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MBL
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T-Select MHC Class I Chicken Tetramer

Allele and Peptide Specificity

The T-Select MHC Class I Chicken Tetramers recognize chicken $CD8^+$ T cells which are specific for a particular peptide in combination with the chicken MHC class I allele.

Background

T lymphocytes play a central role in immune system. Total T cell and T cell subset counts are measured by detection of various cell surface molecules. Enumeration of $CD8^+$ antigen-specific T cells requires cognate recognition of the T cell receptor (TCR) by a class I MHC/peptide complex. This can be done using T-Select MHC class I Tetramers which are composed of four MHC class I molecules each bound to the specific peptide and conjugated with a fluorescent protein. Thus, T-Select MHC Tetramer assays allow quantitation of the total T cell population specific for a given peptide complexed in a particular MHC molecule. Furthermore, since binding does not depend on functional pathways, this population includes specific $CD8^+$ T cells regardless of functional status. Measurements may be performed in whole blood or isolated lymphocyte/mononuclear cell preparations. In some cases where frequency is low, it may be necessary to perform an *in vitro* cell expansion. Specific cell staining is accomplished by incubating the sample with the T-Select MHC Tetramer reagent, then washing away excess Tetramer. The number of Tetramer positive lymphocytes is then determined by flow cytometry.

Reagents

500 μL liquid - 10 μL/test
The Tetramer is dissolved in an aqueous buffer containing 0.5 mM EDTA, 0.2% BSA, 10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0), 150 mM NaCl, and 0.09% NaN_3.
The MHC molecules are expressed in *E. coli* and the peptide is synthesized chemically.

Storage Conditions

Store at 2 to 8°C. Do not freeze. Minimize exposure to light.
The manufacturing date is indicated on the vial label.
Stability data are not available for T-Select MHC Class I Chicken Tetramers.

Conjugates

- Streptavidin-Phycoerythrin (SA-PE)
  Excites at 486-580 nm
  Emits at 586-590 nm

- Streptavidin-Allophycocyanin (SA-APC)
  Excites at 633-635 nm
  Emits at 660-680 nm

- Streptavidin-Fluorescein Isothiocyanate (SA-FITC)
  Excites at 465-495 nm
  Emits at 515-555 nm

Evidence of Deterioration

Any change in the physical appearance of this reagent may indicate deterioration and the reagent should not be used. The normal appearance is a clear, colorless to pink (SA-PE), light blue (SA-APC), or light yellow liquid (SA-FITC).

Reagent Preparation

No preparation is necessary. These T-Select MHC Tetramer reagents are used directly from the vial after a brief vortex on low setting. However, depending on the cell type and assay conditions, it may be necessary to optimize Tetramer labeling of antigen-positive, $CD8^+$ T cells. Optimal labeling is determined by performing a checkerboard titration of both class I Tetramer and anti-CD8 antibody reagents.

Statement of Warnings

1. This reagent contains 0.09% sodium azide. Sodium azide under acid conditions yields hydrazoic acid, an extremely toxic compound. Azide compounds should be flushed with running water while being discarded. These precautions are recommended to avoid deposits in metal piping in which explosive conditions can develop. If skin or eye contact occurs, wash excessively with water.
2. Specimens, samples and material coming in contact with them should be handled as if capable of transmitting infection and disposed of with proper precautions.
3. Never pipet by mouth and avoid contact of samples with skin and mucous membranes.
4. Minimize exposure of reagent to light during storage or incubation.

5. Avoid microbial contamination of reagent or erroneous results may occur.
6. Use Good Laboratory Practices (GLP) when handling this reagent.

Materials Required But Not Supplied

- 12 x 75 mm polypropylene test tubes
- Transfer pipettes
- Pipettors and disposable pipette tips
- Vortex mixer
- Centrifuge capable of 150 x g or 400 x g
- Aspirator
- PBS
- Red blood cell lysis reagent
- Anti-chicken CD8-FITC antibody
- 7-AAD Viability Dye, Beckman Coulter, Inc., PN A07704
- Clear Back (human FcR blocking reagent), MBL, PN MTG-001

Procedure for Whole Blood

1. Collect venous blood specimen according to established protocol into a blood collection tube using an appropriate anti-coagulant.
2. To each 12 x 75 mm test tube add 10 µL of T-Select MHC Tetramer.
3. Add 100-200 µL of whole blood into each test tube.
4. Vortex gently.
5. Incubate for 30-60 minutes at 2-8°C or room temperature (15-25°C) protected from light.
6. Add any additional antibodies (e.g. anti-CD8) and vortex gently.
7. Incubate for 30 minutes at 2-8°C protected from light.
8. Lyse red blood cells using commercially available reagents.
9. Prepare samples according to description of the package insert.
10. Store prepared samples at 2-8°C protected from light for a minimum of 1 hour (maximum 24 hours) prior to analysis by flow cytometry.

Procedure for Cell Preparations and Cell Suspensions

1. Collect lymph node, spleen or thymus and prepare a single-cell suspension according to an established protocol. Cells should be re-suspended at a concentration of 2 x 10^7 cells/mL. 50 µL of sample is required for each T-Select MHC Tetramer determination.
2. Add 10 µL of Clear Back (human FcR blocking reagent, MBL, PN MTG-001) to each 12 x 75 mm test tube.
3. Add 50 µL of cell suspension into each test tube (e.g. 1 x 10^6 cells per tube).
4. Incubate for 5 minutes at room temperature.
5. Add 10 µL of T-Select MHC Tetramer and vortex gently.
6. Incubate for 30-60 minutes at 2-8°C or room temperature (15-25°C) protected from light.
7. Add any additional antibodies (e.g. anti-CD8) and vortex gently.
8. Incubate for 30 minutes at 2-8°C protected from light.
   If red blood cell lysis is necessary, proceed to step 8-9 in the **Procedure for Whole Blood** section. If red blood cell lysis is not necessary, continue to step 9 below.
9. Add 3 mL of PBS or FCM buffer (2% FCS/0.09% NaN_3/PBS).
10. Centrifuge tubes at 400 x g for 5 minutes.
11. Aspirate or decant the supernatant.
12. Suspend the pellet in 500 µL of FCM buffer and analyze it immediately, or suspend it in 0.5% paraformaldehyde/PBS and store the sample in a dark room at 2-8°C. Be sure to analyze it within 24 hours.

Limitations

1. For optimal results with whole blood, retain specimens in blood collection tubes at room temperature, while rocking, prior to staining and analyzing. Refrigerated specimens may give aberrant results.
2. Recommended cell viability for venous blood specimens is > 90%.
3. Prolonged exposure of cells to lytic reagents may cause white blood cell destruction and loss of cells in the population of interest.
4. All red blood cells may not lyse under the following conditions: nucleated red blood cells, abnormal protein concentration or hemoglobinopathies. This may cause falsely decreased results due to unlysed red blood cells being counted as leukocytes.

Technical Hints

A. If cell cultivation is needed, we recommend the use of heparin as an anti-coagulant.
B. Clear Back reagent (human FcR blocking reagent) may effectively block non-specific binding caused by macrophages or endocytosis, resulting in clear staining when cells are stained with MHC Tetramer and antibodies. Please refer to the data sheet (MBL, PN MTG-001) for details.
C. A Tetramer that is constructed with the same allele of interest and an irrelevant peptide may be used as a negative control.
D. The use of CD45 antibody and gating of the lymphocyte population are recommended in order to reduce contamination of unlysed or nucleated red blood cells in the gate.
E. Apoptotic, necrotic, and/or damaged cells are sources of interference in the analysis of viable cells by flow cytometry. Cell viability should be determined by 7-aminoactinomycin D (7-AAD) staining; intact viable cells remain unstained (negative).

F. Cells do not require fixation prior to analysis if the stained cells are analyzed by flow cytometry within several hours.

Selected References

1) Altman JD, Moss PH, Goulder PJR, Barouch DH, McHeyzer W, Bell JI, McMichael AJ, and Davis MM. 1996. Phenotypic Analysis of Antigen-Specific T Lymphocytes. Science 274:94-96.
2) McMichael AJ, and O'Callaghan CA. 1998. A New Look at T Cells. J. Exp. Med. 187:1367-1371.
3) Skinner PJ, Daniels MA, Schmidt CS, Jameson SC, and Haase AT. 2000. In Situ Tetramer Staining of Antigen-Specific T Cells in Tissues. J. Immunol. 165:613-617.
4) Nugent CT, Morgan DJ, Biggs JA, Ko A, Pilip IM, Pamer EG and Sherman LA. 2000. Characterization of $CD8^+$ T Lymphocytes That Persist After Peripheral Tolerance to a Self Antigen Expressed in the Pancreas. J. Immunol. 164:191-200.

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