Comment

Commentary on the article: Purification and characterization of the Ner repressor of bacteriophage Mu (1989) FEBS Lett. 244, 369–375 by G. Kukolj, P.P. Tolias and M.S. DuBow

B. Allet, M. Payton, R.J. Mattaliano+, A.M. Gronenborn*, G.M. Clore* and P.T. Wingfield

*Glaxo Institute for Molecular Biology SA, 46 Route des Acacias, 1227 Geneva, Switzerland, *Laboratory of Chemical Physics, Building 2, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD 20892* and *+Biogen Research Corporation, Cambridge, MA 02143, USA*

Received 12 May 1989

The article by Kukolj et al. [1] claims to present "the first purification of the DNA binding, regulatory protein Ner from bacteriophage Mu". We would like to point out that essentially the same study was published by us almost one year ago in a paper in *Gene* entitled 'Purification and characterization of the DNA-binding protein Ner of bacteriophage Mu' [2]. Further, it might be of interest to the readers of *FEBS Letters* to note that our expression and purification protocol yielded 150 mg pure protein from 1.5 liters of culture [2], whereas Kukolj et al. [1] report only 0.7 mg pure protein from 10 liters of culture.

REFERENCES

[1] Kukolj, G., Tolias, P.P. and DuBow, M.S. (1989) FEBS Lett. 244, 369–375.

[2] Allet, B., Payton, M., Mattaliano, R.J., Gronenborn, A.M., Clore, G.M. and Wingfield, P.T. (1988) Gene 54, 259–268.

FEB 07410

Reply: M.S. DuBow, G. Kukolj and P.P. Tolias*

Department of Microbiology and Immunology, McGill University, 3775 University Street, Montreal, Quebec H3A 2B4, Canada and **Department of Developmental and Cellular Biology, Harvard University, 16 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02130, USA*

Received 7 June 1989

Drs Allet et al. are indeed correct in their assertion that their paper in *Gene* [1] on the purification of the Mu Ner protein preceded the publication of our paper in *FEBS Letters* [2]. That volume of *Gene* was, however, only received in our library on 11 July 1988 (5 months prior to our submission) and, due to extensive library renovations at that time, it was difficult to obtain that journal and others. Nonetheless, we apologize to Drs Allet et al. for its inadvertant omission in our manuscript and reassure them that no deliberate intent was involved. We do, however, wish to direct attention to the fact that the purification of Mu Ner and the determination of its monomeric nature (via gel filtration) were published nearly a year prior to the submission of the manuscript by Allet et al. in a doctoral thesis [3] by one of us (chapter 4, pp.120–138). Additionally, the article by Allet et al. claims "We obtained exactly the same result with the purified Ner by footprinting analysis..." (data not shown) as was obtained in our previous publication [4] using crude protein extracts containing overproduced Ner proteins. We, however, did not. In fact, much of our paper in *FEBS Letters* discusses the implications of these differences, obtained with the purified protein, which extends the footprint of Ner one turn of the helix (on both sides) from the previously defined central operator (which we now call region I).

We would again like to thank Drs Allet et al. (see *Comment*; above) for bringing their manuscript to our attention and hope we have helped clarify matters. We regret any misunderstandings that may have occurred and wish that any further comments or misunderstandings that do arise can be resolved using more direct channels.

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[1] Allet, B., Payton, M., Mattaliano, R.J., Gronenborn, A.M., Clore, G.M. and Wingfield, P. (1988) Gene 65, 259–268.

[2] Kukolj, G., Tolias, P.P. and DuBow, M.S. (1989) FEBS Lett. 244, 369–375.

[3] Tolias, P.P. (1987) Functional Protein-DNA Interaction of the Ner and Transposase Proteins from Bacteriophages Mu and D108, PhD Thesis, McGill University, March, 1987, ISBN 031538350X.

[4] Tolias, P.P. and DuBow, M.S. (1986) Virology 148, 298–311.

Correspondence address: B. Allet, Glaxo Institute for Molecular Biology SA, 46 Route des Acacias, 1227 Geneva, Switzerland

Correspondence address: M.S. DuBow, Department of Microbiology and Immunology, McGill University, 3775 University Street, Montreal, Quebec H3A 2B4, Canada

Published by Elsevier Science Publishers B.V. (Biomedical Division)