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 We use this protocol and it's working

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HTAPP_Dissociation of human neuroblastoma tumors to a single-cell suspension for single-cell RNA-seq using Papain

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ABSTRACT

This protocol was used for the dissociation of fresh pediatric neuroblastoma samples from patient tumors or orthotopic patient derived xenografts. Using this method, we were able to prepare highly viable (>90%) single-cell suspensions compatible with droplet-based single-cell RNA-Seq technology ([Slyper et al](#)).

For the Human Tumor Atlas Pilot Project (HTAPP), this protocol has been successfully applied to neuroblastoma resections collected from abdominal and paraspinal sites.

Description of this protocol and guidance for testing and selecting methods for processing other tumor and sample types can be found in [Slyper et al](#).

GUIDELINES

Store papain kit at 4° C.

MATERIALS

MATERIALS

PDS Kit, Papain Vial Worthington Biochemical Corporation Catalog #LK003178
Falcon™ 15mL Conical Centrifuge Tubes Fisher Scientific Catalog #14-959-53A
Aspen Surgical™ Bard-Parker™ Protected Disposable Scalpel No. 10 Fisher Scientific Catalog #02-688-78
A1000 Pipettor MIDSCI Catalog #A-1000
Pipet-aid pipette controller Drummond Scientific Catalog #4-000-110
Falcon 50mL Conical Centrifuge Tubes Fisher Scientific Catalog #14-959-49A
AvantGuard 1250 microliter filter tips MIDSCI Catalog #AV1250-H
Falcon 5mL sterile serological pipets Fisher Scientific Catalog #13-675-22
Falcon 10mL sterile serological pipets Fisher Scientific Catalog #13-675-20
Sterile 40 micron nylon strainer Fisher Scientific Catalog #08-771-1
Trypan blue 0.4% solution Fisher Scientific Catalog #15-250-061
1.5 mL microcentrifuge tubes Fisher Scientific Catalog #05-408-129
Thermo Scientific Sorvall Legend XTR Centrifuge Fisher Scientific Catalog #75-217-420
Bright-Line Hemacytometer Fisher Scientific Catalog #02-671-5
A100 pipettor Contributed by users Catalog #A-100
AvantGuard 100 microliter filter tips MIDSCI Catalog #AV1000
Falcon 60 mm tissue-culture treated dishes Fisher Scientific Catalog #08-772B

SAFETY WARNINGS

- Follow general lab safety and institutional guidelines for working with human samples and sharps.

BEFORE START INSTRUCTIONS

- Warm water bath to 37° C.
- Allow EBSS (vial #1), albumin-ovomucoid inhibitor mixture (vial #4), papain (vial #2) and DNase I (vial #3) to warm to room temperature for 15 min.
- If you are starting with a new kit, add 32 ml of Earle's balanced salt solution (EBSS; PDS kit vial #1) to albumin-ovomucoid inhibitor (vial #4).

Reagent Preparation

1 Prepare reagents (1 set for each sample):

- 1.1** Add 5 mL of Earle's Balanced Salt Solution (vial #1) to papain (vial #2). Allow papain to dissolve for 15 min at 37° C. 37 °C 15m

00:15:00

- 1.2** Add 500 µL of Earle's Balanced Salt Solution (vial #1) to DNase I (vial #3). Mix using micropipette.

Room temperature

- 1.3** Add 250 µL from DNase I solution (vial #3) to papain solution (vial #2).

Room temperature

Tissue dissociation

- 2** Obtain tumor tissue. Use 100-500 mg of tissue per papain vial. Use a disposable scalpel to mince the sample into small pieces (approximately 1 mm fragments).

Room temperature Process tissue quickly to avoid viability loss (mincing should take less than min)

Note: We typically receive tissue on ice from the repository. Tissue is processed immediately upon receipt. Once dissociation has started, we do not recommend putting tissue back onto ice (temperature fluctuations lead to tissue degradation).

Note: We typically mince tissue on a 60 mm sterile tissue-culture treated plate.

- 3** Move minced tissue into a sterile 15 mL Falcon conical tube, and transfer papain-DNase mixture from vial #2 to the conical tube. Incubate conical tube in water bath at 37° C for 15 min.

37 °C Water bath

00:15:00

- 4** Triturate tissue by pipetting up and down 10-15 times using a 10 mL sterile serologic pipette.

Room temperature

5 Continue dissociation by incubating tube in the water bath for another 15 min.

🌡️ 37 °C Water bath

🕒 00:15:00

6 Repeat trituration by pipetting up and down 10-15 times using a 10 mL sterile serologic pipette.

🌡️ Room temperature

Note: The cell suspension should look cloudy with chunks of debris.

7 Filter cell suspension through a 40 µm cell strainer into a 50 mL Falcon conical tube.

🌡️ Room temperature

Note: Debris will be captured on the cell strainer, while the filtrate should appear cloudy.

8 Rinse filter with 5 mL Earle's Balanced Salt Solution (vial #1).

9 Centrifuge cell suspension at 500 g for 5 min at room temperature.

🌀 500 x g, 00:05:00

🌡️ Room temperature

Cleanup

10

During centrifugation, prepare the two 15 mL Falcon conical tubes containing:

10.1 Resuspension buffer:

🧴 2.7 mL Earle's Balanced Salt Solution (vial #1)

🧴 300 µL Albumin-ovomucoid inhibitor solution (vial #4)

🧴 150 µL DNase I solution (vial #3)

🌡️ Room temperature

10.2

Density gradient:

🧪 5 mL Albumin-ovomucoid inhibitor solution (vial #4)

🌡️ Room temperature

11

After centrifugation (step #9), remove supernatant carefully without disturbing the pellet.

Tip: We typically use suction to aspirate the first 9 mL of supernatant, followed by a micropipette to remove the last 0.5-1 mL of supernatant (to avoid suctioning the pellet). If the pellet is very small or difficult to see, we recommend transferring the top 9.5 mL of supernatant to a tube labeled 'supernatant 1' as a backup.

🌡️ Room temperature

12

Re-suspend pellet with 3 mL resuspension buffer (from step #10.1), and gently mix using a 5 mL serologic pipette.

🌡️ Room temperature

13

Carefully layer resuspended cells over density gradient (from step #10.2).

🌡️ Room temperature

14

Centrifuge at 100 g for 6 min at room temperature.

🌀 100 x g, 00:06:00

🌡️ Room temperature

Cell counting and Quality Control

15

Carefully remove supernatant without disturbing the pellet.

Tip: We typically use suction to aspirate the first 7 mL of supernatant, followed by a micropipette to remove the last 0.5-1 mL of supernatant (to avoid suctioning the pellet). If the pellet is very small or difficult to see, we recommend transferring the top 7.5 mL of supernatant to a tube labeled 'supernatant 2' as a backup.

16

Re-suspend pellet in 10 mL Earle's Balanced Salt Solution and filter through a 40 µm cell strainer into a sterile 50 mL Falcon conical tube.

🌡️ Room temperature

17

Mix 10 µL of single-cell suspension with 10 µL of Trypan blue solution, and load 10 µL onto hemacytometer.

🔥 Room temperature

18 Count and report the number of viable single cells.

Tip: We recommend proceeding only with samples that have >80% viability. Low viability samples will have higher cell clumping, and ambient RNA will complicate downstream single-cell RNA-sequencing analysis.

🔥 Room temperature

Cell dilution and 10x Genomics single-cell RNA-seq loading

19 If necessary, dilute cells prior to loading onto 10x Genomics 3' single cell RNA-sequencing workflow.

Tip: We aim to load 10,000 cells per channel. We recommend trying to dilute cells to a concentration 1000 cells/ μ L.

20 Keep diluted cell suspension on ice, and proceed immediately to 10x Genomics single-cell RNA-sequencing workflow.

🧊 On ice Proceed immediately to 10x Genomics RNA-seq workflow