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M1 - Renal, Fall 2007

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Viewer discretion advised: Material may contain medical images that may be disturbing to some viewers.
Folate and AdoMet One-Carbon Pools

Medical relevance of the one-carbon pathways

Mechanism of antibiotics
  Sulfa drugs - antibacterial
  Trimethoprim, pyrimethamin - antibacterial, antimalarial

Pathologies
  VitB\textsubscript{12} deficiency/pernicious anemia
  dietary folate deficiency
  sprue
(See also the Nucleic Acid lectures for anti-cancer chemotherapies)

I. Tetrahydrofolate as a carrier of one-carbon units

A. Obtaining folate - an essential vitamin

1. Dietary sources (green veggies, fortified cereals, liver) provide folic acid. Cleaved by enzyme 'conjugase' to remove extra glutamate residues, absorbed, reduced to dihydrofolate, then to tetrahydrofolate by Dihydrofolate Reductase (DHFR). DHFR inhibitors are useful antibiotics if they affect other organisms but not humans.

   ![Chemical structures of folic acid, dihydrofolate, and tetrahydrofolate]

2. Inhibitors of DHFR are used therapeutically: e.g. methotrexate (cancer chemotherapy). Tumors that resist methotrexate sometimes have amplified the DHFR gene to compensate for the inhibitor.

See: http://seqcore.brcf.med.umich.edu/mcb500 for supplementary course materials.
3. Compounds that inhibit bacterial folate biosynthesis can be excellent antibiotics. Example: sulfa drugs like sulfanilamide:

\[
\text{Para-aminobenzoic acid (PABA)}
\]

\[
\text{sulfanilamide}
\]

B. Main entry of one-carbon units - N^5, N^{10} methylene tetrahydrofolate

1) Serine conversion to glycine:

\[
\text{Tetrahydrofolate} + \text{serine} \rightarrow \text{glycine} \rightarrow \text{N}^5, \text{N}^7 \text{methylene tetrahydrofolate}
\]

2) Glycine conversion to CO_2 and NH_4^{(+)}:

\[
\text{Tetrahydrofolate} + \text{glycine} \rightarrow \text{N}^5, \text{N}^7 \text{methylene tetrahydrofolate}
\]

C. Oxidation states of the one-carbon unit and inter-conversions (reversible reactions indicated by double-ended arrows)
II. S-adenosylmethionine ('SAM', aka 'AdoMet') Overview:
A. Biosynthesis of methionine
(see also the Amino Acid Metabolism handout)

![Chemical reaction diagram]

B. Re-utilization of folates:

![Chemical reaction diagram]

C. Synthesis of S-Adenosyl Methionine

![Chemical reaction diagram]

D. Uses of SAM - biological methylator
Example: Conversion of norepinephrine to epinephrine:

![Chemical diagram of norepinephrine and epinephrine conversion](image)

Others: Conversion of phosphatidylethanolamine to phosphatidylcholine, methylation of mRNA and DNA

**E. AdoMet cycle**

![Diagram of AdoMet cycle](image)

**III. Pathologies:**
A. Folate deficiency is common. symptom: megaloblastic anemia
weakness, anemia, anorexia
Appearance of large, immature erythrocytes ('megaloblasts') in the blood

B. several causes:
- dietary deficiency common
- alcoholism may compound folate deficiency
- inability to absorb folates (e.g. tropical sprue and non-tropical or celiac sprue)

Dietary folates are typically poly-glutamated (up to 6 γ-glutamyl residues)
We can absorb only the mono-glutamyl form
An enzyme 'conjugase' secreted by the brush border cells of the intestine
hydrolytically removes the extra glu residues so we can absorb the folate
Intestinal irritation can compromise production of conjugase

- possibly secondary to B12 deficiency: pernicious anemia

'Methyl trap' hypothesis and deficiency of vitamin B12:

B12 deficiency can be caused by autoimmune response to 'Intrinsic Factor', a product of the gut that aids in the absorption of B12.