

Commentary Response

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The experiments reported by Hayer-Hartl and Hartl highlight the importance of establishing the tryptophan content of preparations of groEL. Our original purpose in publishing the paper was to draw attention to the need to determine the protein concentration reliably and to highlight the discrepancies between the proposed amino acid sequence of the protein and the A_{280} values quoted by different workers. Our results indicated that tryptophan was present in our preparations at a stoichiometry close to one per groEL subunit. We did not exclude the possibility that a tryptophan-containing

contaminant could account for the results and the work of Hayer-Hartl and Hartl indicates that this is likely to be the case at least for their preparation. It would seem that such (a) contaminant(s) would be rich in tryptophan and/or would stain very weakly with Coomassie blue in order to account for the observed stoichiometry. The correct determination of the protein concentration is important in order to characterise the binding of polypeptides to groEL and to formulate detailed models of action of these chaperone proteins.

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