Chicken embryonic spinal cord electroporation

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Organisation

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Specific Research Group or Service Animal Molecular and Cellular Biology (AMCB)

Country Belgium

SCOPE OF THE METHOD

The Method relates to	Human health
The Method is situated in	Basic Research, Education and training
Type of method	In vivo
Used species	Chicken (Gallus gallus domesticus)
Targeted organ system or type of research	Central and peripheral nervous system

DESCRIPTION

Method keywords

Embryonic spinal cord

Electroporation

In ovo experiment

Expression vector

RNA interference

Gene overexpression
Gene downregulation
chicken
chicken embryo

Scientific area keywords

Development
neurobiology
Developmental neurobiology
Spinal cord
CNS
Neurogenesis
Neuronal differentiation
Neuronal migration
Gene expression
Embryo

Method description

The goal of chicken embryonic spinal cord electroporation is to increase or to reduce expression levels of genes of interest in the developing spinal cord, and to assess the phenotypic consequences of these alterations on neuronal differentiation or migration. Fertilized eggs stored at 14°C are incubated for ~60 hours at 38°C to obtain embryos at the expected developmental stage. Plasmid DNA or siRNA is injected in the lumen of the neural tube at Hamburger-Hamilton stages ~10 to ~18. Later stages cannot be injected due to the rotation of the embryo. Nucleic acids are internalized in neural progenitors and their progeny on one side of the neural tube using whole-embryo electroporation. The contra-lateral side can be used as a perfect matching control. Instead of the spinal cord, hindbrain, midbrain, or forebrain can also be targeted by adapting the position of the electroporation electrodes. Specific cell populations can be targeted by using a cell-specific promoter. Signaling pathway reporter constructs or labelling systems targeting neurites or synapses can also be (co-)electroporated. Development can be continued for 1 to 5 days depending on the developmental stage to be analyzed.

Lab equipment

- Egg storage cabinet (wine cooler) Haier
- Eppendorf FemtoJet injector
- Harvard Apparatus BTX ECM830 power source + electrodes
- FIEM egg incubators

Method status

History of use
Internally validated
Published in peer reviewed journal

PROS, CONS & FUTURE POTENTIAL

Advantages

- cheap
- fast
- versatile regarding gene alterations, labelings, or reporter activity that can be obtained
- adapted for screening a reasonable number of candidate genes for a particular process

Challenges

- requires some initial training and skill
- limited time-window for the injection/electroporation (~HH10 to ~HH18)
- transient activity of the injected constructs
- limited duration of the post-electroporation period of time
- variability from one embryo to another (can be reduced with practice)

REFERENCES, ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND OTHER INFORMATION

References

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Associated documents

Chicken embryo electroporation - NEDI lab (UCLouvain).pdf
Fixation procedure for chicken embryos.pdf

Links

Short movie of chicken embryonic spinal cord electroporation

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