



Dec 26, 2025

UTAG-seq: accurate detection of somatic mutations by single-cell duplex-sequencing

DOI

<https://dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.eq2ly5z8mvx9/v1>

Yichi Niu¹, Chenghang Chuck Zong¹

¹Baylor College of Medicine



Yichi Niu

Baylor College of Medicine

Create & collaborate more with a free account

Edit and publish protocols, collaborate in communities, share insights through comments, and track progress with run records.

Create free account

OPEN  ACCESS



DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.eq2ly5z8mvx9/v1>

Protocol Citation: Yichi Niu, Chenghang Chuck Zong 2025. UTAG-seq: accurate detection of somatic mutations by single-cell duplex-sequencing. **protocols.io** <https://dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.eq2ly5z8mvx9/v1>

License: This is an open access protocol distributed under the terms of the **Creative Commons Attribution License**, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited

Protocol status: Working

We use this protocol and it's working



Created: December 18, 2025

Last Modified: December 26, 2025

Protocol Integer ID: 235271

Keywords: cell somatic mutation detection, accurate detection of somatic mutation, seq to individual human umbilical cord blood cell, somatic mutation, somatic mutation detection, individual human umbilical cord blood cell, comprehensive genome coverage, cell duplex, characterization of somatic mosaicism, somatic mosaicism, sequencing method, cell, utag

Funders Acknowledgements:

Yichi Niu

Grant ID: 1UG3NS132132

Chenghang Zong

Grant ID: 1UG3NS132132

Disclaimer

Patent application covering UTAG-seq chemistry has been filed by Baylor College of Medicine.

Abstract

Here, we developed UTAG-seq, a single-cell duplex-sequencing method that enables comprehensive genome coverage. Applying UTAG-seq to individual human umbilical cord blood cells, we validated the somatic mutation calling accuracy to be $< 10^{-9}$. Together, these results demonstrate that UTAG-seq supports highly accurate single-cell somatic mutation detection and will facilitate the characterization of somatic mosaicism across diverse biological contexts.



Protocol materials

- ✕ Protease (20 mg/mL) **Qiagen**
- ✕ DEPC-treated water **Ambion Catalog #AM9915G**
- ✕ 0.5M EDTA **Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #E7889-100ML**
- ✕ 10% Triton X-100 solution **Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich)**
- ✕ 1 M KCl **Thermo Scientific**
- ✕ 10% NP40 **Amresco**
- ✕ UltraPure™ 1M Tris-HCl, pH 8.0 **Invitrogen - Thermo Fisher Catalog #15568025**
- ✕ 5M NaCl **Invitrogen - Thermo Fisher Catalog #AM9760G**
- ✕ Tn5 transposase, unloaded **Diagenode Catalog #C01070010-20**
- ✕ Glycerol **Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #G5516-100ML**
- ✕ 5X TB1 **Illumina, Inc.**
- ✕ Q5U® Hot Start High-Fidelity DNA Polymerase **New England Biolabs Catalog #M0515**
- ✕ dNTP solution mix (10 mM each) **New England Biolabs Catalog #N0447**
- ✕ 10X ThermoPol Buffer **New England Biolabs**
- ✕ Thermolabile Proteinase K **New England Biolabs Catalog #P8111S**
- ✕ Thermolabile USER II Enzyme - 50 units **New England Biolabs Catalog #M5508S**
- ✕ 10X T4 Ligase buffer **NEB**
- ✕ T4 DNA Ligase **New England Biolabs Catalog #M0202L**
- ✕ Deep Vent DNA Polymerase - 200 units **New England Biolabs Catalog #M0258S**
- ✕ Evagreen dye, 20x in water **Biotium Catalog ##31000**
- ✕ Ampure XP beads **Beckman Catalog #A63881**
- ✕ NEBNext Ultra II Q5 Master Mix **New England Biolabs Catalog #M0544X**



Cell lysis

3h 20m

- 1 Prepare cell lysis buffer (2.5 μ L per cell)

0.075 μ L

UltraPure™ 1M Tris-HCl, pH 8.0 Invitrogen - Thermo Fisher Catalog #15568025

0.01 μ L

0.5M EDTA Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #E7889-100ML

0.05 μ L

1 M KCl Thermo Scientific

0.025 μ L

10% Triton X-100 solution Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich)

0.09 μ L

10% NP40 Amresco

0.12 μ L

Protease (20 mg/mL) Qiagen

2.13 μ L

DEPC-treated water Ambion Catalog #AM9915G

- 2 Sort single cell/nuclei into individual PCR tube or well. Incubate at 50 °C

3h 20m

03:00:00

75 °C

00:20:00

to perform cell lysis. Lysed cells can be stored at -80 °C .

Custom Tn5 transposase assembly

40m

- 3 Prepare 500 μ L 2X Annealing buffer.

40 μ L

UltraPure™ 1M Tris-HCl, pH 8.0 Invitrogen - Thermo Fisher Catalog #15568025

10 μ L

5M NaCl Invitrogen - Thermo Fisher Catalog #AM9760G

450 μ L

DEPC-treated water Ambion Catalog #AM9915G

- 4 Transposon annealing.

10m

20 μ L 2X Annealing buffer

10 μ L

200 micromolar (μ M) ME_REV

10 μ L

200 micromolar (μ M) T1ME_U

Oligonucleotides sequences

ME_REV: /5Phos/CTGTCTCTTATACACATCT



T1ME_U: TCGUCGGCAGCGUC AGATGTGTAUAAGAGACAG

🌡️ 90 °C

🕒 00:05:00

🌡️ 65 °C

🕒 00:05:00

Ramp rate 0.1°C/s

🌡️ 4 °C

Hold, Ramp rate 0.1°C/s

5 Custom Tn5 assembly.

30m

🧴 20 µL

🧬 Tn5 transposase, unloaded **Diagenode Catalog #C01070010-20**

🧴 20 µL

Annealed transposon mix

Incubate at

🌡️ 23 °C

🕒 00:30:00

. Add

🧴 20 µL

🧬 Glycerol

Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #G5516-100ML

. Mix well

and brief centrifuge. Store at

🌡️ -20 °C

.

Single-cell UTAG procedure

3h 4m 30s

6 Prepare tagmentation mix (2.5 uL per cell).

55m

🧴 1 µL

🧬 5X TB1 **Illumina, Inc.**

🧴 0.5 µL

[M] 10 millimolar (mM) MgCl₂

🧴 0.2 µL

U-Tn5 (1:200 diluted)

🧴 0.8 µL

🧬 DEPC-treated water **Ambion Catalog #AM9915G**

Gently mix and briefly spin down. Incubate at

🌡️ 25 °C

🕒 00:50:00

🌡️ 37 °C

🕒 00:05:00 .

Note: the activity of purchased Tn5 transposase may vary between different batches. The goal of this step is to tagment gDNA to an average of ~200 bp fragments. Please adjust the amount of enzyme at this step if needed.

7 Tn5 inactivation.

30m

Add

🧴 1 µL

[M] 0.2 Molarity (M)

EDTA. Incubate at

🌡️ 50 °C

🕒 00:30:00

.

8 Gap filling.



8.1 Add  1 μL  0.2 Molarity (M) MgCl_2 .

8.2 Add  3 μL Sealing mix:

5m 30s

 1 μL  10X ThermoPol Buffer **New England Biolabs**

 1 μL  dNTP solution mix (10 mM each) **New England Biolabs Catalog #N0447**

 0.1 μL

 Q5U® Hot Start High-Fidelity DNA Polymerase **New England Biolabs Catalog #M0515**

 0.9 μL  DEPC-treated water **Ambion Catalog #AM9915G**

Incubate at  65 °C  00:00:30 . Quench reaction on ice. Add  1 μL

 0.1 Molarity (M) EDTA. Mix well and briefly spin down. Incubate at

 Room temperature  00:05:00 .

8.3 Add  1 μL  Thermolabile Proteinase K **New England Biolabs Catalog #P8111S** .

Incubate at  25 °C  02:00:00  20 °C  Overnight  55 °C

 00:12:00 .

9 USER digestion.

30m

Add  2 μL USER mix:

 0.2 μL  10X ThermoPol Buffer **New England Biolabs**

 0.5 μL

 Thermolabile USER II Enzyme - 50 units **New England Biolabs Catalog #M5508S**

 1.3 μL  10 micromolar (μM) T2ME_ssDNA

Incubate at  37 °C  00:30:00 .

Oligonucleotides sequences

T2ME_ssDNA: GTCTCGTGGGCTCGG AGATGTGTAT

10 Ligation adapter annealing.

10m

Add  1 μL MgCl_2 mix:

 0.3 μL  10X ThermoPol Buffer **New England Biolabs**

 0.5 μL  0.2 Molarity (M) MgCl_2



🧪 0.2 µL 🧪 DEPC-treated water **Ambion Catalog #AM9915G**

Incubate at 🌡️ 55 °C ⌚ 00:05:00 🌡️ 25 °C ⌚ 00:05:00 Ramp rate 0.1°C/s.

11 Ligation.

40m

Add 🧪 6 µL Ligation mix:

🧪 2.1 µL 🧪 10X T4 Ligase buffer **NEB**

🧪 1 µL 🧪 T4 DNA Ligase **New England Biolabs Catalog #M0202L**

🧪 2.9 µL 🧪 DEPC-treated water **Ambion Catalog #AM9915G**

Incubate at 🌡️ 25 °C ⌚ 00:30:00 🌡️ 65 °C ⌚ 00:10:00 .

12 Yield test.

3m 40s

Prepare qRT-PCR mix (10 µL per cell):

🧪 1 µL 🧪 10X ThermoPol Buffer **New England Biolabs**

🧪 0.25 µL [M] 10 micromolar (µM) T1ME

🧪 0.25 µL [M] 10 micromolar (µM) T2ME

🧪 0.2 µL

🧪 dNTP solution mix (10 mM each) **New England Biolabs Catalog #N0447**

🧪 0.15 µL

🧪 Deep Vent DNA Polymerase - 200 units **New England Biolabs Catalog #M0258S**

🧪 0.5 µL 🧪 Evagreen dye, 20x in water **Biotium Catalog ##31000**

🧪 7.15 µL 🧪 DEPC-treated water **Ambion Catalog #AM9915G**

🧪 0.5 µL Template.

Oligonucleotides sequences

T1ME: TCGTCGGCAGCGTC AGATGTGTATAAGAGACAG

T2ME: GTCTCGTGGGCTCGG AGATGTGTATAAGAGACAG

Perform the following program on a qPCR machine.

🌡️ 94 °C ⌚ 00:02:00

26 cycles of

🌡️ 94 °C ⌚ 00:00:20

🌡️ 68 °C ⌚ 00:00:20

🌡️ 72 °C ⌚ 00:01:00



13 Amplification step 1.

5m 10s

Add:

 1 μL

0.2 Molarity (M) EDTA

 1.2 μL 10 micromolar (μM) T2ME_ssDNA 2.5 μL 10 micromolar (μM) Illumina Nextera i5 index 25 μL NEBNext Ultra II Q5 Master Mix **New England Biolabs Catalog #M0544X**

PCR cycles:

 98 $^{\circ}\text{C}$

00:00:30

11 cycles of

 98 $^{\circ}\text{C}$

00:00:10

 63 $^{\circ}\text{C}$

00:00:30

 72 $^{\circ}\text{C}$

00:01:00

Cycle end

 72 $^{\circ}\text{C}$

00:03:00

Purify with 1.4 X Ampure XP beads **Beckman Catalog #A63881** . Elute in 20 μL DEPC-treated water **Ambion Catalog #AM9915G** .

14 Amplification step 2.

5m 10s

Add the following reagents to 20 μL purified products. 2.5 μL 10 micromolar (μM) Illumina Nextera i7 index 2.5 μL 10 micromolar (μM) Illumina P5 25 μL NEBNext Ultra II Q5 Master Mix **New England Biolabs Catalog #M0544X**

Oligo sequences:

Illumina P5: AATGATACGGCGACCACCGAGA

PCR cycles:

 98 $^{\circ}\text{C}$

00:00:30

5 cycles of

 98 $^{\circ}\text{C}$

00:00:10



63 °C

00:00:30

72 °C

00:01:00

Cycle end

72 °C

00:03:00

Purify with 1.4 X Ampure XP beads **Beckman Catalog #A63881** . Elute in

20 µL

 DEPC-treated water **Ambion Catalog #AM9915G** .