

Title: NHEJ repair pathway Ku70/80, DNA and partners complexes, structural and functional studies

Description of the internship:

Our team "Envelope Nuclear telomeres and DNA repair" (INTGEN) led by JB Charbonnier and S Zinn-Justin is interested in the networks of protein-protein interactions controlling the stability of the genome using an integrative structural biology approach. One of the focus of the team is the study of the molecular mechanisms taking place in the primary pathway for repairing double-strand breaks (DSB) in DNA in vertebrates, called Non-homologous end Joining (NHEJ). The heterodimer Ku70/Ku80 recognizes DSBs rapidly and coordinates the recruitment of the different activities of this NHEJ repair pathway (ligation, ends processing, and polymerization). The DSBs are deleterious lesions for cell homeostasis. If they are not repaired, or incorrectly repaired, they can induce cell death or chromosomal rearrangements. Our team study the interactions between Ku70/Ku80 and several DNA substrates representing the different types of DNA ends that exist in the cell when a DSB is formed by exogenous or endogenous stress. We also analyse the recruitment by Ku with its NHEJ partners. Our aims are to solve the three-dimensional structure of major complexes formed by Ku using crystallography or cryoEM, and to quantify these interactions by biophysical methods in tight collaborations with NHEJ biologists.

The M2 student will perform the expression in insect cells or in E coli of the NHEJ proteins and their purification. The candidate will characterize the different recombinant NHEJ pathway proteins, alone or in complex with Ku70/Ku80 and DNA. He / she will perform the structural analyses by combining Xray crystallography and cryoEM. He / she will work in the preparative biochemistry laboratory for the purification of these proteins, and for the preparation of crystallisation screening, then for the freezing of the crystals during the collection campaigns before the analyses by X-ray diffraction performed at Synchrotron SOLEIL. The candidate will analyse by cryoEM the Ku complexes when possible. He / she will also quantify the different interactions using mainly ITC, MST and swithSENSE approaches. All these complementary methodologies are available in the laboratory. They will allow us to characterize the thermodynamic and kinetic properties of these interactions as well as to assess in a second step the impact of DNA modifications in the recognition of DSB by Ku70/80.

Contact details of internship supervisors:

Paloma FERNANDEZ VARELA, paloma.fernandez-varela@i2bc.paris-saclay.fr

Jean-Baptiste CHARBONNIER, jean-baptiste.charbonnier@i2bc.paris-saclay.fr

Institute for Integrative Biology of the Cell (I2BC)
Department of Biochemistry, Biophysics and Structural Biology (B3S)
CEA/Saclay SB2SM
LBSR-Bâtiment 144
91191 Gif-Sur-Yvette Cedex

References:

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Nemoz et al, 2018, NSMB: XLF and APLF Bind Ku80 at Two Remote Sites to Ensure DNA Repair by Non-Homologous End Joining

Tadi et al, 2016 Cell Reports: PAXX Is an Accessory c-NHEJ Factor That Associates With Ku70 and Has Overlapping Functions With XLF