenow exo⁻ as well (24). An exception may be human Pol β , which incorporates 8-OH-dGTP into DNA with an efficiency of 10–20% of normal dGTP incorporation and favors its incorporation opposite template A (25). 2-OH-dATP is also a poor substrate for mammalian Pols. The efficiencies of incorporation of 2-OH-dATP opposite template T and C by Pol α are more than 100-fold and 1000-fold, respectively, lower than those of incorporation of normal dATP and dGTP (26).

The Y-family Pols are recently recognized Pols that comprise proteins from different species, including members of Archaea, Bacteria, and Eukarya (27). The most distinct feature of this family of enzymes is their ability to bypass various lesions, such as ultraviolet light photoproducts, in template DNA (28–30). Some bypass reactions, i.e., translesion DNA synthesis (TLS), catalyzed by these enzymes are error prone while others are error free (31). Thus, this family of Pols seems to be involved in mutagenesis and DNA-damage tolerance (32). Interestingly, some of the Y-family Pols are shown to incorporate oxidized dNTPs into DNA in an erroneous manner. Archaeal Y-family Pols from *Sulfolobus* sp. and a bacterial Y-family Pol, i.e., DNA Pol IV (DinB) of *E. coli*, almost exclusively incorporate 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A, and 2-OH-dATP opposite template G and thymine (T) (33, 34). Further genetic analysis with *E. coli* *sod/fur* mutants suggests that both Y-family Pols of *E. coli*, i.e., Pol IV and Pol V (UmuD'C), are involved in oxidative mutagenesis caused by oxidized dNTPs (34). The enzymes may participate in sequential biochemical steps, such as incorporation of oxidized dNTPs into DNA and extension of primers having oxidized bases at the termini. Pol IV is also shown to be involved in induction of G:C-to-T:A mutations when 2-OH-dATP is directly introduced into *E. coli* cells by CaCl₂ treatment (35). Collectively, these results led us to postulate that certain human Y-family Pols might be involved in oxidative mutagenesis through incorrect and efficient incorporation of oxidized dNTPs into nascent DNA. In fact, human Pol η incorporates oxidized dNTPs into

DNA in an erroneous manner like the archaeal and bacterial Y-family Pols (33).

In this study, we quantitatively compared two human Y-family Pols, i.e., Pol η and Pol ι , in the specificity and efficiency of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP into a nascent DNA strand. Surprisingly, Pol η incorporated 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A at almost the same efficiency as incorporation of normal dTTP, and incorporated 2-OH-dATP opposite template T, G, and C at substantial rates. In contrast, Pol ι poorly incorporated 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A and did not incorporate 2-OH-dATP opposite any of the bases in template DNA. Since Pol η is constitutively associated with replication factories (36, 37) and involved in multiple DNA transactions (38–40), we propose that this enzyme may be involved in mutagenesis through the efficient and erroneous incorporation of oxidized dNTPs into DNA strand.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

Materials. Human Pol η and Pol ι were purified as described (41, 42). 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP were prepared as described (26, 43), and no discernible impurities were detected by high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC). dNTPs (ultrapure grade) were purchased from GE Healthcare Bio-Sciences KK (Tokyo).

DNA Substrates. Oligonucleotides containing 8-OH-G and 2-OH-A were prepared by the phosphoramidite method on controlled pore glass supports (1 μ mol) by using a Beckman OLIGO1000 DNA synthesizer. After automated synthesis, the oligomers were detached from the support, deprotected, and purified by HPLC. The oligomers were identified by complete digestion of the oligomers with alkaline phosphatase and P1 nuclease to 2'-deoxymononucleosides. Other oligonucleotides were purchased from BEX Corp. (Tokyo). A Cy3-labeled 18-mer primer (5'-CGCGCGAAGACCG-GTTAC-3') or Cy3-labeled 19-mer primers (5'-CGCGC-GAAGACCGGTTACN-3' where N represents either 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A) were annealed to 36-mer templates (5'-GAAGGGATCCTTAAGACXGTAACCGGTCTTCGCGCG-3' where X represents A, C, G, or T) at a molar ratio of 1:1 to generate substrates. The 5'-Cy3-primer/templates generated by annealing the 18-mer primer to the 36-mer template were named substrate 1, and those generated by annealing the 19-mer primer having 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A to the 36-mer templates were named substrate 2 or 3, respectively. In control reactions, Cy3-labeled 19-mer primers (5'-CGCGC-GAAGACCGGTTACN-3' where N represents either G or A) were annealed to the 36-mer templates. The 5'-Cy3-primer/templates generated by annealing the 19-mer primer having G or A to the 36-mer templates were named substrate 4 or 5, respectively.

Steady-State Kinetic Analyses. The standard reaction mixtures (10 μ L) contained 40 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0), 5 mM MgCl₂, 10 mM dithiothreitol, 250 μ g/mL bovine serum albumin, 60 mM KCl, 2.5% glycerol, 1 nM Pol η or Pol ι , 100 nM primer/template DNA (substrate 1, 2, or 3), and a single oxidized dNTP (8-OH-dGTP or 2-OH-dATP) or normal dNTP (dATP, dTTP, dGTP, or dCTP). The activity of Pol ι was also measured in the same reaction mixtures but without KCl (44). In that case, the concentration of MgCl₂ was reduced to 1 mM instead of 5 mM. Six different

concentrations of oxidized dNTP or normal dNTP were used to determine the kinetic parameters, i.e., k_{cat} and K_m (see below). The mixtures were incubated at 37 °C, and the reactions were terminated by adding 10 μL of stop solution (98% formamide, 10 mM EDTA, 10 mg/mL Blue Dextran). After heat denaturation for 10 min at 100 °C, the samples were separated by electrophoresis with 15% denaturing polyacrylamide gel containing 8 M urea and visualized by the Molecular Imager FX Pro System (Bio-Rad Laboratories, CA).

When the kinetic parameters for incorporation of oxidized or normal dNTPs into DNA were determined, the reaction mixtures contained substrate 1. The reaction time and the concentrations of oxidized dNTP and normal dNTP varied depending on the rates of reactions and the K_m values. For example, the incubation time was 1 min and the concentrations of 8-OH-dGTP varied from 0.05 to 10 μM for the analysis of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A by Pol η . Identical reaction conditions were used for the analyses of incorporation of a single normal dNTP opposite a template canonical base by Pol η . On the other hand, the incubation time was 10 min and the range of concentrations of 8-OH-dGTP was 5 to 100 μM to determine the parameters for incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A by Pol ι . For the kinetic analyses of extension of primers having oxidized bases at the 3'-termini by Pol η , the incubation time was 5 min and the concentrations of dGTP varied from 0.05 to 10 μM with the template/primer DNAs of substrate 2 or 3.

Data Analyses. Gel band intensities were measured using the Molecular Imager FX Pro System and Quantity One software (Bio-Rad Laboratories, CA), and nucleotide incorporation parameters were determined (45). Less than 20% of the primers were extended in these steady-state kinetic analyses, ensuring single-hit kinetics (46). For each DNA substrate, the rate of incorporation was plotted as a function of dNTP concentration, and the V_{max} and K_m values were determined by nonlinear regression fitting using the Sigma-Plot software (Systat Software Inc., CA). k_{cat} was calculated by dividing V_{max} by the enzyme concentration. The fidelity of incorporation, i.e., F_{inc} , was calculated using the equation $F_{\text{inc}} = (k_{\text{cat}}/K_m)_{\text{incorrect}}/(k_{\text{cat}}/K_m)_{\text{correct}}$. All values are means \pm standard errors from three experiments.

RESULTS

Efficient and Erroneous Incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP into DNA by Pol η . Human Pol η almost exclusively incorporates 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A and incorporates 2-OH-dATP opposite template T, G, and C (33). To compare two human Y-family Pols, we at first examined the specificity of human Pol ι incorporating 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP into DNA. To this end, we used substrate 1 having four different bases in the N position in the template and incubated it with Pol ι in the presence of either 8-OH-dGTP or 2-OH-dATP. For the incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP, the primer annealed to the template strand having A in the N position was elongated, and no other primers annealed to templates having C, G, or T in the N position were extended (Figure 2A). These results indicate that Pol ι almost exclusively incorporates 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A as in the case of Pol η . For the incorporation of 2-OH-dATP, no

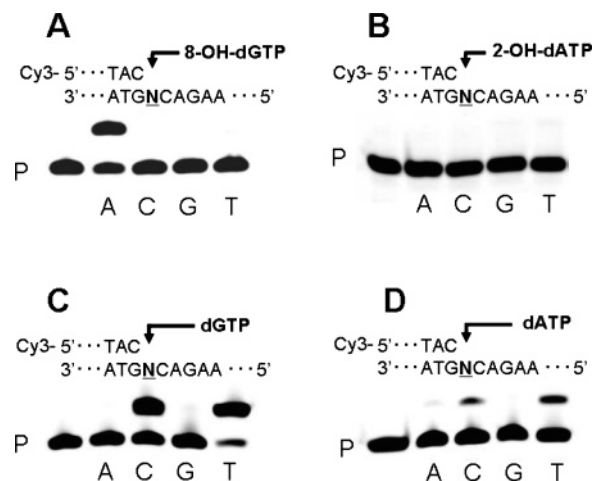


FIGURE 2: Incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP (A), 2-OH-dATP (B), dGTP (C), and dATP (D) into DNA by Pol ι . For analysis of incorporation of oxidized dNTPs (A and B), the reaction mixtures described in Experimental Procedures contained 1 nM Pol ι , 50 μM either 8-OH-dGTP or 2-OH-dATP, and 100 nM substrate 1. No normal dNTPs were included. For analysis of incorporation of normal dNTPs (C and D), the reaction mixtures contained 5 nM Pol ι , 50 μM either dGTP or dATP, and 100 nM substrate 1. In the reaction, KCl was omitted from the reaction mixtures and the concentration of MgCl_2 was 1 mM. The mixtures were incubated for 15 min at 37 °C, and the samples were processed as described in Experimental Procedures. The N in the template strand represents A, C, G, or T.

Table 1: Kinetic Parameters for Incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP by Pol η and Pol ι

Pol	template base/dNTP	K_m (μM)	k_{cat} (min^{-1})	k_{cat}/K_m ($\text{mM}^{-1} \text{min}^{-1}$)	F_{inc}
Pol η	A/dTTP	3.8 ± 0.52	15.4 ± 0.82	4.1	1
	A/8-OH-dGTP	4.2 ± 0.35	10.1 ± 0.35	2.4	0.59
	C/dGTP	1.2 ± 0.22	1.9 ± 0.1	1.6	1
	C/8-OH-dGTP	22.5 ± 8.3	0.3 ± 0.05	0.013	0.008
	C/dGTP	1.2 ± 0.22	1.9 ± 0.1	1.6	1
	C/2-OH-dATP	1.7 ± 0.55	0.1 ± 0.007	0.06	0.038
	G/dCTP	1.6 ± 0.12	9.5 ± 0.22	5.9	1
	G/2-OH-dATP	3.6 ± 0.6	0.35 ± 0.02	0.1	0.017
	T/dATP	5.2 ± 0.47	15 ± 0.61	2.9	1
	T/2-OH-dATP	3.0 ± 0.52	0.55 ± 0.03	0.18	0.062
Pol ι	A/dTTP	14.4 ± 3.0	5.1 ± 0.67	0.35	1
	A/8-OH-dGTP	132 ± 45.4	1.4 ± 0.31	0.011	0.031
	A/dTTP ^a	0.86 ± 0.14^a	2.24 ± 0.08^a	2.6^a	1^a
	A/8-OH-dGTP ^a	48.5 ± 7.37^a	2.17 ± 0.15^a	0.045^a	0.017^a

^a The activities were measured without KCl in the reaction mixtures.

primers were elongated regardless of the bases in the template strand (Figure 2B). The activity of Pol ι is enhanced by omission of KCl from the reaction mixtures (44). We conducted, therefore, the experiments in the absence of KCl. Although the activity was enhanced several times (Table 1), the specificity was unchanged. 8-OH-dGTP was almost exclusively incorporated opposite template A, and no 2-OH-dATP was incorporated into DNA regardless of the template bases (data not shown). In control reactions, Pol ι incorporated normal dGTP opposite template C and T and incorporated normal dATP opposite template T and slightly opposite template C (Figure 2C,D). Thus, we conclude that, although the incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A is a common feature to Y-family Pols, the specificity incorporating 2-OH-dATP into DNA is markedly distinct even within two human homologues.

To compare the efficiency of two Pols for the incorporation of oxidized dNTPs quantitatively, we determined the steady-state kinetic parameters, i.e., K_m and k_{cat} (Table 1). The most remarkable feature of the kinetic data is the high efficiency of Pol η incorporating 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A. The K_m and k_{cat} values (4.2 μ M and 10.1 min⁻¹, respectively) were similar to those of incorporation of normal dTTP opposite template A (3.8 μ M and 15.4 min⁻¹, respectively). Thus, the F_{inc} , i.e., $(k_{cat}/K_m)_{8\text{-OH-dGTP}}/(k_{cat}/K_m)_{dTTP}$, was about 0.6 ($=2.4/4.1$), which suggests that Pol η incorporates 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A with the efficiency of about 60% of that of incorporation of normal dTTP. In addition, the incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP by Pol η was strongly biased opposite template A compared to template C. The k_{cat}/K_m value of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A was more than 180 times greater than that of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template C (2.4 versus 0.013). In contrast, Pol ι incorporates 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A with much lower efficiency. The k_{cat}/K_m value of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A was more than 200 and 30 times, respectively, less than that of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A by Pol η (0.011 versus 2.4) and normal dTTP by Pol ι (0.011 versus 0.35). The k_{cat}/K_m value of incorporation of normal dTTP and 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A by Pol ι was enhanced several times by omission of KCl from the reaction mixtures (0.35 versus 2.6 and 0.011 versus 0.045). Nevertheless, the k_{cat}/K_m value of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A was more than 50 times less than that of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A by Pol η (0.045 versus 2.4) and normal dTTP by Pol ι (0.045 versus 2.6).

We then determined the kinetic parameters of incorporation of 2-OH-dATP opposite template C, G, or T by Pol η (Table 1). We did not determine the parameters for Pol ι because the enzyme did not incorporate 2-OH-dATP into DNA (Figure 2B). The K_m values for the incorporation of 2-OH-dATP by Pol η were indistinguishable from those for the incorporation of normal dNTPs opposite template C, G, or T. However, the k_{cat} values for the incorporation of 2-OH-dATP were 20 to 30 times less than those of incorporation of normal dNTPs. Nevertheless, the F_{inc} values, i.e., $(k_{cat}/K_m)_{2\text{-OH-dATP}}/(k_{cat}/K_m)_{dNTP}$, opposite template C, G, and T were 0.038, 0.017, and 0.062, respectively, suggesting that Pol η incorporates 2-OH-dATP opposite multiple template bases (except for A) with efficiency of 2 to 6% of that of incorporation of normal dNTPs. The order of k_{cat}/K_m values of incorporation of 2-OH-dATP opposite template bases was T (0.18) > G (0.10) > C (0.06).

Efficient Extension of Primers Having 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A at the 3'-Termini by Pol η . To investigate whether Pol η and Pol ι can extend the primers upon incorporation of oxidized dNTPs during DNA synthesis, we examined whether these Pols extend primers having either 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A at the 3'-termini. We annealed the primers to the template strands where the terminal oxidized base was paired with template A, C, G, or T and incubated the primer/templates, i.e., substrate 2 or 3, with Pol η or Pol ι in the presence of four normal dNTPs. Pol η extended the primer having 8-OH-G when the terminal oxidized base was paired with template A or C (Figure 3A). Virtually no extension was observed, however, when the terminal 8-OH-G was paired with template G or T. Pol η could also extend primers having

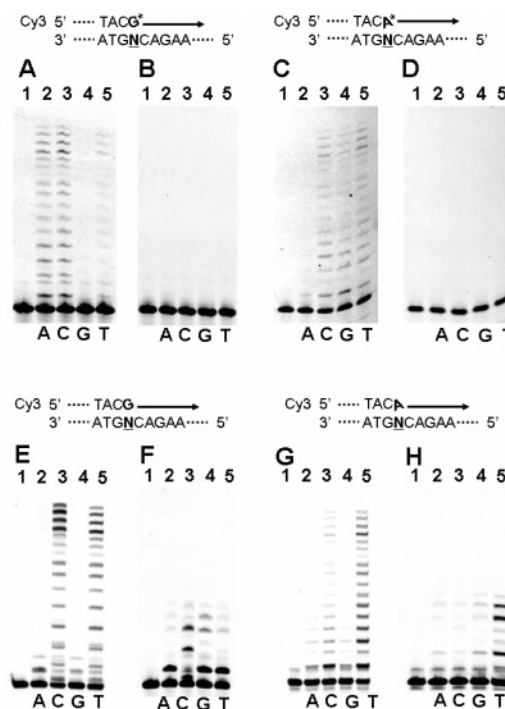


FIGURE 3: Extension of primers having 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A at the termini by Pol η and Pol ι . Primers having 8-OH-G were extended by Pol η (A) or Pol ι (B), and those having 2-OH-A were extended by Pol η (C) or Pol ι (D). As control reactions, primers having G were extended by Pol η (E) or Pol ι (F) and those having A were extended by Pol η (G) or Pol ι (H). The reaction mixtures described in Experimental Procedures contained 1 nM Pol η (A and C) or Pol ι (B and D), 200 μ M four normal dNTPs (dATP, dCTP, dGTP, and dTTP), and 100 nM substrate 2 (A and B) or substrate 3 (C and D). The reaction mixtures were incubated for 5 min at 37 °C. In control reactions, the reaction mixtures contained 10 nM Pol η (E and G) or Pol ι (F and H), 200 μ M four normal dNTPs, and 100 nM substrate 4 (E and F) or substrate 5 (G and H). In control reactions with Pol ι (F and H), KCl was omitted from the reaction mixtures and the concentration of MgCl₂ was 1 mM. The reaction mixtures were incubated for 5 min (E and G) or 15 min (F and H) at 37 °C. The samples were processed as described in Experimental Procedures. Lane 1 (the leftmost lane) represents the position of the primers alone. The N in the template strands represents A (lane 2), C (lane 3), G (lane 4), and T (lane 5).

2-OH-A when the terminal oxidized base was paired with template C, G, or T (Figure 3C). In contrast, Pol ι was unable to extend any primers containing either 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A at the termini regardless of the pairing template bases (Figure 3B,D). In control reactions, Pol η extended the primers having G at the termini when the terminal base was paired with template C or T (Figure 3E) and extended the primers having A at the termini when the terminal base was paired with template T (Figure 3G). Weak extension was observed when the terminal A was paired with template C. Pol ι was a poor extender even without oxidized bases at the termini of primers. It weakly extended primers when the terminal G or A was paired with canonical template bases (Figure 3F,H). These results suggest that Pol η extends the primers upon incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A or C, and extends the primers upon incorporation of 2-OH-dATP opposite template C, G, or T. Two Y-family Pols are distinct for their ability to extend the primers having oxidized bases at the termini.

We then determined the steady-state kinetic parameters for the extension, i.e., incorporation of next dGTP opposite

Table 2: Kinetic Parameters for Incorporation of dGTP with Primers Having Terminal 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A Pairing with Multiple Template Bases by Pol η ^a

Template base/dNTP	K_m (μ M)	k_{cat} (min ⁻¹)	k_{cat}/K_m (μ M ⁻¹ min ⁻¹)
dGTP 5'-C- 3'-GNC-5'	0.98 ± 0.11	2.4 ± 0.08	2.4
dGTP 5'-C- 3'-GCC-5'	2.5 ± 0.38	2.6 ± 0.14	1.0
dGTP 5'-A- 3'-GC-5'	7.3 ± 0.89	9.9 ± 0.61	1.4
dGTP 5'-A- 3'-G-5'	6.9 ± 1.3	7.3 ± 0.7	1.1
dGTP 5'-A- 3'-T-5'	2.8 ± 0.25	8.9 ± 0.28	3.2

^a G* = 8-OH-G; A* = 2-OH-A.

template C, by Pol η from the primers having either 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A at the 3'-termini (Table 2). We did not determine the parameters for Pol ϵ because it did not extend the primers having 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A (Figure 3B,D). The terminal 8-OH-G in the primer was paired with template A or C while the terminal 2-OH-A was paired with template C, G, or T. The primer/templates, i.e., substrates 2 or 3, were incubated with Pol η in the presence of dGTP without other dNTPs. For the extension from the primer having 8-OH-G at the termini, Pol η extended the primer more efficiently when the terminal oxidized base was paired with template A than template C. The K_m value for the extension from the primer having 8-OH-G paired with template A was 2.5 times less than that for the extension from the primer having the oxidized base paired with template C (0.98 versus 2.5 μ M) although the k_{cat} values were very similar between the two substrates (2.4 versus 2.6 min⁻¹). Thus, the ratio, i.e., (k_{cat}/K_m)_{8-OH-G:A}/(k_{cat}/K_m)_{8-OH-G:C}, was calculated to be 2.4 (=2.4/1.0), suggesting that Pol η more than two times more efficiently extends the primer having 8-OH-G paired with template A compared to that having 8-OH-G paired with template C. For the extension from the primer having 2-OH-A at the 3'-termini, Pol η extended the primer most efficiently when the oxidized base was paired with template T followed by template C and template G. The K_m value for the extension from the primer having 2-OH-A paired with template T (2.8 μ M) was 2 to 3 times less than those for the extension from the primers having 2-OH-A paired with template G or template C (6.9 or 7.3 μ M), and the k_{cat} values were not very different among the three substrates (8.9, 7.3, or 9.9 min⁻¹). Thus, the ratio of k_{cat}/K_m values, i.e., (k_{cat}/K_m)_{2-OH-A:T}:(k_{cat}/K_m)_{2-OH-A:G}:(k_{cat}/K_m)_{2-OH-A:C}, was 1:0.34:0.44, which suggests that Pol η extends the primers having terminal 2-OH-A paired with template G or C at rates of 30 to 40% of that of extension from the primer having 2-OH-A paired with template T.

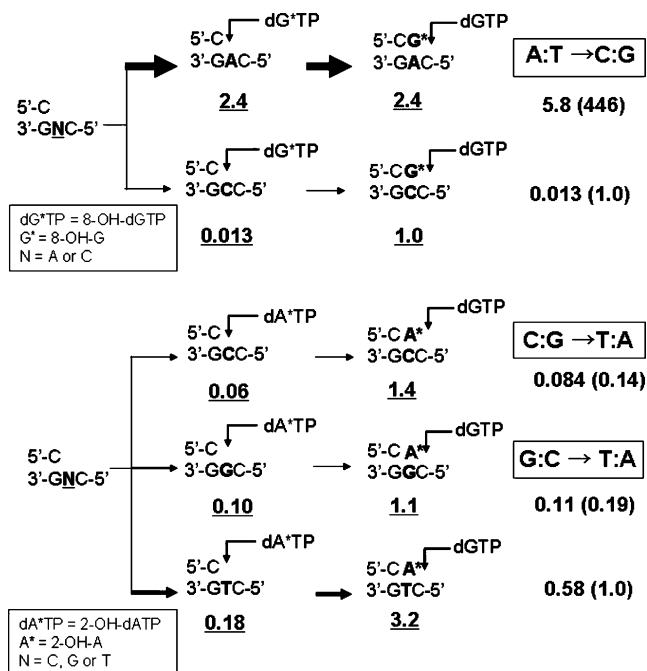


FIGURE 4: Total catalytic efficiency of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP into DNA and the following primer extension by Pol η . The total efficiency of incorporation and extension was calculated as the product of the individual k_{cat}/K_m values, e.g., $2.4 \times 2.4 = 5.8$ for the incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A and the extension by incorporation of normal dGTP opposite template C. The individual k_{cat}/K_m value for each step is underlined. Relative efficiency is presented in parentheses. The relative values were calculated by setting the efficiency of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template C and the following extension or incorporation of 2-OH-dATP opposite template T and the following extension as 1.0.

DISCUSSION

Oxidation is a major cause of spontaneous DNA damage that may contribute to mutagenesis, carcinogenesis, and aging (5, 6). Oxidative damage in DNA is caused not only by direct oxidation of bases in DNA but also by incorporation of oxidized dNTPs in the nucleotide pool into DNA during chromosome replication (7, 47). In this study, we have revealed the remarkable nature of Pol η that incorporates 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A almost as efficiently as the incorporation of normal dTTP (Table 1). In addition, Pol η extends the primer having 8-OH-G paired with template A more than two times more efficiently than the same primer having 8-OH-G paired with template C (Table 2). Calculation of the total efficiency by multiplying the individual k_{cat}/K_m values suggests that Pol η prefers template A more than 400 times (446 = 5.8/0.013) to template C for the incorporation and extension (Figure 4). The efficient and erroneous incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP and the following extension may lead to A:T-to-C:G transversions because the incorporated 8-OH-G opposite template A may pair with dCMP in the next round of DNA replication (8, 43, 48). Besides 8-OH-dGTP, Pol η incorporates 2-OH-dATP opposite template T, G, and C with efficiency of 2 to 6% of that of incorporation of normal dNTPs (Table 1). The F_{inc} values of incorporation of 2-OH-dATP opposite template T and C are about 20 and 50 times higher than the corresponding values by calf thymus Pol α (26). Moreover, Pol η can extend the primers having terminal 2-OH-A paired with template T, G, and C

(Figure 3, Table 2). The relative preference of Pol η to template T:G:C for incorporation and extension is calculated as 1:0.19:0.14 (Figure 4). Incorporation of 2-OH-dATP opposite template G or C and the following extension may lead to G:C-to-T:A and C:G-to-T:A mutations since the incorporated 2-OH-A can pair with dTMP during the next round of DNA replication (14, 49). Thus, we suggest that Pol η has a potential to enhance mutagenesis through the efficient and erroneous incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP and the following extension during DNA replication (see below). It is possible, however, that other Pols may be involved in extension steps once oxidized dNTPs are inserted into nascent DNA by Pol η .

Although Pol η was initially identified as an error-free bypass Pol across a *cis-syn* thymine–thymine dimer in DNA (28, 29), it appears to play important roles in several DNA transactions besides TLS (50). Pol η interacts with RAD51 and has an activity to extend D loop, which is an intermediate of homologous recombination (38, 39). It also participates in mutagenesis at A:T base pairs in immunoglobulin genes during somatic hypermutation (40). In addition, Pol η is identified in replication factories in cells not deliberately exposed to DNA damaging agents (36, 37), suggesting that it might constitutively gain access to the genomic DNA and contribute to mutagenesis and/or damage avoidance even without external DNA damage. Interestingly, *E. coli* Y-family Pols, i.e., Pol IV (DinB) and variants of Pol V (UmuD'C), are shown to be involved in the chromosome replication when the cells are treated with hydroxyurea, which does not induce DNA damage but depletes the nucleotide pool (51). In this case, the Y-family Pols appear to rescue the stalled replication by efficient incorporation of dNTPs in the depleted nucleotide pool at the expense of increased mutations. By analogy, we envisage that Pol η might be localized in replication factories even without external DNA damage and contribute to rescue the stalled replication by incorporation of oxidized dNTPs when the nucleotide pool is heavily oxidized and/or the ratio of oxidized versus normal dNTPs is substantially enhanced. The replicative Pols might have difficulty to extend the primers without Pol η in the situation since the oxidized dNTPs are generally difficult substrates for replicative Pols. However, the incorporation by Pol η is erroneous and thus may induce mutations as described above. In fact, the mutagenicity of 8-OH-dGTP directly incorporated into human cells is reduced significantly when the expression of Pol η is suppressed by RNAi technique (Kamiya et al., unpublished results). It is demonstrated that both 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP are significant contributors to mutations in mismatch-repair-defective cells and incorporation of oxidized DNA precursors is a significant influence on microsatellite instability in repair-defective human tumor cells (21). We suggest, therefore, that Pol η may be involved in mutagenesis by the incorporation of oxidized dNTPs in various DNA transactions when the nucleotide pool is oxidized and imbalanced.

Unlike Pol η , Pol ι has a limited ability to incorporate oxidized dNTPs and extend the primers having the oxidized bases at the termini. It could not incorporate 2-OH-dATP into DNA and extend the primers having 8-OH-G or 2-OH-A regardless of the template bases under the experimental conditions (Figure 2B, Figure 3B,D). The only activity we could detect in this study was the incorporation of 8-OH-

dGTP opposite template A (Figure 2A, Table 1). Pol ι is known to form Hoogsteen base pairing in the active site where the template A is rotated to the *syn* conformation while the incoming dTTP is in the *anti* conformation (52). Thus, the template A may be driven to the *syn* conformation when 8-OH-dGTP is incorporated. The Hoogsteen base pairing, i.e., template A (*syn*):8-OH-dGTP (*syn* or *anti*), may be the basis for the limited catalysis of incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP opposite template A. Nevertheless, Pol ι could not extend the primers having 8-OH-G at the termini. This may resemble the situation where Pol ι fails to further elongate the primers upon incorporation of C or T opposite 1,*N*²-propano-2'-deoxyguanosine, which forms a *syn* conformation in the template DNA strand (53). Although it is possible that other Pols such as Pol κ may help the extension step upon incorporation of 8-OH-G opposite template A by Pol ι , it seems unlikely that Pol ι is heavily involved in oxidative mutagenesis through the incorporation of oxidized dNTPs into nascent DNA.

In this study, we have revealed the remarkable nature of Pol η that incorporates 8-OH-dGTP and 2-OH-dATP into DNA in an efficient and erroneous manner. We assume that the incoming 8-OH-dGTP adopts the *syn* conformation in the active site of Pol η , which allows the formation of Hoogsteen base pairing with the *anti* form of template A. The active site large enough to accommodate bulky DNA adducts may permit the *syn* conformation of incoming 8-OH-dGTP, which is favored when it pairs with A in a DNA duplex (54). The Hoogsteen base pairing, i.e., 8-OH-dGTP (*syn*) and template A (*anti*), which might be opposite to the conformation of pairing bases in the active site of Pol ι , could be the basis for the efficient and erroneous incorporation of 8-OH-dGTP by Pol η . Interestingly, yeast and human Pol η can bypass 8-OH-G in DNA in an efficient but error-free manner by insertion of dCMP opposite the oxidized base in the template strand (55). In these cases, the large active site of Pol η is thought to allow the *anti* conformation of 8-OH-G in the template strand, which introduces barriers for other Pols (56). Since oxidative damage in the nucleotide pool as well as DNA is a major source of spontaneous mutagenesis and carcinogenesis, the present study warrants the validity of further research on the roles of Pol η in the oxidative mutagenesis in human cells.

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