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To cite this article: Toshifumi Tsukahara and Hiroshi Nagasawa 2004 *Sci. Technol. Adv. Mater.* **5** 359

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Probe-on-carriers for oligonucleotide microarrays (DNA chips)

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Received 27 October 2003; revised 10 January 2004; accepted 13 January 2004

Abstract

Oligonucleotide microarrays (DNA chips) are very efficient tools to analyze genotypes of patients or change in gene expressions between two different samples. However, there is no cost effective procedure to manufacture DNA chips. We are developing ‘probe-on-carriers’, immobilized oligonucleotide probes on solid phase to make DNA chips. In this procedure, each oligonucleotide is synthesized on a controlled porous glass carrier as a solid phase, and can be used as a probe for each sequence. This can be substantiated by technology for strictly controlled pore-size of porous glass. In fact, we found the sequence specific hybridization of probe-on-carrier with using porous glass of larger than 50 nm pore diameter.

The probe-on-carriers for wildtype and mutant *p53* genes were hybridized with their complementary probes, respectively, but not with another probes. This result clearly demonstrated that the probe-on-carriers could recognize one-nucleotide substitutions of a gene. We found that the fixed probe-on-carriers on a slide glass still showed sequence specific hybridization. Therefore, we conclude that the probe-on-carriers are epoch-making materials for making DNA chip economically.

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Keywords: Oligonucleotide microarray; DNA chip; Oligonucleotide synthesis; Hybridization; Porous glass; Probe-on-carrier; Single nucleotide polymorphisms

1. Introduction

Oligonucleotide microarrays (DNA chips) are small devices containing gene fragments that are either synthesized directly onto or spotted onto glass or other substrates. Thousands of genes are usually represented in a single array. DNA chip-based hybridization analysis is a promising new technology to allow rapid and cost-effective analysis for genes. DNA chips are currently applied not only to analyze gene expression, clarify metabolic pathways and pathogenetic mechanisms but also to identify genotypes including single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs). SNP patterns associated with adverse drug reactions can be discovered. Therefore, it can be expected that pharmacogenetic research will identify situations where a drug should

be avoided in certain individuals in order to reduce the risk for adverse drug reactions [1–3].

Oligo-DNA arrays are produced by using the semiconductor photolithography technology, patterned, light-directed combinatorial chemical synthesis on a small glass surface. A surface of a solid support modified with photolabile protecting groups is illuminated through a photolithographic mask, yielding reactive hydroxyl groups in the illuminated region. An activated deoxynucleoside, protected at the 5'-hydroxyl with a photo-labile group, is then presented to the surface and coupling occurs at sites that were exposed to light. The process is repeated until the entire number of oligonucleotides probes and control has been synthesized [1,2]. However, this technology is very costly and time consuming, and the yield of each synthesized oligonucleotide was subject to wide variation and uncertainty. An alternate procedure is delivering and covalently attaching pre-synthesized oligonucleotides onto a surface of solid support. First, oligonucleotides are synthesized by standard method. Then chemical modification is introduced at 5'- or 3'-ends of each oligonucleotide.

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Finally, the oligonucleotides are covalently attached by hetero-bifunctional cross-linkers or by chemical coupling on a slid-glass for coupling [3]. This technology is also costly because introduction of cross-linkers or functional residues to each pre-synthesize oligonucleotide by chemical modification are very expensive.

Usually, the oligonucleotide is synthesized on a support filled with porous glass or polystyrene or a membrane. Therefore, if we can use pre-synthesized oligonucleotide on a support itself, without the cleavage as a probe for oligo-DNA array, we can manufacture oligo-DNA array easily and inexpensively. In this report, we are developing 'probe-on-carriers', immobilized oligonucleotide probes on solid phase to make DNA chips. In this procedure, each oligonucleotide is synthesized on a solid phase, and can be used itself as a probe for each sequence.

2. Experimental

2.1. Materials

Several kind of porous glasses with a definite composition were prepared by heat and chemical treatment of borosilicate glass. The glass of the composition SiO_2 : 62.5, B_2O_3 : 27.3, Al_2O_3 : 3.0 and Na_2O : 7.2 wt.% was melted, and were heat treated for phase separation at 600 °C for various times (2 h–7 day). The phase-separated specimens were leached in 0.5N hydrochloric acid for 1 day, and were leached in 0.2N sodium hydroxide for 1 h. Pore distribution of porous glass used in the experiment are shown in Fig. 1. Particle size of porous glass was adjusted to 10 μm . This porous glass (10 g) was refluxed with glycidoxypolytrimethoxysilane (1 wt.%) in toluene (50 ml) at 110 °C, 10 h with stirring, then washed thoroughly with methanol, ether and air-dried. These derivatized porous glasses were heated with stirring in hexaethyleneglycol containing a catalytic amount of concentrated sulphuric acid, 16 h in an atmosphere of nitrogen, at 80 °C, to yield alkyl hydroxyl derivatized porous glass. After washing with methanol and ether, the porous glasses were dried under vacuum and stored under nitrogen at room temperature [4,5].

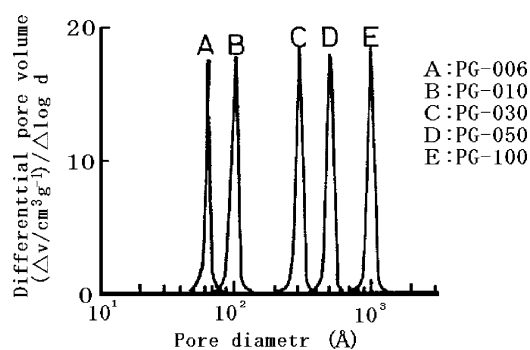


Fig. 1. Pore distribution of porous glass, typical pore-size distributions of five different porous glasses, measured by mercury porosimetry.

A small amount of the hydroxyalkyl derivatized porous glass was put into the reaction vessel of an automatic oligonucleotide synthesizer (own composition), programmed to synthesize sequences. The first nucleotide became covalently attached to the derivatized porous glass. Measuring the amounts of trityl group removed, in the spectrophotometer can monitor each step in the synthesis. By this test, the stepwise yield was 90–95%. The product was deprotected by the standard treatment with hot ammonia and washed thoroughly with distilled water [6].

A polybutadien adhesive was spin-coated on a slid glass, then spot suspended solution of three kinds of probe-on-carriers to make oligo-DNA array by the fixation. The slide glass made dry to fix probe-on-carriers well, then washed by ultra-sonication to remove extra probe-on-carriers.

2.2. Hybridization

The sequence from 947th to 966th of human *p53* gene, 5'-GGCATGAACCG-GAGGCCCAT-3', was used as a target in this study. The sequences of mutants are followed. HSC-4: GGCATGAACCAGAGGCCCAT, and Ca9-22 mutant: GGCATGAACTGGAGGCCCAT [7]. Three kinds of probe-on-carriers were prepared by synthesis those sequences on pre-treated porous glass. On the other hand three kinds, native HSC-4 and Ca9-22, of fluorescent-labeled anti-sense oligo-DNAs were prepared by general protocol. Each FITC-labeled oligo-DNA was mixed with three kinds of pre-synthesized probe-on-carriers, and then hybridized each other at 55 °C for over night. Then washed with $0.1 \times \text{SSC}$ at room temperature [8]. Remaining fluorescence with each probe-on-carrier was observed by fluorescent microscope after stringency wash. Relative brightness was determined with using the Photoshop software, Adobe Systems Inc, as 0; black and 100; white.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Probe-on-carriers

We think the best material for probe on-carrier is porous glass, because they are resistant to heat and chemical hazards, have low absorbency with peptides or nucleotides, and their pore-size could be controlled strictly. As shown in Fig. 1, pore-size of our porous glass could be controlled in a narrow range.

To synthesize oligonucleotides on porous glass, we used 3-glycidoxy-propyltrimethoxysilane coatings for probe-on-carriers and the hexaethylenglycol-linker for solid phase oligonucleotide synthesis in this study. The density of these silan-coupling reagents on glass surface was 1 $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2$. To remove non-specific fluorescence, porous glass was preserved in methanol, THF, ammonia (1:1:1) for 2 days, then washed with triethylamine for 10 h.

There are most of reactive linkers should on surface of pores. Therefore, hybridization reaction should mainly occur within each pore. Because DNA molecules are huge, there must have enough space in each pore. In fact, we could not get good result with porous glass with 30 nm pore diameter (Fig. 2, the bottom row). We found the sequence specific hybridization of probe-on-carrier with using porous glass of more than 50 nm pore diameter. Therefore, porous glass with 50 or 100 nm in diameter was used in following studies.

We chose *p53* tumor suppressor gene as a target for experiments. Mutations on *p53* gene occur with unusually high frequency in tumor tissue. And there are some tumor cell lines with one-point mutation on *p53* gene. For example, HSC-4 mutant has G to A conversion at the 957th nucleotide, and Ca9-22 mutant has C to T conversion at the 956th nucleotide. First, we prepare three kinds, native HSC-4 and Ca9-22, of fluorescent-labeled anti-sense oligo-DNA. Each FITC-labeled oligo-DNA was hybridized with three kinds of probe-on-carriers and remaining fluorescence with each probe-on-carrier was observed.

As shown in Fig. 2, the probe-on-carrier carrying native sequence hybridized with the anti-sense of native well, but not with anti-sense of mutated sequence, even though only one-point conversion in those sequence. The probe-on-carriers with mutations also showed best hybridization with

their anti-sense probes. This result clearly demonstrated that the oligonucleotide immobilized on porous glass, probe-on-carrier, acted as a probe to detect for one nucleotide substitution, and may be use to manufacture oligo-DNA array.

3.2. Fixed probe-on-carriers as oligonucleotide microarray

Next step, we tried to make oligo-DNA arrays by the fixation of probe-on-carriers. Immobilization of oligonucleotide probes on solid phase was achieved with a polybutadien adhesive. Off course we checked the adhesive has no fluorescence. The protocol of the hybridization experiment is similar to before. We made fixed probe-on-carriers, native, HSC-4 and Ca9-22 on a slide glass. Then, each fluorescent-labeled anti-sense oligo-DNA was pore on and hybridized with a fixed probe-on-carriers. Remaining fluorescence with each probe-on-carrier was observed after stringency wash.

As shown in Fig. 3, the fixed probe-on-carrier carrying native sequence hybridized stronger with the anti-sense of native well than with the anti-sense of mutated sequence. The fixed probe-on-carriers for HSC-4 and Ca9-22 also showed the best hybridization with their anti-sense probes, resulting that one point mutation of the *p53* gene could be distinguished with using probe-on-carriers. Therefore, we conclude that the fixed probe-on-carriers may act as an oligo-DNA array. However, the higher background of hybridization spoiled the signal-noise ratio of oligo-DNA arrays. The higher background may be caused by insufficient wash of non-specific hybridization. We must improve the condition of hybridization.

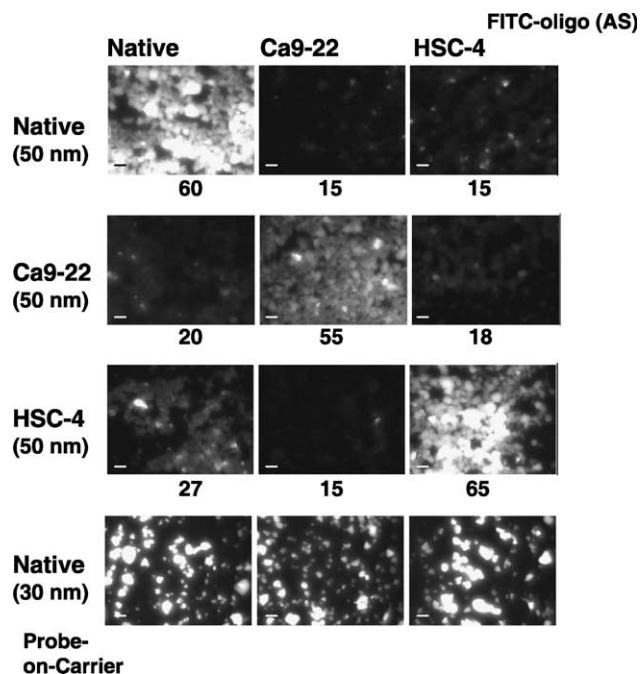


Fig. 2. Result of hybridization with probe-on-carriers, porous glasses with different pore-diameter, 30 and 50 nm, were used for the probe-on-carriers. The probe-on-carriers for wildtype and mutant *p53* genes were applied hybridization with fluorescent-labeled oligonucleotides of each *p53* gene. Sequence specific hybridization was studied by remaining fluorescence, each probe-on-carrier, column, was hybridized with three kinds of fluorescence-labeled anti-sense oligonucleotides, row. Numbers under photographs are relative brightness. 0 means black and 100 means white. Scale bars indicate 100 μ m.

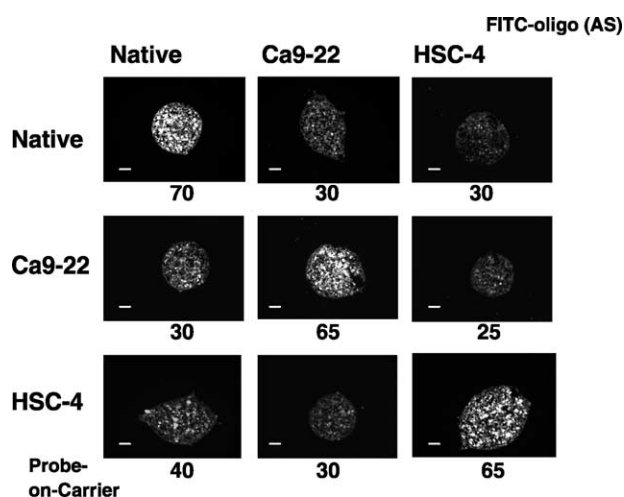


Fig. 3. Result of hybridization with fixed probe-on-carriers on oligo-DNA arrays, Three oligo-DNA arrays on which three probe-on-carriers, native, HSC-4 and Ca9-22, fixed were hybridized with each fluorescent-labeled anti-sense oligo-DNA. Remaining fluorescence with each probe-on-carrier was observed after stringency wash. Numbers under photographs are relative brightness. 0 means black and 100 means white (probe-on-carrier; column, fluorescence-labeled anti-sense oligonucleotides; row, respectively). Bars indicate 100 μ m.

4. Conclusion

Fixed probe-on-carriers are cost effective method to manufacture oligo-DNA arrays, because it dose not need photo mask and chemical modification. Moreover, pre-synthesized-oligonucleotides on various solid phases are usually stable and could be stocked for longtime. Therefore, probes on DNA chips can be designed by order of the request easier, used for clinical diagnosis freely. Probe-on-carriers are outstanding materials to manufacture oligo-DNA array. We hope probe-on-carriers will contribute for evidence based medicine.

Acknowledgements

This work was partly supported by a Grant-in-Aid for the Creation of Innovations through Business-Academic-Public Sector Cooperation from the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, Culture and Technology, a grant from the National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan, and Center for Nano Materials and Technology, JAIST.

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